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## NEIGHBOURHOODS

### top picks

- Russian Museum (p76)
- Church of the Saviour on Spilled Blood (p72)
- Pushkinskaya 10 (p91)
- Kunstkamera (p107)
- Peter & Paul Fortress (p113)
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- Museum of Political History (p117)
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# NEIGHBOURHOODS

Water-loving Peter the Great intended that the Neva River would be the centre of St Petersburg, with Vasilevsky Island as its glittering centrepiece. However, the lack of bridges between the islands hindered development, and most people wanted to build on the higher, less flood-prone land around the Admiralty. Even Peter's despotism couldn't change people's preference and the centre of the city is now solidly south of the Neva, focused on Nevsky pr between Dvortsovaia pl (Palace Sq) and Moscow Station (Moskovsky vokzal).

In this guide we have divided the city into nine digestible neighbourhoods, each with its own characteristic appeal. We begin with St Petersburg's Historic Heart, an area so dense with museums, palaces and churches that one might spend days in this district only (indeed, many tourists do!). The Historic Heart includes the main stretch of Nevsky pr between the Hermitage and the Fontanka River, as well as the area east of Isaakiyevskaya pl (St Isaac's Sq) to the Summer Garden.

East of the Historic Heart is Liteyny, surrounding the busy avenue of the same name, and Smolny, the quiet but historic government district around which the Neva curves on its final approach to the sea. Due south of here are Vladimirskaya and Vosstaniya, which form the area around the two busy commercial squares, Vladimirskaya pl (Vladimir Sq) and pl Vosstaniya (Uprising Sq). Vosstaniya contains the less dynamic, easterly half of Nevsky pr, home to Moscow Station and Alexander Nevsky Monastery.

West of Vladimirskaya and Vosstaniya is Sennaya, which takes its name from Sennaya pl (Haymarket Sq). The area around the haymarket, Dostoevsky's stomping ground, was overrun with poverty and squalor during the 19th century. Today it is still a gritty but lively place, full of colourful characters. West of the Historic Heart and Sennaya is the Mariinsky district, named after the world-famous Mariinsky Theatre. In these quiet historic streets, graceful canals wend their way to the sea past palaces and churches that are just off the beaten tourist trail.

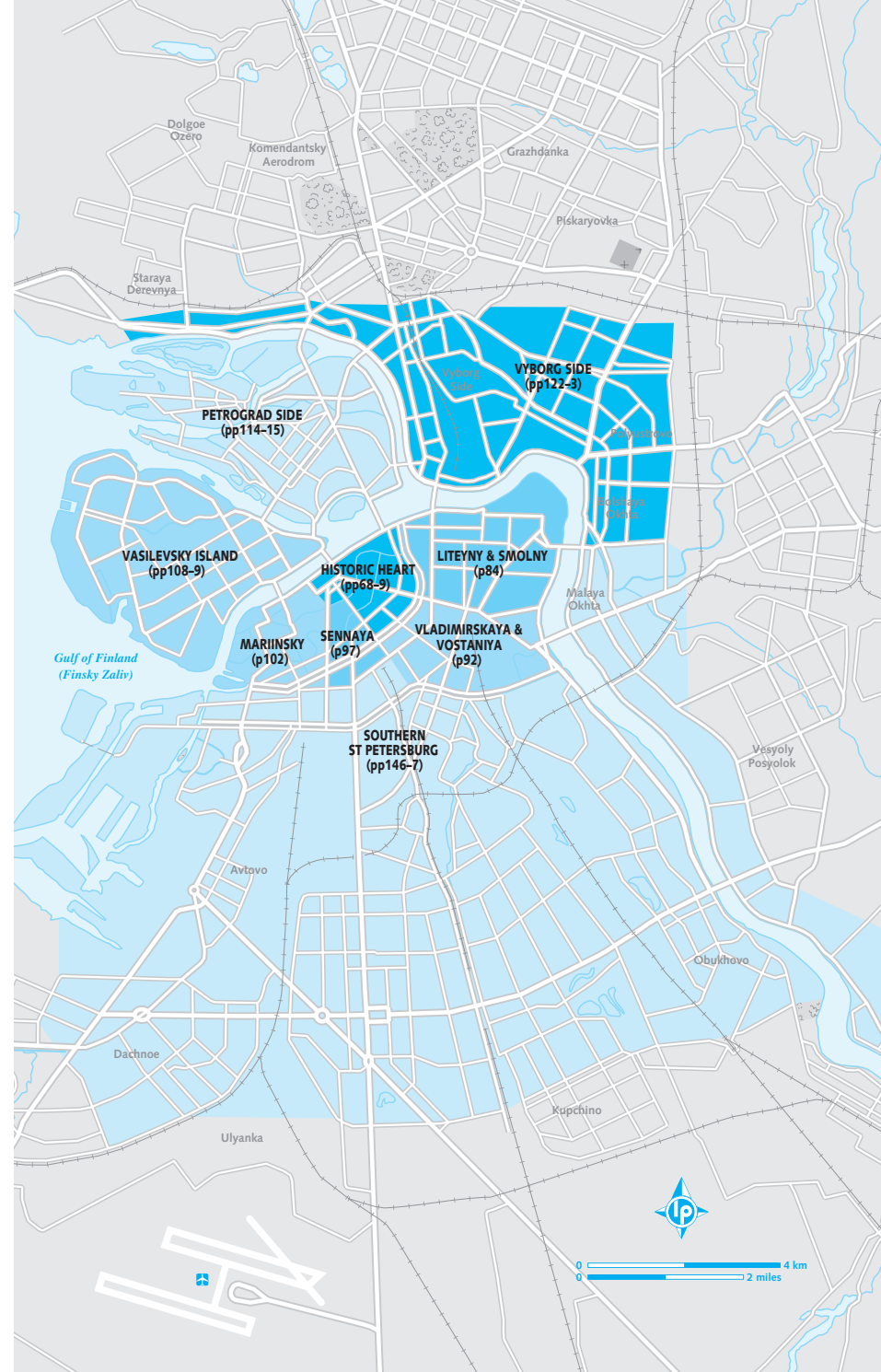
Dividing the Neva River is Vasilevsky Island, the huge triangle of land that Peter the Great thought would be the centre of the city. Today, Vasilevsky functions as the intellectual heart, housing the university, the Academy of Arts and other august institutions.

North and east of Vasilevsky Island, the Petrograd Side is actually where it all began: Peter's city grew out of the Peter & Paul Fortress, prominently placed on Zayachy Island. The Petrograd Side is dominated by the fashionable, Style Moderne Petrogradsky Island, a busy residential neighbourhood with plenty of shops and restaurants and a handful of museums. This neighbourhood also includes the pleasant, green northern islands: Kamenny, Yelagin and Krestovskiy.

The Vyborg Side is a huge swathe of land north of the Neva River. Largely industrial and residential, it contains some of the city's offbeat points of interest, including Kresty Prison, Piskaryovskoe Cemetery and Udelnaya Fair. Visitors arriving from or departing to Finland will pass through either Finland Station (Finlyandsky vokzal) or Ladoga Station (Ladozhsky vokzal).

Back over the Neva, a vast area stretches south, encompassing Stalin's communist city centre which is still more Leningrad than St Petersburg. The appropriately named Southern St Petersburg includes some wonderful historic oddities, Stalinist monoliths and parkland, as well as the bus station (Avtovokzal No 2), the train stations Baltic Station (Baltiysky vokzal) and Vitebsk Station (Vitebsky vokzal), and Pulkovo Airport.

**The Petrograd Side is actually where it all began: Peter's city grew out of the Peter & Paul Fortress, prominently placed on Zayachy Island'**



# ITINERARY BUILDER

The table below allows you to plan a day's worth of activities in any area of the city. Simply select which area you wish to explore, and then mix and match from the corresponding listings to build your day. The first item in each cell represents a well-known highlight of the area, while the other items are more off-the-beaten-track gems.

AREA	ACTIVITIES	Sights	Eating	Nightlife & Entertainment
Historic Heart		<b>Russian Museum</b> (p76)	<b>Pelmeny Bar</b> (p164)	<b>Datscha</b> (p182)
		<b>Church of the Saviour on Spilled Blood</b> (p72)	<b>Onegin</b> (p164)	<b>Shostakovich Philharmonia</b> (p189)
		<b>State Hermitage Museum</b> (p125)	<b>The Other Side</b> (p165)	<b>Mod</b> (p183)
Liteyny & Smolny		<b>Smolny Cathedral</b> (p83)	<b>Black Cat, White Cat</b> (p168)	<b>JFC Jazz Club</b> (p185)
		<b>Museum of Decorative &amp; Applied Arts</b> (p86)	<b>Sunduk</b> (p168)	<b>City Bar</b> (p179)
		<b>Anna Akhmatova Museum in the Fountain House</b> (p87)	<b>Vox</b> (p168)	<b>Probka</b> (p180)
Vladimirskaia & Vosstaniya		<b>Alexander Nevsky Monastery</b> (p90)	<b>Imbir</b> (p169)	<b>Che</b> (p184)
		<b>Dostoevsky Museum</b> (p93)	<b>Bistrot Garçon</b> (p170)	<b>Griboedov</b> (p184)
		<b>Pushkinskaya 10</b> (p91)	<b>Cat Café</b> (p170)	<b>Fish Fabrique</b> (p184)
Sennaya		<b>Railway Museum</b> (p97)	<b>Karavan</b> (p171)	<b>Cynic</b> (p179)
		<b>Sennaya pl</b> (p96)	<b>Testo</b> (p171)	<b>Havana Club</b> (p182)
		<b>Yusupov Gardens</b> (p98)	<b>Fasol</b> (p171)	<b>Manhattan</b> (p184)
Mariinsky		<b>St Isaac's Cathedral</b> (p100)	<b>The Idiot</b> (p172)	<b>Mariinsky Theatre</b> (p188)
		<b>Nikolsky Cathedral</b> (p103)	<b>Stolle</b> (p173)	<b>Shamrock</b> (p180)
		<b>Yusupov Palace</b> (p102)	<b>Crocodile</b> (p172)	<b>Rimsky-Korsakov Conservatory</b> (p189)
Vasilevsky Island		<b>Menshikov Palace</b> (p110)	<b>Restoran</b> (p173)	<b>Die Kneipe</b> (p180)
		<b>Kunstkamera</b> (p107)	<b>Rusky Kitsch</b> (p173)	<b>Island</b> (p183)
		<b>Geological Museum</b> (p111)	<b>Cheburechnaya</b> (p174)	<b>Black &amp; White</b> (p181)
Petrograd Side		<b>Cruiser Aurora</b> (p117)	<b>Tbilisi</b> (p175)	<b>Bridge Lounge</b> (p179)
		<b>Peter &amp; Paul Fortress</b> (p113)	<b>Aquarel</b> (p174)	<b>Tunnel Club</b> (p183)
		<b>Yelagin Island</b> (p120)	<b>Russian Fishing</b> (p174)	<b>Orlandina</b> (p184)

## GREATER ST PETERSBURG

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Monument to the Heroic Defenders of Leningrad  
Монумент Героическим Защитникам Ленинграда ..... 3 B5

Moscow Gates  
Московские ворота ..... 4 B4

Site of Pushkin's Duel  
Место дуэли Пушкина ..... 5 B1

Seven-Forty Семь-Сорок ..... 6 B1

Сиркус в Автovo ..... 7 B4

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German Club Немский Клуб ..... 13 B5

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River Passenger Terminal  
Речной Вокзал ..... 15 D4

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# HISTORIC HEART

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The Historic Heart of St Petersburg epitomises the city, with its over-the-top architecture, dazzling museums, graceful canals and always-active Nevsky pr. Besides its vast cultural wealth, the Historic Heart is still a thriving residential neighbourhood, where locals carry on their daily business without so much as a glance at the visitors who flock here. Get off the main streets and squares and you'll see old, crumbling, painfully beautiful St Petersburg as it has been since the early 18th century.

On the left bank of the Neva River, the Historic Heart stretches from the Neva to the Fontanka River. The river embankment is marked by the unmistakable Dvortsovaya pl (Palace Sq), fronted by the magnificent Winter Palace and flanked by the gold-toned Admiralty. The neighbourhood's main thoroughfare (and indeed, the city's main thoroughfare) is Nevsky pr, which radiates east from Dvortsovaya pl, slicing the district in two.

Three waterways wind their way through this neighbourhood: the Moyka River, closest to the Neva; the Griboedov Canal; and the Fontanka River, which defines the eastern boundary. Crisscrossed by waterways, the neighbourhood conveniently divides into two more manageable sections: the strip along the Neva that is contained within the Moyka River; and the larger section between the Moyka and the Fontanka. The Russian Museum, institutional giant that it is, gets its own section (see p76).

The city's most anticipated transport resource is the Admiralteyskaya metro station, which will be located just steps from the Winter Palace and St Isaac's Cathedral (if it ever opens). Until then, most people arrive in the Historic Heart at **M** Nevsky Pr or **M** Gostiny Dvor, the two linked metro stations on Nevsky pr. This transport hub is a 15-minute walk from just about everywhere.

## WITHIN THE MOYKA

Between the mighty Neva and the meandering Moyka lie St Petersburg's most stately streets, marked by elegant palaces, exquisite plazas and idyllic parklands.

## DVORTSOVAYA PL (PALACE SQ)

Map pp68–9

**M** Nevsky Pr

It is no secret where St Petersburg's heart lies. Although it's no longer the hub of the city, there can be little doubt that the vast expanse where Nevsky pr meets the Neva River and Dvortsovaya nab is simply one of the most striking squares in the world, still redolent of imperial grandeur almost a century after the end of the Romanov dynasty. For the most amazing first impression walk from Nevsky pr, up Bolshaya Morskaya ul and under the triumphal arch.

The square's most impressive building is the incredible green, white and gold **Winter Palace** (Zimny Dvoretz), a rococo profusion of columns, windows and recesses, topped by rows of larger-than-life statues. A residence of tsars from 1762 to 1917, it's now the largest part of the **State Hermitage Museum** (p125).

In the centre of the square, the 47.5m **Alexander Column** was designed in 1834 by

Montferrand. Named after Alexander I, it commemorates the 1812 victory over Napoleon. On windy days, contemplate that the pillar is held on its pedestal by gravity alone!

Curving an incredible 580m around the south side of the square is the Carlo Rossi–designed **General Staff Building** (below) of the Russian Army (1819–29). The two great blocks are joined by a **triumphal arch** over Bolshaya Morskaya ul. The arch is topped by the Chariot of Glory, another monument to the Napoleonic Wars.

On Bloody Sunday (9 January 1905), tsarist troops fired on workers who were peacefully gathered in the square, sparking the 1905 revolution. And it was across Dvortsovaya pl that the much-exaggerated storming of the Winter Palace took place during the 1917 October Revolution.

## GENERAL STAFF BUILDING

Map pp68–9

☎ 314 8260; [www.hermitagemuseum.org](http://www.hermitagemuseum.org); Dvortsovaya pl 6–8; adult/student R200/free; 🕒 10.30am–6pm Tue–Sun; **M** Nevsky Pr

The western wing of this magnificent building on Dvortsovaya pl was formerly used by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, including private apartments for the minister

## STREET NAMES, SIGNS & FUN WITH CYRILLIC

We use the transliteration of Russian names of streets and squares in this book to help you when deciphering Cyrillic signs and asking locals the way. To save space the following abbreviations are used:

- al – аллея аллея (alley)
- bul – bulvar бульвар (boulevard)
- nab – naberezhnaya набережная (embankment)
- per – pereulok переулоч (lane or side street)
- pl – ploshchad площадь (square)
- pr – prospekt проспект (avenue)
- ul – ulitsa улица (street)
- sh – shosse шоссе (highway)

Cyrillic script is provided for all points of interest (sights, activities, restaurants, clubs, hotels etc) on the maps. So if you can't get a local to understand your Russian pronunciation, just point to the map listing and let them read it. In cases where Cyrillic is not provided, it means that the site is commonly known by its English (or other Latin-language) name.

himself. The fabulous Carlo Rossi–designed interiors have been meticulously maintained, and today house exhibition halls displaying items from the Hermitage collection. Here, the art of 20th-century French painters Pierre Bonnard and Maurice Denis is on permanent display. Monarchists will appreciate the 'heraldic eagle', also featured in 600-plus examples of graphics, paintings and applied arts from Russia and Western Europe.

## WINTER PALACE OF PETER I

Map pp68–9

☎ 571 8446; [www.hermitagemuseum.org](http://www.hermitagemuseum.org); Dvortsovaya nab 32; adult/student R200/100; 🕒 10.30am–5pm Tue–Sun; **M** Nevsky Pr

Opened as a part of the Hermitage in 1992, this palace on the Neva was the principal residence of Peter the Great, and he died here in 1725. When Giacomo Quarenghi built the Hermitage Theatre on this site between 1783 and 1789, he preserved parts of the palace and grounds. Between 1976 and 1986, excavations beneath the theatre stage uncovered a large fragment of the former state courtyard, as well as several suites of palace apartments.

Today, the courtyard is used to display Peter's official carriage and sledge. Some of the chamber rooms have been restored to their appearance during Peter's era, complete with Dutch tiles and parquet floors, and are used to exhibit some of Peter's personal items from the Hermitage collection. The admission price includes a useful audio guide in the language of your choice.

## ADMIRALTY Map pp68–9

**Admiralteysky proezd 1**; 🚫 closed to the public; **M** Nevsky Pr

Across the road from Dvortsovaya pl, the gilded spire of the old Admiralty is a prime St Petersburg landmark. It is visible from Gorokhovaya ul, Voznesensky pr and Nevsky pr, as all of these roads radiate outwards from this central point. Despite the spire's solid gold appearance, it's actually made from wood and was almost rotted through before restoration efforts began in 1996. From 1711 to 1917, this spot was the headquarters of the Russian navy; now it houses the country's largest military naval college.

The Admiralty was reconstructed between 1806 and 1823 to the designs of Andreyan Zakharov. With its rows of white columns and its plentiful reliefs and statuary, it is a foremost example of the Russian Empire style. Get a close look at the globe-toting nymphs flanking the main gate. The green gardens, laid out from 1872 to 1874, are dotted with statues of Glinka, Lermontov, Gogol and other cultural figures, as well as a refreshing fountain that dates to 1877.

It's a lovely place to sit and stroll, but the building itself is closed to visitors.

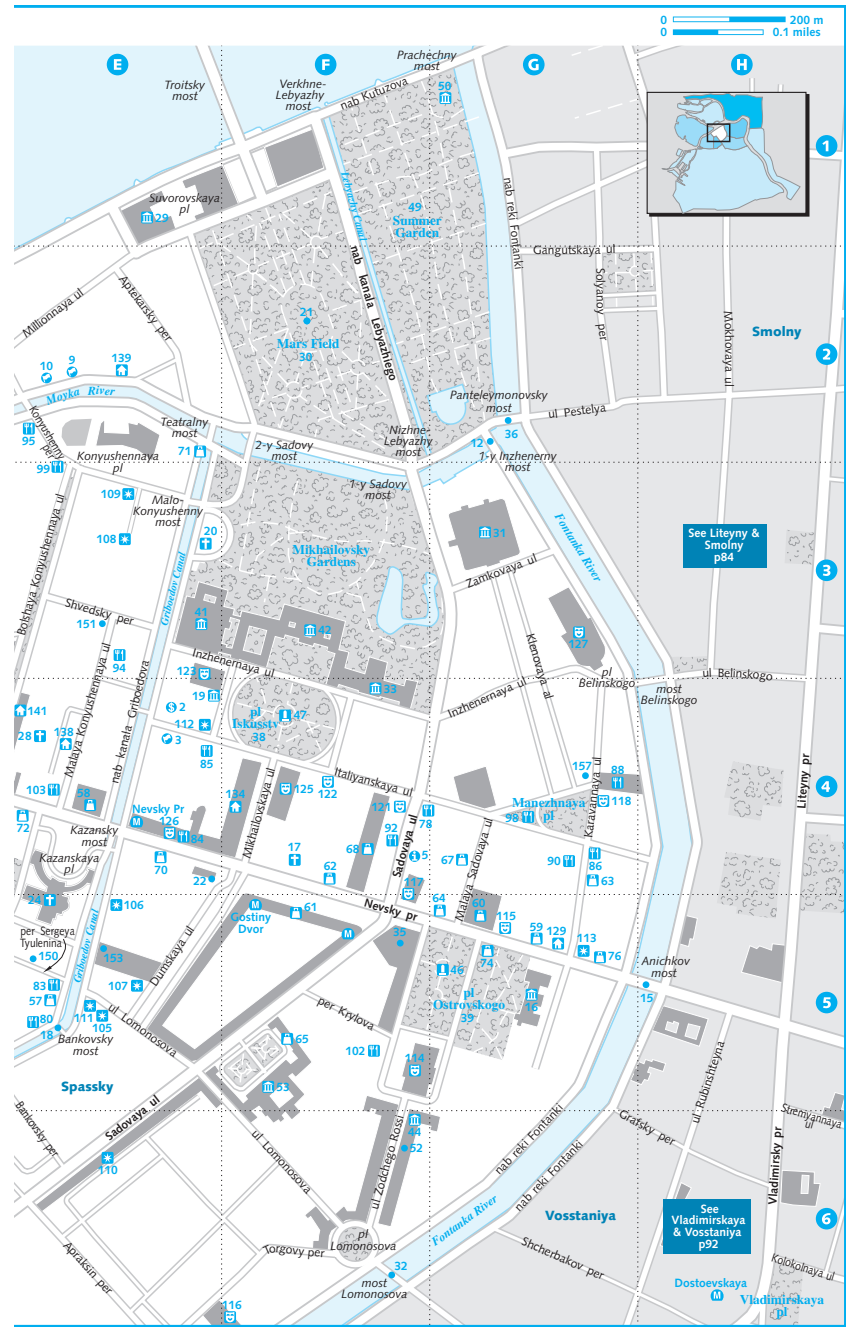
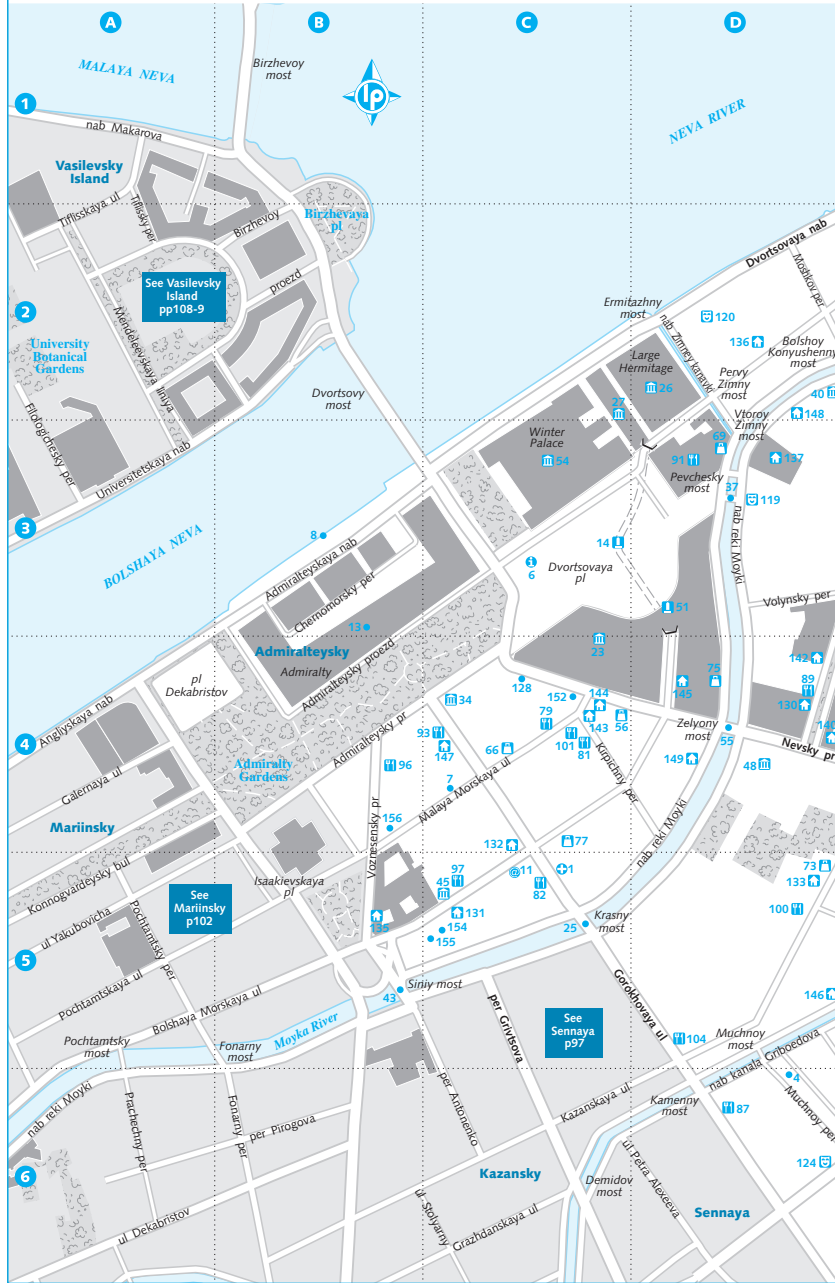
## MUSEUM OF THE HISTORY OF POLITICAL POLICE Map pp68–9

☎ 312 2742; [www.polithistory.ru](http://www.polithistory.ru) in Russian; Gorokhovaya ul 2; adult/student R100/40; 🕒 10am–6pm Mon–Fri; **M** Nevsky Pr

In the very same building that housed the tsarist and the Bolshevik secret police offices, this small museum recounts the history of this controversial institution. An annex of the **Museum of Political History** (p117), it includes one room that recreates the office of Felix Dzerzhinsky, founder of the Cheka (Bolshevik secret police). Each of the remaining three rooms is devoted to the



# HISTORIC HEART



## HISTORIC HEART (pp68-9)

<b>INFORMATION</b>	Little Hermitage	Summer Palace of Peter I
36.6 Pharmacy.....1 C5	Малый Эрмитаж.....27 C2	Летний дворец Петра I.....50 G1
Alfabank.....2 E4	Lutheran Church.....28 E4	Triumphal Arch
Australian Consulate	Marble Palace	Триумфальная арка.....51 D3
Консульство Австралии.....3 E4	Мраморный дворец.....29 E1	Vaganova School of Choreography
City Realty.....4 D6	Mars Field Марсово поле.....30 F2	Хореографическое училище
City Tourist Information Centre.....5 F4	Mikhailovsky Castle	им Ваганова.....52 F6
City Tourist Information Centre.....6 C3	(Engineer's Castle)	Vorontsov Palace
Cultural Security Department.....7 C4	Инженерный замок.....31 G3	Воронцовский дворец.....53 F5
Driver.....8 B3	most Lomonosova.....32 F6	Winter Palace Зимний дворец.....54 C3
Dutch Consulate	Museum of Ethnography	Winter Palace of Peter I
Консульство Голландии.....9 E2	Музей этнографии.....33 F4	Зимний дворец Петра I (see 120)
French Consulate	Museum of the History of	Zelyony most (Green Bridge).....55 D4
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	National Library of Russia	<b>SHOPPING</b> (pp149-58)
<b>SIGHTS</b> (pp66-82)	Российская Национальная	Bon Vin.....(see 80)
1-y Inzhenerny most	Библиотека.....35 F5	Bukvoed.....56 C4
(First Engineer Bridge).....12 G2	Panteleymonovsky most.....36 G2	Chocolate Museum
Admiralty	Pevchesky most	(Gostiny Dvor).....(see 61)
Адмиралтейство.....13 B3	(formerly Yellow Bridge).....37 D4	Chocolate Museum (Passage).....(see 68)
Alexander Column	pl Iskustv.....38 F3	Chocolate Museum
Александровская колонна.....14 C3	pl Ostrovskogo.....39 G5	(Stroganov Palace).....(see 48)
Anichkov most Аничков мост.....15 H5	Pushkin Flat-Museum	Defile.....(see 57) E5
Anichkov Palace	Музей-квартира	Dom Knigi (Nevsky pr 28;
Аничков дворец.....16 G5	А С Пушкина.....40 D2	Singer Building).....58 E4
Armenian Church of St Catherine	Russian Museum (Benois Wing)	Dom Knigi (Nevsky pr 62).....59 G5
Церковь св Екатерины.....17 F4	Русский музей.....41 E3	Eliseevsky.....60 G5
Bankovsky most (Bank Bridge)	Russian Museum	Gostiny Dvor
Банковский мост.....18 E5	(Mikhailovsky Palace)	Гостинный Двор.....61 F5
Brodsky House-Museum	Русский музей	Grand Palace.....62 F4
Музей-квартира Бродского...19 E4	(Михайловский дворец).....42 F3	Intendant.....63 G4
Church of the Saviour on	Singer Building.....(see 58)	Mekhlantia.....64 G5
Spilled Blood	Sinyi most (Blue Bridge).....43 B5	Military Shop.....65 F5
Храм Спас на Крови.....20 E3	State Museum of Theatre & Music	Open World.....66 C4
Eternal Flame Вечный огонь.....21 F2	Государственный музей	Parnas.....67 G4
Former Town Duma.....22 E4	театра и музыки.....44 F6	Passage
General Staff Building	State Photography Centre.....45 C5	Универмаг Пассажа.....68 F4
Здание главного штаба.....23 C4	Statue of Catherine the Great.....46 G5	Plyos Embassy.....69 D3
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Казанский собор.....24 E5	Stroganov Palace	Souvenir Market.....71 E2
Krasny most (Red Bridge)	Строгановский дворец.....48 D4	Stockmann.....72 E4
Красный мост.....25 C5	Summer Garden	Vanity.....73 D5
Large Hermitage	Летний сад.....49 F1	Versace.....74 G5
Большой Эрмитаж.....26 D2		Wild Orchid.....75 D4
		Writers' Bookshop.....76 G5
		Yakhont.....77 C4

secret police during a different period of history: the tsarist police, the Cheka and the KGB. Exhibitions are heavy on photographs and documents, but some of them are fascinating. Some explanatory materials are available in English.

