The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Top 5 Bookstores Where English Readers Are Welcome

By Maria Naum

August 23, 2015



Virtually any foreign-language book can be found on the shelves of Moscow's bookshops or ordered through them.

As summer ends and the school season begins, here at The Moscow Times culture desk we can't stop thinking about books, all kinds of books: school books, textbooks, reference books, books on history and current events, serious fiction, trashy fiction, and even how-to and DIY books. We want our books in English, and we want them now — no delayed gratification as we wait for a shipment from abroad. Given the fall in the ruble and the rise in political and social tensions, we weren't sure if our favorite book shops still had anything to read. So we ran around, studied the shelves, looked at the prices, and checked out the ambiance.

Our conclusion: Moscow may not be the most hospitable city for foreigners, but there are still some quiet places to relax and pick up a wide variety of books in English.

House of the Foreign Book

This shop on Kuznetsky Most has been in operation since 1936, and even before then — way back in 1901 — it was a bookshop. Now part of the enormous Moscow House of Books chain, it is still a charming little shop with a nice old-fashioned vibe. The shop has over 20,000 different books on sale in foreign languages, although the vast majority are in English. The store has a particularly rich assortment of English-language textbooks, as well as coffee table books on the arts; translations of Russian classics; a fairly up-to-date section of Russian history, past and present; cookbooks and how-to guides; many travel guides to Russia and Russian cities; DK and Lonely Planet guides to foreign cities and countries; and several rows of current fiction, both serious and not. The shop also carries some audio versions of books and videos, not to mention a lot of Western-style bookstore paraphernalia: bookmarks, cards, mugs, and the like. Prices hover around the 1,200 ruble range ($17.60), with paperbacks of classics less than half that, and art books many times more.

House of the Foreign Book, 18/7 Kuznetsky Most. Metro Kuznetsky Most. 495-628-2021. Open Mon. to Fri., 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., Sat. 10 a.m. to 9 p.m., and Sun. 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Moscow House of Books

The enormous Moscow House of Books on Novy Arbat is like the mother ship of English language books and materials, with English books to be found in almost every department — including in the DVD, CD and used book sections on the first floor. On the second floor you'll find Russian-published guides to travel, food, and other aspects of Russian life; foreign travel guides; translations of Russian literature; classic and contemporary fiction, including regularly updated bestsellers; detective stories and murder mysteries; albums on arts and crafts; and probably the best maps of Moscow available in the country. Prices for most trade paperbacks are still in the 750-900 ruble range ($11-13). Best of all: there is an actual sofa for actual reading on the second floor and a decent cafe.

Moscow House of Books. 8 Novy Arbat. Metro Arbatskaya. 495-789-3591. Open daily 9 a.m. to 10 p.m.



Vladimir Filonov / MT

Moscow is a world leader with bookshops open 24 hours, 7 days a week.

Biblio-Globus

This is one of the largest bookstores in the capital, and one of the most packed and chaotic. There isn't a single chair to sit down on, and you can barely pass through some aisles. But despite those flaws, it does have a few things going for it, namely nearly 20,000 foreign books covering a full range of subjects, a section selling English teas and other Anglophile goods, and a truly impressive collection of paperbacks, from "Sex in the City" at 659 rubles ($9.70) to "The Great Gatsby" for 189 rubles ($2.80).

Biblio-Globus, 6/3 Myasnitskaya Ulitsa, Bldg. 1. Metro Lubyanka, Kuznetsky Most, Kitai-Gorod. 495-781-1900. Open Mon. to Fri. 9 a.m. to 10 p.m., Sat. 10 a.m. to 9 p.m., Sun. 10 a.m. to 9.p.m.

Moskva

There are two Moskva bookstores in the city and both are huge and comprehensive. But we vote for the branch on Vozdvizhenka for its comfortable chairs and round-the-clock service. Both have a good selection of guidebooks, a section of translations of Russian classics, and an enormous selection of fiction and non-fiction paperbacks, ranging from murder mysteries and thrillers — "Gone Girl" for 600 rubles ($8.80) — to popular science — "A Brief History of Time" for 680 rubles ($10) — and classics and kiddie lit — "Mary Poppins" for 160 rubles ($2.35).

Moskva. 4/7 Ulitsa Vozdvizhenka, Bldg. 1, metro Biblioteka imeni Lenina, 495-212-2208, open 24 hours, 7 days a week; 8/2 Ulitsa Tverskaya, Bldg. 1, metro Tverskaya, 495-629-6483, open daily 10 a.m. to 1 a.m.

Bookbridge

This internet bookshop, formerly called Bookhunter, has a big brick and mortar store with perhaps the city's largest collection of English grammar and textbooks, coffee table albums on the arts, and literature for both children and adults. Prices are sometimes considerably lower than in other bookstores. For comparison, "Gone Girl" sells for 418 rubles ($6.10).

Bookbridge. 7 Ulitsa Bolshaya Tatarskaya, Bldg. 1, Metro Novokuznetskaya, 495-786-2575. Open daily 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Contact the author at artsreporter@imedia.ru

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2015/08/23/top-5-bookstores-where-english-readers-are-welcome-a49116