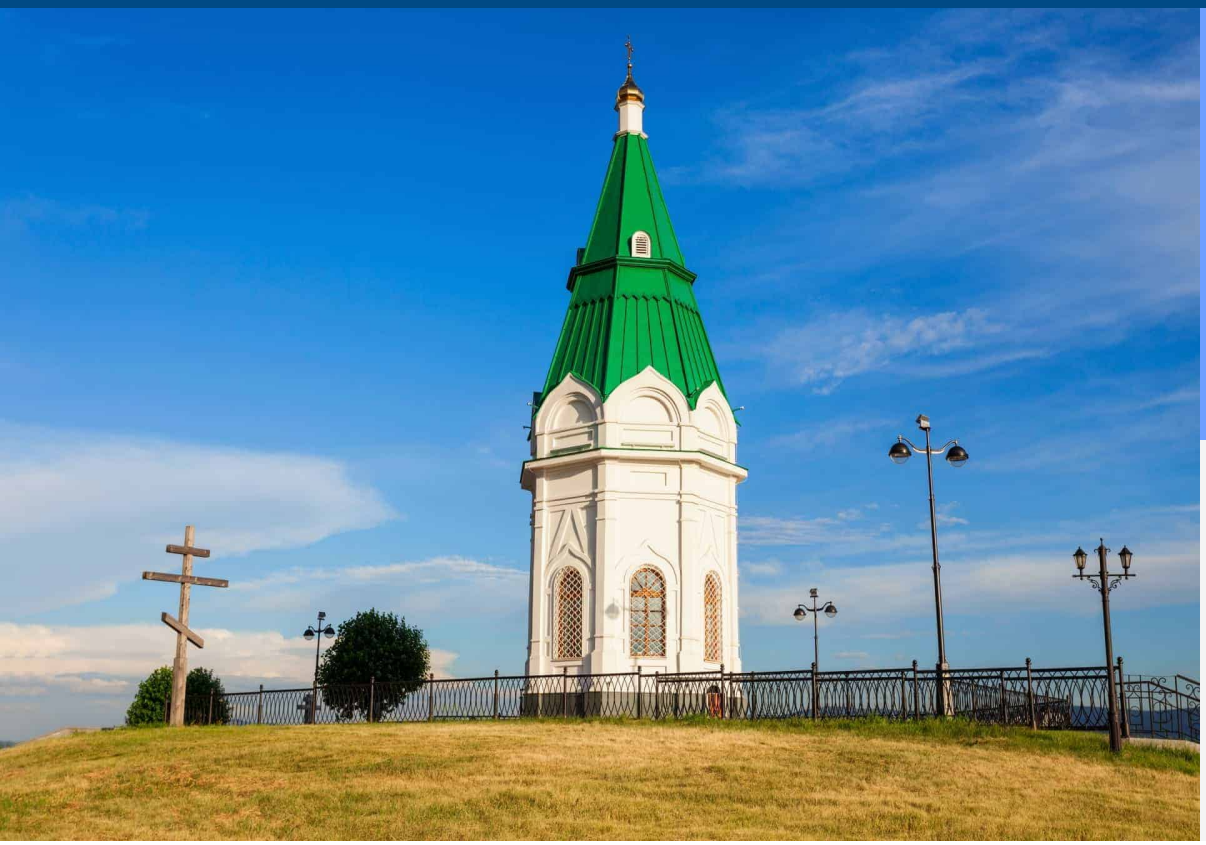
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From
$18,464 NZD

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Prices valid until
30th December 2024

23 days
Duration

Finland, Russia
Destination

Level 2 - Moderate
Activity

Helsinki to Irkutsk on the Trans-Siberian Railway



May 25 2024 to Jun 16 2024

Trans-Siberian Rail Tour: travel by rail from Helsinki to Irkutsk in 21 days

SUSPENDED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.

For details on our programs and an up-to-date list of guaranteed departures, please https://www.odysseytraveller.com/tour-

category/guaranteed/







Join Odyssey Traveller and be ready for a unique experience with out Trans-Siberian Rail Tour. We journey from Helsinki, Finland's famed "White City of the North", to Irkutsk, the jewel of eastern Siberia on the Trans-Siberian Railway. There are 2 scheduled departures that coincide typically with a visit to Europe. The timings of the Helsinki to Irkutsk departures, in late May and late September each year, offer the opportunity to join a small group of like-minded mature and senior travellers to travel through a landscape and cities in Russia which we typically fly over.

