

Ruddy



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School of Continuing Studies

MANUAL FOR RUSSIAN CROSS-CULTURAL TRAINING

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III. IDENTIFYING CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

IV. MANAGING CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

RUSSIAN CROSS-CULTURAL TRAINING

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Objectives

- To acquire an explicit understanding of culture in the cross-cultural context and the ways in which it is expressed
- To identify significant Russian and American cultural differences
- To gain an understanding of Russian culture and daily life, and the social environment in Russia today
- To acquire a strategy for managing cultural differences effectively; feeling comfortable in intercultural situations; and negotiating objectives in a culturally sensitive manner

B. Perceptions and Expectations

C. Definition of Culture in the Cross-cultural Setting*

An out-of-awareness, learned filter between the individual and the outside world: a pattern of behavior and perception that governs what we pay attention to and what we ignore. Culture is expressed as a system of interconnected, hidden "rules." We only become aware of these "rules" when they are "broken." Cultures are internally consistent systems that do not mix with one another. When we try to interpret another culture using our own system of "rules," we perceive it as strange, irrational, uncontrollable, and unpredictable. People perceive reality in terms of their cultural system, but the system is transparent, hidden to the culture bearer. All cultural systems are equally valid, and one should not be viewed as superior to another.

D. Classifying Cultures

1. Context

a. High Context Cultures

Who you *are* is most important; the focus of attention and energies is on the people one is dealing with rather than on the goal/activity that joins you; need for continuity in personnel

*The definition of culture, conceptual framework, and terminology for high- and low-context cultures and polychronic and monochronic time used in this training were developed by Edward T. Hall. See reading list.

Status is internalized, value is inherent in the individual, and not related to what he or she does

Greater distinction between insiders and outsiders

Talk around the point - the point is generally not stated, it is the listener's job to draw the right conclusion; tendency to allude, imply, and use analogy; talk about many subjects at once

Tend to be polychronic

Need for constant, intense personal involvement with those around them

Information component in communications is lower, because the listener has a greater and more detailed store of information, or "context", that is, information on relationships and the current state of affairs—they "network" more; the listener is much more "up" on and in touch with the day to day affairs of others; every scrap of information is filed away

Stability is more important than change

A well-planned event is one in which all the players know each other, and understand and agree upon what is to be done. Assumption that if all know and agree and everyone is integrated properly, the event will come together when it is ready, hence no need for specific scheduling; progress is measured relative to the players' relationships and understanding; relationships are taken care of and those involved are happy; specific activities and scheduling are not spelled out for the players

Examples: Russians, Asians, Arabs, Southern Europeans, Central and South Americans, Southern European Americans

b. Low Context Cultures

What you *do* is most important; the focus of attention and energies is on the activities that join you rather than on the specific players involved; players can be replaced with less disruption

Status is externalized, emphasis on improving your status, "getting ahead"

Less distinction between insiders and outsiders

Get to the point - conclusions are spelled out, and listeners expect this; talk about one subject at a time

Tend to be monochronic

Need time to be alone and collect their thoughts; cannot easily sustain intense, uninterrupted personal involvement for long periods of time

Change is more important than stability

Information component in communications is higher, because the listener has a less detailed store of information, or "context"; the listeners is less current on the day to day affairs of others

A well-planned event is one in which you can pinpoint exactly when each player will be doing specific activities; progress is measured relative to the goal; the specific relationships of the players are much less important, and satisfaction is derived from progress toward the objective; specific activities and scheduling are spelled out for the players

Examples: Germans, Scandinavians, Northern European Americans

The Russians are high context with an overlay of Western (and Northern) European cultural patterns and preferences. Other nationalities of the former USSR are also high context.

American culture is much less homogenous. Because of the intermixing of cultures and different generations, we cannot generalize about what "American" culture is with respect to context and other cultural variables. Northern European-American culture tends to be low context; Asian-American, Latin-American, African-American, and Southern European-American cultures are more high context. Americans must define for themselves where they fall along the high/low context spectrum, and make their own adjustments to the new culture.

2. Time

a. Monochronic Time

Time is viewed as a ribbon or road that stretches out in a line connecting past, present, and future. Time is organized by segmenting it into sequential "rooms" along this ribbon. This space is "sacred" (e.g., the importance of the appointment and the seriousness of incursions into it). Time is perceived as being extremely concrete. It is a precious, valuable commodity that is experienced intensely, is measurable, and is in short supply. It is "spent," "wasted," "bought," and "runs out." The passage of time ("ticking of the clock") is high in awareness. Time is the ruler against which progress, development, and change are measured. Monochronic people schedule their time intensely and become disrupted and upset when schedules are not adhered to. They prefer to do one thing at a time; when an activity is completed (or its allotted time has "expired"), they are ready to move on to the next activity. Interruptions are disorienting and cause frustration. The view of past and future tends to be much shorter in scope, such as 5-10 years.

b. Polychronic Time

Time is not organized in a linear fashion. It is like a sea or a changing matrix, and one "navigates" with reference to the junctures or points at which things come together. Time is abstract and abundant. Not perceived in finite units, but rather as a profusion of processes all going on at once, with natural ebbs and flows. Polychronic people do

not segment their activities into "rooms," they multi-task, doing many things at once, confident that when everything is in order the results will come together automatically. This confidence makes them much less concerned about scheduling and deadlines. Interruptions are merely part of the fabric of things, and do not disorient them. Future and past tend to be perceived in much longer spans, hundreds and even thousands of years.

II. UNDERSTANDING YOUR PARTNER

A. Overview

1. Similarities between Russians and Americans

- Superpowers inhabiting vast continents
- Multiethnic states
- Expansionist traditions, the frontier, and sanctity of borders
- "Chosen" nations with a mission
- Patriotism
- Traditions of self-sufficiency and orientation inward
- Value placed on scale, strength, and numbers
- Casual and unpretentious
- Hospitality to outsiders

2. Differences between Russians and Americans

RUSSIANS	AMERICANS
Central authority, with power flowing down; mistrust of government; vacuum in the legal tradition; <i>proizvol</i> - "government arbitrariness"	Representative authority, with power flowing up; trust in government; strong legal tradition protecting the citizenry; stability and accountability in the system
Ethnic archipelagoes with their own historic territories	"Melting pot," largely immigrants with no historic territories
History of war and conflict	History of relative peace
Egalitarianism - fair outcome	Equalitarianism - fair play
Centralized economy	Market economy
Striving for order and stability; risk-negative	Striving for change; risk-positive
Individual needs subordinate to the common good; mutual dependence	Individual needs of paramount importance; self-sufficiency and independence
Great disparity between formal and informal roles	Small disparity between formal and informal roles
Everything is everyone's business	Privacy
Consensus and universal truth	Diversity of opinion and individual truth
Pessimistic	Optimistic
Present-oriented	Future-oriented
Emotionalism is positive and trusted	Emotionalism is negative and played down
No strong need for logic and internal consistency; contradiction and paradox are acceptable	Strong need for logic and internal consistency; contradictions and paradox are unacceptable and must be reconciled

3. Russian Perceptions of Americans

Materially wealthy, independent, "can-do" attitude, businesslike, unpretentious, casual, technologically superior, Russia's natural peers and partners in the world

4. Russian Perceptions of Themselves

Culturally wealthy, care for the common good of all, unpretentious, casual, morally superior

One major obstacle to understanding the Russians is that we "read" them as Europeans (cultural values, physical appearance, many imported European elements in behavior, social mores, art and architecture), but they do not behave like Europeans. In addition, the many surface similarities between the two cultures lull us into perceiving them as "just like us."

B. Russian Life Today

1. Home and Family

Family size and children; the woman's role

Everyday life; housing; scarcity and the struggle for goods and services; inflation; mutual dependence and supply "networks"; relative poverty and poor quality of consumer goods

Diet and meals (see also travel section)

Cultural preferences for food: high starch, high fat, meat and root vegetables, bland, many sweets; vitamin deficiency

Structure of meals - breakfast, noon meal, evening meal

Entertaining and hospitality

The importance of hospitality and food

Alcohol and toasting (see travel section)

Dining out (see travel section)

Friendship - intense, long-term; almost none of the boundaries between friends we have and respect in this country; they tend to seize control of one another's lives, and will scold and chastise, to a degree Americans perceive as invasive and manipulative.

