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tetrabrain

Back in the USSR

Moscow, 1 Day

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Guide Description

AUTHOR NOTE: Unbelievable as it seems now, it is not so long ago that Moscow's streets were awash in sickles and hammers, not McDonalds and Gucci. Those nostalgic for the days of the Evil Empire, here's a tour for you. This one-day itinerary takes you back to the Soviet Union, with its cosmonauts, secret police, imposing architecture and one particularly cranky dictator. Bonus: Even communists get hungry, so there's a special food inclusion. Happy travels, comrade!

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Itinerary Overview

things to do
restaurants
hotels
nightlife

Day 1 - Moscow

DAY NOTE: A perfect place to start any trip, especially one dedicated to the Soviet Union, is Moscow's most iconic destination -- Red Square. While there, don't forget to pay your respects to the man who started it all, Lenin, who lies in eternal repose in his Mausoleum. Next, walk northwest up Tverskaya, Moscow's main artery where Red Army tanks once rolled through to do battle on the Eastern front. Stop at the Museum of Modern History for a concise look back at the 20th century, an exciting time for the Russian people. Further up Tverskaya, enter Mayakovskaya metro, a proud architectural achievement of the 1930s which later doubled as a fall-out shelter. Ride the metro to Dynamo station, next to the stadium of what was formerly the KGB's sport team. In Frunze Central Airfield you'll find a museum to Soviet aeronautics and glimpse the former Young Pioneers sports complex. Crisscross the city for lunch at Mama Zoya, a famous Georgian restaurant (Stalin was Georgian!) with a view of Gorky Park, the Soviet Union's culture park. Then it's on to the museum of the Federal Security Service, once known as the KGB, in Lubyanka. It is still one of the most feared buildings in the city. Take the metro north to see the VVTs, a massive park which once housed the achievements of Soviet technology and agriculture, before dinner at Praga, a favored destination of the Soviet elite. Finally, end up with a night view of where it all ended – the Bely Dom. When Boris Yeltsin stood on a tank in front of this government building, it was sayonara to the Soviet Union.

Red Square (Krasnaia Ploshchad')
The heart of the city

Lenin's Mausoleum (Mavzolei V.I. Lenina)
Resting place of Soviet leader

Museum of Modern Russian History (Muzei Sovremennoi Istorii Rossii)
Russia's 20th century upheavals

Mayakovskaya Station
Metro masterpiece of Moscow

Moscow Dynamo
Legendary hockey club

'Yunye Pionery' Sportivnyi Kompleks (Young Pioneers Sports Complex)
Sports center near Dinamo

Central House of Aviation and Cosmonautics (Tsentral'nyi Dom Aviatsii i Kosmonavtiki)
For aeroplane buffs

Gorky Park
Listening to the winds of change

Mama Zoya
Inexpensive food and good service

History Hall of the Federal Security Service (Muzei Federal'noi Sluzhby Bezopasnosti)
Latest and greatest in counter-espionage

All-Russian Exhibition Centre (Vse-rosiiskii Vystavochnyi Tsentr - VVTs)
Ex-Soviet business park

Praga (Prague)
More than 100 dishes to choose from

White House (Belyi Dom)
Scene of political struggle

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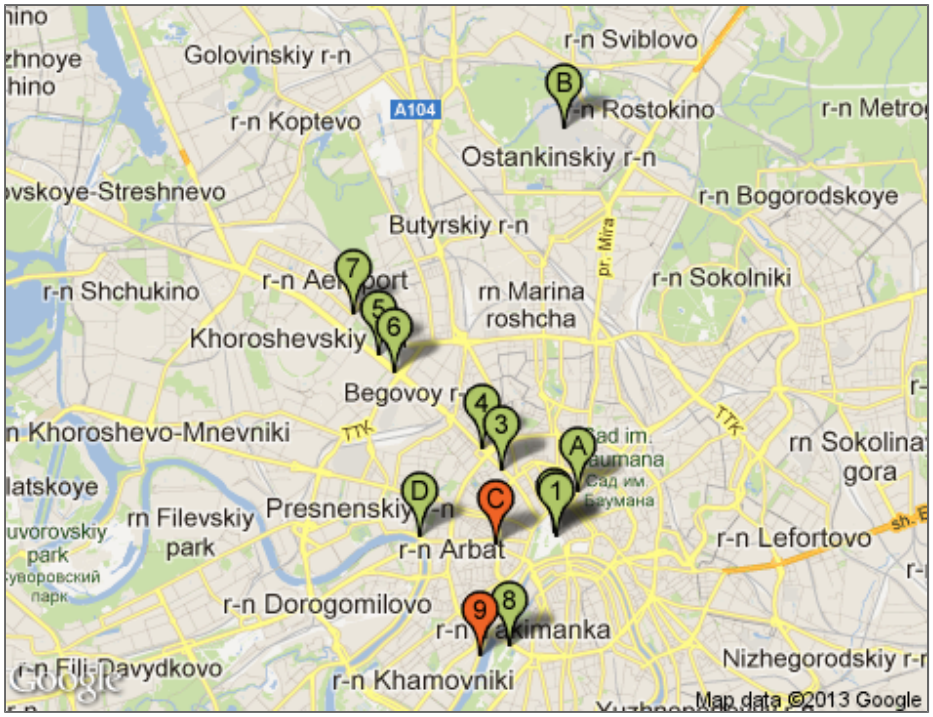
Day 1 - Moscow



