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# The Moscow Times

SINCE 1992

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## Kadyrov's Favorite Citizen

The leader of Russia's Chechen republic has granted honorary citizenship to Egypt's star striker Muhammad Salah during a farewell banquet held in the team's honor.

Human rights groups criticized Salah earlier this month for a photo-op with Chechnya's strongman leader, Ramzan Kadyrov, who is accused of human rights violations and rules over the region with an iron fist.

Critics say Kadyrov, who is hosting the Egypt team in the regional capital Grozny, has used the World Cup as a propaganda tool to boost the Chechen leader's image in the

Muslim world.

"Muhammad Salah is an honorable citizen of the Chechen republic! That's right! Tonight I signed a decree to grant this high title to the great footballer of Egypt and Liverpool," Kadyrov wrote in a statement on the Vkontakte social media network.

At the dinner, Kadyrov granted Salah a copy of the decree and a badge.

"It's a deserved title! Thousands of children, youth and elderly people got the opportunity to see one of the greatest players in the world and to interact with him," Kadyrov explained.

According to the Chechen president, Salah thanked him for his hospitality and for the excellent living and training conditions in Grozny.

Answering criticism that he was using Salah to raise his own image last week, Kadyrov said, "I didn't invite Muhammad Salah or the Egyptian team. We created the conditions and they chose our region."

"Ask FIFA and UEFA the questions, they were in charge of it, not me," he was cited as saying by the Chechnya Segodnya news outlet.

Salah has yet to comment on the issue.

## Beloved 'Shaninka' University Under Fire

Students and educators in Russia are in shock after the state education watchdog late last week stripped a prestigious private university of its accreditation, in a move seen as part of a wider crackdown on progressive universities.

The Moscow School of Social and Economic Sciences, also known as Shaninka, was founded in 1995 as an experiment in British-style education in Russia. The school, which issues joint diplomas with the University of Manchester, offers programs in the humanities, law and social sciences.




Last Wednesday, Russia's education watchdog Rosobrnadzor announced that it was revoking Shaninka's accreditation after an inspection reportedly found that the school had violated sev-

eral formal education provisions set by the regulator.

In an official review, it cited a shortage of lecture hall space, low qualifications of instructors and said several courses failed to provide students with practical skills.

Critics have slammed the move as an attempt

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Monday  24°C  
Tuesday  27°C  
Wednesday  28°C

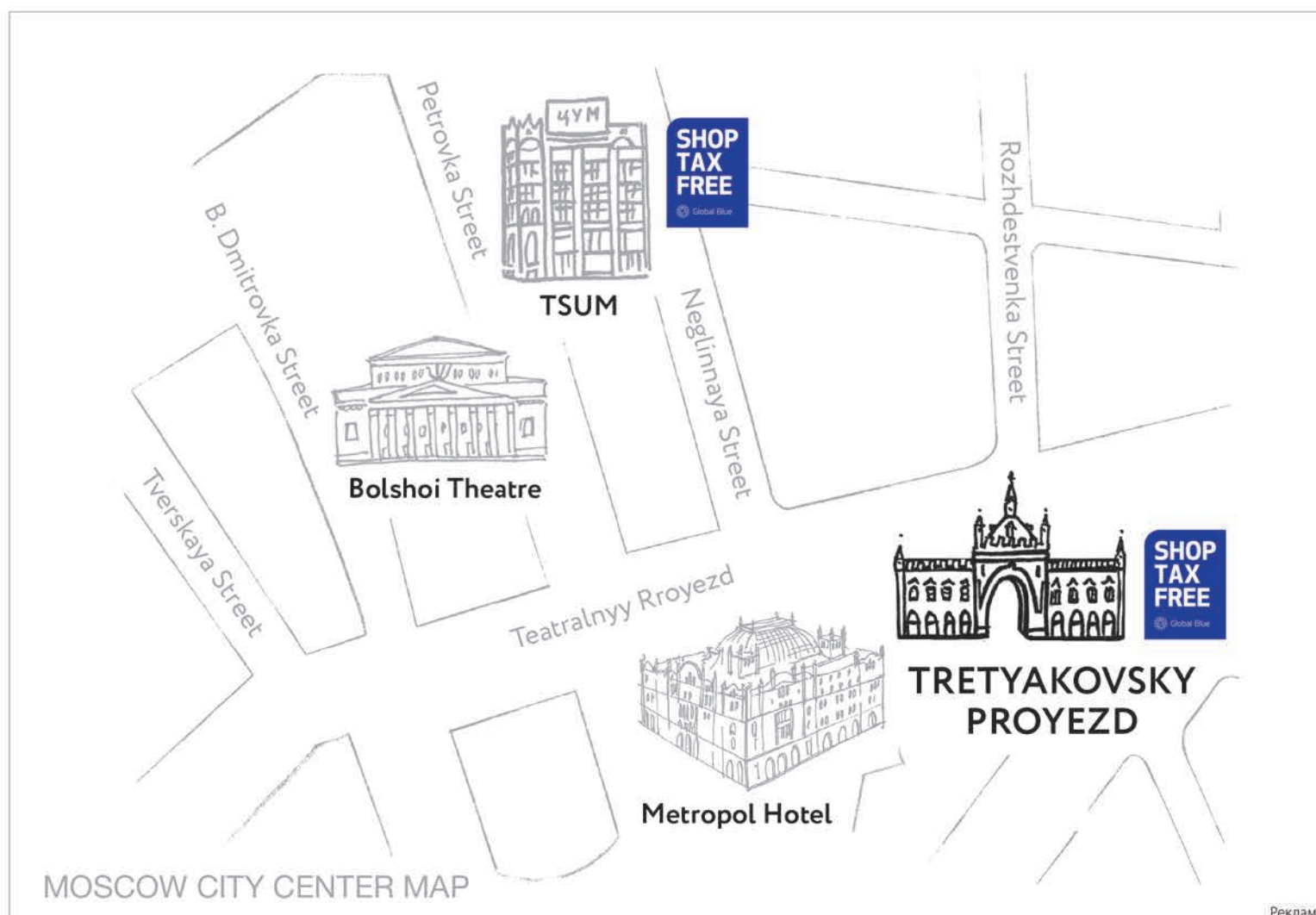
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## SHANINKA

Continued from Page 1

to clamp down on one of the country's last independent educational institutions.

Calling Shaninka "one of the best private universities" in Russia, Alexei Kudrin, the head of Russia's Audit Chamber and a prominent liberal economist, criticized the watchdog's decision as being based on "paper" arguments.

Kudrin, seen as one of only few reformers trusted by President Vladimir Putin, countered that Rosobrnadzor should be "radically reformed."

"We need to seriously reduce the formal criteria [for inspections]. They disrupt the work of universities and contradict the development goals of the country," he tweeted on Saturday.

Commentators have pointed out that Shaninka risks the fate of the European University in St. Petersburg — another renowned private university which lost its accreditation in 2016, in what was widely believed to be a politically motivated decision.

Ilya Budraitskis, a political philosophy professor at Shaninka, told The Moscow Times "there is good reason for the comparison."

"In both cases we see ulterior motives behind the taking away of accreditation," he said.

Budraitskis said that Shaninka's liberal curriculum and close relations with Britain left it vulnerable to political pressure. "On one hand there are people in the security services that are opposed to European institutions like Shaninka. On the other, they do not have the will or ability to voice these beliefs in public," he said.

The hundreds of students currently studying at Shaninka now face completing their studies without a guarantee that their degree will be recognized in Russia.

Nikolai, a sociology student who asked for only his first name to be used, told The Moscow Times that most students planned to continue despite the bad news. "We're reading texts, discussing theoretical problems and studying, as always," he said. "They haven't closed us down yet and we're hoping that the public attention will help make sure the situation does not deteriorate further."

Meanwhile, the school's rector Sergei Zuyev has said that the university will continue to operate in full capacity and is preparing to welcome a new group of students for the coming academic year.

"A withdrawal of accreditation doesn't mean a suspension of educational activity," he said in a post on Facebook, noting that Shaninka still held a license to teach classes.

Meanwhile, many faculty members fear that the backlash against liberal universities in Russia has now come to them.

"We are the last link in a chain of independent non-governmental universities that were created within the last 25 years in Russia, which have since been slowly destroyed," Vasily Zharkov, the head of the school's faculty of international politics, told The Moscow Times.

"The battle has come to us. We cannot retreat now, we are here. The forces are unequal. But we are not thinking about this, we will stand tall," he said.

*Includes reporting by Anton Muratov.*



## OPINION

By Peter Kaznacheev

## A New Chapter in Russia's Oil Alliance

At the OPEC summit this Friday, oil ministers settled to increase output by 1 million barrels per day — a decision which helped to soothe the market. Before the meeting in Vienna passions were running high. At some point the angry Iranian oil minister even threatened to walk out and veto the final resolution. The departure from the fixation on cutting crude production represents an important turn towards economic realism.

Until recently, the price of oil was on the rise and, seemingly, everything was going according to plan. Countries in the OPEC+ (the agreement to cut production between OPEC, Russia and nine other exporting countries) gleefully reported exceeding their targets by more than 50 percent. Consequently, back in December exporters decided to approve the 1.8 million barrels per day cuts until the end of 2018. That's why last week's OPEC gathering in Vienna was seen as little more than a formality — a meeting to rubber-stamp quotas agreed at the previous meeting. A non-event.

The World Cup changed all that. The Saudi crown prince and de facto leader Muhammad bin Salman flew to Russia to support his team in the tournament's opening match against the hosts. After the Saudis' devastating defeat, the young royal was consoled at the stadium by President Vladimir Putin himself. What they discussed remains a mystery, but after the prince returned to his homeland, both Saudi and Russian officials suddenly demanded a relaxation of the quotas. Russia's Energy Minister Alexander Novak went as far as proposing to raise production by 1.5 million barrels per day. If implemented it would effectively wind down the OPEC+ agreement.

That U-turn provoked resistance from several OPEC members. The Iranian delegation led the charge. For them it was a matter of principle to stand firm against the pressure of its two arch-enemies — Saudis and U.S. President Donald Trump. The latter, in his characteristic manner, posted brash tweets demanding that OPEC should raise output.

In order to strengthen their camp, Saudi Arabia and its allies did everything possible to win over the producers from outside the cartel. Suheil al-Mazrui, the OPEC chairman promised a new, closer agreement with Russia. And Muhammad bin Salman proposed holding a special OPEC+ summit in Riyadh attended by Putin as guest of honour.

It may seem that as a result of this active oil diplomacy, the Saudis and OPEC bolstered their influence. On the contrary, the Russian-Saudi alliance testifies not to the strength, but to the weakness of OPEC. In the past, the Saudis managed to balance the oil market without the assistance of their Russian counterparts. But then the shale revolution shifted the role of "swing producer" from the Saudi monarchy to the United States.

In order to reverse their fortunes and prop up the oil price, exporters hastily enlisted new allies to cut output. From the very beginning, however, the advantages of such cuts were questionable. By cutting back production the OPEC+ countries created a vacant market niche, which was then filled by producers outside of the agreement, including U.S. oil companies. As a result, not long ago the United States surpassed Saudi Arabia in oil output and is now on course to overtake Russia and become the number one producer in the world. As it turns out, the biggest winners from the cuts agreement were not those who joined it, but their largest competitor.

