

RUSSIA

Capital: Moscow

Population: 143.9 million

Currency: Russian Ruble (RUB)

Language: Russian

Time Zone: EST plus 8 hours (Moscow)

Electricity: 220V. 50Hz

Fun Facts



- Russia is the largest country in the world.
- Russia has the Urals, the oldest mountains in the world, and Lake Baikal, the world's deepest lake and the largest reservoir of fresh water on earth.
- As per the 1993 constitution, Russia has a democratic and federal government system, which stands divided into executive, legislative, and judicial branches.

Russia is the largest country on the face of the earth. It stretches across eleven time zones with boundaries over 40,000 miles long. The population of the Russian Federation is 143.9 million. European Russia is the heartland; its two main cities are the capital, Moscow, and the former capital, St. Petersburg. Around them lie venerable ancient fortified towns such as Novgorod and Smolensk; and to the northeast of Moscow on the medieval "Golden Ring", Vladimir, Yaroslavl, Suzdal and Kostroma. The countryside between them is timeless; it has endless forests and plains interspersed with straggling villages where the people still draw water from wells and carry it home with yokes, and where chickens and geese forage freely. Through the country flows the majestic River Volga, the "Mother River." It is a land of contrasts—of snow and freezing cold winters but also of majestic mid-summer "white nights" at northern latitudes, where the sun never sets. Its cities are well endowed with extravagant but glorious palaces of tsars and former nobility, and with the onion-domed, orthodox churches of Old Russia.

Distinguished citizens include world-renowned composers such as Tchaikovsky, Glinka, Stravinsky, Shostakovich, Prokofiev, Mussorgsky, and Rimsky-Korsakov; ballet dancers like Nureyev and Baryshnikov; writers of stature such as Pushkin, Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, and Solzhenitsyn; painters such as Repin and Levitan; and the world's first cosmonaut, Yuri Gagarin.

Russian food is hearty and filling. Caviar is now an affordable luxury. Tasty soups include *borsch* (beetroot soup) and *shi* (cabbage soup) served with *smetana* (sour cream). Bread is wholesome, and fruit and vegetables have the organic taste of yesteryear. Local drinks include beer, sparkling wine (Soviet champagne), and vodka consumed straight, ice-cold, and plain or flavored. Worthwhile souvenirs are colorful nesting *matryoshka* dolls and exquisite lacquered boxes with scenes from Russian folk tales, which are painstakingly painted with squirrel-hair brushes by villagers. There are colorful patterned plates and kitchen utensils from Khokhloma on the Volga, and age-old amber jewelry from the Baltic coast.

Russia awaits discovery; all you need is a sense of curiosity and a little tolerance. It won't be quite what you expect. Winston Churchill once described Russia as a "riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma."

VISAS, PASSPORTS, AND OTHER ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Visas to Russia are **required** for US citizens. If you hold a passport from another country, please check with your local consulate about requirements for travel to Russia. All passengers traveling internationally are



required to have a passport. Please carry proper identification (your passport) on you and do not leave it in your suitcase or hotel room.

Visas cannot be obtained upon arrival, and must be arranged well in advance of your vacation departure in your country of residence.

For registration requirements hotels are likely to keep your passport at Reception throughout your stay in Russia. For this eventuality, we recommend you bring a photocopy of your passport and visa(s) with you, which you can carry on you at all times. Migration cards (electronic or hand-completed forms) are as important as your passport/visa(s) and should be looked after accordingly. When you obtain your visa, check validity dates carefully to ensure they cover your departure day from Russia.

In general, going through a visa service is more expensive but it offers convenience and peace of mind. If you choose to go this route, we recommend contacting Generations Visa Services (GenVisa), our preferred partner for visa and passport services, at least 90 days prior to departure. GenVisa has a special website and toll-free number. Call 800.845.8968, email info@genvisa.com, or visit their below websites for additional information. Our travelers receive discounted prices and other special services:

- For Globus, visit: genvisa.com/globus
- For Cosmos, visit genvisa.com/cosmos

When you obtain your visa, check validity dates carefully to ensure they cover your departure day from Russia.



COUNTRY CODES

The country code for Russia is 7. When calling to Russia from overseas, dial your international access code (011 from the US/Canada), followed by the country code, area code, and phone number. Phone numbers in Russia are 10 digits in length. Dialing from the US/Canada: 011 7+### ####.



CURRENCY

The official currency of Russia is the Russian Ruble.

Bank hours: 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

1 RUSSIAN RUBLE (RUB) = 100 Kopek

- Banknote denominations: 10, 50, 100, 500, 1000, 5000 Ruble
- Coin denominations: 1, 5, 10 (rarely used), 50 Kopek; 1, 2, 5, 10 Ruble

For the most current exchange rates, please go to our website at Globusjourneys.com/Currency.

The Ruble may be obtained upon arrival at exchange offices, banks, or from hotel ATMs (with some exceptions). The 1 and 5 Kopek coins are generally useless, so marked prices may be rounded up to the nearest 10 Kopek. Russian law prohibits payments not in Rubles. U.S. Dollar bills or Euro may be exchanged but must be in good condition (not worn, stained, or torn) and recently printed.

Currency exchange offices are common throughout Russia. Banks and small bureaux de change offer very good rates; hotels are generally more expensive. Be prepared to show identification to exchange money and carefully count the amount you receive.

Use of credit cards is more limited, although an increasing number of shops are beginning to accept them. Visa and MasterCard are more widely accepted than American Express or Discover.

Traveler's checks are practically impossible to use. In the few places they are accepted, commission charges are extremely high (10-15%).



