

EXPLORE!

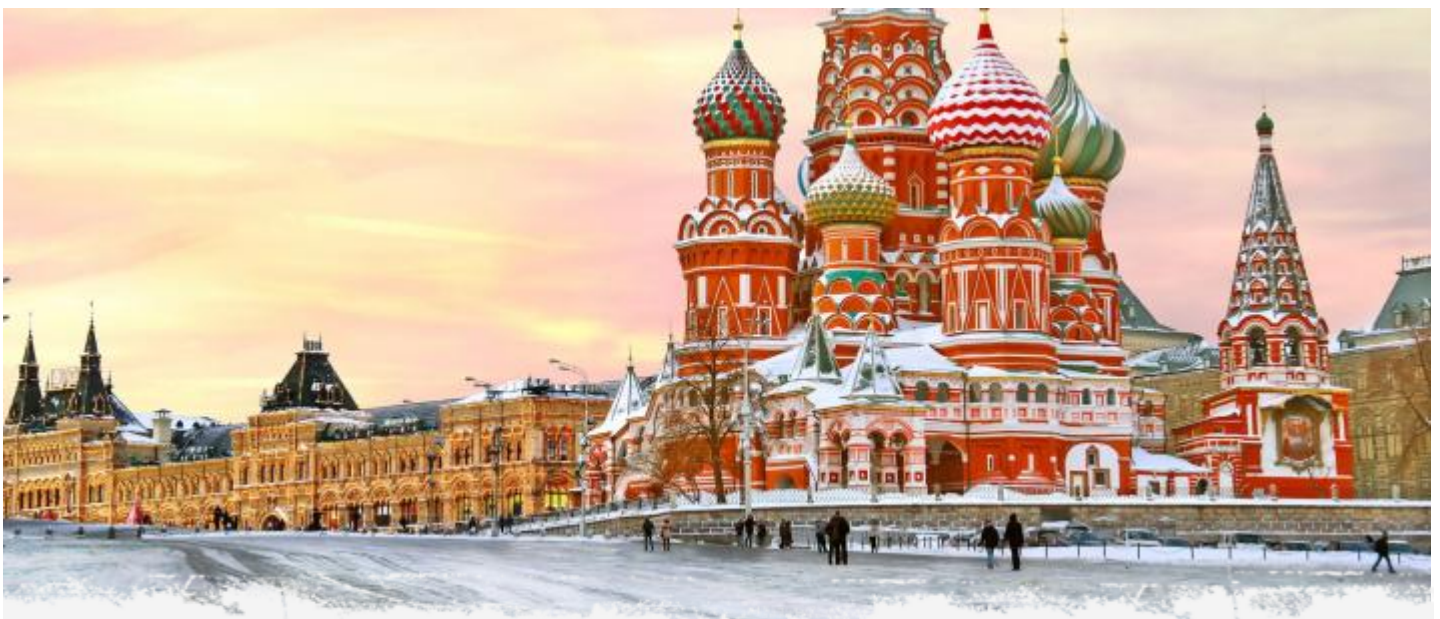
TRIP NOTES



Moscow and St. Petersburg (WR 2017)



TRIPDURATION
8
DAYS



Tour Style: Classic
Tour Pace: Moderate

Tour Type: Small Groups
Accommodation
Grade: Standard

Trip Code: WR

Trip Highlights - Moscow and St. Petersburg

- ✓ Moscow - Explore the city's main sites, such as the Red Square, St Basil's Cathedral, Lenin's Mausoleum and the Kremlin
- ✓ St. Petersburg - Visit the world-famous Hermitage Museum and the gargantuan Winter Palace. Soak up the culture of this stunning city with an optional visit to the ballet or opera
- ✓ Pushkin - Visit Catherine the Great's famously opulent palace

