

GENERAL INFORMATION St. Petersburg is situated on the eastern shore of the Gulf of Finland, in the delta of the River Neva, some 400 miles north-west of Moscow. It is considered the most European of all the great cities of Russia, and a living monument to the opulent days of Imperialism. The City, with a population of over 5 million inhabitants, boasts the largest sea port in the country and is an important maritime center. It is built on a series of islands spread over a wide area, in an attractive plan of large squares, parks, boulevards and broad streets. A network of 60 rivers and canals criss-cross the City and are spanned by about 400 bridges, making it reminiscent of Venice or Amsterdam. The principal waterway is the River Neva which is contained within impressive granite banks, and it was along this river that Russian classicism flourished. The central city is dominated by 18th and 19th century baroque, neo-classical architecture.

St. Petersburg is relatively young for a European city and less than three centuries have passed since the first structure, Peter and Paul Fortress, was built by Peter the Great in 1703. However, it has a rich cultural and political history, being both the home of the Imperial Royal Family and the cradle of the Proletarian Revolution, for it was here that Lenin began his revolutionary activity and laid the foundations of the Communist Party. Today St. Petersburg is the most popular tourist city in the country for both Russian and foreign visitors.

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St. Petersburg

HISTORY St. Petersburg was founded in 1703 by Tsar Peter the Great, whose ambition it was to create a great metropolis and port city. Much of his inspiration came from his years of touring parts of Europe, and thousands of local and foreign workers labored to create a spectacular city of palaces, cathedrals and ostentatious residences for the nobility. In 1712 Peter transferred the Government from Moscow to his new city, and St. Petersburg became the capital of all of Russia.

Catherine the Great (1762-1796) continued to build the City into a major European capital and imported many foreign architects and artists to help. She founded the Hermitage Museum and bought vast treasures of art work from all over Europe, helping to make this one of the greatest collections in the world. In 1812 Napoleon invaded Russia but was driven back. By the end of the 1820's nearly all of Russia's foreign maritime trade had become concentrated in the City, and it was the base for many industrial enterprises; shipbuilding, arms and gunpowder plants and other large manufacturing industries.

Serfdom was still a part of life in Russia and social unrest began to grow. Czar Alexander II introduced reforms, but in 1881 he was killed by a bomb in St. Petersburg. In 1905 hundreds of strikers and demonstrators were shot in front of the Winter Palace and revolutionary forces grew in strength. In 1914 Russia entered World War I on the side of the Allies and St. Petersburg changed its name to Petrograd, which was considered less Germanic. In 1917 conditions





PLACES OF INTEREST

had grown worse, food shortages caused more unrest, the army mutinied and Nicholas II was forced to abdicate. In the October Revolution the Bolsheviks, Lenin's Communist Party, seized power and the Soviet State was established.

By 1918 the seat of Government was moved from the City to Moscow and in 1924, when Lenin died, Petrograd was renamed Leningrad in his honor. During World War II Leningrad withstood a 900 day siege by the Germans, in which it is now estimated that one million citizens died, most from starvation and freezing weather. The City was rebuilt into a major industrial and scientific center. In 1991 the Soviet Union disintegrated, Boris Yeltsin became president in the first democratic election and the people of the City voted to change the name of Leningrad back to St. Petersburg.

PLACES OF INTEREST

Peter and Paul Fortress was built in 1703 to protect the area from Swedish invasion, and the first site chosen by Peter the Great to build his new city. Inside the impressive Citadel is the former Royal Mint and the Peter and Paul Cathedral, with its tall slender

golden spire which was the City's first monumental building and the burial place of all Russian Czars. In 1924 it became a museum.

Battleship Aurora, moored on the Neva off the Petrovskaya em-*L* bankment, is a veteran of the Russian-Japanese War and its guns signalled the historic assault by Revolutionaries on the Winter Palace in 1917.

St. Isaac's Cathedral is St. Petersburg's largest church, situ-3 ated on the side of Decemberists Square. Built between 1818 and 1858, it is decorated with 14 kinds of minerals and semi-precious stones as well as mosaic paintings.

Hermitage Museum, located on Palace Square, is one of the world's greatest treasuries of fine and applied art with over 3 million exhibits. This enormous collection vies for attention with the impressive building and its furnishings.

C The **Russian Museum**, housed in the former Mikhailovsky Pal-J ace, contains a large collection of Russian Art, some 300,000 examples of paintings, sculptures and icons.

Beyond St. Petersburg

Tsarskoye Selo, once known as the Czar's Village or Pushkin, is approximately 17 miles south of the City and the site of Catherine's Palace. Built between 1719-1723 and restored many times, it has a stunning aqua colored facade, decorated with statues, gold and white ornaments and topped with gold onion domes. Inside is an immense collection of art work and furnishings. This, as with all the palaces in the area, was heavily damaged by retreating German forces, but is now almost completely restored.

