



# St Petersburg - City Business Guide

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## Overview

The origin of this city of 4.5 million inhabits dates back to 1703. At the decree of Peter the Great, it was to be a great European-style city, in the tradition of Venice and Amsterdam, a "window to the west."

While the city's best known monument is probably the Hermitage, now open to the public as a state museum, its rich concentration of neo-classical palaces, art nouveau structures and baroque churches avoided the razing practices of Stalin's rule. But beyond its picture-perfect facades built on the banks of the Neva, Saint Petersburg, which recently put on a spectacular celebration for its 300th birthday, is a dynamic center, as evidenced by the crowded shops and cafés along Nevski Prospect and the highly frequented beaches near the Peter and Paul Fortress.

## Business Etiquette

\* Attire that draws excessive attention or is overly casual should be avoided. A plain suit and tie is suitable attire.

\* Quick, firm handshakes are used in greeting.

\* Patting someone on the elbow or shoulder shows trust.

\* Titles and ranks should be used when addressing people.

\* When invited to a person's home, a gift such as flowers, wine or chocolate is appropriate. Bringing a small gift like candy, books or toys for the children of the household is viewed with appreciation.

\* Making efforts to speak a few words in Russian is seen as a gesture of good faith.

\* Current events that may be controversial should be avoided as topics of conversation, as should direct criticism of Russian practices and policies.

## Chamber of Commerce

Foreign Chambers of Commerce are in Moscow.

**St-Petersburg Chamber of Commerce** *Chaykovskogo Ul. 46-48 ; Tel.: +7 (812) 719 6644*

## Embassies and Consulates

Few countries have consular offices in Saint Petersburg. Embassies are in Moscow.

**German Consulate** *Furschtdatskaya Ul. 39 ; Tel. : +7 (812) 320 2400*

**French Consulate** *Quay of the Moika 15 ; Tel. : +7 (812) 332 2270*

**United States Consulate** *Furschtdatskaya Ul., 15 ; Tel. : +7 (812) 331 2600*

**British Consulate** *Pl. Proletarskoy Diktatury 5 ; Tel. : +7 (812) 320 3200*

**Netherlands Kingdom General Consulate** *Moika Nab. 11 ; Tel. : +7 (812) 334 0200*

## Business Centers

Most large international hotels have a business center. The usual facilities are available: telephone and fax, high-speed internet connections, interpreting, conference rooms, video-conferencing. There are also several independent business centers.

**Grand Hotel Europe Business Center** *Mikhailovskaya Ulitsa 1/7 ; Tel. : +7 (812) 329 60 00*

**Nevski Palace Hotel Business Center** *Nevski Prospect 57 ; Tel. : +7 (812) 380 2001*

**Centrako Business Center** *Bolchoy Prospect, V.O. 103 ; Tel. : +7 (812) 119 51 00*

**Europa House** *Artilleriiskaya 1 ; Tel. : +7 (812) 324 2300 / 324 2302*

**DTZ Arenda** *Bolshaya Morskaya Ulitsa 57 ; Tel. : +7 (812) 325 62 26*

## Conference and Exhibition Centers

Large hotels and some of the business centers have conference halls..

**Astoria Hotel** *Bolshaya Morskaya Ulitsa 39 ; Tel. : +7 (812) 313 5757*

**Fontanka Business Center, Sovetskaya Hotel** *Lermontovskiy Pr. 43/1 ; Tel. : +7 (812) 329 9599*

**Neptune Hotel** *Obvodnovo Kanala Nab. 93 ; Tel. : +7 (812) 324 46 10, +7 (812) 324 46 11, Fax : +7 (812) 324 46 11*

**LDM Hotel Business Center** *Professora Popova Ulitsa 47 ; Tel. : +7 (812) 449 02 28*

**Lenexpo, Exhibition Center** *Bolchoy Av. 103 ; Tel. : +7 (812) 321 2679*

## Translation Offices

There are numerous translation and interpreting services. Hotels catering for business customers also often offer such services.

