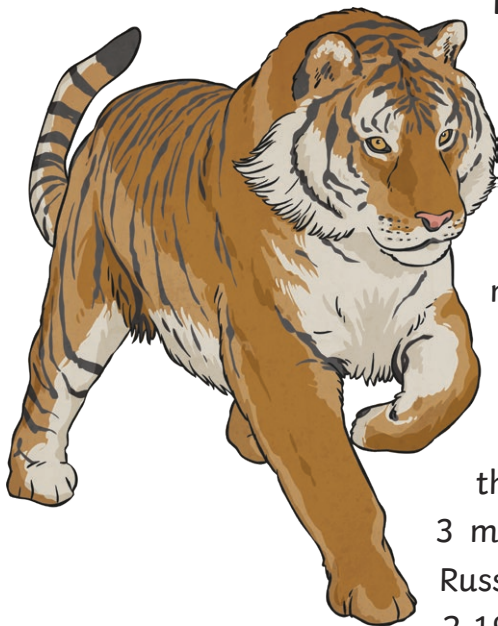


Russia



Facts about Russia

Russia is the largest country in the world. It is so big that it crosses two continents: Europe and Asia. It shares borders with 14 countries and has shores on the Atlantic, Pacific and Arctic oceans. There are around 140 million people living in Russia today and over 100 different languages are spoken. However, Russian is the official language. The president of Russia, Vladimir Putin, lives in the capital city, Moscow. He lives in a building called the Kremlin, which means 'fortress'. Russia also has a Prime Minister who is the second most powerful person in the Russian government.



Russian Nature and Wildlife

Russia has 40 national parks and 100 wildlife reserves. It also has the largest area of forests of all the countries in the world. Due to its size, there are many different climatic zones in Russia and the environment ranges from deserts to polar regions. Russia is home to many rare animals such as the Asiatic black bear, snow leopards and a small rabbit-like mammal called a pika. Importantly, Russia is the natural habitat of the Siberian tiger, the largest cat in the world. They can grow up to 3 metres in length and weigh around 300 kilograms. Russia has Europe's longest river, the Volga, which is 2,193 miles long.

Russia in the 20th Century

In 1922, Russia and 11 other countries became part of the USSR, which was also known as the Soviet Union. During the Second World War, the President of the USSR worked with the leaders of the USA and the UK to end the war with Germany. However, after the war, relations with the USA became difficult and disagreements between the two nations led to the Cold War. This finally came to an end in 1991, when the Soviet Union broke up and Boris Yeltsin became the first freely-elected president of Russia.



Russian Culture

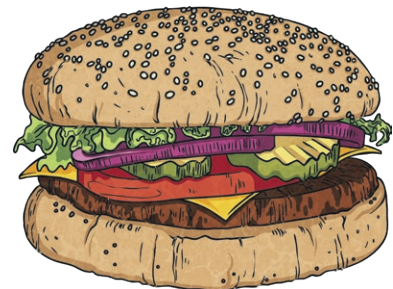
Russia is a country that is rich in culture. Many of the world's most famous authors, artists and composers come from Russia. Classical music has always been an important part of Russian culture and one of the world's most prominent composers was Sergei Rachmaninoff. Rachmaninoff was born on 1st April 1873 and studied at a school where the teacher worked his students very hard; they worked for 16 hours each day! Rachmaninoff's career did not start well. When his first symphony was performed, nobody liked it and he was unable to compose music for some time after. Rachmaninoff lacked confidence in his ability as a composer and doubted his talent and even visited a hypnotist to help him. Eventually, he composed his famous Piano Concerto in C minor before moving to America. He spent the rest of his life touring, conducting and performing his music and soon became known as one of the most important composers of the 20th Century.



One of the most famous authors of all time is the Russian novelist Leo Tolstoy who was born on 9th September 1828. Tolstoy's best-known works are War and Peace and Anna Karenina which have both been adapted into films and TV programmes around the world.

Did You Know...?

