

# WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW WHEN TRAVELLING TO RUSSIA

## SEASONAL HIGHLIGHTS

- June to August – Summer
- September to October – Autumn
- November to March – Winter
- April to May – Spring

The coldest month is January with average temperature at -6°C. The wettest months are October & November. The best time to visit St. Petersburg weather-wise is late spring - early June. This is the season when weather is the most convenient for long hours of sightseeing.

## WHAT TO PACK

As you plan what to wear, keep in mind the season you are travelling in and pack and wear layers. We suggest layering like this: tank top or t-shirt, long sleeve shirt, jersey and then jacket. Always pack something to protect yourself against rain showers. Over the very cold winter months you might consider Alpine Wear to protect yourself from the extreme cold.

## RETAIL HOURS

Shopping hours in Moscow and St Petersburg are generally Monday to Saturday 09h00 to 18h00 with some larger stores open from 10h00 to 20h00.

## MONEY MATTERS

The official currency of Russia is the Russian Ruble. **Credit Cards** are widely accepted and ATM's are available.

## DRINKING WATER

- It is not recommended to drink tap water in Russia.

## TIPPING / PORTERAGE

- Personnel receive living wages and tipping is not required for taxis, restaurants, hairdressers or bars, though it won't be refused and some locals round up a bill. If service was quite exceptional, you could show appreciation (up to 10%).

## TRAVEL RESPONSIBILITY

- Learn a few words of the local language so you know what's considered polite in terms of eating, greeting and local values.

- Appropriate behaviours by travellers helps ensure local communities continue to be hospital and friendly.
- Respect other people's cultures and avoid imposing your beliefs.
- Adhere to the hotel's water or energy conservation policies.
- Buy locally made crafts and support local skills.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

- Russian is the official language but English is spoken and understood more and more, especially in the bigger cities and tourist areas.
- South African passport holders do not require a visa to visit Russia.
- There are eleven time zones in Russia, which observe times ranging from GMT +02 to GMT +12. Daylight saving is not used in Russia
- For Russia there are two associated plug types, types C and F. Plug type C is the plug which has two round pins and plug type F is the plug which has two round pins with two earth clips on the side.
- Russia operates on a 230V supply voltage and 50Hz.

## WHAT THINGS COST

- Meal Inexpensive Restaurant : RUB 300 to RUB 700
- Meal for 2 people, midrange Restaurant 3 Course: RUB 1 300 to RUB 3 000
- McMeal at McDonalds (or equivalent) : RUB 250 to RUB 400
- Domestic Beer (0.5 Lt Draught) : RUB 54 to RUB150
- Imported Beer (0.33 Lt Bottle): RUB 100 to RUB 200
- Cappuccino (Regular) : RUB 80 to RUB 200
- Coke/Pepsi (0.33 Lt Bottle) : RUB 35 to RUB 80
- Water (0.33 Lt Bottle) : RUB 20 to RUB 55

## OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

- A lot of public restrooms will charge you a small fee to use them, so just keep some change on hand to pay the fee.
- Lock valuables away while travelling and always be vigilant of your belongings. Never leave them unattended.
- Always be aware of pick pockets irrespective of where you are in the world.