

# The U.S. tourists' reviews about the BSR cities on *TripAdvisor*



**Baltic Sea Region**  
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## Introduction

*TripAdvisor* was founded in February 2000 and operates sites in 30 countries and in 21 languages including site in the U.S. [tripadvisor.com](http://www.tripadvisor.com). It is the world's most comprehensive travel site with more than 200 million unique visitors per month and over 100 million reviews covering more than 2.5 million accommodations, restaurants, and attractions.<sup>1</sup> The U.S. tourists are active review writers on *TripAdvisor*. For example, approximately one fourth of all reviews about the State Hermitage Museum and the Winter Palace, St. Petersburg have been written by the U.S. tourists.<sup>2</sup>

During Spring Semester 2013, volunteer students from the Tourism and Hospitality Management Faculty of Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences were reading through the *TripAdvisor*'s reviews about 'Things to Do' (attractions, activities, shopping, and nightlife) in 13 cities of the Baltic Sea Region (see map below). All reviews since establishment of the *TripAdvisor* in February 2000 till March 2013 were viewed.



### The research stakeholders:

1. Helsinki
2. Hamburg
3. Warsaw
4. Riga
5. St. Petersburg

### The other metropolises of the BSR:

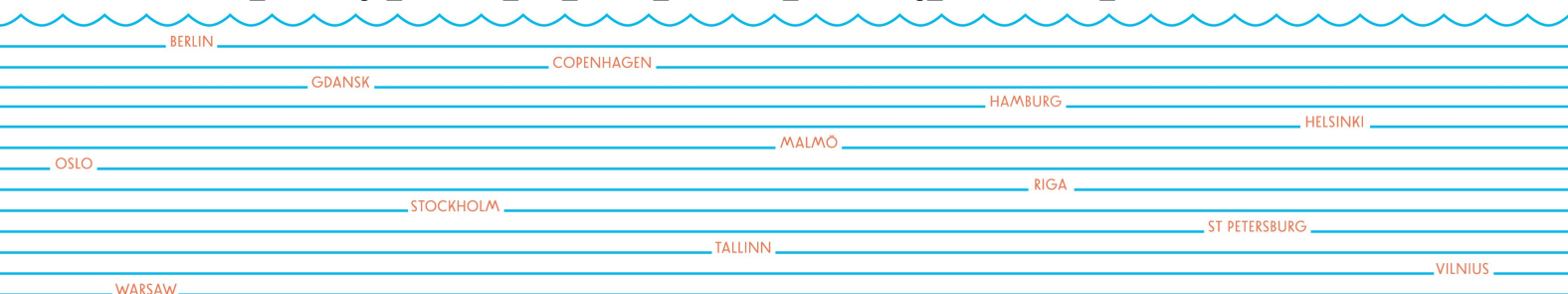
1. Oslo
2. Stockholm
3. Malmö
4. Copenhagen
5. Berlin
6. Gdansk
7. Vilnius
8. Tallinn

### The U.S. tourists' reviews on 'Things to Do':

1. Attractions
2. Activities
3. Nightlife
4. Shopping

1 [http://www.tripadvisor.com/PressCenter-c4-Fact\\_Sheet.html](http://www.tripadvisor.com/PressCenter-c4-Fact_Sheet.html)

2 [http://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction\\_Review-g298507-d300071-Reviews-State\\_Hermitage\\_Museum\\_and\\_Winter\\_Palace-St\\_Petersburg\\_Northwestern\\_District.html](http://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction_Review-g298507-d300071-Reviews-State_Hermitage_Museum_and_Winter_Palace-St_Petersburg_Northwestern_District.html)



Most reviewers identify their home countries and towns therefore it was possible to extract the reviews written by the U.S. tourists. After that the U.S. tourists' reviews per attraction, activity, nightlife or shopping site were counted. As the number of the reviews per 'Thing to Do' grows with every day, the main idea of quantifying the reviews was to detect various review volumes rather than to look at particular numbers. It should also be taken into consideration that various factors influence the accuracy of quantifying the reviews: not all reviewers indicate their home countries or towns; some reviewers have identified their home countries or towns in an inaccurate or misleading way; some U.S. reviewers are of Baltic descent, which influences their opinions and motivates to review and promote 'their' countries and cities; some reviews might be fake – written as a promotion. Also there is a possibility of a human mistake while reading, extracting and counting the reviews. With so many factors influencing the result, once again the focus was not set on the numbers but rather on the proportions or volumes of the reviews. Another thing – the reviews can be both positive and negative. However, the volumes of the reviews regardless of their contents indicate that the U.S. tourists have visited the attraction or tried the activity and have something to say about it.

Speaking about the volumes, analogy with music was used to illustrate the results. Let's imagine that each review is read aloud and all the reviews are read simultaneously. Let's sort the 'Things to Do' by the 'noise' they make. In music there is *forte* for a loud sound and *piano* for a soft sound. From that, the following classification of the tourist attractions was applied:

- Fortissimos – very 'loud' attractions (350 – 450 reviews by the US tourists till March 2013)
- Fortes – 'loud' attractions (250 – 350 reviews)
- Mezzo fortes – moderately 'loud' attractions (150 – 250 reviews)
- Mezzo pianos – moderately 'soft' attractions (75 – 150 reviews)
- Pianos – 'soft' attractions (25 – 75 reviews)
- Pianissimos – very 'soft' attractions (12 – 25 reviews)

12 reviews were set as the minimum for including the 'Thing to Do' in the research. In qualitative research 12 respondents are often mentioned as the minimum for being able to draw conclusions. This rule was also used for this research, as not only the quantity but also the contents of the reviews were analyzed for 'Things to Do' in five cities, the research stakeholders – Helsinki, Hamburg, Warsaw, Riga and St. Petersburg.

The content analysis of the reviews included extracting brightest quotes and key words, which could be used for marketing.

**The research questions:**

1. Which 'Things to Do' are most reviewed by the U.S. tourists on *TripAdvisor* in the 13 metropolises of the BSR?
2. From the reviews, what ideas can be drawn for tourism marketing of the research stakeholders – Helsinki, Hamburg, Warsaw, Riga, and St. Petersburg?

This research could lead to ideas for tourism marketing of the Baltic Sea Region. In this paper not only ideas but also discussion questions are provided. It is planned to discuss these questions in the ONE BSR meeting in September 2013.



## Volumes of the BSR Tourist Attractions

### Fortissimos

very 'loud' BSR attractions from the point of view of the US tourists

- State Hermitage Museum and Winter Palace, St. Petersburg
- Vasa Museum, Stockholm
- Berlin Museum Island with the sites related to it:  
Pergamon Museum, Neues Museum
- Berlin Wall with the sites related to it:  
Memorial, Museum, Checkpoint Charlie and the East Side Gallery

### Fortes

'loud' BSR attractions from the point of view of the US travelers

- Brandenburg Gate, Berlin
- Holocaust Memorial (Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe), Berlin
- Church of the Savior on Spilled Blood, St. Petersburg
- Peterhof, St. Petersburg
- Gamla Stan – Stockholm Old Town including the Royal Palace

### Mezzo Fortes

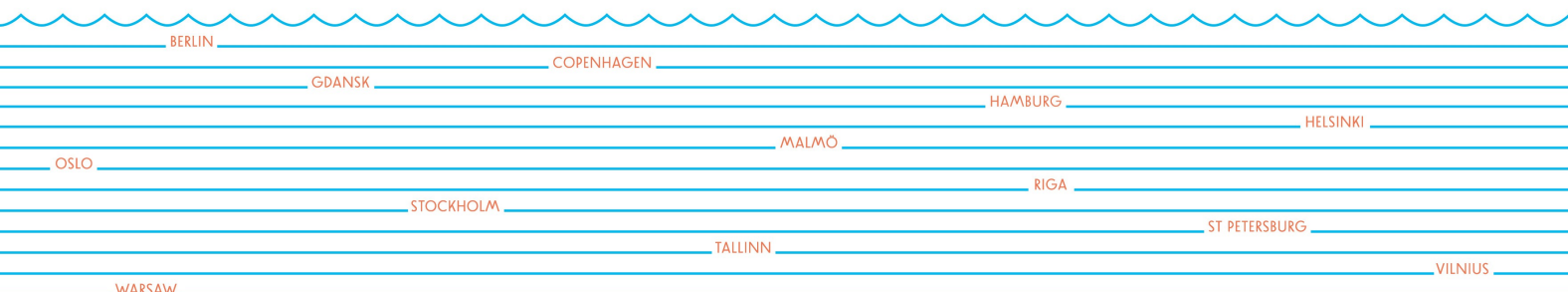
moderately 'loud' BSR attractions from the point of view of the US travelers

- Catherine Palace and Park, St. Petersburg
- Vigeland Sculpture Park, Oslo
- Bundestag (Reichstag), Berlin
- Warsaw Old Town with the sites related to it:  
Old Town Square Market, Royal Castle
- Tallinn Old Town with the sites related to it:  
Toompea Hill, Alexander Nevsky Cathedral, Town Hall Square, Kiek in de Kök and Bastion Tunnels

### Mezzo Pianos

moderately 'soft' BSR attractions from the point of view of the US travelers

- St. Isaac's Cathedral, St. Petersburg
- Viking Ship Museum, Oslo
- Warsaw Rising Museum
- Temppeliaukio Church (Rock Church), Helsinki
- Skansen Open-Air Museum, Stockholm
- Peter and Paul Fortress (Petropavlovskaya Krepost), St. Petersburg
- Nyhavn, Copenhagen
- Gendarmenmark, Berlin



## Pianos

'soft' BSR attractions from the point of view of the US tourists

### Berlin

Topography of Terror  
Berlin Cathedral  
Berliner Philharmoniker  
Tiergarten  
Berlin Zoo  
Jewish Museum Berlin

### Copenhagen

Rosenborg Castle  
Denmark's National Museum  
Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek  
The Little Mermaid  
Copenhagen's Church of Our Saviour  
Round Tower  
Museum of Danish Resistance

### Gdansk

Old Town

### Hamburg

Miniatur Wunderland  
Rathaus (Town Hall)

### Helsinki

Suomenlinna Maritime Fortress  
Esplanade Park  
Helsinki Cathedral

### Oslo

Fram Museum - The Polar Ship Fram  
Norwegian National Opera House  
Norwegian Folk Museum  
Bygdoy Peninsula  
Holmenkollen  
Norway's Resistance Museum  
Norway's National Gallery

### Riga

Old Town  
Museum of the Occupation of Latvia

### Stockholm

Stockholm's City Hall  
Drottningholm Palace  
Nobel Museum  
Stockholm's Canals  
Djurgården  
Fotografiska  
Millesgården  
Södermalm

### St.Petersburg

Nevsky Prospect  
Mariinsky Theatre  
State Russian Museum  
Yusupov Palace  
Bronze Horseman (Monument to Peter the Great)

### Vilnius

Old Town  
Museum of Genocide Victims

### Warsaw

Łazienki Królewskie Park-Palace Complex  
Tomb of the Unknown Soldier

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## **Pianissimos**

very 'soft' BSR attractions from the point of view of the US tourists

### **Berlin**

Berlin-Hohenschönhausen Memorial  
Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church  
Olympiastadion  
Bröhan-Museum  
Tierpark

### **Copenhagen**

Frederiksberg Park

### **Gdansk**

Europe Solidarity Center Roads to Freedom  
Exhibition

### **Hamburg**

HafenCity (Harbour City)  
St. Michaelis Church  
Park Planten un Blomen  
Jungfernstieg  
Alster Lakes

### **Helsinki**

Ateneum Art Museum  
Seurasaari Open-Air Museum  
Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma

### **Malmö**

Lilla Torg (Little Square)

### **Riga**

Riga's St. Peter's Church  
Freedom Monument  
Latvian Open-Air Ethnographic Museum

### **Stockholm**

Nationalmuseum  
Swedish Museum of Natural History and Cosmonova  
Museum of Medieval Stockholm  
Stockholm's Moderna Museet

### **St. Petersburg**

Cathedral of Our Lady of Kazan (Kazansky Sobor)  
Erarta Museum and Galleries of Contemporary Art  
Feel Yourself Russian (Nikolaevsky Palace)  
Pavlovsk Palace and Park  
Blockade of Leningrad Museum

### **Tallinn**

Kumu Art Museum  
Viru Hotel KGB Museum  
Estonian Open Air Museum  
Museum of Occupations  
Kadriorg Palace and Park  
Tallinn Song Festival Grounds

### **Vilnius**

Gediminas' Tower  
Amber Museum-Gallery

### **Warsaw**

Monument to the Warsaw Uprising Fighters  
Gestapo Headquarters Museum  
Jewish Ghetto Memorial  
Copernicus Science Centre  
Frederick Chopin Museum

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## Volumes of the Cities

The picture on the page 10 illustrates that the ‘loudest’ cities of the BSR are Berlin and St. Petersburg followed by Stockholm. Oslo, Warsaw and Copenhagen belong to the second volume level. Then there is Helsinki and Tallinn forming the third volume level, followed by Hamburg, Riga and Vilnius on the fourth level. Gdansk and Malmo concludes the list.

