

TRANS-SIBERIAN RAILWAY

A tour all the way around the world in 23 days

July 15, 2018 - 22 (23) days



a world to experience



Fares Per Person: based on double/twin

\$15,585 Classic Category on train

\$16,030 Superior Category on train

\$19,015 Nostalgic Category on train

\$22,900 Bolshoi Category on train

> Please add 0.1% GST.

> Single fares are available. Triples are not offered.

> **Experience Points:** Earn 237 points from this tour.

Redeem **237 points** if you book by **March 7**.



Includes

- Coach transportation to/from Vancouver Airport
- 1 night accommodation & taxes in Vancouver
- Flight from Vancouver to Amsterdam
- Transfers from Amsterdam airport to hotel & back
- 3 nights accommodation & taxes in Amsterdam
- Locally-guided tour of Amsterdam highlights
- Rijksmuseum
- Amsterdam canals cruise
- Guided tour of Delft with Royal Delft Blue Pottery, and villages of Zaanse Schans and Volendam
- Flight from Amsterdam to Moscow
- 2 nights accommodation & taxes in Moscow
- Guided tour of Moscow with Red Square and Kremlin visit
- Ride on subway to view beautiful metro stations
- Museum of the Cosmonauts
- Tretjakov Gallery
- Evening tour of Moscow lights
- 10 days on Trans-Siberian Railway on the private Tsar's Gold Train with sleeping compartments for 8 nights and all meals
- Hotels during train ride in Irkutsk and Ulan Bator
- Guided tour of Kazan and its Kremlin
- Guided tour of Yekaterinburg
- Welcome ceremony and tour in Novosibirsk
- Tour of Irkutsk with Siberian wooden houses
- Boat excursion on Lake Baikal
- Tour of Ulan Bator with Gandan Buddhist Monastery and Choijin Lama Temple
- Performance of traditional Mongolian folk arts
- Terelj National Park
- Mongolian horseback riding demonstration
- 1 day and night on Chinese private train
- Transfer from Beijing station to hotel
- 2 days touring with local guide in Beijing
- Temple of Heaven
- Tiananmen Square and Forbidden City
- Great Wall of China and Ming Tombs
- Flight from Beijing to Vancouver
- Current air transport taxes, fees & fuel surcharges
- Knowledgeable Wells Gray tour director throughout tour and train excursion
- Multilingual guides in Russia and China
- Gratuities for all local guides, drivers & train staff
- Luggage handling at hotels and train stations
- **55 meals:** 20 breakfasts, 15 lunches, 20 dinners

Kamloops > 250-374-0831
Kelowna > 250-762-3435
www.wellsgraytours.com

Penticton > 250-493-1255
Vernon > 250-545-9197
Toll Free > 800-667-9552



The Trans-Siberian Railway

Experience one of the world's greatest train journeys — the Trans-Siberian Railway from Moscow to Beijing. Crossing three countries (Russia, Mongolia and China) and seven time zones, this legendary rail excursion spans more than 9,000 kilometres and stops at 80 stations. The journey takes 11 days. It was built between 1891 and 1916 under the supervision of Russian government ministers personally appointed by Tsar Alexander III and his son, Tsar Nicholas II.

There are several trains that make the trip with service standards that range from comfortable for wealthy tourists to basic for local residents. Wells Gray Tours has booked space on the Tsar's Gold Train which is among the most deluxe with impeccable service and meals. Khrushchev's "red tsars" were fond of their home comforts and they liked to travel in style too. Some of the carriages were built especially for Brezhnev and his comrades (now the Nostalgic Category) and clearly demonstrate these high standards. The Tsar's Gold Train is a private train, so it does not provide scheduled service between cities as the regular Trans-Siberian train does; it operates on a special itinerary with extended stops in cities for tours and brief stops at scenic highlights. The train usually has 21 cars with the four dining cars in the middle. Wells Gray customers can mingle with other well-heeled travellers from around the world. English is the primary language on board, but you may also hear (and practice) French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Italian.

The longest bridge is 2½ km over the Amur River and the train crosses 15 other big rivers including the Volga, Ob, Enisey, and Oka. The longest tunnel is 2 km and there are a total of 39. The route passes 87 cities or towns, and hundreds of hamlets.

Travelling between bustling cities like Moscow and Beijing, across endless taiga, winding through the Ural Mountains and along the shore of stunning Lake Baikal, and traversing the Gobi Desert, a trip on the Tsar's Gold Train on the Trans-Siberian Railway is likely to be one of life's most memorable journeys.

