

## **Orthodox Christmas in Moscow and the Golden Ring**

**4<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> January 2018**



### **Orthodox Christmas in Moscow and the Golden Ring**

Russian Orthodox Christians celebrate Christmas on 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> January. Russia itself enjoys a prolonged holiday from New Year's Day until everyone goes back to work after a 10 day break. The temperature is usually around -10°C (though it can get colder) and there may be snow (but this is not guaranteed). It's a wonderful time to visit: there are few other tourists, the museums and galleries are open, the metro system works well, and hotel prices are lower. This holiday is seen as a small informal affair based at the Marriott Courtyard Hotel just off Tverskaya Street, fifteen minutes' walk from Red Square, opposite the Anglican Church, close to the Music Conservatory, and right by an Orthodox Church with a good choir which celebrates Christmas. Most days, short excursions are planned because of reduced daylight hours, and the temperature. With much less traffic, central Moscow can easily be explored on foot and using the metro system. For our visit to the monasteries of the Golden Ring we will use a bus. The tour is limited to 12 bookings. There are flights available from various cities in the UK to, for example, Schiphol, where it is possible to change onto a Moscow bound flight, and there are direct flights from London Heathrow. Those wanting to, can book their flights with Ian Dickson Travel, Edinburgh (0131 556 6777), once the tour has been confirmed. The tour is escorted by Rufus Reade.

## JOURNEY DETAILS

Location: Russia  
Dates: 4 to 14 January  
2018  
Duration: 10 nights  
Max: 12 travellers  
Price: £1995  
Single room supplement: £460  
Deposit: £300  
Tour Code: RR 01/18

**What's included:** Accommodation in 3/4 star hotels, breakfast and some meals as indicated in the itinerary (B=breakfast, L=lunch, D=dinner) road transport as described in the itinerary, entry to all the sites mentioned, and all tips. The tour is escorted by Rufus Reade.

**What's not included:** your international flights, personal travel insurance, meals (sometimes described as 'independent') not indicated in the itinerary, drinks, laundry, phonecalls, your metro tickets & your Russian visa.

**Walking:** we will be walking on pavements and footpaths (some which may be icy or slippery after snow or rain), as well as using the Moscow metro. All walks are rated moderate.

**The tour is organised** by Rufus Reade Tours, 40 Pilgrim Street, Edinburgh EH6 5AL  
rufusreade@blueyonder.co.uk  
Tel 0131 554 1078

**Flights:** no flights are included in the cost of this holiday. Once the tour is confirmed we will write to you, confirming the tour, letting you know what available flights there are. You may then book your own flights (you may care to use Ian Dickson Travel, Tel: 0131 556 6777), based in Edinburgh who will be aware of our travelling requirements).

## The Itinerary

### Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> January

Flight to Moscow. Using the metro, travel from the airport to Red Square, in the heart of Moscow. From there it is 15 minutes on foot to our hotel, the Marriott Courtyard on Voznesenskiy Pereluk, just off Tverskaya Street. Walk to dinner (D).

### Friday 5<sup>th</sup> January

On our first day in Moscow we will explore the area around our hotel, and walk through Red Square, past St Basil's with its many coloured domes, down to the Moskva River. Our two hour walk will follow the river embankment, looking over to the Kremlin. We'll pass the former British Embassy, re-cross the river and make our way beneath the Kremlin walls back to our hotel. (B).

**Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> January** We'll continue to explore the area close to our hotel by walking to the lovely Moscow Museum of Modern Art on Petrovka Street which opens at noon, and after time spent there we'll walk through Pushkin Square, passing the statue of Pushkin and circle down past the Conservatory (checking what concerts are on, and if there are tickets) and back to our hotel. In the evening

we can go to the church close to our hotel for their Christmas Eve service (with a small choir). (B)

### Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> January

Official recognition of Christmas followed the break-up of the Soviet Union: there are skaters on the ice-rink in Red Square, where the stalls selling snacks and souvenirs are hoping for customers and the shops are open. We can begin to use the very empty metro system by going to the Tretyakov Gallery with its lovely collection of icons, including those of the great master Rublev (14<sup>th</sup>/15<sup>th</sup> century) and the significant art works from the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Tretyakov also provides somewhere to have a good canteen lunch (independent). After lunch we can walk the few hundred yards to the convent set up immediately before the First World War, and the Revolution by the Grand Duchess Elisabeth Feodorovna. The buildings offer a wonderful harmony with Art Nouveau elements and lovely frescoes. We'll walk back to the metro for our return journey.(B)

### Monday 8<sup>th</sup> January

Over the last few days we have walked around the Kremlin: we will now walk from our hotel, go inside and see the collection of ar-



tefacts and furniture in the Kremlin Armoury. In the afternoon we will visit St Basils on Red Square. (B).

### **Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> January**

Our bus will pick us up to take us beyond the outskirts of Moscow to St Sergius monastery, at Sergiev Posad, which is a fully functioning religious centre attracting many pilgrims. This monastery is famous as the place where Rublev painted. In the afternoon we'll continue to Yaroslavl where we'll stay two nights in the Premier Ring Hotel (described as 4 star). (B, L & D).

