



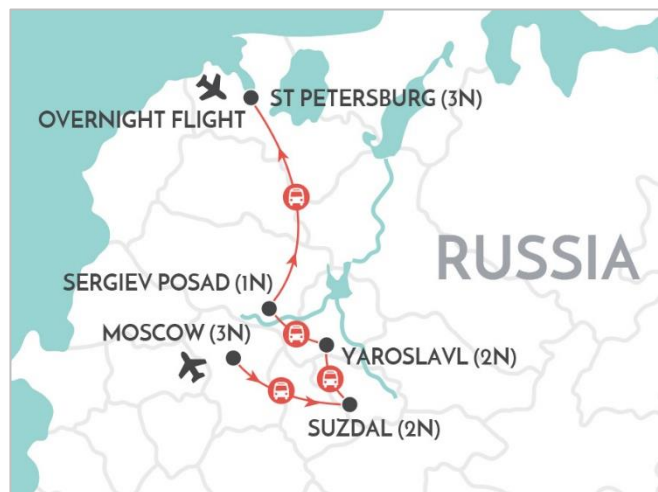
## Classic Russia

### Classic Tour | 15 Days | Physical Level 1

Moscow – Vladimir – Suzdal – Plyos - Sumarokovskaya Elk Farm –  
Yaroslavl – Sergiev Posad – St Petersburg

This 15 day tour encapsulates the standouts sights of Moscow and St. Petersburg plus the highlights the Golden Ring: Vladimir, Suzdal and Sergiev Posad - a group of medieval towns to the northeast of Moscow. Ancient Kremlins, onion-shaped domes, an incredible wealth of culture, history and art, Matryoshka Russian dolls and wooden architecture is just a small part of what awaits you on this unforgettable tour.

- Experience the grandeur of Moscow and St Petersburg
- Visit the intricately detailed cathedrals & historic monuments
- Explore the fairy-tale Golden Ring town of Suzdal
- View ancient treasures at the State Hermitage Museum
- Walk across Red Square to view St Basil's Cathedral
- Go behind the Iron Curtain to discover Mother Russia



### Classic Russia tour inclusions:

Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges  
(unless a land only option is selected)

- All accommodation
- All meals
- All sightseeing and entrance fees
- All transportation and transfers
- English speaking National Escort (if your group is 10 or more passengers) and Local Guides
- Visa fees for Australian passport holders
- Specialist advice from our experienced travel consultants
- Maximum group size of 18

*The only thing you may have to pay for are personal expenditure e.g. drinks, optional excursions or shows, insurance of any kind, customary tipping, early check in or late check out and other items not specified on the itinerary.*

### Classic Tours:

These tours are designed for those who wish to see the iconic sites and magnificent treasures of Russia on an excellent value group tour whilst travelling with like-minded people. The tours are on a fully-inclusive basis, so you'll travel with the assurance that all your arrangements are taken care of. You will be accompanied by our dedicated and professional National Escort/Local Guides, whose unparalleled knowledge will turn your holiday into an unforgettable experience.

### Physical Level 1:

All our tours feature a physical rating to help you select the right holiday for you. To travel on any of our tours requires unaided mobility and the ability to stroll around the sights. 'Classic Russia' is rated 1 on the physical level scale. A reasonable level of fitness is required but it's more about spending time on your feet rather than covering large distances. You'll be getting on and off coaches and boats, walking around the sights and climbing some steps. Of course, our National Escorts and local guides will always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance; however, they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary. If you require any more information about the pace of our tours, please contact our reservations team who will be happy to answer your questions.

### Country Profile: Russia

Russia, officially the Russian Federation is, by a considerable margin the largest country in the world by area, covering more than one-eighth of the Earth's inhabited land area and the 10<sup>th</sup> most populous, with about 147 million people as of 2019. About 77% of the population live in the western, European part of the country. After being closed to the rest of the world during the USSR years, Russia, since the mid-90s is well and truly open to tourism and the sheer scale of the country is somewhat incomprehensible, covering nine time zones.

### Joining Your Tour

The tour is 15 days in duration including international flights. Due to flight schedules passengers may arrive/depart on Day 2.

Travellers booked on 'Land Only', the price includes visa fees and your arrival/departure airport transfers if arriving/departing on the start and conclusion date of your tour. Please advise your international flight times to reservations. Join the tour on Day 2 in Moscow and end the tour on Day 13 in St Petersburg. Please refer to your final itinerary for more specific meeting instructions pertaining to your departure.

