

Summer exchange in Saint Petersburg

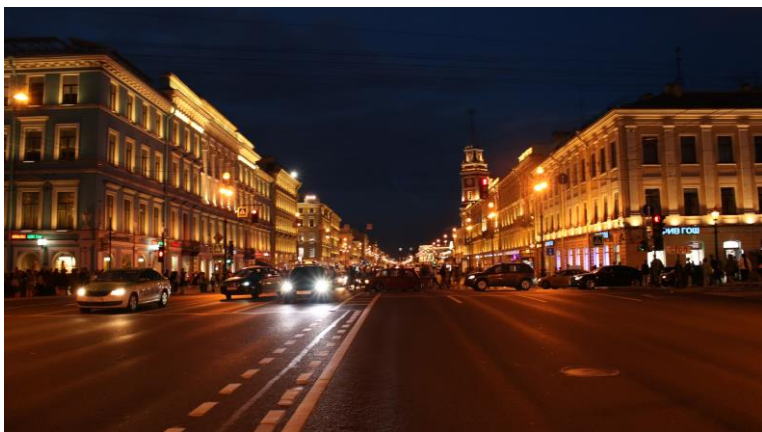
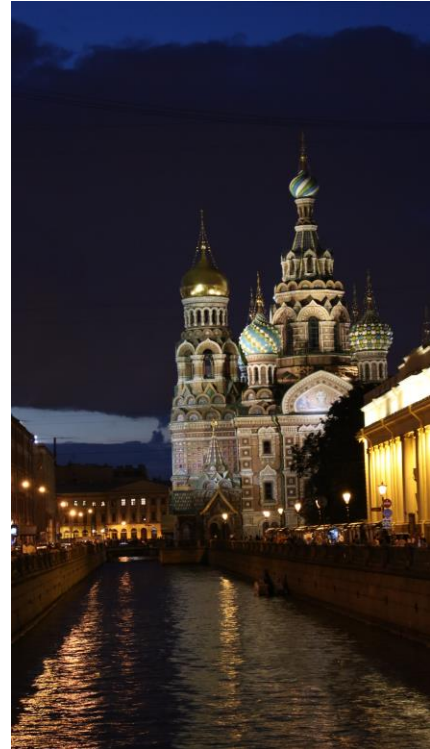
My name is Soma Karakai. I successfully applied for a summer internship in Internal Medicine at North-Western State Medical University Named after I. I. Mechnikov (SZGMU) in Saint Petersburg.

It was an amazing exchange! Very memorable experience. It was over the top. I am very thankful, that I could spend my exchange in Saint Petersburg.

Leo of SZGMU IFMSA Committee let us join the other exchange students of SZGMU and The First Pavlov State Medical University of Saint Petersburg (SPBGMU). Those students spent their practise in Saint Petersburg with the help of IFMSA. The wide range of programs amazed me the Russian student provided us. They arranged us interesting, various programs. We had many different themed sightseeing tours to discover Saint Petersburg and in its surrounding area. Saint Petersburg is such a beautiful city. It's full of famous sights. The architecture is outstanding. Beyond hundreds of remarkable sights my highlights are the Saint Isaac Cathedral, the Church of the Saviour on Blood. Mind the unbelievable construction and architectural solutions of both! My personal favourite is The State Hermitage Museum. It's incredible. Breath-taking. Impressive, huge building containing many of the very best masterpieces of the world. You can spend an entire week walking around and admiring those marvellous exhibitions. Must see. I loved it. The atmosphere of Saint Petersburg is catchy. So great vibes! I liked those nights when we were just taking walks in the city centre. We walked at Neva embankment, watched the opening of the bridges.

We took a trip to Karelia for 2 days. Landscape is very spectacular. We also travelled to Moscow. I liked the city centre of Moscow. We visited most of the famous sights of the capital. Saint Basil's cathedral is fascinating. I could dive a bit into Russian art, because beside the Russian Museum, which is situated in Saint Petersburg, I also visited The State Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow. The IFMSA committee members and our contact person were really kind, reliable and so helpful. They invested so much work and time into our programs. They provided us with the very best service.





Photos about the famous sights of Saint Petersburg and a selfie about the exchange students of SZGMU with Julia at The State Hermitage Museum. Photo credits: Julia Toropova, Marta Koptas and Soma Karakai

I want to say thank you to all of them, especially to Julia Toropova. Thank you, Julia, for all your help, thank you for providing us with the best insider tips on what to do, thank you for being available 24/7 on our questions and requests.

I had the possibility to visit more departments. I was also allowed to visit the surgical theatre. The whole staff, the doctors, the nurses were really kind. They really took care of us, they translated us the conversations, the anamneses. They explained us everything, we shall understand. I felt involved, they invited us to consultations, they offered us the possibility of watching procedures. They were so nice, wanted to show us as much as they could. They also let us do physical examination of patients. They did an excellent job. I think I learnt much during this practise. I should be very grateful for them, I would like to say thank you to the staff of the clinic, especially to our tutors.



Photo about the exchange students, who were at Department of Cardiovascular Chirurgic at the hall of the clinic. Credit: Marta Koptas

The Russian people are open-hearted. They are so helpful. They put much more effort in hosting us, than they should. They did extra efforts just to give us a way more better service. Let me tell you a story, so you can understand, what I mean by that. The canteen of the clinic didn't work, when we were there, so the Office of International Affairs organised a bus with a kind driver to move us to another clinic of SZGMU every day. This speaks for itself. This is a very lovely favour. They were so generous to us! But we haven't reach the end of the story yet! Our driver varied many times the way we drove to the buffet, so we had a mini sightseeing tour included. I think no one did tell him to do it, he decided to do it on his own to show us more from that beautiful city. This kindness made me so happy. I think this little story truly represents the warm hospitality of the employees of SZGMU and the Russian people in general. They really beat all your expectations with their way of handling exchange students. They really did much more for us, than we expected. They do it with so much care, passion, kindness, and love. This is unbelievable. Thanks to the provided services I felt so comfortable. It made my fitting in so easy. I can't be thankful enough to the employees of the Office of International Affairs. I would like to say thank you to the staff, especially to Alyona Kibitova and Julia Kochubeeva. Thank you very much for all your efforts you have done for us! I am so thankful for your work and many favours. Thank you for solving our problems and completing our requests so fast!

I really enjoyed staying in Saint Petersburg. I loved it. I gained much experience in medical field and cultural, social fields. I got to know many great people. I would like to say thank you once again to all the people, who helped me making this internship possible: employees of SZGMU and employees of the International Affairs of UPMS. Thank you Anett Tomózer, Ildikó Huszár. You were so helpful, and kind-hearted. Thank you for your cooperation, for your flexibility and for your patience.

I highly recommend everyone to apply for a summer exchange at Saint Petersburg!

Soma Karakai
3rd year medical student
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