



MIT Alumni Travel Program

Arctic Explorer: Northern Lights, Northern Cultures aboard the Golden Eagle Private Train

St. Petersburg • Kirkenes • Murmansk •
Petrozavodsk • Suzdal • Vladimir • Moscow

December 28, 2017-January 9, 2018

with MIT Professor Rob van der Hilst





Itinerary

Thursday–Friday, December 28–29

Depart USA / Arrive St. Petersburg

Arrive in St. Petersburg on Friday, December 29, check in to the Hotel Kempinski Moika 22. Meet fellow travelers for a welcome reception and dinner this evening is at the hotel.

Saturday, December 30

St. Petersburg

At any time of year, St. Petersburg is one of the most beautiful cities in the world. Its miles of canals, laced together with graceful bridges set amidst pastel 18th century buildings, have earned it the name, “Venice of the North.” A convergence of art and soul, the city survived the calamitous 20th century with its reputation as a storehouse of Russian culture intact. Begin with a drive along Nevsky Prospekt, the three-mile avenue that is the backbone of the city. Visit the Church of the Savior on the Blood, and drive out of town to explore the Catherine Palace, with its famous Amber Room. (B, L, D) *Hotel Kempinski Moika 22*



Sunday, December 31

St. Petersburg • Board the Golden Eagle

Spend time this morning at the world-class Hermitage Museum. Originally a small private palace gallery founded by Catherine the Great with a purchase of 255 paintings from Berlin, the Hermitage today houses the largest museum collection in the world. Then, board the Golden Eagle private train and enjoy a festive New Year’s Eve toast during dinner as you make your way north. (B, L, D) *Aboard the train*

Monday, January 1

Golden Eagle • Cross the Arctic Circle

Spend a relaxing day onboard the private train with time for group discussion and watching the *taiga* forest begin to thin and shrink. Raise a toast to crossing the Arctic Circle. (B, L, D) *Aboard the train*

Tuesday–Wednesday, January 2–3

Kirkenes, Norway

Pack your overnight bag and disembark the train. Board a motorcoach for the tidy polar town of Kirkenes, Norway, overlooking Norway’s easternmost fjord. Located far above the Arctic Circle, Kirkenes experiences continuous daylight from May to August, and conversely, polar night from late November to late January. Visit the fantastic Snow Hotel, assembled each winter since 2006, and enjoy chilled vodka served in a glass made of ice. Embark on two evening bus tours in search of the Northern Lights, as well as an exciting dogsled ride and a visit to the Snow Hotel’s reindeer. Note: An option to stay one night at the Snow Hotel is available at an additional cost. (2B, 2L, 2D) *Thon Hotel*



Thursday–Friday, January 4–5

Golden Eagle • Murmansk

After a pleasant day rolling through the northern landscape, stop in Murmansk, the most important city on the Kola Peninsula. Even though it is above the Arctic Circle, the port city of Murmansk stays ice-free for most of the winter due to the warm waters of the Gulf Stream. Here, board the world's first nuclear-powered ice-breaker, the *Lenin*, and visit the Murmansk Regional History Museum. (2B, 2L, 2D) *Aboard the train*

Saturday, January 6

Petrozavodsk

Heading back south, the train makes a stop in Petrozavodsk, founded by Peter the Great, who recognized that he would need a local iron foundry to outfit the ships he intended to build for his new navy. Petrozavodsk grew around the foundry that Peter built here on the shore of Lake Onega. Weather permitting, board a hovercraft and skim over Lake Onega to Kizhi Island, the location of a UNESCO-listed open-air museum stocked with old wooden churches and houses from Karelia. (B, L, D) *Aboard the train*

Sunday, January 7

Vladimir • Suzdal

Discover two of Russia's Golden Ring towns, Vladimir and Suzdal, ancient towns that were seats of political and economic power long before the rise of Moscow. Admire the blue and gold domes of Vladimir's 12th century Cathedral of the Assumption. Visit the UNESCO-listed Savior Monastery of St. Euphinius, founded in 1352. Inside the walls stands the five-domed Cathedral of the Transfiguration of the Savior, whose interior was frescoed by Gury Nikitin. Attend a choral concert by some of the monks, then go dashing through the snow on a traditional sleigh ride. (B, L, D) *Aboard the train*

Monday, January 8

Moscow

Arriving in Moscow, explore some of its classic sites, including UNESCO-listed Novodevichy Convent, whose main attraction is its cemetery. Such luminaries as Gogol, Chekhov, Khrushchev, Raisa Gorbachev, and Boris Yeltsin are buried here, and some of the graves are quite fanciful. Take a tour of the Kremlin, inside the fortress walls are palaces, cathedrals, government buildings and the Armory Museum. Built in the 16th century as a warehouse for the Kremlin's weaponry, the Armory was transformed into an exhibition hall and museum housing Russia's national treasures, such as religious icons, Fabergé eggs, and Catherine the Great's ball gowns. Finish the day with an evening walk on Red Square, which along with St. Basil's Cathedral is perhaps the most recognizable symbol of Russia, and a festive farewell dinner. (B, L, D) *Ararat Park Hyatt Hotel*

