

# Topdeck

## RUSSIAN REVELATIONS



TRIP CODE:  
EERSTG-0

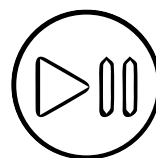
## TOPDECKER, meet Australasia (TD)

Come explore this awesome part of Europe on a tour of Russia and beyond - and get ready to discover some of the region's best-kept travel secrets! From St Petersburg to Moscow via some of the hottest destinations in Eastern Europe, we'll finish up in buzzing Berlin. Ready for this? Yeah, you are!

### WORTH NOTING...

This is a sector of the 37 Day Red Star Special trip.

### WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



Play & Pause



Nights



Download app



Meals

# Thanks for choosing to holiday with Topdeck

Ready for the time of your LIFE?

The countdown's on...

## ABOUT YOUR TRIP NOTES

These Trip Notes contain everything you need to know before your trip departs – from where to meet your Topdeck fam to what we suggest you bring.

Read them on the train, in the supermarket queue or on the loo – we don't mind, just look through them carefully so you know what to expect on your trip. We recommend you download this document so it's with you when you travel (and give a copy to your MVPs so they know what you're up to).

**IMPORTANT:** please refresh this doc as close to your departure as possible. This means you'll have the most up-to-date info available.

### INCLUDED EXPERIENCES

- Driving tour of St Petersburg with a local guide
- Visit the State Hermitage Museum
- Walking tour of Novgorod with a local guide
- Driving tour of Moscow with a local guide
- Guided tour of the Kremlin
- Guided tour of Moscow's Metro
- Visit to Lenin's tomb
- Walking tour of Riga
- Visit the Hill of Crosses
- Walking tour of Vilnius
- Driving or walking tour of Warsaw (time dependent)

# YOUR ITINERARY

## DAY 1 | TALLINN, ESTONIA

What's up, Tallinn? Meet the group and get ready for the ultimate Russian adventure! Pro tip: Old Town is where you'll get the best kind of Estonian #throwback vibes.

## DAY 2 | TALLINN TO ST. PETERSBURG, RUSSIA

Russia is next! After crossing the border, we'll embark on a tour of St Petersburg: the country's former capital. Later, scoff some blini and caviar (yes, caviar) - and wash it all down with a shot of vodka, if you wish. When in Rome...



### MEALS:

- Breakfast
- Lunch
- Dinner

## DAY 3 | ST. PETERSBURG

Today: a St Petersburg driving tour with a super knowledgeable local guide. Learn all the juicy insider info as you check out oh-so-many bucket list items. Anything called the Church of the Saviour on Spilled Blood has got to be worth a look (and it really is).



### MEALS:

- Breakfast



### INCLUDED TODAY:

- Driving tour of St Petersburg with a local guide

## DAY 4 | ST. PETERSBURG

Dig into breakfast, then we'll whisk you away for a guided tour of the Hermitage Museum. This place spans six palatial buildings, including the epic Winter Palace. You won't want to miss this! Next: a spot of (window) shopping on Nevsky Prospect, the city's main street.



### MEALS:

- Breakfast



### INCLUDED TODAY:

- Visit the State Hermitage Museum

## DAY 5 | ST. PETERSBURG TO NOVGOROD

Onwards through the Russian countryside to the World Heritage-listed city of Novgorod. While you're here, why not try a drop of Medovukha (aka the Russian version of mead)?



### MEALS:

- Breakfast
- Dinner



### INCLUDED TODAY:

- Walking tour of Novgorod with a local guide

## DAY 6 | NOVGOROD TO MOSCOW

We'll roll into Moscow today, where the city is alive in rain, hail or shine. Believe it or not, this city sparkles - so be prepared for an incredible few days ahead. As you explore the city, you'll be able to spot tangible reminders of Russia's involvement in modern history.



