

The Gesundheit! Institute

Founded by Patch Adams, MD

March 2019

35th Annual Russia Clown Tour with Patch Adams Information Packet #1

Dear Clowns!

Congratulations and Welcome to the 2019 Russia Clown Tour

In this packet:

- Introduction to the Tour
- Tour package and cost
- Travel Logistics
 - Flights
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- Clowning 101
- About Maria's Children

This information packet is a great resource for participants. Please print this document if you register for the tour. The Russia Tour has made a life changing impact in the live of hundreds of participants and coming on this trip is no small decision.

Please read the entire information packet before registering for the trip.

Tour Dates:

Arrives Moscow Saturday, November 9, 2019

(North American departure for Russia on November 8th)

Our first itinerary item is the *Welcome Dinner in Hotel Katarina November 3rd!*

Departs St. Petersburg Saturday November 23, 2019

Introduction to the Tour

The clown tour begins from your own front door! *All participants travel in costume!* A singularly unique travel experience, 25-30 clowns will assemble from many corners of the globe, across generations and with all levels of experience to explore and exchange healing, playfulness, love, performance, community and culture. No experience required!

We clown in different types of institutions, which could include hospice centers, shelters, schools,

nursing homes, private homes, and many different types of hospital and orphanages as well as restaurants, on the streets and everywhere we go in Russia.

We will spend the 1st week in Moscow and the 2nd week in St. Petersburg and travel between cities by overnight train. We usually travel everywhere together on a private bus, occasionally however, we will take taxis or travel by metro. Occasionally we will break into 2 or 3 groups but usually come back together at meals.

Our arrival is eagerly awaited by host of Russian friends and volunteers who love and care for us as family. The daily schedule made by our Russia team will not be available until closer to November, but our itinerary will include some site seeing and cultural opportunities, some free time, and special evening programs

If we had typical days, they might look like this:

- Breakfast at the Hotel
- Travel by bus to clown at a hospital or orphanage
- Lunch
- Travel by bus to another clowning gig
- Dinner and sometimes an evening program

Group Culture

This tour will provide you with many Russian people and a busload of international travelers who want to be your friend! Our group will emerge as a loving community of friends connected through shared experience, joy of service, and compassion.

Traveling with a large group of clowns in Russia engages a spirit of joy and flexibility from both organizers and participants. We practice relentless humor, patience, and positivity as a group to overcome any logistical problems with ease. You are encouraged to develop your own Russian friendships and find your own evening adventures. There are 2 nights (1 in each city) we do not provide dinner to help make space for this.

Please be aware!

- This trip is extremely active trip with a very full schedule that can include lots of walking and stairs, long bus rides, infrequent bathroom stops, late meals, and late night travel.
- We have a NO-WHINING policy!

Some nights we have evening programs after dinner, which could include live music and dancing, theatre, home dinner parties with our Russian hosts, and group talent shows. We do not provide an evening program every night of the trip.

Some nights Russian friends will collect Patch and a small group of clowns for small gatherings. These intimate gatherings happen in very small homes and cannot accommodate the whole group (if we could we would.) PLEASE, do not feel hurt if you are not included in Patch's evening excursions. If you do not get invited please stay gracious and remember all the amazing evening programs we do provide (above and beyond any tourist organization.)

And you will meet many Russian friends, please introduce yourselves and be forward—so that on free evenings you ask to get together with them.

Tour Cost:

\$2400

The tour package includes:

- Accommodation in 3 or 4 star hotels (with a roommate)
- Meals (except for 2 dinners)
- Transfer to and from airport
- Transportation by tour bus
- Transportation from Moscow to St. Petersburg
- Visa support (letter of invitation and voucher needed to obtain a visa)

Optional Items:

- Single room (cost \$1000)

The tour package does not include:

- International and Domestic Airfare (about \$800-\$1200 from USA)
- Visa and Visa Processing (about \$200 depending on country)

Payment

Space on this trip is limited. We register participants on a first come first serve basis and the trip is known to fill up quickly. This trip requires a \$500 **non-refundable** deposit to reserve a space.

The deposit is applied towards the total cost of the tour package

Full payment due July 31, 2019. We also accept PayPal, Check and Wire Transfer.

To receive information on how to make a deposit complete the electronic registration form.

[2019 Russia Clown Tour Registration Form Link](#) ←click here

Flights

Arrive Moscow Saturday November 9th, 2019 (as early in the day as possible)

Depart St. Petersburg Saturday November 23, 2019

If flying from North America

Professional agent Trish Shea is coordinating air travel. She can book from your local airport and you will have the benefit of professional support if you need to change your itinerary, miss a connection or experience any other problems with your flights. You are **required** to book your international travel with her. We depart for Russia on November 8th.

Trish Shea

Phone: 352-516-7857
Email: trishshea@earthlink.net
Skype: 305-396-2816 Skype ID: trish.shea

If you are NOT flying from North America

You are responsible for your own travel arrangements but encouraged to use Trish's services.

Passport:

IF your passport is expired, expires before June 1, 2020 or you do not have a passport:

apply for a new passport **IMMEDIATELY**

Visa:

You need a visa to travel to Russia. The visa application process will begin in July and can take 2-4 weeks or longer if there are any mistakes in the application process. Alert me if you need your passport for other international travel between July and November!

USA Participants:

We use the agency PassportVisaExpress.com to assist with the visa process. Payment for your visa will be added to your tour package invoice when you make your final payment. Please be prepared to pay an additional \$200 visa and visa processing.

Non USA Participants:

You are responsible for getting your own visa. You need to work with a local Russian embassy or tour agency. Please begin research on obtaining a visa. You will receive a letter of invitation and voucher documents in August or early September.

