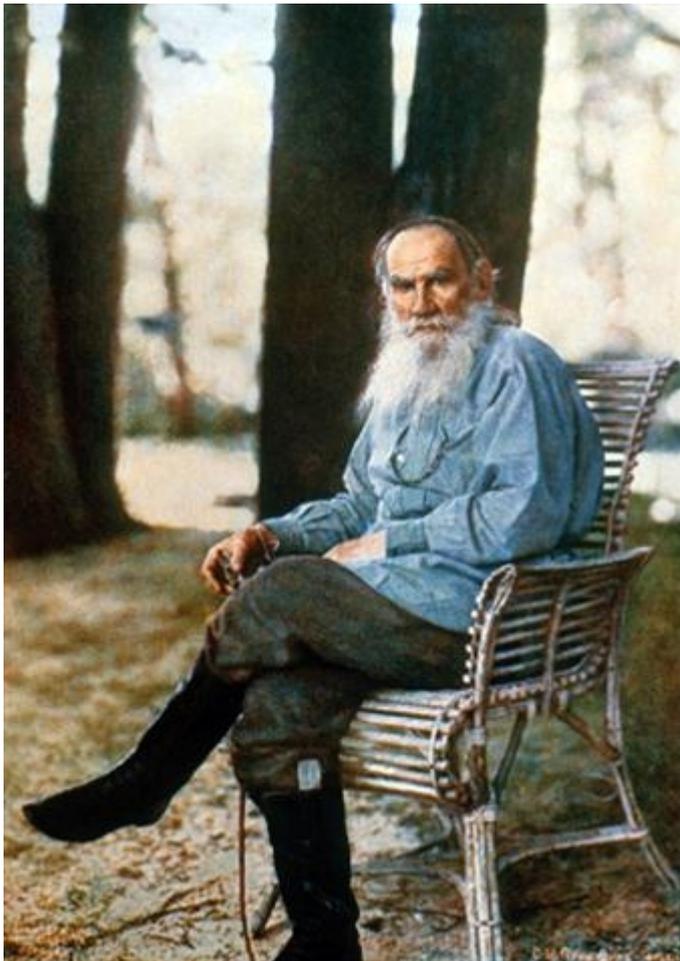


Tolstoy, Chekhov, Dostoevsky: Russian Literary Tours

Russia is a great destination for literary tour lovers. Russian writers have always played a special role in spiritual, intellectual and political life of their readers. Russia has more literary museums than any other country in the world and its literary heritage gives a rich and varied texture to its cultural history.



Literary tours take the traveler from the surreal streets of Bulgakov's Moscow to the country estate of Tolstoy. Visitors can trace the steps of Raskolnikov through St. Petersburg or follow Esenin's life in Moscow.

In Moscow and St. Petersburg and throughout the provincial regions of Russia, several houses of writers have been preserved as literary shrines, statues of writers stand in prominent locations in towns, streets, and institutions have been named after the famous authors who were connected with them.

The origins of the Russian literary tradition can be traced back to the crowning of Peter the Great in 1862 which started a prosperous period in art and culture for the residents of St. Petersburg. Prior to his reign there was no real literary language in Russia and most of the population except the religious members of society and some aristocrats was illiterate.

Gathering ideas from the rest of Europe, Peter the Great ushered in a secular press and the foundations of a literary movement to rival the Western countries he admired so much. St. Petersburg was at the forefront of this movement, with literary salons popping up, philosophical questions thrashed out in smoky rooms, journals founded covering literature and politics, and philosophical traditions and tenets imbibed, digested and turned on their head by some of the most respected minds of the 19th and 20th centuries.



Even Leo Tolstoy, who did not live in St. Petersburg for any length of time, has had cause to write extensively about its influence and importance to them. St. Petersburg is sure to continue to inspire writers all over the world and is high on the list of must-see cities for literature lovers.

Tsarskoe Selo, near St. Petersburg, is one of Russia's most famous attractions; it is the summer residence of the Romanov Tsars. In 1937 Tsarskoe Selo was renamed Pushkin, in honor of Alexander Pushkin, who studied at the lycee there from 1811 to 1817. Indeed because of the links with Pushkin and the so called Golden Age of Russian poetry, which he initiated there, Tsarskoe Selo has traditionally been seen by writers as the “town of the muse”. Day trips to Tsarskoe Selo are an integral part of every St. Petersburg tour itinerary.

Another famous Russian literary destination is Tula, located 120 kilometers south of Moscow. Tula is famous worldwide for **The National Leo Tolstoy Museum-Estate** in Yasnaya Polyana, where the great Russian writer was born in 1828, lived for about sixty years, wrote many of his books including «War and Peace» and was buried in 1910. With its authentic buildings, surrounded by picturesque forests,

orchards and parks, it is a typical Russian estate, which will give the traveller an insight into the everyday life and traditions of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries

Anton Chekhov, another great Russian writer, the works of which have formidably influenced the development of the Russian and world literature, had spent a part of his life in Melikhovo, a small estate on the way from Moscow to Tula. The writer lived in that estate for a comparatively short period of seven years, which, nevertheless, had become the most fruitful one in his creative work. That estate has become the birthplace of such plays and short stories as "Seagull", "Neck-tied Anna", "Ward no. 6", "In the gully", and "Mezzanine House".



Dostoevsky Museum near the Yellow Vladimirskaya Church is an apartment where Dostoevsky spent the last three years of his life and completed his last book "The Brothers Karamazov". "Crime and Punishment" walking tour, following in the footsteps of the main characters of this world famous novel by Dostoevsky is also available.

Alexander Pushkin museum is the largest and most visited literary museum in St. Petersburg. It was his last residence – he died there in 1837 after he was wounded in a duel.

Tourists wishing to visit the major literary landmarks of Russia shouldn't omit the houses of Tolstoy and Chekhov, and numerous sites which have connection with Pushkin and Dostoevsky. Each literary museum founded in a writer's former home possesses its own atmosphere, which reflects the spirit of its

former inhabitant and his or her living conditions.

Before going for a literary tour around Russia, get a copy of the Literary Russia Guide by Rosamund Bartlett and Anna Benn that sketches an extraordinary literary map of the country that unfolds in vivid and remarkable details.

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