



Tatarstan

Land of
1001 Delights





Dear friends!

Welcome to a highly developed and attractive region of Russia. Tatarstan lies in the centre of the country, 800 kilometres east of Moscow, on the greatest European river, the Volga.

Tatarstan is a land of wealth, peace and harmony. Here you will find an authentic way of life, with its own cuisine, music, fashion, art, architecture, hard-working and joyous people.

Tatarstan defies the notions of East or West. It has its own character that is modern, colourful, rich, energetic and diverse.

You will find a unique region known as «The Land of 1001 Delights». You will meet people who have worked for generations to make themselves and their guests happy and prosperous.

Tatarstan regularly ranks among the top 3 most popular Russian tourist destinations in various categories. It offers an exciting, pleasant and safe experience to visitor of any type and taste.

Welcome to Tatarstan!



Kazan

The capital of Tatarstan is the city of Kazan. Kazan celebrated its 1000 anniversary in 2005 and keeps on growing wealthier and more beautiful. Known as "The Third Capital of Russia", Kazan is a modern and comfortable city offering a wide array of choices to a visitor – from countless cafes and restaurants, shopping and entertainment malls to world-class sports and cultural events.

There are over 150 hotels in the city, including brands of international hotel chains: Park Inn by Radisson, Ibis, Ramada and DoubleTree by Hilton.





The Kazan Kremlin

The stunning white walls of the Kazan Kremlin is the primary attraction point in Kazan. The Kremlin dates back to the 12th century and hosts a wealth of sights within its walls.

The most obvious one is the blue and white gem of the Kul Sharif Mosque, one Russia's largest. Next to it is the Russian Orthodox Blagoveschensky (Annunciation) Cathedral and the mysterious leaning Tower of Syuyumbike, the legendary last queen of Kazan.

The Kremlin is home to governmental bodies, a dedicated museum, as well as shops and cafes. One can easily spend a day here, especially during art shows and festivals. Sunsets over Kazan, as viewed from the Kremlin, are incredibly dramatic with deep colours and clouds appearing within reach, and the air filled with a sweet flavour of Oriental hospitality.

Kazan Kremlin was designated a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2000.



The Old Tatar Quarter

On the left bank of the legendary Kaban lake there lies an enchanted small town with tin roofs of merchant mansions and tall minarets of ancient mosques. The Old Tatar Quarter, once an industrial and trade centre of the city, is now an "open air museum" with almost every building bearing cultural significance. Here one can feel the authentic atmosphere of the old Kazan and learn about the traditional culture of the Tatar people.



Bauman Street

The old Bauman Street is the main pedestrian thoroughfare in Kazan. It is the city's tourist quarter, complete with restaurants, fountains, street sculptures, small trades and souvenir shops. You can listen to street musicians, get yourself a portrait, have an ice-cream in summer and a hot broth with local specialty "echpochmak" pies in winter.

Theatre and dance performances are common, street musicians and artists are a permanent fixture. Day and night the Bauman Street is full of people, sounds and colours.



"Kazan" Wedding Palace

Family is very important for Tatarstan people. The bond between generations is strong, in every family there is a "babushka" (Russian) or "davanika" (Tatar) granny, holding keys to life wisdom. Many families nowadays in Tatarstan take their official beginning at the Kazan Wedding Palace, the civic marriage registration centre. Built as a giant chalice, the palace takes its shape from the traditional Tatar cooking pot "kazan". It embodies the traditional saying that "Home is a bowl full of joy".

Since recently the palace acquired new vigilant guardians for family values – the bronze statues of mythical winged leopards and Zilant serpents.

Visitors to the palace can enjoy an unsurpassed panorama of the Kazan Kremlin from a double level viewing desk 32 metres above Kazanka river.



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“Ekiyat” Puppet Theatre

The building of “Ekiyat” Puppet Theatre is a sure head-turner. Its enchanting turrets and stained glass windows catch the eye from far away. The entrance is crowned by a phoenix bird surrounded by brightly coloured puppets, and the timid “Little Prince” greets visitors from a roof top.

