



Lastochki / ICYE-Russia

National Profile

2020 - 2021

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Dear volunteers,

Welcome to our National Profile. This profile aims to inform you – our future volunteers – about what it's like to live and work in Russia.

The idea of leaving your home country and living abroad is exciting, but it is normal to feel anxious and nervous when the moment of leaving your family and friends approaches. You may worry about how you will fit in with other volunteers and the host family, whether you will enjoy your project, or perhaps you will be afraid of the language barrier. All of these worries and emotions are normal. We hope that this document will help you to avoid any potential difficulties and help you prepare for your volunteer experience.

Here you can find basic information about daily life in Russia, especially in Samara (where ICYE Russia is situated), facts and statistics about Russia and its world standing and an overview of Russian culture and society.

This guide will also allow you to read a little bit about ICYE Russia, with whom you will be in contact at your arrival and throughout your time here.

If you have any more questions, please do not hesitate to contact us!

We are looking forward to meeting you in Samara! Пока!

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT RUSSIA

Full country name: Russian Federation

Area: 17 million km

Population: 144.5 million

Capital City: Moscow (pop 11.98 million)

People: 81% Russian, 4% Tatar, 1.4% Ukrainian, and numerous ethnic minorities

Language: Russian

Religions: Russian Orthodox, Islam, other denominations of Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism

Climate: July and August are the warmest months and the main holiday season.



РОССИЯ



RUSSIA



Did you know that...?

The Russian Federation is the largest country on earth!

Russia is the only country in the world washed by 12 seas.

The legendary Trans-Siberian route goes through 8 time zones in Russia, starting from Moscow and finishing in Beijing, China. The route covers over 9,000km

Siberia contains more than 25% of the world's forests.

Russians never shake hands over a doorway. They believe that it leads to arguments.

Every day over 9 MILLION passengers ride the Moscow metro!

The Volga is the longest river in Europe.

Moscow has more billionaires than any other city, explaining its reputation as one of the world's most expensive cities!

Russia is the world's biggest oil exporter

The Ural Mountains that separate the European and Asian parts of Russia are almost the oldest mountains in the world

Lake Baikal in Siberia is the deepest in the world. It would take all the big rivers in the world - the Volga, the Don, the Dnieper, the Yenisei, the Ural, the Ob, the Ganges, the Orinoco, the Amazon, the Thames, the Seine and the Oder - almost a year to fill its basin!

Moscow's 12 metro lines have a total length of 312km

In Russia, men will never give an even number of flowers to women. It is considered bad luck and associated with funerals.

There are approximately 10 million more women than men in Russia

GEOGRAPHY

With an area of 17,075,300 km², Russia is the world's largest country, almost twice the size of either China or the United States! Covering 1/8th of the earth's



surface and much of Eastern Europe as well as the whole of Northern Asia, Russia extends nearly halfway around the Northern Hemisphere. It stretches 7,700 kilometers along the Arctic Circle and from 2,000 to 2,900 kilometers north to south. It's most characteristic landscape is a rolling flat plain. The plains are divided by the Ural Mountains that separate Europe and Asia. In contrast, eastern Siberia is hilly to mountainous tableland.

There are active volcanoes on the Kamchatka Peninsula and the Kuril Islands.

The country has many natural resources – it produces 17% of the world's crude oil, 25-30% of its natural gas, and 10-20% of all nonferrous, rare and noble metals mined across the globe.

POPULATION

Russia has always been a multi-national state. More than 145 million citizens permanently reside in the country.

They represent over 160 nationalities, speaking their own languages. Small population groups live in specific locations. Only seven ethnic groups have more than one million representatives – Russians, Tatars, Ukrainians, Bashkir, Chuvash, Chechens and Armenians.

Russia has the 9th largest population of the world after China, India, the United States, Indonesia, Brazil, Pakistan, Nigeria and Bangladesh.



Almost a fifth of Russia's population lives in 13 cities: Moscow, St. Petersburg, Novosibirsk, Nizhny Novgorod, Yekaterinburg, Samara, Omsk, Kazan, Chelyabinsk, Rostov-on-Don, Ufa, Volgograd, and Perm. Moscow has a population of over 10 million people, making it one of the twenty most populated cities in the world. St Petersburg's population is about 5 million.

The vast majority of the population are, of course, Russians - over 80%. The remaining percentage is made up of: Tatars - 3.7 %, Ukrainians - 1.4 %; Bashkirs - 1 %; Chuvash - 1.0 %; and others. Tatars, the second largest group, mainly live in the Volga region. Together with the Bashkirs, Tatars make up the largest group of Muslims located almost in the center of Russia.



There are about two million Chuvash, another Turkic people. In Siberia there are the Altai, Khakassia and Yakuts people. In the Caucasus there are the people of the Abkhaz-Adyghe Group: that are, Kabardins, Adygea and Circassians; the Nethsko-Daghestanian Group: Chechens, Ingush, Avars, Lezgins; Ossetians, which are related to the Iranian group.

Russia is also home to some Finno-Ugric peoples - these are the Finnish, Karelians, Komis and Saami in the north of European Russia; Mari and Mordovians in the Volga region, the Khanty and Mansi, who are associated with hunting and reindeer, in Western Siberia.

In the Far North the Nenetses herd reindeer. In East Siberia there are the Evenks. On the Chukotka Peninsula there are the Chukchi who are mainly reindeer herders and fishermen. The Mongolian group is represented by Buryats in Siberia and Kalmyks on the Caspian Sea.

Each people seeks to preserve its language, customs and traditions, costumes, traditional occupations and trades. Most of these people have maintained their identity and traditional classes. The wealth of national cultures is part of the country's heritage.

CLIMATE AND WEATHER

The climate in Russia is rather varied due to the country's vast landmass. Generally speaking, the winters vary from cool to very cold while the summers range from humid to cool. The climates of both European and Asian Russia are continental except for the tundra and the extreme southeast. Great ranges of temperatures are typical. In winter, temperatures get colder from south to north and from west to east. Summers can be quite hot and humid, even in Siberia. Russia also has such low annual precipitation almost everywhere averages less than 20 inches (51 centimeters). The peaks are in summer, usually in July or August. The continental interiors are the driest areas.