QUICK NOTE

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contact:
http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/545

location:
Red Square
Moscow 125009

hours:
24 hrs

1 Red Square (Krasnaia Ploshchad')

wcities

DESCRIPTION: This is possibly the most famous central square in the world. It is a humbling sight both day and night; beautiful in winter— regally dramatic all the year round. Originally an expanse of nothing more than mud, and populated by a ragged collection of hawkers, beggars and outcasts, Red Square acquired its present grandness gradually. Nowadays, the square and its surrounds positively exude the drama of Russian past and present. The walls of the Kremlin loom on one side, their blood-red height belittling the pale GUM department store opposite. At the southern end of the square

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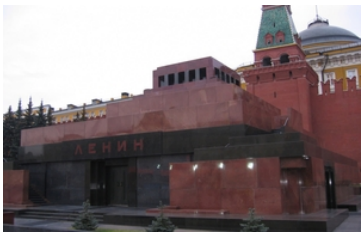
towers, is the onion-domed exuberance of St Basil's Cathedral. © wcities.com

contact:
tel: +7 495 232 5657(Tourist Information)
http://www.aha.ru/~mausoleu/index_e.htm

location:
Red Square (Krasnaia Ploshchad')
Moscow 103073

hours:
Tu-Th, Sa 10a-1p

2 Lenin's Mausoleum (Mavzolei V.I. Lenina)



wcities

DESCRIPTION: Architect Alexei Shchusev (who built this imposing mausoleum on Red Square in 1930) modeled it on the ziggurat terraced temples of the ancient Assyrians and Babylonians. Inside, visitors file round the embalmed body of the leader of the Russian Revolution, Vladiamr I. Lenin. The material used for the exterior is mostly dark-red granite and grey and black labradorite. The colors are in perfect harmony with the red bricks of the Kremlin Wall that looms in the background. It measures 12 meters in height and 24 meters in length. Admission is free. © wcities.com

contact:
tel: 7 495 699 6724
fax: 7 495 699 8515
http://www.sovr.ru/

location:
Ulitsa Tverskaia, 21
Moscow 125009

hours:
Tu, W, F 10a-6p, Th, Sa 11a-7p, Su 10a-5p (closed last F of every month)

3 Museum of Modern Russian History (Muzei Sovremennoi Istorii Rossii)

wcities

DESCRIPTION: Here you will find themed exhibitions dealing with the Russian Empire such as the takeover by the Bolsheviks, the Civil War (the Reds versus the Whites), the emergence of Stalinism and the history of the Soviet Union from its creation in 1922 to its dissolution in 1991. There is also a lot of hardware on display: period small arms, a World War I armoured car, a 6-inch artillery gun used by Bolshevik insurgents to shell the Kremlin and pieces of Moscow's barricades from 1991. A separate exhibition features gifts which have been presented to Soviet leaders from Stalin to Gorbachev. © wcities.com

location:
1-st Tverskaya Zastava Ploshchad'Yamskaya street
Moskva

4 Mayakovskaya Station

kalidoskopika

DESCRIPTION: Built by soviet architect Alexey Dushkin and opened in 1930, this glamorous station is one of the most well-known in the world for its pre-Stalinist design. The station, which is part of the Zamoskvoretskaya Line on Moscow's metro system, features gorgeous architecture and design. Dushkin's art-deco concept is in full swing as the entire place is covered in ornate marble, pink rhondite, stainless steel and glass mosaics. Inspired and named after poet Vladimir Mayakovsky, due to his descriptions of the Soviet future, this station is certainly one to check out. Marvel at its grandeur and beauty before jumping on a train to your next destination. © wcities.com

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contact:
tel: 7 495 612 7172
fax: 7 495 613 1612
http://www.fcdynamo.ru/

location:
Leningradsky Prospekt, 36
Moscow 125167

5 Moscow Dynamo

DESCRIPTION: Russian hockey has gone into something of a decline since the days of the Soviet Union, when the KGB sponsored Dynamo, but the team remains a force in the Russian Elite League. Many of the younger players will one day be NHL stars in North America. The schedule runs throughout the winter (December-March) at the Luzhniki Sports Palace. Tickets are very affordable. © wcities.com

contact:
tel: 7 495 613 0239/ 7 495 613 0335
fax: 7 495 613 0450
http://www.styp.ru/

location:
Leningradskii Prospekt, 31
Moscow Moscow 125284

hours:
M-F 6p-midnight, Sa-Su Noon-midnight

6 'Yunye Pionery' Sportivnyi Kompleks (Young Pioneers Sports Complex)

DESCRIPTION: This former training center for Soviet 'Young Pioneers' (the Soviet Union's youth organ) has transformed into quite a commercial enterprise. There is an upscale restaurant at the entrance and a parking lot inside. Kids under 12 can enter free of charge. It is a well-tended indoor skating rink with comfortable cloakrooms, and they offer excellent Bauer skates that look brand new. The sports complex also has a sweat room, an athletic hall, a soccer stadium, and basketball and tennis courts. © wcities.com

Yunye Pionery' Sportivnyi Kompleks (Young Pioneers Sports Complex)

contact:
tel: 7 495 212 5461 / 7 495 213 4333

location:
Ulitsa Krasnoarmeiskaia, 4
Moscow 125167

hours:
Tu-Su 10a-6p

7 Central House of Aviation and Cosmonautics (Tsentral'nyi Dom Aviatsii i Kosmonavtiki)

DESCRIPTION: This unique exhibition is situated on the Frunze Central Airfield, and displays more than 60 airplanes and helicopters built in the various military-industrial locations of Russia. Some of the most interesting exhibition pieces include Mig (models from 17 to 29) and Su (models from 7 to 27) military airplanes, Mi (models from 1 to 6) helicopters and spy apparatus, constructed on a massive scale at the beginning of the 1950s. Some of the planes still have military equipment attached. The territory around the musuem is often used for airshows and international aviation projects. © wcities.com

contact:
tel: 7 495 237 1100
fax: 7 495 237 0707
http://www.moscow.info/parks/gorky-park.aspx

location:
Krymskii Val, 9
Moscow 117049

hours:
M-Su 11a-8p

8 Gorky Park

DESCRIPTION: Gorky Park (traditionally referred to as Park Kul'tury i Otdykha or Park of Culture and Recreation) stretches along 3 kilometers of the Moskva river to the southwest of the city center. The park became known to the Western public thanks to a blockbuster movie based on Martin Cruz Smith's best-selling book, 'Gorky Park,' and the Scorpions' famous song. Laid down in 1928, the original ornamental gardens are now accompanied by an entertainment zone, hosting everything from science lectures to rock concerts in its auditorium. © wcities.com

