

Trans Mongolian Express - ACTM

21 days: Beijing to St Petersburg

What's Included

Great Wall entrance (Beijing). Tiananmen Square and Forbidden City guided tour. Ulaanbaatar guided city tour including Gandan Monastery and Bogd Khan Palace. Overnight in Mongolian ger camp. Trans Mongolian Railway. Irkutsk city tour. Lake Baikal stay (Listvyanka). Trans Siberian Railway. Ekaterinburg walking tour. Trans Ural Railway. Red Square visit and Moscow metro orientation tour. Kremlin and Armoury guided tour. St Petersburg walking tour. Hermitage Museum entrance. All transport between destinations and to/from included activities.

The information in this trip details document has been compiled with care and is provided in good faith. However it is subject to change, and does not form part of the contract between the client and G Adventures. The itinerary featured is correct at time of printing. It may differ slightly to the one in the brochure. Occasionally our itineraries change as we make improvements that stem from past travellers, comments and our own research. Sometimes it can be a small change like adding an extra meal along the itinerary. Sometimes the change may result in us altering the tour for the coming year. Ultimately, our goal is to provide you with the most rewarding experience. Please note that our brochure is usually released in November each year. If you have booked from the previous brochure you may find there have been some changes to the itinerary.

VERY IMPORTANT: Please ensure that you print a final copy of your Trip Details to review a couple of days prior to travel, in case there have been changes that affect your plans.

VALIDITY: Valid for all trips departing January 1st, 2014 - October 16th, 2016

Itinerary



Day 1 Beijing

As fellow group members will be arriving throughout the day there are no planned activities until the group meeting in the evening at 6:00pm, followed by an optional group dinner. Upon arrival please check the notice board in the hotel reception for details of the time and place of the meeting.

Days 2-3 Beijing

Beijing, the capital city of China, is one of the world's most impressive cities. The attractions are never-ending in this vibrant city. During your free time opt to visit the Temple of Heaven, the Summer Palace and the Lama Temple Monastery. A great way to visit these landmarks is to hire a bicycle and take to the streets, just like the Chinese do.

On Day 2 enjoy a guided tour of Tiananmen Square and the Forbidden City to learn more about past and present of China.

Day 3 takes you on a guided tour of the Great Wall (Mutianyu section). The Wall, an incredible piece of engineering, stretches 6000 km westwards from the mountain ridges north of Beijing. It was originally constructed to protect the Chinese empires from the 'barbarians' of the north.

Day 4 China-Mongolia Railway

The excitement builds as we board the Ulaanbaatar Express on the morning of Day 4. While on board, quickly settle in and enjoy impressive views of the Great Wall as the train tackles the mountains before descending to the arid lands of Inner Mongolia and continues into the heart of rural Asia.

Days 5-7 Ulaanbaatar/Terelj National Park (2B,1L,1D)

Awake to the stunning landscapes of the south Gobi. The classic image of Mongolian horses and gers dot the scenery from horizon to horizon. The occasional nomad encampment appears mirage-like through the carriage window. Arrive shortly after 12pm on Day 5 in the world's most remote capital - Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. Disembark and transfer to the hotel.

Crammed between superpowers Russia and China, the now independent nation of Mongolia is a remote destination that has only recently been opened up to tourism. The capital, Ulaanbaatar (UB), is a city in which the new meets the old as Mongolians in traditional dress mingle with the nation's business elite. The nation's close relationship with the old USSR is evident in the Soviet style architecture and old Russian cars that are still being used.

Exploring the city's many museums is a real eye-opener into a turbulent history including the time of Chinghis Khan, one of the most feared and respected rulers of his time.

On Day 6, enjoy an included city tour with a local guide. Discover one of the most important Mongolian temple complexes, the Gandan Monastery. Learn about the history of Buddhism in Mongolia and hope for the chance see chanting monks. If you're lucky, a local fortune teller may be around to share some wisdom. After the Monastery, the tour will continue in the Winter Palace of the last Mongolian King (the only King's palace that survived the Revolution). At the end of the tour visit Zaisan Hill, a great viewpoint with a monument dedicated to Soviet soldiers.

The remaining hours of the day are free for you to explore the city by visiting more museums, strolling the streets or tasting dumplings (booz) in a local restaurant.

On Day 7 we leave the metropolis and travel into Mongolia's Terelj National Park. This alpine park is a beautiful retreat with imposing rock formations and endless forests. Walk through the valleys, visit nomadic families and live simply overnight in a traditional Ger camp. A unique experience not soon to be forgotten, each ger holds up to 5 people.

Day 8-9 Trans-Mongolian Railway (1B)

On the morning of Day 8 you return back to Ulaanbaatar. There is enough time to buy some souvenirs and snacks for the ride before boarding the next train.

In the evening board the 2-night train, a journey of approximately 40hrs that takes us into Siberia. This train is the most local of all the trains, providing a basic yet comfortable ride. A restaurant car is not normally provided, and if it is, the food can be basic and limited. It's a very good idea to stock up on snacks before you leave Ulaanbaatar.