From north to south the East European Plain is clad sequentially in tundra, taiga, mixed forest, broadleaf forest, steppe, and semi-desert (fringing the Caspian Sea), as the changes in vegetation reflect the changes in climate. Siberia supports a similar topography, but lacks the mixed forest. Most of Siberia is taiga.

Samara, Russia Yearly Climate Precipitation:

Month	Mean Temperature °C		Mean Total Precipitation (mm)	Mean Number of Precipitation Days
	Daily Minimum	Daily Maximum		
Jan	-15.7	-9.0	46	10
Feb	-14.6	-7.5	35	7
Mar	-7.7	-0.9	33	7
Apr	2.3	11.5	39	7
May	9.6	20.9	32	5
Jun	13.6	24.1	58	8
Jul	15.9	26.1	64	8
Aug	13.9	24.2	52	7
Sep	8.7	18.1	45	7
Oct	1.5	8.3	52	9
Nov	-4.6	-0.1	54	10
Dec	-11.4	-5.7	51	10

ECONOMY

Russia has undergone significant changes since the collapse of the Soviet Union, moving from a globally-isolated, centrally-planned economy to a more market-based and globally-integrated



economy. Economic reforms in the 1990s privatized most industry, with notable exceptions in the energy and defense-related sectors. The protection of property rights is still weak and the private sector remains subject to heavy state interference.

In 2011, Russia became the world's leading oil producer, surpassing Saudi Arabia. The most famous oil companies in Russia are Gazprom, Rosneft and Lukoil.

- ✓ Russia is the second-largest producer of natural gas;
- ✓ Russia holds the world's largest natural gas reserves, the second-largest coal reserves, and the eighth-largest crude oil reserves;
- ✓ Russia is also a top exporter of metals such as steel and primary aluminium.

Since 2007, the government has embarked on an ambitious program to build up the country's high technology sectors, but with few visible results so far. The economy had averaged 7% of growth in the following decade. In 1998 in Russia a financial crisis took place, resulting in a doubling of real disposable incomes and the emergence of a middle class. The Russian economy, however, was one of the hardest hit by the 2008-09 global economic crises as oil prices plummeted and the foreign credits, which Russian banks and firms relied on, dried up. The economic decline reached its lowest point in the middle of 2009 and the economy began to grow again in the third quarter of 2009. High oil prices buoyed the Russian growth in 2011-12 and helped Russia to reduce the budget deficit inherited from 2008-09. Russia has reduced unemployment to a record low and has lowered inflation below double digit rates. Russia joined the World Trade Organization in 2012, which reduced trade barriers in Russia for foreign goods and services and helps to open foreign markets to Russian goods and services. At the same time, Russia has sought to cement economic ties with countries in the former Soviet space through a

Custom Union with Belarus and Kazakhstan, and, in the next several years, through the creation of a new Russian-led economic bloc called the Eurasian Economic Union.

Russia has had difficulty attracting foreign direct investment and has experienced large capital outflows in the past several years, leading to official programs to improve Russia's international rankings for its investment climate. Russia's adoption of a new oil-price-based fiscal rule in 2012 and a more flexible exchange rate policy have improved its ability to deal with external shocks, including volatile oil prices. However, since 2014 the plunging price of oil in combination with economic sanctions from Western governments, introduced after the annexation of Crimea, have put a significant strain on the economy, leading to a weakened Ruble and rising inflation. Russia's long-term challenges also include a shrinking workforce, corruption, and underinvestment in infrastructure.

POLITICS

Multinational Russia includes 24 minority republics, four autonomous oblasts (provinces), 4 autonomous okrugs (districts), 6 krais (regions) and 49 oblasts.



Russia is a democratic state with a republican government.

The people are governed by a parliament, the Federal Assembly. It is the nation's highest representative and legislative body, and consists of two chambers, the Federation Council and the State Duma. Two deputies from each of the 89 federation members are elected to the Federation Council. The 450 deputies of the State Duma are elected from parties and public movements, or as individual candidates.

In 1991, the new post of president was created to head the executive branch and to be elected by popular vote. The head of state is the President, designed to be the guarantor of

legality and governmental compliance with the rights and freedoms of Russian citizens. In accordance with his status, he determines the main direction of domestic and foreign policy and represents the country in its foreign relations. The president is elected for a five year period by national direct suffrage and cannot be elected for more than two consecutive terms.

In elections held in June 1991, Boris Yeltsin became the first democratically elected leader of the

republic. He outlined a plan to give greater political and economic authority to the federation and to diminish the role of the central government. Yeltsin's defiance of the coup that briefly deposed Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev in August inspired a popular uprising that led to the unravelling of the old central controls. The Soviet Union officially disbanded in December 1991; Russia became an independent state officially known as the Russian Federation and the country joined with ten of the other former Soviet republics to form the new Commonwealth of Independent States.

The current President of the Russian Federation is Vladimir Putin, who has been President since 2012, having previously completed two terms in the years 2000-2008. The next election will be held in 2024.

LANGUAGE

The Russian language is spoken by 300 million people in different countries. It is the 5th most spoken language in the world, the most geographically widespread language of Eurasia and the largest native language in Europe. Russian has a great literary tradition and is used for international communication in politics (it is one of the United Nations' official languages), science, culture and sports. For an English or German speaker Russian may be challenging to learn, but it can give you the key to many treasures of world culture and enable you to communicate with millions of people for whom Russian is the native or the primary foreign language.



The Russian Alphabet (русский алфавит)

The Russian alphabet is a very beautiful script. However, the print alphabet looks very different from the cursive (hand-written) form of the alphabet. Many cursive forms of certain letters look a lot like letters of the Latin alphabet. It can be quite confusing at first. But once you get used to it, the system is easy to use and convenient.



