
Global Education Office
Reves Center for International Studies
The College of William & Mary



PHOTO COURTESY OF SASHA PROKHOROV

ST. PETERSBURG SUMMER HANDBOOK

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William & Mary St. Petersburg 2017

This handbook offers guidelines that we hope you will find useful in making your preparations and while studying in St. Petersburg. Please read the handbook carefully before your departure and **bring it with you** to Russia, either as a paper or email copy. The program policies are included, along with lists of important items to bring with you, tips for handling your money, and precautions for safeguarding your health and belongings. In an effort to serve you best, the material in this handbook is edited each year and contains the latest information available to assist you in preparing for your trip. While we do our best to provide you with the most accurate information, inevitably some changes may take place and we will need to make adjustments. Your program director and the Global Education Office Advisor at the Reves Center will keep you informed of any changes.



Handy Information

SUMMER HOLIDAYS AND EVENTS IN RUSSIA

Date	Holiday	Description
June 13	Russia Day	Similar to independence day, on this day, in 1990, Russian parliament adopted the Declaration of Russia's state.
June 23	Ivan Kupala Day (equivalent to the Holiday of St. John the Baptist)	A pagan fertility rite and one of the most expressive East Slavic folk and pagan holidays. Many rites of this holiday are connected with water, fertility, and purification.
Late May through July	Stars of the White Nights Festival	One of the world's greatest classical music festivals.

AVERAGE MIN/MAX TEMPERATURES IN ST. PETERSBURG (°F)

January	February	March	April	May	June
8/19	11/22	18/32	33/46	42/59	51/68
July	August	September	October	November	December
55/70	55/69	47/60	39/48	28/35	18/26

TIME ZONE COMPARISON: ST. PETERSBURG IS 8 HOURS AHEAD OF VIRGINIA

Pacific (US)	Mountain (US)	Central (US)	Eastern (US)	St. Petersburg
5:00am	6:00am	7:00am	8:00am	4:00 pm (16:00)
1:00pm	2:00pm	3:00pm	4:00pm	12:00 am (next day)
9:00pm	10:00pm	11:00pm	Midnight	8:00 am (next day)

Overview, Dates, and Money

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

- **Fees:** \$6,600
- **Program Director:** Alexander Prokhorov, Associate Professor, Russian Studies
- **Accommodation:** Students will live in homestays with local Russian families. Most homestays provide students their own rooms. Breakfast and dinner will be provided.
- **Transportation:** You can buy a monthly pass for the metro and buses for 1700 rubles (~\$29, as of February 2017). This pass gives you unlimited bus rides and 70 journeys on the metro. At the end of your stay, you can return the plastic pass to a cashier at any metro station and get 30 rubles back.

PROGRAM DATES

- Arrive June 14 – Depart July 26, 2017

PRE-DEPARTURE ORIENTATION

Your Program Director should hold 2-3 meetings prior to the program leaving to answer questions and have you know what to expect, as well as how to prepare for your program. Students will be automatically enrolled in a one credit pre-course after the spring semester has begun. Dates and times are to be determined by the Program Director and the participants.

MONEY

A note on currency: St. Petersburg and Moscow are among the most expensive cities in the world. Regardless of the level of financial resources you may have available for your period of study abroad, all students share the same need to have quick access to their funds and, at the same time, to have their money protected against loss. The currency of Russia is the ruble (рубль) and is equivalent to the US dollar at a rate of approximately: \$1 US = 58/46 rubles or 1 ruble = \$0.017 USD (as of February 2017). You can check the current exchange rates on the web at <http://www.xe.com/ucc> or in the financial section of a large city newspaper

Visa Information and Budgeting

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

Passport

- You should apply as early as possible before departure to secure your passport through a Passport Agency (found in major cities), a local issuing office, a Federal or State Court House, or a Class I Post Office. Start the process early so that there will be plenty of time to resolve any problems that may arise. If you will be using your current passport, make sure that it is good for six months after your return to the U.S. If it is not, you will need to renew it.
- Guidelines on renewing your passport or applying for a new one can be found at:
<https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/passports.html>



Visa

- For a description of the visa application process, go to the Russian Embassy web site: <http://www.russianembassy.org/>. Hover over Consular Issues, Visas, and then click on "business visas." Please visit <http://www.russianembassy.org/page/important-visa-information> for more information on Russian visas. **Applying for your visa is the most stressful part of planning a trip to Russia, so the sooner you familiarize yourself with the process, the better.**

Health Notice

- An HIV Test (AIDS) Certificate (an HIV test) will be required. You must present a recent (less than a six months old) AIDS-certificate stating that you are HIV negative. Such certificates can be obtained at your local hospital/doctor, or from the student health center on campus.

Staying in Russia for another program in the fall?

- Students planning on participating in a another study abroad program in the fall semester AFTER the St. Petersburg summer program will need to leave Russia to apply for a new visa to cover the period of study for the second program. Please discuss options with the program provider for the fall program.

