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Church of the Savior, Moscow.



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Reflections

In this world of cellular phones, compact digital cameras, and image-stabilized binoculars, it's easy to find yourself trotting the globe with literally pounds (or kilos) of these items hanging from your neck or draped over your shoulder. The idea, of course, is to capture all the sights and sounds of every single moment of your travels.



I am one of those people. I'm not a packhorse for gear since my camera is small enough to fit comfortably on one hip, and my Blackberry, serving multi-duty as a cellular phone, e-mailer, and Internet browser, rests on the other. But I do a lot of "capturing," and not just for business purposes. And yet lately I have begun to feel that I might be missing out on some important aspects of my travels.

On a recent trip abroad, I saw a group of children playing with a dog. The joyous laughter mesmerized me. But instead of photographing the scene, I simply observed the moment — the sounds, the sights, and the joy. For a time I felt that I was a part of it. I would not have experienced this special moment in the same way had I been fumbling with my camera and thinking about my photo's composition.

I am grateful for the insight of that moment, and look forward to more of them.

Regards . . .



Aram Kaprielian

Riding the Russian Rails

What is 5,806 miles (9,289 kilometers) long, spans eight time zones, and requires seven days of continuous travel to go from end to end? It's the Trans-Siberian Railway, the third-longest continuous rail service in the world. The main line begins in Moscow, runs west through Kazan, Ekaterinburg, Omsk, Novosibirsk, Irkutsk, Ulan Ude, and Khabarovsk, and ends in Vladivostok on the Pacific Ocean. This route was constructed between 1891 and 1916, but there are now a number of extensions and alternate tracks, including one to St. Petersburg.

Riding the Trans-Siberian Express is a popular pastime for visitors, in part because a train is one of the most relaxing ways to travel. During summer, the long hours of twilight ensure that the sights of the countryside don't go dark too soon. You can watch the scenery, read, meet people, and unwind. For most travelers on TravelQuest's Russian eclipse tours, the Trans-Siberian Express journey will seem all too short: it begins in Moscow and ends at Novosibirsk, with stops in Kazan and Ekaterinburg. For those on the Grand Passage, the trip continues, post-eclipse, through to Vladivostok.

Venice of the North

Although settlements along the banks of the Neva River had existed since at least the 9th century, St. Petersburg wasn't officially founded until 1703, when Peter the Great pushed the Swedish army out of the region and con-



structed a fortress by that name. Because the fort was on an island, and there were no bridges across the Neva River, people and goods had to be transported by boat, which is how St. Petersburg acquired the nickname "the Venice of the North." By 1712 the citadel and surrounding town were large enough that Peter moved the capital from Moscow to his new town.

By 1761, toward the end of the reign of Peter's daughter Elizabeth, St. Petersburg had been transformed into a fine capital that rivaled the most beautiful cities of Europe. This makeover continued under Catherine the Great, who ruled from 1762 to 1796. She began a royal art collection that ultimately became the Hermitage Museum, expanded the royal palaces, and established buildings for the Russian Academy of Sciences, the Academy of Fine Arts, and the first public library in Russia. For the next century, St. Petersburg was one of the finest cities in Europe.

The 20th century was a turbulent time for the city. Its name was changed to Petrograd in 1914, it lost its capital status to Moscow in 1918, its name changed again (in 1924) to

Above: Catherine's Palace in St. Petersburg.
Left: The State Academy Opera and Ballet Theater in Novosibirsk. Both images courtesy Aram Kaprielian.



Leningrad, and it endured a 900-day siege during WWII. After the war, Stalin decreed that the city not be completely modernized. Instead, many buildings were restored to their 19th-century glory. And in 1991, a city-wide referendum voted to restore the original name of St. Petersburg.

Science in the Heart of Siberia

Back in 1893, Novonikolayevsk was nothing more than the approximate geographic east/west center of Russia and the future site of a bridge across the Ob River — a bridge needed for the Trans-Siberian Railway. By the time the bridge opened in 1897, the site was a town of nearly 8,000 people. Ten years later it was a city of 47,000, and in 1926 it was renamed Novosibirsk. Today it is the third largest city in Russia (in terms of population) with an excellent Opera and Ballet Theater (larger than the Bolshoi Theater), the beautiful cathedral of Saint Alexander Nevsky, and a world-renowned zoo. It is also home to some of the finest science researchers in Russia.

