

BAM - The Winter Expedition 2020

Come with us to the Baikal-Amur Mainline railway as we explore the political and social history of Russia's greatest railway construction project of the 20th century. There is a lot to learn from the veterans who labored on the BAM and many fascinating stories about the life and times of people who live along the railway today.

We travel to:

- Learn about the BAM project first hand from veterans of the construction and hear their stories about the life and times of young Communist Volunteers in the construction camps.
- Come prepared for the adventure of a lifetime This is a wild and beautiful region full of wonderful scenery and plenty of surprises. There are snowy mountains, clear running rivers, fish to catch and unexpected sand dunes hidden in the depths of the Taiga.
- Along the way we will take time to meet with the Evenkis people to learn about their culture and lifestyle in the remote Taiga.
- Life along the BAM was hard and dangerous. Many of the stories don't have happy endings and many of the people who worked on the line and in the Uranium mines did not come to Siberia willingly. These stories were not told openly but they are as important to the social history of the BAM as the stories of the young pioneers.
- Get a greater understanding and appreciation of Russia.

BAM – Construction of the century

The Baikal-Amur Mainline (BAM) was a project that captured the imagination of a Nation in the 1930's. Do you remember those times and wonder what ever happened to the BAM?

The original purpose may seem less important today than it did back then however the BAM is much more than just a railway to the descendents of the young volunteers who built it.

Young Communists Volunteers from all over the Soviet Union set themselves against the Baikal-Amur wilderness with determination and heroic courage. It became the 'Hero Project of the Century where towns were named after origin of the workers and wedding ceremonies took place right on the railway tracks. Steaming locomotives against the background of high mountains and picturesque bridge spans. But more often you think: What is it? Where? and Why?

Why would anybody try to conquer taiga and those lofty mountains, pick countless tunnels and lay sleepers through swamps and mountain passes. Why building new towns and settlements, gathering volunteers from all over the Soviet Union? What ideals drove those people? How did they live and what remains of those times?

Join us on this intriguing adventure to unlock the history of the BAM..

Our choice of traveling in March is not accidental. The road alongside BAM is tough in summer due to the absence of bridges across the rivers. In March the unique beauty of Siberian winter is moving towards spring. The hard frosts and bitter winds have passed but the ground and rivers are still frozen.

At night we will stay in hotels, if there are no hotels - which is a common thing for BAM – in tourist centers, schools and administrations. Everywhere we come we will be expected in advance, treated with kind smiles and shown around. It will be a fascinating to meet the people of the BAM face-to-face. These folk have a different world view than city people. Their lives are fashioned by the Taiga wilderness and by the lifeline of the BAM.. Today Russia would be different without the BAM and in the past the BAM could not have been achieved without Russia

Trip Description

Daily itinerary

0 day	Irkutsk Arrival in Irkutsk On arrival our representative will meet you and transfer you to the hotel.	
1 day	Irkutsk After lunch set out for a few hours sightseeing around this colourful city of log buildings and grand neoclassical churches.	

2 day	<p>Irkutsk to Olkhon</p> <p>Olkhon is the fourth-largest lake-bound island in the world. It is the largest island in Lake Baikal. Geologically, it acts as the southwestern margin of Academician Ridge. The island measures 71.5 km in length and 20.8 km in width. Much of the island is still covered by forests and the amount of precipitation is extremely low – about 240 mm (9.4 in) per year. There are several settlements and five villages on the island: Yalga, Malomoretz, Khuzhir, Kharantsy, and Ulan-Khushin. The village of Khuzhir is the administrative capital of Olkhon, designated as such in April 1987 when the Soviet government issued a comprehensive decree protecting Lake Baikal. Khuzhir is home to about 1,200 mostly of Buryats, the island's aboriginal people.</p>	
3 day	<p>Olkhon</p> <p>Activities today include excursions to local scenic spots and viewpoints for outstanding views of the lake. Points of interest include Shamanka' rock and 'three brother's ' rock, the Museum and Peschanka 'Gulag' Village.</p>	
4 day	<p>Olkhon to Barguzin</p>	
5 day	<p>Barguzin-Khakusy</p> <p>Drive to the hot therapeutic springs of Khakusy, where the water temperature fluctuates between 40 and 52 degrees above zero.</p>	
6 day	<p>Khakusy -Severobaikalsk.</p> <p>The history of Severobaykalsk is closely related to the history of the Baikal-Amur Mainline (BAM). It was founded in 1974 as a work settlement for workers constructing the BAM, serving as a logistics center and a central starting point for the railway project. To the west the railway line was developed to Bratsk and to the east to Tynda. At this time the only settlement in the area was the village Nizhneangarsk, located at the edge of a swampy plain at the northern tip of the lake. It was decided to develop the new town Severobaykalsk 20 kilometers (12 mi) southwest of Nizhneangarsk on a plateau above the lake, thus allowing further extensions and development in the future. Originally it was planned to increase the population to 140,000 people but after the railway construction was completed in 1984 the population began to decline</p>	
7 day	<p>Severobaikalsk.</p> <p>Visit a museum of local history and Evenki culture, meet and get a chance to talk to the Evenkis – the natives of the Eastern Siberia. Day 8. 01 March. Severobaikalsk-Taksimo. The longest tunnel of Russia and Devil's Bridge. BAM stretches along the impressive Verkhneangarsky Range with altitudes up to 2500 meters. In the evening travelers come to the New Uoyan Township. Today we will pass the 15km-long North Muya tunnel – the longest tunnel in Russia – and to the Devil's Bridge – a unique engineer construction and the "business card" of BAM. Next, through the mountain pass travelers drive to Taksimo Township, where they stop for the night at the hotel.</p>	

