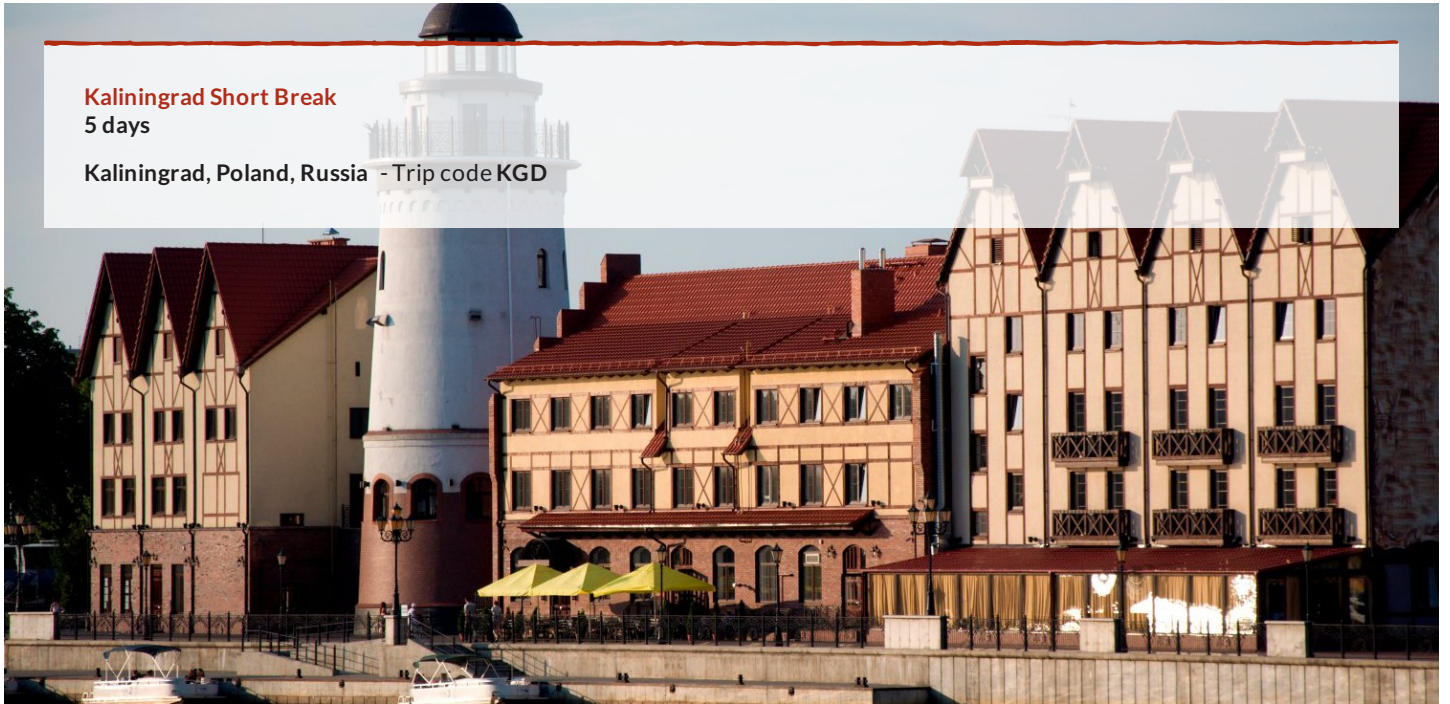


EXPLORE!

Kaliningrad Short Break

5 days

Kaliningrad, Poland, Russia - Trip code KGD



Kaliningrad Short Break

On this short break we explore the little known Russian exclave of Kaliningrad. From Gdansk we will travel to Kaliningrad city before heading out to learn more about amber mining in the beautiful Baltic coastal resort of Svetlogorsk. A full day in the UNESCO World Heritage Site of the Curonian Spit National Park is our last excursion within the Russian borders before we return to Gdansk via the largest castle in the world, Malbork.

