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DISCOVER RUSSIA

Team's letter

Summer is one of the most beloved seasons in Russia, and we make the most of it. The long-awaited sun, the season of the most delicious berries, vegetables, and fruits, the contrast of golden-hour light reflecting off the capital's skyscrapers and shimmering summer tranquility in the countryside with family, white nights, dinners on restaurant patios, and plenty of water: in lakes, rivers, seas, oceans, warm rains, fountains, and pools.

With Russia boasting one of the world's richest arrays of water bodies — including 13 seas and famous Lake Baikal, the deepest lake on Earth containing about 20% of the planet's freshwater supply — the DR team has dedicated the summer issue to water.

This season, we'll embark on a grand journey through St. Petersburg — often called the Venice of Russia — and its surroundings; explore all types of water transport, from river trams to sailing yachts; visit

the most beautiful and unusual beaches; dive into 18th-century underwater architecture; learn how much water to drink in the heat; view Russian art through an aquatic lens; and even attend a cucumber festival (which, by the way, is made up of 95% water — cucumber, not festival).

We'll continue the editorial traditions established by the time of our second guide issue: answers to the most pressing tourist questions in the Travel Tips section, the DR team's best finds in Editor's Pick, and — taking an experimental turn this time — the Traveler's Diary column, which reveals a magical Russian spot where you can almost touch the clouds.

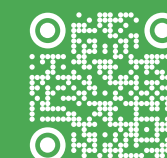
Let's discover the aquatic wonders of Russia together with the summer edition of DR Ultimate Travel Guide.

Yours,
Dasha Chernova

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.

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

To contact the DR team
or inquire about partnerships: dr@csr.ru





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V_E / Shutterstock



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of Summer
Issue



ВОДА
ماء
WATER
水
AQUA

पानी
СУ
ջուր
ВАДА

Water is the source of life, health, energy, and youth, making up 60–65% of the human body. It's also Earth's key resource, sustaining ecosystems, regulating climate, and even driving socioeconomic development. What's more, it's a source of joy and pleasure. After all, what could be more delightful on a sweltering summer day than plunging into enveloping aquatic coolness or taking that first sip of water to quench your thirst?

Given these facts and Russia's status as one of the world's richest countries in water resources, we've decided to dedicate our summer issue to the substance whose chemical formula, H_2O , is probably known to everyone.

Get ready to dive in.

SAINT PETERSBURG:

The Venice of the North

St. Petersburg has many names, one of which is the Venice of the North. The city earned it for its striking resemblance to the famous Italian city, where life flows along the water.

Like Venice, St. Petersburg boasts numerous islands ringed by waterways and bridges, with the facades of most buildings in the historic center facing the embankments. Water transport thrives here — sightseeing boats and river cruises carry tourists and locals along rivers and canals, turning the city into one vast open-air museum, while public water transport provides a scenic way to reach nearby suburbs featuring Gulf of Finland beaches and rich cultural heritage.

Summer is the perfect time to savor all of St. Petersburg's waterside attractions, and our detailed city guide ensures you won't miss a single one.

Anchor Your Ship
in Russia's Cultural Harbor —

ST. PETERSBURG

Tried Venice? Fallen in love with Amsterdam? Good. Now give another European water fantasy a chance. Welcome to St. Petersburg — Russia's cultural harbor, where the best way to greet the city is by setting off on a river-and-canal trip.

FOR THE SPORTY AUDIENCE:

On August 1, 2026, the city's waterways become a little less imperial and a lot more athletic during Fontanka SUP, a stand-up paddleboarding festival and carnival through the rivers and canals of central St. Petersburg. Register in advance if you want to participate — or just come to watch the city turn into a floating costume parade.

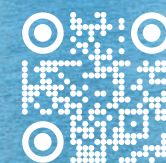


Photo:
Eshma / Shutterstock

RUSSIA'S CULTURAL CAPITAL

is no less bustling and vibrant than Moscow. But from a boat, the whole city turns into a theatrical performance: riverfronts become front-row seats, bridges create their own choreography, and palaces turn into sets for a show where you are the main character. Before hopping aboard, let us guide you through the program.

Act 1.

DAYTIME WATER FANTASY: THE RIVER AND THE CANALS

In St. Petersburg, a strong opening scene can mean only one thing — a daytime route that blends the Neva and the canals.

The Neva, as the city's main artery, gives it scale, offering a perfect look at the imperial city's defining details — the Winter Palace, the Peter and Paul Fortress, the golden cathedral spire, and the Spit of Vasilyevsky Island. Then the canals reveal the intimate side of the city. The Griboedov Canal brings in the Church of the Savior on Spilled Blood, the Moika glides past palaces and old residences, and the Fontanka adds the Summer Garden and Anichkov Bridge. Smaller canals complete the scene with low bridges, reflections and sudden architectural details.

Act 2.

SUNSET WATER FANTASY: THE GULF OF FINLAND

By evening, our performance sets sail for the Gulf of Finland. Here St. Petersburg shifts tone: imperial greatness gives way to air, space and horizon, and the city remembers that it is also a northern port facing the Baltic.

Sevkabel Port on Vasilyevsky Island might be just the right place for this act — a former industrial space turned into a waterfront cluster with exhibitions, concerts, markets, food, drinks and direct views of the gulf. And that is exactly why the place has become a modern focal point — it gives postcard Petersburg some contemporary texture.

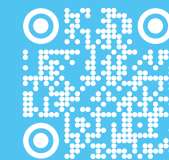


DR RECOMMENDS:

If you need to get from Sevkabel back to the center, do it by water. Boat transfers connect Sevkabel Port with central piers, which is both convenient and way more satisfying than trying to find the nearest metro station, which is not exactly at the door.

Shuttle boats depart from the Sevkabel Port pier. The main route runs to the piers on the English Embankment or Palace Embankment.

Check the bridge schedule before going out at night. Once the bridges are raised, the Neva becomes less of a romantic scene and more of a very serious border between you and your hotel.



Act 3.

NIGHT WATER FANTASY: THE RISING OF THE DRAWBRIDGES

The night act belongs to the drawbridges — St. Petersburg's finest proof that even infrastructure can develop main-character energy. Technically, it is just logistics, but visually, it is something else. Palace Bridge is the classic star, while Trinity and Liteyny Bridges also play their parts beautifully. A classic option is to watch the show from the embankment, but if you seek a

more intimate vibe, then the best choice would be to hop on a boat.

White Nights tip: the best time for this act is the White Nights season, when the city seems to forget the whole concept of darkness. From late May to early July, you can walk from sunset to sunrise with almost no clear border between the two.

Final Act:

RUSSIA'S CULTURAL CAPITAL

After the water performance, it is finally time to come ashore. The city center is filled with world-famous monuments, museums, theaters and architectural drama. The Hermitage alone can swallow a whole day — or several — and still leave you feeling like you have seen only a glimpse of it. The Russian Museum tells the story of national art, the Summer Garden offers fountains, and then there is the Mariinsky Theater, one of the

great homes of Russian ballet.

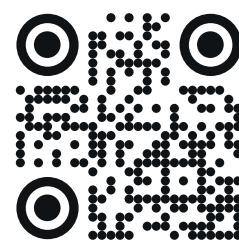
The trick here is that after seeing the city from the water, these places no longer feel like separate points on a tourist map. The Neva and the canals let the city introduce itself in the language it knows best — theater, greatness and history.

Bon voyage — and welcome to Saint Petersburg!

DISCOVER... BANYA

B.O.R. 812

the local bathhouse
masters truly know
the art of the banya



*To make it easier to find the hotel
and complex, here's a QR code*

Culture & Leisure

While preparing our summer issue dedicated to water, the DR team experienced water in all its states firsthand – and how they affect body and soul. In this context, we definitely recommend a traditional Russian banya: the combination of water and steam works wonders, even in summer.

If you decide to follow our advice and find yourself in St. Petersburg or its surroundings, stop by B.O.R. 812 – the local bathhouse masters truly know the art of the banya; we can confirm. And if the magic of the surrounding pine forest proves too enchanting, you can stay overnight (or longer) at the complex's hotel.



AFTERSHOW:

Waterside Escapes Around St. Petersburg

After experiencing water-themed adventures in Russia's cultural harbor, do not rush to pack your bags. St. Petersburg does not really end at the edge of the city center — there is more to it than meets the eye. We welcome you to explore our visual map of waterside escapes around St. Petersburg: follow the water and you might not want to find your way back.



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Denis Anikin V / Shutterstock



Photo:
Mistervlad / Shutterstock

KURORTNY DISTRICT: PINE TREES, BEACHES AND DACHAS

The Kurortny District stretches for about 45 km along the northern shore of the Gulf of Finland, through Sestroretsk, Zelenogorsk and villages such as Komarovo, Repino and Solnechnoye. It is a go-to option for a classic summer escape: pine forests, sandy beaches, old sanatoriums, seaside restaurants and everything you need to make it worth your while.

DR's choice: Komarovo, known as an elite retreat for academics and artists since the early 20th century, is famous for being one of the most scenic places on the coast. Neighboring Repino is home to Penaty, the former estate of the famous artist Ilya Repin, now a major memorial museum.

PETERHOF: FOUNTAINS DOING THE ABSOLUTE MOST

Peterhof, once an imperial summer residence, is now part of a UNESCO World Heritage site, featuring a grand palace, vast gardens and, of course, more than 150 fountains and four cascades working without water pumps thanks to a unique gravity-fed engineering system developed back in the 18th century. The Lower Park is where the spectacle reaches its peak, especially around the Grand Cascade and the Samson Fountain.



KRONSTADT: NAVAL HISTORY WITH A NEW WATERFRONT

Built on Kotlin Island in the Gulf of Finland, Kronstadt has always carried the weight of Russia's naval history: forts, ships, sea winds and horizons that feel slightly harsher than ordinary weather. Today, the Island of Forts cultural cluster gives the city a fresher, more spacious face, with new waterfront areas, open views and the Museum of Naval Glory nearby.

VYBORG: A GLIMPSE OF MEDIEVAL NORTHERN EUROPE

About 120 kilometers from St. Petersburg, Vyborg feels like a northern-European plot twist: castle walls, cobble streets, old towers, waterfront views and a layered history shaped by Russian, Finnish and Swedish influences. Here, try a boat trip along the coast of Monrepos Park if you want something simple and authentic: rocks, trees, water and raw northern landscape.

BEYOND THE GALLERY:

Where Contemporary Art Thrives Today



Tying into DR magazine's summer water theme, Vlad Loktev's striking Match Point (from his Amphibious series, 2020–2026) demands attention. A trailblazer in Russian fashion photography and master of abstract artistry, Loktev writes: "The amphibian's gift for thriving in two realms is an everyday miracle."

Discover a Moscow spot where contemporary art unfolds in an intimate, almost homelike setting.

Long beyond museum confines, contemporary art weaves effortlessly into city life — adorning building facades, enhancing restaurants and public squares, and surprising us in unexpected places like business hubs and medical centers.

Hotels are joining the movement, turning lobbies and lounges into dynamic showcases of painting, sculpture, and sound. Hotel Continental leads the way, its spaces alive with works by visionary creators: Georgy Puzenkov, Vlad Loktev, Alexander Zhernoklyuev, Nino Samadashvili, Daria Russkikh, and a host of other gifted artists and sculptors.

The hotel's art vision lets guests dive into this world mid-stay, fueled by an ever-rotating collection that keeps discovery endlessly fresh.

This "gallery-without-walls" ethos pulses through ArtBar Continental's musical nights, where timeless tracks by Sting, Nirvana, Michael Jackson, and Linkin Park ring out on classical instruments — complemented by star Russian DJ Alexander Nuzhdin's sets of Organic and Progressive House.

Address: 22 Tverskaya Street, Moscow.



RUSSIA REFLECTED IN WATER:

Yachts, Boats and River Trams

Russia is often viewed through the lens of scale — long railways, wide roads, vast fields and flights that can span up to 11 time zones. But sometimes the best view reveals itself when you step off land for a while. It is always a matter of perspective, right? If St. Petersburg's water fantasy wasn't enough, here's our guide to all things water transport in Russia. Let's dive right into it!

There are no special "tourist" tickets — you simply pay for the ride when boarding at the pier.

PAYMENT METHODS:

BANK CARD,
accepted in Russia — you can tap your card directly at the terminal at the pier.

TROIKA CARD
buy a physical Troika card at metro ticket offices or ticket machines. Top it up with the required amount at a ticket office or machine and tap it at the validator at the pier. This is cheaper than using a bank card.

And, of course, where there is water, there is St. Petersburg. While the city itself is already woven through with rivers and canals, there is also a pretty convenient way to get to its picturesque suburbs. St. Petersburg has its own practical water classic: the Meteor, a high-speed hydrofoil that connects the city center with places like Peterhof and Kronstadt. Yes, it is technically a transfer. But when the road takes you along the Neva and the Gulf of Finland, "transfer" does not sound quite flattering enough.

Good to know: the trip to Peterhof takes about 40 minutes, and the trip to Kronstadt about one hour, making Meteors one of the fastest ways to get to these beautiful suburbs from the center of St. Petersburg.

Tickets can be booked and purchased online via payment methods, accepted in Russia.

PUBLIC WATER TRANSPORT — TAKING COMMUTING TO THE NEXT LEVEL

Moscow is all about taking everything to the next level. And water transport is no exception. Meet Moscow's year-round electric river trams: ultra-modern, futuristic vessels that are part of the city's public transport system, with three routes now running along the Moskva River. They are equipped with everything to make your trip comfortable and pleasant: restrooms, chargers, drinking water stations, Wi-Fi and more. Head down to Moscow's subway for the history and step onto the water trams for the view.

Good to know: there are now three routes operating in Moscow: "Kievsky — Fili Park", "ZIL — Pechatniki", and "Novospassky — ZIL." Take the first one for the best views. You can board and get off at any pier along every route; to avoid the longest queues, try boarding away from the starting pier. No advance planning is needed: you can just buy tickets at any pier along the routes. Although it is not the fastest way to get around the city, we recommend it as an authentic non-touristy experience.



RIVER WALKS: TAKING WATER TRANSPORT TO SIGHTSEEING LEVEL

If public water transport is about movement and convenience, river walks are about the view. We have already dived into St. Petersburg's water fantasy, so let's take a look at what Moscow has to offer. In Moscow, sightseeing boats run along the Moskva River, offering views of the Kremlin, some of Stalin's Seven Sisters, modern embankments and city bridges from a softer angle. The good thing about river walks is that they fit almost any schedule. You can take a short daytime route or book an evening cruise with fine dining, which will take your sightseeing experience to a whole new level.



YACHT TRIPS: MAKING THE EXPERIENCE PRIVATE AND EXCLUSIVE

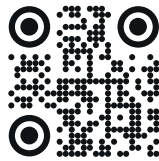
For those who want something more private than a river tram, yacht rental is the next level. The most obvious pick would be Russia's largest and most popular year-round resort city — Sochi. Sea, mountains, marina views, sunset, Black Sea air — the city has all the ingredients for a classic yacht escape.

Visitors can book anything from a short coastal trip to a more polished private cruise from the Marine Station in central Sochi (1 Voykova Street) or through local yacht operators, for example, Helper Travel Service.



But yachts are not only about the sea. Around Moscow, reservoirs such as Pirogovskoye and Klyazminskoye have yacht clubs with rentals, restaurants, beaches and shore-side infrastructure. It is a different kind of water escape: less "Mediterranean fantasy", more a weekend near the capital — but surprisingly elegant if you choose the right club.

DR's choice: for a Moscow-based escape, look at yacht clubs around the reservoirs north of the city. Some combine boat rental with restaurants, golf, beaches and event spaces. We recommend Pestovo Golf & Yacht Club for the ultimate experience.



SAILING SCHOOLS: FINALLY TAKING THE WHEEL

The most ambitious version of water travel is not renting a boat, but learning to control one. Sailing schools operate in Moscow and the Moscow Region, St. Petersburg and the Leningrad Region, Sochi and Vladivostok. Some offer beginner lessons, regatta formats and English-speaking instructors for international visitors: PROyachting (Moscow, St. Petersburg, Sochi) and Vladmore (Vladivostok).



RUSSIA'S MOST BEAUTIFUL BEACHES:

From Baltic Dunes
to Pacific Volcanoes

Summer in Russia is a wonderful opportunity to enjoy a beach vacation. Most popular resorts are dotted with well-equipped public beaches (it's important to check in advance the distance from your accommodation and transportation accessibility), and many hotels have private shorelines, which is definitely a plus, as it ensures cleanliness and eliminates the need to pay extra for sun loungers and umbrellas.

However, beaches in Russia are not just spaces for swimming and sunbathing. The country's coastline stretches across thousands of kilometers, revealing scenery that looks nothing alike. You can walk along the windswept dunes of the Baltic Sea, breathe the ocean air on the volcanic shores of Kamchatka, or discover hidden coves framed by steep cliffs.

We have selected eight beaches that reveal how surprisingly diverse the Russian seaside can be. Most of them are open to both men and women, although in certain regions local customs may include separate beach areas.



CURONIAN SPIT

Where: **Kaliningrad Region, Baltic Sea**

A narrow strip of sand separating the Baltic Sea from the Curonian Lagoon, the Curonian Spit is famous for its vast dunes and endless beaches. Pine forests stretch along the coast, forming a unique landscape constantly reshaped by wind. Interestingly, the spit is a UNESCO World Heritage Site shared by Russia and Lithuania.

Access to the beaches of the spit is free, though an entrance fee applies to the national park itself. Facilities are mainly concentrated near the villages of Lesnoy and Rybachy, where visitors can find cafés and freshly smoked local fish, while more remote stretches remain completely untouched.

Beach infrastructure: 🌴 🌴

DERBENT COAST

Where: **Republic of Dagestan, Caspian Sea**

Located south of the ancient city of Derbent, which is considered one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in Russia, with history spanning over two millennia, the Caspian coastline stretches in vast beaches washed by the waters of the world's largest inland sea.