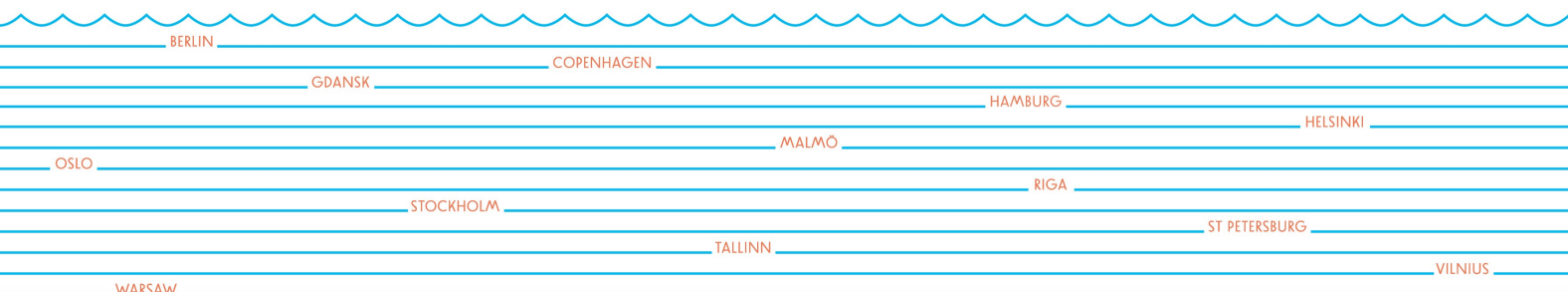
### Volumes of the US tourists’ reviews on *TripAdvisor*

<b>1. Berlin, St. Petersburg, Stockholm</b>
<b>2. Oslo, Warsaw, Copenhagen</b>
<b>3. Helsinki and Tallinn</b>
<b>4. Hamburg, Riga and Vilnius</b>
<b>5. Gdansk and Malmo</b>







The triangle that Berlin, St. Petersburg and Stockholm forms across all the BSR gives an excellent opportunity to develop products, which would attract the U.S. tourists not only to these three cities, but also to the others in between. What city combinations should these be, is dependent on the cooperation between the cities’ tourism promoters and tour operators, as well as transport networks that support the mobility across the region. Should a perfect tour to the BSR include all three – Berlin, St. Petersburg and Stockholm? Which city combinations are the best? If thinking of the research stakeholders, what combinations and cooperation would be the best for attracting more U.S. tourists to Helsinki, Hamburg, Warsaw, Riga, and St. Petersburg?

A picture of the current views of the US tourists to the attractions of the BSR is given in this research, which should be further used for product development, including cooperation of the cities in development of joint products.

On the following pages a closer look is given to the US tourists’ opinions on the attractions of the research stakeholders – Helsinki, Hamburg, Warsaw, Riga and St. Petersburg.



# HELSINKI

 <i>fortissimos</i>	None
 <i>fortes</i>	None
 <i>mezzo fortes</i>	None
 <i>mezzo pianos</i>	Temppeliaukio Church (Rock Church)
 <i>pianos</i>	Suomenlinna Maritime Fortress Esplanade Helsinki Cathedral
 <i>pianissimos</i>	Ateneum Art Museum Seurasaari Open-Air Museum Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma



## Temppeliaukio Church (Rock Church)

Among the US tourists the Temppeliaukio Church (known as 'Rock Church' or 'Church in the Rock') is the most reviewed attraction of Helsinki. However, the reviews are very controversial: while some call it a 'boring hole in the rock', others pay attention to the uniqueness of its architecture, e.g. 'the drainage system around the rock wall to collect the moisture when the rock *sweats*'.

### Some quotes:

"boring hole in the rock"

"way overrated"

"if you have any interest in unusual buildings you need to visit this place"

"you can also climb up onto it from the outside; a few people were sunbathing up there"

"example of the unique design elements of Finland"

"church that is quite different than the fancy, ornate cathedrals in the Baltic countries"

"I recommend you attend either a church service or concert to witness the acoustics for yourself"

"if you stay a bit, you will feel a serenity evoked by its simple, yet ethereal design"

"seeing the church meld in to the rocky landscape, it seems so natural"

"spiritual even with the crowds"

"I'm rather experienced traveler but never seen something like this before. Church built in a rock, with natural light coming through from the Dom. Amazing structure, designed by very talented people. Sit in there and try to absorb the energy, it's almost material."

"The church puts the gold plated artificiality of other churches throughout Europe to shame. The rock church is about you, nature, and god."

"This lovely building has been created with the help of Mother Nature! The church is built into a gigantic rock and was created by gifted engineers with a vision to incorporate both worlds."

"This is a modern-style Lutheran church built underground in a blasted out hunk of granite. Boasting a spaceship-like dome (no, seriously) inlaid with coiled copper wiring, it's... um... well, ugly. But it's apparently one of the must see destinations in Helsinki, so we went to check it out."

**Key words:** unique design, natural spirituality, acoustics, overrated

### Marketing opportunities

The controversy of the positive and negative reviews of the Temppeliaukio Church increases its attractiveness. The tourist might think: Why are the reviews so different? What would I think after seeing this attraction? As it is the most reviewed attraction of Helsinki, I MUST have my own opinion!

From the reviews it can be concluded that most of the positive opinions are formed on a basis of understanding the special details of the building's architecture, knowing the things to look at and pay attention to. Good information and interpretation of the unique architecture is crucial.

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## Suomenlinna Maritime Fortress

### Some quotes:

“take a break from the city and visit this piece of history”

“amazing site with plenty of history... can spend an entire day here”

“it's a great place to go and just wonder about”

“there are great views of the water and other islands if you walk around”

“there are many interesting museums on the grounds to visit, and many restaurants with different kinds of food”

“the beer that is made on the island is excellent and well worth trying”

“it can get quite windy, even in the summer, so it's best to have some warm clothes”

“skip it unless the sun is shining!”

“Be sure to start at the Suomenlinna Museum and view the 25 minute video explaining the history of the fort and settlement of the area.”

“Don't let the military part put you off a visit as it has been adopted by Helsinki as a borough of the city and 300 Finns still live on the island. To give you an idea of how beautiful it is there were 350 applications for 18 apartments that came available recently.”

“I spend 6 hours walking around, nice view of the sea, just very relaxing. It is a town within the town, the fortress is not simply a museum, but a living community.”

“There are many things to do while you're there including a submarine museum and a nice beach too! I suggest going and exploring all of the little nooks and crannies of the fortress too!”

“Our afternoon was filled with an easy walk exploring the grassy hills, rocky seashore, with canons pointing out to sea offering a history of war defending Sweden and Russia in contrast to the peaceful, picnic type atmosphere of today. Highly recommend it to anyone who wants a break from city tours – great for children to explore – great for couples of all ages to slowly meander the grassy slopes.”

“There is no access for people with disabilities to get around. I think it is discrimination. I think people of all kind, even those with disabilities would want to experience seeing the fortress.” (Reviewed September 2, 2012)

**Keywords:** history, museums, restaurants & cafes, beer brewery, picnic, sea-views, escape, weather, day-trip / morning tour / afternoon tour, walking, accessibility

### Marketing opportunities

The U.S. tourists pay attention to such aspects as the easy access (short, inexpensive, frequent boat trips), the time spent for the visit (it could be a day tour or a half day tour), the impact of the weather conditions, lots of walking, the availability of various restaurants as well as picnic sites. Obviously these practicalities are important when convincing the tourists about the visit. Escape from the city, the sea-views and the history are the main key words for the marketing.

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## Esplanade

### Some quotes:

“Even in the dead of winter this is a place worth visiting. There are many restaurants and galleries that are worth a visit.”

“There are fabulous restaurants, from Italian to Authentic Finnish, & amazing shops for original Finn clothes & household goods. All of this is along the sea. And don't forget the handmade bargains in the marketplace.”

“Great for wandering and window shopping.”

“Very pretty, very European, seemed very safe.”

“When I travel I like to just people watch and this was a nice place to do so. Looking over the Baltic Sea watching the ships come in was an added bonus.”

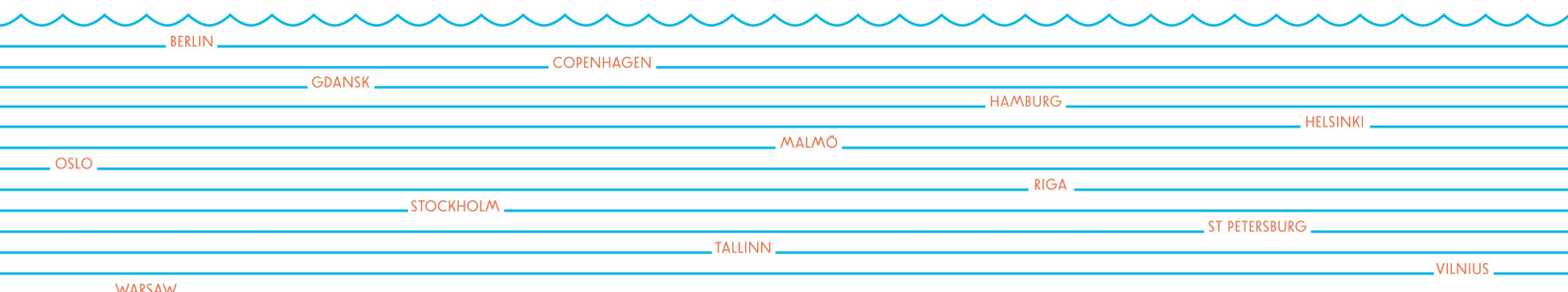
“You can't leave Helsinki without experiencing Esplanade because it's central to the life of the city. You can sit and relax while you watch the people or listen to one of the free concerts or perhaps just stroll through the park.”

**Key words:** strolling, shopping, window shopping, restaurants & cafes, local produce, people watching

### Marketing opportunities

Several reviewers mention people-watching indicating that the Esplanade is a place to observe and enjoy the local lifestyle. It's controversial whether people-watching should be officially promoted as the locals might find it offensive. However, Esplanade can be promoted as a place of the local spirit.

Regarding shopping, the Finnish design brand Marimekko is mentioned in several reviews.



## Helsinki Cathedral and the Senate Square

Most of the reviews of the Senate Square are dedicated to the Helsinki Cathedral therefore the reviews about these two attractions are analyzed jointly.

### Some quotes:

“this place is so photogenic”

“the Senate Square, the statue of Tsar Alexander, the dramatic stairs leading to the church door, and the high church dome create a remarkable setting for photos”

“ the whitest building I have ever seen”

“the stairs are a hike but the view from the top is excellent”

“I loved the exterior of the church and was surprised at the simplicity in the interior”

“I found the views to be particularly beautiful as it was getting dark, while it was snowing. The church looked almost blue – it was so amazing.”

**Key words:** photogenic, the whitest, excellent views over the city, happening place, market, Christmas Market

### Marketing opportunities

The Cathedral is photogenic and the Square is lively – a perfect combination. Photogenic and lively are the main key words. The review that describes the church getting blue in the dawn allows imagining various shades on the white facade throughout the day and the year. A church serving as a screen for the sky projections – isn't it amazing?

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## Ateneum Art Museum

### Some quotes:

“Take your time, there are fascinating works that are out of the main stream.”

“The museum is a small but well run and well laid out national art museum. The national collection is very interesting for its diversity and depth. If you are interested in art and Finland's history, the Ateneum is particularly good. Many of the painters have shown Finland in their time, and bring the hard, but remarkable beauty to canvas.”

“The Ateneum is a wonderful place to get a sense of a range of Finnish art - which you won't find in many other places in the world.”

