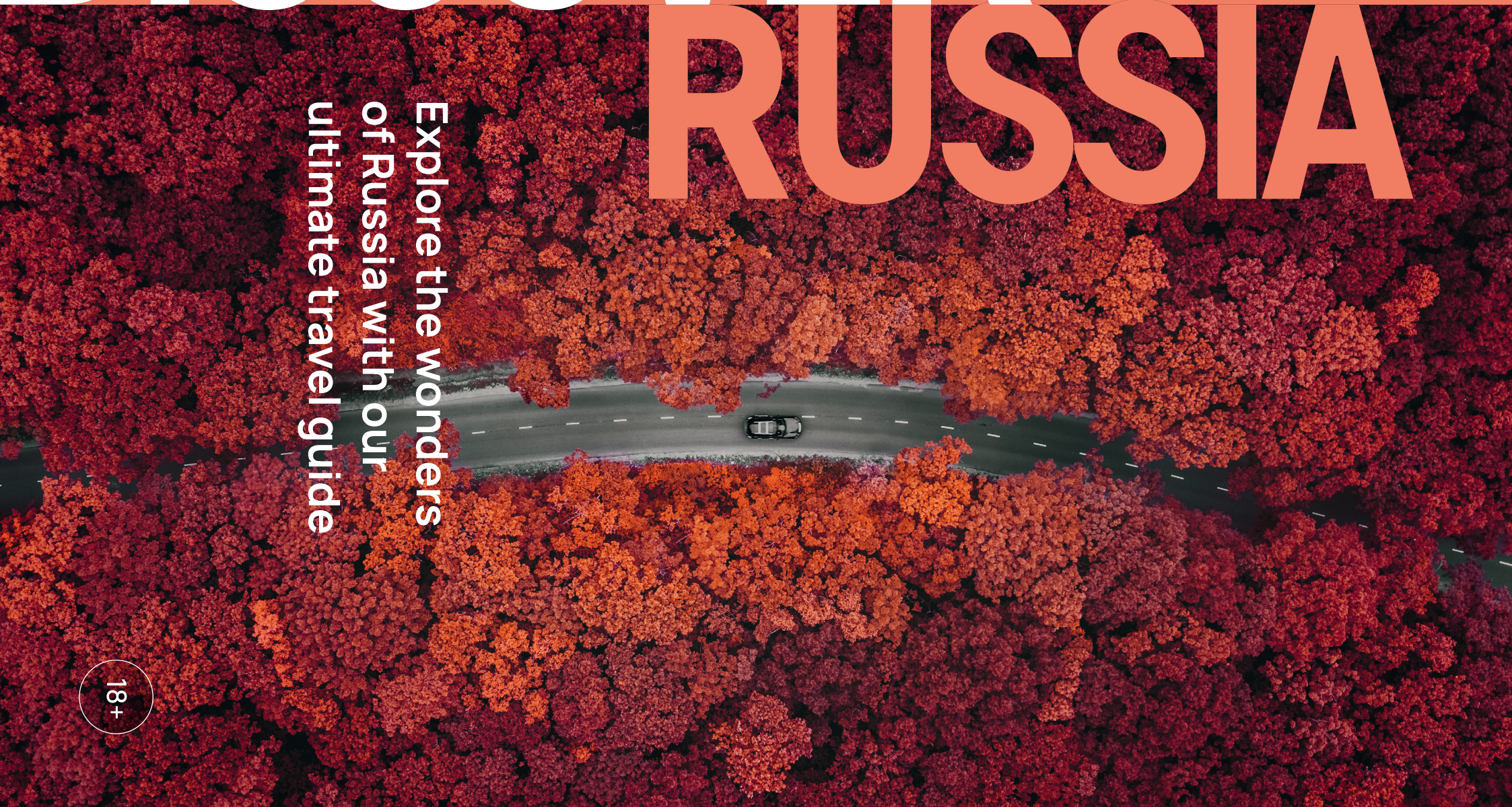
DISCOVER RUSSIA

Autumn Edition



Explore the wonders of Russia with our ultimate travel guide

18+



DISCOVER®

RUSSIA



Title: Discover Russia

Founder: Center for Strategic Research Foundation
(Primary State Registration Number OGRN 1027700574461)

Editor-in-Chief: Dmitrii Igorevich Smolnikov

Наименование: Discover Russia

Учредитель: Фонд «Центр стратегических разработок»
(ОГРН 1027700574461)

Главный редактор: Смольников Дмитрий Игоревич

18+

Age Rating
Знак возрастной маркировки

Editorial Office, Publisher and Printing House Address:

3rd Floor, Building 1, 3–5 Gazetny Lane, Moscow, 125009, Russia

Адреса редакции, издателя и типографии:

125009, Москва, Газетный переулок, дом 3-5, строение 1, 3 этаж

ISSN: 3033-8832

№ 1, Autumn Issue, 2026, *September 1, 2026*
№ 1, осенний выпуск, 2026, *01.09.2026*

Print run: 10,000 copies | *Тираж: 10 000 экз.*

Distributed free of charge | *Распространяется бесплатно*

Registered by: Federal Service for Supervision of Communications, Information Technology and Mass Media on May 29, 2026, Registration Certificate Series PI No. FS77-91590

Зарегистрирован Федеральной службой по надзору в сфере связи, информационных технологий и массовых коммуникаций 29 мая 2026 г., серия ПИ № ФС77-91590

ISSN 3033-8832

DISCOVER RUSSIA

Team's letter

The tricky thing about any print magazine is that layout and print deadlines constantly force you to think ahead: spring issues are prepared in winter, summer issues in spring, and so on. That's why we're writing this text and imagining autumn at the height of summer, when the first leaf is still a long way from falling. Or maybe not?

So, while it may be early for us and just the right time for you, let's pack a light trench coat for a warm September, which we consider the fourth month of summer, and a stylish, warm sweater for the later autumn months, and get ready for a journey across Russia in shades of copper, cherry, dark chocolate, olive, honey, and gold.

Speaking of gold. We chose this noble metal as the theme of our autumn issue. Why? First, because of the colors of golden autumn. Second, Russia ranks second in the world in gold production, extracting about 330–345 tons of the metal each year. And third, we gathered so many associations with the gold theme that they definitely wouldn't fit into a letter from the DR team: from the Golden Ring of Russia, which we'll explore on an engaging virtual tour, to traditional Russian delicacies that are metaphorically called the country's "black gold."

In our regular sections Travel Tips, Traveler's Diary, and Editor's Pick, we'll share the best travel hacks for Russia, from financial and legal to cultural and gastronomic. Along the way, we'll also have time for plenty of other interesting things: visiting seasonal festivals, stocking up on edible souvenirs, exploring the most captivating autumn hotspots, and even taking a behind-the-scenes look at Russian jewelry making.

While we were writing this text, our desire to see our favorite country wrapped in autumn grew immensely. We hope yours did too.

Yours,
Dasha Chernova

Discover Russia is a national tourism brand established to promote Russia as a unified travel destination in international markets. The initiative's objective is to combine the strengths of Russian regions and the tourism sector and create an appealing image of Russia as a unique and accessible travel destination by showcasing its rich cultural, historical, natural, and gastronomic heritage.

Every recommendation in our guide is carefully vetted by the DR team, and brand partners are marked with a special label indicating quality and alignment with our standards: a partner of Discover Russia.

DISCOVER® RUSSIA

To contact the DR team or inquire about partnerships, email us at dr@csr.ru

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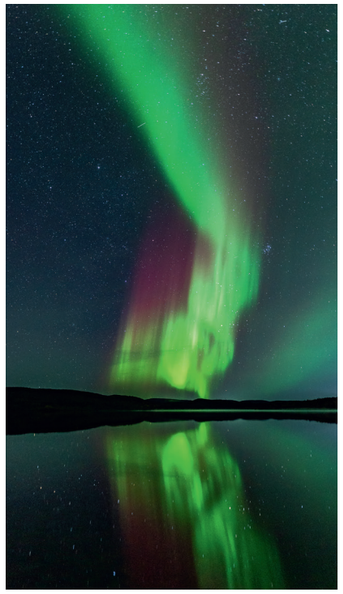



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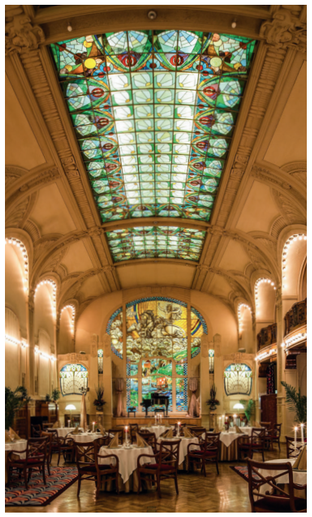



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FEATURE STORY:
GOLD

Russia’s Golden Code

In Russia, gold is not only a natural resource mined on an industrial scale but also one of the country’s most recognizable cultural symbols. It shines in the domes of ancient churches, in the delicate work of jewelers, in the patterns of folk art, in the colors of autumn leaves, and in the Russian language itself, where the word “golden” can figuratively mean the best, the most valuable, or the real thing.

A separate chapter in this story belongs to the Golden Ring of Russia, a route that has long gone beyond conventional tourism. It is a living map of historical memory, with each stop preserving its own shade of gold: artisanal, architectural, natural, and even gastronomic.

For this issue, we have selected the most “golden” destinations, dishes, brands, cultural landmarks, and ideas for leisure activities. We’re ready to share them with you.

THE GOLDEN RING OF RUSSIA

in Shades of Golden Autumn

GOLDEN RING OF RUSSIA

EST. 1967

Following the golden theme of this issue, we began our journey with the Golden Ring of Russia—one of the country's most famous tourist routes, which winds through ancient towns that have preserved unique monuments of history, culture, and architecture.

The photo shows Plyos, one of the towns on the route, nicknamed the "Russian Northern Switzerland" for its scenic beauty and rolling hills. Painted in shades of gold, caramel, honey, and olive green, it invites you to turn the page and set off on an unforgettable autumn journey across Russia. Ready?

THE GOLDEN RING

Across Old Russian Cities

Next year, Russia's most iconic cultural route will mark 60 years since it received the name that made it famous. In 1967, journalist Yuri Bychkov coined the term "Golden Ring" in an article for the newspaper Soviet Culture titled "The Golden Ring. Across Old Russian Cities." Nearly six decades later, we borrow that same title as a tribute to the journey that continues to define the soul of Russia.

GOLDEN RING
OF RUSSIA

EST. 1967

EIGHT ORIGINAL TOWNS. ONE LEGENDARY ROUTE. COUNTLESS WAYS TO DISCOVER THE SOUL OF RUSSIA

Today, the Golden Ring is most commonly associated with nine historic towns, with Uglich added to the original eight-city route. Linking Sergiev Posad, Pereslavl-Zalessky, Rostov Veliky, Yaroslavl, Kostroma, Ivanovo, Suzdal, Vladimir, and Uglich, it brings together UNESCO World Heritage sites, medieval architecture, living Orthodox traditions, and centuries-old crafts that remain part of everyday life. Easily accessible from Moscow, the Golden Ring is remarkably convenient to explore. And if you visit in autumn, lucky you: its landscapes finally live up to its golden name.

Nine cities offer far too much to be reduced to a simple checklist. Here is our take on the Golden Ring through three defining themes:

FOR THE ICONS OF OLD RUSSIA

Sergiev Posad is home to the UNESCO-listed Trinity Lavra of St. Sergius, the spiritual center of Russian Orthodoxy. Vladimir is home to the Golden Gate and its celebrated white-stone cathedrals. Suzdal has preserved an almost intact low-rise townscape of monasteries, bell towers, and wooden churches, while Yaroslavl features a UNESCO-listed historic center and the Strelka, where the Volga and Kotorosl meet.



FOR HISTORY'S GREATEST PLOT TWISTS

Pereslavl-Zalessky is home to Fortuna, the only surviving vessel from Peter the Great's "toy fleet"—an early naval experiment that helped lay the foundations of the Russian Navy. Kostroma's Ipatiev Monastery is closely tied to the accession of the first Romanov tsar, while Uglich's Church of St. Demetrius on the Blood stands on the site where Tsarevich Dmitry died—an event that changed the course of Russian history.

FOR CRAFT, DESIGN, AND SOUND

Rostov Veliky is known for the celebrated belfry of the Rostov Kremlin and finift, the local art of miniature enamel painting. Ivanovo offers a different visual language, with Soviet avant-garde textiles and Constructivist landmarks such as the House-Ship and the Horseshoe House.

Federal Passenger Company

FEDERAL PASSENGER COMPANY
IS A PARTNER OF DISCOVER RUSSIA



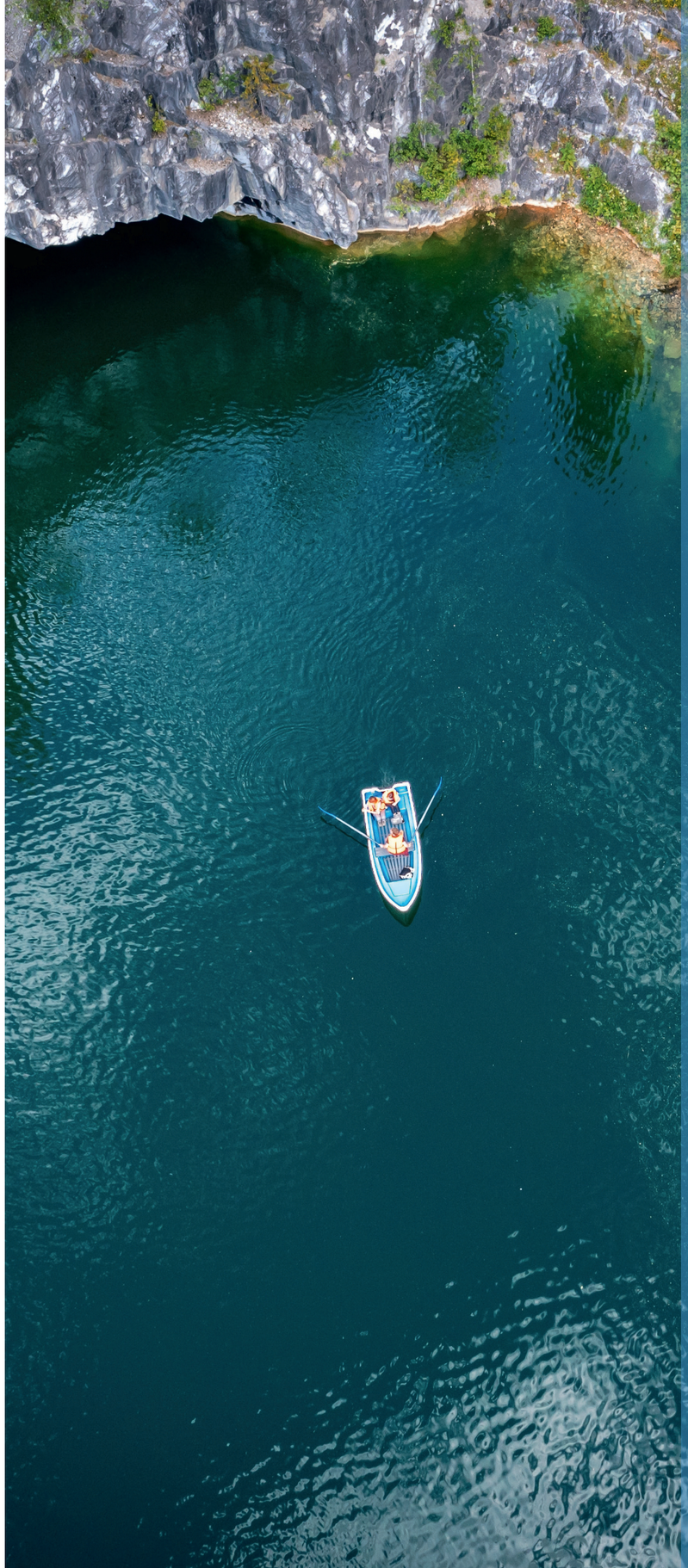
THE EASY WAY AROUND THE RING

The Golden Ring can be explored independently by car, as part of a traditional coach tour, or by train. Federal Passenger Company (JSC FPC), Russia's national long-distance railway carrier, offers a comfortable alternative with a series of rail cruises. The itineraries are available in several versions: some combine Yaroslavl with Nerekhta and Kostroma; others include Rostov Veliky or Ivanovo, while a longer version also reaches Murom. Vladimir and Suzdal are included in most itineraries, allowing travelers to choose an itinerary that suits them rather than commit to one fixed circuit. No single cruise covers all nine cities, but the remaining stops can be added using regular rail services and short road transfers.

