



The Silk Road by Private Train

Beijing to Moscow via Central Asia

2020



The Silk Road by Private Train

From Beijing to Moscow via Central Asia

Aboard the *Golden Eagle* & *Shangri-La Western Express* private trains

Two westbound departures in 2020 – Rail Journey by Private Train – 21 Days

April 13–May 3 • October 1–21

This Silk Road rail journey stretches almost 7,000 miles from Far Eastern Beijing to European Russia, visiting five countries and eight UNESCO World Heritage Sites along the way. The Princes of Muscovy traded precious furs – sable, ermine and fox – for the silks of China that reached their borders on the backs of swaying camels along the old Silk Road. Today you can make the epic journey aboard the exclusive Golden Eagle Trans-Siberian Express and Shangri-La Western Express private trains, which will carry you in style and comfort where camels used to trudge.

Beginning and ending in the capital cities of China and Russia, the train also makes stops in Kazakhstan's business capital, Almaty; Uzbekistan's capital, Tashkent, and its fabled oasis cities, Khiva, Bukhara and Samarkand; Turkmenistan's gleaming capital, Ashgabat, and ancient Merv; and the three Western Chinese cities of Turpan, Dunhuang and Xi'an, with its Terra Cotta Warriors.



Daily Itinerary

Day 1	Arrive Beijing, China
Day 2	Beijing
Day 3	Beijing • day trip to the Great Wall • Bullet Train to Xi'an
Day 4	Xi'an
Day 5	Xi'an • en route
Day 6	Dunhuang
Day 7	Dunhuang • en route
Day 8,	Turpan
Day 9	Cross into Kazakhstan
Day 10	Almaty, Kazakhstan
Day 11	Tashkent, Uzbekistan
Day 12	Samarkand
Day 13	Bukhara
Day 14	Merv, Turkmenistan
Day 15	Ashgabat
Day 16	Khiva, Uzbekistan
Day 17	Kara Kum Desert, Kazakhstan
Day 18	Volgograd, Russia
Day 19	Moscow
Day 20	Moscow
Day 21	Depart Moscow

This tour is now available as a partial itinerary - a Russia and 'Stans-only tour. Call for details.



Tour Features

- Enjoy the comfort and efficiency of your own private en suite cabin on the *Golden Eagle Trans-Siberian Express* luxury train and the comfortable cabins of the *Shangri-La Western Express*.
- Survey a series of fascinating cities along the rail line.
- Get a true picture of the scale and scope of the countries you are traversing.
- Join travelers from around the world to enjoy the casual and relaxed atmosphere aboard the private train, dining in luxury and chatting over drinks in the lounge.
- Relax deeply as you are carried into another land, a world away from home.

Tour Highlights

Beijing	Temple of Heaven (UNESCO World Heritage Site), Tiananmen Square, Forbidden City or Olympic Village, including the Bird's Nest stadium, high-speed train to Xi'an
Xi'an	Terra Cotta Warriors (UNESCO World Heritage Site) or 2nd century BC Han Yangling Mausoleum
Dunhuang	Mogao Thousand Buddha Caves (UNESCO World Heritage Site)
Turpan	2,000-year-old gravity-fed <i>karez</i> system bringing water from the glaciers of the Tien Shan
Almaty	Kazakhstan's largest city, lunch in a Kazakh yurt
Tashkent	Capital of Uzbekistan, Independence Square
Samarkand	Old Town (UNESCO World Heritage Site), Registan Square, Bibi Khanum Mosque, Ulug Bek Observatory
Bukhara	Old Town (UNESCO World Heritage Site), Ark Citadel, Palace of Moon and Stars
Merv	Archaeological site of five ancient cities, the earliest attributed to Cyrus the Great (UNESCO World Heritage Site)
Ashgabat	Capital of Turkmenistan, flamboyant gilded architecture
Khiva	City walls, Old Town, Ichon Qala (UNESCO World Heritage Site)
Kara Kum Desert	"Black Sands" Desert, maybe a camel or two
Volgograd	Formerly Stalingrad, Mamaev Kurgan memorial, museum with panorama of the five-month WWII battle
Moscow	Capital of Russia, Red Square (UNESCO World Heritage Site), St. Basil's Cathedral



Itinerary

Day One

Arrive Beijing, China

Arriving in Beijing, transfer to the Regent Hotel, one of Beijing's premier properties, for a three-night stay. Meet fellow passengers at a **welcome reception and dinner** this evening.

Meals: D – *Regent Hotel or similar*

Day Two

Beijing

Multi-faceted Beijing, modern capital of China, is the country's most important city and its political and historical center. Beijing's skyscrapers overshadow traditional narrow alleys (*hutongs*), and the remnants of Imperial China sit alongside five star hotels and western brand-name stores. **Explore Tiananmen Square** and the **World Heritage Site** of the **Temple of Heaven** and the **Forbidden City**. Or, take a **tour of Beijing's modern architecture**, with visits to the **Olympic Village**, including the **Bird's Nest stadium**, the **National Center for Performing Arts**, known as **The Egg**, the **CCTV Tower** and the **National Museum**.

Meals: B, L, D – *Regent Hotel or similar*

Day Three

Beijing • day trip to the Great Wall •

Bullet Train to Xi'an



Visit the **Great Wall at Badaling**.

Originally stretching over 3,800 miles, the Great Wall was built to protect China from northern nomads. China's first unified wall was built during the third century BC during the rule of Emperor Qin. The current form of the wall dates from the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), and measures 25 feet high and 15 to 30 feet wide. The Wall was declared a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** in 1987.

Return to the city center and transfer to Beijing West railway station. Between Beijing and Xi'an you will take the

exhilarating new high speed railway line. Traveling at speeds of up to 300kms per hour (190 miles per hour) the Bullet Train covers the distance of 1,144kms (710 miles) in approximately five hours. The epic journey to Moscow begins on this modern train.