### **Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> January**

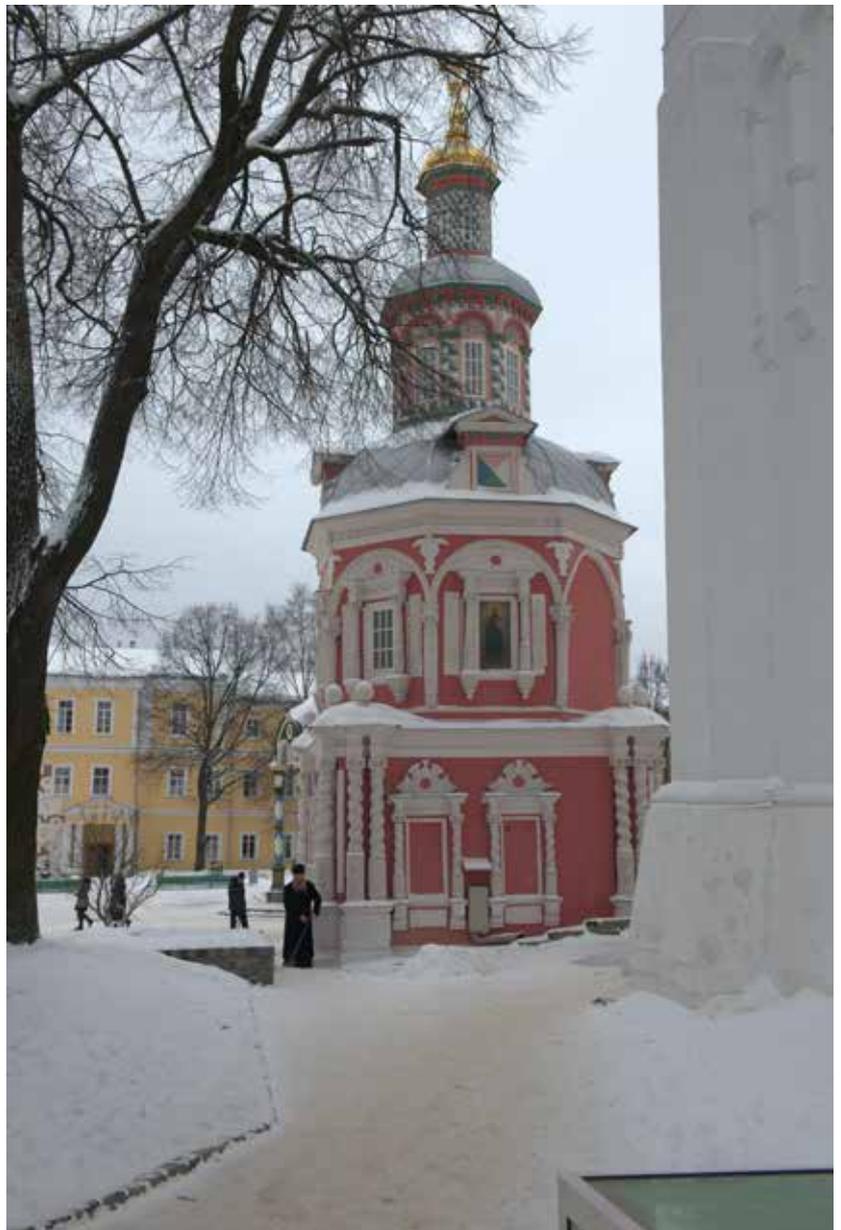
In Yaroslavl, we plan to visit the Kremlin, the cathedral and the Church of Elijah the prophet. Second night in the Premier Ring Hotel. (B, L & D).

### **Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> January**

After breakfast at our hotel we'll see the Pokrovskiy Monastery. There'll be a visit to the Museum of Wooden Architecture. We'll drive to Vladimir (35 km). Lunch at a local restaurant. City tour of Vladimir, which will include the Assumption Cathedral and St. Dimitrius Cathedral. Later we'll drive back the 250 km to Moscow, and return to the Marriott Courtyard Hotel. (B, L).

### **Friday 12<sup>th</sup> January**

We will walk to see the Stalinist housing complex known as the House on the Embankment (and described under the latter title in Yuri Trifonov's novel) on the Moskva River. Originally named the House of Government it was completed in 1931. Today it has



a small museum which may be open. (B).

### **Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> January**

Today we'll explore the metro more fully, looking at some of the highlights of this impressive underground system. We will go to the Pushkin Museum, the largest collection of European art in the city. After our visit we can pause for some lunch (independent) before looking at the nearby re-built cathedral of Christ the Saviour. It's a half hour walk beneath the walls of the Kremlin back to our

hotel. In the evening we will go to dinner at the Pushkin Restaurant (B & D).

### **Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> January**

Travel by metro out to the airport to catch our flights back to the UK. (B).