



PALACE TOURS

Golden Eagle Luxury Train: Single-Departure Journeys

Persian Odyssey (Southbound) / 17 nights Moscow-Tehran

Tour Dates

2016: November 10-November 27

2017: March 23-April 9

Price

Starting from \$20,995



From Russia, Central Asia, to the heart of Persia, this journey takes you to some of the most iconic and ancient sites in this region. Delve into the history of the Silk Road in cities like Khiva and Samarkand, explore ancient ruins in Merv, and see the full beauty of Iran in Isfahan. Along the way, you will see ornate Russian architecture mixed with Islamic mosques and crumbling ruins. A union of cultures, ethnicities, and histories will astound you. All of this is yours on an indulgent journey on the Golden Eagle Luxury Train.

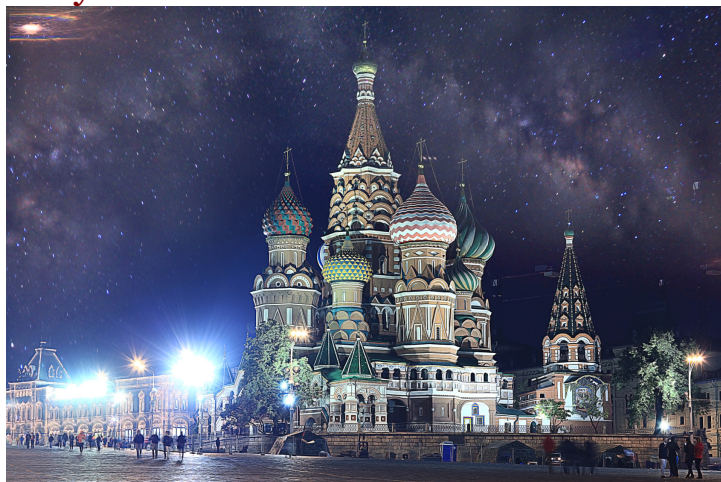
Price Details

Prices in US Dollars

Silver Class (Twin)	Silver Class (Single)	Gold Class (Twin)	Gold Class (Single)	Imperial Class (Twin)	Imperial Class (Single)
\$20,995	\$31,595	\$24,995	\$37,495	\$41,995	\$79,995

Itinerary

Day 1: Moscow



Arrive at Moscow Airport, where you are met and transferred to the five-star Ritz-Carlton (exclusive for 2016). Located in Moscow city center, and within walking distance of Red Square and the Bolshoi Theatre, you will experience a classic and sophisticated ambience within this luxury hotel. Later, enjoy a welcome reception dinner and meet your fellow travelers and anticipate the epic voyage that lies ahead.

If you would like to extend our stay in Moscow to explore more of the city or

attend a performance at the world-renowned Bolshoi Theatre, contact Palace Tours. *Note: Tickets need to be pre-booked and are subject to schedule and availability.*

Day 2: Moscow and the Golden Eagle

Transfer to the Moscow Kazansky Station where you will be greeted in style. A reception with a cold glass of Russian Champagne and canapés waits in the magnificent Imperial Waiting Room. The excitement in the waiting room audibly mounts and, 30 minutes before departure, your car attendants will escort you to Platform 1 where a military brass band is playing and the *Golden Eagle* awaits.

Day 3: Kara Kum Desert

Today, explore all of the luxury the Golden Eagle has to offer as you enjoy a relaxing day on board. Admire the unique landscape of the vast expanses of the Kara Kum desert. You can also take the opportunity to chat to fellow passengers and maybe take part in a Russian language lesson.

