PALACE TOURS
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PALACE TOURS

Golden Eagle: Land of the Midnight Sun

11 Nights • Luxury Experience

www.palacetours.com travel@palacetours.com 786-408-0610

ABOUT THIS TOUR

Overview

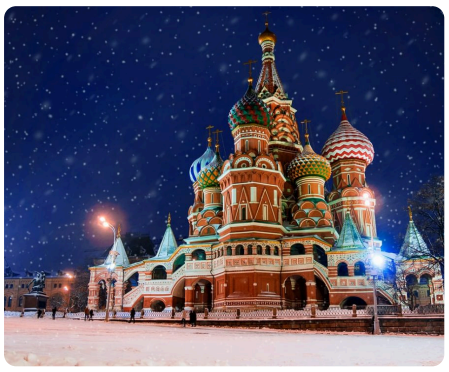
Venture into the Arctic Circle for a remarkable journey to celebrate White Nights season as you search for the famed Midnight Sun aboard the Golden Eagle luxury train. This is a picturesque and unique adventure that takes you across remote areas, breathtaking scenery, and famous cities such as Moscow and St. Petersburg. Once in Kirkenes, Norway you will have the chance to take a boat cruise in search of the Midnight Sun. Traveling through the ever-changing scenery of this unique landscape by luxury rail, you will experience an indulgent, unforgettable, and authentic adventure. The Golden Eagle provides three categories of private, en-suite cabins, a Bar Car lounge, and fine dining in the Restaurant Cars. Spend your days aboard the train in comfort, attending activities such as language lessons and lectures, or mingling with other passengers as you enjoy the music from the resident pianist in the evenings. Experience the Land of the Midnight Sun by luxury private rail, an experience like no other.

If you like these unique tours, take a look at the similar single-departure journeys listed below:

Arctic Explorer, Caspian Odyssey, Heart of Persia, Persian Odyssey, Silk Road, Taste of the Silk Road, Trans-Mongolian Express, Winter Wonderland, Train Information

DAY BY DAY

Your Itinerary



DAY 1

MOSCOW

Today you begin your exciting journey north in the metropolitan city of Moscow. You will be transferred from the airport to the luxurious and centrally located Moscow Ritz-Carlton (or similar). Here you will enjoy a champagne drinks welcome reception with other guests, and relax before tomorrow's activities. Later, an exclusive Welcome Dinner will set a high standard for the rest of the trip with specially selected international wines, which will be available with meals for the duration of the tour.

DAY 2

MOSCOW

Tour the historic city of Moscow and explore its interesting politics and architecture. Visit the impressive Kremlin where it overlooks the Moskva River. Enjoy a private viewing of the Armory Chamber, which houses treasures of the Tsars, before it opens to the public. Other iconic sites include Red Square, Lenin's tomb, St. Basil's Cathedral, and the famous GUM department store. You will also have a tour of Moscow Metro stations, world renowned as showpieces of socialist art. You will be in awe at the statues, frescoes, mosaics, and extravagant architecture and design comprising these stations.

DAY 3

VLADIMIR

Today you will travel by train to Vladimir, a historic city founded in 990. A UNESCO World Heritage Site, Vladimir is one of the ancient Golden Ring cities of Moscow. Here you will visit Uspensky Cathedral, a beautiful site that is over 600 years old, and where many Tsars were crowned. Next you will head to the walled city of Suzdal, founded in 1024 and home to the St Euthymius Monastery. Here you will have the opportunity to attend a traditional church choral performance. An enchanting experience, the culture of this city will captivate you.

In the evening you return to Moscow and board your luxury train, the *Golden Eagle*. Make yourself at home as you prepare to embark on your northern adventure.

