



The Urals

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Best Places to Eat

- » Grill Taverna Montenegro (p387)
- » Vkus Stranstvy (p387)
- » Dacha (p397)
- » Rosy Jane (p397)
- » Only (p404)

Best Places to Stay

- » Hotel Tsentralny (p395)
- » Hotel Bashkortostan (p400)
- » Ecopark Zyuratkul (p401)
- » Minigostonitsa Vesta (p396)
- » Golden Beach (p402)

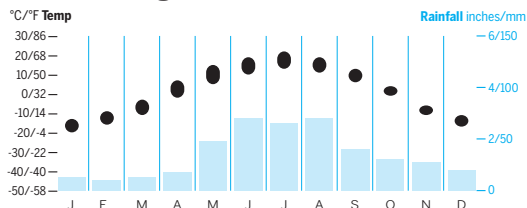
Why Go?

Marking the border between Europe and Asia, the Ural Mountains (Урал) stretch from the Kara Sea in the north to Kazakhstan in the south. Modest in scale in the south, they nevertheless proved to be rich in resources, and when Russia stumbled onto this Aladdin's cave full of lustrous treasures many centuries ago, the mineral riches filled the coffers and allowed Russia to expand into Siberia beyond.

Today Yekaterinburg, the largest of the Ural Mountains towns, is a bustling centre with interesting sights; it also offers a base for exploring less-visited towns. West of Yekaterinburg, the city of Perm – better known in Soviet times for its Gulag camps and industries – is reinventing itself as a cultural capital with considerable success. Kungur has a spectacular ice cave, and take the time to venture into the countryside between Ufa and Chelyabinsk for hiking, bicycle, rafting or horseback expeditions.

When to Go

Yekaterinburg



Dec-Feb Best for winter sports and culture.

Late Apr-May Fewer travellers in spring means little advance booking is needed.

Jun & Jul Street life, summer festivals and hiking can be enjoyed.

The Urals Highlights

- 1 Experience ice and a moment of pitch darkness in Kungur's **ice cave** (p389)
- 2 Hike into the **Zyuratkul** mountain range or stroll the shoreline of Lake Zyuratkul (p401)
- 3 Visit **Perm-36**, the former labour camp and today a haunting Gulag memorial (p389)
- 4 Make sense of the modern at **PERMM**, the new museum of contemporary art in Perm (p386)
- 5 Trace the historical contours of the murder of Russia's last tsar and his family by visiting Yekaterinburg's **Church upon the Blood** (p391) and **Ganina Yama** (p398)
- 6 Take an excursion to the top of Nevyan's **leaning tower** for spectacular views (p398)
- 7 Get away from it all on a rafting, horse-riding or hiking trip into the Urals (p404)