This 21-day tour is designed for the mature or senior traveller, whether travelling alone or with company. Groups size is typically between 4 to 12 travellers. You will be able to enjoy the experience secure in the knowledge that you always have a program leader with you to make sure that all runs smoothly.

Trans-Siberian Rail Tour Itinerary

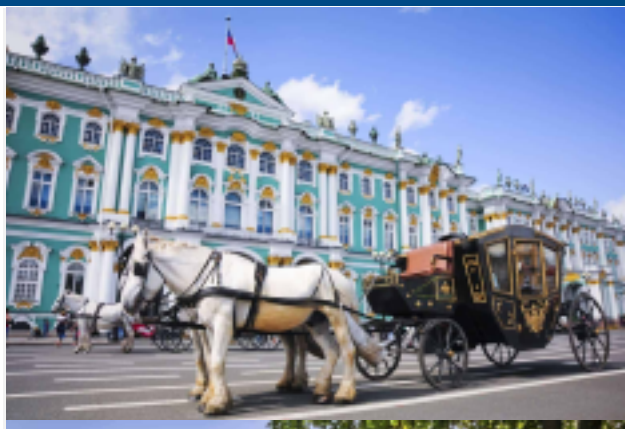
This trip offers a diversity of sites and experiences. We enjoy long train journeys, including overnight train rides, on the Trans-Siberian Railway from Helsinki to Moscow. We take a city tour of the Russian capital, including the famous Red Square; stroll through cities melding the past with the present; visit museums (including the Hermitage museum) and learn more about the history of the former Soviet Union, and see amazing landscapes, including Russia's oldest national park (Stolby), a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and the world's deepest lake (Lake Baikal).

Our guided tour also recognises that experiencing local cuisine is fundamental to an authentic travel experience. Each day, we eat breakfast, lunch, or dinner at a local restaurant (though, of course, some of our meals will be eaten when staying on the train).

Our trip spends multiple nights in:

Helsinki to Irkutsk on the Trans-Siberian Railway

- **Helsinki** is the capital city of Finland, is a treasure trove for lovers of history and all eras of architecture and design. Dubbed the “white city of the north” due to its buildings constructed from locally available light-coloured granite, it was built in a Neoclassical style, modelled off of the then Russian capital, St Petersburg. Helsinki was shaped by Finland’s powerful western and eastern neighbours—Russia and Sweden, passing between both powers for much of its history before finally gaining independence in 1917. Helsinki was declared the World Design Capital in 2012, and remains a centre for innovative architecture today. Most notable is the Amos Rex gallery, opened in 2018.
- **St. Petersburg** was Russia’s capital from 1712 to 1918, its reign as imperial capital ending with the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution (October Revolution) that toppled the tsarist regime. The succeeding Soviet government then moved the seat of power back to the old capital, Moscow, which remained as the capital city in post-Soviet Russia. St Petersburg was founded in 1703 by Peter the Great along the banks of the River Neva, designed to be Russia’s new ‘Western’ capital it reflects the westward looking vision of Russia at the time, with a focus on western European inspired art and architecture visible till today.
- **Moscow** is Russia’s political center and its most populous metropolis. Viewed from the air, Moscow’s city layout resembles concentric rings circling the Kremlin, the seat of the Russian government. Moscow’s history dates back to 12th century, as does the history of one of its most famous landmarks, the Kremlin, the site housing one of the areas earliest fortifications. Moscow grew in importance as a regional trade hub along the Moskva River, becoming the capital of the Grand Principality of Muscovy, which grew in power annexing the princes of Novgorod and Khanates in Tartary to become the Russian heartland we know today. Following the construction of St Petersburg in 1712 the capital periodically shifted between the two cities.
- **Yekaterinburg** sits on the eastern slopes of the Ural Mountains, about 1,667 kilometres east of Moscow. This city in the heart of the Ural region is located just east of the border of Europe and Asia, a window to the resources of Siberia, and a hub for tourism







and industry. Dubbed the “third capital of Russia” (after Moscow and St Petersburg) due to its size and economic power, Yekaterinburg figures in Russia’s intricate history, from the rise of its revolutionary movements to the execution of its last Tsar, Nicholas II.