Compartment Categories

CLASSIC: This compartment measures 255 cm high by 190 cm long by 182 cm wide. The two lower berths are 70 × 190 cm and face each other with a small table under the window. Toilet and sink are located at each end of the carriage and a shower is in every second carriage.

SUPERIOR: This compartment is the same size as Classic and also has two lower beds that are slightly smaller, and the same layout for toilet, sink and shower. These compartments are newly refurbished.

NOSTALGIC: This compartment offers the opportunity to travel in a nostalgic ambience that would even make past Soviet leaders and tsars feel comfortable, but with all of the 21st century's modern amenities. There are two comfortable beds (80 × 185 cm) placed one above the other, plus an armchair. Wash basin and shower are shared with the adjacent compartment and a toilet is at each end of the carriage.

BOLSHOI: This compartment is the second finest on the train, reflected in its illustrious name, and offers 5.57 m² of space. It has two beds, with the upper measuring 80 × 176 cm and the lower 110 × 187 cm, comfortable seating, a table, and a small clothes closet. It has a private lavatory with toilet, wash basin, and shower. The compartment size is 255 cm high by 203 cm long by 178 cm wide.

Is travelling around the world on your Bucket List?

Wells Gray Tours offered an Around the World experience in 2016, flying to Dubai, cruising to Singapore, and flying to Vancouver. This is the second opportunity to achieve this item on your Bucket List. It is a costly venture, especially when done by air as most airlines charge \$4,000 to \$5,000 for the flight alone plus expenses at stopovers. Most cruise lines offer the trip which lasts nearly 4 months and costs at least \$35,000 per person for an outside stateroom. This 23 day tour combines air, 11 days on the train, and a cruise on Lake Baikal, and is much more affordable. The wonders of Moscow and Beijing are also Bucket List cities for many and this tour stays 2 nights and 3 nights there respectively, before and after the train.

Jules Verne's popular book, *Around the World in 80 Days*, was published in 1873. The novel is the story of Phileas Fogg who accepts a wager to make this journey and travels eastward by ships and trains. Upon his return to London, he thinks he has lost the wager by arriving late, then realizes that he crossed the Date Line and gained a day. Now you can circumnavigate the globe in only 23 days.

This tour is 23 days long if you count crossing the Date Line during the flight from Beijing to Vancouver as a day. However, on the calendar it is 22 days, from July 15 to August 5, 2018.

* HIGHLIGHTS & TRAIN STOPS *

AMSTERDAM
MOSCOW
RED SQUARE & THE KREMLIN
KAZAN
YEKATERINBURG
URAL MOUNTAINS
NOVOSIBIRSK

IRKUTSK
LAKE BAIKAL CRUISE
ULAN BATOR (Mongolia)
TERELJ NATIONAL PARK
GOBI DESERT
BEIJING
GREAT WALL & FORBIDDEN CITY

Itinerary

Sunday, July 15: *Meals: D*
We drive to Vancouver and stay overnight. Note: It may seem unnecessary to go to Vancouver a day before the flight, closures of the Coquihalla due to accidents can cause a missed flight.

Monday, July 16: *Meals: B*
The morning is leisure time and we go to the airport about noon for our flight to Amsterdam.

Tuesday, July 17: *Meals: D*
We arrive at Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport in the morning and local time is 9 hours ahead. Our Netherlands guide and coach meet us at the airport and we have an orientation tour on the way to the hotel. **Amsterdam** was founded in the Middle Ages and has many historic buildings. We visit Dam Square with the impressive Royal Palace, the New Church, the canals, and Waterloo Square. We stay three nights in Amsterdam. A welcome dinner is included.

Wednesday, July 18: *Meals: B,L,D*
We visit the renowned **Rijksmuseum** which has an exceptional collection of 15th and 17th century paintings by Dutch masters. View Rembrandt's famous *The Night Watch* plus works by Vermeer, Steen, and Hals. During the afternoon, we explore the city via a narrated **canal cruise**, passing gabled warehouses, arched bridges, noble mansions, and colourful houseboats.

Thursday, July 19: *Meals: B,D*
We head out of Amsterdam for a visit to Delft and a tour of the famous **Royal Delft Blue Porcelain** exhibition. Next is the picturesque UNESCO-listed village of **Zaanse Schans** where we visit a cheese farm, paint mill, and oil mill, and view traditional crafts of cheese- and clog-making. The third village is **Volendam** which has a bustling harbour on the Zuiderzee and is known for traditional costumes of ancient clothing, the klederdracht.

