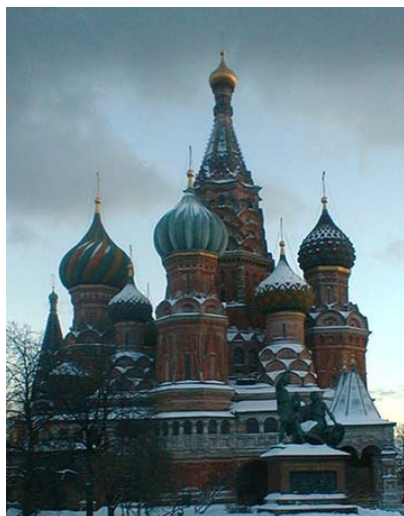




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Russian Excursions

By Barbie Berrang

It was a cold, blustery day as ten Penn State students drug their belongings through Moscow customs. We had been preparing for this journey for months and finally they had reached their destination. We were shaking with anticipation for what was to come in the next few days and the following four months. We took a deep breath and took a stride forward towards our first Russian experience.

Our journey began with a genuine greeting by the MSAU students. They presented us with a welcome party. Valery Chumakov and his administrative assistant, Lidia, were present as well as the MSAU students who would be participating in the program. They served pierogies, pancakes, salami and, of course, Pepsi. They knew how to make us feel at home. This

was only the beginning of our future excursions.

You may be asking yourself, "What is an excursion?" According to the MSAU students it is non-stop entertainment. From the sightseeing of famous architectural masterpieces to taking evening strolls, there has not been a dull moment since the group has arrived.

The first excursion led us to Red Square and Saint Basil's Cathedral. Each Penn State student had the opportunity to stand on the zero kilometer point, in Red Square, where they could make a wish.

The next two days were filled to the brim with activities. Our MSAU friends were ready to show off their homeland and the PSU students were ready to take it all in. Pushkin Museum, Saint Isaac's Cathedral, Izmaylovskiy Park and Gorky Park were a few of the other stops that the group has made.

After two weeks of eating "home-cooked" meals that consisted of potatoes, onions, eggs, bread, tomatoes, mandarins and cookies or at the downstairs canteen (a small dining kitchen), an evening visit to McDonalds was the most exquisite meal of the month. Who would have thought that McDonalds would become an important necessity?

Some of the other minor group activities included balancing on ice skates, shopping in the market, getting trapped on the metro train and discovering how to use Russian toilets.

We would like to extend special thanks to our wonderful MSAU friends for making the past two weeks so memorable. Not only have they taught us how to use the metro and shop at the market, they have also shared their culture with us.



Keep your eyes open for stories about these upcoming events: the Bolshoi Theater, Kremlin Palace Theater, circus, and cathedrals. You don't want to miss this.



Russian! It's Everywhere!

By Matt Brubaker

Russian! On the signs. On TV. On the radio. Russian! In the newspapers. In the magazines. In the everyday conversations. Russian! There's no escaping it! It's everywhere! But we're not surprised it's the method of communication here in Russia.

Appropriately, the first three weeks have been spent studying the Russian language intensively with two

professors, Ludmilla and Vera, for three hours a day, six days a week. Not learning this language would create a sense of isolation from the surroundings and result in failure to enjoy this cultural experience to the fullest extent. Moving about in a city as large as Moscow is difficult without knowing which doors are marked "entrance" and which are marked "exit." Imagine trying to buy potatoes at the market without being able to say "how much" or "one kilogram" or even "potato." Another good reason for intensive study arises when the time comes to find a restroom and "Men's" and "Women's" is not written anywhere. A huge debt of gratitude already is owed to Ludmilla and Vera for their time so far to help make this adventure even more amazing.

Both Russian language professors have similar backgrounds. Born in Moscow and educated at Moscow State University, Ludmilla and Vera teach Russian as a foreign language. They believe that the Russian educational system is of a high standard and very different from the American educational system. The difference between these systems, in their opinion, is that the Russian system provides students with a broader and more practical education while the American system provides a narrower and more professional education. They support the Russian approach because they believe it produces well-rounded graduates.