Trip Essentials

Accommodation: 6 nights Standard Hotel
1 night Simple Overnight Train

Included Meals: 7 breakfasts, 0 lunches, 0 dinners

Start Point: Join trip: Moscow

End Point: Trip ends: St Petersburg

Transport: Bus, Train

Countries: Russia

Moscow and St Petersburg

On this short trip, we explore Russia's two most important cities in-depth. In Moscow, we take-in the Kremlin, the 16th century Saint Basil's Cathedral and have the chance to see Lenin's embalmed body in its Red Square mausoleum. Later, we discover the contrasting architecture of St. Petersburg, with its European influences and vast, flamboyant palaces. For 2017 we will be using the famous Red Arrow Train, which in Soviet times carried the Communist Party elite between Moscow and Leningrad (St. Petersburg) and has been operating since 1931. The train has been kept in its original style, so it's a unique experience and like taking a step back in time to an era when train travel was at its prime.

Suitability

We've given each of our tours a comfort rating and a tour pace, walking or cycling grade to give you a general idea about the level of activity on each tour and the standard of accommodation you will be staying in at the end of your day's adventure.

Often you'll stay in different styles of accommodation during your tour; so we make an average rating across the entire tour. For more information on where you'll stay each night, please refer to the day by day tour itinerary.

Accommodation Grade: Standard

Our mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en-suite facilities.

Tour Style: Classic

Packed with adventure, these tours offer inspiring destinations and authentic travel experiences at a reasonable price. Using all kinds of transport and accommodation, we'll take you off the beaten track to discover the true heart of the people and places you visit.

Tour Pace: Moderate

These moderately paced tours provide some busy days with plenty of experiences to enjoy, as well as time to relax along the way.



Your trip itinerary

Tour itinerary notes

While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day itinerary as printed below, a degree of flexibility is built in. Overnight stops may vary from those suggested.

Your Tour Leader

An Explore Leader is an integral part of any Explore trip and your trip will be led by one of our experienced Explore Leaders who have been handpicked and expertly trained. We believe that our Explore Leaders are the key to the success of our trips; they are passionate travellers who are bursting with first-hand local knowledge which they love to share. Your Explore Leader will also take care of all the planning and organisation throughout your journey. Their passionate approach will make this trip fun and inspiring, bringing the destination to life whether you're travelling alone or with others.

DAY 1 Join trip in Moscow

After checking in to our hotel in Moscow and meeting the rest of the group, there may be time to explore some of Russia's capital at our leisure. Moscow is one of the largest cities in the world. It has grown rapidly in recent decades, creating a sprawl of high-rise suburbs. However, its historic centre remains relatively compact, maintaining a great deal of its fascinating architecture.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 

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 **Included Meals:** None

DAY 2 Orientation tour of Moscow including the Red Square

Moscow is the pivotal centre of Russia and there is much to see and do here. Rather than battle with the traffic on a bus tour, we will use the metro system to get around this morning - an experience in itself. Many of the stations are cavernous underground halls, elaborately decorated with chandeliers and we'll get to see the most iconic stations during our metro tour. Our metro tour will end in the famous Red Square, still paved in its original stones, where we can gaze in awe at the colourful onion-domes of Saint Basil's Cathedral. Surely one of the most remarkable architectural edifices in the world, Ivan the Terrible commissioned the work in the 16th century. Living up to his name, legend has it that he gorged out the eyes of its architect once completed, so that he could never again design a building of such brilliance. After the opportunity to grab some lunch in the famous GUM department store, we head to the outskirts of the city by bus, where we should get a great panoramic view of the city from the Lenin Hills. On our return to the city, we will pass Novodevichy Convent - a beautiful cloister that has remained intact since the 17th century and is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. This evening, you may choose to experience Moscow's vibrant nightlife, which truly offers something for everyone. There are wine bars, blues bars, exceptional restaurants and classical concerts, to name just a few options. Your Explore Leader will be able to offer you advice.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 3 Take Moscow's metro to the Kremlin

