



CULTUREGUIDE

RUSSIA

SERIES 1
SECONDARY (7-12)



BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY
KENNEDY CENTER
FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

RUSSIA CULTUREGUIDE

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WHY STUDY CULTURES?

For most of us, cultures are misunderstood; they are nebulous, vague, and hidden. Like the famous iceberg analogy, we know that most of what a culture is cannot be seen. But what does that mean? And why, then, should we study cultures if we do not know what we're studying in the first place?

In the late twentieth century, Brigham Young University did not embrace a new discipline, but rather a new area of study—the study of cultures. Typically, anthropology is the social science that studies cultures. Why should they have all the fun? The study of cultures unites other academic disciplines (as needed), drawing upon literature, political science, sociology, and even the more applied areas of nursing, social work, law, and business. The study of cultures has grown into nothing short of a revolt against disciplines, “a mode of inquiry” that looks at things in new ways.¹

In 1982, the David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies established International Outreach as a formal program to help build bridges of intercultural understanding. Since then, more than 10,000 *gratis* cultural presentations have been given to local area public schools, taking students to new places using language, multimedia, and imagination. *CultureGuides* derive from the same expertise that has been honed in classrooms—with the exciting exception that these intercultural learning tools are not geographically bound. Thanks to the Internet, accessible multimedia technology, and our trusty iMAC, a limitless audience can learn about different cultures.

Globalization, the driving paradigm of the post-Cold War world, means that now, more than ever, culture matters. Culture is the invisible context that may keep us from understanding important people, places, and ideas; it exists whether or not we think about it. Intercultural education can help us, not only as an intellectual exercise, but also in very practical ways to combat racism, to expand business, and to communicate effectively.

CultureGuides share the same aim as Edward T. Hall, the eminent cultural scholar, to try and “make culture real.”² Even though our “student guides” are not present in every classroom, we hope that *CultureGuides* will make classrooms of the mind and cultural laboratories wherever you may reside.

¹ Ziauddin Sardar and Borin Van Loon. *Introducing Cultural Studies*, Totem Books, New York: 1998.

² *The Edge: The E-Journal of Intercultural Relations*, Summer 1998, Vol. 1(3) Posted 10/11/98, <http://interculturalrelations.com/v1i3Summer1998/sum98sorrellshall.htm>.

TRADITIONS

RUSSIAN FOLK MUSIC

Russian music—folk, popular, and religious—tells of the struggles, triumphs, and heritage of people who take great pride in their past. Folk music is a reflection of customs and traditions that have lasted through many centuries. Folk music is not only a form of entertainment, but also a way of teaching about the Russian way of life.



Starting Points

1. Listen to a selection of Russian folk music (**see Additional Resources**). Ask students what they feel or think about when they listen to this music?
2. How do folk songs reflect a particular view of the past? Are folk songs an important part of America's past? What feelings do these songs evoke in people?
3. Consider the current political/economic situation in Russia. Why does folk music continue to be so popular? As you study Russian folk music, think about how reminders of the past help people understand the present and anticipate the future.



Information

Russia, Music, and the Past

Russians are proud of their traditions, and their history is very important to them. The first Russian state, *Kiev Rus*, emerged in Europe around 800 C.E. During the next thousand years, this state conquered vast territory, and many nations came under its rule. As a result, the Russian culture became diverse and vibrant. Today, people remember the past and preserve the ideas, heritage, customs, and traditions that accompany it. Russian ideology includes the idea that a person learns and lives from the past; the future is only an extension of past experiences.

It is only natural, therefore, that the traditions of Russian music reflect the past. Russian people love gathering to listen to music, sing, and play the piano or guitar. Nearly every Russian is taught songs of the past at an early age. This love of music is evident in the many Russian folk, religious, and children's songs, as well as in the contemporary pop music throughout the country.

The Balalaika

The *balalaika* is an instrument that has been played by Russian peasants for hundreds of years (**see Traditions Visual 1**). The balalaika is a triangular, three or six-stringed, guitar-like instrument, which was so popular in Russia that it is still considered the national instrument. The body of the balalaika is beautifully decorated with designs and pictures. Russians enjoy both the visual and musical beauty of their instruments.

Folk Songs

Historically, Russia was governed by a small group of the aristocracy. Many of the people were poor, uneducated serfs. They often sang and danced to help them forget the burdens of serfdom. The subjects of these songs included stories of love and life, and ranged from tales of pulling barges up the Volga River to stories of daring heroes who fought for the freedom of the serfs. Many Russian folk songs are about peasant life, life in the countryside, or simply the love of the people for their homeland. All reflect the Russian values of hard work, love, and entertainment (see **Traditions Visual 2**).

Church Music

The music of the Russian Orthodox Church is dramatically different from Russian folk music, but it also plays an important part in Russian culture. Until the mid 1700s, almost all Russian music was vocal music written for church worship services. Because the orthodox priests believed that only the human voice could reach heaven, all church music is *a cappella*, or voices with no accompaniment. This belief was so strong that no instruments were allowed inside the church. Choirs today sing beautiful music in eight-to-twelve-part harmonies, without using a piano or other instruments. In the monasteries, the monks sing praises to their Lord in the same unaccompanied style.



Activities

1. Prepare a marketing scheme for a Russian music festival. Choose a slogan that reflects the importance of folk music to the Russian people. Prepare television, radio, newspaper, brochure, and/or poster advertisements that emphasize the authenticity and fun of the festival.
2. Write your own Russian folk song. You may choose to start with a melody you know and rewrite the lyrics to reflect traditional Russian themes.
3. Research American and Russian folk music. Write a paper comparing and contrasting the musical elements, themes, and purposes of various folk songs.
4. Choose a song that reflects your own recent or distant past. Give a short presentation explaining why you chose this song.



