

The Great Break: Moscow on Vacation

December 30, 2016



The great break begins with a bang on New Year's Eve and stretches to Orthodox Christmas. **Pixabay**

While many expats go back to their home countries for the long holiday break, for those who stay Moscow is a vacationer's paradise. First of all, if you drive a car, you can spend hours cruising along near-empty streets checking out the decorations, or stopping to get a bite to eat or a warming cup of hot chocolate. Best holiday present: parking is free. The streets in the center are all lit up and buzzing with events, activities, and plenty of shopping opportunities. Outdoor fun is guaranteed in the parks. And there are plenty of movies, concerts, and exhibits for every age and taste. You'll have so much to do, you'll need a vacation from your vacation. No problem — January is the quietest month of the year.

Visit a Unique Sculpture Park

Ice, ice baby

The much-loved "Ice City" festival opens on December 29 offering Muscovites the chance to travel through Russia, in ice form. That's right, artists wielding chainsaws and chisels will transform more than one thousand tons of natural ice into landmarks such as the Moscow Kremlin, St. Isaac's cathedral and Kizhi Island. Once you're tired of taking photos with the

sculptures, some of which are six meters high, you can take a turn on one of six gargantuan ice slides.

Park Pobedy. Metro Park Pobedy. icemoscow.info. Dec. 29 - Jan. 8

'The Nutcracker' at the Bolshoi

Christmas classic

There is nothing that says Christmas more than "The Nutcracker," and if you are lucky enough to be in Moscow during the holiday season, there is no better place to see it than in the Bolshoi Theater. Put on your dressiest clothes, take your kids — or spouse, parents, grandparents, grandchildren or best friends — by the hand and sashay into the Bolshoi, take your seat amid the gilt and velvet, and enjoy the ballet. Be sure to splurge on a flute of champagne during the intermission. Pricey? Yes. But worth it, if only once. Check the theater site or other ticket sellers for advance purchase.

Catch a Christmas Musical

Some day your prince will come

It might not be the West End, but "Zolushka" (Cinderella) is rather spectacular and a good option if you're missing a traditional pantomime back home this Christmas. The Cinderella in this all singing, all dancing version is not just out to bag herself a handsome prince either — she wants to change the fate of her kingdom. The production, which premiered on Broadway in 2013, has a more interesting political message than the story we all know and love. The three-hour musical is headed by renowned British director Lindsay Posner.

For more information and tickets, see musical-cinderella.ru.

Georgian Art in Moscow

Discover the Georgian avant-garde

The Pushkin Arts Museum has opened a new exhibit celebrating Georgian avant-garde art from 1900–1930, the first large-scale exhibition of Georgian avant-garde artists in Russia. The curators have collected works from many museums and private Georgian and Russian collections, displaying for the public 200 works by such artists as Niko Piroshmanashvili (Piroshmani) (1863–1918), Vladimir (Lado) Gudiashvili (1896–1980), David Kakabadze (1889–1952) and many more. Come and see why Tbilisi was called "Little Paris" at the turn of the last century. The show runs until March 3.

Garage Museum

Kid's playgrounds as art — and fun

On December 24, the Garage Museum of Contemporary Art will launch its annual

initiative “Art Experiment” for the sixth time. This year the experiment is entitled “The Playground Project: From New York to Moscow” and will display innovative playgrounds from around the world collected by Swiss curator and urbanist Gabriela Burkhalter. Garage will present a Moscow version of the project, which Burkhalter has been working on for several years. The playgrounds will be recreated both for the adults to enjoy as pieces of architecture and art, as well as for kids to enjoy in the way originally intended: something to jump, climb, and play on. The interactive exhibit runs just until Jan.10.

A Tribute to Yury Norshtein at VPA Solyanka

Cartoons for kids and kids at heart

An animation exhibition on the eve of the New Year has become a tradition at VPA Solyanka Gallery. This year’s exhibition is devoted to Yury Norshtein, one of the best animation directors in Russia, who turns 75 this year. Norshtein has only directed about a dozen films, but each one is an award-winning masterpiece. His best known work is probably his moving tale about friendship, “Hedgehog in the Fog,” produced in 1975. This exhibition is mostly devoted to his latest work, an introduction to the children’s evening program, “Spokoinoi Nochi Malyshe” (Good Night, Kids), including sketches and storyboards. There will also be interactive objects and site-specific installations devoted to Norshtein’s legacy by contemporary Russian artists. The show runs until Feb. 19.

Anatoly Zverev and Hans Christian Andersen

Illustrations to fairy tale classics

Every year the Anatoly Zverev Museum organizes a holiday exhibition that is as interesting to children as it is to adults. This year is a fairy-tale show — literally. On display are illustrations to four Hans Christian Andersen stories that Zverev did in 1961 at the behest of choreographer Alexander Rumnev. The stories are some of everyone’s favorites: “The Nightingale,” “The Wild Swans,” “The Little Mermaid,” and “The Emperor’s New Clothes.” Stop in to see the fanciful illustrations, accompanied by a special musical program designed to create a truly magical atmosphere. The show ends on March 20.

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