

THE FIVE COUNTRIES EXPEDITION

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| 14 days | 5 | travel type |
| 13 nights | countries | Cultural |

Spend 2 weeks to discover the major cultural attractions of Scandinavia and Russia. This holiday will be a kaleidoscope of changing cities and landscapes, from the Copenhagen Mermaid to Moscow Kremlin:

- 5 capitals – Copenhagen, Oslo, Stockholm, Helsinki and Moscow, each special in its own way, where you will visit only worth seeing attractions.
- Saint Petersburg, also called the cultural capital of Russia, one of the most beautiful cities in the world.
- The magnificent residences of the Russian Tsars in Saint Petersburg and the Hermitage, one of the world's greatest museums.
- The most interesting Scandinavian museums including the Viking Ship in Oslo and the Vasa museum in Stockholm.
- Try several means of transportation: Cruise the Northern and Baltic Seas and admire the views of the Oslo fjords and Stockholm archipelago, drive through the dense Scandinavian forest and take a high-speed train between the Russian capitals.

DESCRIPTION

Day 1, Copenhagen

Arrival in Copenhagen. Bus transfer to the hotel. Like many other Scandinavian, Denmark's charming capital is very much a city of water, built on two main islands connected by bridges, surrounded by the sea, and interlaced with canals. This city is developing a reputation for being one of the most environmentally friendly cities in the world with a laid-back atmosphere, where people cycle along the canals. Meals: D Overnight: Copenhagen

Day 2, Copenhagen – Oslo

Highlights: Copenhagen City Tour, cruise to Oslo Copenhagen city tour is an excellent way to see main highlights of the city including Christiansborg Palace, home to the Danish Parliament, the Old Stock Exchange, Royal Theatre, Tivoli Gardens, the colourful harbor district of Nyhavn and Amalienborg Palace – Winter residence of the Royal Family to see the changing of the Guard and followed by a stop by world-famous Little Mermaid, inspired by H. C. Andersen's fairytale. In the afternoon transfer to the cruise harbor and cruise to Oslo by ferry (500km, 17 h.). Meals: B+L Overnight: ferry Copenhagen – Oslo

Day 3, Oslo

Highlights: Oslo city tour, Vigeland's Park, Viking Ship Museum City sightseeing tour in the Norwegian capital, beautifully situated by a fjord. You will see all of the main attractions, such as the Royal Palace, the City Hall, the Akershus fortress, admire a magnificent view of the Oslo Fjord from Holmenkollen Hill for a birds-eye view of the city and fjord far below. Afternoon tour

continues with visits of two famous Oslo attractions: The Viking Ship Museum displays the world's two best-preserved wooden Viking vessels as well as other finds from Viking tombs dated 9th century. The Vigeland's Park is a unique sculpture park is Gustav Vigeland's lifework with more than 200 sculptures in bronze, granite and wrought iron, who also designed the architectural layout of the park. Meals: B+D Overnight: Oslo

● Day 4, Oslo – Stockholm

Highlights: Örebro Castle Morning Departure to Stockholm (530km, 6-7 h). The route passes areas with typical Scandinavian scenery and thick forests, which will evoke the atmosphere of the fairy-tales of Trolls, lakes, as well as agricultural areas. Stop to visit at Örebro Castle, a medieval castle fortification, standing in the centre of modern Örebro town, surrounded by a moat. Built for defence and once was used as prison, during the Vasa era it was rebuilt as a magnificent, royal castle. Free evening to explore Stockholm on your own. Meals: B+L Overnight: Stockholm

● Day 5, Stockholm

Highlights: Stockholm city tour, Vasa museum Morning City tour by bus and a walking tour of Stockholm. During the excursion you will visit two squares on Riddarholmen and Söder island, walk through the Old Town, where you will pass narrow streets and alleys of the medieval part of the city. The excursion continues through the central parts of the modern Stockholm – City Hall. Acquaintance of the Stockholm continues with visit to Vasa Museum, the Scandinavia's most visited attraction. In the large ship hall stands the warship Vasa – the only remaining, intact 17th century ship in the world. The lower rig of it has been rebuilt, complete with masts, stays and shrouds. Meals: B+L Overnight: Stockholm

● Day 6, Stockholm – Helsinki

Highlights: Sigtuna city tour, cruise to Helsinki Morning trip to Sigtuna, Sweden's oldest town, founded in the 10th century. Today it is a cozy town of narrow streets, colorful wooden houses, plenty of restaurants and hotels, classy souvenir shops and galleries. During the sightseeing tour of the Sigtuna you will see the gothic St. Mary's church, the ruins of the ancient churches, Old Town Hall, which is Europe's smallest city hall and runestones that are scattered through the town. Visit at nearby located Skokloster Castle, a one of the main attractions in the region, former residence of one of Gustav II Adolf's generals. The castle interior from the mid 17th century has been kept completely intact. In the afternoon transfer to the cruise harbor and cruise to Helsinki by ferry (500km, 17 h.). Meals: B+L Overnight: ferry Stockholm – Helsinki

● Day 7, 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 8, Helsinki – Saint Petersburg

Highlights: St. Petersburg city tour Morning departure to St. Petersburg (390 km from Tallinn). Panoramic city tour of St. Petersburg, also called as "Northern Venice", to see the famous Nevsky Prospect, the main street of the City, the Kazan Cathedral, the Admiralty with its gilded top, the largest Church in St. Petersburg – the Blood Church and stop by the ensembles of

Palace Sq. with Winter Palace, Hermitage and Alexander Column and Mariinsky Palace.
Meals: B+L Overnight: Saint Petersburg

● Day 9, Saint Petersburg

Highlights: Peter and Paul Fortress, Hermitage museum Morning visit at the Peter and Paul Fortress – the oldest construction in Saint Petersburg and put up for fortification purposes but never been attacked. Founded by Peter the Great, who himself took part in the construction of the building, 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+D Overnight: Saint Petersburg

● Day 10, 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: St. Petersburg

● Day 11, Saint Petersburg – Moscow

Highlights: St. Isaac's Cathedral, train to Moscow Morning 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. Transfer to the train station. Departure by speed train "Sapsan" to Moscow (approx. 4h). 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. Meals: B + L Overnight: Moscow

● Day 12, Moscow – Kremlin

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 13, 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 14, Moscow

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