Day 1. Siberian history

Arrival to Abakan, capital city of Khakassia republic.

09:00 Meeting in the airport, then pick-up from the railway station.

Abakan city tour visiting the Siberian landscaping park Garden of the dream. The park has so many unexpected and interesting things: the Eiffel Tower, the evil claws and beak of an huge eagle, unsightly mounds near the grass are funny hedgehog, an English lawn, meditation in a Japanese garden, and the most impressing thing is many Siberian amazing plants, pergolas, swings, funny little creatures, sitting at the edges of walkways and much more.

12:00 Lunch in a restaurant.

Then the group goes to an old Russian town Minussinsk. During the excursion you will see Saviour Cathedral, walk around the city center, aged merchant’s houses, visit a local market where you can buy famous Minussinsk tomatoes. Tomatoes in Minussinsk were began to grow the last century. Many local residents still use seed varieties, which fell to them by inheritance from grandparents. The largest tomato weighing nearly 2 kg, raised a local man in 2010.

Excursion to the local museum of Russian Decembrists’.

Next point to see is the Sayano-Shushenskaya hydroelectric power station, the biggest one in Russia. In the area of the reservoir there is the Sayano-Shushensky Biosphere Reserve. Amazingly clear water allows to exist a trout farm near hydroelectric power station, because
trout are known to not tolerate polluted water. Visit a trout farm, where it is possible to buy fresh fish.

Arrival to Shushenskoye village. You will overnight in the guesthouses of the museum Shushenskoye, it still keeps the customs and traditions of the Siberian village of the late 19th century, with its streets and houses, it will help you to feel the atmosphere of country life. Guesthouses were reconstituted with preservation of cultural styles of Angara river area and south of Krasnoyarsk Territory. The realities of peasant life are combined with modern comfort living. Stopping for a rest in the new village, becoming masters of estates, enjoying traditional peasant cuisine, learning the basics of craft, taking part in the games and entertainments, ceremonies and celebrations, guests can feel like the real Siberian farmers. Before dinner a visit to Russian banya is highly recommended*!

Accommodation in guesthouses of Shushenskoye village
Lunch in a restaurant, dinner at guesthouses
250 km by bus
* Not included. Breakfast is not provided

Day 2. The Sayan mountains

The day begins with excursion in the ethnographical museum Shushenskoye that will bring you to the real Siberian village of the 19th-20th centuries. The history of the museum is inextricably linked with the name of Vladimir Lenin, who lived in Shushenskoye in exile 1897-1900. This corner of antiquity is situated on a bank of the river Shush, near its confluence with the Yenisei. There are numerous monuments of architecture on the 7 hectares: farmhouses, commercial shop, jail, tavern, about 200 wooden buildings. A lot of people go here attracted by ancient Siberian traditions, which are fully preserved in this place. A visit to a real tavern will bring everybody another surprise, you can see handicrafts and go to the shop of a merchant.

After a lunch the group continues its way towards Tuva across the West Sayan mountains. You will see the host of this territory - Sleeping Sayan warrior if you look attentively at the contours of the mountain. The legend says that one day the Khakassian warrior Sayan fell asleep here. He can be seen now lying on the back with folded arms.

In June now here, now there you can see globeflowers, flowers of a bright orange colour, which are so fond of Siberians.

Closer to the evening the group comes to Tuva. It’s amazing but as soon as the bus crosses the border between Krasnoyarsk region and comes to Tuva even the scenery changes. It
seems like you are coming to another planet and another age. There are almost no signs of civilization on the most part of Tuva territory; steppes and sharp mountains are over the hundreds kilometers.

The group makes a stop 22 km from Kyzyl city, on the bank of the Biy-Khem river (in Tuvan – the Big Yenisei), in the yurt camp. Accommodation in the real thick felt yurts built by Tuvans specially for the tourists.

To make the guests’ life as clear as the milk, to let spirits of heaven and earth help to the successful resolution of all deals, to make the travel trouble free, we invite you to a Tuvan tea ceremony. During the ceremony you will hear a story about cooking national Tuvan tea with milk and salt, you will learn about the history of tea in Tuva, about tea legends and parables. You’ll feel the taste of the rich culture, feel the wonderful land of steppes and open spaces of Tuva.

