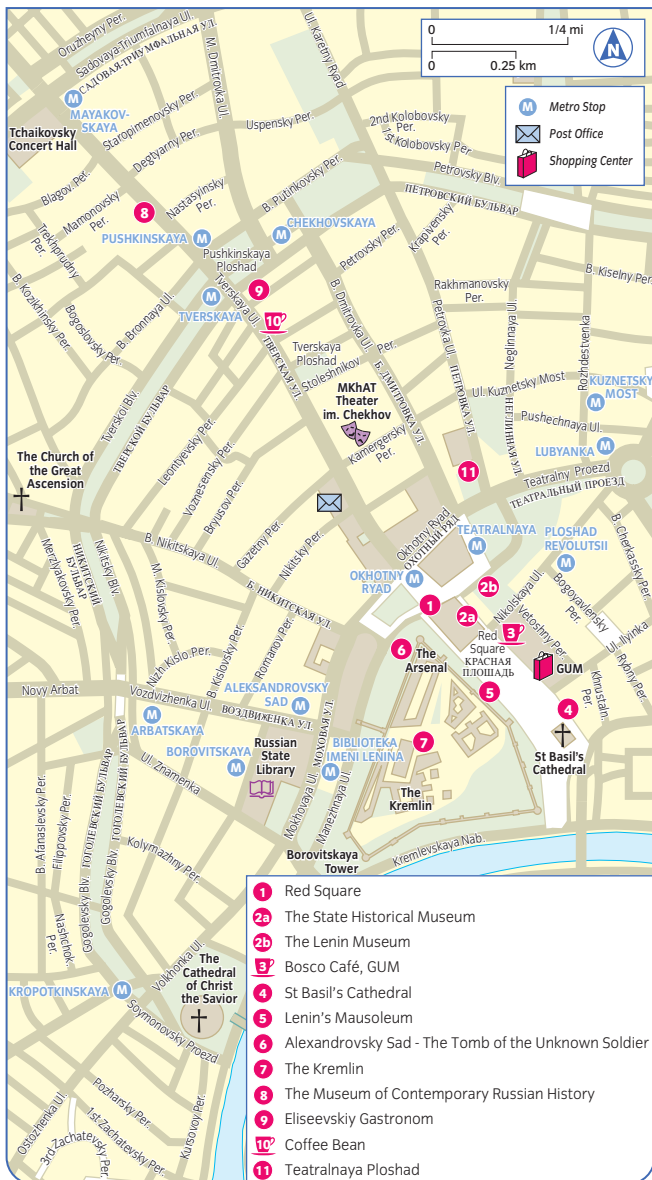


1

The Best **Full-Day** **Tours**



The Best in One Day



With the most famous landmarks in one (tightly-packed) mile around Red Square, this tour should take you from St. Basil's to the Bolshoi (via the Kremlin, GUM and a few secret spots) with minimum wear on shoe leather and nerves. Pace yourself with plenty of stops for snacks and shopping, and leave the Jimmy Choo's at home.

START: from Teatralnaya metro, heading east towards Red Square.



State Historical Museum.

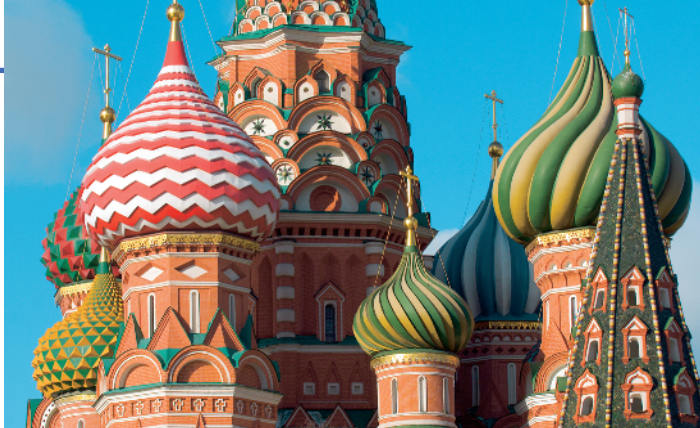
1 ★★★ Red Square. This great expanse only became known as such during the 17th century, with the archaic dual meaning of “krasnaya” (red or beautiful) used in honor of the newly erected St. Basil's. Not everything you see is original: the **Kazan Cathedral** (built 1636) and the **Resurrection Gate** (1680) were both demolished to allow easier access for Stalin's military parades, before being rebuilt in the 1990s. 🕒 **20 min.** **Metro:** Okhotny Ryad, Ploshad Revolyutsii, Teatralnaya.

