

trans-siberian railway & solar eclipse

departs friday 18 july
for 16 days

EARLY BOOKING IS ESSENTIAL ON THIS "ONE- OFF" TOUR

On Friday 1st August 2008 a total solar eclipse will occur stretching from northern Canada, Russia, Siberia, Mongolia and finishing in western China.

This unique tour travels by rail from London via Moscow then 5152km (and 5 days) on board the Trans-Siberian train to the capital of Siberia, Irkutsk, sightseeing at Lake Baikal then to Novosibirsk, where the total eclipse will last over 2 minutes (weather permitting) before flying back to the UK.

Friday 18 July:

Midday departure from London St Pancras International by Eurostar to Brussels, then by Thalys to Koln (1st class upgrade London to Koln available). At Koln join the 'Jan Kiepura' through train to Moscow with two nights on the train in single and 2-berth sleeping compartments.

Saturday 19 July:

Across Poland to the border with Belarus where the wheelsets of the train are changed to the wider Russian gauge; you remain on board whilst this is carried out. Once this operation is completed a restaurant car is then attached to the train as heads further east.

Sunday 20 July:

Morning arrival into Moscow's Belorusskaya station. Transfer to our hotel. Rest of the day at leisure with lunch and dinner included.

Monday 21 July:

A full day sightseeing tour of the major sights including The Kremlin, Red Square, the Lenin Mausoleum, St Basil's Cathedral,

Novodevichy Convent and the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour. The tour will finish at Yaroslavskaya railway station where we board Train 2 'The Rossiya'. Leaving Moscow the train heads through Rostov then crosses the River Volga, the longest river in Europe at Yaroslavl. Accommodation will be in 4-berth sleeping compartments with bedding provided (upgrade to 2-berth subject to availability). A full service restaurant car is provided which provides Russian and western food, meals on board are included. The train operates to Moscow time throughout, but the dining-car keeps to local time for its meal service! At station stops you can always buy food from 'babushkas'(grannies) on the station platforms.

Tuesday 22 July:

Major station stops today are Perm and Yekaterinburg (western Siberia). The train will pass a 13ft white obelisk marking the border between Europe and Asia before reaching Yekaterinburg, scene of the murder of Tsar Nicholas 11 and his family in 1918. The city hit the headlines again in 1960, when the American pilot Gary Powers was brought down nearby in his U2 spy plane, by a Russian missile.

Wednesday 23 July:

Principal stops today are at Omsk and Novosibirsk (which we shall visit later to observe the eclipse). Known as the Chicago of Siberia, Novosibirsk station copes with over 70,000 passengers and 60 passenger trains daily!

Thursday 24 July:

Last full day on the train with the major stop being Krasnoyarsk (eastern Siberia).

Friday 25 July:

Early morning arrival into Irkutsk. Transfer to your hotel for breakfast followed by a city tour. You will see izbas (log houses) with their brightly painted window frames and shutters, Cathedral of the Epiphany, Church of the Holy Saviour – the oldest stone building in the city and the Znamensky Convent.

trans-siberian railway & solar eclipse

This evening enjoy dinner with traditional Siberian dishes accompanied by folk music.

Saturday 26 July:

Full day included tour to Lake Baikal. This is the world's deepest lake as well as holding the largest volume of fresh water on our planet. More than three hundred rivers flow into the lake, but only one, the Angara flows out. Also visit the Baikal Museum at Listvyanka with its fascinating exhibits of Lake Baikal's natural history.

Sunday 27 July:

Drive to Sludyanka station on the shores of the lake and board a train on the CircumBaikal Railway for a fascinating ride of some fifty miles to Port Baikal, along the narrow rocky south west coast of the lake. Tunnels, bridges and viaducts abound on this piece of the original Trans-Siberian railway which was by-passed in the early 1960's when a new, faster route opened. This remaining railway was originally built by political prisoners and convicts.

Monday 28 July:

Full day at leisure.

Tuesday 29 July:

By Hydrofoil across the lake on a ten hour journey to Severobaikalsk, capital of the north Baikal lake area.

Wednesday 30 July:

We join a morning eastbound train on the Baikal-Amur Magistral or BAM Railway. The BAM was originally ordered to be built by Stalin in 1938 but it was not until 1991 that the 3400km long route from Tayshet to the Pacific Ocean was completed. The line passes through many swamps, pristine taiga, mountain ranges and over hundred's of rivers.

Thursday 31 July:

Very early morning arrival into Novosibirsk, transfer directly to our hotel with the rest of the day at leisure. A new railway museum has been opened featuring the Trans-Siberian Railway.

Friday 01 August:

ECLIPSE DAY totality begins at 17.44. Transfer to the airport for an evening flight to Moscow, staying overnight at an airport hotel.

Saturday 02 August:

Morning flight from Moscow to London.

TOUR COST: £2745.00

Optional 1st class upgrade London-Koln: £55.00

Single room supplement: £350.00 (includes single sleeper on train Koln-Moscow). Single compartments are not available on the Trans-Siberian trains.

Insurance: £70.00 per person

Deposit: £250.00 per person

The Tour Cost Includes:

- all rail travel as outlined
- sleeping car accommodation Koln-Moscow-Irkutsk
- all meals on the Trans-Siberian train Moscow to Irkutsk
- 9 nights hotel accommodation in rooms with private facilities, breakfast daily
- Sightseeing tour of Moscow
- City sightseeing tour of Irkutsk
- CircumBaikal Railway excursion
- Hydrofoil across the lake
- Traditional Siberian dinner with entertainment
- Lunch and dinner in Moscow
- Flights Novosibirsk-Moscow and Moscow-London
- All transfers
- Local English speaking guides
- Services of a Railtours Tour Manager throughout

Not Included:

- Visas for Bellarus & Russia approx £120.00 pep person