## STATE PHOTOGRAPHY CENTRE

Map pp68-9  
☎ 314 1214; Bolshaya Morskaya ul 35; admission free; ☎ 11am-7pm; M Nevsky Pr

This exhibition hall showcases rotating exhibitions of photography, videography and other mixed media. Recent features have ranged from photos of Nicholas II and his family in their final days, to video art exploring the concept of 'slowness' in everyday activities. (That last one sounds

like a thriller.) Other events include master classes and talks by participating artists.

## SUMMER GARDEN Map pp68-9

Lety Sad; admission free; ☎ 10am-10pm May-Sep, 10am-6pm Oct-Mar, closed Apr; M Gostiny Dvor Central St Petersburg's loveliest and oldest park, the Summer Garden is on its own island between Mars Field and the Fontanka River (you can enter at the northern or southern end). Early-18th-century architects designed the garden in a Dutch baroque style, following a geometric plan, with fountains, pavilions and sculptures studding the grounds. The ornate cast-iron fence with the granite posts was a later addition, built between 1771 and 1784. The gardens functioned as a private retreat for Peter the

## HISTORIC HEART (pp68-9)

<b>EATING</b> (pp159-76)	<b>ARTS</b> (pp188-94)	Comfort Hotel.....132 C4
Baku.....78 F4	Akimova Comedy Theatre	Cuba Hostel.....133 D5
Bushie.....79 C4	Академический театр	Grand Hotel Europe.....134 F4
Face Café.....80 E5	комедии им Акимова.....(see 60)	Herzen Hotel.....(see 132)
Fat Frier.....81 C4	Alexandrinsky Theatre	Hotel Astoria.....135 B5
Vaganova School of Choreography	Александринский театр.....114 F5	Hotel Grifon.....(see 146)
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Garçon Restaurant.....83 E5	Bolshoy Drama Theatre	Hotel Sonata.....(see 93)
Il Patio.....84 E4	Большой Драматический	Kempinski Hotel Moyka 22.....137 D3
Kalinka Malinka.....85 E4	театр им Товстоногова.....116 F6	Korona.....138 E4
Kavkaz.....86 G4	Demmeni Marionette Theatre	Moyka 5.....139 E2
Kilikia.....87 D6	Театр марионеток	Nevsky Deluxe Hotel.....140 D4
Korovabar.....88 G4	им Деммени.....117 F4	Nevsky Grand Hotel.....141 E4
La Strada.....89 D4	Dom Kino Дом кино.....118 G4	Nevsky Hotel Aster.....142 D4
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Silk.....94 E3	Театр Эрмитаж.....120 D2	Polikoff Hotel.....(see 129)
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Tandoori Nights.....96 B4	Театр им Комиссаржевской 121 F4	Gorokhovaya.....147 C4
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The Other Side.....99 E3	Академический театр оперы	Taleon Imperial Hotel.....149 D4
Tinkoff.....100 D5	и балета им Мусоргского.....123 E3	
U Tyoshiy in Blinakh.....101 C4	Priyut Komedianta Theatre	<b>TRANSPORT</b> (pp233-40)
Yakitoriya.....102 F5	Театр Приют комедианта.....124 D6	Air France.....(see 156)
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Belgrad.....(see 107)	Datscha.....107 E5	Центральные авиакассы.....152 C4
Central Station.....105 E5	Dunes.....108 E3	Центральные
Coffee Break.....106 E5	Fidel.....(see 107)	железнодорожные кассы.....153 E5
Datscha.....107 E5	Mod.....109 E3	CSA Czech Airlines.....154 C5
Dunes.....108 E3	Revolution.....110 E6	Delta Airlines.....155 C5
Fidel.....(see 107)	Second Floor.....(see 107)	Finnair.....(see 151)
Mod.....109 E3	Sinners.....111 E5	Hertz.....(see 156)
Revolution.....110 E6	Stray Dog Café.....129 G5	KLM Royal Dutch Airlines.....156 B4
Second Floor.....(see 107)	The Other Side.....(see 99)	LOT Polish Airlines.....157 G4
Sinners.....111 E5	Tinkoff.....(see 100)	Lufthansa.....(see 126)
Stray Dog Café.....129 G5	Tribunal Bar.....113 G5	SAS Scandinavian Airlines.....(see 72)
Belvedere Nevsky.....130 D4		
Casa Leto.....131 C5		
City Realty.....(see 4)		

Great before becoming a strolling place for St Petersburg's 19th-century leisured classes. Only in the 20th century were commoners admitted. The Summer Garden maintains a formal elegance, with hundreds of lime trees shading its straight paths and lines of statues. The park does enjoy a touch of whimsy, however: look for the fountains depicting scenes from Aesop's fables and the monument to children's writer Ivan Krylov.

## SUMMER PALACE OF PETER I

Map pp68-9  
Музей Летны Dvoretz Petra I; ☎ 314 0456; adult/student R300/150; ☎ 10am-5pm Wed-Mon early May-Sep; M Gostiny Dvor The modest, two-storey Summer Palace in the northeastern corner of the Summer

Garden was St Petersburg's first 'palace', which may seem like a slight misnomer for a remarkably small building. The 14-room baroque palace was built for Peter between 1704 and 1714 by Domenico Trezzini. Today it's open as a museum, showing off some simple 18th-century furnishings, porcelain duct work and ornamental painting. The bas-reliefs around the walls depict Russian naval victories.

## MARS FIELD Map pp68-9

Marsovo polye; nab kanala Lebyazhiego; M Gostiny Dvor Once the scene of 19th-century military parades, the grassy Mars Field lies immediately east of the Summer Garden (south of Troitsky most). Formerly known as the Tsarina's

Meadow (Tsaritsyn lug), it's a popular spot for strollers. At its centre, an **eternal flame** burns for the victims of the 1917 revolution and the ensuing civil war. Don't take a short cut across the grass – you may be walking on the graves of the victims or of later communist luminaries also buried here.

### MARBLE PALACE Map pp68–9

☎ 312 9196; [www.rusmuseum.ru](http://www.rusmuseum.ru); Millionnaya ul 5/1; adult/student R270/135; 🕒 10am–5pm Wed–Mon; 🚶 Nevsky Pr

Between Mars Field and the Neva, this palace is an architectural gem by Antonio Rinaldi, who used 36 kinds of marble, and took pains to bleed them seamlessly into one another. Built between 1768 and 1785, it was a gift from Catherine the Great to Grigory Orlov for suppressing a Moscow rebellion. Formerly the Lenin Museum under the Soviets, it is now a branch of the Russian Museum featuring rotating exhibitions of modern art and a permanent exhibition on foreign artists active in Russia in the 18th and 19th centuries.

An amusing equestrian statue of Alexander III stands plumply in the courtyard outside the main entrance; it became the butt of many jokes after it was erected in 1909 (originally outside Moscow Station). Even his son Nicholas II thought of shipping it off to Irkutsk, but when rumours started that he wanted to send his dad into Siberian exile, he changed his mind. Sculptor Paolo Trubetskoy said of his work, 'I don't care about politics. I simply depicted one animal on another.'

## BETWEEN THE MOYKA & THE FONTANKA

The Moyka and Fontanka Rivers provide neat boundaries for this large section of the Historic Heart, with the Griboedov Canal winding between them. Pl Iskusstv (Arts Sq) dominates the north side of Nevsky pr, while Gostiny Dvor and pl Ostrovskogo (Ostrovsky Sq) are the most prominent landmarks on the south side.

### CHURCH OF THE SAVIOUR ON SPILLED BLOOD Map pp68–9

Spas na Krovi; ☎ 315 1636; [www.cathedral.ru](http://www.cathedral.ru); nab kanala Griboedova 2a; adult/student R300/170; 🕒 11am–7pm Thu–Tue Sep–Apr, 10am–8pm Thu–Tue May–Aug; 🚶 Nevsky Pr

This multidomed dazzler, partly modelled on St Basil's Cathedral in Moscow, was

built between 1883 and 1907 in memory of reformist Tsar Alexander II. On this spot in 1881, a terrorist group known as the People's Will attempted to assassinate the tsar by blowing up his carriage, which did eventually result in his death. Officially called the Church of the Resurrection of Christ, it was intended as a private place of mourning for the life of the tsar.

It was the Bolsheviks who threw the ornate doors of this amazing candy-cake structure open to the people. Not built to withstand the wear and tear caused by thousands of visitors, its interior quickly began to suffer. Following the closure of churches by Stalin in the 1930s, the church was used to store various items from potatoes to theatre sets. Decades of abuse and neglect finally ended in the 1980s, which was surprising given a political climate that was still very cold to religion.

It's now famed as the church that took 24 years to build and 27 to restore, for that's how long it took to refurbish the 7000 sq metres of mosaics that line the walls inside. It reopened in 1997 to much fanfare. In the western apse, the very spot of the assassination is marked by a small but beautiful canopy built out of rhodonite and jasper. The magnificent floor and iconostasis are all Italian marble. These days, it functions as a museum, though services are sometimes held here on special occasions.

If you're on a tight budget, you can still gawk at the superbly polychromatic exterior of this Russian revival marvel, which is unique in the city. The 20 granite plaques on the façade record, in gold letters, the main events of Alexander's reign. The mosaic panels about half-way up detail scenes from the New Testament, and the 144 mosaic coats of arms each represent the provinces, regions and towns of the Russian Empire of Alexander's time, which all joined in mourning the death of the tsar. The whole shebang is crowned by an 81m-high steeple. Photos from the footbridge that crosses the canal are practically required for all visitors to St Petersburg.

### PUSHKIN FLAT-MUSEUM Map pp68–9

☎ 314 0007; nab reki Moyki 12; adult/student R200/60; 🕒 11am–5pm Wed–Sun; 🚶 Nevsky Pr Alexander Pushkin's last home overlooks one of the prettiest curves of the Moyka

## LIFE IMITATING ART

Russian literature is filled with jaded heroes, stubborn heroines, unrequited loves and tragic deaths. None inspires more abhorrence and empathy than Eugene Onegin, the title character in Alexander Pushkin's epic poem.

Eugene Onegin is a world-weary St Petersburg socialite who rejects the love of devoted Tatiana but seduces her sister Olga. Unfortunately, Olga is betrothed to his best friend, Lensky, who challenges our antihero to a duel. Both rivals have misgivings, but pride forces the pair to fight, and Lensky is slain.

Is it a coincidence that Pushkin – the national bard and pride of St Petersburg – was himself slain in a duel? His killer was a French nobleman, Baron Georges d'Anthes, who had publicly courted Pushkin's beautiful wife, Natalya Goncharova.

Oddly enough, d'Anthes married Natalya's sister, Ekaterina – perhaps as a ruse. But Pushkin was not persuaded. After an anonymous letter was circulated, nominating the poet as the 'Grand Master of the Order of Cuckolds', the only honourable response was a fight to the death.

History has not clarified this nasty affair: some still speculate that d'Anthes acted under the influence of Tsar Nicholas I, who found the famed poet's radical politics inconvenient; others imply that the tsar himself may have had a thing for Natalya, a notorious flirt. One thing is for sure: it ended badly for Pushkin.

On a cold night in February 1837, having eaten his final meal at the Literatornoye Kafe on Nevsky pr, Pushkin set off by sled to a remote woodland to meet his adversary (see p124). He was shot and died two days later at his home on the Moyka River (see opposite).

Unlike the remorseful Eugene Onegin, who recognises his foolishness in rejecting Tatiana and must live with his love unrequited and his soul sorrowful, things did not go so badly for d'Anthes. By way of punishment, he was stripped of his rank and forced to leave Russia. He returned to France with his wife (who supposedly never doubted his loyalty), and the two lived out their days in apparent wedded bliss.

This ironic ending does not go over well with Russian romantics. Needless to say, d'Anthes is a much maligned character in Russian history, sometimes dismissed as a tsarist stooge, a hidden homosexual or a French spy (and perhaps all three).

River, north of Nevsky pr. He only lived here four months, but this is where the poet died after his duel in 1837 (see above). The little house is now the Pushkin Flat-Museum, which has been reconstructed to look exactly as it did in the poet's last days. On display are his death mask, a lock of his hair and the waistcoat he wore when he died. Price of admission includes an audio guide.

### STROGANOV PALACE Map pp68–9

☎ 117 2360; [www.rusmuseum.ru](http://www.rusmuseum.ru); Nevsky pr 17; adult/student R300/150; 🕒 10am–6pm Wed–Mon; 🚶 Nevsky Pr

One of the city's loveliest baroque exteriors, the salmon pink Stroganov Palace was designed by court favourite Bartolomeo Rastrelli in 1753 for one of the city's leading aristocratic families. Most famously, the Stroganov's chef created a beef dish served in a sour cream and mushroom sauce that became known to the world as 'beef stroganoff'. The building is now owned by the Russian Museum, which uses the splendidly restored rooms for temporary exhibitions. Also on site are a wacky waxworks museum and a luxury restaurant.

### LUTHERAN CHURCH Map pp68–9

☎ 311 2423; Nevsky pr 22; ☎ bilingual service 10.30am Sun; 🚶 Nevsky Pr

Tucked in a recess between Bolshaya and Malaya Konyushennaya uls is the lovely Lutheran Church that was built for St Petersburg's thriving German community in the 1830s. Distinguished by a four-column portico and topped with a discreet cupola, it was turned into a swimming pool in the 1950s (the high diving board was placed in the apse) – but is that worse than using it to store vegetables, as it had been since the 1930s? The church is open to visitors, having been restored beautifully.

### KAZAN CATHEDRAL Map pp68–9

Kazansky Sobor; ☎ 311 4826; [www.kazansky.ru](http://www.kazansky.ru) in Russian; Kazanskaya pl; admission free; 🕒 11am–7pm, services 9am & 6pm daily; 🚶 Nevsky Pr Atypical of St Petersburg churches, the neoclassical Kazan Cathedral was commissioned by Tsar Paul shortly before he was murdered in a coup. It reflects his eccentric desire to unite Catholicism and Orthodoxy in a kind of 'super-Christianity' as well as his fascination with the Knights of Malta, of which he was a member. The cathedral's



great, 111m-long colonnaded arms reach out towards Nevsky pr, encircling a pleasant garden that is studded with statues. Look for the victorious Napoleonic War field marshal Mikhail Kutuzov (whose remains are buried inside the cathedral) and his friend and aide Mikhail Barclay de Tolly.

Inside, the cathedral is dark and traditionally orthodox, with a daunting 80m-high dome.

Andrei Voronikhin, a former serf, built the cathedral between 1801 and 1811 and his design was influenced by St Peter's in Rome. His original plan was to build a second, mirror version of the cathedral opposite it on the other side of Nevsky pr, but this never materialised.

### SINGER BUILDING Map pp68–9

**Nevsky pr 28; M Nevsky Pr**

Opposite the Kazan Cathedral stands one of St Petersburg's most marvellous buildings, the headquarters of the Singer sewing machine company which opened a factory in the Russian capital in 1904. The building also housed the American consulate for a few years prior to WWI. These days, the Singer Building provides a home to St Petersburg's premier bookstore, *Dom Knigi* (p151), and an uninspiring coffee shop. The wonderful Singer globe and emblem has now finally been restored after spending all of the 1990s under scaffolding.

### PL ISKUSSTV (ARTS SQ) Map pp68–9

**M Nevsky Pr**

Just a block east of the Griboedov Canal is the quiet pl Iskusstv (Arts Sq), named after its cluster of museums and concert halls. In the 1820s and 1830s, Carlo Rossi designed this square and the lovely Mikhailovskaya ul, which joins it to Nevsky pr. A *statue of Pushkin*, erected in 1957, stands in the middle of the tree-lined square. The square is surrounded by the *Shostakovich Philharmonia* (p189), *Brodsky House-Museum* (right), *Mussorgsky-Mikhailovsky Theatre* (p189), *Russian Museum* (p76) and *Museum of Ethnography* (below).

### MUSEUM OF ETHNOGRAPHY

Map pp68–9

**313 4420; www.ethnomuseum.ru; Inzhennaya ul 4/1; adult/student R300/150, English tour R1000; 10am–6pm Tue–Sun; M Gostiny Dvor**

In an impressive classical building on pl Iskusstv, this excellent museum displays

the traditional crafts, customs and beliefs of more than 150 cultures that make up Russia's fragile ethnic mosaic. There's a bit of leftover Soviet propaganda going on here, but it's a marvellous collection: the sections on Transcaucasia and Central Asia are fascinating, with rugs and two full-size *yurts* (nomads' portable tent-houses). The Special Storeroom has some great weapons and rare devotional objects.

The museum's centrepiece is the magnificent Marble Hall, a 1000-sq-metre gallery surrounded by pink Karelian-marble columns.

### BRODSKY HOUSE-MUSEUM

Map pp68–9

**314 3658; pl Iskusstv 3; adult/student R200/100; 11am–5pm Wed–Sun; M Nevsky Pr**

This is the former home of Isaak Brodsky, one of the favoured artists of the revolution (not to be confused with Joseph Brodsky, one of the least favourite poets of the same regime). Besides being a painter himself, Brodsky was also an avid collector, and his house-museum contains his collection of thousands of works, including lesser-known works by top 19th-century painters such as Repin, Levitan and Kramskoy. Occasional concerts and contemporary art exhibitions are also held at the museum, which is administered by the Russian Academy of Arts.

### MIKHAILOVSKY CASTLE

**(ENGINEER'S CASTLE) Map pp68–9**

**Mikhailovsky Zamok; 570 5112; www.rusmuseum.ru; Sadovaya ul 2; adult/student R300/150, photos R100; 10am–5pm Wed–Sun, 10am–4pm Mon; M Gostiny Dvor**

A much greater Summer Palace used to stand at the south end of the Summer Garden. But Rastrelli's fairy-tale wooden creation for Empress Elizabeth was knocked down in the 1790s to make way for the bulky Mikhailovsky Castle. The son of Catherine the Great, Tsar Paul I, was born in the wooden palace and he wanted his own residence on the same spot. He had the current edifice built complete with defensive moat as he (quite rightly) feared assassination. But this erratic, cruel tsar only got 40 days in his new abode before he was suffocated in his bedroom in 1801.

The style is a bizarre take on a medieval castle, quite unlike any other building in the city. In 1823 it became a military engineering school (hence its more common name,

Engineer's Castle, or Inzherny Zamok), whose most famous pupil was Fyodor Dostoevsky. There is a movement, however, to use the original name, Mikhailovsky Castle (not to be confused with Mikhailovsky Palace, the Russian Museum's main building).

As a wing of the Russian Museum, the castle is used mainly for temporary exhibitions. A few finely restored state rooms include the lavish burgundy throne room of the Tsar's wife Maria Fyodorovna.

### ARMENIAN CHURCH OF ST CATHERINE Map pp68–9

**311 5795; Nevsky pr 42; 8am–6.30pm Mon–Fri, 9.30am–1.30pm Sat; M Nevsky Pr**

Continuing with a tradition of non-Orthodox churches being welcome on Nevsky pr, the Armenian merchant Ovanes Lazarian paid for the city's first Armenian church to be erected here in 1771. It was designed and built by German architect Georg Veldtgen and completed in 1780. The Soviet regime deemed it reasonable to bash the place to bits and install a 2nd floor, which blocked the view of the cupola. The church has been fully restored now, however, and it's open to visitors.

### GOSTINY DVOR Map pp68–9

**110 5200; www.gostinydvor.ru in Russian; Nevsky pr 35; 10am–10pm; M Gostiny Dvor**

The arcades of Gostiny Dvor department store stand facing the clock tower of the former Town Duma (Town Parliament) on Dumsкая ul, which was the seat of the prerevolutionary city government. One of the world's first indoor shopping malls, the 'Merchant Yard' dates from between 1757 and 1785 and stretches 230m along Nevsky pr (its perimeter is over 1km long). This Rastrelli creation is not as elaborate as some of his other work, finished as it was by Vallin de la Mothe in a more sober neoclassical style.

These days, Gostiny Dvor is quite a fashionable shopping spot (see p153). Opposite Gostiny Dvor across Sadovaya ul is the *Vorontsov Palace* (1749–57), another noble town house by Rastrelli. From 1810 it was the most elite military school in the empire. It's still a military school for young cadets; on weekends you can watch mothers pass food parcels to their sons through the wrought-iron front gates. The palace is occasionally opened for concerts and such, details of which are posted out the front.

### PL OSTROVSKOGO (OSTROVSKY SQ)

Map pp68–9

**M Gostiny Dvor**

Ringed with important cultural institutions, pl Ostrovskogo is named for Alexander Ostrovsky (1823–86), a celebrated 19th-century playwright. An enormous *statue of Catherine the Great* (1873) stands amid the chess, backgammon and mah-jong players that crowd the benches here. At the Empress' heels are renowned statesmen of the 19th century, including her lovers Orlov, Potemkin and Suvorov. This airy square, commonly referred to as Cathy's Garden (Katkin Sad), was created by Carlo Rossi in the 1820s and 1830s.

The most prominent building on the square is Rossi's neoclassical *Alexandrinsky Theatre* (p190), sometimes called by its Soviet-era name, the Pushkin Theatre. In 1896, at the opening night of Anton Chekhov's *The Seagull*, the play was so badly received here that the playwright fled to wander anonymously among the crowds on Nevsky pr.

The square's west side is taken up by the lavish *National Library of Russia*, St Petersburg's biggest with some 31 million items, nearly a sixth of which are in foreign languages. Its *reading rooms* (9am–9pm Mon–Fri & 11am–7pm Sat & Sun Sep–Jun, 9am–5pm Tue–Sun & 1–9pm Mon & Wed Jul–Aug) are open to the public, but you must bring your passport to sign in.

Rossi's ensemble continues behind the theatre on ul Zodchego Rossi. It is proportion defied: the buildings are 22m wide, 22m apart and 220m long. The *Vaganova School of Choreography* at No 2 is the Kirov Ballet's training school, where Pavlova, Nijinsky, Nureyev and others learned their art.

### STATE MUSEUM OF THEATRE & MUSIC Map pp68–9

**571 2195; www.theatremuseum.ru; pl Ostrovskogo 6; adult/student R50/25; 11am–6pm Thu–Sun & 1–7pm Wed; M Gostiny Dvor**

Behind the Alexandrinsky Theatre, appropriately enough, this museum is a treasure-trove of items relating to Russian theatre, including model sets, posters and costumes. In a relatively new section aimed at children, there are great models of the Mariinsky stage and antique contraptions used to create stage effects such as wind and rain. The museum also



## BRIDGES IN THE BURG

The never-ending network of canals and waterways in St Petersburg has resulted in some innovative designs in the bridges built over the years. With the exception of the new Big Obukhovskiy, all of the *mosty* (bridges) across the Neva are drawbridges. They are raised every evening at designated times to let the ships pass, a spectacle that draws starry-eyed lovers and stranded night birds (see p236 for the schedule). But some of the most charming bridges are the smaller structures that span the canals around the city. Of St Petersburg's 340 bridges, here are a few of our favourites:

**Anichkov most** (Map pp68–9) St Petersburg's most striking bridge features rearing horses at all four corners, symbolising man's struggle with and taming of nature.

**Bankovskiy most** (Bank Bridge; Map pp68–9) This beauty is suspended by cables emerging from the mouths of golden-winged griffins. The name (which does not quite fit this whimsical creation) comes from the Assignment Bank (now a further-education institute) which stands on one side of the bridge.

**Most Lomonosova** (Map pp68–9) Four Doric towers contain the mechanism that pulls up the moveable central section, allowing boat traffic to pass along the Fontanka underneath.

**Lviny most** (Bridge of Four Lions; Map p102) Another suspension bridge, this one is supported by two pairs of regal lions, which give the bridge its name.

**Panteleymonovskiy most** (Map pp68–9) At the confluence of the Moyka and the Fontanka, this beauty features lampposts bedecked with the double-headed eagle and railings adorned with the coat of arms.

**1-y Inzhenerny most** (First Engineer Bridge; Map pp68–9) While there is no shortage of adornment on the cast-iron bridge leading to **Mikhailovskiy Castle** (p74), the highlight is the Chizhik-Pyzhik, the statue of the little bird that hovers over the Moyka.

**Siniy most** (Blue Bridge), **Krasny most** (Red Bridge), **Zelyony most** (Green Bridge) and **Pevchesky most** (all bridges on Map pp68–9) These colour-coded bridges (the Pevchesky was formerly known as the Yellow Bridge) cross the Moyka at intervals between Isaakiyevskaya pl and Dvortsovaya pl.

has branches in the **Sheremetev Palace** (p87) and the former homes of composer Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov and singer Fyodor Chaliapin, the **Rimsky-Korsakov Flat-Museum** (p94) and **Chaliapin House Museum** (p119) respectively.

### ANICHKOV PALACE Map pp68–9

☎ 310 4395; nab reki Fontanki; 📍 by appointment; 🏠 Gostiny Dvor

Occupying an entire block between pl Ostrovskogo and the Fontanka River, the Anichkov Palace was built between 1741 and 1750, with input from a slew of architects, including Rastrelli and Rossi. The palace was twice a generous gift for services rendered: Empress Elizabeth gave it to her favourite Count Razumovskiy and later Catherine the Great presented it to Potemkin. This was also Tsar Nicholas II's favourite place to stay in St Petersburg – he far preferred the cosy interiors to the vastness of the Winter Palace.

The Anichkov Palace became the city's largest Pioneer Club headquarters after 1936 and to this day it houses more than 100 after-school clubs for over 10,000

children. Today there's a small museum inside, but it is only open sporadically for tours. Call to find out the specific times and dates.

Otherwise, the palace, as a children's club, is off-limits to casual tourists. There is a hokey **wax figures exhibition** (admission R300; 🕒 11am–7pm) in the courtyard if you are looking for something to do.

## RUSSIAN MUSEUM

Even if your time in St Petersburg is limited, try your utmost to accommodate some time for this gem, the **Russian Museum** (Gosudarstvenny Russkiy Muзей; ☎ 595 4248; www.rusmuseum.ru; Inzhenernaya ul 4; adult/student R300/150, photos R100, audio guide R200; 🕒 10am–6pm Wed–Sun & 10am–5pm Mon, ticket office closes 1hr before closing time; 🏠 Nevsky Pr). Your appreciation of Russian culture will be much deepened by it. Moreover, it's easily done in a half-day visit unlike the vast and sometimes overwhelming Hermitage.

While the Hermitage spreads its net across the cultures of the world, the Russian Museum – as its name suggests – focuses solely on Russian art, from primitive Church icons to

# top picks

## RUSSIAN MUSEUM

If you don't have time for a comprehensive tour, here are the highlights that you won't want to miss.

### Mikhailovskiy Palace

- **Room 14** *The Last Day of Pompeii* by Karl Bryullov and *The Wave* by Ivan Aivazovsky.
- **Room 26** *Peter I Interrogating Tsarevich Alexey in Peterhof* and *The Last Supper*, both works by Nicholas Ghe.
- **Rooms 33–35** Works by Ilya Repin, especially *Barge Haulers on the Volga* and *Cossacks Writing a Letter to the Turkish Sultan*.
- **Room 36** *Stepan Razin* by Vasily Surikov.
- **Room 38** Viktor Vasnetsov's moving *A Knight at the Crossroads*.

### Benois Wing

- **Room 67** The highly stylised works of Nikolai Roerich, including the *Stroganov Frieze Suite* in the stairwell.
- **Room 70** Boris Kustodiev's smug *Merchant's Wife at Tea*.
- **Rooms 77–82** The Russian take on 20th-century art, including cubism, futurism and avant-garde.

contemporary commercial art. The collection is magnificent. Although it lacks some of the better-known paintings that can be found in its only real rival, the Tretyakov State Gallery in Moscow, the Russian Museum's range is arguably more even.

Mikhailovskiy Palace, the museum's main building, was designed by Carlo Rossi and built between 1819 and 1825. It was a gift for Grand Duke Mikhail (brother of Tsars Alexander I and Nicholas I) as compensation for missing out on his chance on the throne. Nicholas II opened the building as a public gallery on 7 March 1898. The museum originated from the collection begun by Tsar Alexander III, whose bust greets you on the magnificent main staircase.

The Benois Wing was constructed between 1914 and 1919. It is now connected to the original palace and accessible through an entrance on nab kanala Griboedova. In 2002 all 8.7 hectares of the Mikhailovskiy Gardens were redesigned according to the original 19th-century plans. The gardens are absolutely

lovely and offer the most impressive perspective of Mikhailovskiy Palace.

