

GOINGRUSSIA 2015

WEEKEND SAINT-PETERSBURG «ALL INCLUSIVE»

4 DAYS / 3 NIGHTS

WEEKEND SAINT-PETERSBURG «ALL INCLUSIVE»

Day 1 - Thursday or Friday: Saint-Petersburg (arrival)

- Arrival to Saint-Petersburg
- Transfer
- Optional (depending on the flight time):*
 - Walking tour on Nevsky prospect
 - Visit of the Metro

Day 2 - Friday or Saturday: Saint-Petersburg

- Breakfast
- Panoramic City Tour
- Short walk through the Dostoevsky quarter
- Visit to the Kuznechny food market
- Visit to Our Lady of Vladimir Church
- Exterior view of the cruiser Aurora
- Visit to the Peter and Paul Fortress
- Free time for lunch
- Visit to the Hermitage Museum
- Short walk through the Pushkin quarter

Day 3 - Saturday or Sunday: Saint-Petersburg

- Breakfast
- Excursion to Pushkin and visit to Catherine's Palace and its park
- Free time for lunch
- Excursion to Pavlovsk and visit to Paul's Palace and its park
- Return to Saint-Petersburg
- Visit to St. Nicolas Naval Cathedral

Day 4 - Sunday or Monday: Saint-Petersburg (departure)

- Breakfast
- Optional (depending on the departure flight):*
 - Visit of the Peterhof or visit of the Yusupov palace or visit of St. Isaac Cathedral
- Transfer to the airport

WEEKEND SAINT-PETERSBURG «ALL INCLUSIVE»

4 days/3 nights

Day 1 - Thursday or Friday: Saint-Petersburg - arrival

Arrival to Saint-Petersburg

Transfer to the hotel

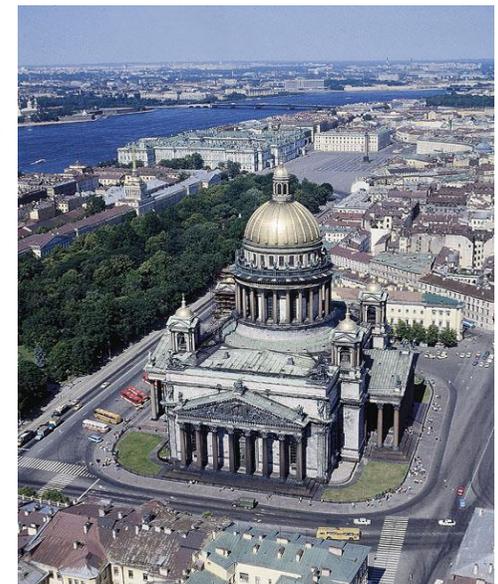
Optional (depending on the flight time):

- *Walking tour on Nevsky prospect*
- *Visit of the Metro*

Day 2 - Friday or Saturday: Saint-Petersburg

Breakfast at hotel

Panoramic City Tour. A guided tour completely in English, this tour is ideal for getting the feel of the city, and in particular its historical center and major monuments. Participants will enjoy **Nevsky Prospect** along with its most prestigious buildings: the Anichkov, Stroganov, and Belozersky Palaces; Lutheran, Catholic, and Armenian churches; the orthodox **Cathedral of Our Lady of Kazan**, the Eliseev, Singer, and Mertens buildings, and many others. We will cross the Fontanka, the river that, along with the Moika River and Griboedov Canal, formed the border of the city center. The banks of Griboedov Canal are home to the well-known Church of the Savior on Spilled Blood, built in the so typically Russian style with its multicolored cupolas and gold onion domes. The former **Winter Palace**, once a residence of the tsars and now the **Hermitage Museum**, dominates the northern bank of the Neva River, while on the opposite bank the silhouette of the **Peter and Paul Fortress** and its high spire command the skyline. We will stop by the **Aurora Cruiser**, whose guns opened the Russian revolution, followed by the **House of Peter the Great** - it was from this modest residence that the Tsar personally kept an eye on the construction of "his" city between 1703 and 1708. On Vasilevsky Island we will see the **Strelka**, the **Menchikov palace** and a historical building which is part of the **State University**. We will pass by the **Admiralty** with its imposing gold broach, a symbol of the Russian navy on which Peter the Great wanted to base his empire. His equestrian statue is erected in front of the **Senate building** and **St. Isaac's Cathedral** with its impressive columns made from Finnish red granite. Then there are the buildings of the **Conservatory** and **Mariinsky Theatre** on Theater Square, after which the tour will conclude with a visit to the **St. Nicolas Naval Cathedral**, surrounded by canals.



