TREASURES OF THE HERMITAGE TOUR
By land: St. Petersburg to Moscow

HOST: BOB KASZANITS
President of the State Hermitage, Museum Foundation of Canada

Experience the art treasures of the Hermitage as well as the palaces and museums of St. Petersburg and Moscow. Enjoy an intimate view of masterpieces of art and architecture that defined the grace and beauty of 18th and 19th century Imperial Russia.

As a special treat, arrangements have been made for us to visit the Hermitage on a Monday when it is closed to the public. Examine the fine details of the dazzling Amber Room in the Catherine Palace and other sights in the “Tzars Village”. Delight in studying the stunning Forbes Collection of Imperial Easter Eggs at the newly opened Fabergé Museum. Don’t miss the Russian Museum holding the finest collection of Russian art anywhere in the world.

In Moscow, visit the Kremlin, Red Square and St. Basil’s, one of the most photographed sites in the world. We will visit the Diamond Treasury Reserve beneath the Kremlin as well as the great art collections at the Treyakov and Pushkin Museums. Take the opportunity to enjoy a ballet at the Bolshoi Theatre only steps from our hotel. This truly is a trip of a lifetime!

Single supplements available!
Call your local Merit Travel expert.

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What’s Included:
- Round-trip airfare
- Plaza Premium airport lounge pass
- St. Petersburg: four nights 5-star hotel accommodation
- Moscow: three nights 5-star hotel accommodation
- Seven breakfasts, three lunches, and one dinner
- Economy class train from St. Petersburg to Moscow
- Arrival/departure transfer assistance and Fast-Track porterage
- Museum curator/specialty expert guide for Hermitage visits
- Private motor coach transportation
- Local English-speaking tour guide
- Privileged access to the Hermitage Museum
- St. Petersburg destination guidebook
- Merit Travel tour host**
- All taxes and gratuities

*CDN$ p.p. dbl. occ. Single supplement: $1,200. Land only: $5,195 p.p. Not included: Russian Visa fee (approx. $200). Airfare available from most Canadian airports, please enquire. **Minimum 12 passengers required for a Merit Travel Tour host. ©Merit Travel is a registered trademark of Merit Travel Group Inc. All rights reserved.
Your Itinerary | Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner = (B, L, D)

DAY 1 | Oct. 3, 2019 | Toronto/Vancouver - St. Petersburg
Depart on your overnight flight to St. Petersburg, Russia.

DAY 2 | Oct. 4, 2019 | Arrive St. Petersburg (D)
A private coach will bring us to our hotel where our luggage will be fast tracked for our convenience. Check into our hotel, and rest up, or enjoy a delightful stroll along the River Neva embankment and the majestic Palace Square. Walk out on Palace Square to Nevsky Prospect, the main thoroughfare for shopping and fashion in St. Petersburg, all within a short walk.
This evening enjoy a welcome dinner at the hotel restaurant with our group and we will review the week’s activities and answer any questions.

Accommodation at Astoria Hotel (4 nights)

DAY 3 | Oct. 5, 2019 | St. Petersburg (B, L)
FULL DAY AT PETERHOF PALACE: Today, join us for a day at the Peterhof Palace, and its extensive grounds on the shores of the Gulf of Finland. The Lower Gardens of Peter the Great’s time are a masterpiece of Russian 18th century design. The park is a labyrinth of paths and ornate iron foot bridges, as well as Montplaisir Palace, Peter’s ‘cottage’ by the shore. Peterhof ‘Peter’s court’ is a stunning formal summer palace, modelled after Versailles, but which possibly outdoes the original in grandeur and scope. Enjoy lunch at the restaurant Legran before visiting the Yussupov Palace. This evening, you have the option of attending world class ballet at the magnificent Mariinski Theatre (price not included in tour).

DAY 4 | Oct. 6, 2019 | St. Petersburg (B, L)
FULL DAY AT CATHERINE PALACE: Travel by private coach to the Village of Pushkin, and the Catherine Palace, the summer retreat of Russian royals and visiting nobility for almost 300 years. Here you will see the legendary Amber Room, which was recently reconstructed.
The room was so beautiful that the retreating Nazi armies tried to dismantle it and take it back to Germany. Only a small panel of the original room was ever recovered. Stroll the extensive grounds or take a carriage ride around the lake. Enjoy lunch at Podvorye Restaurant with traditional Russian folk music and cuisine.
This evening, you have the option of attending a performance of opera, ballet or the Philharmonic at one of St. Petersburg’s many theatres (price not included in tour).

