

Russia

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[Moscow](#) , [Ekaterinburg](#) , [Magnitogorsk](#) , [Togliatti](#) , [Transsiberian Railway](#)

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Travel time: April 04, Feb.02, July 98.
Most information from 2002.

(04): 1 EUR = 34,5 Rubel
(02): 1 USD = 30.5 Rubel
(98): 1 USD = 6.2 Rubel



Moscow

2002:

A lot of things has changed since my last visit in Moscow in 1998. Its more modern, more open, more colorful, more shops, restaurants, friendly people, traffic, advertisements, expensive... but less police, less control, less neglected buildings...

If you came by plane to Moscow try to get one which lands at Airport Domodedovo which is very modern, clean, friendly and less crowded than all other. The official price for taxi transfer into the city center is 1000 Rubel. Same for return. With very good bargain 20 USD are possible.

Close to the city center there are three Marriot Hotels [Map](#). The Marriot Tverskaya at 34 1-st Tverskaya-Yamskaya Street has [large rooms](#), comfortable bed and bath, coffee and tea facilities, microwave, Internet possibility, English speaking staff, driver service... Charge is 276 USD including tax and a nice breakfast buffet. Make reservation at Tel.:095 2583000. Hotel owned taxi to the center is around 15 USD. Just around the corner is a 24h supermarket and subway station Belorusskaya.

Across the street is Sheraton Palace, 19 1-st Tverskaya-Yamskaya, Tel:095 9319700. It offers [modern rooms](#) with most necessities for your comfort. The breakfast buffet offers large choice of European and Japanese food. Its 255 USD for the high class rooms including tax and breakfast. Transfer to the airport will be 90 USD with hotel owned cars. [Map](#)

The Marriot has larger rooms with more comfort but breakfast buffet in Sheraton has the larger choice.

A nice restaurant with reasonable prices is the Elki-Palki-Po at 18a Tverskaya Street [Map](#) just at metro station Tverskaya. Take a bowl and fill it at the buffet with a wide choice of row meat, fish and fresh vegetables, choose your favorite sauce and spices and let it fry by some professionals. Add some salad on top and the cashier will charge you 195 Rubel in a nice atmosphere. www.elki-palki-po.ru

At the lower level of shopping mall Manezh at Manezhnaya near the historical museum at red square offers a large [food curt](#) . Most snack bars charge you for the weight of your complete meal. Average meal will be between 250 and 500 Rubel. There is a very delicious ice-cream parlor too.

Same level is TimeOnLine, a big Internet salon open 24h. Dependent on the daytime 30 minutes online will be 10 to

30 Rubel. They have possibilities for copying, printing, scanning, data storage to disk, CD, ZIP, DVD, MO. Tel: 095 3630060, www.timeonline.ru

The Historical Museum house nice exhibition of evolution of mankind from the very first beginning to the bronze age. All time there are some additional exhibitions at the same building for no extra charge. Its 120 Rubel for foreigner and 40 for locals.

A ticket for the Metro is 5 Rubel and valid as long as you not leave the subway net.

To Ekaterinburg there are three flights a day from Airport Domodedovo operated by Ural Air for 3730 Rubel one-way economy class.

[Up](#)

1998:

Do not overstay your visa! There is no possibility to extend a transit visas. Nor at OVIR neither at the ministry for foreign affairs. If you overstayed your transit visa the only legal possibility to leave the country is to buy an exit visa from the ministry for foreign affairs near the airport for 150 USD which is good for three days. The police check also foreigners because they try to get a bribe if something is wrong.

I overstayed because I missed my train from Beijing to Moscow and did not bought a new transit visa. So I came to Moscow at the last visa date. I got arrested two times but did not pay a fine by explaining the chief officer that I did not overstay the visa value of 10 days (which is not the rule) and that I'll leave the country the next day. Sometimes they don't know their own regulations and you should be very polite by speaking with the police. I took the next train to Poland but at the border the customs officers told me to buy an exit visa at the ministry for foreign affairs in Moscow. I played shocked but one officer asked me for a gift. I gave him 20 USD and got the exit stamp in my passport. FUCK THEM ALL.

You must not register a transit visa.

