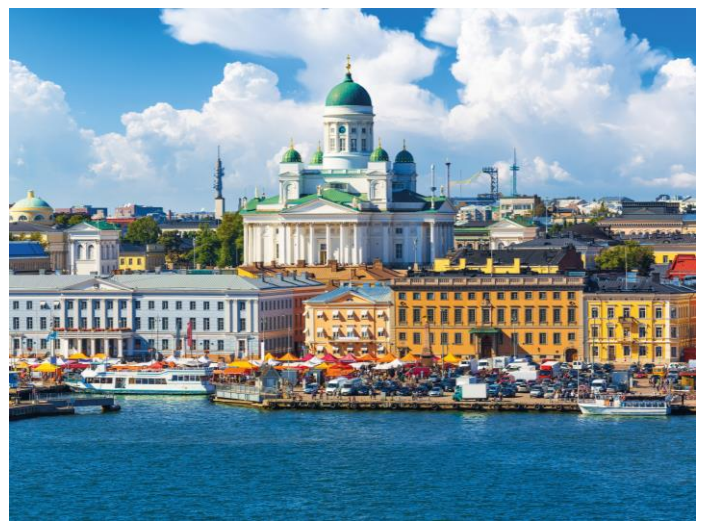
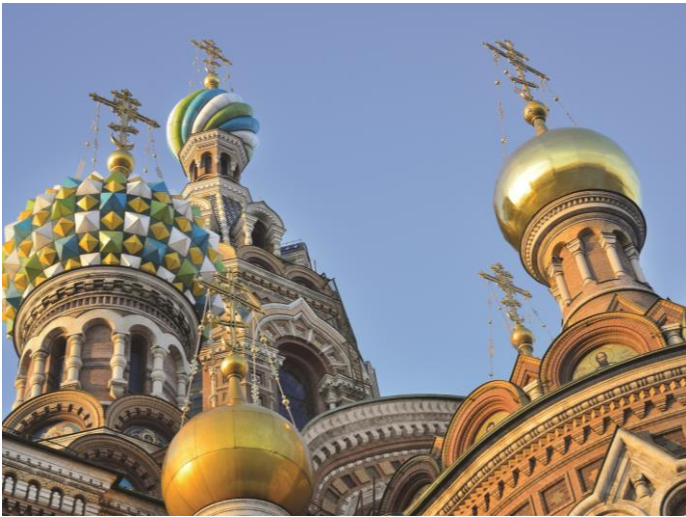


Tour
Information



St Petersburg's Imperial Splendour





Travel

Passports

Please ensure your 10 year British Passport is not out of date and is valid for a full three months beyond the duration of your visit. EU, Andorra, Liechtenstein, Monaco, San Marino or Switzerland valid national identification cards are also acceptable for travel to the Baltic States.

Visas

Visas are not required for British and EU nationals to enter Finland and Estonia. For all other passport holders please check the visa requirements with the appropriate embassy.

Finnish Embassy:

38 Chesham Place, London SW1X 8HW.

Tel: (020) 7838 6200.

E-mail: sanomat.lon@formin.fi

Website: <http://www.finemb.org.uk>

Opening hours (visa section): Mon-Wed 1000-1200.
(appointments necessary)

Estonian Embassy:

16 Hyde Park Gate, London SW7 5DG

Tel: (020) 7838 5388. Fax: (020) 7589 3430.

E-mail: embassy.london@estonia.gov.uk

Website: www.estonia.gov.uk

Opening hours (visa phone line): Mon, Wed 1400-1700, Tue-Thu 0900-1200, Fri 1400-1600.

Visas are required for British and EU nationals to enter Russia, these must be obtained in advance and it is mandatory to visit a Visa Application Centre to apply for your visa as biometric testing is obligatory.

Full details can be found here:

<http://ru.vfsglobal.co.uk>

Whilst in Russia, visitors must carry ID at all times. Rather than carry original documents, it is advisable to carry photocopies of passports and visas, which will facilitate replacement should either be stolen.