On Day 9 we reach the town of Naushki where we go through our border formalities at the Mongolian/Russian borders. Walk around this small town, stock up on supplies and stretch your legs before reboarding the train around 3 pm to continue the journey to Irkutsk.

Days 10-11 Irkutsk and Lake Baikal (1B,1D)

On Day 10 we arrive to the charming Siberian city of Irkutsk where we transfer to a bus for a short trip out to the lakeside village of Listvyanka, located on the shores of Lake Baikal (approx. 2 hrs).

After settling into the hotel, opt for a guided tour of Baikal Museum, a unique museum and research complex that houses an exhibition dedicated to the biggest fresh water lake in the world. Learn about Baikal seals, omul fish and the history of surrounding areas. After visiting the museum you can explore the shores of Lake Baikal, where you will marvel at the vastness of this inland 'sea'. Over 600 kilometres long and up to 80 kilometres wide, Baikal contains one-fifth of the earth's fresh water and is home to many unique species. We enjoy the lakeside village of Listvyanka and a chance to walk along the lake shore, if the weather is nice you might want to hop in the water for a swim.

On Day 11 transfer back to Irkutsk for an included city tour of one of the most beautiful cities in Siberia. Old buildings and time-worn mansions decorate this remote but flourishing city, sometimes called "The Paris of Siberia". Founded over 350 years ago it prospered as a market town on the 'Tea Route' between China and Europe. Irkutsk today is proud of its place in Russian history, and is always a highlight of any Trans Mongolian rail journey.

Before boarding the overnight train westbound, there will be time to shop like the locals at the Central Market for Russian delicacies to keep you well-fed on your voyage.

Days 12-13 Trans-Siberian Railway and Ekaterinburg

The Trans-Siberian Railway is the world's most famous train route. It is also the longest, extending from Moscow across Siberia to the far flung town of Vladivostok. We experience part of this celebrated train odyssey, boarding in Irkutsk for the journey to Ekaterinburg (approx. 40 hours).

The train is basic yet still makes for a comfortable journey. A providnista (train attendant) is assigned to every carriage to look after your needs and each compartment has four convertible beds with luggage storage space provided. The old-style restaurant car tends to have a jovial atmosphere and can offer interesting insights into local cuisine and culture. Station platforms generally have

food for sale at stalls run by the babushkas (Russian grandmothers) helping you replenish your food supply.

Life on board can be as social or as relaxing as you would like it to be. Play cards with the locals, enjoy a Russian beer or just simply relax in your cabin watching the birch forests speed past.

On Day 13, depending on the train timetable - in the afternoon or early evening, we'll arrive to the Ural town of Ekaterinburg.

Day 14 Ekaterinburg (1B)

A city founded by Peter the Great in 1723 and situated just 40 kilometres inside Asia. Ekaterinburg's main claim to fame is the intrigue surrounding the murder of the Romanov family, an event which changed the course of Russian history, as the fall of the Tsar led to the beginning of the Communist era in 1918.

Day 15 Trans Ural Railway (B)

On Day 15 in the morning, we reboard the Trans-Siberian Railway. Today we say farewell to Asia as we cross the Urals and enter Europe aboard the train to Moscow.

Days 16-18 Moscow

We arrive in Moscow in the morning of Day 16.

The great city of Moscow has seen Russia through some of her most turbulent years. The city has survived the trauma and tribulations of centuries of revolution, from the days of the Tzars through the communist era to the growing pains of democracy. Despite the glamour and show of modern capitalism, exploring Moscow is like taking step back in time. Names of places such as the Kremlin and Red Square, bring forth unforgettable images of the Cold War era. It's worthwhile taking the time to explore the streets of this evocative city and visit Ivan the Terrible's extraordinary St Basil's Cathedral.

On Day 17 we take a guided tour of the Kremlin and the Armoury museum, the afternoon is yours to explore. The metro tour is one of Moscow's hidden gems, the city also offers a wealth of museums, shops, and kiosks to discover. On Day 18 continue your exploration of the Russian capital before we catch our last train to St Petersburg in the late evening.

Days 19-20 St Petersburg (1B)

The train arrives in St Petersburg very early in the morning on Day 19.

St Petersburg, one of Europe's finest cities, is largely built of baroque European architecture combined with the opulent palaces of Russian royalty. Its tree-lined streets and cosmopolitan atmosphere make it a favourite destination for travellers from around the globe. Upon arrival to St Petersburg take a walking tour of the city. The afternoon is free for you to explore "the northern Venice".

On the morning of Day 20 visit the Hermitage museum, one of the biggest museums in Europe, famous not only for its amazing art collection, but for being Tsars' palace for almost 200 years.

In the evening we meet for an optional group farewell dinner.

Day 21 Depart St Petersburg (B)

Depart St Petersburg at any time. We highly recommend booking post-accommodation to fully experience this vibrant city.

What's Included

Great Wall entrance (Beijing). Tiananmen Square and Forbidden City guided tour. Ulaanbaatar guided city tour including Gandan Monastery and Bogd Khan Palace. Overnight in Mongolian ger camp. Trans Mongolian Railway. Irkutsk city tour. Lake Baikal stay (Listvyanka). Trans Siberian Railway. Ekaterinburg walking tour. Trans Ural Railway. Red Square visit and Moscow metro orientation tour. Kremlin and Armoury guided tour. St Petersburg walking tour. Hermitage Museum entrance. All transport between destinations and to/from included activities.

