

Where Can I Travel in Russia This Summer?

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More than 70 Russian regions are expected to open their tourist seasons on July 1, Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin has said. **Alexander Avilov / Moskva News Agency**

Russia opened its domestic tourist season Wednesday as it continues to grapple with the deadly coronavirus pandemic that has seen it record the world's third-highest number of infections.

The country closed its borders and grounded most international flights in late March to slow the spread of the outbreak, allowing only special evacuations of its own citizens from abroad and other government-authorized flights. Other countries also grounded flights and sealed their borders to fight the spread of Covid-19.

Related article: [Moscow's Tour Guides Pray for Miracle as Summer Season Ebbs Away](#)

Three months later, Russia has largely exited its coronavirus lockdown, leaving many wondering when and where they can take their summer holidays.

Here's a look at where Russians can and can't go this summer as the country seeks to salvage its battered tourism industry:

Domestic tourism

More than 70 Russian regions are expected to open their tourist seasons on July 1, Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin has said.

Annexed Crimea and the neighboring Black Sea coast of the Krasnodar region in southern Russia remain top tourist destinations, according to a BBC Russia [survey](#) of bookings and industry experts. The Moscow, Leningrad and Kaliningrad regions also ranked among the top five vacation spots.

The Krasnodar region accounts for around 20% of bookings. Rossiya Airlines resumed flights to the region and more than 700 hotels opened their doors to vacationers last week, the state-run TASS news agency [reported](#).

Crimea, which accounts for 15% of bookings, officially opened its borders to Russians on July 1.

Also on July 1, passenger trains to Russia's western exclave of Kaliningrad resumed from Moscow and St. Petersburg via neighboring Belarus and Lithuania.

Experts have also named the Altai region and the republic of Khakasia in Siberia; Kazan and Ufa in the Volga region; and Volgograd, Makhachkala and Mineralnye Vody in the Caucasus as popular tourist destinations.

Quarantine

Around [36 Russian regions](#) including Kaliningrad require visitors to either self-isolate or undergo 14 days of observation upon arriving, according to a map compiled by the RBC news website.

Crimea lifted self-isolation rules on June 15. However, visitors from outside Russia will still be required to undergo two weeks of quarantine.

The Crimean city of Sevastopol waives observation requirements if visitors have documents proving they have either recovered or never been infected with Covid-19.

Kaliningrad waives observation requirements for visitors who book hotels for more than two days.

The Federal Tourism Agency has launched the [Russia.travel](#) website to track current rules for visitors from specific Russian regions.

Foreign destinations

An official travel ban is still in effect in Russia. Only Russians with residence permits in destination countries, as well as those who need to work, study, seek treatment or attend relatives' funerals, are allowed abroad.

However, Russia's flagship carrier Aeroflot is reportedly still flying passengers to New York, Paris, London, Frankfurt, Seoul, Tel Aviv, Barcelona, Rome and Nice at least once a week. Tickets go on sale less than a week before the flights and are not openly advertised, the Vedomosti business daily reported last month.

Related article: [Aeroflot Still Flying Abroad Despite Russia's International Travel Ban – Vedomosti](#)

News outlets reported and officials hinted that Russia could reopen its outside borders starting on July 15 with post-Soviet republics, which Russia refers to as its “near abroad.”

The European Union, which reopened its borders on July 1 to visitors from 15 countries, will officially remain closed to Russians for at least the next two weeks. U.S. and Brazilian tourists, countries with two of the world's highest Covid-19 infections, are also banned from visiting the EU due to health concerns.

Border workarounds

Those still looking to get away to Europe and other countries can use the shared border with Belarus as a springboard, where many drivers [told](#) Reuters they had regularly crossed the border with passengers lacking clearance to do so.

Similarly, the Serbian capital of Belgrade and the Turkish resort of Antalya operate flights out of Moscow seemingly without restrictions, the Znak.com news website [reported](#). Return flights from these locations back into Russia are much less frequent however.

From Belgrade, travelers can reportedly buy a 650 euro seat on a private jet to Montenegro, which formally still bans Russian tourists.

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