Tickets and Flight Times

Norwegian

Included with your detailed itinerary is an travel document, which shows your flight reference number. You will need to show this travel document at the check-in desk and you will be issued with your boarding pass.

Air Baltic

The e-ticket for your flight with Air Baltic is included in your documentation pack. You must show this at the check-in desk along with your passport and you will be issued with your boarding pass. **Online check-in is not available on these flights**
Your ticket is non-transferable and non-refundable. No refund can be given for non-used portions.



Baggage allowance

We advise you to check the baggage allowances carefully as you are likely to be charged the excess if you exceed the weight limit. Maximum weights for single bags apply.

With both Norwegian and Air Baltic your ticket includes one hold bag of up to 20kg plus one cabin bag no bigger than 55 x 40 x 23cm and a personal bag (handbag or computer case) no bigger than 25 x 33 x 20 cm.

Please contact the airline for further information.

<http://www.norwegian.com>

<https://www.airbaltic.com/en/baggage>

Labels

Please use the luggage labels provided. It is useful to have your home address located inside your suitcase should the label go astray.

Departure Tax

The departure tax is included in the price of your flight tickets.

Special Requests

If you haven't already, please notify Travel Editions of any special requests as soon as possible to allow sufficient time to make the necessary arrangements. Please note that some airlines may charge for use of wheelchairs.



Accommodation

Original Sokos Vaakuna, Helsinki

The four-star Original Sokos Vaakuna was built for the 1952 Olympics and is ideally situated in the heart of the city. The hotel offers a stylish restaurant offering panoramic views, bar, sauna & relaxation area and modern bedrooms with private bath/shower, hairdryer, TV, telephone and wi-fi.

For more information please visit the hotel's website:

<http://www.sokoshotels.fi/en/helsinki/sokos-hotel-vaakuna>

Domina Prestige Hotel, St Petersburg

The five-star Domina Prestige Hotel is located on the Monika River Embankment in the centre of St Petersburg. The hotel has a vibrant and eclectic feel to it, and this runs through its rooms and into its restaurant and bar. Rooms all have private bathroom facilities, free wi-fi, telephone, TV, air-conditioning, minibar, safe and tea and coffee making facilities.

For more information please visit the hotel's website:

<https://spb.dominarussia.com/en/>

Hestia Ilmarine, Tallinn

The four-star Hestia Ilmarine Hotel is located close to the historical Old Town and is only a few minutes' walk away from the Port of Tallinn. The hotel offers a restaurant, bar, sauna & relaxation area and comfortable bedrooms with private bath/shower, hairdryer, TV, telephone, wi-fi, and safety-deposit box.

For more information please visit the hotel's website:

<https://www.hestiahotelgroup.com/>

Food

Largely based on seasonal and locally sourced produce, the local cuisine's main ingredients are meat, potatoes, vegetables such as cabbage, seafood, and a delicious, deep, black rye-bread.

Finland: Potatoes, meat, fish, milk, butter and rye bread are the traditional mainstays of the Finnish diet, but food in Finland has been greatly influenced both by Western (French and Swedish) and Eastern (Russian) cooking. Tourists can expect excellent

fresh fish dishes on menus. Examples are pike, trout, perch, whitefish, salmon and Baltic herring. All are in abundance most of the year. Crayfish (a Finnish speciality) is available from July to August. One should also try reindeer meat, smoked or in other forms. Regional dishes include *kalakukko*, a kind of fish and pork pie, baked in a rye flour crust, and *karjalan piirakat*, a pastry of rye flour stuffed with rice pudding or potato and eaten with egg butter. Various kinds of thick soups are also popular.

In restaurants (*ravintola*) the menu is Continental with several Finnish specialities. Restaurant prices are moderate if the set menu is chosen. Most restaurants have a special menu for children, or other half-price meals. Inexpensive lunches are served at places called *kahvila* and *baari* (the latter is not necessarily a licensed bar).

