

EXETER INTERNATIONAL

The SMP Spring Tour to Russia
May 16 – 25, 2014

A VIP Historical and Cultural Tour
of St. Petersburg and Moscow
With Professional Meetings in Both Cities



Featuring Exeter Extraordinary Experience
Private visit to the Diamond Vaults

Day 1

May 17th **Saturday**

St. Petersburg

Arrival of the group into St. Petersburg. Your guide and driver will meet you outside of baggage claim and customs.

(Transfer are planned for one group arrival. If private transfers are required we will be happy to quote accordingly)

On the way to your hotel, your guide will point out sights of historical significance, including one of the last remaining statues of Lenin and the monumental Stalinist apartment buildings that line the route from the airport.

Check in at your hotel and time to freshen up and relax.

At 5:30pm meet in the lobby of the hotel for an Orientation.

This evening at 6:00pm for transfer to your welcome dinner at Mamaliga. *Dinner consists of a set menu with wine, mineral water, coffee and tea.*

Exeter Services: **Transfer**
 Evening Dinner transfer
Hotel: **Astoria**
Meals Included: **Welcome Dinner**

Day 2

May 18th **Sunday**

St. Petersburg

This morning your guide will meet you in your hotel lobby at **9AM** and take you out to Peter the Great's summer palace, Peterhof, to see first-hand the palace's countless fountains and gardens. You will need to journey out by vehicle, as we have an early admission appointment confirmed for you.

Peterhof Palace (or Petrodvorets in Russian) is often called the Russian Versailles due to the prominence of the gardens and fountains. The view from the palace through the grand colonnade of fountains to the Baltic Sea is one of the true masterpieces of Russian artistry. There are many parts to the palace complex and to view them all, you will need to devote most of the day.

When you walk to the upper gardens, you can enter the Grand Palace of Peterhof. This stately palace overlooks the gardens and smaller palaces, as well as the Baltic Sea. The ornate baroque interiors of the Grand Palace will no doubt amaze you and no one soon forgets the unique Chinese Room filled with lacquer and ancient silk. It is important not to have a late start this morning so we can guarantee your admission into this busy and popular palace.



Next your guide will take you into the Grottos of Peterhof. The tremendous variety of fountains is one of the principal features of Peterhof, where their extravagance and playfulness indicate the atmosphere of early 18th century Russia. You will journey underneath the fountains and learn of their remarkable engineering and history.

Later you will visit the lower gardens where you will be able to see Peter the Great's favorite buildings. It is also in this area that you will see Peterhof's most enchanting treat - the trick fountains of the gardens. Be careful where you step in this area- you could be hit by a surprise stream of water as you stroll!

Lunch today is in the historic Orangery of Peterhof Palace opposite the famous Triton fountain. The grandfather of the modern greenhouse, this Orangery served as the palace's main garden center and was used as a freeze shelter for the garden's many orange, apple, and other fruit trees during the harsh St. Petersburg winters.

When the weather is nice in the summertime, a special treat is to take the express hydrofoil back to the city from Peterhof. The one-hour ride takes you out of the city traffic and into the Baltic Sea! Your guides will go with you on the hydrofoil and your drivers will meet you at your destination. Cost of hydrofoil is included in your tour.



During the day you will also pass by the famous Bronze Horseman statue of Peter the Great, the Strelka (the spit in the center of the Neva River, overlooking the Winter Palace, the first stock exchange and dozens of stately palaces) and of course, the grand Nevsky Prospect, the main avenue of the city.

The remainder of the afternoon is at leisure.

This evening meet in the lobby of the hotel for transfer to dinner at Palkin, one of St. Petersburg finest restaurants.

Dinner consists of a set three course menu with wine, mineral water, coffee and tea.

Exeter Services: Full-day Vehicle, Driver & Guide

Hotel: Astoria

Meals Included: Breakfast; Lunch; Dinner

Day 3

May 19th

Monday

St. Petersburg

This morning your driver and guide will take you out into the Russian countryside to see one of the city's most elegant and beautiful palaces- Catherine Palace and its fabled Amber Room.

