

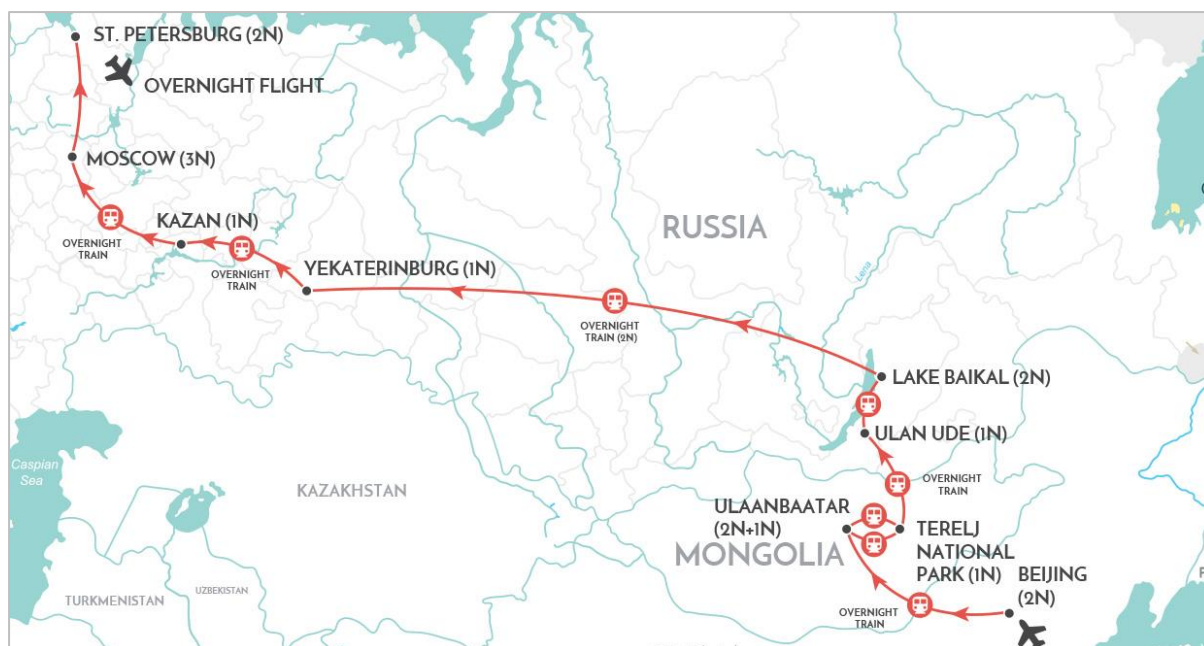


Trans Siberian Railway (Naadam Departure)

Go Beyond Tour | 25 Days | Physical Level 3

Beijing – Overnight Train – Ulaanbaator – Gorkhi Terelj National Park –
Ulaan Baator – Overnight Train – Ulan Ude – Lake Baikal – Overnight Train –
Yekaterinburg – Overnight Train – Kazan – Overnight Train – Moscow – St
Petersburg

The epic Trans-Siberian Railway spans some 9000 km, 2 continents, 3 countries, 8 time zones and offers fascinating people and cultures, historical monuments and is the pinnacle of iconic travel experiences. Journey from Beijing to St Petersburg via the mysterious Mongolia, Siberia and Lake Baikal the grand cities of Yekaterinburg, Kazan and Moscow. The July 5, 2020 departure takes in 2 days of the magnificent Naadam Festival in Mongolia.



- Take a walk on the Great Wall of China
- Experience the spectacular Naadam Festival
- Visit a Siberian village on the shores of Lake Baikal
- Enjoy the world's most exciting railway journey
- Marvel at the Kremlin Citadel complex in Kazan
- Tour the grand cities of Moscow and St Petersburg

Trans-Siberian Railway tour inclusions:

- Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless a land only option is selected)
- All accommodation
- All meals
- All sightseeing and entrance fees
- All transportation and transfers
- 16 nights in 3 and 4-star hotels
- 1 night in a Mongolian Ger
- 6 overnight sleeper train journeys
- English speaking National Escort (if your group is 10 or more passengers) and Local Guides
- Visa fees for Australian passport holders
- Specialist advice from our experienced travel consultants

The only thing you may have to pay for are personal expenditure e.g. drinks, optional excursions or shows, insurance of any kind, customary tipping, early check in or late check out and other items not specified on the itinerary.

Go Beyond Tours:

Venture off the beaten track to explore fascinating destinations away from the tourist trail. You will discover the local culture in depth and see sights rarely witnessed by other travellers. These tours take you away from the comforts of home but will reward you with the experiences of a lifetime.

Physical Level 3:

The Trans-Siberian Railway tour is rated as a **physical level 3** tour. A reasonable level of fitness is required but it's more about spending time on the train rather than hiking or travelling to remote locations. You'll be getting on and off trains and coaches, walking around the sights and climbing some steps.

- There will be sightseeing on foot for both short and extended periods of time
- On the Great Wall of China in Beijing some of the walking will be at an incline
- This trip is based around long train journeys, where you'll be sleeping in comfortable cabins sharing with other Wendy Wu travellers or tourists.
- Conditions are simple but comfortable – an authentic experience and a great way to meet, and travel like, the locals. There is a toilet/bathroom and compartments with bunks/berths and a restaurants cart and bar. Please note that we travel 2nd class on all overnight trains (4 people per compartment).
- These train journeys include one 2-night overnight train journey, and 4 one-night overnight train journeys. There are overnight hotel stays of between 1 and 2 nights between each overnight train journey means that the longest you will be on the train is for 2 nights (only once between Irkutsk and Yekaterinburg).
- As well as 6 overnight train journeys, we experience a variety of different transport types on this journey including private bus and of course plenty of walking on foot.
- You will be staying in a ger camp for 1 night in Mongolia but all other nights will be in 3 to 4 star hotels and upmarket forested guesthouse in the case of the 2 nights on Lake Baikal.

Of course, our National Escort and local guides will always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance; however, they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary.

Country Profile: China

China's civilisation is the oldest in the world and has a history dating back over 5,000 years. With 56 ethnic groups, 22 provinces and eight major dialects, China has a rich and varied culture and way of life. It is home to a wealth of tourist sights and cultural relics, which entice our guests to return again and again to this exciting destination.

Country Profile: Mongolia

Boarded by Siberia to the north and China to the south, Mongolia is the second largest landlocked country in the world, with a varying geography from the Gobi Desert in the south and mountain regions to the north and west. With a landscape that is quite breath-taking, it offers pristine lakes, rugged mountains and incredible wide-open spaces.

Country Profile: Russia

Russia, officially the Russian Federation is, by a considerable margin the largest country in the world by area, covering more than one-eighth of the Earth's inhabited land area and the 10th most populous, with about 147 million people as of 2019. About 77% of the population live in the western, European part of the country. After being closed to the rest of the world during the USSR years, Russia, since the mid-90s is well and truly open to tourism and the sheer scale of the country is somewhat incomprehensible, covering nine time zones.

Joining Your Tour

The tour is 25 days in duration including international flights. Due to flight schedules passengers may arrive/depart on Day 2.

Travellers booked on 'Land Only', the price includes visa fees and your arrival/departure airport transfers if arriving/departing on the start and conclusion date of your tour. Please advise your international flight times to reservations. Join the tour on Day 1 in Beijing and end the tour on Day 24 in St Petersburg. Please refer to your final itinerary for more specific meeting instructions pertaining to your departure.