Many beaches of the coastline are free, with sun loungers available for rent in more developed areas, while quieter stretches offer a simpler experience. In line with local traditions, some beach areas are designated separately for men and women, and seaside cafés serve regional dishes such as freshly caught fish.

Beach infrastructure: 🌴 🌴

BOUNTY BEACH (VINOGRADNAYA BAY, CAPE FIOLENT)

Where: **Crimean Peninsula, Black Sea**

Situated among sheer cliffs near Cape Fiolent, Bounty Beach is known for its magnificent turquoise water and clear sea. The bay is secluded and almost tropical. Interestingly, the beach gained its nickname because its colors reminded tourists of the famous "Bounty island" scenery.

The location is free of charge but largely undeveloped, with no facilities or cafés nearby. Access requires a steep and sometimes challenging descent, so proper footwear is essential. The beach is better suited for experienced and well-prepared visitors.

Beach infrastructure: 🌴

FILINSKAYA BAY

Where: **Kaliningrad Region, Baltic Sea**

This beach is known for its rugged coastal cliffs and iron-rich reddish sand. The Baltic coastline offers panoramic views of Cape Taran and its historic lighthouse, especially striking at dawn. Shifting coastal landslides occasionally reveal ancient shells and fossils hidden in the sand.

The beach is suitable for a relaxed day by the sea: the access is free, basic summer amenities like lifeguards, sun loungers, changing cabins and a small playground are in place. Nearby cafés provide simple food options and are open.

Beach infrastructure: 🌴 🌴 🌴

KISELEV ROCK BEACH

Where: **Tuapse District, Black Sea**

Kiselev Rock beach is a stretch of coastline located near the city of Tuapse on the Black Sea. The beach lies beneath a sheer 46-meter cliff named after Russian painter Alexander Kiselev, who often depicted the location in his works.

The beach is free and popular, often attracting many visitors, especially in summer. Basic amenities are limited, and the nearest cafés and restaurants are located a couple of kilometers away, though boat trips and diving excursions are available.

Beach infrastructure: 🌴 🌴



ITURUP ISLAND BEACH

Where: **Kuril Islands, Pacific Ocean**

The beaches of Iturup Island are shaped by volcanic landscapes and restless Pacific waves. The shoreline is often covered with stretches of dark volcanic sand framed by rocky cliffs and misty horizons. Interestingly, the Kuril Islands lie along the Pacific "Ring of Fire," one of the most active volcanic zones on the planet.

All beaches are free to access, but there is no infrastructure, making them suitable for short visits rather than a full beach day. There are no cafés nearby, and the ocean remains cold even in summer.

Beach infrastructure: 🌴

GLASS BAY

Where: **Vladivostok, Russian Far East, Sea of Japan**

Glass Bay is one of the most unique beaches not only in Russia but in the world. Instead of sand or pebbles, the shore is covered with smooth fragments of colorful sea glass polished by waves. These pieces are remnants of bottles and porcelain once discarded nearby that the ocean gradually transformed into rounded stones. These fragments are slowly disappearing as waves grind them into sand. Some are taken away by tourists as souvenirs.

Access to the beach is free on foot, while entry by car and use of certain facilities may require a fee. Basic amenities and casual cafés are available on-site, though many visitors prefer to bring their own seating and enjoy takeaway food by the shore.

Beach infrastructure: 🌴 🌴



KHALAKTYRSKY BEACH

Where: **Kamchatka Peninsula, Pacific Ocean**

Khalaktyrsky Beach is famous for its long shore of black volcanic sand facing the open Pacific in all its glory. Powerful waves roll onto the coast, making it a popular spot for surfers. The sand owes its unusual color to volcanic minerals carried here by eruptions of nearby Kamchatka volcanoes.

The beach is free to visit, but be aware that it is not a traditional beach destination. The location is best experienced as a wild landscape, with no facilities, sun loungers and cafés directly on site.

Beach infrastructure: 🌴



rosmolodezh
business

Elizaveta Krasnaya is the winner of the All-Russian "Young Entrepreneur of Russia-2025" award from Rosmolodezh.Predprinimai. It honors innovators aged 16–35 who launch their own ventures and drive the nation's economy.

WHERE MY STORY BEGINS:

A Genealogist's Notes

Yesterday, I wandered through a village near Vologda, erased from modern maps. Last week, a German settlement in Saratov. A month ago, a remote mountain hamlet in Dagestan. No plane tickets needed — I simply open archival documents.

I'm Elizaveta Krasnaya, historian, genealogist, and founder of the "Chronicler of the Lineage" agency. Every day, I trace family trees and journey across Russia, guided by lives long past: a birth here, joining the Party there, a first home built over here.

Russia is a tapestry of intertwined peoples — Finno-Ugrics and Turks, Volga German colonists and Black Sea Greeks — sprawling across one-sixth of Earth's landmass. Dig deep enough, and nearly every foreigner traces roots somewhere between Kaliningrad and Vladivostok. They might live in Istanbul or Berlin, unaware their lineage threads back to a precise village, a specific house. And the archives remember it all.

Once, I rebuilt a client's family tree from Finland. The trail led to Tomsk Oblast, a half-abandoned village where his great-grandfather plied his trade as a blacksmith. The church still stands, and its parish registers dating back to 1758 are preserved in the regional archive. My client flew in, stood before it, and later wrote: "It's strange — I'm here for the first time, but it feels like home." That's the essence of my work.

Every research project is a detective story. Let me share another: A client's family believed their great-great-grandmother had perished in the 1917 Revolution. To everyone's astonishment, I tracked her down in Kazakhstan. She had left, become a teacher, and lived until 1961. Three generations mourned her as lost, while she taught children to read — 4,000 km from home.

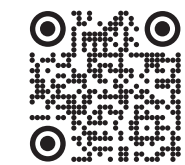
People seek me out for all sorts of reasons. Some hunt for a grandfather vanished in war. Others take a DNA test and puzzle over their 12% Tatar ancestry.

Many simply feel an inexplicable void in their soul. In our world of fleeting videos and endless image scrolls, anchoring to something real — what preceded us and will outlast us — matters more than ever. When someone beholds their family tree spanning centuries, when names gain faces, professions, and pivotal choices, something profound shifts within. Knowledge of your family history reduces anxiety and boosts self-esteem — I know this firsthand. People who trace their roots simply carry themselves with more confidence.

That's why I don't just research family trees myself; I empower others to do it independently. Twice a year, I open enrollment for my genealogy school. Over 1,100 graduates have uncovered their lineages back to the 18th century — on their own. Our Telegram channel has grown into the country's largest genealogy community.

But numbers aren't what drive me. It's that breathtaking moment when someone first cradles a 200-year-old document inscribed with their great-great-grandfather's name — the ink still sharp, the centuries suddenly collapsing.

Russia's vast archives hold millions of stories. Could one belong to your family?



Author:

Elizaveta Krasnaya
Historian, genealogist, founder
of the agency "Letopisets Roda"

atlas

SERVICE ATLAS
IS A PARTNER
OF DISCOVER
RUSSIA

READING YOUR GENOME:

A New Way to Approach
Health and Wellbeing

The structure of the DNA molecule was discovered in 1953. Since then, scientists have been actively studying the human genome and have achieved impressive results – today, thanks to the latest advances in science, you can learn what information is contained in your DNA.

WHY GENETICS MATTER TODAY

Modern life places increasing demands on our health: changing lifestyles, environmental pressures, evolving nutrition habits, and longer life expectancy mean that one-size-fits-all recommendations are no longer enough — personalized data is essential: it can help you understand your natural predispositions, make more informed lifestyle choices, and focus on prevention rather than responding to issues only after they arise.

The key lies in genetics. Our genes determine not only our appearance and eye color but also our predisposition to certain diseases, reactions to medications, and even personality traits. In the era of per-

sonalized medicine, understanding one's genome allows for a shift from a general approach to an individual one, thanks to genetic testing.

These tests identify risks for cancer, heart disease, or diabetes in advance, help select the most appropriate medications, and even assist in planning a diet or choosing a type of exercise that suits your genotype.

For those travelling to Russia for wellness or recovery, integrating genetic testing into their programme can make the experience more precise, offering recommendations tailored to the individual body.

WHAT IS ATLAS

Atlas is a digital genetics service designed to help people build a more personalised approach to health, vitality, and longevity, guided by insights from DNA and microbiome.

Genetic and microbiome data can serve as a detailed map of the body, supporting more confident long-term decisions about lifestyle, nutrition, prevention, and medical care. This approach combines advanced genomic technologies, clinical expertise, and careful interpretation of data, turning complex biological information into clear, practical insights.

WHOLE GENOME TEST

Atlas was among the first in Russia to introduce whole genome sequencing at this scale, and it remains the most comprehensive level of genetic analysis currently available. Using Next Generation Sequencing (NGS) technology, the test reads up to 95% of DNA, providing exceptional depth and accuracy.

Because DNA remains constant throughout life, the test is performed once, while its value continues to grow over time, supporting preventive strategies, lifestyle choices, nutrition, and informed medical decisions.

The Whole Genome Test can reveal risks of multifactorial diseases, an extended panel of inherited conditions, hereditary cancer syndromes, response to medications (pharmacogenetics), analysis of food intolerances and sensitivities and much more, including personalised recommendations for nutrition, lifestyle, and medical monitoring.

The experience includes a consultation with a genetics specialist, as well as access to raw genetic data in multiple formats for further exploration.

Did you know that genetic tests can determine how your body reacts to caffeine? Certain gene variants indicate whether you are a "fast" or "slow" metabolizer. This affects how quickly caffeine is processed by your body and whether it may cause side effects like insomnia and tachycardia.

MICROBIOME TEST

Interest in gut health is becoming a global wellness trend. From fibre-rich foods to fermented products, more people are beginning to recognise the importance of the microbiome, but understanding your own microbiome makes a real difference.

The microbiome plays a key role in digestion, immunity, metabolism, and overall wellbeing. Using advanced bacterial DNA sequencing, Atlas Microbiome Test provides a detailed analysis of the gut microbiota, showing the balance between beneficial and opportunistic microorganisms.

The report includes insights into the microbiota's ability to produce butyrate, a short-chain fatty acid essential for gut health. It supports the intestinal barrier, helps reduce inflammation, nourishes gut cells, and contributes to more comfortable digestion. Based on the results, users receive tailored recommendations to help improve digestion, reduce discomfort, and optimise nutrition and lifestyle.

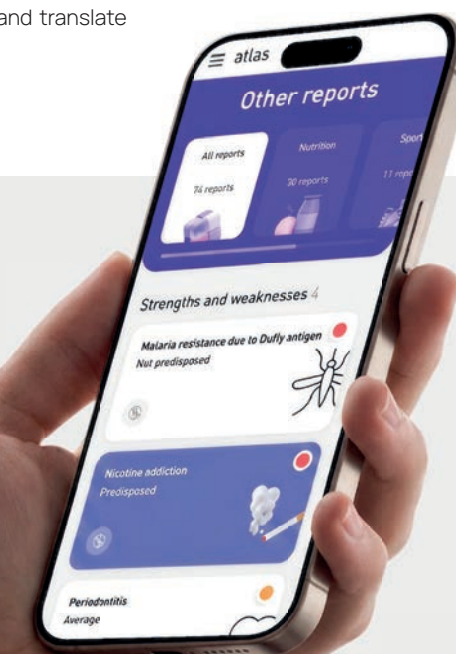
HOW IT WORKS

After purchasing a test, an Atlas kit can be delivered anywhere in Russia, with complimentary delivery and sample collection. Inside the kit, users will find everything they need, along with clear step-by-step instructions for collecting the sample. Once the sample has been collected, the test is activated through a personal account. A courier then collects the sample at a convenient time. Results are available in the personal account within 8–10 weeks, although processing times may be slightly longer for whole genome sequencing.

After receiving the results, users can book a consultation with an Atlas specialist to better understand the data and translate it into a personalised plan.



**ALL RESULTS
AND REPORTS
ARE AVAILABLE
IN ENGLISH**





KONDUKI:

Martian Reservoirs Near Tula

In the Tula Region, not far from the village of Konduki, lies an unusual water attraction — a man-made wonder on the site of old coal quarries, also known as Romantsevskiy Mountains. Artificial hills that grew here during extraction resemble Martian terrain, while the quarries flooded with groundwater have turned into emerald reservoirs surrounded by a woodland.

However, don't let the mesmerizing beauty of the water surface deceive you — the water in the quarries has very high acidity, and the bottom has a dangerous relief, so swimming here is prohibited. Admiring it, though, is fine.

DR REVIEW:

The List of Major Travel Industry Events in Russia

Major industry forums, business platforms, and travel development formats: a selection of key events shaping Russia's tourism industry in the second half of 2026.

Photo: Egor Aleev / TASS Photo Agency

SPROUTS FORUM



WHEN: **AUGUST 16–19**
WHERE: **KAZAN**

The Sprouts Forum is a key Russia–China business platform for interregional cooperation, investment, and long-term partnerships. It will bring together regional authorities, business leaders, and investors from both countries to develop new models of cooperation between Russian regions and Chinese provinces.

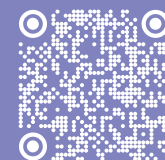
The program will focus on investment opportunities, industrial partnerships, and logistics development in both nations. Particular attention will be given to business dialogue formats and B2B meetings, as well as to the creation of new channels for trade, technological exchange, and cross-border connectivity. Within this framework, the forum will also open opportunities for joint projects in tourism, including the development of travel routes, infrastructure, and cross-border visitor flows.

EASTERN ECONOMIC FORUM (EEF)

The EEF is one of Russia's main international platforms for discussing the future of the Far East. Set to be held in the regional capital of Vladivostok, it will unite government officials, regional leaders, major businesses, and international partners to assess the region's economic potential and present new investment opportunities.

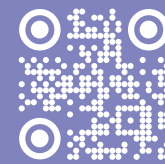
The EEF program will include a plenary session, panel discussions, business dialogues, industry round tables, and presentations of regional investment projects. The forum's agenda will focus on the strategic development of the Russian Far East, including transport and energy infrastructure, investment incentives, and cooperation with the Asia-Pacific region.

In 2025, the tenth anniversary Eastern Economic Forum took place, reaffirming the event's significance in establishing business dialogue with partners from the Pacific region: approximately 8,000 participants and media representatives from 75 countries and territories attended the forum. The largest delegations came from China, Laos, Mongolia, Japan, and India. This year, participation of India, China, and other representatives of Asia-Pacific countries is also expected.



WHEN: **SEPTEMBER 1–4**
WHERE: **VLADIVOSTOK**

OTDYKH LEISURE



WHEN: **SEPTEMBER 2–4**
WHERE: **MOSCOW**

Otdykh Leisure, which brings together key players across the tourism sector, is one of Russia's leading industry exhibitions for inbound, outbound, and domestic tourism, marking the start of the autumn–winter travel season. Due to be held in Moscow, the event will also create space for dialogue between government and business, aligning priorities and fostering new partnerships across the industry.

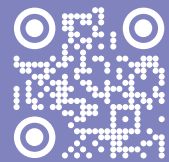
The event will combine industry strategy with practical business tools, covering destination marketing, digitalization, and approaches to year-round travel demand. The agenda will also highlight regional tourism projects, investment cases, and communication strategies, with dedicated tracks focused on industry transformation, marketing and emotional engagement, and applied technological solutions.

Photo: Elena Ignatieva / Roscongress Photobank

FORUM OF RUSSIAN REGIONS

The Forum of Russian Regions is a platform focused on the development of tourism infrastructure and regional investment. The forum will also take place in Moscow and will provide an opportunity for government representatives, private investors, hospitality businesses, and industry experts to discuss the role of tourism in shaping regional economies and improving living environments.

The forum will revolve around infrastructure development, investment opportunities, and the growth of the hospitality sector, highlighting the importance of cooperation between public and private stakeholders. It will also serve as a space for dialogue among experts and decision-makers working on creating competitive destinations and strengthening tourism as part of broader territorial development.

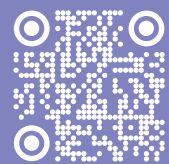


WHEN: **SEPTEMBER**
WHERE: **MOSCOW**

AIR TRAVEL SOCHI

Air Travel Sochi is an international aviation and tourism forum centred on the development of air connectivity and its role in tourism growth. It unites representatives of airlines, airports, tourism authorities, and industry partners to discuss how air transport shapes travel flows across Russia and international markets.

Discussions will address route development, international and regional accessibility, and the expansion of inbound tourism, particularly in southern Russia. The forum will also cover Infrastructure development, strategic partnerships, and the role of Sochi as a key aviation gateway, highlighting the connection between air transport and destination growth.



WHEN: **OCTOBER**
WHERE: **SOCHI**

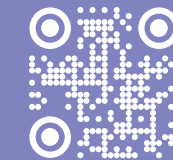


SOCHI INTERNATIONAL TOURISM FORUM (SIFT)

Photo:
SIFT Photobank /
tour-forum.com

SIFT is a major industry platform focused on the development of tourism in Russia, with particular attention to resort destinations and regional travel strategies. Held annually in Sochi, one of the country's key coastal destinations, the forum brings together representatives of the tourism sector, regional authorities, and industry experts.

This year's agenda will cover destination development, infrastructure, and service standards, as well as strategies for domestic and inbound tourism. It will also serve as a platform for professional dialogue on how regions position themselves, manage seasonality, and adapt to changing travel demand.

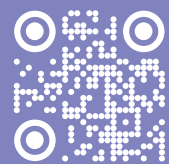


WHEN: **DECEMBER 8–9**
WHERE: **SOCHI**

“CITIES OF RUSSIA” FORUM

The “Cities of Russia” Forum focuses on the long-term development of urban territories and the importance of strategic planning in shaping more resilient cities. This year's line-up will address municipal governance, local economies, public-private dialogue, human capital, and city attractiveness.

Tourism will be one of the forum's dedicated tracks. The platform will explore how territorial identity can become an economic driver, how business tourism supports urban growth, and how common hospitality standards can strengthen a city's competitive position. In this context, tourism will be approached as part of a broader discussion about the development and identity of Russian cities.



