

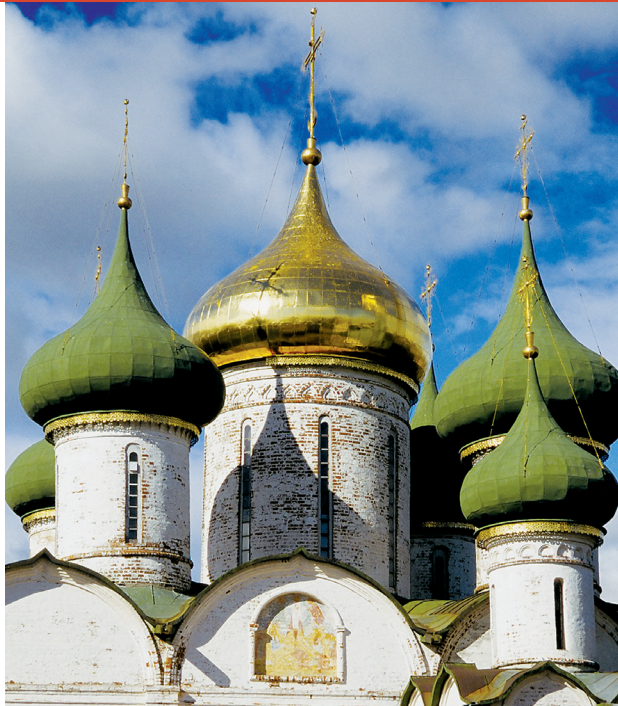
Custom Travel Planner:

WESTERN RUSSIA

Moscow ♦ St. Petersburg ♦ Golden Ring

Western Russia is

a distinctive realm. It is, in the words of author Nikolai Gogol, a "strange, alluring, enthralling, wonderful world." The domed Orthodox churches, world-renowned museums, high culture and down-to-earth street life make up a whole that is at once well-bred and wild, huge and intimate, formal and free-wheeling. Fall in love with gorgeous, expansive, soulful Russia.



The onion domes of the Cathedral of the Transfiguration in Suzdal.

Czarist Russia, a world described by Tolstoy and Dostoevsky and set to music by Tchaikovsky, crumbled after the 1917 Russian revolution. For 74 years, the Soviet Union consolidated its power and ruled its sphere from behind the Iron Curtain. Though it lost an estimated 23 million people to World War II and millions more to Stalin's policies, the USSR made great strides in industry, the arts, education and science, launching the first human being into space in 1961. It remained a formidable world power until its collapse in 1991.

Since then, Russia, the largest country in the world, has slowly and sometimes painfully been building a new, uniquely Russian political system; the world is watching as it unfolds.

Russia today is a fascinating hotbed of political intrigue, a vast repository of cultural riches and architectural delights, a place of immense natural beauty and resources, and a fertile field of artists, poets, entrepreneurs, musicians, writers, scientists and humanitarians.



MIR
CORPORATION

**25 Years of Experience
& Expertise Available to
You**

We've created this Custom Travel Planner as a first step in designing your personalized journey to Western Russia. Once you've had a chance to peruse this expert sketch of the area, give us a call to fill in the details (see *How to Get Started* at the top of page 2). A MIR destination specialist will consult with you, then handcraft an itinerary that suits your travel goals, budget and style.

MIR (from the Russian word meaning both "peace" and "world") specializes in bringing people together to discover more about the world and, consequently, about themselves. Over the past 25 years we've worked closely with our creative field staff in Russia to deliver customized travel experiences that showcase the best of this under-explored destination at the crossroads of Europe and Asia. MIR has twice been named one of *National Geographic Adventure's* "Best Adventure Travel Companies on Earth," and esteemed institutions from the Harvard Museum of Natural History to the alumni travel program of Princeton have entrusted MIR with guiding them to Western Russia.



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