### MEALS:

- Breakfast
- Dinner

## DAY 7 | MOSCOW

Swing by the greats on today's driving tour - including Moscow University, Red Square and St Basil's Cathedral. Then: check out the Kremlin with our local guide before setting off to roam the streets. And tonight? You could always get fancy with an optional evening at the Russian ballet. Clink that champagne and get those binoculars at the ready!



### MEALS:

- Breakfast



### INCLUDED TODAY:

- Driving tour of Moscow with a local guide
- Guided tour of the Kremlin



### OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

- Tickets to a Russian ballet: from €40-€80

## DAY 8 | MOSCOW

Down we go for a guided tour of the not-so-mundane Moscow Metro. If you're picturing the Piccadilly or Central Line in London, think again. Not even close! We're talking chandelier-lined stations, each one more decadent than the last. Later, we'll keep our history lesson going with a visit to Lenin's tomb and an optional guided tour of the Kremlin Armoury.



### MEALS:

- Breakfast



### INCLUDED TODAY:

- Guided tour of Moscow's Metro
- Visit to Lenin's tomb



### OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

- Guided tour of the Kremlin Armoury: from €25

## DAY 9 | MOSCOW TO VELIKIYE LUKI

Today it's out of Moscow and onwards to Velikiye Luki, where we'll stay overnight. Quick fact: this town is also known as 'Small Stalingrad'. Who knew?



### MEALS:

- Breakfast
- Dinner

## DAY 10 | VELIKIYE LUKI TO RIGA, LATVIA

Goodbye Russia, and hello Latvia. Riga's up next - another World Heritage star in an already studded Baltic lineup. Late medieval sights and lots of art nouveau await us on today's guided walking tour. Key highlights include: Power Tower, the Freedom Monument and Riga Cathedral. Oh, and the impressive House of Blackheads building - but more on that later.



### MEALS:

- Breakfast
- Dinner



### INCLUDED TODAY:

- Walking tour of Riga

## DAY 11 | RIGA

You've got a free day today, so take the chance to explore Riga's wooden buildings and medieval Old Town while you can. Set on the Baltic Sea at the mouth of the River Daugava, Riga offers a wide range of water activities, from canal boat tours to swimming at the beach. Tonight, why not hit up the town's cellar bars?



### MEALS:

- Breakfast

## DAY 12 | RIGA TO VILNIUS, LITHUANIA

Today we'll set our sights on Vilnius: the capital of Lithuania. This city is home to Europe's largest baroque Old Town and the world's only statue of Frank Zappa (we know - the connection escapes us, too). Today's walking tour will cover the Town Hall, Gediminas Tower and Vilnius Cathedral. Pro tip: as you make your way around, keep an eye out for the Gate of Dawn and St Anne's Church.



### MEALS:

- Breakfast



### INCLUDED TODAY:

- Visit the Hill of Crosses
- Walking tour of Vilnius

## DAY 13 | VILNIUS TO WARSAW, POLAND

On today's driving tour, you'll find that modern day Warsaw is a far cry from its war-torn past. Once home to Frederic Chopin and Marie Curie, the city has loads to offer when it comes to history and culture - and its nightlife doesn't disappoint, either!



### MEALS:

- Breakfast
- Dinner



### INCLUDED TODAY:

- Driving or walking tour of Warsaw (time dependent)

## DAY 14 | WARSAW

Today, Warsaw is all yours. From the Warsaw Rising Museum to the Neon Museum (which houses Poland's collection of Cold War era neon signs), this city is sure to keep you busy. Make sure you take some time to stroll along the newly-refurbished riverbank or check out some great views from the top of the Palace of Science and Culture! Oh - and don't leave the city tomorrow without trying some stuffed parcels of deliciousness called pierogi. Cottage cheese and onion fillings may sound unusual, but trust us - they don't have our seal of approval for nothing.



### MEALS:

- Breakfast

## DAY 15 | WARSAW TO BERLIN, GERMANY

Time to return to the scene of the crime, #Topdeckers: today it's back to Berlin. Tonight, we'll reminisce over our amazing adventure over one last included dinner (sob).