The museum currently boasts over 400,000 items in its collection and now owns three other city palaces where (mostly) temporary exhibitions are also held: the Marble Palace (p72), the Stroganov Palace (p73) and Mikhailovskiy Castle (Engineer's Castle) (p74). Joint tickets for all four venues are available for adult/child R600/300.

## Mikhailovskiy Palace

Enter the museum via the ground floor entrance to the right of the main façade. Pick up a museum map before ascending the magnificent main staircase to the 1st floor, as this is where the chronological ordering of the exhibits begins.

### ROOMS 1–4: RELIGIOUS ICONS

The first four rooms of the museum encapsulate a succinct but brilliant history of Russian icon painting over the past eight centuries, including work from the three major schools of Russian icon painting: Novgorod, Muscovy and Pskov. Room 2 has *St George and Scenes of His Life*, while Room 3 features Russian master Andrei Rublev's massive *Peter and Paul* as well as his *Presentation of Christ in the Temple*. Room 4 is notable in its departure from earlier styles. Compare *Old Testament Trinity with Scenes from Genesis* with the completely atypical *Our Father*.

### ROOM 5: PETRINE ART

Peter was a great patron of the arts and almost single-handedly brought the Western eye to Russian painting, as witnessed by the massive jump in style from ecclesiastical to secular subjects between Rooms 4 and 5. The room includes three busts of Peter and three portraits, including the creepy *Peter I on His Deathbed*.

### ROOMS 6–7: POST-PETRINE ART

Room 6 includes some charmingly odd canvases in very strange shapes as well as mosaic portraits of both Peter and Catherine the Great. There's also a wonderful moulded portrait of Elizabeth I, Peter's daughter. The centre of the room is taken up by a huge portrait of the ill-fated Peter III, although look out for the impressive bust of Prince Menshikov here too. Room 7

lonelyplanet.com

has an amazingly ornate ceiling. The room houses a sculpture of *Empress Anna with an Arab Boy* and a few impressive tapestries.

### ROOMS 8–10: THE RISE OF THE ACADEMY

These rooms display the early works of the St Petersburg Academy of Arts. These artists borrowed the European classical aesthetic for their work. Look for portraits in Rooms 8 and 10 and biblical themes in Room 9.

### ROOM 11: THE WHITE HALL

This Rossi-designed hall was Grand Duke Mikhail's drawing room. Here, the interior is the art – in this case representing the Empire epoch. It's wonderfully ornate and shiny – a perfect place to host musical greats like Strauss and Berlioz, who performed here.

### ROOMS 12–17: THE ACADEMY

By the early 19th century the Academy of Arts was more and more influenced by Italian themes given the unfashionability of France. In Room 12 look for Vladimir Borovikovsky's magnificent *Catherine II Promenading in Tsarskoe Selo*. Room 14 is truly spectacular, including enormous canvases such as Ivan Aivazovsky's *The Wave* and Karl Bryullov's incredible *The Last Day of Pompeii* and *The Crucifixion*.

Some modernity then begins to creep in with Alexander Ivanov's smaller paintings, all of which are grouped together on one side of Room 15. *Four Nude Boys*, *Old Man Leaning on a Stick* and *Boy Getting out of a Stream* all mark a notable departure in terms of detail and representation. Room 16 is dedicated to drawings, which are considered the basis for all artistic work. And Room 17 pays tribute to the Academy Council.

### ROOMS 18–22

At the turn of the 19th century, it became fashionable for 'genre painting' to look to themes from (an incredibly idealised) rural Russia, which you can see in Rooms 18–20. Room 21 contains some enormous canvases: *Phrina at the Poseidon Celebration* in *Elesium* by Genrikh Semiradsky, *Christian Martyrs at the Colosseum* by Konstantin Flavitsky and *Nero's Death* by Vasily Smirnov. In Room 22 look for the huge rendition of *Pugachev's Judgement* by Vasily Perov.

### ROOMS 23–25: THE WANDERERS

The Wanderers (Peredvizhniki) were a group of academy artists who saw their future outside the strict confines of that strict institution. They wandered among the people, painting scenes of realism that had never before been seen in Russian art. Look for brilliant works by Perov, including *Hunters at Rest* and the scathing *Monastery Refectory*.

### ROOM 26: NICHOLAS GHE

Ghe's masterpiece, *Peter I Interrogating Tsarevich Alexey in Peterhof*, is one of Russian art's most famous historical paintings. The painting relates to the tumultuous relationship between the despot and his son; Peter could not understand Alexey's character, so different from his own. Alexey foolishly went abroad and sought support from foreign leaders to place him on the throne of Russia. Peter, paranoid by his later years, managed to convince Alexey to return home unpunished if he renounced his right to the succession. While Alexey kept his side of the bargain, Peter had his own son tortured to death as he attempted to extract information about 'plotters' against him. Ghe's other work, such as *The Last Supper*, is equally dark.

### ROOMS 27–32: LANDSCAPES

Contemporaries of the Wanderers, landscape artists such as Ivan Shishkin (Room 27) were still popular. These rooms also document the rise of populist art, which had a strong social conscience and sought to educate the public. The best examples of this are Vladimir Makovsky's *The Condemned* and *The Doss House* (Room 30).

### ROOMS 33–35: ILYA REPIN

Considered by most Russians to be the greatest artist the nation has ever produced, Ilya Repin (1844–1930) was originally a member of the Wanderers, but he outgrew the movement. He went on to produce key works of Russian realist and populist art. His masterpiece is *Barge Haulers on the Volga*, an unrivalled portrait of human misery and enslavement in rural Russia. Unfortunately it's often on loan abroad, but the Russian Museum is its home. Other Repin highlights here are *Cossacks Writing a Letter to the Turkish Sultan* and his marvellous portrait of a barefoot Leo Tolstoy.

### ROOMS 36–38: RUSSIAN HISTORICAL ART

Vasily Surikov was a master at historical painting, which was en vogue in the late 19th century. His portrayals of *Yermak's Conquest of Siberia* and *Suvorov Crossing the Alps* (Room 36) are particularly romantic, but the lifelike rendition of Cossack rebel *Stepan Razin* (Room 37) is undoubtedly his most evocative. Viktor Vasnetsov also specialised in mystical and historical subjects. Check out the moving scene in *A Knight at the Crossroads* (Room 38), where a soldier and horse pause to mourn the loss of an unknown life.

### ROOM 39: RUSSIAN ORIENTALISM

The 19th century saw a massive extension of the Russian Empire as vast swathes of Central Asia were tamed and brought under the tsar. This created great interest in the East and its then completely mysterious culture and traditions. Vasily Vereshchagin's work depicts this curiosity, with pieces such as *At the Door of the Mosque*.

### ROOMS 40–47: LATE-19TH-CENTURY RUSSIAN ART

These rooms display the large number of complementing and contradictory styles that were fashionable in St Petersburg before the explosion of the avant-garde. These include Arkhip Kuindzhi landscapes (Rooms 40–41), mystical nature scenes with lots of sky and mysterious light; Vladimir Makovsky's marvellously detailed scenes of celebrations like the *Maslenitsa Festival on Admiralteyskaya pl* (Room 42); Apollinary Vasnetsov's dark, beautiful depictions of old Moscow (Room 43); Isaak Levitan's idyllic landscapes, such as *The Lake* and *Silence* (Room 44); big, bold, colourful creations by Andrei Ryabushkin (Room 45); Abram Arkhipov and other artists depicting unromanticised scenes from everyday life (Room 46); and bright paintings of peasants by Filip Mallianvin (Room 47).

### ROOMS 48–49

Mark Antokolsky's *Ivan the Terrible* and *Death of Socrates* are on display either side of yet another souvenir stand. From here you enter the Benois Wing to your right or continue straight ahead for the comprehensive account of Russian folk art, featur-

ing everything from kitchen equipment to window frames. The long corridor in Room 49 showcases a series of paintings by Konstantin Korovin.

### ROOM 54: ILYA REPIN'S TSARIST PORTRAITS

Room 54 features Repin's enormous rendition of the *Ceremonial Sitting of the State Council on 7th May 1901, Marking the Centenary of Its Foundation*. Around the walls are individual portraits of its members.

### ROOMS 55–59

These rooms contain sculptures in storage, but behind glass walls, so still visible. Most interesting here is Etienne Falconet's model for his *Bronze Horseman*, which stands overlooking the Neva on pl Dekabristov.

## Benois Wing

The Benois Wing marks the beginning of the modern era in painting – the Russian Museum's superb collection of late-19th-century and early-20th-century avant-garde art is here, while exhibits of contemporary Russian art are held downstairs. Don't miss the massive *Stroganov Frieze Suite*, the four amazing paintings by Nikolai Roerich that hang in the stairwell.

### ROOM 66: MIKHAIL VRUBEL & MIKHAIL NESTEROV

Room 66 is normally the home of the father of modern Russian art, Mikhail Vrubel (1856–1910). His ground-breaking works are *Lady in Lilac*, *Epic Hero* and *Demon in Flight*. Mikhail Nesterov is also astute at combining historical and religious themes.

### ROOM 67: NIKOLAI ROERICH

Nikolai Roerich (1874–1947) was a painter, peacenik and spiritual teacher. His philosophical bent is reflected in paintings such as *Three Joys* and *Guests from Overseas*. Roerich's work is prized for its mystical themes and amazingly vibrant colours.

### ROOM 68: BALLETS RUSSES ARTISTS

Sergei Diaghilev founded the Ballets Russes in 1909, and he then proceeded to commission theatre sets and costume designs from some of the greatest artists in Russia and – eventually – the world.

Frequent collaborators included Leon Bakst, whose *Portrait of Sergei Diaghilev with his Nanny* (1906) is featured in Room 68. Konstantin Somov and Alexander Benois were also associated with this group.

### ROOMS 69–70: VIKTOR SEROV & BORIS KUSTODIEV

Serov's works include portraits of Ida Rubenstein, Princess Yusupova and Olga Orlova. Kustodiev's most famous painting is *Merchant's Wife at Tea*, though some may argue that his scenes of provincial Russian life are more accessible.

### ROOMS 71–75

These rooms contain a hodgepodge of painting by artists from the late 19th and early 20th century – many exhibiting impressionist influences. In Room 71, Viktor Vasnetsov plays with religious themes, including the *Mother of God* which occupies an entire wall. Room 72 features several sublime paintings by Konstantin Korovin (1861–1939), including *Northern Idyll* and *Portrait of Shaliapin*. Look also for Mikhail Larionov's wonderful late impressionist *Rose Bush* (1904). Room 73 displays work by Nikolai Miliotti and Victor Borisov-Mussatov, as well as some wonderful sculpture by Mikhail Vrubel. Pavel Kuznetsov and Nikolai Sapunov are also represented here.

### ROOM 76: KUZMA PETROV-VODKIN

Spanning two centuries and surviving the Russian Revolution, Kuzma Petrov-Vodkin (1878–1939) was a unique painter. Indeed, he was all but forgotten during the early Soviet period, as his work did not subscribe to socialist realist norms, but he was rediscovered during the 1960s and 70s. His work conveys a dreamlike atmosphere, much of it with homoerotic overtones.

### ROOMS 77–79: EARLY AVANT-GARDE

Between 1905 and 1917, the Russian art world experienced an explosion of creative inspiration which defied the stylistic categorisation that had existed before. Nathan Altman was among the brightest stars of the Russian avant-garde. Artist couple Mikhail Larionov and Natalya Goncharova were also leaders of this movement, evidence of which you can see in Room 79.

### ROOM 80: CUBISM & FUTURISM

Look for Alexander Rodchenko's famous painting *Black on Black* (1918). Additional work includes pieces by Natalya Goncharova, Lev Bruni and Lyubov Popova.

### ROOMS 81–82: LATE AVANT-GARDE PAINTING

Here is an unrivalled selection of Russian art of the late 1920s and early 1930s. Kazimir Malevich's works of great simplicity sit uncomfortably opposite Pavel Filonov's disturbed and crowded representations of Russian life. This is also the permanent home of Malevich's famous *Black Square* (1925), the third of a series of four, although it is often travelling for special exhibitions.

### ROOMS 83–85: EARLY SOVIET ART

These rooms are often used for special exhibitions. However, the permanent display features pieces from the early Soviet period, where you can enjoy the tantalising overview of the many interesting directions that Soviet art promised to take before socialist realism became the only acceptable style. And of course there is plenty of the latter, too.

## HISTORIC HEART

### Walking Tour

**1 Dvortsovaya pl** Approach the magnificent *Dvortsovaya pl* (Palace Sq; p66) from Bolshaya Morskaya ul. As you turn the corner from Nevsky pr, behold the *Alexander Column* (p66), perfectly framed under the triumphal arch. All of the surrounding buildings are part of the *State Hermitage Museum* (p125).

**2 Moyka River** From Vtoroy Zimny most, look northwest for a wonderful view of the Neva; way to the south is Bartolomeo Rastrelli's lavish *Stroganov Palace* (p73). At No 12, the final residence of Russia's most celebrated poet now houses the *Pushkin Flat-Museum* (p72).

**3 Konyushennaya pl** This square is dominated by crumbling 18th-century court stables. Extending south from here is Bolshaya Konyushennaya ul (the name comes from *kon*, Russian for 'horse'). One of imperial St Petersburg's most prestigious streets, it was home to writer Ivan Turgenev, musician Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov and social revolutionary Nikolai Chernyshevsky.

**4 Mars Field** Formerly the parade grounds for the imperial guard, the wide, open park of *Mars Field* (p71) later became a burial ground for victims of the revolution and the civil war. An eternal flame burns in their honour. East of here is the shady *Summer Garden* (p70) and the unusual *Mikhailovsky Castle* (Engineer's Castle; p74) is to the southeast.

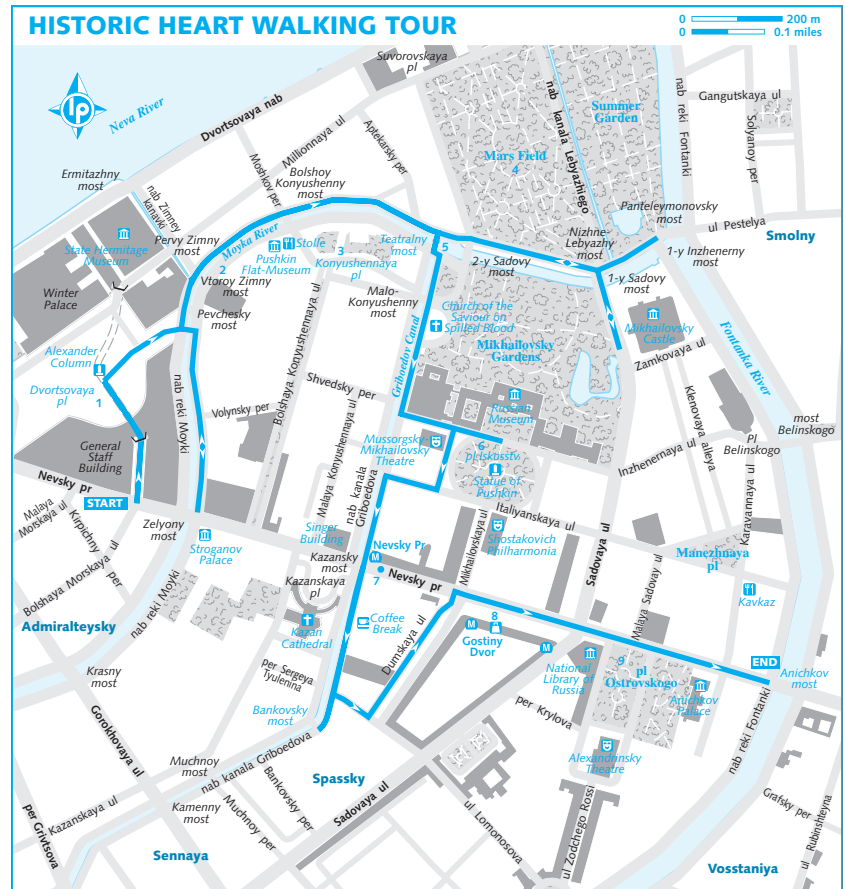
**5 Teatralny most** Near the intersection of the Moyka and Griboedov Canal, this bridge gives a spectacular perspective on the *Church of the Saviour on Spilled Blood* (p72). Behind the cacophony of colours, a Style Moderne wrought-iron fence encloses the *Mikhailovsky Gardens* (p77).

**6 Pl Iskusstv** Centred around a stoic *statue of Pushkin*, pretty *pl Iskusstv* (Arts Sq; p74) is ringed

by celebrated cultural institutions. Most notably, the *Russian Museum* (p76) dominates the north side of the square, which explains the name of the square. Also situated here are the *Mussorgsky-Mikhailovsky Theatre* (p189) and *Shostakovich Philharmonia* (p189).

### WALK FACTS

**Start** Dvortsovaya pl at intersection of Bolshaya Morskaya ul and Nevsky pr (M Nevsky Pr)  
**Finish** Pl Ostrovskogo at Fontanka River (M Gostiny Dvor)  
**Distance** 2km  
**Duration** Two hours  
**Fuel stops** Stolle (p167), Coffee Break (p181), Kavkaz (p166)





**7 Nevsky pr** The corner of Nevsky pr and Griboedov Canal is one of the landmark intersections of this infamous avenue. The old **Singer building** (p74) provides a whimsical contrast to the formidable columned **Kazan Cathedral** (p73) on the opposite corner. Behind the cathedral, **Bankovsky most** (p76) is undoubtedly St Petersburg's most picturesque and most photographed bridge.

**8 Gostiny Dvor** Crowds pour out of the metro station at **Gostiny Dvor** (p75), the 18th-century trading arcade that's still packed with shoppers. One of the world's first indoor

shopping malls, Rastrelli's creation boasts a perimeter over 1km long. The clock tower across the street marks the former **Town Duma** (Town Parliament).

**9 PI Ostrovskogo** Landmarks such as the **National Library of Russia** (p75), **Alexandrinsky Theatre** (p190) and **Anichkov Palace** (p76) surround **pl Ostrovskogo** (Ostrovsky Sq; p75), named for the famous playwright. The pleasant park is otherwise populated by chess players, young lovers and dowdy drunks. Here, the elaborate **Anichkov most** (p76), flanked by rearing horses, crosses the Fontanka.

## LITEYNY & SMOLNY

Eating p168; Shopping p154; Sleeping p206

The Liteyny and Smolny districts sit side-by-side east of the Historic Heart, tucked inside a swooping curve of the Neva River on its south bank. These neighbourhoods take their names from the industries that once dominated this area: *liteyny* means 'foundry' and *smol* means 'tar'. These evocative names hardly capture the atmosphere of these quaint but quiet neighbourhoods today. Their wide avenues do not see nearly as much traffic as those in the Historic Heart, which makes for a refreshing retreat from the hustle and bustle.

Liteyny is dominated by the commercial street, Liteyny pr, which was once the main road between Nevsky pr and the foundry. The foundry is long gone, but it is still a busy street, heading directly north and crossing the Neva River at Liteyny most (the second permanent bridge in St Petersburg).

Smolny is the city's political and diplomatic centre: Governor Valentina Matvienko's office is at the Smolny Institute (below) and a large number of foreign consulates are located on or around ul Furshatskaya (see p242).

Otherwise, both of these neighbourhoods are mostly residential, and rather fashionable at that. Over the years, they have been home to many famous residents. The high-society Sheremetyev family built their palatial residence on the Fontanka, and later poet Anna Akhmatova occupied an apartment in the same building (p87). Grigory Potemkin lived in the Horse Guards Palace (now the Tauride Palace; p85). And the young Vladimir Putin spent his youth playing on these streets: his family lived at Baskov per 12. The Sovetskaya Streets – 10 in all, running perpendicular to Suvorovsky pr – were built in the 1930s and are quiet streets pleasant for strolling and soaking up everyday life.

Liteyny and Smolny are bounded on two sides by the Neva River as it flows east from the Gulf of Finland, then turns south. The western border is the Fontanka River and the southern border is Nevsky pr. The main east–west roads are Kirochnaya ul and Shpalernaya ul; Liteyny pr runs north from Nevsky pr, while Suvorovsky pr runs at a diagonal northeast from Nevsky pr.

The area around Liteyny is served by two metro stations: **M** Mayakovskaya, at the intersection of Nevsky pr and ul Marata, and **M** Chernyshevskaya, further north. Smolny suffers from a lack of public transport, although **M** Chernyshevskaya is at its heart. To get to the farthest reaches of the neighbourhood – near the cathedral – it may be easier to hop on one of the *marshrutky* (minibuses) travelling up Suvorovsky pr.

### SMOLNY CATHEDRAL Map p84

☎ 271 9182; pl Rastrelli 3/1; adult/student R100/70; 🕒 10am–8pm Thu–Tue; **M** Chernyshevskaya

If baroque is your thing, then look no further than the sky-blue Smolny Cathedral, an unrivalled masterpiece of the genre that ranks among Bartolomeo Rastrelli's most amazing creations. The cathedral is the centrepiece of a convent mostly built to Rastrelli's designs between 1748 and 1757. His inspiration was to combine baroque details with the forest of towers and onion domes typical of an old Russian monastery. There's special genius in the proportions of the cathedral (it gives the impression of soaring upwards), to which the convent buildings are a perfect foil.

In stark contrast, the interior is a disappointingly austere plain white. At the time of research, the interior was closed for renovations to the cupola. But even when it is open, it serves as a concert hall or exhibi-

tion space, not as a working church (and indeed, there is not much to see inside).

If you wonder what you are paying for, it is to climb the 63m belfry – all 277 steps – for stupendous views over the city.

### SMOLNY INSTITUTE Map p84

☎ 276 1461; pl Proletarsky Diktatury 3; 🕒 by appointment only 10am–6pm Mon–Fri; **M** Chernyshevskaya

Built by Giacomo Quarenghi between 1806 and 1808 as a school for aristocratic girls, the Smolny Institute was thrust into the limelight in 1917 when it became the headquarters for the Bolshevik Central Committee and the Petrograd Soviet. From here, Trotsky and Lenin directed the October Revolution, and in the Hall of Acts (Aktovy zal) on 25 October, the All-Russian Congress of Soviets conferred power on a Bolshevik government led by Lenin. The Smolny Institute served as the seat of



## LITEYNY & SMOLNY

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power until March 1918. In 1934, Leningrad Party chief Sergei Kirov was assassinated on Stalin's orders as he left the building, sparking the notorious Leningrad purges (see p35). Today St Petersburg governor Valentina Matvienko runs the city from here.

## TAURIDE PALACE & GARDENS

Map p84

### 1 Chernyshevskaya

Catherine the Great built this fabulous baroque palace in 1783 for Grigory Potemkin, a famed general and one of her many lovers. The palace takes its name from the Ukrainian region of Crimea (once called Tavia), which Potemkin conquered. The palace was a thank you for that acquisition, amongst other things. Catherine's bitter son, Paul I, turned the palace into a barracks after his ascension to the throne in 1796, which

ruined most of the lavish interiors. Between 1906 and 1917 the State Duma, the Provisional Government and the Petrograd Soviet all met here; in the 1930s it housed the All-Union Agricultural Communist University, a fate that would have horrified Catherine the Great. Today it is home to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Member States of the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States). It is not open to the public.

The gardens, on the other hand, are open to all. Once the romping grounds of the tsarina, the palace gardens have since become – in true Soviet style – a park for the people (also called City Children's Park). The tree-lined dirt paths and picturesque pond make for a pleasant place to stroll, while children can enjoy climbing on the playground equipment or take their chances on some rusty rides.

# top picks

## IT'S FREE

Here are a few freebies for travellers whose pockets are not so deep:

- **State Hermitage Museum** (p125) Free – and crowded – on the first Thursday of the month.
- **Summer Garden** (p70) Free, thanks to the generous sponsorship of Sberbank in honour of the city's tercentenary.
- **Pushkinskaya 10** (p91) Free to look, not to buy.
- **Cruiser Aurora** (p117) Free Soviet propaganda.
- **Kazan Cathedral** (p73); **Vladimirsky Cathedral** (p91); **Alexander Nevsky Monastery** (p90) Any working church will allow you to enter for free (just say your prayers).
- **Grand Choral Synagogue** (p104) Ditto for working synagogues.
- **Museum of Zoology** (p110) Free on Thursdays.
- **Geological Museum** (p111) Free rocks.
- **Yelagin Island** (p120) Free on weekdays (and still pretty cheap on weekends).
- **Piskaryovskoe Cemetery** (p121)
- **Monument to the Heroic Defenders of Leningrad** (p145)

Just east of the gardens, on Shpalernaya ul, is one of the last remaining **statues of Felix Dzerzhinsky**, founder of the infamous Cheka (Bolshevik secret police), KGB predecessor.

### FLORAL EXHIBITION HALL Map p84

☎ 272 5448; Potyomkinskaya ul 2; admission R60; ☎ 11am-7pm Tue-Sun; **M** Chernyshevskaya One of the finest ways to momentarily escape from a St Petersburg winter is to head for the Floral Exhibition Hall, an indoor tropical paradise just northwest of the Tauride Gardens. If you are sufficiently inspired, there is no shortage of flower stalls and florists in the vicinity, so you can take a little piece of paradise back home with you, too.

### MUSEUM OF DECORATIVE & APPLIED ARTS Map p84

☎ 273 3258; Solyanoy per 15; adult/student R40/20; ☎ 11am-5pm Tue-Sat; **M** Chernyshevskaya

Also known as the Stieglitz Museum, this must-see establishment is as beautiful as you would expect a decorative arts museum to be. A vast array of gorgeous

objects is on display, from medieval hand-crafted furniture to 18th-century Russian tiled stoves to contemporary works by the students of the Applied Arts School next door. Their surroundings merely match their magnificence. This museum is less visited than some of its counterparts in the city, but the quiet, off-the-beaten-track atmosphere only adds to its appeal.

In 1878 the millionaire Baron Stieglitz founded the School of Technical Design and wanted to surround his students with world-class art to inspire them. He began a collection that was continued by his son and was to include a unique array of European and Oriental glassware, porcelains, tapestries, furniture and paintings. It eventually grew into one of Europe's richest private collections. Between 1885 and 1895, a building designed by architect Maximilian Messmacher was built to house the collection and this building also became a masterpiece. Each hall is decorated in its own unique style, including Italian, Renaissance, Flemish and baroque. The Terem Room, in the style of the medieval Terem Palace of Moscow's Kremlin, is an opulent knockout.

After the revolution the school was closed, the museum's collection redistributed to the Hermitage and the Russian Museum, and most of the lavish interiors brutally painted or plastered over, even destroyed (one room was used as a sports hall). The painstaking renovation continues to this day, despite receiving no funding from the Ministry of Education under whose direction it falls, being connected to the Applied Arts School.

### MUSEUM OF THE DEFENCE & BLOCKADE OF LENINGRAD

Map p84

☎ 275 7208; Solyanoy per 9; admission R100; ☎ 10am-5pm Thu-Tue, closed last Thu of month; **M** Chernyshevskaya

This museum opened just three months after the blockade was lifted in January 1944 and boasted 37,000 exhibits, including real tanks and aeroplanes. But three years later, during Stalin's repression of the city, the museum was shut, its director shot, and most of the exhibits destroyed or redistributed. Not until 1985's glasnost was an attempt made to once again gather documents to reopen the museum; this happened in 1989. The grim but engrossing

displays contain donations from survivors, propaganda posters from the time and many photos depicting life and death during the blockade. Book in advance for an English excursion.

### ANNA AKHMATOVA MUSEUM IN THE FOUNTAIN HOUSE Map p84

☎ 272 2211; www.akhmatova.spb.ru; Liteyny pr 53; admission R100, audio tour R100; ☎ 10.30am-6.30pm Tue-Sun, 1-9pm Wed; **M** Gostiny Dvor Housed in the south wing of the Sheremetyev Palace (1750-55), this touching and fascinating literary museum celebrates the life and work of Anna Akhmatova. St Petersburg's most famous 20th-century poet lived here from 1924 until 1952, as this was the apartment of her common-law husband Nikolai Punin. The apartment is on the 2nd floor and is filled with mementos of the poet and correspondence with other writers. The atmosphere is peaceful and contemplative. It's also an interesting chance to see the interior of an (albeit atypical) apartment from the early to mid-20th century.

Admission also includes the Josef Brodsky 'American Study'. Brodsky did not live here, but his connection with Akhmatova was strong. For lack of a better location, his office has been recreated here, complete with furniture and other 'artefacts' from his adopted home in Massachusetts.

Downstairs is a bookshop and video room where you can watch documentaries on the lives of Akhmatova and her contemporaries while drinking a cup of tea or coffee.

### SHEREMETEV PALACE Map p84

☎ 272 3898; www.theatremuseum.ru; nab reki Fontanki 34; adult/student R180/95; ☎ noon-6pm Wed-Sun; **M** Gostiny Dvor

Splendid wrought-iron gates facing the Fontanka River guard the entrance to the Sheremetyev Palace (1750-55), now a branch of the State Museum of Theatre & Music, which has a collection of musical instruments from the 19th and 20th centuries. The Sheremetyev family was famous for the concerts and theatre performances they hosted at their palace, which was a centre of musical life in the capital in the 18th century. Upstairs, the rooms have been wonderfully restored, which gives an impression of the cultural life of the time. Occasional concerts are still held here.

