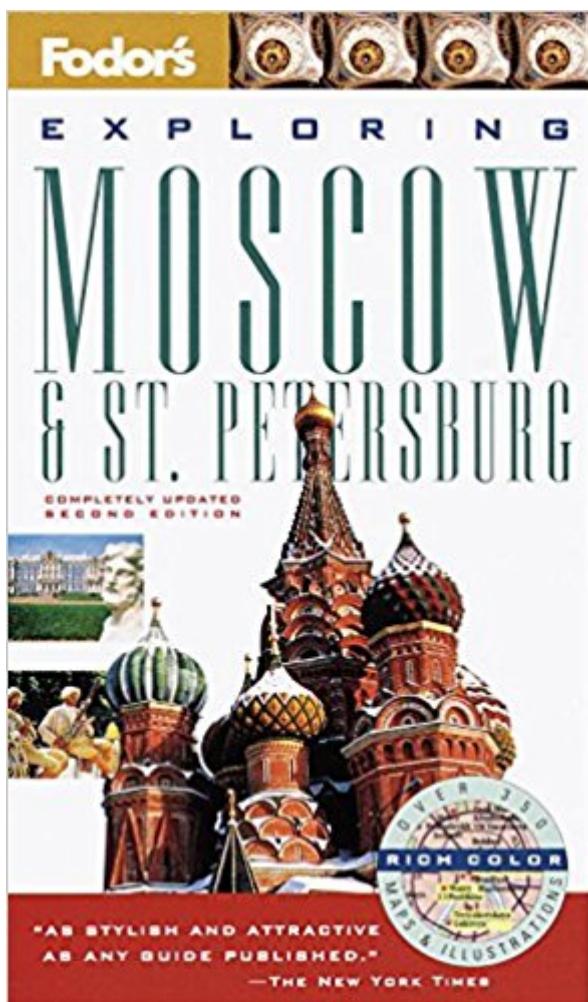


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Exploring Moscow & St. Petersburg, 2nd Edition (Fodor's Exploring Moscow And St Petersburg)



Synopsis

Fodor's Exploring Guides are the most up-to-date, full-color guidebooks available. Covering destinations around the world, these guides are loaded with photos, essays on culture and history, descriptions of sights, and practical information. Full-color photos make this a great guide to buy if you're still planning your itinerary (let the photos help you choose!) and it's a perfect companion to a general guidebook, like a Fodor's Gold Guide. All the great sights plus the history and anecdotes that bring them to life. Extraordinary coverage of history and culture. Itineraries, walks and excursions, on and off the beaten path. Architecture and art. Practical tips and full-color maps and photos. Getting there and getting around. When to go and what to pack. Quick tips on where to sleep in every price range. Savvy restaurant picks for all budgets. Praise for Fodor's Exploring Guides: "Most travel guides are either beautiful or practical. This one is both." -- New York Daily News "Beautiful...and the depth of text is impressive." -- San Diego Union Tribune "Authoritatively written and superbly presented...worthy reading before, during, or after a trip." -- Philadelphia Inquirer "Concise, comprehensive, and colorful." -- Washington Post "Absolutely gorgeous. Fun, colorful, and sophisticated." -- Chicago Tribune