This format is perfect for travelers who want to cover several cities without the usual logistical hassle. The train serves as a hotel on wheels: you spend the day exploring historic towns and return to the same compartment each night, without changing hotels, repacking your luggage, or wondering whether the next taxi driver shares your sense of urgency. The trains feature modern, comfortable carriages, including a dining car.

DR'S TIP:

You can book just the rail journey and plan your own itinerary in each city, or choose a complete tour package with transport, meals, guided excursions, museum admission, and other essentials already arranged. Another option is to book individual excursions with the onboard staff during the journey.



WHERE TO RIDE NEXT

The Golden Ring is only the beginning. Russia's tourist trains travel through dramatically different landscapes, turning the journey itself into part of the experience. Here are three routes worth taking:

THE SILVER ROUTE

Discover old merchant towns, medieval fortresses, and ancient monasteries set against the understated beauty of Russia's historic northwest.

KARELIA

Travel through forests, past granite cliffs, and across a land of thousands of lakes, with a stop at Ruskeala Mountain Park and opportunities to sample the distinctive cuisine of the Russian North.

THE CAUCASIAN PEARL

Combine mountain panoramas, historic spa towns, mineral springs, and the bold flavors of the North Caucasus in one sweeping rail journey.

BEYOND THE RING:

New Jewels of Russia's Most Iconic Route

The classic Golden Ring still has a clearly defined historic heart, but its story extends well beyond the traditional route. Ahead of its 60th anniversary, the Golden Ring is expanding to include 49 additional destinations, from Murom, Gorokhovets, and Gzhel to Myshkin, Rybinsk, Palekh, and Plyos. The idea is not to stretch one itinerary beyond recognition, but to offer new ways into the same cultural landscape—through architecture, craftsmanship, literature, nature, and small-town life.

A LANDSCAPE YOU ALREADY KNOW

Among the new jewels is a place that looks and feels familiar before you even arrive there. Plyos belongs to Russia's shared visual memory: the Volga, steep green banks, church domes, and quiet merchant houses. The scene feels instantly familiar, largely because Isaac Levitan painted it into the national imagination.

Levitan first came to Plyos in 1888 and returned several times over the following years, creating around 200 works inspired by the town. His paintings established Plyos as one of the defining places of the Russian "landscape of mood" tradition, where nature becomes an emotional experience rather than simply a beautiful view. Masterpieces such as Evening. Golden Plyos, After the Rain. Plyos, and Above Eternal Peace transformed this quiet Volga town into one of the most recognizable landscapes in Russian art.



MORE JEWELS FOR THE RING

Plyos may be the most painterly addition, but the expanded Golden Ring includes many more places, each with an unmistakable identity. Palekh is known for its centuries-old icon-painting traditions and world-famous lacquer miniatures; Gzhel is synonymous with its iconic blue-and-white ceramics; Gorokhovets charms visitors with merchant mansions and beautifully carved wooden houses; Rybinsk impresses with monumental Volga architecture; and Kalyazin is instantly recognizable by its solitary bell tower rising from the reservoir.

The options are almost endless, but that is precisely the point. Whether you come for medieval architecture, traditional craftsmanship, riverside landscapes, or quiet small towns, the expanded Golden Ring invites you to discover a different side of historic Russia. All that is left is to choose your route, hop on a train, and let the journey unfold.

DR'S CHOICE:

Set the alarm. Cathedral Hill at sunrise and Levitan Hill before sunset offer two of the finest views in the entire Golden Ring. On crisp autumn mornings, a veil of mist drifts over the Volga. Check the weather the night before: a little fog makes all the difference.

Photo:
Baturina Yuliya / Shutterstock



WALLS THAT HOUSE MASTERPIECES:

An Architectural Route Through the Tretyakov Gallery

Tretyakov Gallery

THE TRETYAKOV GALLERY IS A PARTNER OF DISCOVER RUSSIA

This time, judging a book by its cover is not a mistake. It is part of the experience. In 2026, the Tretyakov Gallery celebrates its 170th anniversary—a perfect moment to look not only at the masterpieces it houses, but also at the buildings that house them. The Gallery is usually explored through the works of artists: Ivanov, Surikov, Vasnetsov, Serov, Malevich. But its architecture tells another story: one of Moscow merchants, the Russian Revival, Soviet modernism, constructivism, and new cultural centers far beyond the capital.

FOUNDING IDEA

Pavel Tretyakov, a Moscow merchant, collector, and patron of the arts, did not simply collect beautiful paintings. He wanted to create a public gallery of Russian art—a place where the country could see its own artistic identity reflected. Today, the Tretyakov Gallery is one of Russia's most important museums and the main treasury of national art.

THREE MOSCOW ADDRESSES

The route begins in Lavrushinsky Lane, the historical heart of the Gallery. At the core of the complex is a mansion from the second half of the eighteenth century, later acquired by the Tretyakov family. Its defining feature is the main façade, designed from sketches by Viktor Vasnetsov in the style of a fairytale Russian terem. The entrance portal features St. George on horseback defeating the dragon—the symbol of Moscow—making the façade not just an entrance, but a declaration of cultural identity.

The Gallery's building on Krymsky Val offers a completely different architectural experience. Nothing here tries to echo old Moscow: the New Tretyakov is larger, more austere, and modernist, both outside and inside. Its halls house works of avant-garde art, socialist realism, post-war and contemporary art—art that needs space, distance, and confrontation.

The newest Moscow building on Kadashevskaya Embankment takes the idea that "the cover matters" almost literally. Here, the journey into Russian art begins before the visitor even enters: the façades feature reproductions of 34 works by Russian artists. Located in a protected historical area, the building turns the street into a preview of the collection. The idea is simple and effective: art does not stay hidden behind the museum walls—it becomes part of the urban landscape.



Photo: Irina Kvyatkovskaya / Shutterstock



Photo: eafaru / Shutterstock





In Samara, the Gallery opened inside the former Factory-Kitchen of the Maslennikov Plant—a constructivist monument in the shape of a hammer and sickle. Designed in the 1930s by Ekaterina Maksimova, one of the first women architects of Soviet Russia, the building was originally conceived as a factory-kitchen: a new type of public canteen meant to feed workers on an industrial scale and free them from traditional domestic routines. Almost a century later, this architectural manifesto has found a new purpose. Russian art now enters a building that once sought to reshape society itself.

In Kaliningrad, the branch speaks a different architectural language—light, minimal, and sharply contemporary. The building seems to hover above the ground, an effect created by a large cantilever, panoramic glazing on the first floor, and special lighting. Its transparent lower level opens the museum toward the city, making the entrance feel less like a threshold and more like a public square under glass.

Vladivostok gives the route an even wider horizon. Until the museum on Eagle's Nest Hill opens, the Gallery's team organizes and coordinates exhibitions of classical and contemporary art in museums across the region. The future branch will bring the Tretyakov name to a city of hills, bridges, and sea views—a very different landscape from the Moscow lanes where the story began.

HOW TO GET THERE

SAMARA

Airports:

Kurumoch International Airport is the main airport, located about 40 km from the city; it handles domestic and international flights.

Key railway stations:

Samara's main railway station is at Komsomolskaya Square, 1, and serves as the city's central rail hub.

From Moscow, flights take about 1.5–2 hours, while trains usually take around 13–17 hours.

KALININGRAD

Airports:

Khrabrovo International Airport, the gateway to Kaliningrad Oblast, lies at 1 Airportnaya St. in Khrabrovo settlement. It primarily handles domestic Russian flights along with international flights to Belarus, Armenia, Turkey, and Egypt.

Key railway stations:

Kaliningrad-Severny (Sovetsky Prospekt 2) and **Kaliningrad-Yuzhny** (Zheleznodorozhnaya St. 13–23).

Direct flights from Moscow average 3 hours; trains from Belorussky Station—routing through Belarus and Lithuania—take 19+ hours.

VLADIVOSTOK

Airports:

Vladivostok International Airport (named after V.K. Arsenyev) sits at Vladimir Saybelya Street, 45, serving domestic routes and international flights to China, Uzbekistan, Korea, and Vietnam.

Key railway stations:

The main station is located at Aleutskaya Street, 2.

Flights from Moscow take 8–9 hours; the epic train journey takes 6–7 days.



After 170 years, the Tretyakov Gallery is no longer just one museum building. It is a network of architectural landmarks, each reflecting its own era and its own idea of what a museum should be. From a merchant's mansion to constructivist experiments and new cultural centers, the Gallery's buildings form a parallel history of Russian art—one written not only in paintings, but in brick, glass, and concrete.

ONE LAST PERFORMANCE:

The Autumn Fountain Festival at Peterhof

Think you've already seen St. Petersburg? Think again. Every September, Peterhof offers one more reason to return—and perhaps its most beautiful farewell to summer. Rather than quietly switching off its famous fountains for the winter, the former imperial residence closes the season with one of St. Petersburg's most spectacular traditions. For one autumn weekend, the Grand Palace and the Lower Park become an open-air stage where water, light, music, and architecture come together in a performance unlike any other.

ABOUT THE PLACE

Once the summer residence of the Russian emperors, Peterhof is now part of a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Its palace and formal gardens are home to more than 150 fountains and four cascades, all of which still operate without pumps, powered entirely by a gravity-fed engineering system created in the 18th century. The festival unfolds in the Lower Park, where the Grand Cascade and the Samson Fountain become the heart of the spectacle.

WHEN WATER TAKES THE STAGE

Projection mapping transforms the facade of the Grand Palace into a giant canvas, while fountains, lasers, fireworks, and live music come together in a carefully choreographed production. Each year's performance tells a new story, but the leading role never changes: Peterhof itself remains both the stage and the star.

GOOD TO KNOW:

The festival is traditionally held over one weekend in the second half of September (exact dates are announced closer to the event). The evening performance is the highlight, but it is well worth arriving early to explore the Lower Park in daylight before it transforms after sunset.

One of the easiest ways to reach Peterhof is by Meteor hydrofoil from central St. Petersburg. The journey takes about 40 minutes and offers panoramic views across the Gulf of Finland before you arrive at Peterhof's waterfront.

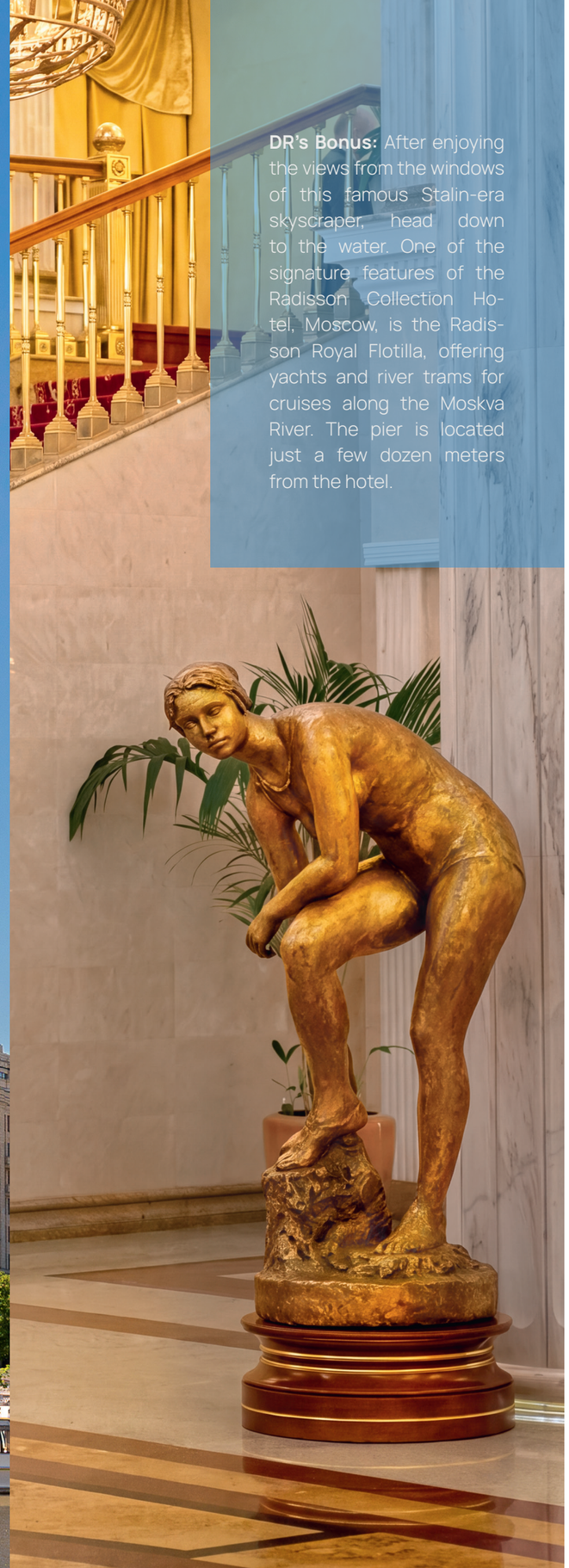
Photo: Yulia_B / Shutterstock

Photo:
Alexander V Evstafyev / Shutterstock

CATCH THE GOLDEN HOUR:

A Panorama of the Capital from the Windows of One of Moscow's Seven Sisters





DR's Bonus: After enjoying the views from the windows of this famous Stalin-era skyscraper, head down to the water. One of the signature features of the Radisson Collection Hotel, Moscow, is the Radisson Royal Flotilla, offering yachts and river trams for cruises along the Moskva River. The pier is located just a few dozen meters from the hotel.

Moscow offers many viewpoints with mesmerizing panoramas of the city. However, we found one where you can not only admire the view, but also explore one of the capital's most iconic architectural landmarks, enjoy a comfortable stay, and discover new culinary horizons. But let's take it step by step.

The Seven Sisters is the unofficial nickname for Moscow's famous ensemble of seven Stalin-era skyscrapers, built in the Soviet Art Deco style between 1947 and 1957. The seventh and last of them now houses the five-star Radisson Collection Hotel, Moscow, where we head in search of the golden hour.

The golden hour, also known as the magic hour, is the period just before sunset. At this time, the sun sits low on the horizon and its light becomes soft, warm, and diffused, creating ideal conditions for photography and simply taking in the view.

The hotel features 501 rooms and suites in various categories, as well as 18 restaurants and bars offering spectacular views of some of Moscow's most iconic landmarks: the Moskva River, the House of the Government of the Russian Federation, Kutuzovsky Prospekt, the main building of Moscow State University, Krasnaya Presnya, and the towers of Moscow City. So where should you go for the very best view?

The Discover Russia team asked the hotel staff and received the answer they were hoping for: for the most impressive panorama of the city in the soft pre-sunset glow of the golden hour, head to the 30th floor, where the Buono restaurant is located. The finest panoramic photos of your trip and most memorable impressions are guaranteed.

But you don't have to stop there. The palace-like interiors, rare finishing materials, distinctive architecture, and collection of cultural and historical artifacts, including the famous Moscow diorama and the painted ceiling in the central lobby, have long made the hotel a favorite setting for photo shoots and even cultural experiences.

POINT OF VIEW:

During the Soviet era, Saratov was one of the Volga region's principal scientific and educational hubs and earned an informal reputation as a university city. That spirit—an environment that encourages creativity and learning—has endured, supported today by local talent, cultural landmarks, and a mix of established and newer educational institutions.

Why Saratov Is a Great City for Creative Professions



We spoke with Varvara Danshina, founder of the Institute for Business Development and Strategy (IRBIS), about how the city nurtures creative growth and what educational opportunities it offers, including for international students.



Varvara, you founded IRBIS, which has operated as a private higher-education institution since 2019—the first of its kind in Saratov. What inspired you, and what is the institute's mission?