WHEN: **NOVEMBER 26–27**
WHERE: **YEKATERINBURG**

TRAVEL HUB

Travel Hub is a key international tourism platform held in St. Petersburg, serving as a year-end meeting point for government, business, and international partners. The forum focuses on inbound and business tourism, international positioning, and regional development, with the city presented as a key hub driving tourism growth in Russia.

This year's program will offer B2B interaction, industry networking, and strategic dialogue, covering MICE tourism, international cooperation, investment, hospitality standards, and digital promotion. It will also include workshops, panel discussions, and specialised formats connecting tourism with aviation and global markets, creating opportunities for partnerships and cross-border collaboration.

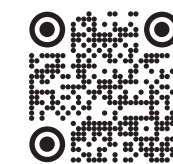


WHEN: **DECEMBER**
WHERE: **ST. PETERSBURG**

MEDTRAVELEXPO

MedTravelExpo is Russia's largest specialised congress and exhibition project dedicated to medical and wellness tourism. Set to be held in Moscow as part of Russian Healthcare Week, it will serve as a meeting point for clinics, rehabilitation centres, sanatorium and resort facilities, wellness hotels, medical tourism agencies, and regional representatives working at the intersection of healthcare and travel.

The congress's agenda will focus on treatment and recovery services, sanatorium-based tourism, and the development of integrated health-focused travel products in Russia and abroad. It will also highlight cross-sector cooperation, the export potential of medical services, and the growing role of wellness and preventive care in shaping new travel demand.



WHEN: **DECEMBER 7–10**
WHERE: **MOSCOW**

LET'S TRAVEL!

International Tourism Forum

Discover the pulse of global tourism at the Let's Travel! International Tourism Forum, which connects government officials, travelers, and business leaders via an exhibition, festival, and business programs — ideal for sharing expertise, building partnerships, and exploring trends.



Things to do as a visitor:

participate in workshops, browse for souvenirs at regional stands, attend expert talks on lesser-known routes in the Grand Lecture Hall, or enjoy a tea ceremony in the Retreat Zone.

Let's Travel! 2025 in figures:

4,000 business participants, 433,000 festival visitors, 438 exhibitors (tour operators, hotel chains, equipment manufacturers) across 140 stands, 61 sessions with 427 speakers and 67 agreements, 182 lectures by 276 experts, and 100+ performance groups. Stands for all of Russia's regions were joined by representatives from 32 other countries.



WHEN: JUNE 10–14, 2026
WHERE: VDNH

The business program centers on three core areas: Product, Infrastructure, and Promotion.

Product: highlighting solutions for management, investment, and communications, while addressing regional identity and competitiveness.

Infrastructure: tackling accessibility and transport connectivity.

Promotion: focusing on regional brand development.

Panel discussions on strategically vital issues will explore domestic and inbound tourism outlooks and government support measures. Networking sessions enable connections with potential partners and discussions of joint projects in a relaxed setting. Visitors from over 40 countries are joining in, underscoring the international stature of Let's Travel!

The exhibition and festival program engages diverse travelers, showcasing new destinations and cultures. Cultural, culinary, educational, and entertainment events, including daily performances of traditional dances and shows from various regions on the main stage, create a travel feast celebrating the great diversity of destinations across Russia and beyond, all within VDNH Park.

Regions from Russia and abroad will present their offerings to over 500,000 visitors — the prime audience for tour operators — with extensive media coverage. Confirmed participants include Abkhazia, Venezuela, Cuba, Nicaragua, Kyrgyzstan, Armenia, the Russian-Thai Business Council, Uganda, and Uzbekistan. The African Tourism Board will also host a stand featuring Lesotho, Mauritius, Malawi, Nigeria, Tanzania (including Zanzibar), and Ethiopia.

As Russia's leading tourism event, the Let's Travel! International Tourism Forum combines a business program for industry professionals with a festival for travelers — engage by attending the business program, exhibiting your project, or simply enjoying the festival.



Interview with Vladimir Zatynaiko, Deputy CEO of the Roscongress Foundation and Director of the Let's Travel! International Tourism Forum

Could you please tell us about the concept of the Let's Travel! Forum? What makes it different from other tourism industry events?

The Let's Travel! International Tourism Forum is a multi-format event that combines an exhibition and festival with an exciting business programme. What really makes it special is the way it integrates different approaches to create an opportunity for businesses and travelers to interact directly with the government. Unlike other industry events that tend to be very niche, the Let's Travel! Forum encompasses every aspect of the tourism industry, from developing tourism products and infrastructure to promoting destinations and adopting digital technologies. This equips the Forum to drive change in the industry and serve as a launching pad for initiatives and an ideal platform for presenting interim project results.

What is the Forum's primary objective this year?

The primary goal of the exhibition and festival is to clearly demonstrate the tourism potential of all Russia's regions, the wide variety of recreational activities available, and the special offers for residents of the country.

Visitors to the Let's Travel! Forum will get to see the achievements of the tourism industry in all their diversity. We not only want to highlight the potential of the regions, but also clearly show the ready-made solutions that already make Russia an attractive tourist destination.

Who is represented at this year's Let's Travel! Forum?

The 2026 edition of the exhibition will feature 76 regions from every federal district, from Kaliningrad to Kamchatka. Their stands will host an entertainment program showcasing the diversity of culture and traditions of the peoples of Russia and the world: music and dance performances, creative workshops for children and adults, and raffles. More than 20 nations from Africa, Latin America, Asia, and the CIS are expected to participate. Visitors will have an excellent opportunity to explore and immerse themselves in international culture in a single venue, with some completely new destinations for Russian travelers, such as Nicaragua, Malawi, and Lesotho, to be presented for the first time.

Why should we attend the Let's Travel! International Tourism Forum?

Come to the festival section of the Let's Travel! Forum to experience Russia's diversity without the long trip, sample regional cuisine, learn traditional crafts, see performances by folk ensembles, take part in a fascinating quest, and use the mobile guidebook to access exclusive discounts and special offers. Bring the whole family so everyone can find new ideas for travel and take home not only souvenirs, but also plans for their next vacation.

DOMODEDOVO AIRPORT:

Comfort in the Air and on the Ground



VIP SERVICE (DEPARTURE / ARRIVAL)

Individual service and assistance with pre-flight procedures: personal meet-and-greet, luggage assistance, priority check-in with no queues, VIP lounge with restaurant and meeting rooms, personal transfer to or from the aircraft, and escort to boarding.

BUSINESS LOUNGES (DEPARTURE)

Waiting for a flight with purpose and comfort: a cozy lounge area with a buffet, a quiet coworking space, showers, and a children's playroom. The lounges offer convenient Wi-Fi, with snacks and drinks included.

ULTRA (DEPARTURE)

"Turnkey" concept: comprehensive support for departing passengers with expedited pre-flight formalities (for domestic flights) and a visit to the business lounge. This service includes personal escort at the airport: meeting with a sign, assistance with luggage, escort through all the formalities and access to a comfortable business lounge.

MEET & GREET (DEPARTURE/ARRIVAL)

Personalized pickup: meeting passengers with a nameplate at a designated location on the airport premises / at the exit of the airbridge or at the entrance to the arrivals area of the airport terminal; assisting with pre- or post-flight formalities; and escorting to the boarding gate / forecourt, or parking lot.

ESCORTING LATE PASSENGER (DEPARTURE)

Catch the flight before the end of boarding: meeting passengers with a nameplate at the forecourt, parking lot or railway platform, if necessary, escorting to the check-in desk and assisting with the pre-flight formalities as a matter of priority in order to catch the flight before boarding. If traveling with luggage, a porter will help to deliver it to the check-in counter.

EXTRAS:

- Assistance with Luggage: the airport team can deliver luggage including hand luggage from the train station, Parking 2 or Taxi Parking (airport forecourt) to check-in counter. Both for departure and arrival.
- Fast Track: after check-in for domestic Russian flights, airport team can assist with fast security screening via a separate security channel without queues.
- Food for Flight: passengers can order healthy food options from airport's online menu; it will be freshly prepared and delivered to the boarding gate.

LEARN MORE ABOUT PASSENGER SERVICES:

- At Check-in counter 231, ground floor of international passenger terminal, international check-ins.
- Online via this QR-code, available 24/7.



ADDITIONAL SERVICES FOR PASSENGERS AT THE AIRPORT:

- VIP-Service
- Business lounges
- Assistance with luggage (porters)
- Fasttrack
- Arranging meeting assistant for the Arrivals



More services for
passengers are
available at
dme.ru

MARK THE DATE:

85th Anniversary of Vnukovo Airport

Vnukovo International Airport (named after A. N. Tupolev) celebrates its 85th anniversary this year. As the oldest operating airport in Moscow, it has evolved from a military airfield into one of Russia's premier international transport hubs, offering advanced infrastructure that meets the highest global standards.

The DR team congratulates Vnukovo on this milestone anniversary, highlighting key moments from the airport's history in a special themed calendar.

July 2, 1941

Official opening. The airport was opened ahead of schedule due to the outbreak of the Great Patriotic War (a theater of World War II fought by the Soviet Union against Nazi Germany and its Axis allies). It subsequently served as a base for the Moscow Airborne Special Purpose Group (MAGON), which included pilots from Vnukovo.

April 14, 1961

Ceremonial welcome for Yuri Gagarin at Vnukovo. Two days after his historic spaceflight, the first human in space, Yuri Gagarin, arrived at Vnukovo Airport from the Baikonur Cosmodrome. This marked the beginning of a tradition of welcoming cosmonauts at Vnukovo, including Valentina Tereshkova, the first woman in space, and Alexei Leonov, the first person to perform a spacewalk.

1980–2004

Construction and opening of Terminals D and B. The first of these, Terminal D, was built for the XXII Olympic Games in Moscow. Vnukovo received Olympic participants and guests, successfully handling the increased traffic and proving its operational capability.

2012

Terminal A, one of the largest and most convenient passenger terminals in Russia, is opened.

2023

Vnukovo Airport metro station is opened. For now Vnukovo is the only airport in Russia with a metro station providing direct access to the terminal complex, enabling a 30–60 minute journey from the city center without traffic delays.



Photo:
vnukovo.ru

LEGAL TIPS

Russia offers far more than just tourism — it's a land brimming with business potential, especially in its rapidly expanding tourism sector. In partnership with VERBA LEGAL, we've compiled essential recommendations for entrepreneurs eyeing Russia as a prime business destination.

MAIN TYPES OF BUSINESS ENTITIES IN RUSSIA

All commercial legal entities engaged in business activities in Russia fall into two main groups:

- Public companies, represented by public joint-stock companies (PJSCs).
- Private (non-public) companies, represented by non-public joint-stock companies (JSCs) and limited liability companies (LLCs).

Public joint stock company (PJSC)

- Shares are publicly placed and traded on a stock exchange.
- Companies may raise capital through the public sale of their shares.
- Public reporting and disclosure requirements are more stringent in terms of corporate governance.
- A public company must disclose information as prescribed by law and include a Board of Directors in its corporate structure. If a shareholder or third party (together with its affiliates) acquires more than 30%, 50%, or 75% of the shares, it must make a mandatory public offer to all other shareholders.

Limited liability company (LLC)

- LLC is the most common corporate form for private businesses in Russia.
- Participatory interests are not publicly traded.
- Maximum number of participants in an LLC: 50.

Joint stock company (JSC)

- Non-public (private) companies generally offer greater flexibility in corporate governance and structuring relationships between shareholders.
- Unlike LLCs, the maximum number of participants in a JSC is not limited.
- The JSC corporate form is more flexible than PJSC and not subject to such strict oversight by the Bank of Russia. The main difference between JSC and PJSC is that JSC shares are not traded on a stock exchange.

According to the Law, tourism is one of Russia's priority economic sectors. The Government must therefore promote tourism activities, create favorable conditions for their development, identify and support priority tourism areas, promote the image of the Russian Federation as an attractive tourist destination, and provide support and protection to tourists, tour operators, travel agents, and their associations.

TAXATION

Most commonly used tax regimes in Russia:

- General system of taxation (GST).
- Simplified system of taxation (SST).

The choice of tax regime determines the taxes your company will pay going forward.

All organizations can opt for the General Special Regime (GST), regardless of their activity type or scale. This regime applies automatically upon company registration unless the organization elects the Simplified Special Regime (SST).

The SST is a preferential tax regime for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that meet specific eligibility criteria.

Main taxes in Russia are:

- Corporate profit tax.
- Value Added Tax (VAT).
- Property tax.
- Transport tax.
- Land tax.
- Withholding tax.

Tax benefits for small and medium enterprises (SMEs):

- Reduced tax rate on social contributions.
- Subsidies, grants, and preferential loans.
- Limitation of scheduled tax audits.
- Priority rights in state tenders.

Criteria for SME: annual turnover up to 2 bln RUB (approx. \$25 000 000) and number of employees up to 250 people.

More than 51% of the company's share capital is owned by individuals or SMEs. A company with foreign participation can also obtain SME status. To do so, a Russian auditor must conduct an audit and confirm that the company's foreign participant meets specific criteria for revenue and headcount.

LEGAL REGULATION

The tourist industry is regulated primarily by certain laws, including the Civil Code of the Russian Federation, the Russian Federation Law "On Protection of Consumer Rights," and the law that directly governs tourism — the Federal Law No. 132-FZ of November 24, 1996, "On the Fundamentals of Tourist Activities in the Russian Federation" — which establishes the general rules for tourist activities in Russia.

Also, there is subordinate legislation that regulates certain tourism issues, such as:

- The Rules for the provision of services for the sale of a tourist product.
- The Rules for the provision of hotel services in Russia.
- The Rules for providing emergency assistance to tourists.

Another key regulator is the Strategy for the Development of Tourism in Russia until 2035, according to which tourism is considered a priority sector to be developed in Russia.

The Strategy establishes as its aim the development of various types of tourism in Russia, particularly:

- Children's tourism.
- Cultural tourism.
- Skiing tourism.
- Cruise tourism.
- Ecological tourism.
- Business tourism.

"Based on the Strategy, the aim of almost every type of tourism mentioned is to double the number of tourists, highlighting business opportunities in Russia's tourism sector," —

Dmitrii Malbin, attorney, Ph.D. in Law

CHOOSING TRUST:

How International Travel Businesses Can Find the Right Partner in Russia

THE MARKET BEHIND THE IMAGE

In international tourism, local partnerships are rarely judged by legal structure alone and never by presentation alone. In Russia, as in any operationally complex destination, the quality of the local partner can define the quality of the entire client experience.

For foreign tour operators, DMCs, MICE agencies, travel designers, and corporate buyers, that makes partner selection a strategic act rather than a procurement routine. A weak counterparty does not simply create inconvenience. It introduces exposure: to service failure, to reputational damage, to financial loss.

That is why experienced buyers tend to become skeptical of the wrong signals. A polished website can indicate brand awareness, but not governance. A low quote can suggest competitiveness, but also hidden exclusions or fragility in delivery. The real question is whether the supplier can be verified, understood, and trusted at the point where responsibility matters.

Russia's inbound and domestic travel ecosystem presents foreign buyers with several distinct categories of counterparties, each with its own risk profile. A hotel affects not only accommodation quality but also group handling and, for foreign guests, practical migration-related processes. A tour operator sits closer to the legal and financial architecture of the travel product. A DMC often becomes the local mind and hands of the project. A transport company carries a more immediate burden of punctuality, safety, and contingency discipline.

The trouble begins when foreign buyers flatten these distinctions and assess every supplier through the same commercial lens. In practice, a strong hotel may be a weak contracting partner, a persuasive DMC may be little more than an intermediary, and a competitively priced transport provider may depend on subcontractors it does not tightly control. Reliability in this market is rarely visible in general reputation alone.

PRESENTATION IS NOT PROOF

There is a familiar seduction in international business: the supplier that communicates beautifully. Yet the distance between polished communication and resilient delivery can be surprisingly wide.

A well-designed digital presence may signal ambition and commercial fluency, but it does not establish who the legal counterparty is, who controls the supply chain, or who takes responsibility when the plan breaks.

The same applies to responsiveness. A company that answers within minutes is easy to like. But in travel operations, the deeper questions come later: who remains reachable when the group lands after midnight, who authorizes a replacement vehicle, who covers the cost of an overbooking, who can actually make a decision when the agreed scenario stops existing.

START WITH LEGAL IDENTITY, NOT COMMERCIAL CHARM

Every serious due diligence process begins with a deceptively simple step: establishing who the counterparty actually is. Not the brand, website, trade name in the email footer, but the legal entity or individual entrepreneur that will sign the contract, receive the funds, and bear responsibility for delivery.

This matters because fragmentation is common enough to cause problems. A foreign client may negotiate with one commercial identity, receive payment instructions from another, and discover only later that the operational work is carried out by a third party. When roles are split in this way, accountability weakens.

LEGAL RED FLAGS

The company avoids sharing legal details: Weak transparency at the start often signals deeper problems

The website, invoice, and contract show different entities: Accountability may be fragmented

The signatory cannot prove authority: The contract may become harder to enforce

The signatory seems detached from the business: Possible nominee director risk

PARTNER SELECTION CHECKLIST

- 1 Identify the exact legal entity or individual entrepreneur**
Prevents confusion between brand, invoice issuer, and contracting party
- 2 Collect registration data**
Confirms the partner exists and operates formally
- 3 Verify who signs the contract**
Reduces authority and enforceability risk
- 4 Check for nominee director risk**
Helps identify weak governance and unclear decision-making
- 5 Review operational structure**
Shows whether the partner can actually deliver
- 6 Assess service-specific compliance**
Important for hotels, tour operators, DMCs, and transport companies
- 7 Review financial terms**
Highlights refund, prepayment, and cancellation risk
- 8 Test the partner with a real scenario**
Reveals practical responsiveness and judgment
- 9 Run a pilot order**
Validates the partner in real operations
- 10 Put all terms in writing**
Reduces ambiguity and future disputes

AUTHORITY IS PART OF RELIABILITY

Knowing the company is not enough. One must also know who, within the company, has the right to commit it. In cross-border business, signing authority is often treated as an afterthought, especially when the relationship feels commercially smooth. That is a mistake.