This morning, we take the metro to the massive Moscow Kremlin - a city within a city. The triangular walls enclose an incredible complex of buildings, including three fine palaces, cathedrals, belfries and towers that represent Russia throughout its glorious past. Whilst here you may choose to visit the Kremlin Armoury Museum, which contains a stunning collection of Imperial jewels and regalia. Included in this exhibit is the 16th century English silver sent to Ivan the Terrible by Queen Elizabeth I, with an eye towards securing matrimony. This afternoon is free to discover more of Russia's capital on your own. You may choose to visit the State Central Museum of Contemporary History, where you can gain a good insight into Russia's history from the beginning of the 19th century to the present day.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 4 Free in Moscow; overnight Red Arrow Train to St. Petersburg

Today has been left free for you to explore the many other sights Moscow has to offer. With the exception of holidays, Mondays and Fridays, you have the opportunity to visit Lenin's Mausoleum. Open between 10.00 and 13.00, entry is free, but there is often a bit of a queue. Other options include a visit to one of the many fine art galleries such as Tretyakova or the Bolshoi Theatre or to take a stroll in Gorky Park. Maybe you will revisit the impressive GUM department store, with its beautiful glass roof. If you're looking for something a bit different, then you could visit Muzeon Park, where you can view over 700 sculptures that have fallen from grace, including old Soviet statues that have been removed from Russia's main parks and squares. Alternatively, you might like to take an optional tour to Sergiev Posad - the beautiful monastery 60 kilometres from Moscow that is one of the most important pilgrimage sites in the country. This evening, we reunite to transfer to Moscow's main station to board our overnight train to St. Petersburg. For 2017 we will be using the famous Red Arrow Train, which in Soviet times carried the Communist Party elite between Moscow and Leningrad (St. Petersburg) and has been operating since 1931. The train has been kept in its original style, so it's a unique experience and like taking a step back in time to an era when train travel was at its prime. Our accommodation is in four-berth compartments with bedding provided.

Overnight: **Simple Overnight Train**

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 5 Orientation tour of St Petersburg

On arrival this morning we'll have breakfast in a local restaurant and then head off for our tour of the city. Built on the hundred islets that form the delta of the Neva River, St. Petersburg (formerly Leningrad) was founded by Peter the Great as his 'Window on the West'. Regarded as one of the most beautiful and romantic cities in the world, its picturesque canals and baroque and neoclassical architecture give the city a European feel. St. Petersburg has always been a city of ideas and ideals. Not only was it the home of great writers such as Pushkin and Dostoyevsky, but it was here that the Russian Revolution began, and where, arguably, the first shoots of democracy sprouted, 70 years later. After arriving into the city by train, a guided coach tour will show us some of the highlights of this great city. We will take in Saint Isaac's Cathedral, Alexander Nevsky Convent, the Church of the Saviour of the Spilled Blood and Palace Square. Our afternoon is free to explore any of these places in more detail or alternatively, you may choose to relax before the opportunity to visit the ballet or opera this evening.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 6 Visit to the Winter Palace and Hermitage Museum

We have some free time before our visit to the Hermitage Museum later in the morning. You may choose to visit the St Peter and Paul Fortress - the original 18th century citadel of St Petersburg. The Hermitage is unquestionably one of the finest art galleries in the world, containing the works of masters like Leonardo da Vinci, Titian, Raphael, Velázquez, Rubens and Rembrandt, as well as contemporary pieces by Matisse and Picasso. Collections are split between buildings, with much on display at the Winter Palace. The official residence of Russia's Tsars from the 18th century until Nicolas II's forced abdication in 1917, this monumental building contains no less than 1,500 rooms. Stormed by Red Army soldiers in a defining moment that marked the beginning of the Soviet era, the following month-long looting of the palace's wine cellars led to what some describe as 'the greatest hangover in history'. This afternoon is free to enjoy the city at your leisure.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 7 Excursion to Catherine the Great's Palace at Pushkin

