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Winter Sports: Three Healthy Alternatives to Hibernation in Moscow

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Sokolniki park **parksokolniki.ru**

There's nothing like a cold crisp day and a bright blue sky to make you fall in love with the Russian winter again. You can either hide from the snow, or embrace it — we know which we'd rather do. Wrap up warm, grab some friends and try something new over the coming weeks.

The Gorka

Tobogganing at its best

Looking to try something fun and outdoorsy but not sure you're up to hitting the slopes on skis? Head down to Sokolniki Park, where you can find a colossal ice slide with the ominous name "The Gorka" (the mountain). At 200 meters long and 13.5 meters high, it's the perfect way to get your adrenalin pumping on a cold, wintry day. A peak-time ticket for an adult, which gives you 45 minutes of sledging fun, costs 450 rubles. The price is lower on weekdays and for children. A number of smaller ice slides are dotted around the park.

Cross-country Skiing at Ostankino

Get lost in nature

Good news for have-a-go winter sports enthusiasts: Ostankino Park has officially opened its forest trails for the winter sports season. If strapping a pair of skis to your feet and navigating the snowy wilderness is your idea of fun, you can hire equipment for 350 rubles an hour at the park. Locker facilities are also available. Ski trails will be lit up once darkness falls so you needn't worry about losing your way in the deep, dark woods.

Snow-biking at Sokolniki

Don't let the ice be the boss of you

Love the feel of the wind through your hair as you conquer the world on two wheels? Some cyclists hang up their helmet when the streets become icy, but not in Russia. At Sokolniki Park you can hire special winter bikes with gargantuan tires and specialized treads which allow you to traverse the snow without any slip-ups. Bike hire costs 400 rubles per hour — remember to wrap up warm.

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