

# Three religions of Baikal

Journey to Olkhon, the Ushkan Islands, and Buryatia



Visit Russia's main Buddhist datsan, listen to the shaman's legends on Olkhon Island, and learn about the life of a Siberian Old Believer village. Capture vast taiga, wide steppes, picturesque rocks, secluded islands, and the magnificent scenery of the great lake. This journey will discover Baikal Lake's natural and cultural diversity.

# Experiences you'll have

## Tour of Baikal and Buryatia

Baikal Lake offers not only hundreds of amazing natural sites. Also, the Baikal region is a confluence of different religions and traditions. On this journey, you will get acquainted with Shamanism, Buddhism, and Old Believers, and see how closely intertwined they are in the lives of local people.

This tour is an exploration of Baikal culture. You will see 14 region's iconic places, get acquainted with Siberian and Buryat cuisine, and touch the mysteries of local religions and spiritual teachings.

### Highlights of the journey:


you will visit Ivolginsky Datsan, the main Buddhist center in Russia  
watch the Baikal seal on the protected Ushkan islands  
cross Baikal in its deepest and widest part by fast boat  
learn the traditional Yokhor dance, taste the national meals, and take part in the purification fire ritual  
visit places of power on Olkhon Island and learn about the origins of Baikal Shamanism  
get acquainted with the life and traditions of the Old Believers in a traditional Siberian village

**We accept bookings for groups of 6 or more**

The base rate is in RUB. The price in dollars (1,674 USD) depends on the exchange rate of the [Central Bank of Russia](#) minus 2% and is valid as of March 11, 2024.

Baikal

### Three religions of Baikal

Difficulty   
Age from 8 y.o.  
Group size to 8  
Duration 7 days

Accommodation at the trip



4 nights 2 nights

Языки



guide



guide

from 148 700 EUR

## Itinerary

The journey begins in Irkutsk, where you should get to on your own on the first day of the program by 10:00 am. Please note that return tickets should be taken from Ulan-Ude, where the route ends.

### Day 1

#### After meeting at the Irkutsk airport, you will go to Baikal

Lake on a comfortable minibus. The route will pass through the historical lands of the Buryat people. You will meet old ulus and villages, sheep flocks, and herds of wild horses.

#### You will stop at the Zolotaya Orda (Rus. for Golden Horde)

ethnographic center, to get acquainted with Buryat culture and have lunch. You can join a master class on cooking *buuz* (a traditional Buryat dish) and learn the national Buryat dance *yokhor*. You will also visit real *yurts*, listen to throat singing performed by local folklore ensembles, and try traditional local dishes.

#### Further, the road will go through forest and steppe areas

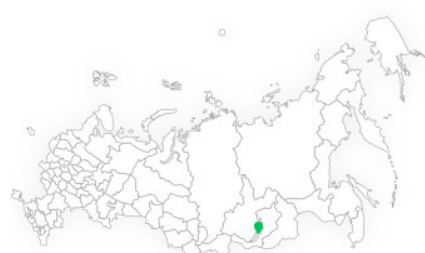
and lead you to the shore of Baikal Lake, where a boat will be waiting for you. On it, you will go to Ogoy Island, where the Buddhist Stupa of Enlightenment is located. Here you will get acquainted with the basics of Buddhism, tie a *khadak* (ritual ribbon, traditional for Buddhism and shamanism), and make a ritual circumambulation of the stupa.

#### Then you will go to Olkhon Island, the center of Baikal

shamanism. Arriving in Khuzhir village, you will be accommodated in the hotel and have dinner (paid extra). After, you can relax or walk along the Saraysky beach, the most beautiful on the island.

### Day 2

After breakfast, you will be taken to the northern part of



Olkhon Island to get acquainted with its nature and legends. The road will pass through the forest, sandy beaches, and dunes with pink sand. On the way, you will make stops at the viewpoints.

**You will visit Khoboi Cape, the northernmost point on the**

island. The guide will tell you a beautiful legend about this place. Then you will descend to Pesochnaya and Uzury bays, and visit Shunte Cape, called the Cape of Love.

**Lunch will be held in the open air. You will taste Baikal fish**

soup and tea with taiga herbs. In the evening you will return to the hotel. After dinner (paid extra) you can meet sunset at Burkhan Cape, one of the 9 sacred places in Asia. Considering it is home to Khan Huute Baabai, the main Baikal spirit.

**Day 3**

**After breakfast, you will go by boat to the other shore of**

Baikal. You will pass along the rocky shores of Olkhon, cross the lake, and find yourself on the Ushkan Islands, one of Baikal's most unique and hard-to-access corners.

**If the weather is good, you can watch the Baikal seal here.**

It is one of the few species of freshwater seals and the only seal living within 5000 kilometers of the ocean. On the islands, seals form giant rookeries, and on a sunny day, you can see dozens of these unique animals basking on coastal rocks. On one of the islands, there is a convenient approach and special structures to observe the seals without fear of scaring them away.

**You will have a picnic lunch in the reserve, and then**

continue your way to Monakhovo village. There you will transfer to a minibus and move to Gremyachinsk village, located on the very shore of the lake. Here you will check in to the hotel, have dinner, and rest.