Trip highlights

- ★ **Kaliningrad** - Explore the city's main sights including the Immanuel Kant Museum, Königsberg Cathedral and the Museum of the Oceans
- ★ **Baltic Coast** - Stroll on beautiful beaches and learn about amber mining
- ★ **Curonian Spit National Park** - Follow trails in this UNESCO World Heritage Site
- ★ **Malbork Castle** - Visit the largest castle in the world

ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

Standard

Our standard, mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service, often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en suite facilities.

TRIP PACE:**Moderate**

Moderate pace tours are ideal if you want a holiday which combines exciting activities and experiences with plenty of time to relax and unwind. Typically you'll be active and busy for part of the day but then also have time to rest and recharge your batteries.

GROUP SIZE:**12 - 18**

Maximum group size ranges from between 6 to 20 people, depending on the type of trip, the transport and accommodation used and activities included. We rarely have groups that are smaller than five or six people and the average is 12 people plus an Explore leader.

Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

DAY 1 - Join trip at Gdansk airport; transfer to Kaliningrad

Once the whole group have arrived we will depart Gdansk airport and drive to Kaliningrad where we will spend the next three nights. Founded in 1255 by the Teutonic Knights, Kaliningrad (then Konigsberg) went through periods of Germanisation and colonisation until its, almost total, destruction by the British and Soviets in World War II. Post war Konigsberg became part of the Soviet Union and was renamed Kaliningrad after Mikhail Kalinin, one of the original Bolsheviks. It was an area of great strategic importance during the Cold War, being the most western province of the USSR, and was closed to foreign visitors for several years. With the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 the Kaliningrad Oblast (or region) became a Russian exclave - still a part of Russia but separated geographically from the rest of the country.



Accommodation: Hotel Moskva (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 2 - Kaliningrad city tour; visit to Svetlogorsk spa town and Yantarny amber region

This morning we will take an orientation walking tour of Kaliningrad's main attractions; the cathedral, symbol of Kaliningrad, Soviet House and the Immanuel Kant Museum - one of the city's most famous former residents. There's an interesting mix of historical and modern architecture with the pre-war Konigsberg Cathedral (restored) through to the much more recent Cathedral of Christ the Saviour situated in Victory Square. We'll also visit the Museum of the Oceans where you can see the only pre-atomic era submarine left in Russia. Following our tour we head to the Baltic coastal resort of Svetlogorsk on the Zamlund Peninsula. This area was very popular with German vacationers in the 19th century who would come to this spa town to take in the sea air and therapeutic waters. During our visit we can see the Art Nouveau bath house, 19th century water tower or just stroll along the beautiful tree lined avenues and the promenade. From here we travel to Yantarny to discover the history of this amber mining region. Amber was first collected commercially along the coastline at Yantarny by the Teutonic Knights who set up a monopoly of the amber trade. The tradition of amber mining continued and, at its peak, was producing over 650 tons of amber a year. You'll have the chance to find your own piece of amber to take home as a souvenir. Whilst in Yantarny we'll stop at an amber mine canteen where you'll have the chance to taste an authentic Russian lunch. This evening you can either return to Kaliningrad on our bus or you may choose to hop on a local train back to the city. At Kaliningrad train station there's a fascinating locomotive section and a statue of Lenin worth seeing.



Accommodation: Hotel Moskva (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 3 - Visit to a Fort 4 and the Curonian Spit National Park

This morning we visit a market where you can mingle with the locals and we have the chance to purchase a picnic lunch of native specialities. We then drive to Fort 4 on the outskirts of the city and have time to explore the fascinating tunnels here before continuing to a World War I Cemetery with its impressive monuments and the Hill of Glory. We spend the rest of the day exploring the UNESCO World Heritage Site of the Curonian Spit National Park. This 98 kilometre long, curved spit separates the Curonian Lagoon and the Baltic Sea and is half Russian, whilst the northern half is Lithuanian. During our visit we will only spend time on the Russian side, exploring trails and footpaths in this beautiful landscape and discovering more about the area at the local museum. Curonian Spit National Park is home to the mysterious 'Dancing Forest', also known locally as the drunken forest. This area has a bizarre natural phenomenon where the pine trees are twisted into loops, spirals and strange shapes along the ground, most probably due to the strong cross winds experienced on this piece of land. The park is however best known for its large and beautiful sand dunes. After exploring on foot we return to Kaliningrad for our final night.



