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A brief introduction to BIS Moscow



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Contents:

- [Arrival in Moscow & Registration](#)
- [Accommodation](#)
- [Clothes](#)
- [Living in Moscow](#)
- [Shopping](#)
- [Health](#)
- [Sports](#)
- [Culture](#)



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Introduction to Moscow

Welcome to Moscow! Current and former teachers from the British International School have put together the following information to introduce you to the city and Russia in general. It is intended to offer practical advice and information for anyone moving here. Hopefully, it will dispel a lot of the myths and give you a perspective that will enable you to enjoy being in Moscow.

The British International School, Moscow comprises 6 schools, which are situated in the north and south of the city (precise information about the schools and their location can be found on our website, bismoscow.com). Although they are far apart geographically, the schools work as a whole and hold joint events [both professional and social] during the year. However, the aim of this booklet is not to provide information about BISM, corporately or as individual buildings, it is more to familiarise you with the way of life and customs that you will encounter from the moment you arrive in Moscow.

The Russian Federation remains the largest country in the world, spanning 11 time zones (from Kaliningrad in the west to Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky in the east). Its population of 146,000,000 sounds like a lot but it is very unevenly spread. Roughly, $\frac{3}{4}$ of the population lives in cities. The number varies but there are estimated to be 103 ethnic groups of people living on the territory of Russia, with 97 different languages spoken. That is before you get to the 'foreigners'.



You will be met on your arrival at the airport. There are three airports in Moscow with international terminals Sheremetyevo, Domodedovo and Vnukovo. The School will coordinate the date and time of your arrival with you, as there will be a number of international staff to meet and you may be one of two or three teachers we are meeting that day.

Arrival in Moscow



Registration

All new arrivals to Moscow must have their passport registered within seven days: this is done by your landlord. We have a relationship with those landlords who are willing to do so. Every time you leave Russia or another city within Russia you have to be re-registered by your landlord. This must be actioned to comply with Russian law and enable you to live legally in Moscow and work at the school.

Everyone is very friendly and they remember what it is like to be a 'new face'. There are always people on hand to offer help and advice. You will find that the week you arrive is quite busy as there is an induction programme which aims to give you both a flavour of Moscow and help you become familiar with school. The schools also have a busy informal social calendar. There's something happening most weekends, whether it is going out for a drink, a get-together in the evening, or a day-out.



Accommodation

In consultation with you, the school will find suitable accommodation for each of our new members of international staff and will find the best options in terms of location, quality and rent cost. The school finds landlords who are willing to register foreigners upon their arrival in Moscow. They need to do this every time you re enter Russia or have visited other areas of the country.

The rent costs may differ for the same quality of apartment, depending on the location, distance from the central part of Moscow or from the Metro station.

Rent is paid on a monthly basis, on a given date as determined by your rental agreement. School HR will act as a facilitator between you and your landlord in case that you need assistance in communicating with them. You can pay your rent either by cash, or by wire transfer. Nowadays, most of the landlords prefer the money to be transferred to their account. Some staff that have been here longer have other arrangements but this is down to the long-term relationships that have been established.





Accommodation

After you have paid the rent money, there may be small charges for the following:

- Electricity, water, internet
- Concierges or caretakers in the buildings may also charge a small fee.

Most apartments are in high-rise blocks. There are cameras at each entrance of each building as well as many cameras across the city making Moscow one of the safest cities in Europe. Violent crime is rare and petty crime has been on a steady decline for over two decades. All apartments have steel doors, multiple locks and many have voice or video intercoms, giving a feeling of great security. The entrance areas are variable but we do our best to find apartments that offer comfortable living with up to date facilities. The flat will include basic furniture, all kitchen facilities with plates and cutlery, a bath / shower, a telephone, some bed linen, a T.V., a washing machine.

Appliances are 220V. **Please be aware that Russia, like continental Europe, has two-pin plugs.** If you are coming from the UK or another country with different plugs or voltages, **you will need to bring appropriate adaptors and/or converters.**

If staff are planning to have a visitor in their flat for a long/short stay, or if they decide to share their flat with someone else, they will have to obtain their landlord's agreement.



