



The Silk Road by Private Train On board The Golden Eagle and Shangri-La Express

A Private, Historical and Cultural Tour from
Moscow to Beijing with your English-speaking guides

Day 1, Moscow

Arrival in Moscow where you will be met and transferred to the luxurious five-star Marriott Royal Aurora hotel (or similar) located in the heart of this vibrant city for a one-night stay. Enjoy a welcome reception dinner at your hotel, whilst you meet your fellow travellers and anticipate the epic 15 day voyage that lies ahead.

Day 2, Moscow

A morning city tour of Moscow takes you to Red Square, an iconic symbol of Russia's former military and political might. Here you will see an eclectic mix of fascinating architecture, such as the ornate St Basil's Cathedral with its magnificent onion-domed spires, the grandeur of The Kremlin and the sombre and evocative site of Lenin's tomb.

Day 3, On Board

This morning board the luxurious *Golden Eagle*. Spend the day exploring the train, getting to know your fellow travelers and settling into your modern, stylish cabins. This evening enjoy dinner in one of the beautifully designed restaurant cars as your rail adventure eastwards to Beijing begins.

Day 4, Volgograd, Russia

Standing on the banks of the Volga, Stalingrad, as the city was known in Soviet times, was the dramatic scene of one of the most important Second World War battles. The Russians heroically turned back the Nazi advance here to alter the course of the war. You will visit the poignantly sobering Mamayev Kurgan war memorial, followed by the informative diorama and absorbing museum visit. In the evening enjoy a beautifully prepared dinner on board the train.

Day 5, Kara Kum Desert, Turkmenistan

Today, enjoy a relaxing day onboard as you travel across the vast expanses of the Kara Kum desert. As well as experiencing the unique landscape, you can take the opportunity to chat to fellow passengers and maybe take your first Russian language lesson.

Day 6, Khiva, Uzbekistan

Crossing into Uzbekistan the train travels towards Urgench, where you will transfer to the ancient city of Khiva, founded 2,500 years ago. As one of the Silk Road's most important trading posts and now a World Heritage Site, it lies at the crossroads of the routes between Mongolia, Russia, China and Persia. A truly magnificent sight to behold, it rises out of the desert to reveal a wealth of impressive architecture. Stepping back in time, discover its impressive mosques, bazaars and minarets within Khiva's ancient walls.

Day 7, Ashgabat, Turkmenistan

In dramatic contrast to Khiva, you will arrive in Ashgabat, capital of Turkmenistan - the 'Las Vegas of the Kara Kum'. Situated between the Kara Kum Desert and the Kopet Dag mountain range, its fountains, golden domes and towering modern buildings appear strangely incongruous in this desert setting.

Day 8, Merv, Turkmenistan

Early morning sees the train arriving in Mary, where you transfer to the ancient and mainly unrestored city of Merv. Once an important stopping point on the Silk Road, it claims to have briefly been the largest city in the world during the twelfth century. 1794 saw the demise of Merv, after the Emir of Bukhara destroyed the dam which the population depended on for its water. After your fascinating exploration return to the train for dinner.

Day 9, Bukhara, Uzbekistan

Bukhara is quite simply outstanding. Like Khiva, UNESCO backed the renovation of much of the city for its 2,500th anniversary in 1999. The highlight of this wonderful tour is a visit to The Ark, a fortified residence of the Emirs of Bukhara - the despotic and ruthless leaders who ruled until Soviet times. You will then travel out of the city to experience the Emir's enchantingly named, Palace of the Moon and Stars.

Day 10, Samarkand, Uzbekistan

Founded in the 6th Century BC, Samarkand's stunning architecture hints at its former status as one of the most important cities in Asia. Today you will visit some of its most significant sites including Registan Square, the refined elegance of the beautifully proportioned Bibi Khanum Mosque and the Ulag Beg observatory, one of the earliest Islamic astronomical observatories built in 1428. After dinner visit the illuminated and awe-inspiring Registan Square before returning to the train for a late evening departure.

Day 11, Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Today you arrive in the capital city of Uzbekistan and spend the morning touring this modern Soviet-style city which was rebuilt following the devastating earthquake of 1966. Re-board the train for lunch as you head towards Kazakhstan and Almaty. This afternoon gives you the opportunity to relax with friends or listen to one of the informative lectures designed to give a greater insight into this fascinating region.

Day 12, Almaty, Kazakhstan

Just before lunch the train arrives in Almaty - the largest city in Kazakhstan. This beautifully verdant city derives its name from 'Alma' meaning 'apple'. Just a short distance from the city, apple orchards thrive in abundance. Surrounded by the majesty of the Tien Shen

Mountains, enjoy a traditional lunch in a Kazak 'yurt', a dwelling place of this region's nomadic people. Tonight is your final evening onboard the Golden Eagle and will be marked by a farewell banquet.