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contact:
tel: 7 495 242 8550

location:
16D Frunzenskaya nab.
Moscow 119146

hours:
M-Su Noon-11p

9 Mama Zoya

wcities

DESCRIPTION: The family of Mama Zoya started with a rudimentary cafe, then expanded to an out-of-the-way cellar restaurant, and now boasts a multistory boat-restaurant moored along the Moscow River across from Gorky Park. The latest location is less intimate but more accessible and successful. The food is just as homey even if the service is not quite so familial. This is an atmospheric and decently priced way to sample the rich and underappreciated pleasures of Georgian cuisine. The grilled lamb -- cubed and skewered, ground and skewered, or grilled by the leg -- is a specialty, and it's divine. Also try adzhapsandal, an eggplant-and-tomato based ragout; or pkhali, spinach, garlic, and walnuts ground to a rich paste. Ignore the weird decor of gnomes, palms, and mannequins, and look out at the river instead. © Frommer's

contact:
tel: 7 495 914 8538
http://www.fsb.ru/history/museum.html

location:
Ulitsa Bolshaia Lubianka, 12
Moscow 101000

hours:
M-F 10a-4p

A History Hall of the Federal Security Service (Muzei Federal'noi Sluzhby Bezopasnosti)

DESCRIPTION: The modern FSB security service is the modern incarnation of the KGB, and this museum in the heart of the imposing Liubianka complex is devoted to the great and notorious history of the mysterious organisation. There's a collection of spy gadgets garnered from those who have fallen foul of the organisation, including mini-bombs and venom-tipped umbrellas. The history of spying is illuminated by the documented biographies of various big catches among of foreign spy networks. Finally, a rogue's gallery of former KGB heads includes Stalin's infamous henchman Lavrentii Beria, the controversial founder Felix Dzerzhinksi, and current Russian president Vladimir Putin. Entry is in groups on a pre-arranged basis only. © wcities.com

contact:
tel: 7 495 760 3386
fax: 7 495 760 3009
http://www.vdnhexpo.ru/

location:
Мира просп
Moskva 129223

hours:
M-Su 10a-6p

B All-Russian Exhibition Centre (Vse-rosiiskii Vystavochnyi Tsentr - VVTs)

DESCRIPTION: Largely referred to by its soviet-era acronym of V-D-N-Kh, this sprawling exhibition site was once host to a complex of exhibitions showing off the economic and technological fruits of the Soviet world. Nowadays the 68 pavilions are full of pretty ramshackle stores with all sorts of household goods. The centre boasts some 40,000 square meters of outdoor space and nearly 130,000 square meters of indoor exhibition space. It hosts some 350 exhibitions each year and 40 to 50 of them are international. The annual visitor influx is close to 10 million. Admission is free. © wcities.com

contact:
tel: 7 495 290 6171
fax: 7 495 290 6530
http://www.praga.ru/

location:
Arbat Ulitsa, 2/1
Moscow 119019

hours:
Daily Noon till late

C Praga (Prague)

DESCRIPTION: Even before the arrival of communists, this place was a favorite hangout of Moscow's elite. Its website waxes lyrical about the university professors, conservatory teachers, musicians, artists and writers who frequented the place around the beginning of the 20th century. In Soviet times the place was a favorite celebration haunt of the upper echelons of Moscow society, and more recently, it was officially reopened by none other than Mayor Luzhkov. The cuisine is Russian and international, offering more than 100 main and vegetable dishes. Its drink menu offers vintage wines, and fine cognacs and vodkas. © wcities.com

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location:
Krasnopresnenskaia
Naberezhnaia, 2
Moscow 103274

D White House (Belyi Dom)

wcities

DESCRIPTION: The White House was main witness to two of the defining moments of post-Soviet history. The first was the August coup of 1991, when Gorbachev was ousted by hardliners and a Yeltsin-led democratic alliance took the White House as their rallying point. Muscovites formed a human shield round the building in full expectation of a militarized clampdown that was never to materialize. The coup and the Soviet Union with it collapsed in disarray. In 1993, the White House once again played host to political drama. Yeltsin shelled the leaders of Russia's parliament into submission when they refused his order of dissolution. © wcities.com

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Moscow Snapshot

Local Info

While the Soviet Union is now just a memory, there is still a lot in Moscow to remind tourists what it was like--and why everyone is thankful that it has been consigned to the history books. The Kremlin, which served as the seat of communist government, is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. An imposing walled-in complex of palaces, cathedrals and government offices, it's a familiar landmark steeped in Moscow's rich and bloody history. Inside the fortified city, you can find architecture in huge proportions--which tells you something about this former government's large ego. The Uspensky Sobor is a massive cathedral where tsars were once crowned, while the Armoury Museum is home to many of the treasures in Russia's immense store, including Faberge Eggs and the 180-carat diamond once presented to Catherine the Great.

