

SECRET OF THE RUSSIAN SOUL

13 days
12 nights

1
countries

14
objects

travel type
Cultural

Russia is one of the major world nations that has made a great influence into the world cultural heritage. Thus, this holiday is perfect for those willing to see more of it and have a deeper look into Russian history and culture:

- 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.
- The highlights of the “Golden Ring” routes – the town of Sergiev Posad, Suzdal, Valdimir, and Uglich. All of these places are included into the UNESCO World Heritage List.

DESCRIPTION

● Day 1, Moscow

Arrival in Moscow. Bus transfer to the hotel. Enjoy a free evening in Moscow by visiting one of the many fancy restaurants, bars or simply having a stroll on its streets while admiring the lights and bright facades of its impressive buildings by night. Overnight: Moscow

● Day 2, 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 3, Moscow – Sergiev Posad

Highlights: Sergiev Possad, Moscow Metro and Arbat Morning departure to Sergiev Possad (70 km from Moscow, approx. 6 h) – 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 4, Moscow – Vladimir – Bogolyubovo – Suzdal

Highlights: Vladimir city tour, Church of the Intercession in Bogolyubovo Today we invite you to leave the hectic capital and start exploring the famous “Golden Ring” – two ancient towns Vladimir and Suzdal, both UNESCO Heritage sites. First you will visit Vladimir to learn about rich history of Orthodox Russia. Vladimir was the capital of Medieval Russia and preserved many unique monuments of that time, i.e. monument to Prince Vladimir, Golden gates, which was built in the early XII century. Continue to Bogolyubovo, where you will see another UNESCO World Heritage Sites – Church of the Intercession built in 12th century. Free evening in Suzdal, one of the oldest Russian towns with medieval churches, wooden houses and the sounds of ringing of church bells. Meals: B + L Overnight: Suzdal

● Day 5, Suzdal – Kostroma

Highlights: Suzdal city tour Morning Suzdal city tour will introduce you to more than 1000 years of history of this former capital of Russia. Today Suzdal is a very special small town with a rustic, country feel combined with its medieval monuments. Sightseeing tour will take you to the oldest part of the Kremlin, the Cathedral of the Nativity, the Golden Gates and the Archbishops’ Chambers with a unique collection of historical and archaeological objects. In the afternoon we follow the “Golden Ring” route to Kostroma – another important town in the Russian history. Meals: B + L Overnight: Kostroma

● Day 6, Kostroma – Yaroslavl – Uglich

Highlights: Kostroma city tour, Yaroslavl city tour Kostroma has a long turbulent history. There were always battles for ownership of Kostroma between Russian dukes who wanted to rule this city. During the 13th — 14th centuries several fortified monasteries were built here. During the city tour you will see the main sights of the town including the Ipatievsky monastery also called ‘The cradle of the Romanov Dynasty’, where the first Romanov was crowned. Continue to Yaroslavl, another ancient Russian town recently celebrated its millennium. Here you will walk in the charming historic centre which is the UNESCO World Heritage site. 17th century is the golden age of the Yaroslavl. During that period 35 stone temples were built here. The best Russian masters of mural paintings worked in Yaroslavl, making each church a unique monument of the Russian art. Free evening in Uglich. Meals: B + L Overnight: Uglich

● Day 7, Uglich – Tver

Highlights: Uglich city tour This morning we have a tour of Uglich – another ancient Russian city, situated on the bank of the Volga River. During the city tour you will visit the most important historical and cultural sights, including Kremlin, church of Tsarevich Dmitry “on blood”, the Transfiguration Cathedral. In the afternoon we continue travelling in the cradle of Russian culture along the Volga river and head towards Tver. In middle age Tver was a competitor of Moscow and fought for the title of the capital. Nowadays it is an important regional centre on a active street between Saint Petersburg and Moscow. Meals: B + L Overnight: Tver

● Day 8, Tver – Veliky Novgorod

Highlights: Tver city tour, open-air Museum of wooden architecture You will spend this morning strolling along Volga embankment and taking pictures of different monuments, like the church “White Trinity”, the Imperial Road Palace and statue of Afanasiy Nikitin, one of Tver inhabitants who alone traveled to India in the XV century (25 years before the first expedition of famous Vasco da Gama). Later this day you will see how the daily life of Russians was like in 16th-19th cent by visiting an open-air Museum of wooden architecture “Vitoslavlitsy”. Here you will see a

unique collection of original full-size wooden churches and residential houses (Izbas). Free evening in Veliky Novgorod. Meals: B + L Overnight: Veliky Novgorod

● Day 9, Veliky Novgorod – Saint Petersburg

Highlights: Veliky Novgorod city tour Veliky Novgorod, often called as a city-museum of Old Russia, one of the most ancient cities of Russia, founded in the 9th-10th centuries. The city is famous for the large number of well-preserved outstanding monuments of medieval architecture and painting. The sightseeing tour includes visits to Yuriev Monastery and the old Novgorod Kremlin with its Cathedral of St Sophia – one of the greatest monuments of old Russian architecture. In the afternoon we travel to the “Northern capital” of Russia – Saint Petersburg. Unlike most of the cities that we saw during this tour Saint Petersburg is not ancient (“only” 300 years), but it is definitely the one of the most beautiful cities and world “must see” sights. Meals: B + L + D Overnight: Veliky Novgorod

● Day 10, 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 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 11, 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 12, Saint Petersburg

Highlights: canal tour, St. Isaac’s Cathedral 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. Afternoon visit of St. Isaac’s Cathedral: the largest Church in Russia and one of the finest architectural works and capable accommodate about 10,000 people. Meals: B + L Overnight: Saint Petersburg

● Day 13, Saint Petersburg

Breakfast at the hotel. Transfer to the airport. Departure.