

Moscow Москва

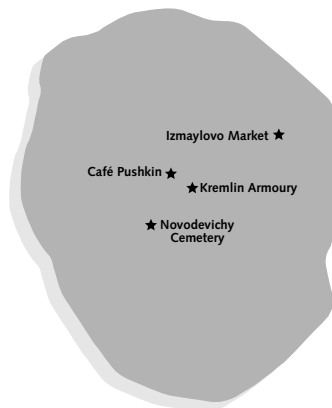
Sunlight glinting off gold-domed churches. Scantly clad women emerging from sleek cars. Uniformed soldiers marching across vast Red Square. This is Moscow – the political, economic and cultural capital that so defines this massive nation. Russia’s medieval roots are here: the Kremlin still shows off the splendour of Muscovy’s grand princes; St Basil’s Cathedral still recounts the defeat of the Tatars. The city also recalls Russia’s more recent history, fresh in our memories. On Red Square, the founder of the Soviet state lies embalmed. Just kilometres away, his heir rallied before the White House – leading to the demise of the same state.

Moscow has always been known for the diversity of its population and the richness of its culture. Today, more than ever, visitors and residents can enjoy events ranging from the classic to the progressive. Whether a Tchaikovsky opera or a Chekhov drama, classical performing arts in Moscow are among the best – and cheapest – in the world. The Tretyakov Gallery and Pushkin Fine Arts Museum house internationally famous collections of Russian and impressionist art. Of course, New Russia comes with new forms of art and entertainment. This bohemian side of Moscow – be it an underground club, or an avant-garde exhibit at the Museum of Modern Art – provides a glimpse of Russia’s future. Sometimes intellectual and inspiring, sometimes debauched and depraved, it is *always* eye-opening.

Standout seasons to visit Russia are late spring (May or June) and early autumn (September or October), when the city’s parks are filled with flowering trees or colourful leaves. The city is spruced for the May holidays and City Day, both festive times in the capital.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Being awestruck by the endless array of jewels and weapons in the **Kremlin Armoury** (p146)
- Marvelling at the artistry of the massive **Moscow metro** (p191)
- Sipping a cappuccino on the rooftop terrace at **Café Pushkin** (p176)
- Bargaining for trash and treasure at the **Izmaylovo Market** (p185)
- Paying your respects to Russia’s cultural greats at **Novodevichy Cemetery** (p160)



■ POPULATION: 10.13 MILLION

■ AREA CODE: ☎ 495

HISTORY

Today the red brick towers and sturdy stone walls of the Kremlin occupy the founding site of Moscow. Perched atop Borovitsky Hill, the location overlooks a strategic bend in the Moscow River, at the intersection of a network of waterways feeding the Upper Volga and Oka Rivers.

Early Settlement

Around the 10th century, eastern Slav tribes began to migrate to the region. For a brief time, these outlying Slavic communities enjoyed an autonomous existence far from the political and religious overlords of medieval Kyivan Rus. Present-day Moscow emerged as a trading post near the confluence of the Moscow and Yauza Rivers.

Political power gradually shifted eastward. Under Vladimir Monomakh, the Vladimir-Suzdal principality became a formidable rival within the medieval Russian realm. When Vladimir ascended to the throne of the grand prince, he appointed his youngest son, Yuri Dolgoruky, to look after the region.

Legend has it that Prince Yuri stopped at Moscow on his way back to Vladimir from Kyiv (Kiev). Believing that Moscow’s prince had not paid him sufficient homage, Yuri put the impudent boyar (high-ranking noble) to death and placed Moscow under his direct rule. Moscow is first mentioned in the historic chronicles in 1147, when Yuri invited his allies to a banquet: ‘Come to me, brother, please come to Moscow.’

Moscow’s strategic importance prompted Yuri to construct a moat-ringed wooden palisade on the hill top, the first Kremlin. Moscow blossomed into an economic centre, attracting traders and artisans to the merchant rows just outside the Kremlin’s walls. In the early 13th century, Moscow became the capital of a small independent principality, though it remained a contested prize by successive generations of boyar princes.

Medieval Moscow

Beginning in 1236, Eastern Europe was overwhelmed by the ferocious Golden Horde, a Mongol-led army of nomadic tribesmen. The Mongols introduced themselves to Moscow by burning the city to the ground and killing its governor.

The Golden Horde was mainly interested in tribute, and Moscow was conveniently

situated to monitor the river trade and road traffic. Moscow’s Prince Ivan Danilovich readily accepted the assignment as Mongol tax collector, earning himself the moniker of Moneybags (Kalita). As Moscow prospered, its political fortunes rose too. It soon surpassed Vladimir and Suzdal as the regional capital.

Moscow eventually became a nemesis of the Mongols. In the 1380 Battle of Kulikovo, Moscow’s Grand Prince Dmitry won a rare victory over the Golden Horde on the banks of the Don River. He was thereafter immortalised as Dmitry Donskoy. This feat did not break the Mongols, however, who retaliated by setting Moscow ablaze. From this time, Moscow acted as champion of the Russian cause.

Towards the end of the 15th century, Moscow’s ambitions duchy emerged as an expanding autocratic state. Under the long reign of Grand Prince Ivan III (the Great), the eastern Slav independent principalities were forcibly consolidated into a single territorial entity. In 1480 Ivan’s army faced down the Mongols at the Ugra River without a fight. The 200-year Mongol yoke was lifted.

To celebrate his successes, Ivan III imported a team of Italian artisans and masons for a complete renovation of his Moscow fortress. The Kremlin’s famous thick brick walls and imposing watchtowers were constructed at this time. Next to the Kremlin, traders and artisans set up shop in Kitay-Gorod (p151), and a stone wall was erected around these commercial quarters. The city developed in concentric rings outwards from this centre.

As it emerged as a political capital, Moscow also took on the role of religious centre. In the mid-15th century, a separate Russian Orthodox Church was organised, independent of the Greek Church. In the 1450s, when Constantinople fell to the heathen Turks, Moscow claimed the title of ‘Third Rome’, the rightful heir of Christendom. Under Ivan IV (the Terrible), the city earned the nickname of ‘Gold-Domed Moscow’ because of the multitude of monastery fortresses and magnificent churches constructed within.

The once-small village grew into an urban centre. By the early 15th century, the population surpassed 50,000 people.

Contemporary visitors said Moscow was 'awesome', 'brilliant' and 'filthy'. The city was resilient against fire, famine and fighting. In the early 17th century, its population topped 200,000, making it the largest city in the world.

Imperial Moscow

Peter the Great was determined to modernise Russia. He built Moscow's tallest structure, the 90m-high Sukharev Tower, and next to it founded a College of Mathematics and Navigation. Yet Peter always despised Moscow for its scheming boyars and archaic traditions. In 1712 he startled the country by announcing the relocation of the capital to a swampland in the northwest (St Petersburg). The spurned ex-capital fell into decline.

In the 1770s Moscow was devastated by an outbreak of bubonic plague, which claimed more than 50,000 lives. The situation was so desperate that residents went on a riotous looting spree that was put down by the army. Empress Catherine II (the Great) responded to the crisis by ordering a new sanitary code to clean up the foul urban environment.

By the turn of the 19th century, Moscow had recovered from its gloom. The population climbed back over 200,000, and the city retained the ceremonial title of 'first-throned capital', where coronations were held. By this time, the city also hosted Russia's first university, museum and newspaper. Moscow's intellectual and literary scene gave rise to a nationalist-inspired Slavophile movement, which celebrated the cultural features of Russia that were distinctive from the West.

In the early 1800s Tsar Alexander I decided to resume trade with England, in violation of a treaty Russia had made with France. A furious Napoleon Bonaparte set out for Moscow with the largest military force the world had ever seen. The Russian army engaged the advancing French at the Battle of Borodino (p197), 130km from Moscow. More than 100,000 soldiers lay dead at the end of this inconclusive one-day fight. When Napoleon entered the deserted capital, defiant Muscovites had burned down two-thirds of the city rather than see it occupied. French soldiers tried to topple the formidable Kremlin, but its sturdy walls withstood their pummelling.

Moscow was feverishly rebuilt after the war. Monuments were erected to commem-

orate Russia's hard-fought victory, including a Triumphal Arch and the grandiose Cathedral of Christ the Redeemer. In the centre, engineers diverted the Neglinnaya River to an underground canal and created two new urban spaces: the Alexandrovsky Garden (p147) and Teatralnaya ploshchad (p150). Meanwhile, the city's two outer defensive rings were replaced with the tree-lined Boulevard Ring and Garden Ring roads.

By midcentury, industry overtook commerce as the city's economic driving force. With a steady supply of cotton from Central Asia, Moscow became a leader in the textile industry, known as 'Calico Moscow'. By 1900, Moscow claimed over one million inhabitants. The Garden Ring became an informal social boundary line: on the inside were the abodes and amenities of businessmen, intellectuals, civil servants and foreigners; on the outside were the factories and flophouses of the toiling, the loitering and the destitute.

Red Moscow

The tsarist autocracy staggered into the new century. Exhausted by three years engaged in fighting a losing war, the old regime meekly succumbed to a mob of St Petersburg workers in February 1917. A few months later, in October, Lenin's Bolshevik party stepped into the political void and radical socialism came to power. In Moscow the Bolshevik coup provoked a week of street fighting, leaving more than 1000 dead. Fearing a German assault on St Petersburg, Lenin ordered that the capital return to Moscow.

In the early 1930s Josef Stalin launched an industrial revolution. The regime's brutal tactics created a wave of peasant immigration to Moscow. Around the city, makeshift work camps went up to shelter the huddling hordes. Moscow became a centre of military industry, whose engineers and technicians enjoyed a larger slice of the proletarian pie.

Under Stalin a comprehensive urban plan was devised for Moscow. On paper, it appeared as a neatly organised garden city; unfortunately, it was implemented with a sledgehammer. Historic cathedrals and monuments were demolished, including landmarks such as the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour (p157) and Kazan Cathedral (see p149). In their place appeared the marble-bedecked metro and neo-Gothic skyscrapers.

When Hitler launched 'Operation Barbarossa' into Soviet territory in June 1941 Stalin was caught by surprise. By December the Nazis were just outside Moscow, within 30km of the Kremlin – an early winter halted the advance. A monument now marks the spot of their nearest advance, near the entrance road to Sheremetyevo airport. In the Battle of Moscow, war hero General Zhukov staged a brilliant counter-offensive and saved the city from capture.

After Stalin's death in 1953, Nikita Khrushchev – a former mayor of Moscow – tried a different approach to ruling. He introduced wide-ranging reforms and promised to improve living conditions. Huge housing estates grew up round the outskirts of Moscow; many of the hastily constructed low-rise projects were nicknamed *khrushchoby*, after *trushchoby* (slums). Khrushchev's populism and unpredictability made the ruling elite a bit too nervous and he was ousted in 1964.

Next came the long reign of Leonid Brezhnev. From atop Lenin's mausoleum, he presided over the rise of a military superpower during the Cold War. The aerospace, radio-electronics and nuclear weapons ministries operated factories and research laboratories in and around the capital. By 1980 as much as one-third of the city's industrial production and one-quarter of its labour force were connected to the defence industry. As a matter of national security, the KGB secretly constructed a second subway system.

Brezhnev showed a penchant for lavish cement-pouring displays of modern architecture, such as the recently demolished Hotel Rossiya and the Kremlin Palace of Congresses (p139). Residential life continued to move further away from the city centre. Shoddy high-rise apartments went up on the periphery and metro lines were extended outward. By 1980 the city's population surpassed eight million.

Transitional Moscow

Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in March 1985 with a mandate to revitalise the ailing socialist system. He promoted Boris Yeltsin as the new head of Moscow. Yeltsin's populist touch made him an instant success with Muscovites. He embraced the more open political atmosphere, allowing 'informal' groups to organise and express themselves in public. Moscow streets such as ul Arbat

(p155) hosted demonstrations by democrats, nationalists, reds and greens.

On 18 August 1991 the city awoke to find a column of tanks in the street and a self-proclaimed 'Committee for the State of Emergency in the USSR' in charge. They had already detained Gorbachev and issued orders to arrest Yeltsin. Crowds gathered at the White House (p155) and started to build barricades. Yeltsin climbed on a tank to declare the coup illegal. He dared KGB snipers to shoot him, and when they didn't, the coup was over, as was Soviet communism. By the end of the year, Boris Yeltsin had moved into the Kremlin.

The first years of transition were fraught with political conflict. In September 1993 Yeltsin issued a decree to shut down the Russian parliament. Events turned violent, and a National Salvation Front called for popular insurrection. The army intervened on the president's side and blasted the parliament into submission. In all, 145 people were killed and another 700 wounded – the worst such incident of bloodshed in the city since the Bolshevik takeover in 1917.

While the rest of Russia struggled to survive the collapse of communism, Moscow quickly emerged as an enclave of affluence and dynamism. By the mid-1990s Moscow was replete with all the things Russians had expected capitalism to bring, but which had yet to trickle down to the bulk of the population: banks, shops, restaurants, casinos, BMWs, bright lights and nightlife.

The new economy spawned a small group of 'New Russians', who are routinely derided for their garish displays of wealth. Outside this elite, Russia's transition to the market economy has come at enormous social cost. For many dedicated and talented professionals, it is now close to impossible to eke out a living. More sadly, the older generation, whose hard-earned pensions are now worth a pittance, paid the price of transition.

Within the Moscow city government, the election of Yury Luzhkov as mayor in 1992 set the stage for the creation of a big-city boss in the grandest of traditions. Through a web of financial arrangements, ownership deals and real-estate holdings, Luzhkov is as much a CEO as he is mayor. His interests range from the media to manufacturing and from five-star hotels to shopping malls.

Following decades of prudish Soviet socialism, Muscovites revelled in their new-found freedom. Liberation, libation, defiance and indulgence were all on open display. Those reared in a simpler time were no doubt shocked by the immodesty of the transition generation. After a decade, the rhythms of the city seemed to have steadied. Decadence is still for sale, but it has become more corporate. Nonetheless, Moscow remains the most freewheeling city in Russia.

ORIENTATION

Picture Moscow as being encircled by five ring roads that spread out from the centre: **Inner Ring Road** About 500m north of the Kremlin; formed by the streets Mokhovaya ul, Okhotny ryad, Teatralny proezd, Novaya pl and Staraya pl. Three important squares – Manezhnaya pl, Teatralnaya pl and Lubyanskaya pl – punctuate this ring. **Boulevard Ring** (Bulvarnoe Koltso) About 1km from the Kremlin. It's mostly dual carriageway, with a park strip down the middle. Each section has a different name, always ending in 'bulvar'. The Boulevard Ring ends as

it approaches the Moscow River in the southwest and southeast.

Garden Ring (Sadovoe Koltso) About 2km out. Most of this ring's northern sections are called Sadovaya-something (Garden-something) ulitsa; several of its southern sections are called ulitsa-something-val, recalling its origins as a val (rampart). And the difference between the Garden and Boulevard Rings? The Garden Ring is the one without any gardens.

Third Ring (Tretoe Koltso) A new, eight-lane, high-speed motorway, recently built to absorb some of the traffic from Moscow streets. Located about 4.5km from the Kremlin, it provides motorists with a speedy route across (or rather, around) town.

Outer Ring Road (Moskovskaya Koltsovaya Avtomobilnaya Doroga; MKAD) Some 15km to 20km from the Kremlin. It forms the city limits.

Radial roads spoke out across the rings, and the Moscow River meanders across everything from northwest to southeast. The Kremlin, a north-pointing triangle with 750m sides, is at Moscow's heart in every way. Red Square lies along its eastern side while the Moscow River flows to the south.

The only elevation worth the name in the whole flat expanse is the Sparrow Hills, 6km southwest of the Kremlin, topped by the Moscow University skyscraper. This is one of seven Stalinist skyscrapers known as the 'Seven Sisters' – Moscow's most prominent buildings.

Maps

An excellent, up-to-date map in English is the *Moscow Today City Map*, published in 2004 by **Atlas Print Co** (☎ 177 8221; www.atlas-print.ru).

INFORMATION

Bookshops

Atlas (Map pp128-9; ☎ 928 6109; Kuznetsky most 9; ☎ 9am-8pm Mon-Fri, 10am-6pm Sat, 11am-5pm Sun; ☎ Kuznetsky Most) A map shop with city and regional maps covering the whole country.

Biblio-Globus (Map pp128-9; ☎ 928 3567; Myasnitskaya ul 6; ☎ 9am-9pm Mon-Fri, 10am-9pm Sat, 10am-8pm Sun; ☎ Lubyanka) A huge shop with lots of reference and souvenir books on language, art and history, and a good selection of maps and travel guides.

Bookberry (Map pp128-9; ☎ 291 8303; Nikitsky bul 17; ☎ 10am-11pm; ☎ Lubyanskaya) A slick new chain that offers the city's best selection of guidebooks and maps.

House of Foreign Books (Map pp128-9; ☎ 928 2021; Kuznetsky most 18/7; ☎ 10am-8pm Mon-Sat, 11am-

THE CAPITAL MEETS THE CAUCASUS

The 1990s marked the revival of a war that is more than 200 years old. In the late 18th century Catherine the Great expanded the Russian empire southward into the Caucasus. The Chechens, a fiercely independent, Muslim mountain tribe, refused to recognise Russian rule.

In the 19th century Russia sought to consolidate its claim on the Caucasus, in order to maintain access to southern sea routes and to thwart British expansion into the region. The tsar ordered General Yermelov, a veteran of the Napoleonic Wars, to pacify the mountain peoples. An intense 30-year conflict ensued between Russians and Chechens, with displays of wanton savagery by both sides. The leader of the Chechen resistance, Imam Shamil, became a larger-than-life folk hero and the inspiration for today's separatist fighters.

Chechnya was tenuously incorporated into the empire through deals that Russia struck with more-cooperative Chechen clans, but separatist sentiments remained strong. Under Soviet rule, a Chechen independence revolt broke out during the Nazi invasion, even while thousands of Chechens fought the Germans. Nonetheless, towards the end of WWII Josef Stalin wreaked his revenge, terrorising villages and deporting nearly half a million Chechens to remote areas of Central Asia and Siberia. In 1969 the statue of General Yermelov in Grozny was dynamited.

National separatists declared Chechnya independent in the early 1990s. President Boris Yeltsin tried unsuccessfully to cajole, buy off and threaten Chechnya into submission. In 1994 he unleashed a military assault on the renegade republic. By 1996 fighting had subsided as Russian troops were contained to a few pockets of influence, while rebel gangs ruled the mountainous countryside in a condition of de facto independence.

In September 1999 a series of mysterious explosions in Moscow left more than 200 people dead. It was widely believed, although unproven, that Chechen terrorists were responsible for the bombings. Further provoked by the incursion of Chechen rebels into neighbouring Dagestan, the Russian military recommenced hostilities with a vengeance. For more on the continuing war in the Caucasus, see p492.

Though the Caucasus seemed far off, the repercussions of war continued to reach Moscow. In 2002 Chechen rebels wired with explosives seized a popular Moscow theatre, demanding independence. Nearly 800 theatre employees and patrons were held hostage for three days. Russian troops responded by flooding the theatre with immobilising toxic gas, resulting in 120 deaths and hundreds of illnesses.

The incident refuelled Russia's relentless and ruthless campaign to force capitulation. Chechen terrorists have responded in kind, with smaller-scale insurgencies taking place regularly.

Muscovites are all too aware of this ongoing conflict. The strike closest to home occurred in February 2004, when a bomb exploded in a metro carriage travelling between Avtozavodskaya and Paveletskaya, killing 39 and injuring more than 100. Other incidents have served as unnerving reminders, including a series of attacks that coincided with the horrific school siege in Beslan (see p491). In late August 2004 two planes that took off from Moscow exploded almost simultaneously in midair, killing all 90 passengers. A few days later, a suicide bomber failed to enter Rizhskaya metro, but still managed to kill 10 and injure 50 people on the street. Meanwhile, Chechen residents of the capital city have endured increased harassment, both officially and unofficially. And prospects for a negotiated peace appear all but nonexistent.

MOSCOW IN...

Two Days

Spend one day seeing what makes Moscow famous: **St Basil's Cathedral** (p149), **Lenin's Mausoleum** (p148) and the **Kremlin** (p138). Allow a few hours in the afternoon to gawk at the gold and gems in the **Armoury** (p146). Art lovers should spend their second day at the **Pushkin** (p157) or **Tretyakov** (p160) galleries, both world class museums. Otherwise, visit **Novodevichy Convent** (p158), where so many scenes from Russian history played out.

Four Days

Take in all of the activities suggested in the two-day itinerary. Then, plan a day trip to **Arkhangelskoe** (p196) to admire the pre-revolutionary riches and hear a concert of classical music.

7pm Sun; ☎ Kuznetsky Most) A small bookshop that specialises in foreign titles, including a decent selection of guidebooks.

Emergency

Ambulance ☎ 03, in Russian

English language emergency assistance ☎ 766 0601, 245 4387

Fire ☎ 01

Police ☎ 02

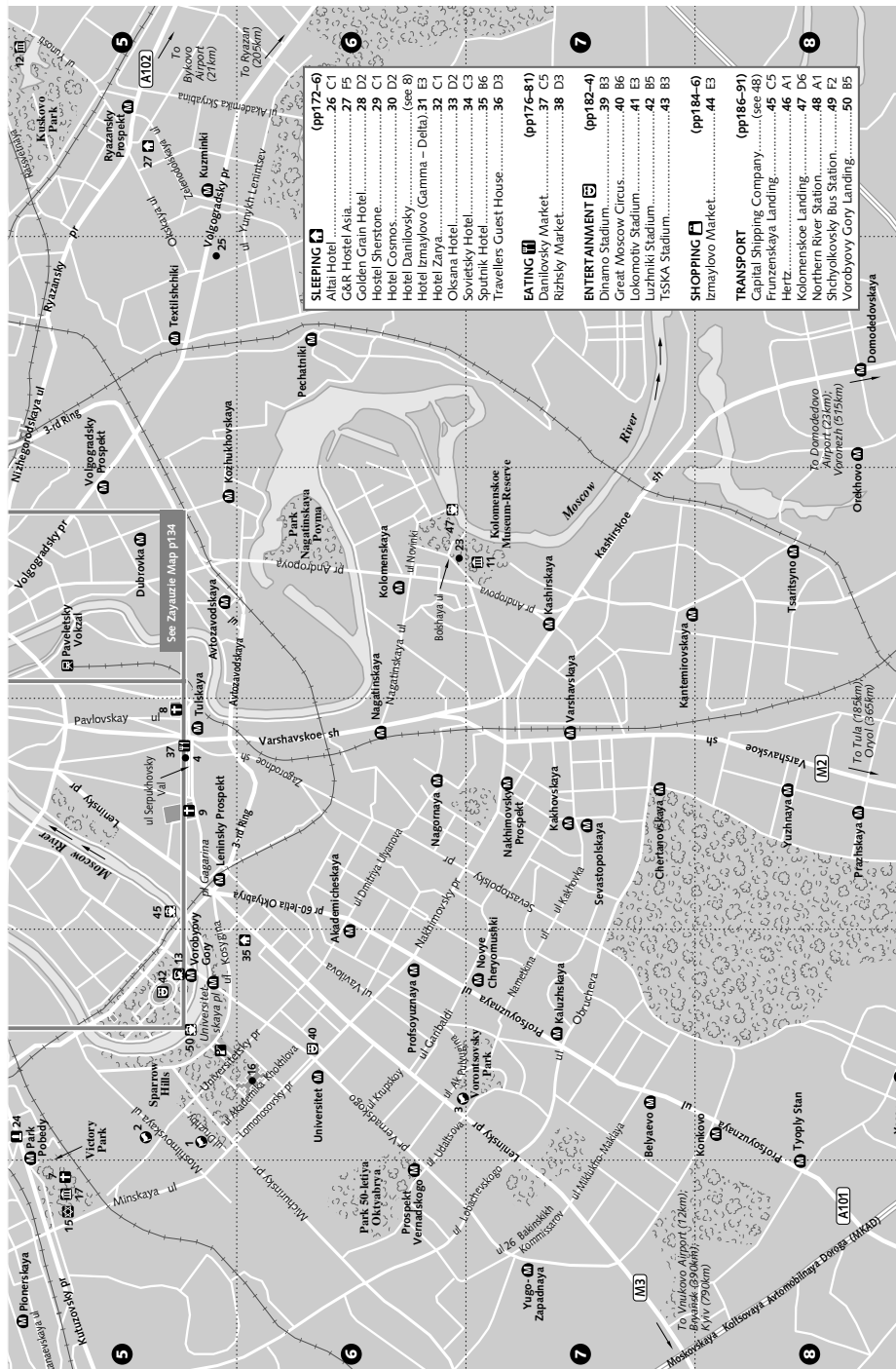
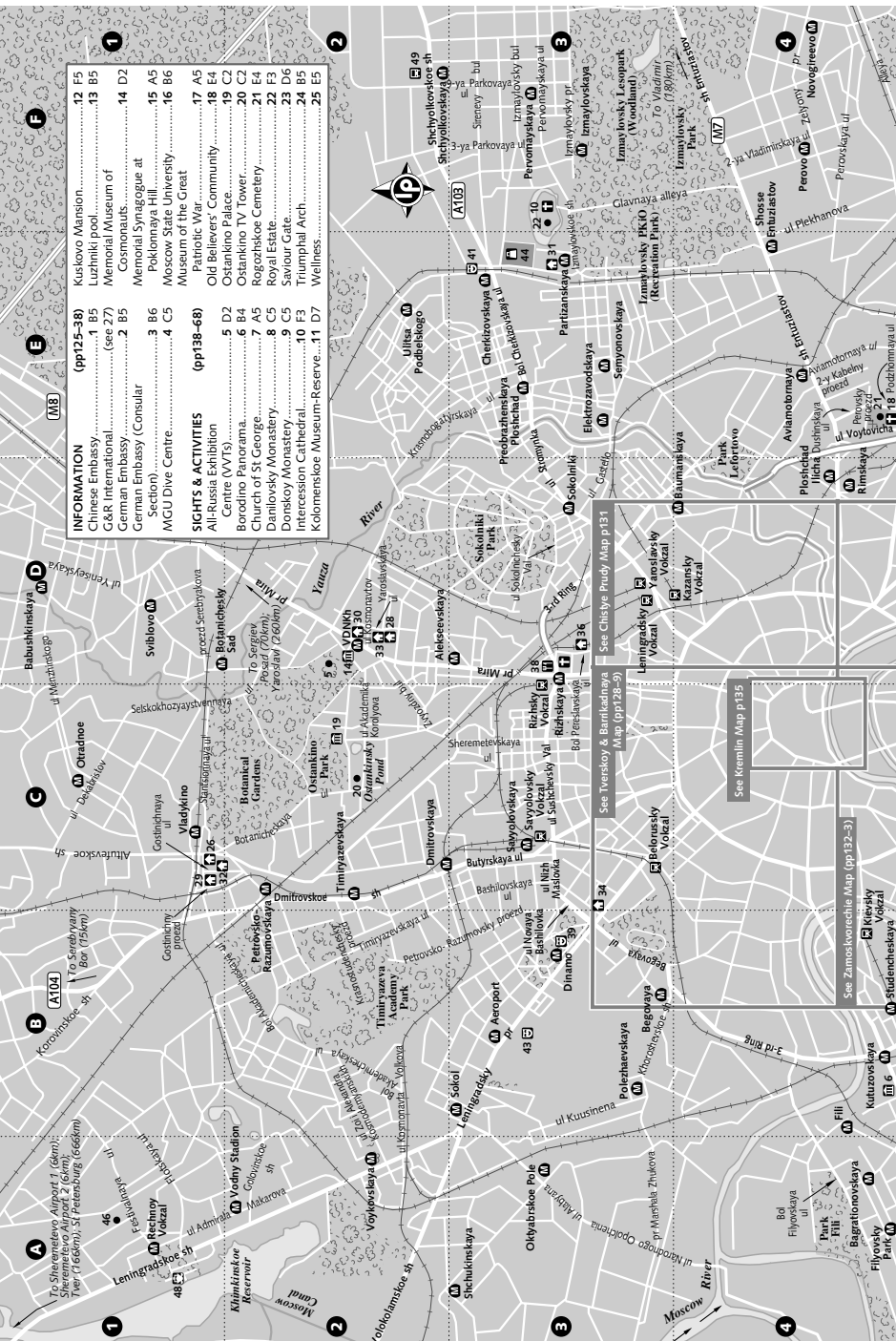
Internet Access

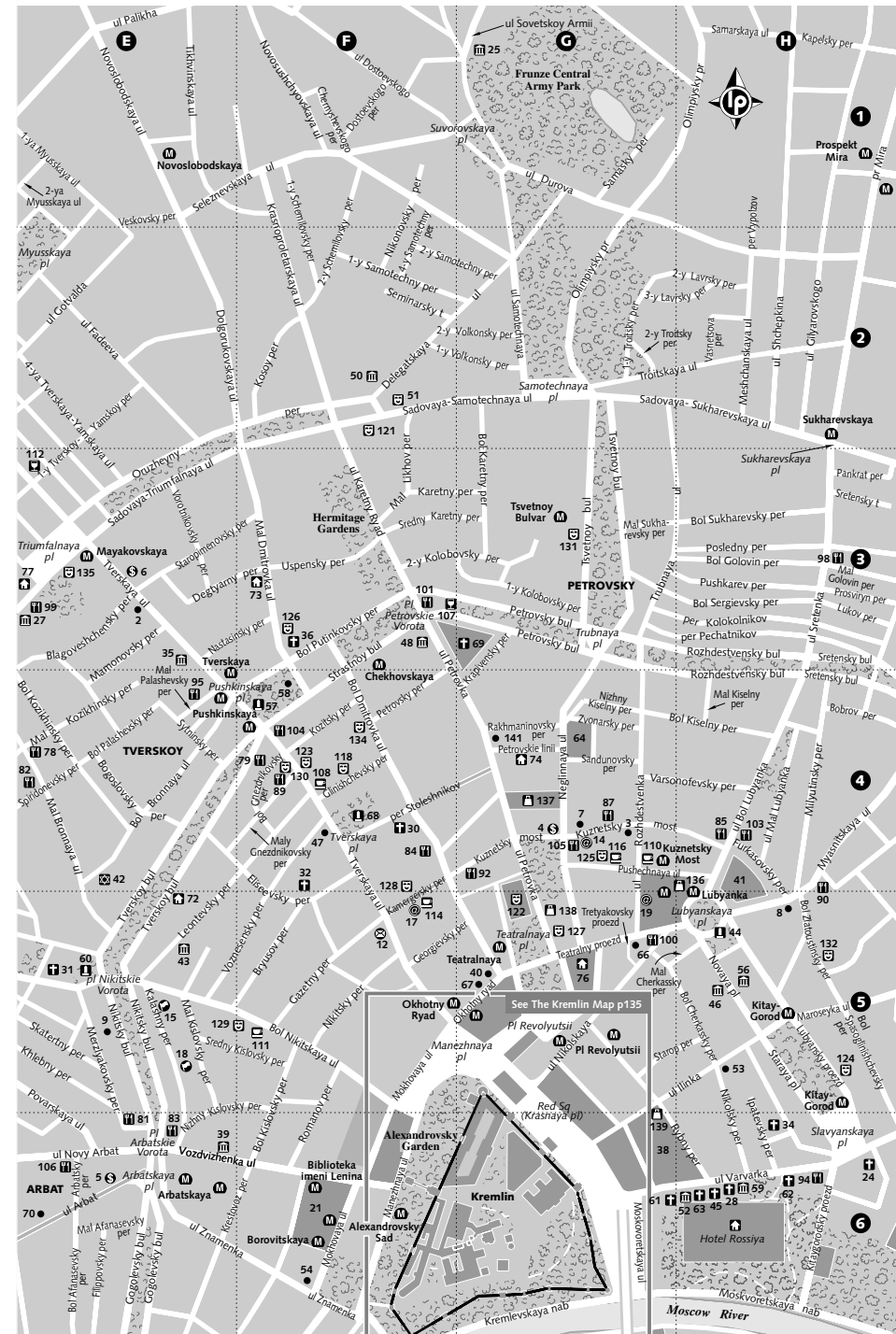
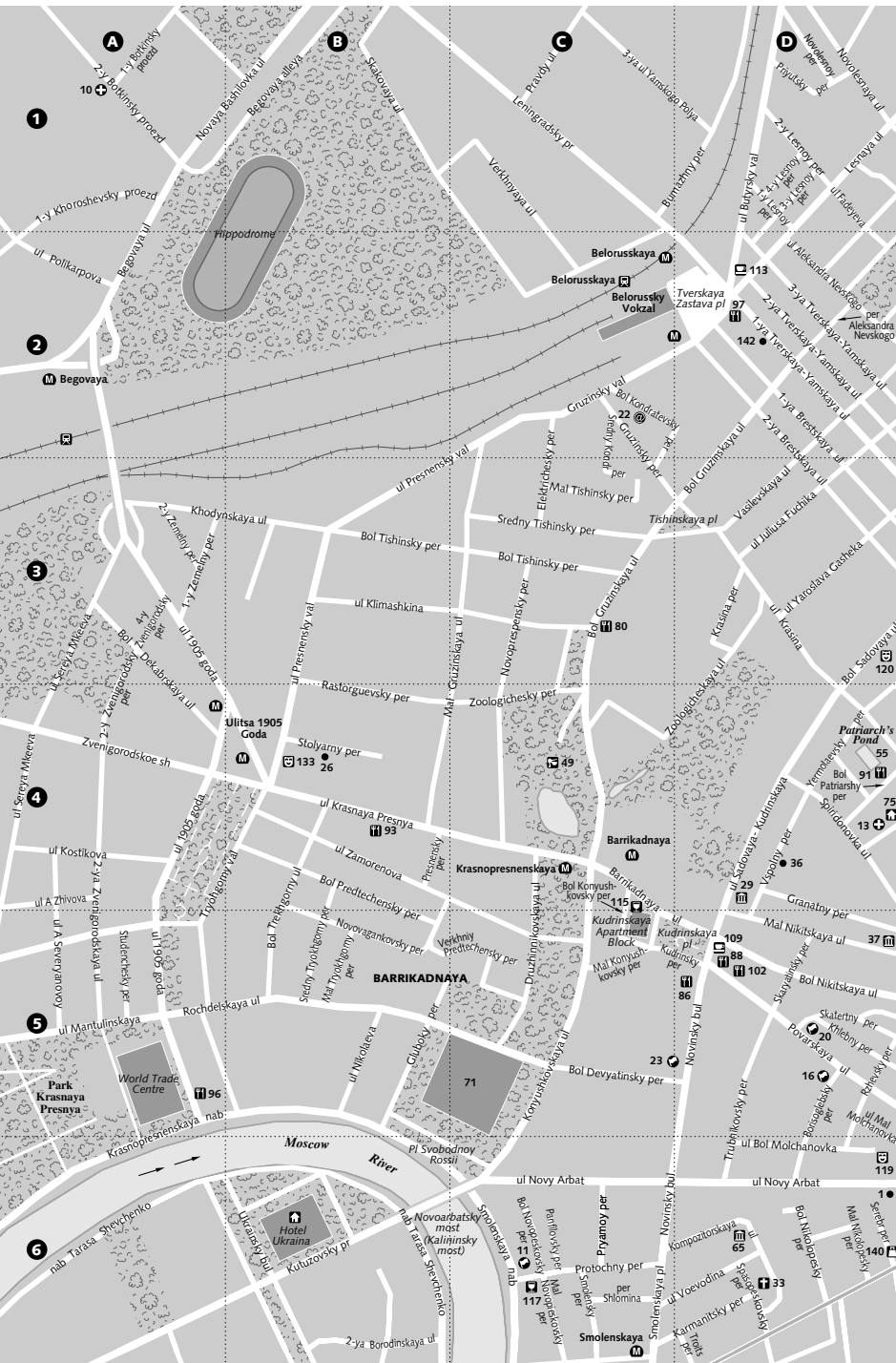
Besides the plethora of Internet cafés, wireless access is also becoming more common around Moscow. Take advantage of free wireless access at several upscale hotels, as well as NetLand or Time Online (see p136). A more-complete listing of clubs and cafés with wireless access is available in Russian at <http://wifi.yandex.ru>.

