



Opinion: How Trump beat Putin to North Korea

Page 3



On display: the golden years of Russian football

Page 14



Meet the Cossacks meant to keep you safe

Page 6

The Moscow Times

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Game Time. But Is Russia Ready?

ALEXEI DRUZHININ / KREMLIN / SPUTNIK / REUTERS

BY DANIEL KOZIN
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With just three days to go until Russia kickstarts the world's most highly anticipated sports event of the year, Moscow and the country's ten additional host cities are putting the final touches on more than eight years worth of work.

In preparation for the prestige project that the Kremlin hopes will shore up its image at home and its reputation abroad, Russia pulled out all the economic, legal and political stops at its disposal.

Ahead of the arrival of tens of thousands of fans, safety is a primary concern. Special security measures, passed by President Vladimir Putin last year, include a heightened police presence in host cities and restrictions on the sale and possession of firearms.

But not everyone is enthusiastic. Workers at factories that produce potentially hazardous materials have had their salaries slashed or have been laid off following one new regulation that orders the factories to close during

the tournament over safety concerns.

And at the elite Moscow State University, some students are complaining that restrictions on hazardous materials near World Cup locations is interfering with their lab research and threatening their academic careers.

Students have also protested a decision to locate a FIFA fan zone, which would accommodate 25,000 spectators, on the campus during exams.

Meanwhile, animal rights activists are ringing the alarm bell over the culling of stray dogs and cats in host cities, with local authorities claiming the animals are a security threat to visitors.

But it is unlikely that there will be public dissent on these new measures during the tournament.

"One major change is the temporary — we hope — tightening of legislation on protests and a practical ban on one-man pickets," said Yekaterina Schulmann, a Russian political analyst.

Some of the legislation, she said, is bound to outlast the tournament. "For the Russian authorities, it would be ideal if the emergency

measures became permanent, because it is just so convenient," Schulmann told The Moscow Times.

It's not all bad news, though.

With an estimated \$14 billion spent on the tournament by the time it ends in mid-July, Russia will have a dozen world-class stadiums and a modernized transport infrastructure, including revamped airports, roads and railway stations.

Russians have also welcomed a decision to delay the country's annual hot water shut-off. The measure is implemented every summer to clear out water pipes in preparation for the winter, leaving residents without the ability to take hot showers or wash clothes for weeks at a time.

Indeed, a poll by the state-funded Public Opinion Fund (FOM) pollster in April found that 74 percent of respondents have a positive view of Russia hosting the World Cup. Only 10 percent responded negatively.

Another poll in April, this time by the independent Levada Center, found that 53 percent of respondents approved of Russia's decision to shell out government money on projects like

the World Cup. Some 35 percent disapproved.

While the tournament has undoubtedly been a boon for infrastructure and could be a tentative step towards restoring Russia's relations with the West, many critics of the Kremlin see the World Cup as nothing but a vanity project for the man leading the country.

"The symbolic benefit of the tournament for Putin has already dissipated and it was insufficient," political analyst Dmitry Oreshkin told The Moscow Times.

"Putin expected the tournament to raise his approval ratings, but people now are more concerned about basic things like incomes and gas prices."

"Not everyone loves football, but everyone uses gas," he added.

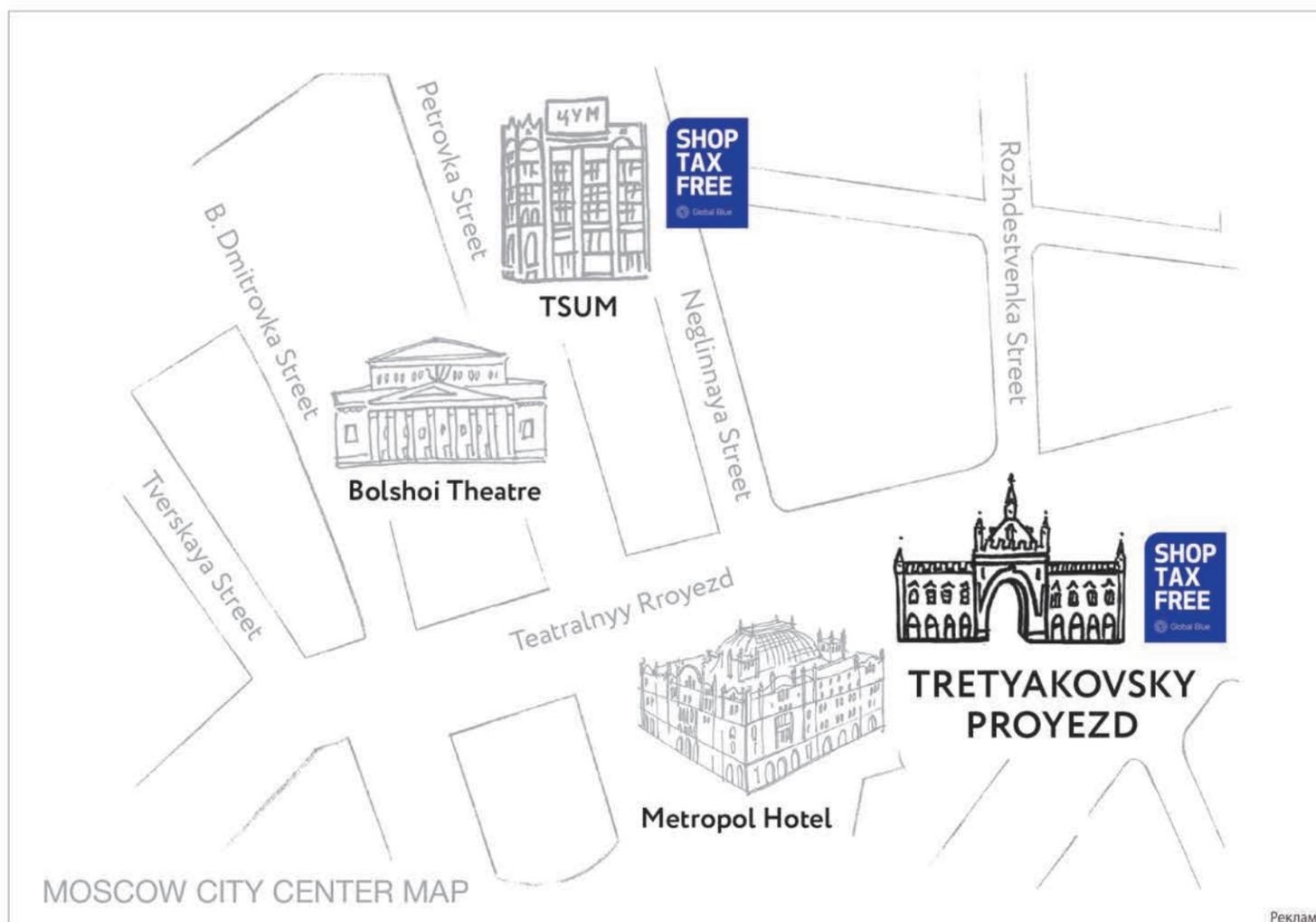
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Putin Suggests Hosting G8 Summit in Moscow

President Vladimir Putin told reporters Sunday that Russia would “be glad to see everyone in Moscow” at a future G8 summit, the state-run TASS news agency reported. Putin’s comments came after U.S. President Donald Trump and Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte called for Russia to be readmitted into the group ahead of the G7 summit over the weekend.

“We did not (choose to) leave it, our colleagues refused to come to Russia,” Putin said.

Russia was expelled from what was then called the G8 in 2014 because of its annexation of Crimea from Ukraine.

Despite Putin’s expressed willingness to host a G8 Summit, he also claimed that the purchasing power of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), in which Russia is a key member, outweighed that of the G7.



KREMLIN.RU



By Vladimir Frolov

On North Korea, Putin Gets Trumped

As U.S. President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un hurtle precariously toward their meeting in Singapore on June 12, Russia has found itself on the sidelines of perhaps the most serious attempts to resolve the international security crisis of the century.

Moscow has looked on with apprehension ever since Trump’s surprise decision on March 8 to meet with the North Korean leader and the subsequent steady warming of relations between Washington and Pyongyang. This coming together is perhaps all the more surprising given that not too long ago, Trump and Kim were sparring on Twitter and the U.S. was accusing Russia of helping Pyongyang circumvent international sanctions.

Washington’s rhetoric on a deal with North Korea is nothing if not opportunistic. It is pushing for the complete and irreversible denuclearization of North Korea in exchange for the normalization of ties, lifting of sanctions as well as security guarantees and a peace treaty to formally end the 1950-53 Korean War.

