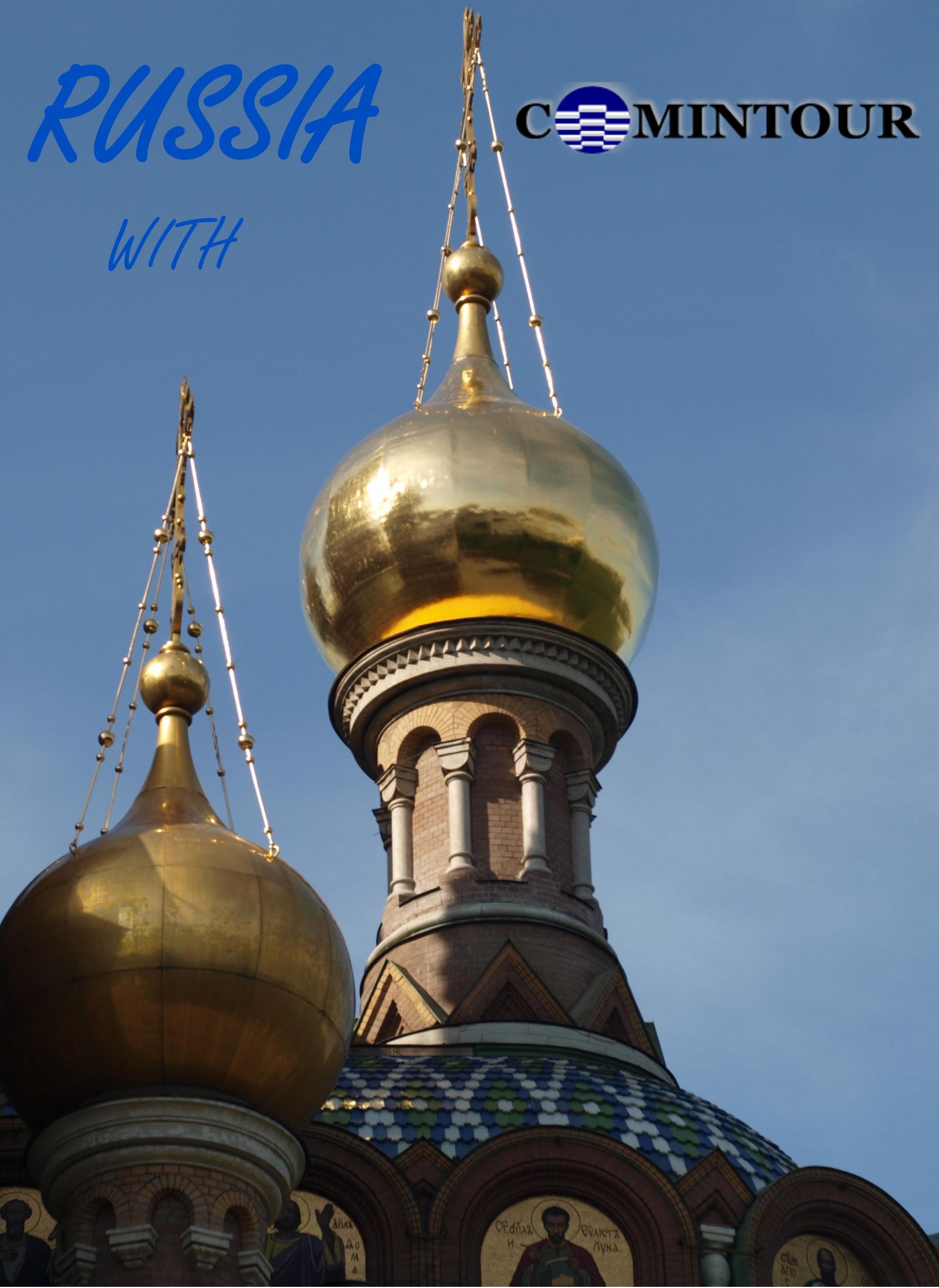


*RUSSIA*

**C**  **MINTOUR**

*WITH*





*Dear colleagues*

We are pleased to introduce our travel company:

We are professionals in tourist business, and put together our skills and experience to contribute the development of tourist industry in Russia. Our goal is to show Russia to your clients using our broad knowledge, many years of practical experience and commitment that enable us to offer a highly competitive tourist product meeting your requirements.

The head office of **COMINTOUR** is located in the very heart of St. Petersburg, the second largest city of Russia.

We specialize in inbound travel to Russia. Our travel operations cover a wide range of **services for tourist groups, individual travellers and businessmen** in St. Petersburg, Moscow, ancient Russian cities of the Golden Ring, the Russian North-West as well as Siberia, The Urals, The Baikal Lake region and other parts of Russia.

Individually served impressions to all your customers is the distinguishing feature and motto of **COMINTOUR**.

*Your COMINTOUR Team*

Touoperator Register:MBT 000551

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**Address: office 1, 21/23, Mokhovaya Str, St. Petersburg 191028, Russia**

**E-mail: [operations@comintour.com](mailto:operations@comintour.com)**

**<http://www.comintour.com>**



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## *our SERVICES:*

### *Hotels*

- *We offer accommodation in the best hotels ranging from 3-star to luxury hotels*
- *We personally know the hotels and the people who run them*
- *You will be supplied with information about each hotel's facilities, location and quality of service to help you make the right choice*
- *We carefully select the type of the hotel your group or individual tourist require and can afford*
- *Our reputation and long standing reliable business contacts allow us to negotiate the very best deals for you*

### *Transfers*

- *We are pleased to offer our clients transfers with guide's service on arrival and departure*
- *Guide will assist during check-in at the hotel*
- *We arrange transfers by private car for 1 to 3 people, by minibus for small groups of 4 to 8 people and by larger motor coaches for groups of 9 people and more; guide's service is always included*

### *Rail, Boat and Air Tickets*

- *We will reserve rail, boat and air tickets from St. Petersburg to all destinations in Russia and abroad*

### *Excursions*

- *You clients will be treated with the friendly warmth and true Russian hospitality to help them escape the pressures of daily life*
- *In-depth sightseeing is another advantage of travelling with Comintour*
- *Tourists will be shown around by licensed professional local guides who will go out of their way to answer their questions, take them behind the scenes and give them views which don't always make it to the newspapers*
- *All separate or package tours include transportation and admission fee to the museums*
- *We will arrange tours booked in advance as well as offer a wide choice of extras*

### *Evening Events*

- *Booking tickets to the most famous St. Petersburg theaters, concert halls, folklore shows*
- *Reservations for dinner in the best restaurants*

### *Special Interest Tours*

- *If your clients are looking for a tour with a difference they can choose one of our offers or tell you about their special interests so that we could find a sight in the city, a farm in the country, contact a shipyard or a secondary school, any museum or specialist to answer their demands. Russia's history and heritage will be revealed on a number of fascinating historical, literary, sports and culinary tours.*
- *We will supply you with the descriptions of the tours we are already operating*
- *We welcome your ideas and are ready to develop a new tourist product in cooperation with you*



### *Incentive Tours*

- *We will work out a special program complying with the duration of the trip to meet the requirements of the company.*
- *Special treatment at the hotel*
- *Welcome drink*
- *Evening events: theater performances, restaurants, night pro-grams with actors, musicians, dancers, folklore show*
- *Best available coaches, most experienced guides*

### *Business Travel*

- *Hotel reservations*
- *Transfers*
- *Private cars and coach hire*
- *Professional interpreters and secretaries*
- *Visa support*

### *Educational and Scientific Tours*

- *We will be pleased to arrange tours for specialists who may be interested in visiting the establishments of that branch of science or technology they are involved in.*
- *We have established contacts with educational and scientific institutions which are so numerous in St. Petersburg, many of them with their own museums*
- *This alternative may help your clients establish new business contacts in Russia*

### *Seminars, Conferences, Exhibitions, Symposia*

- *We will present the information of the available conference rooms of different size in the hotels and in the city, describe the facilities available, arrange transportation, book the hotels and meals*
- *We will keep you informed of the international exhibitions taking place in St. Petersburg*

*your **SUCCESS***

*through our **SERVICE***

*To find out about our offers please study the chapters of this brochure. We would like to keep ourselves in the hearts and minds of the travelling public by being reliable, efficient and offering best value-for-money.*

*We will do all our best to satisfy the needs of your clients and keep them coming back to you and us.*

# NORTH WEST OF RUSSIA

## PALACES AND PARKS OF THE TZARS



If Moscow grew naturally out of a frontier town, Saint Petersburg was from the very beginning conceived and planned as one of the great European capitals. Its name given after Saint Peter the heavenly patron of the man who ordered its construction in the very beginning of XVIII century – Tzar Peter the Great. Some believe he was a vision-

ary, some curse his name, but undoubtedly he was a man of outstanding energy and vigour. Trying to win back the ancient Russian lands on the shores of the Baltic sea he established his new capital at the mouth of Neva River. The best European and Russian architects designed the city from the scratch. Tens of thousands peasants worked on its construction day and night, many died due to severe climate and bad working conditions.

For two hundred years Saint Petersburg remained the capital of the Tzars, each of them beautifying the city. In the summer the whole royal court would move out of the city to the green beautiful parks of the suburbs. Each of the emperors had own favorite summer residence with the best Russian and foreign architects and designers working on their palaces and parks. The most outstanding of such palaces are situated in Peterhof and Pushkin (Tzarskoe selo). In 2010 the city is going to celebrate 300-years of two of these residences Oranienbaum and Tzarskoe Selo. The first of them was originally built for Peter the Great's associate Count Menshikov and later acquired for the royal family. The place is closely connected to the history of the German community in Russia.

Tzarskoe Selo is famous for its Catherine's Palace housing the Amber Room – the masterpiece of the interior design. In the time of the Second World War the palace was stripped off and ruined by the Nazi troops and the Amber Room taken to Germany where its trace had been lost. After the war the Am-

ber Room was painstakingly restored by the best Russian restorers at the cost of lot of money and time. Nowadays you can admire it as in the old days.

In the long cold winters the tzars lived in the Winter Palace, that is nowadays known as The Hermitage Museum. It is not only one of the biggest and most famous art-museums of the world but also a marvelous building featuring majestic state rooms and exquisite cabinets. Nowadays St. Petresburg is one of the world's most beautiful cities, the whole central part of it is an open air museum of various architectural styles. Especially majestic is the city in the summer at so called White Nights, when the sun just briefly goes down for a few hours and silver twilight

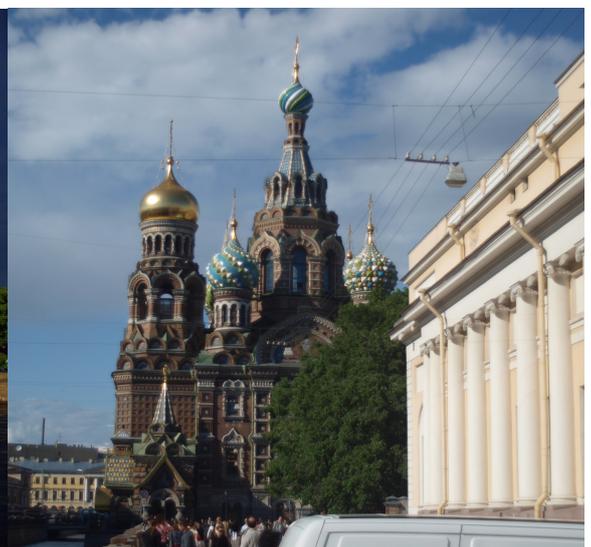
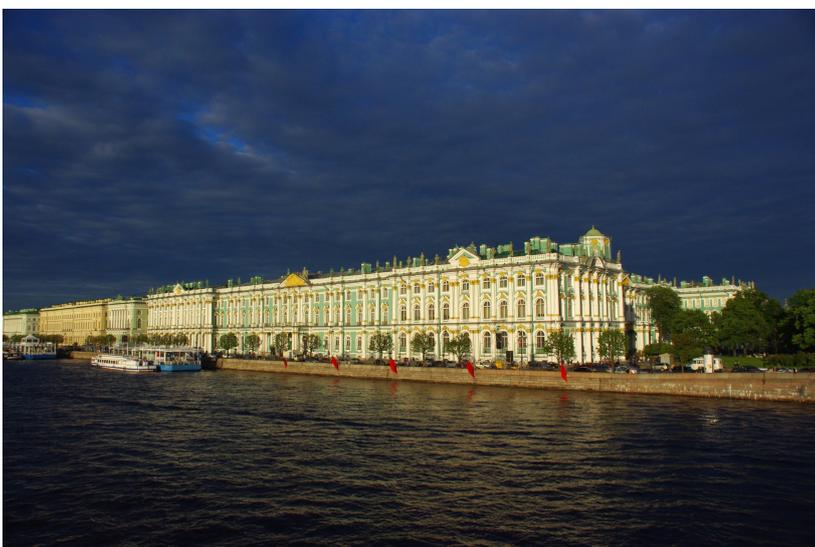


replaces the day. The city is crossed by numerous rivers and canals, hence the nickname given to it “The Venice of the North”. A river boat trip along one of those canals gives you a completely different prospective of the city from the water.

Many world famous writers, artists, composers lived in St.Petersburg, walked its streets. The city was home of the Russian Imperial Ballet, the cultural tradition that is still well preserved nowadays. Saint Petersburg is justly called the cultural capital of Russia. Excellent theatres, including renown Mariinsky (Kirov) opera and ballet teatre, classical and jazz music concerts and festivals, world class museums (like the Hermitage) attract many visitors from all over Russia and abroad.

**The program of the tour: 6 Days/5 Nights**

<b>Day 1</b>	<i>Arrival, transfer to “Petropalace” hotel. Welcome dinner in the hotel.</i>
<b>Day 2</b>	<i>Breakfast. City tour with a visit to Peter and Paul fortress. St. Petersburg is called sometimes 'an open air museum of architecture' with the whole central part of the city declared to be a UNESCO World Heritage site. The most outstanding examples of this rich architectural feast are St. Isaak's and Kazan Cathedras and the Church on the Spilled Blood, numerous palaces, including the Winter Palace – the main residence of the Tzars, the spit of the Basil's Island. In the afternoon the guide take the group to Peter and Paul fortress. It is here where St. Petersburg was started you can see the tombs of most of the members of Romanov royal dynasty buried in the St. Peter and Paul Cathedral, the tallest building in the downtown with its golden spire towering in St. Petersburg's sky. Group visits the first house of Peter the Great greeted by an actor dressed as the tzar. Visit to the palace of Count Menshikov the associate of Peter I. Optional theatre or concert in the evening.</i>
<b>Day 3</b>	<i>After the breakfast the group take a hydrofoil to Peterhof, the palace and garden complex of Peter the Great. Referred sometimes as the "Russian Versailles", Peterhof is an amazing example of the Russian garden design and listed as a UNESCO site. The centerpiece of it is the Grand Cascade with its golden sculptured fountains. In the middle of the ensemble is the sculpture of Samson tearing open the jaws of a lion. A number of palaces and pavilions are scattered around the gardens, featuring exquisite interiors and exteriors.</i>  <i>After a dinner in the “Standard” restaurant, the group continues to Oranienbaum, another Russian royal residence. Originally belonging to Count Menshikov the park and palace were later acquired by the royal family, enlarged and reconstructed. Oranienbaum had reached its golden age in the reign of the emperor Peter III by second half of XVIII century. Most of the work on planning the royal residence was done by famous architect Rinaldi. Further development Oranienbaum received in the reign of Catherine the Great. Overnight back in St.Petersburg.</i>
<b>Day 4</b>	<i>In the morning guided tour of the Hermitage – the Winter Palace of the Russian Emperors. Nowadays the Hermitage is famous as a world class art gallery. Apart of the masterpieces of European art you can also see Egyptian and Oriental collections, superb temporary exhibitions. Even if you are not an art connoisseur, the interiors, including majestic state rooms are must see.</i>  <i>In the afternoon the group goes for a river boat cruise of St.Petersburg, with a complimentary stand up party on the boat. In the evening transfer to Pushkin (Tzarskoe Selo). Check in, hotel Catherine. Dinner in a restaurant.</i>
<b>Day 5</b>	<i>After the breakfast a guided tour of Catherine's and Alexander's palaces and parks. Catherine's palace and park were originally presented by Peter the Great to his wife late becoming empress Catherine I and further extended and beautified by the empress Catherine the Great. Catherine's palace is known as the place of the Amber Room, interior design masterpiece, marauded by the Nazi troops at the time of WW2 and painstakingly restored after the war. In the evening farewell dinner in “Tzarskoselsky present”.</i>
<b>Day 6</b>	<i>Breakfast. Transfer to the airport. Departure.</i>



## HANSEATIC LEAGUE. THE RUSSIAN WAY



Veliky Novgorod (Novgorod the Great) is situated in the North-Western Russia, 180 kilometers from Saint-Petersburg and 524 kilometers from Moscow. The city is easy to reach by car, bus or train.

