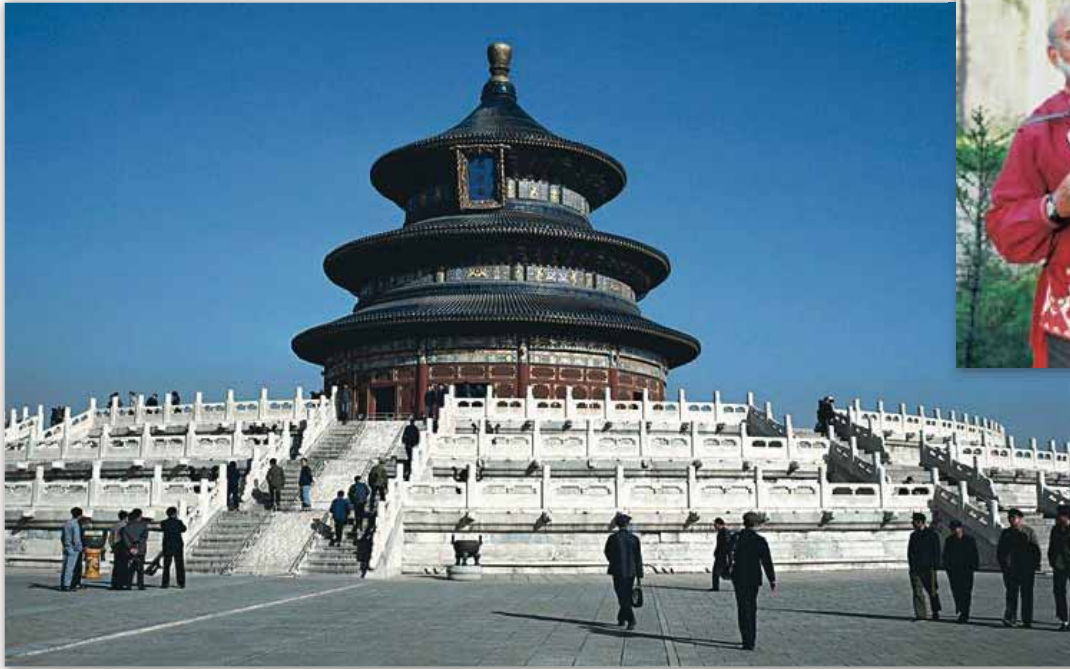




The Trans-Siberian Express

Beijing to Moscow aboard the *Tsar's Gold* private train

2020



The Trans-Siberian Express

From Beijing to Moscow aboard the *Tsar's Gold* private train

Six westbound departures in 2020 – Private Rail Journey – 15 Days

May 17-31 • June 14-28 • July 10-24 • August 2-16

August 28-September 11 • September 20-October 4

*Starting in Beijing, where the remnants of Imperial China sit shoulder-to-shoulder with thriving businesses and five star hotels, roll along a railway that ties together two of the world's biggest countries, China and Russia. Traverse Mongolia as well on the comfortable *Tsar's Gold* private train, from the Gobi Desert across the endless steppe where Genghis Khan's armies once galloped, to the modern capital, Ulaanbaatar. Continue up to the steep shores of ancient Lake Baikal and on to the gleaming, golden cupolas of Moscow. Along the way, admire six UNESCO World Heritage Sites.*

