

Epic Trans-Siberian Journey - ARVR

17 days: Moscow to Vladivostok

What's Included

- Local Living: Listvyanka Homestay, Listvyanka
- Local Living: Buryat Experience, Ulan-Ude
- Kremlin and Armoury guided tour (Moscow)
- Suzdal tour
- Orientation walk (Vladimir)
- Trans-Ural Railway
- Yekaterinburg city tour
- Trans-Siberian Railway
- Lake Baikal stay
- Irkutsk walking tour
- Decembrists Museum guided visit
- Local meal suggestions and language support throughout
- 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, 2015 and onwards

Itinerary

Day 1 Moscow

Arrive at any time. Want to experience St Petersburg? Book the St Petersburg Express, a four-day pre-tour package. Speak to your Global Connection Officer or travel agent to book.

There are no activities planned until an evening welcome meeting.

Want to explore more of Russia? Add the "St Petersburg Express" to your adventure and spend three days getting to know the city with the guidance of a CEO. This nifty package includes arrival transfer, two nights accommodation in St Petersburg, a guided walking tour, entrance to the Hermitage, and wraps up with an overnight train ride to Moscow with free time before the next leg of your journey begins. Speak to your Global Connection Officer or travel agent to book.

Arrival Day and Welcome Meeting

1h18:00

The adventure begins tonight. Feel free to explore, but make sure you're back in time to meet the group. After introductions, your CEO will review the details of your tour.

Optional Activities - Day 1

St. Petersburg Express

Saint Petersburg - Moscow

Want to begin your adventure with a taste of St Petersburg? Add the "St Petersburg Express" and experience this cultural centre with the guidance of a CEO. Spend two nights in the city, explore on a walking tour, and visit the famed Hermitage with included entrance. Cap it off with an overnight train to Moscow with some free time before your tour begins.

Accommodation

Best Western Izmailovo Vega Hotel (or similar)

Hotel

Day 2 Moscow

Enjoy a guided tour of the Kremlin and Armoury. Spend a free afternoon visiting St Basil's Cathedral, Red Square, or exploring the fascinating Moscow metro.

The area around the Red Square is perfect for sightseeing and people watching. Visit one of the many shops, wander the Alexander Gardens, or visit the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Head down into the metro to explore the beautiful stations or visit another part of the city.

Kremlin and Armoury Guided Tour

Moscow 4h

Enjoy a visit to one of the most famous symbols of Russia. For centuries, it was a residence of the tsars, and today it is the official residence of the President of Russian Federation. The Armoury Chamber is a massive treasure trove that houses thousands of items gifted to the Russian tsars and emperors by royals and ambassadors from around the world. Get ready to be stunned by gold goblets, famous Faberge eggs, 18th century embroidery, and gilded royal carriages.

Free Time

Moscow Afternoon

With so much to see and do, get exploring.

Optional Activities - Day 2

Saint Basil's Cathedral

Moscow

Check out the colourful onion-domed towers of stunning St Basil's Cathedral, located right in the middle of a sprawling open square. It is the most quintessential Russian sight, and definitely lives up to its hype.

Red Square Visit

Moscow

Free

The Red Square is an excellent place to start exploring Moscow. Indulge in the many fantastic food and shopping options nearby; you also have easy access to St Basil's Cathedral, the Kremlin and Armoury Museum, Lenin's Mausoleum, and Alexandr Gardens. Most of Moscow's main streets lead from Red Square and the famous Moscow metro provides easy access in and out of it.

Alexander Garden Visit

Moscow

Free

Wander the beautiful Alexander Gardens or visit the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

Accommodation

Best Western Izmailovo Vega Hotel (or similar)

Hotel

Day 3 Moscow/Suzdal

Travel to Suzdal, one of the bucolic villages in the Golden Ring. Tour the Kremlin and visit a folk village museum. Opt to taste local mead (honey beer).

With free time, explore the streets of Suzdal, lined with quaint wooden houses, and enjoy relaxing by the river.

The city square is as charming as they come. Wander past the small church and chat with "babushkas" selling pickled cucumbers and mead.

