**SERGIEV POSAD, THE HEART OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOXY**

Traveller’s Guidebook

Often referred to as the Orthodox Christian Vatican, Sergiev Posad is the heart of the Russian Orthodoxy as it houses the Patriarch’s residence. The residence is situated in the biggest monastery of Russia, the Trinity Lavra of St. Sergius, constructed in the first half of the XIV century. The monastery has always played a crucial role in the political life of the state, in particular, in times of the Mongol yoke. Lavra consists of more than 50 buildings which have been designated by UNESCO as the World Heritage Site. About 120.000 paintings of the talented Russian artists, the representatives of various movements of the XIV-XVII centuries, are held within the walls of the monastery. Among them there are not only icons, but also manuscripts, prints, ornamental adornments, items made of gold and silver, and other works of art. The famous Babushka, Russia’s traditional nestling doll, originates from Sergiev Posad, so the city is the oldest centre of its manufacture.

Arrival and Day One Schedule

The transfer from Moscow to Sergiev Posad will take place at 10.00 am; you will be brought to the venue by car or mini-van.

The journey will last about 2 hours.

12 am – arrival in Sergiev Posad.

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Lunch, which is included into the price of the trip, will take place at one of the local cafes.

3:00 pm – return journey to Moscow.

**SERGIEV POSAD AND VLADIMIR**

Traveller’s Guidebook

These two cities comprise an essential part of the Russia’s Golden Ring tour, a route dedicated to the old Russian cities situated in a ring-like manner. On the way, you will acquire the knowledge of the area’s history; learn more about its traditions, way of life, see its architecture. Many claim that Sergiev Posad and Vladimir make the most beautiful part of the Golden Ring. They will definitely give you an idea of what the rest of the cities on the route look like. Vladimir was founded in XI century and has always been one of the most important cities of the state. Sergiev Posad is often referred to as the Orthodox Christian Vatican, and is the heart of the Russian Orthodoxy.

Arrival and Day One Schedule

The transfer from Moscow to Sergiev Posad will take place at 8.00 am; you will be brought to the venue by car or mini-van.

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Transfer to Vladimir.

The exact date of the city’s settlement is unknown. Later Moscow chronicles attribute its foundation to Vladimir Svyatoslavovich either in 987, 990, or 992. In 1299, Vladimir became the seat of the Metropolitan of Kyiv. However, already in the middle of the XIV century, the residence moved to Moscow. The city’s most prolific period lasted from early XII century till the city was attacked by the Mongols in 1228. It was within this timeframe that Vladimir’s main highlights were built, something that makes the city stand out – its white stone cathedrals with their elaborate relief on the surface. After 1238 the city started to fall into decay. The Mongols set Vladimir on fire and many residents died. They killed prince Vsevolod and Mstislav, and burned the cathedral church, where the grand-ducal family, the boyars and ordinary people found shelter. Vladimir has never fully recovered, though the bishop survived and ran away.

The city tour will enable you to see all major landmarks. The first sight on our way is the Cathedral of the Assumption, a unique building made of white stone. The cathedral was built in the middle of the XII century by Prince Andrei the Pious as the main church of the Vladimir-Suzdalian Rus. Before the rise of Moscow, the Cathedral was the main temple where the great princes were crowned for reign. It is also one of the few temples where Andrei Rublev’s authentic frescoes are still preserved.

The Golden Gate (1158–1164, rebuilt at the end of the eighteenth century) is another important tourist attraction of Vladimir. It is a white stone triumphal arch, above the Gate there is the Church of the Deposition of the Robe (1795–1810). The Gate was built by Prince Andrei the Pious who used it as the a part of the military fortress.

5:30 pm – return journey to Moscow. This is the time when will have to bid farewell to the beautiful churches and all the wonderful landmarks that breathe with history and tell you the story of their complicated past. Hopefully, you’ll enjoy the trip and we’ll be happy to see you in Russia again as there is much more to show. “Do Svidaniya” as we Russian say, or see you soon again.