Accommodation at the yurt camp Biy-Khem
Breakfast in guesthouses, lunch picnic, dinner at the yurt camp
350 km by bus

Day 3. The centre of Asia

The Europeans are still interested in the Eastern traditions. The route that covers the Sayan Ring lets you visit the heart of Asia. The place of this day is Kyzyl, the capital of Tuva. This city is situated in the place where the Biy-Khem (the Big Yenisei) and the Kaa-Khem (the Small Yenisei) unite their waters and give a life to the great river Yenisei. The first sight to visit here is the Geographical Centre of Asia.

The next place of visiting is the Buddhist temple and Drum of Wishes.

The group will visit the National Museum of Tuva (exhibition Scythian gold) and see unique archaeological finds of different epochs.

Buddhism in Tuva exists in harmony with shaman beliefs. So after the Buddhist temple we will go to a Shaman community where you can pay and ask about your health and future, get information about shamanism secrets*.

Visit local handicraftsmen.

Free time in Kyzyl, visit a local market. Departure to a healing mineral spring.
Dinner with traditional dishes of Tuvan cuisine including meat and dairy products will be cooked specially for the guests on returning back to the yurt camp.

After dinner - the performance with the traditional throat singing - khoomei. The throat singing is a fantastical capability of the Tuva people (and some other Siberian nationalities) to emit simultaneously two or three sounds of different tone and to sustain the same sound for 25-30 seconds without taking a breath. If you close your eyes it is hard to believe that the sounds are emitted by a person and not by a musical instrument.

In the evening you will see a bewitching show: shamans' kamlaniye*. Kamlaniye is a magical communication between shamans and spirits. During this ritual the shamans dance around fire, sing and beat a drum. Kamlaniye will leave a long lasting impression, nobody remains indifferent after this ritual. There the shamans will tell you about their traditions, rituals and abilities. After that you will get an opportunity to ask them about your future, your health and experience the ritual of purification*.

Accommodation at the yurt camp Biy-Khem
Breakfast at the yurt camp, lunch in a restaurant, dinner at the yurt camp
70 km by bus
* Not included

Day 4. Following the path of nomads

Nowadays the tourists can follow exactly the same path that ancient nomads followed crossing Tuva from the east to the west and reach Khakassia. The route will go through the mountain pass. Here you can meet places which are considered to be energetically powerful. Before lunch there is a stop near a breathtaking mountain Khairykan - one of the most respected places in Tuva. In 1992 it was chosen by the 14th Dalai Lama to be an energetically powerful place. Once a year local shamans come here to get energy, strengthen and purify their spirits.

Picnic is organized right on the grass.

On the way tourists will see the center of Buddhist culture, a ruined temple Ustuu-Khuree. The temple was the crowning of Buddhist construction in Tuva. And it was unique not only in Tuva, but also in the former Soviet Union. In 1930, after the adoption of a special resolution Ustuu-Khuree was closed, and in 1937 - destroyed. In 1999, the Russian government, recognizing the historic and architectural value of the unique temple Ustuu-Khuree, decided to restore it. In June 2012 the new temple was officially opened.
Khakassia begins after the Sayan pass, at a height of 2214 meters. The mountains here are covered with fabulous cedar taiga. The tourists will spend the next two days in the taiga camp Snow Leopard built on the bank of the river Stoktysh.

You can enjoy walking on colourful moss here and breathe pure mountain air.

Accommodation in the camp Snow Leopard
Breakfast at the yurt camp, lunch picnic, dinner at the camp
440 km by bus

Day 5. Sayan taiga

The first day in taiga will amaze you by silence, not usual in big cities. In the morning the group will go to the bridge of love.

The pendant bridge is over a mountain river, which flows across taiga forest overcoming many rapids. There is a local tradition according to which a lover if he wants to prove his love has to carry in one's arms his beloved lady over this bridge.