Akademgorodok (Academic Town), located about 12 miles (20 kilometers) from downtown Novosibirsk, is a center of Russian scientific research, and the site of more than one-third of the Russian scientific community. Founded in 1957, it is now the location of more than 30 research institutes and design bureaus as well as Novosibirsk State University.

The downfall of the Soviet Union caused a severe funding crunch for research. But in the mid-1990s, private investment from outside Russia began funding research projects, and today Academic Town is once again a thriving applied-research establishment.

The End of the Line

Vladivostok began as a naval outpost in 1860 and quickly became a prosperous trading port. Czar Alexander III quickly saw the potential of this Pacific

Moscow: the Heart of Russia

One of the earliest references to Moscow is in 1147 AD in the Chronicle Ipatyev, where it was noted that Prince Yuri Dolgoruky hosted a feast in a village called Moscow. Nine years later he had added timber walls, a wooden kremlin (citadel), and a church to the settlement. That's why Dolgoruky is honored as the founder of Moscow.

The city's history has been turbulent — it was attacked, captured, and burned numerous times. In 1328 it became the capital of the Great Moscow Principality, which essentially made it the capital of Russia. Peter the Great moved the capital to St. Petersburg in 1713, but it returned to Moscow in 1918 after the Russian Revolution.

The Kremlin is considered the heart of the city. The existing walls and towers were built in the late 15th century. Inside are four palaces and four cathedrals. Just outside the eastern wall is Red Square. At the Square's southern edge is magnificent St. Basil's Cathedral (above), probably one of the most photographed (and photogenic) sights in all of Moscow.



Ocean port, but realized that better access was needed (at the time it took three months for a letter to get from St. Petersburg to Vladivostok). This was one of the key reasons for constructing the Trans-Siberian Railway. The line was rushed to completion during the 1904–05 Russo-Japanese war in order to reinforce Vladivostok.

Between 1948 and 1992, the city was closed to foreign visitors. Today, those who complete the rail journey have a unique experience waiting for them in this city whose name means “Ruler of the East.”

For More Information About Russia . . .

Moscow: www.moscow-city.ru/download.phtml?lang_char_id=en

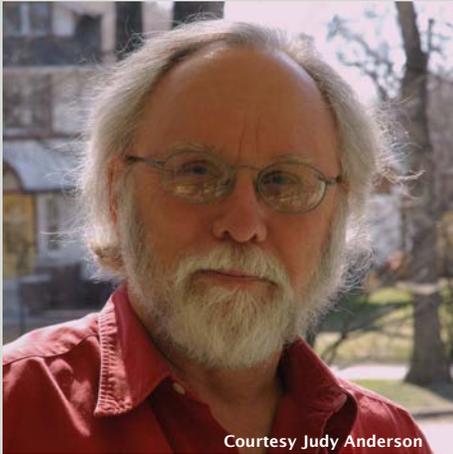
St. Petersburg: www.saint-petersburg.com

Novosibirsk: <http://novosibirskguide.com>

Akademgorodok: www.nsc.ru/sbras/akadem/objects/index1.html

Trans-Siberian Handbook: Seventh Edition (480 pages, October 2007)

Profile: Jay Anderson



Courtesy Judy Anderson

Jay Anderson was born in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, a Canadian hometown that usually elicits a few chuckles from those who ask. He didn't spend much time there; as an army brat he grew up in towns and cities across Canada and Europe. His astronomy interest began when a friend showed him the moons of Jupiter one evening. "It took me six months to save the \$30 for a 3-inch cardboard reflector."

After high school, Jay worked in the Arctic for two years, and sailed the Northwest Passage for two summers. He carried a 4½-inch telescope with him, but "there wasn't much opportunity for observing — it was daylight for 24 hours in the summer, and too cold in the winter."

