

BELARUS, RUSSIA AND FINLAND

12 days
11 nights

3
countries

travel type
Cultural

This is an unusual travel itinerary that offers an interesting mix of places from Belarusian castles to the internationally-recognized must-see sites in Russia and part of Scandinavia:

- Minsk, the capital of Belarus with the impressive monumental buildings of Stalinist architecture. You would be surprised to know that Minsk is also one of the safest European capitals.
- Two magnificent Belarusian palaces – Mir and Nesvizh, both UNESCO Heritage sites.
- Moscow, the “Mother of Russian cities” with one of the most recognizable sites in the world – the ensemble of Kremlin and the Red Square;
- Saint Petersburg, also known as the “Cultural Capital of Russia”. It houses hundreds of museums, including the world’s largest museum, the Hermitage, the world’s top ballet and the former elegant winter and summer palaces of the Russian Emperors.
- Helsinki, the Finish capital built on the crossroads of Western and Eastern culture.

DESCRIPTION

● Day 1, Minsk

Highlights: Minsk city tour Spend this evening to explore Minsk on your own. The city was largely destroyed during the WW2 and later rebuild as an excellent example of Stalinist Neo Classicism with wide avenues, impressive monumental buildings, imposing squares and public gardens. Minsk is a very clean and safe city, a perfect place for curious tourists looking for cultural discoveries. We invite you for a dinner at a traditional Belarussian restaurant. Do you think you know how to cook potato? Wait before you try Beloaussian cuisine! Its no surprise that it makes the perfect match with vodka. Overnight: Minsk Meals: D

● Day 2, Minsk

Highlights: Minsk city tour, “Island of Tears” memorial During the morning city tour you will learn about 900 years history of Minsk, see the most remarkable monuments of the historical center, as well as impressive Neoclassic architecture built to replace ruins left after WW2, i. e. Independence Square and Victory Square with its 38-meter obelisk and the Eternal Flame. Afternoon visit of the “Island of Tears” – a memorial set up to commemorate lost Belarussian soldiers, the Victory Monument and the National Library. Overnight: Minsk Meals: B+L

● Day 3, Minsk – Nesvizh Castle – Mir Castle – Moscow

Highlights: Mir castle, Nesvizh Castle Today you will leave Minsk and learn about a different page of the Belarussian history – medieval times. You will visit the two “must see” sights included into UNESCO World Heritage list. Start with a visit to the Mir castle – another 16th cent. masterpiece housing National art museum. The successful blend of Gothic, Baroque and Renaissance architecture makes Mir Castle one of the most impressive castles in Europe. Continue to the most beautiful Belarussian castle – baroque Nesvizh Castle which gardens are

a particular attraction, with ornamental lakes, and beautifully landscaped gardens. Evening transfer back to Minsk to take a night train to Moscow. Overnight: Minsk Meals: B + L + D

● Day 4, Moscow

Highlights: Moscow city tour, Kremlin Start today with a tour to the heart of Russia – the world-famous Red Square, Moscow's Kremlin and the stunning St. Basil's Cathedral. Once you see this incredible ensemble, you will never forget it! Visit the Kremlin and learn about its history, tightly connected to the dramatic history of the country, listen about traditions of Moscow, which left their mark in the names of ancient towers. After the Kremlin the tour continues to Vorobyevi Hills where you will get an incredible view of the city, you will proceed to Moscow State University which is an example of architecture from the time of Stalin, the Diplomatic Village, Triumphal Arch and much more. Meals: B + L Overnight: Moscow

● Day 5, Moscow – Sergiev Posad

Highlights: Sergiev Possad, Moscow Metro and Arbat Morning departure to Sergiev Possad – the city founded around the sacred place of the Russian land and the World Cultural Heritage sight – the Trinity Sergius Lavra, which is Trinity Sergius Lavra monastery named respected Russian saint Sergius. Afternoon continues with discovering other highlights of Moscow – its famous Metro and Arbat street. This tour introduces the history and architecture of the Metro subway system and includes travels by Metro to see the most famous stations that are uniquely designed with decorative elements including mosaics, statues and marble staircases. You will proceed to Old Arbat street, one of Moscow's oldest streets. The street has gone from being the headquarters of Ivan the Terrible's secret police to the center of aristocratic life in Moscow in the 18th century to finally being the center of the Russian bohemian life. Meals: B + L Overnight: Moscow