Short walk through the Dostoevsky quarter. The world-famous Russian writer Fyodor Dostoevsky was always deeply connected to St. Petersburg, then the capital of the Russian Empire. He loved the city and lived in about 20 different apartments, most of them situated in the same part of the northern capital and near a church or cathedral, as he was a strong believer. We will visit one of his preferred areas, situated in the heart of St. Petersburg. Beyond the elegant facades, the interior of these houses reflect all the different classes represented in the city, from rich families to the middle and low classes, the ones that interested Dostoyevsky the most. He brilliantly depicted these characters and their daily life with the details he knew so well in many of his books, such as Crime and Punishment, The Idiot, and others. During our walking tour we will discover the cobbled streets where the writer lived, see the last home of Dostoyevsky, where his memorial is situated, and visit Vladimir Church, where he used to pray.



Visit to the Kuznechny food market. Situated in one of the oldest parts of the city, the so-called Dostoevsky quarter, it was built in the beginning of the 20th century and today is the most well-known market in St. Petersburg, a favorite with the city's citizens. It is not the cheapest place in the city, but is certainly the best-stocked of its markets. Since its opening only the best natural products have been gathered here from all of Russia and its regions: fruits, vegetables, and spices from the fertile oasis of Central Asia and the slopes of the Caucasian Mountains, along with milk fresh from the cow, home-made cheese, healthy dried fruits, forest mushrooms, fresh fish, and caviar. What is most amazing is that before you buy you can taste almost any product here - the best guarantee of quality! Once you have tried some honey or a slice of cheese you will not be able to leave without taking some of these delights with you.



Visit to Our Lady of Vladimir Church. Built originally out of wood in 1747, the actual stone building was inaugurated in 1768 and designed by the architect Pietro Antonio Trezzini with a surprising mix of the Baroque and Neoclassical styles. Situated in a densely populated area, this is one of the churches most often visited by the city's inhabitants, and boasts five onion-shaped domes along with one separated belfry. During the communist rule in Russia it hosted an anti-religious library, though its religious functions were restored in 1989. One of its most famous visitors was Dostoyevsky, who frequently prayed at the church.



Exterior view of the cruiser Aurora. The Aurora is the ship of the Imperial Navy whose guns announced the beginning of the Russian Revolution on October 25, 1917 when its crew joined the Revolutionaries, neglecting an order to leave the city. Its sailors not only gave the signal for the assault on the Winter Palace, but even participated in it. Visitors will appreciate its historical guns and enjoy the beautiful view of the Neva and embankment.



Visit to the Peter and Paul Fortress. Located on a small island opposite the winter palace and dominating three branches of the Neva River, the Fortress was intended to protect the city from a naval assault. It was the city's first building and is considered the foundation of St. Petersburg, while the tsars also used it as a political prison for their main opponents. Now it is a museum and one of the best spots in the city to enjoy magnificent panoramic views of the Neva's southern bank. One of the guns on the top of its bulwarks is even fired every day at noon, and what was initially a small wooden church built inside the big fortress was eventually expanded and improved on, becoming the current cathedral, both hits with visiting tourists. There we will take in the graves of all the tsars of the Romanov dynasty and their families, including the grave of Peter the Great, founder of the city, and those of Nicholas II and his family, killed during the Bolshevik revolution of 1918. Their remains were buried in the cathedral in 1998.



Free time for lunch

Visit to the Hermitage Museum. The magnificent Hermitage Museum is the most important sight in St. Petersburg, occupying the Winter Palace, former residence of the Russian tsars, and three more adjacent buildings overlooking the Neva River. The Hermitage is Russia's biggest museum and one of the most important in the world. It was founded in 1764 by Catherine the Great and it grew richer through the centuries as tsars purchased entire art collections abroad. Today it is home to more than three million masterpieces and hosts invaluable collections of sculptures, pictorial art, crystals, porcelain, carpets, jewellery, engravings, antiques from the classical era, modern art, weapons, medals, coins, precious books, and many more. It is well known all over the world for its collections of Italian, Flemish, French, and Spanish pictorial art, and particularly for its paintings of Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, and Rembrandt; impressionists such as Gauguin, Matisse, and Van Gogh; and such geniuses of modern art as Picasso. Its sumptuous interiors, richly decorated by the most talented artists, are a marvellous frame for this unique collection.



