



Catherine's Palace, St. Petersburg

Russia: Historical and Contemporary

13 – 23 April 2018



Jon Baines
tours



Red Square and St. Basil's Cathedral, Moscow.

Russia has a long and complex history, from the first United East Slavic State in the 9th century, through the Mongol invasion of the 13th century, to becoming an empire by the 18th century. The Revolution of 1917 triggered an economic breakdown and the creation of the Soviet Union, which would make Russia a superpower. The breakup of the USSR in the 1980s led to the birth of the Russian Federation, which since 2000 has become a controversial player in world politics.

This vast country has played many parts in world history and continues to do so. This tour will take you from Moscow, a modern economic and political capital with a long history, to the old Tatar capital of Kazan, which over the last decade has seen itself reborn as a banking and hi tech industry capital. From here travel to the heart of the Russian Empire, St. Petersburg, with its incomparable grandeur. Visit the local markets and see how economic sanctions are affecting the everyday lives of Russian people and experience the eclectic cuisine of Russia. You will be accompanied by local guides in each city and will hear a series of talks from your tour leader, Dr Richard Marsh, giving you deeper insight into the history and contemporary life of this vast, contradictory and endlessly fascinating country.

Arrive in Moscow, a city that balances the weight of its history against its drive for modern greatness. The afternoon is at leisure before a welcome dinner that evening.

The next morning set out to explore Russia's history, starting at the iconic Kremlin. The Kremlin, a fortified complex at the heart of the city, contains the seat of the Russian Government and once housed the royal palaces. Take a guided visit of its museum with an overview of Russia's long and colourful history. There will also be a visit to the Armoury Chamber, which now houses gold and silverware from the Tsar period, imperial regalia and historic armour. In the afternoon explore Red Square, including St. Basil's Cathedral, New Maiden Convent and take in the views from Sparrow Hill. Along the way stop at a traditional Russian teahouse.



Modern Moscow



Troitse – Sergeiva Lavra

Next day take a different view of the city by using its famous metro. This underground system has continued to expand since the first line opened in 1935 and is remarkable for some of its ornately decorated stations. The first stop will be Tretyakov Gallery, which has a vast art collection of both Russian and International art. Continue to Museon, Park of Arts, where many Soviet era statues have come to rest and a starkly modern contrast to the fine art of Tretyakov Gallery. Continuing with more recent Russian history, visit Novodevichy Cemetery, the final resting place of Russia's Who's Who, including former cosmonauts, with lavish tombs commemorating the heroes of the USSR.

The following morning leave the city behind and head to Sergiev Posad, the home of UNESCO protected monastery Troitse-Sergeieva Lavra. It is the spiritual centre of the Russian Orthodox Church and is still today a working monastery and residence of the Patriarch. Explore the monastery and learn of the history of Russian Orthodoxy. Return to Moscow in the late afternoon and visit Danilov Market, the city's oldest market, where you can buy snacks before heading to the train station to board your overnight sleeper on the famous Trans-Siberian Railway to Kazan.

Arrive in Kazan the next morning to disembark and head to your hotel. There will be time to have breakfast and freshen up before heading out to explore the Tatarstan capital of Kazan, the 'Istanbul of the Volga', a place where Europe and Asia meet. This is a city that demonstrates Russia's rich culture and history. Its magnificent skylines encompass the Kul Sharif Mosque in its centre, bell towers and minarets dotted around the city and the unique Temple of all Religions on its outskirts. Extraordinary buildings that were stripped or repurposed under the Soviet Era are today coming back to life. During the city tour you will visit the city's museum and old merchant houses. Enjoy a traditional Tatar menu for lunch before taking a walking tour to Kazan's Kremlin and the so-called Falling Tower. In the late afternoon enjoy a tasting of Russia's most ubiquitous spirit - vodka.



The Kul Sharif Mosque, Kazan



The following morning visit Kazan Central Market, which has remained unchanged since the 1990s, and browse the local produce and delicacies. Depart Kazan for the island city of Sviyazhsk, which was founded by Ivan the Terrible during his campaigns against the Khanate of Kazan. The island became an outpost of Christianity and the centre for Russian culture within a Bulgarian/Tatar/Turkic state. During the 20th century its history had darker days as it became a labour camp and later a Gulag prison. From here visit Innopolis, a working example of modern day Russia's evolution - born from nothing, this city is now a hub for the IT and high tech industry. Return to Kazan via the Temple of all Religions, an architectural complex that represents the religious architecture of the 12 major religions of the world.

