

Russia survival pocket guide

THE SHORT, OFFLINE EDITION

Money, mobile data, arrival paperwork, Moscow transport and everyday prices — condensed into six pages for your phone or bag.

Before you fly

- ▣ Confirm your visa route on the official Russian Foreign Ministry portal.
- ▣ Plan for foreign Visa, Mastercard, Apple Pay and Google Pay not to work.
- ▣ Activate an eSIM and set up your VPN before departure.
- ▣ Save offline maps and this PDF; keep your accommodation details handy.

THE HONEST VERSION

Russia is workable for visitors in 2026, but the payment and paperwork systems are separate from those most foreigners use at home. Prepare those two things first; the rest is comparatively simple.

By Vlad Lario · Two Nations · English edition · 28 September 2026

Entry and the first 24 hours

E-VISA — ELIGIBLE PASSPORTS

Official portal: evisa.kdmid.ru. The site's 2026 guide lists a \$52 fee, single entry, up to 16 days and a standard decision in four calendar days. Check eligibility again before booking.

PAPER VISA — SOME PASSPORTS

US, UK, Canadian and Australian passport holders are not eligible for the e-visa in the site's 2026 guide. Use the relevant consulate or visa centre and confirm current requirements locally.

ON ARRIVAL

- Keep the migration card issued at the border. It is used for registration and may be requested for a SIM or bank account.
- Hotels register guests automatically, normally within 24 hours.
- In private accommodation, the host must file migration registration within 7 working days. Keep the registration slip.
- Do not treat this PDF as legal advice: rules can change by passport and trip purpose.

Paying without your usual card

The rule to remember

Visa and Mastercard issued outside Russia are declined at Russian terminals and ATMs.

WHAT WORKS

- Rouble cash. Exchange euros or dollars at a bank or official exchange office; airport rates are usually worse.
- A MIR card linked to a Russian bank account. Longer-stay visitors may also need a Russian phone number and INN tax number.
- SBP transfers and QR payments once you have a Russian account.
- Some foreign UnionPay cards work, but acceptance is not universal. Never use one as your only plan.

WHAT DOES NOT

- Apple Pay and Google Pay are unavailable.
- Do not assume a foreign card will work at an ATM, online checkout or hotel desk.
- Do not exchange money with street dealers.

Get connected before you land

01

BEFORE THE FLIGHT

Buy and activate a tourist eSIM. Install and test a VPN before departure; some mainstream VPN apps are throttled inside Russia.

02

AFTER ARRIVAL

For a longer stay, compare local plans from MTS, Beeline, Megafon and Tele2. A local number is useful for bank apps and SBP.

03

NAVIGATION

Download Yandex Maps or 2GIS and save the city offline. Yandex Metro is useful in Moscow.

04

TAXIS

Use Yandex Go rather than street taxis. The app offers a cash payment option.

SERVICE REALITY

- Google, GitHub and Telegram are listed as directly reachable in the site's dated index.
- Instagram, Facebook and several Western news sites are blocked or slowed; a working VPN may be needed.
- Service availability changes. Keep essential bookings, addresses and tickets offline.

Transport and useful prices

MOSCOW METRO

Use a Troika card and top it up at a station. The dated 2026 fare table lists 75 ₺ for a single pay-as-you-go ride and 3,460 ₺ for a monthly unlimited transport pass.

EVERYDAY PRICE SHEET

Single metro ride	75 ₺
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Monthly unlimited transport	3,460 ₺
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Mobile plan, 10 GB+	699 ₺ / month
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Home internet, 60 Mbit/s+	745 ₺ / month
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Cappuccino	292 ₺
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Inexpensive restaurant meal	1,000 ₺
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1-bed flat outside centre	62,583 ₺ / month
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1-bed flat in centre	118,714 ₺ / month
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These are specific published figures, not a personal budget. Rent and café prices use Numbeo averages; transport uses Moscow Metro tariffs.

Your 48-hour checklist

- ☐ **BEFORE DEPARTURE**
Confirm visa eligibility · Activate eSIM · Test VPN · Save offline maps · Plan cash
- ☐ **AT THE BORDER**
Keep your passport and migration card together · Check the permitted stay dates
- ☐ **AT YOUR ADDRESS**
Ask who handles migration registration · Keep the registration slip
- ☐ **MONEY**
Exchange only at a bank or official office · Keep a second payment plan
- ☐ **PHONE**
Use the eSIM first · Compare local SIM plans if staying longer
- ☐ **MOVING AROUND**
Use Troika in Moscow · Use Yandex Go rather than a street taxi

Use the living version

Prices, restrictions and entry rules can change. Recheck the dated Reality Index before you travel.

twonations.org/en/practical/reality-index-2026