

Moscow

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Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Delicatessen (p103)
- ➔ Cafe Pushkin (p104)
- ➔ As Eat Is (p104)
- ➔ Khachapuri (p104)
- ➔ Kitayskaya Gramota (p103)
- ➔ Lavka-Lavka (p103)

Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Hotel Metropol (p97)
- ➔ Hotel de Paris (p100)
- ➔ Kitay-Gorod Hotel (p99)
- ➔ Blues Hotel (p100)
- ➔ Godzillas Hostel (p97)

Why Go?

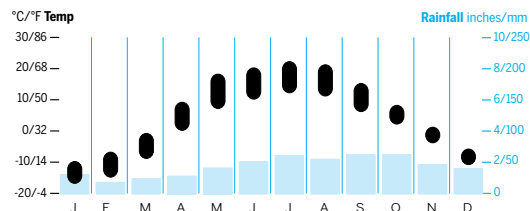
The state becomes more authoritarian. International relations deteriorate. But Moscow keeps getting cooler, more cosmopolitan and more creative. The capital is bursting with energy, as factories and warehouses are converted into art galleries and post-industrial nightclubs; parks are over-run with healthy, active, sporty types; and chefs experiment with their own interpretations of international cooking.

The ancient city has always been a haven for history buffs – the red-brick towers of the Kremlin occupy the founding site of Moscow (Москва); monuments and churches remember fallen heroes and victorious battles; and remains of the Soviet state are scattered all around. But now museums are broaching subjects long brushed under the carpet.

The capital is even experiencing an unprecedented growth in birth rates. From artistry and history to recreation and procreation, Moscow is a cauldron of creativity.

When to Go

Moscow



May & Jun Long hours of day-light and mild temperatures entice Muscovites outdoors.

Sep Moscow celebrates City Day, as the foliage turns the capital splendid oranges, reds and yellows.

Dec The snow-covered city hosts its premier cultural event, the December Nights Festival.

Arriving in Moscow

Most travellers arrive by air, flying into one of the city's three airports. The majority of international flights go in and out of Domodedovo and Sheremetyevo international airports. All three airports are accessible by the convenient Aero-express train (p121) from the city centre.

If you wish to go by taxi, go to the taxi desk (or straight to the dispatcher) for an official airport taxi, which will charge P2000 to P2500 to the centre. Note that driving times vary wildly depending on traffic.

Rail riders will arrive at one of the central train stations: Kievsky or Belorussky vokzal if you're coming from Europe; Leningradsky vokzal if you're coming from St Petersburg; and Yaroslavsky or Kazansky vokzal if you're coming from the east. All the train stations are located in the city centre, with easy metro access. Alternatively, most taxi companies offer a fixed rate of P400 to P600 for a train-station transfer.

GET THE BIG PICTURE

Moscow can be overwhelming for the first-time visitor. An introductory tour can provide an overview of the city, as well as useful advice and information for the rest of your trip.

- ➔ **Moscow Free Tour** (p96) Offers a free walking tour, led by knowledgeable and extremely enthusiastic guides. Did we mention it's free?
- ➔ **Moscow 360** (p96) Four unique and informative walking tours (all free), as well as a big-picture tour by air-conditioned minivan (not free).
- ➔ **Moscow Bike Tours** (p96) Cover more ground and see more sites, while getting fresh air and exercise.
- ➔ **River Cruises** (p96) Two boat-tour companies follow the route from Kievsky vokzal or the former Hotel Ukraine in Dorogomilovo to Novospassky Monastery in Taganka. You can get off and on the boat, but the 90-minute trip is a pleasant way to get the big picture.

New in Moscow

- ➔ **Gorky Park** (p92) & **Hermitage Garden** (p73) Moscow's major green spaces have been revamped into vibrant centres of sport and culture.
- ➔ **Jewish Museum & Centre of Tolerance** (p73) Excellent, interactive, multimedia presentations at this ground-breaking museum.
- ➔ **Moscow Museum** (p87) This city museum has a new location and a new mission.
- ➔ **Krymskaya Naberezhnaya** (p91) Closed to car traffic and filled with fountains and art.

NEED TO KNOW

Most Moscow museums are closed on Monday, but the Kremlin and the Armoury are closed on Thursday instead. Many museums also close once a month for 'sanitary day', often during the last week of the month.

Fast Facts

- ➔ **Telephone area code**
☎ 495 or ☎ 499
- ➔ **Population** 12 million
- ➔ **Moscow time** (GMT/USC plus four hours)

Where to Stay

Moscow is big and filled with cars. Pay attention to the location of your hotel or hostel so you don't spend all your time commuting. Choose a place that is in the centre (preferably within the Garden Ring) and a short walk from the metro.

Resources

- ➔ **Calvert Journal** (www.calvertjournal.com) Excellent articles on Russia's contemporary creative culture.
- ➔ **Moscow Times** (www.themoscowtimes.com) Leading English-language newspaper in Moscow.
- ➔ **Expatriate.ru** (www.expatriate.ru) Run by and for English-speaking expats living in Moscow.

Alternatively, head to **Lonely Planet** (www.lonelyplanet.com/russia/moscow) for planning advice, author recommendations and tips.