

PILGRIMAGE to ST. PETERSBURG, RUSSIA and the HOLY LAND

15 DAYS/13 NIGHTS

(6 DAYS/5 NIGHTS—Russia

9 DAYS/8 NIGHTS— Holy Land)

September 27-October 11, 2017



Nativity Church



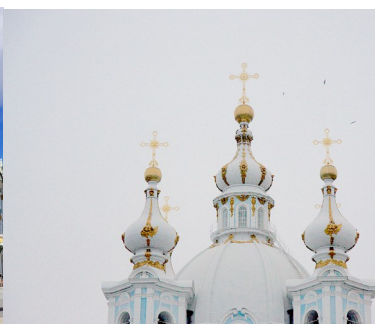
Star of Bethlehem



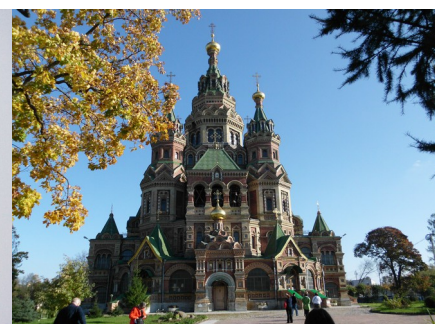
Jerusalem



The Hermitage



Catherine's Palace



St. Petersburg

Join our spiritual tour of St. Petersburg, Russia and the Holy Land in the fall of 2017!

This pilgrimage is designed to be an Orthodox spiritual journey you will remember forever!

***We offer you the opportunity to travel with us to both Russia and the Holy Land
OR***

You can choose to visit only the Russian or only Holy Land segments of this trip.

History and Culture of Saint-Petersburg Religious Spirit (1703-2017)

DAY 1, September 27, 2017: Departure

- Flight to St. Petersburg, Russia for your pilgrimage into the history and culture of the St. Petersburg religious spirit.

DAY 2, September 28, 2017: Arrival St. Petersburg

Arrival at Pulkovo Airport at 4:30 p.m., transfer to Petro Palace Hotel. Dinner.

DAY 3: , September 29, 2017 The Hermitage and St. Isaac Cathedral

Morning Lecture during Breakfast- The Orthodox Church and the Russian State.

Hermitage (4 hours). Lunch at Hermitage at own expense. Mid-afternoon visit to St. Isaac Cathedral (1 hour). Condensed Bus City Tour. Free time on Nevsky Prospect. Dinner.

DAY 4, September 30, 2017: Peterhof

Breakfast. Peterhof (6 hours) (lunch at own expense). Free time before Dinner.

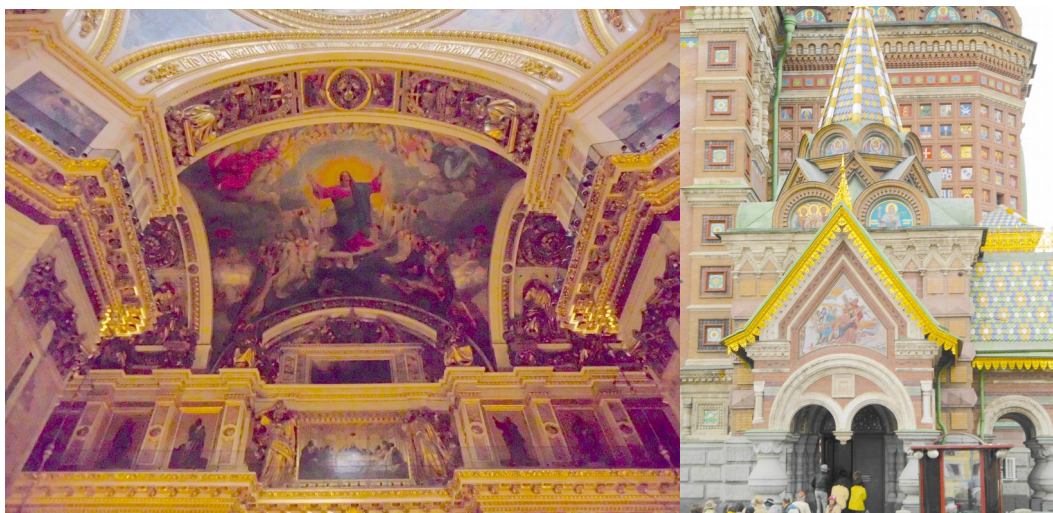
Day 5, October 1, 2017: Russian Museum/Pushkin-St. Catherine's Palace/Church Visits

Breakfast. Russian Museum (3 hours). Lunch at own expense upon arrival at

Pushkin/ Catherine's Palace and church visits (5 hours). Lecture during Dinner- Religion and Contemporary Politics.