Highlights

Explore the courtyards of the Forbidden City and walk along the Great Wall of China, ride the rails through Mongolia's grassy steppe and Siberia's taiga forests, stay in a local village on Lake Baikal, admire the grand structure of Moscow's Kremlin and Red Square, marvel at the rich art collection in the Hermitage.

Dossier Disclaimer

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Itinerary Disclaimer

While it is our intention to adhere to the route described below, there is a certain amount of flexibility built into the itinerary and on occasion it may be necessary, or desirable to make alterations. The itinerary is brief, as we never know exactly where our journey will take us. Due to our style of travel and the regions we visit, travel can be unpredictable. The Trip Details document is a general guide to the tour and region and any mention of specific destinations or wildlife is by no means a guarantee that they will be visited or encountered. Aboard expedition trips visits to research stations depend on final permission.

Additionally, any travel times listed are approximations only and subject to vary due to local circumstances.

Important Notes

1. An official letter of invitation for Russia is needed in order to get your Russian visa. We work with a local operator to obtain these letters, so please complete the visa information form which will be emailed at time of booking in a timely manner so the visa process is completed before your departure. Please note that we enter Russia on day 9 of this trip (See Visa section)
2. On arrival in Russia you will receive a double immigration card, you must fill out both parts and one is taken away upon entry, the other must remain with your passport at all times and you must have it when you are leaving Russia to hand to the relevant authorities.
3. Booking Theatre tickets in advance: to avoid disappointment we recommend that you book any theatre performances that you wish to attend in Moscow or St Petersburg in advance. Please consider carefully which performances you are going to want attend and make sure that the dates correspond to your trip. Here are some useful internet sites to check for what will be on (ballet, opera, exhibitions, etc) in Moscow and St Petersburg when you are there. In particular we recommend you see what's playing at the Bolshoi and Mariinsky, as it may be difficult to get tickets when you are there especially during White Nights in St Petersburg. The most useful sites to check in English are www.mariinsky.ru, www.bolshoi.ru and www.ticketsofrussia.com.
4. Due to the bank restrictions on changing money in Russia, Mongolia and China, only notes/bills printed after 1996 and in good condition will be accepted for exchange. usually 50 and 100 USD/EUR notes get better exchange rate.

Group Leader Description

All our G Adventures group trip is accompanied by a G Adventures Chief Experience Officer (CEO) in China. The aim of the CEO is to take the hassle out of your travels and to help you have the best trip possible. They will provide information on the places you are travelling through, offer suggestions for things to do and see, recommend great local eating venues and introduce you to our local friends. While not being guides in the traditional sense you can expect them to have a broad general knowledge of the countries visited on the trip, including historical, cultural, religious and social aspects. We also use local guides where we think more specific knowledge will add to the enjoyment of the places we are visiting- we think it's the best of both worlds.

Group Size Notes

Max 15, avg 12

Meals Included

8 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 2 dinners.

Meals

Eating is a big part of traveling. Travelling with G Adventures you experience the vast array of wonderful food that is available out in the world. Generally meals are not included in the trip price when there is a choice of eating options, to give you the maximum

flexibility in deciding where, what and with whom to eat. It also gives you more budgeting flexibility, though generally food is cheap. Our groups tend to eat together to enable you to taste a larger variety of dishes and enjoy each other's company. There is no obligation to do this though. Your CEO will be able to suggest favourite restaurants during your trip. The above information applies to G Adventures group trips. For Independent trips please check the itinerary for details of meals included. For all trips please refer to the meals included and budget information for included meals and meal budgets.

Meal Budget

Allow USD400-475 for meals not included

Transport

Train, private bus, metro, walking

About our Transportation

All trains are 2nd Class Kupe Soft sleepers: 4 berth compartments that have lockable doors. There an overhead locker and storage space under the bottom bunk that is sufficient space for your luggage. Bed linen is provided on all trains. Each carriage has two toilets and one hot water boiler. There are two train attendants in each carriage to take care of passengers and maintain the facilities. Most of the trains (but not all) will have dining car. This being said, it is always a good idea to bring your own snacks aboard for more variety of food options while travelling.

Local Flights

All local flights are included in the cost of your tour unless otherwise noted. It is important that we have your passport information at the time of booking in order to process these tickets. Internal flight tickets are issued locally and will be given to you prior to the flight departure.

Solo Travellers

We believe single travellers should not have to pay more to travel so our group trips are designed for shared accommodation and do not involve a single supplement. Single travellers joining group trips are paired in twin or multi-share accommodation with someone of the same sex for the duration of the trip. Some of our Independent trips are designed differently and single travellers on these itineraries must pay the single trip price.

Accommodation

Hotels/guesthouses (11 nts), homestay (1 nt), sleeper trains (7 nts), Mongolian ger (1 nt).

