

Discover Russia Team's letter

Following the belief that all good things should be shared, we decided to share our love for our homeland and highlight its diversity for international travelers in the seasonal Discover Russia guide, which will showcase the country's vibrant tourism spirit to readers.

Each season, we will present the country's top destinations worth visiting in spring, summer, autumn, and winter. We will also explore the richness of cultural traditions, share curated selections of trusted hotels and restaurants, offer practical advice, and include expert insights from tourism industry professionals on such topics as business and investments, health and sports, fashion, ecology, gastronomy.

The first issue of the DR Guide is dedicated to spring tourism in Russia.

Russia, the largest country in the world, spans thousands of kilometers, and spring arrives unevenly. While in the southern regions you can surely take off your outerwear and enjoy the warm weather in April, in the mountains, the ski season continues.

Due to the varying climates across the regions, there is no fixed date for the arrival of true spring. The gentle awakening of nature may be interrupted by an unexpected snowfall, and the long-awaited warmth might temporarily yield to a wintry chill. Within these transformations lies the season's charm—the clash between winter and spring, reminiscent of Russian folklore's struggle between light and darkness, life and death. If you take a moment to look closely, you can see this battle unfolding right before your eyes.

Therefore, for such a transitional period, we recommend opting for forms of recreation that don't depend on the weather, yet enable you to fully enjoy the beauty of the Russian spring. From mountain wellness escapes and shopping in historic buildings to vibrant cultural programs in bustling metropolises and enotourism under the southern sun—prepare to embark on an amazing journey through Russia's most captivating destinations and discover its limitless possibilities with the *Discover Russia* guide.

Yours,
Dasha Chernova, DR Team



Discover Russia is a national tourism brand established to promote Russia as a cohesive travel destination in international markets. The initiative's objective is to unite the potential of Russian regions and the tourism sector, as well as to craft an appealing image of Russia as a unique and accessible travel destination through the richness of its cultural, historical, natural, and gastronomic heritage.

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RUSSIAN WELLNESS

Russia boasts a rich wellness history,

ranging from bathing rituals to numerous balneological resorts scattered throughout the country. However, the concept of Russian wellness doesn't end there. Today, wellness culture in Russia continues to evolve, blending age-old traditions with modern approaches and encompassing a wide array of industries, from tourism to gastronomy.

In the first edition of the *Discover Russia* guide, we will embark on a virtual wellness journey through the country. We will explore how one of the main sanatorium and resort regions of the USSR has transformed into a popular health resort with modern, multifunctional hubs, uncovering where to find the most scenic hiking trails in Russia, the culinary secrets behind Russian longevity, and whether there's a connection between the taste of farm-fresh cheese and the happiness and well-being of cows.

Map of the spring issue

In the spring issue of the DR guide, we mention many locations, ranging from Russia's major cities to remote areas. We will mark the points on the map and provide directions on how to reach them.

1 | Moscow

Airports:

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

Vnukovo, 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. Yes, Vnukovo became the first airport in Russia reachable by metro.

Zhukovskiy. Situated 26 km from the MKAD, in the city of Zhukovsky, Moscow Region. It features a single four-story terminal and mostly 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.
Savoyolovsky — Savoyolovsky Railway Station Square, 2.
Paveletsky — Paveletskaya Square, 1A, Building 1.
Kievsky — Kiev Railway Station Square, 1.
Vostochny — Shchyolkovskoye Highway, 1, Building 5.

2 | Sochi

Airports:

Sochi International Airport named after V. I. Sevastyanov — Mira Street, 50, Sochi, Adler District. The airport serves flights to the following destinations: the CIS countries, Turkey, the UAE, Middle Eastern and Asian countries, as well as some 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.

Aeroexpress is a comfortable high-speed transport service connecting central Moscow to the main airports (Sheremetyevo and Domodedovo). It bypasses traffic jams and departs every 30 minutes. Trains depart from Belorussky and Paveletsky stations and include intermediate stops integrated with the metro and the Moscow Central Diameters (MCD).

3 | Nizhny Novgorod

Airports:

International Airport of Nizhny Novgorod named after V. P. Chkalov — Airport settlement, 2.
The International Airport of Nizhny Novgorod operates direct flights from several foreign countries, including Belarus, Turkey, Armenia, Uzbekistan, Egypt, the UAE, and Vietnam. The list of available destinations may vary depending on the season.

Railway Stations:

Nizhny Novgorod-Moskovsky Railway Station — Kanavinsky District, Revolution Square, 2A.
Suburban Railway Station — Moskovskoe Shosse, 2G.

A direct flight from Moscow to Nizhny Novgorod takes approximately one hour. The journey by comfortable a high-speed train Lastochka or Burevestnik takes just under 4 hours, while the trip by RZD's premium trains it takes around 6 hours.

4 | Kazan

Airports:

International Airport of Kazan named after Gabdulla Tukay — Airport Street, 1. Kazan Airport serves direct flights from Turkey, the UAE, China, Georgia, and the CIS countries including Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan. The list of available destinations may vary depending on the season.

Railway Stations: **Kazan-1** — Railway Station Square, 1A.
Kazan-2 — Vorovsky Street, 33.

A direct flight from Moscow to Kazan takes on average 1.5 hours. The minimum travel time by train is 11 hours.

5 | Saint Petersburg

Airports:

International Airport Pulkovo — Pulkovo Highway, building 41, block 3A. Pulkovo Airport in Saint Petersburg receives flights from more than 20 countries, offering direct flights primarily to destinations in the CIS, Asia, the Middle East, and resort countries (Egypt, Cuba, 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 high-speed Sapsan train takes 4 hours, by double-decker Aurora train—5.5-6 hours, and by RZD premium trains—over 8 hours.

6 | Arkhyz

Airports:

There is no airport in Arkhyz. The nearest airport to the resort is located in Mineralnye Vody (220 km). A direct flight from Moscow takes approximately 3 hours, and the journey from the airport to Arkhyz takes 3–3.5 hours.

Mineralnye Vody Airport services direct flights to the CIS countries, the Middle East, and popular tourist destinations. Key countries served by the airport include Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Egypt, Israel, Kazakhstan, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkey, and Uzbekistan.

Railway Stations:

The nearest railway station to Arkhyz is located **in Cherkessk**, approximately 120 km from the resort. Station address: Privokzalnaya Street, 1. Travel time from Moscow is approximately 22 hours. You can also reach Arkhyz through the railway stations of the towns comprising the Caucasian Mineral Waters resort group: Pyatigorsk, Yessentuki, Kislovodsk.

7 | Lefkadia Valley

Airports:

Lefkadia Valley is located in the village of Moldavanskoye in the Crimea District. The nearest operating airport is located **in Krasnodar** (approximately 110 km). There are regular flights from Moscow to Krasnodar (a direct flight takes approximately 3.5 hours), and you can get to the valley by the high-speed train Lastochka or by taxi. Travel time is 1.5 to 2 hours.

Krasnodar Airport, which resumed operations in September 2025, handles international flights from Turkey, the UAE, Armenia, Egypt, Uzbekistan, Georgia, and Israel.

Railway Stations:

There is no direct train route from Moscow to Lefkadia Valley. However, you can get to **the nearest city, Krymsk**: the are trains operating on the route Moscow (Kazan Railway Station) — Krymsk. Travel time is approximately 24 hours.

Lefkadia Valley has a representative office in Moscow. Address: 2nd Spasonalivkovsky Lane, 2/44. The brand store in Moscow can be reached by taxi.

Many tourists prefer the rail route.

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

For all the airports located outside Moscow, we recommend using a taxi or transfer service.

8 | Samara

Airports:

Kurumoch International Airport named after S.P. Korolev — Samara urban district, bld. 26. The Kurumoch Airport operates direct flights predominantly from neighboring countries and popular resort destinations. Key countries include Egypt, the UAE, Turkey, Kyrgyzstan, as well as Armenia. The list of available destinations may vary depending on the season.

Railway Stations:

Samara — Railway District, Komsomolskaya Square, 1.

A direct flight from Moscow to Samara takes approximately one hour, while train travel takes from 15 hours.

9 | Khabarovsk

Airports:

International Airport Khabarovsk (New) named after G. I. Nevelsky — Matveevskoye Highway, 26a. Khabarovsk International Airport handles direct international flights from China, Thailand, Vietnam, the Philippines, Uzbekistan, and South Korea.

Railway Stations: **Khabarovsk-1** — Leningradskaya Street, 58.
Khabarovsk-2 — Baltic Street, 4.

A direct flight from Moscow to Khabarovsk takes approximately 8 hours. It takes 6-8 days to reach the city by train.

10 | Altai

Airports:

Gorno-Altaysk International Airport — Altai Republic, Mayma village, Airport area. A direct flight from Moscow takes approximately 4 hours.

The Gorno-Altaysk Airport specializes in servicing domestic flights within Russia, including flights from Moscow, St. Petersburg, Kazan, and other major Russian cities.

Railway Stations:

There is no direct railway connection from Moscow to Gorno-Altaysk. The closest railway station is located **in Barnaul**—a major transportation hub and the capital of Altai Krai. You can get to Barnaul from Moscow by train, and then take a bus or a taxi or rent a car to cover the remaining 250 km to Gorno-Altaysk. There are daily trains from Moscow to Barnaul, and the journey takes about 2–3 days, depending on the train you choose and its itinerary.

11 | Kamchatka

Airports:

Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky Elizovo International Airport named after Vitus Bering — Elizovo, Zvezdnaya Street, 14. A direct flight from Moscow takes about 8 hours. The Elizovo Airport mainly handles domestic flights from different cities of Russia, including Moscow, Vladivostok, Khabarovsk and others.

It is impossible to reach Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky by train or private car from the mainland, as there are no roads or railways leading to the peninsula. When it comes to transport on the peninsula, most travelers prefer to hire specially equipped off-road vehicles or use the services of local jeep drivers, as trips to natural attractions often require vehicles with high cross-country capability.

DR / CULTURE & LEISURE

HIDDEN RIVER:

An Immersive Audio Journey Beneath the City

Cities can be explored in different ways: by following well-known tourist routes or by uncovering secret locations hidden from prying eyes. We suggest trying the second approach and experiencing Moscow through its stories, addresses, and cultural codes that cannot be found in traditional guidebooks.

Neglinnaya Street, Kuznetsky Most, Trubnaya Square—while strolling through central Moscow, it is hard to imagine that just two hundred years ago a river flowed here instead of the roads. Not all Muscovites—and even less so visitors to the Russian capital—are aware that one of Moscow's most

famous rivers, the Neglinka, was enclosed in an underground collector in 1819. Above it, urban life—architectural, cultural, and commercial—has always thrived and continues to do so.

Carefully preserving the memory of the city's past, Ararat Park Hyatt Moscow and the Neglinnaya Shopping Mall have developed a unique project—the signature audio tour Hidden River, which connects historical legacy with modern Moscow through the image of the Neglinka River. It traverses all the iconic spots of the district, highlighting locations that may go unnoticed even by the most seasoned traveler.

The audio tour, created with the support of the creative bureau Glazami Inzhenera, begins in the lobby of the Ararat Park Hyatt Moscow and connects the following locations on the map: Bolshoi Theatre, Teatralnaya Square, Maly Theatre, TSUM, Kuznetsky Most, the State Bank (Gosbank) building, Sandunovskiy Baths, and the Gilyarovskiy Trail—a section of the brick collector named in honor of one of Moscow's most renowned chroniclers, Vladimir Gilyarovskiy.

