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# Tour Notes

**Kamchatka in Comfort**

**Tour Duration – 8 Days**



## Tour Rating

Fitness ●●●○○ | Off the Beaten Track ●●●●● | Culture ●●○○○ | History ●●●○○ | Wildlife ●●●○○

## Tour Pace - Busy

## Tour Essentials

**Accommodation:** Comfortable hotel in Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky – no camping involved  
**Included Meals:** Daily Breakfast (B), plus Lunches (L) and Dinners (D) as shown in the itinerary.  
**Group Size:** Maximum of 10 (you may be joined by travellers from companies other than Undiscovered Destinations). Please see notes below. Optional helicopter excursions to Valley of Geysers and Kuril Lake can have group sizes up to 23 clients

**Start Point:** Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky  
**End Point:** Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky  
**Transport:** Specially designed 6-wheel trucks or caterpillar type / motorboat / internal flights minibus / speedboat (for boat trip)  
**Country Visited:** Russia



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## Tour Map – Russia - Kamchatka in Comfort



### Tour Highlights

- ✓ Optional helicopter ride over the splendid Valley of the Geysers or to the Kuril Lake
- ✓ see the active volcanoes Koryaksky, Mutnovsky and Gorely, which are considered to be the most beautiful volcanoes of the whole Kamchatka peninsula
- ✓ take a boat trip to the Avacha Bay and the Pacific Ocean, observing the biggest Kamchatka nesting seabirds
- ✓ participate in a shamanic tea ceremony
- ✓ get acquainted with the history and unique nature of Kamchatka in the museums of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky
- ✓ walk along the famous Khalaktyrsky beach — the Pacific ocean's coastline with the volcanic black sand
- ✓ relax in hot natural springs and thermal pools



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### **Kamchatka in Comfort**

Kamchatka is a vast wilderness perched on Russia's far eastern frontier, jutting out into the Pacific Ocean. Renowned for its unspoilt landscapes, its fantastic wildlife and its spectacular natural phenomena, it represents one of the most untouched, and certainly least visited, places on our planet. On this trip we stay in comfort but still take in the very best of the region, with opportunities to visit the breathtaking Valley of the Geysers and walk along the spurs of active volcanoes. Kamchatka is one of the last frontiers of travel. Explore it now with us in comfort.

### **Tour itinerary notes**

While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day itinerary as printed below, a degree of flexibility is built in. Overnight stops may vary from those suggested and on occasions alternative accommodation, of a similar standard to that named below, will be used.

Please note that the order of the itinerary may change locally. Changes often occur en route due to the nature of travel in these remote areas and this itinerary is only a guideline of the activities possible on each day.

### **Tour Guide**

Our guides are a key strength, chosen for their knowledge of and passion for the areas in which they work. All of our guides are carefully hand-picked, and are not just passing through these countries, but are usually locally born. Unlike some companies it should be noted we do not send a guide or tour leader from Undiscovered Destinations in the UK as we have every confidence in our locally appointed representative who is responsible for operating the tour on our behalf. Where possible you will have the same guide throughout your trip but on occasions it may be necessary to change the guide at one or more points during the tour.

**IMPORTANT:** Please note that in the remote region of Kamchatka, English speaking guides only have an intermediary level of language proficiency. The tour is guided in both Russian and English. Note it is possible to pay extra for a professional interpreter – please contact us if you are interested in this option.

## *Itinerary*

**Please contact us if you wish to have any pre tour requirements, accommodation and/or tours.**

### **Day 1 - Arrival in Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky**

Arrive in Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky and transfer to your hotel. This afternoon we take part in a shamanic tea ceremony, held by Valery Malakhov, a follower of Kamchatka shamans. During this ceremony we will taste Kamchatka wild plants and traditional teas and listen to the harp and guitar. We return to the hotel after dinner. Overnight at Commander Hotel or similar (D)

### **Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky**

The improbably named Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky is the main settlement of the Kamchatka region, and was founded in 1741 by the Russian explorer Vitus Bering. The name 'Petropavlovsk' means 'Peter and Paul', as the city is named after Bering's two ships, the St Peter and the St Paul. The architecture of the city itself is typical of the Soviet style, and is surrounded by mountains and volcanoes, which periodically erupt. During the Crimean War, this far flung outpost of the Russian Empire was attacked by Anglo-French forces, but never fell. Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky is the second largest city in the world that cannot be reached by road, after Iquitos, Peru. Today its source of wealth comes mainly from the fishing industry.