Itinerary - Important Notes

It is our intention to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, the order of events or sightseeing may change as we look to improve our tours or as local conditions dictate. In these circumstances, we will make the best possible arrangements maintaining the integrity of your trip.

Please note: The Forbidden City is closed on Mondays. For both Trans-Siberian Railway departures for 2020, touring in Beijing on day 2 falls on a Monday which is when the Forbidden City is closed. We recommend arriving the day before the tour starts in order for you to book the optional Beijing Uncovered Sunday day tour visiting the Forbidden City, the Temple of Heaven and a Hutong visit.

Itinerary – Trans-Siberian Railway

Day 1: Beijing

Fly to Beijing, the capital of China, for a 2-night stay. On arrival in Beijing Capital International Airport you will be met in the arrival hall by your local guide and/or National Escort from Wendy Wu Tours. Together with all other group members who may be arriving at a similar time, you will transfer approximately 1 hour to your hotel. The rest of the day is at leisure. A tour introduction will be held in the hotel either this evening or the next. Food and drinks will not be served at this meeting, it is simply an opportunity for your group to meet and learn more about travelling in China.



Pre Tour Option: Beijing Uncovered Day Tour (Sunday)

Forbidden City – The sacred centre of the Chinese empire for 500 years and home to the Ming and Qing dynasties, the Forbidden City is a vast complex of over 900 buildings and covers an area of 180 acres. Since 1987, the Forbidden City has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site and its palatial architectural style has been an influence on many imperial buildings throughout Asia

Temple of Heaven – Set in a 267-hectare park surrounded by a long wall and with a gate at each compass point, the Temple of Heaven is absolutely unique. It is one of the most perfect examples of Ming architecture, created as a place of worship for the Emperors, who would ask for prosperity, longevity and good harvest for the people. Walking through the park we will see the many groups of local people that gather here every day to sing folk songs, practice Tai-Chi, play chess or just come to sit and chat.

Hutongs – The Mongol rulers of Beijing established this style of housing in the 13th century as tenancy for the growing population of the city. Hutongs were designed to reflect the Chinese system of Feng Shui with 4 hutongs joining together to make a courtyard in the middle, known as Siheyuan. In more recent times, the hutong suburbs were in jeopardy of disappearing, but a fierce debate between developers and those who fought to protect the architecture and the hutong way of life diminished the threat

Day 2: Beijing

You will rise early this morning to avoid the crowds and drive approximately 2 hours northwest of the city to the Juyongguan Pass to take a walk on the Great Wall of China, appreciating the wall itself and the dramatic scenery. Your visit involves walking from the bus to the first section. Once your group has been given an introduction to the Great Wall's unique history, you will have free time to explore at your own pace.



Later, visit the Jade Museum. In the afternoon, stroll through Tiananmen Square and the Summer Palace. Tonight, enjoy a traditional Peking duck dinner.

Destination Information

Great Wall of China – Originally built under the first Emperor of China, Qin Shi Huang, The Great Wall of China is the country's most iconic sight. Snaking through the northern countryside from the Gobi Desert in the west into the Bohai Sea in the east, the Great Wall of China is the longest wall in the world and was used as a fortification against northern nomadic tribes. The current structure dates back to the Ming Dynasty - over 700 years old.

Jade Factory – Learn about one of China's most symbolic and important materials: jade, at this comprehensive factory. Understand how to tell if jade is real or fake and watch artisans at work, carving this emerald stone into works of art.

Summer Palace – The former holiday retreat of the Qing emperors, the Summer Palace is a stunning example of Chinese garden style. The Summer Palace incorporates the Fengshui notion of 'Mountain' and 'Water', seen here with tranquil Kunming Lake and magnificent Longevity Hill. A favourite resort of the Empress Dowager Cixi, the Summer Palace is home to a stunning Marble Boat and the Long Corridor, one of the longest outdoor passageways in the world.

Tiananmen Square – Built under the guidance of Chairman Mao Zedong, Tiananmen Square is one of the largest public squares in the world, said to hold a capacity crowd of over one million. It houses not only the Monument to the People's Heroes, it is also the final resting place of Chairman Mao himself in the Mausoleum of Mao Zedong.

Peking duck – A favourite of the Emperor's court and the upper-class elite during the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), Peking duck quickly spread throughout Chinese society to become a national favourite and a symbol of China.

Day 3: Trans Mongolian Railway Overnight Sleeper Train

Depart the hotel early for the 30 minutes to the Beijing Railway Station for the Trans Mongolian Railway Journey. This is the first leg of the trip, departs Beijing early in the morning and reaches Ulaanbaatar at 3pm the next day. The train follows the Trans-Siberian Railway until Ulan-Ude in Russia, where it splits off and takes the Trans-Mongolian route. All up, the journey, if you were to travel directly from Moscow to St Petersburg takes seven nights, spanning 8,552kms.



Watch as the landscape changes, while enjoying views of the Great Wall of China as the train tackles the mountains before descending to the arid lands of Inner Mongolia and continuing into the heart of rural Asia.

Destination Information

Crossing from China into Mongolia – Crossing at the border post of Erlian is fascinating, especially if you're a train-mechanics fan. Mongolian and Chinese railroads have different track gauges, so all the bogies must be changed in a painstaking process that takes hours late at night and requires passengers to stay on the train. You may be allowed to get off once your passports have been checked, and you can grab some food near the station. The Chinese dining car is also replaced with the Mongolian one, and you're served a set Mongolian breakfast in the morning before alighting the train.

Beijing to St Petersburg Train – All trains are 2nd class soft sleepers: 4 berth compartments that have lockable doors. There an overhead locker and storage space under the bottom bunk that is sufficient space for your luggage. Bed linen is provided on all trains. Each carriage has two toilets/bathroom and one hot water boiler (for drinks and instant meals) and a small sink with hot and cold water. There are two train attendants in each carriage to take care of passengers and maintain the facilities. The trains are heated but many do not have air conditioning, so they can be hot even in cooler months. Please pack appropriate clothing for the warmer conditions you may experience. Most of the trains will have dining car but it is a good idea to bring plenty of your own snacks aboard for more variety of food options while travelling.

Day 4: Ulaanbaatar

Wake bright and early and pull up your cabin blind to witness a dramatic change in scenery as you get your first look at Mongolia – rolling hills, wild horses dashing along with the train and nomad gers spread out along the open steppe and along the Gobi Desert. Arrive in Ulaanbaator in Mongolia at 3pm and transfer to your hotel. Later in the day visit Genghis Khan Square and the Zaisan Hill Memorial and the Winter Palace of the Bogd Khan.



Tonight, experience a famous Mongolian BBQ and a rich artistic cultural performance of traditional throat and 'long song' singers, musicians, dancers and contortionists.

Destination Information

Ulaanbaatar – Occupying one-third of the country's population, the capital of Mongolia is also its largest city. Ulaanbaatar or UB is a sprawling, industrialised city of pulsating commerce, wild traffic and a bohemian counterculture. It's the coldest capital in the world but come summer the city bursts into life after slumbering through a long winter.

Zaisan Memorial – Built by the Russians to commemorate 'unknown soldiers and heroes' from various wars, the Zaisan Memorial features stirring socialist realism imagery with Soviet mosaics and reliefs. The view from the top is amazing on a clear day, it's 187 steps to the top of the monument!

