

# Moscow to Yekaterinburg

The leg of the Trans-Siberian railroad that traverses European Russia is well travelled. All of the major destinations are serviced by their own dedicated trains from Moscow, as well as by the *Rossiya* and the *Vostok* and other longer-distance trains, which stop at these destinations before continuing east to Siberia and beyond. As a result, finding transportation and obtaining tickets is a relatively easy task for travellers who wish to stop and explore the destinations along the route between Moscow and Yekaterinburg.

And they are worth exploring. Vladimir and Nizhny Novgorod are one of the oldest towns in Russia, with magnificent churches and ancient kremlins showing off their medieval roots. A short road trip from Vladimir, the storybook setting of Suzdal is a highlight of the 'Golden Ring' of historic towns around Moscow. Along the mighty Volga River, the Tatar capital of Kazan recently celebrated 1000 years since its founding as a stronghold of the marauding nomads from the east. And while Perm suffers from its reputation as a provincial outpost, it is a convenient and comfortable base for some fascinating trips in the Urals.

Trains crossing European Russia follow two different paths. The *Rossiya*, *Vostok* and most other trains continuing east take a northern route, which travels through Vladimir, Nizhny Novgorod and Perm, before crossing the Europe-Asia border and reaching Yekaterinburg. Other train services – such as the Moscow-Yekaterinburg direct train 16, *Ural* – follow a more southerly route via Kazan. If you can't bear to miss any of these enticing destinations, it is also possible to jump between the northern and southern routes, reaching Kazan directly from Nizhny Novgorod or on a slower train from Perm.

## HIGHLIGHTS

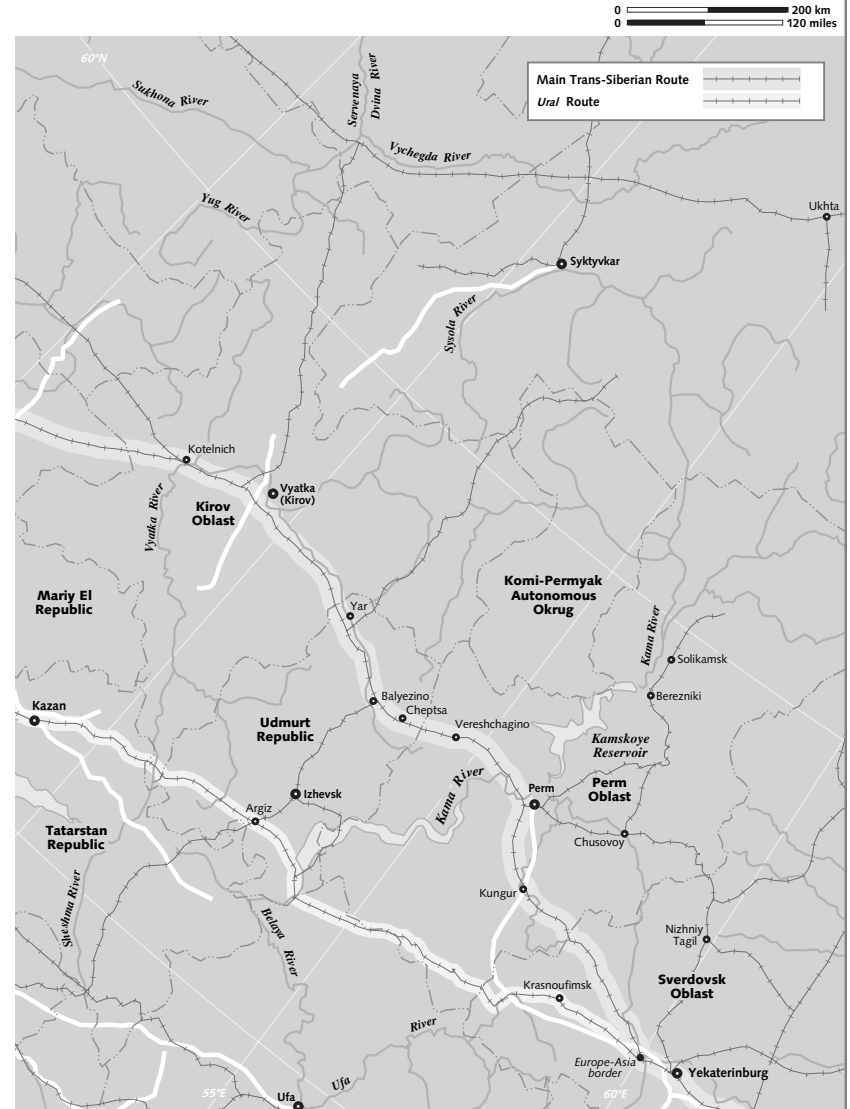
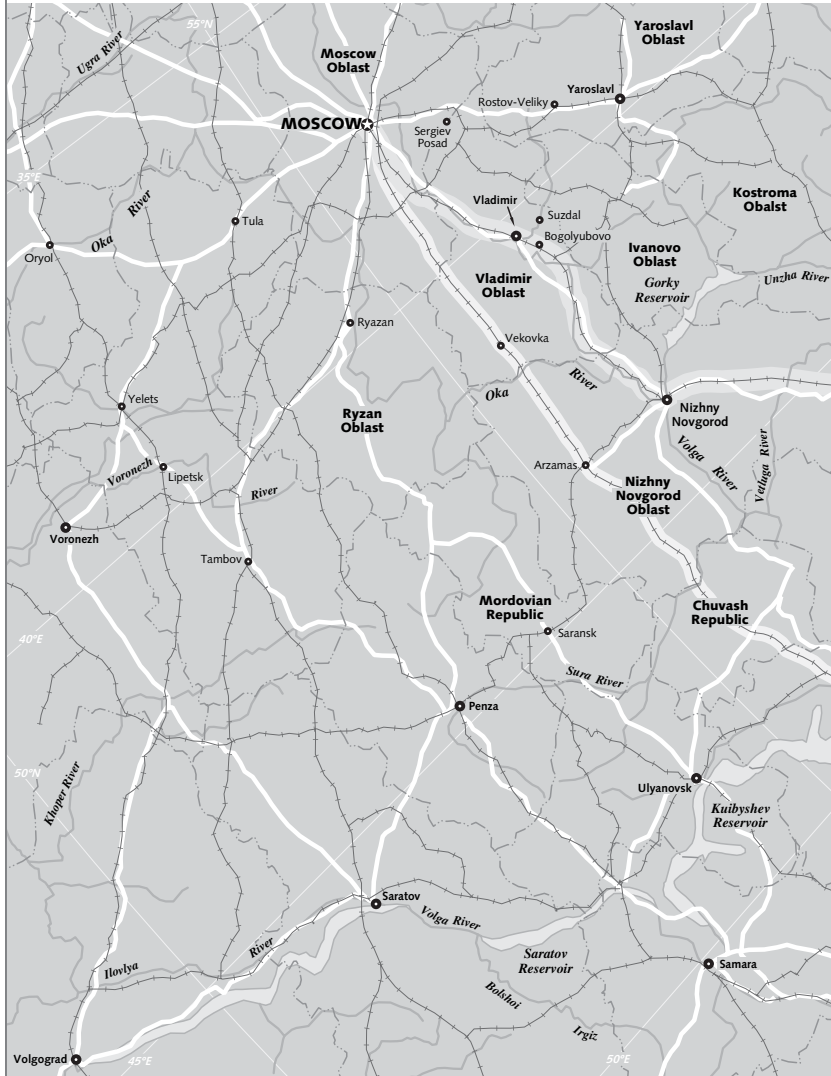
- Recall medieval Rus in the ancient capital of **Vladimir** (p130)
- Sip honey-sweet mead on the steps of the trading arcades at **Suzdal** (p134)
- Admire the view over the Volga from Nizhny Novgorod's **kremlin** (p135)
- Visit the Tatar mosques and markets in **Kazan** (p144)
- Shiver in the darkness of a cell at **Perm-36** (p142)



■ ROUTE DISTANCE: 1814km

■ DURATION: 26 HOURS

MOSCOW TO YEKATERINBURG



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## THE ROUTE

### Moscow to Nizhny Novgorod

In the 21st century, all Trans-Siberian trains take a new eastern route out of Yaroslavl's vokzal (Yaroslavl Station). They head through Moscow's grey suburbs and sylvan satellite communities of dacha (country houses) towards **Vladimir** (191km), where there's a 20-minute stop. As you approach Vladimir look out for the golden spires and domes of the Assumption Cathedral (see opposite), high on the embankment to the north.

Cast your gaze northward as you pull out from Vladimir for a glimpse of the 12th-century monastery complex at **Bogolyubovo** (200km), then do a quick turn to the south-facing window to see the beautiful Church of the Intercession on the Nerl, sitting in splendid isolation at the confluence of the Nerl and Klyazma Rivers.

There is a 12-minute stop at **Nizhny Novgorod** (441km), Russia's third-most populous city, where the modern station is still called by the Nizhny Novgorod's Soviet-era name of Gorky.

