

Overview of Russian Regions and Cities Recommended for Research Geography

2017

Geographical and Administrative Overview

- Russia, with its territory spreading from Baltic sea in the North-West, Black Sea in the South and Pacific ocean in the East, is the biggest country of the world.
- There are 11 time zones throughout Russia's territory, and the summer time change is not performed any more (i.e. time parameter is always fixed)
- Thanks to its history and geographical disposition, Russia embraces various cultures and ethnical groups, each of them having their own characteristics and distinguishing features.
- Economic conditions, consumer behavior and habits may vary greatly from one region to another
- In terms of administrative management the territory of Russia is divided into 8 Federal Districts, or Okrugs:

1 – Central okrug
2 – Northwestern okrug
3 – Volga okrug
4 – Southern okrug

5 – North Caucasian okrug
6 – Ural okrug
7 – Siberian okrug
8 – Far Eastern okrug



Population and Cities Overview

- Russia has 15 “millionaire” cities, i.e. cities with population of more than 1 mln* people
- Number 1 okrug when it comes to “millionaire” cities is Volga Federal okrug which embraces 5 cities with the population of over 1 mln people: Nizhny Novgorod, Kazan’, Samara, Ufa and Perm
- Number 2 is Siberian Federal okrug with 3 “millionaire” cities: Novosibirsk, Omsk, Krasnoyarsk
- There are 2 “millionaire” cities in each of the following okrugs - Central, Ural and Southern:
 - Moscow and Voronezh in the Central okrug
 - Ekaterinburg and Chelyabinsk in the Ural okrug
 - Rostov-on-Don and Volgograd in the Southern okrug
- North Western Federal okrug has only 1 “millionaire” city - St. Petersburg
- North Caucasian and Far Eastern okrugs do not have cities with the population over 1 mln people
- Total number of Russian cities with the population of over 100 thousand people is 169



* Here and after mln stands for million

Central Federal Okrug

- Historically, Central Federal Okrug is the area from where the Russian state sprouted, being its core. Geographically it is the Center of the European part of Russia
- Its administrative center and capital is Moscow which is also a state subject on its own
- Time zone: +3 GMT
- The total population of Central okrug is 38.4 million people, making the okrug number 1 in terms of population density
- The okrug embraces 18 federal subjects, and only two cities – Moscow and Voronezh – have over 1 mln people



Major Cities of Central Okrug

Moscow

- Capital and the biggest city of Russia with the population of over 12 Mln people (up to 17 Mln with agglomeration)
- Usually Moscow is the leader in terms of trend setting - be it food, gadgets, fashion or trends in other spheres
- Russian headquarters of most international companies are located in Moscow
- Dynamic, upbeat lifestyle of Moscow citizens is captured in a saying "Moscow never sleeps"
- *Recommended for research projects since it is huge city with big share of people with average and above average income level, often it is trend setter in brand development and consumption*



Voronezh

- Important center of many industries (mostly heavy)
- Significant transport joint, connecting Southern, Ural and Siberian okrugs
- City population is over 1.1 mln
- Recent upgrades in the city's economy attracted investments from other okrugs, letting Voronezh develop other branches of industry, such as IT
- Distance from Moscow is 534 km
- *Recommended for research projects when it is relevant to compare research results based on the capital city and a smaller city with yet quite big population, located in the same region as Moscow*



Other Cities of Central Okrug

Tver'

- Important industrial, scientific and cultural center with the population over 400 thousand people
- Major transport joint, connecting various regions of Central Russia and the Volga Region
- Starting from 2010s, Tver' hosts multiple sports events
- Distance from Moscow is 176 km
- *Recommended for research projects when it is relevant to compare research results based on the big cities with a smaller one*
- *Convenient location in terms of logistics from Moscow*



Vladimir

- Town in European part of Russia with population around 350 thousand people
- Being one of the most ancient Russian towns and one of the ancient capitals of Old Russia it is a popular tourist attraction and part of famous "Golden Ring" route (that goes through the oldest places of interest in Russia)
- Distance from Moscow is 186 km
- *Recommended for research projects when it is relevant to compare research results based on the big cities with a smaller one*
- *Convenient location in terms of logistics from Moscow*