Back in 2016, when the price of a barrel was dangerously teetering near the \$30 mark, politicians in Russia and Saudi Arabia were ready to do everything to rectify the situation. Dusting off the good old production cuts seemed like a viable option. A new geopolitical alliance between two mighty oil producers seemed the right thing to do for domestic PR purposes. The economic consequences of implementing the quotas were not the main priority. But as the oil price panic receded, the two countries could weigh the pros and cons of their actions.

It turns out that giving a boost to U.S. companies — the main competitors of Russia and Saudi Arabia in the oil market — is a price that neither government is willing to pay at the moment. Economic considerations have prevailed over geopolitics — and this is perhaps the most significant result of last week's OPEC meeting in Vienna.

Peter Kaznacheev is an energy economist and Senior Research Fellow at King's College London European Centre for Energy and Resource Security [@PeterKaznacheev](#)

## Barnaul Wreckage



Dramatic photos are being shared online.

At least one person died and 15 people were injured when a storm swept through the city of Barnaul in western Siberia on Saturday evening.

Temperatures averaged 38 degrees Celsius when a tropical storm broke out around 9 p.m.

local time, local media report.

City authorities declared a state of emergency after several villages on the outskirts of Barnaul saw electricity outages, with trees ripping through billboards and damaging cars.

At least 15 people received light injuries after the recreational "Barracuda" river barge they were on was thrust against a bridge pillar by heavy winds, the Interfax news agency reported.

Some 120 passengers on board the river cruise boat had to be evacuated, transport officials said.

The operator of a construction crane died after the crane fell over, the Investigative Committee said in a statement, adding that it had opened a criminal investigation into possible safety violations at the site.

There was also some good news: An 8-year-old girl presumed to have gone missing during the storm re-appeared on Sunday, the regional branch of the Investigative Committee announced. The girl was unharmed and had reportedly been with friends, the report said.

Saudi Arabia's alliance with Russia testifies to the weakness, not the strength, of OPEC.

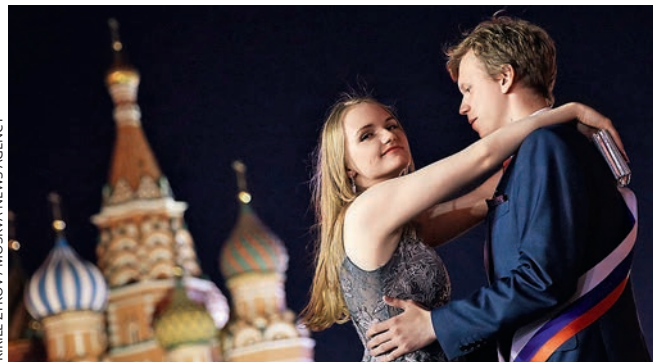
## Putin's Commencement Speech

President Vladimir Putin released an unusual on-line video address to students on Saturday as thousands of students across Russia celebrated their graduation.

An estimated 643,000 children graduated from Russian schools in 2018. The day is traditionally celebrated with ceremonial concerts, as well as events including the Scarlet Sails performance in St. Petersburg in which a ship bearing bright red sails moves down the Neva River accompanied by fireworks. Moscow's Gorky Park was chosen as the center of festivities in the Russian capital.

This year, the Russian president released his video address to graduating students on the VKontakte social media network, dressed in a casual jacket and accompanied by dramatic music and backstage shots.

"We all believe in you and respect your views on life and your interests, even if they differ from



ours," Putin said after congratulating the graduates.

"Don't limit yourself to likes in social networks; take action, gain new knowledge and be bold," he added. The video has been viewed more than 6 million times on VKontakte since it was published.

Putin's advice to young Russians: There's more to life than likes.



# ‘Spiteful’ Doping Claims

Russian sports officials have slammed a U.S. request to conduct additional doping tests on Russian players after the country's team won two of its World Cup opening games with an aggregate score of 8-1.

“Extraordinary performances demand additional tests,” Travis Tygart, head of the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency, told The Daily Telegraph after Russia beat Saudi Arabia and Egypt and qualified for the knockout stages of the tournament. He went on to say that Russia's squad should be “aggressively” tested for doping to protect the integrity of the World Cup.

Russia's Football Union (RFU) rejected Tygart's demand and called the allegations “simple bitterness.” Its honorary president Vyacheslav Koloskov said that Russian players were “repeatedly” tested at their training base north of Moscow before the tournament, along with mandatory post-match testing.

“These statements stem from [Russia's] success in hosting the tournament,” Koloskov told the RBC media outlet.

“There are a huge number of positive reviews, including from U.S. media. All of this irritates them,” he added.

FIFA refused to reveal how many drug tests it had conducted during the tournament or whether any tests were taken beyond those carried out after games, The Daily Telegraph reported Thursday.

“When it comes to tests during the competition, please understand we cannot comment,” a FIFA spokesman was cited as saying.

FIFA had previously called the Russian squad “one of the most tested teams prior to the 2018 FIFA World Cup.”

The state-run TASS news agency said Friday that Russian players had taken over 300 anti-doping tests, all of them clean, in 2018 alone.

Russia went into the tournament as the lowest-ranked out of 32 teams, and has since become one of the highest-scoring sides. The three players that have covered the most distance per game in the tournament are all part of the Russian squad.

“Taking into account that the country is under intense scrutiny by all the anti-doping agencies in the world, would the Russian team undergo doping? It's unthinkable!” Boris Rappoport, a Russian coach who previously managed FC Zenit St. Petersburg, told the local Channel 5 television channel.

Rappoport went on to say that the U.S. charges were part of a political campaign against Russia, tied to the country's “energetic and aggressive football.”



Panama players huddle for comfort after being thrashed 6-1 by England on Sunday.

## Smoke on a Plane

A group of Peruvian football fans whose plane was filled with smoke after an engine failure has vowed to launch legal proceedings against Russian airline Utair, the Peruvian Embassy said in a Facebook statement on Saturday.

The passenger plane, which was carrying the fans from Yekaterinburg to Tyumen in Siberia, landed safely on Friday after an engine failure caused the cabin to fill with smoke, Russia's air transport regulator said Saturday.

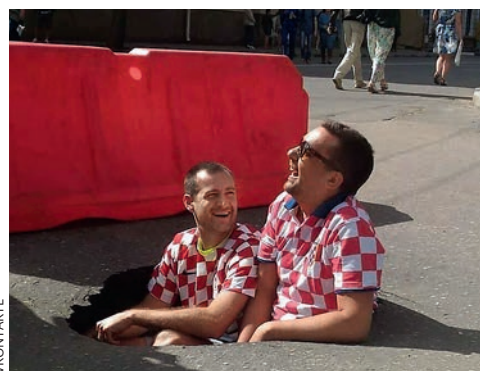
The engine of a plane carrying Saudi Arabia's team also reportedly caught fire earlier this week.

“Some of the citizens plan to make claims against the airline for the alleged breach of security protocols as well as for delays in their air connections,” the embassy said.

Russia's state aviation agency, Rosaviatsia, said the smoke soon cleared from the cabin and that the pilot was able to safely land the plane on one engine. “During the landing approach there was a failure in the second turboprop engine,” Rosaviatsia said in a statement.

A spokeswoman for Utair said media reports about a fire breaking out on the plane were incorrect. Utair is now working with aviation authorities to investigate whether a foreign object got into the engine, she added.

*Reuters contributed reporting to this article.*



Croatians can still laugh at potholes.

## Big Score

What does it take to fix Russia's infamous potholes? Apparently, just a handful of foreign fans.

To locals, the giant pothole in Nizhny Novgorod must have been a daily nuisance. But for two male fans from Croatia the giant hole was a great photo opportunity.

Not to be outdone, four Argentinian fans then staged their own photo-op in the pothole.

Probably fearing a deluge of foreigners, only a day later the pothole had been freshly paved.

“Possibly, to solve Russia's road problem, we only need to put a foreigner in every pothole,” the Lentach Telegram channel proposed. Hear that?

## Goat Optimism



Zabiyaka is one of 11 World Cup oracles.

When it comes to Russia's chances against Uruguay on Monday evening, a goat at a zoo in Samara, where the match will be played, is optimistic.

The goat Zabiyaka — not to be confused with Zabivaka, the World Cup mascot — snubbed bowls labeled “Draw” and “Uruguay” for one labeled “Russia,” the zoo told the Interfax news agency.

Zabiyaka has a decent track record: The goat predicted as winners France and Brazil in their group stage matches. But even oracles get it wrong: Zabiyaka mistakenly chose Costa Rica over Serbia for last Sunday's match.

The goat was chosen out of seven other animals at the Samara zoo, including a monkey called Simon and Coco the skunk.

## MEET THE FANS

Russia is great! We arrived last night after a five-hour flight. We've seen a lot of monuments. Russia is different from Algeria, it has its own kind of charm.

*Ali from Algeria*



## Stay Put, Moscow Officials Warn

Moscow city officials have warned football fans against visiting the capital's official fan zone, citing security concerns.

The site, located on the Sparrow Hills campus of Moscow State University, has a maximum capacity of 25,000.

“The last few days in Moscow have been an unprecedented sporting celebration: The city has not seen such an influx of fans in decades,” the Moscow Mayor's Office said on Saturday, adding that entrance into the fan zone would be restricted for the “most popular matches, which will decide the outcome of the tournament.”

“It is possible to watch matches on additional screens which have been set up in the city. They are also being shown in many hotels, cafés and restaurants,” the statement said.



Russia's recent football success has inspired a wave of interest.

Nikolai Gulyaev, head of Moscow's sport and tourism department, said fans in the Russian capital would have more luck watching Russia's game against Uruguay on Monday in their local bar.

“In this case, you will not have to think about arriving

two to three hours before the game,” the Interfax news agency quoted him as saying.

“There will be no queues for drinks and food, and the atmosphere of unity and intense football passion is just as good as in open-air fan zones.”

*(Reuters)*

## El Ruso

Several Colombian fans came to the rescue of a man who reportedly jumped into the Kazanka River in World Cup host city Kazan.

In a video showing the rescue operation widely shared on Russian social media this weekend, the Spanish-speaking cameraman says the fans “saved the Russian [man] from hypothermia and guaranteed death.”

At first, the man in the water, who appears to be drunk, seems not to want any help. Once on dry soil, however, he changes his mind, telling the camera, in English: “I love you! Thank you.”

## UPCOMING GAMES

Monday 5 p.m. Volgograd Arena

SAUDI ARABIA — EGYPT

6 p.m. Samara Arena

URUGUAY — RUSSIA

8 p.m. Kaliningrad Stadium

SPAIN — MOROCCO

9 p.m. Saransk, Mordovia Arena

IRAN — PORTUGAL

Tuesday 5 p.m. Moscow, Luzhniki Stadium

DENMARK — FRANCE

5 p.m. Sochi, Fisht Stadium

AUSTRALIA — PERU

9 p.m. Rostov-on-Don, Rostov Arena

ICELAND — CROATIA

9 p.m. St. Petersburg Stadium

NIGERIA — ARGENTINA



# Russia Steals March on Long-Distance Record

The lowest-ranked team coming into their own World Cup, Russia has sparked since the action began. But not without putting in the work.

Statistics from FIFA show that no other team has matched the hosts' Stakhanovite work rate in their opening matches – both of which Russia won by healthy margins – nor even come close when it comes to putting in the hard yards.

Russia has covered more ground than any other team, with their opening 5-0 victory over Saudi Arabia seeing them run a collective 118 kilometers.

To put that into context, the second highest distance covered in the first round of matches was 112 kilometers by Egypt in their defeat to Uruguay.