The final destination is Trubnaya Square and the Neglinnaya Shopping Mall. The district, where market stalls once lined the streets, has historically served as a meeting place for Muscovites of diverse backgrounds. And the Neglinnaya Shopping Mall, with its blue marquees reminiscent of the underground river, has become a local cultural and gastronomic hub. To conclude this article, we arrive at its central intrigue: So why was the famous Moscow river enclosed in an underground collector? The answer is revealed in the Hidden River guide.

Neglinnaya Shopping Centre



How to access the guide:

Scan the QR code provided on this page to explore the route in real time, or book a room at Ararat Park Hyatt Moscow, where each guest receives a themed postcard featuring a QR code linking to the project's page. In the latter case, the guide can be listened to directly from the hotel's rooms, many of which offer views of key landmarks along the route.



Available in Russian and English



Bolshoy Moskvoretsky Bridge

BIG CITY LIGHTS:

How Energy Shaped the Image of Moscow

Discover a new tourist route offering a vibrant perspective of the capital.

Imagine: you are in the very heart of Moscow, at the Gostiny Dvor, in the evening. The streets are illuminated by the glow of streetlights and the buildings are adorned with dazzling lighting, beckoning tourists for a lively stroll through the city.

Moscow is one of the most illuminated cities in the world, and its architectural lighting is a landmark in itself. Launched by the national tourism initiative *Discover Russia* in collaboration with the United Energy Company, the route "Energy Island" invites tourists to explore the city bathed in light.

The route winds through the historic center and illustrates how energy has shaped the landscape of Moscow: how urban lighting was developed, electrical substations designed, and industrial buildings turned into industrial sights. Wandering through the city streets, tourists learn about the development of the energy sector.

"Energy Island" combines nine key locations, including the Moscow Kremlin, where festive electric illumination was first set, the Bolshoy Moskvoretsky Bridge with its unique light design, Smidovich State Electric Power Plant No. 1 on Raushskaya Embank-

ment and the Baroque-style St. Nicholas Church illuminated by 130 spotlights and light fixtures.

Moreover, along the route you can see other iconic landmarks of central Moscow that have become symbols of the city, including Zaryadye Park, Red Square and the skyscraper on Kotelnicheskaya Embankment.

Regular guided tours along the route commenced at the end of 2025. All materials are available in foreign languages, making the route an attractive leisure option for tourists visiting Moscow.

Red Square





DR / SPORT & WELLNESS

HEALING INTERSEASON:

Why Visit Sochi This Spring

Sochi is mostly considered a seasonal resort. During winter, tourists flock to the mountains to experience winter sports, while in summer they head to the coast to enjoy beach getaway and sightseeing. However, the “Pearl of the Black Sea,” as the city is unofficially called in Russia, is also appealing during the off-season.



Sochi
Arboretum

THE MOUNTAINS ARE CALLING

Spring at Rosa Khutor

is especially valued by tourists. The mountains offer ideal skiing conditions, queues get shorter, and lower-altitude areas begin to bloom and prepare for the warm season. Moreover, the resort is renowned for its numerous SPA centers and balneology hotel featuring a thermal complex, water stations, and a preventive medicine clinic.

Let us tell you about the activities available at the resort in March, April, and May.

The year-round ski resort Rosa Khutor is located 50 km from Sochi Airport. It is conveniently accessible both by car and taxi—the journey taking no more than one hour. You can also get there by the modern high-speed electric train Lastochka—with a travel time of approximately 50 minutes from Sochi Airport to the Rosa Khutor station.

The ski season at the resort opens in December and may extend until early May, although it is advisable to regard April as the final month for skiing.

March – early April

March at the Rosa Khutor resort is considered one of the best months for skiing activities. The mountain snow softens to an ideal consistency, providing exceptional grip and control. As the daylight hours lengthen, there is more time for skiing and après-ski. Another significant advantage of this period is the reduced tourist flow. Crowds peak during the New Year holidays and the end of winter, and from early March, the congestion on slopes and gondola lifts diminishes.

In addition to ski tourism, the resort offers a wide range of other recreation opportunities: dog sledding, the mountain attraction “Rodelbahn”, an indoor ice rink, and the “Pacha Mama” animal park with alpacas, sheep, goats, rams, and rabbits. Additionally, in early April, sakura and magnolias bloom at Rosa Khutor—a mesmerizing spectacle that lasts for a short period, approximately two weeks.



Spring Weather at the Rosa Khutor Resort

MARCH:

The average daytime temperature ranges from 3 to 7 degrees Celsius, and the days grow longer. In the mountains, snow still blankets the slopes, which, as skiers note, is even more suitable for skiing than winter snow, with temperatures holding around 0 degrees.

APRIL:

City temperatures fluctuate between 7 and 15 degrees Celsius, while in the mountains the ski season continues, albeit within a reduced skiing area.

MAY:

The official month marking the beginning of the warm season, when the resort's temperature reaches 20 degrees Celsius. During this period, the majority of summer season attractions become available.



Pacha Mama

Late April – early May

During this period, the mountain snow melts rapidly. Sometimes the ski season extends into early May, although it most often ends in April, unveiling new recreational opportunities for travelers. Thus, the lower slopes become accessible for hiking, and bicycle rentals open up in Rosa Dolina. This is also an ideal time to explore local hospitality and gastronomy: hotels offer attractive seasonal packages, and restaurants begin opening their summer terraces.

Sochi is one of the most renowned balneological destinations in Russia, and its mountainous region lives up to this reputation. At the Life Balance Hotel Rosa Springs, a balneological resort located in the Mountain Olympic Village, the Rosa Springs Preventive Medicine Clinic has been opened. It features a natural mineral water fountain with locally sourced water and offers wellness programs ranging from 3 to 21 days.

Rosa Dolina is the urban heart of the resort, overlooking the banks of the Mzymta River. You can book a room at Radisson Rosa Khutor, Park Inn by Radisson Rosa Khutor, Erbelia by Vasta, Valset Center & Valset Sport, Freestyle Hotel.

Mountains offer the direct access to ski slopes and a focus on wellness: Life Balance Hotel Rosa Springs, Ski Inn Rosa Khutor SPA Hotel, Endemic Glamping.

Red Fox: fine dining featuring a signature menu based on local ingredients

Dich: restaurant offering alpine cuisine with meat and fish delicacies

Vysota 2320: Black Sea and European cuisine with views of the Main Caucasian Range

Sakhalin: the first Russian fish and seafood restaurant at Rosa Khutor

Velvet: alpine chalet-style restaurant perfect for dining and unwinding after skiing

Tehnikum: modern gastro bistro from the renowned White Rabbit Family restaurant alliance

Pastoria 1600: Italian classics located at the upper section of the Strela gondola lift

Varezhka: family-friendly restaurant offering panoramic views of the Russian Alps



Rosa Springs

Where to stay



Where to eat



Sakhalin



Resort guests can find a suitable wellness program. For example, the restorative “Antistress” program, which is ideal for those suffering from chronic fatigue, burnout, stress, and sleep disturbances. You may also consider programs such as “Healthy Sleep,” “Strong Immunity,” “Detox and Biohacking,” and many others. Each treatment package is curated by the attending physician based on a comprehensive diagnosis, ensuring an individualized approach for every guest.

Additionally, the clinic offers functional diagnostics and aesthetic medicine services.



No. 1

End of May

End of May is perfect for visiting the ethno-park “Moya Rossiya,” a cultural space showcasing 11 architectural models representing different regions of Russia. Here, you can explore the traditions and culture of various regions, participate in master classes and interactive performances (have you ever tried firing a real cannon?), and taste national cuisine.

After cultural activities, you can relax by visiting the Sunshine Park thermal and entertainment complex featuring an outdoor year-round, a sauna with panoramic mountain views, and a gastro-bar, located in the Mountain Olympic Village.

Also, this is when resort hiking trails are being prepared for opening of hiking trails within the resort. Many tourists specifically arrive at Rosa Khutor in the last days of May to savor the tranquility of the fading spring and witness the start of the summer season.

Entertainment for the youngest guests

Year-round, Rosa Khutor offers entertainment options not only for adults but also for children. At the children's centers Childhood Time, Lafakids, and Riders, visitors can enjoy playrooms and outdoor playgrounds. The resort also features a shooting range and a kart track for friendly competitions.



Save the date



March 8: International Women's Day

March 23 – 29: Sports and Music Festival New Star Camp

May 1: Official start of the warm season and the opening of most summer entertainment options

May 9: Victory Day



A BRIEF GUIDE TO THE SOCHI COAST:

What to Do and Where to Stay

Sochi
Olympic Park

In spring, Russia's southern capital delights with a moderate number of tourists and a comfortable temperature—not too hot, but still much warmer than in most Russian cities. And in just an hour and a half by car, you can reach the mountains where snow still lies and the ski season continues until mid-April. Here's a quick guide to the must-see destinations on the Black Sea coast.

Sochi is the longest city in Europe, stretching along the Black Sea coast for 145 kilometres, which makes it challenging to explore every corner within a single trip.

One of the most well-known locations is Sirius, famous for its legacy from the 2014 Winter Olympics. The Olympic Park is located here, featuring numerous Olympic venues, including Fisht Stadium, where the grand opening and closing ceremonies of the XXII Winter Olympic Games took place. It is open daily to tourists. You can also explore several museums of the park, like Auto Museum with a unique collection of racing and retro cars or inter-

active Nikola Tesla Electric Museum, and then take a racing masterclass on the Sirius Autodrome, a race-track that hosted the Russian Grand Prix as part of F1. And after all these daytime activities, don't miss a chance to enjoy the dancing fountain show and catch the sunset on the Imeretinskaya seafront.

MARCH:	APRIL:
Changeable weather. The average air temperature ranges from 10 to 13°C, but feels much warmer on sunny days. Perfect month to combine coastal and mountain vacation.	Period of active warming. The daytime temperature is reaching up to 17°C.
	MAY:
Sochi spring weather	Stable warmth. Daytime temperature is increasing up to 24°C. The most audacious ones open the swimming season at the end of the month.

Another interesting location is Sochi Park. Its concept is based on the cultural and historical richness of Russia. Spanning 25 hectares, the park provides guests with a vast array of attractions and entertainment options, including the fastest and longest roller coaster in Russia with a height of 38 metres and a speed of up to 100 km/h, named after Zmey Gorynych, a famous multi-headed fire-breathing dragon from Russian folklore. An admission ticket grants unlimited access to all rides and shows throughout the day and costs \$32.

It will take time to explore all the sights, so you can stay here for a couple of days and choose one of the local hotels. Sochi Park Hotel, located right next door to the amusement park, is a family resort offering entertainment for children of all ages, as well as a wide range of health and wellness treatments. For a complete immersion into a world of relaxation that you will not want to leave for days, try Mantera Supreme. Its designer rooms, fine-dining restaurants, two-level spa and evening time entertainment make it the ultimate getaway. And if you are on a business trip and seek for a hub of business and leisure, choose Mantera Resort & Congress, a modern hotel, where you should not deny yourself little pleasures. It has a great spa and couple of restaurants, including Château de Talu pool bar, inspired by one of the most famous wineries in Krasnodar region.