Discussion Questions

1. What is the importance of music in Russian culture? Does music play the same role in your culture as it does in Russian culture? Why or why not?
2. How do folk songs reflect Russian ideals and history? Does listening to folk music help you to better understand other aspects of Russian culture?
3. What are some reasons that no instruments are allowed inside Russian Orthodox churches? What does this say about the Russian attitude toward religion?
4. What other ideals might be expressed in Russian music?

FOLKLORE & LANGUAGE

THE CYRILLIC ALPHABET

The Russian language is based on the Cyrillic alphabet. Over time, the alphabet has evolved to reflect the culture and language of the Russian people, and this language has become an integral part of the Russian national identity. By learning about the language and its history, we can begin to appreciate the great pride Russians have in their homeland.



Starting Points

1. Watch a clip of the movie *Anastasia* (see **Additional Resources**). Notice the pride and respect the grandmother has for her motherland. This pride is a defining element of the Russian people and is reflected in their attitudes as well as their language.
2. Why is it significant that Russians refer to their country as “the Motherland?” What kinds of feelings does this title bring to mind?
3. Think of how language defines people’s identity. What comes to mind when you hear Spanish? French? German? What traits do you associate with these languages? Russians consider their language a reflection of their own national identity. As you study the Russian language, consider why this is significant.



Information

History of the Russian Language

In order to better appreciate the complexity of the Russian language, it is important to understand Russian history. There are many Slavic languages spoken in Southern and Eastern Europe, including Ukrainian, Polish, Serbo-Croatian, Czech, and Russian. The Slavs first appeared on the European continent in the sixth century. They later split into various groups, and the original Proto-Slavonic language became the foundation of the variety of the Slavic languages spoken today.

The letters of the Cyrillic alphabet were probably developed by two Greek missionaries, Cyril and Methodius, to aid in the translation of religious texts into Slavic languages. Most people credit the creation of the Russian alphabet, derived from the Greek alphabet, to Cyril, after whom it was named. The modern Russian Orthodox Church still uses an older form of the Russian alphabet that is more closely related to this early Slavonic. After the October Revolution in 1917, the Russian alphabet was simplified by government leaders who removed some elements of the Russian language.

The Cyrillic Alphabet

The Russian alphabet is phonetic. With few exceptions, Russian words are spelled just as they sound, so if a word is marked with corresponding stress marks and accents, it can be sounded out quite easily (see **Folklore & Language Visual 1**).



Activities

1. Play Russian hangman. “Translate” English words into the Cyrillic alphabet and try to guess the words by choosing individual letters. Can you do it without looking at the pronunciation key?
2. Design a nameplate using Cyrillic letters to spell your name. Reproduce the sound of your name as closely as possible, keeping in mind that the Russian alphabet is phonetic.
3. Learn a few basic Russian phrases (see **Folklore & Language Visual 2**) and practice writing them using the Cyrillic alphabet. Afterward, you may want to perform a small role play using the phrases you have learned.
4. Write a few short phrases using the Cyrillic alphabet. Divide into teams to see who can discover the secret message first.



Discussion Questions

1. How is Russian different from English? How do these differences affect the communication process between the two cultures?
2. How can understanding the history of the Russian language help us better understand the Russian culture?
3. In what ways is Russian more difficult to learn and understand than English? In what ways is it easier?
4. What are some of the phrases you think would be most important to learn when visiting Russia? Why?

FOOD

THE FLAVOR OF RUSSIA

Russia's climate and economic structure directly affect the methods of production and preservation of food. As there is much interdependence between the economy and agriculture, one may better understand the traditional Russian way of life by studying their attitudes about food.



Starting Points

1. Make or purchase Russian food such as *borsch* or *pilmyeni*. What are the students' impressions?
2. Ask the students if their families have gardens. Have they ever had to rely on a garden to feed the family? What kinds of food would they be limited to if they only ate what they grew?
3. Have students write down a typical daily menu. As you study Russian food, have students compare the Russian diet with their own. Look for specific reasons that may account for similarities and differences.



Information

The Russian Diet

Most Russian food is homemade. Women begin making dinner shortly after they return from work each day. The Russian diet is, for the most part, based on simple foods that are suitable for production in Russia's climate. Vegetables that can be stored during the winter, including cucumbers, tomatoes, beets, onions, radishes, and cabbage, are the most common. Beef, chicken, pork, and fish are popular main dishes. Fruit is extremely expensive because it does not grow well in Russia's climate, and so is rarely eaten.

Perhaps one of the most common foods in Russia, *borsch*, is made with a meat broth and vegetables, including shredded cabbage and beets, which give the soup a dark red color. A small amount of sour cream is usually added just before serving. If *borsch* is not part of a meal, it is likely that some other soup will be served. Russians feel that a meal is not complete without soup, and it is unacceptable to serve soup without bread.

Bread is so important that it has been incorporated into various elements of Russian customs. For example, bread and salt are always presented upon the arrival of an important visitor as a sign of openness and hospitality. Russian bread, like many European breads, is heavier than the bread most Americans are accustomed to. Russians make and eat white bread, wheat bread, round bread, square bread, long round bread, and flat bread, but Russia is especially known for its dark, rich, black

rye bread. For Russians, fresh bread has always been a delight. It is unheard of to add preservatives or additives to prolong the life of a loaf. This means that most people stop daily at a local bread store.

Most Russian produce is grown at individual summer homes called *dachas* (see **Food Visual 1**). Many families spend the warm months between April and October living in and maintaining a dacha. Staple foods such as potatoes, onions, and cabbages grow well in Russia, despite its harsh climate. Many Russians will either grow these foods in their own gardens, or buy them at an inexpensive local open market. After Russians have harvested their produce, many preserve the surplus in jars. This means that many pots of borsch come from preserved ingredients.

