

Grand crossing of Baikal

Winter trekking across the lake



During this expedition you will cross the deepest part of the legendary lake Baikal and will find yourself 40 miles away from any human habitation. You will skate and spend two nights on the lake Baikal ice at the very location where its depth reaches 5000 feet.

Experiences you'll have

Trekking on Baikal ice


This journey is a route around the lake, starting from Irkutsk and passing through Buryatia. You will make a grand crossing on ice from the western to the eastern coasts of Baikal, covering a total length of around 50 km.

This is an expedition for those who are ready to test their strength. Your main goal is to cross Baikal on foot in its widest part. You can face with the strong winds and blizzards. But if you are not afraid of difficulties and are ready for field conditions, you will enjoy this route!

Crossing the lake from the Olkhon island to Barguzin Bay you will discover incredible scenery. Baikal ice is fascinating, it seems that you can admire it endlessly: in some place it looks like a transparent glass, in other – water freezes, forming bubbles and intricate patterns that are not repeated anywhere else.

Baikal

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Difficulty	
Age	from 16 y.o.
Group size	from 12 to 15
Duration	7 days

Accomodation at the trip

		
2 nights	2 nights	2 nights

Языки



guide

from 890 EUR

Highlights of the journey:

- you will visit the sacred for shamans Cape Burhan located on the Olkhon island and find out, how to blandish the Baikal spirits
- discover the ice grottoes and take stunning photos of ice-hummocks and breaks
- enjoy the scenery of the taiga, covering the Eastern coast of lake Baikal
- visit Ivolginsky datsan, that is the main center of Buddhism in Russia
- spend two nights on the lake Baikal ice at the very location where its depth reaches 5000 feet
- play hockey in the middle of the deepest lake in the world
- take a photo shoot on the unique and always different Baikal ice
- experience the purest Baikal water in an ice-made banya

We accept bookings for groups of 6 or more

Photos by Ekaterina Firsanova, the travel expert of RussiaDiscovery

Itinerary

The journey starts in Irkutsk, where you should get to on your own. We recommend an Aeroflot flight arriving in Irkutsk at 11:45 on the first day of the program. Please, note that return tickets should be taken with the departure from Ulan-Ude, where the route ends. We are ready to help you with the purchase of air tickets, if necessary, leave a comment in the application.

Group transfer from Irkutsk airport to the hotel on the first day of the tour will take place at 12:00. If you arrive on a later flight, you can use individual transfer (extra charge).

Day 1

After meeting at Irkutsk airport you will be taken to the

hotel where you can leave your luggage and then have lunch at the cafe (extra paid). After 2 pm you will check-in at the hotel, rest, or walk around the city.

In the afternoon you will meet with the guide and

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discuss the upcoming program. As an option, we can add the city tour (pedestrian or by car), which is paid additionally.

Day 2

After breakfast in the hotel you will meet with your driver

and guide and set off to Khujir village, located on Olkhon island. On the way you will make a short stops to take photos. Then you will have lunch in the local cafe (pay on site in cash), where you will taste ethnic cuisine of Buryatia.

En route you will stop in the sacred place for blandishing

the main Baikal spirit, called Burhan. Our guide will tell you about all peculiarities of this tradition. The most important thing is to have the clear mind and heart.

Having crossed by the ice the strait, named Olkhonskiye

Vorota, you will arrive to Khujir. You will check-in at the resort and then have free time to walk around the village and visit the Burkhan rock. It is considered to be the residence of the Baikal spirits, site of shamanic cult and one of the nine Buddhist sanctuaries of Asia.

In the evening you will return to the village and have

dinner.

Day 3

After an early breakfast you will move by off-road vehicle

(UAZ) to the starting point of our crossing – to cape Khoboy, situated in the north of the island. Here you will discover a magnificent panorama of the frozen lake. You will make several stops along the way to explore the caves, grottos and islands.

Heading towards the eastern shore, you will pass through the widest and the deepest part of Lake Baikal. During these two days every participant will pull his personal clothes in special sleds. Ice-trekking will take about 7 hours*, on the route you will make stops for having open-air lunch.