The staff at OVIR is very unfriendly and is not willing to speak in English with you. If you have problems with your visa it is a good idea to go to your own embassy. They can tell what to do and write a note for you if necessary.

The Travelers' Guest House is OK (112 R for a dorm). You can get flight tickets at the travel agency on the same corridor. To London or Stuttgart for 185 USD one way with student card.

Cheaper accommodation is RYHA Hostel (single room for 120 R) available only with a good visa.

There is every day a train to Warsaw at 3.40 PM from Belorussia station (2nd class sleeper for 396 R). Very comfortable.

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Ekaterinburg

2002:

The airport is around 30 km on good road from the center away.

One of the best places to stay is the TransHotel, 15 Gogolya St., Tel.(03432) 561211, just at the backside of the USA and Britain consulate [Map](#). The English speaking staff charge you 3700 Rubel + tax for very comfortable single room but breakfast is around 300 Rubel extra.

The Premier Hotel at 23 Krasnoarmeyskaya St., Tel.: 03432 563897, has just opened and that might be the reason

why service is quite a disappointment [Map](#). It has nice [large rooms](#) called luxury suite but are much more like IKEA and will be 3000 Rubel incl. tax and a basic but vary breakfast. The shutters from the rooms on the ground floor will never be opened because of safety reason but the truth is that they are mounted the wrong way. But why they charge 750 Rubel for room reservation I could not figure out.

Some hundred meters away from the hotels are the following restaurants:

The Gradara, a very nice restaurant where delicious Italian food is served by very courteous staff in a authentic atmosphere. The average price for a normal dinner will be around 400 Rubel including soft drinks. It is located at Malischeva 36 and open daily from 12AM to 2AM.

The Golden Dragon is similar to the Elki-Palki-Po in Moscow (see chapter Moscow). Small [bowl](#) is 159 Rubel, a big bowl is 189 Rubel, soft drink 30. It's at Karla Libknechta 13 and open daily from 10AM to 2AM.

The Ganz is a typical Bavarian restaurant although no menu in German language is available. Instead they serve original German food which means mostly large portions of meat with some side orders. A large choice of beer is inalienable. A 250gr steak from the grill served with beer will be around 320 Rubel. The Ganz will be found Malischeva 63 corner Lunatscharskogo [Map](#).

A real socialistic restaurant is the Theatralney next to the puppet theater. The decoration is incredible and the friendliness of the staff has not changed since the last centuries and the prices are for the upper class like in the past time. It can be found Mamina Sibirika 91.

The Internet cafe Arena-E is located at Malischeva 71 and is open 24h.

The daily train to Samara has 4 couch compartments for 680 Rubel per person. Blankets for you couch is 28 Rubel extra. A samovar with hot water is on each wagon. The restaurant serve some inexpensive warm food, cold beer and has a TV set too. The trip take some 22h. Make reservation some days earlier at the railway station.

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Magnitogorsk

2004:

The city biggest business is steel. One of the largest steel factories are located here and when the wind is blowing from the factory side it can get very dusty.

Best western standard has the Wonder Waterfall Hotel at the water sport complex Aquapark. The modern hotel is located in the middle of the city at Rue Naberegnaya No.9, Tel.: 233398. The helpful ladies at the reception are able to speak English, rooms are large and clean, with different comfort for different prices. The [standard room](#) for 2.200 Rubel offer private bath, AC, TV and small beds with hard mattress. If you need king size bed and fridge go for a VIP-room. Included is a breakfast buffet (from 7 to 10) and choice of eggs or porridge. Also you have free access through a separate entrance to the [Aquapark](#) with hotel own shower and locker area. It's open from 6AM till midnight every day except Saturday where the opening hours are 9AM to 10PM. Keep in mind that the swimming pool will be blocked by inflatable islands for children from Friday afternoon till Sunday evening. Swimming will get tricky at that time. They have also 4 different water slides, relaxing pool, sauna and a snack bar (only Russian language). A delicious restaurant is located in the hotel complex where they have an English menu, nice food, high prices and live music most time.