BUDGET

- Your budget for incidental expenses will depend on your personal taste/extravagance and the amount of independent travel you intend to do before or after the program. Judging from the experience of past participants, unless you are planning to stay after the end of the program, or you plan to spend most evenings at clubs, \$750-\$1000 should be sufficient for your basic personal expenses. Most 2012 participants stated that they used roughly \$1,000 while in Russia, and that the cost of food added up quickly. Most everyday expenses (e.g., lunch, snacks, public transportation, books, etc.) will be appreciably cheaper in St. Petersburg than in Williamsburg. But evening entertainment can be approximately as expensive as it is in a big city in the US.
- If your pre- or post-program travel plans include travel in Russia, you should notify the Program Director as soon as possible before you apply for your invitation and visa. Study your guidebooks carefully to get a sense of the cost of intercity transportation, reasonably priced hotels and restaurants in the cities you plan to visit. Check with your student travel agency for good prices on rail travel passes to use for personal travel.

Study Abroad Program Worksheet for St. Petersburg

Expenses:	Amount:	When due:	Paid to W&M?	Paid out of pocket?
Program Fee	\$6600	Deposit March 4th, Balance April 1st	Yes	
Airfare	\$1400			Yes
Meals (Program fee includes breakfast, dinner, and homestay meals)	\$800			Yes
Reves Center Fee	\$75			Yes
Visa, passport, photos	ca. \$255	Prior to beginning of program		Yes
Books & supplies	\$100			Yes
Misc./Personal	\$445			Yes
Total	\$9675			

Eating	Items	Average Price	Price Range
	Meal, Inexpensive Restaurant	\$11.84	\$10.00- \$13.32
	Combo Meal at McDonalds or Similar	\$7.33	\$6.66 - \$8.33

	Coke/Pepsi (0.33 liter can) restaurant price	\$1.33	\$1.00 - \$1.67
	Water(1.5 liter bottle)	\$1.25	\$1.00 - \$1.33
	Milk (regular), 1 liter	\$1.33	\$1.17 - \$1.33
	Cappuccino (regular)	\$3.33	\$2.66 - \$4.00
Living	Cinema, International Release, 1 Seat	\$8.33-10.00	
	1 min. of Prepaid Mobile (monthly)	\$0.03	
Traveling	Transportation Methods	Average Price	
	One-way Ticket (local transport)	\$0.83	
	Monthly Pass (Regular Price)	\$49.97	
	Taxi Rates	Taxi Start: \$7.49 Taxi 1km: \$1.00 Taxi 1hour Waiting: \$15.00	

How will you fund your program?:

Sources:	Amount:	When Available:
Scholarship(s)		Varies by deadline, Reves scholarships will reduce your total balance due. You will find out if you've been awarded a Reves scholarship by the end of February. Please apply separately for the Tepper Funds that are available for Russian and East European summer programs.
Financial Aid (Loans, grants, through W&M)		First day of classes on campus or the first day of the summer program, whichever is LATER .
Savings		
Parental/Guardian support		
Other		
Total		



Packing

PACKING TIPS

General

- Many items you need can be purchased once you've arrived in St. Petersburg. For example, bring travel-sized toiletries to keep your bags light, and purchase full-sized items once you've arrived.
- Do not bring any items of sentimental value that you couldn't bear to lose.

Luggage

- **Pack only what you can carry by yourself up 2-3 flights of stairs, or walk with for relatively long distances.** A wheeled duffle bag or suitcase plus a generous tote or backpack for weekend travel should suffice. Returning students recommend that your carry-on be a backpack rather than a handheld bag if you plan to do any extra traveling.
- Do not pack valuables in your checked luggage.
- Put address labels and contact information inside and outside each piece of luggage.
- Pack medications in your carry-on luggage.
- Pack all sharp objects securely in your checked baggage.
- Pack all liquids in plastic bags to avoid leakage during travel.
- Place your camera and laptop (if bringing one) in your carry-on.

- Put TSA-approved locks on all of your luggage so that it can be opened without the lock or bag being destroyed.

Clothes

- Bring easy care clothing items that are lightweight, drip dry, and wrinkle-proof, such as knits, permanent press, and cotton clothes. Dark colors are more practical than light, as they do not show dirt as easily. Only bring clothes you can imagine wearing often.
- Please bring a pair of comfortable shoes as you will be walking much more than you are used to in the US.
- Pack clothes you can mix and match so as to give your wardrobe as much variety without having to pack as much.
- Roll clothes instead of folding them; you will fit more in the bag, and have fewer wrinkles upon arrival.
- Choose clothing that is easy to keep clean and can be washed and dried at the Laundromat (though dryers are not worth the money – it is far better to air-dry your clothing).
- **Please note:** It is necessary for you to have one pair of long pants or one skirt that comes below the knee and, if most of your tops are sleeveless, a shawl to cover your shoulders. You might otherwise be refused entry into some of the churches you might visit, which have strict dress codes.

Gifts

- Students often ask what small gifts they can take with them to give to their host families. Try to think of things that are unlikely to be available in Russia: items made in your home region, calendars or books with photos of America's outstanding features (wildlife, national parks, plantations, cities, and so on), William & Mary paraphernalia, and the like.