Next day fly to St. Petersburg, Russia's great imperial city that sets the world standard for grandeur and yet was once no more than a swamp. Spend your first afternoon at leisure. The next day set out to explore one of the world's largest and oldest museums, the Hermitage. Set in the magnificent Winter Palace and adjoining buildings, it has over three million items in its collection, a fraction of which are on display in 360 rooms. We have arranged an early entrance on this day to avoid the crowds. Continue with a boat ride through history on the canal, imagining passing the grand buildings along the waterfront during the height of the Russian Empire. In the afternoon take a city tour, visiting Peter and Paul's Fortress, St. Isaac's Cathedral and Church of the Spilled Blood.

The following day visit two of St Petersburg's most magnificent buildings, starting with Yusupov Palace, one of the two remaining St. Petersburg residences of the monumentally wealthy Yusupov family, and the scene of Grigory Rasputin's assassination. It is one of the few aristocratic homes in the city to have retained many of its original interiors after the revolution. Explore the grand interior on a guided tour, which includes an exhibition about Rasputin. From here head out of the city to Catherine's Palace, a stunning building decorated with a blue and white facade with a circumference of nearly 1km. The Palace was financed by both state and public funding and is a reminder of the imperial family's extravagance - which eventually led to its downfall.

The next day is at leisure. There are options to return to the Hermitage Museum, as it is impossible to see it all in a day, or visit some of the other imperial palaces. Enjoy a farewell dinner on your final evening before departing from St Petersburg the following morning.



The Hermitage, St. Petersburg

Itinerary 13 – 23 April 2018

B = Breakfast **L** = Lunch **D** = Dinner

3 nights Moscow – 1 night Trans-Siberian Railway – 2 nights Kazan – 4 nights St. Petersburg

13 Apr (Fri) Moscow **D**
Pm Arrive in Moscow and at leisure
Eve Welcome dinner

14 Apr (Sat) Moscow **B**
Am Explore Russia's history starting with a Kremlin tour with its territory and cathedrals. Visit the Armoury Chamber to see its imperial treasures
Pm After lunch visit St Basil's Cathedral, see the New Maiden Convent and view the city from Sparrow Hill. Stop for tea at a Russian teahouse. Your evening is at leisure.

15 Apr (Sun) Moscow **B L**
Am Explore the city by Moscow's famous metro. Visit the Tretyakov Gallery and explore the vast art collection before continuing to something more contemporary - the Museon, Park of Arts.
Pm Visit the Novodevicy Cemetery, the resting place for the Who's Who of Russia

16 Apr (Mon) Moscow **B L**
Am Depart for Sergiev Posad and visit Trinity Sergius Lavra. Lunch will be at a local restaurant.
Talk: *1900 – 1917 Permanent Revolution by Richard Marsh*
Pm Return to Moscow and visit the Danilov Market, Moscow's oldest market. After dinner head to the train station and board the Trans-Siberian overnight sleeper to Kazan

17 Apr (Tues) Kazan **B L**
Am Arrive into Kazan train station after your Trans-Siberian experience. Head to the hotel to freshen up and have breakfast before a city tour of Kazan
Pm Enjoy traditional Tatar cuisine for lunch before a walking tour to Kazan's Kremlin, the Suyumbike Falling Tower and a touch of vodka tasting

18 Apr (Wed) Kazan **B L**
Am Visit Kazan Central market before visiting the Island city of Sviyazhsk, a Russian Orthodox Shrine, and Innopolis, a new city that has become a IT and high tech industry hub
Talk: *Church, State and Dissent in pre-Revolution Russia by Richard Marsh*
Pm Return to Kazan via the Temple of all Religions

19 Apr (Thurs) Kazan / St. Petersburg **B D**
Am Take a morning flight to St. Petersburg
Pm Transfer to the hotel with time to relax before dinner

20 Apr (Fri) St. Petersburg **B**
Am Early entrance to the Hermitage Museum for a guided tour then take a canal boat ride along the river
Pm In the afternoon city tour visiting Peter and Paul's Fortress, St. Isaac's Cathedral and Church of the Spilled Blood

21 Apr (Sat) St. Petersburg **B L**
Am Visit the Yusupov Palace with rooms dedicated to Rasputin
Pm Visit Catherine's Palace and return to St. Petersburg late afternoon
Talk: *Russia and its people's, what on earth is going on? By Richard Marsh*

22 Apr (Sun) St. Petersburg **B D**
Am Day at leisure with optional tours
Eve Farewell dinner

23 Apr (Mon) St. Petersburg **B**
Am Depart for the airport





Centre Hotel, Kazan (top)
Sokos Vasilievsky hotel room (above)

Hotels

Holiday Inn Tagansky, Moscow

Located close to the Kremlin and Red Square, this hotel is perfectly located for sightseeing in Moscow. The comfortable and relaxed hotel offers all the services and facilities you will require for your stay. The rooms are decorated with Russian folk murals and come with tea and coffee making facilities as well as all the normal amenities. There is also a restaurant and bar within the hotel.