After a hitchhiking tour of South America, he moved to Vancouver and the University of British Columbia, where he acquired a degree in astronomy, his wife Judy, and a job as a weather forecaster with Environment Canada. Posted to Winnipeg in 1974, he was delighted to discover, upon perusing a copy of Oppolzer's *Canon of*

Eclipses, that he was living right under the track of the 1979 total.

Combining his interests in astronomy and meteorology, Jay compiled a study of weather prospects for the 1979 eclipse that was widely distributed to eclipse chasers. "That was my introduction to the world of eclipse fanatics," he notes. A planetarium friend asked him to produce another study for the 1984 eclipse over Indonesia and New Guinea; the friend then passed a copy to another, and another, and another.

"One day, I received a phone call from someone in New York, asking if he could send the study to the US Naval Observatory. I agreed, and two days later, the USNO called, asking for a fresh copy and permission to reproduce it. The version they received had been copied so many times that it was unreadable." Jay has been producing studies of the climatology along eclipse tracks ever since. When the USNO ceased publishing the eclipse circulars, Jay joined with Fred Espenak to continue them under NASA auspices.

"I've been lucky; I just fell into it," he notes. That lucky first eclipse has led to a lifetime of travel and adventure. "Aram and I have seen many weird and wonderful places while investigating sites along eclipse tracks: Madagascar, Botswana, Easter Island." In the process he has made many new friends and eclipse memories along the way — and to Jay, that's what really makes shadow chasing so special.

Jay Anderson will again be investigating the "ground truth" of his latest eclipse predictions in Novosibirsk on August 1st.

Making Memories

In the days before digital, (i.e. back when film was king and dinosaurs roamed the Earth), the traveler's rule-of-thumb for how much film to bring on a trip was one 36-shot roll per day. Now it seems as though we can't get by with less than 100 to 150 digital shots a day! So make sure to bring enough digital memory with you on your trip.

How much is enough? That depends on the image quality. All cameras record in JPEG format, and most let you adjust the level of resolution you want to record. Don't set the resolution too low; you'll end up with hundreds of images that don't look good even as 4x6-inch prints. But unless you're printing 16x24 posters, don't set the resolution to maximum, either, because you'll spend more time at the computer processing your images than you spent on the trip itself.

Once you've set the resolution, your camera will usually tell you how many images your memory card can hold. And even if you think you can get your entire trip onto one card, bring a spare. Cards have been known to fail. And if you find something you want to shoot at high-res, switch memory cards and adjust the camera's resolution level; then reset everything when you're done. This ensures that those special images are safely stored, even if the unthinkable happens to your camera or its memory card.

Eclipsed in Turkey

Story by Walter Jon Williams

Our TravelQuest group had originally planned to view the March 29, 2006, eclipse from Side (pronounced SEE-day), an ancient town on the shore of the Mediterranean. Seeing the eclipse through the frame of Roman arches or past the pillars of the temple of Apollo would have been downright cool, but the Turkish government couldn't guarantee our privacy.

Apparently thousands of people were going to Side for the event, some of whom were planning to participate in neo-pagan ceremonies. I have no particular objection to neo-pagans or the things they do, but the last thing I wanted during an awesome major astronomical event was a bunch of fools chanting at me, or yelling "So mote it be!", or beating drums, or (even worse) playing solos on the Native American flute.

I prefer my spirituality silent, thank you.

So a large chunk of the beach in the front of our hotel (the Sunrise Queen) was reserved for our group, and we were provided with box lunches that were pretty good, as box lunches go. My wife Kathy and I didn't quite see the point in getting sand in our shoes when the hotel itself provided so many excellent platforms from which to view the eclipse. We ended up putting our little Astroscan telescope on the same terrace where we had breakfast and watched the eclipse with our friends Debra, Cheryl, and an assortment of passers-by and hotel employees. Democrats, that's us.

Each hotel in the area had some gimmick to attract tourists wanting to view the eclipse. The Sunrise Queen had classical music, in the form of a trio that was gamely playing away near one of the ornamental pools. On those rare occasions when I could actually hear them, they didn't sound particularly inspired.

