

- [Churches \(10\)](#)

- » [Baptism of Our Lord](#)

2, Dvinskaya Ulitsa

Standing at the edge of Gutuevsky Island, near Ekateringof Park, this small, late 19th century church is still undergoing large-scale restoration after the ravages it suffered in the Soviet period. The parish church for St. Petersburg's main sea port, which was moved from Kronshtadt to Gutuevsky Island in the mid 19th century, the Church of the Baptism of Our Lord was designed by Vasilii Kosyakov, Director of the Petersburg Institute of Engineering and Construction, and funded mostly by Ivan Boronin, a wealthy textiles manufacturer who wished to establish a family mausoleum at the church.

Completed in 1888, the red-brick church had an intricately decorated facade, featuring tiled mosaics, gilded reliefs, and "kokoshniki" - medieval Russian decorations in the shape of a traditional headdress like a tiara. With its large arched windows, single gold dome and slender belltower, the church, standing right on the banks of the Ekateringofka River, recalls a ship in full sail.

The church's interior was also richly decorated, with a marble alter and ivory iconostasis, as well as bright frescoes covering all the walls. Sadly, all these precious decorations were plundered or destroyed after the Revolution, when the church was used variously as a warehouse, a soap factory and a garage. Shelled along with nearby port buildings during the Second World War, the ruined building was returned to the Orthodox Church in the early 1990s, and the massive restoration program is finally nearing completion.

Visiting Information

Address: 2, Dvinskaya Ulitsa.

Metro station: Narvskaya.

From the metro: On exiting the station, cross Ploshchad Stachek and head along Perekopskaya Ulitsa to the Bumazhny Canal. Follow the canal to the right around Ekateringof Park, and take the second right down Lifyandskaya Ulitsa. Walk up to the Obvodny Canal, turn left and cross Gutuevsky Bridge. The church is on your left next to the bridge. (15 minutes)

Opening hours: Daily from 9am to 6pm (from 8am to 8pm on Sundays).

Far from any tourist route, the Church of the Baptism of Our Lord is only worth seeking out for those who have time to explore the varied industrial architecture of the Obvodny Canal and the neglected Kirovskiy District. Although its exterior is still under scaffolding, the Church of the Baptism of Our Lord is fully functioning, with daily services and an Icon of the Birth of Christ which miraculously restored itself in March 1998, and has become a popular shrine for the very faithful, particularly at Christmas. On 19 January, the Baptism of Christ, many come to the church to collect freshly blessed holy water.

- » [Cathedral of SS Peter and Paul](#)

Peter and Paul Fortress

The Cathedral of SS Peter and Paul is the oldest church in St. Petersburg, and also the second-tallest building in the city (after the television tower). It is intimately linked to both the history of the city and to the Romanov dynasty, as it is home to the graves of nearly all the rulers of Russia since Peter the Great.

Work began on the first, wooden church to be erected on the site just one month after St. Petersburg was officially founded, and the church was consecrated on April 1, 1704. In 1712, the current, stone Peter and Paul Cathedral started to be built, to a design by Domenico Trezzini. This one took slightly longer to build - 20 years, in fact - and was consecrated on June 29, 1733.

The Peter and Paul Cathedral marked a radical departure from traditional Orthodox churches, being built in early Baroque style. Its rectangular shape, bell-tower, and landmark needle are all features borrowed from the protestant churches of Western Europe - the influence of Dutch architecture is particularly visible - all of which was in accordance with Peter's wishes.

The cathedral's rectangular base stretches from southwest to northeast, and its walls are formed with decorative pilasters and ornate cherub heads on the windows. The multi-tiered cathedral bell tower is crowned with a landmark needle, upholstered with copper gilded sheets. The needle, built by Dutchman German von Bolis, is topped off by the figure of a flying angel bearing a cross. The clock for the bell tower was delivered in 1720 from Holland where it was purchased for 45,000 rubles - a huge sum for the time.

The inside of the cathedral holds a fantastic iconostasis, completed by a group of more than forty Moscow architects under Ivan Zarudny from 1722-1727. Whereas the architectural style of the cathedral is similar in style

to the Lutheran church, the painting of the iconostasis is more in the spirit of Catholic Church icons. The walls of the cathedral are also embellished with paintings of various bible themes, including many paintings of gospel stories by artists of the early and mid 18th century.

The bell-tower has a colorful, often tragic history. As the tallest structure for many miles, it was often the victim of lightning, and in fact burned down on the night of April 29-30, 1756, in a particularly severe fire. Although the bells were destroyed, the iconostasis was removed from the cathedral in the nick of time. In 1766, Catherine the Great ordered the bell tower to be rebuilt exactly as it had been, and the new tower was unveiled in 1776.

New bells were brought from Holland by renowned Dutch craftsman Ort Krass. They played "Since the Glory" at the top of every hour until 1917, and at noon played the national anthem, "God Save the Tsar", to the accompaniment of a canon shot - a tradition which continues today. The clock was turned off, but in 1952 a new one was installed that chimed four times a day and played the hymn of the Soviet Union.

One major attraction is the graves of most of the Romanov rulers of Russia from Peter the Great onward. Peter's grave is at the front right, and people still leave fresh flowers on it. Also here are both Catherines, Elizabeth, all three Alexanders, Paul, Peter III, Anne - and now both Nicholases as well, as the remains of Nicholas II and his family were re-interred in the small Chapel of St. Catherine on July 17, 1998.

The graves of the former rulers and their families are very extravagant, and well worth seeing. For example, monoliths carved from delicate and valuable stones including gray and green Altai jasper, rise over the graves of Alexander II and his wife, Maria. Top craftsmen from Peterhof worked on the decorations for 17 years.

» [Cathedral of St. Andrew](#)

11, 6-aya Linia Vasilevsky Island

Named after the Apostle Andrew, whom Peter the Great considered his personal protector, and who thus became patron saint of Imperial Russia and of the Russian Navy, this beautiful, late baroque, pink-and-white cathedral stands on the corner of Bolshoy Prospekt and 6-aya Linia, in a particularly picturesque part of Vasilevsky Island.

Peter himself ordered the building of the original Church of St. Andrew on this site, and plans and models for the church has already been chosen when the Emperor died. In 1732, under Empress Anna Ioannovna, a single-storey wooden church was built there. This church was struck by lightning in 1761, and burned to the ground. Alexander Vist, architect of the Senate Building, was commissioned to design a new stone cathedral but, after two years of construction work, one of the arches supporting the building's main dome collapsed, and Vist was dismissed. The job of finishing the cathedral was entrusted to Alexei Ivanov, a professor at the Academy of Arts. The cathedral, a late baroque masterpiece, similar in design to the St. Nicholas Naval Cathedral, was eventually consecrated in 1781.

In the 19th century, two chapels were added to the Cathedral by architect Nikolai Grebenka. The Cathedral of St. Andrew was closed after the Revolution, and given over to various organizations, including the Institute of Ethnography. During the Siege of Leningrad, the Cathedral was severely damaged both by bombs and by shelling. Thanks to the sharp thinking of members of the cathedral's congregation, the famous iconostasis, which had originally stood in the chapel of the Menshikov Palace nearby, was partly saved from the ravages of war and revolution, carefully hidden behind false paneling. Since being returned to the Orthodox Church, the Cathedral has been fully restored, and pride of place inside is given to several 18th century icons, including two - one painted, one mosaic - of St. Andrew.

Visiting Information

Address: 11, 6-aya Linia Vasilevsky Island

Metro station: Vasileostrovskaya

From the metro: Exit the station and turn right down pedestrian 6-aya Linia. The Cathedral of St. Andrew is one block down on your left. (5 minutes)

Opening hours: Daily from 9am to 7pm.

This impressive cathedral is one of the essential sights on Vasilevsky Island, St. Petersburg's oldest district. It can easily be combined with visits to the Menshikov Palace and the Academy of Arts. Services are held daily in the Cathedral, and the Cathedral has its own choir school, meaning that visitors will often get the chance to hear Orthodox choral singing inside.

» [Church of the Annunciation on Vasilevsky](#)

67, 8-ya Liniya

There were once ten churches in St. Petersburg named after the Annunciation of the Mother of God, one of the most important holidays in the Eastern Orthodox calendar. This charming and unusual church on Vasilevsky Island is one of only two surviving. The first wooden church was built here in the earliest years of St. Petersburg,

when Vasilevskiy was planned as the center of the city, and rows of canals were built along what are now the Lines. In 1750, by which time Vasilevsky was predominantly a merchant quarter, construction began on a stone church, funded by wealthy members of the congregation, and principally the Chirkiniy family of brewers.

