

Waterways of the Tsars

Moscow to St. Petersburg 15th to 27th September 2011



St. Petersburg, to which many of you have already been with us, represented the westward-looking Russia; Moscow stood as the bulwark against the East and the home of religious and marxist orthodoxy. Both now are home to some of the greatest galleries, opera and ballet companies, museums and architecture in the world. In between lies the vast eternal Russia of the peasants and monasteries and, in particular, some of the towns of 'the Golden Ring' which with their kremlins and monasteries were built to provide military and religious security for the old Principedom of Muscovy.

I am proposing a thirteen-day trip from Moscow to St. Petersburg, comprising three nights on board in Moscow, six days and nights cruising the rivers, canals and lakes, and three nights moored in the centre of St. Petersburg.

We will be travelling on the award winning Viking River Cruise ship 'Surkov', especially built for these waters and completely refurbished in 2008. In both Moscow and St. Petersburg we will have our own guide – of course, Elena in St. Petersburg – and make our own exclusive arrangements. Bookings for opera, ballet and concerts can be made as usual and I will send out the programmes nearer the time. The accommodation I have booked us is excellent – details are attached and the food on the boat is really first class. The great advantage is that here is no packing and unpacking and if anybody just wants a quiet day on the boat – not another monastery or palace - so be it. And for once there will be plenty of time for those of you who would like to play bridge and/or backgammon!



DAY 1 Moscow We arrive on the afternoon flight and will be taken straight from the airport to the 'Surkov' and dinner.

DAY 2 Moscow All day guided visit to the Kremlin, including Cathedral of The Annunciation and Cathedral of the Archangel. We will also visit the splendid State Armoury Museum - which houses the Fabergé collection followed by a visit to the State Diamond Fund. After lunch we go to Red Square for a view of St. Basil's Cathedral, Lenin's tomb (outside only) and the GUM shopping arcade.



DAY 3 Moscow

We will visit the Tretyakov Gallery with the finest collection of Russian icons and the best collection of Russian art in the world. After lunch, we will visit Leo Tolstoy House Museum which has been carefully preserved to recapture the daily lives of the writer and his family. Dine aboard, with the option of a Moscow by Night Tour or opera or ballet.



Day 4 Moscow & Moscow Canal

After breakfast leave for Pushkin Museum to see the outstanding collection of French Impressionist and Post-Impressionist paintings. If time allows visit the nearby Christ the Saviour rebuilt recently on the site of a former cathedral demolished by Stalin. Then it is back to the boat for lunch and the start of the cruise along the Moscow Canal.



DAY 5 Uglich

We arrive in Uglich after lunch. This provincial village is one of the Golden Ring cities. We will visit the former Kremlin of Uglich and visit the Church of St. Dmitry on the Blood, built on the site where Ivan the Terrible had his son Dmitry murdered. Leave before dinner; cruise through the night.



DAY 6 Yaroslavl

Morning arrival in Yaroslavl, one of the most important towns of the Golden Ring with two great cathedrals inside the walls of the kremlin which was used to house Field Marshall von Paulus and his senior officers after the Battle of Stalingrad. Ride along the river banks where you will see the Church of the Epiphany. Then, visit the Church of St. Elijah the Prophet with its ancient pews icons and unique frescoes. Here, you are treated to a traditional choir performance. After some free time we return to our ship for departure.



DAY 7 Goritzky & Volga-Baltic Waterway

We have the morning in Goritzky with the renowned Kirillo-Belozersky Monastery, founded in 1397. Your guided walk takes you through the historic grounds, seeing many small wooden chapels, the Assumption Cathedral and a museum. After lunch on board we start on the 330 mile waterway connecting the Volga to the lakes and rivers that flow into the Baltic, involving seven locks.



DAY 8 Kizhi

Today we cruise across Lake Onega. Arrive late afternoon at the island village of Kizhi. We visit the Open Air Museum of Architecture, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Here, you see a collection of wooden houses, windmills and churches most fascinating of which is the three-tiered Preobrazhenskaya (Transfiguration) Church. It was built in 1714 without a single nail. We leave around dinner time and cruise through the night.



DAY 9 Scenic Waterways & Mandrogy

Spend a relaxing day cruising across Russia's intricate waterways, including the Svir River and the 139-mile "Blue Route" as it takes you southwest from Lake Onega. Stop in Mandrogy. Visit the vodka museum and/or do some shopping. Continue along the Svir, then cross Lake Ladoga, Europe's largest lake and when frozen the life-line to besieged Leningrad from 1941-44. The Neva River flows out of the lake to St. Petersburg – our next stop.



DAY 10 St. Petersburg

We sail into St. Petersburg early in the morning and after breakfast head into the city for a tour of St. Petersburg. After lunch, we have our first visit with Elena to the Winter Palace to tour the world-famous Hermitage Museum. Dine aboard or book optional tickets for the Mariinsky (formerly Kirov) or Maly Theatres.



DAY 11 St. Petersburg

I am planning to go with our fellow passengers to Pushkin where we meet up with Elena. We will visit the Catherine's Palace, the elegant rococo summer residence of the Russian Czars, named after Catherine I, second wife of Peter the Great. There has been much recent restoration including the completion of the Amber Room. For those with the energy, there is a ballet or opera performance, followed by a late dinner aboard.



DAY 12 St. Petersburg

After breakfast leave for second visit to The Hermitage Museum. Visit the splendid Post Impressionists as well as 'Hidden Treasures Revealed' Exhibitions and make a timed visit the Gold Room which houses the most amazing 7th – 6th century BC and later precious objects. After lunch drive to Peterhof to visit the Palace of Peter the Great and his daughter Elizabeth, famed for its grand cascade, fountains and statues before returning to our boat. There will be a Captain's farewell dinner.



DAY 13 St. Petersburg

After breakfast, disembark for the last time with our luggage and head for Pavlovsk to visit this splendid and now completed neo-classical palace outside St. Petersburg. After a last lunch at the 'Admiralty' Restaurant we will take you to the airport for your return flight.

* Or, extend your journey into another country with 3 nights in Helsinki, Finland, the "White City of the North."

Price of Trip	£4,295.00
Single Supplement	on request

Provisional Flight details

Depart London Heathrow	BA872	8.55
Arrive Moscow		15.55
Depart St. Petersburg	BA879	16.55
Arrive		17.25

Included in the tour price:

Economy Flight to Moscow return from St.Petersburg. 12 nights full board accommodation aboard the Viking River Cruise Ship 'Surkov' in BX grade deluxe stateroom cabins with large picture windows that open. All guided tours as listed on the itinerary, including entries to museums and palaces. On board entertainments and lectures on The Romanov Tsars, The Fall of Cummunism, Russian's Great Waterways, Putin and Democracy. All Port and airport taxes. Transfers as stated.

Not included in the price:

Travel insurance, gratuities, Russian Visa. Drinks on board. Optional excursions and tickets to the opera and ballet. Items of personal expenditure and gratuities for guides and staff.

A reading list will be provided on booking.