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**Irkutsk — Taltsy — Listvyanka — Irkutsk — Golden Horde Ethnopark — Maloye More (the Small Sea) — Ogoy Island — Shaman Rock — Bays of the Great Sea (Bolshoye Sea) — Arctic station on ice — Khoboi Cape — The deepest point of Lake Baikal — Ust-Barguzin village — Barguzin bay — Chivyrkuisky bay — Ulan-Ude — Ivolginsky datsan — Tarbagatai — Ulan-Ude**  
**09.02.2024 - 16.02.2024**

**DAY 1**      09.02.2024, Friday      Irkutsk, Taltsy, Listvyanka

**Irkutsk**

- Arrival in Irkutsk. Transfer to the 5\* hotel History. Check-in.
- Breakfast at the hotel.

Date:  
**09.02(FRI)**

Departure:  
**11:00**

**Taltsy**

Today we will visit the Taltsy open-air ethnographic museum. Unique monuments reflecting the history and culture of Russians, Buryats, Evenks and Tofalars living on this land. On the territory of the museum, you can see peasant houses and homesteads of wealthy villagers, a tavern, a parochial school, a parish board, blacksmith and pottery workshops, a cascade of watermills on the bank of a mountain stream and a watchtower, once guarding a medieval fortress. All the buildings have been preserved since the end of the XVIII century.

Date:  
**09.02(FRI)**

**Departure for the excursion program:**

- Excursion to the Taltsy museum (3 hours).
- Lunch at the restaurant.

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## Listvyanka

Date:

**09.02(FRI)**

- Visit to the Limnological Museum (Baikal museum) in Listvyanka village (approx. 2 hours).
- Dinner at the hotel.

## DAY 2

10.02.2024, Saturday

Irkutsk, Golden Horde Ethnopark, Maloye More (the Small Sea)

## Irkutsk

Date:

**10.02(SAT)**

Irkutsk is a beautiful Siberian city, founded in the 17<sup>th</sup> century on the banks of the Angara River. Thanks to its good location at the crossroads of trade routes that connect Europe and Asia, Irkutsk quickly became the key city in Eastern Siberia. The Great Tea Road, which carried furs to China and tea, silk, and sugar back, used to pass here. When the "gold rush" began in Siberia, Irkutsk bore the title of a gold mining capital - ingots of gold and gold sand flocked here for sale.

Nowadays, you can see the greatness and wealth of that merchant Irkutsk, while walking along the embankments, squares and streets of this city. During your city tour, you will walk along the Lower embankment to the Moscow Gate, walk down the streets of Irkutsk Merchant Suburb.

- Breakfast at the hotel. Check-out from the hotel with luggage.
- **Irkutsk bus sightseeing tour (2 hours).**

## Golden Horde Ethnopark

Date:

**10.02(SAT)**

- Lunch in the Zolotaya Orda (Golden Horde) ethno complex with an entertainment program.

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## Maloye More (the Small Sea)

- Bus transfer to the Bayar recreation centre. Check-in.
- Dinner at the recreation centre.

Date:  
**10.02(SAT)**

**DAY 3**      11.02.2024, Sunday      Ogoy Island, Shaman Rock

## Ogoy Island

Date:  
**11.02(SUN)**

The whole day will be dedicated to the sights of the Maloye More (the Small Sea). Local nature is no less impressive and fascinating – your photo hunt will be really successful!

There is a small, uninhabited island in Baikal in the Maloye More (the Small Sea) Strait, and it is called Ogoy. The word "Ogoy" comes from the Buryat word, which means "waterless". The length of the island is 2,9 km, and the width is 0,6 km. It is the largest island in the strait between Olkhon Island and the mainland. About a hundred herring gulls nest on the Ogoy Island. There is also an endemic species of vole – the Olkhon vole. The local relict grasses are included in the Red Book. The island has never been inhabited by people, and this has helped preserve unique species of wildlife.

In 2005, a Buddhist stupa or Stupa of Enlightenment was erected on the highest point of the island. The snow-white, three-story structure with a dome and spire became a new symbol of the island. The shape of the island resembles the outlines of a dancing Dakini, where the head and body are clearly visible, and in the heart area of the goddess is a stupa. The Enlightenment Stupa is the main of the eight types of stupas in Buddhism because it symbolizes the main goal of Buddhism: enlightenment.

- Breakfast at the recreation centre.

### Departure for the excursion program:

- Hovercraft transfer to the Ogoy Island.
- Walking tour around the Ogoy Island, visit to the Stupa of Enlightenment.

## Shaman Rock

Date:

**11.02(SUN)**

One of the most mysterious and popular places on Lake Baikal is the Cape Burhan (also known as the Shaman Rock).

The name "Burhan" appeared at the end of the 17th century after Tibetan Buddhism came to the Baikal region. The Buryat Buddhists began to call the main deity of Lake Baikal by the word "Burhan". The cape is made of crystalline limestone with veins of quartz, and the adjacent shore is made of granite rock. The rock is covered with bright red lichens. The height of the near shore part of the rock is 30 meters, the height of the far part is 42 meters.

- Hovercraft transfer to the Cape Burhan.
- Visit to the Shaman Rock.
- Lunch at the Port Olkhon Café.
- Hovercraft transfer to the recreation centre.
- Free time\*.
- Dinner at the recreation centre.

*\*Russian sauna service or ice-skating (extra charge).*

## DAY 4

12.02.2024, Monday

Bays of the Great Sea (Bolshoye Sea), Arctic station on ice

## Bays of the Great Sea (Bolshoye Sea)

Date:

**12.02(MON)**

Today you will go through the bays with the most beautiful ice on the hovercraft. Here the winds opened a vast area of that magic ice with bubbles and cracks, which Baikal is famous for in winter. In this incredibly beautiful place, you will have a long photo stop. You will have a chance to walk on the Baikal ice and take beautiful pictures.

