

Russia

Russia is my native country. It is the largest country in the world. Russia is situated on two continents: Europe and Asia. The Urals form a natural border between the continents. The country is washed by 12 seas of three oceans: the Pacific, the Arctic and the Atlantic. Its total area is over 17 million square kilometres. No traveller crosses the country from east to west without being astonished by its size. The population of Russia is more than 145 million. There are a lot of nationalities in Russia and people speak different languages. Russian is the official language.

The land of Russia varies greatly. We have thick forests and vast plains, high mountains and deep valleys. The main mountain chains are the Caucasus, the Urals and the Altai. Russia is rich in rivers and lakes. The longest river on the European territory of Russia is the Volga, which flows into the Caspian Sea. The main Siberian rivers are the Ob, the Yenisei and the Lena. The world's deepest lake, Lake Baikal, is also situated in Russia. The water in this lake is very clear. There is also a wide variety of wildlife in Russia.

Russia is a country without a climate because it has every possible climate from arctic in the north to subtropical in the south. In the west, for example, the climate is usually mild and wet. The southern parts of the country have warm temperatures all year round, but the northern parts have very cold winters. In the middle of the country the climate is usually continental. Winters are cold, windy and snowy, and summers are hot and dry.

Russia is rich in mineral resources. Three quarters ($\frac{3}{4}$) of the country's minerals and fuels, including oil, natural gas, coal, diamonds and gold, are concentrated in Siberia and the Far East.

Russia is a country of great traditions. There are many villages in Russia famous for their specific crafts. Painted boxes from Palekh and wooden tableware from Khokhloma are well-known all over

the world. Log houses decorated with wood carving are typical of Russian villages.

There are a lot of Russian symbols. One of them is the Russian national flag. This flag is made up of three stripes: white, blue and red. These colours have always been symbolic in Russia. They symbolize nobleness, honesty, courage and love. Another Russian symbol is a double-headed eagle. It was introduced in Russia in 1497 by Tsar Ivan III. Besides, there are other Russian symbols well-known all over the world, for example, Red Square and the Spasskaya Tower. Tourists usually buy such traditional Russian souvenirs as Matryoshka dolls, beautifully painted mugs, plates and spoons from Khokhloma village and Palekh boxes.

We, people living in Russia, love our country and are proud of it. And we would like other nations to understand and love our homeland.

Vocabulary

to be situated — располагаться

border — граница

total area — общая площадь

to astonish — изумлять

size — размер

population — население

to vary — меняться, изменяться

mountain chain — горная цепь

to flow — впадать

variety — разнообразие

wildlife — дикие животные

mild — мягкий

wet — влажный

windy — ветреный

snowy — снежный

dry — сухой

fuel — топливо

to include — включать

oil — нефть

natural gas — природный газ

coal — уголь

diamond — алмаз

craft — ремесло

wooden tableware — деревянная посуда

log house — деревянный дом, изба

wood carving — резьба по дереву

village — деревня

stripe — полоса

nobleness — благородство

honesty — честность

courage — мужество

double-headed eagle — двуглавый орел

to introduce — вводить

mug — кружка

Russian Character

There are a lot of wonders in Russia. But it is true to say that Russia is most famous for its people.

To understand Russian people, one must know from where they come. Nature has not been kind to Russia. Winters in Russia are cold, windy and snowy. So in old Russia people could do little during long winter months. But in spring there was a lot to be done, and in a short period of time. Perhaps, this explains why the Russians are often inactive for long periods of time and then show bursts of energy.

The harsh climate explains the Russians' strength and their ability to overcome hardships. Climate has also made them cautious.

Yet most of the Russians are open people. They are neither reticent nor reserved as the British. Russian people love to sit down for a nice long chat. They like having parties and receiving guests. The Russians are known to be a hospitable people. According to old traditions, a guest should always be welcomed with the symbol of life-giving food — bread and salt.

Russian people have always loved their country, though life in Russia has never been easy. They have always been devoted to their Motherland, fighting for peace and independence against enemies.

We can't say that the Russians are conservative. On the contrary, they encourage research and innovation. Still, there are a lot of customs and traditions in their life. For example, before leaving on a journey, many Russian people sit down quietly together for a few minutes.

