



The Baikal-Amur Mainline (BAM)

Includes »

Bratsk	254
Severobaikalsk	255
Tynda	259
Komsomolsk-na-Amure	261

Route Info

- » Distance: 4287km
- » Duration: Four days one hour
- » Time zones: Moscow +5 to Moscow +7

Best Places to Stay

- » Baikal Trail Hostel (p257)
- » Biznestsentr (p263)
- » Zolotaya Rybka (p257)
- » Hotel Taiga (p255)
- » Hotel Olymp (p257)

Why Go?

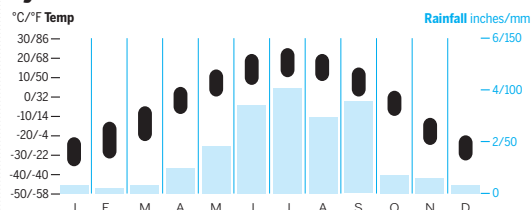
Most people know the Trans-Siberian Railway, but how many can say they've heard of the 'other' Trans-Sib, its poor country cousin, the BAM (Baikal-Amur Mainline, or Baikalo-Amurskaya Magistral)? The branch line to end all branch lines, the BAM begins as a set of points at Tayshet, and ends over 4200 lonely kilometres further east at Sovetskaya Gavan, passing through some jaw-slackeningly off-the-map places en route. As great railway journeys go, this is a Soviet epic, a rail-clanging odyssey you'll never forget.

But it's a miracle the BAM was ever built at all. Costing billions of dollars and declared a 'Hero Project of the Century', construction was fraught with seemingly insurmountable difficulties. The line opened fully in 1991, just as the USSR collapsed. Today only a handful of trains ply the route.

Riding the BAM's snail-paced trains takes you to some very out-of-the-way places. Only Severobaikalsk on Lake Baikal is geared up for visitors.

When to Go

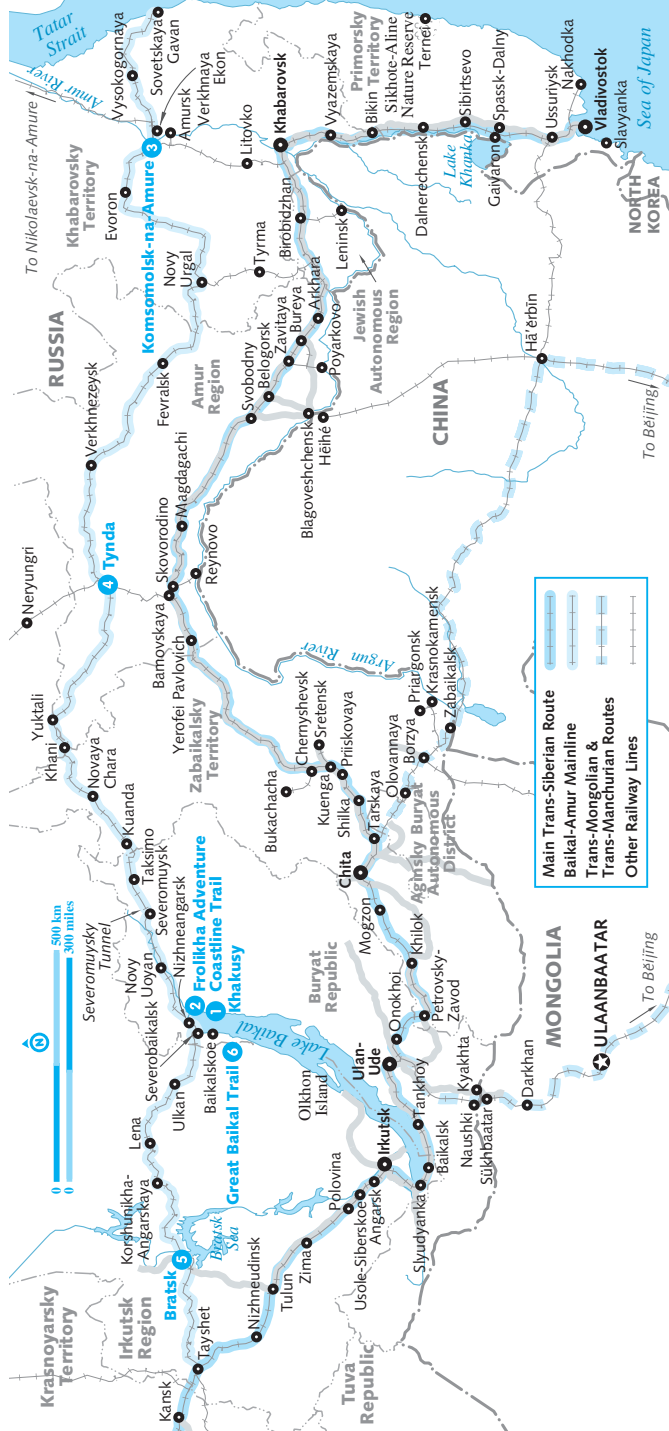
Tynda



Mar Ponder the weird shapes into which Lake Baikal freezes from the shore at Severobaikalsk.

Sep–Nov Avoid the crowds and ticket shortages of summer by taking an autumn trip along the BAM.

Sep & Oct Watch larch trees around Lake Baikal's north fill the landscape with autumnal gold.



BAM Highlights

- 1 Getting into hot water at northern **Baikal's mini-spas** (p260) for a spot of R&R Siberian-style
- 2 Bagging up your boots for the **Frolikha Adventure**

Coastline Trail (p258), one of Siberia's most exhilarating long-distance hiking routes

3 Touring the BAM's nicest town, St Petersburg-styled **Komsomolsk-na-**

Amure (p261), with Soviet monuments and nearby Nanai villages

4 Soaking up all things BAM at the varied and welcoming

BAM Museum (p260) in the BAM capital, Tynda

5 Looking out across the Bratsk Sea from a BAM train window as you trundle across

the top of the **Bratsk Dam** (p254)

6 Trekking a rugged section of the **Great Baikal Trail** between Baikal'skoe (p259) and Echo Turbaza