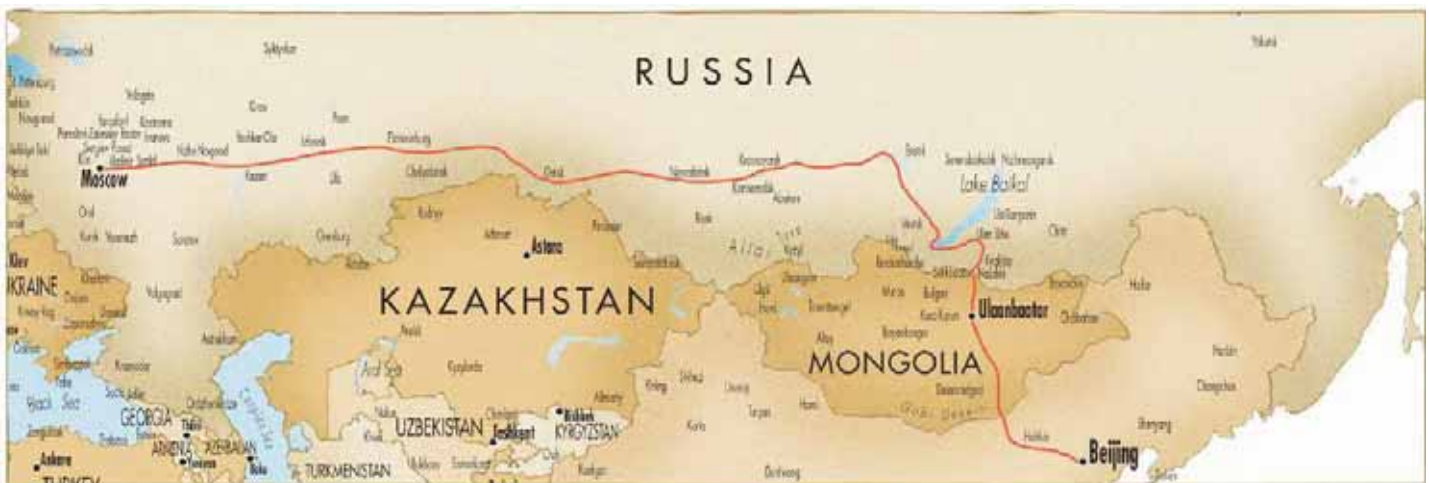


Daily Itinerary

Day 1	Beijing, China
Day 2	Beijing
Day 3	Beijing
Day 4	Change trains at Erlian (Chinese border) • Gobi Desert
Day 5	Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia
Day 6	Ulaanbaatar
Day 7	Ulan Ude, Russia
Day 8	Lake Baikal
Day 9	Irkutsk
Day 10	Aboard train
Day 11	Novosibirsk
Day 12	Ekaterinburg
Day 13	Kazan
Day 14	Moscow
Day 15	Moscow



Note: This train also runs in the reverse direction, from Moscow to Beijing. See page 14 for dates.



Tour Features

- Enjoy the comfort and efficiency of your own private cabin on the *Tsar's Gold* private train.
- 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 comfort 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 (UNESCO World Heritage Site) Great Wall, Ming Tombs (UNESCO World Heritage Site), Peking Duck dinner
Erlian	China/Mongolia border, change trains, lively market
Ulaanbaatar	Chojjin Lama Museum, throat-singing performance (optional), Gandan Monastery, lunch in a nomadic ger
Ulan Ude	City center, biggest Lenin head in the world
Lake Baikal	Largest and deepest lake on earth (UNESCO World Heritage Site), boat ride
Circumbaikal Railway	The most scenic stretch of the original Trans-Siberian Railway
Irkutsk	City center including classic wooden architecture, open-air Wooden Architecture Museum
Novosibirsk	Bread and salt welcome, Trans-Siberian Obelisk, Ob River
Ekaterinburg	Europe/Asia Obelisk, Church on the Blood
Kazan	Capital of the Republic of Tatarstan, Kazan Kremlin (UNESCO World Heritage Site), Qol Sharif Mosque
Moscow	Moscow Kremlin and Red Square (UNESCO World Heritage Site), St. Basil's Cathedral, Moscow Metro

Itinerary

Day One

Arrive Beijing, China

Passengers are met at the Beijing airport and transferred to one of the city's comfortable hotels for a two-night stay. 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.



Touring today includes iconic Tiananmen Square. **Tiananmen (Gate of Heavenly Peace) Square** is one of the largest public squares in the world. Located on the square is the Monument to the People's Heroes and Chairman Mao's Memorial Hall. On the west side of the square is the massive Great Hall of the People, and on the east side is the equally large Chinese History Museum. To



the north is the Forbidden City, where fourteen Ming and ten Qing emperors ruled China.

Another highlight is the **UNESCO-listed Temple of Heaven**, site of Imperial prayer in the long-past Ming and Qing dynasties, and a driving overview of the city. These are seen prior to the **welcome dinner**, at which you will meet other guests this evening.

Meals: D – *Hotel Capital or similar*

Please note: In order to be in the hotel in time for the afternoon’s preliminary touring in Beijing on Day One, you will want to arrive by about 11:00 a.m. or 12 noon. Touring is expected to start between 2 and 3:00 p.m. Travelers arriving later than 11:00 a.m. or noon may miss out on some of the Day One inclusions. Flight schedules into Beijing vary but when arriving from the U.S. it may be challenging to get to Beijing in the late morning or early afternoon. Please discuss with your MIR Tour Specialist to make sure you arrive at your desired time; MIR is happy to arrange additional hotel nights at the tour hotel, at additional expense.

Day Two Beijing

Visit the **World Heritage Sites** of the **Great Wall at Badaling**, and the **Ming Tombs**. 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 Ming Tombs, constructed over nearly 80 years of the Ming dynasty in a valley protected on three sides by mountains, shelter the earthly remains of 13 Ming emperors. The tombs of Zhu Li and Wan Li are open to the public, one an extensive aboveground complex and the other an underground mausoleum.

This evening, enjoy a special dinner of the single most well-known Chinese dish, **Peking Duck**, a northern specialty.

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

Day Three Beijing

After breakfast, enjoy a tour of the **UNESCO World Heritage Site of the Forbidden City**, or Palace Museum, which exceeds 250 acres, making it the largest palace complex in the world. This is where the emperors, as sons of heaven, would communicate with the gods. Built by the third Ming Emperor,



Yongle, the Forbidden City includes hundreds of buildings, reception halls, gates, private apartments and gardens.