### Itinerary - Important Notes

It is our intention to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, the order of events or sightseeing may change as we look to improve our tours or as local conditions dictate. In these circumstances, we will make the best possible arrangements maintaining the integrity of your trip.

## Itinerary – Classic Russia

### Day 1-2: Fly to Moscow

Fly Overnight to Moscow, the capital of Russia, for a 3-night stay. On arrival in at the Moscow Domodedovo International Airport you will be met in the arrivals hall by your National Escort from Wendy Wu Tours. Together with all other group members who may be arriving at a similar time, you will transfer approximately 1 hour to your hotel. The rest of the day is at leisure.

A tour introduction will be held in the hotel this evening where you can meet your group and learn more about travelling in Russia.



#### Destination Information

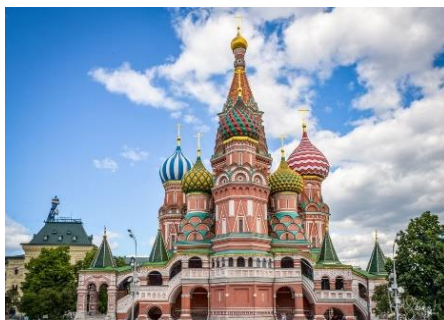
**Moscow** – During any season, at any hour of the day, Moscow thrills visitors with its artistry, history and majesty. Boasting a history that spans eight centuries, Russia's capital has evolved into an expansive megapolis of 16 million people which resembles a city-state. The city has survived centuries of revolution and seen Russia through some of its most turbulent years, from the days of the tsars through the communist era to the growing pains of democracy. Its Cold War history and massive size might give it an intimidating image, but at its core Moscow is every bit the European city offering wealth of history and culture coupled with modernity and edginess. Travel here for strikingly impressive landmarks, high art, world class ballet, lavish celebrations, along with dynamic pockets of nightlife and trendy restaurants.

### Day 3: Moscow

This morning take part in a walking tour seeing the city's main sights: St Basil's Cathedral, Red Square, The Kremlin plus the Armoury and Diamond Fund, the GUM Department Store and Gorky Park.

Later, walk along the trendy Tverskaya Street, which houses the famous Four Seasons Hotel. Tverskaya Street is one of most expensive shopping streets in the world.

Continue along the classy Bolshaya Dmitrovka Street and visit the Bolshoi Theatre (best known theatre in the world and home of the famous ballet and opera companies) and the Monument to Karl Marx.





Visit the Lubyanka Prison Building; a notorious former prison and home of the ex-KGB headquarters. For a long time, the building has been a source of scintillating gossip, cold war anecdotes and now houses Russia's FSB or Federal Security Service, a successor agency to the Soviet-era KGB!

Stroll along Nikolskaya Street (one of the oldest streets in Moscow and where many notable buildings are located), visit Revolution Square and admire Hotel Metropol, one of the finest Art Nouveau buildings in Moscow and have dinner in a local restaurant.

#### **Destination Information**

**St Basil's Cathedral** – At the southern end of Red Square stands the icon of Russia: St Basil's Cathedral. This crazy confusion of colours, patterns and shapes is the culmination of a style that is unique to Russian architecture. In 1552 Ivan the Terrible captured the Tatar stronghold of Kazan on the Feast of Intercession. He commissioned this landmark church, officially the Intercession Cathedral, to commemorate the victory.

**Red Square** – The celebrated Red Square is a 400m-by-150m area of cobblestones that is at the very heart of Moscow. Although Vladimir Lenin requested that he be buried beside his mum in St Petersburg, he still lies in state at the foot of the Kremlin wall, receiving visitors who come to pay their respects at Red Square.

**The Kremlin** – The apex of Russian political power and once the centre of the Orthodox Church, the Kremlin is the kernel of not only Moscow, but of the whole country. From here, autocratic tsars, communist dictators and modern-day presidents have done their best – and worst – for Russia

**The Kremlin Armoury** – The Armoury dates to 1511, when it was founded under Vasily III to manufacture and store weapons, imperial arms and regalia for the royal court. Later it also produced jewellery, icon frames and embroidery. To this day, the Armoury contains plenty of treasures for ogling, and remains a highlight of any visit to the Kremlin.

**Gorky Park** – This park was designed in the 1920s by avant-garde architect Konstantin Melnikov as a piece of communist utopia it is Moscow's main city escape which is absolutely loved by locals. It was named after 19th century Russian and Soviet writer Maxim Gorky, a founder of the socialist realism literary method

**GUM Department Store** – Russia's most famous department store has outstanding interiors, many soviet attributes, elegant, stylish and most impressive shopping centre in Russia.

