



17220 Newhope Street #203, Fountain Valley, CA., 92708, USA @ [800.795.1633](tel:800.795.1633)

RUSSIA TRAVEL TIPS – 2018

To Our "Valued" Guests!

Welcome to the fascinating world of cruising the Rivers, Lakes and Waterways of Russia! We are delighted to be able to share with you information on this fascinating country, culture and its people!

Please bear in mind that last two decades of changes in the economic and political ideologies in the countries of Eastern Europe, Russia and Ukraine have contributed to their rapid economic growth – and to all the growing pains that go with it. Your participation in traveling to these countries not only helps their economy but also spreads the friendship and understanding between our people. **Therefore, you act as an "Ambassador" of the United States when visiting these foreign lands. The impression you leave will have an everlasting effect on future relations between these countries and your own.**

It is therefore important that we advise and prepare you for some of the cultural and social differences you will encounter. These *Tour and Travel Tips* have been designed to provide useful information and helpful suggestions to ease your adjustment and help you get around any obstacles you may encounter. Your journey will be greatly enhanced if you take the time to prepare for it. Thoroughly acquaint yourself with the information provided herewith - but also talk to others who have been there and study one of the many comprehensive guide books available or check the Internet! The effort you put into planning your trip before you go will make all the difference...*Thank you!*

A FEW COURTESY REMINDERS

Make sure to be on time so as not to hold up the group. Please refrain from talking while the guide/s are speaking or providing information regarding the tour. Wait for all information to be given before asking questions. Any special requests regarding group activities should be directed to your Cruise Director who is responsible for representing the interests of the whole group. Your local guides will refer all requests back to the Cruise Director. Your cooperation in these matters will not only be greatly appreciated but will increase both the groups and your personal enjoyment of the tour.

VALUE WORLD TOURS, INC.

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GENERAL TRAVEL INFORMATION

Vouchers: If traveling within a group or on any **set program** vouchers will **not be required** or issued. If traveling as an individual and/or deviating from the regular itinerary, we may issue vouchers for services paid for. **When included, vouchers will be sent/mailed with your final documents.**

Air Tickets: Whenever our company issues tickets, they will be **SENT/EMAILED** with your final documents. **In some instances, when tickets are issued directly by the airlines, they may be sent to you under separate cover – or forwarded electronically.** Please consult your check-off list.

Transfers: If you have purchased your air tickets or have prepaid your arrival transfers through us, please look for our Tour Guides holding name signs and/or our yellow triangle Global Tours & Cruises (GTC) Signs **after exiting the Customs Area of the airport!**



If you have purchased **land/cruise only** and are arranging for your own arrival and departure transportation, the names and addresses of your hotels and the port locations will be listed on the **Contact Sheet enclosed or sent with your final documents.**

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS: Before leaving home, please ensure that you have your valid **PASSPORT** and appropriate **VISA**. At the time of printing, **US citizens needed visas for traveling to Russia.** Please make sure your US passport has a validity of at least 6 months beyond your scheduled travel dates and check for visa updates with the U.S. or the appropriate foreign consulates at least 90 days prior to your departure. If you are a foreign national – please check with your country's consulate, as rules may be different. **Remember: obtaining a visa and proper travel documents are YOUR responsibility!**

BAGGAGE: Make a detailed list of everything you pack for the trip, and then leave this list at home. We cannot be responsible for lost baggage, but most airlines will make every effort to recover baggage or make proper compensation if you are able to itemize the suitcase contents. It is also a good idea to tape a piece of paper **INSIDE** your luggage, which shows your full name, home address and telephone number. **The purchase of Travel Insurance is always strongly recommended!**

BAGGAGE WEIGHT: Please remember that weight allowances vary and are lower when flying domestic, and intra-continental routes, utilizing smaller aircraft. Check your airline ticket for instructions and pack accordingly – or you may face overweight surcharges!