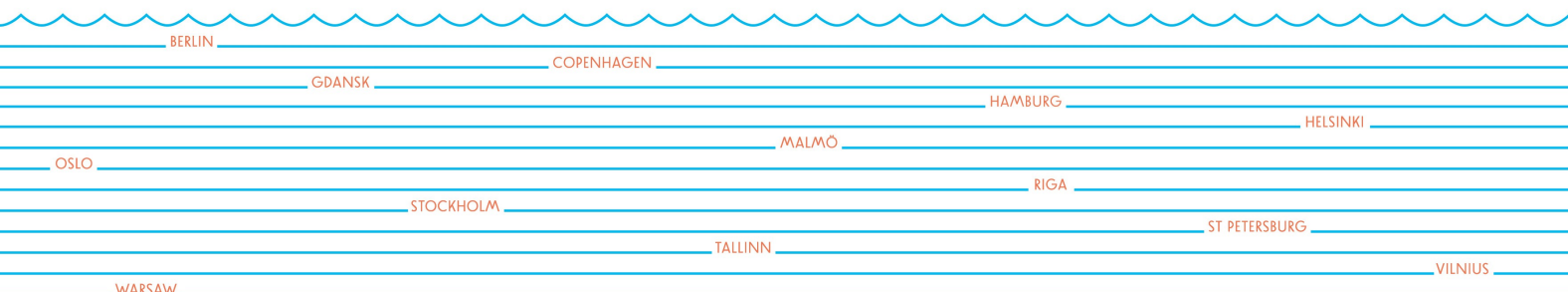
“This museum was advertised as having "van Gogh, Monet, Manet" - and it did have ONE of each”

“We saw this museum immediately after the Hermitage in St Petersburg. We were prepared to be disappointed. What a surprise. Wonderful collection. Good diversity. No crowds.”

**Keywords:** Finnish art, out of the main stream, good diversity, no crowds

### Marketing opportunities

It should be taken into consideration that tourists might have been to the State Hermitage Museum in St.Peteresburg before coming to Helsinki. What are the strengths of Ateneum Art Museum? The compact size, no crowds, excellence of the collection?





## Seurasaari Open-Air Museum

### Some quotes:

“just a short bus trip to the edge of the city and you are transformed by the beauty and tranquility of this area”

“a light, almost flat, and shaded by many trees hike”

“a perfect introduction to the country”

“a lot of the local residents use it for swimming (including during the winter), walking, having a family picnic, jogging, or just strolling along the trails”

**Keywords:** accessibility, escape, hike, picnic, cafes, history

### Marketing opportunities

Escape is the main key word for Surasaari Open-Air Museum. Of course it is also a perfect introduction to the country and Finland's history; however, offering tranquility after one or several days of city touring is a significant strength of Seurasaari.

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## Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma

### Some quotes:

“the museum's architecture is the highlight”  
“the art on display was very limited”

“Check before you go as exhibits change frequently and many may be closed.”

“It's not a large museum, and I don't think they have much art by the big (overpriced) names, but there is a variety of art in an attractive space.”

**Keywords:** attractive space, limited display

### Marketing opportunities

The main challenge is to offer exhibits to experienced tourists and art lovers who are touring around the Baltics and might have been to St. Petersburg before coming to Helsinki. Probably information about the exhibitions should focus on answering the question 'what so special about it' to someone coming 'straight' from the Hermitage in St.Petersburg. There is potential in the beautiful museum's building, the attractive art space.

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## Activities, Shopping and Nightlife in Helsinki

The Market Square and the Hakaniemi Market Square are described in several US tourists' reviews as excellent places for shopping of local produce and watching the local shopping habits. Also the Esplanade is reviewed as a place for shopping and window shopping. Several reviewers have mentioned the Finnish design brand Marimekko.

Ferries to Stockholm and Helsinki (particularly Tallink and Viking Line) are reviewed as an opportunity to extend or continue the trip from Helsinki.

Some service providers are mentioned in one or two reviews, which is however considered to be too little to judge these companies as particular attractions for the US tourists. No nightlife places are mentioned in more than two reviews.

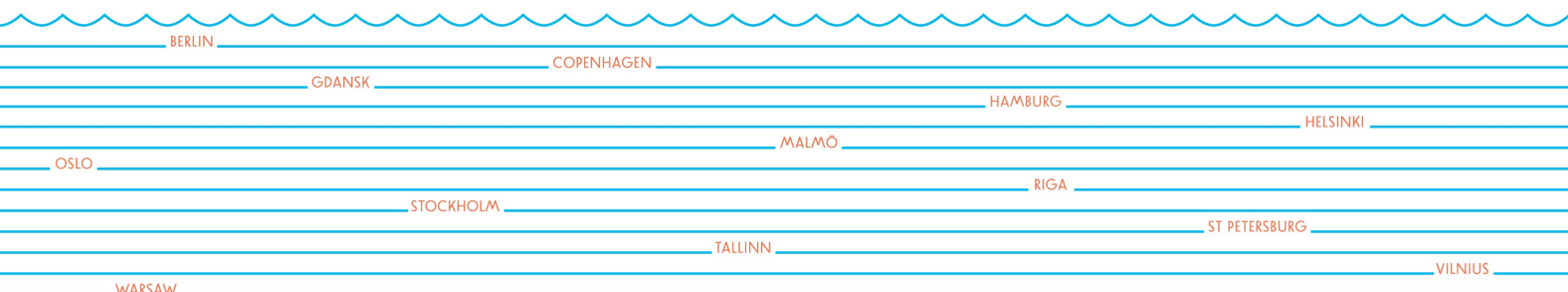
## Marketing Ideas and Questions

Helsinki is located between two 'giants' of the BSR tourism – Stockholm and St. Petersburg. It's both a beneficial and challenging position. Tourists might tend to run through and not to pay enough attention.

Should positioning of Helsinki focus on Stockholm and St. Petersburg – what will tourists think of us after having been there?

Should Helsinki join forces with Tallinn to come out from the shades of Stockholm and St. Petersburg?

While the Esplanade, the Cathedral, the Senate Square, and Suomenlinna form a harmonic core of Helsinki, the Temppeliaukio Church is an outstanding phenomena – so many reviews and so controversial. But are the above mentioned attractions enough to get known with Helsinki? Should something be done about Temppeliaukio Church?





## HAMBURG



*fortissimos*

None



*fortes*

None



*mezzo fortes*

None



*mezzo pianos*

None



*pianos*

Miniatur Wunderland  
Rathaus (Town Hall)



*pianissimos*

Hafencity (Harbour City)  
St. Michaelis Church  
Park Planten un Blumen  
Jungfernstieg  
Alster Lakes

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## Miniatur Wunderland

### Some quotes:

“model train Mecca is what it should be called”

”they have scenes from many parts of Europe and the US”

”you can easily spend hours, going from country to country and enjoying the exhibits”

“the rooms go through a cycle from sun-up to sun-down, and the scenes at night are really incredible”

“it was worth every penny”

“perhaps a better visitor flow pattern would enhance a future visit”

”Wow is all I can say. A must see! So much detail and the airport was unbelievable to see.”

”The people who run this place have a very sly sense of humor. You have to look everywhere to see examples of it (like the tiny Smart car that has 12 people coming out of it all cramped up).”

“It was surprising to see the Americas represented by Las Vegas, Miami and the Grand Canyon but no New York.”

**Key words:** model train Mecca, details, crowded

### Marketing opportunities

The U.S. tourists might find it attractive to see the Europeans' view on the U.S.: are the scenes exact and detailed enough? Most of the reviews are totally positive.

The suggestion about improving the visitor flow pattern should be taken into consideration.

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## Rathaus (Town Hall)

### Some quotes:

“This is probably the fanciest town hall I have ever seen.”

“The inside of the Rathaus will give you an excellent idea of the wealth and confidence of the Hamburg bourgeoisie at the time.”

“If you are new to European travel, then this building will amaze you. Go see it, and take a tour inside for free, in English.”

**Key words:** photographs, fancy, English guided tours, restaurant

### Marketing opportunities

Being one of the most popular tourist attractions of Hamburg, should it be promoted as the starting point for getting known with the city? Should the town hall tour also include hints for other places to see and things to do while in Hamburg?

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## HafenCity (Harbor City)

There are reviews both about the district in general as well as about particular attractions located in it such as the International Maritime Museum and the Elbphilharmonie Concert Hall. Also the Miniatur Wunderland is mentioned in several reviews about the HafenCity as well as the Speicherstadt (Warehouse District). From reviews it's seen that many tourists mix the HafenCity with the St.Pauli Landungsbrücken.

### Some quotes:

"really cool buildings and impressive architecture"

"picturesque and memorable"

"Mariners Museum and Opera House are awesome, and the Miniature Wunderland is unbelievable!"

### *International Maritime Museum*

"Nine floors of history, you need probably a day for each 2 floors to really take it in. Not to miss."

"We thought this was one of the best museums we have ever been to. There is something of interest on every floor."

"The exhibits cover virtually every aspect of ships -- both naval and civilian."

"Should be of interest even to those who are not nautically oriented."

**Key words:** impressive architecture, impressive museum, impressive model train venue, boat tours, picturesque

### Marketing opportunities

Impressive is the key word for the *HafenCity* with the International Maritime Museum and the Elbphilharmonie Concert Hall as the main highlights.

As mentioned above, some reviews indicate that the tourists think that St.Pauli Landungsbrücken, Speicherstadt, and the *HafenCity* are the same area, which is called in three different names. The variety offered by these three locations should be emphasized.

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## St. Michaelis Church

### Some quotes:

“Well worth the trip to the top, but you must be brave to walk it! The elevator is a better bet, especially if you go at an off-time. The view gives you a 360 of the city and really helps you get your bearings. Do it at the beginning of your trip.”

“The church itself and the view at the top are stunning, but take the elevator! I would have loved nothing more, but our fearless leader proclaimed that, "To take the stairs is the German way, and so, we take the stairs." I saw many huffing people on the way up – their pained and sweaty faces said they'd rather be giving birth (women and men) than continue the climb.”

**Key words:** views, photos, stairs vs. elevator

### Marketing opportunities

As some reviews suggest, the view over the city is a good starting point for the visit.



## Park Pflanzen un Blumen

### Some quotes:

“you will get many beautiful landscape pictures”

“you should at least go once in the day, and once at night; the light show at the fountains are pretty nice”

“a nice break from visiting attraction after attraction”

“Park is gracious and spacious. Lots of room to wander, and beautifully landscaped. Compares to any great parks of the world.”

“You can jog, sit, dream and meditate here. A place where you can catch your breath. You can also catch a classical concert here. In the winter you can go ice skating on the rink.”

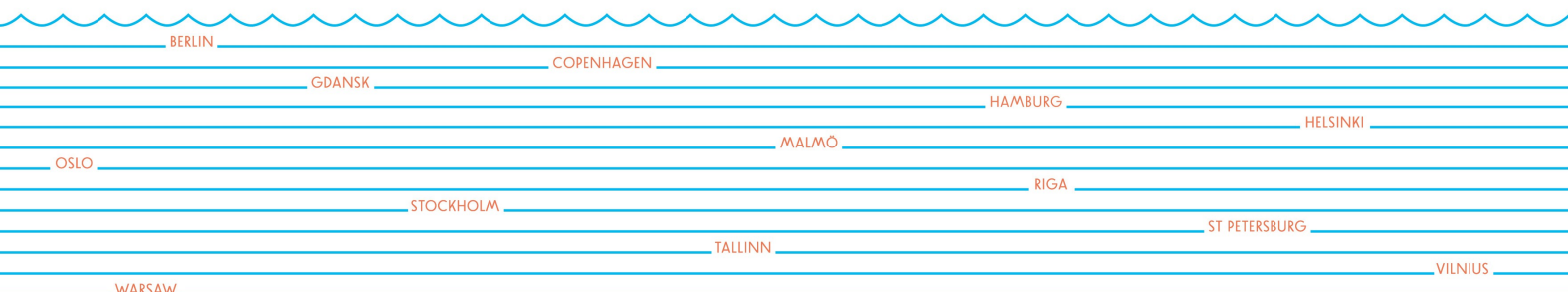
“Bring a picnic or buy something from the vendors in the park.”

“Coming from California, it is a rarity to find a wonderful city botanical garden accessible in a downtown metropolis like Hamburg. We were thrilled to be able to rest our weary bones in this lovely setting. For families there is also a playground with a good variety of apparatus. Hats off to the city planners in Hamburg! This is definitely worth seeing along with the Alster Lakes. I do not think enough people realize what this northern city has to offer.”

**Key words:** spacious, gracious, landscapes, fountains, music, lightshows, pictures, picnic

### Marketing opportunities

Combining some of the reviews, the park could be characterized as “gracious and spacious picnic break after intensive city sightseeing”.



## Jungfernstieg

### Some quotes:

“Great variety of stores and cafes. You also have a great view of the Alster.”

“I have spent hours walking around the Jungfernstieg area. There is lot of great shopping.”

“You name the brand and it is available. The only limit will be your spending power.”

”This is the street running along one end of Alster Lake and has the hippest, hottest shops, and some great cafes on the water side.”

Many reviewers particularly point out that there is the Apple Store on the Jungfernstieg.

**Key words:** extensive shopping, brands, cafes, lake.

### Marketing opportunities

“You name the brand and it is available,” to quote the review. Should it be marketed as a metropolis class shopping in a cozy environment?



## Alster Lakes

### Some quotes:

“What a perfectly picturesque place.”

“You need to stroll around the place, as it offers a lot of scenic views. Nice cafes and shopping invites for leisure.”

