



TOPDECKER, meet Australasia (TD)

Is this trip for me? DIFFERENT. MEMORABLE. ENLIGHTENING.

Disclaimer: if you're looking for a stock-standard whirl around Europe, ticking off mainstream attractions and paying for overpriced tourist traps - this trip is not for you. From Helsinki to Moscow, we're gonna uncover the off-the-beaten-track gems in Estonia's capital, discover the REAL side to St Petersburg with a local guide and delve deeper into Russia's historic core. All with a bunch of comrades just as stoked to be here as you are. Ready? We thought so.

WORTH NOTING...

Heads up! The departure dates for this trip perfectly align with our 15 Day Scenic Scandi trip. Meaning? You can combine the two and make one BIG adventure.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



Sail & Swim



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

- Baltic Sea ferry ticket
- Locally guided walking tour of Tallinn
- Driving tour of St Petersburg with a local guide
- Guided tour of the State Hermitage Museum
- Fast train ticket to Moscow
- Driving tour of Moscow with a local guide
- Guided tour of the Moscow Kremlin

YOUR ITINERARY

DAY 1 | HELSINKI, FINLAND

Uncover the unknown. Embrace the new and exotic. Meet YOUR people. You ready? We thought so. Touch down in Finland's quirky capital and if you're here early, get exploring. The likes of Senate Square, Tuomiokirkko and allllll the picturesque market squares of this vibrant city are calling. Later, we'll meet our expert Trip Leader and head to an included dinner with the rest of the gang – we might be a mixed bunch but we're all in it together. Cheers to the incredible adventure ahead!



MEALS:

- Dinner

DAY 2 | HELSINKI TO TALLINN, ESTONIA

Wave goodbye to Finland, we're jumping on the ferry over to the Silicon Valley of the Baltic Sea. Fact: Skype was invented here and kids start coding at six-years-old. Dump your stuff and get exploring – you've got the rest of the afternoon to do your own spontaneous this-is-what-I-came-for thing. Need some suggestions? Hit the cobblestones on foot and soak up all the medieval vibes in Old Town. Check out Viru Gates and climb a portion of the city's stone walls (cue: allll the city views). Snap a pic of Alexander Nevsky Cathedral. Then head to Ill Draakon in Town Hall square for fresh pastries, Estonian sausages and pickles you have to fish out of a medieval barrel. It's trickier than it sounds. Whatever you do, just be back in time for tonight's included dinner with the gang. Thank us later.



MEALS:

- Breakfast
- Dinner



INCLUDED TODAY:

- Baltic Sea ferry ticket

DAY 3 | TALLINN

Down your coffee and get ready to delve deeper into the best-preserved Gothic city in Northern Europe. Say g'day to your guide and strap in for a walking tour with all the local tips and knowledge. Pass by St Olaf's Church, learn about the House of the Brotherhood of Blackheads, uncover the importance of Great Guild Hall and check out Kiek In de Kök. Then: the rest is up to you. If you're not history-ed out, head to Kadriorg Palace this afternoon. Founded by Russian Tsar Peter I in 1718, this place is the definition of 'opulent' – plus, it's home to the Kadriorg Art Museum, so there's plenty to sink your teeth into. Tonight, dinner is on you but if you're after a local vibe and live music – Olde Hansa is where it's at.



MEALS:

- Breakfast



INCLUDED TODAY:

- Locally guided walking tour of Tallinn



OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

- Visit Kadriorg Palace: from €8

DAY 4 | TALLINN TO ST PETERSBURG, RUSSIA

Another day, another incredible Northern European country. Welcome to Russia, comrades. Say Zdravstvujtye (zdrah-stvooy-tee = hello) to your local guide as we arrive in St Petersburg. They'll be joining our driving tour to give us the low-down on the 'Venice of the North'. Tick off the likes of Peter and Paul Fortress, Rostral Columns, the Bronze Horseman, Kazan Cathedral and the Church of the Savior on Spilled Blood (in all its domed and glittery glory). Then: quiz your trip mates with all your new-found knowledge at tonight's included dinner. Later, head to a rooftop bar and rub shoulders with the locals overlooking the Neva River. Yep, you're really here.