Cabbage is frequently used in Russian cooking because it is easy to grow and fairly inexpensive. Russians make cabbage soup, cabbage pie, cabbage dumplings, and cabbage salads. The most popular cabbage dish is cabbage soup, or *shchi*. It is made with chicken broth, chopped carrots, onions, some kind of meat, and lots of cabbage.

Potatoes are another staple food that is plentiful in Russia. Russians use potatoes to make *perashkee* (which look like scones). Older women (*babooshkas*) make perashkee in the morning and sell it on street corners throughout the day. Another food made from potatoes is *varenikee*. Varenikee are like ravioli with potatoes inside. Russians like to put butter and sour cream on it.

Russians also consume a lot of dairy products. Milk, cheese, and sour cream are common at almost every meal. *Tvorog* is a dairy product similar to cottage cheese, but with less liquid. It can be eaten on its own, used as a filling, or added as an ingredient to many other dishes. In addition to dairy products, Russians traditionally eat a lot of meat; however, economic problems in recent years have limited its consumption.

Pilmyeni are similar to ravioli, filled with ground beef or pork that is mixed with various seasonings and then formed into small dumplings from one to three inches in diameter. Unlike ravioli, dough for the dumplings is more like bread dough than pasta. *Pelmyeni* are boiled and served with sour cream. Russians use various methods of preservation to keep their food during the winter months. Hundreds of *pilmyeni* are made at a time and then placed out on the frozen ground to freeze. They are stored until needed and then added to a hot broth, making the soup heartier and more filling in the cold winter months. *Pilmyeni* accompany many meals, sometimes as an appetizer, and sometimes as part of the main dish. Today *pilmyeni* have also become a popular fast food dish and are served in cafeterias around the country. It is traditional for many people to brag about how many *pilmyeni* they can eat in one sitting, occasionally extending into the hundreds.

The Russian Market

Only since the fall of the Soviet Union have stores similar to American supermarkets appeared in Russia. However, these stores are often quite small, lack fresh produce, and carry mostly imported luxury goods that the average Russian cannot afford. Most shopping is still done in the outdoor market (see **Food Visual 2**). A large city will have various markets, but nearly all cities have one large market in the central area of the city.

The market is often divided into various areas of selling: fruits and vegetables, meats, dairy products, and prepackaged goods. Because the goods brought to the market are sold by many different vendors, each item must be purchased separately. This can greatly extend the amount of time it takes to go shopping because a grocery list may contain items that require the buyer to go to many different areas of the market. Another outcome of this system is that produce prices and availability tend to increase and decrease dramatically from season to season. The system can also make purchases difficult because vendors change places and offer different products. Before buying a product, the buyer must first find the vendors who actually have what they are looking for, and then compare prices.

Many people spend their summers working at their dachas, returning in the fall to sell their fruits and vegetables at their local markets. In many Russian neighborhoods, there are smaller open-air markets where people set up booths to sell their goods. Meat, bread, dairy, pasta, rice, flour, and juices are also sold here. Early in the morning, trucks stop at these markets to deposit large bags of products. People sell food in the rain, snow, heat, and cold. At about eight or nine o'clock in the evening, merchants either box up what didn't sell or load the products back onto the trucks for the night. They then return early the next morning to start all over again.

Recipe for Borsch

You will need:

3 C potatoes, peeled and cubed	sour cream
1/2 tsp each dill, parsley, thyme	2 qt beef broth*
3 C cabbage, shredded	Russian black bread
1 T garlic powder	2 tomatoes, peeled and cubed
1/2 C onions, minced	6 T red wine vinegar
salt to taste	2 bay leaves
3 C beets, grated	12 peppercorns
2 T butter, lard, or oil	large pot and frying pan
1 C carrots, grated	

Preparation

1. Boil potatoes.
2. While potatoes are boiling, chop cabbage and onion and fry in oil.
3. Add grated carrots and beets to the frying mixture. Cabbage should be tender when the potatoes are about done (which is about the same time it takes to peel and grate the carrots and beets).
4. Drain potatoes and add to broth.
5. Add vegetables to beef broth.
5. Bring to a boil.
6. Add tomatoes, vinegar, and seasonings. Let simmer at least 45 minutes.
7. Serve hot with a spoonful of sour cream.

Yield: approximately 36 servings

Slice bread, and cut each slice in half vertically so that it fits in one hand while you eat your soup with the other.

**The easiest way to make beef broth is to use beef bullion. Follow the directions on the package for 2 quarts of beef broth. If you don't want to use bullion, buy soup bones at the grocery store and boil them until the flavor reaches desired strength, usually 2–3 hours.*

Some tasty variations include adding one cup of kidney beans, chopped pickles, green peppers, or parsley root to the borsch.

Recipe for Russian Salad

You will need:

5 potatoes	1 can peas
5 carrots	1 T salt
4 eggs	1 tsp pepper
2 onions	1 C mayonnaise
1 12 oz jar dill pickles	

Preparation

1. Boil potatoes and carrots until soft. Cool, peel, and chop into small pieces.
2. Boil eggs, peel, and cut into small pieces.
3. Chop onions and pickles.
4. Combine all ingredients in large bowl.
5. Add salt, pepper, and mayonnaise.
6. Chill and serve.

Recipe for Pilmyeni (Siberian Dumplings)

You will need:

6 C bleached flour	2 eggs
1 lb ground sausage	2–3 medium onions, diced
2 tsp salt	2 C cold water
1 1/2 lbs ground beef	salt to taste

Preparation

Dough

1. Combine flour and salt in large bowl.
2. Add eggs and beat. Continue to stir mixture while slowly adding water.
3. Mix until dough forms a ball (it will be like bread dough).
4. Place dough on a floured surface and knead until dough is smooth.
5. Cover and let stand until ready to use.