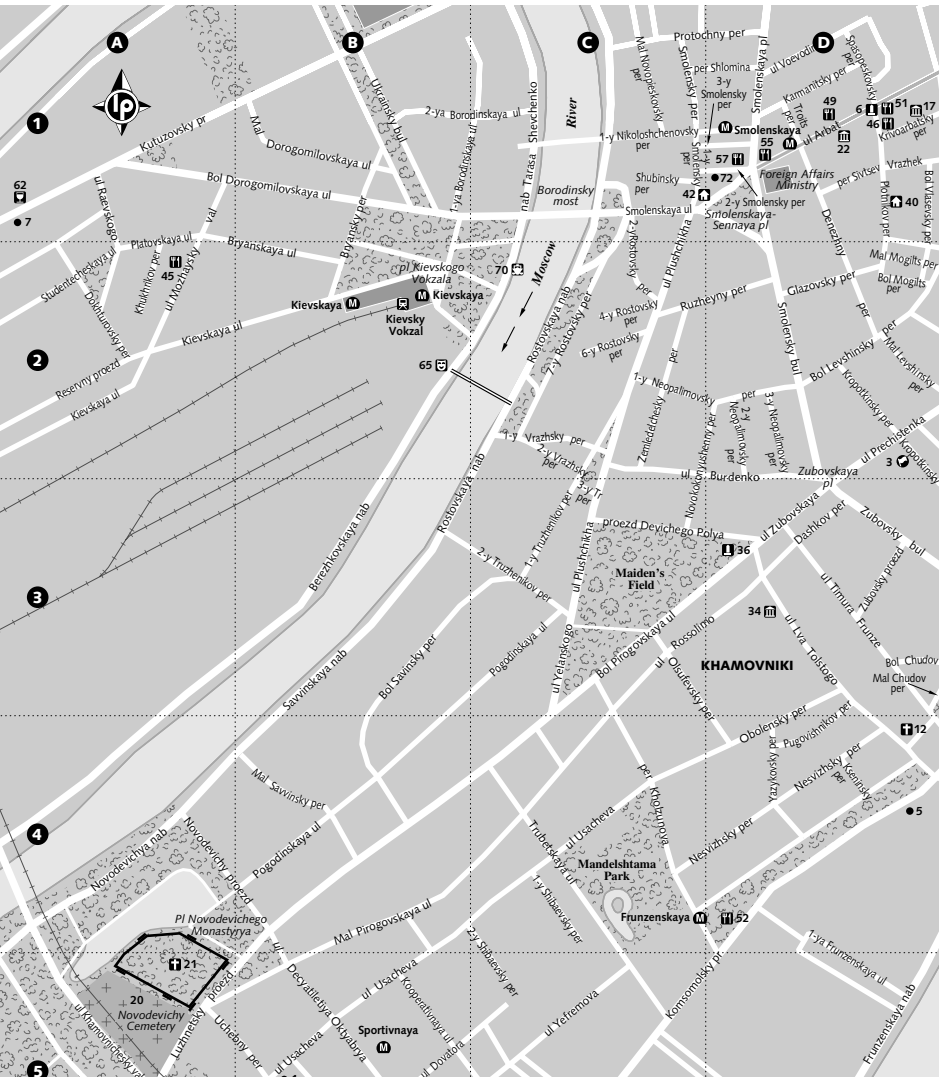
Internet Club (Map pp128-9; ☎ 292 5670; Kuznetsky most 12; per hr R60; ☎ 9am-8pm Mon-Fri, 10am-midnight Sat & Sun; ☎ Kuznetsky Most) Small, simple and very central.

NetCity Paveletskaya pl (Map p134; ☎ 969 2125; Paveletskaya pl 2/1; per hr R60; ☎ 9.30am-midnight; ☎ Paveletskaya); Kamergersky per (Map pp128-9; ☎ 292 0111; Kamergersky per 6; per hr R60; ☎ 10am-11pm; ☎ Teatralnaya) Work stations offer form more than function, but they are sufficient for surfing the Net.

(Continued on page 136)







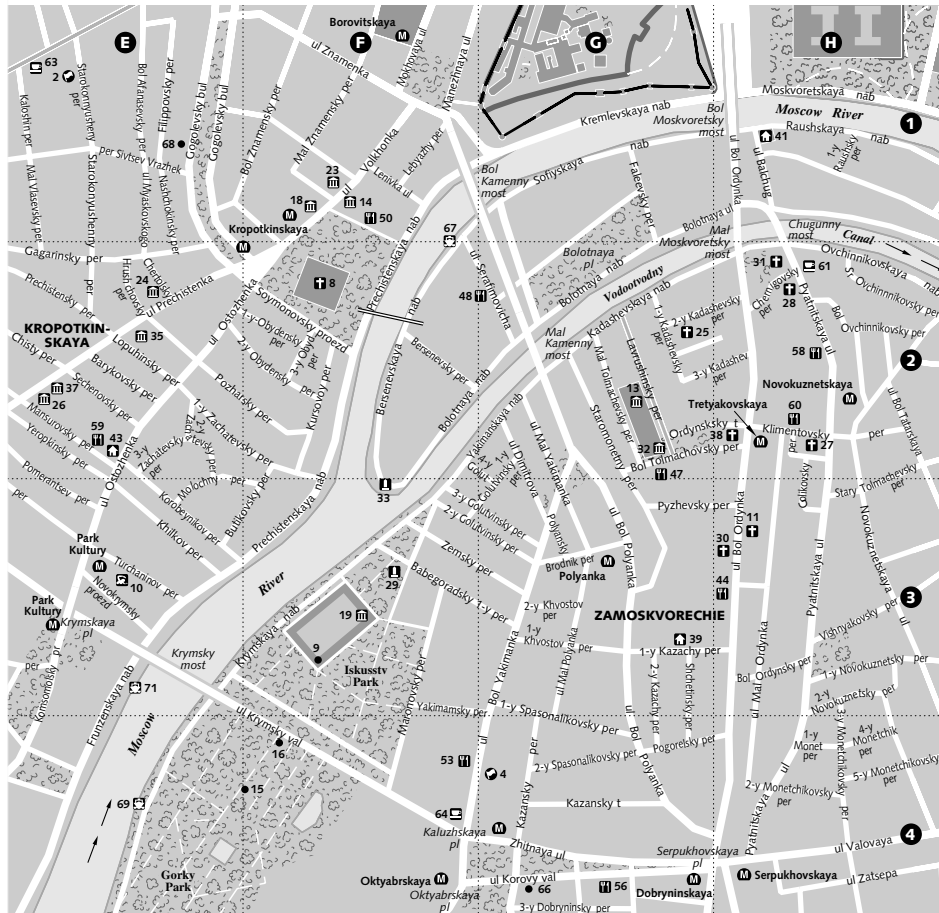
INFORMATION (pp125-38)

American Express	1	B5
Американ Экспресс	1	B5
Canadian Embassy	2	E1
Посольство Канады	2	E1
Committee for Culture	(see 2)	
Комитет по культуре	(see 2)	
Finnish Embassy	3	D2
Посольство Финляндии	3	D2
French Embassy	4	G4
Агенство Инфинити Тревел	4	G4
Infinity Travel Туристическое	4	G4
Агенство Инфинити Тревел	5	D4
KLM Голландские Королевские	(see 1)	
Авиалинии	(see 1)	

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES (pp138-68)

Bulat Okudzhava statue	6	D1
Памятник Булату Окуджаве	6	D1
Cat Theatre Театр Куклачова	7	A1
Сат Театр Театр Куклачова	7	A1
Cathedral of Christ the Saviour	8	F2
Храм Христа Спасителя	8	F2
Chaika Swimming Pool	9	F3
Чайка бассейн	9	F3
Church of St Nicholas in Pyzhi	10	E3
Церковь Николая в Пыжах	11	H3
Church of St Nicholas of the Weavers	12	D4
Церковь Николая в Хамовниках	12	D4
Engineer's Building	13	G2
Инженерный корпус	13	G2
Glazunov Gallery	14	F1
Галерея Глазунова	14	F1

Gorky Park Amusement Park	15	F4
Парк Культуры им Горького	15	F4
Gorky Park Main Entrance Главный вход в Парк Горького	16	F4
Melinov House	17	D1
Дом Мельникова	17	D1
Museum of Private Collections	18	F1
Музей Личных Коллекций	18	F1
New Tretyakov Gallery Новая	19	F3
Третьяковская Галерея Новая	19	F3
Novodevichy Cemetery	20	A5
Новодевичьи кладбище	20	A5
Novodevichy Convent	21	A5
Новодевичий монастырь	21	A5
Pushkin Arbat House-Museum	22	D1
Музей-квартира Пушкина на Арбате	22	D1
Pushkin Fine Arts Museum	23	F1
Музей изобразительных искусств имени Пушкина	23	F1



SLEEPING (pp172-6)

Pushkin Literary Museum	24	E2
Литературный музей АС Пушкина	24	E2
Resurrection Church in Kadashi	25	G2
Церковь Воскресения в Кадашах	25	G2
Russian Academy of Art	26	E2
Российская Академия Художеств	26	E2
St Clement's Church Церковь Кlementa Папы Римского	27	H2
Церковь Иоанна Предтечи	28	H2
Sculpture Park Парк скульптур	29	F3
SS Martha and Mary Convent	30	H3
Марфо-Мариинская Обитель	30	H3
SS Mikhail and Fyodor Church	31	H2
Церковь Михаила и Федора	31	H2
State Tretyakov Gallery	32	G2
Государственная Третьяковская Галерея	32	G2
Statue of Peter the Great	33	F3
Памятник Петру Великому	33	F3
Tolstoy Estate-Museum	34	D3
Музей-усадьба Толстого	34	D3
Tolstoy Museum	35	E2
Музей ИИТ Толстого	35	E2
Tolstoy statue	36	D3
Tsereteli Gallery	37	E2
Галерея Церетели	37	E2
Virgin of Consolation of All Sorrows Church	38	H2
Церковь Иконы всех Скорбящих Радость	38	H2

DRINKING (pp181-2)

Alrosa on Kazachy	39	G3
Алроса на Казачих	39	G3
Hotel Baltchug Kempinski	40	D1
Гостиница Балчуг Кемпински	40	D1
Hotel Belgrad Gostinitsa Belgrad	41	H1
Гостиница Белград	41	H1
Hotel Titlis Gostinitsa Tiflis	42	C1
Гостиница Тифлис	42	C1

EATING (pp176-8)

Artist's Gallery	(see 37)	
Галерея Художника	(see 37)	
Correa's	44	H3
Dorogomilovskiy Market	45	A2
Дорогомилковский рынок	45	A2
Eastern Quarter	46	D1
Восточный Квартал	46	D1
Garden Art Cafe Арт Кафе Сад	47	G2
Галерея Арт Кафе Сад	47	G2
Gastron Seventh Continent	48	G2
Гастроном седьмой Континент	48	G2
Hard Rock Cafe	49	D1
Ил Патно	50	F1
Moо Moo Му-Му	51	D1
Моо Моо Му-Му	51	D1
Pancho Villa Панчо Вилла	52	D4
Музей ИИТ Толстого	53	F4
Ramstore	54	B5
Smolensky Gastronom	55	D1
Смоленский гастроном	55	D1
Starlite Diner Старлайт дайнер	56	G4
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Taras Bulba Тарас Бульба	58	H2

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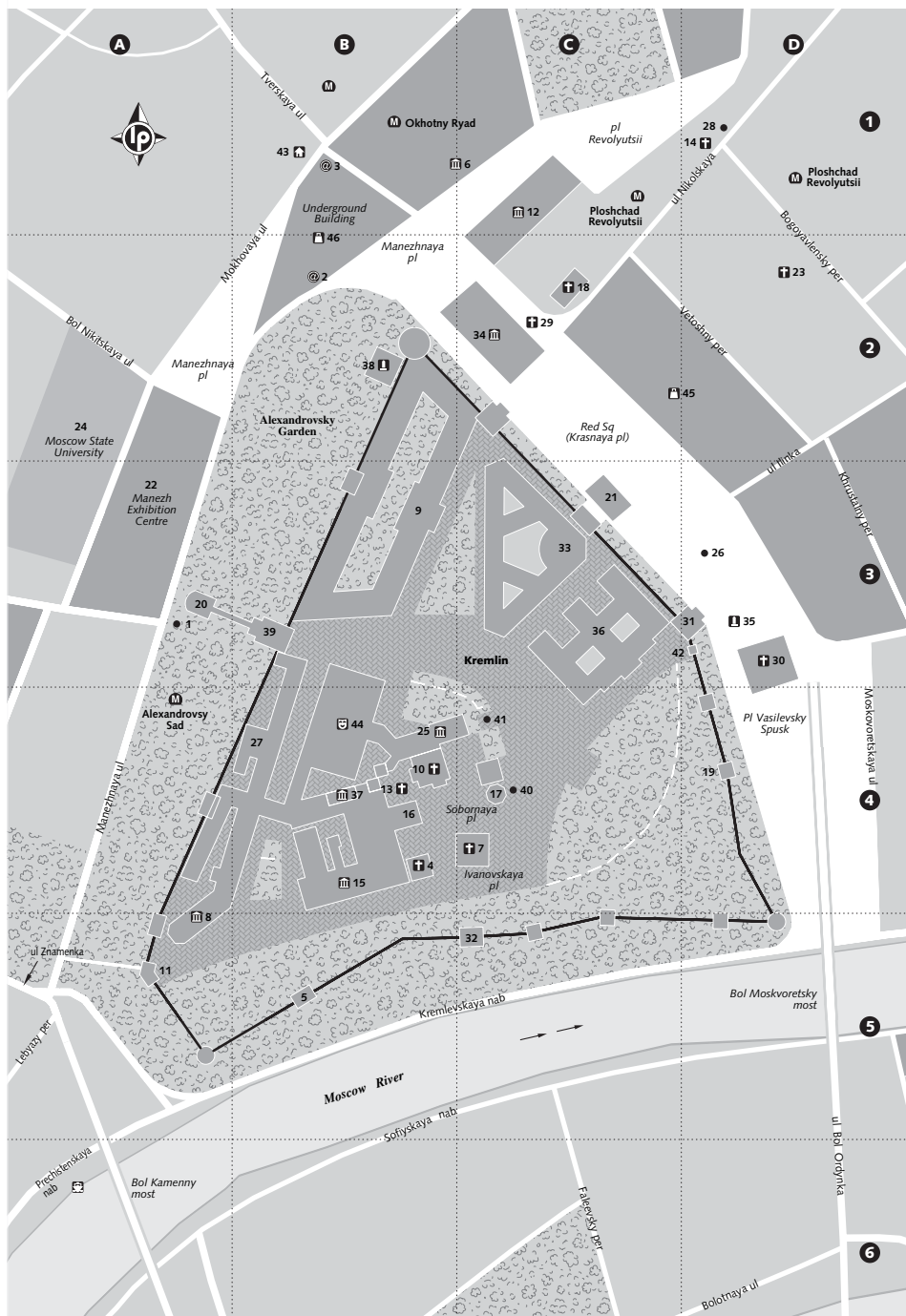
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NetLand (Map pp128-9; ☎ 781 0923; Teatralny proezd 5; per hr R40-60; ☎ 24hr; ☑ Kuznetsky Most, Lubyanka) A loud, dark club that fills up with kids playing games. Enter from ul Rozhdestvenka.

Phlegmatic Dog (Map p135; ☎ 995 9545; Okhotny Ryad, 1st fl; access free; ☎ 10am-1am; ☑ Okhotny Ryad) Recently voted 'most stylish' Internet café in the world by Yahoo! Mail. Free Internet access with the purchase of food or drink.

Time Online Okhotny Ryad (Map p135; ☎ 363 0060; per hr R65-75; ☎ 24hr; ☑ Okhotny Ryad); Belorusskaya (Map pp128-9; ☎ 363 0060; Bolshoy Kondreyevsky per 7; per hr R65-75; ☎ 24hr; ☑ Belorusskaya) Offers copy and photo services, as well as over 200 zippy computers or free wi-fi access.

Internet Resources

See p22 for a list of mostly Moscow-based sites. The *Moscow Times* and the *Exile* (opposite) have electronic versions of their print papers. Other useful resources:

www.expat.ru Run by and for English-speaking expats living in Russia. Provides useful information about real estate, children in Moscow, social groups and more.

www.maps-moscow.com An energetic group of international journalists raising awareness of architectural preservation issues in Moscow.

www.mirkart.ru/moscow An interactive map of Moscow, in Russian.

www.moscow-taxi.com Viktor the virtual taxi driver provides extensive descriptions of sites inside and outside

of Moscow, as well as hotel bookings and other tourist services.

www.moscowout.ru A full calendar of events in the capital, with links to restaurant and movie reviews, nightlife and activities for kids.

Libraries & Cultural Centres

British Council Resource Centre (Map p134; ☎ 782 0200; www.britishcouncil.org/ru; Nikoloyamskaya ul 1; ☎ noon-7pm Mon-Fri, 10am-6pm Sat; ☑ Taganskaya) Located at the Foreign Literature Library; take your passport.

Foreign Literature Library (Map p134; ☎ 915 3669; Nikoloyamskaya ul 1; ☎ 10am-8pm Mon-Fri, to 6pm Sat; ☑ Taganskaya) Home to several international libraries and cultural centres, including the American Cultural Center Library, the French Cultural Centre and the British Council Resource Centre.

Russian State Library (Map p135; ul Vozdvizhenka 3; ☎ 9am-9pm; ☑ Biblioteka imeni Lenina) On the corner of Mokhovaya ul, this is one of the world's largest libraries, with over 20 million volumes. If you want to peruse any of these, take along your passport and one passport photo, and fill in some forms at the information office to get a free *chitatelsky билет* (reader's card).

Media

All of the following English-language publications can be found at hotels, restaurants and cafés around town. Numerous other publications seem to appear at random, last a few issues and then vanish.

element (www.elementmoscow.ru) This oversized newsprint magazine comes out weekly with restaurant reviews,

concert listings and art exhibits. Also publishes a seasonal supplement highlighting Moscow's hottest restaurants.

The Exile (www.exile.ru) An irreverent, free weekly, with extensive entertainment listings. It is hard not to be offended by this rag, which may be why it is not as widely distributed as it used to be.

Go (www.go-magazine.ru) The *Moscow Times*' monthly entertainment guide.

Moscow Business Telephone Guide (www.mbtg.ru) A free, invaluable, bilingual phone book.

Moscow News (www.moscownews.ru) This long-standing Russian news weekly recently reappeared as an English-language publication, focusing on domestic and international politics and business.

Moscow Times (www.themoscowtimes.com) This first-rate daily is the undisputed king of the hill in locally published English-language news, covering Russian and international issues, as well as sport and entertainment. The Friday edition is a great source for what's happening at the weekend.

Medical Services

36.6 Kitay-Gorod (Map p131; ul Pokrova 1; ☑ Kitay-Gorod); Kuznetsky Most (Map pp128-9; Kuznetsky most 18; ☑ Kuznetsky Most); Novy Arbat (Map pp128-9; ul Novy Arbat 15; ☑ Smolenskaya); Tverskaya (Map pp128-9; Tverskaya ul 25; ☑ Tverskaya, Mayakovskaya) A chain of 24-hour pharmacies.

American Medical Center (Map p131; ☎ 933 7700; www.amcenters.com; Grokholsky per 1; ☑ Prospekt Mira) Offers 24-hour emergency service, consultations and a full range of medical specialists, including paediatricians and dentists. Also has an on-site pharmacy with English-speaking staff.

Botkin Hospital (Map pp128-9; ☎ 237 8338, 945 7533; 2-y Botkinsky proezd 5; ☑ Begovaya) The best Russian facility.

European Medical Center (Map pp128-9; ☎ 933 6655; www.emcmos.ru; Spirodnevsky per 5; ☑ Mayakovskaya) Includes medical and dental facilities, which are open around the clock for emergencies. The staff speaks 10 different languages.

Money

Banks, exchange counters and ATMs are ubiquitous in Moscow. Rates do vary, so it may be worthwhile shopping around if you are changing a large sum. Currencies other than US dollars and euros are difficult to exchange and yield bad rates. Travellers cheques can also be problematic.

Credit cards, especially Visa and MasterCard, are widely accepted in upscale hotels, restaurants and shops. You can also use your credit card to get a cash advance at most major banks in Moscow.

Alfa Bank (☎ 8.30am-8pm Mon-Sat) Arbat (Map pp128-9; ul Arbat 4/1; ☑ Arbatskaya); Kuznetsky Most (Map pp128-9; Kuznetsky most 7; ☑ Kuznetsky Most); Marriott Grand Hotel (Map pp128-9; Tverskaya ul 26; ☑ Mayakovskaya) Usually changes travellers cheques. ATMs at the branches listed dispense both roubles and US dollars.

American Express (Map pp132-3; ☎ 933 6636; fax 933 6635; ul Usachova 33; ☎ 9am-5pm; ☑ Sportivnaya) The most reliable place to cash American Express travellers cheques. It also offers an ATM, mail holding and travel services for AmEx cardholders.

Western Union (☎ 797 2197) Contact for wire transfers of money.

Post

Service has improved dramatically in recent years, but the usual warnings about delays and disappearances of incoming mail apply. Note that mail to Europe and the USA can take two to six weeks to arrive.

Central telegraph (Map pp128-9; Tverskaya ul 7; ☎ post 8am-10pm, telephone 24hr; ☑ Okhotny Ryad) This convenient office offers telephone, fax and Internet services.

DHL Worldwide Express (☎ 956 1000) Air courier services. Call for information on drop-off locations and to arrange pick-ups.

FedEx (☎ 234 3400) Air courier services. Call for information on drop-off locations and to arrange pick-ups.

Main post office (Map p131; Myasnitskaya ul 26; ☎ 8am-8pm Mon-Fri, 9am-7pm Sat & Sun; ☑ Chisty Prudy) Moscow's main post office is on the corner of Chistoprudny bul.

TNT (☎ 797 2777) Air courier services.

UPS (☎ 961 2211) Air courier services.

Telephone

Moscow pay phones operate with cards that are widely available in shops, kiosks and metro stations. The cards are available in a range of units. The phones are fairly user friendly, and most of them have an option for directions in English. Make sure you press the button with the speaker symbol when your party answers the phone.

For international calls, it is often easier to place your call from the central telegraph office, where you prepay (R23 per minute) for the duration of your call.

Tourist Information

Moscow has no tourist information centre, but plenty of information is available at hostels and upscale hotels, as well as through travel agents.

Travel Agencies

G&R International (Map pp126-7; ☎ 378 0001; fax 378 2866; www.hostels.ru; Zelenodolskaya ul 3/2, 5th fl; **M** Ryazansky Prospekt) Operates the G&R Hostel Asia, as well as organising itineraries, providing visa support and selling transport tickets.

Infinity Travel (Map pp132-3; ☎ 234 6555; www.infinity.ru; Komsomolsky pr 13; **M** Park Kultury) Affiliated with the Travellers Guest House, this on-the-ball travel company offers rail and air tickets, visa support, and trans-Siberian and Central Asian packages. It's a great source for airline tickets.

DANGERS & ANNOYANCES

Unfortunately, street crime targeting tourists has increased in recent years, although Moscow is not as dangerous as paranoid locals may have you think. As in any big city, be on your guard against pickpockets and muggers. Be particularly careful at or around metro stations at Kursk Station and Partizanskaya, where readers have reported specific incidents. Watch out especially for gangs of children who are after anything they can get their hands on.

Some policemen can be bothersome, especially to dark-skinned or otherwise foreign-looking people. Practical advice from a Moscow synagogue: 'cover your kippa'.

Other members of the police force target tourists. Reports of tourists being hassled about their documents and registration have declined. However, it's still wise to carry a photocopy of your passport, visa and registration stamp. If stopped by a member of the police force, do not give him your passport! It is perfectly acceptable to show a photocopy instead.

The most common hazard is violent and xenophobic drunks. Or even worse, overly friendly drunks.

Scams

Beware of well-dressed people dropping wads of money on the streets of Moscow.

A common scam in Moscow involves a respectable-looking person who 'accidentally' drops some money on the pavement as he passes by an unsuspecting foreigner – that's you. Being an honest person, you pick up the money to return it to the careless person, who is hurrying away. A second guy sees what is happening and tries to stop you from returning it, proposing that you split the money and, well, split.

CHANGING TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Russian authorities have an annoying habit of frequently changing telephone numbers, particularly in cities. We've tried our best to list the correct telephone number at the time of research but it's likely that some will change during the lifetime of this book. As of December 2005 Moscow's telephone code has been ☎ 495, though in some areas, mainly suburbs, it is ☎ 499, and Moscow Region is ☎ 496.

This is a no-win situation. These guys are in cahoots. While you are negotiating about how to split the money – or arguing about returning it – the first guy suddenly realises he is missing his cash. He returns to the scene of the crime. But lo and behold, the cash you return to him is not enough; some money is missing and you are culpable. This leads to a shakedown or any number of unpleasanties.

The moral of the story is that the streets of Moscow are not paved with money – resist the temptation to pick up money lying on the pavement.

SIGHTS Kremlin

The apex of political power, the **Kremlin** (Map p135; ☎ 202 3776; www.kremlin.museum.ru; adult/student R300/150, photography permit R50; ☎ 9.30am-4pm Fri-Wed; **M** Aleksandrovsky Sad, Borovitskaya, Biblioteka imeni Lenina) is the kernel not only of Moscow but of all of Russia. From here Ivan the Terrible orchestrated his terror; Napoleon watched Moscow burn; Lenin fashioned the proletariat dictatorship; Stalin purged his ranks; Khrushchev fought the Cold War; Gorbachev unleashed *perestroika* (his efforts to revive the Soviet economy); and Yeltsin concocted the New Russia.

The Kremlin occupies a triangular plot of land covering little Borovitsky Hill on the north bank of the Moscow River, probably first settled in the 11th century. Today it's enclosed by high walls 2.25km long, with Red Square outside the east wall. The best views of the Kremlin are from Sofiyskaya nab, across the river.

A 'kremlin' is a town's fortified stronghold, and the first low, wooden wall around Moscow was built in the 1150s. The Krem-

lin grew with the importance of Moscow's princes, becoming in the 1320s the headquarters of the Russian Church, which had shifted from Vladimir. The 'White Stone Kremlin' – which had limestone walls – was built in the 1360s, with almost the same boundaries as it has today.

At the end of the 15th century, Ivan the Great brought master builders from Pskov and Italy to supervise new walls and towers (most of which still stand), as well as the Kremlin's three great cathedrals and more. Although Peter the Great shifted the capital to St Petersburg, the tsars continued to show up here for coronations and other celebrations.

Over the years, the biggest threat to the Kremlin was Napoleon, who blew up parts of it before his retreat in 1812. Fortunately, the timely arrival of Russian troops prevented total destruction. The citadel wouldn't be breached again until the Bolsheviks stormed the place in October 1917.

The Kremlin remained closed to the public until 1955. It was Stalin who, in 1935, had the imperial double-headed eagles removed from the wall's five tallest towers, replacing them with the distinctive red glass stars still in place today.

ADMISSION

Before entering the Kremlin, deposit bags at the **left luggage office** (Map p135; per bag R60; ☎ 9am-6.30pm Fri-Wed), beneath the Kutafya Tower near the main ticket office. The main ticket office is in the Alexandrovsky Garden, just off Manezhnaya pl. The ticket covers entry to all buildings except the Armoury and Diamond Fund Exhibition; it also does not include the special exhibits that are sometimes held inside Patriarch's Palace or the Ivan the Great Bell Tower.

In any case, you can and should buy tickets for the Armoury here, to avoid queuing up once inside. Arrive early before tickets sell out.

There's also an entrance at the southern Borovitskaya Tower, mainly used by those heading straight to the Armoury or Diamond Fund Exhibition.

Inside the Kremlin, police will keep you from straying into the out-of-bounds areas. Visitors wearing shorts will be refused entry.

Visiting the Kremlin buildings and the Armoury is at least a half-day affair. If you intend to visit the Diamond Fund or other special exhibits, plan on spending most of the day here.

TOURS

Numerous freelance guides tout their services near the Kutafya Tower, with prices ranging from R300 to R600 per hour, and the quality varying widely. Capital Tours (p171) offers standard daily tours of the Kremlin and Armoury, while Dom Patriarshy Tours (p171) offers more in-depth tours of the Kremlin cathedrals, sometimes including a visit to the otherwise off-limits palaces.

NORTHERN & WESTERN BUILDINGS

The main entrance is through **Kutafya Tower** (Map p135), which stands away from the Kremlin's west wall, at the end of a ramp over the Alexandrovsky Garden. The ramp was once a bridge over the Neglinnaya River, which used to be part of the Kremlin's defences; it has flowed underground, beneath the Alexandrovsky Garden, since the early 19th century. The Kutafya Tower is the last survivor of a number of outer bridge towers that once stood this side of the Kremlin.

From the Kutafya Tower, walk up the ramp and through the Kremlin walls beneath the **Trinity Gate Tower** (Map p135). The lane to the right (south), immediately inside the Trinity Gate Tower, passes the 17th-century **Poteshny Palace** (Map p135) where Stalin lived. East of here the bombastic marble, glass and concrete **State Kremlin Palace** (Map p135), formerly the Kremlin Palace of Congresses, was built from 1960 to 1961 for Communist Party congresses. It is now a concert and ballet auditorium (p182). North is the 18th-century **Arsenal** (Map p135), ringed with 800 captured Napoleonic cannons.

To the east of the Arsenal the offices of the Russian president are in the yellow former **senate** (Map p135) building, a fine, triangular 18th-century classical edifice. Next to the Senate is the 1930s former **Supreme Soviet** (Map p135) building.

PATRIARCH'S PALACE

Built for Patriarch Nikon (whose reforms sparked the break with the Old Believers) mostly in the mid-17th century, the highlight of the **Patriarch's Palace** (Map p135) is perhaps

the ceremonial **Cross Hall**, where the tsar's and ambassadorial feasts were held. The palace also contains an exhibit of 17th-century household items, including jewellery, hunting equipment and furniture. From here you can access the five-domed **Church of the Twelve Apostles**, which has a gilded, wooden iconostasis and a collection of icons by the leading 17th-century icon painters.

The Patriarch's Palace often holds **special exhibits** (adult/student R300/150), which require an additional ticket and reservation time.

ASSUMPTION CATHEDRAL

The heart of the Kremlin is Sobornaya pl (Cathedral Sq), surrounded by magnificent buildings. **Assumption Cathedral** (Map p135) stands on the northern side, with five golden helmet domes and four semicircular gables facing the square. As the focal church of prerevolutionary Russia, it is the burial place of most of the Russian Orthodox Church heads from the 1320s to 1700. The tombs are against the north, west and south walls.

The cathedral was built between 1475 and 1479 after the Bolognese architect Aristotle Fioravanti had toured Novgorod, Suzdal and Vladimir to acquaint himself with Russian architecture. His design is based on the Assumption Cathedral at Vladimir, with some Western features. It replaced a smaller 1326 cathedral on the same site.

In 1812 French troops used the cathedral as a stable, looting 295kg of gold and over five tonnes of silver, although much of it was recovered.

The church closed in 1918. However, according to some accounts, when the Nazis were on the outskirts of Moscow in 1941, Stalin secretly ordered a service in the Assumption Cathedral to protect the city from the enemy. The cathedral was officially returned to the Church in 1989, but still operates as a museum.

A striking 1660s fresco of the Virgin Mary faces Sobornaya pl, above the door once used for royal processions. The visitors' entrance is at the western end, and the interior is unusually bright and spacious, full of warm golds, reds and blues.

The tent-roofed wooden throne near the south wall was made in 1551 for Ivan the Terrible; it's commonly called the **Throne of Monomakh** because of its carved scenes from

the career of 12th-century grand prince, Vladimir Monomakh of Kyiv.

The **iconostasis** dates from 1652, although its lowest level contains some older icons, among them (second from the right) *Saviour with the Angry Eye* (Spas Yaroe Oko) from the 1340s. On the left of the central door, the *Virgin of Vladimir* (Vladimirskaia Bogomater) is an early-15th-century Rublyov-school copy of Russia's most revered image; the 12th-century original, *Vladimir Icon of the Mother of God* (now in the Tretyakov Gallery), stood in the Assumption Cathedral from the 1480s to 1930. One of the oldest Russian icons, the 12th-century red-clothed *St George* (Svyatoy Georgy) from Novgorod, is positioned by the north wall.

Most of the existing murals on the cathedral walls were painted on a gilt base in the 1640s, but three grouped together on the south wall – *The Apocalypse* (Apokalipsis), *The Life of Metropolitan Pyotr* (Zhitie Mitropolita Petra) and *All Creatures Rejoice in Thee* (O tebe Raduetsya) – are attributed to Dionysius and his followers, the cathedral's original 15th-century mural painters.

CHURCH OF THE DEPOSITION OF THE ROBE

This delicate little single-domed church (Map p135) beside the west door of the Assumption Cathedral was built between 1484 and 1486 by masons from Pskov. As the private chapel of the patriarch, it was built in exclusively Russian style, and the frescoes on the pillars depict the church metropolitans and Moscow princes over the centuries. The church now houses an exhibition of 15th- to 17th-century woodcarvings.

IVAN THE GREAT BELL TOWER

With its two golden domes rising above the eastern side of Sobornaya pl, the **Ivan the Great Bell Tower** (Map p135) is the Kremlin's tallest structure, a Moscow landmark visible from 30km away. (Before the 20th century it was forbidden in Moscow to build any higher than the tower.)

When designed by Italian Marco Bono in 1508 the southern tower had just two octagonal tiers beneath a drum and dome. Boris Godunov raised the tower to 81m, a public works project designed to employ the

(Continued from page 140)

thousands of people who came to Moscow during a famine. The building's central section, with a gilded single dome and a 65-tonne bell, dates from the 1530s, while the tent-roofed annex next to the belfry was commissioned by Patriarch Filaret in 1642 and bears his name. Exhibitions from the Kremlin collections are shown on the ground level of the **bell tower** (adult/student R100/50).

TSAR BELL & CANNON

Beside the bell tower, not inside it, stands the **Tsar Bell** (Map p135), the world's biggest bell. Sadly, this 202-tonne monster never rang. In a 1701 fire an earlier 130-tonne version fell from its belfry and shattered; with these remains, the current Tsar Bell was cast in the 1730s for Empress Anna Ioanovna. The bell was cooling off in the foundry casting pit in 1737 when it came into contact with water, causing an 11-tonne chunk to chip off.