#### **Day 4: Moscow**

In the morning continue touring this grand city visiting the Moscow State University, Novodevichy Convent, Stalin's Seven Sisters, Eliseyevskiy Delicatessen, Cathedral of Christ the Saviour and the Red October Arts District.

Enjoy dinner at a Georgian Restaurant and enjoy some sundowner drinks at a local bar for magnificent views over the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour and the Moskva (Moscow River)



### Destination Information

**Moscow State University** – This 18th century building is the tallest educational building in the world, it is rated among the best universities in the world. It's the most impressive of 'Stalin's Seven Sisters' communist buildings.

**Vorobyovy Gory (Sparrow Hills)** – This spot is one of the most scenic parts of the Russian capital, offering the best panoramic view of the city including the Nearby Luzhniki Stadium – the site of the 2018 World Cup final and 1980 Moscow Olympics.

**Novodevichy Convent** – Wander the 16<sup>th</sup> century convent and cemetery and take a photo from the lake in the forefront of the convent. The lake, home to many swans inspired Tchaikovsky to write his famous ballet Swan Lake in 1875.

**Stalin's Seven Sisters** – See the 200m high Hotel Ukraina, one of Seven Skyscrapers known collectively as the Seven Sisters, now known as the Radisson Royal Hotel and view the White House across the river. The White House is the official workplace of the Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev and was famously shelled during the 1993 Russian constitutional crisis.

**First McDonald's to open in the USSR** – On January 31 1990, 5,000 brave Muscovites queued in subzero temperatures to be the first through the doors. 30,000 passed through the doors on its first day. McDonald's, the epitome of Western capitalism had arrived in Russia for the first time.

**Arbat Street** – Walk along the cobblestone Arbat Street, which retains elements of its once elegant past. This 19th century posh neighbourhood is re-awakening from its 20th century neglect...attracting Muscovites for a stroll, like Barcelona's Las Ramblas.

**Cathedral of Christ the Saviour** – At 103 metres, it is the tallest Orthodox Christian church in the world and was the scene of the 1882 world premiere of the 1812 Overture composed by Tchaikovsky.

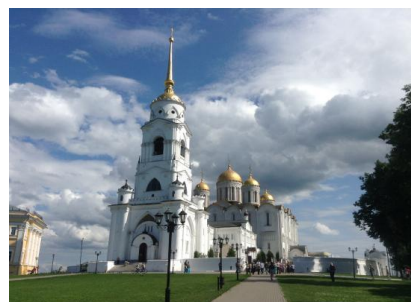
**Bunker Tour** – Learn how Moscow protected themselves in the event of a nuclear war, learn about the Cuban Missile Crisis and the Cold War, simulate a nuclear attack and wander through the depths of the bunker.

**Red October Arts District** - This defiant island of Russian modernity and European-ness is a vibrant arts centre filled with cool bars, restaurants and galleries.

### Day 5: Moscow / Suzdal

Today you will take a cruise on the Moscow river seeing some of Moscow's famous sights, go underground and take part in a metro tour and shop at the colourful Izmailovo Markets.

Board an early afternoon express train to Vladimir to tour the town visiting the Assumption Cathedral, the Vladimir Museum and the Cathedral of St Dmitry. Travel onto Suzdal arriving in the early evening.



### Destination Information

**Moscow River Cruise** – The cruise travels along the Moscow River and sees many of the main sights including the Luzhniki Stadium, the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour, the Kremlin, Gorky Park, Red October, Peter 1 Monument, Stalin's skyscraper on Kotelnicheskaya embankment.

**Moscow Metro Tour** – Go beneath the streets on this tour of spectacular and mind-bending Moscow Metro! Be awed by the architecture, spot the propaganda, and listen to the Soviet stories from a local in the know. From the Square of Revolution station, famous for its huge statues of soviet people, we'll move onto some of the most significant stations (Kievskaya, Mayakovskaya, Novoslobodskaya, Komsomolskaya) decorated in frescoes and lined with marble, where impressive mosaics, columns, and chandeliers will boggle your eyes! These stations reveal a big part of soviet reality — the walls depict plenty of propaganda, with party leaders looking down from images on the walls.