“This is a great place to lounge with a drink and watch the sunset.”

“Do not miss a tour around the lakes. It is by far the best thing in Hamburg. If it’s a sunny day, the open boats are worth it.”

“My favorite thing to do in Hamburg is rent a bike and ride around the lakes.”

“Just perfect for a morning jog.”

**Key words:** picturesque, views, stroll, cafes, boat tour, cycling, jogging

### Marketing opportunities

Picturesque is the main key word for the Alster Lakes. Hamburg is privileged to have truly picturesque and spacious natural scenery in its heart.



## Activities, Shopping and Nightlife in Hamburg

More than ten US tourists have reviewed the Sandeman's New Europe Free Tour of Hamburg describing it as an excellent experience and expressing surprise about the high quality of a free product: "I'm not sure how they do it for free (the tour guides work for tips only, and do not pressure you – but you'll WANT to tip them!), but it's a fantastic way to experience a new city. The guides have A+ personalities and interact with the people who are in the group." The other BSR cities, where the Sandeman's New Europe Free Tours are available are Berlin and Copenhagen. The Sandeman's New Europe brand might also be familiar from the tours to such cities as Amsterdam, Barcelona, Brussels, Dublin, Edinburgh, Lisbon, Liverpool, Madrid, Munich, London, Paris, Prague, as well as Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and New York outside Europe.

There are only three US tourists' reviews about the Lion King musical, all of them being positive: "This is a spectacular performance. The costumes are incredible and the voices of the actors are fantastic."

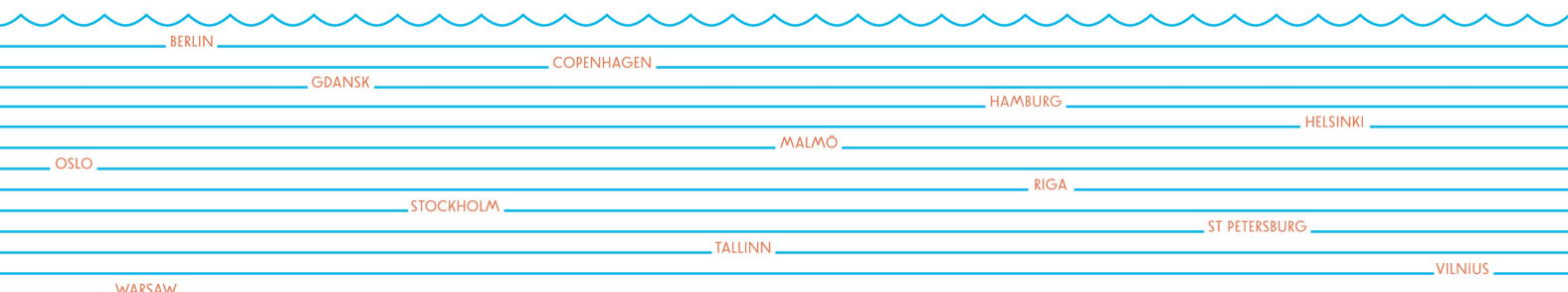
The Jungfernstieg is described in several US tourists' reviews as excellent place for shopping: "You name the brand and it is available on Jungfernstieg."

No other attractions or shopping places and none of the nightlife venues is mentioned in more than two reviews.

## Marketing Ideas and Questions

Miniatur Wunderland is the heart of Hamburg from the point of view of the U.S. tourists. Should it be promoted as the main attraction or should more light be turned to other attractions?

Taking into consideration that Berlin is one of the strongest magnets of the U.S. tourists to the BSR, should Hamburg focus on it when positioning? What is more realistic and beneficial – to compete or to cooperate with Berlin? What other cities could be considered as potential partners for the U.S. tourist attraction?



## WARSAW

 <i>fortissimos</i>	None
 <i>fortes</i>	None
 <i>mezzo fortes</i>	Warsaw Old Town with the sites related to it: Old Town Square Market, Royal Castle
 <i>mezzo pianos</i>	Warsaw Rising Museum
 <i>pianos</i>	Łazienki Królewskie Park-Palace Complex Tomb of the Unknown Soldier
 <i>pianissimos</i>	Monument to the Warsaw Uprising Fighters Gestapo Headquarters Museum Jewish Ghetto Memorial Copernicus Science Centre Frederick Chopin Museum



## Warsaw Old Town

### Some quotes:

"As a New Yorker, I was particularly inspired by the story and quality of the reconstruction that the city made after WWII, making everything exactly as it was before and even earning a UNESCO World Heritage Site long afterward."

"The tragic history of Warsaw is something everyone needs to be aware of, and the entire Old Town is a very good representation of it."

"Amazing to believe it was rebuilt from ground up after WWII. Gives a real picture of the old Warsaw whereas many neighborhoods look like many in Eastern Europe with Soviet era apartment blocks."

"Of course, it does not look exactly like it did pre-war. But the commitment to history and trying to recover the cultural legacy of the old town part of Warsaw is amazing and successful."

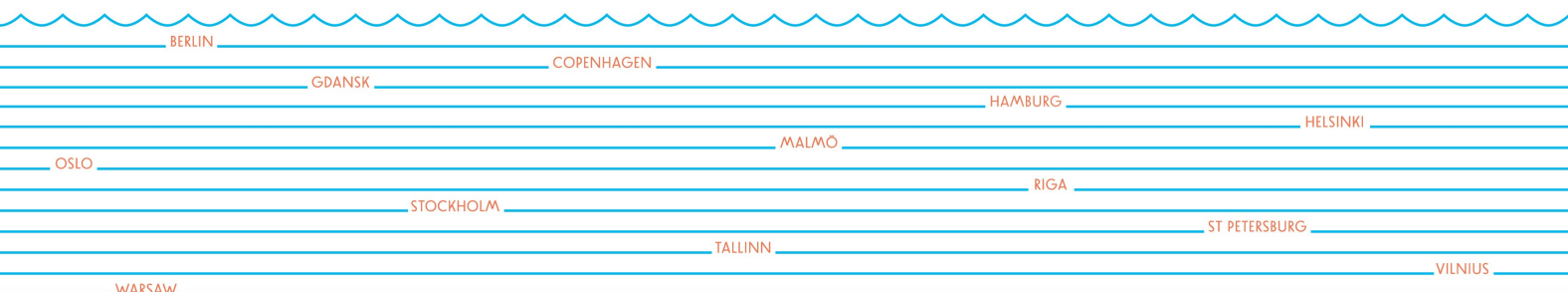
"This wonderful area has such a charm, with its cobblestone streets and alleyways, along with many baroque buildings throughout the area. Definitely happy to be able to get to this city at least once in a lifetime."

"Lots of restaurants with relatively reasonable prices and numerous shops with Amber jewelry."

**Key words:** WWII, tragic history, commitment, reconstruction, UNESCO, charm, restaurants, shops, amber, strolling.

### Marketing opportunities

Majority of the reviews focus on the reconstruction of the old town after the WWII. Only some do not mention the tragic history but rather focus on charm of the place as such. It seems that remembrance of the WWII is important to the majority of the tourists from the U.S.





## Warsaw Rising Museum (also called Warsaw Uprising Museum)

### Some quotes:

“This museum tells the most important part of European history.”

”See before you walk the old city.”

“The movie "City of Ruins" is very moving. It is in 3D and amazing.”

“There is excellent multimedia, an amazing array of exhibits, helpful staff and a fabulously quaint cafe. You really do need hours to take it all in; we spoke to several people who had come back again because there was just too much to take in on one visit.”

“It is a difficult museum to visit because it has a high emotional impact and I doubt if anyone can leave without at least a few tears. It makes one appreciate the bravery and determination of the Polish people to be free.”

“Absolutely one of the best single-theme museums I’ve ever visited – in many ways similar in design, atmosphere, quality of display, and impact as the Holocaust Museum in Washington, DC. It will be my first recommendation to any friends visiting Warsaw.”

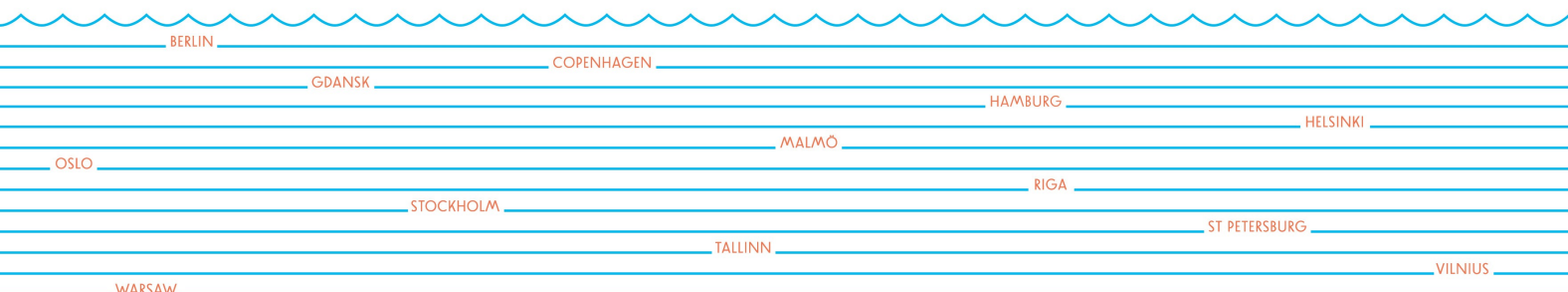
“You Poles have your weaknesses that are revealed when you enjoy freedom, and virtues that appear at the times of the worst adversities and misfortunes. Your strength lies in the fact that at the worst of times you know how to preserve hope. When you lose absolutely everything you had to lose, when you are left with nothing, you still preserve hope, and persistently repeat against reality 'Poland is not yet lost, not yet lost'”.  
Gregory MacDonald, head of the BBC

**Key words:** European history, WWII, emotional, freedom, multimedia, crowded, confusing

### Marketing opportunities

Several reviewers have compared the museum to the Holocaust Museum in Washington, DC. This comparison could be used to introduce the museum to the US travelers.

Quite many reviewers mention such practicalities as lines and crowds on weekends as well as confusing layout of the exposition. When thinking of the product development these issues should be kept in mind.



## Łazienki Królewskie Park-Palace Complex

### Some quotes:

“Warsaw’s version of Central Park or Golden Gate Park.”

“Well worth a visit – whatever the season.”

“Bring a blanket and your kids and enjoy the park, the peacocks that roam the park and make sure you try the fresh fruit ice cream from the many vendors around the park. Make a whole day out of it and you will not regret it!”

“This is a must see in Warsaw! Very large park easily accessible by car, bike, or public transportation. The grounds are so fantastic with lakes, ponds, palaces, monuments, walking trails, and park benches to relax and soak up the surroundings. It’s busy on the weekends (Sunday free concert) with families walking around, feeding the birds, squirrels, and the very, very large fish in the lake. You can also stop at on one of the cafes to have a sundae, crepes, or a coffee. Just a fantastically beautiful setting to enjoy.”

“White royal palaces, Baroque garden, statues and fountains are great place for photo taking.”

“Highly recommend if you like long walks or bike rides.”

**Key words:** spacious, walking, cycling, palaces, Chopin concerts, picnic, ice cream, coffee, cafes, peacocks, squirrels, photos, people watching.

### Marketing opportunities

Should comparisons to the Central Park or Golden Gate Park be used in promotion of the park to the U.S. tourists? Is it a place for local people-watching?



## Tomb of the Unknown Soldier

### Some quotes:

"I take university students to this every time on the first night when we arrive. It sets the tone for a visit to pay honor to what happened in Warsaw during the War, and allows them to see that Poland, like the USA, honors their fallen soldiers. Very tastefully done."

"It is similar to other Tombs of Unknown Soldiers. What makes this unique was the huge number of Unknown Soldiers in this country."

"Large quiet space for reflection of the nameless heroes who sacrificed their lives for the defense of their country. Only God knows their names."

**Key words and phrases:** setting the tone for a visit, paying honor, only God knows their names

### Marketing opportunities

The U.S. tourists' attention to this memorial place demonstrates willingness to commemorate the WWII.



## Monument to the Warsaw Uprising Fighters

### Some quotes:

"This monument is a touching reminder of the sacrifices made by the people of Warsaw during WWII."

"This is an exceptional sculpture. You need to take a bit of time to really look at it. There is so much meaning in the different parts."

"Not many monuments have the impact this one does. It is beautiful and expressive and clearly tells the story of those who fought to save Warsaw."

**Key words:** touching, meaningful, expressive

### Marketing opportunities

Several reviewers admit that for understanding the meaning of the monument it is advisory to visit the Warsaw Rising Museum first.