Fun fact:



You can find here a tower with a five-metre clock, which is surrounded by an architectural mystery. Zodiac signs are placed next to the numbers in random order, but upon closer inspection, instead of Taurus, Virgo and Scorpio, you notice that the dial depicts constellations: the Hunting Dogs, the Swan and the Serpent. Even the locals are unsure what meaning the architect put into this playful solution.



Central Sochi is about an hour's drive from Sirius. The most famous landmarks of the resort, including the Sochi Arboretum and the Marine Station, are located here. You can get around on foot or by taxi. To call a taxi, use the Yandex.Go app.

We suggest starting at the Sochi Arboretum, a beloved spot for both locals and visitors. An area of 46 hectares combines rich flora and fauna: Walking through trees and shrubs from various corners of the globe, rose gardens and bamboo alleys, you can meet squirrels, raccoons, swans, pelicans, ostriches, and peacocks. If you're lucky enough, you might witness the mesmerising sight of a peacock fanning its spectacular tail. Last year the park's cable car was reopened, and on the top of the route you will find the main observation deck offering stunning view on the sea, the city and the park itself. And how could we not mention the seasonal magic of nature: In spring, millions of cherry blossom flowers bloom in the park, painting the landscape in pink.

After your stroll through the park, continue along the coastline and make a few cultural stops: at the Winter Theater and the nearby Sochi Art Museum. The Winter Theatre, which features concerts of organ music, performances by symphonic orchestras and contemporary artists, is also notable for its neoclassical architecture. The Sochi Art Museum invites you to explore the works of famous Russian artists: Aivazovsky, Shishkin, Serov, Kustodiev, as well as multimedia exhibitions, hosted regularly.

The next stop is the Sochi Marine Station. Here you can embark on a boat tour, wander through the picturesque area and sample local cuisine at one of the many restaurants overlooking the marina. By the way, this is one of the best spots to catch stunning spring sunsets—be prepared to capture some amazing photos.

On your way to the final destination of our route—the Sochi railway terminal—take a stroll down the pedestrian Navaginskaya Street. The stone pathway, lined with palms and cypress trees, will lead you directly to the railway station, which is considered one of the most beautiful in Russia.

Sochi
railway station

DR / BUSINESS & MONEY

CREATING AN ATTRACTIVE URBAN ENVIRONMENT:



The Experience of Discover Russia and Leber Group

The case of the partnership between Russia's national tourism initiative and the leading manufacturer of playground equipment shows that it's possible to create an appealing urban environment with a national character.

Not only guidebooks and brochures can highlight the natural and cultural diversity of the country, inform tourists about the climatic features and seasons of the region and showcase rare species of animals. The national tourism initiative *Discover Russia* and the leading manufacturer of playground equipment in Russia, Leber Group, have joined forces to present their vision of an attractive urban environment, which can not only transform the city's appearance but also open up new opportunities for the national tourism industry.

The brands suggest using nature wonders of Russia, images of endangered animals inhabiting the

country's territory, as well as cultural codes and symbols for the design of recreational areas, playgrounds, park spaces and other public locations. This idea will help foreign tourists to learn more about Russia simply by walking through the city streets—whether it's a quiet Moscow courtyard, the inner area of a modern residential complex or a vibrant cultural space. However, the concept is not limited to the country's borders; playgrounds and other infrastructure made from natural materials, created by Leber Group in the UAE, Qatar, Jordan and other countries, allow foreigners to feel the Russian soul even from afar.

We spoke with Leber Group about creating an appealing urban environment with a national character.

We see the partnership with Discover Russia as an opportunity to create urban spaces that are stylish, ecological and truly child-friendly, where play supports development and brings different generations together. As part of the collaboration, we will further develop our scientific playgrounds: interactive modules will let children explore physics and chemistry right outdoors. Such spaces spark curiosity, promote independent thinking and reflect values that shape a national identity: knowledge, care for nature and investment in future generations. Visitors notice this immediately: the city feels modern and open to discovery. For businesses, this partnership helps create public spaces that are not only attractive but meaningful, giving the district a clear and memorable identity.

Igor Shapovalov,
Chief Marketing Officer,
Leber Group



DR REVIEW:

The List of Major Travel Industry Events in Russia

Leading economic forums, tourism exhibitions, and congresses—here is a list of key tourism events scheduled to take place in Russia during the first half of 2026.

International Tourism and Hospitality Trade Show (MITT)

MITT is not only Russia's largest International Tourism and Hospitality trade show, which fosters the development of the Russian regional tourism market and strengthens international cooperation, but also serves as an industry ecosystem for ongoing communication among sector representatives.

Every year, MITT gathers the largest B2B community of tourism business and hospitality industry experts from regions of Russia and various countries. The trade show's ecosystem provides the opportunity to establish live business contacts, acquire up-to-date industry insights from the speakers of the business program, and forge new connections within the MITT Connect online community.

The business program of MITT 2026 is designed to run for three days and includes more than 20 thematic events: conferences, sessions, presentations, discussions, and workshops. Leading industry experts will share with participants their analysis of key market trends and prospects for the development of tourism and hospitality.



When:
March 11-13

Where:
Moscow

International Fair and Forum of Regional Hospitality

INTOURMARKET is the only fair that features absolutely all regions of Russia. Its mission is to promote domestic tourism, develop new travel products, and establish business contacts. Among the participants are regions of Russia, tour operators, hoteliers, transportation companies, educational institutions, media, and representatives of friendly countries.

In 2026, INTOURMARKET will host over 170 events, including plenary sessions, roundtables, conferences, lectures, and masterclasses, which will provide access to professional expertise and skills, as well as up-to-date information on all tourism sectors.

The fair serves as the primary platform for business communication among the leaders of Russia's tourism market—it is tailored for tourism professionals and is supported by the Government of the Russian Federation and the Federal Tourism Agency.



When:
April 2-4

Where:
Nizhny Novgorod

The International Economic Forum «Russia – Islamic World: KAZANFORUM»



Russia – Islamic World: KAZANFORUM is a major annual international economic forum held in Kazan. Since 2009, it has united Russia and the member countries of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to strengthen trade and economic, scientific and technological, social, and cultural ties. The forum serves as a platform for establishing business contacts, exchanging experiences, signing agreements, and also

offers participants a business program along with cultural events.

The annual international economic forum of Russia and the OIC member countries is held with the support of the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Republic of Tatarstan.



When:
May 14-15

Where:
Kazan

St. Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF)



St. Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF) is one of the most large-scale and reputable global business events, held since 1997. Since 2006, the forum has been under the patronage of the President of Russia.

SPIEF serves as a unique platform for dialogue, for establishing business contacts, finding partners, attracting the attention of potential investors and leading media, as well as for direct engagement with the key figures in government and business. At the forum, global economy and Russian economic challenges are discussed in a practical context, large-scale projects are launched, and new approaches to adapting to the global economy are developed.

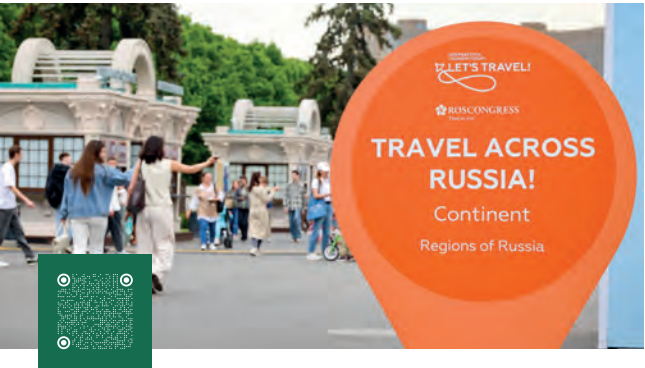
Saudi Arabia will be the guest country at the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum in 2026. That same year, Russia and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations.



When:
June 3-6

Where:
St. Petersburg

International Tourism Forum "Let's Travel!"



International Tourism Forum "Let's Travel!" is a key event in Russia's tourism industry on a global scale and the primary platform uniting industry professionals and a wide audience of travelers. The format enables the presentation of tourism potential in Russia and international destinations, as well as demonstrating the diversity of tourism types.

The business program of the Let's Travel Forum comprises a series of panel discussions, strategic sessions, meetings, and master classes dedicated to all aspects of developing the tourism industry in Russia. The primary focus is on domestic and inbound tourism, with an emphasis on strategic development, investment, infrastructure, human resources, and digitalization.

Last year, Oman, Venezuela, Malaysia, Cuba, and Abkhazia also showcased their tourism capabilities at the International Tourism Forum "Let's Travel!" As of January 2026, participation in the forum has been confirmed by several foreign states: Venezuela, Abkhazia, and Uzbekistan. Another 23 countries, including China and India, are considering joining.



When:
June 10-14

Where:
Moscow

METROPOL HOTEL:

A Classic of Russian Hospitality with a Forward-Looking Vision

In the year of its 120th anniversary, the legendary Metropol Hotel, a monument of modern architecture and a cultural heritage site, underwent a major renovation and unveiled a collection of Signature Rooms. Read our article to find out how the hotel managed to strike a balance between historical heritage and moving forward.



The Metropol was conceived by Savva Mamontov, one of the most renowned Russian entrepreneurs and philanthropists, as a palace of arts featuring an opera hall, art galleries, a hotel, and a restaurant. In 1905, his project came to life: The hotel opened its doors on Teatralnaya Square, with iconic architects, artists, and engineers of that era, such as William Walcott, Mikhail Vrubel, and Sergey Chekhonin, contributing to its creation.

Majolica panels, including the famous "Princess Greza," sculptural friezes, and curved balcony grilles—the building, endowed with all the conveniences of modern civilization, was so striking and innovative that it attracted city dwellers like a magnet.

The Metropol captivated guests not only from the outside but also from within: Visitors were enchanted by the stucco ceiling moldings of the grand lobby, as well as by the impressive glass dome featuring Sergey Chekhonin's "The Creation of the World," which comprises three levels that combine utilitarian and aesthetic functions, and 2,500 glass panes.



In the subsequent years, the Metropol underwent numerous changes: both functional and architectural. And for its 120th anniversary, it entered a new phase of rebirth by launching the Signature Rooms, whose visual narratives will tell guests about the continuity and respect for the hotel's historical heritage.



To execute this meticulous project, the design bureau Denniston was engaged, whose primary specialization is hotel architecture and design. Working on the creation of the new rooms, Jean-Michel Gathy, the founder and chief architect of the bureau, frequently traveled to Moscow on business visits as part of a design delegation, meticulously studying not only the architecture of the Metropol but also its rich visual and historical codes.

The updated rooms reflect the hotel's commitment to visionary technological advances while preserving its historic spirit. For example, the first aspect is reflected through functional zoning, modern technical equipment in the rooms, and Smart Home management systems. The character is revealed in the details: The cupboard handles are adorned with symbols representing the initial letter of the grand hotel's name, and a glance at the high ceilings of the renovated rooms reveals the preserved technique of tented roofing. The ceiling space is not simply rectangular in shape; at its base, vaults are formed that support the roof—a brilliant homage to the historic restaurant dome. Decorative design details complete the picture, creating the aesthetic of Modern style.





