



St. Petersburg

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HISTORY

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St. Petersburg is the second-greatest major city in Russia next to Moscow. By 2012, there were nearly 5-million residents in the town, and that population has only continued to increase. Surrounded by the Baltic Sea and located along the Neva River, there's so much beauty to behold. Visiting St. Petersburg, you'll see luscious gardens, monuments, palaces, detailed architecture, and admirable pieces of artwork created by the most well-known artists throughout history.

In the Beginning

The city of St. Petersburg, Russia, was founded in 1703. Peter the Great took over the land and built the Peter and Paul Fortress after his victory in the Great Northern War against Charles XII of Sweden. By 1712, St. Petersburg became the capital for centuries to come.

St. Petersburg continued to grow as promised, welcoming writers, artists, and entertainers. It quickly became a popular place to dwell despite its harsh climates and swampy region. About ten years after Peter's death in 1725, the developing land suffered from several disastrous fires. The city was then split into five districts and redeveloped, and St. Petersburg's main street, Nevsky Prospekt, was created. In 1850, architects built a bridge across the Neva River, and things quickly began to rebuild.

World War II- The Siege of Leningrad

World War II lasted from 1941 to 1945, causing significant damage to the city and its civilians. It was one of the most devastating sieges of a major city to date, killing many people mostly due to starvation and poverty. After the war, the city, as well as surrounding towns, struggled to adapt. It took decades for St. Petersburg to grow into what it is today.



PETRO VELIKIY
CATHERINA II
IMPERATRITSA

MONEY

MONEY



Russia's official currency is Rubles. One rubel is equal to 100 kopeks. One Russian ruble is also equal to USD 0.16. The most frequent banknotes used in Russia are 50₽, 100₽, 200₽, 500₽, 1,000₽, 2,000₽, and 5,000₽. Russian coins come in categories of 1, 5, 10, and 50 kopeks. You can get up to date exchange rates visit www.xe.com.



Credit Cards

Credit cards are widely accepted in St. Petersburg, notably Visa, American Express, MasterCard, and Eurocard. However, you'll find that some places like the museums and train stations only accept cash. Most of Russia's ATMs will allow cash advances.

ATM

There are ATMs (Bankomats) all around St. Petersburg. Most of the Bankomats accept international debit and credit cards. Most Russian ATMs will charge a small fee on top of the charge your bank typically charges. Due to the high fees, it is best to take out as much money as you may need at once. However, many of Russia's ATMs only issue a small amount of money at once.

Exchanging Currency

There are three places to exchange currency in Russia since the ATMs only dispense Russian rubles. One of these places is the Grand Palace. Of course, it is wisest to transfer your money before your flight to Russia. Although, you can exchange your U.S. dollars at the airport upon your arrival.

HELPFUL INFO

Climate

Russia has a continental climate. This means that it has mildly warm summers and harsh winters. There is usually quite a bit of wind in St. Petersburg and a lot of precipitation. Although it rains in the summer, most of the precipitation occurs during the winter months in the form of snow. The city receives about 24-inches of rainfall and snow each year.

Electricity

The regular voltage in St. Petersburg is 220-volts with a frequency of 50-Hz. The standard sockets and plugs are type C, and F. Bring a power plug adapter with you to charge and use electronics.



Technology & Communication

Technology and communication are continually advancing throughout Russia. You can expect to get 3G WiFi throughout the city. All video and data transmissions in the nation are currently being enhanced. The acceptance of mobile phones is growing astonishingly, and Russia has been quick to accommodate the increased usage.

Infrastructure & Transport

Unfortunately, the infrastructure in St. Petersburg is poorly developed, and the traffic in St. Petersburg isn't something to get caught in, especially during rush hours. It is second to Moscow when it comes to the worst traffic jams throughout the country.

The biggest seaport in northwest Russia is the Port of St. Petersburg. This port is where many of the cruise ships come to dock. It is one of the world's most popular cruise ship destinations.

