

The Tsar's New Years Eve Ball

A small, intimate group tour through St. Petersburg and Moscow



The social season in Imperial St. Petersburg began in autumn and ended with the coming of Lent in March. If you know your Tolstoy then you will remember that it was a blinding social whirl, but one in which some occasions could not be missed – a new opera at the Mariinsky, a ball at which absolutely everybody who was anybody would attend, and a concert at the Philharmonic. Well, you can put your book down, come with us and live for a little while the lives of the Stroganovs, and the Yusupovs, because although the fashions have changed and the carriages are now in the museums, the season in St. Petersburg still very much exists.

Day 1

December 28 Tuesday

St. Petersburg

Arrival into St. Petersburg, where you will be met by your private driver. Transfer to the historic boutique hotel, The Taleon Imperial Hotel, located in the center of the city. On the way to your hotel, you will pass by sights historical significance, including one of the last remaining statues of Lenin and the monumental Stalinist apartment buildings that line the route from the airport.

This afternoon meet your guide in the lobby for a visit to the Peter and Paul Fortress - the birthplace of St. Petersburg. As Peter the Great'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.

End with an overview city tour of St. Petersburg including Nevsky Prospect, Vasilevsky Island for the best views of the city, the "prep school" to Russia's noble class and St. Petersburg's beautiful Grand Synagogue.

Evening

Tonight enjoy a welcome dinner and reception at your hotel. Dinner consists of three courses, two glasses of house wine or beer and unlimited mineral water, coffee and tea.

Exeter Services: **Transfer; Half-Day Vehicle, Driver & Guide**
Hotel: **Taleon Imperial**
Meal Included: **Dinner**

Day 2

December 29 Wednesday

St. Petersburg

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 Vinci's and beyond! Be sure not to miss the recently unveiled collection of French Impressionists that was thought lost after WWII.

Exeter International Extraordinary Experience

While visiting the Hermitage, your guide will take you into the exclusive Gold Treasures Rooms of the Hermitage. Here you will see some of the great treasures of the museum, including Peter the Great's ancient Scythian Gold Collection. These special tours are conducted by Hermitage Guides. Some Hermitage guides speak English, but the tour may be in Russian with your Exeter guide translating. *Please note that these special rooms require an advance appointment. Once confirmed, appointments cannot be rescheduled.*

Note: All touring today is on foot. Please wear appropriate footwear.

Evening

Ballet performance at one of St. Petersburg's famous theaters (*schedule permitting*).

Exeter Services: **Guide; Theater Transfers**
Hotel: **Taleon Imperial**
Meal Included: **Breakfast**

Day 3

December 30

Thursday

St. Petersburg

A day outside of the city to see two of the grandest palaces in Europe: Catherine Palace in Tsarskoe Selo and Pavlovsk in the nearby countryside. Both are extraordinary examples of Russian and European architecture. . During your visit, enjoy a troika sled ride through the grounds of Pavlovsk (*weather dependant*).

Note: We highly recommend reading Suzanne Massie's book, *Pavlovsk*, before you embark on this excursion. It will enrich the experience.

You will have lunch in a traditional wooden restaurant with charming Russian folk entertainment. Lunch consists of two courses and unlimited mineral water, coffee and tea.

Exeter International Extraordinary Experience

While visiting Catherine Palace, you will be invited into the Amber Room workshops where craftsmen rebuilt the famous amber panels lost in World War II.

Evening

Tonight, if interested, your guide will take us to the evening Russian Orthodox service at St. Nicholas Cathedral at 6:00 PM. Services at this beautiful church ran through the Communist period and are now once again well attended. Most worshippers do not stay for more than a few minutes, so you can come and go as you like- just as the Russians do. The acoustics at this cathedral are excellent, so when the choir is singing, you will experience a special treat!

Exeter Services: **Vehicle, Driver & Guide**
Hotel: **Taleon Imperial**
Meals Included: **Breakfast; Lunch**

Day 4

December 31

Friday

St. Petersburg

This morning pay a visit to 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.

Later this afternoon you will visit the Russian Museum in the city center to view one of the greatest collections of exclusively Russian art, including an extraordinary Repin collection. The Russian Museum also houses one of the world's largest collections of ancient Russian icons as Imperial statues dating to the 17th century. Afterward, stop in the Church on Spilled Blood, for a look at the stunning mosaics.