Russia is home to the largest McDonalds restaurant in the world. It has 700 seats inside!



Russia



Facts about Russia

Russia, officially named the Russian Federation, is the largest country in the world. It is so big that it crosses two continents (Europe and Asia), shares borders with 14 countries and has shores on three different oceans: the Atlantic, the Pacific and the Arctic. In fact, Russia covers one tenth of the Earth's surface. Due to its large size, there are 11 different time zones in Russia. There are around 140 million people living in Russia today and over 100 different languages are spoken. However, Russian is the official language. The president, Vladimir Putin, lives in the capital city of Russia, Moscow, in a building called the Kremlin, meaning 'fortress'. Russia also has a Prime Minister, a man called Dmitry Medvedev, who is the second most powerful figure in Russian politics after the President.

Russian Nature and Wildlife

Russia has 40 national parks and 100 wildlife reserves. It also has the largest area of forests of all the countries in the world. As a result of being so large, there are many different climatic zones in Russia and the environment ranges from deserts to



polar regions. Russia is home to many rare animals such as the Asiatic black bear, snow leopards and a small rabbit-like mammal called a pika. More famously, Russia is the natural habitat of the Siberian tiger, the largest cat in the world. They can grow up to 3 metres in length and weigh around 300 kilograms. Europe's longest river, the Volga, is in Russia and is 2,193 miles long.

Did You Know...?

There are approximately 10 million more women in Russia today than men. It is thought that this is due to how many Russian men died during the Second World War.



Russia in the 20th Century

Russia has a troubled and interesting history and this is particularly true of the last century. In 1922, Russia and 11 other countries became part of the USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) which was also known as the Soviet Union. During the Second World War, the President of the USSR, Joseph Stalin, worked with the leaders of the USA (Franklin D. Roosevelt) and the UK (Winston Churchill) to bring about the defeat of Germany. However, after the war ended in 1945, relations with the USA became strained and disagreements between the two nations led to the Cold War. This finally came to an end in 1991, when the Soviet Union broke up and Boris Yeltsin became the first freely-elected president of Russia.

Russian Culture

Russia is considered by many to be a country rich in culture and historical significance. Many of the world's most famous authors and composers come from Russia. Classical music has always been an important part of Russian culture and two of the world's most renowned composers are Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky and Sergei Rachmaninoff. Tchaikovsky was born on 7th May 1840. He studied law as a young man as he was not considered to be a good enough musician to study music. However, his love of music never died and he eventually moved to Moscow to teach at the St. Petersburg Conservatory. His most famous work is the 1812 Overture and the ballets Swan Lake and The Nutcracker.

Rachmaninoff was born on 1st April 1873 and studied at a school where the teacher worked his students very hard; they worked for 16 hours each day! Rachmaninoff's career was slow to take off. When his first symphony was performed, nobody liked it and he was unable to compose music for some time after. Rachmaninoff lacked confidence in his ability as a composer and doubted his talent and so visited a hypnotist to help him. Eventually, he composed his famous and very popular Piano Concerto in C minor, as well as other concertos and symphonies before moving to America. He spent the rest of his life touring, conducting and performing his music and soon became known as one of the most important composers of the 20th Century.

Leo Tolstoy, whose full name was Count Lev Nikolayevich Tolstoy, was born on 9th September 1828 and was one of Russia's most prominent novelists and short story writers. Tolstoy's best-known works are War and Peace and Anna Karenina which have both been adapted into films and TV programmes around the world.



Russia



Officially known as the Russian Federation, Russia is the largest country in the world by land mass. It is so big that it spans two continents (Europe and Asia), shares borders with 14 neighbouring countries and has shores on three different oceans: the Atlantic, the Pacific and the Arctic. In fact, Russia is so big that it covers one tenth of the Earth's surface. It is quite literally colossal. Due to its immense size, there are 11 different time zones in Russia, meaning that someone living in the north-east will wake up at a different time to someone living in the south-west. Russia has a population of approximately 140 million people and over 100 different languages are spoken. However, Russian is the official language. The president, Vladimir Putin, lives in the capital city of Russia, Moscow, in a building called the Kremlin, meaning 'fortress'. Russia also has a Prime Minister, currently Dmitry Medvedev, who is the second most powerful figure in Russian politics (the President being the first).