### CATHEDRAL OF THE TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR SAVIOUR Map p84

Spaso-preobrazhensky Sobor; Preobrazhenskaya pl; ☎ services 10am & 6pm; **M** Chernyshevskaya The interior of this marvellous 1743 cathedral, which has been beautifully restored and repainted both outside and in, is one of the most gilded in the city. The grand gates bear the imperial double-headed eagle in vast golden busts, reflecting the fact that the cathedral was built on the site where the Preobrazhensky Guards (the monarch's personal protection unit) had their headquarters. Architect Vasily Stasov rebuilt the cathedral from 1827 to 1829 in the neoclassical style. It is dedicated to the victory over the Turks in 1828-29; note the captured Turkish guns in the gate surrounding the cathedral.

### CHURCH OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST Map p84

Khram Ioanna Bogoslova; ☎ 273 9619; www.leushino.ru in Russian; ul Nekrasova 31; ☎ 9am-6pm; **M** Mayakovskaya

This extraordinary building has one of the most striking exteriors in the city – its Byzantine façade is totally incongruous with the rest of the street, although few people seem to notice it, hemmed in on both sides by other terraced buildings on ul Nekrasova. The church once had the whole building, but currently it shares the premises with a hospital. Go past the waiting patients to the 2nd floor where you can see the small church and chat with the charming nuns who look after it.

### MUSEUM OF EROTICA Map p84

☎ 320 7600; ul Furshtatskaya 47; admission free; ☎ 8am-10pm; **M** Chernyshevskaya

It is odd enough that a museum should be housed in a venereal disease clinic. But even more surprising is the chief attraction of this quirky museum, which is a 30cm-long grey, embalmed penis that allegedly belonged to Rasputin. The chief of the prostate research centre of the Russian Academy of Natural Sciences, Igor Knyazkin, began assembling his collection of sexually themed trinkets his patients had given him over the years. At the very least, it gives patients something to do in the waiting room. Other exhibits include the bone of a sea lion's penis and various statuettes of people and animals in a variety of sexual positions.



## WORLD OF WATER MUSEUM

Map p84

Mir Vody; ☎ 275 4325; Shpalernaya ul 56; adult/student R40/15; 🕒 9.30am-6pm Wed-Sun; 🚶 Chernyshevskaya

The handsomely restored complex of 19th-century brick buildings between Tauride Gardens and the Neva River house St Petersburg's water treatment company Vodokanal and its museum. The 1st floor has an interesting multimedia exhibition about what goes on underneath St Petersburg. The upper floors of the water tower contain historical exhibitions, including the construction of waterways in the city and the water system during the blockade. Displays are slick and informative, though only in Russian.

## BOLSHOY DOM Map p84

Liteyny pr 4; 🚶 closed to the public; 🚶 Chernyshevskaya

Noi Trotsky's monolithic design for the local KGB headquarters (and current Interior Ministry headquarters) is referred to by everyone as the 'Bolshoy Dom' or 'Big House'. It's a fierce-looking block of granite built in 1932 in the late-constructivist style and was once

a byword for fear among the people of the city: most people who were taken here during the purges were never heard of again. Employees who have worked here include current president Vladimir Putin during his days as a KGB man.

## LITEYNY & SMOLNY

### Walking Tour

**1 Sheremetyev Palace** This spectacular palace on the Fontanka River, built in the mid-18th century, now houses two marvelous museums: the wonderful **Anna Akhmatova Museum in the Fountain House** (p87), which also hosts

temporary exhibitions of contemporary art, and the 'music' branch of the State Museum of Theatre & Music, often simply called **Sheremetyev Palace** (p87).

**2 Solyanoy per** This lane contains two little-known but worthwhile museums: the **Museum of Decorative & Applied Arts** (p86), housed in an exquisite interior, and the moving **Museum of the Defence & Blockade of Leningrad** (p86), which remembers the city's heroism during WWII.

**3 Cathedral of the Transfiguration of Our Saviour** Occupying an island in the middle of ul Pestelya, the **Cathedral of the Transfiguration of Our Saviour** (p87) is beautifully restored both inside and out.

**4 Tauride Gardens** Look across the little lake to the fabulous **Tauride Palace** (p85), gifted

by Catherine the Great to her lover, Grigory Potemkin. If the gardens are not blooming, check out the **Floral Exhibition Hall** (p86) just north-west of the gardens.

**5 Smolny Cathedral** The baby blue façade and gilt gold domes of **Smolny Cathedral** (p83), the premier attraction of the neighbourhood, surely represent one of Bartolomeo Rastrelli's proudest moments. The cathedral is no longer functioning as a church, but you can climb 277 steps to the top of the cupola for a fantastic vista.

**6 Smolny Institute** Just south of the cathedral, the government building of the **Smolny Institute** (p83) has both historic and contemporary significance. In 1917 the Bolsheviks set up the Petrograd Soviet here, and it continues to be the seat of government today.

## WALK FACTS

**Start** Nevsky pr at Fontanka River (🚶 Gostiny Dvor or Mayakovskaya)

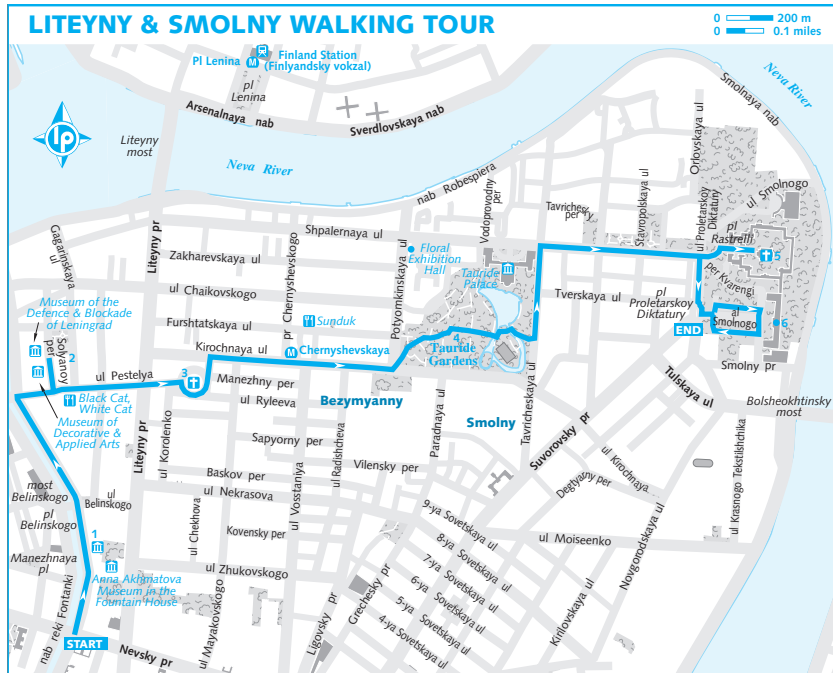
**Finish** Suvorovsky pr at pl Proletarskoy Diktatury (🚶 Chernyshevskaya)

**Distance** 3km

**Duration** Two hours

**Fuel stops** Black Cat, White Cat (p168), Sunduk (p168)

## LITEYNY & SMOLNY WALKING TOUR



# VLADIMIRSKAYA & VOSSTANIYA

Eating p169; Shopping p155; Sleeping p208

As Nevsky pr heads east from the Fontanka River, it continues to attract crowds to its shopping centres and street cafés, although the architecture is more urban – less extravagant – than in the Historic Heart (with a few notable exceptions).

On the south side of Nevsky, Vladimirsky pr leads south to Vladimirskaia pl, which is dominated by the grand, gold-domed cathedral of the same name. In the surrounding streets there is the Vladimirskaia metro station (M Vladimirskaia) and the shopping centre of Vladimirsky Passage (p156), so you know what neighbourhood you are in.

Ever-lively, Nevsky pr continues east to pl Vosstaniya (Uprising Sq), so called because the February Revolution began here in 1917. Although it is a geographically vast area, large swathes of land are consumed by industrial wasteland, as well as St Petersburg's busiest railway station, Moscow Station (Moskovskiy vokzal). Pl Vosstaniya is also the site of the busy connected metro stations, M Pl Vosstaniya and M Mayakovskaya, which are useful transport options.

The joint districts of Vladimirskaia and Vosstaniya are surrounded by water on three sides, with the Fontanka in the west, the Obvodny Canal running across the south and the Neva looping around to form the eastern border. In the north, the neighbourhood goes up to and includes Nevsky pr.

The quieter, less commercial, easterly end of Nevsky is known locally as Staronevsky (Old Nevsky), despite being no older than Nevsky proper. Nevsky pr ends at pl Alexandra Nevskogo, named after the city's patron saint, who defeated the Swedes in the area during the 12th century. On this square stands the ancient and revered Alexander Nevsky Monastery, the oldest monastery in the city. This end of Nevsky is served by its own metro stop, M Pl Alexandra Nevskogo.

## ALEXANDER NEVSKY MONASTERY

Map p92

Lavra Alexandra Nevskogo; ☎ 274 0409; www.lavra.spb.ru; pl Alexandra Nevskogo; admission free; ☞ grounds 6am–10pm; M Pl Alexandra Nevskogo

Peter the Great made a mistake when he founded the Alexander Nevsky Monastery on this spot at the far end of Nevsky pr. He wrongly thought that this was where Alexander of Novgorod had beaten the Swedes in 1240. Nonetheless, in 1797 it became a *lavra*, the most senior grade of Russian Orthodox monasteries. And today it is a working monastery that attracts the most devout believers – a revered and holy place – and the gravesite of some of Russia's most famous artistic figures.

You can wander freely around most of the grounds, but you must buy tickets from the kiosk on your right after entering the main gates to enter the **graveyards** (☎ 271 2635; adult/student R140/70; ☞ 11am–7pm Fri–Wed Mar–Sep & 11am–3.30pm Fri–Wed Oct–Feb).

The **Tikhvin Cemetery** (Tikhvinskoe kladbishche), on the right as you enter, contains the most famous graves (see the boxed text, **opposite**). Now part of the City Sculpture Museum (see following), the former Tikhvin Church contains an exhibition of models of the sculptures and monuments that are scattered around the city.

Facing the Tikhvin across the entrance path, the **Lazarus Cemetery** (Lazarevskoe kladbishche) contains the graves of several late great St Petersburg architects – among them Andrei Voronikhin, Giacomo Quarenghi, Vasily Stasov and Carlo Rossi. Scholar and polymath Mikhail Lomonosov is also buried here. The **St Lazarus Church** (admission R30; ☞ 11am–4.30pm Fri–Wed) is a crypt dating to 1761. It contains the graves of Count Sheremetyev and his serf-attendant wife, as well as a few other statesmen, nobles, artists and intellectuals.

In the main *lavra* complex, the first main building on the left is the 1717–22 baroque Annunciation Church (Blagoveshchenskaya Tserkov), now the **City Sculpture Museum** (☎ 274 2545; adult/student R70/35; ☞ 11am–5pm Tue & Thu–Sun). Except for the cupola, this interior is hardly recognisable as a church, as only a few fragments of frescoes remain. The exhibition includes the downstairs crypt and some sculptures of headstones upstairs.

About 100m further on is the monastery's 1776–90 classical **Trinity Cathedral** (Troitsky Sobor; ☎ 274 1612; ☞ 6am–8pm, services at 7am, 10am & 6pm). Hundreds crowd in here on 12 September to celebrate the feast of St Alexander Nevsky, whose remains are in the silver reliquary by the main iconostasis. Behind the cathedral is the **Nicholas Cemetery** (☞ 9am–9pm summer, 9am–6pm winter), a romantically overgrown field where many of the cathedral's priests are buried.

Opposite the cathedral is **Metropolitan's House** (1775–78), residence of Metropolitan Vladimir, the spiritual leader of St Petersburg's Russian Orthodox community. In the surrounding grounds is a smaller cemetery where leading Communist (ie atheist) Party officials and luminaries are buried. On the far right of the grounds facing the canal is St Petersburg's **Orthodox Academy**, one of only a handful in Russia (the main one is at Sergiev Posad, near Moscow).

## NEW EXHIBITION HALL

Map p92  
☎ 274 2579; Nevsky pr 179/2; adult/student R150/100; ☞ 11am–6pm Sat–Wed; M Pl Alexandra Nevskogo

This small, two-storey exhibition space is one of a few places in the city that are designated for contemporary art. Exhibitions change monthly, usually showcasing local artists, including some edgy, up-and-coming stuff, as well as more conventional works by influential 20th-century artists.

## PUSHKINSKAYA 10

Map p92  
☎ 764 5258; www.p10.nonmuseum.ru; Ligovsky pr 53; admission free; ☞ 3–7pm Wed–Sun; M Pl Vosstaniya

This legendary locale is a required stop for anyone who is interested in the contemporary art and music scene in St Petersburg. The former apartment block – affectionately called by its former street address – contains studio and gallery space, as well as the cool music clubs **Fish Fabrique** (p184) and **Experimental Sound Gallery (GEZ-21)** (p184) and an assortment of other shops (see p155). It offers a unique opportunity to hang out with local musicians and artists, who are always eager to talk about their work.

The story of Pushkinskaya 10 goes back to 1988, when a group of artists/squatters

took over the condemned apartment block. The decrepit building became 'underground central', as artists and musicians moved in to set up studios, others stopped by to hang out with them, and outsiders became curious about the creative activity going on inside (see the boxed text, p49).

These days, the art centre is a registered nonprofit organisation (officially the Free Culture Society) that is completely on the up-and-up. Some would argue that the place has lost its edge, and the tension between culture and commercial is apparent. But the creative atmosphere here is unparalleled, and the centre is unbeatable as a place to witness art and music being created.

The main galleries, the **Museum of Non-Conformist Art** and the **New Academy of Fine Arts Museum**, are on the 4th floor. Smaller galleries are scattered throughout the building, and the artists often open their studios to visitors, especially on Saturday afternoons. A highlight is the **Temple of Love, Peace & Music** (☎ 764 5353; ground fl; ☞ 6–8pm Fri & specially designated 'high holidays'). Collector Kolya Vasin (Russia's most famous Beatles' fan) has an amazing array of John Lennon paraphernalia, which he shares with other fans on designated days.

The centre commonly goes by the name 'Pushkinskaya 10', but note that the entrance is through the archway at Ligovsky pr 53.

## VLADIMIRSKY CATHEDRAL

Map p92

☎ 312 1938; Vladimirsky pr 20; admission free; ☞ 8am–6pm, services 6pm daily; M Vladimirskaia

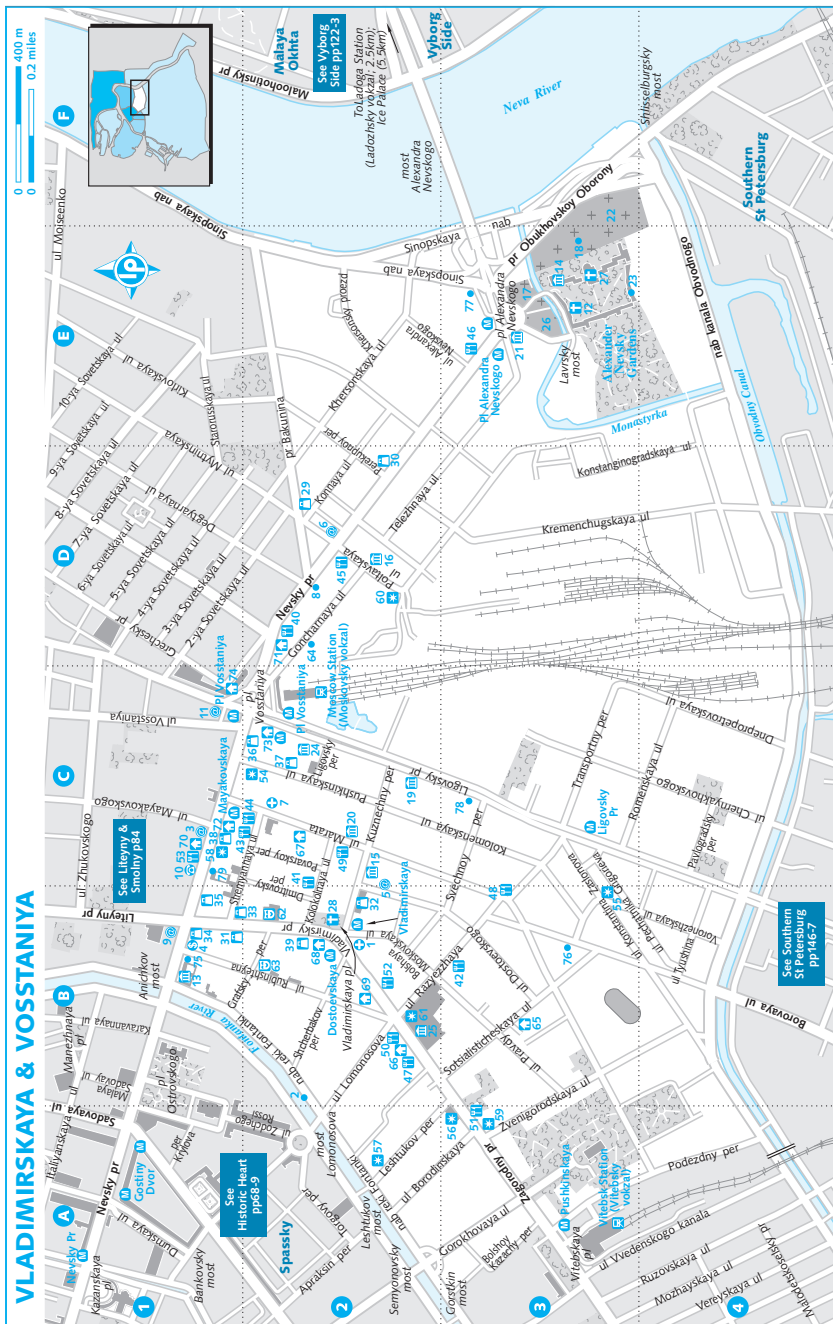
This fantastic, five-domed cathedral, ascribed to Domenico Trezzini, is the namesake of this neighbourhood. Incorporating both baroque and neoclassical elements, the cathedral was built in the 1760s, with Giacomo Quarenghi's neoclassical bell

## GRAVEYARD TO THE GREATS

The Alexander Nevsky Monastery – named for the patron saint of St Petersburg – is the city's most ancient and eminent monastery. So it is appropriate that the attached Tikhvin Cemetery should be the final resting place for so many cultural icons. Like Novodevichy Cemetery in Moscow, this is where visitors pay their respects to the most illustrious individuals in Russian music, literature, art and theatre.

It was in St Petersburg that the 'Group of Five' – Modest Mussorgsky, Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, Alexander Borodin, César Cui and Mily Balakirev – so defined Russian music with their folk-influenced themes. And it is here, in Tikhvin Cemetery, that all five are buried, as are Mikhail Glinka and Pyotr Tchaikovsky.

Here is the grave of Ivan Krylov, beloved Russian fabulist. But Tikhvin's most famous literary resident is Fyodor Dostoevsky, whose epitaph is also the epigraph of his final novel, *The Brothers Karamazov*. 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.'



**VLADIMIRSKAYA & VOSTANIYA**

**VLADIMIRSKAYA & VOSTANIYA**

**INFORMATION**

- 36.6 Pharmacy.....1 B 2
- Anglotourism.....2 B 2
- Café Max.....3 C 1
- Citibank Nevsky.....4 B 1
- FM Club.....5 B 2
- Kofe In.....6 D 2
- Medem International.....7 C 2
- Clinic & Hospital.....7 C 2
- Ost-West Kontaktservice.....8 D 2
- Quo Vadis.....9 B 1
- Sunday Morning Bike Tour.....(see 64)
- Telephone Centre.....10 C 1
- Vosstaniya-1.....11 C 1

**SIGHTS (pp90-5)**

- Alexander Nevsky Monastery.....12 E 3
- Лавра Александра Невского.....12 E 3
- Beloselsky-Belozersky Palace.....13 B 1
- Дворец Белосельских-Белозерских.....13 B 1
- City Sculpture Museum.....14 E 3
- Городской музей скульптуры.....14 E 3
- Dostoevsky Museum.....15 C 2
- Музей Достоевского.....15 C 2
- GUVD Museum Музей ГУВД.....16 D 2
- Lasarus Cemetery.....17 E 3
- Лазаревское кладбище.....17 E 3
- Metropolitan's House.....18 E 3
- Museum of Bread.....19 C 2
- Museum of the Arctic & Antarctic.....20 C 2
- Музей Арктики и Антарктики.....20 C 2
- New Exhibit Hall.....21 E 3
- Новый выставочный зал.....21 E 3
- Nicolas Cemetery.....22 F 3
- Никольское кладбище.....22 F 3
- Orthodox Academy.....23 E 3
- Духовная Академия.....23 E 3
- Pushkinskaya 10.....24 C 2
- Rimsky-Korsakov Flat-Museum.....25 B 2
- Музей-квартира Римского-Корсакова.....25 B 2

- Tikhvin Cemetery.....26 E 3
- Тихвинское кладбище.....26 E 3
- Trinity Cathedral.....27 E 3
- Троицкий собор.....27 E 3
- Vladimirsky Cathedral.....28 B 2
- Владимирский собор.....28 B 2

**SHOPPING (pp149-58)**

- 505.....(see 69)
- Art reflex.....29 D 2
- Imperial Porcelain.....30 D 2
- Imperial Porcelain.....31 B 1
- Kailas.....(see 37)
- KultProsvet.....(see 24)
- Kuznechny Market.....32 B 2
- Кузнечный рынок.....32 B 2
- La Russe.....33 B 1
- Lend.....(see 39)
- Natalie Kvasova.....34 B 1
- Parfionova.....35 B 1
- Pushkinskaya 10.....(see 24)
- Rive Gauche.....36 C 2
- Spinning Wheel.....37 C 2
- Titanik.....38 C 1
- Vladimirsky Passage.....39 B 2
- Владимирский пассаж.....39 B 2

**EATING (pp159-76)**

- Baltic Bread.....(see 39)
- Bistrot Garçon.....40 D 2
- Bliny Domik.....41 C 2
- Bushie.....42 B 3
- Cat Café.....43 C 2
- Chaunaya Lozhka.....44 C 2
- Che.....45 D 2
- Il Patio.....46 E 3
- Imbir.....47 B 2
- Matrosskaya Tishina.....48 B 3
- Orient Express.....49 C 2
- Shinok.....50 B 2
- Troitsky Most.....51 A 3
- U Tyoshi na Blinakh.....52 B 2
- Yolki Palki.....53 C 1

- DRINKING & NIGHTLIFE (pp177-86)**
- Café Rico.....54 C 2
- Che.....(see 45)
- Experimental Sound Gallery (GEZ-21).....(see 24)
- Fish Fabrique.....(see 24)
- Griboedov.....55 B 3
- Jazz Philharmonic Hall.....56 A 3
- Manhattan.....57 A 2
- Ounce.....58 C 1
- Pivnaya 0.5.....59 A 3
- Red Club.....60 D 2
- Nero Istiny.....61 B 2

**ARTS (pp188-94)**

- LenSovet Theatre.....62 B 2
- Театр им Ленсовета.....62 B 2
- Maly Drama Theatre.....63 B 2
- Малый драматический театр.....63 B 2

**SPORTS & ACTIVITIES (pp195-200)**

- Skat Prokat.....64 D 2

**SLEEPING (pp201-12)**

- Brothers Karamazov.....65 B 3
- Fifth Corner.....66 B 2
- Helvetia Hotel & Suites.....67 C 2
- Hotel Dostoevsky.....68 B 2
- Kristoff Hotel.....69 B 2
- Nevsky Central Hotel.....70 C 1
- Nevsky Express Hotel.....71 D 2
- Nevsky Forum.....72 C 1

**TRANSPORT (pp233-40)**

- Aeroflot.....75 B 1
- Astoria Service.....76 B 3
- Avis.....77 E 3
- Cruise Russia.....78 C 3
- Rossiya Airlines.....79 C 1

tower added later in the century. Apparently Fyodor Dostoevsky was a parishioner here (convenient, as he lived around the corner). Sadly, the cathedral was closed in 1932 and the Soviets turned it into an underwear factory; but in 1990 it was reconsecrated and reconstructed, and it has resumed its originally intended function. These days it is one of the busiest cathedrals in town, as evidenced by the hordes of babushkas and beggars outside. Nonetheless, it's worth weaving your way through the outstretched hands to admire the cathedral's interiors (upstairs). The baroque iconostasis was originally installed in the private chapel of the **Anichkov Palace (p76)**, but was transferred here in 1808. For an impressive perspective on the onion

domes, have a drink in the 7th-floor bar of **Hotel Dostoevsky (p209)** across the road.

**DOSTOEVSKY MUSEUM** Map p92

☎ 571 4031; [www.md.spb.ru](http://www.md.spb.ru); Kuznechny per 5/2; adult/student R120/60, audio tour R70; 🕒 11am-6pm Tue-Sun; 📍 Vladimirskaya Fyodor Dostoevsky lived in flats all over the city, mostly in Sennaya (p96), but his final residence is this 'memorial flat'. Dostoevsky lived here from 1878 until he died in 1881. The apartment remains as it was when the Dostoevsky family lived here, including the study where Fyodor wrote *The Brothers Karamazov*, and the office of Anna Grigorievna, his wife, who recopied, edited and sold all of his books. Two rooms of the museum are devoted to his novels: literature fans will



want to pay close attention to the map of Dostoevsky's Petersburg, which details the locations of characters and events in his various works. A rather gloomy likeness of the man himself (as if there's any other kind) is just outside the Vladimirskaya metro station.

## RIMSKY-KORSAKOV FLAT-MUSEUM

Map p92

☎ 713 3208; [www.theatremuseum.ru](http://www.theatremuseum.ru); Zagorodny pr 28; adult/student R75/50, Russian tour R200;

🕒 11am-6pm Wed-Sun; 🚇 Vladimirskaya

Home of Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov for the last 15 years of his life (1893-1908), this is where he composed 11 of his 15 operas, including the *Fairytale of the Tsar Sultan* and the *Golden Rooster*. The memorial flat (a branch of the State Museum of Theatre & Music) includes four rooms that have been lovingly restored to their original appearance, including the composer's study. A Becker grand piano graces the living room. Rachmaninov, Glazunov, Scriabin, Stravinsky – and of course Rimsky-Korsakov himself – have all tickled these ivories.

The composer maintained a tradition of hosting musical soirees at his home; this tradition continues today, with concerts on Thursday afternoons at 4pm (although you are unlikely to see Chaliapin perform here today). Enter from the courtyard.

## GUVD MUSEUM

Map p92

☎ 779 7825; Poltavskaya ul 12; tour for up to

20 people R600; 🕒 11am-5pm Mon-Fri; 🚇 Pl

Vosstaniya

For police enthusiasts, the great but little-known GUVd Museum chronicles the history of criminality and law enforcement by the Ministry of Internal Affairs in Leningrad/St Petersburg. This balanced, fascinating exhibition, featuring photos, costumes and weapons in several large halls, will acquaint you with interesting tidbits about gang bosses and the Mafia's reign of terror in the 1920s through the fight to control illegal abortions and alcohol production. You'll need to get a guided tour for this, so you will want to book in advance.

## BELOSELSKY-BELOZERSKY PALACE

Map p92

☎ 315 5236; Nevsky pr 41; 🕒 by appointment;

🚇 Gostiny Dvor or Mayakovskaya

The salmon pink exterior of the 1840s Beloselsky-Belozersky Palace provides a photo-

genic backdrop to Anichkov most (p76). The palace was formerly a home of Communist Party officials, and now continues to serve in various official capacities. It is normally closed to the public, although tours of the opulent interior can be arranged and occasional concerts are held in the oak-pannelled concert hall. The 1st floor holds the small **Anatoly Sobchak Museum on the Establishment of Democracy** (☎ 571 1706; 🕒 10am-5pm Mon-Fri), which might be interesting for its coverage of recent history.

## MUSEUM OF BREAD

Map p92

Muzey Khleba; ☎ 764 1110; [www.museum.ru/museum/bread](http://www.museum.ru/museum/bread) in Russian; Ligovsky pr 73; adult/student R100/50; 🕒 10am-4pm Mon-Fri; 🚇 Pl

Vosstaniya This funky little museum pays tribute to 'our daily bread' and the role it has played in history (of the city and of the world). A model bakery exhibits the equipment that was used to make bread for the city's poorest classes in the 19th century. A special exhibition on the Siege of Leningrad offers an example of a daily ration of bread during WWII. The museum has been open since 1998, but hours of operation are sporadic, so it may be useful to call in advance.

## MUSEUM OF THE ARCTIC & ANTARCTIC

Map p92

☎ 571 2549; [www.polarmuseum.sp.ru](http://www.polarmuseum.sp.ru); ul Marata 24A; adult/student R100/50; 🕒 10am-6pm Wed-Sun; 🚇 Vladimirskaya

Inside the former Old Believers' Church of St Nicholas, this little museum is devoted to Soviet polar explorations. The self-proclaimed highlight of the museum is the 'polar philatelic collection' – a huge selection of postcards sent by various expeditions and stamps with polar themes. Apart from stuffed polar bears and the like, the most impressive exhibit is a wooden boat plane hanging from the ceiling.