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## Day 2 - Valley of Geysers optional excursion or day at leisure

Today you can take an optional helicopter excursion to Geysers Valley (additional local charge - see below). Walk along the Uzon Caldera and have lunch in the valley. We return to our hotel in the evening. For those not wanting to take the helicopter ride, you can visit observation points, a museum and historical sights. Alternatively, you can visit an ethnic settlement (additional charges apply). Overnight Commander Hotel or similar (B)

### Valley of the Geysers

The helicopter excursion to the Valley of Geysers includes a flight around Karymsky (1486m) and Maly Semyachik (1560m) volcanoes, as well as a walking excursion through the valley itself which is a UNESCO world heritage site. This valley cannot be compared with anywhere else as it has more than twenty large geysers in the vicinity. Some gush forth every 10-12 minutes, while others may erupt once in 4-5 hours. The plumes of steam, fountains of boiling water, incredible colours of the slopes with hot water streaming along them and profuse vegetation create an enchanting spectacle. On the excursion there will also be the opportunity to swim in the Nalychevsky hot springs.

**Note:** in the case of bad weather, the helicopter tour will not take place. If it is important for you to get to the Geysers Valley during your trip to Kamchatka, we recommend to take some reserve days before or after the tour.

**Local cost of the excursion in EUR 630 per person. Please inform us early as possible if you wish to take this excursion. The excursion has to be paid for in cash locally – credit cards are not accepted.**

## Day 3 – Volcanic Spurs

Today we take an off-road trip to the high plateau, located between Avachinsky and Koryaksky volcanoes, where we walk for approx. 2-3 hours along the volcanic spurs. We ascend camel mountain and admire the beautiful scenery and mountain flowers and see the colonies of ground gophers. We return to the hotel in the evening. Overnight Commander Hotel or similar (BL)

## Day 4 - Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky – Pacific Coast and the Black beach

Today we take a city tour of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky. Visit the viewing points and learn about the history of Kamchatka in the museums and visit the fish market. Later, we head to the Pacific coast and walk along the famous Khallaktvsky beach with its black volcanic sand. We then take a swim in the healing waters of the Zelenovskie Ozerki springs before returning to our hotel in the evening. Overnight Commander Hotel or similar (B)

## Day 5 - Mutnovsky Volcano and "Small Geysers Valley"

Today we travel through the plateau of Vilyuchinsky and Gorely volcanoes to the foot of Mutnovsky volcano. You will enjoy a guided walk to the Dachny hot springs, called by locals the Small Geysers Valley. En route, visit the Upper Paratunsky hot springs and the Vilyuchinsky waterfall. We return to our hotel in the evening. Overnight Commander Hotel or similar (BL)

## Day 6 – Avacha Bay – Starichkov Island – Paratunka

Today enjoy a boat trip to the Avacha Bay. See the picturesque rocks and Tri Brata (Three Brothers) Island which is considered to be one of the main symbols of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky. We also watch the sea birds on Babushkin Kamen (Old Woman's Stone) Island. We then head to Starichkov Island with the largest sea bird rookery in Kamchatka. If wanted, you can take part in some sea fishing. This afternoon we travel to the resort area of Paratunka with its thermal water pools where it is possible to take a swim. Return to your hotel in the evening. Overnight Commander Hotel or similar (BL)



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### Day 7 - Malkinsky Hot Springs or optional Kuril Lake Helicopter excursion

Today you can choose to take a helicopter tour to Kuril Lake to observe the bears (additional local charge see below). If you do not wish to go to the lake, we can visit Malkinsky hot springs and swim in the reputedly healing waters. Overnight Commander Hotel or similar (B)

#### Kuril Lake

Kuril Lake was formed about 8,000 years ago as a result of a series of enormous volcanic explosions which shook southern Kamchatka. Today, the largest population of sockeye salmon in Eurasia spawns in Kuril Lake. To feed on the abundance, over 200 bears usually come here from mid-July to mid-September. Also observe the caldera of Ksudach volcano and swim in the Khodutkinsky hot springs.

