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Russian Cafe Chains Shrink as Restaurant Sector Feels Pressure From Costs, Changing Consumer Habits

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Two well-known Russian restaurant chains have roughly halved their footprints since Moscow launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine, underscoring the mounting pressures facing the country's casual dining sector as operators grapple with rising costs, shifting consumer habits and weakening profitability.

Coffee chain Shokoladnitsa has cut its number of outlets in Russia by nearly 58% since 2021, while Moscow cafeteria chain Mu-Mu has reduced its locations by more than half, according to market research data.

Shokoladnitsa, one of Russia's largest coffeehouse chains, operated 444 cafes in 2021, according to research firm Infoline. It now has 187 locations in Russia, a decline of 257 outlets, or 57.9%.

The pace of closures has accelerated in recent months. Since the end of 2025, the chain has shrunk from 236 to 187 cafes. During 2024, it closed 42 locations while opening only seven new ones.

Mu-Mu, a self-service cafeteria chain popular in Moscow, has also contracted sharply. It operated 40 restaurants in the capital in 2021 but now has 18, according to real estate consultancy Nikoliers, representing a 55% decline.

Sergei Mironov, founder of restaurant chain Myaso & Ryba, said the casual dining segment has come under increasing pressure from rising prices, the expansion of food delivery services and ready-made meals sold by retailers, as well as the declining appeal of some traditional cafe formats.

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The industry's financial health has deteriorated more broadly.

A March survey by Action Accounting found that 94% of cafes, bars and restaurants in Russia were either operating on the edge of profitability or at a loss.

Russia's largest fast-food operators have also reported weaker earnings. Business daily Kommersant reported that Unirest, the company operating the Rostic's fried chicken chain, saw net profit fall 27.5% in 2025. Net profit at Vkusno i Tochka, the successor to McDonald's in Russia, declined 15.1%, while Burger King Russia reported a 61% drop.

Restaurant closures have accelerated in Moscow this year.

More than 440 restaurants and cafes shut down in the Russian capital during the first six months of 2026, Telegram news channel Baza reported. That is nearly as many as closed during all of 2025, when around 540 establishments ceased operations, and exceeds the 455 closures recorded during the pandemic-hit year of 2020.

Among the notable closures this year were Oshi Izakaya in the Patriarch's Ponds neighborhood, several Black Star Burger locations and restaurants operated by the Odessa-Mama chain.

Traditional full-service restaurants have been closing at twice last year's pace, Zulfiya Shilyaeva, head of retail real estate at CMWP, told Baza.

Alexander Sysoyev, founder of the international restaurant guide GreatList.ru, told Baza that the wave of closures represented a correction in a market that had long been dominated by either high-end restaurants or inexpensive fast-food outlets, with more affordable urban cafes and street food now gaining ground.

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