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OUR FINAL DOCUMENTS – TRAVEL PORTFOLIOS

FREE ELECTRONIC DELIVERY: *Once final payment is received all paper documents including: day by day itinerary, travel tips, airline tickets, contacts and other related information will be sent to your electronically via email. **This service is free, provided we have your email address.***

PHYSICAL DELIVERY OF OUR PORTFOLIO OF GIFTS & PAPER DOCUMENTS:

*If you do not have email OR would prefer to receive paper documents along with our set of useful, travel related items as outlined below, **YOU MUST NOTIFY US AT THE TIME OF BOOKING** so that these items can be sent to you approximately 2 weeks prior to your departure via registered or overnight mail. The items are complimentary, you will only be billed the cost of delivery which is usually around \$20 per address. **The cost of this service will be added to your invoice.***

1. LUGGAGE TAGS: Will be provided. *If you would like your luggage to take the same vacation you do – please use them! **Please note:** The tags have been designed to allow you to list up to 6 points of travel (hotel to ship, ship to hotel, etc.). **DO NOT DISCARD THEM!** Simply **cross out** your previous location and **write in your next destination (and room or cabin number if you know it).** This will help our staff and porters deliver your luggage to you in the shortest possible time!*

2. SQUARE LUGGAGE STICKERS: *If provided, please stick them visibly on your suitcases when possible - the stickers will allow you, our guides and porters to recognize them quicker and get them to their destination faster!*

3. BADGES: *If provided, please **wear the badges** at all airports, transfer points, hotels, and at any time you are embarking/disembarking the ship. Not only does your badge assist us in providing adequate security on the vessel by identifying you as a group member to our guides, staff and security personnel, it also allows you to get to know your fellow passengers sooner!*

***NOTE:** Since people go by nicknames, our badges come **blank**. Please print your name the way you would like to be addressed and wear them at least for the first few days.*

4. PENS & TRAVEL BAGS: *Our unique pens and practical travel bags are not only “**good looking**” but superbly designed to hold everything from your documents to cameras to water bottles! People love them- and you will too!*



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CLOTHING SUGGESTIONS: The dress code on our cruises are INFORMAL!

So please - **PACK LIGHTLY!** Combine a few tee shirts, several shirts, a turtleneck with 2 wrinkle free slacks, one skirt, one sweater, a pair of shorts, a windbreaker and a sports jacket - and you are done! Leave your formal evening clothes at home; *tuxedos and evening gowns are not required!* The only time you may wish to "*dress up*" is for the Farewell Dinner aboard the ship or if going to an evening cultural performance (ballet or similar); on these occasions, a jacket and tie for gentlemen, and a cocktail dress for the ladies will be fine. But generally, the dress code is informal (*and that goes for excessive jewelry too!*) **Remember - you are traveling to see - not to be seen!** Keep it simple and you'll thank yourself later! **DO pay particular attention to footwear** - you should have a good pair of comfortable walking shoes with thick rubber soles and firm arch supports. If you buy new shoes, "*break them in*" before the trip. Suitable footwear aboard the ship are sneakers, deck shoes, and similar rubber-soled shoes. **Our cruises involve extensive walking during visits ashore, so you need to be comfortable!**

PHYSICAL DISABILITIES: Please note that the majority of the passenger vessels sailing the various rivers of the world (*including those featured in our programs*) **have limited services for the physically impaired.** There are **no elevators on board - steep staircases are the norm.** In addition, due to their small size and shallow draft, the ships often anchor at remote undeveloped ports and stops. While this ability enhances the itineraries **it also means that most of the shore excursions require quite a bit of walking!** Therefore, severe walking disabilities may limit the passenger's overall enjoyment on these programs.

Regretfully, we do not recommend these cruises to severely disabled or wheelchair bound passengers!

RUSSIAN ENTRY & EXIT Formalities

(Valid at the time of printing but subject to change without notice)

ENTRY INTO THE COUNTRY:

An immigration card and Customs Form will be provided by aircraft personnel or will be available on arrival in the baggage area. Fill in both and proceed to:

IMMIGRATION: Will check your Passport, Visa and take your Immigration Card.

CUSTOMS: After retrieving your luggage proceed through either the "GREEN" or "RED" lane;

"GREEN LANE" – NOTHING TO DECLARE: If you have no high end valuables, laptops and are carrying **LESS than \$10,000 in USD/EU cash** - this is the quickest way out for most tourist visitors. **NOTE** however that Customs officers have a right to stop passengers and request to see their belongings. If you are not stopped, you do not need to give your Customs Declaration.