This palace was originally designed in the 1750s in the Rococo style by the famous architect Rastrelli (who also designed many of St. Petersburg's grandest buildings like the Winter Palace, parts of Peterhof, the Stroganoff Palace, and the Smolny Cathedral) for the Tsarina (Princess) Elizabeth, who named it after her mother Catherine I – Peter the Great's second wife.



Later, Catherine II (the Great) commissioned the Scottish architect Charles Cameron to re-design the palace's interiors in the then-fashionable Neo-Classical style. After Catherine the Great's death, the palace remained largely unchanged for centuries until the Second World War when the Nazi army, retreating after the unsuccessful siege of Leningrad, destroyed the palace almost completely. After the war, the magnificent palace and its interiors were thoroughly and painstakingly rebuilt, but renovations at some parts still continue.

Lunch today is in the village of Pavlovsk at the restaurant, Podvorye. This charming restaurant is made of wood and features lively folk entertainment at lunch.

The remainder of the afternoon is at leisure.

Dinner this evening is on your own and is not included.
After dinner the first professional meeting will be held.

Exeter Services: **Half-day Vehicle, Driver & Guide**
Hotel: **Astoria**
Meals Included: **Breakfast; Lunch**

Day 4

May 20th **Tuesday**

St. Petersburg

This morning your guide will meet you in the lobby at 10:00am and take you to visit the Peter Paul Fortress: the birthplace of St. Petersburg. After walking through the many gates and across the bridges and moats, you can begin to feel the late 18th century era that required such fortification. As Peter's original outpost against the Swedes, St. Petersburg was born from this fortress and its historical significance is felt to this day by the presence of every Romanov tomb from Peter the Great.

Next your guide will accompany you to Palace Square. The main focal point of this ensemble is the Winter Palace - an architectural masterpiece of the Russian Baroque and the royal residence of all the Russian Emperors (except Paul) until the 1917 Revolution. The existing Winter Palace is based on three earlier versions, the first two of which were rather modest and were erected under Peter the Great. After his death, the palace was repeatedly expanded and redesigned, most notably by the famous architects Domenico Trezzini and Bartolomeo Rastrelli.

Today's visit to the Hermitage Museum will take you to another world; a time when Catherine the Great commissioned whole buildings to house an ever growing collection of the world's finest art. The former Winter Palace now spans just about every artistic period from Greek and Roman collections to Matisse. This museum holds the largest collection of art in the world. Your guide will escort you through the entire museum, from its collection of Rubens to its da Vincis and beyond! Be sure not to miss the recently unveiled collection of French Impressionists that was thought lost after WWII.

Your guide will spend the remainder of the afternoon in the museum and you may stay as long as you wish and make your own way back to the hotel at your leisure.

Lunch is on your own and the remainder of the afternoon is at leisure.

Dinner this evening is on your own and is not included. Suggestions for dinner will be provided.

Exeter Services: Half-day Vehicle, Driver & Guide
Hotel: Astoria
Meals Included: Breakfast

Day 5

May 21st Wednesday

St. Petersburg - Moscow

This morning at 9:00am the General Group Meeting will be held at the hotel.

Transfer to the rail station at 12 Noon for departure on the Sapsan high speed service to Moscow. The journey takes approximately 4 ½ hours and provides an opportunity to see some of the Russian countryside.

Business class seats are included on this service.

Upon arrival in Moscow transfer to the Ritz Carlton located in the heart of the historical center of the city.

Evening at leisure. Suggestions will be provided for dinner venues.

Exeter Services: Transfer St. Petersburg; Transfer Moscow
Hotel: Ritz Carlton
Meals Included: Breakfast; Lunch served on board the train

Day 6

May 22nd Thursday

Moscow

This morning there will be a professional meeting.

The remainder of the day is at leisure.