Day 13, Crossing Into China

As you arrive at the Kazakh border of Druzhba, you bid the Golden Eagle a final farewell. The border crossing takes 5 hours but your patience is rewarded as the Shangri-La Express private train awaits in Alanshankou, the Chinese border station. Settle into your comfortable cabins as you head into the intriguing landscape of China. A welcome dinner is served in the restaurant cars, giving you your first taste of authentic Chinese cuisine.

Day 14, Urumchi and Turpan

Urumchi is located in a verdant oasis between the lofty ice capped Bogda Peak, the vast Salt Lake, the pine covered Southern Hill and the alternating fields and sand dunes of the Zunggar Basin. Urumchi boasts an entry in the Guinness Book of Records for being the city furthest from any sea in the world – a staggering 1,400 miles (2,500km) from the nearest coastline. This morning you visit the renowned mummy exhibition at the Provincial Museum. After lunch travel to Turpan, where the Flaming Mountains create a magnificent backdrop. You then take a fascinating tour to the ancient underground irrigation system that has successfully fed the rich orchards and vineyards for centuries. Your final destination is the elegantly decaying sand city of Jiaohe that was founded in 108 BC.

Day 15, Dunhuang

Before lunch arrive in the small oasis-city of Dunhuang, where you will visit the fascinating Magao Thousand Buddha Cave Complex. This impressive site contains almost 500 grottoes, carved between 700 and 1,700 years ago. Inside you will see an amazing collection of beautiful sculptures and murals depicting the evolution of Buddhist religious art over a 1,000 year period. In the afternoon explore the vast natural beauty of the Gobi Desert by camel. Here you will discover Crescent Lake. Hidden amongst towering sand dunes, it has sustained life in this region for millennia. Tonight experience dinner and a local folk performance in this magical setting.

Day 16, Jiayuguan

This morning your private train arrives in Jiayuguan. Famous for being the first pass at the most westerly point of the Great Wall of China, it was given the rather poetic name: 'The first and greatest pass under Heaven'. Your tour takes you to the perfectly restored fortress at the end of the Great Wall which dates back to 1372. Considered one of the greatest sites in northwest China, you will spend time here and visit its excellent museum. This afternoon enjoy time in the Bar Car either attending a lecture on the Great Wall or simply relax as the landscape unfolds before you.

Day 17, Xian – Terracota Warriors

Your fascinating journey of discovery takes you to Xian. Morning arrival gives you several hours to explore the world famous Terracotta Warriors, discovered by peasants only 30 years ago. The 6,000 terracotta figures and their horses are one of the greatest

archaeological finds of the 20th Century. This evening enjoy the Tang Dynasty Dinner, Music and Dance Show, a wonderful performance of ancient entertainment.

Day 18, Beijing

Spending your last day onboard the Shangri-La Express you wind your way northwards towards the capital of China, Beijing. Having travelled a mammoth 7,000 miles (11,250km) from Moscow, you bid farewell to your train crew and transfer to the five-star Regent Hotel (or similar) for a three-night stay.

Day 19, Beijing

Today visit Tiananmen Square and then explore the magnificently restored Forbidden City. Your cultural exploration continues at the Temple of Heaven, the grandest of the four great temples situated in Beijing. Here you experience enchanting displays of traditional dancing, singing and the delicately precise ancient art of calligraphy.

Day 20, Beijing – The Great Wall

The final full day in Beijing is devoted to the most awe-inspiring site in the whole of China - The Great Wall. This amazing edifice is one of the few man-made structures visible from outer space and perhaps the most evocative symbol of Chinese skill and precision. At Badaling you have the privilege of walking along a portion of the wall – the perfect opportunity to take some memorable photographs with your fellow guests. Your farewell banquet is hosted in an authentic Peking Duck restaurant, where you say goodbye to your fellow travelling companions.

Day 21, Beijing

Following breakfast, you will be transferred to Beijing airport for international departures.

Price:

Silver Class

\$20,795.00 per person, double occupancy.
\$29,195.00 single occupancy

Gold Class

\$25,995.00 per person, double occupancy
\$37,095.00 single occupancy.

Imperial Suite

\$34,995.00 per person, double occupancy
\$48,995.00 single occupancy.

Prices are per person for the fully inclusive tour Moscow to Beijing. Air-fare is not included.

Prices are subject to change until deposit is received.

Eastbound: Moscow to Beijing (2012)

September 21 – October 11

General Information:

A full passport with at least six months validity from the start of the tour is required along with a visa for every country you visit.