Although the building's architect is unknown, the Church of the Annunciation is a surprisingly original creation, successfully blending elements St. Petersburg Baroque and medieval Muscovite styles. Its layered bell-tower was for many years the tallest building on Vasilevsky Island. The round church comprised seven side-chapels, each containing a holy relic or copy of a famous icon. The Church of the Annunciation was once the parish church for the nearby Academy of Sciences, and many famous scholars were members of its congregation, including the great Russian polymath Mikhail Lomonosov.

In the mid 19th century, the church became part of a convent, the auxiliary buildings of which can still be seen surrounding the church. However, on the orders of Nicholas I, the Church of the Annunciation was returned to its congregation, while the nuns were moved to the Voskresensky Novodevichy Convent in the south of the city. After the Revolution, the church was closed, its treasures ransacked, and the building used as a warehouse and workshops. During the Siege of Leningrad, the building was repeatedly bombed and remained in ruins till the early 1990s. The church's exterior has since been restored, and work continues on the interior, with the second floor already completed, including the restoration of original frescoes depicting Mount Ararat and God's covenant with Noah.

Visiting Information

Address: 67, 8-ya Liniya, V.O.

Metro station: Vasileostrovskaya.

From the metro: On exiting the station, cross Sredny Prospekt and walk up 7-ya Liniya. The church is only just over 100m away, set back from the street to your left. (5 minutes)

Opening hours: Daily from 9am to 6pm.

Although the Church of the Annunciation is still undergoing much needed restoration, and only the second floor is currently open, the church is so close to Vasileostrovskaya Metro Station that it can easily be visited while exploring the island. Although regular services are not currently held in the church, it is used often for weddings, christenings and funeral services.

» [Church of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ](#)

2a Kanal Griboyedova

This church is known to Petersburgers as the Church of the Savior on the Spilled Blood - or even just the Church on the Blood - as it marks the spot where Alexander II was fatally wounded in an assassination attempt on March 1, 1881. Designed by Alfred Parland in the style of 16th and 17th-century Russian churches, the Church of the Resurrection provides a stark (some would say jarring) contrast to its surroundings of Baroque, Classical and Modernist architecture.

Alexander II died of wounds inflicted in an attack by the terrorist group People's Will. Immediately, his heir, Alexander III, declared his intention to erect a church on the site in his father's memory, and moreover to have this church built in "traditional Russian" style - in distinction to what he saw as the contaminating Western influence of Petersburg.

Eventually, after Alexander had rejected several architects' designs, Archimandrite Ignaty gave the job to Parland, but made the design himself. The church's final composition drew heavily from St. Basil's Cathedral in Moscow and the Vladimir Cathedral in Kiev. Construction began in 1883, and Ignaty died shortly afterward, leaving Parland to complete the job.

No baptisms, funeral services, weddings, or other traditional church services were held in the Church on the Blood, as this was not in Alexander III's plans. However, weekly requiems (for Alexander II) and sermon readings attracted large numbers of worshippers.

After the Revolution, the church - despite becoming an official cathedral in 1923 - was looted. It was closed in 1932, and essentially turned into a garbage dump. Rumors abounded that the church would be torn down. Damage from World War II and the Siege of Leningrad can still be seen on the church's walls.

After World War II, the church was used as a warehouse for the Small Opera Theatre. The valuable shrine was almost completely destroyed. Four jasper columns with mosaic mountings in them, and a part of the balustrade were all that remained.

On July 20, 1970 the church was made a branch of the St. Isaac's Cathedral museum, and eighty percent of the church's extraordinary restoration was funded by profits from St. Isaac's. The decades of deterioration and then restoration culminated in the dramatic re-opening of the church in August 1997, when thousands of eager visitors swamped the church.

The project was estimated to cost 3.6 million rubles, but ended up costing 4.6 million rubles, mainly from the extravagant collection of mosaics. The more than 7500 sq. meters of mosaics link Alexander II's murder with the crucifixion.

One of the most impressive elements of the church is the extravagant shrine constructed on the spot where Alexander II was fatally wounded, which has maintained a special place within the church's interior. It was constructed to Parland's design, and completed in July 1907. Four columns of gray violet jasper serve as the base of the shrine. Rising up the shrine, small rectangular columns unite the carved stone awning and the decorated mosaic icons with images of the patron saint of the Romanov family. The columns are supported by a frieze and cornice and stone-carved pediment with vases of jasper along the corners.

The church has an outstanding and varied collection of mosaic icons. Several icons were completed in the traditions of academic painting, modernist style and Byzantine icon painting. The large icon of St. Alexander Nevsky was created according to a design by Nesterov. The icons of the main iconostasis Mother of God with Child and the Savior were painted to designs by Vasnetsov. The mosaic panel Pantokrator (Almighty) which depicts Christ giving a blessing with his right hand and holding the gospels in his left, in the platform of the central cupola was painted according to a design by N. Kharlamov. Parland and Andrey Ryabushkin completed the framed icon mosaic ornaments.

» [Naval Cathedral of St. Nicholas](#)

Kryukov Canal

The golden Baroque spires and domes of St. Nicholas' Cathedral (known locally as the Sailors' Cathedral) rises among the trees at the bottom of Ulitsa Glinki and shines above the bland residential and commercial buildings in the area. It is home to a number of revered 18th-century icons and a fine carved wooden iconostasis. Its beautiful bell tower overlooks Kryukov Canal.

The first church was built here in 1743, on the banks of Kryukov Canal, which links the Moika and Fontanka rivers just south of Teatralnaya Ploshchad. The cathedral and green space in front of it are located in a bend of Kanal Griboedova in an especially picturesque part of the city.

The area was originally settled by sailors in the time of Peter the Great, and the first, wooden chapel was built for them and bore the name of St. Nicholas the Miracle-Worker. As the area grew along with the new capital, Empress Elizabeth issued a decree to build a stone church for the regiments living here. Admiralty architect Savva Chevinskiy was commissioned to design and build it. However, before construction could begin, the ground where the church's foundation was to be built had to be raised by two meters to protect it from floods.

Construction of the new stone church began in 1753, and the main altar in the current cathedral was consecrated in 1760 in the presence of Empress Elizabeth. The cathedral actually consists of two churches, an upper church and a lower church. The church officially became a naval cathedral in July 1762 by order of Catherine II. Today, it is one of the best - and last remaining - examples of Baroque architecture.

The walls of the cathedral are decorated with scenes from the history of the Russian Navy. In 1907, two marble plaques were hung on the south wall of the upper church in honor of sailors who died in the Russo-Japanese War in 1904-5. At the same time, in the square next to the cathedral a memorial was erected to all the sailors of the battleship Alexander III who lost their lives in 1905.

The cathedral houses 10 spectacular icons in gold frame that were a gift from Catherine the Great. The icons portray saints who are celebrated at Russian Navy celebrations. One of the most revered places in the cathedral is the image of Nicholas the Miracle-Worker, given to the church by Greek sailors, which was taken from Russia by the French in 1812, and returned to Nicholas I by the Prussians in 1835.

St. Nicholas Cathedral is one of a very few cathedrals in the city that was not closed in Soviet times. In 1941, it became the official residence of Metropolitan of Leningrad and Novgorod Alexey (Simanskiy), who served in the cathedral from 1941 to 1944 during the 900-day siege of the city.

In 1989, a memorial plaque was installed in the cathedral to honor the 42 sailors who lost their lives off the coast of Norway. The inscription reads "In eternal memory of the sailors of the Russian Float who were taken by the sea on April 7, 1989."

» [Smolensk Icon of the Mother of God](#)

24, Kamskaya Ulitsa

In the grounds of the Smolensk Cemetery on Vasilevsky Island, this charming baroque church dates back to the mid 18th century, and is closely connected to St. Ksenia of St. Petersburg, the city's favourite saint - legend even has it that this 18th century "Holy Fool" secretly helped the builders of the stone church by carrying bricks to the site under the cover of night. As well as the separate stone chapel built in the cemetery near her grave, there is

also a chapel within the church itself devoted to her. The stone church, which replaced a wooden church consecrated in 1760, was completed in 1776 to a design by Aleksei Ivanov, Professor of Architecture at the Academy of Arts.

Additions were made to the church in 1809, when architect Andrian Zakharov added the northern chapel, and again in the mid-19th century, when the Chapel of John the Baptist, with its unusually beautiful iconostasis in the Byzantine style was added. The church suffered little in the Soviet period, and was closed for only six years, between 1940 and 1947. In fact, the church benefited from the widespread closure of Petersburg churches, gaining a number of valuable holy relics, including the famous Icon of the Merciful Mother of God, a gift from the monks of Mount Athos in the 19th century.