Friday, July 20: *Meals: B,D*
We have a three-hour flight to Moscow today and move watches ahead another hour. **Welcome to Russia!** A transfer is provided from the airport to the Intercontinental Tverskaya Hotel (subject to change) where we stay two nights. It is located in the vibrant heart of **Moscow**, just 15 minutes walk from the Kremlin. There is an option tonight to see the Russian National Dance show, *Kostroma*. Fifty ballet dancers present this epic tale of Russian folklore. Cost is \$105 per person; please book this no later than final payment date.

Saturday, July 21: *Meals: B,D*
We enjoy a half-day Moscow tour, seeing famous sites like the Bolshoi Theatre, **Red Square**, and the colorful onion domes of St. Basil's Cathedral. We also have a shopping opportunity at the famous GUM Department Store, explore the Museum of the Cosmonauts about the history of space exploration, visit Tretjakov Gallery, the world's foremost Museum of Russian fine art, and experience the city's Metro with its beautiful stations. Later tonight, admire this "City of Lights" during a tour around the exquisitely illuminated Russian capital.

Sunday, July 22: *Meals: B,L,D*
The morning is devoted to Moscow's famous red brick enclosure known as **The Kremlin**. This historic fortified complex includes five palaces, four cathedrals, and the enclosing Kremlin Wall with towers. The complex serves as the official residence of the President of the Russian Federation. The afternoon is free to relax and explore. You may wish to spend some time people-watching in Red Square or visit Lenin's Tomb. We board **The Trans-Siberian Railway, the Tsar's Gold Train**, in late afternoon. Settle into your private compartment, then meet your fellow travellers in the dining car to learn more details about your private train. The train pulls out of Moscow during dinner to begin our 11-day adventure to the Far East.

Monday, July 23:*Meals: B,L,D*

In the morning, we arrive in **Kazan**, the capital of Tatarstan, located on the Volga River. We tour the **Kazan Kremlin**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and learn about the turbulent relationship between the Tatars, the Cossacks, and the Russians. The Annunciation Cathedral is the oldest part of the Kremlin and was built in 1554 at the behest of Ivan the Terrible, the only 16th-century Russian church to have six piers and five apses. The train resumes its journey eastwards in the evening.

Tuesday, July 24:*Meals: B,L,D*

The train arrives about noon in **Yekaterinburg**, the historic capital of the Ural Mountains and Russia's fourth largest city. It is located on the border of Europe and Asia, 1,667 km or just over 1,000 miles east of Moscow. The city is remembered as the place where the Russian Tsar Nicholas II and his family were murdered in 1918. We visit the Church on Blood in Honour of All Saints Resplendent in the Russian Land which was built in 2003 in commemoration of that tragic event. There is time in the city centre which was beautifully restored in 2009 and now has some of Russia's tallest buildings. Back on board, we continue the journey through the vast steppes of western Siberia.

Wednesday, July 25:*Meals: B,L,D*

We arrive in **Novosibirsk**, Russia's third largest city with a population of about 1.5 million and the capital of the Siberian Federal District. We are welcomed in the traditional Russian fashion with bread and salt. During a city tour, we experience the most Soviet of all cities during this journey. We see the enormous **Trans-Siberian Monument** which honours Alexander III who started construction of the railway. Novosibirsk lies on the banks of the Ob River, the world's seventh longest river at 3,650 km, which flows north into the Arctic Ocean. The rail bridge is 1 km long and was completed in 1897.

Thursday, July 26:*Meals: B,L,D*

Our train crosses the vast **Yenisei River**, the second of three great Siberian rivers which rises in Mongolia and flows 5,500 km to the Arctic Ocean. We are on the train all day. The chefs once again demonstrate their skills as they serve Russian specialties in a "tsar's feast". A vodka tasting accompanied by clever toasts offers an enjoyable opportunity to combine pleasure and Russian hospitality. The train passes villages with typical wooden houses and through birch forests set against a background of mountain landscapes.

Friday, July 27:*Meals: B,L,D*

We arrive in **Irkutsk**, the capital of Eastern Siberia in tsarist times. It is located on the Angara River, a

tributary of the Yenisei River, and is 70 km downstream from huge Lake Baikal. During the city tour, we see the picturesque Siberian wooden houses and another memorial to Tsar Alexander III which was erected in 2003 where the Trans-Sib Obelisk once stood. This afternoon, we go to an open-air museum with a focus on life and work in historical Siberia. As a break from the train, we stay overnight in the Irkutsk Hotel.

