Moskva River

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Pages of History

Archaeologists have known about the settlements on the banks of the Moskva River existing already during Bronze and Iron Ages. More information about this can be found, for example, in the State Museum-Reserve “Kolomenskoye”, where the “Milestones in the history of Kolomna” exhibition is open, adequately reflecting lifestyle of our ancestors.

Starting from the VIIIth century, Slavic settlements begin appearing here. Vyatichi have chosen to live alongside the Moscow river sides as well as along its tributaries, Neglinnaya (Samoteka), Yauza, Gorodyanki, and others. And starting from the XII century, we associate its history with the life of the town being founded here. Moskva river and its tributary, Neglinnaya river, were defending the Kremlin from enemies, and when the ancient fortress lost its defensive function, Neglinka was “hidden” in an underground pond.

But not always was Moskva river an assistant and nurturer; sometimes, it brought misery and destruction to the city inhabitants. Its capricious nature, manifesting itself especially during seasonal fluctuations in water level, or upon heavy rains, caused severe flooding.
In order to combat the elements, the Vodootvodny channel was established in the years 1783-1786, changing not just water but land geography of the capital as well. Now, the river and the channel jointly form the Baltschug island. Interestingly, on its territory it is always a little warmer than everywhere else in Moscow.

But even the channel did not fully tame the Moskva river, which has flooded its banks in the XIX as well as in the early twentieth century. Last time, it flooded the city in 1931. And the flood of 1908 was the largest ever. Then, water was covering about one-fifth of city’s total area. The river has risen to nine meters! The streets, the lower floors of buildings – everything was hidden under water. People had to escape to the rooftops.

To finally an end to these natural disasters, the Channel of Moscow was created in 1937, and it really helped. Presently, some constraints are put on the river character by locks and dam-ponds which regulate the drainage and prevent the water from rising too high.

Because of its rivers and channels as well as highly developed boat traffic here, Moscow is rightfully called the “port of five seas”, i.e., of the White, Baltic, Caspian, Azov and Black seas.
Embarkments
Presently, Moskva river has 37 embankments, and if you add to them the embankments of the Vodootvodny channel, Yauza, and other water bodies flowing through the city, the list would be quite impressive. Choosing a place to walk depends only on your preferences. We will be telling you about the five most popular city embankments.

1. **From Kremlevskaya**, as well as from Sofijskaya embankment, located on the opposite bank of the river, you may enjoy the most spectacular view of the Kremlin. Stunningly beautiful pictures may be taken here anytime and in any weather, for it is impossible to spoil this classic look. The downside of such a walk, however, would be
high air pollution, since car traffic is very lively here.

2. **Pushkinkaya embankment.** The name of the great Russian poet is proudly worn by one of the most enjoyable and romantic embankments in Moscow. It meanders along the Central Park of Culture and Relaxation named after Gorki, and along Neskuchnyi garden. Both of these places are proven recreation areas for people of all ages and interests. There is plenty of entertainment as well as enough cozy nooks. At the embankment itself, you shall see two gazebos made of white stone by the design of M. Kazakov, as well as beautiful stairways leading to the water, comfortable benches, and much more.

At the point where the river goes down Titovsky parkway, several attractions are gathered at once. From the Gorky Park side, there is a pedestrian Pushkinsky bridge, and also the Olivkovy beach with sun beds and umbrellas, just like on a real seaside resort. Unfortunately, taking a plunge here is not allowed, but one can do a little pretending, and simply dream about it. And from side of Neskuchnyi garden, there are open-air discos. Nearby you
can see the famous Zeleny theater as well as a pier for river cruisers.

3 Vorobyevsky embankment is part of Vorobyevy Gory nature reserve. This place will attract primarily those who seek a quiet place for silent meditation, or a quiet conversation with a friend. After all, Vorobyevy Gory went down in history as the place where, looking at Moscow, people have been making their most important and serious decisions. Therefore, you can begin by admiring the beautiful panorama of the river and city from the observation deck, and then go down to the waterfront.

4 Embankment in Kolomenskoye. Museum-Reserve Kolomenskoye is known for its many attractions. This place owes its special charm to a specific geographical relief, allowing you to walk at the waterside as well as enjoying the river views from above, where, coincidentally, its gateways are especially nicely seen. In addition, a river cruiser departs regularly from Kolomenskoye pier, offering a small river journey to everyone.

5 Taras Shevchenko embankment. This place is recommended for fans of all things new and unusual, since it is a perfect viewing opportunity for modern high-rise buildings of Moscow City. Here, you can often see photographers, for whom this kind of a view, especially combined with evening lighting, is a great gift.
If there is a river in the city, all bridges over it soon become tourist attractions. Well, what bridges in Moscow are the most interesting ones?