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“RED LANE” – SOMETHING TO DECLARE. If you are carrying high value items such as laptop computers, high-end camera equipment or **LARGE AMOUNTS OF CASH** (\$10,000 or more - *some or all of which you intend on taking back*) you may want to declare them to avoid problems when exiting.

If taking the “RED” LANE, present your Passport and Declaration Form to the Customs officer who upon inspection of cash or goods will sign and stamp your Declaration Form and return it to you. You MUST keep this form, as you will need to present it to Customs upon exiting the country!

CASH: Unlimited foreign currency may be taken into Russia **but a maximum of \$10,000** per person USD (\$) may be taken **OUT** of Russia **without** any declaration forms.

IMPORTANT NOTE: *Local personnel including our Tour and Cruise Guides are NOT allowed to enter the Immigration/Customs area. If you experience a problem you may ask the officers to summon one of them to assist you in translating. Otherwise, our Guides will meet you as soon as you exit the Customs Area. They will hold our **Yellow GTC Triangle Signs!** (Please note: this applies only to those passengers who have booked their flights with us or have purchased transfers through us.)*

EXITING THE COUNTRY:

“GREEN” LANE: Nothing to declare including cash amounts **LESS than \$10,000 USD.**

“RED” LANE: If you are taking back high end items including cash amounts larger than allowed, fill out **another Customs Declaration Form and submit it to the Customs officer along with your stamped ENTRY FORM.** Upon comparing the two the officer may request to see the funds or may let you through without a check. In either case – **be sure NOT TO LOSE your Entry Declaration!**

CAUTIONS FOR EXPORTING & SHOPPING

NO ART / ANTIQUES: Works of art such as paintings, sculpture and **old ICONS** cannot be taken out of the country. Antiques (*anything older than 50 years*) such as old coins, weapons, books published before 1945, furniture, samovars and musical instruments can be taken out only if you have a permit from the Ministry of Culture. These items are subject to 100% duty.

YES Items such as coats, caviar (*in reasonable quantities*), carpets, jewelry and crystal purchased at legitimate shops can be taken out of the country and **NO** custom fees are applicable.

SOUVENIRS: Any type of handicraft is usually of the highest quality. Hand painted “Matryoshka” dolls and lacquer boxes are world famous – but make sure they are originals and not fake copies.

Photography: Please do not photograph people without asking their permission to do so. Do not take photographs of airports, military bases, or installations. Remember to bring all the film/memory cards you will need, because Russian and Ukrainian film/memory cards may not be of the same quality.



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VIDEO CAMERAS: Please remember that Russia and Ukraine utilize a different standard (*PAL/SECAM*) than the United States (*NTSC*). **THEY ARE NOT COMPATIBLE!** Remember to bring enough blank tapes **and if purchasing tapes locally**, make sure they are marked **NTSC!**

NOTE: On our ship we allow an independent company to sail and film the cruise for the benefit of our passengers who may wish to purchase a VHS or DVD copy for their own use. **Important:** These DVDs are encoded differently from US DVD. If you purchase a DVD, even if it is without a Region code, you may only be able to play it in laptop computers but not your DVD player.

Note: *Most museums, galleries and concert halls either charge a fee for photos or videos (anywhere from 5 - 8 Euros depending on the institution) or may not allow photography at all.*

HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS (when applicable)

HOTELS: On some of our tours and cruise packages, in order to conform to airline schedules, we add pre/post-cruise stays at hotels in various cities (*check your itinerary*). In all such cases we use First Class (4*) properties, or best available and breakfast is usually included (*for further information consult your vouchers or itinerary*). Other meals are provided as specified in your tour itineraries. In all cases, hotels are carefully selected to provide **the best combination of location, comfort and value**, but please remember - *the quality and service levels of these hotels may still lag behind what we are used to in the West!* For actual hotels used on your particular departure, please check the "Contact List" included with your final documents.

CRUISE RULES

Your enjoyment of the trip will depend in large part on your positive attitude. Here are a few pointers that will help you prepare for your journey. Cruising the rivers of **Russia** is a unique and incomparable experience to any other form of travel!