- Breakfast at the recreation centre.

**Departure for the excursion program:**

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- Hovercraft transfer to the Arctic station with a photo-stop, visit to the Baikal bays.

### Arctic station on ice

Date:  
**12.02(MON)**

At the station you will have lunch in Arctic scenery with viewing of photo albums of the early 20th century about polar expeditions. On the territory of the Arctic station there are ice figures, geodetic devices and real Siberian entertainments. You will have a unique opportunity to send a postcard directly from the ice camp!

- Lunch on the Arctic station.
- Hovercraft transfer to the recreation centre.
- Free time\*.
- Dinner at the recreation centre.

*\*Russian sauna service or ice-skating (extra charge).*

**DAY 5**      13.02.2024, Tuesday      Khoboi Cape, The deepest point of Lake Baikal, Ust-Barguzin village

### Khoboi Cape

Date:  
**13.02(TUE)**

The Olkhon Gate connects the southwestern part of the Maloye More (the Small Sea) to Lake Baikal. The shores of the strait are mostly steep and precipitous, and the coast is divided by long narrow bays and coves. The most prominent bays are located on this mainland.

Breakfast at the recreation centre. Check-out with luggage.

#### Departure for the excursion program:

- Hovercraft transfer through the Olkhon Gate Strait to the Khoboi Cape.
- Walking tour around the Khoboi Cape with the traditional Baikal kiss ceremony and snacks.

**The deepest point of Lake  
Baikal**

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Date:  
**13.02(TUE)**

### **Ust-Barguzin village**

Date:  
**13.02(TUE)**

- Hovercraft transfer to Ust-Barguzin.
- Lunch-picnic on ice.
- Check-in at the Baikal Breeze Guest House.
- Free time\*.
- Dinner at the Guest House.

*\*Russian sauna service (extra charge).*

**DAY 6**      14.02.2024, Wednesday      Barguzin bay, Chivyrkuisky bay, Ulan-Ude

### **Barguzin bay**

Date:  
**14.02(WED)**

Today you'll get acquainted with the sights of the Barguzin bay. Barguzinsky and Chivyrkuisky bays are separated by the Svyatoy Nos (Holy Nose) Peninsula. It is a narrow mountain massif, which stretches for 53 kilometers along the shore of Lake Baikal in the form of a giant nose.

- Breakfast at the Guest House. Check-out.

### **Chivyrkuisky bay**

Date:  
**14.02(WED)**

In winter, the Chivyrkuisky bay is one of the first to freeze over. It is just in winter that you have a unique opportunity to see the incredibly beautiful icy rocks of Baikal and to breathe in the freshest frosty air. In one of the wind-protected cosy places we'll have a picnic in the best Siberian traditions - with freshly caught omul, lingonberries and hot herbal tea. Right on the shore of the bay there are famous thermal springs in Baikal. Their temperature is about +40°C to +45°C. The water is hydrogen sulphide, has healing properties and is used for diseases of the musculoskeletal system.

**Departure for the excursion program:**

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- Walking tour with the visit to the ice caves.
  - Visit to the hot springs in Zmeinaya bay.
  - Lunch.

## Ulan-Ude

Date:  
**14.02(WED)**

- Bus transfer to Ulan-Ude (4 hours). Check-in at the Baikal Plaza hotel 4\*.
- Dinner at the hotel.

**DAY 7**      15.02.2024, Thursday      Ivolginsky datsan, Tarbagatai

## Ivolginsky datsan

Date:  
**15.02(THU)**

Ivolginsky datsan is the most famous datsan in Buryatia and an important place of pilgrimage for Buddhists not only in Russia, but all over the world. Ivolginsky datsan is the residence of the head of Buddhists of Russia. It is the largest Buddhist monastic complex and the spiritual capital of the Buddhist Traditional Sangha of Russia. The Ivolginsky datsan monastery complex now consists of ten buildings, including temples, a library, and Russia's only Buddhist university, where they study philosophy and traditional Tibetan medicine.

- Breakfast at the hotel.
- Transfer to the Ivolginsky datsan.
- **Visit of the Ivolginsky datsan (3 hours).**

## Tarbagatai

Date:  
**15.02(THU)**

In the 17th century, Russian Orthodoxy after the Reformation split into the official and Old Believer branches. Old Believers did not want to accept the new rules, they were persecuted and exiled away from the capital cities. This is why so many adherents of the old faith have survived in Siberia and still live by the laws and traditions of their ancestors. The culture of the Old Believers is recognised by UNESCO as part of the World Cultural Heritage.

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You will also meet the locals of Tarbagatai, one of the largest Old Believers' settlements in Transbaikalia. It will be a real journey down the history lane. You will visit the Old Believers' Museum and the Old Orthodox Church, get acquainted with the rites, customs, unique polyphonic singing and the Old Russian cuisine. You will get acquainted with Old Believers' folklore culture, visit the Museum of Old Believers' Culture and Life and the Old Orthodox Church.

**Departure for the excursion programme in the Tarbagatai Old Believers' village (5 hours):**

- Visit to the Museum of History, Culture and Life of Old Believers.
- Visit to the St. Nicholas temple of the Russian Orthodox Church.
- Lunch (dishes based on ancient recipes of local Old Believers in one of the most beautiful villages in the country).
- Dinner at the hotel.

**DAY 8**      16.02.2024, Friday      Ulan-Ude

**Ulan-Ude**

Last day in beautiful Ulan-Ude. We're not saying farewell, we're saying "See you next time!".

Date:  
**16.02(FRI)**

Breakfast at the hotel. Check-out.

Arrival:  
**09:00**

Transfer hotel-airport.