



CICERONI
T R A V E L

KREMLINS & CATHEDRALS MOSCOW & THE BIRTH OF RUSSIA

THURSDAY 8 – MONDAY 12 NOVEMBER 2018 (5 DAYS)

LECTURER: TOM DUNCAN

£2090

- **Comprehensive introduction to Moscow, one of the most intriguing of cities**
- **Explore the Kremlin with its array of churches, reception halls and museums**
- **Discover the city's fine museums, particularly the Tretyakov and Pushkin**
- **Enjoy time on the celebrated Moscow Metro**
- **Very comfortable 5* hotel and surprisingly good food**
- **Ideally followed with Collecting the Best: Connoisseurs' St Petersburg**



The Kremlin, Moscow

OVERVIEW

The Moscow Kremlin (a 'kremlin' is a fortified complex, of which many have survived throughout Russia) is imprinted on our memories, visual and literal. This is partly due to its extraordinary silhouette seen against the skyline, but also the result of its 'see-saw' role in the development of Russia as a European and world power.

Emerging from medieval isolation as the centre of an autocratic state, *Rus*, a buffer state which saw off the Mongol hordes who had arrived from Asia to harry the fringes of eastern Europe, it grew into the capital of a fast expanding Russia under Ivan the Great (d. 1505) and his grandson, Ivan the Terrible (d. 1591). Subsequent losses during the 'time of troubles' when a virtual 'civil war' broke out, were reversed and consolidated in the seventeenth century with the rise of the Romanov dynasty who would rule Russia until the revolution of 1917.

Moscow's role did not last long as it was side-lined by Peter the Great's foundation of St Petersburg. However, it was not neglected, given it was the traditional place of coronation for all Tsars up to Nicholas II. Thus the Kremlin and its constituent buildings were maintained and constantly renewed, surviving even the change of regime at the end of World War I.

Moscow re-occupied centre stage after the Russian revolution of 1917. While those of us of a certain age will probably equate Moscow with the grim communist era, the most interesting chapter in its history is now in full swing. This is its amazing physical transformation over the last twenty years into a vibrant, exciting and, surprisingly for many visitors, a youthful and welcoming city!

Our tour will chart this extraordinary history and its often vivid events through a series of visits to all the major sites and collections in and around central Moscow. This is timed to avoid the crowds which can blight one's experience during the 'high' season from April to October.

The Kremlin with its cathedrals, museums and Imperial halls will take centre stage as we trace the history of Russia over many centuries. There are wonderful museums such as the Kremlin Armory with its Tsarist treasures (not just weapons!), including the fabulous Romanov crown jewels. Then there are the splendid paintings in both the Tretyakov and Pushkin Museums. We shall also enjoy time on the Moscow Metro, visit the extraordinary Novodevichiy Convent and its adjoining Cemetery (here we find the resting place of Chekov, Prokofiev, Shostakovich, Chaliapin, Khrushchev and Yeltsin, amongst many other famous Russians) and sample the very best of contemporary Russian cuisine.

We shall stay in the historic and charming 5* Metropol Hotel. Located adjacent to the famous Bolshoi Theatre (for which tickets can be booked) and a few minutes gentle walk from the Kremlin, it is the ideal base from which to explore the city. **Participants will be able to attend opera, ballet and concert performances – details of these will be issued to participants once the programmes are published.** This tour can be combined with Connoisseurs' St Petersburg for which a £300 discount will apply to the combined cost of both tours.

ITINERARY OUTLINE

Day 1: Thursday 8 November – We fly from Heathrow to **Moscow** and on arrival we shall be met by our local tour manager. We drive into the city and check into our hotel, the **5* Metropol**. Later that evening we have dinner in one of the hotel's two restaurants.