For more tips, please consult the Summer Study Abroad Manual, as well as the "Know Before You Go" section of this handbook.



AN IMPORTANT NOTE ON ELECTRICITY IN ST. PETERSBURG

Electricity in Russia is 220 volts, 50 cycle alternating current (AC). For comparison, in the United States it is 110 volts, 60 cycle AC current.

If you plan on using your own 110-volt appliances, you will need a voltage converter, unless your appliance is designed to also work with 220 volts electricity (dual voltage). For example, most laptop and camera chargers are designed to work both at 110 and 220 volts. **Plugging in an appliance that is not designed to run on 230/240 volts electricity without using voltage converter will most likely kill it and may cause fire!**

Regardless of voltage, if your appliance has flat prongs, you will need a plug adapter: Russian sockets are designed to accept round prongs. Do get one before your leave!

As a matter of fact, Russian plugs can be of two different types. Some sockets will take in the plugs with large prongs only, some other will take in the ones with small prongs (more common for small appliances; large prongs are used for demanding appliances such as refrigerators and washing machines). Regardless of prong size, **the outlets all produce 220 volts!**



Traveling to St. Petersburg

NOTE: You are responsible for your own travel arrangements to and from Russia

AIRPORT PICK-UP

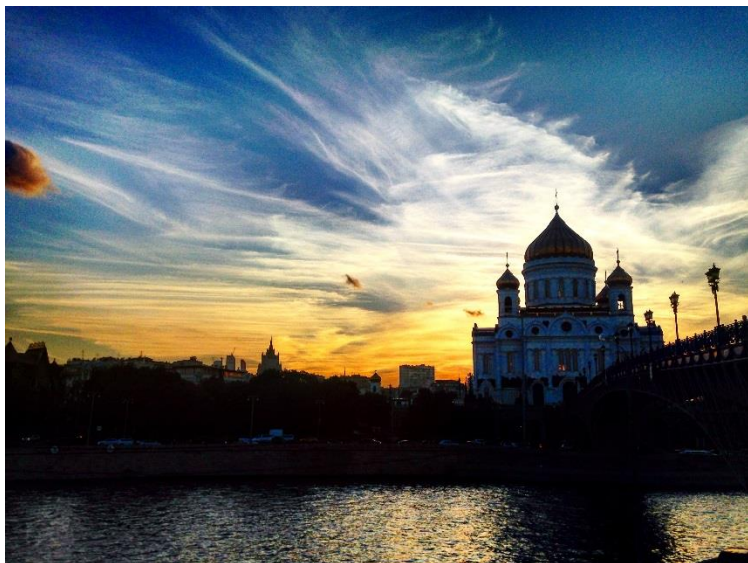
You are responsible for your flight arrangements to and from St. Petersburg.

All students will be met at the airport in St. Petersburg and taken to individual host families. The Director will announce travel plans as soon as possible to facilitate coordinating travel. Please inform the Program Director of your travel plans.

Please schedule your travel so as to arrive in St. Petersburg on June 14. (As flights from the U.S. to Europe are overnight, this means leaving the U.S. on the evening of June 13.) The program officially ends July 26 (i.e. you will need to leave by July 26 or make arrangements for your own housing for that night and beyond). If you plan to stay in St. Petersburg after the program ends you will be responsible for organizing and incurring all additional housing and food costs.

It is advised that students travel in pairs, if not larger groups. Use the Blackboard site and share flight information, or plan travel arrangements during the one-credit course.

After you arrive, remember to call or email your family to let them know you have arrived safely. This will not only save them from worry, but also will help the Global Education Office and St. Petersburg State University from receiving panicked phone calls regarding your whereabouts.



Coursework

A list of textbook requirements and syllabi will be distributed in advance of the program. For more information, contact the program director.

During your stay in St. Petersburg, you will study at:

St. Petersburg State University
7-9, Universitetskaya nab.,
St.Petersburg, 199034, Russia
E-mail: office@inform.pu.ru
Phone: 812-328 2000
Website: <http://eng.spbu.ru/>

Founded in 1724, St. Petersburg State University is the oldest institution of higher education in Russia. During the 285 years of its existence University secured the right to be acknowledged as one of the best institutions of higher education in Russia: its rich history, modern large-scale research activities, development and innovations make University ahead of the curve in the field of Russian science.

At present, there are more than 32,000 students in University, receiving education in more than 323 specialties in 20 faculties. University's staff comprises almost 14,000 people, including nearly 6,000 teachers (*1,000 Doctors of Science, over 2,000 Candidates of Science, 42 Academicians of state academies*) who represent 289 academic departments. The University has everything

to enjoy studies, hobbies and research: the richest Research Library named after Maksim Gorky, research institutes, museums, the big University publishing house, the University choir of students, graduates and teachers, clubs (from rugby and orienteering to the *Ingria* search party), etc.