Tuesday, January 9

Depart Moscow

This morning transfer to the airport for flights home. (B, in flight)

What To Expect

This trip is moderately active, and includes rigorous touring due to the daily walking involved and the overall limited tourism infrastructure. To reap the full rewards of this adventure, travelers must be able to walk up to four hours per day, keeping up with fellow travelers. Flexibility, a sense of humor and a willingness to accept local standards of amenities and services are essential components to the enjoyment of this trip. This itinerary features a significant amount of touring on foot. In true expedition style, some delays or changes in the itinerary are likely. *Note: inclement weather conditions could prevent trip participants from viewing the northern lights. Ideal weather conditions are not guaranteed.*



Cost Per Person

Silver Class - \$12,995 per person, double occupancy

Gold Class - \$14,995 per person, double occupancy

Single Supplement

Silver Class - \$4,500

Gold Class - \$5,500



About the Golden Eagle

Two styles of accommodation are available on board the Golden Eagle: Gold Class and Silver Class. Both offer private en suite facilities with upper/lower berth configuration.

On the train, each sleeping car has its own highly qualified attendants who provide bed turndown service, plus tea, coffee and mineral water. Towels, bathrobes, slippers and toiletries are provided and onboard laundry service is available.

A Bar/Lounge Car is included in the formation of the train. The bar/lounge offers a relaxing area where you can enjoy a drink and gather with other passengers.

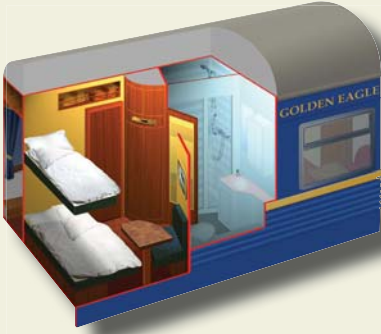
Dining Cars. Onboard meals feature Russian and European cuisine complemented by a selection of wine, beer and non-alcoholic beverages.

Train car/cabin styles may vary. Please note that a variety of cabin styles are in use. Décor and layout of dining, bar and sleeping cars on your journey may differ from the sample images depicted.



Gold Class

Gold Class cabins are well-proportioned (77 sq ft) and feature a large picture window. Modern en suite amenities include shower, under floor heating, a DVD/CD player, remote-controlled air-conditioning/heating, wardrobe and personal safe. Each cabin is configured with upper and lower berths, and can accommodate double, twin or single occupancy.



Silver Class

Silver Class cabins are more compact (60 sq ft) than Gold Class cabins with similar facilities. Silver Class cabins feature the same amenities as Gold Class cabins but in a smaller space and with a smaller, wet-room style shower area.



Cabin configurations and décor may vary from samples depicted



Register Today!

To reserve space on this program, please call the MIT Alumni Travel Program at **800-992-6749** or email compass@mit.edu. Or complete and mail a reservation form which can be found on the trip's website at alum.mit.edu/travel.

A deposit of \$1,000 per person is required and is payable by major credit card (MasterCard, Visa, American Express, Discover) or by check, to *MIR Corporation-Trust* (the tour operator for this program). Credit cards are accepted for deposit payment only. Mail payment and reservation form to: MIT Alumni Travel Program, 600 Memorial Drive, W98-2nd Floor, Cambridge, MA 02139

Reservations to be paid in full by **September 29, 2017**, 90 days prior to departure payable by check only. Reservations received after September 29, 2017, must be accompanied by payment in full. A signed release agreement is required for trip participation.

Terms & Conditions

Included: All accommodation based on double occupancy per itinerary with breakfast daily, local service charge and tax: St. Petersburg (2 nights); on board the Golden Eagle Trans-Siberian Express private train (6 nights); Kirkenes (2 nights); Moscow (1 night) • Meals as listed in itinerary • Group arrival/departure transfers for passengers arriving/departing on scheduled start/end days • All land transportation per itinerary including private motor coach throughout the itinerary • Special cultural events and extensive sightseeing, including entrance fees • Lecture series • Welcome and farewell dinners • Beverages with included lunches and dinners: bottled water, choice of non-alcoholic drinks, tea, coffee, wine and beer • Bottled water on buses on tour days • Services of a MIR tour manager throughout the land program • Gratuities to tour manager, guides and drivers • Comprehensive pre-departure packet

Not Included: International airfare between the U.S. and the tour start and end cities; air taxes or fuel surcharges; pre- or post-tour services; visa or passport fees; medical and trip cancellation/interruption insurance; evacuation costs; food or beverages not included in group meals; items of a personal nature such as laundry, alcohol, telephone expense, excess baggage fees, photo/video expenses inside museums (where allowed); other items not expressly listed as included. Optional night at the Snow Hotel near Kirkenes is available at \$360 per person double occupancy.