Centre Hotel, Kazan

Located in the heart of historic Kazan, the hotel is perfect for exploring the city. The rooms are modern and come with all the usual amenities including tea and coffee making facilities. The hotel also has two restaurants and a bar.

Sokos Vasilievsky, St. Petersburg

The hotel has spacious rooms with modern design with a twist of Russian style. They come with the normal amenities including tea and coffee making facilities. The hotel is located near the Hermitage Museum and has its own gallery where it hosts art exhibitions.



Russian dolls

Tour Leader

Dr Richard Marsh has a long association with the Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox churches. He is an author of books on art and spirituality and is the Director of the Institute for Food, Brain and Behaviour, a registered charity that works in the intersection of nutrition and neuroscience to improve brain health and wellbeing. Richard has travelled extensively and is an experienced tour leader, having led many successful tours to many destinations.

“Richard Marsh was an extraordinary leader. Not only was he an expert on places we visited; he has excellent humour. I would definitely go on another trip with him.”

**Theodore Sullivan, Ethiopia: Historical and Contemporary,
7-21 Feb 2017**



Statue of Lenin in the Museum, Park of Arts

**Ground cost of the tour is
USD \$3,775 per person sharing
(excluding international flights
and transfers)**

The cost includes:

- 10 nights' accommodation in medium grade with private facilities

Single room supplement is \$405

- UK tour leader (Dr Richard Marsh)
- Comprehensive briefing notes
- Meals as per the itinerary
- All transport within the tour, including overnight train journey (2nd class) on the Trans-Siberian Railway and domestic flight
- Full programme of sightseeing and admission fees where applicable
- English speaking guides throughout
- Tips

The cost excludes:

- International flights* (see below) and airport transfers
- Russian visa
- All personal extras such as portage, laundry, inoculation fees and drinks
- Meals not mentioned
- All optional excursions, tours and visits
- Travel insurance

*** Please contact the London or Melbourne office if you need help booking flights.**

Trans-Siberian Railway

On this tour we have included one night on the famous Trans-Siberian Railway, from Moscow to Kazan. We will be booking 2nd class, 4 person berths for this overnight journey. The berths may end up being mixed sex depending on the makeup of the group. There is the option to upgrade to a 1st Class, 2 person berth. The price to do this will be USD \$147 per person. Please contact us if you have any questions.

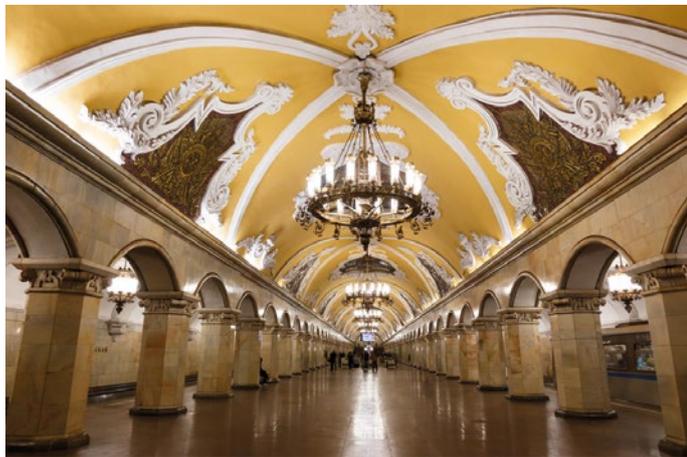
About Us

To travel with us is to dig below the surface, revealing the deeper destination. Of course, you will visit the great historical sites; marvel at the wonders of architecture and engineering; be moved by the riches of culture and art; and experience the most spectacular landscapes in the world. What we also do is make sure that you see the country as it is today, giving you privileged access that independent travel and other tour companies rarely get close to. We give you a variety of experiences, from the sublime to the humble, in the company of intelligent, curious, like-minded people. And while we can be worthy, we also make sure that you have a lot of fun.

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Kremlin from the Moskva River; Grand Moscow Metro stations; View of Kazan Kremlin from Kazanka River; St. Isaac's cathedral (above)



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