The interior is equally fabulous. Shows are given in Russian and Tatar languages.

During summer, the square in front of the theater becomes a place of colorful flower festival.



Temple of All Religions

The temple is a symbol of the peaceful co-existence of people of different religions and ethnicities in Tatarstan. It is a unique complex combining Orthodox and Catholic churches, a Muslim mosque, a Jewish synagogue, a Buddhist temple, a Chinese pagoda – many iconic elements of 16 world religions, including the images of lost civilizations. The temple is intended as an architectural symbol of religious unity rather than a working church.

It was built by a local artist Ildar Khanov using charitable donations. The temple opens its doors for art exhibitions and music evenings.

What to see
in Tatarstan?

The
Island-
Town of
Sviyazhsk





Pushkin's fairy tales come to life on the Sviazhsk river island only 60 kilometres from Kazan. Initially a fortress built by Ivan the Terrible to seize Kazan in 16th century, Sviazhsk has grown through the ages into a quintessential place of Russian culture.

The island with less than 300 residents has 37 cultural sights. Sviazhsk hosts the oldest Christian church on the Volga, the wooden Trinity Church which was built in 1551 during a single day. Among the beautiful murals of the Uspensky Cathedral rare images of Ivan the Terrible himself can be spotted. The cathedral became the 29th Russian site that was recently included into UNESCO World Heritage List.

Sviazhsk bears witness to the worst aspects of the Soviet era, with some of its churches being turned into a prison camp and a mental institution. An extensive and careful restoration since 2010 has brought the island's churches back to their original function.

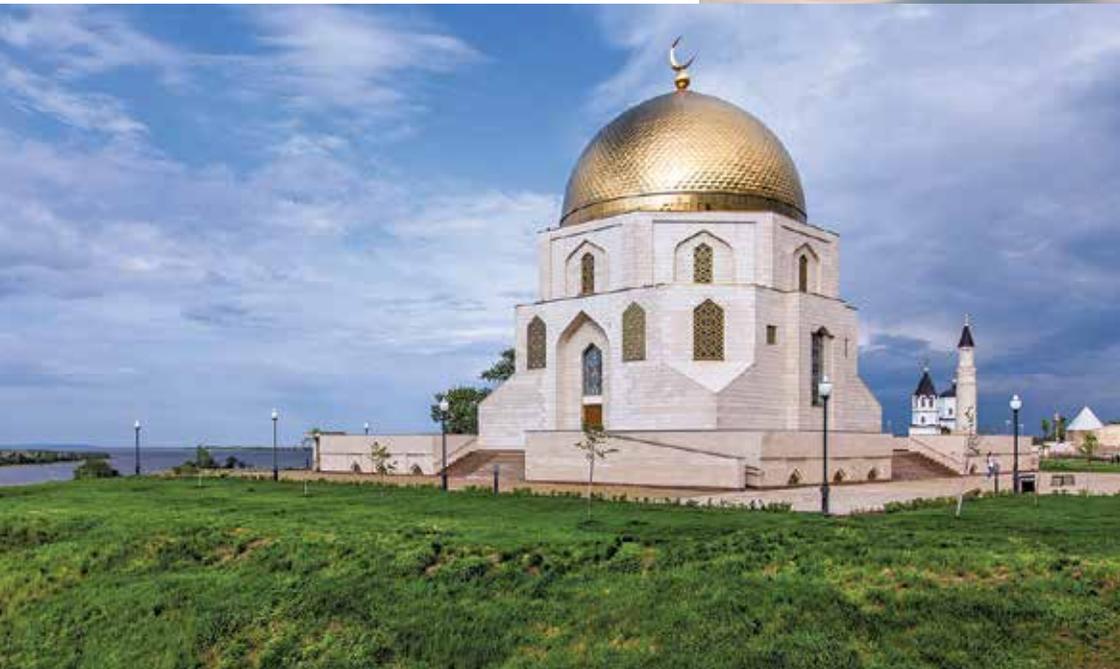
The solitary and pure nature of the island is preserved with no industry or public transport allowed on the island.