Personal hygiene - soap, washing machines, dry cleaners

Medical and dental care - poor quality, expensive; not a lack of knowledge, but a matter of affluence and supply

Leisure and social activities - anything to do with nature: skiing, walking, jogging, hiking, camping (but in all these activities, much less emphasis on equipment and technology); evenings spent with friends; drinking tea together; reading literature and poetry; the performing arts

2. At Work

Work day - hours, flex time; lunch hours for errands

Status, position, and "turf" consciousness

Less emphasis on procedure, more on going to the people directly involved

New freedoms, but residual/habitual fear and lack of incentive

Impact of poor infrastructure

Work habits: extremes—superlative commitment and total negligence

Women in the workplace; low status, low paying jobs, such as physicians and teachers; but women keep the country running. Wherever you find things getting done, you'll find a woman.
Much less productive industrial sector

3. Society

Existing classes - *intelligentsia*, industrial workers, farmers

Emerging classes - the New Rich and the New Poor

Not consumer oriented - difficulty of getting your needs met, Russians have a hard time when confronted with many choices

Negotiating for everything

Religion and superstition: Russian Orthodoxy; the number 13; black cats crossing one's path; shaking hands over a threshold; even numbers of flowers as a gift; "jinxing"; sitting down before a long journey

Education - rewards mastery of facts, no encouragement of individual analysis

Alcoholism - pervasive, more men than women. Not as acutely perceived as an illness to be treated. You will find many characteristics of alcoholic behavior and the alcoholic personality throughout Russian society.

Men and women: Explicitness of sexual roles - men and women are still regarded as very much different in Russia; women don't always take their husbands' last names (but if they do, the woman's name will end in *-a*, e.g., Mikhail Gorbachev and Raisa Gorbacheva); women expect to be treated differently, with deference, pretty much the same as women were treated in this country 20-30 years ago; this difference must be acknowledged; women's liberation in Russia has meant that women hold full-time jobs in addition to their traditional duties of shopping, cooking, laundry, managing the household, raising and caring for the children, and doting on their husbands. Women have traditionally been raised to believe that they do not have value outside the context of a relationship with a man. The younger generation is less this way, but the degree to which American men participate in these activities may be viewed as somewhat henpecked; women in positions of authority is still relatively unexplored territory, and American women managers are initially not likely to be treated with the same degree of seriousness as if they were men. It is best to know your subject and job well, forge ahead, and ignore this; you'll do fine once the Russians know you, so be patient. Allowing a Russian man to hold the door for you won't affect your credibility, and refusing it would hurt his feelings and/or confuse him. This kind of deference is not a romantic overture and is not demeaning: it's a common courtesy. Russian men do make passes more frequently than American men, and unless you are confident of the relationship, watch for and avoid putting yourself in situations where this can occur.

Sensitive subjects - the "inferiority complex," anything that would project the country or the people in a bad light; politics; coarse language and sexual references have a *much* stronger impact. For people learning

Russian, you will find that Russian has a vast and rich lexicon of obscene words—*do not use them, especially if a woman is present*. For you they are just sounds, and are devoid of the huge impact and shock value they carry in Russian.

4. Attitudes

Trust in the people you know, not the system; views of capitalism and the perception of wealth and money (and lack of inhibition regarding salaries); longing for structure and security; fear of chaos; unfulfilled promises and exhaustion; residual suspicion; inertia and lack of incentive; moral damage of the Soviet period—thrift, lying, and guilt; mistrust of "getting ahead"; racism, anti-Semitism, sexism, view of homosexuality; no equivalent of the "American Dream"; monotony—good stories and scandal (anything that will be exciting in the retelling) enhance the richness of life; "hoarding" mentality and stockpiling; Moscow and St. Petersburg, and the provinces

5. Identity Crisis in Society

All of the Russians' "moorings"—how they orient themselves in the world—have been severed:

At home: split between the generations (Stalin-era vs. today) and ideologies ("Socialism," i.e., the way we know vs. today's realities)

At work: no job security; new freedoms, but no understanding of what is the right way to handle things—the old ways are going out, but there is no clarity about what should replace them

In society: from superpower to "beggar," developing country in a few short years; fundamental failure of the social contract (government, health care, social services and infrastructure, failure to maintain order and predictability)

Disenfranchisement and confusion at all levels of society and the family combine to create extreme disorientation and alienation, fear, and uncertainty: like when you are in the middle of the process of moving from one house to another and are saying good-bye to the known (which no longer suits your needs, but for which you are nostalgic and where you feel secure), but don't know how life in the new place will be (with all the attendant hopes, doubts, fears, misgivings—have we made the right decision?—and exhaustion).

C. Getting Acquainted

1. Ethnicity

Russians and non-Russians (see guide to surnames); ethnic tensions and Russification. It is critical to establish whether your Russian counterpart identifies as an ethnic Russian (as opposed to Armenian, Ukrainian, and so on); do not refer to people as Russians if you are

not sure that is what they are. Asking for this information rather early on in the relationship is fine, and can be used to build a bridge to the other person.

To satisfy their high-context need for information, Russians start "classifying" people right away, in terms of class, ethnicity, and social standing. This is not the same thing as pigeonholing people.

2. Address

The Patronymic - In some ways Russian society is much more formal than that in the United States. Russians do not have middle names; instead, they have what is called the *patronymic*, which consists of the father's name coupled with an ending, *-ovich* or *-evich* for men, and *-ovna* or *-evna* for women. The polite and proper way to address a Russian is by the first name and patronymic: this is equivalent to saying "Mr." or "Ms." in the United States. More and more Russians, particularly those accustomed to international settings, are becoming used to being addressed by their first names only. It is appropriate and culturally sensitive to find out and learn both the first name and patronymic, and to use both until the Russian suggests another form of address. Similarly, for people learning Russian, there are two forms of "you," formal and familiar (*vy* and *ty*, respectively); again, it is important to follow the Russian's lead before switching to the informal pronoun. Avoid using "he" or "she" when the person being referred to is present; use their first name and patronymic instead.

Mr., Ms., Mrs., and Miss - the closest Russian equivalents to these terms are pre-Revolutionary and sound funny today. Russians will only use them in reference to foreigners; this usage is respectful.

Comrade: now only in use among dyed-in-the-wool communists and to get attention or express disapproval in public

Diminutives - there are some 33 different diminutives in Russian. These are used to indicate an entire range of the speaker's feelings about a person or thing. For example, at home, Olga will virtually never be referred to as Olga, it sounds too formal, so Olya will be used instead. Olka would indicate that the speaker is somewhat peeved; Olenka is consoling; Olechka is playful. The meaning of each diminutive depends on the word to which it is attached. Exercise caution when repeating diminutive forms of personal names you have heard until you are positive you understand the meaning they convey. (For more on names and diminutives, see Gerhart, *The Russian's World*, pp. 20-27, in the reading list.)

3. Hospitality, Expectations of Hosts and Guests, and Making Russians Feel at Home

Arrival: polite time-frame (don't shake hands over the threshold!); what to bring; outerwear and house slippers; washing hands

Food as the centerpiece of social interaction: food is equated with hospitality, and when invited, Russians expect lots of it. If you are invited, you will be fed whether you are hungry or not, and not eating will make your host uncomfortable. (See also travel section)

Daytime: tea and coffee, always with something to eat, never by themselves

At night: a meal, extremely lavish preparation, guests are fed continuously, and if things go well, the evening will last until quite late. Often people will go for walks after long periods of sitting, eating, and talking.

Toasting (see travel section)

Conversation: The Russians are masters of conversation, and can discuss a great variety of topics intelligently, engagingly, and at length—and discuss many topics at the same time, cycling around through the subjects. Appropriate topics for conversation are the same as in the U.S. (but check the section on sensitive subjects).

Atmosphere: The home—especially the kitchen!—is where Russians really "let their hair down." The atmosphere in the home is extremely warm, casual, and unaffected, and it is here that formal barriers disappear entirely (but see travel section on public behavior).

Departure: as always, effusive thanks. Guests are usually seen off, or all the way home.

4. Giving and Receiving Gifts

Russians are very demonstrative and love giving gifts. In giving, the presentation is essentially as important as the gift itself, and your thanks should be effusive. Choose your compliments wisely, for you may spontaneously receive the item you mentioned. This Russian style of giving is as generous as it is sincere. Although you have doubtless read of acute shortages of such important items as sugar, coffee, aspirin, razor blades, and so on, making gifts of such items draws attention to the Russians' "neediness," and should be avoided, regardless of how desperately they may be needed. As you become friends with the Russians this situation will naturally relax in the course of your relationship, but at first it is safest to stick with more "unnecessary" items such as books in English, a nice bottle of

liquor, scarves, perfumes, boxes of chocolates, gifts for their children, and so on.