The oldest city in Russia, one of the biggest in the Medieval Europe, the cradle of Russian democracy, medieval centre of trades and crafts, a golden mine for historians, architects and archaeologists - all this is Veliky Novgorod.

The name Novgorod means "the new town". It is first mentioned as a fortress in the chronicles of 859, and this date is accepted as a starting point of the city's age. However, historians and archaeologists still debate over the exact date of the city's foundation and the location of the "old" town, compared to which the later settlement was considered "new". It is generally considered that the old town used to be the settlement of Varangian Prince Rurik who was summoned to rule over Novgorod in the 9th century and who started the first Russian royal dynasty.

From the very beginnings of its existence, Novgorod had a quite different political order than most of the other Russian cities. At the times of the Kievan Rus', the first Russian state, the oldest son of the Grand Prince of Kiev (King of Russia) traditionally ruled in Novgorod. Grand Prince Vladimir the Great, who converted Russia into Christianity, and his son Yaroslav the Wise were among those who occupied Novgorod throne for some time. From the year 1136 and on, Novgorod became "free of princes", which means that princes from the royal house were invited for a period of time (usually during the wars) to serve as generals or administrators, without much of real power. They were hired on certain conditions which were stated in a contract. If the prince didn't come up to the expectations, he was simply fired and expelled.

Moreover, the prince and his troops were forbidden to live within the proper city borders and hunt nearby.

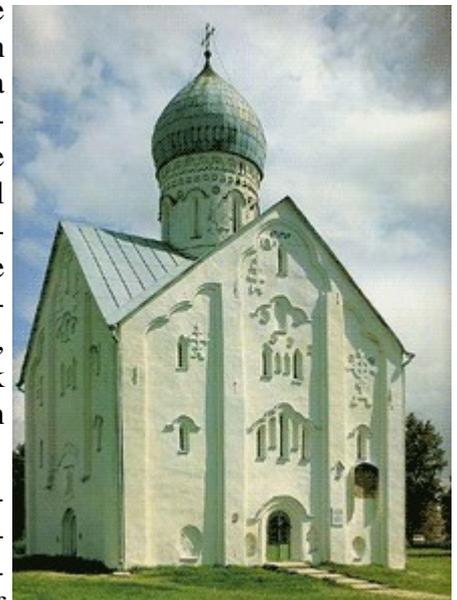
From the 12th century, the Novgorodian Land became an independent feudal republic managed by the Veche - a sort popular gathering of representatives from all city ends. Veche made decisions concerning war and peace, foreign and internal policy and other global matters as well as electing the Archbishop of Novgorod. The town grew up around its *Kremlin* (citadel), the most ancient in Russia, an oval red-brick fortress on the banks of the Volkhov river, surrounded by a large moat.

Russia's decision-making centre at that time, Veliky Novgorod is also the home of Saint Sophia Cathedral which towers above the sixty or more churches of the fortified city. Also in the Kremlin is a truly astonishing and exquisite collection of impressively large icons, probably the finest in Russia.

For centuries, Veliky Novgorod was a political centre of a vast land from the Baltic region and Finland in the West to the Northern Urals in the East. It was a gateway to Europe, one of the most powerful hubs of international trade on the way from the Baltic Sea to Volga, serving as a link between Northern Europe and Asia.

Medieval Novgorod had close contacts with the Hanseatic League of European cities, a prototype of present-day European Market. The League had its permanent representatives in Novgorod. Since 1993, Veliky Novgorod is a member of the modern Hanseatic League of New Time based on traditions of Medieval Hansa, that includes more than 160 cities from 15 European countries.

In December 14, 1992 at the jubilee conference of the World Heritage Committee UNESCO it was decided to include the historical monuments of Novgorod and its suburbs into the List of World Heritage.



The program of the tour: 3 Days/2 Nights

<b>Day 1</b>	<i>Arrival to Novgorod and check –in the hotel, dinner at the hotel</i>
<b>Day 2</b>	<i>Breakfast, The Yuriev Monastery (XI), St. George cathedral, Museum of Wooden architecture “Vitoslavitsy” – features ancient churches and other traditional buildings, the concert of bell-ringing, lunch; “Ganza tour”: City tour, Kremlin tour, Sophia Cathedral, monument “Millennium of Russia, Zvonitsa of Sophia Cathedral, ancient Bells of Novgorod (XVI-XVII)”; “Fair on the Marketplace”: Yaroslav Courtyard and Marketplace – architectural complex XII-XVII, guest meeting with the traditional Russian personages Sadko and Lubava, accompanied by the folk entertainment group (ancient Russian musical instruments, songs, dances, games, show of the local handicrafts, welcome shot of vodka and bliny and pirojki ), small gift souvenir to the each guest. Dinner at the hotel</i>
<b>Day 3</b>	<i>Breakfast, check-out</i>

**Arrangements:**

- City tour
- Kremlin
- The Yuriev Monastery (XI), St. George cathedral
- Vitoslavitsy
- Sophia Cathedral
- Yaroslav Courtyard and Marketplace
- 2 Dinners at the hotel
- Lunch
- Accommodation 2 B/B
- Transfers Airport / Hotel / Airport

## ONE DAY TRIP TO NOVGOROD

**The program of the tour:**

*Leaving **St.Petersburg** by bus (at around 7:30).*

*Arrival to **Novgorod** (at around 11:00). Russian traditional “**Bread & Salt**” welcome by a Russian folklore group. Coffee-stop at the **Beresta** hotel.*

*Sightseeing **tour of Novgorod**, including the **Kremlin** and the **Cathedral of St.Sophia**.*

*Lunch at a Russian restaurant.*

*Tour of the **Yuriev Monastery** by the **Ilmen Lake** and the **Cathedral of St.George**.*

*Tour of the open-air **museum of the wooden architecture**. Coffee-stop at the **Beresta** hotel.*

*Presenting the customers with special birch rind medals to commemorate their visit.*

*Departure to St.Petersburg. Return to the hotel (at around 21:00).*

**Recommended period for travel: all year round.**

**The price of the tour is quoted by request.**

## ONE DAY TRIP TO PSKOV

Mentioned for the first time in the Chronicles in 903 the ancient **Pskov** is attractive for foreign tourists for two main reasons: it has a lot of monuments of the ancient Russian culture and is located conveniently close to St.Petersburg, the Russia's major tourist center. Although the city can be easily accessed from St.Petersburg either by bus or by train, the present tour offers customers a rather exotic way of getting to Pskov by MI-8 helicopter, which has a specially designed passenger cabin and covers the way for an hour. After dissolution of the ancient Russian state **Kiev Rus'** into several independent principalities (12<sup>th</sup> century) **Pskov** became the part of the **Novgorod land**. It stayed the dominion, and the capital of the **Republic of Pskov** at the same time, until the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, when both **Novgorod and Pskov** were annexed by the mighty **Moscow principality**. During its long history **Pskov** played repeatedly the role of the Russia's stronghold in the North-West. Besides defending the country from many invasions, it was also the city where **Peter the Great** started his glorious campaigns. With founding **St.Petersburg** **Pskov** lost its trading and commercial importance, but nevertheless stayed the



important cultural and religious center, which witnessed many significant events, including abdication of the last Russian Emperor Nicolas II. The present-day **Pskov** is renowned for the numerous 11<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> century architectural monuments including **the Kremlin** and the majestic **Trinity Cathedral**. Especially attractive are the old churches that dot the city. Among the other highlights of the tour are the **Pechorsky Monastery of Assumption** and the suburban town of **Izborsk**, one of ten Russia's oldest towns.

### ***The program of the tour:***



Arrival in **Pskov** (before noon). Traditional Russian "**Bread & Salt**" welcome (a sort of folk show). Sightseeing **tour of the city** including **the Kremlin** and the **Trinity Cathedral**. The walking tour **of the Kremlin**, showing the oldest stone structures of the city. Visiting the **Cathedral of St.John** and the Cathedral's **icon-painting workshop**. During meeting with a priest of the Cathedral the customers will be informed about the present-day life of the Orthodox monasteries. Proceed to the town of **Pechory** for the tour of the famous local monastery. Stop on the way for lunch in the town of **Izborsk**. **The walking tour of the Pechorsky Monastery of Assumption**. The adjective **Pechorsky** indicates the monastery's location and originates from the word, which is Russian for "**the caves**". The monastery received its name because of the first hermits who lived and prayed in the caves dug by the monks on the site of the future cloister. Owing to their unique pre-

serving properties the caves were also used by the monks as burial places. The monastery was founded on August 15, 1473, when the first built-in-the cave **Church of Assumption of Virgin Mary** was consecrated. By the late 16<sup>th</sup> century, when several stone churches and the wall around the monastery were built, the architectural ensemble of the monastery was basically completed. We also visit the **Caves of the Holy Mountain**, the burial ground of the monks, defenders of the monastery and its benefactors. Return to **St.Petersburg**.

# DISCOVERING ORTHODOX RELICS OF THE NORTH

ST.PETERSBURG / OLD LADOGA / TIKHVIN

The tours presented below are recommended for buying on the spot as **extra tours** aimed to introduce customers to the history of **Rus'** (the name of the medieval Russia before unification)

and the most revered Orthodox relics. The tours start from **St.Petersburg** and include visits to the old towns of **Old Ladoga** and **Tikhvin**, both very popular for unique history and monuments.



Rightly called **Russia's first capital**, the town of **Old Ladoga** was established in 862 by the **Varangian** (Viking) **Prince Rurick**, who was to become the founder of the dynasty that ruled Russia for nearly 700 years. Invited by the Slavonic tribes to stop the unceasing internal conflicts, Prince Rurick started ruling the tribes by building a fortified town on the steep banks of the **Volkhov river** and annexing the adjacent lands of **Beloozero** and **Izborsk**. 15 years after he moved the capital of his state from Old Ladoga to **Novgorod**.

The town of **Tikhvin** (founded 1560) is known for the **Assumption Monastery**, one of the biggest in Russia, and the **icon of Our Lady of Tikhvin**, which is housed in it. It is also the birthplace of the composer **Rimsky-Korsakov**. The first settlement on the site of the town dates back to 1383, the year of miraculous occurrence of the **icon of Our Lady** and building of the wooden **Assumption Church** on the scene of it (was replaced in 1515 by the stone church of the same name). In 1558, aiming to convert Tikhvin into an important strong point in

## ***I. The program of the one-day tour to Tikhvin:***

Breakfast. Leaving the hotel for **Tikhvin** (at around 8:00). Stop on the way in **Old Ladoga**. (some 120 km away from St.Petersburg). Tour of the **fortress**. Visits to sanctuaries: **the Church of St.George** (12<sup>th</sup> century), **the Church of Demetrius Solunsky** (17<sup>th</sup> century), **St.Nicolas' Monastery**, **the Assumption Nunnery** (an unique sample of the 12<sup>th</sup> century Bizantian-styled architecture). Arrival to **Tikhvin** (some 100 km away from Old Ladoga). Lunch at the Monastery's refectory. The tour of **the Assumption Monastery** and **the Assumption Church** built to house and protect the miracle-working **icon of Our Lady of Tikhvin**. It is considered that the icon was painted by the **Apostle Luke** in the lifetime of **Mother of God** and was staying in **Jerusalem** until the 5<sup>th</sup> century, when it was carried to **Byzantium**. In 1383, 70 years prior to conquering Byzantium by the Turks, the icon vanished from the shrine and occurred miraculously over the waters of the Ladoga Lake. Founded by edict of **Ivan the Terrible** specially to protect the icon, the **Assumption Monastery** was closed by Bolsheviks in 1924. In the same year the icon, along with other Monastery's relics, was carried to **Pskov**. In 1944 it was brought to **Riga** and later carried by the archbishop John (Garklavs) firstly to Germany and afterwards to the United States, where it was housed at the **St.Trinity's Cathedral** in **Chicago**.

According to the terms of the archbishop's testament the icon could be returned to Russia only on condition of reopening the Assumption Monastery. The testament was satisfied by the Russian Orthodox Church after thorough restoration of the Monastery, which cost the Church some 20 million roubles. Return to **St.Petersburg**.

## ***II. The program of the tour to Old Ladoga (2 days / 1 night):***

Besides visiting **all the highlights** of the one-day tour, **it includes:**

- overnight in **Tikhvin**;
- visiting the **Rimsky-Korsakov Museum** (on the day of departure);
- a concert of classical music specially arranged in a church.

## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE NORTHWEST

The tour enables a visitor to get acquainted with the cultural wealth and architectural splendour of the **Imperial St.Petersburg**, to trace the history of Russia from the 11<sup>th</sup> through 19<sup>th</sup> centuries in **Novgorod**, and to admire the miraculous **Kizhi Island** renowned for unique wooden Churches built without a single nail.



### The program of the tour: 8 Days /7 Nights

Day 1	Arrival to <b>Saint Petersburg</b> . Transfer to the hotel. Check- in. Dinner at the hotel.
Day 2	Breakfast. Sightseeing <b>tour of the city</b> . Visit to <b>the Peter and Paul Fortress</b> . Lunch at a city restaurant
Day 3	Breakfast. Tour of <b>the Hermitage museum</b> . Lunch at a city restaurant. Tour of <b>the St.Isaac's Cathedral</b> .
Day 4	Breakfast. Leaving the hotel by bus for <b>Novgorod</b> . Sightseeing <b>tour of the city</b> including visits to <b>the Kremlin</b> and <b>St.Sophia's Cathedral</b> . Lunch. <b>Tours of the Yuriev Monastery and the Museum of</b>
Day 5	Breakfast. Trip to <b>Pushkin</b> for the tour of the <b>Catherine's Palace</b> and park. Lunch. Trip to <b>Pavlovsk</b> for
Day 6	Breakfast. Trip to <b>Petrodvorets</b> for the tour of the <b>Grand Palace</b> and the <b>Lower park</b> with fountains. Return to St.Petersburg. Lunch in a city restaurant. Tour of the <b>Alexander Nevsky Monastery</b> . Dinner.
Day 7	Arrival to <b>Petrozavodsk</b> . Transfer to the hotel. Breakfast at the hotel (a day-room is provided to the group for the whole day), trip to <b>Kizhi island</b> in the <b>Onega Lake</b> by hydrofoil. Walking tour of the island. Lunch. Return to Petrozavodsk. City tour. Dinner. Transfer to the train station. Departure to St.Petersburg by
Day 8	Arrival to <b>St.Petersburg</b> . Breakfast. Transfer to the airport. Departure.

# LOW SEASON ADVANTAGES

*Dear colleagues!*

Renowned as one of the world's architectural masterpieces and the cultural capital of Russia, St.Petersburg offers its visitors a wealth of individual tourist attractions that can hardly be outnumbered by any other world's tourist centre. Many Russians and foreigners dream of coming here and seeing fantastic museums, palaces, theatres and other points of interest that are abundant in the city. The number of city's guests is steadily growing in the spring as the air is warming up, traditionally reaching its peak in summer. Along with limited accommodation resources, the high season tourism faces an-



Much easier access to the museums and popular dining places;

Much wider choice of accommodation at lower prices;

Much better range of the companies, orchestras and soloists performing at the local theatres and concert halls. It's also the period when two renowned art festivals-the International Ballet Festival and the Art Square Musical Festival - are taking place here.

No doubt it's a very good time for arranging conferences, seminars and incentive tours - partially because you can get especially attractive offers from the hotels, venues and catering companies.