*Note: in the case of bad weather, the helicopter tour will not take place. If it is important for you to get to Kuril Lake during your trip to Kamchatka, we recommend to allow for some reserve days before or after the tour.*

**Local cost of the excursion in EUR 600 per person. Please inform us early as possible if you wish to take this excursion. The excursion has to be paid for in cash locally – credit cards are not accepted.**

#### Day 8 – Departure

This morning there is time to visit the fish market and to buy souvenirs before you are transferred to the airport for your departure flight (B)

**Please note that extra accommodation can be arranged post tour if you wish to extend your stay in Kamchatka**

## Tour Inclusions/Exclusions

#### Inclusions :

Arrival and departure transfers on Day 1 and Day 8.  
Transport throughout the tour  
All accommodation  
Services of English-speaking guide / tour leader – see notes in guiding section for more information  
Meals as listed (B – Breakfast, L – Lunch, D – Dinner)  
Entrance fees for sites listed as part of the itinerary

#### Excluded:

International flights  
Any airport taxes  
Travel Insurance  
Visas  
Optional helicopter excursions on Days 2 and 7  
Drinks  
Tipping (at discretionary)



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# Important Information

## Foreign Office Travel Warnings

We constantly monitor the advice posted by the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). In particular we will always advise clients of any travel warnings. At present there are no warnings against travel to the regions of Russia that we visit. Please feel free to contact us should you have any specific concerns or would like to know in detail what measures are being taken to ensure visits remain trouble free and without incident.

It should be noted that this information applies to British citizens. Other nationals are asked to check the current position of their respective government.

## Accommodation and Meals

### Hotel Check-in Times

As a general rule most hotels will allow guests to check-in from 2pm. Please note that the price of your tour does not include guaranteed early check-in. Therefore, please advise us if you would like to ensure that your room is available for an earlier arrival. This is particularly relevant on the first day of the tour and for early morning arrivals. One option is to pre-book and pay for an extra night at the beginning of your tour which will guarantee your accommodation is available irrespective of what time you arrive. Please contact us for information and costs.

It should also be noted that on many of our tours we have set-aside Day 1 of the itinerary as an 'arrival day'. For this reason and because tour participants are likely to be arriving at different times, and often from different countries, guided sightseeing or other activities are not included. If you are arriving early or before the start date of the tour and would like to organise some extra arrangements on a private basis please contact us.

### Accommodation Rating

On this tour you will be staying in a comfortable hotel with private bathroom facilities.

We welcome solo travellers and single rooms will be allocated subject to the applicable tour supplement. Please note that on occasions you may not always be allocated a double or twin room, as some hotels have designated single rooms. These may be smaller in size. However, the supplement payable takes this into consideration.

### Food & Drink

The daily meal basis is shown in the tour itinerary; Breakfast (B), Lunch and Dinner (D). Please note that lunch may be a picnic. Drinks are not included and will be payable locally in cash.

### Dietary Requirements

If you have any special dietary requirements you must notify us at the time of booking. While we will make every effort to cater for you, we cannot guarantee that this will be possible.

### Budgeting for your Tour

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the tour price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry.



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### Food

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch £5  
Dinner £10

### Drinks

The prices for drinks can vary greatly depending upon location and the prices detailed below are an average guide. In general, you would expect that drinks purchased in a supermarket or local bar to be less expensive, whilst drinks in an upmarket bar or restaurant may be more expensive.

Bottle of Beer £1  
Water £0.50

### Tipping – Guide and Drivers

Tips are the accepted way of saying 'thank you' to your local guides and other local staff. We make sure that they are paid appropriately, and they are aware that any tips are a bonus, and entirely dependent on the service that they provide. As a guide we suggest you allow a total of £50 for this.

### Foreign Exchange

**ATM Availability:** ATMs are widely available.

**Credit and Debit Card Acceptance:** The use of cards is limited to the top hotels and restaurants in major towns and cities

**Local Currency:** Rouble

**Recommended Currency for Exchange:** Dollars or Euros

**Where to Exchange:** Your guide will advise you

### Joining your Tour

#### Flight Information

Our advertised prices do not include the cost of international flights. Please contact us if you would like a quotation to book a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

#### Joining Your Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will receive a free airport transfer, both on arrival and departure. In order that the transfer can be arranged please ensure that you advise us of your flight information once available. Please advise the date, time and flight number for your arrival/departure. If we have not been advised of this information at least 2 weeks before travel, then you will be required to make your own way to the hotel on Day 1 of your tour.

#### Travel Insurance and Altitude

It is a condition of booking with Undiscovered Destinations that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country and be valid for the entire duration of your holiday.



