

Title:

Siberia, Russia, Part 8 - The Slow Train

Word Count:

554

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 on the Trans-Siberian Railway.

Keywords:

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Article Body:

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The Horror

As my new Russian friend walked down the hall, I reflected on the information he had provided me with a grimace. The train ride from Khabarovsk to my destination, Chita, was going to take three days. I had already been traveling for four days and the thought of 3 days on a train made me...unhappy.

While reflecting on this development, I had an opportunity to take a look at my new neighbors, err...fellow passengers. They were moving in. Literally. Pillows, sheets, bags full of food. The general impression was we were going to be on the train for a long, long time.

As we actually cleared the city, I told myself to look at it as an adventure. An adventure? Oh, yes.

Of Crackers and Grape Juice

Nutrition is an odd thing. Like many, I try to eat a healthy diet with vegetables and so on. Of course, a stressful day at work has led to more than a few fast food meals. On the Trans-Siberian Railway, I would've killed for fast food.

Contrary to what another passenger had told me, the food car on the train was open for business. The woman in charge of our car told me this in limited English and an exasperated look on her face. Well, she didn't lie. The food car was open. Unfortunately, the only thing it was selling were boxes of crackers and grape juice.

I'm not a big cracker fan, but I'll eat them. I happen to like grape juice...or I did. For the next 48 hours, Grae, a fellow traveler, and I munched crackers and drank juice. Then we drank juice and munched crackers. Then we crushed crackers and put them in the juice. Then we made feverish declarations to never eat crackers or drink juice again. Ever.

The Funny Part

After 48 hours of crackers and juice, I was more than willing to starve. I kept having nightmares about the horrible things happening in my stomach. Grae apparently had arrived at the same opinion. Cinching up his pants, he went to hit up our fellow travel companions for some real food.

Part of the fun of traveling is realizing how foolish you really are. When you are in a country where you don't speak the language, you are going to eat a pretty hefty amount of humble pie. What the hey, we were hungry.

After five minutes, Grae returned to our compartment with one of those looks on his face. We had lived on crackers and grape juice for no reason. Yes, we could buy food at every stop the train made by just walking into the train station. And we stopped a lot.

As we pulled into a little town, Grae and I were hanging from the doors of the train. We ran into the station and...all they had were crackers and grape juice. Just kidding. I am not sure what we bought, but it was the best food I've ever had.

Next stop...Chita!

Read more of this Russian Travelogue at NomadJournalTrips.com