

# Caucasian VII Steam Tour

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## Overview

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### The Highlights

- Tour Moscow's Kremlin, the treasures of the Tsars in the Armory Chamber, and the somber site of Lenin's tomb;
- Ride on the famous Gagarin Children's Railway in Rostov-on-Don;
- Visit The Radishchev Museum in Saratov;
- Boat trip on the Volga Delta, home to hundreds of bird and fish species;
- Visit the Akhmad Kadyrov Mosque in Chechnya;

- Ride on the steep branch line from Mineralnye-Vodi to Kislovodsk;
- Ride on the "Russian Riviera" line to Sochi, where guests will tour the site of the 2014 Winter Olympic Games;
- Tour Krasnodar, nicknamed "Little Paris" because of its European style;
- Ride on a restored 1930s narrow-gauge railroad through Guamsky Canyon;
- All gratuities, meals, sightseeing, transfers, and a generous drinks allowance included in tour;
- Tour Volgograd, formerly Stalingrad.

## The Tour

The Caucasian VII Steam Tour is a nostalgic re-creation of the first [Golden Eagle](#) tours in Russia. Travel 3,500 miles (5,700 km) across the Caucasus and on the Black Sea coast hauled by restored Soviet steam locomotives. The tour offers a constantly changing window on this rarely explored part of western Russia.

Highlights include a tour of Moscow's Kremlin & Lenin's tomb, a ride on the famous Gagarin Children's Railway in Rostov-on-Don, the Radishchev Museum in Saratov, a boat trip on the Volga River in Saratov, the Akhmad Kadyrov Mosque in Chechnya, a ride on the steep branch line from Mineralnye-Vodi to Kislovodsk, the restored 1930s narrow-gauge railroad through Guamsky Canyon, journey on the "Russian Riviera" line to Sochi, and, best of all, 12 nights aboard the luxurious *Golden Eagle* train. Almost everything is included in this tour — gratuities, meals, sightseeing per itinerary, transfers, and a generous drinks allowance.

## Itinerary

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### Day 1: Moscow

Upon arrival at Moscow Airport you will be met and transferred to the five-star Leningradskaya Hilton for a welcome dinner and a two-night stay. The hotel is conveniently located in Moscow's city center.

### Day 2: Moscow

Explore the grandeur of the Kremlin – the spiritual, historical, and political heart of Moscow – and see the treasures of the Tsars in the Armoury Chamber. Enjoy an exclusive private viewing before the Kremlin opens to the public before visiting Red Square.

This iconic symbol of Russia's former military and political might features an eclectic mix of fascinating architecture, including the magnificent onion-domed spires of St. Basil's Cathedral

and the beautiful façade of the world famous GUM department store which was constructed in Tsarist times. It is also the somber and evocative site of Lenin's tomb.

Next, have a traditional Russian lunch in Café Pushkin, a legendary Moscow restaurant with décor that revives the atmosphere of an early 19th century mansion.

End the day with a tour of the opulent and unique stations of the Moscow metro – showpieces of Socialist art furnished with statues, frescoes, and mosaics, unsurpassed anywhere in the world.

If you have been to Moscow before, we offer included Freedom of Choice touring, where we show you other lesser-known sights of Moscow, such as the famous State Tretyakov Gallery (National Museum of Fine Art) and the Space Museum.

## Day 3: Moscow

Head to Moscow Kazanskiy Station, where you will be greeted in the magnificent Imperial Waiting Room by the train staff with a cold glass of Russian Champagne. The excitement in the waiting room audibly mounts, and, 30 minutes before departure, car attendants will escort you to Platform 1 where the *Golden Eagle* awaits.

A loud whistle will indicate the train's imminent departure, and soon the train will be snaking out of the station as you start to gain speed and head south, away from Moscow.

## Day 4: Saratov

Arrive on the banks of the Volga river at Saratov. The town has a unique resort atmosphere with a distinctly Central European ambiance. Formerly a closed city during Soviet times, the city is also home to Russia's first major public art museum situated outside Moscow or St. Petersburg. The Radishchev Museum is named after the "first Russian revolutionary," Alexander Radishchev.

Enjoy lunch on board as you travel along the Volga River towards the Caspian Sea.

## Day 5: Astrakhan

Spend the morning in the culturally diverse town of Astrakhan, Russia's Caviar capital. Its two impressive cathedrals are accompanied by equally interesting mosques, synagogues, and temples.

Enjoy a boat trip on the Volga Delta, where the intricate wetlands are home to hundreds of bird and fish species. Then, have lunch traveling by train across the Delta, during which guests may sample some of Astrakhan's most famous export (caviar)!

## Day 6: Grozny & Vladikavkaz

Next, arrive at the foothills of the Caucasus Mountains, where we will visit the towns of Grozny, Chechnya, and Vladikavkaz, North Ossetia. Despite the region's recent turbulent history after the fall of the Soviet Union, both cities feature many interesting sites, including Grozny's Akhmad

Kadyrov Mosque. Completed in 2008 and locally known as the "Heart of Chechnya," this is by far the largest mosque in Russia and was part of the huge regeneration program that has completely transformed Grozny.

Vladikavkaz, situated in a stunning location in the foothills of the Caucasus Mountains, was established as a Russian fortress in 1784 and is at the northern end of the Georgian Military Highway, a huge undertaking built at the end of the 18th century that links the South and North Caucasus.

## Day 7: Mineralnye-Vodi, Kislovodsk, & Pyatigorsk

The train continues west this morning, pausing at the impressive station of Mineralnye-Vodi (Mineral Water) before taking the steep branch line up to Kislovodsk. Here you have the opportunity for a walking tour of the city's well-manicured gardens and cobbled streets. The air, at nearly 2/3 mile above sea level, feels crisp and fresh.

In Soviet times, Kislovodsk was a closed area, and required special permission to visit as it was a favorite haunt of the Soviet leadership. Have lunch at the restaurant Zamok (Castle) before continuing by train to Pyatigorsk, another spa town, on our way back down to Mineralnye-Vodi.

## Day 8: Apsheronk for Guamsky Canyon

After traveling overnight, arrive in the small town of Apsheronk, which is in the most densely-forested area of the tour. Transfer to the tiny village of Guamka where you will join a restored 1930s narrow-gauge railroad for a journey through Guamsky Canyon, pausing midway for a very scenic lunch.

In the evening, enjoy dinner on board as you arrive in the colorful coastal town of Tuapse, one of the Black Sea's biggest oil terminals. From here, the train joins the scenic coastal 'Russian Riviera' line all the way to Sochi for a late evening arrival.

## Day 9: Sochi

After lunch on board, disembark for a tour of the Winter Olympic city (actually held at Krasnya Polyana, about 25 miles from Sochi in the Caucasus Mountains)

## Day 10: Novy Afon (New Athos), Abkhazia

We are hoping to continue south down the coast today into Abkhazia, however, negotiations are ongoing at the time of writing.

If negotiations are successful, we will stop in the town of Novy Afon, located on the Black Sea Coast.

## Day 11: Krasnodar & Tikhoretsk

Run back up the coast to Tuapse before taking a relatively new and very steep line up to

Goryachy Kluch. In the late morning, arrive at Krasnodar, nicknamed 'Little Paris' because of its European style. Visit Krasnodar for a brief tour of the charming city center.

Return to the train for lunch before arriving in Tikhoretsk, where you will have an opportunity to visit the locomotive repair depot to see a range of historic steam locomotives from the Soviet era.

## Day 12: Rostov-on-Don

After an early morning stop in Azov, arrive into Rostov-on-Don mid-morning, where you will transfer to the famous Gagarin Children's Railway, a miniature narrow gauge railroad, for a tour around Nikolai Ostrovsky Park.

After lunch in Rostov, we continue our exploration of southern Russia's largest and most cosmopolitan city. Enjoy a boat ride on the Don River to the Cossack capital of Starocherkassk.

## Day 13: Volgograd

Arrive in Volgograd. Standing on the banks of the Volga, Stalingrad, as the city was known in Soviet times, was the dramatic scene of one of the most important Second World War battles. The Russians heroically turned back the Nazi advance here to alter the course of the war.

Visit the poignantly sobering Mamayev Kurgan war memorial, followed by an informative museum visit.

## Day 14: On Board to Moscow

Spend today on board as the train makes its way way north towards Moscow. This evening, enjoy a Gala Dinner on board.

## Day 15: Moscow

Our 3,500 mile journey ends as we arrive back into Moscow's Paveletski station early this morning. After breakfast, you will be transported to the airport or other train stations for your onward journey.

*Alternatively, why not extend your stay in Moscow — or travel on to St Petersburg? Explore more of these stunning cities at your leisure, or have time to take in a performance at the world-renowned Bolshoi or Mariinsky theatres.*

## Dates & Prices

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## More

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The [\*Golden Eagle\*](#) is your luxurious hotel-on-wheels. Unpack just the once and settle into your well-appointed and comfortable en-suite cabin as you begin this voyage of a lifetime. One of your cabin attendants, available at all times, will be on hand to look after all of your needs.