Saturday, July 28:*Meals: B,L,D*

Today is one of the highlights of our journey across Russia — the renowned **Lake Baikal**, an incredible lake of superlatives. It is the largest freshwater lake by volume in the world, containing 22% of the world's fresh surface water or 23,615 cubic km, in fact more water than the Great Lakes combined. With a maximum depth of 1,642 metres, Baikal is the world's deepest lake. It is considered among the world's clearest lakes and some geologists say it is the world's oldest lake at 25 million years. Baikal is the seventh-largest lake in the world, measuring 636 km long by 79 km wide. We drive by motor-coach from Irkutsk to Listvyanka, then we board a boat to cross the outlet arm to **Port Baikal**. Our private train is waiting. We ride for several hours directly along the rugged shore of Lake Baikal, enjoying spectacular views of the water and cliffs. The train stops at one scenic layby so we can admire this majestic natural wonder and dinner is served as a picnic on the lakeshore, weather permitting. You can even take a swim in the lake.

Sunday, July 29:*Meals: B,L,D*

This morning, we are still travelling along Lake Baikal, then the train turns into the splendid **Selenga Valley** and the wild solitude of eastern Siberia's mountainous steppes. We stop for a short tour in **Ulan-Ude** including a stroll in the Square of the Soviets. The largest head of Soviet leader Lenin ever built is here (7.7 metres tall). Back on the train, we soon cross the **Russian-Mongolian border** where formalities are an easy matter carried out on board.

Monday, July 30:*Meals: B,L,D*

Early risers are treated to central Mongolia's spectacular scenery, set in a mountainous landscape dotted with colourful yurt camps and inhabited by solitary riders on horseback. This morning, we arrive in **Ulan Bator**, the capital of Mongolia. During the city tour, we see the impressive Gandan Buddhist Monastery and the odd Choijin Lama Temple, among other things. Beer gardens are very popular in Mongolia, and the evening includes a visit to the city's finest. Afterwards, we have the unique opportunity to attend a performance of traditional **Mongolian folk arts**, including throat singing, horse-

headed fiddle playing, national costumes, and dances. This is another night off the train at the Ramada Hotel.

Option: For a really rare experience and a dream come true for nature lovers, we can arrange lodging in a yurt (a Mongolian tent) high in the mountains. You do not see the folk arts show, but the star-gazing is incredible. Guests use candles as there is no electricity. Toilets and showers are in a separate building. Cost is \$55 per person. Please sign up when you book for this tour.

Tuesday, July 31: *Meals: B,L,D*

Today is devoted to **Terelj National Park**, east of Ulan Bator. Here we observe the nomadic herds-men's exotic settlements of traditional tents, horse herds, and scraggly yaks, a type of wild Tibetan cattle. A Mongolian horse-riding demonstration is put on especially for us and we enjoy a picnic lunch served in these splendid surroundings. We board the train tonight.

Wednesday, August 1: *Meals: B,L,D*

For the whole day, the train crosses the vast **Gobi Desert** which sprawls across southern Mongolia and northern China. It is the fifth largest desert in the world, covering about 1.3 million square kilometres. Much of the Gobi is not sandy but has exposed bare rock. At midday, we arrive at the **Mongolia-China border** where a chartered Chinese train is waiting. The Russian private train cannot continue towards Beijing because of the different track gauge in China.

Note: The Chinese train has only one class of sleeping compartments. For this final night on board, everybody has the same type of compartment regardless of the category selected on Tsar's Gold Train.

Thursday, August 2: *Meals: B,L,D*

We reach the end of our epic journey across two continents this morning when the train arrives in **Beijing**. A motorcoach meets us at the station and takes us to the Capital Hotel for a three-night stay. The rest of the day is yours to do as you wish.

Friday, August 3: *Meals: B,L,D*

Beijing is the capital of the People's Republic of China and the political centre. During today's tour, we make photo stops at sites of the **Summer 2008 Olympics** including the National Stadium (Bird's Nest) and National Aquatic Center (Water Cube). We also tour the **Temple of Heaven**, completed in 1420, which was used by the Emperors of the Ming and Qing dynasties for annual ceremonies of prayer to heaven for a good harvest. Next, we take a stroll around famous **Tiananmen Square**, the world's largest, and then visit the sprawling **Forbidden City**, also called the Palace Museum. It was the Imperial Palace during the Ming and Qing dynasties.

Saturday, August 4: *Meals: B,L,D*

A highlight is the **Great Wall of China**, one of the Seven Wonders of the World. Built between the 7th and 8th centuries BC, it meanders across the country for more than 6,000 kilometres. We also visit the **Ming Tombs**, the burial site of 13 Ming Dynasty emperors, with its impressive Spirit Way. In the evening, we enjoy a farewell dinner of world-renowned Peking Duck.