### Nizhny Novgorod to Yekaterinburg via Perm

The *Rossiya* and other services to Siberia and beyond all head northeast from Nizhny Novgorod, crossing over the mighty Volga River about 1km outside the station. You'll then chug along past the farmland and taiga of Nizhny Novgorod Oblast (region) towards **Kotelnich** (869km), the junction with the old Trans-Siberian route from Yaroslavl. Here, the time is Moscow time plus one hour.

Just outside Kotelnich the train crosses the Vyatka River, a meandering 1367km waterway that gives its name to **Vyatka** (956km), often called by its old Soviet moniker of Kirov. There's a 15-minute stop here, but little reason to get out and explore other than to stretch your legs or search the kiosks for supplies.

**Yar** (1126km) is the first town you'll pass through in the Udmurt Republic, home to the Udmurts, one of Russia's four major groups of Finno-Ugric people. Around here the countryside becomes wonderfully picturesque with plenty of pretty painted log cabins to be spotted. At **Balyezino** (1192km)

there's a change of locomotive during the 19-minute halt.

After crossing Cheptsu River at 1221km, the train enters the town of the same name. **Cheptsu** (1223km) is the junction with the line that runs between Perm and Kazan. About 40km further east, you'll cross into Perm *oblast* and the foothills of the **Ural Mountains**, which stretch about 2000km from Kazakhstan to the Arctic Kara Sea. The mineral-rich, densely wooded Urals rarely break 500m above sea level in this area, so it's difficult to actually tell you're in a mountain range. Still, with glimpses above the pine and birch forests across verdant rolling landscapes, this is one of the more attractive sections of the route.

Around **Vereshchagino** (1314km), named after the late-19th-century painter VV Vereshchagin, turn forward your watch as local time becomes Moscow time plus two hours.

Crossing the broad Kama River (1432km) you will spot the industrial city of **Perm** (1434km), where trains make a 15-minute stop. Check out the steam locomotive on the northern side of the train as you pull into the station.

From **Kungur** (1535km) the railway follows the Sylva River. The crucial thing to keep an eye out for beyond here is the **Europe-Asia Border Obelisk** (1777km), a large white monument on the southern side of the train. One of several monuments marking this continental divide, it is understated, at best. Eric Newby also wasn't impressed. In *The Big Red Train Ride* he wrote, 'We were in Asia, at last – but... there was nothing to see except a lot of deciduous trees in leaf...' For a more monumental border marker see p156.

Approaching Yekaterinburg, the train travels along the Usovaya River, affording picturesque views of a small lakes district on the south side. The first major station in Asian Russia – but still 260km short of the official beginning of Siberia – is **Yekaterinburg** (1814km), which merits a 15- to 30-minute stop.

### VLADIMIR ВЛАДИМИР

☎ 49222 / ☎ 360,000 / ✉ Moscow

High up on Vladimir's slope above the Klyazma River sits the solemnly majestic Assumption Cathedral, built to announce

### MOSCOW TO YEKATERINBURG VIA KAZAN

As well as the main Trans-Siberian route from Moscow to Yekaterinburg outlined in this chapter there is also a more southerly route that travels via the Tatar capital of Kazan. The flagship train 16, known as *Ural*, follows this route, as do many other trains travelling from Nizhny Novgorod to Kazan.

The first major stop east of Moscow is **Vekovka** (207km), home to a glassware factory. Along the platform the food and drink hawkers are vastly outnumbered by factory workers flogging off sets of cut-glass tumblers, giant brandy glasses, vases, chandeliers and the like.

**Arzamas-II** (562km) is the junction for trains running from Nizhny Novgorod to Kazan and further south along the Volga. From here, the train traverses the Chuvash Republic. The Chuvash people are descended from the Bulgars (as are the Tatars), although most of them do not live within the territorial boundaries of this artificially drawn region.

The train stops for 16 minutes in **Kazan** (820km), capital of the autonomous republic of Tatarstan. The original 19th-century train station has been handsomely restored and now houses a waiting room. See p142 for more information.

Continuing east there's a 10-minute stop at **Argiz-1** (1107km), where you may spot old steam locomotives still in use for shunting. At 1150km the *Ural* crosses the Kama River, which flows northeast to Perm.

At **Krasnoufimsk** (1456km) the local time is two hours ahead of Moscow time. This small country station is often a good place to buy berries and other forest fruits, sold by locals on the platform. From here, you will pass through the Urals' rolling mountain scenery, with lake views to the south as you near the terminus at **Yekaterinburg** (1814km).

Vladimir's claim as capital of Rus. These days, Vladimir – 178km east of Moscow – feels more like a modern, provincial town than an ancient capital. Nonetheless, the grandeur of medieval Vladimir shines through the commotion of this busy, industrial town. The exquisite examples of Russia's most formative architecture, along with some wonderfully entertaining museums, make Vladimir one of the jewels in the Golden Ring.

### Orientation

Vladimir's main street is called Bolshaya Moskovskaya ul, although it sometimes goes by its former name, ul III Internatsionala. This is where you'll find the main attractions such as the Golden Gate and the Cathedrals of the Assumption and St Dmitry. The train and bus stations are on Volkzalnaya ul at the bottom of the slope and 500m east.

### Information

**Internet@Salon** (cnr uls Gagarina & Bolshaya Moskovskaya; per hr R30; ☎ 9am-9pm)

**Post & telephone office** (ul Podbelskogo; ☎ 8am-8pm Mon-Fri)

**Sberbank** (Bolshaya Moskovskaya ul 27; ☎ 9am-7pm Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm Sat) Exchange facilities and an ATM.

### Sights

Begun in 1158, the **Assumption Cathedral** (☎ 325 201; admission R100; ☎ 1.30-4.30pm Tue-Sun) is a white-stone version of Kyiv's brick Byzantine churches. The cathedral used to house the *Vladimir Icon of the Mother of God*, brought from Kyiv by Andrei Bogolyubsky. A national protector bestowing supreme status to its city of residence, the icon was moved to Moscow in 1390 and can now be found in the Tretyakov Gallery (p110).

Inside the working church, a few restored 12th-century murals of peacocks and prophets holding scrolls can be deciphered about halfway up the inner wall of the outer north aisle. The real treasures are the *Last Judgment* frescoes by Andrei Rublyov and Daniil Chyorny, painted in 1408 in the central nave and inner south aisle, under the choir gallery towards the west end.

Just east of the Assumption Cathedral you'll find the smaller **Cathedral of St Dmitry** (1193-97), where the Vladimir-Suzdal art of stone carving reached its pinnacle. The church is permanently closed, but the attraction here is its exterior walls, which are covered in an amazing profusion of images.

The grand building between the cathedrals is known as the **Chambers** (☎ 323 320; Bolshaya Moskovskaya ul 58; admission R150; 🕒 10am-5pm Tue-Sun), containing a children's museum, art gallery and historical exhibit.

Across the small street, the **History Museum** (☎ 322 284; Bolshaya Moskovskaya ul 64; admission R50; 🕒 10am-4pm Tue-Sun) displays many remains and reproductions of the ornamentation from the Cathedrals of the Assumption and St Dmitry.

Vladimir's Golden Gate – part defensive tower, part triumphal arch – was modelled on the very similar structure in Kyiv. Originally built by Andrei Bogolyubsky to guard the main, western entrance to his city, it was later restored under Catherine the Great. Now you can climb the narrow stone staircase to check out the **Military Museum** (☎ 322 559; admission R50; 🕒 10am-4pm Fri-Wed) inside. It is a small exhibit, the centrepiece of which is a diorama of old Vladimir being ravaged by nomadic raiders. Across the street to the south you can see a remnant of the old wall that protected the city.

## Sleeping & Eating

**Golden Gate Hotel** (☎ 323 116; www.golden-gate.ru; Bolshaya Moskovskaya ul 17; s/d with breakfast R1800/2300) The 14 rooms at the shiny new Golden Gate Hotel are spacious and comfortable, with large windows overlooking the activity on the main street – or a central courtyard, if you prefer. The attached restaurant is one of the town's best, and is popular with tour groups.

**Hotel Vladimir** (☎ 323 042; tour@gtk.elcom.ru; Bolshaya Moskovskaya ul 74; s/d with bathroom from R950/1300, r without bathroom per person R350-500) This conveniently located option has acceptable rooms for all price ranges (upgraded singles/doubles cost R1150/1600). It is a friendly place with lots of services, including restaurant, bar and parking.

## Getting There & Away

The daily express train between Moscow's Kursky vokzal (Kursk Station; R208, 2½ hours) and Nizhny Novgorod (R290, 2½ hours) stops in Vladimir, as do many slower trains. Privately run buses (R100, three hours) also leave regularly from Kursky vokzal and Kazansky vokzal (Kazan Station) to Vladimir. They do not run on a timetable, but leave as they fill up.

There are scheduled buses to/from Moscow's Shchyolkovsky station, as well as Suzdal (R20, one hour, half-hourly) and Nizhny Novgorod (R180, five hours, six daily).

## SUZDAL СУЗДАЛЬ

☎ 49231 / pop 12,000 / 🗺 Moscow

Flower-drenched meadows, the winding Kamenka River and the dome-spotted skyline make this medieval capital the perfect fairy-tale setting. Suzdal, 35km north of Vladimir, has earned a federally protected status, which has limited development in the area. As a result, its main features are an abundance of ancient architectural gems and a decidedly rural atmosphere. Judging from the spires and cupolas, Suzdal may have as many churches as people.