Sights

Your visit to Moscow should rightfully begin at Red Square. Bounded on all sides by the Kremlin, the brightly colored onion-shaped domes of St. Basil's Cathedral, Lenin's Mausoleum and the State Historical Museum, Red Square can easily eat up an entire day because there are so many historic sites to see. Culture in megadoses may also be consumed in the art, sculpture and paintings found in the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts and in the Tretyakov Gallery. Another attraction that should not be missed, if you can get a ticket, is the Bolshoi Circus, the oldest circus show in the city. You can get most places via the huge and complex Moscow Metro, which is more than just an efficient transport system--the ornately decorated and lavishly painted stations once served as bomb shelters as well.

Dining

Fine dining in Moscow is an amazing and amazingly expensive experience--if the doormen of the elitny establishments will allow you entry. Top gourmet spots include Cafe Pushkin at Pushkin Square, Noev Kovcheg, famous for its spicy basturma, and Aist. For a taste of Russian food without such a hefty bill, check out Matrioshka or Moo Moo. At One Red Square you can eat the same food that was served to the tsars.

Shopping

The GUM shopping complex in Red Square is one shopping site not to be missed--but you might want to take a look at the nosebleed-level price tags before you buy. Okhoktny Ryad is home to high-street fashion, while Tverskaya Ulitsa is a hip shopping street lined with expensive boutiques. Also check out the Ulitsa Arbat, a 1-kilometer-long pedestrian street in the center of Moscow, for interesting souvenirs and street music played with typical Russian passion.
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History

In 1147, Prince Dolgoruki invited a group of nobles from Novgorod to a grand feast at his lodge overlooking the Moskva river. That location became the Kremlin- the power center of the emerging Russian state. The surrounding area gradually evolved into a vast metropolis and one of the world's great capital cities.

The Mongols arrived during the first half of the 13th Century, decimating the already crumbling remnants of the declining Kievan civilization. The Mongols took a relatively hands-off approach to the governance of their vast conquered territory, extracting tribute from approved princes rather than administrating the areas directly. During this time, the principality of Muscovy assumed importance thanks to its advantageous position on a confluence of trade routes and the location of the Orthodox church in Moscow.

By 1480, Tatar(Mongol) domination weakened enough to allow Ivan III(the Great) the pleasure of tearing up the regime's symbol of authority in the Assumption Cathedral. He then proceeded to subdue both the pesky Lithuanians and the proud civilization of Novgorod to the north. To celebrate his achievements, he invited Italian architects to revitalize the Kremlin, which had become the center of a now-flourishing city.

Ivan the Terrible's reign was characterized by the consolidation(in famously brutal fashion) of Moscow and the territory it governed. Ivan was obsessed with the possibility of treason and allowed no mercy to those who fell under his suspicious gaze. He died in 1584, and the years up until 1613 were marked by a series of ascension crises known as the Time of Troubles. This ended with the dawn of the Romanov Dynasty, which lasted until the revolution of 1917.

Peter the Great's reign saw the emergence of Russia onto the European political stage, but also the eclipse of Moscow by Peters's pet project: the new northern capital of St Petersburg. Peter despised the conservative views pervading many Russian philosophies, partly because of childhood traumas. He traveled to Europe on his Great Embassy, learning about western European technologies, philosophies and economies. When he returned, he was determined to bring Russia into mainstream Europe. By 1712, the Imperial court had been transferred to what became the capital of the Russian empire until the necessities of war returned that title to Moscow in 1917. Until then, Moscow was consigned to a secondary role in Russian history as Russia played out its European aspirations from St Petersburg.

In June 1812, Moscow was largely destroyed by fire and looting in the wake of Napoleon’s invasion. The French were eventually chased all the way back to Paris, but Moscow was in dire need of complete reconstruction. Much of modern central Moscow dates from this period.

During the 19th century, whispers of discontent about Tsarist autocracy,(fanned by the influence of Western ideas), became louder, but the Imperial regime, despite acts like the abolition of serfdom in 1861,

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was far from lenient. The end of the 19th century saw a growth both in underground revolutionary movements and dissent within the aristocracy itself. With the coming of World War I and the devastation it brought with it, the rule of the Romanovs was soon to be history, and Russia's last tsar, Nicholas II, abdicated. Soon afterward in October 1917, the Bolshevik Revolution ushered in more than 70 years of Communism.

Lenin and the Bolsheviks consolidated their power by ceding huge territory to the Germans as part of a peace deal and by exterminating remaining opposition to their regime during a three-year civil war. In March 1918, the capital was transferred from St Petersburg back to Moscow. Though this was done because St Petersburg was still under threat from the Germans, it was at the same time a suitable accompaniment to the change that was underway as Russia moved from Imperial to Soviet power.

A brief period of economic liberalization followed the restrictive"War Communism" of the civil war period. After Stalin took the helm following Lenin's death in 1924, he began isolating potential opponents and started the process of mass industrialization as well as mass terror.

During the 1930s, millions of people died in the countryside where enforced collectivization brought production to its knees. As the Great Terror gathered speed, countless numbers of people were arrested, tortured, killed or exiled to labor camps. The offices of Stalin's secret police at the Liubianka have never quite shed their symbolism as the center of Stalinist repression. Party members were assassinated as Stalin's paranoia grew ever stronger. Trials held just for show in the House of Unions resulted in dubious confessions of alleged wrongdoing by former Party faithful who were often subjected to having sulfuric acid poured on them and then condemned to death.

The terror was also accompanied by a period of mass construction. The first line of Moscow's impressive metro system was constructed and opened in 1935.