### MEALS:

- Breakfast
- Dinner

## DAY 16 | BERLIN

We're outta here after breakfast. Swap numbers and start planning your next trip!



### MEALS:

- Breakfast

# MEALS

Your included meals are detailed in the 'Included Essentials' section of this document.

Breakfasts (usually continental breakfasts) are included every day, except on the first morning of your trip. A typical continental breakfast may consist of cereals with milk or yogurt, bread, croissants, cold meats, and cheese – with fruit juice, tea or coffee to drink. It is rare to get a hot breakfast in continental Europe, though on some occasions some hot food may be available.

Included meals will be provided at local restaurants and the accommodations in which we stay. In most cases, table water is provided with meals. If you wish to purchase additional drinks, you can do so at your own expense.

If you have any dietary requirements, we'll make every effort to cater to your needs – as long as you advise your travel agent or Customer Service Consultant when you book. You can also make a note of dietary requirements in the Topdeck app when you check-in.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Although we'll do everything in our power to cater to your needs, we cannot guarantee this will be possible in every restaurant we visit. We also cannot cater to tastes or dislikes, as most of our included evening meals feature a set menu.

# OTHER INFORMATION

## TOPDECK APP

Feeling appy? Download the Topdeck app and get PUMPED for the adventure ahead. Best bit is: from 45 days before departure you'll be able to chat with your soon-to-be tripmates.

Plus, get your itinerary at your fingertips – so you know where you'll be going and what you'll be doing on each day of your trip. Nice!

Links:

Apple <https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/topdeck/id994727866>

Android <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.FlexiTechSolutions.TopDeck&hl=en>



## YOUR SAFETY

### NIGHTS OUT

We love a good night out – experiencing the nightlife and entertainment places have to offer is a big part of travelling. But alongside the fun it's important to be aware of your surroundings and personal safety.

When you're out late, remember to avoid walking alone – particularly through deserted areas like beaches and back streets. Always stick together, take a registered taxi where possible, and keep a note of your accommodation so you can find your way back to your fellow Topdeckers if you become separated. Make sure you have your trip mates' mobile numbers in case you need to get hold of them while out and about.

In some countries, alcoholic measures can be considerably larger than what you may be used to. Try to keep track of what you're drinking – and if you see one of your trip mates looking a little worse for wear, take them back to your accommodation. Never leave your drink unattended.

It's also important to be aware that what you might consider harmless flirting may be interpreted differently in some countries. Be yourself and have fun, but stay savvy – you don't want to find yourself in an uncomfortable situation.

### DRUG USE

Topdeck has a strict zero-tolerance drug policy. Customers should not bring any illegal substances onto the Topdeck coach or into any of the accommodation we stay in on our trips. This includes marijuana – even if it is legal in some of the states your trip passes through. If you are found in possession of drugs, you will be removed from the trip immediately. All instances of drug possession will be reported to Topdeck Head Office, who may consider alerting the relevant authorities.

**REMEMBER:** if you are found in possession of drugs, not only do you risk getting in trouble with the local police, but our Driver will also be held responsible if they are found on the Topdeck coach. Trust us, you don't want that to happen to any of our Drivers – they're awesome.

### MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Culture shock, homesickness, random periods of feeling down – these things happen and are totally normal. You can rest assured that if you're feeling low, your Topdeck crew will do their utmost to cheer you up.

Measures you can take to look after your mental health and wellbeing while on the road with us are:

- Call home. Sometimes it's nice to hear a familiar voice and have a good old-fashioned catch up with your loved ones
- Eat well. Never underestimate the power of a good, wholesome meal. Nobody feels at their best when they're hungry!

- Drink responsibly. Not only will you swerve the dreaded hangover, but by keeping an eye on what you drink you could also avoid getting into any potentially uncomfortable situations
- Talk to your Trip Leader. Don't forget, they're probably far from home too – so they're sure to know some tried- and- tested ways to beat the blues
- Integrate with your fellow Topdeckers. This one is key! The more fun you're having on your trip, the less likely you are to feel homesick (fact!)