General River Rules

1. **Maritime Law** - As with a pilot on a plane, the **Captain of a ship** is the **ultimate law**. He/she is responsible for the ultimate safety and comfort of the vessel and its passengers. It is within the Captain's jurisdiction to change the sequence or duration of stops and ports if necessary due to inclement weather conditions, high or low water levels, dock and lock schedules, technical reasons, etc. The Captain has the right to remove unruly passengers, quarantine the ship in case of disease and similar. Therefore, although unlikely, **certain changes in schedules may happen**. Though we expect to provide sightseeing of all of the major attractions listed in our programs, there is always a possibility **that the sequence of touring** may be altered to take into account the operating hours at museums, galleries and monuments. Shore excursions may be changed in response to sailing conditions and other factors. *Your understanding and cooperation in such instances will be greatly appreciated!*



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- Cultural Differences** - Remember that you are traveling through a country whose political, social and cultural backgrounds may be very different from your own. Do not let political differences govern your perspective. Instead, travel with an open mind, and you will satisfy your curiosity about the people, their land, their history and their culture.
- Service** - If you receive poor service at any point, try to take it in good humor and solve it directly. If you have any serious complaints, take them to your guide and/or Cruise Director.
- Bureaucracy** - Expect a little bit of red tape, and try not to be bothered by bureaucratic rituals, which may be different from country to country.
- Do not compare things you see by American standards.** These river vessels were all specifically built for cruising the narrow rivers, low lying bridges and tight locks that connect the Russian Waterways. Therefore, although quite comfortable, they are small and practical and should not be compared with huge ocean faring vessels. Above all, keep your sense of humor and enjoy the cultural legacies, physical geography and rich variety of the people as you sail through this unique and different land!

DOCKING LOCATIONS

For those passengers purchasing cruise only and arriving directly to our ship on the day of embarkation, please note the docking locations of our ship, which are currently:

Moscow

Northern River Station

Leningradsky Prospekt

(Северный Речной вокзал, Ленинградское шоссе 51)

St. Petersburg

Utkina Zavod', Oktyabrskaya emb., 31

Or Vodohod Shipping Dock (across the river)

Санкт-Петербург

Уткина Заводь, Октябрьская наб., 31 Ст. м. «Ломоносовская».

Please check your final documents for the final docking location as it may change on short notice.

RUSSIAN RIVER CRUISE VESSELS

Most, if not all, the ships currently plying the inland lakes and rivers were built during the eighties in Eastern Germany, Czech Republic, or Austria. They were all built to meet the strict standards of the inland waterways including locks built back in the 1930's. While there have been a number of ship renovations in the past few years, the important things that distinguish competing vessels are the variables: **the quality of food, provisioning, maintenance, and level of on board service.** These will vary based on the shipping company, which owns the vessel, as well as the **Tour/Cruise Operator**, who arranges the services. **In your case, you have made an excellent choice!** You will be sailing on one of the best **FIRST CLASS** ships plying the Volga with a company that is recognized as **one of the premier River Cruise Operators in its class - Yours Truly!**



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Our UNIQUE FIRST CLASS SHIP: M/S “*Sergei Yesenin*”

Built in Germany in the late eighties, the M/S “*Yesenin*” named after the famous Russian poet, is one of **only 4 such ships built for the ruling elite and is a true 4* first class vessel.** Featuring just 2 passenger decks – both above water, all twin cabins are outside with big picture windows that open, have private bathrooms with **separate shower stalls**, hair dryers, mini-refrigerators, radio, flat screen TV’s with international channels and air control. The public areas include a **one sitting restaurant**, an evening lounge with live entertainment, a panorama salon, and a medical office with a doctor on board. The ships best feature is its smaller size with a maximum of only 108 passengers serviced by a wonderful crew of 46, with a lively on board ambiance full of activities, overseen by a superb team of cruise directors, and complemented by a young and enthusiastic staff that will ensure you have a trip of a lifetime! **NEW: Free Wi-Fi is available when in major ports via 2 provided laptops or your own!** **NON-SMOKING INTERIORS.** Designated Smoking areas outside.