Dinner is on your own. Suggestions will be provided for dinner.

Exeter Services: No Exeter Services
Hotel: Ritz Carlton
Meals Included: Breakfast

Day 7

May 23rd

Friday

Moscow

Today, your guide will take you into the Kremlin and through its expansive grounds. Here you will see the largest bell in the world – as well as the largest canon. Neither was ever used due to their enormous size! Also on the grounds of the Kremlin are three very important churches and your guide will take you through all that are of interest. We suggest you don't miss the Assumption Cathedral, where all Russian tsars were crowned.

Later, your guide will take you to the famed Armory Museum, including its vast collection of Imperial Russian artwork. You will have the opportunity to see the Kremlin's unique and intimate collection of Imperial Faberge Easter Eggs. Also in the Armory are many of the most important Imperial thrones and crowns, including the most historic, Cap of Monomachus. *Note: An appointment is required for visits to the Armory Museum. Once confirmed, these are not able to be changed.*

Exeter International Extraordinary Experience

Included in your Kremlin visit today is private entry into the Diamond Vaults. You will see Catherine the Great's scepter with its famous Orlov Diamond and one of the largest collections of diamonds and gem stones in the world! Your guide will provide the detailed history behind these jewels and an insight into Russia's imperial history

Lunch today will be at Korchma, an energetic and fun Ukrainian restaurant close to the Kremlin. Lunch will be a set menu and includes two courses and unlimited mineral water, coffee and tea.

Later your guides will take you into Red Square. Be sure not to miss the newly rebuilt church and Imperial Gates at the south end of Red Square- they were both destroyed under Stalin and only recently have been rebuilt in their original splendor. Your guide will also show you the stunning St. Basil's Cathedral. This magnificent church-museum was commissioned by Ivan the Terrible and was completed in 1561. Rumor has it that Ivan had the architect blinded so he would never be able to design anything as exquisite again!

The cathedral is at its most awesome when viewed from the outside and your guide will be happy to explain its history and the significance of each of the domes, each of which contains a separate chapel.

Exeter Services: Full-day Guide (No Vehicle Services)

Hotel: Ritz Carlton

Meals Included: Breakfast; Lunch

Day 8

May 24th Saturday

Moscow

This morning there will be a professional meeting.

The remainder of the day is at leisure.

This evening meet in the lobby of the hotel for transfer to your farewell dinner at Turandot.

Dinner consists of a set menu with wine, coffee, tea and mineral water

Exeter Services: Evening Dinner Transfers with Guide

Hotel: Ritz Carlton

Meals Included: Breakfast; Dinner

Day 9

May 25th Sunday

Moscow onwards

Transfer to the airport for departure.

(Transfers are arranged for a group departure. If private transfers are required please let us know and we will be happy to quote accordingly.)

Exeter Services: Transfer

Meals Included: Breakfast

Price: \$6,300 per person double occupancy
\$8,600 per person single

PAYMENT

An initial deposit of \$500.00 per person is required before reservations can be initiated. This initial deposit may be made at any time and confirmation of space will be based on availability at the time of receipt of deposit. In order to ensure availability on this trip we recommend placing your deposit as soon as possible.
No reservations are made on your behalf until this deposit has been received.
Availability and pricing is subject to change until this deposit is received.

The balance of payment is due on January 15th, 2014.

CANCELLATION

The following cancellation penalties will apply:

Prior to October 31 st 2013:	50% of initial deposit (\$250)
November 1 st 2013 – Feb 14, 2014	100% of initial deposit
Jan 15 2014:	Final payment due
Jan 16 – March 15, 2014:	25% cancellation fee
March 16 – March 31, 2014:	50% cancellation fee
April 1, 2014 onwards:	100% cancellation fee

The itinerary includes...

Accommodations

St. Petersburg

Run of House Rooms for Four (4) nights at the Rocco Forte Astoria; Tax (18%) and Buffet Breakfast included daily.

