The Golden Ring of Russia.

The Golden Ring of Russia is a name for a loop of very old towns located north-east of Moscow. The Golden Ring includes several ancient Russian towns – Vladimir, Suzdal, Kostroma, Yaroslavl, Rostov the Great, Pereslavl Zalessky, Sergiev Posad, Moscow, Gorokhovets, Murom, Alexandrov, Uriev Polsky, Gus Khustalny, Plios and Bogolubovo. Geographically they make a big ring. They preceded Moscow, the present capital, as the political and cultural centres of the early Russian state. These cities are very old. They are famous for their rich and ancient architecture and designs, old churches and Kremlins with white or red brick walls. There are many museums and places to see in these cities.

These towns reflect Russian culture and history. The majority of the present Golden Ring town buildings had been constructed after the Tartar invasion. Golden Ring should be visited by those who want to learn more about Russia. In this article, we give you some information about each of the cities that make this Russian Golden Ring and list some main places that might be of special interest to visitors.

Vladimir

The city of Vladimir was founded at the end of the X century and named after the Russian Prince Vladimir who allowed Christianity to spread in Russia to become the main religion of the country for centuries. The city rapidly developed and by the beginning of the XIII century it became one of the most important trade and cultural centres in Russia. It was the time when the main buildings, including the famous Golden Gate, churches and cloisters, were built. For many years Vladimir was the capital of the Russian state.

Today, Vladimir is less influential compared with the other Russian cities, especially Moscow. The population of Vladimir is about 360,000 people. However it is still has administrative, industrial and cultural significance. 

The historical buildings, ancient churches, museums accommodating the most beautiful and precious pieces of art make the former capital well-known and loved by many Russians as well as foreigners. Local authorities are doing their best to preserve the main gateway to the city - the Golden Gate, the Cathedral of Assumption with Andrey Rublev’s paintings, and the Cathedral of St. Dmitry — the main places to see in this old city.



All museums of the city are incorporated into the State Vladimir-Suzdal History, Arts and Architecture Museum-Preserve. The Heroes Gallery accommodates the portraits and information of the famous people who lived in the Vladimir area, including pilots, smelters and even a cosmonaut. The Exhibition of Military History is showcased in the former Church of the Deposition of the Robe. In the museum, one can see different armours used in Russia from XII to XIX century. The Lacquer-work and Embroidery Exhibition located in the former Old Believers’ Trinity Church near the Golden Gate showcases the crystal, glass and lacquer-work and well as pieces of appliqué, crochet and embroidery. The Museum Centre for Culture and Education presents various exhibitions including “The Russian House”, “Old Russian School”, “The Birth of the Book" and others. All museums are kept in ideal order thanks to the special and up-to-date techniques of storage and presentation.

Suzdal

Suzdal is about the same age as Vladimir. Founded in X century, the town is located 35km north from Vladimir. In the first half of the XII century it became the capital of the Rostov-Suzdal principality and later progressed to become a developed industrial and monastic centre. Suzdal is one of the most popular towns and cities of the Golden Ring. The town has won the special prize for the preservation of the historical monuments and developing tourism. When in Suzdal, you feel as if you are in medieval Russia. The town is more of a village than a city. It is friendly and calm with churches, vegetable gardens and wooden houses everywhere.

 Suzdal is a small town with a population of about 12,000 people. Among the town’s architectural monuments of special interest for tourists is the Kremlin surrounded by ancient ramparts, the complexes of the Convent of the Intercession and the Monastery of Our Savior and St. Euthimius, the Museum of Wooden Architecture and Peasant Life, XVIII century Possad churches, and the Gostiny Dvor. The Museum of Wooden Architecture and Peasant Life is located close to the town centre. In the multiple exhibition displays you will find icons, fine pieces of folk art, paintings and drawings.

The Kremlin. The historic centre of Suzdal is located in the walls of the ancient Kremlin. The Kremlin is located on a bank of the Kamenka river in the heart of the old town. Within the Kremlin are several of the most important monuments of the old Suzdal: the Kremlin rampart (XI-XII centuries), the Cathedral of the Nativity, built in XIII-XVI centuries, the Archbishop’s Palace (XV-XVIII centuries), and the wooden Church of St. Nicolas.

Yaroslavl

Yaroslavl is an ancient town located 260 kilometres northwest of Moscow, the most metropolitan of the Golden Ring towns. The town of the Golden Ring, Yaroslavl has many old churches with beautiful icons and traditional Russian decoration. It was founded in 1010 as a fortress and developed rapidly because of its favourable location on the Volga trade route. The XVII century was the best time for the city. It was then that the architectural ensembles were built up to make Yaroslavl, one of the most beautiful cities of old Russia.



 Today Yaroslavl is a regional centre, an important railway junction and a river port. The population of the city is about 680,000 people. The city has many industries, five educational institutions, three theatres, the Philharmonic Society and many museums.