DR / ENVIRONMENT
& SUSTAINABILITY

EXPLORE ECO-TRAILS AND TRY PARAGLIDING:

Reasons to Visit
the All-Season Mountain
Resort Arkhyz

Spring in Arkhyz offers a spectacular setting for leisure and adventure alike. This year-round resort is a great and comfortable getaway and stands out for its modern infrastructure, active development, focus on the comfort and safety of tourists and mild climate, perfect for skiing, as the valley is sheltered by mountain ranges on all sides. If you're not quite ready to tackle the mountains on skis or a snowboard, you can still enjoy your time here, exploring eco-trails or trying aerial entertainment like hot air balloon ride.

Moreover, the resort is a true paradise for novice skiers and families with children: unlike the harsher conditions of Dombay or the extreme challenges of Elbrus, Arkhyz offers gentler slopes as well as comfortable facilities for learning and relaxation. The skiing season in Arkhyz lasts from December to April, peaking from late December to mid-March.

Let's explore all the opportunities of the resort with a closer look.



Arkhyz
spring
weather

MARCH:	APRIL:	MAY:
A transitional month. There is still snow in the mountains, with nighttime temperature remaining below zero and daytime temperature reaching up to 2°C.	Active warming. Daytime temperature rises to 13°C, and the snow begins to melt rapidly. The ski season usually ends in mid-April.	Stable warmth. Daytime temperatures warm up from 15 to 20°C, bringing nature to life with an abundance of greenery.

Above the Clouds: a Cable Car Adventure

Spring is the ideal season for reaching new heights and watching clouds take shape virtually at arm's length. The Orbita cable car, operating all year round, carries guests to an altitude of over three thousand metres, where a scenic observation deck opens onto breathtaking views of the Main Caucasus Range. The ascent itself is an unforgettable journey: Thanks to the crystal-clear air, visibility extends for dozens of kilometres. On a clear day, even Mount Elbrus, Europe's highest peak, appears on the horizon.

Availability:
all year round.

Feel Adrenaline Amid Awakening Nature

As the snow starts to melt in April, it reveals Arkhyz resort's vast network of eco-trails, with a total length of forty-five kilometres. Spring offers particularly diverse routes: from high-mountain lakes still shimmering under thin layers of ice to gentle paths leading to waterfalls at their most powerful this time of year. The trails are perfect for full-day walks. The weather is mild and pleasant, never too hot—perfect for both families with children and older travelers. Ambitious hikers can even set a personal record by walking the greatest number of steps along routes with names as picturesque as their surroundings: The Path of Times, The Romantics' Trail or The Alans' Path.

Starting from May, botanists and nature lovers have a rare chance to observe the Caucasus's endemic plants as they begin to bloom. And those who stay overnight at the high-altitude campsite will find themselves in tranquillity of the mountain landscape.

Availability:
from April to October.



Conquer the Elements: In the Air and On the Ground

By spring, the weather becomes steady enough for flight, making the dream of soaring through the skies in a paraglider or hot-air balloon entirely within reach. Warm updrafts carry you over valleys with the season's first greenery. A hot-air balloon ride at dawn is just as unforgettable: As the sun's first rays touch the mountain peaks, they glow in shades of pink and gold.

Availability:
all year round. Please note that
for safety reasons, flights are only possible
in favorable weather conditions.

Horseback Adventures for Beginners and Skilled Riders

The Karachay horse is among the most ancient and striking breeds of the North Caucasus. There's no better way to experience the awakening of spring in April than on a tranquil ride along scenic routes that wind through flowering meadows and beside murmuring mountain streams. Professional instructors carefully select safe trails where riders can enjoy the serenity, fresh air and closeness of the mountains. Beginners can take easy, guided rides, while experienced equestrians can venture on multiday journeys with overnight stays in cozy mountain huts.

Availability:
from April to October.

Journey Through Time and Space

Just a half-hour drive from the Arkhyz Resort lies the ancient settlement of Nizhne Arkhyz, dating back to the 10th–12th centuries. It is a long-abandoned witness to history, where stone temples stand out beautifully against the fresh spring greenery. Nearby is the Special Astrophysical Observatory of the Russian Academy of Sciences, offering a completely different perspective. Clear spring nights here provide optimal conditions for stargazing. The highlight of the visit is the Large Altazimuth Telescope (BTA), which is the largest optical telescope in Eurasia, with a primary mirror six metres in diameter.

Availability:
all year round.

Mountain Comfort: Unwinding After a Day of Adventures

With its modern infrastructure, Arkhyz ensures that a spring getaway is comfortable and enjoyable for all kinds of travelers. Local hotels introduce special seasonal programs, from spa treatments featuring mountain herbs to gourmet dinners with tastings of regional delicacies. As the weather warms (usually in April–May), many restaurants open up their heated terraces, letting guests savor the fresh mountain air and stunning views well into the evening. One unique spring pleasure in Arkhyz is staying at hotels located at different altitudes, greeting each morning in a new landscape and atmosphere.

In the winter of 2025, two new accommodation facilities opened in Arkhyz, offering a total of 296 beds. Among them is the Lazurit Hotel, a new five-star property for 107 guests, featuring a spa. The hotel's outdoor area will also host a series of cultural events throughout the season.

DR / FOOD & BEVERAGE

SECRETS OF RUSSIAN LONGEVITY:

the Power of Fermented Foods

Fermented foods have been a significant part of Russian cuisine for centuries: this method of food preparation preserved its freshness, flavor, and nutritional benefits during the long winter months. Moreover, the fermentation process endows food with new nutritional and functional properties—from anti-inflammatory to antioxidant ones.

Together with Anastasia Efimova, a dietitian at Atlas Clinic and a specialist in preventive medicine, we explore the fermented secret of Russian longevity.



From sauerkraut to kvass: fermentation in the history of Russian gastronomy

The taste of fermentation literally permeates the culinary pages of Russian history—the earliest mentions of pickled and soured products date back to X-XII centuries. Vegetable and fruit preserves provided a balanced diet during the cold season. They were consumed as appetizers, as well as used in the preparation of soups, salads, and hot dishes. Additionally, the foundation of the fermented menu comprised a variety of beverages: ranging from kvass and kissel to braga—a mildly alcoholic fermented product.

Today, this method of food preparation has not only retained its popularity but has also gained a new dimension. Almost no festive table in Russia is complete without sauerkraut—the queen of Russian fermentation, and leading chefs are reinterpreting ancient culinary traditions using modern techniques and approaches. On the menus of restaurants specializing in Russian cuisine, one can find such fermented wild plants as birch leaves and spruce shoots, while bar menus offer signature cocktails based on tea fungus, known in the West as kombucha.

Fermented products have always occupied an important place in the traditional Russian diet.

In the context of a harsh climate and pronounced seasonal variations, pickling vegetables and making fermented milk products were survival strategies. Despite the centuries-long presence of fermented products in the human diet, only in recent years has science begun systematically studying the mechanisms of their effects on the body.

notes by
Anastasia Efimova

What is fermentation and what are its benefits?

Let's turn to science. Fermentation is a natural metabolic process during which sugars and other carbohydrates present in foods are transformed by microorganisms. As a result, the flavor and texture of the product change, along with its biochemical profile.

Regular consumption of fermented products supports intestinal function, regulates inflammatory processes in the body, reduces the risks of developing oncological diseases, Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases, and also positively influences the emotional state. So, a slice of sourdough bread is not a guilty pleasure, but a healthy snack that boosts mood and promotes well-being and longevity.



The benefits of fermented products are due to the presence of live microorganisms, vitamins, antioxidants, and bioflavonoids," explains Anastasia Efimova. "As an example, Let's take two fermented favorites of Russian gastronomic culture: sauerkraut and kefir. Cabbage contains lactobacilli, lactic acid, dietary fiber, minerals, and vitamin C. Its regular consumption improves intestinal motility, facilitates nutrient absorption, and maintains immune balance. Kefir holds a special place among fermented dairy products thanks to its unique symbiosis of bacteria and yeasts. It contains bioactive peptides, fermented milk proteins, B vitamins, and minerals. The beverage enhances lactose tolerance, supports the gut microbiota, and influences mineral metabolism.

Anastasia Efimova

How often should one consume fermented products?

It is impossible to precisely determine how often and in what quantities fermented foods should be consumed — especially since, on their own, they cannot cope with all the external challenges to the body. It is far more important to develop a diet that maintains the proper balance of proteins, fats, carbohydrates, and other macronutrients, which will incorporate fermented food. Moreover, it is recommended to gradually introduce them into the daily menu, particularly in cases of gastrointestinal disorders, while also taking individual tolerance into account.

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Gastronomic bonus:

Fermentation imparts products with a complex, rich flavor with astringent and acidic nuances, which render the conventional diet more multifaceted—no wonder modern chefs are actively experimenting in this culinary sphere.

“Fermented foods are not a universal remedy, but they certainly deserve attention as part of a strategy aimed at maintaining health and longevity,” concludes the expert.

A DESTINATION ON RUSSIA’S WINE MAP:

Nikolaev & Sons Winery

Ironically, Russia is perceived as a country with little experience in winemaking, even though it is on its territory, in the Caucasus Mountains, that wine culture originated even before our era. The science of winemaking from the Soviet Union and the efforts of modern winemakers have given Russian wine a unique path, unlike any other.

Let’s explore the past and future of Russian winemaking with the founders of Nikolaev and Sons family business.

From Antiquity to Tsarist Russia

The fact that winemaking culture flourished in the territory of modern Russia as early as the 4th century BC may seem surprising. However, science is indisputable: The port of Gorgippia (modern-day Anapa, a resort town in Krasnodar Krai) was an important center of winemaking in the Bosporan Kingdom, exporting wines to Greece and Rome. During excavations, scientists discovered wine storage vessels with a capacity of several tonnes and other evidence of a thriving production.

It is no surprise that today the largest collection of wineries in the country is concentrated in Krasno-



dar Krai. Here one can find estates that reinterpret the experiences of the imperial and Soviet eras, as well as visit young wineries that are oriented towards modern global trends.

Speaking of the imperial legacy, let us briefly return to the past and mark an important milestone in history: in the 17th century, Mikhail Fyodorovich Romanov, the first tsar from the Romanov dynasty, planted vineyards near Astrakhan—this event is considered the official birthday of Russian winemaking. Subsequently, the geographical origins of the winemaking craft extended through Crimea, Kuban, and the Don Valley.

This material is for informational purposes only. The DR team reminds you that excessive alcohol consumption is harmful to your health.

A New Generation of Winemakers

Having experienced several periods of development and decline, which alternated during both the Tsarist era and the Soviet Union, Russian wine-making entered a fundamentally new era in the 21st century. Small producers have emerged on the scene, having grown in a highly regulated and competitive market. Thanks to tough conditions, they have learned to survive by investing in quality. Today, world-class vineyards, the expertise of international specialists, and high-tech equipment used by new Russian winemakers allow them to create quality and competitive products.



Another victory of the new era of winemaking is the 2018 law aimed to protect Russia's wine regions. The first winemaking zone in the country to receive the status of Protected Designation of Origin (PDO), which includes Nikolaev & Sons Winery, is Lefkadia Valley in Krasnodar Krai. It is located at a sufficient distance from the sea and is known for its sharp temperature fluctuations, which help the wines retain freshness, higher acidity, and vibrant aromas. The Greek name pays homage to the history of these lands, where Ancient Greeks traded with steppe nomads.



Russian wine in numbers and facts:

Thanks to improved product quality, the share of domestic wines in the Russian market reached 65-70% in 2025, continuing to show a growth trend. Wine tourism is also gaining popularity; experts note record increases in bookings and a steady rise in visits to Russian wineries.

