

Sights of Golden Ring in brief

The Golden Ring is a ring of cities Northeast of Moscow, the capital of Russia, these ancient towns and cities played a significant role in the formation of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Russian History.

Sergiev Posad

There is the **Holy Trinity St. Sergius Lavra** situated in **Sergiev Posad** (70km to the North-East from Moscow). It is the center of **Russian Orthodoxy** and an ancient architecture monument of great value. **The Holy Trinity-St. Sergius Lavra** was founded by the monk **Sergius Radonezhsky** in **30th - 40th** years of the **XIV** century. Russian religious philosopher **Paul Florensky** wrote: Lavra is an artistically portrait of Russia in a whole and any other place becomes in comparison with it no more than a photographic spot... There is not only aesthetics but also sense for history and feeling of national soul.

The first stone building at the territory of the monastery is the **Trinity Cathedral (1423)**. One can see here iconostasis of the **XV** century with the rarest collection of old-Russian painting. Earlier there was kept the world-known **Trinity of Andrei Rublev**. In 1929 it was transferred to the possession of the **State Tretyakov Gallery**. The copy of this icon is placed into iconostasis of the cathedral.

There is the **Dormition Cathedral (1585)** situated in the central part of the monastery. The forms of it are equal to those of cathedral in Moscow Kremlin and its dimensions are even bigger.

Alexandrov

There are many legends connected with the history of town of **Alexandrov** situated 100 km away from **Moscow**. In accordance with one of them, once upon a time there lived **Nikitka Kholop** who for the first time in the history of the mankind made an attempt to fly up into the sky, he fasted to his arms wooden wings and jumped from the cathedral roof.

In the ancient, **Aleksandrovsk Village** lost the vestiges of the famous **Tsars Liberia**, library of **Ivan the Terrible**. It was the richest in **XVI** century collection of Greek parchments, Latin chronicles old-Jewish manuscripts, admire by scientists contemporizes of the tsar. This collection disappeared without leaving a trace. Till the present days mysterious Liberia arouses interest of treasure seekers, adventures and authors of detective stories.

Pereslavl Zalessky

City located on the **Pleshcheevo Lake** side in **Yaroslavsky** region at a distance of 130km from **Moscow**. There are many ancient churches, monasteries and convents in the city. The real architectural treasure of the town is one of the oldest stone temples, the **Transfiguration of the Savior Cathedral (1152-1160)**.

There is the rarest **Pereslavl Herring** so called **Ryapushka** from the salmon in **Pleshcheevo Lake**. This fish belongs to the sea relics and apparently got to the sweet water reservoir together with the glacial waters. **Russian Tsars** were fond of the delicious taste of **Ryapushka** and that is why this fish is called the **Tsar's herring**. Now **Ryapushka** is included in the heraldic emblem of **Pereslavl Zalessky**.

Peter the Great small boat

There is the oldest provincial museum of Russia, **Peter the Great small boat**, not far away from **Pereslavl Zalessky** on the shore of the silent **Pleshcheevo Lake**. In August 2003 it celebrated its 200 year anniversary, **Tsar Peter I** in 1688 -1693 order to build the team Amusing Flotilla, predecessor of powerful navy fleet of Russia. Only one boat survived from hundred of Amusing ships. A special building was constructed to keep it know as **Boat House** in **1803**.

Gorizky Monastery in Pereslavl Zalessky

Named because of its location on a rising ground, **Gora means mountain in Russian**. It was founded in **XIV** century at the time of **Prince Ivan Kalita**. The monastery stand by the way to Moscow, suffered military attacks, fires. It was restored as it was under protection of **Moscow Monastery** (built in 1750) is one of the most brilliant sights in baroque in Russia of the **XVIII** century.

Rostov the Great

Rostov the Great is the oldest town in North-East of Russia. For the first time it was mentioned in the ancient chronicle in the year 862. It is situated by the lake **Nero**, means **silty** and **marshy**. At the bottom of the lake lies a very massive of 20 meters sick stratum

of silt. It is used for fertilizing of the fields. There are impressive white-stone towers of **Rostov Kremlin** reflected in the waters of **Nero Lake**.

Assumption Cathedral situated in Rostov the Great. It is the first Christianity temple in the North-East of Russia. The story of the temple starts with year 991 the time of Christening of Russia. The temple was four times utterly rebuilt. The existing building now of the cathedral is almost 500 years old.

Rostov the Great is the center of Russian pictorial enamel production. This type of artistic handicraft has been here starting with the **XVIII** century. Firstly enamel insets were used for ornamentation of church objects: icons, book frameworks. Now **Rostov enamel** is mostly represented by portraits and decorative painting. The most popular are jewelry, powder cases, mirrors, ear rings and bracelets. Of a big value are portraits with filigree exact drawings. Marvelous jewelry works of art of Rostov enamel masters are wonderful presents from Russia.