A typical Russian restaurant is the Cafe Ural which is 200 meters down the road (Rue Naberegnaya No.20) with good food, small prices, loud music at weekend but no English at all. A self-service shop for daily items ("supermarket") is located just 100 meters up the road. [Map](#)

If you like more the Russian style the [Hotel Valentino](#) would be a good choice: The liquor store in the hotel lobby is open 24 hours, gambling machines found their home here too and the dark restaurant with unfriendly waiters is located in the basement. The noisy [rooms](#) are basic, equipped with bulky furniture, old carpet and never seen

wallpaper. Only the insulation windows are new. Including basic breakfast at the gloomy restaurant it's 3.400 Rubel per night but this might be the price for foreigners because you can see lots of couples staying there for the night. A huge supermarket is next to the hotel.

The airport is less than 20 km away from the city center. Be there one hour before departure at least and keep in mind that extra luggage or any other service will be charged only in Rubel. No credit card, no Euro, no USD accepted and no exchange booth. The locals might help you out for a worse exchange rate if you wave with cash if they have enough Rubel with them.

Togliatti

2002:

Nothing special but the Lada is produced here and the nearby mountains are nice for hiking. From Samara its around one hour by car.

Hotel Zhiguli at Lenin Boulevard 5, Tel:08482 223311, has tiny used [rooms](#) for 55USD including "Swedish table" which means breakfast buffet. Better maintained and bigger rooms will be 125USD. Only cash is accepted. Two restaurants with normal prices are located on the first floor. Transfer to the airport of Samara is available on request and take around one hour.

Internet is possible at [Internet Club](#), Gagarina St. 2 and they charge 10 Rubel per half hour.

There are a few daily flights from the airport near Samara to Moscow. Tickets from Aeroflot are 2590 Rubel.

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Transsiberian Railway

1998:

If you want to travel by the Trans-Mongolian or Trans-Siberian Railway go to the ticket office round the corner of the International Hotel in Beijing (1800 RMB, 2nd class sleeper). There are two trains a week available: One at Wednesday 7.40 am (No. 3) through Mongolia (for that you need a transit visa for Mongolia) reaching Moscow at 4.30 PM next Monday and the other at Saturday 10.40 PM (No. 19) through the northern part of China reaching Moscow at 7.30 PM next Friday. Most of the year you can get a ticket within two or three days if you ask polite! Be sure that the trains leaves at time.

On the train is hot water available all time for free. Take a cup, a spoon and a lot of noodle soup with you. Also tea, coffee, cream and sugar. Bread and jam or sausages are also useful. Cigarettes and beer are cheaper in China and a good gift for your conductor. If you have some ladies as conductor you should have some cosmetics from foreign countries with you as a gift. It is good to have a nice relation to your conductor because you have to travel six or seven days with them and get a lot of extra if you are polite and know a little Russian.