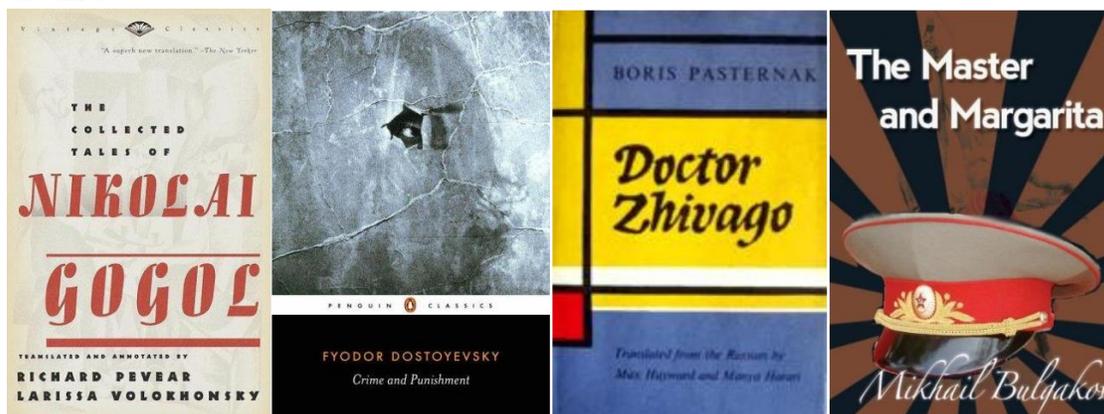
R Enjoy **RUSSIA** **А** **N**

CULTURE

Russia has made a priceless contribution to world culture. The country has given the world not only great classics and fine art masterpieces but entire schools. The Russian Stanislavski drama school and ballet school are world-famous.

You can enjoy both theater and art at affordable prices in Russia. Make sure to check out the local theaters and take a trip to the library.

Literature



Russian literature is known all over the world. Books by Lev Tolstoy and Feodor Dostoevsky are as famous as the works of Shakespeare and Dumas; “War and Peace”, “Anna Karenina”, and “Crime and Punishment” have been translated into many different languages. “Eugene Onegin”, by the great Russian poet Pushkin, is considered one of the world’s literary masterpieces of the 19th century, and many more remarkable books appeared in the 20th century, such as “The Master and Margarita” by Mikhail Bulgakov.

The places where the most famous Russian writers lived and created their outstanding works have themselves become cultural monuments.

The Yasnaya Poliana Memorial Estate of Lev Tolstoy is located 200 km south of Moscow. Cultural festivals and international literary meetings are held there.

There are many places in Saint Petersburg related to Dostoevsky and Pushkin, as well as to the characters of their books. Pushkinskie Gory (Pushkin Hills) is a literary memorial museum located in the Pskov Region in the north-west of Russia. Every year the International Pushkin Poetry Festival is held there.

Music



Russian classical music is well-known too. The best orchestras in the world play symphonies by Peter Tchaikovsky, Sergey Rachmaninov and Alfred Schnittke.

Every staging of “Eugene Onegin” and “The Queen of Spades” by Tchaikovsky, “Boris Godunov” by Mussorgsky, “Tsar’s Bride” by Rimsky-Korsakov and “Prince Igor” by Borodin is a remarkable cultural event.

Russian opera singers and musicians are world-famous. Opera fans from Paris, London, Berlin, Milan and New-York applauded Feodor Chaliapin. Great Russian conductors Valery Gergiev and Vladimir Spivakov are today’s idols for classical music fans all over the world.

Ballet



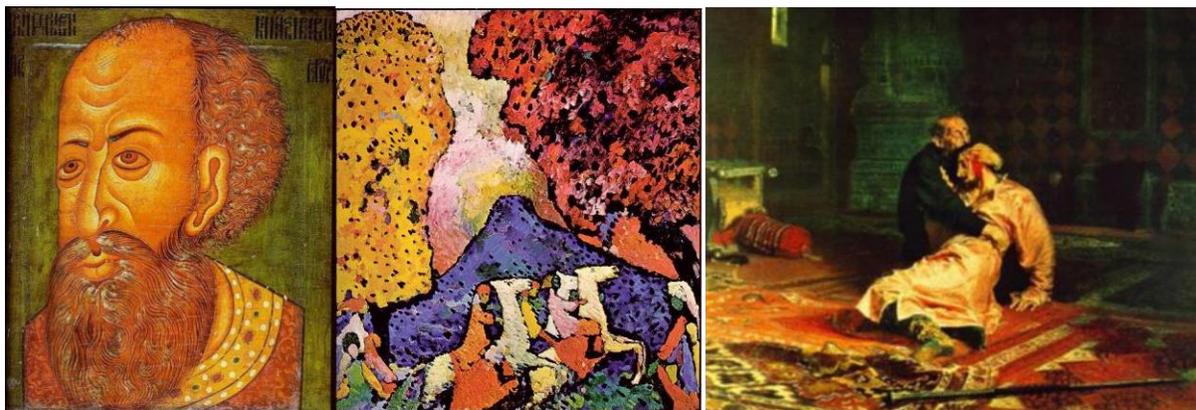
Russian ballet, its rich traditions and the names of famous ballet dancers are the most important cultural symbols of Russia. The Russian school of classical ballet is considered to be the best in the world.

Classical ballet came to Russia in the 18th century. By the end of the 19th century the national school of ballet had finally formed. It has concentrated the achievements of the best ballet schools of the world and enriched them with Russian national dance traditions. Sergei Diaghilev's "Russian Seasons" project of the early 20th century had great significance for Russian music and dance. Russian opera and ballet dancers' performances organized in Europe by Sergei Diaghilev achieved much success in Paris, London, Rome, Berlin and other cities. Swan Lake, The Nutcracker and Rome and Juliet are famous ballet theatres.

One of the greatest ballet dancers – Anna Pavlova – was one of the "Russian Seasons" stars. Galina Ulanova, Maya Plisetskaya, Mikhail Baryshnikov, Rudolf Nuriev were included in the world ballet hall of fame in the 20th century.