Winter Palace of the Bogd Khan – Built between 1893 and 1903, this palace is where Mongolia's eighth Living Buddha, and last king, Jebtzun Damba Hutagt VIII lived for 20 years. There are six temples; each now contains Buddhist artworks, including sculptures and thangkas.

Day 5: Gorkhi Terelj National Park

This morning, visit a ger district located in Northern outskirts of the city, where you'll meet some of the residents, have a cup of traditional Mongolian tea and a chat about life in an urban ger community.

Travel the 2 hours to the Gorkhi Terelj National Park Ger Camp.

Located 55km northeast of Ulaanbaatar, this popular national park is characterised by picturesque alpine scenery, open grassland fields and magnificent mountain ranges where you could experience and enjoy outdoor activities including horseback riding, camel or yak trekking, hiking, and photography.



Have lunch on arrival travel to Turtle Rock for a hike and visit a Mongolian nomadic family for the taste of nomadic lifestyle, traditional food, culture and traditions and warm hospitality. There are options to do some horse riding, archery or hike to a Tibetan monastery to take in stunning views of the Mongolian steppe.

Destination Information

Mongolian Gers – Tonight, you will sleep in traditional gers, which are round wooden tents covered in felt, with a stove in the middle. There are beds inside the spacious interior and the gers are surprisingly very comfortable. Bathroom facilities here are basic with no showers, but there are toilets and basins with cold water in a support building outside. For dinner enjoy some traditional Mongolian dumplings, Buddhist vegetarian cuisine and khorkhog (Mongolian lamb cooked on hot stones).

Day 6: Ulaanbaatar

On the way back to Ulaanbaatar, stop and visit the huge Genghis Khan Monument. Few tourists come to Mongolia without visiting its most iconic landmark, a 40m-high glistening silver Genghis Khan statue. Atop, enjoy spectacular views of the steppe below.

On your return, you will visit the Gandan Monastery. This monastery is one of Mongolia's most important, and also one of its biggest tourist attractions. Return to Ulaanbaatar city for Naadam Eve and visit Central Square where you can view the Naadam Mongol costumes on display.



Destination Information

Genghis Khan equestrian statue – Mongolia's most iconic landmark is the 40m-high glistening silver Genghis Khan statue. Constructed in 2008 from stainless steel, the dramatic statue, has a lift (elevator) rising up its tail, from where there are steps to the horse's head. Atop, enjoy spectacular views of the steppe below

Gandan Monastery – Gandan Monastery means 'great place of complete joy', and is the largest, most significant monastery in the country. Building began in 1838 and today there are over 150 monks in residence. Lining the walls of the temple are many images of the Buddha of Longevity, Ayush.

Day 7: Ulaanbaatar (Naadam Festival Opening Ceremony)

One of the special features you will encounter over the next 2 days is experiencing first-hand the annual Naadam Festival. The highlight of your journey begins as the group mix with locals and nomads alike to witness the Opening Ceremony of the Naadam Festival, at Central Stadium. Here you can see featured events that include wrestling, horseracing and archery. You will have the chance to view the procession of the athletes, officials and monks, as the first round of competition in the wrestling tournament begins.



Tickets to all arenas are allocated by local Government tourist authority in the weeks leading up to the opening ceremony; therefore, the exact programme for the festival cannot be given until during your trip. After the grand Opening Ceremony, the first round of wrestling and archery is held in the afternoon at Naadam Stadium. This evening you will see the Naadam Traditional Folk Gala Show, which includes the renowned 'throat singing'.

Please prepare your bag each day to contain everything you may need for the day – sun hat, sunscreen, drinking water and plenty of camera memory etc. at a minimum. It is usually hot at this time of year, and the seats are not under cover, so you will be exposed to the sun all day. Valuables must be kept in the hotel safe or under your clothes in a money belt as you will be walking through huge crowds on your way in and out of the stadium stands. Lunch during this time will usually be a boxed lunch organised by the hotel, so that you can enjoy it 'picnic style' without leaving the excitement of the festival.

Travel approximately 50km outside the city to enjoy the second day of the Naadam festival.

Destination Information

The Naadam Festival – The Naadam Festival is a local celebration of the Mongolian people and culture and the festival's origins can be traced to the Mongol Army. Naadam literally means "games" and is locally termed "eriin gurban naadam" or "the three games of men". The games are Mongolian wrestling, horse racing, and archery.

Day 8: Ulaan Baator / Trans-Mongolian Railway

A thrilling day unfolds as you to view the cross-country horseracing. Also known as 'tumnii ekh' (leader of ten thousand), this certainly is sought after amongst the younger competitors. Cheer along with the locals as the athletes compete and enthral in the carnival-like atmosphere. Boxed meals will be provided for lunch in the horse racing field today.



There's free time to do some shopping and stock up on supplies for tomorrow's overnight train ride. You could also search out local handicrafts like cashmere and felt products. In the afternoon transfer to the Trans Mongolian Railway journey into Russia.

Destination Information

Ulaanbaator to Ulan Ude Trans Mongolian Railway – Back on the rails this afternoon for our overnight train trip (approximately 15 hours) into Russia. During the journey you'll cross the border from Mongolia (Sukhbaatar) to Russia (Naushki) at night. Patience is required during the long wait at the border towns while passports are processed, customs does their checks and we wait for the engine to re-join the train.

Day 9: Ulan Ude

Arrive in Ulan Ude and transfer to your hotel.

Founded as a Cossack fort called Udinsk in 1666, the city prospered as a major stop on the tea-caravan route from China via Troitskosavsk. Renamed Ulan-Ude in 1934, it was a closed city until the 1980s due to its secret military plants (there are still mysterious blank spaces on city maps).



With its smiley Asian features, cosy city centre and fascinating Mongol-Buddhist culture, Ulan Ude the Buryat capital is one of Eastern Siberia's most likeable cities. Quietly busy, welcoming and, after Siberia's Russian cities, refreshingly exotic, it's a pleasant place to base yourself for day trips to Buddhist temples.

Tour the city on arrival visiting the Lenin Statue, the city centre, the Rinpoche Bagsha Datsan Tibetan temple and the Odigitrievsky Cathedral. Later, spend the afternoon at the Old Believers' village of Tarbagatay following the beautiful Selenge river valley.

Upon arrival in Tarbagatay, you'll be greeted by local ladies in full traditional dress who will show you around their traditional house. Visit a small Old Believers church, a fascinating museum put together by the local priest to learn about their way of life. Enjoy a village hall dinner with a veritable feast of sumptuous food, vodka and wine whilst being entertained with local dancing and folk singing.

Destination Information

Lenin Head – Ulan-Ude's main square is entirely dominated by the world's largest Lenin head that creates an ensemble with the grey constructivist government building behind it. The 7.7m-high bronze bonce was installed in 1970 to celebrate Lenin's 100th birthday.

Rinpoche Bagsha Datsan Tibetan Temple – Roosting high above the city's far north, the Rinpoche Bagsha Datsan Tibetan temple has fantastic panoramic views of the city and snow-capped mountains.

Old Believers' Village – Spend the afternoon at the Old Believers' village of Tarbagatay following the beautiful Selenge river valley. The area is fabulously beautiful, Ulan Ude is surrounded by vast, wild nature, boundless steppes, alpine and taiga forests. Old Believers are members of a group of Russian religious dissenters who refused to accept the liturgical reforms imposed upon the Russian Orthodox Church by the patriarch of Moscow Nikon (1652–58). Numbering millions of faithful in the 17th century, the Old Believers split into a number of different sects, of which several survived into modern times.

