

It's all about me. And my family. Oh, and Russia too, of course...

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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I feel there is something I should make perfectly clear before we even start this: Unlike you intelligent people possibly reading this blog, I never had the imagination while growing up to think that I would ever live in Russia. Unlike my husband, who knew from a young age that he was fascinated by this place, it barely impinged on my consciousness during my formative years, other than as the cradle of communism and vodka (I'll let you work out for yourselves which of those two are more important to me, but one of them featured rather more than the other during my years at university ...).

However, while working as a marketing consultant in London, I took up with a Russophile ('Reader, I married him') and spent the subsequent 15 years irregularly visiting the Motherland. Most of these I spent loudly denying the possibility that I would ever move there (too far, too cold, too ... Russian), and yet here I am, living and sporadically working in Moscow, along with my family (husband, 2 young sons) and — unsurprisingly, to anyone who's ever properly exposed themselves to what this city has to offer — loving it.

We've been here for nearly 18 months now, and I've blogged about the experience throughout, from our original discussions on whether or not to take the plunge and "just do it," through the hell that is an international move unsupported by an international corporation, and on into the shock of arriving in a city experiencing it's coldest winter for 30 years with no car and — crucially with a youngest son of 4 years old in tow — no buggy. (It was character building and we quickly bought a sled, is all I'll say about that particularly ill-conceived experiment.)

Since then, I've jumped into frozen lakes (well, one, anyway), visited the banya and made the mistake of turning around whilst sitting on one of the lower steps, learned how to cross-country ski and applied arnica to the resulting bruises (how the devil is it possible to fall on the flat quite so often?), and been amazed by how unfazed my sons are at watching fish get clubbed to death in a supermarket. I've driven through the hell that is Moscow traffic every morning, learned how not to let that get to me (after the obligatory sobbing by the side of the road experience that all expats foolish enough to get behind the wheel of a car here go through to earn their stripes), and watched with my sons as the tanks rolled down Tverskaya on Victory Day. The family has had the unparalleled experience of skating on Red Square (can there be a more beautiful setting for an ice rink?), visited galleries, been to the ballet, marveled at the wealth of culture available, and seen splendor and hopelessness in almost equal measure. In short, I've been pushed further out of my comfort zone than I ever imagined it was possible for a pampered Londoner to be.

We're not in Kansas any more, Toto. And we love it.

Clare Taylor will be blogging regularly at The Moscow Times. You can also find her writing at "The Potty Diaries," a blog she has written for the last 4 years. Warning: she might even make you laugh.

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