The icon after which the church is named is one of the most celebrated in Russian history. Purported to be the work of Luke the Apostle, it originally came to Rus in 1046, when Anna, daughter of the Emperor Constantine, married Vsevolod Yaroslavich, Grand Prince of Chernogov. Moved to Smolensk, it became associated with the defense of the city against the Blue Horde of Batu Khan, and was moved to Moscow in 1812 to lend its powers to the struggle against Napoleon's forces. Returned to Smolensk, it proved less effective in the Second World War, when it vanished during the Nazi invasion. In 2005, it cropped up in a private London gallery, and negotiations are underway to have the icon returned to Russia. A copy was brought to St. Petersburg by the gangs of forced labour from Smolensk who became the first occupants of the Smolensk Cemetery in 1738.

Visiting Information

Address: 24, Kamskaya Ulitsa.

Metro station: Primorskaya.

From the metro: Take buses 41 or 47, or trolleybus 9. (10 minutes)

Opening hours: Daily from 6am to 5pm.

For those who have plenty of time to explore St. Petersburg, the Church of the Smolensk Icon of the Mother of God, and the surrounding cemetery, are something of a hidden gem, well off the regular tourist track, although very popular among devout natives, who come to kiss the walls of the Chapel to Ksenia of Petersburg and lay flowers on the graves of the cemetery's most famous occupants. It's a tranquil and beautifully kept corner of the city, an ideal place for quiet contemplation. Restoration of the church itself is ongoing, but the church remains fully functional, with daily services.

» [Smolny Cathedral](#)

Neva River

The dazzling cupolas of Smolny Cathedral, one of the most beautiful churches in St. Petersburg, rise majestically from its waterside location on the banks of the Neva River.

Smolny Cathedral was designed by Italian architect Bartolomeo Rastrelli, who came to Russia as a boy with his father, who was invited to the country by Peter the Great and who constructed the Winter Palace and the palace at Tsarskoe Selo. Smolny Cathedral was one of Rastrelli Jr.'s last projects, and one that the great architect left unfinished.

The cathedral was part of a complex planned by the Empress Elizabeth to include a nunnery and a new school for girls - the first and most famous girls' state school in the Russian Empire. Construction began on October 30, 1748, and by 1761 construction of the cathedral was complete. However, in December of that year, Elizabeth died, and work on the monastery came to a halt. Rastrelli was relieved of his duties at Smolny by Catherine the Great, and left Russia in October 1763.

By the early 1830s, much of the cathedral had fallen into disrepair and was becoming overgrown. In 1832, Nicholas I commissioned Vasily Stasov to finish the building. Construction was officially completed in 1835, and the cathedral was on July 22 of that year.

Originally, Rastrelli wanted to put a bell-tower - designed to be taller than the Peter and Paul Cathedral, at that point the tallest building in the city - next to the cathedral, but his plans were never realized.

A half-circle cast-iron tracery fence with meticulous posts and gates fenced in the entrance to the cathedral. The steps in front of the altar were decorated with a cut-crystal balustrade, while the walls and the columns of the cathedral were finished with white marble and covered with sculpted images. The regal throne was located on the right side of the cathedral under a canopy, while on the other side there was a pulpit carved of white Urals marble and decorated with various carvings. The cathedral's Ark of the Covenant was made of 180 pounds of silver. There were numerous icons and paintings including Alexander Venetsianov's famous Resurrection of Christ.

After the revolution, the cathedral suffered a similar fate to most of the churches in St. Petersburg. In 1922, all of its valuables were looted, and in 1923 the cathedral was closed. For many years, the building was not even

heated, had no electricity or water, and it slowly decayed.

In 1972, the cathedral's iconostasis was taken out. Soon after, the cathedral became a museum for the city, and hosted exhibitions. It was later converted into a concert hall, which is still one of its primary functions today.

» [Ss. Isidor and Nicholas](#)

24, Ulitsa Rimskogo-Korsakova

Just a few hundred meters from the St. Nicholas Naval Cathedral, on the embankment of the Griboedov Canal, this charming neo-Byzantine church was one of the last churches to be built in St. Petersburg before the Revolution.

Built for the Brotherhood of St. Isidor, a group of Orthodox professionals and tradesman from Estonia, the church was designed by Alexander Poleshchuk, a member of the Brotherhood, and built on land presented to them personally by Emperor Nicholas II. Building of the two-storey church, in traditional five-dome form, began in 1903 and took four years to complete. The main hall of the church, on the second floor, was consecrated in 1907 in honour of St. Isidor. Services there were conducted in Estonian. The smaller first-floor hall, where services were conducted in Russian, was consecrated a year later in honour of St. Nicholas.

The church, which became the center of Estonian Orthodox life in the city, was closed in 1935, and many of its valuable decorations were passed to the St. Nicholas Cathedral nearby. The building itself came to be used as an Art Factory, the production site for vast banners and posters depicting the Soviet Union's leaders, for use at demonstrations and holidays.

Returned to the Orthodox Church in the mid-1990s, the church is still undergoing restoration. The smaller first-floor has already been reopened, and regular services are held there while the upper floor is completed.

Visiting Information

Address: 24, Ulitsa Rimskogo-Korsakova.

Metro station: Sadovaya.

From the metro: On exiting the metro, turn right down Sadovaya Ulitsa, and keep walking until you come to the confluence of the Kryukov and Griboedov Canals. Cross the first, and walk down the Griboedov Canal Embankment another 100m to the next bridge. The church is next to the bridge on the other side. (15minutes)

Opening hours: Daily from 9am to 6.30pm.

For now, there is little reason to go inside the Church of St. Isidor, which is mostly closed for restoration. However, it is one of the most picturesque areas of historic St. Petersburg, and visitors are likely to pass it at some point on boat trips or while exploring the Kolomna District.

» [St. Isaac's Cathedral](#)

Isaakievskaya Ploschad 1

St. Isaac's Cathedral was originally the city's main church and the largest cathedral in Russia. It was built between 1818 and 1858, by the French-born architect Auguste Montferrand, to be one of the most impressive landmarks of the Russian Imperial capital. One hundred and eighty years later the gilded dome of St. Isaac's still dominates the skyline of St. Petersburg. Although the cathedral is considerably smaller than the newly rebuilt Church of Christ the Savior in Moscow, it boasts much more impressive facades and interiors.

The cathedral's facades are decorated with sculptures and massive granite columns (made of single pieces of red granite), while the interior is adorned with incredibly detailed mosaic icons, paintings and columns made of malachite and lapis lazuli. A large, brightly colored stained glass window of the "Resurrected Christ" takes pride of place inside the main altar. The church, designed to accommodate 14,000 standing worshipers, was closed in the early 1930s and reopened as a museum. Today, church services are held here only on major ecclesiastical occasions.

Foreign visitors should buy entrance tickets just inside the right-hand door in the southern facade (not at the street-level ticket booth). We also recommend that you climb the 300 steps up to the cathedral's colonnade, and enjoy the magnificent views over the city.

Address: Isaakievskaya Ploschad 1

Metro: Nevsky Prospekt/Gostiny Dvor

Telephone: +7 (812) 315-9732

The Cathedral Open: Thursday to Tuesday, 11am to 7pm, last admission is at 6pm

The Colonnade observation point is open: Thursday to Tuesday, 11am to 6pm, last admission is at 5pm

Closed: Wednesdays

N.B.! No photography or video-filming is allowed in the Cathedral or at the Colonnade.

- [Museums \(7\)](#)

- » [Hermitage Museum](#)

Dvortsovaya Naberezhnaya, 34

The State Hermitage occupies six magnificent buildings situated along the embankment of the River Neva, right in the heart of St Petersburg. The leading role in this unique architectural ensemble is played by the Winter Palace, the residence of the Russian tsars that was built to the design of Francesco Bartolomeo Rastrelli in 1754-62. This ensemble, formed in the 18th and 19th centuries, is extended by the eastern wing of the General Staff building, the Menshikov Palace and the recently constructed Repository. Put together throughout two centuries and a half, the Hermitage collections of works of art (over 3,000,000 items) present the development of the world culture and art from the Stone Age to the 20th century.

Official names

Federal Cultural Institution "The State Hermitage"

The State Hermitage

Legal address

Dvortsovaya Naberezhnaya, 34

190000 St Petersburg, Russia

Director

Mikhail Borisovich Piotrovsky

About the collection

The collection contains around 3 million exhibit items, including:

paintings

16,783

works of graphic art

621,274

sculptures

12,556

works of applied art

298,775

archeological monuments

734,400

numismatics

1,125,323

other exhibit items

144,185

Creation of the museum

The museum was founded in 1764 when Empress Catherine the Great purchased a collection of Flemish and Dutch paintings (225) from the Berlin merchant Johann Ernest Gotzkowski.

Museum Complex

The museum's storerooms, exhibitions, departments and services are housed in 10 buildings, 7 of which are monuments of 18th- and 19th-century Russian culture.