Day 10: Lake Baikal

in the morning for the Trans-Siberian Railway journey to Irkutsk and onto the pretty Lake Baikal town of Listvyanka.

Day 10 offers the best scenery of the entire trip when Lake Baikal, the largest freshwater lake in the world, comes into view on one side and mountains on the other. The train twists around some tight turns near the lake and skirts the edge just metres away, so you can take some great photos.

Travel via Irkutsk to the small Lake Baikal town of Listvyanka, 70km southeast arriving at your wooden Siberian forested guesthouse.



Destination Information

Lake Baikal – As the closest lakeside village to Irkutsk, Listvyanka – aka the ‘Baikal Riviera’ – is the spot where most travellers go to dunk their toes in Baikal’s pure waters. During your time here you will hike the Great Baikal Trail, enjoy a boat trip, discover more about the lake at the Baikal Museum and chill out at one of Siberia’s most eco-friendly sleeps, our hotel.

Day 11: Lake Baikal

Enjoy your surroundings today and explore the beautiful Lake Baikal nature by going on a hike along the lakeshore.

Hop aboard a boat that will take you along the shore to some impressive viewpoints. The lake is very flat that you’ll find it difficult to see the horizon off in the distance. In the village cows roam freely, contained only by the fences keeping them out of the village’s produce gardens.



Back in town you can admire the sculptures made of Soviet car parts at Retro Park or get up close and personal with Baikal’s aquatic life at the Baikal Museum aquarium. Although a little chilly, there are options for swimming in the lake or the nearby river or you may wish to enjoy the sunshine and the beautiful scenery.

Enjoy a dinner of smoked omul (Baikal whitefish) and shashlyk (grilled meat skewers) at the waterside market and picnic on the pebble beach with weekenders. Enjoy some local Siberian lager, vodka and plenty of laughs!

Destination Information

Russian Banya - You will have the chance to experience a banya, the Russian version of a sauna. Russians believe in the cleansing, healing and meditative properties of having a steam and a wash in a bathhouse which is a very social occasion!

The Great Baikal Trail project – This project aims to eventually encircle Baikal with a series of trails. You can currently hike through pine forest between the villages of Listvyanka and the picture-perfect fishing village of Bolshiye Koty via an attractive cliff-edge path. For those with less energy can hike up to the viewpoint for excellent views of the lake.

Day 12: Irkutsk / Trans-Siberian Railway

At 9am travel the 2 hours back to Irkutsk for a tour of the city.

The de facto capital of Eastern Siberia, pleasantly historic Irkutsk is by far the most popular stop on the Trans-Siberian Railway between Moscow and all points east. View 19th-century wooden architecture, impressive churches, Central Market and Trans-Siberian Railway Angara Icebreaker Museum.



Enjoy lunch at the blockbuster 130 Kvartal project - an entire neighbourhood given over to typical Siberian timber buildings housing new restaurants, classy bars, cafes and the odd museum and board the train and depart Irkutsk bound for Yekaterinburg.

Depart on the train in the afternoon Yekaterinburg.

Destination Information

Trans-Siberian Railway – This leg from Irkutsk via Krasnoyarsk, Novosibirsk along the border of Kazakhstan via Omsk to Yekaterinburg continues through birch forests, stark landscapes and picturesque villages. This journey on your Trans-Siberian Railway adventure is 49 hours. There are a few stations stops throughout the day; you can stretch your legs for 15 to 20 minutes at each one.

Day 13: Trans-Siberian Railway

Continue your epic Trans-Siberian Railway adventure.

No other rail journey can compare to the Trans-Siberian Railway, once hailed as 'the fairest jewel in the crown of the Tsars'. Survivor of revolution, wars, natural calamities and extreme weather, this historic iron way provides access to both contemporary metropolises and timeless villages, as well as beautiful landscapes.



Destination Information

Life on the Train – While aboard the train, embrace the chance to interact with your fellow passengers and learn a little about their respective cultures as you share with them something of your own. You'll discover, if you haven't already, that Russians in particular are among the kindest people you could meet, ever ready to share their provisions and engage in conversation. Prepare yourself for a magnificently rewarding experience of changing landscapes and cultures, diverse peoples, eating, reading, looking out the window, sleeping, drinking, talking, sleeping, and of life on the rails!

Day 14: Yekaterinburg

Continue your epic Trans-Siberian Railway adventure. Arrive at Yekaterinburg and transfer to your hotel.

Gem rush, miners' mythology, the execution of the Romanovs, the rise of Russia's first president, Boris Yeltsin, and legendary gangster feuds of the 1990s – Yekaterinburg is not only Russia's 4th largest city at 1.3 million people and the political capital of the Ural Mountains, it is like a piece of conceptual art with a fascinating historical subtext.



Learn more about the devastating history of the Romanov family, and visit the moving monuments at the Church of All Saints on Spilled Blood. It is like a piece of conceptual art with a fascinating historical subtext.

Destination Information

Church upon the Blood – Church upon the Blood The massive Byzantine-style Church upon the Blood dominates this site where the Romanov family was executed and was built to honour the Romanov family, now elevated to the status of saints.

Black Tulip Monument – Take the lift up 52 floors to the Vysotskiy Viewing Platform for one of Russia's best urban panoramas, visit the Black Tulip Monument, opened in 1995 is dedicated to the memory of fallen soldiers who had died during 1979-1988 Afghanistan War.

Day 15: Yekaterinburg / Trans-Siberian Railway

Check out of your hotel and tour the Romanov Death Site and take part in a Mafia Gangster Tour to learn about history of Yekaterinburg of the 1990s.

Board the Trans-Siberian Railway this evening for your 15 hours, 30 minutes journey to Kazan.



Destination Information

Mafia Gangster Tour – During the tour you will hear the stories about those who dominated society in the new Russia after the break-up of the Soviet Union, learn about Boris Yeltsin's influence and see impressive tombstones at the cemeteries elaborately designed with full-sized portraits of the people dressed according to the 1990s gangster fashion.

Day 16: Kazan

Arrive in Kazan and transfer to your hotel.

Kazan (meaning 'cooking pot' in Tatar) is the Istanbul of the Volga, a place where Europe and Asia curiously inspect each other from the tops of church belfries and minarets. It is about 150 years older than Moscow and the capital of the Tatarstan Republic - the land of the Volga Tatars, a Turkic people commonly associated with Genghis Khan's hordes.



Walk along the 4 kms long Baumanm Street on arrival. Walking along the pedestrian Bauman street is an indispensable thing that any traveller must do in Kazan. Continue on and visit Kazan Kremlin, Chak-Chak Museum, Kul Sharif Mosque, an old Tatar Settlement and the Soviet Lifestyle Museum.

Destination Information

Kazan Kremlin – Kazan's striking kremlin is home to government offices, pleasant parks, museums, the enormous Kul Sharif Mosque and other religious buildings. Among the highlights are the Hermitage Kazan gallery and the Tatarstan Museum of Natural History.

Chak-Chak Museum – Tour this interactive museum dedicated to traditional Tatar food and drink, particularly sweet 'chak-chak', balls of dough that are baked in honey and served on holidays and at family festivities.

Kul Sharif Mosque – This mosque was completed in 2005 and is named after the imam who died defending the city against the troops of Ivan the Terrible in 1552.

Old Tatar Settlement – This assemblage of historic timbered buildings, dating mainly from the 17th and 18th centuries, marks the quarter where ethnic Tatars were forced to live following the siege of Kazan in 1552.

