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A Winter Dip in Russia's Most Iconic Outdoor Pool

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Located in the heart of the city, just across the river from Gorky Park, Chaika is more than just a swimming pool in central Moscow.

Chaika was built in 1957 to host the VI Worldwide Festival of Youth and Students, an event organised across Europe beginning 1947 for socialist youth movements. After renovation for the Olympics in 1980, the pool has hosted annual swimming championships and thousands of weekly visitors.

In summer, the pools glisten in the sun, but in winter they are surrounded with snow as clouds of steam rise up, drifting across the Moskva river. It is famously the only place in the capital to go for an outdoor swim in the middle of a minus 20 C winter.

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