The United States has created the impression that this North Korean settlement would be strictly a bilateral affair, perhaps including South Korea, whose president has been shamelessly overselling an imminent breakthrough.

This scenario poses an existential threat to the Kremlin’s elaborate narrative that Russia, under Vladimir Putin, is re-emerging as a great world power with a decisive say on every major global issue.

Even more ominous for Russia are some of the ideas floated in Washington about its guarantees to North Korea, including extending the U.S. nuclear umbrella over South Korea to the north. For Russia, this raises the unpleasant specter of an emboldened U.S. security position in Northeast Asia at the expense of the Kremlin and China.

North Korean leaders have never suggested they are ready to accept Washington’s terms for speedy denuclearization. Nor does Moscow believe that North Korea would give up their nuclear deterrent. It is, after all, the ultimate guarantee of the regime’s survival.

Russia is highly skeptical of a denuclearized North Korea. The Kremlin now believes that North Korea’s small nuclear deterrent against the U.S. would be stabilizing and eventually lead to a more balanced regional order.

What’s more, until March 8, Russia and China believed the North Korean settlement would unfold in accordance with their “double freeze” strategy, first proposed by the countries in July last year. This phased and multilateral approach would have allowed Moscow and Beijing to shape the contours of the agreement at every stage.

That plan was quickly sidelined when Kim and Trump gushed over each other. And when Moscow and Beijing detected Pyongyang’s intent to establish its own security relationship with the United States, the great powers sprung into action.

China was more successful. Beijing brought Kim twice to China for meetings with Xi Jinping, general secretary of the communist party of China, to reaffirm his preference for a phased approach. This left Putin dangerously close to being irrelevant at this historic moment, especially after his repeated efforts to meet with Kim ahead of the Trump meeting were rebuffed.

This left the Kremlin with no choice but to dispatch Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov to Pyongyang in a somewhat desperate attempt to reinsert Russia into the negotiating process.

But North Korea would not confirm Lavrov’s meeting with Kim until the last minute. And a brilliant plan to arrange for a trilateral meeting for Putin and China’s leader with Kim at the SCO summit in China on June 9-10, which would have upstaged the meeting with Trump in Singapore, ultimately fizzled.

It is not so much that Moscow wants U.S. diplomacy with North Korea to fail. Rather, it does not want it to succeed without Russia. To that end, Putin and Lavrov have been careful not to publicly undermine U.S. efforts, despite Trump’s concerns to the contrary.

After all, Moscow is betting that should Trump’s rendezvous with Kim be declared “a historic success,” nothing in the world will stop Trump from rushing into another “historic summit” with Putin.

Vladimir Frolov is a columnist and political scientist. [@vfroloff](#)

Forbes Editor Fired

The chief editor of Forbes Russia, Nikolai Uskov, has been fired for supposedly neglecting his professional duties.

Uskov said that the firing was preceded by clashes between him and the magazine’s owner Alexander Fedotov, who he accused of editorial interference for commercial interests.

Fedotov took control of the magazine in 2015, after a law limiting foreign ownership of media companies forced out German publishing house Axel Springer.

Last year, Forbes for the first time did not publish its annual list of highest-paid Russian executives. At the time, Uskov told the Vedomosti business daily that the magazine needed “more accurate information” before publishing the list.

Uskov will be replaced by his deputy, Nikolai Mazurin.

Two Detained

At least two people were detained at a protest in central Moscow on Sunday afternoon.

More than 1,500 people attended the protest on Prospekt Sakharova to call for an end to politically motivated persecutions, the ban on Telegram and police brutality, among other stated goals.

Artsy Birthday

The Garage Museum of Contemporary Art celebrated its 10-year birthday on Sunday, as well as the one-year anniversary of its moving to Moscow’s iconic Gorky Park.

In 2017, the museum welcomed some 717,000 visitors, the TASS news agency reported.

Ministry Denies Destroying Gulag Prison Records

A top Interior Ministry official has denied reports that officials are destroying the archived records of people who survived imprisonment in Soviet-era gulag labor camps.

Last week, the Kommersant business daily cited an employee at The Gulag Museum in Moscow as saying that cards detailing the personal information of former inmates and the dates of their release were being secretly destroyed. The report cited an interdepartmental order dating back to 2014, which called for the removal of files belonging to victims older than 80.

At a meeting on the topic of repression in Yoshkar-Ola, Deputy Interior Minister Igor Zubov denied the existence of the decree. He instead stated the records would be stored indefinitely, according to a statement on the Presidential Council for Civil Society and



MOSCOW NEWS AGENCY

Human Right’s website.

Zubov went on to say that the missing records of specific individuals would be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Russia has an ambiguous relationship with its Soviet

past. While Stalin is considered to be responsible for the deaths of up to 13 million people, he is often glorified for his industrial and military achievements – including by the country’s leadership.

The Gulag Museum in Moscow stores records of Soviet repression.

Putin's Promise

President Vladimir Putin released a video address late last week to welcome foreign fans arriving to Russia for the 2018 FIFA World Cup.

"We have done our best to ensure that all of our guests – the athletes, the staff and, of course, the fans – feel at home in Russia," the president said.

With days to go until the tournament kicks off on June 14 with a game between Russia and Saudi Arabia, Putin promised "an unforgettable experience."

"We have opened both our country and our hearts to the world. Welcome to the FIFA World Cup!"

VIP Tickets Craze

Russian state companies have spent millions of dollars on VIP tickets to World Cup matches, the RBC business outlet reported Sunday.

The media outlet cited 13 tenders on the government's official state procurement website, totaling 200 million rubles (\$3.3 million) for match tickets to the tournament.

Tickets to the stand-off between France and Denmark on June 26 at Moscow's Luzhniki Stadium were most in demand, with 81 total tickets bought. In comparison, only 49 tickets were bought by state companies for Russia's opening match against Saudi Arabia.

Russia's VTB bank and several affiliated structures were the biggest buyers of World Cup tickets, according to the tenders, with VTB24 spending some \$1.5 million dollars on tickets and the state-run Sberbank spending around \$281,000.

MEET THE FANS



Once we got lost in the metro and everyone said: "Don't worry, we will help you." Though most people here don't speak English or Spanish, they are very, very nice.

Victoria and Angel from Argentina

Russians Grow 'Mustaches of Hope'



With just three days to go until Russia's first game in the FIFA World Cup, fans across the country have little left to bank on other than hope.

The national team has failed to win in seven consecutive games since November 2017 and will be the lowest ranked team in the tournament it hosts

this summer.

Desperation rising, Russia's popular late-night television host Ivan Urgant launched a tongue-in-cheek campaign in support of the team's beleaguered head coach Stanislav Cherchesov.

"Everything is against him now: Expectations, the weather, the laws of physics, the anatomy of certain footballers and just plain-old logic!" Urgant said during an episode of his show on June 5.

To support the mustached coach, Urgant called on social media users to grow "mustaches of hope" to share on social media. Over 4,000 people have already participated in the online flashmob, including nationalist politician Vladimir Zhirinovskiy and members of the 'FRUKTb!' pop group. Find the best pictures by searching for the #УсыНадежды (#MustachesOfHope) hashtag on Instagram.

World Cup Fever?



Fifty-six percent of Russians over the age of 16 plan to watch the upcoming 2018 FIFA World Cup on TV or on the internet, according to data gathered by the GfK survey agency in May 2018. The figure is up from 42 percent in November 2017. GfK conducted its study among 2,100 respondents.

Hefty Price Tag

The cost of hosting the FIFA World Cup in Russia will reportedly exceed \$14 billion, making it the most expensive football competition in history.

It's the first time Russia will host the World Cup, where 32 teams will compete for the football prize from June 14 to July 15. Russia's former Deputy Prime Minister Arkady Dvorkovich estimated that preparations for the championship had contributed \$14 billion, or around 1 percent, to Russia's GDP over the last five years.

Altogether, Russia will spend 883 billion rubles (\$14.2 billion) to host the World Cup, several billion more than the official cost of 683 billion rubles (\$11 billion), according to calculations by the RBC business portal.

Transport infrastructure (\$6.11 billion), stadium construction (\$3.45 billion) and accommodation (\$680 million) are the biggest line items.

Over half of official World Cup-related costs fall under the federal budget. Since Russia won the hosting bid in 2010, the official budget for the tournament has been amended 12 times.

Analysts surveyed by RBC forecast that any economic growth from the World Cup would quickly dissipate, despite the influx of government spending.