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## Gestapo Headquarters Museum

### Some quotes:

"This is a small museum that could be overlooked. But should not be. The place is simple just a couple of cell blocks. But the crimes that occurred here were horrible. If you are looking to understand Warsaw during the war period this place is a must."

"One of the most chilling places I've ever been. Well organized and thought-out and can be done in little time."

"This is one of those places that stick with you. The facility is maintained as it was during WWII. It is a somber and eerie place."

"It is a horrible walk through evil but needs to be maintained for no other reason than to teach people what happens when monsters take over. It is far too explicit for children or even young teenagers."

**Key words:** understanding, WWII, somber, eerie, horrible, evil

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## Jewish Ghetto Memorial

### Some quotes:

“The Memorial has two sides. One side is a bold 3 dimensional portrayal of those who fought in the Ghetto. The other side portrays the thousands who were taken to concentration camps.”

”The Warsaw Ghetto Freedom Fighters didn't have a chance against the occupying Germans. But that didn't stop them from fighting back, and their resistance eventually inspired the world. As a child I read about Mila 18 and the ŻOB, and I never forgot the lessons I learned. And I vowed that if I ever had the time/money to make it to Warsaw, I would stop by this memorial to pay my respects.”

**Key words:** resistance, respect

### Marketing opportunities

Several reviewers express high expectations regarding the museum next to the memorial, opening in 2013. Together with the museum the memorial forms a good explanation of history as well as respectful and emotional remembrance opportunity.



## Copernicus Science Centre

### Some quotes:

“If you are visiting Warsaw with kids, this is a must-see.”

“Tons and tons of hands on activities.”

“Pretty comparable to similar places in the States, although I think mostly good for little ones, not teens. I was more entertained at the Chicago Museum of Science, but I'm not the right target market.”

“It is not rocket science to have pre-paid tickets, virtual queuing and/or timed entry so that people do not have to queue.”

**Key words:** children, interactive, queues

### Marketing opportunities

The Chicago Museum of Science mentioned in one of the reviews and other science centers of the US could be named as examples when introducing and marketing the Copernicus Science Centre to the US travelers. However, from the reviews it can also be concluded that there are some development opportunities that could be copied from the science centers of the US including improvements to the visitor flow management.



## Frederick Chopin Museum

### Some quotes:

"This museum immerses the old and young in Chopin. The interactive exhibits were easy enough for my 70 year old mother to use, yet entertaining for younger children we saw."

"As far as museums go, this is one of the highest tech ones I've experienced."

"Wow, I could have stayed all day, it is so tastefully done."

"This is supposed to be a state-of-the-art museum that highlights the life and work of Chopin. Unfortunately, the museum hides behind technological gimmicks and gizmos, and Chopin's life and work are a second thought. You learn little about Chopin's inspirations, and how his Polish upbringing influenced his music."

**Key words:** interactive (like it or hate it)

### Marketing opportunities

The reviews are controversial: while the interactivity of the museum is praised by ones, the others have found it disturbing for learning the Chopin's work and personality.

There are also some complaints about the layout of the exposition as well as the staff's service manner.

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## Activities, Shopping and Nightlife in Warsaw

Tours provided by “Adventure Warsaw” and “Warsaw behind the Scenes” are the most reviewed activities by the US travelers and the majority of the reviews are very positive. Also the following tour providers are mentioned in several reviews: “Warsaw 4U”, “Warsaw Walkabouts”, “Eastern Station Warsaw”, “Get to Know Warsaw”, “Free Walking Tour Warsaw”, “Slow Warsaw”, “Segway City Tours”.

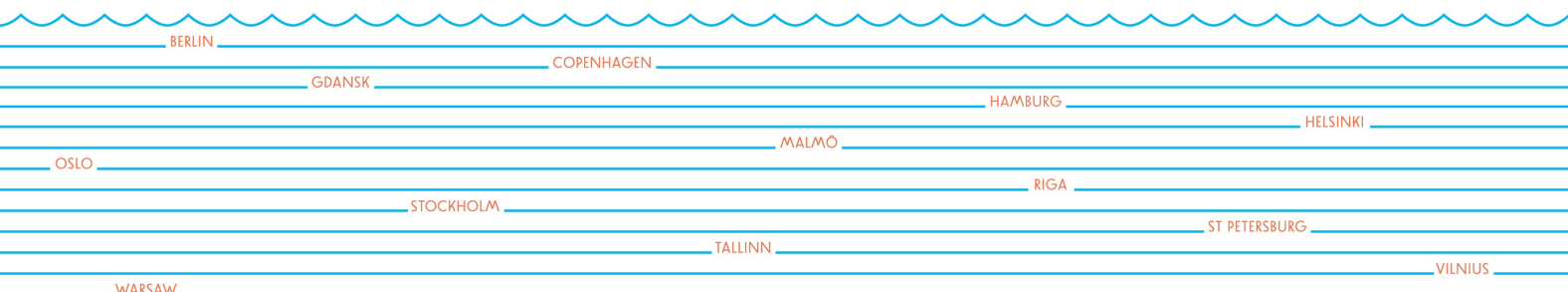
Shopping is mentioned in several reviews of the old town, especially amber and local crafts shopping. No other shopping places are mentioned in more than one or two reviews.

Warsaw’s nightlife is not particularly reviewed by the US tourists.

## Marketing Ideas and Questions

Most of the Warsaw’s sites reviewed on the *TripAdvisor* by the U.S. tourists are related to the remembrance of the WWII. It seems that the U.S. tourists come to Warsaw in a serious and respectful mood and want to commemorate what has happened during the WWII. Should this serious mood be respected or cheered up a bit? What would be the best way?

Similar seriousness is observed also in Berlin, one of the strongest magnets of the U.S. tourists to the BSR. Should Warsaw and Berlin tell the WWII stories together? What other topics could there be? Could attractions related to music (Chopin) and science (Copernicus, Marie Curie) be attractive enough to the U.S. tourists? Which would be the best partner cities for joint products?





## RIGA

 <i>fortissimos</i>	None
 <i>fortes</i>	None
 <i>mezzo fortes</i>	None
 <i>mezzo pianos</i>	None
 <i>pianos</i>	Riga Old Town Museum of the Occupation of Latvia
 <i>pianissimos</i>	Riga's St. Peter's Church Freedom Monument Latvian Open-Air Ethnographic Museum



## Riga Old Town

### Some quotes:

“Easy to walk around all day with plenty to see, lots of shops, restaurants, cafes, and bars. Easily the first thing anyone visiting Riga should do.”

“Old Riga can be walked through in a couple of hours, but is well worth lingering in. There are plenty of photo ops.”

“Beautiful architecture and very clean. The shopping and dining is abundant. For those who appreciate architecture, Riga has it all.”

“There is plenty of life in Riga's city center at least in summer. Wandering the streets and viewing some of the great art deco architecture on buildings and restored buildings is a delight. Enjoyed the sidewalk cafes and restaurants and the omnipresent live music in numerous locations. A lively and pleasant place.”

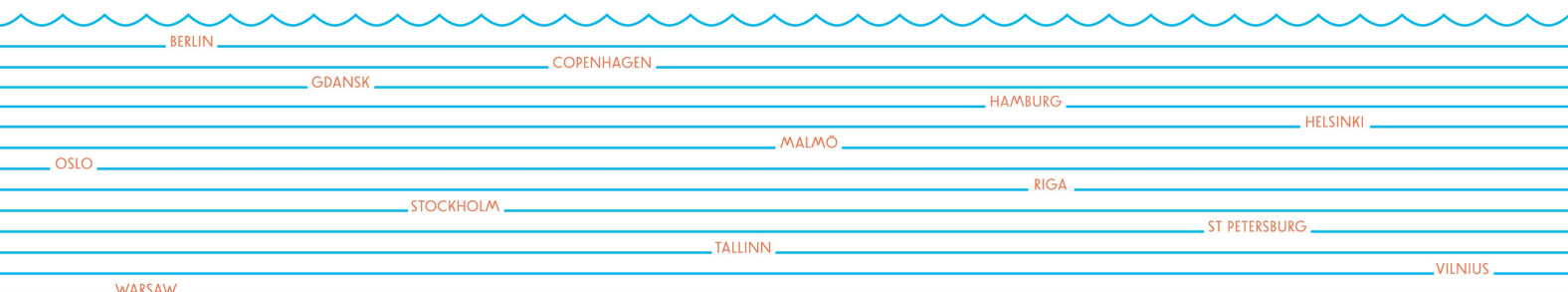
“Big party city. Especially for travelers. Meet a lot at various pubs. Very clean city and courteous.”

“We feel that Riga and cities like Riga such as Krakow are so historical and beautiful but have not been on the top list of travel spots, people are missing out! After Paris, Rome, London, these are the cities to come and see...”

**Key words:** architecture, art deco, art nouveau, shops, restaurants, cafes, lively, clean

### Marketing opportunities

It should be taken into consideration that Riga, Tallinn and Vilnius are often visited on one trip and therefore compared. The competitive advantages should be very clear to win tourists' hearts and to earn good reviews in such a tough competition with the two other 'Baltic Sisters'.



## Museum of the Occupation of Latvia

### Some quotes:

“This museum is one of the best I found in Eastern Europe to explain what happened during the Soviet era.”

“If there is any single historical visit mandatory for Europeans and Americans, this is it. The people of Latvia and the Baltics have suffered immeasurably and much of the world is unaware.”

“You can't visit the Baltics without seeing this museum and the Genocide Victims Museum in Vilnius, Lithuania. The images you'll see will stay with you for a long long time. "Man's Inhumanity to Man" is graphically displayed.”

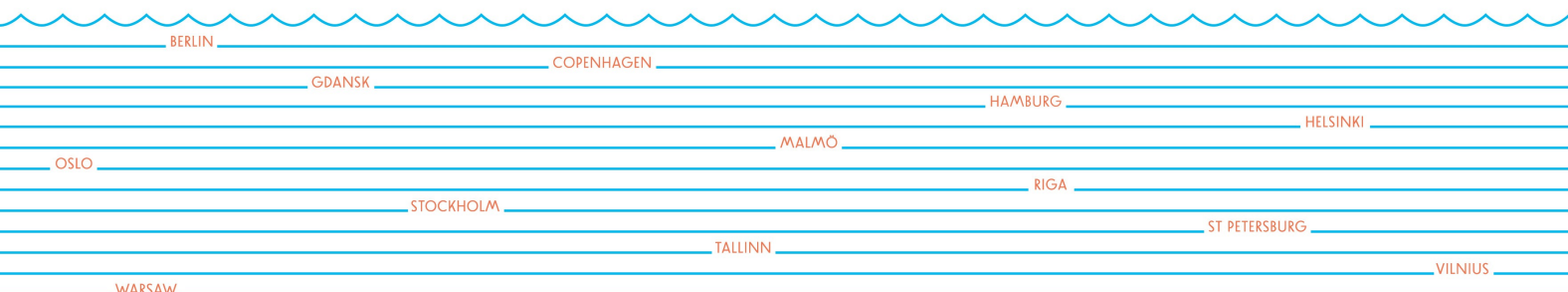
“One holocaust after another and still the Latvian people have survived. This is the story of the triumph of the human spirit in the face of unimaginable hardship and oppression. It is well documented and covers in many dimensions the difficulties the Latvian people faced for 50 years. We must never forget the inhumanity that exists in the world and the forms it can take. Do not expect to be entertained by this museum. It is something to be done to show respect for the victims of oppression.”

“Most Latvians do not understand why this museum is rated so highly by tourists, as it is such a negative place... most Latvians have lost multiple loved ones during this era, and just do not want daily reminders of the atrocities.”

**Key words:** Eastern Europe, the Baltics, Soviet era, oppression, respect.

### Marketing opportunities

The U.S. tourists are interested in what happened behind the iron curtain and are respectful to the remembrance of the victims of occupations. Focusing on the 'story of the triumph of the human spirit' might help to tell the difficult stories.



## Riga's St. Peter's Church

### Some quotes:

“Go on your first day, if the weather is clear. Beautiful view!”

“Great views of the city in all directions.”

“A great view, wonderful place to get some photographs from above.”

**Key words:** views, pictures

## Freedom Monument

### Some quotes:

“We were lucky enough to see the changing of the guards at the Freedom Monument. Very special to see the pride that Latvian's have in their country and their freedom (which was not come by easily). A must see.”

“The location of the Freedom Monument is so pivotal in Riga. So much goes on around the monument, it really is a symbol of life.”

**Key words:** freedom

## Latvian Open-Air Ethnographic Museum

### Some quotes:

“The museum covers a large area with many many buildings from several regions and periods of Latvian history. The artifacts within are as interesting as the houses and outbuildings. The best part is, it is not touristy and commercialized; although, you will find some older Latvian women in costume who would love to sell you some crocheted knickknacks. They aren't pushy though. The place is well worth visiting, especially the sod house that is a copy of the ones the deportees the Soviets sent to Siberia had to erect and live in.”