Ludmilla Chrisanova has been teaching for over twenty years. She and her husband Leonid have a daughter Marina. Ludmilla enjoys language, literature, geography, art, philosophy, and swimming. When asked where she would have preferred to study abroad during her college years, she replied that she would have gone to Great Britain for economics and the United States for agriculture.

Vera Samoksseva has been teaching for eighteen years. She her husband Victor have a daughter Elizabeth. Vera enjoys art, museums, the theater, skiing, swimming, and reading English books. When asked the same question about studying abroad, she replied that she would have only wanted to study language in Russia. Traveling abroad only as a tourist is her preference. Thanks to Ludmilla and Vera finding the "Men's" and "Women's" bathrooms is now possible. "How much," "one kilogram," and "potato" are words and phrases that are now known. Knowing these simple things is the difference that makes life here much easier and allows for a greater appreciation of this new culture.

Moscow's Underground Culture

By Meg Bruening

Despite the fact that the escalator leading to the metro platform crawls along at the pace of a snail, the ride itself remains intense because of the steep incline. But still this amusement park-like experience seems negligible when compared to the jolting ride of the metro train. Screech. Jerk. Ten-person pile-up. The Penn Staters have made themselves noticed once again.

Riding the metro is an interesting experience but a



necessary one when trekking about the city. The Moscow metro system is probably the fastest and most convenient method of getting around.

This intricate mode of transportation began construction under Stalin in 1931. The Communist Party wanted the entire country to build the metro; thus, both men and women were brought in from all parts of the union to help in the construction. Aiding the common workers were members of the Red Army and the Communist Youth League. The first section was completed in 1935, and by 1939 there were twenty-two stations serving over one million passengers (Eyewitness 40). The metro stations were built deep underground to serve as both bomb shelters and as headquarters during the Second World War. Mayakovskaya, a station near the center of the city was used as Russia's headquarters of the Anti-Aircraft Defense Forces. Kirovskaya was the station of the General Staff throughout the war. It was in this station that Stalin began his campaign against the Nazis.

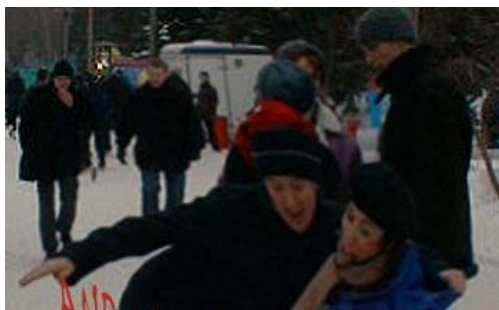


More than ten million people ride the metro daily (Odyssey 92), which is more than the London and New York systems combined (Eyewitness 40). Over 7,800 trains operate everyday, moving at speeds of up to fifty-six mph (90 km/h). Still expanding, the Moscow metro has ten major lines and almost one hundred fifty stations. Containing about two hundred sixty miles of track, the trains operate from 5:30 AM to 1 AM, with trains arriving every one or two minutes during rush hour (Odyssey 92). Kept immaculately clean and graffiti-free, each station is a piece of art within itself; however, the older stations are those famous for their beauty and ornate design.

The metro stations were carefully conceived so as to contain themes such as the Russian way of life, national defense, and the Revolution. In the Kievskaya metro station, there are large intricate mosaics depicting different moments in Russian history. A fashion magazine used the Ploshchad Revolyustii station ñ one that consists of beautiful, life-size, bronze statues and marble lined arches - for a photo shoot. Aleksey Dushkin won the grand prize at the New York World's Fair in 1938 for his design of the stainless steel and marble-lined Mayakovshaya.

The metro has become vital to transportation of the group. Everyone seems to have a station which he or she enjoys the most. Albeit all one hundred and fifty stops have not been visited, but nonetheless there are those stations that grasp the curiosity and appeal to the senses. Dan Moore appreciates Krasnopresnenskaya, the station devoted to the peasant rebellion in 1905. ìIt is a tribute to the average person who makes up Russia, a tribute to being liberated,î he commented. Many members of the group enjoy Novoslobodshaya which is a station decorated with large stained glass walls. Lights shine from behind the glass producing beautiful arrangements of color. LeeAnn Tice believes this technique makes this particular station ìthe most imaginative.î

As the group continues to use the metro, the trains will not seem to jerk as much, they will not move as fast, and the stations will not seem as crowded; but the metro will always hold the group's fascination. Not only is it aesthetically pleasing but the Moscow metro system is also an insight into a piece of Russian culture.