More

The following exhibitions are open to visitors:

Main Museum Complex

Palace Square, 2

Winter Palace of Peter the Great

Dvortsovaya Naberezhnaya, 32

Menshikov Palace

Universitetskaya Naberezhnaya, 15

Museum of Porcelain

Prospekt Obukhovskoi Oborony, 151

Storage Facility of the State Hermitage in Staraya Derevnya
Zausadebnaya Street, 37A

Website: http://www.hermitagemuseum.org/html_En/index.html

» [Museum of Applied Art](#)

13-15, Solyanoy Pereulok

This is one of St. Petersburg's best-kept secrets! Located only a block away from the Mikhailovsky Castle and the Field of Mars, the Applied Art Museum is little known and rarely included in tourist itineraries. Yet the museum, which was established to provide education and stimuli to future generations of Russian artists and designers, is a real treasure for anyone interested in the fine arts and antiques. Its collection of over 30 thousand exhibits includes various decorative arts and crafts, including furniture, porcelain, chandeliers, tiled stoves, artistic metalwork, bass reliefs and carvings.

The museum was established in 1878 as a part of the Baron Schtieglitz School of Technical Drawing, which in the 20th century evolved into the Artistic Industrial Academy.

The museum's building is a masterpiece in its own right and was built in eclectic style by the architect Maximilian Mesmacher, specifically to house the museum's collection. The building's huge Grand Hall, incorporating an impressive glass roof, recently underwent an extensive program of restoration. Some of the museum's elegant smaller halls, including the Antique, Medieval and Ancient Russian rooms are definitely worth a look even if you don't plan on staying to browse through the museum's main collections.

Finding the museum tucked away on the premises of the Academy can be quite a challenge! Visitors need to take the main entrance into the Academy, located at Solyanoy Pereulok 13, then go up the grand staircase, turn right, walk along the corridor and take the first narrow staircase on your left down to the next floor. The museum's entrance is on the lower landing of the staircase and the ticket counter is just on the left as you walk in. As with most Russian museums, all visitors are asked to leave coats and larger bags in the cloakroom. Don't be surprised to see dozens of students throughout the museum and the Academy, busy sketching the museum's exhibits as well as the magnificent building in which they are housed.

Location: 13-15, Solyanoy Pereulok
Metro: Chernyshevskaya
Telephone: +7 (812) 273-3258
Open: Daily, 11 am to 5 pm

» [Museum of Cosmonautics and Rocket Technology](#)

3, Petropavlovskaya Krepost

Of the several museums housed in the Peter and Paul Fortress, this is one of the most interesting, although it appears to have the least connection with its historic surroundings. In fact, these particular buildings were used in the 1930s to house one of the Soviet Union's first military rocket research laboratories.

Located in the Ioannovskiy Ravelin, the museum, which has been open since 1973, traces the history of the development of rocket technology in the Soviet Union and Russia. Among the exhibits, visitors will find a number of historic rocket engines, as well as a Soviet era re-entry capsule, cosmonauts' space suits, and a flag of St. Petersburg that was hung from the Mir Space Station for 161 days, before being returned to the city in time for the 300th Anniversary celebrations in 2003. The museum's simply presented exhibits still have the power to thrill, especially for those who remember the heady days of the Soviet-US space race.

Location: 3, Petropavlovskaya Krepost'
Metro: Gorkovskaya
Telephone: +7 (812) 238-4540
Open: Daily from 11am to 6pm (Closed Wednesdays and the last Tuesday of each month).

» [Museum of Dolls](#)

8, Ulitsa Kamskaya

The exhibition at the Doll Museum isn't just for girls - as well as dolls "from all ages and nations", the museum displays a rich collection of lead soldiers, representing warriors of various eras.

The Doll Museum has displays a huge variety of exhibits, from traditional folk toys to the latest designer dolls. Looking at the dolls, you will also learn plenty about the traditional ceremonies, festivals and costumes of the Eastern Slavs. The museum also contains characters from literature and fairytales, and doll "actors" from the puppet theatre.

Alongside the permanent exhibition, the museum hosts temporary exhibitions of dolls by Petersburg's top designers. Under the instruction of local artisans, you can take part in master classes where you will get the chance to make your own dolls from cloth, straw, paper and other materials. Traditional peasant dolls are surprisingly quick and easy to make, and there are a variety of other master classes on offer.

Location: 8, Ulitsa Kamskaya

Metro: Primorskaya

Telephone: +7 (812) 327-7223, +7 (812) 327-7274

Open: Daily from 10 am to 5.30 pm, closed on Mondays

» [Museum of Non-Conformist Art](#)

10, Ulitsa Pushkinskaya (Entrance from 53, Ligovsky Prospekt)

Part of the Pushkinskaya 10 Arts Center, which has become the (un)official home of St. Petersburg's alternative arts scene, this ramshackle gallery is a must-see for anyone with an interest in the development of modern art in Russia. Housed in several rooms of this sprawling association of galleries, concert venues, and studios, the museum represents the most interesting aspects of independent art from the Soviet Union.

Much of the collection was donated personally by the artists, many of whom worked or still work with the Pushkinskaya collective. Official support from the State Russian Museum has helped to enlarge and formalize the collection, but it still provides a fascinating glimpse of the counter-culture in the post-war Soviet period.

Location: 10, Ulitsa Pushkinskaya (Entrance from 53, Ligovsky Prospekt)

Metro: Ploshchad Vosstaniya

Telephone: +7 (812) 764-4852

Open: Daily from 3 pm to 7 pm (Closed Mondays and Tuesdays)

» [The Cruiser Aurora](#)

Petrovskaya Naberezhnaia (Embankment).

The historical ship Aurora has been turned into a museum and is docked just a few hundred yards upstream from the Cabin of Peter the Great, opposite the "St Petersburg" Hotel. The cruiser, built in St. Petersburg between 1897 and 1900, took an active part in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05 and participated in the Tsushima battle, in which most of Russia's Pacific fleet was destroyed. After the war the ship was used for personnel training and during the October revolution of 1917 gave the signal (by firing a blank shot) to storm of the Winter Palace, which was being used as a residence by the democratic, but largely ineffective Provisional Government.

During World War II and the 900-day Siege of Leningrad the guns of the ship were taken down and used on the front line of the city's defenses. After the war the ship was carefully restored and used as a free museum and training ship for cadets from the nearby Nakhimov Navy School.

Location: Petrovskaya Naberezhnaia (Embankment).

Open: 10:30 am to 4:00 pm.

Closed: Monday, Tuesday and the last Wednesday of the month.

Admission: free.

» [Zoological Museum](#)

1, Universitetskaya Nabereshnaya

St. Petersburg's impressive zoological collection consists of over 17 million species, although only 500 thousand species can be displayed in the museum's current 19th century home. Exhibits range from enormous dinosaur, mammoths and whale skeletons to stuffed animals and birds and a unique collection of butterflies. Although the museum's exhibits are rather low-tech and old-fashioned, future funding projects hope to liven up the museum with more interactive displays and multimedia presentations.

The museum developed from the original zoological collection of the Kunstkammer, which was established in 1832 and opened to the public in 1838. Since 1898 the museum has occupied its current location, which previously housed part of the city's Sea Port Authorities. Today the turreted building of the Zoological Museum blends beautifully with the architectural ensemble of the Strelka of Vasilyevsky Island. Many locals call this district of St. Petersburg the "Museum Town" due to the large number of museums concentrated in the area (the Navy Museum, the Ethnography of the World Museum a.k.a. the Kunstkammer etc.).

Address: 1, Universitetskaya Nabereshnaya

Metro: Vasileostrovskaya

Telephone: +7 (812) 328-0112

Open: 11 am to 5 pm

Closed: On Fridays

• [Palaces, Castles \(6\)](#)

» [Catherine's Palace](#)

Pushkin, 7, Sadovaya Str.

Located some 12 miles (about 25 kilometers) away from St.Petersburg, the ensemble of the Catherine's Palace and Park are among Russia's top historical recreation complexes visited by hundreds of thousands tourists every year.

In the seventeenth century there was a Finnish farm here at Dudorovsky eminence called "Saari mois" in Finnish language. In 1708 it became a possession of the Russian Tsar, and the Finnish toponymy word "Saari mois" was transformed into "Tsarskaya Mysa" that sounded more Russian.

Portal of Ekaterininsky PalaceIn 1708-1724 Tsarskaya Mysa was the residence of Peter the Great's wife, the Empress Catherine I. From 1741 Tsarskoye Selo became the residence of the Empress Elizabeth and during her reign the architect Rastrelli created a magnificent Imperial Palace, a brilliant masterpiece of Russian baroque. At the same time the Hermitage and Grotto Pavilions were built, regular Upper and Lower Gardens were laid out, and the Lower Garden was decorated with sculptures.

