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What is Russia for foreigners?

Russia attracts and pushes away foreigners at the same time. Not everyone is ready to visit the country of bears and nested dolls even if they have enough money. All the same, some people who decide to visit our country will meet certain difficulties.

Foreigners can think that all Russians are rough and aggressive, especially in the large Russian cities. It seems that the people surrounding them don't notice anything near them and, look at each other with a blank look and never smile. Foreigners can understand their severe expressions as aggression and bad temper. Actually, Russians smile only when they really want to. For example, if they hear something funny or pleasant. Sometimes Russians can seem tactless. They can ask a person they just met a private matter. Some people like to interfere with other's lives and even to give advice. Especially this concerns elderly people who can easily express negative opinions on the appearance or behavior of a stranger. Moreover, they will even insist that the person listened to their advice and follows it by all means.

Russians don't observe personal space at all. One Englishwoman living in Moscow for several years, remembers with a smile: "In Great Britain passersby give way to each other kindly. And if suddenly someone faces a stranger, then both of them begin to apologize. In Moscow there is a constant crush. People got used to being pushed for a long time, therefore nobody apologizes". Foreign mass media advise men to be especially careful. In their opinion, Russians welcome foreign guests in a big way and will use their best efforts to make sure that the guest was satisfied. In their opinion, "contentment" means a plentiful binge after which the next day many wake up under a table. That's why foreign mass media carefully warn: "Never underestimate the force of Russian vodka, otherwise you will wake up not under a table, but under a hospital bed". In Russia corruption is one of the most serious problems. Many Russians claim that they hate "взяточничество". However it's hardly possible to find a person who has never given bribes or gifts in our country. Russians don't see anything shameful in giving a gift to "the necessary person". Usually they present to men a bottle of expensive vodka, whisky or liqueur, to women - a bouquet of flowers, box of chocolates or perfume. Foreigners are advised to note this delicate detail of the Russian reality. Foreign mass media notes that gifts are a latent form of "взяточничество".

In Russia there is practically no concept of "service sectors", and those foreigners who are used to the polite address can be unpleasantly surprised with the tactless or indifferent address in various Russian establishments. Besides, many houses are subject to demolition or restoration for a long time, and the size of rooms and apartments is very small in comparison with the European standards. Therefore, foreign tourists should approach the choice of a hotel especially attentively. Sometimes it is difficult to find Internet access and points of an international telecommunication in Russia.

Nevertheless, despite all the difficulties about which newspapers warn, the flow of foreign tourists to Russia does not weaken. Sometimes foreigners want to experience the exotic, consider a visit to our country as something like an extreme trip. But those who accept the Russian reality and don't try to change it and don't condemn it, open absolutely another world for themselves.