## VLADIMIRSKAYA & VOSSTANIYA

### Walking Tour

**1 Vladimirskaya Pl** Named for the golden-domed **Vladimirsky Cathedral** (p91), this bustling square is the centre of a commercial district. Indeed, if you like to shop, **Vladimirsky Passage** (p156) is a nice place to do it. The bronze bust



## WALK FACTS

Start Vladimirskaya pl (🚇 Vladimirskaya)

Finish Pl Alexandra Nevskogo (🚇 Pl Alexandra Nevskogo)

Distance 2km

Duration 1½ hours

Fuel stops Cat Café (p170), Che (p170), Il Patio (p170)

of Dostoevsky pays tribute to the fact that the great writer lived nearby.

**2 Kuznechny per** Though Dostoevsky's best-known novel was set in the streets around Sennaya pl, he also lived in a home on Kuznechny per, which is now the **Dostoevsky Museum** (p93). Some scenes from *The Idiot* take place in the streets of Vosstaniya, although the descriptions are not quite so vivid as in *Crime and Punishment*. Up the road is the odd little **Museum of the Arctic & Antarctic** (opposite).

**3 Museum of Bread** Say what you want about Russian cuisine, but these people know how to

bake their bread. The unexpected **Museum of Bread** (opposite) pays tribute to the staff of life.

**4 Pushkinskaya 10** This old-fashioned apartment block houses an eclectic assortment of art galleries, music clubs and studio space. Alive with creative energy and artistic electricity, **Pushkinskaya 10** (p91) is a throwback to a time when things were not so predictable.

**5 Pl Vosstaniya** Inside Moscow Station, St Petersburg's busiest railway station, Peter the Great welcomes visitors to his city. Outside, the sign above the **October Hotel** (p209) proclaims 'Hero City Leningrad', a designation bestowed upon this city after WWII.

**6 Alexander Nevsky Monastery** At the far end of Nevsky pr, the important **Alexander Nevsky Monastery** (p90) dates to 1713. Besides the centrepiece church, the grounds contain three cemeteries – the final resting places of some of Russia's most important cultural figures. Nearby is the **New Exhibition Hall** (p91) showcasing contemporary art.

# SENNAYA

Eating p171; Shopping p156; Sleeping p209

More infamous than famous, this neighbourhood is named for the once derelict Haymarket, which was the centre of Dostoevskian St Petersburg. Sennaya was home to the poor workers and peasants who were new arrivals in the city, living in rat-infested basements and sleeping 10-to-a-room in shifts.

In honour of the city's tercentennial celebrations in 2003, the square received a massive overhaul, being modernised and sanitised almost beyond recognition. But the chaos around the square has not subsided, and the alleyways and waterways to the north still evoke the moodiness that Fyodor Dostoevsky portrayed so vividly.

The border between reality and fantasy has been smudged irrevocably here: Petersburgers will point out where Dostoevsky lived as quickly as they will the homes of his protagonist Rodyon Raskolnikov and the old woman moneylender. The omnipresent stray cats – as permanent a fixture in St Petersburg courtyards as dim light and foul odours – are the gatekeepers to a neighbourhood whose gloominess and squalor have been preserved well enough to make it instantly recognisable.

Sadovaya ul is the neighbourhood's main road. It cuts through Sennaya pl, which is served by two connected metro stations (M Sennaya Pl/Sadovaya). It is flanked by the Fontanka River to the south and Griboedov Canal to the north. The Moyka River forms the neighbourhood's northern boundary. Gorokhovaya ul delineates the eastern border with the Historic Heart, and Voznesensky pr marks the western border with Mariinsky. The neighbourhood extends south all the way to Zagorodny pr.

## SENNAYA PL Map p97

(M) Sennaya Pl

St Petersburg's Haymarket was the city's filthy underbelly immortalised by Dostoevsky, who lived in the neighbourhood and set *Crime and Punishment* here. Until a recent face-lift, the square was overloaded with makeshift kiosks and market stalls, which made it a magnet for the homeless, beggars, pickpockets and drunks. Despite a big clean-up effort by city authorities in time for the tercentennial in 2003, Sennaya pl retains a fundamental insalubriousness. Be on your guard walking around here at night.

The peripatetic Dostoevsky, who occupied around 20 residences in his 28-year stay in the city, once spent a couple of days in debtors' prison in what is now called the Senior Officers' Barracks, just across the square from the Sennaya pl metro station.

The old woman moneylender from *Crime and Punishment* lived a few blocks west of here, at nab kanala Griboedova 104. Her flat would have been no 74, on the 3rd floor.

## DOSTOEVSKY HOUSES Map p97

Kaznacheykaya ul 7; (C) closed to the public; (M) Sennaya Pl

Dostoevsky lived in three flats on this tiny street alone. From 1861 to 1863, he lived at No 1. In 1864, he spent one month living in the faded red building at No 9, before

moving to No 7. Here, he lived from 1864 to 1867 and wrote *Crime and Punishment*; indeed, the route taken by the novel's anti-hero Raskolnikov to murder the old woman moneylender passed directly under his window. While this area has changed enormously, it's still possible to catch glimpses of the grim reality of slum life that pervaded this place in the mid-19th century.

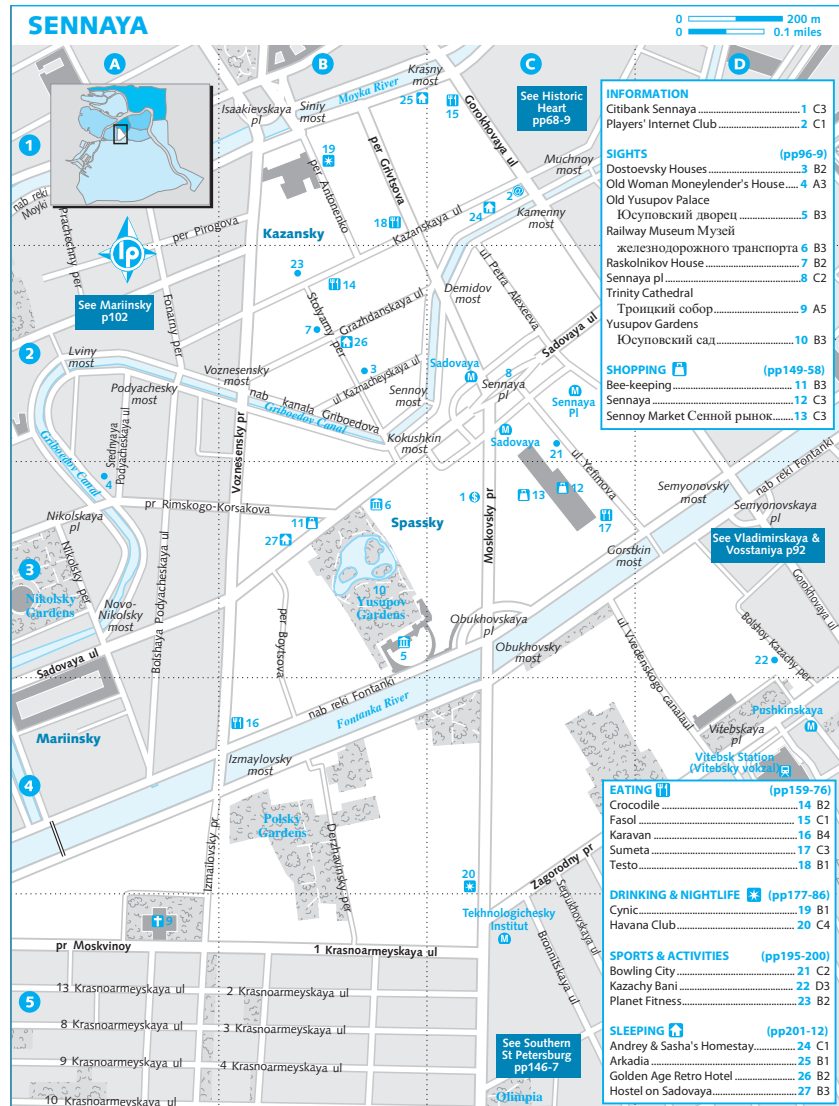
## RASKOLNIKOV HOUSE Map p97

Dom Roskolnikova; Stolyarny per 5; (C) closed to the public; (M) Sennaya Pl

This innocuous house on the corner of Stolyarny per (called 'S... lane' in the book) is one of two possible locations of the attic apartment of Rodyon Raskolnikov, protagonist of Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*. Those who claim this is the place go further, saying that Rodyon retrieved the murder weapon from a street-sweeper's storage bin inside the tunnel leading to the courtyard.

The house is marked by a sculpture of Dostoevsky. The inscription says something to the effect of 'The tragic fate of the people of this area of St Petersburg formed the foundation of Dostoevsky's passionate sermon of goodness for all mankind'.

Other Dostoevsky connoisseurs argue that Raskolnikov's attic apartment would more appropriately be located down the street at No 9, which is otherwise unmarked.



## RAILWAY MUSEUM Map p97

☎ 315 1476; [www.railroad.ru/cmrt](http://www.railroad.ru/cmrt) in Russian; Sadovaya ul 50; adult/student/child R70/30/20; (C) 11am-5.30pm Sun-Thur; (M) Sadovaya

This quirky museum near Sennaya pl houses a collection of scale locomotives and model railway bridges, often made by the same engineers that built the real ones. The oldest such collection in the world, the museum dates to 1809. That's

28 years before Russia had its first working train! It includes models of the *Yenisey Bridge*, the ship that once carried passengers and trains across Lake Baikal. No matter how many overnight trains you have ridden, you are unlikely to recognise the sumptuous 1903 Trans-Siberian wagon, complete with piano salon and bathtub. To see full-size vintage trains, visit the [Museum of Railway Technology](#) (p146).

**YUSUPOV GARDENS** Map p97

**Sadovaya ul;** ☀️ sunrise-sunset; 🚇 Sadovaya  
Due west of the square along Sadovaya ul are the charming Yusupov Gardens, a pleasant park with a big lake in the middle. The flower-filled grounds are a popular place to stroll, sit and sunbathe. The building set back behind the gardens is the **Old Yusupov Palace** (not to be confused with the Yusupov Palace on the Moyka River, where the Yusupov family moved in the 18th century). The Old Yusupov Palace is closed to the public and used mainly for official receptions.

**TRINITY CATHEDRAL** Map p97

**Troitsky Sobor; Izmailovsky pr 7A;** 🕒 9am-7pm  
Mon-Sat, 8am-8pm Sun, services 10am daily & 5pm  
Fri-Sun; 🚇 Tekhnologichesky Institut

The Trinity Cathedral boasts stunning blue cupolas emblazoned with golden stars. Slow but careful restoration of this cathedral has been underway for several years. In 2006, a fire that started in the scaffolding caused the 83m-high central cupola to collapse – it was a major setback to reconstruction efforts. Nonetheless, the renovation continues, and the smaller renovated cupolas act as a shining example of what is to come.

Construction of this vast cathedral began in 1828, according to a design by Vasily Stasov. The cathedral was consecrated in 1835 and functioned as the chapel for the Izmailovsky Guards, who were garrisoned next door. In honour of the Russian victory in the Russo-Turkish War in 1878, the memorial Column of Glory was constructed out of 128 Turkish canons. (The present monument was erected on the north side of the cathedral in 2003: it is an exact replica of the original, which was destroyed by Stalin.)

The cathedral was famed for its immense collection of icons, as well as several silver crosses dating from the 18th and 19th centuries. After the revolution, most of these treasures were looted, the ornate interiors were destroyed and the cathedral was finally closed in 1938.

Trinity Cathedral was returned to the Orthodox Church in 1990, but the interior is decidedly bare, especially compared with its previous appearance. Literature buffs will be interested to know that this is the church where Fyodor Dostoevsky married his second wife, Anna Snitkina, in 1867.

**SENNAYA****Walking Tour**

**1 Sennaya pl** After the massive (and desperately needed) face-lift of **Sennaya pl** (p96), the historically notorious filth and squalor is no longer evident, yet it is still possible to imagine

**WALK FACTS**

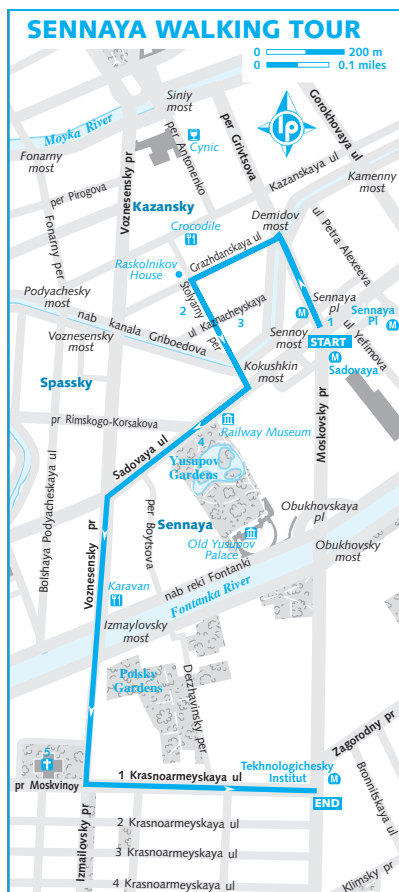
**Start** Sennaya pl ( 🚇 Sennaya Pl/Sadovaya)

**End** Trinity Cathedral ( 🚇 Tekhnologichesky Institut)

**Distance** 1km

**Duration** One hour

**Fuel stops** Crocodile (p171), Karavan (p171), Cynic (p179)



that in Dostoevsky's time it was a teeming madhouse, filled with drunks, beggars, thieves and other sleazy characters.

**2 Stolyarny per** The house at No 5 Stolyarny per (simply called 'S... lane' in *Crime and Punishment*) is known as **Raskolnikov House** (p96), as it is one of two possible locations of Raskolnikov's attic room. Many believe that the more likely location is down the street at No 9.

**3 Kaznacheyskaya ul** Dostoevsky lived in three flats on this tiny street. From 1861 to 1863 he lived at No 1. In 1864 he spent one month at No 9, before moving to No 7, where

he would live for three years and write *Crime and Punishment*.

**4 Yusupov Gardens** Dostoevsky and his characters weren't the only famous residents here. Until the mid 19th-century, the now-infamous Yusupov family lived in the Old Yusupov Palace, which is surrounded by the lovely **Yusupov Gardens** (opposite). Not far away, the **Railway Museum** (p97) will delight model-train lovers.

**5 Trinity Cathedral** Cross the Fontanka River and stroll south to the star-spangled gem of **Trinity Cathedral** (opposite). Renovation is taking longer than expected because of a 2006 fire that caused the main cupola to collapse.



# MARIINSKY

Eating [p172](#); Shopping [p157](#); Sleeping [p210](#)

Named after the celebrated Mariinsky Theatre, this neighbourhood is just off the beaten tourist track (assuming you wander away from the theatre itself). The Historic Heart is just next door, but Mariinsky feels far from those crowded streets. Here, the canals that meander through the centre empty into the Gulf of Finland (Finsky Zaliv) and crumbling mansions and forgotten churches gradually give way to the city's docklands. The district houses some of the city's lesser known but most interesting religious buildings, including the recently renovated Grand Choral Synagogue ([p104](#)).

Change is in the air, however. Just behind the famous theatre is a huge construction project, better known as Mariinsky II (see [p57](#)). Other notable renovation projects are underway, including the long forgotten Palace of Grand Duke Alexey Alexandrovich ([p105](#)) and the soon-to-be cultural centre at New Holland (Novaya Gollandiya; [p105](#)).

Unfortunately one of the planned improvements is not the introduction of a metro line: the whole area has a somewhat languorous feel, as there's not a single metro station in it. The best way to access this neighbourhood is from **M** Sennaya Pl/Sadovaya, which is a 10- to 20-minute walk from most of the sights. Some sights in the northwestern corner may be more easily accessed from the metro station **M** Vasileostrovskaya, across the river.

The Neva embankment west of the Admiralty is dominated by the golden cupola of St Isaac's Cathedral, which towers over pl Dekabristov and the Admiralty Gardens. Isaakievskaya pl and Voznesensky pr delineate the neighbourhood's eastern boundary with the Historic Heart and Sennaya districts, while the Neva River marks the northern and western boundaries. Voznesensky pr stretches south to the Fontanka River, the southern border of the Mariinsky district.

The Mariinsky Theatre and its namesake Teatralnaya pl are the centrepiece of the neighbourhood. From here, the main drag, ul Dekabristov, heads east and west. A whole network of waterways wind their way around here, including the meandering Moyka, Griboedov and Fontanka, as well as the straight, north-south Kryukov Canal.

## ST ISAAC'S CATHEDRAL [Map p102](#)

Isaakievsky Sobor; ☎ 315 9732; [www.cathedral.ru](#); Isaakievskaya pl; adult/student cathedral R300/150, colonnade R150/100; 🕒 11am-6pm Thu-Tue;

**M** Sadovaya

The golden dome of St Isaac's Cathedral, looming just south of pl Dekabristov, dominates the St Petersburg skyline. Named after St Isaac of Dalmatia, on whose feast day Peter the Great was born, it is one of the largest domed buildings in the world. More than 100kg of gold leaf was used to cover the 21.8m-high dome alone.

French designer Auguste Montferrand began designing the cathedral in 1818, despite the fact that he was no architect. Indeed, it was Montferrand's contacts at court who ensured that the design was approved by the tsar. Local architects were outraged at the foreign upstart's commission and were quick to point out (correctly) a number of technical flaws in the plan.

The cathedral took so long to build (until 1858) that Nicholas I was able to insist on a more grandiose structure than Montferrand had planned. The long construction

period gave rise to a rumour among locals that the Romanov dynasty would fall were the cathedral ever completed – something that in the event happened some 60 years later. Special ships and a railway had to be built to carry the granite from Finland for the huge pillars, which each weigh some 120 tonnes. There's a statue of Montferrand holding a model of the cathedral on the west façade, although Nicholas I denied the architect his dying wish, to be buried here, considering it too high an honour for an artisan.

Since 1990, after a 62-year gap, services have been held here on major religious holidays and St Isaac's may return to full Church control before long. Like the Church of the Saviour on Spilled Blood, St Isaac's is officially classed as a museum and as such lacks any religious atmosphere.

The cathedral's interior is obscenely lavish, covering 4000 sq metres with 600 sq metres of mosaics, 16,000kg of malachite, 14 types of marble and an 816-sq-metre ceiling painting by Karl Bryullov. Among the many displays inside there are some interesting photographs of the cathedral

## TO HAVE & TO HOLD

No event gives more cause for celebration than a wedding. Festivities commence when the groom arrives to claim his bride. He is forced to pass a series of tests – physical feats and brain-teasers – before he can see his beloved. Once he proves his devotion, the happy couple proceeds to the department of registry for a simple ceremony, usually attended only by immediate family and close friends. Then the wedding party takes a tour of the city, laying flowers at war memorials to remember the dead, and drinking champagne at other landmarks to celebrate the living.

Newlyweds' most beloved site in St Petersburg is pl Dekabristov. Here, Peter the Great sits astride his horse. And here, brides and grooms, friends and family come to memorialise their wedding day in photographs. More often than not, an amateur band is on hand, playing requests from the wedding parties to earn a few roubles. Everyone is invited to partake of the bubbly, to toast the glad day and the couple's joyful future together.

throughout its history, including one of the park outside being used to grow cabbages during the Nazi blockade.

Finish off your visit by climbing the 262 steps to the *kolonnada* (colonnade) around the drum of the dome. The view to the four corners of the city is sublime. Tickets are sold separately at the kiosk on the north-east side of the cathedral.

## BRONZE HORSEMAN [Map p102](#)

pl Dekabristov; **M** Sadovaya

The most famous statue of Peter the Great was immortalised as the Bronze Horseman in the poem by Pushkin. With his mount rearing above the snake of treason, Peter's enormous statue stands at the river end of pl Dekabristov. The statue was sculpted over 12 years for Catherine the Great by Frenchman Etienne Falconet. Its inscription reads 'To Peter I from Catherine II – 1782'. Many have read significance into Catherine's linking of her own name with that of the city's founder: she had no legitimate claim to the throne and this statue is sometimes seen as her attempt to formalise the link (philosophical, if not hereditary) between the two monarchs. The significance of the inscription in both Latin and Cyrillic alphabets would not have been lost on the city's population, which was still in the process of Westernisation during Catherine's reign.

Falconet's original study for the magnificent sculpture can be seen in the Russian Museum ([p76](#)). Despite completing his lifework here, Falconet departed Russia a bitter, angry man. Years of arguing with the head of the Academy of Fine Arts over the finer details of the sculpture had taken its toll, and he didn't even bother staying for the unveiling.

The statue has become a much-debated philosophical symbol of the city and the

main trademark of the new spirit of St Petersburg.

## PL DEKABRISTOV (DECEMBRISTS' SQ)

[Map p102](#)

**M** Sadovaya

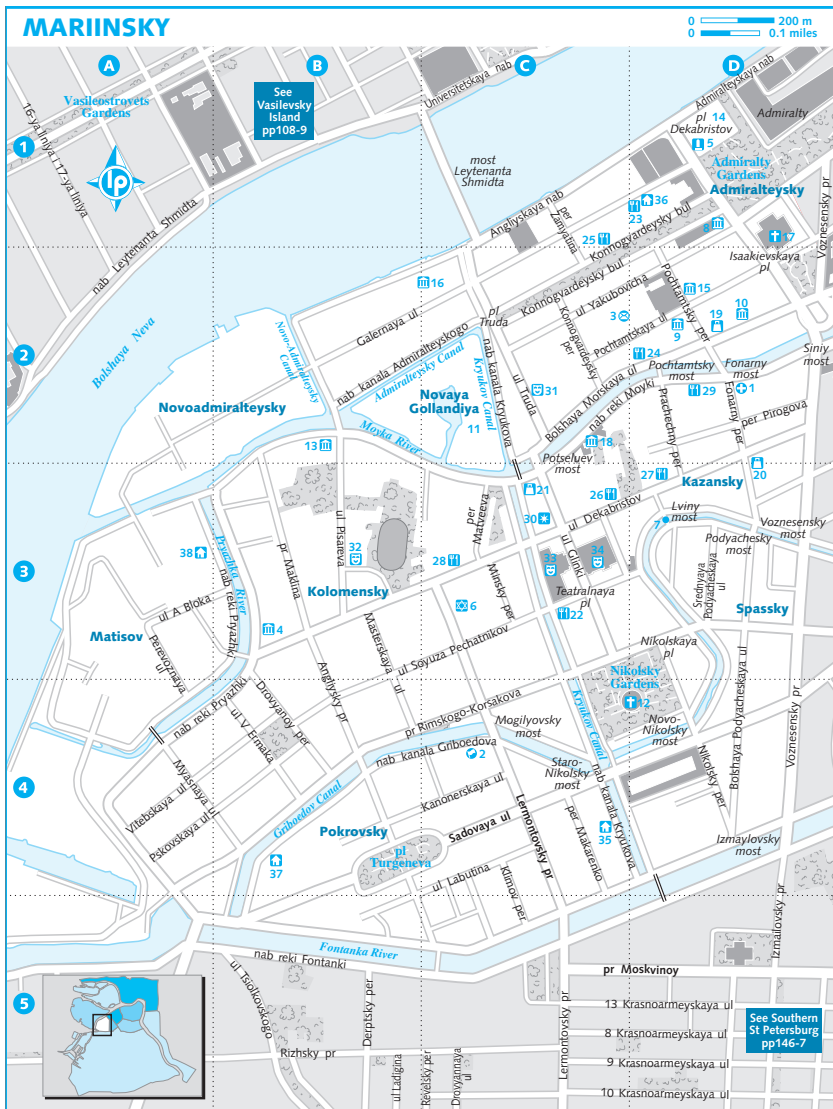
Centred on the famed statue of the Bronze Horseman, pl Dekabristov (Decembrists' Sq) is named after the first attempt at a Russian revolution – the Decembrists' Uprising of 14 December 1825. The Decembrists were young officers who were inspired by radical ideas from France during the Napoleonic campaigns and wanted to introduce constitutional monarchy. Ineptly, they set up their protest on the same day as the swearing-in ceremony of the new tsar, Nicholas I. After repeated attempts by Nicholas' ministers to reason with the rebels, they were fired upon. Many officers and bystanders died as a result. Most of the leaders later ended up on the gallows or in Siberia.

The dominant feature of pl Dekabristov is the immense façade of [St Isaac's Cathedral](#) (opposite). Most of the west side of the square is occupied by the Central State Historical Archives in the former Senate and Synod buildings, built by Carlo Rossi between 1829 and 1834. These institutions were set up by Peter the Great to run the civil administration and the Orthodox Church.

## MARIINSKY THEATRE [Map p102](#)

☎ 326 4141, fax 314 1744; [www.mariinsky.ru](#); Teatralnaya pl; 🕒 box office 11am-7pm, tours by arrangement; **M** Sadovaya

The pretty green and white Mariinsky Theatre has played a pivotal role in Russian ballet ever since it was built in 1859. Outside performance times you can usually wander into the theatre's foyer and maybe peep into its lovely auditorium. To organise a full



tour, fax a request to Dr Yury Schwartzkopf and call for an answer. For more information about attending performances at the Mariinsky, see p188.

Construction of a new Mariinsky Theatre, known as Mariinsky II, is under way directly west of the original building (see p57). The controversial new building is due to open in 2009. Elsewhere around Teatralnaya pl you will find the illustrious music school,

**Rimsky-Korsakov Conservatory (p189)**, which faces the Mariinsky. Surrounding the square is an area of quiet canals and side streets.

**YUSUPOV PALACE** Map p102

☎ 314 9883; [www.yusupov-palace.ru](http://www.yusupov-palace.ru); nab reki Moyki 94; adult/student/child R450/350/250; 🕒 11am-5pm; 📍 Sadovaya  
This spectacular palace on the Moyka River has some of the most perfectly preserved

**MARIINSKY**

**INFORMATION**

- American Medical Clinic..... 1 D2
- Chinese Consulate..... 2 C4
- Main Post Office..... 3 C2

**SIGHTS (pp100-06)**

- Alexander Blok House-Museum  
Музей-квартира Блока..... 4 B3
- Bronze Horseman  
Медный всадник..... 5 D1
- Grand Choral Synagogue  
Большая хоральная  
синагога..... 6 C3
- Lviny most (Bridge of Four Lions) .. 7 D3
- Manege Central Exhibition Hall  
Манеж центральный  
выставочный зал..... 8 D1
- Mariinsky Theatre  
Мариинский театр..... (see 33)
- Museum of the History of  
Religion  
Музей истории религии..... 9 D2
- Nabokov Museum  
Музей Набокова..... 10 D2
- New Holland  
Новая Голландия..... 11 C2
- Nikolsky Cathedral  
Никольский собор..... 12 D4

- Palace of Grand Duke Alexey  
Александрович  
Дворец великого князя  
Алексея Александровича..... 13 B2
- pl Dekabristov..... 14 D1
- Popov Communications Museum  
Музей средств связи..... 15 D2
- Rimsky-Korsakov Conservatory..(see 34)
- Rumyantsev Mansion  
Общник Румянцева..... 16 C2
- St Isaac's Cathedral  
Исаакиевский собор..... 17 D1
- Yusupov Palace  
Юсуповский дворец..... 18 C2

- Noble Nest..... 26 C3
- Stolle (ul Dekabristov 19)..... 27 D3
- Stolle (ul Dekabristov 33)..... 28 C3
- The Idiot..... 29 D2

**DRINKING & NIGHTLIFE** (pp177-86)

- Shamrock..... 30 C3

**ARTS** (pp188-94)

- Feel Yourself Russian..... 31 C2
- Mariinsky Concert Hall  
Мариинский  
концертный зал..... 32 B3
- Mariinsky Theatre  
Мариинский театр..... 33 C3
- Rimsky-Korsakov Conservatory  
Консерватория им  
Римского-Корсакова..... 34 C3
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**SHOPPING** (pp149-58)

- Gallery of Dolls..... 19 D2
- Kosher Shop..... (see 6)
- Mariinsky Art Shop..... (see 33)
- Mir Espresso..... 20 D3
- St Petersburg Artist..... 21 C3

**EATING** (pp159-76)

- Backstage..... 22 C3
- Crocodile..... 23 D1
- Le Paris..... 24 D2
- Lechaim..... (see 6)
- Lya Rus..... 25 C1

**SLEEPING** (p201-12)

- Alexander House..... 35 C4
- Guesthouse on Galernaya..... 36 D1
- House in Kolomna..... 37 B4
- Matisov Domik..... 38 A3

19th-century interiors in the city, in addition to a fascinating history. Admission tickets do sell out, so show up before mid-afternoon to ensure your entry. The admission price to the palace includes an audio tour in English and a number of other languages.

The palace was built by Vallin de la Mothe in the 1760s, but the interiors were redecorated later. It became the residence of the illustrious Yusupov family after they moved from another fine house on Sadovaya ul (which, confusingly, is also sometimes called the Yusupov Palace; see p98). The palace's last Yusupov owner was the eccentric Prince Felix, a high-society darling, enamoured of cross-dressing, who often attended the Mariinsky and society balls as a woman. Most notoriously, the palace is the place where Grigory Rasputin met his gruesome end.