The institute's own history inspired me. IRBIS was originally founded in 1990; in 2008 we rebranded and added "development" to our name, making it central to our mission: "We help every student believe in themselves, unlock their potential, grow harmoniously as individuals, and join a community of successful people." Development has always been my top personal priority, and that drove me to work in private education.

Saratov is a major student center in the Volga region with a deep university tradition. Does the city's atmosphere influence students' creative development?

Absolutely. When students in creative fields walk the streets and see sculptures and monuments made by their teachers, they feel proud to study under recognized masters. That pride motivates and inspires them.

The "Decorative and Applied Arts and Folk Crafts" program is considered IRBIS's most creative and diverse major. What makes it unique, who is it for, and what does it prepare graduates to do?

Over 3 years and 10 months, students master decorative textile arts—batik, tapestry, and other hand techniques. The program is unique because it combines practical skills across multiple textile disciplines and encourages work in different visual arts genres. Students learn to experiment confidently with materials, color, and texture, moving from sketch to finished piece and across media. It's ideal for anyone who enjoys drawing and wants to develop design skills, a refined sense of style, and aesthetic intelligence.

One of your instructors is Andrey Shcherbakov, an Honored Artist of Russia and member of the Russian Academy of Arts. How did you bring him on board, and what do students gain from learning with an active professional?

We're fortunate to count such an outstanding artist among our contemporaries—and to give students the chance to learn from him. I admire Andrey Shcherbakov's work and have organized several exhibitions of his pieces in our gallery. His small-scale bronzes—especially the "Predators" series—demonstrate superb plasticity, grace, and captivating subjects. Studying with a practicing master like him exposes students to professional standards, real-world perspectives, and artistic rigor.

Can IRBIS accept and teach international students in creative majors like Decorative and Applied Arts?

Yes. We can admit and teach foreign citizens. Certificates from countries that have mutual recognition agreements with the Russian Federation do not require nostrification.

Do you have a favorite city spot that captures Saratov's student atmosphere?

The inner courtyard of Saratov State University. Nestled among handsome early 20th-century buildings, it's a place to relax in the lacy shade by the fountain and admire the bronze sculpture by Andrey Shcherbakov—a full-height monument to architect Karl Mufke, blueprint in hand, honoring his role in shaping the university quarter.

THE BOLSHOI THEATRE

Another "golden" facet of Russia is its rich culture. To offer readers a closer look, we decided to step inside Russia's most famous theater, the Bolshoi, and showcase its lavish interior. And yes, there is plenty of gold, too.

The theater's repertoire includes masterpieces of Russian and international opera, classical and contemporary ballet, as well as symphony concerts and chamber programs.

Address: 1 Teatralnaya Square, Moscow

Photo:
Andrey Bayda / Shutterstock

VELVET SEASON:

The Black Sea Coast

In the summer issue, we ran a major feature on Russia's best beaches, but we deliberately left out the popular destinations on the Black Sea coast, saving them for the velvet season in autumn, with its ideal climate, warm, calm sea, and, most importantly, the chance to enjoy a holiday without the crowds. Here's everything you need to know.

When the school year starts and the peak holiday season winds down, the Black Sea coast reveals its true character: a slower urban rhythm, natural scents on the breeze, comfortable weather, and quieter beaches, routes, restaurants, and hotels. That's why seasoned travelers don't rush to the Black Sea resorts in summer; they wait until the velvet season arrives.

HOW TO GET THERE

Airports:

Sochi International Airport named after V. I. Sevastyanov—Mira Street, 50, Sochi, Adler District. The airport serves flights to the following destinations: CIS countries, Türkiye, the UAE, and countries in the Middle East and Asia, as well as other destinations. The list of available destinations may vary depending on the season.

Railway Stations:

Adler—Lenina Street, 113.

Sochi—Gorky Street, 56.

A direct flight from Moscow takes about 3.5 hours. The journey by train takes approximately 22 hours.



Photo: bellena / Shutterstock



Photo: Nelli Nekrasova / Shutterstock

WHY "VELVET"?

The term appeared in Imperial Russia at the turn of the 20th century and originally referred to the spring months (April–May), when the imperial family moved to Crimea and swapped furs for velvet. In Soviet times, the name shifted to the autumn months, but the meaning stayed the same—it denotes the most comfortable time to travel.

WHICH DESTINATION TO CHOOSE

The most popular destinations during the velvet season are Anapa, Novorossiysk, Gelendzhik, Tuapse, and Crimea. But our recommendation is Russia's resort capital, Sochi. Why? In short: it's a city with an Olympic legacy and mature infrastructure, excellent transport links, and an open international airport that serves as the main hub for the region. That makes getting there easier and the trip safer and more convenient than traveling to some other resorts.

Plus, in Sochi you can combine beach time with mountain activities thanks to its year-round ski resorts—we'll cover that in our next piece (but don't turn the page just yet).

DISCOVER RUSSIA

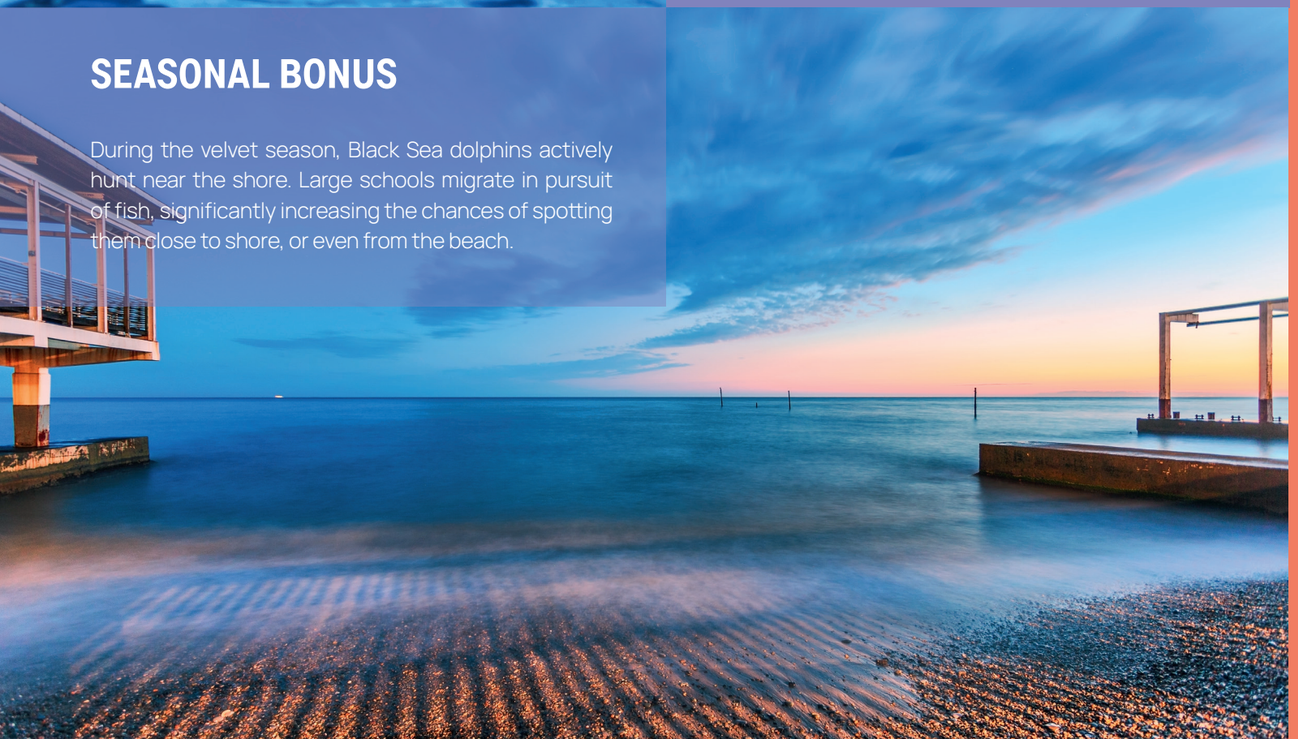


ADVANTAGES OF THE VELVET SEASON ON THE BLACK SEA COAST

- **Comfortable weather.** Daytime temperatures generally range from 22–26°C, with sea temperatures reaching a pleasant 22–25°C. Autumn also brings less rain and fewer storms than summer.
- **Fewer tourists.** It's easier to find available sunbeds, parking spaces, and hotel rooms; queues at cafés, restaurants, and popular attractions are shorter.
- **Prices.** Lower tourist demand is reflected in accommodation costs; you can find good deals on hotels and apartments.
- **Nature.** Sunsets are especially vivid, the air becomes cleaner and more fragrant, and the sea offers clearer water.
- **Leisure.** Autumn marks the start of the festival, exhibition, and concert season, offering more opportunities to combine beach days with cultural programming.

SEASONAL BONUS

During the velvet season, Black Sea dolphins actively hunt near the shore. Large schools migrate in pursuit of fish, significantly increasing the chances of spotting them close to shore, or even from the beach.



THREE SEASONS, ONE DAY:

Autumn at Rosa Khutor



ROSA KHUTOR

ROSA KHUTOR IS A PARTNER OF DISCOVER RUSSIA

Some places are best experienced in summer, while others reveal their beauty in winter, and sometimes it is just unbearably hard to pick the right season for your destination. We will spare you the trouble—welcome to Rosa Khutor, a place where you do not have to choose a season because you can experience three of them in one day.

HOW TO GET THERE

Rosa Khutor is located 50 km from Sochi Airport. It is conveniently accessible by car, taxi, or the modern high-speed electric train Lastochka—with a travel time of approximately 50 minutes from Sochi Airport to the Rosa Khutor station.

LOCATION OVERVIEW

Rosa Khutor is a year-round mountain resort in Sochi's Krasnaya Polyana, known for its Olympic legacy, ski infrastructure, cable cars, hiking routes, and panoramic views of the Caucasus. Its main levels—Rosa Valley, Rosa Plateau, and Rosa Peak—are linked by cable car. This means a single route can take you through different altitudes and, in autumn, even different seasons, with a range of activities along the way.

Visiting Rosa Khutor is all about peeling back the layers of this one-of-a-kind place as you change altitude. Make sure your outfit fits the genre. Here, layers are not just about style—they are practical, since you are literally moving between seasons.

ROSA VALLEY: SUMMER AT 560 METERS

Rosa Valley is a natural starting point. At 560 meters, summer still lingers here, even in autumn. The surroundings feel reminiscent of Amsterdam. A pretty embankment runs along the Mzymta River, the main artery of the area, tying together this European mountain-town scene—little houses, hotels, and small cafés. Beyond the scenery, the resort has plenty to offer: a ride on the Ferris wheel, an archaeological museum, the My Russia ethnopark, and much more.

ROSA PLATEAU: AUTUMN AT 1,100 METERS

If the European mise-en-scène starts to feel too polished, hop on the Olympia cable car, which takes you to the next altitude—1,100 meters—and into the next season: autumn. Rosa Plateau, also known as the Mountain Olympic Village, brings you into the more active part of the day: mountain air, forest paths, and views over Krasnaya Polyana, with enough options to turn a leisurely escape into a small adventure.

This is the level for the rodelbahn, walking trails, Yeti Park, hiking, and animal encounters. You can follow a trail through the forest, go dog trekking at Husky Hut, visit the alpacas at Pacha Mama, or simply linger at the viewpoint and let the mountains do the work.

ROSA PEAK: HINTS OF WINTER AT 2,320 METERS

Here comes the final act: Rosa Peak welcomes you at 2,320 meters, and the mountains finally come to the fore. Everything speaks of scale, power, and height. You can simply stand at the viewpoint, where the panorama opens up across the mountain range and toward the Black Sea, or add a little adrenaline with the high-altitude swings and the suspension bridge. If at any point you get cold, retreat to Vysota 2320 for warmth, food, and the pleasure of looking at the mountains through a window. And finally, if you still have time and sturdy footwear, continue down toward the Edelweiss lift and Mendelikha Waterfalls Park—a forest-and-waterfall epilogue at 1,470 meters.



DR'S CHOICE

For those who collect rare settings, not just restaurants, book Rosa Khutor's Dinner in the Mountains—a premium chef's table experience at a panoramic viewpoint, with live music, DJ sets, and fire-cooked dishes.

Fine dining, mountain atmosphere, and cinematic views: what else do you need for a grand finale?

A PLACE OF CALM:

Where to Recharge in Sochi

GRAND KARAT SOCHI: AN OASIS IN THE CITY CENTER

The spa at Grand Karat Sochi, opened this spring, promises deep relaxation, rejuvenation, and a return to natural balance by blending the power of nature with cutting-edge technology. The Discover Russia team has already visited and is ready to share their impressions. Spoiler: the journey to wellness is as beautiful as it is restorative.



Physical, energetic, and even emotional

A brand-new wellness destination has arrived on Sochi's map—another good reason to visit Russia's resort capital.

GRAND KARAT SOCHI
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PART I: THE SEA

At the heart of the spa is an outdoor heated pool with sea salt—a biotherapeutic sanctuary where water itself becomes a source of well-being.

The pool uses only crystalline AEGEA sea salt, harvested from the pristine Aegean waters. Rich in calcium, potassium, magnesium, zinc, iodine, selenium, and other bioactive minerals, and maintained at the optimal concentration with advanced technology, the water closely resembles the composition of the Mediterranean Sea.

Heated year-round, the pool lets guests enjoy marine therapy in any season. Swimming outdoors in ionized air promotes mineral absorption by the skin, boosts circulation, and encourages profound muscular relaxation.

PART II: THERMAL TRADITIONS

The next stop on the restorative journey is the "North and South" thermal complex, where time-honored rituals meet contemporary design.

The Abash Finnish sauna offers a deep yet safe detox even at high temperatures. Meanwhile, the hammam's soft, humid steam and the warmth of its heated marble relax the muscles and prepare the skin for mineral absorption.

PART III: HEALING BY THE VIEW

After the thermals, guests move to an indoor heated pool framed by panoramic glazing. Its crystal-clear, comfortably tempered water makes year-round swimming a pleasure, gently acclimatizing the body to the aquatic environment and extending the relaxation begun in the thermals. A lounge area with recliners and a captivating view elevates physical relaxation into an aesthetic experience.

PART IV: IN A HEALTHY BODY

Last but not least: the fitness center is divided into three zones—cardio with machines that adapt to the body's biomechanics, a strength area, and a functional training zone—ensuring effective, safe, and tailored workouts.

EMC
GROUP OF COMPANIES
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A GOLD STANDARD ROUTE TO HEALTH:

Medical Tourism in Russia

Medical tourism is no longer only about traveling somewhere to solve a problem. More and more often, it is about prevention, longevity, and access to expertise that may not be easily available at home. In this context, Russia is becoming a serious player on the medical tourism map: a destination where complex clinical protocols meet economic rationality, and high-end private medicine can offer both advanced technology and a faster route from first consultation to treatment.

When it comes to health, the choice should never be random. So, before the glossy promises, let us put the facts on the table.

FACTS & FIGURES

- The annual number of medical tourists from CIS countries alone is estimated at 300,000–500,000, with total spending of around $1.5–2.5 billion.
- 68% of patients are looking for innovative treatment methods, while 59% are interested in access to unique medical equipment.
- The two major reasons for traveling are the lack of highly specialized doctors at home and the international reputation of medical experts.
- 41% of respondents from 16 countries identify Russia as the country they trust most for medical care.

*According to research by the Analytical Center of the European Medical Center in Moscow.

EXPERT VIEW: NOT AN ALTERNATIVE, BUT A STRATEGIC CHOICE

When the choice combines expertise, speed, and predictability, medical tourism is no longer a compromise. Experts at the European Medical Center (EMC) in Moscow see it as a planned investment in health: not a last-minute search for treatment, but a smarter way to combine diagnostics, care, and longevity planning into one clear pathway.

OPTING FOR TURNKEY SOLUTIONS

In Russia, premium medical providers are increasingly focusing on a model that extends far beyond the clinic itself: early-stage online consultations, treatment planning, arrival support, procedures, and follow-up care after the patient returns home. According to EMC, this is where the future of medical tourism is heading: not simply choosing a clinic abroad, but choosing a medical ecosystem that provides convenient, continuous, and personalized care.