Monastery of St. Boris and St. Gleb

At the distance of 18km from **Rostov Monastery of St. Boris and St. Gleb** stands. It is a monastery-fortress encircled from three sides with river and a deep moat. The walls of the monastery are 3m thick and 13.5m high includes 14 towers and two gates. Up to the **XIV** century all the monasteries in Russia were built in the cities or close to their walls. The reverend **Sergius Radonezhsky** created a new tradition to found the monasteries far away from the cities or in the middle of impenetrable forests. In accordance with the legend in 1363, **Sergius** showed to the monks the temple place and the foundation of the monastery and rises the **Borisoglebsky Cathedral**.

Uglich

Uglich is a charming ancient town at **Volga**. All its history is connected with the mysterious event in **the end of the XVI** century, death of the last **Ryurikovich**, son of the **Tsar Ivan the Terrible Dmitry**. The people suspecting the murder rose in rebellion which punished as a man: it was flogged, its tongue was torn out and after it was exiled to Siberia. After many years, it was acquitted and now it is kept in **Uglich Kremlin**.

There are two more interesting objects in Uglich, museum of **Library of Russian Vodka**

demonstrating the technology and culture of production, storage and application of this drink and the private museum of **Kulaginy** where one can enjoy the famous bell chime of **Uglich** in the concert of chamber bell music.

Myshkin

It is another beautiful town in the Golden Ring itinerary. Cruise ships running between Moscow and St. Petersburg make stop there. The legend said that once the **Prince Yuhotsky** lay down on the bank of the river for a short rest after hunting. He was awakening by a mouse passing over his face. The prince opened his eyes and saw a venomous snake creeping to him. In honor of little rodent who had saved his life, the prince ordered to build there a chapel.

Today, **Museum of a Mouse**, townsmen of **Myshkin** is the only in the world created and opened for visitors. There is amusing collection of different images of a small gray animal. Furthermore, **Smirnoff Museum** in the city dedicated **Peter Smirnov**, creator of the world famous **vodka**, who was born there. Recently there was also opened the **Museum of Valenky** traditional Russian winter foot gear.

Kalyazin

Small town on the **Volga** riverside is known after the **XII** century. Its main sight is the belfry of the **St. Nicolas Cathedral** (1800). It rises directly from the water above the place which was flooded as result of Uglich hydroelectric power station construction. All the buildings at the territory of submerged area were dismantled or exposed and only the belfry was left intact for the trainings of parachute jumpers. Now the belfry became the symbol of the city. The belfry is fortified with soil to prevent destructions caused by water and drifting ice.

Yaroslavl

Yaroslavl is one of the oldest cities with beautiful churches and several monasteries of the **XVI** century are preserved. This is the birth place of professional Russian theatre. The amateur actor troupe of **Fedor Volkov** was established in the middle of the **XVII** century. Later after the invitation of the empress this troupe came to St. Petersburg and became the core of the first professional theatre in Russia.

One of the favorite places for leisure walks and trips in horse carriage is the

beautiful quay in the center of the city. It is decorated with delicate tracery railing of the **XIX** century. There was an interesting private museum of **John Mostoslavsky** opened in Yaroslavl, Gramophones, Concertinas, French clocks and a great number of hand bells are collected and all this still works, rings and crack.

The Tolgsky Convent is situated on the Volga riverside not far away from **Yaroslavl**. The bishop of **Rostov Triphon** became the witness of miracle sign, appearance of the icon of the Holy Virgin. That is how the Tolgsky cloister was founded and the wonder-working icon of the **XIV** century is solicitously kept till the present time. In 1928 the cloister was closed and in 1987 the revival of it as a nunnery convent started there. The Convent is also famous for the unique in Russia cedar grove. Saplings for it were presented to the cluster by **Tsar Ivan the terrible** in the **XVI** century but the trees till bears the nuts.

Kharabikha lies 15km away from **Yaroslavl**, the memorial museum-convent of the Great Russian poet of the **XIX** century Nikolai Nekrasov. The village **Kharabikha** is of ancient history and almost all the last periods of Nekrasov life is inseparably linked to **Kharabikha**. **Nekrasov** spent summer here and created poems likes **Frost, Red Nose, Russian Women** and a great number of rhymes. Start from 1968, Festivals of Nekrasov poetry held here.

Tutaev

This small town spreads over both banks of Volga. Each bank got its own name, **Romanov and Borisoglebsk**. This town charms its guests with peace and spirit of old times. One can get acquainted with the history and lifestyle of the town in the history museum where are collected more than a thousand exhibits, goods of local handicraft, collections of china and paintings. Tutaev, the birth place of the first woman astronaut in the world.