Private Vehicle

Moscow - Suzdal3h30m219km

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

Suzdal Tour

Suzdal2h30m

The Suzdal Kremlin is one of the famous sights of Russia. It's whitewashed building with brilliant blue onion-domes dotted with gold stars are a sight to behold. Visit the Kremlin and learn about life in this bucolic town.

After, visit the folk village museum, an outdoor space filled with traditional architecture. Learn about life in this tiny town.

Free Time

Suzdal Afternoon

Explore this charming area.

Optional Activities - Day 3

Museum of Wooden Architecture and Peasant Life Visit

Suzdal

Enjoy a visit to this museum and learn more about the life of Russian peasants.

Accommodation

Suzdal Inn (or similar)

Hotel

Meals included: Lunch

Day 4 Suzdal/Yekaterinburg

Enjoy more time in Suzdal before a drive to nearby Vladimir. Take an orientation walk around the city before boarding a train for the roughly 26hr ride to Yekaterinburg.

Private Vehicle

Suzdal - Vladimir30m35km

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

Orientation Walk

Vladimir

Get to know a bit more of Vladimir with a CEO-led orientation walk including stops at Cathedral Square and an observation point.

Free Time

Vladimir Evening

Spend some free time exploring or picking up supplies for the upcoming train journey.

Basic overnight train (beds)

Vladimir - Yekaterinburg26h

Experience overnight travel like a local. Sit back and get some well-earned (and likely much-needed) rest en route to your next stop.

Day 5 Yekaterinburg

Enjoy a full day on the train crossing the Ural Mountains and the border between Europe and Asia. Arrive to Yekaterinburg in the evening.

Train

Vladimir - Yekaterinburg Full Day

Spend a full day on the train before an evening arrival to Yekaterinburg.

Accommodation

Park Inn Hotel (or similar)

Hotel

Day 6 Yekaterinburg/Irkutsk

Explore the sights around Yekaterinburg, including the Church of All Saints and the Romanov Burial Site. Enjoy free time in this Soviet-style city before boarding the Trans-Siberian for Irkutsk.

Yekaterinburg City Tour

Yekaterinburg 4h

Head out for a guided walking tour of the important sites around Yekaterinburg. Take note of the contrast between the elegant onion-domed churches and the gray soviet bulk. Learn more about the devastating history of the Romanov family, and visit the moving monuments at the Church of All Saints on Spilled Blood.

Free Time

Yekaterinburg Afternoon

Explore more of this fascinating city.

Basic overnight train (beds)

Yekaterinburg - Irkutsk 55h

Experience overnight travel like a local. Sit back and get some well-earned (and likely much-needed) rest en route to your next stop.

Optional Activities - Day 6

Church of All Saints Visit

Yekaterinburg

Free

Enjoy a visit to this Russian Orthodox Church. It's famous for being the site where Nicholas II, the last tsar of Russia, and several members of his family were shot by the Bolsheviks during the Russian Civil War.

Romanov Memorial Visit

Yekaterinburg

Visit this memorial dedicated to the Romanov family, the last family of tsars in Russia who were shot by the Bolsheviks during the Russian Civil War.

Days 7-8 Yekaterinburg/Irkutsk

Wake up to the rhythm of the Trans-Siberian Railway. Spend two full days travelling through the Siberian taiga forests. Make some new friends or catch up on your reading list.

Basic overnight train (beds)

Yekaterinburg - Irkutsk Full Day

Experience overnight travel like a local. Sit back and get some well-earned (and likely much-needed) rest en route to your next stop.

Day 9 Irkutsk/Listvyanka

Arrive in the morning to Irkutsk and drive to a small town on Lake Baikal, Listvyanka. Enjoy a homestay on the lake and opt to tour the Baikal Limnological Museum or enjoy some relaxing in a banya (Russian sauna),

Private Vehicle

Irkutsk - Listvyanka 2h

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

Local Living: Listvyanka Homestay

Enjoy a homestay in beautiful Listvyanka along the shores of Lake Baikal and learn about the local culture hands on. The host, Nikolai, is a warm and welcoming, not to mention a fantastic chef. Enjoy the charming home he built himself and his delicious cooking.

