

Title:

Siberia, Russia, Part 7 - The Trans-Siberian Railway

Word Count:

521

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 trip leaving the train station in Khabarovsk.

Keywords:

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Article Body:

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A Train To Nowhere?

In deciding to travel to Chita, Siberia, I had originally estimated a travel time of three days. Okay, maybe three at the outside figuring time changes and such.

As day 4 of the trip headed into the afternoon, I was finally on the train that would take me to Chita and figured I would be there in a day or so. I would finally get to see the beautiful and extreme landscape of Russia. To make things even better, I would get to brag to my friends about riding on the famous Trans-Siberian railway. This was going to be great. As is often the case with anticipated events, reality threw an ugly wrench in the proceedings.

Stop...Go...Stop...Go

In California, there are two types of trains you can take. The first is an express train that pretty much takes you from point A to point B with few stops in between. For those traveling shorter distances, there is a "slow train" that stops at every little town and station. In Russia, we were clearly on the slow train.

As we pulled out of the train station in Khabarovsk, anticipation was in the

air. The train slowly gained speed. We stared out the window as the city started to pass at an increasing pace. After about 5 minutes, we stared out the window as the city started to pass at a DECREASING pace. After a few more minutes, we stopped at another train station.

Ah, there are probably two big stations in the city and it makes sense to pick up everyone for the trip across the country. Soon enough, the whistle blew and off we went again. Smiles spread across our face. These disappeared roughly 5 minutes later as we stopped again.

My god, how many train stations are there in this city? I can tell you there are at least 5 since we stopped at that many. With time spent sitting in each little train station, an hour had passed and we weren't even out of the city!

As I stood at a window in the hall, a Russian man heard me muttering and decided to practice his English. We chatted. I remarked on the number of stops. He grimaced and told me the trip to Chita would take 3 plus days. I grimaced. And nearly cried like a small child. Three days in a train compartment no bigger than a closet. Oh, my.

Then he told me the food car on the train was closed for the trip. Since this is a clean web site, I can't print the words I uttered at that moment. Just picture the reaction of Homer Simpson on learning there is no more beer in Springfield.

My new Russian friend smiled and said, "What does that word mean? We never learned that."

Read more of this Russian Travelogue at NomadJournalTrips.com.