Soviet Lifestyle Museum – This is one of the most original and eccentric museums in Russia. Kazan's most unusual museum, packed with Soviet knick-knacks, is proof that Russia's socialist epoch fostered a lively contemporary cultural scene. Entering the museum is like going through a time-machine back to the USSR – in the 1970s and 1980s.

Day 17: Kazan / Trans-Siberian Railway

Check out of your hotel and leaved your bags in storage and visit the Temple of All Religions, the Virgin Monastery of Raifa, take part in a boat trip along the scenic Volga River to visit the Sviyazhsk Island Fortress.

Return to the city centre for dinner at a Tatar Restaurant. After dinner board the Trans-Siberian Railway for your 12-hour journey to Moscow.



Destination Information

The Temple of All Religions – On a quiet roadside in Kazan, a cluster of sky-blue towers and polka-dot domes erupts seemingly out of nowhere. The Temple of All Religions is as beautiful as it is bewildering: an Orthodox-style cupola bulges next to spiky Gothic turrets, and Islamic crescents soar over statues of the Buddha. And somehow, this architectural oddity perfectly captures Kazan's collision of cultures.

The Virgin Monastery of Raifa – The monastery is located on the shore of the lake, surrounded by the protected forest. Kazan Raifa Monastery is a masterpiece of architecture in the age-old pines "embrace". This extraordinary place was chosen specifically for future monks to lead a solitary life more than 400 years ago. Have a BBQ lunch on the shore of the lake, enjoying impressive scenery.

Boat trip on the Volga River – The Volga, one of Europe's great rivers, winds for some 3530km through Russia's heartland and has been a part of the continent's longest 'highway' since time immemorial. The stretch of the Volga between Nizhny Novgorod and the Caspian Sea forms a rich and fascinating cultural region with over a dozen different ethnic groups, most notably the Volga Tatars.

Sviyazhsk Island Fortress – This fortress is located in the water area of three rivers, which are the Volga, the Sviyaga and the Schuka, and is based as a powerful fortress. Tour around this ancient Russian town which was founded by Csar Ivan the Terrible in 1551. You will find out why emperor Paul the First fell in love with this place and how Sviyazhsk got its name.

Day 18: Moscow

Arrive at the Moscow Train Station and transfer to your hotel.

During any season, at any hour of the day, Moscow thrills visitors with its artistry, history and majesty. Boasting a history that spans eight centuries, Russia's capital has evolved into an expansive megapolis of 16 million people which resembles a city-state. The city has survived centuries of revolution and seen Russia through some of its most turbulent years, from the days of the tsars through the communist era to the growing pains of democracy. Its Cold War history and massive size might give it an intimidating image, but at its core Moscow is every bit the European city offering wealth of history and culture coupled with modernity and edginess. Travel here for strikingly impressive landmarks, high art, world class ballet, lavish celebrations, along with dynamic pockets of nightlife and trendy restaurants.



Take part in a walking tour seeing the city's main sights: St Basil's Cathedral, Red Square, The Kremlin plus the Armoury and Diamond Fund, the GUM Department Store and the Bolshoi Theatre.

Later walk along the trendy Tverskaya Street, which houses the famous Four Seasons Hotel is the best-known street in Moscow and one of most expensive shopping streets in the world.

Continue along the classy Bolshaya Dmitrovka Street and visit the Bolshoi Theatre (best known theatre in the world and home of the famous ballet and opera companies) and the Monument to Karl Marx.

Visit the Lubyanka Prison Building; a notorious former prison and home of the ex-KGB headquarters. For a long time, the building has been a source of scintillating gossip, cold war anecdotes and now houses the Russia's FSB or Federal Security Service, a successor agency to the Soviet-era KGB!

Stroll along Nikolskaya Street (One of the oldest streets in Moscow, where many notable buildings are located), visit Revolution Square and admire Hotel Metropol, one of the finest Art Nouveau Buildings in Moscow and have dinner in a local restaurant.

Destination Information

St Basil's Cathedral – At the southern end of Red Square stands the icon of Russia: St Basil's Cathedral. This crazy confusion of colours, patterns and shapes is the culmination of a style that is unique to Russian architecture. In 1552 Ivan the Terrible captured the Tatar stronghold of Kazan on the Feast of Intercession.

Destination Information

Moscow State University – This 18th century building is the tallest educational building in the world, it is rated among the best universities in the world. It's the most impressive of 'Stalin's Seven Sisters' communist buildings.

Vorobyovy Gory (Sparrow Hills) – This spot is one of the most scenic parts of the Russian capital, offering the best panoramic view of the city including the Nearby Luzhniki Stadium – the site of the 2018 World Cup final and 1980 Moscow Olympics.

Novodevichy Convent – This 16th century convent and cemetery and take a photo from the lake in the forefront of the convent. The lake, home to many swans inspired Tchaikovsky to write his famous ballet Swan Lake in 1875.

Stalin's Seven Sisters – The 200m high Hotel Ukraina, now known as the Radisson Royal Hotel and view the White House across the river. The White House is the official workplace of the Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev and was famously shelled during the 1993 Russian constitutional crisis.

First McDonald's to open in the USSR – On January 31 1990, 5,000 brave Muscovites queued in subzero temperatures to be the first through the doors. 30,000 passed through the doors on its first day. McDonald's, the epitome of Western capitalism had arrived in Russia for the first time.

Arbat Street – Walk along the cobblestone Arbat Street, which retains elements of its once elegant past. This 19th century posh neighbourhood is re-awakening from its 20th century neglect...attracting Muscovites for a stroll, like Barcelona's Las Ramblas.

Cathedral of Christ the Saviour – At 103 metres, it is the tallest Orthodox Christian church in the world and was the scene of the 1882 world premiere of the 1812 Overture composed by Tchaikovsky.

Bunker Tour – Learn how Moscow protected themselves in the event of a nuclear war, learn about the Cuban Missile Crisis and the Cold War, simulate a nuclear attack and wander through the depths of the bunker.

Red October Arts District - This defiant island of Russian modernity and European-ness is a vibrant arts centre filled with cool bars, restaurants and galleries.

Day 19: Moscow

In the morning continue touring this grand city visiting the Moscow State University, Novodevichy Convent, Stalin's Seven Sisters, Eliseyevskiy Delicatessen, Cathedral of Christ the Saviour and the Red October Arts District. Enjoy dinner at a Georgian Restaurant and enjoy some sundowner drinks at a local bar for magnificent views over the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour and the Moskva (Moscow River).



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Day 20: Moscow

Today you will take a cruise on the Moscow river seeing some of Moscow's famous sights, go underground and take part in a metro tour, shop at the colourful Izmailovo Markets, tour at the Palaces for the Workers and relax in Gorky Park.



Destination Information

Moscow River Cruise – The cruise travels along the Moscow River and sees many of the main sights including the Luzhniki Stadium, the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour, the Kremlin, Gorky Park, Red October, Peter 1 Monument, Stalin's skyscraper on Kotelnicheskaya embankment.

Moscow Metro Tour – Go beneath the streets on this tour of spectacular and mind-bending Moscow Metro! Be awed by the architecture, spot the propaganda, and listen to the Soviet stories from a local in the know. From the Square of Revolution station, famous for its huge statues of soviet people, we'll move onto some of the most significant stations (Kievskaya, Mayakovskaya, Novoslobodskaya, Komsomolskaya) decorated in frescoes and lined with marble, where impressive mosaics, columns, and chandeliers will boggle your eyes! These stations reveal a big part of soviet reality — the walls depict plenty of propaganda, with party leaders looking down from images on the walls.