This morning we visit Pushkin, named after the eminent author and home to his 19th century wooden house. Formerly 'the Tsar's Village', the royal estates were built here, including the summer residence of Catherine the Great, a majestic palace styled in blue and gold rococo. After viewing its sumptuous interior, including the grand gold and crystal ballroom, we may stroll around the lakes and gardens of the palace. This afternoon is free to explore more of St Petersburg. If you have not already done so, you should spend time wandering down the main street of Nevsky Prospekt, with its three miles of shops, cafés, waterways, elegant buildings and historic monuments. There is also the option to visit Yusupov Palace, the city residence of one of Russia's wealthiest families. The tour includes the state rooms, private apartments and its beautiful theatre, as well as the basement apartments where the 'mad monk' Rasputin was murdered in the early 20th century. Please note: In some instances, entrance time allocations at Catherine's Palace may require us to switch around today's itinerary, so that we visit Pushkin in the afternoon and have a free morning.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 8 Trip ends in St Petersburg

Our trip ends in St. Petersburg this morning, after breakfast.

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

Included Activities

Please note for many attractions and sites you visit during the tour, you will not be allowed to take coats or bags inside. These will have to be checked into the cloakrooms available and so customers are advised to carry a small bag for wallets/purses, mobile phone, personal docs etc in whilst inside the venue.

Accommodation and Meals

Accommodation Notes

For the overnight train journey we will use sleeper carriages with four bunk beds with bedding provided (two beds on floor level and two above) per compartment and with a shared toilet and wash basin in each carriage. There are no shower facilities on board. Luggage is stored under the bottom bunk beds and above the cabin door for the top bunks. There is the possibility that you will be sharing with non-Explore clients in the same cabin. There is no air-conditioning on board and it's not always possible to open the windows, so we recommend light weight bed clothes. You can experience authentic rail travel with the local people and it's a great way of getting from place to place during the night, so you maximise on the amount of time you have in each city during the day to explore. Take snacks, drinks, toilet roll, hand sanitiser and an open mind with you for maximum enjoyment.

For 2017 we will be using the famous Red Arrow Train, which in Soviet times carried the Communist Party elite between Moscow and Leningrad (St. Petersburg) and has been operating since 1931. The train has been kept in its original style, so it's a unique experience for us and like taking a step back in time to an era when train travel was at its prime.

In Russia the majority of buildings including the hotels still use the old Soviet District Heating System. Large power plants supply both

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electricity and hot water and from autumn to spring the central heating provided is at a set temperature, which can't be individually adjusted. So this means that it can be hotter inside the hotel bedrooms than you'd expect, but this can't be turned down, so it's best to open a window if you are too warm.

Most of the hotels in the main cities were constructed during Soviet times and so tend to be large and can have ostentatious decor. The hotels we use in both Moscow and St. Petersburg are in this style and are just a short journey by metro from the city centres.

In Moscow our hotel is by Partizanskaya metro station and is approximately 15 minutes from the Red Square. Within walking distance of our hotel is the Kremlin in Izmailovo where you can visit a number of museums and see different Russian architectural styles. Here you'll find the Russian Toys Museum, Russian Fleet Museum and the Russian Vodka History Museum. Next door to here is a flea market and the Vernissage where folk crafts and antiques are on sale. Nearby there's also Izmailovsky Island surrounded by the Serebryano-Vinogradnye ponds. The island contains 18-19th centuries architectural monuments and was created by the second Tsar of the Romanov family. One of the largest city parks in Europe, Izmailovo Park, is also close by.

In St. Petersburg our hotel is situated near to Nevsky Prospekt on the Neva River embankment. The metro station is in the hotel building and it takes approximately 20 minutes to reach the Hermitage. Within walking distance of our hotel is Alexander Nevsky Lavra. This monastery complex is home to some of the oldest buildings in the city and the graves of some of Russia's most famous composers and writers including Tchaikovsky, Dostoevsky and Glinka.

Food & Drink

Included meals: 7 breakfasts, 0 lunches, 0 dinners included in the price of this trip. Please be prepared to pay for non-included meals. Please note that costs for drinks and meals can vary depending on location.

Budgeting for your Trip

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the trip price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

Food

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Russia

Lunch £: 6.00 - 10.00

Dinner £: 12.00 - 16.00

Drink

The prices for drinks can vary greatly depending upon location and the prices detailed below are an average guide. In general you would expect that drinks purchased in a supermarket or local bar to be less expensive, whilst drinks in an upmarket bar or restaurant may be more expensive.