The Second World War or theGreat Patriotic War, as it is known in Russia broke out on June 22, 1941 when German forces broke a previous Nazi-Soviet pact and mounted a full-scale invasion. The initial stages of the war were disastrous for the Soviet side and it took awhile for Stalin's forces, somewhat crippled by his military purges, to begin the difficult process of repelling the Fascists. Both Moscow and St Petersburg came under close threat of capture. As German forces approached Moscow in October, 450,000 people were put to work digging trenches. The Germans were finally defeated, but up to 30 million Soviet citizens died in the effort. On June 24th, Red Square witnessed a deeply symbolic moment as high-ranking soldiers rode their horses onto Red Square and trampled swastika banners in front of Lenin's Mausoleum.

Post-war Moscow was subject to a flurry of construction activity, including the start of work on Stalin's skyscrapers,(also known as the Seven Sisters), a series of buildings intended to make the city look sufficiently grand, fit for a capital of world Communism.

Stalin died in 1953 and was followed by Krushchev, whose Secret Speech to the 20th Party Congress acknowledged Stalin's crimes. Thus began The Thaw, a period of relative political and cultural relaxation after Stalin's rule by terror.

The distinctly passive Brezhnev took the country listlessly through a period of stagnation, which was followed by self-proclaimed fix-it man Gorbachev. His policies ofglasnost(open public discourse) andperestroika(economic reconstruction) aimed to rejuvenate the ailing socialist state, but it was beyond help and by the late 1980s the authority of the Communist Party was under threat. The charismatic leader Boris Yeltsin rose from campaigning Moscow Party boss to become the spearhead of movements against the authority of Gorbachev. He ripped up his Party membership card on TV.

A failed coup could not slow the momentum of the fall of Soviet Communism. On Christmas day of 1991 Gorbachev resigned and the Russian tricolor was raised above the Kremlin.

Through violent conflict between the President and the parliament in 1993 and some shaky elections along the way, Yeltsin led Russia into the brave new world of Capitalism. Since the fall of Communism, Moscow has attracted more than the lion's share of foreign capital and new development, to the extent that it is often spoken of by outsiders as a different country. Its architecture has been improved by a few projects pushed by populist mayor Luzhkov, most notably the Church of Christ the Savior, a remake of an original building swept away by the Communists.
©

Hotel Insights

Since the fall of Communism in the beginning of the 1990s, the new Russia has seen Moscow transformed to an extent unimaginable in any other Russian city, even St Petersburg. One manifestation of this is the abundance and variety of new(or newly refurbished) top-class hotels. Nearly all major hotel groups offer something in Moscow. However, the gap between the top luxury hotels- (there are 19 listed here compared to only three in St Petersburg)- and the budget accomodations is often wide.

City Center

In some rooms at the Hotel Baltschug Kempinski you'll be treated to stunning views over Red Square. Although built in 1898, it was thoroughly re-modernized by new German management during the 1990s.

The Metropol Inter-Continental is a high-class affair and possibly one of the finest hotels Moscow has to offer: art-nouveau elegance combined with modern amenities to luxurious effect, but expect to pay accordingly. A similarly-styled effort is the city-owned Le Royal Meridien National, again a luxurious hotel dating back to pre-revolutionary times.

The Marriott Moscow Royal Aurora is one of a trio of Marriot establishments in the

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city, the others being the Marriott Moscow Grand and the Marriott Tverskaia. They are all well-appointed, though the Royal is the most lavish of all. It is near the Bol'shoi Theatre and is a favorite with VIP visitors.

Yet another renovated, refurbished hotel of the pre-Communist times is the Savoy Hotel Moscow, which was a languishing sub-standard Soviet hotel until extensive(and impressive) renovation at the end of the 1980s.

The Budapest is in a slightly higher price category, but is reasonably deserving of the steeper prices it demands, while the East-West Hotel is more expensive but also attractive.

North

Located some way up Tverskaia Ulitsa(Tverskaia Street), the Marriott Grand is a brand new hotel with high-tech facilities, such as in-room internet. Further up the same stretch of road lies the Sheraton Palace, a modern hotel known for the quality of its restaurants, as well as the final Marriott hotel(the Moscow Marriott Tverskaya Hotel, which is a little quieter than its counterparts though no less well-equipped.

The Moscow Marriott Tverskaya Hotel sits across from the Olympic Sports Complex. Both were erected especially for the 1980 Moscow Olympics, but have since been renovated.

One particularly curious hotel is the Marco Polo Presnja Hotel, just over two kilometers(a little over a mile) northwest of the city center on grounds owned by the Patriarch(the most senior figurehead of the Orthodox Church). This is a relatively inexpensive luxury option.

The Novotel Sheremetyevo 2 Moscow Airport is practically at the terminal of the Sheremetevo Airport. A free shuttle bus slightly mitigates the distance to the hotel.

The Kosmos boasts an impressive number of 3500 beds. It is quite a distance from town but is located across from a metro station. The area has a generous ensemble of restaurants as well as a reputation for prostitution.

The Sovietskaia combines Soviet styling with updated amenities and a famous pre-revolutionary restaurant, the Novyi Yar, adjacent to it.

The Traveller's Guest House is the premier option for backpackers stopping through Moscow, while Nasledie(Heritage Hostel) targets a similar market but lies a bit further away from the city center.

South

A corporate atmosphere reigns at Gazprom Hotel, in a building owned by the conglomerate of the same name. The Hotel Orlenok and Sevastopol' are two other moderate options in the south of the city.

West

The Golden Ring Hotel offers reasonably priced rooms not far from the end of the famous Ulitsa Arbat to the west of the Kremlin.

The Radisson SAS Slavjanskaya is a multi-purpose complex including some corporate offices, a shopping mall, a cinema and a 410-room hotel.

Relatively inexpensive rooms and excellent service distinguish the Katerina-City Hotel, a Scandinavian-run hotel some way to the south-east of the city center.

