



Day Trips from St Petersburg

Peterhof p160

The most popular day trip from St Petersburg is to Peter the Great's spectacular summer palace and grounds on the Gulf of Finland, easily reached from central St Petersburg by hydrofoil from outside the Admiralty.

Pushkin & Pavlovsk p165

Tsarskoe Selo (in the town of Pushkin) and Pavlovsk are two beautiful palaces and grounds next door to one another. This is a great day trip to see the summer palaces of Catherine the Great and Paul I.

Gatchina p169

The leafy park at Gatchina is one of the wildest and most beautiful of all the tsarist palace grounds, while the huge palace itself is an interesting and impressive place to explore.

Oranienbaum p170

Beyond Peterhof is Prince Menshikov's vast estate, which has some truly lovely gardens and is a great place to wander, especially since a recent renovation has brought the Great Palace back to its former glory.



TOP SIGHT PETERHOF ПЕТЕРГОФ

The fountains are incredible, the palace is a stunner and the grounds are great for walking, so it's no surprise that Peter the Great's summer palace is usually the first-choice day trip for visitors to St Petersburg. Peterhof is no secret, however, so come early in the day or out of season to enjoy it without the crowds.

Peter's Summer Palace

Hugging the Gulf of Finland 29km west of St Petersburg, Peterhof, the 'Russian Versailles', is a far cry from the original cabin Peter the Great had built here to oversee construction of the Kronstadt naval base. Peter liked the place so much he built a villa, Monplaisir, here and then a whole series of palaces and ornate gardens. Peterhof was renamed Petrodvorets (Peter's Palace) in 1944 but has since reverted to its original name. The palace and buildings are surrounded by leafy gardens and a spectacular ensemble of gravity-powered fountains.

What you see today is largely a reconstruction since Peterhof was a major casualty of WWII. Apart from the damage done by the Germans, the palace suffered the worst under Soviet bombing raids in December 1941 and January 1942 because Stalin was determined to thwart Hitler's plan of hosting a New Year's victory celebration here.

The Lower Park

The **Lower Park** (Нижний парк; adult/student R500/250, Nov-Apr free; ☀9am-8pm) contains most of Peterhof's sights and is where you will arrive if you take the hydrofoil from St Petersburg to get here. Forming the lion's share of the palace grounds, it boasts an incredible symphony of gravity-powered golden fountains, beautiful waterways and interesting historical buildings, making it one of St Petersburg's most dazzling attractions.

DON'T MISS...

- ➔ Grand Palace
- ➔ Water Avenue
- ➔ Monplaisir
- ➔ Hermitage

PRACTICALITIES

- ➔ Большой дворец
- ➔ adult/student R550/300, audioguide R500
- ➔ ☀10.30am-6pm
Tue-Sun, closed last Tue of month