Filling

1. In another large bowl, combine sausage, beef, and onions. Mix thoroughly. Add salt.
2. Divide dough into several small balls. Place dough ball on a floured surface and roll into a very thin layer, making sure dough doesn't tear. With a round cookie cutter or cup, cut dough into 2-inch circles.
3. In a large pot, or a few small pots, bring some water to a boil.

4. On the cut-out circles of dough, place a teaspoon of filling on one half. Fold the other half of dough over and pinch the edges shut. Seal the edges by pressing the tines of a fork all the way around the edges.
5. Carefully drop the formed pilmyeni into the boiling water, stirring occasionally, until thoroughly cooked (about eight minutes).
6. Serve with sour cream and enjoy!

Recipe for *Bleeni* (Russian Pancakes)

You will need:

1/2 C water	1 T butter, melted
1/2 C milk	2 eggs
1 C flour	1 1/4 C raisins
1/2 tsp salt	2 T sour cream
1 egg	1/4 C sugar

Preparation

1. Mix water, milk, flour, salt, and 1 egg in bowl. Beat until smooth.
2. Add 1 T melted butter to batter.
3. Pour 1/4 C batter into heated skillet. Tip pan to spread the batter.
4. Cook until light brown, turn, and brown other side.
5. Repeat with remaining batter, adding butter to skillet as needed.
6. For topping, blend the eggs, raisins, sour cream, and sugar.

Recipe for Varenekee

You will need:

1 C milk	5–6 C mashed potatoes (you may want to add grated cheese and/or chopped onions and mushrooms that have been sauteed in oil)
1 egg	
dash of salt	
3–4 C flour	

Preparation

1. Combine milk, salt, and egg.
2. Add flour until dough is firm. It should stick together and handle easily.
3. Place dough on a floured surface and roll to approximately 1/4 inch thick.
4. Cut dough into circles with a glass or cookie cutter.
5. Place a spoonful of potatoes on one half of the dough. Fold other half over and seal the edges.
6. Add these dumplings to boiling water and cook for 3 minutes, stirring so that they do not stick to the pan.

Note: If you want to save varenekee until later, completely cover them in flour, place in plastic bag (uncooked) and freeze.



Activities

1. Cook and eat a Russian meal. You may want to go to a local specialty store and purchase Russian bread to go with your soup.
2. Market Day Simulation. You will need: 1) A shopping list for each group member with five or six of the items discussed in the *rynok* section including bread, dairy, vegetables, meat, and packaged goods; 2) Twenty-five rubles cut out of paper for each individual consisting of three 5p coins, three 2p coins, and four 1p coins (the Russian “r” for ruble looks like an English “p”); 3) Cans of food, wooden blocks, or other heavy goods; 4) A *paket* (plastic shopping bag) for each participant. Set up ten to twelve booths on desks or tables, and designate group members as salespeople for each.

Some suggested prices:

1 kg of beets: 6 rubles	1 kg of sugar: 16 rubles
1 kg of chicken: 18 rubles	250 g of cheese: 9 rubles
1 kg of potatoes: 8 rubles	1 kg of macaroni: 10 rubles
1 kg of pork: 15 rubles	10 eggs: 6 rubles
1 head of cabbage: 3 rubles	1 kg of beef: 24 rubles
250 g of butter: 1 ruble	

These prices are not unrealistic, but they are rather high for a twenty-five ruble budget. Encourage participants to haggle over prices. Also, remind them that they don’t have to buy a whole kilogram. At the market, salespeople frequently cut portions of meat and cheese, open packages, and hand out individual eggs. After fifteen minutes, switch roles. If you run out of food, just remember, that is part of Russia, too.

3. Pretend you are going to open a Russian restaurant. After doing additional research on Russian foods, design a menu. Each dish should include a short explanation as well as an interesting fact about the history or preparation of the dish.



Discussion Questions

1. How is Russian food different from a common American diet? Why do these differences exist?
2. What kinds of food would you not have if you only ate what you could grow or make yourself?
3. What are some of the advantages of buying fresh foods daily from a local market? What are some of the disadvantages?
4. How does Russia’s food reflect the traditions and values of the Russian people? What does your diet say about your culture?

CROSS-CULTURAL CONTRIBUTIONS

RUSSIA AND THE ARTS

Russian people enjoy the color and variety that music and painting add to their lives. Russian arts have been greatly influenced by the conditions of everyday life, which is evident by the prevalent peasant and folk themes. The appreciation of Russian arts has spread throughout the world, and many people recognize Russia's contributions to the arts as a symbol of their love of beauty and creativity.



Starting Points

1. Listen to an audio recording of a Russian composition, or watch a segment of Walt Disney's *Fantasia* (see **Additional Resources**). Do the students recognize this music? Russian composers have contributed much to the field of music.
2. Ask others to share their knowledge of arts and music from other countries and cultures. Think specifically of art and music that have roots in folk traditions. What classical music or art is based on folk themes?
3. As you study Russian contributions to the arts, make a list of the works about which you learn. Have the students heard of these before? If not, find copies of a few, and think about why these works are considered great.



Information

Ballets and Symphonies

During the late 1800s, Russian music flourished not only in Russia but also throughout the world. Composers like Tchaikovsky and Musorgsky (*Night on Bald Mountain* and *Pictures at an Exhibition*) wrote operas, ballets, symphonies, and concertos that were recognized worldwide. Much of this music is based on Russian history or folklore and contains distinct Russian sounds.