**Izmailovo Markets** – At the colourful Izmailovo Markets where you can bargain for a wide variety of already reasonably priced souvenirs, crafts, Matryoshka Dolls, Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin memorabilia, Soviet-era souvenirs and Ushanka Russian fur hats

**Vladimir** – Founded at the dawn of the 12th century, Vladimir became the cradle of Russian history when Prince Andrei Bogolyubsky moved his capital there from Kyiv in 1169. Thus began Vladimir's Golden Age, when many of the beautifully carved white-stone buildings for which the area is renowned were built.

**Suzdal** – The sparkling diamond in the Golden Ring is undoubtedly Suzdal. With rolling green fields carpeted with dandelions, a gentle river curling lazily through a historic town centre, sunlight bouncing off golden church domes and the sound of horse clops and church bells carrying softly through the air, you may feel like you've stumbled into a storybook Russia.

### Day 6: Suzdal

Today you'll tour the fairy-tale town of Suzdal.

Suzdal only has a population of around 10,000 and managed to avoid the Soviet-town development, thus has retained its country village feel with many of the roads remaining unpaved with livestock roaming the streets. The atmosphere is extremely pleasant due to its rustic, country feel combined with its medieval monuments.



### Destination Information

**Saviour Monastery of St Euthymius** – Founded in the 14th century to protect the town's northern entrance, Suzdal's biggest monastery grew mighty in the 16th and 17th centuries after Vasily III, Ivan the Terrible and the noble Pozharsky family funded impressive new stone buildings and made large land and property acquisitions.

**Kremlin** – This citadel was the 12th-century base of Prince Yuri Dolgoruky, who ruled the vast northeastern part of Kyivan Rus (and, among other things, founded a small outpost that would eventually become the Russian capital). The 1.4km-long earthen ramparts of Suzdal's kremlin enclose a few streets of houses and a handful of churches, as well as the main cathedral group on ul Kremlyovskaya.

**Museum of Wooden Architecture & Peasant Life** – This open-air museum across the river from Suzdal's kremlin offers a fascinating glimpse into the traditional lives of rural folk in this area. Besides log houses, windmills, a barn, and churches there's lots of tools and handicrafts.

**The Nativity of the Virgin Cathedral** – The Cathedral's blue domes spangled with gold dominate the front courtyard of the Suzdal kremlin, was founded in the 1220s. Visit inside to see its sumptuous 13th- and 17th-century frescoes and 13th-century damascene gold on copper.

### Day 7: Plyos, Elk Farm, Yaroslavl

This morning visit Plyos. Plyos is one of the smallest Golden Ring destinations at just 3 sq km. It's a tranquil town of old wooden houses and hilly streets winding down to the Volga River.

The town's historical renown stems from an artists' retreat in the late 19th century: Isaac Levitan, Russia's most celebrated landscape artist, painted its serenity when he lived here. Explore the town visiting Resurrection Hill, Church of St Barbara, Torgovaya Square and enjoy a home cooked traditional lunch on the picturesque river embankment.



Moving on you'll visit the Sumarokovskaya Elk Farm. Founded in 1963, this research farm breeds European elk for their nutrient-dense milk, considered beneficial for various stomach ailments. A guided tour includes a bag of carrots to feed to these gentle creatures.

Arrive in Yaroslavl in the late afternoon and check into your hotel.

### Destination Information

**Yaroslavl** – Yaroslavl is the largest and oldest city on the Golden Ring, a fact underscored by its place of honour on the Russian 1000-rouble note (including the 15-domed church of John the Baptist on the back). Embraced by two rivers, the mighty Volga and the smaller Kotorosl, Yaroslavl's centre is dotted with onion domes like no other place in Russia.

## Day 8: Yaroslavl

This morning take part in a walking tour of the town visiting the Monastery of the Transfiguration of the Saviour, the Magic & Time clock house, John the Baptist Church and participate in a Master Matryoshka (Russian Dolls) painting class.

Enjoy lunch and a free afternoon where you can relax on the main square or in your hotel. Later, dine at a traditional Golden Ring restaurant.



### Destination Information

**Monastery of the Transfiguration of the Saviour** – Founded in the 12th century, the Unesco-listed monastery was one of Russia's richest and best-fortified monasteries by the 16th century. A bird's-eye view of Yaroslavl and its rivers can be had by climbing up to the top of the cathedral's bell tower.

**Music & Time** – Every object has a voice in this little house containing the late magician John Mostoslavsky's impressive collection of clocks, musical instruments (harmoniums, a loud hurdy-gurdy), bells and gramophones – one of the most eclectic museum experiences in the Golden Ring.

**John the Baptist Church at Tolchkovo** – Visit Yaroslavl's largest and most unique church – you may recognise it from the 1000-ruble currency note. Protected by Unesco, the red-brick structure boasts a staggering 15 green-coloured cupolas and some of the most extensive series of frescoes in the Orthodox world.

