



“*Cleopatra’s fleet, never was there a more brilliant and agreeable voyage.*”

Prince de Ligne, describing the journey of Catherine the Great by galley down the Dnieper in 1787

The imperial fleet that carried Catherine the Great down the river Dnieper was built by an Englishman, Samuel Bentham, in the service of Prince Potemkin, whose triumph it was to arrange the journey. There were seven galleys in all, painted in red and gold, and needing 3,000 oarsmen. Each barge had its own orchestra, drawing room, library, and even a flushing toilet.

There is no better, or more elegant, way to see some of the most ancient towns in Russia, and to visit the kremlins and churches that line the river banks. The cruise will take you as far as Kizhi Island on Lake Onega, to see the Cathedral of the Transfiguration, built entirely out of wood, with no nails.