Izmailovo Markets – At the colourful Izmailovo Markets where you can bargain for a wide variety of already reasonably priced souvenirs, crafts, Matryoshka Dolls, Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin memorabilia, Soviet-era souvenirs and Ushanka Russian fur hats

Palaces for the Workers – There is no better place to see this Soviet slogan put into practice than at VDNKh, which stands for Exhibition of Achievements of the National Economy aka the Palaces for the Workers. The place feels like a Stalinesque theme park, with palatial pavilions, each designed in its own unique style to represent all the Soviet republics and various industries, from geology to space exploration.

Gorky Park – This park was designed in the 1920s by avant-garde architect Konstantin Melnikov as a piece of communist utopia it is Moscow's main city escape which is absolutely loved by locals. It was named after 19th century Russian and Soviet writer Maxim Gorky, a founder of the socialist realism literary method

Day 21: St Petersburg

Catch the morning 4-hour fast train from Moscow to St Petersburg and transfer to your hotel.

The sheer grandeur and history of Russia's imperial capital and City of the Tsars never fail to amaze, but this is also a city with a revolutionary spirit.

The creation of westward-looking Peter the Great, St Petersburg was intended from its inception as a display of imperial Russia's growing status in the world. Fine-tuned by Peter's successors, who employed a host of European architects to add fabulous palaces and cathedrals to the city's layout, St Petersburg grew to be the Romanovs' showcase capital and Russia's first great, modern city. Upon arrival, tour the State Hermitage Building and the Winter Place, the Kazan Cathedral and the Church of the Savior of the Spilled Blood.



Destination Information

State Hermitage Museum – Visit the stunning pink pastel-coloured State Hermitage Museum and the Winter Palace. The Hermitage fully lives up to its sterling reputation. The enormous collection of art, over three million items, almost amounts to a comprehensive history of Western European art.

Kazan Cathedral – This neoclassical cathedral, partly modelled on St Peter's in Rome, was commissioned by Tsar Paul shortly before he was murdered in a coup. Its 111m-long colonnaded arms reach out towards the street below, encircling a garden studded with statues.

Church of the Savior on Spilled Blood – This five-domed dazzler is St Petersburg's most elaborate church, with a classic Russian Orthodox exterior and an interior decorated with some 7000 sq metres of mosaics. Officially called the Church of the Resurrection of Christ, its far more striking colloquial name references the assassination attempt on Tsar Alexander II here in 1881.

Day 22: St Petersburg

This morning tour the 'Russian Versailles' at Peterhof, have a traditional Russian lunch in Siberian forested lodge, visit Catherine's Palace to swoon at its lavish Rococo interiors like the replica of the incredible Amber Room and enjoy a boat trip along the Neva River seeing some of St Petersburg main sights.



Destination Information

Peterhof – Peterhof is known as the 'Russian Versailles' with its stunning palaces, gold water fountains and ornate gardens. The Grand Palace is an imposing building with 30-something rooms. All the paintings, furniture and chandeliers are original, as everything was removed from the premises before the Germans arrived in WWII. At 11am, they open the water valves to start the fountains to the tune of Peter the Great's anthem – quite spectacular.

Catherine's Palace – Visit the magnificent Catherine's Palace to swoon at its lavish Rococo interiors like the replica of the incredible Amber Room. Built in 1752, it was named Catherine in honour of her mother, Catherine I, wife of Peter the Great. Inside the palace, our tour takes us through the gentlemen-in-waiting's dining room, the Great Hall, State Dining Room, Crimson and Green Pilaster rooms and the legendary Amber Room. Tour the palace gardens designed by Charles Cameron as a classic English landscaped garden, and one of the most beautiful park ensembles in Europe.

Neva River Boat Trip – Enjoy a 60-minute boat trip along the Neva River starting at Kazan Cathedral. Cruise past the Church of the Savior on Spilled Blood, the Summer Garden, Peter and Paul Fortress, Rostral Column, Winter Palace, the Hermitage, the Admiralty, Bronze Horseman, Yusupov Palace, Stroganov Palace and finish at Anichkov Bridge with its imposing horse statues.

Day 23-25: St Petersburg - Australia

Check out of your hotel and leave bags in storage. There will be day rooms so you can freshen up before your flight home.

Start the day by visiting the St. Nicholas Naval Cathedral, the Mariinsky Theatre from the outside and Smolny Cathedral.

Later, visit the Monument to Heroic Defenders of Leningrad on Victory Square, stroll through the Summer Gardens and the Field of Mars, visit St. Isaac's Cathedral, the Bronze Horseman, the General Staff Building and Palace Square.



Summer Gardens and the Field of Mars and continue along St. Petersburg's busiest street (Nevsky Prospekt), home to restaurants, theatres, museums, the 18th century Great Gostiny Dvor Department Store (one of the first shopping centres in the world) and ornate palaces of the ex-Russian aristocracy.

Visit St. Isaac's Cathedral (and enjoy great city views from the rooftop), the Bronze Horseman, the General Staff Building and Palace Square. After crossing the Neva River, we'll stop at a favorite local spot from which you can enjoy panoramic views of the Palace Embankment with its renowned Hermitage Museum, and many prominent St. Petersburg landmarks including St. Isaac's Cathedral, the Admiralty, and the Chamber of Curiosities.

In the late afternoon, return to your hotel where you can freshen up, enjoy a farewell dinner and at 8.30pm transfer the 30 minutes to the St Petersburg airport for your evening flight arriving in Australia 2 days later.

Destination Information

Monument to Heroic Defenders of Leningrad on Victory Square – This sight which poignantly evokes the 900-day siege of Leningrad (1941-1944) and acts as an important reminder of great hardships endured by its people during World War II.

Visit St. Isaac's Cathedral – The golden dome of St Isaac's Cathedral dominates the St Petersburg skyline. Its obscenely lavish interior is open as a museum, although services are held in the cathedral throughout the year. Many people bypass the museum to climb the 262 steps to the kolonnada (colonnade) around the drum of the dome, providing superb city views.

Trans-Siberian Railway Travel Information

Visas - China

Entry visas are required by all visitors to China and Wendy Wu Tours' Visa Department can assist you with the process of obtaining a visa. We will supply you with all paperwork and submit the visa application on your behalf. Visas for China are valid for 90 days from the date of issue and allow you to stay in the country for up to 30 days. Please be advised that your passport must have at least six months validity left on it when you arrive back into Australia.

Visa application forms and all relevant documentation are due in our office 60 days prior to departure; if received after this date urgent visa processing fees will apply. Passports will be returned with your final documentation 4 weeks prior to your group tour's scheduled departure. If you require your passport to be returned earlier, a \$15AUD courier fee will apply.

Please note that if you intend to arrive more than 24 hours before your tour commences or intend to stay in China after your tour has ended and you are NOT staying in a hotel you will need to register with the local police station. If you are staying in a hotel, registration is done on your behalf as part of the check-in process.

Visas - Mongolia

An Entry visas are required by all visitors to Mongolia. Wendy Wu Tours' Visa Department can assist you with the process of obtaining a visa. We will supply you with all paperwork and submit the visa application on your behalf.

Please be advised that your passport must have at least six months validity left on it when you arrive back into Australia.