## Day 9: Sergiev Posad

Transfer via road to Sergiev Posad visiting the picturesque lakeside town of Pereslavl-Zalessky. The town is a popular dacha (summer country house) getaway for Muscovites and its attractions are scattered around a large area.

While here visit the 14th century hilltop Goritsky Monastery and the Assumption Cathedral. Arrive in Sergiev Posad and tour the town.





### Destination Information

**Assumption Cathedral, Pereslavl-Zalessky** – The centrepiece is the Assumption Cathedral, with its beautiful carved iconostasis, but don't miss a trip up to the top floor of the Church of the Epiphany's belfry for terrific views the lake below.

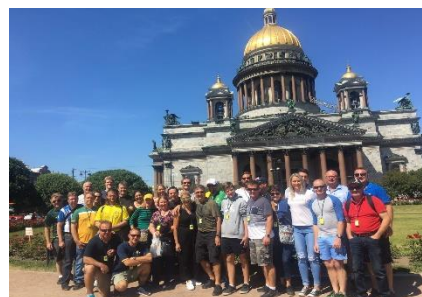
**Sergiev Posad** – Blue-and-gold cupolas offset by snow-white walls – this colour scheme lies at the heart of the Russian perception of divinity and Sergiev Posad's monastery is a textbook example. It doesn't get any holier than this in Russia, for the place was founded in 1340 by the country's most revered saint, St Sergius of Radonezh. Since the 14th century, pilgrims have been journeying here to pay homage to him.

**The Trinity Monastery of St Sergius** – This mystical place is a window into the age-old belief system that has provided Russia with centuries of spiritual sustenance. Built in 1423, the squat, gold-domed Trinity Cathedral is the heart of the monastery, as well as its oldest surviving building and the star-spangled Cathedral of the Assumption was modelled on the cathedral of the same name in the Moscow Kremlin.

## Day 10: St Petersburg

Travel the 2 hours by train back to Moscow and take the 3-hour, 30-minute fast train to St Petersburg arriving in the afternoon.

The sheer grandeur and history of Russia's imperial capital and City of the Tsars never fail to amaze, but this is also a city with a revolutionary spirit. Tour some of the sights in the late afternoon and have dinner by one of the cities famous canals.



### Destination Information

**St Petersburg** – The creation of westward-looking Peter the Great, St Petersburg was intended from its inception as a display of imperial Russia's growing status in the world. Fine-tuned by Peter's successors, who employed a host of European architects to add fabulous palaces and cathedrals to the city's layout, St Petersburg grew to be the Romanovs' showcase capital and Russia's first great, modern city. St Petersburg still feels every bit the imperial city with its historic heart largely frozen in time.

**Kazan Cathedral** – This neoclassical cathedral, partly modelled on St Peter's in Rome, was commissioned by Tsar Paul shortly before he was murdered in a coup. Its 111m-long colonnaded arms reach out towards the street below, encircling a garden studded with statues.

**Church of the Savior on Spilled Blood** – This five-domed dazzler is St Petersburg's most elaborate church, with a classic Russian Orthodox exterior and an interior decorated with some 7000 sq metres of mosaics. Officially called the Church of the Resurrection of Christ, its far more striking colloquial name references the assassination attempt on Tsar Alexander II here in 1881.

## Day 11: St Petersburg

This morning tour the 'Russian Versailles' at Peterhof, have a traditional Russian lunch in a Siberian forested lodge, visit Catherine's Palace to swoon at its lavish Rococo interiors like the replica of the incredible Amber Room and enjoy a boat trip along the Neva River seeing some of St Petersburg main sights.



### Destination Information

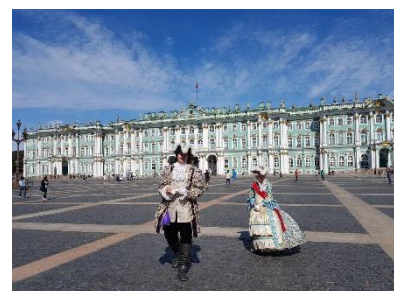
**Peterhof** – Peterhof is known as the 'Russian Versailles' with its stunning palaces, gold water fountains and ornate gardens. The Grand Palace is an imposing building with 30-something rooms. All the paintings, furniture and chandeliers are original, as everything was removed from the premises before the Germans arrived in WWII. At 11am, they open the water valves to start the fountains to the tune of Peter the Great's anthem – quite spectacular.

