

**Your Saint Petersburg 2-day Comfort Tour:** Offers an informative city highlights drive tour (with photo stops) on day 1 and continues on day 2. Among other sights, this tour takes in the city's most famous and beautiful buildings and historic monuments:



**Bronze Horseman**

the tip of Vasilevsky Island, the log house of Peter the great, the battleship Aurora, Nevsky Prospekt, Arts Square, Ostrovsky Square, the monument to Catherine the Great, the Alexandrinsky Theatre, the Yeliseevsky grocery store (Eliseyev Emporium), the National Library, the Russian Museum, the Gostinyy Dvor department store, the Kazan Cathedral, the Admiralty, the monument to Peter the Great (Bronze Horseman), the Mariinsky theatre, and St Nicholas' Cathedral .

The highlights tour gives a comprehensive overview of the historic city center and acquaints you well with the city. On the way to the suburban estates (Peterhof, Catherine Palace) you will drive through residential areas where the majority of St Petersburg's residents live.

**Over the course of two marvelous days, you will visit many spectacular venues including beautiful fountains, gardens, churches, cathedrals, stunning palaces, and world famous museums.**

**Below is a brief introduction to your 2-day Comfort Tour of Saint Petersburg:**

### **Peterhof Fountains and Gardens: Grand Cascade and Samson Fountain**



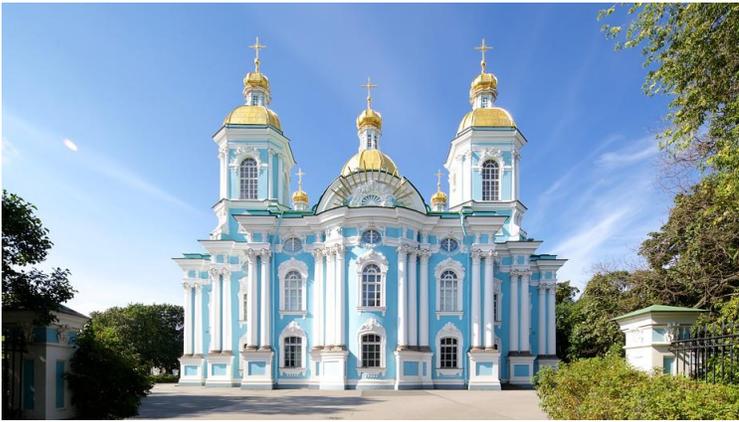
The majestic suburban estate of Peterhof (translation: Peter's Court), referred to as the "Russian Versailles", is protected as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The grandeur and scope of Peterhof is simply breathtaking. After visiting Peterhof, you will understand that the Russian monarchs' wealth and taste for luxury rivaled that of other European royalty. Built by Peter the Great in the 18th century and rebuilt after the ravages of WWII, this complex of palaces, gardens, and gorgeous, ingenious fountains and cascades is one of Russia's most famous tourist attractions, drawing millions of visitors every year. Improvements to the park continued throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Catherine the Great, after leaving her own mark

on the park, moved the court to Pushkin, but Peterhof once again became the official Imperial Residence in the reign of Nicholas I, who ordered the building of the modest Cottage Palace in 1826.

### **Kazan Cathedral or St. Nicholas Naval Cathedral**



Kazan cathedral, which was modelled on St. Peter's in Rome, is one of Saint Petersburg's most majestic. It was built from 1801 to 1811 to house the miracle-working Icon Our Lady of Kazan. The dome is 80-meters high and the colonnade facing Nevsky has 96 columns.



St. Nicholas Naval Cathedral is an ice-blue masterpiece which affords us a supreme example of eighteenth-century Russian Baroque.

With an inventiveness worthy of Rastrelli, Chevakinsky used every variety of ornament to give his cathedral a festive look. The exterior is painted ice-blue, with white Corinthian pilasters and window surrounds, crowned by five gilded cupolas and onion domes. The large windows have moulded platbands on which cherubs peep out from behind the clouds, and the top oval windows are framed in elaborate stucco garlands.

## Church on Spilled Blood



**Exterior**



**Interior mosaics**

This marvelous Russian-style church was built on the spot where Emperor Alexander II was assassinated in March 1881. Both the interior and exterior of the church is decorated with incredibly detailed mosaics, designed and created by the most prominent Russian artists of the day (V.M. Vasnetsov, M.V. Nesterov and M.A. Vrubel). Interestingly, despite the church's very obviously Russian aspect, its principle architect, A. Parland, was not even Russian by birth. The church was closed for services in the 1930s, when the Bolsheviks went on an offensive against religion and destroyed churches all over the country. It remained closed and under restoration for over 30 years and was finally re-opened in 1997 in all its dazzling former glory. The view of the church from Nevsky Prospekt is absolutely breathtaking.

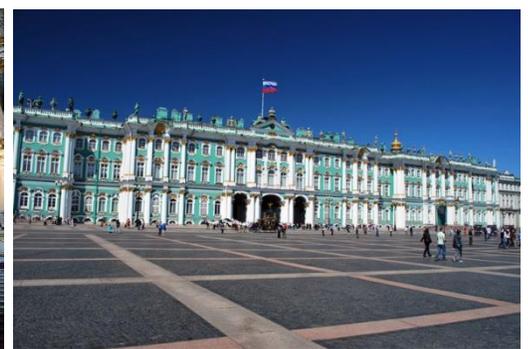
## State Hermitage Museum



**Hermitage Museum**



**Grand Staircase**



**Hermitage from across Palace Square**

The bulk of the Hermitage collection is housed in the Winter Palace, formerly the official residence of the Romanov Tsars, and its several annexes. The Hermitage Museum is St. Petersburg's most popular visitor attraction, and one of the world's largest and most prestigious museums. With over 3 million items in its collection (from Impressionist masterpieces to fascinating Oriental treasures), it is a must-see for all visitors to the city. One estimate has it that you would need eleven years to view each exhibit on display for just one minute. We have organized your tour here to ensure that you have time to catch all the collection's highlights.

The Imperial Winter Palace is itself an architectural masterpiece both inside and out, not to mention all the treasures contained within. Designed by Rastrelli, it is St. Petersburg's most famous building. The Winter Palace not only physically dominates Palace Square and the south embankment of the Neva River, but also plays a central political,

symbolic, and cultural role in the three-century history of the city. The building forms a square with an interior courtyard accessed via three archways facing Palace Square. The richly decorated facades feature two levels of richly decorated ionic columns, and the parapets of the building are decorated with statues and vases. The palace is 22m high, and local planning regulations now prevent any building in the city center from rising higher than the Winter Palace.