In their second match, a 3-1 victory over Egypt, Russia took their total over two games to more than 233 kilometers, which, after Friday's action, was around eight kilometers more than any other two-match team, with workmanlike Australia their nearest challengers.

This ferocious industry has been spearheaded by Alexander Golovin, who has not only stood out as a shining midfield talent, but also as the most hardworking player at the tournament, covering an impressive 25.15 kilometers.

And Golovin, like Russia's other players, is not simply accumulating distance by ambling around the pitch.

Any doubts that the stats for distance covered provide an accurate picture of effort are dispelled when you look at the figures for the number of sprints made, with Russia again leading the way having completed 824 in their two matches. Ar-



gentina, in contrast, completed only 604 sprints in their draw with Iceland and defeat to Croatia.

This may go some way towards explaining how the Russian team, who had won just one of their last nine matches at previous tournaments and none of their last seven warm-up games, have now breezed into the knockouts with a game to spare.

Undoubtedly fueled by adrenaline from being roared on by a passionate home crowd, Russia face Uruguay at the Samara Arena on Monday to decide who will finish top of Group A, with the added incentive of avoiding the victors in Group B.

With Uruguay edging into the last 16 with narrow 1-0 victories over Egypt and Saudi Arabia, the Russians will be keen to finish the group with a perfect record. (Reuters)

**Russian football players are far out-running their foreign colleagues. But can they keep it up?**

## OPINION

By Marc Bennetts



## Unpredictable, That's What You Are

If there's one phrase commonly associated with Russia's national football team, it's probably the memorable words uttered by Viktor Chernomyrdin, then the country's prime minister, during Russia's disastrous budget reforms in 1993.

"We hoped for something better, but things turned out like they always do," he said, striking a chord with the deeply fatalistic Russian psyche. His comment was used for years by sportswriters to describe the national team's countless failures and its apparent appetite for self-destruction, characterized by a sad litany of last-minute defensive mistakes and missed goalmouth chances.

Unsurprisingly, with a pitiful reputation like that, no one gave Russia much of a chance at this summer's World Cup. Even Match TV, the Kremlin-funded sports channel, described the current side as the country's worst team ever. "We can only hope for a miracle," a commentator said ahead of the month-long tournament.

But Russian football, like the country itself, is nothing if not unpredictable. Two wins in two games have propelled Russia into the play-off stages of the World Cup for the first time since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

And Russia has qualified with style, hammering Saudi Arabia 5-0 before beating Egypt 3-1. Along with Belgium, they have scored more goals than any other side at the tournament. Indeed, their total of eight goals is the highest ever recorded by a host nation since 1934.

It is a common saying here that Russians don't love football, they love victories.

It's a common saying here that Russians don't love football, they love victories. The outpouring of national joy after the win over Egypt seemed to confirm that. As Russians celebrated until dawn, some wondered how many of the national team's newly-found fans could name more than a few of its players. But cynicism was generally in low supply. "The young people running along Nevsky Prospekt with flags and shouting 'Russia!' will remember this for the next 50 years," wrote Igor Rabiner, one of the country's leading football journalists. "Whatever happens next in the World Cup, nothing can take those emotions away."

Next up for Russia is their final group stage match against Uruguay on June 25. Assured of noisy home support, the national side will be hoping to break more records and become the first Russian team to beat South American opponents at the World Cup. Russia's underwhelming total of four World Cup victories since 1991 have all come against African or Middle Eastern sides, and so a win against Uruguay on Monday would likely trigger new scenes of nationwide revelry.

There were accusations ahead of the World Cup that the Kremlin would exploit the event for propaganda purposes. But while the scenes of happy crowds and smiling police officers have undoubtedly been a soft-power success so far for Russia, President Vladimir Putin's approval ratings have actually fallen during the tournament, according to VTsIOM, the state-run pollster. The reason? The government's announcement that Russia would increase the national retirement age from 60 to 65 for men and 55 to 63 for women. It's one of the most unpopular policies of Putin's long rule, and even an apparent attempt to bury the announcement during the World Cup opening ceremony has failed to dilute public anger. Don't expect any public protests in Moscow, though. The government has effectively banned demonstrations in World Cup host cities until July 25.

Besides their goal-scoring feats, Russia have also run farther than any other side at the World Cup, clocking 118 kilometers against the Saudis and 112 kilometers against Egypt, according to stats. The side also had three players in the Top 10 for distance covered during the first round of matches, with Alexander Golovin, Russia's skillful midfielder, in first place. After allegations of a Kremlin-sponsored doping program at the Sochi Winter Olympics, which also saw stunning improvements by Team Russia, it's no surprise that some critics have suggested the side's World Cup achievements might likewise be down to steroids. Russian football figures have dismissed the claims. Stanislav Cherchesov, the Russian manager, has refused to take questions on the topic, while the team's doctor, Eduard Bezuglov, has said Russian players have passed numerous doping tests. Not that the denials are likely to hush skeptics. Like the tireless Russian team, the issue seems set to run and run.

Marc Bennetts is a journalist and author of "Football Dynamo: Modern Russia and the People's Game." [@marcbennetts1](#)



Egypt's star striker Salah seems to have become the main object of Kadyrov's attention.

## Argentinian Deportation

Argentinian authorities have asked Russia to deport four of its citizens from the country after they were reportedly filmed beating a Croatian supporter after a World Cup match Thursday.

The four fans were identified on security footage from the stadium in Nizhny Novgorod following Argentina's shock 0-3 loss to Croatia. Men in Argentina jerseys are seen in the video punching a Croatian supporter

who is lying on the floor, before kicking him in the head.

"We asked the Russian authorities to immediately detain them," Argentina's security minister, Patricia Bullrich, said in a tweet on Friday accompanied

The organizing committee is shocked and disappointed.

by photographs of the four suspects.

Seven Argentinian fans were reportedly detained after the game on administrative charges, Russia's organizing committee said on Friday.

"The Russia-2018 organizing committee is shocked and disappointed by the events seen in the video. Such behavior is absolutely unacceptable and intolerable for attendees of the FIFA World Cup and for fans in general," the statement said.

FIFA's disciplinary committee has ruled to fine the football federations of both Argentina and Croatia for crowd disturbances during the game.

(Reuters)





Russian media lampooned the national side before the World Cup kicked off, but bookmakers were hearing an altogether different story.

# What Are the Odds?

Going against the grain, Russian gamblers put their money on the home team

BY EVAN GERSHKOVICH [@EVANGERSHKOVICH](#)

**B**efore the World Cup kicked off earlier this month, Russians were, to say the least, pessimistic about their team's chances.

Not only was Russia the lowest-ranked team, the hosts had gone without a win in seven matches. After the final match in that streak beginning October 2017, a state television commentator summed up the mood. "What a pity," he said, "that when we are finally hosting the World Cup, we will be represented by the worst Russian national team ever."

That mood, however, changed drastically in just a few days. After the host team pummeled Saudi Arabia 5-0 and then Egypt 3-1, it secured

its first ever qualification into the World Cup knockout rounds. And all that before even playing its final group stage match against Uruguay on Monday. Now, home supporters have newfound belief.

What may come as a surprise, though, is that despite all the pre-tournament pessimism, Russians putting money on the matches believed in their team from the outset. According to Alexander Yegorov, deputy general director of one of the country's largest bookmakers, Liga Stavok, 90 percent of bettors who put money on Russia's result in the group stages bet they would progress.

Even more surprisingly, Russia has consistently been one of the top five favorites to win

the tournament since Liga Stavok, which has upwards of 500 locations in 97 cities, opened betting on the World Cup.

"There are a several factors that explain this," Yegorov said. "One is that with the odds at 75 to 1 before the tournament, and only down to 45 to 1 now, the payout would be huge if Russia did somehow win. Another is that people also just really like supporting their own team with their bets."

"I see it as a question of solidarity," explained Igor, 56, one of the 90 percent to wager Russia would make it to the knockout rounds. As he watched Brazil play Costa Rica at one of Liga Stavok's locations in central Moscow on Friday afternoon, Igor said that although he had had his doubts about the Russian football team's quality, he knew he would back the players at the bookmakers. "For me, it was about national pride."

That afternoon, about 50 men were in the Liga Stavok betting shop. While all the large screens were playing the ongoing World Cup

match, many patrons also tuned into other sports: Russian table tennis, international volleyball, the Thai professional football league, Australian rules football.

"Typically I come to try to make money, so I play the odds in various sports," explained Eldar, a 25-year-old construction worker who had stopped in during his lunch break. "But with the World Cup I've been betting for fun: It makes the games more interesting."

Eldar was tense as he spoke: His eyes never left the screen in front of him showing the Brazil-Costa Rica match. He had put 5,000 rubles (\$80) on Brazil to win, and the teams were still at a deadlock with 10 minutes to go.

Dylan Cox, an 18-year-old Russian-American, also had put his money on Brazil. A student, he had just finished a year studying abroad in Moscow and was killing time before heading back to the United States after the World Cup. Like Eldar, he said he sometimes bets simply to raise the stakes for himself while watching a match.

"I've got tickets to see Russia, if they finish in second place, in the round of 16," Cox said. "I'll definitely be betting on Russia that match."

Despite Russia's recent form and his intention to bet on them regardless, Cox was doubtful of the host's chances. Against Uruguay in their final group stage game, Cox said Russia will lose. And regardless of whether Russia comes out of the group in first or second place, he notes it will probably then face Spain or Portugal, two of the tournament favorites. Russians' optimism, Cox concluded, might be driven by emotions.

"Before the tournament, I remember seeing on social media how everybody was saying that we would embarrass ourselves," he said. "Now everyone's saying we'll make it to the semis or even the final. It's kind of crazy."

Others were baffled not just by Russia's results, but by the entire tournament. Brazil, a tournament favorite, had just scored in the final few minutes as time was running out to barely squeak by Costa Rica. While most of the men in the shop erupted into cheers, Andrei Volkov, 40, was holding his head in his hands.

"Nothing in this tournament makes any sense," he said. "Brazil is barely getting by, Germany looks mediocre, Argentina looks terrible, Russia is winning. I just don't think I can bet on any more games."

**The payout would be huge if Russia did somehow win. People also just like supporting their own team.**

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# A Temporary Thaw

Russia's LGBT community says strict laws have relaxed for the World Cup. Can it last?

BY YANA KUNICHOFF [@YANAZURE](#)

In late 2016, Alexander Stein began posting about LGBT issues on Facebook and Russian social media site Vkontakte. He shared links to news articles on gay marriage laws in European countries and images promoting tolerance.

It wasn't long before there was a backlash. "I started getting messages through SMS, Facebook and other platforms," Stein told The Moscow Times under a pseudonym. The messages warned him to stop posting his liberal opinions, and that he would pay the price for supporting gay rights.

Stein, a chemistry student completing a doctorate at the Moscow Technological University, stopped speaking out because he didn't feel it was safe. Friendships with Americans which he thought could bring him unwanted attention were put on the back burner.

Since the Russian government passed its infamous law banning "gay propaganda among minors" in 2013, any public affiliation with LGBT issues is risky. Rainbow flags don't often — if ever — make it out the door.

Hate crimes against LGBT people have doubled in the five years after the law was passed, the majority of which have been murders, research by the Center for Independent Social Research found.

Unsurprisingly, some fans were concerned when Russia won the bid for the World Cup: Could the country safely welcome gay fans? The concerns were buoyed by reports of a rise in homophobic chants at football matches and evidence of targeted detentions and killings of gay men in Russia's Chechen republic.