About Accommodation

A variety of styles of hotels/guest houses are used on this trip. In some local guest houses the rooms can be small and simple with shared toilet facilities and showers. A sleep sheet and travel pillow are recommended for the overnight train journeys, although simple bedding is provided. The trains have sleeper carriages with 4 beds per cabin.

Joining Hotel

Chongwen Men Hotel - ■■■■■■

#2 Chongwen Men West Street

■■■■■■■■■2■

Tel (■ ■)■(+86-10) 6512 2211, (+86-10) 6523 8497

Fax (■ ■)■(+86-10) 6512 4676, (+86-10) 6512 2122

Joining Instructions

When arriving to Beijing International Airport, you have a few choices on how to get to your starting point hotel.

Taxi: Follow the signs to the taxi ranks once you have come out of the baggage hall. The ranks are clearly defined and traffic guards will systematically put you into a taxi. Print out the name of your hotel in Chinese. A taxi ride will take between 34-45 minutes depending on traffic, and should cost between 95-120 Yuan (plus an extra 10 for the tollway).

DO NOT GO WITH ANYONE WHO APPROACHES YOU OFFERING A METERED TAXI WHICH IS PARKED IN THE LOT. We do not recommend travelling with anyone who approaches you offering a metered taxi from the nearby parking lot. They are not official taxis and usually charge a much higher price.

Airport Express Train: Once you have come out of the luggage hall, follow the signs to the underground Airport Express Line. This line takes you to the center of Beijing, to DONGZHIMEN, where you can transfer to Subway line 2, or take a taxi from here to your hotel. The Airport Express ticket costs 25 yuan. It takes about 16 minutes from Terminal 3 of the Airport to Dongzhimen. Train hours are from 6:30am to 10:30pm.

To continue to Chongwen Men Hotel by subway, it is very easy to transfer to Line 2 of the Subway and take it 5 stops to the Chongwenmen stop (Chongwen men station). Take Exit D out Walk will take you about 3 minutes to hotel. Subway fare is 2 yuan.

If you have paid for an arrival transfer when you booked your trip, our driver will be waiting for you with a G Adventures sign with your name on it. They will be waiting for you outside the luggage hall. There most likely will be many signs, so please check carefully for your name.

Arrival Complications

We don't expect any problems, and nor should you, but if for any reason you are unable to commence your group trip as scheduled, as soon as possible please contact your starting point hotel, requesting that you speak to or leave a message for your CEO. If this is unsuccessful, please refer to our Emergency Contact. If you have pre-booked an airport transfer and have not made contact with our representative within 30 minutes of clearing customs and immigration, we recommend that you make your own way to the Starting Point hotel, following the Joining Instructions. Please contact your travel agent on your return for a refund of the transfer cost if this occurs.

Emergency Contact

Should you need to contact us during a situation of dire need, it is best to first call either the G Adventures Local Operator (if one is listed below) or our G Adventures Local Office. If for any reason you do not receive an immediate answer, please leave a detailed message and contact information, so they may return your call and assist you as soon as possible.

AIRPORT TRANSFER

If you have purchased an arrival through G Adventures or if an arrival transfer is included in the cost of your tour, please note that:

Your arrival transfer has been arranged based on flight information provided to us. If you are advised of a flight schedule change within 48 hours of your scheduled arrival time, we will do our best to rearrange your arrival transfer however we cannot guarantee this. If your arrival transfer does not arrive within 30 minutes after you have exited the arrivals area please take a taxi to your start point hotel

If your call is specifically concerning Beijing Airport Transfer complications please call our local G Adventures Transfer provider directly at:

Ms Xiaofeng Chen (Beijing): +86 1391 0388 356

EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS

G Adventures Asia Manager: Julie Fitzgerald

G Adventures Office Bangkok, Thailand

During Office hours (Weekdays, 9am-5pm Local Time)

From outside Thailand: +66 2 381 5574

From within Thailand: 02 381 5574

After hours emergency number

From outside Thailand: +66 87 049 6074

From within Thailand: 087 049 6074

If you are unable for any reason to contact our local office, please call the numbers listed below, which will connect you directly with our 24 hour Sales team, who will happily assist you.

Toll-free, North America only: 1 888 800 4100

Calls from UK: 0844 272 0000

Calls from Germany: 01805 70 90 30 00

Calls from Australia: 1 300 796 618

Calls from New Zealand: 0800 333 307

Outside North America, Australia, New Zealand, Germany and the UK: +1 416 260 0999

Finishing Point Instructions

If you go to the airport - metro is the easiest way. From metro station Moskovskaya there are buses to the both airport terminals (about 3-5\$). Make sure you check from what terminal - Pulkovo 1 or Pulkovo 2 you depart. There is no bus connection between two terminals, and they are quite far apart.

If you take train - make sure that you go to the right train station (by metro again). Trains to Finland leave from Ladozhsky and Finlandsky train stations. To Moscow - from Moskovsky train station - 10 min walk from our hotel. To Eastern Europe - from Vitebsky train station.

You also can take a bus to Helsinki (approx 25 EUR - bus stop is at the hotel Oktyabarskaya, opposite Moskovsky train station; 10 min walk from the hotel), or to Baltic states (check EuroLines website).

