



## Magadan Tour 2022

### TOUR

June 23<sup>rd</sup> - July 1<sup>st</sup> 2022

### OVERVIEW

For fans of adventure, history, the obscure, and the evocative – this is the experience of a lifetime: [Magadan!](#)

See remote settlements, people living all kinds of lives across the region, abandoned gulags, abandoned towns and cities, stunning landscapes, and so much more.

his tour will be led by our general manager and travel specialist Simon Cockerell, who first visited Magadan in the deep winter of 2010 to research this tour. Fascinated with the history of the Soviet Union, Simon has considerable knowledge of the area, and has been to Russia over 30 times and to every corner of the country – the known and unknown, famous, infamous, and ignored! We have been running the particular tour at select times since 2010 and it is now in its 6th incarnation – and better than ever. The remote edges of Russia can be a harsh and unforgiving place, with long journeys, grueling roads, and other logistical issues. However, the rewards of amazing landscapes, incredible people, and some unsettling and tragic-yet-compelling history having been lived and left in this area more than make up for it.

See for yourself with the specialist who developed the itinerary especially for Koryo Tours' adventurous travellers!



## DAILY ITINERARY

### JUNE 23 - THURSDAY

Our tour begins in [Magadan](#) – it's up to you to get here but we offer as much support as possible. There are flights from various places in Russia such as Moscow, Novosibirsk, and Khabarovsk, easy connections from [Vladivostok](#), from Harbin and Beijing in China, and we can help with those coming in from elsewhere. Regardless of your arrival time we provide a transfer from Magadan airport to the city centre for check-in so please look into flights and contact us for advice. It is not a problem to arrive a day early if this suits you better, we can arrange extra nights at the hotel for anyone who needs them.

On arrival in the city the group will meet our lovely local partners Vika, and Volodya. They will explain some basics about the history and geography of the region – we'll learn more in detail later on. We'll check in to the VM-Tsentr Hotel. The location is terrific and it's a very comfortable place (join us for a welcome beer in the hotel bar!). We'll have a group dinner and then you're free to wander the city. Our local friends can recommend places to go, things to see and do. Remember that it stays light late into the night here so you don't have to worry about getting lost in the dark. The city isn't huge and can easily be wandered around on foot without too much difficulty; you'll find it a very interesting place indeed! We will have a meal in the best restaurant in Magadan to welcome you all and start the tour in the best way possible!

**OVERNIGHT:** Magadan



## JUNE 24 – FRIDAY

Today we take a tour of the highlights of [Magadan City](#); we'll visit the **Mask of Sorrow** (Gulag monument dedicated to the victims of the *Dalstroy* forced labour system, a deeply moving monument on a hill overlooking the city), the **Magadan History Museum** (which has a terrific display about the gulags as well as the local wildlife, both extinct and extant – the mammoth exhibit is particularly good), the workshop of a **local bone carver** (one of the quirkier businesses in this area is mining for mammoth ivory! This gentleman has a stock of the tusks as well as the bones of other extinct creatures in his basement workshop, he carves them into trinkets and works of art, it's quite unique!), an observation point over the **Nagaeyev Harbour** (great for photos, also this is where the ships docked that brought prisoners to this place at the edge of the world, a chilling location), the home of famed singer and composer **Vadim Kozin**, (one of the most famous of the prisoners in Magadan, learn his tragic story, one of many millions) stop off at the **Lenin Statue** of course! and see even more of the city than we list here, including a stop at the **China Town Market** for any supplies needed for the next day; come and see Magadan with us on this action-packed day

Along the way we will stop for a group lunch and finally, at the end of the day we'll go to the local souvenir shop for all our Magadan-themed goodies and then you're free for the evening (we can recommend bars, restaurants, and other activities). A big day tomorrow!

**OVERNIGHT:** Magadan



## JUNE 25 – SATURDAY

We head off along the [Kolyma Highway](#) (known in the west as the ‘**Road of Bones**’) – the longest road in the world and one built by prisoners to ease the passage of many more unfortunate souls into the inner-depths of the Kolyma area, from where many would never return. We’re heading for the [Dneprovsky Gulag Camp](#) – one of the most complete remaining camps in the area (note that these camps are not preserved as museums, they are left to crumble and decay, in a few years almost nothing will be left to see of this dark place). The drive will be done in a Kamaz truck – a large multi-axle Russian vehicle that can traverse the 20km of deep forest we need to drive through to make it to the Gulag site. Along the way, we’ll make some stops for rest and refreshment including at the [abandoned town of Atka](#), which we will have time to explore.

We should arrive at the Gulag in the early afternoon and then we’ll set off on a hike around the area; we’ll be guided by a local gulag historian and expert, he’ll give us a fascinating insight into what went on here and has many a heart-breaking story to tell, and some amazing statistics, feel free to ask anything you like about the Gulag, he knows a great deal indeed! Bears do pass through this area but fear not! We also take a couple of local hunters and drivers with us who know the Russian outdoors very well, they will ensure our safety and security on this part of the trip, and also pitch camp for us to rest and eat a terrific meal of local specialities after we have finished exploring the Gulag site. Some of the highlights of this exploration include guard towers, the mine entrance (it was a tin mine), the cemetery, bread making buildings, officers houses. It’s a chilling and fascinating place to visit, let alone spend the night. The sun will be up until about 2AM here but get some sleep if you can we surge onwards the next day!

