



RUSSIA

You can go on a deer safari, observe the polar lights or ski in Russia

From the Black Sea in the south-west to the Baltic Sea in the north-west, Russia is so vast it has 11 time zones. Its capital may be Moscow, but the cultural heart remains St Petersburg, which is often referred to as the second or northern capital. Whether you want to observe the polar lights, go on a deer safari or a cruise, scale mountains, ski or go white-water rafting, you can do it all in Russia.

► **The place to be: Sochi**

Russia's main health resorts are based around the Caucasian Mineral Waters found in Pyatigorsk, Kislovodsk, and Essentuki. Seaside spa resorts also flank the Black Sea coast in Sochi, Anapa, Gelendzhik and Tuapse. Sochi, the palm-tree capital of the 'Russian Riviera', only 15 miles north of Russia's southernmost border with Georgia, is due to host the 2014 Winter Olympics. There are plenty of other activities to do in Sochi, from visiting Stalin's villa — once secretary of the Communist Party — to touring the beautiful botanical Park Arboretum. A multibillion-dollar airport is also in the pipeline.

THE HOTEL: GRAND HOTEL AND SPA RODINA

This stylish hotel sits on a pebble beach and offers a Black Sea Beach Club cafe, luxury cabanas and teak-wood paths leading to the water's edge. www.grandhotelrodina.ru

- **The spa:** Spa Rodina is a modern affair that covers 48,000sq ft, which is proudly described as one of the largest in Europe. The Beauty Studio, which attracts manicured Russian women, offers luxury facials, thalassotherapy and balneotherapy (the treatment of diseases through bathing).
- **The product:** Ole Henriksen facial products have been used to beautify many a Hollywood complexion.
- **The treatment:** The Ole Henriksen Lemon Peel 'luminizing facial' is a popular solution for sallow skin.
- **The best bit:** The mammoth indoor and outdoor swimming pools.
- **The price tag:** A body massage using Tiare oil costs £141.