It is the time when you can watch or try something very traditionally Russian - be it troika ride in a snow-covered park or Maslenitsa holiday when Russians celebrate the coming of the spring with pancakes and butter or New Year and Russian Christmas seasons when the squares of the Russian cities embellished with beautifully-lit fir trees and other decorations.

When snow turns tree branches into silver silhouettes, powders the granite embankments and puts the white lace over the grilles of the gardens, don't you think that ALL THIS IS WORTHY TO BE SEEN?



other problem: tourist sites become quite crowded. It's enough to say that high-season visits account for nearly 70 % of the total annual volume of tourists coming here. Because of that touring the city in summer is not always comfortable. While the White Nights add a lot to the beauty of St.Petersburg in the summer, there are many other advantages making the city very attractive in winter, autumn or early spring. After all, the world-famous Hermitage museum or internationally acclaimed Mariinsky Theatre are fantastic at any time of a year!

Apart from evident benefits of visiting St.Petersburg at a low-season period are:

## RUSSIAN WINTER FAIRY TALE



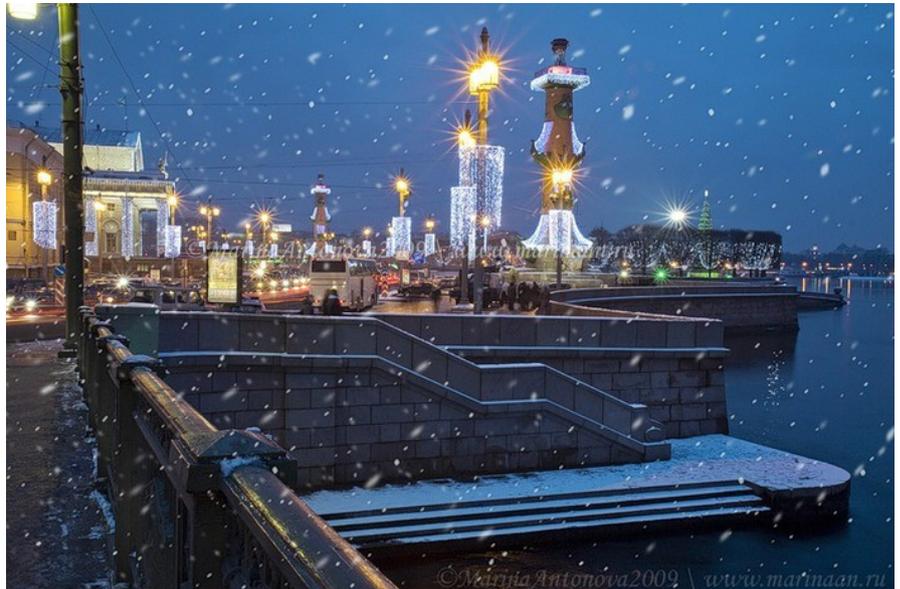
With its population of nearly 5 million citizens St.Petersburg is the fourth largest city in Europe. It is located closer to the North Pole than any other world's large city- only 6,5 degrees of latitude below Arctic Circle! At the same time the city's climate is still affected by the warm currents of the Atlantic. When you visit St.Petersburg in winter, the peculiar northern daylight and snow add special charm to the city but there is no extreme cold there. Covered with white, the city's parks and squares look enchanted and create the impression of peace and spaciousness. The golden spires and domes contrast with the blue or grey sky and white frozen rivers and canals, while the grilles of the gardens are forming an intricate lacework. It all creates the image of the Russian winter that you have probably gained from Tolstoy's novels. Troika ride in a snowy park followed by a dinner in a Russian restaurant or a ballet performance at Mariinsky will make your tour an unforgettable experience.

### The program of the tour: 5 Days / 4 Nights

Day 1	Arrival in <b>St.Petersburg</b> . Russian traditional <b>Bread &amp; Salt welcome</b> . Transfer to the hotel. Check-in. Dinner at the hotel. The night tour of <b>the St.Peter &amp; Paul Cathedral</b> (the burial ground of the Romanov royal family) opened exclusively for the group members. <b>A live concert of sacred music</b> performed in the interiors of the Cathedral.
Day 2	Breakfast. The <b>tour of St.Petersburg's highlights</b> . The <b>tour of the Russian museum</b> . Some 400000 exhibits of the collection open the world of the Russian fine art from the 10 <sup>th</sup> century to the present day, including unique collections of Russian icons and Russian avant-garde. The afternoon tour of the nicest private palace of St.Petersburg: <b>the Yusupovs' Palace</b> . The tour gives a thorough idea of the life styles of the Russian aristocracy of the past centuries. It includes visiting the gala and private rooms of the Palace and unique private theatre. Of some special interest is visiting the room where a mysterious murder of <b>Gregory Rasputin</b> took place. Dinner in a city restaurant. Return to the hotel.
Day 3	Breakfast. The whole day tour of the former royal residences in <b>Pushkin</b> (Tsarskoye Selo) and <b>Pavlovsk</b> , the fantastic palaces and parks of which add a lot to the attractiveness of the winter country scenery. The tour of <b>the Great Catherine's Palace</b> designed by <b>Rastrelli</b> in the mid of the 18 <sup>th</sup> century in the lavish Russian baroque style, and the famous <b>Amber Room</b> . Proceed to <b>Pavlovsk</b> . The tour of the Palace built by <b>Catherine the Great</b> for her son, <b>the Russian Emperor Paul</b> . <b>Troika ride</b> in the park (under favourable weather condition only). Dinner at the <b>Podvorye</b> restaurant known for Russian specialities and fantastic folklore show. Return to the hotel.
Day 4	Breakfast. The tour of <b>the St.Isaac's Cathedral</b> , one of the world's most majestic. The afternoon <b>tour of Hermitage Museum</b> to visit not only the fabulous fine art collections but the glorious gala and private rooms of the Winter Palace as well. <b>The farewell dinner and show</b> at the restaurant with excellent Russian cuisine. Return to the hotel.
Day 5	Breakfast. Check-out, transfer to the airport, departure.

## WINTER SUITE

The tour gives you an insight into the two Russian capitals with all their cultural treasures, but also a bit of the countryside which is so different – vast, enigmatic, more traditional. It mostly suites to those with an interest in Russian classic music, but the general travellers will be pleased with it as well. A jolly Troika ride on a snowy road is a great fun as well as a touch of the Russian tradition.



### The program of the tour: 8 Days / 7 Nights

Day 1	<b>Arrival in Moscow.</b> Transfer to the <b>Sheraton hotel</b> . Welcome with a glass of Champagne. Check-in. Dinner at the hotel. The tour of <b>Moscow by night</b> .
Day 2	Breakfast. Sightseeing <b>tour of Moscow:</b> Tverskaya ulitsa, (the main thoroughfare of the city), Manege Square, Red Square, Sparrow Hills (known for a fantastic view of the city), Novodevichy Convent (New Convent of the Virgin), etc. Lunch in a city restaurant. Afternoon <b>tour of the Kremlin</b> and one of its Cathedrals.
Day 3	Breakfast. Trip to <b>Kolomenskoye</b> , an ancient royal summer retreat. Welcome by a <b>folklore group</b> . The wooden churches of Kolomenskoye with their blue and golden cupolas date back to the early period of the Russian State. Among the attractions of the place is the house of the Russian Emperor Peter I, with a 600 years old oak tree planted nearby. Lunch in a city restaurant. Afternoon visit to <b>the Pushkin Fine Art Museum</b> , one of the best art museums in Russia featuring exhibits from <b>Greek antiquities to Picasso</b> .
Day 4	Breakfast. Trip to <b>the town of Klin</b> (90 km north-west of Moscow), known for the country estate of the Russian composer <b>Tchaikovsky</b> to be located there. It was in Klin that he composed world famous symphonic concerts and ballets. In a concert hall of the museum visitors can enjoy listening to Tchaikovsky's great music. Lunch in a local restaurant. Return to Moscow. Time at leisure. Transfer to the railway station. Departure to <b>St.Petersburg</b> by overnight train.
Day 5	Arrival in <b>St.Petersburg</b> . Transfer to the <b>Corinthia Nevsky Palace Hotel</b> . Welcome with a glass of Champagne. Check-in. Breakfast. Sightseeing <b>tour of the city</b> (Nevsky prospect, the Palace Square, The Spit of St.Basil's Island, St.Isaac's Square, Smolny, etc.). The tour of <b>the Peter and Paul fortress</b> . Lunch in a city restaurant. Time at leisure.
Day 6	Breakfast. Whole day trip to <b>Pushkin and Pavlovsk</b> , the former royal residences. Visit to <b>the Great Catherine's Palace</b> . Lunch and folklore show in the <b>Podvorye</b> Russian restaurant Visit to the <b>Palace of the Russian Emperor Paul</b> . <b>Troika ride</b> in the park of Pavlovsk.
Day 7	Breakfast. Tour of the <b>Hermitage museum</b> (West European Arts, the gala and private rooms of the Winter Palace, etc.). Lunch in one of the city's palaces. Afternoon tour of <b>the Rimsky-Korsakov museum</b> including a concert of the classical music. Return to the hotel. <b>Farewell dinner</b> in a city restaurant.
Day 8	Breakfast. Tour of <b>the St.Isaac's Cathedral</b> . Farewell drink. Transfer to the airport.

# WINTER TOUR OF THE TWO RUSSIA'S CAPITALS



This tour introduces you to the history, culture and **major highlights of two Russia's capitals: Moscow and St.Petersburg**. Both cities are attractive for tourism all year round. However, we should like to draw customers' attention to visiting them in **autumn, winter and early spring**, when sightseeing, or visiting museums and theatres

can be done much easier as compared to summer. It's also the time when tour prices are especially attractive.

**The program for Moscow includes: a sightseeing tour of Moscow** (the Cathedral of Saint Basil, the Bolshoy theatre, the Moscow State University, tour of the Moscow metro), **the tours of the Kremlin**

**and Kolomenskoye, a circus performance**. An overnight train will take tourists to **St.Petersburg**, the former capital of Russia, one of the world's most renown architectural masterpieces. **The program for St.Petersburg includes:** the tour of the **Hermitage museum, a trip to Pushkin** (Tsarskoe selo), the tour of the **Peter and Paul Fortress and Cathedral**, the tour of the **Alexander Nevsky Monastery**, where tourists can see the tombs of the famous Russian composers (Tchaikovsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, Borodin), and writers (Dostoevsky and others).

Both cities nowadays also offer excellent opportunities to dip yourself into nightlife. Music clubs, bars, restaurants and casinos - many of them open trough the night. World famous ballet companies and music performers, that usually go touring in the summer, stay at home in the winter, therefore giving a great opportunity to see them in much less crowded environment and often cheaper.

### ***The program of the tour: 8 Days / 7 Nights***

Day 1	Arrival in <b>Moscow</b> , transfer to the hotel, check-in, dinner at the hotel.
Day 2	Breakfast, sightseeing <b>tour of Moscow, metro tour</b> , dinner.
Day 3	Breakfast, visit to the <b>Kremlin</b> and one of its Cathedrals, walking tour of <b>Kitai-gorod</b> , dinner, Circus performance.
Day 4	Breakfast, free time, afternoon trip to <b>Kolomenskoye</b> , an ancient royal summer retreat, troika ride, Russian dinner, transfer to the railway station, overnight train to St. Petersburg.
Day 5	Arrival in St.Petersburg, breakfast, sightseeing <b>tour of the city</b> , check-in (after the tour), free time, welcome cocktail and dinner at the hotel.
Day 6	Breakfast, tour of <b>the Hermitage</b> , tour of the <b>Alexander Nevsky Monastery</b> , dinner.
Day 7	Breakfast, trip to the town of <b>Pushkin</b> for visiting the Great Catherine's Palace and park, folklore performance and fourchette). Dinner in a city restaurant.
Day 8	Breakfast, tour of the <b>Peter &amp; Paul Fortress</b> , check-out, transfer to the airport, departure.

## NEW YEAR PROGRAM I

MOSCOW / SUZDAL / VLADIMIR

Celebrate New Year in the charming ancient cities of the old Russia. Take a troika ride in Suzdal – a fairytale town that looks like it was sealed and preserved in Medieval time. See the architectural masterpieces of Vladimir – the ancient capital of Russia that survived the Mongol invasion and retained its unique charm through the following eight centuries of turbulent Russian history. Witness the Russian Christmas preparation in sacred Trinity Monastery of Sergiev Posad. Visit Moscow – one of the most vibrant and thriving cities in Europe, during the favorite holidays of the Russian people.



### **The program of the tour: 7 Days / 6 Nights**

Day 1 December 28	<b>Arrival to Moscow</b> , transfer to the hotel, traditional Russian <b>Bread &amp; Salt welcome</b> , check-in, dinner at the hotel. <b>Sightseeing tour of Moscow by night.</b>
Day 2 December 29	Breakfast, <b>city tour, metro tour, tour of the Kremlin</b> (a Cathedral and the Armory Chamber). Dinner at the hotel, Circus performance.
Day 3 December 30	Breakfast, <b>tour of the Tretyakov Art Gallery</b> , departure for <b>Suzdal</b> . Arrival to Suzdal (at around 19.00). Check-in. Dinner at the hotel.
Day 4 December 31	Breakfast, <b>sightseeing tour of Suzdal</b> (by sleighs), <b>visits to the Kremlin, the Evfimiev Monastery of the Saviour and the Annunciation Cathedral. Attending church bells performance by Cathedral's bell ringers.</b> Lunch (blini tasting). Time at leisure. Visiting <b>evening service</b> celebrated in a Russian Orthodox church accomplished by a Russian clergyman's brief review of the traditions of the Russian Orthodox Christmas.  22:00-03:00 – <b>A New Year dinner.</b> Visiting fireworks and outdoors festivities (Grandfather Frost and Snow Maiden's show).
Day 5 January 01	Breakfast, departure for <b>Vladimir</b> , <b>sightseeing tour of the city</b> (the Golden Gates, the Church of St.Dimitrus). Lunch in a city restaurant. Visit to <b>Our Lady's Ascension Cathedral</b> , trip to <b>Bogolyubovo</b> , visit to <b>the Church of Pokrova na Nerli</b> . Return to Suzdal. Dinner at the Trapeznaya restaurant.
Day 6 January 02	Departure for <b>Moscow</b> . Visit to <b>the Holy Trinity Monastery</b> (on the way). Lunch in the town of <b>Sergiev Posad</b> . Arrival to Moscow, transfer to the hotel, check-in, dinner at the hotel
Day 7 January 03	Breakfast, transfer to the airport.

## NEW YEAR PROGRAM II

MOSCOW / SUZDAL / VLADIMIR / ST.PETERSBURG



Another exciting way to celebrate New Year in Russia. Lots of fun and many interesting discoveries. The ancient Russian cities are especially charming in the winter, with all those golden domes glitter above the snow.

### **The program of the tour: 9 Days / 8 Nights**

Day 1 December 28	<b>Arrival in Moscow</b> , transfer to the hotel, <b>welcome with bread &amp; salt</b> , check-in, dinner, <b>tour of the "Moscow by night"</b> .
Day 2 December 29	Breakfast, <b>sightseeing tour of the city</b> , <b>tour of the Moscow Metro</b> , <b>tour of the Kremlin with 1 Cathedral and the Armory</b> . Dinner at the hotel, circus.
Day 3 December 30	Breakfast, <b>tour of the Tretyakov Gallery</b> , <b>departure to Suzdal</b> ; <b>arrival at Suzdal</b> by 19.00. Transfer to the hotel, check-in, dinner at the hotel.
Day 4 December 31	Breakfast, <b>sightseeing tour of Suzdal</b> (in horse-harnessed sleighs), <b>tour of the Kremlin</b> , <b>visit to the Spasso-Eufimievsky Monastery</b> , <b>Annunciation Cathedral</b> , a small liturgical concert performed with church bells. Lunch downtown (with blinis), free time, presence at the church mass, Initiation in <b>the traditions of the Russian Orthodox Christmas by a Russian clergyman</b> .  22:00-03:00 – <b>Christmas dinner</b> (alcoholic drinks included) with program, fireworks and outdoors festivities in the market square with Grandfather Frost (Russian Santa Claus) and snow maiden;
Day 5 January 01	Breakfast, <b>departure to Vladimir</b> , sightseeing tour of the city, <b>the Golden Gates</b> , visits to <b>The Church of St.Demetrius</b> , lunch in Vladimir, <b>visit to Our Lady's Ascension Cathedral</b> , <b>trip to Bogolyubovo</b> , <b>visit to the Church of Pokrov</b> (the Saint Veil) upon Nerl. <b>Return to Suzdal</b> . Dinner at the restaurant 'Trapeznaya'.
Day 6 January 02	<b>Departure to Moscow</b> , <b>tour of the Holy Trinity Monastery</b> , lunch in Serguiev Possad, <b>Arrival in Moscow</b> , dinner, transfer to the rail station, <b>departure to St.Petersburg</b> by a night train.
Day 7 January 03	<b>Arrival in St.Petersburg</b> , breakfast, transfer to the hotel, check-in, <b>sightseeing tour of the city including excursion to the Peter &amp; Paul Fortress and the Cathedral</b> , dinner at the hotel.
Day 8 January 04	Breakfast, <b>tour of the Hermitage</b> , free time, dinner at the hotel.
Day 9 January 05	Breakfast, transfer to the airport.

