

Russian Religion, Culture, Traditions.

9 nights / 10 days.

Day 1. MOSCOW.

Arrival in Moscow. Meeting with guide. Transfer to hotel. Overnight at hotel. Due to the time of arrival, we can organize an activity, or simply have a splendid afternoon in the Russian capital. For example, we can visit **The Arbat street**. It is one of the oldest streets in Moscow. Its name comes from the word "Arbad" or "rabad" which means "suburb". In the years 1974 - 1986 Arbat became Pedestrian Street with many shops, cafes, shopping areas, restaurants, street vendors and so on. Today Arbat Street retains its own unique Moscow look of past centuries.



Night in Moscow.

Day 2. MOSCOW.



Breakfast. Meeting with guide. We start our day with **City tour**. During the tour, we walk through the most attractive areas of Moscow: Red Square, Lenin's Mausoleum and **The Cathedral of Saint Basil**. It is one of the architectural landmarks of the Russian capital and monuments of World Heritage. Construction of the cathedral was ordered by Tsar Ivan the Terrible and was made between 1555 and 1561. There is a legend that Czar Ivan blinded the architect Postnik Yakovlev with the project to avoid a construction that could overcome The Cathedral, but it seems clear that

it is nothing more than a fable. Today the Cathedral is the most recognized symbol of the country. Nearby is the famous Bolshoi Theater, the imposing building of the Lubyanka, the former KGB, close to the wonderful churches of the old Kitay Gorod. Next stop will be near the majestic **Cathedral of Christ the Savior** of the Patriarch of Moscow, the highest Orthodox Church in the world. The current church is the second to stand on this site. The original church, built during the 19th century, took more than 40 years to build, and was the scene of the 1882 world premiere of the 1812 Overture composed by Tchaikovsky. It was destroyed in 1931 on the order of Soviet leader Joseph Stalin. Construction started in 1937 but was halted in 1941 when Germany invaded the Soviet Union during World War II. Its steel frame was disassembled the following year, and the Palace was never built. Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the current church was rebuilt on the site between 1995 and 2000.

Night in Moscow.

Day 3. MOSCOW.

Breakfast. Meeting with guide. In the morning, we visit the territory of the ancient fortress called **Kremlin**, XII century. Even now, all the major organs of political and religious government are located on its territory. We visit **the Assumption Cathedral, Cathedral Arkhanguelsky**, the Belfry of Ivan the Great and other monuments.





In continuing to explore the religious places we offer to visit **Novodevichiy Monastery**

It's one of few Monasteries that has retained its original appearance intact since the 17th century. In 2004 the monastery was declared a World Heritage. According to legend, the beautiful lake, located next to the walls of the Monastery inspired masterpiece of the famous Russian composer Piotr Tchaikovsky called "The Swan Lake".

Night in Moscow.

Day 4. MOSCOW.



Breakfast. Meeting with guide.

We offer you to visit **Sergiev Posad**. It's situated about 60 km from Moscow. In this small town, the most interesting monument is **the monastery of the Trinity Sergius**, an ensemble of XV-XIX century depicting all stages of Russian architecture. Apart is the spiritual center of the Orthodox church, where over 300 monks look after the territory of the monastery live.

Night in Moscow.

Day 5. MOSCOW - SAINT PETERSBURG.



Breakfast. Meeting with guide for transfer to the railway station for the fast train **Sapsan**. It's a new high-speed train developed by Siemens company especially for Russian railways. It was named in honor of sapsan bird. The journey time between the two capitals Moscow and St. Petersburg are 3 hours 45 minutes with speed of 200 km/h.

Arrival in St. Petersburg. Meeting with guide on the platform.

Then we have **city tour of St. Petersburg**: Nevsky prospect we travel - the splendid Vasilievsky Island - the old port, the university area, the Theatre Square. We enter to **the Church of St. Nicholas**, district of Fyodor Dostoevsky, Saint Isaak 's Square and **The Cathedral of St. Isaak** is the most sumptuous and magnificent in St. Petersburg. The work of the French architect Auguste Montferrand who created during 40 years his magnificent work in the heart of the city. The Dome Cathedral is considered the fourth in Europe by size. More than 12 thousand people could come together inside. In 1928 the Cathedral was closed and opened as the Museum of Atheism. Currently, the Cathedral is the Museum of the history of construction of the Cathedral.



Transfer to hotel. Accommodation. **Night in St. Petersburg .**

Day 6. SAINT PETERSBURG.

Breakfast. We meet with guide and have a trip to **Peterhof**, also called "Russian Versailles". Peterhof was the main summer residence of the tsars. Located on the southern coast of the Gulf of Finland, by the sea and about 25 km from the city of St. Petersburg, it is undoubtedly one of the main attractions of the ancient imperial capital. It is a vast complex including the **Grand Palace** and the park to visit, and several minor pavilions and palaces scattered across the beautiful gardens. These have a special attraction with its 150 fountains and three waterfalls, along with the colorful "water games", all ornate golden statues of incomparable beauty.

Then we visit the **Peter and Paul Fortress**. It is the historical and architectural center of St. Petersburg. It was the first building of the city founded on May 27, 1703 is considered the date of the founding of St. Petersburg. We will visit **the Cathedral of St. Peter and St. Paul**, which became the Pantheon of the Romanov family, when in 1998 in a side chapel of the Cathedral buried the remains of the last Russian Emperor Nicholas II and his family. Currently the Fortress and the Cathedral of St. Peter and Paul is history museum.