In November 2009, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev signed a law granting St. Petersburg State University the special status of "a unique scientific and education complex, an oldest institution of higher education in Russia being of a great importance to the development of the Russian society". The right of giving its own diplomas with the official symbols of the Russian Federation has also been granted to University. The university has two main campuses: on Vasilievsky Island and in Peterhof. During the Soviet period, it was known as Leningrad State University

Saint Petersburg State University is considered the second best university in Russia after Moscow State University and is ranked 84th worldwide by the Russian Global University Ranking 2009,

The university has a reputation for having educated a number of Russia's most prominent politicians; these include presidents Vladimir Putin and Dmitry Medvedev, both of whom studied Law at the university.

CLASSES AT ST. PETERSBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

Courses on this program focus on understanding modern Russia and include:

Courses	
RUSN 300:	Russian Study Abroad: Russian Language and Culture Instructor: St. Petersburg State University faculty (3 credits)
RUSN 350:	Topics in Russian Literature Instructor: St. Petersburg State University faculty (3 credits)
RUSN 309:	Myth & Memory: The City of St. Petersburg In Print & On Screen Instructor: Alexander Prokhorov(3 credits)
RUSN 393:	Russian Movie Theatre Project (Optional) Instructor: Prof. Sasha Prokhorov (1 credit)

One semester of college-level Russian is required for this program. We strongly recommend students to complete at least two semesters of college-level Russian by the time the program begins. Students are required to register for the 1 credit RUSN 393 course “Study Abroad and Research in Russia” in the spring.

Excursions & Activities

OFFICIAL AND PERSONAL TRAVEL OPTIONS

Excursions are an integral part of the summer abroad program in St. Petersburg. In the past, the program has gone on excursions to areas such as Novgorod, Peterhof, and Pavlovsk. Your Program Director will know the specifics as to the excursions for this year. Please note that there will be a week-long excursion to Moscow. The PD will also arrange some evening visits to a number of special events, such as concerts, ballet, operas, etc, depending on ticket prices. Students should apprise themselves of the offerings at local theaters, such as the Mariinsky Theatre, and take advantage of their offerings on their own as well.



THE MARIINSKY THEATRE (PHOTO BY ALBERT KNUTSSON)

GUIDEBOOKS

Consider purchasing a travel guidebook prior to leaving the United States to help you make personal travel plans. These can be purchased at bookstores like Barnes & Noble, or online. Some guidebook publishers include:

- *Fodor's* (<http://www.fodors.com>)
- *Let's Go* (<http://www.letsgo.com>)
- *Lonely Planet* (<http://www.lonelyplanet.com>)
- *Rick Steves' Books* (http://www.ricksteves.com/books/update/update_menu.htm)

- *Rough Guide to St. Petersburg*
(<http://www.roughguides.com/destinations/europe/russia/st-petersburg/d>)

NOTE: You are strongly encouraged to purchase a detailed map of the city and to acquaint yourself with the city layout before the trip. Wide selections of detailed transportation maps are available at local bookstores in St. Petersburg.

Housing and Meals

HOUSING

Student accommodation will be in homestays with local Russian families. Most homestays provide students their own rooms. Homestays offer multiple opportunities to speak and hear Russian and to learn about Russian life and culture. Generally, each family accepts a single student.

MEALS

Homestays guarantee breakfast and dinner (lunch may be purchased at the university cafeteria or at local cafes). We will ask you to indicate your preferences regarding smoking, pets, children, roommates, etc., and every effort will be made to find housing that suits your individual needs. If you will not be home for an evening dinner at your homestay, please be sure to let your host-family know in advance.

Note: In keeping with the policy of the W&M Office of Residence Life, the Reves Center does not offer housing for the family of any students participating in W&M-sponsored study abroad programs. Also, family members or friends may not participate in any program activities or excursions. If you have family or friends who want to visit you while abroad it is recommended they do so after the completion of the program.

Communication

ONLINE

Although most host families do have wireless internet, this is not always the case; if your host family does not have internet in their apartment, there are several internet cafes around the Primorskaya subway station. There are also computers in the main university library (the “Twelve Colleges” Building) where you can check your email and browse the internet.

LANDLINE PHONES

Pay phones in the city work with phone cards that can be purchased at metro stations, post offices and some banks. While it may be possible to place long distance phone calls directly from your host family’s apartment, you’ll need to arrange permission and payment with them.

CELL PHONES

Students will be provided cell phones for free with a “pay as you go” plan.

PLACING INTERNATIONAL PHONE CALLS

See the “Handy Information” section for a time zone conversion chart before you call!

Calling St. Petersburg from the United States: Dial 011+ 7 +city/area code + phone number.

Calling the United States from St. Petersburg: Dial 00-1+area code + phone number.

Emergency Numbers

Police: 112 or 02

Medical Emergencies: 112 or 03

Fire: 112 or 01

Gas Leaks: 112 or 04

Health & Safety

IMMUNIZATION

Before traveling to Russia, students are advised to get booster shots for diphtheria, polio and tetanus. To have the most benefit, see a health-care provider at least 4–6 weeks before your trip to allow time for your vaccines to take effect. Students are also required to get an HIV blood test and provide an original HIV certificate with their visa application (although this is subject to change by the Russian government). This should be taken within 3 months of submitting the visa application. The main health concern for visitors to St. Petersburg, however, is *giardia lamblia*, which can be contracted from tap water. To avoid *giardia*, you should use only bottled or boiled water to drink or brush your teeth. Symptoms of *giardia* are diarrhea, stomach cramps and gas, and it is treated with Metronidazole (called Trikhapol (Триханол) in Russian), 200 mg three times a day for 14 days.