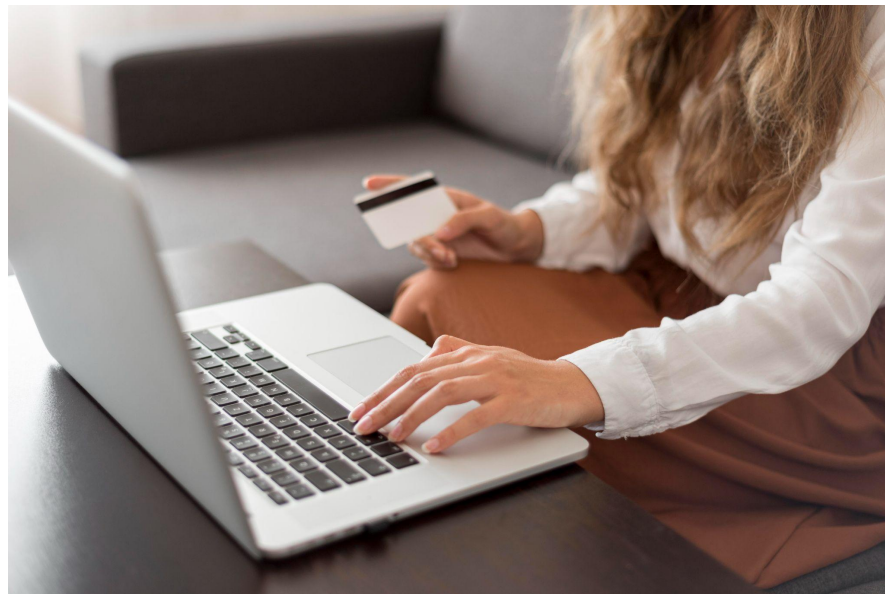
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Clothes

Teachers are expected to look smart and business like at all times. A suit and tie, or shirt, tie and trousers for men; smart top, trousers or skirt for women.

There are shopping malls and internet markets (such as [Wildberries](#), [Ozon](#), [Yandex Market](#)) where clothing (winter coats etc) can be purchased at reasonable prices and delivered within 24-48 hours.

Everything is available in Moscow and at prices similar or below to your home country. Do not waste luggage space on items that are obtainable here.



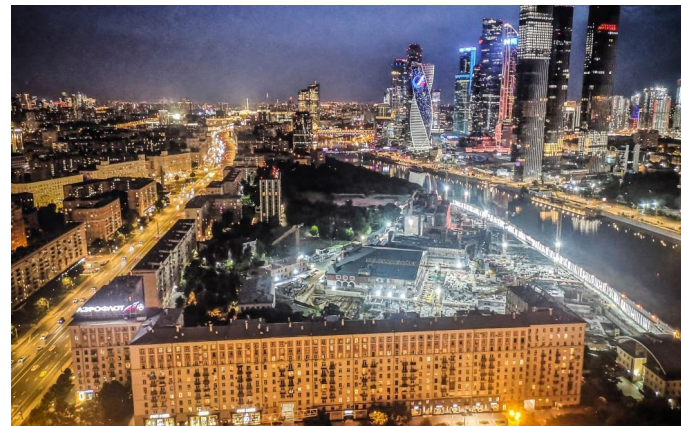
Living in Moscow

Moscow is a modern, exciting city and like every capital city, it has much to offer. However, preparation for relocation involves recalibrating your mental compass. It is important to learn something about Russia, its people and history before embarking on your assignment here.

Learning the Cyrillic alphabet takes a few hours and will be an advantage although the Russian and English languages are used in the Metro and signs are generally in both languages.

Living expenses vary depending upon your life style however some things are inexpensive, for example, public transport and theatre tickets. Some things are the same as Western prices, such as bars and restaurants. It is easily possible to live well in Moscow and save money. You will find your own 'happy medium' based on the style of living that you like and are accustomed to.

Please ensure that you bring some cash (USD or EUR) to Moscow so that you have enough money before your bank account and first paycheck are in place.





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Shopping

The Western-style supermarkets (Pyaterochka, Magnit, SPAR, Perekryostok) have most things. 'Auchan' and 'Billa' are less expensive and also have a wide range of items. More and more Russian shops are adopting a western supermarket approach, and some do a home delivery service.





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Health

Bring copies of your latest optical prescription plus a spare pair of glasses and contact lenses for emergencies, although both are easily available in Moscow and reasonably priced.

Your emergency healthcare is covered through a local company. Through this, we have access to excellent medical facilities. Meds are easy to buy, but can be of doses in excess of those in your home country and should be treated with caution. We also have a doctor or nurse based on all our sites for minor ailments and advice.





Ice-skating — Gorky Park (Park Kultury) in the winter. Most of the other parks also have frozen paths for skating.
Hire skates or buy from shops such as Sportmaster.

Skiing — there are a few training slopes in Moscow and all of them are fairly inexpensive. Cross-country skiing is popular in the winter. For those who fancy skiing in the summer, CHEЖКОМ at Krasnogorsk (NW Moscow) is an indoor ski-slope.

Ice Hockey is a national sport and hugely popular in Russia. Some of the sports best players have come from Russia. Information on the leagues and how to get tickets to games can be found here;
<https://en.fhr.ru/>





Horse-riding — there are stables in the North and South where you can ride. “Bitsa” on Balaklavskii prospect (between metro Kaluzhskaya and metro Chertanovskaya) is in Bitsevskii Park in the south of Moscow. It is Europe’s largest equestrian centre within a city’s boundaries and served as the venue for the equestrian events in the 1980 Olympic Games.

Spectator sports — Everything is available on big screen in the bars. Tap and Barrel Pub, Pig and Rose, Connolly Station and Paddy’s Pub are common places when a big game is on. Russia is on a sporting ‘high’ after the Winter Olympics (2014) and the World Cup (2018). Russians are big sports fans.