Opt to try out his banya (Russian sauna), too.

Optional Activities - Day 9

Baikal Limnological Museum

Listvyanka

350RUB per person

Tour the Baikal Limnological Museum and learn all about Lake Baikal and surrounding area's wildlife and local flora. Visit its living exhibition full of fish and marine life, and check out the arboretum located nearby.

Russian Banya (Bathhouse)

Listvyanka 1h-1h30m

2000-3500RUB per person

Enjoy some relaxing in a banya (Russian sauna), which is very popular in Russia. Typically, Russians visit their local neighbourhood banya once a week to get a good scrub, sweat out the toxins, and drink tea with their friends. They often wear floppy felt hats in the sauna and beat each other with birch branches tied together -- it's only true way to get all the vodka out.

Accommodation

Nikolai's Guesthouse (or similar)

Guesthouse

Meals included: Dinner

Day 10 Listvyanka

Spend one more day exploring the surrounding countryside of Lake Baikal with the options to go for a boat ride (in summer) or take a short hike.

Free Time

Listvyanka

Enjoy the Siberian countryside any way you wish -- there's plenty to do!

Optional Activities - Day 10

Lake Baikal Boat Trip

Lake Baikal

Head out by boat to explore beautiful Lake Baikal. Enjoy the sun and scenery of this isolated region.

Hiking

Listvyanka

Free

Lace up your boots and explore this scenic area by foot.

Accommodation

Nikolai's Guesthouse (or similar)

Guesthouse

Meals included: Breakfast | Dinner

Day 11 Listvyanka/Ulan-Ude

Drive back to Irkutsk for a walking tour of the city including a visit to the fascinating Decembrists Museum where you'll learn about the revolution the city was built on. In the evening hop an overnight train to Ulan Ude.

Private Vehicle

Listvyanka - Irkutsk

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

Irkutsk Guided City Tour

Irkutsk 2h

Enjoy a guided tour of Irkutsk and learn about the history of how this Siberian gem came to be. Soak in the beautiful architecture of the quaint wooden houses and visit the bustling central market.

Decembrists Museum Visit

Irkutsk1h

The Decembrists Museum offers a fascinating glimpse into early 19th century life in Siberia. On December 14, 1825, there was an uprising of high-ranking officials in St Petersburg demanding reform. The uprising was suppressed and those that weren't executed were exiled to Siberia for life. Wander room to room, learn about their struggle, and their important role in developing the now charming city of Irkutsk.

Basic overnight train (beds)

Irkutsk - Ulan-Ude8h30m

Experience overnight travel like a local. Sit back and get some well-earned (and likely much-needed) rest en route to your next stop.

Accommodation

Hotel Angara (or similar)

Hotel

Day 12 Ulan-Ude

Arrive to Ulan Ude, the city with the largest Buddhist population in Russia. Here, learn about the indigenous people, the Buryats, and how they survive in such a harsh environment. Enjoy a local Buryat lunch.

Local Living: Buryat Experience

Meet the local ethnic group of Ulan Ude and learn about life in such a harsh and remote environment. Enjoy a traditional lunch.

Accommodation

Hotel Gesser (or similar)

Hotel

Meals included: Lunch

Day 13 Ulan-Ude

Enjoy free time to explore Ulan Ude.

Free Time

Ulan-Ude Full Day

Don't waste a minute-- get out and explore.

Accommodation

Hotel Gesser (or similar)

Hotel

Day 14 Ulan-Ude/Vladivostok

Board the last train of the trip very early and settle in for the 55 hr ride.

Basic overnight train (beds)

Ulan-Ude - Vladivostok55h

Experience overnight travel like a local. Sit back and get some well-earned (and likely much-needed) rest en route to your next stop.

Day 15 Ulan-Ude/Vladivostok

Watch the scenery go by, practice your newly acquired Russian skills, and relax to the rhythm of the train.

Basic overnight train (beds)

Ulan-Ude - Vladivostok Full Day

Experience overnight travel like a local. Sit back and get some well-earned (and likely much-needed) rest en route to your next stop.