- **Krasnoyarsk** is one of the oldest Siberian towns, sitting on both banks of the Yenisey River it has a long history as an important hub of Trans-Siberian activity. The city was originally founded as a fort on the left bank of the Yenisey by Cossack leader Andrey Dubenskoy who called it “Krasny Yar”—or “red steep riverbank” in the Khakas dialect—in 1628. In March 1891, tsar Alexander III officially announced the building of a Trans-Siberian Railway. His son and heir apparent Nicholas laid the first stone at Vladivostok (“lord of the East”). The railway connected Krasnoyarsk in Siberia with Moscow and St Petersburg in European Russia. With the train bringing goods and manpower, Krasnoyarsk continued developing and expanding, eventually moving across the river to occupy the right bank of the Yenisey.

- **Irkutsk**, situated in the rolling hills and the subarctic forests of eastern Siberia, is the administrative centre of the Irkutsk *oblast* (region) in Eastern Siberia. It is a popular stop on the Trans-Siberian Railway due to its proximity to UNESCO-listed Lake Baikal, the largest, deepest, and oldest freshwater lake in the world. Irkutsk was one of the towns built by Russian traders and Cossack explorers, founded as a zimovye (wintering camp or winter quarters) in 1652, later gaining town rights in 1686. A road connection between Moscow and the new Siberian city led to Irkutsk becoming the main centre of the Russian trade route to China and Mongolia. It grew more prosperous with the coming of the railway in 1898, as European Russians can travel through the Siberian wilderness by train. This Siberian city was given the nickname, “Paris of Siberia”.

To reach each city we board the Trans-Siberian train to connect between locations as we travel along an easterly route. This tour is a combination of short stops and longer stays. In Irkutsk, the tour is over and travellers can then connect with International flights or continue on their way through to Beijing as an extension to this tour program.









Odyssey Traveller Tours by Railway

Odyssey Traveller regularly offers tours designed for the active senior traveller to enjoy in a small group holiday and learning environment. We also publish articles to provide more information to our loyal and prospective participants.

If you want to learn more about the Trans-Siberian Railway and the train journey, click through to read the following articles prepared by Odyssey Traveller:

1. Overview, which includes tips on booking your ticket and preparing for the long train ride.
2. History of the Trans-Siberian Railway
3. Trans-Siberian Landscapes and Wildlife

You may also want to check out our tour also travelling on the Trans-Siberian Railway, from Mongolia to Russia, and from Krasnoyarsk to Vladivostok.

For a different pace and cultural experience, you may want to explore our other small group tours by Rail:

- Japan History by Rail tour which journeys through Japan on the *shinkansen* (high-speed train)
- French History by Rail tour which goes through Paris and the other cities of France; we have a 21-day tour and a shorter 11-day tour

Additional advice on travelling across Finland and Russia with this Trans-Siberian Rail Tour from Irkutsk to Helsinki

You can read our country profiles on Finland and Russia.

These external links provide you with additional information on travelling through Russia that will improve your journey.

- Travel by Train 101: Everything You Need to Know About …
- How to plan & book a journey on the Trans-Siberian Railway

Other articles of possible interest is this two–part post filled with travelling tips for seniors, an article on the many nifty gizmos and gadgets you can bring on your trips, and an important article about practising responsible travel.







Highlights

1. Experience a performance by the world-famous Mariinsky Opera and Ballet Company in Russia's famed cultural capital, St Petersburg
2. See the glorious museums of Yekaterinburg.
3. Learn more about the history of the former Soviet Union in Moscow.
4. See the giant granite rock formations in the oldest national nature reserve in Russia, Stolby Nature Sanctuary.
5. Visit Lake Baikal, one of the world's oldest and deepest freshwater lake.