2 The State Historical and Lenin Museums. These two gothic monoliths, completed in 1881 and 1900 respectively, are classic examples of Russian Revival architecture—but both best observed from a distance. The Lenin Museum **2B** was closed after the putsch of 1993, and the State Historical Museum **2A** has little to recommend it unless you are fascinated by archeology. The statue

in front is of World War II victor Marshall Zhukhov (1896–1974), as he appeared in the 1945 Victory Parade on Red Square.

3? ★★ Bosco Café, GUM. It's hard to believe that the GUM department store housed government offices from the end of the Revolution until 1953. Prices are high and the tables cramped: but this is New Russian country, and observing the clientele is fascinating. **Red Square d. 3.** ☎ **495 621 3182. \$\$\$.**

4 ★★★ St. Basil's Cathedral. It may look haphazard, but St. Basil's (commissioned by Ivan the Terrible in 1555 to celebrate the capture of Kazan) was originally a highly symbolic structure of eight separate chapels, centered around the Cathedral of the Intercession, whose iconostasis (the icon-filled screen in



The psychedelic domes of St Basil's cathedral.

front of every orthodox altar) is a must see. The stone platform in front—the **Lobnoe Mesto**, or Place of Skulls—is said (incorrectly) to be a former execution site. In fact, while Ivan the Terrible made his public repentance here in 1549, and Boris Godunov was crowned here in 1598, miscreant boyars (members of the nobility) were executed on Vasilyevsky Spusk, the cobbled slope directly behind. The statue in front is of Kuzma Minin and Dmitry Pozharsky, victors against the 1612 Polish invasion during the Time of Troubles. 🕒 1 hr. **Red Square d. 2** ☎ 495 698 3304. **Admission 100R adults, 50R kids and students. Daily May–Oct 11am–6pm, Nov–Apr 11am–5pm. Metro: Okhotny Ryad, Ploshad Revolutsii, Teatralnaya.**

5 ★★ Lenin's Mausoleum. Still here decades after his death, the embalmed corpse of the first Soviet leader (Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov or Lenin, 1870–1924) has withstood numerous attempts to allow him a decent burial. If you find this grotesque, be grateful Stalin was relocated to the Kremlin Wall in 1961: and don't read page 43.

6 ★ Alexandrovsky Sad. Leaving a bouquet at the tomb of the unknown soldier here was a

longstanding tradition for Soviet brides. Equally moving are the monuments containing earth from each of the Hero Cities of World War II (Stalingrad, Leningrad and Moscow itself in 1941) awarded that status for their role in that conflict. 🕒 20 min. **Metro: Alexandrovsky Sad.**

7 ★★★ The Kremlin. The original defensive center of the city, its historic and ornate cathedrals, scene of the coronations (and burials) of the Tsars deserve half a day at least. **See p 16.** 🕒 4 hr.