North of the bell tower is the **Tsar Cannon** (Map p135), cast in 1586 for Fyodor I, whose portrait is on the barrel. Shot has

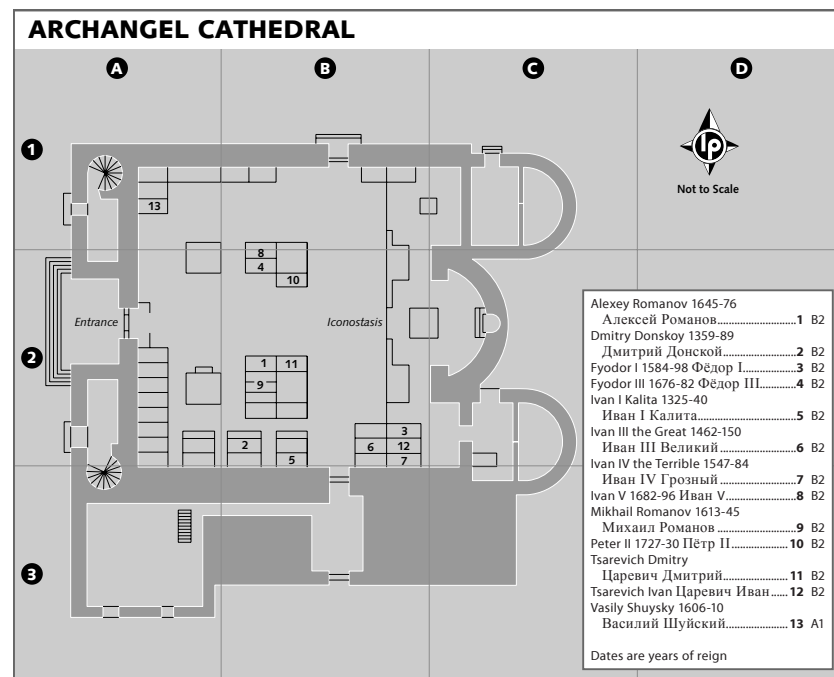
never sullied its 89cm bore – and certainly not the cannonballs beside it, which are too big even for this elephantine firearm.

ARCHANGEL CATHEDRAL

The cathedral at the square's southeastern corner was – for centuries – the coronation, wedding and burial church of tsars. The tombs of all Muscovy's rulers from the 1320s to the 1690s are here, bar one – Boris Godunov is buried at Sergiev Posad.

The **Archangel Cathedral** (Map p135), built between 1505 and 1508 by the Italian Alessio Novi, is dedicated to Archangel Michael, guardian of Moscow's princes. Like the Assumption Cathedral, its style is essentially Byzantine-Russian, though the exterior has many Venetian Renaissance features, notably the distinctive scallop-shell gables.

Tsarevich Dmitry – Ivan the Terrible's son, who died mysteriously in 1591 – lies beneath a painted **stone canopy**. Ivan's own tomb is out of sight behind the iconostasis, along with those of his other sons: Ivan (whom he killed) and Fyodor (who succeeded him). From Peter the Great onwards, emperors and empresses were



(Continued on page 145)

buried in St Petersburg; the exception was Peter II, who died in Moscow in 1730 and is buried here.

During restorations in the 1950s, 17th-century **murals** were uncovered. The south wall depicts many of those buried here, and on the pillars are some of their predecessors, including Andrei Bogolyubsky, Prince Daniil and his father, Alexander Nevsky.

ANNUNCIATION CATHEDRAL

Dating from 1489, the **Annunciation Cathedral** (Map p135) at the southwest corner of Sobornaya pl contains the celebrated icons of master painter Theophanes the Greek. Their timeless beauty appeals even to those usually left cold by icons.

The cathedral, built by Pskov masters, was the royal family's private chapel. Originally, it had just three domes and an open gallery around three sides. Ivan the Terrible, whose taste was more elaborate, added six more domes and chapels at each corner, and enclosed the gallery and gilded the roof.

Ivan's fourth marriage disqualified him under Orthodox law from entering the church proper, so he had the southern arm of the gallery converted into the **Archangel Gabriel Chapel**, from which he could watch services through a grille. The chapel has a colourful iconostasis dating from its consecration in 1564, and an exhibition of icons.

Many of the murals in the gallery date from the 1560s. Among them are the *Capture of Jericho* in the porch, *Jonah and the Whale* in the northern arm, and the *Tree of Jesus* on the ceiling.

The cathedral's small central part has a lovely jasper floor, and the 16th-century frescoes include Russian princes on the north pillar and Byzantine emperors on the south, both with Apocalypse scenes above. But the cathedral's real treasure is the **iconostasis**, where restorers in the 1920s uncovered early-15th-century icons by three of the greatest medieval Russian artists.

Theophanes likely painted most of the six icons at the right-hand end of the deesis row, the biggest of the six tiers of the iconostasis. Left to right, these are the *Virgin Mary*, *Christ Enthroned*, *St John the Baptist*, the *Archangel Gabriel*, the *Apostle Paul*, and *St John Chrysostom*. Theophanes' icons are distinguished by his mastery at portraying visible pathos in facial expressions.

Archangel Michael is ascribed to Andrei Rublyov, who may also have painted the adjacent *St Peter*. Rublyov is also reckoned to be the artist of the first, second, sixth and seventh (and probably the third and fifth) icons from the left of the festival row, above the deesis row. The seven at the right-hand end are attributed to Prokhor of Gorodets.

The basement – which remains from the previous 14th-century cathedral on this site – contains a fascinating exhibit on the **Archaeology of the Kremlin**. The artefacts date from the 12th to 14th centuries, showing the growth of Moscow during this period.

HALL OF FACETS & TEREM PALACE

On the western side of the square, named after its facing Italian Renaissance stone, is the square **Hall of Facets** (Map p135); its upper floor houses the tsar's throne room, the scene of banquets and ceremonies, and was reached by external staircases from the square below.

The 16th- and 17th-century **Terem Palace** (Map p135) is the most splendid of all the Kremlin palaces. Catch a glimpse of its sumptuous cluster of golden domes and chequered roof behind and above the Church of the Deposition of the Robe. Both buildings are closed to the public.

ARMOURY

In the Kremlin's southwestern corner is the **Armoury** (Map p135; adult/student R300/175; ☎ 10am, noon, 2.30pm, 4.30pm), a numbingly opulent collection of treasures accumulated over centuries by the Russian state and Church. Your ticket will specify a time of entry.

Upstairs, Room 2 houses the renowned eggs made from precious metals and jewels by St Petersburg jewellers, **Fabergé**. The tsar and tsarina traditionally exchanged these gifts each year at Easter. Most famous is the Grand Siberian Railway egg, with gold train, platinum locomotive and ruby headlamp, created to commemorate the completion of the Moscow–Vladivostok line.

The **royal regalia** in Room 7 contains the joint coronation throne of boy tsars Peter the Great and his half-brother, Ivan V (with a secret compartment from which Regent Sofia prompted them), as well as the 800-diamond throne of Tsar Alexey, Peter's father. The gold Cap of Monomakh – jewel-

studded and sable-trimmed – was worn for two centuries of coronations until 1682.

Among the **coaches** in Room 9 is the sleigh that Elizabeth rode from St Petersburg to Moscow for her coronation, pulled by 23 horses at a time.

Between the Armoury and the Annunciation Cathedral stretches the 700-room **Great Kremlin Palace** (Map p135), built as an imperial residence between 1838 and 1849. Now it is an official residence of the Russian president and is used for state visits and receptions. It's not open to the public.

DIAMOND FUND EXHIBITION

If the Armoury doesn't sate your diamond lust, there's more in the separate **Diamond Fund Exhibition** (Map p135; ☎ 2292036; adult/student R350/175; ☎ 10am–noon, 2–5pm Fri–Wed); it's in the same building as the Armoury. The lavish collection shows off the precious stones and jewellery garnered by tsars and empresses over the centuries, including the largest sapphire in the world. The highlight is the 190-carat diamond given to Catherine the Great by her lover Grigory Orlov.

TOWERS

The Kremlin's walls have 19 distinctive towers, mostly built between 1485 and 1500, with tent roofs added in the 17th century. Some towers had to be rebuilt after Napoleonic vandalism.

The **Saviour Gate Tower** (Map p135) is the Kremlin's 'official' exit onto Red Square. The current clock dates from the 1850s. Hauling 3m hands and weighing 25 tonnes, the clock takes up three of the tower's 10 levels. Its melodic chime sounds every 15 minutes across Red Square and across the country (on the radio).

Nearby, the **Tsar Tower** (Map p135) sits atop the Kremlin wall. Legend has it that Ivan the Terrible watched executions from an old wooden tower that previously stood on this spot.

The first tower built (1485) was the **Secrets Tower** (Map p135), named for a secret passageway down to the river. During the 17th century, the **Konstantin and Yelena Tower** (Map p135) was used as a prison, earning it the nickname 'torture tower'. The **Annunciation Tower** (Map p135) is named for the miracle-working icon on the façade.

ALEXANDROVSKY GARDEN

The first public park in Moscow, **Alexandrovsky Garden** (Map p135) sits along the Kremlin's western wall. Colourful flowerbeds and impressive Kremlin views make it a favourite strolling spot for Muscovites and tourists alike.

At the north end is the **Tomb of the Unknown Soldier** (Map p135), where newlyweds bring flowers and have their pictures taken. The tomb contains the remains of one soldier who died in December 1941 at km41 of Leningradskoe sh (the nearest the Nazis came to Moscow). The inscription reads, 'Your name is unknown, your deeds immortal', along with an eternal flame and other inscriptions listing the Soviet hero cities of WWII, honouring 'those who fell for the motherland' between 1941 and 1945. The changing of the guard happens every hour.

Red Square

Immediately outside the Kremlin's northeastern wall is the infamous **Red Square** (Krasnaya ploshchad; Map p135). Commanding the square from the southern end is the building that, more than any other, says 'Russia' – St Basil's Cathedral.

Red Square used to be a market square adjoining the merchants' area in Kitay-Gorod. It has always been a place where occupants of the Kremlin chose to congregate, celebrate and castigate for all the people to see. Here, Ivan the Terrible publicly confessed his misdeeds in 1547, built St Basil's to commemorate his victories in the 1550s, and later had numerous perceived enemies executed. Red Square also saw the dismembering of the Cossack rebel Stepan Razin in 1671, as well as the en masse execution in 1698 of 2000 members of the Streltsy, Peter the Great's mutinous palace guard.

Soviet rulers chose Red Square for their military parades, perhaps most poignantly on 7 November 1941, when tanks rolled straight off to the front line outside Moscow; and during the Cold War, when lines of ICBMs rumbled across the square to remind the West of Soviet military might.

Incidentally, the name 'Krasnaya ploshchad' has nothing to do with communism or the blood that flowed here: *krasny* in old Russian meant 'beautiful' and only in the 20th century did it come to mean 'red', too.

Red Square is closed to traffic, except for the limousines that whiz in and out of the Kremlin's Saviour Gate from time to time. Most people here are sightseers, but that doesn't reduce the thrill of walking on this 400m by 150m area of cobbles, so central to Russian history. It's particularly atmospheric when floodlit at night.

The best way to enter Red Square is through the **Resurrection Gate** (Map p135). Rebuilt in 1995, it's an exact copy of the original completed on this site in 1680, with its twin red towers topped by green tent spires. The first gateway was destroyed in 1931 because Stalin considered it an impediment to the parades and demonstrations held in Red Square.

Within the gateway is the bright **Chapel of the Iverian Virgin** (Map p135), originally built in the late 18th century to house the icon of the same name.

LENIN'S MAUSOLEUM

The granite **tomb** (Map p135; ☎ 923 5527; admission free; ☎ 10am-1pm Tue-Thu, Sat & Sun; 🚶 Ploshchad Revolyutsii) standing at the foot of the Kremlin wall is another Red Square must-see, espe-

cially since the former leader may eventually end up beside his mum in St Petersburg. For now, the embalmed leader remains as he has been since 1924 (apart from a retreat to Siberia during WWII).

From 1953 to 1961 Lenin shared the tomb with Stalin. In 1961, at the 22nd Party Congress, the esteemed (and by then ancient) Bolshevik Madame Spiridonova announced that Vladimir Ilych had appeared to her in a dream, insisting that he did not like spending eternity with his successor. With that, Stalin was removed, and given a place of honour immediately behind the mausoleum.

Before joining the queue at the northwestern corner of Red Square, drop your camera and knapsack at the left-luggage office in the State History Museum, as you will not be allowed to take it with you. Humourless guards ensure that visitors remain respectful.

After trudging past the embalmed, oddly waxy figure, emerge from the mausoleum and inspect the burial places along the Kremlin wall of Stalin, Brezhnev and other communist heavy hitters.

LENIN UNDER GLASS

Red Square is home to the world's most famous mummy, that of Vladimir Lenin. When he died of a massive stroke (on 22 January 1924, aged 53), a long line of mourners patiently gathered in winter's harshness for weeks to glimpse the body as it lay in state. Inspired by the spectacle, Stalin proposed that the father of Soviet communism should continue to serve the cause as a holy relic. So the decision was made to preserve Lenin's corpse for perpetuity, against the vehement protests of his widow, as well as his own expressed desire to be buried next to his mother in St Petersburg.

Boris Zbarsky, a biochemist, and Vladimir Vorobyov, an anatomist, were issued a political order to put a stop to the natural decomposition of the body. The pair worked frantically in a secret laboratory in search of a long-term chemical solution. In the meantime, the body's dark spots were bleached, and the lips and eyes sewn tight. The brain was removed and taken to another secret laboratory, to be sliced and diced by scientists for the next 40 years in the hope of uncovering its hidden genius.

In July 1924 the scientists hit upon a formula to successfully arrest the decaying process, a closely guarded state secret. This necrotic craft was passed on to Zbarsky's son, who ran the Kremlin's covert embalming lab for decades. After the fall of communism, Zbarsky came clean: the body is wiped down every few days, and then, every 18 months, thoroughly examined and submerged in a tub of chemicals, including paraffin wax. The institute has now gone commercial, offering its services and secrets to wannabe immortals for a mere million dollars.

In the early 1990s Boris Yeltsin expressed his intention to heed Lenin's request and bury him in St Petersburg, setting off a furore from the political left as well as more muted objections from Moscow tour operators. It seems that the mausoleum, the most sacred shrine of Soviet communism, and the mummy, the literal embodiment of the Russian Revolution, will remain in place for at least several more years.

ST BASIL'S CATHEDRAL

No picture can prepare you for the crazy confusion of colours and shapes that is **Pokrovsky Cathedral** (Map p135; ☎ 298 3304; adult/student R100/50; ☎ 11am-5pm Wed-Mon; 🚶 Ploshchad Revolyutsii), commonly known as St Basil's. This ultimate symbol of Russia was created between 1555 and 1561 (replacing an existing church on the site) to celebrate Ivan the Terrible's capture of the Tatar stronghold, Kazan. Its design is the culmination of a wholly Russian style that had been developed building wooden churches; legend has it that Ivan had the cathedral's architect blinded so that he could never build anything comparable.

The cathedral's apparent anarchy of shapes hides a comprehensible plan of nine main chapels: the tall, tent-roofed one in the centre; four big, octagonal-towered ones, topped with the four biggest domes; and four smaller ones in between.

The misnomer St Basil's actually refers only to the northeastern chapel, which was added later. It was built over the grave of the barefoot holy fool Vasily (Basil) the Blessed, who predicted Ivan's damnation and added correctly, as the army left for Kazan, that Ivan would murder a son. Vasily, who died while Kazan was under siege, was buried beside the church that St Basil's soon replaced. He was later canonised.

The interior is open to visitors: besides a small exhibition on the cathedral itself, it contains lovely frescoed walls and loads of nooks and crannies to explore. A joint ticket (adult/student R230/115) allowing access to the State History Museum and St Basil's Cathedral is available at either spot.

Across the street, the former **Central Lenin Museum** (Map p135; pl Revolyutsii 2; 🚶 Ploshchad Revolyutsii) was once the big daddy of all the Lenin museums, but was closed in 1993 after the White House shoot-out. It is sometimes used for special exhibits, but more often communist rabble-rousers congregate here.

GUM

The elaborate 19th-century façade on the northeastern side of Red Square is the Gosudarstvenny Universalny Magazin (State Department Store). **GUM** (Map p135) once symbolised all that was bad about Soviet shopping: long queues and shelves empty, bar a few drab goods. A remarkable transfor-

mation has taken place since *perestroika* and today GUM is a bustling place with more than 1000 fancy shops; see p185 for more.

KAZAN CATHEDRAL

Opposite the northern end of GUM, the tiny **Kazan Cathedral** (Map p135; ul Nikol'skaya 3; admission free; ☎ 8am-7pm; 🚶 Ploshchad Revolyutsii) is a 1993 replica. The original was founded in 1636 in thanks for the 1612 expulsion of Polish invaders; for two centuries it housed the *Virgin of Kazan* icon, which supposedly helped to rout the Poles.

Three hundred years later the cathedral was completely demolished, allegedly because it impeded the flow of celebrating workers in May Day and Revolution Day parades. Evening services are now held at 8pm on Monday.

STATE HISTORY MUSEUM

At the northern end of the square, the **State History Museum** (Map p135; ☎ 292 4019; www.shm.ru; adult/student R150/75; ☎ 11am-7pm Wed-Mon; 🚶 Ploshchad Revolyutsii) has an enormous collection covering the whole Russian empire from the Stone Age on. The building, dating from the late 19th century, is itself an attraction – each room is in the style of a different period or region, some with highly decorated walls echoing old Russian churches. Reopened in 1997, each year sees the addition of a few more galleries. A joint ticket (adult/student R230/115) allowing access to the State History Museum and St Basil's Cathedral is available at either spot.

Across the street, the former **Central Lenin Museum** (Map p135; pl Revolyutsii 2; 🚶 Ploshchad Revolyutsii) was once the big daddy of all the Lenin museums, but was closed in 1993 after the White House shoot-out. It is sometimes used for special exhibits, but more often communist rabble-rousers congregate here.

City Centre

The heart of the city lies in the area immediately surrounding the Kremlin and Red Square. The centre is bound by an arc: Mokhovaya ul, Okhotny ryad, Teatralny proezd and Lubyansky proezd. The Moscow River encloses the arc on the south side.

AROUND MANEZHNAJA PLOSHCHAD

At the northern end of Red Square, Manezhnaya pl has been transformed with the

vast underground **Okhotny Ryad Shopping Mall** (Map p135). From the square, it appears as a series of half-domes and balustrades, and a network of fountains and sculptures. See p185 for details on the shops inside.

The long, low building on the southwest-ern side of the square is the **Manezh Exhibition Centre** (Map p135; ☎ 292 4459; ☹ 11am-8pm Tue-Sun; 📍 Aleksandrovsky Sad, Borovitskaya, Biblioteka imeni Lenina), housing local art exhibitions. It is newly renovated, reopening after a fire in 2004. On the northwestern side of the square are the fine old edifices of the **Moscow State University** (Map p135; built in 1793) and **Le Royal Meridien National** (p175).

The infamous 1930s-era **Hotel Moskva** on Manezhnaya pl was finally demolished in 2004. The story goes that Stalin was shown two possible designs for the hotel and – not realising they were alternatives – approved both. The builders did not dare to point out his error, and so built half the hotel in constructivist style and half in Stalinist style. The incongruous result became such a familiar feature of the Moscow landscape that the new, high-class hotel being constructed on the site is expected to re-create its predecessor's architectural quirks.

At the base of the once and future Hotel Moskva is the entrance to the **Archaeological Museum** (Map p135; ☎ 292 4171; Manezhnaya pl 1; admission R100; ☹ 10am-5.30pm Tue-Sun; 📍 Ploshchad Revolyutsii, Okhotny Ryad). An excavation of the Voskresensky Bridge – which used to cross the Neglinnaya River and become the road to Tver – uncovered coins, clothing and other artefacts from old Moscow. The museum displaying these treasures is situated in an underground pavilion 7m deep, a pavilion that remains from the excavation itself.

Northeast of Manezhnaya pl, Okhotny ryad passes between the Hotel Moskva site and the glowering **State Duma** (Map pp128–9), where Russia's parliament sits. Next door, the green-columned **House of Unions** (Map pp128–9) dates from the 1780s.

TEATRANAYA PLOSHCHAD

Teatralnaya pl opens out on both sides of Okhotny ryad, 200m from Manezhnaya pl. The northern half of the square is dominated by the **Bolshoi Theatre** (Map pp128–9), where Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake* premiered (unsuccessfully) in 1877. Initially overshadowed by St Petersburg's Mariinsky Theatre, the

Bolshoi didn't really hit the high notes until the 1950s, when foreign tours won great acclaim for its ballet and opera companies. For ticket information, see p182. The busy streets behind the Bolshoi constitute Moscow's main shopping centre (see p185).

Across ul Petrovka from the 'big' Bolshoi is the 'small' **Maly Theatre** (see p183), a drama establishment. On Teatralnaya pl's southern half is the tiled, sculptured façade of luxurious **Hotel Metropol** (p175).

AROUND LUBYANSKAYA PLOSHCHAD

For several decades the broad square at the top of Teatralny proezd was a chilling symbol of the Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti (Committee for State Security), more commonly known as the KGB.

In the 1930s, the **Lubyanka Prison** (Map pp128–9) was the feared destination of thousands of innocent victims of Stalin's purges, but today the grey building is the headquarters of the KGB's successor, the FSB (Federal Security Service). The building is not open to the public.

Behind Lubyanka is the four-room **KGB Museum** (Map pp128–9; ul Bolshaya Lubyanka 12/1; 📍 Lubyanka), devoted to the history, propaganda and paraphernalia of the Soviet intelligence services. The museum is not open to casual callers, but Dom Patriarshy Tours (p171) occasionally takes groups there.

From 1926 to 1990 Lubyanskaya pl was called pl Dzerzhinskogo, after Felix Dzerzhinsky, founder of the Cheka (the KGB's ancestor). A tall statue of Dzerzhinsky that dominated the square was memorably removed by angry crowds (with the assistance of a couple of cranes) when the 1991 coup collapsed. Now you can see the statue in all its (somewhat reduced) glory in the Sculpture Park (p161), where it stands among others fallen from grace.

The much humbler **Memorial to the Victims of Totalitarianism** (Map pp128–9) stands in the little garden on the square's southeastern side. This single stone slab comes from the territory of an infamous 1930s labour camp on the Solovetsky Islands in the White Sea.

The little **Moscow City History Museum** (Map pp128–9; ☎ 924 8490, 924 8058; Novaya pl 12; admission R50; ☹ 11am-5.30pm Tue-Sun; 📍 Lubyanka) shows how the city has spread from its starting point at the Kremlin. Across the street, the huge **Polytechnical Museum** (Map pp128–9; ☎ 923

0756; Novaya pl 3/4; adult/child R175/75; ☹ 10am-5pm Mon-Tue & Fri-Sun, 1-9pm Thu; 📍 Lubyanka) covers the history of Russian science, technology and industry.

Kitay-Gorod

The narrow old streets east of Red Square are known as Kitay-Gorod – it translates as 'Chinatown', but this area has nothing to do with China. The name actually derives from *kita*, meaning 'wattle', and refers to the palisades that reinforced the earthen ramp erected around this early Kremlin suburb. Kitay-Gorod is one of the oldest parts of Moscow, settled in the 13th century as a trade and financial centre.

Along Teatralnaya proezd, archaeologists uncovered the 16th-century fortified wall that used to surround Kitay-Gorod, as well as foundations of the 1493 Trinity Church. Coins, jewellery and tombstones were also excavated at the site, called **Starie Polya** (Map pp128–9; 📍 Teatralnaya). Beside the remains of the wall and the church, you can now see the memorial statue of Ivan Fyodorov, the 16th-century printer responsible for Russia's first printed book. The gated walkway of Tretyakovskiy proezd leads into Kitay-Gorod.

AROUND NIKOLSKAYA ULITSA

Kitay-Gorod's busiest street was once the main road to Vladimir and used to be the centre of a busy trade in icons. The dilapidated **Church of the Zaikonospassky Monastery** (Map p135; 📍 Ploshchad Revolyutsii), built between 1661 and 1720, stands in the courtyard of No 9. The ornate green-and-white building at No 15 is the old **Printing House** (Map p135; 📍 Ploshchad Revolyutsii). It was here in 1563 that Ivan Fyodorov reputedly produced Russia's first printed book, *The Apostle*. (The first Russian newspaper, *Vedomosti*, was also printed here in 1703.)

The **Monastery of Epiphany** (Map p135; Bogoyavlenskaya per; 📍 Ploshchad Revolyutsii) is just up the road and around the corner. Its Epiphany Cathedral was constructed in the 1690s, while the monastery itself dates from the 13th century and is the second oldest in Moscow.

AROUND ULITSA VARVARKA

From the 16th century Kitay-Gorod was exclusively the home of merchants and craftsmen, as evidenced by the present-day names of its lanes: Khrestalny (Crystal),

Rybny (Fish) and Vetoshny (Rugs). Along ul Ilinka, a block south, the **old stock exchange** (Map pp128–9; ul Ilinka 2; 📍 Ploshchad Revolyutsii) designates Moscow's financial heart.

Ul Varvarka has Kitay-Gorod's greatest concentration of interesting buildings. They have been long dwarfed by the gargantuan Hotel Rossiya, which is next on the list for demolition. The pink-and-white **St Barbara's Church** (Map pp128–9; 📍 Kitay-Gorod) dates from the years 1795 to 1804 and is now given over to government offices. The reconstructed 16th-century **Old English House** (Map pp128–9; ☎ 298 3952; admission R20; ☹ 11am-6pm Tue-Sun), white with peaked wooden roofs, was the residence of England's first emissaries to Russia (sent by Elizabeth I to Ivan the Terrible). It also served as the base for English merchants, who were allowed to trade duty-free in exchange for providing military supplies to Ivan. Ironically, this museum has no signs or descriptions in English.

Built in 1698, **St Maxim the Blessed's Church** (Map pp128–9; ul Varvarka 4) is now a folk-art exhibition hall. Next along is the pointed bell tower of the 17th-century **Monastery of the Sign** (Map pp128–9; ul Varvarka 8), with accompanying **monks' quarters** and a **golden domed cathedral**.

The small, though interesting, **Romanov Chambers in Zaryadiye** (Map pp128–9; ☎ 924 4529; ul Varvarka 10; admission R150; ☹ 10am-5pm Thu-Mon, 11am-6pm Wed) is devoted to the lives of the Romanov family, who were mere boyars (nobles) before they became tsars. The house was built by Nikita Romanov, whose grandson Mikhail later became the first tsar of the 300-year Romanov dynasty. Enter from the back.

The colourful **St George's Church** (Map pp128–9; ul Varvarka 12), another crafts gallery, dates from 1658. Opposite St George's Church, Ipatevskiy per leads to the 1630s **Church of the Trinity in Nikitniki** (Map pp128–9), one of Moscow's finest (but still undergoing renovation). The church's onion domes and lovely tiers of red-and-white spade gables rise from a square tower, while the interior is covered with 1650s gospel frescoes by Simon Ushakov and others. A carved doorway leads into St Nikita the Martyr's chapel, above the vault of the Nikitnikov merchant family, one of whom built the church.

At the southern end of Staraya pl is **All Saints Cathedral on the Kulishka** (Map pp128–9), built in 1687. In 1380 Dmitry Donskoy

built the original wooden church on this site, commemorating those who died in the Battle of Kulikovo.

Hidden among the narrow alleyways of Kitay-Gorod are more tiny churches, and ongoing renovations should produce delightful results over the next few years.

OUTER KITAY-GOROD

Moscow's oldest synagogue, the **Moscow Choral Synagogue** (Map p131; Bolshoy Spasoglinishchevsky per 10; M Kitay-Gorod), was built in 1891 by the businessman Polyakov, who made his fortune in the sugar industry. The interior is exquisite. It was the only synagogue that continued to operate throughout the Soviet period, in spite of Bolshevik demands to convert it into a workers' club.

South of Kursky vokzal (station) is a two-storey house in a small park, which

contains the **Andrei Sakharov Museum** (Map p131; ☎ 923 4115; www.wdn.com/af; Zemlyanoy val 57; admission free; ☎ 11am-7pm Tue-Sun; M Chkalovskaya). Its displays cover the life of Sakharov, the nuclear-physicist-turned-human-rights-advocate, detailing the years of repression in Russia and providing a history of the dissident movement. Temporary expositions cover current human-rights issues (see the boxed text, below). There are signs in English and audio tours are planned. Watch for a piece of genuine Berlin Wall in front of the building.

Chistye Prudy

This area encompasses the streets off Chistoprudny bul, between uls Myasnitskaya and Pokrovka to the northeast of the Kremlin. Myasnitskaya means 'butchers' and in the late 17th century the area was known

for this profession; logically, its ponds were filthy. Peter the Great gave the area to his pal Alexander Menshikov, who launched a bit of a PR campaign, renaming it Chistye Prudy (Clean Ponds). Apparently, he did actually have them cleaned first. The area boasts the first Moscow post office, founded in 1783 in one of the houses of the former Menshikov estate.

Chistoprudny bul is a pleasant stroll in itself. The pond has paddle boats in summer and an **ice-skating rink** in winter, or you can simply pick a café and (depending on the season) sip a beer or coffee while watching the boats or skaters go by.

Hidden behind the post office is the famous **Menshikov Tower** (Map p131; Krivokolenny per), built from 1704 to 1706 by the order of Menshikov at his newly founded estate. The tower was originally 3m taller than the Ivan the Great Bell Tower in the Kremlin and was one of Moscow's first baroque buildings. In 1723 it was hit by lightning during a thunderstorm and seriously damaged by fire. Today it houses the working **Church of Archangel Gabriel**.

KOMSOMOLSKAYA PLOSHCHAD

From Chistye Prudy, pr Akademika Sakharova leads northeast to Komsomolskaya pl, Moscow's transportation hub. In one square the three main railway stations capture Moscow's architectural diversity, along with diverse and dubious crowds; it's among the city's busiest and hairiest centres.

Leningradsky vokzal (Leningrad Station; Map p131), with its tall clock tower, is on the northern side of the square and is Moscow's oldest railway station (built in 1851).

Yaroslavsky vokzal (Yaroslavl Station; Map p131) – the start of the Trans-Siberian Railway – is a 1902–04 Art Nouveau fantasy by Fyodor Shekhtel.

Kazansky vokzal (Kazan Station; Map p131), on the southern side of the square, was built between 1912 and 1926. It's a retrospective of seven building styles, going back to a 16th-century Tatar tower in Kazan. (The style of its architect, Alexey Shchusev, transformed over the years – his later work includes Lenin's mausoleum.)

The 26-storey 'wedding cake' west of Komsomolskaya pl is **Hotel Leningradskaya** (p174), one of Stalin's 'Seven Sisters'.

Petrovsky District

Now restored to its prerevolutionary fashionable status, ul Petrovka constitutes Moscow's glossiest central shopping area (see p185 for more).

The **Upper St Peter Monastery** (Map pp128-9; cnr ul Petrovka & Petrovsky bul; admission free; ☎ 8am-8pm; M Chekhovskaya) was founded in the 1380s as part of an early defensive ring around Moscow. The grounds are pleasant in a peaceful, near-deserted way. The main onion-domed **Virgin of Bogolyubovo Church** dates from the late 17th century. The loveliest structure is the brick **Cathedral of Metropolitan Pyotr** in the middle of the grounds, restored with a shingle roof. (When Peter the Great ousted the Regent Sofia in 1690, his mother was so pleased she built him this church.)

A pet project of the ubiquitous Zurab Tsereteli, the **Museum of Modern Art** (Map pp128-9; ☎ 231 4408; ul Petrovka 25; adult/student R150/75; ☎ noon-8pm Wed-Fri, to 7pm Sat-Mon; M Chekhovskaya) is housed in a classical 18th-century merchant's home. It contains all kinds of 20th-century paintings, sculptures and graphics, including some works by Marc Chagall, Natalia Goncharova, Vasily Kandinsky and Kasimir Malevich. Don't bypass the whimsical sculpture garden in the courtyard.

Just beyond the Garden Ring, the **Museum of Decorative & Folk Art** (Map pp128-9; ☎ 923 7725; Delegatskaya ul 3 & 5; admission R50; ☎ 10am-5pm Sat-Thu; M Tsvetnoy Bulvar) has a good two-room *palekh* (painted lacquerwork from the town of the same name) collection, as well as lots of regional folk art.

Tverskoy District

In spite of soulless reconstruction in the 1930s, it's hard to imagine Moscow without Tverskaya ul, the beginning of the road to Tver, and therefore to St Petersburg. The bottom end of the street, near Manezhnaya pl, is the city's hub: numerous places to eat and some of Moscow's classier shops dot the slope up to Pushkinskaya pl. Trolleybuses 12 and 20 go up and down Tverskaya ul as far as Belorussky vokzal (Belarus Station).

The streets around Tverskaya ul comprise the vibrant Tverskoy District, characterised by old architecture and new commerce. Small lanes such as Kamergersky per are among Moscow's trendiest places to sip a coffee or a beer and watch the big-city bustle.

CAUTION: CENSORSHIP

In January 2003 Yury Samodurov, director of the Andrei Sakharov Museum in Moscow, premiered a contemporary art exhibit entitled 'Caution: Religion'. The exhibit cast a critical eye on the clash between the nascent Orthodox revival and emerging mass consumer culture in Russia. It depicted, among others, the image of Jesus on a Coke can and the seven deadly sins as committed by an average Russian family in daily life. The theme: despite the sharp rise in citizens who identify themselves as Orthodox Christian, it is the values and identities of mass consumer culture that dominate postcommunist society.

The message elicited a shrill reaction from the Russian Orthodox Church, nationalist politicians and some patriotic hooligans, who were so offended that they vandalised the museum. The uproar attracted the attention of the state prosecutor.


The episode reveals how Russia's long tradition of dissent has evolved in postcommunist times. Throughout the Soviet period, dissent most often took political forms, correcting the lies of the regime and exposing its brutalities. As a prime example, the museum's inspiration and namesake, Andrei Sakharov, spent six years under house arrest in Nizhny Novgorod (see p407) for criticising Soviet policy. When communism collapsed, some wondered if Russia's long tradition of dissent would fade away with the commissars. As evidenced by 'Caution: Religion', dissent in post-Soviet Russia has not disappeared, but it is taking on new, cultural forms.

The case against the heretical artists also shows another side of postcommunist Russia. Under the administration of thin-skinned president Vladimir Putin, free expression has been curtailed, independent media have been intimidated and human-rights advocates silenced. The regime that began the transition espousing liberal political values has come to reflect an embattled Russian nationalism. The charges brought against the museum included inciting ethnic hatred and offending true believers. The prosecutor demanded – in the name of religious sensibility – that the exhibit should be destroyed and museum officials should be punished.

In March 2005 a Moscow court handed down the verdict. Museum director Samodurov and his deputy were found guilty and ordered to pay a fine of R100,000 each. Outside the courthouse, angry Christians were not appeased. 'These kind of people should be beaten in the face', one true believer railed.

Samodurov said that he would appeal the court's finding, taking the case, if necessary, all the way to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. The communist dictatorship may have fallen, but the ghost of Andrei Sakharov still haunts the Kremlin.

INNER TVERSKAYA ULITSA


Through the arch across the start of Bryusov per is the unexpected little gold-domed **Church of the Resurrection** (Map pp128-9;  Okhotny Ryad). The main building, built in 1629, is full of fine icons saved from churches torn down during the Soviet era; the refectory and bell tower date from 1820.

Tverskaya pl is recognisable by its **statue of Yuri Dolgoruky** (Map pp128-9), the man traditionally considered Moscow's founder. The buffed-up five-storey building that faces it is the **Moscow Mayor's Office** (Map pp128-9). Behind the statue to the right is the 17th-century **Church of SS Cosma and Damian** (Map pp128-9).



On the eastern side of Tverskaya ul, shortly before Pushkinskaya pl, is the ornate **Yeliseev Grocery Store** (p180) named after its founding owner, Pyotr Yeliseev, whose bust can be seen in the central hall. Originally a mansion, the shop has been restored to its former splendour with chandeliers, stained glass, and marble columns.

AROUND PUSHKINSKAYA PLOSHCHAD

From the square that bears his name, a **Pushkin statue** (Map pp128-9) surveys his domain. It seems Pushkin has been chosen to take the place of Lenin in the New Russian ideology. Behind the statue, the recently re-named **Pushkinsky Cinema** (Map pp128-9) – formerly the Rossiya – is the main venue of Russian film makers and celebrities; Pushkinskaya metro station is underneath.