Russian composers first began incorporating traditional themes into their compositions in a nationalistic effort to promote patriotism. Michail Glinka composed the first Russian opera initiating the use of traditional elements in musical compositions and quickly became the ideal Russian composer. Soon, many Russian composers adapted this approach in their composition efforts.

Partly due to the work of these composers, the Russian ballet became internationally famous during the 1800s. In their dancing, Russian performers reflected the talent of the composers and the beauty of the stories. They spent long, exhaustive hours preparing and practicing. Russian ballet continues to be admired for skill and grace.

Peter Ilich Tchaikovsky

Born in a small Russian settlement in 1840, Peter Ilich Tchaikovsky became familiar with Russian folk songs during his childhood as his mother sang them in his home.

He began composing at a fairly young age while living alternately in Russia and western Europe, and produced a wide variety of works which include the 1812 Overture and the ballets *Sleeping Beauty*, *Swan Lake*, and *The Nutcracker*.

In most of Tchaikovsky's works, he utilized a wide variety of traditional elements, including national songs, folk melodies and harmonies, and historical themes. For example, in one of his symphonies, he incorporated a simple harmony that he heard his house servants singing. Tchaikovsky's immersion into the peasant life allowed a more subtle and natural permeation of his compositions with traditional elements. He did not, however, adhere as stringently to clear Russian national composing style as his contemporaries. As a result, he was severely criticized by his peers for his lack of gaudy expressions of Russian folk themes in his compositions.

Russian Art

Between the tenth and seventeenth centuries, Russian painting received minimal influence from the common people. Artists were commissioned by aristocrats to produce religious icons, wall paintings, and mosaics for the interiors of churches. Although a finite change in Russian painting styles did not occur until the turn of the century, Russian attitudes toward painting began to evolve by the mid 1800s. Art schools were established in Moscow and St. Petersburg. It was not until the seventeenth century, however, that new styles and forms of painting emerged to replace the religious works. One of the most distinct folk styles is painted woodwork.

In the village of Palekh, artisans painted and lacquered wooden boxes. Often their paintings depicted churches, hunting scenes, battles, fairy tales, and decorative patterns (see **Cross-cultural Contributions Visual 1**). Today, lacquer boxes are treasured all over Russia and throughout the world for their beautiful facades.

Wooden bowls, spoons, and cups were also used by artisans as canvas (see **Cross-cultural Contributions Visual 2**). Like the boxes, these beautifully carved and painted dishes are more than just an art form. Even after their metamorphic change, these items are still used for their originally intended purpose, eating and drinking. Wooden spoons are given to young children in place of metal ones. The effect of this folk form of woodworking on the Russian people is immeasurable. Every home has several pieces of art which penetrate their daily lives. Furthermore, revenue created from selling items to foreign visitors is a major source of income for millions of Russian families.

Matryoshka dolls, also known as nesting dolls, further represent Russian folk arts (see **Cross-cultural Contributions Visual 3**). These treasured works of art were originally designed as childrens' toys, but soon grew in popularity as collectors' items. The dolls were traditionally depictions of women (*matryoshka* is one Russian version of "Maria"), but today, *matryoshka* dolls are painted with the faces of animals, Hollywood stars, presidents, sports teams, or even custom painted with the faces of a particular family. The dolls in **Cross-cultural Contributions Visual 3** have Russian fairy tales painted on them.

Artists added beauty and art to daily activities of common people. These innovative artists changed plain wooden boxes and ordinary household items into exquisite, beautiful works of art that added color and variety to the doldrums of peasant life. In time, these common utensils and boxes, transformed into works of art, gained national and international attention.

Authors

Russians consider Alexander Sergievich Pushkin to be the greatest of all Russian writers. He was an author, poet, and artist. Almost every Russian knows who Pushkin is, and has memorized several of his poems. Through his writing, Pushkin was instrumental in modernizing the Russian language, and his talents are recognized throughout the world. Other popular and influential Russian authors are: Feodor Dostoyevsky, who wrote *Crime and Punishment*; Ivan Turgenev, who wrote *Fathers and Sons*; and Leo Tolstoy, who wrote *War and Peace* and *Anna Karinina*.



Activities

1. Write and perform a TV news feature on a Russian art exhibit (real or fictitious). What was the purpose of the exhibit? Who was in attendance? What was displayed? Include interviews with patrons or artists. You may even want to create a few pieces of art or play some music for background effect.
2. Locate a famous piece of Russian music or art. Find out who the artist was and give a five minute presentation on the piece. You may want to include some background about the piece of art as well as the artist. Consider works not mentioned in this section.
3. Design and make your own piece of Russian art from an ordinary household item. Remember to improve the appearance of the item without damaging its utility. The item should still be useable like the Russian lacquered spoons, bowls, and cups.
4. Many artists use traditional themes and stories as the foundation of their works. For example, Aaron Copland, an American composer, is famous for his inclusion of folk tunes in many of his pieces. Identify several pieces of fine art that derive from folk art and make a poster or bulletin board entitled "From Folk Art to Fine Art" to display your discoveries. Try to include works from as many different cultures as you can.
5. Listen to a segment of *The Nutcracker*. A CD or cassette of this can be found in almost any public library, or in Walt Disney's movie *Fantasia*. Other well-known works by Tchaikovsky that you may want to find include the 1812 Overture, the Fifth and Sixth Symphonies, *Eugene Onegin*, *Swan Lake*, and *Vesper Service*.



Discussion Questions

1. What can music and art communicate that words cannot? Why are music and art valuable for these reasons?
2. Has all the art that can contribute something to the world already been created? Do you think art forms exist in the world that we do not yet know about?
3. What ordinary items do you use every day that might hold the potential of becoming works of art?
4. What can we learn about Russian culture through a study of Russian arts?
5. What influence do folklore and folk music have on the arts in the United States?