In the afternoon, board the Chinese train, reaching the Mongolian border in Erlian in approximately 16 hours. The special Chinese charter train is furnished in a modern and practical manner, but *does not* feature any of the *Tsar's Gold* Nostalgic Comfort or Bolshoi Class cabins. Passengers travel in comfortable compartments with either two or four berths on this rail segment.

Meals: B, L, D – *On board the Chinese charter train*

Day Four

Change trains at Erlian • Gobi Desert

Around noon, the Chinese train arrives at the **border** where the changeover to the **special *Tsar's Gold* private train** takes place. The rail track gauge between China and Mongolia differs in size, requiring the change of trains at this juncture. The Russians built their rail gauge slightly wider than the standard size gauge used in Europe and China. Luggage is transferred between trains while passengers explore the colorful border market in the town of Erlian.



The Russians built their rail gauge slightly wider than the standard size gauge used in Europe and China. Luggage is transferred between trains while passengers explore the colorful border market in the town of Erlian.

The *Tsar's Gold* train heads for Ulaanbaatar along a route through **the Gobi Desert**. The changing landscape unrolls during a full day spent on the train. Settle into your comfortable cabin and enjoy the onboard services.

Meals: B, L, D – *On board the *Tsar's Gold* train*

Day Five

Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

Upon arriving in the capital of Mongolia, transfer to a comfortable city center hotel before visiting the **Chojjin Lama Museum**. The museum was once a temple for the younger brother of the last Bogd Khaan. Built between 1904 and 1908, it features five temples displaying Buddhist sculptures and a large collection of *thangkas*, masks and costumes used in Tsam dances. This evening if you choose, enjoy an optional performance of **Mongolian throat singing and traditional dance** at additional cost.

Please note, there is also an option to spend most of this day in the countryside with an overnight in a *ger* instead of the above programming. Please call for details and pricing.

Meals: B, L, D – *Hotel Ulaanbaatar, Ramada City Center or similar*



Day Six
Ulaanbaatar

Learn about the Buddhist traditions of Mongolia during a visit to the **beautiful Gandan Monastery**, originally founded in 1838. Until then, Mongolia's monasteries had been small, mobile organizations that moved with the nomads. Meaning "Great Place of Complete Joy," the monastery was badly damaged during the 1930s Stalinist repressions, but the main temple was allowed to remain as a showcase for foreigners. Today, this temple houses a 20-ton gilded statue of "The Lord Who Looks in Every Direction," created in the 1990s to replace the one destroyed in 1937.

Then venture outside the city to get a feel for the wide-open spaces and natural beauty Mongolia is known for. Lunch is served in a traditional Mongolian-style *ger* before an afternoon **demonstration of Mongolian horseback riding** and traditional wrestling. The *Tsar's Gold* train pulls out of Ulaanbaatar this evening on the way to the Russian border.

Meals: B, L, D – *On board the Tsar's Gold train*

Day Seven
Ulan Ude, Russia

Today, the train rolls through the valley of the Selenga River, which flows into Lake Baikal. Make a stop in **Ulan Ude**, capital of the Buryat Republic. Join a guided tour of the city or explore on your own. Formerly called Udinsk, Ulan Ude was founded in 1666 by Cossacks as a winter encampment on the Selenga River. The city later prospered as a major trading post along the tea route between China and Irkutsk. The indigenous people of the region, the Buryats, resisted frequent attempts to infiltrate their culture and traditions. Today, the unique cultural identity, language and spiritual beliefs of the Buryat people make a visit to Ulan Ude a fascinating experience.

Meals: B, L, D – *On board the Tsar's Gold train*

Day Eight
Lake Baikal

A spectacular part of the journey today is spent winding through tunnels and around cliffs along the shoreline of **Lake Baikal**, the world's deepest and oldest freshwater lake. Baikal's great age and isolation have produced one of the richest and most unusual ecosystems on earth. A **UNESCO World Heritage Site**, Lake Baikal holds 20 percent of the world's fresh water.

Enjoy a short **boat ride** on this magnificent lake, and visit a local village. Weather permitting, enjoy **dinner picnic-style at the lake's edge**. For the adventurous, there is time to take a quick dip in the crystal clear – and cold – waters.

Meals: B, L, D – *On board the Tsar's Gold train*





Day Nine

Irkutsk

Morning arrival in **Irkutsk**, the “capital” of Eastern Siberia, where you check into a comfortable hotel in the city center. A tour today includes the major sights of this cultured little city, including examples of the classic wooden architecture for which the area is known.

The afternoon features a tour of the **ethnographic museum**. This outdoor museum is a 166-acre collection of authentic Russian and native Buryat, Evenki

and Tafalar houses and community buildings from the 17th to the early 20th century. The wooden structures were moved here from various Siberian locations, furnished with period appointments and assembled into little hamlets and nomadic camps that demonstrate how people actually lived.

