

Definition: **Moscow** from *Collins English Dictionary*

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1 the capital of Russia and of the Moscow Autonomous Region, on the Moskva River: dates from the 11th century; capital of the grand duchy of Russia from 1547 to 1712; capital of the Soviet Union 1918–91; centres on the medieval Kremlin; chief political, cultural, and industrial centre of Russia, with two universities. Pop: 10 672 000 (2005 est) Russian name: **Moskva** Related noun: **Muscovite**

Summary Article: **Moscow**

From *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*

Industrial and commercial city, capital of the Russian Federation and of the Moscow region, and formerly (1922–91) of the USSR; population (2002) 10,382,800. Moscow lies on the Moskva River 640 km/400 mi southeast of St Petersburg, and covers an area of some 880 sq km/340 sq mi. It is the main political, economic, and cultural centre of Russia. A major manufacturing city, its industries include aerospace technology and vehicle assembly, machine and precision tool manufacture, and the production of such diverse goods as electrical equipment, textiles, chemicals, and many food products. Moscow's State University was founded in 1755; other cultural institutions include the extensive Russian State Library and the Academy of Sciences. The city is home to the renowned Bolshoi Theatre of Opera and Ballet, the Pushkin Fine Arts Museum, the Tretyakov Gallery, and the Exhibition of Economic Achievements.

Landmarks The 12th-century Kremlin ('Citadel'), at the centre of the city on the north bank of the river, is Moscow's main landmark. It is a walled enclosure containing several historic buildings, including three cathedrals, one of them the burial place of the tsars; the 90 m-/300 ft-high Ivan Veliki tower, a famine-relief work commissioned by Boris Godunov in 1600; various palaces, including the former imperial palace; museums; and the Tsar Kolokol, the world's largest bell (200 tonnes), cast in 1735. The Kremlin walls are crowned by 18 towers and have five gates. Red Square, adjoining the Kremlin on the northeast, contains St Basil's Cathedral and Lenin's tomb and was formerly the scene of Soviet military parades. To the southwest of the city centre lie the Central Lenin Stadium, a huge sports complex, and Gorky Park. The seat of the prime minister and national government of the Russian Federation, the marble 'White House', stands near the Kutuzovsky Bridge over the Moskva River. This building was a key location in the two failed coup attempts in 1991 and 1993.

History Moscow was first mentioned in chronicles in 1147 as a settlement near the southern frontier of the Rostov-Suzdal principality. The town was sacked by Mongols under Batu Khan in 1238, but was rebuilt by Daniel, the son of Alexander Nevski, and established as the capital of his independent principality of Muscovy in 1294. During the 14th century, under the rule of Ivan I (1304–1341) and Dmitri Donskai (1350–1389), Moscow became the foremost political power in Russia and its religious capital. It also continued to develop as an important commercial and manufacturing centre, attracting a large artisan population. In 1712, Tsar Peter the Great transferred the Russian capital to St Petersburg, and Moscow was reduced to the role of a second capital throughout the imperial period. In 1812 the inhabitants of Moscow, having fled under the approach of Napoleon's troops, returned to find their city in ruins, with over two-thirds of the buildings burned to the ground. Rebuilding was a major operation

that took many decades to complete. With the collapse of the Tsarist regime during the 1917 October Revolution, Moscow regained its status as Russia's principal city, being made capital of the Russian Soviet Federated Social Republic (RSFSR) in 1918, and of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) in 1922. In 1941, Nazi forces advanced to within 32 km/20 mi of Moscow, but were defeated by a fierce Russian defence and severe weather conditions. In the turmoil that preceded and followed the demise of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, Moscow was the scene of two abortive coup attempts, the first in 1991 by hardline communists attempting to overthrow Mikhail Gorbachev, and the second, in 1993, by conservative parliamentary leaders opposed to the constitutional reforms of President Boris Yeltsin.

Transport Moscow is built on a radial pattern, with the Kremlin forming the centre of the city, and an Outer Ring Road some 30 km/19 mi from the centre. The city is also the hub of the Russian railway system, with nine main terminals, and trunk routes radiating in all directions, most of which are linked, 50–120 km (30–75 mi) outside the city, by a circular line. There are three river ports with passenger services to Nizhniy Novogorod, Ufa, and Rostov-on-Don via the Moskva and Oka rivers, and the Moscow Canal. A hydrofoil service operates on the River Moskva. Moscow is served by five airports. The public transport system consists of a highly efficient underground railway, opened in 1935, which has several imposing stations and a total track length of 427 km. Buses and trolley-bus routes run throughout the city, and trams operate in a few regions outside the city centre.

Architecture From the early 14th century onwards, Moscow has been the seat of the Patriarchs and the spiritual centre of the Russian Orthodox Church. Among its historic churches, many of which have been reconsecrated and refurbished since the fall of communism, are the Smolensk Cathedral in the Novodevichy Convent (1525), the Church of the Nativity of the Virgin in Putinki(1649–52), and the Church of the Intercession in Fili (1690–93). Moscow's many Neoclassical buildings from the 18th and early 19th centuries include the House of Unions (formerly the Club of the Nobility), the old building of the Lenin Library (1786), the old university building (1793), and the Bolshoi Theatre (1856). Buildings in the capital dating from the late 19th and early 20th centuries often imitate earlier Russian styles; among these are the State Historical Museum (1874) and the Kazan railway station.

During the 1920s and early 1930s, constructivism was the dominant style of Moscow architecture, while from the 1930s to the early 1950s 'Soviet Classicism' was the prevailing idiom. The underground stations are prime examples of this latter style. The years following World War II saw the emergence of prefabricated construction techniques. The suburban housing developments put up in the 1950s and 1960s around Moscow contain hundreds of functional blocks of residential flats. More prestigious public buildings from this period include the Kremlin Palace of Congresses (1959–61), the Ostankino television tower (1967) in the north of the city, and the former COMECON skyscraper (1969) next to the White House. Most of Moscow's older wooden buildings have been destroyed by fires through the centuries (notably in 1571, 1739, 1748, 1753, and 1812), while other architectural monuments fell victim to state policy in the 1930s. Places of worship that were torn down in this period include the Chapel of the Iberian Virgin (1669), one of the most sacred churches in Russia, and the Church of the Redeemer (1839–83), once the most richly decorated churches in Moscow.

weblinks

Exploring Moscow

images

Cathedral of the Assumption

Cathedral of the Assumption, Moscow

Great Palace of the Kremlin

hammer and sickle

Kremlin

Kremlin

Kremlin

Kremlin and St Basil's Cathedral

Kremlin, Cathedral of the Assumption

Moscow

St Basil's Cathedral

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