



Kaliningrad Excursion

📍 4012 / POP 423,000

Includes ➔

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Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Dolce Vita (p404)
- ➔ Borsch and Salo (p403)
- ➔ Zarya (p403)

Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Chaika (p403)
- ➔ Skipper Hotel (p402)
- ➔ Amigos Hostel (p401)

Why Go?

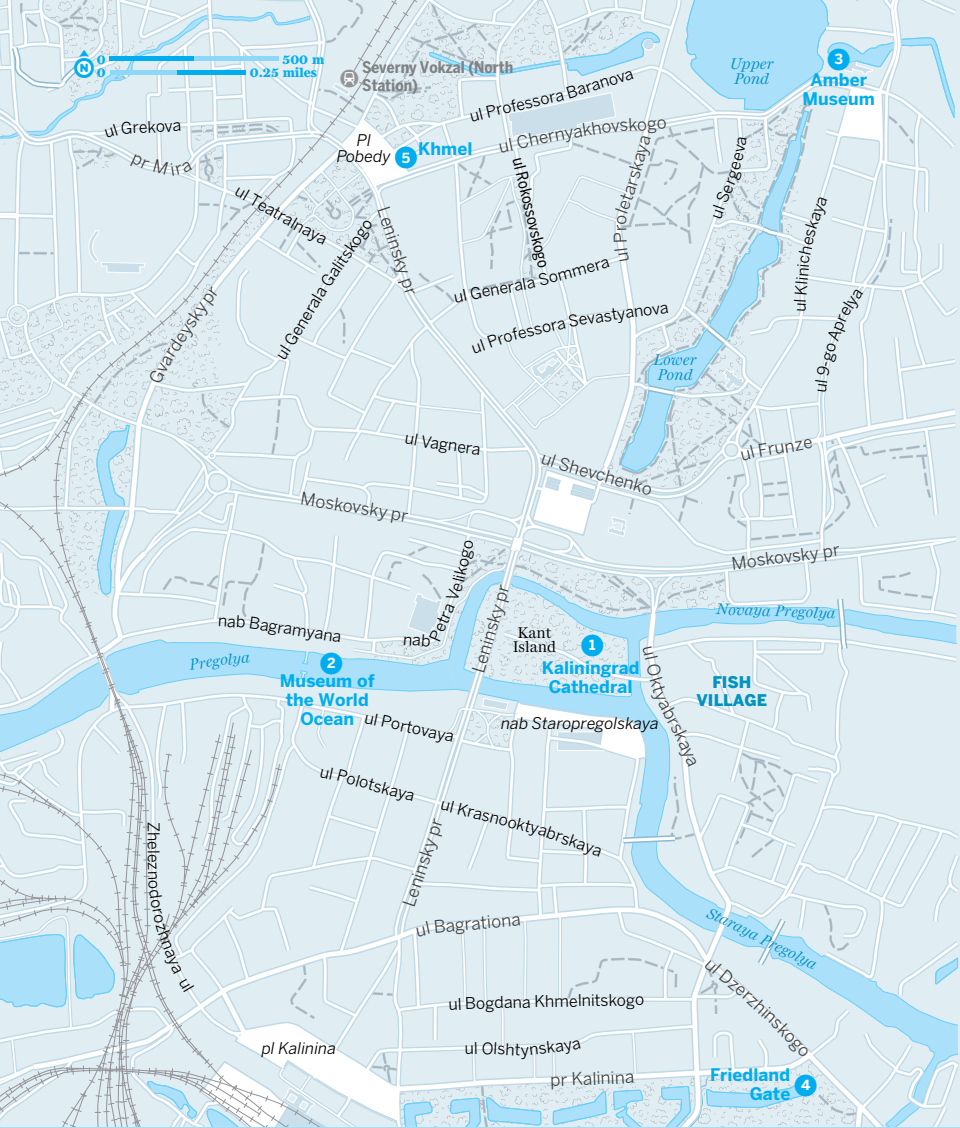
An intriguing and obscure destination, Kaliningrad is one of the grandest could-have-beens on the map of Europe. Having emerged, matured and indeed grown old as the grandiose German city of Königsberg, it is now the capital of a Russian exclave, surrounded on all sides by EU countries, and bearing the name of a Stalin-era Communist bigwig.

But the legacy left by the Germans, deported from East Prussia (as the region was known for centuries) at the end of WWII, shines through the Soviet architectural brutality and curiously affects local Russians, who have developed a peculiar Westernised identity, living in isolation from their mainland.

The three-day on-demand visa arrangement, still valid at the time of writing, gives a chance to explore this fascinating region of medieval German ruins, wide sandy beaches and amber-filled dunes, as well as to get a glimpse of Russia at yet another poignant moment in its history.

When to Go

- ➔ On 9 May troops and tanks parade through central streets to celebrate the Soviet victory in WWII. In mid-May museums welcome visitors for the museum night.
- ➔ Russian Navy Day at the start of the fourth week of July offers a rare chance to visit the nearby naval port of Baltiysk, which is usually off-limits to tourists unless they are on pre-organised tours.
- ➔ The Kaliningrad Jazz Festival is held in Kaliningrad every August, with the main shows taking place in the city's Central Park.



Kaliningrad Highlights

- 1 Visit the grave of philosopher Immanuel Kant and listen to an organ concert in **Kaliningrad Cathedral** (p400).
- 2 Learn about Russian maritime history at Kaliningrad's fascinating **Museum of the World Ocean** (p400).
- 3 Admire beautiful pieces of jewellery and art made from petrified pine resin at the **Amber Museum** (p400).
- 4 Be transported back to old Königsberg at the **Friedland Gate** (p400).
- 5 Spend a night out at **Khmel** (p404), where Central European beer culture meets Siberian culinary exoticism.