

Western European Russia

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Why Go?

This ancient, Arcadian region showcases Mother Russia at her most fertile: Tolstoy, Turgenev, Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* and nothing less than the modern country itself were all born here. It's a lofty legacy and nowhere does Western European Russia (Западно – Европейская Россия) let you forget it. The imposing kremlins, soaring cathedrals and cultural treasures of cities such as Veliky Novgorod, Pskov and Smolensk bear stunning testament to golden eras. Budding writers flock to the area's wealth of literary estates – Staraya Russa, Spasskoe-Lutovinovo, Yasnaya Polyana and Pushkin's ancestral home, Mikhailovskoe – with high hopes there's something in the water; and character-filled smaller towns such as Yelets and Oryol are photogenic throwbacks to prerevolutionary Russia. Even the tiny, far-flung village of Stary Izborsk – a stone's throw from the Estonian border – claims a distinguished heritage: it's home to the oldest stone fortress in Russia.

Best Places to Eat

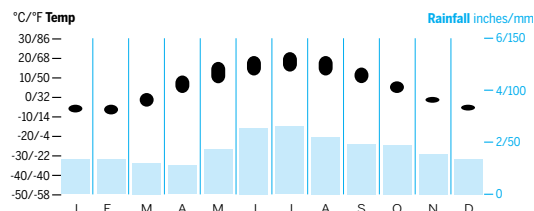
- ➔ Pyotr Petrovich (p231)
- ➔ 17 Bar (p239)
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- ➔ Nice People (p254)

Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Armenia (p230)
- ➔ Retrotur (p238)
- ➔ Hotel 903 (p259)
- ➔ Hotel Staraya Russa (p256)
- ➔ Izborsk Park (p261)

When to Go

Smolensk



Apr Catch the Alexander Nevsky Festival in Veliky Novgorod.

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

Nov–Mar Witness magnificent European bison in the wild at Orlovskoye Polesye National Park.

SOUTH OF MOSCOW

Tula

☎ 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

Тула

👁️ Sight

★ Tula Kremlin

HISTORICAL BUILDING

(Тульский кремль; ul Mendelevskaya 10; admission ₺100; 🕒 9am-5pm Tue-Sun) The five burnished onion domes of the 18th-century **Assumption Cathedral** (Успенский собор)



WESTERN EUROPEAN RUSSIA TULA

Western European Russia Highlights

① Return to rural 19th-century Russia at **Yasnaya Polyana** (p231), the leafy estate and final resting place of Leo Tolstoy.

② Light a candle in the spooky underground tombs of **Pechory Monastery** (p262), where solemn monks show you their dead.

③ Explore a magnificent kremlin, ancient churches and monasteries in tourist-friendly **Veliky Novgorod** (p249).

④ Go on a museum crawl in the hilly Hero City of **Smolensk** (p240).

⑤ Acquaint yourself with

Russia's literary talent in the house-museums of Oryol, including **Spasskoe-Lutovinovo** (p239), Turgenev's lovely country estate.

⑥ Admire the beautifully decorated churches of **Yelets** (p232).