

The Women's Travel Group presents

Western Russia: Inside Treasures & Traditions

July 13-24, 2017

Get to know Western Russia from an insider's perspective. Explore the classic sites, such as Red Square and the Amber Room at Catherine's Palace, but also enjoy lunch in a Soviet-style café, and visit ancient towns and early churches in Russia's Golden Ring. Learn from an expert about Soviet life, *perestroika* and the transition to capitalism. Come away feeling like you've caught a glimpse of Russia's soul.

Program Highlights

- By special arrangement, peruse the Kremlin's glittering Diamond Fund.
- Enjoy a private tour and tasting of double-distilled vodkas at the Crystall vodka museum.
- Attend performances at world-renowned theaters in both Moscow and St. Petersburg.
- Visit Suzdal's UNESCO-listed Savior Monastery of St. Euphinius, founded in 1352.
- Discover Sergiev Posad, center of wooden toy making in Russia.
- Visit the Fabergé museum, boasting the largest collection of Fabergé eggs in the world.
- Drive out of St. Petersburg for a quintessential Russian *dacha* experience.
- Attend a ballet master class to appreciate first-hand the high level of artistry in Russian dance.

Overview

Day 1: Arrive Moscow, Russia

Days 2-4: Moscow

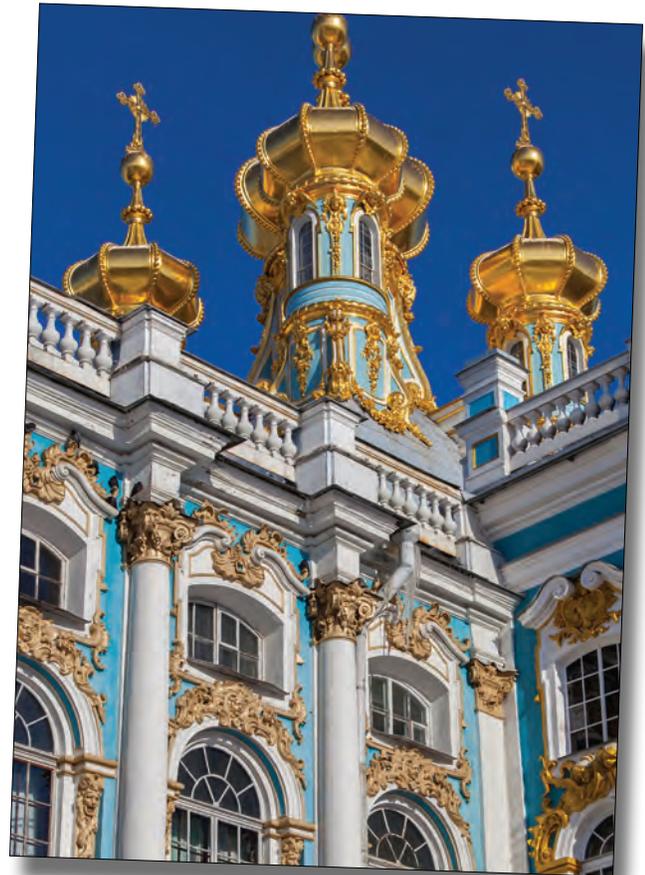
Day 5: Moscow • drive to Suzdal

Day 6: Suzdal • drive to Sergiev Posad

Day 7: Sergiev Posad • drive to Moscow • train to St. Petersburg

Days 8-11: St. Petersburg

Day 12: Depart St. Petersburg



For Reservations & Information

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Day by Day Itinerary

Day 1 Arrive Moscow, Russia

Arrive in Moscow and transfer to a centrally located hotel to rest and relax. Gather for a welcome dinner, and if you want, enjoy an optional nighttime walk to Red Square. *InterContinental Tverskaya or similar (D)*

Days 2-4 Moscow

Get to know Russia's capital city, a booming metropolis where ancient churches sit shoulder

to shoulder with 21st century financial institutions. First, take a tour of the Kremlin and the Armory Museum, housing Russia's national treasures, such as icons, Fabergé eggs, and Catherine the Great's ball gowns. Also admire the exclusive collection of "crown valuables" in the Diamond Fund, by special arrangement. Explore Moscow on foot, starting with Kitay Gorod, one of the earliest districts in Moscow. Make a stop at one of the city's oldest women's convents, on a hill not far from the Kremlin. Stroll across the Patriarch footbridge leading to the gleaming Cathedral of Christ the Savior. Take a walk down Arbat Street and enjoy a private tour and tasting at the Crystall Vodka Museum. *InterContinental Tverskaya or similar (2B, 1L, 2D)*