If you need a taxi to take you to the airport, ask hotel to book it and confirm a price for you.

What to Take

You will be on the move a good deal, so pack as lightly as possible. It is in your own interest as you are expected to carry your own luggage, though distances are never great. Most travellers carry their luggage in a pack, which is the most suitable. Suitcases are not recommended for G Adventures travellers! It is important that your bag can be locked.

You will also need an overnight pack for the Terelj stay. This should be big enough to carry a spare set of clothes and basic necessities (approx. 30 litre/8 gallons capacity).

If you are not sure about what kind of clothes to bring - check some weather web sites, and remember that layers are always good when it's chilly.

Checklist

Travel documents and copies of each: passport, visa, travel insurance, air tickets, voucher.

Health requirements arranged.

Money: cash/credit card

Money pouch

First aid kit

Day pack to carry belongings on day trips

Alarm clock

Torch or flashlight

Lightweight travel towel

Mosquito repellent

Refillable water bottle

Cutlery and plastic mug for the train journeys

Ear plugs and eye mask can be useful if you are a light sleeper

Tampons can be difficult to buy in Mongolia and China

Phrase books

Travel sheet for train journeys - bed linen is provided on all trains but some people like to travel with their own

Comfortable clothes for the train - tracksuits and open toe shower shoes are the best combination

Raincoat or umbrella

Comfortable walking shoes

Lock for your bag

Sunscreen and sunglasses - Spring and Summer

Waterproof shoes and clothes, scarf, hat, gloves and fleece for Winter

Some warmer clothes if the air conditioning on the train is turned up high

Lightweight clothes for all seasons - indoors are very well heated in Autumn/Winter

Laundry

Laundry facilities are offered by some of our hotels for a charge. There will be times when you may want to or have to do your own laundry so we suggest you bring non-polluting/biodegradable soap.

Visas

Please note that visas are the responsibility of the individual traveller. The visa requirements for your trip vary depending on where you are from and where you are going. We keep the following information up to date as much as possible, but rules do change. It is important that you check for yourself with the embassy of each country. Your travel agent can assist. Please, keep in mind that all countries require passports valid for at least 6 months from the moment of departure from the country.

MONGOLIA: Most nationalities require a visa to visit Mongolia

Some of these nationalities also need an official Letter Of Invitation (LOI) before they can apply for their Mongolian visa.

Noted Exemptions: Citizens of the following countries do not require a tourist visa for Mongolia for visits up to 30 days: Canada, Germany, the UK, Israel and the United States.

If necessary you can obtain the LOI through our visa support agent in Mongolia. The visa support link you need to complete will be sent to you or your travel agent by email when you confirm your booking. You must read the instructions carefully and fill out all the details.

Once you have received your LOI and you are completing your Embassy Visa Application, please list the following as the hosting company or individual you will be visiting in Mongolia.

Monkhutuch Trade & Travel
Bayanzurkh Duureg, 13-r Horoolol 12-179, Ulaan Baater,
Tel: 976 1199199291

HOW TO FILL IN MONGOLIAN LOI FORM ONLINE:

As Mongolian visas are dated specifically for entry and exit, please ensure you enter the correct dates. We also recommend you add on an extra day to both the start/end of your trip so your visa length will cover any unexpected delays. Please, remember to put exactly the same dates when you fill out the application at the Mongolian embassy.

Please make sure to choose your country of origin as your Visa pick up location, if you do not see your local Mongolian consulate/embassy on this list or if you are unable to go there due to prior travel arrangements, please contact your travel agent or G Adventures for further assistance.

Please do not submit the application until 3 months prior to your entry into Mongolia. The details will be forwarded to our local agent in Mongolia. As a Mongolian visa is only valid for 90 days once it is issued, you will be emailed your Mongolian Invitation Letter only once we are within 60 days of the trip start date.

Once you have received your LOI you can apply for your visa by going to the Mongolian embassy you listed in the online application. Please, remember that it is your responsibility to check whether passport details, name spelling and dates on the LOI are correct.

RUSSIA: all nationalities require a visa to visit Russia

All nationalities also need an official Letter Of Invitation (LOI) before they can apply for their Russia visa.

You can obtain the LOI through our visa support agent in Russia. The visa support link you need to complete will be sent to you or your travel agent by email when you confirm your booking. You must read the instructions carefully and fill out all the details.

Please note, the company, that provides us Letters of Invitation is based in Russia. Please make sure to check your SPAM folder - emails from addresses with .ru Russian server address are often redirected to SPAM.

The visa support letter often lists hotels that may not be the exact hotels that you will be staying at during your trip. It is critical however, that when you complete your Russian visa application that you copy the hotels that are on your LOI rather than those that are on your G Adventures voucher or dossier.