For current information concerning recommended protection against communicable diseases for those planning to travel abroad, you may check the Center for Disease Control's website at: <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/russia.htm> If you prefer to talk to someone in person about the currently recommended immunizations, you can call Travel Health of Williamsburg at 757-220-9008 (located at 287 McLaws Circle), or consult with a physician in your area who has some expertise concerning immunizations for international travel.

STAYING WELL/GETTING SICK

You will have access to Russian health care if the need arises, but you should be aware that, due to a shortage of modern equipment and low salaries for health care professionals, Russian health care standards tend to be below that of the US. There are high-quality American and European clinics in St. Petersburg which accept most U.S. insurance plans, but you will have to pay for services on the spot and be reimbursed by your insurance company later.

The American Medical Center (*Amerikanskaia meditsinskaia klinika*) is located at 78 Moika Embankment, Saint Petersburg, 190000, Russia. The Center's Medical Helpline: **+7 (812) 740 20 90**. The Center's fax: +7 (812) 310-4664. Email: E-Mail: info@amclinic.ru The Director is always available to assist students in obtaining medical care and, in any case, should be notified immediately in case of any health problems or emergencies in Russia.

If you have special health concerns (allergies, asthma, etc.), please inform the Program Director before you leave for Russia. Keep in mind that what might not qualify as a "health concern" in the United States could prove to be one in Russia (due to unavailability of medication, etc).

You should inform the Program Director of any substantial dietary issues you have. Though the director will do his or her best, there are no guarantees that you will be able to recreate your diet in Russia. Vegetarian and vegan food options are limited. If diet is a concern, you should talk to the director and last year's participants. You should inform your host family of dietary restrictions and/or concerns but you must not expect your host family to prepare special meals for you. Please keep in mind that experiencing new foods can be an enriching part of the cultural experience. *Prijatnogo appetita!*

Travel & Country Information

We encourage all students to research their study abroad destination. The State Department has important information available at **online**. Be sure to read up on Russian history, culture, and current events before your arrival, as well. Knowing as much as possible about where you are going will not only make you more comfortable during your time in the country, but will also allow you to talk more knowledgeably with your host family and new friends.

We strongly recommend that you register your travel plans with the U.S. State Department at this website:

<https://step.state.gov/step/>

This will help the State Department contact you if there is a family emergency in the U.S., or if there is a crisis where you are traveling. On this website you can find information ranging from geographic and political descriptions of the country, to special health and safety announcements.

St. Petersburg



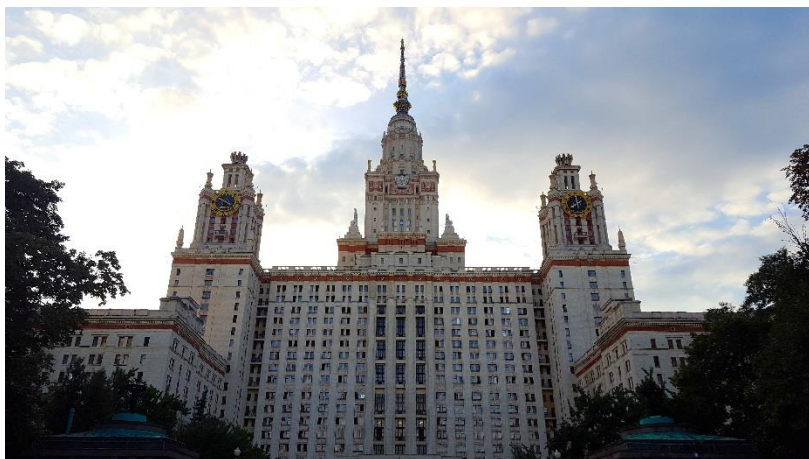
Photo Credit: Tucker Cole ('11)- The Winter Palace

ST. PETERSBURG is a city and a federal subject located on the Neva River at the head of the Gulf of Finland on the Baltic Sea. The city's other names were Petrograd (1914–1924) and Leningrad (1924–1991). It is often called just *Petersburg* and is informally known as Piter.

Founded by Tsar Peter I of Russia on May 27, 1703, it was the capital of the Russian Empire for more than two hundred years (1713–1728, 1732–1918). Saint Petersburg ceased being the capital in 1918 after the Russian Revolution of 1917. It is Russia's second largest city after Moscow with 5.132 million inhabitants, and sixth in Europe after Moscow (15m), London (12.875m), Paris (9.638m), Istanbul (9.413m), and The Ruhr, (7.3m). Saint Petersburg is a major European cultural centre, and an important port on the Baltic Sea.