GENERAL INFORMATION

CABINS: All cabins are outside facing spread over 2 decks: Main and Upper. All cabins have **2 lower Pullman style berths** and **full picture windows that can be opened.** Twin cabins are approximately 130 sq. feet. There are 4 Jr Suites which are about 220 sq. feet and 2 Two room Grand Suites about 250 sq. feet. **NEW:** The ship will see the addition of **6 new private balcony cabins** on the sun deck! Every cabin has a **bathroom with separate shower/toilet/sink**, individually controlled heating and forced air, radio P/A system and storage space. All cabins also have mini-refrigerators, mini safes and flat screen TV’s. **In terms of comfort they are not luxurious, but they are clean, practical and comfortable.**

KEYS: For security reasons and to avoid loss, there is only one key available per cabin (*old style turn keys*). We ask that keys be left at the reception desk whenever disembarking the vessel. **This is the only way for the ship to know who is on shore or on board the vessel.**

LINEN/TOWELS: While cabins are cleaned every day, due to limited storage and cleaning facilities on board, **and in order to conserve water, bed linens and towels are washed every 3 days - small hand towels every day.** To add to the conservation of water, we ask that you use your towels sparingly and, especially if you like to wrap yourself in a large bathroom towel, we suggest that you bring that with you. *Thank you!*

LAUNDRY FACILITIES: Washing and ironing services are available for a fee, through your cabin maids. Dry cleaning, is not available. Laundry charges should be paid in cash directly to your maid.

TOILETRIES: While toilet paper and soap bars are provided, they are coarser and may not be of the quality you are used to at home (*girls!*). Therefore you may want to bring your own roll, soap, shampoo and similar. If you are not particular (*guys!*) you won’t have a problem.



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COMMUNICATION: There are no public phones on the vessel. Ship to shore communications can only be done through the Captain's radio. Although our Cruise Directors have cell phones, these are used for **business and emergency situations only** and sometimes are difficult to get through especially when the ship is at sail. Therefore your ability to communicate with people back home will be limited to selected port stops where there are post offices offering international connections. In an emergency we recommend that your family contact our US office or our overseas representatives who will forward important messages via the port and river authorities. However please note that even in emergencies information may take 24 hours or more to get to their recipient. ***If bringing your US Cell phone, please make sure they are "unlocked" by your US provider in order to use them!** *WI-FI corners: Are located in public areas (lounge) and are available in major ports.*

RESTAURANTS: The restaurant is on the **Main Deck**. All meals are served in one seating. Mealtimes vary from day to day because they are coordinated with the timing of port arrivals and departures. The exact times are noted on daily schedules (*delivered to cabins each evening during dinner*). As a **general guideline**, meals are served as follows:

MEAL	TIME	STYLE
• Early Morning Coffee	06:30-	Self service
• Breakfast	07:00-08:30	Buffet
• Lunch	12:00-13:30	<i>Sit down*</i>
• Dinner	19:00-20:30	Sit down

**While docked in Moscow and St. Petersburg, due to traffic, distances and an extensive sightseeing program, Lunch packs may be provided instead of a served lunch. Once at sail, full meals are served for lunch.*

MEALS: While meals served on Russian cruises may not be extravagant compared with Western or Ocean going, lobster munching cruises, most of our passengers find the size and quality of the meals hearty and satisfying. All meals are preset **but passengers can choose between 2 to 3 main courses**. *Buffet* Breakfast consists of a variety of eggs, sausage, porridge, cold cuts and similar. A three or four course meal is served at both lunch and dinner, usually consisting of soup/salad or appetizer, main course (*meat, fish, chicken with vegetables*) and dessert (cake/fruit/ice cream). Coffee or tea is provided free of charge with all meals. Other beverages and bottled water can be purchased at nominal prices.

SEATING ASSIGNMENTS: All passengers are assigned a restaurant/table for the duration of the cruise at the first meal. If traveling with friends we recommend you advise the *Maitre d'* during the first meal that you wish to sit together. Our restaurant staff will make every effort to accommodate all requests but **please note** that we do reserve the right to assign seats based on client profiles, group seating requests, special meal requirements and for other technical reasons.



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SPECIAL DIETS: Due to an economy still in transition, food variety and provisioning may not be as varied as we are accustomed to in the West. **Vegetarian diets** are limited to the vegetables at hand. Salt-free, sugar-free or fat-free meals are a novelty. **Weight Watchers, Jenny Craig or similar are not available.** Although we and the restaurant staff will make every effort to arrange for special meals, if you have **strict dietary needs**, you may want to bring some non perishable snacks, crackers, dried fruits, dietary sweeteners, or other items that will compliment the limited variety of *special meals*.