Day 6, October 2, 2017: Novgorod or St. Alexander Nevsky Lavra

- Visit either:
 - The great city of Novgorod
 - Or
 - Morning at the St. Alexander Lavra in St. Petersburg, the most important historical, cultural, and religious center in Northern Russia, followed by an afternoon of leisure
- For those only traveling in Russia; option to depart to USA on Day 6 or 7
- Departure from USA for pilgrims choosing only the Holy Land



St. Petersburg

Cost for the St. Petersburg, Russia itinerary will be available upon request.

We can not quote the price for Russian travel until we know how many participants will also sign on for the Russia itinerary.

The Holy Land portion of the pilgrimage includes 8 nights of lodging with departure taking place on day 15. The tour cost for the Holy Land Itinerary will be \$1,300.00 (for double board) plus airfare for a minimum of 25 participants.

Day 7, October 3, 2017: Flight to the Holy Land

- Travelers on Russian tour depart Russia at 7:45 a.m.; arrive at Ben Gurion at 12:45 p.m.
 - Travelers coming from USA arrive at 4:35 p.m.
 - Transfer to Gloria Hotel in Jerusalem
- Dinner and overnight in Jerusalem

Day 8, October 4, 2017: Jerusalem

- Meet with Archbishop Theophanes
 - Archbishop will lead tour of Church of the Holy Sepulchre
 - Archbishop will possibly lead tour of other sites in Jerusalem
- Possible audience with Patriarch Theophilos III

Sites to Visit In Jerusalem (sites not seen with the Archbishop)

- Bus to St. Stephen's Gate
- Pools of Bethesda where Jesus healed the Paralytic
- Prison of Christ (Orthodox)
- Via Dolorosa
- Enjoy the Old City Marketplaces

Dinner and overnight in Jerusalem

Day 9, October 5, 2017: Jerusalem

- Bus to the Mount of Olives View
- Site of the Ascension
- Palm Sunday walk
- Gethsemene—Church of All Nations
- Tomb of Mary
- Russian Orthodox Church and Monastery of Mary Magdalene
 - "HODIGITRIA," Miracle-working icon of the Mother of God, from Lebanon
 - Sarcophagi of Grand-Duchess Elizabeth and her companion Sister Barbara
 - Ancient Roman road to Jerusalem
 - Site where the Virgin gave her cincture to St. Thomas 3 days after her dormition
- Bus to hotel

Dinner and overnight in Jerusalem

Day 10, October 6, 2017: Jerusalem

Early morning

- Liturgy at the Tomb of Christ or Golgotha
(Best time to pray at the Tomb without pressure from 100's of pilgrims)

Afternoon—

- Mount Zion
 - Upper Room—site of the Last Supper and Disciples' meeting place after the Resurrection
 - Walk down to Gallicantu—the path Jesus took to Gethsemene before His betrayal and the path the soldiers took to bring Him back to the city after His arrest
- Wailing Wall
- Dome of the Rock
-

Move to Alexander Hotel in Bethlehem

Dinner and overnight in Bethlehem

Day 11, October 7, 2017: Bethlehem Area

- Morning Liturgy at Nativity Church (6:30 a.m.)
- Meet with Bishop after liturgy and visit the upper rooms
- View the bones of the innocents
- Shepherd's Field Orthodox Church—Father Ignatios will greet us
- St. Theodosios

Dinner and overnight in Bethlehem

Day 12, October 8, 2017: Jericho & Dead Sea

Morning:

