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Fairs Galore Open for This Holiday Season

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The Strasbourg Christmas Fair first took place in 1570. This year it's on Manezh Square from Dec. 25 to Jan. 7.

Christmas music has been on a loop for a month and a half at your local Starbucks, the trees are up but Moscow is not yet getting into the holiday spirit. That is set to change as a series of fairs for Christmas and New Year's will open all over the city including the visit for the first time of a centuries-old European fair. This is a selection of the most interesting Moscow fairs.

A Christmas market, or ChristkindelmKrik in the local Alsatian dialect, was first held in the French town of Strasbourg in 1570. One of the most famous fairs in Europe, it will make its debut in Russia by setting up on Manezh Square. The market will consist of 20 French wooden chalets and sell the usual Christmas fair products that are sold in France including Christmas decorations, various arts and crafts, mulled wine and French pastries. The fair will also have a series of master classes. As Strasbourg comes to Moscow, Russia's neighbor Georgia is in France with chalets at a Christmas fair that began Nov. 24.

Strasbourg Christmas Fair. Manezh Square. Dec. 24 to Jan. 7.

Paradise Apples at Artplay will see more than 200 designers and showrooms show off their ideas for Christmas and New Year's.

Paradise Apples, Artplay. 10 Nizhnyaya Syromyatnicheskaya Ulitsa. Metro Kurskaya. Dec. 15 and 16.

Head to Gorky Park for "Presents in the Park," a children-oriented event where you can send a letter to Santa. Young designers will sell their wares, while competitions, music and food for kids, including toffee apples and gingerbread, are also promised.

Presents in the Park. Gorky Park. 9 Krymsky Val. Metro Park Kultury. Dec. 15 and 16.

The magic of Christmas gets clumsily branded at the Sberbank New Year's Fair, set to open on Poklonnaya Gora with the biggest Christmas tree in Moscow, at 46.5 meters, and one of the biggest fairs. Judging from previous Sberbank trees, it will likely have dozens of ornaments advertising the sponsor. Still the event will also offer a rink where everyone can get a skating lesson for free and is backed by the Gift of Life charity, which will receive part of the income made at the fair.

Sberbank Christmas Fair. Poklonnaya Gora, Park Pobedy. Metro Park Pobedy. Dec. 15 to Jan. 8.

The Christmas fair at the All-Russia Exhibition Center focuses on traditional Russian arts and already has 50 wooden pavilions open selling felt boots (valenki), wool gloves, gingerbread cookies and hand-painted Christmas tree decorations.

Christmas Fair at the All-Russia Exhibition Center. 119 Prospekt Mira. Metro VDNKh. Runs till Jan. 8.

LavkaLavka's Christmas Party will have all their usual organic fare from its network of farmers. Plus Christmas gifts, kids program.

LavkaLavka's Christmas Party. Garage Center for Contemporary Culture. Gorky Park. 9 Krymsky Val. Metro Park Kultury. Dec. 22.

Head back to the 1950s at the Retrofestival Christmas Bazaar, which will have separate areas representing different cities such as Paris, Copenhagen, London and New York. Listen to accordion music and try roasted chestnuts in Paris or meet the Grinch in old New York.

Retrofestival Christmas Bazaar. Bauman Garden. 15 Staraya Basmannaya. Dec. 30.

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