Learn the alphabet and words for basic courtesies and pleasantries; be generous with yourself and your time.

D. Interpersonal Communications

1. Physical Contact

America is a non-contact society. Much stress placed on "sacred" personal space. Non-intimate touching must be acknowledged and accounted for. For Russians, physical contact in society is part of life and is generally not acknowledged. In personal relations, it is a cue that things are going well.

2. Body Language and Facial Expression

Russians tend to express their emotions verbally. In Russia, emotional outbursts in public occur regularly and are a way to blow off steam, and tend to be ignored. In their "formal" mode, Russians generally refrain from expressing emotion with facial expressions and gesticulation. In their "informal" mode, the reverse tends to be true.

3. Conversational Distance and Touching

Russian conversation and interaction distances are much closer than ours. This tends to make us feel uncomfortable, we register that non-intimates have violated our intimate space. Moving away is the natural response, but this sends a signal to the Russian that something is wrong, and he or she will continue to move closer to affirm that things are going well. Touching an arm or a shoulder will convey that the Russians feel things are going right and your relationship is on the right track. Don't artificially try to include touch in your interactions with them, however, because if you're uncomfortable, it will come across.

4. Smiling and Laughter

Smiling does not convey friendliness; no special expression of friendliness is expected or required, particularly in public. This makes the Russians appear somber and unhappy to us; it makes us seem somewhat simple-minded to them. You should generally expect smiles and laughter only in response to things that are actually amusing or funny. Russians love to laugh and carry on, however, and cherish the absurd. The Russian sense of humor is very visually-oriented. To understand Russian jokes, always try to access the visual component,

i.e., imagine the picture of the situation being described and look for the humor there.

5. Emotionalism

Russians are emotive and trust their emotions. Emotions are a positive thing and convey sincerity, caring, concern, commitment, and how things are going in the relationship. Expect Russians to express their emotions, and not be surprised or put off by them. This cultural preference is echoed in the language: the cadences and intonation of spoken Russian will often give Americans the impression that the Russians are fighting, when in fact exactly the reverse is true.

6. Conflict

Although friendship is of paramount importance and taken very seriously, Russians do not place the same value on "friendliness" in interaction. Russians are not upset by disagreement and conflict—in fact, sometimes they even seem to be recreational pursuits. If you are confronted with a fact you find to be incorrect or an opinion you feel is wrong, it is fine to disagree and state your opinion (but be ready to back it up). Russians don't mind being corrected if they are wrong, and don't take it personally—and neither should you, when the shoe is on the other foot. Keep talking, and if the matter is important to you, stand your ground. The Russians appreciate strength of character and values, and will you respect you for it.

7. Public versus Private Lives

There is a huge distance between public and private roles. Partly because of the history of suspicion and persecution, in public, Russians tend to appear very passive and unemotional (except for emotional outbursts, as mentioned above). That is, one's private life is concealed in society and is reserved exclusively for the home and one's family and friends. The real issue in cross-cultural interaction is slightly different: formal versus informal roles. The formal role is the one you encounter first. It seems distant, reserved, formal, and somewhat expressionless, and perhaps even cold. As the relationship progresses—as you become a member of the "in" group—this role is replaced by an increasingly informal mode of interaction, and you will finally be all but another member of the family. Americans tend to draw much less of a distinction between their public and private roles.

8. Relations between the Sexes; Sex and Intimacy

Not a lot different than in this country 20 years ago. The biggest obstacle here—and the one that is key in all relationships with Russians—is overcoming the formal versus informal threshold; once this is done, everything else can be handled just as you feel comfortable. Men are generally expected to take the lead, but this is

When we identify a friction cue the first step is to stop and recognize and accept the emotion(s). The emotion(s) should then be interpreted as information: one of my "rules" has been "broken." Take time to formulate and make explicit which rule has been broken, and add this knowledge to your understanding of yourself and your own culture. The energy that accompanies the emotions can be transformed into change and heightened perception.

Accept that you will never know all the rules of the other system. You will always make "mistakes," that is, you will always be learning. As long as you maintain awareness of this, misunderstandings can be overcome. Try to view the differences in the two cultures as assets and resources that contribute to a more creative, greater whole rather than as limitations that one must always "waste" time, energy, and resources overcoming.

When dealing with members of the other group, high context people should:

- Remember that to your partner, the activity that joins you is foremost
- Use much less detail than you are accustomed; make your points explicit—spell out your conclusions
- Don't rely on reading your partner's overt expressions of emotion to gauge how things are going in your relationship, emotions will often be beneath the surface or will be responses to your partner's perception of progress toward goals and objectives
- Allow your partner flexibility and to brainstorm, to think on his or her feet
- Make your points explicit—spell out your conclusions
- Be aware that your partner is probably not very comfortable with "multi-tasking," and doing too many things at once will make him or her feel unimportant, confused, and that nothing is being accomplished
- Recognize your partner's need for goals, scheduling, and clear organizational structure

When dealing with members of the other group, low context people should:

- Build relationships with your partners according to their rhythms and time schedules and allow time for yourself (and your ideas) to assume substance and become predictable
- Remember that your partner is focused on the value of the people and relationships involved; the activities and goals are secondary, or more precisely, the natural result of sound relationships
- Pay attention to emotions expressed by your partner and treat them as signals indicating how the relationship is going
- Think things all the way through, including the implications for those involved
- Go into much more detail than you are accustomed
- Draw conclusions regarding your partner's point on your own—this means taking a much more "active" role as a listener

Be aware that your partner is probably more comfortable "multi-tasking" and that this is a question of approach, not a reflection of the importance of what is happening

Place less emphasis on goals and scheduling

Focus on long-term building of relationships instead of short-term, immediate familiarity

Both high and low context people should:

Stay in an interpretive mode to the degree possible

Make it a point to know your partners well enough so you are aware of what they pay attention to and what they ignore

Spend time trying to assess the different values in your own and the other culture and make an effort to accommodate them

Recognize that the respective needs of each cultural group are fundamental and important, and must be treated as valid and with respect: remember, people don't perceive the "rules" themselves

Actively maintain awareness that you can never be fully aware of what you are communicating to someone else

Watch attentively for friction cues; interpret them as information about your own cultural "rules": your emotional responses are a reaction to something that is happening to or in you, as opposed to something that "they" are "doing" to you

Lower expectations: an expectation is a premeditated resentment

Be patient and allow time for things to work out and new rhythms to emerge

Make a sincere effort to behave authentically with your partners

Remember that "why?" is not a particularly productive question when trying to understand cultural preferences

Remember that in a low/high context situation, the low context people are focused on getting things done, and the high context people are trying to establish and enhance human contact

Culture Shock - Whenever two people are in an intercultural situation, it is reasonable to assume that at least one of them, and likely, both, are experiencing some degree of culture shock. Culture shock is an extremely powerful, yet often incredibly subtle, reaction to a lack of familiar references, cues, and information. In essence, it is a response to operating outside your own system of rules. You don't know what things mean or how to react, and the constant exposure to new things requires interpretation, which is a lot of work, takes a great deal of energy, and generates strong emotions, often like the ones we experience when we are exhausted or very hungry, such as irritability, confusion, doubt, frustration, short-temperedness, and hostility. Not all the reactions are "negative" emotions, however: there is also the elation of new discovery, the satisfaction of making puzzle parts fit together,

and the achievement of becoming at ease in a difficult situation. Most people experience culture shock as some or all of the following, as a progression or in varying order: exhilaration; urge to flee or withdraw; aggression/urge to fight; condemnation of the culture; partial denial; learning to selectively filter out the parts you can't handle; and the painstaking process of developing your own coping mechanisms. These reactions do not always manifest themselves immediately, but they definitely will occur. Anticipate a "crash" after the initial elation. The best approach to managing culture shock is to become aware of it; acknowledge and accept the feelings; take care of yourself (eating, sleeping, and so on); give yourself time to make adjustments; and don't act out on the emotions. For your partners, give them lots of understanding and time, recognize that if they display emotions, this is often the result of culture shock and does not relate specifically to what is happening or something you are doing, and may seem wildly out of proportion to the matters at hand.

You don't have to like or even approve of cultural differences to be successful in an intercultural situation. The key to being successful and comfortable lies in recognizing and accepting your emotions, and treating them as information. The associated energy can be directed toward greater understanding and change. You may continue to feel that your partner is wrong, but you cannot be effective if you behave as though this were true or condescend. Communication is only possible between equals, and maintaining respect is foremost in supporting this process. Don't retreat.