Overnight in the hotel.

Meals: B, L, D – *Hotel Marriott Courtyard, Hotel Irkutsk, or similar.*

Day Ten

Aboard Train

Rolling through the vast Siberian *taiga*, spend the day relaxing onboard the private train. As the train passes Krasnoyarsk on the Yenesei River, balance for a moment at the geographic center of Russia. Enjoy an onboard **traditional Russian vodka tasting**.

Meals: B, L, D – *On board the Tsar’s Gold train*

Day Eleven

Novosibirsk

Today’s stop in **Novosibirsk** begins with a traditional Russian **bread and salt welcome**. Make a stop to see the mighty Ob River and the Trans-Siberian monument. With a population of roughly 1.6 million, Novosibirsk is the largest city in Siberia, and its industrial and scientific center. Novosibirsk did not exist before the Trans-Siberian Railway was built, growing up around the place chosen for the rail line’s Ob River crossing. Nikita Khrushchev relocated his best scientists 30 km from here in 1959, in a special town built expressly for scientific research, called Academgorodok, or Academy City.

Meals: B, L, D – *On board the Tsar’s Gold train*

Day Twelve

Ekaterinburg

Cross from Asia into Europe at **Ekaterinburg**. The cultural and architectural influences of European and Asian civilizations come together here, in one of Russia’s largest cities. Founded in 1723 and named after Catherine I, Ekaterinburg is where the last tsar, Nicholas II, and his family were placed under house arrest for months before the Bolsheviks executed them in July of 1918. Today, the off-train tour takes you to the





photo: Helge Pedersen

Church on the Blood, standing over the spot where Tsar Nicholas II and his family were killed. The house itself was torn down in 1976.

Meals: B, L, D – *On board the Tsar's Gold train*

Day Thirteen

Kazan

The train makes a stop today in **Kazan, the beautiful capital of Tatarstan on the Volga**. The Tatars, who make up a majority of the population, are actually Turkic Muslims with an ethnic makeup similar to that of early Bulgarians. Leo Tolstoy spent over five years here in Kazan,

where Orthodox churches and Muslim mosques were both accepted.

A tour of the **UNESCO-listed Kazan Kremlin** is the highlight of the city tour. Originally a fortress of the Golden Horde during the time of the Kazan Khanate, little of the original remains from this time. It is considered the only surviving Tatar fortress in Russia. Ivan the Terrible conquered Kazan in 1552 and built new walls on top of the older ones, adding the Annunciation Cathedral and razing the original Qol Sharif Mosque, now rebuilt. The entire ensemble shows the synthesis of the Tatar and Russian cultures. Enjoy a **final evening aboard the Tsar's Gold** train.

Meals: B, L, D – *On board the Tsar's Gold train*

Day Fourteen

Moscow

Mid-day arrival in **Moscow**. The Soviet flag flew here for the last time on December 25, 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.



photo: Jim Beers

Tour the classic sights of this 870-year-old capital, including the magnificent **UNESCO-listed Kremlin**. You'll stop at **UNESCO-listed Red Square** and have a chance to ride on the Moscow Metro to visit a few of the beautiful old stations as well.

Transfer to a comfortable hotel this evening and gather one last time to celebrate the journey at a **farewell dinner** followed by an **evening tour of Moscow**, by coach.

Meals: B, L, D – *Hotel Azimut, InterContinental, or similar*



Day Fifteen

Depart Moscow

After breakfast at the hotel, a short morning city tour is available for those with later departures.

Travelers with early flights transfer to the airport for international flights. **Please note:** *If you want to catch this morning's short city touring, your flight should be scheduled for departure after 2:00 p.m. or so. Most flights for U.S. travelers to make same-day connections home depart earlier in the morning.*

Meals: B



About The Tsar's Gold Train

The *Tsar's Gold* train is a comfortable, though not luxurious, private train, which can accommodate up to 200 passengers. Average group sizes can range from 120-180 passengers.

Train Accommodations

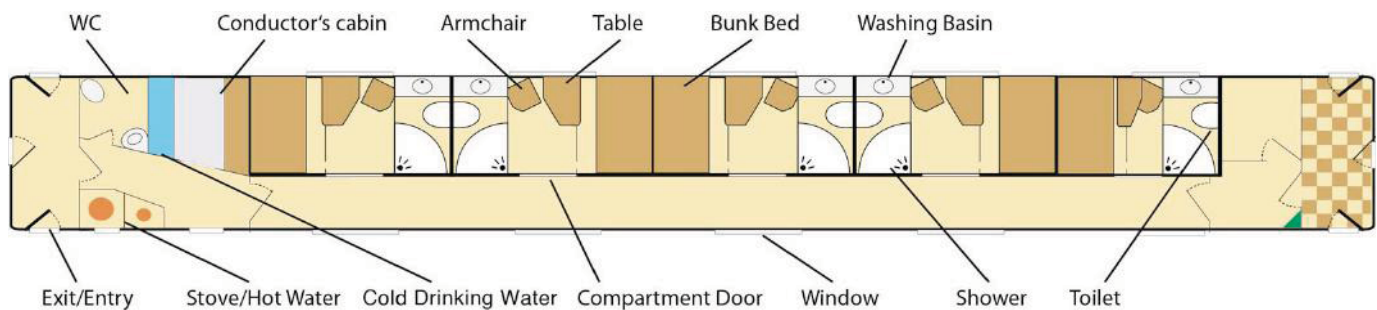
Six styles of accommodation are available aboard the *Tsar's Gold* for the journey between Erlian and Moscow: **Bolshoi Platinum Class** (en suite), **Bolshoi Class** (en suite), **Nostalgic Comfort Class** (shower for every two cabins), **Superior Plus Class** (shower and WC per car), **Superior Class** and **Classic Class** (WC per car, shower per two cars).