Nowadays Russian classical ballet traditions are supported and developed by dancers and choreographers not only from Russia but from all over the world. Trips to the ballet or opera are part of many tourism programs in Moscow and Saint Petersburg.

Art



Great masters of the Russian avant-garde of the 20th century have made priceless contributions to world art. They generated a new culture of art, architecture and design. Works by Kazimir Malevich and Vasily Kandinsky are acclaimed by critics of various countries. "Black Square" by Malevich (1915) is kept in Moscow at the State Tretyakov Gallery.

A special place among the cultural symbols of Russia is occupied by its architectural monuments. The development of Russian culture is inseparably linked with religious tradition. Orthodox Christianity came into Ancient Russia in the 10th century. Churches, cathedrals and monasteries constructed in different centuries reflect the spirituality of Russia. St Basil's

Cathedral in the center of Moscow, the white-stone temple on the Nerl River, and the unique Church of Transfiguration in Kizhi have become cultural symbols of the country.

Folk crafts



Folk art is also very important for Russian culture. Russian fine arts, literature, music and dance have incorporated ancient national cultural traditions and achievements. Originality and national identity are reflected in folklore, music and dances, in legends and tales and in traditions of national crafts.

In Russia you can get hold of remarkable souvenirs, such as samovars from Tula, Gzhel ceramics, Palekh caskets, trays from Zhostovo and many other things.

CUISINE



Original and varied, Russian cuisine is famous for exotic soups, cabbage tshi and solyanka, which is made of assorted meats. Russians are great lovers of pelmeni, small Siberian meat pies boiled in broth. Every housewife with some experience has her own recipes for pies, pickles, and cabbage. Even more varied is the choice of recipes for mushrooms, one of the most abundant and nourishing gifts of our woods. They are fried, pickled, salted, boiled and much more.

"No dinner without bread," goes the Russian saying. There are many different varieties of Wheat loaves and rye bread. Russians eat more of it than any nation in the world - a peculiarity of the Russian cuisine.

In some parts of the country customary Russian and ethnic foods are being replaced by current international favorites: hamburgers, pizza and sushi. This is particularly widespread in big cities like Moscow and St Petersburg, where there are lots of western-style supermarkets.

As is Russian custom, a table at a party isn't worth its name without a bottle of vodka. Russians are traditionally hearty drinkers: just as good whisky comes from Scotland and port from Portugal, Russian wheat vodka is the world's best. We have an amazing variety to offer, from the clear, colorless Moskovskaya and Stolichnaya to all kinds of bitters with herbs and spices.



Of our folk soft drinks, kvass is the most famous. Made out of brown bread or malted rye flour, it goes down best on a warm summer day. If you add it to chopped-up meat and vegetables, you get okroshka, an exquisite cold soup.



FACTS ABOUT SAMARA

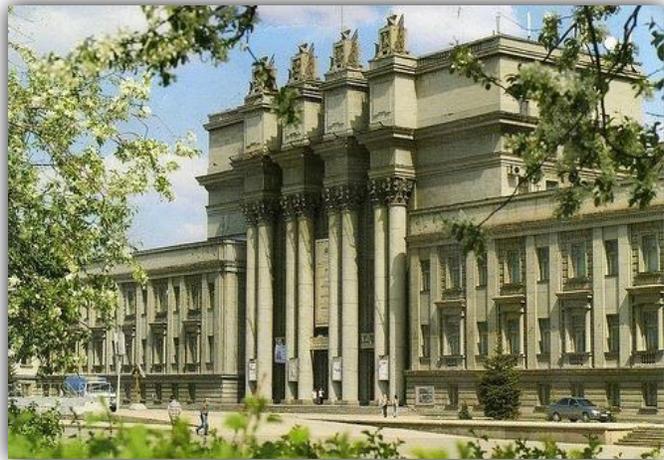
Samara is the sixth biggest city in Russia, and home to over 1.57 million people. The city is situated in the South East of European Russia, on the banks of the River Volga. Samara is the capital of the Samara Oblast. The left bank of the Volga River acts as Samara's natural Western boundary. The Northern boundary is the Sokolyi Hills, and the steppes to the South and East also form natural boundaries to the city. The city's official land mass is 46, 597 hectares. Samara's climate is continental, meaning temperatures are very hot in summer and very cold in winter, ranging from around -25°C to +35°C. Record temperatures in Samara are as follows: a high of +39.6°C and a low of -43°C. Samara is traditionally a scientific city and a centre of industry. It is in the top ten Russian cities in terms of the produced income and industrial activity.



Samara was a closed city for some time due to its aerospace engineering activities. Satellites, engines, astronomical equipment, aircraft and aluminium were also produced here during Soviet times. Samara is also a center of energy, with power stations and gas refineries.

But Samara is not just famous for aerospace engineering activities, it is also known for its local Rodnik vodka, its Zhiguli branded beer (there is a huge old brewery on the Volga river), and its local Samara chocolate.

There is a legend that Samara's inception as a city was predicted by Metropolitan Alexey in 1357, when he visited the banks of the Volga and declared that a great city would be built there. The area was first defined in 14th century Italian maps.



However, the official founding of the city was in 1586 when a fortress was built at the confluence of the Samara and Volga River to protect the eastern boundary of Russia from invaders.

At the time when the shipping route along the Volga became popular, Samara became a centre of diplomacy between Russia and the (then) East.



On January 1st 1851 Samara became the capital of Samara Oblast (county), with a population of around 20,000. In 1877, Samara became a special ally of the Bulgarian revolt with the gifting of their flag. Pyotr V Alabin was head of the State Duma at this time, and the flag still exists today, riddled with bullets and stained with blood from its time in battle.

Samara grew rapidly during the late 19th century and early 20th century thanks to its booming bread and milling industries. The Samara Brewery was also established in the 1880s, as were the chocolate factory, match factory and ironworks. Ornate residencies and architecturally impressive administrative buildings were constructed. The old milling families, Subbotin, Kurlin & Shikhobalov, made Samara famous. The city's population had reached 100,000 by the beginning of the 20th century and Samara was becoming a center of trade and industry. After the Bolshevik revolution of 1917, Samara fell, like the rest of Russia, under Soviet control. However, in June 1918 it was occupied by the Czechs in support of the Whites.

