



RLUS

Russian Language Undergraduate Studies

St Petersburg Guide



Welcome to St Petersburg!

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PLEASE PRINT A COPY OF THIS DOCUMENT AND TAKE IT TO RUSSIA WITH YOU

Benedict School has been working together with RLUS to bring students to St Petersburg for over 20 years. We hope that you will have an enjoyable and rewarding stay in Russia's cultural capital! If you have any questions that are not covered in this document, please do not hesitate to contact any of the representatives of RLUS or the school!

THIS DOCUMENT FOR THE THREE WEEK SEPTEMBER COURSE (PBEN3). ALL OTHER STUDENTS WILL BE STUDYING AT THE STATE UNIVERSITY AND SHOULD READ THE ST PETERSBURG STATE UNIVERSITY BRIEFING DOCUMENT.

Contents:

- Upon your arrival
- Your Course
- Visas and Registration
- Accommodation
- Safety
- Money
- What to do if Something Goes Wrong
- Life in St Petersburg: Mobile Phones, Transport, Food
- Maps

UPON YOUR ARRIVAL

The RLUS recommended flight will be met by Benedict and the RLUS representatives, who will welcome you to Russia and take you to your accommodation. Please note: If you are not staying in accommodation organised through RLUS and you are instead staying in your own accommodation, then you will NOT receive a free transfer to your accommodation.

If you are arriving independently, you can, of course, take a taxi to your accommodation. You can get a taxi from the booths either inside the arrivals terminal beside the doors or the ones directly outside. On average, it costs about 1000 roubles to get to the centre by taxi. Do make sure, however, that you stay by the window of the booth to avoid being poached by other taxi drivers who charge by a meter.

You will be staying in homestay accommodation. The family, will take care of you for the first two days, giving you guidance on the city, helping you to change money and buy a Russian simcard.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT FROM THE AIRPORT

Getting to the centre from the airport is cheap and relatively easy. There are two buses, the 39 and k39 (actually a marshrutka) that can take you from the airport to Moskovskaya metro (located on the blue line).

When you reach the metro (it looks like a regular subway with a small blue **M** over it), just should go downstairs and turn left. Go through the swing doors into the main hall and there will be cash desks on your right where you can buy a token/zheton. To get to the centre, you need to take a train in the direction of **Parnas**. **Nevskiy Prospekt** metro is roughly 20 minutes away.

YOUR COURSE

Classes will begin the Monday after you arrive, at 10am.

You will also meet the teachers and the General Director of the Benedict School, Natalia Dmitrievna Rostovtseva.

During your course, you will study a number of subjects, taking in various aspects of Russian language and culture. The timetable includes the classes Media, Grammar, Translation, Film, Pronunciation and Conversation. According to the Russian educational system, each lesson lasts not for 60 minutes but 2x 45minutes (without a break).

On the first day you will sit a placement test to allocate you to a group, after which you will receive your timetable for the semester. More details can be found on the Benedict website: <http://eng.benedict.ru/>

VISAS AND REGISTRATION

When you arrive in Russia, you will be given a migration card, filled in for you at passport control. This small piece of paper is very important, so please keep it safe and make sure that you have it stamped with the correct date. Check this has been stamped and dated **BEFORE YOU LEAVE THE AIRPORT!** This is particularly important for people making their own way to Russia, as group flighters will have their migration cards checked by the RLUS reps.

On arriving at the school you will be **registered**. This is required by authorities to make your stay in the country legal and must be done within three working days after your arrival. You have to bring the following items:

- passport
- visa
- migration card
- registration fee – 600 rubles

N.B. The registration fee here covers your initial registration and the registration of your multi-entry visa, should you need one. Every time you leave the country after you will have to pay 500 rubles to reregister.

ACCOMMODATION

You will be staying in homestay accommodation. You will be assigned a room with a family living in St Petersburg. They are always friendly and do what they can to help you. They usually do not speak English, so this will be a great opportunity for you to practice your Russian!