Russia: Breakfast is often similar to the Scandinavian, with cold meats, boiled eggs and bread served with Russian tea. One of the more famous Russian dishes is *borshch*, a beetroot soup served hot with sour cream. Several dishes which are now often seen as international but find their origin in Russia are *beef stroganov* (beef stewed in sour cream with fried potatoes), *blini* (small pancakes filled with caviar, fish, melted butter or sour cream), *aladyi* (crumpets with the same filling and jam) and especially *ikra* or *krasnaya ikra* (black and red caviar). The local *chicken kiev* should not be confused with Western imitations. Local dishes worth trying include *kotlyety po Pozharsky* (chicken cutlets), *pirozhyki* (fried rolls with different fillings, usually meat), *prostakvasha* (yoghurt), *pelmeni* (meat dumplings), *rossolnik* (hot soup, usually made of pickled vegetables) and *shchi* (cabbage soup). Stuffed cabbage leaves and sweet peppers are filled with boiled rice and minced meat. Mushrooms in sour cream are very popular.

Estonia: Although Estonia has a long coastline, fish is rarely eaten as a main course, but rather as a hors d'oeuvre, smoked or slated. Traditional Estonian dishes include *Tallinn sprats* (small raw sprats preserved in brine and spices) spread on boiled eggs or bread and butter, *sült* (jellied veal), *täidetud vasikarind* (roast stuffed shoulder of veal), *rosolje* (vinaigrette with herring and beets) and *braised*

goose stuffed with apples and plums. Pork with sauerkraut and potatoes, blood sausage, boiled pork in aspic jelly, wild mushrooms in salads, smoked salmon, and of course sour cream, will also frequently feature on the menu.

Among popular desserts are *rhubarb cake* and *Kissell* (milk with sweetened berries).



Drink

Finland:

Restaurants are divided into two classes: those serving all kinds of alcohol and those serving only beers and wines. Waiter service is common although there are many self-service snack bars. Bars and cafés may have table and/or counter service and all internationally known beverages are available. The Finnish berry liqueurs, *mesimarja* (arctic bramble), *lakka* (cloudberry), and *polar* (cranberry), as well as the Finnish vodka (usually served ice cold with meals), are well worth trying. Finnish beer is of a high quality and mild beers are served in most coffee bars. There are strict laws against drinking and driving. In restaurants beer is served from 0900 and other liquor from 1100. All alcohol is served until half an hour before the restaurant closes. Nightclubs are open to serve drinks until 0200 or 0400. Service begins at 1100 and continues until the restaurant closes. The age limit for drinking is 18 years, but consumers must be 20 before they can buy the stronger alcoholic beverages. Locally brewed beers, such as *Švyturys*, *Gubernija*, and *Tauras*, are popular and come in a range of strengths and darkness. Lithuanians also produce different herb or fruit based spirits, such as *Trejos devynerios*, and excellent honey and herb mead (*Midus*).

Russia:

One of the most popular drinks is *chai* (tea served without milk). Coffee is generally available with meals and in cafés, although standards vary. Vodka is often flavoured and coloured with herbs and spices such as *zubrovka* (a kind of grass), *ryabinovka* (steeped with rowan-tree berries), *starka* (dark, smooth, aged vodka) and *pertsovka* (with hot pepper). *Posolskaya*, *Stolichnaya* and *Rossiskaya* are popular brands. Russian champagne is surprisingly good and reasonably priced. Imported wines from Georgia, Ukraine and Moldova and Armenian Cognac are excellent. Drinks are ordered by grams

or by the bottle. City-centre bars close around midnight.

Estonia:

Beer is the most popular beverage in Estonia, and two of the country's oldest breweries are *A Le Coq* and *Saku*, both founded early 19th century.

Local liqueurs include *Vana Tallinn* (a spiced rum liqueur) and juniper and caraway-flavoured spirits, such as *Kännu Kukk*.

Meals included in the price of your holiday are:

Breakfast – daily



Destination

The three countries offer a series of contrasts from the vibrant nordic feel of Helsinki to Russia's jewel in the crown, St Petersburg, a treasure trove of art and architecture, and the chocolate box beauty of the old town of Tallinn.