In 1935, back under Soviet control, Samara was renamed Kuybyshev, after the Bolshevik leader Valerian Kuybyshev. Many cities were named after Soviet heroes during the time of the USSR, like Leningrad (today St. Petersburg) or Stalingrad (today Volgograd). During the Second World War (1939-1945) Samara was the second capital of Russia, after Moscow, which was susceptible

to German invasion. Indeed, in October 1941, key Communist Party members and diplomats were evacuated to Samara.

There was even an underground bunker built for Stalin, and although it was never used, it is still in existence and today it is a tourist destination. Samara contributed to the war effort in other ways too – a lot of arms and aircraft products were produced here, and many Samarian citizens volunteered to go to the front line.



After the war the city became closed due to its rapid industrial growth and missile engineering activities. The launch vehicle, called Vostok 1, which launched the first manned space shuttle into space, was built in Samara.

Because of Samara's prolonged influence in aerospace and aircraft engineering a monument of an Ilyushin IL-2 plane is erected in Samara, at the end of Prospect Kirova. This plane is rather special as it was originally assembled in 1942 and was used in 1943 when it was shot down. The pilot, Kotlyarvosky, managed to crash land the plane near to Lake Oriyarvi. The aircraft was returned to Russia in 1975 and erected on the roundabout where it still sits.

With the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Kuybyshev regained its original name, Samara. In the beginning of the 21st century Samara is one of Russia's biggest cities in terms of population and industrial growth. With several universities, including Nayonava University and Samara State University, it is also becoming a center of education, with many promising law, medical and philology students. An asteroid, 26922 Samara, was named after the city on the 1st of June 2007.

ДОБРО ПОЖАЛОВАТЬ В САМАРУ!



ICYE (International Cultural Youth Exchange)

ICYE is the leader in international youth exchange programs with more than 60 years of experience in promoting young people's active and global citizenship. Its main activities are: long and short-term exchange programs (for annually 4,000 participants), as well as the organization of training courses and seminars in order to enhance international communication, intercultural understanding and commitment to peace and justice, strengthening ties between the countries and the development of youth volunteerism. More information about the federation, as well as descriptions of the programs offered can be found on the website www.icye.org.

ICYE Russia



Lastochki, which means Swallows, is the Russian National Committee of ICYE.

«ICYE» stands for “International Cultural Youth Exchange”. ICYE consists of partner organizations all over the world.

The Russian branch, Lastochki, was established in 1997 by young members of the United Nations support group in Samara. Since 1998 Lastochki has been involved in coordinating both long term and short term voluntary projects. ,

ESC (European Solidarity Corps) is open to those aged 18-30 and it lasts minimum 2 months and maximum 1 year. It is completely free of charge and not based on qualifications. ICYE volunteers usually stay between 6-12 months and pay from €1,500 to €3,550.

To read more about these different programs visit the international ICYE website at: www.icye.org or the Lastochki site at: www.icye.ru

In 2001 Lastochki was accepted as an Associate Member of ICYE Federation. In 2015 Lastochki became the Full-Member of ICYE Federation.

ICYE's International Office is based in Berlin, Germany. Lastochki aims to support and

encourage youth engagement with the society and to widen cultural boundaries. The aim is that young people between 18-30 years will integrate into a new national environment and exchange ideas and skills, which will benefit both the volunteer and the community. To help achieve this aim, Lastochki works with numerous partner organizations, including the other ICYE organizations and also other NGOs, local authorities, registered charities, UNESCO, ECOSOC, CCIVS and societies which help to promote the voluntary sector.

Organisation's contact details:

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443099 Samara

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E-mail: icye.russia@gmail.com



At the moment ICYE/Lastochki is involved in the following projects:

YOUTH AND CHILDREN:

- Waldorf Kindergarten
- Samara Jewish Kindergarten Makkabi-Lauder
- Centre of Creative Development "Volshebnyki"
- State school project "Otkrytie"



DISABILITIES AND SPECIAL NEEDS:

- Samara public organization for the disabled people «Parus Nadezhdy»



- Public organization «Down Syndrome Association»
- Samara City Public and non-profit Organization of Disabled People Using Wheelchairs «Desnitsa Association»

ANIMAL WELFARE:

- Animal shelter «Nadezhda»

(Currently available for ICYE and STePs)

YOUTH WORK:

- Lastochki Office



Please read our Work Profile for more details.

BEFORE COMING TO RUSSIA

What to bring with you

Be aware of the Russian weather. Samara's climate is continental, which means that it is very hot in summer and very cold in winter. Temperatures range from approximately -25°C to +30°C. This means you should pack winter clothes (scarf, hat, gloves, coat, and boots) and summer clothes (t-shirts, shorts). It is also advisable to pack swimwear as the banya is a popular pastime in Russia and swimming in the Volga is refreshing in the summer months!

Checklist

Remember to make sure you have the following things BEFORE you step into that airport-

bound taxi!

- ✓ Passport
- ✓ Russian Visa
- ✓ Plane ticket
- ✓ Some emergency cash
- ✓ Medical insurance card
- ✓ Any information you may have been issued with from ICYE Russia or your sending NC



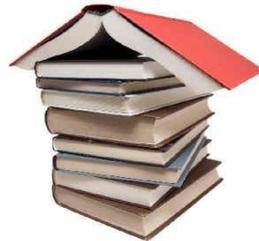
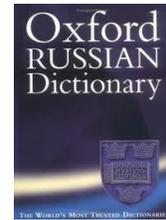
Depending on where you are travelling from you may have to spend a long time on a plane, or even on more than one plane. Prepare yourself for the time you will spend travelling. Take a book or mp3 player to occupy yourself with.

«Weight» a moment!

Please weigh your luggage before you go to the airport as it may exceed your aircraft carrier's luggage limit, and this means you will either have to hurriedly repack at the airport or PAY for the extra weight, which can be very expensive.