North-Western Federal Okrug

- North-Western federal okrug has a lot of geographical advantages, bordering Norway, Finland, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia and Poland
- Kaliningrad is an exclave on the shore of Baltic sea and is surrounded by Lithuania and Poland
- Time zone: +3 GMT, except Kaliningrad which is in GMT +2 time zone
- The population of North-Western okrug is about 14 million people, making 9.45% of the country population
- The okrug embraces 11 federal subjects, but only one city – St. Petersburg – has over 1 mln people



Major Cities of North-Western Okrug

St. Petersburg

- Second biggest city of Russia with the population over 5 million, commonly referred to as “the cultural capital of Russia”
- It is important economical, educational and scientific center
- St. Petersburg pace of life and citizens are sometimes described as “reflective” and “hasteless”
- *Recommended for research projects when it is relevant to study North-Western region of Russia*



Kaliningrad

- Russian exclave on the Baltic sea with the population of 450 thousand people
- It is important transportation, industrial and military center
- Included in top-5 Russian cities that are most attractive for migrants
- Recently Forbes magazine listed Kaliningrad as the best city for business in Russia
- *Recommended for research projects when it is relevant to study this very city with a unique location which has an impact on behavior and consumption habits*

Other Cities of North-Western Okrug

Velikiy Novgorod

- One of the oldest and most famous towns of Russia with history of over 1155 years
- Its population exceeds 220 thousand people
- Velikiy Novgorod is a big cultural center acknowledged as World Heritage Site by UNESCO
- Throughout last 10 years Velikiy Novgorod received various awards and nominations in economics and business development
- *Recommended for research projects only when it is relevant to study North-Western okrug in detail (both bigger cities and smaller towns)*



Arkhangelsk

- Arkhangelsk is located in the North of European part of Russia
- Its population is over 350 thousand people
- Arkhangelsk was a hometown of Mikhail Lomonosov, the founder of Moscow University
- Now the city is mostly a seaport, opening gates to Arctic navigation
- *Recommended for research projects only when it is relevant to study North-Western okrug in detail (both bigger cities and smaller towns)*



Volga Federal Okrug

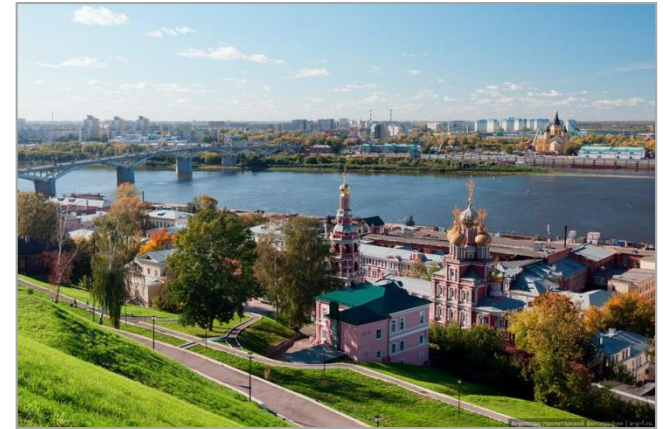
- Nizhniy Novgorod is its administrative center and biggest city
- The okrug is located on historical crossroads or various routes, so geographically some parts of it belong to other regions of Russia: for example, Ufa (the capital of Bashkiria) and Perm' are in fact located in the Urals.
 - This explains the extended time zone
- Time zone: +3 +5 GMT
- The population of Volga okrug is about 30 million people, making 20.25% of the country population
- Overall, the okrug has 14 federal subjects, including 5 “millionaire” cities: Nizhny Novgorod, Kazan', Samara, Ufa, Perm'



Major Cities of Volga Okrug (1/3)

Nizhny Novgorod

- The capital of the Volga region with the population over 1.2 mln people
- Founded in 1221 as a fortress, it has always been an important point in trade and migration routes
- One of the key attractions of river tourism (as it is located on the confluence of two big rivers – Volga and Oka)
- Overall, lifestyle in Nizhny Novgorod can be referred to as a healthy blend of dynamism and serenity
- *Recommended for research projects when it is relevant to study a big city in the Central part of Russia*
- *Rather convenient logistics from Moscow (express train)*