FACTS ABOUT RUSSIA

Official Name: Rossiyskaya Federatsiya
(Russian Federation)

Capital: Moscow

Government Type: federation

Area: 17,075,200 sq km

Land Boundaries: Azerbaijan, Belarus, China, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Kazakhstan, North Korea, Latvia, Lithuania, Mongolia, Norway, Poland, Ukraine

Climate: ranges from steppes in the south to humid continental in much of European Russia; subarctic in Siberia to tundra climate in the polar north; cool winters along the Black Sea coast to frigid seasons in Siberia; warm summers in the steppes to cool summers along Arctic coast

Lowest Point: Caspian Sea -28 m

Highest Point: Mount El'brus 5,633 m

Natural Resources: wide natural resource base including major deposits of oil, natural gas, coal, strategic minerals, and timber
Note: formidable obstacles of climate, terrain, and distance hinder exploitation of natural resources

Natural Hazards: permafrost over much of Siberia is a major impediment to development; volcanic activity in the Kuril Islands; volcanoes and earthquakes on the Kamchatka Peninsula

Population: 144,978,573 (July 2002 est.)

Ethnic Groups: Russian 81.5%, Tatar 3.8%, Ukrainian 3%, Chuvash 1.2%, Bashkir 0.9%, Byelorussian 0.8%, Moldavian 0.7%, other 8.1%

Religions: Russian Orthodox, Muslim, other

Languages: Russian, other

GDP: \$1.2 trillion (2001 est.)

GDP Per Capita: \$8,300 (2001 est.)

GDP Composition By Sector: agriculture 7%, industry 37%, services 56% (2001 est.)

Labor Force: 71.3 million (2001 est.)

Unemployment Rate: 8.7% (2001 est.) with considerable additional underemployment

Industries: mining and extractive industries producing coal, oil, gas, chemicals, and metals; machine-building, including rolling mills and high-performance aircraft and space vehicles; shipbuilding; road and rail transportation equipment; communications equipment; agricultural machinery, tractors, and construction equipment; electric power-generating and transmitting equipment; medical and scientific instruments; consumer durables, textiles, food-stuffs, handicrafts

Agricultural Products: grain, sugar beets, sunflower seed, vegetables, fruits, beef, milk

Exports: \$103.3 billion (2001 est.) petroleum and petroleum products, natural gas, wood and wood products, metals, chemicals, and a wide variety of civilian and military manufactures

Imports: \$51.7 billion (2001 est.) machinery and equipment, consumer goods, medicines, meat, grain, sugar, semifinished metal products

Trade Partners: Europe, North America, Japan, Ukraine, Germany, U.S., Belarus

Currency: ruble (*R*)

Exchange Rates: 30.4669 *R* = \$1 U.S.
(January 2002)

HISTORY & HOLIDAYS

TIME LINE

- 860** Cyrillic alphabet invented
- 1147** Moscow founded as defense outpost
- 1240** Kiev sacked by Mongols
- 1380** Prince Dmitri Donskoi defeats Mongols
- 1462–1505** Ivan III (Ivan the Great)
- 1480** Ivan renounces allegiance to Mongols
- 1533–1584** Ivan IV (Ivan the Terrible), virtual elimination of secular culture
- 1613–1645** Mikhail Romanov (beginning of the Romanovs)
- 1703** Saint Petersburg founded
- 1812** Russian victory over Napoleon
- 1842** Mikhail Glinka's opera *Ivan Susanin*
- 1861** Alexander II abolishes serfdom
- 1905** Revolution begins, first parliament elected
- 1909** Ballet Russes founded
- 1914–1918** WWI; Lenin and Bolsheviks seize power (1917); Nicholas II and family executed (1918)
- 1922** USSR established
- 1924–1953** Josef Stalin harnesses all economic power to the state, mandates atheism
- 1941–1945** The Great Patriotic War (WWII)
- 1957** Sputnik launched
- 1985–1991** Mikhail Gorbachev is president (perestroika)
- 1991** USSR dissolves, Boris Yeltsin becomes president
- 1999** Yeltsin resigns on New Year's Eve
- 2000** Vladimir Putin becomes president

HOLIDAYS

- 1 Jan** New Year's Day
- 7 Jan** Russian Orthodox Christmas
- 8 Mar** International Women's Day (Mother's Day and Valentine's Day)
- 1–2 May** Holiday of Spring, traditionally communist demonstrations
- 9 May** Victory Day (Commemorates the Great Patriotic War—WWII)
- 12 Jun** Russian Independence Day
- 22 Aug** Day of the Russian Federation State Flag
- 7 Nov** Day of Accord and Conciliation—Anniversary of Great October Socialist Revolution (Bolsheviks)
- 12 Dec** Constitution Day

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

RUSSIAN EMBASSY TO THE UNITED STATES

2650 Wisconsin Ave NW
Washington, D.C., 20007
Phone: (202) 298-5700, Fax: (202) 298-5735
Web site: <http://www.russianembassy.org>

RUSSIAN CULTURAL CENTRE

1825 Phelps Place, NW
Washington, D.C., 20008
Phone: (202) 265-3840, Fax: (202) 265-6040
E-mail: rcci@erols.com

BOOKS

- Amery, Heather and Kirilenko, Katrina. *First Thousand Words in Russian*, EDC Publications, 1985.
- Andre, Paul, ed. *The Great History of the Russian Ballet: Its Art and Choreography*, Parkstone Press, 1998.
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- Manus, Mavis and Volokh, Anne. *Art of Russian Cuisine*, IDG Books Worldwide, 1989.
- Montagu-Nathan, M. *Contemporary Russian Composers*. Greenwood Publishing Group, 1917.