8 ★★ The Museum of Contemporary Russian History. This museum is housed in the former English Club, whose members included the writers Alexander Pushkin (1799–1837) and Leo Tolstoy (1828–1910). It became the Museum of the Revolution of the USSR in 1924, and now covers Russian political and social history since the mid-19th century. Enjoy one of the largest collections of political posters in the world, before picking up your own copy in the ground floor shop. 🕒 1 hr. **Tverskaya Ul. d. 21.** ☎ 495 699 6724; 495 699 5217. www.sovr.ru/english/. **Admission 100R, kids and students 70R. Tues, Wed, Fri 10am–6pm, Thurs and Sat**

Russian Museums: Need to Know

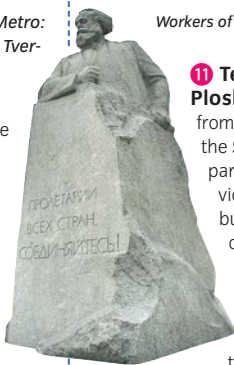
Dual Pricing: Some museums still charge different prices for Russian nationals and foreigners: “foreigner” rates are shown throughout this guide. **Opening Times:** Russian museums close one day a week, usually Monday. Many also close for cleaning, usually—although by no means always—on the final Monday of every month.

Floor Numbering: What Europeans call the ground floor will be the first floor in Russia. This system is used throughout this book. **Telephone Numbers:** A 499 Moscow code has been introduced in addition to the existing 495. Most numbers won’t require a prefix if dialing within the city: but if calling a 499 number from a 495 one, you’ll need to prefix it with ‘8’ and wait for a tone before dialing the number. It’s the same procedure for long-distance calls: see Savvy Traveler, p 172. Numbers change all the time. If you don’t get through on a 495 number, try 8 499.

11am–7pm, Sun 10am–5pm. Metro: Chekhovskaya, Pushkinskaya, Tverskaya.

9 ★★★ Eliseevskiy Gastronom. Built at the end of the 18th century Eliseevskiy’s Stores was opened here in 1901. Nationalized after the revolution to become Gastronom No. 1, it was notorious during the Brezhnev years for supplying the *nomenklatura* (communist party elite) with their luxury goods: until an anti-corruption crackdown by Soviet leader Yuri Andropov saw its director, Yuri Sokolov, executed on charges of corruption in April 1984. 🕒 15 min. Tverskaya Ulitsa d. 14. ☎ 495 650 4643. http://www.eliseevskiy.ru/e_about.htm Daily 24 hr. Metro: Chekhovskaya, Pushkinskaya, Tverskaya.

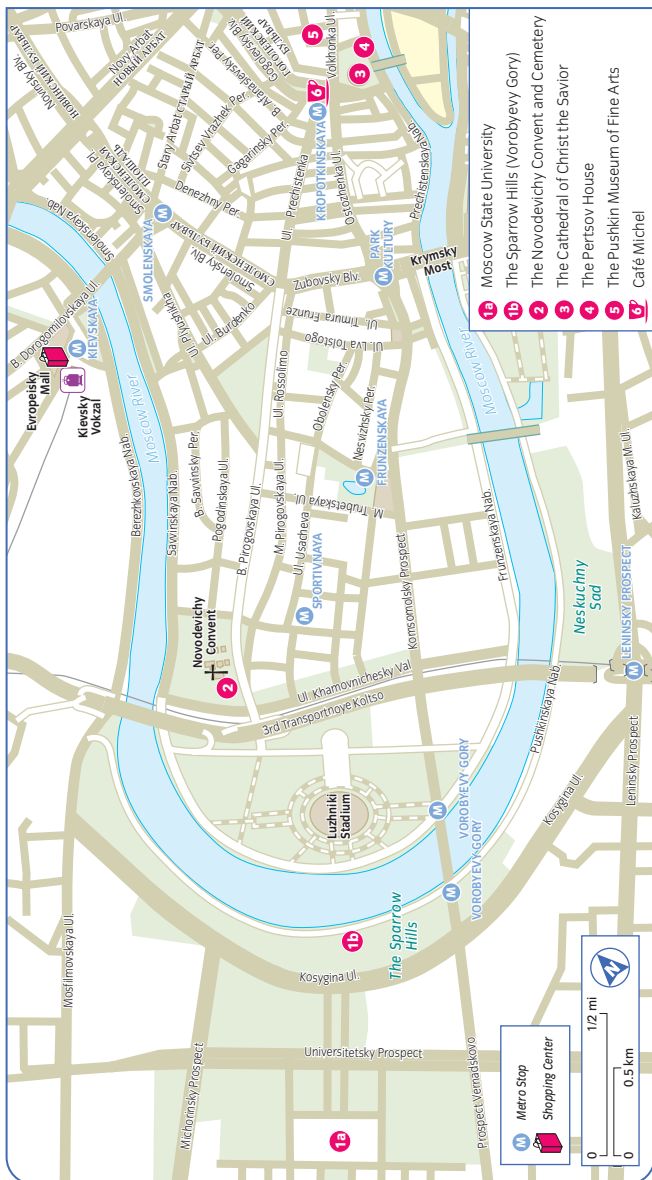
10★ Coffee Bean. The former Filippov bakery, this site saw heavy fighting during the 1905 uprising. Service is desultory, but the cakes are irresistible. Tverskaya Ul. d. 10. ☎ 495 788 6357. \$.