WATER: We recommend **against** drinking **tap** water anywhere in Russia. During your cruise **we will provide you with a small bottle of water daily delivered in your cabins each evening.** Free ice is also available from a small purified ice vending machine. Additional water may be purchased on board.

ELECTRICITY: Electrical current in hotels and on board ship is 220 volts/50MHZ. In order to use appliances, *including shavers, hair-dryers, chargers for movie cameras, etc.*, you will need to bring:

- 1) **Universal Transformer:** to convert from US 110 Volts to 220. (Note: recent electronic equipment such as laptops and cameras MAY automatically convert. Please check your individual item.)
- 2) **Universal Adapter Plugs:** Round pins for sockets that are different than at home. Since there are no supplies of converters/ adapters, we recommend you purchase a transformer/ adapter plug set at any electronics or appliance store before you leave.

OTHER FACILITIES: Please note there are **no elevators, casinos, swimming pools, tennis courts, climbing walls, skating rinks, or similar** aboard these vessels. We do have books and table games ☺

PASSENGER MIX: Most of the sailings are reserved for our North American clientele and most passengers will be **English speaking** Americans or Canadians. On other dates, there is usually an international mix of people from all over the world – Australia, Norway, Scandinavia - even local folks! It's a great way to meet the people of the world and make new and long lasting friends! Whatever the mix, however, **English is always the primary language used.**

Smoking: *In most former Eastern block countries is still a mass habit.*

However, **ALL** our ships are **NON-SMOKING!** *Smoking is allowed only in designated areas on outside decks. Mutual respect between smokers and non-smokers will be appreciated.*

HEALTH CONSIDERATIONS: Due to limited services for the disabled and because of extensive walking on our excursions, **we do not recommend these cruises to people with severe disabilities.** Those passengers with lighter physical disabilities **must report them to us** at the time of booking. Most cabin doorways and public rest rooms are **not wide enough to allow access by standard wheelchairs.** Passengers confined to wheelchairs must provide their own collapsible chair, and may find certain areas of the ship inaccessible. Please note there are risers to cabins, bathrooms, and public rest rooms. **Prospective passengers with physical impairments must therefore be self-sufficient since the vessel's crew or staff cannot provide services of a personal nature.**



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MEDICAL: A qualified physician is available on board our ship. Customary charges will be made for all medical care and services. *Please note that the medical facilities and personnel are only equipped to provide basic medical care.* These personnel cannot offer care for conditions requiring specialized expertise or equipment. Passengers with such conditions, or in the event of an emergency, may be evacuated to a medical care facility ashore **at the passenger's own expense.** *Existing medical problems, which may require treatment by the vessel's physician, must be brought to our attention at the time of booking. Neither we or the vessel's owners and operators shall be liable for any act or omission of the physician and/or nurse. If you require special medicines, it is essential that you bring them with you from home, as only a limited range of medicines are available.*

MONEY & METHODS OF PAYMENT ON BOARD/ON SHORE:

Due to strict foreign currency laws here are IMPORTANT notes:

- **CASH: YES (*PREFERRED*) – EURO (EU) OR USD (\$) changed to Rubles**
- **CREDIT CARDS: YES, VISA OR MASTERCARD ONLY!**
(LIMITED USE outside of urban areas)

****Credit Card Note: As of May 2015, European/Russian Credit Card processors require credit cards with chips and a 4 digit PIN code. Your USA magnetic strip cards may NOT work at local ATM's requiring a PIN. Ask your bank for a chip card and/or bring along a Debit card with your PIN or enough cash to cover your expenses!***

CURRENCY: The currency is the **RUSSIAN RUBLE**. At the time of this printing, \$1 was worth around 56 Rubles. These values may change daily – so check your local newspaper or the internet a few days before departure.

EXPENSES FOR ON BOARD SERVICES: All costs are quoted in Rubles. Direct payments are accepted in cash (Rubles) or signed to your cabin card and paid at the end of the navigation by cash or Credit Card – **VISA or MasterCard ONLY!** Bank fees may apply! Check on arrival!