Novgorod.

In the town one can find the Fine Arts Museum, History and Architecture Museum-Reserve, and some house-museums. The old Governor’s Mansion exhibits the collection of Russian fine art dated XVIII to XX centuries. Yaroslavl Art Museum has an excellent collection of Russian paintings, including famous icons such as "The Saviour" dated XIII century and "The Diesis" dated XV century. The Music and Time Museum, set up in the early 1990s, was the first private museum in Russia. It contains a unique collection of old clocks, musical instruments, bells, household utensils (gramophone records, irons, icons, etc.).The Yaroslavl History, Architecture and Art Museum-Reserve established in 1895 have enormous collections of great historical and artistic value. The museum visitors will see exhibitions of ancient Russian painting, expensive drapery, know more about the history and nature of the Yaroslavl region.

The redbrick Church of Epiphany with bright exterior is the town’s specialty. The central statue on the Bogoyavlenskaya square is that of Yaroslav the Wise, the founder of the city. The Church of the Iliah the Prophet located on the Sovietskaya square is open daily from May-September contains some Golden Ring’s brightest frescoes.

Rostov -The -Great

Rostov-the-Great was founded in the middle of the XI century on the beautiful Nero Lake. It is almost three hundred years older than Moscow. Since the XII century the town has been called Rostov-the-Great. The word "Great" referred to the concentration of the civic and religious authorities in the town. Rostov has been developing as an economic, religious and cultural centre because of its favourable location on the northern Russia trade route. The architectural ensemble of the Rostov Kremlin had been built for about 30 years, and came down to us in its magnificent beauty. The town preserves two-storey wooden houses of the XIX century with Russian architectural features, as well as the monuments of civic architecture called Myitny and Gostiny Dvors. Rostov is the only town in Russia where the old art of finite (decorative designs and portraiture on enamel) has been preserved. The Rostov Kremlin Rostov bell chiming has been known all over Russia. Different chimes have their specific names. Visitors to Rostov Kremlin can enjoy melodious chimes of Russian bells.

Today Rostov is a district centre of the Yaroslavl Region with developed industries. Population: 40,000 people. Location: 220km north-east of Moscow Museums. The Rostov Kremlin State Museum-Preserve established in 1883 as a museum of church antiquities is located in the Kremlin. There are several museum exhibitions: "Ancient Russian Art" (XV-XIX century icons of the Rostov school of painting), "Russian Painting of the XVIII-XIX Centuries", and "Russian Finift" as well as some other collections. The Church of the Saviour-over-the-Galleries has the most beautiful interior. Gate Church of St. John the Divine and Monastery of St. Jacob are also worth visiting.

Sergiev Posad

Sergiev Posad is a half-day trip from Moscow and one of most interesting towns in the Moscow Region. The town is known as the capital of the Russian Orthodox Church, because for many centuries it has been the main cultural and religious centre of Russia. The town is home to the famous medieval Holy Trinity Monastery of St. Sergius, founded in the 1340s by Reverend Sergius of Radonezh, whose name was given to the town because he played a great role in a consolidation of Russian lands. In the Monastery and other churches of the town there are many stunning and precious icons, including those by Andrey Rubliov.

Things to know Population 100,000 people. Location: 70 km north-east of Moscow.

The Old Russian Applied Art Museum houses the Trinity Cathedral rich treasury, including tapestries, jewel-encrusted vestments etc. In the Treasury buildings, Vicegerent Chambers, Hospital Ward and Sacristy building icons, church-plate, works of decorative and applied art, local lore and ethnographic materials are exhibited. The Art Museum of Toys or the "kingdom of fun" accommodates many toys, including ancient ones, made of different materials. The Church Archeological Cabinet and The Sacristy are also worth visiting. Excursions available upon request.

Pereslavl-Zalessky

Pereslavl-Zalessky town is located on the banks of the Trubezh River. It was founded as a fortress by the Prince Yury Dolgoruky, the founder of Moscow. Many great people lived and worked there. For example, Peter the Great has built several ships for the first Russian Navy.

Being a Golden Ring town, Pereslavl-Zalessky has many historical monuments including churches. In the town one can see the famous Cathedral of the Transfiguration of the Saviour built in 1152, St. Daniel monastery, the monastery of St. Nikita, and Goritsky monastery. These beautiful historical monuments have been attracting a lot of people to the town.

Below we listed only the main towns of the Golden Ring which are visited by the majority of tourists. There are some smaller towns which are also included in the Russian Golden Ring — Kostroma founded by Prince Yuri Dolgoruky in 1152 and located on the banks of the Volga River 330 kilometers northwest of Moscow. Others include Gorokhovets, Murom, Alexandrov, Uriev Polsky, Gus Khustalny, Plios and Bogolubovo with the wonderful church ensemble. In these towns, visitors can see more masterpieces of Russian art, more ancient historical buildings and beautiful churches.