Itinerary

Day 1

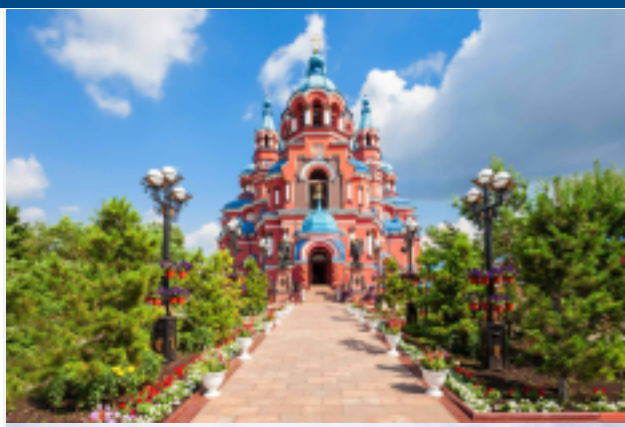
Locations: HELSINKI

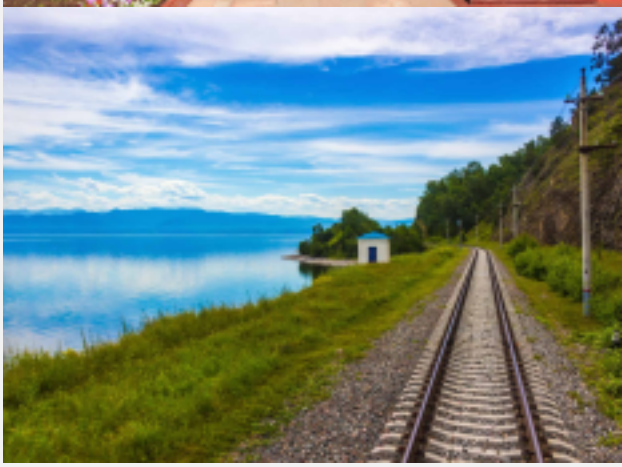
Overview:

On arrival in Helsinki, we make our way individually to the hotel. In the evening, we meet for a welcome dinner and orientation.

Accommodation:

To be advised





Day 2

Locations: HELSINKI

Overview:

Today we experience a tour of the Helsinki by tram — a fantastically winding and slow way to experience the city like a local.

Accommodation:

To be advised

Day 3

Locations: HELSINKI to ST PETERSBURG

Overview:

We board a train on the Trans-Siberian Railway bound for St Petersburg today, crossing the border from Finland into Russia. This relaxing journey will take up the full day as we watch the changing landscape and culture from the comfort of our seats. On arrival in St Petersburg, we will make our way to our hotel.

Accommodation:

To be advised

Day 4

Locations: ST PETERSBURG

Overview:

Today is the first of two full days to explore this vibrant city — Russia's second largest. We enjoy a tour with a local guide, and visit the Botanical Gardens, or, to use its full name, the Botanical Garden of the V.L. Komarov Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences. This is Russia's oldest Botanical garden, founded in 1714 by order of Peter the Great. Today, it mostly follow an English landscape style, with many diverse species available for our appreciation. The giant waterlilies are a highlight — they flower during the summer.

While we are in St Petersburg, we will experience a performance of either the ballet or opera — depending on local programming. Russia is

a world leader in the performing arts.

Accommodation:

To be advised

Day 5

Locations: ST PETERSBURG

Overview:

Today we visit some of St Petersburg's most historically significant sites, including the Hermitage — Russia's most famous palace and equally famous art collection. Prepare to be amazed by its scale and quality, with pieces by Matisse, Rubens, Rembrandt and Picasso. The Winter Palace is now part of the Museum complex, but was the official residence of the monarchs until 1917.

St Isaac's Cathedral is the world's largest orthodox basilica (and fourth largest cathedral). It houses a Museum where we can learn about the building's historic and cultural significance.

Later, we board the Vladimirskay metro bound for the vibrant Kuznechny market, filled with food stalls selling local produce and treats.

In the evening, we dine at the popular Austeria restaurant, located within the Peter and Paul Fortress. Now a Museum, St Petersburg's original citadel provides views across the city's popular, sandy beaches. We enjoy traditional Russian fare and live music, the setting providing us with an authentic historic atmosphere.

Accommodation:

To be advised

Day 6

Locations: ST PETERSBURG to MOSCOW

Overview:

Today we travel by train during the day to Moscow. Upon arrival we transfer to our hotel for a 3 night stay in this city.

Overnight Moscow.

Accommodation:

To be advised

Day 7

Locations: MOSCOW

Overview:

On arrival in Moscow, we set about discovering this bustling city. The Kremlin, Russia's most famous fortified complex, is viewed from a boat on the river, before we venture in to explore its towers, garden, enormous Tsar Bell, and the cathedral square at its heart.

Our city tour is led by a local guide, who shares some of the city's secrets. The Red Square, St Basil's and Kazan Cathedrals and the State History Museum are among our stops.

Later, we sample Georgian cuisine at Tifils restaurant. Pending local programming, we enjoy a second performance — perhaps the opera, ballet, theatre, or even the circus. Moscow is brimming with cultural events.

Accommodation:

To be advised

Day 8

Locations: MOSCOW

Overview:

There are no scheduled activities today, so you may explore (or relax!) at your leisure.