Meanwhile, President Vladimir Putin vowed that those who traveled to Russia for the tournament would find a country free of discrimination. For its part, FIFA also promised a monitoring system to detect discrimination in real-time at games.

But Stein, a football fan, isn't convinced that Russia's new tolerance will outlive the tournament.

While foreign fans might be safe during the month-long World Cup, the situation will continue to be dire for LGBT Russians, he said.

"It was a bad idea to host the World Cup in a place where the state openly discriminates, intimidates and kills LGBT people," he said. "They want to pretend that they treat people nicely here, but it's a lie."

## Be prepared

In advance of the tournament, local and international groups issued advice to traveling LGBT fans on what to expect and how to behave in Russia.

The Football Against Racism in Europe network (FARE) released a guide plainly telling LGBT fans that while "it is not a crime or punishable offense to be gay in Russia, the LGBT+ community faces both exclusion and discrimination."

"Periodic outbursts of homophobic violence have also been on the rise since 2013," the report said.

FARE also opened two Diversity Houses — one in Moscow and one in St. Petersburg — to offer what it referred to as "safe spaces" to challenge racism and homophobia in Russia.

The Russian LGBT Sports Federation, headed by Russian football player Alexander Agapov, will hold a series of inclusive amateur football games, in partnership with FARE, during the tournament. And ComingOut, a St. Petersburg-based group, has set up a hotline for LGBT World Cup fans to access legal or psychological help during the World Cup.

For Joe White, however, it took a signal from higher up to convince him to buy a ticket.

Speaking to The Moscow Times, White, an LGBT English football fan, said the public promises of protection from Putin and FIFA officials



Peter Tatchell was detained on Red Square for a one-man picket highlighting LGBT rights.



Hate crimes against LGBT people in Russia have increased sharply in recent years.

made it possible for him to travel to Russia for the tournament.

"Having that kind of added protection as foreigners visiting for the World Cup is definitely an opportunity to take," said White, who is a cofounder of Three Lions Pride, the LGBT fan group for the England team.

But, he said, Russia still has plenty of progress to make. He pointed to the increasing number of LGBT fan groups for English Premier League teams as an example of what he would like to see in Russia. "Football is a massive opportunity for social change and accepting diversity in all of its beauty."

Other foreign fans say no amount of promises would make them feel safe in Russia.

Adrian Hyrylainen-Trett, a candidate for the Liberal Democrats in the UK and an openly HIV+ advocate, said he chose not to come to the World Cup because it felt "just too dangerous."

Not only would Hyrylainen-Trett be worried about entering the country as an open supporter of LGBT rights, he and his husband "would have to tone down or act in a different way and not be our normal exuberant selves because we wouldn't want to offend local Russians, and that is very sad," he said.

Since the World Cup started, an apparent thaw has swept across the country: Football player Agapov waved a rainbow flag at the opening match and a British LGBT activist named Di Cunningham also flew a gay flag at an England match, after confirming with Russian authorities that it would be allowed.

But outside the stadium, public LGBT events were met with a harsher hand.

The opening of the Diversity House in St. Petersburg was delayed after the landlord of its

original premises pulled out only hours before the opening, forcing the organizers to scramble for another venue. The project's coordinator said the move was "politically motivated."

And gay rights activist Peter Tatchell was detained after holding a one-man protest on the opening day of the World Cup.

"I reasoned that this was the ideal moment to do a protest that would secure worldwide media coverage about the victimization of Russian and, in particular, Chechen LGBT+ people," Tatchell told The Moscow Times in a statement. "There can be no normal sporting relations with an abnormal regime."

## After the Cup

For some Russians, the thaw around LGBT issues during the World Cup, while likely short-lived, also offers a glimpse into what Russia could be.

On a Sunday afternoon during the World Cup, six people in Moscow's Diversity House sat on bean bags that look like giant footballs, on a room with the floor carpeted in artificial turf, and openly discussed LGBT issues in sports.

"There aren't a lot of places in Moscow like this, especially for LGBT people," said Galina, an employee at the center for the duration of the football tournament who asked that only her first name be used.

Diversity House is a model for the Russia Galina hopes to see again in the future. But with a nod to the two security guards at the door, she acknowledged the country still has some way to go. "The World Cup provides us with a window of opportunity for people here to experience that equality," Galina said. At the Diversity House, "everyone can come and feel that it can work like this."

## INFO FOR U.S. CITIZENS TRAVELING TO THE WORLD CUP IN RUSSIA

### EMBASSY MOSCOW

Bolshoy Deviatinsky Pereulok 8  
+ (7) (495) 728-5577 or + (7) (495) 728-5000 (after hours)  
[moscowacs@state.gov](mailto:moscowacs@state.gov)

### CONSULATE GENERAL YEKATERINBURG

Ulitsa Gogolya 15  
+ (7) (343) 379-3001 or + (7) 917-569-3549 (after hours)  
[consulekatacs@state.gov](mailto:consulekatacs@state.gov)

### CONSULATE GENERAL VLADIVOSTOK

Pushkinskaya Ulitsa 32  
+ (7) (4232) 300-070 or + (7) (914) 791-0067 (after hours)  
[vladcons@state.gov](mailto:vladcons@state.gov)

## SERVICES FOR U.S. CITIZENS DURING THE WORLD CUP

- Replacing lost or stolen passports (only at a U.S. embassy or consulate)
- Providing information on medical resources
- Helping victims of crime
- Assisting after an arrest or detention
- Locating a lost U.S. citizen
- Helping after the death of a U.S. citizen

## EMERGENCY SERVICES IN RUSSIA

- All Emergency Services: Call 112 or 101
- Police: Call 102 or 112 if using a mobile phone
- Fire: Call 101
- Medical: Call 103

## USEFUL LINKS

- Official FIFA World Cup Russia 2018 Website  
[www.fifa.com/worldcup/index.html](http://www.fifa.com/worldcup/index.html)
- Fan Guide Information  
[welcome2018.com/en/fan\\_guide](http://welcome2018.com/en/fan_guide)
- Official ticket reseller  
[www.fifa.com/worldcup/organisation/ticketing/index.html](http://www.fifa.com/worldcup/organisation/ticketing/index.html)

## STAY CONNECTED

[ru.usembassy.gov](http://ru.usembassy.gov)

[Facebook.com/russia.usembassy](https://www.facebook.com/russia.usembassy)

[twitter.com/USEmbRu](https://twitter.com/USEmbRu)  
[travel.state.gov/WorldCup](http://travel.state.gov/WorldCup)

[Facebook.com/travelgov](https://www.facebook.com/travelgov)  
[twitter.com/travelgov](https://twitter.com/travelgov)

Sign up for the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) at [step.state.gov](http://step.state.gov) to receive important safety and security information.

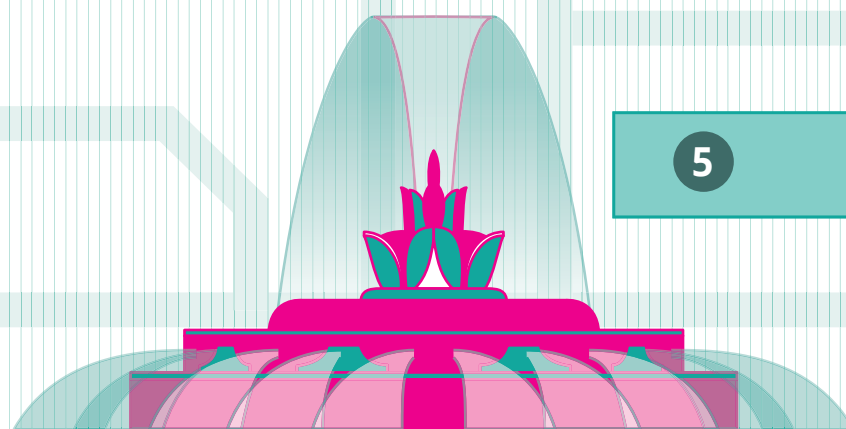






### 3. Uzbekistan / Culture Pavilion

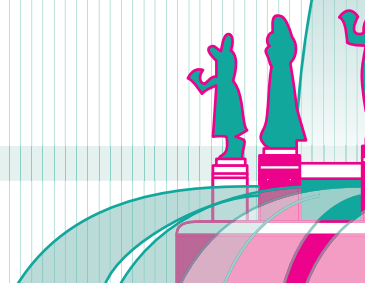
Across the fountain from the Central Pavilion to the right is a mighty white pavilion with an unusual rotunda fountain in the center and huge white block letters spelling out ART FOR THE PEOPLE. This is the former Uzbekistan pavilion – No. 66 – decorated with mosaics, carved wooden doors and ornamented plasterwork.



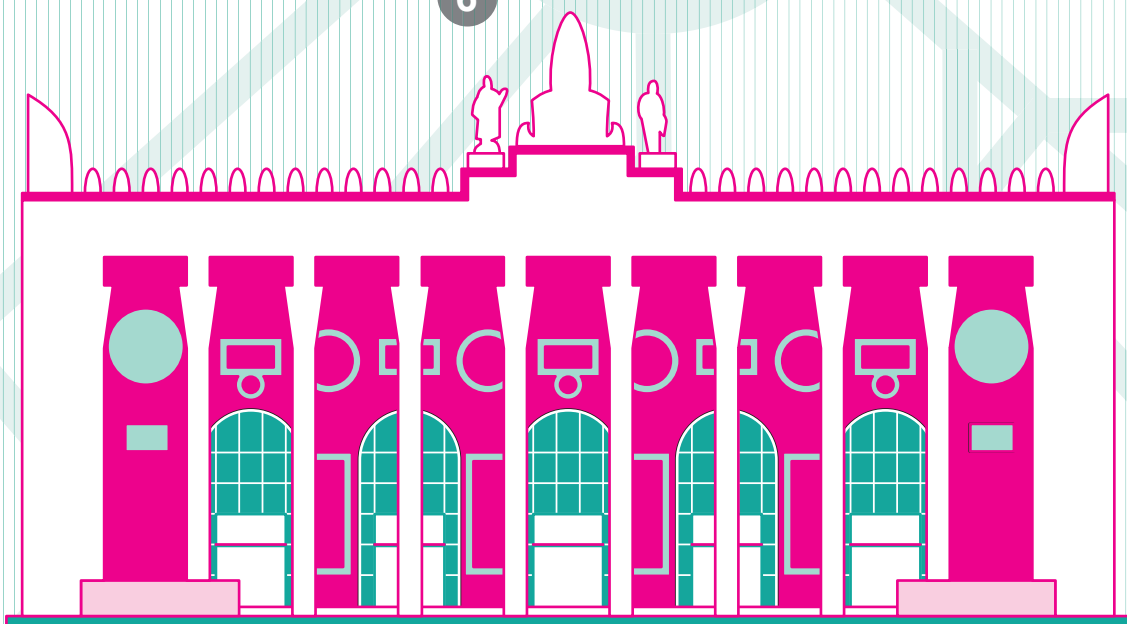
5

### 5. Stone Flower Fountain

Behind the Friendship of Nations fountain is a lush garden and yet another spectacular fountain, this one called the Stone Flower. It is based on a folk tale from the Ural Mountains that was collected and reworked by Pavel Bazhov in the late 1930s. This very popular and compelling tale was then turned into a ballet by Sergei Prokofiev, which premiered in 1954 after his death. In the tale, a young stone carver is displeased by his work, which is far less beautiful than what nature creates. He is told about the Mistress of the Copper Mountain, whose stone flower is more beautiful than human beings can imagine. But once a person sees it, he never again can see the beauty in his own reality. The stone carver travels up the mountain to see the stone flower and then returns to his village. He destroys his carvings, abandons his beloved and runs away, never to be seen again. The fountain, a human approximation of the Stone Flower of legend, was opened in 1954 with music by Dmitry Shostakovich accompanying the 1,000 sprays of water.



