**MOSCOW**

Moscow is the capital of Russia, its administrative, economic, political and educational center. It is one of Russia’s major cities with the population of about 10 million people. Its total area is about 900 thousand (nine hundred thousand) square kilometers. The city was founded by prince Jury Dolgorukiy and was first mentioned in the chronicles in 1147. At that time it was a small settlement. By the 15th century Moscow had grown into a wealthy city. In the 16th century under Ivan the Terrible Moscow became the capital of the State Moscovy. In the 18th century Peter the Great transferred the capital to St-Petersburg. During the war of 1812 three quarters of the city were destroyed by fire. But by the middle of the 19th century Moscow was completely rebuilt. Moscow is a major industrial city. Its leading industries are engineering, chemical and light industries. Moscow is known for its many historical buildings, museums and art galleries. Museums are considered an important part of the National Heritage. There are more than 80 museums in Moscow, the largest are the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts and the State Tretjakov Gallery.

The Tretjakov Gallery is a major research, artistic, cultural and educational center. The Gallery takes its name from its founder, the merchant Pavel Tretjakov, who began to collect Russian paintings in 1856. The collection was donated as a gift to the city of Moscow in 1882. Later it was supplemented by collections from other museums and private citizens. The Tretjakov Gallery has a rich collection of old Russian Icons from the 11th to the 17th century, many fine examples of Russian paintings from 18th to the early 19th century. The Gallery contains halls devoted to old Russian paintings, to great master such as Ivanov, Serov, Surikov, Repin and Levitan. Levitan was one of the first painters of the Russian scenery to reveal its beauty. He is a real poet of the Russian countryside. Levitan is a very special sort of painter. There is something in his landscapes that reflects our moods. He deeply felt what he wanted to depict. A master of landscape, he never introduced figures into it. Though if you look at "The autumn in Sokolniky" you will notice the figure in the center. Everything seems to underline the loneliness of this figure: the trees loosing their leaves, the remote indifferent sky, the path going off into the distance. But the fact is that it was not Levitan who painted this figure. It was Chekhov’s brother Nikolay who did it. Levitan’s influence over lyrical landscape painters can’t be over estimated. His paintings have won the love and gratitude of people.

The oldest part of Moscow is the Kremlin. This is the main tourist attraction in Moscow. The word "Kremlin" means "fortress". And the Moscow Kremlin used to be a fortress. In 1156 a small settlement of Moscow was surrounded by a wooden wall and became a Kremlin. The town and the Kremlin were burnt in 1237, but they were rebuilt. In 14th century Prince Dmitry Donskoy built a white stone wall around the Kremlin, and in the 15th century the Kremlin was surrounded by a new red-brick wall. Twenty towers of the Kremlin wall were constructed in the end of the 17th century. The Spasskaja Tower is the symbol of Russia and Moscow. It has a famous clock; one can hear the clock on the radio. The Usspensky Cathedral is the largest one. Russian Tzars were crowned there. Outside the Kremlin wall there is the famous Red Square.