



Taste of Zabaikalye Tour 2018

featuring KRASNY CHIKOY



Itinerary

Met in Moscow by guide and transferred all together to Hotel Izmailovo, dinner, overnight stay.

Travel to Zabaikalye

Day 1: 8am breakfast; check out 12 (noon); lunch 1pm; 1:30pm bus to the Domodedovo airport, flight check-in at 5pm (with interpreter/guide)

Explore the capital city of Chita

Day 2: Following the six-hour red-eye flight, arrive Chita in the morning, check in at Hotel Marka; lunch at the hotel. Free time; dinner at 7pm at a local restaurant; back to the hotel.

Day 3: Breakfast 9am at hotel. Free morning to roam the city center. 2pm lunch. 3:30pm visit Zabaikalye's historic main library, the "Pushkin" Library for a symposium on Chita, Siberia and Russia today with professors of Zabaikalsky State University. Special attention given to the Old Believers of the Krasny Chikoy region. 7pm home-style dinner with *Sibirskye Mosti*, our host in Chita and Siberian Bridges' partner. Back to the hotel.

Lake Arey

Day 4: 8am Breakfast at hotel. 9am checkout and leaving the hotel by bus for comfortable four-hour drive to Lake Arey, a special part of Zabaikalye nature to both Slavs and Buryats. We'll stay here overnight in a lake resort (double and triple occupancy, outdoor toilets). 2pm lunch at the local dining hall. Free time (swim in the lake, enjoy the sun and little fish pecking at your feet – a "massage" people love here). 5pm drive to the mineral spring. 6pm dinner at the resort. 8pm lakeside bonfire. Have a taste of the local fish (pike), enjoy some guitar music "under the stars". 10.30pm bed-time.

Lake Arey: *Surrounded by pines Lake Arey lies at more than 3000 ft above sea level and is fed entirely by by underground springs. Medical research has revealed that the lake's mud and water composition, its unique weeds and its quartz sand have a striking curative effect in the treatment of psoriasis, dermatitis and other skin ailments.*

Krasny Chikoy

Day 5: 8am breakfast in a café; 8.30am bus to Krasny Chikoy, 6-7 hours. Arrive in Krasny Chikoy, late lunch of Russian family favorites--Siberian *pelmeni* and *blini* with honey and jam, tea. Quick tour of the town of Krasny Chikoy and meeting with the local administration. Symposium on Chikoy, its past, present and plans for the future. Dinner and banya (optional) with a family. Accommodation in a private guesthouse with conveniences.

Day 6: 9am breakfast. 10am visit to the local museum housed in a historical building with the exhibits representing the unique material and spiritual culture of Zabaikalye's Old Believers (the "*Semeiskie*"). 1pm lunch. 2pm excursion to a local household that typifies traditional *Semeiskie* culture in the village of Arkhangelskoye. The house (*izba*) showcases the original layout and furniture and way of life of *Semeiskie* people. 6pm back to Krasny Chikoy. 6.30 dinner. 7pm evening show of *Semeiskie* traditional song and dance, "*Semeiskie fun play*".

Day 7: 8am breakfast. 9am leave for Krasny Chikoy National Park in special off-road "Ural" trucks). Lunch in the field. Tour of the National Park with visit to one of the famed archeological digs. 7pm back to Krasny Chikoy. Dinner. Banya.

Krasny Chikoy National Park: *The southern border of the National Park is only 30-35 km from Mongolia and there is a plan to make it a component of the International Special Protection Natural Territory. The Park boasts many picturesque spots in mountain ranges and river valleys, the highest point of South Zabaikalye (2519 m above sea level), waterfalls, the crater of a paleo-volcano and others. We will view sites considered sources*

of the original peoples that migrated to America across the Bering Land-Bridge. The territory of the Park is densely forested with mountain taiga; its fauna and flora are extremely rich (over 325 animal species and over 700 plant species). 31 species of mammals and 44 of plants are registered in the Red Data Books (rare and endangered) of the Russian Federation and of Zabaikalye.

Day 8: 8am breakfast. 9am Visit to the Buddhist temple (“datsan”) in the village of Busormon. Meet the lamas, tour the area. Learn about the cultural traditions of Buryats in Krasny Chikoy.

Buryat legend says there once lived people who went to find a better lot and discovered a beautiful place where the valleys were yellow, the mountains blue and the rivers were flowing in the fair clockwise direction; the air was fragrant with myriad plants. They found sixty kinds of flowers in the valley not far from the big river now called the Chikoy. The people liked this place, settled in it, and called it Shergalzhon meaning “yellow valley”. Today, their descendants revere the old ways and traditions; one of those is to start a meal with offering the first spoonful to the God of Fire and only then to the father. Fire is sacred for Buryats. They also consider sacred the “Kangiur”, an ancient collection of 108 volumes of thought in history, logic, philosophy, and medicine. You can see some of these books here. 2pm Back to Krasny Chikoy. Lunch. Free time. 6pm Farewell dinner: national cuisine.