## NEW YEAR IN ST. PETERSBURG

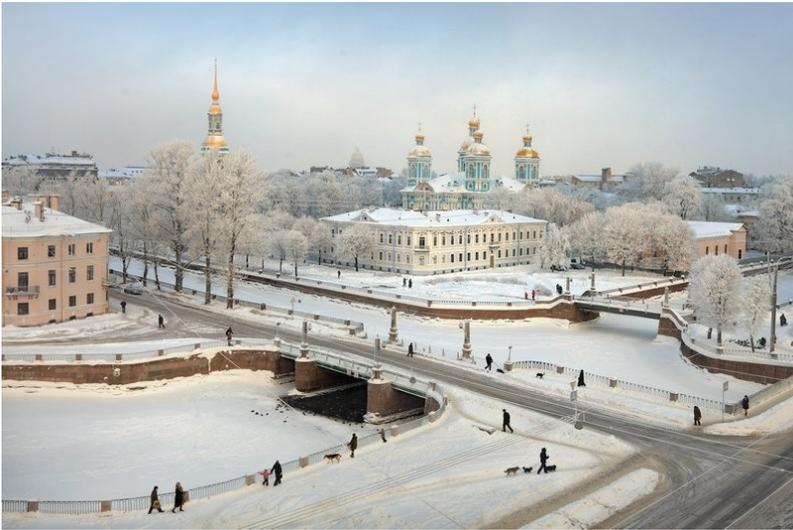


Located in a new district of St.Petersburg on the shore of the **Gulf of Finland**, the four-star **Park Inn Pribaltiyskaya** is the city's largest (**1200 rooms**) hotel meeting entirely the international standards. **20** three-room suites, **40** two-room suites and **1140** twin-bedded rooms can accommodate **2400 guests**. Several rooms are for non-smokers and for disabled guests. The hotel has excellent dining and conference facilities. Along with 9 restaurants, 16 bars and 6 banquet rooms it has two congress halls for 900 and 250 seats fully equipped to run congress or meetings of any level. The amenities include individual room temperature control, electronic code locks, international telephone with direct dialing and operator's service, mini bar, satellite TV, Voice Mail, etc.

### **The program of the tour: 5 Days / 4 Nights**

Day 1	Arrival in <b>St.Petersburg</b> , transfer to the hotel, check-in, welcome cocktail, dinner at the hotel.
Day 2	Breakfast, sightseeing <b>tour of the city</b> including visit to the <b>St.Isaac's Cathedral</b> , lunch in a city restaurant, afternoon at leisure, <b>New Year gala dinner</b> (rich choice of Russian specialities, greeting by Santa Claus, concert program, etc.)
Day 3	Breakfast, trip to <b>Pushkin</b> for the tour of the <b>Great Catherine's Palace</b> and its famous <b>Amber Room</b> , <b>troika ride</b> , <b>Russian tea party &amp; entertainment</b> , dinner and folk show at <b>the Podvorye</b> Russian restaurant. Return to the hotel.
Day 4	Breakfast, tour of the <b>Hermitage Art Museum</b> , lunch in the city, afternoon at leisure, <b>ballet perfor-</b>
Day 5	Breakfast, check-out, transfer to the airport, departure.

## RUSSIAN WINTER IN ST.PETERSBURG



St.Petersburg, one of the world's most beautiful cities, is admirable all year round, but every season has its own attractions. It is in winter when the city looks especially charming in its snow attire. It's in winter when you won't feel rushed, as you may in summer, standing in long lines to enter a museum and making your way through the crowds of people in the streets. It is in winter when fantastic museums and celebrated theatres are easily accessible and the hotels are ready to offer the most attractive prices.

### The program of the tour: 7 Days / 6 Nights

Day 1	<b>Arrival in St. Petersburg</b> , transfer to the hotel, <b>welcome cocktail</b> , check-in, dinner at the hotel.
Day 2	<b>Sightseeing tour of the city</b> including a visit to the <b>Peter &amp; Paul Fortress</b> , the place where the city has got its start, and to the <b>Cathedral of St.Peter &amp; St.Paul</b> , a burial ground of the <b>Romanov royal family</b> . Afternoon at leisure free. Dinner and a folk show at <b>the former Palace of the Grand Prince Nicholas</b> .
Day 3	<b>Visits to the St.Petersburg Cathedrals: The Marine Cathedral of St.Nicholas</b> (This is a functioning Russian Orthodox Cathedral built in the sumptuous baroque style in the 18th century), <b>St.Isaac's Cathedral</b> (The interior of the Cathedral strikes imagination with the abundance of gold, semiprecious stones and minerals. The walls are richly decorated with frescoes, icon paintings and mosaics by the best Russian artists), <b>Church of the Saviour on the Spilt Blood</b> , one of the city's most beautiful, lavishly ornamented, modeled on the Church of St.Basil in Moscow, <b>The Cathedral of Our Lady of Kazan</b> (built in the beginning of the 19 <sup>th</sup> century, it is a masterpiece of the neo-classical style, modeled on St.Peter's in Rome), <b>The Chesma Church</b> dating back to the 18 <sup>th</sup> century, one of the few neo-gothic buildings in the city, <b>The Trinity Church</b> (built in the 19 <sup>th</sup> century, it is known among its parishioners as <b>Kulitch and Paskha</b> , which is
Day 4	Visits the residences of the Russian Tsars in Pushkin and Pavlovsk. Named after the great Russian poet, the town of Pushkin is renowned for the Russian baroque Great Catherine's Palace designed by Rastrelli in the 18 <sup>th</sup> century. Over hundred yards long facade of the Palace is richly decorated with baroque mouldings presenting a spectacular and overwhelming sight. The more so is the exquisite interior of the Palace with the endless suite of formal and living rooms, including the famous Amber room. The Palace in Pavlovsk, which is probably the most elegant of the Tsars's summer residences, features exquisitely designed gala and private rooms full of the authentic rare objects: furniture sets, tapestries, gifts by the European Royal Courts, a rich collection of clocks and china. Another attraction of the place is a large serene park, the second largest in Europe. Lunch at the Podvorye restaurant, renowned for excellent Russian cuisine.
Day 5	Visit to the <b>Hermitage museum</b> , <b>ballet master class</b> . Dinner at the hotel.
Day 6	We arrange a walk along the Nevsky prospect, visit to one of the Russian farmer's markets and shopping, then return to the hotel. A farewell dinner in the Last Palace built for the Prince Abamelek-Lazarev, one of the richest aristocrats of St. Petersburg and the famous patron of arts. Finished shortly before World War I, the palace was the last one built in St.Petersburg (hence comes the unusual name). Since 1913 the building was known not only as a popular meeting place for scientists and patrons of arts but also as a place where musical concerts and aristocratic balls were arranged.
Day 7	Check-out, transfer to the airport.

## WHITE DAYS IN RUSSIA

For 300 years St.Petersburg has been traditionally the center of the cultural and artistic life of the country. It was mostly in winter that the outstanding balls, performances and exhibitions were held there. The standard of entertainment has not failed since the old days. Fairs and festivals for popular audiences flourish as ever. When snow turns tree branches into silver silhouettes, drifts down to dust the granite embankments of the rivers, and puts the white lace on the grilles of the gardens a fairy tale comes to life.



### **The program of the tour: 8 Days / 7 Nights**

Day 1	Arrival in <b>St.Petersburg</b> , transfer to the hotel, traditional Russian " <b>Bread &amp; Salt</b> " welcome with a glass of vodka by a folklore group, check-in (fruits and mineral water in the rooms are complimentary). Dinner.
Day 2	Breakfast, sightseeing <b>tour of the city</b> including visit to the <b>Peter the Great's house</b> . Lunch in a city restaurant. <b>A night tour of the Peter &amp; Paul Cathedral</b> , specially opened for the group. A concert of sacred music in one of the cathedrals (a glass of Champagne is served in the open air afterwards).
Day 3	Breakfast, stroll along the <b>Nevsky prospect</b> , visit to the <b>farmer's market</b> downtown, <b>metro ride</b> , tour of the <b>Russian museum</b> , dinner at the Russian families' homes.
Day 4	Breakfast, attendance of the <b>ballet master class</b> , lunch in a downtown restaurant, tour of the <b>Hermitage museum</b> including the <b>Golden Treasury</b> .
Day 5	Breakfast, trip to the town of <b>Pushkin</b> for visiting <b>the Great Catherine's Palace</b> and its famous <b>Amber Room</b> ), proceed to <b>Pavlovsk</b> for a troika ride in the park. Lunch at the <b>Podvorye Russian restaurant</b> .
Day 6	Breakfast, all day trip to <b>Novgorod</b> , sightseeing <b>tour of the city</b> (the Kremlin, the Cathedral of St.Sophia, museum of icons, Yaroslavov Torg – the old trade center of the city. Lunch in a Russian restaurant, afternoon trip to the <b>Yurievsky Monastery</b> and the open air museum of the wooden architecture.
Day 7	Breakfast, sightseeing <b>tour of the literary St.Petersburg</b> including visit to the museums of <b>Dostoevsky</b> and <b>Pushkin</b> , tour of the <b>Alexander Nevsky Monastery</b> . Farewell dinner in the city in a former Palace.
Day 8	Breakfast, check-out, transfer to the airport, departure.

# THE MOST POPULAR ITINERARIES

## THE GOLDEN RING OF RUSSIA

MOSCOW / SERGIEV POSAD / SUZDAL / VLADIMIR / KOSTROMA /

YAROSLAVL / ROSTOV / PERESLAVL / MOSCOW

The tour includes visiting the major tourist centers of the **Golden ring** of Russia's most ancient historic places. Though having distinctive characters and unique monuments, all the places of the route have very much in common: they are very traditionally Russian, whether it concerns their architecture or the spirit of their dwellers.

### Sergiev Posad

The history of the city (founded in 1742) is closely connected with the history of the **Troitse-Sergiev Monastery** (The Trinity Monastery of St. Sergius), which was founded in the 14<sup>th</sup> century by **St. Sergius Radonezhsky**, one of the most revered saints of the Russian Orthodox Church. For many centuries the monastery was Russia's largest religious and cultural centre. The main sacred place of the monastery is the **Trinity Cathedral** (1422), the burial ground of St. Sergius. The Cathedral is also known for unique frescoes painted by the genius Russian icon painter **Andrew Rublev** and his teacher **Daniil Cherny**. The icon of **Holy Trinity** by Andrew Rublev, one of the most inspired masterpieces ever created by a human being, is kept now in the **Tretyakov State Art Gallery** in **Moscow**.



### Rostov the Great

The very name of the city reflects its significance in the history of Russia. Mentioned firstly in 862, it reached its heyday as the capital of the principality of the same name by the early 13<sup>th</sup> century. Though destroyed several times by the Mongol hordes, the city came back to life persistently, staying one of the most beautiful cities of the medieval Russia. The city of many architectural masterpieces, **Rostov** is known most for its metropolitan's residence – the last architectural ensemble built in the traditional Russian style.

### Pereslavl

Founded in 1152 by Prince **Yuri Dolgoruky**, the town of **Pereslavl** remains in the history of Russia connected to the

names of the two most popular Russian rulers. Prince Alexander Nevsky, the most able general, politician and diplomat of ancient Russia, was born and for some time ruled there. Later the first Russian Emperor **Peter the Great** spent his youth in Pereslavl and there he built his "poteschny" (amusing) flotilla, the prototype of the Russia's first navy. Among the town's sights, are the **Transfiguration Cathedral of the Savior** (1152), and **Peter the Great's estate**, where one of his boats is kept.



### Kostroma

It is considered that this Volga city was founded in 1152 by Prince of Rostov and Suzdal Yuri Dolgoruky, who is also known as the founder of Moscow. After a short period of rapid growth (16-17<sup>th</sup> centuries) Kostroma lost its commercial significance, but stayed the city that played noticeable role in the national history. It was here, where the last Russian royal dynasty had its roots. Among the main city's attractions is the Ipatiev Monastery complex (13<sup>th</sup> century) with its famous Trinity Cathedral and Chamber of the the Romanov boyars.

### Yaroslavl

Founded on the Volga river in 1010, this is a city of great history and rich cultural traditions. For a few centuries it had been one of the most prosperous and developed cities of imperial Russia. Known as a tourist center of many outstanding architectural monuments, **Yaroslavl** was included in 2005 in the UNESCO World Heritage List.

### Vladimir

Founded in 1108, the city is a part of the popular **Golden Ring** travel itinerary, known for many masterpieces of the ancient Russian architecture. The best architectural masterpieces of pre-Mongolian Russia, including splendid golden-domed cathedrals build of carved white stone and the magnificent Golden Gates, can still be seen inside and around the city.

## Suzdal

With its population of only 12 thousand citizens, this town nevertheless is one of the country's most popular tourist centers, a real pearl of the **Golden Ring** travel itinerary. Nowadays this charming little town, frozen in time looks right like a picture from a Russian fairytale, untouched by the modern development, with many brightly-colored domes of the churches and monasteries razing to the sky. There are more than 200 historical monuments preserved in the city.



## The program of the tour:

### 9 Days / 8 Nights

Day 1	Arrival in Moscow. Check in. Dinner at the hotel.
Day 2	Breakfast. Sightseeing <b>tour of the city</b> including <b>Novodevichy Convent</b> (New Convent of the Virgin). Lunch. Tour of the <b>Kremlin</b> including one of its Cathedrals. Dinner.
Day 3	Breakfast. Departure to Sergiev Posad. Tour of the <b>Troitse-Serguiev (St.Sergius) Monastery</b> . Founded by one of the most revered of the Russian saints St.Sergius in 14 century, the Trinity monastery is among the main pilgrimage sites for the Russian Orthodox believers, and one of the residences of the Russian patriarch. That makes it a kind of the Russian Vatican. Departure to Suzdal. Arrival at Suzdal. Check in. Dinner.
Day 4	Breakfast. Whole day trip to <b>Vladimir</b> for sightseeing <b>tour of the city</b> (the Assumption Cathedral, the Golden Gates and the other sights). Lunch. Proceed to <b>Bogolyubovo</b> for visiting <b>the Church of the Intercession</b> built on the river Nerl. Though rather small and modestly decorated, it is one of the most beautiful Russian churches, possibly due to its fantastic location. The tour of <b>the museum of handicrafts</b> can be also arranged when visiting Bogolyubovo. Return to Suzdal. Dinner.
Day 5	Breakfast. Sightseeing tour of <b>Suzdal</b> (the Kremlin, the Cathedral of Nativity of the Mother of God, the Transfiguration Cathedral, the Spaso-Yevfimiev and Intercession Monasteries). Lunch. Departure to <b>Kostroma</b> . Arrival in Kostroma. Check in. Dinner at the hotel.
Day 6	Breakfast. Sightseeing tour of the city. Lunch. Visit to <b>the Ipatiev Monastery</b> . Dinner.
Day 7	Breakfast. Departure to <b>Yaroslavl</b> . Sightseeing tour of the city including <b>the Transfiguration Cathedral of the Saviour</b> . Lunch. Departure to Moscow. Sightseeing tours of <b>Rostov the Great and Pereslavl</b> on the way. Arrival in Moscow. Check in. Dinner at the hotel.
Day 8	Breakfast. The tour of the <b>Kremlin</b> . Lunch in a city restaurant. Walking tour of the <b>Arbat street</b> . Dinner.
Day 9	Breakfast. Tour of <b>the Tretyakov State Art Gallery</b> . Lunch in a city restaurant. Transfer to the airport. Departure.

