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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Begin Your 'Journey to Christmas'

Our top ten picks at Moscow's outdoor holiday celebration

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Moscow's biggest seasonal festival, "Journey to Christmas," has taken over the capital with decorations, lights and nearly round-the-clock merriment. Running through Jan. 14, the festival offers a dizzying amount of free entertainment, displays and classes. Don't know where to start? The Moscow Times is here to help.

Travel the world in Izmailovsky Park

Love learning about different cultures? Then Izmailovsky Park is the place to go. Every day during the "Journey to Christmas" festival, guests can attend master classes and lectures to learn how Christmas and New Year are celebrated around the world. Head to the Christmas Lecture Hall at 4 p.m. on weekends and 2 p.m. on weekdays to hear about different traditions and to listen to fairy tales. Festive concerts will also take place, beginning at 3 p.m. on weekdays and 1 p.m. on weekends.

Indulge your sweet tooth in Mitino Park

Head to Mitino Park to learn about sweet recipes and decorating techniques. On December 23, you can join the master class Magic Marshmallows where you'll learn how to make hedgehogs out of the fluffy confection.

Watch a Hungarian puppet show on Tverskaya Ploshchad

On December 28 (4-5 p.m.), 29 (6-7 p.m.), and 30 (8-9 p.m.), head to the 'Living Room' pavilion on Tverskaya Ploshchad for a grand puppet show by acclaimed Hungarian puppeteer Benz Sarkadi. Sarkadi makes the puppets himself, and has previously performed in Greece, Australia, India and Canada.

Buy a bit of Siberia on Yartsevskaya Street

Stuck for original gift ideas? Then head to Yartsevskaya Street where you'll find stalls selling handmade goods from Western Siberia such as dolls, traditional clothing and sculptures.

Stop in for story time in Fili Park

On December 31 and January 4, visitors to Fili Park will be able to watch the Christmas-themed plays "Madam Blizzard" and "The Mystery of the Snow Queen." Kids will also be able to listen to classic winter fairy tales, and to learn the difference between Grandfather Frost and Santa Claus.

Be dazzled by mirrors on Tverskaya Ploshchad

On January 11, 12, and 13 (noon), head to the stage on Tverskaya Ploschad to watch the Austrian theatre troop Mirror Family perform a unique spectacle inspired by the experiments of Leonardo da Vinci. The costumes, and even the bodies, of performers will be covered in a multitude of mirrors, promising a truly dazzling sight.

Shop Southern Russia on Profsoyuznaya Ulitsa

Head to Profsoyuznaya Ulitsa where you'll be able to buy gifts from Kabardino-Balkaria and Stavropol. Here you'll find everything from handmade porcelain to woolen children's hats and mittens.

Go gourmet on Tverskaya Ploshchad

Stop by Tverskaya Ploshchad to buy delicious delicacies from all over Europe. Here you'll find German gingerbread, Czech waffles, Italian chocolates, Latvian sprats and a plethora of other tasty treats.

Marvel at designer fir trees on Kuznetsky Most

From December 17 until the end of the festival, head to Kuznetsky Most to see eight Christmas trees decorated by famous Russian designers. By popular demand, visitors can now buy replicas of the ornaments they see on the trees as a special charity bazaar.

Cook up the perfect Russian New Year's feast on Sireny Bulvar

Do your kids love to cook? Then take your budding young chefs to the 'Big Buffet' on Sireny Bulvar where they'll learn about traditional Russian New Year's dishes, and even how to make them.

Details about all these events and more can be found in English at the city site*.*

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