The palace interior is sumptuous and rich, with many halls painted in different styles and decked out with gilded chandeliers, silks, frescoes, tapestries and some fantastic furniture. The tour begins on the 2nd floor, which features an amazing ballroom and banquet hall, where musicians perform short concerts throughout the day. The highlight is the ornate rococo private theatre, which apparently has hosted artists as famed as Fyodor Chaliapin, Mikhail Glinka and Anna Pavlova. The tour

continues on the ground floor, where you can't miss the fabulous Turkish Study and Moorish Drawing Room. Of the latter, Felix Yusupov wrote: 'I loved the tender Oriental luxury of this room. I used to dream here... I sat on the sofa with my mother's jewels on me and imagined myself as an Oriental satrap, surrounded by slaves.'

In 1916 Rasputin was murdered here in the grizzliest possible way by Felix Yusupov and some fellow plotters, who considered the 'mad monk' to have become too powerful (see p30). A special 30-minute **Murder of Rasputin Tour** (tour R200; 🕒 1.45pm) is conducted once a day in Russian only.

**NIKOLSKY CATHEDRAL** Map p102

**Nikolsky Sobor; Nikolskaya pl 1/3; admission free; 🕒 9am-7pm; 📍 Sadovaya**

Just south of the Mariinsky Theatre, surrounded on two sides by canals, this ice-blue cathedral is one of the most picture-perfect in the city. The baroque spires and golden domes make the Nikol'sky Cathedral one of the city's best-loved churches. It was one of the few that continued to work during the Soviet era when organised religion was effectively banned.

Nicknamed the Sailor's Church (Nicholas is the patron saint of sailors), it contains many 18th-century icons and a fine carved

wooden iconostasis. A graceful bell tower overlooks the Griboedov Canal, which is crossed by **Staro-Nikolsky most**: from this bridge, you can see at least seven bridges, more than from any other spot in the city.

## GRAND CHORAL SYNAGOGUE

Map p102

☎ 713 8186; [www.jewishpetersburg.ru](http://www.jewishpetersburg.ru); Lermontovskiy pr 2; admission free; 🕒 8am-8pm Sun-Fri, service 10am Sat; 🚶 Sadovaya

Designed by Vasily Stasov, the striking Grand Choral Synagogue opened in 1893 to provide a central place of worship for St Petersburg's growing Jewish community. Its lavishness (particularly notable in the 47m-high cupola and the decorative wedding chapel) indicates the pivotal role that Jews played in imperial St Petersburg. The synagogue was fully revamped in 2003 with money donated by an American benefactor. Visitors are welcome except on the Sabbath and other holy days. Men and married women should cover their heads upon entering.

Also on site are the **Small Synagogue** (🕒 11am-4pm Mon-Thu, 11am-1pm Fri & Sun), the Jewish restaurant **Lechaim** (p172) and the store **Kosher Shop** (p157). In summer, the synagogue also hosts performances with a Jewish cantor and other musicians performing *chaaznut* and *klezmer* music.

## NABOKOV MUSEUM Map p102

☎ 315 4713; [www.nabokovmuseum.org](http://www.nabokovmuseum.org); Bolshaya Morskaya ul 47; adult/student R100/20, admission free Thu 11am-3pm; 🕒 11am-6pm Tue-Thu, 11am-5pm Fri, noon-5pm Sat & Sun; 🚶 Sadovaya  
This lovely 19th-century town house was the suitably grand childhood home of Vladimir Nabokov, infamous author of *Lolita* and arguably the most versatile and least classifiable of modern Russian writers. Here Nabokov lived with his wealthy family from his birth in 1899 until the revolution in 1917, when they sensibly left the country. The house features heavily in Nabokov's autobiography *Speak, Memory*, in which he refers to it as a 'paradise lost'. Indeed, he never returned, dying abroad in 1977. There's actually relatively little to see in the museum itself, save for some charming interiors (don't miss the gorgeous stained-glass windows in the stairwell, which are not technically part of the museum, but staff will often allow

you to take a peek). Nabokov artefacts on display include family photographs and parts of his extensive butterfly collection. A 30-minute film (in Russian only) features interviews with Vladimir's son and sister, the latter recollecting her time in this house.

## MANEGE CENTRAL EXHIBITION HALL

Map p102

☎ 312 2243; [www.manege.spb.ru](http://www.manege.spb.ru) in Russian; Isaakievskaya pl 1; admission varies R50-100; 🕒 11am-7pm Fri-Wed; 🚶 Sadovaya

Formerly the Horse Guards' Riding School, this large white neoclassical building was constructed between 1804 and 1807 from a design by Giacomo Quarenghi. It now houses rotating art exhibitions, often featuring contemporary and local artists. Particularly interesting is the annual retrospective of painting, sculpture and installation pieces produced by St Petersburg artists, held here each December.

## POPOV COMMUNICATIONS MUSEUM

Map p102

Muzej Svyazey imeni Popova; ☎ 315 4873; [www.rustelecom-museum.ru](http://www.rustelecom-museum.ru) in Russian; Pochtamtsky per 4; admission R50; 🕒 10.30am-6pm Tue-Sat; 🚶 Sadovaya

Housed in the fabulous 18th-century palace of Chancellor Bezborodko, this brand new museum of communications is the perfect addition to Pochtamtskaya ul (Postal St). It is named for Professor AS Popov, inventor of the radio, and it covers all manner of communication, from the Pony Express up through the modern era (on-site computers offer internet access to all museum guests). Exhibits are interactive and interesting, including an antique telephone switchboard that still works; the first civil communications satellite Luch-15, which occupies a prominent place in the atrium; and plenty of multimedia explanations of how things work. Stamp collectors will have a field day admiring the national philatelic collection.

## MUSEUM OF THE HISTORY OF RELIGION Map p102

☎ 312 3586; [www.relig-museum.ru](http://www.relig-museum.ru) in Russian; Pochtamtskaya ul 14; adult/student R120/60; 🕒 11am-6pm Thu-Tue; 🚶 Sadovaya

Back in the day, it was called the Museum of Atheism and it was housed in the Kazan

Cathedral. Now the name has changed, as has the location, but the exhibition remains. It describes the history of various world religions, including the Russian Orthodox Church.

## RUMYANTSEV MANSION Map p102

☎ 571 7544; [www.spbmuseum.ru](http://www.spbmuseum.ru); Angliyskaya nab 44; adult/student R60/30; 🕒 11am-5pm Thu-Tue; 🚶 Vasileostrovskaya

History buffs should not miss this oft-overlooked but superb local museum. It is housed in the majestic 1826 mansion of Count Nikolai Petrovich Rumyantsev, a famous diplomat, politician and statesman, as well as an amateur historian. His personal research library became the basis for the Russian State Library in Moscow. The history of the mansion and its owners is fascinating in itself.

Part of the State Museum of the History of St Petersburg, the bulk of the exhibitions at the mansion address 20th-century history, including displays devoted to the 1921 New Economic Policy (NEP), the industrialisation and development of the 1930s, and the Siege of Leningrad during WWII. Exhibitions are unusual in that they depict everyday life in the city during these historic periods. Ask for the explanatory guide in English at the ticket office downstairs.

## ALEXANDER BLOK HOUSE-MUSEUM

Map p102

☎ 713 8627; [www.spbmuseum.ru](http://www.spbmuseum.ru); ul Dekabristov 57; adult/student R50/25; 🕒 11am-6pm Thu-Mon & 11am-5pm Tue; 🚶 Sadovaya

This museum occupies the flat where poet Alexander Blok spent the last eight years of his life (1912-20). The revolutionary Blok believed that individualism had caused a decline in society's ethics, a situation that would only be rectified by a communist revolution.

The 4th floor has been preserved much as it was when Blok lived here with his wife Lyubov (daughter of Mendeleev). After touring the simple but historic home, descend to the 2nd floor, where Blok's mother lived. When the poet fell ill in 1920, his family moved into this apartment where he finally died a year later. Here, a literary exhibition demonstrates the influence of Blok's work, as well as some original copies of his poems. The room where Blok died

contains his death mask and a drawing of Blok on his deathbed, sketched on the last page of the poet's pad. Chamber concerts are occasionally performed here – they're worthwhile for the subdued charm of the flats and the lovely views out onto the Pryazhka River.

## NEW HOLLAND Map p102

Novaya Gollandiya; cnr nab kanala Kryukova & Bolshaya Morskaya ul; 🚶 Vasileostrovskaya  
Except for one day in 2000 – when an exhibition of avant-garde art was held here – this island has been closed to the public for the nearly three centuries of its existence. The impressive red brick and granite arch, designed by Jean-Baptiste Vallin de la Mothe in the late 18th century, is one of the city's best examples of Russian classicism.

In Peter's time, the complex was used for ship-building (its name refers to the place where he learned the trade). In the 19th century, a large basin was built in the middle of the island. Here, experiments were conducted by scientist Alexey Krylov in an attempt to build a boat that couldn't be capsized. In 1915 the navy built a radio transmitter here – the most powerful in Russia at the time.

The place has since been left to the dogs, but the city has big plans to turn it into a retail and cultural centre (see p57).

## PALACE OF GRAND DUKE ALEXEY ALEXANDROVICH Map p102

Dvorets Velikogo Knyazi Alexeya Alexandrovicha; nab reki Moyki 211; 🕒 closed to the public; 🚶 Vasileostrovskaya

This fabulous derelict mansion at the very far end of the Moyka River belonged to the son of Alexander II. The wrought iron and stone fence is one of its most stunning features, with the Grand Duke's monogram adorning the central gates. The palace was built in 1895 by Maximilian Messmacher, and each façade represents a different architectural style, perhaps reflective of the character of Grand Duke Alexey himself. The interior is equally diverse, although it is not open to the public.

Used as a Pioneers' Palace during the communist era, the building sat empty for years and eventually fell into terrible disrepair. It is now undergoing a badly needed renovation.



## MARIINSKY

### Walking Tour

**1 Pl Dekabristov** With the **Bronze Horseman** (p101) as the centrepiece, **Pl Dekabristov** (Decem-brists' Sq; p101) is surrounded by the Admiralty on the east and Carlo Rossi's Empire-style Senate and Synod buildings on the west.

**2 St Isaac's Cathedral** The gold dome and neoclassical exterior of **St Isaac's Cathedral** (p100) house one of the most elaborate marble-filled interiors in the city. St Isaac's Cathedral is

#### WALK FACTS

**Start** Pl Dekabristov (M Sadovaya)

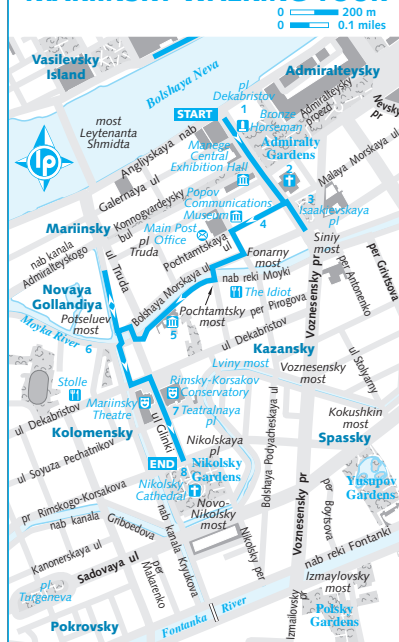
**End** Sennaya pl (M Sadovaya)

**Distance** 2km

**Duration** 1½ hours

**Fuel stops** The Idiot (p172), Stolle (p173)

#### MARIINSKY WALKING TOUR



the most striking building on the St Petersburg skyline.

**3 Isaakievskaya pl** A monument to Nicholas I stands at the centre of **Isaakievskaya pl** (p100), which is often clogged with tour buses. On the south side of the square, the Mariinsky Palace was a gift from Nicholas I to his daughter Maria Nikolaevna. On the west side, the **Manege Central Exhibition Hall** (p104) hosts exhibitions of contemporary art featuring local artists.

**4 Pochtamtskaya ul** Through the ornate 1859 archway, 'Postal St' is fresh from a thorough renovation in 2007. Check out the impressive neoclassical façade of the main post office, with a delightful bridge connecting its two buildings. The new **Popov Communications Museum** (p104) is appropriately located across the street.

**5 Yusupov Palace** On the south side of the Moika River, you can't miss the grand but overbearing edifice of the **Yusupov Palace** (p102), where Rasputin enjoyed his last meal before he was shot and tossed into the freezing river. Today, tourists can gawk at the palace's over-the-top ornate interior.

**6 Moika River** This stretch of the Moika contains a number of beautiful old buildings in states of charming decay and the off-limits island of **New Holland** (Novaya Gollandiya; p105). Further west, check out the Palace of Grand Duchess Kseniya Alexandrova at No 108 and the Victor Shreter masterpiece at No 112.

**7 Teatralnaya pl** The pale-green **Mariinsky Theatre** (p101) dominates its namesake square, with Mariinsky II going up just west. The Rimsky-Korsakov Conservatory stands opposite the theatre. East of the square, the Griboedov Canal runs under another beast-supported suspension bridge, the **Lviny most** (p76), with chains emerging from the mouths of lions.

**8 Nikolsky Gardens** Surrounded by canals on three sides, these blooming gardens contain the lovely **Nikolsky Cathedral** (p103), one of the city's most beloved churches (and one of the few that operated throughout the Soviet period).

## VASILEVSKY ISLAND

Eating p173; Sleeping p211

Peter the Great originally intended that this triangular island would be the heart of his city. As such, it is among the oldest neighbourhoods in St Petersburg, especially the eastern tip known as the Strelka (tongue of land). Peter wanted the Strelka as his city's administrative and intellectual centre, which is why it's crammed with buildings of historical and cultural significance, a 'museum ghetto' as it were. There's no metro station nearby, but it's a pleasant stroll across Dvortsovy most (Palace Bridge) from the square of the same name. Alternatively, (M) Sportivnaya is on the Petrograd Side, a short walk over Tuchkov most. Today, the island is still the intellectual centre of the city, thanks to the presence of St Petersburg State University, along the river embankment. The area behind the campus maintains a distinct academic atmosphere and is bustling with cafés and clubs. This part of the island is easy to access, as it is served by a designated metro station ((M) Vasileostrovskaya).

The streets are numbered lines (*linii*), which ascend as you head west. So the metro station is on 6-ya liniya i 7-ya liniya, the next street is 8-ya liniya i 9-ya liniya, and so on, up to 24-ya liniya i 25-ya liniya. The east-west thoroughfares are Bolshoy, Sredny and Maly prs (Big, Middle and Small Aves), so the whole island is very well organised.

There are very few reasons to go out to the far northern and western edges of the island (though there's a metro station out there, (M) Primorskaya). Unless your cruise ship is docked at the *morskoy vokzal* (sea station), you're unlikely to want to visit this strangely empty end of the island.

#### STRELKA Map pp108–9

Among the oldest parts of Vasilevsky Island, this eastern tip is where Peter the Great wanted his new city's administrative and intellectual centre. In fact, the Strelka became the focus of St Petersburg's maritime trade, symbolised by the colonnaded Customs House (now the Pushkin House, p110). The two **Rostral Columns**, archetypal St Petersburg landmarks, are studded with ships' prows and four seated sculptures representing four of Russia's great rivers: the Neva, the Volga, the Dnieper and the Volkhov. These were oil-fired navigation beacons in the 1800s (their gas torches are still lit on some holidays).

The Strelka has one of the best views in the city, with the Peter & Paul Fortress to the left and the Hermitage, the Admiralty and St Isaac's Cathedral to the right. The Neva is adorned with a fantastic **dancing fountain** (☞ 30-min 'performances' at noon & 8pm-midnight on the hr Wed-Thu & 8am-midnight on the hr Fri-Sun), perched midway between the Strelka and Zayachy Island. In summer, classical music blasts from the loudspeakers, while the shoots of water are choreographed to spray, sputter and spurt in time to the music.

#### KUNSTKAMERA Map pp108–9

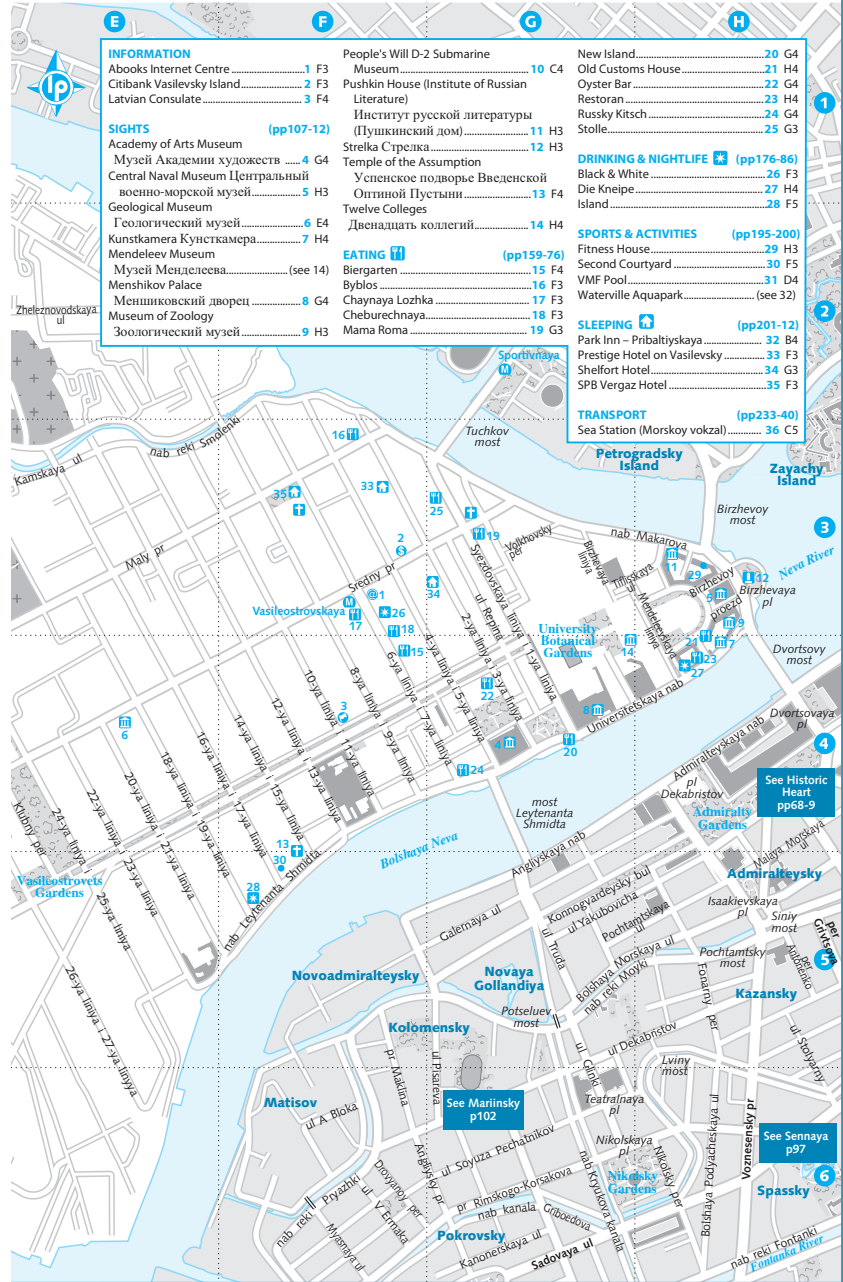
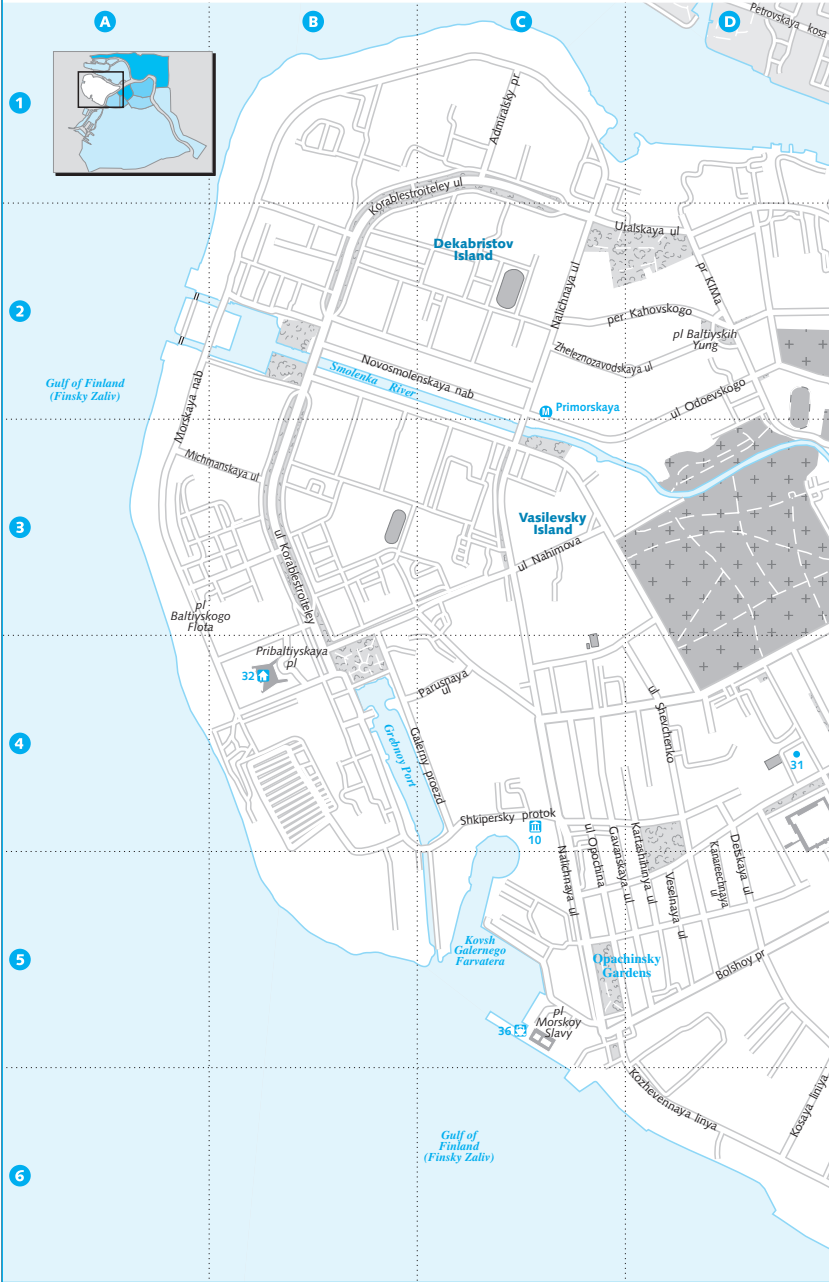
**Museum of Anthropology & Ethnography**; ☎ 328 1412; www.kunstkamera.ru; Universitetskaya nab 3; admission R200; ☹ 11am–6pm Tue–Sun, closed last Tue of the month; (M) Vasileostrovskaya The city's first museum was founded in 1714 by Peter himself. It is famous for its

ghoulish collection of monstrosities, preserved 'freaks', two-headed mutant foeti, deformed animals and odd body parts, all collected by Peter with the aim of educating the notoriously superstitious Russian people. He wanted to demonstrate that the malformations were not the result of the evil eye or sorcery, but rather caused by 'internal damage as well as fear and the beliefs of the mother during pregnancy' – a slightly more enlightened interpretation. This fascinating place is an essential St Petersburg sight, although not one for the faint-hearted. Think twice about bringing young children here and definitely give Kunstkamera a wide berth if you are pregnant yourself.

Most people rush to see the sad specimens, largely ignoring the other interesting exhibitions on native peoples from around the world. Wonderfully kitsch dioramas exhibit rare objects and cultural practices from Asia, Oceania, Africa and the Americas. The 3rd floor houses an exhibition devoted to Mikhail Lomonosov, with a re-creation of his study-laboratory.

The top floors of the tower contain the Academy of Science's first **astronomical observatory** (tour R1200), and the great Gottorp Globe (1654–64), a rotating globe and planetarium all in one. This special exhibition is open only as part of a guided tour, which is not included in your admission price. Entrance to the museum is on Tamozhenny per.

# VASILEVSKY ISLAND



INFORMATION		People's Will D-2 Submarine	
Abooks Internet Centre	1 F3	Museum	10 C4
Citibank Vasilevsky Island	2 F3	Pushkin House (Institute of Russian Literature)	22 G4
Latvian Consulate	3 F4	Институт русской литературы (Пушкинский дом)	23 H4
		Стрелка Стрелка	24 G4
		Temple of the Assumption	25 G3
		Успенское подворье Введенской Оптиной Пустыни	26 F3
		Twelve Colleges	27 H4
		Двенадцать коллегий	28 F5
			29 H3
			30 F3
			31 D4
			32 F3
			33 G3
			34 F3
			35 G3
			36 C5



**MUSEUM OF ZOOLOGY** Map pp108–9  
☎ 218 0112; Universitetskaya nab 1/3; adult/student R150/50, Thu free; ☎ 11am–5pm Sat–Thu; 📄 Vasileostrovskaya

One of the biggest and best of its kind in the world, the Museum of Zoology was founded in 1832 and has some amazing exhibits. Amid the dioramas and the tens of thousands of mounted beasts from around the globe, you'll also find a live insect zoo (a welcome diversion from all the dead animals). The highlight is unquestionably the 44,000-year-old woolly mammoth thawed out of the Siberian ice in 1902. Buy your ticket at the microscopic cashier window just west of the main entrance.

### CENTRAL NAVAL MUSEUM

Map pp108–9  
☎ 328 2701; www.museum.navy.ru; Birzhovaya pl 4; adult/student R320/110; ☎ 10.30am–6pm Wed–Sun; 📄 Vasileostrovskaya

Housed in the Old Stock Exchange, the Central Naval Museum is a grand, expansive museum full of maps, model ships, flags and photos. It covers the history of the Russian navy up to the present day – a must-see for naval enthusiasts. The highlight of the display is *Botik*, Peter's first boat and in his own words the 'grandfather of the Russian Navy'. Other interesting exhibits include a two-seater submarine and some big oars.

### PUSHKIN HOUSE

Map pp108–9  
Pushkinsky Dom; ☎ 328 0502; www.pushkinskiydom.ru; nab Makarova 4; admission R150, tour R120; ☎ 10am–4pm Mon–Fri; 📄 Vasileostrovskaya  
The old customs house, topped with statues and a dome, is now home to the Institute of Russian Literature. Fondly called Pushkin House, the handsome building contains a small literary museum with dusty exhibits on Tolstoy, Gogol, Lermontov and Turgenev, as well as a room dedicated to the writers of the Silver Age. Call in advance for an English-language tour.

### TWELVE COLLEGES

Map pp108–9  
Mendelevskaya liniya 2; 📄 Vasileostrovskaya  
Marked by a statue of scientist-poet Mikhail Lomonosov (1711–65), the 400m-long Twelve Colleges building is one of St Petersburg's oldest buildings. It was originally meant for Peter's government ministries, but it is now part of the university, which stretches out behind it. Within these walls

populist philosopher Nikolai Chernyshevsky studied, Alexander Popov created some of the world's first radio waves and a young Vladimir Putin earned a degree in law. This is also where Dmitry Mendeleev invented the periodic table of elements, and the building now contains the **Mendeleev Museum** (☎ 328 9744; Mendelevskaya liniya 2; adult/student R60/30; ☎ 11am–4pm Mon–Fri). His cosy study has been lovingly preserved and you can see his desk (where he always stood rather than sat) and some early drafts of the periodic table.

### MENSHIKOV PALACE

Map pp108–9  
☎ 323 1112; www.hermitagemuseum.org; Universitetskaya nab 15; adult/student R200/100, audio tour R100; ☎ 10.30am–5pm Tue–Sun; 📄 Vasileostrovskaya

The first stone building in the city, the Menshikov Palace was built to the grandiose tastes of Prince Alexander Menshikov, Peter the Great's closest friend and the first governor of St Petersburg. Menshikov was of humble origins (he is said to have sold pies on the streets of Moscow as a child), but his talent for both organisation and intrigue made him the second-most important person in the Russian Empire by the time of Peter's death in 1725. His palace, built mainly between 1710 and 1714, was the city's smartest residence at the time: compare it to Peter the Great's tiny Summer Palace! The palace was used by Peter for official functions and its interiors are some of the oldest and best-preserved in the city.

It is now a branch of the Hermitage and the interiors have been impressively restored. The 1st floor displays some stunning Dutch tile work, intended to fortify the rooms against humidity to help Menshikov's tuberculosis. Original furniture and the personal effects of Menshikov are on display. Each room has a fact sheet in English you can borrow to explain its history. Vavara's Chamber is particularly evocative of how the aristocracy lived during Peter's time. The main room in the palace is the magnificent Grand Hall, where balls and banquets were held.

### ACADEMY OF ARTS MUSEUM

Map pp108–9  
☎ 213 3578; www.nimrah.com.ru; Universitetskaya nab 17; adult/student R300/150; ☎ 11am–6pm Wed–Sun; 📄 Vasileostrovskaya  
Art-lovers should not bypass the research museum of the Russian Academy of Arts,

which contains works by students and faculty since the founding of this institution in 1857. Two 3500-year-old sphinx monuments guard the entrance of this time-tested institution. This is the original location of the academy, where boys would live from the age of five until they graduated at age 15. It was an experiment to create a new species of human: the artist. For the most part, it worked; many great Russian artists were trained here, including Ilya Repin, Karl Bryullov and Anton Losenko. But the curriculum was designed with the idea that the artist must serve the state, and this conservatism led to a reaction against it. In 1863, some 14 students left to found a new movement which became known as the Wanderers (Peredvizhniki).