Saint Petersburg is often described as the most Western city of Russia. Among cities of the world with over one million people, Saint Petersburg is the northernmost. The Historic Centre of Saint Petersburg and Related Groups of Monuments constitute a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Saint Petersburg is also home to The Hermitage, the largest art museum in the entire world.^[13] Russia's political and cultural center for 200

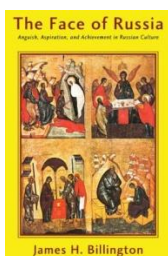
years, the city is sometimes referred to in Russia as the *Northern Capital*. Over its history it has also been referenced as "the Venice of the north" and the "Northern Palmyra". A large number of foreign consulates, international corporations, banks and other businesses are located in Saint Petersburg.



For Fun: Light Reading and Movies

Following are a few books regarding Russia. Check them out, or consider looking for other books to put you in a Russia mood prior to – or during – your time abroad. Don't worry; you won't be tested on them!

BOOKS

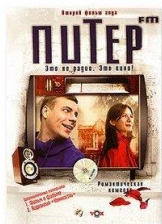


**THE FACE OF
RUSSIA**
By James Billington



**THE XENOPHOBE'S
GUIDE TO THE
RUSSIANS**
By Vladimir Zhelvis

MOVIES



Piter FM



**THE BARBER OF
SIBERIA**



NIGHT WATCH ,
DAY WATCH



AUTUMN
MARATHON

Reflections from a Past Student

Describe your arrival at the airport and your means of transportation to your home stay, apartment or institution. If your arrival and transport was not typical for the rest of the group, explain that as well.

Upon my arrival at Pulkovo Airport, a representative from St. Petersburg State University picked me up. The man was holding a sign with my name on it. He helped me carry my luggage to the University's van and drove me to my homestay.

Meals: where did you eat most often, and what was the food like? If you ate with host family; write about the customs of the family meal, and foods that were typically served.

For breakfast and dinner students typically ate at their home stays. For lunch, students ate at the cafeteria in the building of the university, where our classes were held. On the weekends, students still ate breakfast and dinner with their host families, but often got lunch at local restaurants, while out exploring St. Petersburg. Host families serve typical Russian foods like blini, pirogis (varenyky), meat, rice, mayonnaise-based salads. However, you can tell your host family what food you can or cannot eat. Most host mothers were very good about adhering to our preferences. Sometimes we would eat as a family, other times my host mother would serve us without her eating. Meal customs

are very similar to those in the United States.

Money: Did you have a budget, ways to get cash and approximately how much did you spend?

My budget or spending money was \$1500. Many students spent below this, while I spent roughly \$1200 on transportation, some food, souvenirs, shopping, going out, etc. Credit cards are extremely difficult to use in St. Petersburg. It is much easier to pay in cash. I recommend taking a Debit Card and withdrawing cash at ATMs that have good withdrawal rates, like Sberbank.

How did you do laundry?

Some host mothers did laundry for their students. However, most of the homestays are located near dorms for St. Petersburg State University, where there is a Laundromat. You take a bag of laundry and there is someone who does the laundry for you. You come back in an hour or two, depending if you want your laundry dried, and pick up your laundry. For a load of laundry it costs roughly \$8-\$10.

Describe any academic differences or similarities to your regular classes at W&M. Describe any classes taught by the host university instructors: what criteria were used for grading (exams only? class participation?, etc.), attendance policy, course difficulty, were professors accessible outside of class time, typical class size, etc.

The classes taught at St. Petersburg State University were very similar to those taught at William & Mary. In the classes taught by the Russian professors attendance was mandatory and expected. We were graded based on attendance, participation, and a final oral exam. The classes were similar in difficulty to those taught in the Russian Department at William & Mary.

Describe your access to the internet and computers. Did most students bring laptops? Did you use any electrical adaptors, and if so, from where did you acquire them?

Every student on our program brought a laptop. We purchased internet modems from a cell phone company called "Megaphone". We bought an amount of gigabytes of high speed internet that allowed us to use internet anywhere we went. The modems are reloadable.

We also used electric adaptors. I purchased mine at RadioShack.

Describe excursions organized by the program, including places visited, their frequency, and your interest in them.

While in St. Petersburg we had daily excursions to different sites in the city. We toured the Hermitage Museum, the Kunstkamera Museum, Alexander Nevsky Monastery, and many other places.

We also traveled to Moscow for an overnight weekend trip, a day trip to Novgorod, a day trip to the Catherine Palace, and to the Summer Palace.

What was the weather like? What types of clothing did you need?

In June, upon our arrival, the weather was cooler in the 50s to 60s Fahrenheit. During this weather, we often wore jeans and needed a jacket or sweater. In July the weather was extremely hot, up into the high 80 degrees Fahrenheit. Most buildings are not air conditioned, so the month of July was extremely hot. Boys continued to wear pants, while girls wore either dresses or skirts.

What advice can you give students on packing? What do you wish you had brought from home and/or what can be purchased in country?

Pack lightly on the clothing, in order to leave room in your suitcase for souvenirs. Jeans, a jacket, short and long sleeves are a must. Matroshka, vodka, and postcards are interesting souvenirs to bring home.

What things did you do during your free time?

During our free time, students relaxed on the canals near our homestays. We often toured other places in the city. We also shopped and some went to the movies.

