



The Trans-Manchurian Route

Includes »

Mǎnzhōulǐ.....	294
Hǎ'ěrbīn.....	295
Chángchūn.....	300
Shānhǎiguān.....	300

Route Info

- » Distance: 2790km
- » Duration: Two days, eight hours
- » Time zones: Chita: Moscow +6; Hǎ'ěrbīn and Běijīng: Moscow +4

Best Places to Stay & Eat

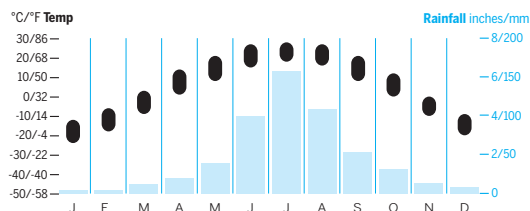
- » Fēngzéyuán Lǚdiàn guesthouse (p295)
- » Modern Hotel (p299)
- » Zhōngdà Dàijiǔdiàn hotel (p299)
- » Kazy International Youth Hostel (p299)
- » Cafe Russia 1914 (p299)
- » Barguuzin restaurant (p295)

Why Go?

For connoisseurs of obscure rail routes, the Trans-Manchurian Railway ranks high on the wish list. It's not on the main line to Vladivostok, nor does it take the 'tourist route' via Mongolia; rather, the weekly *Vostok* (19/20) chugs through China's rust belt, where foreign faces are few and far between. From Chita the railway heads toward the Chinese border at Mǎnzhōulǐ, sweeps through the grasslands of Inner Mongolia and passes through Hǎ'ěrbīn (Harbin) before carrying on towards the megalopolis that is Běijīng. The highlight is fascinating Hǎ'ěrbīn, where elements of turn-of-the-century Russia still poke through the surface of a thoroughly modern Chinese city. Bullet trains speed south from Hǎ'ěrbīn to Běijīng, but there's plenty to see along the way. Jumping-off points include Chángchūn, one-time capital of Japanese-occupied Manchukuo; Shěnyáng, with well-preserved relics of the Manchu era; and Shānhǎiguān, where the Great Wall meets the sea.

When to Go

Hǎ'ěrbīn



Jan Hǎ'ěrbīn hosts the dazzling Ice & Snow Festival.

Apr & May Avoid the summer crush of tourists and the hot weather by visiting in the shoulder season.

Sep & Oct Another good time to visit, after peak summer season and before the cold sets in.

The Route

In Russia, the kilometre markers show the distance from Moscow. Once in China, they show the distance to Hā'ěrbin (Harbin); south of Hā'ěrbin, they show the distance to Běijīng.

Chita to Zabaikalsk

6199KM FROM MOSCOW There's a 20-minute stop at **Chita** (p223), where you can stagger off the train and forage for snacks at the small shops near the platform.

6293KM The next major stop is **Karymskaya**, from where it's 12km down the line to Tarskaya, the official start of the Trans-Manchurian route; here the train crosses the Ingoda River and heads southeast.

6444KM There's a short stop at **Olovyannaya**, then the train crosses the Onon River, a tributary of the Ingoda. This area is said to be the birthplace of Chinggis (Genghis) Khan.

6543KM The train makes another 10-minute stop at **Borzya**. A little-known spur line heads south from here to Mongolia; it was built to move military equipment into eastern Mongolia during the Japanese invasion of 1939.

6666KM The bogies are changed in the Russian border town of **Zabaikalsk** before the train can travel into China. Passably edible meals are available at a cafe across from the station (take the bridge over the tracks and turn left). An ATM inside the train dispenses roubles.

Mǎnzhōulǐ to Hā'ěrbin

935KM (TO HĀ'ĒRBĪN) Chinese border town **Mǎnzhōulǐ** (p294), established in 1901 as a stop for the train, is booming thanks to cross-border trade.

749KM Next along the line is **Hāilǎēr**, the northernmost major town in Inner Mongolia, where the train stops for about 10 minutes. Should you choose to linger longer, a great option is to go to the **Jinzanghan Grassland** (金帐汗草原), just 40km north of Hāilǎēr, where you can eat mutton stew, sleep in a yurt (per person ¥80) and ride horses (per hour ¥150). There's also a **grasslands ger camp** (☎133 2700 0919). A taxi here from Hāilǎēr is ¥120 return.

650-560KM The train enters the Greater Hinggan Mountains. Some trains make stops at towns such as **Mianduhe** (634km), **Yilick Ede** (574km) and **Xinganling** (564km). From here the train descends on the eastern side of the range.

539KM Shortly after the 15-minute halt at **Boketu**, the train leaves Inner Mongolia and enters the province of Hēilóngjiāng, meaning Black Dragon River. Known in Russian as the Amur River, Hēilóngjiāng's namesake river marks the border with Russia in northeastern China. At this point you can sense a changing climatic and

Chita to Běijīng