Important Notes Russian Visa Application:

1. As stated above the Visa application must exactly match the LOI sent to you.
2. The type/purpose of visa: Tourism
3. Company or organization in Russia to be visited: Karelia Plus Travel Agency
4. Name of Russian Travel Agency: Karelia Plus Travel Agency
5. Reference number of Russian tour agency: 001695 (This is in the top right hand corner of your visa support letter)
6. Route of Journey: Copy the dates and cities that appear below your name on the left hand side of your visa support letter

HOW TO FILL IN RUSSIAN LOI FORM ONLINE:

As Russia visas are dated specifically for entry and exit, please ensure you enter the correct dates. We also recommend you add on an extra day to both the start/end of your trip so your visa length will cover any unexpected delays. Please, remember to put exactly the same dates when you fill out the application at the Russian embassy.

Please do not submit an application until 3 months prior to your entry into Russia. The details will then be forwarded to our local agent in Russia. As a Russian visa is only valid for 90 days once it is issued, you will be emailed your Russia Invitation Letter (and travel service voucher) only once we are within 60 days of the trip start date.

Please Note: Once we are within 60 days from departure it takes 10-15 business days to obtain a Russian LOI from the supplier, but this process can be delayed due to holidays or unexpected circumstances.

Once you have received your LOI you can apply for your visa by going to the nearest Russian embassy. Please, remember that it is your responsibility to check whether passport details, name spelling and dates on the LOI are correct.

CHINA: all nationalities require a visa to visit China

Most nationalities also need an official Letter Of Invitation (LOI) before they can apply for their Chinese visa.

You can obtain the LOI through our visa support agent in China. The visa support link you need to complete will be sent to you or your travel agent by email when you confirm your booking. You must read the instructions carefully and fill out all the details.

When filling out your Chinese Visa Application form, Please ensure that you list the same details as appear on your LOI when filling out your Chinese Visa Application form.

Passengers traveling to Tibet:

As Tibet continues to be a sensitive area for travel to the Chinese government you must refrain from listing Tibet as one of the places you are going to visit as your application form or your Visa will be denied. We will provide you with the necessary documents to obtain your Chinese Visa, please use the details provided when filling out your Chinese Visa application form.

HOW TO FILL IN CHINA LOI FORM ONLINE:

As Chinese visas are dated specifically for entry and exit, please ensure you enter the correct dates. We also recommend you add on an extra day to both the start/end of your trip so your visa length will cover any unexpected delays. Please, remember to put exactly the same dates when you fill out the application at the Chinese embassy.

Please do not submit the below application until 3 months prior to your entry into China. The details will be forwarded to our local agent in China and you will be emailed your Chinese Invitation Letter (With day by day Itinerary) only once we are within 60 days of the trip start date.

Once you have received your LOI you can apply for your visa by going to the nearest Chinese embassy. Please, remember that it is your responsibility to check whether passport details, name spelling and dates on the LOI are correct.

Detailed Trip Notes

1. An official letter of invitation for Russia is needed in order to get your Russian visa. We work with a local operator to obtain these letters, so please complete the visa information form which will be emailed at time of booking in a timely manner so the visa process is completed before your departure.

Spending Money

Every traveller is different and therefore spending money requirements will vary. Some travellers may drink more than others while other travellers like to purchase more souvenirs than most. Please consider your own spending habits when it comes to allowing for drinks, shopping and tipping. Please also remember the following specific recommendations when planning your trip.

Money Exchange

China : USD1 = 7 Yuan. Mongolia: USD1 = approx. 1400 Tugriks. Russia: USD1 = approx. 30 Roubles.

You will find that USD and EUR are the easiest to exchange currency in all three countries (AUD and CAD can be exchanged also, mostly in big cities). Please, note that due to bank restrictions, you might not be able to exchange banknotes printed earlier than 1996; and also notes with stamps or marks on them.

For security reasons the safest way to carry your money is as travellers cheques, but please, be aware that not many banks in the region are familiar with travellers cheques, and here might be very long delays when changing them. The easiest cheques to change are Thomas Cook or American Express in US currency. The easiest and quickest way is to change USD or EUR cash but you must be aware of the security risk of carrying large sums of money. In any case some money should be taken as cash in case of emergencies. Black markets do exist but we strongly advise that you do not get involved. We recommend that you don't use money changers on the street.

There are lots of ATM's in every big city on the way: in all of them you can withdraw local currency. Some ATM's in Moscow and St Petersburg allow to withdraw USD. Major credit cards are accepted in the shops and restaurants almost everywhere in Mongolia and Russia. Some banks in Beijing, Irkutsk, Moscow and St Petersburg (but not Ulaan Bataar) will allow cash advances against a credit card but cash withdrawals are subject to a 3% to 4% service charge.

If you booked before 1st October 2009, you will need to pay Local Payment to the Chief Experienced Office that leads your group. It has to be paid in US\$ cash, we recommend that you arrive with your local payment money already exchanged. If you do not have time to change your money before you arrive, money exchanges can be found close to our starting point hotel. Please check the Welcome Note at reception for location of money changers. Note that often banks apply some commission (either set fee, or 3-4% of the amount) to any money exchanged at the bank.

Emergency Fund

Please also make sure you have access to at least an additional USD \$200 (or equivalent) as an 'emergency' fund, to be used when circumstances outside our control (ex. a natural disaster) require a change to our planned route. This is a rare occurrence!

Departure Tax

Departure Tax is included in all International and Domestic tickets in Russia.