- Azaria—Ancient Bethany where Lazarus' tomb is located
- On the way to Jericho, overlook of Wadi Qelt—St. George Greek Orthodox Monastery
- View Mount of Temptation—Site of the Temptation of Christ
- Visit Jericho—oldest city in the world
- Visit St. Gerassimos Orthodox Monastery and Church—Where St. Mary of Egypt began her journey.
- Lunch at Qumran

Afternoon:

- Dead Sea
 - Enjoy the unique floating experience in the therapeutic waters of the Dead Sea

Shopping, dinner and overnight in Bethlehem

Day 13, October 9, 2017: Nablus, Nazareth, & Mount Tabor

Morning

- Church of Jacob's Well in Nablus—Ancient Sychar, Samaria
 - Where Jesus met the Samaritan Woman
 - Father Ioustinos will begin liturgy when we arrive.

Afternoon

- Mount Tabor (Orthodox Church)—site of the Transfiguration of Christ
- Nazareth
 - Basilica of the Annunciation
 - St. Joseph's Workshop
 - Jewish baptism site beneath the workshop—place of ritual Mikvit—the Jewish baptism
 - St. Gabriel Greek Orthodox Church—site of the Virgin Mary's Well

Dinner and overnight in Nazareth

Day 14, October 10, 2017: Cana & Galilee

- Cana—Site of Jesus' 1st miracle—changing the water into wine
- Mount of Beatitudes
- Church of the Multiplication of Loaves and Fishes
- Church of the Primacy of St. Peter
- Khafar Nahum (Capernaum)—where Jesus lived after He was thrown out of Nazareth
- Lunch—St. Peter's fish
- Ride on the Sea of Galilee
- Visit the Jordan river baptismal site

Dinner and overnight in Nazareth.

Rest for very early departure to Ben Gurion airport.



Jerusalem



Bethlehem

Day 15, October 11, 2017: Departure

Midnight transfer to Ben Gurion.

- Flight to USA

Optional Choices in Russia- *Ballet/Opera at the Mariinsky.* Will be announced.

Upon arrival to the Northern Russian capital - the glorious city of St. Petersburg we will explore a number of churches, tracing the architectural and iconographic development of the Russian Sacred Art and Architecture in 18th the and 19th centuries. Various sites of interest will be:

- **Hermitage-** Buildings and history of the museum. Houses famous collections of West European art of the 15th-19th centuries.
- **The State Russian Museum-** Survey of Russian art from icons through Avenir-garde. Deb's business partner that facilitates the Russia part of the tour is a descendent of the family that the Benois Wing of the State Museum was dedicated too.
- **Cathedral of the Savior "on the Spilled Blood"** - a splendid example of 19th century Russian mosaic art.
- **Cathedral of our Lady of Kazan-** the see of the Metropolitan of St. Petersburg. Historical Vasilievskiy Island- the two oldest surviving churches of St. Petersburg, one dedicated to the Apostle Andrew and another one to three Holy hierarchs – St. John Chrysostom, St. Basil the Great and St. Gregory the Theologian.
- **St. Nicholas Cathedral-** the most illustrious example of the Baroque style in Russian Church
- **St. Isaac's Cathedral-** the largest Orthodox Cathedral in St. Petersburg, a museum now. Alexander Nevsky Lavra - monastic foundation of Peter the Great that he established to "sanctify" the newly initiated Northern Russian Capital.
- **Pushkin- State Historical Park "Tsarskoe Selo" (Tsar's village)**—one of the summer residences of the Romanov dynasty with the splendid Catherine's Summer Palace. Built in the second half of the 18th century, it represents the glory of Russia's "Golden Age". The interiors of the palace are fully restored after they were savagely destroyed in WWII. The most recently restored amber now once again conquers the imagination of visitors. Pushkin represents West European architecture in Russia: baroque and neoclassicism. St. Sophia's Cathedral is included in the visit to Pushkin, a unique architectural monument from the beginning of 19th century. Abandoned and partly destroyed during the Communist Era, this Cathedral welcomes visitors in its restored glory.
- **Historical State Park "Peterhof"**- world famous Golden Palace that is surrounded by a Park with arcades of golden fountains (the fountains may be turned off in October). Western European architecture: baroque. Imperial residency of the 18th century.
- **SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral** - an Orthodox Architectural Masterpiece built in Neo-Russian style. This church is also famous for an interesting ceramic iconostasis and rich decoration of the interior.
- **Alexander Nevsky Lavra Cathedral** – Home to some of the oldest buildings in St. Petersburg, as well as cemeteries which contain the graves of some of the giants of Russian Culture, including Tchaikovsky, Dostoevsky, and Glinka. The monastery was elevated to the rank of lavra in 1797. There are only 8 designated lavras in the entire world. 3 of these are found in Russia and 2 in Ukraine. Today the complex houses a seminary and icon painting school.