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Sports

Football — The Russian Premier League runs from August until May with a winter break from mid-December until March (<https://eng.premierliga.ru/calendar/>). Some of the best teams to watch include; CSKA, Spartak, Lokomotiv, Zenit and Dynamo. During this time the Russian Cup is also played. Fan ID is required to attend football games. See here requirements to get FAN ID – (<https://www.gosuslugi.ru/fancard>). After you have received your FAN ID you can purchase tickets directly from the club website of your chosen team. When purchasing your ticket you enter your FAN ID Number and proceed from there. The ticket is then soon available to download from your Gosuslugi account. (HR will assist in setting up your Gosuslugi account)

Rugby is played in Moscow and is gaining popularity in the country.

The most English speaking club is the Moscow Dragons, they train twice a week. Lokomotiv and CSKA also have rugby teams including underage set ups.

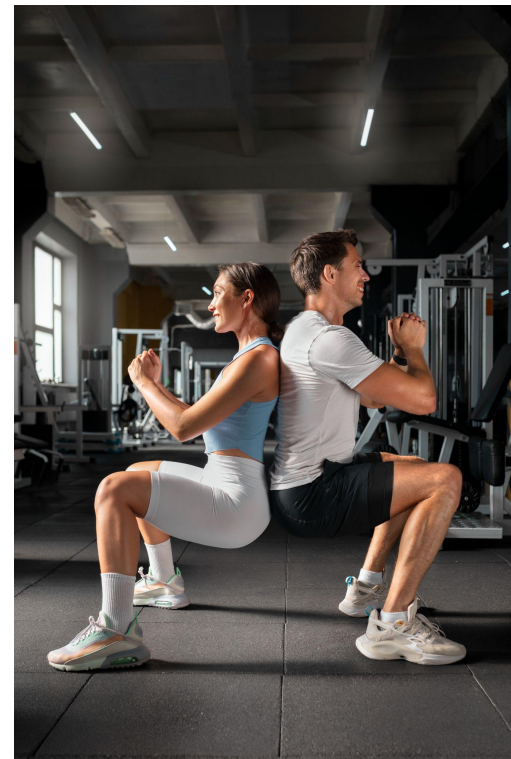




Basketball — the standard is very high. CSKA are one of the best teams. More information on the league can be found here <https://russiabasket.ru/>.

Gyms — There are several gyms all over the city. Some can be very expensive. Just ask any of your colleagues who will be able to advise you of one in your locality.

Banya — One of the oldest Russian traditions. Since mediaeval times Russian towns and villages have had a steam house where men and women would sit steaming themselves, beating one another with venniki (branches of birch leaves), and cooling down by rolling around together in the snow. Today it is slightly different – a person can choose between mixed or single-sex banya, and there are pools of cold water rather than snow – but the birch leaves remain. Worth visiting at least once – for the experience alone (birch leaves optional) Sandunovskiye Banya (m. Kuznetskiy Most) is ornate and plush; whereas Donskoy Banya (m. Leninsky Prospekt/Shabolovskaya) is stark and Soviet -like. Either provides a memorable experience.





Running of all kinds is very popular in Russia and in all seasons! The largest running event in the country takes place in mid-September annually in Moscow, the Moscow Marathon. This also includes a 10k run with over 20,000 runners in total taking part from Russia and internationally. Details of running events in both Moscow and Russia can be found here <https://runc.run/> and here <https://russiarunning.com/>. The running community is very welcoming to both the casual and competitive runner.



Moscow has a huge amount to offer! There is a tremendous variety of museums, concert halls, theatres, galleries, bowling alleys, cinemas etc.

Theatre and Music — The possibilities are endless. The Bolshoi Theatre is a must though expensive — the name alone carries the gravitas to make you want to go out of curiosity — and it is better than the hype. The Old Stage has reopened after several years of refurbishment. There are many other high-quality theatres too. Ballet and opera opportunities abound. The International House of Music and Tchaikovsky Concert Hall attract world class performers from across the musical spectrum. Live popular music, including Jazz and Blues of all varieties, is alive and well in Moscow.



Cinema. Foreign Language cinemas in the city show films in their original language with Russian subtitles.

Some options include the recently renovated ‘Khudozhestvenny Cinema’ which is one of the oldest cinemas in the world, the schedule can be found here; <https://cinema1909.ru/en/schedule>

‘Illusion Cinema’ which is located in on the iconic Kotelnicheskaya Embankment. The schedule can be found here <https://illusion-cinema.ru/>

And ‘5 Star Cinema’ which can be found in locations throughout Moscow. Generally, films are dubbed in Russian but some are in the film’s original language with Russian subtitles. Information on the films in the original language will be indicated when making a booking, which you can do from here <https://5zvezd.ru/>

Russian Literature — Russia has a deep and varied literary tradition which the readers among you may wish to explore.