# THE GREAT CITIES OF THE RUSSIAN HEARTLAND

NIZHNY NOVGOROD / VLADIMIR / SUZDAL / MOSCOW

The tour includes visiting the capital and three centrally located cities of Russia, known for their great history and unique culture. Differing greatly in their size, population and industrial development, they are united by their glorious history and contribution to creation of the Russian state and traditional Russian culture.

## Nizhny Novgorod

Located at the confluence of the Volga and Oka rivers, 450 km south east off Moscow, the city was founded in 1221 by Yuri Vsevolodovich, Grand Prince of Vladimir. For a short period of time (1341-1392) it was the capital of the mighty principality but lost afterwards its independence and became a part of the expanding Moscow state (1392). By the late 16<sup>th</sup> century, owing to its convenient location by the trade roads to Central Asia and India, Nizhny Novgorod (or simply *Nizhny* as the locals nickname it) became a flourishing market town,

and a stronghold of the **Moscow Tzardom** (the predecessor of modern **Russia**). During the 19<sup>th</sup> century the riverside city became worldwide known as home for the Russia's largest trading fair and the world's biggest grain stock exchange. In 1932 the city's name was changed to **Gorky**, in honor of the famous Russian writer Maxim Gorky, who was born there. The old name of the city was brought back in 1990, a notable year in the history of Nizhny: closed for foreigners by Soviet authorities for decades due to a big number of defense industry enterprises located there, it was opened up that year for unrestricted access. The famous Russian scientist and the Peace Noble Prize winner **Andrey Sakharov** spent six years there in exile (1980-1986) for his human rights activity. Today's Nizhny, with its 1,4 million citizens, is Russia's third largest city, after Moscow and St.Petersburg, and a popular tourist destination.

## The program of the tour: 8 Days / 7 Nights

Day 1	Arrival to <b>Nizhny Novgorod</b> . Transfer to the hotel. Check-in. Dinner at the hotel;
Day 2	Breakfast. Sightseeing <b>tour of the city</b> including the <b>Kremlin</b> and <b>Maxim Gorky Memorial Museum</b> . Lunch. Afternoon tour of the <b>Museum of Fine Arts</b> , one of Russia's oldest and best museums. Dinner.
Day 3	Breakfast. Tour of the <b>Museum of Woodcrafts</b> . Visit to the <b>Andrey Sakharov Memorial Museum</b> . In this flat the famous Russian scientist, the "father of the H-bomb", spent six years in exile for his human rights activity and sharp criticism of the regime of those days. Lunch. Check-out. Transfer by bus to <b>Suzdal</b> . Arrival at Susdal. Check-in. Dinner at the hotel.
Day 4	Breakfast. Whole day sightseeing <b>tour of the town</b> including visit to the <b>Nizhny Novgorod Kremlin</b> . Lunch. <b>Tours of the Yevfimiev Monastery of the Saviour and the Intercession Monastery</b> . Visit to the <b>Museum of Icons</b> . Dinner.
Day 5	Breakfast. Transfer by bus to <b>Vladimir</b> (65 km away from). Sightseeing <b>tour of the city</b> including visit to the <b>Golden Gates</b> . Tours of the <b>Assumption</b> and <b>Dmitrievsky Cathedrals</b> . Trip to <b>Bogolyubovo</b> for visiting the <b>Church of the Intercession on the river Nerl</b> . Though rather small and modestly decorated, it is one of the most beautiful Russian churches, partially due to its picturesque location. Lunch. Transfer by bus to <b>Moscow</b> . (170 km away from). Arrival to <b>Moscow</b> . Check-in. Dinner at the hotel.
Day 6	Breakfast. Sightseeing <b>tour of Moscow</b> including <b>Novodevichy Convent</b> (New Maiden Convent), <b>Sparrow Hills</b> and the <b>Red Square</b> . Lunch. Afternoon tour of the <b>State Tretyakov Art Gallery</b> , the best and the most famous collection of the Russian classical art. Dinner at the hotel.
Day 7	Breakfast. Tour of the <b>Kremlin</b> including visit to one of its ancient cathedrals. Lunch. Trip to <b>Kolomenskoye</b> , an ancient royal summer retreat. Dinner at the hotel.
Day 8	Breakfast. Check-out. Transfer to the airport. Departure.

# SERGIEV POSAD – ALEXANDROV

## – MOSCOW

**Alexandrov.** Many legends are connected with this town situated in 100 km from Moscow. According to one of them there once lived Nikitka Holop, a serf who first in the history of mankind tried to fly in the skies: he fastened wings to his hands and jumped from the roof of a cathedral.

Museum in this town is situated on the territory of **Alexandrov Kremlin**, which is the oldest country governmental residence of Moscow sovereigns. It is known in the history for outstanding **Alexandrovskaya Sloboda**, a temporary capital of Ivan the Terrible. Its beginning was laid by the father of Ivan the Terrible - Vassily III, who was a grand duke of Moscow. After his order the best Russian and Italian architects, who constructed **Moscow Kremlin**, also established a splendid palace in Alexandrov. Beginning in December 11, 1513 Alexandrovskaya Sloboda became a place of permanent stay of the Tsar, his family and the Court. There was a special role of Alexandrovskaya Sloboda during a very cruel struggle for power in the second half of XVI-th century. Tsar Ivan the Terrible turned it into real capital of the state where from he conducted the unification of the country. In accordance with Ivan the Terrible wish Sloboda became the biggest cultural center of Russian state at the time.

Monuments of Alexandrovskaya Sloboda include unusually well preserved ancient Russian palace and church ensemble. Ancient monuments of Alexandrov refer to the period of great construction of the XVI-th century in the traditional Russian architectural style.

**Sergiev Posad** one of the most interesting old towns in Central Russia, is situated 58 kilometres from Moscow and is part of Russia's "Golden Ring". The beginning of the town in 14<sup>th</sup> century was laid with the foundation of the Trinity Monastery;



largest in Russia. It's founder was **St. Sergius Radonezhsky**, one of the most revered saints in Russia. In a sign of respect to the saint the city had received it's name. In 1774 the monastery was given the title *lavra*, meaning the monastery of the highest rank. The Trinity Monastery played an important role in the history of Russia and in the development of Russian culture. In this monastery Ivan The Terrible has received a christening. The siege of the monastery at the Time of Troubles in 17<sup>th</sup> century by the enemy brought the awakening of the Russian patriotic consciousness and consequent liberation of Moscow from the Polish invaders. The Trinity Monastery is included in the UNESCO list of the world heritage. Today the monastery remains to be spiritual center of the Orthodox Russia, a kind of Russian Vatican.

### ***The program of the tour: 5 Days / 4 Nights***

Day 1	Arrival to Moscow. <b>City tour</b> , transfer to <b>Sergiev Posad</b> . Dinner and overnight stay at hotel.
Day 2	Breakfast. <b>Tour to Lavra</b> , transfer to Alexandrov, <b>tour to Alexandrovskaja sloboda</b> with lunch, transfer to Moscow. Dinner at the Hotel.
Day 3	Breakfast. <b>Kremlin tour</b> . Walk along <b>Red Square</b> with visit of <b>Basilius Cathedral</b> and <b>Romanov's Chambers</b> . Dinner at the hotel.
Day 4	Breakfast. <b>Tretyakov Gallery</b> with icon's exposition, free time with bus and guide, <b>farewell dinner at restaurant</b> .
Day 5	Breakfast. Transfer to the Airport. Departure

## HIGHLIGHTS OF RUSSIA

MOSCOW / SERGIEV POSAD / ROSTOV THE GREAT / PERESLAVL / YAROSLAVL /

KOSTROMA / SUZDAL / VLADIMIR / MOSCOW / ST.PETERSBURG



**Pereslavl:** Founded in 1152 by Prince **Yuri Dolgoruky**, the town of **Pereslavl** remains in the history of Russia connected to the names of the two most popular Russian rulers. Prince Alexander Nevsky, the most able general, politician and diplomat of ancient Russia, was born and for some time ruled there. Later the first Russian Emperor **Peter the Great** spent his youth in Pereslavl and there he built his “poteshny”(amusing) flotilla, the prototype of the Russia’s first navy. Among the town’s sights, are the **Transfiguration Cathedral of**

The program of the tour aims to give a traveller profound understanding of the **Russian history, architecture and culture** through visiting **two Russia’s capitals** and the historical places of the **Golden Ring** – chain of the ancient cities of the Russian heartland.

**Sergiev Posad:** The history of the city (founded in 1742) is closely connected with the history of the **Troitse-Sergiev Monastery** (The Trinity Monastery of St. Sergius), which was founded in the 14<sup>th</sup> century by **St. Sergius Radonezhsky**, one of the most revered saints of the Russian Orthodox Church. For many centuries the monastery was Russia’s largest religious and cultural centre. The Cathedral is also known for unique frescoes painted by the genius Russian icon painter **Andrew Rublev** and his teacher **Daniil Cherny**. The icon of **Holy Trinity** by Andrew Rublev, one of the most inspired masterpieces ever created by a human being, is kept now in the **Tretyakov State Art Gallery** in **Moscow**.

**Rostov the Great:** The very name of the city reflects its significance in the history of Russia. Mentioned firstly in 862, it reached its heyday as the capital of the principality of the same name by the early 13<sup>th</sup> century. Though destroyed several times by the Mongol hordes, the city came back to life persistently, staying one of the most beautiful cities of the medieval Russia

**the Savior** (1152), and **Peter the Great’s estate**, where one of his boats is kept.

**Kostroma:** It is considered that this Volga city was founded in 1152 by Prince of Rostov and Suzdal Yuri Dolgoruky, who is also known as the founder of Moscow. After a short period of rapid growth (16-17<sup>th</sup> centuries) Kostroma lost its commercial significance, but stayed the city that played noticeable role in the national history. Enough to say, that the noble family of the Romanovs, the royal dynasty, ruling Russia from 1613, originated from Kostroma. Among the main city’s attractions is the Ipatiev Monastery complex (13<sup>th</sup> century) with its famous Trinity Cathedral and Chamber of the the Romanov boyars.

**Yaroslavl:** Founded on the Volga river in 1010, this is a city of great history and rich cultural traditions. For a few centuries it had been one of the most prosperous and developed cities of imperial Russia. Known as a tourist center of many outstanding architectural monuments, Yaroslavl was included in 2005 in the UNESCO World Heritage List. The local Museum of Fine Arts keeps one of Russia’s largest collections of the icons. The city is also known as the birthplace of many Russian celebrities.

**Vladimir:** Founded in 1108, the city is a part of the popular **Golden Ring** travel itinerary, known for many masterpieces of the ancient Russian architec-

ture. Until the mid of 14<sup>th</sup> century (when Moscow overshadowed it) Vladimir was de facto the political and cultural capital of the old Russia and the residence of the Russian metropolitans. The best architectural masterpieces of pre-Mongolian Russia, including splendid golden-domed cathedrals build of carved white stone and the magnificent Golden Gates, can still be seen inside and around the city.

**Suzdal:** With its population of only 12 thousand citizens, this town nevertheless is one of the country's most popular tourist centers, a real pearl of the **Golden Ring** travel itinerary. It was the capital of its own principality in the first half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, but later lost. Nowadays this charming little town, frozen in time looks right like a picture from a Russian fairytale, untouched by the modern devel-



opment, with many brightly-colored domes of the churches and monasteries reaching to the sky.

### **The program of the tour: 11 Days / 10 Nights**

Day 1	Arrival to <b>Moscow</b> . Check-in. Dinner at the hotel.
Day 2	Breakfast. Sightseeing <b>tour of the city</b> . Lunch. Tour of the <b>Kremlin</b> and one of its cathedrals. Dinner.
Day 3	Breakfast. Trip to <b>Sergiev Posad</b> (70 km. from Moscow). Tour of the <b>Troitse-Sergiev Monastery</b> . Lunch. Departure to <b>Yaroslavl</b> . Stops on the way in <b>Rostov</b> (for the tour of <b>Rostov Kremlin</b> ) and <b>Pereslavl</b> (for a tour of the town). Arrival to <b>Yaroslavl</b> Check in. Dinner at the hotel.
Day 4	Breakfast. Sightseeing <b>tour of the city</b> , including <b>The Transfiguration Cathedral of the Saviour</b> and <b>The Monastery of Our Lady of Tolg</b> . Lunch. Departure to <b>Kostroma</b> . Arrival to Kostroma. Check in. Dinner at the hotel.
Day 5	Breakfast. Sightseeing <b>tour of the city</b> including visit to the <b>Ipatiev monastery</b> . Lunch. Departure to <b>Suzdal</b> . Arrival at Suzdal. Check in. Dinner at the hotel.
Day 6	Breakfast. Trip to <b>Vladimir</b> for a whole day <b>tour of city's highlights</b> including the <b>Assumption Cathedral</b> . Lunch. Trip to <b>Bogolyubovo</b> for visiting the <b>Church of the Intercession on the river Nerl</b> . Though rather small and modestly decorated, it is one of the most beautiful Russian churches, possibly due to its fantastic location. (supplementary visit to the museum of handicrafts can be also arranged during the trip). Return to Suzdal. Dinner.
Day 7	Breakfast. Sightseeing <b>tour of Suzdal</b> (the Suzdal Kremlin, the Transfiguration Cathedral, Spaso-Yevfimiev monastery of the Saviour, the monastery of the Protecting Veil of the Mother of God). Lunch. Visit to the <b>Cathedral of Nativity of the Mother of God</b> . Departure to <b>Moscow</b> . Arrival in Moscow. Check in. Dinner at the hotel.
Day 8	Breakfast. Tour of the <b>Tretyakov State Art Gallery</b> . Lunch. Tour of the <b>Novodevichy Convent</b> (New Convent of the Virgin). Departure to <b>St. Petersburg</b> by a night train.
Day 9	Arrival to <b>St.Petersburg</b> . Check in. Breakfast. Sightseeing <b>tour of the city</b> incl. <b>Peter and Paul Fortress</b> . Lunch. Tour of <b>Cathrine's Palace in Pushkin</b> . Dinner.
Day 10	Breakfast. Tour of the <b>Hermitage museum</b> . Lunch. Visit to the <b>St.Isaac's Cathedral</b> . Dinner.
Day 11	Breakfast. Transfer to the airport. Departure.

## CITIES OF RUSSIAN PERIL AND GLORY

ST.PETERSBURG / VOLGOGRAD / THE CITIES OF THE GOLDEN RING / MOSCOW

The program of the tour aims to broaden a traveller's knowledge of Russia through visiting the cities where most dramatic and glorious events of the Russian history took place. Along with two Russian capitals, it includes Volgograd (also known as Stalingrad) and the major tourist centres of the Golden Ring in the ancient past Russia's most important historic cities.

**Volgograd:** Founded on the right bank of the lower **Volga**, the settlement under the name of **Tsaritsin** (originates from the name of the nearby river **Tsaritsa**) was firstly mentioned in 1589. It was built to protect the **Volga trade route** against steppe nomads and gangs of thieves. Owing to its location, the city was the centre of many military and rebel conflicts. Renamed **Stalingrad** (1925), it stayed in the world history after the great battle, that was to become one of the major turning points in the World War II took place there. As a result of the battle, Stalingrad was razed to the ground. Rebuilt after the war, the city was renamed **Volgograd** (1961). Presently with the population of over 1 million citizens, it is one of Russia's largest industrial, scientific and cultural centers.

**Sergiev Posad:** The history of the city (founded in 1742) is closely connected with the history of the **Troitse-Sergiev Monastery** (The Trinity Monastery of St. Sergius), which was founded in the 14<sup>th</sup> century by **St. Sergius Radonezhsky**, one of the most revered saints of the Russian Orthodox Church. For many centuries the monastery was Russia's largest religious and cultural centre. The main sacred place of the monastery is the **Trinity Cathedral** (1422), the burial ground of St. Sergius. The Cathedral is also known for unique frescoes painted by the genius Russian icon painter **Andrew Rublev** and his teacher **Daniil Cherny**. The icon of **Holy Trinity** by Andrew Rublev, one of the most inspired masterpieces ever created by a human being, is kept now in the **Tretyakov State Art Gallery** in **Moscow**.

