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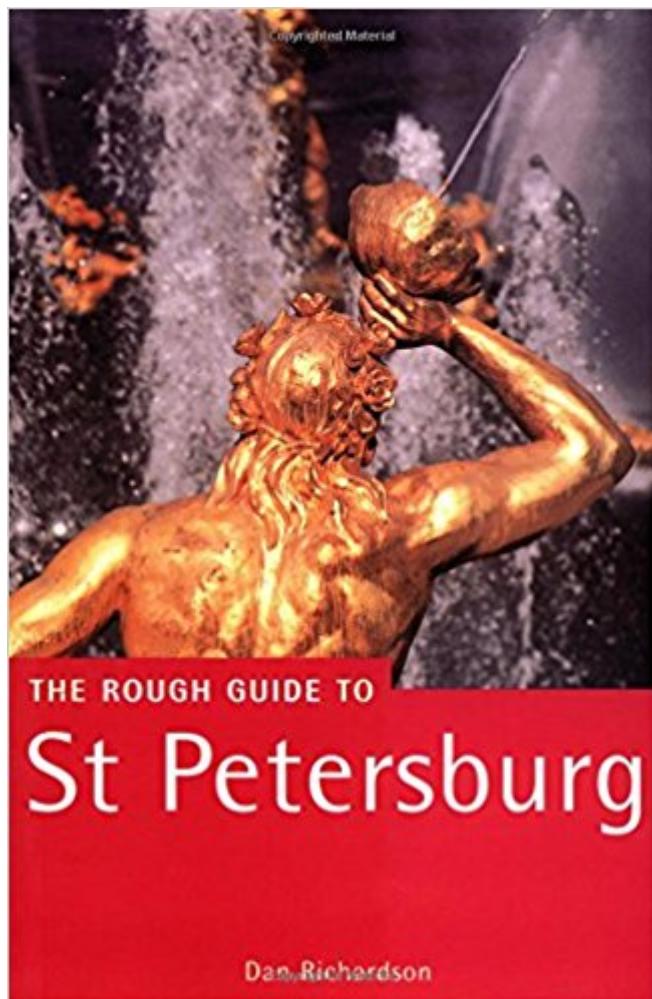# The Rough Guide To St. Petersburg

THE ROUGH GUIDE TO

St Petersburg

Dan Richardson

Synopsis

The Rough Guide to St Petersburg is the definitive guide to Russia's most beautiful city. Features include lively accounts of all the great sights, from the grandiose Nevskiy prospekt to the peerless art collection of the Hermitage. Candid reviews of the best places to stay, eat and drink, in all price ranges. Detailed accounts of day-trips to the imperial palaces of Peterhof and Tsarskoe Selo, and the ancient city of Novgorod. Informed coverage of St Petersburg's history and politics, from Peter the Great to the post-communist era.

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Customer Reviews

Dan Richardson is an established Rough Guide author, specialising in Eastern Europe. Before joining Rough Guides in 1984 he worked as a sailor in the Red Sea and a commodities dealer in Peru.

WHEN TO GO St Petersburg lies on the same latitude as the Shetland Islands and Anchorage, Alaska, but its climate is less harsh than you’d imagine, being moderated by warm air blowing in from the Atlantic Ocean. Summers are hot and while winters may be cold by Western European standards, they rarely compare with the ferocious cold of winter in Moscow, let alone Siberia. The most popular time to go is summer, lasting from the beginning of June to early September, when the city celebrates the famous "White Nights" (mid-June to mid-July) with a special festival and weeks of partying. Days are baking hot and nights sultry with the occasional downpour providing relief from

the humidity. In August, everyone who can afford to leaves the city, if only to stay in a dacha (cottage) in the surrounding countryside. Although tourism is at its height in the summer, ballet fans should bear in mind that the Mariinskiy is closed in August. By mid-September autumn is under way, with cloudy skies and falling temperatures. October sees the first frosts (and sometimes snowfalls), though it’s not unknown for there to be warm and sunny days, when the city looks especially beautiful in the soft northern light. Subzero temperatures and snow can set in weeks before winter officially begins in December. The canals and rivers soon freeze over and a blanket of snow creates enchanting vistas that almost make you forget the cold. The secular New Year occasions shopping and merrymaking, much as Christmas in the West, though you need to stick around a while longer to catch the traditional Russian Orthodox Church celebrations of both holidays, in early January. While temperatures rarely fall below -15Â C, the snow soon loses its charm as it compacts into black ice which lingers on until March, by which time everyone is longing for spring. Like winter, its arrival is somewhat unpredictable – the fabulous sight of the Neva ice floes breaking up and flowing through the heart of the city may not occur until April, or even early May. CHANGES IN THE NEW RUSSIA Inevitably, the speed of change in Russian society means that certain sections of this book are going to be out of date by the time you read them, not to mention the more humdrum but frequent changes to opening times, phone numbers, and suchlike. More positively, the prospect of political uncertainty has receded for the time being, and the apocalyptic scenarios of civil war that were popular in the media a few years ago now look ridiculous.

While in St Petersburg for several months I stocked up on three guidebooks. The Rough Guide was an excellent way to get to know the city. The amount of information is so dense that it actually becomes a drawback at times. I used the Rough Guide in conjuction with the Lonely Planet guide to St Pete. Together they were a great combination.If you want one book that will fill you in on the background of St Pete's and delves in depth into its subject matter this is the guide for you. Or, if you are going on an extended stay- as I was- I can recommend this guide.If you're going on a shorter trip you may try the very good (and shorter) Lonely Planet guide.

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