

TOP 10 TOURIST ATTRACTIONS OF ST PETERSBURG



Moscow may be the capital of Russia today, but the grandeur and history of its former capital mean that St Petersburg is often the destination of choice for many travelers. From the palaces and squares of the city center to the Neva River and beyond, St Petersburg tourist attractions provide countless opportunities to learn about Russian history. Tourism-Review.com introduces 10 of the most interesting sights in and around the city. Compiled in cooperation with the leading incoming tour operator in Russia, [Olta Travel](#).

10) Vasilevskiy Island

The largest island of the Neva river is Vasilevskiy, one of the most popular St Petersburg tourist attractions. The range of museums located on the island showcases the nation's love of holding onto history and important artefacts. Vasilevskiy Island however is home to oddities from other lands and strange collections - from the out-of-place 15th century Egyptian sphinxes to the skeleton of Peter the Great's servant in the museum of biological oddities.

9) Tsarskoe Selo

Known also as the Town of Pushkin, Tsarskoe Selo, lies 15 miles south from St Petersburg. The town is home to the imperial family's Catherine Palace, which lies within 300 hectares of gardens. It is home to the infamous Amber room. Once ransacked by the Nazi's, this room has been restored to showcase the wealth and history of its former owners.

8) Mariinsky Theatre

There is so much history to uncover in St Petersburg's churches and palaces but this is also a city of culture. Russian opera and ballet is world-famous and there is no better place to see it performed by masters of the art than at Mariinsky Theatre. This theatre, opened in 1860, brought Prokofiev and Tchaikovsky to the attention of the world and their works are still performed here for captive audiences.

7) Yusupov Palace

There might be other St Petersburg tourist attractions that draw hundreds of visitors every day, but Yusupov Palace is just as commanding and important in Russian history. Visitors can explore the rooms of this building, once home to the wealthy Prince Felix Yusupov, and enjoy the aptly named 'Murder of Rasputin' tour. Folklore is full of speculation on the death of the curious Rasputin and the cellar of this palace provides the answer.

6) Peter and Paul Fortress

The Peter and Paul Fortress, built in 1703, is the oldest structure in St Petersburg. It is a must for literature fans because it was where Dostoyevsky and Trotsky were held as political prisoners.

Visitors can also see the burial places of tsars and enjoy panoramic city views from the bell tower - St Petersburg's highest structure.

5) Palace Square

A trip to the Winter Palace housing the Hermitage Museum means that you have to stop by the neighboring Palace Square. This grand, iconic space is a must-see attraction for its aesthetic appeal - notably the 47.5-meter-high Alexander Column in the center - but also its history. The square was a focal point for the October Revolution of 1917 and the scene of the 1905 Bloody Sunday massacre.

4) Church on Spilled Blood

This church is another must-see building for visitors keen on Russian heritage and history because of its iconic onion domes, striking design and historical significance. The name refers to the fact that the church was built on the site of the assassination of Tsar Alexander II in 1881. For much of its life, this former Nazi potato store has been closed off from the public, but it was reopened in the 1990s.

3) Peterhof

Located 20 miles from St Petersburg, the imperial estate of Peterhof, inspired by Peter the Great's trip to Versailles, is worth exploring on their own, but the highlight for many is the iconic Grand Cascade. This stunning series of 140 fountains and canals provides a brilliant backdrop for the grounds, which also include a forest and smaller residences.

2) St. Isaac's Cathedral

The cathedral is one of the most recognizable St Petersburg tourist attractions. It is one of the tallest Orthodox churches in the world at 300ft. It has a gilded viewing platform in addition to the gold dome and decorative biblical scenes. The Cathedral is currently home to an art museum but once housed the Soviet museum of atheism.

1) Hermitage Museum

All trips to St Petersburg must include the Winter Palace, the home of tsars from 1732 to 1917, now housing the world known Hermitage Museum. There are 365 grand rooms, all full of art and exhibits that they cannot all be seen in a day. The trick is to choose the preferred period. There are collections of old masters such as Di Vinci, Picasso, and Rembrandt but also a copy of the Vatican's Raphael Loggias gallery and the War Gallery of 1812.

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