In practice, foreign buyers sometimes discover too late that the polished executive who negotiated the terms was not authorized to finalize them. What looks like a technical issue at the beginning can become

painfully concrete later, particularly in disputes over refunds, substitutions, liability, or scope changes.

The prudent approach is straightforward: confirm who signs, on what basis, and with what documented authority. In a healthy company, that request is not controversial. It is normal business discipline.

THE NOMINEE DIRECTOR PROBLEM

Among the less obvious but more consequential risks is the nominee director: a person who appears in official records as the head of the company but does not truly govern the business or control its decisions. For a foreign partner, it can become a direct operational liability.

The difficulty is that nominee structures do not always look suspicious at first. The company may appear polished, responsive, even well connected. Yet beneath that surface, negotiations may be driven by one group of people, assurances given by another, and the actual contract signed by a figurehead with limited real authority. When something goes wrong, it becomes painfully clear. The formal signatory may be unable to authorize a refund, approve a supplier replacement, resolve a payment issue, or even explain how the business is structured.

No single indicator is conclusive, and caution is needed before drawing hard conclusions. Still, patterns matter. If the signatory never joins important discussions, avoids direct conversation, seems unfamiliar with the commercial logic of the proposal, or cannot explain who controls operations, the buyer should slow down and test further. A short video call focused on the structure of the project can be revealing.

OPERATIONAL MATURITY IS THE REAL DIFFERENTIATOR

Once legal identity and authority have been clarified, the inquiry should move to what actually separates a dependable supplier from a merely persuasive one: operational maturity. This is often less glamorous than branding and more valuable than reputation.

Operational maturity appears in specifics. Can the company describe how it handles late arrivals, last-minute changes, special meal requests, transport breakdowns, or venue substitutions? Is there a

24/7 escalation structure? Are emergency contacts real, or symbolic? Does the partner distinguish between confirmed elements and provisional ones? Does it document changes properly? These are not minor signs. They are the visible expression of whether a business is managed with discipline.

The strongest Russian counterparts often stand out not because they are the most aggressive sellers, but because they are precise. They answer with structure. They set expectations clearly. They know what they can control and what they cannot. They offer alternatives before being cornered.

HOTELS: BEYOND STARS AND AESTHETICS

Hotels are among the easiest suppliers to misread because visual quality and brand recognition create immediate confidence. Yet for international buyers, the real question is not how a property photographs, but how it performs.

A credible hotel partner should be assessed on facts that directly affect group and guest experience: whether the property appears in the relevant accommodation classification framework, which entity actually manages it, which entity contracts and invoices, how group bookings are handled, how overbooking is managed, and whether staff are genuinely comfortable working with foreign guests. For international arrivals, practical handling of migration-related procedures also matters.

OPERATIONAL RED FLAGS

All communication depends on one manager: Operational fragility

No 24/7 contact exists: Weak crisis response

The partner avoids difficult operational questions: Sales strength without execution strength

TOUR OPERATORS: STRUCTURE MATTERS AS MUCH AS PRODUCT

A beautifully assembled itinerary can obscure structural weaknesses. For a foreign buyer, the more meaningful inquiry is whether the tour operator has a credible legal and operational framework for the services it claims to provide.

Beyond formal status, the decisive issue is accountability across the chain of delivery. Who controls regional contractors? Who remains available after office hours? Who steps in when one segment of the product fails? A company may be highly skilled at shaping a program commercially while remaining comparatively weak in operational control. The only reliable way to distinguish the two is to move beyond the proposal and interrogate the operating structure behind it.

The very first step in checking a tour operator is to ensure it's listed in a special registry. Please note that the registry specifically states whether the operator works with foreign lawyers. The registry is available in Russian.



DMCS: LOCAL INTELLIGENCE VERSUS ELEGANT MEDIATION

DMCs are often the most attractive partners in the room. They tend to be articulate, agile, visually polished, and commercially responsive. Those qualities matter, but they should not be confused with operational depth.

The true value of a DMC lies in local intelligence: knowing what is realistic, what is risky, which suppliers can be trusted, where bottlenecks are likely to appear, and how to adapt when the environment shifts. A genuine operator brings structure to uncertainty. A superficial intermediary simply packages options attractively and hopes they hold.

This difference becomes visible under stress. Present a difficult scenario — a protocol-sensitive VIP arrival, a compressed multi-city schedule, a late venue change, a highly customized MICE brief — and the response will say more than any brochure. A capable DMC does not just answer quickly. It answers with judgment, hierarchy of priorities, and a credible plan.

TRANSPORT: WHERE LOW PRICE CAN BE DANGEROUS

If one category most vividly illustrates the danger of choosing on price alone, it is transport. On paper, one bus provider may look much like another. In reality, the differences can be profound: fleet condition, licensing, insurance, dispatch control, reserve vehicles, language capability, and the maturity of real-time coordination all shape service quality and client safety.

A cheap transport quote may conceal an aging fleet, weak backup capacity, poor maintenance culture, or a dependence on subcontractors outside the buyer's field of view. The practical questions are therefore the right ones: what vehicles will actually be used, what happens in case of breakdown, who coordinates on the day, and whether there is a real reserve plan rather than a verbal assurance.

COMMERCIAL RED FLAGS

The company pushes for large prepayment too early: Higher financial exposure

The quote is unusually low without clear scope: Hidden exclusions or weak delivery model

Promises are verbal, but not confirmed in writing: High dispute risk

THE VALUE OF THE PILOT

No amount of desk-based due diligence fully replaces a pilot project. A test transfer, a small group movement, an inspection trip, or a limited-scope event often reveals what documents cannot: how the partner communicates under pressure, whether escalation routes work, whether promises survive contact with reality.

For international buyers entering the Russian market, or expanding into unfamiliar regions within it, the pilot is especially useful. It converts assumption into evidence. It also allows the buyer to assess not only quality, but behavior — the single most important indicator of whether a relationship can scale safely.

FROM DRAWBRIDGES TO THE NEVA:

Symbols of St. Petersburg Hidden in Pulkovo Airport’s Visual Identity

Pulkovo International Airport is the largest air hub of Russia’s Northern Capital and the country’s second-busiest airport by passenger traffic. It is known not only for its advanced infrastructure, but also for its architecture, design, and visual identity, all of which reflect key symbols of the city. Here is a themed version of a hidden-object game: try to spot traces of St. Petersburg in the design of its main airport.



Drawbridge Tails

In 2012, the studio of Russian designer Artemy Lebedev created a logo for Pulkovo Airport featuring drawbridges that also resemble aircraft tails. For some time, the concept remained “in the drawer,” but twelve years later, a more contemporary version became the central element of the airport’s new visual identity.

The idea is built on a double meaning: drawbridges as one of the city’s key engineering symbols and most famous landmarks, and aircraft tails as a reference to the main protagonists of any airport. The result is a distinctive symbol that instantly makes it clear: Pulkovo is the airport of St. Petersburg.

Peter the Great’s Reforms

In the early 18th century, Peter the Great, a central figure in the history of St. Petersburg, introduced the civil script, which became the basis for modern Russian printed type. The reform simplified the writing and reading of letters and contributed to the modernization of culture. This script inspired Pulkovo Airport’s custom typeface — another stylistic reference to the history of the Northern Capital.

The Neva, Islands, and Golden Domes

You can admire the city’s main waterway, the Neva River, right inside St. Petersburg’s airport. The wave-like ceiling on the first floor of Pulkovo’s new terminal serves as an architectural metaphor for the Neva and its curves. This design solution creates a sense of smooth flow and brings the image of the river into the airport’s contemporary space. One of the elements of the airport’s visual identity — the “Roof” pattern — continues this idea. When touched by sunlight, the terminal roof takes on a golden hue, recalling the gilded domes of the city’s churches.

Another interesting architectural feature is connected with the “islands” of the new terminal: the check-in area and the area beyond passport control are linked by bridges, so moving between different parts of the airport recalls walking through the city routes connecting St. Petersburg’s many islands.

A perfect example of how a city’s history and culture can begin to reveal themselves within the walls of its airport.



Photo:
Alexey Smyshlyaev / Shutterstock



Helvetia,
St. Petersburg

DR’S CHOICE:

List of Recommended Hotels

Drawing on traveler reviews, location, quality of stay, service, and other key evaluation criteria, we’ve compiled the guide’s recommended hotels in the locations mentioned in the summer issue of Discover Russia Ultimate Travel Guide — you can book a room on the hotel’s official website by scanning the nearby QR code, or through trusted booking platforms with English-language versions of their sites that feature these hotels: Ostrovok and OneTwoTrip.



Ostrovok



OneTwoTrip

MOSCOW

ARARAT PARK HYATT MOSCOW

Star rating and brief description: five-star luxury hotel in the center of Moscow, known for its high level of service, designer interiors, and panoramic views of iconic landmarks.

Address: Neglinnaya Street, 4



METROPOL

Star rating and brief description: five-star hotel with a rich history in the heart of the capital — it is an important cultural landmark of Moscow and the oldest operating hotel with modern infrastructure.

Address: Teatralny proezd, 2



THE CARLTON

Star rating and brief description: five-star hotel located within walking distance of Red Square and the Kremlin. The hotel is famous for its classic interiors, panoramic views, high level of service, rooftop restaurant, and spacious rooms.

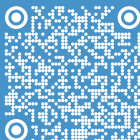
Address: Tverskaya Street, 3



HOTEL CONTINENTAL

Star rating and brief description: five-star hotel located on Tverskaya Street, steps from Red Square. It features a prominent "living art" concept, transforming its public spaces and rooms into a curated gallery of modern art and sculpture.

Address: Tverskaya Street, 22



COSMOS HOTEL GROUP

Star rating and brief description: modern urban, suburban, and premium hotels ranging from 3 to 5 stars. Cosmos Hotel Group is one of the leading Russian hotel operators managing more than 45 hotels in 20+ cities across Russia.

Address: the chain's hotels are represented in the following cities mentioned in the summer issue of DR: Moscow, St. Petersburg, Sochi, Kazan, Yekaterinburg, Astrakhan



Photo:
Vasilixa / Shutterstock

ST. PETERSBURG AND LENINGRAD OBLAST

HELVETIA

Star rating and brief description: five-star boutique hotel located in a historic 19th-century mansion in the business center of St. Petersburg. Known for its cozy home-like atmosphere, high-quality service, and restaurants Cafe Claret and Marius offering signature cuisine.

Address: Marata Street, 11



B.O.R. 812

Star rating and brief description: suburban boutique hotel with a bathhouse complex in the village of Solnechnoye (Kurortny District of St. Petersburg), surrounded by a coniferous forest. The complex offers 8 unique wood-fired banyas and a signature cuisine restaurant. No stars.

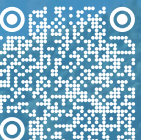
Address: St. Petersburg, Solnechnoye, Primorskoye Highway, 385



ROSA KHUTOR HOTELS

PARK INN RADISSON 4*

Address:
Lavanda Embankment, 5



RADISSON ROSA KHUTOR 5*

Address:
Panorama
Embankment, 4



LIFE BALANCE HOTEL ROSA SPRINGS 5*

Address:
Medoveya Street, 4,
Mountain Olympic Village



GOLDEN TULIP 4*

Address: Panorama
Embankment, 3



SKI INN SPA HOTEL 4*

Address:
Pikhtovaya Alleya, 1



SOCHI

GRAND KARAT

Star rating and brief description: five-star beachfront hotel located on the first line in central Sochi. Rooms with views of the Black Sea, outdoor pool, spa complex, fine dining restaurants, and proximity to major attractions.

Address: Ordzhonikidze Street, 17



SUZDAL

DYMOV DACHA

Star rating and brief description: boutique guest house located in the restored 1871 house, featuring a modern log extension. The interiors feature local art, vintage furniture, and signature tiles from Dymov Ceramics. It is marketed as an ideal spot for cultural relaxation. No stars.

Address: Vladimir Region, Suzdalsky District. The exact address depends on the selected property.



NIZHNY NOVGOROD

MERCURE NIZHNY NOVGOROD CENTRE

Star rating and brief description: a four-star upscale hotel located in the historic center near the city's main attractions. The hotel is known for its central location and quality of service, making it suitable for both leisure and business travelers.

Address: Oktyabrskaya Street, 11A



SHERATON NIZHNY NOVGOROD KREMLIN

Star rating and brief description: five-star luxury hotel located in the city centre, adjacent to the Nizhny Novgorod Kremlin and walking street Bolshaya Pokrovskaya. It offers designer rooms, high-end dining, a 24-hour gym, and versatile event spaces.

Address: Teatralnaya Square, 1



CORT INN NIZHNY NOVGOROD CITY CENTER

Star rating and brief description: four-star hotel located in the historic heart of the city, offering comfortable, modern accommodation. It is within walking distance of major landmarks like the Nizhny Novgorod Kremlin, Bolshaya Pokrovskaya Street, and the Chkalov Staircase.

Address: Ilyinskaya Street, 46/1



TULA

AZIMUT CITY HOTEL TULA

Star rating and brief description: modern and comfortable four-star hotel in the very center of Tula within walking distance of the Tula Kremlin and Upa River embankment. The hotel offers a convenient base for both business travelers and tourists exploring the historic Tula region.

Address: Tula, Sovetskaya Street, 3



ZAVIDOVO

RADISSON, ZAVIDOVO

Star rating and brief description: five-star year-round resort located 100 km from Moscow in the Zavidovo nature reserve on the Volga River. Positioned as a nature-focused destination for both leisure and business with rooms and suites, a comprehensive spa, a panoramic pool and saunas, restaurants and bars.

Address: Tver Region, Konakovskiy District, derevnya Varaksino, Tverskoy bulvar, 2





EXPLORE RUSSIA

by Hot Air
Balloon

When we conceived this spread, we wanted to select a few elevated vantage points from which to see Russia from a bird's-eye view. Then we thought — why limit ourselves to an observation deck or a city rooftop when virtually every corner of the country can be seen from above by soaring over it in a hot air balloon?

This shot, capturing the landscapes of Sochi, inspires you to take flight.

ANO "PARK DEVELOPMENT,"

a government-backed organization, oversees the enhancement, upkeep, and expansion of Moscow's parks. Its dedicated team safeguards this green legacy, from preserving landscapes and ensuring spotless grounds to building new facilities and leisure options.

GETTING THERE:

We've included each park's district and nearest metro stations for easy navigation. You can also get there by taxi — just input the park name and specify an entrance if needed.

ECOPOLIS:

10 Moscow Parks Shaping the Capital's Ecology

Moscow may conjure images of grand boulevards and towering skyscrapers, yet nearly half of its territory is blanketed in lush parks and natural havens. Partnering with ANO "Park Development," we've curated the capital's must-visit green escapes for this summer — and explored how one of the world's greenest megacities lives up to its reputation.

Escape to **Mitino Landscape Park** for expansive vistas, crisp air, and a rare blend of wild terrain and sleek modern design. Wander birch groves and wildflower meadows, pausing at hilltop benches and gazebos with stunning views of the Moscow River and the park's centerpiece, Penyaginsky Pond — summer home to a family of elegant mute swans. Cap your visit with café fare, a picnic in the designated spots, or Instagram-worthy photos.

District: North-Western Administrative Okrug (SZAO)

Nearest metro: Volokolamskaya

Perched on the Khimki Reservoir's shore in northwest Moscow, **Severnoye Tushino Park** beckons with idyllic waterfront walks. The star attraction? The Naval Fleet Museum, where you can climb aboard the storied submarine B-396 "Novosibirsk Komsomolets," tour its tight compartments, and uncover tales of submariners' service and daily life.

Come summer, it takes on a resort-like atmosphere: lounge on the beach-lined embankment, or for the energetic, rent bikes and pedal along scenic paths.

District: North-Western Administrative Okrug (SZAO)

Nearest metros: Skhodnenskaya, Planernaya

Nestled in east Moscow, the **Park at Rainbow Ponds** earns its name from the arc-like curves of its serene ponds. Unwind with a picnic or gazebo lounging, rent a bike or rowboat, catch a sunset from the open-air amphitheater, and marvel at blooming water lilies. Adrenaline junkies will love the summer thrills: amusement rides and a tree-top rope course.

District: Eastern Administrative Okrug (VAO)

Nearest metro: Vykhino

MOSCOW'S GREEN FRAMEWORK FORMS

a vital ecosystem that sustains the city. These parks serve as the metropolis's "lungs," with dense foliage trapping dust and pollutants from urban sprawl. Towering trees and shimmering waters temper extreme temperatures, offer shade in scorching heat, and shelter diverse birds and wildlife.

At the watery core of **Khodynskoye Pole Park** lies Khodynsky Pond, encircled by winding paths perfect for birdwatching. Summer bursts with action: workout zones, trampoline parks, rope courses, parkour spots, and an open-air artificial wave where novices and experts alike conquer the surf.

Echoing its airfield past, the park's design dazzles — runway-like paths, a plane-shaped kids' zone, and a mirror maze for Instagram magic reflecting the greenery.

District: Northern Administrative Okrug (SAO)

Nearest metro: CSKA

THE WAVE RUNS

daily from 10:00–21:00 in summer.

Entry is ticketed, starting at 2,000 rubles (wetsuit and gear included).

Vorontsovo Estate shines with its iconic Vorontsovo Ponds, the heart of this historic natural-architectural gem that lures locals and visitors alike. Stroll the polished embankment, rent boats or catamarans, and get closer to nature by feeding the ducks — from nearby vending machines, not bread or pastries.

District:
South-Western Administrative Okrug (YuZAO)

Nearest metro: Novatorskaya

Coniferous forest, water, sandy beaches, and trails through unique natural zones — it's hard to believe such a spot exists within city limits. **Serebryany Bor**, an artificial island amid the metropolis, offers SUP and river boat rides, hiking routes, an ornithological tower with panoramic island views, and riverside picnics. But the main reason to visit in summer: ideal beach relaxation with essentials like sunbathing areas under shade, changing rooms, and showers.

