

*A Custom Designed Itinerary to  
Moscow, St. Petersburg & Krakow*

*By*

*IN QUEST OF THE CLASSICS*

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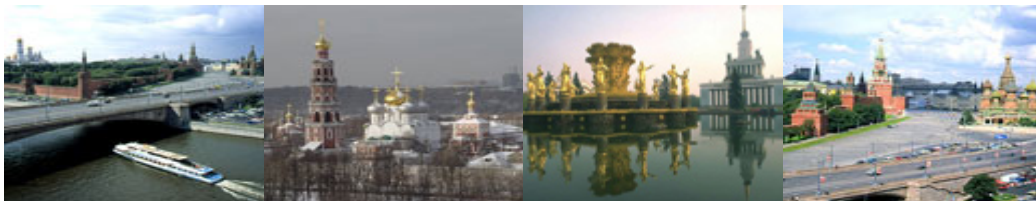
**DAY 1: MOSCOW.** Upon arrival at Moscow Airport you are met by an English-speaking assistant and privately transferred to **Le Meridien National**, a landmark luxury hotel overlooking the Kremlin. Here we include two nights.



This afternoon at 2:00 PM, meet your English-speaking guide at your hotel for a three hour private sightseeing tour of Red Square (*Krasnaya Ploshad*), possibly the most famous central square in the world.

It is a humbling sight day and night; beautiful in winter—regally dramatic all year round. Originally an expanse of nothing more than mud, and populated by a ragged collection of hawkers, beggars and outcasts, Red Square acquired its present grandness gradually. Nowadays, the square and its surrounds positively exude the drama of Russian past and present. The walls of the Kremlin loom on one side, their blood-red height belittling the pale GUM department store opposite. At the southern end of the square towers, is the onion-domed exuberance of St Basil's Cathedral. Inextricably linked to all of the most important historical and political events in Russia since the 13th century, the Kremlin (built between the 14th and 17th centuries by outstanding Russian and foreign architects) was the residence of the Great Prince and also a religious centre. At the foot of its ramparts, on Red Square, St Basil's Basilica is one of the most beautiful Russian Orthodox monuments. Entrances included to the State History Museum only. (All sites are in close proximity to your hotel.)

**DAY 2: MOSCOW.** This morning meet your guide at your hotel for a full day of touring. Begin your day with a visit to Moscow's most famous historical and political landmark, the Kremlin; a walled-in complex of cathedrals, palaces and government offices, with several buildings open to the public, including the incredible State Armory (with separate entrance to the Diamond Fund), Patriarch's Palace and the State Kremlin Palace.



You will also have a chance to visit Lenin's Mausoleum (no charge for this but opening times are subject to change at very short notice). Time for a lunch break on your own (your guide can suggest a nice place to eat depending on location on all days of guided sightseeing). This afternoon your guide will take you briefly to Arbat Street, a pedestrian street with lots of stalls and street musicians. You will also be taken to visit some of the Metro stations to see their unusual interiors. A shortened visit to Arbat Street will allow for a visit to the outskirts of the city to the Vodka Museum - an incredible exhibit.

**DAY 3: MOSCOW / ST. PETERSBURG.** Meet your guide at your hotel for more private sightseeing. Entrances are included to the Tretyakov Gallery, one of Moscow's must sees. (Don't forget to check out and store your luggage prior to sightseeing this morning). You'll have some free time this afternoon before being privately transferred to the rail station this evening and your guide can suggest additional sites of interest for this afternoon. An English-speaking assistant will meet you at the Royal Meridien National Hotel for a private transfer to the rail station. Here we include two-berth Grand Cabins on the overnight train to St. Petersburg.

**DAY 4: ST. PETERSBURG.** Upon arrival in St. Petersburg you will be met and privately transferred to the **Astoria**, where three nights are included. This morning (after leaving luggage with the concierge) you will have a panoramic sightseeing tour with an expert local guide.