Meals: B, L, D – *Sofitel Xi'an or similar*



Day Four

Xi'an

Explore the city this morning, with a visit to the **city walls**. The first emperor of the Ming Dynasty built Xian's city walls in the 14th century. They are the most complete city walls remaining in China. Next stroll, shop, and sample delicious street food in the **Muslim quarter**, surrounding the Great Mosque. A busy area of narrow streets lined with shops selling Muslim/Chinese specialties, including steamed buns stuffed with lamb and fried sweet persimmon buns. Things really get going at dinner time.

Enjoy an exploration of the **UNESCO-listed Terra Cotta Warriors**. Xi'an's most important site is the tomb of China's first emperor, Qin Shi Huang. Guarding the tomb is the magnificent Terra Cotta army of an estimated 8,000 life-sized figures.



Peasants digging a well stumbled on this vast archaeological discovery in 1974. View some of the originally crafted warriors, horses and chariots, now restored and on display at the local museum.

Alternately, you can choose to visit the Han Yangling Museum and the tombs of Emperor Liu Qi (Hanjindi, 188-141 BC) and the Empress Wang. The huge complex took 28 years to construct, and includes the largest human sacrifice graveyard in China.

This evening enjoy a **Tang Dynasty dinner with music and dance** before a hotel overnight at a top-tier property. **Please note**, you will need an overnight bag for tonight and for the other off-train

nights during the China portion of the trip.

Meals: B, L, D – *Sofitel Xi'an or similar*

Day Five

Xi'an • en route

In **Xi'an** the morning is dedicated to additional touring, such as the Muslim Quarter with its **Great Mosque**. Persian merchants brought Islam to China along the Silk Road during the 7th century. The Great Mosque, founded in the 8th century, combines elements of both Islamic and Chinese architecture. The buildings remaining today are probably from the 18th century. Prayers are held here five times a day, as this is an active mosque.

Depart this afternoon to board the private train, the *Shangri-La Western Express*. There is time this afternoon to settle into your cabin before having a drink in the bar before dinner.

Meals: B, L, D – *On board the Shangri-La Western Express private train*



Day Six Dunhuang

Enjoy a leisurely morning on board before arriving in Dunhuang. The oasis town of Dunhuang was founded during the Han Dynasty in 111 BC. It was one of four Chinese garrisons meant to control the trade routes to the west. Situated at the western end of the Hexi Corridor, which snakes between North Mountain and Qilian Mountain, Dunhuang became one of the most important towns on the Silk Road. The road from Xi'an divided at Dunhuang into two routes around the Taklamakan Desert.

Discover Crescent Moon Lake, bubbling up in the midst of desert sand dunes. It is fed by an underground spring, and maintains its shape in spite of the shifting sands. The lake sits at the foot of Mingsha (Echoing Sands) Mountain, so called because of the ringing sound the sand makes. Check in to the hotel in this small oasis city and enjoy a local **folk performance**.

Meals: B, L, D – Dunhuang Silk Road Hotel or similar

Day Seven Dunhuang • en route



If you choose, wake early this morning to take in sunrise over the dunes before visiting the **fascinating Mogao Thousand Buddha Cave Complex**, which contains almost 500 grottoes carved between 700 and 1,700 years ago. Traditionally it is believed that a Buddhist monk on a pilgrimage to India in the 4th century carved the first one at the place where he had a vision of a thousand Buddhas. Until the 14th century other travelers, pilgrims and artists carved more caves, decorating them with frescoes and painted statues. The resulting grottoes present a thousand-year study in the development of Buddhist art in China. The caves became a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** in 1987.

Re-board the train this afternoon, and roll through the desert towards Turpan. Spend the day relaxing and watching the starkly beautiful

desert landscape unfold outside your window.
Meals: B, L, D – Aboard the Shangri-La Western Express

Day Eight Turpan

The morning is reserved for an exploration of **Turpan**, the hottest city in China. The **wine grapes cultivated here** are irrigated with a 2,000-year-old gravity-fed system that brings water from the glaciers of the Tien Shan. Turpan was a welcome oasis on the northern Silk Road, its green fields surrounded by one of the deepest waterless depressions on earth.



Next is the **ruined city of Jiaohe**, built in the 2nd century and eventually abandoned after it was decimated by the Mongols in the 13th century. Located six miles west of Turpan, Jiaohe stands on an island surrounded by two small rivers. “Jiaohe” literally means “confluence of two rivers.”

Dinner on board the train.

Meals: B, L, D – *Aboard the Shangri-La Western Express*

Day Nine

Cross into Kazakhstan

Arriving at the border of Kazakhstan, board the waiting *Golden Eagle* private train and head towards Almaty. Border crossing formalities can be time consuming (up to five hours), so patience is a virtue today. A welcome dinner is served in the restaurant cars.

Meals: B, L, D – *Aboard the Golden Eagle*

Day Ten

Almaty, Kazakhstan

Today the train approaches **Kazakhstan’s “city of apples,” Almaty**, set in the green foothills of the majestic Tien Shan Mountains. The commercial capital of Central Asia’s wealthiest country, Almaty may be the most rapidly growing and modernizing city in the region. Enjoy **lunch** here in a **traditional Kazakh yurt**. Meals: B, L, D – *Aboard the Golden Eagle*



Day Eleven

Tashkent, Uzbekistan

After a morning on board and lunch on the train, arrive this afternoon in **Tashkent**, the **capital of Uzbekistan**, and spend the **afternoon touring** this pleasant Soviet-style city, rebuilt with wide tree-lined boulevards after a devastating earthquake in 1966. After seeing the highlights, re-join the train for dinner as it departs for Samarkand.

Meals: B, L, D – Aboard the Golden Eagle



Day Twelve

Samarkand

Today the train arrives in **Samarkand**, **Tamerlane's blue-tiled capital**. Perhaps the best-known of Silk Road towns, Samarkand, fabled oasis on the fringes of the Kyzyl Kum ("Red Sands") Desert, has been settled since the 6th century BC. **UNESCO** calls Samarkand the "Crossroads of Cultures." It has been visited through time by many of the world's conquerors – Alexander the Great, Genghis Khan and Tamerlane. Tamerlane made it his capital city and gathered the finest architects, builders and artisans of the time to enhance its beauty. Admire gracious **Registan Square**, the **Bibi Khanum Mosque** and the amazing **Ulug Bek Observatory**.

