

RUSSIA

Travel around Russia.

Russia is inscrutable. She can be only.

spans over the continents of Europe and Asia, this great land of 10,000 km (6,200 miles) from west to east and almost 3,000 km (1,800 miles) from the arctic latitudes to subtropics.



Endless variety of landscapes, 14 seas and three oceans, pristinely clean and incredibly deep lakes, powerful rivers, snow-covered mountain peaks, waterfalls and caves, age-old forests and sunny tropical beaches with palm groves. It has great potential for attracting travelers from around the world.



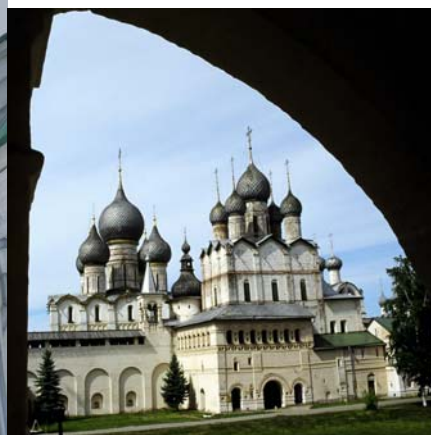
Russians are friendly, gracious hosts and are always happy to show off their country to visitors. It is especially exciting that in the last two decades those territories that have been off limits to foreign travelers have been opened. These include Kamchatka, Sakhalin, Kuril Islands, Primorye (the south of the Pacific coast), the Ural Mountains and many parts of Siberia.

Today, cities and towns all over the country changes rapidly, new hotels and roads are being built, the old ones are being restored. Churches, monuments, museums and urban historical districts are restored to their former glory together with many new places of interest appear.



Moscow & St. Petersburg, the twin cities never sleep.

The small ancient towns:
Suzdal, Pereslavl-Zalessky, Zvenigorod, Rostov Veliky and Ouglich. Those are especially charming.

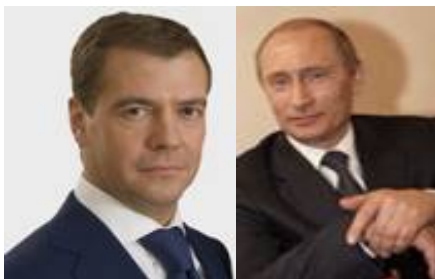


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Geographical Location, Territory and Climate

Largest country in the World, area is 17 million sq. km. or 6.5 million sq. miles. Russia borders 14 different countries and has the longest land border in the World, direct access to 12 different seas. Its territory is crossed by tens of thousands rivers and approximately 2 million lakes, among them the World's deepest lake, the Lake Baikal.

Climate is truly variegated. Ranges from the sub-tropics (of the Black Sea coast) to dry continental in Southern Siberia (where the annual temperature range is 80°C or 150°F) to arctic conditions in the Far North. Most of Russia is in the moderate continental climatic zone.



Government

A parliamentary democratic federal republic and the Head of state is the President elected by the citizens every four years. The executive branch consists of the Cabinet headed by the Prime Minister. The bicameral legislative branch refers to the Federal Assembly and consists of the upper house, the Council of the Federation, and the lower house, called the Duma.



Population and Languages

Population is around 142 million. The European part of the country has the highest population density. Over 100 different nationalities live in Russia, however, the majority of the population about 80% are ethnic Russians. Russian, the official language, is spoken throughout the country and many other languages are spoken regionally.

Religions

Vast majority are Russian Orthodox. Other common religions include Islam, Catholicism, Judaism, and Buddhism.



Currency

Russia's primary unit of currency is the ruble. One ruble equals 100 kopecks. There are many currency exchange places in the cities, larger towns, and in tourist centers. Major credit cards are now accepted by many businesses.

Statutory Holidays

- New Year's Day — January 1
- Orthodox Christmas — January 7
- The Day of the Defender of the Motherland — February 23
- International Women's Day — March 8
- The Day of Spring and Labor — May 1
- Victory Day — May 9
- Russia Day — June 12
- The Day of People's Unity — November 4