Kostroma

Kostroma is one of the oldest cities of Russia. Like Moscow, it was created by **Prince Yury Dolgorukiy**, the name of the city is ancient and pagan word. From time immemorial there exist a rite of straw puppet burning, the symbolic sacrifice to the pagan god of the sun **Yarilo**. The puppet was called Kostroma. Advantageous Strategic situation of Kostroma made of it and one of the main advanced post of Moscow principality. There is

a monument in Kostroma dedicated Russian hero **Ivan Susanin**. It was an ordinary peasant who at the cost of his own life saved successor to the Russian throne from foreign enemies.

The **Ipatievsky Monastery** in Kostroma is one of the most famous treasures of Russian culture. From a modest wooden abode it evaluated to the richest stone monastery, the stronghold of Russian Tsars dynasty Romanov. At this place came the boyars to ask Mikhail Romanov ascend the throne of Russia. Now there are several museums in the convent of history and culture. One of them is devoted to the Russian tree ceremony. Among different pots and pans, kettles and samovars was exhibited a tea service weighting only 15 grams. Only two grams of water can be poured in it but it is in operation!

Elk farm the only one in the world, the unique nature convent in **Sumarokovo** village close near **Kostroma**. Once can see here with these vigorous wild animals and taste elk milk. Rich delicious drink has strong bactericidal characteristics and is used as good remedy against stomach ulcer and immune deficiency. Close to this place is a special sanatorium situated where people are medically treated with elk milk.

Krasnoye na Volge

Village Krasnoye na village lying not far away from **Kostroma** is well-known for its jewelry handicraft. Long since special arts of jewelry with the use of cupronickel and silver filigree and zern have been developed here. Interesting collection articles as also copper casts can be seen in the Museum for jewelry and handicraft art. There is kept an unusual crucifix of **XIX** century, from time to time becomes apparent portrayal of mysterious woman in a crown on its surface.

Plios

Plios is another small town on the **Volga riverside**. It was very popular among Russian intelligentsia of **XIX** century. First of all, **Plios** is known as a place where in the end of the 18th landscape painter **Isaac Levitan** lived and worked. Here are created his famous in Russia canvas, **Evening, Golden Plios, Silent Abode, Evening Chime** etc. Now all these paintings are exhibited in the **State Tretyakov Gallery** in Moscow. In 1972 there was **Levitan Museum** opened in **Plios**.

Ivanovo

Ivanovo is a new town in the **Golden Ring** itinerary. It arose on the base of old village and industrial settlements in **1871**. It was the biggest center of cotton industry and was called **Russian Manchester**. The main population of it was women weavers famous with their beauty in all the Russia. Since that time **Ivanovo** is called **the city of brides**. Its amazing that textile handicraft came here to replace icon-painting. A peculiar architectural ensemble dominated by modernist style and constructivism was formed there.

Palekh

Settlement **Palekh** near **Ivanovo** is well-known for **Palekh miniature paintings**. This is a unique art of Russian folk painting with tempera on black lacquered handicrafts from **papier mache** (boxes, caskets, cigarette-cases, powder-cases). It was formed in 1920 and has an ancient icon-painting handicraft in the base. **Palekh** miniature is made with vivid colors on a black background. A thin delicate and smooth design, plenty of golden shading, clear and accurate silhouettes are distinctive features peculiar to it. The basic themes of the miniatures are Russian national tales and songs. There are the museum of **Palekh miniature-paintings** in the settlement.

Suzdal

Suzdal is one of the oldest Russian towns. It was mentioned for the first time in chronicles in 1024. The city was founded on the ground of ancient handicraft and agricultural settlement. In different times, **Suzdal** was at one moment the capital of **Rostov-Suzdal** principality, at another ordinary town of **Vladimir region**. For the last 250 years the borders of the town stayed practically unchanged. More than 200 architectural monuments of the **XX** centuries are there. They create a unique city ensemble.

Kremlin, is the ancient center of **Suzdal** and the city was developed around it in the middle Ages. In the end of the **XI** and beginning of **XII** century there was a fortress constructed. Till the present days there exist remainders of fortress ramparts and of 35m deep moat around the fortress. The ancient monument of **Suzdal** land, the **Cathedral of the Nativity of Our Lady** with its **Golden Gates** and also the **Archbishop Palace** houses with exposition on **Suzdal** history and a collection of ancient icons are situated there.

Spaso Yevfimievsky Monastery of Our Saviour was founded in 1352. At the monastery territory stand strict and monumental cathedral of transfiguration of the **Saviour (Spaso Preobrazhensky)** of the **XVI** century and hip-roof church of assumption. There is the national Russian hero **Prince Pozharskiy** buried in the family burial-vault. The monastery is also famous for its bell-chime so called **Suzdal bells**.