FILM

- Anastasia*, Don Bluth, 1997.
- Fantasia*, Walt Disney, 1940.

INTERNET SITES

CIA World Factbook:

<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/>

Classical Music of St. Petersburg:

<http://www.classicalmusic.spb.ru>

Russia on the Web:

<http://www.valley.net:80/~transnat/>

Russia on the Net Site:

<http://www.ru/>

Russia-U.S. Relations:

<http://www.friends-partners.org>

Russian Phototrack:

<http://www.friends-partners.org/oldfriends/mes/russia/photo.html>

Virtual Tour of Russia:

<http://www.webzonecom.com/russia.htm>

MUSIC

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Kalinka. *Russian Folk Songs*, Dmitri Hvorostovsky and the St. Petersburg Chamber Choir. Uni/Philips, 1999.

Mussorgsky. *Pictures at an Exhibition*, Szell, Cleveland Orchestra, Sony Classics, 1992.

Rachmaninov. *Rachmaninov: Liturgy of St. John*, Moscow Chamber Chorus, MG/Melodiya, 1996.

Rimsky-Korsakov. *Scheherazade, Capriccio, Russian Easter Overture*, London philharmonic Orchestra, EMD/Seraphim, 1995.

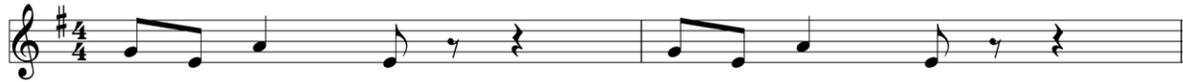
Tchaikovsky. *The Best of Tchaikovsky*, Berlin Deutsche Opera Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra, et al. BMG/RCA Victor, 1991.

Traditions Visual 1: Russian Balalaikas



Song of the Volga Boatmen

Refrain



Yo,___ heave ho! Yo,___ heave ho!



Once more, once a__gain, still__ once more.

Verse



Now we fell__ the__ stout birch tree, Now we pull__ hard:__



one, two, three. Ay da, da, ay da, Ay da, da, ay da.



Now we fell__the stout_birch tree. Yo,___heave ho!



Yo,___ heave ho! Hey, hey, let's



heave a-long the way to the sun__we__ sing__ our song.

Song of the Volga Boatmen

Refrain

Yo, heave ho! Yo, heave ho!
Once more, once again,
still once more!

Ei, ukhnem! Ei, ukhnem!
Eshche razik eshche raz!

Эй, ухнем! Эй, ухнем!
Ещё разик, ещё раз!

Verse 1

Now we fell the stout birch tree,
Now we pull hard: one, two, three.
Ay-da, da, ay-da!
Ay-da, da, ay-da!
Now we fell the stout birch tree.
Yo, heave ho!

Razov'em my beriozu,
Razov'em my kudriavu,
Ai-da, da, ai-da!
Ai-da, da, ai-da!
Razov'em my kudriavu.
Ei, ukhnem!

Разовьём мы берёзу,
Разовьём мы кудряву,
Айда, да, айда!
Айда, да, айда!
Разовьём мы кудряву.
Эй, ухнем!

Verse 2

As the barges float along,
To the sun we sing our song.
Ay-da, da, ay-da!
Ay-da, da, ay-da!
To the sun we sing our song.
Hey, hey, let's heave along the way,
To the sun we sing our song.

My po berezhku idem,
Pesniu solnyshku poyom.
Ai-da, da, ai-da!
Ai-da, da, ai-da!
Pesniu solnyshku poyom.
Ei, ei tiani kanat smelei,
Pesniu solnyshku poyom.

Мы по бережку идём,
Песню солнышку поём.
Айда, да, айда!
Айда, да, айда!
Песню солнышку поём,
Эй, эй, тяни канат смелей,
Песню солнышку поём.

Verse 3

Volga, Volga our pride.
Mighty stream so deep and wide.
Ay-da, da, ay-da!
Ay-da, da, ay-da!
Mighty stream so deep and wide.
Hey, hey, that is why we say
Volga, Volga, you're our pride.

Ekh, ty, Volga, mat'-reka.
Shiroka i glubuoka.
Ai-da, da, ai-da!
Ai-da, da, ai-da!
Shiroka i gluboka.
Ei, ei, chto nam vsevo milei,
Ekh, ty, Volga, mat'-reka.

Ах, ты, Волга, матьрека.
Широка и глубока.
Айда, да, айда!
Айда, да, айда!
Широка и глубока.
Ей, ей, что нам всего милей,
Эх, ты, Волга, матьрека.

The Cyrillic Alphabet

PRINTED LETTER	PRONUNCIATION	PRINTED LETTER	PRONUNCIATION
А а	the <i>a</i> in car	Щ щ	<i>shyeh</i> said very shortly
Б б	the <i>b</i> in bar	Ь ь	the “hard” sign (not pronounced alone)
В в	the <i>v</i> in vine	Ы ы	the <i>i</i> in pit
Г г	the <i>g</i> in good	Ь ь	the “soft” sign (not pronounced alone)
Д д	the <i>d</i> in dog	Э э	the <i>e</i> in let
Е е	<i>ye</i> as in yes	Ю ю	<i>you</i>
Ё ё	<i>yo</i> as in yonder	Я я	<i>yah</i>
Ж ж	the <i>s</i> in treasure		
З з	the <i>z</i> in zoo		
И и	<i>ee</i> as in weed		
Й й	<i>y</i> as in toy		
К к	the <i>k</i> in kite		
Л л	the <i>l</i> in lip		
М м	the <i>m</i> in man		
Н н	the <i>n</i> in no		
О о	the <i>o</i> in or		
П п	the <i>p</i> in pick		
Р р	the <i>r</i> in c		
С с	the <i>s</i> in sad		
Т т	the <i>t</i> in tiny		
У у	the <i>oo</i> as in good		
Ф ф	the <i>f</i> in fill		
Х х	the <i>h</i> in hot		
Ц ц	the <i>ts</i> as in its		
Ч ч	the <i>ch</i> in chin		
Ш ш	the <i>sh</i> in ship		

My Name in Russian.