One night aboard Chinese Charter Train

For the approximately 16-hour overnight journey between Beijing and Erlian (Chinese/Mongolian border where the rail gauge changes), guests travel aboard a chartered Chinese train. All cabins are similar to the Classic category and accommodate two passengers. There are no Bolshoi, Bolshoi Platinum or Nostalgic Comfort type cabins on the Chinese train. The number of cabins available for single occupancy is limited; therefore single occupancy for travelers booked in Classic/Superior/Superior Plus Classes or Nostalgic Comfort Class is not guaranteed for this overnight travel segment.

Bolshoi & Bolshoi Platinum Classes

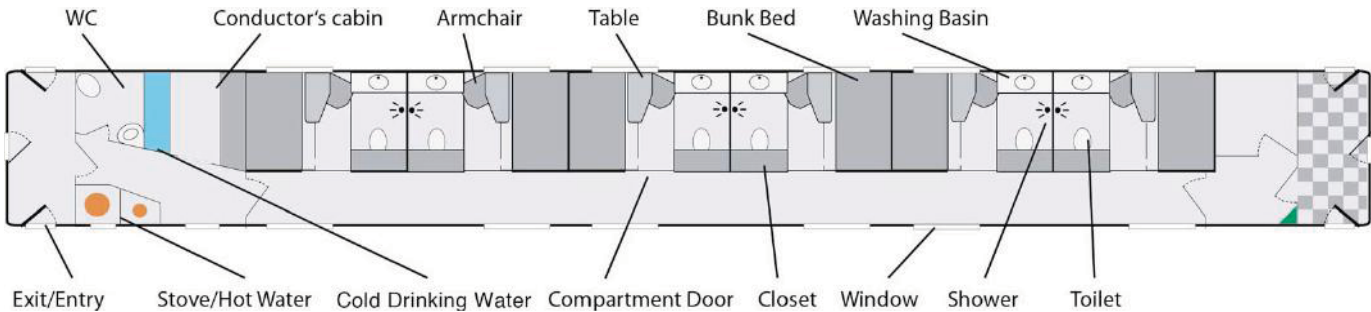
Bolshoi Platinum Class cabins are the most comfortable option available on the *Tsar's Gold* private train. Each cabin is outfitted with a shower, WC and washbasin. Cabins are equipped with convertible upper and lower berths and a window-table.



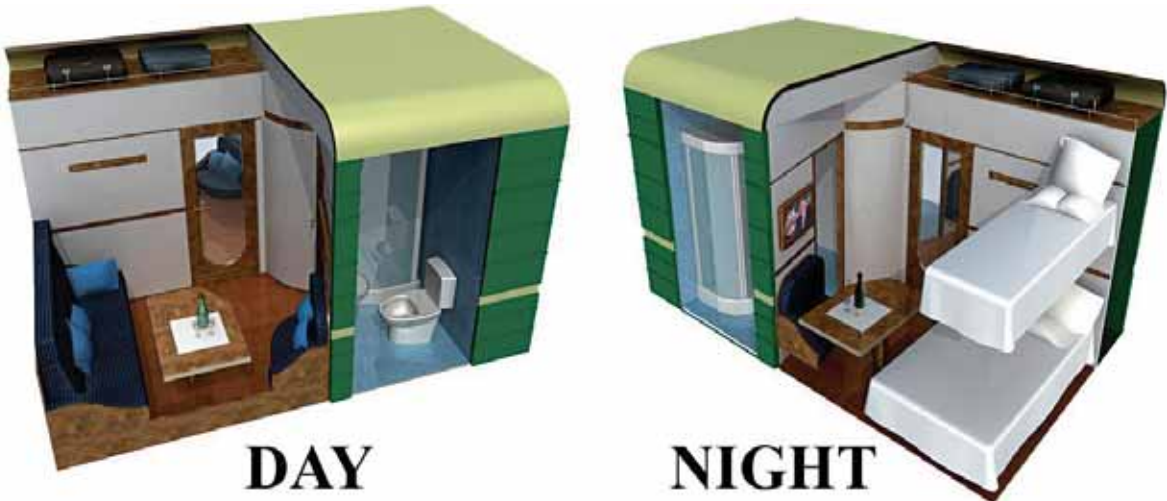
Bolshoi Platinum Class



Bolshoi Class cabins feature the same modern en suite amenities as Bolshoi Platinum, but in a smaller space. Bolshoi Class cabins are smaller than Bolshoi Platinum cabins but still have en suite facilities, though with a smaller shower area.