DAY 4

PETROZAVODSK

Explore the Russian city of Petrozavodsk on the shores of Lake Onega as you head north towards the Arctic Circle. Here you will enjoy a private folk performance at Kantele House and then take a hydrofoil to Kizhi Island. This small island is home to a Museum of Wooden Architecture, where you can see the 1714 Church of the Transfiguration, before returning to your train for the evening. The Church of the Transfiguration was built entirely out of wood without any nails and has twenty two domes stretching impressively above it. It is one of very few left of its kind.

DAY 5

MURMANSK

Relax on your train as it continues north towards the city of Murmansk. View breathtaking scenery as you socialize in the Bar Lounge Car or attend a lecture. When your train reaches the Arctic Circle there is a special on board ceremony to mark the occasion, as the Midnight Sun becomes closer in reach. In the evening arrive in Murmansk, a city located halfway between Moscow and the North Pole, 120 miles north of the Arctic Circle. Learn about and explore this Arctic trading post, which is ice-free year round due to the Gulf Stream. You can also visit the Nuclear Icebreaker Museum Ship and learn about these amazing engineering marvels.

DAY 6

MURMANSK

Today you leave your train at the Russian border station of Nikel and travel by bus to Kirkenes, just across the Russian/Norweigian border. Here you will stay two nights at the Thon Hotel (or similar), or you may choose to experience the ambiance of a wooden log cabin at the Kirkenes Snow Hotel (for an additional fee). Enjoy a traditional Nordic meal before embarking on a boat cruise (weather permitting) to see the famed midnight sun. Travel by RIB (rigid inflatable boat) from Kirkenes central harbor to Bøkfjord and Barents Sea, and experience the midnight sun from this beautiful fjord. You can also view various flora and fauna, and your guide will explain the history of the region, including bombing during World War II.

DAY 7

EXPERIENCE FJORD FISHING

Embark on a fjord fishing adventure! Today you will catch, prepare, and sample King Crab of the Bugøyfjord and the Barents Sea. Fish by RIB with an experienced Nordic fisherman, and help remove the King Crab cages from the sea's deep waters. Once you return to shore, you will have the opportunity to taste your fresh and delicious catch in a renovated boat house. In the evening, attend a Summer Solstice Cocktail Party and Gala Dinner to celebrate the longest day of the Northern Hemisphere. Your unique and adventurous day comes to an end.

DAY 8

NIKEL

This morning you can take part in various optional activities (additional charges apply). You can go on another fishing adventure, this time for coalfish, cod, or haddock in the Barents Sea. Other activities may be available. However, there are limited places so please request at time of booking. Later today cross back into Russia and board the train back in Nikel.

DAY 9

SAINT PETERSBURG

Spend today on board your train as it travels south through arctic Russia towards our next and final destination, St. Petersburg. Socialize with other passengers and enjoy the beautiful scenery out your windows.

DAY 10

SAINT PETERSBURG

Explore St. Petersburg during the peak of its most beautiful period, the few weeks of White Nights (Beliye Nochi). During this time the city seems to glow all night and locals enjoy the long warm summer days. To celebrate this unique time of year, concerts and White Nights festivals fill the bustling night in St. Petersburg. This festival, lasting from May until July, includes classical performances (ballet, opera, and orchestras), carnivals that reproduce historical events, the Scarlet Sails celebration, and may coincide with famous entertainers' performances in the city. St. Petersburg is also home to splendid architecture and history, which you will have the opportunity to see. Once you first arrive in the city, embark on a tour of central St. Petersberg. You will visit sights such as St Issac's Cathedral and Nevsky Prospect. You will stay two nights at the Grand Hotel Europe, an ornate and centrally located hotel that has hosted royalty and cultural icons, such as Tchaikovsky and Pavarotti.

DAY 11

SAINT PETERSBURG

Spend the day in St. Petersburg touring iconic sights. You will visit The Catherine Palace in Pushkin and the Hermitage Museum. The Catherine Palace was originally constructed in 1717, and became the summer residence for the tsars of Russia. The Hermitage Museum is housed in the former Winter Palace of the Tsars, and is home to the royal art collection. This collection houses three million works and is one of the largest art museums in the world. You can spend your last evening on this incredible tour at a ballet or opera performance at the famous Mariinsky Theater, or enjoy an outdoor concert (subject to schedule and availability and must be pre-booked at least six weeks prior to departure).