Nonetheless, the Academy of Arts has many achievements to show off, including numerous studies, drawings and paintings by academy members. On the 3rd floor, you can examine the models for the original versions of Smolny Cathedral, St Isaac's Cathedral and the Alexander Nevsky Monastery. And if you had any doubt that the Academy of Arts is an august academic institution, take a peek into the fabulous old library.

### GEOLOGICAL MUSEUM

Map pp108–9  
☎ 312 5399, excursions 328 9248; Sredny pr 74; admission free; ☎ 10am–5pm Mon–Fri; 📄 Vasileostrovskaya

Located in the upper floors of the geology faculty of the university, this huge room contains several kilometres of fossils, rocks and gems – a veritable treasure chest of geological finds. The precious and semiprecious stones will certainly have you gawking at Mother Nature's handiwork: sparkling amethyst crystals (one from the Altai mountains that is 1.5m long!); huge chunks of malachite from the Urals; and a gorgeous gypsum 'rose' from Astrakhan. Also on display are prehistoric rocks and fossils, dinosaur fragments, animal skulls and mammoth tusks.

The centrepiece of the museum is a huge map of the Soviet Union made entirely of precious gems. The winner of the Paris World Exposition Grand Prix in 1937, this 26.6-sq-metre, 3.2-tonne mosaic took more than 700 people to create, combining amethysts, diamonds, granite, rubies and other gems from 500 different places in the USSR. This masterpiece was on display in St George's Hall in the Hermitage for 34 years.

There's a similarly constructed hammer and sickle nearby.

### PEOPLE'S WILL D-2 SUBMARINE MUSEUM

Map pp108–9  
☎ 356 5277; Shkipersky protok 10; adult/student R300/150; ☎ 11am–5pm Wed–Sun

Opened as a fun, unique museum, the *People's Will (Narodovolets) D-2 Submarine* was one of the first six (diesel-fuelled) submarines built in the Soviet Union. It was in action between 1931 and 1956, and proudly sank five German ships. Mandatory tours (in Russian) depart on the hour to take you through the sub to see how the crew of 53 lived and worked.

### TEMPLE OF THE ASSUMPTION

Map pp108–9  
Uspenskoe Podvorie Optina Pustin; ☎ 321 7473; cnr nab Leytenanta Shmidta & 14-ya liniya i 15-ya liniya; admission free; ☎ daily; 📄 Vasileostrovskaya

This stunning 1895 neo-Byzantine church was built by architect Vasily Kosyakov on the site of a previous monastery. It was closed during the Soviet period, and from 1957 the building became the city's first – and very popular – year-round skating rink. The 7.7m, 861kg metal cross on the roof was only replaced in 1998. The exterior was under scaffolding at the time of research, but the church continued to hold services. Women should cover their heads before entering.

## VASILEVSKY ISLAND

### Walking Tour

**1 Strelka** The eastern nose of Vasilevsky Island, the *Strelka* (p107) boasts an unparalleled panorama, looking out over the Peter & Paul Fortress, the Hermitage, the Admiralty and St Isaac's Cathedral. A recent addition is the dancing fountain in the middle of the Neva. Overlooking the park, the old stock exchange now houses the **Central Naval Museum** (opposite).

**2 Kunstkamera** The Museum of Anthropology & Ethnography, *Kunstkamera* (p107) was Russia's first museum, set up by Peter to dispel common superstitions about illness and disease. The collection of deformed foeti and animals is impressive, if a little disturbing. Next door is the equally impressive **Museum of Zoology** (opposite).



**3 St Petersburg State University** At Peter's behest, Domenico Trezzini built the magnificent **Twelve Colleges** (p110) in 1722. The emperor based his bureaucracy here: separate entrances for each ministry signified their independence, while the unified façade highlighted collective goals. It is now part of the university, housing the **Mendeleev Museum** (p110) amongst others. Behind these buildings, the grounds contain the beautiful university botanical gardens.

**4 Menshikov Palace** Peter originally gifted the entirety of Vasilevsky Island to his best

friend, Prince Menshikov, who proceeded to build the fabulous **Menshikov Palace** (p110) on the north bank of the Neva. Menshikov's humble origins gave him a taste for opulence, and the interior is the best-preserved Petrine décor in the city.

**5 Academy of Arts Museum** Two Egyptian sphinx monuments mark the entrance to the institutional **Academy of Arts Museum** (p110), which houses 250 years of artistic expressions. On display are works by academy students and faculty over the years, as well as temporary exhibitions. A beautiful old library – lined with dusty volumes and packed with dark wood furniture – is open for visiting researchers.

**6 6-ya liniya i 7-ya liniya** This pedestrian-friendly street is one of the city's most pleasant places to sit at a sidewalk café and watch the world go by. Check out the charming Church of St Andrew, before sampling the goods at one of the sweet sidewalk cafés (see p173).

## WALK FACTS

Start Strelka (M Nevsky Pr)

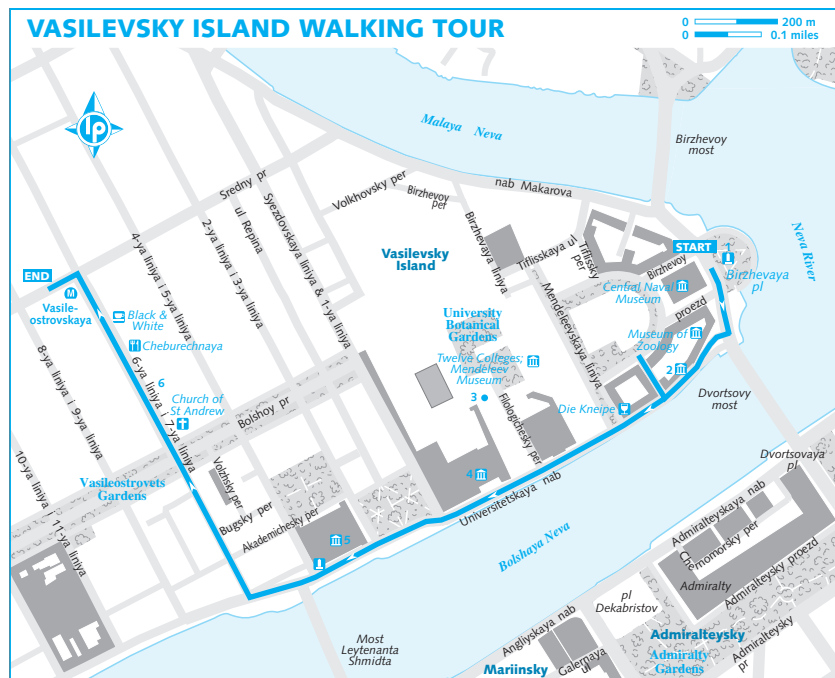
End 6-ya liniya i 7-ya liniya (M Vasileostrovskaya)

Distance 2km

Duration Two hours

Fuel stops Die Kneipe (p180), Cheburechnaya (p174), Black & White (p181)

## VASILEVSKY ISLAND WALKING TOUR



## PETROGRAD SIDE

Eating p174; Shopping p157; Sleeping p211

The Petrograd Side (Petrogradskaya Storona) is a cluster of delta islands, of which five are significant: Zayachy (Hare), Petrogradsky, Krestovskiy, Kamenny (Stone) and Yelagin Islands. The Bolshaya and Malaya Neva and the Bolshaya, Srednaya and Malaya Nevka channels weave around them.

## ZAYACHY ISLAND

On little Zayachy Island, Peter the Great first broke ground for St Petersburg and built the Peter & Paul Fortress in 1703. Having captured the formerly Swedish outpost on the Neva, he thus staked his claim to the northwestern region and then set to turn the outpost into a modern Western city. Although the city grew from here, today there is only room for the ancient fortress and not much more. It is surrounded by a moat and accessible only by boat or bridge from Petrogradsky Island. There is no metro station on Zayachy Island, but M Gorkovskaya is just across the bridge in Alexandrovsky Park.

## PETER & PAUL FORTRESS

Map pp114–15  
Petrovavlovskaya krepost; ☎ 230 0329; www.spbmuseum.ru; grounds free; ☎ grounds 6am–10pm daily, exhibitions 11am–6pm Thu–Tue; M Gorkovskaya

Founded in 1703, the Peter & Paul Fortress is the oldest major building in St Petersburg. It was built as a defence against the Swedes, but they were defeated before the fortress was finished. In fact, it has never been utilised in the city's defence – unless you count incarceration of political 'criminals' as national defence.

Up until 1917, the main use of the structure was as a prison. One of the first and most famous inmates was Peter's own son Alexey, who was tortured and killed for his betrayal of his father. Other famous residents were Fyodor Dostoevsky, Maxim Gorky, Noi Trotsky, Mikhail Bakunin and Alexander Lenin (Vlad's older brother).

Enter the fortress from the eastern side of the island. Just inside the main gate is a useful information office, where you can pick up a map and buy tickets. You can also buy an **overall ticket** (adult/student R250/130), which allows access to all of the exhibitions on the island (except the bell tower) for 10 days. While there are loads of various and changing exhibitions, make a point to pay your respects at the SS Peter & Paul Cathe-

dral, with its landmark needle-thin spire, and at the Trubetskoy Bastion, which was closed for renovation at the time of research.

The **SS Peter & Paul Cathedral** (adult/student R150/70; ☎ 10am–7pm May–Sep) has a magnificent baroque interior, quite different from other Orthodox churches. All of Russia's prerevolutionary rulers from Peter the Great onwards (except Peter II and Ivan VI) are buried here. Peter I's grave is at the front on the right. Nicholas II and his family – minus Alexey and Maria – were the latest most controversial additions in 1998 (see p34).

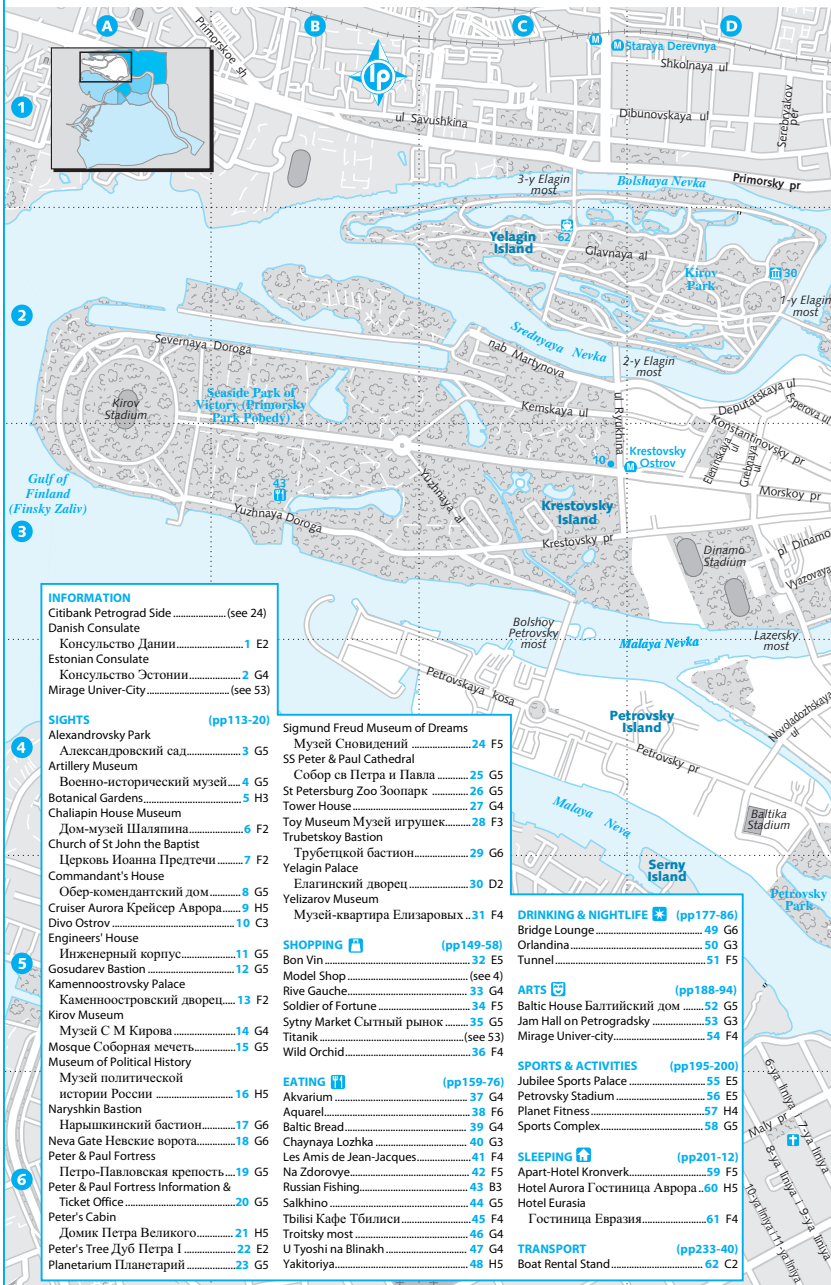
The 122.5m-high **bell tower** (☎ 498 0505; adult/student R100/60; ☎ tours noon, 1.30pm, 3.30pm & 4pm May–Sep) remains the city's tallest structure. It offers a small exhibition about the renovation of the tower, as well as an up-close inspection of the bell-ringing mechanism. The main reason to climb all these steps, of course, is for the magnificent 360-degree panorama. The bell tower is open only with a guided tour, so call in advance or check the information office for the schedule, which is likely to change. Tickets are sold at the boathouse.

Between the cathedral and the Senior Officers' Barracks is Mikhail Shemyakin's **statue of a seated Peter the Great**, with strangely proportioned head and hands. When the statue was unveiled in 1991 it caused outrage among the citizens of St Petersburg, for whom Peter remains a saintly figure. Local lore has it that rubbing his right forefinger will bring good luck.

The **Commandant's House** (adult/student R60/40; ☎ 11am–7pm Thu–Tue) contains an exhibition on the history of the St Petersburg region from medieval times to 1917. The **Engineers' House** (☎ 498 0607; adult/student R60/40; ☎ 11am–7pm Thu–Tue) also has a museum with rotating exhibitions.

In the fort's southwest corner are reconstructions of the grim cells of the **Trubetskoy Bastion**, where Peter supervised the torture to death of his son. The cells were used by later tsars to keep a lid on original thinking in the empire.

# PETROGRAD SIDE



### INFORMATION

- Citibank Petrograd Side (see 24)
- Danish Consulate  
Консульство Дании 1 E2
- Estonian Consulate  
Консульство Эстонии 2 G4
- Mirage Univer-City (see 53)

### SIGHTS (pp113-20)

- Alexandrovy Park 4
- Александровский сад 3 G5
- Artillery Museum 4 G5
- Военно-исторический музей 4 G5
- Botanical Gardens 5 H3
- Shaliapin House Museum 6 F2
- Дом-музей Шаляпина 6 F2
- Church of St John the Baptist 7 F2
- Церковь Иоанна Предтечи 7 F2
- Commandant's House 8 G5
- Обер-командантский дом 8 G5
- Cruiser Aurora Крейсер Аврора 9 H5
- Divo Ostrov 10 C3
- Engineers' House 11 G5
- Инженерный корпус 11 G5
- Gosudarev Bastion 12 G5
- Камменноостровский дворец 13 F2
- Kamennooostrovsky Palace 13 F2
- Камменноостровский дворец 13 F2
- Kirov Museum 14 G4
- Музей С.М. Кирова 14 G4
- Titanik (see 53) 15 G5
- Mosque Соборная мечеть 15 G5
- Museum of Political History 16 H5
- Музей политической истории России 16 H5
- Naryshkin Bastion 17 G6
- Нарышкинский бастион 17 G6
- Neva Gate Невские ворота 18 G6
- Петро-Павловская крепость 19 G5
- Peter & Paul Fortress 19 G5
- Петро-Павловская крепость 19 G5
- Peter & Paul Fortress Information & Ticket Office 20 G5
- Peter's Cabin 21 H5
- Домик Петра Великого 21 H5
- Peter's Tree Дуб Петра I 22 E2
- Планетарий Планетарий 23 G5

### SIGHTS (pp113-20)

- Sigmund Freud Museum of Dreams 24 F5
- Музей Сновидений 24 F5
- SS Peter & Paul Cathedral 25 G5
- Собор св Петра и Павла 25 G5
- Tower House 27 G4
- Тор Музей Музей игрушек 28 F3
- Trubetskoy Bastion 29 G6
- Трубецкой бастион 29 G6
- Yelagin Palace 30 D2
- Елагинский дворец 30 D2
- Yelizarov Museum 31 F4
- Музей-квартира Елизаровых 31 F4

### DRINKING & NIGHTLIFE (pp177-86)

- Bridge Lounge 49 G6
- Orlandina 50 G3
- Tunnel 51 F5

### ARTS (pp188-94)

- Baltic House Балтийский дом 52 G5
- Soldier of Fortune 53 G3
- Jam Hall on Petrogradsky 53 G3
- Mirage Univer-city 54 F4

### SPORTS & ACTIVITIES (pp195-200)

- Jubilee Sports Palace 55 E5
- Petrovsky Stadium 56 E5
- Planet Fitness 57 H4
- Sports Complex 58 G5

### SLEEPING (pp201-12)

- Apartment Kronverk 59 F5
- Hotel Aurora Гостиница Аврора 60 H5
- Hotel Eurasia 61 F4
- Гостиница Евразия 61 F4

### TRANSPORT (pp233-40)

- Boat Rental Stand 62 C2



See Vyborg Side pp122-3

See Historic Heart pp68-9



## WALRUS CLUB

In the cold of winter, the Neva River is frozen solid, except for a pool formed by a 12-sq-metre hole in the ice. Ignoring the bitter wind, an enthusiastic young man strips down to his shorts and plunges into the pool, while a small crowd gathers round. He emerges from the icy waters and stands proudly with his arms above his head in the sign for Victory. Welcome to the Walrus Club, a group of hearty souls who exhort the health benefits of taking a daily dip.

This scene unfolds at the southeastern corner of Zayachy Island, in front of the Peter & Paul Fortress. A friendly blue walrus is painted on the fortress wall. Many of the ice swimmers, known as *morzhi* (walruses), have been paying regular visits to this spot for decades. They claim the practice eliminates muscle pains and boosts energy. More than a few *morzhi* – advancing in age – claim the icy dip improves their libido.

There is good news for all walrus wannabes: this is not an exclusive club. All are invited to take the plunge!

In the southeast corner, the **Gosudarev Bastion** (adult/child R60/40; ☎ 11am-7pm Thu-Tue) contains a passage into the hidden walkway inside the fortress walls. The passage used to be secret, but now it houses the 'Neva Panorama' exhibition.

In the south wall is **Neva Gate**, a later addition (1787), where prisoners were loaded on boats for execution or exile. Notice the plaques showing water levels of famous floods. Outside are fine views of the whole central waterfront. Along the wall to the left, throughout the year on sunny days, you can witness a motley crew of sunbathers (standing is supposed to give you a *proper tan*); in winter this is the territory of the Walrus Club, the crazy crew that chops a hole in the ice so they can take a dip (see [above](#)). At noon every day a cannon is fired from **Naryshkin Bastion**.

## PETROGRADSKY ISLAND

During WWI, the city of St Petersburg changed its name to the less Germanic 'Petrograd'. At this time, the large island north of Zayachy became a fashionable place to live, and the name stuck to the island, if not the city. Today, this fabulous district boasts sparkling architecture, a lively commercial district and plenty of refreshing, uncrowded, green space. Many glorious mansions remain from its early development: stroll up Kamennooostrovsky pr for a Style Moderne treat. Look closely for architectural gems around Avstriyskaya pl, with its castlelike edifices, and around pl Lva Tolstogo, especially the whimsical, turreted Tower House.

The main street of Petrogradsky is Bolshoy pr, a happening avenue with plenty of shops and restaurants. Metro stations **M** Gorkovskaya and **M** Petrogradskaya provide easy access to the east side of Petrogradsky Island (including Kamennooostrovsky pr and the east-

ern end of Bolshoy pr), while **M** Chkalovskaya and **M** Sportivnaya are better for the west side (and the western end of Bolshoy pr).

## ALEXANDROVSKY PARK Map pp114-15

**M** Gorkovskaya

As you make your way from the metro to the fortress on Zayachy Island, you will undoubtedly pass through this bustling park. Don't come here looking for peace and quiet: it is too close to traffic and perpetually thronged with people. If you have kids in tow, however, there are a few entertainment options worth considering.

The **Planetarium** (☎ 233 5312; Alexandrovsky Park 4; adult/child R100/free; ☎ 12.30am-5pm Tue-Sun; **M** Gorkovskaya) has 50-minute shows throughout the day, as well as an observatory and several different halls. The **St Petersburg Zoo** (☎ 232 4828; Alexandrovsky Park 1; adult/child R250/60; ☎ summer 10am-7pm daily, winter 10am-4pm Tue-Sun) is full of miserable animals and happy kids. The lack of funds is pitifully evident, but all things considered it's pretty well kept. It's the world leader in polar bear births (since 1993, over 100 have been born here).

## ARTILLERY MUSEUM Map pp114-15

**Voyenno-istorichesky Muzei Artilerii**; ☎ 232 0296; Alexandrovsky Park 7; adult/student courtyard R50/20, museum R300/150, photos R100; ☎ 11am-6pm Wed-Sun; **M** Gorkovskaya

The Artillery Museum is housed in the fort's original arsenal, across the moat from the Peter & Paul Fortress. It chronicles Russia's military history, with examples of weapons dating all the way back to the Stone Age. The centrepiece is Lenin's armoured car, which he rode in triumph from Finland Station. Even if you are not impressed by guns and bombs, who can resist climbing around on the tanks and trucks that adorn the courtyard?

## CRUISER AURORA Map pp114-15

☎ 230 8440; Petrovskaya nab; admission free;

☎ 10.30am-4pm Tue-Thu, Sat & Sun;

**M** Gorkovskaya

In the Bolshaya Nevka opposite the Hotel St Petersburg is the *Aurora*, a mothballed cruiser from the Russo-Japanese War, built in 1900. From a downstream mooring on the night of 25 October 1917, its crew fired a blank round from the forward gun, demoralising the Winter Palace's defenders and marking the start of the October Revolution. During WWII, the Soviets sank it to protect it from German bombs. Now, restored and painted in pretty colours, it's a living museum that swarms with kids on weekends. It's possible to see the crew's quarters as well as endless communist propaganda and a collection of friendship banners from around the world.

## PETER'S CABIN Map pp114-15

**Domik Petra Velikogo**; ☎ 314 0374; Petrovskaya

nab 6; admission R200; ☎ 10am-5pm Wed-Mon;

**M** Gorkovskaya

In a patch of trees east of the fortress is a little stone building known as Peter's Cabin, St Petersburg's oldest surviving structure. This log cabin was supposedly built in three days in May 1703 for Peter to live in while he supervised the construction of the fortress and city. During Catherine the Great's time, the house was protected by a bricklayer.

The cabin has always been a sentimental site for St Petersburg. During WWII, Soviet soldiers would take an oath of allegiance to the city here, vowing to protect it from the Germans, before disappearing to the front. After the Siege of Leningrad, this was the first museum to reopen to the public.

The little cabin feels more like a shrine than a museum, but confirms Peter's love for the simple life with its unpretentious, homely feel, visibly influenced by the time he spent in Holland. Look out for the bronze bust of Peter by Parmen Zabello in the garden.

## MUSEUM OF POLITICAL HISTORY

Map pp114-15

☎ 233 7052; www.polithistory.ru in Russian; ul Kuybysheva 4; adult/student R150/70, English guide R700 (maximum 5 people); ☎ 10am-5pm Fri-Wed; **M** Gorkovskaya

East of Kamennooostrovsky pr, the 1904 Kshesinskaya Palace contains the Museum

of Political History. Indeed, the building is political history – it was the headquarters of the Bolsheviks and Lenin often gave speeches from the balcony. The elegant Style Moderne palace had previously belonged to Mathilda Kshesinskaya, famous ballet dancer and one-time lover of Nicholas II in his pre-tsar days. It is worth a visit to see the house itself, as well as the best Soviet kitsch in town.

Of special note are the rare satirical caricatures of Lenin that were published in magazines between the 1917 revolutions (the same drawings a few months later would have got the artist imprisoned or worse). By contrast, the Lenin memorial room is unchanged since Soviet days, with an almost religious atmosphere. You can visit Lenin's one-time office where he worked between the February and October Revolutions.

The main exhibition tackles Russian politics from the Brezhnev era to the present day. It's excellently curated, with explanations in English. Elsewhere, both the pre- and post-revolutionary period are covered in scrupulous (almost forensic) detail.

## top picks FOR CHILDREN

Here's how you can keep your kids happy in St Petersburg:

- **Hermitage (p125)** Call in advance for a special kid-focused tour.
- **Russian Museum (p76)** Call ahead for a tour for children.
- **Kunstkamera (p107)** Inspire your kid to start a new collection.
- **Museum of Zoology (p110)** Snuggle up with some stuffed animals.
- **People's Will D-2 Submarine Museum (p111)** Give new meaning to the song 'Under the Sea'.
- **Artillery Museum (opposite)** Drive tanks and shoot guns (or at least pretend).
- **Kirov Museum (p118)** See how children lived in the Soviet era.
- **Alexandrovsky Park (opposite)** Take your pick between the zoo, the planetarium and the wide open spaces.
- **Krestovskiy Island (p120)** Give them some thrills on the roller coasters at Divo Ostrov.
- **Museum of Railway Technology (p146)** Ride the train or drive the train, whichever suits your fancy.



## MOSQUE Map pp114–15

☎ 233 9819; Kronversky pr 7; **M** Gorkovskaya East of Alexandrovsky Park, this beautiful working mosque (1910–14) was modelled on Samarkand's Gur Emir Mausoleum. Its fluted azulejo dome and minarets have emerged from a painstaking renovation and are stunning. It is not really open to the public: *jamat* (congregation) members are highly protective of their mosque, which is a serious place of worship and not a tourist attraction. However, if you are respectfully dressed (women should wear a head covering), you can walk through the gate at the northeast side and politely ask the guard for entry. It might help if you say you are a student of religion or architecture. If you are asked in, remove your shoes, do not talk and do not take photos.

## KIROV MUSEUM Map pp114–15

☎ 346 0217; www.kirovmuseum.spb.ru; Kamennostrovsky pr 26/28; adult/student R70/40, tour R200; ☎ 11am–6pm Thu–Tue; **M** Petrogradskaya Sergei Kirov, Communist Party leader and celebrated Soviet henchman, spent 10 years of his life at this decidedly unproletarian apartment, until his murder in 1934 sparked a wave of deadly repression in the country. The apartment is now a fascinating museum showing how the Bolshevik elite really lived: take a quick journey back to the days of Soviet glory, including choice examples of 1920s technology (the first ever Soviet typewriter is here) and books (20,000 of them).

Many of Kirov's personal items are on display, including gifts from Leningrad workers, such as a portrait made completely out of feathers. His office from the Smolny Institute has been fully reconstructed in one of the halls downstairs.

A gory but reverential display shows the clothes that Kirov wore when he was killed. The tiny hole in the back of his cap was where he was shot (blood stains intact!) and the torn seam on his jacket's left breast was where doctors tried to revive his heart.

## BOTANICAL GARDENS Map pp114–15

☎ 346 3639; ul Professora Popova 2; admission grounds free, greenhouse R50; ☎ 11am–4pm Sat–Thu; **M** Petrogradskaya

On eastern Aptekarsky (Apothecary) Island, this quiet jungle was once a garden of medicinal plants that gave the island its name. The gardens date to 1714, when

they were founded by Peter the Great himself. The botanical gardens contain 26 greenhouses on a 22-hectare site. It is a lovely place to stroll and a fascinating place to visit – and not just for botanists. At the turn of the 20th century, these were the second-biggest botanical gardens in the world, behind London's Kew Gardens. However, 90% of the plants died during WWII, which makes the present collection all the more impressive (you will recognise the 'veterans' by their war medals!).

A highlight is the *tsaritsa noch* (*Selenicereus pteranthus*), a flowering cactus that blossoms only one night a year, usually in mid-June. On this night, the gardens stay open until morning for visitors to gawk at the marvel and sip champagne.

## SIGMUND FREUD MUSEUM OF DREAMS Map pp114–15

☎ 380 7650; www.freud.ru; Bolshoy pr 18A; ☎ noon–5pm Tue & Sun; **M** Sportivnaya

An odd conceptual exhibition – based on abstractions and ideas, not artefacts – this unusual museum is an outgrowth of the Psychoanalytic Institute that houses it. The two-room exhibition aims to stimulate your subconscious as you struggle to read the display symbolising what Freud himself would have dreamt. Illustrations to Freud's patients' dreams and other quotations line the dimly lit, incense-scented hall.

## TOY MUSEUM Map pp114–15

Muzey Igrushki; ☎ 234 4312; nab reki Karpovki 32; ☎ 11am–6pm Tue–Sun; **M** Petrogradskaya

Since 1997, this privately run museum has been collecting toys from all over Russia and presenting them in three sections – folk toys, factory toys and artisanal toys. Examples of the latter include toys made in Sergiev Posad, home of the ubiquitous *matryoshka* (nesting doll), a creation often assumed to be far older than it is, being created for the first time only in the 19th century. The Toy Museum is charming and often has very interesting temporary exhibitions too.

