



# Russian Far East

## Includes »

Blagoveshchensk .....	565
Khabarovsk .....	568
Vladivostok .....	575
Tynda .....	589
Komsomolsk-na-Amure .....	590
Sakha Republic .....	593
Yakutsk .....	594
Sakhalin Island .....	600
Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk .....	601
Kholmsk .....	605
Kamchatka .....	605
Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky .....	607
Esso .....	615

## Best Places to Eat

- » Zima (p585)
- » Chochur Muran (p598)
- » Tygyn Darkhan (p598)
- » Nihon Mitai (p604)
- » San Marino (p612)

## Best Places to Stay

- » Boutique Hotel (p572)
- » See You Hostel (p582)
- » Biznestsentr (p592)
- » Polar Star Hotel (p597)
- » Tri Medvedya (p616)

## Why Go?

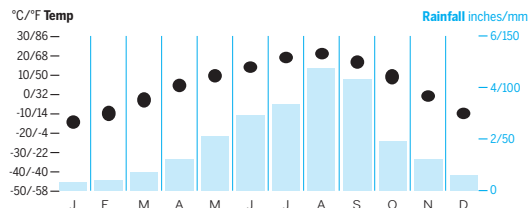
Russia's distant end of the line, the wild wild east, feels like its own entity. 'Moscow is far' runs the local mantra, and trade and transport connections with Asian neighbours are growing fast.

For those who've not been, the Russian Far East (Дальний Восток) seems impossibly forbidding and it's often mistaken for Siberia (it was considered part of Siberia in pre-communist times). The truth is it's bigger, more remote and, in winter, even colder. Areas of snow-capped mountains and taiga, bigger than some European countries, separate former Cossack fort towns, old Gulag camps, decaying Soviet towns along railways heading nowhere special, towns raised on stilts over permafrost and once-closed Soviet ports roaring with new business.

Many travellers skip the Far East entirely, cutting south from Lake Baikal to China – but that's all the better for those who make it. Elbow room is definitely not in short supply.

## When to Go

### Vladivostok



**Feb & Mar** Still the season for snowy delights, only not dark or slushy.

**Jun** Essentially midspring, with all the beauty that entails (minus mozzies).

**Sep & Oct** Better weather and more autumn foliage than anywhere else on earth.



## Russian Far East Highlights

- 1 Climb a fuming volcano around **Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky** (p613) on the wild Kamchatka Peninsula
- 2 View sublime Golden Horn Bay in mountain-spiked **Vladivostok** (p575)
- 3 Go exotic with horsemeat, reindeer and frozen fish meals in fascinating **Yakutsk** (p594)

- 4 Take in exquisite tsar-era buildings along the Amur River in **Blagoveshchensk** (p565)
- 5 Splurge on the adventure of a lifetime in the far-flung **Kuril Islands** (p606)
- 6 Take a party cruise on the Amur River before a night of clubbing in hip **Khabarovsk** (p568)

- 7 Hike the well-mapped trails of **Bystrinsky Nature Park** (p615) in laid-back Esso, Kamchatka
- 8 Revisit Soviet power and take a Gulag camp tour at friendly **Komsomolsk-na-Amure** (p590)