

10 of St. Petersburg's Must-See Sights

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Summer Garden / Legion-Media

Summer Garden

Relaxation Spot

At walking distance from the Hermitage Museum, the Summer Garden is the most famous green spot in St. Petersburg and is an ideal place for meditation after a long day of sightseeing and exploring. The garden was personally designed by Peter the Great, who ordered the construction of his summer house to be adorned with 250 marble statues and majestic fountains. In the summer, the garden is regularly visited by local street musicians who will serenade you as you stroll through nature.

Open: Daily from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m., 7.30 p.m. on Tuesdays

Tickets: Free

Russian Museum

All the Russian Art You Need

Located at the sumptuous Mikhailovsky Palace, the Russian Museum boasts one of the largest collections of Russian art in the world. It is divided into two floors documenting different periods of Russian art, from early icons of the 12th and 14th centuries to the 20th-century art movement of socialist realism. You can admire renowned portraits by Dmitry Levitsky, the seascapes of Ivan Aivazovsky, avant-garde art works by Natalia Goncharova and Kazimir Malevich, and explore Russian history guided by the works of Vasily Surikov.

Open: Mon. from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., Wed. to Sun. from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Thurs. from 1 p.m. to 9 p.m. Closed: Tuesday

Tickets: 450 rubles; students 200 rubles

Hermitage Museum

The Pride of the City

Visiting the Hermitage Museum is not just a recommendation — it is a must for all visitors to the city. Its collection includes over 3 million items and is the largest collection of paintings in the world. Although it is impossible to see the entire museum in just one day, you can choose from a vast selection of different art periods and art forms based on your interests: from prehistoric art, Egyptian antiquities and mummies to Russian and European fine art.

Open: Tues. to Sun. from 10:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Wed. and Fri. from 10:30 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Tickets: Free admission the first Thursday of the month; 700 rubles (adults) or 400 rubles (schoolchildren, students and Russian pensioners)

Mariinsky Theater

Theater Time

Designed by the Russian-Italian architect Alberto Cavo, the Mariinsky Theater is the center of classical performances in the city. This is where masterpieces by Tchaikovsky, Mussorgsky and Rimsky-Korsakov once premiered. Every summer the theater hosts the “Stars of the White Nights” festival, featuring the best performers from Russia and beyond.

Open: Box office open 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Tickets: Varies

Museum of Political History

Perfect Spot for History Geeks

Russophiles and history lovers can't miss this fascinating museum with artifacts from Russia's political history. Located in the former mansion of the ballerina Mathilde

Kschessinska, famous for her alleged affair with the last tsar, Nicholas II, the house was subsequently seized by Lenin during the 1917 Revolution. Today the building displays Lenin's study as well as numerous political artifacts, photographs and posters that document Russia's history.

Open: Sun. to Tues., Sat. from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Wed. and Fri. from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Closed Thursdays and the last Monday of every month

Tickets: 250 rubles for adults, free for children

Peter and Paul Fortress

A Beach, a Fortress, a Prison

Just a 10-minute walk from the Hermitage, another unmissable sight is the Peter and Paul fortress. This is where the foundations of the city were laid by Peter the Great. Constructed to withstand an attack from the Swedes, the fortress never served its original purpose but over the ages was used as a prison, a mint, a rocket engine laboratory, and as the resting place of the imperial family. Today the fortress is part of the museum of St. Petersburg's history, with various museums documenting the history of the city and of the fortress. It also encompasses a fascinating cathedral and a small beach where you can catch the city's rare sun rays.

Open: Open all day. The museums are open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and closed on Wednesdays

Tickets: Free, although all the museums charge admission

The Church of the Savior on Blood

Eye-Catching Church

Built on the site where Tsar Alexander II was assassinated in 1881, the church, with its striking colored domes, is the most prominent building on Nevsky Prospekt. If the exterior of the church looks stunning with its bright colors and patterned cupolas, the interior, entirely covered with mosaics, is an even more outstanding sight and definitely worth the entrance fee.

Open: Daily from 10:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Evening openings of the cathedral in the summer only (May 1–September 30): 6 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. Closed Wednesdays

Tickets: adults 250 rubles, children 50 rubles

St Isaac's Cathedral

Breathtaking Views

Dominating St. Petersburg's skyline, St Isaac's Cathedral is the fourth-largest cathedral in the world. Designed by Auguste de Montferrand, it took 40 years for construction to be completed. Today, there is also a museum inside the cathedral but don't leave before climbing to the dome's top and enjoying the panoramic view over the city.

Open: from 10:30 a.m. to 6 p.m., evening admission from April 27–Sept. 30 from 6 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. Closed Wednesdays

Tickets: 250 rubles

Planetarium

Starry, Starry Night

The Planetarium's dome, with a diameter of 37 meters, makes it the largest planetarium in the world. Besides offering visitors the chance to check out the starry skies, the planetarium offers exhibits dedicated to virtual reality, space exploration and various modern entertainment facilities.

Open: Mon. to Sun. from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Tickets: 450– 550 rubles for adults

Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography: Kunstkamera

A Museum of Curiosities

It wasn't only fortresses and palaces that Peter the Great built in and around St. Petersburg; his limitless curiosity and fascination with science also led to the creation of one of the most curious museums in the city: the Kunstkamera. Originally designed to host Peter's Cabinet of Curiosities, it was meant to help counter people's superstitions about physical abnormalities and natural phenomena. Today there is a vast array of natural and human rarities, as well as artifacts from all over the world and a photography collection.

Open: Tues. to Sun. from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Tickets: 300 rubles, students 100 rubles

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