



Kamchatka
Departs 16th August
2021

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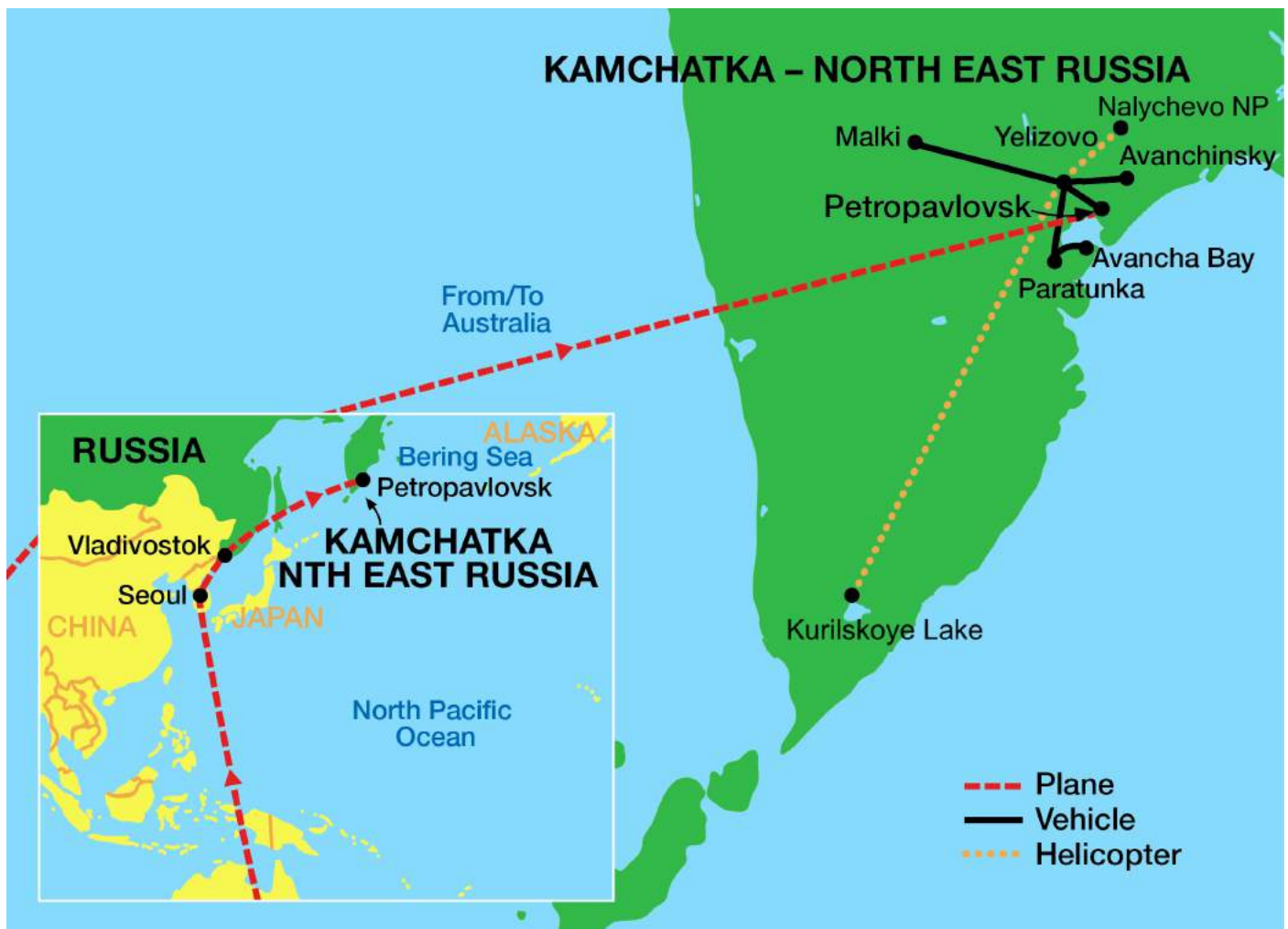
KAMCHATKA, EASTERN RUSSIA PENINSULA

Kamchatka, one of Russia's least explored but most scenically spectacular regions, is one of the few places left in the world whose name is unknown to most travellers. A peninsula in North-east Asia, separated from the Russian mainland by the Okhotsk Sea on the west and bordered by the Bering Sea on the east, it is 1,200km long and at its widest about 450km.