Bolshoi Class



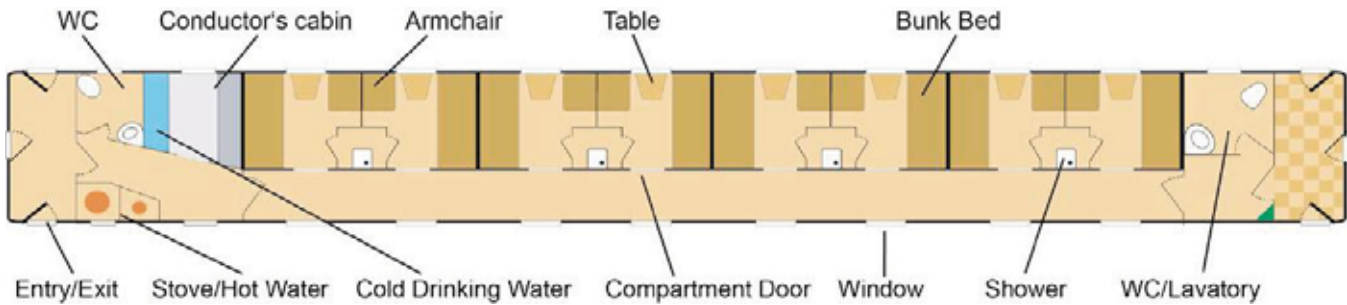
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NIGHT

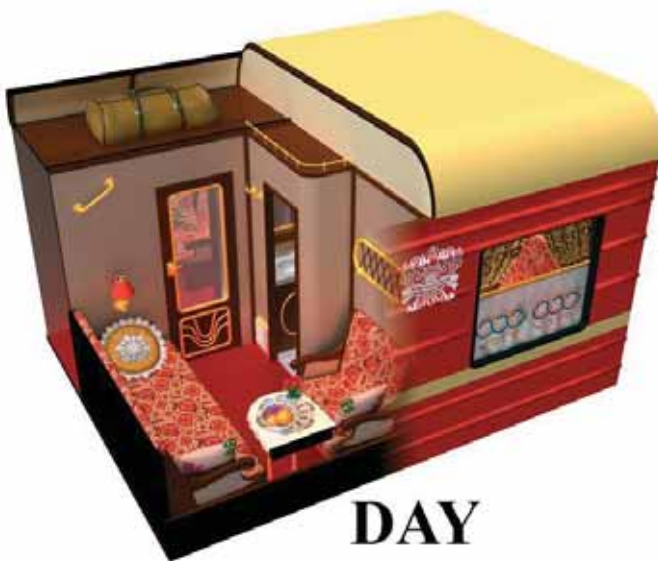


Nostalgic Comfort Class

Nostalgic Comfort Class cabins are aboard new cars retrofitted with furnishings reminiscent of the special sleeping cars used by Communist Party leaders in the 1950s. Cabins include convertible upper and lower berths, a comfortable armchair and storage space above the door. A small, basic hand-held shower is shared between each two compartments, and a WC is found at each end of the car.



Nostalgic Comfort Class

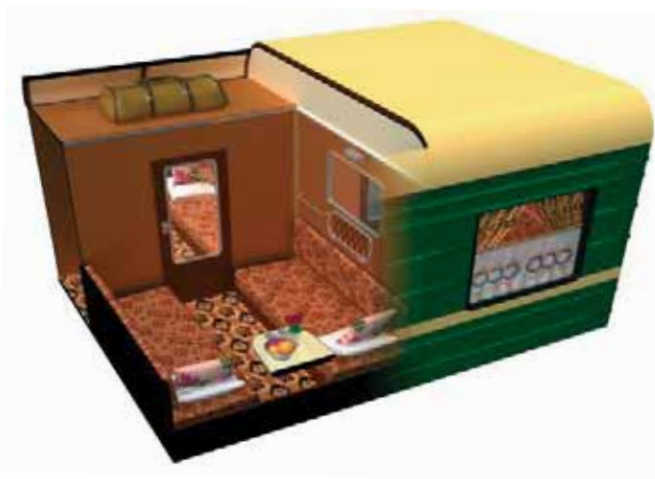
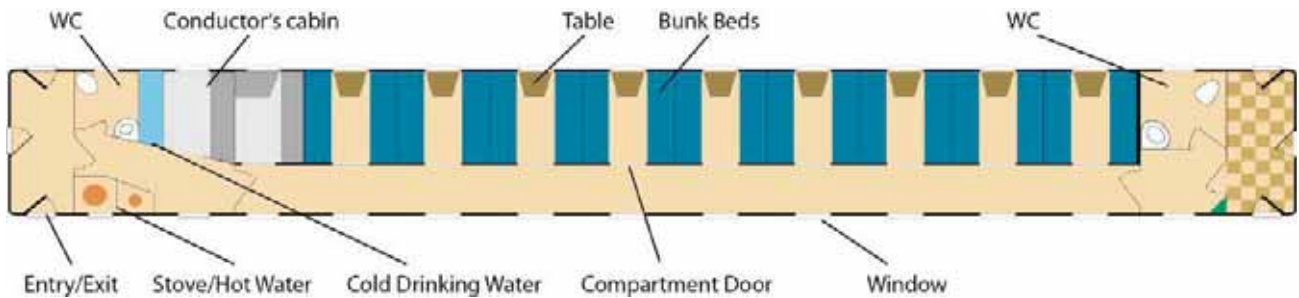