Remember that being culturally sensitive does not mean not being yourself.

RUSSIAN TRAVEL TRAINING

OUTLINE

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 - 1. In the Business Environment
 - 2. In the Home
- B. Food and Alcohol
- C. Tips for the Invited Guest
- D. Dining Out

II. PUBLIC BEHAVIOR AND ETIQUETTE

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RUSSIAN TRAVEL TRAINING

OBJECTIVES:

- To become familiar with Russian social behavior patterns
- To acquire practical "survival" skills needed by the traveller
- To learn to plan safe, successful travel to and in Russia

I. HOSPITALITY

Russian hospitality is both serious and lavish. Russians love to receive guests, and in general, as a guest in the country, you will be treated with deference and respect throughout Russian society.

A. Settings

1. In the Business Environment

As always, the primary (yet out-of-awareness!) focus of dealings with Russians is on relationships, and this finds its expression in the business environment as well. Try to keep this in mind if you experience impatience and the feeling that nothing is getting done—something is getting done, and it's relationship-building; achieving objectives always comes later, almost as a side-effect of the relationship.

Business is never conducted at breakfast, and meetings are usually not scheduled before 10:00 am. Although business may be conducted at meals, the time spent together is still of foremost importance, and the American habit of a few minutes of friendly chat followed by "getting down to business" is likely to be perceived as abrupt. Be patient, things will get taken care of. The focus of mealtimes, even with business partners and colleagues, is on entertainment and enjoyment. In keeping with the importance of hospitality, tables at even the most serious negotiations will generally have flowers and bottled mineral water, and tea and coffee will probably be served. Traditionally, tea and coffee are never served without something to eat as well.

2. In the Home

By no means pass up an opportunity to visit Russians at home. When they suggest that you come by, it is completely sincere—Russians do not extend invitations as pleasantries.

B. Food and Alcohol

The traditional Russian diet favors meat, fish, and carbohydrates. Fresh fruits and vegetables are rarely available outside "Western" restaurants (which import most of their supplies) and farmers' markets (where prices are high). Lunch is the main meal of the day, and includes hors d'oeuvres, soup, a main course, and dessert. In Slavic culture food is equated with hospitality, and visitors to Russia are typically served much more food than they are accustomed to eating. Coffee and tea invariably follow the meal.

Alcohol is part of any Russian meal with the faintest trace of "special" overtones, so as a foreign visitor, you are likely to see a lot of it. Alcohol is virtually never taken without food, and there is no equivalent to our "cocktails" style of drinking. Vodka is the beverage of choice, followed by wine, champagne, and beer. Russians can handle their liquor and should be allowed to "win" in any "competitive" drinking situation. Typically vodka is drunk chilled, beginning straight away with the hors d'oeuvres, and the visitor is advised to keep eating along the way. Refusing alcohol is a bit dicey socially: it's like rejecting part of the hospitality. Medical reasons (such as medication or conditions) as well as spiritual convictions are acceptable "excuses" for not drinking, however. The pressure to drink, especially vodka, falls squarely on men, with women preferring much less copious amounts of wine, tending to drink vodka somewhat more "symbolically," in the spirit of the occasion, or not at all. There is nothing unusual about being served many alcoholic beverages at a meal, in the same overwhelming abundance as the food.

Toasting is a rather serious affair in Russia, and is not to be taken lightly. Toasting is begun by the host, and will usually address the importance of those present and the occasion. The toasts—which can be quite long and elegant—may have humorous components, but levity is not their purpose. Friendship and new beginnings are often the subject of toasts, and should never be interpreted as being clichés. Before travelling to Russia take a bit of time to consider the occasions you are likely to encounter and prepare a couple of toasts in advance, for sooner or later it becomes incumbent upon the visitor to raise a toast in answer to the host (pay attention to the rhythm of the event and you'll sense when is the right time), and you'll want to do so in an elegant and appropriate manner. In a way, toasting is one of the "measures" of the significance of the occasion, and should be treated as such.

C. Tips for the Invited Guest

Bring a gift: flowers (odd numbers), a box of chocolates, or a bottle of wine or other spirits.

Don't shake hands over a threshold.

It is polite to arrive within about a half-hour of the appointed time. If you are invited for 7:00, arriving at 7:30 is fine. If you are not being picked up by your host, plan more travel time than you think is necessary, by about 1/3-1/2.

Outerwear is generally removed right in the entrance hall, and usually you will be expected to remove your shoes or boots and put on house slippers, even if they're not your size.

Wash your hands before sitting down at the table.

Nowadays most Russians don't drink tap water without boiling it; bottled water or tea is preferred.

Don't be too shy about asking for things. Once you've been invited to a Russian home you are well on the way to being accepted as one of the "in" group, and as this happens the rigid formal character of the Russian public role rapidly disappears. Your hosts want you to relax and have a good time.

Bring along pictures of your family, home, and friends. Again, remember the emphasis on relationship-building. Also, don't be shy about asking about your host's family. These are subjects of genuine interest. You will find that Russians are fascinated by the American way of life, and have lots of questions. Russians are not particularly inhibited about discussing salaries and the cost of living, and you may expect such questions. Americans appear phenomenally wealthy to Russians, and quoting the amount of your average salary will probably amaze them, but not really give them an understanding of the meaning of that amount of money. You can help them understand by never simply naming a dollar figure: in addition, give them an idea of the buying power this represents. For example, how much you spend on rent, food, clothing, and so on.

Russians love to go for walks outdoors after long meals, and will see you off (if not completely assume responsibility for your transportation home).

D. Dining Out

Dining out is traditionally a fairly extravagant event in Russia, reserved for special occasions. Generally a table is reserved for the duration of the evening, and courses are served slowly amidst a wash of wine, champagne, and rounds of vodka. Often there is (loud) music and dancing. This is not an environment considered appropriate for children (say, under 16 years of age), and so you are not likely to see any. Since dining out is a special event,

people tend to dress up for it, but not to "black tie" degree—Russians typically do not own such clothing. If you were invited out, the Russians will expect to pick up the tab. If you offer, your offer will probably be declined and you shouldn't push it, you'll hurt their feelings.

II. PUBLIC BEHAVIOR AND ETIQUETTE

Many forms of behavior that are no longer practiced in the West are still very much alive in Russia, and are considered part of respectable behavior. Women are treated with deference, and they expect it. This includes holding doors, letting women go first, helping them with coats, in and out of cars and on and off of buses, and lighting cigarettes.

It is not considered appropriate to sit on the ground or on stairs in any public place, and feet are never elevated. A good rule of thumb is never place your legs in such a way that the soles of your shoes are visible. Short pants and going barefoot are not customary, and with the exception of jogging, sweat suits are only worn in public on trains.

Coats must be checked when entering any public building. This is a cultural "rule" that should be observed—failure to check your coat borders on outright rudeness. Be sure to plan time to check your coat and pick it up before leaving the building, for lines, particularly, for example, at theater performances, can be considerable. Do not leave valuables in your coat pockets. Tipping coat-check attendants is not customary, although those who deal frequently with foreigners are coming to expect it; 200 rubles is more than adequate in such situations.

In consecrated Russian Orthodox churches, women should wear a scarf or a hat or in some way cover their hair; men should remove their hats and hold their hands at their sides, not in pockets or clasped behind the back.

Physical contact - elbowing and shoving are pervasive in public, and you should not be offended. Russians often hold hands and kiss (friends as well as lovers). Because of the utter lack of privacy, you may see displays of affection that in the United States would be reserved for the home.

III. GETTING AROUND AND GETTING ALONG

A. Meeting Your Needs

Getting attention often requires a high degree of assertiveness, and you should not be shy when trying to get someone's attention. Use your voice and facial expression, not your hands, to get attention. Don't hesitate to ask the Russians for help.

Don't take no for an answer - unlike in the United States, in Russia, "no" is usually the beginning of a transaction, not the end. Interpret "no" to mean "you haven't asked me right yet." Context the person and don't give up.

Shopping - plan for complete self-sufficiency, down to paper clips. There are generally two types of stores, old and new style. In the old style stores, you must stand in a total of 3 lines: first, to identify what you want and have it wrapped up; second, at the cashier, to pay for the item; and third, to exchange the receipt obtained from the cashier for your purchase. New stores function the same as in the U.S. Business hours are generally 9-6, with an hour break at 1:00 or 2:00 pm for lunch.