Fauna bonus: spotting a fluffy squirrel is nearly guaranteed, alongside birds (owls, woodpeckers), hares, hedgehogs, chipmunks, and more.

District: Western Administrative Okrug (ZAO)

Nearest metros: Polezhaevskaya, Shchukinskaya, Khoroshevo

Moskvoretsky Park unfurls for dozens of kilometers along the Moscow River's banks. Summer ignites with wakeboard and wakesurf lessons, plus the city's pioneering open-water surf trainer — perfect for sharpening skills on glassy waters. For laid-back vibes, catch waterfront concerts, join major SUP festivals, or unwind on wooden decks with plush sunbeds.

Districts: Western Administrative Okrug / North-Western Administrative Okrug (ZAO/SZAO)

Nearest metros: Krylatskoye, Molodezhnaya, Strogino, Mnevniki

Remarkably, even Moscow City's gleaming skyscraper district hides a serene green haven. **Krasnogvardeyskiye Ponds** — remnants of the Princes Gagarin estate — pulse with urban play: outdoor gyms, shaded walking paths, ping-pong tables, and an amphitheater with a floating stage for cultural shows. Adults recharge with sports and events, while kids conquer fantasy playgrounds complete with treehouses.

District: Central Administrative Okrug (TsAO)

Nearest metros: Delovoy Tsentr, Vystavochnaya, Mezhdunarodnaya



A pedestrian deck hovering over the water, swing-shaded pergolas, riverside cafés and restaurants, workout and yoga zones, plus kids' playgrounds — Tsarskaya Naberezhnaya debuted in 2025 within the **Kolomenskoye** Museum-Reserve and swiftly claimed a top city spot.

Iconic views steal the show: the UNESCO-listed Church of the Ascension and ancient Dyakovo Settlement, priming you for a deep dive into history and feed-worthy photos.

District: Southern Administrative Okrug (YuAO)

Nearest metros:
Klenovy Bulvar, Kolomenskaya

Another highlight for Moscow last year was the opening of the renovated Pushkinskaya Embankment and the new leisure area near Pioneer Pond in **Gorky Park**. The promenade now features striking new pavilions shaped like cruise liners, with cafés, restaurants, shops, and rooftop viewing platforms overlooking the Moskva River, the city's main waterway. It's the perfect spot to catch the golden hour in summer. While you wait for the ideal light, head to Pioneer Pond, where a new beach area with decking and sun loungers has been created — along with, most importantly, clean water for swimming. For those looking for both active and cultural experiences, the park offers morning yoga sessions, as well as evening DJ sets and open-air theater performances.

District: Central Administrative Okrug (TsAO)

Nearest metro stations:
Park Kultury, Oktyabrskaya



THE SURF TRAINER

runs seasonally
through
October 19, 2025.

Admission is paid:
sessions from
3,500 rubles
(instructor, wetsuit,
and gear included).

COSMOS
HOTEL GROUP

COSMOS
HOTEL GROUP
IS A PARTNER
OF DISCOVER
RUSSIA

POINT ON THE MAP:

Cape Peshurova

Cape Peshurova in Primorye is known for its rocky beaches, sweeping views over Vostok Bay, a unique lighthouse chapel, and an unusual hotel where guests can fully immerse themselves in the distinctive nature of the Russian Far East. Here is everything you need to know about this remarkable point on Russia's map.

Cape Peshurova is located on the shore of Vostok Bay in the Sea of Japan. The nearest city is Nakhodka, from which the cape is most conveniently reached by taxi. Travel time is approximately 30–40 minutes.

Important: Nakhodka does not have its own airport. The nearest airport is in Vladivostok, from where you can travel to Nakhodka by suburban train or arrange a transfer.

LIGHTHOUSE CHAPEL SURROUNDED BY NATURAL WONDERS

The cape's main landmark is its lighthouse chapel — a rare combination of navigational structure and religious site featuring icons created from sketches by the renowned Russian traveler Fyodor Konyukhov. Restored in 2024, the lighthouse is now open to visitors, and many travelers come here specifically to see it.

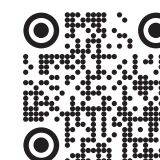
Another reason to visit is the surrounding nature. Observation points on the cape offer stunning views of Vostok Bay, dramatic cliffs, and small sea islands inhabited by gulls and cormorants, while the area itself is ideal for walks along scenic beaches and eco-trails.

WHERE TO STAY

In addition to its cultural and natural attractions, Cape Peshurova is also home to the year-round glamping hotel **Cosmos Atmosfera Primorye Resort**, located directly on the bay's shoreline. Its capsule houses with home cinemas and eco-spheres featuring panoramic sea views, terraces, and private hot tubs have become one of the area's defining landmarks — and a compelling reason to make the journey.

The resort grounds include a fully equipped beach area with pergolas, gazebos, a panoramic event dome, and firepit zones, as well as SUP board and ATV rentals for exploring both the coastline and surrounding landscapes. Guests can also experience the resort's cedar banya.

What makes the banya so beneficial? Cedar wood contains phytoncides — natural compounds often referred to as "natural antibiotics." They are believed to support respiratory health and have a beneficial effect on the body overall, from the skin to the nervous and circulatory systems, while also helping restore energy and emotional balance.



Address:

1 Cape Peshurova, Yuzhno-Morskoy Settlement, Primorye Region

RUSSIA'S SUNSET CAPITAL:

Best Spots in Nizhny Novgorod to Catch the Sunset

One of Russia's oldest cities, Nizhny Novgorod is celebrated not just for its storied past but for its mesmerizing sunsets, which have earned it the title of Russia's sunset capital. We've rounded up the top spots to savor the day's most magical moments.

CHKALOV AIRPORT

Arriving in Nizhny Novgorod by evening flight? Prepare for an unforgettable welcome: the airport's expansive panoramic windows mirror the setting sun's glow, immersing you in the city's magic from your very first step.

SWITZERLAND PARK

Nizhny's sprawling 52-hectare green oasis fuses modern amenities with wild beauty. Wander eco-trails, discover regional flora and fauna, peek into the planetarium or zoo — and from its lofty Oka River perch, savor jaw-dropping sunsets. For prime views, climb to the upper terraces' observation decks.

Entry is free.

Most of these locations, including *the Kremlin, Chkalov Stairs, Fedorovskaya Embankment, and Alexander Garden*, are located in the historic center within walking distance of each other.

For outlying gems, hop in a taxi via the handy Yandex.Go app.

FERRIS WHEEL AND NIZHNY NOVGOROD CABLE CAR

For bird's-eye sunsets, ride the Ferris wheel on Sennaya Square or hop aboard the cable car. Gondola views span the Volga's grandeur, and the line doubles as a swift, traffic-free shuttle to reach the neighboring town of Bor — though expect crowds during rush hour, as locals treat it like everyday transit.

By the numbers: *The Nizhny Novgorod cable car is Europe's longest over-water span, with a total length of 3,661 meters and an unsupported section over the water measuring 861 meters.*

Cable car ticket price for one-way trip: 150 rubles.

Ferris wheel ticket price for one full ride: 450 rubles.

Tickets are available at box offices on the day of your visit.

NIZHNY NOVGOROD KREMLIN

This historic heart of the city lets locals and visitors alike soak in the past while basking in sunset vistas over the surroundings. Climb the observation decks atop the Georgievskaya and Tainitskaya towers — or join a summer museum route that weaves along the Kremlin walls and into exhibits in the Dmitrovskaya, Nikolskaya, and Ivanovskaya towers.

Tickets are available on the day of your visit at box offices in the Dmitrovskaya and Ivanovskaya towers. **Adult price:** 600 rubles (cash or Russia-valid cards accepted).

ALEXANDER GARDEN

Nizhny Novgorod's pioneering English-style park cascades down a 70-meter slope, where winding paths and staircases link terraced levels. Catch the guide's featured sunsets from scenic observation decks, watch Volga ships glide by, and catch free weekend concerts of classical and modern music on the open-air "Shell" stage.

Entry is free.

CHKALOV STAIRS

This iconic landmark links the Upper and Lower Volga embankments, framing epic panoramas of the far Oka River bank. Sunsets here are breathtaking — and don't miss the local legend: make a wish on the first step, climb all the way, and watch it come true.

Fun fact: *the Chkalov Stairs' step count sparks endless debate (443 to 560, per various sources). Its figure-eight design means the left and right halves differ, turning every ascent into a playful counting challenge.*

Entry is free.

FEDOROVSKAYA EMBANKMENT

A Nizhny Novgorod favorite, this pristine waterfront boasts winding paths, cozy cafés, and lounging areas with sweeping views of the city center and the iconic Strelka — where the Oka and Volga rivers meet. It consistently ranks as the city's premier sunset vantage point.

Musical bonus: *In summer, the embankment pulses with live music from street performers, DJs, and festival stars during the annual "Sunset Capital. Solo at Sunset" event (June through August).*

Entry is free.

STRELKA

Featured throughout this guide, the Oka-Volga confluence deserves every nod as Nizhny Novgorod's crown jewel — a stunning natural icon. Stroll the pristine promenade and capture the full palette of sunset colors with your camera lens from the unique viewing platform — the Strelka amphitheater.

Entry is free.

Nearby are beloved local and tourist draws: the ornate metal warehouses, now hosting concerts and exhibitions; the futuristic football stadium built for the 2018 FIFA World Cup; and the Alexander Nevsky Cathedral, one of Russia's tallest churches.

GROT PAVILION IN KUSKOVO:

An Underwater Fantasy
in an 18th-century Estate



OPENING HOURS:

Park: open daily from 10:00 am to 6:00 pm. Closed on Mondays and Tuesdays. **The Palace and pavilions (including the Grot Pavilion):** open daily from 10:00 am; closing time varies from 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm depending on the season. Closed on Mondays and Tuesdays. **Maintenance day:** the last Wednesday of every month.

TICKETS:

Ticket prices range from 150 rubles (park admission) to 1,250 rubles (including access to the palace and all pavilions). Tickets can be purchased at the entrance ticket offices using cash or bank cards accepted in Russia.

HOW TO GET THERE:

The estate is located at 2 Yunosti Street. From the city centre, you can get there by taxi (for example, via YandexGo). The nearest metro station is Novogireyevo, from which it takes about 20 minutes to walk to the estate.



Photo:
KrimKate / Shutterstock

Just a half-hour drive from central Moscow lies one of the few surviving 18th-century architectural and park ensembles in Russia: the Kuskovo Estate. Once the summer residence of the Sheremetevs, one of Russia's most renowned noble families, it is now an important landmark on the capital's cultural map. Kuskovo is often referred to as the "Versailles of Moscow Region" for its distinctive style, modeled after French royal residences.

The estate is known for its illustrious owners and guests, its love stories, and the lavish balls and receptions once held here, as well as for its architectural masterpieces: the Grand Palace, the Dutch House, the Italian House, the Hermitage Pavilion, the Grand Stone Orangery, and the formal French park with canals and a pond.

In listing the ensemble's many architectural gems, we have deliberately left out the Grot Pavilion — and for good reason.

Standing on the shore of the Italian Pond and seeming to rise directly from the water, the building is regarded as the estate's most exotic structure. The pavilion reflects the 16th-century Italian tradition of artificial grottoes (the Italian word grotto means "cave") and embodies a fantasy of an underwater kingdom. Since the theme of

this summer issue of Discover Russia is water, we decided to take a closer look at it.

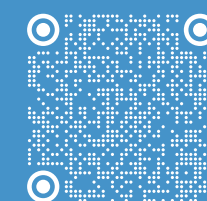
The structure consists of a central rotunda and two cabinets decorated in different colour schemes representing the southern and northern seas. The façade is designed in the Rococo style, with ornate stucco pediments, lion masks above the windows, and numerous sculptures. Its decoration incorporates mother-of-pearl, coral, and several types of shells from the Mediterranean, Black, Japanese, and Red Seas, as well as from the Atlantic and Indian Oceans.

The central hall is adorned with columns featuring gilded details, while the light streaming through the round lunette windows recalls the shimmer of seawater. The underwater theme continues in the pavilion's cabinets, with large shell-inlaid figures and walls decorated with coloured glass, fragments of mirrors, mother-of-pearl, and stucco ornamentation.

Together, these details create the impression of being inside an enchanted cave hidden beneath the ocean's depths — precisely the idea behind the project conceived by Count Pyotr Sheremetev and brought to life by skilled craftsmen.

AN INTERESTING FACT:

it took a full fourteen years to complete the interior decoration. Craftsmen carefully selected rare types of shells, many of which are now listed in the Red Data Book, which later complicated the restoration process. Nevertheless, in 2019 the pavilion was finally restored, and this highly complex project received the restoration and construction industry's equivalent of an Oscar.





Point of Attraction: **ASTRAKHAN'S LOTUS FIELDS**

Another star of the issue is the Caspian lotus, listed in the Red Data Book, which grows in water and delights visitors with its beauty not only across Asia, but also in sun-scorched Astrakhan in summer.

The lotus fields of Astrakhan are one of Russia's most beautiful natural wonders. In the height of summer, the Volga Delta turns into a pink expanse, where the Caspian lotus blooms in its natural habitat and creates an exotic landscape.

The best time to visit is from mid-July through August, and the best time of day is early morning, when the flowers are just opening and the soft light is ideal for photography.

RADISSON, ZAVIDOVO:

Closer to Nature,
Closer Than Expected



When the fast pace of a big city begins to wear you down, the first instinct is simple: to get away. Somewhere quieter, closer to nature, with space to slow down. It may seem that this kind of escape in Russia requires distance: a flight or at least an overnight train. But that is not always the case. About 120 km from Moscow lies Zavidovo, an ecological resort where you will find open water, forest air, and the riches of Russian nature combined with the comfort of a full-scale resort: Radisson, Zavidovo.



The journey from the capital takes approximately 50 minutes — you can get there by the modern high-speed Lastochka train or by car on the M-11 highway. The resort, located close to the Volga River, operates year-round and offers services that meet international standards, a connection with nature, and a variety of seasonal activities: from golfing, fishing, and boating in the warm months to skiing, ice skating, and windsurfing in the winter.

The M-11 highway is a toll road: the cost of traveling to Zavidovo will be approximately 1,400 rubles (approx. \$17). You can pay the toll at the payment points — both cash and bank cards accepted in Russia can be used. For more information about payment methods in Russia check the Travel Tips section.

HERE ARE REASONS

Why It's Worth Spending a Weekend
or a Whole Vacation Here

RESORT SURROUNDED BY PRISTINE NATURE

The main treasure of Zavidovo is its unique natural environment. The resort is nestled among forests and water bodies, and the ecological significance of the region is recognized internationally, as it includes areas designated as specially protected natural zones.

In this setting lies Radisson, Zavidovo, offering rooms and suites, many with open views over the Volga River and the surrounding landscape — a perfect choice to enjoy nature without leaving your room. For those looking for a more flexible format, the hotel offers apartments with one- to three-bedroom layouts and kitchenettes. This option works especially well for families or longer stays, allowing guests to move between hotel services and a more independent rhythm. Pets are also welcome in the residences.

WATER ACTIVITIES

Once settled, the next question is simple: how to spend your time. As water runs through the Discover Russia Summer edition, it also shapes the experience here at Radisson, Zavidovo. You can unwind at the resort's spa complex, enjoying relaxing rituals, massages, and facial and body care programs. For families, Zavidovo AQUA & SPA, located about ten minutes from the hotel, offers a more varied experience. The indoor water park features slides, pools, and relaxation areas suitable for both children and adults.

Those looking for outdoor water activities will find plenty of options. You can take a boat trip, rent a yacht, join a guided fishing experience, or simply spend a quiet morning by the water.

NEARBY LANDMARKS

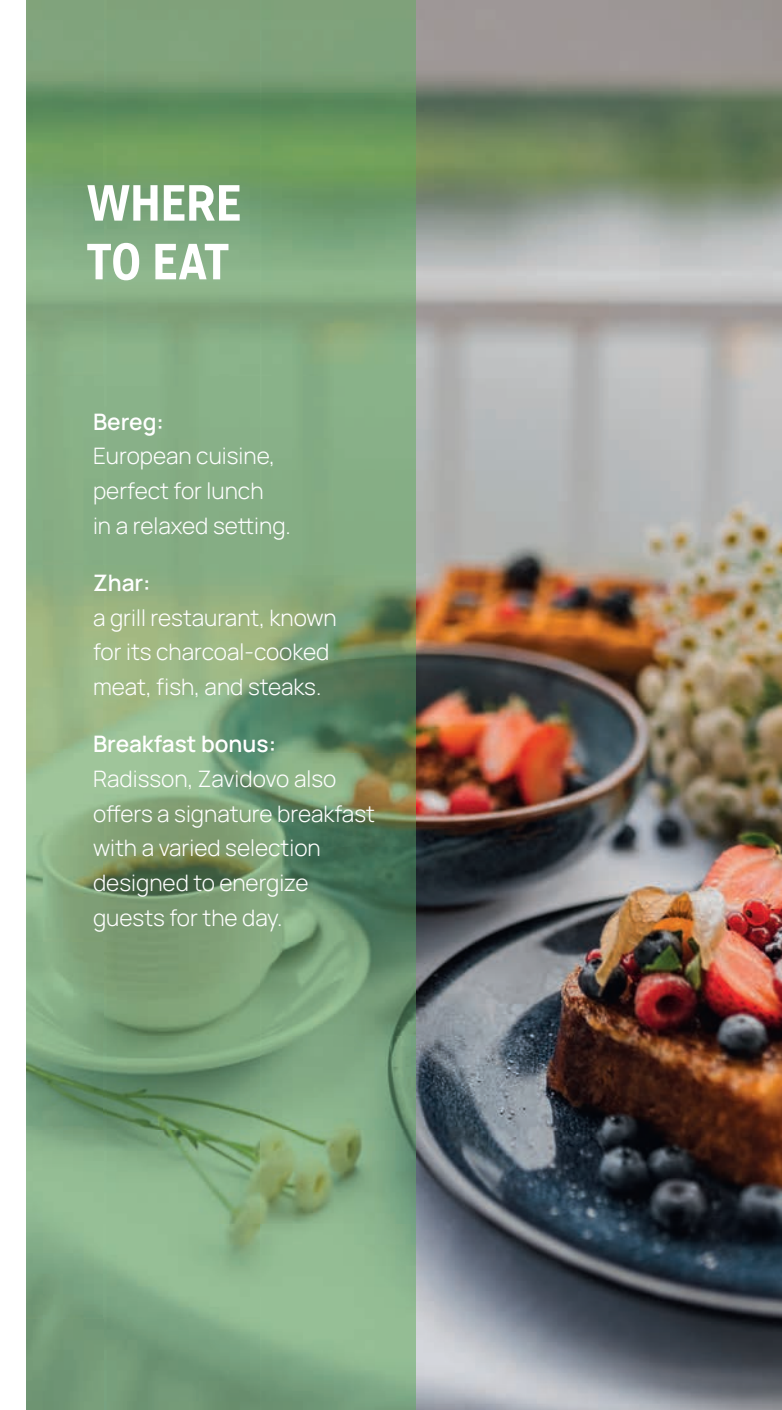
- Trinity Church — one of the oldest complexes in the Tver region, founded in the 17th century. The ensemble currently includes two churches: the Dormition and the Holy Trinity, and also boasts a five-storey bell tower. **Approx. 7 km**
- Konakovo Faience Factory. Here, you can book a factory tour, participate in workshops, and purchase traditional Konakovo ceramics crafted by local artisans. **Approx. 15 km**
- Tchaikovsky State House-Museum — a unique museum complex located in the house where the famous Russian composer Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky lived and worked. It was here that he composed his last Symphony No. 6. **Approx. 30 km**
- Zavidovo Nature Reserve, whose territory has been designated a national park of Russia and is recognized by UNESCO as one of the world's most environmentally sustainable destinations. **Approx. 30 km**

WHERE TO EAT

Bereg:
European cuisine, perfect for lunch in a relaxed setting.