Meals: B, L, D – Aboard the Golden Eagle

Day Thirteen

Bukhara

Uzbekistan's **best-preserved oasis city**, Bukhara, is next.

UNESCO-listed Bukhara offers cool shade and rest to the modern traveler as it did to the camel caravans that plied the Silk Road hundreds of years ago. The Old Town in Bukhara has a unified feel, drawn together by a central reflecting pool and plaza, by commonality in the structure of the domed bazaars and by the major monuments ringing the old town. Explore the **2,000-year-old Ark Citadel** and the **Emir's Palace of Moon and Stars**.

Tonight the train crosses into Turkmenistan.

Meals: B, L, D – Aboard the Golden Eagle

Day Fourteen

Merv, Turkmenistan

Today the train arrives in Mary, Turkmenistan; board a coach to nearby Merv to explore the ruins. The **earliest of the five ancient cities at Merv** is attributed to Cyrus the Great in the 6th century BC. Merv was the center of several succeeding civilizations, and became an important way station on the Great Silk Road between the 2nd and the 13th centuries, when it was sacked and burned by the Mongols. The year 1794 saw the demise of Merv, after the Emir of Bukhara destroyed the dam that the population depended on for its water. The ruins of Merv were listed as a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** in 1999 because of the wealth of ongoing information they offer about the evolution of urban centers. After the tour, return to the train for dinner on board.

Meals: B, L, D – Aboard the Golden Eagle



Day Fifteen

Ashgabat

Arrive in Ashgabat, capital of Turkmenistan. In spite of its location on a trade route, Ashgabat never achieved the status and influence of other Silk Road cities like Khiva or Bukhara. Originally known as Konjikala, the city was destroyed by Mongols in the 13th century. In 1881 the Russians built a fortress on the site as a buffer against English-dominated Persia, and by the early 20th century Ashgabat was a prosperous and flourishing city. In 1948 a massive earthquake leveled the city, killing over two-thirds of the population. Recently Ashgabat has seen a boom in new construction, which has had a major impact on the look of the city. Modern marble and gold monuments have sprung up all over town. In fact, in 2013, the Guinness Book of World Records awarded Ashgabat the record for the highest density of white marble buildings in the world

Visit the **National Museum of Turkmenistan**, which, with its grand approach and panoramic views, introduces modern Turkmenistan on the ground floor and ancient history in the galleries above. The historical exhibits begin with artifacts ranging from stone-age tools to carved ivory drinking horns used for Zoroastrian rituals and special occasions (called rhytons), and move through time, telling the story of Turkmenistan through the ages. Other galleries display beautiful ceramics, coins, amulets, and gold and silver artifacts. The museum also features a fantastic selection of Turkmen carpets located on the ground floor.



Touring also includes **Kipchak Mosque**. The huge \$100-million-dollar mosque in former Turkmen President Niyazov's hometown of Kipchak was inaugurated in 2004. The mosque is big enough to hold 10,000 people, and its 164-foot golden dome had to be lowered in place by helicopter. Verses from Niyazov's own spiritual book, the *Ruhnama*, are etched on the walls alongside Koranic verses. Niyazov was buried here in the family mausoleum that he built, along with the mosque, with government funds.

Depart Ashgabat and re-board the train, setting off back towards the Uzbek border. Take the opportunity this evening to leave the train for a nighttime excursion to the **Darvaza Gas Crater**. Darvaza is a tiny town of about 350 semi-nomadic Teke tribal people just outside the "Door to Hell," one of Turkmenistan's most unusual sights. Located about 160 miles north of Ashgabat in the Kara Kum Desert, Darvaza was a site of natural gas exploration in the 1970s. The story goes that the drilling equipment was swallowed up by a huge sinkhole filled with gas. Engineers decided to burn off the gas to make the



cavern safe for more drilling. It has been burning ever since, and blazes with an incredible strength that's visible from miles away. Re-board the train for overnight.

Meals: B, L, D – *Aboard the Golden Eagle*

Day Sixteen

Khiva, Uzbekistan



Crossing back into Uzbekistan, stop in Urgench for the transfer to Khiva, one of the most important trade centers on the Silk Road. **Khiva's Old Town, a UNESCO World Heritage Site**, has been **extensively preserved and restored**, and exists today much as it did hundreds of years ago. Approaching the Old Town, modern-day travelers face the same sight as Silk Road caravans did, the dun-colored city walls, the main gate opening on a dusty stone thoroughfare, merchants hawking their wares from each side, and the distinctive minarets watching over the whole scene.

Meals: B, L, D – *Aboard the Golden Eagle*

Day Seventeen

Kara Kum Desert, Kazakhstan

Spend a **relaxing day on the Golden Eagle** private train as it travels across the vast expanses of Kazakhstan's Kara Kum ("Black Sands") Desert, where you may spot a camel or two. Enjoy the opportunity to get to know fellow travelers while experiencing the austere landscape.

Meals: B, L, D – *Aboard the Golden Eagle*

Day Eighteen

Volgograd, Russia



Stalingrad, as this city was known in Soviet times, was the place where the Russians finally turned back the Nazi advance to the Caucasian oil fields during World War II, altering the course of the war. Until this defeat, Hitler had lost no major battles; after Stalingrad he won none. Visit the **sobering war memorial, Mamaev Kurgan**, and the **museum** featuring a fascinating panorama of the famous battle. Return to the train for dinner. Tonight is the final night aboard the *Golden Eagle* and the event is marked with a farewell banquet.

