

Visa-Free Travel for 20 Countries to Boost Domestic Airline Profits

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Aeroflot is expected to increase its revenues by 30 billion rubles after the 72-hour visa waiver is introduced.

As early as next year, foreigners from 20 countries could visit Russia without a visa for up to 72 hours as long as they purchase a ticket with a Russian carrier, a draft bill by the Culture Ministry proposes.

Russia's flagship carrier Aeroflot is expected to increase its revenues by 30 billion rubles (\$936 million) after the 72-hour visa-free stay policy for foreign tourists is introduced in the country, the proposal published Sunday on the government's legal information website said.

The draft legislation to allow foreign nationals in transit at 11 Russian airports to remain in the country for 72 hours without a visa was approved by the Russian government in September.

The loosened visa regulations will apply to visitors from 20 countries, including Germany, China, United States, United Kingdom, Sweden, Italy, France, Spain, South Korea, Japan, Poland, Canada, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Austria, Belgium, Finland, Singapore, Australia and Greece.

Experts believe that the measure will increase foreign tourist arrivals by 60 percent, the statement said.

According to estimates, the Russian hotel industry will see its income rise by 3.6 billion to 5.4 billion rubles (\$110-160 million) a year.

Last year, 2.1 million foreign nationals visited Russia as tourists.

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