

## WHILE IN RUSSIA

### TIME



**Moscow Time** is the time zone for the city of Moscow, Russia, and most of western Russia, including Saint Petersburg. It is the second western most of the nine time zones of Russia. Russia is UTC+4 year-round; 8 hours ahead of EST.

### STAYING IN TOUCH



GSM (Global System for Mobile Communications) phone service works throughout Russia, but requires a particular type of international cell phone and a SIM card. You can check with your phone company for availability and rates in acquiring an international phone plan. **GSM phones are also available for rental or sale at [www.ayelet.com](http://www.ayelet.com)** (Click Travel Information, then Cell Phone Rental)

### WEATHER



**Moscow:** The temperature in the spring and summer ranges from 65-89. **St. Petersburg:** The temperature in the spring and summer will range from 59 to 86 degrees. While we hope to have many sunny days, we suggest that you bring an umbrella and a light rain jacket: it is better to be prepared. Dressing in layers is recommended, and checking the weather on the internet a day before your departure is always a good idea.

### REMEMBER...



Even if you don't normally keep a journal, bring a note pad or diary to record your feelings and experiences. When you come home, and for years later, you'll be glad you did. Try to take pictures or video of people rather than just buildings. The photos will be more memorable when attached to faces.

### MONEY

**Changing money:** US dollars are now widely accepted at exchange bureaus throughout Russia. When you visit the exchange office, be prepared to fill out a lengthy form and show your passport. Your receipt is for your own records, as customs officials no longer require documentation of your currency transactions. Most hotels have currency-exchange bureaus, some operating 24 hours a day.

ATMs linked to international networks such as AmEx, Cirrus, Eurocard, MasterCard and Visa, are now common throughout Moscow. Look for signs that say bankomat (Банкомат). Credit cards, especially Visa and MasterCard, are becoming more widely accepted beyond up market hotels, restaurants and stores. Travelers cheques are still relatively difficult to change. The process can be lengthy, involving trips to numerous different cashiers in the bank, each responsible for a different part of the transaction. Visit [www.xe.com](http://www.xe.com) for current exchange rates.

### SHOPPING & ETIQUETTE

- Keep Your Passport with you in a safe, tucked away place.
- Don't flash money around while traveling in Russia, as there are many pickpockets.
- Keep some spending money in a readily accessible pocket or wallet, and keep the rest hidden either on your person or locked away at your hotel.
- When standing in line, tourists should get up quite close to the person in front of them. Failure to do so will lead locals to believe that the tourist is not in line at all.
- Pedestrians do NOT have the right-of-way
- **Taxis:** In Russia, taxi fees are usually negotiated with the driver ahead of time. Do not use gypsy cabs or accept rides in cabs that already have a rider.
- **Tipping:** Wait staff in Russia are not as dependent on tips as in the US, so the expected amount is correspondingly less. Also, don't tip in cafeteria-like settings. Note: Keep some small bills in your wallet, as there is no way to leave a tip with your credit card.



### YOUR HEALTH



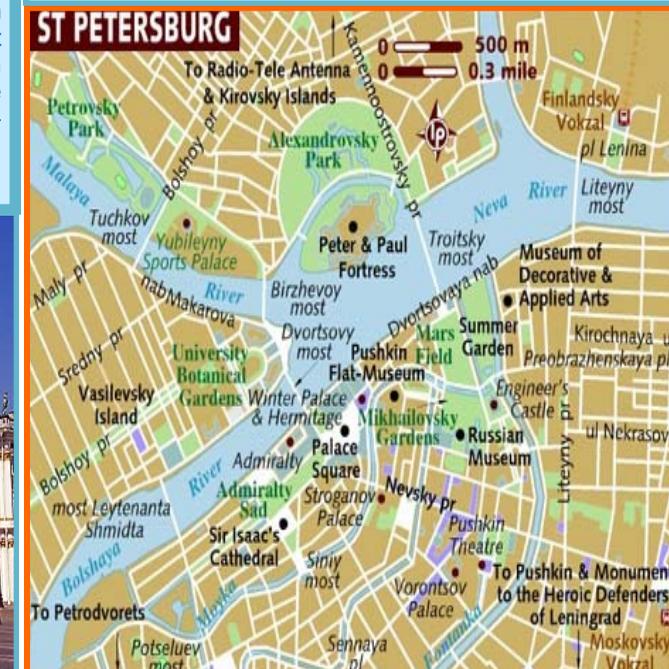
If you need medical assistance, please contact the hotel desk or your tour escort.

The pharmacies in Russia are marked with green crosses. Also, they often post the Russian word "аптека" in green lettering as well. They are extensively available throughout all cities. However, the medications carried there are often under different names or entirely different brands. Be sure to bring enough of any prescription medicine to last your entire stay abroad.



### BASIC RUSSIAN

**Please:** Pozhalusta **Thank you:** Spasibo  
**How are you:** Kak Vy pozhivaete **Well:** Khorosho  
**Good day:** Dobryy den  
**Good evening:** Dobryy vecher



## BEFORE YOU LEAVE



### PASSPORT/VISA

Make sure you have a signed, valid passport and necessary visas. You are responsible to secure any needed visas. You can check: <http://travel.state.gov> for up to date information. If you do not have a passport already, make sure you apply 2 -3 months prior to your departure date. Waiting for a visa can take up to a month in itself, so get your application in early.

**Current US government regulations stipulate that passports must be valid for at least six (6) months after your return travel date or you may not be permitted to depart the United States. There are certain circumstances where you can get your passport renewed on an expedited basis, but it is an expensive process.**

It's a good idea to make two copies of the first two pages of your passport. Give one copy to a friend or relative in the United States and pack the other separately from your passport. This will help speed the process of replacing your passport if it is lost or stolen.