Meals: B, L, D – *Aboard the Golden Eagle*



Day Nineteen

Moscow

Arrive into Moscow late afternoon today and transfer to a five-star hotel for dinner and overnight. The Soviet flag flew here for the last time on 25 December 1991, and since then central Moscow has been transformed. Moscow today is a booming metropolis, dignified yet dynamic, where ancient churches sit shoulder to shoulder with 21st century financial institutions, and where the new high-rise commercial district of Moscow-City is changing the face of the city forever.

Meals: B, L, D – *Four Seasons, Baltschug Kempinski, or similar*

Day Twenty

Moscow

Today, tour the classic sights of this 870-year-old capital city, including expansive **UNESCO-listed Red Square** with its imaginatively decorated **St. Basil's Cathedral**. You can choose to visit the **Tretyakov Gallery** if you would prefer. Lunch and dinner are served in city restaurants.

Meals: B, L, D – *Four Seasons, Baltschug Kempinski, or similar*



Day Twenty-One

Depart Moscow

After breakfast the journey ends with transfers to the airport for international flight departures.

Meals: B



About The Golden Eagle Train

Train Accommodations

Three styles of accommodation are available on board the luxury *Golden Eagle*: Imperial Suites, Gold Class and Silver Class, each with private en suite facilities. Imperial Suites feature a king size bed, while Gold and Silver Class cabins are furnished with an upper/lower berth configuration.

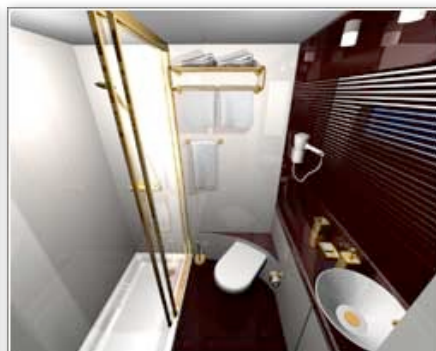
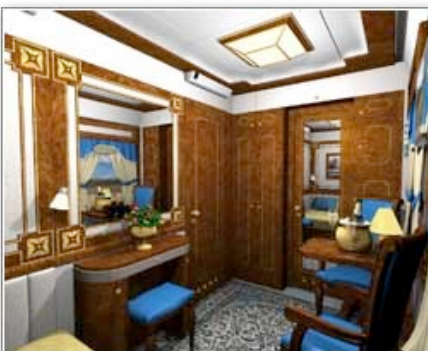
Imperial Suites

Imperial Suite cabins are the most beautiful and spacious cabins available onboard the *Golden Eagle*. Measuring a surprising 120 sq ft (11.1 sq meters), they are furnished with a luxurious king size bed, dedicated seating area, dressing table and private en suite facilities with large power shower and under floor heating. Individual air-conditioning, wardrobe, DVD/CD player with LCD screen and two large picture windows make the cabin a pleasant retreat. Imperial Class guests also enjoy butler service, a selection of complimentary drinks from the premium bar list, laundry service and room upgrades at hotels. Limited availability.

Imperial Suite Cabins:

- 120 sq ft (11.1 sq meter)
- Sleeps 2 in king size bed (width: 5ft, length: 6ft 2in)
- Sitting area
- In cabin dining options
- Remote controlled air-conditioning and heating
- Recessed lighting and wardrobe
- Dressing table
- Personal safe
- Minibar
- Private en suite bathroom with full power shower and under floor heating
- Bathrobes, slippers and toiletries
- DVD/CD player with LCD screens
- Towels and linens changed daily
- Complimentary tea, coffee and mineral water available at all times
- Dedicated butler service
- Drinks from the Bar Car included from the Standard and Premium Bar List (excluding Premium Wine List)
- Laundry service included
- Hotel room upgrade to next available category
- 1 cabin per carriage (plus 3 Gold cabins)

Note: cabin configurations and decor may vary from samples depicted

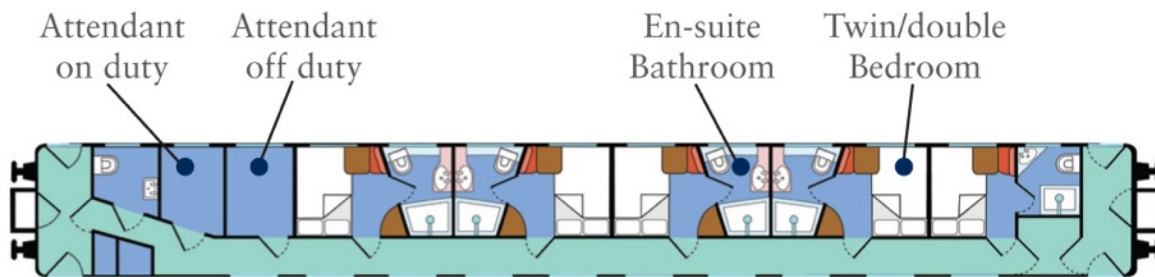


Gold Class

Gold Class cabins are well-proportioned and feature modern en suite amenities including power showers, under floor heating, a DVD/CD player with LCD screen, remote-controlled air-conditioning/heating, recessed lighting, a wardrobe and a personal safe. Each cabin is configured with upper/lower berths and can accommodate double, twin or single occupancy.

Gold Class Cabins:

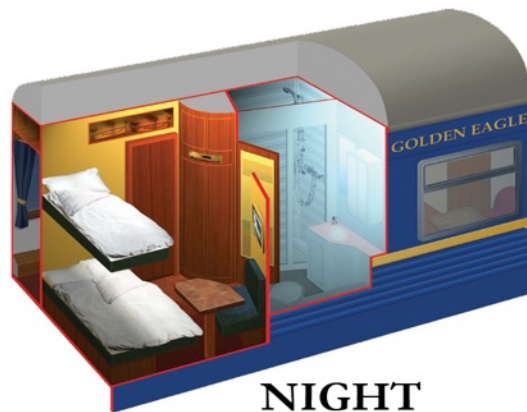
- 77 sq ft (7 sq meters)
- Sleeps 2 in either lower standard (width: 4ft 5in) double bed or bunk style
- Remote controlled air-conditioning and heating
- Recessed lighting and wardrobe
- Personal safe
- Private en suite bathroom with full power shower and under floor heating
- DVD/CD player with LCD screens
- Towels and linens changed regularly
- Complimentary tea, coffee and mineral water in cabin
- Drinks from the Bar Car included from the Standard Bar List
- Laundry service available for a fee
- 5 cabins per carriage (Note: The 5th compartment is of a slightly different layout – 68 sq ft – and will normally be allocated to single guests.)