Commissioned in 1910 the hotel was conceived as a celebration of the tercentenary of the Romanov dynasty and opened in December 1912. Built by one of St Petersburg's most famous architects, Fyodor Lidval, who had his own style that some have termed 'Northern Modern' and is almost Art Nouveau.

Today the Astoria still plays host to celebrities and politicians, and the 172 rooms and suites have virtually all been renovated in the last 12 months as part of the hotel's 100th anniversary celebrations which also of course coincide with the 400th Anniversary of the Romanov dynasty in 2013.

The décor is light and airy and gives a sense of place that is more Chekhov's Russia than opulent Oligarch, with oak parquet floors and pristine Russian Volga linen curtains and bedspreads. Splashes of color are added with sumptuous velvet cushions and we love quirky touches like the photo of Sean Connery and Daniela Bianchi in *From Russia with Love* in each of the bathrooms of the junior suites. Local touches throughout the hotel like the beautiful Imperial porcelain in clean white or intense cobalt blue give the hotel a classic but contemporary feel.

The Kandinsky Bar is a perfect place to enjoy a frozen vodka or two, and the Rotunda lounge, with its large windows overlooking St Isaac's Square is a relaxing place to watch the world go by and enjoy afternoon tea from a traditional Russian Samovar. Café Astoria serves a very nice mix of international and Russian favorites. The hotel is wonderfully located in the heart of the city in St Isaacs Square and is in walking distance from the Hermitage and the banks of the Neva River, and many excellent restaurants.

Moscow

Superior Rooms for Four (4) nights at the Ritz Carlton Moscow; Tax (18%) and Buffet Breakfast included daily.

The façade of this new 11 story building is reminiscent of the Russian classic époque and fits well into the historical setting of the Tverskaya Street and will offer a new standard of luxury and service for visitors to Moscow. Peter Silling has recreated a classic interior reflecting the rich imperial style for which Russia was well known during the 19th century.

The hotel is centrally located and the striking architecture of the Roof Top Lounge and terrace offers panoramic views of Red Square and the Kremlin and the contemporary structure of glass and steel promises a day light environment all year long.

The hotel features the largest rooms in the city decorated with red cherry wood and marble from Portugal and 1800 antiques that capture the feel of that era. Rooms are tastefully designed and spacious, featuring the latest in technology. Each room's bathroom is opulent; offering a separate rainfall shower, separate toilet and bidet, two sinks and a marble bath.

Superior Rooms: These rooms are the starting category and feature over 450 square feet of space. The larger of these rooms feature up to 550 square feet in size – the largest standard guest rooms in Moscow. These rooms can either face a neighboring building or the quiet inner atrium. Bedding is either one king or two double beds.

Meals

Buffet Breakfast is included daily. Other meals are included as noted in the itinerary. Guides will be happy to suggest restaurants daily based on guests' preferences.

Services

Private vehicle, driver and guide at your service as described. A full day is generally eight hours in duration. A half-day is generally three and a half hours in duration.

Transfers

All transfers to and from airports and rail stations are included in the program. Airport transfers are provided on a group basis. Individual private transfers may be quoted separately. Dinner transfers are included as described.

Guides

Hand chosen for their knowledge on local history, art & architecture. Guides are at your disposal as noted in your itinerary. Guides may assist you with restaurant reservations and purchasing of additional theater and museum tickets at your request.

Theater

No theater is included. We have access to the best seats and will be happy to arrange for theater performances as preferred. Please note that theater performance schedules are generally not confirmed until six – eight weeks prior to performance date.

Tickets

All optional touring museum tickets as described in the program.

Airfare

No airfare is included.

Railfare

Business Class tickets on the Sapsan service between St. Petersburg and Moscow are included.

Tour Managers

No Exeter Tour Manager is included

Not Included:

- Gratuities to guides, drivers and your Tour Manager
- Meals other than breakfast daily at the hotels (unless otherwise noted)
- Incidental costs
- Visas