

Date: April 8, 2001 Volume: 3 Issue: 6 Issue Editor: Wade Taylor

**Russian and American Climate**

**Weather**

By: Matt Kreifels

It's hard to come to another country and not compare it to your own. A stereotype that all the American students had about Russia is that it is inordinately cold and murky. After living in Moscow for three months, and not wearing the clothes we especially bought for this trip because they were too warm, we realize that our perceptions were somewhat skewed.

With the help of 1997 ASHRAE data, we hope that we can compare the United States and Russia's climate trends to help clear our friends' and families' misconceptions as well. These following cities are typical for the Russian counterpart cities listed below based on high and low temperatures over the course of 30 years.

US College City	Russian Equivalent	High & Low Temperatures
College Station, TX	Astrakhan	22 to 96 F
Gainesville, FL	Sochi	30 to 92 F
State College, PA	Rostov-Na-Donu	9 to 89 F
Bozeman, MT	Irkutsk	-20 to 87 F
Lincoln, NE	Moscow	-7 to 94 F



Russia is a huge country and contains many temperate climates that any US citizen would feel



Sergiev Posad

**Diamonds and Beggar Children**

**Culture**

By: Theresa Lynn

Last Friday evening two other Americans and I went walking in downtown Moscow. Arbat Street was the route we chose for its fame of street musicians, portrait artists, tourist gifts, and Russian restaurants. There was one artist who followed the American gentleman in our group and sketched his portrait in charcoal as we walked. It was a rough sketch and though he asked for ten dollars he quickly gave it to us for one. As it grew dark the musicians, dancers and comedians began to draw small crowds. It was truly a street full of sounds, pleasing and memorable.

About midway in our evening stroll we stopped in for a Russian dinner. My heart was nearly broken as I spotted a very small child, no older than 5, begging at the entrance. As he caught my eye, he "nailed me" and quickly latched onto my leg and would not let go! I literally drug him five or more steps, all the time trying to peel him off of me. He finally let go as I passed the restaurant's security guard. From our dinner table on the second floor we were able to

comfortable in. However, the misconceptions that many of us have are not totally unwarranted.

Yakutsk's temperature range is from -58 to 81 F.

To be certain, all of us are glad the MSAU, our host university, does not have classes there!

---

## **The Moscow Metro System**

### **Education**

**By: Casey Saxton**

Moscow is home to 12 million people. One of the problems facing any city of this size and magnitude is transportation throughout the city. Many large cities in the US have tons of cars everywhere. Moscow has a unique way to move a large amount of people very quickly and easily. The Moscow Metro system could be one of the most impressive transit systems ever built.

In 1935, Joseph Stalin initiated this Metro system that is buried far below the sidewalks of Moscow. The depth of the first Metro line was decided after planes, ordered by Stalin, flew and dropped bombs to see the depth of penetration. After that was determined, they built the Red line at a safe depth under the bombs reach. Stalin ordered the building of the first Metro system to serve two purposes: safe transportation and a bunker system that was critical during World War II. The use of this system protected many people from the overhead bombs that almost destroyed Moscow.

The Metro system was at its peak during Stalin's time. Every station was built top quality and built to last the stands of time. It is a tribute to the craftsmanship and quality of the Russian people. The tradition still remains the same for the Metro system today. The newer lines are still built deep in the earth.

Today, the most impressive part of the Metro system is the sheer magnitude of people it can move. In 1999, Moscow students conducted a count for one day to see how many people used it per day. The system at that time could move over 13,430,500 people a day. Some stations see almost 3 million people per day.

If you missed a train there would be no need to worry because there will be another one soon. Most of the time it is only a 2-5 minute wait to catch the next train. While you are waiting for the next train it

watch this little guy and three more of his buddies continue their trade.

As we continued our stroll after dinner, we passed picture windows of shops displaying dazzling diamonds and earthy amber jewels. There were stores with fur coats and gifts fit only for presidents and kings.

With sights and sounds, poverty and riches, we thought we had seen it all when we were greeted by a gentleman of about 70 years, who spoke English with a strong Russian accent. He proceeded to tell us a few bits of history of the surrounding buildings, a few jokes and then he apologized for his confession that, as he was a "pensioner" he would continue entertaining us for a nominal donation. We modestly rewarded this kind old gentleman for his cultural enrichment lesson. This was truly an evening full of Russian culture!

---

## **Free Time in Russia**

### **Activities**

**By: Noah A. Handley**

We were able to visit Dannon of Russia on Friday the 30<sup>th</sup> of March. Dannon is an international company with a production plant in the Moscow Region of Russia. The plant we visited supplies the country of Russia with yogurt, cottage cheese, sour cream, and other fine dairy products. The visit was mostly for us to see the facilities and observe a new Russian business in progress. Unfortunately, it is company policy not to discuss any economic or production statistics.

The facility was very impressive because it was less than two years old and completely automated. The amount of stainless steel that was used to construct the production line was also remarkable. Each stage of the production process was located in a different room in order to maximize the management of the critical control points. The only difference between this and what I would expect to see in America is that the warning signs were written in Russian instead of English. And of course they were gracious enough to fill us to the top with as much yogurt as we could possibly eat – *Yum!*

is very easy to take look around the metro stations at the beautiful artwork, ranging from the chandeliers to the marble statues and mosaics.