B. Personal Safety and Medical Care

1. Medical Care

Physicians in Russia do not freely impart information to the patients in their care as is generally the case in the U.S., and there is no "paying customer" component to the relationship. Information is meted out on a "need to know" basis, and you may have to be quite persistent in order to have your questions answered. If you need to see a doctor, have someone go with you to help with this process. Do bear in mind that the Russians may interpret your questions regarding your own health as a lack of trust in their expertise and judgment.

The hygiene practices in Russian health care facilities are far below American standards. This is not because the Russians do not know better, but rather a reflection of the economic and social situation in the country. In addition, the focus of Russian health care is on saving lives, not patient comfort.

Disposable syringes are in short supply in Russia, and often one of the first steps a Russian doctor will take is to give an injection. You must *insist* on the use of disposable syringes and categorically refuse anything else.

2. Personal Safety

In recent years there has been extensive—and somewhat shrill—media coverage of the increase in crime in Russia, particularly with respect to foreigners. Nonetheless, Russian cities are not really any more dangerous than any large cities in the U.S. The key difference is that with our comparatively expensive and colorful dress, Westerners stand out as dramatically wealthy in Russian society. A good rule of thumb is to take the same precautions you would use when visiting any large city: always be aware of your immediate environment and stay attentive to your personal belongings. Always lock the door to your room and test it to be sure it is in fact locked. It is invariably preferable not to travel alone whenever possible, particularly in large cities and after dark. Keep an eye out for and avoid groups of

gypsies—especially children—in any area frequented by foreigners. Pickpocketing is on the rise, particularly in crowded situations, such as the subway.

Pedestrians *never* have the right of way in Russia—even in "zebra stripe" zones—and Russian drivers do not slow down for them. When crossing the street, it is *essential* to look carefully, keep an eye on traffic, and be ready to move quickly. Most major intersections have underground crossings, and where they do exist, their use is compulsory. Jaywalking is not legal.

C. Transportation

1. Taxis

When travelling by taxi, be sure to use one of the official cabs (marked with a checkerboard pattern on the side of the car), as the use of "gypsy" cabs is questionable and even dangerous for foreign visitors. Fares are occasionally charged according to the meter, but more often than not the fare is agreed upon at the outset of the trip. When charged by the meter add an additional 5-10% as a tip; tipping is not necessary when the fare has been negotiated in advance.

2. Subways

Most large Russian cities have subway systems. You enter the system by using a token, obtained from a window inside the station entrance. The cost to use the system is the same regardless of the distance travelled or the number of transfers you make. Obtain a subway map before attempting to navigate the system, and don't be shy about asking for directions—Russians are always glad to help out. Beware the extremely fast escalators, and "stand right, go left."

3. Trolleybus, Tram, and Bus

The public transportation network is very crowded and requires the use of coupon-like tickets that are purchased in books in advance from kiosks (and, if need be, from the driver—have correct change ready). Once you have entered the vehicle, you must "cancel" a ticket (one per ride) in the cancelling device (usually there are two per vehicle) mounted between the windows. Travel is on the honor system, that is, you will generally not be asked to show a ticket. Periodic spot-checks are made, and people travelling without tickets are fined. If someone taps you on the shoulder or speaks to you, he or she is usually: (a) asking if you are getting out at the next stop; if you are, nod yes; if you are not, try to move out of the way; (b) asking that you pass a ticket to the person nearest the cancelling device, or, if you are nearest, that you cancel the ticket and hand it back; or (c) asking to purchase a ticket from your book.

4. Airplanes and Airports

Air travel in Russia is always an adventure. Flights are often subject to long, unexplained delays. There is usually no place to sit down, and obtaining food and beverages can be difficult, if not impossible, especially at domestic airports, so be sure to eat before leaving for the airport. Seating is often not assigned, and you may have to take any available seat. Domestic flights *must* be reconfirmed 72 hours in advance. Plan to arrive at the airport a minimum of two hours in advance of any flight, and be ready to handle your own luggage.

5. Trains

Trains generally run right on time in Russia, so be sure to arrive at the station at least a half-hour before departure. Watch your belongings very carefully in and around stations. On overnight trains, befriend the conductor assigned to your car immediately, and ask to be shown how to lock the compartment. The conductor will collect your ticket before or upon departure and will return it to you when you arrive. There are no restaurant cars on most trains, so you may wish to consider taking provisions with you, especially something to drink, as the trains can often be quite warm and the windows in the compartments generally do not open. The conductor can usually provide hot tea. Lavatories are locked when the train is near or at a station.

D. Border Formalities

Despite the great relaxation in foreign relations in recent years, Russian border formalities remain a rather serious business. Travellers are required to fill out customs declarations upon arrival to the country, and all foreign currency, travellers checks, valuable equipment, and items made of precious metals and gems must be declared. If you do take valuables with you to Russia, make sure they are declared on your customs declaration, for they are otherwise subject to confiscation. There is no limit to the amount of foreign currency you may bring with you, but bringing rubles into the country or taking them out with you is a serious crime. Upon departure you will be asked to fill out another, identical, customs declaration, which will be compared with the original. It is essential to make sure any valuables you listed coming into the country are listed on your outgoing form as well. (See the appendix on border formalities.)

Should there be any question when crossing the border, items brought as gifts for others should be identified as for your personal use or as gifts brought to be given away along the way, not intended for any specific individual.

Many items cannot be taken out of the country, and customs officials enjoy wide discretion in applying export laws. The following items cannot be exported from Russia without special export permits: jewelry and precious metals and gems; works of art; antiques; items that can be considered part of the cultural heritage; and any

materials published before 1976. Rarely, a law permitting an export duty of 600% on luxury items may be capriciously invoked by customs officials. If this happens, keep talking, and, as a last resort, state that you simply cannot afford the duty and if they insist they'll simply have to keep the item. In all cases, maintain a respectful attitude. Penalties for smuggling range from confiscation of the item to fines and imprisonment. It is always wise to ask carefully about the legality of exporting any questionable item well in advance of arriving at the airport, and for obvious reasons, the person selling the item may not be the most reliable source of information. It is a good idea to keep receipts for all large purchases. Items acquired in Russia cannot be mailed home.

E. Communications and Staying in Touch

The Russian phone system is extremely unreliable and can often be quite frustrating. Telephones in the newer, Western-style hotels are reliable, but quite expensive. These telephones can be used for quick international connections (outside these hotels, international and many domestic long-distance calls must be booked in advance through the operator, generally involving long waits next to the phone for the call to be put through). Phone books are not available, so any local numbers you plan to call *must* be brought with you.

Although they are improving, communications with Russia have always been poor. It is a good idea to discuss how you're going to stay in touch before you leave Russia, and set up a "back-up" plan at the same time.

In recent years it has become much easier to call Russia, although the quality of connections is often poor, and often fade or are cut off. Remember the time difference! Also, bear in mind that whereas international calls originating in the U.S. are relatively inexpensive by world standards, the charges incurred by your Russian counterparts are extremely high compared to salaries, and placing calls is much more difficult. Answering machines are still comparatively rare, and voice mail essentially nonexistent. Russian offices do not have centralized switchboards; what this means is that when you are given someone's office number, that is the direct line to the telephone on his or her desk, and is not likely to be answered at all if the person is out of the office.

Faxes often do not get through, even though no transmission problems are apparent or reported at this end, and you should understand that Russians are not quick to respond in writing, particularly if obtaining agreement on or permission for something is involved. In addition, because of frequent power surges and the associated fire hazard, Russians often shut machinery off before leaving the office, so the fax machine may be off during business hours in the U.S.

Telex and telegram are perhaps the most reliable means of communication between the U.S. and Russia, and E-mail is beginning to proliferate in Russia as well, although messages must often be re-sent.

The Russian mail system is erratic at best. The general pattern these days is that letters from the U.S. are delivered, in anywhere from 10 days to 3 months. A much smaller percentage of letters from Russia arrive at their destinations in America. If you send parcels to colleagues and friends in Russia you should know that these items are often stolen outright or are arbitrarily subjected to an import duty of 100% of what the customs officials deem the value of the object to be—in practice, ruling this out as a possibility. Items are best sent with people travelling to Russia.

The various international express mail services available today, such as Federal Express and DHL, are very reliable, although not inexpensive. The U.S. Postal Service offers 5-day letter service to major Russian cities, and this service is quite modestly priced (about \$15).

IV. PLANNING YOUR TRIP

A. Medical

Before travelling to Russia and the other countries of the former USSR it is always wise to consult the U.S. Department of State Foreign Travel Advisory Desk in Washington, D.C. (202/647-5225) to see if there are travel or health advisories in effect. You may also wish to call the Centers for Disease Control's International Travellers Hotline in Atlanta (404/332-4559). It is also a good idea to seek the recommendation of your physician regarding any immunizations and medications that might be advisable for your own health and safety. Be sure to investigate the extent of your health insurance coverage—particularly accident and medical evacuation coverage—while travelling abroad.

Currently many Western pharmaceutical products and supplies are available in Moscow and St. Petersburg, although prices are quite high and considerable time may be spent tracking down specific items. Outside these cities, however, the situation differs considerably, and medical supply is both erratic and of poor quality. Travellers to Russia should take ample quantities of any prescription medications they take, as well as their generic names. Women should take any necessary gynecological supplies, for they cannot be easily obtained in Russia. While travelling in Russia many Americans experience digestive upset and cold/sore throat symptoms, so it is a good idea to bring along over-the-counter medicines such as pain reliever and cold remedies, and a considerable supply of tissues.

Prescription lens wearers should take a second pair of glasses as well as a copy of their prescription. Western-quality eyewear is now available in the larger cities, however prices are quite high and selection limited. Because the Russian water supply does not meet the standards to which we are accustomed in the United States, contact lens wearers may wish to consider leaving their lenses at home. If you do wish to bring your lenses, be sure to bring all necessary solutions and fragrance-free hand soap. Again, back-up lenses are a must.

Special dietary needs generally cannot be easily accommodated in Russia. The Russian diet is high in salt, fat, and cholesterol, and fresh fruits and vegetables are not readily available, particularly outside of St. Petersburg and Moscow. Avoid drinking unboiled tap water.

People planning extended stays in Russia should consider packing a vitamin and mineral supplement.

B. Clothing

As always when travelling, clothing that can be layered is the most versatile option. In Russia one does far more walking than in the U.S., so comfortable, sturdy footwear that is in good repair is a must (it is virtually impossible to have anything repaired in Russia on short notice).

In addition to whatever you normally pack when travelling, you might wish to consider taking the following items:

- Hat/scarf, gloves
- Raincoat, umbrella
- Battery or wind-up travel alarm (alarm clocks are generally not available in hotels)
- Liquid laundry soap and a round, flat sink stopper
- Sunglasses
- Small sewing kit
- All toiletries
- Photos of your home and family

Because of the severe economic situation in Russia today, characterized by high inflation and unemployment, pilfering and petty theft are on the rise (see the section on personal safety). For this reason it is unwise to bring any valuable jewelry or belongings of special importance to you. Moreover, the Russians themselves generally do not have such possessions and they can appear ostentatious.

C. Luggage

Hard-sided suitcases with durable locks are best for travel in Russia. You may wish to consider purchasing baggage insurance, particularly if your itinerary involves travel on Aeroflot, not renown for honoring lost and damaged baggage claims. Never pack travel documents, medicine, or corrective lenses in your checked luggage. Luggage should always be locked securely when you are travelling in Russia. Porters are often not available, so it is important that you can manage all of your luggage yourself. If you are travelling via Aeroflot (i.e., on any regular domestic flight) you should be aware that the total weight limit for checked luggage *and* carry-ons is 20 kilograms (44 pounds), and surcharges for excess weight run about \$100 for each 40 pounds. Carry-ons are generally not weighed, but this rule is somewhat capriciously applied.

Regardless of point of departure or destination, scheduling and ticketing of domestic flights is always done on Moscow time. This merits attention whenever planning air travel within Russia.

D. Electricity

The supply of electricity in Russia, 220 volts AC, is not particularly reliable or stable. If you are bringing sensitive electronic equipment for use in Russia you should seriously consider bringing a spike (surge) protector in addition to a conversion transformer, if necessary, to convert to 110 volts. Russia uses two-prong plugs with the two round pins found throughout Europe.

E. Currency

The Russian unit of currency is the ruble, which consists of 100 kopeks. At present (April 1994) the rate of exchange is hovering around 1,600 rubles to the dollar. As of January 1, 1994, foreign currency has been banned for use in all cash transactions in Russia. This presents a bit of a dilemma for the traveller as it is often difficult to have rubles re-converted into dollars before leaving the country, which can generally only be done at airports, and involves long lines and waiting. It is most advisable to convert more frequently, changing smaller amounts, say, \$50-100 at a time. Whenever paying in cash you will have to pay in rubles, although many stores and some restaurants now have money exchanges.

It can often be difficult, and even impossible, to cash travellers checks in Russia, especially outside of Moscow and St. Petersburg. American Express travellers checks are the most widely accepted, and some types, such as Master Card checks, are not negotiable at all. Cash should best be carried in smaller denominations, such as 10s and 20s, for change is often hard to come by. Credit cards are accepted by many hotels and the newer restaurants. Whenever you plan to use a credit card, however, be sure to agree about this method of payment *before* accepting any goods or services.

F. Accommodations

In the last several years many new, Western-style hotels have been constructed in Russia, particularly in Moscow and St. Petersburg. These hotels generally provide the services customarily available in hotels in this country, but at a premium.

Russian hotels do not meet Western quality standards, and offer comparatively very few services. Washcloths and basic toiletries are not provided, and towels are thin, small, and not particularly absorbent. Soundproofing is virtually non-existent and light sleepers may wish to consider taking disposable earplugs. Electrical outlets, especially in bathrooms, do not work, and thus the use of portable hair dryers is unreliable. If using a hair dryer is important to you, you should bring a small (6 foot) extension cord, a transformer (if necessary), and an adapter for the plug.

G. Laundry

Laundry services are often available in hotels, although because of the harshness of Russian soaps, are not suitable for delicate items. Dry cleaning exists, but takes a very long time, and produces results that are questionable at best.

H. Services

By tradition, the Russian economy is not consumer oriented. In practice this means that service is neither quick nor attentive, and one should expect most transactions to take considerably longer than they do in the United States. Lines can be long and chaotic.

I. Tipping

Tipping was not part of Soviet society, and is still nowhere near as prevalent as it is in the U.S. The general rule is that tipping expectations increase with exposure to foreigners, particularly Americans. Ten percent is certainly adequate for any meal at a nice restaurant. In hotels, airports, train stations, and so on, porters generally expect about 1,000-1,500 rubles per bag.

J. Photography

Western film is generally not available outside of hotels in the major cities, and Russian (Agfa process) film cannot be readily processed in the U.S., so you should take an ample supply with you.

Choose subjects for your photos with sensitivity: often subjects that are colorful or exotic to the eye of the visitor—such as long lines or crowded marketplaces—may be a source of strong emotions, such as embarrassment, to the Russians, and taking a photograph may seem to draw attention to something that Russians perceive as backward or a shortcoming of society. In addition, remember that Russia is populated by a great many extremely different ethnic groups, and societal views of photography can differ greatly, particularly regarding photographs of people. Always ask permission before photographing people.

In museums, visitors are often required to purchase special photo licenses in order to use their still and video cameras (flash is generally not permitted). The cost of these licenses varies from about \$1-3 for a regular camera to \$20 and up for video.

K. Smoking

There has been no serious anti-smoking trend in Russia. Smoking is constant and virtually everywhere, and non-smokers as a rule have no rights in this regard.

IVANOV OR RABINOVICH? A BRIEF GUIDE TO SURNAMES

Following is a list of the most typical endings for the surnames of the main ethnic groups living in Russia.* Bear in mind that these endings should be used as clues, and are not iron-clad. Furthermore, for a variety of reasons, many people identify as belonging to an ethnic group different from what their last name might suggest.

Armenian

-yan, -ian

Belorussian, Polish

-ski, -ich

Georgian

-dze, -vili, -vali, -yani, -ani

Jewish

-ovich, -man, -shtam, -shtein, -baum

Latvian, Lithuanian

-sh, -is, -us, -as

Russian

-ov, -ev, -in, -sky

Ukrainian

-ko, -enko, -ak, -yak, -chuk

smile & laughter have to
do w/humor

EARLY AGENDA
DON'T ASK QUESTION
NAME SUBJECT & DECISION

NOT OCCUR IN SAME MTC

WHAT'S YOUR FATHER'S
NAME
USE FIRST NAME
+ PATRONIMIC

DON'T REFUSE TO ANSWER
AS IN OR SITE -
USE NAME

women add "a" to end of name.
ova cva mu skya

Russians don't use patronyms
use diminutives (37
names per person)

Alexander = SASHA
CARRY BUSINESS CARDS
CAPITALIZE LAST
NAME


*Adapted from Genevra Gerhart, *The Russian's World: Life and Language* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1974), pp. 31-33.

RUSSIAN HOLIDAYS

One of the areas where the recent changes in Russia are most apparent is holidays. Many holidays from the Soviet period have fallen out of favor, but are still celebrated by some, depending on their convictions, particularly in rural regions. Most of the traditional Russian Orthodox holidays have not been reinstated. At present the situation with holidays is ambiguous, and it is always a good idea when in Russia to ask if any holidays are upcoming.

January 1 - New Year's Day. A major holiday, New Year's coincides with important dates in the Russian Orthodox calendar, and together, the period from December 24 through the first week of January is left about as functional in business terms as it is in the U.S.

January 7 - Russian Orthodox Christmas.

 **March 8 - International Women's Day.** All the women in one's life are treated to a great deal of special attention in the form of flowers, cards, evenings out, and so on, and you might wish to join in.

April 4 - May 8 - Russian Orthodox Easter (must be calculated each year). The first Sunday after the first full moon following the vernal equinox; this day must follow Passover. If it does not, the Easter is celebrated the following Sunday.

May 1 - International Labor Day. Depending on when the first falls during the week, May 2 may be a holiday as well.

May 9 - Victory Day (1945).

August 19-21 - Independence Day (also know as Democracy Day and Freedom Day). Commemorates the quashing of the coup attempt in 1991. This is a new holiday, and the exact timing and character of festivities are still in flux.

November 7-8 - Revolution Day. Commemorates the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. Although its status may change in the future, Revolution Day was still celebrated in 1993.

December 24-25 - (European) Christmas. Celebrated selectively, depending on ties and the degree of contact with Westerners.

If a holiday falls on a Thursday, Friday and Saturday may also be holidays.

DON'T RUSH
INTO BUSINESS —
WORK TOWARD SITTING
AT TABLE TOGETHER FOR
20 MIN & SAY NOTHING IS
OBJECTIVE

RUSSIAN BORDER FORMALITIES AND CUSTOMS DECLARATIONS

Visas

To travel to Russia you must have a visa. If your visa is not being obtained for you, you should contact the Russian Embassy, Consular Division, 1825 Phelps Place, NW, Washington, D.C. 20008, telephone (202) 939-8907, 8911, 8913, 8918 or the Russian Consulates in New York, San Francisco or Seattle for current information on visa requirements. Entry and exit visas are issued as a single sheet of paper with the photographs attached, and will be separated and collected by customs officials as you enter and leave Russia. Obtaining a Russian visa can be a lengthy process (which can be shortened by paying an additional charge and requesting express service), so it is wise to submit your application as early as possible. It is not uncommon for visas to be issued as little as 24-48 hours before departure. This is normal and should not cause concern.

Border Formalities

To enter the country after you plane lands in Russia, you must complete three steps:

1. Pass through passport control. You present your passport and visa to the official, who then tears off the entry portion of the visa and returns the exit portion to you along with your passport.
2. Proceed into the customs area to collect your luggage from the luggage belt. If your luggage is lost, file a lost baggage report now, before passing through customs. If you're not sure where to go to do this, ask anyone wearing a uniform—there will be plenty of these on hand.
3. Pass through customs. At large airports there are "green" and "red" lanes, that is, for nothing to declare and for goods to declare, respectively. If you have more than \$50 with you (as of course everyone does), you must join the line for any red lane unless customs officials direct you otherwise. You are likely to be asked to put your luggage and hand luggage through an x-ray machine (film-safe for less than ASA 1000), and you present your passport, visa, and completed customs declaration form to the customs official. ***Be sure the customs official stamps your customs declaration.*** When the customs official returns your travel documents and the customs declaration, you are free to leave the airport. (When leaving the country, the process is reversed. First, you present your luggage for customs inspection, along with two declaration forms, the one you completed upon arrival and a second, "identical" form, both of which the customs official will keep. Second, you pass through passport control, presenting your passport, exit visa, and boarding pass. The visa will be retained by the customs official.)

FOOD & DRINK THE WAY THEY SHOW HOSPITALITY

TOASTING IS IMPORTANT

RUSSIAN PACK SLOWLY

FIRST TOAST IS BY HOST

- NEW BEGINNINGS *non 1 on 2 TOASTS
- PROTECT RBY

RUSSIANS LOVE TO WAIT.

RUSSIANS LOVE TO GIVE LITTLE THINGS

PRESENTATIONS MORE IMPORTANT THAN
ACTUAL GIFT.

TAKE DARK LIQUOR - LIQUORS

↳ SCOTCH / BOURBON

RUSSIAN MOVE CLOSE - NO SPACE

IF YOU MOVE AWAY BECAUSE THEY ARE

GETTING TOO CLOSE, THEY ARE OFFENDED.

DON'T GIVE THEM OPTIONS

"CONFIRM RECEIPT OF FAX"

SYMBOLIC CONTENT OF PAPER ALTHOUGH RELATIONSHIP

WILL GOVERN REGARDLESS OF WHAT PAPER SAYS

{ MINOR FLOWER CHOCOLATES }
NOT FOOD

"Ceremonial Gift Items"

"NO MIMAS LATE TALK"

TAKE SHOES OFF & WINTER COATS.

This entire procedure can take anywhere from 1/2 hour to as much as 4 hours and longer, depending on how many airplanes arrive at the same time, the number of customs officials on duty, etc. Searches by customs officials are generally cursory and on a spot-check basis; extensive searches of Americans are rare.

Customs Declarations

Each traveler to Russia must complete a customs declaration to enter the country and another, identical form in order to leave. Each person should have his or her own declaration, even married couples: should your plans change and you have to leave the country separately, the departure process will be much smoother this way. The customs declaration must usually be presented in order to change money, and you must not lose this document, for *it cannot be replaced*. Information entered on customs declarations should be correct and as precise as possible; this applies particularly to money and any valuables you are carrying with you. When filling out the second form prior to leaving Russia, you should check carefully to see that the lists of valuables on the two forms match—discrepancies in these lists on the two forms can lead to confiscation of the item(s) in question.

Completing Customs Declaration Forms

Full Name: enter your full name, exactly as it appears in your passport.

Citizenship: If you are a U.S. citizen, write *U.S.A.*; citizens of other countries should enter the name of the appropriate country.

Arriving from: Write the name of the country where the flight on the last leg of your journey originated—*U.S.A., Finland, Germany*, etc.

Country of Destination: Write *Russia*.

Purpose of Visit: If your visa is on yellowish paper, write *Tourism*. If your visa is on blue paper, write *Business*.

My luggage (including hand luggage) submitted for Customs inspection consists of _____ pieces: write the total number of pieces you have. For 1 suitcase and 1 carry-on, for example, write 2. Women's purses should not be counted.

Items I-IV: Write *None* in each blank.

V. Currency: Here you must declare the money you are carrying with you, cash separately from traveller's checks. Count each carefully and write the amount in numbers and in words (there is no need to count coins). If you have currency in addition to dollars, such as Deutschmarks, these currencies must be listed separately.

This is also the section where valuables (jewelry made of precious metals and/or stones, cameras, etc.) should be itemized. Be sure to list wedding rings. You do not have to enter the values of these items: the number and description, such as "1 gold ring" will suffice. Do not list costume jewelry or watches that are not made of precious metals. If you run out of space, flip the form over and continue in the section under the heading **FOR OFFICIAL USE, Part A. Cleared on entry to (exit from) the U.S.S.R.:**

VI. U.S.S.R. rubles, other currency, payment vouchers, valuables, and any objects belonging to other persons: Write *None*.

I also declare that my luggage sent separately consists of _____ pieces: Write *None* unless you are shipping something that is arriving later on a separate flight, by boat, etc.

(Date) _____ 198 _____ Owner of luggage _____: Sign and date the form. Enter the date using the following pattern: 19 March 1994.

Again, make sure the customs official stamps this form before you leave the customs area. The form is not valid without this stamp. Upon departure from Russia, you may wish to copy all the information directly from the form you completed upon arrival (changing the countries of arrival, destination, date, and different amount of money, as appropriate) to be sure that you do not omit any valuables.

COMPLETED SAMPLE CUSTOMS DECLARATION FORM (FRONT)

T-6
Англ.

Keep for the duration of your stay in the U.S.S.R. or abroad. Not renewable in case of loss.

Persons giving false information in the Customs Declaration, or to Customs officers shall render themselves liable under laws of the U.S.S.R.

CUSTOMS DECLARATION

Full name STEVEN DOUGLAS JONES
Citizenship U.S.A.
Arriving from FINLAND
Country of destination RUSSIA
Purpose of visit BUSINESS
(business, tourism, private, etc.)

My luggage (including hand luggage) submitted for Customs inspection consists of 2 pieces.

With me and in my luggage I have:

- I. Weapons of all descriptions and ammunition NONE
II. Narcotics and appliances for the use thereof NONE
III. Antiques and objects of art (paintings, drawings, icons, sculptures, etc.) NONE
IV. U.S.S.R. rubles, U.S.S.R. State Loan bonds, Soviet lottery tickets NONE

V. Currency other than U.S.S.R. rubles (bank notes, exchequer bills, coins), payment voucher (cheques, bills, letters of credit, etc.), securities (shares, bonds, etc.) in foreign currencies, precious metals (gold, silver, platinum, metals of platinum group) in any form or condition, crude and processed natural precious stones (diamonds, brilliants, rubies, emeralds, sapphires and pearls), jewelry and other articles made of precious metals and precious stones, and scrap thereof, as well as property papers:

Description	Amount / quantity		For official use
	in figures	in words	
U.S. Dollars	<u>500</u>	<u>FIVE HUNDRED</u>	
Pounds Sterling			
French Francs			
Deutschemarks			
<u>US TRAVELLERS CHECKS</u>	<u>500</u>	<u>FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS</u>	
<u>1 GOLD RING</u>			
<u>1 PORTABLE COMPUTER</u>			

VI. U.S.S.R. rubles, other currency, payment vouchers, valuables and any objects belonging to other persons NONE

I am aware that, in addition to the objects listed in the Customs Declaration, I must submit for inspection: printed matter, manuscripts, films, sound recordings, postage stamps, graphics, etc., plants, fruits, seeds, live animals and birds, as well as raw foodstuffs of animal origin and slaughtered fowl.

I also declare that my luggage sent separately consists of NONE pieces.

(Date) 19 MARCH 198 94

Owner of luggage

[Signature]
(signed)

COMPLETED SAMPLE CUSTOMS DECLARATION FORM (BACK)

FOR OFFICIAL USE

A. Cleared on entry to (exit from) the U.S.S.R.:

No.	Description of objects	Quantity (in words)
	1 SILVER WATCH	
	1 VIDEO CAMERA	

B. Cleared Rbls. _____ with/without authorization to spend or change abroad
Customs clearance

BANK RECORDS

Purchase of foreign currency							
Date	Foreign currency	Rubles	Name of bank	Date	Foreign currency	Rubles	Name of bank
Re exchange of unexpended rubles							

Внешторгиздат. Изд. № 1533 М
ВТИ. Зак. 4764

PACKING CHECK-LIST

- Passport, visa, and photocopies of each (pack photocopies separate from originals)
- Airline tickets
- Photocopies of any credit cards you are taking and lost card contact numbers
- Prescription medications and gynecological supplies
- Glasses/contacts, as well as a back-up set and a copy of your prescription
- Health plan/insurance card and related information

Do not pack any travel documents, necessary medicines, or glasses in your checked luggage.

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

Calling Russia

Country code for Russia: 7

To direct dial Moscow from the States, for example, dial:

011-7-095 and the telephone number.

(In the U.S., pressing the "#" key on a touch-tone phone after all the other numbers helps the system place the call more quickly.)

Moscow

Area code for Moscow: 095

United States Embassy
Novinskiy Bul'var 19/23 (formerly
Ulitsa Chaikovskogo)
After hours duty officer

Tel. 252-24-50 through
252-24-59

252-1898 or 255-5123

Consular Section

Tel. 255-09-30, 255-51-14,
255-48-62

Medical Treatment
American Medical Center
3 Smitovskiy Proezd

Tel. 256-82-12, 256-83-78

International Health Care (24 hours)
Gruzinsky Pereulok 3, Korpus 2

Tel. 253-07-03, 253-07-04

Medical Interline (Dental)
Intourist Hotel
Ulitsa Tverskaya 5, Room 2030

Tel. 203-95-53

Lost/Stolen Credit Cards
IntourCreditCard

Tel. 284-47-16, -48-05, -47-94
Fax 200-12-43, 203-98-69

American Express
Sadovo-Kudrinskaya, 21a

Tel. 254-43-05, 245-44-95

St. Petersburg

Area code for St. Petersburg: 812

United States Consulate General
Ulitsa Furshtadskaya 15 (formerly Ulitsa
Petra Lavrova)
After hours duty officer

Tel. 275-1701

Tel. 274-86-92

Medical
Finnish medical clinic
Fontanka, 77

Tel. 310-96-11

Lost/Stolen Credit Cards
American Express
in the Grand Hotel Europe

Tel. 315-74-87; 315-65-17

Vladivostok

Area code for Vladivostok is 4232

United States Consulate General
Mordovtseva, 12

Tel. 258-458 or 266-734

SUGGESTED READING AND VIEWING FOR RUSSIAN CROSS-CULTURAL TRAINING

Books and Articles

- Aksyonov, Vassily. *In Search of Melancholy Baby* (New York: Random House, 1987). Aksyonov is an extremely popular contemporary Russian writer; this insightful book details his experience as an emigre establishing himself in the United States.
- Billington, James. *The Icon and the Axe: An Interpretive History of Russian Culture* (New York: Vintage Press, 1970). A lengthy study on the culture of the former Soviet Union and Old Russia.
- Fisher, Roger, and William Ury. *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1981). This book is the product of the famous Harvard Negotiations Project, and has excellent material on negotiation strategies.
- Gerhart, Geneva. *The Russian's World: Life and Language* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1974). Although dated in some respects, Gerhart's book provides a sound overview of everyday life and the "material" experience of living in traditional Russia and the Soviet Union. Of special interest to those studying the Russian language.
- Hall, Edward T. *Beyond Culture* (New York: Anchor Books/Doubleday, 1989).
- _____. *The Silent Language* (New York: Anchor Books/Doubleday, 1990).
- _____. *The Dance of Life: The Other Dimension of Time* (New York: Anchor Books/Doubleday, 1989). Edward Hall is an anthropologist and perhaps America's foremost authority on culture and cultural differences. His books are informative and very readable, and focus on theory and the hidden mechanisms by which culture is expressed.
- Harris, Philip R., and Robert T. Moran. *Managing Cultural Differences*, third edition (Houston: Gulf Publishing Company, 1991). This book is directed towards managers working in the international business environment and deals with human resources and effectiveness in intercultural situations.
- Hosking, Geoffrey. *The First Socialist Society* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990). An excellent introduction to the history of the former USSR.

Kopkind, Andrew. "From Russia with Love and Squalor," *The Nation* vol. 256, no. 2 (January 18, 1993). This article can be read to offset the "datedness" of many older but important works on Russia and the Soviet Union.

Noble, John, and John King. *USSR, A Travel Survival Kit* (Berkeley: Lonely Planet Publications, 1991). Currently there are many fine guides for the traveller to Russia, but none handles the nuts-and-bolts of travel as well as this book.

Massie, Suzanne. *Land of the Firebird* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1980). Although a bit impressionistic in its treatment of Russian history, this book has much solid material on Russian folkways, culture, and traditions.

Richmond, Yale. *From Nyet to Da: Understanding the Russians* (Yarmouth, Maine: Intercultural Press, 1992). This short book provides an overview of Russian culture and the differences between Russian and American cultures. It has a handful of factual errors and is somewhat dated, but the material on culture is first rate. If you only have time to read one book, this is the one to choose.

Film and Video

BBC Series *The Second Russian Revolution* (6- and 7-tape set). Although the focus of this series is political rather than cultural, it offers a wealth of information about recent events in Russia and has much remarkable footage.

The following films were made in Russia. *Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears* is really about the Soviet period, but is very rich in its exposition of daily life and the rhythm of life in Russia. The other films are all recent and present solid, if sobering, images of life in Russia today and social interaction.

A Forgotten Tune on the Flute (Eldar Ryazanov, director, 1988).

Little Vera (Vasily Pichul, director, 1989).

Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears (Vladimir Menshov, director, 1980).

Taxi Blues (Pavel Loungine, director, 1991).