DO NOT FORGET:

- ✓ All travel documents
- ✓ Russian dictionary
- ✓ Project information
- ✓ Information about your country
- ✓ Books
- ✓ Hat
- ✓ Scarf
- ✓ Gloves
- ✓ Warm coat
- ✓ Thermal underwear
- ✓ Boots
- ✓ Shorts
- ✓ T-shirts
- ✓ Swimwear
- ✓ Beauty products
- ✓ Electronics
- ✓ Adaptors (if needed)
- ✓ Reminders of home
- ✓ Something relevant to your project
- ✓ GOOD ATTITUDE!



USEFUL RUSSIAN PHRASES

Of course the Russian language is too complex to cover here, but hopefully you will get the hang of it once you embark upon your 30 hours of language training. It is a really good idea to have a dictionary or phrase book with you when you arrive in Russia. Just in case you are left in the lurch. Here are a few key phrases and words to get you started. Good luck! Удачи (Udachi!)

Hello (formal) Здравствуйте [Zdrastvuytyeh]	Good morning Доброе утро [dobroyeh ootra]
	Good afternoon Добрый день [Dobrihy Dyen]
Welcome Добро пожаловать [Dobro Pozhalovat]	Good evening Добрый вечер [Dobrihy Vecher]
How are you? (formal) Как поживаете – [Kak Pazhevaityeh]	Good night Спокойной ночи [Spakoyniy Nochi]
	Goodbye (formal) До свидания [Da svidaniya]
	Cheers! (to health) На здоровье [Na Zdarovyeh]
Have a nice day Хорошего Дня [Harosheva dnya]	Bon appetite (Enjoy your meal) Приятного аппетита! [Priyatnava Appetita]
I don't understand Я не понимаю [Ya ne panimayoo]	How do you say in Russian? Как сказать ... по-русски? [Kak skazat ra ruskee]
Where are you from? Откуда вы? [Otkuda vi]	How much is this? Сколько это стоит? [Skolka eta stoit]
I'm from Я из [Ya iz]	Do you speak Russian? Вы говорите по-русски? [Vi gavareetyeh ra ruskee]

	I don't speak Russian я не говорю по-русски [Ya ne govoryu po russki]
	What is your name? Как вас зовут? [Kak vas zavut]
Where is the toilet? Где туалет? [Gdye tooalet]	My name is Меня зовут [Menia zavut]
I love you Я тебя люблю [Ya tebya lyublyu]	Pleased to meet you Очень приятно [Ochen priyatna]
Help! Помогите! [Pomageetyeh]	Good luck! Удачи! – [Udachi]

LIVING IN SAMARA

Pocket Money



Your pocket money will be paid monthly. The amount of money you will receive will depend on your program: ESC, STePs or ICYE. You will get pocket money as well as a food and transport allowance if you are an ESC or ICYE volunteer. You only get food and transport allowance if you are STePs volunteer. ESC pocket money is a fixed amount according to the ESC programme. The food and transport allowance for ESC volunteers is 7000 RUB. You will get it directly to your bank account. ICYE volunteers receive 9000 RUB in total and STePs – 5000 RUB.

Spend this money wisely. Use it to buy essentials, such as food and hygiene products before luxuries. STePs and ICYE volunteers will be asked to sign a form each month stating that you have received your spending money, and confirming the amount given.

You can change your currency in an official bank branch with the best exchange rate.

Costs of Living

Just to give you an idea of how expensive Samara is:



Bus/trolleybus/tram tickets	28 - 35 RU= 0, 40 EUR
Entrance to cinema	150-350 RU= 2- 4, 70 EUR
Entrance to night club	200-350 RU= 3, 50- 4, 70 EUR
Cup of tea	30 - 60 RU= 0, 40 EUR
Bread	22-30 RU= 0, 30-0, 40 EUR
Milk	38-70 RU= 0, 50 EUR
Letter to Europe	50 RU= 0, 50 EUR
Newspaper	15-60 RU= 0, 20 EUR
Beer	60 - 300 RU= 0, 80- 4 EUR
Lunch in a café	200-500 RU= 2 ,6 - 6, EUR
2 liters of Coke	70 RU= 0, 70 EUR

ACCOMMODATION

You will either live in a host family or a rented flat shared with other international volunteers.

Host family



If you want to live in a Russian host family, then you will be sure to get a feeling for how friendly and sociable Russians are, especially with regard to their friends and family. Russians are very hospitable people, and will certainly greet you with respect and politeness.

Perhaps it would even be a good idea to bring a small gift with you from your home country to give it to your host family to show appreciation. It does not have to be expensive. Russians like to eat and drink together, and meal times are very sociable occasions. It is polite to join your host family at meal times, if it is possible especially at the beginning of your stay. They will want to welcome you into their family. Try to respect the customs and traditions of the family, even if they seem strange to you.

Your new family will probably be very keen to hear about your home country. They may well bombard you with questions. This might become a little bit exhausting, but it is also an opportunity for you to learn more about Russia from them.

If you have any problems with your host family, try to talk to them to mutually understand and solve the problem. The problems may well arise out of misunderstandings and cultural differences, but these can usually be solved. If things decline then speak to your mentor or one of the coordinators about the problems.

All in all, staying with a host family is a great opportunity if it suits you. You will have a support network instantly available, and a wonderful chance to practice your Russian language and be involved in Russian life. Your family will be very happy to meet you, but Russians are not known for their sentimentality, so do not think they dislike you if they do not cry of happiness at your arrival! Remember that your host family is there to support you and care for you, just like your

real family.

ICYE Russia/Lastochki usually provides incoming volunteers with the contacts of their host families some time before their arrival to Russia.

First days in the family

Coming to Samara the first few days will be free for you to get used to your family and run the initial errands such as getting a SIM card or getting a Russian registration (don't worry, you will have help!). Nevertheless, it is a good idea to get an idea from your family within the first days of how and when you can help around the house or what are their family traditions. That will ensure, that you will be more a part of the family than a guest.