Day 16 Vladivostok

Arrive in the evening in time for an optional final dinner with the group to recount this truly epic journey.

Train

Vladivostok Full Day

Climb aboard, take a seat, and enjoy the ride.

Accommodation

Azimut Amur Bay Hotel (or similar)

Hotel

Day 17 Vladivostok

Depart at any time.

What's Included

Kremlin and Armoury guided tour (Moscow). Suzdal tour. Orientation walk (Vladimir). Trans-Ural Railway. Yekaterinburg city tour. Trans-Siberian Railway. Lake Baikal stay. Homestay experience (Listvyanka). Irkutsk walking tour. Decembrists Museum guided visit. Local Buryat lunch (Ulan Ude). Local meal suggestions and language support throughout. All transport between destinations and to/from included activities.

Highlights

Marvel at Moscow's Kremlin, immerse yourself in bucolic Suzdal, watch the countryside glide by from your Trans-Siberian train compartment, meet the locals at Lake Baikal, discover Buryat cuisine and history in Ulan Ude, travel west to east across this massive country

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. OFFICIAL LETTER OF INVITATION

You will require a Letter of Invitation for Russia in order to get your Russian visa. You must complete the visa information form which will be automatically sent to you or your travel agent via email upon time of booking.

2. IMMIGRATION CARD

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. BOOK THEATRE TICKETS IN ADVANCE

To avoid disappointment we recommend that you book any theatre performances that you wish to attend in Moscow 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 when you are there. In particular we recommend you see what's playing at the Bolshoi, as it may be difficult to get tickets when you are there. The most useful sites to check in English are www.bolshoi.ru and www.ticketsofrussia.com.

4. MONEY

Due to the bank restrictions on changing money in Russia 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 rates.

6. ST. PETERSBURG EXPRESS

If you have booked the St. Petersburg Express Extension, you will have an included arrival transfer to the start hotel.

Overnight Train details: The train ride will be approximately 7 hours. Trains are 2nd Class Kupe Soft sleepers, with 4 berth compartments that have lockable doors. Bed linen is provided on all trains. There is enough space for medium size luggage under bottom bunks, and in the overhead shelf up top. Each carriage has two toilets, and one hot water boiler. Each carriage is accompanied by two train attendants. Your train may also be a Double deck train, which will have similar arrangements.

Group Leader Description

All our G Adventures group trip is accompanied by a G Adventures Chief Experience Officer (CEO) in Russia. 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 16, avg 12

Meals

Allow USD400-500 for meals not included.

Transport

Train, private van, metro, taxis, 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.

Solo Travellers

We believe solo 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 solo travellers on these itineraries must pay the single trip price.

Accommodation

Hotels (7 nts), homestay/guesthouse (2 nts), sleeper trains (7 nts).

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

For details of your joining hotel please refer to your tour voucher, G Account, the G Adventures App or contact your travel agent.

Joining Instructions

Hotel - Best Western Izmailovo Vega (IZMAILOVO VEGA) - is situated near metro station Partizanskaya (■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■) on the dark blue line. Hotel is just five minutes walk from the metro station. It is in 5 metro stops from the Red Square and the Kremlin.

If your call is specifically concerning Airport Transfer complications please call our local G Adventures Transfer provider directly at:
Svetlana: +7 921 936 98 58

EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS

G Adventures Office Bangkok, Thailand:

Mr Laziz Otayarov (Operations Manager - Central Asia)

Mobile 1: +998 90 134 7888 (24h)

Mobile 2: +998 93 528 7678 (24h)

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: 0344 272 0000

Calls from Germany: 0800 365 1000

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

What to Take

You will be on the move a good deal, so pack as lightly as possible (try to stay under 10kg / 22lb). It is in your own interest as you are expected to carry your own luggage. Please, note that we use public transport on this trip - the walking distance is never too far, but there will be up and down stairs in train stations, getting on and off metros, cobblestoned streets, etc and having a backpack makes travelling easier. We don't recommend bringing suitcases.