The city of St. Petersburg is a treasure in itself, covered with splendid architecture from the Palace square, Kazan Cathedral, the Summer Palace of Peter the Great and the Summer Garden with over 80 works of sculpture. Other sights include St. Isaac's Cathedral, first built in 1712 and where Peter I and the Catherine I were married. French Architect Montferrand constructed the present version of the Cathedral from 1818-1858. Everything was done on a grand scale including the mosaics inside with twelve thousand shades of colors. It is the fourth highest cathedral in the world, with walls that are five meters thick and the main cupola is coated with one hundred kilos of gold. Inside you will also find hundreds of paintings, and sculptures. Peter & Paul's Fortress is known as one of the most interesting and beautiful landmarks of the city. The St. Peter and Paul Cathedral is the burial place for all the Emperors of Russia. From the city's main street (Nevsky Prospect), littered with numerous historical buildings, palaces and cathedrals, St. Petersburg continues to be an unforgettable experience. Your tour today will focus on and included entrances to the Peter & Paul Fortress and the Church of the Spilled Blood. You will also see the Aurora, the ship from which the first canon shot was fired that began the revolution in 1917.

**DAY 5: ST. PETERSBURG.** This morning we include a private transfer and expert guide for a tour around the State Hermitage Museum, home to the world's largest museum collection. Spread throughout four buildings with literally a billion things to see, not to mention the enchanting façade each building claims, antique furniture housed between frescoed walls, wood and marble mosaic floors all pay tribute to the grand scale of beauty and intrigue that continues to fascinate the mind, making the Hermitage well worth more than one visit.



After free time for lunch, this afternoon we include further sightseeing of Yusupov Palace, located on a quiet stretch of the Moika River. This long yellow building once was a residence of the wealthy and respected Yusupov family who saw one of Russian history's moments of high drama - the murder of Grigory Rasputin, a peasant who had gained control over the Tsar's family through his alleged supernatural powers.

**DAY 6: ST. PETERSBURG.** Another full day of sightseeing for a journey out of the city to visit Petrodvorets Palace (formerly called Peterhof). This is an immensely luxurious and beautifully preserved Imperial estate, founded in 1710 by Peter the Great on the shore of the Gulf of Finland (Baltic Sea). It combines several ornate palaces, a number of beautifully landscaped parks and a dazzling array of magnificent statues and fountains, lending it the epithet "The Russian Versailles". Return to the city this afternoon for free time.

**DAY 7: ST. PETERSBURG / KRAKOW.** You will be met at the hotel and privately transferred to the airport for your flight to Krakow, via a stopover and change in Warsaw. Flight to be arranged by travel agent. Upon arrival in Krakow, you will be privately transferred to the **Radisson SAS Krakow**, where we include two nights.

**DAY 8: AUSCHWITZ / KRAKOW.** Enjoy a private city tour this morning of Krakow with a local guide.



To find the soul of Poland, you must seek it in Krakow – wrote the author and critic Wilhelm Feldman at the beginning of this century. Poland's soul is chiseled into almost every stone of its former capital and this atmosphere can be felt in each of the city's most visited sites. Visit 11<sup>th</sup> century Wawel Castle, which houses a fabulous collection of Arras tapestries, portraits and other precious objects. The heart of the city is Rynek Glowny (a great plaza), which is dominated by The Sukiennice (Cloth Hall), Europe's largest medieval marketplace. Other sites include the Wierzynek Restaurant, the oldest continuously operating restaurant in Europe, the Florian Gate, and much more. Time for a lunch break on your own and then head out to Auschwitz by private vehicle with an English-speaking driver/guide, where you will have a visit to the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum created by an act of the Polish parliament on July 2, 1947, including the grounds of two extant parts of the Auschwitz I and Auschwitz II Birkenau concentration camps. In 1979 the site of Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp was entered on the UNESCO international list of world heritage sites. Return to Krakow for your final evening.

**DAY 9: DEPART.** Meet an English-speaking assistant for a private transfer to Krakow Airport .

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