

6 of Sochi's Must-See Sights

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Artyom Korotayev / TASS

Roza Khutor

Four years after the Winter Olympics, Sochi focuses more and more on development as a ski resort, centered around the village of Roza Khutor. It is easily accessible by either train or bus. The fast Lastochka train is the best option, as it goes along the coast allowing for some nice views. The skiing season at Roza Khutor continues till the very end of April. Off season you can take the cable car up for breathtaking views of the Caucasus or a bite at Vysota 5642 (Height 5642) restaurant by Arkady Novikov, one of Moscow's top restaurateurs.

Olympic Park

Olympic Park was constructed specifically for the 2014 Games, but today it stands semi-empty. It's great to rent a bike and just ride around, taking in all the contemporary architecture: Fisht Stadium — the largest Olympic venue; the Bolshoi Ice Dome — meant to look like a frozen drop of water; ice hockey arena Shayba (shayba means "hockey puck" in Russian) and the smaller Ice Cube Curling Center and Adler Arena. The central square hosts a

huge singing fountain, with a music program lasting about one hour. From central Sochi it's easier to travel here by taxi, but there's also the infrequent bus Number 124 and an even less frequent fast train — the Lastochka. The Olympic Park train station though is beautiful and worth checking out.

Sochi Sea Port

Built in 1955, Sochi's sea port is one of the city's architectural landmarks. Designed in Stalin's empire style, it looks more like a palace than an actual port. No wonder that in post-Soviet times it has been turned into a high-end boutique mall. A 36-meter spire on the top of the tower is decorated with a replica of the Order of the Patriotic War (a Soviet World War II medal) and visible from many parts of central Sochi. There are several fountains on the territory of the sea port, the most notable being the one with a sea goddess, carrying a compass and a spyglass. You can still see some of the original 1950s interiors if you are willing to dish out a small fortune on a dinner at Chaika restaurant, located in the former waiting room, full of mirrors, majolica tin-glazed pottery and mosaics.

Ulitsa Voikova, 1

Railway Station

The newly built Adler station has replaced the one in central Sochi as the main transport hub of the city, but it's still worth checking out this UNESCO World Heritage site for its architectural splendor. The station was designed by one of the most prolific architects of Stalin's time, Alexander Dushkin, best known for several Moscow subway stations. The station is built like an Italian palazzo, with a tree-filled courtyard, somewhat tarnished by the metal fence and metal detectors all around it. The 55-meter tower has a clock with Zodiac signs, but on close inspection it turns out that they are all mixed up.

Ulitsa Gorkogo, 56

Arboretum

Be prepared to spend several hours at the Sochi Arboretum; it is one of the largest in the world and is a major draw for tourists to Sochi. The best way to explore it is to take a cable car to the highest point in the park, enjoy the views of the Caucasus and the Black Sea, then start working your way down to the bottom of the hill. The Arboretum is also one of the oldest Sochi attractions, established in 1889. When Kurortny Prospekt was built, it divided Arboretum into the larger upper part and a smaller lower section. Today Arboretum covers 49 hectares and has more than 1,700 plant species, including 24 species of palm.

Open: daily from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Tickets: 250 rubles, cable car 300 rubles one way

Kurortny Prospekt, 74k. Bldg. 1a dendrariy.com

Sochi Art Museum and Art Square

Despite the fact that the Sochi Art Museum claims a collection of more than 5,000 items, a

visit there shouldn't take more than an hour. The permanent collection is mostly devoted to late 19th and early 20th century painters, and there are some real gems among them, including works by Ilya Mashkov, Pyotr Konchalovsky, Nicolai Fechin and David Burliuk. The museum also puts together interesting temporary exhibitions, some of which are dedicated to high-profile painters. The museum is located in Art Square, which is also worth checking out; during Soviet times it served as the city's main square, so there's a compulsory Lenin statue in the middle.

Open: Tues. through Sun. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Kurortny Prospekt, 51 sochiartmuseum.ru

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