Just off Pushkinskaya pl stand the multiple tent roofs of the **Church of the Nativity of the Virgin in Putinki** (Map pp128-9; Malaya Dmitrovka ul 4;  Pushkinskaya), which curiously contributed to a ban on tent roofs on churches by Patriarch Nikon in 1652 (the year this church was completed). Nikon thought them too Russian and secular – too far from the Church's Byzantine roots.

OUTER TVERSKAYA ULITSA



North of Pushkinskaya pl is the **Contemporary History Museum** (Map pp128-9; ☎ 299 6724; www.sovr.ru; Tverskaya ul 21; admission R50;  10am-6pm Tue-Sun;  Mayakovskaya), which provides an account of Soviet history from the 1905 and 1917 revolutions up to the 1980s. The highlight is the extensive collection of propaganda posters, in addition to all the Bolshevik paraphernalia. Look for the picture of the giant Palace

of Soviets (Dvoretz Sovietov) that Stalin was going to build on the site of the blown-up – and now rebuilt – Cathedral of Christ the Saviour. English-language tours are available with advance notice.

PATRIARCH'S POND

This peaceful fish pond was immortalised by writer Mikhail Bulgakov, who had the devil appear here in *The Master and Margarita*, one of the most loved 20th-century Russian novels. **Bulgakov's flat** (Map pp128-9; Bolshaya Sadovaya ul 10;  Mayakovskaya), where he wrote the novel and lived up until his death, is around the corner on the Garden Ring. Although the empty flat used to be a hang-out for dissidents and hooligans, it now has tight security appropriate to this high-rent district.

ARMED FORCES MUSEUM



Covering the history of the Soviet and Russian military since 1917, the **Armed Forces Museum** (Map pp128-9; ☎ 681 6303; ul Sovetskoy Armii 2; admission R30, English-language guided tour R650;  10am-4.30pm Wed-Sun;  Novoslobodskaya) occupies 24 exhibit halls, plus open-air exhibits. It houses more than 800,000 military items, including uniforms, medals and weapons. Among the highlights are remainders of the American U2 spy plane (brought down in the Urals in 1960) and the victory flag raised over Reichstag in 1945. Take trolleybus 69 (or walk) 1.25km west from the Novoslobodskaya metro.

Barrikadnaya

The neighbourhood surrounding the intersection of Bolshaya Nikitskaya ul with the Garden Ring at Kudrinskaya pl is known as Barrikadnaya (Barricade), so-called because it saw heavy street fighting during the 1905 and 1917 uprisings.

The skyscraper at this intersection is one of the Stalinist 'Seven Sisters' neo-Gothic monstrosities.

AROUND KUDRINSKAYA PLOSHCHAD



'The colour of the house is liberal, ie red', Anton Chekhov wrote of the house on the Garden Ring, where he lived from 1886 to 1890. Appropriately, the house now contains the **Chekhov House-Museum** (Map pp128-9; ☎ 291 6154; ul Sadovaya-Kudrinskaya 6; admission R30;  11am-5pm Tue-Sun;  Barrikadnaya), with bed-


rooms, drawing room and study intact. One room is dedicated to Chekhov's time in Melikhovo (p198), showing photographs and manuscripts from his country estate.



Behind Kudrinskaya pl is the main entrance to the big **Moscow Zoo** (Map pp128-9; ☎ 255 6367; www.zoo.ru/moscow; cnr Barrikadnaya & Bolshaya Gruzinskaya uls; admission R80;  10am-8pm Tue-Sun May-Sep, 10am-5pm Tue-Sun Oct-Apr;  Barrikadnaya). Popular with families, the highlight is the big cats exhibit, although the domestic animals and the kids are fun to watch too.

BOLSHAYA NIKITSKAYA ULITSA


Bolshaya Nikitskaya ul runs from the Moscow State University building, on Mokhovaya ul, to the Garden Ring. In the back streets many old mansions have survived – some renovated, some dilapidated. Most of those inside the Boulevard Ring were built by the 18th-century aristocracy; those outside by rising 19th-century industrialists. With little traffic, Bolshaya Nikitskaya ul is excellent for a quiet ramble.

On an even quieter side street, the **Matryoshka Museum** (Map pp128-9; ☎ 291 9645; Leontevsky per 7; admission free;  10am-6pm Mon-Thu, to 5pm Fri;  Pushkinskaya) is a two-room museum showcasing designer *matryoshka* (nesting dolls) and different painting techniques. The exhibit demonstrates the history of this favourite Russian souvenir.

Pl Nikitskie Vorota, where Bolshaya Nikitskaya ul crosses the Boulevard Ring, is named after the Nikitsky Gates in the city walls, which the ring has replaced. In 1831 the poet Alexander Pushkin married Natalya Goncharova in the **Church of the Grand Ascension** (Map pp128-9;  Arbatskaya) on the western side of pl Nikitskie Vorota. Six years later, he died in St Petersburg defending her honour in a duel; the **Rotunda Fountain** (Map pp128-9), erected in 1999 to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the poet's birthday, features the couple.

Immediately north of the church is the fascinating 1906 Art Nouveau **Gorky House-Museum** (Map pp128-9; ☎ 290 5130; Malaya Nikitskaya ul 6/2; admission free, photography permit R100;  11am-6pm Wed-Sun;  Pushkinskaya), designed by Fyodor Shekhtel. Gifted to Gorky in 1931, the house is a visual fantasy with sculpted doorways, ceiling murals, stained glass, a carved stone staircase, and exterior tile work. Besides the fantastic décor, it contains many

of Gorky's personal items, including his extensive library.

Converted to a theatre in the 1930s, the **Lyubavicheskaya Synagogue** (Map pp128-9; Bolshaya Bronnaya ul 6;  Pushkinskaya) was still used for gatherings by the Jewish community throughout the Soviet period. The rug on the altar hides a trapdoor leading to a small cell where Jews used to hide from the communists.

WHITE HOUSE

The Russian **White House** (Map pp128-9; Krasnopresnenskaya nab 2;  Barrikadnaya), scene of two crucial episodes in recent Russian history, stands just north of Novoarbatskaya most (still commonly known by its former name, Kalininsky most), a short walk west of the US embassy. It was here that Boris Yeltsin rallied the opposition to confound the 1991 hardline coup, then two years later sent in tanks and troops to blast out conservative rivals – some of them the same people who backed him in 1991. The images of Yeltsin climbing onto a tank in front of the White House in 1991 and of the same building ablaze after the 1993 assault are among the most unforgettable from those tumultuous years.

The White House – officially called the House of Government of the Russian Federation – fronts one of the Moscow River's staliest bends, with the Stalinist Hotel Ukraina rising on the far bank. This corner of Moscow is particularly appealing at night when these buildings and Kalininsky most are lit up at night.

Arbat District

Bound by the Moscow River on both sides, this district includes the area south of ul Novy Arbat and north of the Garden Ring.

ULITSA ARBAT

Ul Arbat is a 1.25km pedestrian mall stretching from Arbatskaya pl on the Boulevard Ring to Smolenskaya pl on the Garden Ring. Moscow's most famous street, it's something of an art market, complete with instant portrait painters, soapbox poets, jugglers and buskers (as well as some pickpockets). The Arbat is an interesting walk, dotted with old pastel-coloured merchant houses and tourist-oriented shops and cafés.

Until the 1960s ul Arbat was Moscow's main westward artery. Then a swath was

bulldozed through streets to its north to create the present ul Novy Arbat, taking out the old Arbatskaya pl, a monastery and half-a-dozen churches. Ul Arbat itself lay like a severed limb, until restored as a pedestrian precinct in the 1980s.

The evocative names of nearby lanes – Khlebny (Bread), Skatertny (Tablecloth), Serbryany (Silver), Plotnikov (Carpenters) – and that of the peaceful quarter south of the Arbat, called Staraya Konyushennaya (Old Stables), identify the area as an old settlement of court attendants (who were eventually displaced by artists and aristocrats).

Near ul Arbat's east end, the **Wall of Peace** (Map pp128-9; **M** Arbatskaya) is composed of hundreds of individually painted tiles on a theme of international friendship. Spasopeskovsky per, a side lanes, is home to the 17th-century **Church of the Saviour in Peski** (Map pp128-9) and the elegant **Spaso House** (Map pp128-9), residence of the US ambassador.

In a side street stands the refreshingly bizarre **Melnikov House** (Map pp132-3; Krivoarbatsky per 10; **M** Smolenskaya). This concoction of brick, plaster and diamond-shaped windows was built in 1927 by Konstantin Melnikov, the great constructivist architect who was denounced in the 1930s. Melnikov continued to live in the house, one of the few privately

owned homes in the USSR, until his death in 1974.

The statue at the corner of Plotnikov per is of **Bulat Okudzhava** (Map pp132-3), a 1960s cult poet, singer and songwriter, much of whose work was dedicated to the Arbat (he lived at No 43; see the boxed text, below).

At the western end of the street is the **Pushkin Arbat House-Museum** (Map pp132-3; ☎ 241 4212; ul Arbat 53; admission R40; ☎ 10am-5pm Wed-Sun), a house where the Pushkins lived after they married. The museum provides some insight into the couple's home life.

NOVY ARBAT

The start of the road west to Smolensk is formed by ul Vozdvizhenka (running west from the Kremlin) and ul Novy Arbat (the continuation to the Moscow River).

The 'Moorish Castle', studded with seashells, was built in 1899 for Arseny Morozov, an eccentric merchant who was inspired by the real thing in Spain; the inside is sumptuous and equally over the top. Morozov's home is now the **House of Friendship with Peoples of Foreign Countries** (Map pp128-9; ul Vozdvizhenka 16; **M** Arbatskaya), which is not normally open to the public, although exhibitions are sometimes held here. The 'castle' apparently inspired Morozov's mother to

declare: 'Until now, only I knew you were mad; now everyone will'.

Kropotkinskaya

The Kropotkinskaya district borders the Arbat district in the north, roughly at per Sivtsev Vrazhek. It is bounded more definitively in the west by the Garden Ring and in the south by the Moscow River.

PUSHKIN FINE ARTS MUSEUM

Moscow's premier foreign-art museum is the **Pushkin Fine Arts Museum** (Map pp132-3; ☎ 203 7998; www.museum.ru/gmii; ul Volkhonka 12; adult/student R300/150, audio tour R250; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun; **M** Kropotkinskaya). It is famous for its impressionist and postimpressionist paintings, but also has a broad selection of European works from the Renaissance onwards, mostly appropriated from private collections after the revolution. There is also an amazing (read: mind-numbing) array of statues through the ages.

Keep an eye open for any special exhibitions at the Pushkin. In recent years – as with the Hermitage in St Petersburg – it has revealed some fabulous art hoards that have been kept secret since their seizure from Germany by the Red Army at the end of WWII. The museum is also making an effort to mount some ambitious temporary exhibitions from its vast legitimate holdings.

The highlight of the Pushkin's permanent display is the four incredible rooms of impressionist and postimpressionist paintings and sculpture. But don't neglect the 17th-century Dutch and Flemish paintings, including several Rembrandt portraits. The excellent ancient Egyptian collection includes weapons, jewellery, ritual items and tombstones, as well as two haunting mummies that were excavated from burial sites.

Next door to the Pushkin, the **Museum of Private Collections** (Map pp132-3; ☎ 203 1546; ul Volkhonka 14; admission R40; ☎ noon-7pm Wed-Sun; **M** Kropotkinskaya) shows off art collections donated by private individuals, many of whom amassed the works during the Soviet era. The collectors/donors are featured along with the art.

The elaborate empire-style mansion opposite the Pushkin Fine Arts Museum houses the **Glazunov Gallery** (Map pp132-3; ☎ 291 6949; ul Volkhonka 13; adult/student R150/100; ☎ 11am-6pm Tue-Sun; **M** Kropotkinskaya), a new gallery

dedicated to the work of Soviet and post-Soviet artist Ilya Glazunov. The interior is impressive: three floors filled with fanciful illustrations of historic events and biblical scenes. Glazunov is famous for huge, colourful paintings that depict hundreds of people and places and events from Russian history in one monumental scene. His most famous work is *Eternal Russia* (Bechnaya Rossiya).

CATHEDRAL OF CHRIST THE SAVIOUR

Now dominating the skyline along the Moscow River, the gargantuan **Cathedral of Christ the Saviour** (Map pp132-3; ☎ 201 2847; www.xc.ru; admission free; ☎ 10am-5pm; **M** Kropotkinskaya) sits on the site of an earlier and similar church of the same name. The original church was built from 1839 to 1883 to commemorate Russia's victory over Napoleon, but it was destroyed during Stalin's orgy of explosive secularism. Stalin planned to replace the church with a 315m-high 'Palace of Soviets' (including a 100m statue of Lenin) but the project never got off the ground – literally. Instead, for 50 years the site served an important purpose: as the world's largest swimming pool.

This time around, the church was completed in a mere two years, in time for Moscow's 850th birthday in 1997, and at an estimated cost of US\$350 million. Much of the work was done by Luzhkov's favourite architect Zurab Tsereteli, and it has aroused a range of reactions from Muscovites, from pious devotion to abject horror. Muscovites should at least be grateful they can admire the shiny domes of a church instead of the shiny dome of Lenin's head.

ULITSYA PRECHISTENKA

Heading southwest from Kropotkinskaya metro, ul Prechistenka is virtually a classical mansion museum; most date from empire-style rebuilding after the great fire of 1812.

The **Pushkin Literary Museum** (Map pp132-3; ☎ 202 8531; ul Prechistenka 12; admission R40; ☎ 10am-5.30pm Tue-Sun; **M** Kropotkinskaya) is one of the most beautiful examples of the Moscow empire architectural style; the exhibit inside is devoted to Pushkin's life and work. In another mansion across the street, the **Tolstoy Museum** (Map pp132-3; ☎ 202 2190; www.tolstoymuseum.ru; ul Prechistenka 11; adult/student R100/50; ☎ 11am-6pm Tue-Sun; **M** Kropotkinskaya) contains Leo Tolstoy's manuscripts, letters

ARBAT, MY ARBAT

Arbat, my Arbat, You are my calling
You are my happiness and my misfortune.

Bulat Okudzhava

For Moscow's beloved bard Bulat Okudzhava, the Arbat was not only his home, it was his inspiration. Although he spent his university years in Georgia dabbling in harmless verse, it was only upon his return to Moscow – and to his cherished Arbat – that his poetry adopted the freethinking character for which it is known.

He gradually made the transition from poet to songwriter, stating that, 'Once I had the desire to accompany one of my satirical verses with music. I only knew three chords; now, 27 years later, I know seven chords, then I knew three.' While Bulat and his friends enjoyed his songs, other composers, singers and guitarists did not. The ill-feeling subsided when a well-known poet announced that '...these are not songs. This is just another way of presenting poetry.'

And so a new form of art was born. The 1960s were heady times – in Moscow as elsewhere – and Okudzhava inspired a whole movement of liberal-thinking poets to take their ideas to the streets. Vladimir Vysotsky and others – some political, some not – followed in Okudzhava's footsteps, their iconoclastic lyrics and simple melodies drawing enthusiastic crowds all around Moscow.

The Arbat today – crowded with tacky souvenir stands and overpriced cafés – bears little resemblance to the hallowed haunt of Okudzhava's youth. But its memory lives on in the bards and buskers, painters and poets who still perform for strolling crowds on summer evenings.

LEAVING A MARK ON MOSCOW

Zurab Tsereteli is nothing if not controversial. As the chief architect of the Okhotny Ryad shopping mall and the massive Cathedral of Christ the Saviour, he has been criticised for being too ostentatious, too gaudy, too overbearing and just plain too much.

The most despised of Tsereteli's masterpieces is the gargantuan statue of Peter the Great, which now stands in front of the Krasny Oktyabr chocolate factory. At 94.5m (that's twice the size of the *Statue of Liberty* without her pedestal), Peter towers over the city. Questions of taste aside, Muscovites were sceptical about the whole idea: why pay tribute to Peter the Great, who loathed Moscow, and even moved the capital to St Petersburg? Some radicals attempted – unsuccessfully, however – to blow the thing up. Today a 24-hour guard stands watch.

Mixed reactions are nothing new to Zurab Tsereteli. An earlier sculpture of Christopher Columbus has been rejected by five North American cities for reasons of cost, size and aesthetics. Some believe that the Peter the Great statue is actually a reincarnation of homeless Chris. Despite his critics, who launched a 'Stop Tsereteli' website, this favourite artist of Moscow Mayor Yury Luzhkov does not stop. He launched the Moscow Museum of Modern Art and took over the Russian Academy of Art. He recently opened the aptly named Tsereteli Gallery, which houses room after room of the artist's primitive paintings and elaborate sculptures.

Rumour has it that Tsereteli's next project is a theme park in a northwest Moscow suburb. Apparently, a 350-hectare plot has already been designated for the so-called 'Park of Wonders', which will be based on Russian fairy tales. As one Moscow journalist observed, 'For the sake of the children, let's hope Tsereteli's fairy tale heroes are not as scary as his Peter the Great'.

and sketches. These museums focus on literary influences and output, as opposed to the authors' personal lives, which are on display at the house-museums (see p156 and below, respectively).

The latest endeavour of the tireless Zurab Tsereteli is the aptly named **Tsereteli Gallery** (Map pp132-3; ☎ 201 4150; ul Prechistenka 19; admission R150; ☎ noon-6pm Tue-Sun; 🚶 Kropotkinskaya), housed in the 18th-century Dolgoruky mansion. The **Russian Academy of Art** (Map pp132-3; ☎ 201 4150; ul Prechistenka 21; admission R40; ☎ noon-6pm Tue-Sun; 🚶 Kropotkinskaya) holds rotating exhibits next door.

Khamovniki

The Moscow River surrounds this district on three sides, as it dips down south and loops back up to the north. The northern boundary is the Garden Ring. At its intersection with ul Prechistenka, a brooding Tolstoy statue sits in the park called Maiden's Field (Skver Devichego Polya).

TOLSTOY ESTATE-MUSEUM

Leo Tolstoy's winter home during the 1880s and 1890s now houses the interesting **Tolstoy Estate-Museum** (Map pp132-3; ☎ 246 9444; www.tolstoymuseum.ru; ul Lva Tolstogo 21; adult/student R100/30; ☎ 10am-5pm Wed-Sun; 🚶 Park Kultury). While it's not particularly big or opulent,

it is fitting for junior nobility – which Tolstoy was. Exhibits demonstrate how Tolstoy lived, as opposed to his literary influences, which are explored at the Tolstoy Museum (p157). See the salon where Sergei Rachmaninov and Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov played piano, and the study where Tolstoy himself wove his epic tales.

At the south end of ul Lva Tolstogo, the beautiful **Church of St Nicholas of the Weavers** (Map pp132-3) vies with St Basil's Cathedral as the most colourful in Moscow. It was commissioned by the Moscow weavers' guild in 1676, which explains the name.

NOVODEVICHY CONVENT & CEMETERY

A cluster of sparkling domes behind turreted walls on the Moscow River, **Novodevichy Convent** (Map pp132-3; ☎ 246 8526; adult/student R150/75, photography permit R60; ☎ grounds 8am-8pm daily, museums 10am-5pm Wed-Mon; 🚶 Sportivnaya) is rich with history and treasures.

The convent was founded in 1524 to celebrate the taking of Smolensk from Lithuania, an important step in Moscow's conquest of the old Kyivan Rus lands. Novodevichy was later rebuilt by Peter the Great's half-sister Sofia, who used it as a second residence when she ruled Russia as regent in the 1680s.

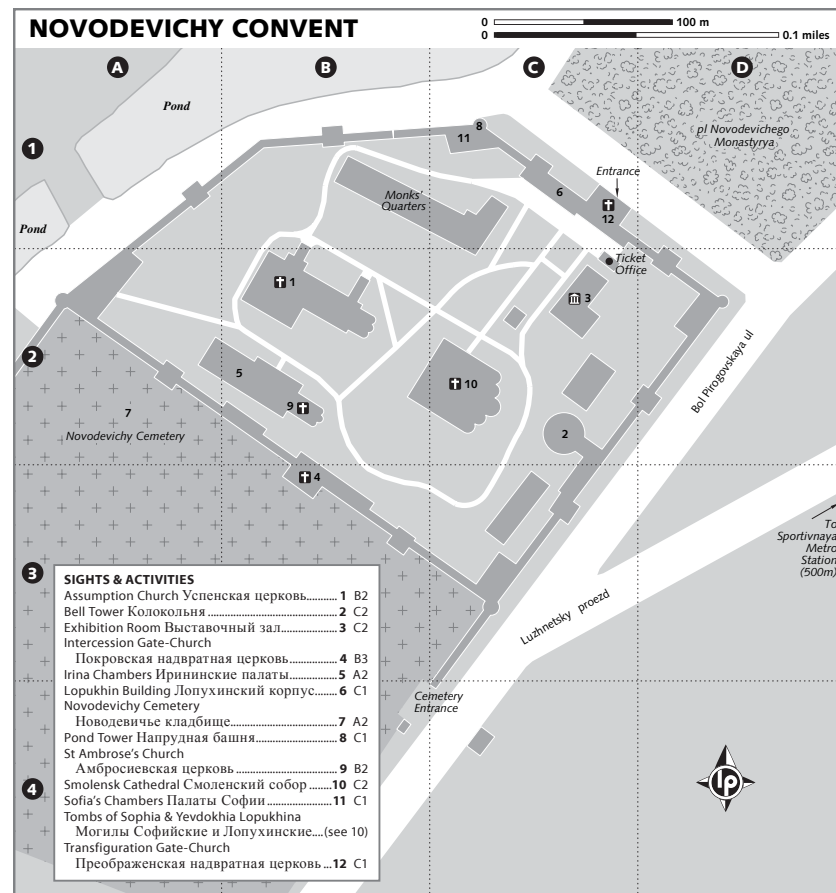
When Peter was 17, he deposed Sofia and confined her to Novodevichy; in 1698

she was imprisoned here for life after being implicated in the Streltsy rebellion. (Legend has it that Peter had some of her supporters hanged outside her window to remind her not to meddle.) Sofia was joined in her retirement by Yevdokia Lopukhina, Peter's first wife, whom he considered a nag.

Enter the convent through the red-and-white Moscow-baroque **Transfiguration Gate-Church**, built in the north wall between 1687 and 1689. The first building on the left contains a room for temporary exhibitions. Yevdokia Lopukhina lived in the **Lopukhin Building** against the north wall, while Sofia probably lived in the chambers adjoining the **Pond Tower**.

The oldest and most dominant building in the grounds is the white **Smolensk Cathedral**, modelled from 1524 to 1525 on the Assumption Cathedral in the Kremlin. It was unfortunately closed at the time of research, but the sumptuous interior is covered in 16th-century frescoes. The huge iconostasis – donated by Sofia – has icons from the time of Boris Godunov. The **tombs** of Sofia, a couple of her sisters and Yevdokia Lopukhina are in the south nave.

The **bell tower**, against the convent's east wall, was completed in 1690 and is generally regarded as the finest in Moscow. Other churches on the grounds include the red-and-white **Assumption Church** (1685 to 1687), and the 16th-century **St Ambrose's Church**.



Boris Godunov's sister Irina lived in the building adjoining the latter church. Today, **Irina's Chambers** hold a permanent exhibit of 16th- and 17th-century religious artwork such as icons and embroidery.

Adjacent to the convent, **Novodevichy Cemetery** (Map pp132-3; admission R30; ☎ 9am-6pm; 🚶 Sportivnaya) is among Moscow's most prestigious resting places – a veritable 'who's who' of Russian politics and culture. You will find the tombs of Chekhov, Nikolai Gogol, Vladimir Mayakovsky, Konstantin Stanislavsky, Sergei Prokofiev, Sergei Eisenstein, Andrei Gromyko, and many other Russian and Soviet notables.

In Soviet times Novodevichy Cemetery was used for eminent people, whom the authorities judged unsuitable for the Kremlin wall – most notably, Khrushchev. The intertwined white-and-black blocks round Khrushchev's bust were intended by sculptor Ernst Neizvestny to represent Khrushchev's good and bad sides.

The tombstone of Nadezhda Alliluyeva, Stalin's second wife, is surrounded by unbreakable glass to prevent vandalism. A recent addition is Raisa Gorbachev, the sophisticated wife of the last Soviet premier, who died of leukaemia in 1999.

If you want to investigate the cemetery in depth, buy the Russian map on sale at the kiosk, which pinpoints nearly 200 graves.

Zamoskvorechie

Zamoskvorechie (Beyond Moscow River) stretches south from opposite the Kremlin, inside a big river loop. This ancient district boasts Moscow's most famous park, its premier gallery of Russian art, and the current headquarters of the Russian Orthodox Church.

The Vodootvodny (Drainage) Canal slices across the top of Zamoskvorechie, preventing spring floods in the city centre and creating a sliver of island opposite the Kremlin. Tatars used to attack from the south, so Moscow's defensive forces were stationed in Zamoskvorechie, along with merchants and quarters devoted to servicing the royal court. After the Tatar threat abated and the court moved to St Petersburg, the merchants were joined by nobles, then by 19th-century factories and their workers.

Little damaged by Stalin, Zamoskvorechie is a varied, intriguing area, and from almost

any place here you can see the giant **statue of Peter the Great** (Map pp132-3).

TRETYAKOV GALLERY

Nothing short of spectacular, the **State Tretyakov Gallery** (Map pp132-3; ☎ 951 1362, 953 5223; www.tretyakov.ru; Lavrushinsky per 10; adult/student R225/130, audio tour R120; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun; 🚶 Tretyakovskaya) holds the world's best collection of Russian icons, as well as an outstanding collection of other prerevolutionary Russian art, particularly from the 18th-century *Peredvizhniki* (p96).

The original part of the Tretyakov building is a likeness of an old boyar castle, and was created by Viktor Vasnetsov between 1900 and 1905. The collection is based on that of the 19th-century industrialist brothers Pavel and Sergei Tretyakov (Pavel was a patron of the *Peredvizhniki*).

Within the museum grounds, the **Church of St Nicholas in Tolmachi** is the church where Pavel Tretyakov regularly attended services. It was transferred to the museum grounds and restored in 1997, and now functions as exhibit hall and working church. The exquisite five-tiered iconostasis dates back to the 17th century. The centrepiece is the revered 12th-century *Vladimir Icon of the Mother of God*, protector of all of Russia.

The Tretyakov's 62 rooms are numbered and progress in chronological order from rooms 1 to 54, followed by eight rooms holding icons and jewellery. In rooms 20 to 30, the art of the most prominent *Peredvizhniki* occupies its own rooms. Look for **Ilya Repin's** realist work, including the tragic *Ivan the Terrible and his son Ivan*, in rooms 29 to 30. A selection of **Isaac Levitan's** landscapes are in room 37. **Mikhail Vrubel's** masterpieces, including *Demon Seated* (1890), are in rooms 32 and 33.

Icons reside on the ground floor in rooms 56 to 62. **Andrei Rublyov's** *Holy Trinity* (1420s) from Sergiev Posad, widely regarded as Russia's greatest icon, is in room 60.

It's worth showing up early in order to beat the queues. The entrance to the gallery is through a lovely courtyard; the **Engineer's Building** (Map pp132-3; Lavrushinsky per 12) next door is reserved for special exhibits. Thanks to a lavish renovation during the early 1990s, the entire gallery is accessible to wheelchairs.

GORKY PARK

Part ornamental park, part funfair, Gorky Park is one of Moscow's most festive places to escape the hubbub of the city. Officially the **Park of Culture** (Map pp132-3; ☎ 237 1266; ul Krymsky val; adult/child R50/15; ☎ 10am-10pm; 🚶 Park Kultury), it's named after Maxim Gorky, and stretches almost 3km along the river upstream of Krymsky most. You can't miss the showy entrance, marked by colourful flags waving in the wind and the happy sounds of an old-fashioned carousel.

Gorky Park has a small Western-style amusement park with two roller coasters and almost a dozen other terror-inducing attractions (aside from the Peter the Great statue). Space buffs can shed a tear for the *Buran*, a Soviet space shuttle that never carried anyone into space. Most of the rides cost R30 to R60.

In winter the ponds are flooded for ice skating on and tracks are made for cross-country skiing. Skis and skates are available for rental for R50 and R80 per hour, respectively.

NEW TRETYAKOV

The premier venue for 20th-century Russian art is the State Tretyakov Gallery on ul Krymsky val, better known as the **New Tretyakov** (Map pp132-3; ☎ 238 1378; adult/student R225/130; ☎ 10am-6.30pm Tue-Sun; 🚶 Park Kultury). This place has much more than the typical socialist realist images of muscle-bound men wielding scythes and of busty women milking cows (although there's that too). The exhibits showcase avant-garde artists like Malevich, Kandinsky, Chagall, Goncharova and Lyubov Popova.

In the same building as the New Tretyakov, the **Central House of Artists** (☎ 238 9634; adult/student R50/20; ☎ 11am-7pm Tue-Sun; 🚶 Park Kultury) is a huge exhibit space used for contemporary art shows.

Behind the complex is a wonderful, moody **Sculpture Park** (Map pp132-3; ☎ 290 0667; ul Krymsky val 10; admission R50; ☎ 9am-9pm; 🚶 Park Kultury). Formerly called the Park of the Fallen Heroes, it started as a collection of Soviet statues (Stalin, Dzerzhinsky, a selection of Lenins and Brezhnevs) put out to pasture when they were ripped from their pedestals in the post-1991 wave of anti-Soviet feeling. These discredited icons have now been joined by contemporary work, including an

erie bust of Stalin surrounded by heads representing millions of purge victims.

ULITSA BOLSHAYA ORDYNKA & PYATNITSKAYA ULITSYA

The atmosphere of 19th-century Moscow lives on in the low buildings, crumbling courtyards and clusters of onion domes along narrow ul Bolshaya Ordynka, which runs 2km down the middle of Zamoskvorechie to Serpukhovskaya pl. Pyatnitskaya ul is roughly parallel, 200m to the east. The many churches here make up a scrapbook of Muscovite architectural styles. The name 'Ordynka' comes from *orda* (horde); until the 16th century, this was the start of the road to the Golden Horde's capital on the Volga, where Tatar ambassadors lived.

If you head south from Maly Moskvoretsky most, the first lane on the right contains the tall **Resurrection Church in Kadashi** (Map pp132-3; 🚶 Tretyakovskaya), a restoration centre for other churches. Its rich, late-17th-century decoration is a fine example of 'Moscow baroque'. The tall and elegant belfry earned the nickname 'the candle'.

The small, white **SS Mikhail & Fyodor Church** (Map pp132-3; Chernigovskiy per; 🚶 Tretyakovskaya), dating from the late 17th century, has two rows of spade gables and five domes on a thin tower. The larger **St John the Baptist Church** (Map pp132-3), from the same period, has a landmark bell tower that was added in 1753.

The empire-style **Virgin of Consolation of All Sorrows Church** (Map pp132-3; ul Bolshaya Ordynka 20; 🚶 Tretyakovskaya) dates from the 1830s. Klimentovskiy per leads to **St Clement's Church** (Map pp132-3; Pyatnitskaya ul 26; 🚶 Tretyakovskaya), built between 1742 and 1774, and a rare Moscow example of the true baroque style favoured by Empress Elizabeth.

The blue-and-white **Church of St Nicholas in Pyzhi** (Map pp132-3; ul Bolshaya Ordynka 27A; 🚶 Tretyakovskaya), a working church, is a typical five-domed, mid-17th-century church, with spade gables and thin onion domes. **SS Martha & Mary Convent** (Map pp132-3; ul Bolshaya Ordynka 34A; 🚶 Tretyakovskaya), with its pretty, single-domed Intercession Church, now houses church restoration offices. The church and gates were built between 1908 and 1912 in neo-Russian style. The church is open only for services, but the interior frescoes are worth a visit.

DANILOVSKY MONASTERY

The headquarters of the Russian Orthodox Church stand behind white fortress walls. The **Danilovsky Monastery** (Map pp126-7; ☎ 955 6757; Danilovsky val; admission free; 🕒 7am-7pm; 📍 Tulsckaya) was built in the late 13th century by Daniil, the first Prince of Moscow, as an outer city defence. It was repeatedly altered over the next several hundred years, and served as a factory and a detention centre during the Soviet period.

However, it was restored in time to replace Sergiev Posad as the Church's spiritual and administrative centre and to become the official residence of the patriarch during the millennial celebrations of Russian Orthodoxy in 1988. Today it radiates an air of purpose befitting the Church's role in modern Russia.

On holy days in particular, the place fills with worshippers murmuring prayers, lighting candles and ladling holy water into jugs at the tiny chapel inside the gates. Enter beneath the pink **St Simeon Stylites Gate-Church** on the north wall. Its bells are the first in Moscow to ring on holy days.

The monastery's oldest and busiest church is the **Church of the Holy Fathers of the Seven Ecumenical Councils**, where worship is held continuously from 10am to 5pm daily. Founded in the 17th century and rebuilt repeatedly, the church contains several chapels on two floors: the main one upstairs is flanked by side chapels to St Daniil (on the northern side) and SS Boris and Gleb (south). On ground level the small main chapel is dedicated to the Protecting Veil, the northern one to the prophet Daniil.

The yellow, neoclassical **Trinity Cathedral**, built in the 1830s, is an austere counterpart to the other buildings.

DONSKOY MONASTERY

Founded in 1591, the **Donskoy Monastery** (Map pp126-7; ☎ 952 1646; Donskaya ul; 📍 Shabolovskaya) is the youngest of Moscow's fortified monasteries. It was built to house the *Virgin of the Don* icon (now in the Tretyakov Gallery), which was credited with bringing victory in the 1380 Battle of Kulikovo (see p121). It's also said that in 1591 the Tatar Khan Giri retreated without a fight after the icon showed him with burning arrows in a dream.

Most of the monastery, surrounded by a brick wall with 12 towers, was built be-

tween 1684 and 1733 under Regent Sofia and Peter the Great. From 1918 to 1927 it was the Russian Orthodox Church headquarters; later, it was closed as a monastery, falling into neglect despite being used as an architecture museum. Restored in 1990 and 1991, it's now back in Church hands.

The **Virgin of Tikhvin Church** over the north gate, built in 1713 and 1714, is one of the last examples of Moscow baroque. In the centre of the grounds is the large, brick **New Cathedral**, built between 1684 and 1693; just to its south is the smaller **Old Cathedral**, dating from 1591 to 1593.

When burials in central Moscow were banned after a 1771 plague, the Donskoy Monastery became a graveyard for the nobility, and it is littered with elaborate tombs and chapels.

Zayauzie

Taganskaya pl on the Garden Ring is a monster intersection – loud, dusty and crowded. It's the hub of Zayauzie, the area south of the little Yauza River, and the territory of the 17th-century blacksmiths' guild; later it became an Old Believers' quarter. The square's character disappeared with reconstruction in the 1970s and 1980s, but traces remain in the streets radiating from it. This whole neighbourhood has a look of abandoned grace.

TAGANSKAYA PLOSHCHAD

The great block that dominates Taganskaya pl is the **Taganka Theatre** (Map p134; cnr Taganskaya pl & Verkhnyaya Radishchevskaya ul; 📍 Taganskaya), famous in the Soviet era for director Yury Lyubimov's vaguely subversive repertoire; see p183 for ticket information.

Behind metro Taganskaya is the sombre **Taganka Gates Church of St Nicholas** (Map p134), from 1712. More fetching is the **Potters' Church of the Assumption** (Map p134; ul Goncharnaya 29; 📍 Taganskaya), built in 1654, with its star-spangled domes and impressive tile work.

Ul Goncharnaya leads north to the **Church of St Nikita Beyond the Yauza** (Map p134), which has 15th-century foundations, 16th-century walls, 17th-century chapels and an 18th-century bell tower. The church is dwarfed by the Kotelnicheskaya apartment block, one of the Stalinist Gothic 'Seven Sisters' skyscrapers built around 1950.