Kazan'



- The capital of Tatarstan with the population of 1.2 mln people
- Being an important area since old times, today it is sometimes referred to as “the third capital of Russia”
- Kazan' (as the whole Tatarstan) is initially a Muslim city; now the ratio of Islam and Christianity is about 50/50
- In 2014 TripAdvisor ranked Kazan' as #8 in the world and #3 in Europe in the list of the cities with fastest tourism development
- *Recommended for research projects when it is relevant to study a city with both Muslim and Christian population, also Tatar ethnic group*

Major Cities of Volga Okrug (2/3)

Samara

- Samara population is approaching 1.2 mln people
- City agglomeration is the third in Russia with over 2.7 mln people in total
- It is an important logistical, scientific and industrial joint
- It is one of the leading economies in the Volga okrug, relying mostly on heavy industries
- *Recommended for research projects when it is relevant to study a big city (yet not capital) of the Volga region*



Saratov

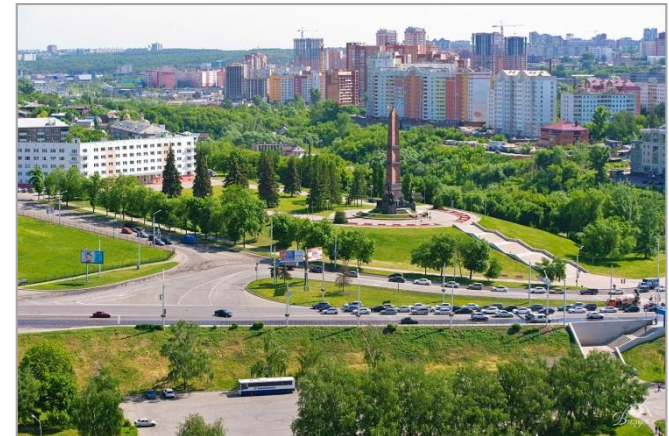
- The population of the city itself is 850 thousand people and the population of the agglomeration is over 1 mln people
- It is renowned education and science center, mostly with technical and exact science colleges and universities
- In 2013 Saratov outranked Moscow and St. Petersburg in the list of cities which are most convenient for business, according to Forbes Russia
- *Recommended for research projects when it is relevant to study a big city (yet with the population of less than 1 mln people) of the Volga region*



Major Cities of Volga Okrug (3/3)

Ufa

- The capital of the Republic of Bashkiria (Bashkortostan), one of the biggest ethnic republics in Russia
- Population of Ufa is 1.1. mln people
- Like Kazan', Ufa (and Bashkortostan) were initially Muslim and are now embracing cultural and religious pluralism
- One of the most important economic and logistical joins
- *Recommended for research projects when it is relevant to study Bashkortostan region*



Perm'

- An important transportation, logistical and industrial joint connecting the Urals region with the rest of Russia
- The city population slightly exceeds 1 mln people
- Part of Transsiberian railway
- 2016 is the 100th anniversary of Perm' university, the first university in the Urals region
- The Permian geological period is named after the city, as it was discovered in its area
- *Recommended for research projects when it is relevant to study a big (yet not capital) city of the Volga region*



Southern Federal Okrug

- Initially embraced southern territories of European Russia, until in 2010 President Dmitri Medvedev signed a resolution that granted North Caucasus more autonomy (this was the only change in the list of okrugs since their formation)
- Time zone: +3 GMT
- The population of the okrug is above 14 million people, and only two cities – Rostov-on-Don and Volgograd – exceed the rank of 1 mln people in terms of population
- The okrug has access to three seas– Caspian, Black and Azov
- The total number of federal subjects in the okrug is 6



Major cities of Southern Okrug (1/2)