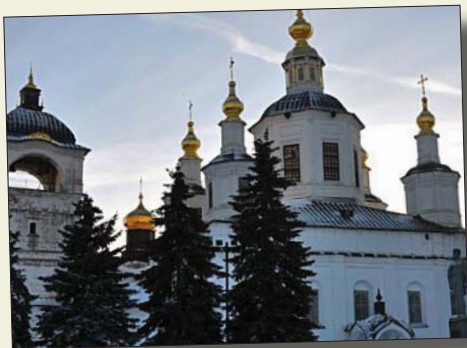
Air Arrangements: Due to the variety of flight options available, there is no group flight for this program. As of this writing, the cost of round-trip economy-class airfare from/to Boston on British Airways connecting via London Heathrow is \$1,050 per person. Airfare is subject to change any time until paid and ticketed. Upon confirmation of reservation, the tour operator can work with travelers on flights on an individual basis.

Cancellations and Refunds: All cancellations must be made in writing to MIR Corporation and the following cancellation charges will apply: Cancellations received 91 or more days before departure, deposits paid or due in full of \$1,000 per person; those received 61 days to 90 days before departure, 50% of land tour cost per person; those received 60 days or less before departure, no refund. Refunds cannot be made to passengers who do not complete the full tour for any reason at all. MIR Corporation reserves the right to decline to accept any person as a participant in a tour, or to require any participant to withdraw from a tour at any time at his/her own expense, when such action is determined by tour staff to be in the best interest of the health, safety, or general welfare of the tour group or of the individual participant, and subject only to the requirement that the recoverable cost of unused services and accommodations be refunded, if any.

Single Travelers: We make every effort to match single travelers who request a roommate. However, shared accommodations cannot be guaranteed and a single supplement rate will apply.

Insurance: Trip cancellation/interruption insurance is available. Insurance information will be sent to you by the MIT Alumni Travel Program on receipt of your registration.

Responsibility: A Release of Liability and Assumption of Risk Agreement of MIR Corporation and MIT for loss of property, injury, illness or death will be provided to passengers upon enrollment and is available to prospective travelers upon request. A signed release and exclusions agreement is required for trip participation.



MIT Alumni & Friends,

Join fellow alumni for an unconventional journey above the Arctic Circle in pursuit of the spectacular northern lights aboard the luxury Golden Eagle Trans-Siberian Express train. Begin in St. Petersburg, where the boulevards and serene canals take on a warm veneer in the slanted winter sunlight. Travel north above the Arctic Circle, disembarking in the Norwegian town of Kirkenes, located squarely within the auroral zone. For those interested, take the option of staying one night in the Snow Hotel near Kirkenes.

Stop in the ice-free Arctic port of Murmansk and tour the nuclear icebreaker, the *Lenin*. Conclude your journey with time in Moscow to explore classic sites including St. Basil's Cathedral and Red Square. Lectures will focus on the history and culture of the region, Earth's magnetic field, the atmosphere, and the aurora borealis.

We are sharing this program with alumni from Harvard University. For more details, or to register, call the MIT Alumni Travel Program office at 800-992-6749. Our email address is compass@mit.edu. You may also call the tour operator MIR Corporation at 877-535-9814.

Sincerely,

Melissa Chapman Gresh
Director, MIT Alumni Travel Program

P.S. Please see our website at alum.mit.edu/travel for details and updates on all our programs. Find us on Facebook at MIT Alumni Travel Program.



Study Leader: Rob van der Hilst

Rob van der Hilst, Head of Department and Schlumberger Professor of Earth Sciences, whose cross-disciplinary and collaborative research focuses on understanding geological structures and processes in Earth's deep interior, both on a regional and global scale. The main tools he uses (and develops) are global reflection seismology and seismic tomography, but he integrates these findings with constraints from geology, plate reconstructions, mineral physics, and geodynamics.

van der Hilst received his PhD in Geophysics from Utrecht University in 1990. After postdoctoral research at the University of Leeds and the Australian National University he joined the faculty of MIT's Department of Earth, Atmospheric, and Planetary Sciences (EAPS) in 1996. From 2004 to 2012 he was the Director of the Earth Resources Laboratory and since the beginning of 2012 he has been Head of EAPS. In addition to his work at MIT, Rob has been a Visiting Professor at the Institut de Physique de Globe de Paris (France). Among several other awards and honors, Rob was most recently elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He has been named a Fellow of the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, a Fellow of the American Geophysical Union, and awarded the James B. Macelwane Medal.



MIT Alumni Travel Program
600 Memorial Drive
Cambridge, MA 02139

Program Highlights

- Enjoy lectures with MIT Professor Rob van der Hilst.
- Celebrate an unconventional and adventurous New Year's Eve aboard the deluxe private train.
- Venture far above the Arctic Circle, and experience twilight at noon.
- Visit the Snow Hotel, its guestrooms built of snow and adorned with snow carvings and ice sculptures.
- Search out the Northern Lights across the Aurora Borealis Zone in the comfort of a cozy coach.
- Embark on a dogsled ride behind a team of dogs running over the frozen lakes and across the northern tundra.
- Board the world's first nuclear-powered ice-breaker, the *Lenin*, now a museum ship.
- Take an exhilarating traditional sleigh ride in old Suzdal, one of Russia's old Golden Ring towns.