Northeast of Taganskaya, you can't miss the grand **Cathedral of St Martin the Confessor**

(Map p134; Bolshaya Kommunisticheskaya ul 15; 📍 Taganskaya), built in 1792.

ANDRONIKOV MONASTERY

On the grounds of the former Andronikov Monastery, the **Andrei Rublyov Museum of Early Russian Culture & Art** (Map p134; ☎ 278 1467; Andronevskaya pl 10; adult/student R85/40; 🕒 11am-6pm Thu-Tue; 📍 Ploshchad Ilich) exhibits icons from the days of yore and from the present. Unfortunately, the museum does not include any work by its namesake artist.

It is still worthwhile, not the least for its romantic location. Andrei Rublyov, the master of icon painting, was a monk here in the 15th century; he's buried in the grounds, but no-one knows quite where.

In the centre of the grounds is the compact **Saviour's Cathedral**, built in 1427, the oldest stone building in Moscow. The posy of *kokoshniki* (colourful tiles and brick patterns) is typical of Russian architecture from the era. To the left is the combined rectory

and 17th-century Moscow-baroque **Church of the Archangel Michael**. To the right, the old monks' quarters house the museum.

NOVOSPASSKY MONASTERY

Another 15th-century fort-monastery is 1km south of Taganskaya pl – the **New Monastery of the Saviour** (Map p134; ☎ 276 9570; Verkhny Novospassky proezd; admission free; 🕒 7am-7pm Mon-Sat, 8am-7pm Sun; 📍 Proletarskaya).

The centrepiece, the **Transfiguration Cathedral**, was built by the imperial Romanov family in the 1640s in imitation of the Kremlin's Assumption Cathedral. Frescoes depict the history of Christianity in Russia; the Romanov family tree, which goes as far back as the Viking Prince Rurik, climbs one wall. The other church is the 1675 **Intercession Church**. Under the river bank, beneath one of the monastery towers, is the site of a mass grave for thousands of Stalin's victims.

Across the road, south of Novospassky, is the sumptuous **Krutitskoe Podvorye** (Ecclesi-

SPACE TOURISM RUSSIAN STYLE

Ever fancied flying into space, or at twice the speed of sound? In Russia, it can be arranged – at a price. In April 2001 American billionaire Dennis Tito made history as the first paying customer of the Russian Space Agency, forking out a cool US\$20 million to pay a week-long visit to the International Space Station. In April 2002 another millionaire, South African Mark Shuttleworth, followed in Titos' space boots.

Not everyone has US\$20 million to spare, so the Russian aerospace company Sub-Orbital Corporation is working together with the US-based Space Adventures (which arranged the Tito and Shuttleworth jaunts) on its C-21 shuttle, designed to take one pilot and two passengers on hour-long return trips into space. For around US\$100,000 passengers will zoom 100km from earth, leaving the atmosphere for about five minutes and experiencing weightlessness and the blackness of space. The companies hope to have flights scheduled by 2008.

If you can't wait that long for a space flight, Space Adventures can arrange (for US\$18,995) for you to copilot a MiG-25 'Foxbat', a fighter jet that can fly at over 3000km/h (more than twice the speed of sound) to an altitude of 24,000m (the outer limit of the atmosphere, from where you can see the earth's curve). The flights take off from the formerly top-secret Zhukovsky Air Base, an hour's drive southeast of Moscow. Zhukovsky, the testing ground for Russia's newest aircraft, is home to the Gromov Flight Research Institute, one of Russia's largest centres for aviation science research and testing.

For your money you get four nights at a top Moscow hotel (including breakfast), transfers between airport, hotel and Zhukovsky Air Base, an English-speaking guide, a flight suit, a DVD with photo and ground video coverage of the flight, preflight instructions, training and a medical check. If you can't quite afford the MiG-25 experience, Space Adventures offers a range of flight programmes (including one to experience zero gravity) in other military aircraft. The cheapest is US\$6995 to experience weightlessness. This package also includes three nights in Moscow, transfers, an English-speaking guide, a flight suit, tour of historic Star City where Yuri Gagarin trained, a DVD with photo and video coverage of the flight, and lunch with a Russian cosmonaut. For full details contact **Space Adventures** (☎ 888-85-SPACE in USA, ☎ 703-524-7172 outside USA; www.spaceadventures.com; 4350 Fairfax Dr, Arlington, Virginia 22203).

astic Residence; Map p134; ☎ 10am-6pm Wed-Mon). It was the residence of the Moscow metropolitans from the 16th century, when they lost their place in the Kremlin as a result of the founding of the Russian patriarchate. At the northern end of the grounds are the brick **Assumption Cathedral** and an extraordinary Moscow-baroque **gate tower**.

OLD BELIEVERS' COMMUNITY

One of Russia's most atmospheric religious centres is the **Old Believers' Community** (Starobryadcheskaya Obshchina; admission free; ☎ 9am-6pm Tue-Sun), located at Rogozhskoe cemetery, 3km east of Taganskaya pl. Old Believers split from the main Russian Orthodox Church in 1653 when they refused to accept certain reforms. They have maintained old forms of worship and customs ever since (see p77).

In the late 18th century, during a brief period free of persecution, rich Old Believer merchants founded this community, among the most important in the country. To get here, take trolleybus 16 or 26, or bus 51, east from Taganskaya pl; get off after crossing a railway. Rogozhskoe's tall, green-domed 20th-century **bell tower** is clearly visible to the north.

The yellow, classical-style **Intercession Church** contains one of Moscow's finest collections of icons, all dating from before 1653, with the oldest being the 14th-century *Saviour with the Angry Eye* (Spas Yaroe Oko), protected under glass near the south door. The icons in the deesis row (the biggest row) of the iconostasis are supposed to represent the Rublyov school, while the seventh, *The Saviour*, is attributed to Rublyov himself.

North of the church is the **Rogozhskoe Cemetery**.

Visitors are welcome at the church, but women should take care to wear long skirts (no trousers) and headscarves.

Moscow Outskirts

ALL-RUSSIA EXHIBITION CENTRE (VDNKH) No other place sums up the rise and fall of the Soviet dream quite as well as the **All-Russia Exhibition Centre** (Vserossiyskiy Vystavochny Tsentr, VVTs; Map pp126-7; ☎ 544 3400; www.vvcentre.ru; ☎ pavilions 10am-6pm, grounds 9am-7pm; 🚗 VDNKh). The old initials by which it's still commonly known, VDNKh, tell half the story – they stand for Vystavka Dostizheniy Narod-

nogo Khozaystva SSSR (USSR Economic Achievements Exhibition).

Originally created in the 1930s, VDNKh was expanded in the '50s and '60s to impress upon one and all the success of the Soviet economic system. Two kilometres long and 1km wide, it is composed of wide pedestrian avenues and grandiose pavilions, glorifying every aspect of socialist construction from education and health to agriculture, technology and science. The pavilions represent a huge variety of architectural styles, symbolic of the contributions from diverse ethnic and artistic movements to the common goal. Here you will find the kitschiest socialist realism, the most inspiring of socialist optimism and, now, the tackiest of capitalist consumerism.

VDNKh was an early casualty when those in power finally admitted that the Soviet economy had become a disaster – funds were cut off by 1990. Today it's a commercial centre, its pavilions given over to sales of the very imported goods that were supposed to be inferior; much of the merchandise on sale is low-priced clothing and the like from China. The domed Kosmos (Space) pavilion towards the far end became a wholesaler for TV sets and VCRs, while Lenin's slogan 'Socialism is Soviet power plus electrification' still adorns the electrification pavilion to its right. Although you may not want to do your shopping here, VDNKh does host international trade exhibitions.

For tourists, it's a fascinating visit to see the remnants of socialism's achievements. Muscovites are not so easily amused, however. Fortunately the new centre also offers other distractions, including an amusement park, paint ball, a stocked fish pond and an open-air circus.

The soaring 100m titanium obelisk is a monument to Soviet space flight. In its base is the **Memorial Museum of Cosmonauts** (Map pp126-7; ☎ 283 8197; adult/child R40/20, audio tour R100; ☎ 10am-7pm Tue-Sun; 🚗 VDNKh), a high-concept series of displays from the glory days of the Soviet space programme.

OSTANKINO

The pink-and-white **Ostankino Palace** (Ostankinsky dvorets; Map pp126-7), a wooden mansion with a stucco exterior made to resemble stone, was built in the 1790s as the summer pad of Count Nikolai Sheremetyev,

JUDAISM IN MOSCOW

The Jewish population in Moscow became statistically notable only in the late 18th century, when imperial Russia annexed the eastern part of the Polish Kingdom – known as the Jewish Pale. Jewish trades and traditions were regarded as a threat to the social order of the empire, however. Official policy fluctuated from forced assimilation to social isolation.

A brief respite occurred under Alexander II, the Tsar Reformer, who lifted residential restrictions on Jews with 'useful' talents, such as merchants, doctors and artisans. Jews were allowed to enter new professions, such as banking and industry, and Moscow's small Jewish community flourished during these years.

Lenin once said 'scratch a Bolshevik and you'll find a Russian chauvinist'. While the revolution provided a period of opportunity for individual Jews, the socialist regime was not tolerant towards Jewish language and customs. In 1930 Lazar Kaganovich, an ethnic Jew and Stalin crony, was made mayor of Moscow. He pleaded against the destruction of the Christ the Saviour Cathedral out of fear that he would be personally blamed and that it would provoke popular anti-Semitism (both of which happened).

Anti-Semitism became official policy again in the late Stalinist period. The Jewish quarter in the Dorogomilova neighbourhood was levelled for new building projects. Two huge apartment houses were constructed for the communist elite, at 24 and 26 Kutuzovsky pr, on top of the city's old Jewish cemetery. Systematic discrimination finally prompted the rise of a dissident movement, which battled Soviet officialdom for the right to leave the country.

In 1986 Mikhail Gorbachev announced that refusenik Anatoly Shcharansky was permitted to emigrate, signalling a more relaxed official stance. Between 1987 and 1991 half a million Soviet Jews emigrated to Israel, and another 150,000 to the USA. Moscow's Jewish community declined as a result.

Today Judaism in Moscow is enjoying a modest revival, as believers reconnect with their ancestry and traditions. As in earlier times, the new opportunities for Jews that have arisen in postcommunist Russia have also stirred anti-Semitic incidents and rhetoric.

probably Russia's richest aristocrat of the time and son of Count Pyotr Sheremetyev. Its lavish interior, with hand-painted wallpaper and intricate parquet floors, houses the count's art treasures. The centrepiece is the oval theatre-ballroom built for the Sheremetyev troupe of 250 serf actors (see p166). In 1801 Count Nikolai married one of the troupe, Praskovia Zhemchugova, and the two retired to Ostankino to avoid court gossip.

Only the **Italian Pavilion** (☎ 286 6288; admission R40; ☎ 10am-6pm Wed-Sun mid-May-Sep) is open for visits. The hours are limited and it's closed on days when it rains or when humidity is over 80%.

After a fire in the late 1990s, the 540m **Ostankino TV Tower** (Map pp126-7) is no longer open to the public, although it still provides a distinctive landmark for the area.

To reach the Ostankino Palace, walk west from VDNKh metro, across the car parks, to pick up tram 7 or 11, or trolleybus 13, 36, 69 or 73 west along ul Akademika Korolyova.

VICTORY PARK & AROUND

Following a vicious but inconclusive battle at Borodino (p197) in August 1812, Moscow's defenders retreated along what are now Kutuzovsky pr and ul Arbat, pursued by Napoleon's Grand Army. Today, about 3km west of Novoarbatsky most (formerly Kalininsky most) is the **Borodino Panorama** (Map pp126-7; ☎ 148 1967; Kutuzovsky pr 38; adult/student R5/30; ☎ 10am-5pm Sat-Thu; 🚗 Park Pobedy, Kutuzovskaya), a pavilion with a giant 360-degree painting of the Borodino battle. Standing inside this tableau of bloodshed – complete with sound effects – is a powerful way to visualise the event.

The **Triumphal Arch** (Map pp126-7), further out, celebrates Napoleon's eventual defeat. Demolished at its original site outside Belarus Station in the 1930s, it was reconstructed here in a fit of post-WWII public spirit.

A short distance west is **Victory Park**, a huge memorial complex celebrating the Great Patriotic War. The park includes endless fountains and monuments and the memorial **Church of St George** (Map pp126-7).

The dominant monument is a 142m obelisk (each 10cm represents a day of the war).

The **Memorial Synagogue at Poklonnaya Hill** (Map pp126–7) houses the **Museum of Jewish Legacy History and Holocaust** (☎ 148 1907; Minskaya ul; admission free; ☎ 10am–6pm Tue–Thu, noon–7pm Sun; ☎ Park Pobedy). Admission is with a guide only, so you must make arrangements in advance, especially if you want a tour in English. Otherwise, you may be able to join an existing group.

The **Museum of the Great Patriotic War** (Map pp126–7; ☎ 142 4185; ul Bratiev Fonchenko 10; admission R30; ☎ 10am–5pm Tue–Sun; ☎ Park Pobedy), located within the park, has a diorama of every major WWII battle involving Soviet troops. Exhibits highlight the many heroes of the Soviet Union, as well as show weapons, photographs, documentary films, letters and many other authentic wartime memorabilia.

SPARROW HILLS

The best view over Moscow is from Universitetskaya pl on the Sparrow Hills – most of the city spreads out before you. It is also an excellent vantage point for seeing Luzhniki, the huge stadiums built across the river for the 1980 Olympics.

Behind Universitetskaya pl is the 36-storey Stalinist main spire of **Moscow State University** (Map pp126–7; Moskovsky Gosudarstvenny Universitet; ☎ Vorobyovy Gory), one of the ‘Seven Sisters’ that is visible from most places in the city thanks to its elevated site. It was built by convicts between 1949 and 1953.

KOLOMENSKOE MUSEUM-RESERVE

Set amid 4 sq km of parkland, on a bluff above a Moscow River bend, **Kolomenskoe Museum-Reserve** (Map pp126–7; ☎ 115 2768; grounds admission free, museum adult/child R300/100; ☎ grounds 10am–9pm, museum to 5pm; ☎ Kolomenskaya) is an ancient royal country seat and Unesco World Heritage Site. As many festivals are held here during the year, check if anything is happening during your visit.

From Bolshaya ul, enter through the 17th-century **Saviour Gate** (Map pp126–7) to the white-washed **Kazan Church**, both built in the time of Tsar Alexey. The church faces the site of his great wooden palace, which was demolished in 1768 by Catherine the Great. Ahead, the white, tent-roofed 17th-century **front gate and clock tower** mark the edge of the old inner palace precinct. The golden

double-headed eagle that tops the gate is the symbol of the Romanov dynasty.

The adjacent buildings house an interesting **museum** with a bit of everything: a model of Alexey’s wooden palace, material on rebellions associated with Kolomenskoe, and Russian crafts from clocks and tiles to woodcarving and metalwork.

Outside the front gate, overlooking the river, rises Kolomenskoe’s loveliest structure, the quintessentially Russian **Ascension Church** (Map pp126–7). Built between 1530 and 1532 for Grand Prince Vasily III, it probably celebrated the birth of his heir Ivan the Terrible. It is actually an important development in Russian architecture, reproducing the shapes of wooden churches in brick for the first time, and paving the way for St Basil’s 25 years later. Immediately south of it are the round 16th-century **St George’s Bell Tower** and another 17th-century tower.

Some 300m further south across a gully, the white **St John the Baptist Church** was built for Ivan the Terrible in the 1540s or 1550s. It has four corner chapels, which make it a stylistic ‘quarter-way house’ between the Ascension Church and St Basil’s.

Among the old wooden buildings on the grounds is the **cabin of Peter the Great** (adult/child R200/100), in which he lived while supervising ship- and fort-building at Arkhangelsk in the 1700s.

KUSKOVO PARK

When Count Pyotr Sheremetyev married Varvara Cherkassakava in 1743, their joint property amounted to 1200 villages and 200,000 serfs. They turned their country estate at Kuskovo, 12km east of the Kremlin, into a mini-Versailles, with elegant buildings scattered around formal gardens, as well as an informal park. It’s a pleasant trip out from central Moscow.

The main wooden mansion, **Kuskovo Mansion** (Map pp126–7; ☎ 370 0160; ul Yunosti 2; admission per exhibit R30–100; ☎ 10am–4pm Wed–Sun Nov–Mar, 10am–6pm Wed–Sun Apr–Oct), overlooks a lake where the count staged mock sea battles to entertain Moscow society. Across the lake to the south is the informal park. North of the mansion in the formal grounds are: an **orangery**, now housing an exhibition of 18th- to 20th-century Russian ceramics; an open-air **theatre**, where the Sheremetyev troupe of serf actors performed twice weekly; a pond-side

grotto with exotic ‘sea caverns’; a **Dutch house**, glazed inside with Delft tiles; an **Italian villa**; a **hermitage** for private parties; and a **church** with a wooden bell tower.

Buildings are closed when humidity exceeds 80% or when it’s very cold, counting out much of the winter. To get to the park, head to Ryazansky Prospekt metro station, then take bus 133 or 208.

IZMAYLOVO

Izmaylovo is best known for its extensive arts and crafts market (p185), held every weekend. After shopping, however, Izmaylovsky Park and the crumbling royal estate are nice for a picnic or more-serious outdoor activity.

A former royal hunting preserve 10km east of the Kremlin, **Izmaylovsky Park** (Map pp126–7) is the nearest large tract of undeveloped land to central Moscow. Its 15 sq km contain a recreation park at the western end, and a much larger expanse of **woodland** (Izmaylovsky Lesopark) east of Glavnaya alleya, the road that cuts north to south across the park. Trails wind around this park, making it a good place to escape the city for hiking or biking. To get here, head south (away from the giant Hotel Izmaylovo complex) from Partizanskaya metro.

The **royal estate** (Map pp126–7) is on a small, moated island. Tsar Alexey had an experimental farm here in the 17th century, where Western farming methods and cottage industries were sampled. It was on the farm ponds that his son Peter learnt to sail in a little boat, a boat that came to be called the Grandfather of the Russian Navy.

Past an extensive 18th-century barracks (now partly occupied by the police) is the beautiful, five-domed 1679 **Intercession Cathedral** (Map pp126–7), an early example of Moscow baroque. The nearby triple-arched, tent-roofed **Ceremonial Gates** (1682) and the squat brick **bridge tower** (1671) are the only other original buildings remaining. The latter contains an **exhibition hall** (☎ 166 5881; ☎ 11.30am–5pm Wed–Sun; ☎ Partizanskaya).

ACTIVITIES

Banya

What better way to cope with Moscow than to have it steamed, washed and beaten out of you? There are traditional *bani* (Russian hot baths) all over town. If you aren’t shy, gen-

eral admission to shared facilities (though thankfully separated by gender!) is cheaper than renting a private bath. Either way, the *banya* is a sensuous, exhilarating and uniquely Russian experience. See p71 for a fuller description of the *banya* experience.

Banya on Presnya (Map pp128–9; ☎ men 255 5306, women 253 8690; Stolnyarny per 7; admission R500–600; ☎ 8am–10pm Mon–Sat, 2–10pm Sun; ☎ Ulitsa 1905 Goda) Although lacking the old-fashioned decadent atmosphere of Sanduny, this new, clean, efficient place provides a first-rate *banya* experience.

Sanduny Baths (Map pp128–9; ☎ private 925 4631, general 925 4633; www.sanduny.ru; Neglinnaya ul 14; private room per hr from R1200, general admission per hr R500–700; ☎ 8am–10pm; ☎ Chekhovskaya) The oldest and most luxurious *banya* in the city. A work of art in itself, the Gothic Room has rich wood carving, and the main shower room has an almost aristocratic Roman feel to it.

Wellness (Map pp126–7; ☎ 709 5491; www.wellness-hall.ru in Russian; Volgogradsky pr 54; private room R2300–2900; ☎ Kuzminki) A distinctly New Russian place. Private baths for groups of up to four people include a Japanese sauna, a Greek bath and an ultrafrancy ‘modern hall’, in addition to the Russian *banya*.

River Trips

For new perspectives on Moscow neighbourhoods, fine views of the Kremlin, or just good old-fashioned transportation, a boat ride on the Moscow River is one of the city’s highlights. The main route runs between the boat landings at **Kievsky vokzal** (Map pp132–3), and **Novospassky most** (Map p134) 1km west of Proletarskaya metro (near the Novospassky Monastery). There are six intermediate stops: **Vorobyovy Gory landing** (Map pp126–7), at the foot of Sparrow Hills; **Frunzenskaya** (Map pp126–7), towards the southern end of Frunzenskaya nab; **Gorky Park** (Map pp132–3); **Krymsky most** (Map pp132–3); **Bolshoy Kamenny most** opposite the Kremlin (Map pp132–3); and **Ustin-sky most** (Map p134) near Red Square.

The boats seat around 200 (most Muscovite passengers are actually going somewhere, not just enjoying the ride) and are operated by the **Capital Shipping Company** (☎ 458 9624). They run from May to September (adult/child R200/100, 1½ hours, every 20 minutes). Check at the landings for the limited weekday schedules; on weekends they run as often as every 20 minutes in either direction.

Swimming

Public pools are difficult places to take the plunge if you are a foreigner because they all insist on a Russian doctor's certificate of your good health before they'll let you in. Fortunately, the pools generally have somebody on hand who can issue the certificate on the spot (for a small fee).

Chayka Swimming Pool (Map pp132-3; ☎ 246 1344; Turchaninov per 1/3; per hr R150; 🕒 7am-10pm Mon-Sat, 8am-7pm Sun; 🚶🏠 Park Kultury)

Luzhniki pool (Map pp126-7; ☎ 201 0795; Luzhnenskaya nab 24; 🕒 8.30am-8pm; 🚶🏠 Vorobyovy Gory) Part of the vast complex built for the 1980 Olympic games.

On hot summer days you can join much of the city and head to the beaches at **Serebryany Bor**, a series of lakes and channels on the Moscow River, 20km north of the city (a key detail since nothing from Moscow has yet been *flushed* into the water). There are areas that are unofficially dedicated to families, gays, nudists and even disco dancers. Take the metro to Sokol and then ride trolleybus 65 to the end of the line.

Winter Sports

There's no shortage of winter in Moscow, so take advantage of it. You can rent ice skates and see where all those great Russian figure skaters come from at **Gorky Park** (p161) or **Chisty Prudy** (p153). Bring your passport.

Izmaylovsky Park (p167) has both ski and skate rental. To get there, take bus 7 or 131 from Partizanskaya metro and get off at the third stop.

WALKING TOUR

A walk around Moscow is a chance to see some original settings from Russian literature, as well as the environs where various authors and poets lived and worked.

Start from Pushkinskaya pl on the west side of Tverskaya ul. Prepare yourself for the journey ahead with a little something at **Café Pushkin** (1; p176). Walk southwest along the promenade that runs between the two lanes of traffic of Tverskoy bul. Since the 18th century this has been the most popular of Moscow's streets for walking; even the Shcherbitskiye sisters in Leo Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* promenaded here.

The huge brown block at No 22 is the new building of the **Gorky Art Theatre** (2), named after Maxim Gorky. Previously

on this site stood the house of Praskovya Yuryevna Gagarina, a socialite who was very fond of hosting extravagant balls and opera performances. One of these infamous events is supposedly where Alexander Pushkin first met his future wife Natalya Goncharova.

In the middle of the boulevard is a **statue of Sergei Yesenin** (3), an early-20th-century poet who was in and out of favour throughout the Soviet era. Writing about love and landscapes earned him the nickname 'the peasant poet'. His short, stormy life was torn apart by no less than five marriages and violent bouts with alcoholism. He finally ended his own life in 1925 at the age of 30.

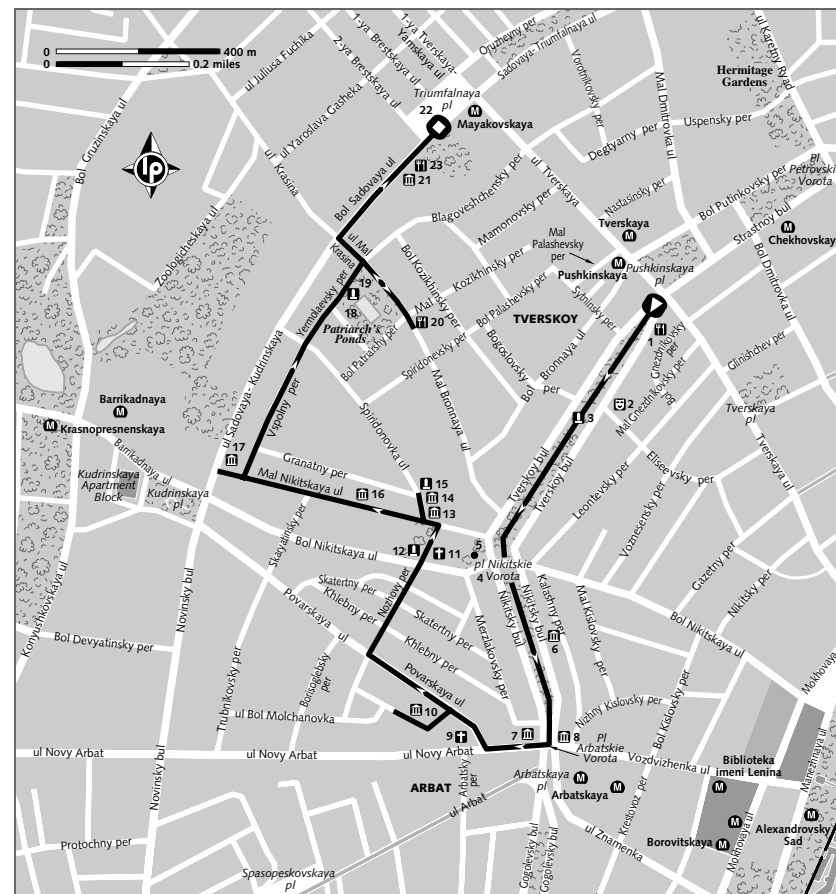
At the foot of the street is one of the most beautiful squares in Moscow. **Nikitskie Vorota** (4; Nikitskie Gates) takes its name from the gates of a wall that stood here from the 15th to the 18th centuries. At the corner of the square, the **Rotunda Fountain** (5), by the tireless Zurab Tsereteli, hides a statue of Pushkin and Goncharova, erected in 1999 to celebrate the poet's birthday.

Continue south on the Boulevard Ring, now called Nikitsky bul.

The classical building at No 12A now houses the **Museum of Oriental Art** (6; ☎ 202 4555; admission R60; 🕒 noon-8pm Tue-Sun), but it was built for the musical Lunin family. The moulded lyre on the front of the elegant house is a symbol of the many musical evenings that took place here.

The quiet courtyard at No 7 contains a statue of an emaciated, gloomy Nikolai Gogol, surrounded by some of his better-known characters in bas-relief around the base. The building on the right houses the **Gogol Memorial Rooms** (7; ☎ 291 1550; Nikitsky bul 7; admission free; 🕒 noon-7pm Mon-Fri, to 5pm Sat & Sun), where the writer spent his final, tortured months. The rooms are arranged as they were when Gogol lived here; you can even see the fireplace in which he infamously threw his manuscript of *Dead Souls*.

Across the street at No 8A is an 18th-century **mansion** (8) that was home to Colonel Kiselyov, a literature fanatic and friend of Pushkin. Apparently, Pushkin and Goncharova attended a ball at the colonel's home on the day after their wedding in 1831. During the Soviet period, this building became the House of the Press, and writers such as



WALK FACTS

Start Pushkinskaya pl
Finish Triumphalnaya pl
Distance 3km
Duration 2-3 hours

Yesenin, Alexander Blok and Mayakovsky all presented their work here. In 1925, just two months after Yesenin recited his poem 'Flowers' here, his fans returned to pay him their last respects.

Proceed down to ul Novy Arbat and turn right; then head west for one block. Turn right in front of the 17th-century **Church of St Simeon the Stylite** (9), Gogol's regular

parish church. Head north on Povarskaya ul and take the first left on Malaya Molchanovka ul.

The pink house at No 2 was home to Mikhail Lermontov, author of *A Hero of Our Time*. It now houses the **Lermontov House-Museum** (10; ☎ 291 5298; Malaya Molchanovka ul 2; adult/child/student R30/20/25; 🕒 2-5pm Wed & Fri, 11am-3pm Thu, Sat & Sun).

Return to Povarskaya ul and turn left, heading northwest. Povarskaya ul (meaning Cooks' St) was once inhabited by the royal court's cooks. The names of the lanes in this area still evoke the tsar's kitchen: Stolovy (Dining Room), Skatertny (Table Cloth), Khlebny (Bread) and Nozhovy (Cutlery).

Turn right on Nozhovy per and head north. Cross Bolshaya Nikitskaya ul.

The graceful **Church of the Grand Ascension** (11; p155) was built between 1798 and 1816 by Vasily Bazhenov and Matvei Kazakov. Pushkin married Goncharova here in 1831.

A lesser-known Tolstoy (and distant relative of Leo), **Alexey Tolstoy** (12) stands in the small park across the lane. Also a writer, Alexey Tolstoy is known primarily for his 20th-century novels about the Civil War and the revolution, the most famous being the trilogy *The Ordeal*.

Continue north on Nozhovy per until it ends at Malaya Nikitskaya ul.

Opposite the church on Malaya Nikitskaya ul is an Art Nouveau masterpiece at No 6/2 that once was the house of a wealthy merchant, Stepan Ryabushinsky. Designed by Fyodor Shekhtel, with mosaics by Mikhail Vrubel, the house was later gifted to writer Maxim Gorky, who often complained about the décor's extravagance. The building still houses the **Gorky House-Museum** (13; p155). Behind Gorky's house is **Alexey Tolstoy's flat** (14).

From Malaya Nikitskaya ul, take an immediate right and then head north on ul Spiridonovka.

The statue of another early-20th-century poet, **Alexander Blok** (15), stands a bit further up ul Spiridonovka. The revolutionary Blok believed that individualism had caused a decline in society's ethics, a situation that would only be rectified by a communist revolution.

Head back to Malaya Nikitskaya ul and turn right. The 18th-century **classical estate** (16) at No 12 once belonged to the Bobrinsky family. It was also depicted by Pushkin as the Larins' house in Yevgeny Onegin. At the end of ul Malaya Nikitskaya, turn right on to the Garden Ring.

The 19th-century writer Anton Chekhov lived and worked at No 6 ul Sadovaya-Kudrinskaya. Now open as the **Chekhov House-Museum** (17; p154), this is where he composed such masterpieces as *Three Sisters* and *The Seagull*.

Head back on Malaya Nikitskaya ul. Take the first left and walk north on Vspolny per. At the intersection with ul Spiridonovka, the name changes to Yermolayevsky. Proceed another 200m to reach the **Patriarch's Ponds** (18).

The small park to the west of the pond has a huge statue of 19th-century Russian writer **Ivan Krylov** (19), known to every Russian child for his didactic tales. Scenes from his stories surround the statue of the writer.

Once this area contained several ponds that kept fish for the patriarch's court (thus the name). But it is more famous as the setting for the opening scene in the novel by Mikhail Bulgakov, *The Master and Margarita*. The initial paragraph describes the area north of the pond, where the devil enters the scene and predicts the rapid death of Berlioz. If you are a real literary buff – or if you just need to refuel – grab a bite to eat at the nearby **Cafe Margarita** (20; p177).

Turn left on Malaya Krasina ul and head out to the Garden Ring. Turn right and walk one block north. The otherwise nondescript building at No 10 is **Bulgakov's flat** (21; p154).

Up ahead is Triumfalnaya pl, previously named for the poet and playwright **Vladimir Mayakovsky** (22), whose statue stands in its centre. A favourite of the Bolshevik regime, Mayakovsky sought to demystify poetry, adopting crude language and ignoring traditional poetic techniques.

From here you can break for lunch at the **Starlite Diner** (23; p178) or hop on the metro at Mayakovskaya station.

COURSES

Cooking

Russian cooking classes are hard to come by, but Dom Patriarshy Tours (opposite) does offer an occasional half-day course. Learn to whip up some bliny, then eat them for lunch.

Language

Check the *Moscow Times* for advertisements for Russian tutors and short-term courses.

Center for Russian Language & Culture (☎ 939 1463; www.ruslanguage.ru; MGU; 20hr course €110) Caters mostly to students, offering semester-long courses and dormitory lodging.

Liden & Denz Language Centre (☎ 254 4991; www.lidenz.ru; 16hr course R4480) These more-expensive courses service the business and diplomatic community with less-intensive evening courses.

Russian Village (☎ 721 7294; www.rusvillage.com; weekend-/week-/month-long course from €320/770/2380)

An upscale 'country resort' language school located in the village of Pestovo, north of Moscow. Prices include lodging and meals.

Ziegler & Partner (☎ /fax 939 0980; www.study.russian.com; Moscow State University, MGU) A Swiss group offering individually designed courses from standard conversation to specialised lessons in business, law, literature etc.

MOSCOW FOR CHILDREN

Got kids with you in Moscow? They may not appreciate an age-old icon or a Soviet hero but Moscow still has plenty offer the little ones.

For starters, the city is filled with parks. Patriarch's Pond (p154) and Alexandrovsky Garden (p147) both have playgrounds and plenty of room to run around. Or take them to Gorky Park (p161) – thrilling rides in summer and ice skating in winter make it the ultimate Russian experience for children. For a more post-Soviet experience, VDNKh (p164) also has amusement-park rides and video games.

Russia excels at the circus, and crazy clowns and daring acrobatics are all the rage at two locales: the huge Great Moscow Circus (p183), and the more atmospheric Nikulin Circus (p183).

Another Russian favourite is the puppet theatre. **Obraztsov Puppet Theatre & Museum** (Map pp128-9; ☎ 299 3310, 299 5563; Sadovaya Samotychnaya ul 3; ☎ Kutuzovskaya) runs performances of colourful Russian folk tales and adapted classical plays; kids can get up close and personal with the incredible puppets at the museum.

What better entertainment for kiddies than performing kitties? At the **Cat Theatre** (Map pp132-3; ☎ 249 2907; Kutuzovskiy pr 25; ☎ Kievskaya), Yuri Kuklachev's acrobatic cats do all kinds of stunts to the audience's delight. Kuklachev says, 'We do not use the word *train* here because it implies forcing an animal to do something; and you cannot force cats to do anything they don't want to. We *play* with the cats.'

Bigger cats are the highlight of the Moscow Zoo (p155), an obvious destination for children. For a trip out of the city, take the young ones to the bison nursery at the Prioksko-Terrasny Biosphere Reserve (p199), where highly informative educational programmes are designed especially for kids.

TOURS

Capital Tours (Map pp128-9; ☎ 232 2442; www.capitaltours.ru; Gostiny Dvor, ul Ilinka 4; ☎ Kitay-Gorod) This spin-off of Dom Patriarshy offers a twice-daily Kremlin/Armoury tour (US\$37/20, 10.30am and 3pm Friday to Wednesday) and Moscow city tour (adult/child US\$20/10, 11am and 2.30pm daily). Tours depart from Gostiny Dvor.

Dom Patriarshy Tours (Map pp128-9; ☎ /fax 795 0927; http://russiatravel-ptours.netfirms.com; Vspolny per 6, Moscow school No 1239; ☎ Barrikadnaya) Provides unique English-language tours on just about any specialised subject; some provide access to otherwise closed museums. Day tours range from US\$16 to US\$40 per person. Look for the monthly schedule at Western hotels and restaurants or online.

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

While Mayor Luzhkov is a keen proponent of bread and circuses for the masses, the festivals are an ever-changing lot from year to year; consult the Moscow newspapers for what's on. See p705 for a list of Russia-wide spectacles.

December & January

December Nights Festival Held at the main performance halls, theatres and museums from mid-December to early January. Classical music at its best, performed in classy surroundings by the best Russian and foreign talent.