GOLD CLASS FLOOR PLAN



DAY



NIGHT

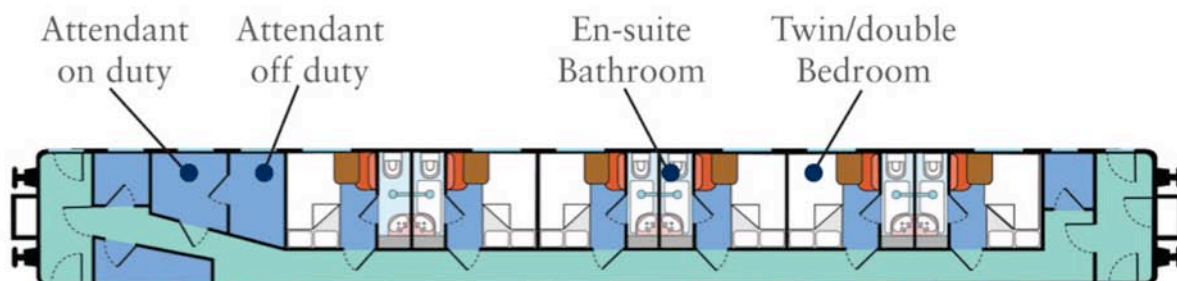


Silver Class

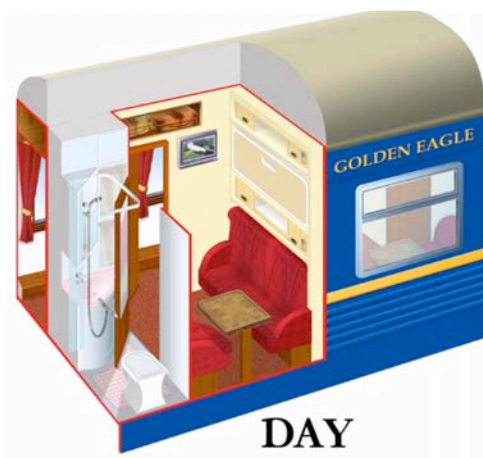
Silver Class cabins are smaller than Gold Class cabins but still have en suite facilities, though with a smaller shower area. Silver Class cabins feature the same amenities as Gold Class cabins but in a smaller space. Each Silver Class Sleeping Car has six two-bedded cabins, accommodating a maximum of 12 passengers per car.

Silver Class Cabins:

- 60 sq ft (5.5 sq meters)
- Sleeps 2 in lower small double bed (width: 3ft 6in) or bunk style
- Remote controlled air-conditioning and heating
- Recessed lighting and wardrobe
- Personal safe
- Private en suite bathroom with “wet-room” style shower and toilet
- DVD/CD player with LCD screens
- Towels and linens changed regularly
- Complimentary tea, coffee and mineral water in cabin
- Laundry service available for a fee
- 6 cabins per carriage



SILVER CLASS FLOOR PLAN



DAY



NIGHT



About The Shangri-La Western Express Train

Train Accommodations

Two styles of accommodation are available on board the comfortable *Shangri-La Western Express*: Diamond Class with en suite facilities, and Heritage Class. Diamond Class cabins feature a large lower bed, while Heritage Class cabins are furnished with two lower twin berths.

Diamond Class

Diamond Class cabins are the more comfortable and spacious cabins available onboard the *Shangri-La Western Express*. Measuring 75 sq ft (7 sq meters), they are furnished with a large queen style bed, and private en suite facilities with shower. Individual air-conditioning, wardrobe and large window make the cabin a pleasant retreat. Limited availability.

Diamond Class Cabins:

- 75 sq ft (7 sq meters)
- Sleeps 2 in queen size bed
- Centrally controlled air-conditioning
- Recessed lighting and wardrobe
- Table and stool
- Private en-suite bathroom with shower, toilet and washbasin
- Bathrobes, slippers, and toiletries
- Towels and linens changed daily
- Complimentary tea, coffee and mineral water available at all times
- Drinks from the Bar Car included

Note: cabin configurations and decor may vary from samples depicted



Heritage Class

Heritage cabins offer comfortable accommodation with twin-berth compartments featuring two lower berths. Beds convert to comfortable sofas for daytime travel and there is storage space under the berths and above the door in each cabin. A WC is found at each end of the car and each car has a shower compartment at one end.

Heritage Class Cabins:

36 sq ft (3.4 sq meters)

- Sleeps 2 in two lower standard berths
- Centrally controlled air-conditioning
- Recessed lighting
- Towels and linens changed regularly
- Complimentary tea, coffee and mineral water in cabin
- Shared shower cabin in each car, see image below



Dates for 2020 – Private Rail Journey

The land itinerary is scheduled to operate on the following dates. Please note that you need to depart the U.S. at least one day prior to the tour start date, due to airline flight schedules.

April 13-May 3, 2020
October 1-21, 2020

This tour is also available as a partial itinerary – a Russia and ‘Stans-only tour. Call for details.

2020 Package Prices

Land Tour Cost – Per Person:

Silver/Heritage Class, twin share	\$26,295
Silver/Heritage Class, single	\$38,495

Gold/Diamond Class, twin share	\$32,995
Gold/Diamond Class, single	\$47,695

Imperial Suite/Diamond Class, twin share	\$49,395
Imperial Suite/Diamond Class, single	\$98,695

Private Train Tour Deposits – Per person:

Silver/Heritage Class deposit	\$2,500
Gold/Diamond Class deposit	\$3,000
Imperial Suite/Diamond Class deposit	\$5,500

A non-refundable deposit and completed reservation form/signed release are required to hold space.