You will pay your rent directly to the Benedict School. The price you pay for homestay includes breakfast but not dinner. You can arrange to make extra payments for an evening meal (250 rubles) or laundry (150 rubles). Please note that bedding will be supplied, and so you only need to bring a towel. (And clothes!). Homestay is a great insight into life in Russia but please be aware that you are staying in someone else's home. There isn't a curfew as such, but it is a good idea to let your hosts know if you will be home later than 11pm. There are also a couple of cultural differences that might be helpful to know in advance: you should wear slippers indoors and the food might differ from what you are used to. If you talk to your host family about your preferences, they will try to accommodate you as far as possible.

You will, no doubt, wish to contact your family when you arrive, in which case we suggest using an international phone card if Skype is not available.

Homestays more often than not have access to the Internet – but not always! In this case you can buy a dongle quite cheaply (see MOBILE PHONES AND INTERNET).

SAFETY

St Petersburg is a big, bustling city and so you should take the same precautions as you would do in any other large town. Be particularly careful of pickpockets and make sure your valuables are not hanging out of your back pocket! Girls: don't bring low hanging bags; try to bring something that hangs under your arm or in front of you. This will reduce the risk of pick pocketing.

You do not need to carry your original passport but you should have a copy of your passport, visa, migration card and registration on you. These are all stamped with the details of where you are studying.

This is particularly important for gentlemen as you may be stopped by the police. In this case don't worry, just show them your documents and if there are any problems just get them to contact Benedict School (+7 (812)314-8172, +7 (812) 325-7573) or your Reps. You shouldn't carry large amounts of money around with you. **We also advise that you leave all unnecessary cards at home i.e. your driving licence, your national insurance card, and student card (if it isn't an international student card). These cards are totally useless in Russia and better left at home!**

If you are going to go out at night, try not to overdo it as you make yourself more vulnerable to dangers. Do plan how you are going to get home and try to go together with

someone else. We recommend that you use taxis at night – such as 6-000-000, 068 or 777-1-777, as they are reliable, safe, and not much more expensive than other forms of night transport. RLUS does not condone the use of “private cars” or “gypsy cabs”. However, if you do take one, ensure that there is only one person in the car, agree the price before getting into the car, and show caution!

Lastly: Don't drink the tap water! The plumbing system is old and badly maintained, so you should either boil your water or use a Brita filter, or best of all, both! Bottled water is inexpensive and available everywhere.

MONEY

You can exchange money in numerous banks and bureaux de change around the city. (Your host family should show you these in the first couple of days if you need to change money) You can't use dollars, euros or pounds in St Petersburg but changing them will not be a problem.

You will be able to use your bank cards to withdraw money from cash machines in the city, but please remember that most banks charge a fee for this and some have limited service. Please let your bank know before you leave that you will be using your card in Russia, as some banks may otherwise get suspicious and stop your card.

Also, many shops and restaurants do not take cards and you should be prepared for this, do carry some cash just in case. However, credit cards are becoming more common in large supermarkets and shopping malls. Many places ask for ID when using your card. A copy of your passport will be fine.

There are debit cards available in the UK, which are commission-free and great for travelling. However, beware that commission-free does not always mean that they have a great exchange rate. A good place to start looking for currency cards etc. is moneysupermarket.com