Not that I cared. Arturo Toscanini and the NBC Radio Symphony could have been booming away and I would have granted them the same annoyed scorn I would the dunderhead with the Native American flute. And I *like* classical music.

It's just that when Nature puts on a sublime spectacle, no sound track is required.

The night before our departure I had made two solar filters, one for my camera and the other for the Astroscan. Both used cardboard, duct tape, and Baader Astrosolar film, which is best for this sort of thing. The results looked incredibly crude and I was a bit skeptical of my handiwork, but on the day both filters worked splendidly.

First contact was at 12:38 local time. If we had been down on the beach with the main group, Paul Deans, our TQ astronomer, would have given us a very precise time reading. But since we were by ourselves it was pure chance that I happened to be looking through the Astroscan at the moment when the Sun was first touched by the edge of the Moon. After a moment of silent rejoicing, I announced this fact and reached for my camera to take a picture.

And so it went for more than an hour. The Moon slowly crept across the face of the Sun. I took an occasional picture, ate my box lunch, and chatted with Kathy and Cheryl and Debra. Occasionally Kathy would invite some folks over to look through the telescope or to use the telescope to project the eclipse on their shirts or other parts. The day remained sunny and warm. We kept looking out to sea to discover if we could see the shadow of the Moon advancing across it, but we didn't see anything until literally the last minute.

Wispy cirrus clouds formed in the sky — right around the Sun, where I guess the air was cooler. This didn't prevent us from getting a good view of the solar disk, but it



One of the many terraces in the Sunrise Queen Hotel. We're in the knot of people immediately to the left of that tall pillar (an elevator).

probably meant we wouldn't see as much corona as we would have otherwise.

When the Sun was down to a sliver the world turned eerie. A weird sort of half-twilight descended, and the air grew chill. Fitful half-breezes gusted from every corner of the compass. Venus blazed bright in the sky. You could see a nebulous area of darkness rushing toward us over the sea, like something in a horror film.

Something was very clearly going wrong with the foundations of the universe. If I were a primitive person, I would have been scared witless. I must be more primitive than I thought, because I could feel my heart racing.

And then the Sun was gone, eaten by this huge black monster. The corona glowed around a bottomless hole in the sky. Cheers roared up from a neighboring hotel.

One of the exotic things about a solar eclipse is that, cheers aside, it takes place in silence. It's so cosmic that you expect a sound track. Not a flute, either, but the furious howl of the Moon-monster as it devours the solar disk, or maybe some kind of bizarre choral piece by Györgi Ligeti.

I took off the solar filter and began methodically taking pictures. Snap, move one shutter speed setting, snap. Kathy was yelling at me to look through the telescope. I told her I was busy right now. Snap, move one shutter speed, snap. Kathy kept yelling. I told her to let Cheryl and Debra look.

Snap, snap. I was going to take all the pictures I could right at the beginning, then reserve the rest of totality for gawking. All my pictures show the corona as far smaller, and with far less detail, than I could see with the naked eye.

Eventually I'd run down all the shutter speeds, and took my place at the Astroscan, where the Sun and corona leaped straight onto my retina. Through the scope, the details of the corona were far more visible.

The corona isn't just a ball of faint light surrounding the Sun. It has texture to it, bands of streamers woven in complex patterns. You see it in three dimensions, with structures reaching toward you and other structures leaning away. It's a pearly ivory color with a slight greenish tinge, and other colors have been reported as well.

The corona was smaller than that of the 1998 eclipse we'd watched from Curaçao — a disappointment because, given the absence of sunspots, we'd expected something bigger. Probably the high wisps of cirrus had something to do with this.

One of the things I could have done at this point was look not at the Sun or the corona but at the Moon. The Moon isn't actually dark during an eclipse, because it receives a good deal of reflected light from the Earth.

People have reported that the Moon turns slightly red during an eclipse, and has flashes of other color. I was so carried away that it never occurred to me to look at the Moon at all.