By 5 pm you will have arrived at the camp, located on the

Baikal ice in the geographic centre of the lake, on the boundary between the Irkutsk region and the Republic of Buryatia. You will take part in the ritual of meeting and greeting where every participant of the group can try to bore the ice.

After the long journey, there is nothing more relaxing than

the ice banya and the herbal tea. You will have dinner and rest in a heated tent, placed in the middle of the lake.

**Time and mileage depend on weather conditions*

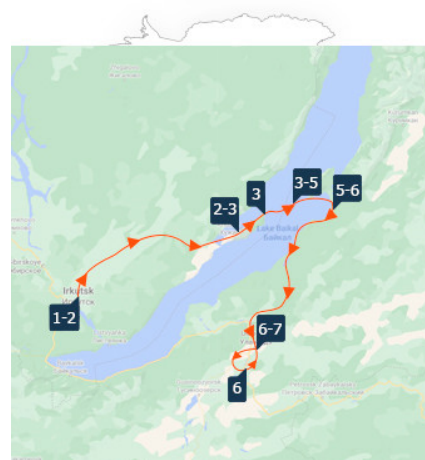
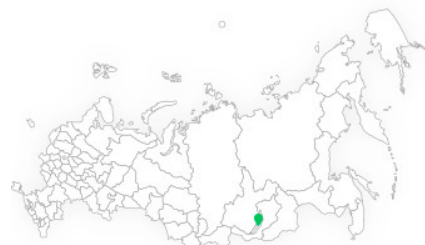
Day 4

Today you will have a free day on the Baikal ice. For those

who prefer the active rest, we suggest to go skating or to walk near the camp. The transparent ice, the ice-hummocks and breaks will allow you to take thousand of photos.

If you are keen on photography, we suggest you to wake

up earlier and take photos of the Baikal ice at dawn.



After lunch you can play ice hockey. In the evening you will

have dinner and rest in the tents. For an extra fee you can order a special cocktail with a cube of pure Baikal ice.

Day 5

Today you will continue ice-trekking to the eastern coast

of lake Baikal. This coast is flatter and the Barguzin and Khamar-Daban mountains extends behind it. Usually there is more snow then on the western coast.

You will have lunch in the open air and continue ice-

trekking. At the end of the day you will be taken to Ust-Barguzin village. You will stay at the guest house and have dinner prepared by the locals. After several days of physical activity its time to visit traditional Russian banya!

Day 6

After breakfast you will move to Ulan-Ude, that is the

capital of the Republic of Buryatia. In the beginning our way goes along the bank of the lake and then passes through taiga forests.

You will have lunch in the cafe of traditional Buriat cuisine

(is paid on site in cash) and then arrive to Ulan-Ude. Excursion to Ivolginsky datsan is waiting for you here. It is considered to be a monument of history and architecture and the main centre of Buddhism in Russia, located in a beautiful steppe.

After the excursion you will return to Ulan-Ude, have

dinner and check into a hotel (dinner and the hotel are extra paid).

Day 7

In the morning you will have breakfast and go to the

airport for your flight to Moscow (breakfast and transfer are extra paid).

Accommodation at the trip

In Irkutsk you will stay for the first night at the **Angara Hotel 3***. It offers a comfortable standard business twin room with air conditioning, mini-fridge, flat-screen TV and free Wi-Fi. The room has two comfortable single beds (90/200 cm), spacious wardrobe, work area and bathroom with shower. There are also a spa salon, restaurants of international cuisine, a sauna, a gym and a billiard club in the hotel.

The second night you will spend at **the guest house "U Lukomorya"**, located in Khuzhir village on Olkhon island. You will be accommodated in standard twin rooms with a balcony. Each room has two single beds, a desk, a sofa, free Wi-Fi, and a bathroom with a shower.

From the third to the fifth day you will stay in **Baikal Ice Camp**, equipped in the geographical center of Lake Baikal. You will be accommodated in the heated tents designed for 4 and 6 people. There are two or three bunk beds and one standard tourist bed with a warm down sleeping bags. You will be throwing firewood into the stove yourself, thereby controlling the temperature in the tent. Ice camp has also a kitchen-dining room, where a professional chef will prepare a hot meal for you, a guide's tent and a gear tent, an ice-made banya and Ice bar with a specially designed ice menu, as well as toilet-tents.