Later the ensemble was supplemented by the Cold Bath-house, the Agate Pavilion, the Hanging Gardens with a sloping platform, and the Cameron Gallery.

Principal staircase to Ekaterininsky PalaceIt is best to get away from the city's rush and noise and come to Catherine's Palace and see its magnificent interior and treasures or stroll along the Park's alleys and paths. It is where you will find calmness and relaxing atmosphere.

The exposition in the Catherine Palace Museum (prior to 1910 - the Great Tzarskoje Selo Palace) encompasses the 250-year history of the famous monument, and acquaints visitors with the work of the architects who participated in its construction and decoration in the 18th and 19th centuries, and also with the current state of this unique landmark, with the work of restorers who managed to bring the palace back to life after World War II. Currently, 29 of the 57 palace halls destroyed during the war have been restored.

"Girl with a jug" fountainIn 1717, when the city of St. Petersburg was just being built on the banks of the Neva river, Tzarskoje Selo saw the construction of a new, stone imperial manor, which became known as the "Stone Chambers" of Catherine I. In August of 1724, when the construction was already completed, a celebration was organized in the palace during which "13 cannons were fired thrice." The Tsar and all of the major government dignitaries were present.



The palace was a small two-story building typical of Russian palaces of the early 18th century. The first attempt to expand the palace was undertaken during the reign of Empress Elizabeth according to plans Chinese village by Mikhail Zemtsov at the end of 1742 and beginning of 1743. Reconstruction of the Catherine Palace and park

ensemble was carried out by his pupils, Andrei Kvasov and Savva Chevakinsky. Following the death of Mikhail Zemtsov, work at Tzarskoje Selo passed under the direction of Andrei Kvasov and his assistant, the builder Giuseppe Trezini. On May 5, 1745, along with Trezini, Savva Chevakinsky was appointed to Tzarskoje Selo, and the latter oversaw the construction at Tzarskoje Selo until 1760. From the end of 1748 and through 1756, construction of the Tzarskoje Selo residence was directed by court architect Bartolomeo Francesco Rastrelli. On May 10, 1752, Empress Elizabeth signed a decree ordering the complete overhaul of the old palace. On July 30, 1756, Bartolomeo Francesco Rastrelli presented his creation to Elizabeth and foreign diplomats.



The palace was quite impressive with its size, powerful spatial dynamics and picturesque decoration in the style of the Russian Baroque. The wide, light blue ribbon of the palace with its snow-white columns and gilt ornament looked quite festive. The northern wing was topped by the five golden domes of the Palace Chapel, and the southern wing, which contained the formal, state rooms, was topped off by a golden dome with a star on the spire. Approximately 100 kilograms of gold were used to gild the exterior and interior ornaments. At this time the formal yard was also designed, surrounded by the palace's service buildings placed in a semi-circle around the "circumference" of the yard. The galleries of the palace's facade consisted of windows and columns, each of which bore a wooden, gold-leafed statue or vase.

Address: Pushkin, 7, Sadovaya Str.

Open: 10.00 - 17.00

Closed: on TUE and on the last MON of every month

» [Gatchina](#)

Gatchina

Perhaps the most neglected of St. Petersburg's suburban palaces in the post-war period, Gatchina is also probably the most lived-in, with four Tsars considering it their family home. First appearing in records in 1499, Khotchino - the old name for Gatchina - was a Russian village under the rule of Novgorod the Great. Won and lost by the Livonians and then the Swedes in the course of the 17th century, it was regained for Russia by Peter the Great during the Northern Wars. Peter founded an Imperial Hospital and Apothecary there, but it was not until 1765, when Catherine the Great bought the village and surrounding lands for her favourite, Count Grigoriy Orlov, that work began on the palace and park.

Orlov employed Italian-born architect Antonio Rinaldi to design the Gatchina Palace. Rinaldi began work in 1766, and took fifteen years to complete the castle-style building. By that time, Orlov had fallen out of favour with Catherine and had only two years left to live. After his death, Gatchina was bought back by the Empress and handed to her son, the future Tsar Paul. Paul had his favourite architect, Vincenzo Brenna, remodel the palace, accentuating its fortress character to suite his militaristic tastes. Gatchina remained the property of his widow, Maria Fedorovna, and was then passed to his son, Nicholas I, who added the Arsenal Halls to the building and used it as his official summer residence, as did his son, Alexander II. Alexander III spent almost the first two years of his reign based at Gatchina, terrified of being assassinated like his father.

During the Revolution and Civil War, Gatchina was the site of two major events - the final fall of Kerensky's Provisional Government in 1917, and Trotsky's defeat of the final advance of the White Army from Estonia in July 1919. The town was renamed Trotsk for six years in the 1920s. The palace and park were opened to the public soon after the Revolution, and served as a museum until occupied by the Nazis in 1941. As elsewhere, occupation brought severe damage to the palace and park, and restoration work is still continuing over 60 years later.

Gatchina is located about 50km south of St. Petersburg, beyond Pushkin and Pavlovsk. The simplest way to reach the town is by marshrutka minibus from Moskovskaya (K-18), Kirovskiy Zavod (K-546), or Prospekt Veteranov (K-631) Metro Stations. Buses terminate next to Gatchina-Baltiskaya Station, which is directly opposite the main entrance to the Grand Palace. Suburban trains also run between there and Baltiskaya Station in St. Petersburg every 40 minutes, and the journey takes slightly less than an hour.

Grand Palace

The Grand Palace at Gatchina is perhaps the most unusual and individual of St. Petersburg's suburban Imperial palaces, although the modesty of its architectural decorations makes it far less striking at first glance than the brightly coloured, stucco covered facades at Pavlovsk and Tsarskoe Selo.

Antonio Rinaldi, the architect who designed the original Grand Palace for Count Grigoriy Orlov, studied and worked in his native Italy under Luigi Vanvitelli, probably that country's greatest neoclassical architect. While traveling in England, from where he took a great deal of the inspiration for Gatchina's Grand Palace and Park, Rinaldi received a commission from hetman Kirill Razumovsky to build a royal residence at the old capital of Baturin. From there he moved on to St. Petersburg, where he became attached to the Imperial Court of the future Peter III, for whom he designed a palace at Orenienbaum. After Peter's deposition and Catherine the Great's ascension to the throne, Rinaldi became the 'pet' architect of Catherine's lover and political ally, Grigoriy Orlov, building for him simultaneously the Grand Palace at Gatchina and the count's St. Petersburg residence, the Marble

Palace.

Priory Palace

An extraordinary building that resembles a Gothic country church more than a palace, the Priory Palace was the result of Paul's abiding relationship with the Knights Templar of the Maltese Order of St. John. Compelled to leave Malta by Napoleon, the Knights turned to Russia, with whom they had been allied during the Turkish Wars of Catherine the Great's reign, for assistance and protection. Paul, although officially Russian Orthodox, agreed to take the order under his patronage and, in 1798, assumed the title of Grand Master.

The Priory Palace was intended to be used as a priory for the knights under the auspices of Prince Conde, a French prior of the order who had entertained and impressed Paul during his travels in Europe. Although the Prince never came to Gatchina, and the palace was never officially turned into a priory, the building became the site of meetings for the Order.

Gatchina Park

The park at Gatchina was established at the same time as the Grand Palace, and its development followed much the same pattern as that of the building. Originally laid out by Antonio Rinaldi for Count Grigoriy Orlov, who boasted of his fine landscape garden in letters to Jean-Jaques Rousseau and used the park to indulge his favourite pastime, hunting, the Gatchina Park was developed further for Emperor Paul by Vincenzo Brenna, who added most of the park's stone follies and gave the picturesque wilderness a slightly more formal appearance.

» [Oranienbaum \(Lomonosov\)](#)

Oranienbaum (Lomonosov)

Still commonly known by its post-war name of Lomonosov, the estate at Oranienbaum is the oldest of the Imperial Palaces around St. Petersburg, and also the only one not to be captured by Nazi forces during the Great Patriotic War. Founded by Prince Menshikov, Peter the Great's closest adviser, the Grand Palace is one of the most opulent examples of Petrine architecture to have survived to the present, although until very recently the palace itself has been greatly neglected. After Menshikov's death, Oranienbaum passed to the state, and was used as a hospice until, in 1743, it was presented by Empress Elizabeth to her nephew, the future Peter III. Peter made Oranienbaum his official summer residence and transformed one corner of the park, ordering the construction of a "Joke" Castle and a small citadel manned by his Holstein guards. This peculiar ensemble, called Petershtadt, was mostly demolished during Pavel's reign. Antonio Rinaldi, the Italian-born architect who also designed the Grand Palace at Gatchina and the Marble Palace in St. Petersburg, was commissioned by Peter in 1758 to build a modest stone palace next to the fortress, and this has survived.