Details of places of interest included in your tour:

Helsinki

Helsinki, Finland's capital, World Capital of Design in 2012 and site of the 1952 Olympics is a fascinating mixture of old and new with classical buildings, some striking modern architecture including several by acclaimed architect, Alvar Aalto, pioneer of architectural functionalism, as well as some outstanding churches and museums. This afternoon we have a guided tour to Suomenlinna Fortress, added in 1991 to the UNESCO World Heritage List as a unique monument of military architecture. Dating from 1747, it has served in the defence of three realms: Sweden, Russia and Finland, reflecting Finland's tumultuous history.

For more information about Helsinki:

<http://www.visithelsinki.fi/en>

Peter and Paul Fortress

The first structure to be built in St. Petersburg, and thus the birthplace of the city, it never served its intended defensive function. Instead it has had a rich, hugely varied, and sometimes sinister history as a military base, a home of government departments, the burial ground of the Russian Imperial family, the site of groundbreaking scientific experiments, and a forbidding jail that held some of Russia's most prominent political prisoners.

Today, the Peter and Paul Fortress is for the most part under the auspices of the St. Petersburg Museum of History, with a number of permanent and temporary exhibitions charting the various aspects of the compound's past. While the central visitor attraction is undoubtedly the Ss. Peter and Paul Cathedral, one of St. Petersburg's most striking buildings, there is plenty within the walls of the fortress to keep children and adults occupied for a full day at least. The Peter and Paul Fortress is also the centre of a number of St. Petersburg urban traditions, among them the daily firing of the cannon from the Naryshkin Bastion at noon and the "walruses" who use the beach in front of the

fortress to sunbathe and swim in ice-holes in the winter. In the summer, the beach is a popular picnic site and is also used to host a variety of events, festivals and concerts, including the respected Petrojazz annual festival.

St Isaac's Cathedral

St. Isaac's Cathedral was originally the city's main church and the largest cathedral in Russia. It was built between 1818 and 1858, by the French-born architect Auguste Montferrand, to be one of the most impressive landmarks of the Russian Imperial capital. One hundred and eighty years later the gilded dome of St. Isaac's still dominates the skyline of St. Petersburg. Although the cathedral is considerably smaller than the newly rebuilt Church of Christ the Savior in Moscow, it boasts much more impressive facades and interiors.

The cathedral's facades are decorated with sculptures and massive granite columns (made of single pieces of red granite), while the interior is adorned with incredibly detailed mosaic icons, paintings and columns made of malachite and lapis lazuli. A large, brightly colored stained glass window of the "Resurrected Christ" takes pride of place inside the main altar. The church, designed to accommodate 14,000 standing worshippers, was closed in the early 1930s and reopened as a museum. Today, church services are held here only on major ecclesiastical occasions.

The Hermitage

The Hermitage was founded in 1764 by Catherine the Great and opened to the public in 1852. Its collection is widely regarded as one of the world's best with a plethora of masterpieces, housed in a collection of neo-classical buildings along the Palace Embankment.

St. Petersburg's most popular visitor attraction, and one of the world's largest and most prestigious museums, the Hermitage is a must-see for all first-time travellers to the city. With over 3 million items in its collection, it also definitely rewards repeat visits, and new-comers can only hope to get a brief taste of the riches on offer here, from Impressionist masterpieces to fascinating Oriental treasures. One estimate has it that you would need eleven years to view each exhibit on display for just one minute!

For more information about The Hermitage:

<http://www.hermitagemuseum.org/>

Pushkin Palace

The Catherine Palace is named after Catherine I, the wife of Peter the Great, who ruled Russia for two years after her husband's death. Originally a modest two-storey building commissioned by Peter for Catherine in 1717, the Catherine Palace owes its awesome grandeur to their daughter, Empress Elizabeth, who chose Tsarskoe Selo as her chief summer residence. Starting in 1743, the building was reconstructed by four different architects, before Bartholomeo Rastrelli, Chief Architect of the Imperial Court, was instructed to completely redesign the building on a scale to rival Versailles.

