

Depart the US May 14

Detailed trip tips coming soon by email with group air option.

Day 1, May 15 Welcome to Moscow! D

Our tour begins today in Moscow where after arrival, we are greeted and transfer to our hotel. The Radisson Slavyanskaya is located in the heart of Moscow and overlooking the Moskva River. This gorgeous modern hotel has three restaurants, a pool and a fitness center, but you are walking distance to most of the city's most important sites.

The afternoon is free for you to settle in before we all get together for a scrumptious Welcome Dinner at a local restaurant. Get to know your fellow AFSers.

Overnight: Radisson Slavyanskaya (2 nights)

Day 2, May 16 Moscow - Full day city tour B

One of the largest cities in the world, Moscow is the symbolic heart and soul of Russia. Your sightseeing tour begins at Red Square, dominated by colorful St. Basil's Cathedral and by the massive red walls of the Kremlin. Visit the Armory Museum, with its impressive collection of Tsarist, Russian, and foreign jewelry, armor, and other artifacts. Then walk by Moscow University. Continue with a drive along the wide boulevards and a stroll through GUM, Russia's largest department store. Continue, on the north bank of the River Moskva, passing by the 16th century baroque Novodevichy (New Maidens) convent. We end our tour at the popular Arbat shopping district where we turn you loose to grab lunch and shop 'til you drop. If time permits, check out the Vodka Museum or Gorky Park.

EVENING TOUR MOSCOW / METRO & RED SQUARE BY NIGHT

No visit of Moscow is complete without a tour of its elegant Subway Stations! These are not the stations you are used to by any stretch of the imagination. We will show you some of the most beautiful stations decorated with marble, brightly colored stained glass, mosaics, and chandeliers. Later, we take a stroll in Red Square, passing the tomb of Lenin and seeing the beautifully lit St. Basil's Cathedral.

Overnight: Radisson Slavyanskaya

Day 3, May 17, 2020: Moscow – St. Petersburg B

Our morning is free to relax or explore a bit more of Moscow. In the afternoon, we head to the railway station for our four-hour ultra-modern high-speed Sapsan train ride to spectacular St. Petersburg.

We head immediately to the world-famous **Hermitage**. Founded in 1764 by Catherine the Great, it is home to more than four million works of art and ranks among one of the largest and oldest museums of the world.

Afterwards, you will have free time to stroll this historic city with a leisurely evening on your own. Our home for the next three nights is the elegant Ambassador Hotel which is located near St. Nicholas Cathedral, the Mariinsky Theater and a ton of shopping and restaurants.

Overnight: Ambassador Hotel (3 nights)

Day 4, May 18 St. Petersburg City Tour**B**

After buffet breakfast, we begin with a sightseeing tour of St. Petersburg including the Bronze Horseman statue of Peter the Great, the Stock Exchange, Senate Square, Vasilievsky Island, Smolny Cathedral, Admiralty, the Alexander Column, the Church of the Spilled Blood, the Kazan Cathedral, the Blue Bridge, and of course, a trip down Nevsky Prospect, the main street. We also take an excursion to the Russian Vodka museum with tasting 3 types of vodka. We'll take a break for you to grab lunch on your own.

In the afternoon, we travel to Pushkin to explore what is considered one of the world's greatest palaces, the baroque, wedding-cake look palace of Catherine the Great.

Your evening is free.

Overnight: Ambassador Hotel

Day 5, May 19 St. Petersburg – Free Time to Play or Peterhoff**B**

You have a full day on your own to continue exploring this beautiful city. You can take time to climb to the top of St. Isaac's Basilica or venture out to Catherine the Great's Palace. Our hotel is so close to the Mariinsky Theater. Why not take a tour? Or check out the incredible works at the Faberge Museum.

Tour of the Peterhof Palace (\$95 optional) - The former summer Residence of Czar Peter the Great, he built this to outshine Versailles. It is famed for its palaces, extensive gardens, terraces of gilded statues and fountain cascades on the Gulf of Finland. Relax and enjoy the elegant atmosphere of these baroque gardens and palaces on your visit.

At night consider a theater or a river cruise through the canals and River Neva transforms the city into a magical place that has inspired generations of artists. On board, you can enjoy champagne, caviar, and vodka – talk about a Russian experience! Enjoy the sights of this classical city from a different perspective.

Overnight: Ambassador Hotel

Day 6, May 20 St. Petersburg – Tallinn, Estonia Walking Tour**B/L**

Today's journey takes us to the beautiful Baltic Sea country of Estonia. Our first stop is the picturesque city of Narva, set just across the border from Russia on the Narva River. We'll enjoy lunch here before continuing to Tallinn. Estonia's capital, Tallinn is a mesmerizing walled city situated on the southern coast of the Gulf of Finland.

Our afternoon includes a Walking Tour to visit the Dome Cathedral, Town Hall Square and medieval Town Hall, Toompea Hill and Castle, the Niguliste Church, St. Olav's church, and Alexander Nevsky Orthodox Cathedral. We'll explore the medieval walls and fortifications (no entrances included). Look for the GOT sites and new chocolate boutiques.

We overnight at Hestia Europa, located near the port and convenient to restaurants and shops. Dinner on own. There are endless affordable choices here for hearty peasant cuisines and great nightlife.

Overnight: Hestia Europa (1 night)

Day 7, May 21 Tallinn – Riga Welcome to Latvia!**B**

After breakfast, we travel south to historic Riga, Latvia. The drive through the Estonia countryside is beautiful! When we arrive, we'll do a City Tour which includes the Riga Castle on the banks of the Daugava River, the magnificent Dome Cathedral, St. Jacobs Cathedral, St. Peter's Church, the Parliament building, and Liberty Monument. Riga is known for its amazing architecture and Art Nouveau District and we'll get a real taste of what the fuss is all about. We'll get to spend time at the Central Market to find treasures to take home.

The rest of the day is free to explore more, shop, or maybe sample Latvian crepes. Evening at leisure. We'll be staying at local landmark Radisson Blu Latvija. Located right across from Riga's most popular park, the Esplanade, numerous shops and restaurants are all within walking distance. Check out the award-winning ESPA Spa next door.

Overnight: Radisson Blu Latvija (2 nights)

Day 8, May 22 - Full Day in Riga

B/D

Morning free to explore this beautiful old city. A fun area to visit to the oldest section, the Vecriga, whose cobblestone streets and lined with shops, restaurants and museums. There's also the less explored Kalnciema Quarter, known for its outdoor markets and cafes. You may want to seek out a café and sample some of the local liquor called Riga Black Balsam, good on its own or mixed with just about anything. There are tons of art as well as just plain old quirky museums to sample. How about the Sun Museum?

Afternoon guided tour to the Open Air Ethnographic Museum where you will travel back in time to the 18th Century. Located on the outskirts of Riga, it is set on 100 hectares of land in a pine forest on the banks of the Jugla Lake. The 118 historic structures include farmhouses, windmills, fishing villages, churches and other historic structures that have been rebuilt and preserved here to re-create a proper village preserved from this era.

In the evening, we gather with your fellow AFSers for a wonderful Estonian buffet Farewell Dinner at a local restaurant.

Overnight: Radisson Blu Latvija

Day 9, May 23 Depart Riga for Home

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Following breakfast, we head to the airport to return to the U.S.