The European Medical Center in Moscow is one example of how this model can work in practice. EMC positions itself as one of Russia's leaders in high-tech private medicine, with international JCI accreditation, more than 600 doctors from Russia, Europe, Israel, and the United States, and expertise across 57 medical specialties.

Its key fields include personalized preventive health plans, checkups, oncology, complex neurosurgery, cardiac surgery, and reproductive medicine. Another advantage is efficiency: the time between initial contact and complex treatment can be relatively short, while the cost of high-tech treatment may be two to three times lower than at comparable clinics in London or Zurich.

KARELIAN WONDER

The Ladoga Skerries

Off the northwestern shore of Lake Ladoga lies one of Karelia's most enchanting landscapes—the Ladoga Skerries. This picturesque archipelago comprises roughly 650 rocky isles, carved by narrow bays and channels. With their stark granite, windswept pines, and mirrorlike water, these shores are often called the Karelian fjords.

BUCKET LIST:

Must-Do Experiences for an Autumn Trip Around Russia

We dedicated a whole issue to ideas for spending autumn in Russia, yet we still couldn't fit everything. Here's an extra check-list of must-do experiences—use it and tick off each item as you complete it.

- Spend a whole day in a park, taking photos among the bright leaves and feeding friendly squirrels.
- Squeeze in a ride on a river tram or sightseeing boat before the navigation season ends.
- Warm up in a café with a cup of hot cocoa and a slice of fragrant apple pie.
- Go mushroom foraging in the forest (just don't forget to go with an experienced guide).
- Briefly change the season and head to the seaside (spoiler: see page 28 for ready-made itinerary ideas).
- Boost your immunity with seasonal Russian drinks: from tea to sbiten.
- Visit an open-air fair—stroll between stalls, sample seasonal treats, and buy souvenirs.
- Buy a bright umbrella and greet the first autumn rains with confidence.
- Visit the Tretyakov Gallery and see golden autumn in Isaac Levitan's painting of the same name.



TRANSPARENT BUSINESS:

Top State Tools for Checking Russian Counterparties

In the summer issue, the DR editorial team put together practical recommendations on how to check a potential partner in Russia, what to look out for, and how to minimize your risks. If you are planning long-term cooperation and a significant volume of obligations, the most reliable foundation is a full due diligence review, where experienced lawyers still outperform digital tools. At the same time, Russia offers a range of free state online services that allow you to gather critical information on almost any company.

Most Russian state online services are available only in Russian. Use browsers with built-in translation and an AI assistant to make working with the interfaces easier.

A separate risk signal is a "mass registration" address, at which dozens or even hundreds of companies are registered. You can check this via "Transparent Business", which indicates how many legal entities share a given address.

While state services provide basic and in many cases sufficient information, commercial aggregators are also widely used in Russia. These platforms consolidate open data from the Federal Tax Service, courts, and the Federal Bailiff Service in a single interface; the best-known examples include Rusprofile, Kontur.Focus, and similar systems. Their main advantage is convenience: users see registration data, financial statements, court disputes, enforcement proceedings, and other risk signals on one screen.

REGISTRATION DATA

Information on a company's state registration and tax status is the first thing to check. Asking only for a scanned registration certificate or tax ID certificate is not enough, as these documents may be outdated and never renewed. It is much more reliable to obtain a current extract from the Unified State Register of Legal Entities or the Unified State Register of Individual Entrepreneurs.

You can do this yourself by entering the company's Taxpayer Identification Number (INN) or Primary State Registration Number (OGRN) on the Federal Tax Service website: egrul.nalog.ru. The extract shows the governing bodies, registered address, authorized representative, types of activity, and, where available, the history of changes.

The extract also helps you decide whether a more in-depth review is needed. Red flags include frequent changes of legal address and directors, a legal address that does not match the actual place of business, and a main activity that clearly differs from how the partner describes the business in negotiations. None of this automatically means bad faith, but it does call for additional questions and, where appropriate, legal advice.

FEDERAL TAX SERVICE "TRANSPARENT BUSINESS"

Another key tool is the state online service "Transparent Business" on the Federal Tax Service website: pb.nalog.ru. It aggregates information from several state registers and tax databases and provides a more comprehensive picture of a legal entity or individual entrepreneur.

Using the INN, OGRN, or company name, you can check whether the company is active, who manages it, which addresses were declared at registration, whether the person participates in other legal entities, and whether there is any information on disqualification. Where available, the service also provides access to financial statements, data on average headcount, and information on taxes and fees paid.

For an initial screening, this is often enough for a foreign partner to decide whether to continue negotiations and proceed to a more detailed analysis. A further advantage is that the service allows you to download official documents, including registry extracts and financial statements (where these are public).

ARBITRATION CASES AND DEBT ENFORCEMENT

To understand how litigious a company is and what types of disputes it is involved in, use the official "Arbitration Case File" system at kad.arbitr.ru. By entering the INN, OGRN, or company name, you can see arbitration cases involving the organization, including disputes with counterparties, banks, and tax authorities.

Another useful source is the Federal Bailiff Service's "Enforcement Proceedings Database." It allows you to search for both legal entities and individuals and shows whether there are enforcement proceedings open against a company or its executives.

TOUR OPERATORS, TRAVEL AGENTS, AND TOURISM FACILITIES

If you are considering long-term cooperation in the tourism sector, you should always consult the relevant state registers. Tour operators must be included in the Unified Federal Register, and it is particularly important to verify whether a company is authorized to provide inbound tourism services and work with foreign visitors.

Travel agents are likewise included in a specialized register maintained by Russia's Ministry of Economic Development. When working with hotels and infrastructure facilities, the Unified Register of Classified Tourism Industry Facilities is useful, as it contains information on hotels, beaches, and ski slopes that have passed official classification.

For a reputable partner, inclusion in such registers is an important indicator of transparency. Absence from a register does not automatically mean a breach of the rules, but almost always requires additional clarification from the counterparty.

GOLDEN AUTUMN MEETS GOLDEN STANDARDS:

Grand Hotel Europe in St. Petersburg

Choosing autumn for a trip to Russia's cultural capital is already a good decision. Now for the second: choosing the right address. The city has no shortage of beautiful options, but Grand Hotel Europe is in a category of its own. It does not merely host you; it makes your stay part of the journey itself.



"All the hotel's salons were filled with the public eager to view its premises."

— Golos, a St. Petersburg newspaper, on the hotel's opening day in 1875

A STAY THAT BECOMES THE JOURNEY

Considered Russia's first luxury hotel, Grand Hotel Europe marked its 150th anniversary in 2025. Set between the Russian Museum, the Mikhailovsky Theatre, and the Church of the Savior on Spilled Blood, it has long been part of the city's cultural map. Its staircase, lobby, restaurants, and rooms all tell the same St. Petersburg story.

A PAGE FROM HISTORY

Grand Hotel Europe opened in 1875, after architect Ludwig Fontana completed the project in just three years. Between 1908 and 1914, Fyodor Lidval redesigned interiors in the Art Nouveau style, adding a sense of Silver Age elegance that still shapes the hotel's character.

DR RECOMMENDS

L'Europe restaurant remains one of the hotel's signature venues: in 1905, it became the first restaurant in Russia to use electric light bulbs. And Rasputin was spotted here dining. The Sunday brunch features live music, while Tchaikovsky Nights pair dinner with opera arias and ballet performances.

ELEGANCE ROOTED IN TRADITION

The appeal lies not only in the hotel's history but in the way that history is still felt today. Fresh flowers, handwritten notes, polished service, caviar at breakfast, and live music create a contemporary version of old-world savoir-faire, built on timing, taste, and attention.

NAMES IN THE GUESTBOOK

Tchaikovsky and Johann Strauss; Maxim Gorky and Bernard Shaw; Anna Pavlova and Luciano Pavarotti; and Whitney Houston and Leonardo DiCaprio have all passed through Grand Hotel Europe. Scan the QR code to add a contemporary footnote to a story that began in 1875.

INDIAN SUMMER? ALTWEIBERSOMMER? OR, BETTER YET, BAB'E LETO?

In Russia, bab'e leto refers to a short spell of warm, dry weather in autumn, most often in September or October, when summer-like warmth briefly returns. In English, this period is called Indian summer.

The term has its roots in Slavic tradition. In Russian villages, by early September, the heavy fieldwork was over, and women had more time for lighter household tasks—hence the idea of a "women's summer."

In the photo: a golden autumn view of Gatchina Palace near St. Petersburg, a perfect place for a walk during bab'e leto in 2026.



DISCOVER MOSCOW

A FRIENDLY ONLINE GUIDE AVAILABLE IN SIX LANGUAGES FOR INTERNATIONAL TRAVELERS

SEASONAL PRINTED GUIDE TO TAKE AROUND MOSCOW

- Routes, food, museums, events, souvenirs
- Practical tips for exploring the city

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УДОБНЫЙ И ПОНЯТНЫЙ ОНЛАЙН-ГИД ДЛЯ ИНОСТРАННЫХ ТУРИСТОВ, КОТОРЫЙ ДОСТУПЕН НА ШЕСТИ ЯЗЫКАХ

СЕЗОННЫЙ ПЕЧАТНЫЙ ПУТЕВОДИТЕЛЬ, КОТОРЫЙ УДОБНО БРАТЬ С СОБОЙ

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AUTUMN ABOVE THE CLOUDS

3,912 Meters Closer to the Sun: Cosmos Elbrus Leaprus Camp

COSMOS HOTEL GROUP

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HOW TO GET THERE

Airports:
The nearest airports are in Mineralnye Vody and Nalchik. Estimated flight time from Moscow is about 3 hours.

Access route:
From there, take a shuttle or private taxi via the village of Terskol to the Azau clearing, then ride the cable car up to Garabashi station, where the hotel is located.

Photo:
Anton Taipei /
Press Service кавказ.рф

WHERE RUSSIA REACHES ITS HIGHEST POINT

Elbrus has always been one of Russia's great mountain symbols—a place of sport, endurance, and vast landscapes. It is where the country literally reaches its highest point. Rising 5,642 meters above the Caucasus, Elbrus is the highest mountain in Europe and part of the Seven Summits—the list of the highest peaks on each continent. People come here for skiing, climbing, altitude, silence, and views—and now, for the rare chance to spend the night almost where the mountain route begins.

CHECK IN ABOVE THE CLOUDS

Cosmos Elbrus Leaprus Camp, opened in 2013, is located at 3,912 meters above sea level, next to the Garabashi cable car station. Here, "a room with a mountain view" means something very literal: waking up above the clouds, with the peaks of the Caucasus right in front of you and Elbrus not as scenery, but as the reason to stay. This is exactly where Leaprus fits in—not as a classic resort hotel, but as a high-altitude base for climbers, eco-travelers, and those who want to experience sunrise and golden-hour sunsets far above the usual tourist route.

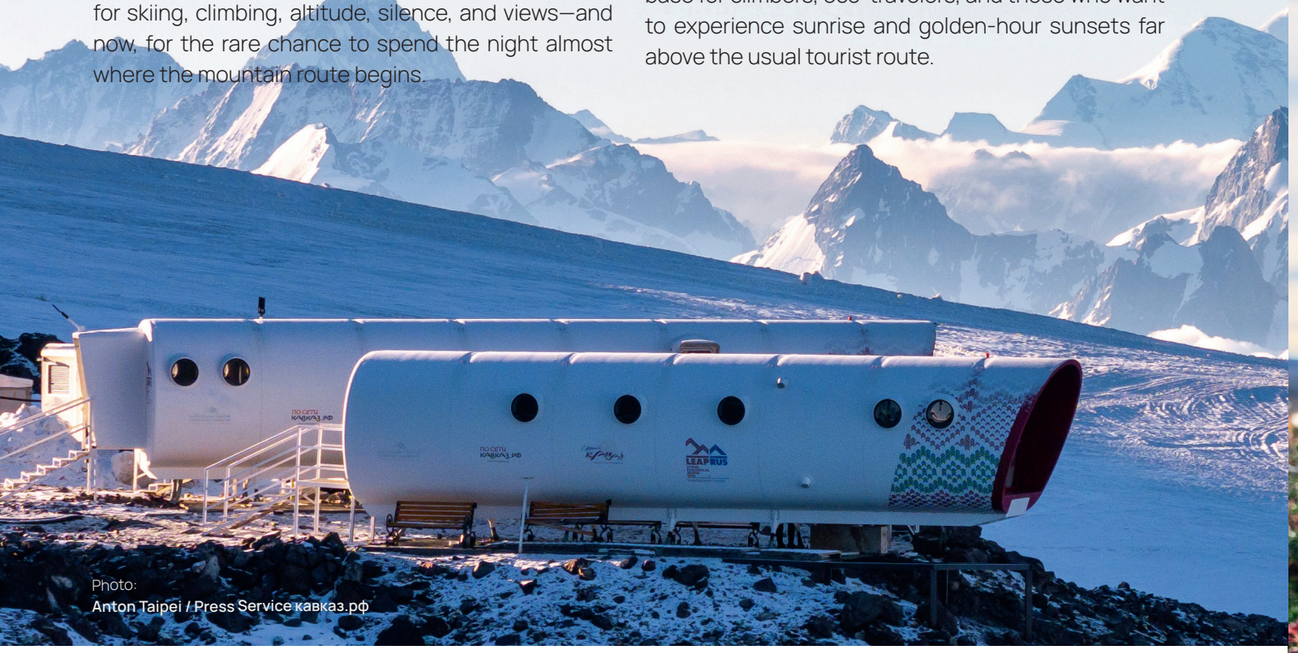

Photo:
Anton Taipei / Press Service кавказ.рф

PRACTICAL COMFORT, COSMOS STANDARD

Now operating under the Cosmos brand, Leaprus shifts the usual idea of a resort. The hotel offers 34 beds in heated residential modules with panoramic views and a slightly retrofuturistic feel. Comfort here is not about chandeliers or spa rituals. It is warmth after a cold ascent, hot water at almost 4,000 meters, a place to dry your gear, Wi-Fi, a warm meal, and a panoramic window opening onto the peaks of the Caucasus. At this altitude, practical becomes luxury —and that is exactly the point.

USEFUL INFO

Location:
Elbrus resort, next to the Garabashi cable car station

Altitude: 3,912 meters above sea level

Season: April–September

Best for: climbers, active travelers, eco-tourism, and high-altitude experience seekers

Facilities:
heated modules, hot water, showers, Wi-Fi, café-dining area, gear-drying room, panoramic windows

Tip: Plan acclimatization before staying overnight at the camp

AUTUMN BEYOND THE ARCTIC CIRCLE:

Why Murmansk Region Is the Season's Best Destination

When southern resorts empty, the Kola Peninsula comes alive. Autumn here isn't an off-season—it's a time when northern nature brings together everything that makes the region special: from the first displays of the Northern Lights to whale watching in the Barents Sea.

The Kola Peninsula is the northernmost peninsula in European Russia, located in Murmansk Oblast, with almost its entire territory lying above the Arctic Circle. It's worth visiting for raw Arctic beauty, the Aurora, whale watching, local gastronomy, and active outdoor adventures.

Together with TripSeller—a service created by people who are passionate about their region, with support from the Government of Murmansk Oblast—we explore the Kola Peninsula's best autumn experiences.