## Orientation & Information

The main street, ul Lenina, runs from north to south through Suzdal. The bus station is 2km east along Vasilevskaya ul.

**Post & telephone office** (Krasnaya pl; 🕒 8am-8pm) Open 24 hours for phone calls.

**Sberbank** (ul Lenina; 🕒 8am-4.30pm Mon-Fri) Exchange office.

**Vneshtorgbank** (Kremlyovskaya ul; 🕒 10am-5pm Tue-Fri, 10am-3.30pm Sat & Sun) A central bank which has an ATM.

## Sights

### KREMLIN

The 1.4km-long earth rampart of Suzdal's kremlin, founded in the 11th century, today encloses a few streets of houses and a handful of churches, as well as the main cathedral group on Kremlyovskaya ul.

The **Nativity of the Virgin Cathedral**, its blue domes spangled with gold, was founded in the 1220s. Only its richly carved lower section is the original white stone, the rest being 16th-century brick. The inside is sumptuous with 13th- and 17th-century frescoes and 13th-century damascene west and south doors. At the time of research, the cathedral was under restoration and was closed indefinitely.

The **Archbishop's Chambers** house the **Suzdal History Exhibition** (☎ 21 624; admission R30; 🕒 10am-5pm Wed-Mon). The exhibition includes the original 13th-century door from the cathedral, photos of its interior and a visit to the 18th-century **Cross Hall** (Krestovaya palata),

which was used for receptions. The tent-roofed 1635 bell tower on the east side of the yard contains additional exhibits.

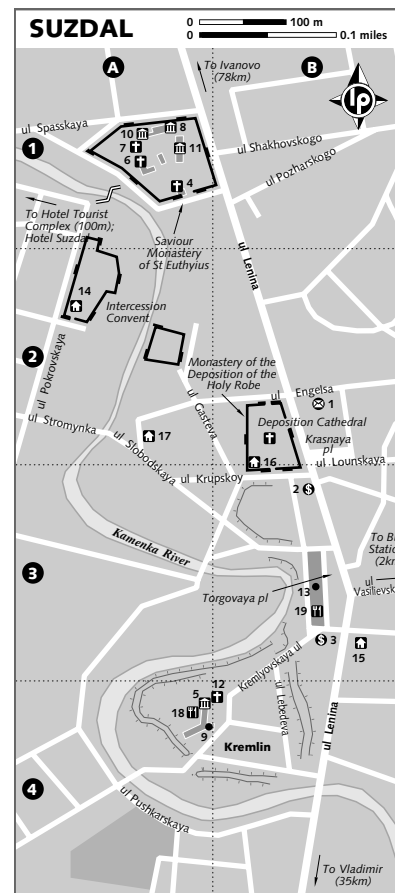
## SAVIOR MONASTERY OF ST EUTHYMIUS

Founded in the 14th century to protect the town's northern entrance, Suzdal's biggest **monastery** (☎ 20 746; admission to each exhibit R40-50, all-inclusive R280; 🕒 10am-6pm Tue-Sun) grew mighty in the 16th and 17th centuries after Vasily III, Ivan the Terrible and the noble Pozharsky family funded impressive new stone buildings and big land and property acquisitions. It was girded with its great brick walls and towers in the 17th century.

Inside, the **Annunciation Gate-Church** houses an interesting exhibit on Dmitry Pozharsky

(1578-1642), leader of the Russian army that drove the Polish invaders from Moscow in 1612.

A tall 16th- to 17th-century bell tower stands before the seven-domed **Cathedral of the Transfiguration of the Saviour**. Every 90 minutes from 10.30am to 4.30pm, a short concert of chimes is given on the bell tower's bells. The cathedral was built in the 1590s in 12th- to 13th-century Vladimir-Suzdal style. Inside, restoration has uncovered some bright 1689 frescoes by the school of Gury Nikitin from Kostroma. On summer weekends a short but heavenly a cappella concert takes place once an hour. The **tomb of Prince Dmitry Pozharsky** is by the cathedral's east wall.



### INFORMATION

Post & Telephone Office	
Почтамт и переговорный пункт	1 B2
Sberbank Сбербанк	2 B3
Vneshtorgbank	
Туристическое бюро	3 B3

### SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

Annunciation Gate-Church	
Благовещенская надвратная церковь	4 A1
Archbishop's Chambers	
Архирейские палаты	5 A4
Assumption Church	
Успенская церковь	6 A1
Cathedral of the Transfiguration of the Saviour	
Спaso-Преображенский собор	7 A1
Hospital & St Nicholas' Church	
Больничные кельи и Никольская церковь	8 A1
Kremlin Bell Tower	
Кремлевская колокольня	9 A4
Monastery Prison Тюрма	10 A1
Monks' Quarters Батский корпус	11 A1
Nativity of the Virgin Cathedral	
Рождественский собор	12 B4
Suzdal History Exhibition	(see 5)
Tomb of Prince Dmitry	(see 7)
Trading Arcades	
Торговые ряды	13 B3

### SLEEPING

GTK Cabins	14 A2
Hotel Falcon Гостиница Сокол	15 B3
Hotel Rizopolozhenskaya	
Гостиница Ризоположенская	16 B2
Likhoninsky Dom Лихонинский Дом	17 A2

### EATING

Kremlin Refectory	
Трапезная в Кремле	18 A4
Mead-Tasting Hall	
Дегустационный зал Суздальского медо-варенного завода	19 B3

The 1525 **Assumption Church** facing the bell tower adjoins the old Father Superior's chambers, which house a display of Russian icons. The **monks' quarters** across the compound contain a museum of artistic history.

At the northern end of the complex is the old **monastery prison**, set up in 1764 for religious dissidents. It now houses a fascinating exhibit on the monastery's military history and prison life, including displays of some of the better-known prisoners who stayed here. The combined **hospital** and **St Nicholas' Church** (1669) contains a rich museum of 12th- to 20th-century Russian applied art, much of it from Suzdal itself.

## Activities

The rolling hills and picturesque countryside around Suzdal are ideal for outdoor adventures, such as horse riding and mountain biking. The **Hotel Tourist Complex** (Gostinichnyy Turistskiy Kompleks, GTK; ☎ 23 390; ul Korovniki 45; ☎ 10am-6pm) rents out bicycles, snowmobiles and skis, and also offers horse-riding tours.

## Sleeping

**Likhoninsky Dom** (☎ 21 901; aksenova-museum@nt.vladimir.ru; Slobodskaya ul 34; s/d with breakfast R1500/1800) Suzdal's most charming place to stay is on a quiet street near the town centre. The 17th-century merchant's house has five rooms and a pretty garden. It feels like home, thanks to the kindly ladies who run it.

**Hotel Falcon** (☎ 20 088, 20987; www.hotel-sokol.ru; Torgovaya pl 2A; s/d with breakfast from R1300/2200) This attractive new hotel is ideally located opposite the trading arcades. Its 40 rooms are all simply decorated and fully equipped with new wooden furniture and modern bathrooms. The elegant restaurant is also recommended. Prices decrease significantly between October and April.

**Hotel Rizopolozhenskaya** (☎ 24 314; ul Lenina; s/d with breakfast R620/1000) Housed in the decrepit Monastery of the Deposition, this hotel is Suzdal's cheapest place to stay. Some rooms have been renovated but they vary widely, so it's wise to ask for a preview before you commit.

**Hotel Suzdal** (☎ 21 530; www.suzdaltour.ru; s/d with breakfast from R1580/1800; 📶 📺 📺) One of three hotels within the Hotel Tourist Com-

plex (see left). This place is low on charm but high on facilities: the complex includes a fitness centre, a bowling alley, several restaurants and a cheaper 'motel' (single/double R1120/1340). GTK also rents the cosy cabins at Pokrovskaya Hotel (single/double with breakfast R1820/2400), on the grounds of the Intercession Convent.

## Eating & Drinking

**Kremlin Refectory** (☎ 21 763; meals R300-500; ☎ 11am-11pm) The main attraction here is the atmospheric location inside the Archbishop's Chambers. This place has been serving tasty, filling Russian favourites for 300 years.

**Mead Tasting Hall** (☎ 20 803; tasting menu R120-150; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-8pm Sat & Sun) Hidden in the back part of the trading arcades, this hall is done up like a church interior – floor-to-ceiling frescoes, arched ceilings and stained-glass windows. The menu features different varieties of *medovukha*, a mildly alcoholic honey ale that was drunk by the princes of old. A few other places to eat are in the trading arcades.

## Getting There & Away

The bus station is 2km east of the centre on Vasilievskaya ul. Some long-distance buses continue past the station into the centre; otherwise, a *marshrutka* (fixed-route minibus) will take you there. Buses run every half-hour to/from Vladimir (R20, one hour). One daily bus goes directly to/from Moscow's Shchyolkovskiy bus station (R145, 4½ hours).