Superior Plus, Superior and Classic

There are three levels of more basic accommodation on the Tsar's Gold train: Superior Plus, Superior and Classic. All three levels 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 in all cases, and every other car has a shower compartment at one end.

There are three levels of cabins:

- **Superior Plus Class** cabins feature new upholstery and modern design, include an electrical outlet in the cabin and offer the best cabin-to-shower ratio of these three levels of cabin options.
- **Superior Class** cabins are newly upholstered with new trim and a more modern interior design.
- **Classic Class** cabins are the best-value cabin option.



Please note that a variety of cabin styles are in use aboard the Tsar's Gold train. As not all cars are configured identically, décor and layout of dining and accommodation cars on your journey may differ from the sample images depicted in our catalogs/websites.

For more photographs of the train, please visit our website at www.mircorp.com/rail_journeys.asp



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.

May 17-31, 2020
June 14-28, 2020
July 10-24, 2020
August 2-16, 2020
August 28-September 11, 2020
September 20-October 4, 2020

Note: This train also runs in the reverse direction, from Moscow to Beijing.

2020 eastbound departure dates are:

May 9-24, 2020
June 6-21, 2020
July 2-17, 2020
July 25-August 9, 2020
August 20-September 4, 2020
September 12-27, 2020

2020 Package Prices – Westbound

Land Tour Cost – Per Person:

Classic Class, twin share	\$9,295
Classic Class, single	\$12,945
Superior Class, twin share	\$9,795
Superior Class, single	\$13,945
Superior Plus Class, twin share	\$10,495
Superior Plus Class, single	\$14,645
Nostalgic Comfort Class, twin share	\$12,595
Nostalgic Comfort Class, single	\$18,945
Bolshoi Class, twin share	\$16,095
Bolshoi Class, single	\$24,195
Bolshoi Platinum Class, twin share	\$19,195
Bolshoi Platinum Class, single	\$28,595

Please note: the May 17-31, 2020 and July 10-24, 2020 departures will operate at a special price.

Land Tour Cost – Per Person – May 17-31, 2020 and July 10-24, 2020 departures only:

Classic Class, twin share	\$9,095
Classic Class, single	\$12,745
Superior Class, twin share	\$9,595
Superior Class, single	\$13,745
Superior Plus Class, twin share	\$10,295



<i>Superior Plus Class, single</i>	\$14,445
<i>Nostalgic Comfort Class, twin share</i>	\$12,395
<i>Nostalgic Comfort Class, single</i>	\$18,745
<i>Bolshoi Class, twin share</i>	\$15,895
<i>Bolshoi Class, single</i>	\$23,995
<i>Bolshoi Platinum Class, twin share</i>	\$18,995
<i>Bolshoi Platinum Class, single</i>	\$28,395

Private Train Tour Deposits – Per person:

Classic, Superior, Superior Plus classes	\$2,000
Nostalgic Comfort class	\$2,000
Bolshoi class	\$2,500
Bolshoi Platinum class	\$3,000

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

Land Tour Includes

- Accommodation aboard the *Tsar’s Gold* private train and one night aboard the chartered Chinese train.
- Hotel accommodation per the itinerary (5 nights total: 2 in Beijing, 1 in Ulaanbaatar, 1 in Irkutsk and 1 in Moscow).
- Water, coffee and tea.
- Meals per itinerary.
- 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.
- Baggage handling at all railway stations.

Not Included

- International airfare or surface transport to the point of joining/leaving the tour. MIR is able to arrange your air itinerary with special economy and business class rates available on several airlines. 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.
- Some meals.
- Any drinks other than water, coffee and tea.
- Any drinks outside of mealtimes.
- Gratuities to local guides, train staff and your train tour manager.
- Visa fees.
- Any excess baggage charges.
- Airport departure taxes.
- Vaccination or medical costs.
- Trip cancellation, medical and evacuation 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 1-866-385-4839.