The Arbat hotel is located next to one of the"Seven Sisters" buildings, which dominate Moscow's skyline. This particular one towers up at the end of Ulitsa Arbat. Rooms are in the upper-medium price range. A much cheaper option in a similar area is afforded by the Belgrad, but rooms are significantly less appealing.

The Ukraina is actually locatedinside one of the huge Gothic monsters that forms part of the"Seven Sisters" and is accordingly Soviet in ambiance. Modern touches include a business center. The Mir is another Soviet effort located next to the White House.
©

Restaurants Insights

Moscow's contemporary wining and dining scene is utterly unlike anything that existed here during the age of the Iron Curtain. The transformation of the city from Communist citadel to Capitalist frontier is reflected in the entirely new range of restaurants that have sprung up since the beginning of the 1990s- Irish bars, snazzy American diners, expensive Japanese restaurants, Australian pubs...the list goes on. From the thriving fast-food scene to the numerous prestigious restaurants serving the new elites, eating and drinking in Moscow will not be boring. Moscow also harbors a surprisingly rich stock of ethnic cuisine from around the former Soviet Union, the most widespread being that of Georgia(a former Soviet republic to the south) but also including Central Asian and other Caucasian varieties. If you've got enough money, Moscow's selection of top class restaurants is unbeatable.

Red Square and the Kremlin

Other opportunities for high-quality Russian cuisine and exquisite presentation are offered at top-notch restaurants such as Serebrianyi Vek,(the name means"Silver Century"), which was once a Soviet bathhouse. For fresh Japanese cuisine, you won’t find much better than Laluna, which offers a menu of sushi rolls and a wide variety of sakes to sample. If you're looking to save some cash, there's always chain restaurants such as Sbarro. The doorway of Godunov is a large vaulted arch. Expect to find the best in obscure, ancient Russian dishes on the menu here. Red Square 1 is a fine 19th-century style restaurant as centrally located as its name suggests.

City Center

Bunker is a popular local spot for after-work drinks and dinners. There is also a live music schedule and a dance floor for those feeling more adventurous. U Babushki is a modern restaurant that serves fresh seafood dishes and French cuisine with an extensive wine list. Gratzi is a family-friendly restaurant that serves Italian food and offers live jazz music. Papa John's is a popular option for those

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with children. If you'd like something more rustic try Khlestakov Traktir, which offers plenty of hearty Russian fare on its menu, while the slightly more expensive Argo specializes in Georgian cuisine. The wait staff at Elki-Palki are decked out in old-fashioned Russian costumes. Don't miss your chance to try their homemade pies. The Ukrainian restaurant Shinok has a collection of live game animals grazing out front and entertainment provided by a clown on the weekends.

Kitai-Gorod

This district displays Moscow's most impressive architecture, and the dining options here are somewhat limited, but still delicious. Kruiz(Cruise) is a pub and steakhouse that has a pirate theme, with servers dressed accordingly. People also come here at night to grab a beer and shoot some pool. Named for a Chinese pilot, Kitaiskii Letchik Dzhao Da(Chinese Pilot Dzhao Da) is conveniently open 24 hours and is reasonably priced. Vogue Cafe is an appropriately named cafe where people go to be seen. There is also live music and an eclectic menu with everything from Russian to Italian dishes.

The North

Tsarskaia Okhota was a hunting-themed favorite of Boris Yeltsin, with a rustic interior and a live music lineup on Sunday. The German eatery Bierstube is as well known for its beer selection as it is for its menu of classics like Sausages with Sauerkraut. Always expect great service when you stop by. The American Bar& Grill is popular with Americans living abroad because of its Western menu and English-speaking staff. There is a patio open in the summer for those looking to dine outdoors.

South Of The City Center

Darbar has an extensive menu of Indian food and an à la carte menu. Khlestakov Traktir was built to model the setting of the Gogol's play"The Government Inspector," with a VIP lounge that accommodates large groups. For something different, try Bul'dog(The Bulldog), a Latin restaurant with Peruvian-style decor. If you're looking for impressive traditional Russian creations, Danilovskii is a fantastic option.

The East

The Schwein, which is German for"pig," is a bar and restaurant that features live music and delectable German and Russian cuisine. Inside, you will find plenty of fun, pig-related decorations. For authentic Ukrainian cuisine, try Vechera na Khutore(Evenings on a Farm). The name comes from a Gogol folk story, and the building is modeled after a windmill.

The West

Kafe Ogonek is a popular local cafe where you can find a tasty, inexpensive Russian meal. Be sure to try the signature cocktail made of garlic, vodka, pepper and cloves. Le Gastronome offers unbeatable international cuisine(principally seafood, including shark) for a sizable wad of rubles. It is considered to be one of the best restaurants in Moscow. If you're looking to spend a bit less, Patio Pizza has 30 different kinds of pizza and a sizable wine list. Oblomov is a classically-decorated restaurant with pool tables and various board games available. Mama Zoia's is a no-nonsense restaurant where you can get the best in Georgian food and enjoy live, local music. For Mexican fare, Pancho Villa is a must; it's known for its generous portions of traditional dishes.
©

Nightlife Insights

Moscow is one of the world's major capital cities, with entertainment and nightlife to match the title. The traditional offerings of classical music and drama have been joined in recent years by a vibrant and often extravagant array of nightclubs. The following is a mere introduction to Moscow entertainment.

Classical Music: Opera, Ballet, Orchestral

Russia's great heritage of classical music is reflected in the quality of its orchestras and orchestral venues. The Bol'shoi Theatre is a world-renowned institution and the jewel of Moscow's cultural nightlife. The performances, as well as the auditorium, are immaculate. In terms of grandeur, the Bol'shoi surpasses anything else in Russia. It is a popular venue, especially among visiting tourists, and tickets may be difficult to find at short notice.