**City Translation Center** *Kanala Groboyedova Nab. 10 ; Tel. : +7 (812) 325 7270*

**St-Petersburg Chamber of Commerce** *Chaykovskogo Ul. 46-48 ; Tel.: +7 (812) 273 4896*

## Courier/Messenger Services

**EMS - Express Mail of Russia - Garantpost 4** *Konnogvardeyskiy bulvar ; Tel. : +7 (812) 325 7525*

**DHL Worldwide Express** *4 Izmalvosky Prospect; Tel:+7 812 326-6400*

**Russian Express** *Vyborgskaya Nab ; Tel: +7 (812) 703 42 12*

**TNT Global Express** *14 Sophiskaya Ulitsa; Tel: +7 812 118-3330*

**UPS** *51 Shpalemaya ul.; Tel. : +7 (812) 327-85-40*

## Internet Connection Place

**Quo Vadis** *Nevski Prospect 24 ; Tel. : +7 (812) 177 80 11*

**Web plus** *33 Kolomenskaya Ulitsa; Tel. : +7 812 326 9020*

**Tetris Internet-Cafe** *Cherniakhovskoye Ul. 33 ; Tel. : +7 (812) 325 4877 / 164 4877*

**Sofit** *Avstriskaya square 10 ; Tel. +7 (812) 232 2022*

## Visas & Customs

A visa is necessary for travel to Saint Petersburg. Whether it is a business or tourist visa, you must have a certificate from an organization in Russia. This can be from the agency that is organizing your stay while you are in Russia, from the hotel where you have your reservation, or from the company with which you are doing business. You must also show that you have insurance coverage which includes repatriation costs. Applications usually take about a week. It is often simpler to call an agency that has been approved by the consulate, which will, for a fee, organize these documents for you. If you staying less than 72 hours, you can obtain a transit visa at the airport on presentation of your hotel reservation.

## Phone Information

The country code for Russia is 7. The city code for Saint Petersburg is 812.

To call Saint Petersburg from abroad, dial Russia's country code, followed by 7 and by 812, and the full seven-digit number.

To know Russian town's code call 274 93 83

## Emergency Phone Numbers

**Fire** : 01

**Police** : 02

**Ambulance** : 03

**Gas emergency service** : 04

## Tips and Rules for Use of Phone in Country

For local calls, there is no need for any codes, just dial the seven digit number. To call another city dial 8, wait for the tone and then dial the city code followed by the number that you wish to reach. To make an international call from Saint Petersburg dial 8, wait for the tone and then dial 10 followed by the country code and the number that you wish to reach. There are a lot of public payphones in Saint Petersburg; the blue ones are part of the BCL network and operate with cards that may be purchased in large hotels or at the airport (at the BCL signs).

## Tips and Rules for Use and Rental of Mobile Phones

The GSM network functions in Saint Petersburg and the cell phone industry is booming. Check with your service provider before departure to ensure that your phone will function in Russia; charges are likely to be high for both incoming and outgoing calls. Another possibility is to hire or even buy a phone (from 100 US\$) while you are there, from NorthWest Megafon or Delta Telecom for example. Cell phone numbers begin with a 9 (for example, 9 444 8888).

## Money

The Russian unit of currency is the rouble. You should pay in roubles even if prices are displayed in American dollars. The major credit cards (Visa, Mastercard, American Express, Diners) are accepted in hotels, restaurants and department stores. You can also use credit cards to withdraw money from cash point machines. Traveler's checks can be changed in bureaux de change. However, it is preferable to bring cash, particularly American dollars. Make sure the bills are in good condition: changers will refuse damaged bills.

## Tipping

A 10% tax is usually included in the bill in restaurants and bars. It is nevertheless customary to leave a tip if you are happy with the service. Usual tipping practices are as follows:

**Restaurants** : yes, directly to the waiter or waitress.

**Bars** : no, but it is common to leave the change.

**Taxi** : no

**Hotel Receptionist** : no

**Concierge** : no

**Hotel housekeeping** : no

**Porter for luggage** : yes

**Parking Attendant/Valet** : yes

**Hairdresser** : no

## Time Difference

In summer, (March to October) four hours ahead of GMT; in winter, three hours ahead.





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## VAT & Taxes

VAT is 20%. Hotels also charge a 3% urban tax. When asking for information about room prices, confirm that all taxes are included.

## Voltage

220 volts 50 Hz. Two pin plugs.

## Local Transportation

The center of Saint Petersburg is compact and one can easily travel on foot. The city also has an excellent transport network. As in Moscow, the decor of the subway stations is extremely grand. There are four lines serving about sixty stations. Tokens may be bought singly, or there are cards available that are valid for 10 to 60 journeys, or for a month. Above ground, the trolley bus and trams are convenient for short journeys. Have change ready to pay the conductor on board, and be prepared for a tight squeeze. Official taxis are yellow. If the meter is broken be sure to negotiate a price before departure. Inhabitants of Saint Petersburg frequently hail private taxis (*tchastniki*); again, it is advisable to fix the price before you get in.