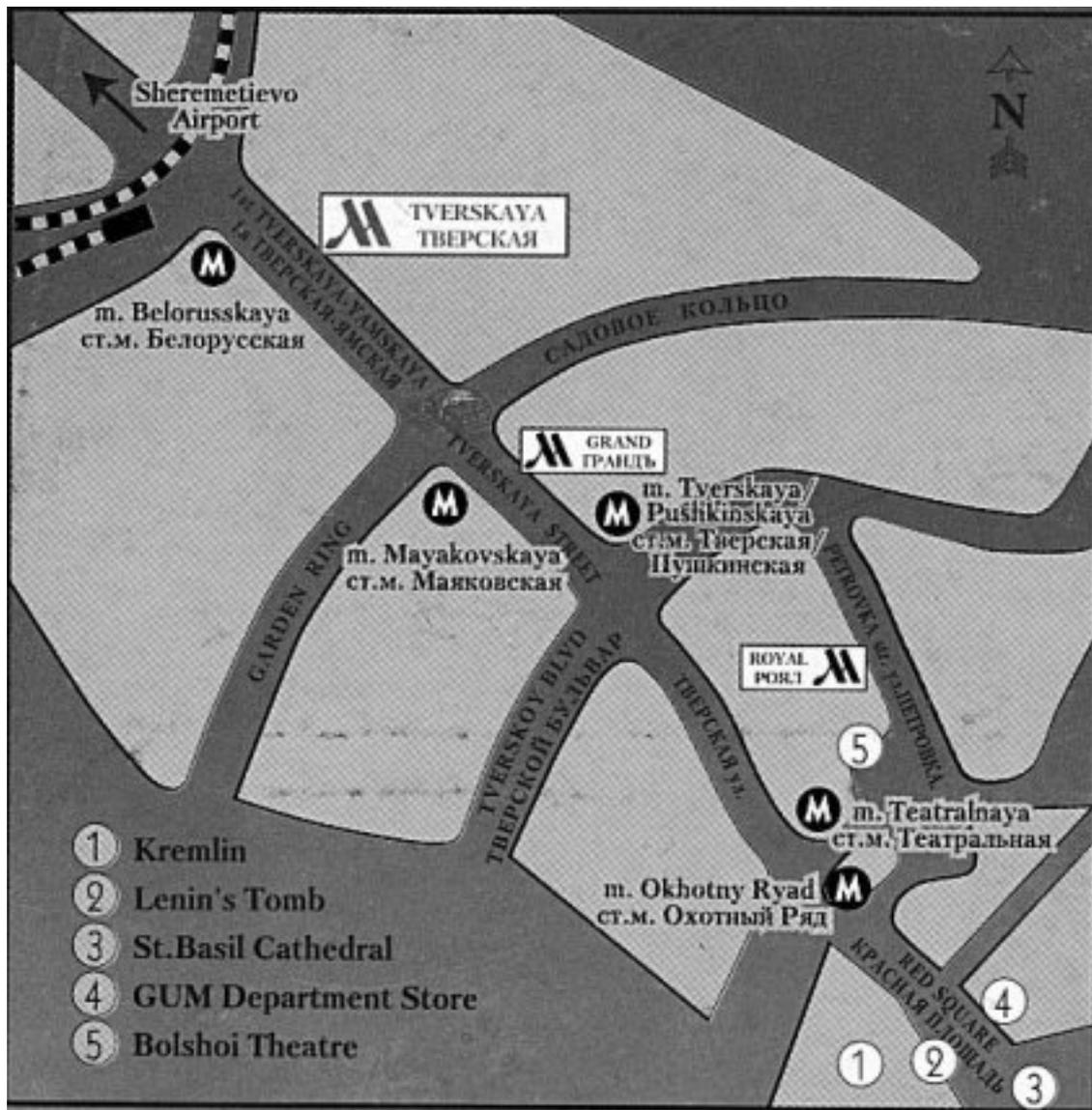
Only at small railway stations you can buy fresh and good food from the locals. At large stations the bribe for the police is too high for good business. There are only more expensive kiosks but with all what you need. Ask you conductor where to get good and cheap food because meals on the train are expensive and bad.

