The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

# Japan Opens New Visa Centers in Moscow and St. Petersburg

February 12, 2026




The new Japan Visa Application Center in Moscow. **Sergei Vedyashkin / Moskva News Agency**

Japan opened two new specialized visa centers in Moscow and St. Petersburg on Thursday to keep up with surging demand for tourism from Russia.

Visa processing will no longer be handled by Japan's Embassy in Moscow or its consulate general in St. Petersburg.

Instead, Russians can apply for a Japanese tourist visa at the new centers in the two cities.

The centers are operated by VFS Global, a visa and passport administration outsourcing company headquartered in Dubai.

Japan's Embassy in Moscow said this week that the move was made in response to a "sharp increase in Russian tourists visiting Japan."

**Related article**: Japan Sees Record Number of Russian Tourists in 2025

A record 194,900 Russians visited Japan in 2025, nearly doubling the previous year and surpassing the previous record of 120,000 set in 2019. Japan has also seen a surge in business visas from Russia.

The increase comes as Russian travelers look for alternatives to Europe and other Western destinations, which have become increasingly difficult to access since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

VFS Global said it will collect a service fee of 970 rubles ($12.56) and introduce a digital appointment system to avoid overcrowding. The Japanese tourist visa itself remains free for Russians.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2026/02/12/japan-opens-new-visa-centers-in-moscow-and-st-petersburg-a91936