Accommodation:

To be advised

Day 9 - 10

Locations: MOSCOW to YEKATERINBURG

Overview:

Today is reserved for our journey by train to Yekaterinburg, a 30-hour comfortable train journey from Kazansky Station. We will enjoy the shifting panoramas of the Russian landscape as we approach the Ural mountains. The train passes at kilometre post 1777. This is a white obelisk marking the boundary between Europe and Asia.

Day 11

Locations: Yekaterinburg

Overview:

Yekaterinburg is located at the heart of the Ural Mountains, and holds a proud place in Russian mythology. Our local guide will outline for us Russia's history, covering pre-history, the industrialisation initiated by Peter the Great, the October Revolution, the Soviet era, and the modern era, through visits to museums and historic sites. We will also take a drive in the afternoon to see examples of local farming techniques.

Accommodation:

Novotel Yekaterinburg, Hotel Tsentrainy, or similar

Day 12 - 13

Locations: YEKATERINBURG to KRASNOYARSK

Overview:

For 33 hours, we will travel by train from Yekaterinburg onward to Krasnoyarsk. Krasnoyarsk is located on the banks of the Yenisei River, surrounded by beautiful mountains, so this train ride approaching this city promises to offer more scenic views.

Accommodation:

Hilton Garden Inn Krasnoyarsk or similar

Day 14

Locations: KRASNOYARSK

Overview:

Today we will take a tour of Krasnoyarsk. Highlights include the Krasnoyarsk Hydroelectric Power Station dam and the oldest national nature reserve in Russia, Stolby Nature Sanctuary. Stolby (“the pillars”) covers an area of 470 square kilometres (or 180 square miles) where we will see numerous giant granite rock formations.

Accommodation:

Hilton Garden Inn Krasnoyarsk or similar

Day 15

Locations: KRASNOYARSK

Overview:

After a day in nature, we will now take a relaxing city walk to view the local architecture, including the chapel on Karaulnaya Hill. We will end the day with a nice evening meal in a themed restaurant.

Accommodation:

Hilton Garden Inn Krasnoyarsk or similar

Day 16 - 17

Locations: KRASNOYARSK to IRKUTSK

Overview:

We will travel for 18 hours by train onward to Irkutsk.

Accommodation:

Hotel Yevropa or similar

Day 18

Locations: IRKUTSK

Overview:

We arrive in Irkutsk and have the afternoon free to ourselves.

Accommodation:

Hotel Yevropa or similar

Day 19

Locations: IRKUTSK

Overview:

Now that we've settled in and rested, we are ready to take in the sites of the city and experience its history through its architecture and museums. Today we will learn more about the Novemberists, the October Revolution, the Red and White Army, and the Bolsheviks.

Accommodation:

Hotel Yevropa or similar

Day 20

Locations: IRKUTSK

Overview:

Today we will take a 50-minute boat ride to Lake Baikal, one of Russia's national treasures and one of the world's oldest and deepest freshwater lake. Baikal is famous for having plant and animal species that exist only

in this area. There is also an outdoor market where we can sample freshwater fish.

Accommodation:

Hotel Yevropa or similar

Day 21

Locations: IRKUTSK

Overview:

The end of breakfast also marks the end of the tour and our services.

Inclusions / Exclusions

What's included in our Tour

- 17 nights hotel accommodation.
- 3 nights travel aboard the Trans Siberian in 4 berth compartments, with exclusive use for 2 or 3 people (depending on final group size).
- 17 breakfasts, 3 lunches and 12 dinners.
- Transport and field trips as indicated.
- Applicable entry fees and services of local guides.
- Gratuities and necessary tips.
- Invitation letter for Russian Visa.
- Services of an Odyssey program leader.
- Detailed Tour Information Booklet.

What's not included in our Tour

- International airfares and departure taxes
- Comprehensive International Travel Insurance.

- Cost for a Russian Visa. Odyssey will assist in obtaining the invitation letters for your visa.
- Meals not specified in the itinerary and on board the trains.
- Items of a personal nature, such as telephone calls and laundry.

Level 2 - Moderate

Participants must be able to carry their own luggage, climb and descend stairs, be in good health, mobile and able to participate in 3-5 hours of physical activity per day, the equivalent of walking/hiking up to 8 kilometres on uneven ground.

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any requests for further information about this tour or any others offered by Odyssey Travel.