INCOMING TOUR OPERATOR
IN SIBERIA

SIBIRIA
SAYAN RING
САЯНСКОЕ КОЛЬЦО

Sightseeing tour around the Baikal

Day 1. Saturday



10:00 – Meeting with the guide at the airport of Irkutsk.
Sightseeing trip to Listvyanka.
Today is the first day of the tour, and you are welcome to start it with exploring lake Baikal in Listvyanka settlement. This is perhaps one of the oldest Russian settlements on the shore of the great lake. Lately it has turned into a tourist centre with the number of sights, cafes, hotels and tourists exceeding the number of residents.
We invite you for a sightseeing tour of Listvyanka, during which you will visit an observation platform next to the famous Shaman-Rock, hear a beautiful legend and visit the acting Russian Orthodox church of St.Nicholas-the-Miracle-Worker – the patron of all travelers and sailors. You may also have an excursion to Baikal Ecological museum* with an exposition telling about the flora and fauna of Baikal, including aquariums with the lake's live inhabitants. Tireless travelers may have a boat ride on Baikal, hiking or ATV tour along the picturesque shore*. Watching the water from the coastal cliffs pay attention to its unmatched transparency and purity! Besides, you may visit the spectacular open-air market, where the locals sell souvenirs alongside with home-made specialities of Baikal fish.
Return to Irkutsk, free time.

- Accommodation in a hotel in Irkutsk
- Lunch in a cafe
- 130 km by bus
- For extra charge. Breakfast and dinner independent

Day 2. Sunday

After breakfast you will set off on a trip to Baikal. Bus transfer to Olkhon island. Your way to the lake will head through vast steppes, ancient Buryat villages, over the magnificent Pribaikalskiy range's spurs covered with the Siberian taiga forest which then change to Mongolian-type landscapes of the Tazheranskaya steppe.



Boarding the ferry to cross the famous Olkhon Gate Straits separating Olkhon from the mainland. It will take you about 40 min. to get to the island; on the way you will see both the Maloye (Small) and the Bolshoye (Larger) Seas – two parts of Baikal split by Olkhon.

Arrival at Olkhon island – the biggest one out of 26 Baikal's isles; the lake's geographic, historical and sacral centre, which resembles it even by shape.

A 40-km transfer on the island – and you reach its capital – Khuzhir settlement. After putting up at the tourist lodge we invite you to start exploring the vast spaces of Olkhon with a walking sightseeing tour of the outskirts: Khuzhir settlement, sacred Burkhan cape (Shaman-Mount) – 1 of the 9 Asian shrines, equally worshipped by Shamanists, Buddhists and Lamaists. Optionally* excursion to the local lore museum with an interesting collection of objects representing the everyday life and culture of the islanders.

After the long impression-filled day, you will have a sound sleep enhanced by the health-giving atmosphere of a wooden house.

Accommodation at a lodge on Olkhon island

Breakfast in the hotel, lunch and dinner at the camp

KM 320 km by bus

* For extra charge

Day 3. Monday

Although Olkhon is just an island, the distances here are quite long making most of the local excursions last practically the whole day. So, we invite you to spend this day exploring the legendary **Khoboy cape** – the island's northernmost point, which is located at the widest place of Baikal.



On the way you will see all the diversity of Baikal's natural landscapes concentrated on the island: steppes, warm bays jutting deep into the shore, sandy dunes, mixed deciduous forests interspersed with relict fir woods and magnificent marble rocks spotted with red lichens.

The cape gives a splendid panoramic view of Baikal's northern part, and if the weather is fine, one can make out the outlines of the Ushkanyi isles and Svyatoy Nos peninsula.

It is really worth having a walk here, during which the guide will tell you the legends and describe traditions and customs connected with this place. After putting up at the tourist lodge we invite you to start exploring the vast spaces of Olkhon with a walking sightseeing tour of the outskirts: Khuzhir settlement, sacred Burkhan cape (Shaman-Mount) – 1 of the 9 Asian shrines, equally worshipped by Shamanists, Buddhists and Lamaists. Optionally excursion to the local lore museum** with an interesting collection of objects representing the everyday life and culture of the islanders.

After the long impression-filled day, you will have a sound sleep enhanced by the health-giving atmosphere of a wooden house.

Accommodation at a lodge on Olkhon island

Breakfast and dinner at the camp, lunch picnic

80 km by UAZ

Day 4. Tuesday

A day at leisure. You are welcome to choose entertainments to your taste.



If you have enjoyed touring Olkhon by car, we recommend visiting Shara-Nuur lake* (in the Buryat language means “Yellow Lake”). This is the island’s only lake with mineralized healing water. The lake is surrounded by diversified landscape, where one can observe the local wildlife – birds and animals. The water has healing properties and if you have a soak in it, the mineral salts make your skin slightly red. The lake’s mud is known to cure various diseases, e.g. arthritis.

If, on the contrary, you fancy some activities, you may go cycling* over the vast Olkhon spaces.