Back to Chita

Day 9: 6am early breakfast. 7am leave for Chita, a long trip of 561 km broken up with three stops. Lunch at Arei, Café Golden Dragon. Dinner at a roadside café close to Chita. Arrive in Chita at 8-9pm. Check-in at Hotel Marka.

Day 10: 10am breakfast. 11am visit the Vyunov family in the village of Tasey on Lake Ivan. Slava Vyunov is a well-known local poet. While on the road, listen to the story “Land of the steppe warriors: the history of Zabaikalye from ancient burial sites to the age of the Huns and Genghis Khan, to the arrival of Cossacks (birth of Chita)”. 2pm family meal with the Vyunovs: fish soup, pirogi, tea from old-fashioned charcoal samovar. Stories of traditions and ways of Russian people. Listen, ask questions, relax, go fishing/boating, and take pictures. 5pm back to Chita. 6pm dinner at the roadside Apple Tree Café. 7:30pm arrive in Chita, free evening.

Day 11: By bus to Ulan Ude, then board train to Irkutsk.

Lake Baikal

Day 12: Lake Baikal

Back to Moscow for a taste of the city, Red Square and the Kremlin

Day 13: Flight to Moscow (*or travel back to Chita*); transfer to Izmailovo Hotel and check in; lunch followed by loop tour of Moscow including Red Square and the Kremlin. Dinner.

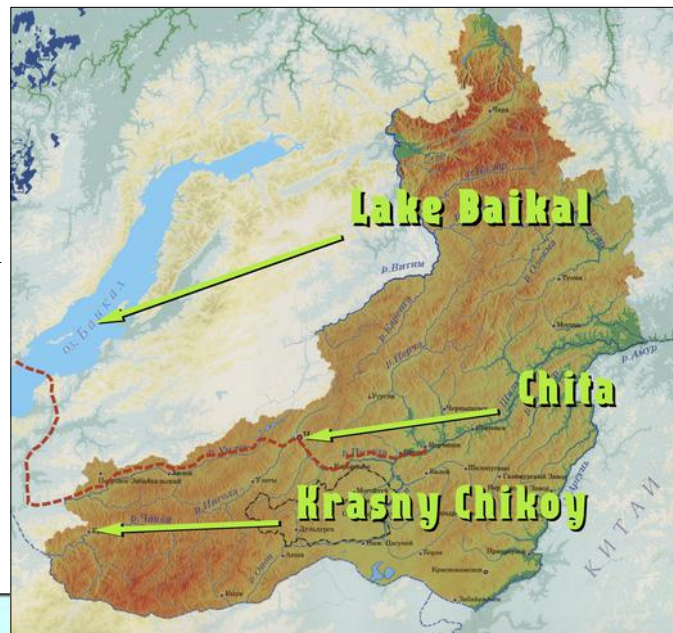
Day 14: 8am breakfast, transfer to airport (Domodedovo). Flight to the US.

Visa information: Apply for a Russian tourist visa online at <https://visa.kdmid.ru> Check early for time needed, possible changes in the application procedures, costs, etc. Contact tour leader, Tom Dickinson, for help.

Travel insurance information: The Russian Federation requires all visitors have medical insurance. Check if your US medical insurance will cover travel in Russia. Insurance is available at <http://www.travelguard.com> among other companies.

Tour leader: Tom Dickinson founded Siberian Bridges in 1993 to focus on the formerly closed region of eastern Siberia called Zabaikalye, which translates as “beyond Lake Baikal.” This destination is considered remote even to Russians. In its first years Siberian Bridges focused on English language assistance, sending teachers, written materials and computers. After moving to Minnesota, Siberian Bridges has shifted to a variety of projects, including support for a remote Children's Home (orphanage), English teaching assistance for a group of 34 village schools near the regional capital Chita and various small private courses and schools, and these tours to help Americans discover this beautiful region and its warm, hospitable citizens.

Tour agency: Olga Kostina and Sibiriada Tours have been arranging tourism for members of Siberian Bridges since 2010 including 2014's “Taste of Zabaikalye” tour. She has been in the business more than 15 years and is an expert in presenting the Zabaikalye's largest minority, the Buryats, part of Buddhist Russia.



Contact:

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This tour is a project of Siberian Bridges, a 501c3 non-profit based in Minnesota for the purpose of introducing this special place and meeting our neighbors in Russia. The agency handling the tour in Russia is Sibiriada Tours, Olga Kostina, Director, 36 Leningradskaya St, Chita, 672000 RUSSIA

Dates: August 15 -29, 2018. ARRIVE IN MOSCOW ON AUGUST 14

Cost: (subject to change until deposit is due):

\$4800 covers three meals a day, transportation, guides, drivers, from the moment of being met on August 14 to being left at the airport in Moscow on August 29. Does not include airfare to and from Russia, or tips and gifts for guides and drivers which will be coordinated by the Tour Leader.

Deposit: \$500 is due by April 1, 2018. This is non-refundable.

Balance due: July 1, 2018



Traditional Russian greeting of bread and salt



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