Rostov-on-Don

- The biggest city in the south of Russia and the administrative center of the okrug
- Population of the city itself is 1.1 mln people, the agglomeration with over 2.7 mln people is the third in the country
- Has unofficial titles of the “Gateway to the Caucasus” and “the Southern capital”
- The most important southern logistical joint, Rostov region is also an important agricultural area
- *Recommended for research projects when it is relevant to study South of Russia*



Krasnodar

- One of the key cities in the Southern okrug, equally close to Black and Azov seas
- Its population is over 820 thousand people
- According to RBC (one of the leading Russian business and news medias), in 2013 Krasnodar topped the list of Russian cities with the most dynamic business activity, one of the reasons being the fact that it is close to Sochi which hosted 2014 Olympic Games
- Krasnodar region is also an important agricultural area
- *Recommended for research projects when it is relevant to study South of Russia, yet not the capital city of the okrug*



Major cities of Southern Okrug (2/2)

Volgograd

- One of the biggest and oldest Southern cities, dating back to 900s
- Its population is over 1 mln people
- Historically its position on the shores of the Volga river made the city an important trade and military route stop
- The Soviet name for the city was Stalingrad, and the battle of Stalingrad - one of the turning points of World War II - took place there
- *Recommended for research projects when it is relevant to study South of Russia, yet not the capital city of the okrug*



Sochi

- The biggest and the most famous Black sea resort city in Krasnodar region
- Population approaches 400 thousand people
- It's an important cultural and economic center on the Black sea shore, as well as logistical joint
- Unofficially known as “the summer capital”, although it combines mild climate on the seaside and snow in the mountains which makes it a popular resort all year round
- Hosted Winter Olympics in 2014 which made the city extremely attractive for business development
- *Recommended for research projects when it is relevant to study resort area of Russia*



North Caucasian Federal Okrug

- Initially a part of the Southern Federal Okrug, it was granted autonomy in 2010 since its distinguishing features, location and development require special attention
- Time zone: +3 GMT
- The population of the okrug is 9.7 million people, and there are no “millionaire” cities
- The total number of federal subjects in the okrug is 7
- The okrug is the only one in Russia where Russians are not an ethnic majority and make up less than 1/3 of its population. Ethnic majorities in these republics belong to the North Caucasian ethnicities which are very diverse



Major Cities of North Caucasian Okrug

Makhachkala

- The biggest city of the North Caucasus with the population of 700 thousand people (agglomeration reaching 1 mln people)
- The capital of the Republic of Daghestan on the coast of the Caspian sea
- Predominantly Muslim, the city embraces over 60 cultures and ethnic groups
- *Recommended for research projects when it is relevant to study the North Caucasus of Russia and Daghestan in particular*



Stavropol'

- The city population is over 400 thousand people
- An important economical and industrial center of the North Caucasus
- One of the few Caucasian cities where Russians make up ethnic majority
- *Recommended for research projects when it is relevant to study a city in the North Caucasus where various ethnicities, including Russians, live*



Ural Federal Okrug

- The okrug lies on the territories of the Urals mountain range and Western Siberia, which defines its main industries – mining, gas and oil production
- Time zone: +5 GMT
- The population of the okrug is over 12 million people, making it 8.4% of overall country population, and the “millionaire” cities are its capital Ekaterinburg and Chelyabinsk
- The total number of federal subjects in the okrug is 6



Major Cities of Ural Okrug

Ekaterinburg

- The fourth biggest city of Russia with the population around 1.5 mln
- Unofficially called “the third capital” or “the capital of the Urals”
- Very significant industrial, logistical and scientific center
- Ekaterinburg goes through steady extensive development for years now that shows no sign of slowing down
- *Recommended for research projects if the Urals region is relevant for business development*



Chelyabinsk

- The second biggest city in the Urals with the population around 1.3 mln people
- Over 40% of Chelyabinsk production are various kinds of metal
- Chelyabinsk enters Top-10 of Russian cities by index of human and urban development
- *Recommended for research projects when it is relevant to study the Urals region, yet not its capital city*

Other Cities of Ural Okrug

Tyumen'