Zhar:
a grill restaurant, known for its charcoal-cooked meat, fish, and steaks.

Breakfast bonus:
Radisson, Zavidovo also offers a signature breakfast with a varied selection designed to energize guests for the day.



BEYOND WATER

There are also options for those seeking dynamic experiences beyond the shoreline: off-road drives in Niva vehicles, trips to nearby production sites, including a local cheese farm and a sturgeon breeding facility, forest expeditions with navigation basics in Yamskoy Forest, a nearby 150-hectare landscaped nature park, and a golf course featuring a Par-72 championship layout designed by European Golf Design.

Nature lovers can also enjoy a walk along the cycling routes through the forest, where they may even come across rabbits that gladly accept treats.

You can book a tour and get additional information at the reception desk — the hotel provides English-speaking staff for foreign guests.

RUSSIA BY WATER:

The Volga Dream Journey
from Moscow to St. Petersburg

One of the most revealing ways to travel across Russia is by river, and the Volga Dream route between Moscow and St. Petersburg is a clear example of why.

Rather than focusing only on the country's two most famous cities, the journey also passes through smaller historic towns and northern waterways, offering a broader sense of Russia's geography and cultural depth.

What makes this route distinctive is its continuity. Instead of a sequence of flights, train rides, and hotel changes, travelers move gradually through rivers, canals, and lakes, watching the landscape shift from the Volga basin toward the Russian North. This slower rhythm helps explain Russia

not as a set of isolated landmarks, but as a connected world of river towns, monasteries, wooded shores, and old trading routes.

For international visitors, this format is often one of the easiest ways to travel in Russia. A river cruise simplifies logistics: the cabin stays the same throughout the trip, while excursions, meals, and the daily schedule are arranged in advance.

According to the operator's published information, the program includes accommodation, guided sightseeing, meals, cultural activities, and onboard internet, which can make the trip more manageable for travelers unfamiliar with local transport systems or the Russian language.



PRACTICAL TIPS

CHOOSE

a river itinerary if you want to see several parts of Russia without constantly changing hotels.

PACK

in layers, even in summer, because weather on the water can change quickly.

CHECK

the walking level of shore excursions in advance, especially if you prefer a moderate pace.

KEEP

your passport, visa, and migration documents easy to access during the trip.

LEAVE

time to enjoy the sailing itself: on a Russian river cruise, the view from the deck is part of the experience, not just the time between stops.

The route is also appealing because it combines internationally known destinations with places many foreign travelers would not visit on their own. Stops such as Kizhi introduce visitors to Russia's wooden architectural heritage, while smaller ports like Uglich offer a quieter and more local atmosphere than Moscow or St. Petersburg. Together, they create a fuller picture of the country than a city-only itinerary.

Published guest reviews suggest that this kind of trip is valued not only for the scen-

ery, but also for comfort and pacing. One traveler described the ship as being in "excellent condition," praised the comfort of the cabin and the large windows, and noted the quality of the food, including vegetarian options. Other reviews highlight the advantage of having pre- and post-cruise stays in central hotels in Moscow and St. Petersburg, as well as the more personal feel of a smaller group and the sense of a more authentic Russian travel experience.

GREAT LIST

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RUSSIA



GASTRO GUIDE:

Waterfront Restaurants in Russia

Water — the central theme of the Discover Russia Summer Edition — runs through every feature in this issue, and our now traditional gastro guide is no exception.

Waterfront restaurants are one of the most popular dining formats in Russia during the summer months. Guests come for the mesmerizing views across the water, the feeling of escaping the pressures of city life, and the fresh breeze that offers relief from the heat — in addition, of course, to the food itself.

We have put together a list of the best projects in this category, selected and recommended by the team behind GreatList, an international restaurant guide operating in Russia, the UAE, Qatar, Thailand, and China.

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

Saint Petersburg
II Lago SPB

800°C CONTEMPORARY STEAK

This two-storey restaurant overlooking Patriarch's Ponds is known for its meat: premium steaks, ribs, and refined meat dishes prepared at extremely high temperatures in an oven maintained at a constant 800°C. Before your visit, we recommend taking a walk around the neighbourhood to build up an appetite and admire one of Moscow's favourite ponds, home to the famous pair of swans, Ivan and Marya.

What to try: aged beef sausage, roast beef with Pecorino and ginger sauce, butcher's steak.

Address: 6 Bolshoy Patriarshy Lane, Bldg. 1

OLTREMARE

A two-storey Italian restaurant on Savvinskaya Embankment with panoramic views of the Moscow River. Created by brand chef Emanuele Pollini, the menu focuses on fish and seafood, minimal intervention, and classic Italian recipes that, as the restaurant team puts it, are "enriched with experience and soul."

What to try: rigatoni all'amatriciana, Cantabrian anchovies, fried artichokes, Tuscan seafood soup.

Address: 13 Savvinskaya Embankment

"KAZBEK"

The menu at "Kazbek" is rooted in Georgian culinary traditions, skillfully combined with a contemporary approach: classic khachapuri, khinkali, and lobio sit alongside original interpretations by Tbilisi-born chef Mamia Jojua. The cuisine is made all the warmer by the presence of the chef's mother, Nana, in the kitchen.

The interior resembles a cosy Georgian apartment, complete with carved shutters and textured floors, while also incorporating a distinctly Moscow element: a summer terrace with mesmerizing views of the Moscow River.

What to try: Adjarian khachapuri, lamb khinkali, spinach pkhali.

Address: 2 Ulitsa 1905 Goda

0.75 PLEASE

An intimate restaurant with panoramic views that focuses on European cuisine thoughtfully paired with an impressive wine list. Its large windows frame expansive skies and striking views of the Moscow River, creating, together with the food, an ideal setting for a leisurely dinner.

What to try: lamb and cabbage pie, duck ravioli, brownie with ganache and cocoa.

Address: 8 Smolenskaya Street

SAINT PETERSBURG

IL LAGO DEI CIGNI

This Italian restaurant sits on the shore of Swan Pond on Krestovsky Island, one of the most romantic locations in St. Petersburg. In summer, we highly recommend enjoying the local cuisine on the second-floor terrace, which offers panoramic views of the lake and its black and white swans.

What to try: beef carpaccio with Parmesan and arugula, marinated salmon with asparagus, tiger prawns with arugula and cherry tomatoes.

Address: 21B Krestovsky Prospekt.

KAZAN

"PIR"

With panoramic windows overlooking Lake Kaban, "Pir" offers both classic Tatar dishes and international favourites reinterpreted by chef Konstantin Ryzhaykin. Special attention should be paid to the wine list, which includes more than 100 labels.

What to try: duck echpochmak, qistibi with potatoes, pea soup with horse meat.

Address: 54A Khadi Taktasha Street

TERRA ET SILVA

A casual two-storey restaurant located just a few minutes' walk from the Kazanka River. The menu combines familiar European dishes with local ingredients, including horse meat and lamb tongues. The wood-fired oven turns out excellent pizzas and flatbreads that are well worth trying.

What to try: pancakes with salmon and guacamole, crab omelette with Uzbek tomatoes, flatbread with horse meat, tomatoes, and mozzarella.

Address: 56 Podluzhnaya Street



Moscow
800°C Contemporary Steak

KHABAROVSK

RUMA

A restaurant with panoramic views of the Amur River serves pan-Asian cuisine based on Far Eastern ingredients and the gastronomic traditions of Khabarovsk Krai. The interior reflects the seasonal characteristics of all four seasons, and the menu abounds in local delicacies: from the fillet of Far Eastern aukh to venison tartare with mushroom cream.

What to try: Yukidoki (Pacific trout fillet and gravlax with red caviar and avocado), Manoma (venison tartare with mushroom cream), Ussuri (first phalanx of Kamchatka crab with green gazpacho), as well as anything from the live seafood tank.

Address: 2B Pionerskaya Street

YEKATERINBURG

GAVI

An Italian restaurant on the Iset River embankment with panoramic windows and a marked fondness for white wines from Piedmont — a passion reflected in the project's name. The menu includes thin-crust pizza, raw fish dishes, homemade pasta, and classic Italian antipasti, while the in-house sommelier helps guests navigate the extensive wine list.

What to try: signature Piedmont bruschetta — vitello tonnato, pizza "Margherita", pumpkin soup with broccoli florets.

Address: 26 Gorkogo Street

"BOLSHOY GRUZINSKY"

Georgian cuisine at its best, served in a historic building on Olimpiyskaya Embankment. With an open kitchen where traditional khinkali are made, a spacious dining room with the atmosphere of a festive family gathering, and straightforward food designed for sharing, it is no surprise that tables here are booked out a week in advance.

What to try: all kinds of khinkali, khachapuri with smoked cheese, roast kid, chicken tabaka.

Address: 7 Olimpiyskaya Embankment

VLADIVOSTOK

ULISS ASIA

A panoramic restaurant with captivating views of Amur Bay, Uliiss Asia brings together standout pan-Asian dishes with an emphasis on fresh fish and seafood from local waters. The natural interior extends the culinary concept, while the seascape outside provides a beautiful finishing touch.

What to try: salmon tartare, red caviar gunkan, crab with black pepper sauce, halibut steak.

Address: 13 Naberezhnaya Street

Moscow
"Kazbek"



GREEN IS THE NEW BLACK:

Cucumber Festival in Suzdal

In Russia, even cucumbers get their own holiday — and nowhere does it better than Suzdal, where a humble summer staple turns into a feast of folklore, flavor and old-world charm.

A VERY GOOD REASON TO LEAVE MOSCOW BEHIND

Just a few hours from Moscow, Suzdal feels like a world apart: old churches, monastery walls and the kind of quiet beauty that makes you slow down almost at once. It is already one of Russia's most atmospheric historic towns. In midsummer, it gains another reason to visit. On 1 and 2 August 2026, Suzdal is expected to mark Cucumber Day — its most cheerful annual festival — at the Museum of Wooden Architecture, an open-air ensemble of 18th- and 19th-century wooden churches, houses and farm buildings.

FOLK, FIZZ AND CUCUMBER IN EVERY FORM

Here, the cucumber is taken far beyond the salad bowl. The festival turns it into jam, sweets, ice cream, vodka, spritzes and pickles in more variations than most visitors would think possible. There are costumed guests, folk music, dancing, craft stalls and just enough cheerful green madness to make Spain's tomatoes look almost restrained. What makes it work is not the novelty alone, but the mood: bright, generous and entirely unashamed of its own eccentricity.



A STORY WORTH BRINGING HOME

Suzdal itself is reason enough to come. Known for its white-stone heritage and remarkably intact historic landscape, it forms part of the Vladimir-Suzdal cultural world recognized by UNESCO for its age, authenticity and distinctive architecture. That is what makes the festival land so well here: it gives travelers not just a quirky anecdote, but a real sense of place. Come for the cucumbers, stay for the town, and leave with the kind of story people actually retell — cheerful, local, photogenic and impossible to confuse with anywhere else.

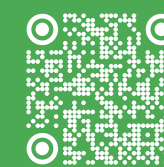
MORE THAN A GIMMICK

The best thing about Cucumber Day is that it never feels invented for tourists. It grew out of local life. First held in 2001, the festival is rooted in the region's long vegetable-growing tradition: for years, cucumber farming was one of Suzdal's defining trades. Over time, the vegetable became more than a crop. It became part of the town's identity — a modest symbol with real local history behind it.



In 2026, the Vladimir-Suzdal Museum-Reserve will host its first festival in an extended two-day format — the event will take place at the Museum of Wooden Architecture in Suzdal.

You can buy a ticket at the ticket office located at the museum entrance or online, using bank cards accepted in Russia:



WHEN: **AUGUST 1–2**
WHERE: **SUZDAL, PUSHKARSKAYA ST., 27 "B"**
TICKET PRICE:
1,000–2,500 RUBLES



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MOCKTAIL HOUR:

A Fresh Take on Summer Drinks

As summer unfolds, with its long, sunlit evenings and easygoing pace, the aperitif ritual takes on a lighter, more refreshing twist.

Perfect for celebrating the season: mocktails, today's alcohol-free twist on classic cocktails. They deliver all the flavor, creativity, and visual allure — minus the buzz. In pursuit of the best, our DR team visited Chaliapin Bar at the Metropol Hotel, where head bartender Sergey Petrov's alcohol-free menu echoes timeless cocktail styles, refreshed for crisp summer sipping.

Nestled just steps from Red Square, Chaliapin Bar fuses early 20th-century grandeur with a vibrant modern cocktail scene. Named for Russian opera legend Feodor Chaliapin, it offers summer drinks with an alcohol-free edge, paired with a menu blending Russian and European flavors.

Address:
Moscow, Teatralny proezd, 2

The Chaliapin Bar has graciously shared its alcohol-free Bellini recipe — a simple, home-friendly version you'll like:

- **100 g peach sorbet**
- **100 ml alcohol-free sparkling wine**
- **20 ml peach syrup**
- **A drop of quillaia extract**

Blend the sorbet, syrup, and extract until smooth. Pour into a glass, top with sparkling wine, and enjoy.

AMONG THE KEY OPTIONS:

BELLINI

A blend of peach purée, jasmine cordial, and alcohol-free sparkling wine, served in two parts for you to mix the fruity base with bubbles to your taste. Slightly creamy with a gentle sparkle.

BASIL SMASH

A fresh, herb-forward cocktail made with non-alcoholic gin alternative, basil, and citrus. Clean, tangy, and ideal for hot days.

APEROL SPRITZ

A zero-proof rendition of the Italian classic, delivering its signature bittersweet citrus notes and refreshing finish.





POINT OF ATTRACTION:

ARARAT PARK HYATT MOSCOW™

ARARAT PARK HYATT MOSCOW
IS A PARTNER OF DISCOVER RUSSIA

The Conservatory Above the City

The Conservatory Lounge & Bar at Ararat Park Hyatt Moscow is one of those rare addresses that feels less like a stop on a trip or walk through Moscow and more like part of the experience itself. On the tenth floor, above the noise of the city center, Moscow reveals itself at its most striking, with sweeping views of the Bolshoi Theater, the Kremlin, and the evening lights.

In summer, people come here for the terrace as much as for the restaurant itself, drawn by the pleasure of watching the rhythm of the capital from above. It is precisely this sense of height and air that sets the Conservatory Lounge & Bar apart from the familiar hotel lobby restaurant: there is none of the expected neutrality here, but rather atmosphere and a distinct personality.

Open from May through September, the summer terrace serves as a seamless extension of the restaurant. Natural wood flooring, teak furniture, and crisp white linens cultivate a meticulously curated al fresco environment.

The cuisine is contemporary, with seasonal accents and close attention to detail: seafood, chef-driven dishes, refined presentation, and service that feels polished without excess formality. Reviews especially tend to highlight the atmosphere, the view, and that unmistakable sense of lightness that shapes the memory of the place.

A wave-like glass roof floods the interior with natural daylight, while at dusk, soft ambient lighting and candlelight create the intimate atmosphere that earned Conservatory Lounge & Bar a place among the world's best bars according to Architectural Digest. The zebrano wood bar counter, accented with chrome detailing, adds distinctive character to the setting.

It is the kind of place we want to return to after a walk through the city center, whether for an unhurried business lunch or to mark the release of another issue of our travel guide.



DR SPECIAL RECOMMENDATION:

the local bar menu stands out not only for its selection of wines and classic/signature cocktails, but also for its non-alcoholic options made with alcohol-free wines and distillates — kindly give them a try.

SMART HYDRATION:



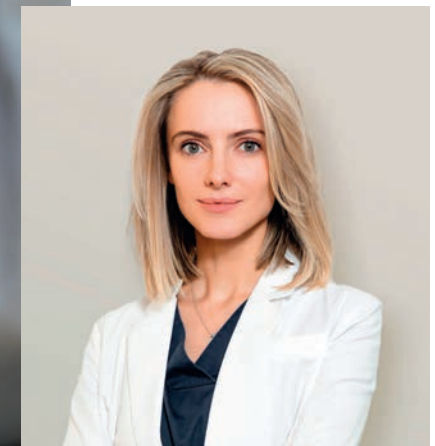
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RUSSIA



How Much Water to Drink in Hot Weather

In summer, our bodies go into overdrive: the air temperature rises, we cool ourselves down through sweating, and lose more fluids than usual. The natural solution is water — essential not only for quenching thirst but also for supporting all bodily processes, including temperature regulation, metabolism, brain function, and even digestion.