**OVERNIGHT:** Camping at Dneprovsky Gulag

## JUNE 26 – SUNDAY

We’ll break camp and head for a few more Gulag sites here, including a demolished factory site. Then we’ll make our way back to the highway and switch from the Kamaz truck to some comfortable mini-buses that we will now use along the Road of Bones. In the buses, we’ll drive onwards enjoying some amazing scenery and surroundings until we turn off the main Kolyma highway and head for the settlement of **Sinegorye**. Here we will pass through some very unexplored areas and see the **Sinegorye Dam**, some gulag and **abandoned infrastructure** along the way, as well as a regional museum. Arriving in Sinegorye we will be back in a small piece of civilisation and will be spending the night in a retro sanitarium; health treatments are on offer or just relaxing and exploring the town.

**OVERNIGHT:** Sinegorye Hotel, Sinegorye



## JUNE 27 – MONDAY

Up and refreshed after a night in an actual hotel, we will hit the road once more, our destination this morning is the town of **Yagodnoye**, former gulag admin centre and now a small settlement mainly housing local gold miners. We will visit the **Krivbas Gold Mine** where we will learn how gold is extracted and processed here these days, as well as the **Shalamov Museum** - with exhibits to the great writer who was once an involuntary resident of this town. The Museums here are small but very well presented and staffed by people seriously dedicated to their mission, you will find this to be absolutely fascinating!

After lunch in the town, we will continue north, our destination at the end of the day is the remote and unusual city of [Susuman](#) in the mid-afternoon.

Susuman is very run down and some parts even seem abandoned, but thousands of people live here, there are shops, a restaurant (where we will have dinner), and a guesthouse run by a local factory (where we will spend the night), it also has some interesting things to see on a wander around the town such as a young scientists institute which for some reason has an aeroplane sticking out of an apartment building, some Soviet-era apartment building murals and signs, a church, and often curious locals who are happy to chat and interact with the rare visitors to their city. If you want a night out in Susuman then go right ahead but it's definitely a good idea to get some rest, something truly amazing awaits us the next day!

**OVERNIGHT:** Susuman Guest House



## JUNE 28 – TUESDAY

Up early, first we hit the shops for supplies, then we drive on a further 90 mins to the largest abandoned city in this region; [Kadykchan](#). This truly is the ideal abandoned town (if such a concept even exists!) – it's the right size to spend a whole day wandering around without going through the same buildings twice, but small enough to know where you are all the time, the buildings haven't been inhabited in two decades but most of the apartment blocks have held up very well. We can explore apartments, the city government building, schools (the highlight we believe, just for the murals alone), hospitals, restaurants, shops, etc. all left to the ravages of nature. It's spooky and mind-blowing and we can guarantee that you'll never forget this day! On previous visits some amazing souvenirs such as old school books, license plates, signs, etc. have been found too, so you'll definitely be able to get yourself some amazingly unique mementoes of this fascinating day. Trust us when we say this will be among the most memorable days of your life – it has to be experienced to be believed!

We'll eat a picnic lunch on the spot and then in the evening we simply sleep on the roof of the secondary school or, if you prefer, occupy an abandoned apartment and become one of the very few Kadykchan residents of the 21st Century. If taking the second option then expect no electricity, no running water, no furniture (we will have camping equipment) and a general sense of post-apocalyptic living. It'll be a night like no other; you'll almost not want to sleep at all!

**OVERNIGHT:** Camping in Kadykchan

## JUNE 29 – WEDNESDAY

Get up early and explore some more of Kadykchan while breakfast is prepared, or have a lie un while soaking up the uncanny feeling of being in a city devoid of human activity, free time in Kadykchan starts the day. then we break camp and head for the nearby semi-abandoned settlement of [Myaundzha](#) - just half an hour's drive away. Myaundzha has actual living humans-in-residence as well as some amazing tragically derelict structures such as a lovely **Palace of Culture**.

We then begin a bit of an epic journey back to Magadan. This will take all day and we will arrive quite late, but it will be very much worth it! Our return journey is not the same as the path we have followed already, the Road of Bones is a loop in fact, and we will take the road less travelled this time. This road runs along the Kolyma River for much of the way, an amazing bit pf remote scenery, we will stop for plenty of views and also at some monument and significant spots along the way. Most notable the **Ust-Omchug Gulag Museum**, something very out of the way, but very special indeed. We will have lunch along the road and then when finally back in Magadan a 'welcome back' dinner! you will have earned this by now and be ready for a serious rest!

**OVERNIGHT:** Magadan



## JUNE 30 - THURSDAY

Back in the big city, we have a day of leisure for you. Still, we will assess how everyone is feeling on the spot and if there is still energy left in you then we will arrange a couple of side excursions for the morning. Once you are over the confusion of being in an actual inhabited city once more! For the rest of the day you have free time, visit some of the museums and galleries, shop for souvenirs and gold (mined by machines and free workers these days), visit a **local banya**, or consider a trip to the nearby **local beach** (of course this being Magadan it has an abandoned factory on the shores, and the water is absurdly cold, but where did you think you were after all?) We will meet for a final farewell meal with our local hosts, at somewhere very nice indeed, then the final night of the tour - to close out a long and arduous journey (follow it with a night out on the town if you like, we know some good nightspots!) but one that will provide an unbeatable experience in deepest Russia, something that will stick in the mind forever!

**OVERNIGHT:** Magadan

## JULY 1 - FRIDAY

**Departure Day** - There are flights this day to Moscow (from where almost anywhere in Europe can be reached, as well as North America), and other cities around Russia (some obscure, some well-known). [Check out this link for some info on these flights](#). If you want to extend the stay in Magadan we can arrange that for you and we can offer help and advice for other places that you can reach from here too if you wish to extend your stay in Russia, just drop us a line to ask what assistance we can offer.

So head home, continue to explore Russia, or embark on even more adventures! The end of the trip but the start of remembering the trip for many years to come!