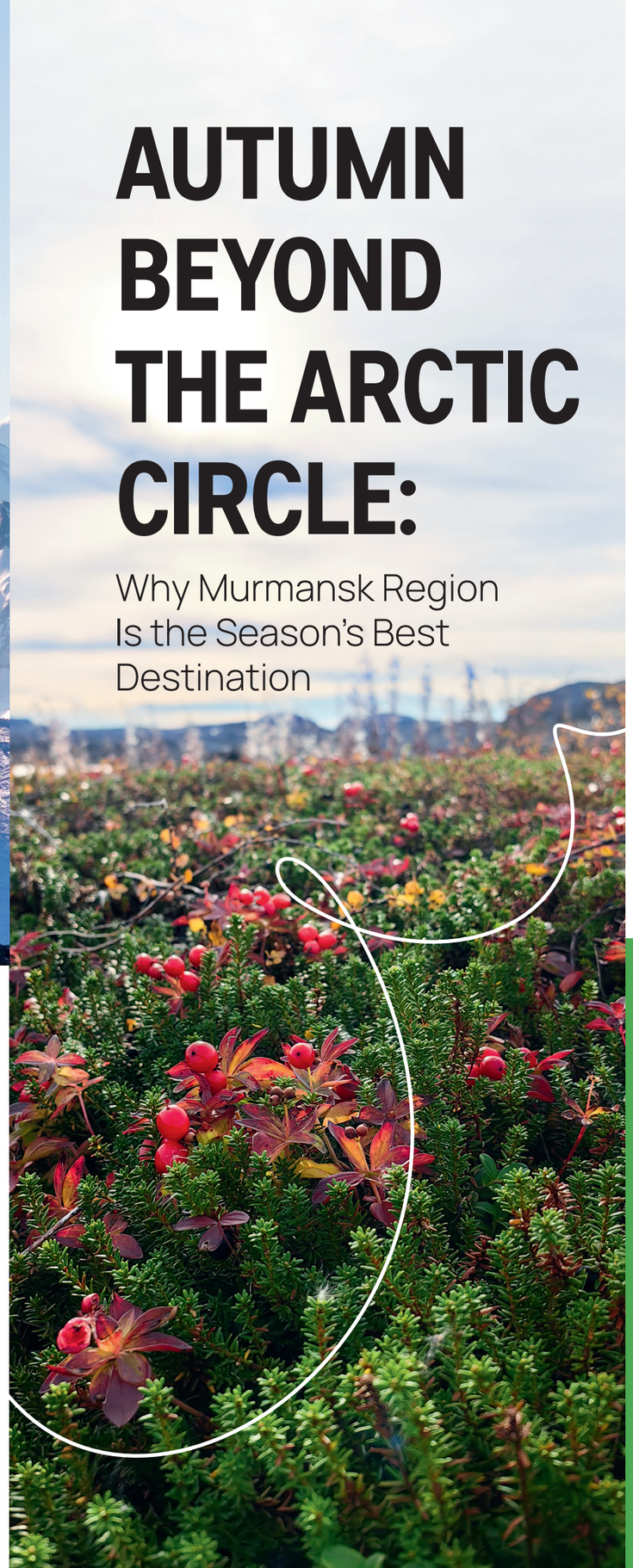

Photo: Adam Selmani

HOW TO GET THERE

Airports:

Murmansk International Airport — Murmansk Oblast, Kolsky District, Murmansk Airport named after Nicholas II.

The airport handles domestic flights as well as flights to Belarus.

Railway Stations:

Murmansk Railway Station — Murmansk Oblast, Murmansk, Kominterna Street, 14.

A direct flight from Moscow to Murmansk Airport takes about 2.5 hours. By train, the journey takes 30–38 hours (the branded "Arktika" train is the most comfortable option).

NORTHERN LIGHTS

Many people think you must go deep into winter to see the Aurora. In fact, the northern lights season on the Kola Peninsula begins as early as late August, once nights grow dark. September and October are the golden months: the weather is still mild, there's no snow yet, and the sky frequently erupts in green and purple hues. Local guides offer trips into the tundra to lakes where you can witness a double Aurora—in the sky and reflected on the water's surface.

Photo: **Adam Selmani**

WHY GO TO THE KOLA PENINSULA IN AUTUMN:

- *Lower prices than in the high winter season.*
- *Fewer tourists.*
- *Generous nature: in a single trip you can experience the last traces of northern summer, golden autumn, and the beginning of polar winter, as well as the Northern Lights, whale-watching season, and astonishing autumn tundra.*

Find ready-made itineraries for the Kola Peninsula, vetted guides, and the best seasonal locations on the TripSeller website.

DR readers can use promo code SVOAERO for a 10% discount.

ADVERTISEMENT. Advertiser: Tripseller LLC. OGRN 1255100003839, INN 5190239001. Address: Lomonosova St., Bldg. 7, Block 2, Apt. 69, Murmansk, Murmansk Region 183032, Russia.

Найти готовые маршруты для поездки на Кольский полуостров, выбрать проверенных гидов и лучшие сезонные локации можно на сайте TripSeller. А для читателей DR доступна скидка 10% по промокоду "ШЕРЕМЕТЬЕВО".

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ARCTIC CUISINE: WORLD-CLASS GASTRONOMY

In recent years Murmansk has become one of the country's most attractive gastronomic destinations. Sea urchins, scallops, crab, cod, reindeer, cloudberries, and reindeer lichen (yes, it's used in local cooking)—the best restaurants turn local products into dishes that food lovers travel here for, and inventive presentations by local chefs have established the region's culinary reputation.

FIRST SNOW AND THE START OF A WINTER TALE

From November, once the snow stays on the ground, the winter season opens with snowmobile safaris across frozen lakes, husky and reindeer sled rides, and atmospheric visits to Saami villages where you'll be offered fish soup and told local legends and stories.

Saami villages are settlements of the indigenous Saami people on the Kola Peninsula. In modern Russia they operate as ethnographic complexes and open-air museums that offer an immersive experience of indigenous life.

KHIBINY IN CRIMSON HUES

Autumn paints the Khibiny, the largest mountain range on the Kola Peninsula, in a full palette of colors: landscapes shift to shades of burgundy, white, green, blue, and gold. Jeep tours across mountain passes, past waterfalls and hidden lakes are the best way to see this magical scenery. For adrenaline lovers, there are ATV off-road tours, river fords, and climbs to plateaus with breathtaking views.

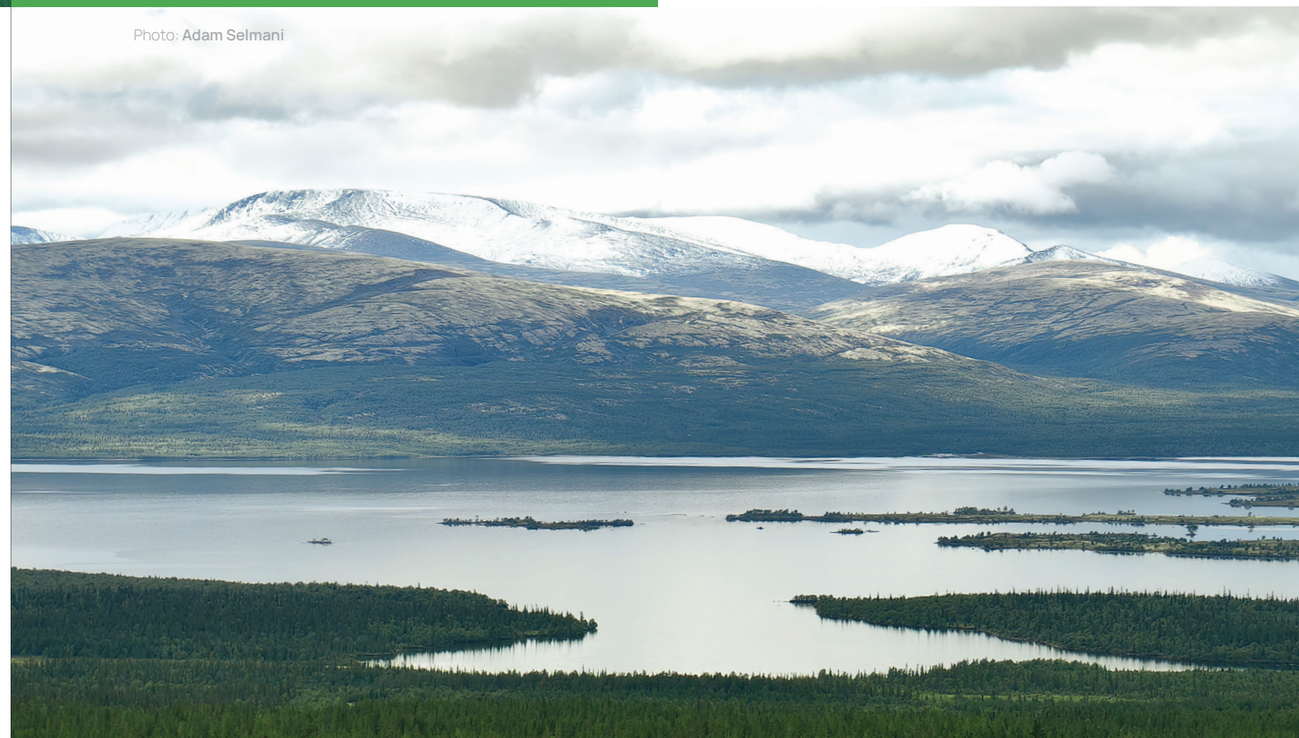
WHALES, SEALS, AND MARINE LIFE

Until the end of September, you can still encounter whales, dolphins, and seals in the Barents Sea. Boat trips along the Kola Peninsula's coast that pass by seabird colonies feel like a behind-the-scenes National Geographic experience. If you choose a calmer route through Kola Bay, you can admire Murmansk's panorama from the water, see abandoned ships, and breathe in Arctic air so pure it can leave you feeling slightly light-headed.

BERRIES AND QUIET FORAGING

September and the first half of October in the North mean buckets of cloudberries, lingonberries, blueberries, and crowberries gathered in a few hours, and the season of mushroom foraging. For safe, tried-and-tested locations and tips on how to distinguish edible from poisonous species, consult local guides. They'll also show you how to brew tea right in the tundra.

Photo: **Adam Selmani**





THE GATEWAY TO SIBERIA:

Autumn in Tyumen Region

For many travelers, Siberia arrives first as a set of associations: vast, cold, distant, and a little mysterious. Tyumen Region is where that vague image starts to become a route. Known as the gateway to Siberia, it makes an ideal autumn starting point: winter has not arrived yet, but the region has already entered its best mood—golden landscapes, cooler air, steaming thermal water, and food that feels just right for the season. Consider the gates open!

DISCOVER RUSSIA

SHEDDING LIGHT ON THE REGION

Tyumen, the regional capital, is the first Russian city in Siberia and the easiest starting point, with an airport, hotels, restaurants, and city walks. Tobolsk gives the route its historical weight: once a major Siberian center, today it is known for the only white-stone Kremlin beyond the Urals. Add a few smaller stops if the route allows: Yalutorovsk for Decembrist stories and authentic atmosphere, Abalak for monastery silhouettes and a wooden fairytale mood, Zavodoukovsk for slow walks and Kolmakovsky pryanik. Together, they turn the region from a point on the map into a proper route.

THE HOT SPRINGS CAPITAL

One of the region's strongest travel attractions is thermal water. Tyumen's hot springs are linked to the ancient West Siberian Sea, and today the region has more than 20 thermal resorts, with mineral water usually staying between 36 and 48°C. In autumn, the contrast does the work: cold air, hot water, steam above the pool, and a dark sky—what else do you need? Choose a large thermal complex, a countryside base, a hotel by the water, or a short spa stop between cities. In Tyumen Region, warming up is part of the itinerary.

FORGET ABOUT YOUR DIET

We refuse to taste a region without actually tasting it. In Tyumen Region, that means hearty food, forest flavors, fish, berries, mushrooms, and old recipes that sound like they belong in a novel but arrive on a plate. Look for pelmeni with unusual fillings, salted milk mushrooms, stroganina, ikryaniki, and the local "oil" fish soup. No lines for this one! No actual oil involved, though. But you must go and figure out the name yourself. Spoiler: it's all about the color. This is a place where ordering a Caesar salad would be a crime.



EVENTS TO VISIT

Siberia to Taste

From September 12 to November 8, restaurants across the region create special Siberian-style sets. A good shortcut if you want to understand the local cuisine without ordering blindly.

Kapusta Barynya

On October 3, Yalutorovsk hosts the Kapusta Barynya folk harvest festival at the Yalutorovsky Ostrog: cabbage, games, songs, treats, and the kind of local tradition that works best when taken seriously and not too seriously at the same time.

Our team put together a few tips to help you get the most out of the region.

- Rent a car if you can. Tyumen, Tobolsk, Yalutorovsk, Ishim, and countryside stops make much more sense when you are not tied to one city.
- Plan around November 8 if you like cultural timing. Day of Siberia brings historical programs, folk celebrations, and a good reason to see how the region celebrates its own identity.
- Do not stay only in standard city hotels. Look at thermal resorts, countryside bases, tree houses, geodomes, and forest stays. At least part of the trip should feel close to Siberian nature, not just to the breakfast buffet.
- Think about the route. The fastest way is to fly to Tyumen from Moscow. For a Ural detour, fly first to Yekaterinburg and take the train to Tyumen—the journey takes about four and a half hours.

Tyumen Region is not the whole of Siberia, of course. That would be too easy, and Siberia does not do "easy" as a concept. But it is one of the best places to begin: accessible, historic, warm where it matters, cold where it should be, and full of reasons to stay a little longer.

A Must-See:

CYPRESS LAKE IN ANAPA

Cypress Lake is a unique natural landmark on the outskirts of Sukko, near Anapa, formed in the 20th century as spring water accumulated in a natural depression in the valley. Its main feature is a grove of 32 North American swamp cypresses growing directly out of the water.

In autumn, the scenery becomes even more captivating: the tree-tops take on vivid russet and copper hues, and their reflections on the lake's mirror-like surface turn the lake into a fairytale scene.

Make a Wish:

NORTHERN LIGHTS OVER MURMANSK

The hunt for the Northern Lights in Russia begins in mid-September and continues until early April. All it takes is a dark, clear sky and strong solar activity.

Legend has it that if you make a wish beneath the aurora, the sky will hear you. In this photo, turquoise streaks of light shimmer above Murmansk. Shall we put the old saying to the test?

GREAT LIST

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SOUP SEASON:

10 Russian Restaurants to Warm You Up This Autumn



Cafe Pushkin **Moscow**

Soup is the ultimate comfort when the temperature outside falls below 15°C. It's the dish that brings a feeling of inner warmth and helps keep any weather-related gloom at bay. Together with GreatList, an international restaurant guide operating in Russia, the UAE, Qatar, Thailand, and China, we selected ten restaurants across Russian cities worth visiting for their soups—from classic recipes to surprising interpretations.

GreatList is an independent guide curated by experts who assess restaurants based on cuisine, service, interior design, and atmosphere.

MOSCOW

"CAFE PUSHKIN"

This legendary Russian restaurant opened its doors in 1999. Over the years, the kitchen at Café Pushkin has produced thousands of liters of all kinds of soups, all marked by a distinctly Russian character and a generous use of ingredients. Whether you choose the 24-hour shchi served with rasstegai, borscht made with smoked goose, or the imperial fish soup (ukha) served with vodka, any choice on the menu is sure to please.

Address: Tverskoy Boulevard 26A

BAGEBI

A grand Georgian restaurant whose cuisine sits at the intersection of tradition and experimentation. The restaurant has not one but two brand chefs—Maka Zakaraya, who oversees the classics, and Evgeny Dokunin, who treats tradition more freely. The menu features three soups, each worth trying: kharcho, ukha with zander and trout, and a chicken broth with dumplings.

By the way, the restaurant is adjacent to the Zurab Tsereteli Art Gallery and the Russian Academy of Arts, so you can work up an appetite before lunch or dinner while broadening your cultural horizons.

Address: Prechistenka St. 19/11

SELFIE

One of the most lauded Russian restaurants and one of the country's best-known establishments abroad. The menu is built around the geography of Russia: more than 15 regions, each interpreted through modern techniques and the chef's signature approach—chef Anatoly Kazakov experiments with the Russian gastronomic code to create contemporary takes on classics.

For example, okroshka—the famous cold Russian soup—is made here with ayran; sorrel shchi comes with a poached egg; and zander ukha includes burbot milt. If you aren't familiar with any of these dishes or ingredients, don't worry about the theory—go straight to tasting.

Address: Novinsky Boulevard 31

ST. PETERSBURG

"BANSHCHIKI"

A Russian restaurant with the atmosphere of a country house, located in the building of the famous Degtyarnye Baths. The kitchen reinterprets Russo-Soviet classics in a way that's perfect both after a steam bath and on its own.

There are many soups on offer, all promising heartfelt comfort and lasting satisfaction: creamy salmon soup, borscht served with salo, porcini mushroom soup with pearl barley, and sorrel soup with smoked turkey.