**Kostroma:** It is considered that this Volga city was founded in 1152 by Prince of Rostov and Suzdal



Yuri Dolgoruky, who is also known as the founder of Moscow. After a short period of rapid growth (16-17<sup>th</sup> centuries) Kostroma lost its commercial significance, but stayed the city that played noticeable role in the national history. Enough to say, that the noble family of the Romanovs, the royal dynasty, ruling Russia from 1613, originated from Kostroma. Among the main city's attractions is the Ipatiev Monastery complex (13<sup>th</sup> century) with its famous Trinity Cathedral and Chamber of the the Romanov boyars.

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tectural masterpieces of pre-Mongolian Russia, including splendid golden-domed cathedrals build of carved white stone and the magnificent Golden Gates, can still be seen inside and around the city.

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## **The program of the tour: 12 Days / 11 Nights**

Day 1	Arrival in <b>St.Petersburg</b> . Check-in. Dinner at the hotel.
Day 2	Breakfast. Sightseeing tour of the city including visit to the memorial <b>Piskaryovskoye Cemetery</b> , the common grave for nearly 600 000 residents who died because of starvation and shelling during the Siege of Leningrad in 1941-1944. Lunch in a city restaurant. Tour of the <b>Hermitage museum</b> . Dinner.
Day 3	Breakfast. Trip to <b>Pushkin</b> , formerly known as "village of the tsars" (Tsarskoje Selo), the former summer residence of the tsars. The tour of <b>the Catherine's Palace</b> . The palace with its famous <b>Amber Room</b> , is an impressive post-WWII reconstruction. Lunch (in St.Petersburg or in Pushkin). Afternoon at leisure. Dinner.
Day 4	Breakfast. Tour of the <b>Peter &amp; Paul Fortress</b> and <b>St.Isaac's Cathedral</b> . Lunch in a city restaurant. Transfer to the airport. Flight to <b>Volgograd</b> . Arrival in Volgograd. Transfer to the hotel. Check-in. Dinner at the hotel.
Day 5	Breakfast. Sightseeing <b>tour of the city</b> including the enormous <b>war memorial</b> on the <b>Mamayev Kurgan</b> (burial mound) and the <b>Battle of Stalingrad Museum-Panorama</b> . Lunch. Visit to the <b>Planetarium</b> . Dinner.
Day 6	Breakfast. Transfer to the airport for an early morning flight to <b>Moscow</b> . Transfer from the airport to <b>Vladimir</b> (170 km away from). Arrival in Vladimir. Lunch in a city restaurant. Sightseeing tour of the city. Trip to <b>Bogolyubovo</b> for visiting the <b>Church of the Intercession</b> on the river Nerl. Though rather small and modestly decorated, it is one of the most beautiful Russian churches, possibly due to its fantastic location. Departure to <b>Suzdal</b> . Check-in and dinner at the local hotel.
Day 7	Breakfast. Sightseeing <b>tour of Suzdal</b> (the Kremlin, the Transfiguration Cathedral, Spaso-Yevfimiev monastery of the Saviour, the monastery of the Protecting Veil of the Mother of God). Lunch. Visit to the <b>Cathedral of Nativity of the Mother of God</b> . Dinner at the hotel.
Day 8	Breakfast. Departure by bus to <b>Kostroma</b> . Arrival in Kostroma. Check-in. Lunch. Sightseeing <b>tour of the city</b> including the <b>Ipatiev Monastery</b> . Dinner.
Day 9	Breakfast. Departure by bus to <b>Yaroslavl</b> . Sightseeing <b>tour of Yaroslavl</b> including the <b>Transfiguration Cathedral of the Saviour</b> . Lunch. Departure by bus to <b>Moscow</b> . Stop on the way in <b>Sergiev Possad</b> for the tour of the <b>Troitse-Sergiev (St.Sergius) Monastery</b> . Dinner. Proceed to <b>Moscow</b> . Arrival in Moscow. Check-in. Dinner at the hotel.
Day 10	Breakfast. Sightseeing <b>tour of the city</b> including the War Memorial on <b>Poklonnaya Hill</b> . Lunch in a city
Day 11	Breakfast. Trip to <b>Kolomenskoye</b> , an ancient royal summer retreat. Lunch in a city restaurant. Tour of the <b>Kremlin</b> including one of its Cathedrals. Dinner.
Day 12	Breakfast. Check-out. Transfer to the airport. Departure

## THE URALS, BORDERLINE BETWEEN EUROPE AND ASIA

PERM / SOLIKAMSK / EKATERINBURG / VERKHOTURIE /

NIZHNYAYA SINICHIKHA / NEVIANSK / TOBOLSK / TYUMEN



wealth of Ural region that it became the source of many folk tales and literary works. The most illustrious of these is a set of beautiful fairytales by Pavel Bazhov, used by famous composer Prokofiev in his Tale of the Stone Flower.

Some of the enterprising Russians made huge fortune out of the abundance of the Urals, most notably the Stroganovs - dynasty of highly successful Russian merchants, industrialists, landowners, and statesmen of the 16th - 20th centuries who's influence eventually earned them nobility. The resources of Urals were behind the success of the Romanov's imperial

expansion and Russian industrial revolution of XIX century.

The wildlife of the region is abundant with many species of flora and fauna, some very rare. The history of the Urals is closely connected to the history of the rest of Russia with many of its momentous events taking

The Ural mountains, separating Europe from Asia are known from the ancient time. Pliny the Elder, the Roman writer and scientist, thought that the Urals correspond to the Riphean Mountains mentioned by various authors. They are also known as the Great Stone Belt or simply as The Rock in Russian history and folklore. The Urals run for 2,498 km (1,552 mi) from the Kazakh steppes to the coast of the Arctic ocean. The Urals are among the world's oldest extant mountain ranges. For its age of 250 to 300 million years, the elevation of the mountains is unusually high.

Since the Russian conquest of Siberia the Urals have been the country's invaluable source of mineral resources, precious and semi-precious stones including large deposits of gold, platinum, coal, iron, nickel, silver, magnetite, chromite, chrysoberyl, quartz, zircon, topaz and beryl, among others. Some of the minerals like malachite are rarely found elsewhere. Such is the



place in the region. During the Second World War many of industrial plants and factories were evacuated from European Russia to Urals to prevent them from falling into German hands. After the war they remained there once again earning Ural region a fame of being the industrial backbone of Russia.

Nowadays Ural region is still an important part of Russia with impressive nature, developed industrial might and busy dynamic metropolises like Yekaterinburg, Perm and Chelabinsk that match rich cultural heritage and stylish nightlife as well as modern lifestyle.

### **The program of the tour: 12 Days / 11 Nights**

Day 1	Arrival to <b>Perm</b> (around 21:00), transfer to the hotel 'The Urals'; check-in, dinner and overnight.
Day 2	Buffet breakfast, general sightseeing tour of Perm, trip to <b>Solikamsk, (Tcherdyn via Ussolsk)</b> , to the land that was a private domain of the Stroganov dynasty of the Russian manufacturers; lunch, visiting historical mansions of the Russian nobility; return to Perm, dinner at the hotel, overnight.
Day 3	Breakfast, trip to <b>Ekaterinburg via Kungur</b> , the vast spaces conquered for Russia by Yermak in the 17 <sup>th</sup> century; visit the ice cave in Kungur with 20 grottos and subterranean lakes. The trip from Perm to Kungur takes 1,5 hour; tours in Kungur take 4 hours; it takes 5 hours from Kungur to Ekaterinburg; arrival in Ekaterinburg, check-in at the hotel "Isset", Dinner.
Day 4	Breakfast, <b>general sightseeing tour of Ekaterinburg</b> , lunch, afternoon visit <b>to the execution place of the Tzar Nicolas I's family, the Chirch On The Blood</b> , built in the memory of the victims and to <b>the Ganina Yama (pit)</b> where The Tsar's family was buried after the massacre. Then we continue the sightseeing tour of the city; dinner at the hotel.
Day 5	Breakfast, one day trip to <b>Verkhoturie</b> (about 300 km, 5 hours), <b>the Christian Orthodox capital of the Urals</b> ; visits to <b>the first Russian Friery</b> built in 1604, <b>the Trinity Cathedral</b> (under UNESCO protection), and <b>the Kremlin</b> – all dating back to the beginning of the 17 <sup>th</sup> century; lunch in Verkhoturie; dinner at the hotel on return to Ekaterinburg.
Day 6	Breakfast, <b>trip to Nizhnyaya Sinichikha</b> (100 km), the site closely associated with <b>the Grand Princes of the Russian Tsar Families</b> , visit <b>the Museum of the Local Lore, the Museum in the open air</b> to see the wooden houses of the salt founders dating from 17 <sup>th</sup> to 19 <sup>th</sup> centuries, <b>the collection of the church bells, and paintings</b> done by the Urals artists; lunch; <b>return to Ekaterinburg</b> , dinner and overnight at the hotel.
Day 7	Breakfast, trip to <b>Neviansk</b> (about 2 hours drive), visit to <b>the famous Nevian Sloping Tower</b> with an incident of 2 meters; continue <b>excursion to Tavalga village</b> to see pottery workshops with <b>master class</b> ; lunch in Neviansk; <b>trip to the borderline between Europe and Asia</b> ; transfer to the rail station to board a night <b>train to Tobolsk</b> (packed dinner in the train).
Day 8	<b>Arrival at Tobolsk</b> (around 08:00 a.m. local time), general sightseeing tour of Tobolsk, a Siberian town situated on the banks of <b>the deep water Irtysh River</b> , on the way to the hotel "Slavyanskaya"; check-in,
Day 9	Buffet breakfast (extra), time at leisure, lunch, continue <b>the sightseeing tour of Tobolsk, visits to the Kremlin and the Cathedral of St. Sophia, the study room of the Russian Tsar Nicholas II; the 'heaped' cemetery and the graves of the Decembrists, the Museum of the Religions of the Peoples of Siberia, the bone</b>
Day 10	Breakfast, check-out, <b>trip to Tyumen</b> (about 80 km from Tobolsk); <b>excursion to the museum-house of Gregory Rasputin in the Pokrovskoye village</b> where he was born; <b>the Museum of Oil and Gas in Tyumen</b> ; check-in at the hotel "Verkhny Bor" (Upper Pinewood) that is situated near the hot springs (about 45 degrees C); leisure time, bathing in the springs; lunch and dinner at the hotel.
Day 11	Breakfast, check-out, <b>departure from Tyumen to Ekaterinburg</b> ; on the way visit to one of <b>the best Russian sanatoria "Obukhovskiy"</b> , with <b>the winter garden, pheasants, and mineral springs</b> ; lunch; <b>visit to the Porcelain Factory</b> , and the shop on its grounds; <b>arrival to Ekaterinburg</b> , check-in at the hotel "Isset", dinner and overnight at the hotel.
Day 12	Breakfast, check-out, transfer to the airport, departure.

## THE HEART OF BAIKAL LAKE

IRKUTSK / OLKHON ISLAND / KHOBOY / UST-ORDA / LISTVYANKA

Olchon is the third-largest lake-bound island in the world. It is the largest of the 22 islands in the **Lake Baikal** eastern Siberia, with an area of 730 square kilometres 71 km long and 15 km wide, and is situated in the very center of the Lake near the deepest part of it (1637 m). Its diverse landscape is a combination of taiga, steppe, and rocks. The population of the island is less than 1,500 and consists mostly of Buryats, the island's aboriginal people related to Mongols. The special atmosphere reigning on the Olkhon Island untouched by civilization makes it a unique place. There is neither electricity (kerosene lamps used instead) nor telephone lines there, and cell phones don't work either. Russian baths make it up for the absence of shower cabins. The original ancient name of the Island is "**Oy-Khun**" which means "a small forest". The Lake Baikal is the blue heart of Siberia, and the **Olkhon Island** is the heart of the Lake Baikal, and the home of many peoples and tribes of the Central Asia. It is also a religious center of **Shamanism**, a place of the annual spiritual gatherings of shamans from the northern territories



of Russia. Lots of legends and myths are associated with the Island that was believed to be a sacred place inhabited by formidable spirits. Natives believe that Burkhan, a modern religious cult figure of the Altai peoples, lives in the cave in this rock. The rock is one of nine Asian Most Sacred Places. The museum at Olkhon, exhibits the nature and ethnography of the island, including pipe-smoking and a samovar collection.

### **The program of the tour: 7 Days / 6 Nights**

Day 1	Arrival in <b>Irkutsk</b> ; general <b>sightseeing tour</b> including a visit to the <b>Decembrists Museum</b> ; transfer to the hotel, check-in
Day 2	Breakfast, transfer to the landing stage to board a ferry to Irkutsk; arrival at <b>Olkhon</b> , transfer to the camping, check-in, <b>Russian baths</b> ; time at leisure, dinner.
Day 3	Breakfast, trip to the northern cape of the Island, the <b>Khoboy</b> , that means a " <b>tusk</b> " in Buryat language. The Cape reminds a woman's profile, and the legend says that it is a wicked wife who was turned into a cliff because she envied her kind and lucky husband. Khoboy is 500 m high, and those who climb to the top of it are awarded with the fantastic panoramic view of the <b>Big</b> and the <b>Small Seas</b> of the Baikal Lake, <b>Ushkanii Islands</b> that is a favourite place of the seals that come to sunbathe on the rocks below, and <b>Svyatoy Nos (Sacred Nose)</b> on the Eastern shore of the Island. Someone once said that Khoboy seems to be the end of the Earth – as it is surrounded by water. Lunch (packed), return to the camping, dinner; evening party by a bonfire.
Day 4	Breakfast, optional tour – one-day trekking to the opposite shore of the Island (15 km), to the <b>Cliff Shamanka</b> or Shaman's Rock, the Baikal's most famous landmark. Packed lunch. Return to the camping, dinner.
Day 5	Breakfast, return to <b>Irkutsk via Ust-Orda</b> to visit the <b>Museum of the Local Lore</b> . Folklore performance with a shaman, lunch (national cuisine); arrival in Irkutsk, check-in at the hotel. Dinner.
Day 6	Breakfast, trip to <b>Listvyanka</b> , visit the <b>Limnological Museum</b> there; picnic in the woods, boating along the Lake Baikal (or a 5 hour boating along the Lake and a picnic on the shore); return to Irkutsk, dinner with Russian music.
Day 7	Breakfast, departure

## THE HIGHLIGHTS OF THE CRIMEA

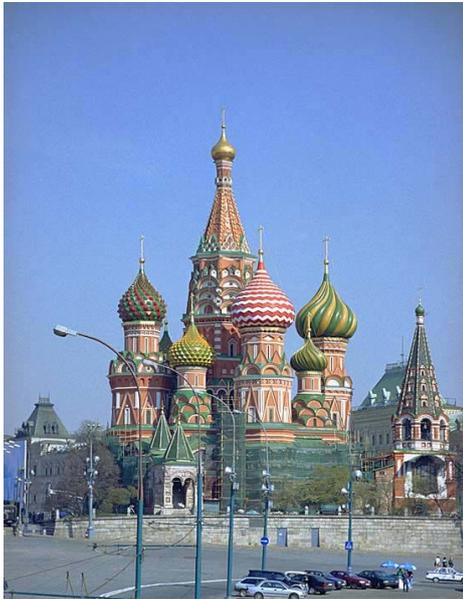


Crimea is a peninsula in Black Sea with the history so rich and diverse that probably no other region of Russia can match. From the Age of Antiquity the Greeks and Romans had established their colonies on the shores of Crimea. That was natural as the climate and nature of Crimean Peninsula closely resemble that of Northern Mediterranean. In the Middle Ages the Italians, followed their way building a number of fortresses along the South Coast of Crimea. All that long and rich history is reflected in picturesque monuments, so beautifully matching lavish Crimean nature.