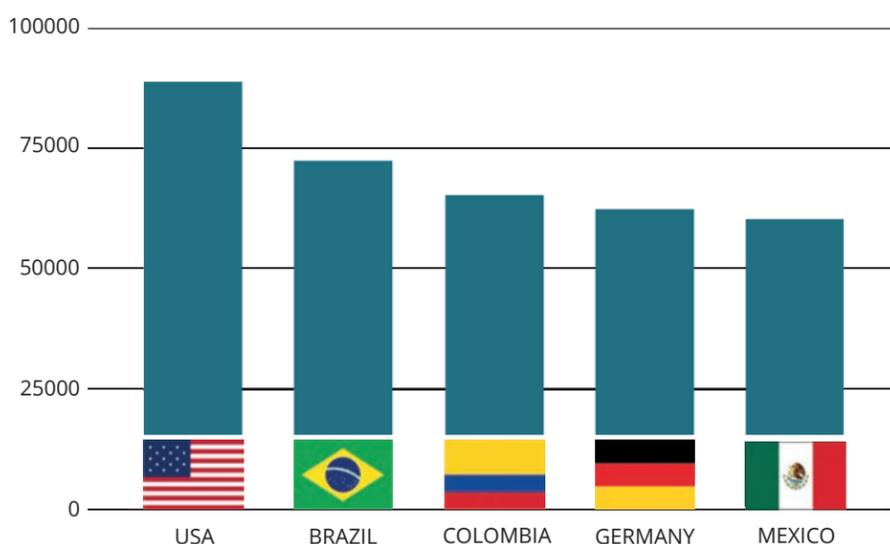
"We spent a lot of money and we need to make sure that all this infrastructure works first and foremost for the development of sport," President Vladimir Putin said at an annual call-in show on Thursday.

Reuters contributed reporting to this article.



Opening of the FIFA Fan Fest Zone on Sunday at Moscow's Sparrow Hills.

Top 5 Countries for Tickets Sold Abroad



Source: FIFA

Volgograd Workers Strike

Workers at the Red October factory in the southern Russian city of Volgograd have raised the alarm over mass layoffs and salary delays in the runup to this summer's FIFA World Cup.

Special laws passed for the World Cup stipulate that factories that pose a potential safety risk in host cities be temporarily shut down for the duration of the tournament.

The Red October factory produces steel for the T-14 Armata tank, Russia's first new main battle tank since the fall of the Soviet Union.

"The current situation at the enterprise is catastrophic and may lead to a total shutdown," the factory's union wrote in a letter addressed to



President Vladimir Putin, according to a copy of the letter carried by the RBC business portal.

As many as 3,000 workers have been temporarily laid off because of the new measures,

RBC reported.

The factory workers plan to stage a protest in Volgograd on June 18, the day of the first World Cup match scheduled in the city, between England and Tunisia.



By Marc Bennetts

Russia's Forgotten Football Dreams

In early 2009, shortly after Russia announced its intention to bid for the right to host the 2018 World Cup, the country's top football official set the national team the task of lifting the trophy. And no one – well, almost no one – laughed.

The reason for the lack of universal mirth was because Russian football

was on the up. The previous summer, a talented generation of players that included Andrei Arshavin, the future Arsenal star, had stormed to the semi-finals of Euro 2008, dispatching the Netherlands on their way with a display of vibrant, attacking football. Anything seemed possible.

Flash forward almost a decade, and those ambitions have been quietly forgotten. Without a win

in their last seven games and only one shot on target in their previous 180 minutes of playing time, Russia is the lowest-ranked side at the 2018 World Cup. Rather than hoping their national side will conquer the World, most Russian fans will be content if their team makes it out of their group. Even President Vladimir Putin is unable to conjure up any optimism, saying mere-

The Kremlin is using the World Cup to show that – despite sanctions – Russia is thriving.

ly that he hopes Russia's team will "fight until the end."

As Russia's dejected footballers trailed off the pitch to scattered jeers in the wake of their squad's 1-1 draw with a weakened Turkey on June 5, the state television commentator didn't even try to disguise his disgust.

"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." Although Russia faces Uruguay, Egypt and Saudi Arabia – hardly "a group of death" – for a play-off place, less than 50 percent of the country's football fans believe the team will progress, according to a recent Sports Express magazine poll.

It's not only Russia's sporting ambitions that have changed as FIFA's quadrennial festival of football kicks off in Moscow this week. In 2009, the Russian economy was on the up and Kremlin officials were dreaming of transforming Moscow into a global financial center. That summer, U.S. and Russian officials met in Geneva for a symbolic "reset" of relations. Russia was affluent, confident and increasingly powerful. It seemed reasonable to imagine that the 2018 World Cup, along with the Sochi Olympics, would showcase what Putin described as the "new" Russia that had emerged after the Soviet Union's collapse.

Flash forward almost a decade and Russia and the West have entered what analysts in both Moscow and Washington are describing as a new Cold War. An economic slump, triggered by Western sanctions and lower global oil prices, has plunged millions of Russians into poverty. Putin, rightly or wrongly, is seen across large swathes of the planet as an evil, warped genius who spends his days plotting how to destroy democracy and cause untold misery to millions. The World Cup, which is costing Russia at least \$11 billion, is unlikely to change too many opinions on that score. Instead, the Kremlin will use the World Cup to try to prove that despite Western sanctions, it is not only surviving, but thriving.

And Putin couldn't have picked a bigger stage to get across his message of defiance. Despite some initial blustering by Boris Johnson, Britain's blunder-friendly foreign secretary, none of the national sides qualified for the World Cup are boycotting the tournament. Even London, which accuses Moscow of carrying out a chemical weapons attack in southern England, has balked at snubbing the event. The British government has, it is true, decided not to send any royals to Moscow as a sign of its displeasure. That probably hasn't caused too much concern in the Kremlin: Most Russians would rather see Harry Kane on the pitch than Prince William in a VIP box.

Of course, they'd also like to see their national team surprise the world and reach at least the semi-finals. But you can't have everything, can you?

Marc Bennetts is a journalist and the author of "Football Dynamo"

[@marcbennetts1](#)



Some of football's biggest stars, including Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi, landed in Russia.

FIFA Refs to Fight Crowd Discrimination

FIFA has said that referees will have the power to abandon matches at this month's World Cup in cases of persistent discrimination in the crowd.

Russia has pledged to crack down on racism as the country faces increased scrutiny before and during the tournament, which it will host from June 14 to July 15 in 11 cities.

But there is still concern over the situation. England defender Danny Rose said on Wednesday that he has told his family not to attend the World Cup because he feared they may be racially abused.

FIFA secretary general Fatma Samoura said the global football body took discrimination very seriously.

"Besides educational measures... we have systems in place to react to and sanction discriminatory acts as well as measures to ensure a discrimination-free environment at the FIFA World Cup," she said in a FIFA statement on June 7.

FIFA said that, for the first time in the tournament's 88-year history, there would be a dedicated anti-discrimination monitoring system at each match.

A team of three observers from the anti-discrimination FARE network would watch the behavior of fans from both teams as well as neutrals.

"Those observers understand the language and are trained on the regional specificities of the respective fan cultures," the statement read.

FIFA said referees could also intervene under the so-called three-step procedure.

The referees will have the authority to first stop the game and request a public announcement asking for the discriminatory behavior



FIFA's visual assistance operations room.

to cease. They can then suspend the match if it continues and ultimately abandon it.

FARE's executive director Piara Power said the monitoring system had been "very effective" in the World Cup qualifiers, especially in identifying homophobic behavior.

A number of teams, mainly from Latin America, were fined or suffered stadium closures as a result of their reports.

"If issues arise, the observer system allows us to identify them early and have action taken during a match," he said.

FIFA's Head of Sustainability and Diversity Federico Addiechi said that everyone who is part of the match organization, including staff, volunteers, teams, stewards and security personnel, had been trained to take action if necessary. (Reuters)

Playing in the Rain

With Moscow suffering yet another cold and wet spell to start off the summer, Russia's Meteorological Service has announced a new monitoring system to help visitors track the weather during the World Cup.

"Our site will update the weather forecast for all host cities every hour," the head of the weather agency Roman Vilfand said at a press conference on Friday, adding the informa-

tion would be shared with the World Meteorological Organization (WMO).

"That way, fans and teams will stay updated on the weather around the clock," he said.

The forecaster's website now also has an English-language section, providing weather and air quality forecasts for all host cities.

For Russia's opening match against Saudi Arabia on Thursday, forecasters are expecting

sunny weather with temperatures between 15 and 20 degrees Celsius.

"It might be cold in the evening, so fans are advised to take a coat with them," the state-funded TASS news agency cited an agency employee as advising.

