



Moscow

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Best Places to Eat

- ◆ Delicatessen (p78)
- ◆ Café Pushkin (p79)
- ◆ Khachapuri (p79)
- ◆ As Eat Is (p79)
- ◆ Lavka-Lavka (p79)

Best Places to Stay

- ◆ Hotel Metropol (p74)
- ◆ Hotel de Paris (p75)
- ◆ Kitay-Gorod Hotel (p77)
- ◆ Blues Hotel (p76)
- ◆ Godzillas Hostel (p74)

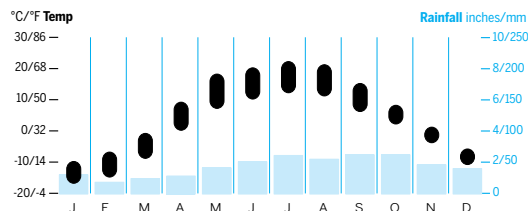
Why Go?

Moscow (Москва) is the start or the end point for your train journey across Mother Russia. If you are travelling east to west, you will be relieved – after days (or weeks) on the train – to reach the cultured, cosmopolitan capital, brimming with opportunities to immerse yourself in history; to indulge in world-class music and art; to feast on fabulous food; and to sample the nightlife in a city that never sleeps. If you are travelling west to east, you may be relieved to depart – to escape the overwhelming urbanity, the bumper-to-bumper traffic, the nonstop noise, the panic-inducing prices. Either way, Moscow is an exhilarating and confounding contrast to the rest of Russia.

Soak it up. Examine the art and move to the music; splurge on a ritzy restaurant; stay out till sunrise; get lost in the crowds. Once you get on that train, you may not get to do it again.

When to Go

Moscow



May & Jun Long daylight hours and mild temperatures entice locals to sit at summer terraces.

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

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

Arriving by Air

If you arrive by air, you will fly into one of the city's three airports. The majority of international flights go in and out of Domodedovo and Sheremetyevo International Airports; the third airport is Vnukovo. All three airports are accessible by the convenient Aeroexpress train (p87) from the city centre.

If you wish to take a taxi from the airport, go to the taxi desk (or straight to the dispatcher) for an official airport taxi, which will charge between R2000 and R2500 to the centre. Note that driving times vary wildly depending on traffic.

ARRIVING BY RAIL

Rail riders will arrive at one of the central train stations. All trains from St Petersburg arrive at Leningradsky vokzal, while Trans-Siberian trains from the east arrive at Yaroslavsky or Kazansky vokzal. These three railway stations are clustered around Komsomolskaya pl, a bustling square just northeast of the centre. From here, you can hop on the metro (M Komsomolskaya) for a quick, easy ride to your destination. Alternatively, most taxi companies offer a fixed rate of R400 to R600 for a train-station transfer.

Guided Tours

Moscow is a big, overwhelming city with a strange alphabet. Letting the locals show you around is a good way to get your bearings and learn something along the way.

Moscow Free Tour (Map p63; ☎ 495-222 3466; <http://moscowfreetour.com>; Nikolskaya ul 4/5; paid tours R950-1550) Offers a free walking tour, led by knowledgeable and extremely enthusiastic guides. Did we mention it's free?

Moscow 360 (☎ 8-915-205 8360; www.moscow360.org) For unique and informative walking tours (all free!) as well as a bigger-picture tour by air-conditioned minivan (not free).

Moscow Bike Tours (☎ 8-916-970 1419; www.moscowbike.com; 3hr tour R1800) Cover more ground and see more sights, while getting fresh air and a bit of exercise.

NEED TO KNOW

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

Fast Facts

- ✦ Telephone code: ☎ 495, ☎ 499 or ☎ 498
- ✦ Population: 12 million
- ✦ Time zone: GMT/UTC +3 hours

New in Moscow

- ✦ **Gorky Park** (p72) & Hermitage Gardens (p68) Major green spaces revamped into vibrant centres of sport and culture
- ✦ **Jewish Museum & Centre of Tolerance** (p69) Groundbreaking museum with interactive multimedia
- ✦ **Moscow Museum** (p70) The city museum has a new location and a new mission
- ✦ **Krymskaya Naberezhnaya** (p71) Closed to car traffic and filled with fountains and art

Resources

- ✦ **Calvert Journal** (www.calvertjournal.com) Articles on Russia's creative culture
- ✦ **Moscow Times** (www.themoscowtimes.com) Moscow's leading English-language newspaper
- ✦ **Expat.ru** (www.expatri.ru) Run by and for English-speaking expats in Moscow