## Health Info

There are no compulsory vaccinations for entry to Russia. However, do check that your standard vaccinations are up to date. It is not advisable to drink tap water. For stays of over three months, proof of HIV negative status is required.

## Climate

Weather in Saint Petersburg is highly changeable. Winter lasts from November to March and temperatures can hover around minus 10 C, a cold which is intensified by the city's damp climate. Winters are snowy but Saint Petersburg also sees some splendidly sunny days in the deepest chill when the river has frozen over. The icy days can be so bitter that outdoor statues and sculptures are encased in wood as a protective measure. The thaw begins in mid-April, and by May temperatures start to go above 15 C. The "white nights" phenomenon takes place from mid-June to early July, when it is full daylight at 3AM. Summers are rainy but warm, with temperatures between 20 and 25 C. Autumn temperatures drop quickly and October temperatures seldom exceed 5 C, foretelling the snow that will soon arrive.

## Public Holidays

- \* **New Year's Day** January 2
- \* **Orthodox Christmas** January 7
- \* **Defender's Day** February 23
- \* **International Women's Day** March 8
- \* **Labor Day** May 1
- \* **Victory Day** May 9
- \* **National Holiday - Independence Day** June 12
- \* **Reconciliation Day** November 7
- \* **Constitution Day** December 12

## Where to Eat

The **Jardin d'hiver** is the restaurant of the Astoria, Saint Petersburg's most sumptuous palace. Traditional Russian indulgences like **Zakouskis** can be sampled while a string orchestra sets the mood. For Empire-period setting, try the **Taleon Club**. In a Romantic palace décor, the **Dostoevsky** restaurant's menu features fine Russian and French cuisine. In the Loussopov palace, the discreet level of service at **Dvorianskoye Gnedzo** facilitates both intimate dinners and business clients. Finally for exquisite European-Russian cuisine in a temple of sleek modern design, the Grand Hotel Europe's restaurant, **Europe**, is worth a visit. The **Russian Empire** has been called the most exquisite restaurant in Russia; it features three luxurious dining rooms, and a very exclusive wine and cognac list: an Armagnac from 1812 can even be ordered just by the spoonful! At the **Na Zdorove**, you can order Gorbachev's favourite soup: okroska and typical Russian drinks like kvass and mors.

## Local Gift Ideas

No matter what your taste, Russian gift ideas abound. Elisseev has a good selection of high quality vodka and caviar, as do some of the shops in the Gostiny Dvorshopping center. For Russian crafts like the Matriochkas (Russian wooden puzzle dolls), lacquered boxes, painted wooden eggs, fur hats, wool shawls, or Red Army paraphernalia, try the market on Rynok Souverinov, close to the Church of Our Savior's Blood. For art books and engravings, the gift shops at the Russian Museum, the Hermitage and the Peter and Paul fortress have a fine choice. Other gifts to look for include religious images, gourmet delicatessen products and Soviet-era remnants.

## Leisure Time

The regal Winter Palace houses the Hermitage, which has one of the largest art collections in the world. Its more than three million works of art include several important pieces by Rembrandt and Rubens, as well as works by Van Gogh, Matisse, Picasso, Fra Angelico, among many others. In the same area, you can see a bronze statue of the city's father, Peter the Great, as well as impressive views of the Neva and the buildings in proximity from the quays between Lieutenant Schmidt Bridge and Trinity Bridge.

Another impressive street for a promenade is Nevski Prospect. Three miles in length, this busy street, packed with cafés, chic hotels, shopping galleries and churches, invites frequent comparisons to Paris' Champs-Élysées.

A cosier, but interesting neighborhood for a more serene stroll along the canals is that of Sennaïa Plotchad. This is also where the Marinski Theatre, which produces operas and dance recitals, is located.

The Church of Our Savior's Blood, which embodies the Russian Revivalist style, is colorfully lit. Saint Petersburg's oldest structure is the Peter and Paul Fortress on Zaiatchi island. Dostoevsky and Trotsky are among its famous prisoners. The royal family, the Romanovs, also have their tombs here in the gilt-edged Cathedral of Saint-Pierre and Saint-Paul, located within the fortress walls.

Excursions to Catherine's Palace at Tsarskoïe Selo or the Peterhof Palace both offer a taste of the luxury enjoyed by the Czars. Located on the outskirts of the city, a visit to either palace offers a pause from the urban pace and a view of Russia's northwest plains.

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