

Russia Land of Contrasts

Area: 17 075 400 km² (12% of world's dry land)
Highest mountain: Elbrus (5 633m)
Important rivers: Amur, Lena, Ob (Katun), Jenisej, Volga
Largest lakes: Bajkal, Zajsan, Ladoga and Onega lakes

Governance - federative presidential republic (21 federal republics, 49 administrative counties) with two-chamber parliament (Federal Assembly and State Duma)
- both proportional and majority systems applied
- president and the government share the executive power, president has many executive and legislative powers (can veto a law, dissolve parliament or government)
- question of democracy???
- 1994-95 - Chechnia struggle which lasts up today, Russians wouldn't allow Chechnia to become separated, military control

Population: 148 800 000
Russians - 82,6%, Mongolian - 3,6%, Ukrainian 2,7% ...
- vast majority is orthodox, small numbers of Jews, Catholics, Muslims, pagans
Largest cities: Moscow (capital, 9,2 mil inhab.), Sankt peterburg, Nižnij Novgorod, Novosibirsk, Jekaterinburg, Samara, Čeljabinsk, Omsk, Ufa, kazaň, Perm, Rostov na Donu, Volgograd, Verchojansk (the coldest city in the world)
GDP per capita: 1900USD/ 3100 USD (2005 estimation)
46% by services, 39% industry, 15% agriculture
Monetary unit: rouble

Location

In both Europe and Asia

N - Arctic ocean (Barents Sea, Karsk Sea, Sea of Laptev, East Siberian Sea),

E - pacific ocean (Sea of Ochotsk, Japanese Sea, Bering Sea)

S - borders with Mongolia, China, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Georgia,

W - borders with Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine, Poland (Kaliningrad region)

- Baltic Sea, Gulf of Finland

Relief

- can be divided into 5 major geographic parts:

1. East European Lowland (from west Russian borders up to the Urals)
2. The Urals
3. West Siberian Lowland (between the Urals and Jenisej river)
4. Central Siberian Highland (between Jenisej and Lena rivers)
5. Mountainous regions of south and east Siberia

1. East European Lowland

- covers most of the European part, S is bordered by Caucasus Mountains, NW Cola peninsula, NE Timan Mountain range,

- W of Moscow - Valdaj uplands (sources of Volga, Dneper can be found here)

- SW comprises of Central Russian uplands

2. the Urals - border between Europe and Asia
 3. West Siberian Lowland - waterlogged soils, marshes, Ob, Irtyš and Jenisej Rivers, SE - Altaj mt. Range (glaciated), Western and Eastern Sajan Mountains,
 4. Central Siberian Highland - created by many uplands and plateaus, N - North Siberian Lowland, Byrranga mountain range, Tajmyr peninsula, - Bajkal lake - deepest lake in the world, 1620m
 5. upland plateaus of Vitim and Aldan reaching up to the Sea of Ochotsk, Burej mountain range, along the shore of Japanese Sea - Sichote-Aliñ mt. Range, N - Verchojan mt. Range, Čerského mt. Range, NE - Chukotka peninsula and mt. Range, E - Kamchatca, Sachalin island, Kuril Islands,
- Russia also owns a territory between Poland and Lithuania, Franz Joseph's Land, Novaja Zemľa, Severnaja Zemľa, New Siberian Islands, Wrangler Island

Climate - Cold Continental climate prevails, huge temperature variations (summer - winter)
 SW - coastline of the Black sea and Caucasus straits - colder Mediterranean climate
 Mild oceanic climate in east (region of Vladivostok)
 NE of Siberia - very low temperatures recorded reaching up to -70°C, but in summer temperatures may climb there to 30°C
 Central Siberia - permafrost soils,
 Irregular precipitation (average - 400-700 mm per year), most precipitation in Kamchatca region (2000 mm), driest - Caspian coastline area (less than 200 mm)
 2/3 of the are is covered by snow for more than six months, even rivers in Siberia freeze for more than 4 months

Economy

Russia is energetic superpower, it covers most of the European gas consumption, provides oil and uranium as important fuels, vast natural deposits of various character, Russia does not have to import any natural resources
 However - Russia imports food and its industry requires extensive modernisation

Agriculture

- arable land covers only 8% of area (in European part)
- 4th largest producer of grain
- World's largest producer and exporter of potatoes
- only 5% of all arable land is owned by private farmer, the rest is kept by modernised Kolkhozes,
- one of the largest fish producers
- pastoral agriculture belongs to one of the most numerous in the world but needs refunding and modernisation
- Russia has the world's largest deposits of timber, but the wood processing industry is not that developed

Industry

- nuclear power plants, hydroelectric power plants (Jenisej, Volga)

- mostly heavy industry, mining industry and industry which processes the products of mining industry
- extracting of energetic fuels plays major role (export of gas and oil from NW Siberia, Volga region, Sachalin Island)
- Russia has the world's greatest deposits of natural gas, 3rd greatest deposits of oil
- world's largest coal reserves (Central and E Siberia)
- all metals, iron deposits at the border with Ukraine (Kursk magnetic anomaly)
- gold reserves in far east
- diamond reserves in Yakutsk region
- production of consumer goods underdeveloped during communism, only strategic industry was established
- weaponry industry, engineering, high-tech industry (rocketry, computer production)
- Moscow is one of the world's most expensive cities, largest shopping centre in the world is found here, number of millionaires living in Moscow is larger than the one living in New York and Washington together