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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Where to Satisfy Your Sweet Tooth in Moscow

By The Moscow Times

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Laduree **Laduree**

Cafe Bolshevik

Retro chocolate treats

The official store and cafe of the famous Moscow "Bolshevik" brand opened last year on the historical premises of the former plant. Located in one of the red-brick buildings next to the Museum of Russian Impressionism, you can purchase all the Soviet era confectionery hits, like kartoshka (potato) cake (100 rubles) which is made from crushed cookie crumbs, honey-based medovik cake (179 rubles) or ptichye moloko (bird's milk) (179 rubles). Western classics like panna cotta (149 rubles) or cheesecake are also available (179 rubles). The waitstaff is decked out in the height of 1960s restaurant fashion which adds to the charm. It's well worth a visit after you've finished browsing the selection of Serov paintings next door.

Eklernaya Kler

Upmarket coffee and cake

Eklernaya Kler is a tiny corner shop where three tables jostle for space alongside a flower shop. Eclairs — elongated cream puffs — come in all the familiar flavors, such as chocolate, vanilla or caramel, as well as less orthodox fillings like tarragon or pear and chestnut (170 rubles each). Feeling adventurous? Try the popscake — a piece of soft cake shaped like a Popsicle. Either order a box of eclairs to share at your office or grab one on your morning coffee run — the shop also serves delicious espresso-based drinks.

Alyonka Shop

Chocolate "it" girl

Instantly recognizable for her sweet blue eyes, baby face and rosy cheeks, Alyonka is one of the most enduring vestiges of Soviet marketing. Some say that Alyonka was inspired by the daughter of the first woman in space, Valentina Tereshkova, while other sources suggest she was chosen after a competition in which people sent in pictures of their children as suggested Alyonka wrapper girls. Whatever the truth, take it from us that Alyonka chocolates are pretty darn tasty. There are a number of Alyonka chocolate shops dotted around the city, the biggest is on Nikolskaya Ulitsa. Here you can by the eponymous chocolates as well as meringues, toffees and other sugary delights from the Red October factory.

Museum of the History of Russian Chocolate

Chocolate-fueled brain gain

From the mysteries of the Mayan civilizations to the history of chocolate in Europe and exploration of the popularity of chocolate in Russia, this cozy museum in the center is sweet in more ways than one. Perhaps the most interesting part of a trip to Moscow's chocolate museum is the chance to see dozens of boxes, posters and promotional materials from the Soviet Union. These include everything from luxurious Einem chocolate selection boxes to constructivist-inspired chocolate wrappers laden with poetry from Mayakovsky. Quite a lot of reading is involved so if you have kids, consider booking an excursion with a guide.

Mon Bon

Macarons in every color of the rainbow

Browsing the Mon Bon website is a wonderful form of everyday escapism. The company sells picture-perfect macarons with names like "berry cheesecake" and "lime pudding" for 90 rubles a pop. You can order a box to be delivered to your home or head to one of their candy-colored counters located in several malls across the city, most notably Tsvetnoi Univermag and Atrium. If you're really looking to make a statement gift you can even ask Mon Bon to personalize your macarons with pictures and quotes. After all, nothing says "I love you" like a box of pretty pastel-colored French patisserie.

Ladurée

French fancies

Ladurée Moscow opened in the fancy neighborhood of Patriarch's Ponds last spring. Such was the demand for its pricey macarons that for the first couple of weeks there were long lines of macaron lovers queuing for hours in the rain to get their hands on the trademark macarons, famous all over the world. They come in a variety of flavors such as orange blossom, salty caramel, rose or licorice (225 rubles). If you want to eat in, Ladurée branded teas start at 550 rubles for a teapot, while the café au lait served Parisian style in two small pots with espresso and steamed milk (250 rubles). It’s expensive compared to other alternatives in Moscow, but hey, it’s Ladurée.

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