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Customer Reviews

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MOSCOW AND ST. PETERSBURG ARE Culture Music Opera lovers still rightly regard a visit to Moscow's Bolshoy or St. Petersburg's Mariinskiy Theater as a treat. Both companies are finding it difficult to cope with recessionary times and tend to rely on standards like Tchaikovsky's Eugene Onegin and Moussorgsky's Boris Godunov. Nevertheless, the brilliant setting and the audience's infectious enthusiasm still make an evening at the opera an occasion to savor. For concert lovers, the return from American exile of the great cellist Mstislav Rostropovich was a major event -- as too was the return, in 1994, of another legendary exile, the writer Alexander Solzhenitsyn. There are major orchestras in both cities, but for a real flavor of Russian music of the past, try to hear the old court choir, the St. Petersburg (Glinka) Kapella. Jazz has a long and highly respectable tradition in Russia, surviving decades of Communist persecution to emerge as vibrant and challenging as ever. Rock music has received a great deal of publicity in recent years in the West, and the scene is as multifarious and fast-changing as anywhere else. Moscow's Rock and Jazz Laboratory and St. Petersburg's Rock Club are good starting points. Dance Such is the reputation of the Bolshoy and Mariinskiy Ballet companies that visitors to Russia still gasp with pleasure when the tour representative announces that tickets are available for Swan Lake. Recent tours of the West suggest that nowadays that reputation is somewhat inflated. Nevertheless, the schools continue to produce dancers of supreme virtuosity, in spite of desperate shortages of funds, which limit the introduction of new, more experimental works into the repertoire. Art St. Petersburg's Hermitage ranks with the Vatican and the Louvre in holding one of the world's finest international art collections. But Russian art itself also has a lot to offer, as visitors to St. Petersburg's Russian Museum and Moscow's Tretyakov Gallery soon realize. The socialist realist art of the Communist

era has now been ousted by the work of previously banned artists with an international reputation like Malevich and Chagall. A thriving commercial art market provides a showcase for the work of young contemporary artists in private galleries in both cities. Theater continues to thrive with contemporary companies like St. Petersburg's Maly Theater, which toured Western Europe with a highly acclaimed production of Anton Chekhov's The Cherry Orchard. A more unusual theatrical development was the opera singer Galina Vishnevskaya's triumphant return to the Russian stage -- 12 years after her retirement as a singer -- in the acting role of Catherine the Great in Yelena Gremina's comedy Behind the Mirror. Literature Russians revere their writers above other cultural figures, and in June 1994 an international festival, "Pushkin and St. Petersburg," heralded five years of festivities in the city of Pushkin's birth, which will culminate in his bicentennial year, 1999. New writers are also given encouragement, with the creation of an annual -- and lucrative -- prize awarded for the best new work of fiction. Entries are judged by a distinguished panel, and the publicity which the short-listed novels receive gives them a good chance of future publication in the West. Fun Winter The "Russian Winter" festival traditionally begins on December 25 and is a secular celebration involving family parties, concerts, New Year trees, fireworks, and the Russian Santa Claus -- Ded-Moroz (Grandfather Frost). Nowadays Christmas is also a religious celebration, marked on the Orthodox calendar as January 7. In February and March there is a folklore festival, "Farewell to the Russian Winter," with concerts and troika rides. Spring The long hard winter ends dramatically in April with the cracking of the ice and the appearance of the first spring flowers. During the spring there are several public holidays: March 8 -- International Women's Day; May 1 and 2 -- Labor Day/Spring Holiday; May 9 -- Victory Day (end of World War II). The Spring Music Festival held in April focuses on Russian classical music, ancient and modern. Easter is a solemn religious occasion in the Orthodox Church and is celebrated in April, but rarely on the same date as in the West. Summer The summer months in Moscow and St. Petersburg are generally sunny and hot: bands play in the public parks and outside palaces. It is the season of outdoor rock concerts and boat parties. A new public holiday is Russian Independence Day, June 12. Also in June, St. Petersburg celebrates the White Nights. For a week or so, when the sun dips below the horizon for no more than 40 minutes in every 24 hours, the city doesn't sleep: the place to be is on the river, where special boat parties and celebrations are organized by the major hotels. Fall This season tends to be short, and by the Day of National Reconciliation on November 7, temperatures are already near freezing.

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I had three travel books with me for my three week trip to Russia. At the beginning of the trip I would bring along all three. Within four days I was leaving this book back at my hotel. It doesn't have nearly enough maps, the directions are incredibly hazy and I obtained a lot more historical information about the sights I was visiting from other books. It is entirely worth buying two books on the two cities, rather than trying to economize by just purchasing this one, because the attempt fails.

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