Workers of the world unite!

11 Teatralnaya Ploshad. Head east from Tverskaya past the **State Duma** (or parliament, but previously the Gosplan building, the heart of the Soviet Central planning) towards this Neo Classical square, home to the **Maly** and **Bolshoi Theaters** (see p 136). Take the *perehod* (subway) in front of the Maly to admire the mosaics on the Style Moderne **Metropol Hotel**—with the statue of Karl Marx somewhat ironically in front—before heading uphill past upmarket shopping mall **Tretiyakovskiy Proezd**. Keep going uphill towards the **Lubyanka**, and head down Lubyansky Proezd for a glimpse of one of Stalin’s skyscrapers, the **Dom na Kotelnicheskoi** (see p 39). Metro: Ploshad Revutsii, Teatralnaya.

The Best in Two Days



It may seem odd to begin a tour from the outside in: but this route—from the Novodevichy Convent to the Pushkin Museum—can be done in a single-direction metro journey, minimizing the aggravation of a transport system still largely signposted in Cyrillic.

START: from **Universitet metro**.

1 ★ Moscow State University (MGU) and the Sparrow Hills. Start with a quick look at MGU **1A**, another of Stalin's skyscrapers (see p 39), before heading for the observation deck (directly in front) at the Sparrow Hills **1B**, from which Napoleon watched Moscow burn as his forces retreated in 1812. *Vorobyovy Gory. Metro: Universitet.*

2 ★★★ The Novodevichy Convent and Cemetery. Spend an hour in the 16th and 17th century architecture of this working convent, before visiting the graves of Yeltsin, Brezhnev, and Chekhov. *See p 130. Metro: Sportivnaya.*

3 ★★ The Cathedral of Christ the Savior. Commemorating the 1812 victory over Napoleon, the original cathedral was finally consecrated in 1883, and Tchaikovsky's 1812 Overture premiered there the following year. Demolished in 1931 to make way for Stalin's ill-fated "Palace of Soviets" (see p 39), the excavated area then became the world's largest open-air swimming pool. The rebuilt cathedral was consecrated in 2000. Visit the basement

Symbol of the new Russia: the Cathedral of Christ the Savior.



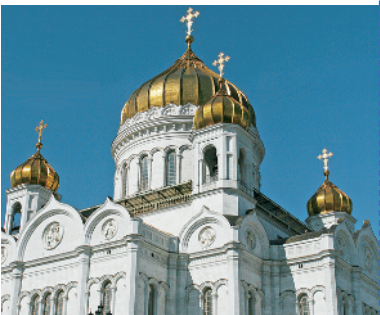
A masterpiece of Moscow Moderne: the Pertsov House.

museum for relics from the original building and photos of a fresh-faced Patriarch Alexei II (Russia's current Patriarch, born 1929) as a young priest. ⌚ 30 min. *Volkhonka Ul. d. 15. Daily 10am–6pm.* ☎ 495 637 2847. www.xxc.ru. *Free admission, excursions from 750R. Metro: Kropotkinskaya.*

