

# The Sad Beauty of Russia's Abandoned Villages

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Russia's big cities may appear to be flourishing, filled with shops, restaurants, recently built apartment buildings, malls and entertainment venues. But many if not most of Russia's villages are not enjoying the same economic boom. Infrastructure is in poor shape, job opportunities are scant, schools are closed as families move to larger towns and cities, and churches that once welcomed several villages are now abandoned and crumbling. Tver oblast is right next to Moscow. It is considered a top spot for vacations with several beautiful lakes, including Lake Seliger, famously the site of a Kremlin-sponsored youth camp, and the Valdai hills where three enormous rivers have their sources: the Volga, the Dnipro (called Dnieper in Russia) and the Daugava (called the Western Dvina in Russia). The most populous cities in the region are Tver, Torzhok, Kimri and Rzhev, and the region has some industry. But it ranks in the lower half of economic development in Russia, in 39th place out of 83 federal subjects.



Eski village, about 300 kilometers (180 miles) from Moscow. **MT**

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