Important: *the itinerary may be adjusted to satisfy the interests of the group to the best extent possible; i.e. services, rest, additional time spent in the places where the most important collections of interest are housed.*

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE TOUR:

Price does include:

- Accommodations
- Transfers
- Breakfast and dinner, as noted in the itinerary
- 1 lunch in Tiberias (Saint Peter's Fish)
- 1 lunch in Qumran
- Private bus transportation whenever required
- All admissions to the scheduled sites and museums and special transportation
- Donations to monasteries, churches and icon studios
- Professional tour guide at all of the tour places
- English speaking guide/escort during the entire tour
- Visits to the restorers' workshops and studios are subject to availability.
- Invitation for Russian visa

- * Some museum churches containing fragile ancient frescoes may be closed if the weather will be too damp. We'll try to do our absolute best to visit those places anyway, but we hope for your understanding if such visits won't be possible.

Price does not include:

- Personal travel/health/accident insurance
- Airfare tickets* - we highly recommend that you work with our travel representative, Verene Travel, so that we can fly together as a group. Transfer costs are included but not individual arrivals at different times taking place apart from the scheduled group arrival time.
- Extra beverages, wine, liquor, mineral water, and items not on the regular menu of the included meals
- Items of a personal nature (hotel extras, laundry, phone calls, etc.)
- Optional sightseeing tours, excursions and all expenses of purely personal nature
- Single Supplements
- Any increase in airport taxes and/or fuel surcharges
- Fee for Russian visa.
- Private transfers for additional (optional) tours and tickets to unscheduled show/concerts or museums.
- Newly introduced fees that may occur in certain places (monasteries or churches)
- Most lunches
- Tips for tour guides and bus drivers (suggested tips are \$1.00-\$2.00 a day for bus drivers in the Holy Land and \$2.00-\$3.00 day for bus drivers in Russia; suggested tips for tour guides in the Holy Land are \$1.00-\$2.00 and \$3.00-\$5.00 a day for tour guides in Russia).
- Potential overnight stay in Amsterdam for the connection on the way back to USA

Financial arrangements:

- The current cost of the trip is USD \$1,300.00/Holy Land per person and price will be announced for Russia per person, based on double occupancy. Single supplement will be announced. The price might change due to the constantly changing prices and taxes, especially the fluctuating exchange rate of ruble vs. US Dollar and Euro in Russia. Our hope is that the price of the tour will remain essentially the same. In any case you'll be informed right away of any possible financial changes or adjustments.
- The itinerary is prepared with pricing for a minimum of 25 participants, please note that price may change either way if we do not meet the required minimum and we still choose to travel.

- All payments should be made by check to: Icon Art Studios, Inc.
- We would request \$500.00 deposit at the time of signing up for the trip. ***Deposit is nonrefundable.***
- The entire amount is requested 90 days prior to the departure (). The deadline for signing up for the tour is .
- In the unlikely event of cancellation, the charges in addition to the full amount of the deposit are*:
 - 25% of the tour cost, 90 to 30 days prior to the departure
 - 50% of the tour cost, 30 to 15 days prior to the departure
 - 100% of the tour cost 14 days prior to the departure
- ◆ All the cancellations must be in writing and sent directly to coordinator – Debra Korluka, Icon Art Studios, Inc., 13921 127th Street No., Stillwater, Mn 55082. If Russian visa is denied for any reason, the above cancellation fees still apply.

