



Rostov-on-Don

The following text is reprinted from www.uran.net/docs/rostov/Rostov.html.

Rostov-on-Don is located in European Russia. This city of over 1.5 million is considered a political, economic and cultural center of southern Russia. The Black Sea, the Azov and the Caspian are all easily accessible from the “Gates to the Caucasus.” Although the history of this area dates back many centuries, the current city is said to have been founded in 1749.

Despite the recent efforts of U.S. and Russian media, Russia remains quite unknown to the general American public. The most popular stereotype is: “I know two cities in Russia: Moscow and St. Petersburg, the rest of the country is Siberia covered with thick layer of ice that never melts.” Another confusing opinion is that Russia locates in Asia and follows Asian traditions. However, it takes just one quick look at the map to find out that Russia covers both European parts and Asian parts of the Eurasian continent (and also has several climate zones). Although Russians have their own unique Slavic traditions (that are not to be found either in Europe or in Asia), their major cultural trends follow along with other European nations.

A Russian proverb says it is better one time to see something rather than hear about it 100 times. We would like to introduce our American friends to the Russian South and its main center, the city of Rostov-on-Don. The Rostov region is one of the richest and most resourceful areas in the Russian Federation. Due to the mild climate and “black” soils, Rostov produces a vast variety of food and agricultural products including such cold-weather sensitive

crops as grapes and peaches. Its unique geographical location has allowed Rostov-on-Don to develop into an important industrial, research and educational center.

Rostov-on-Don is not just “another city in Russia.” For many years it has been known as a land where people seek freedom. Feudal slaves from all Russian cities used to escape there. The Rostov region vigorously resisted the Communist movement at the beginning of the 20th century and it became one of the last regions taken over by Communists. In fact, the spirit of free enterprise survived in Rostov through all dark times and now gives an advantage for numerous private businesses in the city.

People of different nationalities have lived there in Rostov-on-Don area for centuries in an atmosphere of cultural tolerance and friendship. It is our great hope that this tradition will not ever change despite any disturbing political games. Rostov-on-Don is located at 47.11 latitude North and 39.38 longitude East. The current population is about 1.2 million people.

History

The land on which Rostov stands has long been sacred for the Russian people. Here the Russian warriors of old crossed swords with the nomads that ravaged the domains of Kiev Rus. Here the Don Cossacks, former serfs who had fled to the Don and the Northern Donets to escape the oppression of their owners, valiantly defended the southern frontiers of Russia. And it was in this area that the Cossack atamans Stepan Razin, Kondraty Bulavin and Yemelyan

Pugachov started the famous uprisings that shook Russia in the 17th and 18th centuries.

The city is considered to have been founded in 1749 when the Temernik frontier custom house was opened on the high western bank of the Don. Construction work soon began on the so-called fortress of Dmitry Rostovsky nearby, and the town which grew up around its walls came to be called “Rostov which lies on the Don” (to distinguish it from the ancient North Russian city of Rostov the Great, which now falls within the bounds of the Yaroslavl Region of the Russian Federation). Rostov has always been of great significance to Russia. Apart from being a major port, where the vessels of Russian, Armenian, Greek, Italian and Turkish merchants tied up, it was an important strategic point; in the 18th century, this Rostov fortress with its bastions and cannons was the largest on the South of Russia.

Present

Rostov is one of the biggest industrial centers in Russia. Today the city produces combine harvesters and transport helicopters, furniture and refrigerators, cultivators and footwear, champagne and tobacco goods.

After the construction of the Volga-Don navigation canal, Rostov became a five-sea port accessible from the Black Sea, the Sea of Azov, and the Baltic, White and Caspian seas. And the famous Russian river-to-sea-going motor vessels now make regular runs from Rostov to many Mediterranean ports. At Rostov no longer does the Don flow in a quiet way.

Its smooth waters are ruffled by modern motor vessels, speedy Raketa hovercrafts and Meteor hydrofoils, tug-boats, motorized barges and yachts.

Culture and Science

The city has rich cultural traditions. The old-timers invariably take pride in naming you dozens of illustrious figures in literature, art, science and technology, whose lives and work were associated with Rostov. Here Moussorgsky gave concerts, a great Russian actor Mikhail Shchepkin played in the theatre, Alexander Solzhenitsyn studied at Rostov State University and the famous physiologist Pavlov performed his research.

Among the famous names who hailed originally from Rostov are the outstanding doctor N. Bogoraz, the composer M. Gnesin and celebrated explorer of the Arctic seas, Georgi Sedov.

Today Rostov-on-Don is the site of the North-Caucasian science centre. It has several higher educational institutes training specialists for various fields of the national economy and dozens of research institutes working on complex theoretical problems. The residents and visitors have a choice of four theatres, a philharmonic, a Sports Palace and over 900 libraries, including the Central City Public library, one of the largest in the country linked to the Internet and other famous electronic library systems including U.S. Library of Congress via satellite channels.

Rostov puts out numerous books, newspapers, and other publications, including the literary journal *Don*. The works of many writers from the Don area--Sholokhov, Zakrutkin, Kalinin and others--have won the affections of readers far beyond the borders of our

country. The Rostov regional film studio puts out documentaries, newsreels and scientific films that are known throughout the country, and programs from the local TV centre are transmitted far afield.