Short walk through the Pushkin quarter. Almost two centuries have passed already since the tragic death of the most famous and celebrated Russian poet, but Russians still remember and love his books and admire his attitude toward life. He was not only an extraordinarily talented writer, but an outstanding person who actively participated in the politic and social life of his time, defending the interests of the Russian people. Our visit will take us to the area of the city where he lived between his long and frequent trips. We will stroll along cobbled Millionnaya Street where we will admire the old palaces, the impressive Atlantes holding one of the Hermitage colonnades, and the romantic Winter Canal. By the Moika River we will discover the elegant facade of the house that Pushkin shared with his wife and where he died defending her honor after a duel with a French officer of the Tsar.



Day 3 - Saturday or Sunday: Saint-Petersburg

Breakfast at hotel

Excursion to Pushkin and visit to Catherine's Palace and its park. The small city of Pushkin, located 30 kilometers to the south of St. Petersburg, was named after the great Russian poet. In the past it was also called Tsarskoe Selo, meaning "Village of the Tsars". Catherine Palace, named after Peter the Great's wife, Catherine I, is one of the most beautiful residences of the Russian tsars. It was designed by the famous Italian architect Bartolomeo Rastrelli, the designer of the most important monuments and palaces of the city, and was constructed in the 17th century, spanning the reigns of five tsars. Each of them altered the palace according to their own personal tastes and what was in vogue at the time, from the initial Rococo through to the later Neoclassic. It was a favorite of Catherine II, her incomparable heritage crowned by the Amber Room, covered from floor to ceiling with Baltic amber. The Amber Room was kept from the public for almost 100 years and opened only after a full renovation in 2003, on the 300th anniversary of St. Petersburg. We will also admire the beauty of the large ballroom known as the Grand Hall or the Hall of Paintings. The beautiful architecture of the palace is surrounded by the neighboring park, where you can walk among the birches, firs, lakes, ponds, streams, bridges, sculptures, and pavilions - unforgettable beauty that has been the subject of many poets and artists.



Free time for lunch

Excursion to Pavlovsk and visit to Paul's Palace and its park. The palace at Pavlovsk was a present made by Catherine the Great to her son Pavel, future Tsar Paul I, in 1777. The place soon took the name of Pavlovsk and quickly acquired numerous masterpieces thanks to the tsar's spouse, Maria Fedorovna, who was fond of art and a sponsor of many artists. We will appreciate the refinement of its salons, the harmony of its colors, the elegance of fireplaces made from Carrara marble, and an extensive collection of porcelain, paintings, and ivory articles. Its park, covering 600 hectares, was initially a game reserve for the tsar, and is considered a masterpiece of European landscape architecture.



Return to Saint-Petersburg

Visit to St. Nicolas Naval Cathedral. This beautiful Russian Baroque building is remarkable for its massive golden cupolas. It was built in an area where sailors had lived ever since the town was founded by Peter the Great due to the many canals crisscrossing the neighbourhood and the proximity of the port, and the Naval Regiment established its headquarters there. The cathedral itself was a gift from Prince Golitsin to Tsaritsa Elisaveta Petrovna for the feats of Russian fleet, as the temple of St. Nicholas the Miraculous, patron saint of sailors, with architect Chevalinsky managing construction from 1753 to 1762. The cathedral building is actually composed of two separated churches on different floors: Saint Nicholas Church on the lower one and Epiphany Church above it. Both are richly decorated with moulding and corinthian columns, the ensemble crowned by a beautiful freestanding bell tower.



Day 4 - Sunday or Monday: Saint-Petersburg - departure

Breakfast at hotel

Optional (depending on the flight time):

- *Visit of the Peterhof or visit of the Yusupov Palace or visit of St. Isaac Cathedral*
- *Lunch*

Transfer to airport