On the high bank of the Volga lies Yaroslavl', a city which has preserved magnificent reminders of yore, and which has formed a school of architecture and art uniquely its own. According to legend, in 1010 prince Yaroslav Mudriy (the Wise) along with his men captured an old Russian settlement, and with his battle axe split in two a pagan image of a bear. Another version has the prince killing a live bear. Still, whatever happened, Yaroslav founded a fortress, naming it in his own honour — Yaroslavl'. The new city's coat of arms showed a bear holding an axe in its paws. On the prince's orders the city was girded by a wooden wall with towers. A hundred years later, it became the capital of an independent principality. Yaroslavl' did no escape the fate of many other Russian cities, and was burned and looted by the Tartars in 1238. In 1436, the Yaroslavl' principality became part of the Grand Principality of Moscow. Situated along trade routes with Western Europe (Moscow-Arkhangelsk) and the East (the Volga), Yaroslavl' eventually became the Russian state's most prominent trade centre. In 1608, the city was overrun by Polish-Lithuanian invaders. An army from Vologda came to Yaroslavl's aid, and the enemy was ousted. The next year, in 1609, the Poles were again at the ancient city's gates. Yaroslavl' became a stronghold of opposition to the aggressors. In 1612, Minin and Pozharskiy's army entered the city and remained there for four months while preparing tor a liberating march to Moscow. I he war years damaged the city heavily, but reconstruction progressed at a fast pace, and soon Yaroslavl' was second only to Moscow in terms of its area and the number of inhabitants. In the 18th century, Yaroslavl' was rebuilt according to a 'standard' plan, ll'yinskaya Square became the city's centre, with streets emanating from it in the manner of rays from the sun. In the 18th century, Yaroslavl' became home to the first theater in Russia accessible to the general public, created by Fyodor Volkov. Today, Yaroslavl' is a prominent industrial and cultural centre.Sightseeing in Yaroslavl

Yaroslavl Art Museum

has an excellent collection of Russian painting. In 1977 it won the title of the "Best Museum of the Year" among provincial Russian museums. The museum collecti...

Governor Garden

A unique peculiarity of the Governor's House is the park-museum “Governor's Garden”, where modern sculpture is represented, flower exhibitions are organized and...

The architectural ensemble of the Strelka

place where the Kotorosl river flows into the Volga, built in 1658-68.

Bogoyavlenskaya Church

In the 17th-18th century, the use of poured ceramics for decorating buildings became very popular in Yaroslavl', BOGOYAVLENSKAYA CHURCH, (1684-1693), for ...

Church Ensemble in Korovniki

Remarkable in its beauty the church ensemble in Korovniki (middle of the 17th-18th centuries) embellished the Korovnitskaya Sloboda (settlement), at the mouth o...

Church of Ilia the Prophet

If you walk from the monastery to the direction of Volga river you'll see the white Church of Ilia the Prophet (Tserkov Ilii Proroka) with five green domes. It ...

Church of St. Nickols Rublenny (of-the-logs)

Epiphany Church

Next to the monastery there's the richly decorated Epiphany church (Tserkov Bogoyavleniya). Built in the end of the 17th century, this church had more Moscovitan than Yaroslavl look.

Spaso-Preobrazhensky Monastery

THE SPASO-PREOBRAZHENSKIY MONASTERY was founded in 1216 by the prince Konstantin Vsevolodovich. In 1550-80, it was surrounded by stone walls and towers. It became Spassky Monastery.

Yaroslavl starts from the Spassky monastery (Saviour monastery), that was founded in the 12th century at the place where Kotorosl river meets Volga river.

Yaroslavl Historic-Architectural Museum-Reserve, founded in 1895, possesses rich collections (more than 250,000 exhibits). There are expositions of Ancient Russ...

The Literature-Memorial Museum-Reserve of N.A.Nekrasov Karabikha

Is located in the estate of a great Russian poet in the old settlement of Karabikha. The estate in Karabikha is a beautiful architectural ensemble in the classy...

Yaroslavl History, Architecture and Art Museum-Preserve

established in1895 has enormous collections of great historical and artistic value. The museum visitors will see exhibitions of ancient Russian painting.

Vladimir is a beautiful town located 178 km north-east of Moscow. It is famous as one of the most beautiful, charming and ancient cities of the Golden Ring of Russia. The population of the town is about 360,000 people. Location: 178 km north-east from Moscow.The main street of the city is Bolshaya Moscovskaya street.

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For many years Vladimir was the capital of the Russian state, but later Moscow strengthened and Vladimir lost its importance.

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The cathedrals of the Assumption and Saint Dmitry can be easily found in 15 minutes walk west of the train and bus stations. In 1 km, in the town centre, is XII century Golden Gate.

The church of Intercession on the Nerl is located farther – around 11 km east of the town of Bogolubovo.

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