Winter Festival An outdoor fun-fest during early January, for those with antifreeze in their veins (though plenty of people use vodka for this purpose). Teams compete to build elaborate ice sculptures in front of the Pushkin Museum and on Red Square.

March & April

Golden Mask Festival (www.goldenmask.ru) Two weeks of performances by Russia's premier drama, opera, dance and musical performers, culminating in a prestigious awards ceremony. Brightens up otherwise dreary March and April.

Moscow Forum (www.cmm.ru) A contemporary music festival held every year in April at the Moscow Conservatory.

June

Interfest (www.miff.ru) Short for the Moscow International Film Festival.

September

City Day (Den Goroda) Celebrates the city's birthday every year on the first weekend in September. The day kicks off with a festive parade, followed by live music on Red Square and plenty of food, fireworks and fun.

GAY & LESBIAN MOSCOW

Moscow is the most cosmopolitan of Russian cities, and the active gay and lesbian scene reflects this attitude. Newspapers such as the *Moscow Times* feature articles about gay and lesbian issues, as well as listings of gay and lesbian clubs. The newest publication of note is the glossy magazine *Queer* (Квир), which offers up articles and artwork aimed at, well, queers.

Some other useful resources:

www.gay.ru/english The English version of this site includes updated club listings, plus information on gay history and culture in Russia.

www.gaytours.ru While Dmitry is no longer working as a tour guide, his site is still a wealth of information about gay life in Moscow.

www.lesbi.ru An active site for lesbian issues; Russian only.

For specific venue information, see p184.

SLEEPING

Moscow is not a cheap place to stay – the small, simple hotels found elsewhere in Europe just don't exist yet, while those in the midpriced and budget ranges are mainly older Soviet-era properties that have weathered the transition to a market economy with varying degrees of grace. Many are huge labyrinths lacking any charm; however, with a bit of spirit, a stay in these places can be part of the Russian adventure.

The optimal area of the city to stay in is the centre. With the destruction of the landmark Rossiya Hotel, however, the remaining options are mostly top-end. Fortunately, a few midrange choices exist within the Garden Ring, which guarantees easy access to major sights and plenty of dining and entertainment options. The Tverskoy and Arbat Districts are particularly lively.

If you do find yourself far from the centre (which may be the case if you are on a tighter budget), look for easy access to the metro. An underground ride will whisk you from almost any stop into the centre in 20 minutes or less.

Beware that some hotels may charge a reservation fee – as much as 50% of the cost of the first night – if you reserve in advance. Prices listed include the 20% VAT (value-

added tax), but not the 5% sales tax that's charged mainly at luxury hotels.

Budget

Galina's Flat (Map p131; ☎ 921 6038; galinas.flat@mtu-net.ru; ul Chaplygina 8, No 35; dm/s/d R300/540/750; ☑; ♿; ♿) (Chisty Prudy) It's just that – a private, Soviet-era flat with a few extra rooms that Galina rents out. Staying at Galina's feels like staying in your friend's crowded apartment – cosy, comfortable and convivial. She has a total of six beds, as well as kitchen and laundry facilities, but she does not provide visa support.

Travellers Guest House (Map pp126-7; ☎ 631 4059; www.tgh.ru; Bolshaya Pereslavskaaya ul 50, 10th fl; dm R690, s/d without bathroom R1350/1650, d with bathroom R1800; ☑; ♿; ♿) (Prospekt Mira) Calls itself Moscow's 'first and only' budget accommodation. Perhaps the first but no longer the only, this place is still one of the better options for budget travellers. Despite its location on the 10th floor of a drab hotel, it manages to maintain a vibrant, hostel-like atmosphere, thanks to the travellers hanging out in common lounge and to all the services available through the affiliated Infinity Travel Agency.

Hotel Izmaylovo (Gamma – Delta) (Map pp126-7; ☎ 737 7187, 737 7104; www.izmailovo.ru; Izmaylovskoe sh 71; s/d from R1440/1540; ☑; ♿; ♿) (Partizanskaya) Built for the 1980 Olympics, this hotel has 8000 beds, apparently making it Europe's biggest hotel. Four of the five buildings are budget accommodations, but Gamma – Delta is the snazziest and most service-oriented. If you need to escape the frenetic atmosphere that surrounds Izmaylovo market, it's just a few steps to lovely Izmaylovsky Park.

Hostel Sherstone (Map pp126-7; ☎ 711 2613; www.sherstone.ru; Gostinichny proezd 8/1, 3rd fl; dm/s/d R600/1200/1550; ♿) (Vladykino) The tree-lined streets west of the Botanical Gardens comprise somewhat of a hotel district (thus the name of the street, which means 'Hotel Way'). This friendly hostel occupies one floor of a hotel by the same name. Its main advantage is the English-speaking staff, but rooms and services are also satisfactory.

Hotel Zarya (Map pp126-7; ☎/fax 788 7277; Gostinichnaya ul 4/9; s/d from R1350/1500; ♿) (Vladykino) A complex of short brick buildings, also located near the Botanical Gardens. Renovation of the rooms is ongoing, so the cheapest ones are pretty plain. But the reception is welcoming and the atmosphere is cosy. Upgraded

rooms with new furniture and bathrooms are R2100 for a single, R2700 for a double.

Golden Grain Hotel (Map pp126-7; ☎ 217 6356; www.zkolos.ru; Yaroslavskaaya ul 15; s/d from R1090/1345; ☑; ♿; ♿) (VDNKh) Outshone by its posher and pricier neighbour, the Dinaoda, this old-style hotel still has something to offer: pleasant service and affordable rooms. The location near the All-Russia Exhibition Centre means that it is often booked out to travelling business types.

G&R Hostel Asia (Map pp126-7; ☎ 378 0001; www.hostels.ru; Zelenodolskaya ul 3/2; s/d without bathroom from R875/1400; ☑; ♿) (Ryazansky Prospekt) It calls itself a hostel, but this is really a travel agency hiding out in a big old Soviet hotel. Unlike at the other 'hostels', your rooms may be anywhere in this monolith.

Midrange

TVERSKOY DISTRICT

East-West Hotel (Map pp128-9; ☎ 290 0404; www.eastwesthotel.ru; Tverskoy bul 14/4; s/d with breakfast R4800/6500; ☑; ♿; ♿) (Pushkinskaya) Located on the loveliest stretch of the Boulevard Ring, this small hotel evokes the atmosphere of the 19th-century mansion it once was. It is a kitschy but charming place with 26 individually decorated rooms and a lovely fountain-filled courtyard.

Hotel Budapest (Map pp128-9; ☎ 923 1060; www.hotel-budapest.ru; Petrovskiy linii 2/18; s/d with break-

fast R3850/5450; ☑; ♿; ♿) (Kuznetsky Most) This 19th-century neoclassical edifice is a perfect retreat after strolling in the surrounding swanky shopping district. Have a drink in the plush bar or dine under the crystal chandelier in the restaurant, Grand Opera. The grandeur does not extend to the rooms unless you dish out some extra cash for a suite (from R5775), but all of the accommodation is excellent value.

Hotel Peking (Map pp128-9; ☎ 209 2215; www.hotel.pekin.ringnet.ru; Bolshaya Sadovaya ul 5/1; d from R2500; ♿) (Mayakovskaya) With ongoing renovations, this Stalinist building boasts a prime location towering over Triumfalnaya pl. It's hard to see past the flashing lights and raucousness of the casino, but this place is blessed with high ceilings, parquet floors and a marble staircase. The upgraded rooms (single R3500, double R4200) – elegantly decorated in jewel tones – are worth the investment.

ARBAT DISTRICT

Hotel Arbat (Map pp132-3; ☎ 244 7628; fax 244 0093; Plotnikov per 12; s/d from breakfast R4320/5130; ♿) (Smolenskaya) One of the few hotels that manages to preserve some appealing Soviet camp – from the greenery-filled lobby to the mirrors behind the bar. For better or for worse, the guest rooms are decorated tastefully and comfortably. But the whole place has an anachronistic charm. Its location is

FIND A FLAT

Hotels in Moscow could easily break your bank. In response to the shortage of affordable accommodation, some entrepreneurial Muscovites have begun renting out flats on a short-term basis. Flats are equipped with kitchens, and sometimes with other useful amenities like Internet access. Often, a good-sized flat is available for the price of a hotel room, or less. It is an ideal solution for travellers in a group, who can split the cost.

Several websites provide information about apartments for rent. The apartments vary widely, of course, but many have photos available online. Apartments are around US\$80 to US\$100 per night, with prices decreasing for longer stays. Expect to pay more for fully renovated, Western-style apartments.

www.apartmentres.com Bills itself as gay-friendly lodging. Most flats include free airport transfers and international phone calls.

www.enjoymoscow.com Rick's apartments are off the Garden Ring between Sukharevskaya and Tsvetnoy Bulvar metro stations.

www.flatmates.ru/eng A site for travellers looking for somebody to share short- or long-term accommodation in Russia.

www.hofa.ru Apartments from €40 per night and homestays from €20 per night.

www.rentline.ru Offers online reservations for a variety of centrally located flats, starting from US\$80 per night.

www.unclepasha.com Uncle Pasha is an unbelievable grouch, but his flat – at US\$75 per night – is a great deal. He also maintains an extensive list of other budget accommodation options and will help you locate one.

AUTHOR'S CHOICE

Golden Apple (Map pp128-9; ☎ 980 7000; www.goldenapple.ru; Malaya Dmitrovka ul 11; r from R9000; 📍 🚶 🚗 🚲; 🍷) Pushkinskaya, Chekhovskaya) Calling itself Moscow's first boutique hotel, this small-ish, slick hotel is indeed a novelty. The location is prime – in the heart of Moscow's shopping district and steps from the serenity of Hermitage Gardens. A classical edifice fronts the street, but the interior is sleek and sophisticated. The rooms are decorated in a modern, minimalist style – subdued whites and greys punctuated by contrasting coloured drapes and funky light fixtures. But comfort is also paramount, with no skimping on luxuries like heated bathroom floors and down-filled duvets.

Even if you can't afford to spend the night, it's worth dropping in to have a drink in the lounge – walls splashed with colour – or to dine at the relatively subdued but highly acclaimed restaurant. This is the best of New Russia: contemporary, creative and classy.

too. With only 30 rooms, the hotel offers an intimate atmosphere and personalised service. Ask for a room with a balcony overlooking the fountain-filled patio.

Alosa on Kazachy (Map pp132-3; ☎ 745 2190; www.alosahotels.ru; 1-y Kazachy per 4; s/d from R7000/8050; 📍 🚶 🚗 🚲; 🍷) Polyanka) Set in the heart of Zamoskvorechie, one of the oldest and most evocative parts of Moscow, the Alosa re-creates the atmosphere of an 18th-century estate. The light-filled atrium, bedecked with crystal chandelier, and 15 classically decorated rooms provide a perfect setting for old-fashioned Russian hospitality.

Hotel Marco Polo Presnja (Map pp128-9; ☎ 244 3631; www.visit-m.ru; Spiridonevsky per 9; s/d from with breakfast R6750/7425; 📍 🚶 🚗 🚲; 🍷) Pushkinskaya) Once a prestigious hotel for high-ranking Communist Party officials, this small hotel is now an excellent, straightforward business hotel operated by the Moscow city government. It is situated in Moscow's most prestigious residential neighbourhood, home to expats and diplomats. The restaurant scene is lively, and Patriarch's Pond is right around the corner.

EATING

In Soviet days eating out meant either a cheap meal at the local cafeteria, or for special occasions, nearly identical food at a cheesy hotel restaurant. Perhaps the current situation in Moscow is a reaction to this dreary sameness. These days, theme restaurants are all the rage. From the Uzbek restaurant with the live camel out the front to the French restaurant with the Gothic cathedral interior, restaurateurs are going all out to ensure that their patrons' dining experience is at least interesting.

Today many restaurants in Moscow allow the diner to experience Russian food as it is meant to be – exquisite *haute-russe* masterpieces once served at fancy feasts and extravagant balls, as well as the tasty and filling meals that have for centuries been prepared in peasant kitchens with garden ingredients.

When you tire of borscht and beef stroganoff, you will be able to find excellent European, American and Asian cuisine. Many of these restaurants have foreign chefs, foreign management, foreign standards, and foreign price levels to match. Cuisine from former Soviet republics – including Georgia (p109), Armenia, Uzbekistan and Ukraine – is popular and delicious.

Many restaurants, especially top-end eateries, accept credit cards. Discounted 'business lunch' specials are often available weekdays before 4pm. This is a great way to sample some of the pricier restaurants around town. Most upscale places require booking a table in advance, especially on weekends.

Restaurants
RUSSIAN

Café Pushkin (Map pp128-9; ☎ 229 5590; Tverskoy bul 26a; business lunch R525, meals R1500-2000; 🕒 24hr; 📍 Pushkinskaya) The queen mother of *haute-russe* dining, with an exquisite blend of Russian and French cuisines; service and food are done to perfection. The lovely 19th-century building has a different atmosphere on each floor, including a richly decorated library and a pleasant rooftop café.

GlavPivTorg (Map pp128-9; ☎ 928 2591; ul Bolshaya Lubyanka 5; business lunch R125-195, meals R600-1000; 📍 Lubyanka) At the 'central beer restaurant No 5', every effort is made to re-create an upscale apparatchik dining experience. The

Soviet fare is authentic, but not too authentic. So you may get a side of peas, but they will be fresh and sweet. Add three varieties of tasty beer brewed on site, and you've got a restaurant to suit any ideology.

Yolki-Palki (meals R200-400; 🕒 11am-midnight) Tverskoy District (Map pp128-9; ☎ 928 5525; Neglinnaya ul 8/10; 📍 Kuznetsky Most); Arbat District (Map pp128-9; ☎ 291 6888; ul Novy Arbat 11; 📍 Arbatskaya); Zamoskvorechie (Map pp132-3; ☎ 953 9130; Klimentovskiy per 14; 📍 Tretyakovskaya) This excellent Russian chain is beloved for its country cottage décor and its well-stocked salad bar. Outlets all over the city specialise in traditional dishes and cheap beer.

Café Margarita (Map pp128-9; ☎ 299 6534; Malaya Bronnaya ul 28; meals R400-600; 🕒 noon-2am; 📍 Mayakovskaya) With walls lined with bookshelves and a location opposite Patriarch's Pond, this offbeat café is popular with a well-read young crowd. These bookworms are pretty quiet during the day, but the place livens up in the evening, when it often hosts live music.

Meeting Place (Map pp128-9; ☎ 229 2373; Maly Gnezdnikovskiy per 9/8/7; business lunch R300, meals R600-800; 🕒 noon-5am; 📍 Pushkinskaya) The name aptly describes this club-restaurant, which attracts a constant stream of regulars. The food gets mixed reviews, but it's filling and affordable; the many varieties of *pelmeni* (Russian-style ravioli) are particularly popular. Most come for the cosy atmosphere, summertime garden café and free wi-fi access.

TsDL (Map pp128-9; ☎ 291 1515; Povarskaya ul 50; meals R1500-2000; 🕒 noon-11pm; 📍 Barrikadnaya) The acronym stands for Tsentralny Dom Literatov (Central House of Writers), which is the historic building that houses this fancy restaurant. A glittery chandelier above, plush carpets under foot and rich oak panelling all around create a sumptuous setting for an old-fashioned Russian feast.

UKRAINIAN

Taras Bulba (meals R400-600) Tverskoy District (Map pp128-9; ☎ 200 6082; ul Petrovka 30/7; 📍 Pushkinskaya); Zamoskvorechie (Map pp132-3; ☎ 951 3760; Pyatnitskaya ul 14; 📍 Tretyakovskaya) With several branches around the city, this is the Ukrainian version of Yolki-Palki. There's no salad bar, but specialities like pork stuffed with vegetables and spicy smoked beef are tasty. Ukrainian tapestries and wood floors provide a homy atmosphere.

AUTHOR'S CHOICE

Tiflis (Map pp132-3; ☎ 290 2897; ul Ostozhenka 32; meals R1000-1500; 📍 Kropotinskaya) Moscow is the best place outside the Caucasus to sample the rich, spicy cuisine of the former Soviet republic of Georgia. And Tiflis is the best place in Moscow. The name comes from the Russian word for the Georgian capital, Tbilisi, and when you enter this restaurant, you may think you're there. Its airy balconies and interior courtyards recall a 19th-century Georgian mansion – a romantic and atmospheric setting. Tiflis takes Caucasian cuisine upscale. The *kharcho* (beef soup) is thick and rich, while the *basturma* (grilled lamb) is spicy and cooked to perfection. All the menu items are particularly delectable when accompanied by the Tiflis wine, produced by the restaurateur's winery in Georgia. According to Moscow foodies, Tiflis counts among its regular customers the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Igor Ivanov, who happens to be of Georgian descent.

Shinook (Map pp128-9; ☎ 255 0204; ul 1905 goda 2; meals R1000-1200; 📍 Ulitsa 1905 Goda) In case you didn't think that Moscow's theme dining was really over the top, Shinook has re-created a Ukrainian peasant farm near the city centre. The staff wear colourfully embroidered shirts, speak with Ukrainian accents (probably lost on most tourists), and serve up the house speciality, *vareniki* (the Ukrainian version of *pelmeni*). As you dine, you can look out the window at a cheerful babushka tending the farmyard animals (who are very well taken care of, we are assured).

CAUCASIAN

Karetny Dvor (Map pp128-9; ☎ 291 6376; Povarskaya ul 52; meals R600-800; 🕒 24hr; 📍 Barrikadnaya) Moscow's most popular Caucasian place has a simple, relaxed interior and a green, leafy courtyard – both pleasant. Go for classic Azerbaijani fare like dolmas and lamb kebabs, accompanied by a bottle of Mukuzani (red wine).

Dioskuriya (Map pp128-9; ☎ 290 6908; Marzlyakovskiy per 2; meals R400-600; 🕒 11am-midnight; 📍 Arbatskaya) This little house just off ul Novy Arbat is famous for its delicious *khachapuri* (Georgian cheese bread), but all of the food

is highly regarded, especially for the price. The music, a trio of a capella vocalists, outclasses standard Georgian restaurant bands.

Noah's Ark (Map p131; ☎ 917 0717; Maly Ivanovskiy per 9; meals R800-1000; M Kitay-Gorod) This Armenian joint features many varieties of shashlyk (meat kebab), many more varieties of cognac and an Armenian orchestra every night. The dining hall is aromatic and atmospheric, thanks to the meat roasting over charcoal in the central brazier.

EUROPEAN

Correa's (brunch R400-600, sandwiches R200-300, meals R600-1000; ☎ 8am-midnight) Belorusskaya (Map pp128-9; ☎ 933 4684; Bolshaya Gruzinskaya ul 32; M Belorusskaya); Zamoskvorechie (Map pp132-3; ☎ 725 6035; ul Bolshaya Ordinka 40/2; M Tretyakovskaya) It's hard to characterise a place that's so simple. It is a tiny space – only seven tables. Large windows and an open kitchen guarantee that it does not feel cramped, just cosy. The menu – sandwiches, pizzas and grills – features nothing too fancy, but everything is prepared with the freshest ingredients and the utmost care. The new outlet in Zamoskvorechie is roomier, but reservations are still recommended for Sunday brunch.

Artist's Gallery (Map pp132-3; ☎ 201 2866; ul Prechistenka 19; business lunch R240, meals R600-1000; M Kropotkinskaya) This fantastical restaurant in the Tsereteli Gallery is everything you would expect from this over-the-top artist. The five rooms follow different themes, all equally elaborate; it culminates in a huge, light-filled atrium wallpapered with stained glass and primitive paintings. The place certainly lives up to its name. The menu is a fusion of European and Asian influences, and while secondary to the art, the food is well prepared and artistically presented.

Scandinavia (Map pp128-9; ☎ 200 4986; Maly Palashevskiy per 7; business lunch R490, buffet R600, meals R1500-1800; M Pushkinskaya) There is no better place to indulge in *Shvedsky stol* (smorgasbord, or 'Swedish table' in Russian) than at a place called Scandinavia. The cold-cut buffet, however, is just the tip of the iceberg at this expat fave. A delightful summer café features sandwiches, salads and treats from the grill. Inside, the dining room offers a sophisticated menu of modern European delights.

Il Patio (business lunch R190-280, meals R400-500) Arbat District (Map pp132-3; ☎ 201 5626; ul Volkhonka 13a; M Kropotkinskaya); Barrikadnaya (Map pp128-9; ☎ 785

6553; Novinsky bul 31; M Barrikadnaya, Krasnopresnenskaya); Taganskaya (Map p134; ☎ 230 6662; Taganskaya ul 1/2; ☎ 8am-11pm; M Taganskaya) Long-time Moscow favourite Patio Pizza has gone upscale, with a new, more Italian name, and a new, more stylish look. Fortunately, it still has a slew of outlets, each representing a different Italian city. Wood-oven pizzas and fresh salad bars are the highlights of the menu.

NORTH AMERICAN

Simple Pleasures (Map pp128-9; ☎ 207 4043; ul Sretenka 22; meals R800-1000; ☎ noon-midnight Mon-Fri, 2pm-midnight Sat & Sun; M Sukharevskaya) The chef is American, but the menu is wide-ranging, including his favourite dishes from Italy, Spain and the American South. The common denominator is fresh ingredients and simple cooking techniques, an ideal match for this comfortable, uncluttered space.

Starlite Diner (meals R500-700; ☎ 24hr) Mayakovskaya (Map pp128-9; ☎ 290 9638; Bolshaya Sadovaya ul 16; M Mayakovskaya); Oktyabrskaya (Map pp132-3; ☎ 959 8919; ul Korovy val 9, stroyeniye A; M Oktyabrskaya) Outdoor seating and classic diner décor make this a long-time favourite of Moscow expats. The extensive brunch menu includes all kinds of omelettes, French toast and freshly squeezed juice. Otherwise, you can't go wrong with burgers and milkshakes, any time of day or night. A second, less pleasant outlet is near Oktyabrskaya pl.

Goodman Steakhouse (Map pp128-9; ☎ 981 4941; Novinsky bul 31; business lunch R360, meals R900-1500; M Krasnopresnenskaya, Barrikadnaya) Inside the Novinsky shopping centre, this classic American steakhouse is done up in leather and wood, with B&W photos on the walls and old movies running on the big screen. It receives rave reviews for filet mignon and rack of lamb, and it also claims Moscow's best burger for the bargain price of R360.

Hard Rock Café (Map pp132-3; ☎ 244 8970; ul Arbat 44; sandwiches R250-300, meals R600-800; ☎ 24hr; M Smolenskaya) At long last, those souvenir T-shirts reading 'Hard Rock Café Moscow' actually mean something. This is the real deal, complete with framed guitars, chicken wings and gift shop. The rock and roll memorabilia does not include enough representation from Russian rock stars, but there are a few notable exceptions. Live music on weekends.

Pancho Villa (Map pp132-3; ☎ 238 7913; ul Bolshaya Yakimanka 52; business lunch R120, meals R300-600; ☎ 24hr; M Oktyabrskaya) In a new location near

Oktyabrskaya pl, this is still Moscow's top choice for 'Meksikansky' food. If the fajitas and margaritas aren't enough of a draw, come for breakfast burritos, happy hour specials (before 7pm, Monday to Thursday) or live Latin music nightly (from 9pm).

ASIAN

Eastern Quarter (Map pp132-3; ☎ 241 3803; ul Arbat 45/24; meals R400-600; M Smolenskaya) Uzbeks cooking in the open kitchen and more Uzbeks filling up the dining room are signs that this Central Asian eatery is serving some of Moscow's best international cuisine. The speciality: tasty, filling *plov* (pilaf rice with diced mutton and vegetables).

Sushi Vesla (Map pp128-9; ☎ 937 0521; ul Nikolskaya 25; sushi per piece R100-200; ☎ noon-1am Sun-Thu, to 3am Fri & Sat; M Lubyanka) Sushi is all the rage in Moscow these days. To get in on it, head to this hip Japanese café in the basement of the Nautilus building (enter from Teatralnaya proezd). Dishes are colour-coded to indicate price; at the end of the meal the server clears the empty plates and uses them to calculate the bill.

Silk (Map pp128-9; ☎ 251 4134; 1-ya Tverskaya-Yamskaya ul 29/1; meals R600-800; ☎ 11am-5am; M Belorusskaya) Not too expensive, but still stylish, Silk is popular for authentic Chinese fare. Connoisseurs credit fresh ingredients and bold spices. 'Bamboo Fire' comes highly recommended for those with a tough tongue.

Maharaja (Map p131; ☎ 921 7758; ul Pokrovka 2/1; meals R600-1000; ☎ 12.30-11pm; M Kitay-Gorod) Moscow's oldest Indian restaurant features lots of spicy tandoori specialities, including several variations of kebabs and rotis hot from the tandoori oven. Vegetarians have no shortage of options here.

VEGETARIAN

During Lent (the 40-day period before Orthodox Easter), vegetarians will have a plethora of eating options, as many restaurants offer special lenten menus that feature no meat or dairy products. Only a few restaurants are exclusively veggie all year round.

Jagannath (Map pp128-9; ☎ 928 3580; Kuznetskiy most 11; meals R300-500; ☎ 10am-11pm; M Kuznetskiy Most) If you are in need of vitamins, this is a funky vegetarian café, restaurant and shop. Its Indian-theme décor is more New Agey than ethnic. Service is slow but sublime, and the food is worth the wait.

Avocado (Map p131; ☎ 921 7719; Chistoprudny bul 12/2; breakfast R35-65, business lunch R140, meals R200-400; ☎ 10am-11pm; M Chistye Prudy) Less atmospheric than Jagannath, Avocado has a more diverse menu, drawing on dishes from the world's cuisines. No-meat versions of soups and salads, pasta and *pelmeni* are all featured. Grab a seat near the window to watch the passers-by on the boulevard, because the place is otherwise rather austere.

Cafés

Loft Café (Map pp128-9; ☎ 933 7713; ul Nikolskaya 25; meals R800-1000; ☎ 9am-midnight; M Lubyanka) On the top floor of the Nautilus shopping centre, next door to the luxury spa, you'll find this tiny, trendy café. An even tinier terrace gives a fantastic view of Lubyanka pl. Innovative, modern dishes fuse the best of Russian cuisine with Western and Asian influences – for example, grilled salmon with spinach, pine nuts and caviar sauce.

Pavilion (Map pp128-9; ☎ 203 5110; Bolshoy Patriarskiy per; meals R600-1000; ☎ 24hr; M Mayakovskaya) With a prime location overlooking Patriarch's Pond, this new place promises to be prominent on Moscow's thriving café scene. While the pavilion dates from the 19th century, the interior is chic and contemporary.

Garden Art Café (Map pp132-3; ☎ 239 9115; Bolshoy Tolmachevskiy per; breakfast R60-100, meals R500-800; ☎ 24hr; M Tretyakovskaya) This appropriately named café is set in the midst of flowering trees in the courtyard opposite the Tretyakov, drawing a sophisticated, artsy crowd. Wide-plank wood floors and antique furniture contrast with the modern, jazzy music and contemporary cuisine.

Donna Klara (Map pp128-9; ☎ 290 6974; Malaya Bronnaya ul 21/13; meals R300-500; ☎ 10am-midnight; M Mayakovskaya) Specialising in flaky pastries and dark coffee, this little café is a regular stop for the French community that lives in this area.

Quick Eats

Moo-Moo (meals R100-200; ☎ 9am-11pm) Lubyanka (Map pp128-9; ☎ 923 4503; Myasnitskaya ul 14; M Lubyanka); Arbat District (Map pp132-3; ☎ 241 1364; ul Arbat 45/23; M Smolenskaya); Khamovniki (Map pp132-3; ☎ 245 7820; Komsomolskiy pr 26; M Frunzenskaya) You will recognise this place by its black-and-white Holstein-print décor. The cafeteria-style service offers an easy approach to all the Russian favourites.

Drova (meals R200-400, all-you-can-eat buffet R350; ☎ 24hr) Chistye Prudy (Map p131; ☎ 925 2725; Myasnit-skaya ul 24; **M** Chistye Prudy); Arbat District (Map pp128-9; ☎ 202 7570; Nikitsky bul 8A; **M** Arbatskaya); Iverskoy District (Map pp128-9; ☎ 229 3227; Bolshaya Dmitrovka ul 7; **M** Teatralnaya) The self-serve buffet features offerings ranging from *solnyanka* (a salty vegetable and meat soup) to sushi to sweet-and-sour pork. It's not the best place to sample any of these items, but the price is right. Hungry student types really take advantage of the all-you-can-eat option: it's not always pretty.

Pelmeshka (Map pp128-9; ☎ 292 8392; Kuznetsky most 4/3; breakfast R60, lunch R125, meals R150-200; ☎ 11am-midnight; **M** Teatralnaya) Serves many different kinds of *pelmeni*, the most filling of Russian favourites. This place is packed at lunchtime, a sign that it is tasty as well as cheap.

Fighting for prime retail space with McDonald's is the equally omnipresent local chain Russkoe Bistro, endorsed (and co-owned) by Mayor Luzhkov. It serves cheap,

traditional goodies such as pirozhki (pastries) and bliny.

There's a handy food court in the basement of the Okhotny Ryad shopping mall.

Self-Catering

If you want to eat like an old-time Muscovite, you'll buy your food, take it home and cook it there. Russian food markets can be entertaining, and if nothing else you can buy the ingredients for a good picnic.

SUPERMARKETS

Stockmans (Map pp132-3; Smolensky Passage, Smolenskaya pl 3/5; ☎ 10am-10pm; **M** Smolenskaya) The foreign-goods supermarket in the basement of Stockmans is pricey but convenient.

Yeliseev Grocery Store (Map pp128-9; Tverskaya ul 14; ☎ 8am-9pm Mon-Sat, 10am-6pm Sun; **M** Pushkinskaya) Peek in here for a glimpse of prerevolutionary grandeur, as the store is set in the former mansion of the successful merchant Yeliseev. It now houses an upscale market selling caviar and other delicacies.

COFFEE MANIA

Moscow temperatures occasionally call for a warming drink, so it's nice to know you're never far from a fresh brewed cup o' joe. With bohemian coffee houses opening on every corner, Moscow might be called the Russian Seattle; and what, you ask, might be the Russian Starbucks?

Coffee Bean Iverskoy District (Map pp128-9; ☎ 788 6357; Tverskaya ul 10; ☎ 8am-11pm; **M** Pushkinskaya); Zamoskvorechie (Map pp132-3; ☎ 953 6726; Pyatnitskaya ul 5; ☎ 8am-10pm; **M** Tretyakovskaya); Chistye Prudy (Map p131; ☎ 923 9793; ul Pokrovka 18; ☎ 8am-10pm; ☎ Chistye Prudy) One could claim that Coffee Bean started the coffee thing in Moscow, as the original outlet on Tverskaya ul has been around for years. It's still the coolest café in the city, with high ceilings, fantastic architectural details and large windows looking out onto the main drag. Coffee drinks cost around R100; it's a rare Russian place that does not allow smoking.

Coffee Mania Kuznetsky Most (Map pp128-9; ☎ 924 0075; Pushechnaya ul; ☎ 8am-11pm; **M** Kuznetsky Most); Barrikadnaya (Map pp128-9; ☎ 290 0141; Kudrinskaya pl 46/54; ☎ 8am-midnight; **M** Barrikadnaya); Bolshaya Nikitskaya (Map pp128-9; ☎ 775 4310; Bolshaya Nikitskaya ul 13, Moscow Conservatory; ☎ 8am-1am; **M** Alexandrovsky Sad) Not quite as bohemian as Coffee Bean (and who can be surprised at this, with a name like Coffee Mania?), but it's still a cool spot, and the menu includes tasty soups, salads and sandwiches as well as coffee drinks. The Bolshaya Nikitskaya branch has a delightful outdoor seating area in front of the conservatory.

Shokolodnitsa Kuznetsky Most (Map pp128-9; ☎ 937 4639; Pushechnaya ul 7/5; ☎ 24hr; **M** Kuznetsky Most); ul Arbat (Map pp132-3; ☎ 241 0620; ul Arbat 29; ☎ 8am-11pm; **M** Arbatskaya) Oktyabrskaya pl (Map pp132-3; ☎ 238 2734; ul Bolshaya Yakimanka 58/2; ☎ 24hr; **M** Oktyabrskaya) Those with a sweet tooth will not be able to resist this place for coffee and desserts. Popular with night owls.

Montana Coffee Belorusskaya (Map pp128-9; ☎ 234 1784; Lesnaya ul 1/2; ☎ 8am-midnight Sun-Tue, 24hr Wed-Sat; **M** Belorusskaya); Teatralnaya (Map pp128-9; ☎ 292 5114; Kamergersky per 6; ☎ 9am-11pm; **M** Teatralnaya); Paveletskaya (Map p134; ☎ 235 5282; Paveletskaya pl 1; ☎ 8am-11pm Mon-Fri, 9am-10pm Sat & Sun; **M** Paveletskaya) Formerly Zen Coffee, this place offers breakfast and business lunches, as well as double espresso decaf cappuccinos. It is impossible to do a serious stroll of the trendy pedestrian strip on Kamergersky per without stopping to sip a drink at this outlet.

The well-stocked **Seventh Continent** (☎ 777 7779; ☎ 24hr) supermarkets are the most convenient and reasonable places to stock up on foodstuffs. Grab a cart and peruse the aisles, just like at home. Products available are Russian and imported – it's still expensive, but more affordable than the other places we've mentioned. Branches around the city:

Gastronom Seventh Continent (Map pp132-3; ul Serafimovicha 2; **M** Kropotkinskaya)

Smolensky Gastronom (Map pp132-3; ul Arbat 54/2; **M** Smolenskaya)

Tsentralny Gastronom (Map pp128-9; ul Bolshaya Lubyanka 12/1; **M** Lubyanka)

The more affordable, Turkish-owned **Ramstore** (www.ramstore.ru; ☎ 24hr; Sportivnaya Map pp132-3; ul Usachyeva 35; **M** Sportivnaya; Komsomolskaya Map p131; ☎ 207 3165; Komsomolskaya pl 6, Moskovsky Univermag; **M** Komsomolskaya; Ulitsa 1905 Goda Map pp128-9; ☎ 255 5412; Krasnaya Presnya 23; **M** Ulitsa 1905 Goda) includes three shopping malls, as well as a number of self-standing supermarkets in and around Moscow; of the many outlets around the city, those listed here are the most convenient. 'Club card' holders (R25) are eligible for discounts of 20% to 30% on some products. The selection is impressive, but these places can be overwhelming due to their size and the number of shoppers they attract.

MARKETS

Moscow's *rynky* (markets) are busy, bustling places, full of activity and colour. Even if you are not buying, it's fun to see what's for sale: tables piled high with fresh produce; golden honey in jars as big as basketballs; vibrantly coloured spices pouring out of plastic bags; silvery fish posing on beds of ice.

Prices are negotiable at the markets, but don't expect them to come down too much. Bring your own bag if you have one, and keep your eye on the quality of items that are popped in there. Some central markets:

Danilovsky Market (Map pp126-7; Mytnaya ul 74; **M** Tulsakaya)

Dorogomilovsky Market (Map pp132-3; Mzhaysky val 10; ☎ 10am-8pm; **M** Kievskaya)

Rizhsky Market (Map pp126-7; pr Mira 94-96; **M** Rizhskaya)

DRINKING

There is not one area of Moscow where all the bars and pubs are clustered; indeed, the whole city is now littered with such estab-

AUTHOR'S CHOICE

Red Bar (Map pp132-3; ☎ 730 0808; Kutuzovskiy pr 22-24; beers R175, meals R1400-1750; ☎ noon-3am; **M** Kievskaya) On the 27th floor of a skyscraper overlooking the Moscow River, Red Bar features funky décor and a fabulous view. The name refers to its colour, not its politics: the whole place is draped in swanky red, except the glistening white piano.