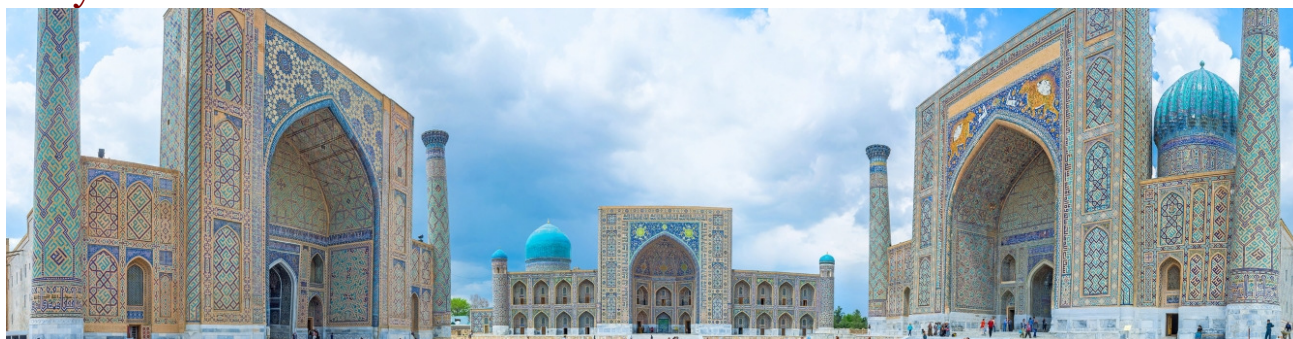
Day 4: Baikonur

Baikonur, formerly known as Leninsk, is situated in Russian Territory on the right bank of the Syr Darya River. It was constructed to service the Baikonur Cosmodrome, which itself was originally constructed by the Soviet Union in the late 1950s as the base of operations for its space program. History fills the area, from the launches of Sputnik 1 in 1957 and the first human, Yuri Gagarin, into space in 1961, to the current day missions to re-supply the International Space Station. On your visit, see the launch station of Yuri Gagarin's historic mission into space.

Day 5: Tashkent

Tashkent, the capital city of Uzbekistan, is a modern Soviet-style city which was rebuilt following the devastating earthquake of 1966. Our tour of the city includes the Old Town, where traditional homes and religious buildings line the narrow streets. Here, tucked in a small library, we will be privileged to see one of Islam's most sacred relics – the world's oldest Koran. After this special stop, visit the Railway Museum and the Museum of Applied Arts.

Day 6: Samarkand



Samarkand is one of the most well-known stops along the famed Silk Road. Founded in the 6th century BC, Samarkand's stunning architecture references its former status as one of the most important cities in Asia. The city is particularly noted for its architectural remains from the 14th to the 17th century, when it flourished as the fabled capital of the Mongol empire of Timur and his successors.

Today we will visit some of its most significant sites including Registan Square, the refined elegance of the beautifully proportioned Bibi Khanum Mosque and the Ulugh Beg observatory, one of the earliest Islamic astronomical observatories built in 1428. Before dinner we will return to the now illuminated and awe-inspiring Registan Square.

Day 7: Bukhara

Bukhara is an outstanding ancient city. In 1999, UNESCO sponsored the renovation of much of the city for its 2,500th anniversary. Most significantly, this wonderful tour visits The Ark, a fortified residence of the Emirs of Bukhara – the despotic leaders who ruled until Soviet times.

Travel out of the city to experience the Emir's "Palace of the Moon" and Stars, a historic and beautiful summer palace. This evening, if weather and time permit, we will enjoy a barbecue on the station platform before the train departs.

Day 8: Khiva



From Urgench, travel to the city of Khiva, founded 2,500 years ago. These ancient walls were once one of the Silk Road's most important trading posts. Now a World Heritage Site, it lies at the crossroads of the routes between Mongolia, Russia, China and Persia.

A truly magnificent sight to behold, it rises out of the desert to reveal a wealth of impressive architecture. Stepping back in time, we discover its impressive mosques, madrassas, bazaars and minarets along Khiva's streets.

Day 9: Ashgabat

Ashgabat, the capital of Turkmenistan, is known as the 'Las Vegas of the Kara Kum' and is almost a surprising modern city in the barren desert. Situated between the Kara Kum desert and the Kopet Dag mountain range, Ashgabat is built upon the ruins of the Silk Road city of Konjikala and

the Soviet city built after the devastating earthquake of 1948.

The city is dominated by extravagant fountains, golden domes and towering modern buildings that appear strangely incongruous in this desert setting. Highlights on our visit include a visit to the National Museum and Kipchak Mosque.