## NIZHNY NOVGOROD

### НИЖНИЙ НОВГОРОД

☎ 8312 / pop 1.31 million / 📶 Moscow

Often called Russia's 'third capital', Nizhny Novgorod is markedly less cosmopolitan than Moscow and St Petersburg. But its ancient kremlin on the banks of the Volga and its pleasant pedestrian promenade make it an appealing place to spend a few days.

During Soviet times the city was named Gorky, after the writer Maxim Gorky, who was born here in 1868. Literature connoisseurs will find several museums in his memory. Everyone else will find one of Russia's most dynamic provincial capitals, replete with eating and entertainment opportunities.

## History

Founded in 1221, Nizhny Novgorod has long been an important trading centre. Barges used to dock on the river and exchange goods; this floating market later became a huge trade fair, the Yarmarka, a tradition that continues to this day. In the 19th century it was said, 'St Petersburg is Russia's head; Moscow its heart; and Nizhny Novgorod, its wallet'.

The presence of many industries connected with the military (submarine construction, for example) meant that Nizhny Novgorod was closed to foreigners for many decades; this is one reason why the late Andrei Sakharov, physicist, dissident and Nobel laureate, was exiled here in the 1980s (see right).

## Orientation

Nizhny Novgorod, lying on the southern bank of the Volga River, is split by the Oka River. The train and bus stations are side by side on the western side of the Oka. The kremlin sits on the high eastern bank overlooking the Volga. Outside its southern wall, the city's main streets spoke out from pl Minina i Pozharskogo. From here the pleasant, pedestrian ul Bolshaya Pokrovskaya heads south to pl Gorkogo.

## MAPS

**Dom Knigi** (☎ 442 273; pl Lenina; ☎ 10am-7pm Mon-Fri, 10am-6pm Sat, 11am-4pm Sun) carries maps with local transport routes, and also has some English-language books.

## Information

**Central post office** (pl Gorkogo; ☎ 24hr)

**Pauteen.ru** (Sergievskaya ul 1; per hr R40; ☎ 11am-5am) Internet café.

**Post office** (ul Bolshaya Pokrovskaya 7; ☎ 8am-7pm Mon-Sat, 8am-3pm Sun) Near the kremlin.

**Sberbank** (ul Bolshaya Pokrovskaya 3; ☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-2pm Sun) ATM and currency exchange services.

**Volga Telecom** (☎ 301 270; pl Gorkogo; per hr R40; ☎ 24hr) A convenient Internet facility with plenty of computers.

## Sights

### KREMLIN

The mighty walls of the kremlin and its 11 towers date from the 16th century. Sometimes the ramparts are open, providing a sweeping view of the kremlin grounds and

beyond; climb up through the restaurant in the Kladovalaya Bashnya gate.

Inside, most of the buildings are government offices. The small, 17th-century **Cathedral of the Archangel Michael** (☎ 9am-2pm) is a functioning church. Behind it, an eternal flame burns near a striking **monument** to the heroes of WWII.

At the northeast end of the grounds, the former governor's house is now home to the **Nizhegorodsky State Art Museum** (☎ 391 373; admission R30; ☎ 10am-5pm Wed-Mon). Exhibits here range from 14th-century icons to 20th-century paintings by artists such as Syatoslav Rerikh and Vasily Surikov.

## SAKHAROV MUSEUM

A reminder of more-repressive times, the **Sakharov museum** (☎ 668 623; pr Gagarina 214; admission R30; ☎ 10am-5pm) provides visitors with a sobering but fascinating view of Andrei Sakharov's life.

Sakharov was a nuclear physicist who was involved in developing the Soviet Union's first hydrogen bomb. Over the years, he became one of the main figures opposing the Soviet regime from within. In 1975 Sakharov was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize but never dared to go to pick it up.

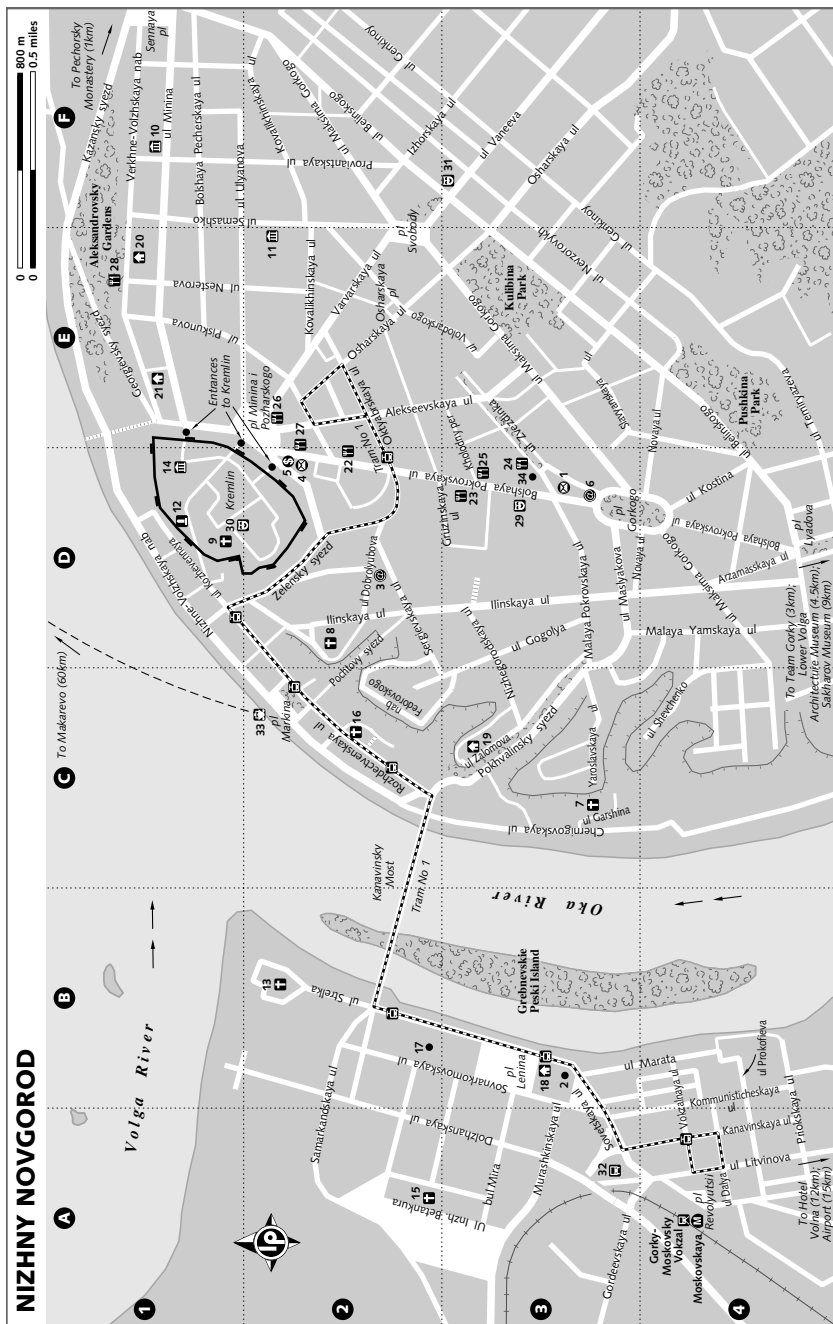
Sakharov was exiled to Gorky in 1980, and his wife Elena Bonner joined him in 1984. Located in the flat where they lived, the museum documents their lives before and after their exile. You can see the telephone that was installed in 1986, expressly so that Mikhail Gorbachev could call to inform Sakharov of his pending release. To get here catch minibus 104 or 4 from pl Minina i Pozharskogo.

## GORKY MUSEUMS

Fans of Maxim Gorky can visit the historic wooden houses where the writer lived and worked. The best is the **Gorky Museum** (☎ 361 651; ul Semashko 19; ☎ 9am-5pm Tue, Wed & Fri-Sun), where he lived during his 30s. For a more in-depth look at the events and personalities that influenced Gorky's work, visit the **Gorky Literary Museum** (☎ 338 589; ul Minina 26; ☎ 9am-5pm Wed-Sun).