Public transportation is frequently used by tourists and residents alike. However, the public transit system is currently being modernized with a lot of focus on the metro and express tram. To take public transportation in St. Petersburg, it is in your best interest to learn the Cyrillic alphabet. Fortunately, public transport in the city is inexpensive.



In Case Of An Emergency

National Emergency– 101

Medical Emergency (Skoraya pomoshch)– 103

Police (Politsiya)– 102

St Petersburg City Police– (812) 579-9824

Language

Although English is widely spoken throughout Russia, Russian is the official language. The natives use the Cyrillic alphabet to write.

There are often signs throughout the city written in both English and Russian.



LGBT Travel

The LGBT scene in St. Petersburg is thriving. Since 1993, it has been legal to be gay in Russia. It is easy to find gay bars, clubs, entertainment (including drag shows, gay DJs, etc.), and gay-friendly lodging and dining. The Cabaret Club is the oldest gay nightclub in all of Russia. Enjoy a darkroom, karaoke, cabaret shows, dancing, and live entertainment throughout the week.

Religion

The main religion of the city is Russian Orthodoxy. This religion is similar to the beliefs held by Christians. While 91% of St. Petersburg is Russian Orthodoxy, there are also Catholics, Muslims, and Jews. You'll find that there are many churches within the city.



Getting There

There are flights from the U.S. to St. Petersburg that you can book out of Miami, New York City, Los Angeles, Boston, and Chicago airports. It is approximately 11.5-hours of flight time and 5,536-miles away. Once you arrive at Pulkovo Airport, you can take public transit to your hotel or place of stay.

Driving

A U.S. citizen's license is valid in Russia for up to six months. Nonetheless, it is not recommended that you try to drive around St. Petersburg, especially if you are not familiar with its infrastructure. The traffic is horrendous, specifically during peak hours.

THE EXPERIENCE

Culture

Known as the nation's cultural hub, St. Petersburg is mainly known for its fascinating history and stunningly beautiful architecture and artwork. With over fifty theatres in the city, including the internationally famous Mariinsky Theatre, music, and performing arts are just a couple of the other things St. Petersburg is known for. There are also over 200 museums and a ton of art galleries.

Bucket List

Go on several of the Peter & Paul Fortress tours

Visit Peterhof Palace

Learn about the art and culture of Russia and St. Petersburg at the Hermitage Museum

Walk down Nevsky Prospekt and check out the markets

Check out the remarkable Church of Savior on Spilled Blood

Visit Catherine Palace

See some of the Cathedrals

Go to the Faburgé Museum

Visit the Museum of Russian Vodka

Family Travel Highlights

Check out the Bronze Horseman Statue

Visit the Kazan Cathedral

See a show or opera at Mariinsky Theatre

Watch the bridges in St. Petersburg go up at night

Dine on the Terrace at Terrassa

Stroll through the Summer Garden

Walkthrough the flower gardens at Primorsky Victory Park

Tourism Authority

Tourist Information Bureau

+7 812 242-39-09

Palace Square, 12

St Petersburg, Russia, 191186

Visit Petersburg (Tourist Info. Centre)

+7 812 310-22-31

Millionnaya St, 25

St Petersburg, Russia, 191186

City Tourist Information Office

+7 812 242-39-09

Sadovaya St, 14

St Petersburg, Russia, 191023



Foods To Try

Borscht

Pelmeni and Vareniki

Chicken Kiev

Pierogies

Beef Stroganoff

Pirozhki

Solyanka

Blini

Koryushka

Drinks To Try

Russian Vodka

Bread Wine

Black Tea

Sbiten

Mors

Kefir

Kissel

Kvass

Ryazhenka



Photography Hotspots

Summer Garden
Peter & Paul Fortress
Winter Palace
Catherine's Palace and Gardens
Church of the Savior on Spilled Blood
Alexandrinsky Theater Russian Ballet
Admiralty Embankment
Alexander Garden

Souvenirs To Buy

Amber Jewelry

Fur Clothes

Gzhel Porcelain

Lacquer Boxes

Birchbark boxes

Khokhloma

Matryoshka Dolls

Russian Malachite