Whatever the weather, just remember that Moscow got a whopping six minutes of sunlight in December. So count your blessings!



Cossack culture was all but extinct in Russia until former president Boris Yeltsin issued a decree encouraging its revival in the 1990s.

Send In the Cossacks!

Cossacks have been enlisted to help maintain law and order during the World Cup. But not everyone is feeling safer.

BY EVAN GERSHKOVICH [@EVANGERSHKOVICH](https://twitter.com/evangershkovich)

It was one of the first hot days of spring, but dozens of the men gathered in Moscow's central Pushkin Square were nonetheless clad in fur hats, heavy military fatigues and leather boots. Some also carried a leather accessory: the traditional *nagaika* whip.

The men were Cossacks who came to see the May 5 protest against President Vladimir Putin's fourth inauguration for themselves, they later said. But they did more than just watch. Soon after the gathering began, the men charged at the protesters, tearing away their signs, punching them and lashing them with the leather whips.

Within a day, before some of the protesters' wounds had even begun to heal, a news report surfaced that claimed one of the Cossack units had been trained by Moscow city authorities in handling large street gatherings. The report also said that the group had received funding from

the Moscow Mayor's Office totaling 16 million rubles (about \$261,000).

The controversy did not stop there. The reporters also found that the same group — the Central Cossack Battalion — will help Russia's police ensure security in Moscow during this summer's FIFA World Cup football tournament. This claim was later denied by city authorities.

It is "insanity," said Maxim Shevchenko, a pro-Kremlin political commentator and journalist. Earlier, Shevchenko had resigned from his post on Russia's Human Rights Council over the government's decision to deploy the Cossacks on Pushkin Square. "We've seen how they 'provide security,'" he told *The Moscow Times*. "Why do we need Cossacks when we have police and the National Guard?"

Law and order

For Cossacks, enforcing their conservative interpretation of law and order has long been a

point of pride. Tracing their heritage back to the ferocious horsemen of Russia's southern steppes, who protected the frontier of the Russian Empire during the tsarist era, many Cossacks today still believe that they are essential to an orderly state.

"In traditional Cossack areas before 1917, there were never any police," said Mikhail Bepalov, the first deputy ataman — a Cossack leader — of the Great Don Army. "If someone beat their wife or if someone stole a pig, the Cossacks decided what to do. And as a rule, lashing someone with a *nagaika* resolved things better than — I'm sorry to say — any judge."

Loyal to the tsars and the Orthodox Church, the Cossacks fought against the Bolsheviks on the losing side of the 1917 civil war. In subsequent years, they were nearly wiped out, with

Lashing someone with a whip resolved things better than — I'm sorry to say — any judge.

hundreds of thousands killed by the Soviet regime.

Still, the Cossacks' combat lifestyle and codes of honor have lived on in the public imagination. Under Putin, they have enjoyed a resurgence as a symbol of his militaristic brand of nationalism. Today, even men with dubious claims to Cossack heritage who are attracted to the lifestyle can find traditional garb — including *nagaikas* — for sale in shops across the country.

"There are a lot of former police and military types who don't know what to do with themselves after they have completed their service," Nikolai Mitrokhin, who researches contemporary Russian nationalism at the University of Eastern Finland, told *The Moscow Times*. "The Cossack movement speaks to them. They get to put on a uniform and protect something."

A history of violence

For many years, the Russian government was unsure about what to do with these vigilante types, Mitrokhin said. Then, in 2005, a government register was created that allowed them to win state tenders to provide security at public events. In doing so, the government also formalized a jack-of-all-trades and, at times, extralegal tool, Mitrokhin said.

He pointed to the weeks leading up to the annexation of Crimea in 2014 as an example of how Cossacks have benefited the Kremlin, when an estimated 1,000 of them from Russia's southern regions were sent to the peninsula.

"Once they arrived, they pretended to be locals to provide a veneer of wide public support, and they also used physical violence to strong-



Sergei Pivovarov / Reuters

Cossacks in Rostov-on-Don are training alongside police and the Emergency Situations Ministry.

arm Crimeans into supporting Russian intervention," he said.

This vigilantism is embedded in Cossack history. During the tsarist era, Cossacks carried out campaigns against minorities, including Muslims and Jews, at the behest of the authorities. And today, government officials often still see Cossacks in the same illicit tradition.

When the then-governor of the Krasnodar region Alexander Tkachev formed a patrol of 1,000 Cossacks in 2012, he noted that they would not be limited by the law in the same way as police. "What you cannot do," Tkachev told a gathering of law enforcement officials, "a Cossack can."

World Cup peacekeepers?

Moscow is not the only city where Cossacks were reportedly commissioned to provide security during the World Cup. In Rostov-on-Don and Volgograd, 330 Cossacks, including some on horseback, will be divided between the two cities to provide security, according to Bespalov of the Great Don Army, a government registered unit.

"We will welcome tourists with joy and with smiles on our faces," he said by phone, noting that the Cossacks have learned a handful of words in several foreign languages in prepara-

tion. "We want to show them that Russia is a welcoming place."

In recent weeks, Bespalov said his men have been attending training sessions with local police and the Emergency Situations Ministry. "It will be hot, both in emotions and in temperature," he said. "We need to be ready to help out fans in case they need us."

Asked how the men were selected, Bespalov said that to join the Don Cossacks, candidates must answer questions about their heritage in detail, pass an exam on Cossack history and a six-month probation period. Of 1,200 members, about a quarter were selected for the World Cup after strict Interior Ministry criminal background checks, Bespalov said.

Local police departments, the Interior Ministry and the National Guard referred all requests for comment on the Cossacks' participation in World Cup security provision to FIFA. FIFA, in turn, referred The Moscow Times to the authorities.

"FIFA is in regular contact with Russian and international authorities concerning security matters for the 2018 FIFA World Cup," a spokesperson wrote in an email. Reached by phone, Andrei Shustrov, the first deputy ataman of the



Cossacks whip anti-government protesters ahead of Putin's inauguration in May. Some observers are concerned they will employ similar tactics during the World Cup.

ILYA VARLAMOV



PASCAL DUMONT / TMT

A Cossack in Simferopol, Crimea in 2014.

Central Cossack Battalion, said, "I don't have time for interviews," then hung up.

Getting off easy

The 2018 World Cup will not be the Cossacks' first international sporting event on the government payroll. During the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics, they made headlines after whipping members of Pussy Riot. When Russian police failed to prosecute the perpetrators, Pussy Riot appealed to the European Court of Human Rights.

Following the May 5 protest, the Cossacks have yet again mostly escaped punishment.

The Investigative Committee is currently considering two complaints against Cossacks: Another was fined 1,000 rubles (about \$16) by a Moscow court for using foul language in public,

though he escaped punishment for whipping protesters.

"Legally, Cossacks in these instances are representatives of law enforcement officials," said Pavel Chikov, from the Agora human rights NGO. "If something like this happens during the World Cup, I would urge people to appeal to the courts, just like if a policeman uses excessive force."

After the anti-Putin protests on May 5, however, even self-identifying Cossacks are questioning whether the militia units can be trusted to handle public events.

Mikhail Popov, a 20-year-old university student in Moscow who identifies as Cossack, was horrified after witnessing what happened on Pushkin Square. With three other activists, he launched a Telegram channel "Beware of them," which outs the men who perpetrated the violence. Although the majority of Cossacks there that day were non-government registered, Popov sees both types as frauds.

"Most of the government-registered Cossacks aren't real Cossacks," he said. "We see all of these people simply as wanting to join a militia. It's a farce."

Unfortunately for Popov, though, neither the Russian public nor foreign tourists are able to recognize true Cossack identity. As put by Alexander Verkhovskiy, director of the Moscow-based SOVA Center, which tracks extremism, "From an outsider's point of view, what difference does it make who is real and who is not?"

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* Легендарный



6

6. Izmailovo Kremlin

On the other side of the island you re-enter mad, modern Moscow. To the right is a fairy-tale Kremlin built up over the years on the site of a big flea market. There are shops, stands and cafes, some under tents, others under brightly covered turrets, cupolas and vaulted roofs. Here Disneyland meets Russian artisans. If you have patience and stamina, you will actually be able to find many beautiful things. If you don't want to indulge in retail therapy, you can take a masterclass in ceramics or breadbaking, stop in one of the museums of everything from vodka to toys or attend a musical event. When you get hungry, stop at a food stand. And when you get overwhelmed, simply head back to the Partizanskaya metro station. Or better yet: go back to the birch grove.