- Formally belonging to the Ural okrug, the city is located in West Siberia
- Its population is almost 700 thousand people
- After discovery of major oil and gas fields in 1960s, most of the city's industry is focused on mining
- Tyumen' was the first Russian city founded during the exploration of Siberia
- *Recommended for research projects when it is relevant to study a big city of the Urals/Siberian region, yet with the population of less than 1 mln people*



Nizhny Taghil

- A town in Ekaterinburg region with the population of 350 thousand people
- Important industrial joint of the Urals, outnumbering even Ekaterinburg in logistic indexes
- Like all small towns has slower pace of life as compared to cities with the population of over 1 mln people
- The distance from Ekaterinburg to Nizhny Taghil is 140 km
- *Recommended for research projects when it is relevant to study a small town of the Urals region*
- *Convenient logistics from Ekaterinburg (car, mini van)*



Siberian Federal Okrug

- The second biggest okrug in Russia, taking over 30% of the country territory
- Time zone: +5 +8 GMT
- The population of the okrug is over 19 million people, making it 13.19% of overall country population, and the “millionaire” cities are Novosibirsk, Krasnoyarsk and Omsk
- The total number of federal subjects in the okrug is 12
- Historically Siberia was always an important part of Russian economy with its rich oil, gas and mineral resources



Major Cities of Siberian Okrug (1/2)

Novosibirsk

- The capital of the Siberian okrug and the third most populated city of Russia with over 1.5 mln people
- Main spheres of activities in the city are energy and heavy industries
- Novosibirsk is known around the world for its Akademgorodok, embracing dozens of research institutes, academies and libraries
- Foreign Media coined a new name for Akademgorodok - “Silicon Taiga”
- *Recommended for research projects if it is relevant to study Siberian region*



Omsk

- The second biggest city in Siberia with the population around 1.2 mln people
- Omsk is a home for various industries, including defense and aerospace
- Besides industries, Omsk is a renowned cultural and historical center, being for a short while even the capital of anti-Bolshevik Russian state (1918-1920)
- *Recommended for research projects if it is relevant to study big a city of the Siberian region – yet not the capital city*

Major Cities of Siberian Okrug (2/2)

Krasnoyarsk

- It is the biggest of the oldest Siberian cities and currently it is biggest city in the East of Russia with its population of over 1 mln people
- The center of Krasnoyarsk krai (region) – the second biggest federal subject of Russia
- It is an important educational and sport center
- *Recommended for research projects if it is relevant to study a big city in the Siberian region – yet not the capital city*



Irkutsk

- Important city in East Siberia with the population of over 620 thousand people (1.1 mln in agglomeration)
- It is a major educational center with over 100 thousand students
- Irkutsk is located 66 km away from Baikal, the deepest and the biggest fresh water reservoir
- *Recommended for research projects if it is relevant to study a smaller city in the Siberian region*



Far Eastern Federal Okrug

- The biggest okrug of Russia in terms of territory - taking over 36% of the country territory
- Time zone: +9 +12 GMT
- The population of the okrug is a bit over 6 million people, making it 4.23% of overall country population, it has the lowest population density in the country (1/km²) and no “millionaire” cities
- The total number of federal subjects in the okrug is 9
- Almost all federal subjects of Far Eastern Okrug have access to world ocean



Major Cities of Far Eastern Okrug

Khabarovsk

- The biggest economical, cultural and industrial center of the Far East of Russia
- Its population is over 640 thousand people
- The status of the capital of the Far East makes it the most attractive city for local migration
- It is located on the crossroads of international Far East airline communication
- *Recommended for research projects if it is relevant to study the Far East of Russia*



Vladivostok

- City and the free port in the Far east, located both on the coastline and islands in the Japanese sea
- The biggest pacific marine base
- Its population is over 600 thousand people
- *Recommended for research projects if it is relevant to study the Far East of Russia – yet not the capital city of the region*



Sources of Information

Information and images are taken from open sources such as:

- <http://www.forbes.ru/>
- <http://www.history-at-russia.ru/>
- <http://www.rutraveller.ru/country/Russia/photos>
- <http://www.rbc.ru/>
- <http://www.statdata.ru/goroda-millionniki-rossii-po-naseleniu>
- <https://ru.wikipedia.org/>

and others

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