## LOWER VOLGA ARCHITECTURE MUSEUM

This open-air **museum** (☎ 651 598; Gorbatovskaya ul 39; admission R50; ☎ 10am-4pm Sat-Thu) has a pleasant woodland site and a collection

**INFORMATION**

Central Post Office	Центральный почтамт	1	D3
Dom Knigi Dom Knigi	Дом Книги	2	B3
Pauteen.ru	Паутен.ру	3	D2
Post Office Почтамт	Почтамт	4	D2
Sberbank Сбербанк	Сбербанк	5	D2
Volga Telecom	Волга Телеком	6	D3

**SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES**

Annunciation Monastery	Благовещенский монастырь	7	C3
Assumption Church	Успенская церковь	8	D2
Cathedral of the Archangel Michael Собор Михаила Архангела	Собор Михаила Архангела	9	D1
Gorky Literary Museum	Литературный музей Горького	10	F1
Gorky Museum	Музей Горького	11	E2
Monument to Heroes of WWII	Памятник Отечественной войны	12	D1

Nevsky Cathedral	Невский собор	13	B2
Nizhegorodsky State Art Museum	Художественный музей	14	D1
Saviour Old Market Cathedral	Спаский староярмарочный собор	15	A2
Stroganov Church	Строгановская церковь	16	C2
Yarmarka Ярмарка	Ярмарка	17	B2

**SLEEPING**

Central Hotel	Гостиница Центральная	18	B3
Nizhegorodsky Hotel Complex	Гостиничный Комплекс	19	C3
October Hotel	Гостиница Октябрьская	20	E1
Volga Slope Hotel	Гостиница Волжский Откос	21	E1

**EATING**

Bar Bochka Бар Бочка	Бродвей пицца	22	D2
Broadway Pizza	Бродвей пицца	23	D3

English Embassy	Английское Посольство	24	D3
Gorod Gorky	Город Горький	25	D3
Mexican Studies	Мексиканские Этюды	26	E2
Michelle Мишель	Картофельный Папа	27	E2
Potato Papa	Картофельный Папа	28	E1

**ENTERTAINMENT**

Jam Prestige	Джем Престиж джаз клуб	29	D3
Kremlin Concert Hall	Концертный Зал	30	D1
Pushkin Theatre of Opera & Ballet	Театр оперы и балета	31	F3

**TRANSPORT**

Bus Station	Автостанция	32	A3
River Station	Речной вокзал	33	C2
Turbyuro Турбюро	Турбюро	34	D3

of traditional wooden buildings, some of which are open for visitors. The highlight is the **Pokrovskaya church**, a beautiful wooden church dating from 1731.

**CHURCHES & MONASTERIES**

The proliferation of onion domes and golden spires in Nizhny Novgorod is a ubiquitous reminder of the city's rich history.

The 13th-century **Annunciation Monastery**, located above Chernigovskaya ul, is the oldest church in town, but it's not open to the public. The 17th-century stone **Assumption Church** is unique in that its design was normally exclusive to wooden churches. The baroque **Stroganov**, otherwise known as **Nativity Church**, has retained its magnificent stone carvings.

On the west bank of the Oka River is the eye-catching **Nevsky Cathedral**. The **Saviour Old Market Cathedral** sits behind the **Yarmarka**, the handsomely restored exhibition hall on pl Lenina.

**Tours**

**Team Gorky** (☎ 651 999; www.teamgorky.ru; ul 40 let Oktyabrya 1a) organises adventure tours in the Volga region and beyond, including several three-day trips in the region (per person from €85) and a 10-day bike tour of the Golden Ring (per person €560).

**Sleeping**

**October Hotel** (☎ 320 670; www.oktyabrskaya.ru; Verkhne-Volzhskaia nab 9A; s/d with breakfast from R2900/

4500; ☑) This business hotel has a prime location overlooking the Volga. All of the rooms are renovated with new furniture, modern bathrooms and a hint of post-Soviet kitsch.

**Volga Slope Hotel** (☎ 390 530; fax 194 894; Verkhne-Volzhskaia nab 2A; r from R800) This Soviet hotel has friendly staff and decent rooms for the excellent price. Nicer, renovated rooms overlooking the Volga run at around R2500, while budget travellers may appreciate the cheapies (from R300) with shared facilities.

**Nizhegorodsky Hotel Complex** (☎ 305 387; www.hotel.r52.ru; ul Zalomova 2; s/d with breakfast from R900/1200) A 15-minute walk from Nizhny's main drag, this old-style place is good value. The facility is not the most attractive, but rooms are adequate and service is friendly.

**Hotel Volna** (☎ 961 900; www.volnahotel.ru; ul Lenina 98; s/d from R4480/6700; ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑) Nizhny Novgorod's top hotel offers all the facilities you'd expect, including tastefully decorated rooms, an impressive breakfast spread, a well-equipped gym and a couple of upscale restaurants. The location, 9km south of the station (but near the end of the metro), is not in its favour.

**Central Hotel** (☎ 775 500; www.hotel-central.ru; Sovetskaya ul 12; s/d from R1100/1700) The location of this hotel near the station is convenient, but the flip-side is that it attracts a rough and tumble crowd (as does the casino in

the lobby). Nonetheless, service and security are satisfactory. Upgraded rooms cost R1700/2200 with breakfast, but the difference in comfort level is negligible.

## Eating & Drinking

**English Embassy** (☎ 336 165; ul Zvezdinka 12; business lunches R150, meals R300-500; ☎ 8am-midnight Sun-Thu, 8am-2am Fri & Sat) This convivial British pub offers all your favourites, from steak and eggs for breakfast, to roast beef and pudding for dinner, to fish and chips for the late-night munchies. A good selection of draught beers is available from the wood and brass bar.

**Gorod Gorky** (☎ 332 017; Bolshaya Pokrovskaya ul 30; meals R150-400; ☎ 11am-midnight) Of several Soviet nostalgia places, this quietly upmarket choice is the most entertaining. Enter through the archway to Dom Ofitserov (look for the 'Музей СССР' sign). Walk through a waxwork Leonid Brezhnev's office into the dining room, littered with Soviet memorabilia and Beatles photos. The food is surprisingly good, and you can compare how much it costs today with how little it cost in 1974.

**Michelle** (☎ 192 914; Bolshaya Pokrovskaya ul 6; meals R150-300; ☎ 10am-11pm) This place is – first and foremost – a coffee bar, offering

several varieties of aromatic brew in a simple café setting. The menu also features soups and sandwiches and dishes with French nuances – innovative fare for the price.

**Bar Bochka** (☎ 335 561; Bolshaya Pokrovskaya ul 14; meals R200-400; ☎ noon-midnight) An old-school Georgian place. The dark, basement location has a bar-like atmosphere, live crooners and shashlyk (meat kebab) for every palate.

**Mexican Studies** (☎ 391 460; pl Minina i Pozharskogo 2; meals R300-600; ☎ noon-midnight) This place takes Mexican food seriously. See if you can pass the test by finishing off plates piled high with rice and beans, burritos, fajitas and empanadas. Conveniently located opposite the kremlin, it is the place to go for something spicy.

Recommended for cheap eats:

**Broadway Pizza** (☎ 917 916; Bolshaya Pokrovskaya ul 31; pizza from R45; ☎ 8am-4am) A great stop for a late-night snack.

**Potato Papa** (☎ 194 101; Verkhne-Volzhsкая nab; meals R60-100; ☎ 11am-9pm) A cafeteria with lovely river views.

## Entertainment

**Jam-Prestige** (☎ 333 246; ul Bolshaya Pokrovskaya 49A; admission R50-200; ☎ shows 8-9pm) For jazz, blues

and rock and roll, this small basement dive is a great venue. The place also hosts swing dancing on Monday and Saturday, so bring along your dancing shoes.

**Kremlin Concert Hall** (☎ 391 187; ☎ shows 6pm) The concert hall at the west end of the kremlin is home of the philharmonic, playing a full schedule of classical concerts throughout the year.

**Pushkin Theatre of Opera & Ballet** (☎ 351 640; ul Belinskogo 59) This beautifully renovated theatre is also recommended for Russian classics.

## Getting There & Away

### AIR

Several flights daily make the journey to Moscow (R1000 to R3000, one hour). **Luft-hansa** (☎ 759 085) flies directly to and from Frankfurt three times a week. Airline tickets are available at agencies around the city, including the **Turbyuro** (☎ 104 503; ul Zvezdinka 10; ☎ 10am-7pm Mon-Sat).

### BOAT

The **Rechnoy vokzal** (River Station; ☎ 303 666) is on Nizhne-Volzhsкая nab, below the kremlin. Apart from short trips along the Volga (see right), this is where you can find out about the summer cruises linking Nizhny Novgorod with St Petersburg, Moscow and cities further down the Volga.

### BUS

Buses go to/from Moscow's Shchyolkovsky bus station (R300, nine hours, five daily) and to/from Vladimir (R180, 4½ hours, four daily).

### TRAIN

The Nizhny Novgorod train station still goes by its old name of Gorky-Moskovsky vokzal (so 'Gorky' appears on most timetables). It is located on the western bank of the Oka River, at pl Revolyutsii. Several trains go to Moscow (seven hours), including one fast train (R300, 4½ hours), which departs every morning at 6.30am. All of these services stop at Vladimir (R240, two to three hours). One train also continues all the way to St Petersburg (R1500, 16 hours).

Heading east, trains stop at all major points along the Trans-Siberian route – the next stop being Perm (R1700, 14 hours).

Trains also depart to Kazan (R640, nine hours, daily).

The **service centre** (☎ 483 470) at the train station is helpful for buying tickets, and also offers other services such as Internet access.

## Getting Around

Tram 1 is very convenient, starting from the train station, crossing the Kanavinsky most (bridge) and climbing the hill to the kremlin. There are plans to extend the metro across the river but that's unlikely to happen during the life of this book. Currently you might use it only to get to Hotel Volna.

## AROUND NIZHNY NOVGOROD

### Makarevo Макарево

☎ 249 / pop 180 / ☎ Moscow

The sleepy village of Makarevo is around 60km east of Nizhny Novgorod along the Volga. The fortified stone walls and church domes of its **Makariev Monastery** (☎ 26 967; admission R150; ☎ 9am-5pm) look magnificent on the approach from the river.

