



## Norilsk Tour 2022

### TOUR

June 14<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> 2022

### OVERVIEW

Closed to outsiders since its foundation as a forced-labour nickel mining colony, [Norilsk](#) has since grown into an absolutely fascinating and utterly remote region of apocalyptic industrial landscapes, stunning natural beauty, a fascinating and hardy local population, and so much more for pioneering adventurers to discover – see this very remote and very special area with Koryo Tours!

We start the tour in **Igarka**, an unknown and super-remote place. It is reachable only by a very rare flight and home to some fascinating museums. From here, we travel up to Norilsk by ship along the Yenisei River.

Norilsk is a closed city in the arctic circle, known for being the world's most polluted city and the base of the largest nickel mines in the world – but is so much more than this! We will also travel to [Dudinka](#) – Port settlement controlling access from the arctic to the Siberian interior, and [Talnakh](#), a Fascinating town and the base of some of the dirtiest and most apocalyptic industry on the planet. Beautiful and terrifying all at once.



## DAILY ITINERARY

### JUNE 14 - TUESDAY

Our epic adventure begins on arrival in **Igarka** (flights to here are only from Krasnoyarsk, we can assist in buying these tickets as well as any pre-tour accommodation or tour in Krasnoyarsk via our local partners, get in contact for more information on this). deep in the remote north of Russia. A tiny town known (if at all) for being the centre for gulag prisoners working on a never-completed railway project. This unlikely spot is where we begin this unlikely trip. We will have a walking tour of the town including the **Museum of Polar Aviation** to get us oriented and then some free time before we stay overnight in the local hotel

**Overnight:** Igarka

### JUNE 15 - WEDNESDAY

We have a full day in Igarka as our onward transportation doesn't depart until the following day. So we will be led on further explorations in the morning until lunchtime in a local restaurant, then in the afternoon we will visit the award-winning **Museum of Permafrost**. Something crucial to any and all structures and indeed life itself in these regions. A free evening to explore and make the most of the time in this remote area follows, we depart the next day on a river cruise!

**Overnight:** Igarka



## JUNE 16 – THURSDAY

We depart from Igarka heading north on a **boat trip** up the mighty **Yenisei River**. Our ship is the V. Chkalov, a comfortable vessel equipped with cabins, furnishings, bathrooms, and so on. We will ride in relative comfort (Especially considering where we are at this point!) and leave Igarka at 09:00. The views of the river along this route are known to be excellent and the remoteness of the journey emphasised by the experience. Lunch and Dinner will be served on the ship and we will make final arrival in the port city of **Dudinka** (part of the Norilsk area) at around 21:00. From there we disembark and check into our hotel for the night.

**So here we are in the [Norilsk Area](#)** - being a closed region all foreigners need a special permit to enter this area (which has been closed to foreigners since 1937) and we will provide this. Dudinka was founded as a settlement in 1667, due to its position giving it access to both the interior of the Russian north as well as the river flowing from the arctic ocean down deep into Siberia. The modern town functions mostly as the site from where the main product of the region, nickel, is shipped to the outside world on barges. A somewhat sleepy but highly interesting settlement you can find sports facilities, shops, monuments, and much more here.

**Overnight:** Dudinka

## JUNE 17 – FRIDAY

Welcome to **Norilsk!** You need a special permit to enter this area (which has been closed to foreigners since 1937) and we will provide this. The first settlement we explore in this region is [Dudinka](#), on the mighty **Yenisei River**. Dudinka was founded as a settlement in 1667, due to its position giving it access to both the interior of the Russian north as well as the river flowing from the arctic ocean down deep into Siberia. The modern town functions mostly as the site from where the main product of the region, nickel, is shipped to the outside world on barges. A somewhat sleepy but highly interesting settlement you can find sports facilities, shops, monuments, and much more here.

We will visit some of the highlights of Dudinka, including the **port area** itself with its fascinating collection of aged cranes, the *de rigueur* **Lenin statue**, the **city museum** which contains fascinating exhibits of northern culture, indigenous peoples, and the often-tragic history of this area, **War Memorials**, and more! We'll walk around the city centre and soak up the vibes too - prepare for an amazing first day! We will finish off by heading for the city of [Norilsk](#), a 90 min drive away. We'll make the time to stop at some of the outer mining settlements, amazing for photos and dotted with quirky sites such as an old plane used as a town marker in one case, as well as other scenic spots. On arrival in Norilsk, we will check into our hotel. Free time in the evening for dinner and evening exploring - remember it doesn't get dark at all so keep an eye on the time if out on the town in the evening!