● Day 6, Moscow – Saint Petersburg

Highlights: Saint Petersburg city tour Morning transfer to the train station and departure by speed train "Sapsan" to St. Petersburg (4h). Upon arrival you will have a panoramic tour of the cultural capital of Russia. For three centuries St Petersburg has been impressing visitors from all over the world and it doesn't take much time to fall in love with this splendid city. On the way to your hotel you will admire views of magnificent palaces, cathedrals, canals and world-renown theatres. Meals: B + L Overnight: Saint Petersburg

● Day 7, Saint Petersburg

Highlights: St. Isaak Cathedral, Peter and Paul Fortress, Hermitage museum This morning you see the major sights of this impressive city and learn about last three hundred years of the Russian history reflected in its rich architecture. Start with a visit of the former principal cathedral of the Russian capital – St. Isaak Cathedral and continue to Peter and Paul Fortress – the oldest construction in Saint Petersburg, enjoy the beauty of one of the world's great architectural masterpieces, the golden Peter and Paul Cathedral. Afternoon visit to one of the world's greatest art museums – the Hermitage, located within the Winter Palace, baroque masterpiece and residence of the Russian tsars. It boasts a collection of art from the Stone Age to the 20th century. The Hermitage is so large that according to expert's it would take you 9 years to look at each item of the museum collection for one minute! So, don't get frustrated if you can't see it all, but take away some special memories from this visit, because the Hermitage is definitely a "must see" museum for any art lover. Meals: B+L Overnight: Saint Petersburg

● Day 8, Saint Petersburg – Peterhof – Tsarskoye Selo

Highlights: Peterhof Palace, Catherine Palace This day is devoted to exploring one of St. Petersburg suburbs – Peterhof, where famous summer residence of the Russian tsars is

located. This palace is Russian answer to French Versailles with an impressive park with 200 fountains that make its major attraction. World best artists designed the unique ensemble of fountains and cascades over long period of over 100 years. You stay in St. Petersburg would not be complete without visit of another outstanding suburban residence of the Russian tsars – Catherine Palace, named after the Empress Catherine I, its the first royal owner of the imperial palace. It is the best example of Russian baroque with incredible collection of art, where you will admire breath-taking interiors of its 29 halls, including the legendary Amber Room assembled with over 500,000 pieces of amber like a huge puzzle. Meals: B + L Overnight: Saint Petersburg

● Day 9, Saint Petersburg

Highlights: boat trip in Neva River Morning boat trip in Neva River and canals. Getting around St Petersburg by boat is one of the best ways to enjoy a romantic sightseeing in the city of rivers and canals. The combination of fascinating architecture and water in St. Petersburg, as well as in Venice, has a special charm. Free time in the city. Exploring St. Petersburg on your own is a chance to see some of its main highlights including the fairy-tale like cathedral “Our saviour on the Blood” or other significant monuments. St. Petersburg has numerous ways to surprise its visitors and you will find your own way to enjoy it in your free time. Dinner in the city center with folk show. Meals: B + D Overnight: Saint Petersburg

● Day 10, Saint Petersburg – Vyborg - Helsinki

Highlights: Vyborg city tour Morning departure to Helsinki. On the way you will stop to see the capital of the Russian region Karelia – Vyborg. The city was founded by Swedes in 16th century. During the walking city tour you will see a medieval Round tower, enjoy a view from the Vyborg castle – former Swedish stronghold and walk in a spacious English landscape garden. Afternoon arrival in Helsinki the capital of Finland. Helsinki is a modern European cultural city whose urban cosmopolitan lifestyle exists in perfect harmony with nature. Surrounded by the sea and its own archipelago, Helsinki offers visitors an endless number of possibilities. Meals: B + L Overnight: Helsinki

● Day 11, Helsinki

Highlights: Helsinki city tour, Suomenlinna Fortress Helsinki is truly located at the crossroads of Western and Eastern culture and it is reflected everywhere in the green and lively Finnish capital. Helsinki sightseeing tour takes us around the harbours, up central Mannerheim Street and by the Parliament Building, the Finlandia Hall, market square, and the Sibelius Monument and for a visit at the famous Church-in-the-Rock. Afternoon visit at Suomenlinna Fortress, built in the second half of the 18th century by Sweden on a group of islands located at the entrance of Helsinki’s harbour. This fortress is an especially interesting example of European military architecture of the time. Meals: B+L Overnight: Helsinki

● Day 12, Helsinki

Breakfast at hotel. Transfer to the airport. Departure.