In July and August you can gather gifts of the forest - berries and mushrooms which you don't even need to look for - they are just under your feet. You will also have a chance to eat cedar nuts. A Siberian cedar is a unique tree. Those cedars which you will be surrounded by are the witnesses of several centuries, fed hundreds of generations who lived in taiga.

Taiga air makes you healthier, but the real cure for all illnesses is a Russian banya. A steaming Russian banya with brooms made of coniferous twigs, birch and oak twigs. Those who are courageous enough can jump into the cold river right after steaming. Cedar taiga, star-spangled sky and silence will make you forget about rush of the cities. All this will make you feel a part of wild nature.

Accommodation in the camp Snow Leopard
Breakfast, lunch and dinner at the camp
4 km on foot
Day 6. The valley of delight

After breakfast - bid farewell to Snow Leopard and taiga.

On the route the group makes a stop at a Khakassian village where there is a monument Khurtuyakh tas, where native women bring there gifts if they wish to have a baby.

The ancient land of Khakassia takes the lead over Siberia and even Russia for the abundance of its archeological relics. Here right by the road you can see the rock paintings, every twenty meters - a burial mound or a stone figure, which is still serving as a cult place for the local people.

By afternoon the group arrives to the Kyug valley (in Khakassian "kyug" means "delight"). Two great mountains chains stand near each other here. The Khakassian people call this valley "delight", archaeologists find a lot of monuments of different cultures. There is the yurt camp Kyug. Accommodation again in yurts, this time it will be wooden Khakassian yurts also built specially for tourists.

The excursion to the nature reserve Kazanovka will let you know more about the inheritance of ancient civilizations. This museum is situated under the open sky and includes mountains, canyons, caves, mixed forest, rare plants. There are more than 2000 archaeological monuments on the territory of the nature reserve. Every year archaeologists open 30-40 new monuments. The main purpose of this museum is to preserve natural and historical landscapes, reconstruction and development of local people's life, gathering, searching, forming and protection of the funds.

In Kazanovka the tourists will have a chance to see rock paintings which are 3000-5000 years old. Archaeologists make copies of these paintings on paper for further studying and you can take these copies with you as souvenirs.

After dinner with traditional dishes - a performance of the Khakassian national folklore group.

Khakassian speech sounds here, Khakassian food is not exotic, all rituals are natural without striving for theatricality. In the silence of the Khakassian valley you can really calm and relax and the scent of the beautiful irises will give you new energy. Feel the energy and power of the Khakassian land. This unearthly peace of mind and inner cleanliness, ease and lucidity will accompany you. Suddenly you will recognize and don’t recognize yourself. This world is full of mysteries. And you are a part of these mysteries, you should only let yourself
become free. Khakassia is a centre of the favorable emotions, diluted by amazement before the fantastical proximity of eternity.

Accommodation at the yurt camp Kyug
Breakfast at the taiga camp, lunch and dinner at the yurt camp
242 km by bus

Day 7. The history of Khakassia

The history of Khakassia is very reach and has plenty of memorable dates.

The excursion to the National museum of Khakassia Kazanovka will let you know more about the inheritance of ancient civilizations. This museum is situated under the open sky and includes mountains, canyons, caves, mixed forest, rare plants. There are more than 2000 archaeological monuments on the territory of the nature reserve. Every year archaeologists open 30-40 new monuments. The main purpose of this museum is to preserve natural and historical landscapes, reconstruction and development of local people's life, gathering, searching, forming and protection of the funds. In Kazanovka the tourists will have a chance to see rock paintings which are 3000-5000 years old. Archaeologists make copies of these paintings on paper for further studying and you can take these copies with you as souvenirs.

After lunch group departs to Abakan.

Upon arrival short Abakan city tour and then you will be able to see the exposition of stone monuments in the National museum of Khakassia. Among them there are fantastic animals, sun like gods, figures with animal's heads. Local people believe that some of these stones still have great power.

Check-in to hotel Asia.

Dinner.

Accommodation in the Asia hotel 4*
Breakfast at the yurt camp, lunch in a restaurant, dinner in the hotel
Day 8. Departure

Morning flight to Moscow. Till 12:00 check-out. Transfer to the airport*

Breakfast at the hotel or packed to the airport

* Not included