The peninsula is traversed by two active volcanic ranges in which there are over 160 volcanoes in varying stages of activity, with 20 or more being amongst the world's most volatile. Thermal activity deep below the surface produces numerous hot springs, heated rivers and geysers. We will visit the most impressive of these, the "Valley of the Geysers" in Kronotsky National Park, discovered in 1941. Here the variety of volcanic phenomena to be seen is exceptional. The largest geyser, "Velikan", is equal to Yellowstone's "Old Faithful" hurling a column of steam and boiling water fifty metres into the air. Hundreds of others sporadically blast steam, mud and rainbow coloured water heavenwards.

The capital city and administrative headquarters of Petropavlovsk sprawls over the hills and sits in the valleys surrounding Avancha Bay, one of the largest and best-protected harbours in the world. Just 30km to the east the three "domestic" volcanic peaks of Koryaksky, Avachinsky and Kozelsky tower majestically above the city. Away from the volcanoes, Kamchatka is covered by large areas of mixed forests and plains of giant grasses, home to a vast array of wildlife, including brown bears and sable. The sable, a small dark-brown furred carnivorous mammal, has long been a valued currency in Russia. With the 18th century fur traders came religion, settlers and disease, which had disastrous results for the native populations, both animal and human. Kamchatka came late to the Russian Empire. It was annexed by the Cossacks in 1697. In the following forty years the native inhabitants were reduced from some 150,000 to only 10,000. Today, the native people make up about 2% of the population. After WWII the peninsula took on new strategic importance. It became a base for military airfields and home to Soviet nuclear submarines. No foreigners were allowed anywhere near. Fortunately that all changed in 1990 and today tourists are being actively sought by a fledgling tourist industry.

Importantly, this trip requires a certain level of fitness to complete all of the activities. It is not essential for everyone to take part on all activities but as this is a wilderness environment, we cannot guarantee supervised entertainment for those not taking part in the core activity. We will try to be as flexible with options as possible.



Day 1, Monday 16th August

Depart Australia for our overnight transit in Incheon, Seoul. (All flights to be confirmed). We recommend you check your luggage through from Australia to Vladivostok and just keep your hand luggage, medical pack, valuables and essentials with you. *Meals in flight*

Day 2, Tuesday 17th August

We depart Seoul in the morning for the 2.5-hour flight to the city of Vladivostok. This port city with a population of around 600,000 is close to the border of China and North Korea. It acts as Russia's main port on the Pacific Coast and is also the terminus for the transSiberian railway linking the region to Moscow. We will transfer to our hotel and check in around 4pm. There won't be much time to see anything on this leg but we will spend time in Vladivostok on way home. *B/L/D*

Day 3, Wednesday 18th August

This morning we have a very early flight to our core destination – The Kamchatka Peninsula. Our 3 hour and 15 minute flight on Aeroflot SU 5616 departs at 02:20hrs and arrives into Petropavlovsk at 07:30hrs local time. Our guide will meet us at the airport, which is situated in Yelizovo (30 km north-west of Petropavlovsk), and taken to our Hotel Petropavlovsk

(or similar) where we stay for just the one night.

