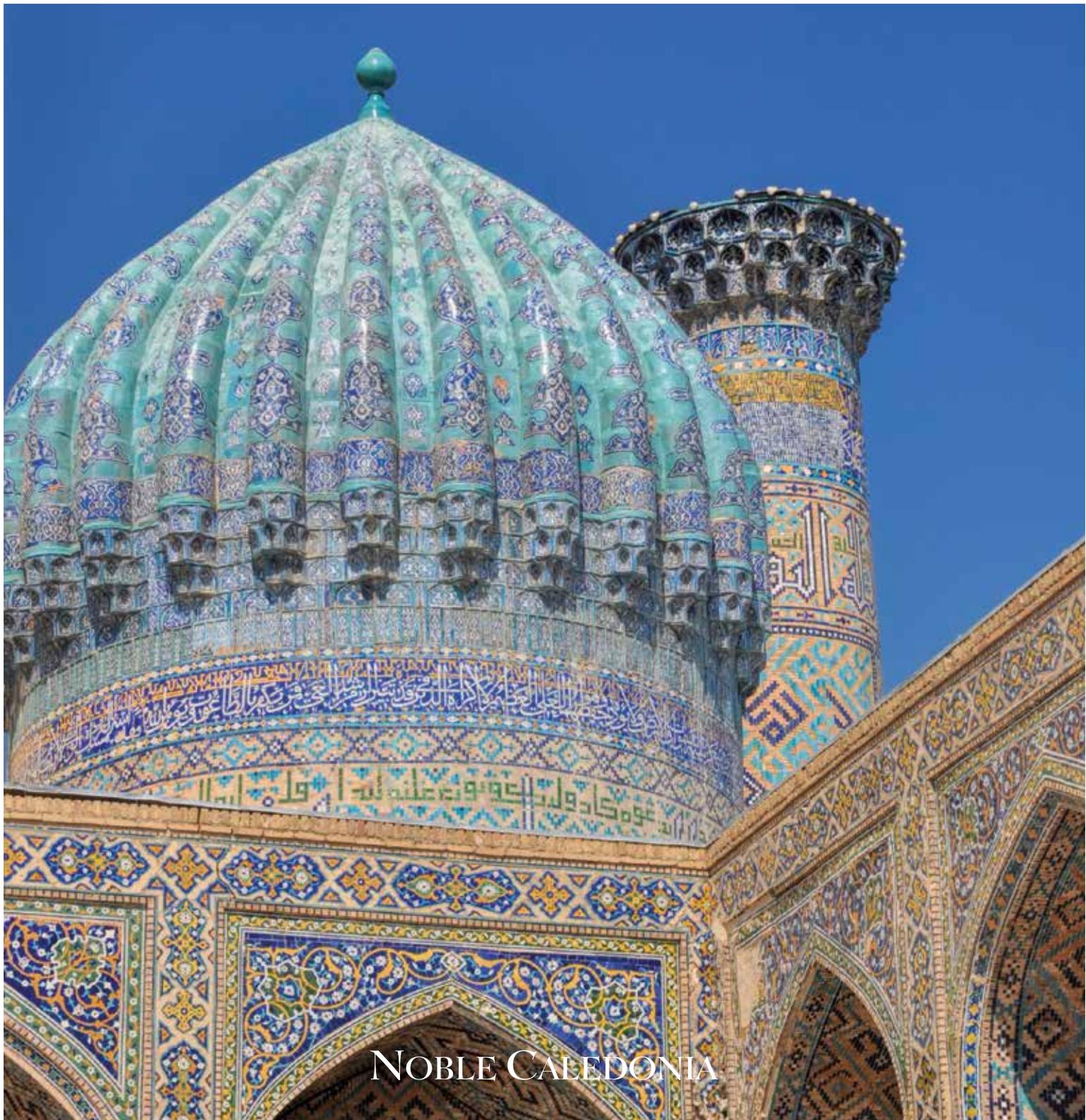


THE SILK ROAD

An escorted discovery of the legendary Silk Route by **Private Train**

12th April to 3rd May 2020 &
30th September to 21st October 2020



NOBLE CALEDONIA



We are delighted to be working with Golden Eagle Luxury Trains, the world's leading operator of private train tours, in offering you a selection of cabins for this epic journey along the Silk Road.

Join us as we retrace one of the most remarkable trading routes of ancient civilisation from Beijing to Moscow. The Silk Road was a network of routes, plied by merchants and traders between China and the Mediterranean. We will follow in the footsteps of such legendary figures as Alexander the Great and Marco Polo, discovering 2000 years of history. Travelling aboard both the Shangri-La Express and the Golden Eagle, we will journey through China, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Russia in great comfort taking in some of the most magnificent yet little-visited sites from the ancient world.