DAY 12

SAINT PETERSBURG

Today your Midnight Sun adventure comes to a close. Enjoy breakfast before heading to the airport. Alternatively, you can contact Palace Tours to extend your stay in St. Petersburg to explore more of this major European city during the lively summer season!

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Terms & Conditions

Booking & Payment

- **Deposit:** 30% of the total tour cost is due at the time of booking. The deposit is non-refundable.
- **Final payment:** the balance is due no later than 125 days before departure.
- Bookings made within 125 days of departure are payable in full at the time of booking.
- Fares are per person. Your written confirmation shows the exact amounts and due dates.

Cancellation

- **125 days or more** before departure: 30% of the total tour cost (the deposit)
- **Less than 125 days** before departure: 100% of the total tour cost

Changes

- **Date change:** free of charge, subject to availability, when requested 125 days or more before departure; after that, a fee of 15% of the total tour cost applies.
- **Cabin upgrade:** only the fare difference between cabin categories applies.
- **Cabin downgrade or passenger name correction:** free of charge up to 35 days before departure; within 35 days, EUR 500 per change.

Changes or cancellation by the train operator

If the train operator cancels or materially changes a departure, you will be offered a new date or an amended booking, a credit toward a future journey, or a refund of the amounts paid.

All cancellation, change, or update requests must be submitted in writing by email to travel@palacetours.com. A request takes effect only once we have received and processed it, and we will confirm the outcome to you in writing. Timeframes are calculated by reference to local time and business days at the destination; a request received outside business hours is treated as received on the next business day.

We strongly recommend purchasing travel insurance, including cancellation cover, from the moment you pay your deposit. For information on available plans, please visit www.palacetours.com/insurance.

COMMON QUESTIONS

Frequently Asked Questions

Do you have tour managers on board the Golden Eagle?

We have experienced Tour Managers on-board and they are renowned for their travel knowledge and their organizational abilities which allow you to relax and enjoy your rail cruise. Also we receive exceptional passenger comments about our Tour Managers and they ensure you enjoy every minute of your holiday. Usually there is one Tour Manager onboard a train, and also a number of assistants depending on the total number of passengers.

Do you provide arrival and departure airport transfers?

At the start of the tour, arrival transfers from the international airport to our tour hotel are covered. As the tour ends departure transfers from our tour hotel to the airport are included.

What is included in terms of hotel and train accommodation?

During the tour on the Golden Eagle you will spend much of your time sightseeing or relaxing in the train's public areas. However, you will find your hotel room or cabin on-board the train a welcome retreat at the end of a rewarding day. All hotels that you stay in will be of five-star standard, or the best available. Room upgrades are available on request, subject to availability and at additional cost.

Is the price of meals included in the tour?

The price of all the meals is included in the tour cost. This starts with dinner on the first day and ends with breakfast on the last day, unless otherwise stated. The Golden Eagle features one or two Restaurant Cars where you can dine on excellent food.

What is the quality of service on board the train?

On board the Golden Eagle you can expect service which is attentive, friendly and yet un-intrusive. Attendants in your train car will provide housekeeping and bedding turndown services and they will also assist you to ensure that you are comfortable in your cabin. Complimentary tea, coffee and bottled drinking water will be served to you in your cabin.

What is included in guided off train excursions?

During the off train excursions, guides will bring alive the history and culture of each place you visit on our rail cruise. All our tours come with a packed sightseeing schedule to make the most of the time you have off the train. These will bring you closer to the culture, people and history of your destinations. Also you will find special little touches included and these will help create magical memories.

Are there any doctors or medical facilities on board the train?