DAY 5 | Oct. 7, 2019 | St. Petersburg (B, L)
FULL DAY AT THE HERMITAGE MUSEUM: Whilst its closed to the public, enjoy ample time and space to enjoy the indulgent decor and art collections of the Hermitage Museum.
The tour will focus on the European painting collection and the collection of decorative arts as well as the state rooms of the Winter Palace including the recently restored Memorial Hall of Peter the Great and the Large Throne Room where Nicholas II announced the sale of Alaska to the United States. In the Pavilion Hall we will see the world famous 18th century Peacock Clock, by James Cox of Britain.
We will visit the Diamond Treasure Gallery of diplomatic gifts and see the personal jewelry of the Romanovs.

Bob Kaszanits is an internationally recognized expert in the preservation of museum collections. He is a former Assistant-Director of the National Gallery of Canada and has worked in Russia for the past 25 years as President of the State Hermitage Museum Foundation of Canada Inc. and the Canadian Friends of the Hermitage. In 2005, he received a Presidential Distinguished Service Award for his work in helping preserve Russia’s cultural treasures at the Hermitage. His tours offer a warm insight to the grand mosaic that is Russia today.
Lunch will be served in the Hermitage Museum.

**DAY 6 | Oct. 8, 2019 | St. Petersburg - Moscow (B)**

FABERGÉ MUSEUM / SAPSAN TRAIN: This morning we will visit the new Fabergé Museum to see the Forbes Collection of Fabergé eggs that Tsar Nicholas II gave to Empress Alexandra. It is absolutely stunning.

Afterwards transfer to the railway station for our Sapsan day high speed train from St. Petersburg to Moscow (economy class) approx. 4 hours. Arrive in Moscow and transfer to our hotel.

*Acommodation at the Baltschug Kempinski Hotel (3 nights)*

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**DAY 7 | Oct. 9, 2019 | Moscow (B)**

KREMLIN AND PUSHKIN MUSEUM: After breakfast, transfer to the Kremlin. This ancient walled fortress contains historic and richly decorated cathedrals around the square. Within the Kremlin you will experience three key sites. The Assumption, is the primary Church of Russian Orthodoxy and site of all manner of coronations, victory services and intrigues.

The Archangel, is the most Italianate of the Kremlin’s churches and home to the remains of everyone from Grand Prince Ivan Kalita to Tsar Ivan V.

The Annunciation, is the golden domed former private chapel of the Tsars, featuring the Armory Palace, which houses many of the treasures of the Tsars. Contained within are a number of ambassadorial gifts from the Eastern Sultans, the Coronation dress of Catherine the Great, splendid gilded carriages, and so much more. You will also tour the Diamond Fund, deep in the heart of the Kremlin.

After lunch (at your own cost), transfer to the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts. Delight in the large collection of French Impressionist paintings collected by Moscow businessmen Sergei Shchukin and Ivan Morozov.

In the evening complimentary transfers will be provided to the legendary Café Pushkin. We have made dinner table reservations for our group but dinner is at your own cost. We will have time to take photos in front of St. Basil's Cathedral in Red Square, and peek in to see the beautiful G.U.M. Department store also on Red Square.

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**DAY 8 | Oct. 10, 2019 | Moscow (B)**

TRETIAKOV STATE GALLERY & GARAGE CONTEMPORARY GALLERY: Today your coach will take you to the Tretyakov State Gallery where over 100,000 works of art charter the development of Russian painting from the 10th to 19th centuries. You will also see the works of Kandinsky, Chagall and Malevich, all of whom brought international attention to Russian art at the beginning of the 20th century.

After lunch (at your own cost), enjoy a city tour of Red Square and stand where tanks still parade past Lenin’s tomb and where Napoleon watched Moscow burn. Take a walk around St. Basil’s Cathedral with its colourful domes, rising majestically from the cobblestones. We will visit the Garage Contemporary Gallery, Moscow’s premier contemporary art scene.

Tonight we have the evening at our own leisure.

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**DAY 9 | Oct. 11, 2019 | Moscow - Toronto/Vancouver (B)**

After breakfast transfers will be arranged to the airport for your flight home.
RESPONSIBILITY

Merit Travel Group Inc. doing business as Merit Travel, acts solely as agents for the Travel Service Suppliers such as hoteliers, airlines, ground service operators, bus operators, etc. who are providing their facilities as described in this brochure. We do our best to select such suppliers but exercise no control over them and cannot be held responsible for the failure of these suppliers to carry out any obligations. Any and all bookings made with these suppliers by us, for you, are subject to the terms and conditions of each and every such supplier. Supplier liability may also be limited by law, tariffs, or conditions set forth in their documentation, tickets, etc.

Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, Merit and its directors, officers, employees, affiliates, successors, assigns, agents and other representatives are not responsible for any and all claims for losses, damages (whether direct, indirect, special, punitive, or other consequential damages, lost profits or opportunities) delays, illness, injuries, inconvenience, loss of enjoyment, or anxiety (whether based in contract, tort, negligence, strict liability or otherwise, and even if Merit and the Travel Service Suppliers have been advised of the possibility of damages to such party or any other party) arising from:

a. Fault or negligence or omissions on the part of the said travel service suppliers;

b. Illness, theft, strikes, mechanical problems, quarantine, governmental intervention, weather conditions, acts of hostility or violence, and any other grounds beyond our control;

c. Your failure to obtain passport, visas, other travel documents or inoculations;

d. Your failure to advise us the name of the traveller exactly as it appears on the passport;

e. Your failure to report on time at an airport or ground transfer facility;

f. Material damages, theft or other mysterious disappearances of your goods;

g. Personal injuries or death;

h. Force Majeure - an event(s) beyond our, or our supplier(s), reasonable control including, but not limited to, acts of God, strikes, lockout or other labour disputes or disruptions, wars, blockades, insurrections, riots, earthquakes, weather conditions, floods or acts of restraint imposed by governmental authorities.

LIABILITY

Merit cannot assume responsibility for any costs incurred for any travel arrangements purchased separately from the Merit tour. Merit’s responsibility shall extend only to the provisions of advice as to industry-standard or supplier recommended connections and check-in times. Provided Merit supplies such advice, they shall not be responsible for missed connections or departures, regardless of the cause.

TRAVEL PROTECTION PLAN (INSURANCE)

Trip cancellation and interruption insurance, medical and hospital insurance, baggage insurance, and various additional insurances are available and HIGHLY RECOMMENDED. If you choose not to purchase insurance, you are required to sign an Insurance Waiver Form. Note that if you choose not to purchase insurance, you are fully liable for any and all penalties imposed as stated under Cancellation Policy on this page. Please speak to your representative at the time of making reservations about insurance.

REFUNDS

The nature of travel involves risks and unpredictable weather and thus Merit cannot assure any departure or arrival times at any point of an itinerary. Your right to receive a refund is limited. There will be no discounts or monies refunded for any missed or unused services. Merit reserves the right to cancel the tour for any reason. Should this occur, a full refund will be made to the traveller.

CANCELLATION POLICY

While Merit will do its utmost to minimize any penalties charged, there are irrecoverable costs associated with your tour. The following penalties will be considered the costs incurred with cancellation:

a. 90 days or more prior to departure: Loss of total deposit.

b. 89 – 60 days prior to departure: Loss of 50% of total tour cost.

c. 59 days or less prior to departure: Loss of 100% of total tour cost.

Cancellation penalties for some tours will vary and there may be additional penalties associated with the airfare. If so, these policies will be noted separately at time of booking and will prevail.

TOUR CHANGES

We reserve the right to substitute itineraries, hotels, airlines or vessels due to conditions beyond our control. In such cases we will do everything possible to ensure the locations visited, the excursions taken and the hotels offered are similar to the ones originally planned. Any change to itineraries will not result in eligibility for a refund.

REVISION FEE

Changes to your tour reservation might not be possible. Should you request a change and we are able to accommodate it, you will be subject to any charges imposed by the airline or tour suppliers. In addition, we reserve the right to charge a $50 revision fee for any change made after the deposit is paid. A change in name or departure date may constitute a cancellation, and the corresponding penalties may apply.

PERSONAL DOCUMENTATION

All passengers travelling internationally must travel with a passport. Many countries require the passport to be valid for 6 months beyond the traveller’s return date. Visas may be required for some destinations. It is the passenger’s responsibility to obtain at the passenger’s expense, all documentation required by all relevant authorities. In the event that the passenger does not possess the correct documentation, the air carrier has the right to refuse passage.

DESCRIPTION

Every effort has been made to describe and produce the travel services and photographs as accurately as possible in the printed tour description. However we reserve the right to correct errors and we will make all reasonable efforts to inform you should any significant changes occur.

CONSENT

Your retention of tickets, reservations or bookings after issuance shall constitute your consent to the above terms. If you encounter any concerns during your tour, please inform your local travel service provider. If the matter cannot be resolved, please inform Merit Travel in writing upon your return.