Land Tour Includes

- Accommodation aboard the *Golden Eagle* and *Shangri-La Western Express* private trains.
- Tickets for the high-speed Bullet Train from Beijing to Xi'an.
- Hotel accommodation per the itinerary (2 nights in Beijing, 2 nights Xi'an, 1 night Dunhuang, and 2 nights Moscow).
- All meals starting with dinner on Day 1 until breakfast on final tour day, including a generous, though not unlimited, allowance of wine or local beer, soft drinks and water with all lunches and dinners.
- Arrival/departure transfers, provided you arrive and depart on the tour start/end dates and in the tour start/end cities.
- All guided off-train tours per itinerary.
- The services of an experienced Train Tour Manager, with local guides for scheduled off-train touring.
- Complimentary tea, coffee and mineral water round the clock from your car attendant while on board the train.
- All gratuities.
- Baggage handling.

Not Included

- International airfare or surface transport to the point of joining/leaving the tour. MIR is able to arrange your air itinerary in economy or business class. If you wish to obtain an air quote, please contact us for details.
- Items of a purely personal nature (laundry, telephone, bar account, photography at museums, etc).



- Optional pre- or post-tour extensions.
- Drinks in the bar car and outside of meal times.
- Visa fees, any excess baggage charges, airport departure taxes, vaccination or medical costs.
- Travel and trip cancellation insurance.

Interested in travel insurance?

To learn more about all the benefits of purchasing a Travel Guard travel insurance plan, please visit www.travelguard.com/mircorp or contact Travel Guard at 1.877.709.5596.

Start Planning Next Year Now

Dates for 2021 – Rail Journey by Private Train

At the time of writing, the land itinerary for this program next year is projected to be generally as depicted for this year. Next year's dates are shown below – please call if you're ready to book now.

April 10-30, 2021

September 29-October 19, 2021

Package Prices – 2021

Land Tour Cost – Per Person:

Silver/Heritage Class, twin share	\$27,395
Silver/Heritage Class, single	\$40,995
Gold/Diamond Class, twin share	\$34,295
Gold/Diamond Class, single	\$56,595
Imperial Suite/Diamond Class, twin share	\$51,995
Imperial Suite/Diamond Class, single	\$103,895

Private Train Tour Deposits – Per person:

Silver/Heritage Class deposit	\$2,500
Gold/Diamond Class deposit	\$3,000
Imperial Suite/Diamond Class deposit	\$5,500

A non-refundable deposit and completed reservation form/signed release are required to hold space.

Rail Journey by Private Train

Private Train tours are in a class of their own, offering the opportunity to experience remote destinations in unparalleled style. These all-inclusive, overview tours aboard the fully-chartered *Golden Eagle* and *Shangri-La Western Express* private trains bring together passengers from around the world. Group sizes are flexible and can be more than 100 passengers.



Important Notes: Is This Trip Right For You?

- This trip is moderately active, and is rated **moderate to rigorous touring** due to the daily walking involved and the overall shortcomings of the tourism infrastructure. To reap the full rewards of this adventure, travelers must be able to walk at least a mile a day, keeping up with fellow travelers. Flexibility, a sense of humor and a willingness to accept local standards of amenities and services are essential components to the enjoyment of this trip.
- This itinerary features a significant amount of touring on foot. Many streets and sidewalks are uneven, and some attractions are only accessible via steep staircases. Museums generally do not have elevators.
- On the train, restaurant and bar cars may be some distance from your sleeping car. Although portage is provided where possible, you may have to carry your baggage for short distances.
- Passengers may encounter problems getting on and off trains; there may be low platforms, steep steps and/or gaps between the platform and the train.
- In true expedition style, some delays or changes in the itinerary are likely.

MINIMUM PASSENGER REQUIREMENTS All *Golden Eagle* rail tours require a minimum number of passengers to operate. Should this not be reached, *Golden Eagle* will run a modified service of carriages attached to regular service trains to accommodate a smaller group or offer an alternative tour. If no alternative is suitable a full refund of land payments made (exclusive of payments made for air tickets, visa fees or other expenses) will be offered. Reduced numbers mean smaller and more intimate groups, and a shorter train, as unfilled cars are left behind. On a number of tours Russian Railways will be combining *Golden Eagle* carriages with regular trains departing at similar times. The on-board experience and off-train tours will be unaffected and, as there will be no connection with the regular trains, the *Golden Eagle* carriages will remain totally private and you will not notice any difference to the quality, comfort and enjoyment of your trip.

Important Notice Regarding Prescription Drugs

Please be advised that some countries in Central Asia, most notably Turkmenistan, but also Uzbekistan, have recently stepped up their border/customs inspection and enforcement activities for arriving and departing travelers concerning pharmaceutical drugs. While baggage search has always been possible, as of late there are reports of much greater frequency for baggage search at border crossings than has been the case based on our experience in the past. If you need to carry prescription medications with you of any kind, you are reminded to **carry an amount suitable for personal use only, in original labeled packing and with a copy of the prescription**. If you are not able to bring a copy of the prescription, please bring an official printed list of your medications that includes the drug name, dosage, doctor's name and all other relevant information. Package labeling should clearly indicate the same information.

Please note that some prescription drugs, including certain pain relievers such as **Tramadol** and **Hydrocodone**, which are somewhat common in the U.S., are completely prohibited from entry into Turkmenistan, even for personal use with a foreign prescription. Anti-anxiety medications such as **Lorazepam** can be problematic, as can sedatives such as **Zolpidem**. Another prohibited medication in Turkmenistan is **pseudoephedrine**. Please be sure to bring alternative medication with you as these drugs (**among others** – call for details) are simply not allowed at the present time.

If you have concerns about prescription drugs you need to take with you as you travel through Central Asia, please contact your Tour Specialist before your departure for more information.