Vladimir

Since olden times Vladimir is called **the father of the Russian cities**. It was founded in 1108 by **Prince of Kiev Vladimir Monomakh** and was named after him. The city became the capital of a new principality of **Vladimir**, its cultural and official center. Transformation of **Vladimir** to the political and spiritual center of the state stimulated unprecedented boom of building. There are situated the greatest churches and temples. Till the present days they have preserved beautiful and solemn appearance.

Assumption Cathedral was built in 1158 - 1160. This is a grandiose white-stone cathedral where the frescoes of the **XII-XIII** centuries and frescoes of **Andrey Rublev** and **Daniil Cherny** (1408) still can be seen. In the beginning of the **XIX** century a belfry and later **St. Georgius** side-chapel were attached to the cathedral.

There is a wonderful monument of the **XII** century, white-stone Golden Gates, preserved in **Vladimir**, in the city with the 1000 years history. There was the beginning of the main street of **Vladimir**. In the old times on the oak folds of the gates was a gilded copper. Their arched vault was covered with frescoes and there were messes served in a church on the top of the decorations the gates. Now there is **Museum of Military History**.

The facade of the archdukes Dmitry Cathedral of the **XII** century is turned to **Kluzama River** and broad lands behind it. The most amazing feature of the cathedral is its white stone carving. There are more than thousand of sculptured decorations the mystery of which still is not solved till the present days. Among them can be met **Tsar Solomon** and **psalm singer David**, **Alexandre Makedonskiy** and **Russian Princes**. The cathedral is crowned with tracery crucifix having weather-vane in the form of pigeon.

The Temple of Protection on the **Nero River** is the masterpiece of old Russian architecture. It is situated 14km from **Vladimir**. The church build in 1164 stands on artificial eminence with height of 6m on the water-meadow by confluence of **Rivers Kliazma** and **Nero**. There is no highway to the temple but on foot about two kilometers. This is a really pleasant walk. There is a legend that in **XVIII** century this church should be dismantled because of the lack of parishioners. But on the will of **Our Lady** whom the temple was scarified the sun ray reflected in the golden cupola blinded the workmen. That is how the temple has survived.

Yuriev-Polsky

It was created by **Prince Yury Dolgorukiy** and was names in his honor. The second part of its name **Polsky** the town got because of its locality, boundless black earth fields, so called **Opolie**. This fertile soil attracts ancient farmers in favoring the creation of **Zalesky principality**. In 1234 there was one of the **perls** of the Golden Ring constructed the **Whitestone Georgics Cathedral**, it is the last architectural monument on this earth appeared before **Mongol Tatar** invasion. There still can be seen in town **Kremlin** earth ramparts of the **XII** century, almost the highest in the North-Eastern Russia.

Gus-Khrustalny

The town of **Gus-Khrustalny** is situated at a distance of 70km from **Vladimir**. The name of **Gus-Khrustalny** is associated in Russia with the production of artistic glass and crystal. The history of **Gus-Khrustalny** started in the middle of **XVIII** century when merchant **Akim Maltsov** created a glass cutting factory. This event marks the beginning of rapid development of Russian glass industry. The range of factory goods includes bottles, glasses, bowls of color-less and colored glass with engraving and gilding. There is exhibited a richest museum collection of crystal and glassware in the **Cathedral of St. George**.

Everyone can buy inexpensive articles of modern crystal production in the shops of the town.

Murom

This ancient town is considered as the birthplace of the most famous hero of Russian sagas, glorious athlete **Ilia Muromets**. Architectural ensembles of monasteries on the high bank of **Oka River** are fine and beautiful. A brilliant collection of furniture and tableware of **XVIII-XIX** centuries is kept in **Museum of Art and History small Hermitage**. Interesting theatre performances about the life of heroes of Russian folklore sagas and tales are often arranged in town.

Eat and buy along the Golden Ring.

Cuisine

The best and the real dishes of Russian cuisine are easily to be found in the restaurant of the Golden Ring. **Kournik** (chicken-pie), it is a kind of pie made of pancakes stuffed with chicken, mushrooms and rice. The original Slavonic meal includes a chain of different dishes such as baked fish and fish in aspic, piglet stuffed with boiled buckwheat, game, soups and pottages. Fish-soup made of three types of fish, poultry and saffron, nobody can count all the courses especially the adornment of the table is a huge.

Handicrafts

Almost along the whole *Golden Ring* there are existing settlements inhabited by the masters of traditional national handicrafts. Today, there are productions of articles from cut glass and crystal in **Gus Chrustalny**, painted wooden boxes in **Palekh**, painted salvers in **Zhostovo**, large kerchiefs with bright ornaments in **Pavlov Posad**, enamel and fine jewelry with enameled patterns in Rostov. No traveler will stand out temptation to bring home from a distant country one of the traditional Russian souvenirs.