Together with Dr. Anastasia Efimova, dietitian, nutritionist & preventive medicine specialist at Atlas Clinics, we take a closer look at the issue.



Dr. Anastasia Efimova,
dietitian, nutritionist & preventive
medicine specialist

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO DRINK ENOUGH WATER IN HOT WEATHER?

Even under normal conditions, an adult loses between 0.5 and 2.5 liters of fluid daily, and in the heat, these losses increase dramatically. A lack of water in summer can lead to unpleasant, and sometimes dangerous, consequences — the most common of which is dehydration. Its symptoms include weakness, headache, dry mouth, and dizziness. Severe fluid loss can impair the function of the heart, kidneys, and thermoregulatory system — the body simply stops coping with the heat.

In addition, the body loses important electrolytes along with water, so fluid deficiency affects almost all systems and functions of the body:

- **Cardiovascular system.** When water is lacking, the strain on the heart and blood vessels increases — blood becomes thicker, the heart works harder, and the risk of overheating rises.
- **Brain and cognitive functions.** Mild dehydration reduces attention, slows reaction time, worsens memory, and makes it harder to focus. Losing just 1–2% of body water can cause fatigue, headaches, and irritability.
- **Muscles and musculoskeletal system.** Insufficient fluid decreases endurance, flexibility, and coordination, increasing the risk of cramps and injuries.
- **Digestion and metabolism.** Water is essential for proper intestinal function, nutrient absorption, and toxin removal. Dehydration can cause heaviness and slow down metabolism.
- **Thermoregulation.** In heat, the body cools itself through sweating. A lack of fluid makes this mechanism less effective, heightening the risk of overheating, weakness, dizziness, and heat stroke.

HOW MUCH WATER SHOULD YOU DRINK DAILY?

"Many people have heard of the "eight glasses of water a day" rule, but it's more of a guideline than a universal standard. Fluid needs vary from person to person and depend on body weight, physical activity, temperature, humidity, health, and diet,"

notes
Anastasia Efimova.

On average, an adult requires 2–3.5 liters of fluid per day, but in hot weather or during intense activity, these numbers increase.

Please note: relying on thirst alone can be risky, as thirst may arise after the body is already experiencing dehydration. Therefore, it's important to drink water throughout the day — if you're going on an excursion or walking around the city, bring a reusable water bottle that's easy to refill and carry.

Water is the main, but not the only, source of hydration. Tea, even coffee, milk, fruits, vegetables, soups, and other water-rich foods also contribute to daily fluid intake. Alcohol, on the other hand, increases water loss and can worsen dehydration, while sugary drinks and sodas add unnecessary calories and are not ideal for hydration.

TO DETERMINE YOUR DAILY WATER NEEDS, CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING FACTORS:

Body weight. On average, you need about 30–40 ml of fluid per kilogram of body weight per day.

Physical activity level. For every 30–60 minutes of active work or exercise in the heat, drink an additional 300–500 ml of water, depending on how much you sweat.



TO SUM UP

FOODS THAT HELP PREVENT DEHYDRATION ARE PRIMARILY VEGETABLES:

celery, tomatoes, cucumbers, radishes, iceberg lettuce, and zucchini. Fruits and berries are also great in summer, but it's important to pay attention to their sugar content.

- Drink water regularly, not just when you're thirsty. Keep a bottle of water in sight and take it with you when going out.
- Include water-rich foods in your diet. Fruits, vegetables, salads, and light soups help maintain hydration. Avoid hot, heavy, protein-rich meals — they raise your body temperature and increase water loss.
- During extreme heat, avoid alcohol and limit strong tea, coffee, and sugary drinks — they intensify dehydration.
- If you have chronic health conditions, consult your doctor for safe ways to cope with the heat and stay hydrated.
- Reduce physical activity in hot weather. Try to minimize exertion between 11:00 AM and 3:00 PM; avoid working under the sun, in the garden, or taking long walks at this time.
- Wear light, loose, and light-colored clothing, a hat, and don't forget sunscreen. Take regular breaks in the shade.

And most importantly, remember the golden rule of summer: water is not just a drink — it's a way to maintain your health, energy, and well-being.

DISCOVERING RUSSIAN ARCHITECTURE:

A Kid-Friendly Edition



There are countless ways to introduce a child to architecture, but the DR team has uncovered the most delightful one yet — and it's worth a trip to VDNKh. Spoiler: it's deliciously sweet.

One of VDNKh's most iconic symbols and key architectural gems is the Main Entrance Arch in the Stalinist Empire style. This 32-meter-high composition features a central triumphal arch flanked by two symmetrical wings, crowned with a sculpture of a tractor driver and a female collective farmer emblematic of the union between industry and agriculture. Designated a federal cultural heritage site, the arch stands as the signature landmark of the entire complex.

An adult might grasp its scale and grandeur from this description — perhaps even imagining it — before experiencing it in person. But a child? Architectural details and sculptural symbolism won't spark much joy. So how do you captivate them?

The pastry chefs at "Domik v Sadu" ("House in the Garden") — a Mediterranean restaurant on VDNKh evoking a bohemian southern dacha — have the answer. Beyond their kid-friendly menu for the youngest guests, they offer a unique 3D dessert replica of VDNKh's star attraction: the Main Entrance Arch. It wows not just with its precision but with its irresistible flavor. A scrumptious first step into the world of art.

Meanwhile, as the little ones explore their sugary masterpiece, parents can savor the gastronomic delights on the bright veranda, immersed in tropical greenery. The menu boasts wood-fired pizza, handmade pasta, smoky grilled meats, and so much more.

Address:

Moscow, VDNH,
Prospekt Mira 119,
Building 512.



GUM ICE CREAM:

A Gastro-Cultural
Touch to the Portrait
of Moscow



Photo: GUM Press Office

The State Department Store on Red Square is famous not only for its 130-year history, innovative architecture, and array of shops. Since 1954, GUM has been selling its signature ice cream, which has become one of the city's best-known culinary legends.

A DIVE INTO HISTORY

GUM ice cream has been a Moscow legend for 72 years. After the 1950s renovation, a workshop opened in the basement, producing only plombir and crème brûlée at first. Natural ingredients, combined with strict standards, turned the dessert into a gastronomic symbol not only of the department store itself, but of the entire capital.

A TICKET TO CHILDHOOD

Muscovites call it a "ticket to childhood," while visitors rave about its delicate, melting texture and pure flavor. The secret lies in natural ingredients without preservatives or colorings, plus small-batch production exclusively for GUM.

To refresh yourself and savor the taste of authentic Russian summer, we recommend choosing the berry flavors: blackcurrant, cherry, and strawberry.

Since 1954, the lineup has grown to ten flavors: timeless vanilla plombir (the eternal favorite), chocolate chip, pistachio, blueberry, cherry, strawberry, blackcurrant, melon, chocolate, and crème brûlée, plus eskimo bars in crinkly foil.

You can buy the famous ice cream at one of the kiosks inside GUM. And if you happen to be in the capital in early June, don't miss Ice Cream Day, traditionally held in the first ten days of the month by the central fountain.

Address: 3 Red Square, Moscow



Point of
attraction:

VDNKH FOUNTAINS

One of the most recognizable water symbols of VDNKh and Moscow itself is the "Friendship of Peoples" Fountain. Its composition reflects the idea of unity and diversity among the peoples of the USSR: around the central sheaf of golden wheat ears, industrial hemp, and sunflowers sixteen female figures are positioned in national costumes, symbolizing the Soviet repub-

lics. The bronze statues are covered with gold leaf — six kilograms of gold went into the entire composition.

In summer, the fountain becomes the main attraction for locals and tourists, and a favorite meeting spot at VDNKh.

Another famous historical fountain of VDNKh is the "Stone Flower." At the center of the composition, inspired by the vibrant imagery of Russian writer Pavel Bazhov's fairy tales, stands a gigantic flower whose petals are made of concrete and clad in sparkling smalt, evoking the glow of precious gems. Thousands of water jets bursting from the petals create the illu-

sion of a living flower, and the fountain looks especially enchanting in the evening — under beams of colorful illumination.

Fashion & Shopping

FROM SUNSCREEN TO DRY SHAMPOO:

Russian Beauty Brands for Your Summer Makeup Bag

The Discover Russia team has explored the Russian beauty market and selected 11 brands where you can find everything you need to put into your summer makeup bag — for both women and men. And yes, we haven't overlooked makeup and perfume either.



CHA U KAO

The young Russian cosmetics brand Cha U Kao focuses not only on innovative ingredients and effective formulas, but also on the visual part: we love the brand for its vibrant packaging design, which transforms a skincare routine into a hypnotic beauty ritual.

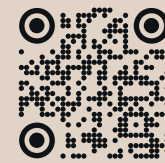
DR's pick: two products at once. A compact SPF 50 sunscreen stick with a matte finish and a waterproof oil spray for intense tanning, Don't Kiss Me Sun SPF 10, which enhances the skin's natural beauty and has a pleasant salted caramel scent.



BARBARO

Barbaro, a Russian brand of professional men's cosmetics that conquered the market in 2015, creates products for salon and home beard and moustache care, as well as shampoos and face creams.

DR's pick: Beard kit in a wooden case. Inside you will find beard care products (oil, balm, and soap), as well as an eco-friendly brush with natural bristles.



VOIS

A professional cosmetics brand that strives to combine high quality and affordability. The range includes products for the face, body, and hair.

DR's pick: blotting sheets with a sponge and mirror in a stylish case. This product will leave your skin matte and shine-free.



GELTEK

GELTEK men is a line of Geltek cosmetics created specifically for men. The range includes skincare products that can become a part of your daily routine in just two steps — for convenience, each product packaging is marked with Step 1 and Step 2.

DR's pick: GELTEK men moisturizing face cream. This versatile product offers multiple benefits: it moisturizes, nourishes, accelerates the healing of micro-damage caused by shaving, and prevents acne. It's suitable for regular skincare and can replace aftershave lotion.



FOR ME BY GOLD APPLE

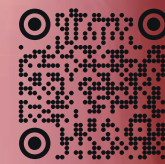
For Me is a cosmetics brand created by the Gold Apple team, Russian beauty retailer. The range includes face, hair, and body care products, accessories, makeup brushes, home fragrances, and much more.

DR's pick: For Me dry shampoo, which not only absorbs excess oil but also helps your hair stay fresh longer — an absolute must for hot summers.

SHIKSTUDIO

The cosmetics brand, founded in 2015 by a makeup artist and beauty influencer Natalya Shik, offers both skincare and makeup products, as well as makeup accessories.

DR's pick: Total Repair Balm for lips — it nourishes the skin, provides long-lasting comfort, and gives a glossy, mirror-like finish with a beautiful translucent pink tint. SPF 15 protects delicate lips from UV rays and photoaging.



SMORODINA

SmoRodina is a Russian skincare brand whose DNA is natural ingredients and environmental awareness. The range includes face and body care lines, as well as candles and hair products.

DR's pick: moisturizing facial sunscreen SPF 50 with innovative suspension physical UV filters. The manufacturer promises reliable protection against photoaging, skincare benefits, and, most importantly, no white mask on the skin, as is often the case with heavy sunscreens.



Photo:
Maeva Maya / vk.ru



ECOLATIER

Ecolatier is a Russian brand of natural and organic cosmetics, founded in 2019. Its DNA is rooted in natural ingredients, transparency, and eco-friendliness — according to the manufacturer, its formulas are paraben- and silicone-free, and all products are vegan.

DR's pick: *Sport 2-in-1 shampoo and shower gel from the brand's men's range. The product has moisturising, softening and revitalising properties, lathers well and leaves you feeling fresh all day long.*



THE ACT

The Act is a skincare brand for the face, body and hair, based on natural ingredients. According to the team, the brand is constantly refining its products, does not use ready-made formulas, and adheres to the principles of sustainable production.

DR's pick: *a hydrating facial spray with a polyvitamin complex of plant extracts. It eliminates dryness, refreshes, and improves skin elasticity without leaving a filmy feeling. As a nice bonus, it has a to-go format. A compact bottle is easy to take with you on a walk or excursion.*



ANSALIGY

A Russian skincare brand that has been on the market since 2015 and produces skin care products for the face, body, and hair.

DR's pick: *one of the brand's signature products is eye patches — lots and lots of them. We love them for the variety of effects and ingredients they offer: hyaluronic acid, vitamin C, amber granules and other ingredients are responsible for cooling, lifting, nourishing, restoring and enriching the delicate skin around the eyes with vitamins. It's practically impossible to settle on just one option.*



FAKOSHIMA

Konstantin Shilyaev's FAKOSHIMA eyewear brand has won over both a Russian audience and global fashion influencers. Besides eyewear, the brand also produces its own fragrance line.

DR's pick: *SECRET VENUE unisex eau de parfum. The composition opens with a combination of pink pepper, mango, and pink champagne. Its heart is creamy, fruity mangosteen and almond meringue with a spicy note of rum. The base reveals a blend of oud and amber on a soft, powdery base of marzipan and neroli.*

ART IN YOUR TOTE BAG:

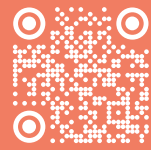
What to Buy in Russian Museum Shops



The days when museum shops offered only a magnet, a meaningless engraving or another postcard are long gone. And Russian museums have brought some concept to their stores too. Now you can buy almost anything — from hoodies to wine stoppers — and the best part is that these things can actually become part of your wardrobe or interior. So grab your tote bag and set off on this conceptual hunt: we have picked the crème de la crème of Russian museum stores.

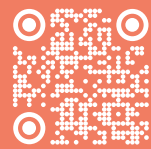
MOSCOW

PUSHKIN STATE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS



The Pushkin Museum is one of Moscow's great homes of world art, with collections ranging from antiquity to European painting and modernism. Its shop follows the same logic: broad, elegant and full of objects that turn art history into something you can actually carry home.

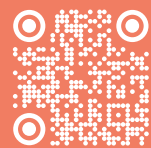
DR's choice: look at pieces created for the current exhibition The Princes Baryatinsky. The Art of Heirs (April 21 – July 5, 2026). A bamboo fan with Andrey Martynov's View of the Estate in Summer can be a nice and delicate gift for a romantic soul. If you want to go a bit niche — pick a porcelain wine stopper featuring a crab, inspired by Flemish painting.



TRETYAKOV GALLERY

If the Pushkin Museum gives you the world, the Tretyakov gives you Russia. Icons, nineteenth-century masters, Symbolism, avant-garde, Soviet art — the gallery is basically a national visual biography. Its shop turns Russian art into accessories, stationery and clothing, featuring masterpieces by names like Shishkin, Vasnetsov, Vrubel and Malevich.

DR's choice: the "Matryoshka. Suprematism" bag, inspired by Malevich, is exactly the kind of object that looks cute until you realize it is also carrying the avant-garde. For something darker, go for a zip hoodie with Vrubel's Seated Demon on the back.



MUSEUM OF RUSSIAN IMPRESSIONISM

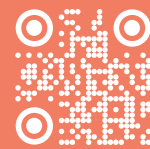
The Museum of Russian Impressionism plays a different tune — one of Russian art from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, touched by French ideas of light, air and color. In 2026, the experience became even more tempting with Podpisnye in the Museum — the first Moscow branch of the famous St. Petersburg bookshop Podpisnye Izdaniya, combining a bookstore, café and museum shop in one space.

DR's choice: come for catalogs, art books, rare stationery, artist supplies and museum editions — then stay for coffee and the famous Podpisnye buns.



Photo:
Alex Segre / Shutterstock

MUSEUM OF TRANSPORT OF MOSCOW



The Museum of Transport proves that merchandise does not need a palace or a tragic painter to work. Its shop is built around Moscow mobility, city nostalgia and transport culture, which turn out to be surprisingly stylish.

DR's choice: the English-language catalogue The Moskvitch Dream is a great pick: it tells the biography of "people's cars" that became heroes of films, jokes, legends and memories. For something smaller, take the "Annushka" tram pin — a tiny tribute to one of Moscow's most famous trams.



bookstore and cafe,
Museum of Russian Impressionism

“PODPISNIE”
IN MUSEUM

ST. PETERSBURG

STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM

The Hermitage modestly contains the whole world: ancient sculpture, Oriental carpets, Italian Renaissance painting, and enough art to exhaust even the most active visitor. The shop follows suit: the collection is vast, especially when it comes to porcelain and art reproductions.

DR's choice: The Garden of Earthly Delights by a follower of Bosch is one of the museum's gems. The shop offers its reproduction — go for the XL size. For something more ceremonial, look at the "Bactista Bella" plate, based on a 1537 work by Giorgio Andreoli and hand-painted with pigments close to the dyes used by the master. And if a plate feels too practical, there is always a giant porcelain artichoke.



FABERGÉ MUSEUM

Some museums sell souvenirs. The Fabergé Museum sells the fantasy of imperial jewellery in a form you can carry in your tote bag. Located in the Shuvalov Palace, the museum is best known for its collection of Fabergé eggs and decorative masterpieces.

DR's choice: the go-to option is the "Coronation" egg, inspired by one of Fabergé's most famous works, created for Nicholas II's coronation celebrations. A more intimate choice is the "Lilies of the Valley" egg: the original was an Easter gift from Nicholas II to Empress Alexandra Feodorovna in 1898.



TRAVEL TIPS

How to make your journey through Russia comfortable and safe

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

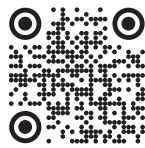
- Modern tourist infrastructure, consular support and laws designed to protect foreign citizens.
- Enhanced security and video surveillance at airports and train stations.
- Security services in hotels.
- Assistants and guides proficient in foreign languages at airports, hotels and on excursions.
- An operational tourist police force.
- Mandatory insurance for unforeseen circumstances and the need for medical assistance.

