



## orld War II



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## the great patriotic war

### Day 1, Thursday - St. Petersburg

St. Petersburg was founded by Peter the Great in 1703 and is steeped in Russian history and culture. Meet our local guide and take a city tour of this beautiful city. One of the first stops will be the visit to the famous cruiser, Aurora, a Russian Navy war ship. This museum exhibition depicts the Aurora's role in the Russo-Japanese War, the Russian Revolution and World War II. The afternoon is dedicated to the Hermitage, including the White Cabinet where Lenin's takeover was announced and Russia became the USSR.

### Day 2, Friday - St. Petersburg

We start the day with a visit to Piskarevo Cemetery, the burial place of almost one million people who died during the siege. On the display there is a diary of a teenage girl Tanya Savicheva, whose relatives all died during the siege. Next, to Peter & Paul Fortress, the birthplace of St. Petersburg. To see the dark side of the Romanov reign, we will visit the imperial prison. At the Museum of the Monument to the Heroic Defenders of Leningrad on Victory Square we will see original documents and possessions of the city's residents and soldiers, then tour the Monument to the Heroic Defenders on Victory Square.

### Day 3, Saturday - St. Petersburg

Today we will travel the historic "Road of Life." This five hour trip will include a stop at the "Broken Ring" monument on Lake Ladoga and an expert explanation of the siege, the defence of Leningrad, and the role of the "Road of Life" in the city's survival during World War II. Of particular interest will be a visit to a small museum in the village of Osinovets that was used as an evacuation point during the siege. Some leisure time before boarding our overnight train to Moscow.

### Day 4, Sunday - Moscow

Start the day with an extensive city tour, including historic Red Square with St. Basil's Cathedral, Lenin's Tomb and the monument to Marshal George Zhukov.

We will stroll through Alexander Gardens with stops at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and the Eternal Flame. Next to Christ The Savior Cathedral, erected (and recently rebuilt) to celebrate victory over Napoleon. We will stop at the Victory Park, which houses the largest museum in the world of the Great Patriotic War. The museum, which opened on the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II, is designed to give post-war generations an appreciation of the victory that cost 35 million Russian lives.

### **Day 5, Monday – Moscow**

Today we visit Cold War Bunker, the amazing underground place in downtown Moscow, until recently which was one of the command centers. Afternoon at leisure.

### **Day 6, Tuesday - Moscow**



Special permission has been obtained for an exclusive tour of Russia's largest and best aviation museum, The Russian Federation Air Force Museum at Monino, approximately 38 km from Moscow. The museum opened in 1960 at a former air base (which operated from 1932 to 1956). Many of the Russian aviation designers (Tupolev, Ilyushin, Antonov, Mikoyan, etc.) have contributed exhibits and resources to the museum.

### **Day 7, Wednesday - Moscow**

After checking out of our hotel, we will tour the suburban military town of Kubinka, (about 1 hour by car from Moscow) and visit the Museum of Armored Vehicles and Equipment. It has one of the world's largest collections of armoured vehicles representing 11 countries. The 290 items on display include self-propelled guns, armoured cars, reconnaissance and command vehicles, and a variety of technical and engineer support vehicles. Many of the Russian items are prototypes that were never mass-produced. Around midnight we board the overnight train to Kursk.

### **Day 8, Thursday - Kursk**

First thing in the morning, we will meet our military expert for a tour of Kursk and its museums. The Battle of Kursk was monumental for numerous reasons, including being the site of the largest clash of armor during World War II. The USSR recorded 250,000 deaths and 600,000 wounded soldiers. Germans reported 100,000 deaths and 200,000 wounded. In late afternoon we depart by bus for Stalingrad.

### **Day 9, Friday - Volgograd (formerly Stalingrad)**

We arrive early in the morning, check into our hotel and rest until noon when our local guide will take us on an overview city tour. Volgograd was founded in 1589 as a stronghold to defend Russia's newly acquired land along the Volga. We will start from the memorial complex Mamayev Kurgan(hill). The hill is topped with the magnificent rendering of the statue Mother Russia, 52 meters high.



To get a better feel of this terrible struggle, you can also visit a panorama of the Stalingrad Battle, a 360 degree lifelike depiction of the Stalingrad Battle. Later in the afternoon, we will travel 40 km outside to the war memorial devoted to fallen Soviet soldiers in Rossoshki village. It became very well-known for the cemetery, where the remains of 21.000 of German soldiers, fallen in the fierce battle for Stalingrad lie. The ensemble includes a monument “Mourning Mother”, which was put up in 1999, and the replica of it will be set up in London in memory of World War II. The monument divides the cemetery from burial places of Russian soldiers.

### **Day 10, Saturday - Volgograd**

We begin the day with the Museum of the Defence of Stalingrad which houses all kinds of weapons and uniforms of the Soviet soldiers who participated in the battle. A three-hour guided city tour to the main battle sites afterwards.

