

# For partying (not politics), venues abound

► MOSCOW  
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tries to get the latest political news from major media outlets, most of which are state-controlled. But that visitor can benefit from the amenities that flowed into the capital with the oil-fueled boom of the mid-2000s, and the relative improvements in safety compared with the Wild East days of the 1990s.

And it is possible to do it all in English. Many restaurants and bars have menus in English, and pretty much any place you stop has someone who speaks it.

Just after midnight, I set out from my hotel on Sretenka ulitsa, a busy radius north of the Kremlin that connects the innermost of Moscow's rings, the Boulevard Ring, with the Garden Ring. My plan was to start with anything that looked open, and Sherbet — a place across the street from my hotel — looked open. What a find: Beyond the keel arches, the carved wood interiors, the wrought iron doodads, and the hookah pipes, there was a restaurant well stocked with European wines, Middle Eastern mezze, and all-world fusion. But the prize here was the flagship of Uzbek cuisine, “plov,” a pilaf dish that combines fragrant spiced rice, carrots, fruit, and tender cubes of mutton. I laid off the hookah pipes, even though pretty much everyone else in the place was smoking them.

The next stop was a bit of a cop-out, but I needed a jolt after that heavy meal. On the corner of Sretenka and the Boulevard Ring, a stereo blasted Elvis Presley. Gleaming vinyl, primary colors, and an admirable collection of American memorabilia beckoned. TV monitors showed Bogart movies. This was the Beverly Hills Diner, and I have always been a sucker for diners, so in I went. For the record, no one tying into massive burgers and slurping malted shakes was American.

The place becomes popular after midnight as partygoers load up on calories for the evening, said Anna Schebet, night manager at the time. “We also get the exhausted people from the clubs just before breakfast,” she said, adding that the diner had a breakfast for about \$3. I drained an espresso and was on my way.

It was now past 2 a.m., and I headed west along the Boulevard Ring — not a ring, in fact, but a horseshoe-shaped chain of boulevards that extends from the Moscow River and more or less traces ancient defensive confines of the city. The leafy alleys of the boulevards provide a respite from the bustle of more heavily trafficked hours, but right now the task was



PHOTOS BY MIKHAIL GALUSTOV FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

For burgers and more, the Beverly Hills Diner is open 24 hours. For its last customer, Chaikhona No. 1 just might stay open until dawn. Among its decor are tapestries woven with portraits of Vladimir Putin and Dmitry Medvedev.

to find bustle. A sharp right turn on ulitsa Petrovka led, eventually, to the Hermitage Gardens, which contained the self-described “chill-out restaurant” Chaikhona No. 1. The terrace outside was appropriately lined with sofas with plush pillows; servers brought brightly colored woven blankets and tea, and hookahs and board games for anyone who asked.

The place's expansive menu offers such international dishes as gazpacho and carpaccio and Central Asian specialties such as mutton tongue; flaky, savory samosa pastries; and Uzbek-style “shurpo,” the meaty soup that I settled on.

The interior is less than chill, with its loud, thumping, Turkish-inflected techno-pop, and kitschy, creepy tapestries woven with portraits of Prime Minister Vladimir Putin and President Dmitry Medvedev.

I could have stayed all night on the sofa outside, or at least until the last person left, which is when Chaikhona closes. (This particular balmy night, I later learned, it was open until 5 a.m.) But it was time to go. A jet-lagged tourist might also want to dance — and party like a Muscovite. A good place to do this turned out to be Strelka Bar.

Perched on an island in the river across from the Kremlin, Rolling Stone Bar and Tattoo with overrun by young hipsters with red leather jackets, piercings, and pink hair, and slicker, professional types in suits. Drunken



revelers danced on the bar top to funky music as gruff, burly bouncers watched over the jam-packed bar. Up a stairway decorated with graffiti depicting skulls, mermaids, and Communist Party logos, the rooftop terrace was slightly less crowded, and revealed a unique view of the central Moscow skyline along the river. Here, young Moscow literally was dancing the night away. I left to the tune of “Ghostbusters” as a red glow crossed the sky.

Outside, occasional shouting matches broke out among partiers as they traipsed from Rolling Stone and a couple of other clubs in the neighborhood. A note to tourists who follow in my footsteps: Be polite and avoid large crowds of drunken, jealous

men and the women they fight over.

I crossed the river and walked past the Russian State Library, formerly the Lenin Library (upon the roof of which, in the definitive Moscow novel, Mikhail Bulgakov's “The Master and Margarita,” Satan broods before departing the city). Beyond this landmark stretched Nikitsky Boulevard, where the sun came up, the streetlights went off, and I found Zhan-Zhak.

