

# POLITICALTOURS

Travel beyond the headlines

t +44 (0) 843 289 2349  
e info@politicaltours.com  
w www.politicaltours.com



## Russia

Dates: 7 nights  
**Tuesday to Tuesday**

### Yekaterinburg and Moscow

*Led by Leonid Ragozin & Angus Roxburgh*

Watch the military parade for the anniversary of Victory Day in Moscow. Our tour coincides with the commemorative events.

Vladimir Putin's Russia has regained much of its standing lost during the years of chaos in the 1990s and has emerged as a major challenge to Western governments.

We examine Russia's recent history, its perspective on relations with NATO, the conflict in Ukraine as well as Putin's increasingly firm grip on power at home.

The tour starts away from Moscow in Yekaterinburg on the border between Europe and Asia and arguably at the heart of Russia. It's an ideal place to examine recent history and life away from Moscow.

Our tour then takes us to Moscow for meetings with members of the President's own party, the opposition, media and diplomats. With Russia's intervention in Ukraine, east-west relations have been at their lowest ebb since the cold war. We will be in Moscow for the May Day military parade.

**Leonid Ragozin** a former BBC Russian correspondent leads the tour. He is an expert on the region reporting mainly for Bloomberg but also the Guardian, Time, Newsweek and others.

**Angus Roxburgh** is exceptionally placed to explain Russia's recent history. He first lived in Moscow in the 1970s, and after working as the BBC correspondent advised President Putin on his media strategy.

**Price:** £4500.00

Single Supplement: £500.00

This tour starts in Yekaterinburg and then moves on to Moscow. Flights are not included in the tour. If you need help with bookings please contact us.

**Political Tours Limited** Bloxham Mill, Barford Road, Bloxham OX15 4FF, UK.

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*Like all our tours the itinerary is focused on current affairs. Events on the ground may change and the final schedule may be adjusted accordingly.*

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## Itinerary

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### **Day One, Tuesday:** *Introducing Putin's Russia*

The tour begins in Yekaterinburg at the foot of the Urals and just inside Asia. We meet in the evening for dinner and an introduction to the week ahead.

*(Political Tours can recommend flights to and from Yekaterinburg – the group will return from the city to Moscow on Day Four of the tour) Overnight Yekaterinburg*

### **Day Two, Wednesday:** *The many faces of Yekaterinburg*

No country can be summed up by its capital and with this in mind we start our tour in a province at the heart of the country and on the dividing point between Asia and Europe; Yekaterinburg is steeped in history and has all the complexities of modern Russia to boot. It's here famously where the Romanovs were murdered and where now the strange cult of Nicholas II is promoted along side modern Russian nationalism. This was also Boris Yeltsin's home town; a museum in his name promotes a pro-western liberal agenda. The city is run by an opposition mayor with his own interesting and controversial history. We explore all of these themes on our first day with a walk around town and meetings with local experts and officials. *Overnight Yekaterinburg*

### **Day Three, Thursday:** *The heart of tradition and industry*

The contrasts continue on our second day in Yekaterinburg. Russia has many communist-era industrial zones and the region is no exception. It boasts one of the oldest mining regions in the country. But it is also a centre of international investment. We visit Verkhnyaya Salda, home to a factory that produces titanium for all the Boeings manufactured in the world. It represents one of the largest American investments in the Russian economy since 1991. In the afternoon we visit an Old Believers village outside of the city and meet with a German born environmentalist and fervent supporter of the president. *Overnight Yekaterinburg*

### **Day Four, Friday:** *To Moscow*

Mid-Morning flight to Moscow (2 hours - *Political Tours will co-ordinate flight times with the group.*) After lunch we explore the historic city centre and Kremlin. We also get to see the radical changes the city has been through since the collapse of communism. President Putin's confidence at home has led to a more assertive role abroad and brought relations with the West into perilous new territory in Ukraine and the Middle East. The West sees Russia reigniting a new cold-war but Russia accuses the West of breaking its commitments. We look at changing Russian foreign policy and examine how this rediscovered influence is perceived by the Russian people? Dinner with the vice-president of a leading international think tank who will give further insight into Russian foreign policy. *Overnight Moscow*

### **Day Five, Saturday:** *Jubilee Victory Day Parade*

We join ten of thousands of Muscovites as they witness the Victory in Europe celebrations. Russian losses during WWII surpass all other nations, and the event is being used to revive Russia pride. It is the 75th anniversary of the Soviet Union's victory over Nazi Germany in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945. Watch the military parade. We view the city through the eyes of Muscovites, from its imperial centre to its Soviet era suburbs. We look at the cost of living.

Visit to a local market we learn about the price of goods and recent inflation and how ordinary people have coped with western sanctions imposed since the conflict in Ukraine. *Overnight Moscow*

### **Day Six, Sunday:** *Church & Dacha*

President Putin has renewed the state's support for the Orthodox Church. We visit Christ the Saviour, the rebuilt cathedral that has become the symbol of the state's role in religion. Church of Christ the Saviour, was destroyed shortly after the 1917 revolution and rebuilt under President Yeltsin. It was also the scene

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## Itinerary

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of a famous protest. We get an opportunity to get out of the city to a Dacha. Meet with a local family, plenty of vodka and home-cooking. *Overnight Moscow*

### **Day Seven, Monday: Media & State**

We look at the changing role of Russian media with a visit to a TV station to see how they cover the news. In the 1990s government was chaotic and oligarchs were arguably more powerful than the Kremlin. We look at how that situation was reversed and how Vladimir Putin has restored national pride and established a firm grip over government. We meet with members of the Russian parliament or Duma. Diplomats and former Kremlin insiders explain how government works today. Oil is seen as key to Russia's more recent economic fortunes. We sum up the tour over dinner with guests. *Overnight Moscow*

### **Day Eight, Tuesday:**

*Tour ends after breakfast.*