Accommodation: Hotel Moskva (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 4 - Drive via Malbork Castle to Gdansk

This morning we leave our Russian exclave to return to Gdansk, Poland. Our journey will take approximately three hours and crossing the border can sometimes take a bit of additional time. On route we will visit the impressive Malbork Castle. It's an outstanding example of the castles of the Teutonic Order, which evolved in the frontiers of Medieval Western Europe. It is a unique, perfectly planned architectural creation, with no equivalent in Gothic architecture. It is also the largest castle in the world by surface area, the largest brick building in Europe and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Once we arrive in Gdansk and have checked into our hotel, we will have a short walking tour of the city. Gdansk is located on the Baltic coast and is Poland's largest sea port as well as one of its oldest cities, a fine location for the last night of our short break in Eastern Europe.



Accommodation: Hotel Wolne Miasto (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 5 - Trip ends Gdansk

Our trip ends in Gdansk, after breakfast.



Why book this trip

On this short break, we experience the culture and history of Kaliningrad. From Kaliningrad city to the amber mines at Yantarny, Malbork Castle to Curonian Spit National Park, this trip delves into the hidden treasures and history of this eastern European exclave.

What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 4



Transport

Bus



Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader
Driver(s)



Accommodation

4 nights standard hotel

Trip information

Country information

Holidays to Kaliningrad

Poland Holidays & Tours

Climate

Poland has a temperate, changeable climate. September and October are cooler and gradually become damper until late November when temperatures fall below freezing with snowfall, particularly in mountainous areas. Cold temperatures last through to March, but are tolerable. Snow can lie for up to three months in the mountains.

Time difference to GMT

+1

Plugs

2 Pin Round

Religion

Roman Catholic

Language

Polish

Russia Holidays & Tours

Climate

In European Russia snows usually start in November and stay till late March/early April, when a great thaw occurs with temperatures ranging from about 5°C in October and April to -15°C in January.

Time difference to GMT

+3

Plugs

2 Pin Round

Religion

Orthodox Christianit, Islam, Buddhism, Judaism

Language

Russian

Budgeting and packing

Optional activities

Yantarny - Amber Workshop €8.00

Clothing

The weather in Kaliningrad can be changeable, so please bring layers with you. The winters are very cold and summers warm, but there is no particular dry season, so always bring a waterproof jacket and umbrella.

Footwear

Comfortable shoes for walking (both city and national park) - trail shoes, trainers and/or walking boots should be fine for all the different terrains we will be walking on. Bear in mind Curonian Spit National Park could be muddy at any time so more sturdy shoes would be preferable. Trainers/sandals for relaxing in.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

One main piece of luggage and a daypack for personal items.

Equipment

We recommend taking a torch, water bottle, insect repellent, a sunhat, sunscreen, sun glasses and of course don't forget your camera.

Tipping

Explore leader

At your discretion you might consider tipping your Explore Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

Local crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognised part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of

the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. Accordingly, you should allow £15.00 for tipping. In order to make things easier for you, the Expolore Leader may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the trip.

Country Information

Holidays to Kaliningrad

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Foreign Exchange

Poland Holidays & Tours

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch price

£8

Dinner price

£18.00 - 22.00

Beer price

£1.50 - 3.00

Water price

£0.8

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

Polish Zloty2

Recommended Currency For Exchange

British Pounds Sterling, US Dollars and Euros are all accepted at exchange offices and banks2

Where To Exchange

Most major towns - your Tour Leader will advise you on arrival

ATM Availability

Available in all major cities

Credit Card Acceptance

Credit cards are widely accepted in all major cities

Travellers Cheques

Easily exchanged

Russia Holidays & Tours

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Dinner price
£12.00 - 16.00

Beer price
£2.00 - 4.00

Water price
£1

Foreign Exchange

Local currency
Rouble.