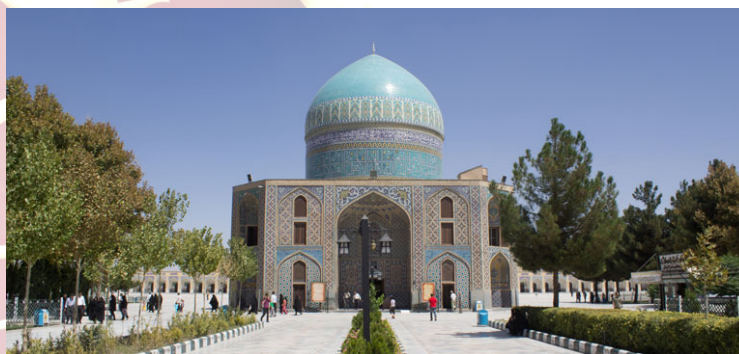
Day 10: Merv

From Mary we transfer to the ancient and mainly unrestored remains of Merv. Once an important stopping point on the Silk Road, it claims to have briefly been the largest city in the world during the 12th century. 1794 saw the demise of Merv, after the Emir of Bukhara destroyed the dam which the population depended on for its water. Explore the ruins, truly a sight to behold, and contemplate its history.

Early evening we arrive at the border town of Sarakhs and it is here we make the important changes to the bogies as we prepare to cross onto the standard gauge tracks of Iran.

Day 11: Mashhad

Following the change overnight of wheelsets, we leave Sarakhs before dawn and an early morning arrival provides us with the entire day to explore the sacred city of Mashhad. Home to the Imam Reza Holy Shrine, the largest mosque in the world in terms of its dimension, this city will astound you. You will also have a tour of the Nader Shah Museum. Following lunch in the city, we will visit the Tomb of Ferdowsi, the father of Persian Literature who lived over 1,000 years ago.



Day 12: Mahan & Rayen

Arrive in Mahan after breakfast. Here, you will visit the 19th century Royal building, Prince Garden and tomb. We later visit the sanctuary and tomb of the famous, Soufi, Shah Nematollah Vali, dating back to the Mongol Era.

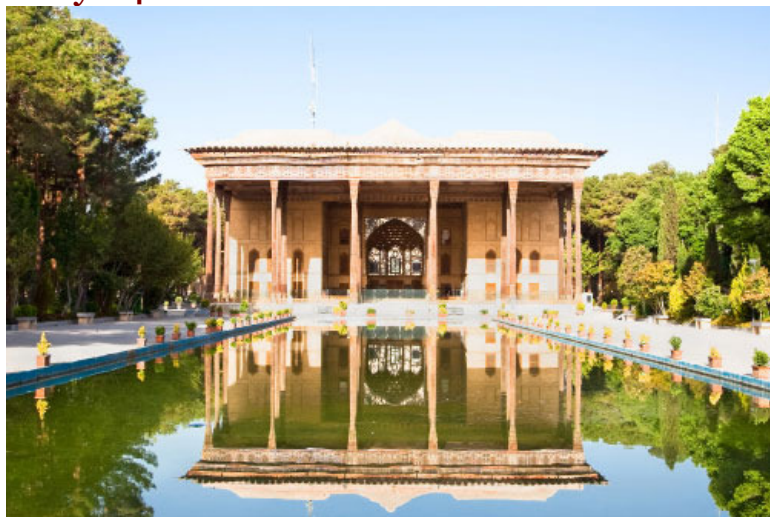
We continue by road to Rayen. The 20,000 square metre Rayen castle is situated beneath the snow-capped Mount Hezar in the Province of Kerman. A huge medieval mud brick citadel, it was considered second only to Bam before the 2003 earthquake. It was inhabited until 150 years ago, and displays all the architectural elements of a deserted citadel and is extremely well preserved. It is considered one of the most interesting sites in Iran.

We re-join the train at dusk in time for dinner as we continue to Yazd.

Day 13: Yazd

Yazd is considered one of the oldest cities in the world and is a center of Zoroastrianism, a monotheistic faith founded in Iran 3,500 years ago. A tour takes you to the Zoroastrian Fire Temple, Amir Chakhmagh Square and the 14th century Friday Mosque, home to one of Persia's finest and most exquisite mosaics.

Day 14: Isfahan



A crossroad of international trade and diplomacy, Isfahan has a rich mix of languages, religions and customs. This enchanting city is 2,500 years old (one of the oldest in Iran) and was Persia's capital from 1598 to 1722.