73 Izmailovskoye Shosse

5. Birch Grove

Across the courtyard to the left is the space where the original residence stood. Leave through the side gate and enter into a little piece of heaven. Next to the long white wall of the southern administration building is one of the most glorious birch groves in the city. Soft grass, white-bark birches, fluttering silvery leaves... take off your shoes and walk in the grove, or lie down in the soft grass and relax. Now you know why Russians love birch groves, and why every painter has tried to capture their soft beauty. After a long rest in the grove, continue down the road that runs along the wall to the right. From 1924 to the 1960s, the island was home to the Bauman Worker's Settlement, with over 3,000 people living in communal apartments. You'll pass tennis courts and overgrown playing fields before you come to a little hunchbacked bridge. This crosses the Silver Pond; to the right is Grape Pond. Nearly 40 ponds were formed when the Silver River was dammed in various locations, although only nine remain today.

5

Izmailovo Island and Kremlin

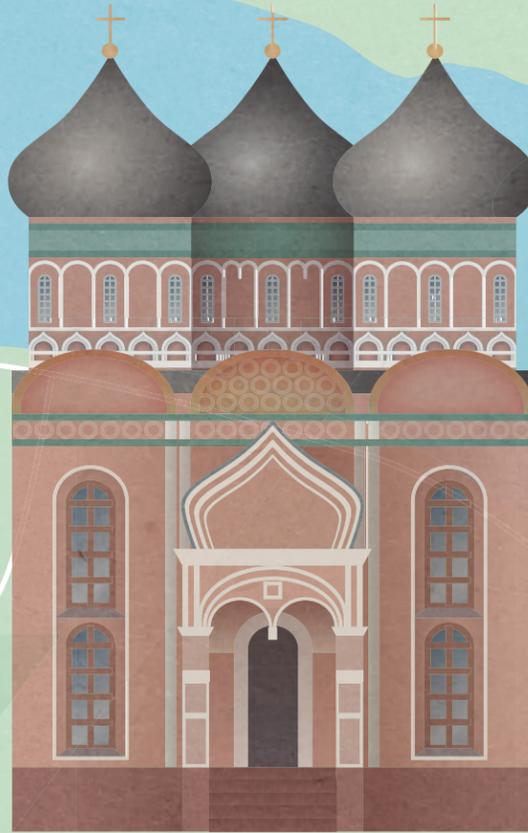
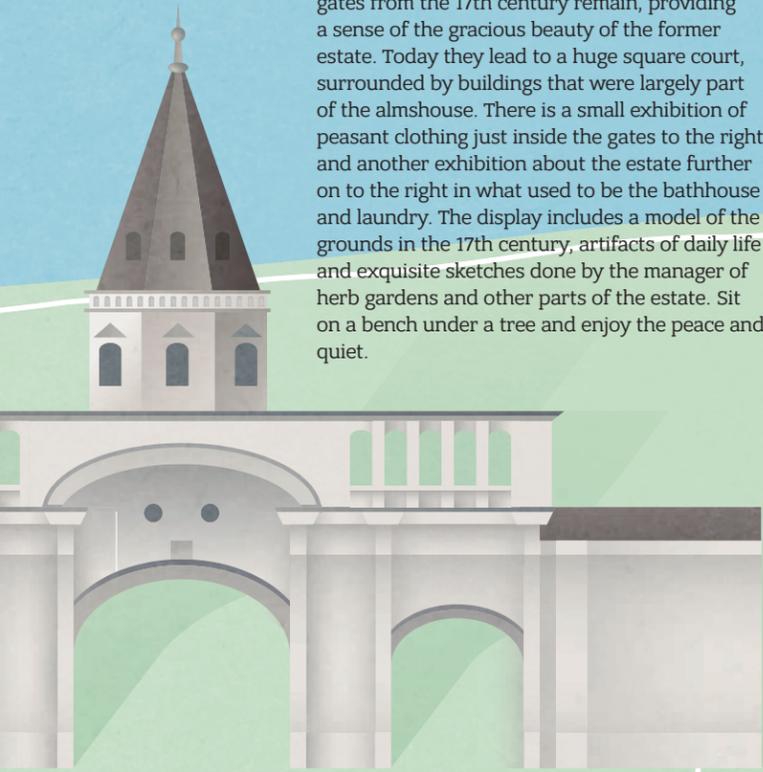
Tsars' Former Estate and Fabulous Flea Market

By [Michele A. Berdy](#) m.berdy@themoscowtimes.com | Illustration by [Olga Marchenko](#)

Explore this peaceful island of natural beauty and history next to Moscow's favorite shopping spot

4. Front Gates of the Royal Court

Walk through the little square to the left toward a white tower. Almost nothing is left of the original royal court of the Romanovs; the wooden palace – probably similar to the one reconstructed at Kolomenskoye – is long gone, and most of the buildings were torn down or destroyed. But these gates from the 17th century remain, providing a sense of the gracious beauty of the former estate. Today they lead to a huge square court, surrounded by buildings that were largely part of the almshouse. There is a small exhibition of peasant clothing just inside the gates to the right, and another exhibition about the estate further on to the right in what used to be the bathhouse and laundry. The display includes a model of the grounds in the 17th century, artifacts of daily life and exquisite sketches done by the manager of herb gardens and other parts of the estate. Sit on a bench under a tree and enjoy the peace and quiet.



2. Church of the Intercession

To the left of the Bridge Tower is the enormous Church of the Intercession of the Mother of God, built by craftsmen from Kostroma and Yaroslavl and completed in 1679. Be sure to look up to see the particularly beautiful ceramic tiles on the facade and around the drums that hold the cupolas aloft. By 1837, many of the original chambers and buildings of the royal court had fallen into disrepair or been torn down, including previous damage by Napoleon's troops in 1812. It was then that Nicholas I decided to dedicate the island to providing housing and services for disabled soldiers and their families. The massive church had three equally massive wings built onto it for the patients and became the almshouse's place of worship. The almshouse lasted until 1918, when the new Soviet government discontinued its funding. The church was closed and plundered, then used as a KGB archive and vegetable warehouse. The church was reconsecrated in 1997 with two of the original icons that had been found and returned.

4

2

3

1

3. Statue of Peter the Great

At the edge of the little square in front of the church is a statue of Peter the Great by Lev Kerbel, installed in 1998. Peter spent a lot of time here in his youth: This was one of the places where he and his young soldiers had their play battles. In 1688 he was poking around his grandfather's old things in a storeroom of a linen-making shop when he found an old boat. He asked around until he learned that the boat was English and had the extraordinary ability to sail not just with the wind, but against it. This unbelievable assertion had to be proven, so they found a Dutch master who fixed the boat up and sailed it here on the ponds. Peter later dubbed this boat "the grandfather of the Russian navy." It is now enshrined in the home of the fleet in St. Petersburg.



1. Bridge Tower

For this walk, take the metro to Partizanskaya station and walk along Izmailovskoye Shosse (away from the city center) on the left side. At the second traffic light, turn left and then veer left away from a gas station. After a short walk along a leafy road you'll cross Silver Pond and find yourself on Izmailovo Island, one of the best places in Moscow you've never heard of. It was originally the Romanov family's estate, and after Mikhail I was crowned tsar in the 17th century, it became one of the royal courts outside of the city. With its orchards, gardens producing rare fruits and vegetables, one of the first palace theaters, advanced water pumping devices and other engineering innovations, it was ahead of its time. The estate was described as an idyllic place where the fish in the ponds wore gold rings in their gills. Concerts were held outside in the summer so that the music joined with the sound of tree boughs rustling in the wind. To the right of the current bridge was a 106-meter stone bridge with 14 arches that stretched to the three-level Bridge Tower, built in 1674. The lower level had a chapel, the middle level had a "Duma" room where boyars confabbed with the tsar and the top level held a bell tower.





JENNIFER EREMEEVA

Georgian Cuisine: A Primer

By Jennifer Eremeeva

The sumptuous traditions of Russia's neighbor are a national favorite

One happy byproduct of Russia's centuries of imperial rule over its contiguous neighbors is the resulting ecumenical cuisine. Even the most fervently patriotic Russian today thinks nothing of tucking into a plate of *plov*, the signature rice pilaf of Uzbekistan, or a pile of *draniki*, Belarus' beloved potato pancakes. Woe betide he who suggests these are not legitimate parts of the rich tapestry of Russia's national cuisine. When it comes to the wine and cuisine of Georgia,

that bountiful land that spreads out over the slopes of the mighty Caucasus mountains, Russians put politics firmly aside.