Some simple question to ask about the household:

- **Do you have breakfast/lunch/dinner together ?**
- **When do you clean the house and how can I help ?**
- **Can I do my own laundry, how ?**
- **How does this machine work.... (washing machine, dryer, coffee machine etc) ?**
- **What do you usually do in the weekends ? But after work ?**
- **Will I have any chores you want me to help out with ?**
- **When is « bed time » in your house ? Can I go out in the evenings ?**
- **If there are pets, ask about them. Who walks them, should you help with them etc**

Shared flat

If you have chosen to live with other volunteers in a flat then you will be responsible for self-catering and everything else, which is connected with living alone. Some volunteers have been known to cook paella every night whilst others live on pizza; it's your life to live as you want!

You will be expected to keep the flat in good condition, and not to damage or abuse the property.

Russian flats are mostly Soviet blocks – replicas of each other. It is probable also that your flat will be smaller than average flats in your home country, but this is not always the case. Flat sharing ranges from 2 to 4 people.

Your flat mates are likely to come from all over the world and thus it is important to be free of

prejudice and judgment. It is often the case that volunteers living together get on very well together and we would like this to continue.

ICYE Russia always aims to secure the best flats which the organization can get in the most advantageous locations, but do not expect a glass-walled penthouse. Interior design is likely to be old, but homely. ICYE Russia will usually provide bed linen but it is a good idea to bring a sheet or two from home. There will be a wardrobe space for you to hang your clothes. It is important that you feel comfortable in your Russian home and are able to live with your flat mates. Do not be afraid to stack your books or hang up your favorite dish towel in the kitchen. Most flat mates live in harmony together, despite their age, gender, or nationality, but if you are having problems with either your flat mates or the flat itself, try to sort it out between you first, before asking your mentor or an ICYE Russia coordinator for help.

Living with good friends in a new country, and learning a new way of life together. It often awakes the independence of the volunteers when they are living in a volunteer flat is a very liberating experience. You can expect flat living to be full of fun times. A place to rest your head which will eventually become home!

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

There are various ways to travel around Samara. One of the most popular means of transport in Samara, and indeed all of Russia, is the marshrutka. These are small vans with slide-open doors that serve as minibuses. Often, but not always, marshrutkas are yellow or white. The backs of the marshrutkas are installed with about eleven seats. There are also sometimes two seats up front adjacent to the driver.

These days, doors are often automatic so you will not have to slide to open the door. Although some marshrutkas have stop buttons, a lot do not, and it is up to the passenger to indicate their next stop by shouting: «Na slyedusheh astanaveetyes/N'astanovkyeh astanaveetyes». Make



sure you shout loud enough, or the driver will not hear you.

Marshrutkas are cheap, almost always 35 r per ride around the city, but slightly more for routes outside of it. It is a good idea to have the right change ready when you get into a marshrutka. There are a lot of different routes. The passengers in the back of the marshrutka pass their money to the driver with the expression «Vazmitye» («Take it»).



Alternative options for travel include regular buses. These come in various shapes and sizes and various conditions. These buses are sometimes small, but bigger than marshrutkas. Other times they are long and bendy. Buses tend to come less frequently than marshrutkas but stick more strictly to their timetables. On most buses, a

conductor will come to you to collect your fare and give you a ticket, but on some others you leave your money by the driver's side either when you get on or off the bus. There are discount cards available. The fixed price on a bus for a ticket is 28 rubles. That is a price also for the trolley, tram and metro single fare. You can pay both by cash or swipe your card on the ticket machine the conductor carries.

The last type of bus is the trolley bus. This is a long skinny bus which runs on electric cables. These buses are often driven by women. The drivers, who wear fluorescent orange jackets, often have to stop the bus, get out and change the wires over so that the bus can move in a different direction.



Trams are another form of transport. Trams are good for particular kinds of routes but are not very flexible destination wise. They can also become extremely busy and can also be very slow.

Finally, the metro - Samara's metro contains only 11 metro stations. However, for some destinations they are a good alternative to buses and trams.



APPS TO HELP YOU IN SAMARA

Russians are into technology and have developed many apps that can help you get around town and make more of your time in Samara.

2GIS

It's Russian miracle map such as Google Maps. But honestly, it's better. It shows you not only the directions, but also the entries to the offices you are looking, reviews, all transport possibilities, all chains, nearest shops, cafes, but also gyms etc. If you are travelling, just download the map of the city and it works perfectly also offline! The Google directions around Russia can be shady, since they are at one hand inserted in English and on the other in Russian, but 2GIS recognizes them both.



Lingvo live (and offline) translators

Lingvo is a great tool for learning Russian, since it has not only the definition and meaning you are looking for, but also the grammar rules and exceptions in there. It has a social tab, which has examples in it of people using the word in real life conversations and it has an online forum, where you can post your questions, if something considering the language is unclear. It works in a ton of different languages and you can use it for others to, such as German-Spanish etc!



Everything Yandex

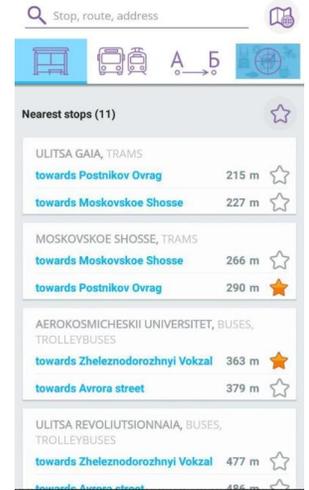


The Russian Google has similar features as it's western "brother" but it's privacy and policy related questions have raised many debates in the world. To leave the question of the Big Eye aside, Yandex has everything you need to have a comfortable life in Russia. From "Yandex Translator" to "Yandex Eda" you can both learn a language on it (and the translator is pretty good, since it has examples from real movies and TV) and order food to your

home. “Yandex Taxi” is the local Uber (but also Uber Russia works) and “Yandex Music” is the local Spotify. The actual search engine with the same name provides to often more reliable resources than Google, since it is language and community based.