The monastery and surrounding village, founded in 1453, thrived on vibrant river trade through the 19th century. The monastery was closed during the Soviet period, but a few nuns returned in 1991 to help restore the churches. Today four churches are working, but only 20 nuns live here. The village of 180 people is made up of rustic wooden cottages, as well as a small museum in the old school house. Most locals come here for a day of sunbathing by the river; bring a picnic as there are only a few small shops.

From Nizhny Novgorod, boats to Makarevo (3½ hours) depart in the morning from near the river station and return in the evening.

### PERM ПЕРМЬ

☎ 3422 / pop 1 million / ☎ Moscow + 2hr

Dominated by heavily trafficked avenues and concrete blocks, Perm is a modern, industrial city that most travellers could bear to miss. Its chequered history, however, draws them in – to bear witness to the thousands of years that were lost by prisoners at the notorious labour camp Perm-36; and to discover what has become of the once-secret city of Molotov (named during

## THE GULAG

The Siberian exile system was abolished at the turn of the 20th century, but Stalin brought it back with a vengeance, expanding it into a full-blown, home-grown slave trade. It was during his rule that Siberia became synonymous with death. He established a vast bureaucracy of resettlement programs, labour colonies, concentration camps and special psychiatric hospitals, commonly known as the Gulag.

The Gulag's inmates – some of whose only 'offence' was to joke about Stalin or steal two spikelets of wheat from a *kolkhoz* (collective farm) field – cut trees, dug canals, laid railway tracks and worked in factories in remote areas, especially Siberia and the Russian Far East. A huge slice of the northeast was set aside exclusively for labour camps, and whole cities were developed as Gulag centres.

The Gulag population grew from 30,000 in 1928 to eight million in 1938. Prisoners were underfed, mistreated and literally worked to death; the average life expectancy was about two years, and 90% of inmates didn't come out alive. The Gulag system continued well after WWII: Boris Yeltsin announced the release of Russia's 'last 10' political prisoners from a camp near Perm in 1992.

Anne Applebaum, author of the definitive *Gulag: A History*, believes that at least 18 million people passed through the camp system. Many more suffered, though. Nadezhda Mandelstam, whose husband Osip Mandelstam, a highly regarded poet, was exiled to Siberia in 1934, wrote that a wife considered herself a widow from the very moment of her husband's arrest. She was almost right – Osip lasted four years before dying at the Vtoraya Rechka transit camp in Vladivostok.

the Soviet period for the foreign minister who was also the namesake of the explosive cocktail).

Today, Perm is not so menacing, but its reputation as a bland, provincial capital persists (Chekhov used Perm as inspiration for the city that his *Three Sisters* were so desperate to leave). This is quite unfortunate, as the city boasts its fair share of cultural attractions, from a championship basketball team to a one-of-a-kind art collection.

Economically, the city is thriving. Evidence of its military history is everywhere, but so are signs of ongoing economic development, from shiny new bank buildings to sushi bars.

## Orientation & Information

Perm sprawls along the south bank of the Kama River. The city centre is at the intersection of ul Lenina and Komsomolsky pr, and Perm II train station is about 2.5km southwest of here.

**Internet Centre** (☎ 373 605; Kommunisticheskaya ul 77; per hr R30; ☎ 24hr) Often crowded with young boys playing video games, but the large, dark hall contains plenty of computers.

**Main post office** (ul Lenina 29; per hr R30; ☎ 24hr) Also offers Internet access.

**Permtourist** (☎ 906 237; www.permtourist.ru; ul Lenina 58) Arranges local excursions as well as cruises along the Kama River and further to the Volga.

**Sberbank** (ul Lenina 31; ☎ 10am-8pm Mon-Sat) Cashes travellers cheques and gives credit card advances.

## Sights

Housed in the grand Cathedral of Christ Transfiguration on the banks of the Kama, the **Perm State Art Gallery** (☎ 129 524, 122 395; www.sculpture.permonline.ru; Komsomolsky pr 4; admission R30; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Fri, 11am-7pm Sat, noon-6pm Sun) is renowned for its collection of Prikamye wooden sculpture. Dating back to the 17th century, the religious figures are examples of a primitive style that is unique to the Perm region. The museum also contains a large collection of icons, some works by the Peredvizhniki (Wanderers) of the 19th century, and some temporary exhibits by contemporary artists.

Next door, the **Ethnographic Museum** (☎ 122 456; Komsomolsky pr 6; admission free; ☎ 10am-6pm Sat-Thu) mainly features stuffed animals with some exhibits on local history.

The **Sergei Diaghilev Museum** (☎ 120 610; Sibirskaia ul 33; admission free; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri) is a small, lovingly curated exhibition on world-famous ballet and opera impresario Diaghilev (1872-1929), whose family came from the Perm region.

## Sleeping

**Hotel Ural** (☎ 906 030; ural-hotel@permtourist.ru; ul Lenina 58; s/d from R720/1000) Average distance from front desk to drab room: about 1km. This monolith has the charm of an apparatchik, but the location is convenient. For R1500/1800 you'll get a slightly upgraded single/double with a telephone, a TV and breakfast. Another decent and affordable option, Hotel Prikamye, is right next door.

Two small, upscale hotels are about 5km from the city centre on the way to the airport. **Kama Business Hotel** (☎ 280 248; www.kama-hotel.ru; ul Baumana 25b; s with breakfast from R2900; ☎ ☎) and **Hotel Mikos** (☎ 241 999; www.micos.perm.ru; Stakhanovskaya ul 10a; s/d from R2400/2900; ☎ ☎) are both popular with business travellers and require advanced booking.

## Eating

The terrace overlooking the Kama River just outside the Perm State Art Gallery (above) is a good place for beer and shashlyk from a *letny kafe* (summer café).

**Le Café Valida** (☎ 103 393; Komsomolsky pr 7; meals R50-800; ☎ 8am-2am) 'Coffee...like Art' reads the menu. Coffee is not the only thing that is artistic at this trendy place: a DJ works the wax in the midst of a funky, modern

décor, and Perm's fashionable set nibble on creative salads and snacks while checking each other out.

**Zhili-Byli** (☎ 125 771; Sibirskaia ul 9; meals R150-200; ☎ 11am-2am) A chain with outlets around the region, this *traktir* (tavern) is a popular spot for affordable Russian favourites. You can fill up at the salad bar, which is a god-send for vegetarians.

**Teaspoon** (☎ 126 048; Sibirskaia ul 19a; meals R30-60; ☎ 9am-10pm) Serving tea (R12), coffee and bliny (pancakes; R18), this little café is a perfect stop for breakfast or for a light lunch. Service is cafeteria-style, but the setting is light and clean, attracting lots of students and young people.

To stock up for your train ride, visit the central **supermarket** (cnr Komsomolsky pr & ul Sovetskaya; ☎ 24hr).

## Entertainment

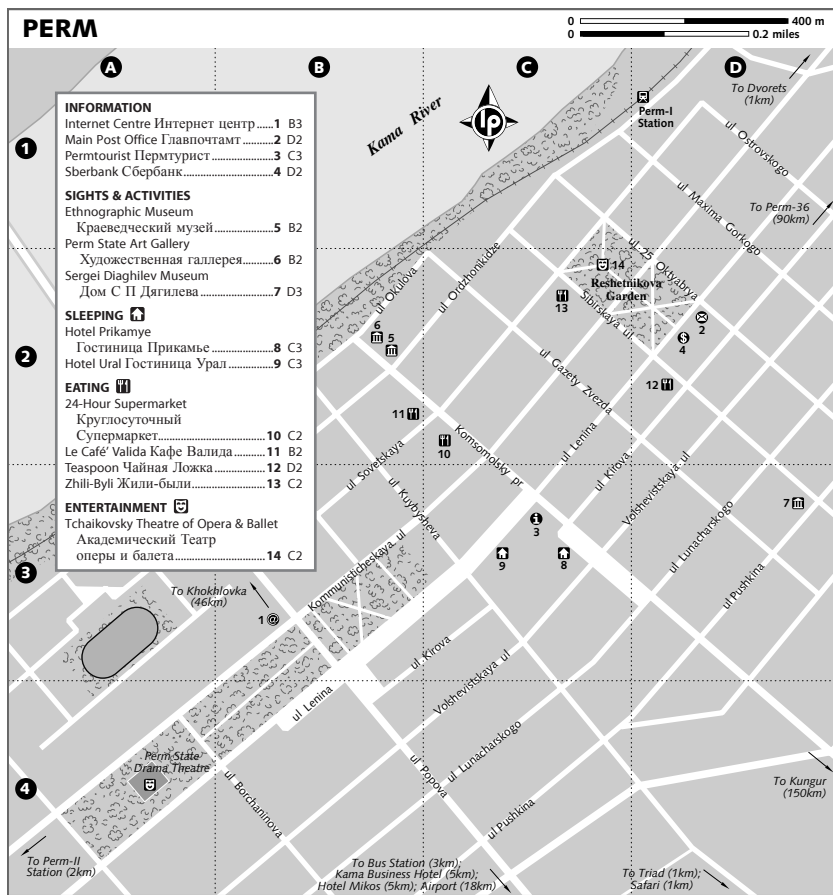
**Triad** (☎ 347 256; ul Kuybysheva 66; ☎ noon-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-6am Sat & Sun) Check out this neon-lit entertainment complex for bowling (R300 to R600) or billiards (R100 to R200), but skip the overpriced bar. The Safari nightclub is tucked in the parking lot behind the complex.