Today Sviazhsk has a lively arts and festival scene. There is a museum, a stable yard and a medieval theme centre, complete with an iron monger, archery stalls and interactive knight's armour displays.

The serene and spiritual Sviazhsk is a firm favourite with locals and visitors alike.



The Great Bolgar





A thousand years ago on a tall shore high above Volga, 180 kilometres away from Kazan, there sat the buzzing capital of the thriving and formidable Volga Bolgar Civilization. Here the ancestors of Tatars adopted Islam in 922, and in the 13th century Bolgar became the capital of the Golden Horde.

A UNESCO World Heritage site, Bolgar remains a sacred pilgrimage place. A visitor can admire the Cathedral Mosque, with its Big Minaret, North and East Mausoleums, Khan's Tomb, built in the 13-14th centuries.

So important is Bolgar for modern Tatarstan that it continues to be developed, keeping it alive and present in the Tatarstan culture. In recent years an elegant White Mosque was added and a Commemoration Monument to celebrate the adoption of Islam. It hosts the world's largest Quran with pages 2-metres tall and a solid malachite cover weighing 800 kilograms.

The excellent on-site museum displays intricate pieces of beautiful medieval jewelry, runic scrolls and weapons, and tells the engaging story of what was once the core state between Europe and Asia.

After a day full of sightseeing a visit to the Bread Museum with a working mill will be rewarding.



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Volga



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Nature lovers and travellers seeking escape from the hustle and bustle of life will cherish the magnificent and splendid views offered by two great rivers that merge in Tatarstan, the Volga and Kama. The Volga, Europe's largest river, also reaches its widest span here at 43 kilometres.

River cruises are a popular way to enjoy Tatarstan nature in a slow and relaxed way. Cruise boats make daily stops in small towns, each with their own character, yet all contributing to a picture of Russia's historic provincial wealth.

The infrastructure for recreation is developing fast in response to the ever-growing demand for Tatarstan's magnificent nature.



Tastes of Tatarstan

Tatarstan boasts an authentic cuisine that is rich, flavourful and nourishing, with strong tastes and vivid colours. Feasts are an important part of the Tatarstan culture, with their own rituals of serving a seemingly endless number of dishes. A meal is like a journey along a river with a thousand bends. The full course is not all evident from the start, but be assured that with each new horizon everyone will find something to their taste and satisfaction. During feasts one finds Tatarstan's famous hospitality at its best.

The traditional Tatar cooking is the bedrock of the modern gastronomic wealth of Tatarstan. Age-tested traditional dishes are satisfying and luscious: meat and vegetable triangle-shaped pastries "echpochmak", elegant and velvety "kystybyi" mashed-potato pies, sweet melting sensations of "chak-chak" honey and sugar pyramids are widely available to be enjoyed by the visitor.



Gourmands are advised to note the nascent new Tatarstan cuisine. Young local chefs, well-versed in classical cooking techniques and inspired by local ingredients, create original and remarkable dishes. Core ingredients are wild mushrooms and berries, homemade dairy products including a heavenly “katyk” cream, fish and game.

The ultimate food souvenir from Tatarstan is of course a smoked goose. This traditional home dish is enjoying a surge in demand. Whilst the lean dry-cured horse meat is historically ubiquitous in Tatarstan, it is a novelty for visitors.

The hot drink of choice in Tatarstan is black tea flavoured with thyme, St. John’s Wort and marjoram. Traditionally it is served with dried apricots, prunes, raisins and a delicious selection of nuts.

Dishes and ingredients from Tatarstan are widely known and appreciated across Russia. They have become the symbols of health, wealth and the joy of life – the main values of Tatarstan people which they happily share with their guests.



State Committee
on Tourism
of the Republic of Tatarstan

19 M.Gorky Street, Kazan,
the Republic of Tatarstan,
Russia 420015

Tel. +7 843 222 9020
Fax +7 843 222 9051

tourism.rt@tatar.ru
tourism.tatarstan.ru

Official Tourism Portal
of the Republic
of Tatarstan –
visit-tatarstan.com

