

VOLGA DREAM

The Grand Volga

13-day Expedition Cruise from Moscow to the Caspian Sea



TRIP DESCRIPTION & HIGHLIGHTS

From the Golden Horde to the Soviet era, the scenic cities of Russia's grand Volga River have been witness to some of the most significant events in Russian history. On a journey aboard the deluxe *M.S. Volga Dream*, cruise from Moscow to the Volga River Delta on the Caspian Sea. Discover iconic onion-domed churches; stroll through gems such as medieval Nizhniy Novgorod; and explore the treasures of Yaroslavl, the Volga's oldest city.

- Visit magnificent Red Square and Kremlin and examine the collection at the Kremlin's State Armory.
- Enjoy lectures by an on board guest speaker about the history and culture of local communities and famous Russians who were born and lived on the banks of the Volga River.
- Experience Russia's diverse musical traditions at lively folk music performances.
- Explore Volgograd, the site of the decisive battle of World War II's eastern front.
- Visit the world capital of caviar and taste this delicacy in the city of Astrakhan.

Day 1. September 22

MOSCOW

Upon arrival in Moscow, transfer to the deluxe *M.S. Volga Dream*. You may spend the rest of the day at leisure relaxing after the flight or exploring Moscow on your own.

Meals: D



Day 2. September 23

MOSCOW

Begin your day with orientation tour of Moscow followed by a ride in the ornate Moscow metro. After lunch in a local restaurant proceed to the Old Tretyakov gallery to view its extraordinary collection of Russian art, ranging from 12th-century icons to 20th-century paintings.

Optional: This evening enjoy opera or ballet performance at the famed Bolshoi Theatre (subject to the schedule of performances).

Meals: B, L, D

Day 3. September 24

MOSCOW

This morning enter the Kremlin for a visit to the Armory Museum, with its collection of tsarist thrones, ceremonial crowns, coaches and gifts of state. Continue to the beautifully frescoed 15th-century Assumption and Archangel Cathedrals. After lunch return to the awaiting *Volga Dream* and begin your sailing along the Russian Waterways. Gather for Captain's welcome reception and dinner as we begin our cruise.

Optional: Visit the new Tretyakov Picture Gallery to discover its outstanding collection of XX century masterpieces by artists including Chagall, Kandinsky, and Malevich. The tour is guided by a professor of fine arts.

Meals: B, L, D

Day 4. September 25

UGLICH

We arrive this afternoon in Uglich, dating back to the 10th century. A walking tour of this Golden Ring city includes the Chapel of Dmitry on a Spilled Blood, a 17th-century treasure built on the site where Ivan the Terrible's 10-year old son met his death. Visit the Church of the Transfiguration, noted for its beautiful iconostasis, and attend a concert of choral music.

Meals: B, L, D



Day 5. September 26

YAROSLAVL

This morning visit the oldest city on the Volga River, Yaroslavl, a World Heritage site. In the Spassky Monastery see the Transfiguration of the Savior, adorned with murals depicting St. John's apocalyptic visions, and the richly frescoed Church of St. Elijah the Prophet. There will be time to stroll the lively farm market before reboarding the *Volga Dream* in time for lunch. Later this day enjoy a private performance of Russian dance and songs by a local folk ensemble.