Passport and Visa:

A valid passport and Russian visa are necessary for travel to Russia. The passport must be issued at least three months prior to the departure and must be valid until your return. We will facilitate the process of obtaining the visa.

The visa is obtained through the Russian Embassy in Washington D.C., or the regional Russian Consulate General at the Embassy of the Russian Federation. We will apply for the visa via mail. You must have an invitation from an agency in Russia to obtain Russian entry visa. To receive such invitation you must provide us with your full name, date and place of birth, number of your passport and your permanent address. Upon receiving the invitation all the necessary forms for the visa will be provided to you directly by Verene Travel. We highly recommend that you book with our tour as a group so that we can manage any flight changes and the visa application.

Rules on the road:

It is strongly suggested as a traveler that you:

- Obtain insurance covering medical needs and coverage regarding personal property.
- Be aware that all medical needs will be sole responsibility of the traveler.
- Act in a manner consistent with the surrounding environment.
- Make arrangement to have sufficient funds to cover personal needs and unexpected occurrences.

The places that we will be visiting may not have the same amenities that one is accustomed to. Medical facilities in most areas are limited. Because of the difference in language and customs, it is expected that the traveler will follow the directions of the Tour Director at all times.

The Director reserves the right to restrict a person's participation in the group's activities, including exclusion from the group, when, in the opinion of the Director, such action is appropriate.

Please note: The coordinator of the trip Icon Art Studios, Inc. and it's leaders do not hold any legal responsibilities concerning any of the arrangements. Icon Art Studios, Inc. plays solely as the role of an agent-coordinator.

TRAVEL TIPS BY EXPERIENCED AMERICAN TRAVELERS:

- ***LUGGAGE*** — We recommend packing as compactly as possible. Take only as many pieces of luggage as you can manage yourself. There will be several times on the trip, especially going through Russian customs, when a luggage cart may not be available.

- **MEDICATION** — Bring whatever medications (including medicines for colds, sore throats, nausea and diarrhea) that you think you may need. While most medicines are available in the larger cities, the quality may be questionable and you need a doctor's prescription for antibiotics.
- **BE SURE TO BRING** - an alarm clock (very few hotels provide room clocks); alcoholbased hand sanitizer or wet wipes (to clean your hands while touring and for those emergency trips to the restroom); film/memory cards and extra batteries for your camera; comfortable shoes (do not start the trip with new shoes). An electric outlet adapter is necessary if you plan to use any electric gadgets from non-European countries. We will visit many churches and monasteries. While the dress code is getting looser, especially in larger cities, we encourage moderation and respect. It may be necessary to wear head-coverings in churches, even if it is something symbolic. Skirts are also necessary, especially at the monasteries. People in shorts and open shouldered outfits will not be allowed in the monasteries and churches.
- **WATER** – Please only drink bottled water, which will be widely available.
- **SECURITY** - Don't keep all of your cash in one place, and carry important documents (like your passport and visa) with you in a hidden pocket or secure bag. You don't want to be in a foreign land without money or travel documents. Expensive jewelry and fancy are best left at home.
- **CURRENCY** – There are more and more places that accept credit cards (mostly Visa or MasterCard, rarely Discover or American Express). The easiest way to obtain cash is to use the ATM machine. For ATMs use your debit card because you won't be charged any interest on cash withdrawals. On your credit card purchase or with your debit card cash withdrawal you get the best exchange rate of the day. It is a good idea to let your bank or credit company (the one that you'll be using a card of) know that you are traveling overseas. Without such a notice some companies may "freeze" your account to prevent foreign card fraud. If you still feel more comfortable with cash, there are numerous currency exchanges in hotels, banks, stores - even in the smaller towns. For travel in Russia, try to obtain clean, recently printed U.S. bills.
 - Russian banks are VERY particular about the dollars they will accept and don't want dirty, torn or defaced bills. If you are exchanging cash money please use larger bills, since it always takes a while for the bank clerk to check the bills. The exchange of a large number of small bills may slow down the process and the pattern of the day in general.
 - Please take note that traveling anywhere in the world, it's best to be prepared and to take precautions that will keep you and your possessions safe.