## YELIZAROV MUSEUM Map pp114–15

☎ 235 3778; ul Lenina 52, flat 24; adult/student R200/50; ☎ 10am–6pm Mon–Tue & Thu–Sat; **M** Chkalovskaya

This unique building (known locally as the 'boat house' due to its uncanny similarities externally to a large cruise liner) was built

in 1913 at the height of St Petersburg's lust for Style Moderne. It would otherwise be unremarkable were it not for the fact that Lenin's wife's family lived here and the great revolutionary himself laid low here before the revolution while organising the workers.

The flat's delightful turn-of-the-20th-century fittings have been preserved intact, and by the look of things, Lenin had a very bourgeois time of it. See the bathroom, where Vladimir Ilyich had a daily splash and the telephone that today still bears Lenin's home phone number.

## CHALIAPIN HOUSE MUSEUM

Map pp114–15

☎ 234 1056; www.theatremuseum.ru; ul Graf-tio 2B; admission R40; ☎ noon–6pm Wed–Sun; **M** Petrogradskaya

Opera buffs will want to make the trek out to this house-museum (a branch of the State Museum of Theatre & Music) where the great singer Fyodor Chaliapin lived before fleeing the Soviet Union in 1922. The kindly babushkas (clearly music-lovers themselves) will probably play some of the singer's recordings for you as you peruse his personal effects.

## ZAYACHY & PETROGRADSKY

### Walking Tour

**1 Zayachy Island** The city known as Sankt Pieter Burk was founded on Zayachy Island (p113), within the walls of the city's first defensive installation, the Peter & Paul Fortress (p113). Make sure you check out the SS Peter & Paul Cathedral (p113), the last resting place of Peter the Great and almost every tsar since.

**2 Alexandrovsky Park** The circular Alexandrovsky Park (p116) surrounds Zayachy Island on three sides, so you'll have to pass through it on your way. It contains a small amusement park, a zoo, a planetarium and plenty of other fun for all ages.

**3 Artillery Museum** Hawks flock to the massive Artillery Museum (p116), appropriately placed along the moat opposite the fortress. Its enormous exhibition features weapons through the ages, as well as plenty of tanks and bombers to climb on in the courtyard.

**4 Troitskaya pl** The central square of Peter's early city, Troitskaya pl (Trinity Sq) formerly

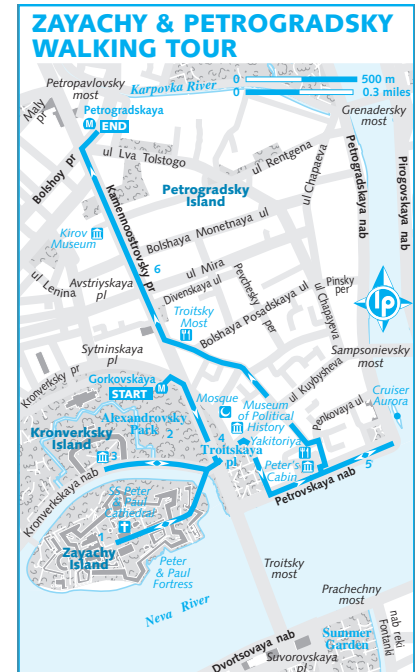
had as its centrepiece the enormous Trinity Cathedral, where Peter attended Mass. The cathedral was destroyed and now the square's most striking building is the Mosque (opposite). The palace of ballerina Mathilda Kshesinskaya now houses the Museum of Political History (p117).

**5 Petrovskaya nab** This embankment is home to two historic landmarks. Peter's Cabin (p117) is considered the oldest structure in the city and the city's soul. Off the island's eastern tip, the Cruiser Aurora (p117) is a legendary battleship surviving since the Russo-Japanese War.

**6 Kamennostrovsky pr** Stroll up this stylish street to get a sense of Petrograd's ever-growing vibrancy. It is packed with shops (see p157), theatres and restaurants (see p174), not to mention the ever-popular Kirov Museum (opposite).

## WALK FACTS

**Start** Peter & Paul Fortress (**M** Gorkovskaya)  
**End** Kamennostrovsky pr (**M** Petrogradskaya)  
**Distance** 3km  
**Time** Two hours  
**Fuel stops** Troitsky Most (p175), Yakitoriya (p175)



## KIROVSKY ISLANDS

This is the collective name for the three outer delta islands of the Petrograd Side – Kamenny, Yelagin and Krestovsky. Once marshy jungles, the islands were granted to 18th- and 19th-century court favourites and developed into elegant playgrounds. Still mostly parkland, they are leafy venues for picnics, river sports and White Nights' cavorting.

Yelagin Island is an especially attractive oasis, as it is closed to cars. Krestovsky and Kamenny Islands are also pleasant places to stroll, as there is plenty of parkland, as well as a sort of New Russian suburbia. The metro station **M** Krestovsky Ostrov provides easy access to both Krestovsky and Yelagin Islands; for Kamenny you can walk across the bridge from **M** Chyornaya Rechka on the Vyborg Side.

## KAMENNY ISLAND Map pp114–15

**M** Chyornaya Rechka

Century-old *dachas* (country cottages; now inhabited by wealthy New Russians) line the lanes that twist their way around Kamenny (Stone) Island. The wooded island is punctuated by a series of canals, lakes and ponds, and is pleasant for strolling any time of year. At the east end of the island the **Church of St John the Baptist** (1776–81) has been charmingly restored. Behind it, Catherine the Great built the big, classical **Kamennostrovsky Palace** for her son; it is now a weedy military sanatorium (off limits to casual callers).

The rest of the island is a woody, mostly residential neighbourhood. For years a dead oak, supposedly planted by Peter the Great, stood in the middle of the Krestovka embankment. The old oak has been removed and replaced with a young, healthy tree; but it is still known as **Peter's Tree**.

## YELAGIN ISLAND Map pp114–15

☎ 430 0911; [www.elaginpark.spb.ru](http://www.elaginpark.spb.ru) in Russian; admission Mon-Fri free, adult/student Sat & Sun R30/10; 🕒 6am-midnight; **M** Krestovsky Ostrov

This island is basically a giant park, a delightful car-free zone that is a fantastic place to wander. It was landscaped by the architect Carlo Rossi, so you can expect the loveliest of settings. The centrepiece is the **Yelagin Palace** (☎ 430 1130; Yelagin ostrov 1; admission R100; 🕒 10am-6pm Wed-Sun), also by Rossi, which Alexander I built for his mother Empress Maria. The very beautiful restored interiors of the main house include old furnishings on loan from the Grand Europe and Astoria Hotels; don't miss the stupendous 1890s carved-walnut ensemble in the study and the incredible inlaid-wood floors. Other nearby estate buildings sometimes host temporary exhibitions too.

The rest of the island is a lovely network of paths, greenery, lakes and channels. At the northern end of the island, you can rent rowing boats (per hour R160) to explore the ponds or in-line skates to explore the paths; in winter it's an ideal setting for sledging, skiing and skating (see p198). At the west end, a plaza looks out to the Gulf of Finland: sunsets are resplendent from here.

## KRESTOVSKY ISLAND Map pp114–15

**M** Krestovsky Ostrov

The biggest of the three northern islands, Krestovsky consists mostly of the vast **Seaside Park of Victory** (Primorsky Park Pobedy), dotted with sports fields. Not far from the metro station, **Divo Ostrov** (☎ 323 9705; [www.divo-ostrov.ru](http://www.divo-ostrov.ru); admission free, rides R40-70; 🕒 11am-8pm daily Jun-Aug, 11am-8pm Sat-Sun Sep-May; **M** Krestovsky Ostrov) is a low-rent Disney-style amusement park with thrill rides kids will adore. You can rent bikes and in-line skates here. At the island's far western end, the 80,000-seat Kirov Stadium is set for demolition and reconstruction.

## VYBORG SIDE

Eating p175; Sleeping p212

Peter the Great had no apparent interest in the far side of the Neva and today, beyond the embankment and Finland Station (Finlyandsky vokzal), among the factories and railway lines, there are few attractions. But there is more than meets the eye, including some excellent, unusual restaurants and a few unexpected and off-beat sights.

Take a tour of Russia's oldest working prison, Kresty Prison. Pay your respect to the blockade victims at the mass graves at Piskaryovskoe Cemetery. Haggle for trash and treasure at the city's largest flea market, Udelnaya Fair (Udelnaya Yarmarka; p158). Say a prayer at the wonderful Samponievsky Cathedral or recite a mantra at the world's most northerly Buddhist temple. Or follow in the footsteps of generations of pilgrims and poetry-lovers who lay flowers at the site where Alexander Pushkin fought the duel that would end his life.

Distances are vast on the Vyborg Side: despite two metro lines and some 14 stations, there are often big distances to cover on foot. Most useful are the stations **M** Staraya Derevnaya and **M** Pl Lenina, both near the Neva.

## HERMITAGE STORAGE FACILITY

Map pp122–3

☎ 334 9226; [www.hermitagemuseum.com](http://www.hermitagemuseum.com); Zausadebnaya ul 37a; admission R200; 🕒 tours 11am, 1pm, 1.30pm & 3.30pm Wed-Sun; **M** Staraya Derevnaya

In case you did not see enough stuff at the museum in town, the storage facility of the Hermitage provides a superb reason for dragging yourself out to northern St Petersburg. Inside the state-of-the-art complex you'll be led through a handful of rooms housing but a fraction of the museum's collection. This is not a formal exhibition as such, but the guides are knowledgeable and the examples chosen for display – paintings, furniture, carriages – are wonderful. The highlight is undoubtedly the gorgeous wool and silk embroidered Turkish ceremonial tent, presented to Catherine the Great by the Sultan Slim III in 1793. Beside it stands an equally impressive modern diplomatic gift: a massive wood carving of the mythical garuda bird, given by Indonesia to the city for its 300th anniversary.

The **Hermitage** (p125) has big plans for this site; by 2010, it is meant to be the largest facility of this kind in the world, with eight buildings open to the public. The storage facility is directly behind the big shopping centre opposite the metro station.

## PISKARYOVSKOE CEMETERY Map p65

Piskaryovskoe Kladbishche; ☎ 247 5716; pr Nepokoryonnikh 72; 🕒 10am-5pm; **M** Lesnaya or Pl Muzhestva

It's hard work getting to this rather remote cemetery, but as the main burial place for the victims of the Nazi blockade in WWII, it

is a poignant memorial to the tragedy (see the boxed text, below).

Originally, this area was just an enormous pit where unnamed and unmarked bodies were dumped. Some half a million people were laid to rest here between 1941 and 1943. In 1960 the remodelled cemetery was opened and has been an integral part of the city's soul ever since. Every year on Victory Day (9 May) the cemetery is packed out with mourners, many of whom survived the blockade or lost close relatives to starvation.

From Lesnaya metro station turn right and walk down the street about 100m and

## HERE LIE THE PEOPLE OF LENINGRAD

No place in present-day St Petersburg better captures the horror of the holocaust of wartime Leningrad than Piskaryovskoe Cemetery. Defiant yet moving music emanates from the speakers; a devastated Mother Russia casts her eyes over the destruction. The inscription on the wall behind the sculpture reads:

Here lie the people of Leningrad  
Here are the citizens – men, women and children  
And besides them the Red Army soldiers  
Who gave their lives  
Defending you, Leningrad,  
Cradle of the Revolution,  
Their noble names we cannot number  
So many lie beneath the eternal granite  
But of those honoured by this stone  
Let no one forget  
Let nothing be forgotten.

*Olga Bergolts, Siege survivor*



## VYBORG SIDE

**SIGHTS** (pp121-4)

- 1 Buddhist Temple ..... 2 A1
- Finland Station
- Финляндский вокзал ..... 3 A1
- Hermitage Storage Facility ..... 3 A1
- Kresty Prison Тюрьма кресты ..... 4 E4
- Sampsonievsky Cathedral
- Сампсониевский собор ..... 5 D2

**EATING** (pp159-76)

- 6 Avia ..... 6 D3
- Old Countryside ..... 7 A1

**SPORTS & ACTIVITIES** (pp195-200)

- 8 Beauty Formula ..... 8 E1
- 9 Circle Baths Крутые бани ..... 9 E1

**SLEEPING** (pp201-12)

- Hotel St Petersburg
- Гостиница Санкт-Петербург ..... 10 D3

take bus 123, K-385 or K-33. These go to the Piskaryovka train station, from where it's a further 10 to 15 minutes to walk to the cemetery itself. It may be easier to take a cab from Lesnaya station (reckon on about R150 each way).

**FINLAND STATION** Map pp122-3  
**Finlyandsky vokzal; pl Lenina 6; M PI Lenina**  
 Finland Station is where Lenin finally arrived in 1917 after 17 years in exile abroad. Here, in the square where his statue now stands, he gave his legendary speech from the top of an armoured car to a crowd who had only heard of but never seen the man. After fleeing a second time he again arrived here from Finland, this time disguised as a railway fireman, and the locomotive he rode

is displayed on the platform. It's not really the same station, as it was rebuilt in the 1970s in the drabest possible Soviet style. However, its historic significance remains. Walk out onto the square that still bears Lenin's name and you'll see a marvellous statue of the man himself at the far end.

**KRESTY PRISON** Map pp122-3  
 ☎ 542 6861, 542 4735; [www.kresty.ru](http://www.kresty.ru); Arsenalnaya nab 7; admission R300; tours noon, 1.30pm, 3pm Sat & Sun year-round, plus 4.30pm Sat & Sun May-Oct; M PI Lenina  
 Kresty is St Petersburg's main holding prison; if you're busted here, Kresty's where they take you to await whatever it is that awaits you. You wouldn't want to find out: conditions are much better now than when

claiming your spot in the queue (your passport must be shown on entry). Tours are in Russian only, although several tour operators organise excursions in English (see p247).

**BUDDHIST TEMPLE** Map pp122-3  
 ☎ 239 0341, 430 0341; Primorsky pr 91; service 10am; M Staraya Derevnya  
 This beautiful *datsan* (temple) was built between 1909 and 1915 at the instigation of Pyotr Badmaev, a Buddhist physician to Tsar Nicholas II. Money was raised from all over Russia, and as far afield as Thailand and England, by various Buddhist organisations; it even gained the support of the Dalai Lama in Lhasa.

The communists shut the temple, arrested many of the monks and used the building as a military radio station. In the 1960s it was taken over by the Zoological Institute and used as laboratories (the Soviets thrived on using religious buildings for purposes that were particularly humiliating). Thankfully, however, the damage was not particularly profound and the *datsan* was returned to the city's small Buddhist community in 1990, since when it has been renovated. Visitors are welcome, though it's best to avoid the services unless you're a Buddhist.

**SAMPSONIEVSKY CATHEDRAL**  
 Map pp122-3  
 ☎ 294 5751; Bolshoy Sampsonievsky pr 41; adult/student R200/100; ☎ 10am-8pm Thu-Tue May-Sep, 11am-6pm Thu-Tue Oct-Apr; M Vyborgskaya  
 This fascinating pea-green baroque cathedral dates from 1740 and is a beautiful highlight of a remarkably dull industrial area of the Vyborg Side – it's well worth the trip out here. It is believed to be the church where Catherine the Great married her one-eyed lover Grigory Potemkin in a secret ceremony in 1774.

Today it's a delightful place, having been repainted and restored to its original glory on the outside. Restoration on the inside continues and it looks marvellous. The cathedral's most interesting feature is the calendar of saints, two enormous panels on either side of the nave, each representing six months of the year and every day decorated with a mini-icon of its saint(s). The enormous silver chandelier above the altar is also something to behold, as is the stunning baroque, green and golden iconostasis.

the prison was at its most crowded, but it is still hardly a pleasant place.  
 Kresty is the oldest working prison in Russia, built in 1892. Tours visit the holding areas, the grounds and a small museum. This definitely constitutes a unique day out in the city. You will have a chance to see the six-bunk cells and the frightening solitary-confinement closets. Inmates are on site – working, walking or peeping out at you through slats in their cells. Guests are advised not to interact with them. The little museum has exhibitions on past residents (like Noi Trotsky and the entire Provisional Government from 1917), as well as art made by prisoners with lots of time on their hands.  
 Each tour can accommodate up to 25 people, so it's worth arriving early and



## UNDERGROUND ART

If you've had your fill of museums and palaces in St Petersburg, an ideal way to spend a rainy day is to take a tour of underground art. Metro line 1 (that's the red line on the official metro map) between **M** Pl Vosstaniya and **M** Avtovo is striking for its station designs:

**Avtovo** (Map p65) The red and gold mosaic at the end of the platform is only the beginning of the grandeur. Marble and cut-glass clad columns hold up the roof, while a relief of soldiers stands in the temple-like entrance.

**Baltiyskaya** (Map pp146–7) Look for a naval theme here, with a wavy motif on the mouldings along the platform ceiling and a vivid marble mosaic at the end of the platform depicting the volley from the *Aurora* in 1917.

**Kirovsky Zavod** (Map p65) This station is named after the nearby engineering plant; the decoration along the platform also takes its inspiration from the oil wells and industry. A scowling bust of Lenin is at the end of the platform.

**Narvskaya** (Map pp146–7) Perhaps the city's coolest station, Narvskaya features a fantastic sculptured relief of Lenin and rejoicing proletariat over the escalators, as well as lovely carvings of miners, engineers, sailors, artists and teachers on the platform columns.

**Pl Vosstaniya** (Map p92) Lenin and Stalin are depicted together in the roundels at either end of the platform. Look out for Lenin on a tank and Lenin with the Kronstadt sailors.

**Pushkinskaya** (Map pp146–7) A statue of the poet stands at the end of the platform and a moulding of his head is above the escalators. Nip out of the station to view the nearby Style Moderne Vitebsk Station.

**Tekhnologicheskyy Institut** (Map pp146–7) On the platform heading south are reliefs of famous Russian scientists, while the northbound platform announces the dates of Russia's major scientific achievements along the columns.

## SITE OF PUSHKIN'S DUEL Map p65

Mesto duela AS Pushkina; Kolomyazhsky pr;  
**M** Chyornaya Rechka

This is a point of literary pilgrimage for those who mourn the loss of Russia's poetic genius, Alexander Pushkin, who was senselessly killed in a duel with the Frenchman Georges d'Anthès on 8 February 1837. The story has developed a certain mythology around it in the past two centuries:

see p73 for details. A marble monument now stands on the place where Pushkin was shot and there are always fresh flowers here.

From the metro station at Chyornaya Rechka, walk down Torzhkovskaya ul and turn left at the first light on Novosibirskaya ul. Walk straight to the end of the road, cross the train tracks and enter the park. The monument is across the park to the left.

## SOUTHERN ST PETERSBURG

### Sleeping p212

Stalin chose Southern St Petersburg to be the centre of his new Leningrad: he hated the tsarist associations of the Historic Heart, and starting in the 1930s, new planning and construction began in earnest.

The process was interrupted by WWII and the reconstruction that was necessary afterwards, and the plans were finally shelved after Stalin's death in 1953. As such, the proposed 'southern' city centre was never completed. But evidence of this grand scheme remains, most notably in buildings like the bombastic House of Soviets, which occupies a prominent position on the main drag.

While the area of southern St Petersburg is vast, it is not too hard to access the most important sights, all of which lie along the north-south avenue, Moskovsky pr, which is the start of the main road to Moscow. This is also the road to Pulkovo Airport.

As one of the primary entryways into the city, Moskovsky pr was designed to be visually striking. The Monument to the Heroic Defenders of Leningrad at pl Pobedy (Victory Sq) is one of the first sights that welcomes visitors to the city. Just north of here, the aforementioned House of Soviets is fronted by hundreds of fountains and a stoic statue of Lenin. Further north, the Moscow Triumphal Arches span the road at Moskovskie Vorota.

The south of St Petersburg is far from the centre of the city, but it is well served by three metro lines and some 18 stations, making it extremely easy to get there. Most useful for the sights listed here are **M** Moskovskaya and **M** Park Pobedy.

## MONUMENT TO THE HEROIC DEFENDERS OF LENINGRAD

Map p65

☎ 293 6036; www.spbmuseum.ru; pl Pobedy;  
admission free; ☎ 10am-5pm Thu-Tue;  
**M** Moskovskaya

Pl Pobedy (Victory Sq) is one of the first sights of the city that visitors see on the road from the airport to the city centre, making a deeply Soviet impression for a town as imperial as St Petersburg! The square now houses the vast Monument to the Heroic Defenders of Leningrad, which is the city's most moving monument. The front line was only 9km from this spot.

Centred around a 48m-high obelisk, the monument (unveiled in 1975) is a sculptural ensemble of bronze statues symbolising the plight and eventual victory in WWII. On a lower level, a bronze ring 40m in diameter symbolises the city's encirclement; a very moving sculpture stands in the centre. Haunting symphonic music creates a sombre atmosphere to guide you downstairs to the underground exhibition in a huge, mausoleum-like interior. Here, the glow of 900 bronze lamps creates an eeriness matched by the sound of a metronome (the only sound heard by Leningraders on their radios throughout the war save for emergency announcements), showing that the city's heart was still beating. Large bronze sheets form the Chronicle; changed daily,

these are engraved with the events in Leningrad on each day of the blockade. Twelve thematically assembled showcases feature items from the war and siege. An electrified relief map in the centre of the room shows the shifting front lines of the war. Ask to see the two seven-minute documentary films.

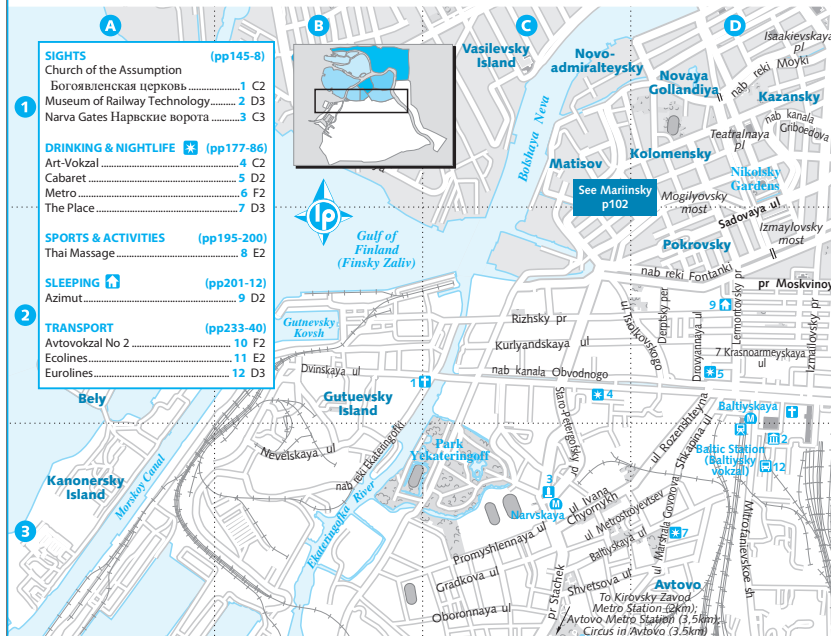
## HOUSE OF SOVIETS Map p65

Moskovsky pr 212; ☎ closed to the public;  
**M** Moskovskaya

No building in the city can compare in terms of sheer staggering bombast to this Stalinist beauty (or beast, depending on your take). Planned to be the central administrative building of Stalin's Leningrad, it was built with the leader's neoclassical tastes in mind. Begun by Noi Trotsky in 1936, it was not finished until after the war, by which time Trotsky had been purged. Nonetheless, this magnificently sinister building is a great example of Stalinist design, with its columns and bas-reliefs and an enormous frieze running across the top.

The House of Soviets dominates the vast square (Moskovskaya pl) before it, which features a 1970 bronze statue of Lenin and a seemingly endless array of fountains. The House of Soviets was never used as the Leningrad government building, as the plan was shelved after Stalin's death in 1953. Today it houses the Moskovsky Region's local administration.

## SOUTHERN ST PETERSBURG

**CHESME CHURCH** Map p65

☎ 373 6114; ul Lensovetta 12; admission free; 🕒 10am-7pm; 🚏 Moskovskaya

One of the city's most wonderful buildings, this red-and-white Gothic beauty looks not unlike a candy cane, with long, vertical white stripes giving the impression that it's rising straight up from the earth like a mirage and shooting upwards.

Designed by Yury Felten, it was built between 1777 and 1780 in honour of the Battle of Chesme (1770).

The church's remote location is due to the fact that Catherine was on this spot when news arrived of her great victory over the Turks. Ever capricious, Catherine ordered that a shrine be built on the spot to preserve this great moment in Russian history. It now seems particularly incongruous with its surroundings, as Stalin's ill-fated city centre has since grown up around it.

While the Chesme Church is definitely more visually impressive from the outside, do go inside to see some of the icons, including a beautiful painting of Christ's arrival in Nazareth.

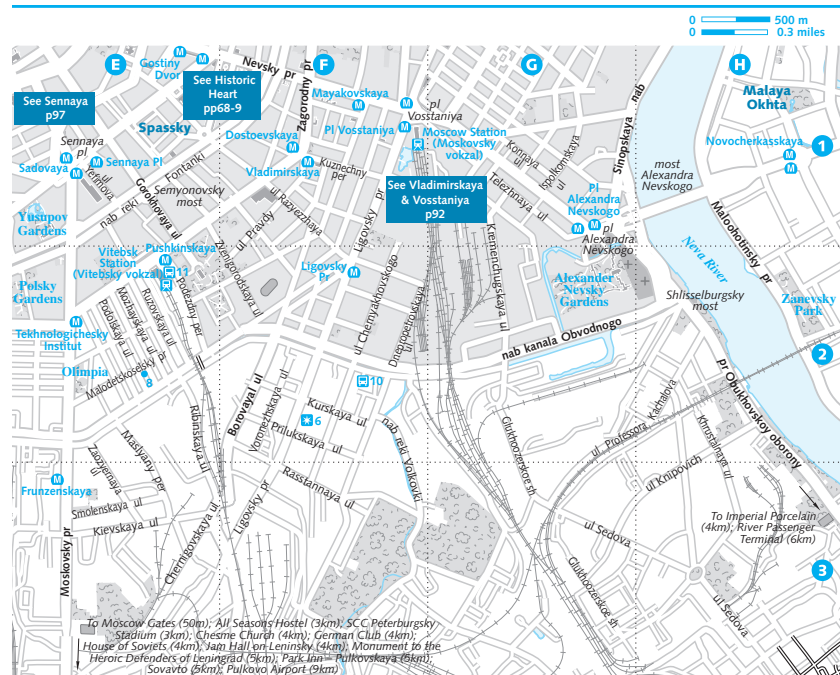
**MOSCOW GATES** Map p65

📍 Moskovskie Vorota; 🚏 Moskovskie Vorota About 4km south of Sennaya pl, the iron Triumphal Arch looks much like Berlin's Brandenburg Gate, though it is somewhat less than grand in its surroundings. The arch was built by Vasily Stasov in 1838 to mark victories over Turks, Persians and Poles. Demolished in 1936, it was rebuilt between 1959 and 1961. Local legend has it that the gate is built on the spot where the earliest travellers entering the city had to show that they had brought bricks or stones to be used in the construction of buildings.

**MUSEUM OF RAILWAY TECHNOLOGY** Map pp146-7

☎ 768 2063; nab kanala Obvodnogo 118; adult/child R150/80; 🕒 11am-5.30pm Tue-Sun; 🚏 Baltiyskaya

A huge treat for trainspotters lurks in a forgotten lot behind the former Warsaw Station (now a fancy shopping mall). This museum has a wonderful collection of Russian locomotives from the 19th and 20th centuries, including a dining carriage



you can go into and some ancient steam engines. This is a fantastic option for kids.

**NARVA GATES** Map pp146-7

Narvskaya pl; 🚏 Narvskaya Just outside the Narvskaya metro station, the Narva Gates were built between 1827 and 1834 by Vasily Stasov as a tribute to the defeat of Napoleon in 1812. Standing proudly at one of the city's old gates, this 12-columned monolith is crowned with an angel of victory and decorated with an assembly of valiant warriors.

**CHURCH OF THE ASSUMPTION**

Map pp146-7  
Dvinskaya ul 7; admission free; 🕒 9am-6pm; 🚏 Narvskaya

When Tsarevich Nikolai (later Nicholas II, the last Romanov tsar) was attacked by a Japanese fanatic while on a tour of Asia in 1891, he sustained a serious blow to the head but miraculously survived. The customs officers of St Petersburg's docklands gathered money and constructed a bell tower in thanks for the survival of the heir to the throne.

The church was sanctified in 1899, and the imperial family would annually come here to attend a service of thanksgiving for Nicholas' deliverance. The church was shut from 1935 to 1991. Restoration is ongoing since then, with fantastic results. The impressive portico and shimmering golden domes are particularly (and incongruously) beautiful in this, one of St Petersburg's most industrial suburbs.

**KANONERSKY ISLAND** Map pp146-7

An original option for a day's outing is to head to the remote, grassy tip of this island in the city's southwest to watch the big boats head out into the Gulf of Finland. The island once served as part of the city's defence and a shooting training ground; since 1883 a ship-repairing factory has been located here. Taking taxi bus 115 outside Sadovaya ul 39 (at Sennaya pl), you get to go under the only tunnel linking two islands in the city. After the last stop, walk for 40 minutes to the very tip of the island. You'll need good shoes, as there's a bit of climbing over rocks involved, but the views are worth it.

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