Russia

Bottle of Beer £: 2.00 - 4.00

Water £: 1.00

Other Sightseeing & Activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations.

Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

Optional Excursions

Moscow - Kremlin Armoury Museum €35.00 (€40.00 for groups under 10) with a guide or 700 RUB for entrance only with audio guides available in English; opera or ballet €50-150.00; visit to Sergiev Posad €35.00 (€40.00 for groups under 10). Concert of Maestro Borodiansky which usually held at Glazunov Museum €25-30.00 (please note this optional is subject to availability and your Explore Leader will advise of this on arrival). The cost shown here is just for the ticket to the concert and museum/gallery entrance fee, transport will be paid for separately and locally.)

St. Petersburg - Saint Peter and Paul Fortress €25.00; opera or ballet €40-180.00; Yusupov Palace €28.00; Alexander Nevsky Lavra (Monastery) €5.00.

Prices for the above optional trips include guide fee, entrance fee to the site and necessary transport unless it states otherwise.

Tipping - Tour Leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Explore Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

Tipping - Local Crew

You should allow approximately 20 Euros for tips.

Foreign Exchange

Russia

ATM Availability: Cash can be withdrawn both in Moscow and St. Petersburg

Credit Card Acceptance: Local currency (Russian Roubles) can also be drawn on credit cards from ATM's in both Moscow and St Petersburg.

Travellers Cheques: Travellers cheques are accepted in Moscow and St Petersburg but are very time-consuming to change and attract unfavourable exchange rates

Local Currency: Rouble.

Recommended Currency for Exchange: We recommend that you take your money in Sterling, Euros or US Dollars cash. For US Dollars notes should be in good condition (not torn or marked), issued after 1990 (pre-1990 are often refused) and ideally in small denominations. Euros, Sterling and Dollars are easily transferable into the local currency, Roubles.

Where to Exchange: Most major towns - your Tour Leader will advise you on arrival.

Joining your Trip

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found on our website at www.explore.co.uk, in the tour specific dates and prices section.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer. For more information please refer to <https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers>.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer please refer to <https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers>.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Important Information

Travel Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

EXPLORE!

The Adventure Travel Experts

CAMPBELL IRVINE
DIRECT TRAVEL INSURANCE



Travel Insurance is essential. If you have not already arranged cover, please contact our recommended Travel Insurance providers www.campbellirvinedirect.com/Explore who offer Travel Insurance specifically designed to cover travel with Explore or call **Campbell Irvine Direct** on Tel: 020 7938 1734

Explore Worldwide is an Introducing Appointed Representative of Campbell Irvine Ltd who are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

Travel Aware

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office Advice follow the link at www.explore.co.uk/travel-safety

We strongly advise that you register with the FCO to receive updates to the travel advice for your chosen destination. A hard copy of the current FCO Travel Advice for your chosen destination is available by contacting cr@explore.co.uk or 01252 379438.

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Visa Information

Russia: All nationalities require a single entry visa in order to enter Russia. As part of the visa requirements you will need to obtain a Russian Travel Voucher and Authorisation from the local Russian authorities. Explore will request this on your behalf approximately 8 weeks prior to departure. Please allow a minimum of 5 working days for the travel voucher and authorisation to be processed. Due to the visa processing times, Explore are unable to accept bookings within one month of travel.

For British passport holders: All applicants must present themselves in person to the Russia Visa Processing Centre in London, Manchester or Edinburgh, on the day of application, to provide biometric information (fingerprints). There is currently no appointment system in place for this new process, so applicants will be seen on a first come, first serve basis. It is likely this will mean lengthy queues and waiting times. The biometric process is not optional, and any applicant who refuses to provide their fingerprints will automatically be refused a visa. This information is not stored and applicants will therefore need to travel to the Processing Centre each time a visa is required. In the event an application is rejected due to inaccurate or incomplete information, fingerprints must be resubmitted as part of the revised application. For more information regarding this process - we recommend contacting the Russian Embassy direct, their website is <http://rusemb.org.uk/visa/>