Nikolaev & Sons: Combining the Best Terroirs and Approaches

"Our family's winery, Nikolaev & Sons, is in one of the villages within the Lefkadia Valley PDO. We chose this area because it has been recognized, at least since the 1930s as having the potential to produce world-class still and sparkling wines. But back in 2007, when our first vineyards were planted, we were still among the few newcomers to these ancient lands, just lucky enough to plant in what would rapidly become the first project to receive worldwide recognition thanks to 90+ points by Robert Parker and our 23rd spot on the list of World Best Vineyards," says M.M. Nikolaev, managing partner of the estate.

Wine here is produced in a gravity-fed winery and is aged in clay amphorae, concrete eggs, and oak barrels. The choice of containers is intentional—the founders believe that fermentation in breathable materials results in a more balanced product.

Nikolaev & Sons winery is no exception. Wine production is just one part of a larger agricultural ecosystem, where the first organically certified estate in continental Russia hosts vineyards, a farm, a beehive, production of organic products, and Pastoral restaurant, which operates based on a farm-to-table concept. This ensures the quality and freshness of the products and adheres to the brand's core principle of sustainability.



Another trend in contemporary Russian winemaking

is wine tourism. Almost every estate is expanding beyond mere production to offer guests a comprehensive tourist experience. High-end gastronomy focusing on local products, guided tours to wineries with an immersive insight into the production process, and a well-developed infrastructure featuring hotels, spa complexes, and educational centres all contribute to making Russia's wine regions an appealing destination for tourism.

The winery's selection includes still and sparkling wines in various styles: from the summer white "Flight of the Bumblebee," named after the work of Russian composer Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, to classic red wines made from Bordeaux grape varieties aged in oak barrels, as well as vintage brut crafted using the traditional "champenoise" method and frizzante wines.

Visitors can explore the diverse range of production as part of guided tours. After a sightseeing trip through the vineyards and a visit to the winery with tasting, guests head to a local restaurant to process what they have seen and gain new food for thought.



Aina



Matryoshka

GASTRO GUIDE:

Restaurants
Offering Cuisine
from Russia’s Regions

The rich traditions of Russian cuisine are closely linked to the country’s history, its multi-ethnic nature, and its vast geography. These include dishes that originated in Rus’ and have stood the test of time: soups such as shchi and ukha, porridges, pastries, pickles, and traditional soft drinks, including kvass, kisel, and sbiten. Significant milestones in Russia’s culinary history are the diverse pre-revolutionary cuisine and some Soviet gastronomic hits, including aspic (“kholodets”), stuffed cabbage rolls (“golubtsi”), meat patties with mashed potatoes, and, of course, traditional holiday salads: mimosa, dressed herring, and Olivier. In pre-revolutionary times, the latter was made with hazel grouse, crayfish tails, beef tongue, and caviar. In the USSR, it acquired a different meaning, as the delicacy’s main ingredients gave way to more accessible options: boiled sausage, and later, boiled beef.

Today, chefs strive to combine regional traditions with a modern approach, offering guests their own interpretation of Russian cuisine, turning every restaurant visit into a true gastronomic journey. And the country’s vast geography offers even greater diversity.

From Siberian to Tatar—we present 10 restaurants serving national cuisines across Russia, selected and recommended by the team of GreatList, a restaurant guide exploring restaurants in Russia, the UAE, and Qatar.

Moscow

Aina

Moscow boasts numerous restaurants serving ethnic cuisine, but Aina, a beautiful ethnic project located on Ostozhenka, offers a chance to experience several options. The menu combines traditional comfort food with dishes from Russia’s regions, from Dagestan to Karelia. The concept of blending traditions and cultures is developed further in Etna Bar, whose team chooses a ritual or tradition of one Russia’s ethnic group every three months and makes a new cocktail menu on its basis.

What to try:

crab-stuffed chebureki served with Krasnodar adjika and matsoni, rapana rillettes, pie with northern fish and caviar, and honey cake with monastery-made wax ice cream.

Address:
Ostozhenka, 14/2

Matryoshka

One of the simplest, yet most beautiful and delicious ways to experience traditional Russian cuisine is to visit Matryoshka on Taras Shevchenko Embankment. The project’s ideologist and brand chef is Vlad Piskunov, a historian, writer and popularizer of Russian cuisine. The restaurant’s menu, with its emphasis on ingredients from around the country, showcases the diversity of the country’s culinary culture. And the interior, a blend of modern trends and vintage elements, will make the immersion captivating to the fullest.

What to try:

Olivier salad with quail and crayfish tails, salmon rillettes, stuffed pike, and muksun and crab aspic.

Address:
Kutuzovsky Prospekt, 2/1s6

Beluga

Beluga is one of Moscow’s most beautiful restaurants, boasting spacious Russian-style dining rooms, a bar shaped like a crystal caviar bowl, and a stunning panorama of the Kremlin. Located on the second floor of the National Hotel, this establishment embodies the true Russian spirit and prides itself in the richest selection of caviar in Russia, combining national classics with global trends, offering guests a fresh take on the traditions of Russian cuisine.

What to try:

a definite must is the famous Burlak’s Breakfast served with a kilogram of black caviar, pirozhki, caviar patties, potato croquettes (“zhimchiki”), and other national specialties, accompanied by Russian vodka or sparkling wine.

Address:
Mokhovaya St., 15/1, Bldg. 1

Gvidon

Alexander Pushkin’s fairy tales, based on Russian folklore, are Russia’s historical and literary heritage, and an integral part of its culture. They inspired the founders of the Gvidon gastronomic project—a restaurant offering Russian and French cuisines and magical interiors transferring guests to the fairy tale.

An award-winning Moscow chef Anatoly Kazakov is in charge of the food here. The menu is focused on seafood and fish from around the world including Far East and Japan. Mermaids painted on the walls, crystal chandeliers, and glacier fountains with fresh fish make the venue even more spectacular, turning a visit to the restaurant into a true spectacle.

What to try:

creamy chestnut soup with scallops and black truffles, wild sea bass ceviche with sweet tomato sauce, spaghetti with vongole and bottarga.

Address:
Bolshaya Nikitskaya St., 5

Sakhalin

If you want to hear the music of the seas and oceans while admiring the views of the famous Stalin skyscrapers, Moscow City towers, and the Kremlin, head to the Sakhalin fish restaurant on the top floor of the Azimut Hotel. The kitchen is helmed by a Russian celebrity chef Vladimir Mukhin, who has combined tradition with an innovative approach: Thus, he makes jellied meat and traditional Russian cabbage rolls with Kamchatka crab, and adds trumpet crab to stroganoff.

P.S.: If you find yourself at Sakhalin during the warmer months, be sure to book a table on the summer terrace offering an even more breathtaking view of the capital.

What to try:

in addition to the aforementioned jellied meat, cabbage rolls and seafood stroganoff, we recommend the Kamchatka crab dim sum and the halibut steak with spring onions.

Address: Smolenskaya, 8

#SiberiaSiberia

In Russia, making pelmeni is a kind of meditation, albeit with a culinary twist. At the #SiberiaSiberia restaurant, you won't witness the meditative process of making pelmeni, but you will see the famous Siberian pelmeni being cooked in the open kitchen and, most importantly, you can taste them. The menu, overseen by chef Evgeny Kuznetsov, is replete with Siberian delicacies and also offers traditional Soviet holiday favorites, game dishes, freshwater fish, and wild taiga vegetables, blending traditional and modern Russian cuisine.

What to try:

Olivier salad with lightly salted trout, pickled grapes and soaked apples, and venison and lingonberry pies. And don't forget the aforementioned pelmeni—the menu offers five varieties.

Address:
Smolenskaya, 8

Russia

Kazan: Chirem

One of the main attractions of the Tatarstan capital is the Kazan Kremlin comprising Kul Sharif Mosque, the Annunciation Cathedral, museums, exhibition centres, and the Tatar restaurant Chirem. In Tatar, chirem means “young green grass,” and on the restaurant's vaulted walls, you can find bas-reliefs depicting plants growing on Tatarstan's meadows.

Here, pastries are baked in a wood-fired oven. Chef Artem Laptev inherited the recipes from his Tatar grandmother. The menu combines ancestral experience with a modern approach to cooking.

What to try:

Groom's Pelmeni, honey-glazed cod fillet with cauliflower and potato puree, and veal manti. Horse meat is a Tatar specialty. We recommend starting with spicy dried horse meat called kazylyk, as well as horse meat tartare with adjika and baked beets.

Address:
Kazan, Proyezd Sheinkmana, 5

St. Petersburg: Chaliapin

If you are looking for classic Russian cuisine in the interiors of an early 20th-century historic apartment, visit the Shalyapin restaurant, a cozy place in the center of St. Petersburg between the Tauride Garden and the Smolny Cathedral. The menu features famous national dishes with a modern twist, and the atmosphere is perfect for a cheerful and hearty feast in a traditional Russian style.

What to try:

pike pelmeni, mushroom soup with sour cream, veal schnitzel with sauerkraut and baked apple.

Address:
St. Petersburg, Tverskaya St., 12/15

Khabarovsk: Amur

In Khabarovsk, one of the major cities in the Far East, there are two Amurs: the river on whose banks the city was built, and the restaurant of the same name, which embodies the finest traditions of Far Eastern cuisine. Carefully selected local ingredients and authentic recipes, influenced by the latest culinary trends, are what make Amur's menu the ultimate expression of this unique region.

What to try:

Taimyr muksun stroganina, Olyutor herring forshmak with pike caviar, and sturgeon talu (a traditional dish of the Far East indigenous peoples).

Address:
Khabarovsk, Lenina St., 29

GreatList

is an independent guide compiled by a team of experts who evaluate restaurants by different criteria, including food, service, traditions, interior design, and atmosphere.



Please find other recommended restaurants in Russian cities on the guide's website



Nizhny Novgorod: Yale

Russia's natural beauty is one of the country's main treasures, reflected not only in culture and art but also in food. Yale, a contemporary Russian cuisine restaurant, focuses on local and farm-grown ingredients, combining them with the latest cooking techniques and global food trends. “My menu is a tale about the nature, its blessings, and people of the Nizhny Novgorod region, who are much more complex and multifaceted than they are believed to be,” notes chef Dmitry Dmitrienko.

While waiting for your order, you can enjoy the interiors of the restored historic manor house, home to the restaurant, which features nature-inspired murals and 19th-century stucco.

What to try:

lightly salted whitefish with almond hummus and brioche, kulebyaka with Arzamas goose, and ukha (fish soup) made with Volga pike and zander in crucian broth.

Address:
Nizhny Novgorod, Rozhdestvenskaya St., 30



Chaliapin

"HAPPY COWS— HAPPY MILK":

Inside One of Russia's
Most Unusual Cheese Dairies



Announcing the main theme of the spring issue, Russian wellness, we promised to reveal whether there is a connection between the taste of farm cheese and the cows' level of happiness and well-being. Keeping our promise, we embark on a virtual tour of the production facilities at the Uspenskiy Dvorik family farm.

What is the most important aspect in cheese production: the production technology, the staff's professionalism, or the location? Notwithstanding the importance of the mentioned factors, Maria Karaulova, founder of the Uspenskiy Dvorik farm, situated in the picturesque surroundings of the Samara region and producing natural dairy products and cheeses according to a unique recipe, asserts that the main secret lies in caring for the animals.

