



PLACES OF INTEREST

HISTORY *continued*

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

1 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.

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

3 St. Isaac's Cathedral is St. Petersburg's largest church, situated 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.

4 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.

5 The Russian Museum, housed in the former Mikhailovsky Palace, 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 displays of art, decorative objects and furniture. The Palace over-looks a vista of spreading gardens and fountains.

There are many other museums and attractions to be seen in and around St. Petersburg, too numerous to be fully mentioned. For further information please consult the Shore Excursion Desk or the Port Lecturer who will do their best to assist.

- Many of the places of interest in and around St. Petersburg may be subject to charges for photography. It is advisable to check on entering if you wish to take photographs or use video equipment.
- Admission Charges are generally in local currency.
- When going ashore, passengers are advised to take with them only the items they need and to secure any valuables.

SHORE EXCURSIONS To make the most of your visit to St. Petersburg and its surrounding areas we suggest you take one of our organized Shore Excursions. For information concerning tour content and pricing consult your Shore Excursion Brochure or contact the Shore Excursion Desk.

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

Tipping: Tipping is becoming a widely accepted practice, a good guideline is between 10 and 15% in restaurants where there is no service charge, and for taxi fares.

Local Cuisine: Typical Russian dishes include; Borsht, a beetroot soup, Beef Stroganoff, thin slices of beef braised with mushrooms, onions and sour cream, and perhaps the best-known, Chicken Kiev, chicken breasts wrapped around garlic butter, usually breaded and sauteed. The Russians are also famous for their Caviar (Sturgeon's roe) small, black eggs, slightly salty, served with finely chopped hard-boiled egg and onion with miniature pancakes (blinis).

Drink Specialities: Vodka is the favorite here, drunk ice cold, as a shot. There are a wide range of Vodkas available, many with subtle flavorings such as pepper or lemon or some other fruit. There are several quite acceptable wines produced locally and the Russian Brandys are quite comparable.

Bottled water is recommended.

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.

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 and icons that might be seen for sale.

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

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

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. It is a controlled currency, i.e. it is illegal to bring it into or take it out of the country. Previously the U.S. Dollar has been widely accepted and black market activity extensive, however, recent laws have been implemented to restrict the use of foreign currencies. It is therefore implied that visitors should exchange currency and convert any remaining, prior to leaving St. Petersburg. A receipt for the exchange must be retained. It is also advisable to return your remaining Rubles to the same bank or exchange office that you purchased them from. 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 the street.

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 Telephone Exchange and Business Centre with pre-purchased phonecards, available in various denominations. It is located at 3/5 Bolshaya Morskaya St. between the Hermitage Museum and Nevsky Prospekt. Some hotels have satellite telephone booths from which international calls can be placed.

AT&T: +7812.325.5042 / MCI: +7095.747.3322
SPRINT: +7095.747.3324