The Weather

By LeeAnn Tice

How cold is it outside?

Let me count the degrees. -1, -2, -3, -4Ö

So far the weather has proved to be very favorable --

never hindering us from our daily routine. For the past week temperatures have been hovering around 1°C (30 °F). At night it can dip down into the double digits to a chilly -11°C (12 °F). However, earlier in our trip winds were gusting, making the temperature feel like -20 °C (-4 ° F). But have no fear; our fingers and toes are still here.

One little tidbit of information: On many of our excursions around the city of Moscow, we were amazed to see the number of ice cream vendors in the street. We thought that it was ironic to have ice cream being sold on the streets when it was ñ12° Celsius. We were informed that in the summer they do not have ice cream vendors because it would be too expensive to refrigerate the ice cream carts. Now thatís what I call using your environment to your best advantage.

First Impressions

Edited By Sara Hayden

Variety is the spice of life, which proves that this group is hot, hot, hot. Part of the beauty of the INTAG program is its ability to bring together individuals, freshman and super-senior alike, from different majors, different backgrounds, even different countries, who have at least one thing in common ñ a desire to learn and experience a culture foreign to their own. The following first impressions not only demonstrate the different styles and personalities of the Penn State group members but also reveal a common enthusiasm for the experiences to come over the next four months.



Barbie Berrang

Super-senior (10th semester), Animal Science

The anticipation grew as the airplane touched Russian soil. What was Russian life like? How were the Russians going to receive us?

These and many other questions raced through my mind. Just around the corner from customs, a whole new world of adventure was waiting for us to see it and experience it. The ten of us were ready to attack. Thanks to our new Russian friends, we have begun our adventure through this historical country. I look forward to the next three months. The Russians have proved that a good time will be had by all.

Matt Brubaker

Junior, Agricultural and Biological Engineering, mdb177@psu.edu

Moscow is a huge city with an elaborate system of transportation that includes an extensive subway system, buses, and trains, all of which are powered by electricity. I am surprised that there is not a lot more snow. One can easily see how American culture is entering contemporary Russian culture through commercialization.

Suzanne M. Bruening

Senior, Art Education & Sculpture (8th semester and 3 to goÖ)

Before arriving in Moscow, I wanted to focus most of my energy on the contemporary art world while studying architecture and sculpture independently. Now, I feel that it is just as important to understand the people of Moscow. On the Metro, I look at these faces and think about all the stories they could tell. I wonder who they are, what they are doing, what they are saying, where they have been and what they could teach me. I guess these ideas are no different than any other stranger I meet on the street but perhaps it is different now, in Moscow.

On the last evening excursion I realized that we went backwards instead of forwards. I knew then that sometimes we have to, to become aware of the current shadows the moon casts on us. Sometimes we fester in this overcast and call it reality but it isn't. For sometimes, the leaf has to participate in the breeze in order to make a chorus of rustling.

Meg Bruening

Freshman, DUS

The people. When I saw the familiar blue letters on a sign that read Penn State held by a friendly face, I knew that we were going to make some amazing friends. The beauty. Watching the sun set on this massive terrain made me realize that no matter where we are, there are always so many beautiful things to see. Moscow. A massive city sporadically sprinkled by high apartment buildings. The cold. I do not and will not ever appreciate freezing conditions. And the group. We are just beginning and already we are a family.

Danielle H. Cowden

Freshman, Agricultural Business & Political Science

The most predominant first impression in my mind is how some things here are very different and yet other things are very much the same as in the United States. Many common everyday things vary however - for example, cars are smaller, buildings are not as tall as you would expect in a big city, and the everyday dress of the people here is very unlike ours. But what matters the most, the people themselves, are unchanged. We flew across the Atlantic and much of Europe, but at heart the people here are the same as in America. Realizing this has made me feel very welcome and at home in Russia.

