

SOUTHERN BAIKAL

Prepared by
LTD Colors of Baikal
Irkutsk 2020

DETAILED PROGRAMME 2020

DAY 1

Arrival to the airport/railway station of Irkutsk, meeting with your English-speaking guide. Transfer to the hotel. City tour takes you to the historic districts of the city, the place where Irkutsk was founded by the cossack Yakov Pokhobov, its ancient churches, cultural sites and monuments. Lunch. The tour continues with the visit to the Historic Memorial Decembrists' Museum (house-museum of Decembrist Sergei Volkonsky), where you are going to hear many stories about the life of Decembrists in Siberia. Dinner..

DAY 2

We leave the big city behind this morning and head for Arshan - a small picturesque village situated in the republic of Buryatia at the foot of Eastern Sayan mountains. It's known as «Little Siberian Switzerland» because of its healing hot springs that rise to the surface near Kyngarga river. Walking in Tunkinsky National Park. Short trekking to the Kyngarga waterfall..

DAY 3

We'll spend the day exploring the village and its charming surroundings. Visiting the local market and the small buddhist datsan (monastery) hidden in the forest. A breath-taking drive will take us to Zhemchug village located at the end of the Tunkinsky valley with its vast steppes, horses and cows. Here you will have the chance to bathe in the healing mineral springs, which are so good for your skin, joints and the nerve system. On the way back we pass by a small local observatory with telescopes. Return to Arshan village.

DAY 4

In the morning we drive straight to Sludyanka village where we'll board on the Circumbaikal train to make a day trip on a former Trans-Siberian railway along the lake shore. Until the middle of the 20th century the Circumbaikal railway was part of the main line of Trans-Siberian Railway; later on, however, a duplicate section of the railway was built. Sometimes called a unique achievement in engineering, the Circumbaikal is one of the picturesque sights of the area around lake Baikal. The Circumbaikal contains thirty-eight tunnels with a total length of 9063 m (the longest of them, a tunnel through cape Polovinnyj, is 777.5 m long). There are also 15 stone galleries and 3 ferro-concrete galleries with apertures, 248 bridges and viaducts, and 268 retaining walls. We are going to enjoy a day trip on board of the train making several stop to wonder around the tunnels, bridges on the coast of the Baikal lake with lots of wild flowers. After arriving to the port Baikal in the evening we take a ferry trip to Listvyanka village. Accommodation in a hotel..

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DAY 5

We start the day exploring Listvyanka village with its port and fish market. Next, we'll visit the church of Saint Nicholas followed by the excursion in the Baikal limnological museum. Here you will learn a lot about the unique flora and fauna of the lake. If you don't suffer from dizziness you can also enjoy the virtual diving to the bottom of the lake to see it more closely.

Lunch. Departure to the Talsty Museum of Wooden Architecture that will tell you the history of native people of Siberia. Talsty museum opens its doors to all visitors wishing to enjoy the beauty of different types of old wooden constructions - civil, religions and defensive - from the 17th to the 20th centuries. You will get to know a lot about the cultural heritage of Russian, Buryat, Tofalar and Evenks people. The leisurely journey back to Irkutsk..

DAY 6

Morning departure towards Olkhon island. On the way we'll visit the Buryat village Ust-Orda with its ethnographic museum, where we are going to enjoy the folk programme and take part in an authentic shaman ritual. Our next stop is the Datsan (buddhist temple) with a nice lunch of traditional Buryat cuisine afterwards. Finally we'll arrive to the picturesque Maloe more strait. Maloe more (Small sea) is a 90 km strait which separates Olkhon island and the mainland, surrounded by many cozy bays with a very nice view of the opposite shore. Accommodation in a hotel. Dinner.

DAY 7

Ferry trip crossing the strait on the way to Olkhon island, the largest island of Baikal and one of the sacred shamanist centres, land full of legends and holy places. Exploring the southern part of the island with its steppes, small lake Khankhoy and beautiful landscapes..

DAY 8

Spend the day exploring the northern end of Olkhon island. On the way we are going to make several stops in the most picturesque places: the cliff Three Brothers, the Love cape and many others. The final point of the excursion - the cape Khoboy. This is a place where the smaller and bigger seas meet and form the widest place of the lake of 79.5 km. From the top of the cape opens a phenomenal panoramic view. Return to the village in the afternoon. Free time before dinner. You'll have the opportunity to snap impressive photos of the last sunset on the island...

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DAY 9

This morning we depart for Irkutsk. On the way back we will pass the Tazheranskaya steppe with its icebergs that form the Mongolian landscapes. You can find few trees here but many prairie dogs running in front of the feet. The breathtaking viewpoints of Tan-Khan and Shebete mountains will open the fantastic view to the landscapes of the steppe and the lake. Lunch in a Buryat cafe on the way. Arrival to Irkutsk in the evening. Accommodation in a hotel. Farewell dinner..

DAY 10

Transfer to the airport/railway station..

Conditions of the journey:

Comfortable single accommodation (except for one night in Buguldeika where you will have single room with shared WC).
All meals included.
Private transport.
English speaking guide.

Price includes the following services:
excursions mentioned
the entrance fee to all mentioned museums and the national park
the rent of the hovercraft

Price doesn't include:
Visa fees
Insurance
Extra drinks off menu
Luggage service
Personal expenses
Tips