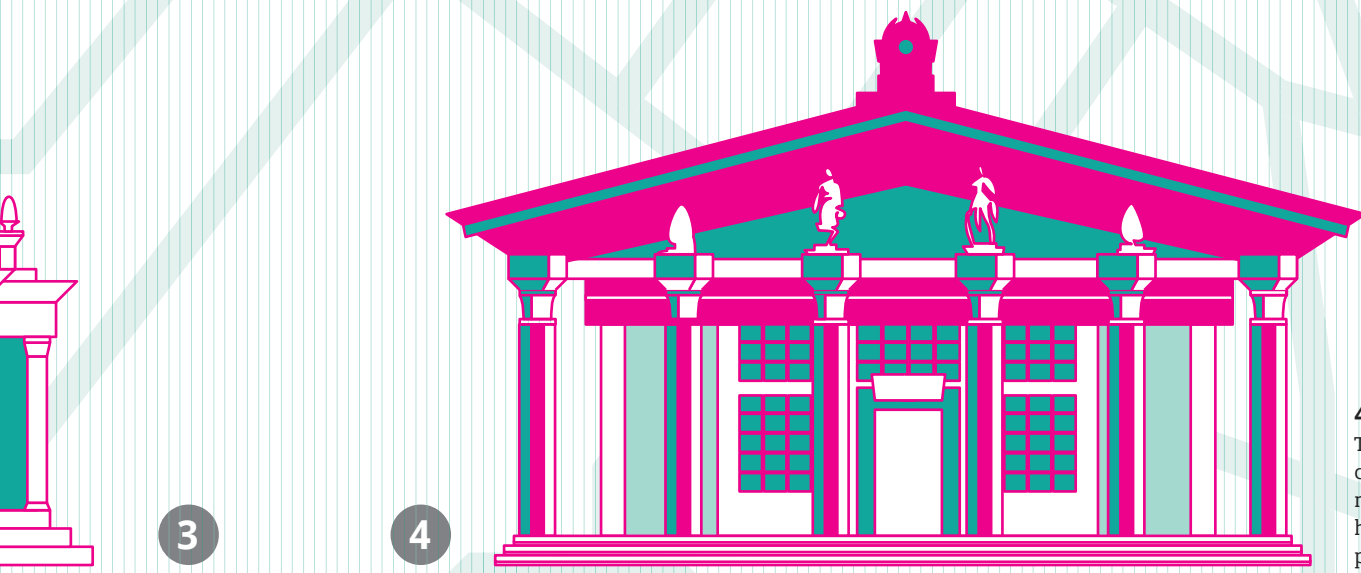
6



### 6. Polytechnic Museum

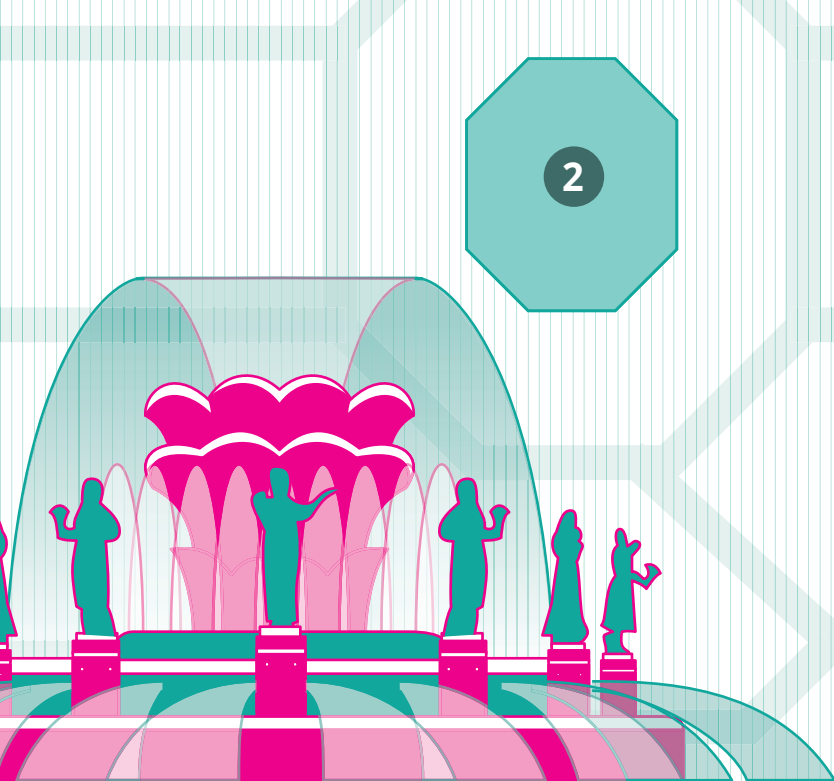
If you like hands-on science and scientific art – or artistic science – wend your way past the big rocket visible from the fountains to Pavilion No. 26, now housing the Polytechnic Museum while its permanent building undergoes reconstruction. The permanent exhibition gives a brief tour of various scientific disciplines in their applied forms. You can try to pick up something while wearing a pair of space suit gloves, or experience a nuclear explosion on a special platform, or guess what invention was inspired by particular animals. Everything is described in English and Russian: Stand under one of the explanatory cones at the beginning of each section, face the video person doing the explaining and raise your left hand when they ask if you want English. The nice person will magically speak English.





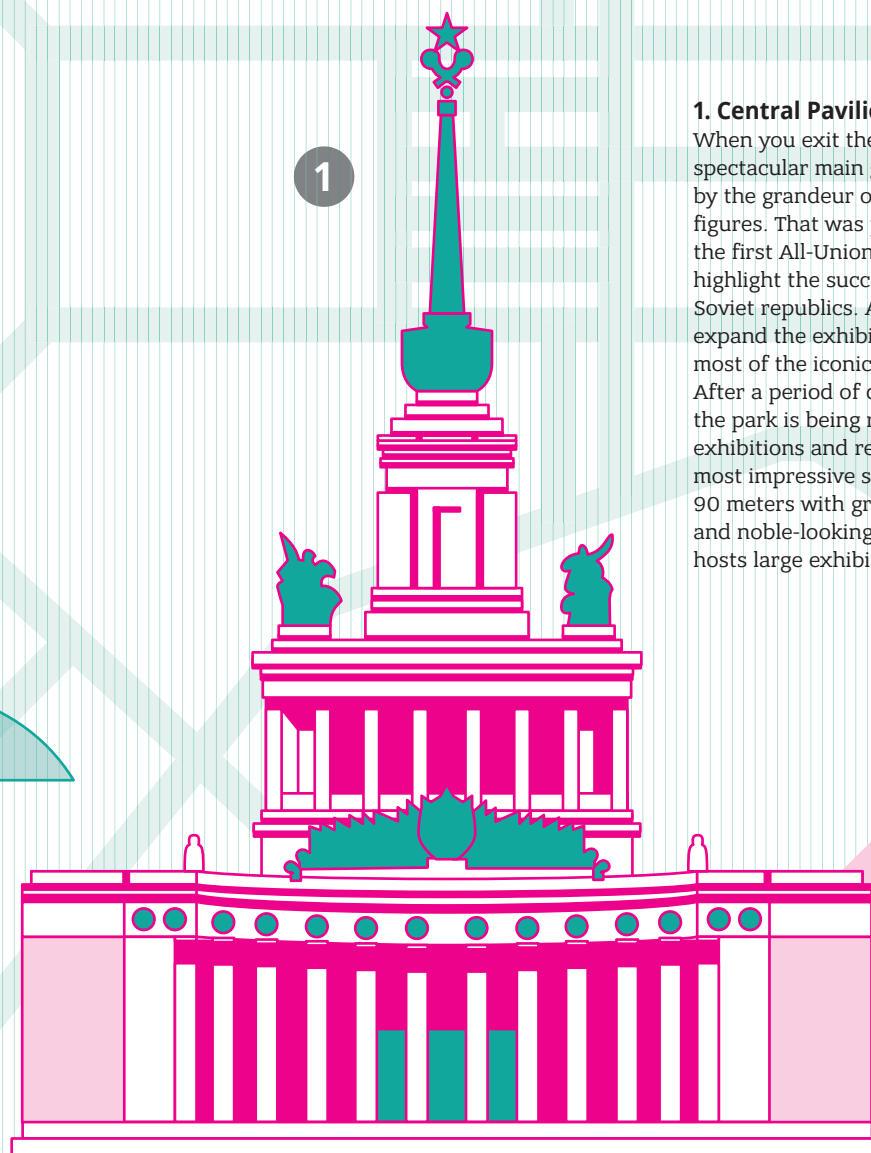
#### 4. Karelia

The Karelian Pavilion next door (No. 67) has a carved wood façade that evokes the Russian northwest. Inside is a great exhibition on the history of football in Russia from the pre- to post-Soviet period.



#### 2. Friendship of Nations Fountain

Behind the Central Pavilion is the magnificent Friendship of Nations Fountain. Enormous golden figures representing the 16 Soviet republics dance around a huge golden sheaf of wheat, all glittering under hundreds of sprays of water. Built in 1954, the gold-plated bronze "Soviet republics" were sculpted based on real representatives of these ethnic groups, including an Estonian ballerina and a pianist from Turkmenistan. Look carefully: The women are welcoming but mostly serious, and you can't decide if they are dancing or frozen in time. This is a good place to sit for a while, smell the roses (literally) and take in the glory around you. Now over 500 hectares (almost 1,300 acres) including the Botanical Gardens and Ostankino Park, VDNKh has over 500 structures, along with playgrounds, restaurants, sports and game centers, theaters and flower gardens. Ride a horse, paddle a boat, feed the animals, take a class, hear a talk and then enjoy dinner and music under the stars.



#### 1. Central Pavilion

When you exit the VDNKh metro station and enter through the spectacular main gates of the park, you may feel a bit dwarfed by the grandeur of the massive columns and enormous bronze figures. That was pretty much the idea in the late 1930s, when the first All-Union Agricultural Exhibition was built here to highlight the successes in the fields and factories of the young Soviet republics. After the war, the government decided to expand the exhibits to cover all economic achievements, and most of the iconic buildings are from this period (1948-63). After a period of decline in the 1980s and decay in the 1990s, the park is being restored and revived as a place of museums, exhibitions and recreation. Start your tour with the biggest and most impressive structure, the Central Pavilion (No. 1), rising up 90 meters with grand columns, the crests of the Soviet republics and noble-looking bronze figures. Today it has lecture halls and hosts large exhibitions.

# The Heart of the Park

## The Pavilions, Fountains and Gardens of Central VDNKh





ALEX MALEV / FLICKR

# Host City in the Spotlight:

# Samara

bodies were also evacuated to Samara from Moscow when the capital was threatened by German attack, along with the Bolshoi Theater Company and famous artists including the composer Dmitry Shostakovich. The city was thereby regarded as the second capital of the Soviet Union during wartime. Stalin even had a special bunker built there, 37 meters underground, which can now be visited as a museum.