Visa application forms and all relevant documentation are due in our office 90 days prior to departure; if received after this date urgent visa processing fees will apply. Passports will be returned with your final documentation 4 weeks prior to your group tour's scheduled departure. If you require your passport to be returned earlier, a \$15AUD courier fee will apply.

Visas - Russia

An entry visa is required by all visitors to Russia. Wendy Wu Tours' Visa Department can assist you with the process of obtaining a visa. We will supply you with all paperwork and submit the visa application on your behalf.

Please be advised that your passport must have at least six months validity left on it when you arrive back into Australia.

Visa application forms and all relevant documentation are due in our office 100 days prior to departure; if received after this date urgent visa processing fees will apply. The earliest date you can apply for your Russian visa is six months prior to your intended entry date, depending on nationality.

Passports will be returned with your final documentation 4 weeks prior to your group tour's scheduled departure. If you require your passport to be returned earlier, a \$15AUD courier fee will apply.

Russian Letter of Invitation:

You will need a Letter of Invitation (LOI), sometimes called a Visa Support Letter or a voucher in order to apply for your Russian visa.

Wendy Wu Tours' Visa Department will obtain your LOI through our local Russian operator and this is included in the trip package as is the Russian visa. Wendy Wu Tours' Visa Department will contact the individual agent or client to complete the LOI application form. Once we have obtained your LOI we can apply for your visa.

We require the following documents to apply for your Russian visa: Letter of Invitation (LOI), Photocopy of your passport, passport size photos (up to 4), flight or other transport details.

China, Mongolia and Russia Train Ticket Bookings

Train tickets in China, Mongolia and Russia are booked with passport numbers. Please make sure you provide us with your correct passport number. If you have to renew your passport after booking please notify us as soon as you have a new passport number and bring your old passport with you on your trip. If we receive changes to passport numbers less than 60 days prior to departure, we cannot guarantee purchase of train tickets. Travelling

on multiple passports for trips that involve border crossings by train is strongly discouraged. This can cause difficulties with train ticket bookings and cause significant issues delays at immigration.

China, Mongolia and Russia National Escort

As this is a multi-country trip, your Russian National Escort will meet you at the Beijing airport and guide you in China, Mongolia and Russia. You will have local guides in each city guiding you around but your experienced National Escort who has operated this trip before will be with you for the duration of the tour. He or she will check you in at the St Petersburg airport and wave you off for your flight home.

Insurance

We strongly encourage all customers to take a copy of their travel insurance documents (especially relevant international contact numbers) with them while on tour. We advise that you check the inclusions and procedures for lodging claims prior to your departure. These documents should be stored separately from the originals.

Wendy Wu Tours will not be liable for any costs incurred by you due to your failure to take out suitable travel insurance from the date of booking.

Eating in China, Mongolia and Russia

Chinese cuisine is one of the most influential, diverse and flavoursome culinary styles in the world with a legacy stretching back thousands of years. Often, you'll find that the local Chinese style is very different from what you're used to at home. We welcome people on our tours with a wide variety of tastes and as such try to present an array of food to suit everyone in the group. Our schedule of meals is designed so that you can experience the local dishes, their individual flavours as well as the different ways they are prepared and cooked throughout China. All meals (excluding drinks) are included in our fully inclusive group tours from dinner on the day of the groups' arrival until breakfast on the groups' day of departure.

The combination of vast barren plains and nomadic lifestyle has created a unique culinary tradition in Mongolia, which you will have the opportunity to experience on your tour. All meals (excluding drinks) are included on our group tour, from the groups' arrival until the groups' day of departure.

While staying in Ulaanbaatar, the breakfast will contain a mixture of local and western-style dishes, served buffet and set styles. During the Naadam Festival and most days of driving in the countryside, you will be provided with a 'picnic box' lunch. All other meals will be served in restaurants located in Ulaanbaatar or at the Ger camps. Food in Mongolia tends to be simple, as they have limited ingredients, such as mutton (used in a variety of ways), beef, potato, cucumber, tomato, onion, carrot and sheep's milk. People on restricted or vegetarian diets can be catered for on a limited basis with foods such as noodles, rice and steamed vegetables. Please contact us to discuss this if you are concerned.

We would suggest that you bring some staples or snacks to supplement this diet with you from Australia. Tea/coffee bags and noodles are generally available in all Ger camps and at train stations. You may wish to bring some biscuits or energy bars if you would like but these can be purchased on the tour. There will be some days that meals may be served late due to the length of the drive that day – refer to the above itinerary to plan for this.

The Russian food scene has made a giant leap towards cutting-edge modernity in the last decade, particularly in large cities, where international culinary mainstream mixes with unique and exotic cuisines of the Caucasus and Central Asia as well as a powerful movement to reinvent traditional Russian gastronomy

Traditional Russian cuisine tends to be meaty and quite heavy. Popular dishes are:

Borsch – this beetroot soup hails from Ukraine but is now synonymous with Russia

Beef Stroganov – a beef, mushrooms and sour-cream dish

Chicken Kiev – A chicken fillet pounded and rolled around cold butter, then coated with eggs and breadcrumbs

Shashlyk – Meat or fish kebabs

Pelmeni – Ravioli-like dumplings generally stuffed with pork or beef

Central Asian–style dishes are also common, notably plov (fried rice with lamb and carrot) and lagman (noodles and meat in a soupy broth that gets spicier the further south you go).

Accommodation

Your accommodation is selected for convenience of location, comfort or character, and can range from a business hotel in one city to a family run guesthouse in a smaller town. In more remote areas, accommodation may be of a lower standard and may not have all western amenities. Hotels are generally rated as local three to four-star standard, but please note that there is no international classification system for hotels and differences in facilities and quality do exist between Australia and China, Mongolia and Russia. All group tour hotels have private western bathroom facilities, air conditioning, TV and telephone. Plumbing and electricity supplies can be erratic and quite often the power in hotel rooms is turned off while guests are out of the room. If you experience any difficulty, please speak to your National Escort/Local Guide. Rest assured that all hotels used by Wendy Wu Tours are regularly inspected by our staff and our partners to ensure that standards meet your needs. Please note that double bed requests can be made at time of booking but can't be guaranteed.

While travelling outside Ulaanbaatar you will be staying in Ger camps. Gers are the traditional home of nomads across Mongolia. They are made from a wooden frame and layers of felt and canvas erected on a wooden platform. The interior is filled with warm fabrics and furs as well as ornate wooden furniture. Ideally suited to Mongolia's nomadic way of life and harsh weather, the Ger has been the most popular dwelling for hundreds of years. Gers are also known by the Russian name 'yurt'. Each Ger will consist of up to four single wooden beds, linen, and a stove for heating purposes, a thick blanket, one electrical socket and a low bearing table and chairs. Shower and toilet facilities will be shared in a separate area, hence a flashlight is needed.

The supply of electricity is limited, as is the supply of hot water. Showers are available, however the camp may have enough power to heat water for five or six people only, so the members of your group should keep this in mind and plan ahead for showers. It is recommended to advise staff at least an hour before you intend to shower as hot water will need to be boiled for you. Cafes and communal areas are also located within the camp grounds. Most of the Ger camps we use will also have a laundry service available, at a small additional cost. Staying in a Ger will allow you to experience the most unique and intrinsic aspect of the nomadic life in Mongolia. Although they are not luxurious, they do offer comfortable accommodation while we travel through the most remote regions of the country.s you may experience.

Most of the trains will have dining car but it is a good idea to bring plenty of your own snacks aboard for more variety of food options while travelling.