After Peter was deposed, Rinaldi was commissioned by Catherine the Great to build the Chinese Palace, in the Upper Park, as her official country residence. However, Catherine spent little time at Oranienbaum, which she had grown to hate during her marriage to Peter, and by the end of the 18th century the estate had been turned into a Naval Cadet College. The palace became an Imperial residence again in the reign of Alexander I, and retained that status until the Revolution, when it was immediately opened as a museum. Although never captured by the Germans, Oranienbaum was bombarded during the war and, while the Grand Menshikov Palace survived intact, its restoration was given much lower priority than the more famous estates at Peterhof and Tsarskoe Selo. Today, the small but elegant park has been almost completely restored, while the full restoration of the palaces has finally gained momentum over the last decade.

Oranienbaum is only 12km along the coast from Peterhof, so it is possible for those with some stamina to combine the two in a single daytrip. A marshrutka minibus (K-348) connects the two estates. From St. Petersburg it is possible to take a minibus (K-300) from Avtovo Metro Station, or suburban trains from Baltiskiy Station. Either way, the journey takes a little under one hour.

Grand Menshikov Palace

The lands on which Oranienbaum and the town of Lomonosov were established were first presented by Peter the Great to Grand Duke Alexander Menshikov around 1710. At the time, Menshikov was overseeing the fortification of the sea fort at Kronshtadt on Kotlin Island, 5km from the site across the Gulf of Finland.

Menshikov began to build his residence here in 1713, at about the same time as Peter began work on his own estate at Peterhof. Menshikov seemed intent on outdoing his master in terms of scale and grandeur, and commissioned architects Giovanni Mario Fontana and Gottfried Schadel, who were already building the Menshikov Palace in St. Petersburg, to design his seaside palace. After over a decade of work, which eventually bankrupted Menshikov, the palace was completed.

Peter III's Palace

Built between 1758 and 1762 by Antonio Rinaldi, the small Palace of Peter III is, along with the nearby Gate of Honour, all that remains of Petershtadt, the model fortress that Peter III had built for himself and his Holstein bodyguards. The bizarre set-up of Petershtadt adds weight to the traditional perception of Peter as immature, obsessed with militarism, and decidedly unfit to become Emperor of Russia. The citadel, of which Peter declared himself "Commandant", was surrounded by moats and earthen ramparts, and consisted of a barracks and officers' mess, an arsenal, a parade ground, and a Lutheran church.

Most of the buildings that comprised Petershtadt were demolished in 1798, when Peter's son, Paul I, ordered the removal of all wooden structures in the park. The Gate of Honour, which led onto Petershtadt's parade ground, is an elegant late Baroque gate tower with a narrow gold spire atop a wide arch and an octagonal turret that was once used as a look-out post. It now stands alone, and looks rather out of place among the overgrown shrubbery. However, its archway does provide a superb view of the Lower Pond and the eastern wing of the Grand Palace.

The Chinese Palace

There is nothing particularly Chinese about this charming building in the southern corner of the park at Oranienbaum. Built by Antonio Rinaldi between 1762 and 1768, it was the first major building project to be ordered by Catherine the Great, who planned for the building to serve as her private dacha. In fact the Empress spent only 48 days there during the 34 years of her reign. However, the building, which is currently undergoing full-scale renovation, is considered one of the finest examples of rococo in Russia, with its superbly ornate interiors featuring a range of late 18th century styles, including Chinoiserie, a trend imported to St. Petersburg from England rather than from the East.

Oranienbaum Park

Like the fabulous buildings at Oranienbaum, the park around them is in need of a great deal of tender, loving care to restore it to its former glories. While some parts of the varied parkland can still give a fair impression of the carefully planned landscaping carried out in the reign of Catherine the Great, others are so overgrown as to have become just wilderness.

The Upper Park, to the south-west of the Grand Menshikov Palace, is the most beautiful section of the estate, with varied woodland interlaced with canals, bridges and ponds. Laid out in the reign of Catherine the Great by Joseph Bush, the rolling parkland contains the Chinese Palace and Antonio Rinaldi's equally fascinating Sliding Hill, a three-storey, blue-and-white baroque pavilion that was once the starting point for a 500m "rollercoaster" using sledges or wheeled carts. Other buildings in the Upper Park include the Stone Hall, used in Catherine's reign for masquerades, the late 19th century Pergola, and the simple neoclassical Cavaliers' Room, which now houses a cafe. The Upper Park also boasts a deer enclosure with tame and very friendly inmates.

[More Information](#)

» [Pavlovsk](#)

Pavlovsk

Pavlovsk is the youngest of the grand Imperial estates around St. Petersburg. Named in honour of Tsar Pavel, this fine neo-classical palace and its extensive landscaped gardens are stamped with his taste and even more so with that of his wife, the German-born Maria Feodorovna. Although there was no love lost between Pavel and his mother, Catherine the Great, it was she who originally presented him with the 362 desyatinas - 607 hectares - of land around the Slavyanskaya River. Perhaps it was the impossibility of living with her son at Tsarskoe Selo, combined with the desire to keep him and his family reasonably close, that prompted her to do so, although the official reason was the birth of her grandson, the future Alexander I.

Although lacking the dazzling splendour of the estates at Tsarskoe Selo and Peterhof, Pavlovsk is well worth visiting both for the treasures in the elegant palace and for the charming, rambling park, which is one of the largest and finest English-style landscape gardens outside the UK.

Both the Park and the Palace at Pavlovsk were victims of wanton destruction during the Nazi occupation, and the extraordinary restoration project was not completed until the mid-1950s. Fortunately, there were extensive blueprints available for all aspects of the estate, so what you see now is almost entirely faithful to the original designs.

Pavlovsk Palace

The Great Palace at Pavlovsk is somewhat staid in comparison to its near neighbour at Tsarskoe Selo, forgoing that building's opulent ornamentation for classical elegance and harmony, painted in the deep yellow and white colour scheme typical of St. Petersburg neo-classicism.

That the palace achieved such a harmonious facade belies the fact that it was conceived as a much smaller building, with the design expanded and embellished during construction. The task of designing the palace was originally assigned by Catherine the Great to Charles Cameron, the Scottish-born architect who had won the Empress's lasting favour with the work he did at Tsarskoe Selo. Construction began in 1782, but Cameron's modest design and his penchant for the absolute simplicity of Palladianism and the historical purity of Adamesque were not to the liking of Pavel and his wife Maria Feodorovna, and they charged Cameron's assistant, Vincenzo Brenna, with the task of extending the palace and creating a more imposing and regal building. Brenna quickly became Pavel's favourite architect, and went on to design alterations on the palace at Gatchina, and the Mikhailovsky Castle in St. Petersburg. His great achievement, both there and at Pavlovsk, was to combine the future Tsar's eclectic tastes into an organic and harmonious architectural solution.

Pavlovsk Park

Although Pavlovsk's Park has nothing like the architectural wealth that can be seen at Pushkin or Peterhof, it is one of the most charming and extensive green spaces in or around St. Petersburg, and one of the largest landscaped gardens in the world.

The park's design, by Charles Cameron and Vincenzo Brenna - and, it is rumoured, Capability Brown - takes full advantage of the rolling countryside around the Slavyanka River's valley to create delightful vistas of copses, gentle slopes, winding streams and the occasional classical folly.

Right next to the Palace, the Private Garden was restricted to only the Imperial family, and its Dutch-style formalism and beds of brightly coloured flowers are in sharp contrast to the idyllic pastoralism of the rest of the park. The Palace stands almost on the edge of the park, although a small section across the main road contains a stretch of the Slavyanka, with decorations including Cameron's simple but striking Obelisk and the faintly ridiculous, gothic Marienthal Fortress, another testament to Pavel's fanatic militarism.

[More information](#)

» [Peterhof Palace](#)

18 miles west of St. Petersburg, 2 Razvodnaya Ulitsa

One of St. Petersburg's most famous and popular visitor attractions, the palace and park at Peterhof (also known as Petrodvorets) are often referred to as "the Russian Versailles", although many visitors conclude that the comparison does a disservice to the grandeur and scope of this majestic estate.

Versailles was, however, the inspiration for Peter the Great's desire to build an imperial palace in the suburbs of his new city and, after an aborted attempt at Strelna, Peterhof - which means "Peter's Court" in German - became the site for the Tsar's Monplaisir Palace, and then of the original Grand Palace. The estate was equally popular with Peter's granddaughter, Empress Elizabeth, who ordered the expansion of the Grand Palace and greatly extended the park and the famous system of fountains, including the truly spectacular Grand Cascade.