From the vibrant capital of modern China, Beijing, we will visit the Great Wall and journey through China visiting the world-famous Terracotta Warriors in Xian, the fascinating Magao Thousand Buddha cave complex and the fortress city of Jiaohe. At the China border crossing, we will leave the Shangri-La Express and join the Golden Eagle to journey through Uzbekistan. Here, we will explore the 2500-year-old cities of Khiva and Bukhara as well as Samarkand, the 'Rome of the East', home to the beautiful Registan Square. We will also venture into Turkmenistan and visit the capital city of Ashgabat and the ancient city of Merv. Witness the changing landscapes as we cross into Kazakhstan and through the Kara Kum Desert before continuing through Russia to our final destination, Moscow.

This is a journey for the adventurous traveller; keen to discover spectacular expanses, ancient kingdoms, hidden wonders and varying cultures. The whole vast region offers a cornucopia of delights and what better way to experience them than from the comfort of your private train.





Forbidden City, Beijing



Terracotta Warriors, Xian



Crescent Lake, Dunhuang



Gobi Desert

The Itinerary

Day 1 London to Beijing, China. Fly by scheduled flight to Beijing.

Day 2 Beijing. Arrive this morning and transfer to the five-star Four Seasons Hotel, which is located in the historical centre of the city and is the base for our three night stay. This luxurious Beijing hotel is minutes from the Forbidden City, Tiananmen Square, Wangfujing shopping street, the Oriental Plaza and the picturesque hutongs (old lanes). After a day at leisure we will enjoy a welcome reception dinner at a local restaurant, giving you the opportunity to meet your fellow travellers.

Day 3 Beijing. During today's tour of the Imperial City we will visit Tiananmen Square and explore the magnificently restored Forbidden City which was built in the early 14th century and was home to the emperors of the Ming and Qing dynasties. Our cultural exploration continues at the Temple of Heaven, built during the Ming Dynasty to offer sacrifices to the heavens, which is the grandest of the four great temples situated in Beijing. Here we experience enchanting displays of traditional dancing, singing and the delicately precise ancient art of calligraphy. We will also explore the small 'hutong' lanes of old Beijing by rickshaw and visit a local family in a traditional courtyard house.

Day 4 Beijing. Today is entirely devoted to the most awe-inspiring site in the whole of China – The Great Wall. Originally built to protect the Chinese Empire from raids by nomadic tribes, it is the longest man-made structure in the world and part of the UNESCO World Heritage List. We have the privilege of walking along a portion of the wall, providing the perfect opportunity to take some

memorable photographs.

Day 5 Xian. This morning we depart Beijing and travel to Xian on the exhilarating new high-speed railway line. Travelling at speeds of up to 300 kilometres per hour the bullet train will cover the distance of 1144 kilometres in a time of approximately five hours. Arriving in Xian early this afternoon, we will have several hours to explore the world-famous Terracotta Warriors, discovered by peasants 45 years ago. The 6000 terracotta figures and their horses are one of the greatest archaeological finds of the 20th century. Alternatively, as part of the Freedom of Choice programme, there will be a visit to the Han Yangling Museum. This tomb, dating back 2000 years with its adjoining museum, is one of China's best-kept secrets. Tonight we stay overnight at the centrally located Sofitel Xian and enjoy the Tang Dynasty Dinner, Music and Dance Show, a wonderful performance of ancient entertainment.

Day 6 Xian. After breakfast at the hotel we will admire Xian's historical architecture on a cycle along the ancient city walls and experience the bustling street culture of the Muslim Quarter with a visit to the Great Mosque. Later this afternoon we will board the Shangri-La Express train for the next stage of our journey across China. A welcome dinner of authentic Chinese cuisine is served on board in the Restaurant Car, as we travel towards Dunhuang.

Day 7 Dunhuang. After a leisurely morning on board, we arrive in the small oasis city of Dunhuang. This afternoon we explore the vast natural beauty of the Gobi Desert by camel. Here we discover Crescent Lake which, hidden amongst towering sand dunes,

has sustained life in this region for millennia. We will overnight at the Silk Road Dunhuang Hotel and this evening enjoy dinner and a local folk performance in this magical setting.

Day 8 Dunhuang. We wake early this morning to experience sunrise over the magnificent sand dunes, before we visit the fascinating Magao Thousand Buddha Cave Complex. This impressive site contains almost 500 grottoes, carved between 700 and 1700 years ago. Inside we will see an amazing collection of beautiful sculptures and murals depicting the evolution of Buddhist religious art over this 1000 year period. Later this afternoon we will rejoin the Shangri-La Express for our onward journey to Turpan.

