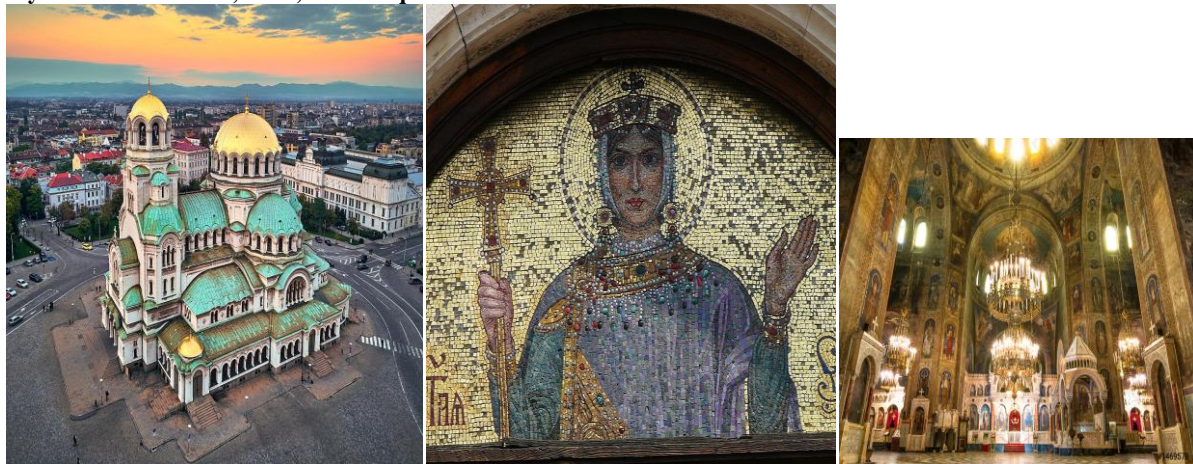


The St. Alexander Nevsky Cathedral is a Bulgarian Orthodox cathedral in Sofia, the capital of Bulgaria. Built in Neo-Byzantine style, it serves as the cathedral church of the Patriarch of Bulgaria and it is believed to be one of the 50 largest Christian church buildings by volume in the world. It is one of Sofia's symbols and primary tourist attractions. The St. Alexander Nevsky Cathedral in Sofia occupies an area of 34,100 square ft and can hold 5,000 people inside. It is believed to be among the 10 largest Eastern Orthodox church buildings. It is the third largest Orthodox Cathedral located in Southeast Europe, being surpassed only by two new and not yet fully completed Cathedrals - the Romanian People's Salvation Cathedral in Bucharest, and the Church of Saint Sava in Belgrade. It is believed that until year 2000 it was the largest finished Orthodox Cathedral. The Alexander Nevsky Cathedral is a cross-domed basilica featuring an emphasized central dome. The cathedral's gold-plated dome is 148 feet high and 152 ft with the cross, with the bell tower reaching 174 ft. The roof span of the central nave is 92 feet. The temple has 12 bells with total weight of 23 tons, the heaviest weighing 12 tons and the lightest 22 pounds. The interior is decorated with Italian marble in various colors, Brazilian onyx, alabaster, and other luxurious materials. The central dome has the Lord's Prayer inscribed around it, with thin gold letters. The construction of the St. Alexander Nevsky Cathedral started in 1882 (having been planned since 19 February 1879), when the foundation stone was laid, but most of it was built between 1904 and 1912. Saint Alexander Nevsky was a Russian prince. The cathedral was created in honor to the Russian soldiers who died during the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878, as a result of which Bulgaria was liberated from Ottoman rule. The marble parts and the lighting fixtures were created in Munich, the metal elements for the gates in Berlin, while the gates themselves were manufactured in Karl Bamberg's factory in Vienna, and the mosaics were shipped from Venice. The name of the cathedral was briefly changed to the Saints Cyril and Methodius Cathedral between 1916 and 1920 (since Bulgaria and Russia belonged to opposing alliances in World War I), but then the initial name was restored. The St. Alexander Nevsky Cathedral was consecrated on September 12, 1924 and in 1955 was declared a cultural monument. To the left of the altar is a case displaying relics of Alexander Nevsky, given by the Russian Orthodox Church. Although the accompanying Bulgarian-language plaque refers simply to "relics" (мошти), the item on display appears to be a piece of a rib.

The cathedral is adjacent to St. Sofia Church, the church for which the city of Sofia is named. Other notable landmarks in the immediate vicinity of the cathedral are the Monument to the Unknown Soldier, the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, the National Gallery of Foreign Art, the National Art Academy, the Bulgarian Parliament, a park honoring Ivan Vazov with his monument and gravestone, the Sofia Opera and Ballet, and a park where one can buy handmade textiles, icons, and antiques in a small flea market.



The outside of the church is decorated with mosaics of saints.