Improvements to the park continued throughout the 18th and 19th centuries. Catherine the Great, after leaving her own mark on the park, moved the court to Pushkin, but Peterhof once again became the official Imperial Residence in the reign of Nicholas I, who ordered the building of the modest Cottage Palace in 1826.

Like almost all St. Petersburg's suburban estates, Peterhof was ravaged by German troops during the Second World War. It was, however, one of the first to be resurrected and, thanks to the work of military engineers and over 1,000 volunteers, most of the estate's major structures had been fully restored by 1947. The name was also de-Germanicized after the war, becoming Petrodvorets, the name under which the surrounding town is still known. The palace and park are once again known as Peterhof.

Grand Palace

The Grand Palace at Peterhof was designed to be the centerpiece of Peter the Great's "Russian Versailles". Around 1720, the Tsar gave up on attempts to establish his court at Strelna, mainly because the boggy ground proved entirely unsuitable for the canals and fountains that he envisioned. Moving his attentions further east to Peterhof, the Tsar began to draw up his own plans for the grounds and palace. Work had already begun on a modest palace, designed by Jean-Baptiste Le Blond, in 1714, and that building was completed in 1721.



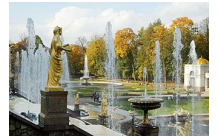
Peterhof Park and Gardens

The spectacular parkland at Peterhof is remarkable for the sheer variety of styles encompassed in its layout and features. Representing nearly two centuries of European aristocratic fashion executed to the highest standards, Peterhof is like an encyclopedia of park design through the age of empire. Particularly impressive is the fact that the master landscapers and garden designers who worked on the estate at Peterhof managed to overcome the extremely inclement conditions of the northern climate to create a wonderland of greenery and flowers, sweeping vistas and ornate architectural decorations.



The Fountains of Peterhof

The fountains of Peterhof are one of Russia's most famous tourist attractions, drawing millions of visitors every year. Fountains were intrinsic to Peter the Great's original plans for Peterhof - it was the impossibility of engineering sufficiently powerful jets of water that prompted him to move his attentions from the Strelna site to Peterhof - and subsequent generations competed with their predecessors to add grander and ever more ingenious water features to the parkland surrounding the Grand Palace.



Monplaisir

Peter the Great's pet project at Peterhof was this small but charming summer palace, which the Tsar designed by and for himself, although he sought the help of several architects to do so. If you arrive in Peterhof by boat, Monplaisir is one of the first sights to greet you. Sitting in the eastern corner of the Lower Park, right on the shoreline of the Gulf of Finland, Monplaisir vaguely resembles a Dutch Colonial mansion, with its high gabled roof over the central corpus and narrow rectangular windows to keep out the wintry north wind. The facade on the opposite side of the palace is quite different, with long single-storey galleries topped by a balustraded terrace and supported by slender columns. Here, large French windows allow natural light to pour into the rooms, giving the whole building a summery, almost tropical feel.



Marly Palace

Located in the western half of the Lower Park, the Marly Palace is a charming baroque mansion that was built on the orders of Peter the Great as an intimate retreat in the grounds of the Grand Palace. Peter's inspiration was the royal hunting lodge at Marly Le Roi, just outside Paris. Louis XIV had commissioned his residence there as a private, peaceful alternative to Versailles. Peter visited Marly Le Roi during his visit to France in 1717, and, when creating the "Russian Versailles" at Peterhof, he decided to have his own personal sanctuary built in the grounds.



Peterhof Hermitage

Standing on a moted island right on the shore of the Gulf of Finland, the graceful two-storey Peterhof Hermitage was envisioned by Peter the Great as an informal dining room for his closest associates, with a system of pulleys used to serve food and ensure the privacy of the diners.



Cottage Palace and Alexandria Park

To the west of the main park at Peterhof lies an expanse of landscaped parkland in the English style, named after Alexandra Fedorovna, wife of Nicholas I. Originally divided amongst Peter the Great's favourites, including Alexander Menshikov, who began to build a palace here shortly before he was disgraced and exiled, the land was used as a royal hunting ground for most of the 18th century, and then left to go wild after the court moved to Tsarskoe Selo.



[More information about Peterhorf Palace here](#)

» [Yelagin Ostrov](#)

Yelagin Ostrov Island

Known as Mustila in Finnish, Yelagin Ostrov, the smallest of the Kirov Islands in the northern part of the Neva delta, was inhabited by a colony of fisherman long before the founding of St. Petersburg. In 1709, it was presented by Peter the Great to Peter Shafirov, a distinguished diplomat and his Vice-Chancellor. Confiscated when Shafirov was sentenced to death for embezzlement in 1723, the island changed hands nine times before the end of the 18th century. Among its owners during this period was Ivan Perfilevich Yelagin, Oberhofmeister of the Imperial Court, who built the first brick palace on the island. It was his name that stuck in the popular consciousness, and the island has been Yelagin Ostrov ever since.

In 1817, the island was bought by the Office of Emperor Alexander I, who commissioned architect Carlo Rossi to reconstruct the existing palace as a summer home for his mother, Maria Fedorovna. The result is the beautiful Empire-style palace that still stands today, with several restored state rooms open to the public, and several charming follies dotted about the park. The island remained the property of the imperial family until the October Revolution.

In 1934, Yelagin Ostrov was reopened as a Central Park of Culture and Leisure. The layout of the palace grounds was considerably altered, with the addition of numerous sporting facilities, playgrounds, and monumental sculptures. A new central alleyway was cut through the park from the palace to the western tip of the island, and Yelagin became hugely popular with Leningraders for sport and relaxation at weekends.

Nowadays, some effort has been made to restore the park to its original landscaping, and paid entrance keeps the island free of traffic and new construction projects. As well as the attractions of the palace, Yelagin also offers rambling parkland, boating on an attractive series of lakes, and the chance to see the sun set over the Gulf of Finland from the island's western tip.

Opening hours: Park Summer - Daily from 6am to 12am, Winter - Daily from 6am to 11pm Palace Daily from 10am to 6pm.

• [Gardens, Parks \(5\)](#)

» [Alexander Garden](#)

Behind the Admiralty, at the top of Nevsky Prospekt.

The Alexander Garden is located in the very center of St. Petersburg, next to Palace Square and behind the Admiralty. Until 1806, the area was covered by the Admiralty's fortifications, but after these were removed it became Admiralty Square. At the beginning of the 19th century an avenue was laid out along the front of the main Admiralty, and very quickly became a fashionable place for the Petersburg aristocracy to promenade and swap the latest gossip from high society. The avenue even made it into Russian literature, when the country's favorite poet, Alexander Pushkin, mentioned it in his immortal novel-in-verse Evgeny Onegin.

The Alexander Garden was laid out in 1872-1874 over what had been Admiralty Square, to a design by the landscape gardener Eduard Regel, as part of the celebrations of the 200th anniversary of the birth of Peter the Great. The Garden was formally opened in 1874 in the presence of Alexander II, who agreed to having the Garden named after him. A fountain was installed in 1880 by a team led by Alexander Geschwend - it is known as the musical or dancing fountain because of the way it reacts to any music being played in the Garden. At the end of the 19th century, statues of great Russian cultural figures - the poets Vasily Zhukovsky and Mikhail Lermontov, the writer Nikolai Gogol, the composer Mikhail Glinka and the traveler Nikolai Przhevalsky - were installed.

The Alexander Garden was restored to its former glories at the beginning of the 1920s. During the Siege of Leningrad in the Second World War, not one tree in the Garden was cut down, although the city's inhabitants were in desperate need of firewood. The Garden was severely damaged by air-raids and shelling, but was again restored and opened to the public immediately the Siege was lifted.

How to Get There:

The Alexander Garden is located behind the Admiralty, at the top of Nevsky Prospekt. It's a pleasant 10-minute walk up Nevsky toward Palace Square from Nevsky Prospekt metro station.

Timeline:

Beginning of the 19th century - Avenue laid out along the front of the Admiralty.

1833 - Statues installed on the avenue.

1872 - Alexander Garden laid out on Admiralty Square.

1876 - 1880 - Fountain put in in the center of the garden.
1887 - Statue of Zhukovsky unveiled.
1892 - Statue of Przhevalsky unveiled.
1896 - Statues of Gogol and Lermontov unveiled.
1899 - Statue of Glinka opened.
1918 - 1989 - Garden renamed as the Maxim Gorky Workers' Garden.
Myths and Legends

Unlikely though it may sound, many people have pointed to similarities between the sculpture of Nikolai Przhevalsky and Stalin - and some have even suggested that Przhevalsky was Stalin's father. Some older people, true believers in Communism, to this day bring flowers to Przhevalsky's statue, as they are convinced that it is a bronze representation of Stalin.