Sunday, August 5: *Meals: B*

Our flight to Vancouver is 11½ hours, but we cross the International Date Line and arrive on the same date. We drive home to the Interior.

Congratulations — you are in an elite group of travellers who have circumnavigated the globe!



Tour Notes

BOOK EARLY. There is huge international demand for this famous journey from Moscow to Beijing and this private train only operates six times in 2018. If you want to go on this tour, please don't delay booking. Wells Gray Tours has a limited number of compartments on the train in the four categories described. It is very important to book early to ensure availability and your preferred train category.

CHANGES. This tour has been planned 1½ years in advance and released for sale over a year out. Some parts of the tour can easily change with such early planning. Airfare, air taxes, and fuel surcharges are estimates only and are based on rates at time of planning. Flight routes and even airlines can change. The train is priced in US dollars, and the exchange rate is always subject to fluctuation. Hotels named can change, usually to equivalent or upgraded hotels. Wells Gray Tours will notify you of changes to fares (up or down), hotels or the itinerary. Some changes can even occur after departure. Experienced international travellers are always flexible and expect changes to happen, despite possible disappointment.

PASSPORT & VISAS. A valid passport is required with at least 4 blank pages and must not expire until six months after return date. A Russian visa and a Chinese visa are required and Wells Gray Tours can advise you about procedures. Plan on applying about mid-April 2018 and not having your passport for up to 45 days. The cost of visas (about \$600 with a visa service agency) is not included in the tour fare. A visa is not required for Netherlands or Mongolia.

GRATUITIES for train staff, local guides, drivers, and hotel luggage handlers are all included. You are welcome to offer additional gratuities.

FLIGHTS cannot be booked until about 11 months prior, so we can advise you in September which airlines we will be using. Group advance seating is completed at this time and specific seat selection or requests are not permitted.

CHECKING THE TRAIN IN 2017. Wells Gray Tours' general manager, Stephanie Dilling, has been invited by the Trans-Siberian Railway to experience the Tsar's Gold Train in August 2017. She will be able to check out every aspect of the journey (even the optional Mongolian yurt). Please call or email your questions and Stephanie should be able to answer everything when she returns.

WELLS GRAY TOUR DIRECTOR. As of July 2017, your tour director is Roland Neave, owner of Wells Gray Tours, accompanied by his wife, Anne.



ACTIVITY LEVEL. Moderate activity most days including distances to walk of up to 1 km, steps during the city tours, and getting on and off the train. Expect lots of walking during the two days in the Amsterdam area. Climbing the Great Wall of China is challenging. It is a 3-hour walk through the Forbidden City and some visitors hire a wheelchair and pusher. Walking tours may be part of a city tour and these could be more challenging if on cobblestone streets or uneven sidewalks in historic districts. Some buildings and museums may not have elevators. You should consult with the local guide if you want to omit part of a tour. There may be a walk through several cars of the moving train between your compartment and the dining cars. There can be longer walks in airports; request a cart or wheelchair in advance if this could be an issue. If you are not able to participate in Activity Level 2, Wells Gray Tours recommends that you bring a companion to assist you. The tour director, local guides and drivers have many responsibilities, so please do not expect them, or your fellow travellers, to provide ongoing assistance.

Tour Policies

Payments: A deposit of \$2,000 per person is requested at the time of booking and the balance is due March 7, 2018.

Cancellation Policy: Up to November 5, 2017, your tour payments will be refunded less an administrative charge of \$300 per person. From November 6, 2017, to March 7, 2018, the cancellation charge is \$2,000 per person. From March 8 to May 1, the cancellation charge is 50% of the tour fare. From May 2 to May 31, the cancellation charge is 80% of the tour fare. After May 1, there is no refund.

Travel Insurance: A Comprehensive Insurance policy is available through Wells Gray Tours and coverage is provided by Travel Guard. Policies purchased at deposit include a waiver of the pre-existing condition clause for medical and cancellation claims, otherwise policies must be purchased by final payment. Please contact us for details. Because of the size of the penalties on this tour, we urge you to buy a policy or check your own carefully for adequate coverage.

Photo Credit: Trans-Siberian Railway (pictured along Lake Baikal)

e-points: This tour earns 237 e-points. Each time you travel on a Wells Gray tour, you earn Experience Points, or e-points. One point equals \$1. Redeem your points on select tours or accumulate enough points to earn a free tour! Redemptions offered until March 7, 2018.

Consumer Protection BC Licences: Kamloops 178, Vernon 655, Kelowna 588, Penticton 924