Transport

Coaches: Coaches with air conditioning are used on our group tours for city sightseeing, short excursions to the countryside and longer transfers where necessary. Roads in China have generally improved over recent years, but traffic and/or weather conditions may extend driving times. Road construction work usually covers an enormous section of road – not just 1-2 kilometres as you may be used to. For this reason, the timings listed in the itinerary are approximations only. There may be sections of road where the surface is comparatively bumpy but our drivers will do their utmost to lessen the impact.

Planes: Internal flights are based on economy class, with reputable airlines. Pre-seat flight allocation is unavailable.

Transport in Mongolia: There is more than 20,000km of road stretching across Mongolia. Only 1,600km of this distance is paved. In the countryside, you will be travelling across many different surfaces, from gravel highways to wide, open plains where the route is marked out by poles. The roads can be rough, and a level of discomfort can be expected. In Ulaanbaatar, we use modern, air-conditioned coaches. Everywhere else we use sturdy 4WD vehicles, which best suit this terrain. Each 4WD vehicle will hold three passengers per vehicle and the National Escort will rotate from each vehicle to become the fourth passenger. They will drive in convoy and endeavour to stay within sight of each other throughout the day. Seatbelts are not compulsory by law in Mongolia and local people largely choose not to wear them. Wendy Wu Tours will ensure that the 4WD vehicles are fitted with seatbelts. Drivers often use seat covers to make their vehicles more presentable. If they obstruct your access to seatbelts, please request that they be adjusted or removed. It is recommended that where seat belts are available customers must use them and remain seated at all times whilst the vehicle is moving. Please see your National Escort if you have any concerns.

Overnight Sleeper Trains: All trains from Beijing to St Petersburg are 2nd class soft sleepers: 4 berth compartments that have lockable doors. There an overhead locker and storage space under the bottom bunk that is sufficient space for your luggage. Bed linen is provided on all trains. Each carriage has two toilets/bathroom and one hot water boiler (for drinks and instant meals) and a small sink with hot and cold water. There are two train attendants in each carriage to take care of passengers and maintain the facilities. The trains are heated but many do not have air conditioning, so they can be hot even in cooler months. Please pack appropriate clothing for the warmer conditions you may experience. Most of the trains will have dining car but it is a good idea to bring plenty of your own snacks aboard for more variety of food options while travelling.

Development in China, Mongolia and Russia

Though parts of China, Mongolia and Russia match the west in modernity and technological advances, it is important to remember that China is still a developing country and as such, many aspects of tourism in these countries do not have the solid infrastructure and safety standards as seen here in the west.

Souvenirs

We want to be able to give you an opportunity to buy souvenirs; so in each city, we will visit a workshop or factory which demonstrates a craft or product unique to that region with pieces available to buy. We understand that souvenir hunting is not for everyone so we aim to take you to places which hold local interest; for example, in Shanghai you will be able to see how silk is created all the way from the silk worm to beautiful garments; and in Xian we will take you to a workshop which creates replicas of the Terracotta Warriors, from tiny little warriors to seven foot behemoths! We trust you will enjoy these opportunities to learn about local arts and crafts and understand their historical and cultural importance.

Group Size

Most of our groups consist of 10 travellers or more and will be accompanied by both a National Escort and local guides. There will usually be no more than 18 travellers in each group although you may encounter other Wendy Wu tour groups while you are travelling.

All our departures are guaranteed to operate with a minimum of 8 travellers booked (unless cancelled due to factors beyond our control). However, at our discretion we may operate departures with a smaller group size as

we try to operate advertised departures wherever it is viable to do so. For groups with fewer than 10 travellers, departures will operate with local guides only.

Tipping Policy

Local tipping is customary in Asia. However, this can often lead to awkwardness in knowing when it is appropriate to tip and how much, as well as ensuring you have a suitable amount of change available at the time. For your convenience, with years of experiences in providing the best customer service, Wendy Wu Tours operates a kitty system on our Group Tours so your National Escort will look after this aspect of your trip for you. It also ensures that the amounts paid are reasonable for you but still fair for the local people. The amount is stated on each Group Tour page will be advised again on your final documentation. Tipping is approximately 5 USD per person, per day on the tour, and will be collected (in the local currency) by your National Escort in Beijing and distributed throughout the tour on your behalf. Any additional tipping on any of our tours is welcomed at your discretion. Further guidance for tipping contributions will be outlined in your final documentation.

Packing list and Climate

You will find a complete packing list and a helpful climate chart in the 'Suggested Packing List', which will be included in the pre-departure information link sent within your deposit documentation. Seasonal weather patterns can be quite unpredictable. Up to the minute information on worldwide weather can be found on www.weather.com

Luggage

All travellers are limited to two items of luggage each; a suitcase with a maximum weight of 20kg and one piece of hand luggage with a maximum weight of five kilograms. It is essential that your luggage is lockable. Please note that authorities will only allow bottles onto the aircraft if they have been checked in as main baggage. Bottles in hand luggage may be confiscated.

Exchanging Cash

It is highly recommended that extra care and attention is paid when exchanging money when travelling to cities outside of the main cities in Mongolia and Russia. US Dollars are easily exchanged throughout China and other currencies such as Australian Dollars can generally be exchanged in hotels and airports provided notes are new and undamaged. We suggest exchanging your money before travelling to remote areas and smaller towns, as exchange facilities can be limited. Your National Escort will remind you to do this before departure.

Personal Expenses & Optional Tours

Personal Expenses - You will need to take some extra money to cover drinks, laundry and souvenirs, plus any additional sightseeing that may be offered to you. Based on the advice of previous customers an approximate amount of \$400AUD per person, per week should be sufficient; however, for those that can't resist a bargain or may wish to participate in all of the optional excursions, consider allocating a higher amount.

Optional Tours - May be offered in each city you visit during your tour. These are not included in the standard itinerary and will only be available if time permits and if seats are available. In your Final Documentation an

Climbing Steps

Optional Excursion Sheet will be included outlining the activities available in each city and local cost associated. Please ensure you have additional funds available if you feel you may wish to participate in any extra activities. Each option will be arranged locally by your National Escort/Local Guide, participation and tipping for optional excursions is completely at your discretion.

Sightseeing at nearly all of the palaces, fortresses and some temples involves climbing quite a number of steps. These palaces were built to provide defense against potential invaders so nearly all of them stand on top of a hill, while the interiors have layers of narrow hallways and steps to slow down the advance of enemies once they were inside. The steps tend to be quite large, not level and sometimes without handrails. Hindu and Buddhist temples or pagodas also tend to be built at an elevation, as this is the most auspicious position according to ancient beliefs. This means you sometimes need to walk from the bus park to the entrance, and/or need to climb some steps inside.

People with knee or hip injuries, who have poor balance or are otherwise unable to complete these activities independently should consider the suitability of this itinerary carefully.

Vaccinations and Your Health

We recommend that you contact either your GP or Travelvax (1300 360 164) for advice on vaccinations and travel health. Travelvax has a comprehensive website that you may also find useful www.travelvax.com.au

Before You Leave

We strongly recommend registering your travel plans with www.smartraveller.gov.au as in the event of an emergency, Australian Consular assistance will be more readily available. You can also access the Australian Government's travel advisory service for up to date information about your destination on the same website.

After your booking

Once you have booked with Wendy Wu Tours, you will receive a confirmation invoice followed by deposit documentation, which includes a visa application form (if applicable), and a help sheet. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2-3 weeks prior to departure.

Last updated 19/07/19