

RUSSIA AND THE TZAR'S WATERWAYS

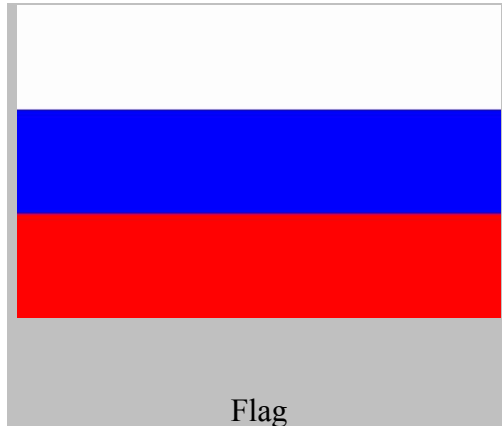
The 11th of May 2012 we traveled with [Apollo](#) to [Russia](#). They have a cruise from [Moscow](#) to [St. Petersburg](#) on rivers, canals and lakes. It lasted to the 21st of May.

We went first to Dalen Parkering for parking of the car. From there we were taken by mini-bus to Gardermoen. We went by SAS from Gardermoen directly to Moscow. Departure from Gardermoen was 09.50 o'clock and we arrived at Moscow at 14.20 o'clock. There is 2 hour time difference between Norway and Moscow, so the time in the air was not more than 2.5 hours. The airport where we landed was [Sheremetyevo International Airport](#) and is the second biggest near Moscow.

A bit of Russia's history:



Russia's position in Europe/Asia



Flag



Coat of arms

The steppes in Russia was early populated by peoples such as the [Scythians](#). Later Greek colonists settled down around the [Black Sea](#). During the migration period was also later Russia invaded by nomadic [Avars](#) and [Huns](#). Somewhat later the [Khazars](#) formed a kingdom in the north Caucasus.

From 500's came [Slavs](#) from Central Europe, and in the course of the next few hundred years, they gradually became the dominant ethnic group in western Russia. From the middle of the eight century Scandinavian [Vikings](#) dominated waterways in western Russia and Ukraine. Contemporary chronicles tell that [Rurik](#) should have reigned in [Novgorod](#) around 860, and his descendants expanded south to [Kiev](#) and moved the center of power there. Over the next few hundred years the [Kievan Rus](#) became dominant in Eastern Europe.

In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the Slavs was invaded by Turkish people groups such as the [Kipchaks](#) and the [Pechenegs](#). Later, the Turkish empires was invaded by [Mongols](#). The Mongols formed the state of the [Golden Horde](#), which controlled most of Russia for three hundred years.

The [Grand Duchy of Moscow](#) was the most powerful of of the successors of the Kievan Rus. In the 1600s, Russia expanded eastward and formed colonies in Siberia and near the Pacific Ocean. Russia emerged in the 1800s as one of the leading powers in Europe and the world. The victory over Napoleon and the subsequent Russian occupation of Paris was a highlight of Russian power.

Russia's weakness became more and more apparent during the 1900s. The defeats in the [Russo-Japanese War](#) in 1904 triggered a [revolution attempt](#) that was struck down in [St. Petersburg](#) in January 1905.

In February 1917 the military forces, workers and peasants [revolted](#), and [Tzar Nicholas II](#) was forced to abdicate. After the Communist victory in the [Russian Civil War](#) from 1918 to 1922, the [Soviet Union](#) was established.

During 1991, the Soviet Union disintegrated and all the Soviet republics became independent states. These states are Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan.



We stayed on a ship named [MS Surikov](#). It is run by a company called [Mosturflot](#). The cruise brochure is found [here](#).

The ship is built in 1974 and renovated in 2007/08. The width is 14,5 m and the length is 110 m. It is designed for 150 passengers.



This is the itinerary. We had a stop in Moscow, Uglich, Jaroslavl, Goritzkiy, Kizhi, Mandrogo and St. Petersburg.

On the boat we had breakfast with a big buffet, lunch when we first had salad and then we could choose between 3 appetizers, 3 main courses and 3 desserts and the same procedure at dinner. In Moscow and St. Petersburg there were fixed menus.

In Moscow there was a city round trip with bus, which was included in the price and an extra trip to an additional cost.

In St. Petersburg There was one tour included + 2 optional tours both days.

In the evenings there was some entertainment program.