» [Catherine Garden](#)

Ploshchad Ostrovskogo

The Catherine Garden is the unofficial name for the public garden in front of the Alexandriinsky Theater, between the Theater and Nevsky Prospekt. The Garden was laid out in the 1820s to a design by Carlo Rossi, and the statue of Catherine the Great which dominates it and from which it takes its name was erected in 1873. Looking at the Theater from Nevsky Prospekt, to the left of the Catherine Garden - known affectionately by locals as Katya's Little Garden - is the Anichkov Palace, while to the right is the Public Library, which was also built by Rossi and is considered to be one of the world's most important libraries. From late spring to early fall - and sometimes into winter - local artists sit on the sidewalk outside the Catherine Garden exhibiting and selling their work and offering to draw portraits of passers-by.

Timeline:

1816 - 1832 - Alexander Square laid out on former part of the Anichkov Palace Estate to a design by Rossi. Public garden opened on square.
1873 - Statue of Catherine the Great erected.
1873 - 1880 - Square remodeled.
Address: Ploshchad Ostrovskogo

» [Leningrad Zoo](#)

1, Alexandrovsky Park.

Leningrad Zoo is located in Alexander Park - of which it is effectively part - on the Petrograd Side. It was founded by two animal-lovers - Sofia and Julius Gerhardt - in 1865. Today it is the second largest Zoo in Russia (after Moscow Zoo), with 2,000 animals from 410 species.

In 1873 the Zoological Garden was taken over by Ernest Rost, who replenished its collection of animals, carried out repairs on all of its buildings and equipment, and made it into a profitable business by splitting it into two parts - zoological and commercial. The Zoo was used for circus performances and concerts by choirs and orchestras, and was also home to restaurants. The Zoo's increased profitability meant it could afford to expand its collection of animals - it gained giraffes, orang-utans, anteaters and African elephants - and create more pleasant living conditions and new enclosures for them. Rost left in 1897, and Zoo began to decline. In 1909 it was closed to visitors.

The Garden remained in desperate condition until 1918, when it was nationalized and began to be restored. A library was collected, research was carried out, and expeditions despatched to all corners of the globe.

The Zoological Gardens were significantly damaged during the Second World War - but even though the city's residents were themselves starving the Zoo's elephant always was fed. When the elephant was killed in a bombing raid in 1944, the whole city mourned. The Zoo closed during the middle of the War, but opened again in 1944. The animal collection gradually grew to include an Indian elephant, chimpanzee, giraffes, a hippo, and a rhino.

How to Get There:

The Zoo is located in Alexander Park between Gorkovskaya and Sportivnaya Metro stations. It's probably easier to get to from Gorkovskaya - turn left out of the metro and left again into the park, and just keep walking.

Timeline:

1865 - Sophie and Julius Gerhardt open public Zoological Garden in Alexander Park.
1873 - Ernest Rost takes over the Zoological Garden.
1909 - Zoological Garden declines; closed to public.

1918 - Zoological Garden nationalized.

Spring 1944 - Zoological Garden partially restored after being destroyed during the war; work goes on through the year.

1952 - Zoological Garden renamed Leningrad Zoo.

1991 - Zoo decides to remain as Leningrad Zoo - even though Leningrad votes to return to being St. Petersburg.

Address: 1, Alexandrovsky Park.

» [Moscow Victory Park](#)

Right next to Park Pobedy metro station

Moscow Victory Park is located in the south of St. Petersburg on Moskovsky Prospekt. It was founded in 1945 to mark the Allied victory in World War II over Nazi Germany.

The Park, which spreads over 68 hectares, is home to more than 100 types of tree and bush, and includes elements of formal and landscape planning, being decorated with ponds, canals, avenues, and flower gardens. The main artery of the park is the Avenue of Heroes, which is lined by bronze statues of people twice awarded the titles Hero of the Soviet Union and Hero of Socialist Labor. A statue of Marshal Georgy Zhukov, who commanded the Leningrad Front in the fall of 1941, was unveiled for the 50th anniversary of the victory over Germany.

The park is full of reminders of Leningrad's suffering during the war. In front of the park's main pavilion are two figures: "The Front", by Leonid Razumovsky, and "The Rear", by Nikolai Gorenyshev. In 1986, a cross was erected to the victims of the Second World War on the site of a brick factory in whose ovens the bodies of those who died in the Siege of Leningrad were burned.

How to Get There:

Moscow Victory Park is located right next to Park Pobedy metro station

Timeline:

October 7, 1945 - Moscow Victory Park founded.

July 7, 1946 - Park formally opened.

1961 - Park Pobedy metro station opened.

Myths and Legends

Rumours abounded for a years after the Park opened of strange things happening to people - many said they felt short of breath, or choked, or even fainted. Amid talk of the park having an "aura", an investigation was set up which discovered that the park was on the site of a brick factory whose ovens were used to burn the corpses of people who died during the Siege of Leningrad, as well as soldiers from the front. So many people died that many were roughly buried in unmarked graves in the factory's grounds. Leningraders swear that since a cross was erected on the sight of a mass grave, the ghosts of those who died and were not properly buried have ceased to haunt visitors to the park, and that the previous symptoms have disappeared.

» [Summer Garden](#)

Next to the Field of Mars and St. Michael's Castle

The Summer Garden is located where the Fontanka River flows out of the Neva River. It was founded in 1704 by order of Peter the Great, who was personally involved in planning it, and is laid out according to strict geometrical principles. The Summer Garden is home to marble statues acquired from Europe especially for Russia's new capital, and also to rare flowers and plants, as well as fountains. It was a traditional location for courtly life outside the palace, and balls were held here by the nobility, who also enjoyed simply taking the air in the Garden.

The Summer Garden is also the location of Peter the Great's first Summer Palace, built by the great Italian architect Domenico Trezzini and still there today. This Summer Palace - a two-storey Dutch-style affair with a high roof and comparatively modest interior - was one of St. Petersburg's first stone palaces. Its original interiors have been preserve to this day.

In 1777 the Summer Garden was severely damaged by flooding: Several statues were destroyed and fountains broken. However, it was soon restored to its original regular plan. Today its avenues are adorned by 79 sculptures by Italian sculptors of the 17th and 18th centuries, including Boratta, Bozzazza, and many others - the oldest collection of garden statues in Russia. And the selection of mythological themes in the statues is no accident, as the images of the gods and heroes of Antiquity reflected the ideas underpinning Peter's state and transforming activity.

The Neva River end of the Summer Garden is bounded by a fence designed by the architect Yury Felten in 1773-

1786. The Garden is also home to a Coffee House (designed by Carlo Rossi) and a Tea House (designed by Ludwig Charlemagne); in front of the latter is a statue of the great Russian fabulist Ilya Krylov by the sculptor Pyotr Klodt. The base of the monument is decorated by a bas relief based on themes from Krylov's tales.

How to Get There:

The Summer Garden is located next to the Field of Mars and St. Michael's Castle. To get there, take the metro to Gostiny Dvor station, cross Nevsky Prospekt and head up Sadovaya Ulitsa until you get to St. Michael's Castle. One of the two entrances to the Summer Garden is located just behind the Castle, across the canal.

Timeline:

1704 - Summer Garden laid out on the island bounded by the Fontanka, Moika, and Neva Rivers and the Swan Canal.

1776 - 1786 - Fence designed by Yury Felten added at the Neva end of the garden.

1777 - Garden almost completely destroyed by flooding, but swiftly restored.

1826 - Carlo Rossi builds Coffee House.

1827 - Ludwig Charlemagne builds Tea House.

1855 - Statue of Krylov unveiled.

Open: 10 am to 9 pm

- [Ports \(1\)](#)

- » [St. Petersburg Port](#)

St. Petersburg Harbour

Saint-Petersburg is the largest industrial and transport center, the marine capital of Russia. The port of Saint-Petersburg is the European gateway of the country, the most important transport link between the East and the West.

JSC "Sea Port of Saint-Petersburg" is the largest group of stevedoring companies in Saint-Petersburg port and the North-West of Russia. Founded on the base of Leningrad Sea Commercial Port, the enterprise has enjoyed successful development in the market environment.

The number of the port's employees exceeds 3,5 thousand people, and each work place in the port generates 7-8 jobs in other industrial branches.

More than 2000 companies from Russia, CIS countries, from far and near abroad choose the companies of the group "Sea Port of Saint-Petersburg". The main success factors are professional employees, modern technical equipment, high level of cargo handling, convenient location and well-developed infrastructure of the territories.

The thought-out policy of production modernization, new qualified staff, social and informational openness help JSC "Sea Port of Saint-Petersburg" to solve problems of the Russian transport market.

[Website](#)