Tipping

It is customary in Asia to tip service providers such as waiters, at approximately 10%, depending on the service. In Mongolia tipping is not expected, but some restaurants have donation boxes, rising money for different charity projects. If you want to tip, they usually ask you to put money into the donation box. In Russia some restaurants include 10% service charge into the bill - check the menu. In general tipping is not expected but highly appreciated.

Although it may not be customary to you, it is of considerable significance to the people who will take care of you during your travels. There are several times during the trip where there is opportunity to tip the local guides or drivers we use. You may do this individually, or your CEO will offer to collect the money and tip as a group. Recommendations for tipping drivers and local guides would range from \$1-\$2 USD per person per day depending on the quality and length of the service; ask your CEO for specific recommendations based on the circumstances and culture. Also at the end of each trip if you felt your G Adventures CEO did an outstanding job, tipping is appreciated. The amount is entirely a personal preference, however as a guideline \$20-25 USD per person, per week can be used.

Optional Activities

We suggest you bring along 250 USD for additional sightseeing.

St Petersburg

- St Isaacs Cathedral- USD10
- Peters Walking Tours - USD14-18
- Canal tour - USD18
- Mariinsky Theatre - various USD25 - USD250

■ Peterhof - USD17

Moscow

- River Cruise - USD12
- Pushkin Fine Arts Museum - USD8
- Tretyakov Gallery - USD8
- St Basils Cathedral - USD5
- Bolshoi Theatre - various USD50 - USD250

Ekaterinburg

- Military History Museum - USD5
- Ekaterinburg Opera theatre - USD7 - USD150

Irkutsk

- Regional Museum) - USD4

Listvyanka

- Russian Banya - USD5

Lake Baikal

- Boat Trip - USD40 p/boat p/hr

Ulaan Baatar

- Horse riding at ger camp - USD5 p/hr

Beijing

- Great Wall entrance - CNY 45.00
- Cable car at Great Wall - CNY 60.00
- Toboggan at Great Wall - CNY 60.00
- Forbidden City - CNY 60.00
- Temple of Heaven - CNY 35.00 (Taxi 12 CNY per taxi from your hotel)
- Summer Palace - transfer - CNY2 PP by subway (Taxi or Subway)
- Summer Palace - CNY 50.00 (30main entry; 10 Cixi Museum; 10 Dragon boat)
- Lama Temple - CNY 25.00 (Subway 2 CNY PP)
- Legend of Gongfu Beijing - CNY200-680
- Acrobatic Performance Beijing - CNY180-880
- Beijing Opera Performance - CNY180-680
- Hutong Trishaw Cycle Tour - CNY100-150
- Bike tour Drum Tower & Houhai - CNY 25.00 (Bike Rental)
- Factory 798 Art & Galleries - Free
- Tiananmen Square - Free
- Beijing Duck - CNY100-150
- Hutong Cycle tour - 100-150

All prices are per person (unless stated otherwise), and are subject to change as services are provided by third party operators.

Health

Please note inoculations may be required for the country visited. It is your responsibility to consult with your travel doctor for up to date medical travel information well before departure.

There are no specific health requirements for this trip. However, you should consult your doctor for up-to-date medical travel information about before departure. We recommend that you carry a First Aid kit and hand sanitizers / antibacterial wipes as well as any personal medical requirements . Please be aware that we are in remote areas and away from medical facilities for some time during this trip, and for legal reasons our leaders are prohibited from administering any type of drug including headache tablets, antibiotics, etc.

Safety and Security

Many national governments provide a regularly updated advice service on safety issues involved with international travel. We recommend that you check your government's advice for their latest travel information before departure. We strongly recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt while travelling, for the safe keeping of your passport, air tickets, travellers' cheques, cash and other valuable items. Leave your valuable jewellery at home - you won't need it while travelling. Many of the hotels we use have safety deposit boxes, which is the most secure way of storing your valuables. A lock is recommended for securing your luggage. When travelling on a group trip, please note that your CEO has the authority to amend or cancel any part of the trip itinerary if it is deemed necessary due to safety concerns. Your CEO will accompany you on all included activities. During your trip you will have some free time to pursue your own interests, relax and take it easy or explore at your leisure. While your CEO will assist you with options available in a given location please note that any optional activities you undertake are not part of your itinerary, and we offer no representations about the safety of the activity or the standard of the operators running them. Please use your own good judgment when selecting an activity in your free time. Although the cities visited on tour are generally safe during the day, there can be risks to wandering throughout any major city at night. It is our recommendation to stay in small groups and to take taxis to and from restaurants, or during night time excursions.

Protests and Demonstrations- Protests and demonstrations, even those that are well intended, have the potential to turn violent with no warning. Counter protests can also turn violent. Action by security forces to disperse demonstrators and protesters may occur at any time. If you are in an area where demonstrators or protesters are gathering, avoid the temptation of staying for a good photo opportunity and leave the area immediately.

Water based activities have an element of danger and excitement built into them. We recommend only participating in water based activities when accompanied by a guide(s). We make every reasonable effort to ensure the fun and adventurous element of any water based activities (in countries with varying degrees of operating standards) have a balanced approach to safety. It is our policy not to allow our CEOs to make arrangements on your behalf for water based activities that are not accompanied by guide(s).

