

# FROM ST. PETERSBURG TO HELSINKI IN 3.5 HOURS



The train journey between St. Petersburg and Helsinki takes less time now when Russian Railways (RZD) launched new high-speed trains there. The journey lasts amazing 3.5 hours.

In the middle of December 2010 OAO Russian Railways launched new French high-speed trains Allegro between St Petersburg and Helsinki. **They reduced the travel time between the two cities from more than six hour to three and half.** The travel time in Russia was reduced too; from 3 hours 10 minutes to 1.5 hour.

The vice-president of Russian Railways Michael Akulov said that the shortening of journey time was achieved by the acceleration of border formalities and the rise of train speed due to the use of modern technology. **Maximum speed of Allegro trains on Russian territory is 200 kilometers per hour,** on Finnish territory it is 220 kilometers per hour.

Allegro project cost about 2 billion Euros altogether. **In its first stage, two trains will set off from each city every day:** from St. Petersburg at 6.40 and 15.25 local time and from Helsinki at 10.00 and 15.00 local time. The trains will stop at following stations: Vyborg, Vainikkala, Kouvola, Lahti, Tikkurila and Pasila. By summer 2011, RZD plans to increase the number of trains to four a day.

Four electric Allegro trains produced by French company Alstom are used for the St. Petersburg-Helsinki journey. Soon after launching these trains, Finnish train "Sibelius" and a Russian train "Repin" that are currently running between St. Petersburg and Helsinki will be discontinued. Current Russian night train 'Leo Tolstoy', which now connects the two destinations, will then be used between Moscow and Helsinki.

**Allegro trains have 296 seats for the second class and 48 for the first class.** The trains can offer seats for disabled passengers and passengers with pets. There is also a carriage with meeting room. Passenger carriages and the first and second classes are equipped with adjustable seats, folding tables, pockets to store magazines and newspapers, footrests and electric sockets for connecting computers and mobile phones. Moreover, there is a special play corner designed for children on each train. Every Allegro train also has a restaurant carriage. All Allegro trains are non-smoking. Ticket price for the second class carriages is 84 Euros (for passengers with pets - 104 Euros) and 134 Euros for the first class.

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