“On a nice sunny day it is a nice diversion from the hustle and bustle of downtown Riga. I would highly recommend making this a day trip on any visit to Riga.”

**Key words:** large, day-trip

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## Activities, Shopping and Nightlife in Riga

Such activity providers as "Tours in Riga", "Riga Free Tours", "E.A.T. Riga Tours", "Smile Line Day Tours", "Riga Bike Tours" are reviewed by several US tourists.

The five-star spa complex ESPA Riga is also mentioned in the US tourist reviews; however some of the feedback are critical.

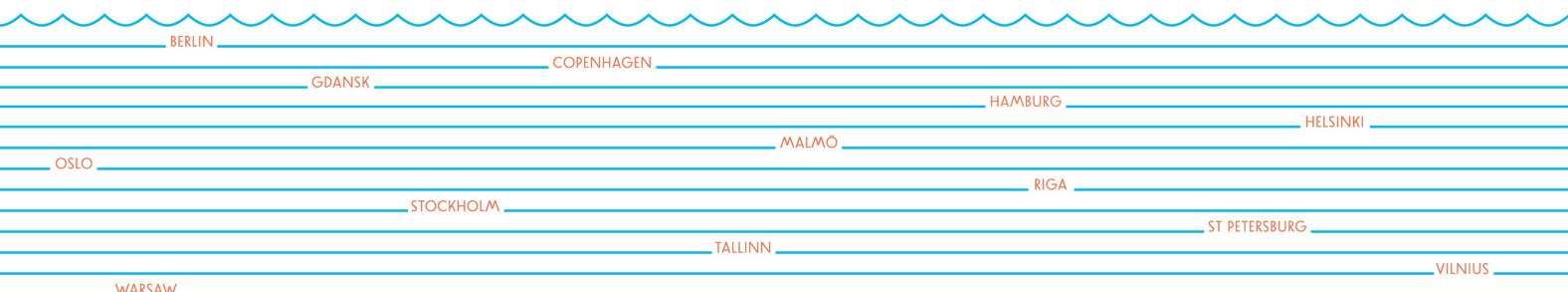
Although several reviewers have characterized Riga Old Town as a party spot, no particular nightlife places have been reviewed by more than one or two US tourists.

Also it is often mentioned that there are many shops in the Old Town; however the only particular shopping place reviewed by several US travelers is the Central Market.

## Marketing Ideas and Questions

The key words for Riga are diverse. Probably due to the diversity there are no attractions which would significantly stand out regarding the quantity of the reviews. At the same time there is something for many different tastes.

What would be the best ways to increase popularity among the U.S. tourists? What themes and what partner cities should be chosen?



## ST. PETERSBURG



*fortissimos*

State Hermitage Museum and Winter Palace



*fortes*

Church of the Savior on Spilled Blood  
Peterhof



*mezzo fortes*

Catherine Palace and Park



*mezzo pianos*

St. Isaac's Cathedral  
Peter and Paul Fortress (Petrovavlovskaya Krepost)



*pianos*

Nevsky Prospect  
Mariinsky Theatre  
State Russian Museum  
Yusupov Palace  
Bronze Horseman (Monument to Peter the Great)



*pianissimos*

Cathedral of Our Lady of Kazan (Kazansky Sobor)  
Erarta Museum and Galleries of Contemporary Art  
Feel Yourself Russian (Nikolaevsky Palace)  
Pavlovsk Palace and Park  
Blockade of Leningrad Museum

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## State Hermitage Museum and Winter Palace

### Some quotes:

“You can really feel the heritage of the Tsars.”

“I am not sure whether one goes to the Hermitage to see the building or the art. Both are spectacular.”

“We spent nearly 8 hours in the museum and loved every minute!”

“The Hermitage went under my radar as one of the best museums in the world. I have been to many in Europe and the States and this is in the top 3 for sure. I like seeing famous works of art and this was probably only surpassed by Louvre, but the architecture and furnishings at the Hermitage were more impressive to me.”

“Unreal. Puts the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Louvre to shame.”

“The Winter Palace has a beautiful interior, but during summer months it is impossible to enjoy it because of the crowds.”

**Key words:** famous artworks, tsars, royalty, architecture, crowds

### Marketing opportunities

There are hundreds of the U.S. tourists’ reviews expressing delight about the art collections and the building. Comparisons with the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Louvre are inevitable.

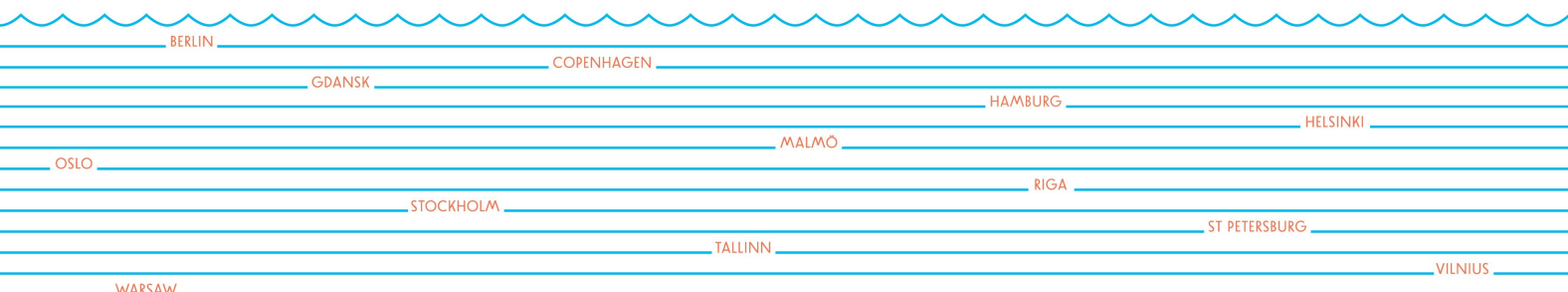
Many reviewers suggest doing some research about the exhibits before visiting and having a guide or an audio guide during the visit.

There are many practicalities reviewed by the U.S. tourists such as purchase of the tickets, locations of the toilets, the elevators, lack of the air conditioning, the visitor flows, photographing.

There are many positive reviews from the U.S. tourists about the possibility to buy the tickets online; at the same time several reviews express disappointment about long queuing, if buying the tickets at the entrance.

While some reviewers are positive about possibility to take pictures, others are critical about too many people taking pictures and disturbing for enjoyment of the exhibitions.

With so many practical issues reviewed by the U.S. tourists, there could be an official information material produced such as “10 tips for an enjoyable time in the Hermitage”.





## Church of the Savior on Spilled Blood

### Some quotes:

“Beautiful cathedral built on the spot where Alexander II was assassinated. It looks much like the famous St. Basil's Cathedral that heads Red Square in Moscow.”

“A mosaic of mosaics. Walk around the outside, read all the accomplishments of Alexander II, ponder what might have happened if he had survived the attack, buy a ticket, go inside, and then just look. Look up, straight up into the towers to see the faces looking down, look down to the floors that are covered with utilitarian rugs that cover the rich stone "rugs" and look all around. Color and mosaics leap from all sides.”

“As you walk closer and close to this you can't believe what you are seeing. It's like walking towards Cinderella's castle in WDW. The difference is that this is not something out of a fairy tale. The level of detail put into this place is beyond imaginable. The interior is absolutely stunning. I can't think of a more underrated sight in the world that this. Learning why and where it was built just added to the mysticism.”

“I had the preconceived idea of an atheistic, Communist Russia and no mention of Jesus. We went into the church and started looking at the art work. Jesus and the events from the bible are everywhere!!! I mean EVERYWHERE. I did not expect that.”

“Better interior than most cathedrals in the world – tops St. Mark's in Venice, tops St. Basil's in Moscow for sure, more ornate and beautiful than the Hermitage.”

**Key words:** mosaics, colors, details, ornate, stunning

### Marketing opportunities

The comparisons to the St. Basil's Cathedral in Moscow mentioned in several reviews, can be considered for the marketing purposes.

The phrases “color and mosaics leap from all sides”, “better interior than most cathedrals in the world” as well as the amusing comparison with the Cinderella's castle in the Walt Disney's World characterize the impressiveness of the cathedral.

It is interesting and might be kept in mind when preparing marketing materials that many U.S. tourists come to Russia with an impression that it is an atheistic country with most of the churches destroyed or rebuilt during the Soviet times.

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## Peterhof

### Some quotes:

“Peter the Great was determined to go a step further than Versailles and I think he did when it came to the gardens, the fountains and his smaller residence located on the edge of the property looking across the water.”

“Equal to if not better than Versailles and Schönbrunn Palace.”

“Fantastic grounds; much more comfortable than Versailles’ ominous orchards. It had a great deal of charm, especially the fountains that shoot out randomly. Kids will love those, and they should bring trunks and a towel. While they’re at it, they can also run to take a dip in the Baltic. While it’s not as warm as the Gulf of Mexico, it’s sunnier and warmer than most California beaches.”

“You won’t believe that no electricity or other power source is required to shoot water to amazing heights. The grounds are lovely and open onto the beautiful Baltic Sea.”

“The time spent reviewing the devastating damage in WWII and the work done to rebuild this property was well spent.”

“Read Greek mythology before coming to this place as every fountain has the story to tell.”

“Visiting this palace in the winter, with the frozen fountains, absolute quiet and beauty is a dream come true. Have not been there with the summer crowds, but have walked down the steps to the frozen Bay of Finland, and imagined the Tsar looking out as we did.”

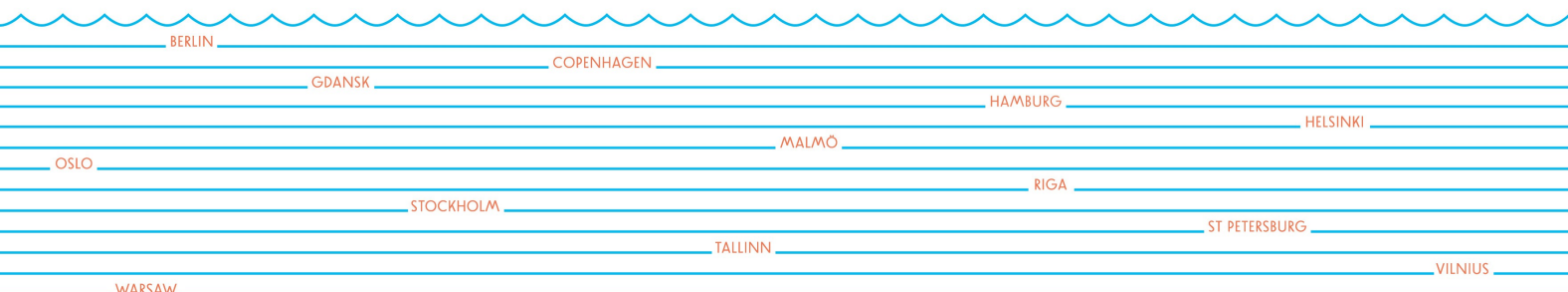
**Key words:** Peter the Great, fountains, the Baltic Sea, Versailles, crowds.

### Marketing opportunities

There are hundreds of the U.S. tourists’ reviews expressing delight about the palace and especially about its gardens and fountains. Comparisons with Versailles are inevitable.

Some reviewers suggest reading the Greek mythology to understand the stories, which are displayed in the fountains.

There are several reviews explaining the best way to travel to Peterhof from the city center. Many reviewers warn about crowds and pickpockets. Similar to the Hermitage, also for Peterhof an official “10 tips for an enjoyable visit” could be useful and appreciated by the tourists.



## Catherine Palace and Park

### Some quotes:

“What can you say about attending the Tsar’s Ball in the beautiful blue Catherine Palace, and standing at the same windows the Tsar and his family looked out? Listening to the harpsichord in the Amber Room. Fireworks at midnight. Dancing. Caviar. Champagne. Incredible service. International guests at the ball. Incredible.”

“The Nazis had headquarters here during their 872-day siege of Leningrad during World War II. When they left, the palace was in shambles and 70,000 trees in the surrounding park had been cut. Almost immediately after the war, the Russians set about restoring the palace, meticulously putting back together the pieces and re-creating from photographs such spaces as the Amber Room.”

**Key words:** tsars, Amber Room, WWII, Russian Baroque

### Marketing opportunities

Similar to Petershof, also the Catherine Palace is compared to Versailles. Several reviewers describe the royal and festive atmosphere in the palace, which can be emphasized for the marketing purposes. Also the fate of the palace during the WWII, its demolition and reconstruction, with the story of the Amber Room as the highlight, is appealing to the U.S. tourists.