Samara's World War II legacy continued after the final peace treaties were signed. Namely, its knack for manufacturing and heavy industry transformed it into a center for aeronautic manufacturing. Aircraft from Samara were said to flood the Soviet skies. Its factories developed and produced aircraft designed to deliver nuclear strikes, along with planes for major domestic airlines. Samara also became one of the primary builders of the Soviet space program, producing rockets that competed with the U.S. during the Cold War space race.

Samara is also known as the birthplace of the country's beer industry. The local brand, Zhigulyovskoye, has become synonymous with Russian beer itself. At the height of its popularity, Zhigulyovskoye beer was produced by 735 factories across the Soviet Union. The original, with its "inimitable taste," is still produced at a 130-year-old facility in Samara. Established in 1881 by Austrian businessman Alfred von Vacano, the facility was one of the first modern breweries in Europe at the time. But Vacano was deported after Russian and Austrian soldiers found themselves in opposing foxholes during World War I, and in 1917, the Bolsheviks nationalized the brewery. The beer, often con-

Located along the legendary Volga River, Samara is an aviation and manufacturing hub with a stadium completed just in time

Most Russians know Samara as the country's aeronautics manufacturing capital and a historic hub of the Soviet space program. Samara Arena was designed for the World Cup with this heritage in mind, featuring a 65-meter-high glass dome that lights up at night to resemble a spaceship. Following a trend seen in most of Russia's World Cup venues, Samara Arena had tremendous difficulties throughout its construction process – to the extent that it is considered the "bad boy" of Russia's stadium projects. By the middle of 2015 it was already \$53 million over budget, leading to last-minute changes of

plans, including finding a new builder. A fire broke out in the arena in August 2017, another foreboding omen for the stadium's completion. Samara Arena was only officially approved to host World Cup matches the day before its first test match in April, cutting things dangerously close. Despite the obstacles, Samara Arena emerged victorious and is now successfully hosting matches.

Samara is one of the most prominent cities on the Volga River. Fyodor I founded the city in 1586 as a fortress to protect the budding Russian Empire's Volga trade route. The city soon became a trading hub and, later, a regional seat. Samara was famous throughout the Russian Empire for its impressive production rates, especially of wheat. From its onset, Samara was a manufacturing goldmine.

Samara saw its true glory days during the Soviet era. It did a brief stint as the country's capital (one of many) during the Revolution and began to evolve into a major industrial center in the 1930s. Samara was renamed Kuybyshev in 1935, in honor of Bolshevik Valerian Kuyby-



ALEX MALEV / FLICKR

The Iversky Convent was built in 1850, a trace of Samara's pre-revolutionary heritage.

shev upon his death. The name was changed back to Samara in 1991 after the fall of the Soviet Union.

The real heyday came in World War II. As the German front crept up on Russia's western cities, major manufacturing plants were moved eastward, especially to Samara. Government

sumed with vodka, is valued for its ubiquitousness and price – not its taste.

Today, the city hosts several leading space industry companies, including Progress, which manufactures the Soyuz rocket – the only way to reach the International Space Station now that U.S. space shuttles have been retired. There is also the Aviakor aviation plant, which once produced Il-2 fighters for the Red Army and now cranks out civilian Tu-154M airliners.

The locals are still watchful of the city's heritage and how it is treated. When Samara authorities installed a supposedly hideous orange monument of an astronaut resembling a giant plastic toy downtown to mark the 50th anniversary of the first manned space flight in April 2011, it did not last a month before unidentified hooligans had a go at it. The sculpture was removed for repairs, and the perpetrators were never found.

With Samara now hosting the World Cup, its legacy of national prominence and technological capability continues into the future. With the structure completed and the tournament successfully under way, perhaps this latest development will give the locals, so protective of their city's heritage, something new to be proud of.



WIKICOMMONS

A tribute to Samara's aviation workers

HOST TO:			
June 17		–	
	COSTA RICA		SERBIA
June 21		–	
	DENMARK		AUSTRALIA
June 25		–	
	URUGUAY		RUSSIA
June 28		–	
	SENEGAL		COLOMBIA
July 2	ROUND OF 16		
July 7	QUARTERFINAL		



## Keeping and Being Cool in Moscow's Outdoor Pools

Whether you're looking to get in shape, pining for a cocktail and a lounge chair or desperately seeking ways to keep the kids entertained over the next couple of days, Moscow has an outdoor pool for you. Dive in to this list of the best spots around the city for exercise, relaxation and partying – all in the fresh air.



SHORE HOUSE YACHT CLUB

### Port at VDNKh

#### Escape the heat

Port at VDNKh offers Muscovites a beach holiday experience in the sprawling grounds of VDNKh. The recreational center is located between pavilions eight and nine and operates on a time-based system – on entry you are given a smart bracelet and at the end you pay for the duration of your visit. The complex spans 1.5 hectares and offers a diverse array of attractions. Four swimming pools, four beach volleyball courts, a relaxation area packed with lounge chairs and a jacuzzi have made the area a hit with locals. At a loose end after your swim? Table tennis, an exercise area and an illuminated dance floor should provide plenty of entertainment. Order a mojito from one of the three on-site bars and feel the stress of city life fade away.

119 Prospekt Mira. Metro VDNKh.

vdnh.ru/en/events/sports/port-at-vdnh

tropics to this large Moscow park. The Bassein offers Wi-Fi, two heated swimming pools and plenty of recliners, while a children's swimming pool caters to the younger crowds. Those of a sporty persuasion can try their hand at volleyball, table tennis, Frisbee, aerobics or perhaps take a jog around the park before cooling off with a dip in the expansive pool. As evening approaches, the place fills up with a partying crowd. People swarm to the bar, dance as DJs spin discs and then jump in the pool for a starlit swim.

1/1 Sokolnichesky Val. Metro Sokolniki.

park.sokolniki.com/activities/3



CHAIKA

### Chaika

#### Something for everyone

The Chaika sports complex near the Park Kultury metro station is the most central spot in the city to catch some rays and take a dip in the open air this summer. Four heated swimming pools cater to sporty and not-so-sporty sunseekers, while the children's pool is the perfect place for little ones to practice their front crawl before taking part in one of the frequent swimming competitions hosted by the complex. An artificial beach, a mini-golf area and an exercise zone provide plenty of options for those looking to make a day of it. If you're feeling particularly indulgent, slip into the sauna afterwards. Chaika also has a number of English-speaking sports and swimming instructors.

3 Turchaninov Pereulok, Bldg. 1. Metro Park Kultury.

chayka-sport.ru

### Neptune

#### If you're serious about swimming

If you are in the northeast of the city or are a serious swimmer, Neptune pool is for you. It has two outdoor pools, one 50 meters long with eight lanes and the other 25 meters long with six lanes. It's open from the early morning and stays open late enough in the evening for workaholics who need to unwind after a tough day. It's affordable and conducts a variety of



MAXIM KUZMIN / TOMSK-NOVOSTI.RU

### LIFEHACK

## How Do I Get a Pool Spravka?

Remove the document and you remove the man, as it says in Mikhail Bulgakov's "The Master and Margarita." If you're new to Moscow you may be blissfully unaware of the cogs of bureaucracy that keep the country in motion.

So before you take a plunge, you may need to take this plunge.

A *spravka* is any kind of official document. To use most swimming pools in Russia, you will need a *spravka* to attest that you are disease-free and won't infect the pool and other swimmers. (The major concern regards athlete's foot and other such unappealing worries.)

Do you need to see a doctor to attain this? Officially – yes. In reality – no.

While some swimming pools allow you to

obtain a *spravka* on-site after a once-over by the pool doc, if you want to avoid lines, hassle and the wrath of the angry babushka you're holding up, there is a simple solution.

The Moscow Mayor's office has a FAQ page dedicated specifically to this ([mos.ru/news](http://mos.ru/news)), and the city's health department has a useful website of hospitals that can issue a *spravka* ([mosgorzdrav.ru](http://mosgorzdrav.ru)). Or pop onto one of the many other online *spravka* sites. Enter your e-mail address, phone number and passport details, then set a time and a place to meet the courier. Hand over your money (usually it's not very expensive) and receive your *spravka*. It's really as simple as that. If you're not a Russian speaker, ask a friend to help you out since most sites have limited English translation.

classes for adults and children. It also hosts water-polo matches and has a small fitness center for pre-swim workouts and sauna for post-swimming relaxation. The only slight hitch is that you need a doctor's certificate of health to be allowed entry. But otherwise, this is one of Moscow's great secrets: an affordable, Olympic-size, outdoor swimming pool. 30 Ulitsa Ibragimova. Metro Semyonovskaya. [swimcenter.ru/pools/moscow/216](http://swimcenter.ru/pools/moscow/216)



LUZHNIKI

### Luzhniki

#### Sporty, modern complex

This popular outdoor pool complex opens every June to the delight of sporty Muscovites across the city. There is a larger sports pool for

laps and a smaller pool for those simply looking to take a relaxing dip. Plenty of sun loungers border the pools, so you can relax in the sun or enjoy people watching after you've taken a dip. The whole area is modern, clean and very trendy. Food trucks, huge comfy beanbags and an on-site sports training center offer plenty of entertainment for those less interested in swimming. You can easily spend a whole day exploring the complex and picnicking with views of the Moscow River. Come for a swim, stay for the atmosphere.

24 Luzhnetskaya Naberezhnaya. Metro Vorobyovy Gory, Sportivnaya. [aqua-luzhniki.ru](http://aqua-luzhniki.ru)

### Shore House Yacht Club

#### Moscow Riviera

This luxurious resort has succeeded in bringing a touch of Mediterranean glamor to Moscow. With a sparkling, clean pool, relaxing lounge chairs, a VIP area and – if you're feeling particularly regal – outdoor mattresses, the Shore House Yacht Club is the ideal spot to soak up the sun, sip on prosecco and experience a little bit of the high life. Celebrating a special occasion? Why not go all out and hire one of their pavilion tents for your party? A range of bars and restaurants cater to different tastes while each weekend there is a special children's program with entertainers and supervised play areas.

66th km MKAD. Metro Myakinino. [shore-house.ru](http://shore-house.ru)



THE BASSEIN

### The Bassein

#### Hip beach club vibes

Located in Sokolniki Park, the Bassein (the swimming pool) is one of the most popular places to swim, sunbathe and socialize on long summer days in the city. The area is bordered by tall trees – creating a very natural feel – while a synthetic beach brings a little bit of the



# The Dacha Diaries: At the Grill

By [Jennifer Eremeeva](#) | [@JWEremeeva](#)

## Cracking the shashlik code



PIXABAY

**D**acha season is upon us and the countryside beckons with the enticing acrid smell of smoke from the wood burning open fire. Summers spent outside the city in a wooden dacha are an integral part of the rhythm of Russian life, a welcome respite from the urban hustle, necessitating a slower pace that entreats us to relax and savor the simple pleasures of long light evenings, fresh air and al fresco dining around a communal table with friends and family.

The two great pillars of dacha cooking are an open fire and fresh, local ingredients. Dacha hosts worth their salt have long ago (ideally two

or three generations ago) secured access to a reliable source of fresh dairy, meat and poultry for *shashlik* – what other cultures calls *shish kabob* – from a neighboring farm. Salad makings such as cucumbers, cabbage, carrots, tomatoes, potatoes, runner beans and herbs are hopefully growing in the kitchen garden or from that of an obliging neighbor across the fence.