It is important that your bag can be locked. We recommend an overnight pack for the long train journeys, sparing you from going in and out of your luggage in the small compartments. This should be big enough to carry a spare set of clothes, towel, book, cards and basic toiletries (approx. 30 litre/8 gallons capacity).

Checklist

Cold Weather:

- * Long-sleeved shirts or sweater
- * Scarf
- * Warm gloves
- * Warm hat
- * Warm layers

Conservative Dress:

- * Modest clothing that covers knees and shoulders (Long pants, long skirts, shirts that cover shoulders)
- * Shawl or scarf (for temple visits)

Documents:

- * Flight info (required) (Printouts of e-tickets may be required at the border)
- * Insurance info (required) (With photocopies)
- * Passport (required) (With photocopies)
- * Required visas or vaccination certificates (required) (With photocopies)
- * Vouchers and pre-departure information (required)

Essentials:

- * Binoculars (optional)
- * Camera (With extra memory cards and batteries)
- * Cash, credit and debit cards
- * Day pack (Used for daily excursions or short overnights)
- * Ear plugs
- * First-aid kit (should contain lip balm with sunscreen, sunscreen, whistle, Aspirin, Ibuprofen, bandaids/plasters, tape, anti-histamines, antibacterial gel/wipes, antiseptic cream, Imodium or similar tablets for mild cases of diarrhea, rehydration powder, water purification)

tablets or drops, insect repellent, sewing kit, extra prescription drugs you may be taking)

- * Flashlight/torch (Headlamps are ideal)
- * Fleece top/sweater
- * Footwear
- * Hat
- * Locks for bags
- * Long pants/jeans
- * Moneybelt
- * Outlet adapter
- * Personal entertainment (Reading and writing materials, cards, music player, etc.)
- * Reusable water bottle
- * Shirts/t-shirts
- * Sleepwear
- * Small travel towel
- * Sunglasses
- * Toiletries (Preferably biodegradable)
- * Watch and alarm clock
- * Waterproof backpack cover
- * Windproof rain jacket

Light Hiking:

- * Hiking boots/sturdy walking shoes
- * Hiking pants (Convertible/Zip-off and quick dry recommended)

Sleep Sheet:

- * Sleeping bag liner/sleep sheet

Train Travel:

- * Slip-on shoes
- * Small container with lid
- * Travel cutlery
- * Travel or camp cup

Warm Weather:

- * Sandals/flip-flops
- * Shorts/skirts (Longer shorts/skirts are recommended)
- * Sun hat/bandana

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

Russia:

PLEASE READ THE ENTIRETY OF THE TEXT BELOW AS THIS IS IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR YOUR ENTRY INTO RUSSIA

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 Russia. Please, keep in mind that all countries require passports valid for at least 6 months from the moment of departure from the country.

To apply for a Russian visa, all nationalities must present an official Russian Letter of Invitation (LOI).

It is the responsibility of the traveller to check with their nearest Embassy and confirm the requirements for entry into Russia

IMPORTANT: Once your trip is confirmed, at 90 days prior to your entry into Russia, you must submit an application for your Letter of Invitation. A link will be emailed to you in your confirmation email. The details will be forwarded to our local agent in Russia and as a Russian visa is only valid for 90 days once it is issued, you will be emailed your Russian Invitation Letter about 10 business days after submission. Russian LOI's can be rushed in extreme circumstances.

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

Input your name the same way it is in your passport. The information on the application form must match your passport (if you have 2 or more names - all of them have to be listed under "first name").

If you have an umlaut or other character not recognized in the english alphabet in your name (ie. ü), please enter it in the longer form (ie. ue).

Please note: Our Supplier will provide the Russian LOI by email only. This Supplier is based in Russia, so please make sure to check your SPAM folder - emails from addresses ending with .ru often get redirected as SPAM.

Some nationalities may require an original copy of the LOI - please contact the Russian Embassy or Consulate to confirm. If you do require an original copy, please send an email to experience@gadventures.com to request this. You will be required to provide a valid mailing address and cover the cost of postage to receive this document.