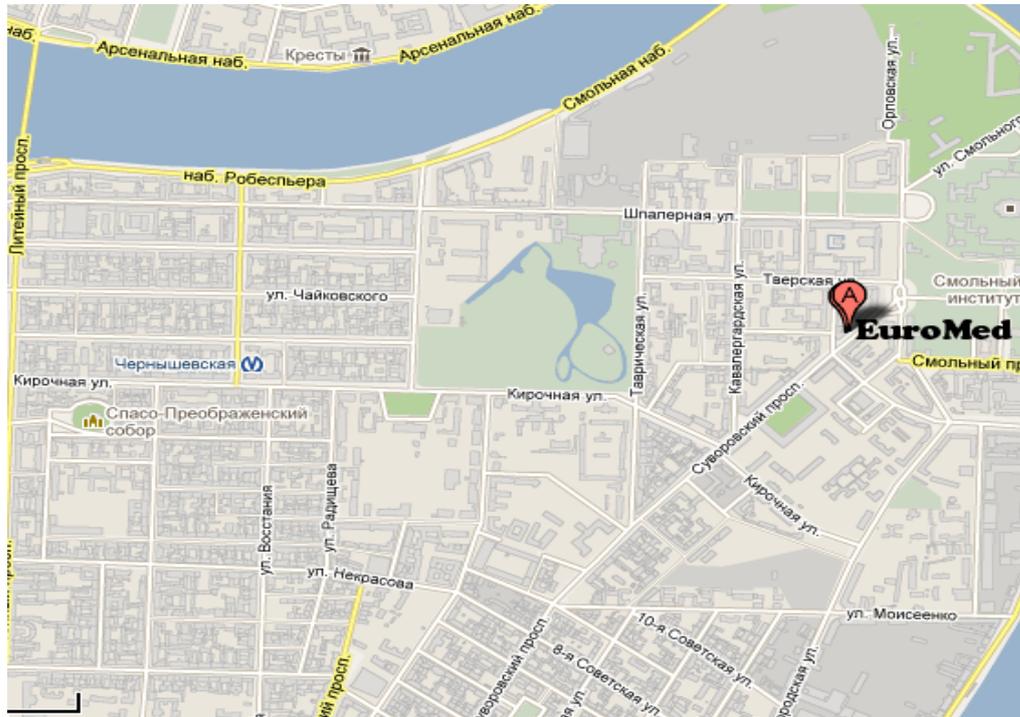
If you lose your card, or it stops working, you can get cash sent to you from England by Western Union or MoneyGram.

WHAT TO DO IF SOMETHING GOES WRONG

If you have an emergency, you can reach the RLUS reps on our emergency phone numbers. They are at the beginning of the document.

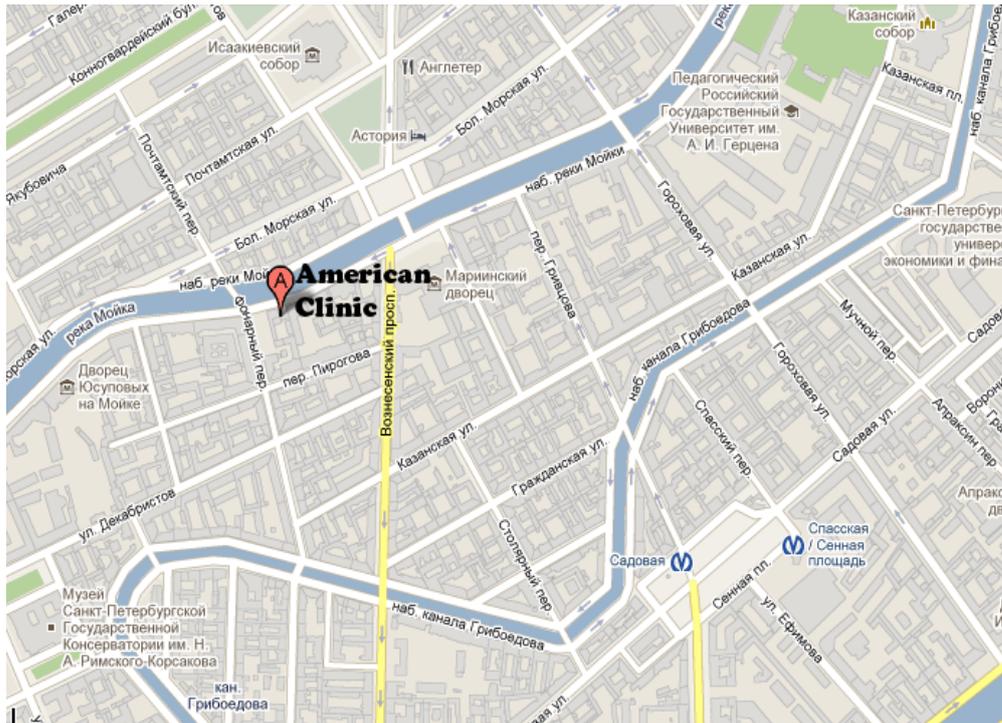
In case of theft or other emergencies requiring a visit to the **police**, please get in touch with your RLUS rep straight away. They can help you in any situation. If you are unlucky enough to find yourself in a police station without your rep. **Sign nothing!!** You will be given a phone call, and you should use it to contact your RLUS rep! Do not stop until you get in touch. They will contact the necessary people and save you! **If you are forced to sign something, you must write that you do not understand what you are signing.**

If you lose any of your documents, contact your RLUS rep straight away, and together with Benedict School, they will sort everything out.