Day 9 Turpan. Turpan is the location where the Flaming Mountains create a magnificent backdrop. We take a fascinating tour of the ancient underground irrigation system that has successfully fed the rich orchards and vineyards for centuries. We will visit the Museum of Turpan with its 5000 artefacts detailing the rich history of the area and which includes the Ancient Mummy exhibition with exhibits dating back 3200 years. Our final destination is the elegantly decaying sand fortress city of Jiaohe that was founded in 108 BC and became an important trading route along the Silk Road until it was abandoned in the 13th century following a raid by Genghis Khan.

Day 10 Border Crossing. After a final breakfast on board the Shangri-La Express, we pass through dramatic mountain scenery before arriving at the Chinese border station of Alashankou. The border crossing takes approximately five hours, however,

our patience is rewarded as our private train, the Golden Eagle, awaits us in Druzhba, the Kazakh border station.

Day 11 Almaty, Kazakhstan. Almaty is the largest city in Kazakhstan and is notable for its wide tree-lined boulevards. Surrounded by the majesty of the Tien Shan Mountains, this beautifully verdant city derives its name from 'alma' meaning 'apple'. Just a short distance from the city, apple orchards thrive in abundance. Our city tour includes a visit to Panfilov Park where we have the opportunity to visit the Zenkhov Cathedral which was built entirely of wood. We will also travel out of the city to the Chimbulak resort, where a cable car ride will give us spectacular views of Almaty and the mountains.

Day 12 Tashkent, Uzbekistan. Tashkent is the capital city of Uzbekistan and we spend time touring this modern Soviet-style city which was rebuilt following the devastating earthquake of 1966. Our tour of the city includes the Old Town, where traditional homes and religious buildings line the narrow streets and here in a small library we will be privileged to see one of Islam's most sacred relics – the world's oldest Koran. This is followed by a visit to the Railway Museum and the Museum of Applied Arts.

Day 13 Samarkand. Founded in the 6th century BC, Samarkand's stunning architecture hints at its former status as one of the most important cities in Asia and is particularly noted for its architectural remains from the 14th to the 17th century, when it flourished as the fabled capital of the Mongol empire of Timur and his successors. Today we will visit some of its most significant sites including Registan Square, the refined elegance of the beautifully proportioned Bibi Khanum Mosque and the Ulug Beg



observatory. Before dinner we will return to the now illuminated and awe-inspiring Registan Square.

Day 14 Bukhara. Bukhara is quite simply outstanding. Like Khiva, UNESCO sponsored the renovation of much of the city for its 2500th anniversary in 1999. The highlight of this wonderful tour is a visit to The Ark, a fortified residence of the Emirs of Bukhara – the despotic and ruthless leaders who ruled until Soviet times. We then travel out of the city to experience the Emir's enchantingly named, Palace of the Moon and Stars. This evening, weather and time permitting, we will enjoy a barbecue on the station platform before our train departs.

Day 15 Merv, Turkmenistan. From Mary we transfer to the ancient and mainly unrestored remains of Merv. Once an important stopping point on the Silk Road, it claims to have briefly been the largest city in the world during the 12th century. 1794 saw the demise of Merv, after the Emir of Bukhara destroyed the dam which the population depended on for its water.

Day 16 Ashgabat & Darvaza. Ashgabat, the capital of Turkmenistan is known as the 'Las Vegas of the Kara Kum'. Situated between the Kara Kum desert and the Kopet Dag mountain range, Ashgabat is a relatively modern city built upon the ruins of the Silk Road city of Konjikala and the Soviet city built after the devastating earthquake of 1948. The city's extravagant fountains, golden domes and towering modern buildings appear strangely incongruous in this desert setting. Highlights of our visit include the National Museum and Kipchak Mosque. The Golden

Eagle makes a brief scheduled stop at Ichoguz, where we have the option to leave the train and make a short journey to Darvaza's famous burning gas crater, a spectacular sight best seen at night. Located in the middle of the Kara Kum desert where the area is rich in natural gas, the 70 metre-wide crater is known by locals as the 'Door to Hell' and has been burning for over 40 years.

Day 17 Khiva, Uzbekistan. From Urgench we travel to the ancient city of Khiva, founded 2500 years ago. As one of the Silk Road's most important trading posts and now a World Heritage Site, it lies at the crossroads of the routes between Mongolia, Russia, China and Persia. A truly magnificent sight to behold, it rises out of the desert to reveal a wealth of impressive architecture. Stepping back in time, we discover the impressive mosques, madrassas, bazaars and minarets within Khiva's ancient walls.