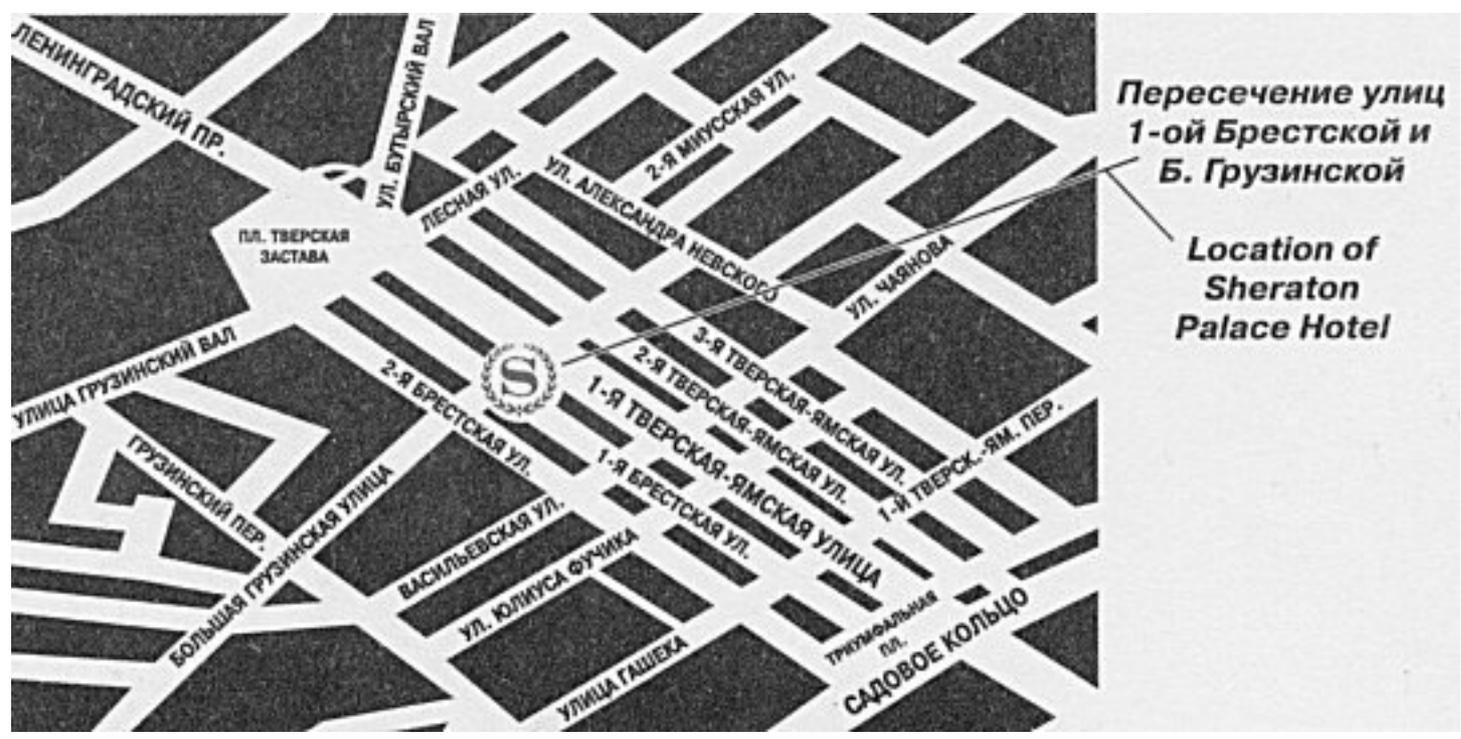
If you can't change money at the border because the only bank is closed try the bars, shops or hotels at the border or ask the traveler in your wagon. You can also change money at the conductors rate. At Novosibirsk there is a 15 min. stop and across the station is an international hotel where you can change money for a good rate but be quick to catch your train again.

To get a shower you should enter the toilet at night with an empty water bottle. Be sure that the [sink](#) on the floor is removed and water available. Lock the door and get undressed. Fill the bottle and you can shower as long as you want. Be sure that you have finished before the next arrival to a station.

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Пересечение улиц
1-ой Брестской и
Б. Грузинской

Location of
Sheraton
Palace Hotel

д. 18а



Торговый центр
ПИРАМИДА

ПУШКИНСКАЯ



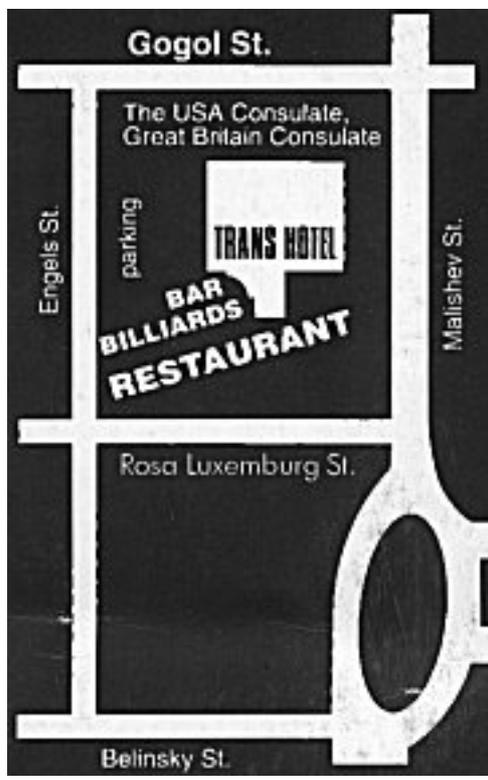
ЧЕХОВСКАЯ

ул. Тверская

Пушкинская
площадь

ТВЕРСКАЯ







УЛ. МАМИНА СИБИРКА

ГАНС



УЛ. ЛУНА УАРСКОГО

УЛ. МАЛЫШЕВА