**Overnight:** Norilsk

## JUNE 18 – SATURDAY

After breakfast we begin a long walking tour of this most-amazing of cities. **Leninsky Prospekt**, the main street through the centre, is designed to evoke St. Petersburg's Nevsky Prospekt (you have to squint a bit and use some imagination, but the similarity is there!), we'll walk this street, see some monuments around the city, pass the **World's most northern Mosque**, see good old Lenin again, stand on the **foundation stone** of the city, see the First House (built by prospectors surveying the area), a **WW2 monument**, the **Zapolyannik recreation ground** (with one of Russia's omnipresent Pushkin parks nearby), and so much more too! We will stop for a hearty lunch, coffee shop break and so on but we will cover as much ground as possible and see as much of the city as we can. While Norilsk is not a huge place it is still big enough to contain many gems and a range of buildings. Of specific architectural interest are some of the older buildings (of which several are derelict now), as well as some of the utterly **massive Soviet-era apartment buildings** that stretch for enormous distances. As this is the arctic all buildings are on stilts above the permafrost, gas pipes run through the city also providing heating and energy, churches, shops, bars, restaurants, and much more exist here too – for the free time in the evening you'll find much to do as well – it's a surprisingly lively town for somewhere so remote and shrouded in mystery! Wear good shoes for this day – we will see and do a great deal and cover a long distance – at the end of the day you'll have a much better sense of what it is like to live in such a city

**Overnight:** Norilsk

## JUNE 19 – SUNDAY

This morning we will take a drive to **Staryy Gorod**, the 'Old Town' in a place founded less than a century ago. This is the original mining settlement here, an area still used for mineral extraction as well as some of the administration of the mines. Here some buildings survive from the early days such as the first hospital, former gulag admin buildings and so on, most re-purposed and still in use for various reasons. The first mine can be seen and the difference between this simple wooden structure and the modern behemoths is stark. The first miners here didn't come voluntarily; they were prisoners and victims of the Great Terror. Shipped here in their thousands and put to work in this unwelcoming environment very few of them ever left. To the memory of these unfortunates there is a **Gulag Memorial**; a tasteful small chapel and some evocative monuments in this area, we will visit these and have an explanation of how this place came to be and the dark history of the area. We'll continue our drive around the old town and stop at some curios such as a small **abandoned factory**, a quirky **marker stone**, and a well-done **Komsomol Monument**, before crossing back to the 'new' town for lunch and the rest of the day at leisure (we can recommend some extra activities if you like, there is much more to see and do and areas of the city to explore)

**Overnight:** Norilsk



## JUNE 20 - MONDAY

There are in fact three main settlements in the Norilsk area, and today we head for the third of these; the town of [Talnakh](#). This is just a short distance from Norilsk but strangely seems to have a different micro-climate and general vibe too. We take a drive through a wooded area, dotted with (some derelict, some still in use) sanitarium and dachas. We will stop at the bridge over the **Norilskaya River** and see some of the fishing and pleasure boat fleets that are moored here (also great for photos), and on arrival at the edge of the town of Talnakh will have a peek at their very own **ski resort** (one slope, no other real facilities, quite quirky). We'll drive on to a **hilltop viewpoint** that will give us a good sense of the topography of the area and show how dominated by mines this part of the world is. There are many massive nickel mines surrounding the city and employing almost the entire labour force here. We'll have a picnic on this hill and then descend to visit the massive abandoned **Norilskgeologiya Research Facility** site. This was a geological research and study centre which fell into disuse and lies derelict - locals use it for various things such as a base for free wood as well as a place to play a violent form of Russian paintball set in a post-apocalyptic landscape, you will see how very apt this is when you're there!

After exploring here we finally make our way into the town itself, past monuments to miners we will go to a central viewpoint to see what the settlement looks like from up close and above (there is a cliff in the middle of the place, allowing for amazing views), and then get down into the streets to see the local museum and have a walking tour of the central part. This town is much smaller than Norilsk but it is compact and easy to navigate, you'll love it!

A free evening follows (we can recommend interesting places to have some dinner and drinks)

**Overnight:** Talnakh



## JUNE 21 – TUESDAY

As you know now, and as will be abundantly clear when we are there, nickel mining is the lifeblood of this entire area. Without nickel there would be no larger settlements here at all (and much less environmental damage too!). We will have the rare chance to **visit one of the nickel mines** here, to speak to workers and to find out what they do, where they come from, what it is like working in such a place, what nickel is and does, and so much more about the place; direct from the mouths of local people. The degree of access to the mine is not confirmed yet (don't expect to be hacking away at the rock-face underground though!) but we will get as much as possible and see this heavy industry up close – essential to modern technological life, but disastrous for the environment and the health of many who work up close to it, this industry in many ways characterizes the harshness as well as the stark beauty and wonder of the environment and the place we have come to visit

We head back to Norilsk city – on arrival checking back into our hotel and then you're free for a **final afternoon** of exploration, souvenir shopping (yes there are some places to get local souvenirs – we will show you where), relaxing, sending postcards, walking around some of the remoter parts of town, whatever you like really! We will meet up for a group dinner at an excellent restaurant – a final dinner for this fast-paced but comprehensive and guaranteed life-changer of a trip!

**Overnight:** Norilsk

## JUNE 22 – WEDNESDAY

**Departure Day** – Flights depart from Norilsk airport, again all are domestic flights within the Russian Federation. We arrange transfers to the airport and then you can head home or continue your adventures in the amazing and massive country. Let us know if we can be of any assistance in recommending further travels of course! This is the end of the adventure but the start of many years of amazing memories of this remarkable place!

OR!

**Join our amazing adventure to Magadan!** If you haven't had enough of **Remote Russia** by this time then com with us on this additional adventure – we can help with flights from Norilsk to Magadan and then you join our group there exploring abandoned cities, sleeping in a gulag, travelling on the epic Kolyma Highway (the Road of Bones) and so much more. Check it out and let us know if you're interested. We offer discounts for combining tours of course