For passengers with Traveler Checks as well as foreign cash that needs to be converted to Rubles, we do make stops at major city banks and exchange offices in order to enable you to change money on arrival and along the way. **Please note that paper bills need to be NEW or at least in good condition (not written on, tattered or overly wrinkled) or Russian Banks may reject exchanging them.**



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OPTIONAL EXCURSIONS: A number of optional activities will be offered for sale (*Folk or Ballet performances, additional tours, etc.*) during your cruise. These *optional services* are priced in **EUROS**. Because of the need to **prepay** extra buses, guides and entrance fees at the last minute depending on passenger interest – **ALL OPTIONAL EXCURSIONS CAN BE PAID IN CASH with Euros or US Dollars at the current exchange rates OR WITH CREDIT CARDS - VISA or MasterCard ONLY!**

To sum this up – JUST REMEMBER – CASH IS STILL KING!

*How much CASH to bring with you? Although everyone is different, we suggest that you bring at least \$700-\$1000 per person in **NEW AND UNTORN BILLS** (\$5, \$10, \$20 and higher) for use during the trip (half you will exchange into Rubles on arrival – the rest as you need). If you are planning on purchasing more expensive items and top quality souvenirs, you may want to bring more.*

GRATUITIES

THE "BAD" NEWS: Tipping today has become commonplace in all former communist block countries including Russia, Ukraine and beyond. Due to the volatile nature of these new economies, salaries for regular folk are still pitiful compared to the rising costs and inflation in their countries – let alone if we compare them to Western standards. **Consequently, for the majority of the people working in the service industries (hotels, ships, restaurants, travel), tips and gratuities have become a large source of their income. Therefore, your gracious generosity will be appreciated throughout your trip.** **THE "GOOD" NEWS:** Unlike in many places in the West including the United States - where 18% “*service charges*” are either tacked on to your bill or demanded (*regardless of the quality of service*), tips in the “East” are still left to your discretion! **Therefore, no service - no tip!** The choice is still yours. However, since we repeatedly get asked to provide guidelines - here they are:

TIPPING SUGGESTIONS: Tips should be divided into 2 separate categories:

- 1) **Individual tips:** To staff/personnel on land portions who have earned your gratitude (*Cruise & Tour Directors, Local Guides leading local tours, bus drivers, specific waiters at hotels or other ground personnel*). These should be given directly to each individual service provider. (*See below*)
- 2) **Pooled tips:** For a group of individuals working as a team to serve you on a specific portion of a trip (such as **CREWS** on the ship).



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1) INDIVIDUAL TIPPING: While you are in cities or on shore excursions, local guides and drivers will escort the local tours. The so-called **standard tips** are: **Half day tours** – \$3 per person for the local guide and \$2 per person for the driver. **FULL DAYS (Moscow/St. Petersburg):** \$5 for guide and \$3 for the drivers. Porters will also appreciate a \$1 tip. A \$1 per person/per day tip should be left at hotels for your maids. For taxicabs or at restaurants add 10% to 15% to your final bill amount.

CRUISE DIRECTORS are *THE Travel Experts we employ who pick you up and stay with you from the moment you arrive to the moment you depart. They will be your guiding angels throughout the trip. They will lead you, educate you, entertain you and if need be, scold you 😊 but we are certain you will find their assistance indispensable in providing you with the utmost travel experience possible! Since they sail with you and are essentially at your disposal 24 hours a day....*

We recommend \$7 per person/per day - or \$80 per person for 12 day cruises

2) **POOLED TIPPING (CREW ON SHIP):** For the ship crew we implement a Pool System whereby *all the crew members*, from the Captain to the "lowly" deck hands, share in the gratuities collected from all passengers. The reason for doing this is that during the course of your cruise, you will actually see and meet only about 1/3 of the crew - mainly the entertainers, the restaurant and bar staff, and maybe your cabin maid. However, *there are many more crew members you will not see whose good work is equally important to the smooth operation of the cruise* - from the engine crew who sweat in the "bowels" of the ship and who keep you afloat, to the many staff and crew members who arrange for our busses & excursions, to the catering people who travel to our ports in advance of the ship in order to obtain and provide us with the best available food and beverage supplies.