Russian people are clever and talented. We can name a lot of outstanding Russians who are well-known all over the world. And we can say that we are a nation that has done a lot for the world civilization.

When foreign guests leave Russia, they usually say different things about the country. Some of them like it, others don't. But practically everybody agrees that Russian people are wonderful. They are friendly, kind and very hospitable.

Vocabulary

Russians — *Обратите внимание:*

*названия национальностей
могут употребляться как
с определенным артиклем,
так и без артикля*

burst — вспышка, прилив
(энергии)

harsh — суровый

to overcome — преодолевать

hardships — трудности, лишения

cautious — осторожный

reticent — молчаливый, скрыт-
ный

reserved — сдержанный

hospitable — гостеприимный

according to — согласно,

в соответствии с

to welcome — приветствовать

to be devoted — быть преданным

to fight — бороться, сражаться

independence — независимость

enemy — враг

on the contrary — напротив,
наоборот

to encourage — способствовать,
поддерживать

research — исследование

innovation — нововведение,
новшество

outstanding — выдающийся

to agree — соглашаться

Ancient Russian Cities

Nearly all Russian cities and towns have a lot of historic architectural monuments, such as Russian orthodox churches, cathedrals and monasteries. They are valuable symbols of ancient Russian culture. The most attractive city for foreign tourists is Moscow. There is a lot to see in the capital but the most important place to visit is the Kremlin.

Here visitors can admire beautiful cathedrals, built in the 15th century, visit the Faceted Palace and the Armoury, and get a fantastic view of the city from the top of the Ivan the Great Bell Tower, which is the composition centre of the entire Kremlin. There are quite a lot of other examples of ancient Russian architecture outside the Kremlin, such as St. Basil's Cathedral, Novodevichy Convent and Pokrova Church in Fili.

Moscow's attraction for tourists is not only its historical sites but the fact that it's a modern city with hundreds of museums and galleries, theatres and restaurants. In my opinion, it's impossible to be bored in Moscow, but if you want to enjoy some fresh sightseeing impressions, you may visit two major towns of the "Golden Ring of Russia", Suzdal and Vladimir.

Upon your arrival in Suzdal you will find yourself in a fairy-tale world. The town has a kremlin, a convent, two monasteries, dozens of churches, dating from the 12th to the 18th centuries and a nearly 200-year-old shopping arcade with traditional iron signs outside the shops. There are no high buildings here. The city is like an extended village of wooden houses, with lace curtains and geraniums in the windows.

Vladimir attracts tourists by the severe architecture of its white stone cathedrals and churches. The most famous of them are Dormition Cathedral, the Cathedral of St. Demetrius and Pokrova Church on the Nerl.

These two towns are like two islands of beauty in a sea of mediocrity. Yet, there are very few foreign visitors there. Why? They are scared off by the lack of comfortable hotels, coaches, good roads with road signs and well-trained guides. Besides, some of the architectural monuments have become ruined by time and really have to be renovated. But local authorities usually lack funds and it

restricts the possibilities for developing tourism in these towns.

It goes without saying that sustainable tourism could provide good profits for local residents, especially at the height of the tourist season. But to draw more tourists into Russian towns, we must provide good accommodation and eating facilities, build roads and parking places, develop outdoor activities and make these towns known to the public. If only Russian cities and towns could become popular tourist destinations, then they would really prosper and flourish.

Vocabulary

orthodox — православный

valuable — ценный

ancient — древний

attractive — привлекательный

to admire — восхищаться

Faceted Palace — Грановитая
палата

Armoury — Оружейная палата

entire — весь, целый

convent — женский монастырь

attraction — привлекательность

iron — железный

sign — знак, вывеска

extended — увеличенный,
расширенный

lace curtains — тюлевые занавески

to attract — привлекать

severe — строгий, суровый

Nerl — Нерль (*река*)