Then we visit **The Church of the Savior on Spilled Blood**

This church was built on the site where Emperor Alexander II was fatally wounded by political nihilists in March 1881. The church was built between 1883 and 1907. The construction was funded by the imperial family.

Night in St. Petersburg.

Day 7. SAINT PETERSBURG

Breakfast. We meet with guide and go to **Pushkin**. You can see great **Catherine Palace and Park**. The small town of Pushkin, located in 30 km, south of St. Petersburg, was named in honor of the greatest Russian poet. Formerly called Tsarskoye Selo, or "Village of the Tsars". It is one of the most beautiful imperial residences, Catherine's Palace, whose name is dedicated to the wife of Peter the

Great, Catherine I. It was a favorite place of Catherine II the Great, with its incomparable Amber Room, entirely covered with Baltic Amber. Hidden to visitors for nearly a century, it has been completely restored in 2003, to mark the Tercentenary of St. Petersburg. The beautiful architecture of the palace is reflected in the surrounding park, where you can see forests, lakes and ponds, streams, bridges, sculptures.



On the way back we will visit **Theodore cathedral**. It was built specifically for the significant date, the tercentenary of the Romanov dynasty. The construction lasted two years on the donations of the faithful. The temple was made of reinforced concrete, which was a novelty at the time. Outwardly, he looked like the Rostov and Yaroslavl churches of 16-17 centuries, its maximum capacity of 3,500 people. Since the cathedral was dedicated to the royal family, it was shown the Romanov family tree on the northern wall, and was inscribed, devoted to the Emperor's family members among bells.

After the establishment of Soviet power Cathedral lasted until 1932, thanks to the active support of the Communists; but then the dome was demolished and the building was given to the dairy. Only in 2013, the 400th anniversary of the Romanov, it was restored in a historically accurate way.

Night in St. Petersburg.

Day 8. SAINT PETERSBURG- NOVGOROD

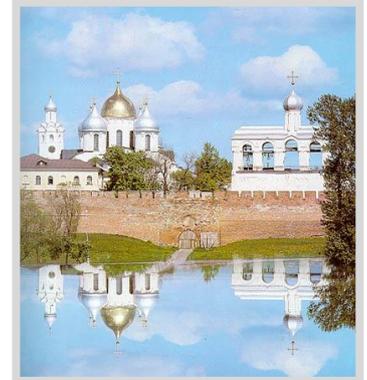
Breakfast. We meet with guide and departure from Saint-Petersburg to Novgorod.

After check in a hotel we have an **Interactive tour with Sbyslav**. Sbyslav tells about how Detinets was built, about fortified towers, about Prince Vladimir Yaroslavich, who erected a stone city and his military affairs. The story of the wonderful church of Boris and Gleb, that the legendary Sadko built, about the shrines of the cathedral of Sophia, about of the Magdeburg gates, about Vladychny dvor.

After interactive tour we will visit **Faceted Archbishop Chamber**. Guests will attend one of the most considerable meetings of jewelry art in Russia. About two hundred gold and silver monuments, indoor sculpture of the Byzantine, Russian and Western European masters covering the period from VI to the XIX century are presented at an exhibition.

Then we will have a walk on **Yaroslav's Courtyard**, the territory of the medieval market. It is one of the most beautiful places in the city.

And we will finish our day excursion **with The Church of the Transfiguration of Our Savior on Ilyina Street** (1374 y.b.) is world famous. This is the only temple in which fragments of the fresco painting were preserved, the fresco were executed by the legendary Byzantine artist and philosopher Theophanes the Greek.



Night in Novgorod

Day 9. NOVGOROD- ST.PETERSBURG

Breakfast. Meeting with guide.

We start our day with **the center of restoration of monumental painting of Antoniev Monastery**. Visitors will visit the workshops, which are engaged in the restoration of the destroyed unique frescoes of the Novgorod's ancient temples. An amazing contiguity to the past in modern times.

After Monastery we will have an **excursion to the Pereyn skete**. Here is the smallest church in the Novgorod Diocese (8X8 meters). You will visit the most picturesque place in the pine forest near the source of the Volkhov River, where the city was baptized and where, in ancient times, there was one of the largest pagan sanctuaries of the Eastern Slavs - the temple of the god-thunderer Perun. This place is famous for its extraordinary atmosphere, coziness and good energy.

We will complete our introduction to Novgorod with **the Museum of wooden architecture and Yuriev monastery**. The Museum of Wooden Arts "Vinoslavlitsy" is one of the most interesting museums of Veliky Novgorod. You will visit a real village of 16-19 centuries with different wooden izbas, churches and other buildings. You will know about the life of Novgorod peasants. Yuriev Monastery is situated near the museum and it is a functioning man's monastery of the 12 century.

We leave Novgorod for transfer to St. Petersburg. Accommodation in hotel. **Night in St. Petersburg.**

Day 10. ST.PETERSBURG

Breakfast. Meeting with guide. Transfer to airport or railway station.

Price: from 800EUR (price depends on season, pax in the group, preferable language)

INCLUDED SERVICES

- Expected Hotels or similar category
- Meals according itinerary (B)
- The Museum Entrances as per itinerary
- English speaking guide throughout the tour.
- All transfers indicated in the itinerary by car with the guide
- Fast train ticket Moscow- Saint Petersburg (economy class)
- Visa support documents

NOT INCLUDED SERVICES

- International Flights
- Health Insurance
- Drinks, gratuities
- Tips to guide and driver, in hotels and restaurants