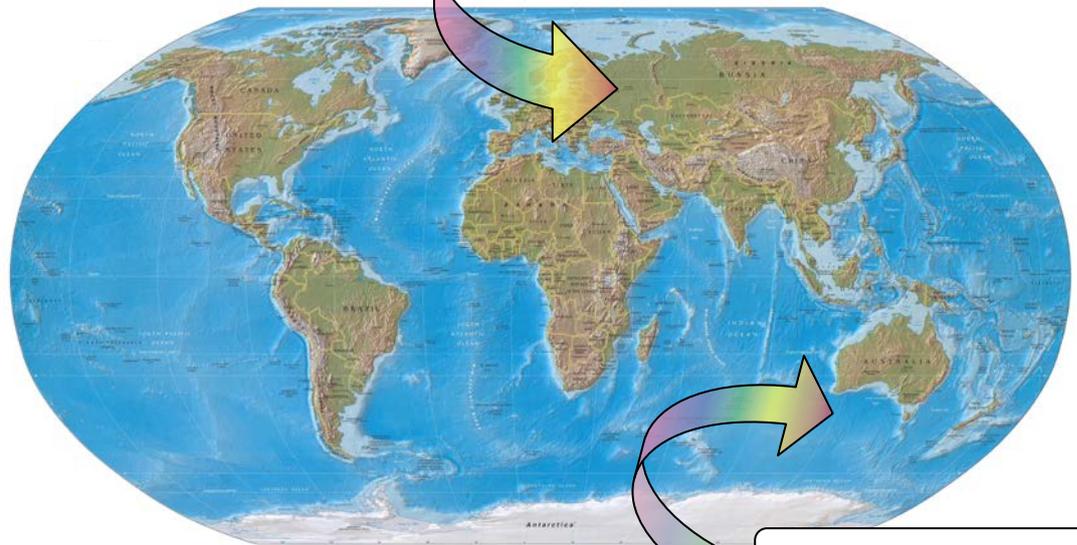


RUSSIA



We were there



Now we are here

FACTS:

- **Full name:** Russian Federation
- **Population:** 143.8 million (via UN, 2006)
- **Capital:** Moscow
- **Area:** 17 million sq km (6.6 million sq miles)
- **Major language:** Russian
- **Major religions:** Christianity, Islam
- **Life expectancy:** 59 years (men), 72 years (women) (UN)
- **Monetary unit:** 1 rouble = 100 kopecks
- **Main exports:** Oil and oil products, natural gas, wood and wood products, metals, chemicals, weapons and military equipment
- **GNI per capita:** US \$4,460 (World Bank, 2006)
- **Internet domain:** .ru
- **International dialing code:** +7

Russian Community in WA

Russian Ethnic School 341a Scarborough Beach Rd, Woodlands WA 6018 ph: 9446 6678

Russian Orthodox Church 161 Whatley Crs, Bayswater WA 6053 ph: 9272 6864

St Martha and Mary Orthodox Welfare Association Inc. 14 Kathleen St, Trigg WA 6029
ph: 9349 1283

Russian Social Club of WA 275 Stirling St, 9228 0422 WA 6000

Overview of cultural groups

Russians constitutes 81.5% of the population of what is now the Russian Federation. The next largest groups are Tatars 3.8%, Ukrainians 3.0%, Chuvash 1.2%, Bashkirs 0.9%, Belarussians 0.8%, and Mordovians 0.7%. Other groups totaling more than 0.5% of the population each are Armenians, Avars, Chechens, Germans, Jews, Kazaks, Mari, and Udmurts.

The Russian Federation (the most direct successor to the Soviet Union) is home to more than 100 national minorities, whose members coexist uneasily with the numerically and politically predominant Russians.

Language/dialects spoken

Russian is the official language in Russia. It is the most geographically widespread language of Eurasia and the most widely spoken of the Slavic languages. Russian belongs to the family of Indo-European languages and is one of three (or, according to some authorities, four) living members of the East Slavic languages, the others being Belarusian and Ukrainian (and possibly Rusyn, often considered a dialect of Ukrainian).

Today Russian is also widely used outside Russia. Over a quarter of the world's scientific literature is published in Russian. It is also applied as a means of coding and storage of universal knowledge.

60–70% of all world information is published in English and Russian languages. Russian also is a necessary accessory of world communications systems (broadcasts, air and space communication, etc). Due to the status of the Soviet Union as a superpower, Russian had great political importance in the 21th century. Hence, the language is one of the official languages of the United Nations.

Dietary preferences

Russians have many different types of food. It is famous for its meat dishes, **ukha** (fish soup), **shchi** (cabbage soup), **pokhlyobka** (thick broth), **okroshka** (cold vegetable soup), **bliny** (pancakes) with **sour cream or caviar**, **cabbage pie**, and **beef a la Stroganoff**. Siberia is known for its pelmeni (dumplings). Tea with lemon is the traditional Russian beverage. Something that may seem really odd is that even in the winter Russians eat ice cream.

A main meal in Russia usually consists of soup, a main meat/fish dish, sometimes vegetable salad. Russians drink a lot of tea, usually often with no milk but with sugar, sometimes lemon.

Borsch - is one of a favorite type of food. It can be made of almost anything - scraps of meat, beets, carrots, potatoes, tomatoes, onions, mushrooms, and cabbages. Borsch is eaten hot or cold.