Address: Degtyarnaya St. 1A

RENE

An elegant Russian-French restaurant in the historic Singer House with views of Kazan Cathedral. The soup selection is attractively varied: classic options like French onion soup appear alongside the Scandinavian-style creamy trout ukha, and for lovers of simple, clean flavors, there is chicken soup served with a pie.

Address: Nevsky Prospect 28



Singer House, known as the House of Books, is a notable Art Nouveau landmark and one of the city's most recognizable architectural gems, located at the corner of Nevsky Prospect and the Griboyedov Canal.

The bookstore, opened in 1919, remains in place and continues to draw readers with its extensive collection of books and its historic atmosphere.

NIZHNY NOVGOROD

"PYATKIN"

The Russian restaurant Pyatkin is an ideal refuge for tired travelers and locals weary of the autumn winds on the Volga. The atmosphere—decorated with samovars and baranki and accompanied by recordings of the Russian opera singer Fyodor Chaliapin—and its setting in a historic building recreate the distinctive atmosphere of Russia's merchant class. Large portions of all kinds of soups—from Little-Russian borscht and 24-hour shchi to Volga ukha and pea soup with smoked meats—make this restaurant an absolute must for an autumn lunch or dinner.

Address: Rozhdestvenskaya St. 25

KAZAN

"ARTEL"

A city bistro serving modern, pared-back Tatar cuisine made from simple, familiar ingredients, with a well-thought-out wine and cocktail list and a good soup selection. Try the lentil soup—offered in two versions: with bildyama (a traditional horsemeat delicacy) and with pumpkin—and the chicken soup, served here with wontons.

Address: Mushtari St. 18

YEKATERINBURG

"SOIKA"

A popular Asian restaurant located in a historic mansion with white-brick vaults, a lemon-and-emerald interior, a golden bar, and abundant greenery.

Alongside a rich Pan-Asian menu, the restaurant offers a wide selection of soups: tom yum, Singaporean laksa, several varieties of kuksi, and beef ramen.

Address: 8 Marta St. 6



Tiama **Vladivostok**

FAR EAST

TIAMA

An Italian restaurant that highlights local seafood, lively service, and carefully considered interiors. If you come for soups—and that is exactly what this guide recommends—be prepared to choose among minestrone, homemade tortellini in broth, a Mediterranean tomato-and-seafood soup, and gazpacho.

Editor's tip: Bring hungry friends who don't mind sharing—that way you'll avoid the agony of choice and can order several dishes at once.

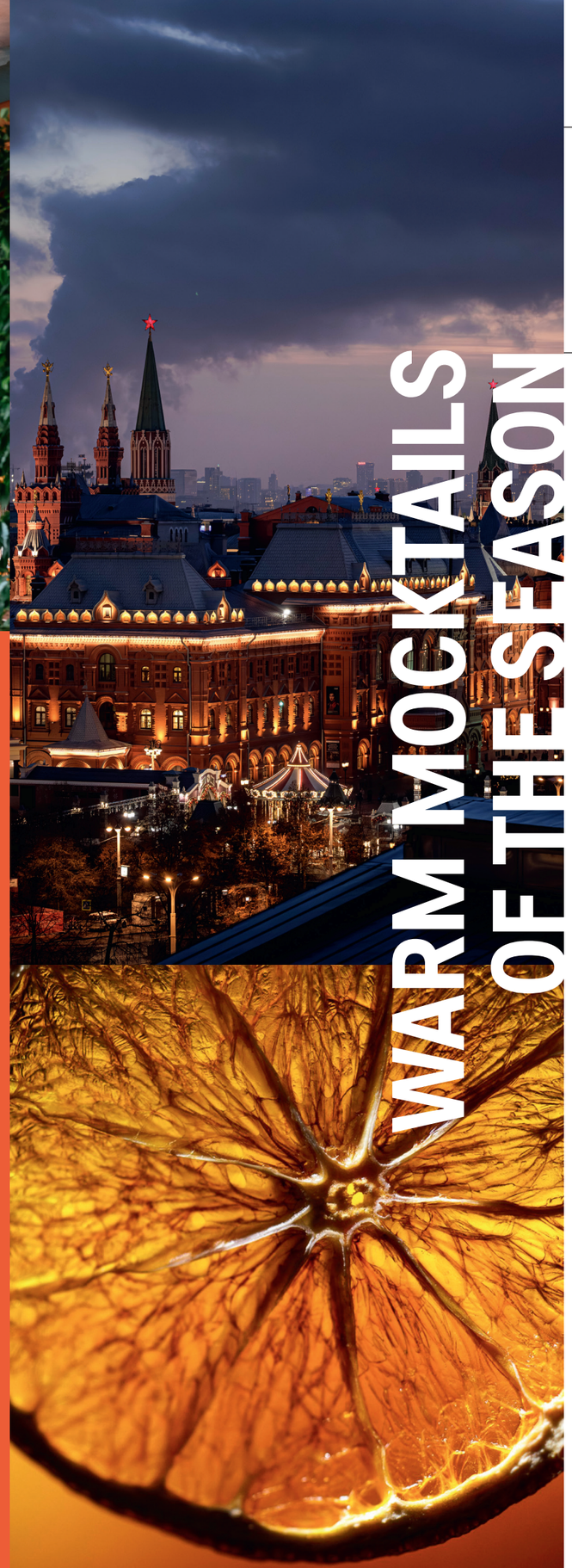
Address: Vladivostok, Laninsky Lane 4

"DOM"

Located in a historic mansion in Khabarovsk, the restaurant "Dom" (Russian for "home") welcomes its guests with an open kitchen, a wood-fired oven, and open flames. Its cuisine, with an emphasis on Far Eastern ingredients, reflects the unique character of the Russian Far East.

As for the soups: if you want something light, try the classic chicken broth or a Far Eastern ukha. For bigger appetites or colder days, the menu features oven-baked borscht and a hearty solyanka.

Address: Khabarovsk, Kalinina St. 72



WARM MOCKTAILS OF THE SEASON

ARARAT PARK HYATT MOSCOW™

ARARAT PARK HYATT MOSCOW
IS A PARTNER OF DISCOVER RUSSIA

If summer refuses to linger, warmth does not have to leave with it. Autumn simply moves it elsewhere. This season, we are skipping the obvious pumpkin-spice default and going for warm mocktails with a proper twist.

Our top pick is mock mulled wine with a Russian accent. Start with alcohol-free red wine, then move away from the usual orange-and-cinnamon combo toward lingonberries or cranberries for a tart northern kick, and blueberry or blackcurrant for a darker berry note. Still cozy, still recognizably mulled—just a bit darker and more berry-rich.

We tried a particularly polished version of this drink at The Conservatory Lounge & Bar at Ararat Park Hyatt Moscow, where it is refined with black tea and herbs. The bar team shared the recipe for their Warm Non-Alcoholic Berry Cocktail—perfect for a rooftop evening, yet simple enough to recreate at home.

Conservatory Lounge & Bar is located on the 10th floor of the Ararat Park Hyatt Moscow and is known for its signature cocktails, gourmet dishes, and stunning panoramic views of the Kremlin, the Bolshoi Theatre, and the State Duma.

Address: 4 Neglinnaya Street

INGREDIENTS FOR ONE SERVING:

- *80 ml alcohol-free red wine*
- *50 ml black tea*
- *20 ml blueberry syrup*
- *15 g lingonberries*
- *3 g dried thyme*
- *5 g fresh basil*

METHOD:

Brew black tea with dried thyme and let it infuse. Mix it with basil, blueberry syrup, and lingonberries, add the alcohol-free red wine, then gently heat until warm and aromatic. Let it rest for 3–5 minutes before serving.





OTHER PICKS FOR THE SEASON:

HOT GIN PUNCH

Alcohol-free gin, apple juice, lemon, honey, cloves, and pear. Botanical, warm, and not too sweet—exactly what you want when mulled wine feels too safe.

SBITEN WITH A TWIST

Russia's old-school honey-and-spice warmer gets a darker update with alcohol-free wine, ginger, cloves, and mint.

HOT BUTTERED "RUM" CIDER

Alcohol-free dark rum, warm apple cider, butter, brown sugar, and spices. Rich, glossy, and just decadent enough for a cold evening.

RUSSIAN TRADITIONS:

The Tea Ceremony

METROPOL
SINCE 1905

METROPOL HOTEL IS A PARTNER OF DISCOVER RUSSIA

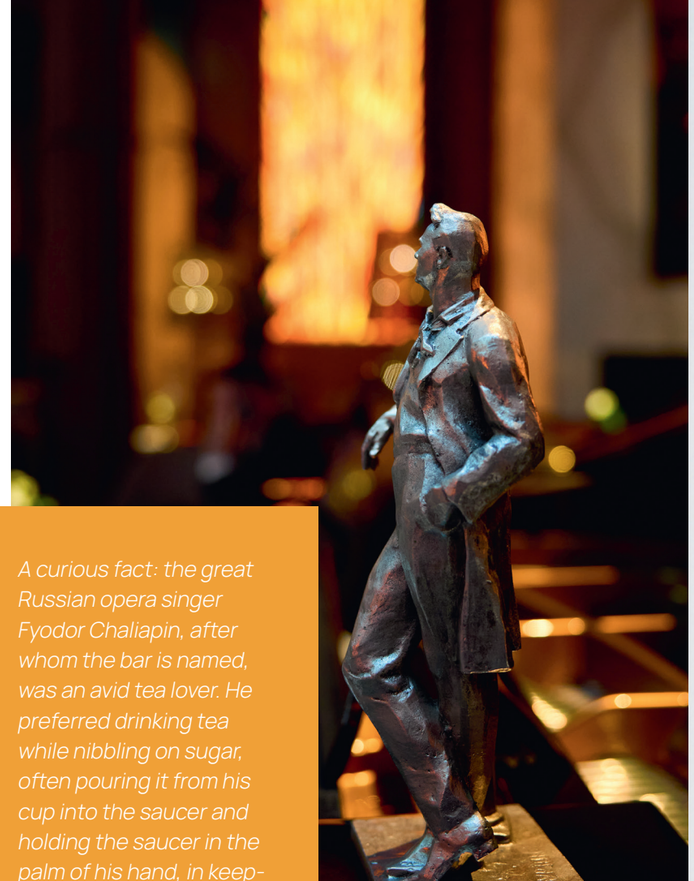
Russians' love of tea, traditionally expressed through lavish table settings, dates back several centuries. Tea first arrived in Russia in the 17th century and was initially used as a medicinal drink. By the mid-19th century, it had become widespread and entered everyday culture, leaving its mark not only on culinary history but also on literature, painting, and the arts more broadly.

Tea came to hold a special place in the hearts of the capital's residents. With its many teahouses and specialty shops, Moscow was often dubbed Russia's tea capital, where the ritual of serving tea became a symbol of hospitality passed down through generations.

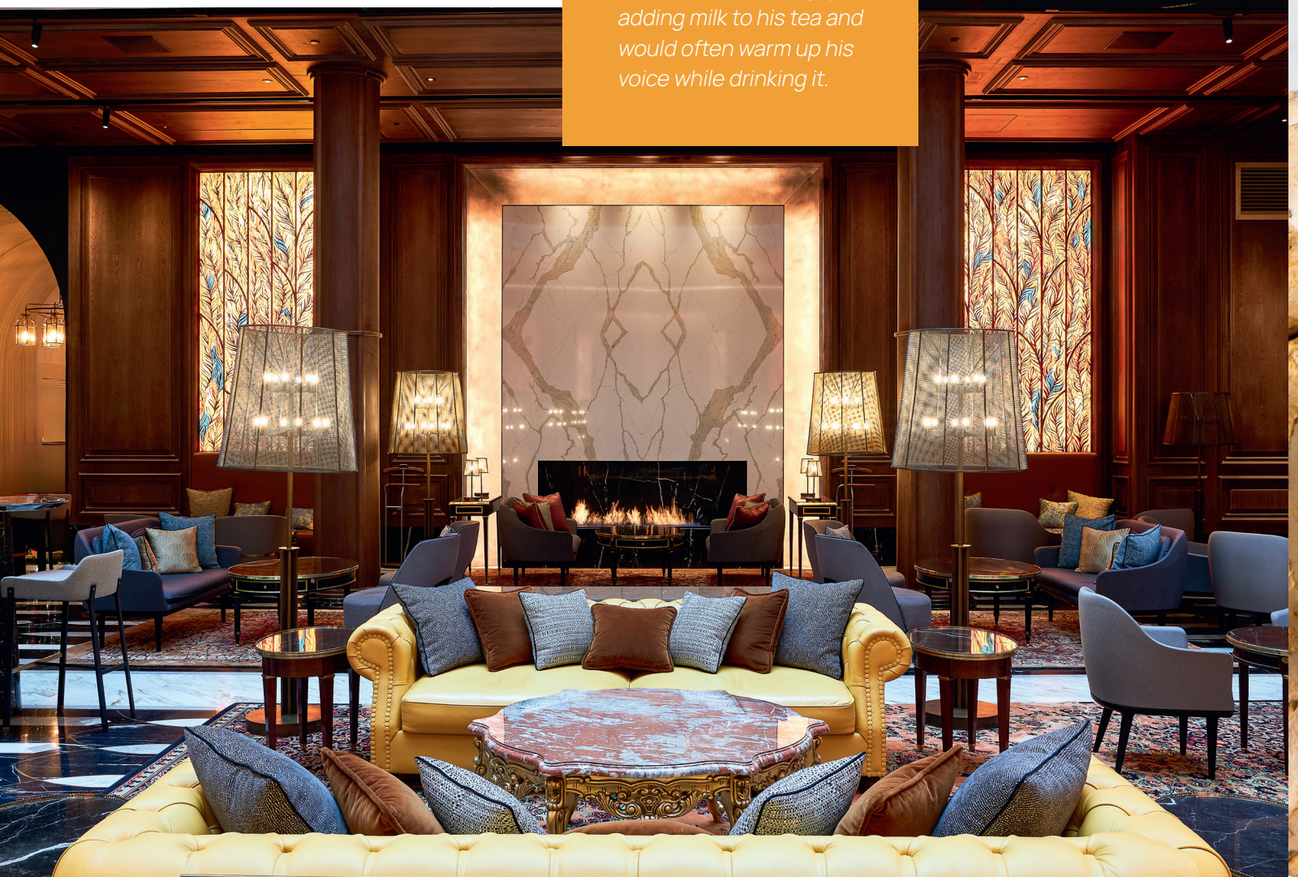
Today, the Russian tea ceremony lives on not only in Moscow homes but also in the capital's landmark gastronomic venues.

At the Chaliapin Bar in the Metropol Hotel, overlooking Moscow's historic center, tea ceremonies are held daily. Traditional treats with a modern twist are served on tableware by the Imperial Porcelain Factory: blini with red caviar, signature pirozhki and vatrushki, petits fours, handcrafted candies, natural marmalade, and more. The centerpiece of the ceremony is an antique silver-colored teapot that carefully preserves the memory of this tradition.

Address: Moscow,
Teatralny Proezd 2



A curious fact: the great Russian opera singer Fyodor Chaliapin, after whom the bar is named, was an avid tea lover. He preferred drinking tea while nibbling on sugar, often pouring it from his cup into the saucer and holding the saucer in the palm of his hand, in keeping with an old Russian tradition. He also enjoyed adding milk to his tea and would often warm up his voice while drinking it.



STAYING HEALTHY BETWEEN SEASONS:

атлас

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Top 5 Healthy Drinks for Autumn

As autumn arrives, supporting immune health becomes a growing priority. The internet is full of advice—vitamins, supplements, and traditional remedies—but much of it rests on an oversimplified understanding of how the immune system works.

We spoke with Dr. Anastasia Efimova, dietitian, nutritionist & preventive medicine specialist at Atlas Clinics, to get a clearer picture.



Dr. Anastasia Efimova,
dietitian, nutritionist & preventive medicine specialist at Atlas Clinics

When people say “I want to boost my immunity,” they usually mean they want to get sick less often and have milder symptoms when they do. But it’s misleading to assume that the more active the immune system is, the better. Immunity can’t simply be “boosted,” although some traditional approaches may still have some value. Warm drinks, for example, can indirectly support health by helping maintain hydration, keeping you warm, and providing essential nutrients—making them a helpful part of a healthy autumn routine.

