



**Learn Your World: Russia**

**Skills and Professional Development**



To support your global practice, ACC Docket offers country-specific fun facts from your peers who've been there — literally.



**Economy**  
**Population**  
**Corruption**

GDP (purchasing power parity) \$3.458 trillion  
143,975,923 (2015 estimate)  
According to Transparency International's "2014 Corruption Index," Russia is the 136th "cleanest" (i.e., least corrupt) country out of the 175 surveyed.

**Economic forecast**

GDP is projected to fall by around three percent in 2015, and to grow less than one percent in 2016. This weak turnaround is supported by the recovery of oil prices, better international relations achieved in the first half of 2015, and on the success of import substitution programs. A spike in consumer price inflation, which has peaked at around 17 percent, resulted in a sharp fall in real wages, weighing on private consumption. The current account remains in surplus because lower revenues from oil and gas exports are more than offset by falling imports, which reflect weak domestic demand and sanctions, according to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

**Additional resources**

[The Moscow Times, English-language newspaper](#)  
[Russian National Tourism Office](#)

Russia is a civil law country, influenced by the German and Dutch legal concepts, but also has

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unique specifics. Although it is a civil law country, court precedents (especially recent decisions of the higher courts) are important and can influence the decision of the panel of judges.

In Russia, handshakes are required between men but rarely between women. A man should generally not offer a handshake to a woman, unless she initiates the handshake (which almost never happens). Handshakes between people standing at the opposite sides of the doorway is frowned upon since a handshake through a door is regarded as guarded and not friendly enough — either out or in but not across the threshold.

When people are asked, “How are you?” or “How do you do?” they tend to tell you the whole story of their current week, rather than simply saying they are “fine.”

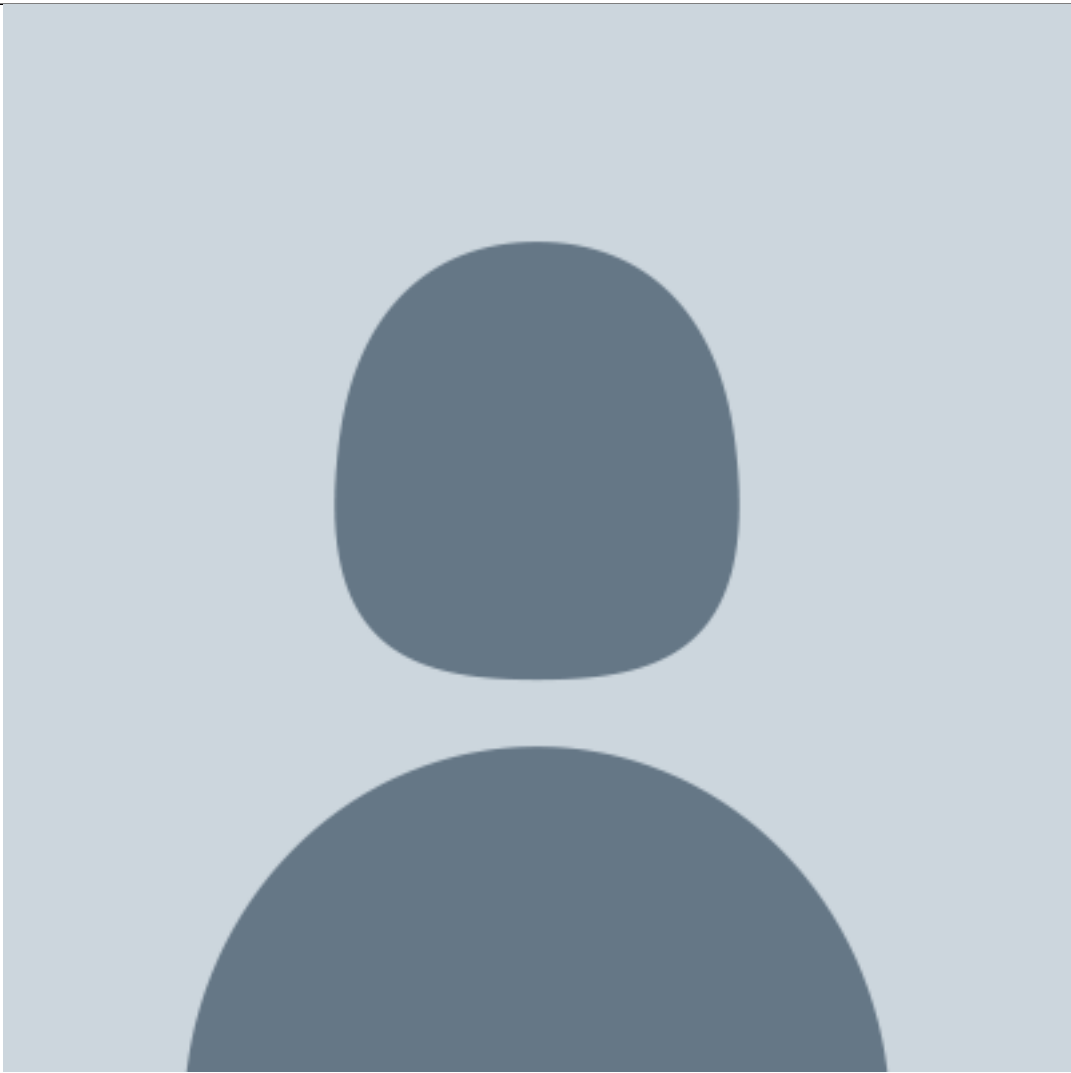
In formal business communication people aged over 50 years always use “patronymics,” a name derived from the first name of the father or ancestor, together with first name (e.g., Lev Nikolayevich means the “son of Nikolai”). Formal communication also entails the formal/plural form of the verb (similar to Vous in French or Sie in German). There are certain topics that should be avoided in a small talk, including religion, politics, personal wealth and personal life details.

Job titles are important. Everyone tends to state on his business cards that he is at least a “manager” (even if he is a waiter in a restaurant or a shop assistant) or a “lead” or “director” etc.

Business partners normally drink alcohol during dinner (normally wine, not vodka, as many people think). Inability or reluctance to drink is regarded as strange behavior. A good enough reason not to drink is a health condition (but no one would be willing to admit it), or the need to drive from the restaurant (senior executives would normally have a driver). Ladies are not expected to drink, and explanations are not expected. For foreigners, it is OK to refuse alcohol if cultural traditions or a different mindset are referenced.

It is OK to wear fur coats in Russia (especially so for women) and no one thinks it is a mauvais gout or bad manners.

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