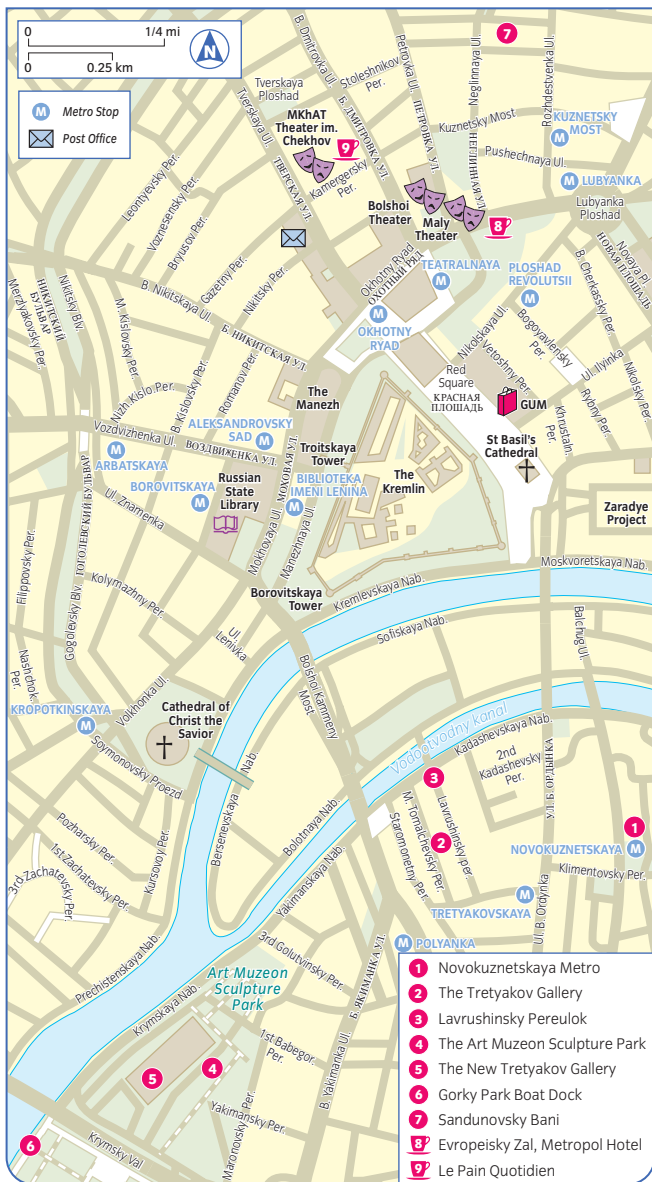
4 ★ The Pertsov House. Walk through the Patriarch's Gardens and turn right into Prechistenskaya Nab. for this spectacular Style Moderne mansion, built 1905–1907. *Metro: Kropotkinskaya.*

5 ★★★ The Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts. Art fans will need an entire day. *See p 24. Metro: Kropotkinskaya.*

6? Café Michel. Refuel with the best Italian coffee in town, directly behind Kropotkinskaya metro. *Prechistenskikh Vorot d. 1 bldg. 2. No phone. \$.*



The Best in Three Days




Finally, a day of relaxation in Zamoskvorechye with a leisurely tour of both Tretyakov Galleries and a trip to the *banya* (traditional Russian sauna and baths). **START:** Novokuznetskaya metro, for the Tretyakov Gallery.

1 ★★ Novokuznetskaya

Metro. Tretyakovskaya is closer to the gallery, but the bas reliefs and mosaics at this station (built in 1943 and celebrating former military heroes) are simply too ornate to miss.

2 ★★★ The Tretyakov Gallery.