Other major venues include the Kremlin Palace of Congresses(State Kremlin Palace), a modern building within the walls of the Kremlin that hosts performances of the great Russian ballets. Both the Stanislavskii and Nemirovich-Danchenko Musical Theater and the Helikon Theater in Arabt run a variety of Russian and foreign classics, with the latter taking a more innovative approach.

For the city's best orchestral music, visit the Tchaikovskii Concert Hall and the Tchaikovskii Conservatory.

Theater

Modern Moscow may be a commercial epicenter, but theater and the arts still find a special role in the city life. The breadth and range of drama theaters rival those of most major capitals.

The Moscow Art Theater has always been among the city's most prominent theaters, of which there are now two branches. The original, Chekhov Moscow Art Theater(MKhAT- Moskovskii Khudozhestvennyi Teatr imeni A. Chekhova), is reputed to be the best.

The Theater on Taganka was a politically controversial theater during Soviet times. It is famous for its veiled satires.

For classic Russian drama, head to the Maly Theatre, founded in 1824. It continues to produce material predominantly from the 19th Century. The same is true for the Sovremennik Theater. Contemporary works are favored by a few theaters, most notably the Maiakovskii Theater and the Lenkom Theater. The Lenkom is the birthplace of the Russian rock-opera.

The Iugo-Zapad Theater performs a mixture of works, from foreign classics to Soviet staples.

You'll find alternative theater productions offered up at the Obraztsov Puppet Theater(Teatr Kukol imeni Obraztsova) and

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the Moscow Clown Theater(Moskovskii Teatr Klounady).

Cinema

The smell of popcorn and Hollywood blockbusters can be found at the Amerikanskii Dom Kino(American House of Cinema), Moscow's most glitzy film house. The Pod Kupolom(Under the Dome) and the Kodak Kinomir(Cinema World) both feature American films.

For Russian movies, visit the Illuzion or the Kinosentr(Cinema Center).

Clubs

Moscow is home to some of the world's most fiercely fashionable clubs. The Garage and Titanik are popular nightclubs, especially with the young and rich. Golodnaia Utka(Hungry Duck's) is a wild and intense spot for dancing, while laid-back Bohemian types might prefer to stop in at Proekt OGI.

16 tonnes and Svalka are good places to hear live music, as well as Le Club and Arbat Blues Club, which both specialize in live jazz and blues.
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Things to Do Insights

Many of Moscow's quintessential sights are located in the heart of the city around the Red Square and the Kremlin. While there are things to do and places to see throughout the Russian capital, most travelers will begin their exploring here.

The Kremlin

An ancient seat of Russian power, an awe-inspiring symbol, and an internationally-renowned landmark, the Kremlin is the spiritual heart of the Russian government: a giant, walled complex combining sacred monuments of both church and state. Russian rulers have sat here since medieval times, excluding the temporary interruption when St Petersburg was made capital. There is a story that when one film crew was at work shooting a period film in the Kremlin grounds, Yeltsin himself came out of his office to instruct them to keep the noise down. The grounds themselves are thick with history, home to a scattering of churches and cathedrals that would suffice elsewhere for a whole city.

Entry can be gained via the Kutafia Tower(Kutaf'ia Bashnia), which lies at the end of a ramp jutting from the Kremlin's west wall. Security is understandably high at this point. Walk up the ramp and you'll get to the Trinity Gate(Troitskaia Bashnia), built in 1495 and placed right on top of a 16th-century prison.?? the right, beyond the Trinity Tower is the Poteshnyi Palace(Poteshnyi Dvorets) in which Stalin had private apartments and where his wife shot herself. Next, on the right is the Kremlin Palace of Congresses(State Kremlin Palace), a former venue for Communist Party parties and now a huge 6000-seat concert hall which is, and always was, completely out of tune with its surroundings.

On the left side lies territory strictly out of bounds to tourists. From west to east the buildings are the Arsenal, the Senate and the building of the Supreme Soviet(Verkhovnyi Sovet). The first of these is fronted by an array of Napoleonic cannons while the second is very notable for being the official residence of the Russian president himself.

On the right you'll see the Patriarch's Palace(Patriarshii Dvorets), a 17th-century building constructed for the head of the Orthodox church.

You can walk through the arches of the Palace, at which point you will find yourself entering the Kremlin's core. From here you can either swing to the left for a quick peek of the Tsar Cannon(Tsar-pushka), an impressive but non-functioning 40-ton piece of heavy armory, or you could proceed onto the main square itself and investigate what's going on there. Surrounding the square, there are various churches and cathedrals.

The Rest Of Red Square

The Cathedral of the Assumption(Uspenskii Sobor) lies just beyond the Patriarch's Palace at the north end of the square and is justifiably considered one of its key monuments. A golden-topped, five-domed structure built in the 15th Century, it was returned to Orthodox Church ownership in 1989.

Next to this(on the right) lurks the snappily-named Church of the Deposition of the Robe, a late 15th-century effort built in wholly Russian style. Inside, you'll find, among other things, a permanent display of wood-carvings. To the south lies the Hall of Facets, where Tsars would entertain guests in the Throne Room. This is closed to the public.

On the other side of the square is the Ivan the Great Bell-Tower(Kolokolnia Ivana Velikogo). It stands higher than any other of the Kremlin's buildings, while behind it, noticeably at ground-level, sits the rather forlorn Tsar Bell(Tsar-kolokol), which never made it to the bell-tower after it lost a chunk during the forging process.

The south side of the square is bordered by two cathedrals, the first of these being the Archangel Cathedral, initially erected in the 14th Century as a place of burial for the tsars but then extensively re-shaped at the beginning of the 16th Century. The second is the Annunciation Cathedral(Blagoveshchenskii Sobor), which used to be a private church for the Tsars.