**Catherine's Palace** – Visit the town of Tsarskoe Selo, formerly Pushkin, home to the magnificent Catherine's Palace and the incredible Amber Room. Built in 1752, it was named Catherine in honour of her mother, Catherine I, wife of Peter the Great. Inside the palace, our tour takes us through the gentlemen-in-waiting's dining room, the Great Hall, State Dining Room, Crimson and Green Pilaster rooms and the legendary Amber Room. Tour the palace gardens designed by Charles Cameron as a classic English landscaped garden, and one of the most beautiful park ensembles in Europe.

**Neva River Boat Trip** – Enjoy a 60-minute boat trip along the Neva River starting at Kazan Cathedral. Cruise past the Church of the Savior on Spilled Blood, the Summer Garden, Peter and Paul Fortress, Rostral Column, Winter Palace, the Hermitage, the Admiralty, Bronze Horseman, Yusupov Palace, Stroganov Palace and finish at Anichkov Bridge with its imposing horse statues.

## Day 12: St Petersburg

This morning tour the grand Hermitage Museum, visit the Peter and Paul Fortress and visit St. Isaac's Cathedral.



### Destination Information

**State Hermitage Museum** – Visit the stunning pink pastel-coloured State Hermitage Museum and the Winter Palace. This enormous collection of art, over three million items, almost amounts to a comprehensive history of Western European art.

**St. Isaac's Cathedral** – The golden dome of St Isaac's Cathedral dominates the St Petersburg skyline. Its obscenely lavish interior is open as a museum, although services are held in the cathedral throughout the year. Many people bypass the museum to climb the 262 steps to the kolonnada (colonnade) around the drum of the dome, providing superb city views.

**Peter and Paul Fortress** – Housing a cathedral where the Romanovs are buried, a former prison and various exhibitions, this large defensive fortress on Zayachy Island is the kernel from which St Petersburg grew into the city it is today. History buffs will love it and everyone will swoon at the panoramic views from atop the fortress walls, at the foot of which lies a sandy riverside beach, a prime spot for sunbathing.

## Day 13-15: St Petersburg

Check out of your hotel and leave bags in storage. There will be day rooms so you can freshen up before your flight home.

Start the day by visiting the St. Nicholas Naval Cathedral, the Mariinsky Theatre from the outside and Smolny Cathedral.

Later, visit the Monument to Heroic Defenders of Leningrad on Victory Square, stroll through the Summer Gardens and the Field of Mars, visit the Bronze Horseman, the General Staff Building and Palace Square.

Summer Gardens and the Field of Mars and continue along St. Petersburg's busiest street (Nevsky Prospekt), home to restaurants, theatres, museums, the 18th century Great Gostiny Dvor Department Store (one of the first shopping centres in the world) and ornate palaces of the ex-Russian aristocracy.

In the late afternoon, return to your hotel where you can freshen up, enjoy a farewell dinner and in the evening transfer the 30 minutes to the St Petersburg airport for your flight to Australia arriving back in Australia in in 2 days' time.



### Destination Information

**Monument to Heroic Defenders of Leningrad on Victory Square** – This sight which poignantly evokes the 900-day siege of Leningrad (1941-1944) and acts as an important reminder of great hardships endured by its people during World War II.

**The Field of Mars** – One of the most famous squares and green spaces in the city center, the Field of Mars is home to an eternal flame that burns in the center of the square commemorating the victims of the Russian revolutions of 1917. The lovely, open location between the Summer Garden and Mikhailovsky Garden makes the Field of Mars a favorite place for residents to walk and a must-see destination for tourists.

## Classic Russia Travel Information

### Visas - Russia

Please be advised that your passport must have at least six months validity left on it when you arrive back into Australia.

An entry visa is required by all visitors to Russia. Wendy Wu Tours' Visa Department can assist you with the process of obtaining a visa. We will supply you with all paperwork and submit the visa application on your behalf.

Visa application forms and all relevant documentation are due in our office 100 days prior to departure; if received after this date urgent visa processing fees will apply. The earliest date you can apply for your Russian visa is six months prior to your intended entry date, depending on nationality.

Russian Letter of Invitation:

You will need a Letter of Invitation (LOI), sometimes called a Visa Support Letter or a voucher in order to apply for your Russian visa.

Wendy Wu Tours' Visa Department will obtain your LOI through our local Russian operator and this is included in the trip package as is the Russian visa. Wendy Wu Tours' Visa Department will contact the individual agent or client to complete the LOI application form. Once we have obtained your LOI we can apply for your visa.

