

15,000 Muscovites Take to the Streets for 'Velobulvar'

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Cyclists of all ages gathered to race and just relax on bicycles, enjoying the programs set up for the yearly event.

More than 15,000 people took their bikes and went to Velobulvar, a yearly event in which Muscovites gather to take over roadways and bike together along a specified route. Free from the traffic jams, the roads of the historical center of Moscow were emptied for Velobulvar cyclists on May 18.

City authorities blocked streets including Suvorov Square, Samotechnaya Ulitsa, Tsvetnoi Bulvar Trubnaya Ploshchad, Olimpiisky Prospekt and Ulitsa Durova for the event. Moscow has changed a lot for a past few years, and the city became more adapted for cycling, Moscow Culture Department head Sergei Kapkov said.

The number of different bicycle-related activities offered was fascinating: People could participate in a mass bicycle race along the route, or bike-polo on unicycles. There were thirty

bicycle clubs, each with their own entertainment programs. Bikes of different brands were on display for purchase or rental, as well as stations for bike repair. There were memorable bikes with unusual handlebars and wheels and an exhibit of antique bicycles, the oldest of which was made in 1865.

The best part of Velobulvar was riding a bicycle on the streets in a way most people wouldn't think was possible. The dusty and dangerous roads, usually filled with cars and annoyed drivers, were suddenly filled with the joy of life and excited cyclists. The wind rings in your ears as you drive a bicycle on Tsvetnoi Bulvar when you don't have to worry about traffic jams and can simply concentrate on the feeling of freedom.

The "Begushy Gorod," or "Running City," competition was held alongside Velobulvar this year. An urban orienteering competition, "Running City" challenges teams to find and visit hidden places in Moscow faster than other teams and solve different riddles. It aimed to show that something new can be found even in places where you go every day.

The atmosphere of Velobulvar was relaxed, people could rest under the shade of tents or trees, children had their own mini-bikes and fun competitions. Professionals and amateurs found something about Velobulvar that brought all people together on a hot day. The evening ended with an award ceremony for winners of different contests. Summer was welcomed to Moscow with the warm embrace of Velobulvar.

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