Both Georgia and her renowned cuisine are hard to pigeonhole. Her temperate climate and verdant lands, washed by both the Caspian and Black Seas, make her far more Mediterranean than northern European. Certainly the olive-skinned Georgians themselves, with their expansive and passionate natures and love of wine and song, remind one more of Italians than of Scandinavians. Georgia straddles Asia

and Europe, but she is neither. For millennia, Georgia has lain at the crossroads of the Silk Road, that river of civilization which connected cities and cultures as diverse as Baghdad and Venice. For much of her long history, Georgia has been occupied, beginning with Jason and his Argonauts who sought the Golden Fleece. It comes as no surprise to anyone who has spent time in Georgia that the feisty and passionate Princess Medea of Colchis, who helps Jason and then exacts a terrible revenge when he spurns her, is a Georgian woman. Subsequent

invasions by the Seljuqs, Ottomans, Iranians and Russians were unable to eradicate the indomitable Georgian sense of national identity, epitomized by her unique language, enduring traditions of hospitality and unforgettable national cuisine.

The cuisine

Georgia's mild climate spans agricultural zones as diverse as Alpine pastures, ideal for grazing sheep and cattle, and verdant lowland vineyards where succulent grapes, plums, eggplant,

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red peppers, beans, walnuts, pomegranates and herbs ripen under the hot sun. At its heart, Georgian cuisine is deceptively simple, relying on fresh ingredients, simple cooking methods, a few key spice mixtures and the wonderful fusion of flavors that the land itself crafts.

The supra

Experiencing a Georgian supra, or banquet, is an unforgettable culinary and cultural experience. This multi-course banquet showcases Georgian food and wine in a leisurely, hours-long party, where the ancient Georgian saying “Every guest is a gift from God” is brought alive in all the country’s expansive hospitality. Guests should bring to the supra a clear head and empty belly, but also an unhurried willingness to submit to the experience: to be wined, dined, toasted, sung to and feted as never before.

The appetizers

Arriving at a supra, you will find the table already groaning with a dazzling array of appetizers and salads that are a feast for both the eyes and the stomach. The lovely contrast of emerald green herbs such as cilantro, tarragon and mint jump off the plate when contrasted with the jewel tones of pomegranate, eggplant and plums. A newcomer to the Georgian supra can be forgiven for attacking the appetizers with gusto, but more seasoned veterans know the importance of pacing oneself: A supra is a marathon, not a sprint. Some salads you may encounter are *ispanakhis pkhali*, a spinach pate, *lobio*, beans in a variety of dressings, red peppers mixed with a variety of accompaniments such as walnuts in *witeli bulgaruli zizakis salata* and *badrijani nigvzit roule*, or eggplant roll ups with walnuts and pomegranates. Also on

The pomegranate is a vital ingredient in Georgian cuisine.



YEST KHINKALI, PIT VINO

the table will be chewy *puri* bread and tangy, salty sheep cheese, which pair beautifully with the platters of plain cucumbers, beef tomatoes and fresh herbs.

The tamada

The supra’s master of ceremonies is the tamada. Part toastmaster, part enforcer of good manners, part bard and storyteller, the tamada keeps the proceedings moving, ensuring that appropriate toasts are said in the correct order, that all guests are welcomed and that no one drinks to excess. If the company seems awkward, the tamada may well strike up the band and order the guests onto the dance floor, or tell a funny story or ancient tale of the glories of Georgia’s past heroes, such as the valiant King David or wise Queen Tamara.

The tamada will also keep one eye on the ta-

ble and the other on the kitchen to ensure that the flow of food and drink is paced correctly. When everyone has eaten his fill of the light appetizers, a parade of slightly more robust and substantial dishes will appear, including *satsivi*, a pungent dish of shredded chicken in walnut sauce, or *khachapuri*, the universally popular chewy cheese pastries made from Georgian *sulguni*, a delightfully runny distant cousin of mozzarella.

Georgian soups are designed to stick to your ribs. *Matsvni shechamadi* is a hot yogurt soup spiked with fresh coriander, rich lamb *bobash* combines fruit and herbs, *chikmyrta* is a lamb-based rice soup thickened with egg yolks and *kharcho*, Georgia’s signature soup, is made from beef or lamb, rice or millet and a rich tomato broth enriched with plum fruit leather, creating an unforgettable sweet and sour taste.

The main courses

Main courses, when they come, prove that they were worth the wait and restraint. *Khinkali* are oversized Georgian dumplings, filled with lamb and pork and a mouthful of delectable tart broth. *Shashlik*, or meat on a skewer, is made delicious with one or more of Georgia’s delicious condiments: *tkemali*, a tart plum sauce and *adjika*, a fiery red pepper sauce. Georgian food gets much of its signature taste from spice mixes with wonderfully evocative names: *utskho suneli*, “a strange and delicious smell from far away” and *khmeli suneli*, “a mixture of dried smells.” Other signature flavors include calendula or dried marigold, known confusingly as *shaffran* and not to be confused with saffron. Coriander, mint, garlic, purple basil and tarragon are other popular accents, the latter being the dominant flavor in the very popular *chicken tabaka*, a spatchcocked chicken cooked under a brick.

Pheasants’ tears

Wine flows freely throughout the supra, as it has for almost ten thousand years in this ancient land. Georgian legend says that only the most extraordinary and delectable wine can make a pheasant cry tears of joy, a challenge Georgians take very seriously. Georgian winemakers today are experimenting with both modern technology and the ancient principle of aging wine in clay pots known as *kveri*. One sip and you delight in another Georgian saying, which promises that “He who just once drinks of the waters of the Mtkvai River, will drink of them again and again.”

Jennifer Eremeeva is a longtime expatriate who writes about Russian cuisine, culture, history and travel.

Giant clay pots — *qvevri* — are filled with grapes and buried underground in order to make Georgian wine.



JENNIFER EREMEEVA



JENNIFER EREMEEVA

The legendary *khinkali* dumplings, which involve a complex eating ritual

RECOMMENDED



NATAKHTARI

Natakhtari

This homey cafe offers all the classics, from colorful balls of *pkhali* (minced vegetables) to 11 kinds of *khachapuri* (cheese bread), as well as *khinkali* (meat dumplings) and meats grilled and stewed in a variety of sauces. This is a good choice for families, with its reasonable prices, a casual welcoming atmosphere and a special menu for children.

6/8 Ulitsa Maroseika, Bldg. 1. Metro Kitai-Gorod cafenatahtari.ru



YEST KHINKALI, PIT VINO

Yest Khinkali, Pit Vino

In Georgia food is sacred, and *khinkali* are at the top of the pantheon. The tradition is to eat these large dumplings in large quantities, and here they are the house specialty. As the restaurant’s name suggests, it’s recommended that you enjoy them with some Georgian wine from one of the oldest wine-growing regions in the world.

4 Ulitsa Malaya Bronnaya, Bldg. 1. Metro Pushkinskaya eatkhinkali.com



KHACHAPURI

Khachapuri

This chain is popular among locals and visitors alike. Be sure to try the *adjarian khachapuri* and homemade lemonade. Their branch in the city center is the most buzzing location and features an in-house pianist who serenades diners. Reservations are recommended, especially on weekends.

10 Bolshoi Gnezdnikovsky Pereulok. Metro Pushkinskaya / Tverskaya hacha.ru



GOTINAZA

Gotinaza

Discreetly tucked behind an arch just off Novy Arbat and located in a tiny two-story house, this restaurant has long been a favorite Moscow secret. Some rooms are cozy, quiet and warm, and others are a bit garish with loud blaring music. But Gotinaza, this wonderful and least hip of places, is always a treat, serving delicious, authentic Georgian fare.

2 Merzlyakovsky Pereulok. Metro Arbatskaya gotinaza.ru

Get Away From It All: Some of Moscow's Prime Parks and Gardens



Kolomenskoye

Unlike many of Moscow's more central parks, Kolomenskoye is not excessively primped, manicured and paved. Here you can explore gorgeous hilltop views, one of Russia's most exquisite architectural landmarks and a ravine with a beautiful wooden staircase. Located on a historic estate on the southern bank of the Moscow River, Kolomenskoye's most striking landmark is the Ascension Church, which offers a unique example of 16th century ecclesiastical architecture. Three hundred years ago, apples from the estate's grounds graced the tsar's table. Centuries later the park still produces thousands of apples every fall, to the delight of opportunistic fruit-pickers. In early June the trees are in bloom with delicate pale pink and white flowers.