Days 5-6 Vladimir • Suzdal • Sergiev Posad

Set out on an exploration of the Golden Ring, a modern name given to the ancient towns that form an elliptical circle to the north and east of Moscow. Begin in Vladimir, capital of Kievan Rus from the 12th to the 14th centuries. Stop at the Church of the Intercession on the Nerl, considered one of the most perfectly proportioned churches in Russia. It's included in UNESCO's "White Monuments of Vladimir and Suzdal." Visit UNESCO-listed 14th century Savior Monastery of St. Euphinius in Suzdal, as well as the 10th century kremlin. After the second day of touring in Suzdal, drive to Sergiev Posad for dinner and overnight. *Suzdal: Pushkarskaya Sloboda or similar Sergiev Posad: Imperial Village Hotel or similar (2B, 2L, 2D)*

Day 7 Sergiev Posad • train to St. Petersburg

Sergiev Posad grew around the UNESCO-listed Trinity St. Sergius monastery, founded in the 1340s by St. Sergius of Radonezh, now the patron saint of Russia. It occupies a special place in the spiritual, political and cultural life of the country. The town has been a center of woodcarving and toy making for centuries. After exploring the town and the monastery, continue on to Moscow and transfer to the railway station. Depart via the high speed Sapsan train to St. Petersburg, with an independent dinner aboard. *Angleterre Hotel (B, L)*

Days 8-11 St. Petersburg and environs

Begin an exploration of Russia's cultural capital, St. Petersburg, often described as one of the most beautiful cities in the world. Take a walking tour of Nevsky Prospekt with your knowledgeable guide, then browse the Russian Museum, displaying the most comprehensive and moving collection of Russian art in the world. Spend as much time as you like at the incredible Hermitage Museum, admiring works by Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Rembrandt, Rubens, the French Impressionists, Van Gogh, Matisse, Gauguin, and Picasso. Spend a romantic evening at one of St. Petersburg's illustrious theaters. Take a hydrofoil over to Peter the Great's summer palace, Peterhof, appreciating some 150 gilded marble, granite and limestone fountains that adorn its Lower Park. Head to Pushkin to see one of Russia's greatest cultural attractions, Catherine's Palace, with its famed Amber Room. Drive outside St. Petersburg to experience rural Russian *dacha* life, enjoying dinner and an intimate evening with your host. Attend a special lecture entitled "Soviet Life, Perestroika, Capitalism," and visit the Fabergé Museum to see capitalism in action. Enjoy lunch in a Soviet-style café, and interact with English-speaking Russian professionals. Attend a ballet master class where the dancers run through their warm-up routines and practice fragments of ballets. Lastly, toast the journey with a festive farewell dinner. *Angleterre Hotel (4B, 3L, 3D)*

Day 12 Depart St. Petersburg

Following breakfast, the tour concludes with a transfer to the airport. *(B)*



Western Russia

12 Days

July 13-24, 2017

\$5,195 per person, double occupancy
\$1,200, single supplement
Book before January 15 and get the **early bird rate** of \$4,995 per person, double occupancy

Included

- All accommodations based on double occupancy, hotel taxes
- All meals per itinerary
- Group arrival / departure transfers for passengers arriving to Moscow on July 13 and departing from St. Petersburg on July 24
- All internal air and land transportation by private coach per itinerary
- Special cultural events and extensive sightseeing, including entrance fees
- Welcome and farewell dinners
- Services of a tour manager throughout the land program
- Comprehensive pre-departure packet.

Not Included

- Gratuities to tour manager, guides, drivers and baggage handlers
- Travel insurance
- Roundtrip airfare from / to your home city. MIR can assist you with reservations
- Passport and visa fees
- Personal items such as telephone calls, alcohol, laundry, excess baggage fees
- Single supplement
- Items not expressly listed as included

Air Arrangements

Program rates do not include international airfare. Information on recommended flight itinerary will be sent by our tour operator upon confirmation.