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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Celebrating Valentine's Day in Moscow

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Valentine's Day **Sergei Bobylev/TASS**

Valentine's Day is approaching, and even though it falls on a Tuesday this year, there's no reason you shouldn't mark the occasion. To help you pick the right place for a perfect date, we've compiled a list of top events.

No Expense Spared

Diamonds are your Valentine's best friend

If you are really looking to splash out for Valentine's Day, you might consider a gift of local diamonds (brillianty). Did you know that Russia has a booming diamond trade and a unique way of cutting the rough stone to make it, well, just really really sparkly? Smolenskiye Brillianty offers flawless "Russian cut" diamonds, a technique with highly regulated parameters which ensures optimal light reflection. That means: sparkly. Prices increase according to the complexity of the cut and, of course, the number of carats. Smolenskiye Brillianty prides itself on quality and heritage and so all diamonds are certificated to guarantee their authenticity.

http://smolenskdiamonds.ru/

Various locations

A Romantic Train Journey

Love on the rails

Granted, it's no Orient Express, but on February 13th the № 003 overnight train from St. Petersburg to Moscow will be getting into the spirit of love and giving its passengers a journey to remember. The eve of Valentine's Day will be marked by a special concert from a St. Petersburg music group in the train's restaurant wagon. Guests aboard the train will also be treated to romantic gifts, and the cars will be decorated with all the trappings of the holiday. For a truly romantic evening consider avoiding the platskartny (third class) carriage. Sharing Valentine's Day with 50 babushkas may not scream romance.

Details at http://fpc.ru/

Sokolniki Park

Selfies with your significant other

Those who aren't fans of public displays of affection can stop reading now. Love taking selfies with your significant other? Stick with us. February 13 marks the launch of Sokolniki Park's Valentine's Day quest, in which happy couples are invited to take photos of themselves around the park and share them on social media with the hashtag #влюбленывпарке (lovers in the park). An additional element of the fun will be secret helpers hiding twenty miniature versions of the park's golden fairy statue near the main trails and landmarks of the park. The more you find and photograph, the greater your chance of winning. If that all sounds like hard work, don't worry. Sokolniki boasts plenty of other activities, including skiing paths, a husky club and a tubing slope.

Meatless

An alternative Valentine's Day

Sick of couples making out in front of you on the metro escalator and the proliferation of pink decorations and candied roses in town? Meatless could be your sanctuary this Valentine's Day. Down with hearts, roses and sweet sparkling wine, and up with huge chunks of roast beef chased by a smooth whiskey—their words not ours. Meatless is encouraging ladies to treat their men to an unforgettable night this Feb. 14. Think free shots and meat tastings, a bearded waitstaff and an abundance of dark wood and leather.

Fall in Love at VDNKh

A romantic extravaganza

Whether you have a significant other or not, the romantic atmosphere at Moscow's VDNKh

is bound to get you in the mood for love this Valentine's Day. Most activities will be centered around the gargantuan ice rink, where guests will be welcomed by cupids on skates to learn dance moves, take part in the "longest kiss" competition and join in with a huge, romance filled flash mob. If you're single and don't mind being loud and proud about it, don a "my heart is free" badge and try to find yourself a date on the ice. The evening will culminate with a huge balloon release where you'll be encouraged to make a wish for the special someone in your life.

Films about Love

Cinema and chocolate

On Valentine's Day, the Swiss Embassy in Moscow will present a special event called "Films about Love" at the Multimedia Art Museum. Two movies by Swiss filmmakers from the Italian speaking canton Ticino will be shown: "Bread and Tulips" by Silvio Soldini and "Sinestesia" by Erik Bernasconi. There's no better way to spend the most romantic evening of the year than treating yourself and your significant other to some Italian and Lindt chocolates that the organizers promise will be provided at the event. The films will play in Italian with Russian subtitles.

Dances about Love

An evening of contemporary ballet

If you and your loved one are into classical music and ballet, then the Russian Academic Youth Theater (RAMT) has prepared a real gift for you on Feb. 14. Primas and leading singers of the Bolshoi, Mariinsky and Perm Opera and Ballet theaters, as well as guests from abroad, will talk about love on the same stage. "Dances about Love" is a collection of true love stories, from Mozart's "Kiss" to Tchaikovsky's "Nutcracker," to some contemporary composers like Olga Wojciechowska from Poland that will delight any fan.

Library Addict

Valentine's Day for a bookworm

The Bibliotechnik (Library Addict) project is hosting a romantic edition on Feb. 14 at the Flakon design factory, which could be a perfect date for a couple of bookworms. Bibliotechnik runs a series of theater performances, and the Valentine's Day special edition will feature readings of love lyrics written by prominent Russian poets such as Alexander Pushkin, Agniya Barto and Boris Pasternak. There will also be a signing, cover versions of perennial Russian hits from the 1980s by Yury Shatunov and Andrei Gubin, and discussions of classical literature. Once a glassworks plant, Flakon now houses dozens of design studios, cool boutiques and bars, so it's a good place to browse for a gift before the performance and have some wine afterward.

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