Future plans include modern computer touch screens to assist people with getting from point A to B in the shortest time possible. Moscow has other plans to bring the system booming into the 22<sup>nd</sup> century with State-of-the-Art trains and new stations with the same essence of creation that the first stations had over 70 years ago.

\* Special thanks to Sasha Zolotov who helped with some translations from <http://www.metro.ru>

## The Story Behind Russian Lacquer Boxes

### Focus

By: Nila Kreidich

This past rainy Saturday I had the chance to do some souvenir shopping at Izmaylovsky Park. As I walked past some of the vendors a particular type of item continually caught my eye: lacquer boxes. I have grown quite fond of these hand painted wonders. I spent some time looking at one particular stand where the seller intrigued me with the meanings behind the traditional paintings. She sparked some interest to learn more about these beautiful crafts.



Russian Lacquer Boxes

Lacquer boxes became popular after icon painters were discouraged from painting religious themes on artifacts after the October Revolution. Village artists borrowed features associated with icon



Dannon Safety Protocol

Outside of the planned excursions, we have been traveling around Moscow on our own. We have been sticking to smaller groups to travel around the city, for it is easier to please three people rather than eight. The group has definitely reached the point where each of us is comfortable enough with the city and Metro to get back to the hostel by ourselves.

We have been doing the usual tourist thing: Red Square and Izmaylovsky Park (a flea market), as well as doing a little bit of random exploring. A good example is when we get the wild idea to get lost just to see a part of the city that we have not seen before. We accomplish this by picking a Metro stop that looks interesting. Then we exit and walk until we find another Metro station to get back on and ride home. It has taken from two to three hours of walking to find another station, but it has always been worth it to see Moscow in its truest state.

Until next time, we will be getting lost and finding some new and exciting places that will each have a story of its own.

paintings such as the use of gold, bright colors, and highly decorative designs and began to paint them on wooden boxes. Now they are commonly painted with themes from traditional Russian fairy tales. On these boxes, you can frequently find a picture of three horses that represent December, January, and February and symbolize the passing of winter.

The process of making these boxes is long and tedious. In fact, there are schools in Russia for the sole purpose of learning this art. First, sheets of cardboard are glued and pressed into forms. The papier-mâché forms are dried, then dipped in linseed oil and dried again in special heating equipment — a process that takes about one month. \*

Second, the forms are cut to the sizes of the boxes, and then sanded by hand. Hinges, joints, and clasps are attached. Black paste is applied and dried for 24 hours. The forms are smoothed and polished. The box is then coated 2-3 times with lacquer, red on the inside, black on the outside. Each coat dries 24 hours before another coat can be applied.

Finally, the painting begins. First, artists outline their paintings on their "canvasses". Egg-emulsion tempera and gold leaf are carefully applied using squirrel-hair brushes. Frequently, the artists use magnifying glasses as they work. The gold leaf is then polished with a wolf's tooth.

I can now fully appreciate the art of making these boxes. Russian culture and history are deeply embedded into these crafts. The character behind each box is expressed through its own unique shape and painting. No two boxes are the same and that is why these priceless items have become my favorite souvenir.

\* Information about the process taken from Northern Marca Inc. at [www.russiaingiftshop.com](http://www.russiaingiftshop.com)



Theresa and Masha's Grandma

### **A Russian Students Perspective**

**By: Masha Pospeshnova**

Привет! My name is Masha Pospeshnova. I am a third year student at Moscow State Agroengineering University and this semester I am participating in this international program with the American students. I have previously worked with other Americans and it was very interesting to communicate with all of them. Now, many of them are good friends of mine and my family. However, this year's students have become really special to me because of our experience with this program. I will never be able to forget it!

I study with the Americans three days a week and the other two days I attend classes at the university. My schedule is very busy and that is what makes this program so exciting. On the weekend, I usually go home to spend time with my parents. I tell them all the news from the past week and also practice my dancing.

An interest of mine is folk dancing of Russia, the Ukraine, and Byelorussia. Last Saturday my dance



Evening at St. Basil's

group celebrated its 35<sup>th</sup> year anniversary. There were dancing boys and girls ranging in age from 5 to 45. We had beautiful music and awesome costumes. American and Russian students and several teachers were invited to see the performance. They watched the concert and after it was finished, Matt Kreifels and Dr. Buffington went to the stage and said few words to the Russian people.

It was so important for me for my good friends to watch this performance. Their presence helped me to do my best while dancing. I was so proud to stand on the stage with Dr. Buffington and Matt and translate for the Russians all those good words that they said. My favorite moments of this concert were after each sentence I translated when the Russian people were clapping and smiling. Every Russian was excited to hear Dr. Buffington and Matt, speaking for the rest of Americans in there, said that they would like to continue the friendship between our peoples despite everything.

---

Questions? Comments? [E-mail Us!](#)

---

Photo Editor: **Graham Rupe**

Article Reviewer: **Amanda Allbritton**

Pictures courtesy of:  
**Matt Kreifels, Graham Rupe, and Casey Saxton**

[Top of Page](#)

[Home](#)

---

[Penn State University](#) | [College of Agricultural Sciences](#)

[Copyright Information](#)

This publication is available in alternative media on request.

[Penn State is committed to affirmative action, equal opportunity, and the diversity of its workforce.](#)

This site is a product of [Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences](#).

Please e-mail us with your questions, comments or suggestions at [tbruening@psu.edu](mailto:tbruening@psu.edu)