

A Brief Guide to Winning FIFA Cities

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The  **Moscow Times**

A look at the 11 cities chosen to host the 2018 soccer World Cup that were announced by the organizers on Saturday:

Moscow



Igor Tabakov / MT

Population: Officially 11.5 million, but actually closer to 25 million, with millions of unregistered migrant workers.

Clubs: Spartak, CSKA, Dynamo, Lokomotiv, Torpedo (Division II)

Stadiums:

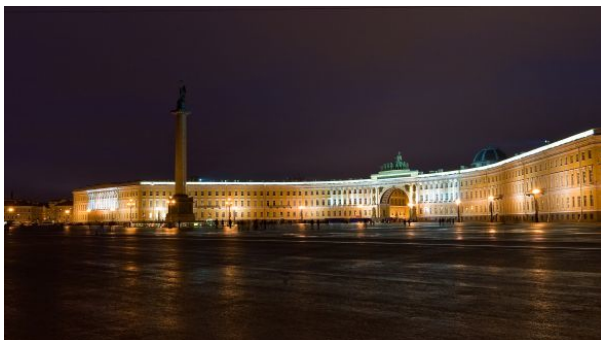
Luzhniki, capacity: 90,000;

Spartak (to be built by 2013), proposed capacity: 45,000;

Dynamo (to be built by 2016), proposed capacity: 45,000

History: Founded in 1147 on the banks of the Moscow River, it is home to some 130 different nationalities, served by three international airports and the world's second-busiest subway system. It welcomes 4 million tourists per year.

St. Petersburg



fotoimedia

Population: 5 million

Club: Zenit St. Petersburg

Stadium: Gazprom Arena (to be built by 2014), proposed capacity: 69,000

690 kilometers from Moscow

History: Founded by Peter the Great in 1703 on the banks of the Neva River as the new Russian capital, the city is famous for its canals, drawbridges, fountains and “white nights” during the summer months.

Kazan



wikipedia.org

Population: 1.2 million

Club: Rubin Kazan

Stadium: To be built by 2013, proposed capacity: 45,000

825 kilometers from Moscow

History: The capital of the central region of Tatarstan celebrated its millennium in 2005. Kazan is on the banks of the Volga River. It is an ethnically diverse city with more than 100 different nationalities. The dominant religion is Islam.

Sochi



Sergei Porter / Vedomosti

Population: 400,000

Clubs: Has had no professional clubs since Zhemchuzhina Sochi dropped out of the Russian Second Division because of financial difficulties last year.

Stadium: To be built by 2013, proposed capacity: 45,000

1,680 kilometers from Moscow

History: Founded in the early 19th century, the summer resort will host the 2014 Winter Olympics.

The city sits at the foot of the Caucasus Mountains and stretches almost 140 kilometers along

the Black Sea coast.

Volgograd



Vladimir Filonov / MT

Population: 1.1 million

Club: Rotor Volgograd (Division II)

Stadium: Yet to be built, proposed capacity: 45,000

940 kilometers from Moscow

History: Founded in 1589 on the banks of the Volga River as Tsaritsyn, shortly after the death of Tsar Ivan the Terrible, as Russia's southern fortress against the nomadic tribes.

In 1925, it was renamed Stalingrad after the Soviet dictator Josef Stalin, and in 1961 it became Volgograd.

The city is known for a famous battle during World War II in 1942-43, when the Soviet forces defeated the Germans.

Yekaterinburg



For MT

Population: 1.37 million

Club: Ural Yekaterinburg (Division II)

Stadium: Seats 27,000, to be expanded to 45,000

1,755 kilometers from Moscow

History: The city was founded in 1723 by a decree of Peter the Great and named after the tsar's wife, Catherine I.

One drawback for Yekaterinburg is that it is the farthest venue from Moscow. But local authorities have promised to build high-speed trains that fans can use for free.

Kaliningrad



Vladimir Filonov / MT

Population: 450,300

Club: Baltika Kaliningrad (Division II)

Stadium: Yet to be built, proposed capacity: 45,000

1,235 kilometers from Moscow

History: Founded in the 13th century by knights of the Teutonic Order, the city was formerly known as Königsberg and was the capital of East Prussia. Now, it is a key Baltic seaport. Until 1945, the city was part of Germany, but it was annexed by the Soviet Union after World War II. The amber industry is a key business, attracting thousands of visitors every year.

Nizhny Novgorod



Andrei Makhonin / Vedomosti

Population: 1.3 million

Club: Volga Nizhny Novgorod

Stadium: Yet to be built, proposed capacity: 45,000

425 kilometers from Moscow

History: Thanks to its advantageous location on the Volga River, the city, founded in 1221, developed into Russia's key commerce center in the 19th century. Its kremlin dates back to the 16th century and has a 2-kilometer brick wall and 13 watchtowers.

Rostov-on-Don



For MT

Population: 1.1 million

Clubs: FK Rostov

Stadium: Yet to be built, proposed capacity: 45,000

1,110 kilometers from Moscow

History: Known from the time of Herodotus as the land of warlike Scythians, the steppes of the Don River basin eventually became home to the freedom-loving Cossacks. Rostov was founded in 1749 to serve as a southern fortress.

Samara



Denis Grishkin / Vedomosti

Population: 1.2 million

Club: Krylya Sovietov Samara

Stadium: Yet to be built, proposed capacity: 45,000

1,060 kilometers from Moscow

History: Capital of the Samara region and founded in 1586, it is one of the most prominent cities along the Volga River and serves as Russia's aerospace center.

Places of interest for visitors include Stalin's 37-meter-deep bunker and the Zhigulevskie Hills nature preserve on the Volga River.

Saransk



wikipedia.org

Population: 300,000

Club: Mordovia Saransk

Stadium: Yet to be built, proposed capacity: 45,000

650 kilometers from Moscow

History: Saransk, founded in 1641 and located in central Russia, is the capital of the Mordovia region. It is home to many ethnic groups, such as the Finno-Ugric. Saransk is a frequent venue for ethnographic festivals.

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