> All our tours have a doctor on board and he will travel with the group during the entire journey. This means that medical assistance is always available. Importantly the doctor is on call 24 hours a day and can deliver primary care to you onboard the train. Usually the doctors will speak in English and be registered with the General Medical Council in the UK. In the case of exceptional circumstances and the doctor does not speak English, translation will be provided.

Are there any Porterage facilities?

> Once you are on board the train, you will only have to unpack once. Then your luggage and belongings will stay with you on the train throughout the 14 day journey. However if necessary, Porterage will be provided between the hotels and stations.

Do I have to pay any tips/gratuities during the tour?

> During the tour, you will not have to worry about tipping anyone on or off the train. On your rail journey with Golden Eagle Luxury Trains all gratuities are included in the tour price. We encourage passengers to refrain from offering gratuities to crew/hoteliers/drivers etc as we will tip on your behalf. In case of any exceptional service received please inform us and Golden Eagle Luxury Trains will reward people accordingly.

How many restaurant cars are included on the Golden Eagle?

> On board the Golden Eagle one or two restaurant cars will be available to guests. However, this depends on the number of guests that are booked for a particular tour. In each car you can enjoy meals prepared by our Executive Chef who is assisted by his onboard restaurant team. Meals are prepared using the very best ingredients and these are locally sourced wherever possible.

What is provided for breakfast on board the train?

> The breakfast on the train includes a wide selection of fruit, cereals, orange juice and cold plates and these are presented to you as a buffet. Alternatively you can enjoy a cooked breakfast delivered by waiters to you table along with tea and coffee.

What is provided as lunch and dinner on board the train?

> During lunch and dinner you will enjoy fine food created by the Executive Chef that is served along with great wines. Attentive service will ensure you experience a welcoming atmosphere within the restaurant car. We also ensure that your culinary experience reflects the very essence of the countries we travel through, as well as international cuisine.

What type of seating arrangement is followed in the restaurant car?

> On-board the train the restaurant cars can accommodate all guests in a single sitting. Also you can make use of our open-seating policy to dine wherever, and with whomever you please.

Is there any dress code on board the train or during tours?

> Throughout the journey there is a casual dress code. In the evening we suggest smart casual.

What is included in the Bar Lounge Car?

> The Bar Lounge Car is the social heart of the Golden Eagle Here you can rest and relax in comfortable surroundings as you read or enjoy a game of cards with friends or fellow passengers.

What planning is included in daily tours?

> In the Bar Lounge Car the Tour Manager will outline the activities included for the day. Passengers will be given printed daily itineraries throughout the tour detailing train arrival and departure timings. Up to date weather forecasts for the next destination and information on the following day's excursions and activities will also be provided here.

What types of activities are provided to guests on board the train?

> In the Bar Lounge Car and Restaurant Cars you can partake in language lessons and engaging talks hosted by experts and you can learn more about the local history and culture of countries you are traveling through. In the evenings the resident pianist will entertain you in the Bar Lounge Car and you can make use of the bar which stays open until the last person leaves.

What is included in the Freedom of Choice touring options?

> In specific cities you can customize your journey and enjoy the opportunity to select from an array of Freedom of Choice tours. In these cities off-train excursions will take in all the major attractions but in addition you can choose from a variety of activities and enjoy a tailor-made experience. All these optional activities are included in the tour cost and there are no extra charges which ensure that you get the ultimate in terms of flexibility. However, Freedom of Choice options may vary depending on train timings, minimum number of people and local weather conditions. Occasionally we may offer an optional excursion that requires extra payment. In case you do not wish to take an off-train excursion you can either stay onboard the train (Golden Eagle only) or make arrangements privately to go on your own tour. However, you will have to ensure that you are back by the departure time. In case you are not back in time, the train will not be able to wait and must leave as per the schedule.

Do I need to purchase travel insurance?

> When traveling on our tours you must be fully insured for any medical expenses that may be incurred. To buy travel insurance contact Palace Tours and we also recommend buying cancellation insurance in case you are unable to travel for any reason. Please contact us for more details.