Peterhof

One of St. Petersburg's most famous and popular visitor attractions, the palace and park at Peterhof (also known as Petrodvorets) are often referred to as "the Russian Versailles", although many visitors conclude that the comparison does a disservice to the grandeur and scope of this majestic estate. Versailles was, however, the inspiration for Peter the Great's desire to build an imperial palace in the suburbs of his new city and, after an aborted attempt at Strelna, Peterhof - which means "Peter's Court" in German - became the site for the Tsar's Monplaisir Palace, and then of the original Grand Palace. The estate was equally popular with Peter's daughter, Empress Elizabeth, who ordered the expansion of the Grand Palace and greatly extended the park and the famous system of fountains, including the truly spectacular Grand Cascade.

Yusupov Place

One of two surviving St. Petersburg residences of the monumentally wealthy Yusupov family, the Yusupov Palace on the Moika River is perhaps most famous as the scene of the assassination of Grigory Rasputin, and is one of the few aristocratic homes in the city to have retained many of its original interiors.

The land on which the palace stands, in the south of the historic centre close to the Mariinsky Theatre, was originally the site of a wooden palace belonging to Tsarevna Praskovia Ivanovna, niece of Peter the Great. In the mid-18th century it was bought by Count Peter Shuvalov. In 1770, his heir Andrei Shuvalov commissioned the French architect Jean-Baptiste Vallin de la Mothe, designer of the Small Hermitage, Gostiny Dvor and the Academy of Sciences, to build a new palace on the site. De la Mothe's building forms the basis of the palace that can be seen today, although various additions and

alterations were made by leading architects as the palace changed hands over the years.

For more information on St Petersburg:

<http://www.saint-petersburg.com/>

Tallinn

Estonia's capital, Tallinn is a city on the rise. A delightful mix of the medieval and the modern, the old town is World Heritage-designated – a maze of narrow, cobbled streets overlooked by a charming muddle of 14th century churches and beautiful buildings. At the same time, new and exciting galleries of local artists, delightful boutiques, bar and restaurants are flourishing within the old city walls, sitting side by side with traditional artisans. This is the perfect city to take a leisurely stroll and soak up the atmosphere, enjoy a meal at one of the many restaurants serving cuisine from around the former USSR and beyond, or take in the main sights, that include the *Estonian Parliament Building*, the 1921 simple, pink, functional building and the contrasting Russian Alexander Nevsky *Cathedral*, an elaborate, powerful onion-domed structure completed in 1900 as a symbol of the Russian Empire.

For more information about Tallinn:

<http://www.tourism.tallinn.ee/eng>

Lahemaa National Park

Lahemaa, Estonia's first and largest national park, established in 1971, gives a beautiful overview of the landscapes of the country. Rich in flora and fauna, it is an extremely important conservation area within Europe, and home to many large mammals including moose, boar, brown bears and lynxes.

Located on the coast at the North of the Lahemaa are the beautiful **Altja** and **Käsmu**. With their row of houses built along a rocky shore, these two traditional fishing villages are delightful and offer stunning views of the sea.

The Jägala Waterfall sits on the lower course of the Jägala River, just 4kms from its mouth at the Gulf of Finland. An incredible sight in winter – its flow is suspended, frozen into thousands of icicles – it is equally impressive in the warmer months, with water gushing down from a height of 8 meters across its 50 metre width.

For more information about Lahemaa National Park:

<http://www.keskkonnaamet.ee/lahe-eng>

Narva

Estonia's easternmost town boasts the best preserved castle (Hermann Fortress) overlooking a large, winding river acting as a border between Estonia and Russia. The nearby Narva-Jõesuu resort is dotted with spas and a large sandy beach that draws in holiday makers every summer. Narva is a melting pot of Estonian and Russian cultures and a great place to stop and relax when travelling to and from St. Petersburg. The first spa in Narva-Jõesuu was opened in the 19th century, beginning a fine and well established tradition.

Reading suggestions

Colin Thubron, *Among the Russians*.

Colin Thubron gives a beautifully descriptive and poetic account of his travels through Russia and Soviet States in the 1980s.

Anthony Powell, *Venusberg*.

Powell's second novel relates the story of a British journalist who relocates to a Baltic State.

Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *Crime and Punishment*.

Dostoyevsky's classic novel detailing the anguish and moral dilemmas of Raskolnikov, an impoverished student, is set entirely in St Petersburg.

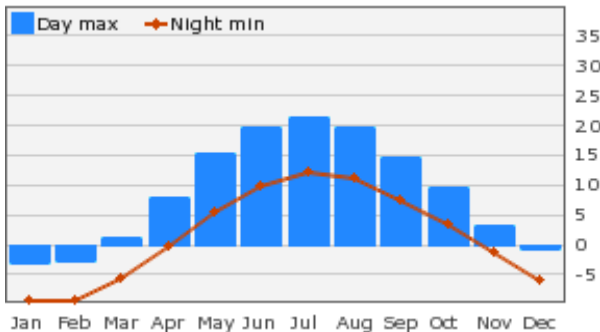
Tour manager

Your tour manager will be on hand throughout the tour to ensure that everything operated according to plan. If you have any problems or questions please see him or her immediately – it is often possible to resolve complaints or problems very quickly on the spot, and do everything to help you enjoy your holiday.



The Basics

Climate – The weather in the Baltic region at this time of year is likely to be pleasant. However, it can get chilly in the evenings, and there is always the chance of the odd shower, so our best advice is to be prepared.



Time – GMT +3 hours (Summer time Apr-Oct); GMT + 2 (Standard time Nov-Mar).

Language – Lithuanian, Latvian, Estonian.

Religion – predominantly Roman Catholic (Lithuania), Lutheran and Catholic (Latvia), majority non-religious, with some 20% Christian (Estonia).

National holidays – Common to all three countries: New Year's Day (01 Jan); Labour Day (01 May); Christmas Day (25 Dec); Boxing Day (26 Dec).

Finland: Epiphany (06 Jan); Good Friday; Easter Sunday; Easter Monday; Ascension Day; Whit Sunday; Midsummer Day (25 Jun); All Saints Day (01 Nov); Independence Day (06 Nov).

Russia: Russian Orthodox Christmas Day (07 Jan); Defender of the Fatherland Day (23 Feb); Victory Day (09 May); Russia Day (12 Jun); Unity Day (04 Nov); Constitution Day (12 Dec).

Estonia: Independence Day (24 Feb); Good Friday; Whit Sunday; Victory Day (23 Jun); St John's Day (24 Jun); Restoration of Independence Day (20 Aug).

Currency

Finland and Estonia

Euro. €1 = 100 cents. Notes are in denominations of €500, 200, 100, 50, 20, 10 and 5. Coins are in denominations of €2 and 1, and 50, 20, 10, 5, 2 and 1 cents.

Russia

Rouble (Rbl) = 100 kopeks. Notes are in denominations of Rbl1,000,000, 500,000, 50,000, 10,000, 5000, 1000, 500, 200 and 100. Coins are in denominations of Rbl100, 50, 20, 10, 5 and 1

Banks – Cashpoints compatible with international banking networks are located in all towns and cities,

as well as airports, major train stations and other spots. They usually offer an attractive exchange rate. Those banks that still exchange foreign currencies into local money will always charge a transaction fee, so withdrawing money from an ATM usually represents the most logical means of obtaining euros.

Credit cards – American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard and Visa are widely accepted across the country. If you're eating at a restaurant, check prior to the meal that your card will be an acceptable form of payment. Even in cities, it's advisable to carry a supply of cash with you at all times. Varying amounts of commission can be charged.

Electricity – 220 volt, two-pin continental plug.

Drinking water – Tap water is safe in Finland and Estonia, although it has high mineral content and can be cloudy. Therefore, bottled water is safer and widely available.

Shops and museums – Shops and stores are generally open Mon-Fri 0900-2100. Many are also open at the weekend including Sundays. Please note that most museums are closed on Mondays.

Clothes & Shoes – You may like to bring medium weight clothing and a warm sweater for cool evenings. Light rain wear for the occasional storm and good grip/flat walking shoes are recommended.