The history of the farm began four years ago with a single cow and a desire to create a unique product. In addition to providing traditional care and nutrition for the animals, the founders of the Uspenskiy Dvorik decided to create special conditions for them and even design leisure activities: Local cows not only receive abundant interaction, affection, and attention, but also enjoy concerts of classical and folk music. Sometimes the farm's founder, Maria, sings for the residents herself and plays traditional musical instruments, fostering local culture in her role as a guardian of Russia's intangible cultural heritage.

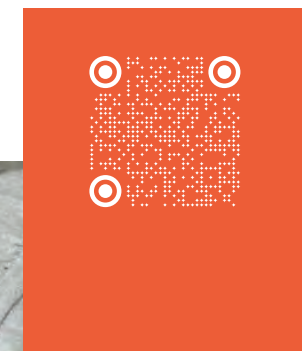
Maria also has several professional "secrets" that help maintain the cows' health and mood with care—an individual nutrition and care plan is developed for each animal according to its needs. Hence the motto: "Happy Cows—Happy Milk." This approach creates a harmonious atmosphere that promotes the animals' health and well-being, as well as rendering the milk's flavor exceptionally delicate and rich.

The entire production cycle—from selecting the cow breed, developing an individualized feeding plan, to the milking and cheesemaking processes—is carried out with great care and utmost respect for animals and nature. Thus, the answer to whether the taste of cheese is linked to the level of cow happiness is unequivocally affirmative.

Milk, yogurt, cheeses, and butter, produced by the happiest cows in Russia, undergo voluntary certification and rigorous quality control, ensuring their safety and benefits for consumers.

We strive not only to create high-quality products but also to maintain harmony in our interaction with the environment

**shares Maria,
expressing their production
philosophy**





Kirill Shishov
Dymov Ceramics

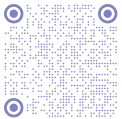
Once you are in Suzdal,

be sure to stop by the Russian Tea House by Dymov Ceramics: Here you can try famous authentic food, including pirozhki, pelmeni and vareniki, taste various tea varieties, and enjoy the traditions of Russian hospitality.



DR's choice:

a ceramic tableware set from the Blueberry collection in the colors of serene Russian summer. Despite the brand's relatively young age (it was established in 2003), this collection has already been included in the list of folk crafts of the Vladimir region.



Where to buy:
Moscow, Prospekt Mira, 119,
building 186, VDNKh

DR / FASHION
& SHOPPING

FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE:

Gifts to Bring Back from Your Vacation

Here are some ideas of what you can bring back from your trip to Russia to delight your loved ones and yourself.

Travel culture has many pleasant traditions. One of them is buying souvenirs to keep your fond memories and share them with your friends and family. The Discover Russia team has made its own investigation and compiled a list of the best gift ideas from Russia with love. Spoiler alert: some of them will decorate your home, some will warm you on a chilly evening, and the rest are edible and so delicious that they risk never reaching your destination.



Kirill Shishov
Krestetsky Stitch

Textiles: Krestetsky Stitch

Krestetsky stitch is a unique hand embroidery technique developed by artisans in the Novgorod province in the mid-19th century. Today, the traditions of this folk craft continue to be perfected at the Krestetskaya Strochka factory. Collections of table and home textiles, clothing, and home decor are released several times a year in small amounts.

DR's choice:

a decorative linen napkin that will add an elegant touch to your table setting, a nod to the cherished traditions of Russian culinary culture.



Where to buy:
showrooms in Moscow
(Seasons shopping mall, Okhotny
Ryad, 2) and St. Petersburg
(Passage department store,
Nevsky Prospekt, 48)

Interior design: Svoy Design

Svoy Design is a modern Russian brand creating design items inspired by Russian folklore, architecture, and cultural values. Its collections feature lamps, furniture, decorations and souvenirs made by both acknowledged Russian masters and aspiring artists.

DR’s choice:

funny Barynya pendant lamp from the Folklore collection as a modern reimagining of a Dymkovo toy.



Where to buy:
in the brand’s showrooms throughout Russia

Souvenir: Gus Crystal Factory

Back in the old days, the distinctive crafts of Gus masters were renowned far beyond Russia and made a splash at international exhibitions. In modern times, they have got a second wind. The Gus Factory still creates legendary hand-blown crystal while also collaborating with popular Russian brands and artists, presenting a synthesis of tradition and modernity.

DR’s choice:

hand-blown crystal horses, available in different sizes and colors, make charming home decorations.



Where to buy: in the “Dom Farfora” shops in Moscow, as well as in the Gus Crystal brand store (Leninsky Prospekt, 45)

✓ If you have time on your hands, be sure to visit the Vladimir Region for a tour around the Gus Factory located in the building of St. George’s Cathedral. There, you’ll learn about the history of production and see how crystal is melted, figures are blown, and intricate patterns are created.



Dymkovo toys

are unique Russian clay figurines originating in the village of Dymkovo. Toys representing animals, common people and fairy-tale characters are handcrafted from local red clay, preserving the centuries-old traditions of ancient craftsmen.

Folk crafts:
Fedoskino Miniature

Fedoskino miniatures are a Russian folk craft that originated in the late 18th century in the village of Fedoskino not far from Moscow. The Fedoskino factory’s modern production line includes lacquer boxes, caskets, pictures, and souvenirs featuring scenes from Russian history and culture.

DR’s choice:

handmade Ballet jewellery box, a nod to the great history of Russian ballet. It will not only be a touching souvenir from Russia but also an inspiration for a cultural night out and a visit to the ballet hot spots of Moscow and St. Petersburg: the Bolshoi and Mariinsky Theaters where you can watch such famous ballets as Swan Lake, The Nutcracker, Giselle, Don Quixote, and many others.



Where to buy:
FEDOSKINO shop in the Radisson Slavyanskaya Hotel; Moscow, Eurasia Square, Bldg. 2

Food (St. Petersburg):
Candies by the Kultura Factory

Chocolate brownies, fruit jellies, chocolate-covered creamy soufflés with various flavors, signature cupcakes, dragées, and vegan candies—the St. Petersburg startup confectionery factory “Kultura” has become a sweet symbol of the Northern Capital, making products that are a joy to give and get.

DR’s choice:

Cultured Birdie, soft and airy candies with a delicate filling. You can buy them individually or as a set with different flavors.



Where to buy:
at the brand’s stores in St. Petersburg



Clothing: Orenburg Shawl

Light as a feather yet warm even in the harsh Russian winter, shawls, scarves, and “cobwebs” made from the finest down hair of Orenburg goats have become a traditional symbol of the country. Each piece is handcrafted by artisans—it can take a month to create a single Orenburg shawl.

DR’s choice:

Orenburg down shawl with Gzhel embroidery is a jackpot in the world of traditional Russian crafts. Both the shawls and the famous blue-and-white ceramic painting known as Gzhel are folk crafts and the Russian cultural heritage.

Food (Moscow): Candies
by the Krasny Oktyabr Factory

Red October (“Krasny Oktyabr”) is one of the oldest confectionery companies in Russia, with a history spanning over 150 years. Its product range includes candies such as Mishka Kosolapy, with wrappers inspired by Russian landscape artist Ivan Shishkin’s painting “Morning in a Pine Forest”, and Krasnaya Shapochka. The factory’s Alenka chocolate has been considered a symbol of happy childhoods for several generations.

DR’s choice:

Alenka classic milk chocolate, made according to a 1966 recipe.



Where to buy:
Factory stores and supermarket chains



Red October sweets are no longer produced in downtown Moscow, though tours and pastry workshops are still offered on the former factory grounds, located on an island opposite the Kremlin.



Where to buy:
ORENSHAL brand shops in Moscow, Ufa, and Orenburg

3 BEST SHOPPING

Destinations
in Russia

From Moscow to Sochi: *Discover Russia's* editorial team selects the country's most exciting shopping destinations.

Moscow

The undoubted shopping capital of Russia, Moscow offers shoppers grandeur, variety, and affordability. The city's central department stores and big shopping malls offer both luxury brands and small, locally owned shops, making it a fashionable hotspot.

Central Department Stores: Classic Locations with International and Russian Brands in the City's Heart

GUM is a renowned Moscow shopping mall with a 130-year history and unique engineering solutions, including Vladimir Shukhov's "glass heaven." Over 100 leading global brands are represented on three floors of this architectural landmark, while the vacated spaces are occupied by flagship Russian brands such as 12 STOREEZ and LIMÉ.

GUM is not only a popular shopping destination, but also a favorite meeting place for locals and visitors. It is said that the camera shutter sound at the central fountain is heard approximately once every three seconds, and the legendary movie hall, a landmark of Russian cinema, attracts visitors with its intimacy and vintage atmosphere. The kiosks selling the delicious ice cream famous across Moscow are worth mentioning: try all 10 flavors during your visit.

In winter, the capital's main ice rink, the GUM Ice Rink, welcomes guests on Red Square. During other seasons, you can relax after shopping in one of the nearby cafes.

Address: Red Square, 3

TSUM's history began in 1885 as the Muir & Merilz trading house. Having shed its former name and sur-

vived several relocations, today it is the country's leading department store, offering over 1,500 luxury brands of clothing, footwear, cosmetics, and accessories.

Bolshoi and Maly Theatres, the Historical Museum, Red Square, and the Russian Academic Youth Theatre (RAMT)—all these key landmarks surround TSUM, making it easy to combine shopping and cultural activities. Here's our special recommendation for foodies: Find the BURO.TSUM restaurant on the fifth floor. The menu features crabs and caviar alongside seasonal ingredients and comfort foods, and it would be an inexcusable mistake not to try desserts here.

Address: Petrovka Street, 2

The Central Children's Store is a legendary children's shopping mall in downtown Moscow. Opened in the middle of the last century, it has managed to preserve its historical appearance and fairytale atmosphere throughout modern times.

In addition to numerous children's stores, the mall also features play spaces, a Childhood Museum displaying toys from the 1950s to the 1980s, art installations, a café, and a cinema. Adults also have plenty to enjoy at the Children's Store. After strolling through the historic atrium and admiring the magnificent clock mechanism weighing over 5 tons, manufactured by the Raketa watch factory, head to the observation deck. The rooftop offers a unique view of the historic centre: the Kremlin, the Polytechnic Museum, Lubyanka Square, and the spire of the main building of Moscow State University.

Address: Teatralny Prospekt, 5, Bldg. 1

Shopping Streets: The Capital's Main Shopping Arteries, Shaping the City's Modern Fashion Architecture

Flagship Russian brand stores, boutiques, concept stores, and small local shops can be found on Moscow's central streets: Stoleshnikov Lane, Kuznetsky Most, Nikolskaya, Prechistenka, Tverskaya, Petrovka, as well as around the Patriarch's

Ponds and Chistye Prudy. A little extra thing: lots of seasonal street decorations in the historic downtown.

Big Shopping Centres: Popular Venues with a Wide Range of Brands and Modern Shopping Formats

Aviapark is the largest shopping mall not only in Russia but in Europe. It houses over 300 stores from popular brands, as well as cafés, restaurants, play areas, and a giant aquarium listed in *The Guinness Book of Records* as the tallest cylindrical aquarium in the world. You can observe its inhabitants for free from any floor of the building, with the fish being fed daily at 7:00 PM. Don't forget to wave to the diver—they'll wave back.