Blini - are round thin pancakes, soaked in butter. Blini is often eaten with caviar, which is fish eggs.

Kulibiaka- is a pie filled with eggs, meat, chicken, or cabbage- is another favorite meal, and is often eaten on special occasions.

Salted herrings covered by beet root with mayonnaise.

Pirozhki are small dumplings made of either yeast dough or short pastry. They are filled with one of many different fillings and are either baked or shallow-fried. Four typical fillings for traditional pirozhki are:

- Fish sautéed with onions and mixed with hard-boiled chopped eggs
- Chopped boiled meat mixed with sauteed onions and eggs
- Mashed potatoes mixed with dill and green onion
- Sautéed cabbage
- Sauteed mushrooms with onions and sometimes carrots

Kotlety (cutlets, meatballs) - are small pan-fried rissoles. Made primarily from pork and beef (sometimes also from chicken or fish), they are easily made and require little time. Milk, onions, ground beef, and pork are put in a bowl and mixed thoroughly until it becomes relatively consistent. Once this effect is achieved, balls are formed and then put into a hot frying pan to cook.

Religion/spirituality/observances

The most widespread religion in Russia is Orthodox Christianity, dominated by Russian Orthodox Church. It has been the major religion of Russia for centuries, with about 25 million followers (15% of the total population). While two-thirds of Russians consider themselves Orthodox Christians, opinion polls suggest that most of those identify with the faith out of nationalism.

Islam, with about 15-30 million followers (depending on estimates), is the second largest religion.

As a consequence of state atheism 48.1% of Russian population is irreligious.

Other branches of Christianity present in Russia include various Protestant faiths, Roman Catholicism, and Old Believers. There is some presence of Judaism, Buddhism, and Krishnaism (and other forms of Hinduism), as well.

Public Holidays:

Date	English Name	Local Name
January 1	New Year and Christmas	Новый Год Рождество
February 23	Defender of the Motherland Day	День защитника Отечества
May 9	Victory Day	День Победы
June 12	Russia Day	
November 4	Unity Day	День народного единства
December 12	The Constitution Day	

Customs/traditions

One of the most prominent Russian traditions is hard drinking. It does not mean they all are alcoholics. Russians are just drinking more alcohol when they are drinking. You should never go to someone else's house empty handed. Alcoholic beverages and/or dessert is a common gift to bring when invited to someone's home.

When young people are married it is a tradition to bring a flower to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. There is a flame constantly burning there. The flame is called the eternal flame. It is traditional in Russia for men to give flowers to women on nearly every occasion, but only an odd number can be given. Giving an even number of flowers is taboo, because even numbers are brought to funerals.

You must remove the shoes in the house, because many people keep icons at home and according to Russian Orthodox religion it is a bad custom to wear shoes in front of an icon, or even to say something bad about someone. It brings bad luck.

Another Russian tradition is they don't celebrate Christmas to such an extent as other countries do. They celebrate New Years day a lot more. Ded Moroz is the Russia version of Santa Clause. He has one helper whose name is Snegwronchka.

Recreational activities

Russians have been successful at a number of sports and continuously finishing in the top rankings at the Olympic Games. During the Soviet era, the national team placed first in the total number of medals won at 14 of its 18 appearances; with these performances, the USSR was the dominant Olympic power of its era.

Soviet gymnasts and track-and-field athletes, weight lifters, wrestlers and boxers were consistently among the best in the world. Even since the collapse of the Soviet empire, Russian athletes have continued to dominate international competition in these areas. Association soccer enjoys wide popularity in Russia, although ice hockey was only introduced during the Soviet era, the national team soon dominated the sport internationally, winning gold at almost all the Olympics and World Championships they contested.

Figure skating is another popular sport; especially in pair skating and ice dancing. At every Winter Olympics from 1964 until the present day, a Soviet or Russian pair has won gold, often considered the longest winning streak in modern sports history. Since the end of the Soviet era, tennis has grown in popularity and Russia has produced a number of famous tennis players. Chess is a widely popular pastime; from 1927, Soviet and Russian chess grandmasters have held the world championship almost continuously.

Environment

At 17,075,400 square kilometers, Russia is by far the largest country in the world, covering more than an eighth of the Earth's land area; with 142 million people, it is the ninth largest by population. It extends across the whole of northern Asia and 40% of Europe, spanning 11 time zones and incorporating a great range of environments and landforms. Russia has the world's largest mineral and energy resources, and is considered an energy superpower. It has the world's largest forest reserves and its lakes contain approximately one-quarter of the world's unfrozen fresh water.

The climate of the Russian Federation formed under the influence of several determining factors. The enormous size of the country and the remoteness of many areas from the sea result in the dominance of the continental climate. Mountains in the south obstructing the flow of warm air masses from the Indian Ocean and the plain of the west and north makes the country open to Arctic and Atlantic influences.

Throughout much of the territory there are only two distinct seasons - winter and summer. Spring and autumn are usually brief periods of change between extremely low temperatures and extremely high. The coldest month is January (on the shores of the sea - February), the warmest usually is July. Great ranges of temperature are typical. In winter, temperatures get colder both from south to north and from west to east. Summers can be quite hot and humid, even in Siberia. A small part of Black Sea coast around Sochi is considered in Russia to have subtropical climate. The continental interiors are the driest areas.

Your Notes and Comments: