

# RUSSIA 411



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## HF STAFF REMARKS

In this article, Link's Wild Safaris General Manager Cyndy Boyce reminds us that the Cold War is over and the Iron Curtain has been removed, granting hunters access to the incredible opportunities Russia provides. It's a good bet that reading this article will whet the appetite of any adventurous hunter who is looking for an unforgettable experience while hunting a wide range of species in a country that welcomes U.S. citizens with open arms.

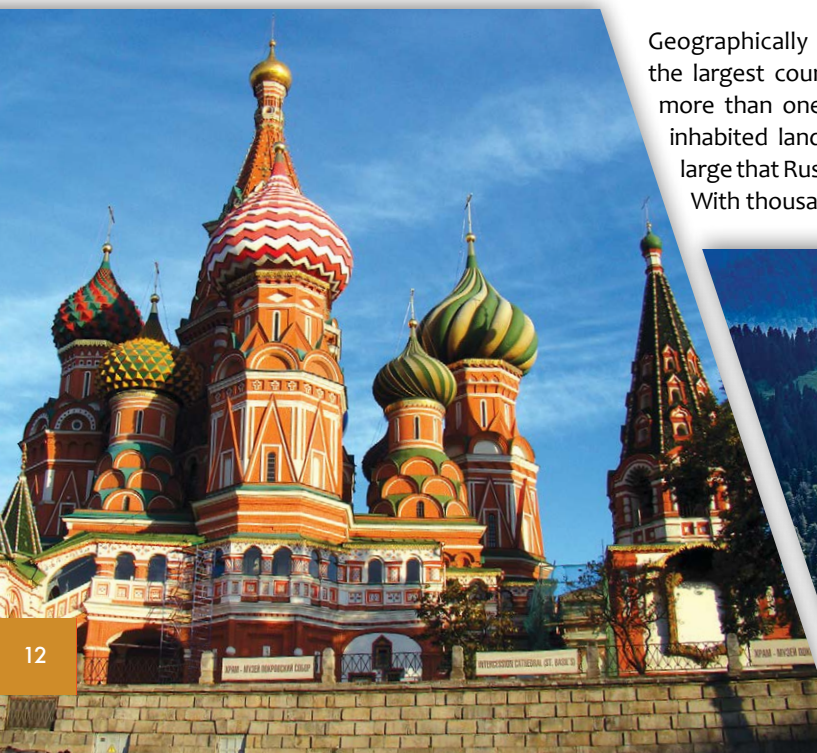
**M**any of us grew up in a world where the Soviet Union was considered the enemy. The threat of nuclear war was so palpable that bomb shelters were common discussion and the original "preppers" made sure they had the necessary supplies to survive an imminent attack. The first major relief in the Cold War came on December 3, 1989 when Mikhail Gorbachev and George W. Bush signed the START I Arms Control

Treaty. Shortly thereafter, in 1991, the Soviet Union collapsed, making way for literal and psychological barriers to crumble away. Why the short history lesson on the Cold War and collapse of the Soviet Union? In order to fully appreciate the opportunity to hunt in Russia, it is important to set aside years of mistrust and fear to realize that Russia has become a destination for many hunters to experience amazing culture, geography, people, and hunting trophies.

it is one of the world's largest surface water resources and contains 25% of the world's fresh water. Due to the enormous size of Russia, temperatures vary drastically, from frigid Siberia with a record low temperature of 96 degrees below zero to other parts of the country that feature a humid, subtropical climate, heavily influenced by warm air masses from the Indian Ocean.

Preparing to travel to Russia is not unlike any other international travel, with a few exceptions. Your U.S. Passport must be valid for at least six months beyond the date of entry to Russia and it needs to have at least two blank pages available for stamping. Also, a traveler needs to obtain a Tourist's

Geographically speaking, Russia is the largest country in the world with more than one-eighth of the earth's inhabited land area. In fact, it is so large that Russia spans 11 time zones! With thousands of rivers and lakes,







Visa, which requires an invitation letter that is obtained by jumping through a few simple hoops. Once the invitation letter has been obtained, it is necessary to submit your Passport, two passport-sized photographs, the Russian Visa Application Form, the Invitation Letter, and a Consular fee to the Russian Consulate. In case that sounds intimidating, Link's Wild Safaris works closely with our clients throughout the entire Visa process and we have wonderful partners assisting our traveling hunters at every step. It is actually a very straightforward procedure that takes 15-30 days to complete. Upon your arrival in Russia, you will register your Visa with the Russian authorities in an experience that is akin to clearing customs at any international destination.

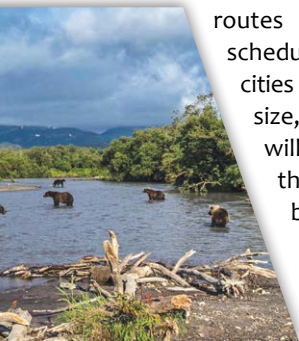
in the Kamchatka Peninsula, it is recommended to fly direct from Anchorage to Petropavlovsk. A less expensive but longer alternative to this flight would be to fly to Moscow and then catch one of the daily flights to Petropavlovsk. Due to the length of the flight and the number of time zones you cross, you will arrive in Petropavlovsk the day after departing Moscow, and on the return trip, you will arrive back in Moscow at nearly the same time you departed Kamchatka. As a result, you should book a flight leaving Moscow the day before you need to arrive in Kamchatka. Alternative routes to Moscow can be achieved by departures from the east coast and routes through Seoul, South Korea. Again, the route is dependent on what part of the country is to be hunted. Link's Wild Safaris will work with each client to fit their travel needs and recommend the best route.

for tipping the guide, skippers, drivers, translators, cooks, and other staff who assist with the hunt.

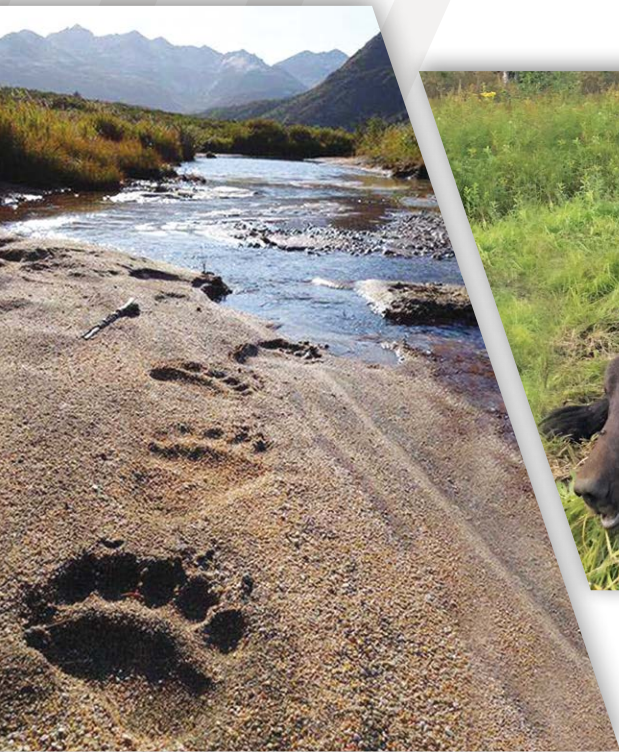
Like many countries around the world, safety concerns in Russia vary based on the city or region you are visiting. The major cities in Russia have seen a significant increase in tourists and embrace the financial benefits brought to local communities. As such, crime and risk to tourists is extremely low in these areas. With that being said, Link's Wild Safaris highly recommends travel insurance for all international trips. Organizations like Global Rescue are available 24/7, 365 days a year should an emergency unfold, and they have a ground team for assistance in nearly all cases. For more information, check out Global Rescue plans at <https://ss.globalrescue.com/partner/linkswild/>. As an added piece of mind, all Link's

From the U.S., there are several routes that have regularly scheduled flights to major cities in Russia. Due to its size, the route you take will likely depend on the location you will be traveling to. For example, if you will be hunting moose, sheep, bear, or reindeer

The official currency of Russia is the Ruble, and exchanges can be done at most airports or in advance through any national bank. Credit cards are used in most larger cities; however, it is not uncommon to find them unacceptable in some of the smaller, more rural communities. Planning ahead with Rubles is a good idea



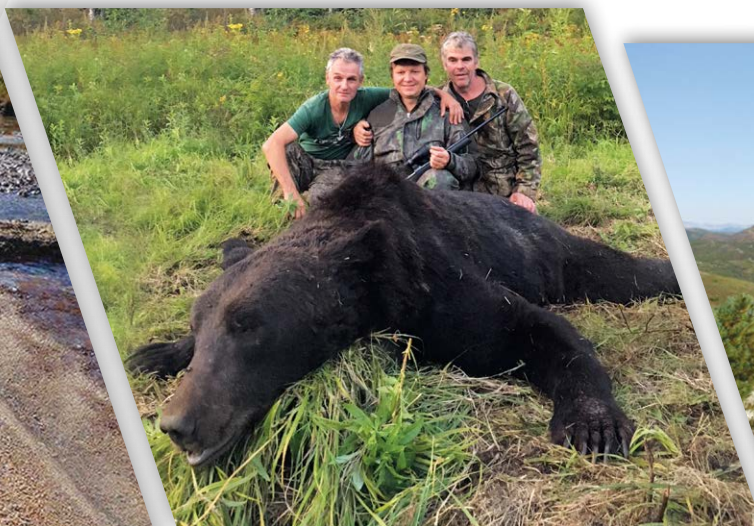




Wild Safaris clients are under the care of a professional guide, translator, tour guide, or other certified individual from the moment they arrive at the airport in Russia until the moment they head back through security to fly home.

With a country the size of Russia, the ethnicity of food offerings is vast from one end to the other. Of course, many U.S. chain restaurants exist there, like McDonalds and Starbucks, but how much fun is it really to eat a Big Mac or drink a frappuccino while in Russia when you can try something new? You can try the Russian chain of cheap cafes, like Yolki-Palki or Moo-Moo, where it is possible to taste Russian traditional salads (vinegret and selyodka pod shuboy, also known as “dressed herring”), soups (borscht and okroshka), blini (Russian pancakes), pelmeni, kotlety, and famous drinks (kvass and kisel). Yolki-Palki is also famous for its all-you-can-eat buffet. An absolute must-eat when in Russia are the stuffed pies, the most famous being mushroom and cabbage, often served at Russian tea drinking ceremonies.

While you are in the Kamchatka region, expect to taste national dishes of the



Itelmen, Koryak, and Chukchi people, such as Kamchatka fish cutlets – Telno. Large cutlets from red fish with mashed potatoes inside are a frequent dish. Freshly caught sockeye salmon, chinook salmon, and chum salmon are used for fish mince mixed with onion and garlic. Forget the common false belief that caviar must be red. When you try Kamchatka caviar, you will find many different kinds from different types of salmon.

Hunting in Russia is as long of a tradition as any, and the variety and quality of species is truly something special. Bringing firearms into Russia requires a completed CBP 4457 form and a Russian Firearms permit that is easily obtainable. Link's Wild Safaris Certified Outfitters will have this completed upon arrival. As with all of our hunts, we are happy to recommend our favorite calibers of rifle for each species available to hunt in Russia. Unfortunately, at this time, archery hunting is not allowed anywhere in Russia. In order to export hunting trophies, it is necessary for some species to have a CITES permit. Our outfitters will provide the necessary papers for the trophy shipment, such as CITES, veterinary certificates, and other documents that are required.

When it comes to available species, Link's Wild Safaris provides hunts



for brown bear, Russian grizzly bear, moose, six species of sheep, Asian black bear, Amur bear, Tur, reindeer, Roe deer, wolf, capercaillie, and more. All packages include lodging, meals, transportation during the hunt, professional guide service, in-field preparation of trophies, delivery to a local taxidermist, meet and greet at the appropriate airport, and the services of a translator. Most packages do not include lodging before or after the hunt, international travel expenses, export documents, and shipping of the trophies to the final destination. Depending on the package, some will include the trophy fee and some will not. We will be sure to thoroughly explain all expenses associated with any hunt.

Not surprisingly, the hunt experience can differ vastly among the species. The Asian black bear and Amur bears are hunted in one of the most unique places in the world. The Nanaiski District of Russia is a rainforest and home to one of the largest populations of Siberian tigers. Imagine seeing a Siberian tiger stroll by while you are sitting in your tree stand waiting for a bear. It's truly an experience like none other.

If your sights are set on a brown bear, Russia is far and away your best option in terms of price, size of the







When it comes to the Kamchatka Snow sheep, there will likely be a fun ride on a large military ATV that culminates in a comfortable log cabin near a salmon-filled river. Many clients add a Kamchatka brown bear to the Kamchatka Snow sheep and make a dynamic combo hunt. Link's Wild Safaris Certified Partner has rediscovered an

bears, and quality of the experience. The spring hunts are adventurous and exciting as they are conducted on sleds towed behind snowmobiles where you will most likely track a giant bear in the spring snow. The fall hunts for all species, including brown bear, grizzly bear, and moose, are less arduous but still full of heart-pounding adrenaline.

Most Snow sheep are hunted from six remote mountain base camps on approximately 2.5 million acres in the wildlife-rich Magadan region. Access to this vast, scenic, and unspoiled land is by helicopter and is coordinated in advance to ensure that hunters are in good hands from the time they land in the Magadan airport until they climb into the helicopter to head into the spike camps. It is not uncommon to travel from one spike camp to another, depending on the number of trophies sought.

amazing area for this hunt, taking place in the local Nature Park ESSO, commonly referred to as Bystrinsky. The last time this area was hunted was almost 15 years ago, resulting in an incredible hunt opportunity for our clients with our very experienced team of guides who worked the area in the past.

Russia truly has something for everyone, and Link's Wild Safaris has everything to help make your hunt a success. The Cold War is long over, and Russia has opened its doors to the international hunting community, offering some of the best and most varied hunting opportunities on the planet. Don't let fears of years gone by prevent you from this amazing location. Contact Link's Wild Safaris today and plan your Russian adventure! **EF**