Clowning 101

If you come to this tour with a sense of joy and generosity, **there is no "right" or "wrong" way to be a clown**, below, however, are some tips to prepare for success.

➔ *Take some time putting together your costume.*

Make sure your clown costumes and shoes are comfortable, even if you feel silly. Thrift stores and yard sales abound with inexpensive clown wear. *Don't over-pack*, but bring enough costumes and clothes for the trip. Though November can be very cold the places where we clown are well heated, so *think in terms of layers*. You will also find endless use for *many pockets*. I highly recommend a

red nose, but this is of course, up to you. Remember, a clown can be anything you imagine it to be!!!

➡ *Take some time getting toys together.*

Lots of experienced clowns like to **carry a bag full of props and goodies**. There are certain clown tools that never run out of uses, here is a quick list of props or toys you might want to stock up on. Bring enough to share and give away!

BALLOONS BALLOONS!, (1st time clowning and don't know what to do? Try blowing up balloons everywhere you go!),

puppets

stickers

bubbles

face paints

musical instruments

sound makers

woopie cushion

a personal photo album about your life at home, and where you are from

pen and paper

magic tricks

***Don't stop there, find anything that is funny or interesting to you, lots of folks like abstract props like big pieces of fabric, funnels, or string. Get creative!!!!**

YOU WILL BE HAPPY YOU HAVE A FEW PROPS!

➡ *You don't have to be funny (seriously)*

Clowning is a way to connect to people and share love, don't worry about getting laughs, they will come naturally!

➡ *Gifts when Clowning*

Gift giving is a wonderful and beautiful thing, but can also be challenging as a clown. Often, if you begin giving out gifts in a *group* of kids you will be transformed in their eyes from a "funny loving clown" to "vending machine." If you want to give presents away it is a good idea to do it with *individual* kids with whom you are having a personal and intimate clowning connection! I always bring some gifts to share at the end of very special interactions

If you have lots of presents and toys, you can always donate extra materials to Maria's Children who will get toys to children in need and uses donated clown costumes and materials full time.

A serious note about clowning:

While clowning can be wild and full of energy, it **very important** to remember that we are guests, both

in the country and the institution where we are clowning, **DON'T BE TOO NAUGHTY, IT CAN JEPORDIZE CHANCES TO RETURN IN FUTURE YEARS.**

This means while we encourage you to be wildly experimental, that **we need to be respectful** of any rules or requests about behavior. Generally, “potty” humor is unwelcome by institutions directors including, fake poop, pants dropping, and over the top farting. Please come with an open mind, and if someone from the team makes a request about your clowning, be open to the suggestions. The hospitals are filled with sick people and we often clown in terminal wards.

When I enter a room, until I know it is safe to go crazy, I enter with awe and wonder, and **MAKE NO ASSUMPTIONS** about the space I am entering. It might be a utility closet, a family at a death bed, a staff break room filled with nurses, a classroom for hospitalized children, or an individual patient.

I have found that the more I establish a relationship with people when clowning the more I can get away with. Being a clown is about connecting with people, alleviating pain and suffering, and creating loving relationships with strangers.

About Maria's Children

In Moscow, we will be hosted by non-for-profit organization Maria's Children and their wonderful volunteer community. Moscow based artist Maria Eliseeva started the organization in 1993 after meeting Patch during the annual clown tour with a vision to improve the lives of orphans. She began with a group of twelve children connecting to and nurturing them through art classes.

Maria's Children has grown to full scale art program with year round classes serving more than 200 orphans and special needs children. Graduates of their intensive program are rising to great success in their adult lives and many volunteer or work for the organization. Maria has plans to develop the Pelican House, a transition housing and vocational program for Maria's Children students graduating from orphanages.

In general, the Russian orphanage system is negligent, violent, and corrupt. Children who are institutionalized are an extremely at risk population. In addition to working directly with children, Maria's Children advocates for system change. The clown tour has witnessed a direct positive impact of their work in several of the orphanages we visit every year.

Maria's children also facilitates an annual summer camp, exhibitions in Moscow and abroad, mural painting and clowning, volunteer opportunities and many other wonderful programs, several of which coincide with the clown tour and will be an important part of our Moscow itinerary.

It is hard to explain just how important Maria's Children is to the culture of this trip. Maria's Children volunteers and students will be with us everyday to clown, host dinners, invite us to their studio and an annual exhibition and performance, befriend and help us, and some of them will join the clown tour in St. Petersburg. This tour would not be possible without their incredible contribution including hundreds of hours of volunteer support before and during the tour.

The Maria's Children Annual Gala and Auction Benefit happens during the Clown Tour and Patch will be onstage as the auctioneer. The evening includes gourmet dinner, drinks, live music and dancing and is a great party. This upscale charity event is the largest Maria's Children's fundraiser. The tickets sell to the public for \$400 but Maria gives all the Clowns this wonderful gift to be apart of this special evening. *Don't forget to bring your clown formal wear (more info about dressing for the gala in information packet #2)!*

You will fall in love with this amazing program and its people. Learn more about their work www.mariaschildren.ru

Closing Thoughts

If you read this much you must be seriously considering joining the trip and you are amazing for making the bold leap! We're looking forward to working and playing with you!!!

To complete the registration process:

1. **Fill out the electronic registration form**
2. **Make \$500 non-refundable deposit**
3. **Have a current passport**
4. **Have sense of humor and excitement!**

Administrators:

Our role is to prepare our group for this trip. Feel free to contact us with questions of any kind including clowning!

Sharon Stein
Chris Chanter
Anna Eliseeva

Important links:

[2019 Russia Clown Tour Registration Form Link](#)

www.mariaschildren.ru

Upcoming:

Information Packet #2:

- Arrival in Russia
- Hotels
- The Visa Process
- Packing
- Schedule and Night Life
- Final Payment