It is essential that you provide Explore with the correct passport information at the time of booking, as this will be required in order to request the travel voucher and letter of invite, as well as pre-book any applicable train tickets. Corrections and amendments will incur additional charges, so please double check that the information we have for you is up to date and correct, this includes your passport number, full name as per passport (including middle names), date of birth and place of birth; if customers renew or reissue their passports from the details initially given to Explore, train tickets must be cancelled and purchased again, which involves extra costs and may result in customers being in differing train carriages to the rest of the group. If you intend to renew your passport please let Explore know at the point of booking and please ensure that you have the new passport no later than 8 weeks prior to travel.

Once you receive your travel voucher and authorisation, you may notice that the dates of entry and exit displayed do not match your exact dates of entry and exit. This is not a problem and it is often the case that the entry date is earlier than your actual tour start date and the exit date is later than the end of the tour. On your visa application you will need to insert the dates of entry and exit exactly as they are stated on your authorisation letter. In the very unlikely situation that the date band showing on your authorisation letter is ever less than your planned travel duration, please notify Explore as soon as possible and we will get this updated.

You will be required to enter a reference number and a confirmation number on your visa application. These can be found at the top of your authorisation letter under the heading 'Voucher Number'. The 6 digit long number is the reference and the 4 digit number is the confirmation number.

If arriving in Russia more than 72 hours before day 1 of your Explore holiday, and staying at a different hotel to the joining hotel, or with friends, then please contact Explore to provide us with the address of your accommodation before you begin to apply for your Russian visa

Please ensure that your passport has a minimum of 6 months validity from the date of return to your home country.

All visa information is subject to change regularly, so please check with your local consulate for the most up to date advice for the



countries you are visiting. All other nationalities should check with the Russian embassy.

For nationalities that require proof of their travel insurance through Explore as part of their visa application, please contact us for a copy of this.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on **0208 5431846**.

Vaccinations & Protection

Russia

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against tetanus, typhoid, hepatitis A, polio and diphtheria. Consult your travel clinic for further advice. Tick-borne encephalitis is recommended by some medical sources if travelling in certain areas of Eastern Europe, at specific times of the year. Check latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. Special Note: Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed before departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider. The Russian government advises that certain medications must be declared upon entry into the country, and you may also be required to carry a prescription with you. You should consult your local consulate for up to date information prior to travel.

Preparing for your Trip

Climate

Russia

In European Russia snows usually start in November and stay till late March/early April, when a great thaw occurs with temperatures ranging from about 5°C in October and April to -15°C in January.

Clothing

Pack a warm jumper, thermals, gloves, scarf, hat and a warm waterproof coat for trips in the winter. Layers work best as it will often be very warm inside buildings and on the overnight train, but much colder outside.

July and August are the hottest months and lightweight cotton clothing is best. During spring and autumn temperatures can be lower or drop during the evenings and there is also a stronger possibility of rain, although light rainwear may be needed at any time of year. A warm fleece/jacket is recommended for cooler evenings.

Ladies should take a headscarf and ensure their shoulders are covered when entering churches.

Equipment

Spare camera batteries can be useful as these do not last long in cold weather. A torch is useful in case of powercuts/ emergencies.

Footwear

We recommend taking comfortable walking shoes for exploring and trainers or sandals for relaxing. During winter, conditions maybe icy or snowy so we recommend taking warm boots with good grip.

Luggage: On Tour

One main piece of luggage and a daysac for personal items.

Luggage allowance on trip: 20kg

General Information

Country details

Russia

Population: 143,600,000

Size of Country: 17,075,400 sq km

Major Language: Russian

Religion: Orthodox Christianit, Islam, Buddhism, Judaism

Time Difference to GMT: +3

Electric Supply & Plugs

Russia

2 Pin Round

Why Choose Explore

We've been creating award-winning pioneering adventure holidays for over 30 years, earning the trust of thousands of delighted customers, who feel safe in our hands. Our tour leaders have expert local knowledge and our tours are designed to take you off the beaten track to see the most exotic, inspiring and dramatic places in the world.

