



Russia Россия

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Best Places to Eat

- » Volkonsky, Moscow (p1051)
- » Stolovaya 57, Moscow (p1051)
- » Stolle, Moscow & St Petersburg (p1051 & p1058)
- » St-Leninsbar, St Petersburg (p1057)
- » Croissant Café, Kaliningrad (p1062)

Best Places to Stay

- » Home From Home Hostel, Moscow (p1050)
- » Artel Hotel, Moscow (p1051)
- » Hostel Ligovsky 74, St Petersburg (p1057)
- » Stony Island Hotel, St Petersburg (p1057)
- » Villa Severin, Kaliningrad (p1062)

Why Go?

Could there be a more iconic image of Eastern Europe than the awe-inspiring architectural ensemble of Moscow's Red Sq? Russia's brash, exciting and economically powerful capital is a must on any trip to the region.

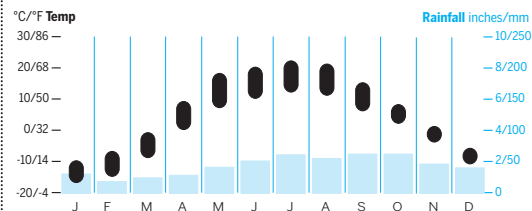
St Petersburg, on the Baltic coast, also shouldn't be missed. The former imperial capital is still Russia's most beautiful and alluring city with its colourful and often crumbling Italianate mansions, winding canals and enormous Neva River.

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, and deserves more visitors.

Visa red tape deters many travellers from visiting Russia – 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



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

Jun–Jul Party all night during St Petersburg's White Nights; bask on Kaliningrad's beaches.

Dec–Jan Arts festivals and snow make Moscow and St Petersburg magical.

AT A GLANCE

- » **Currency** Rouble (R)
- » **Language** Russian
- » **Money** Plenty of ATMs in easy to find locations, most accepting foreign cards
- » **Visas** Required by all – apply at least a month before travel. For details, see p1065.

Fast Facts

- » **Area** 16,995,800 sq km
- » **Capital** Moscow
- » **Country code** 7
- » **Emergency** 112; ambulance 03; police 02

Exchange Rates

Australia	A\$1	R29.95
Canada	C\$1	R28.83
euro zone	€1	R40.12
Japan	¥100	R34.75
New Zealand	NZ\$1	R23.01
UK	UK£1	R46.30
USA	US\$1	R28.16

Set Your Budget

- » **Budget hotel room Moscow/elsewhere** R3000/1000
- » **Two-course evening meal** R600 to R1200
- » **Museum entrance** R350
- » **Bottle of beer** R70
- » **Moscow Metro ticket** R26

Resources

- » **Visit Russia** (www.visitrussia.org.uk)
- » **Moscow Expat Site** (www.expat.ru)

Connections

Bordering Belarus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Ukraine, Russia has excellent train and bus connections with the rest of Europe. Routes connecting Kaliningrad with St Petersburg will take you through the Baltic countries, while trains between Kaliningrad and Moscow head through Belarus. Trains from Kharkiv in Ukraine transit via Kursk, Oryol and Tula to terminate in Moscow.

ITINERARIES

Two Days

In Moscow Tour Red Sq and the Kremlin. Admire art old and new at the State Tretyakov Gallery, the Pushkin Museum of Fine Art and Garazh.

In St Petersburg Wander up Nevsky Pr, see Palace Sq and the mighty Neva River, then tour the magnificent collection of the Hermitage. Visit St Peter & Paul Fortress, the Church of the Saviour on Spilled Blood and the wonderful Russian Museum.

In Kaliningrad Admire the reconstructed Gothic cathedral, then wander along the river to the excellent World Ocean Museum. The Amber Museum is also impressive. Explore the sand dunes and forests of the Kurskaya Kosa National Park.

Essential Food & Drink

- » **Soups** Such as the lemony meat *solyanka* or the hearty fish *ukha*.
- » **Bliny** Pancakes with *ikra* (caviar) or *tvorog* (cottage cheese).
- » **Salads** A wide variety usually slathered in mayonnaise, including the chopped potato one called *olivier*.
- » **Pelmeni** Dumplings stuffed with meat and eaten with sour cream and vinegar.
- » **Central Asian dishes** *Plov* (fried rice with vegetables and lamb), *shashliky* (kebabs) or *lagman* (noodles).
- » **Vodka** Quintessential Russian tippie.
- » **Kvas** A refreshing, beerlike drink.
- » **Mors** A red-berry juice mix.