Pavlovsk, just two miles from Pushkin, the Palace was a former residence of the Czars, built in the 18th century. A more unassuming structure compared with the lavish facade of Catherine's Palace, its interior is still a beautiful repository of priceless paintings, sculptures and furnishings. The Palace is set in a 1,500 acre park.

Peterhof is situated on the southern shore of the Gulf of Finland, about 22 miles southwest of St. Petersburg. Also known as Petrodvorets, it was founded in 1710 as a summer residence for Peter the Great. Altered and extended over the years, it was almost completely rebuilt between 1747 and 1754. Inside the Grand Palace are many splendid a vista of spreading gardens and fountains.

displays of art, decorative objects and furniture. The Palace over-looks POST OFFICE AND TELEPHONE FACILITIES The central Post Office is located at Konnogvardejsky bulvar, 4. International calls can be placed from the St. Petersburg International and Domestic Tele-SHORE EXCURSIONS To make the most of your visit to St. Petersphone Exchange and Business Centre with pre-purchased phonecards, burg and its surrounding areas we suggest you take one of our orgaavailable in various denominations. It is located at 3/5 Bolshoya nized Shore Excursions. For information concerning tour content and Morskaya St. between the Hermitage Museum and Nevsky Prospekt. pricing consult your Shore Excursion Brochure or contact the Shore Some hotels have satellite telephone booths from which international Excursion Desk. When going ashore, be advised to take with you only calls can be placed. necessary items and secure any valuables onboard.

the street.

LOCAL CUSTOMS Bargaining: Bargaining is expected when dealing with street vendors or in markets.

TOURIST INFORMATION The official Tourist Information Office Tipping: Tipping is becoming a widely accepted practice, a good is located on Nevsky Prospect, 41. Most hotels provide information guideline is between 10 and 15% in restaurants where there is no serservices for guests or otherwise, although there is generally a fee. vice charge, and for taxi fares.

TRANSPORTATION Taxis are available at the MAIN gate, however, Local Cuisine: Typical Russian dishes include; Borsht, a beetroot soup, few drivers will speak English, thus it is advisable to have your desti-Beef Stroganoff, thin slices of beef braised with mushrooms, onions nation and the ship's berth written down. It is important to negotiate a and sour cream, and perhaps the best-known, Chicken Kiev, chicken fare prior to departing and recommended to travel with a companion breasts wrapped around garlic butter, usually breaded and sautueed. and not to hail a cab with more than one person in it. The Russians are also famous for their Caviar (Sturgeon's roe) small, black eggs, slightly salty, served with finely chopped hard-boiled egg St. Petersburg has a bus and tram system, but neither are recommendand onion with miniature pancakes (blinis). ed for use by our passengers. Those guests wishing to use taxis must have an independent visa.

Drink Specialities: Vodka is the favorite here, drunk ice cold, as a shot. There are a wide range of Vodkas available, many with subtle flavor-

USEFUL WORDS AND PHRASES ings such as pepper or lemon or some other fruit. There are several Yes • Da quite acceptable wines produced locally and the Russian Brandys are No • Ne quite comparable. Bottled water is recommended. Good Day • Dobry Dyen Many of the places of interest in and around St. Petersburg may be Good-bye • Do Svidaniya subject to charges for photography. It is advisable to check on entering Thank-you • Spasiba if you wish to take photographs or use video equipment. You're Welcome • Pazhalsta SHOPPING FACILITIES Shopping opportunities in Russia are limited. The main shopping district is centered around Nevsky Prospekt.

The real souvenirs however, local handicrafts such as matrioshka dolls, lacquer boxes, painted wooden spoons and other wood-carved items and local prints, are available from street vendors.

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Capitalism has taken off in recent years and now many of the younger

generation are learning the technique of salesmanship. It is wise to

beware the authenticity of certain products, such as the lacquer boxes

The laws governing the export of certain items are unclear and subject

to change, suffice it to say that any item considered a Russian treasure

or restricted products, such as military watches, certain caviars or old

Opening hours vary, generally opening between 9:00 am and 7:00 pm,

most stores can be expected to shut for an hour for lunch, between

LOCAL CURRENCY The unit of currency in Russia is the Ruble.

Notes are available in the following denominations: 10, 50, 100 and

1000. Coins are issued in amounts of 5, 10, 50 Kopecks with 100

Kopecks in a Rouble. Exchange facilities are available at most of the

larger hotels and official banks or currency exchange offices found

throughout the city. It is not recommended to exchange currency on

icons, may be confiscated by Customs Officials at the Port.

1:00 pm and 3:00 pm and most are closed on Sundays.

and icons that might be seen for sale.