## St. Isaac's Cathedral

### Some quotes:

“This cathedral did not have one inch of space that wasn't painted or covered in gilding or semiprecious stone. The wealth of the Russian Orthodox Church is displayed here in a glorious way. It is said Russian Tsars sold Alaska to pay for the gold dome on top of this cathedral. The top of the cathedral's architectural plans were purchased by America to build as the top of our Congressional building in Washington, D.C. It is identical.”

”This place is like one big mosaic. Everything was done piece by piece. From the tile artwork to the beautifully designed floors and doors.”

“The interior of the cathedral is certainly impressive and worth the time taken to visit, but for us the most memorable part was the view that you get when you climb the 274 steps up to the colonnade. Here you can walk all around the outside of the base of the cathedral dome and enjoy magnificent views across the city.”

“I didn't think I'd want to see ABC – another bloody church, but am glad I toured St Isaac's. I first climbed the 5-7 minutes of steps to the colonnade (top of the domes) for panoramic views of St Petersburg. Then I toured the museum/cathedral, which is new and lovely inside.”

”This is absolutely the most impressive church I have seen outside of Rome.”

”It does reveal a dark side of Russia. During the height of Communism it was actually designated as a museum of atheism.”

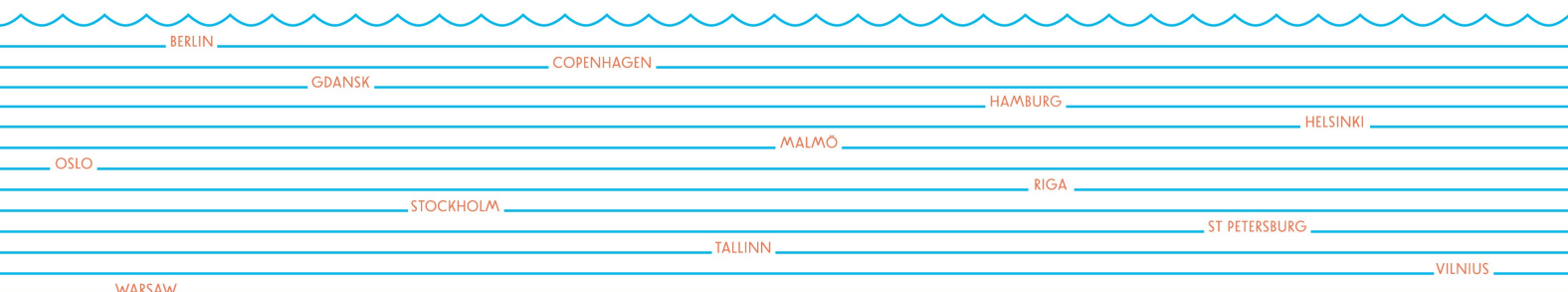
**Key words:** impressive interior, views, museum, Ortodox, atheism

### Marketing opportunities:

The stories about selling Alaska to build the golden dome of St. Isaac's Cathedral as well as selling the cathedral's architectural plans to the U.S. are appealing to the American audience. Also the stories about promotion of atheism during the Soviet times are interesting to the U.S. tourists.

St. Isaac's Cathedral is often compared to St. Peter's in Rome. Also it is compared with the Church of Our Savior on Spilled Blood in St. Petersburg. Both of these comparisons could be considered for marketing materials.

Many reviewers describe the views from the St. Isaac's dome as a great opportunity to get panoramic impressions and photos of St. Petersburg.



## **Peter and Paul Fortress (Petropavlovskaya Krepost)**

### **Some quotes:**

“We had read copious amounts about Peter the Great, Catherine and other Tsars and Tsarinas before going to St. Petersburg. Visiting the Peter and Paul Fortress brought everything we had read to life – it was a magical experience.”

“Well worth the visit to see one of the places involved in the beginning of the city and the Peter and Paul Cathedral to see the tombs of the royal family.”

“The prison reminded me of Alcatraz in California because of its island location and the reputation of a dank, scary prison.”

“The Peter and Paul Fortress houses several smaller museums in addition to the church. If you are at all interested in the space race, the Museum of Cosmonautics and Rocket Technology is very interesting way to see the other side of the race to the moon.”

“My kids loved being able to go through the “secret entrance” and walk on the walls of the fortress and climb on the cannons.”

“Some of the best pictures you'll take in St. Petersburg will be of the spires of the cathedral in this fortress.”

“Be ready to do a lot of walking!”

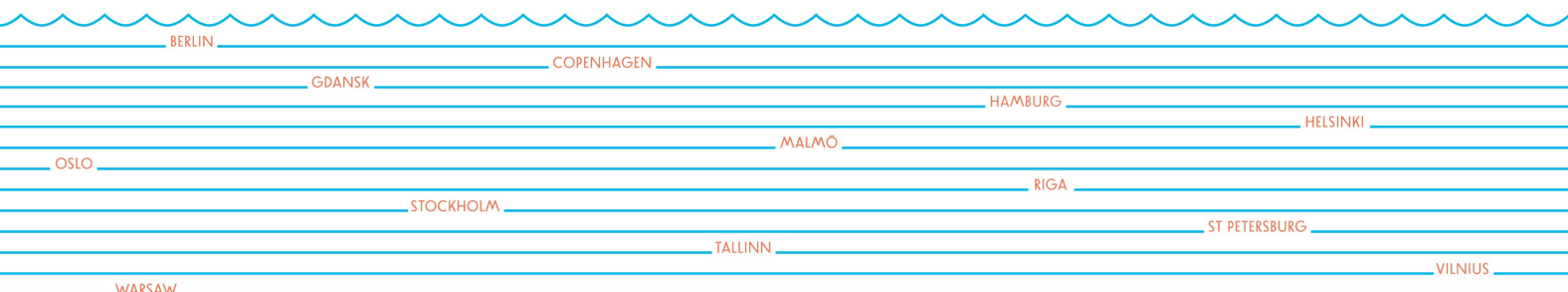
**Key words:** beginning of the city, tsars, tombs of the royal family, prison, museums, walking, crowded

### **Marketing opportunities**

The U.S. tourists find the stories of the Russian royal families very attractive, therefore the main highlight of the Peter and Paul Fortress is the tombs of the Romanov family at the Peter and Paul Cathedral.

Also the similarity of the prison at the Peter and Paul Fortress to the Alcatraz is appealing to the U.S. tourists the same as the possibility to see “the other side of the race to the moon” at the Museum of Cosmonautics and Rocket Technology.

The Peter and Paul Fortress is described as a good place to spend time with children and have nice walks. However, similar to other top attractions of St. Petersburg, there are also complaints about big crowds of tourists, especially during the cruise season.



## Nevsky Prospect

### Some quotes:

“Reminded me of the Fifth Avenue in New York but dirtier. Maybe this was a magical commercial strip 10 years ago and the reputation lingers.” (Visited February 2013)

“It is very beautiful, European, colorful and crowded even during the winter. It creates a familiar feel to the city.”

“This is the Fifth Avenue of St. Petersburg. There is such energy and a sense of capitalist economics. You can find anything on the Nevsky Prospect.”

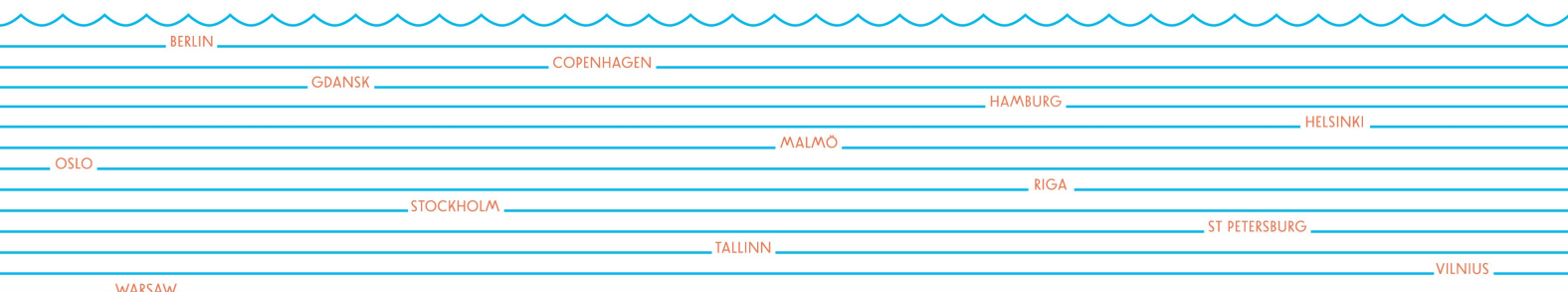
“Two excellent Art Nouveau stores to visit: a book store and a pastry/ candy/ food store. Incredible Art Nouveau design and ignored by guidebooks.”

“This is the high end shopping district and it does have some interesting stores to visit – that said, the prices are much higher here than in the U.S. and not a place to go on a shopping spree.

**Key words:** lively, crowded, shopping, expensive, European, the Fifth Avenue

### Marketing opportunities

Many U.S. reviewers compare the Nevsky Prospect with the Fifth Avenue in New York. However, several reviewers warn about high prices; also pickpockets are often mentioned. The Nevsky Prospect definitely has a certain charm, it is lively and exclusive; however, this spirit needs to be maintained as some reviews are critical complaining about pollution and expensiveness. Definitely there are hidden treasures on the Nevsky Prospect such as the Art Nouveau book store, which is mentioned in one of the reviews.



## Mariinsky Theatre

### Some quotes:

“Like going to Broadway for a show in New York, the ballet in Russia is a must for culture oriented tourists. This is the place; it is like Magic with its rich history, lovely architecture and premier performances.”

“Above the stage, high enough to not be distracting, but easy to see, were the words in English.”

“It has a better organized, more intimate, cozier feel than the Bolshoi.”

“The world-famous Mariinsky Theatre added a second venue a few years ago. Located a few blocks from the theatre, the new concert hall has won rave reviews for acoustics, design, etc., and presents outstanding performers. But be forewarned: This concert hall contains many truly terrible seats. And you do not want to be in one of them.”

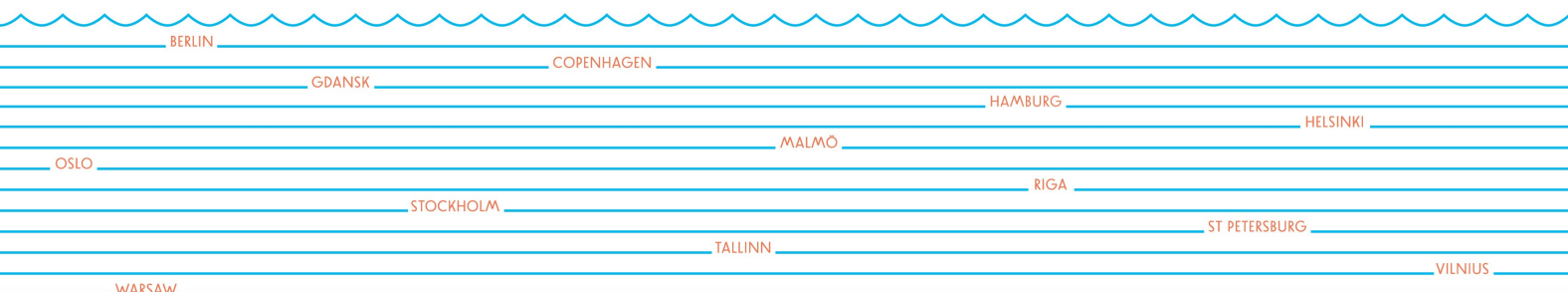
**Key words:** Russian ballet, premier performances

### Marketing opportunities

Mariinsky Theatre is compared both to Broadway and the Bolshoi in Moscow and it definitely has certain strengths in this competition.

As some reviewers write: seeing Russian ballet in Russia is a wonderful experience.

The new building is definitely an opportunity; however, some reviewers warn about bad seat planning in some sections.



## State Russian Museum

### Some quotes:

"A great introduction to Russian art."

"I really liked the art being displayed in a chronological order. That made it easy to see how art styles developed in Russia."

"Although it is smaller and less opulent than the Hermitage this is a truly Russian museum unlike the Hermitage. I loved the focus on Russian art and history and there are some truly special paintings and icons in this museum."

"I like to visit this museum every time I am in St Petersburg. It is very comprehensive, including fine and applied arts, and they have also got a marvelous collection of contemporary Russian art. Their temporary exhibitions are usually excellent. The paintings by Repin are a must as well as their icon paintings. I particularly like the folk art, too, and their works from the revolutionary period. There are kiosks scattered throughout the museum which sell some very good material, some in English."

**Key words:** Russian art, chronology

### Marketing opportunities

The State Russian Museum is often compared with the Hermitage, naming several strengths: comprehensive presentation of Russian art, easy entrance and less crowds. Enjoyable experience of Russian art.