Pribyvalka 63

This bus, tram, marshrutka etc timetable app might be difficult to get a hang of, but it is a great helper when you finally learn how to use it. It was developed for the football championships for tourist to understand the hectic movement for the public transport. And it has helped. Even though your bus might show up on 2GIS, it’s always handy to double-check from Pribyvalka which uses online and real time placements of the transport. You can check all stops around you, but also the path of your bus on it’s way. Check it out!



Rutaxi



We already mentioned the most popular taxi app here, Yandex Taxi. There are a bunch of competitors out there, but one worth mentioning is Rutaxi, which might have a bit cheaper prices than Yandex Taxi, but at the same time is maybe for the first couple of rides more difficult to understand. Try it out as an alternative! And trust us, you need a taxi app, since even though helpers like Pribyvalka exist, in Russia nothing is 100% certain. And with this tip, we do advise you to carry around some cash for a fare home.

MEDICAL INSURANCE

You should bring a medical insurance card or certificate with



you to Russia. This is very important. Insurance provided by CIGNA will be secured for ESC volunteers via sending organization. You should have either a small card, the size of a credit card, or a paper certificate. Do not lose it! If you have to see a doctor, you may not need this card/certificate, but it is imperative to keep it safe. It ensures that your treatment in Russia is FREE, or if it is not, that you will be reimbursed.

Most of the projects in Samara ask volunteers to bring their medical certificates in Russian or English with information on all vaccinations and medical conditions.

Another important note: Please be aware that your project may ask you to do some medical tests again. Please do not think that the project does not trust your doctor: it is a usual procedure, obligatory for institutions of this kind in Russia.

LANGUAGE COURSE

Very few Russian people can speak foreign languages, mainly because of the lack of practice.

During the orientation camp and if needed, after that, you will have language training, but still it would be better if you learn at least some words and basic phrases before you come to Samara. A pocket phrase book would also be very useful during your first weeks in Russia.



The host organization is responsible for providing volunteers with language support. It is an integral part of any project. Language support should be appropriate to the volunteer's needs and level, but the type of language support may vary from formal language classes to more informal learning methods.

Lastochki will arrange a Russian Language Course on weekly basis for as much time as the volunteer needs. The Russian language lessons will be provided either by experienced language teachers or volunteers. The content and structure of the language course will be planned together with the volunteers, taking into consideration their learning abilities and needs. The language course will be provided free of charge for the entire period of the project for the ICYE and ESC volunteers. In case STePS volunteers would like to attend a language course, they should pay in addition.

VISA PROCEDURE

As you of course already know, you will need a visa to come to Russia. The visa application will be handled by your sending organization in conjunction with ICYE Russia. Your application form will be forwarded to ICYE Russia together with your passport scan. If your application is approved, then the visa procedure will begin.

We have recently changed our visa arrangements for incoming volunteers, so please read below carefully to get the most up-to-date information!

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Our volunteers will receive a **humanitarian visa**. This is valid for 90 days, and so you will have to go home every 90 days to get a new visa. If you are ESC, your budget will cover the costs of this. If you are ICYE, you will have to pay for this yourself. If you are STePs, your project will not last longer than 3 months, so you will not need to renew your visa.

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It is **very important** that your visa remains undamaged; otherwise it is regarded as invalid. Your visa will most probably look like this:



Sometimes your visa does not have a photo on it, and you should not add one! The visa must be left exactly as it was when you first got it.

Another very important issue is the REGISTRATION. Please see the “Visa rules and regulations” file for more details. .

RULES FOR VOLUNTEERS

- ✓ No volunteer will receive a salary. Employment is prohibited during the exchange year because of visa restrictions as well as because voluntary work does not involve monetary compensation.
- ✓ Volunteers should respect “accommodation” rules. Volunteers are hosted in rented apartments or host families. These apartments are not property of ICYE Russia. Each volunteer is responsible for keeping these apartments clean and safe.
- ✓ ICYE Russia will not be responsible for the volunteers’ personal expenses (mobile phone bills, internet, etc.). If a volunteer leaves Russia with an unpaid bill or bills, ICYE Russia will ask the volunteer or his/her sending organization to cover this/these bill(s).
- ✓ If a volunteer decides to travel during holidays, he/she should inform ICYE Russia at least two weeks in advance. Whenever he/she leaves Samara, the registration will be cancelled. The volunteer will be responsible for his/her registration during the trip. Whenever he/she arrives back, ICYE Russia will take care of the registration process. Please see “Visa rules and regulations” for information about registration fees.
- ✓ Problems and misunderstandings naturally occur when people from different cultural backgrounds live together. Such problems can be used to help volunteers learn new things about each other’s cultures. Volunteers are encouraged to see these problems as learning opportunities.
- ✓ If volunteers experience problems at their project, they are advised to talk to the person or people involved in order to solve the problem. Volunteers should first of all contact their mentors. If the problem cannot be solved at this level, volunteers should feel free to contact the staff of the ICYE Russia office.

VOLUNTEERS' TESTIMONIALS

The only bad thing I can say about the Samarian people is that sometimes they are too friendly! It can be quite exhausting answering similar questions from a variety of people, and if you are female there is likely to be a certain amount of attention from amorous males. But people here are genuinely good people and I think every single person I have met here has been a nice individual, whether to chat to in a taxi or drink with in a bar.



Hannah, UK

Michaela, Austria



I consider Russia as my second home country. Some things I hate here, but I've even learned to laugh at them - just as the Russians do. I came here for some poor do something good for some people in a developing country and now I feel like I'm living in just another country (one gets blind to the poorness).

Alberto, Mexico



For someone who's interested in Russian culture, Russian way of life and Russian hospitality, the Lastochki's project in Samara is the best deal. A beautiful city, very nice people and a rewarding volunteering work, it's the best cocktail for a fascinating experience. I'll never forget my time in Samara

Russia is soooooo much more than most of us over there, the western people think about it. Russia is everything, first of all Russia is relative, heaven and hell, happiness and sadness, Russia is even big and small, very rich and very poor, very hospitable and friendly and at the same time it is possible to be killed in the middle of the day, in the middle of the street (I love to write in a dramatic style), especially as a stranger.

Eva, Switzerland