Isfahan is famous for its silver filigree and metal work, array of great historical monuments, and its life-giving river, the Zayandeh-Rood, which has given the city its beauty. It is brimming with some of Iran's best sights and we spend a whole day in

the city. Highlights include visits to the Chehel Sotoon Palace and the Vank Church in the Armenian Quarter.

Following a traditional Iranian lunch we move on to Naghshe Jahan Square, a World Heritage Site and the second largest man-made square in the world, where the Ali Qapou Palace and Shah and Sheikh Lutfullah Mosques can be found. Here, the time is yours to enjoy the huge square and pick up a bargain at the handicraft Bazaar of Qaisarieh.

Day 15: Persepolis & Shiraz

Following breakfast on board we stop at Sadat Shaha, for the home of Persepolis, another World Heritage Site where ancient ruins will astound you. Perhaps Iran's most important archaeological site, this ceremonial capital of the Persian Empire dates back to the 6th century. We also view the Necropolis (Naghshe Rostam). After lunch we continue by bus to Shiraz.

Shiraz has many strings to its bow: poetry, literature, wine, flowers and amazing gardens and fruit trees. A visit to the Quran Gate, Hafez Tomb and the Vakil Citadel are the highlights of our afternoon tour.

Day 16: Tehran



After breakfast we reach our final destination, Tehran, and disembark the *Golden Eagle* and transfer to the five-star Espinas International Hotel for a two night stay.

Day 17: Tehran

Our first port of call on our city tour of Tehran is the Crown Jewels Museum in the Central Bank of Iran Building, with its vast array of crown jewels used by the Qajar and Pahlavid royalty and the legendary Peacock Throne. We also visit the Golestan Palace with its renovated Versailles-inspired mirror-encrusted Marble Throne Hall used for the coronation of the last Shah. Most of the remaining brick and tile buildings date back to the 19th century Qajar dynasty.

On our final evening we will enjoy a farewell dinner and take the opportunity to reflect on our pioneering journey along the Silk Road and into the heart of Persia.

Day 18: Tehran

Following breakfast the following morning you will be transferred to the airport for onward departures.



The Silk Road (Northbound) / 17 nights

Tehran-Moscow

Tour Dates

2017: April 17-May 4; November 24-December 11

Price

Starting from \$20,995



The Northbound journey of the Persian Odyssey tour follows the daily itineraries of the Southbound journey. An additional excursion from Ashgabat on Day 10 takes you to the impressive Darvaza gas crater, which has been burning brilliantly for forty years. From heart of Persia, Central Asia, to Russia, this journey takes you to some of the most iconic and ancient sites in this region. Delve into the history of the Silk Road in cities like Khiva and Samarkand, explore ancient ruins in Merv, and see the full beauty of Iran in Isfahan.

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Itinerary

Day 1: Tehran	Arrive in Tehran, transfer to the Espinas International Hotel (or similar) for two nights. Enjoy a welcome reception dinner.
Day 2: Tehran	Tour the city.
Day 3: Tehran	Transfer to the railway station in the late afternoon. Board the Golden Eagle.
Day 4: Persepolis & Shiraz	Tour the archeological site of Persepolis, travel by bus to Shiraz.
Day 5: Isfahan	Spend the day in this enchanting city.
Day 6: Yazd	Visit one of the oldest cities in the world.
Day 7: Rayen & Mahan	Explore these two ancient locations.
Day 8: Mashhad	Highlights include the Imam Reza Holy Shrine and the Tomb of Ferdowsi.
Day 9: Merv	Explore the remains of Merv.
Day 10: Ashgabat & Darvaza Gas Crater	Visit the "Las Vegas of the Kara Kum" and see the spectacular sight of the "Door to Hell." This gas crater has been burning for over 40 years.
Day 11: Khiva	Travel to the ancient city of Khiva, an important post on the Silk Road.
Day 12: Bukhara	Tour the city and its surrounding area.
Day 13: Samarkand	View stunning architecture and impressive mosques.
Day 14: Tashkent	Visit Old Town and the world's oldest Koran.
Day 15: Baikonur	Tour the historic city known as a center for the Russian space program.
Day 16: Kara Kum Desert	Relax on board
Day 17: Moscow	Tour the city, visiting Red Square and the Kremlin. Stay overnight.
Day 18: Moscow	After breakfast, transfer to the airport for departures. If you would like to extend your stay, contact Palace Tours.