

Title:

Siberia, Russia, Part 9 - Chita

Word Count:

392

Summary:

After deciding to move to Siberia for a year to teach at the Chita State Technical University, I embarked on a travel odyssey unlike any other. In this entry, we pick up the last stage of the seven-day trip to get there.

Keywords:

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Article Body:

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Siberia As Seen From A Train

In preparing for my trip, I had actually done some preparation. As a common man, I know most of you female readers will find this hard to believe, but I swear it was so. Yep, I had read up on books, rented movies and so on. I was familiar with the tundra, the forest and the perma-frost of Siberia. And I was going to see it all during the three-day train ride across Siberia. Au Contraire!

Apparently, the untamed wilds of Siberia are a bit farther north than where the Trans-Siberian Railway runs. During our train ride, we saw no forests, no mountains and pretty much nothing. It was like taking a really slow train ride across Kansas. There just wasn't much of anything to see. I wish I could tell you differently.

End of the Road

As I went to sleep on the evening of the sixth day of the trip, I was developing a firm conviction that I would never see Chita. Instead, it was clear that I was in some type of bizarre reality television series based on travelers being driven slowly insane. Amazing Race? Give me a break. As with oh so many things, I was wrong.

The Seventh Day

Brooms scratch. Particularly when handled by the Russian woman in charge of our car. As I shot up out of my bunk, I realized she was talking loudly and pointing more than a bit. The train was slowing down, but I couldn't see much out the window because we were in trees and there was too much sun. Upon awaking Grae with a few whacks and a laugh, I finally recognized her saying, "Chita".

We had arrived. After three flights, one angry customs official, a few embarrassing moments, way too many crackers and seven total days of travel, we had indeed arrived. At 5:30 in the morning.

Jumping out of bed, we each stuffed our belongings into our bags. Staggered out into the hall. Realized we both badly needed showers.

And stepped off the train into Chita. Siberia. Russia.