We require the following documents to apply for your Russian visa: Letter of Invitation (LOI), Photocopy of your passport, passport size photos (up to 4), flight or other transport details.

### Russia Train Ticket Bookings

Russia train tickets are booked with passport numbers. Please make sure you provide us with your correct passport number. If you have to renew your passport after booking please notify us as soon as you have a new passport number and bring your old passport with you on your trip. If we receive changes to passport numbers less than 60 days prior to departure, we cannot guarantee purchase of train tickets. Travelling on multiple passports for trips that involve border crossings by train is strongly discouraged. This can cause difficulties with train ticket bookings and cause significant issues delays at immigration.

### Russia National Escort

Your Wendy Wu Russian National Escort will meet you at the Moscow Airport and guide you throughout the country. You will have local guides in each city guiding you around but your experienced National Escort who has operated this trip before will be with you for the duration of the tour. He or she will check you in at the St Petersburg airport and wave you off for your flight home.

### Insurance

We strongly encourage all customers to take a copy of their travel insurance documents (especially relevant international contact numbers) with them while on tour. We advise that you check the inclusions and procedures for lodging claims prior to your departure. These documents should be stored separately from the originals.



Wendy Wu Tours will not be liable for any costs incurred by you due to your failure to take out suitable travel insurance from the date of booking.

### Eating in Russia

The Russian food scene has made a giant leap towards cutting-edge modernity in the last decade, particularly in large cities, where international culinary mainstream mixes with unique and exotic cuisines of the Caucasus and Central Asia as well as a powerful movement to reinvent traditional Russian gastronomy.

Traditional Russian cuisine tends to be meaty and quite heavy. Popular dishes are:

Borsch – this beetroot soup hails from Ukraine but is now synonymous with Russia

Beef Stroganov – a beef, mushrooms and sour-cream dish

Chicken Kiev – A chicken fillet pounded and rolled around cold butter, then coated with eggs and breadcrumbs

Shashlyk – Meat or fish kebabs

Pelmeni – Ravioli-like dumplings generally stuffed with pork or beef

Central Asian-style dishes are also common, notably plov (fried rice with lamb and carrot) and lagman (noodles and meat in a soupy broth that gets spicier the further south you go).

### Accommodation

Your accommodation is selected for convenience of location, comfort or character, and can range from a business hotel in one city to a family run guesthouse in a smaller town. In more remote areas, accommodation may be of a lower standard and may not have all western amenities. Hotels are generally rated as local three to four-star standard, but please note that there is no international classification system for hotels and differences in facilities and quality do exist between Australia and China, Mongolia and Russia. All group tour hotels have private western bathroom facilities, air conditioning, TV and telephone. Plumbing and electricity supplies can be erratic and quite often the power in hotel rooms is turned off while guests are out of the room. If you experience any difficulty, please speak to your National Escort/Local Guide. Rest assured that all hotels used by Wendy Wu Tours are regularly inspected by our staff and our partners to ensure that standards meet your needs. Please note that double bed requests can be made at time of booking but can't be guaranteed.

### Transport

**Coaches:** Coaches with air conditioning are used on our group tours for city sightseeing, short excursions to the countryside and longer transfers where necessary. Roads in Russia have generally improved over recent years, but traffic and/or weather conditions may extend driving times. Road construction work usually covers an enormous section of road – not just 1-2 kilometres as you may be used to. For this reason, the timings listed in the itinerary are approximations only. There may be sections of road where the surface is comparatively bumpy but our drivers will do their utmost to lessen the impact.

**Planes:** Internal flights are based on economy class, with reputable airlines. Pre-seat flight allocation is unavailable.

**Trains:** Train travel from Moscow to St Petersburg is in comfortable 2nd class Western European style compartments. Train attendants in each carriage to take care of passengers, service clients and maintain the facilities. The trains are heated and have air conditioning. Most of the trains will have dining car and a bar.

### Development in Russia

Though parts of Russia match the west in modernity and technological advances, it is important to remember that Russia is still a developing country and as such, many aspects of tourism in these countries do not have the solid infrastructure and safety standards as seen here in the west.

We want to be able to give you an opportunity to buy souvenirs; so in a few cities, we will visit a workshop or factory which demonstrates a craft or product unique to that region with pieces available to buy. We understand that souvenir hunting is not for everyone so we aim to take you to places which hold local interest. We trust you

### Souvenirs

will enjoy these opportunities to learn about local arts and crafts and understand their historical and cultural importance.

