

Russia

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Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Delicatessen (p943)
- ➔ Varenichnaya No 1 (p943)
- ➔ Duo Gastrobar (p953)
- ➔ Yat (p953)

Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Hotel Metropol (p943)
- ➔ Blues Hotel (p943)
- ➔ Soul Kitchen Hostel (p953)
- ➔ Rachmaninov Antique Hotel (p953)

Why Go?

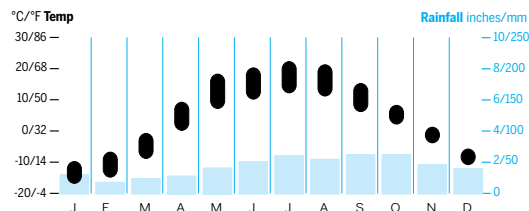
Could there be a more iconic image of eastern Europe than the awe-inspiring architectural ensemble of Moscow's Red Square? The brash, exciting and oil-rich capital of Russia (Россия) is a must on any trip to the region.

St Petersburg, on the Baltic coast, is another stunner. The former imperial capital is still Russia's most beautiful and alluring city, with its grand Italianate mansions, wending canals and enormous Neva River. Also make time for Veliky Novgorod, home to an ancient stone fortress and many fresco-decorated churches. Emulating the tourist-friendly nature of its Baltic neighbours is little Kaliningrad, wedged between Poland and Lithuania on the Baltic Sea. It's a fascinating destination, combining all the best elements of its enormous mother.

Visa red tape deters many travellers from visiting – don't let it keep you from experiencing the incredible things to see and do in the European part of the world's largest country.

When to Go

Moscow



May Big military parades and a public holiday mark the end of WWII.

Jun & Jul Party during St Petersburg's White Nights, and bask on the beaches of Kaliningrad.

Dec & Jan Snow makes Moscow and St Petersburg look magical, while hotel rates drop.

Russia Highlights

- 1 Be awe-inspired by the massive scale and riches of **Moscow**, Russia's brash, energetic capital.
- 2 Take a walking, bike or boat tour of **St Petersburg**
- (p948), an Italianate slice of Old Europe incongruously placed in Russia.
- 3 Ogle the seemingly endless collection of masterpieces in St

Petersburg's unrivalled **State Hermitage Museum** (p949).

- 4 Take a day trip out of St Petersburg to see the imperial country estates at

Petrodvorets and Tsarskoe Selo (p954).

- 5 Trace Russia's roots back to **Veliky Novgorod** (p946) with its well-preserved kremlin and many picturesque churches.

- 6 Explore **Kaliningrad** (p956), once part of the Prussian empire, and home to the pristine beaches of the Kurskaya Kosa National Park.