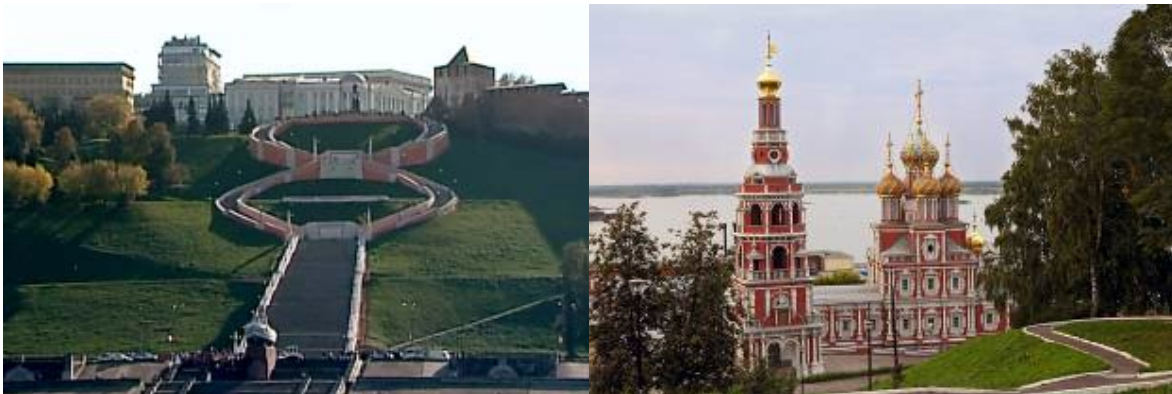
Meals: B, L, D

Day 6. September 27

NIZHNIY NOVGOROD

Nizhniy Novgorod (formerly Gorkiy), once a wealthy commercial center poised on the trade routes to the East, became a closed city due to military activity during the Soviet era. Learn about the city's history as a place of exile for political prisoners. Walk the ramparts of the 16th-century Kremlin with its spectacular views, and visit elaborately painted churches. Tonight, attend a concert by a local children folk group.

Meals: B, L, D



Day 7. September 28

KAZAN

This morning notice that Russian Orthodox Churches no longer dominate on the Volga river banks. Beautiful Muslim mosques appear from time to time as you cruise down the Volga River and enter the Republic of Tatarstan.

In the afternoon disembark from the *Volga Dream* to explore Kazan, the capital of Tatarstan and center of Tatar culture of Russia. Visit the white-walled Kazan Kremlin (citadel) where the famous mosque Kul-Sherif neighbours the old Peter and Paul

Cathedral. Later this day enjoy a concert by a local Tatar folk ensemble and taste delicious local food cooked by your *Volga Dream* chef.

Meals: B, L, D



Day 8 . September 29

SAMARA

This morning rest on the Sun Deck as we sail by the Zhigulevskie mountains and approach the city of Samara.

In Samara, visit Stalin's Bunker, preserved exactly as it was at the end of World War II. Tour Cosmic Samara, the space museum, then stroll along the Volga esplanade and taste beer at the famous local brewery.

Meals: B, L, D

Day 9. September 30

SARATOV

Once home to a large German community, today Saratov is known for its connection to Russia's first cosmonaut, Yuri Gagarin, who lived and studied here. Take a city tour, and visit Radishev State Art Museum - the first Russian picture gallery outside of St. Petersburg and Moscow.

On the way back to the ship stop by at an open air museum of military weapons and take a picture of the Volga river from Saratov highest point.

Meals: B, L, D



Day 10. October 1

VOLGOGRAD (ex. Stalingrad)

Originally called Tsaritsyn, this remarkable city has had three name changes in its tumultuous history. The site of epic battles during the Russian Revolution, it was known as Stalingrad from 1925 until 1961. The city's heroic defense by the Russian people during World War II became the decisive battle of the eastern front.

Visit the memorial on Mamayev Hill, where the struggle saw its bloodiest fighting, and Stalingrad battle panorama museum.

Meals: B, L, D

Day 11. October 2

ASTRAKHAN

This afternoon the *Volga Dream* arrives in the city of Astrakhan – world's caviar capital and fishing capital of the Western Russia - set at the mouth of the Volga, where it flows

into the Caspian Sea. Proceed with a tour of a local fortress built in the reign of Ivan the Terrible and attend a lecture about famous black caviar followed by a private testing of this precious delicacy.

Meals: B, L, D



Day 12. October 3

ASTRAKHAN

Continue your exploration of Astrakhan today.

Meals: B, L, D

Day 13. October 4

ASTRAKHAN

This morning transfer to the airport for your flight.

