

# Western European Russia

## Includes »

Tula.....	239
Yasnaya Polyana.....	244
Yelets.....	244
Voronezh.....	246
Oryol.....	248
Smolensk.....	252
Tver.....	258
Ostashkov.....	261
Veliky Novgorod.....	262
Staraya Russa.....	268
Pskov.....	269
Stary Izborsk.....	275
Pechory.....	275
Vyborg.....	276
Staraya Ladoga.....	279
Tikhvin.....	280

## Best Places to Eat

- » 3 Etazh (p250)
- » Biblioteka (p241)
- » Manilov (p259)
- » Dvor Podznoeva (p273)
- » Nice People (p266)

## Best Places to Stay

- » Armenia (p241)
- » Hotel Oryol (p249)
- » Usadba (p256)
- » Hotel Volkhov (p266)
- » Letuchaya Mysh (p278)

## Why Go?

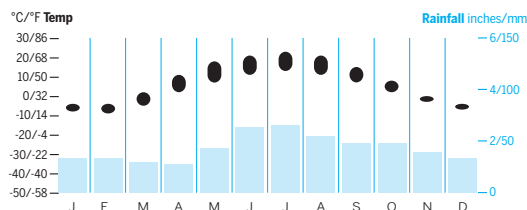
The lush green countryside of Western European Russia (Западно-Европейская Россия), home to some of the nation's earliest settlements, is a crucible of Rus culture. Impressive kremlins (stone fortresses) and fairy-tale onion-domed churches rise over towns such as Veliky Novgorod, Pskov, Smolensk and Tula, offering visual history lessons and memorable vistas.

The area was the birthplace and home of many of Russia's cultural heavyweights, from author Fyodor Dostoevsky to the composer Mikhail Glinka. In Mikhailovskoe, Pushkin's ancestral estate, you can stroll along the serene lake that inspired the nation's most revered poet. The estates of Leo Tolstoy and Ivan Turgenev, near Tula and Oryol respectively, also offer serene slices of rural life.

This region is largely off most foreign travellers' itineraries. Nonetheless, you can expect to be greeted with friendliness and interest by locals, and find good-quality hotels and restaurants in which to experience that hospitality.

## When to Go

### Smolensk



**Apr** Visit in spring to catch the Alexander Nevsky Festival in Veliky Novgorod.

**End May–early Jun** The Glinka Festival of classical music is held in Smolensk.

**Sep** A historical battle is reenacted at Kulikovo Pole in early autumn.

## SOUTH OF MOSCOW

### Tula

### Тула

☎4872 / POP 501,000 / 🌐MOSCOW

A town centre graced by a picturesque kremlin; a fascinating industrial history reflected

in several museums; and several great restaurants: there's much to recommend in Tula. The key attraction, though, is Yasnaya Polyana, the country estate of the celebrated author Leo Tolstoy, just south of the city.

Blacksmiths, ironmongers and gun-makers have churned out everything from



### Western European Russia Highlights

- 1 Return to rural 19th-century Russia at **Yasnaya Polyana** (p244), the leafy estate and last resting place of Leo Tolstoy
- 2 Light a candle and enter the spooky underground tombs of **Pechory Monastery** (p275), where solemn monks show you their dead
- 3 Explore a magnificent kremlin, ancient churches and monasteries – even lounge on a riverside beach – in the tourist-friendly town of **Veliky Novgorod** (p262)
- 4 Stroll the romantic cobblestone streets of **Vyborg** (p276), admiring the mix of old Russian and Finnish art nouveau architecture
- 5 Acquaint yourself with Russia's literary talent in the charming house-museums of **Oryol** (p248), including **Spasskoe-Lutovinovo** (p249), the lovely countryside estate of Turgenev
- 6 Admire the beautifully decorated churches of **Yelets** (p244)