The LOI will contain 2 sections. The section on the right in Russian is identical to the section on the left in English. Beside 'Confirmation voucher SPC' you will find the confirmation/application/approval number you will need when filling out your visa application. The Supplier information can be found at the bottom of the left page in English (Supplier name can be found in the quotations, address, email, website and phone number follow).

At time of writing, the below documents will be needed to obtain your visa (however, we do advise you confirm this with your nearest Embassy):

1. A standard visa application form from the Embassy or Consulate where you will collect your visa
2. 2 colour, passport sized photos (taken within 14 days)
3. Payment for the visa (this will be dependent on nationality and will sometimes need to be made at a local nearby bank - check with your Embassy to confirm details)
4. Passport with empty pages and at least 6 months validity
5. Russia Letter of Invitation
6. We also recommend bringing your vouchers as well as proof of onward travel (flight tickets entering and leaving the country) and a copy of the itinerary, printable from our website. While this may not be needed, we recommend having a copy on hand if needed.

Please carefully check all the information below prior to submitting

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

Information accurate as of January 21st, 2016

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

Russia: USD1 = approx 30 Roubles.

You will find that USD and EUR are the easiest to exchange in Russia (AUD and CAD can be exchanged also, mostly in big cities).

IMPORTANT: Due to bank restrictions, you will not be able to exchange banknotes printed earlier than 1996; and also notes with stamps or marks on them.

The most consistent way to get local currency is to exchange USD or EUR cash into Roubles but please understand the security risk of carrying large sums of money. A mix of cash, credit and debit cards are recommended but it is always good to have some cash on hand for situations where there are no other options available. A money belt is highly recommended to carry cash and important documents through Russia.

There are ATMs in every big city on the way: in all of them you can withdraw local currency. Major credit cards are accepted in the shops and restaurants almost everywhere in Russia.

Some banks in Moscow will allow cash advances against a credit card but these are subject to steep service charges and interest rates and should only be used in an emergency.

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

In Russia some restaurants include 10% service charge into the bill - check the menu before leaving a gratuity.

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.

At the end of your 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

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

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.

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 group leader has the authority to amend or cancel any part of the trip itinerary if it deemed necessary, due to safety concerns. Your Chief Experience Officer (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 and 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 judgement 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.

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. [Read more about travel safety](#) for ways to further enhance your personal safety while traveling.

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, 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 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 leaders 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.

Please note that all passengers traveling to Antarctica are required to fill out this questionnaire.

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 group leader has 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 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 leader, who will take note of your insurance details. When selecting a travel insurance policy we require that at a minimum you are covered for medical expenses including emergency evacuation and repatriation. A minimum coverage of USD200,000 is required. G Adventures can provide you with the appropriate coverage. 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

Planeterra is G Adventures' non-profit foundation created to make a positive difference in the communities where G Adventures takes travellers. Planeterra supports sustainable social and environmental solutions in destinations travellers love to visit.

As travellers, it's natural to want to give back to the places we've come to love. But to truly impact poverty, we work to build self-sufficiency, not dependency.

Planeterra partners with grassroots organizations with firsthand knowledge of local culture and true community needs. This ensures that solutions come from the people we support. Then G Adventures brings travellers to visit, fuelling sustainable local income in these communities. This model is helping many rural and marginalized communities on their way to self-sufficiency because they are harnessing the power of the tourism industry as a force for good. 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 planeterra.org.

MAKE EVERY DAY COUNT

Fifty percent of our planet lives on less than \$2/day. For the price of a coffee, you can make every day of your trip count by giving back to the communities you visit through Planeterra.

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

When packing, be aware of local dress standards. Russia will definitely display the full spectrum from high fashion to extremely conservative. As a visitor, it's always best to dress conservatively, especially travelling into the more remote regions, as some areas are more religious/modest than others. Loose, lightweight, long clothing is both respectful and practical. As a general guideline shoulders and knees should be covered when visiting religious sites - shorts, singlets and tank tops are not suitable. For the train journeys, comfortable "lounging" clothes is recommended with slip-on sandals and light layers to pile on and take off as temperature on the train fluctuates.

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.