

## Bear Observation — Detailed description

Trip Length: Group: 2-3 Departure: Fixed Period: December - January

### Trip overview

This tour is an ideal opportunity to discover some hiding places of the Baikal wild nature. Our journey will take us to the Baikalo-Lensky nature reserve where, in total isolation, we are going to observe brown bear of taiga in the only company of forestry officers. Among others, we will pay a visit to Yura, the weather station worker on Ushkany Islands, who will take us to endemic freshwater seals of Lake Baikal.

Animal observation is organized in taiga where the forestry officers set up huts raised above the ground and put some bait by side: drilled iron barrels full of seal fat and skin. The smell of fat attract bears, and in the morning and evening they approach the bait to look for some food. As they do not manage to take it out of the barrel, they stay near bait for hours which makes it possible to take pictures of them nearby. Hunting is forbidden in the reserve, and animals are not afraid of people, that is why nothing can draw their attention from food. Quiet conversation and clicking of cameras do not make them run away and do not cause their aggression. However, to guarantee safety of our travellers, forestry officers are always armed and have smoke bombs.

We will also trek in taiga where it is likely to meet other wild animals: stag, roe deer, elk, hare, and marten. Along with Pokoyniki Cape and its surroundings, we will visit other picturesque places of the reserve - Bolshoy and Maly Solontsovy Capes, Zavorotnaya Bay. During a boat tour we will be able to see brown bears which, starving after winter, come out on pebble beaches to enjoy insects.

### Highlights

- Wild animals observation in their natural habitat
- Total change of scenery
- Discovery of wild places of Lake Baikal

### Tour type

NATURE

### Difficulty

Moderately Easy - 1-3 hours of physical activity daily

### Comfort

Standard — most of nights in comfortable rooms, some nights in tents or rooms with shared WC.

### Program

Day 1 — -

Day 2 — -

Day 3 — -

Day 4 — -

Day 5 — -

Day 6 — -

Day 7 — -

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Day 8 — -

Day 9 — -

Day 10 — -

Day 11 — -

## Departures

New departures available soon

## Note

Supplement for the group of 2 persons 20070 RUB / person (approx. 480 EUR). The price does not include the entrance fee to Ushkany Islands to see seal colonies (1000-2000 RUB / person) Breakfast on Day 1 and lunch / dinner on Day 10 are not included.

## What's included

### Price includes

- English-speaking guide
- Russian-speaking guide services
- Russian-speaking guide
- Accommodation as per itinerary
- Transport as per itinerary
- Excursions and visits as per itinerary
- Nature reserves and parks entrance permissions
- Accident insurance
- Letter of invitation

### Price does not include

- Meals as per itinerary
- Visa invitation and registration of passports (for foreign citizens, if necessary)
- Personal expenses and tips
- Visa fees and travel insurance
- Bathing in springs
- Airplane/ train tickets

## Checklist & Equipment

2

### Recommended checklist

pants, long sleeve jacket/tracksuit  
comfortable shoes for the city  
raincoat / windproof and waterproof jacket with HOOD!  
cap/comfortable hat on head (for sun protection)  
sunglasses  
sunscreen and lip balm  
swimsuit / swim trunks  
towel  
wet wipes and antibacterial hand gel  
water bottle/flask  
spray against mosquitoes and ticks (for summer outdoor tours)  
sleeping bag  
trekking telescopic poles  
winter (down) jacket and warm pants (windproof and waterproof) / winter suit  
thermal underwear

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comfortable winter boots (suitable for walking on ice and snow)  
fleece jacket/sweater with collar  
warm mittens (for convenience, thin gloves and a second layer of mittens with fur) / ski gloves  
thermal socks  
comfortable warm hat and scarf (snood)  
ski mask  
winter expedition boots (like Sorel or Baffin)  
winter expeditionary down jacket (up to -50°)  
fleece balaclava  
moisturizing cream

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## Meals

At restaurants and homestays in cities, traditional cuisine consists of local specialties.  
In the canteen at the inns, fresh local products.  
Homestay cuisine based on fresh products.  
If you are a vegetarian or have any particular preferences, please let us know, so we could adapt the menu.

## Laundry

Some hotels and inns offer laundry services for a variable sum of money. It is sometimes possible to use laundry services at homestay (when there is running water) for a fee.

## Visa

You need a tourist visa to travel to Russia. It can be issued for a maximum period of 30 days. Your passport has to be valid for at least six months after the expiry date of your visa and to have at least two blank pages.

BaikalNature offers visa support and has created "BaikalNature letter of invitation" package. If you buy a BaikalNature tour, this package is absolutely free; when you buy any other BaikalNature service, you will have to pay for this package.  
For questions regarding obtaining an electronic visa, please contact your tour manager.

## Money

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The Russian currency is ruble. The cost of travel and other services is always fixed in rubles. Please note that cards from foreign banks do not work in Russia at the moment. Tourists can obtain a bank card from a Russian bank in advance or travel with cash. If you have euros or dollars with you, exchange offices will allow you to change them easily in the cities. It is also worth noting that the exchange rate at airports is usually not the most favorable. It is better to exchange in big cities (you can check the current exchange rate online). Important! Only new banknotes without defects or any traces are accepted for exchange.

## Tipping

All persons who compose the BaikalNature travel team (guides, drivers, cooks, etc.) are paid a decent wage for their services and do not expect any tips from you. So you have no obligation to leave anything. If you really want to express your satisfaction by leaving a gratuity, and if it is in foreign currency, be aware that torn or glued coins and banknotes cannot be exchanged. Anyway, thank you for your tips, left at your discretion in envelopes.

## Health

No compulsory vaccination.

You need to get a health examination before a great trip. Consult your doctor. Get a dental checkup. If you have health problems that could worsen during the trip, make sure you have taken all your medications with you.

It is advisable to keep the following vaccines valid:

- diphtheria,
- tetanus,
- Polio.

Tick-borne encephalitis is present in areas of forest, taiga where ticks are the carriers of encephalitis between May and July. As of August, they are no longer carrying the virus. If you do not get vaccinated, you should follow the basic precautions, including:

- protective clothes
- use of repellents
- daily check of the skin.

It is also possible to take out special insurance covering the analysis of the insect and vaccines.

Provide a first aid kit that includes among other items:

- aspirin or paracetamol,
- anti-diarrheal pills,
- antiseptic,
- adhesive plaster,
- sterile pads.

If you have individual diseases, make sure you have taken your medications.

## Emergency Contact

You can contact BaikalNature by phone: +7 924 531 87 01 (What's App, Telegram, Viber)

In addition, your call will be forwarded to your manager, reachable 7/7.

## Legal Mentions

Professional Guarantees: BaikalNature LLC (ООО "БайкалНейче"), United Federal Register of Tour Operators number: RTO 009402.

Financial Guarantee: "Gaide insurance company" JSC (АО "Страховая компания Гайде"). Insurance contract N 4875/2422-49 from August 6, 2024. Amount of coverage: 500 000 RUB. Legal and actual address: BaikalNature LLC, 55 Dekabrskikh Sobyti Str., office 204.1 664007 Irkutsk Russia

## Travel Insurance

In addition to your personal insurance, you have an opportunity to purchase local insurance. Please, do not hesitate to ask us about our services.

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**Security**

2

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