Day 18 Kara Kum, Kazakhstan. Today we enjoy a relaxing day on board as we travel across the vast expanse of the Kara Kum desert. As well as experiencing the unique landscape, you can take the opportunity to chat to fellow passengers and maybe take a Russian language lesson.

Day 19 Volgograd, Russia. Standing on the banks of the Volga, Stalingrad, as the city was known in Soviet times, was the dramatic scene of one of the most important Second World War battles. The Russians heroically turned back the Nazi advance here to alter the course of the war. We visit the poignantly sobering Mamayev Kurgan war memorial, followed by an informative museum visit.

Day 20 Moscow. Having travelled a mammoth 7000 miles (11,250 kilometres) from Beijing we arrive

into Moscow, our final destination. We transfer to the centrally located, five-star Ritz-Carlton Hotel and check in for our two night stay.

Day 21 Moscow. Our touring programme of Moscow principally takes us to the grandeur of the Kremlin – the spiritual, historical and political heart of Moscow – and to see the treasures of the Tsars in the Armoury Chamber. We also visit Red Square, an iconic symbol of Russia's former military and political might with its eclectic mix

of fascinating architecture. With the Freedom of Choice touring option, you may instead wish to travel out of the city centre to Sergiev Posad, home to one of the most beautiful monasteries in Russia and the historical and spiritual centre of the Russian Orthodox Church or visit the famous State Tretyakov Gallery (National Museum of Fine Art).

Day 22 Moscow to London. After breakfast in the hotel, transfer to Moscow Airport for the scheduled flight to London.

FREEDOM OF CHOICE TOURING

In select locations, in addition to the main excursions, it is possible to choose from a range of activities or tours at no extra cost. Please note that these options are subject to availability, minimum numbers, local conditions and timings.

PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

SHANGRI-LA EXPRESS & GOLDEN EAGLE CABIN CATEGORIES

Heritage Class & Silver Class	£20295
Diamond Class & Gold Class	£24295
Diamond Class & Imperial Suite	£35295
Heritage Class & Silver Class for sole use	£28295

PRICE INCLUDES: Economy class scheduled air travel • Three nights hotel accommodation in Beijing • Overnight hotel accommodation in Xian • Three nights aboard the Shangri-La Express • Overnight hotel accommodation in Dunhuang • 10 nights aboard the Golden Eagle • Two nights hotel accommodation in Moscow • Breakfast, lunch & dinner daily except lunch on days 2 & 22 • Wine at lunch and dinner • Excursions • Train Tour Manager • Onboard Doctor • Gratuities • Transfers • Airport taxes • Portage.

Not Included: Travel insurance, visas, lunch on days 2 & 22.

Please note: Visas are required for China, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Russia. Golden Eagle Luxury Trains will provide all supporting documentation needed although the process to apply for visas can not be started until three months before departure and in some instances can take up to six weeks. To obtain a Russian visa it will be necessary for passengers to attend application centres in London, Manchester or Edinburgh. Visas for other countries can be obtained via post. This information is correct at the time of printing and should the information change, we will be in touch with booked passengers with updated guidelines.

ACCOMMODATION

For this Silk Road itinerary, we are delighted to be working with Golden Eagle Luxury Trains in offering a selection of cabins aboard two private trains as we travel between Beijing and Moscow. Passengers will travel aboard the Shangri-La Express for three nights from Beijing to the Kazakhstan border, and then transfer to the Golden Eagle for ten nights, travelling through Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, and finally on to Moscow.



SHANGRI-LA EXPRESS

The Shangri-La Express, though not as luxurious as the Golden Eagle, offers passengers modern comfort in an ancient country and is the best private train available for our three night journey in China.

Your Accommodation

The train comprises of just two cabin categories, the Diamond Class cabins with a large double bed and private en-suite wet room, or the Heritage Class cabins which are more compact with two single beds and shared toilet facilities. All cabins have a large picture window from which to enjoy the passing landscapes.

Diamond Class

At 75 square feet, Diamond Class cabins are the most spacious compartments available on the Shangri-La Express, featuring a large double bed, individual desk with freestanding chair, a large picture window and a double wardrobe. Diamond Class cabins have a private en-suite wet room with washbasin, toilet and shower. Towels, robes and slippers are provided in the cabin, along with complimentary tea, coffee and mineral water.

