

Russian Staycation: Kazan with Kids

An insider's tips for a kid-happy family trip.

By [Yulia Skopich](#)

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Pixabay

This summer, travel and vacations are not going to be like usual. If you are wary of crowds or flying, forget the Black Sea coast and consider some vacation options closer to Moscow.

How about Kazan? The Republic of Tatarstan does not require visitors from other regions to [self-isolate](#), and the capital is full of historical and cultural sights, such as glorious mosques and Orthodox churches, ethnographic and art museums. The Kazan Kremlin, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is an utterly unique mix of Russian, Tatar, Islamic and Orthodox Christian architecture from the 16th century, with some parts dating back as far as the 10th century.

There are plenty of print and online sources for adult tourists, but what if you want to travel with your children? No worries. The city is fun and fascinating for children, too.

City Panorama Museum

Even if you or your kids generally don't like history museums, be sure to stop in. No one is bored here, where the history of this 1000-year-old city is presented in an interactive format. At the entry all the visitors are given tablets that they use to navigate the exhibits in this 4-story museum. There is something on every floor to interest both adults and children.

The exhibition begins with some short historical films about Kazan and a wall-sized video showing a bird's eye view of the city. Visitors can use a 3-D joystick to control what part of the city they see. Then everybody can explore the city through historical re-enactments, starting with the 15th and 16th centuries and ending with life in the city today. On the next floor you can have a talk with Yemelyan Pugachev (who organized a rebellion against Empress Catherine the Great); give a hand to the 16th century woman regent Suyumbike; or take a selfie with Peter the Great and other famous historical figures — all possible with augmented reality technology. If your kids aren't so interested in history, send them to a hall with an Xbox game based on the ancient legend of the origins of Kazan. At the end, you can relax in a cafe stylized as a tram of the beginning of the 20th century for traditional Tatar pastries and tea.

The museum reopened on June 1 but requires all visitors to wear masks and gloves.

kazan-panorama.ru

The Ekiyat Tatar State Puppet Theater

Even though the theater season ended early this year, the theater itself is still like a fairy tale. It's a fabulous castle with stained-glass windows, white-stone columns, interesting architectural details, and colored toy sculptures. There is a huge clock on the main facade that looks like a child's toy watch and a sculpture of the Little Prince from the story by Antoine de Saint-Exupery in front of the entrance. Here your children can play on the local playground, which is considered to be the best one in Kazan.

puppet-show.ru

Kremlin Embankment

The Kremlin Embankment is one of the most beautiful places to spend time in the city. While your children get some exercise in the work-out zone, ride on bicycles, rollerblades, and skateboards — all of which can be rented on site — their parents can buy ice cream and walk along the Kremlin Embankment, enjoying the panorama of the city. This has perhaps the best view of the Kremlin, the main Kazan Wedding Hall, and the Farmers Palace any time of year. Fabulous towers, evening lighting, and green sculptures add charm to the embankment. There are a lot of children with their parents both day and evening.

kremlinnab.ru

Riviera Aquapark

The Riviera Aquapark is one of the largest in the world with over 50 different attractions and things to do. Even though it's a thousand kilometers from the sea, your kids can do some body surfing on waves or fly down the many adrenaline-producing slides with names like Niagara, Tornado and Kamikaze. For younger children, there are smaller slides, wading pools, and

calmer games — like attacking a pirate fort with water guns.

At the time of publication, the park is partially opened, but information is constantly being updated. Before you visit, be sure to check the site and social media for more information.

kazanriviera.ru

Tugan Avylym (native Tatar village)

Enjoy village life in the center of the city. Tugan Avylym is a small oasis of traditional Tatar culture where all the buildings are made of a natural logs in the old rural style. A wooden bridge connects the shores of an artificial reservoir filled with colorful fish. You can happily spend several hours walking around the complex and letting the kids have fun on a playground made of a traditional wooden house. Several cafes and restaurants are offering national cuisine or pancakes, but only for take-out. Other activities, like the adventure park, toy museum, craft workshops, and quests are expected to open soon. Be sure to contact the park to find out about restrictions and conditions.

tugan-avilim.ru

Getting there

If you want, you can make this a road trip from Moscow: it takes about 12 hours to drive. If that doesn't suit, you can take a bus from Kotelniki Bus Station for about 1,500 rubles (\$21) (about 15 hours) or go by train from Moscow Kazansky railway station from 2,000 rubles (\$29) for one-way ticket (about 11 hours). If you are fine with flying, there are flights from several Moscow airports daily (it's about a 4-hour flight).

avtovokzaly.ru, www.rzd.ru, avia.yandex.ru

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