**Tchaikovsky Theatre of Opera & Ballet** (☎ 123 087; Kommunisticheskaya ul 25) If your cultural inclinations lean towards the classical, take in a performance at the beautiful baroque theatre that dominates Reshetnikova Garden. It is home to one of Russia's top schools of performing arts.

## Getting There & Away

Perm II, the city's major train station, is on the Trans-Siberian route. Many trains travel the route from Moscow, including the *firmeny* (a nicer, long-distance train) called the *Kama* (R1950, 20 hours). Heading east, the next major stop is Yekaterinburg (R650, six hours). Trains also travel every second day to Kazan (16 hours, R706) – more frequently in summer. Note that some trains to Kazan depart from the *gorny trakt* (mountain track) on the north side of Perm II, as opposed to the *glavny trakt* (main track).

The **ticket office** (☎ 9am-8pm) in the lobby of Hotel Ural is useful for airline and train tickets. The smaller Perm-Station, northeast of the centre, is used for suburban trains only.





There are three daily Aeroflot flights to/from Moscow Domodedovo (R3500), with additional flights to Yekaterinburg (R2500, four weekly) and St Petersburg (R5100, two weekly). **Lufthansa** (☎ 284 442) flies to/from Frankfurt twice a week.

Plans for a new bus station near Perm-II train station will probably not be realised until 2007. In the meantime, use the old station at the southern end of ul Popova for buses to Khokhlovka (below) and Chusovoy, for Perm-36 (below).

## Getting Around

Buses 110, 119 and 120 serve the airport (35 minutes), or take a taxi for about R250. Take tram 7 or any bus or trolleybus between Perm II Station and Hotel Ural.

## AROUND PERM

### Khokhlovka ХОХЛОВКА

☎ 3422 / ☎ Moscow + 2hr

The **Architecture-Ethnography Museum** (☎ 997 182; admission R35; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Sun late-May-mid-Oct) is set in the rolling countryside near the village of Khokhlovka, about 45km north of Perm. Its impressive collection of wooden buildings includes two churches dating back to the turn of the 18th century. Most of the structures are from the 19th or early 20th centuries, including an old firehouse, a salt production facility and a Khanty izba (log house). A few buses a day serve Khokhlovka from Perm (R50, one hour).

### Perm-36 Пермь-36

Once an ominous island in the Gulag Archipelago, **Perm-36** (☎ 120 030; www.perm36.ru; admission R60, guided tour R600; ☎ by appointment) is now a fascinating museum and moving memorial to the victims of political repression.

For most of its history since 1946 Perm-36 was a labour camp for political prisoners – in other words, dissidents. Countless artists, scientists and intellectuals spent years in the cold, damp cells, many in solitary confinement. They worked at mundane tasks like assembling fasteners, and survived on measly portions of bread and gruel.

Much of the evidence of this history was destroyed when the camp was closed in 1988, but museum staff are dedicated to re-creating the camp as it was. Windowless cells and barbed wire are eerie reminders

that this history is not so distant. The exhibits make the reality of prison life all too clear.

The memorial centre is about 10km from the town of Chusovoy, which is 100km east of Perm. A new road makes the museum accessible by bus from Perm. Alternatively, museum staff can make arrangements for a taxi for about R3000. Museum management plans to build a small on-site hotel and conference facility, expected to open in 2007.

### Kungur Кунгур

☎ 34271 / pop 76,600 / ☎ Moscow + 2hr

Founded in 1663, the town of Kungur was a copper-smelting centre during the 17th and 18th centuries. Many notable (though dilapidated) buildings remain from its heyday, including the **All Saints Church**, a 17th-century **governor's house** and a 19th-century arcade, **Gostiny Dvor**. Get the full story at the **Regional Local Studies Museum** (ul Gogolya 36; admission R20; ☎ 11am-5pm).

Kungur was long a popular destination for potential spelunkers investigating the **Kungur Ice Cave** (Ledyanaya peshchera; admission R350; ☎ 10am-5pm), about 5km out of town. The extensive network of caves stretches for more than 5km, although only about 1.5km are open for explorers. The grottoes are adorned with unique ice formations, frozen waterfalls and underground lakes. In Perm, **Permtourist** (☎ 906 237; www.permtourist.ru; ul Lenina 58) arranges tours here, as well as accommodation in the adjacent **Stalagmit Hotel** (☎/fax 39 723; r R600, upgraded r from R1200).

Trains from Perm (R60, 2½ hours, eight daily) arrive at the station on ul Bachurina in Kungur. A day trip is possible if you start early, but check the train schedule in advance.

## KAZAN КАЗАНЬ

☎ 8432 / pop 1.1 million / ☎ Moscow

Kazan is the capital of the Tatarstan Republic, home to the descendants of the nomadic Turkic tribe that wreaked particular havoc in ancient Rus. The atmosphere of this intriguing autonomous republic is redolent of Central Asia. The spires of many mosques dot the skyline – including the grand Kul Sharif Mosque inside the historic kremlin.

Nationalism is strong here, as evidenced by the bilingual signposts and the ubiquitous green, white and red of the Tatar flag. Ethnic pride was particularly passionate in 2005, when the city of Kazan celebrated 1000 years since its founding. Many parks and buildings received a massive makeover in anticipation of the celebration, so the city centre is looking better than ever.

## History

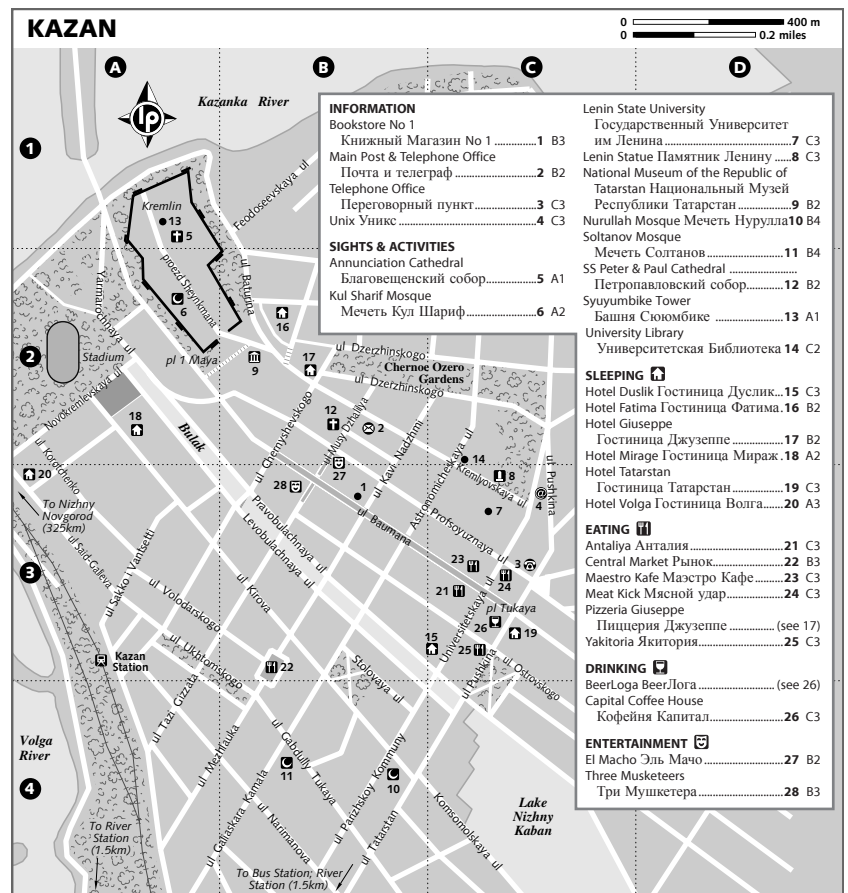
Kazan, one of Russia's oldest Tatar cities, dates back to 1005. Capital of the Kazan khanate in the 15th and 16th centuries, it was famously ravaged in 1552 by Ivan the Terrible, who forced the Muslim khan to become Christian. St Basil's Cathedral

in Moscow was built to celebrate Kazan's downfall. The city later flourished as a gateway to Siberia.

During Soviet times, Kazan became the capital of the Tatar Autonomous Republic. In autumn 1990, this oil-rich region (now renamed Tatarstan) declared its autonomy from the rest of Russia, launching several years of political warfare with Moscow. But full independence remains unlikely given that 43% of the population is Russian.

## Orientation

Kazan's city centre is flanked in the north by the Kazanka River and in the west by the Volga; the train station is on the east bank of the Volga. The main drag, ul Baumana,



is about 500m east of the train station, running from the kremlin in the northwest down to busy ul Tatarstan, which goes to the bus station and river station.