Describe your everyday life during the program or typical schedule during the week.

We began every day around 9 am with breakfast. We took the bus to class, which began at 10 am. We had class until 1 pm, when we took a break for

lunch at the university's cafeteria. At 2pm we again had class until 3:30 pm. After class students explored St. Petersburg or took the chance to relax. On the weekends, days were filled with excursions and field trips.

Describe any opportunities you had to meet locals or immerse yourself in culture outside of program activities.

While studying at St. Petersburg State University, we wrote papers on a "Cultural or Historical Site of Memory". This project gave us the opportunity to interview locals and collaborate with journalism students of St. Petersburg State University. We also interacted with locals at restaurants and clubs.

How did you stay in touch with family and friends back home?

Our internet modems and computers enabled us to Skype family and friends back home. It was also possible to use an international calling card on our Russian cell phones.

What else is helpful for someone to know if they go on this program?

I believe these questions and the St. Petersburg Student Handbook cover the basics and more about studying abroad in St. Petersburg.



Frequently Asked Questions

Will I need a visa?

A visa for summer study in Russia is MANDATORY! In order to apply for a Russian visa, you need an invitation from St. Petersburg University. In order to apply for an invitation, you need a valid US passport. You will need to scan the signature pages of your passport and email them to the program director, who will forward them to St. Petersburg.

What airport will I fly into? Do all W&M students travel together on the same flights?

Please refer to the section in this handbook on "Traveling to St. Petersburg" for specific information. W&M students do not necessarily take the same flight. However if you wish to travel with other students you can arrange communicate through Blackboard or Facebook.

Can I arrive earlier or stay longer than the program dates?

Yes, you may but you will be responsible for making your own accommodation arrangements. You will **NOT** be able to stay in the housing provided during the program.

If my family or friends visit, may they stay with me?

No, they will need to make their own arrangements for accommodations. Please advise your program director if you expect family or friends to visit you during the program.

Am I required to participate in all excursions provided by the program?

Yes, unless your program director says otherwise. The excursions supplement the coursework and expand cultural learning.

Will I need to seek post approval for the courses I take?

No, all of the courses offered in the W&M faculty-led summer programs have already been approved.

Will my grades be posted on my transcript?

Yes, the grades you receive will be posted on your W&M transcript and will be calculated into your GPA.

Can I take class pass/fail?

No, this is not an option.

Do I need to take my own sheets and towels?

Students will stay in homestays with local Russian families. Towels and linens are provided in homestays. However, if you plan to travel before or after the program, you may want to bring your own towel and linens.

Will my study-abroad facility have a fitness center/gym for student use?

Unfortunately, St. Petersburg State University does not have a fitness center available to visiting summer students.

How much spending money will I need?

That varies on your normal spending habits, especially in regards to eating meals out and how much shopping you like to do. Students reported spending between \$500-1,200 during the program. Most students reported spending around \$750, but again this depends on your personal spending habits. Former students **DO NOT** recommend traveler's checks. They recommend carrying some cash and your credit or debit card.

Know Before You Go

ADDITIONAL TIPS FROM PAST STUDENTS

PLACES TO SEE IN AND NEAR ST. PETERSBURG

- Alexander Nevsky Monastery and Cemetery (Lavra Aleksandra Nevskogo)
- Anna Akhmatova Museum
- Blockade Museums
- Buddhist Temple (Budisky Khram)
- Chesma Cathedral and Monastery
- Church of the Savior on the Spilled Blood (Tserkov' Spasitelia Na Krovi)
- Dostoyevsky House Museum
- Kazan Cathedral (Kazanski Sobor)
- Menshikov Palace
- Kunstkamera
- Museum of Arctic and Antarctic (Muzei Arktiki i Antarktiki)
- Museum of Musical Instruments (at the Sheremetev Palace)
- Nabokov Museum
- Peterhof
- Pushkinskaya 10
- Russian Museum (Russkii Muzei)
- Smolny Cathedral and Convent (Smolny Sobor)
- St. Isaac's Cathedral (Isaakevsky Sobor)
- St. Petersburg Mosque (Mechet)
- Summer Garden (Letnii Sad)
- Synagogue (Sinagoga)
- Taurida Gardens (Tavrisheskii Sad)
- The State Hermitage Museum and the Winter Palace
- Victory Park (Park Pobedy)

MONEY

- Be sure to call your bank and put a travel notice on your debit AND credit cards. Otherwise, purchases and withdrawals may be declined due to suspected fraud.
- Discuss with your bank the fees associated with international transactions and withdrawals. The bank may be able to inform you of a partner bank in Russia that you can use to withdraw cash and avoid fees.
- The suggested minimum budget for this program is \$1,000 for expenses in St. Petersburg.
- "You will use more cash than you think. Many places do not accept debit or credit cards, and constant cash withdrawals can be expensive, so come prepared."

COMMUNICATION

- Not all host families will have Internet – but plenty of internet cafes do! Café Dubai and Paraiso have been recommended by former students.
- There are computers in the main university library (the “Twelve Colleges” building) where you can check email and use the internet. Certain sites, such as Facebook, are blocked.
- You might have a difficult time finding places to print; it is best to rely on internet cafes and copy centers in the city.