## TRAVEL SINCE COVID-19

Travel looks a bit different since COVID-19. That's why we've put some new procedures in place to help keep you safe on the road.

What remains the same? Your Topdeck trip will be run hygienically, responsibly, and with your safety at the forefront of everything we do. End of.

Here's the info: <https://www.topdeck.travel/resources/travel-safely>

# RESPECT ON THE ROAD

## RESPECTING FELLOW TRAVELLERS

Our trips are for everyone. We're a family – and we want every Topdecker to have an incredible time.

What we're not about is excluding people or making them feel like they don't belong. That's why we always encourage Topdeckers to be kind and courteous to their fellow tripmates . The golden rules? Respect each other's space, be mindful of causing excessive noise in shared accommodation, and treat others how you'd wish to be treated. Easy!

## HOW TO BE A RESPONSIBLE TRAVELLER

Responsible travel isn't difficult to achieve. With a little conscious thought and preparation, you can have an awesome adventure AND a positive impact on the places you visit. Sweet!

Here are five things you can do to ensure you're travelling responsibly:

- Conserve water. You know the drill – reuse your room towels, take short showers and remember to turn off the tap when you're brushing your teeth
- Reduce your waste. Ditch the plastic bag, refuse unnecessary packaging, dispose of your waste responsibly and recycle as much as possible
- Go local. Hunt down locally owned and operated restaurants and bars, shop in local markets, and book tours and activities run by local guides
- Consider the wildlife. Avoid any attractions that involve closely engaging with wild animals
- Respect local people and culture. Obeying local laws is a given – but also remember to dress and behave in a manner appropriate to the community. Be polite and keep an open mind!

# INSURANCE

Before your trip departs, it's compulsory for all passengers to take out comprehensive travel insurance covering cancellation, medical expenses (including repatriation), loss or damage to baggage and personal belongings, money and personal liability.



Head to our FAQ for more info: <https://www.topdeck.travel/resources/faqs-0>

Got more Qs? Chat with our Customer Service team: <https://www.topdeck.travel/about-us/contact>

## PASSPORTS AND VISAS

Please make sure your passport is valid for at least six months after the last day of your trip. Some countries will refuse entry if you do not have at least six months validity remaining on your passport after your departure date. Depending on your nationality, you may require a visa to enter certain countries.

It is your responsibility to obtain visas prior to your trip's departure. To determine which visas you'll need, you can consult either your own government's website or the government websites of the countries in which you will be travelling. Check out our handy interactive map showing global visa requirements:

<https://www.topdeck.travel/resources/latest-border-restrictions>

PLEASE NOTE: some visas can take up to six weeks to acquire, so don't leave it until the last minute. Also, bear in mind that the validity of a visa often runs from its date of issue rather than the date of entry into the country. Please check with the appropriate embassy/embassies prior to departure, as requirements do change periodically.

## TIPPING

Your Topdeck Trip Leaders and Drivers never expect tips, and they won't ask for any either. We also know how much tipping can cost you. So go ahead – spoil yourself with the money you save travelling with us (just don't forget Mum's souvenir).

## WHAT TO BRING

Based on our experience, these items are key. Everyone's different though – so if you want to bring more or less, go for it! (As long as you don't exceed your 20kg allowance, that is.)

1 pair of comfortable walking shoes

1 pair of smart casual shoes

1 pair of thongs/jandals/flip-flops

2 pairs of jeans/trousers

2 pairs of shorts/skirts

4 shirts/T-shirts

2 sweaters/jumpers

Smart casual evening wear

1 rainproof jacket

1 warm jacket

Underwear and socks

Swimwear

Snow gear

Towel

Toiletries

Hat and sunscreen

Basic medical kit (including plasters, aspirin etc)

Insect repellent

Conversion plug

Reusable water bottle



# THAT'S IT!