39 Prospekt Andropova. Metro Kolomenskaya
mgomz.ru/kolomenskoe



Serebryany Bor

Serebryany Bor is hugely popular among Muscovites. It occupies a spot between a curve of the Moscow River and a man-made canal, forming an artificial island and pleasant natural getaway. The rich and famous have often used the area as a relaxation spot, and Serebryany Bor boasts many summerhouses belonging to politicians, celebrities and businesspeople. Metro Polezhayevskaya, then Minibus 190



Botanical Garden

The biggest botanical garden in Moscow (of five) is located at the Russian Academy of Sciences. The grounds are vast and roaming. The rosarium

contains 20,000 rose bushes and the total site spans over 3.5 square kilometers. The garden itself wasn't intended to be simply a park: Its main purpose has been to preserve plants for study and to research on how best to acclimatize plants to a changing environment. With a Japanese garden, tree nursery and examples of rare Russian plant species, this park is perfect for horticulturists and nature lovers.

4 Botanicheskaya Ulitsa. Metro Vladykino
gbsad.ru



Aptekarsky Ogorod

The Aptekarsky Ogorod (The Apothecaries' Garden) is an oasis of calm just off the rumbling Prospekt Mira. Founded in 1706 by Peter the Great, it claims to be the oldest botanical garden in Russia. Moscow's apothecary board originally owned the garden, and it was home to many species of medicinal plants. The park was originally an educational resource for medical students, but today you're more likely to see groups of schoolchildren and families enjoying the wooded, meandering walkways and play areas. There are also three greenhouses offering climate zones and many rare and beautiful plants.

26/1 Prospekt Mira. Metro Prospekt Mira
hortus.ru



Sokolniki Park

The massive Sokolniki Park is a wonderful place to get away from it all without ever leaving the city. The current layout of clearings and alleyways began under Peter the Great, and still provides an ideal space to stroll and soak in the natural world. Besides the impressive ornamental flowerbeds, one of the best things about Sokolniki is being able to enjoy the forested wilderness of pines, birches and oaks. Once you've finished getting lost in the woods, you can admire the vibrant blossoms in the park's own lilac garden. Situated on the right side of the Calligraphy Museum, it runs adjacent to two stunning rose gardens.

Sokolniki Park 1/1 Sokolnichesky Val. Metro Sokolniki. park.sokolniki.com



Sirenevyy Sad

You need to travel a little way to see it, but the Sirenevyy Sad (lilac garden) in eastern Moscow,

Northern Tushino Park

Northern Tushino Park is a little out of the way, toward the northwestern suburbs of the city. Still, if you make the trip, you won't be disappointed. Situated next to the Museum of the History of the Russian Navy, the island of untouched nature features large green spaces and rolling natural landscapes. Large numbers of apple and rowan trees populate the park, and a bounty of children's play areas provide relief for kids who want a break from looking at plants and trees.

56 Ulitsa Svobody. Metro Skhodnenskaya.
mosgor-park.ru



on Shchyolkovskoye Shosse, is home to the city's biggest *sirengaria*, or garden of decorative lilac bushes. There are over 30 different species on display, including "The Beauty of Moscow," "Captain Gastello" and "Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya" – named after the heroine of the Soviet Union. Their sweet, intoxicating fragrance is a reminder of the once booming Soviet gardening culture. The garden was reconstructed in 2014 and has since focused on restoring and preserving the lilacs created by Russian hybridizer Leonid Kolesnikov.

8-12 Shchyolkovskoye Shosse. Metro Cherkizovskaya
mosgor-park.ru



Bauman Garden

The small, intimate Bauman Garden, between Krasniye Vorota and Baumanskaya metro stations, is a favorite with local office workers and neighborhood residents. An oasis of calm in the bustling streets of central Moscow, the garden was originally formed by the convergence of several manor gardens between the 17th and 19th centuries. The Belvedere grotto and alleyway remain from this period, while another highlight is a 1920s concert stage in the shape of a shell. The stage still hosts concerts, lectures and poetry readings in the summer months. Lilac, chestnut and apple trees line the main pathways.

15 Staraya Basmannaya Ulitsa. Metro Baumanskaya, Kurskaya, Krasniye Vorota.
sadbaumana.ru



Host City in the Spotlight: Kazan

LEGION-MEDIA

One of Russia's most historic, vibrant, and multicultural cities, Kazan is also an established international sports hub

Kazan calls itself the sports capital of Russia, so it's only natural that this old city serves as one of 11 host cities for the 2018 World Cup. The Kazan Arena, built in 2013, has a 45,000-person capacity and is expected to be jam-packed during the international World Cup championship. Capital of the Republic of Tatarstan, Kazan is Russia's sixth largest city with a population of more than a million people, of which almost half are ethnic Tatars.

This historic city is home to some of Russia's greatest athletes and football, basketball, and hockey sports clubs, even rivaling Moscow and St. Petersburg. It invested heavily over the last decades in long-term sport infrastructure. The Kazan Arena hosted the 2015 World Aquatics Championships, and the city was the site of the 27th Summer Universiade in 2013 and many other international sporting competitions. Kazan seized these large events as opportunities to develop its airport, transportation and hospitality infrastructures.

Kazan officially celebrated its millennium anniversary in 2005, although it remains unclear exactly when the city at the confluence of two rivers, the Volga and the Kazanka, was

founded. There's evidence that by the 11th century there was a fortress there, defending the northeastern borders of Volga Bulgaria, a historic Bulgar state. However, a Mongol invasion headed by Batu Khan almost annihilated Volga Bulgaria in 1236.

The etymology of the city's name has perplexed researchers. Though obviously connected with the name of the river Kazanka, it has also been linked to the word *kazan*, which means cauldron. There's a popular theory that the city is built on a hill that resembles a cauldron.

Despite the constant insurgencies, Volga Bulgaria was incorporated into the Golden Horde Mongol Khanate. After its capital, Bulgar, was all but destroyed in a Mongol raid in 1361, Kazan rose to prominence as the new regional center. Enjoying proximity to several trade routes, it quickly expanded into a proper city. When the Golden Horde collapsed, the independent Kazan Khanate was established in 1438.

The Kazan Khanate had an uneasy relationship with its western neighbor, Muscovy. Several wars were fought before Ivan the Terrible's campaign in the early 1550s put an end to the Kazan Khanate. The island city of Sviyazhsk was founded by Ivan the Terrible in 1551 as the

Kazan prides itself on its rich history and cultural diversity

One of the architects was Postnik Yakovlev, the man behind Saint Basil's Cathedral on Moscow's Red Square – a church that, ironically, celebrates the Muscovite victory over Kazan.

There's a legend about the Suyumbike Tower – the most prominent structure within Kazan's Kremlin. Suyumbike was reportedly the niece of Kazan's khan, and Ivan the Terrible wanted to marry her. Suyumbike agreed, but only if the tsar would build the highest tower in the city. When it was completed, she climbed the stairs and threw herself off the top. Many historians dispute this, instead claiming that the tower was built in the 17th century.

The Muscovite occupiers destroyed all the mosques in the city and forced conversion to Christianity. However, this changed in the latter half of the 18th century, when Catherine the Great once again allowed mosques to be built. In 1804 Alexander I founded Kazan University, the third institution of higher education in Russia. Notable students include Leo Tolstoy and Vladimir Lenin.

After the October Revolution, the Tatars got the chance to have their own political entity once again. The Tatar Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic was established in 1920. Although officially part of Soviet Russia, Tatarstan enjoyed certain freedoms, including official status for the Tatar language and the preservation of its unique local culture. In the 1940s, several large oil wells were discovered in Tatarstan and oil production remains the major source of income for the region.

In 1992, after the collapse of the USSR, the region was renamed the Republic of Tatarstan and is one of the few Russian regions that elects its own president. In 2009 Kazan was allowed to officially brand itself as the "third capital" of Russia.

Thanks to its oil deposits, Tatarstan is one of the richest and most economically developed Russian regions. Tatarstan has recently ventured into the realm of innovative economy by building Innopolis, dubbed "a Russian Silicon valley," in the suburbs of Kazan.

launching ground for his troops against Kazan.

In 1552 Ivan's troops successfully sieged Kazan. Much of the city was destroyed by the Russian troops, and surviving Tatars were forced to settle beyond the city walls on the shores of Lake Kaban, in what later became known as the Old Tatar Quarter (Staro-Tatarskaya Sloboda).

Some of Kazan's most famous landmarks were built after the city was taken by Ivan the Terrible, including the new Kremlin walls and the Annunciation Cathedral inside the fortress.



