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# Best of Moscow: Cycling the City

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With its traffic-choked roads and minimal biking infrastructure, Moscow has traditionally been seen as a city hostile to those on two wheels. But change is afoot. Several new bike lanes, renovated parks and the increasingly popular Velobike project mean that people won't fix you with an incredulous look these days if you pedal past them at speed.So whether it's family fun in the park, a challenging workout or some off-piste exploration of the city you're after, the only limit is the one you set yourself. Oh — and the roadworks.

## Embassy Row

*A ride on the diplomatic side*

This route puts you right in the heart of the city, along with cars and construction — so be careful. Start at Krasnopresnenskaya metro station and cycle through the quiet Presnensky district, passing one of Stalin's Seven Sisters at Barrikadnaya. Then go down Malaya Nikitskaya and double back onto Bolshaya Nikitskaya, admiring the embassies of Brazil, Spain, and Tajikistan on the way. Stop off en route at Gorky's astonishing Art Nouveau

mansion on Malaya Nikitskaya and take a few minutes to gawk at the beautiful Bolshoye Vozneseniye church. Head down Nikitsky Bulvar, remaining aware of the ongoing construction work around Arbat. Continue onto Gogolevsky Bulvar, and end up at the golden domes of the Cathedral of Christ the Savior.

*Start: Krasnopresnenskaya metro station*

*End: Cathedral of Christ the Savior*

*Approximate distance: 5 km*

## VDNKh and Beyond

*Soviet grandeur and stunning nature*

If the sights and sounds of the city center are wearing you down, you don't need to go far for a little breathing room in northeast Moscow. Head to VDNKh and rent a bike from one of several Velobike stations near the park‘s entrance to start your adventure. Cycle through VDNKh and take in the park‘s beautiful pavilions before escaping into nature at the far end of the territory. Where VDNKh stops, two of Moscow’s greenest parks start: Ostankino, and the Moscow Academy of Science’s Botanical Garden. Each has seemingly endless bike trails and some breathtaking scenery to boot. You'll find yourself stopping a few times to take in some of the prettier scenes. Take a picnic and some friends to make a day of it. It's the kind of route that can be as easy and relaxed as you like, or extended for sporting enthusiasts.

*Start: VDNKh*

*End: Moscow Academy of Science’s Botanical Garden*

*Approximate distance: 10 km*

## Sokolniki Park and Losiny Ostrov

*Get lost in nature*

This route starts off in one of Moscow’s most bike-friendly parks — Sokolniki. With dedicated cycling lanes in all pedestrian areas and plenty of avenues to explore, it is easy to ride around for hours taking in the sights. Once you’ve had your fill of Sokolniki, bike to the back of the park, cross the river and enter Losiny Ostrov National Park (Elk Island). It is so named for the abundance of elk inhabiting the forest, which was once a hunting ground for tsars such as Ivan the Terrible. Not all parts of the park are open to the public and only some areas allow cycling, so be cognizant and keep your eyes on the signs. The fact that only some of trails are paved makes this both a workout and an adventure. There’s no better place to escape the heat of the city and experience a little bit of wilderness. Just be careful to keep an eye on where you came from — it’s easy to get lost in the rambling forests and paths.

*Start: Sokolniki Park*

*End: Losiny Ostrov National Park*

*Approximate distance: 12 km or more*

## Along the Embankment

*Riverside views*

The perfect route for a sunny weekend, this easy and popular ride takes in the best sights along the Moscow River. Start at Vorobyovy Gory metro station and head straight for the dedicated bike lane which runs for several kilometers along the river. On your travels look out for Russia's Defense Ministry and the stunning Christ the Savior Cathedral. Weave through the crowds of sun-seekers, rollerbladers and skateboarders on the embankment, then stray into Gorky Park to enjoy a spot of culture at the Garage Museum of Contemporary Art. End your journey at Muzeon Arts Park and reward yourself with a well-deserved beer across the bridge at Strelka bar. The flat embankment and width of the paths make this great for families with kids or recreational cyclists. Just remember it will be slow-going with the hordes of people enjoying the riverside view at the weekend.

*Start: Vorobyovy Gory metro station*

*End: Muzeon Arts Park*

*Approximate distance: 5 km*

## Izmailovsky Park to Kuskovsky Forest Park

*Lakes, nature and a country estate*

Begin at Partizanskaya metro station and head immediately south into Izmailovsky, a historical Moscow park very conducive to cycling. Head down Glavnaya Alleya — on a wide trail next to the road — before wandering off onto any one of the side trails that splits off from it to see some of the park's stunning lakes. If you're looking for family fun, limit your excursion to Izmailovsky as the wide paths and relatively flat park make it perfect for kids on wheels. Those in the mood for some Russian aristocratic history should continue down Glavnaya Alleya and then take one of the crossings across Shosse Entuziastov. Take a right down 1st Vladimirskaya Ulitsa, then follow signs for Kuskovo once on Perovskaya Ulitsa. Once you reach this park, explore the surroundings or find somewhere to leave your bike then take a tour of the Kuskovo manor, once home to the Sheremetev family.

*Start: Partizanskaya metro station*

*End: Kuskovsky Forest Park*

*Approximate distance: 9 km*

## Along the Yauza

*Parks, monasteries and life along the river*

If you're looking to explore a new part of Moscow and you're a relatively strong cyclist, this

could be the weekend challenge for you. Start at the magnificently named Sad Budushchego (Garden of the Future) near Botanichesky Sad metro station. Cycle south through the park, cross the river via the bridge and turn left then follow a trail parallel to the river out of the park. Continue under the Rostokinsky bridge and admire the aqueduct, which was built under the reign of Catherine the Great. Emerge from your historical reverie and follow the Yauza River, traversing Sokolniki Park and continuing down the river onto Naberezhnaya Gannushkina. Take a moment on your travels admire the transformation of the embankment, Lefortovsky Park and the 16th-century Andronikov monastery, home to the Andrei Rublev Museum of Early Russian Art. Tired yet? You're nearly there. Continue down the river until you reach the Kotelnicheskaya embankment building — one of the Stalinist skyscrapers. While it's quite a distance and you may need to cross a couple of roads, the trails through the paths and the embankment are mainly flat and offer perfect conditions for cyclists.

*Start: Sad Budushchego*

*End: Kotelnicheskaya embankment building*

*Approximate distance: 14 km*

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