Submitted by

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Russia

Russia is a country with rich and beautiful history that goes back many centuries. The first organized state located on the modern territory of Russia dates down to ninth century. Even before that time the territory was occupied by a number of tribes that have been involved in active trade with European establishments, Greece and Rome. Since then the country has evolved, survived wars and revolutions, and went through a number of different cultural periods leaving a vast trace of historical monuments.

Saint Petersburg

My favorite place of vacation in Russia is Saint Petersburg. This city is rightfully considered one of the major historical centers of Russia. It has been built in the beginning of 18\textsuperscript{th} century by Russian Tsar Peter the Great in order to become a northern capitol of Russia. The location of the city was chosen strategically close to European states to improve trade and increase Russia's military influence in Europe. Since then the city has grown; as a capitol it went through a number of cultural and architectural styles that have been popular throughout the Europe those times. That is one of the things that fascinate me in that city, the synergy of styles: traditional Slavic, European and some influence from Greek and Asian architecture. You can see nearly everything, from gothic buildings or Greek-style churches to mosques and minarets.
I like to take a walk on the main street called Nevskiy Prospect, it is usually filled with pedestrians and tourists. This street is closed to traffic, so people can freely navigate around the main parts of the city. So, I usually walk in the crowd and stop by various palaces and other historical monuments. To tell the truth, almost behind every house lays the story of famous people that lived there and major historic events that happened long time ago. In addition to that, I have to mention that historical center of the city is basically built on water, there are many channels, and beautiful bridges among them, which gives Saint Peterburg almost a Venetian charm.
The city definitely has its own spirit, sometimes it is cold like the northern wind and sometimes - cheerful and welcoming, depending on the time of the year you visit it. The special time comes in the beginning - middle of the summer: so-called white nights. Saint Petersburg is located so far up north, that for a period of two to three weeks in the summer the sun never really goes down, it just stays on the horizon and circles the sky. Those times it’s never dark: at night you can walk around the city just like in day time. At night there are a lot of people on the streets: tourists from all over the world come to experience this phenomenon. One of my favorite things to do during white nights is to watch the bridges being drawn opening the river for the ships.
Considering that Saint Petersburg is nearly built on water, you can observe that sight from almost any point in the city center. So, my advice would be to visit Saint Petersburg in the end of June or even beginning of July, the weather is usually nice and warm, and in addition, you can witness the famous white nights and walk around the city at night just like in a broad daylight.

White nights in Saint Petersburg.