WHAT TO DRINK?

GREEN AND BLACK TEA

Both green and black tea contain polyphenols—compounds with antioxidant properties. Drinking two to three cups a day has been linked to a lower risk of cardiovascular disease and stroke.

“But the most important consideration is temperature. Beverages hotter than 65°C may increase the risk of certain diseases, so let your tea cool down a little before drinking. Another important point is that traditional teas contain caffeine. Keep this in mind if you are sensitive to it or drink tea before bed,” notes Dr. Anastasia Efimova, dietitian, nutritionist & preventive medicine specialist at Atlas Clinics.

CRANBERRY OR LINGONBERRY MORS

This traditional Russian drink has been undeservedly overshadowed by store-bought juices. Cranberries and lingonberries are rich in organic acids, vitamin C, and polyphenols, so mors with no added sugar is a good way to support hydration and get antioxidants from natural sources.

Note: frozen berries are just as good as fresh ones and often contain even more vitamin C.

GINGER DRINK

Ginger is one of the most popular ingredients in autumn recipes. Its characteristic spicy flavor comes from gingerols—bioactive compounds with anti-inflammatory and antioxidant effects. Ginger can help reduce nausea and affect inflammatory processes in the body. While evidence supporting its ability to prevent colds is limited, a drink made with ginger, lemon, and honey remains a comforting way to warm up and soothe throat discomfort.

ROSEHIP INFUSION

Rosehips are one of the richest plant sources of vitamin C. Adults need roughly 75–90 mg per day, and a single cup of a well-made rosehip infusion can provide that amount. Vitamin C won’t guarantee protection against colds, but it plays a role in immune function, supports the barrier function of the skin and mucous membranes, and is essential for collagen synthesis and tissue repair. In addition to vitamin C, rosehips contain numerous plant compounds with antioxidant activity.

Note: vitamin C breaks down at high temperatures, so it is best to brew rosehips in water at about 80°C.



LINDEN BLOSSOM TEA

Linden tea is a traditional Russian drink often consumed at the first sign of a cold. The flowers contain compounds that can gently soothe mucous membranes and ease throat irritation.

Like other hot drinks, linden tea helps maintain hydration during illness and can provide comfort. It is traditionally enjoyed slowly in the evening; the quiet ritual can be relaxing and help prepare the body for sleep. Sleep is one of the few factors whose link to normal immune function is well documented.





AUTUMN TEA WITH ROSEHIP, GINGER, AND LEMON

INGREDIENTS FOR 1–2 CUPS:

- *1–2 tsp dried rosehips (or 5–7 crushed fresh berries)*
- *2–3 thin slices of fresh ginger*
- *1–2 lemon wedges*
- *1 tsp honey*
- *A pinch of cinnamon*
- *400–500 ml water*

INSTRUCTIONS:

Lightly crush the rosehips to help release their beneficial compounds. Pour water heated to about 80°C over the rosehips and let them steep in a thermos for 2–4 hours. Before serving, add the fresh ginger, lemon, honey, and a pinch of cinnamon.

ABOUT VITAMINS

Many people also begin taking vitamin supplements between seasons, but this is not the best way to support your health. First, with a balanced diet, the body gets the nutrients it needs from food—the safest form of nutritional support, whereas many dietary supplements raise questions about their composition and effectiveness. Second, taking supplements without first being tested for deficiencies can be unsafe. Before buying a product marketed “for immunity,” it’s important to determine whether you actually need it.

The key is to keep the body’s basic needs in mind. The most reliable foundation remains unchanged: a varied diet, adequate hydration, regular physical activity, and sufficient sleep. For now, let’s start with something simple: brewing a fragrant autumn tea.



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ALL THINGS PUMPKIN:

Russia's Harvest Season

Harvest celebrations have long been part of Russia's rural traditions, marking the end of the agricultural season and honoring autumn's abundance. Today, that spirit lives on through seasonal fairs, local produce, regional food festivals, and autumn decorations across cities and villages alike. Farmers' markets brim with pumpkins, apples, and other seasonal produce; city squares are dressed in autumn colors; cafés serve warming drinks and freshly baked pastries—everything seems to embrace the golden spirit of the season.

MOSCOW

In Moscow, the heart of the autumn atmosphere is Manezhnaya Square, where seasonal decorations often feature pumpkins, harvest displays, and colorful floral installations. If your visit coincides with the annual Golden Autumn Festival at VDNH, expect regional delicacies, farmers' markets, and some of the country's finest seasonal produce.

ST. PETERSBURG

St. Petersburg somehow becomes even more cinematic at this time of year. Golden parks, mist drifting over the canals, and historic streets create a beautifully melancholic backdrop for slow walks. But even a city this gothic knows how to embrace the autumn harvest spirit: just head to Sevkabel Port, where seasonal markets bring together local makers, food vendors, workshops, and music on the waterfront. And if you'd like to add a touch of mystery to your trip, autumn is also the perfect season to join one of the city's evening walking tours devoted to the ghosts, legends, and hidden stories of St. Petersburg.

KALININGRAD

For travelers drawn to European charm without leaving Russia, Kaliningrad is a natural choice. Few places wear autumn as effortlessly as this city. Around the Fishing Village (Rybnaya Derevnya), seasonal decorations, cozy cafés, and amber-colored foliage create one of the country's most atmospheric autumn settings.

CITIES IN TUNE WITH THE SEASON



DR'S CHOICE

Meshchersky Park

Hidden among the trees of Meshchersky Park, the Forest Tea House feels made for autumn. Decorated with pumpkins and other seasonal accents, it serves herbal teas and freshly made blini—an ideal reward after a long autumn walk through the forest.

THE APPLE DOESN'T FALL FAR:

Autumn in Kolomna

Photo:
Elena Nechiporenko / Shutterstock

Kolomna has always had a thing for apples. The historic town grew up among orchards, and their harvest found a particularly successful second life in its famous pastila. So when autumn comes around, the apple really does not fall far from the tree.

BOOKS, APPLES, AND EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN

Every September, the historic center hosts Apples in Kolomna, the garden and book festival long known as Antonov Apples. Its former name evoked both Antonovka—one of Russia's classic apple varieties—and Ivan Bunin's wistful short story Antonov Apples, in which the scent of fruit becomes the scent of an entire season slipping away.

The program changes each year, but books and apples remain dependable protagonists. Publishers, writers, musicians, gardeners, and chefs take over the old streets with readings, concerts, theater, workshops, tastings, and a slow-food market. There is no need to choose between trick and treat here—the treats are everywhere. Apples come in every imaginable form: fresh, baked, preserved, and even discussed.

SAVE ROOM FOR KOLOMNA

Once the festival winds down, stay for Kolomna itself. Walk through the Kremlin and the old Posad, try apple pastila at the museum devoted to the city's signature sweet, then follow it with a hot kalach from Kalachnaya.

In Kolomna, even the cultural program tends to end with a treat.

HAYSTACKS:
Agricultural Poetry

Haystacks waiting for their moment on empty fields are one of the most poetic images of the changing seasons, as if autumn itself, stocking up for the future, carefully gathers the remnants of summer into neat golden forms.

As a visual reference: haystacks against the backdrop of the Altai Mountains, still autumnal yet already dusted with snow.

In Gold:

6 RUSSIAN JEWELRY BRANDS TO WATCH



The theme of our autumn issue is gold—jewelry included. We couldn't ignore Russia's glittering and fast-evolving jewelry scene, so we selected a few standout brands: time-honored houses with decades of experience alongside inventive newcomers who are quickly reaching new heights in jewelry design.

If you're looking for the brightest and most unusual gold—and not only gold—pieces from Russian designers, start here.

LETTERS AND STONES

Letters and Stones is a fresh Russian jewelry label with a playful spirit. The brand's creations—like the pickle-shaped brooch we featured in our spring issue—mix a wink of irony with impressively solid craftsmanship and materials. Their range includes rings, necklaces, earrings, and cuffs crafted from gold and set with precious and semi-precious stones.

DR's pick: *the "Eyes" ring in white gold, set with onyx, cacholong, and lab-grown diamonds. The playful open design works well on its own or paired with a classic solitaire diamond engagement ring.*



Letters and Stones

ALROSA DIAMONDS

ALROSA Diamonds is the jewelry line of ALROSA, the world's largest diamond mining company, sourcing stones from Russian deposits in Yakutia and Arkhangelsk Region. The collections highlight both the jewelers' technical skill and the full spectrum of diamonds—from whimsical small-carat stones to rare solitaire diamonds with unusual cuts.

DR's pick: *a minimalist rose gold necklace featuring a champagne-glass pendant set with diamonds—the perfect piece for an impromptu celebration.*



10 gran

DZHANELLI JEWELLERY

Dzhanelli Jewellery creates concept-driven jewelry in gold, silver, steel, titanium, and a variety of precious and semi-precious stones. The brand draws inspiration from both abstract themes in art and culture and deeply personal stories. For example, its "Insects" collection was created as the designer's way of overcoming a lifelong fear of insects—a bold and striking example of transforming a personal phobia into wearable art.

DR's pick: *the "Spoon with Black Caviar" pendant in white gold with mother-of-pearl and morion—a playful, jewelry-inspired take on Russia's most iconic delicacies, without the shelf life or the hassle of taking it across borders.*



10.GRAN

10.GRAN is a Russian jewelry brand with production facilities in Moscow and Kostroma, a town with a long jewelry tradition. Architecture is a recurring theme for the brand: many pieces are conceived as miniature architectural objects, designed to carry a sense of space and history.

DR's pick: *the RIBS ring in sterling silver with gold plating, its textured surface inspired by the modernist fascination with exposing a building's structural frame. The design is also available in gold.*

LIZA BORZAYA

Liza Borzaya's collections take cues from Russian art, the changing seasons, childhood memories, and the natural palette. Playful, bold, and slightly dreamlike, her pieces are technically intricate yet meant for everyday wear. "Jewelry is not made for display cases or safes: art should be comfortable for everyday wear and meant to be seen," says Liza.

DR's pick: *an ideal autumn choice—a convertible sunflower pendant from the "Harvest Time" series that can be worn as a necklace or used as part of an earring or ring. Materials: yellow gold, diamonds, and guilloché hot enamel.*

YANA

YANA is the jewelry house founded by Yana Raskovalova in 2011, crafting pieces in gold, silver, and precious stones. The brand's DNA draws on high jewelry traditions and intricate, multilayered constructions that encourage mixing and matching across collections.

DR's pick: *tassels—a signature motif that appears as rings, chokers, bracelets, earrings, and long sautoirs. Creative director Yana Raskovalova suggests starting your exploration with these pieces.*

However, we chose a different piece—a yellow gold ring shaped like a horse's head. After all, the horse is the patron animal of 2026, so paying it a jewelry tribute feels especially fitting.

EDIBLE SOUVENIRS:

What to Bring Home from Russia This Autumn

Food says more about a place than a postcard ever can. For travelers exploring Russia this autumn, bring back bites that tell local stories—from Sochi's sweets to Murmansk Arctic delicacies. Here are our top picks, all easy to pack and perfect for gifting.

SOCHI:

CHURCHKHELA

Skip Krasnodar tea and honey from mountain apiaries (though both are excellent) and grab churchkhela: a traditional Caucasian confection. Nuts threaded on a string are dipped in thickened grape juice to create a chewy, naturally sweet treat that travels well and tastes like the Black Sea coast.

GOLDEN RING:

GINGERBREAD, SALT, HONEY, AND CHEESE

The Golden Ring is a feast for the senses. Vladimir is famed for aromatic gingerbread, Kostroma for black salt and cheese, Yaroslavl for sbiten (a warming honey-and-herb drink), and Suzdal for jars of honey and jam.

DR's Choice: Suzdal's cucumber jam—a quirky, delicious souvenir tied to the town's beloved Cucumber Festival.



KALININGRAD:

MARZIPAN

Kaliningrad's marzipan is a centuries-old calling card. Buy it in shops across the city or make a stop at the Marzipan Museum inside the Brandenburg Gate to pair shopping with history.

Address:
137 Bagration Street,
Kaliningrad



Photo: Sergey Granev / Shutterstock



RUSSIAN FAR EAST:

CRAB, WILD FOODS, AND "SEA" SWEETS

Choose preserved seafood for travel: crab meat in its own juice or premium red caviar travel best. A bolder idea: chocolate flavored with sea salt, seaweed, and even seafood—including sea urchin and scallop—produced by the Primorsky Konditer factory.

KAZAN:

CHAK-CHAK

From Tatarstan, take home chak-chak: crisp fried dough pieces bound with honey syrup. It's sturdy, shareable, and an indulgent way to bottle the flavors of Kazan.

MURMANSK:

FISH AND ARCTIC DELICACIES

Murmansk delivers oceanic flavors: dried sea ruff (a regional emblem), smoked halibut, canned cod liver, reindeer specialties, cloudberry jam, and reindeer lichen chips. Opt for vacuum-packed or canned goods for safe, hassle-free transport.

PRIMORYE'S ENGINEERING MARVEL

On the map of Vladivostok, there is a landmark feat of engineering that fits the theme of the autumn issue perfectly—the Golden Bridge.

This grand cable-stayed bridge across Zolotoy Rog Bay, built for the 2012 APEC Summit, not only connects the historic city center with the districts on the opposite side of the bay, reducing travel time, but also serves as a recognizable visual symbol of Primorsky Krai.

TRAVEL TIPS

How to make your journey through Russia comfortable and safe

PROHIBITED ORGANIZATIONS & CONTENT

Some organizations, activities, media platforms, symbols, and materials are classified as extremist and banned in Russia. Check the official Russian Ministry of Justice website for the current lists of banned organizations and extremist materials before your trip, and do not carry or share items (digital or physical) that could be interpreted as extremist or undesirable.

SAFETY AND SECURITY MEASURES FOR TOURISTS

- Modern tourist infrastructure, consular support, and laws designed to protect foreign citizens.
- Enhanced security and video surveillance at airports and train stations.
- Security services in hotels.
- Assistants and guides proficient in foreign languages at airports, hotels, and on excursions.
- A dedicated tourist police force.
- Mandatory travel insurance covering unforeseen circumstances and medical emergencies.

TRANSPORT

Yandex Go is an all-in-one app that lets you order food, arrange deliveries, rent a scooter, or call a taxi. You can pay with a Mir card or in cash.

Metro systems operate in seven Russian cities: Moscow, St. Petersburg, Kazan, Nizhny Novgorod, Novosibirsk, Yekaterinburg, and Samara. Tickets can be purchased at station ticket offices and machines, or you can simply tap a bank card at the turnstile.

Information about public transportation is available at stops and in the Yandex Maps and 2GIS apps. In Moscow, it is also available on the Moscow Transport website. The city's public transportation network includes not only the metro, MCC, MCD, buses, and trams, but also eco-friendly electric buses, electric vessels operating on the Moscow River, and Aeroexpress trains connecting the city center with Sheremetyevo and Domodedovo airports.

VISA REGIME

An e-visa is valid throughout Russia.

Processing time: up to 4 calendar days, including weekends. **Duration of stay in Russia:** up to 30 days. **Visa validity period:** 120 days.

Note: Citizens of several countries may enter the Russian Federation visa-free for up to 90 days.

PAYMENT METHODS

Visa and Mastercard cards issued outside Russia do not work in Russia. However, certain Russian payment services allow you to top up a local balance using a foreign card.

Payment services and QR payments

PAY IN RUSSIA is a convenient payment service for international travelers. Instantly top up your balance with a foreign card or supported payment service and pay anywhere in Russia: online with a virtual card or in person using a QR code at cafes, shops, museums, on public transportation, and more. No bank visit is required. The service is available as an app or directly in your browser.

