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Moscow's Top 5 Skating Rinks

The guide to enjoying the glide

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"The Factory of Happy People" ready for business **Courtesy of Gorky Park**

Moscow has dozens of skating rinks: indoors, outdoors, in courtyards and neighborhood parks. They all have something to recommend them: some are good for kids, some are perfect for courting couples, and a few are made for good amateur skaters working on their spins. Here are the five best rinks of the season.

City of Winter at VDNKh Park

VDNKh Park has reinvented its skating rink, the biggest in Moscow. This year they divided it into two: "Flower Garden" and "Rocket." The first is between the two magnificent fountains behind the central pavilion and can take up to 1,200 people at a time. It has a family and romantic air about it, while the "Rocket" rink encircles the replica of a Vostok missile and can take about 2,400 visitors who like skate faster and more aggressively. The City of Winter includes not just these rinks but also a skating rink and snowmobiles for children, tubing,

curling and yukigassen – team snowball battles from Japan.

The main rinks operate Tuesday to Sunday; closed on Monday for maintenance.The working hours are 11a.m. to 11 p.m. on week days (service break from 3 to 5 p.m.) and 10 a.m. to 11 p.m. on weekends and holidays (with a 1-hour service break every two hours). Tickets are 250-450 rubles depending on the day, with weekends more expensive. A ticket is valid for both skating rinks. Skate rentals are 200 rubles.

119 Prospect Mira. Metro VDNKh. katok.vdnh.ru

Gorky Park "Factory of Happy People"

This year's name is what H.G. Wells called the park when he visited it in 1934. This winter the skating rink lives up to its name and features a neon assembly line and a ten-meter chimney. The rink, which is the trendiest in Moscow thanks to regular music events, has a separate kids zone and a hockey pitch.

Like at VDNKh, Monday is maintenance day. The "Factory" is open 10 a.m. to 11 p.m. (until midnight on weekends and holidays). There is a service break 3 to 5 p.m. Tickets are 350-650 rubles; rentals – 250 rubles.

9 Ulitsa Krymsky Val. Metro Park Kultury and Oktyabrskaya. park-gorkogo.com/places/199

Pure Ice at Sokolniki

Skating at Sokolniki Park may not be as spectacular as at Gorky Park, but its ice is considered the best in its category by amateur figure skaters. Frequent service breaks – every two hours from 10 a.m. to midnight – and plenty of space in the middle lets them practice their spins and other tricks without any problems, while everyone else can admire their skill as they circle the edges of the "Lyod" (Ice) rink. Tickets are 300-400 rubles and include skate rentals. The rink is open 10 a.m. to midnight daily.

1/1 Sokolnichesky Val. Metro Sokolniki. parksokolniki.com/catalog/222/katok-led/

Cheburashka on Red Square

This year the theme of the skating rink next to the GUM department store is Soviet cartoons produced by the Soyuzmultfilm studio: Cheburashka, his friend Gena the Crocodile, Winnie the Pooh, Matroskin the Cat and other characters loved by Russian boys and girls. The small venue will be open until Feb. 28 and welcome skaters from 10 a.m. to 11:30 p.m.

Tickets are for an hour-long session. The first four morning sessions on work days and the first one over the weekend is free, except during the New Year holidays (Dec. 29 - Jan. 8). Otherwise a ticket costs 400 rubles during work days, 500 rubles over the weekend and 600 rubles during the long holidays. Rentals are 300 rubles.

Red Square/GUM. Metro Okhotny Ryad, Teatralnaya, Ploshchad Revolyutsii. gum.ru

“Silver Ice” at Izmailovsky Park

Located near the entrance to Izmailovsky Park, “Serebryanny Lyod” (Silver Ice) is good for those living in or around the Izmailovo district in the northeast part of Moscow. It offers a vast space for skating, nine pavilions with food and drinks, and warm changing rooms.

On weekdays the rink is open noon to 10 p.m.; on weekends and holidays it is open from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. The service breaks are an hour from 4 to 5 p.m. during the week and 2-3 p.m. and 6 -7 p.m. over the weekend. Tickets are 250-350 depending on day. Skate rentals are 200 rubles.

7a Alleya Bolshogo Kruga. Metro Partizanskaya, MCC (Moscow Central Circle) Sokolinaya Gora and Izmailovo. www.izmailovsky-park.ru/43-razvlecheniya/310-katok-serebryanyj-led

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