The last night of the tour you will spend in a hotel in Ulan-Ude, which you need to book by yourself. Accommodation in Ulan-Ude is not included in the cost of the tour. We recommend hotels ["Ulan-Ude Park-hotel" 3*](#), ["Buryatia"](#),

["Baikal Plaza" 4*](#), ["Mergen Bator" 4*](#) or ["Reston Hotel&Spa"](#).

FAQ

Who will be my guide

You will be accompanied by experienced guides. They provide security on the route and have first aid kit, GPS navigator and a satellite phone.

Each trek you do is registered in the Ministry of Emergency Situations. Even in case of bad weather you can easily get to the camp.

Meals

The tour price includes breakfast and dinner during your stay at the tourist base and the guest house (days 2 and 5), as well as full board at the BaikalNature Ice Camp (days 3 and 4).

Meals in Irkutsk and Ulan-Ude, as well as lunches in the cafe Buryat cuisine during the relocations (days 2 and 6) you should pay additionally.

If you are a vegetarian or have any particular preferences, please let us know in advance, so we can adapt the menu.

Can I take part

You should be physically fit enough for this tour, because every day you will have 5-7 hours of intense physical activity. During hiking, tourists roll only their personal belongings on a sled. The equipment needed for the group will be waiting for you on site, in Baikal Ice Camp.

The difficulty of the crossing depends entirely on the weather: if it is sunny and windless, you will have an easy and pleasant walk, while blizzards and winds will make it quite difficult. The distance of the crossing will be determined by the guide, based on the weather and the general condition of the group.

If you have health problems that could worsen during the trip, make sure you have taken all your medications with you.

Insurance

The cost of the tour includes accident insurance for persons under 75 years. Travel insurance is paid additionally.

What will be the weather like

This tour is organized in mid-February and in March when the weather on the lake is usually fair. However, it may happen that the temperature falls under 4°F (20°C), that a strong wind starts to blow or that the fog suddenly descends over the lake.

What should I bring with me

Documents:

- passport, bank card
- train/air tickets (and copies of them)

Clothing:

- waterproof and breathable pants and jacket (GORE-TEX, EVENT, SIMPA-TEX)
- down jacket

- [fleece jacket](#) or warmer
- pullover in fleece or POLARTEC fabric
- comfortable pants
- track pants
- turtleneck sweater or long sleeve sweater
- hiking socks
- warm socks
- warm gloves or mittens

Footwear:

- winter trekking boots for walking on ice and snow
- flip-flops or flip-flops (for bathing)

Personal belongings and equipment:

- personal hygiene items
- headlamp
- sunscreen and lip balm
- sunglasses with UV protection or a ski mask
- pocket knife
- sewing kit (needle, thread)
- bath accessories
- camera/phone charger
- photo or video camera

What equipment is provided

You will be provided with an expedition sled and ice studs for shoes, so you can walk on ice safely.

During your stay at Baikal Ice Camp you will be provided with warm sleeping bags and felt boots (Russian valenky).

Visa

You need a tourist visa to travel to Russia. It can be issued for a maximum period of 30 days. Your passport has to be valid for at least six months after the expiry date of your visa and to have at least two blank pages.

Booking

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What's included in the price:

— accommodation as per itinerary

— meals as per itinerary

— transport as per itinerary, including transfer from airport

Extra charge:

— [airline tickets](#) to Irkutsk and back from Ulan-Ude (starting at 285 EURO per person for both flights)

— accommodation in Ulan-Ude on the last night and transfer to the airport

- English-speaking guide services
- camping outfit rental (tent, sleeping bag), ice studs for shoes and valenky (in Baikal Ice Camp)
- letter of invitation
- excursions and visits as per itinerary
- accident insurance
- a visit to ice banya (day 3) and the Russian banya (day 5)

- individual transfer from the airport to the hotel (+20 EURO per car of 3 passengers)
- visa fees and travel insurance
- 3-hour city tour in Irkutsk on day 1(+40 EURO per group)
- personal expenses and tips



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