What currency do I need to bring during a tour?

> On board the train US Dollars and Euros are used but guests will not need much currency. However, charges for laundry and bar bills have to be met so bring $500 in cash per person. You can also run a 'tab' on-board and make a CASH payment at the end of the tour. We do not accept Credit cards on-board any of the trains. We also recommend passengers travel with small denominations and clean bills. Importantly, marked or torn US Dollar bills are not accepted in Russia. You will also need money to pay for souvenirs and any shopping done off the train. This can be paid for in local currency and in some instances in US Dollars. If you need to change money contact the Tour Manager and/or guides and they will provide you with more information.

Is there a safe on board the train?

> Each cabin has a safe in which you can store any cash or valuables.

Can passengers pay with credit cards and traveler's checks in cities?

> ATM machines are now available in all large towns and cities and all the hotels that we use accept major credit cards. Traveler's checks however, are virtually impossible to exchange.

Will a representative meet me at the airport / train station?

> When you arrive one of our representatives will be waiting with a Golden Eagle Luxury Trains sign. In case you are arriving by air, you will be met after immigration, and once you have collected your luggage and cleared customs. Our representative will then assist you to your transfer vehicle to the hotel.

Do any restrictions about luggage apply on the train?

> Within the train there is very limited space inside the cabin for storing luggage therefore, we advise passengers to bring soft-topped luggage as it is easier to store. There is also no space to store luggage under beds. However, there is luggage storage area at the end of each carriage and we recommend that passengers unpack and store their empty luggage here. Our cabin attendants will assist with this process.

What footwear should I bring for this tour?

> All our tours require some walking so we recommend that passengers bring comfortable walking shoes with rubber soles to avoid slipping.

Are toiletries provided on board the train?

> A range of L'Occitane toiletries are provided in each cabin and these include shower cream, shampoo and conditioner. Within the cabin you will also find a hairdryer, bathrobes, slippers and towels.

Should I bring my prescription medication?

> We advise guests to bring enough medication to last the duration of the tour. Also ensure that you have spoken to your primary care physician and received a medical clearance prior to traveling. Finally, our doctor on board the train must be advised of prescription medication that you are traveling with.

Are vaccinations needed for the trip?

> We advise guests to contact their GP or local travel clinic to get up to date information on what vaccinations are required. In case you are traveling from America you can check the CDC website if you need further information.We advise guests to contact their GP or local travel clinic to get up to date information on what vaccinations are required. In case you are traveling from America you can check the CDC website if you need further information.

What languages are tours conducted in?

> The main language used for tours is English. However, guides speaking other languages are available on selected tours and these are often subject to minimum numbers of passengers requesting for a particular language, or on request at additional cost. Please contact us for more information.

Can specific dietary needs of passengers be accommodated on tours?

> Most of the special dietary requirements that passengers have can be catered for. Please contact our office for further details.

Will I get access to beauty treatments on board the train?

> Beauty treatments are not available on board but are available in tour hotels.

Will I get access to internet on board the train?

> The train does not have Wi-Fi, however there are a number of internet USB adapters, which you can use in the Golden Eagle Bar Lounge Car. These can only be used on personal laptops carried by passengers and are provided on a first come, first served basis. However, internet coverage is limited and is usually available when the train passes through larger cities and towns.

Can I use my mobile phone on the train?

> When using your mobile phone on-board the train you will notice that coverage is limited. It may also be limited in rural areas. Please check with your service provider for more information on coverage.

What time should I arrive at the hotel on the first day of the tour?

> We recommend that guests arrive between 11.00 and 16.00 hours, as this will give them time to join the Welcome Dinner. In most hotels check-in is at 12 noon. Early check-ins are dependent on hotel availability (charges may apply).

Are there any gym facilities on board the train?

> Gym facilities are only available in the tour hotels. There are no such facilities on board the train however; tours involve a moderate degree of walking.