Alternative: a Russian bank card

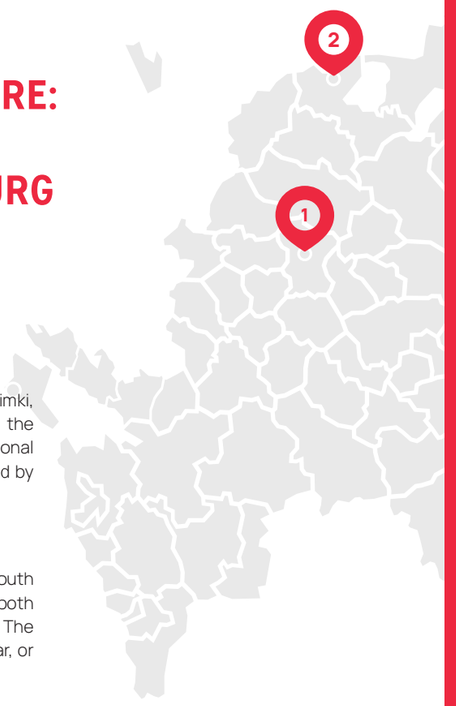
- The most convenient way to pay is with a Mir debit card (accepted mainly in Russia and in partner countries).
- You can have one issued upon arrival at certain airports, including Sheremetyevo, Domodedovo, and Sochi.
- Alternatively, a bank representative can issue and deliver a debit card to a location convenient for you (Sber, VTB, YooMoney, T-Bank, or RusAg). You can top up the card at ATMs.

Cash payments:

- You may bring up to $10,000 into Russia without filing a customs declaration.
- Currency can be exchanged at banks, airports, exchange offices, and hotels.

  It is advisable to carry a small amount of cash for transportation and souvenirs.

HOW TO GET THERE: MOSCOW AND SAINT PETERSBURG



1 | MOSCOW

Airports:

Sheremetyevo Airport named after A. S. Pushkin.
It is situated in the city of Khimki, approximately an hour's drive from the capital's center. It serves both international and domestic flights. It can be reached by car or taxi, as well as by Aeroexpress.

Domodedovo Airport named after M. V. Lomonosov.
Located approximately 45 km south of Moscow's center and serving both international and domestic flights. The airport is accessible by taxi, private car, or Aeroexpress.

Vnukovo Airport named after A. N. Tupolev.
The oldest airport in Moscow, located in the Vnukovo District—approximately 10 km southwest of the MKAD. It handles both domestic and international flights. You can reach the airport by car, taxi, or metro. Vnukovo was the first airport in Russia reachable by metro.

Zhukovsky Airport. Situated 26 km from the MKAD, in the city of Zhukovsky, Moscow Region. It features a single four-story terminal and predominantly serves international flights to neighboring countries, along with several domestic destinations. You can get to the airport by car or taxi.

Railway Stations (primarily useful for foreign tourists traveling within Russia):

Belorussky—Tverskaya Zastava Square, 7.
Kazansky—Komsomolskaya Square, 2.
Rizhsky—Rizhskaya Square, 1.
Yaroslavsky—Komsomolskaya Square, 5.
Leningradsky—Komsomolskaya Square, 3.
Kursky—Zemlyanoy Val Street, 29.
Savyolovsky—Savyolovsky Railway Station Square, 2.
Paveletsky—Paveletskaya Square, 1A, Building 1.
Kievsky—Kiev Railway Station Square, 1.
Vostochny—Shchyolkovskoye Highway, 1, Building 5.

2 | SAINT PETERSBURG

Airports:

Pulkovo International Airport—Pulkovo Highway, building 41, block 3A.

Pulkovo Airport in Saint Petersburg serves flights from more than 20 countries, offering direct flights primarily to destinations in the CIS, Asia, the Middle East, and holiday destinations (Egypt, Cuba, the Maldives, Morocco). Key destinations: Turkey, the UAE, China, Egypt, Thailand, Belarus, as well as Central Asian countries.

Railway Stations:

Moskovsky Station—Nevsky Prospekt, 85.
Vitebsky Station—Zagorodny Prospekt, 52.
Finland Station—Lenin Square, 6.
Ladozhsky Station—Zanevsky Prospekt, 73.
Baltic Station—Baltic Station Square, 1.

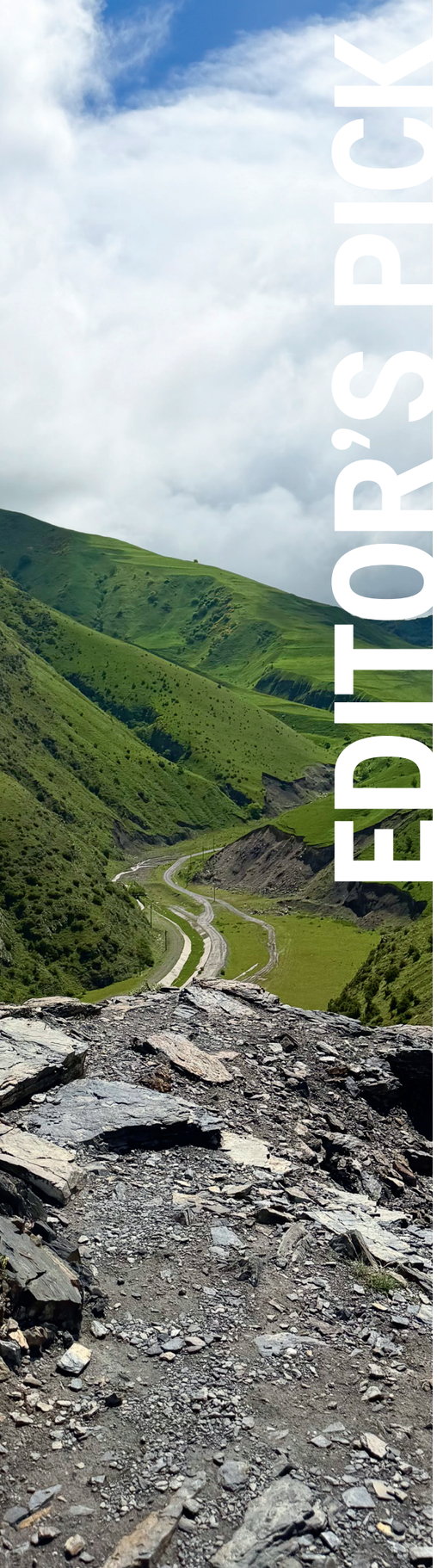
A direct flight from Moscow to Saint Petersburg takes approximately one hour. Traveling by train takes 4 hours on the high-speed Sapsan, 5.5–6 hours on the high-speed double-decker Aurora, and over 8 hours on RZD premium trains.

Aeroexpress

is a fast and comfortable means of transportation from central Moscow to the main airports (Sheremetyevo and Domodedovo), bypassing traffic jams, with departures every 30 minutes. Trains depart from Belorussky and Paveletsky stations and include intermediate stops with connections to the metro and the Moscow Central Diameters (MCD).

Many tourists prefer the rail route

—despite the longer travel time by train, the railway stations in Moscow and Saint Petersburg are located in the city centers, eliminating the need for additional transit time to and from the airports. Moreover, there is no need to arrive at the station well in advance, as is the case with air travel.



6 ITEMS, DESTINATIONS, AND EXPERIENCES SELECTED BY THE DISCOVER RUSSIA TEAM FOR THE AUTUMN WISHLIST

Dasha Chernova, DR team:
Memories of the Best Trip of the Year

Recently I visited North Ossetia for the first time (a republic of the Russian Federation in the country's south) and tasted its signature dish: the Ossetian pie. It's a traditional Caucasian flatbread made with thin yeast dough and a generous, flavorful filling.

But of course I'll recommend not only the pies, but the destination itself. Everyone should see the local landscapes—often called the "Switzerland of Ossetia"—breathe the crisp mountain air, wander through ancient villages, fortresses, and necropolises, enjoy the local hospitality, and experience the richness of the North Caucasus' nature, history, and culture.

The republic's capital is Vladikavkaz, and the flight time from Moscow is about three hours. Enjoy!





Dmitrii Smolnikov, DR team:
Black Caviar: Gold on the Plate—and Beyond

We tend to steer clear of the most predictable symbols of Russia—bears, vodka, and caviar rarely make it onto our pages. Yet when the theme is gold, as in this autumn issue, leaving out the so-called "black gold" would feel like a missed opportunity. In Russia, this is exactly how black caviar is often described.

The phrase "black gold" captures both its color and its enduring aura of luxury. And yet, the name is slightly misleading. Not all black caviar is truly black: Beluga can appear pale, almost silvery; Osetra ranges from gray to olive hues; and only Sevruga tends toward a deeper, darker tone. In essence, "black caviar" is a collective term for roe from sturgeon species.

Its status has not always been so elevated. But after it found its way onto imperial tables, it gradually acquired its reputation as a royal delicacy.

Production methods have also evolved considerably. Since 2007, wild sturgeon fishing in Russia has been strictly limited, and most caviar now comes from aquaculture farms. Some modern techniques even allow roe to be harvested without harming the fish, reflecting a broader shift toward sustainability.

For those who prefer a keepsake over a delicacy, there is a more playful alternative. The Moscow-based brand Pepfer, founded in 2016, is known for turning everyday objects into statement accessories. Among its most recognizable designs is a handbag modeled after a tin of black caviar. Crafted from genuine leather, it features a compact interior and a signature spoon-shaped charm—a subtle nod to tradition.

On that note, tradition suggests serving caviar with a mother-of-pearl spoon, which preserves its delicate flavor by preventing oxidation.

Bon appétit—and happy shopping.

Price: 38,000 ₽
Where to buy: on the brand website







Sergei Lykov, DR team:
a Dining Spot with Ancient Echoes

In this issue we shared an extensive piece about Russia's Golden Ring—the famous tourist route that runs through ancient Russian towns. But our country has another Golden Ring as well, the Golden Ring of the Bosporan Kingdom—a large-scale tour route across sites with ancient history in southern Russia.

One of its stops is the ruins of the Mamai-Kale fortress in Sochi, built in the 1st-2nd centuries AD. Nearby, within the Sochi National Park, there's a restaurant named after it, featuring a wine bar, open terraces and gazebos, tables shaded by banana trees, a swimming pool, and excellent cuisine.

I'll pick it as my recommendation for this issue. And while I'm at it, here are a few local specialties: Black Sea mussels in a sauce made with Crimean rosé; dolma—a traditional dish of many Caucasian peoples—made from young vine leaves with marbled beef, sun-dried tomatoes, Caucasian spices, and herbs; and saffron risotto with scallop, squid, and octopus.

Address:
Mamai-Calé, 284/1 Vinogradnaya St., Sochi

EDITOR'S PICK



Roman Mishchenko, DR team:
Gastronomy + Wellness

Last year Moscow opened the world's first gastro-banya, "Ognivo"—a project that revives authentic Russian bathhouse traditions and pairs them with a vivid cultural and culinary experience. Inspired by the tales of Hans Christian Andersen, the complex offers several shared and private steam rooms with theatrical steaming programs: from shamanic drum rituals to nail-standing ceremonies. The chef-driven menu riffs on Russian classics, while a stage with live music and performances turns a visit into a fully fledged cultural experience.

Address: Kyivskogo Vokzala Square, 1A

Maxim Lupakov, DR team:
a Dive into Russia's Golden History

In 1745, in the Berezovka River valley near Yekaterinburg, a peasant named Erofey Markov found a piece of quartz with traces of gold. He received a reward from the state for his discovery, but nearly ended up in prison when the promised nuggets were not found at the indicated site. Gold was later discovered there after all, and soon these places became one of the world's largest gold-mining centers.

Today, you can trace the remarkable history of Russian gold at the Gold Museum, which features a unique collection of gold-bearing rock specimens, as well as a multimedia mine hall that showcases the real working conditions of miners in the past.





Andrew Maximov, DR team:
Meeting Autumn Halfway

Autumn for me is praying for an Indian summer in September, building my whole personality around layered fits in October, and quietly escaping somewhere warmer in November. So here is my seasonal route: a cool Moscow courtyard while terraces are still open, Kaliningrad when the European mood and the cathedral organ feel just right for a dramatic fit, and Sochi when you want summer to linger a bit longer. That is my way of meeting autumn halfway.

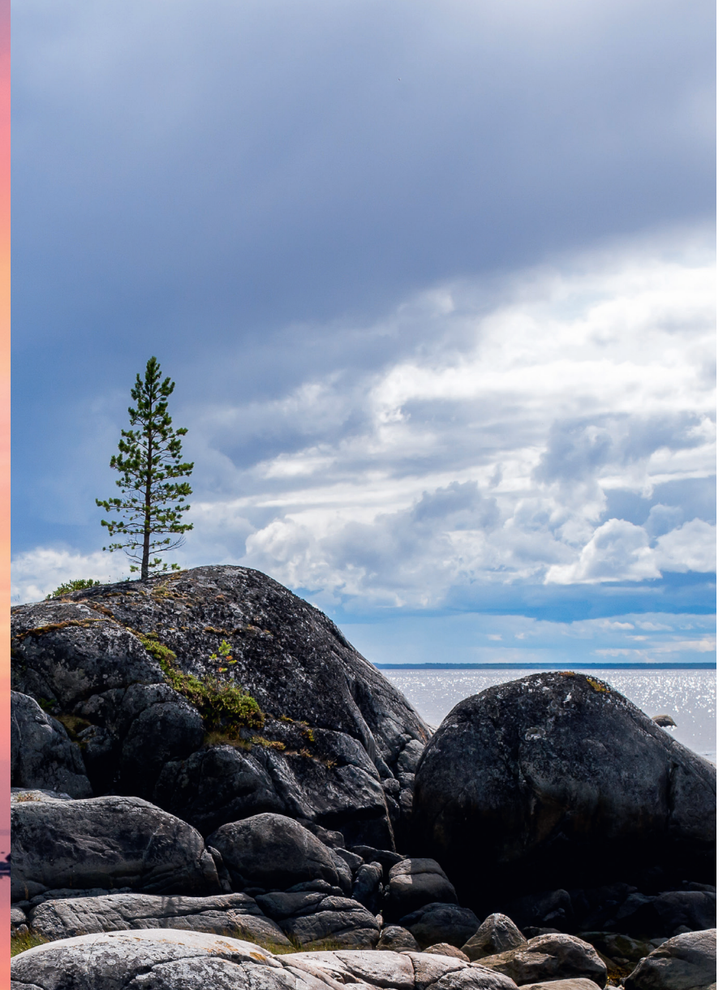
Locations:

The courtyard at Restaurant by Deep Fried Friends, 10/2 Yauzskaya Street, Building 4, Moscow
Organ concert at Königsberg Cathedral, 1 I. Kant Street, Kaliningrad
A walk in Rosa Valley, Rosa Khutor, Sochi

TRAVELER'S DIARY

In this autumn edition of Traveler's Diary, Russian regions that won the All-Russian "More Than a Journey" Award, presented by the Rosmolodezh program of the same name, will tell their stories through captivating natural landscapes, architectural gems, and unique locations that speak for themselves and can make travelers fall in love with each destination. Get ready for a breathtaking visual journey across five unique destinations in Russia.

more than trip
project by rosmolodezh



The Volgograd, Zaporozhye, and Arkhangelsk regions, together with the Stavropol Krai and Krasnoyarsk Krai, were named winners of the All-Russian "More Than a Journey" Award in the "More Than a Region" category. As a special prize, the winning regions received a training course on promoting youth tourism, featuring an educational program developed by the CSR (Center for Strategic Research) team.

During the course, regional teams explored modern ways to engage young international travelers and gained practical insight into the potential of the national tourism brand Discover Russia.

Here are the winning regions' ideas of how the perfect youth journey begins

ARKHANGELSK REGION

A perfect trip begins with...

... dense forests, crystal-clear waters, and mesmerizing northern scenery reminiscent of Scandinavian landscapes.

VOLGOGRAD REGION

A perfect trip begins with...

... the pink waters of Lake Elton, often called Russia's "Dead Sea" because of their high salt content and buoyancy—ideal conditions for floating.

ZAPOROZHYE REGION

A perfect trip begins with...

... wide sandy beaches and the turquoise waters of the Sea of Azov, where you can easily discover all the pleasures of a beach vacation.

KRASNOYARSK KRAI

A perfect trip begins with...

... national parks, nature reserves, and natural monuments, found in record numbers across Krasnoyarsk Krai, which spans six natural zones.

STAVROPOL KRAI

A perfect trip begins with...

... the region's distinctive architecture, which blends several styles—from Neo-Gothic and Art Nouveau to Empire and Classicism.



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