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## Yusupov Palace

### Some quotes:

"The Yusupovs had it all ... lots of money, plenty of intrigue (Rasputin was assassinated here) and good taste over many generations. This is a livable palace, with plumbing and everything!

"The Yusupov "Palace" is not truly a palace, as it did not belong to royalty, but rather, to a very wealthy common citizen, and thus technically is known as the Yusupov Manor. Regardless, the treasures contained within this spectacular residence rival those of the larger true palaces, and the wealth displayed is on a par with those palaces, as well. The contrast from one room to the next is spectacular."

"Often overlooked but a great contrast to Catherine's Palace and Peterhof. Owned by a contemporary but demonstrates the difference between the royalty and the businessman."

"This palace is more "human" in its size and not as extravagant as Catherine's Palace. It is absolutely beautiful. Take the historical tour and learn about Rasputin's assassination. We learned some things we had never heard before."

"From Madame Pompadour's staircase to the Rococo Theater to the room where Rasputin was murdered, it is all here."

"It makes you go back to the books and read the story of Rasputin."

"Some rooms are still the way they were before the Revolution."

**Key words:** Rasputin, theatre, wealth, intrigue, revolution

### Marketing opportunities

The legends of the Yusupov Manor attract many tourists. The reviews reveal interest about the wealth and influence of the Yusupovs, which is well presented in the palace. The U.S. tourists are intrigued by the story about Rasputin. The reviewers suggest visiting the Yusupovs Palace to see the difference and appeal if compared to the Catherine's Palace and the Peterhof.

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## **Bronze Horseman (Monument to Peter the Great)**

### **Some quotes:**

“It is not as big as I had expected. I thought "This is it?". but later on that night, a friend told me the history behind the statue and it's significance and it's truly an amazing. It survived two world wars. It didn't need to be restored until 2002.”

“According to legend, enemy forces will never take St. Petersburg while the "Bronze Horseman" stands in the middle of the city.”

“Make sure to read about Peter the Great to really appreciate his contributions to this great city.”

“The tradition of brides and grooms visiting the statute for pictures and champagne is interesting.”

“Pushkin wrote a poem about "The Bronze Horseman." Read that first. It's quite fun and has a spooky ending. Then, come see the statue itself. Be sure to say nice things about St. Petersburg to it and be sincere... unless you want to end up like Evgeny from the poem!”

**Key words:** Peter the Great, history, significance, traditions, photos

### **Marketing opportunities**

Many reviews emphasize importance of having some knowledge about the stories related to the monument before visiting it. Peter the Great's biography, Pushkin's poem “Bronze Horsemen”, legends about the significance of the statue to the city and its involvement in wedding traditions as well as the unique features of the monument's construction are explained in some reviews and could also be provided in marketing materials. Those reviewers who do not have any knowledge of the above mentioned facts and legends characterize it as 'just another monument'.

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## Cathedral of Our Lady of Kazan (Kazansky Sobor)

### Some quotes:

“This looks like the most European churches we saw, but upon entering it was the only church we visited that seemed alive and full of spirit. Babushkas kissing icons and lighting candles, people lined up in a long line at one particular icon, thick clouds of incense.”

“This is a true, working church, filled when we were there, in the middle of the day, with many worshipers, mostly women. Quiet. Peaceful. A place to contemplate Russian history, and be thankful for the survival, through the years of Communist rule, of this cathedral. A place to reflect on the survival of the faith of the Russian people. A deeply spiritual place.”

“I actually was more moved by my time spent inside Our Lady of Kazan than I was by St. Isaac's or Savior on Spilled Blood. Those two were so full of people taking pictures.”

**Key words:** alive, spiritual, peaceful, icons, candles, worshipers, atmosphere,

### Marketing opportunities

Cathedral of Our Lady of Kazan is compared with St. Petersburg's cathedrals of St. Isaac's and Savior on Spilled Blood. The main strength of the Cathedral of Our Lady of Kazan is its spiritual atmosphere comparing to other museum-like cathedrals.



## Erarta Museum and Galleries of Contemporary Art

### Some quotes:

"While the Tsarist and Communist eras are well-explored in a lot of other places, Erarta did an excellent job of opening my eyes to the latest generation of creative people that actually live in the country and continue driving it forward."

"It's an excellent glimpse of modern Russia, or rather, of what the country should be like – genuinely welcoming, friendly to its foreign guests, home to many talented people with a fresh perspective on old ideas... I got the feeling that they're trying to make this place into the MOMA [The Museum of Modern Art, New York City] of Russia with their more minimalist approach than any other museum and make the art speak for themselves."

"Creative space, with art that gives you a glimpse into Russia's soul. A great counterpoint to the Hermitage."

"There is something here for everyone, as it has a great mix canvases and some installations and it has a very good structure in the sense that when you walk around it all fits. Unlike say the Whitney or the New Museum in NY, where I live, everything made sense."

**Key words:** modern Russia, creativity, welcoming

### Marketing opportunities

Modern Russia, the latest generation of creative people, welcoming atmosphere are the characteristics that are mentioned in several reviews and make this museum special. The fact that there are Erarta galleries also in New York, Honk Kong, London and Zurich increases its attractiveness even more.



## Feel Yourself Russian (Nikolaevsky Palace)

### Some quotes:

“The palace is beautiful, the costumes are gorgeous, the dancing is wonderful, the music enjoyable – a fully satisfying tourist entertainment show and historic palace site.”

“The performers were all beyond my expectations. The singers and dancers were outstanding professionals who kept the attention of the entire audience throughout all their performances.”

“I thought this would be cheesy, but it actually ended up being quite entertaining. The vocals by the singing quartet were beautiful. The dances were energetic and the costumes colorful. There was a bit of acting integrated into the dances which added to the entertainment. I do wish they had some sort of explanation of where the different dances came from or what they signified, but this is a minor issue.”

“It turned out to be much better than we expected. The performers really have to be in good shape. The wine and caviar break is somewhat limited and we had a full house all trying to get to the snacks and wine.”

“Seating in the theater for this show is not tiered, so unless you are in front row, or in the very back and can stand, it is very hard to see. The show itself proved to be somewhat repetitive. Also, the theater is not air conditioned.”

**Key words:** folklore, music, dancing, costumes, professional

### Marketing opportunities

Many reviews reveal that the experience has been better than expected thanks to the professional performance. However, the seating and the catering could be better organized.



## **Pavlovsk Palace and Park**

### **Some quotes:**

"We went to Pavlovsk Palace as part of the "The Last Romanovs" excursion. We really enjoyed the authentic Russian lunch in the palace's restaurant – including the shot of vodka – prior to our tour of the palace. The rooms had so many unique qualities and contents. It was a very pleasant visit and the park was beautiful. There were horse drawn carriages you could rent to go through the park if you wanted to as well."

"This is a spectacular restoration of a palace wrecked during World War II."

**Key words:** the Romanovs, restoration after WWII, restaurant

### **Marketing opportunities**

The Pavlovsk Palace is often compared to Catherine Palace and offered on the same tour. The reviewers acknowledge the well done restoration, also the good offer of the restaurant is mentioned.



## Blockade of Leningrad Museum

### Some quotes:

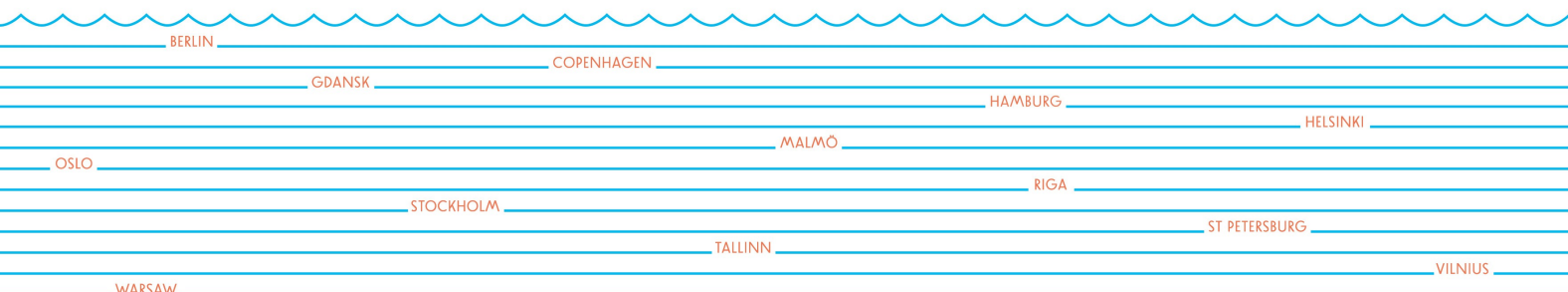
“This small yet powerful museum gives a great picture of what life would have been like to be under siege for 900 days. There are quite a few shocking items on display here. The ones that got my attention were the displays of food rations, the metronome that ran overnight to let people know the city was holding up, the pictures of the women who aged 20 years in about 2 years and the display explaining how wallpaper glue became soup.”

“As an American, I knew so little about the Russian experience during the Second World War until I actually went there. The amount of suffering that happened in St. Petersburg during the war is staggering – over one million dead, either from trauma, disease, or starvation. This museum has assembled a fairly diverse collection of artifacts from the war era, and it's hard not to be moved by many of the images.”

**Key words:** WWII, siege, shocking, artifacts and images

### Marketing opportunities

Some U.S. reviewers admit that have never known this part of history and express respect to it.



## Activities, Shopping and Nightlife in St.Petersburg

Alla Tours is the U.S. tourists' most reviewed tour provider in St. Petersburg (about 100 reviews till March 2013!) and the feedback is highly positive. It is followed by SPB-Tours and Insider Tour with about 80 reviews each, also of a very positive character. In addition several reviewers were commenting the tours in Berlin, Tallinn and Helsinki also offered both by Alla Tours and SPB-Tours. The main clientele of the mentioned companies are the cruise passengers. TJ Travel, Ulko Tours, DenRus, Dancing Bear Tours, Red October are also reviewed by several U.S. tourists.

The only nightlife place reviewed by more than one or two U.S. tourists is The Idiot restaurant; however, the reviews are rather critical. No other nightlife places and no shopping places are reviewed by more than one or two U.S. tourists.

## Marketing Ideas and Questions

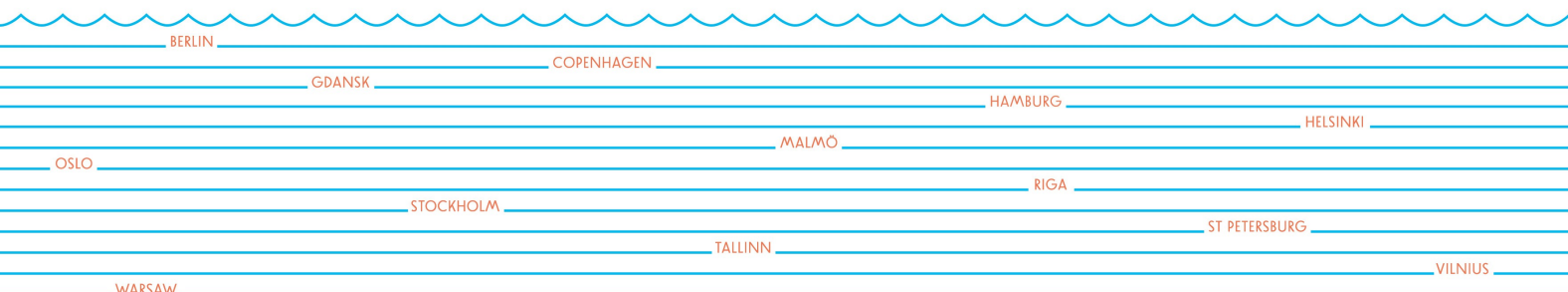
Many reviews include the words 'crowds' and 'crowded'. How many tourists can St.Petersburg and it's attractions pleasure? Could the visitor flows be managed even more effectively? Should there be more offers for the winter season, when there are no crowds from the cruise ships?

Some reviews describe the cruise ship challenge very well:

“If you have to visit in the summer you may want to try and get hold of the cruise schedules for St. Petersburg so you try and visit the traditional historical places on days when there are fewer ships at port. Over the past several years, St. Petersburg has become a Mecca for the cruise ships traveling the Baltic. The problem is that the city becomes over run with cruise ship vacationers.”

“It seems that 'crowded' is the norm in Russia. I'm from New York, I'm used to the crowds but you can't really take your time seeing things as there is always a group waiting to see the same thing. Crowds everywhere!!” (Visited August 2012)

Another reviewer characterizes St.Petersburg as “a jungle for a U.S. traveler”. This is because of the following aspects mentioned in several reviews: not enough information and communication in English, various opening days and times in the attractions, threat of the pickpockets at the main attractions. A practical guide like '10 tips for an enjoyable experience in St.Petersburg' would be a nice gesture from the city.





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