Recommended Currency For Exchange

We recommend that you take your money in Sterling, Euros or US Dollars cash. For US Dollars notes should be in good condition (not torn or marked), issued after 1990 (pre-1990 are often refused) and ideally in small denominations. Euros, Sterling and Dollars are easily transferable into the local currency, Roubles.

Where To Exchange

Most major towns - your Tour Leader will advise you on arrival.

ATM Availability

Cash can be withdrawn both in Moscow and St. Petersburg

Credit Card Acceptance

Local currency (Russian Roubles) can also be drawn on credit cards from ATM's in both Moscow and St Petersburg.

Travellers Cheques

Travellers cheques are accepted in Moscow and St Petersburg but are very time-consuming to change and attract unfavourable exchange rates

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Bus

Essential information

FCO Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice [click here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, [click here](#)

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Essential Information

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

Visa Information

All nationalities require a single entry Russian visa in order to enter Kaliningrad. As part of the visa requirements you will need to obtain a Russian Travel Voucher and Authorisation from the local Russian authorities. Explore will request this on your behalf approximately eight weeks prior to departure. Please allow a minimum of five working days for the travel voucher and

authorisation to be processed. Due to the visa processing times, Explore are unable to accept bookings within one month of travel. For British passport holders: All applicants must present themselves in person to the Russia Visa Processing Centre in London, Manchester or Edinburgh, on the day of application, to provide biometric information (fingerprints). There is currently no appointment system in place for this process, so applicants will be seen on a first come, first serve basis. This may mean that there are lengthy queues and waiting times. The biometric process is not optional, and any applicant who refuses to provide their fingerprints will automatically be refused a visa. This information is not stored and applicants will therefore need to travel to the Processing Centre each time a visa is required. In the event an application is rejected due to inaccurate or incomplete information, fingerprints must be resubmitted as part of the revised application. For more information regarding this process - we recommend contacting the Russian Embassy directly and their website is <http://rusemb.org.uk/visa/> It is essential that you provide Explore with the correct passport information at the time of booking, as this will be required in order to request the travel voucher and authorisation, as well as pre-booking any applicable train tickets. Corrections and amendments will incur additional charges, so please double check that the information we have for you is up to date and correct, this includes your passport number, full name as per passport (including middle names), date of birth and place of birth; if customers renew or reissue their passports from the details initially given to Explore, train tickets must be cancelled and purchased again, which involves extra costs and may result in customers being in differing train carriages to the rest of the group. If you intend to renew your passport please let Explore know at the point of booking and please ensure that you have the new passport no later than eight weeks prior to travel. You will be required to enter a reference number and a confirmation number on your visa application. These can be found at the top of your authorisation letter under the heading 'Voucher Number'. The 6 digit long number is the reference and the 4 digit number is the confirmation number. In order for Explore to provide the necessary documentation to support your visa application (i.e. your visa authorisation), all pre or post tour accommodation in Russia must be booked through Explore and not booked independently. Please ensure that your passport has a minimum of six months validity from the date of return to your home country. All visa information is subject to change, so please check with your local consulate for the most up to date advice for the countries you are visiting. All other nationalities should check with the Russian embassy. For nationalities that require proof of their travel insurance through Explore as part of their visa application, please contact us for a copy of this. Poland: Visas are not required by UK, US, Canadian, Australia and New Zealand citizens. Other nationalities should consult the relevant consulate.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our Essential Information and Booking Conditions.

Transfers

[Find out more about Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions before you book.](#)

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. [Read more about them here.](#)

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Non refundable permits

Holidays to Kaliningrad

Poland Holidays & Tours

Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against tetanus, polio and hepatitis A. Tickborne encephalitis is recommended by some medical sources if travelling in certain areas of Europe, at specific times of the year. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed before departure.

Russia Holidays & Tours

Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against tetanus, typhoid, hepatitis A, polio and diphtheria. Consult your travel clinic for further advice. Tick-borne encephalitis is recommended by some medical sources if travelling in certain areas of Eastern Europe, at specific times of the year. Check latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. Special Note: Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed before departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider. The Russian government advises that certain medications must be declared upon entry into the country, and you may also be required to carry a prescription with you. You should consult your local consulate for up to date information prior to travel.