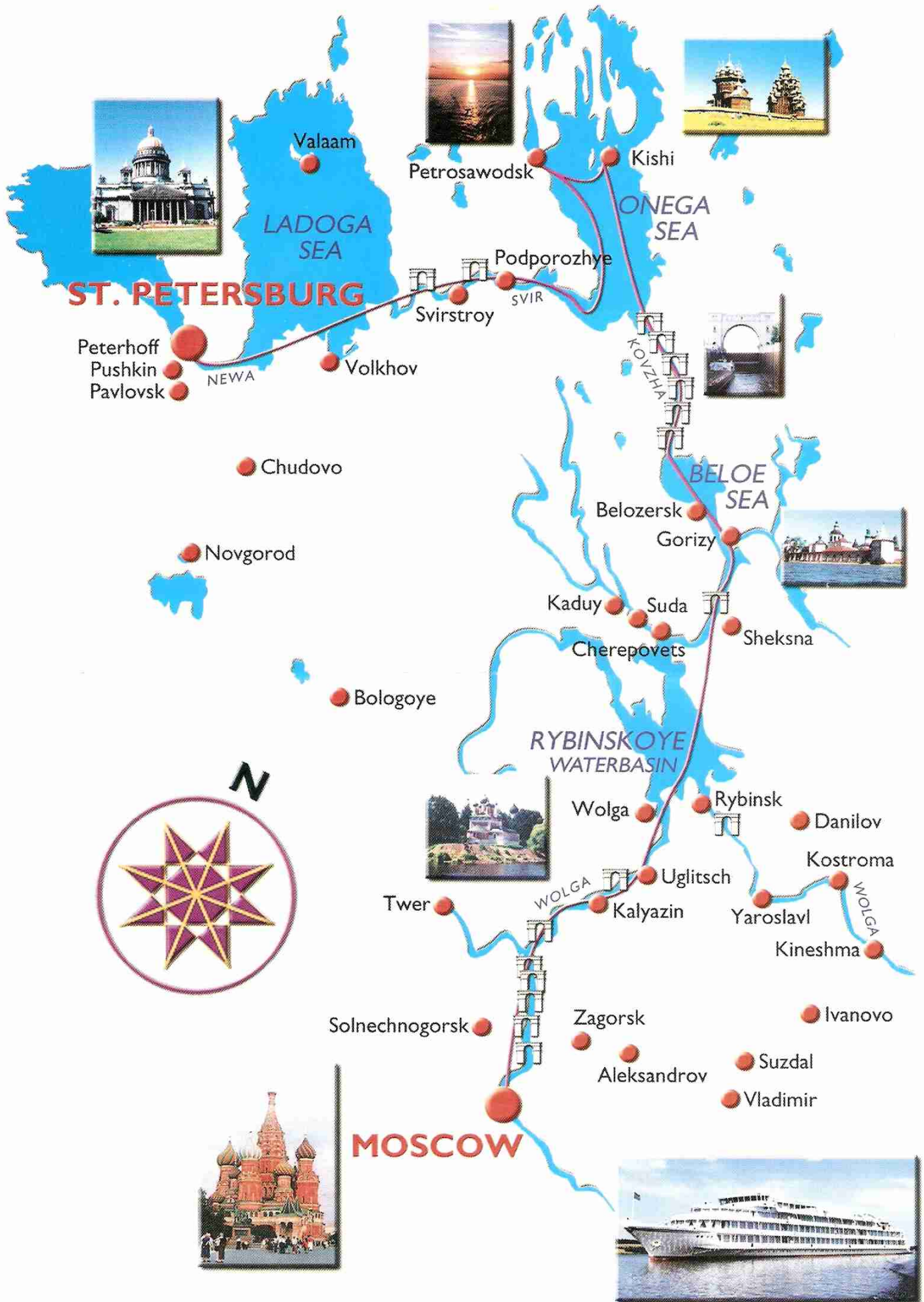


Here we come out of the bus after having been fetched at the airport.



There was a full bus.

This is a bit more detailed map of the area, in which we traveled.





Here some of us are entering the ship.



Down the gangway.



We are welcomed and are offered a bread which we are supposed to break and dip the piece into salt before eating it.



Here it is our turn.



All of us are taken picture of and there is played Russian music on accordion.



Next.



Everybody are very happy.



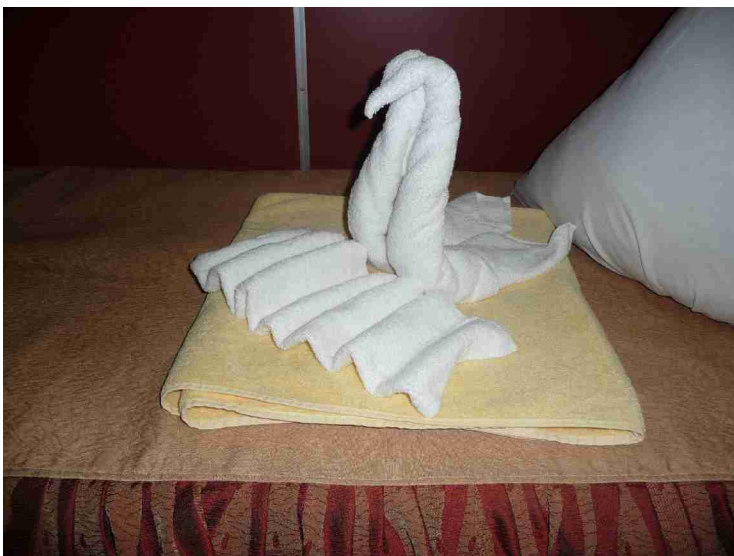
She is very clever at playing the accordion.