MEALS:

- Breakfast
- Dinner



INCLUDED TODAY:

- Driving tour of St Petersburg with a local guide

DAY 5 | ST PETERSBURG

With three million items in the archives, the Hermitage Museum is your morning sorted. With the largest collection of art in the world, you'll need a local expert to show you what's what. Luckily, we've got one on hand (thank us later). Wander through the most interesting collections – dating back from Ancient Egyptian artefacts to 20th-century paintings and try spot a guard cat, they're here to protect the art from rodents. True story. Then? The rest is 100% up to you. Jump on the subway and explore the city's unique neighbourhoods – just don't get stuck when they draw the bridges tonight! Tried some of Russia's notorious clear spirit yet? Head to a local bar and drink it like a local.



MEALS:

- Breakfast



INCLUDED TODAY:

- Guided tour of the State Hermitage Museum

DAY 6 | ST PETERSBURG

You wanted more time to delve deeper. So, here's 24 hours of free time to do just that. Go get it! Organise a cruise along the canal and get an alternative view of the city. Get your history fix with a wander through Peter and Paul Fortress. Take in alllll the panoramas from the top of St Isaac's Cathedral. Or slow the pace with a visit to the City Gardens. Just make sure you try a pyshka (sugary Russian donut) along the way. Gotta keep your energy up, right? Tonight, the city's nightlife is yours for the taking – head to Dumskaya and mingle with the locals over a cocktail. Or book tickets to the ballet. You're in Russia after all.



MEALS:

- Breakfast

DAY 7 | ST PETERSBURG TO MOSCOW

Onwards! We're gonna travel like a local today, swapping the coach for a fast train to Moscow. After landing in Russia's vibrant and edgy capital, we'll meet our local guide for a driving tour of the city. Roll past showstoppers like Red Square, St Basil's Cathedral and Lenin's Mausoleum –uncovering the fascinating history this city has developed over more than 800 years. Then? We'll tuck into some hearty Russian cuisine at tonight's included dinner with the gang.



MEALS:

- Breakfast
- Dinner



INCLUDED TODAY:

- Fast train ticket to Moscow
- Driving tour of Moscow with a local guide

DAY 8 | MOSCOW

Tick off a UNESCO A-lister today as we get the inside scoop on the Moscow Kremlin. The biggest active fortress in Europe, with 2,235-metre-long walls, five squares and 20 towers – you won't be bored here. Spend the morning exploring the likes of Cathedral Square, the Church of Laying Our Lady's Holy Robe, the Patriarch's Palace and the 'Ivan the Great' Bell Tower complex with a local guide. Then: take a walk around the Kremlin Armoury – filled with ancient state regalia, vestments of the Russian Orthodox Church Hierarchs and the largest collection of gold and silverware made by Russian craftsmen. Hungry? We thought so. Head to a local haunt and fill your belly with some steaming vareniki (Russian dumplings) or beef stroganoff. Mmmmm.



MEALS:

- Breakfast



INCLUDED TODAY:

- Guided tour of the Moscow Kremlin

DAY 9 | MOSCOW

Nobody panic, but today is our last full day on tour. So, don't waste a second. St Basil's Cathedral blows all those Hans Christian Andersen fairy tales out of the water, so head over and get a closer look. Then: delve deeper (literally) with an optional tour of the Moscow Metro. You can say g'day to founder of the Russian Communist Party at Lenin's Mausoleum. Or hunt down a traditional banya for a real Russian experience. And before the day is done, explore GUM Department Store and try the Soviet ice cream. It's the best, trust us. Tonight, we'll get the gang together for one last dinner together. Toast like a Russian (to health, our meeting and friendship) and give this incredible trip the send-off it deserves!



MEALS:

- Breakfast
- Dinner



OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

- Guided tour of the Moscow Metro: from €14

DAY 10 | MOSCOW

Time to say poka (bye). Get down to breakfast and swap those socials. Who's up for round two next year? We won't blame you if you wanna stick around for more.



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, though on some occasions some hot food may be available.

Included meals will be provided in a mixture of local restaurants and places 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

Basically: it's not necessary.

Your Trip Leader and Driver don't expect tips, and they won't ask for any either. Meaning? More dollar to spend on optional activities (and a souvenir for your nan).

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!).

Off to Japan? Your luggage must be no bigger than 160cm in total (height x width x length). So maybe leave the hairdryer at home.

Psst: this is a packing list for Topdeck trips in general. Obv you'd look silly splashing around the Greek islands in a snowsuit.

- 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 warm jacket + 1 rainproof jacket

- Underwear and socks + swimwear
- Towel
- Toiletries
- Hat and sunscreen
- Basic medical kit (including plasters, aspirin etc)
- Adaptor plug
- Reusable water bottle
- Snow gear



THAT'S IT!