LIVING

- In some large Russian cities it is common practice to shut off the central hot water mains for two to four weeks during the summer months to flush out and repair the system. If you are living with a family that does not have hot water heaters installed, this will mean cold showers or heating water on the stove for bathing. Sometimes it may be possible to arrange to take showers at a friend’s apartment, since the water is shut off district by district. Another option is to try the local bath house, or *Banya*. If you are interested in the *Banya*, ask your hosts for advice and go with other students including, if at all possible, Russian friends. Do NOT take valuables to the *Banya*.
- You will have your own room in the host family’s apartment and two meals per day (breakfast and supper). The families do their best to accommodate restrictive diets – allergies, vegetarians, etc. Many students bring part of their breakfast with them as lunch or a snack.
- Learn two Russian words: “tapochki” (slippers) and “kushai” (eat). Your host mom will always tell you: “Kushai!” and might offer you slippers to wear around the house, a common tradition in Russian homes.
- Two inexpensive eateries in St. Petersburg are the large cafeteria in the student center and the small café in the Philology department.
- Be on your guard with pickpockets.
- Always carry your international visitor’s registration forms with you to avoid unnecessary complications with the Russian police.
- Keep your host family informed of when you will be late for dinner, or when you will miss a meal. Also let them know when you will be going on weekend excursions.

RUSSIAN CULTURE

- Russians have a fine sense of humor and love anecdotes, especially those poking fun at politicians & others in the public eye.
- Russians, when they are hosting, are usually anxious to be hospitable and offer tea, coffee and, in some instances, vodka, regardless of the time of day.
- Between family, good friends and colleagues, and sometimes subordinates, the given name is modified to a nickname, e.g. Alexander = Sasha; Ludmila = Mila;

etc. A distinctive feature of Russian names is that the middle name traditionally is patronymic, or derived from the father's first name.

- Same sex relationships are not fully accepted and still can attract some negative reaction.
- Within the USSR, the dominant culture was Slavic, and there were, and still are, prejudices against those from what is now the "southern republics," e.g. Kazakhstan, Georgia, etc. Dark skinned people from other countries also suffer discrimination. There are isolated anti-Jewish incidents and to some degree religious discrimination will parallel ethnic biases.
- Flowers are very popular gifts for men & women – large bouquets are presented for all kinds of celebrations, including birthdays, jubilees, name days for women (Vera, Luba, Nadia, etc.). The count of flowers is important – an even number is unlucky (for funerals); odd numbers of flowers should be given for all other occasions.

MEETING PEOPLE

- Russians are not as used to the openness and instant rapport practiced by many other cultures. They prefer to slowly get to know someone and many of their personal and business relationships are built up over a lifetime of association. Hence, the visitor should move slowly and be guided somewhat by the Russian party.
- Sports, literature, and weather are great topics for when you first meet a Russian person. Avoid topics like religion, politics, history, and the current socio-economic situation in Russia.
- A firm handshake is the common form of greeting and parting, even between people that see each other every day. This, combined with a friendly & open greeting with good eye contact, and about the same spatial relationship as is normal in American social settings, is acceptable.
- Avoid shaking hands across a doorway threshold as it is considered very bad luck. When visiting someone's house or office, you must either go all the way in, or wait until (s)he has come all the way out, before greeting each other.

TRAVEL

- Moscow and St. Petersburg are now among the 15 most expensive cities in the world. One aspect of Russian life which remains relatively inexpensive is public transportation. You can now buy a monthly pass for the metro and buses. This pass gives you unlimited bus rides and 70 journeys on the metro. At the end of your stay, you can return the plastic pass to a cashier at any metro station and get 30 rubles back.

PREPARE YOURSELF

- Be warned: Russian drivers do not brake for pedestrians!

PACKING SMART

- In general, your clothing should be comfortable and light – St. Petersburg weather in the summer will range from chilly and wet to warm and humid. Be sure to pack a raincoat and an umbrella, as well as one or two warm sweaters for cooler evenings, but keep clothing to a minimum.
- Former participants recommend taking a jacket, as a sweatshirt just isn't warm enough sometimes.
- Always carry an umbrella with you. The weather is unpredictable.
- Bring giardia medication with you, just in case, though the water situation in the past hasn't been problematic.
- Bring comfortable shoes – you will do a LOT of walking!
- Bring house slippers with you.
- Bring small gifts for your host family – books about W&M or Williamsburg would certainly be appropriate!
- Female travelers should bring at least one head scarf/kerchief.



Contact Information

GLOBAL EDUCATION OFFICE CONTACTS

You may call the Reves Center and its advisors at the numbers below between 8am and 5pm (Virginia time), Monday through Friday. In case of an emergency that falls outside of these times, please call William & Mary Campus Police at + 001(757) 221-4596. Campus police will then forward your call to the correct person or office.

GEO Advisor: Sarah Mullen (semullen@wm.edu) +001 (757)221-2003

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*To call the U.S. from abroad: 001+ (Area Code) + phone number

AT ST. PETERSBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

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