### *The program of the tour: 8 Days / 7 Nights*

Day 1	Arrival (by flight/train) to <b>Simferopol</b> , the capital of the Crimea. Transfer to the city-resort of <b>Yalta</b> (about 80 km away from). Check-in. Welcome cocktail and dinner at the hotel.
Day 2	Breakfast. Tour of the <b>Great Livadia Palace</b> . Built for the last <b>Russian Emperor Nicholas II</b> in 1911, this Italian-styled summer residence is also known as the seat of the <b>Yalta conference</b> called by the Allies in February 1945. <b>A walking tour</b> of the nearby settlement of <b>Koreis</b> , one of picturesque villages that dot the <b>Southern Coast of the Crimea</b> . Return by bus to the hotel. Lunch. A guided walk along the seashore by a specially made promenade path. Time at leisure. Dinner.
Day 3	Breakfast. Trip to <b>Chatir-Dag Plateau</b> for visiting the <b>marble caves</b> created by underground waters. Picnic on the site. Return to the hotel. Dinner at the hotel.
Day 4	Breakfast. A whole day trip to <b>Esky-Kermen</b> and <b>Bakhchisarai</b> including a spectacular drive by the mountain road leading to the <b>Mount Ai-Petri</b> and the settlement of <b>Kosh-Kosh</b> . A walking tour of the cave town of <b>Eski-Kermen</b> . Built virtually inside the mountain, the miraculous town dates back to the 6 <sup>th</sup> century BC. Proceed to <b>Bakhchisarai</b> , the former capital of the <b>Crimean Khanate</b> of the <b>Golden Horde of the Tartars</b> . Visiting the <b>Khan's Palace</b> and the <b>Assumption Cave Monastery</b> in the <b>Valley of St.Maria</b> . Lunch in a local restaurant. Return to <b>Yalta</b> . Dinner at the hotel.
Day 5	Breakfast. Trip to the <b>Mount Demerdzhi</b> via the <b>pass of Angara</b> . The view of the <b>Valley of Ghosts</b> from the slopes of the mountain is breathtaking! Lunch (or a picnic) in the town of <b>Alushta</b> . Founded by the <b>Byzantines</b> as the fortress under the name of <b>Aluston</b> (6 <sup>th</sup> century), it was a safe refuge for the <b>Gynoise merchants</b> , who turned the fortress into a flourishing market town (13-15 centuries). Return to the hotel. Dinner.
Day 6	Breakfast. Whole day trip to the <b>city of Sevastopol</b> , which is also the main <b>naval base</b> of the <b>Russia's Black Sea Fleet</b> . Founded in 1783, the city is renowned for heroism of its defenders during two wars: <b>the Crimean War of 1854-55</b> (between Russia and coalition forces of the Great Britain, France and Turkey) and World War II. In connection with its 1942-1943 defense <b>Sevastopol</b> was decorated with the <b>Golden Star medal</b> and entitled the <b>hero city</b> . Sightseeing <b>tour of the city's highlights</b> (upon arrival), including war memorials on the <b>Mamaev Barrow</b> and the <b>Mount Sapun</b> . Lunch. Visiting the ruined structures (towers, temples, a theatre, workshops, etc) of the ancient city of <b>Chersonise</b> . Founded in the 5 <sup>th</sup> century BC, it is known as <b>the Russian Troya</b> . Return to the hotel. Dinner.
Day 7	Breakfast. Trip to the <b>Fairy Tales Land</b> A walk through a scenic pine forest to <b>Stavri-Kaja rock</b> , and (across the Devil's Bridge) to the <b>Uchan-Su</b> waterfall. Lunch at the <b>Mountain Spring</b> restaurant. Return to the hotel. Afternoon at leisure. Dinner at the hotel.
Day 8	Breakfast. Transfer to the airport. Departure.

## MOSCOW: YESTERDAY, TODAY, TOMORROW



With its population over 10 million citizens, it is one of the world's greatest megalopolises. Firstly mentioned in the Chronicles in 1147, Moscow, as compared with old capitals of Europe, such as Athens, Rome, Paris and London,

is a middle-aged city. However, it is the standing that really matters, not the age. Being the capital of the world's biggest country Moscow always played the very important role in political and cultural life of Europe and the world as a whole. In Russian history Moscow played very important role uniting the various constantly quarreling principalities and establishing Russia as a single state in the process. With the two hundred years exception of Romanovs, who after Peter the Great resided in St.Petersburg, most of the Russian rulers known in the modern his-



tory, such as Ivan the Terrible, Boris Godunov, Lenin and Stalin directed their orders from the Kremlin – the old citadel in the heart of Moscow.

Being the capital of the Russian Tzars Moscow con-

centrated the best artistic potential of old Russia. Some talented European architects also worked for the tzars, mostly Italians. They took part in the construction of some of the most important buildings including the Kremlin. In the old days Moscow was nicknamed “Forty times forty” referring to the hundreds of the golden domes of the churches embellishing the skyline. Many of them are still visible now.



Moscow reached its heyday in the time after the Second World War, when on the orders of Stalin many impressive buildings were built, including above all the so called “Seven Sisters” - the seven skyscrapers of Neo-Gothic style that are still remaining among the most visible landmarks of the Russian capital. Therefore we often refer to Moscow's architectural style as the “Stalin's Moscow” in the same way as we talk about the “Romanov's Petersburg”. Around the same time the glamorous early stations of Moscow Metro were built to impress as much as to serve as the means of transportation.

Contemporary Russian capital is a modern vibrant city, full of great shopping opportunities, big and diverse artistic community and busy nightlife. Nowadays the Stalin's Moscow gradually giving way to the modern development. Endless dull apartment blocks of Khrushchev's era are being replaced with much better designed buildings. One of the examples is the area of the Moscow City – the quickly developing modern commercial district which is designed to become the business heart of Moscow and the engine of the Russian economy.

**The program of the tour: 5 Days/4 Nights**

<b>Day 1</b>	<i>Arrival to Moscow, transfer to the hotel. After the dark the group goes to “Moscow-by-night” tour that gives a unique prospective of the Russian capital in the evening. At the elevated Sparrow Hills, tourists can get the best panoramic view of the big city lights, accompanied by a complimentary glass of vodka with traditional Russian snacks.</i>
<b>Day 2</b>	<i>After the breakfast the group starts the city tour, seeing some of the most famous Moscow's landmarks connected to the rich history of Moscow such as multy-colored and multy-domed St. Basil's Cathedral, the historical New Maiden Convent with its cemetery of the famous Russians, and the symbol of Russian spiritual resurrection the Christ the Savior Cathedral. In the afternoon we visit Chambers of the Romanovs – ancestral home of the last Russian royal dynasty.</i>
<b>Day 3</b>	<i>This day is mostly dedicated to the Soviet period of the Moscow's history. Stalin wanted to turn his capital into a showcase model city. His legacy still can be seen in the “Seven Sisters” - the seven skyscrapers built in the Soviet Neo-Gothic style. In the morning the group, accompanied by the guide, can go and see The Mausoleum: the tomb of Lenin, the founder of Soviet state, the Red Square and the famous GUM department store. After that we visit The Kremlin – the old citadel in the heart of the city and the place where the Russian government works since the capital was moved to Moscow from St.Petersburg. In the Kremlin the tourists have a chance to see the parade of the presidential guards regiment at noon. In the afternoon the group visits the viewing platform on the top of the main building of Moscow University – probably the most impressive of the “Seven Sisters”. After that we visit the bunker of Stalin – the commanding centre of “Uncle Joe” built in 1939 in the East of Moscow. It is the whole underground city, fitted with state of art of that time, capable of accommodating hundreds of soldiers, tanks and service personnel and even connected by an underground railway line to the Kremlin. In the evening the guide takes the group for a tour of the Moscow Metro which was designed by the best soviet engineers and architects to serve not merely as the means of transportation but also to impress people with the elaborate style of its stations. Nowadays the Moscow Metro is one of the busiest underground railways in the world nevertheless remains rather orderly with the trains arriving every couple of minutes at the rush hours.</i>
<b>Day 4</b>	<i>The tours of this day introduce the Moscow of the modern time. Shortly after the breakfast the guide takes the group to the Museum of Contemporary History, followed by a highlight tour “Modern Moscow” stopping at art Gallery “Vinzavod” or “Garage”, underground mall Okhotnyj Ryad, Moscow City ( the brand new business core of the city) and Bagrationovskij Bridge.</i>
<b>Day 5</b>	<i>Breakfast. Transfer to the airport, departure.</i>

# SPECIAL INTEREST TOURS

## GREAT BATTLEFIELDS

### OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR

MOSCOW / KURSK / VOLGOGRAD / ST.PETERSBURG



World War II was the most titanic struggle that mankind ever experienced. The interest in this major historic event does not vanish as time goes by. It cost over 50 million lives and consumed enormous resources. It deformed the world economy and brought enormous suffering to the whole generation. Among the countries involved, the greatest human losses were borne by the Soviet Union, which had suffered 27 million

fatal casualties, mostly civilians, and Germany that started the war (over 12 million). The United States and Great Britain, the allies of the Soviet Union in the War, lost correspondingly over 300 000 and 400 000 lives. The whole nations were facing the total extermination; most notably 6 million Jews killed by the Nazis, mostly in the concentration camps. Accordingly, the victory over fascism, in which the Soviet Union played the leading role, is one of the most momentous events in human history, which we have no right to forget about. The itinerary of the tour designed by COMINTOUR includes visiting Moscow, Kursk, Volgograd (the former Stalingrad) and St. Petersburg: the cities, which gave the names to the most decisive battles that brought the final victory to the Allies over the Nazi Germany. Our arrival destination is the Russian capital. Apart of the iconic views of the Kremlin, the Red

Square and St. Basil Cathedral Moscow can offer many more not so much visited attractions. The site of one of the Great Battles of WW2, where Drang nach Osten of the Nazi's panzer armies was stopped for the first time, partially by poorly armed and trained Russian volunteers, Moscow nowadays has some of the best museums dedicated to the Second World War and the military history. As the Europe's biggest city, Moscow also boasts excellent night life and modern vibrant culture. The second Russian capital St. Petersburg (also called the capital of the culture) is one of the world's most beautiful cities. Also nicknamed The Venice of the North this city is a real jewel box of architecture of the last



three centuries, and also hosts some of the best museums and theatres. At the time of the Second World War St. Petersburg (called Leningrad at that time) had become the stage for some of the grimmest events in the recent human history. Hitler had plans to raise the city to the ground. Besieged by German and Finnish troops for 900 days Leningrad didn't give up and survived. The victory came at a very dear cost. One million of the city's inhabitants

had perished due to starvation, cold, Nazi's bombing and artillery shelling. The sacrifice of these people preserved the beauty of their city for us.

The name of Stalingrad (nowadays called Volgograd) during WW2 has become synonymous to heroism and commitment. Viewed by the Soviets and the Nazis as an important strategic point, Stalingrad had seen some of the fiercest street to street and house to house battles that reduced the city to a little more than a pile of rubble. Eventually Stalingrad became the first major defeat of the Nazi's armies and the turning point of the whole Second World War. After the war the city was rebuilt and now is a thriving place with a population just over a million people.

The next city – Kursk at the time of the war had witnessed one of the biggest battles in the human history. During the battle each side deployed about a million soldiers, thousands of tanks, planes and artillery pieces. The site of Prokhorovka village was the place of the biggest tank battles ever fought. After the defeat of Kursk the German army had never fully recovered and during next two years gradually lost the ground all the way up to Berlin.

The Great Battlefields of the Second World War tour is best designed to give the detailed impression of the events that took place in the Eastern Front during the war and also introduce the modern Russian way of life and the culture.

<b>Day 1</b>	Moscow	Arrival to Moscow, transfer to the hotel, check-in.
<b>Day 2</b>	Moscow	Breakfast, sightseeing tour of the city, tour of the Kremlin, including visit to the cathedrals, free time.
<b>Day 3</b>	Moscow	Breakfast, visits to the Marshal Zhukov Museum and the Air-Force Museum in Monino (Moscow suburbs).
<b>Day 4</b>	Moscow	Breakfast, Armed Forces Museum, trip to Kubinka (a settlement outside of Moscow best known for the biggest tank museum), departure to Kursk by night train.
<b>Day 5</b>	Kursk	Arrival, transfer to the hotel, check-in, breakfast, city tour, including visits to the World War II museum and museum of the Kursk battle.
<b>Day 6</b>	Kursk	Breakfast, trip to Prokhorovka and Yakovlevka, including visit to the site and museum of the greatest tank battle in the history, (meeting with War veterans can be arranged), departure to Moscow by an overnight train.
<b>Day 7</b>	Moscow / Volgograd	Arrival to Moscow, breakfast, sightseeing tour including the war memorial on the Poklonnaya Hill, transfer to the airport, flight to Volgograd (formerly Stalingrad). Arrival to Volgograd, transfer to the hotel, check-in.
<b>Day 8</b>	Volgograd	Breakfast, sightseeing tour of the city, including the War Memorial, Panorama of the Stalingrad Battle and the Mamayev Hill.
<b>Day 9</b>	Volgograd	Breakfast, the whole day-tour of Stalingrad Battlefields, Dinner with war veterans.
<b>Day 10</b>	Volgograd / Petersburg	Breakfast, a morning flight to St. Petersburg, transfer to the hotel, check-in, sightseeing tour of the city.
<b>Day 11</b>	St. Petersburg	Breakfast, tour of the city including the Navy Museum and the Artillery Museum, trip to Kronstadt, the main historical Navy base of Russia situated on an island in the Gulf of Finland, sightseeing tour.
<b>Day 12</b>	St. Petersburg	Breakfast, tour of the Hermitage, the Leningrad Siege Memorial Museum, folk show at the former Palace of Grand Prince Nicholas.
<b>Day 13</b>	St. Petersburg	Breakfast, transfer to the airport, departure.

# HISTORY OF MILITARY DEVELOPMENT AND SPACE RESEARCH

Most of the impressive technological achievements of the recent Soviet past of Russia were related to her success in the fields of military development and space exploration. Nowadays Russia still remains one of world leaders in those technologies. Most of the successful commercial satellite launches provided by the Russian rockets and Russia remains to be among the world's leading arms exporters. The tour is designed to give a traveler the comprehensive understanding of the history and the modern situation of the space research in Russia.



## **The program of the tour: 8 Days / 7 Nights**

Day 1	Arrival in <b>Moscow</b> , traditional “ <b>Bread &amp; Salt</b> ” welcome at the airport, transfer to the hotel, check-in, dinner at the hotel.
Day 2	Breakfast, <b>sightseeing tour</b> of the city including a visit to the memorial apartment of the “father of Russian space program” <b>Sergey Koroljov</b> , tour of the <b>Kremlin</b> including one of the <b>cathedrals</b> , dinner at the hotel.
Day 3	Breakfast, <b>Full day trip to the town of Kaluga (about 3 hours drive)</b> , known as the birth place of <b>Constantine Tsiolkovsky</b> (the founder of theoretical Cosmonautics), <b>visit to the museum of Cosmonautics History</b> and the apartment house of Constantine Tsiolkovsky, return to Moscow, dinner at the hotel
Day 4	Breakfast, visit to the “ <b>Star City</b> ” – the only professional training centre of cosmonauts in the world (30 km from Moscow), where the <b>Cosmonauts Training Centre</b> and <b>Museum of the Star city</b> named after <b>Yuri Gagarin</b> are located. Here one can see the biggest centrifuge in the world that is used for cosmonauts training by simulating the space flight as well as the <b>Hydro Lab</b> that is designed to test space object models and micro gravity, dinner in a downtown restaurant. Transfer to the Leningradsky Rail Station. <b>Departure to St. Petersburg</b> by a night train.
Day 5	Arrival to <b>St.Petersburg</b> , breakfast, transfer to the hotel. <b>Sightseeing tour</b> of the city including <b>Piskaryovskoye Memorial Cemetery</b> where many of the victims of the Siege of Leningrad are buried, tour of the <b>Peter &amp; Paul Fortress</b> with its <b>Cathedral</b> and <b>necropolis of the Russian emperors of Romanov dynasty</b> and <b>visit to the museum on Space Exploration and Missilery</b> , visit to the cruiser “ <b>Aurora</b> ” - the historical battleship built more than 100 years ago which participated in some of the most important events of the Russian history of the last century, dinner at the hotel.
Day 6	Breakfast, tour of the <b>State Hermitage Museum</b> , trip to <b>Pushkin</b> , excursion to the <b>Catherine’s Palace</b> with <b>Amber Chamber</b> , dinner at the hotel.
Day 7	Breakfast, <b>trip to Kronstadt naval base</b> , tour of the city that for more than two centuries was the main naval base of Russia, <b>visit to a submarine</b> , dinner in the downtown restaurant.
Day 8	Breakfast, transfer to the airport, departure.