Meals: B

Tour starts in Moscow **Tour ends in Astrakhan**
September 22, 2012 October 4, 2012

Price:

Cabin Deck

Standard Twin Stateroom with portholes \$3,985 per person double occupancy
Single Supplement \$1,050

Main Deck

Superior Stateroom \$4,685 per person
Single Supplement +\$1,300

Promenade Deck

Deluxe Stateroom \$5,185 per person
Single Supplement +\$1,500

Junior Suite \$6,185 per person
Single Supplement +\$3,725

Owner's Suite \$8,485 per person
Single Supplement +\$5,450

Sun Deck

Deluxe Twin Cabin \$5,185 per person
Single Supplement +\$1,500

Junior Suite \$6,185 per person
Single Supplement +\$3,725

Deluxe Junior Suite \$6,985 per person
Single Supplement +\$4,325

Single Cabins

Promenade Deck

Standard Single Cabin \$5,585

Sun Deck

Deluxe Single Cabin \$6,285

Services

Touring services as described in your itinerary. All touring services are operated by and arranged by the Volga Dream and touring is with other cruise guests. Most touring, unless otherwise indicated, is half-day.

Transfers

All transfers to and from the airport are included in the program (between 7:00am-11:00pm) provided you are arriving and departing the same days as the cruise begins and ends. If you are arriving earlier or departing later, Exeter can arrange transfers for an additional charge. Unless otherwise noted, all transfer service is with a driver only, not a guide. In general, drivers

have extremely limited English-speaking skills. Should you wish to have an English-speaking guide for your transfer, please inquire for the additional cost.

Guides

All guide services are arranged by the Volga Dream.

Tickets

All museum tickets are included as described in the program.

Airfare

None Included.

BAGGAGE

The vehicles reserved for your itinerary can accommodate up to two medium-sized suitcases per person. If you intend to travel with additional luggage, please advise your travel consultant so appropriate arrangements may be made.

SIGHTSEEING

Sightseeing arrangements have been made to show you the very best in each city. The program has been carefully planned to maximize your time and comfort. Please do understand that the itinerary cannot be modified at a guest's request.

Please note that the ship is your hotel in each city, and it generally docks outside of the city center in both Moscow and Astrakhan.

Every effort has been made to confirm that scheduled sightseeing venues will be open at the time you plan to visit them. However, individual estates, museums, gardens and other points of interest can change their hours of operation at short notice. In the event that a particular attraction is closed on the day or time of your visit, your guide will offer alternative arrangements or rearrange your sightseeing to accommodate these unexpected events.

OPTIONAL EXPENSES

Charges for extra meals, transport, sightseeing services or other optional additions to your established itinerary are your responsibility and must be paid locally in the local currency.

GRATUITIES

Once on board, you will be given a tipping guideline for ship staff. This is payable in cash only and is generally recommended at \$17 per person, per day to cover all staff.

BOOKING CONDITIONS

PAYMENT

Exeter International must receive a deposit of twenty percent of the cruise total before reservations for your program can be confirmed. The balance of payment is due 90 days prior to departure. *No reservations are made on your behalf until this deposit has been received.* Availability and pricing is subject to change until this deposit is received. **All deposits are nonrefundable.**

CANCELLATION

Written cancellations received less than 90 days prior to departure are subject to the following forfeit of tour cost

- 90 – 60 days prior to departure, 50% of total tour cost
- 59 days or less prior to departure, 100% of total tour cost.

REFUNDS

We regret that refunds cannot be issued for arrangements confirmed on your itinerary but unused once your tour has begun.

INSURANCE

Exeter International strongly recommends the purchase of travel insurance to protect your investment. You will find insurance costs noted on your invoice and insurance coverage information in your original booking packet. Insurance must be purchased with your deposit to cover pre-existing conditions.

PRICES AND ARRANGEMENTS

The tour price includes planning, handling and operational charges. Rates are quoted in US Dollars on the current rate of exchange and tariff 2011. Exeter International reserves the right to increase tour prices to cover increased costs, tariffs and taxes, and to reflect fluctuations in foreign exchange markets. Devaluation of a foreign currency will be weighed against any tariff increases imposed. Exeter International is under no obligation to give breakdown costs involved in any Small Group or Individual Travel Program.

All arrangements are subject to availability and modification if necessary.

Weather, heavy traffic and heavy crowds may affect the order of your sightseeing program.

Prices are subject to change until paid in full.

Visa fees are not included in the program.

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