I looked around instead. Standing in the center of the Moon's shadow, we could see a red sunrise completely surrounding us, all 360 degrees (*left*). Totality lasted something like three minutes, forty seconds. Down on the

beach Paul was shouting out a count-down, but up on our terrace I had no idea how much time had passed. I could think of nothing more to do than repeat everything I'd already done. I looked around. I looked through the telescope. I took more snaps. I gaped in awe.

The western sunrise rushed toward us over the sea. I grabbed my camera. Bailey's Beads appeared on the edge of the Moon, where the Sun shone through deep valleys in the lunar mountains. I managed by luck to snap a gorgeous diamond ring formation, then one with another, bigger diamond before the Sun blazed out fully and blinded me.

It was 1:59 pm. We put on our solar filters once more and bade farewell to totality. It's an anticlimax between third and fourth contact. As the day brightened, we took our last views of everything and then packed up our stuff. On the path to our room I noticed that the leaves on the trees were casting crescent-shaped shadows, reflecting the shape of the Sun that shone through them.

The world, and the leaf shadows, slowly returned to normal. In memory, however, the eclipse rages on with a furious, Sun-eating monster — and a terrific soundtrack.

Walter Jon Williams is the award-winning author of the "cosmic thriller" *Implied Spaces*, as well as the forthcoming *This is Not a Game*. His website is www.walterjonwilliams.net.



On The Road

Jet lag is the bane of all long-distance travelers. The first day of any trip is usually spent just getting there. One night's sleep later, and you're off on tour, whether you're ready or not.

There are a number of drugs on the market that claim to combat jet lag, and many travelers swear by them. But if you'd rather not pump drugs into your system, here are some other options for dealing with jet lag. They all have to do with trying to rapidly reset your body's internal clock.

Start with something simple. The moment you're on the plane reset your watch to the local time of your

destination. Then try to behave as if you're already "on the clock." For example, if your watch says it's now 3 am local time, try to sleep. If you can't sleep, then relax as best you can. But if you departed at night and it's already morning at your destination, do your best to stay awake during the flight.

Obviously this concept should be modified for long-haul flights since not sleeping would be counterproductive. But if possible try to time your in-flight sleep time to match what's going on at your arrival location. While airborne, the usual caveats apply: drink plenty of water and avoid alcohol.

Some people claim that avoiding airplane food helps reduce jet lag! So they drink plenty of fluids and munch on high-carbohydrate snacks.

Once you're at your destination, continue to adapt to the local time zone. Go to bed when the locals do (even if you're not tired or it means an exceptionally long day), eat when they do, and so on. If you arrive during daylight hours, get outside and catch some sunlight. Sunshine is better than drugs for resetting your internal clock. Continue to drink plenty of non-alcoholic beverages: a hydrated body is a happy body.

Finally, if you feel you absolutely need some sleep when you arrive but sunset is still hours away, keep it short. An effective nap is one that's less than 45 minutes long. This will prevent you from falling into the deep sleep that'll leave you feeling groggy when you wake up. And once you're up, get outside, grab some air, and explore.

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Go on safari and experience outstanding game viewing in open vehicles, uncrowded wildlife areas, and small intimate camps. Two departures: *June 26 and October 16.*

[Last Call: Eclipse 2008](#)

Space is still available on two trips, to Russia and China, for the *August 1, 2008*, total eclipse of the Sun.

[Grand Passage through Siberia](#)

Ride the Trans-Siberian Express from Moscow to Vladivostok, and experience totality from outside the Siberian city of Novosibirsk.

[The Ancient Silk Road](#)

Travel the legendary Silk Road, ride the famed China Orient Express, and watch the eclipse from the high desert of northern China.

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If you'd like to write a little something for *Travel Quest*, here's what you need to know.

Travel tips for "On the Road" and photo hints for "Making Memories" are easy to submit. Just jot them down and fire them off to me at the e-mail address below. If you have a memorable travel tale to tell, we'd love to hear about it. Write it as a Word document (try to keep it to about 600 words in length), include one or more photos, and send the story and images to me as e-mail attachments.

Your tips, hints, travel tales, and any comments you have about *Travel Quest* will reach me at:

editor@TQ-International.com

I look forward to hearing from you!

Paul Deans
Editor, *Travel Quest*