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Mexico's World Cup Party Goes on as Fan Opens Bar in Russia

By Reuters

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Sergei Kiselyov / Moskva News Agency

Mexican Carlos Rocka came to Russia months ago to cheer on his team at the football World Cup – and he liked it so much he's now opened a bar here.

Rocka, 29, from Cancun, was among the thousands of foreign fans who thronged the city of Yekaterinburg in July for his team's match against Sweden.

Despite Mexico losing 3-0 he stayed on, and Viva Mexico – the bar he set up with girlfriend Thaylin Mendez – opened at the end of November.

"I made this bar for me.... (But) I think everybody who likes Latin music and Mexican food is going to be welcome," Rocka said at a well-attended launch party, as a DJ blared out pop and customers drank cocktails and danced.

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Nestled beneath the Ural mountains on the edge of Siberia, Yekaterinburg is the capital of a heavily industrialized region some 1,760 km (1,100 miles) east of Moscow.

"Fate is so strange," said Juan Manuel, one of three other Mexican fans who helped set up the bar, on opening night. "I don't really want to go back to Mexico. I want to stay here."

Russia gave World Cup ticket holders visa-free travel for the duration of the tournament and then extended the visa waiver until the end of the year.

Rocka and Mendez, whose team were eventually knocked out by Brazil in the round of 16, are now applying for business visas to keep their project going.

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