

You Can Leave Your Hat On

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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No, please. Let me. Leave my hat on, that is. Because 'that' time of year has arrived — The Time Of The Eternal Hat.

I've never had an easy relationship with head-gear. Throughout my childhood I managed to avoid them as a rule. Sure, there was my uneasy truce with a dun bobble-hat when I was in the Brownies, and then the airline stewardess look-alike cap I had as a Girl Guide — the things I did for Queen and Country — but overall, I was always aware that generally, hats were not for me.

I'm not sure why that was. Oh, alright, I know exactly why that was. I have a big head and fine hair, a disastrous combination for any aspiring hat-wearer, and one that invariably tends to leaves me either looking like I borrowed my younger sibling's titfer (hat on), or with hair so lank, straight, and flat against my head that I might as well have tipped a vat of cooking oil over myself. Not, I am sure you will agree, desirable outcomes in either case.

But, here I am in Moscow. Where the temperature for, oh, I don't know, five or six months

of the year is so inclement that only a fool would venture outside without 'protection.'
At times, it gets so cold here that if you are silly enough to set foot on the street without a hat, you will be accosted by well-meaning but more than a little scary babushkas berating you for your idiocy and prophesying doom in the form of cold, pneumonia and imminent death if you don't immediately put the woolly bobble hat your mum knitted for you back on. (Mind you, they make the same pronouncements about drinking beverages with ice in them.)

So, at the start of my third winter here, having spent the previous two in an adequately warm but frankly unstylish wool confection from (name deleted to protect the innocent), I was determined that this year, THIS YEAR, I would find the perfect hat.

Reader, I promise you, I tried. It's not as if Moscow is short on hats. They come in every shape, size and material, and surely there must be at least one within my price range to suit? But therein lies the problem — the "within my price range" disclaimer. Certainly, I saw lots of beautiful hats. Some of them — in the right light and with half-squinted eyes — actually suited me. But amongst the ones I could afford? Nothing. Nada. Zilch. If only I could make like my sons and simply throw whatever happened to be warmest and fit me on top of my head.

Instead, I've ended up with a velour number that looks distressingly like the sort of thing your grandmother would sport on a trip to the dentist and which, whilst it fits, doesn't even keep my ears that warm. To add insult to injury, despite it's being too loose, it still manages by some Moscow static magic to glue my hair to the sides of my head by the time I take it off, leaving me with a daily dilemma: add 40 years to my age and keep my hat on inside like some misplaced Edwardian lady on sabbatical from a BBC drama, or remove the offending item and look instead like a drowned rat?

Decisions, decisions.

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