Amongst its many attractions, Russia has 40 national parks and 100 wildlife reserves. It also has the largest area of forests of all the countries in the world. As a result of being so large, there are many different climatic zones in Russia and the environment ranges from deserts to polar regions. Russia is the natural habitat of many rare animals such as the Asiatic black bear, snow leopards and a small rabbit-like mammal called a pika. More famously, Russia is the home of the Siberian tiger, the largest cat in the world. They can grow up to 3 metres in length and weigh around 300 kilograms. Europe's longest river, the Volga, is in Russia and is 2,193 miles long and its highest mountain is Mount Elbrus, which stands at 5,642 metres tall.

Russia has a turbulent and interesting history and this is particularly true of the last century. In 1922, along with 11 other countries, Russia became part of the USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) or as it is also known, the Soviet Union. During the Second World War, the President of the USSR, Joseph Stalin, worked with the President of the United States of America (Franklin D. Roosevelt) and the Prime Minister of the UK (Winston Churchill) to bring about the defeat and downfall of Hitler and the German army. Russia played an important role in ending the war but sadly lost around 20 million people. The effects of this are still felt today as there are approximately 10 million more Russian women than men alive today. After the war ended in 1945, relations with the USA grew fraught and paranoia and disagreements between the two nations led to the 45 year-long Cold War during which no fighting ever actually took place. This tense crisis finally came to an end in 1991, when the Soviet Union broke up and Boris Yeltsin became the first democratically-elected president of Russia.



Rich in culture and history, Russia is home to many of the world's most famous authors, artists and composers of all time. Classical music has always been an integral part of Russian culture and two of the world's most renowned composers are Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky and Sergei Rachmaninoff. Tchaikovsky, who was born on 7th May 1840, studied law as a young man as he was not considered to be proficient enough as a musician to study music. However, his love of music remained with him and he moved to Moscow to study and teach at the St. Petersburg Conservatory.

Tchaikovsky was supported financially by a wealthy widow, Nadezhda von Meck who was a great fan of his music. However, fearing that he would not live up to her expectations, Nadezhda specified that she and Tchaikovsky should never meet in person. They communicated instead via letters only and grew very close. As a result of her generosity and support, Tchaikovsky dedicated his Fourth Symphony to her. His most famous work is the 1812 Overture and the ballets Swan Lake and The Nutcracker.



Rachmaninoff was born on 1st April 1873 and studied at a school where the teacher worked his students very hard; they toiled for 16 hours each day! Despite his fine training, Rachmaninoff's rise to fame was slow and difficult. When his first symphony was performed, nobody liked it and he was unable to compose music for some time after. Rachmaninoff lacked confidence in his ability as a composer and doubted his talent. As a result, he visited a hypnotist who repeated the mantra, 'You will write your Concerto'. Consequently, Rachmaninoff composed his famous and very popular Piano Concerto in c minor, as well as other concertos and symphonies before moving to America. He spent the rest of his life touring, conducting and performing his music and soon became known as one of the most significant composers of the 20th Century.

Leo Tolstoy, whose full name was Count Lev Nikolayevich Tolstoy, was born on 9th September 1828 and was one of Russia's most prominent novelist and short story writer. Tolstoy's best-known works are War and Peace and Anna Karenina which have both been adapted into films and TV programmes around the world. In his later life, Tolstoy wrote and published some religious scripts based on his new spiritual beliefs before he passed away on 20th November 1910.



Did You Know...?

Russia has the world's longest railway. The Trans-Siberian railway travels across almost the entire width of the country and is 5700 miles long. If you were to ride the train without stopping from beginning to end, it would take you 152 hours and 27 minutes to complete!