Swimming, including snorkeling, is always at your own risk.

We take all prudent measures in relation to your safety. For ways to further enhance your personal safety while traveling, please visit:

www.gadventures.com/travel-resources/safety/

Trip Specific Safety

We strongly recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt while travelling, for the safe keeping of your passport, air tickets, travellers' cheques, cash and other valuable items. Leave your valuable jewellery at home - you won't need it while travelling. Many of the hotels we use have safety deposit boxes which is the most secure way of storing your valuables. A lock is recommended for securing your luggage.

Medical Form

Our small group adventures bring together people of all ages. It is very important you are aware that, as a minimum, an average level of fitness and mobility' is required to undertake our easiest programs. Travellers must be able to walk without the aid of another person, climb 3-4 flights of stairs, step on and off small boats, and carry their own luggage at a minimum. Travellers with a pre-existing medical condition are required to complete a short medical questionnaire, which must be signed by their physician. This is to ensure that travellers have the necessary fitness and mobility to comfortably complete their chosen trip. While our CEOs work hard to ensure that all our travellers are catered for equally, it is not their responsibility to help individuals who cannot complete the day's activities unaided. Please refer to the physical ratings in this Trip Details document for more information.

The medical questionnaire can be found online at:

www.gadventures.com/medical-form.

A Couple of Rules

Illegal drugs will not be tolerated on any trips. Possessing or using drugs not only contravenes the laws of the land but also puts the rest of the group at risk. Smoking marijuana and opium is a part of local culture in some parts of the world but is not acceptable for our travellers. Our philosophy of travel is one of respect towards everyone we encounter, and in particular the local people who make the world the special place it is. The exploitation of prostitutes is completely contrary to this philosophy. Our CEOs have the right to expel any member of the group if drugs are found in their possession or if they use prostitutes.

Travel Insurance

Travel Insurance: Travel insurance is compulsory in order to participate on any of our trips. When travelling on a group trip, you will not be permitted to join the group until evidence of travel insurance has been sighted by your CEO, who will take note of your insurance details. When selecting a travel insurance policy please bear in mind that all clients must have medical coverage and that we require a minimum coverage of USD 200,000 for repatriation and emergency rescue. We strongly recommend that the policy also covers personal liability, cancellation, curtailment and loss of luggage and personal effects. If you have credit card insurance we require proof of purchase of the trip (a receipt of credit card statement) with a credit card in your name. Contact your bank for details of their participating insurer, the level of coverage and emergency contact telephone number.

Planeterra-The G Adventures Foundation

Through our commitment to responsible tourism we have developed the Planeterra Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to making a positive difference in the lives of people and communities around the world through support of international charities, local organizations and community projects in the places that we visit on our tours. G Adventures matches all individual donations and pays all administration costs, which means that 100% of each donation is doubled and goes directly to support our projects. For more information about Planeterra and the projects we support, or to make a donation, please visit www.planeterra.org

Planeterra Dollar-A-Day Program

Our Dollar-A-Day Program provides travellers with the opportunity to help us give back to the people and places visited on our tours by donating one dollar per day for the duration of their tour. 100% of these proceeds will go directly to support our Planeterra projects.

To participate in this program please indicate at the time of booking that you would like to participate in G Adventures' Dollar-A-Day program, either by clicking the check box online, or by advising your G Adventures specialist or travel agent. (Note: Donation will be charged in the currency of your booking)

Local Dress

In Asia the dress standard is generally more conservative. When packing try to pick loose, lightweight, long clothing that will keep you cool in the usually hot and humid climate of Asian summers. In predominately Buddhist countries we ask that you dress respectfully and avoid very short skirts and singlets/tanktops when visiting temples or mosques or other holy sites. All these sights require a respectful type of dress: no shorts for both - men and women, head scarves for women in some areas.

Feedback

After your travels, we want to hear from you! Your feedback information is so important to us that we'll give you 5% off the price of your next G Adventures trip if your feedback is completed on-line within 30 days of finishing your trip. Your tour evaluation will be e-mailed to you 24 hours after the conclusion of your trip. If you do not receive the tour evaluation link in the days after your tour has finished, please drop us a line at customerservice@gadventures.com and we will send it on to you.

Newsletter

Our adventure travel e-newsletter is full of travel news, trip information, interesting stories and contests. To avoid missing out on special offers and updates from G Adventures, subscribe at www.gadventures.com/newsletters/

Stay current on how our company invests in our global community through our foundation – Planeterra. Sign up for [Planeterra's monthly news](#) to learn more about how to give back and support the people and places we love to visit.

Travel Forum - The Watering Hole

Be sure to stop by [The Watering Hole](#), our adventure travel forum. If you're interested in meeting others booked on your upcoming trip, check out the [Departure Lounge](#) section of our forum and introduce yourself. Otherwise, just drop in at anytime to share some travel tips, ask questions, meet other travellers and quench your thirst for travel. Our forum is located at wateringhole.gadventures.com.