### Group Size

Most of our groups consist of 10 travellers or more and will be accompanied by both a National Escort and local guides. There will usually be no more than 18 travellers in each group although you may encounter other Wendy Wu tour groups while you are travelling.

All our departures are guaranteed to operate with a minimum of 8 travellers booked (unless cancelled due to factors beyond our control). However, at our discretion we may operate departures with a smaller group size as we try to operate advertised departures wherever it is viable to do so. For groups with fewer than 10 travellers, departures will operate with local guides only.

### Tipping Policy

Local tipping is customary in Russia. However, this can often lead to awkwardness in knowing when it is appropriate to tip and how much, as well as ensuring you have a suitable amount of change available at the time. For your convenience, with years of experiences in providing the best customer service, Wendy Wu Tours operates a kitty system on our Group Tours so your National Escort will look after this aspect of your trip for you. It also ensures that the amounts paid are reasonable for you but still fair for the local people. The amount is stated on each Group Tour page will be advised again on your final documentation. Tipping is approximately 5 USD per person, per day on the tour, and will be collected (in the local currency) by your National Escort on your first day in Russia and distributed throughout the tour on your behalf. Any additional tipping on any of our tours is welcomed at your discretion. Further guidance for tipping contributions will be outlined in your final documentation.

### Packing list and Climate

Please refer to our website or brochure for detailed temperature charts.

You will find a complete packing list and a helpful climate chart in the 'Suggested Packing List', which will be included in the pre-departure information link sent within your deposit documentation. Seasonal weather

### Luggage

patterns can be quite unpredictable. Up to the minute information on worldwide weather can be found on [www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com)

All travellers are limited to two items of luggage each; a suitcase with a maximum weight of 20kg and one piece of hand luggage with a maximum weight of five kilograms. It is essential that your luggage is lockable. Please note that authorities will only allow bottles onto the aircraft if they have been checked in as main baggage. Bottles in hand luggage may be confiscated.

It is highly recommended that extra care and attention is paid when exchanging money when travelling to cities outside of the main cities in Russia. US Dollars are easily exchanged throughout Russia and other currencies such

### Exchanging Cash

as Australian Dollars can generally be exchanged in hotels and airports provided notes are new and undamaged. We suggest exchanging your money before travelling to remote areas and smaller towns, as exchange facilities can be limited. Your National Escort will remind you to do this before departure.

### Personal Expenses & Optional Tours

**Personal Expense** - You will need to take some extra money to cover drinks, laundry and souvenirs, plus any additional sightseeing that may be offered to you. Based on the advice of previous customers an approximate amount of \$300AUD per person, per week should be sufficient; however, for those that can't resist a bargain or may wish to participate in all of the optional excursions, consider allocating a higher amount.

**Optional Tours** - May be offered in each city you visit during your tour. These are not included in the standard itinerary and will only be available if time permits and if seats are available. Please ensure you have additional funds available if you feel you may wish to participate in any extra activities. Each option will be arranged locally by your National Escort/Local Guide, participation and tipping for optional excursions is completely at your discretion.

### Climbing Steps

Sightseeing at nearly all of the palaces, fortresses and some temples involves climbing quite a number of steps. These palaces were built to provide defense against potential invaders so nearly all of them stand on top of a hill, while the interiors have layers of narrow hallways and steps to slow down the advance of enemies once they were inside. The steps tend to be quite large, not level and sometimes without handrails. Hindu and Buddhist temples or pagodas also tend to be built at an elevation, as this is the most auspicious position according to ancient beliefs. This means you sometimes need to walk from the bus park to the entrance, and/or need to climb some steps inside.

People with knee or hip injuries, who have poor balance or are otherwise unable to complete these activities independently should consider the suitability of this itinerary carefully.

### Vaccinations and Your Health

We recommend that you contact either your GP or Travelvax (1300 360 164) for advice on vaccinations and travel health. Travelvax has a comprehensive website that you may also find useful [www.travelvax.com.au](http://www.travelvax.com.au)

### Before You Leave

We strongly recommend registering your travel plans with [www.smartraveller.gov.au](http://www.smartraveller.gov.au) as in the event of an emergency, Australian Consular assistance will be more readily available. You can also access the Australian Government's travel advisory service for up to date information about your destination on the same website.

### After your booking

Once you have booked with Wendy Wu Tours, you will receive a confirmation invoice followed by deposit documentation, which includes a visa application form (if applicable), and a help sheet. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2-3 weeks prior to departure.

**Last updated 19/07/19**