TRANSPORT

A universal app that will help you order food, delivery from a restaurant, rent a scooter or call a taxi is Yandex.Go. Payment can be made with a Mir card or in cash.

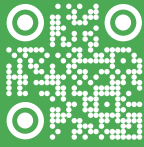
The metro system in Russia operates in seven cities: Moscow, St. Petersburg, Kazan, Nizhny Novgorod, Novosibirsk, Yekaterinburg and Samara. Tickets can be purchased at ticket offices and machines at the stations or simply by tapping a bank card on the turnstile.

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 — 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 Sheremet-yevo and Domodedovo airports.



VISA REGIME

An 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.

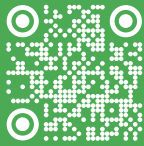
N.B.: citizens of several countries are eligible for visa-free entry (up to 90 days) and do not require a visa to enter the Russian Federation.

PAYMENT METHODS

Visa/MasterCard cards issued abroad **don't work** in Russia. However, it's possible to top them up using certain Russian payment services.

Electronic wallets and QR payments

PAY IN RUSSIA — Payment service designed for foreign tourists to make seamless payments throughout Russia — available even before travel, activated in minutes, and accepted everywhere.



Alternative — Russian bank card:

- The most convenient way to pay is with a debit card from the Russian payment system "Mir" (works mainly in Russia and in partner countries of the payment system).
- You can get it issued immediately upon arrival at the airport (Sheremetyevo, Domodedovo, Sochi, etc.).
- Alternatively, a bank representative can issue and give you a debit card at any convenient location (Sber, VTB, YooMoney, T-Bank, RusAg).

You can top up the card at ATMs.

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.

HOW TO CALL EMERGENCY SERVICES

General emergency line: 112 — calls from a mobile phone are free and can be made, even if the number is blocked for non-payment and there is no SIM card in the phone.

Firefighters: 101 / Police: 102 / Ambulance: 103

EDITOR'S PICK

8 ITEMS, DESTINATIONS AND IMPRESSIONS SELECTED BY DISCOVER RUSSIA TEAM FOR THE SUMMER WISHLIST

Dasha Chernova, DR team:
home decor and a green spot on the Moscow map

Decor: caviar-bread by nōtem

The Russian brand nōtem offers a variety of handcrafted candle art objects, including shapes like an anatomical heart, popsicle, various animals, and even a sausage in dough. My choice is the traditional symbol of Russian feast, a caviar sandwich, presented in a candle form.

Price: 2,990₽

Where to buy:
on the brand website

Spot on the Map:
Apothecary Garden

Escape the hustle and bustle of the metropolis and enjoy lush blooms right in the heart of the capital? Easy — just visit Russia's oldest botanical garden, founded by Peter I in 1706. In summer, the garden is filled with blooming peonies, irises, rhododendrons, hydrangeas, roses, and many other plants. By the historic pond located here, you can relax by the water and catch the peak bloom of water lilies in July.

Where: Mira Ave., 26/1, Moscow



Dmitrii Smolnikov, DR team: Russian Summer Vibes

If you want to really soak up the summer vibe, going to a party at a bar or restaurant is a must. Think dancing until sunrise, fun music mixes, and everyone around you just enjoying summer to the fullest. Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Kazan are some of the best cities for this kind of night out. And if you're heading to Moscow, it's worth checking when and where the Russian DJ Grisha SUPER is playing — he's easy to find on social media. He's great at mixing hits by Russian artists, and somehow it all makes the Russian soul feel a little easier to understand.





Sergei Lykov, DR team:
a View from Above and a Fragrance
Inspired by Russian Culture

View: Nizhny Novgorod Cableway

Want to ride the longest cable car in Europe, stretching across one of the world's largest rivers? Welcome to Nizhny Novgorod. The journey along the 3,661-meter route takes 10–12 minutes and delivers pure exhilaration, along with some of the most stunning panoramic views of the Volga River. It's especially beautiful at sunset, making the late afternoon the ideal time to visit.

Where: 8A Kazanskaya Embankment,
Nizhny Novgorod

Fragrance:
'Black' & 'Ash' by Holynose

Russia's best-kept fragrance secret is no longer a secret. Holynose is a niche perfume house where scents transcend mere function — and the references run deep. Chyornyy (Black) is an homage to the work of Rodchenko and Stepanova, key figures of the Russian avant-garde of the 1920s: constructivist geometry distilled into smoke and ink. Pepel (Ash) goes further — warmer, stranger, harder to pin down. Each fragrance is issued in limited runs, so hesitation is a risk. Before you commit, you can build your own sample box. Try it — and the Russian perfume scene will open up anew.

Price: 5,000₽

Where to buy:
on the brand's website
(international version available
with support for foreign cards)

EDITOR'S PICK



Photo:
Kotkisam / Shutterstock



Andrew Maximov, DR team:
Summer Terrace at Geraldine

As much as I love Moscow's speed and scale, summer sometimes demands a graceful escape from all that urban drama. A French escape? Even better. Geraldine's summer terrace is just the right place: a hidden French neo-bistro moment on Ostozhenka, set behind trees and bushes, away from the city noise. Think art deco, soft shade, cocktails and a little glamour. Tempting, right? A friend once showed me this place, and I have been in love ever since. Bisou!

Where:
Ostozhenka, 27, bldg. 2, Moscow



Roman Mishchenko, DR team:
Summer Point of Attraction for Kids and Adults

Opposite the famous Moscow Nikulin's Circus on Tsvetnoy Boulevard stands the "Clowns" sculpture by Zurab Tsereteli, dedicated to the circus's founder Albert Salamonsky and the outstanding clown and actor Yuri Nikulin. The narrative group depicts circus performers in motion, with a fountain at the center of the composition — running barefoot around its basin is a favorite summer pastime for children.

After a stroll by the fountain, don't forget to pop into the circus itself, renowned for its over-a-century-long history, vibrant programs, acrobats, trained animals, and clowns.

Where: Tsvetnoy Boulevard, 13, Moscow



Maxim Lupakov, DR team:
Water in Russian Art

Water as a source of life and inspiration holds a special place in the work of many Russian artists. One of the most renowned marine painters is Ivan Aivazovsky, who captured the sea's moods — from mirror-like calm to raging storms — using glazing techniques to create the effect of living, moving waves. His works can be seen at the Tretyakov Gallery, home to one of the largest collections of the artist.

Where:
10 Lavrushinsky Lane, Moscow

TRAVELER'S DIARY

 **ROSA KHUTOR**

ROSA KHUTOR
IS A PARTNER
OF DISCOVER
RUSSIA

For this summer edition of Traveler's Diary, we decided to experiment and create the feature without involving any high-profile bloggers. Instead, the DR team gathered authentic reviews from ordinary travelers sharing their experiences and impressions after visiting the destination.

The place in question is located in a remote mountain area at an altitude of 1,900 meters above sea level. From the observation deck, there are breathtaking views of the Caucasus Mountains and ancient forest, while the clouds drifting by seem close enough to touch. This is Nakhazo Camping, located at the Rosa Khutor resort in Sochi.

Nakhazo Camping has an average rating of 5.0 on Russian map and review platforms. Here is a selection of visitor reviews to help explain what travelers praise most about the location and what kind of experience you can expect.

"The campsite is located not far from Rosa Peak, the highest point of the Rosa Khutor resort. The journey begins before you even arrive: the campsite can be reached on foot via a scenic mountain trail about 7 km long, running through forest and across the mountains. The walk takes around two hours, although a transfer can be arranged if necessary. Still, the views along the way are incredible — some of my most treasured travel photos were taken on the way to Nakhazo."

Masha M., Level 5 Traveler

DR team comment

In addition to the banya and the communal space with panoramic glazing, the campsite has a large terrace overlooking the Psou River valley, where guests can watch spectacular sunsets and observe the night sky through a telescope. For those who want to spend time by the water, there are also decorative ponds and a mountain stream with a waterfall.

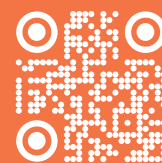
DR team comment

Because the mountain campsite is located in a remote area, there are several important limitations to keep in mind. First, the altitude requires a responsible approach to health: the organizers advise guests not to drink too much alcohol before the trip and to limit coffee consumption during their stay. There are no medications available at the campsite, as storing them on site is not permitted under current regulations, so guests should bring any essential medicines with them. It is also not recommended to bring children under the age of seven, as young children may have difficulty adjusting to the altitude.

WHAT TO BRING

- Hiking boots or trekking shoes
- Thermal underwear and warm windproof clothing
- A hat or other head covering
- Sunglasses
- A backpack of up to 30 liters
- A first-aid kit, as well as a light snack, water, a phone, and a power bank

Also useful to bring:



a thermos of hot tea, a camping mat, binoculars for observing wildlife, gloves, a raincoat, insect repellent, and a portable speaker.

"The campsite offers wooden tent platforms as well as two types of A-frame cabins, with either a small porch or a terrace overlooking the mountains. The cabins can accommodate up to six guests, although I think four is the most comfortable number. Inside, there are two double beds, one of them on the upper floor, and two single beds, plus a coat rack and shelves in the entrance area, a table with welcome snacks, and everything needed for a comfortable stay, including a warm duvet, a good mattress, and blankets. Overall, the experience was excellent: clean and comfortable accommodation, friendly staff, including English-speaking employees, delicious food, and incredible natural surroundings."

Anna B., Level 7 Traveler

"We stayed in a lodge cabin with a terrace. Even though Nakhazo is officially a campsite, the experience felt more like staying in a modern hotel with everything you might need: bed linen, towels, and soft bathrobes. On site there are showers and toilet facilities, washing machines, and a communal space with a dining area and a projector. But the highlight is the scenic wood-fired banya with a plunge pool, aromatherapy, steaming rituals, and a relaxation area. After visiting it, we felt completely refreshed."

Igor H., Level 9 Traveler

"There is plenty to do at the campsite: yoga sessions, a games area with board games and a PlayStation, evening film screenings on a large screen, a campfire zone, and barbecue facilities. But we didn't manage to try everything, because we simply couldn't tear ourselves away from the untouched nature around us. Walks across the central meadow with protected plant species and along the radial trails, morning exercise overlooking vast mountain scenery, and encounters with wild animals — it was one of the most amazing experiences of my life."

Natalya K., Level 10 Traveler

"There are many hiking trails around the campsite, and they are one of the main reasons people come here. We managed to explore three of them: the Turya Road, the most beautiful trail in the region, with alpine meadows and views over the Psou and Mzymta river valleys, as well as the lower and upper Deer Trails, where chamois and deer can often be seen roaming. We also heard that Caucasian bears can sometimes be encountered nearby, so once you arrive at the campsite, make sure to read the safety guidelines for encounters with wild animals."

Nikita D., Level 7 Traveler

"Nakhazo is an extraordinary place where untouched nature and the spirit of camping are combined with comfort and access to all the essentials of modern life."

Marina Z., Level 4 Traveler

MAP OF THE SUMMER ISSUE

In the summer 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.



Aeroexpress

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



Many tourists prefer the rail route –

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

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 and serving 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 accessible by metro.

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

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

Belorussky – Tverskaya Zastava Square, 7.

Kazansky – Komsomolskaya Square, 2.

Rizhsky – Rizhskaya Square, 1.

Yaroslavsky – Komsomolskaya Square, 5.

Leningradsky – Komsomolskaya Square, 3.

Kursky – Zemlyanoy Val Street, 29.

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 | SAINT PETERSBURG

Airports:

Pulkovo International Airport – 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, UAE, China, Egypt, Thailand, Belarus, as well as Central Asian countries.

Railway Stations:

Moskovsky Station – Nevsky Prospekt, 85.

Vitebsky Station – Zagorodny Prospekt, 52.

Finland Station – Lenin Square, 6.

Ladozhsky Station – Zanevsky Prospekt, 73.

Baltic Station – Baltic Station Square, 1.

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

3 | SOCHI

Airports:

Sochi International Airport named after V. I. Sevastyanov – Mira Street, 50, Sochi, Adler District.

The airport serves flights to the following destinations: CIS countries, Turkey, 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.



4 | 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, 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 on comfortable high-speed trains Lastochka and Burevestnik takes just under 4 hours, while on RZD's premium trains it takes around 6 hours.

5 | KAZAN

Airports:

International Airport of Kazan named after Gabdulla Tukay – Airport Street, 1.

Kazan Airport serves direct flights from Turkey, UAE, China, Georgia, Tajikistan, and CIS countries including 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.

6 | ASTRAKHAN

Airports:

Astrakhan International Airport named after B. M. Kustodiev nestles at Aeroportovskiy Proezd 1, Bldg. 2, specializing in domestic connections.

Astrakhan-1 station stands at Vokzalnaya Square 20.

Direct Moscow flights take about 2.5 hours; trains cover the distance in 25–27 hours.

7 | KALININGRAD

Airports:

Khrabrovo International Airport, gateway to Kaliningrad Oblast, lies at 1 Airportnaya Street, 1 in Khrabrovo settlement. It primarily handles domestic Russian flights alongside international hops to Belarus, Armenia, Turkey, and Egypt.

Key railway stations:

Kaliningrad-Severnoy (Sovetsky Prospekt 2) and **Kaliningrad-Yuzhny** (Zheleznodorozhnaya Street, 13–23).

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

8 | SUZDAL

No local airport – head to Ivanovo or Vladimir instead. Travelers favor the swift Lastochka high-speed train from Moscow's Kursky or Vostochny stations to Vladimir (1.5–2 hours), followed by a 36 km bus or taxi hop.

9 | KONDUKI (TULA REGION)

Fly into Moscow airports, then reach Tula via the toll-free M2 "Crimea" highway or Lastochka from Kursky Station (2.5 hours). From Tula, drive or taxi 1.5 hours to Konduki amid the Romantsev Hills.

10 | YEKATERINBURG

Airports:

Koltsovo International Airport named after A. N. Demidov anchors Sverdlovsk Oblast at Bakhtivanzhi Square 1, blending domestic services with flights to Kazakhstan, Turkey, Armenia, and more.

Key railway stations:

Yekaterinburg-Passazhirsky station is at Vokzalnaya Street, 22.

Moscow flights whisk you there in 2–2.5 hours; trains roll on for 25–34 hours.

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11 | KHABAROVSK

Airports:

Khabarovsk International Airport named after G. I. Nevelskoy (new terminal) — 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.

12 | VLADIVOSTOK

Airports:

Vladivostok International Airport named after V. K. Arsenyev sits at Vladimir Saybelya Street, 45, welcoming domestic routes and internationals to China, Uzbekistan, Korea, and Vietnam.

Key railway stations:

the main station awaits at Aleutskaya Street, 2.

Moscow flights span 8–9 hours; the epic train odyssey clocks in at 6–7 days.

13 | LENINGRAD OBLAST

Kurortny District

You can reach Sestroretsk, Repino, Komarovo, Zelenogorsk, and Solnechnoye via Primorskoe Highway (car or taxi) or electric trains from St. Petersburg's Finlyandsky Station — 30–60 minutes door-to-door.

Peterhof

Opt for taxi, Baltiysky Station electric to Novy Peterhof, or the high-speed Meteor hydrofoil (~35–45 minutes) — a scenic standout.

Kronstadt

Choose taxi, Finlyandsky electric to Gorskaya station, or Meteor — all about 60 minutes.

Vyborg

Taxi or Lastochka high-speed from Finlyandsky Station gets you there in ~1 hour.

14 | KAMCHATKA

Airport:

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.

BEACHES

Curonian Spit and Filinskaya Bay

Nearest city: **Kaliningrad**
Nearest airport: **Kaliningrad Khrabrovo International Airport**

From the airport to the Curonian Spit and Filinskaya Bay, take a taxi by entering the beach name as the destination — travel time is about 1 hour.

Bounty Beach at Cape Fiolent (Crimea)

Nearest city: **Sevastopol**
Nearest airport: **Simferopol International Airport** (60 km), which handles only domestic flights. Average flight time from Moscow to Simferopol is 2 hours 30 minutes.

From the airport to Sevastopol, take the electric train or a taxi (apps like Up-Taxi and Maxim operate in Crimea) — travel time is about 2 hours. To Bounty Beach at Cape Fiolent, go by taxi (enter the beach name in the app) or boat. In season, boats depart from Sevastopol or Balaklava Embankment — check schedules and prices on-site.

Kiselev Rock

Nearest city: **Tuapse**

Nearest airport: **Sochi International Airport named after V. I. Sevastyanov**

From Sochi Airport to Tuapse, take the high-speed "Lastochka" train — travel time is about 3 hours. From Tuapse to Kiselev Rock, go by taxi or join organized sea excursions departing from Tuapse Sea Port.

Derbent Coastline

Nearest city: **Derbent**

Nearest airport: **Makhachkala International Airport** — Republic of Dagestan, Karabudakhkent District, Karabudakhkent Village, Airport Territory. It serves domestic and international flights to Istanbul.

The distance from Makhachkala to Derbent is about 130 km. Reach it by electric train from Makhachkala Railway Station or taxi — road time is about 2.5 hours.

Iturup Island Beaches

Nearest city: **Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk**

Nearest airport: **Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk Khomutovo International Airport** — Sakhalin Region, Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, Khomutovo. It handles domestic flights and international routes (e.g., Harbin). Flight time from Moscow is about 8–9 hours.

From Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk to Iturup Island, fly from Khomutovo Airport to Yasny Airport on regular Aurora Airlines flights — travel time is about 1.5 hours. Then take a taxi.

Iturup is in a border zone, so a special permit is required. Obtain it via the Gosuslugi portal, in person at the Sakhalin Region FSB Border Service, or through tour operators organizing Kuril Islands tours.

Khalaktyrsky Beach

Nearest city: **Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky**

Nearest airport: **Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky (Elizovo) Airport**

From the airport to Khalaktyrsky Beach, take a taxi — travel time is about 30 minutes.



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