

## Russia Visa & Trains Information

### Information about obtaining Russia Visas

To obtain a visa, you must first apply to Tucan Travel for an invitation letter. You can obtain this by providing us with all the information requested on our booking form online. We will then liaise with our local Russian Operator and obtain the hotel and voucher confirmation we need to issue your invitation letter (as endorsed by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs). We will also need details of the city where you wish to process your visa application. After forwarding this onto you, it is then your responsibility to organise your visa with the Russian Embassy.

A Russian visa is required by all travellers to enter Russia and applications can only be lodged 3 months or less before your departure. Also, your passport must be valid for a further six months. The invitation letter is date specific so your exact arrival and departure details are required on the booking form before we can apply for your invitation letter. The visa lists entry and exit dates including pre or post accommodation you may have organised. We cannot always get an Invitation Letter to cover accommodation booked independently before or after your tour and it is recommended that you organise this accommodation through Tucan Travel. Please note that we will need to know if you have booked yourself a pre tour hotel so we can add this to your invitation letter. When filling out the booking form, be careful not to write outside the line and print neatly in black ink pen. We discourage bookings less than 28 days before travel as the time frame given by the embassy can be unpredictable depending on demand, so the sooner you know your dates the better. We will provide you with a visa authorisation letter and service voucher to enable you to arrange your Russian visa. Please consult your trip notes for further information.

If you are applying for a visa within 28 days of your departure, we advise that you use a visa agency to obtain your visa (although you can expect to pay over the odds for this service).

**Please note:** we charge an administration fee of GBP 22, AUD 47, CAD 39, CHF 39, EUR 26, NZD 58 or USD 35 per invitation letter. The actual visa is the responsibility of the person travelling to Russia and this charge is paid by yourself no matter which avenue you should take.

Failing this you are free to use one of the many visa agencies who will complete the entire service for you. This does work out to be more expensive; however, they will obtain the visa for you.

You must validate your Russia visa within 72 hours of your arrival in each Russian city. This can be done when you check in at your hotel. The price is approx. 3 Euros (not included).

### Trains

We use 2nd class carriages on the train and will sleep four to a cabin. This is broken down as two up and two down, with loads of luggage storage, individual reading lights (so bring a book or two), and a small table to rest your drinks and Russian vodka. Clean bedding is provided on the train, and there is usually a western and squat style toilet at each carriage. Please note these toilets are locked before coming into the stations so timing is everything. There is a dining cart on the train, however we advise you to take your own food in case they run out. Hot water is also available on the train so you can make your own hot drinks. The scenery is very beautiful and diverse, and the train is a great way for you to try to learn some local language from the Russians, or sample in the local vodka.