

Finland Sees Drop in Russian Tourists for New Year's Holiday

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Finland expects to see a 20 to 30 percent decline in Russian tourists visiting for the Jan. 1-11 holidays, the regional director for Russia at Finland's national tourism center told the Association of Tour Operators of Russia, or ATOR.

Russian tourism to Finland, whose capital is just a short ferry ride away from St. Petersburg, has decreased 11 percent this year compared with 2013, Visit Finland's Arto Asikainen said. The months of May, July and August saw particularly steep declines, which Asikainen blamed on exchange rate fluctuations and the bankruptcies of several Russian tour operators.

Earlier this month, ATOR reported that the number of Russians traveling to certain parts of Europe had plummeted due to the ruble's decline of more than 20 percent against the euro this year.

Despite the downturn, however, Russians are still the single largest group of tourists

to Finland. Last year 1.6 million Russians visited Finland, more than British, German and Swedish tourists combined.

Most Russian visitors come from the affluent cities of Moscow and St. Petersburg, and they tend to spend more than their European counterparts. Russian tourists typically spend an average of 120 euros (\$150) a day, while Europeans spend about 80 euros (\$100), Asikainen said.

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