Dormition Cathedral — Успенский собор

mediocrity — заурядность

to scare off — отпугивать

lack — недостаток, нехватка

coach — туристический автобус

authorities — власти, администрация

to restrict — ограничивать,
сдерживать

sustainable — непрерывный,
постоянный

profit — прибыль, доход

resident — постоянный житель

height — пик

to draw — привлекать

accommodation — проживание

destination — цель путешествия

prosper — преуспевать

flourish — процветать

Famous Russian Cities

Millions of people all over the world are fond of travelling. They travel to see other countries and continents, to discover different ways of life, to meet different people and to practise foreign languages. It goes without saying that travelling broadens the mind. While travelling, we can see and learn a lot of things that we can never learn staying at home and watching TV or reading books. That's why a lot of foreign people come to Russia to get acquainted with Russian culture, with Russian customs and traditions.

Russia has always been a country of mystery and attraction for foreigners. There are a lot of villages and towns in Russia famous for their specific crafts: painted boxes in Palekh, wooden tableware in Khokhloma and toys in Dymkovo. Thousands of foreigners visit Russia to enjoy typical Russian log houses, decorated with wood carving.

Tourists like to visit old Russian towns and cities famous for their ancient architecture. They are especially attracted by Russian orthodox cathedrals, churches and monasteries. One of the most interesting old cities in Russia is Novgorod, or Novgorod the Great, as it was called in the old times. It is a treasury of architecture, painting and applied art created over the 11th to 17th centuries. The first records of the city on the Volkhov River date back to the year 859. Now Novgorod has expanded far beyond its former limits. It is an important industrial and cultural centre, located on the busy highway linking Moscow and St. Petersburg.

The focal point of the city is the Detinets, or the Kremlin. The present-day Kremlin stems largely from the 15th century. Several alterations made in the 16th and 17th centuries were minor and did not affect its appearance. Novgorod's contribution to the development of Russian culture is outstanding. No other city excels Novgorod in the number of ancient monuments of architecture. The Novgorod Museum of History, Architecture and Art shows visitors the history of medieval Novgorod. Its artistic value lies primarily in its collection of medieval icon painting.

Of course, every foreigner should visit St. Petersburg, the second largest city in Russia and one of the most beautiful cities in the world. It was founded in 1703 by Peter the Great at the mouth of the Neva River. Now it is an important industrial, cultural and educational centre.

St. Petersburg is indeed a wonderful city: at every turn there is something to catch your eye. The Winter Palace, St. Isaac's Cathedral, the Peter and Paul Fortress, the Admiralty building

attract thousands of tourists from every corner of the world. Petersburg's many museums house some of the world's most famous art collections. The Hermitage and the Russian Museum, for example, contain the richest collections of pictures in the world.

The city is called the Northern Venice because there are more than a hundred rivers, arms and canals there with artistically decorated bridges. It's also famous for its beautiful white nights.

There are a lot of Hero-cities in our country. And I would recommend my foreign friends to visit one of them. Volgograd is a legendary city, because here in 1943 the Soviet Army won the great and glorious victory over the fascists. The city was completely ruined during the war, but now it is a beautiful city again. It stands on the banks of the great Russian river Volga. The symbol of Volgograd is the Mamaev Hill. It was the centre of fighting during the heroic defence of Stalingrad. Now there is a great memorial there. Besides, you can visit the Stalingrad Battle Panorama Museum, which is situated on the bank of the Volga. The centre of Volgograd is the Square of the Fallen Heroes. In the middle of it there is a granite obelisk and the common graves of the heroes of the Civil War and the Great Patriotic War. At the foot of the memorial you can see the Eternal Flame. Now Volgograd is a big industrial and cultural centre.

There are a lot of other interesting towns and cities in Russia, which are all worth visiting.

Vocabulary

to get acquainted with — знако-
миться с

wooden tableware — деревянная
посуда

log house — бревенчатый дом, изба

wood carving — резьба по дереву

orthodox — православный

treasury — сокровищница

to attract — привлекать

applied art — прикладное
искусство

to stem from — происходить от

alteration — изменение

contribution — вклад

to excel — превосходить

medieval — средневековый

artistic value — художественная
ценность

glorious — славный

completely — полностью

to ruin — разрушать

fighting — борьба

defence — оборона

common grave — братская
могила

Eternal Flame — Вечный огонь