*Note, our itinerary in Kamchatka is determined by the weather. On our previous tours we have been blessed with stunning days for most of the trip, but the weather is one thing we cannot control. Sometimes we will need to swap the day's events. Our objective is to get through every item on the itinerary but we can't guarantee we will. *B/L/D*

Day 4, Thursday 19th August

Grab your passports because after a 40 minute drive to the heliport, today we take an M18 helicopter flight for about 1.5 hours to a few very special destinations. Firstly, The Valley of the Geysers, one of the largest geyser fields in the world and the only one in Eurasia. It is located in the Kronotsky Reserve. The Valley of the Geysers is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Be amazed by what nature presents – geysers, bubbling mud, fumaroles and spectacular scenery. Our guide will lead us around the area for an hour or so for an in depth



briefing. You'll be astonished by the wealth of fauna and flora of Kamchatka. If lucky we'll see bears and other animals. Get your cameras ready! We'll then take a short helicopter flight to another part of the reserve before taking off to Mount Kronotsky Lookout for a highly memorable picnic lunch (weather and time permitting). In August, there are usually some bears fishing near the river, so if you are lucky, you might be able to see them. Don't be alarmed, they keep their distance, but bring your long lens and binoculars. Then after lunch our helicopter will take us to the Nalychevo Natural Park where we'll stay for the next two nights at the Nalychevo Valley Central Lodge. Nalychevo Natural Park was created only a few years



ago. It sits in an amphitheatre of active and extinct snow-capped volcanoes. The breathtaking scenery includes wild-flower filled tundra, stately

stone birch forests and hot springs that are famous for their bathing. **B/L/D**

*Note. The Nalychevo Valley Central Lodge (the only accommodation in the Park) could be considered basic. The toilet facilities are basic and there are no showers. Most people are happy to bath and clean in one of the three natural hot water springs which are a few hundred metres from the accommodation (see above). Electricity only runs for a few hours at night when it gets dark. Regardless of whether you request the single supplement or not for the tour, you will need to share accommodation in the lodges for these two nights. The beauty and serenity of the place makes up for the basic infrastructure. It is not necessary to take all your luggage with you for these two nights. Subsequently, it's a good idea to pack a backpack or small duffle bag for this section of the trip. (Closer to departure, we will advise more about this).

Day 5, Friday 20th August

Today there is an option. Spend time around the lodge area with a visit to the natural hot springs, and the park's museum which is very good, or a hike on one of the few lovely trails through the countryside. It will be a little more strenuous than previous days and you are not obliged to join. Depending on which direction we choose and the fitness of the group, the trek will be between 6 and 9 hours return, with a picnic lunch. We will walk at the slowest persons pace. *Note, for those not joining the trek, you'll need to provide your own entertainment as the guide will be with the trekkers. This is a great opportunity to take it easy and enjoy the wonderful surroundings. **B/L/D**

Day 6, Saturday 21st August

Today we are transferred to Yelizovo via helicopter and then bus to our hotel at Paratunka near Petropavlovsk.



The Antarius Hotel is a nice place to stay. It has a decent restaurant and a pool, so don't forget to bring your swimmers. All breakfasts and dinners will be at the hotel for the rest of our stay in Kamchatka. **B/L/D**

Day 7, Sunday 22nd August

Today we transfer by helicopter for a day excursion to Kurilskoye Lake with the main objective of seeing the bears. This beautiful fresh water lake is over 70 sq kms and very deep with an average depth of 175 metres. There are some very good viewing points to see the bears feeding on the sockeye salmon. We transfer back to The Antarius Hotel late in the afternoon via helicopter in time for dinner. **B/L/D**

Day 8, Monday 23rd August

Today is a long but rewarding day. We leave early this morning in a special big-wheeled bus for a 4-hour (each way) bumpy but scenic drive over both paved and unpaved roads to the dramatic volcanic/geothermal area of Mount Mutnovsky. Mutnovsky volcano is situated 70km to the south of Petropavlovsk- Kamchatsky. This giant is calm, but it showed its' power 15 times in the last 100 years. The entire massif comprises four cones of volcano. Some scientists call Mutnovsky volcano "Somma-Vesuvius". A deep depression surrounded by cliffs lies in the centre of the volcano. Glaciers descend from a sheer drop of the terrace along its' edge. Volcanic gas and steam clouds are gathered deep in the crater and, slowly creeping along the slopes, rise as a white column. On the top of this mountain you can see a big snow-white glacier, a little sulphur, sandy river and the biggest fumarole field in the world. We return to our hotel late at night (around 10.00pm) for a late dinner. The actual trekking will be between 5 and 7 hours (return) depending on the speed and fitness of the group. A very long day but well worth the effort! **B/L/D**

*Note. Importantly, there are options for those not wanting to trek including short trips around the base camp of the volcano to see the waterfall and the close section of snow. A good book or a deck of cards would also be an idea!