The fulcrum of a dacha dinner is the shashlik skewer. This age-old form of marinating then barbecuing meat on a stick came to European Russia centuries ago from Central Asia and has become a fundamental part of Russian cuisine. Russian men revere the preparation and execution of shashlik in the way Freemasons treat their secret lodge

rituals, jealously guarded and seldom confided. “Shashlik,” Russian men say, shooing us weaker vessels away with the hand that isn’t clutching vodka, “does not tolerate women’s touch.”

This, of course, makes cracking the shashlik code an irresistible challenge.

And to be honest? It wasn’t that hard. After almost two decades of surreptitious sleuthing around the fire, I can reveal that the secret sauce contains vinegar, oil, salt, some fresh herbs and chopped onion. So, occasionally, just to chip away at the patriarchy, I dabble in mixing up the shashlik marinade myself.

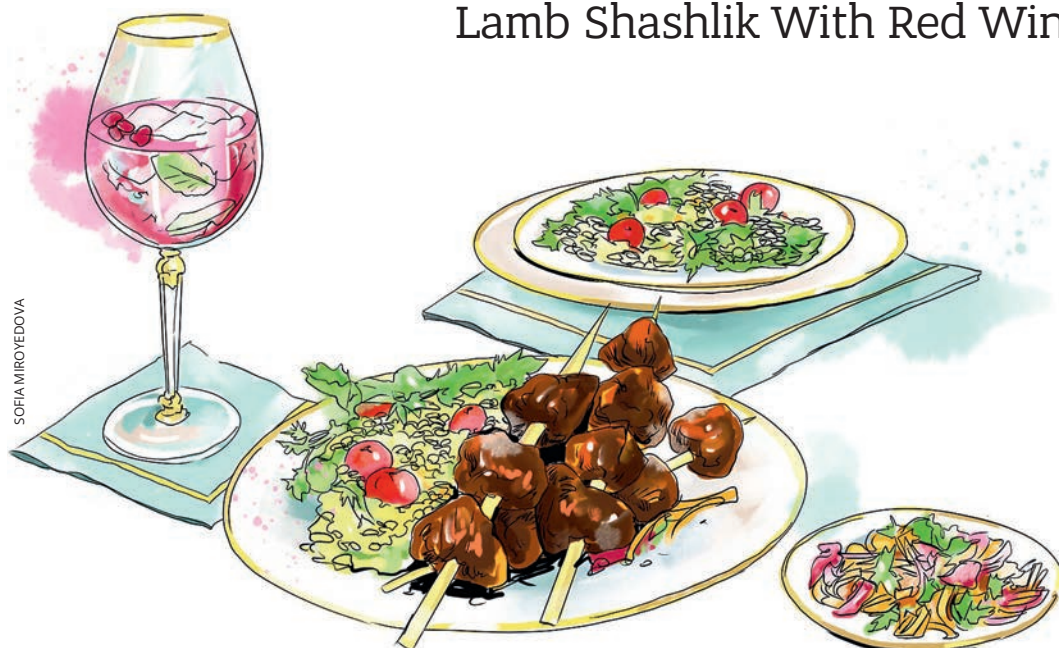
What can and should tolerate a woman’s touch are dacha side dishes. Classic dacha cui-

sine calls for fresh garden vegetables consumed in their purest form: whole cucumbers just off the vine, ripe tomatoes sliced in half and stalks of fresh tarragon, mint and green onions. To keep dinner at the dacha from getting monotonous, I’ve used basic shashlik building blocks with sides that feature fresh garden produce with light, tangy dressings.

*Jennifer Eremeeva is a longtime expat who writes about Russian cuisine, history, travel and culture. More details and recipes can be found on The Moscow Times website at [themoscowtimes.com/articles/the-dacha-diaries-at-the-grill/](http://themoscowtimes.com/articles/the-dacha-diaries-at-the-grill/)*

### RECIPE

## Lamb Shashlik With Red Wine, Rosemary and Chives



SOFA MIROVEDOVA

### Ingredients:

3 lbs. (1.5 kilos) of lamb, shoulder or leg, cut into 2-inch (5 cm) chunks  
3 cups (700 ml) red wine  
½-cup (80 ml) red wine vinegar  
½-cup (80 ml) olive oil  
3 Tbsp salt  
2 Tbsp whole coriander seed  
Three sprigs fresh thyme  
Two stems fresh rosemary  
Two anchovy fillets  
Six garlic cloves, peeled and sliced  
One bunch of fresh chives, roughly chopped  
Fresh chives and rosemary for the garnish

### Instructions:

- Marinate the lamb 12-24 hours in advance.
- Place the lamb, fresh herbs, anchovy fillets and garlic in a non-reactive bowl or

plastic bag.

- Whisk together the remaining ingredients, then pour over the meat.
- Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least four hours, ideally overnight.
- Turn or occasionally stir to ensure that all the meat comes into contact with the marinade.
- Skewer the lamb.
- Bring the meat to room temperature, then impale the chunks onto metal shashlik skewers, taking care not to crowd the meat.
- Note that you can use wooden skewers, but soak them in salt water overnight to make them fire-resistant.
- Onto the grill.
- Grill the skewers over hot coals, approximately four minutes per side.

Serve immediately, garnished with more fresh rosemary and chives.



# Top Places to Cook Shashlik

Russians love to cook out in the summer, particularly the grilled meat kebabs called shashlik. Shashlik can be made with most kinds of meat, and with or without vegetables. The meat is pre-marinated, threaded on a skewer and grilled.

If you don't have a dacha, the best place to cook shashlik around Moscow is in a picnic zone in one of the area's many parks. Most of them have special picnic zones regulated by the city's Department of Wildlife and Environmental Protection that contain all the necessary equipment for grilling. Shashlik can be cooked only on the grills provided, using coal and not firewood. Cooking on your own grill or an open fire can result in a fine.



## Kuskovsky Forest Park

This beautiful park toward the east of the city offers 17 areas for cooking shashlik, some of which can be booked beforehand if you're planning a party. After feasting, spend the evening wandering around the park and discovering a little bit of wilderness to offset your time in the city. Visit the Kuskovo manor house, which is one of Russia's oldest surviving country residences. The park also has a ceramics museum and a program of classical concerts in the summer.

40 3rd Muzeinaya Ulitsa. Metro Perovo.



## Sokolniki Park

Sokolniki Park in northeastern Moscow, one of the city's biggest and oldest recreation areas, has two picnic zones with grills and two special "Finnish houses" for barbecuing. Grilling spaces need to be booked in advance.

1 Ulitsa Sokolnichesky Val. Metro Sokolniki. park.sokolniki.com

## Fili Park

A forested haven toward the west of the city, Fili is the perfect spot for gathering with friends on long, warm evenings. There are plenty of quiet spots near the riverbank, and several shashlik areas on the wooded slopes of the park provide the perfect location for your evening barbecue. After your meal, you can rent sports equipment and bikes to explore the surrounding area.

22 Bolshaya Filyovskaya Ulitsa. Metro Fili. parkfili.com

## Izmailovsky Park

A former royal estate with birch forests, the beautiful Pokrovsky Cathedral and picturesque alleys, Izmailovsky is a favorite with Muscovites for obvious reasons. By the shore of the "Oleny Prud" (Deer Pond) there is a barbecue with a seating area and a lovely view of the park. Afterward head to the Izmailovo Kremlin and browse around.

Alleya Bolshogo Kruga. Metro Izmailovskaya. izmailovsky-park.ru



## Troparyovsky Park

You can bring your own shashlik supplies to Troparyovsky Park, or you can use the supplies provided by the park. All in all, there are 20 shashlik areas with tables, benches and a barbecue. After your meal, indulge in some bird watching: The park offers special tours so that

you can see birds up close. It also has a fishing pond where you can rent supplies, as well as a stream and natural spring.

Ulitsa Akademika Anokhina. Metro Troparyovo. moscow.info/parks/troparevsky-forest-park.aspx



## Kuzminki-Lyublino

This park in southeastern Moscow is known for its 19th century buildings and petting zoo. There are four picnic zones with grills, tents, chairs and tables that can accommodate about 60 people and are free of charge. One is near the Shibayevsky Pond, where visitors can also fish or rent a boat; and another is near the petting zoo, where children can roam while their parents cook and relax.

10 Kuzminskaya Ulitsa. Metro Kuzminki. kuzpark.ru

## Pokrovskoye-Streshnevo Forest Park

This nature lovers' paradise offers beautiful walks through linden trees, overgrown alleys and a cascade of ponds by the Chernushka river. An 18th century manor, orangery, greenhouses, elegant fences, ponds and several beaver dams add to the charm. The numerous shashlik areas within the park are completely free to use and are popular with locals throughout the summer season.

2a 5th Voikovskiy Proyezd. Metro Voykovskaya, Sokol.

## Bitsa Park

Bitsa Park offers one of the largest and most unspoiled green areas in Moscow. There are three designated shashlik spots, but as the

park is so large, you may need to hike a bit to reach them. Various country manors can be found within the grounds, and it's a great place for watching nature: woodpeckers, hedgehogs and many squirrels.

1 Novoyasenevsky Tupik. Metro Bitsevskiy Park, Konkovo.

## Serebryany Bor

This park, with its large swimming area, is a lovely place to spend a day. The picnic zone at Serebryany Bor includes 22 grills in an area dubbed "Picnic Valley." There are also three picnic zones near Bezdonnoye Lake. The picnic zone at Serebryany Bor faces the Moscow River and also features covered areas with tables, benches and trash cans. After eating, you can enjoy table tennis, volleyball, basketball and soccer, or rent a bike and take a ride through paths lined with pine trees.

4th Linia Khoroshevskogo Serebryanogo Bora. Metro Krylatskoe, Strogino s-bor.ru



## Kolomenskoye Museum and Preserve

Kolomenskoye, the museum and nature preserve complex in Moscow's southeast, is another pleasant place to spend an afternoon. The park includes many historical buildings, such as the 16th century Church of the Resurrection. The picnic zone is located by the river and has grills and tents to accommodate about 30 people. Visitors here can enjoy a beautiful view of the Moscow River and take a tour of the park.

39 Prospekt Andropova. Metro Kolomenskaya. mgomz.ru

A large wooden platter filled with various meats, including shashlik, chicken, and beef, along with bread, vegetables, and condiments. The platter is set on a table with a black and white striped tablecloth.