**Day 4**

**You can spend this day as you wish. Go for a walk along**

the eastern coast of Baikal, sunbathe, and swim in the lake. Or take part in one of the additional activities: excursion to the Barguzin Valley, fishing in the Chivyrkuisky Bay, or rafting on the Barguzin River. You can also relax in the spa complex (see the list of additional activities in the Common questions block).

**Day 5**

**After breakfast, you will leave Baikal and go to the capital**

of Buryatia, Ulan-Ude city. For lunch, you will stop at a restaurant of Buryat cuisine.

**Then you will go to Ivolginsky datsan, Russia's main**

Buddhist monastery and a monument of history and architecture. The monastery complex is a graceful ensemble of temples, dugans, stupas, and prayer drums. In this datsan, the imperishable body of Dashi-Dorzho Itigilov is placed. You can learn more about Buddhism, communicate with real lamas, and buy incense and amulets.

**Toward evening you will return to the city, check into your**

hotel, have dinner (paid extra), and relax.

**Day 6**

**After breakfast at the hotel, you will go to the Old Believer**



village of Tarbagatai. On the way, you will see the world's largest Lenin's head and visit Rinpoche Bagsha datsan. Here a large bronze statue of Shakyamuni Buddha was installed for the first time in Russia.

### **Reaching Tarbagatai village, you can experience Siberian**

village life. You will get acquainted with the canons of Old Believership, and visit the museum and the local church. For lunch, you will come to Old Believers' family's house and taste traditional drinks and local cuisine.

### **In the evening you will return to the hotel in Ulan-Ude,**

have dinner (paid extra), and rest.

### **Day 7**

### **After breakfast, you will be taken to Ulan-Ude airport, from**

where you will fly home.

## Accommodation at the trip

**2 nights** you will spend in the **Saraysky Guest Complex** in Khuzhir village on **Oikhon Island**. It is located on the shore of Baikal with a beautiful view of Sarai Beach. You will be accommodated in standard rooms with double or 2 twin beds, a fridge, a TV, and a private bathroom. There is a restaurant in the complex.

**2 nights** will be spent in the **Baikal Riviera Park Hotel** in **Gremyachinsk village**, in a picturesque pine forest on the shore of Baikal. You will be accommodated in comfortable standard double rooms. Each room has double or 2 twin beds, a TV, and a private bathroom. There is a restaurant and Russian sauna with fonts on the territory.

**2 nights** you will spend in the **Baikal Plaza Hotel 4\*** in **Ulan-Ude**. You will be accommodated in standard rooms with double or 2 twin beds, AC, cable TV, a fridge, and a private bathroom with a hairdryer, toiletries, and bathrobes. A buffet breakfast is served every morning in the restaurant. There is a fitness center with a sauna in the hotel.

## FAQ

### What will the weather be like

July in Baikal is the sunniest and warmest month of the year. In August the probability of rain and cloudiness is slightly higher. The average daytime temperature in July and August is +24 °C. Rains are possible, mostly moderate.

### What to bring with me

- windbreaker jacket
- warm sweater
- comfortable shoes (trekking shoes/sneakers, sandals)
- cap, bucket hat, hat, or bandana
- warm hat
- sunscreen (SPF at least 20)
- sunglasses (UV at least 2)
- swimwear
- personal first aid kit (if you have specific medical conditions)
- photo and video equipment
- rain cover or umbrella
- small backpack for day trips
- binoculars

- mosquito and tick spray
- thin gloves

## Meals

The price of the program includes all meals, except for breakfast on Day 1, lunch on Day 4, and all dinners. Lunch on Day 1 will be held in the Golden Horde Ethno park, as a picnic in nature on Days 2 and 3, and in the Buryat cuisine restaurant on Day 5. On Day 6 you will have lunch at the Old Believers village.

## Who will be my guide

You will be accompanied by an experienced guide during the journey.

## Additional excursions

Excursion to the Barguzin Valley with a visit to the Datsan: 50,000 RUB/group up to 5 people, each next participant - 10,000 RUB/pp.

River rafting: 68,750 RUB/group up to 5 people, each next participant - 13,750 RUB/pp.

Fishing in Chivyrkuisky Bay:

2 persons - 32,200 RUB/pp  
 4 persons - 18,250 RUB/pp 6 persons - 13,000 RUB/pp 8 people - 10,125 RUB/pp

It is also possible to rent bicycles, and visit a Russian sauna and spa (check the cost with our managers).

## Discounts and offers

A 10% discount is available for travelers 8 to 12 years old.

We can also run this program on any other dates for your group of two or more. The cost depends on the group size:

- 6 people - 175,850 RUB/pp
- 4 people - 224,250 RUB/pp
- 2 people - 388,380 RUB/pp.

# Booking

Baikal

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### What's included in the price:

- double accommodation according to the program
- meals according to the program

### Extra charge:

- [airfare](#) to Irkutsk and from Ulan-Ude
- visa fees and travel insurance

- meeting at the airport, all transfers according to the program
- professional guide services
- speedboat rental (Yamaha FR)
- excursion to the ethnopark and Old Believer village
- all water and car excursions according to the program
- folklore programs and master classes
- national parks fees

- single accommodation (+27,200 RUB/pp)
- meals not included in the program
- interpreter from English, German, Chinese (+2,500 RUB/a day)
- additional excursions and activities (details in the Common questions section)



Best price guarantee



Personal tours



Discounts for regular clients



Gift cards