

Vasilyevsky Island

Neighbourhood Top Five

❶ Taking in one of the best views of the city from the historic **Strelka** (p136), the spit of land that crowns Vasilyevsky Island and boasts flaming rostral columns during national holidays.

❷ Exploring Peter the Great's private collection

of anatomical oddities at the ghoulish **Kunstkamera** (p134).

❸ Checking out St Petersburg's best modern-art museum, the huge **Erarta Museum of Contemporary Art** (p135), where you'll see Russian works from the late Soviet and post-Soviet era.

❹ Visiting the fascinating **Menshikov Palace** (p136), St Petersburg's first stone building.

❺ Hearing tales of Soviet exploration in the Arctic aboard the retired **Ice-breaker Krasin** (p137).



For more detail of this area see Map p270 ➔

Explore: Vasilyevsky Island

Peter the Great originally intended this large triangular island to be the heart of his city. As such, it is among the oldest neighbourhoods in St Petersburg, especially the eastern tip known as the Strelka (meaning 'tongue of land'), which is crammed with institutions, museums and the sprawling campus of St Petersburg State University.

Further back from the Strelka, the island is an orderly, residential place, with a grid system of wide roads full of shops, restaurants and cafes. It makes for a pleasant base for travellers, with fast connections to the centre and a good choice of eating options.

The northern and western end of the island is rather postindustrial and remote, with the city's ferry port and the LenExpo exhibition centre blighting the landscape. However, in the past few years regeneration has come, with the fantastic Erarta Museum of Contemporary Art well and truly putting the area on the map for more inquisitive travellers.

Local Life

➔ **Bridge advice** If you're staying on Vasilyevsky Island, remember that in the summer months the bridges go up at night and you can't cross. Dvortsovy most stays up all night (1.25am to 4.50am), but Blagoveshchensky most has a short break and is crossable from 2.45am until 3.10am.

➔ **Cool street** Hang with the locals on 6-ya and 7-ya liniya, the main pedestrian and commercial street of Vasilyevsky Island. Full of cafes, bars, restaurants and shops, this is where to escape the tourist crowds at the Strelka.

Getting There & Away

➔ **Metro** Vasilyevsky Island is served by two metro stations, both on Line 3. By far the most useful is Vasileostrovskaya, at the island's heart, while Primorskaya serves the far-flung northwestern corner of the island.

➔ **Bus** The number 7 bus goes between Primorskaya and pl Vosstaniya, via Nalichnaya ul, all of Bolshoy pr and Nevsky pr. Trolleybus 10 and 11 run similar routes.

➔ **Marshrutka** From Vasileostrovskaya metro station, the following *marshrutky* (fixed route minibuses) zip to the far end of Sredny pr: K30, K44, K62, K120.

Lonely Planet's Top Tip

This tip might sound slightly nuts, but trust us. If you're heading to Vasileostrovskaya metro station from the city centre during rush hour, be sure to get on the very last carriage (ie the one at the back end of the train), as this is nearest to the escalator when you arrive at the station. The platform at this very busy station is always swamped with people and you'll have to wait for minutes before being able to get on the escalator unless you use this sneaky trick.

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Restoran (p140)
- ➔ Na Kukhnye (p140)
- ➔ Buter Brodsky (p140)
- ➔ Casa del Myaso (p140)
- ➔ Gintarus (p140)

For reviews, see p138 ➔

Best Places to Drink

- ➔ Buter Brodsky (p140)
- ➔ Helsinki Bar (p141)
- ➔ Birzha Bar (p141)
- ➔ Brügge (p141)
- ➔ Grad Petrov (p141)

For reviews, see p141 ➔

Best Museums

- ➔ Erarta Museum of Contemporary Art (p135)
- ➔ Kunstkamera (p134)
- ➔ Museum of Zoology (p136)
- ➔ Menshikov Palace (p136)

For reviews, see p134 ➔