8 day	Taksimo- Kuanda — Golden link of BAM. In the morning travelers go to the Museum and then drive to Kuanda Township to see a memorial, placed outside the railway station to commemorate rail-laying of BAM. Staying in homestay in Kuanda.	
9 day	Severobaikalsk-Taksimo. The longest tunnel of Russia and Devil's Bridge. BAM stretches along the impressive Verkhneangarsky Range with altitudes up to 2500 meters. In the evening travelers come to the New Uoyan Township. Today we will pass the 15km-long North Muya tunnel – the longest tunnel in Russia – and to the Devil's Bridge – a unique engineer construction and the “business card” of BAM. Next, through the mountain pass travelers drive to Taksimo Township, where they stop for the night at the hotel.	
10 day	Taksimo- Kuanda — Golden link of BAM. In the morning travelers go to the Museum and then drive to Kuanda Township to see a memorial, placed outside the railway station to commemorate rail-laying of BAM. Staying in Kuanda.	
11 day	Kuanda- New Chara . Balbuhta and Kodar pass. Going through the legendary Balbuhta junction and storming the vivid Kodar pass. Descending in the Chara cavity, contemplating of one the most photogenic, but continuous and forbidding chain of mountains of Siberia to the North – Kadar. Driving to Chara Township, overnight in hotel. Distance: 160 km	
12 day	Chara sands - dunes among the snow. Sallying out in the direction of the unique natural phenomenon – Chara sands. It is the real desert with dunes semi-covered by snow – only in Siberia and only on BAM can you see this amazing miracle. Driving to the camping site with hot springs in the evening. Resting, bathing, overnight in hotel.	
13 day	New Chara - Chin. The most high-altitude, abandoned Russia's railway. Radial trip to the Chineyskoye field of vanadium-containing titanium magnetite ores – one of the biggest in the world. Driving along the highest railway in Russia (around 1650 m). Its rail-track is piled by rocks and tied up in knots by recent earthquake. It is a real abandoned railway with fancy bridges and galleries in mountains and tunnels. Travelers are surrounded by picturesque high lands. Returning to Chara Township in the evening, overnight at hotel. Distance: 70 km	

14 day	New Chara - Yuktali. The highest point of the Russian Railways. Storming the most high-altitude mountain pass of BAM – Udokan (1310 m). This is the highest point of the whole Russian Railways. Never-ending Siberian taiga and towering snow-clad peaks all around. Passing snowy Leprindo lakes to Hani Township Driving forward along BAM through Siberian taiga and mountains to the east. Stop at the bridge over the river Olyokma, where one of the rocks is covered by ancient drawings – petroglyphs. Stop for the night in Yuktali Distance: 307 km	
15 day	March Yuktali-Tynda Driving to the final destination of our expedition, unofficial capital of BAM – Tynda the next day. Staying overnight in the hotel. Distance: 349 km	
16 day	Tynda - the Capital of BAM. Visiting Museum of BAM history . It has eight large rooms each for its own story: aboriginal people, gulag, railway history, flora and fauna, minerals etc.	
17 day	Blagoveshchensk. Train to Blagoveshchensk Overnight in train.	
18 day	Blagoveshchensk. Blagoveshchensk is a city in Russia, the capital of the Amur region, the fifth largest city in the Far East, located 7,985 kilometers east of Moscow. The city stands on the left bank of the Amur River, on the border with China. The population of Blagoveshchensk is about 224,000. In 1644, the first Russian settlers moved to the area and founded their settlement. Russian military outpost was founded later in 1856. The town received its name “Blagoveshchensk” after the parish church of Annunciation (Blagoveshcheniye in Russian). By the end of the 19th century, the town was a large river port and industrial center. Also, it was growing fast because of gold rush. Blagoveshchensk had favorable position, situated on the Chinese-Russian border (about hundreds of meters opposite the city of Heihe).	
19 day	Flight to Moscow or to Novosibirsk, or to VVO. It is possible to stay longer in Blagoveshchensk or continue your trip to Vladivostok.	

Dates & Prices

23-02-2020 - 10-03-2020, days total: , price: 7500

Tour starts in Bratsk, Irkutsk region. There is a daily flight Moscow to Bratsk S7 121

Tour finishes in Blagoveshchensk.

Blagoveshchensk to Moscow flight with one stop is on the 9-th of March.

Included

Price includes :

- ESG service
- Accommodation according to the program
- 4 WD vehicles (Land Cruisers)
- All sightseeing entry fees
- Special winter equipment
- Special winter cloths
- Full board
- train ticket
- meeting at the airport

Price dosen't include:

- air tickets