Address: Khodynsky Boulevard, 4

Afimall City is a big indoor shopping mall with a spacious atrium, a fountain, famous brand stores, and a food court, located in the Moscow City Business Centre. After shopping, we recommend visiting one of the observation decks of the Moscow City skyscrapers, which offer a spectacular panorama of the capital.

Address: Presnenskaya Nab., 2

Vremena Goda is a shopping arcade featuring the best international and Russian brands, from Rolex and Loro Piana to Ulyana Sergeenko and SASHAVERSE. On your way to this shopping mall located on Kutuzovsky Prospekt, you can stop at the Triumphal Gate on Victory Square, one of Moscow's most recognizable landmarks.

Address:
Kutuzovsky Prospekt, 48



**Nikolskaya
Street**



GUM



TSUM

Outlets: For Those Looking for Deals on Luxury Russian and International Brand Names

- Belaya Dacha Outlet Village.
Address: Novoryazanskoe Shosse, 8.
- Vnukovo Outlet Village.
Address: Lapshinka Village, 8, Bldg. 19.
- FASHION HOUSE Outlet Centre.
Address: Leningradskoe Shosse, 14 km, Chernaya Gryaz.

St. Petersburg

St. Petersburg also offers residents and visitors a wide selection of classic shopping destinations. As a cultural capital, it invites visitors to explore its unique bookstores, which have become landmarks in their own right.

Passage Shopping Mall

This historic shopping center, with its three-story galleries under a transparent roof, was modeled after the Palais-Royal in Paris starting a new era of retail development. Today, the mall offers popular clothing, footwear, and accessories brands. Pay attention to the building's architecture with its glass vaults and plasterwork, and enjoy a post-shopping lunch—for example, at the Krest-sky Stitch ("Krestetskaya Strochka") tea house, where you can enjoy traditional Russian tea ceremony with table textiles from the famous factory.

Address: Nevsky Prospekt, 48

DLT

The Leningrad Trade House, or just DLT, is one of the oldest stores in St. Petersburg, located in the historic part of the city. Here, similar to Moscow's TSUM, you can find leading global brands, including Dolce & Gabbana, Kiton, Jil Sander, Dries Van Noten, and Maison Margiela, as well as Russian souvenirs created by top artisans specifically for DLT. They are sold on the ground floor.

Another lifehack for foodies: Not far from DLT, at 25 Bolshaya Konyushennaya street, you can find the city's oldest and widely known donut ("pyshki") shop. Don't forget to stop for some pyshki and tea, but be prepared to wait in line.

Address: Bolshaya Konyushennaya St., 21-23

Gallery Shopping Mall

St. Petersburg's biggest shopping mall brings together global and local brands under one roof. 12 STOREEZ, LIMÉ, Love Republic, Namelazz, Askent, Guess, and many others—300 shops in total. As well as a movie theater, restaurants with panoramic views of the city, a café, and the Eat Market food hall, which offers over 40 cuisines: from Korean and Mexican to Peruvian and modern Russian.

Address: Ligovsky Prospekt, 30A

Au Pont Rouge

Au Pont Rouge is an Art Nouveau department store built in 1907, whose first customers included the imperial family. Today, on three floors of the shopping center, you can imagine the historical shopping experience and buy clothing, shoes and accessories from Russian and international brands, as well as cosmetics and souvenirs.

The department store places special emphasis on supporting local manufacturers and often hosts markets and exhibitions where you can find interesting items from local brands.

Address: Moika River Embankment, 73

Subscription Editions and House of Books in the Singer House on Nevsky Prospekt

At these legendary bookstores, you can not only buy rare gift books, literary souvenirs and postcards but also enjoy the atmosphere of the cultural capital, exploring the historic interiors and observing the lively conversations of St. Petersburg's bookworms.

Addresses: Liteiny Ave., 57 and Nevsky Ave., 28



Grand Marina
Shopping Gallery

Sochi

Another destination on the Russia's shopping map is the resort city of Sochi.

Grand Marina Shopping Gallery

This three-level gallery housed in a Russian classical style building, featuring branded boutiques and the impressive D.O.M. restaurant complex, is located on the city's waterfront. The brands include Brioni, Rolex, Pinko, Bogner, MIUZ Diamonds, and others. Sochi Seaport, offering boat trips from its pier, is also within walking distance.

Address: Sochi, Nesebrskaya Street, 1a

MoreMall Shopping Mall

One of the city's largest shopping center, MoreMall, is located in central Sochi. Brands represented include WEEKEND Max Mara, Alena Akhmadullina, Tommy Hilfiger, 12STOREEZ, United Colors of Benetton, and many others. The shopping center also features cafés and restaurants, ATMs, and entertainment venues.

Address: Novaya Zarya Street, 7

Navaginskaya Street and the Shopping Gallery

The city's biggest pedestrian street, known as the "Sochi Arbat," is also a shopping hotspot. Here you can find numerous boutiques, Russian brand stores, and souvenir shops, as well as the Shopping Gallery with its corners of local and international brands.

It offers a seasonal bonus: In spring, magnolias bloom on the streets of Sochi, and Navaginskaya Street is one of the best locations for admiring the Kobus and Soulangeana varieties.

Address: Navaginskaya Street



HOW TO CALL EMERGENCY SERVICES

2026

General emergency line: 112 — the call from a mobile phone is free and possible even if the number is blocked for non-payment and the SIM card is not inserted in the phone.

Firefighters: 101 **Ambulance:** 103
Police: 102

TRAVEL TIPS

How to make your journey through Russia comfortable and safe



VISA REGIME



Electronic visa is valid across the entire territory of Russia.

Processing time: up to 4 calendar days, including weekends.

Duration of stay in Russia: up to 30 days.

Visa validity: 120 days.

N.B.: citizens of several countries enjoy a visa-free regime (up to 90 days) hence do not require a visa to enter the Russian Federation.

PROHIBITED ORGANIZATIONS & CONTENT



Some organizations, activities, media platforms, symbols and materials are recognized 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.
- An operational tourist police force.
- Mandatory insurance for unforeseen circumstances and medical assistance.

TRANSPORT

An all-in-one app that will help you order food, delivery from a restaurant, rent a scooter or call a taxi is Yandex.Go.



PAYMENT METHODS

Local currency: Russian ruble (RUB). Check the exchange rate of the ruble to the your currency at banks and licensed exchange offices during your trip.

How to use:

MIR Tourist Card

- Obtain a card upon arrival at airports (Sheremetyevo, Pulkovo, Sochi), at YooMoney branches, as well as at hotels (Moscow, Saint Petersburg, Krasnaya Polyana).
- Top up with cash in US dollars or using a foreign card.
- Pay for hotels, restaurants, transportation and leisure throughout Russia.

Electronic wallets and QR payments

- Download the YooMoney app (iOS/Android).
- Open a virtual MIR account either before your arrival or upon arrival.
- Fund your account using a personal card or in cash.
- Pay for services via QR code in restaurants, retail stores, hotels and taxis.

Cash payment

- It is permitted to import up to \$10,000 without declaration.
- Currency exchange is available at banks, airports, exchange points and hotels.
- It is recommended to carry small amounts of cash for transportation and souvenirs.

The metro system in Russia operates in seven cities: Moscow, St. Petersburg, Kazan, Nizhny Novgorod, Novosibirsk, Yekaterinburg and Samara. Tickets can be purchased at ticket offices and machines at the stations or simply by tapping a bank card on the turnstile.

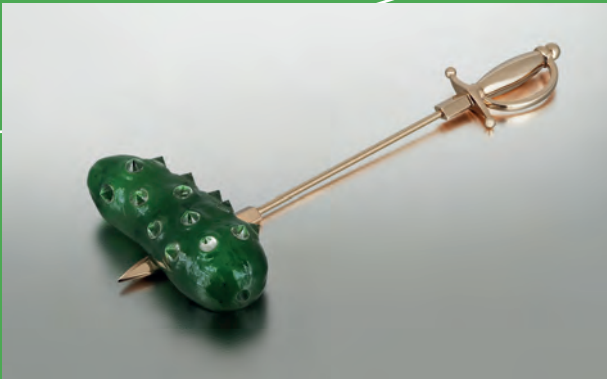
Information about public transport can be found at public transport stops, in the Yandex Maps and 2GIS applications and on the Moscow Transport website for the capital. The urban ecosystem of Moscow public transport includes not only metro, MCC, MCD, buses and trams, but also eco-friendly electric buses, electric vessels operating on the Moscow River and Aeroexpress trains connecting the city centre with Sheremetyevo and Domodedovo airports.

No. 1

Travel tips | Editor's pick

EDITOR'S PICK

7 items, destinations and impressions selected by *Discover Russia* team for the spring wishlist



Dasha Chernova, DR team: culture & jewellery

Jewellery: The Pickle Pin by Letters and Stones Brand

The pickle on a golden cocktail stick is not only a playful match for every outfit and occasion but also a jewellery homage to the rich traditions of Russian cuisine.

Materials:
rose gold, jade, natural green sapphires

Price: 280,000₽

Where to buy: on the brand website



Exhibition: Alena's Dreams at the State Historical Museum Exhibition Complex

Alena's Dreams is an exhibition that will present Alena Akhmadullina—a legendary Russian couturier—as an artist whose work extends far beyond the confines of fashion. Visitors will be immersed in the ancient Russian world that plays a significant role in the designer's vision, and also will have a chance to see numerous utility art exhibits from the collection of the State Historical Museum.

When: 28 November 2025 — 20 April 2026

Where:
Moscow, Revolution Square, 2/3 (the building of the Museum of the Patriotic War of 1812)



Dmitry Smolnikov, DR team: The Carlton Night Shift

The Carlton Night Shift is a new late-night concept of The Carlton, Moscow. Every Friday evening after sunset, The Carlton Lounge & Bar transforms into a unique space for conversation, memorable encounters, and unexpected discoveries. Guests can enjoy a special program that includes live music, vinyl DJ sets, guest bartending nights, and intimate evenings devoted to art, poetry, and salon-style gatherings where visitors can meet distinguished figures from the world of culture. It is the perfect gastronomic and intellectual conclusion to the evening, when dinner has ended but you are not yet ready to go home.

Where: Tverskaya Street, 3



Daria Korobova, DR team: culture & cocktails

Exhibition: Marc Chagall.
The Joy of Earthly Gravity

Did you know that Chagall is the third most frequently stolen artist in the world, right after Pablo Picasso and Nick Lawrence? The world-famous avant-garde master will be flying over Moscow from December 11, 2025, to March 15, 2026. The core of the exhibition will feature works from his "Russian period" (late 1900s - 1922), which was one of the most pivotal phases of his career. By the way, this very period inspired designers Maria Grazia Chiuri and Pierpaolo Piccioli to create the Valentino Haute Couture SS2015 collection.

When: December 11 – March 15, 2026

Where: The Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts;
Moscow, Volhonka St., 12

Tears of the Birch Bar ("Slyozy beryozy")

An atmospheric bar in the Old Russian style, designed to resemble burned-down wooden huts made of birch logs. The cuisine offers an avant-garde take on Russian tradition: borscht with duck, potato pancakes with salmon, and spicy-salted sprats with fried potatoes. The bar won't disappoint either: after a couple of signature cocktails, you might just run into Baba Yaga, so be careful!

