

Bread Rolls and Dyson Hair Stylers: Russia Lures Voters With Election Day Freebies

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A young woman takes a selfie in front of a mural in the Russian-occupied city of Donetsk that reads "Our Family Goes to the Polls." **Dmitry Yagodkin / TASS**

Local officials across Russia have been doubling down on efforts to encourage the public to vote in this weekend's presidential election as the Kremlin seeks a historic turnout for President Vladimir Putin's expected re-election.

In addition to [pressuring](#) public sector workers and employees of state-linked companies into casting a ballot, officials are also trying to attract residents to polling stations with free lunches, concert tickets and raffles for prizes ranging from bags of sugar to a new car.

Many free events put on by local authorities have reportedly been [scheduled](#) for midday on March 17 — the same time that allies of late Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny have called for a "[Noon Against Putin](#)" [protest](#) at polling stations across the country.

The Moscow Times has compiled a list of some of the freebies Russia's regional governments are offering in exchange for a vote:

Ferris wheel rides

In the Siberian city of Omsk, first-time voters aged between 18 and 24 will be given a free ticket for one Ferris wheel ride at a local amusement park, news outlet Omsk Inform [reported](#).

Local officials are ready to give away around 50,000 tickets at polling stations across the city, according to the outlet.

iPhones and Dyson AirWraps

Residents of the Altai region will have the chance to win brand-new sanctioned goods such as an iPhone 15 and hairstyling devices produced by British household appliance giant Dyson, local news outlet Tolk [reported](#).

All voting-age residents of the region who take a picture at a polling station and upload it to a dedicated page on the VKontakte social media website will be eligible for the election-day raffle.

Bread rolls and porridge

The mayor of Strezhivoy, a town of some 39,000 people in the Tomsk region, promised that voters would be offered free bread rolls and porridge.

“Bread rolls will be available for all three days at all polling stations — this wish [of voters] from prior elections was realized,” Valeriy Denichenko [wrote](#) in a Telegram post accompanied by a picture of a detailed three-day voter entertainment program.

Motorcycles, apartments and Chinese smartphones

In the Sverdlovsk region, 2,000 Chinese-made smartphones, 45 apartments and 20 motorcycles, as well as 100 cars produced by the revived Soviet-era brand Moskvich, are up for grabs.

To win one of the prizes, voters are invited to take part in an election day trivia quiz where they will have to answer a series of questions about the region's history. At the same time, officials said that correct answers won't boost one's chances of winning a prize.

“You can literally answer all the quiz questions incorrectly and still win a prize. It is all random,” [said](#) local news outlet SVET Yekaterinburg.

Free public transport, a music festival and a Lada

Officials in Russia's republic of Tatarstan decided to go all out, putting on a free music festival for voters in the region's capital Kazan on Sunday.

The [festival](#), titled “The Whole Family to the Elections,” will take place in the city's Ak Bars Arena stadium and feature performances by well-known Tatar and Russian music artists and

food stands with cuisines from across Russia.

Voters will be given a bracelet at the polling station that will be used to enter the festival. The bracelet also [entitles](#) one to free, unlimited access to public transport in Kazan.

Election participants can also enter a [raffle](#) to win one of three Lada Vesta cars priced at more than 1.7 million rubles (\$18,615) each.

To enter the raffle, families must take a picture outside the polling station and post it on their VKontakte or Instagram page with the hashtags #ТатарстанАлга (“Forward, Tatarstan” in Tatar) and #ВсейСемьейНаВыборы (The Whole Family to the Elections).

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