## Information

**Bookstore No 1** (☎ 924 510; ul Baumana 19; ☎ 9am-6pm) A central bookstore with a good selection of maps and books about Tatar history and culture.

**Main post & telephone office** (Kremlyovskaya ul 8; per hr R30; ☎ 8am-7pm Mon-Fri, 9am-6pm Sat & Sun) Has Internet facilities.

**Telephone office** (cnr uls Pushkina & Profsoyuznaya; per hr R30; ☎ 8am-9pm Mon-Fri, 10.30am-6pm Sat & Sun) Has Internet facilities.

**Unix** (Kremlyovskaya ul, 2nd fl; per hr R40; ☎ Mon-Sat) A student computer centre that is open to the public for Internet services.

## Sights

### KREMLIN

Declared a Unesco World Heritage site in 2000, Kazan's striking kremlin is the focal point of the city's historic centre. It is home to government offices, pleasant parks and a few religious buildings that should be open and operating. Some of the white limestone walls date from the 16th and 17th centuries.

Completely renovated for the 2005 celebrations, Kazan's **Annunciation Cathedral** was originally designed by the same architect responsible for St Basil's Cathedral in Moscow. The new iconostasis – designed in the Pskov style – is similar to that of the Assumption Cathedral inside the Moscow Kremlin.

Nearby, the slightly leaning 59m-high **Syuyumbike Tower** is named after a long-suffering princess who was married to three successive khans. According to legend, Ivan the Terrible launched his siege of Kazan as a result of Syuyumbike's refusal to marry him. To save her city, the princess agreed to marry the tsar, but only if he could build a tower higher than any other mosque in Kazan in a week. Unfortunately for Syuyumbike, the tower was completed, driving her to jump to her death from its upper terrace shortly thereafter.

Today, the tower competes with a rival landmark inside the kremlin. The enormous **Kul Sharif mosque** was constructed on the site of a mosque by the same name, which was burnt and destroyed after Ivan the Terrible captured the city in 1552.

## NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE REPUBLIC OF TATARSTAN

Opposite the kremlin's main entrance, the **museum** (☎ 928 984; Kremlyovskaya ul 2; exhibit admission R15-100; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun) is in an ornate building dating from 1770. It contains a wide range of exhibits, including Tatar history, water and wildlife, and local artists. The Gallery of Zarif is a unique exhibit by a local artist-philosopher.

## SS PETER & PAUL CATHEDRAL

Among Kazan's several Russian Orthodox churches, the most attractive is the **SS Peter & Paul Cathedral** (ul Musy Dzhaliyalya 21; ☎ 1-3pm). Built between 1723 and 1726, this baroque cathedral, with its heavily decorated façade and soaring iconostasis, commemorates the visit of Tsar Peter I to the city in 1722.

## LENIN STATE UNIVERSITY

At the foot of Kremlyovskaya ul, you can't miss the overbearing classical façade of the main building of **Lenin State University**, where Vladimir Ilych himself was a student. Across the street, the **statue** of a young Lenin looks like he's on his way to class. However, the plaques don't tell us that he was actually expelled from the university for revolutionary activity and questionable ties. The **university library** (cnr Astronomicheskaya & Kremlyovskaya uls) has an exquisitely decorated exterior.

## MOSQUES

Many of the mosques in Kazan are clustered around the rather dumpy southwestern corner of town. Near the central market is the **Soltanov Mosque** (ul Gabdully Tukaya 14), dating from 1867, and the **Nurullah Mosque** (ul Kirova 74), which has been rebuilt several times since 1849.

## Sleeping

Visa registration is a tricky business in Tatarstan, and cheaper hotels may be hesitant to accept foreign guests staying more than two nights.

**Hotel Fatima** (☎ 924 636; ul Karla Marksa 2; s/tw R600/900) Within spitting distance of the Kremlin walls, this brand-new hotel is a great bargain. Bathrooms are shared, but the whole place is modern and clean. You can't beat it, for the price.

**Hotel Volga** (☎ 316 349; fax 921 469; ul Said-Galiev 1A; s/d with bathroom from R900/1500, without bathroom R500/820) Convenient to the train station, this nicely revamped hotel has rooms for every budget (although the mid-range rooms get booked early). Rooms facing the street can be noisy, but the place is clean and welcoming. Prices include a buffet breakfast.

**Hotel Giuseppe** (☎ 926 934; hotelgiuseppe@mi.ru; Kremlyovskaya ul 15/25; s/d with breakfast from R3040/5700; ☎) Hidden inside the restaurant of the same name (see below), this friendly place has rooms that are spacious and comfortable – even plush by Kazan standards. On weekdays they are often booked by business travellers, so reserve in advance if possible. Cash only.

**Hotel Mirage** (☎ 780 505; www.summithotels.com; ul Kirova 1A; r from R6000; ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎) This new, international-standard hotel is ideally located between the train station and the kremlin. With a plush, modern décor, it somehow seems out of place in this ancient city, but it is still a very welcome addition for business travellers and luxury-minded guests.

**Hotel Tatarstan** (☎ 388 379; fax 316 704; ul Pushkina 4; s/d from R1400/1600) Location is the primary advantage of this concrete slab of a hotel. Rooms are Soviet-standard – not exactly stylish nor particularly comfortable, but clean and functional.

**Hotel Duslik** (☎ /fax 923 320; Pravobulachnaya ul 49; s/d R1200/1800) Despite Hotel Duslik's stark lobby, this place has simple but nicely renovated rooms that are good value for the price. Unfortunately, the quality of the service – and the consistency of the room prices – does not match the quality of the rooms.

## Eating & Drinking

**Pizzeria Giuseppe** (☎ 326 934; Kremlyovskaya ul 15; pizza R50-100) A lively place for pizza, pasta and cappuccino. The place is not big on atmosphere, but it still attracts young couples and families, who fill up on tasty, inexpensive Italian treats.

**BeerLoga** (☎ 922 436; ul Pushkina 5; meals R300-500; ☎ noon-2am) Ten beers on tap and a whole range of spicy sausages are the features of this Bavarian beer bar. The rustic décor and convenient location make this a popular spot.

**Capital Coffee House** (☎ 926 390; ul Pushkina 5; breakfast R50; ☎ 8am-midnight Mon-Fri, noon-midnight Sat & Sun) Next door to Kazan's trendiest brewpub is the city's trendiest coffee house. Come for the wide range of coffee drinks or for free wi-fi access.

**Yakitoria** (☎ 922 713; ul Pushkina 3; sushi R40-60, meals R200-400; ☎ 11am-6am) Moscow's favourite sushi bar has gone national, with this very popular outlet on Kazan's main square. Service is pleasant and efficient, quickly turning over tables at this busy, bustling place.

**Meat Kick** (☎ 929 332; ul Profsoyuznaya 9; meals R400-600) Besides the highly sought-after salad bar, this place offers Western-style steakhouse fare. For a sample of the Volga's riches, try the upscale seafood restaurant in the same building.

**Central market** (ul Mezhlauka) This colourful, sprawling place is good for stocking up on snacks or just for browsing.

Also recommended:

**Maestro Kafe** (☎ 921 338; ul Baumana 47; breakfast R50; ☎ 24hr) Specialises in bliny and coffees; a great place for breakfast or a late-night snack.

**Antaliya** (☎ 383 803; ul Baumana 74; mains R100-150; ☎ 10am-10pm) Popular for Turkish treats, including *shawarma* (sandwich made of spicy grilled lamb or chicken on flat bread) and Efes beer.

## Entertainment

**El Macho** (☎ 925 883; ul Musy Dzhaliyalya; cover R50-150; ☎ noon-5am) Mexican food and Latin music are the attractions of this popular club. It varies from day to day, but live music and free salsa lessons are often on the programme.

**Three Musketeers** (☎ 923 711; ul Baumana 42/9; cover R100; ☎ noon-5am) This stylish basement club has a wide range of entertainment options, including pool tables, dance floor, live music and – for better or for worse – male and female striptease.

## Getting There & Away

The beautifully restored original train station on ul Said Galieva serves only as a waiting room these days. Long-distance tickets can be purchased in the sleek new building that is north of the tatty, suburban train station. On the 2nd floor you'll find a service centre that is useful if the ticket counters on the ground-floor are overly crowded.

Frequent trains link Kazan to Moscow (R1150, 13 hours), Nizhny Novgorod (R640, nine hours) and Yekaterinburg (R1275, 15 hours). Trains going to Perm (R706, 16 hours) travel along a winding, scenic route through the mountains. They run every second day, daily in summer.

Flights from here go to Moscow (1½ hours, three daily, R1800 to R2300) and St Petersburg (four hours, three weekly). Lufthansa has twice-weekly flights to and from Frankfurt.

The **long-distance bus station** (☎ 930 400) is at the intersection of uls Tatarstan and Portovaya (take tram 7 from the train station). Buses go to Ulyanovsk (R230, five hours, five daily) and Samara (R290, 10 hours, daily).

### Getting Around

A bus to the airport goes from the train station to the airport every hour from 4am to 10.30pm. Tram 7 links the train and river stations. Tram 2 goes from the station to the bottom of ul Baumana near Hotel Tatarstan.