The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Romantics Get Many Treats for Valentine's Day

By The Moscow Times

February 12, 2013



With so many things to do on Feb. 14, now even the opponents of the holiday could be tempted to celebrate. **Vladimir Filonov**

Valentine's Day is a relatively new holiday in Russia and is met with mixed reactions. Some are planning to put the holiday "on trial" to decide whether it is legitimate, while others will be lining up to buy the usual dinners, stuffed animals and bouquets of flowers for their sweethearts.

Regardless of which position you take, it is no longer a debate that the Feb. 14 holiday has been gaining momentum in the country over the past few years, especially among the younger crowd.

Moscow will play host to a variety of themed events, dinners and film nights to compliment the emerging holiday.

As the evening sets in, 35MM movie theater (47/24 Ulitsa Pokrovka) will begin its "Future Shorts" series of love stories, including Spike Jonze and Simon Cahn's stop-motion animation "To Die By Your Side," Nash Edgerton's unpredictable "Bear" and Luke Matheny's short action film "God of Love." The screenings last until Feb. 21.

The Moscow Planetarium (5/1 Ulitsa Sadovaya-Kudrinskaya) is hosting a romantic night, called "Stars of Love," where love stories of the ancient Greek myths and legends that wound up as constellations will be told under the wide dome. This event will be in Russian, however, so non-speakers may find it hard to understand.

Britain's "Triplets of Belleville" inspired Puppinni Sisters will take to the stage of concert hall Mir (11 Tsvetnoi Bulvar) on Valentine's night. The Pavel Slobodkin Center (48 Arbat) will also host a themed concert, set to feature a rendition of Antonio Vivaldi's "Four Seasons."

Tochka G, Moscow's provocative Museum of Erotic Art (15 Novy Arbat), will be open from noon until midnight, housing some 3,000 works and offering guests a walk through the largest sex shop in Russia.

Although a little difficult to find from Novy Arbat (look for a small archway surrounded by a gold light at No. 15), the entrance is well sign-posted on Arbat, which runs parallel.

If staying outdoors is more your style, consider strolling or skating through one of the city's many romantically decorated parks.

Sokolniki Park plans to trump Times Square for its record of the biggest heart-shaped ice sculpture. The park's administrators have promised to unveil a 4-meter heart — double the size of the one displayed in New York — on Valentine's Day. The Russian version will also have a pulsator set up inside to create the effect of a beating heart.

The park will also be decorated with smaller ice hearts and 2-meter-tall teddy bears. The evening will wrap up with a love-themed light show and a contest for the longest kiss.

Gorky Park will give romantics a chance to skate on alleys illuminated with multiple hearts and declare their love over loudspeakers. Cupids will be on hand to tell fortunes and even if your fortune is not so good and you've been left without a pair, you can stifle some of this woe by taking a photo with the slightly less than real figures of Jude Law, Charlize Theron, Daniel Craig, Angelina Jolie or Robert Pattinson.

To warm up, head to a restaurant serving a holiday menu. The White Rabbit restaurant (3 Smolenskaya Ploshchad) has a wonderful 360 degree view of the city at night and is offering a special aphrodisiac-based menu for 3,000 rubles ($100) per person, while the Ritz Carlton is holding a gala dinner at 8 p.m.

The meal costs 15,000 rubles for two and includes Canadian lobster with fennel and chanterelles confit and red wine sauce.

If you're planning to honor the age-old tradition of bringing your date flowers, remember how important it is to give bouquets with an odd number of flowers. Bouquets with an even number are associated with death and funerals, and are best avoided on Valentine's Day (unless, of course, the bouquet is so large that nobody's counting).

While many don't read into the meaning behind the color of the flowers given nowadays, it would still be smart not to choose yellow, which symbolizes separation. Red and the less intense pink are both safe bets.

Of course, not all are enthused about the Cupid-spangled holiday. Large numbers of Russians assume it to be just another name day whereas others dismiss it as unnecessary considering the preexisting presence of national holidays for both women and men.

Family Day, celebrated in July, was also initially regarded as already serving a similar function. However, the primary focus of the Orthodox festival is on marriage, rather than romance and spending money to show your devotion.

At the Museum of the History of Yekaterinburg, St. Valentine's Day itself will go "on trial." Cases will be made for and against the holiday, with the public taking on the jury's role to decide whether its existence is believable, Interfax reported.

In 2011, Belgorod went as far as to ban the celebration, though you might want to avoid citing this particular case of the anti-Valentine movement on the holiday itself.

Related articles:

- 'Pushkin's Grandmother' Brings Russian Poetry Back to Life
- Moscow Galleries Are Alive and Well
- 28-Year-Old "Cerceau" Made Fresh and Innovative

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2013/02/12/romantics-get-many-treats-for-valentines-day-a21487