Nothing says “the night is still young” quite like a half liter of Leffe and a bowl of bouillabaisse, but the photographer Mikhail Galustov put it best as he watched the other diners struggle over whether to order breakfast or beer.

“This is a great place to suffer the transition between night and morning,” he said. “It's like sweet pain.”

I finally experienced that pain in the bright sun as Moscow was waking up. Suddenly exhausted, I hit one of the ubiquitous Kofe Haus cafes. The allure of 24-hour wireless was dulled a tad by the fear of cyber crooks. Then again, I thought as I sipped a cappuccino from a faux-leather couch, the crooks have to sleep, too. I devoured a chocolate croissant, stumbled back to Sretenka, and slept until 4 o'clock. Saturday evening was approaching ... time to party!

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Hermitage Gardens (ulitsa Karetny Ryad)  
011-7-495-790-0032  
[www.chaihona.com](http://www.chaihona.com) (limited English translation)  
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KARI BODNARCHUK

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## World class

A SEMESTER IN CHILE



Jessica Howard, second from left, in Chapod, Chile, a rural town, with students from the school where she studied.

For Jessica Howard, a junior at Bates College majoring in chemistry and education, taking a break from science meant traveling to the end of the world. In a program based in Santiago, she took classes in comparative education, social change, and intensive Spanish. She visited different schools and did her independent study in Chapod, a rural town in south-central Chile. “I chose Chile because I wanted to travel to a country that would be a bigger culture change than Europe, a country where I would be immersed in a unique culture and a different language,” says Howard.

**BACK TO BASICS:** “I lived in three different homestays, very different [from] typical dorm life at college in the United States. One of my homestays was in a rural town where I actually walked to school every day and showered without running water. Heated rainwater and a cup was all that was given to me. This particular homestay was in Chapod, and I lived with an indigenous (Mapuche) family.”

**WHAT'S TO EAT?** “Sopapilla (a fried bread), juju (a naturally grown vegetable that has not been cultivated, similar to spinach), avocado on anything and everything, and manjar (a caramelized condensed milk) are some favorites.”

**NOT BY THE BOOK:** “Chilean Spanish is very different from the Spanish I learned in class. Chileans, like most people, have their own phrases, words, and abbreviations for certain things that simply are not known elsewhere. Learning these phrases and getting used to using them in my

Spanish as well was one of the most difficult parts of communicating successfully. My biggest faux pas when it comes to the language and culture was not always using the formal form of the subject ‘you’ when speaking with professors, the elderly, and people you are not close with.

**CLOSE CALL:** “The way you greet people in Chile is much more personal and close than in the United States. It does not stop at a handshake, but even when meeting or introducing yourself to a random stranger a typical greeting is a hug and kiss on the cheek. This etiquette goes for everyone in all situations.”

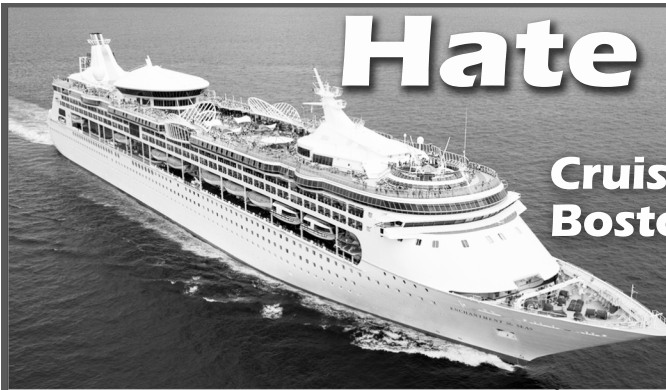
**SCREEN TIME:** “There was one game show that was very odd that people loved to watch. At points during the show women would strip down to swimsuits and then shower if the contestants or groups got questions right. In addition, they would chop off people's hair and weigh

it to determine the winner.”

**SONG AND DANCE:** “One of the most popular dance songs in Chile is ‘Danza Kuduro’ by Don Omar. In my rural homestay I was introduced to Mapuche music by a band called Kechu Werken. El Huevo is a very popular night club in Valparaiso. It has different floors and dance rooms, all with different types of music, different bands, and occasionally with dance classes as well.”

**MOST MEMORABLE:** “When I went canyoning in Puerto Varas, or the time when I was accompanied 20 blocks home by a friendly stray dog, or the marches and protests of Sept. 11 (the date that marks the start of the dictatorship in Chile in 1973), a hill in Santiago called Santa Lucia with a great view of the city, [and] my rural homestay with the Mapuche family.”

CHRISTINE MURPHY



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