Bath plugs – The hotel has plugs for basins, but it is useful to carry a 'universal' one with you.

Telephones/mobiles – You should be able to use your mobile phone depending on your operator and contract.

Tipping – To keep our tours affordable, we do not increase the tour price by adding in tips. However, in the tourism industry, there is a certain level of expectation that when receiving a good service, one does award with a tip. Tour Managers, Representatives, Guides and Drivers appreciate a tip at the end of their involvement with the tour, but this is entirely at your discretion. We believe in allowing you to tip according to your level of satisfaction with their services, but for your guidance about £2-3 per person per day for the tour manager is the norm. We would like to reiterate that tipping is an entirely optional payment and this information is given purely to answer any questions you may have about it.



Health

Doctor/Dentist/Chemist

Please talk to your tour manager if you are feeling unwell and they will organise for you to see a doctor.

Keep receipts for insurance claims.



Hospital

Your tour manager/hotel reception will arrange hospital transport.

Keep receipts for insurance claims.

General Health Advice

We suggest you take a good supply of your own individual medicines with you and always keep some in your hand luggage in case you get delayed or your luggage goes astray. General-purpose supplies for bites, stings, or scratches, and your usual medication for headaches, or stomach upsets are always recommended. Oral re-hydration sachets are excellent for topping up salt and glucose levels.

Visit the NHS Fit For Travel website for more generally information specific to the country you are visiting – www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk

Sun Protection

Always ensure you take sufficient sun protection and moisturiser. A sun hat and sunglasses are also advisable.

Inoculations

You should check with your own doctor and take their advice as to which inoculations are required for the country you are visiting, as only they know your medical history and recommendations are liable to change at short notice.



Insurance

To be covered under your Travel Insurance Policy, if you become ill, it is essential that you contact a local doctor and also telephone the emergency number of your insurance company. You will **NOT** be covered for any claim unless this procedure is carried out. Your insurance company will then decide on the best course of medical attention.

European Health Insurance Card (EHIC)

The EHIC replaced the old E111 in 2006. Valid in all EEA countries, the card lets you get state healthcare at a reduced cost or sometimes for free. It will cover you for treatment that is needed to allow you to continue your stay until your planned return. It also covers the treatment of pre-existing medical conditions.

Please note that the EHIC **is not** an alternative to travel insurance. It will not cover any private medical healthcare or costs such as being flown back to the UK, or lost or stolen property. Therefore, it is important to have both an EHIC and a valid private travel insurance policy. It is also important to note that each country's healthcare system is slightly different, so the EHIC might not cover everything that would be generally free on the NHS.

We strongly recommend that you take out an appropriate travel insurance policy when you travel abroad.

For more information about the EHIC please visit:

<https://www.ehic.org.uk>



Emergencies

Should an emergency arise, please call our offices on:

00 44 20 7251 0045

Outside office hours (Mon-Fri 0900-1700), telephone our emergency staff on:

00 44 7899 796542 or

00 44 7831 133079 or

00 44 1235 850720

PLEASE USE THESE NUMBERS ONLY IN THE EVENT OF A GENUINE EMERGENCY.

If you find that you are in need of consular assistance during your holiday:

British Embassy Helsinki

Itäinen Puistotie 17

00140 Helsinki

Finland

Email: info.helsinki@fco.gov.uk

Tel: +358 922865100

Fax: +358 922865262

Open Mon-Fri 0900-1630

British Consulate St Petersburg

Pl. Proletarskoy Diktatury 5

191124 St Petersburg

Russia

Email: information.stpetersburg@fco.gov.uk

Tel: +7 812 3203200

Fax: +7 812 3203211

Open Mon-Fri 0900-1700

British Embassy Tallinn

Wismari 6

Tallinn

10136

Estonia

Email: TallinnConsular.Enquiries@fco.gov.uk

Tel: +372 667 4700

Fax: +372 667 4725

Open Mon-Fri 0900-1700.

Travel Editions

3 Young's Buildings, London EC1V 9DB

Tel: 020 7251 0045

Email: tours@traveleditions.co.uk www.traveleditions.co.uk

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