Day 9, Tuesday 24th August

We can take it a little easier today after yesterday's long day. After breakfast, we'll drive to an

indigenous centre. Here we'll be entertained by a folk group - indigenous of the northern section of Kamchatka - who will dance and show us some of their rituals. Take a walk around their land and visit the husky dogs (being careful not to pat them). We'll return to the hotel in the afternoon. **B/L/D**



Day 10, Wednesday 25th August

After breakfast we'll travel for about two hours to the Bistraya River at Malki, a geothermal and mineral springs area and the home of the bottled water we have been drinking since we've arrived. On the way, we'll stop and grab a local berry pie at the pie stop. On arrival at the river, we'll have a bite of



lunch before boarding an inflatable rubber boat. This trip will last for about 2 hours. It's a really pleasant float (no rapids) down an untouched

wilderness. You'll also have the chance to throw out a line and try your luck (the last Blue Dot Travel group caught more than a dozen fish). After this enjoyable change of pace we will return to the hotel for dinner.

B/L/D



Day 11, Thursday 26th August

Today you have an option... Firstly, you can join another adventure to the volcanoes, this time the "domestics", as the volcanoes on the doorstep of Petrapavlovsk are known. We will drive up to the shoulder pass between Avanchinsky and its' neighbour Koryaksky where we will find a hill appropriately named "The Camel". Depending on the fitness of the group, we will trek around The Camel – about 2.5 hours or climb Avanchinsky - about 10 hours to the top and back – for fantastic views of the surrounding countryside. The drive each way is around 2 1/2 hours. The other option is a visit to the markets in Petropovlovsk and then on to a volcanic sandy beach outside of the city for a picnic lunch. You can dip your toes in the very cold Pacific Ocean. The return to the hotel will be late in the afternoon via a look out over the city. **B/L/D**

Day 12, Friday 27th August

Today, it's an early morning start to experience Russkaya Bay (approximately 10 hours by boat). We'll board our vessel and pass the "3 Brothers" then Starichkov Island before sailing into Russkaya Bay. Here there's an opportunity to walk a little before visiting the Steller's Sea lions. (There are often Orcas around as well, however sighting these wonderful creatures cannot not be guaranteed).



The boats take 10 people so depending on final tour numbers we will take one or two vessels. There is ample food provided on the boat for lunch but feel free to take extra snacks. **B/L/D**

Day 13, Saturday 28th August

Today we say goodbye to our Kamchatka guide and transfer to the airport for our flight back to Vladivostok. We'll be collected by a local guide and transferred to our hotel. Then we'll be taken to a local Dacha (weekend house), to enjoy a traditional Eastern Russian lunch. After lunch, we'll visit the sea aquarium and then back to the hotel. Dinner is at a restaurant, just a 10 minute walk from the hotel. **B/L/D**

Day 14, Sunday 29th August

Today we will see the rest of the highlights of the city of Vladivostok including the submarine museum, Eagle Nest lookout, Rusky Island bridge and the fortress plus the European style Svetlanskaya Street. Dinner is in the hotel. **B/D**

Day 15, Monday 30th August

After breakfast, there'll be some free time to explore museums or shops at your leisure. We'll transfer to the airport for our afternoon flight home. (All flights to be advised). **B/Meals in flight**

Day 16, Tuesday 31st August

Arrive home.



Icon indicates a day where there is **moderate physical exertion**. A basic level of fitness is required: eg. A trek over 'mostly flat' terrain or climbing several flights of steps without the support of handrails or elevators.



Icon indicates a day where there is a **particularly active section**. A good level of fitness is required: eg. A longer trek over non-groomed, uneven terrain, or ascending to reach a panorama. May also include exposure to higher altitude. **An alternate activity may be offered if you choose to sit out an active section.** Please call - we are happy to discuss each tour in more detail.