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.

May 16-30, 2021
June 13-27, 2021
July 9-23, 2021
August 1-15, 2021
August 27-September 10, 2021
September 19-October 3, 2021

Package Prices – 2021

Land Tour Cost – Per Person:

Classic Class, twin share	\$9,495
Classic Class, single	\$13,090
Superior Class, twin share	\$9,995
Superior Class, single	\$13,990
Superior Plus Class, twin share	\$10,595
Superior Plus Class, single	\$14,590
Nostalgic Comfort Class, twin share	\$13,395
Nostalgic Comfort Class, single	\$19,990
Bolshoi Class, twin share	\$17,395
Bolshoi Class, single	\$26,690
Bolshoi Platinum Class, twin share	\$20,495
Bolshoi Platinum Class, single	\$31,390

Note: May 16-30, 2021 and July 9-23, 2021 departures operate at a lower rate – deduct \$200 per person from the package prices shown above.

Private Train Tour Deposits – Per person:

Classic, Superior, Superior Plus classes	\$2,000
Nostalgic Comfort class	\$2,000
Bolshoi class	\$2,500
Bolshoi Platinum class	\$3,000



Start Planning Next Year Now

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. Tours aboard the fully-chartered *Tsar's Gold* 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 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.
- *Tsar's Gold* average group sizes can range from 120-180 passengers.
- Travelers from around the world join the *Tsar's Gold* departures. English-language guides and announcements are guaranteed on these departures, but the majority of train travelers may be German, French or other nationalities/native speakers.
- 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.

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. State Department's Travel Advisory regarding travel to China here: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/china-travel-advisory.html>

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

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



Weather

China generally experiences hot summers and cold winters. Wintertime temperatures range from 20-35 degrees Fahrenheit. During the day temperatures warm up to the 60s and 70s in spring (April-May), and return to this range for fall (September-October). Summer months of June-August are hot, with temperatures reaching into the 80s.

Mongolia and Siberia generally experience hot summers and cold winters. June through September travel is recommended for these destinations, as in April and October, Mongolia can be quite cold. Keep in mind that Mongolia can be very hot in July and August. Average June temperatures in Ulaanbaatar in June are in the 70s daytime with nights dipping into the upper 50s. Temperatures can go as high as 90 or more in and around Ulaanbaatar. Average June temperatures in Irkutsk are in the high 60s daytime, and in the low 50s at night. Temperatures in Siberia can spike as high as the 90s.

The climate of **Western Russia** is a rather severe **continental climate**, cold in winter and hot in summer. As with traveling anywhere, it is best to bring layers of different weights and thickness to keep yourself comfortable. In the heat of a Moscow summer, shorts are acceptable anywhere but in church and the theater or a formal restaurant. Women will be happy that they brought a skirt or dress, and a long-sleeved shirt or blouse is great to slip on whenever you feel underdressed. In the winter and spring months, a warm coat, hat and gloves will come in handy, and a pair of boots that will withstand wet snow or rain as well. You can carry a light windbreaker in your daypack or bag in case a sunny day turns chilly.

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.

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

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), and a **single-entry** Chinese visa are required for this tour. Please note, double-entry visas or visas for other countries may be required depending on your air itinerary. Extensive pre-tour paperwork is necessary to obtain the 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 \$541. 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. At the time of writing, the Russian Embassy is offering U.S. passport-holders three-year multiple-entry visas at the same price as single- or double-entry visas (the \$541 estimated above). Travelers who need to expedite their processing may not have the same option of getting the multi-entry visa at the single-entry visa cost. Please call for information.



Standard visa processing is about 4-5 weeks for this tour. Travelers should prepare to be without their passports for that amount of time. If you plan to travel extensively in the time leading up to your MIR tour, you may need to obtain a second valid passport or use expedited processing, depending on your plans. Please contact us with any questions you may have regarding the timeline for visa processing.

Please note: non-U.S. passport holders usually require a **Mongolian visa** in addition to the Russian and Chinese. Please call MIR for details.

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, Eastern or Central Europe before or after your tour. Suggested extensions include:

Shanghai, China

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 thrived. Foreign investment, once by decree and now by choice, has played a huge part in Shanghai's development. The influence of Britain, France and America is as prominent today as it was 160 years ago. Contact us for a suggested itinerary, details and pricing.

St. Petersburg, Russia

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." Explore the Hermitage Museum and the grand estates of czars Peter and Catherine. Contact us for a suggested itinerary, details and pricing.

Also Nearby

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

Flexible Essential Trips – Classic Private Journeys

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 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 Poland, 6 days. On this focused tour, visit four Polish UNESCO sites in six days – Warsaw's Old Town, Krakow's Historic Center, the Auschwitz/Birkenau camp and the Wieliczka Salt Mine.



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 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 10 days.

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.

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 \$2,000, \$2,500 or \$3,000

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.
MIR Corporation



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