Those fond of leisurely beach rest will enjoy the sandy beach of Saraisky Bay.

Accommodation at a lodge on Olkhon island

Breakfast, lunch and dinner at the camp

* For extra charge

Day 5. Wednesday

Today you will have an air trip by small plane – you will cross Baikal at its widest part from the west coast to the east one, namely to Barguzin Bay – the biggest bay of Baikal. Here the fish-filled Barguzin River flows into the Baikal, nearby there are unique nature parks, and the Barguzin Valley is believed to be the motherland of Genghis Khan. You will have three days to explore this storied land staying at a cozy tourist lodge on the coast.



Accommodation at a tourist camp in the Barguzin Bay

Breakfast, lunch, dinner at the camp

Day 6-8. Thursday-Saturday



For the next three days you are welcome to choose entertainments to your taste. For those fond of sightseeing there are numerous excursions*: for example, a water trip around Barguzin Bay or to the Barguzin Nature Reserve, automobile – to the legendary Barguzin Valley, or hiking – on Svyatoy Nos (Holy Nose) Peninsula. It is worth visiting the neighbouring Chivyrkuy Bay and Zmeinaya (Snakes') Cove famous for the thermal spring. Avid anglers will hardly miss a chance of exploring the local fishing spots (tackles are available for rent at the lodge*), whereas fans of beach rest will appreciate the warm water, windless beach and water attractions (*).

- Accommodation at a tourist camp in the Barguzin Bay
- Breakfast, lunch, dinner at the camp
- * For extra charge

Day 9. Sunday



After some days in a natural environment by the lake, it is time to return back to the civilization, which is here original and interesting. Still not parting with Baikal (you will see it again from the train), you will go by bus to your next destination – Ulan-Ude, the capital of Buryatia called the Eastern Gate of Russia.

- Accommodation in a hotel in Ulan-Ude
- Breakfast at the camp
- KM 240 km by bus
- * Lunch and dinner independent

Day 10. Monday

We invite you for a sightseeing tour around this old Siberian city, during which you will see its old part of the city, richly carved mansions that once belonged to local merchants and stone buildings of the 18th-19th centuries. Then your itinerary runs beyond the city: you may enjoy the view of an endless Mongolian steppe till you reach the main local sight – **Ivolginskiy datsan** – a functioning Buddhist monastery, which is also the capital of Buddhism in Russia.



Today's lunch will be also sort of an excursion: you are offered to try some delicious specialities of the Buryat cuisine, in a real Buryat yurt exquisitely designed in the national style.

After lunch you will go on studying the ancient times' life at the **Ethnographic Museum of the People of Trans-Baikal region**, reconstructing the history of the region's population and the culture of its indigenous peoples.

- Accommodation in a hotel in Ulan-Ude
- Breakfast in a hotel, lunch in a cafe
- 100 km by bus
- Dinner independent

Day 11. Tuesday



Today you will continue surveying the peoples inhabiting Baikal shores, their confessions and traditions. The 17th century in the Russian history was marked by Raskol – the schism within the Russian Orthodoxy over Patriarch Nikon's reforms in liturgy and forms of worship, which forced plenty of the so-called Old Believers to come to Siberia: some – under the sentence of exile, and some – escaping from prosecution. We offer you a whole-day trip to the village of the Old Believers (or the Semeiskiye), where you will see the differences between Patriarch Nikon's followers on the one hand, and those who confess the Old Belief, on the other one. During the trip you will get acquainted with their original culture, customs, and folklore, and try the traditional cuisine.

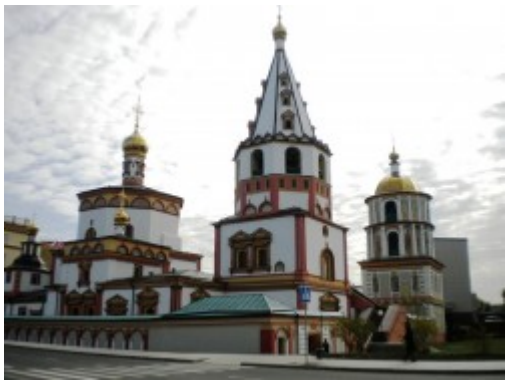
In the evening a night train will take you back to Irkutsk, which you will reach the next morning having skirted Baikal in the south.

Accommodation on train board

Breakfast in the hotel, dinner in the family

KM 440 km by train

Day 12. Wednesday



Today is the final day of the tour, and we offer you to explore Irkutsk – old Siberian city.

During the city sightseeing tour you will see the historical centre, the place, where over 300 years ago Irkutsk was founded, the Angara river's embankment, the most prominent monuments of architecture and, of course, Znamenskiy ("Holy Sign") Russian Orthodox convent with one of the most beautiful Siberian cathedrals noted for its iconostasis and graves on the territory (graves of the Decembrists, Gregory Shelikhov and others). After the sightseeing you will have some time for shopping at the central market and a souvenir

store.

By 13:00 the end of all excursions and the tour.

 Breakfast