Are You Prepared?

A Travel Guard travel insurance plan can help cover your vacation investment, offset expenses from travel mishaps and provide you with emergency travel assistance. To learn more about all of the benefits of purchasing a Travel Guard travel insurance plan, please visit www.travelguard.com/mircorp

If you are not already enrolled in STEP, Smart Traveler Enrollment Program, a free service to enroll your trip with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate, please consider enrolling. For more information: <https://step.state.gov/step/>

Please read the U.S. Department of State's Travel Advisory on travel to China here: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/china-travel-advisory.html>

Please read the U.S. Department of State's Travel Advisory on travel to Kazakhstan here: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/kazakhstan-travel-advisory.html>

Please read the U.S. Department of State's Travel Advisory on travel to Uzbekistan here: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/uzbekistan-travel-advisory.html>

Please read the U.S. Department of State's Travel Advisory on travel to Turkmenistan here: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/turkmenistan-travel-advisory.html>

Please read the U.S. Department of State's Travel Advisory on travel to Russia here: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/russia-travel-advisory.html>

Weather

Moscow is a wonderful city to visit any time of the year. In the spring, expect temperatures around 45-65 degrees Fahrenheit. July and August bring a range of 55-80 and October temperatures are cooler to cold, with highs in the mid-40s. Rain is possible year round.

Central Asia experiences hot summers and cold winters. The best times to travel to these countries are in spring and fall, to catch the best temperatures between the hot parts of the summer and the cold winters. Rain is minimal. April-May brings temperatures ranging from 60 to 80 degrees Fahrenheit, while late August-September temperatures are typically 75-95+. Those whose plans don't allow travel in April-May or August-September can still catch great opportunities to visit as early as March or as late as November. At these times, comfortable touring weather is still called for, with warm days and cooler nights/early mornings. Travelers to Central Asia in March and November might want to bring along some additional warmer layers to help adjust to the difference between mountainous areas and desert areas.

China generally experiences hot summers and cold winters. This tour could be taken at any time of the year, but the best times will be from May through October. In May, Beijing temperatures run between the upper 50s and the upper 70s. Temperatures peak in late-July and August, with Beijing highs in the mid to upper 80s.

International Airfare

MIR's in-house, full-service air department is available to assist with your air travel needs. Check with MIR before booking air on your own, as we are happy to research and compare the best published fares available. Airfare varies depending on a wide variety of factors, such as dates of travel, seat availability, special airline promotions, how restrictive ticket changes are, how long the fares can be held without



purchase, routing considerations such as stopovers, and more. Tour dates are based on the land tour only. Our preferred carriers for this program are Aeroflot and Air China as they offer the most competitive rates.

Please call us at 800-424-7289 to discuss air options and routings for this program, and to request a quote for your specific plans and dates of travel. We will be happy to put together a no-obligation suggested air itinerary and estimate for you at your request.

Visas

Four visas are required for this tour: a single-entry Russian visa (though at the time of writing a 3-year multi-entry Russian visa is priced the same if using standard processing, and is counted that way in the estimate below), a **double-entry** Uzbek visa, a single-entry Turkmenistan visa and a single-entry Chinese visa. Extensive pre-tour paperwork is necessary to obtain the required visas. MIR will provide you with the necessary applications and instructions.

An estimate of current visa costs for U.S. passport holders, based on standard processing time, is \$741. Your exact visa fees may differ as visa costs can depend on a number of factors, such as state of residence, processing time, and return shipping. Visa fees are always subject to change.

Standard visa processing at the various visa sections is expected to take two to one and a half to two months. Travelers should prepare to be without their passports for that amount of time. If you plan to travel in the time leading up to your MIR tour, you may need to obtain a second valid passport or use expedited processing. Please contact us with any questions you may have regarding the timeline for visa processing.

In the past some travelers have made their own visa arrangements instead of using MIR's preferred provider for their visa processing; either using their own visas service or attempting to process directly with the embassies/consulates. We strongly recommend you discuss it with us before choosing an alternate visa processing method, to help avoid difficulties and visa problems. **In the event that you plan to process visas without going through MIR's preferred provider, please contact us first so we can pass you detailed instructions with critical trip-specific information.**

Pre and Post-Tour Extensions

MIR can arrange for an extended program in St. Petersburg, Moscow, Mongolia or China before or after your tour. Suggested extensions include:

Shanghai Pre-Tour

Shanghai is arguably the most westernized city in China. Though originally forced open as a concession port at the end of the Opium War with Britain, the city has since then flourished. Foreign investment, once by decree and now by choice, has played a huge part in Shanghai's development. The influence of Britain, France, and the U.S. is as prominent today as it was one hundred sixty years ago.

St. Petersburg Post-Tour

St. Petersburg is often described as **one of the most beautiful cities in the world**. Its miles of canals, laced together with graceful bridges set amidst 18th century buildings, have earned it the name "Venice of the North." Conceived of by Peter the Great and designed by his favorite European architects, St. Petersburg was meant to be Peter's link to the western world. Capital of Russia from 1712 until just after the revolution, the city celebrated its 300th anniversary in 2003. Explore the fabulous museums and palaces, including the Hermitage Museum, the Russian Museum, Usupoff Palace and the grand estates of czars Peter and Catherine.



MIR will customize your St. Petersburg stay to be as many days as you would like. Transport by train or air to Moscow connects with the tour. For a comprehensive exploration of the city, ask for MIR's "Essential St. Petersburg" suggested private eight-day tour.

Suggested Accommodations at the *Hotel Astoria* or *Grand Hotel Europe*

One of the oldest hotels in St. Petersburg, the **five star Astoria** was opened in 1912 in honor of the House of Romanov's 300th anniversary. Its location across the street from the landmark St. Isaac's Cathedral and just a ten-minute walk from the Hermitage makes it a perfect starting point for roaming the city. The Astoria offers all the amenities of a five star property in a historic setting.