POOLED TIPS: Therefore, to ensure equality for all, we ask that one day before your Captain's Farewell Dinner, you place your total gratuities for the cruise portion in an envelope and drop it in our "Gratuities box" or give it to the Head Purser/Cruise Director. All the gratuities will be delivered, on behalf of all the passengers, to the Captain during the Farewell Dinner. Suggested amount:

\$10 per person/per day = \$120 per person for a 12 day cruise
(Which will be divided EQUALLY among ALL crew & staff)

IMPORTANT FINAL NOTE ON TIPS: The above suggestions are given as guidelines ONLY!
You may leave as little or as much as you feel comfortable with. If you endear yourself to any particular crew member and wish to award them directly - please feel free to do so!

Summary on Tipping: If all of this is confusing, we recommend that *each person* sets aside **\$250** to cover all tipping needs for the total duration of the program.



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DAILY SCHEDULE AND INFORMATION BOARDS

Information regarding the daily tour program, meal hours and updated on board activities for the next day will be printed and delivered to each cabin the night before (*usually during dinner*). Information will also be displayed on the notice boards, each evening after dinner. Please remember to check these boards frequently during the day (**best at meal times**) since they will always be **updated in case of any last minute changes**. Although the ship is equipped with a P.A. system, to ensure the passengers' privacy, announcements are not heard in public areas (*except in an emergency*). **Therefore it is a good idea to check our information boards regularly!**

THANK YOU! SPASIBO! AND HAVE A WONDERFUL TRIP!

SAMPLE OF TYPICAL WEATHER

Average Temperatures in Fahrenheit Degrees

CITY	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT
	<i>H/L</i>	<i>H/L</i>	<i>H/L</i>	<i>H/L</i>	<i>H/L</i>	<i>H/L</i>
Moscow	61-43	68-50	72-58	88-63	65-43	62-40
St. Petersburg	57-42	66-52	72-57	76-60	62-45	61-37

Some Useful RUSSIAN PHRASES: *English/Russian (pronounced as written)*

Hi! - *Priviet*

Good Morning - *Dobroe Ootro*

How Are You? - *Kak dela?*

How much does it cost? - *Skolko stoit?*

Too Much! - *slishkom dorogo*

My name is - *menya zovoot*

Thank you - *spasibo*

Please - *pazhalosta*

Bye - *poka*

Goodbye - *dosvidanya*

Yes - *da*

No- *nyet*

Numbers: *one – odin two - dva three - tri four - chetiri five - pyat six - shest*
 seven – sen eight - vosem nine - devyat ten - desyat



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PACKING TIPS & SUGGESTIONS

Items You May Wish to Bring Along:

- Facial tissues, washcloths and shower caps, as they are not supplied on board.
- **Skin cream and other cosmetics for sun protection.**
- Insect repellent.
- Spare set of eyeglasses for emergencies. If you wear contact lenses, bring a pair of eyeglasses for occasions when contacts are bothersome to wear, such as in strong wind or dust.
- **Medications** which are vital to your health. A letter should accompany these from your doctor (signed and dated), certifying that such medications are vital to your health. Dosage should be indicated. *Always pack any personal medications in your carry-on luggage, not in your checked baggage.*
- Common remedies such as laxatives, indigestion tablets, aspirin and travel sickness pills (*However, the latter will probably not be needed while in the protected waters of the inland rivers and waterways.*)
- Sunglasses.
- **Bring plenty of film or digital memory cards.**
- Sewing kit, first aid kit, hand sanitizer, and paper towels.
- ***Diet sweeteners if you do not take sugar***
- ***Instant coffee especially if you prefer decaffeinated!***
- ***Non-dairy cream packets for your coffee***
- Binoculars (excellent for viewing scenes from the rivers).
- Batteries for cameras, shaver etc.
- Electrical extension cord (if needed)
- **Transformer/converter and plug adapters** (at K-Mart, Thrifty, or appliance stores)

FOR MORE INFORMATION SEE YOUR TRAVEL AGENT OR CONTACT

VALUE WORLD TOURS, INC.

17220 NEWHOPE ST. #203

Fountain Valley, CA. 92708

Tel: (714) 556-8258, Fax: (714) 556-6125

Email: value@valueworldcruises.com Web: www.valueworldcruises.com

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