- With over 30 years' experience, we are passionate about what we do.
- Pioneering small group adventures, self-guided, private journeys & tailor-made holidays.
- Award-winning tour leaders who you can trust.
- Responsible travel is and always has been one of the driving principles of Explore.

Our adventure holidays are full of exciting things to see and do, exploring in small groups travelling by bus, boat, plane, rickshaw, camel, or any number of unusual forms of transport. Often you will stay in family-run hotels and village houses and enjoy authentic local cuisine. In this way, it's easy to discover the true heart of the people and the place you travel to – and make some new friends along the way. Each tour is uniquely different, so please feel free to browse through our tours to see what may whet your appetite.

Cool Earth

Explore are proud to support Cool Earth in their effort to reduce global carbon dioxide levels through the prevention of deforestation in the South America rainforest. Cool Earth focus on areas in immediate danger of deforestation, supporting local communities to be forest guardians. To date 350,000 acres of rainforest has been protected. Saving rainforest also protects rare animals and plants, allows local forest communities to maintain their way of life, and protects a major source of oxygen and fresh water. When you travel on an Explore holiday we make a donation to Cool Earth that exceeds the impact of our customers flights each year.

Earth Matters

We are passionate about sustainable travel and work hard to create tours where your holiday delivers real benefits to the local communities. We minimise our impact by travelling in small groups, respecting local cultures, reducing waste and offsetting 100% of the CO2 from our flights.

When you travel with Explore, you are directly contributing to local economies and helping empower the people you meet. We currently support a range of charities and good causes, including: Toilet Twinning (helping to flush away poverty), Lone Buffalo Foundation (a community project based in Laos providing creative skills for young people) and have recently supported women's cooperatives in Borneo and Morocco. We are a member of Tourism Concern's Ethical Tour Operator Group (www.tourismconcern.org.uk) and support their campaign for fair and ethical tourism. We also care passionately about the world's wildlife and actively support and promote the Born Free Organisation and Mahouts Elephant Foundation.

Booking Your Holiday

Peace of mind - book with confidence

You can book your Explore holiday with confidence, as all monies paid to us for your trip are fully protected. Explore is a fully bonded tour operator licensed by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and by ABTOT.

The air holiday packages (Tours including flights) that we advertise are ATOL protected, since we hold an Air Travel Organiser's Licence granted by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 2595. In addition, As a member of the Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited (ABTOT), Explore has provided a bond to meet the requirements of the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992. Please note that packages booked outside the UK are only protected when purchased directly with Explore.

Reserving your place

To reserve your place on this tour you will need to check availability on the Explore website or through our dedicated call centre based in the UK where you can. Our tours can fill up quickly so you are advised to book as early as possible. If your chosen date is 'Available' or 'Guaranteed' we will be able to provisionally hold you a space for up to 48 hours.

For Self-Guided holidays and Private Journeys simply choose your date of travel and let us know so we can confirm all ground services.

The easiest way to confirm your booking is through our website. When you are ready to book, we normally require a 10% non-refundable deposit, but for some holidays this may be more to cover such items as permit fees, internal flights or other non-refundable services. If your travel starts within 60 days of booking, full payment will be required at the time of booking

100% No Surcharge Guarantee

The price paid for our holidays is no longer subject to change. Once booked and confirmed we will guarantee the price you pay will not increase, whatever the circumstances. You will not be approached to pay fuel surcharges unlike the vast majority of other adventure tour operators. The price guarantee applies to all new bookings departing between 1st January 2016 and 31st December 2017.

Trip Itinerary Versions

Itinerary details may vary depending on departure date and alternative itineraries for this tour may exist. Please refer to the dates and prices page on our website to check which itinerary operates on each departure date.

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of these tour notes immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers. You will be informed of any major changes to your tour but small changes may just be added to these tour notes.

Please note: 2017 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing in 2017. 2018/19 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing from 1st January to 31st December 2018.

These trip notes were printed on 28/05/2017 10:31:04