Practice writing and saying these Russian phrases.

1. Hello! My name is Ivan.

Привет! Меня зовут Иван.

Privet! Minya zavoot Ivan.

2. What is your name?

Как вас зовут?

Kak vas zavoot?

3. How are you?

Как дела?

Kak dyela?

4. Fine thanks, and you?

Хорошо спасибо, а вас?

Horosho spasiba, ah vas?

5. Goodbye.

До свидания!

Do svidanya!

6. Yes.

Да

Da

7. No

Нет

Nyet

8. Please.

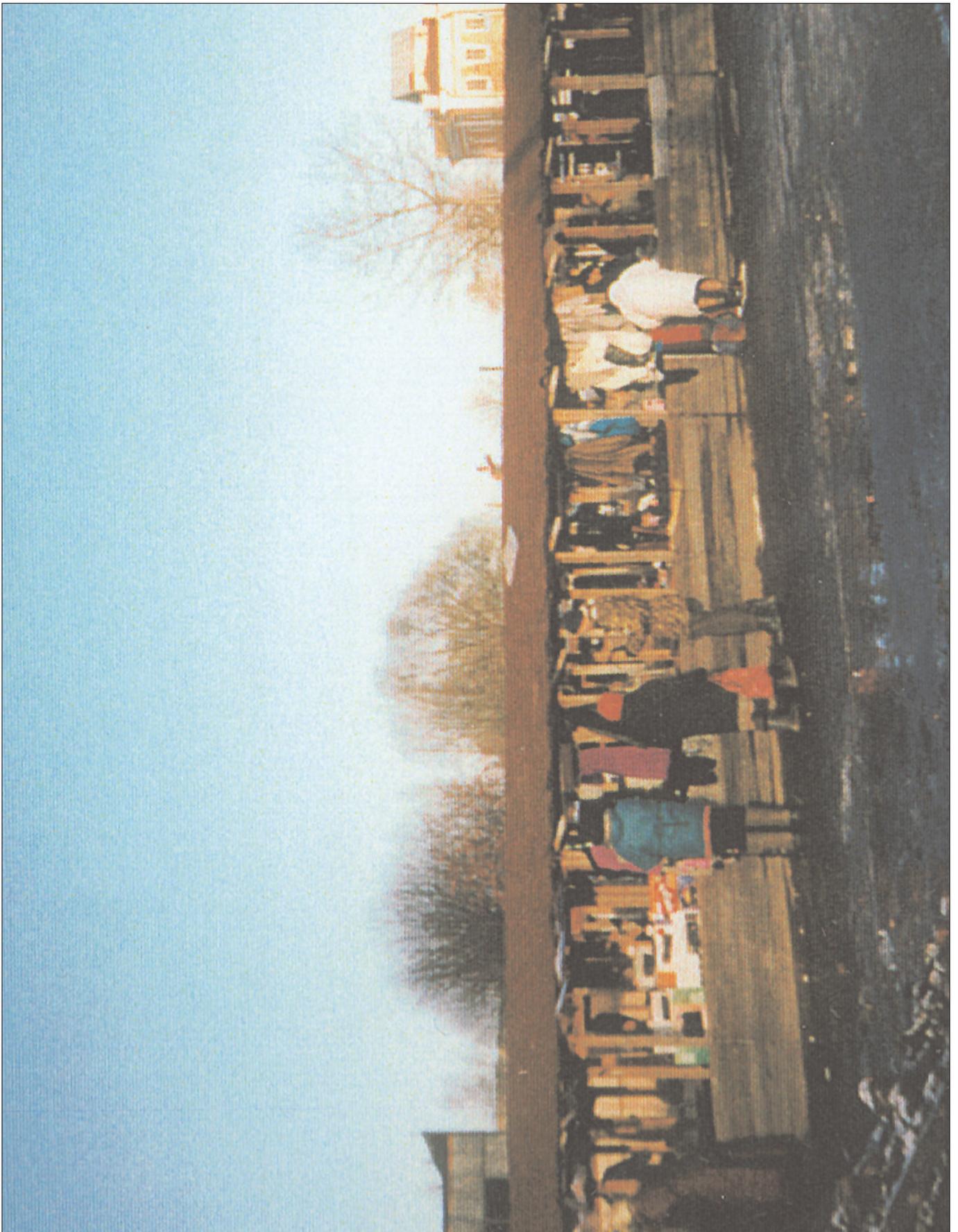
Пожалуйста

Pozhalsta

Food Visual 1: Dacha



Food Visual 2: Rynok—The Russian Market



Cross-cultural Contributions Visual 1: Doll & Lacquered Box



Cross-cultural Contributions Visual 2: Lacquered Bowl, Cups, and Spoons



Cross-cultural Contributions Visual 3: Matryoshka Dolls





FLAG OF RUSSIA

The Russian flag design was influenced by the Dutch flag, but the colors are traditional. This flag has been a part of Russia since 1883 but was suppressed under the Bolsheviks. In 1991, Boris Yeltsin reintroduced the flag, and it remains today. The white symbolizes God, the blue the Tzar, and the red the people. The Tzar is above the people, and God is above all.

Map of Russia