The menu is mostly small plates; overpriced, but tasty. The real draw is the floor-to-ceiling windows and their vantage point of the city skyline. Come for a sundown drink before heading out to paint the rest of the town red.

lishments, with more opening every day. Traditionally, ul Arbat is a prime spot for the café scene, especially as it is closed to automobile traffic. Likewise, the newer and trendier Kamergersky per is a pedestrian-only street, which makes it a hot spot for strollers and drinkers.

Bar 30/7 (Map pp128-9; ☎ 209 5951; ul Petrovka 30/7; ☎ 24hr; **M** Chekhovskaya) This slick new bar, located on the boulevard Ring, is the latest place to see and be seen in Moscow. If you can snag a seat in the attached 'sun room' seating area, you will enjoy a lovely view of the boulevard promenade. Good luck, as the place gets packed on weekends.

Real McCoy (Map pp128-9; ☎ 255 4144; Kudrinskaya pl 1; business lunch R180, meals R500-1000; ☎ 24hr; **M** Barrikadnaya) The main features of this 'bootlegger's bar' are walls plastered in old newspapers and a dining room crowded with expats. The menu is not too memorable, except it includes BBQ ribs, seafood curry and everything in between. Nonetheless, this is a popular spot for drinking, especially the two-for-one happy hour specials (5pm to 8pm daily).

Mon Café (Map pp128-9; ☎ 250 8800; 1-ya Tverskaya-Yamskaya ul 4; meals R800-1200; ☎ 24hr; **M** Mayakovskaya) The hot-to-trot clientele is the décor at this otherwise minimalist French café. The vaguely European fare is tasty, if somewhat overpriced. Don your short skirts and black shirts and take a seat on the upper level for the best view of the activity below.

Tinkoff (Map pp128-9; ☎ 777 3300; Prochny per 11; ½-litre beer R120, meals R600-800; ☎ noon-2am; **M** Smolenskaya) Moscow's branch of this now nationwide microbrewery features sport on the big screen, lagers and pilsners on draught, and a metre-long sausage on the menu (yikes). This hip and happening venue often hosts DJs who travel from Europe to spin for its upscale clientele.

ENTERTAINMENT

Moscow can keep anyone entertained for months. The key to finding out what's on is the weekly magazine *element* and the comprehensive weekly entertainment section in Friday's *Moscow Times*. For a laugh, try the *Exile*.

The classical performing arts remain an incredible bargain. Highly acclaimed professionals stage productions in a number of elegant theatres around the city. While the Bolshoi is Moscow's most famous theatre, other venues host productions of comparable quality, with tickets at a fraction of the Bolshoi's price.

Theatre and concert programmes are displayed at venues and ticket kiosks. Aside from the Bolshoi, you can usually purchase tickets directly from box offices on the day of the performance. Most theatres are closed between late June and early September.

Classical Music

Moscow International House of Music (Map p134; ☎ 730 1011; www.mmdm.ru; Kosmodamianskaya nab 52/8; tickets R60-600; **M** Paveletskaya) A graceful, modern, glass building, this new venue opened in 2003. It has three halls, including Svetlanov Hall, which holds the largest organ in Russia. Needless to say, organ concerts held here are impressive.

Tchaikovsky Concert Hall (Map pp128-9; ☎ 299 3957; www.philharmonia.ru; Triumfalnaya pl 4/31; **M** Mayakovskaya) Home to the famous State Symphony Orchestra.

Moscow Conservatory (Map pp128-9; ☎ 229 8183; Bolshaya Nikitskaya ul 13; **M** Okhotny Ryad, Arbatskaya) Russia's largest music school has two venues: the Great Hall (Bolshoy Zal) and the Small Hall (Maly Zal). Every four years, the conservatory hosts hundreds of musicians at the prestigious International Tchaikovsky Competition, which will be held next in summer 2006.

Opera & Ballet

Bolshoi Theatre (Map pp128-9; ☎ 292 0050; www.bolshoi.ru; Teatralnaya pl 1; tickets R200-2000; **M** Teatralnaya) An evening at the Bolshoi is still one of Moscow's most romantic options, with an electric atmosphere in the glittering six-tier auditorium. Both the ballet and opera companies perform a range of Russian and foreign works.

Since the Soviet collapse (and even before), the Bolshoi has been marred by politics, scandal and frequent turnover. Yet the show must go on – and it will. At the time of research, however, the Bolshoi was preparing to close its main stage for long-needed renovations. It is expected to reopen for the 2008 season.

In the meantime, the smaller New Stage (Novaya Stsena) – open since 2003 – will be hosting performances. In spring 2005 the New Stage showed the controversial *Children of Rosenthal*, the first world premiere performed at the Bolshoi in years (see the boxed text, p98).

In theory, tickets can be reserved by phone or Internet, or purchased directly from the box office. It's usually necessary to buy them well in advance, especially during peak tourist periods. Otherwise, the easiest way to get tickets to the Bolshoi is to go there on the day of the performance and buy them from a tout. Expect to pay upwards of R1000. Exercise caution so that you don't buy tickets for a show that was, say, last year.

State Kremlin Palace (Map p135; ☎ 928 5232; www.kremlin-gkd.ru; ul Vozdvizhenka 1; **M** Alexandrovsky Sad) The Bolshoi does not have a monopoly on ballet and opera in Moscow. Leading dancers also appear with the Kremlin Ballet and the Moscow Classical Ballet Theatre, both of which perform here.

Stanislavsky & Nemirovich-Danchenko Musical Theatre (Map pp128-9; ☎ 229 8388; www.stanislavsky.music.ru; Bolshaya Dmitrovka ul 17; **M** Chekhovskaya) Another opera and ballet company with a similar classical repertoire and high-quality performances. This historic theatre company was founded when two legends of the Moscow theatre scene – Konstantin Stanislavsky and Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko – combined forces in 1941.

Theatre

Moscow has around 40 professional theatres and numerous amateur theatres, with a wide range of plays – contemporary and

classic, Russian and foreign – staged each year. Most performances are in Russian. Some of the best drama venues:

MkhT (Map pp128-9; ☎ 632 4105; http://art.theatre.ru; Kamergersky per 3; **M** Teatralnaya, Okhotny Ryad) Also known as the Chekhov Moscow Art Theatre, this is where method acting was founded more than 100 years ago. Watch for English-language versions of Russian classics performed by the American Studio (☎ 292 0941).

Lenkom Theatre (Map pp128-9; ☎ 299 0708; www.lenkom.ru in Russian; Malaya Dmitrovka ul 6; **M** Pushkinskaya) Flashy productions and a lot of musicals keep non-Russian-speakers happy.

Maly Theatre (Map pp128-9; ☎ 923 2621; Teatralnaya pl 1/6; **M** Teatralnaya) A lovely theatre founded in 1824, performing mainly 19th-century works.

Taganka Theatre (Map p134; ☎ 915 1015; Zemlyanoy val 76/12; **M** Taganskaya) A legendary theatre famous for its rebellious director, Yuri Lyubimov, and the unruly actor Vladimir Vysotsky. Stages top-notch contemporary productions.

Circus

Moscow has two separate circuses, putting on glittering shows for Muscovites of all ages. The show usually mixes dance, cabaret and rock music with animals and acrobats. Performance schedules are subject to change.

Great Moscow Circus (Map pp126-7; ☎ 930 2815; www.bolshoicircus.ru; pr Vernadskogo 7; tickets R100-450; ☎ shows 7pm Wed, Fri & Sun, 3pm Sat & Sun; **M** Universitet) With 3400 seats, this circus is near Moscow University and has the best reputation, especially for its animal acts and clowns.

Nikulin Circus (Old Circus at Tsvetnoy Bul; Map pp128-9; ☎ 200 0668; www.circusnikulin.ru; Tsvetnoy bul 13; tickets R50-500; ☎ shows 7pm Thu & Fri, 2.30pm & 6pm Sat & Sun; **M** Tsvetnoy Bulvar) More central than the Great Moscow Circus, this is in a modernised 19th-century building and produces shows around a central theme.

Nightclubs

Karma Bar (Map pp128-9; ☎ 924 5633; Pushechnaya ul 3; cover R100-200; ☎ 7pm-6am Thu-Sat, 11pm-6am Sun; **M** Kuznetsky Most) A worldly mix of Asian food, Latin music and Russian fun. Thursday nights usually feature live music, while the other nights are for DJs and dancing (free lessons from 9pm to 11pm, Friday and Saturday). Add to the mix happy hours and hookah pipes and you've got one of Moscow's top expat clubs.

Propaganda (Map pp128-9; ☎ 924 5732; Bolshoy Zlatoustinsky per 7; meals R300-400; ☎ noon-7am; **M** Lubyanka) This long-time favourite looks to be straight from the warehouse district, with exposed brick walls and pipe ceilings. It's a café by day, but at night they clear the dance floor and let the DJ do his stuff. This is a gay-friendly place, especially on Sunday nights.

Night Flight (Map pp128-9; ☎ 299 4165; Tverskaya ul 17; meals R1000-2000, cover incl drink R650; ☎ restaurant 6pm-4am, club 9pm-5am; **M** Pushkinskaya) This continues to be one of Moscow's most popular spots for business travellers on expense accounts, despite – or because of – its dubious reputation. Indeed, it's hard to miss the crowds of working women hanging around this club. Nonetheless, the restaurant continues to receive rave reviews, thanks to Swedish ingredients and chefs. And the dance floor is always hopping. No cover for restaurant guests.

A Priori (Map pp128-9; ☎ 291 7783; Bolshaya Molchanovka ul 12; cover from R400; ☎ midnight-10am Fri & Sat; **M** Arbatskaya) To really strut your stuff on the dance floor, head to this progressive house club. It has a huge bilevel dance hall, as well as an exclusive 'sofa zone'. Resident and visiting DJs host dance parties on weekends. It's a new experience every time, as the interior is redesigned every few weeks. There's strict face control, so dress the part.

Live Music

Sixteen Tons (Map pp128-9; ☎ 253 5300; www.16tons.ru; ul Presnenskiy val 6; cover R250-600; ☎ concerts 10pm or 11pm; **M** Ulitsa 1905 Goda) Has a brassy English pub-restaurant downstairs, with an excellent house-brewed bitter. Upstairs, the club gets some of the best local and foreign bands that play in Moscow.

Le Club (Map p134; ☎ 915 1042; www.le-dub.ru; Verkhnyaya Radishchevskaya ul 21; concerts R300-3000; ☎ concerts 8:30pm; **M** Taganskaya) Moscow's top venue for jazz is in the building of the Taganka theatre. Top performers from all over the world come to play in this 1930s Chicago-style club.

ilingua (Map p131; ☎ 923 6683; Krivokolenny per 10/5; meals R200-500; ☎ 24hr; **M** Chisty Prudy) Crowded with grungy, artsy student types, this café also sells books and funky clothing. If you can stand the smoke, it's a cool place to grab a bite to eat and listen to some music (nightly) or peruse the

literary offerings. Despite the name, there's not much in the way of foreign-language literature.

Proekt OGI (Map p131; ☎ 927 5366; www.proekt.ogi.ru in Russian; Potapovsky per 8/12; cover R50-80; ☎ 8am-11pm; **M** Kitay-Gorod, Chistye Prudy) This vaguely hippy (but definitely hip) place is for student types; enter through the unmarked door in the corner of the courtyard and descend into the underground – literally and figuratively. Live music plays most nights.

Chinese Pilot Dzhao-Da (Map pp128-9; ☎ 923 2896; www.jao-da.ru in Russian; Lubyansky proezd 25; cover R150-250; ☎ concerts 11pm; **M** Kitay-Gorod) A relaxed and relatively inexpensive place to hear live music. The divey basement place hosts lots of different kinds of bands – from around Europe and Russia – so check out the website in advance.

BB King (Map pp128-9; ☎ 299 8206; Sadovaya-Samotychnaya ul 4/2; cover R200; ☎ 8pm Wed-Sun; **M** Tsvetnoy Bulvar) This old-style blues club hosts an open jam session on Wednesday night, acoustic blues on Sunday (7pm) and live performances on weekends. The restaurant is open for lunch and dinner, when you can listen to jazz and blues on the old-fashioned jukebox.

Both **Bunker** (Map pp128-9; ☎ 200 1506; Tverskaya ul 12; ☎ 10pm-7am; **M** Mayakovskaya) and its successor **B-2** (Map pp128-9; ☎ 209 9918; Bolshaya Sadovaya ul 8; **M** Pushkinskaya) have cheap food and drinks, and live music almost every night.

Gay & Lesbian Venues

New Age (Three Monkeys) (Map p131; www.gaycentral.ru in Russian; Nastavnichesky per 11/1; ☎ 10pm-7am Thu-Sun; **M** Chkalovskaya) The newest and best club on the gay scene. Besides the dance floor, which is hopping, the club has drag queens and go-go boys, an Internet café and a cinema. The clientele comes dressed to kill. There's no cover charge before midnight.

12 Volts (Map pp128-9; ☎ 200 1506; Tverskaya ul 12; meals R400-600; ☎ 10pm-7am; **M** Mayakovskaya) The founders of Moscow's gay and lesbian movement opened this welcoming café-cum-social club, tucked in behind the club Bunker (enter through the courtyard). Besides good food and cheap drinks, the place offers a consultation service for individuals facing homosexual issues. This is one of the few hang-outs that attracts lesbians as well as gay men.

911 (Map pp128-9; ☎ 292 2911; Glinishchevsky per 3; ☎ noon-2am; **M** Pushkinskaya) This used to be a straight bar with a gay night, but it has grown into a gay bar with some straight guests – 'gay expansion' as described by one local in-the-know. Although the place has a small dance floor and a drag show on Saturday night, it is more of a café scene. Look for the entrance down from Studio Casino.

Cinema

American Cinema (Map pp132-3; ☎ 941 8747; Berzhkovskaya nab 2; **M** Kievskaya) Located inside the Radisson Slavianskaya Hotel, this cinema shows major Hollywood movies in English. Call for information, or check the listings in the *Moscow Times* or *element*.

Sport

Vysshaya Liga, the premier football league, has six Moscow teams: Spartak, Lokomotiv, TsSKA, Torpedo, Dinamo and FC Moskva each with a loyal following. You can often buy tickets immediately before games, played at the following venues.

Dinamo Stadium (Map pp126-7; ☎ 212 3132; Leningradsky pr 36; **M** Dinamo) Seats 51,000 and hosts Dinamo and TsSKA.

Lokomotiv Stadium (Map pp126-7; ☎ 161 4283; Bolshaya Cherkizovskaya ul 125; **M** Cherkizovskaya) Reconstructed in 2002 and seats 30,000.

Luzhniki Stadium (Map pp126-7; ☎ 785 9717; www.luzhniki.ru in Russian; Luzhnetskaya nab 24; **M** Sportivnaya) Seats 80,000 and hosts Torpedo and Spartak.

Moscow's main entrant in the Super Liga, the top ice-hockey league, is Dinamo, which plays at the stadium of the same name.

Men's basketball has dropped in popularity since its days of Olympic glory in the 1980s. Moscow's top basketball team, **TsSKA** (Map pp126-7; ☎ 213 2288; Leningradsky pr 39A; **M** Aeroport), does well in European league play, but all too often serves as a retirement home for the NBA, which also poaches the best players. The TsSKA women's team plays from September to May.

SHOPPING

Foreign goods cost the same or more than they would in their home countries; if an item seems like a steal, it's probably a bargain-basement counterfeit. Local items you may want to purchase are crystal, linen,

traditional crafts and woollen shawls. Soviet paraphernalia is a fun novelty souvenir. If you are interested in taking home vodka or caviar, see p180.

If you'd like to take home antiques or anything else that's more than 25 years old, see p702 for details on export restrictions.

Shopping Streets

Now restored to its prerevolutionary fashionable status, ul Petrovka is Moscow's main shopping strip. It begins beside the Bolshoi Theatre and heads north, lined with upmarket boutiques, as well as a large department store (right) and a fancy shopping centre (right). It culminates in Stolessnikov per, a pedestrian strip given over to the most exclusive shops.

Ul Arbat has always been a tourist attraction; therefore, it is littered with souvenir shops and stalls.

Markets

Izmaylovo Market (Map pp126-7; admission R15; ☎ 9am-6pm Sat & Sun; **M** Partizanskaya) This sprawling area is packed with art, handmade crafts, antiques, Soviet paraphernalia and just about anything you may want for a souvenir. You'll find Moscow's biggest original range of *matryoshky* (nesting dolls), *palekh* and *khokhloma* (lacquer bowls) ware, as well as less traditional woodworking crafts. There are also rugs from the Caucasus and Central Asia, pottery, linen, jewellery, fur hats, chess sets, toys, Soviet posters and much more.

Feel free to negotiate, but don't expect too much flexibility in prices. Vendors normally come down in price by about 10% with little or no argument; with some hard work you can get them down further. This place is technically open every day, but many vendors come out only on weekends, when your selection will be greater.

Mayor Luzhkov has long threatened to raze this chaotic market and move the vendors indoors.

Artists set up their stalls on ul Krymsky val, opposite the entrance to Gorky Park (p161), and in the *perekhod* (underground walkway). There are also many galleries within the Central House of Artists (p161). Unlike the Izmaylovo market, this is more arts than crafts.

Malls

GUM (Map p135; ☎ 921 5763; Krasnaya pl 3; ☎ 10am-10pm; **M** Ploshchad Revolyutsii) On the eastern side of Red Square, this place has made the transition to a market economy in fine form: the 19th-century building is a sight in itself. It's often called a 'department store', but that's a misnomer as it is really a huge collection of individual shops spread over several floors.

Okhotny Ryad (Map p135; ☎ 737 8449; Manezhnaya pl; ☎ 11am-10pm; **M** Okhotny Ryad) This zillion-dollar mall was built in the 1990s. Although it was originally filled with expensive boutiques and no people, times have changed. Now the stores cater to all income levels and they are usually packed. There is a big, crowded food court on the ground floor.

Petrovsky Passazh (Map pp128-9; ☎ 928 5012; ul Petrovka 10; ☎ 10am-9pm; **M** Kuznetsky Most) One of Moscow's sleekest shopping arcades.

Department Stores & Speciality Shops

TsUM (Map pp128-9; ☎ 292 1157; ul Petrovka 2; ☎ 9am-8pm Mon-Sat, to 6pm Sun; **M** Teatralnaya) TsUM stands for Tsentralny Universalny Magazin (Central Department Store), which was built in 1909 as the Scottish-owned Muir & Merrilees. It was the first department store aimed at middle-class shoppers. It no longer is, as it is now filled with designer labels and luxury items.

Detsky Mir (Map pp128-9; ☎ 238 0096; Lubyanskaya pl; ☎ 9am-8pm Mon-Sat; **M** Lubyanka) This huge store – 'Children's World' in English – was the premier toy store during Soviet times. Now Detsky Mir has a mix of imported and Russian-produced toys, along with well-stocked sporting goods and homewares departments (and other toys for adults too).

Many smaller, more specialised stores offer plenty of opportunities for souvenirs: **Gus-Khrustalny Factory Store** (Map pp128-9; ☎ 232 5658; www.gkhz.ru; Gostiny Dvor; ☎ 10am-8pm Mon-Fri, to 6pm Sat & Sun; **M** Ploshchad Revolyutsii) Beautiful and reasonably priced glassware and crystal from the nearby town of Gus-Khrustalny.

La Casa de Cuba (Map p135; ☎ 737 8409; ☎ 11am-10pm; **M** Okhotny Ryad) Deep in the Okhotny Ryad shopping mall, La Casa de Cuba sells a wide range of Cuban cigars.

Vologda Linen (Map pp128-9; ☎ 232 9463; www.linens.ru; Gostiny Dvor; ☎ 10am-8pm; **M** Ploshchad Revolyutsii) Fine clothes and linen made according to traditional Russian methods. The stuff is beautiful and good value.

World of New Russians (Map pp128-9; ☎ 241 0081; www.newrussian.net; ul Arbat 36; ☎ 10am-9pm; 📺 Arbat'skaya) Stocks a wide range of overpriced but amusing gifts, mostly traditional Russian items with a New Russian theme (the Gzhel mobile phone, for example).

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Air

International flights from Moscow's airports incur a departure tax, which is sometimes split between arrival and departure. In any case the taxes are included in the price of the airline ticket.

AIRPORTS

Moscow has five main airports servicing international and domestic flights. Note that the destinations served by different airports can vary, so confirm your airport when you buy your ticket. Arrive at least 90 minutes before your flight in order to navigate check-in formalities and security.

Moscow's main international airport is **Sheremetyevo-2** (☎ 956 4666; www.sheremetyevo-airport.ru), 30km northwest of the city centre. It services most flights to/from places outside the former USSR. Nearby **Sheremetyevo-1** (☎ 232 6565; www.sheremetyevo-airport.ru) services flights to/from St Petersburg, the Baltic states, Belarus and northern European Russia. The airport is across the runways from Sheremetyevo-2: bus 517 and an airport shuttle bus run between them.

Domodedovo (☎ 933 6666; www.domodedovo.ru), 48km south of the city centre, has undergone extensive upgrades in recent years in order to service more international flights.

Most notably, all British Airway flights now fly in and out of Domodedovo. It also services many flights to/from the Far East and Central Asia.

Vnukovo (☎ 436 2813; www.vnukovo-airport.ru) serves most flights to/from the Caucasus, Moldova and Kaliningrad. About 30km southwest of the city centre, this airport is also undergoing substantial renovation and is expected to expand its services significantly in future years.

The little-used **Bykovo** (☎ 558 4933) airport is about 35km southeast of the city limit on the Novoryazanskoe Hwy.

TICKETS

You can buy domestic airline tickets from most travel agents (p138) and at Aeroflot offices all over town. Convenient ticket offices:

Aeroflot (Map pp128-9; ☎ 753 5555; www.aeroflot.ru; ul Petrovka 20/1; ☎ 9am-8pm Mon-Sat, to 4pm Sun; 📺 Chekhovskaya)

Transaero (☎ 788 8080; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Sat) Smolenskaya pl (Map pp132-3; 2-y Smolensky per 3; 📺 Smolenskaya); Paveletskaya pl (Map p134; Paveletskaya pl 2/3; 📺 Paveletskaya)

Boat

In summer, passenger boats from Moscow ply the rivers and canals of Russia all the way north to St Petersburg, and south to Astrakhan or Rostov-on-Don.

The St Petersburg route follows the Moscow Canal and then the Volga River to the Rybinsk Reservoir; then the Volga-Baltic Canal to Lake Onega; the Svir River

to Lake Ladoga; and the Neva River to St Petersburg.

The main southbound route takes the Moscow Canal north to the Volga. It then follows the Volga east before heading south all the way downstream to Astrakhan (which is nine days from Moscow), via Uglich, Yaroslavl, Kostroma, Nizhny Novgorod, Kazan, Ulyanovsk, Samara, Saratov and Volgograd.

The Moscow terminus for these sailings is the **Northern River Station** (Severnoy Rechnoy Vokzal; Map pp126-7; ☎ 457 4050; Leningradskoe sh 51; 📺 Rechnoy Vokzal). To get here, take the metro to Rechnoy vokzal, then walk 15 minutes due west, passing under Leningradskoe sh and through a nice park.

The navigation season is generally May to September, although it depends on the route. Transit ships are operated by the **Capital Shipping Company** (Map pp126-7; ☎ 458 9624; www.cck-ship.ru in Russian; Rechnoy Vokzal, Leningradsky sh 51; 📺 Rechnoy Vokzal), located at the Northern River Station. Other companies offer tourist cruises that visit the cities in the Golden Ring and along the Volga. See p406 for more information.

Buses

Buses run to a number of towns and cities within 700km of Moscow. Bus fares are similar to *kupeyny* (2nd-class) train fares. Buses tend to be crowded, although they are usually faster than the *prigorodnye poezdy* (suburban trains).

To book a seat go to the long-distance bus terminal, the **Shchyolkovsky Bus Station** (Map pp126-7; 📺 Shchyolkovskaya), 8km east of the city centre. Queues can be bad, so it's advisable to book ahead, especially for travel on Friday, Saturday or Sunday.

Buses are best for those destinations with poor train services, including some of the Golden Ring towns.

BUSES FROM MOSCOW

Destination	Buses per day	Duration	One-way fare
Nizhny Novgorod	5	9hr	R300
Pereslavl-Zalessky	2	6hr	R236
Suzdal	1	4½hr	R145
Vladimir	4	3½hr	R120

DOMESTIC FLIGHTS FROM MOSCOW

Destination	Flights per day	Duration	One-way fare
Arkhangelsk	4	1hr 40min	R4200-4600
Astrakhan	4	2½hr	R4850
Irkutsk	2	5hr	R8500-9000
Kaliningrad	7	2hr	R2800-3000
Krasnodar	6	2hr	R3200-3900
Murmansk	4	2hr	R4400-5090
Novosibirsk	6	3hr	R3600-6800
Sochi	5-6	2hr	R2900-4000
St Petersburg	20	50min	R2800-3500
Yekaterinburg	11	2½hr	R5300-5400
Vladivostok	3-4	7hr	R12,500-13,800
Volgograd	4	2hr	R3400-3600

Car & Motorcycle

See p734 for general advice about driving in Moscow.

Ten major highways, numbered M1 to M10 (but not in any logical order), fan out from Moscow to all points of the compass. Most are in fairly good condition near the city, but some get pretty bad further out:

M1 The main road from Western Europe, including Poland via Brest, Minsk and Smolensk.

M2 The first 110km of the M2 to Oryol and Ukraine are excellent dual carriageway – something you'll remember like a dream as you hit some of the bumpy, narrow roads further south.

M7 Heads east to Vladimir.

M8 Heads northeast to Yaroslavl.

M10 The road to St Petersburg; dual carriageway as far as Tver.

Moscow has no shortage of petrol stations selling all grades of fuel. Most are open 24 hours, are affiliated with Western oil companies, and can be found on the major roads in and out of town. There are service, repair and parts' specialists for many Western makes of car in Moscow – see the *Moscow Business Telephone Guide* for listings.

CAR RENTAL

While there's little reason for the average traveller to rent a car for getting around Moscow (as public transport is quite adequate), you may want to consider it for trips out of the city.

Be aware that many firms won't let you take their cars out of the city, and others will only rent a car with a driver. This latter option is not necessarily a bad one, as cars with drivers aren't always more expensive. Plus you can avoid the trouble of coping with Russian roads.

The major international rental firms have outlets in Moscow. Generally it is best to reserve your car before you arrive in Moscow – advance reservations and special offers can reduce the price by 50% or more. Prices for on-the-spot rental start at €80 per day.

The major car rental agencies will usually pick up or drop off the car at your hotel:

Avis (☎ 578 7179; www.avis-moscow.ru; Sheremetyevo-2)

Europcar (☎ 363 6418; www.europcar.ru; Domodedovo)
Hertz (Map pp126-7; ☎ 937 3274; www.hertz.ru; Smolnaya ul 24; 📺 Rechnoy Vokzal)

Train

Moscow has rail links to most parts of Russia, most former Soviet states, many Eastern and Western European countries, plus China and Mongolia. For representative schedules and fares, see the boxed text, below. See p737 for general information on train travel, fares and deciphering timetables.

STATIONS

Moscow has nine main stations. Multiple stations may service the same destination,

so be sure to confirm the arrival/departure station.

Belorussky vokzal (Belarus Station; Map pp128-9; ☎ 251 6093; Tverskaya Zastava pl; **M** Belorusskaya) Serves trains to/from Smolensk, Kaliningrad, Belarus, Lithuania, Poland, Germany; some trains to/from the Czech Republic; and suburban trains to/from the west including Mozhaysk, Borodino and Zvenigorod.

Kazansky vokzal (Kazan Station; Map p131; ☎ 264 6556; Komsomolskaya pl; **M** Komsomolskaya) Serves trains to/from Kazan, Izhevsk, Ufa, Ryazan, Ulyanovsk, Samara, Novorossiysk, Central Asia; some trains to/from Vladimir, Nizhny

Novgorod, the Ural Mountains, Siberia, Saratov, Rostov-on-Don; and suburban trains to/from the southeast, including Bykovo airport, Kolomna, Gzhel and Ryazan.

Kievsky vokzal (Kyiv Station; Map pp132-3; ☎ 240 1115; pl Kievskogo vokzala; **M** Kievskaya) Serves Bryansk, Kyiv, western Ukraine, Moldova, Slovakia, Hungary, Austria, Prague, Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Serbia, Greece, Venice; suburban trains to/from the southwest, including Predelkino and Kaluga.

Kursky vokzal (Kursk Station; Map p131; ☎ 916 2003; pl Kurskogo vokzala; **M** Kurskaya) Serves Oryol, Kursk, Krasnodar, Adler, the Caucasus, eastern Ukraine, Crimea, Georgia, Azerbaijan. It also has some trains to/from Rostov-on-Don, Vladimir, Nizhny Novgorod, Perm; and suburban trains to/from the east and south, including Petushki, Vladimir, Podolsk, Chekhov, Serpukhov and Tula.

Leningradsky vokzal (Leningrad Station; Map p131; ☎ 262 9143; Komsomolskaya pl; **M** Komsomolskaya) Serves Tver, Novgorod, Pskov, St Petersburg, Vyborg, Murmansk, Estonia, Helsinki; and suburban trains to/from the northwest including Klin and Tver. Note that sometimes this station is referred to on timetables and tickets by its former name, Oktyabrsky.

Paveletsky vokzal (Pavelets Station; Map p134; ☎ 235 0522; Paveletskaya pl; **M** Paveletskaya) Serves Yelets, Lipetsk, Voronezh, Tambov, Volgograd, Astrakhan; some trains to/from Saratov; and suburban trains to/from the southeast, including Leninskaya.

Rizhsky vokzal (Riga Station; Map pp126-7; ☎ 631 1588; Rizhskaya pl; **M** Rizhskaya) Serves Latvia, with suburban trains to/from the northwest, including Istra and Novoierusalimskaya.

Savyolovsky vokzal (Savyolov Station; Map pp126-7; ☎ 285 9005; pl Savyolovskogo vokzala; **M** Savyolovskaya) Serves Cherepovets; some trains to/from Kostroma, Vologda; and suburban trains to/from the north.

Yaroslavy vokzal (Yaroslavl Station; Map p131; ☎ 921 5914; Komsomolskaya pl; **M** Komsomolskaya) Serves Yaroslavl, Arkhangelsk, Vorkuta, the Russian Far East, Mongolia, China, North Korea; some trains to/from Vladimir, Nizhny Novgorod, Kostroma, Vologda, Perm, Urals, Siberia; and suburban trains to/from the northeast, including Abramtsevo, Khotkovo, Sergiev Posad and Aleksandrov.

SUBURBAN TRAINS

When taking trains from Moscow, note the difference between long-distance and 'suburban' trains. Long-distance trains run to places at least three or four hours out of Moscow, with limited stops and a range of accommodation classes. Suburban trains, known as *prigorodnye poezdy* or *elektrichki*, run to within just 100km or 200km of Moscow, stop almost every-

where, and have a single class of hard bench seats. You simply buy your ticket before the train leaves, and there's no capacity limit – so you may have to stand part of the way.

Most Moscow stations have a separate ticket hall for suburban trains, usually called the Prigorodny Zal and often tucked away at the side or back of the station building. Suburban trains are usually listed on separate timetables, and may depart from a separate group of platforms.

TICKETS

For long-distance trains it's best to buy your tickets in advance. Tickets for some trains may be available on the day of departure, but this is less likely in summer. Always take your passport along when buying a ticket.

Tickets are sold at the train stations themselves, but it is much easier to buy tickets from a travel agent (p138) or *kassa zheleznoy dorogi* (railway ticket office). These are often conveniently located in hotel lobbies. One agency selling airplane and train tickets with many outlets around town is **GlavAgentstvo** (Lubyanka Map pp128-9; ☎ 924 8728; Teatralny proezd 5/1; **M** Lubyanka; Tverskoy Map pp128-9; ☎ 290 2771; Tverskoy bul 14/5; **M** Pushkinskaya). Additional outlets are in Sheremetyevo-1 airport, as well as Belorussky and Leningradsky vokzals.

GETTING AROUND

The central area around the Kremlin, Kitay-Gorod and the Bolshoi Theatre is best seen on foot. Otherwise, the fastest, cheapest and easiest way to get around is almost always on the metro, though buses, trolleybuses and trams are useful sometimes.

To/From the Airports

The easiest and surest way to get from any airport into the city is to book your transfer in advance through your hotel or travel agent (p138). This means you will be driven straight to your destination in the city and you may not have to pay any more than a normal taxi fare.

All five airports are accessible by public transportation, which usually involves taking a minivan shuttle from a metro stop. This is obviously a much cheaper, slower way to go.

TRAINS DEPARTING FROM MOSCOW

Trains from Moscow to St Petersburg

Train no & name	Departure time	Duration	Fare
2 <i>Krasnaya Strela</i>	11.55pm	8hr	R1700
4 <i>Ekspress</i>	11.59pm	8hr	R1700
6 <i>Nikolaevsky Ekspress</i>	11.30pm	8hr	R1700
24 <i>Yunost</i>	12.30pm	8hr	R1300 (seat)
54 <i>Grand Express</i>	11.24pm	9hr	R3000-13,000
160 <i>Avrora</i>	4.30pm	5½hr	R1300 (seat)
164 <i>ER200</i>	6.28pm	4½hr	R1700 (seat)

International Trains from Moscow

Destination & train no	Departure time & station	Duration	Fare
Almaty 008	10.25pm (odd days), Kazansky	78hr	R4100
Kyiv 001	11.23pm (odd days), Kievsky	14hr	R1033
Minsk 001	10.25pm, Belorussky	10hr	R1200
Riga 001	7.11pm, Rizhsky	16hr	R2030
Tallinn 034	6.15pm, Leningradsky	15hr	R1560
Vilnius 005	7.01pm, Belorussky	15hr	R1588

Domestic Trains from Moscow

Destination & train no	Departure time & station	Duration	Fare
Irkutsk 002	9.22pm, Yaroslavy	77hr	R6200
Kazan 028	7.28pm, Kazansky	11hr	R1150
Murmansk 382	7.28pm, Leningradsky	34hr	R1860
Nizhny Novgorod 062*	4.55pm, Kursky	4½hr	R300 (seat)
Pskov 010	7.55pm Leningradsky	12hr	R1120
Samara 010	6.50pm, Kazansky	15hr	R1888
Tver	10 daily, Leningradsky	2hr	R400
Vladimir 816*	6.04pm, Kursky	2½hr	R208
Yaroslavl	14 daily, Yaroslavy	4hr	R340
Yekaterinburg 122	4.50pm, Yaroslavy	28hr	R2300

*Express train; other slower trains also available.

BYKOVO

Prigorodnye poezdy run from Kazan station to Bykovo train station, 400m from the airport (R30, one hour, every 20 minutes). You can also pick this train up at Vykhino, near Vykhino metro. A taxi to/from the city centre is about R800 and can take 1½ hours.

DOMODEDOVO

A super convenient express train leaves Pavelets station every half-hour for Domodedovo airport (R100, 45 minutes). This route is particularly convenient, as you can check into your flight at the train station.

A taxi fare to/from the city centre is R700 to R800, with the trip taking one to 1½ hours, depending on traffic.

SHEREMETYEVO

Marshrutky (minibuses) travel between Rechnoy vokzal and Sheremetyevo-1, with Sheremetyevo-2 the middle stop in either direction. They make the journey as soon as they are full, which is about every 30 minutes or less.

At Sheremetyevo-2, *marshrutky* leave from a stop 200m in front of the terminal (just right of the car park). Make certain your shuttle is going in the right direction.

When heading to the airport, take the metro to Rechnoy vokzal, and once at Rechnoy vokzal leave the metro platform by the exit at the front end of the train. *Marshrutky* wait at the road, 100m from the metro station. The combined metro and *marshrutka* trip to/from Sheremetyevo-2 takes about one hour; to/from Sheremetyevo-1 is 70 minutes. City bus 551 also follows this route, but takes much longer.

