

The 5 Craziest, Weirdest Stories in Russia in 2019

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A Siberian shaman's cross-country voyage to cast Putin out of power and a cow that was given an anxiety-reducing virtual reality experience were just some of the offbeat headlines that stole the show this year. news.ykt.ru, msh.mosreg.ru / MT

Russia is no stranger to all things strange and unusual. It seems as though every week, there's a new story about bears running amok or *babushki* filming their own rap videos.

But the weirdness is part of what makes this country so endearing. Here's a look back at the five most offbeat stories that grabbed our attention this year:

A shaman from Russia's republic of Yakutia [embarked](#) on an 8,000-kilometer journey to Moscow by foot with aims to "expel" President Vladimir Putin, who he viewed as a "demon," out of power. In September he was detained and flown back to his home city on suspicion of extremism. Though the shaman was declared insane by psychiatrists, he restarted his trip to exorcise Putin this month, only to be arrested a second time.

"Don't judge without trying."

A Russian man [sued](#) Apple for more than \$15,000 in damages after his iPhone allegedly drove him to homosexuality. He says it all started when he received 69 GayCoins on a cryptocurrency payment app on his phone. The unknown sender was said to have included an English-language message that Razumilov interpreted as “don’t judge without trying,” and subsequently entered into a same-sex relationship that he says ruined his life.

Moscow region farmers [fitted](#) their dairy cows with virtual-reality headsets that played serene scenes of grassy fields in an effort to calm their anxiety. The farmers said they would evaluate the headsets' effects on milk production. The Moscow region agriculture administration also said that local manufacturers play classical music “whose soothing effect has a positive effect on milk flow.”

Curing drunkenness and fornication is easy: Just get two religious icons, 70 liters of holy water and an airplane. That’s what Russian Orthodox priests in the city of Tver did to save residents from these sins, [flying](#) in an airplane to douse the city in holy water from 300 meters above the ground.

It was the perfect crime. A Russian cat believed to have been used as part of a drug-smuggling operation foiled authorities’ attempts to prosecute the human suspects after it [escaped](#) from captivity. In court, prosecutors [said](#) they had managed to find the missing cat, but it turned out to be a very close lookalike.

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