

Your Saint Petersburg 2-day Must See Tour: Begins with a 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.

All of the following are included in your 2-day Must See 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 18th and 19th 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.

Catherine Palace



Bartholomeo Rastrelli's enormous late-Baroque palace, with its seemingly endless rows of gilded atlantes, has some of the most extravagant interiors in Europe, including the world-famous Amber Room. In 1743, Rastrelli, chief architect of the Imperial Court, was instructed to completely redesign the palace on a scale to rival Versailles.

The awesome grandeur of the enormous resultant palace, completed in 1756, is simply stunning, with elaborately decorated blue-and-white facades featuring gilded atlantes, caryatids and pilasters. It took over 100kg of gold to decorate the palace exteriors.

Amber Room - Catherine Palace



The interiors of the Catherine Palace are no less spectacular. The crown jewel of the Palace is the world-famous Amber room. The so-called Golden Enfilade of state rooms, designed by Rastrelli, is particularly renowned and forms the focus of the palace tour. Further on in the Catherine Palace, the most noteworthy interiors are those in the Cameron Rooms, the suites decorated in the reign of Catherine the Great by her favorite architect, Charles Cameron. His penchant for classical symmetry and his superb taste for color are evident in the charming Green Dining Room, originally fitted for Catherine's son Paul, and the delightful Blue Drawing Room, with its blue-and-white painted-silk wallpaper and superb painted ceiling. More flamboyant but equally charming, the

Chinese Blue Drawing Room also boasts exquisite painted-silk wallpaper featuring intricate Chinese landscapes.

Saint Isaac's Cathedral



St. Isaac's Cathedral, built between 1818 and 1858 by the French architect Auguste Montferrand, is one of the most impressive landmarks of the Russian Imperial capital and its glittering, gilded dome still dominates the skyline of Saint Petersburg today. It was originally the city's main church and the largest cathedral in Russia. The cathedral's facades are decorated with sculptures and massive granite columns (made of single columns of red granite), while the interior is adorned with incredibly detailed mosaic icons, paintings and columns made of malachite and lapis lazuli. A large, brightly colored stained glass window of the "Resurrected Christ" is found inside the main altar. The church, designed to accommodate 14,000, was closed in the early 1930s and reopened as a museum.

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.

Nevsky Prospect

Enjoy some shopping time on Nevsky Prospect, the main thoroughfare in St. Petersburg and one of the most famous streets in Russia. Named after the 13th-century Russian prince, Alexander Nevsky, and planned by Peter the Great as the road to Novgorod and Moscow, Nevsky Prospect stretches from the Admiralty to the Alexander Nevsky Lavra. Nevsky Prospect is St. Petersburg's central shopping street and is the bustling hub of the city's entertainment and nightlife.

Canal and River Cruise



Known as the "Venice of the North", St. Petersburg has a beautiful labyrinth of rivers (Neva, Fontanka, Moika) and numerous canals across the city giving it a distinct character. Given the iconic classical architecture here, the water is actually one of the best places to get the best views of all these magnificent structures. If you are lucky enough to be in St. Petersburg during summertime, you will have the opportunity to enjoy a leisurely boat trip around the city's rivers and numerous canals. You will be shown around the town from the water and the guide will tell you about the history and architecture details of the places you will pass.

Take a ride on the Metro (deepest in the world) and see a richly decorated Metro station.



On the way down



Metro station



another Metro station