Day 2: Friday 9 November – This morning we begin with a city tour by coach which will introduce us to the historic centre. There is little or nothing left of medieval **Moscow** outside the Kremlin, as it was burned to the ground by Crimean Tartars in 1571. It was not until the election of Mikhail Romanov as tsar in 1613 that the city recovered and thereafter new buildings appeared, especially outside the city's ramparts. Peter the Great's move to St Petersburg initiated a period of semi-decline, sealed by Napoleon's occupation. In the nineteenth century Moscow developed into a thriving commercial centre which saw powerful elites emerge, with many fine public buildings and monuments erected. This is the heritage which we shall discover today and on subsequent days.

Apart from the Kremlin, one of the city's major 'skyline' buildings is the recently completed **Cathedral of Jesus Christ the Saviour**. Nothing else marks so spectacularly the revival of the influence of the Russian Orthodox Church since the collapse of communism. We continue to the **Tretyakov Gallery** for the first of two visits. This will concentrate of what is surely one of the finest collections of Russian Icons to survive from medieval times. These talismans of faith are exceptional in every way. We then enjoy a tour of the **Moscow Metro**, visiting a series of remarkable stations with their lofty platform halls decorated in the most spectacular fashion. Our day will end with a first walk round Red Square where we shall visit **St Basil's Cathedral** and end with time spent exploring the historic **GUM** department store. We shall break for a group lunch and the evening will be free.

Day 3: Saturday 10 November – It is a short walk from our hotel to the **Kremlin** where we shall spend the morning. No other building summarises the trajectory of Russia quite so comprehensively: a fortified medieval enclosure within which church and state shared its grounds; a 'theatre' within which some of the most significant events in Russian history were enacted; all this and more will be encountered. We shall visit the **Cathedral of the Assumption**, the famous **Armory Museum** (which incidentally has the finest collection of Tudor silver anywhere!) and of course, the utterly amazing **Imperial Regalia**, newly displayed.

Our afternoon visit will be devoted to the **Pushkin Museum**, divided between two adjacent galleries. The **Main Building** houses Ancient Art (including the famous treasures from Troy 'borrowed' from Berlin at the end of World War II), with a wonderful display of Old Master paintings across many schools - there is a particularly fine series of works by Rembrandt. Across the road is the so-called '**Museum of Private Collections**' and this contains some truly stunning European and American art from the nineteenth century onwards, particularly Impressionist and Post-Impressionist works. We shall break for a group lunch and the evening will be free.

Day 4: Sunday 11 November – We return to the **Tretyakov Gallery** and discover the rich heritage of Russian art, particularly from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries with works by Perov, Shishkin and Ilya Repin all well represented. We return to our hotel and the rest of the day will be free for independent exploration. Tonight's group dinner will be in a local restaurant close to our hotel.

Day 5: Monday 12 December – This morning we drive out to visit the famous **Novodevichy (New Maiden) Convent**, founded in 1524 and within its walls we shall find some spectacular churches and bell towers. Adjacent is the famous cemetery wherein lie some of Russia's most important politicians, writers, composers and artists. This marks the formal end of our visit and those travelling on for the 'Connoisseurs' St Petersburg' tour will be dropped at the relevant rail station, accompanied by Tom Duncan. Those returning to the UK will be taken to the airport, accompanied by our local guide, for the flight to Heathrow.

PRACTICALITIES

Price £2090 **Single Supplement** £375 (Double/Twin Room for Sole Use) **Deposit** £350

Please note that there is a £300 total discount if Moscow is taken with Connoisseurs' St Petersburg

Hotels 4 nights with breakfast at the 5* Metropol Hotel

Flights British Airways

Outward: **BA233** Departs London Heathrow (Terminal 5) **0835**, arrive Moscow Domodedovo **1515**

Return: **BA232** Departs Moscow Domodedovo **1650**, arrive London Heathrow (Terminal 5) **1755**

Price includes 2 dinners & 2 lunches with wine, water & coffee, all local transfers, entry fees & gratuities, services of Tom Duncan & local guide

Not included Travel to/from Heathrow, 2 dinners & 2 lunches. Visa: from approx £109 excluding agency fees.

Please note that as part of the process you will need to provide biometric data (fingerprints) at the Russian Embassy or CIBT Visa Agency offices in London (Mon – Fri). Details will be sent with the booking confirmation.



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