

Key tips on traveling to the Russian Federation

Russia is open for business and travel. Lately, foreign visitors have been coming to the Russian Federation more and more often. In response to the numerous inquiries, we have prepared the handbook with key points that should be considered when planning a visit to Russia to help ensure a more comfortable stay.



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| Before your trip

■ PUBLIC SCREENING

Check Russian public sources and any available government databases for litigation / prosecution in the Russian Federation.

The assistance of a Russian-speaking lawyer may be required. Moreover, some of the relevant websites are only accessible from within Russia.

■ VERIFICATION OF PAPERWORK

Ensure you have an entry permit for the Russian Federation. The type of entry permit depends on your citizenship and is typically a visa. The visa category must correspond to the purpose of entry and stay in the Russian Federation (e.g., tourism or business). A mismatch between the visa category and the purpose of entry and stay may lead to denial of entry to the Russian Federation or deportation¹.

It is advisable to plan your visit in advance, as obtaining an entry permit can take from 10 to 30 days, depending on your type of visa and the country from which you apply.

■ PREPARE TO EXPERIENCE SOME STRESS

Please be aware that the border authorities may, at their discretion, interview you in the detention center at the airport. Usually, they ask questions of a standard nature about the purpose of entry into the country, period of stay, place of stay, etc.².

Also please be aware that the border authorities have the right, at their discretion, to collect your biometric data (photo and fingerprints)³.

1) Article 11 (e) of the Law of the Russian Federation of 01.04.1993 № 4730-1 'On the State Border of the Russian Federation'. According to paragraph 18 of the Resolution of the Government of the Russian Federation of 09.06.2003 № 335, when issued, the visa is categorised according to the purpose of entry.

2) Article 30 (4-7) of the Law of the Russian Federation of 01.04.1993 № 4730-1 'On the State Border of the Russian Federation'.

3) Article 11 (b) of the Law of the Russian Federation of 01.04.1993 № 4730-1 'On the State Border of the Russian Federation'.



■ TRAVEL LIGHT AND CHOOSE YOUR LUGGAGE WISELY

We recommend not carrying medicines containing strong, narcotic or psychotropic substances (even if you have a prescription)⁴.

Cash (any currency) and traveler's cheques up to a total amount of USD 10,000 can be carried without being declared⁵.

Goods for private use, the value of which does not exceed the equivalent of EUR 10,000, can be imported without being declared or subject to duties. When importing such high-value goods for private use, it is recommended not to gift wrap them and to declare them (e.g., wristwatches)⁶.

4) Depending on the type of substance, liability for illegal importation into the territory of the Russian Federation is stipulated by Chapter 25 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation.

5) Article 260 of the Customs Code of the Eurasian Economic Union establishes the list of goods for private use that are subject to mandatory customs declaration before being transported across the State border of the Russian Federation.

6) Annex 1 to the Decision of the Council of the Eurasian Economic Commission from 20.12.2017 № 107 (ed. of 18.10.2024) 'On certain issues related to goods for personal use'.

We assume that when entering the Russian Federation, your electronic devices will not contain:

- A. Materials and information in any way related to and/or supporting terrorist or extremist organizations banned in the Russian Federation (e.g., Ukrainian paramilitary associations, LGBTQIA+ groups⁷, etc.).
- B. Materials and information in any way connected with and/or supporting foreign and international organizations undesirable in the Russian Federation. A full list of undesirable organizations and associations can be found on the website of the [Ministry of Justice](#).
- C. Pornographic materials⁸.

When in Russia

MIGRATION DOCUMENTS

You will receive a migration card at border control, which includes your personal information and authorized period of stay. This card must be kept with you throughout your trip and submitted upon departure from the Russian Federation.

Upon arrival at your hotel or apartment, you must register at your place of stay and receive a confirmation slip⁹. Hotels will typically handle this for you. If you are renting an apartment, please coordinate with the owner to ensure your registration will be completed. You must carry the confirmation slip with you throughout your stay.

7) LGBTQIA+ is banned in the Russian Federation. Responsibility for propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations and (or) preferences, gender reassignment, or refusal to procreate is stipulated by Article 6.21 of the Code of Administrative Offences of the Russian Federation.

8) Article 242 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation stipulates liability for the manufacture and (or) transport across the State border of the Russian Federation for the purposes of distribution, public demonstration or advertising.

9) Article 22 of the Federal Law on Migration Registration of Foreign Citizens and Stateless Persons in the Russian Federation defines the procedure for registering foreign citizens at the place of stay.

■ PAYMENT RESTRICTIONS

Please note that now you can't use most of the common major international payment methods like Visa, Mastercard, American Express, Discover, JCB, PayPal, or cash apps while in the country. Apple Pay is currently not available in Russia either.

To make your stay in Russia more convenient, we recommend planning how to obtain a bank card for use in Russia before traveling to the Russian Federation. The bank may require additional documents, so it is advisable to verify on the list of documents to be submitted in advance. As another option, you can obtain a UnionPay bank card that is not subject to the sanctions on Russia.

■ NETWORK ACCESS ISSUES

Please note that Meta Platforms (Facebook and Instagram)¹⁰, YouTube, etc. are blocked in Russia so you cannot use them from a Russian network.

As a foreign citizen, you will only be able to purchase a Russian SIM card by visiting the office of a telecom operator and providing your biometric data.

¹⁰) By judgement of the Tverskoy District Court of 21 March 2022 in case № 02-2473/2022, Meta Platforms Inc. is prohibited from distributing Facebook and Instagram in the Russian Federation. However, WhatsApp is operating as usual.



NAVIGATION

Due to the country's air defence regime, mobile navigation in the major cities is poor. It is therefore advisable to plan your route in advance. Some assistance from local citizens may be required.

DRIVING

To drive a vehicle, you need to have an international and national driving license. For the national driver's license, you should carry a notarized Russian translation¹¹.

Please note that the use of alcoholic, narcotic, psychotropic, or other intoxicating substances is completely prohibited when driving a vehicle in the Russian Federation¹².

11) Paragraphs 14-15 of Article 25 of the Federal Law dated 10.12.1995 № 196-FZ (ed. 08.08.2024) 'On Road Traffic Safety' (with amendments and additions, effective from 01.03.2025).

12) Basic liability for intoxicated driving is stipulated in Article 12.8 of the Code of Administrative Offences of the Russian Federation "Driving a vehicle by an intoxicated driver, transferring control of a vehicle to an intoxicated person".



| Leaving the country

■ CHECK YOUR VISA

It is crucial to adhere to your permitted duration of stay in the Russian Federation, which generally cannot exceed 90 days within any 180-day period¹³. Your visa should be valid (unexpired) when you leave the country¹⁴.

■ EXPORT RESTRICTIONS

Cash (any currency) and traveller's cheques totalling more than USD 10,000 cannot be exported from the Russian Federation in any form¹⁵.

13) Article 17 of the Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation of 09.06.2003 № 335.

14) Liability for violation of the rules of stay in the Russian Federation for foreign citizens and stateless persons is stipulated in Article 18.9 of the Code of Administrative Offences of the Russian Federation, which may make it difficult to enter the Russian Federation in the future.

15) From 02.03.2022, it is prohibited to export from the Russian Federation cash currency and monetary instruments in currency exceeding the equivalent of USD 10,000. From 15.10.2022, the amount may be increased by permission of the Bank of Russia (Decrees of the President of the Russian Federation dated 28.02.2022 № 79, and dated 15.10.2022 № 737).



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