If you need to see a **doctor**, you can go to Euomed on Suvorovsky Prospekt or the American Clinic on Moika Canal. Please ensure that you have your insurance policy with you, as well as a phone number of someone at the insurance company, just in case the doctors need to get assurance of payments, so that you don't have to pay anything yourself.

It is normal to have to pay up front for outpatient procedures, however it is possible to avoid this by getting the hospital administration to contact the insurance company themselves to arrange a guarantee of payment. Inpatient procedures won't have to be paid for up front. The best thing to do is to contact one of the RLUS reps if you need to go and see a doctor, as they are experienced in dealing with insurance issues.



LIFE IN ST PETERSBURG

St Petersburg is an exciting and fascinating city, with lots to offer. Here are some things that you should know about:

MOBILE PHONES & INTERNET

No doubt one of the first things you'll want to do in the city is set yourself up with a **simcard**. The main providers in Petersburg are MTS, Beeline and Megafon. Megafon generally seems to be the most expensive of the three, and MTS and Beeline tend to be preferred by young people. There is also a provider called Tele2, which is cheap, but does not always work when corresponding with British providers such as EE.

You can buy a sim from any mobile shop (such as Svyaznoi & Evroset) and then top up using the touchscreen (orange) machines on the streets, in shops, and in the metro.

If you want to buy a dongle, we recommend Yota or MTS. They are a little bit more expensive than buying Beeline or another service, but they are much better and ensure you get good signal wherever you are in the city.

If you are living privately, routers can be quite expensive but there is a good, cheap internet provider called Tvoi Internet: they give you a free router when you sign up and also install it free-of-charge. For more info, Google them! Also, do make sure that you check with your landlord before drilling holes in the wall!

TRANSPORT

The city is quite large, but it is easy to get around. There is a **metro** system which is reliable and fairly comfortable, and although it can get quite squished at rush hour, it is still the fastest and most convenient way to get from A to B. 

There is also a large network of **buses, trams, trolleybuses** which are all run by the state transport company. The metro and other state transport is



reasonably priced and you can get a travel card for various periods (eg 20 journeys for 15 days, 40 journeys for a month). Non-Russians are not able to get discounted rates, even students, so getting a **travel card** is the best-value option.

Aside from these, there are also **marshrutkas** - private buses in the form of minivans, which are more expensive than state transport but run more often and much faster. They are like "taxis", which follow a set route. You can flag them down at any point, not only at stops. Similarly, you can ask them to stop anywhere (that is safe) by shouting out «остановите, пожалуйста». They can take some getting used to, but in fact are very useful and quite fun.

Most forms of transport run from between about 6am until midnight. At night you should make sure to take a taxi, avoid walking around on the street alone.

FOOD AND DRINK

Restaurants and bars are constantly opening in SPB, and one of the best sites to get the latest information is the-village.ru. Make sure the site is set to SPB, not Moscow; not only can you find reviews and photos of new places, but you can also find a calendar of events for the upcoming weekend.

Be aware that credit cards are not accepted everywhere here, so if you're thinking of dining in a small, out-of-the-way cafe, best to carry some cash, just in case! They will, however, generally be accepted in chain restaurants and high street shops, but not always in your local produkty.

There are two huge **shopping centres** in the centre of the city. One is called Galeria <http://www.galeria.spb.ru/> and Nevskii Centre <http://www.nevskycentre.ru/>. These are practically identical to Western shopping malls with many shops you will be familiar with.

All the best, and good luck!

RLUS

СХЕМА ЛИНИЙ ПЕТЕРБУРГСКОГО МЕТРОПОЛИТЕНА

THE SAINT PETERSBURG SUBWAY MAP



УСЛОВНЫЕ ОБОЗНАЧЕНИЯ MAP SYMBOLS

- Линии метрополитена / Subway lines (1-6)
- Железнодорожные вокзалы, станции, платформы / Railroad stations
- Автовокзал / Bus station
- Музей метро / Metro museum
- Станция пересадок / Change for another line
- Автомобус в аэропорт / Bus to airport
- Станция строится или проектируется / The station is under construction
- Музей метро / Metro museum
- Порты / Sea and river ports