Sara K. Hayden

Freshman, Animal Bioscience, skh129@psu.edu

The ecstasy I felt when I saw the beautiful, blue, Roman letters "Penn State University" held by hands belonging to a smiling Russian face waiting to meet our group in the airplane terminal is indescribable: a perfect beginning for my experiences here. Being surrounded by an unfamiliar language, unfamiliar city, and unfamiliar landscape can be rather unsettling ñ just trying to get through customs made me realize that there is no way that I could ever take care of myself here simply because I cannot communicate. But, happily, the Russians leading us around do have knowledge of a language foreign to them, and, even more happily, they use their ability to speak English (as well as an abundance of patience) to make sure I have food to eat and activities to keep me occupied. We can all benefit from our time together as we talk (in English, for now) and get to know one another better. By the way, sunsets here are amazing ñ the sky is huge!

Daniel Moore

Freshman, Biochemistry and Molecular Biology

If first impressions are forever, I will without doubt look back upon my time in Moscow with both sincere fondness and deep appreciation. This winter wonderland may be cold to the bones but it is hot chocolate to the heart. With time skating by like a Metro train, the only fear I have is that my time here

will come to a screeching halt all too soon. But when it comes time to say my good-byes I know I will be able to take the friends I have made with me, both in memory and in spirit (as long as they do not exceed 42 linear inches and weigh less than 70 pounds).

Christin Ondrusek

Senior, Horticulture

My first day in Russia Ö The Moscovites greeted me with open arms and a land with a beautiful sunset.

Today ÖI realize the metro becomes my key to traveling around Moscow. And we go out to a nice restaurant, McDonaldís.

Tomorrow Ö ?

Regina Szczesniak

Freshman, DUS

Despite the many new things surrounding me, I find Ím most impressed by the people within the environment. I constantly absorb their insights and experiences. I enjoy our discussions immensely but also revel in my own ability to add to their perspectives. It seems that together we can only grow.

LeeAnn Tice

Freshman, Agricultural Science

Arriving in Moscow promised to be very exciting. My first encounter with customs went fine, except for the fact that I felt totally illiterate to the world. Leaving the airport, I noticed the most beautiful sunset, and I told myself that this place is no different than home. It has a sunset, so it must have a sunrise, a new morning to begin each day. Overall, I knew that I would have no trouble living here. The people I am with prove to have some of the nicest and most patient personalities. In some ways I feel right at home.

Certainly, these ten participants are individualistic, but a common desire to make the most of their short time here unifies them. Learning about the people and culture of this foreign city promises to create many lasting memories, but relationships between people will make the experience even more meaningful.



Point of View: The Market

By Regina Szczesniak

We were at the Moscow Zoo when someone realized that an exotic bird was attracted to Danís brightly colored ski coat. I soon discovered a parallel in the local open market: our American mating colors are just as apt in attracting vendors. Only a week had passed before the men and women in the market were greeting us with first names and smiles and we began to understand these natives as not merely an obstacle in language, but separate and charming personalities through whom our experience has grown.

Though the outside market extends far past the metro station spanning what seems as large as two city blocks, we mainly shop in a section about the size and shape of a supermarket aisle clad with fresh fruits and vegetables. The row is lined with vendors side-by-

side fervently promoting their goods. At the far end lies a triangle of women affectionately known as "the potato ladies." Each sells a variety of winter-hardy vegetables (most prevalent are, of course, potatoes) almost identical to the next. Should a person approach one of their stands, one finds him or herself being coaxed in Russian to the next. "Zaftra," we explain, learning the word for "tomorrow" so that we may guarantee patronage to another stand in the future.

The market is necessarily integral to our "Russian" lives; at least one American visits daily. The workers therefore become our truest connection to the culture we strive to understand. Here life is foreign and quite different from the home to which we are accustomed within hostel doors. As a result, the market becomes our training ground for common sense communication on the streets. With no English-speaking professors at our sides, we must fend for ourselves. Successful exchange is a triumph; the wrong purchase is an opportunity to learn.

Our experiences here are rich: the cheese lady's reaction when I asked her for six pounds of cheese, the spice man's profession of love for LeeAnn, hearing various salesmen wish the Americans "Good Morning" at six in the evening, etc. The list will only grow with time.

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