

Novosibirsk: The Frosty Metropolis

Russia's third-biggest city, after Moscow and Saint Petersburg, and also the largest metropolis in the whole Siberia region, Novosibirsk is the cultural, scientific and transportation hub and a great stop during your trans-Siberian trip. Novosibirsk is the place to come if you are looking for vibrant nightlife, a huge choice of restaurants and a seemingly endless selection of Irish pubs.

It was founded in 1893 as the future site of the Trans-Siberian Railway bridge crossing the great Siberian River Ob. To the south is the Ukok Plateau part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site entitled Golden Mountains of Altai. The importance of the city further increased early in the 20th century with the completion of the Turkestan-Siberia Railway, connecting Novosibirsk to Central Asia and the Caspian Sea.



From 1893 until 1925, Novosibirsk was called Novonikolayevsk after Tsar Nicholas II.

Industries include machine manufacturing and metallurgy. It is the home of one of Novosibirsk State University (situated in nearby Akademgorodok), a number of institutes and a scientific research center.

To cope with the regular influx of visitors and the tourism infrastructure, Novosibirsk has a large number of travel agencies. These not only offer tourist information, but are used by visitors that need to book their accommodation, since many hotels in Novosibirsk will not accept tourists unless they have booked via a tour or travel agency.

Use the fast Novosibirsk Metro network to travel around the city and reach the main tourist attractions. Families staying in the city will find that the **Novosibirsk Zoo** and its 11,000 animals

and extensive collection of big cats is a particular highlight, and amongst the biggest zoos in the whole of Russia. On average, around 700,000 people visit the zoo every year.



Another of the country's biggest offerings is the **State Academic Opera and Ballet Theatre**, which resembles a magnificent palace in its appearance and is famed for its outstanding acoustics and regular shows. Among other popular landmarks belong **the Cathedral of Ascension** and the **Alexandre Nevsky Cathedral**.

At the centre of the city, the prominent statue of Lenin and his famous flapping coat presides over Lenin Square (Ploshchad Lenina), standing close to a number of modern sculptures and directly opposite the Novosibirsk State Academic Opera and Ballet Theatre.

The harsh Siberian winters see the Ob River freeze and the creation of an ice town, while the summer attractions include plenty of sunbathing opportunities along stretches of the riverbank and on some popular sandy beaches.



Several museums stand out in Novosibirsk and provide a wealth of information on various topics, such as Siberian history and Russian art. **The Local Studies Museum** is filled with religious treasures and contains over 200,000 artifacts, while the **State Art Museum** is full of paintings and sculptures, both from Russia and Siberia, and around Europe. Currently it houses around 9,000 works of art.

Southern Siberia covers a huge area and whilst there are many quality tourist attractions close to Novosibirsk, most will require an overnight stay. The city of **Tomsk** appeals to tourists with its famous 'wooden lace' architecture. Another large city that many Russian visitors choose to explore is **Barnaul**, where the **Altai Fine Art Museum** is always highly praised.

Tourism

Over the last years with the local authorities' cooperation tourism industry in Siberian region has seen a considerable development and increase in investment attractiveness. More than 1000 travel companies represent tourism market in Siberia. The leader is Novosibirsk region with 260 companies operating in tourism business. Practically all of them offer outgoing tourism services; 20% are dealing with incoming tourism and approximately 80% focus on the domestic tourism market. The travel services in Siberia, especially outgoing tourism, are rapidly developing. The tourist flow from Novosibirsk is increasing by 30% annually. The growth of personal income in Siberian region and improvement of the quality of life are changing the attitudes of clients towards such types of tourism as spa-, business-, health-tourism, cruising and weekend breaks.

However many parts of the tourist market, e.g. the hotel business, are not fully developed and present a huge potential for investors' activity.

Did you know?

In winter the temperature drops as low as to -40°C or even lower in Novosibirsk. However, such frosts do not occur every year and they rarely last longer than two or three days. Cars are driven on the right side of the road but the majority of cars have the steering wheels on the right. It is so, indeed, and it can be explained by a relative proximity of Japan and its car auctions, where the citizens of Novosibirsk buy used cars for good price. Novosibirsk was the first Russian city to introduce compulsory primary education. It happened in 1912, when the city was still called Novonikolaevsk. There is a city area in Novosibirsk designed in the shape of Olympic Games' symbol. There was a plan to build an area in the form of five Olympic rings - not surprisingly, this idea came to the minds of authorities just before the Olympic Games of 1980s in Moscow. However, only one and a half ring were built while others remained only a dream. You can actually see these rings from the space.

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