BUDGETING AND SHOPPING

The following budget guidelines are just approximate values or starting values for meals and are per person. Actual prices will vary widely by restaurant and city within a country but below are some averages as provided by our experienced personnel.

- The approximate cost of a soft drink/mineral water/coffee is 200 Ruble.
- An average lunch consisting of a salad or sandwich and a soda or water starts at approximately 800 Ruble.
- Dinner at a mid-range restaurant with dessert and a non-alcoholic beverage starts at approximately 2000 Ruble.

Soft drinks and mineral water are often as expensive, or more expensive, than wine or beer.

Shopping specialties: nesting matrioshka dolls, reproductions of Fabergé eggs, lacquered boxes with scenes from Russian folklore, Khokhloma ware (painted plates and kitchen utensils), Baltic amber jewelry.

VAT refunds are not available in Russia.

Counterfeit and pirated goods are widely available; be aware that under local law transactions involving such products may be illegal, and bringing them home may result in confiscation and fines.

Receipts should be obtained for any high-value item purchased. For any article that could appear old or as having cultural value to the Customs service you must obtain a certificate from the Russian Ministry of Culture to indicate that it has no historical or cultural value. Certificates will not be granted for the export of articles that are over 100 years old, no matter what the value.



TIPPING

Tipping is more common in upscale restaurants. Where gratuity is not included in the bill, 10% is a reasonable amount.

Tipping is not considered customary for taxis; in fact, you should negotiate and settle upon your fare before you get in the taxi to avoid being overcharged once reaching your destination. Hotel reception should be able to recommend reputable companies.

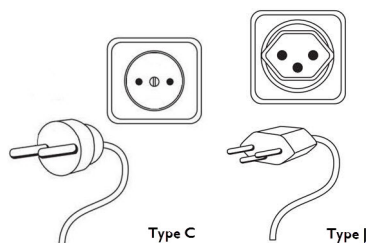
Tip hotel staff 100-150 Ruble for room service.



ELECTRICITY AND ELECTRICAL OUTLETS

Outlets

Voltage for outlets is 220V. North American voltage is generally 110V. Therefore, you will need a converter for your travels. Adapters will be necessary to adapt your plug into the outlet, but these may not convert the voltage, so both devices are necessary.





TEMPERATURES

Weather across Russia is hard to predict. Most of the country experiences warm summers, though not many sunny days. Winters are cold and snowy, with freezing temperatures.

To help you plan, below are average low and high temperatures for Russia.

Month	St. Petersburg	Moscow
January	18/29°F	17/26°F
February	15/28°F	16/26°F
March	22/37°F	24/37°F
April	33/46°F	33/46°F
May	44/60°F	44/63°F
June	52/66°F	51/69°F
July	56/70°F	55/71°F
August	54/66°F	52/68°F
September	45/56°F	43/57°F
October	36/48°F	37/47°F
November	26/35°F	26/33°F
December	20/30°F	19/26°F

To convert to Celsius, subtract 30, then divide by 2. While not exact, this simple formula will give a close estimation.



CUSTOMS AND CULTURE

Pre-vacation reading for Russia: *War and Peace* by Lev Tolstoy (also the movie), or the historical novel *Ruska* by Edward Rutherford.

Be aware of cultural and behavioral differences; you may not be greeted as cheerfully as back home; smiling is generally reserved for intimate friends! *So be especially wary of people presenting themselves as "instant friends" and never accept any offer of food or drink from strangers.*

Travelers should not photograph or film anything perceived to be of a sensitive nature, such as government buildings, diplomatic missions, border formalities, or military interests.



FOOD SPECIALTIES

Caviar, soups (*borsch* – beetroot, *shi* – cabbage) served with *smetana* (sour cream), *blini* (pancakes), salad dishes and appetizers (*zakuski*), gherkins, beer, sparkling wine “Soviet champagne”, and vodka (consumed straight, ice-cold, and plain or flavored).



A FEW WORDS OF THE LOCAL LANGUAGE

Russian (transliteration):

Good day: Dobri dyen, **Good evening:** Dobri vyecher, **Pleased to meet you:** Ochen priyatna poznamomitsja s vami, **Do you speak English?:** Vuiy gavaritiye pa angliiski?, **I don't understand:** Ya nye panimaiyu, **Write it down please:** Napisheetye pazhalujesta, **Thank you:** Spasiba, **Please:** Pazhalujesta, **Yes:** Da, **No:** Nyet, **How much does it cost?:** Skoljka stoyit?, **1:** Adin, **2:** Dva, **3:** Tri, **4:** Chetiri, **5:** Pyatj, **6:**

Shestj, **7:** Siemj, **8:** Vosemj, **9:** Dievatj, **10:** Diyesatj, **Where is...?:** Gdye...?, **Mineral water:** Mineralnaiya vada, **Tea:** Chai, **Coffee:** Kofye, **Wine:** Vino, **Beer:** Piva, **Cheers/Good Health!:** Nazdarovyel!/Za vashe zdarovyel!, **Toilet:** Tualyet, **Telephone:** Teljefon, **Goodbye:** Dasvidaniya, **All the best!:** Vsevo harosheva!

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE COUNTRY INFORMATION

Additional country-specific information for US citizens can be found on the US Government's website www.travel.state.gov. Here, you can find the most up-to-date information about destination descriptions, passports/visas, safety and security, transportation, travel local laws, alerts/warnings, vaccinations, and more. For citizens of other nations, we recommend you consult your local consulate for travel information, regulations, and requirements.

Last Updated 10/11/18

GLOBUS. COSMOS. **GLOBUS.** *family of brands* **MONOGRAMS**  **AVALON**
WATERWAYS®

Copyright, All rights reserved.