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Russia's Football Legacy



By **Andrei Muchnik**

A new exhibition at VDNKh showcases Russia's rich football history

To coincide with the World Cup, a special exhibition on the history of Russian football is now on display at the Karelia Pavilion. The museum is one of many in the newly renovated VDNKh, a sprawling Soviet-era park originally built to showcase the U.S.S.R.'s economic achievements. The exhibition takes its title from a popular Russian football saying, "Because the ball is round and the pitch is flat," and it chronicles Russian football's development from 1897 to the present.

The exhibition mirrors the structure of a football match – divided into first-half, half-time and second-half sections. Its main objective is to convey "the image of Russian football through

historical chronicles, photos, videos and objects from mostly private collections," Kristina Romanova, the exhibition's co-curator, told The Moscow Times. "We tried to connect all the chapters of Russia's great history in football – covering Imperial Russia, the golden age of Soviet football and the present."

The first half gives viewers a glimpse into football during the Russian imperial and Soviet eras, from 1897 to 1992. It includes rare photographs from the CSKA Museum of Sports Glory, photos by the legendary Soviet documentary photographer Yevgeny Khaldei from Moscow's Multimedia Art Museum and a floor-to-ceiling documentary collage by Igor Gurovich, using archive images from the TASS news agency.

The story goes that it was the British who brought football to Russia and that both Englishmen and Russians played on the country's first teams. The first match in Russia is believed to have been played in 1897 in St. Petersburg, when the Vasileostrovsky Sports Club faced off against the Sports Lovers Club. During the same period, the "Morozov Team" began playing in Moscow, taking its name from the Savva Morozov factory, where most of the players worked. The rivalry between Moscow and St. Petersburg, always fierce, inevitably made its way onto the football pitch. The exhibition opens with posters advertising the first Petrograd vs. Moscow matches.

There are many videos in the exhibition, including documentary footage fragments, as well as feature films and even cartoons from the famous Soyuzmultfilm studio. One of the most popular videos is from the popular Soviet film classic "Starik Hottabych" (Old Man Hottabych), in which a genie magically manipulates a goalpost to help his favorite team win.

Other items include template foot-

ball match posters (to which dates and venues were added later), quotes and comments from famous television commentators and porcelain and varnished miniatures devoted to football themes, from the All-Russian Decorative Art Museum collection.

The half-time section puts in the spotlight the "dream team" of players from the golden age of Soviet football, though they never actually played together. Life-size sculptures of white plaster immortalize players as Greek gods and present them in a 1+4+3+3 formation. The eleven players were selected by popular vote in a poll organized by the TASS news agency on their website.

A video installation displays documentary footage of professional and amateur teams training, as well as audio recordings made by young football players about their idols.

The second half opens with a timeline of post-Soviet Russia's achievements in football.

"Talking about Russian football today was the most difficult part," Romanova said. "We were not sure what achievements to talk about, what memorabilia to show. So we decided to turn to contemporary photography instead, and talk about football through photographic art rather than reportage."

This section includes photographs by Sergei Novikov of amateur players in the regions hosting the World Cup. "Without Pain and Fear" by Alexander Anufriev is a series of close-ups of football-fan tattoos.

"We briefed Anufriev on what we needed and he then looked for specific people. It turned out to be a great story about Russian football fandom," Romanova said.

Anna Shmitko has a showcase of her photographs of children's football, including children with disabilities. Margo Ovcharenko's project "Rebellion" is about women's football, which reflects the status of women in contemporary Russian society.

"The Football of the Outcasts" is a short graphic novel by illustrator Alexei Iorsh, who is known for his political



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РЕКЛАМА



A trophy on display at the Karelia Pavilion

comic strips. It tells the story of the Russian Federation football team winning the Homeless World Cup in Cape Town, South Africa in 2006.

The Museum of Soviet Arcade Machines has provided foosball tabletop games for visitors, and the lobby also contains computers and game consoles. Moscow street artist Roma Peeks has decorated the space with colorful graffiti.

The exhibition is in Russian, but each section is introduced by a brief description in English. Its organizers are also planning an English-language map for World Cup guests so that the exhibition's visitors can better orient themselves.

Because the Ball Is Round and the Pitch Is Flat
VDNKh, Pavilion 67
119 Prospekt Mira
Metro VDNKh
vdnh.ru/en

Music Festival Bol

June 11

Bol (Pain) is as alternative as musical festivals get in Moscow. This year it will take place in and around the ZIL Cultural Center, a constructivist masterpiece designed by the Vesnin brothers in the 1930s. June 11 is the second day of the festival and will feature a line-up of international and Russian bands. The imports include British post-punk group Shame, the American post-hardcore Slaves and HMLTD (Happy Meal Ltd), a British post-punk and art-rock band that NME last year dubbed "the UK's most thrilling new band." The Russian headliner is Husky, a rapper who released one of the country's most critically acclaimed albums of 2017. St. Petersburg synth-pop duo Electroforez will also perform, as will Motorama, an English-language post-punk band from Rostov-on-Don with a huge following in Europe, and RSAC (Red Samara Automobile Club), an electro-pop group with parental-advisory level lyrics.

ZIL Cultural Center

4 Ulitsa Vostochnaya, Bldg. 1. Metro Avtozavodskaya. bolfest.com



BOL PRESS SERVICE

JOE SHLABOTNIK / FLICKR



Moscow Lifehack: What's the Etiquette for Tipping in Russia?

Tipping in a foreign country can be confusing and awkward – even if you're fairly certain that you know the rules of the game.

To be clear: Yes, in Russia there is a tipping culture. And yes, if you round up your bill after receiving a service of some kind and leave without the change, you won't be seen as offering a bribe.

In restaurants, a gratuity is rarely added automatically to the bill – it is, after all, a point of personal preference. Note that you are usually unable to add the tip manually when you pay by card, so bring cash. A standard tip at a restaurant is between 10 to 15 percent, while for coffee and cake or other small amounts, feel free to simply round up the check.

For taxis, due to the many apps that connect directly to a bank account or PayPal, the tipping culture has diminished somewhat. But if you book a cab, are paying in cash and feel like you've received good service, a 10 percent tip will be appreciated. Also note that cab drivers rarely want your change. They'll either round the amount down or up to the nearest 50 or 100 rubles. Other services like haircuts, manicures, massages and concierge should also receive a tip.

And last but not least – while tipping may seem like an obligation masquerading as a choice, you shouldn't tip if you don't think it's been earned. But at the same time, good service should also be rewarded.

Exhibition New Japan

Through June 21

Immerse yourself in contemporary Japanese art at this Solyanka VPA gallery exhibition. Audiovisual installations, videos and sculptures contemplate "the multivariate nature of events and their interpretations," in the words of the exhibition's co-curator, Margarita Osepyan. Check out the moving polyethylene cylinders by Yasuaki Onishi or the trancelike "Cinema Concrete" videos by Takashi Makino.

Solyanka VPA

1/2 Ulitsa Solyanka. Metro Kitai-Gorod.

solyanka.org



ELECTROTHEATER

Theater Psychosis

June 12

This play at the Stanislavsky Electrotheater is based on British playwright Sarah Kane's "4.48 Psychosis." Director Alexander Zeldovich describes this production as a "dance macabre, a dance of death, a ritual of a grotesque." The performance is in Russian, with English subtitles.

Stanislavsky Electrotheater

23 Tverskaya Ulitsa. Metro Tverskaya, Pushkinskaya. electrotheatre.com

Music Festival Bosco Fresh Fest

June 11

Bosco Fresh Fest is a regular Moscow festival that changes venue every year. This year, the festival is hosted in the futuristic park at the Skolkovo School of Management. June 11 is the second day of Bosco Fresh Fest, featuring main headliner Orbital, an electronic music duo from Britain. Veterans of the rave music scene, Orbital reunited in 2017 to tour and work on new material. The festival's Russian line-up includes SBPCh, a popular indie band from St. Petersburg and Luna, one of the best-known ukropop (Ukrainian pop) stars in Russia.

100 Novaya Ulitsa, Skolkovo. Metro Kuntsevskaya. boscofreshfest18.com



SERGEI KISELYOV / MOSKVA NEWS AGENCY

Exhibition Rodchenko and Stepanova. Football

Through July 15

This small exhibition includes paintings, graphic artworks and photographs related to football and sports by the great Soviet avant-garde constructivist artists Alexander Rodchenko and Varvara Stepanova. Both were advocates of the cult of athleticism, with sport motives recurring in their works from the late 1920s until the early 1940s (with Stepanova supplying sketches for sports uniforms).

Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts

12 Volkhonka Ulitsa. Metro Kropotkinskaya.

pushkinmuseum.art

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