Where: 15 Baumanskaya Street, entrance 1



Baikal doesn't just appear before you. First, you catch a glimpse of it out of the corner of your eye, and then the train follows a curve, and here it is—majestic, cold, and absolute. For the next half hour, silence reigns in a carriage.

Maxim Lupakov

Maxim Lupakov, DR team: Journey to Baikal by Russian Railways Train

For me, the magic of Baikal begins with click-clacking wheels and views from the window. Russian Railways trains running along the Trans-Siberian Railway will take you from point A to point B in just a few days, while also showing you other interesting locations along the route.

DR note:

You can go to Baikal from Moscow by train via Irkutsk (the journey takes about 3.5 days), or by taking Russian Railways' special tourist journey, such as "Baikal Fairy Tale."



Sergey Lykov, DR team: shopping location

Spring in Russia is not only a time for the long-awaited warmth but also a period for choosing gifts for International Women's Day on March 8. One of the most convenient platforms is Russian retail chain of personal care and beauty products, Gold Apple. It offers more than 5,000 brands of goods for life, beauty and home, plenty of which are exclusively sold in GA.

My choice will be from the range of Russian brands, presented in Gold Apple: travel-inspired body treatment myTAUI, FOR ME, Geltek, The Act and AYRIS SILK, a brand of organic Mulberry silk products.

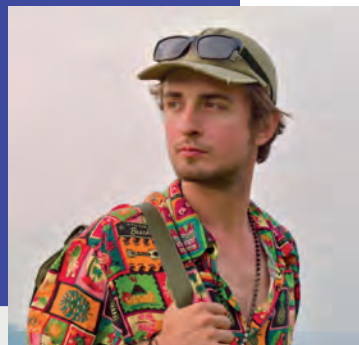
Where to buy:

brand stores in Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, UAE, Qatar and Saudi Arabia, as well as online.

TRAVELER'S DIARY

How I accidentally entered
the border security zone
without a permit: story of a
travel blogger

Yusufcan Karakoc



My name is Yusufcan Karakoç.

For nearly five years, I have been living in Russia and traveling to the most remote corners of the world's largest country, discovering what remains hidden from most travelers, and even from many locals.

When I first arrived in Russia, I had one dream: to explore the world's largest country with nothing but a backpack. And that's exactly what I did. Hitchhiking from Moscow, I made my way to Nizhny Novgorod, where I first felt the power of the Volga River, Kazan, a unique union of two great cultures in one city, Novosibirsk, Irkutsk and Lake Baikal, where time seems to stand still before the world's deepest lake.

Belukha
Mountain

But the adventure didn't end there. I also camped beneath legendary peaks of Altai Mountains, I've been to Yakutsk—a city that survives even at -60°C, Kamchatka, Sakhalin and Kuril Islands—the edge of the world with unbelievably kind people. That's when I realized: Russia is not just a country; it is an entire world.

Paradise With Borders: The Altai Incident

At the foot of Belukha Mountain, the highest point in Siberia, I set up my tent by a crystal-clear mountain lake. Suddenly, border guards appeared. Only then I learned about the "propusk" — a special permit required for many border regions.

Fortunately, this story ended for me with virtually no consequences—I paid a fine of 500 roubles and discovered a travel rule for myself and other travelers: Even if you have a tourist visa, foreign travelers must apply for a special permit at least two months in advance to enter certain areas. Nature is tempting, but rules always come first.

Another Lesson in Kamchatka

After some time the situation repeated itself. While climbing a volcano in Kamchatka, I again unknowingly entered a restricted zone and had to pay a fine. Sometimes passion for adventure overshadows caution, but Russia teaches respect—for both nature and law.

My advice for future travelers before visiting remote parts of Russia:

- Check if a permit is required.
- Have offline maps.
- Study local rules carefully.

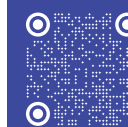
P.S.: Russia is a paradise for nature enthusiasts. It is a mosaic of cultures, beliefs, and landscapes. The more you discover, the more it captivates you. I will keep sharing my experiences of this remarkable country from the perspective of a Turkish traveler—with wonder and appreciation.

DR team comment:

The border security zone is an area of land along the state border. It operates under a border regime, which entails special rules for entry, stay, and various activities. Warning signs are placed at the entrances to the border zone. To pass through, a permit or authorization, as well as an identification document, is needed. Visiting the border zone without a permit or authorization is considered an administrative violation.



If you are traveling independently rather than as part of an organized tour, you can obtain a permit from the Border Authority of the FSB of Russia by submitting an application via the Public Services Portal of the Russian Federation (a verified account is required), in person or through email, specifying the exact route and attaching a copy of your passport.



Subscribe to Yusufcan's channel
«**Russia Through the Eyes of a Turk**»
@russiadakesif on Telegram to follow
his fascinating journeys across
the country.

List of major tour operators in Russia

The AI, guided by the DR team, has studied the Russian tourism market and compiled a list of 25 leading tour operators offering tours to both popular and the most unusual destinations across the country: from Moscow and Saint Petersburg to Kamchatka and Altai. As primary selection criteria, in addition to formal requirements (i.e., the tour operator is functioning and listed in the registry), requested it to consider a multi-language website and a detailed description of the tourist product. The DR team does not claim absolute truth: If you are not listed but work with international tourists, please contact us.

FORTUNA

A multi-specialty tour operator from St. Petersburg offering sightseeing tours and cruises across Russia.



Key destinations: St. Petersburg, Karelia, the Solovetsky Islands, Lake Baikal, Kamchatka, and the Pskov and Novgorod regions

\$: from 50 to 1300 dollars and above

KAMCHATKALAND

An adventure tourism operator in Kamchatka offering volcano ascents, jeep tours, rafting expeditions, helicopter excursions, and bear watching.



Key destinations: Kamchatka

\$: from 1300 to 4000 dollars per a week-long tour (excluding flights)

FREMA D RUSSIA

One of the oldest inbound tour operators with offices in Moscow and Saint Petersburg. The company offers turnkey tours across Russia—from tailored excursion program planning to hotel and restaurant reservations.



Key destinations: Moscow, Saint Petersburg, Murmansk, Kazan, the Golden Ring cities, as well as river and lake cruises

\$: from 50 to 1300 dollars and above



SPUTNIK MED

Medical tourism operator that specializes in organizing treatment for foreign patients in Russia, arranging medical visas, providing accompaniment services, as well as check-up programs.



Key destinations: all of Russia

\$: from 150 dollars

BAIKALNOVA TRAVEL

Tour operator based in Irkutsk, specializing in organizing signature individual and group tours, winter and summer programs, and cruises.



Key destinations: Baikal

\$: from 400 dollars

VOYAGE BAIKAL

Tour operator specializing in guided tours and cruises on Baikal and other destinations, also offering corporate services.



Key destinations: Baikal, Buryatia, Kamchatka, Altai

\$: from 330 dollars for a tour from two days

ARTEFACT TRAVEL

Inbound premium-segment tour operator with an office in Moscow, working with Middle Eastern markets. Offers customized tours across Russia and VIP escort services.



Key destinations: all of Russia

\$: from 1500 dollars

BAIKAL GREEN

Tour operator specializing in ecotourism on Lake Baikal. Organizes tours for small groups, eco-lodge accommodations, guided hiking tours, and rafting excursions.



Key destinations: Lake Baikal and all Russia

\$: from 200 dollars for a two-day tour

KAICHI TRAVEL

Tour operator specializing in ecological and ethnic tourism in the Altai region, offering exclusive tours to remote areas, wildlife observation (e.g., snow leopard watching) and photo tours.



Key destinations: Altai

\$: from 1100 dollars

VODOHOD

Russia's largest river cruise operator, offering cruises on the Volga, Kama, Don, Yenisei, and Baikal. Luxury and premium class vessels, as well as Wild Life ships, operating on expedition cruise routes.



Key destinations: all of Russia

\$: from 200 dollars (depending on the class and destination)

BAIKAL RESIDENCE

Baikal Residence is a premium tour operator offering accommodation in a lodge hotel in Irkutsk and curated tours around Baikal.



Key destinations: Baikal

\$: from 200 dollars per day

FAVORITE TRAVEL KAMCHATKA

Tour operator based in Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky offering active group and private tours across Kamchatka, including jeep and snowmobile tours, dog-sled tours, and rafting adventures.



Key destinations: Kamchatka Krai

\$: from 100 dollars

RUSSIA ADVENTURES

Adventure tour operator in Russia specializing in motorcycle tours.



Key destinations: Caucasus, Altai

\$: from 1000 dollars

THE REAL KAMCHATKA

Tour operator specializing in excursion tours to popular destinations and unexplored corners of Kamchatka.



Key destinations: Kamchatka

\$: from 800 dollars

KESHTA

Tour operator offering group, wellness, and thematic tours in Southern Russia.



Key destinations: Sochi, Arkhiz, Pyatigorsk, Dombay, Kislovodsk

\$: from 900 dollars

DAG TOUR

The largest company in the tourism services market of the Republic of Dagestan, offering bespoke group tours, one-day excursions, and jeep tours.



Key destinations: Dagestan

\$: from 330 dollars

AMPARUS

Tour operator with an office in Saint Petersburg, offering a comprehensive range of travel services in Russia: from classic tours to cruises to popular destinations.



Key destinations: all of Russia

\$: from 600 dollars

SOCHI HELISKI

Heliski tour operator in Krasnaya Polyana (Sochi). Offers safe, organized ski tours in remote locations, as well as individual programs.



Key destinations: Baikal, Putorana Plateau, the Elbrus region, Kamchatka

\$: from 6500 dollars for a 7-day tour

KAMCHATKA TRAVEL GROUP

Tour operator specializing in tours in the Kamchatka Territory. Offers jeep tours, helicopter excursions (Geyser Valley, Kuril Lake), sea cruises, as well as VIP tours.



Key destinations: Kamchatka

\$: from 1950 dollars

FORTIS TRAVEL

A Moscow-based business and classic tourism agency that organizes business trips and personalized travel and provides concierge and VIP services at airports.



Key destinations: all Russia

\$: on request

NORDWAY INTERNATIONAL COMPANY

Tour operator offering individual, group, and VIP tours across Russia, as well as organizing business trips and MICE tourism.



Key destinations: Moscow, Saint Petersburg, Kazan, Murmansk, the Arctic region, Baikal, Kamchatka, and Altai

\$: on request

HALAL TRAVEL RUSSIA

Specialized tour operator offering sightseeing and tailor-made halal journeys throughout Russia for Muslims, including bookings at Muslim Friendly hotels, organizing excursions, visa support, as well as medical tourism.



Key destinations: all Russia

\$: on request

RUSSIAN TOUR

Inbound tour operator catering to international groups. Offers individual and group tours, VIP services, corporate travel arrangements, transfers, and excursions in Moscow, Saint Petersburg, and other Russian cities.



Key destinations: Moscow and Saint Petersburg

\$: on request

SALMONICA TRAVEL

Tour operator specializing in land, water, and air journeys across the Kamchatka Peninsula, led by qualified, experienced guides, as well as fishing and hunting tours.



Key destinations: Kamchatka

\$: on request

LUCKY TOURS

Tour operator based in Vladivostok providing tourism services throughout Russia's Far East.



Key destinations: Vladivostok, Primorsky Krai, Khabarovsk, Sakhalin, Kamchatka, Yakutia, Chukotka, Irkutsk, and Lake Baikal

\$: on request