A taxi arranged on the spot between Sheremetyevo-2 airport and the city centre takes about 45 minutes and should not cost more than R800. A better bet is to arrange one in advance through one of the companies listed (see opposite).

VNUKOVO

A new high-speed train runs between Kievsky vokzal and Vnuukovo airport (R76, 35 minutes). It runs every hour between 7am and noon and between 5pm and 8pm. Outside these hours, you can take a *marshrutka* from Yugo-Zapadnaya metro (R30, 30 minutes). A taxi to/from the city

centre can take over an hour and costs about R800.

Bus, Trolleybus & Tram

Buses, trolleybuses and trams are useful along a few radial or cross-town routes that the metro misses, and are necessary for reaching sights away from the city centre. Tickets (R10) are usually sold on the vehicle by a conductor.

Metro

The metro is the easiest, quickest and cheapest way of getting around Moscow. Many of the elegant stations are marble-faced, frescoed, gilded works of art (see the boxed text, opposite). The trains are generally reliable: you will rarely wait on the platform for more than two minutes. Nonetheless, they get packed during rush hour. Up to nine million people a day ride the metro, more than the London and New York City systems combined. Sometimes it feels like all nine million are trying to get on one train.

The first station opened in 1935. The stations were meant to double as air-raided shelters, which is why the escalators seem to plunge halfway to the centre of the earth.

The 150-plus stations are marked outside by large 'M' signs. Magnetic tickets are sold at ticket booths (R13). It's useful to buy a multiple-ride ticket (10 rides for R120, 20 for R195), which saves you the hassle of queuing up every time.

Stations have maps of the system and signs on each platform showing the destinations. Interchange stations are linked by underground passages, indicated by *perekhod* signs, usually blue with a stick figure running up the stairs. The carriages now have maps inside that show the stops for that line in both Roman and Cyrillic letters. The system is fairly straightforward. The biggest confusion you may find is that when two or more lines meet, each line's interchange station often has a different name.

These days, the Moscow metro has implemented a sort of public-relations campaign. You will notice posters decorated by pretty, smiling, young ladies in uniform promising 'Good weather, any time of year.' These *devushki* (young women) bear little resemblance to the babushkas sitting at the bottom of the escalators, but let's not mull over a technicality.

Taxi

Almost any car in Moscow could be a taxi if the price is right, so get on the street and stick your arm out. Many private cars cruise around as unofficial taxis, known as 'gypsy cabs', and other drivers will often take you if they're going in roughly the same direction. Expect to pay R100 to R150 for a ride around the city centre.

Official taxis – which can be recognised by the chequerboard logo on the side and/or a small green light in the windscreen – charge about the same. No driver uses a meter (even if the cab has one), and few will admit to having any change.

Don't hesitate to wave on a car if you don't like the look of its occupants. As a general rule, it's best to avoid riding in cars that already have two or more people in-

side. Problems are more likely to crop up if you take a street cab waiting outside a nightclub, or perhaps a tourist hotel or restaurant at night.

Some reliable taxi companies (all with websites in Russian only):

Central Taxi Reservation Office (Tsentralnoe Byuro Zakazov Taxi; ☎ 927 0000; www.cbz-taxi.ru)

Eleks Polyus (☎ 707 2707; www.taxi-14.ru)

MV Motors (☎ 775 6775; www.7756775.ru)

New Yellow Taxi (☎ 940 8888; www.nyt.ru)

Taxi Bistro (☎ 327 5144; www.taxopark.ru)

Taxi Blues (☎ 105 5115; www.taxi-blues.ru)

Normally, the dispatcher will ring back within a few minutes to provide a description and licence number of the car. It's best to provide at least an hour's notice before you need the taxi.

UNDERGROUND ART

The Moscow metro is justly famous for the art and design of many of its stations. Many feature marble, bas-reliefs, stucco, mosaics and chandeliers. Diversity of theme is not their strongest point – rather, it's history, war, the happy life of the Soviet people, or a mix of all.

Ring Line Stops

Taganskaya Features a war theme, with the heads of unknown war heroes set in luscious, floral stucco frames made of white-and-blue porcelain with gold linings.

Prospekt Mira Also decorated in elegant gold-trimmed white porcelain. The bas-reliefs depict happy farmers picking fruit, children reading books, and so on.

Novoslobodskaya Features brightly illuminated stained-glass panels with happy workers, farmers, artistic types and lots of flowers.

Belorusskaya Mosaics on the ceiling depict yet more happy workers, along with farmers milking cows, dancing and taking oaths. All wear Belarusian national shirts for the occasion.

Komsomolskaya A huge stuccoed hall, its ceiling covered with mosaics depicting past Russian military heroes: Peter the Great, Dmitry Donskoy, Alexander Suvorov and more.

Barrikadnaya Done in dramatic red-and-white marble, it features bas-reliefs depicting the fateful events of 1905 and 1917.

Kievskaya The hall is decorated with labelled mosaics depicting events in Ukrainian history and goodwill between Ukrainians and Russians.

Radial Line Stops

Mayakovskaya Grand Prize winner at the 1938 World's Fair in New York. It has a central hall that's all stainless steel and marble.

Novokuznetskaya Features military bas-reliefs done in sober khaki, and colourful ceiling mosaics depicting pictures of the happy life. The elegant marble benches came from the first Church of Christ the Saviour.

Plushchad Revolutsii Life-sized bronze statues in the main hall and beside the escalators illustrate the idealised roles of common men and women. Heading up the escalators the themes, in order, are revolution, industry, agriculture, hunting, education, sport and child-rearing.

Partizanskaya Features floral bas-reliefs decorated with AK-47 machine guns. Unfortunately it has been covered in scaffolding for years.

AROUND MOSCOW ПОДМОСКОВЬЕ

As soon as you leave Moscow, the fast-paced modern capital fades from view, while the slowed-down, old-fashioned countryside unfolds around you. The subtly changing landscape is crossed by winding rivers and dotted with peasant villages – the classic provincial Russia immortalised through the works of artists and writers over the centuries.

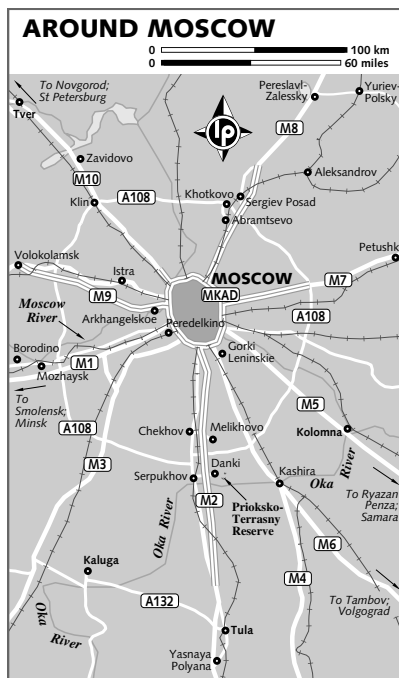
Moscow's elite have long escaped the heat and hustle of city life by retreating to the surrounding regions. The quintessential aristocratic getaway is Prince Yusupov's palatial estate at Arkhangelskoe. On a more modest scale, Tolstoy, Tchaikovsky, Chekhov and Boris Pasternak all sought inspiration in the countryside around Moscow, not to mention the countless painters and sculptors who retreated to the artists' colony at Abramtsevo. Even Lenin maintained a country estate on the outskirts of Moscow. All of these properties are now museums to inspire the rest of us.

These days, most Muscovites do not have country estates, but they still need an occasional break from the urban madness. The lovely lakes district, northwest of the capital, provides plenty of opportunities for swimming, sunning and soaking up the tranquillity of rural Russia. For some other short trip possibilities from Moscow see the Golden Ring chapter.

ABRAMTSEVO АБРАМЦЕВО

☎ 254 from Moscow, ☎ 49654 from elsewhere
Artists colony and country estate, Abramtsevo was a font of artistic inspiration for the renaissance of traditional Russian painting, sculpture and architecture.

In 1870 Savva Mamontov – railway tycoon and patron of the arts – bought this lovely estate 45km north of Moscow. Here, he hosted a whole slew of painters, who sought inspiration in the gardens and forests: Ilya Repin; landscape artist Isaak Levitan; portraitist Valentin Serov; and the quite un-Slavic painter and ceramicist Mikhail Vrubel. Other artists came to dabble at the woodworking and ceramics' workshop, and musicians (including Fyodor Chaliapin,



who made his debut here) performed in the private opera.

Today the **Abramtsevo Estate Museum-Preserve** (☎ 32 470; admission R100; ☎ 10am-5pm Wed-Sun) is a delightful retreat from Moscow or addition to a trip to Sergiev Posad. Apart from the highlights mentioned here, arts and crafts exhibits occupy the other buildings on the grounds, which cost extra.

Several rooms of the **main house** have been preserved intact, complete with artwork by various resident artists. The main attraction is Mamontov's dining room, featuring Repin's portraits of the patron and his wife, and Serov's luminous *Girl with Peaches*. A striking majolica bench by Vrubel is in the garden.

The prettiest building in the grounds is **Saviour Church 'Not Made by Hand'** (Iserkov Spasa Nerukotvornyy). The structure epitomises Mamontov's intentions: it's a carefully researched homage by half a dozen artists to 14th-century Novgorod architecture. The iconostasis is by Repin and Vasily Polenov. The tiled stove in the corner, still working, is exquisite.

The Slavophile painter Viktor Vasnetsov conjured up the fairy tale of Baba Yaga the witch, with his rendition of her **Hut on Chicken Legs**.

Getting There & Away

Suburban trains run every half-hour from Yaroslavsky vokzal (R50, 1½ hours). Most – but not all – trains to Sergiev Posad or Aleksandrov stop at Abramtsevo. There are also regular buses between Abramtsevo and Sergiev Posad (R20, 20 minutes).

By car, turn west off the M8 Moscow–Yaroslavl highway just north of the 61km post (signs to Khotkovo and Abramtsevo mark the turn-off) and continue over the railroad tracks.

KLIN КЛИН

☎ 224 / pop 90,000

From 1885, Tchaikovsky spent his summers in Klin, 90km northwest of Moscow. Of his country estate, he wrote, 'I can't imagine myself living anywhere else. I find no words to express how much I feel the charm of the Russian countryside, the Russian landscape and the quiet that I need more than anything else.'

In a charming house on the edge of town, he wrote the *Nutcracker* and *Sleep-*

ing Beauty, as well as his famous *Pathétique* Symphony no 6. After he died in 1893, the estate was converted into the **Tchaikovsky House-Museum** (Dom-Muzei Chaykovskogo; ☎ 58 196; ul Chaykovskogo 48; adult/child/student R110/70/70; ☎ 10am-6pm Fri-Tue). The house and grounds are kept just as when Tchaikovsky lived here. You can peruse the photographs and personal effects, but only special guests are allowed to play his grand piano. Occasional concerts are held in the concert hall.

Klin is on the road and railway from Moscow to Tver, Novgorod and St Petersburg. Suburban trains from Moscow's Leninskogradsky vokzal run to Klin (R60, 1½ hours) throughout the day. Most of these continue to Tver (R42, two hours). From the station, take *marshrutka* 5 to Tchaikovsky's estate.

ZAVIDOVO ЗАВИДОВО

☎ 495

At a beautiful spot at the confluence of the Volga and Shosha Rivers, the village of Zavidovo is midway between Klin and Tver on the road to St Petersburg. On the outskirts, the **Zavidovo Holiday Complex** (☎ 937 9944; www.zavidovo.ru; Shosha village, Novo-Zavidovo; d incl breakfast from R5000/5500; ☎ ☎ ☎) offers all kinds of recreation activities, such as horse-back riding, water-skiing, tennis, boating

GETTING BACK TO NATURE

At least 30% of Russians own a small country home, or *dacha* (see p72). The *dacha's* most remarkable feature is its garden, which is usually bursting with flowering fruit trees and veggie plants. Families today still grow all manner of vegetables and fruits, which get sold at the market or canned for the winter. Throughout winter, city dwellers can enjoy strawberry *kompot* (canned, syrupy fruit) or pickled mushrooms, and fondly recall their time in the countryside.

After playing in the dirt, the next stop is undoubtedly the *banya* (p71). While bathhouses exist in the city, the countryside *banya* experience cannot be replicated. Crowding into the tiny, wooden hothouse; receiving a beating with fragrant *veniki* (birch branches) straight from the forest; cooling down with a dip in the pond or – more extreme – a roll in the snow...now *that's* getting back to nature.

Nothing piques hunger like a *banya*, and what better way to enjoy the fruits of one's labour than with a hearty meal. *Dacha* cuisine evokes the peasant's kitchen: tasty soups that are the highlight of Russian cuisine; typically Russian *kasha* (porridge), which sates any appetite; and coarse, black Russian bread. These dishes often use ingredients straight from the garden, coop or pasture. Simple to prepare, rich in flavour and nourishing to body and soul, *dacha* fare is a perfect example of how Russians return to their rural roots for replenishment.

For an authentic *dacha* experience, visit **Uncle Pasha's Dach**a (☎ 910-932 5546, 916-117 1527; www.russian-horse-rides.com; d with meals R750) in the tiny village of Dubrovki (near Tver) – the setting on the Volga is magnificent. Accommodation is rustic, as it should be (read: outside toilet). Meals are included but leave something to be desired; guests are welcome to use the kitchen facilities to make their own. This place is hard to reach, so be sure to contact Uncle Pasha in advance.

and fishing. Afterwards, soothe your weary body in the tiled Turkish bath or the lake-side Russian *banya*.

In addition to the hotel complex, comfortable **cottages** (weekdays/weekends R8100/9800) sleeping four to eight people replicate various architectural styles, including Finnish cabins, Alpine chalets and Russian dachas. Suburban trains from Moscow's Leninskogradsky vokzal to Tver stop in Zavidovo (R75, two hours, hourly).

TVER ТВЕРЬ

☎ 4822 / pop 450,000

Tver, on the Volga 150km northwest of Moscow, was capital of an unruly minstate that was Moscow's chief rival in the 14th

and 15th centuries. Little evidence of Tver's medieval heyday remains, as it subsequently went through a series of upheavals. It was punished for rising against the Golden Horde, conquered by Ivan III, savaged by Ivan the Terrible, seized by the Poles and completely destroyed by fire in 1763.

Tver experienced a renaissance when Catherine the Great made it one of her rest stops between St Petersburg and Moscow. Today classical town houses from the late 1700s and early 1800s line the main street and riverbank of this mini-Petersburg on the Volga.

In 1990 Tver dumped its Soviet name, Kalinin (after Mikhail Kalinin, Stalin's puppet president during WWII, who was

born here). Though Tver is not in the same league as some of the towns of the Golden Ring, it has just enough attractions to make it worth the trip from Moscow. You may also want to stop here for the same reason as Catherine the Great – to rest during your journey between Moscow and St Pete.

Orientation & Information

The Volga runs roughly from west to east through Tver, with the town centre on the southern river. Sovetskaya ul is the main east-west street. It intersects the north-south Tverskoy pr, which becomes pr Chaykovskogo further south. The train station is 4km south of the centre, at the point where pr Chaykovskogo turns 90 degrees east and becomes ul Kominterny. The bus station is 300m east of the train station.

The **main post & telephone office** (Sovetskaya ul 31; ☎ 8am-8pm Mon-Sat) is open for international phone calls 24 hours a day. You'll find a decent selection of maps at the **Letter** (Sovetskaya ul 7; ☎ 10am-8pm Mon-Fri, to 7pm Sat & Sun) bookshop.

Sights

At the west end of Sovetskaya ul, fronted by a statue of Mikhail Kalinin, stands the town's most imposing building – Catherine the Great's 1775 **Road Palace**, bedecked with ornate mouldings, marble columns and crystal chandeliers. Besides the fancy 18th-century interiors, it houses Tver's **Art Gallery** (☎ 336 243; Sovetskaya ul 3; admission R40; ☎ 11am-5pm Wed-Sun), exhibiting antique furniture and Russian paintings. The collection is not extensive, but it does feature some pieces by Levitan, Repin, Surikov and other Russian favourites.

The **City Park** on the riverbank behind the palace often hosts live concerts on summer weekends. In summer, excursion boats sail every hour from the piers.

The quaintest part of town is the streets of old wooden houses with carved eaves and window frames, west of the market on ul Bragina. In this area is Tver's oldest building, the stately **Church of the White Trinity** (Trudolyubia per), dating from 1564.

A promenade stretches along the north bank of the Volga, providing lovely views of the old houses on the southern bank. The **Museum of Tver Life** (☎ 318 404; ul Gorkogo

19/14; admission R40; ☎ 11am-5pm Wed-Sun) is housed in an 18th-century merchant's manor house. It exhibits arts, crafts, furniture and other domestic artefacts from several centuries.

Sleeping & Eating

Hotel Osnabruck (☎ 358 433; www.hotel.tver.ru; ul Saltykova-Shchedrina 20; s/d with breakfast R1800/2200; ☎ ☎ ☎) This Western-style hotel is named for Tver's sister city in Germany, the source of investment for its construction in the late 1990s. Its 34 spacious rooms are decorated with wood furniture and rose-toned tapestries. The hotel's restaurant, fitness centre and business centre are all on par.

Hotel Volga (☎ 348 100; fax 379 557; ul Zhelyabova 1; s/d from 600/800) Overlooking the Tmaka River, the Hotel Volga is undergoing a long-term renovation process, so rooms vary widely in quality. You will pay around R1650 for an upgraded room, but don't expect a big difference in style or comfort. Nonetheless, this place is a conveniently located, reliable stand-by.

Central Hotel (☎ 489 093; fax 489 152; Novotorzhskaya ul 1; s without bathroom from R620, d with bathroom R840-1100) The darkest and dreariest option is located on the city's central square, opposite the circus.

Besides the hotel restaurants, you can dine at **Cafe Dobrynya** (☎ 321 500; Sovetskaya ul 7; meals R200-300), a convivial place with a rustic chalet interior and standard Russian food.

Getting There & Around

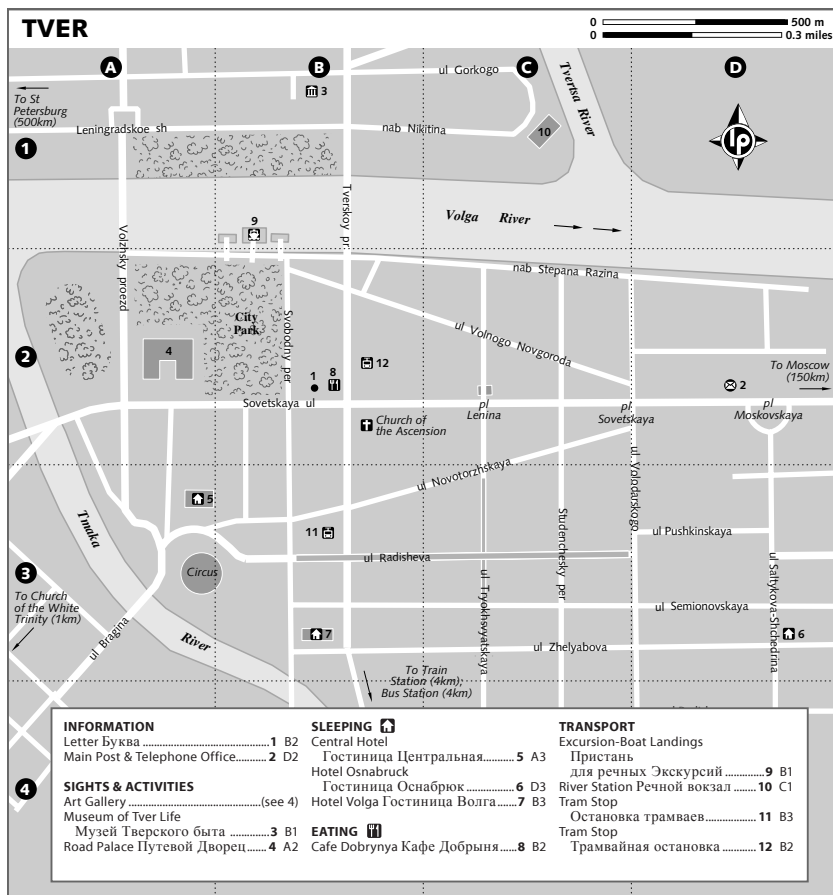
Tver (often still listed as Kalinin on time-tables) is accessible by suburban train (R102, three hours, hourly) from Moscow's Leninskogradsky vokzal. Faster, long-distance trains between Moscow and St Petersburg also stop at Tver. There are also buses (R100, three hours) to/from Moscow's Yaroslavsky vokzal.

Trams 2, 5, 6 and 11 run from the bus and train stations up Chaykovskogo and Tverskoy pr to the town centre.

ISTRA ИСТРА

☎ 231

A steady stream of pilgrims makes the journey to this village, 50km west of Moscow. Their motives are diverse, as they come to worship at the grandiose New Jerusalem



Monastery, or to worship the gods of sun and fun at the nearby holiday resorts.

Sights

In the 17th century, Nikon, the patriarch whose reforms drove the Old Believers from the Orthodox Church, decided to show one and all that Russia deserved to be the centre of the Christian world. He did this by building a little Holy City right at home, complete with its own Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Thus, the grandiose **New Jerusalem Monastery** (Novo-Iyerusalimskiy monastyr; ☎ 49 787; admission per exhibit adult/child R40/20, guided tour R500; ☞ 10am-4pm Tue-Sun) was founded in 1656 near the picturesque Istra River.

Unlike other Moscow monasteries, this one had no military use. In WWII the retreating Germans blew it to pieces but it's gradually being reconstructed. After years as a museum, the monastery is now in Orthodox hands and attracts a steady stream of worshippers.

In the centre of the grounds is the **Cathedral of the Resurrection** (Voskresensky sobor), intended to look like Jerusalem's Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Like its prototype, it's really several churches under one roof. The main building is still under restoration, but it is possible to enter the detached **Assumption Church** (Uspensky tserkov) in the northern part of the cathedral. Here, pilgrims come to kiss the relics of the holy martyr Tatyana, the monastery's patron saint.

Reconstruction is complete on the unusual underground **Church of SS Konstantin & Yelena** (Konstantino-Yelenskaya tserkov), with only its belfry peeping up above the ground. Patriarch Nikon was buried in the cathedral, beneath the **Church of John the Baptist** (Tserkov Ioanna Predtechi).

The **refectory** exhibits weapons, icons and artwork from the 17th century, including personal items belonging to Patriarch Nikon. In the monastery walls, there is additional **exhibit space** displaying 20th-century drawings and handicrafts from around the Moscow region. On weekends you can sample fresh-brewed tea and homemade pastries in the **tearoom**.

Just outside the monastery's north wall, the Moscow region's **Museum of Wooden Architecture** (☎ 49 787; ☞ May-Sep) is a collection of picturesque peasant cottages and windmills set along the river.

Sleeping & Eating

Istra Holiday Country Hotel (☎ 495-739 6198 in Moscow; www.istraholiday.ru in Russian; Trusovo; d weekdays/weekends from R4000/7100; ♿ ♿) The quaint wooden cottages that make up this hotel sit on the shores of the lovely Istra water reserve. The place offers all the sports and outdoor activities you could hope for, from skiing to swimming to lounging on the beach. The resort is all-inclusive, with two restaurants and several cafés and bars, as well as sports facilities and spa.

Getting There & Away

Suburban trains run from Moscow's Rizhsky vokzal to Istra (R42, 1½ hour, hourly), from where buses run to the Muzeystop by the monastery. If the weather is fine, a 20-minute walk from the Istra train station is a pleasant alternative.

ARKHANGELSKOE АРХАНГЕЛЬСКОЕ

☎ 495

In the 1780s the wealthy Prince Nikolai Yusupov purchased this grand palace on the outskirts of Moscow and turned it into a spectacular **estate** (☎ 363 1375; www.arkhangel.skoe.ru; admission R150; ☞ grounds 10am-6pm daily, exhibits 10am-4pm Wed-Sun).

During several ambassadorships and as director of the imperial museums, Yusupov accumulated a private art collection that outclassed many European museums. The **palace** consists of a series of elegant halls that display his paintings, furniture, sculptures, glass, tapestries and porcelain.

The multilevel Italianate **gardens** are full of 18th-century copies of classical statues. The majestic **colonnade** (admission R80) on the eastern side was meant to be a Yusupov mausoleum, but the family fled Russia forever after the revolution. In summer months this is the exquisite setting for live classical music **concerts** (☎ 501-453 8229; tickets R300; ☞ 5pm Sat & Sun May-Sep).

Yusupov also organised a troupe of serf actors that eventually became one of the best known of its kind, and built them a **theatre** just west of the gardens. Predating everything else is the little white **Church of the Archangel Michael** (Arkhangelskaya tserkov; 1667).

The estate is 22km west of central Moscow. Take *marshrutka* 151, 285 or 549 from

Moscow's Tushinskaya metro station to Arkhangelskoe (R20, 30 minutes).

BORODINO БОРОДИНО

☎ 238

In 1812 Napoleon invaded Russia, lured by the prospect of taking Moscow. For three months the Russians retreated, until on 26 August the two armies met in a bloody battle of attrition at the village of Borodino, 130km west of Moscow. In 15 hours more than one-third of each army was killed – over 100,000 soldiers in all. Europe would not know fighting this devastating again until WWI.

The French seemed to be the winners, as the Russians withdrew and abandoned Moscow. But Borodino was, in fact, the beginning of the end for Napoleon, who was soon in full, disastrous retreat.

The entire battlefield – more than 100 sq km – is now the **Borodino Field Museum-Preserve**, basically vast fields dotted with dozens of memorials to specific divisions and generals (most erected at the centenary of the battle in 1912). Start your tour at the **Borodino Museum** (☎ 51 546; www.borodino.ru; ☞ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun), where you can study a diorama of the battle before setting out to see the site in person.

The front line was roughly along the 4km road from Borodino village to the train station: most of the monuments are close to the road. The hill-top monument about 400m in front of the museum is **Bagration's**

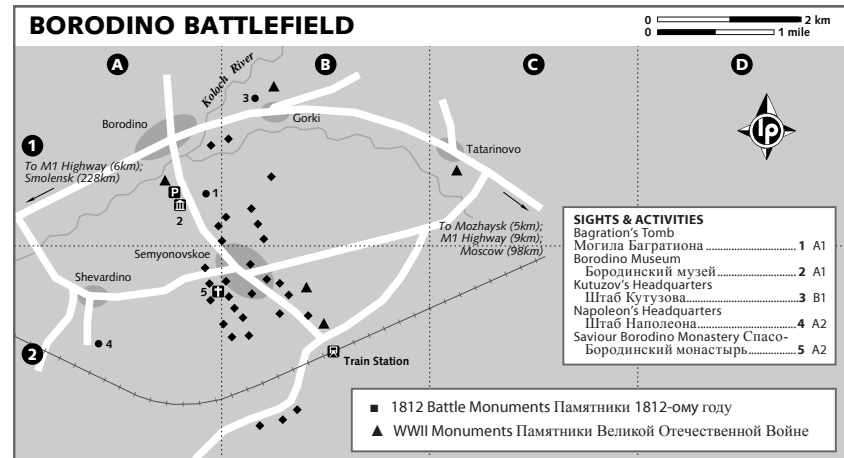
tomb, the grave of Prince Bagration, a heroic Georgian infantry general who was mortally wounded in battle.

Further south, a concentration of monuments around Semyonovskoe marks the battle's most frenzied fighting; here, Bagration's heroic Second Army, opposing far larger French forces, was virtually obliterated. Apparently Russian commander Mikhail Kutuzov deliberately sacrificed Bagration's army to save his larger First Army, opposing lighter French forces in the northern part of the battlefield. Kutuzov's headquarters are marked by an obelisk in the village of Gorky. Another obelisk near Shevardino to the southwest, paid for in 1912 with French donations, marks Napoleon's camp.

Ironically, this battle scene was re-created during WWII, when the Red Army confronted the Nazis on this very site. Memorials to this battle also dot the fields, and WWII trenches surround the monument to Bagration. Near the train station are two WWII mass graves.

The **Saviour Borodino Monastery** (☎ 51 057; admission R15; ☞ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun) was built by the widows of the Afghan War. Among its exhibits is a display devoted to Leo Tolstoy and the events of *War and Peace* that took place at Borodino.

The rolling hills around Borodino and Semyonovskoe are largely undeveloped, due to their historic status. Facilities are extremely limited; be sure to bring a picnic lunch.



Getting There & Away

Suburban trains leave in the morning from Moscow's Belorussky vokzal to Borodino (R45, two hours). A few trains return to Moscow in the evening, but be prepared to spend some time waiting. If you miss the train, you may be able to catch a bus to nearby Mozhaysk, from where there are frequent trains and buses.

Since the area is rural, visiting by car is more convenient and probably more rewarding. If driving from Moscow, stay on the M1 highway (Minskoe sh) until the Mozhaysk turn-off, 95km beyond the Moscow outer ring road. It's 5km north to Mozhaysk, then 13km west to Borodino village.

PEREDELKINO ПЕРЕДЕЛКИНО

☎ 495

Boris Pasternak – poet, author of *Doctor Zhivago* and winner of the 1958 Nobel Prize for literature – lived for a long time in a dacha in this writers' colony on Moscow's southwestern outskirts, just 5km beyond the city's outer ring road. The dacha is now the **Pasternak House-Museum** (☎ 934 5175; ul Pavlenko 3; admission R50; 🕒 10am-4pm Thu-Sun). The museum features the room where he finished *Doctor Zhivago* and the room where he died. It is open to visitors only with a guided tour (in Russian).

When Pasternak died in 1960 he was buried in the nearby cemetery, which has attracted a stream of visitors ever since. In a pine grove towards the rear of the cemetery, look for the stone slab bearing the writer's profile. Above the graveyard sits the tiny 15th-century **Transfiguration Church** (Preobrazhenskaya tserkov).

Getting There & Away

Frequent suburban trains go from Moscow's Kievsky vokzal to Peredelkino (R20, 20 minutes) on the line to Kaluga-II station. From the stop opposite Peredelkino station, you can catch a taxi or *marshrutka* to the museum. Otherwise, it is a 30-minute walk through the village. Follow the path west along the train tracks past the cemetery (where Pasternak is buried) and over the bridge. After about 400m look for the yellow two-storey building on the right-hand side, which sits on the corner of ul Pavlenko.

GORKI LENINSKIE ГОРКИ ЛЕНИНСКИЕ

☎ 495

In Lenin's later years, he and his family spent time at the lovely 1830s manor house on this wooded estate, 32km southeast of the Kremlin. Now it is an interesting and well-maintained **museum** (☎ 548 9309; admission per exhibit R50, guided tour R350; 🕒 10am-4pm Wed-Mon).

The house was redesigned in neoclassical style by the Art Nouveau architect Fyodor Shekhtel. It is largely furnished with the incredible collection of custom-designed furniture that was commissioned by the wealthy Morozov family, who owned the estate prior to the revolution. It is set amid lovely landscaped grounds – reason enough to visit this spot on a summer afternoon.

Many of the rooms are maintained as they were when Lenin's family lived here. A special exhibit re-creates his office in the Kremlin, with many of his personal items on display. The highlight, however, is his vintage Rolls Royce – one of only 15 such automobiles in the world. Other buildings on the grounds house exhibits about 20th-century political history and peasant life in the region.

Bus 439 (R18, 30 minutes) leaves every 90 minutes for the estate from the Domodedovskaya metro station in Moscow. By car, follow the M4 highway (Kashirskoe sh) to 11km beyond the Moscow outer ring road, then turn left to Gorki Leninskie.

MELIKHOVO МЕЛИХОВО

'My estate's not much,' wrote playwright Anton Chekhov of his home at Melikhovo, south of Moscow, 'but the surroundings are magnificent'. Here, Chekhov lived from 1892 until 1899 and wrote some of his most celebrated plays, including *The Seagull* and *Uncle Vanya*.

Today the estate houses the **Chekhov Museum** (☎ 272-23 610; admission R10, tour R50; 🕒 10am-4pm Tue-Sun), dedicated to the playwright and his work. Visitors today can examine his personal effects, wander around the village and peek into the 18th-century **wooden church**.

Theatre buffs should visit in May, when the museum hosts **Melikhovo Spring** (tickets R100-150), a week-long theatre festival. Theatre groups from all over the world descend

on the village to perform their interpretations of the great playwright's work.

Getting There & Away

Suburban trains (R50, 1½ hours) run frequently from Moscow's Kursky vokzal to the town of Chekhov, 12km west of Melikhovo. Bus 25 makes the 20-minute journey between Chekhov and Melikhovo, with departures just about every hour.

By car, Melikhovo is about 7km east of the dual carriageway that parallels the old M2 Moscow-Oryol road, signposted 50km south of Moscow's outer ring road.

PRIOKSKO-TERRASNY RESERVE

ПРИОКСКО-ТЕРРАСНЫЙ ЗАПОВЕДНИК

Covering 50 sq km bordering the northern flood plain of the Oka River, a tributary of the Volga, the **Prioksko-Terrasny Reserve** (☎ 27-707 145; <http://online.stack.net-ptz> in Russian; admission R50, guided tour R150-350; 🕒 9am-4pm) is a meeting point of northern fir groves and marshes with typical southern meadow steppe. The reserve's varied fauna includes a herd of European bison, brought back from near extinction since WWII.

You cannot wander freely around the reserve by yourself, so it's useful to make advance arrangements for a tour. Otherwise, you could tag onto a prescheduled group tour. There is also a small **museum** near the office, with stuffed specimens of the reserve's fauna (typical of European Russia), including beavers, elk, deer and boar.

The reserve's pride, and the focus of most visits, is its **European bison nursery** (*pitomnik zubrov*). Two pairs of bison, one of Europe's largest mammals (some weigh over a tonne), were brought from Poland in 1948. Now there are about 60 and more than 200 have been sent out to other parts of the country.

Getting There & Away

Public transport is difficult. If you leave by 8am, you can take a suburban train from Moscow's Kursky vokzal to Serpukhov (two

hours), then a rare bus (25, 31 or 41) to the reserve. You may also be able to negotiate a ride from the station.

Drivers from Moscow should follow Simferopolskoe sh (the extension of Varshavskoe sh). At 98km, look for the sign to the reserve or to the village of Danki.

YASNAYA POLYANA ЯСНАЯ ПОЛЯНА

☎ 487

Located 14km south of central Tula and around 240km from Moscow, Yasnaya Polyana is the **estate** (☎ 238 6710, 517 6081; www.yasnayapolyana.ru; admission R100; 🕒 10am-5pm Tue-Sun May-Oct, 9.30am-3.30pm Tue-Sun Nov-Apr) where the great Russian writer Count Leo Tolstoy was born and buried.

Tolstoy spent much of his life in this house, which is a simple place filled with many of his possessions. Of Yasnaya Polyana, he wrote: 'All [my grandfather] had built here was not only solid and comfortable, but also very elegant. The same is true about the park he laid out near the house.' Tolstoy's nearby grave is unmarked except for bouquets of flowers left by newlyweds.

The highly recommended **Cafe Preshpekt** (meals R200-250) features hearty home-cooked Russian fare. House specialities are prepared according to recipes by Sofia Andreevna, Leo's devoted wife. There is also a simple hotel on site.

Getting There & Away

The easiest way to get to Yasnaya Polyana is on the express train from Moscow's Kursky vokzal (R180, three hours, departs 9am, returns 4.36pm). While waiting for the shuttle bus to the museum, you can amuse yourself by perusing the exhibit that shows the railway as it was during Leo Tolstoy's time.

Otherwise, you can take the *elektrichka* to Tula (R130, three hours), then take bus 261 to Yasnaya Polyana (R10, 20 minutes).

If you're driving from Moscow, it's easiest to follow Tula's western bypass all the way to its southern end and then turn back north towards Tula.

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