What happens in case I require hospitalization?

> We will ensure that you are escorted to a hospital and make every effort to ensure that you receive the highest possible level of care. If needed we will also get in touch with your relatives at home. We recommend that you purchase travel insurance as it will cover expenses associated with hospitalization and loss of luggage.

On average how many passengers do cabin attendants serve?

> During a tour 2 cabin attendants look after 10 passengers.

Are porters available to help with baggage?

> Porters are available at each of the hotels and at the station to help get luggage on and off the train.

Will I be informed about cities and places that we visit daily?

> Upon boarding the train you will be given a brochure that is specific to the route and it will have details about the journey and the places covered. Additionally, passengers will receive daily updates throughout the tour with detailed timings, weather forecasts and excursion information.

What should I do if I require a foreign language interpreter?

> If you require a foreign language interpreter please contact our Reservations Department, and they will do their best to accommodate all requests (charges may apply).

Who should I inform in case I go on a private off train excursion?

> During the off-train excursion period, the train may be moved to another platform or depot so you should inform the Tour Manager if you intend to make you own tour plans during the day.

Can passengers in wheelchairs go on off train excursions?

> Passengers in wheelchairs can go on off-train excursions but if they require a wheelchair this must be specified at the time of booking the tour. We will do our best to accommodate the request (charges will apply if assistance is required for maneuvering the wheelchair). However, please note it may not be possible to go on all of the excursions.

How many people can travel on off tour excursions?

> Each bus can carry up to 35 passengers and tours may be divided into groups.

Can Golden Eagle accommodate dietary restrictions?

> Yes, Golden Eagle can make adjustments to your dietary restrictions, excluding Kosher needs due to the remote locations the train passes through. Just notify Palace Tours prior to booking your trip.

Where is my luggage stored, and how might I access it during a long journey?

> Empty suitcases are stored at the end of each carriage. Ask your steward if you need to access your suitcase during the journey. Generally, the Golden Eagle follows an, “unpack once,” mentality whereby passengers unpack their items into their cabin at the beginning of the trip, and use a smaller carry on bag at excursions and hotel stops.

Are there safety measures or precautions in place?

> There are certain safety measures already in place for passengers. Smaller numbers in group tours allow for more accountability and personal attention, and therefore a heightened sense of safety during excursions. While there has currently been no trouble in areas of Golden Eagle’s tours, if necessary, changes will be made to the itinerary. The safety of the passengers is Golden Eagle’s top priority.

Are there accommodations for families on board?

> There are no interconnecting rooms on the Golden Eagle, but families spread across multiple cabins will be placed next to each other in the carriages. The Golden Eagle train is an adult-oriented train and there are no cots or changing facilities. It is up to parents if they choose to bring their children, but there is a wide range of ages aboard the train. Also, Golden Eagle adds and removes carriages depending on the size of the group on the train.

What are the main differences between the classes of cabins?

> The Imperial, Gold, and Silver classes differ mainly in floor space and the number of services provided. For instance, the Imperial Cabin is 120 square feet with a king sized bed. Private car and guide services are available, and a complimentary bottle of Dom Perignon is included at the start of each journey. The Gold Cabin is 77 square feet and features a double, or bunk bed. The Silver Cabin is 60 square feet with a small bed on a lower and upper berth. Services such as laundry require an additional charge in this arrangement. All classes include Golden Eagle's "signature touches" (such as a backpack, slippers, etc.), radio, and DVD screens. For the Gold and Imperial classes, all drinks are included. For the Silver Class, drinks are only included with meals in the Restaurant Car. Other drinks can be kept on a tab throughout the duration of the tour.

Ready to Book Your Journey?

Contact Palace Tours for personalized rates and departure dates

travel@palacetours.com | 786-408-0610

www.palacetours.com

500 S. Federal Hwy, Unit 3852, Hallandale Beach, FL 33008