### WATER/ELECTRICITY

It is our recommendation that you buy bottled water available at your hotels. Use this water for drinking as well as for brushing your teeth.

The electricity in Russia is 220 Volt and 50 Hz AC. Most of the sockets are standard European-size for double round-pin plugs. Converters can be purchased at any discount or travel store.

### SECURE YOUR MAIL AND HOME



Arrange for a friendly neighbor to collect your mail, or arrange for your local post office to hold your deliveries for the duration of your stay abroad.

It is also a good idea to have someone reliable check on your home or apartment once a week while you are away.

### PACKING

How much you pack depends on how long you plan to stay, and on the purpose of your trip. Clothing requirements vary depending on whether your trip is designed for business or solely as a vacation. On your tour, you will probably be moving around a lot and you won't want to pack and unpack completely. Generally, it's a good idea to travel light and expect that you will need more room in your bags when you go home than when you left to accommodate gifts & souvenirs. Please note that your touring schedule may require a later lunch than you are accustomed to. Because of this, and because touring days can often be quite active, we suggest that you bring snacks with you on your touring days to make sure that you are as comfortable as possible.

Suggestions for simplifying:

- Build your travel wardrobe around no more than two colors, one of which is black, navy, gray, or brown. Plan to wear every item more than once.
- Bring more tops, fewer bottoms. A combination of T-shirts, shirts and sweaters will work in most climates and let you change your look from day to day. Fleece works well in cooler weather.
- Use old plastic dry cleaning bags between suits and dresses to eliminate wrinkles.
- Don't pack too many shoes as they are heavy and bulky. Sneakers and fashionable comfortable shoes are highly recommended. Storing your shoes in an extra large plastic bag will keep dirt off your other clothes. If you're bringing more than one coat or pair of shoes, wear the heaviest one on the plane.
- Even during summer months, it is a good idea to bring a light jacket, shawl or wrap with you for cooler evenings and travel in the air-conditioned buses.
- Make certain to bring appropriate clothes for your visits to synagogues, cathedrals, and places of other religious significance. Plan to dress respectfully - skirts and headscarves are recommended for women and kippahs (yamulkes) and slacks are recommended for men.
- We recommend that you do not bring jewelry of high monetary or sentimental value with you on your travels. If you do choose to bring valuable jewelry, make certain to pack it in your carry-on luggage to help make certain it will not be lost en-route. Store your valuables in your hotel room safe or the hotel safe deposit box if necessary.
- Be certain to bring all necessary eyewear and eye care supplies - you may have difficulty finding the specific products you need during your travels.

- Pack toiletries in a self-sealing waterproof bag to protect your clothing.
- Bring an adapter and charger for any electronic devices you plan to use on your trip. If you carry a digital camera, cell phone, or laptop computer, you will want to be able to charge it. American plugs will not work in European outlets, so make certain you have a converter or adapter which will reduce the 220 volts to 110 volts.
- Make a list of everything in your suitcase. You'll have something to refer to if your luggage is lost and you have to describe the contents. Refer to it to make sure you don't forget anything.

**Don't bring more than you can manage yourself. Most able-bodied travelers should be able to hoist their own bags. The more experienced the traveler, the less luggage he will bring!**

### TRAVEL INSURANCE

Travel insurance is available and highly recommended. In order to be fully covered for pre-existing conditions, you must take out insurance within 15 days of your initial deposit (which can be found on your receipt). Acting immediately will avoid many possible future problems with refunds or medical coverage. Please go to [www.ayelet.com](http://www.ayelet.com) and click on the "Travel Insurance" link for complete, detailed information.

### LUGGAGE



Each person traveling is allowed to check one suitcase and may also bring one personal item and one carry-on piece. The weight of each may not exceed 50 lbs. when traveling from the United States to Europe. However, if the group is traveling between European cities, the weight may not exceed 44 lbs.

While we certainly expect all luggage to arrive with you at your destination, we strongly advise putting any medication, glasses, film, and an extra change of clothing in your carry-on as a precaution. Check weight restrictions before your departure, as the limits do change!

**STILL HAVE QUESTIONS? CONTACT US!**

**AYELET TOURS**

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# Ayelet Tours, Ltd.

## RUSSIA PACKING TIPS

### DOCUMENTS

Tickets  
Copy of travel insurance  
Itinerary  
Passport and photocopy  
Cash (not too much)  
Travelers Checks  
Credit Cards/ATM  
Phone Numbers  
Reservations

### SUPPLIES:

Wallet/Handbag  
(Sun) Glasses  
Umbrella/Rain slicker  
Backpack/ Day pack

First Aid supplies  
Sewing kit

Jewelry (Not expensive)  
Safety pins

Flashlight

Paper/ Journal

Travel Alarm Clock

Camera/Video & Film

Plastic bags

Pen/Pencil

Addresses / Stamps

### TOILETRIES

Toothbrush/paste  
Mouthwash  
Deodorant  
Prescriptions  
Hand Sanitizer  
Razor & Shaving cream  
Comb/Brush  
Shampoo & Soap  
Wash cloth  
Sunscreen  
Moisturizer  
Medication  
Cosmetics

### CLOTHING

Pajamas  
Bathing suit/towel  
Flip flops  
Hat/ Kipah/ Yamulke  
Shirts (casual/dress)  
Pants/shorts (casual/dress)  
Comfortable walking shoes  
Sandals  
Socks/hose  
Dresses/ skirts  
Belts/ scarves  
Underwear  
Sweater/ sweatshirt  
Raincoat with zip out lining  
Gloves