Subject to bookings, this tour may also be operated in the reverse direction on the same dates or cancelled.

A deposit in the amount of \$2,500.00 per person is required on all Silver Class cabins, a deposit in the amount of \$3,000.00 per person is required on all Gold Class bookings and a deposit in the amount of \$5,000.00 per person is required on all Imperial Suite bookings.

The Golden Eagle/Shangri-La Express Tour Price Includes:

Accommodations:

Moscow

Two (2) nights at the Marriott Aurora or similar; Tax and Buffet Breakfast included daily.

Golden Eagle

One Silver or Gold Class Cabin or Imperial Suite for Ten (10) nights on board the Golden Eagle. Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner included daily.

Shangri-La Express

One Cabin for Five (5) nights on board the Shangri-La Express. Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner included daily.

Beijing

Three (3) nights at the Regent Hotel or similar; Tax and Buffet Breakfast included daily.

Imperial Suites:

The Imperial Suites are the most spacious cabins available onboard the *Golden Eagle* measuring 120 square feet and benefit from their own large and luxurious fixed double bed as well as a dedicated lounge area with dressing table. Suite facilities include private en-suite facilities with power shower and underfloor heating, individual air-conditioning, wardrobe, DVD/CD player with LCD screen and two large picture windows. Guests will also benefit from a dedicated butler service, a selection of complimentary drinks from the premium bar list, included laundry service and room upgrades to the next available category at our selected hotels as per the itinerary.

Gold Class Cabins:



Gold Class Cars are purpose-built, new carriages designed for the 21st century to offer top-class comfort and service, which equals the best luxury trains in the world today. Each carriage has four compartments which can be configured for double, twin or single occupancy, with the lower berth converting into a comfortable sofa for daytime travel. Each compartment offers 77 square feet of space and features its own private shower and toilet facilities and has a wardrobe, audio system, DVD/VCR with the latest flat, plasma screens and air conditioning with individual climate control by remote handset.

Silver Class Cabins:



The Silver Class Carriage provides complete comfort for our passengers. These newly added cabins are slightly smaller than Gold Class Cabins offering 60 square feet, but still have modern en-suite facilities with a smaller shower area. The sleepers are modern airconditioned cars built in Germany. They are cozy and comfortable, and provide an ideal method of transport for the remote areas of Russia that you will visit. Each car has six twin compartments, all fitted with one upper berth and one lower berth that converts to a sofa seating for daytime travel.

There is ample space for luggage storage the lower bed and for suitcases in a recess above the corridor area. Clothes hangers are provided and the cars are well appointed with mirrors, bedside table, reading lamps and space for the storage of small items.

Shangri-La Express - China

Modern comfort in an ancient country...the Shangri-La Express guarantees you good living even in the remotest places and is the perfect place from which to take in China's ever-changing scenery.

Meals are served in the train's spacious restaurant cars, where dedicated chefs serve a western breakfast followed by a wide range of authentic Chinese specialties at lunch and dinner, using only the finest local ingredients. As well as soft drinks, tea and coffee, meals are accompanied by a selection of wines from around the world.

Equally special is the unique ambience of the piano bar car, where the resident pianist is always happy to take requests. Staying open until the last person leaves, the bar is the perfect place to get to know your fellow passengers... or simply will away some time, reading or taking in the scenery while enjoying your favorite drink.

Shangri-la Express Cabins

These comfortable cabins offer 38 square feet of space and sleep one in one lower and one upper berth. A wash basin facility is shared between 2 compartments. (Gold Class passengers receive two compartments while Silver Class passengers receive one compartment). Toilet facilities are available at the end of each of the sleeping carriages. There is also a separate state-of-the-art shower car with individual compartments. Each

compartment features a shower, mirror, hairdryer and changing area. Towels, robes and slippers are provided.

The Tour Includes:

- *All meals.
- *Wine, beer and soft drinks provided with Lunch and Dinner.
- *Experienced tour representatives throughout the tour.
- *Russian Interpreters able to speak English, German, French and Italian.
- *Comprehensive off-train sightseeing program as detailed in the itinerary. Please note that all touring is with fellow-passengers at all times.
- *A doctor who travels with the train throughout the tour.
- *Complimentary tea, coffee and mineral water throughout the tour from your car attendant.

The Tour Does Not Include:

- *Travel cancellation insurance.
- *Charges of a personal nature on the train or at the hotels (laundry, telephone, bar account, etc.)
- *Visas (as required) or Excess Baggage Charges, Airport Departure Taxes, Vaccination or Medical Costs.

Options and Extensions:

Please contact Exeter International for tour extensions and options in Russia. All tour extensions are on a private customized basis.

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