From here you can head west, past the Great Kremlin Palace(Bol'shoi Kremlevskii Dvorets), which is normally closed to everyone except visiting statesmen. Keep going toward the Armory, an impressively rich ensemble of state treasures dating well back into the dim and distant history of the Muscovite regimes. From here you can exit via the nearby Borovitskii Gate.

Kitai-Gorod

Go east from the Red Square and you'll find yourself in the business neighborhood of Kitai-Gorod, an area almost entirely encircled by reconstructed medieval walls and filled with interesting traditional architecture including wonderful mansions and churches. After taking a look at the well-preserved 17th-century Tserkov Troitsy v Nikitinkakh(Church of the Trinity

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in Nikitinov), you could do some shopping or grab a bite to eat at Chambers in Zariadie(Muzei Palaty v Zariade), the former home of Romanov boyars, which has been converted into a commercial center. Be sure to visit Lubyanka Square, which is where you'll also find the KGB headquarters. It's also worth checking out the Slavyanskaya Square and Theatre Square, on which sits the Bolshoi Theatre. Even if it is on the late side, you can always grab some good food 24 hours a day at the Kitaiskii Letchik Dzhao Da(Chinese Pilot Dzhao Da).

Guided Tours

Capital Tours(+7 495 232 2442/http://www.capitaltours.ru/)

Ost-West(+7 812 327 34 16/http://www.ostwest.com)

Isango(+1 866 663 7017/http://www.isango.com/)

Three Whales(+7 495 4208441/http://www.threewhales.ru/t3.htm)

Moscow Tour Guide(+7 495 565 61 63/http://www.moscowguidedtours.com)

Monkey Business Shrine(http://www.monkeyshrine.com/places/moscow/guided-tours.php)

Moscow with Elena(http://www.yourmoscowguide.com)

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Travel Tips

Getting There

Air

Sheremetyevo International Airport(SVO)

+7 495 232 65 65

http://www.svo.aero/

Sheremetyevo International Airport offers flights to and from Moscow. The airport is located ten kilometers(six miles) from the MKAD, the beltway around Moscow. There are bus, taxi, and other transportation services in and out of the Moscow International Airport. Major airlines to Moscow include:

Aeroflot Russian Airlines(+7 495 223 5555/http://www.aeroflot.ru/eng/)

Air France(+1 800 237 2747/ http://www.airfrance.us/)

British Airways(+1 800 247 9297/ http://www.britishairways.com/)

Delta(+1 800 241 4141/ http://www.delta.com/)

Finnair(+1 800 950 5000/ http://www.finnair.com/)

KLM Royal Dutch Airlines(+1 800 225 2525/http://www.klm.com/)

Lufthansa(+1 800 399 5838/ http://www.lufthansa.com/)

From the Airport

There is a train that connects the airport to Moscow's Belorussky Station. The trip takes 35 minutes and costs RUB250. You will find the airport station 250 meters(820 feet) in front of Terminal 2. More information can be found here:http://www.aeroexpress.ru/en/

Train

Moscow has eight major train stations that provide service for long-distance, intercity travel, including:

Belorussky Station- 7 Tverskaya Zastava Ploshchad,+7 95 251 6093

Kazansky Station- 2 Komsomolskaya Ploshchad,+7 95 264 6556

Savyolovsky Station- Ploshchad Savyolovskogo Vokzala,+7 95 285 9005

Yaroslavlsky Station- 5 Komsomolskaya Ploshchad,+7 95 921 5914

Some trains come equipped with RZD sleeper cars, allowing passengers to rest during their trip.

Bus

Moscow Tramway(http://tram.ruz.net/) is the bus/tram/subway system with routes that span throughout Moscow. Traverlers from outside of Moscow will most likely arrive at the Central Bus Terminal where intercity and long-range buses arrive and depart. It is located near Shcholkovskaya Metro station, and owned by Mostransavto(http://www.mostransavto.ru/).

Car

From the northern Russian cities, take route M8 south. From the southern cities, take route M2 north. From the west, follow route M1 east and from the east, take M7 west. Moscow has two major beltways: the MKAD(the outer beltway), and the Third Transportation Ring(inner beltway).

Getting Around

Moscow Tramway(http://tram.ruz.net/) is Moscow's favorite transportation service. However, the Moscow Metro(http://www.metro.ru/) is much more intriguing. The metro stations are famous for their art, murals and chandeliers. Europe's longest escalators are part of Park Pobedy station, located 84 meters(275 feet) underground.

Since metro stations are located further apart the further you travel away from the city center(four kilometers/ 2.5 miles), an extensive bus network guarantees short walking distances. Buses pick up passengers at all stations to bring them closer to their destinations.

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Fun Facts

Moscow

Country: Russia

Moscow by the Numbers:

Population: 10.4 million

Elevation: 190 m/ 623 ft

Average Annual Rainfall: 60 cm/ 23.6 in

Average Annual Snowfall: 46 cm/ 18 in

Average January Temperature:-9°C/ 16°F

Average July Temperature: 17°C/ 63°F

Length of Moscow River: 65 km/ 40 mi

Quick Facts:

Major Industries: machine building, metalworking, oil refining, publishing, brewing

Electricity: 220 V, 50 Hz, two pin thin European plugs

Time Zone: GMT+3

Country Dialing Code:+7

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Moscow Snapshot continued

Area Code: 95(7 and the area code must be dialed even for local calls)

Did You Know?

Moscow has more billionaires living in the area than any other city in the world. With a total of 74 billionaires, Moscow beats New York City's statistic by three.

Seven of Moscow's buildings, two hotels, two administrative buildings, two blocks of flats, and the Moscow State University, look exactly the same.
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