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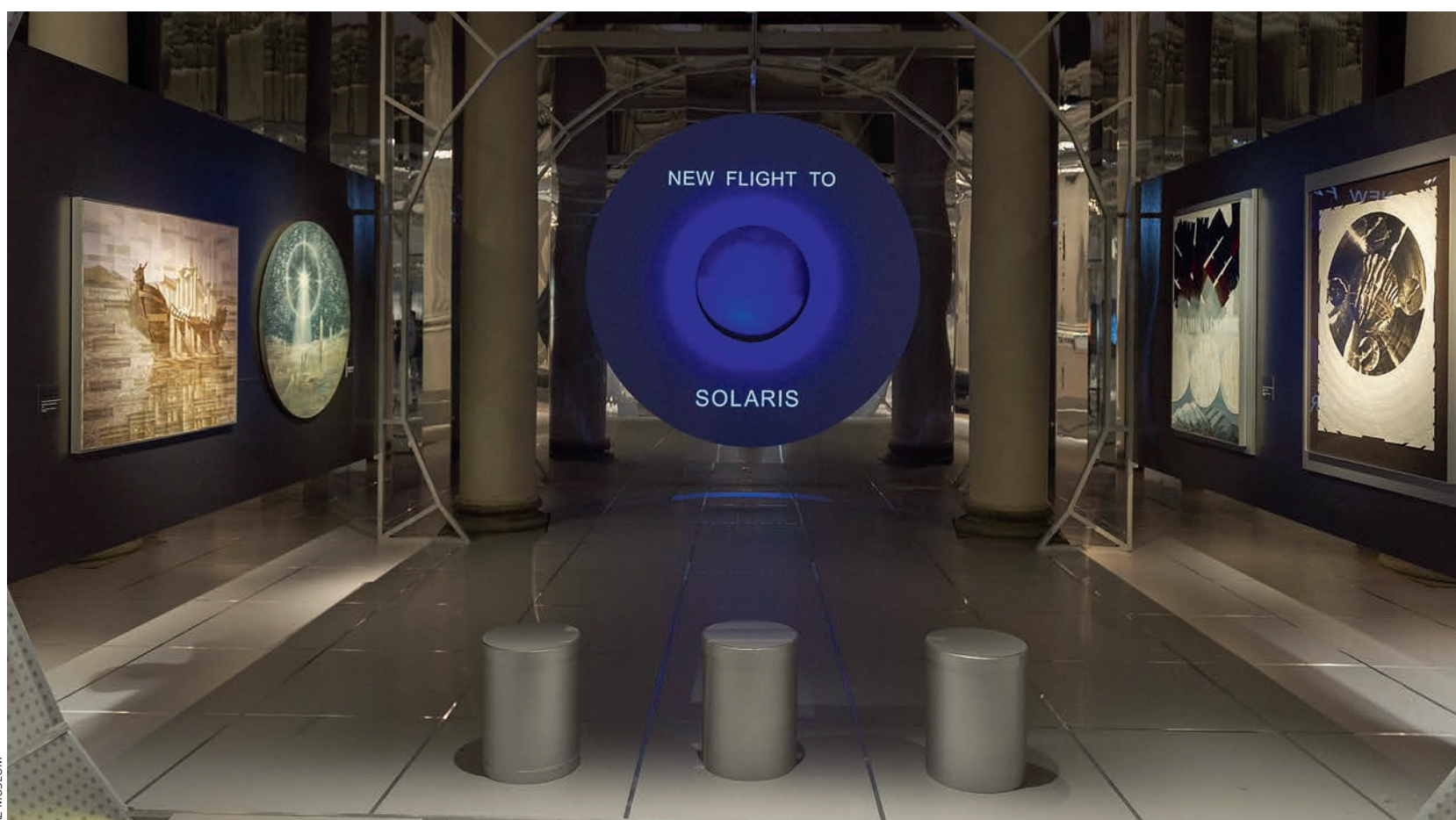
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The exhibition combines the main ideas of Tarkovsky's "Solaris" and the artwork of Soviet non-conformist artists.

## 'New Flight to Solaris' Lands in Italy

By Michele Berdy | [@MicheleBerdy](#)

*The AZ Museum and Franco Zeffirelli Foundation bring an exhibition of Soviet nonconformist art to Florence*

**T**he cultural relationship between Russia and Italy is stronger than ever. The latest proof of rich cultural exchanges is a new joint project that just opened in Florence. "The New Flight to Solaris" associatively connects the film by Andrei Tarkovsky with paintings, drawings and sculptures of Soviet non-conformist artists. This "spaceship" of art from Moscow's AZ Museum and the private collection of Natalia Opaleva is on display in the unique venue of the Palazzo San Firenze in Florence.

The idea to start a project between the Fran-

co Zeffirelli Foundation and the AZ Museum came when AZ Museum General Director Natalia Opaleva and Franco Zeffirelli met in Florence for the inauguration of the Zeffirelli Fund in October 2017.

The "New Flight to Solaris" project is the final and most important part of an exhibition trilogy organized by the AZ Museum. The first two parts, based on Tarkovsky's films "Stalker" and "Andrei Rublyov," were presented by the AZ Museum in Moscow in 2016 and 2017 respectively.

"When we saw the hall [in Florence] with all this beauty, magnificent baroque sculptures and high ceilings, it immediately became obvious

we needed to think of a special project," Opaleva told The Moscow Times. "We very quickly decided that the Zeffirelli Fund was just the right place to show the third concluding part of the trilogy dedicated to Tarkovsky and based on the movie 'Solaris.' This is how the idea of the project 'New Flight to Solaris' came about: It combines the main ideas and messages of Tarkovsky's 'Solaris' and the artwork of the non-conformist artists from AZ Museum and my own collection."

On the Italian side, Pippo Zeffirelli, son of Franco Zeffirelli and vice president of the fund, considered it not only a pleasure but also a duty to bring to Florence the exciting installation in the baroque space of Palazzo San Firenze.

"'New Flight to Solaris' is the first international project of the Fondazione Zeffirelli since the museum opened to the public on Oct. 1, 2017, but we are already in contact with various international art organizations for future possible collaborations," Pippo Zeffirelli told The Moscow Times. "I think our next guest will be a Chinese artist."

Using Tarkovsky's filmic idea as the defining feature, Polina Lobachevskaya, the exhibition curator, created a futuristic installation of a space station equipped with 22 screens showing video art based on unique photographic and cinematic materials connected with Tarkovsky's creative work. The same space also displays 32 paintings and two sculptures made by Russian artists of the second half of the 20th century: Anatoly Zverev, Francisco Infante, Dmitry Plavinsky, Dmitry Krasnopevtsev, Vladimir Yankilevsky, Vladimir Yakovlev, Lidia Masterkova, Pyotr Belenok, Yulo Sooster, Vladimir Nemukhin, Ernst Neizvestny.

"The first thing that amazes the visitor is how the art works are put together with the multimedia; the two forms of art somehow complement



Andrei Tarkovsky (right)

each other without letting the technology overwhelm the art," Italian journalist Emanuela Chiumeo told The Moscow Times after visiting the opening of the exhibition in Florence. "But these new technologies just help the curators describe every work in detail. This is important, especially because these artists were non-conformist artists and thus not known."

The organizers stress that the art displayed today in Florence could not be seen publicly in the Soviet Union. But after a half-century, the movement in the U.S.S.R. that developed in parallel to European artists and trends – the "Soviet Renaissance" – has finally found a way to be seen and enjoyed by an international audience.

The exhibition will run in Florence until July 31. For more information about the show, Anatoly Zverev and other unofficial artists, visit the AZ Museum in Moscow. [museum-az.com](http://museum-az.com).



The exhibition space has been turned into a futuristic space station installation.



# Who Lives Well in Russia?

**June 25**  
“Who Lives Well in Russia?” (Komu na Rusi Zhit Khorosho?) is an epic poem by Nikolai Nekrasov. Despite being written almost a century and a half ago, the poem about seven peasants traveling across Russia is relevant today. At least, that’s the opinion of Kirill Serebrennikov, the art director of Gogol Center, the most forward-looking theater in Moscow. “Who Lives Well in Russia?” consists of three acts, the first and third depicting important episodes from the poem and the second telling its story through physical theater and dance. Serebrennikov has been under house arrest for almost year on corruption charges his supporters say are politically motivated.  
**Gogol Center**  
8 Ulitsa Kazakova. Metro Kurskaya.  
en.gogolcenter.com



These innovative, short-lived pieces are meant to appeal to experienced museum-goers and young audiences alike.  
**Gary Tatinsian Gallery**  
19 Serebryanicheskaya Naberezhnaya. Metro Chkalovskaya, Kurskaya.  
tatinsian.com



**Ballet Nureyev**  
June 26  
“Nureyev” is another production by the embattled director Kirill Serebrennikov, this time at the Bolshoi Theater. It’s a ballet about the legendary dancer and choreographer Rudolf Nureyev, spanning his life from the 1960s to the 1990s. Libretto, scenography and staging are by Sereberennikov; the music is by Ilya Demutsky; and the choreography is by Yuri Posokhov. The production has been surrounded by controversy due to Serebrennikov’s arrest and the subject of the ballet. Rudolf Nureyev was a gay ballet and contemporary dancer and choreographer who defected from the Soviet Union and died from AIDS-related illnesses in 1993.  
**The Bolshoi Theater**  
1 Teatralnaya Ploshchad. Metro Teatralnaya.  
bolshoi.ru/en

**Concert Collage and Careless Orchestra**  
June 26  
The Turgenev Library is presenting two concerts on Tuesday evening. The first, at 7:30 p.m., features the popular youth pop vocal collective “Collage,” comprising regional and international competition winners. The group is directed by Anna Gordienko from television’s “Two Voices”

**Exhibition Fabrizio Plessi: The Soul of Stone**  
Through Aug. 5  
Curated specifically for the Pushkin Museum, this exhibition showcases the work of one of the most prominent voices in contemporary media art. Italian artist Fabrizio Plessi’s video sculptures are embedded within sound performances, architectural structures and television and theater scenographies, with the elements of fire and water as a central focus. To create these installations, Plessi selected 16 bust casts from the Pushkin Museum and produced multimedia works around them, entering into a dialogue between the past and future.  
**Pushkin Museum**  
12 Ulitsa Volkhonka. Metro Kropotkinskaya.  
pushkinmuseum.art



**Opera The Golden Cockerel**  
June 26  
At the end of the season Helikon-Opera premiered a new production of Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov’s opera “The Golden Cockerel,” based on the eponymous poem by Alexander Pushkin, a fairy tale in verse. The director is the Helikon-Opera’s head, Dmitry Bertman, but the team is international: It’s a joint production of Helikon Opera and the Deutsche Oper am Rhein in Düsseldorf.  
**Helikon-Opera**  
19/16 Bolshaya Nikitskaya Ulitsa. Metro Chekhovskaya, Arbatskaya.  
helikon.ru/en



**Exhibition General Rehearsal, Act Two**  
Through July 22  
“General Rehearsal” at MMOMA is literally a rehearsal for a grand opening of a new museum in Moscow – V-A-C Foundation’s space at the revamped GES-2 power plant in the heart of Moscow, slotted for 2019. “General Rehearsal” combines masterpieces from three art collections—V-A-C, KADIST and the Moscow Museum of Modern Art. It’s also a rehearsal in a different sense, as it follows the structure of a theatrical production and will be divided into three acts. Act One, based on Chekhov’s “Seagull,” has already taken place, and Act Two has been launched. It is based not on a play, but rather a series of questions and answers by Austrian philosopher Armen Avanessian, entitled “A Philosophical Play in 11 Thought-Images.” The questions range from metaphysical to futuristic, and the answers are played out by the artworks on display.  
25 Ulitsa Petrovka. Metro Pushkinskaya, Chekhovskaya.  
mmoma.ru

**Exhibition Vik Muniz**  
Through Sept. 8  
International artist and photographer Vik Muniz re-imagines the works of Van Gogh, Klimt, Picasso, Malevich and others in postmodern forms at this personal exhibition. Muniz began his career as a sculptor and returns to these roots in this exhibition, using non-traditional materials ranging from dust to caviar to children’s toys in order to build copies of famous artworks.



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program, and will also be joined by celebrated jazz violinist Georgy Osmolovsky. The second concert begins immediately afterwards at 8:20 p.m. and features the collective Careless Orchestra. The performance, entitled “The Fly Flew into the Window,” will showcase songs composed live during the concert, both with and without words. Careless Orchestra was founded in 2000 by Alexander Yarchevsky and is made up of members of the Yarchevsky family, all of whom are multi-instrumentalists.  
**Turgenev Library**  
6 Bobrov Pereulok, Bldg. 1. Metro Turgenevskaya, Sretensky Bulvar, Chistiye Prudy.  
turgenev.ru

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