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Please note that your tour involves some walking/trekking at altitude. Some travel insurance policies may exclude walking and trekking above a certain altitude. Please ensure that your travel insurance is valid for walking at altitude and if you have any doubts please contact your insurance provider.

### Visa Information

Most nationals will require a visa to visit Russia. To obtain a visa you will need a stamped tourist confirmation document and tourist/service voucher – we will provide these for you. In order to do this, we will require your full passport information and details of arrival and exit into and from Russia as well as details of the city in which you intend to lodge your Russian visa application, no later than 30 days before departure.

Everyone in the UK applying for a Russian visa will have to do so in person in order to submit their finger prints. This does not apply to Diplomats, Officials and children under the age of twelve.

You can now apply for your appointment for your selected Embassy using the following link: <https://ru.vfsglobal.co.uk/tourist.html>

Currently there are 3 processing centres in the UK: London, Edinburgh and Manchester. Regulations do frequently change, so we advise that you check the current requirements with your nearest embassy.

### Passports

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, valid for at least six months after the date of return to the UK.

We strongly advise that your passport contains a minimum of two blank pages, as this may be a requirement of the local immigration authorities. In addition, certain countries will stipulate that the two blank pages are opposite each other. If you are unable to meet these requirements you may be refused boarding by your airline or denied entry by the immigration authorities.

For specific information about the requirements for your destination please check with the country's embassy or consulate. Alternatively, UK citizens can visit [www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice](http://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice)

### Vaccinations & Protection

As with travel to most parts of Asia, we strongly recommend that you contact your doctor's surgery or a specialist travel clinic for up-to-date information, advice and the necessary vaccinations. For a visit of less than one month, almost certainly you will be advised to have immunisations against the following: Diphtheria and Tetanus, Hepatitis A and B, Polio and Typhoid.

The legal status and regulation of some medicines prescribed or purchased in your home country can be different in other countries. If you're travelling with prescription or over-the-counter medicine, read this guidance from NaTHNaC on [best practice when travelling with medicines](#). For further information on the legal status of a specific medicine, you'll need to contact the embassy, high commission or consulate of the country or territory you're travelling to.



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# Preparing for your tour

## Climate

Kamchatka is a mountainous region stretching from the North to the South and surrounded by the waters of the Pacific Ocean and the Okhotsk Sea. The weather here is changeable, and there is a special microclimate in different areas. The best months for summer travel are July and August. The average temperature in August is +12°C to +16°C. In the highest parts of the mountains there are glaciers. Rain is possible, as well as snow at high altitudes. In forest areas there are a lot of mosquitoes and midges. In September, it is important to take into account the low temperature and the possibility of frost. You should be ready for all kinds of weather conditions: from summer heat to strong winds with cold autumn rain and frosts.

## Clothing

It can be quite cold even in the summer. Please be prepared for varying weather conditions. You will need to bring at least one fleece or jumper, along with a waterproof/ windproof jacket with a hood, comfortable waterproof trousers, woollen or thermal socks, and a swimming suit for bathing in the hot springs. A warm hat and gloves are also recommended.

## Equipment

The first thing on your list should be a first aid kit. Whilst there is no undue cause for alarm, travellers are best advised to travel well-prepared: adequately immunized, with sufficient supplies of prescription drugs, along with a medical kit. Suncream / sunblock are a must. When out on tour, it is important to have suncream with you, as there will not be anywhere nearby to buy it. Sunglasses will also be invaluable. A strong insect repellent, including a bite spray is strongly recommended as midges and mosquitoes are prevalent in summer. This Kamchatka tour does not have a hard trekking grade but you may still wish to bring trekking poles if you are used to using them.

## Footwear

Footwear is a main priority on this tour. Comfortable and sturdy waterproof walking shoes/boots are recommended, as well as an additional pair of shoes to change into should your boots get wet.

## Luggage on tour

Your luggage should not exceed 20kgs (44lbs). One large rucksack, and one small hand luggage rucksack is acceptable. We advise you to travel with a rucksack or soft bag rather than a suitcase.

## Electric Supply & Plugs

Generally electrical supply is 220-240V AC (50 Hz) and uses European two circular pin style plugs.

## Tour Itinerary Versions

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of these tour notes immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers. You will be informed of any major changes to your tour, but small changes may just be added to these tour notes. These tour notes were prepared 12<sup>th</sup> November 2019