This afternoon is yours at leisure to explore the city or prepare for tonight's Gala Evening.

Exeter International Extraordinary Experience: Gala Evening

Tonight celebrate at the Tsar's New Year's Eve Ball at Catherine Palace in Tsarskoe Selo for an unforgettable New Years Eve Gala (black tie). Music, dancing and exquisite dining will all be part of your gala experience.

Exeter Services: Half-Day Vehicle, Driver & Guide; Evening Transfers
Hotel: Taleon Imperial
Meals Included: Breakfast; Dinner (Ball)

Day 5

January 1 Saturday

St. Petersburg-Moscow

This morning is yours at leisure to rest after your gala evening. Depart on this afternoon on your flight to Moscow. You will be advised exactly which flight to book with your booking packet. The cost of this flight is not included in your program.

Upon arrival in Moscow, your guide will meet you for your transfer into the city. On the way to your hotel, you will enjoy an overview city tour and pass by sights of historical significance, including Tverskaya Street, the Bolshoi Theater, the Lubyanka KGB Building and the Kremlin.

This evening is yours to explore Moscow on your own.

Exeter Services: Transfers (St. Petersburg & Moscow); Half-Day Vehicle, Driver & Guide (Moscow)
Hotel: Ritz-Carlton
Meal Included: Breakfast

Day 6

January 2 Sunday

Moscow

This morning, you may want to visit the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts. The Pushkin is best known for its French Impressionist collection- a group of paintings that were originally acquired by two famous Russian industrialists who lost their paintings

after the Revolution. Part of their collection went to the Hermitage and part went to the Pushkin.

Next your guide will take you into the enormous and only recently completely Christ the Holy Redeemer Cathedral. This church was demolished under Stalin's reign and completely rebuilt by Mayor Luzhkov of Moscow in 2001- at the budget of over 350 million dollars! It is a beautiful cathedral and it now stands as it did at the turn of the 20th Century.

Your guide and driver will return you to your hotel where you can enjoy lunch on your own.

After lunch, your guide will take all interested shoppers via Metro to Izmailovsky Park for the weekend "Bazaar": the best shopping in Russia. The park is only open on the weekend and is by far the best place to stock up on matrioshka dolls, fur hats, Russian art, and more.

The tour will include a ride on the famous Moscow Metro.

Exeter Services: Half-Day Vehicle & Driver; Full-Day Guide
Hotel: Ritz-Carlton
Meal Included: Breakfast

Day 7

January 3

Monday

Moscow

This morning your guide will meet you for a walking tour through Red Square to St. Basil's Cathedral. You will then journey into the Kremlin and through its expansive grounds. Begin with a visit inside 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.

We have made special arrangements to take you into the Diamond Vaults inside the Kremlin. 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!

This afternoon is open for time at leisure in Moscow.

Note: All touring today is on foot. Please wear appropriate footwear.

Evening

This evening enjoy a special Farewell Dinner in one of Moscow's finest restaurants. Dinner consists of three courses, 2 glasses of beer or wine, and unlimited mineral water, coffee/tea.

Exeter Services: **Half-Day Guide**
Hotel: **Ritz-Carlton**
Meals Included: **Breakfast; Dinner**

Day 8

January 4 **Tuesday**

Moscow-onward

Transfer to the airport for flight onward.

Exeter Services: **Transfer**
Meal Included: **Breakfast**

2010 Departure

Arrival Date	Return Date	Price 2010
December 28, 2010	January 4, 2011	\$7,400

Single Supplement: \$1,400

All prices are per person, double occupancy.
No airfare is included.

Hotels

Taleon Imperial St. Petersburg (Superior Room)
Ritz-Carlton Moscow (Superior Room)

Exeter Dine Around

This program includes Exeter Dine Around credit cards to be used during your touring for any meals that are not included. In fact, you can use the cards for anything! These credit cards are sent to you with your final documents. Simply activate the card and start spending.

Each guest receives a Dine Around card for \$150.

*A visa is required for travel to Russia and is not included in the cost above.
All arrangements are subject to availability and modification if necessary.
Weather, heavy traffic and heavy crowds may affect the order
of your sightseeing program.
Prices are subject to change until paid in full.*