The city also boasts a fine local lore museum, which gives visitors a good

idea of Rostov and its environs, history and terrain. And the Rostov museum of fine arts is rich in exhibits, including some genuine works by such masters of Russian painting as Repin, Surikov, Perov and Levitan.

Architecture and Layout

Rostov's busiest thoroughfare is Bolshaya Sadovaya Street, which bisects the city and runs parallel to the Don from the river Temernik to the vast Theatre Square. Towering over the Square is the Gorky Drama Theatre, a veritable palace of glass and marble, which was built in 1935 to a design by Academicians V. Shchuko and V. Geilfraikh. The Nazis burned the theatre when they retreated but its original appearance was subsequently restored. This superb edifice is set off by the picturesque greenery of Theatre Square.

Rostov as a whole is rich in greenery—with plenty of parks, boulevards and flower gardens—October Park, Student Park, First of May Park, Pioneer Park, University Park, Gorky Park, the lovely gardens around its central bookstore and on the Gagarin Square and so forth. In Frunze Park a memorial has been designed to those who fell during the Great Patriotic War.

The people of the city take pride in their botanical gardens, which feature a large selection of trees and bushes from East, South and Central Asia, South Europe, the Caucasus and the Crimea. And its glass houses have become a second home for some 500 species of tropical plants.

The lower reaches of the Don are indescribably beautiful with their tranquil lagoons ringed by thickets, and, on the western bank, pebbly strands and rocky outcrops. And here lies Rostov-on-Don, loved by all who were born there, lived there or whose fate was otherwise bound up with it, and never to be forgotten by all who visit it.



The remaining section is from work written by Ekaterina Solovova, BISNIS representative in Samara, Russia, September 2000, from the BISNIS website.

Leading Industry Sectors

The leading industry sectors of the Rostov region are food processing (25.7% of the total regional output), machine building and metalworking (23%), metallurgy (12.2%), power generation (17%) and fuel and energy (7.1%). There was a remarkable change in the structure of the industrial output by industries in 1999 compared to 1997. In 1997 the leading industries contributed to the Rostov's regional output in the following order: power generation (27.2%), machine building and metalworking (21%), food processing (13.7%) and the fuel and energy sector (13.3%). The drastic fall of the fuel and energy sector can be explained partly by the closing of 30 to 62 coal mines operating in the area, the result of the Russian government's decision in the early 1990s to stop subsidizing unprofitable coal mining. The upturn of the food-processing sector is the result of the ruble devaluation and import substitution: before the August crisis in 1998 most foodstuffs were imported.

The Rostov region is the second-largest producer of agricultural products, including grain, sunflower products, fruits and vegetables. Products such as coal, fuel, equipment, grain and sunflower seeds produced in the region are exported. Among the newly developed industries where mostly small- and medium-sized businesses are involved, some activity is observed in polygraph and woodworking industries. Construction and construction materials production are based on the local raw materials and are mostly for the domestic market.

Foreign Trade

The Rostov region conducts trade with more than 95 countries, including export to more than 70 countries. The main partners in the foreign trade are Turkey, Germany, U.S., Italy, Greece, Cyprus, Eastern European countries and C.I.S. Due to its geographical vicinity and historical ties with the Rostov region, Ukraine takes the leading part (26.4%) in the total trade turnover.

The second largest participant is Turkey (9.63%), which imports consumer goods and foodstuffs, and the third is Germany (5.73%) with imports of cars, engines and medical equipment.

The leading exports from Rostov are aircrafts (\$ 94mn), equipment for energy sector (\$ 75mn), metals scrap and ferrous metals (\$ 63mn), aluminum (\$35.7mn), and sunflower seeds (\$34mn). The export structure by countries reflects the low competitiveness of the locally produced machinery – it is exported mainly to C.I.S. and Eastern Europe, and export effectiveness of the raw materials, which are going mostly to the Western countries. The main import items are equipment (\$ 73mn.), ferrous metal products (\$ 70mn.), cars and car components (\$ 54.5mn), refrigerators and freezers (\$ 13.9mn). Western consumer goods are distributed to Rostov mostly through Moscow wholesalers.

Transportation

Rostov-on-Don is one of the largest transportation hubs in Russia and C.I.S. There are six railroads and seven highways going through the city and a very active waterway in the Don-river. An international airport connects the city with Europe, Africa, Russian cities and the other countries of the C.I.S. Visitors and cargo come to the region by all means of transportation.

Sea

There are three sea and river ports in the Rostov region - Rostov-on-Don, Taganrog and Azov. Ships coming down the Volga-river can reach the Black Sea and the Mediterranean through the Volga-Don channel, and then through the Don River and Azov Sea. The only problem, which makes shipment to and from Europe less cost efficient, is that cargo can be delivered only by small ships due to the shallowness of the Azov Sea.

Air

Rostov International Airport is located about 20 minutes from the city center via automobile. The major regional airline is Don Airlines. There about five daily flights to and from Moscow, which makes easy connections with any country in the world. The flight time to Moscow is 1.5 hours. There are also direct flights to Europe, Asia and Africa from Rostov.□