The **five star Grand Hotel Europe** was built in 1824, making it the oldest hotel in St. Petersburg. Renovated in 1991 and 2006, it may be the most luxurious hotel in the city. With beautiful facilities for business and leisure, the hotel enjoys a great location on Nevsky Prospekt near the Russian Museum, the Hermitage, and the Cathedral of the Savior on the Spilled Blood.

Other accommodation options in three to four star hotels are also available.

Also Nearby...

For more tours to this region, you may want to check out:

Flexible Essential Trips – Classic Private Journeys

Essential St. Petersburg, 7 days. St. Petersburg, home of the czars and their courts, is a rich repository of extravagant palaces, brilliant museums and renowned theaters overflowing with music and dance. Its fashionable boulevards and serene canals glisten in the "White Nights" of summer and dazzle on sunny winter days.

Essential Russia, 7 days. A compact and compelling survey of Russia's political capital, Moscow, and its cultural capital, St. Petersburg, this tour communicates the character of Western Russia in a succinct and meaningful series of experiences.

Essential Balkans, 14 days. Visit seven Balkan countries in 14 days on this compact overland journey through history. A remarkably complex region, the mountainous Balkan Peninsula is fascinating, diverse and incredibly beautiful.

Essential Ukraine, 8 days. Ukraine is the new borderland between Europe and Russia. Explore this resilient region influenced by Polish princes, Cossack *hetmen*, Turkish khans, Russian communists and Ukrainian poets and nationalists.

Essential Caucasus, 10 days. Armenia's intricate stone *khachkar* crosses, the bounteous wines of Georgia and the ancient petroglyphs of Azerbaijan are icons of these three intertwined Caucasus countries, where you can experience five UNESCO masterpieces in ten days.

Essential Kyrgyzstan, 8 days. On this comprehensive journey among the soaring peaks, glacial lakes and steep valleys of the Kyrgyz outback, spend a night with a village family, learning the traditional way to make felt, bake flatbread in a clay oven and milk a mare. Visit with a seasoned eagle hunter and admire dramatic landscapes of ochre and umber sandstone formations.



Essential Tajikistan, 8 days. Rarely-visited Tajikistan is wreathed in spectacular mountains and colored with the influence of Persia, the Islamic world and Russia. Meet local people at Fergana Valley markets, explore the ruins of ancient Penjikent and share a meal in a warm Tajik home. Visit the country's capital, Dushanbe, where an airy, light-filled space is home to the modern National Museum of Tajikistan.

Essential Turkmenistan, 12 days. From the golden monuments of Ashgabat and the ruins of Parthian Nisa, head into the mountains to overnight in a village home. Visit the Caspian seaport, Turkmebashi, explore UNESCO-listed Merv, and learn about traditional crafts. Camp at the "Door to Hell" and survey Kunya-Urgench, ancient capital of Khorezm.

Essential Kazakhstan, 7 days. Begin in the new city of Astana, capital of Kazakhstan only since 1997. Fly to Chimkent and discover the historic city of Turkistan with its UNESCO-listed mausoleum of a revered Sufi sheikh. Fly to Almaty and explore spectacular Charyn Canyon, with its strange rock formations and colorful strata.

Essential Uzbekistan, 10 days. Beginning in the modern capital, Tashkent, roam the great Silk Road oases of Bukhara, Samarkand and Khiva, all of them UNESCO sites. Admire their mosques, *madrassahs* and minarets clad in ceramic tiles the color of the desert sky.

Conditions of Participation

Your participation on a MIR Corporation trip is subject to the conditions contained in the 2020 Tour Reservation Form and Release of Liability and Assumption of Risk Agreement. Please read this document carefully and contact us with any questions.

Cancellation and Refund Policy

Please note that no partial refunds are available for any missed days of a tour or any whole or part of a tour, accommodation, meal or any other service not utilized by the participant during the tour. The quoted price represents a package price for the services offered and an itemization of individual component costs will not be provided. Please understand there will be no exceptions to our cancellation policies regardless of your situation. Should you need to cancel your travel plans, please notify us in writing immediately. At the time we receive written notification of cancellation, the following charges apply:

Scheduled Rail Journeys by Private Train:

121 or more days prior to departure-----deposit due or paid in full of \$2,500, \$3,000 or \$5,500

65-120 days prior to departure-----50% of the land tour cost

64 days prior to departure or after trip departure----no refund

References

We encourage you to speak directly with satisfied past travelers. Please request a list of references.

Why MIR?

Regional knowledge is crucial to the success of any trip to our corner of the world. MIR combines detailed information about geography and infrastructure, history and art, language and culture, with the depth of knowledge that comes only from decades of regional experience. You may wonder how we differ from other tour operators...



Destination Specialization

MIR focuses exclusively on the exceptional region at the crossroads of Europe and Asia. This area has been our overriding passion since 1986; we don't do the rest of the world. Our hard-earned expertise gained over the last three decades can take you from end to end of the largest country in the world – Russia – and to all of its neighbors. We specialize in travel to Siberia, the Silk Route, St. Petersburg & Beyond. Our destinations include: Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, the Baltics (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania), the Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Slovenia), Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan), the South Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia), Turkey, Mongolia, China, Tibet, and Central/East Europe (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia).

30 Years of Experience

A travel company doesn't last more than 30 years in the business without a solid track record. MIR has helped thousands of individuals achieve their travel goals. Our dedication and experience have earned us their trust and the trust of many well-respected institutions. Today MIR is the preferred tour operator for museum, alumni and special interest organizations across the country.



Recommended & Respected

MIR has twice been rated one of the “Best Adventure Travel Companies on Earth” by *National Geographic Adventure*. Several of our tours have won awards in top travel publications, such as *Outside* magazine and *National Geographic Traveler*. Our trips have been featured in books like *Riding the Hula Hula to the Arctic Ocean* and *1,000 Places to See Before You Die*.



More Questions?

Please feel free to call us with questions at 1-800-424-7289, 8:30am-5:30pm Pacific Time.

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