An easy to follow, chronological layout (covering Russian art from the 17th to the 20th centuries) and free English language guides make this gallery an absolute joy. *See p 34.*

 **2 hr.** **Metro:** Novokuznetskaya, Tretyakovskaya.

3 ★★ Lavrushinsky Pereulok. It's worth taking some time to explore this lane, pedestrianized in 2006 (see p 82). The 17th-century **Chambers of the Kadashevski Slobode** at No. 4 now house police administrators. But follow the signs for the **Magnum Ars Gallery** to discover a red granite statue skulking against the Tretyakov's northernmost wall: Joseph Stalin himself, abandoned in a corner, as if in disgrace.  **30 min.** **Metro:** Tretyakovskaya.

4 ★★★ The Art Muzeon Sculpture Park.

This park was established in 1991 to house the Communist statues being rapidly torn down by the Moscow Soviet. You'll find Derzhinsky (founder of the NKVD, forerunner to the KGB), Stalin, Lenin, Brezhnev, Gorky and others—some of them a bit worse for wear, with the graffiti on Dzerzhersky still evident, and Stalin's nose having taken a severe beating.  **1 hr.** **Krymsky Val d. 10.**  **8 499 238 3679; 8 499 238 3396.** **Admission 100R.** **May–Sep 9am–10pm, Oct–Apr 10am–9pm.** **Metro:** Oktyabrskaya, Park Kultury.

5 ★ The New Tretyakov Gallery.

The grey 1960s' building of the New Tretyakov Gallery (dedicated to 20th-century Russian art), depresses on sight and doesn't really improve on entry. I always head straight to the fourth floor, for a peerless chronicle of 20th-century Russian art from the avant garde to Socialist Realism and beyond, including late Kandinsky graphics,

End of an empire : the Art Muzeon Sculpture Park.





20th Century Russian art at the New Tretyakov Gallery.

early propaganda posters, and 1930s' constructivist photography. For me the real gems are in Halls 25 and 26, with several rarely seen propagandist portraits of Stalin and typical Soviet statuary, including Vera Mukhina's infamous *Worker and Kolkhoznitsa* (1936). ⌚ 1 hr. Krymsky Val d. 10. ☎ 8 499 230 7788; 8 499 238 1378. www.tretyakovgallery.ru. Admission 250R, kids and students 150R. Tues–Sun 10am–7:30pm. Metro: Oktyabrskaya, Park Kultury.

6 Boat Trip From Gorky Park.

Pick up a boat among the fairground attractions in Gorky Park and head upstream past the Novodevichy Convent or downstream past the Kremlin to the Novospassky Monastery. ⌚ 1½ hr (leaving every 20 min.). ☎ 495 225 6070. www.cck-ship.ru (Russian only). Adults 400R, kids up to 12 150R. Metro: Oktyabrskaya.

7 ★★★ Sandunovsky Bani.

These are the most ornate banya in the city, but men get by far the better deal, with a columned swimming pool in the “Higher Man Class” baths (check the deliciously translated website for details). Alternatively, order vodka and *zakuski* (snacks) in your own private banya

complete with pool. ⌚ 2 hr. Neglinnaya Ulitsa d. 14, bldgs 3–7 (entrance from Sandunovsky Pereulok). ☎ 495 625 4631; private banya ☎ 495 628 4633. www.sanduny.ru. From 600R for 2 hours (kids half price), private banya 2,500R per hour. Daily 8am–10pm, but check website for cleaning times. Metro: Kuznetsky Most.

8 ★ Europeisky Zal, Metropol

Hotel. This historic landmark, completed in 1905, once hosted members of the Bolshevik's Central Committee. Splash out under the stained-glass ceilings of the Metropol Zal, or the smaller but equally ornate or Europeisky. Teatralny Proezd d. 1/4. ☎ 8 499 270 1061 (Metropol Zal); ☎ 8 499 270 1062 (Europeisky Zal). \$\$\$\$.

9 Le Pain Quotidien.

If you're strapped for cash, on the other hand, this café chain (rapidly opening new branches throughout town—see www.lpq.ru) offers cheap comfort food and hot chocolate by the pint. Kamegeksy Pereulok d. 6. ☎ 495 937 7742. \$\$. ●