

Moscow Gets Record-Breaking Traffic Jams for Christmas

December 26, 2014



Traffic jam is seen in Moscow, on Dec. 25, 2014.

With the magical Christmas snow that fell over Moscow this week came less-than-fairytale driving, with many city streets at a near standstill for hours as visitors poured in for the holidays.

The Russian capital's streets were gridlocked for more than seven hours on Thursday, with traffic paralyzed on more than 60 kilometers of road, according to the Yandex Probki traffic tracking service.

A spokeswoman for the service, Elina Staviskaya, took to Facebook to tell Moscow commuters that the excruciating traffic jams had made Christmas in Moscow a "historic day."

"This is the first time that traffic has reached 10 points [on a 1-10 scale] so early and for so long. It has been like this for 7 hours already. More to come!" Staviskaya wrote.

Vadim Yuriyev, the head of the city's center for traffic management, said at a news conference

Friday that street cleaners were in emergency mode to battle the traffic quagmire.

While the surprise snowfall could seem at fault, it was in fact an influx of visitors that did the most damage. The department has seen 5 to 6 percent more vehicles in Moscow this year than last, Yuriyev was quoted by the Interfax news agency as saying.

"It's good, people should be congratulating each other on the holiday, but this has clogged several cities," Yuriyev said.

The situation has also caused more traffic accidents. On Thursday, Moscow police said they had recorded more than 500 traffic accidents in just one hour.

Low visibility caused by the blizzard on Thursday also proved a headache for those hoping to fly out of town for the holidays, with 20 flights canceled at the city's airports and about 200 delayed, NTV reported.

With nothing to do on the roads but wait, many drivers took to Twitter and Instagram to make light of the situation, with some posting photos of drivers getting out and dancing in the snow after having been stranded for hours.

Others used the Yandex Probki app to suggest that all the down-on-their-luck drivers abandon their vehicles and throw a party.

As of Friday afternoon, the traffic situation had eased up but was still a hassle for drivers, with Yandex Probki ranking the city's congestion at 8 out of 10.

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2014/12/26/moscow-gets-record-breaking-traffic-jams-for-christmas-a42594>