### **Day 11, Sunday - Volgograd - Simpheropol**

Early in the morning, we check out of hotel and off to the airport for the flight to Simpheropol via Moscow. We arrive in Simpheropol in the afternoon and take a 1.5 hour bus ride to Yalta, the principal city of the Crimean Riviera. In the late 19th c., the Russian aristocracy built palatial homes and hotels here and all along the spectacular coast. Russia's great writers Pushkin and Chekhov resided here, and Mark Twain was a visitor.

In the afternoon, we travel 15 minutes west to Livadia, with its enormous complex of Tsar's palaces. It is here that Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin met in 1945 and agreed on the post-war division of Europe into East and West. Still further in the same direction, at Alupka, we will visit the park and spectacular, 19th C., Casa Loma-type palace of Count Voronstov.

### **Day 12, Monday - Yalta-Sebastopol**

We spend all day on a guided tour of Sevastopol, which was founded by the Russian Navy at the end of the 18th.C. During the Soviet era, no foreigners were allowed anywhere in this area. Now the Russian and Ukrainian navies share the base. There is an interesting navy museum and an aquarium. On a peninsula, just outside the city, you will find the well preserved ruins of a large Greek city Chersonese Taurica, founded 500 B.C. as an independent Greek city-state. If you saw one of the several film versions of the "Charge of the Light Brigade", the suicidal attack of British troops on fortified Russian positions during the Crimean War (1854-56), you will be interested in seeing the actual site of this battle at Balaklava on the hills above Sebastopol. A panorama in the city depicts one of these battles.

### **Day 13, Tuesday - Bakhchysaray – Odessa**



After checking out of our hotel, we travel to the old Tartar capital Bakhchysaray. The place is dominated by the graceful minarets of the 16th century mosque, which may be visited. After visiting Khan's Palace and Assumption Mountain Monastery, we take the overnight train to Odessa.

### **Day 14, Wednesday - Odessa**

Perennially popular and much loved, Odessa celebrated its 200th anniversary in 1994. According to legend, its first mayor wanted to build a city to rival Paris' beauty. Generations of artists, poets and scientists have expanded the city's glory. Mechnikov, Pirogov, Mendeleev, Pushkin and Bunin, among others, lived here. Your city tour includes a viewing of the obelisk and eternal flame that honors the Unknown Sailor.

We will then take a pleasant stroll along Primorsky Boulevard, the city's most popular promenade, lined with many of Odessa's finest buildings and monuments. Our walks takes us past the impressive Potemkin Staircase and the Odessa Opera and Ballet Theater, Europe's second grandest theater after Vienna.

### **Day 15, Thursday - Odessa-Kiev**

Your exploration of Odessa would not be complete without a visit to the labyrinth of catacombs that lace their way under the city and its environs. Our journey begins in the village of Nerubaiskoye, originally built as a southern Cossack military settlement at the end of the 18th century. Here, your guide will escort you on a fascinating underground walk of approximately 500 yards, including stops at the command post for the brave members of the World War II resistance effort. A recreation of the resistance headquarters will be visited in the local museum after you leave the catacombs. There will be leisure time in the afternoon before boarding the overnight train to Kiev.

### **Day 16, Friday - Kiev**

We arrive early in the morning in Kiev, one of the oldest cities in Europe predating St. Petersburg by nearly 1,000 years. Your city tour will allow you to appreciate the city's broad boulevards, leafy parks and medieval monasteries perched majestically on bluffs above the Dnieper River. You will visit the monastery of the caves and St. Sofia's Cathedral, have some free time to explore St. Andrew's Cathedral, and enjoy a cruise on the Dnieper River. Next to the Museum of World War II, which includes an imposing 102-meter-high Mother Country statue, and a visit to Babi Yar, site of the infamous massacre of Ukraine Jews by the Nazis during World War II. From September 29 to 30, 1941, more than 33,000 Jewish residents of Kiev were marched to this site and systematically gunned down over the edge of the ravine. Another 100,000 people, including Jews, Gypsies and Soviet POWs, were executed at this site between 1941 and 1943.



### **Day 17, Saturday - Chernobyl**

We will take a full day trip to Chernobyl, 100 km north of Kiev. When we arrive at the Chernobyl check point, we change into special anti-radiation uniforms, meet and speak with Director/Deputy Director of the Chernobyl Zone and see a video/photos of the disaster. We will visit the host town of Pripyat, the former place of residence for workers at the nuclear power plant. Lunch is available only in specially equipped canteens. There is no eating on the bus or in the streets. In the afternoon we will visit one the sites, depending on availability and choice, such as the shelter or the park of abandoned vehicles, etc. After changing our clothes, we depart for Kiev, arriving there around 5 p.m.

### **Day 18, Sunday - Kiev**

Depart Home Transfer to the airport.

*Please note: All private travel is customized based on your specific interests, travel dates, included experiences, entrance fees and hotel choices. We will help you choose the perfect length of stay in each city, go over all hotel options, including upgraded rooms or suites if desired, and specific views and room features at each hotel. We invite you to tell us about your specific interests and "likes and dislikes" so we can further customize your trip to your exact needs. Minimum stay of 18 days to cover St. Petersburg, Moscow, Kursk, Volgograd (former Stalingrad), Yalta, Odessa and Kiev we would recommend .*