# 400 YEARS OF ROMANOV DYNASTY

EKATERINBURG / MOSCOW / KOSTROMA / YAROSLAVL / ST.PETERSBURG

For over three centuries Romanov dynasty ruled Russia, turning it from relatively backward mid-sized state into one of the biggest and most powerful empires in the world's history. During reign of Romanovs Russia was reformed from a civilization on its own into an European state and had become very much involved into cultural and political life of Europe. At the time of Romanovs many European artisans, craftsmen, people of art and military commanders had settled in Russia making it a second home. The wealth of the Russian emperors and lavishness of their court was made a proverb. Their palaces and parks, their museums and theatres still inspire owe.

The last Romanov Tzars saw the end of the empire and paid their lives for that. The whole family of the last emperor was executed in 1918 on the orders of the revolutionary Soviet authorities.

During this tour we visit most important places connected to the history of the dynasty from their family nest in the ancient town of Kostroma to the execution spot in Ekaterinburg and their burial ground in their favorite capital city Saint Petersburg where the remains of the last emperor and his family have also eventually found their final rest. Travelling along this route you will get better insight into the reasons behind the rise and fall of the last Russian royal dynasty.

## The program of the tour: 12 Days / 11 Nights

Day 1	Arrival to <b>Ekaterinburg</b> . Transfer to the hotel assisted by a guide. Check-in. Dinner at the hotel.
Day 2	Buffet breakfast. General <b>sightseeing tour</b> of the city. Visit to the <b>Museum of the Ural's Minerals</b> . Visiting a market of the <b>Ural souvenirs</b> . Lunch at a Russian restaurant. Visiting the <b>geographical border-line between Europe and Asia</b> accomplished by a glass of Champagne to mark the event. Return to
Day 3	Buffet breakfast. The tour of the sights associated with massacre of Nicolas II and his family: the <b>Cathedral on the-Spilt Blood</b> erected on the grounds of the house, where the Romanovs spent their last days and the <b>Monastery</b> built nearby the burial ground of the last Tsar Family in <b>Ganina Yama</b> . Visit the unique <b>leaning Tower</b> built for the <b>Demidov Urals manufacturers</b> in the 18th century. Lunch at the Russian izba styled restaurant in the village of <b>Tavolga</b> . Visiting the pottery workshops and the souvenir market. Dinner at the hotel.
Day 4	Buffet breakfast. Transfer to the airport for departure to Moscow. Arrival in <b>Moscow</b> . Transfer to the ho-
Day 5	Buffet breakfast. <b>Sightseeing tour</b> of the city including the <b>Cathedral of Christ the Savior</b> . Lunch at a city restaurant. Trip to <b>Kolomenskoye</b> . Dinner at the hotel.
Day 6	Buffet breakfast. Time at leisure. Lunch at a city restaurant. The tour of the <b>Kremlin (Cathedrals and</b>
Day 7	Arrival to <b>Kostroma</b> (at around 05:00). Check-in. Breakfast. <b>Sightseeing tour</b> of the city including the <b>Church in the Woods</b> and to the <b>Ipatiev Monastery</b> . Lunch at a city restaurant. Dinner at the hotel.
Day 8	Breakfast. One-day trip to <b>Yaroslavl</b> (lunch and dinner are included). <b>Sightseeing tour</b> of the city. Visit
Day 9	Arrival in <b>St.Petersburg</b> . Breakfast downtown. <b>Sightseeing tour</b> of the city, including the <b>Peter &amp; Paul Cathedral</b> , the burial place of the Romanovs beginning with Peter I. Lunch at a city restaurant. Transfer to the hotel. Check-in. Dinner at the hotel.
Day 10	Breakfast. The tour of the <b>Hermitage Museum</b> . Lunch at a city restaurant. Afternoon visits to: the <b>House of Peter the Great</b> (the city's first dwelling house), the <b>Summer Palace of Peter the Great</b> , the <b>Russian Emperor Paul's Castle</b> . Dinner at a city restaurant.
Day 11	Breakfast. Trip to <b>Pavlovsk</b> for the tour of the <b>Paul's Palace</b> and the park (a great place to walk, especially in winter). Lunch in <b>Pushkin</b> . The tour of the <b>Alexander's Palace</b> . Return to <b>Pavlovsk</b> for a farewell dinner at the <b>Podvorye restaurant</b> known for excellent Russian food and <b>folk show</b> .
Day 12	Breakfast. Transfer to the airport. Departure.

## TREASURES OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH



The Russian church for centuries possessed an immense influence over the minds of the Russian people. Many generations of talented artists, artisans and craftsmen dedicated their inspiration and skills to the religious subjects. The best architects and builders were employed to erect cathedrals and monasteries. Until the modern time the religion was present in virtually all spheres of the Russian life as well in arts. It is not surprising that the Orthodox Christianity so deeply influenced the Russian culture.

One kind of artifacts is particularly popular when we talk about old Russia. It is icons – the images of God, scenes from the Holy Bible or lives of saints, painted on the wooden board. The Orthodox Christians believe that an icon is the spiritual door to the divine world (not an object of worship on its own as some people think). The art of the icon painting was borrowed from the ancient Byzantium and perfected in Russia, then remaining intact tradition for centuries. Some of the most revered Russian icons have long history behind them, sharing the most dramatic pages of the general Russian history. Some of the ancient icon painters like Andrey Rublev are widely regarded as the genius representation of the traditional Russian civilization.

Among the oldest surviving examples of the Medieval Russian architecture are churches and cathedrals

that have become the ultimate images of Russia abroad. One of them is multicolored St. Basil's church on the Red Square in Moscow. Another is XII-century Church of the Intercession on the Nerl river, stunning in its beauty and simplicity. More recently Christ the Savior Cathedral in Moscow have become the symbol of the spiritual resurrection of Russia.

Over the centuries the church accumulated lots wealthy items which at times were taken to the museums. One of such museums is the Armory in Moscow Kremlin where many of the artifacts religious origin are exhibited. Another excellent exhibition of the church treasures is the museum in Evfimiev Monastery of the Saviour in Suzdal, where you can see golden icon frames, richly embellished robes of the Orthodox high clergy and other precious relics.



**The program of the tour: 10 Days/ 9 Nights**

Day 1	Arrival to <b>Moscow</b> .
Day 2	Breakfast. Full day tour of <b>Moscow monasteries: Danilov</b> (St.Daniel's) Monastery, <b>Andronikov</b> Monastery of the Saviour, <b>Novodevichy</b> (New Convent of the Virgin) Convent, <b>Donskoy</b> Monastery. Attending mass in the <b>Resurrection Church</b> . Visit to the <b>Chapel of Our Lady of Iberia</b> on the Red Square. Trip to the <b>Poklonnaya Hill</b> to visit the <b>Chapel of St.George</b> . Dinner at the hotel.
Day 3	Breakfast. Tour of the <b>Kremlin</b> (the <b>Assumption</b> and the <b>Annunciation Cathedrals</b> ). Visiting the <b>Armory Chamber's</b> collection of the church artifacts of 12 <sup>th</sup> to 18 <sup>th</sup> centuries. Tour of the <b>Tretyakov Art Gallery</b> known for the fantastic collection of icons including some of the most revered icons of the Russian Orthodox Church: the icon of Our Lady of Vladimir, the icon of Our Lady of Don and
Day 4	Breakfast. Departure to <b>Vladimir</b> . We stop on the way at <b>Sergiev Posad</b> for the tour of the <b>St.Trinity Monastery</b> . Founded by one of the most revered of the Russian saints St.Sergius in 14 century, the Trinity monastery is among the main pilgrimage sites for the Russian Orthodox believers, and one of the residences of the Russian patriarch. That makes it a kind of the Russian Vatican. Arrival to Vladimir, the ancient pre-Mongolian capital of Russia. <b>Sightseeing</b> tour of the city, including the Golden Gate and the cathedrals of 12 century. Trip to <b>Bogolyubovo</b> to visit the <b>Church of the Intercession</b> on the Nerl river. Proceed to <b>Suzdal</b> . Check-in at the <b>Pokrovsky Monastery Vis-</b>
Day 5	Breakfast. <b>Sightseeing</b> tour of Suzdal including the <b>Kremlin</b> , the <b>Museum of Icons</b> and the <b>Evfimiev Monastery of the Saviour</b> with its famous frescoes and collection of the church treasures. Departure to Moscow. Arrival. Dinner at a city restaurant. Transfer to the train station. Over-
Day 6	Arrival to <b>St.Petersburg</b> . Transfer to the hotel. Check-in. <b>Sightseeing</b> tour of the city including the <b>Alexander Nevsky Monastery</b> , the <b>Smolny Cathedral</b> , the <b>Prince Vladimir Cathedral</b> (the Cathedral's icon of Our Lady of Kazan is among the most worshipped relics of the city). Tour of the <b>Peter &amp; Paul Fortress</b> . Dinner at the hotel.
Day 7	Breakfast. Tour of the <b>State Hermitage Museum</b> . Time at leisure. Dinner at the hotel.
Day 8	Breakfast. Trip to <b>Novgorod</b> (180 km away from). The afternoon <b>tour of the city</b> including the <b>Cathedral of St.Sophia</b> and <b>St. George Monastery</b> . Dinner.
Day 9	Breakfast. Departure to St.Petersburg. Arrival in St.Petersburg. Check-in. Time at leisure. Dinner.
Day 10	Breakfast. Transfer to the airport. Departure.

## LEARN AND ENJOY

# THE RUSSIAN CULINARY ART

ST.PETERSBURG / NOVGOROD



Each country is distinguished by its distinctive traditional cuisine. Such a big country as Russia is not an exception. The Russian art of cooking also adopted culinary experience of many peoples that contributed to the creation of Russian civilization: Tatars, Finno-Ugrians, people of Caucasus and Middle Asia. The imperial age brought to the Russians excellence in the skill of the high cuisine, developed to the level of state of art.

While visiting Russian restaurants the guests will have chance to taste **borsch** (beet roots soup), **shchi** (cabbage soup), **okroshka**, which is a favorite Russian summer dish made of vegetables and **kvass** (bread and yeast fermented liquid), **pancakes** served with a number of different fillings, **pelmeni** (meat dumplings) and many others. Collections of the **Russian chinaware** exhibited in the **Winter Palace** and former summer residences of the Russian Tsars give an idea of how the tables were laid out when the Royal families welcomed noble guests. The trip to **Novgorod**, which is one of the oldest Russian cities, allows visitors to enjoy not only the highlights of the ancient city, but a **traditional Russian lunch** accompanied by balalaika music as well.

The tour includes visiting the most popular of the city's dining places, as well as a special course of the **Russian culinary art** by famous local chefs. At the end of the tour each guest will be presented a menu with recipes, articles of a Russian chef's uniform, and an album of photos to commemorate their trip. (The menus of all the meals included in the program will be given to the guests in advance).

### **The program of the tour: 6 Days / 5 Nights**

Day 1	<i>Arrival in St.Petersburg. Check-in.</i>
Day 2	<i>Breakfast. General sightseeing tour of the city. Visit to a farmers' market. Lunch at the hotel including chef's presentation of dishes and specialities. Afternoon at leisure. Dinner at the Yusupov restaurant (the menu includes fish delicacies).</i>
Day 3	<i>Breakfast. Tour of the Hermitage Museum including visiting the Golden Treasury. Lecture by a Hermitage expert on the art of table lay-out and Russian traditions of serving meals. Lunch (arranged at the culinary school). Taking a practical course. Dinner at the Taleon restaurant. Evening theatre performance.</i>
Day 4	<i>Breakfast. Trip to Pushkin and Pavlovsk for the tours of the Catherine's and Paul's Palaces. Lunch at the Podvorye restaurant including visit to the restaurant's kitchen to watch cooking of pelmeni, kasha (Russian for gruel) a la Guryev, and pirozhki. Dinner provided by Russian families at their homes (5 to 6 guests per family).</i>
Day 5	<i>Breakfast. Trip to Novgorod. Sightseeing tours. Lunch (tasting pokhlyobka, bliny, sbiten, kvass, etc.). Return to St.Petersburg. Farewell dinner at the Dvoryanskoye Sobranie restaurant.</i>
Day 6	<i>Transfer to the airport. Departure.</i>

## JOURNEY WITH THE CLASSICAL MUSIC



Being the unofficial Capital of Modern Russian Culture, St.Petersburg is naturally a home to some of the best world class music companies such as Mariinsky (Kirov) State Opera & Ballet House, Mikhailovsky (Musorgsky) State Opera & Ballet House, Saint Petersburg Philharmonia and others. The tradition of classical

music and dance in St.Petersburg reached its highest point in the Emperor's Theatres in the beginning of the XX century and was further maintained and developed during the Soviet period.

Today you can enjoy the beauty of St.Petersburg's classical architecture and listen to its classical music at the same time. The itinerary of this most refined tour presents a unique opportunity to submerge into

the mysterious charm of the Russian classical music through visiting many concerts, theatres, and museums, including a concert of choral singing and a ballet or opera performances.

Among other attractions of the tour is a visit to the unique collection of musical instruments and the burial place of the world famous Russian composers Tchaikovsky, Rimsky-Korsakov and Borodin, supplemented nicely by the tour of the Museum of the singer Shaliapin. Though the tour aims, in the first place, to introduce the world of the Russian classical music, it includes also visiting such city's highlights as the Hermitage and the former summer residence of the Russian Tsars in Pushkin, both being in the past and present some of the most charming venues for the classical music performances.

In the recent years Mariinsky Theatre has received an enormous boost as the new modern state-of-the-art building has been complete. The stage has the most advanced technologies integrated, that allows Mariinsky team to prepare even the very complicated performances. During the tour we have the opportunity to compare the two stages – the historical theatre in all its classical majesty and the new, hi-tech one.

Day 1	<i>Arrival to <b>St. Petersburg</b>. Check-in. Dinner at the hotel.</i>
Day 2	<i>Breakfast. General sightseeing <b>tour of the city</b> including city's highlights and places connected closely with the history of the <b>Russian classical music: the Theater Square, the Square of Arts and others</b>. Visit to <b>the Smolny Cathedral</b> for the concert of choral singing. Lunch in a city restaurant. <b>The tour of the Peter &amp; Paul Cathedral</b>, Visit to the <b>Saint Petersburg Philharmonia</b> for a music recital/ concert. Dinner at the hotel.</i>
Day 3	<i>Breakfast. Visiting <b>morning service celebrated at the St. Nicholas Marine Cathedral</b>. The tour of the <b>Hermitage Museum</b>, including, along with the art collection's highlights, the gala rooms of the Winter Palace and the <b>Hermitage Theatre</b>. Lunch in a city restaurant. Visit to the <b>Conservatory</b>, among the professors of which were <b>Tchaikovsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, Shostakovich</b> and many other prominent Russian composers. Meeting the professors and students of the Conservatory. Visiting classes. Dinner at the hotel.</i>
Day 4	<i>Breakfast. Visit to <b>Pushkin</b>, the former summer residence of the Russian Tsars, for the tour of the <b>Catherine's Palace</b>. Lunch in a city restaurant. Visit to the <b>museum of the musical instruments</b>. Visiting ballet or opera performance at the <b>Mariinsky Theater</b>. Dinner at the hotel.</i>
Day 5	<i>Breakfast. The tour of the <b>St. Isaac's Cathedral</b>. Lunch in a city restaurant. Visit to the <b>Shalyapin Museum</b>. The tour of the cemetery of the <b>Alexander Nevsky Monastery</b>, where the most prominent Russian composers and musicians were buried. <b>The concert of sacred music</b> performed at the Cathedral specially for the group. Evening performance at <b>Mikhailovsky Theatre</b>. <b>Farewell dinner</b> in a city restaurant.</i>
Day 6	<i>Breakfast. Check-out. Transfer to the airport. Departure.</i>