

WHITE NIGHTS FESTIVAL ST. PETERSBURG

Riga and St. Petersburg – 10 days

Departure: June 13, 2017

Return: June 22, 2017

Since 1985 H.A.T. Tours has brought opera lovers regularly to Saint Petersburg,



formerly known as Leningrad, during the Soviet days. Our frequent guests have seen the transformation of a gray city into a shining metropolis worthy of Peter the Great's dreams, including the renovation of the old Mariinsky Theatre plus buildings of the new Mariinsky II Theatre and the smaller Mariinsky Concert Hall, under their captivating conductor Valery Gergiev.

This tour offers stunning sights of the gardens of the Grand Palace at Petrodvorets, the Amber Room of the luxurious Catherine Palace near Pushkin, the Hermitage Museum with its immense collection of the Old Masters' paintings as well as those of the Impressionists, brought from Germany after the end of the Second World War. We will stay five nights at the most comfortable and centrally located HOTEL ASTORIA, where Hitler had planned to celebrate his victory over the Soviets on Christmas Eve 1941.

Enjoy the summer listening to great operas in two of the best cities in Europe. The Mariinsky Theater and the elegant National Opera in Riga, are amongst the best today.

Opera Performances

In Riga:

June 15 – To be announced

June 16 – To be announced

In St. Petersburg:



June 18 – To be announced

June 19 – To be announced

June 20 – To be announced

Wednesday, June 13. (D)*. DEPART FOR RIGA

Depart this evening aboard any airline of your choice to Riga, Latvia. Dinner and light breakfast served on the plane.

Thursday, June 14. (B,D). RIGA

Upon arrival at the Riga International Airport, take a taxi to the centrally located HOTEL RADISSON BLU LATVIJA, where we will stay three nights. We will reimburse the taxi fare. Briefing with cocktails and Gala Welcome dinner in the hotel..

Friday, June 15. (B). RIGA

Among sights to see in Old Riga are St. Peters Church, Riga Castle, the Monument of Liberty and the Dome Cathedral. This evening we will see an opera at the National Opera House, performance to be announced.

RIGA is a wonderful surprise to many strangers. A big city in feeling and sophistication, she has come to life again after 50 years of Soviet domination. The moment you walk the streets you understand why in the 1930's it was known as the "Little Paris of the North". Perhaps the best indicator of Riga's cultural strength is that far from old buildings being torn down to make way for high risers, they are being lovingly restored. Almost symbolically, one of the first to be brought back to its former glory was the Opera House.

Saturday, June 16. (B). RIGA

Today we drive around Riga to see how Peter the Great enlarged this seaport on the Baltic and made it into the important trading center that it is today. See the early Art Nouveau houses and the State Gallery. Afternoon free. This evening we will see an opera at the National Opera, performance to be announced.

Sunday, June 17. (B,D). ST. PETERSBURG

Today, we fly to St. Petersburg, Russia, and transfer you to the deluxe, centrally located HOTEL ASTORIA where we stay five nights. Dinner at this evening at the hotel.



ST. PETERSBURG was founded in 1703 by Peter the Great as his “Window on the West.” The city was renamed Petrograd in 1914 but lost its status as capital of Russia in the 1917 revolution that began in this city. In 1924, the city took the name of Leningrad after the death of the revolutionary leader, Lenin, and it remained thus until a referendum returned the city to its original name in 1991. Thanks to Lenin’s determination to prevent its destruction in 1917, the city survives today as an extraordinarily beautiful and perfectly preserved tribute to Peter’s vision and the taste of his imperial successors.

Monday, June 18. (B). ST. PETERSBURG

Among the sights to see along the main thoroughfare, Nevsky Prospect, are many buildings and former palaces, modernized after the fall of the Soviet Union 26 years ago. This afternoon we drive to the outskirts of St. Petersburg to visit Petrodvorets begun by Peter the Great as his summer home. We will visit the Grand Palace and take a brief walk through the breathtaking gardens. This evening or the next few evenings we will three operas or ballets at the Mariinsky Theater or the new Mariinsky II Theater, performance to be announced.

PETRODVORETS (formerly called Peterhof) was founded in 1714 on plans personally drawn up by Peter the Great, which provided detailed instructions to eminent Russian and European architects and sculptors to create a total of 144 fountains, four cascades, beautiful gardens, dazzling gold-plated statues and the very impressive GRAND PALACE to rival Versailles in France. During the Nazi occupation from September 1941 to January 1944, the beautiful palaces were destroyed and the grounds were totally ruined. What we see today is a complete and thorough restoration of Peter the Great’s dreamt.

Tuesday, June 19. (B). ST. PETERSBURG

This morning visit Peter and Paul Fortress and its Cathedral where many Czars are buried. In the afternoon, we visit the world-famous Hermitage Museum, founded by Catherine the Great, to see the magnificent collection of Old Masters’ paintings, acknowledged as one of the greatest treasures of art in the world. This evening, we will see opera at one of the three Mariinsky venues, performance to be announced.

Wednesday, June 20. (B). ST. PETERSBURG

This morning we drive to Pushkin to visit the luxurious Catherine Palace which has seen many restorations over the past 250 years, especially after the extensive damage done by the Nazis during the Second World War. See the newly completed Amber Room. Afternoon return to St. Petersburg. Evening performance to be announced at the Mariinsky Theatre.



PUSHKIN was a trading village one thousand years ago when the Swedish Vikings exerted their influence in the Baltic lands. In 1709, the troops under Peter the Great occupied these territories. The country estate in the town was presented by Peter to his wife, the future Empress Catherine I. What began in 1718 as a modest, two-story, stone mansion for Empress Catherine was leveled to the ground and then expanded by every successive monarch. In 1752, Empress Elizabeth enlisted the services of Bartholomeo Rastrelli for the reconstruction of the mansion. He built a magnificent rococo palace with a blue and white exterior with gilded decorations. There were subsequent additions by various architects under Catherine the Great (1762-1796), with no heed paid to an integral composition. Outside the palace gates is a statue of the famous Russian poet, Alexander Pushkin, who went to school in the town.

Thursday, June 21. (B,D). ST. PETERSBURG

Today is free to visit the Hermitage Museum again or the Russian Museum housing paintings from the last century by Russian artists. This evening we will have Gala Farewell dinner at a local restaurant.

Friday, June 22. (B). ST. PETERSBURG – BACK HOME

We transfer you to the airport for your flight back home arriving the same afternoon. See you on another European Opera Tour.

* B-Breakfast, L-Lunch, D-Dinner (including wine)



LAND COST

DOUBLE: \$6,950 PER PERSON

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: \$1,500

TOUR INCLUDES

- Flight ticket between Riga and St. Petersburg
- 1st Category orchestra level seats in theatres
- Deluxe centrally located hotels
- Buffet breakfast daily, and 3 dinners with wine in gourmet restaurants
- Welcome reception with cocktails
- Private sightseeing in each city
- Experienced English speaking guides
- Entrance fees to museums
- Transportation to and from theatres
- Baggage handling
- Guide, driver and bellboys gratuities
- Travelling with the owner at your service
- Complete package with details of operas listed
- Transfers from and to airports on published arrival and departure days only

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