Heritage Class

Heritage Class cabins are more compact, at 36 square feet, featuring two lower berth single beds, a large picture window and luggage storage above the door. Complimentary towels, robes and slippers are provided, in addition to

tea, coffee and mineral water, available from your cabin attendant throughout the day. Toilet and showering facilities are located at each end of the sleeping carriage. The shower room features a separate shower cubicle, hairdryer and separate changing area.

Life On Board

Meals are served in the train's spacious Restaurant Car, where the dedicated chefs serve a western breakfast followed by a wide range of authentic Chinese specialities at lunch and dinner, using only the finest local ingredients. As well as soft drinks, tea and coffee, meals are accompanied by a selection of wines from around the world. Equally enjoyable is the unique ambience of the piano Bar Car, where the resident pianist will entertain you during the evenings. Staying open until the last person leaves, the bar is the perfect place to get to know your fellow passengers or simply while away some time, reading or taking in the scenery whilst enjoying your favourite drink.



Heritage Class cabin



Diamond Class cabin



Restaurant Car



Bar / Lounge Car



Gold Class cabin



Restaurant Car

THE GOLDEN EAGLE

In 2007 HRH Prince Michael of Kent unveiled the Golden Eagle, a private train that brings unprecedented luxury to the world's greatest railway journey. The Golden Eagle has been carefully designed with comfort and enjoyment in mind and, for ten nights, provides the ideal base from which explore this fascinating region.

Your Accommodation

The full train comprises of three categories of sleeping cars which feature state of the art amenities, all with en-suite facilities and luxury toiletries. All of the cabins and communal carriages were refurbished in 2018 to the highest of standards and the accommodation has been cleverly designed to maximise the available space as cabins convert from a sitting area by day into a cosy sleeping area by night. All cabin categories benefit from an evening turndown service and a cabin attendant is on hand 24 hours a day.

Imperial Suites

The Imperial Suites are the most spacious cabins available, measuring 120 square feet and benefiting from a large and luxurious king size bed, lounge area with dressing table and two large picture windows. The facilities include private en-suite bathroom with power shower, underfloor heating, individual air-conditioning, wardrobe and a DVD/CD player with LCD screen. Bathrobes, slippers and toiletries are also provided. Guests will also benefit from a complimentary fully stocked minibar and included drinks from the standard and premium bar list from the Bar Car (excluding premium wine list), included laundry service, option of in-suite dining and hotel room upgrades to the next available according to itinerary.

Gold Class

At 77 square feet, Gold Class cabins are well proportioned and have everything from a private bathroom with power shower and underfloor heating to a DVD/ CD player with LCD screen. The cabins also feature individual air-conditioning, wardrobe, large picture window and a double lower bed or the option to use the upper bunk bed. Bathrobes, slippers and toiletries are also provided. Guests in Gold Class enjoy included drinks from the standard bar list from the Bar Car.

Silver Class

Silver Class cabins are more compact at 60 square feet but have similar facilities to those of Gold Class. The Silver Class cabins have their own en-suite wet room with washbasin, toilet and shower. The cabins feature a small double lower bed and single upper bed as well as DVD/CD player with LCD screen, individual air-conditioning, wardrobe and large picture window. Bathrobes, slippers and toiletries are also provided.

Your Space

The Bar Lounge Car is the perfect location to relax and unwind as you watch the ever-changing scenery pass by. Reminisce about the day's adventures with fellow passengers over afternoon tea or perhaps challenge your friends to a game of cards before dinner. As evening falls, enjoy the sounds of the resident pianist playing on the baby grand piano in the Bar Lounge Car.

Your Dining

Each morning, enjoy a bountiful breakfast buffet in the beautifully appointed Restaurant Car, offering a fresh selection of fruit, cereals, cold plates and freshly squeezed orange juice. For something more substantial enjoy a breakfast cooked to order by the onboard Chef. At lunch and dinner you will enjoy a delightful culinary experience inspired by the countries we venture through. All meals are skillfully prepared by the Executive Chef and his onboard team, using the very best ingredients and locally sourced wherever possible. Attentive service and an excellent choice of wines accompany lunch and dinner, in addition to bottled mineral water, draught beer and soft drinks. Expect a relaxed and convivial atmosphere at meal times with the freedom to dine wherever, and with whomever, you please in a single sitting.

Life On Board

Throughout the journey, you can expect a service which is attentive, friendly and unintrusive. Your car attendants provide 24-hour housekeeping and bedding turnaround services and the Train Tour Manager is there to co-ordinate all of the elements and to assist you as required. There is a Wi-Fi service on board though coverage is limited and will usually only be available as we pass through larger cities and towns. However, the aim is to provide internet access in a local hotel or restaurant for guests at least every other day.



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