It looked like this in our cabin when we came in.



The staff is busy carrying all the trunks onboard.



The towels were folded differently each day.





Solveig and Berit were placed at our table. We had fixed table during the entire trip.



Here we are looking further down the dining room.



Here we are looking across the dining room.



The guides were sitting at a table just inside the door.



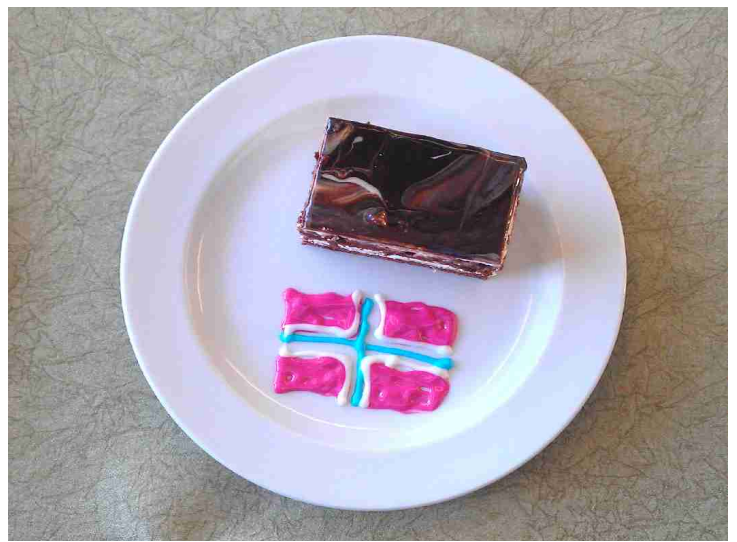
We get good food, so we are smiling.



This is the appetizer we got that night when there was Russian food on the menu. It is smoked salmon, not smoked salmon and Russian caviar in two varieties.



This was the first course.



The 17th of May (the Norwegian Constitution Day) this was the dessert with the Norwegian flag.



Once the dessert looked like this.



Another time like this.



The evening with Russian night, we were met in the door by the staff and all of us got a glass of vodka as an aperitif.



A couple of time there were people who had birthday. Then the staff came in a row with a cake and walked for a round in the dining rom.



Here they have made the round.



At the birthday 2child". He is presented with the birthday cake while the "happy birthday" song is played and sung.



These three played 3 of the nights. This is the first day they played.



They were incredibly clever.





This is another night when they are playing classical music.
They played only well known evergreens and it was a great experience to listen to them.



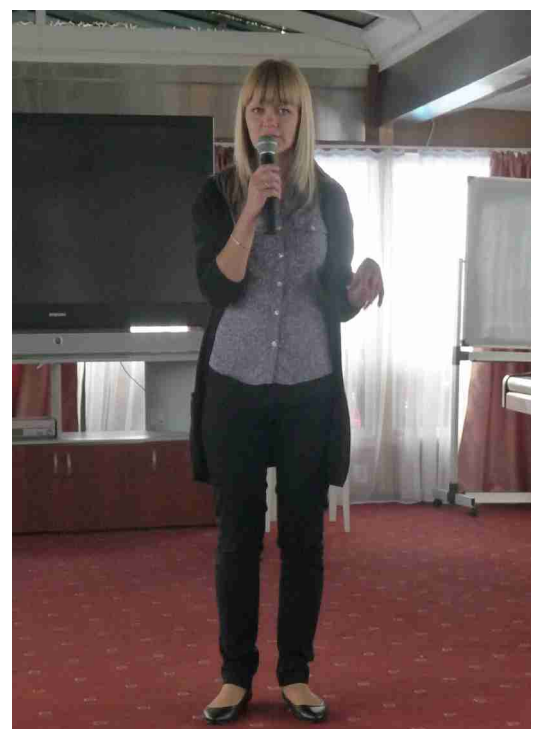
Another night there is teaching of Russian folk dance.



The accordion player is ready.



Right before the start.



Introduction.



Demonstration.



Here the pupils are about to start.



Full speed.



One day we visited the captain on the bridge.



The captain.



Our Apollo guide is explaining what is happening on the bridge because the captain can't speak English.



While the guide is explaining, the captain and his crew are working.



The last night before we are arriving in St. Petersburg. The crew is thanking for the trip. The captain, the cruise manager and the chef.



Two of the Russian guide.



Here is one of the Apollo guides, Arvin.



One of the American guides.



En English guide.



Another of the American guides.



Anne Berit and the captain.



Here are all the three Apollo guides. The two on the left are Masha and Arvin and he to the right is Joakim.