1. **Bolshoy Kamennyi Bridge.** This bridge may be called the most important one. And although it was built only in 1938, a river crossing at this area is believed to exist here from the very beginning of Moscow. The most “classical” view of the Kremlin is also from here. Do you remember the scene from the “Meeting point is still the same” TV series, when Zheglov and Sharapov meet with a veteran who is sorry that he had seen all capitals of the European countries, but not Moscow? Well, he admires the Kremlin precisely from this bridge.

2. Recently, however, **Bolshoy Kamennyi Bridge** got a worthy competitor – a Patriarshy bridge. Built in 2004, this bridge has already achieved well-deserved popularity. Kremlin may also be viewed from it, and since this bridge is a pedestrian one, taking a walk on it is much more pleasant. In addition, it begins at one of the main attractions of the capital – the Cathedral of Christ the Savior. Standing precisely on this bridge, D.A. Medvedev was recording his New Year greetings.
Luzhkov bridge over Vodootvodny channel. Also a relatively new pedestrian bridge, built in 1994, it has already become one of the most famous, due to the fact that the newlyweds and lovers are legally allowed to hang their symbolic locks here. The tradition of “securing” faithful relationships with a lock attached to the railing of the bridge appeared not so long ago, but somehow became very popular among the young people around the world. Moscow, too, was not spared by this fashionable fad. Public utility workers were relentlessly cutting down the locks, but they kept reappearing. Then, a compromise solution was found. A tree-shaped frame was “planted” on the bridge especially for locks. Presently, a whole alley of those metal trees has “walked over” the bridge and began “moving” along the embankment. This little bridge has also another attraction: the bench of reconciliation. This bench, shaped like a bowl, reconciles anyone sitting on it, no matter how far away the scoot, because they all would slide to its middle, anyway.

Borodinsky bridge across Moskva river. This bridge is part of the historic road to Smolensk, so a crossing has been here, too, since long ago. Previously, it was called Dorogomilovsky, because it was located near the Dorogomilovskaya watchtower. On occasion of the 25th anniversary of victory over Napoleon, it was renamed Borodinsky. The events
of the war of 1812 are reminiscent in the design of the bridge: military paraphernalia abound here, along with symbols of triumph and memorable writings.

5 **Bagration Bridge** – this trade and pedestrian bridge across the Moskva river was opened in 1997. Named in honor of P.I. Bagration, a general, and a hero of the War of 1812. This bridge is part of the Moscow City complex, it has open viewing platforms and shopping pavilions.

6 **Pushkinsky bridge** over the Moskva river. This pedestrian bridge, built in 2000, connects the Pushkinskaya and the Frunzenskaya embankments. Just like the Bagration bridge, it is a favorite of photographers and newlyweds.

7 **The Krimsky bridge** over the Moskva river. This wonderful bridge, opened in 1938, is by no coincidence one of the hallmarks of Moscow. By design, this is a suspension bridge, and such structures are rare. From the Krimsky bridge, interesting views open,
and it is often showcased in movies as one of the symbols of the capital.

**The Zhivopisny bridge** over the Moskva river. If you look at this bridge from above, like it is located on the map, you may not help but wonder how it goes not across the river, but somewhat alongside it, going to the opposite shore not as we would expect, at a right angle, but much sharper. This unusual task required an unusual solution. And this is how Zhivopisny cable bridge came to be in Moscow, with its pylon as an arched structure. According to the authors idea, at the top of the arch a viewing platform should have been placed. This project is presently still at the stage of implementation.
9. **Rostokinskiy Aqueduct across Yauza.** This remarkable construction is called the Millionny Bridge, as the cost of its erection was quite expensive. However, the goal was very important, too, namely, creating a public water supply system, which was launched in 1804. Nevertheless, the construction of the aqueduct began much earlier, in the late XVIII century. Now, this “grandfather” of our water supply system is not directly on duty anymore, but it still pleases the eye and helps us to imagine what the technology of the past was like.

10. **Luzhnetsky metro bridge** across the Moskva river. This bridge is completely unique in its design, because it contains a subway station, and on the upper part of it is a traffic road. As if all of this were not enough, the bridge also has a pedestrian part, and a walk there shall leave wonderful memories.

This is by far not an exhaustive list of interesting bridges in Moscow. Do not forget the small pedestrian bridges over the Yauza and Vodootvodny channel, and bridges in the parks, such as Tsaritsyno or Serebryany Bor. There are bridges over the rivers which by now are flowing in underground tunnels, there are overpasses over major roads, and there is even an entire street which is still called by its old-fashioned name, Kuznetsky bridge ...
Boat trips and cruises
A river cruise on a comfortable boat is an entertainment which is hard to refuse. You climb aboard, get a place on the open deck or stay in a glass-ceiling cabin from where you can see all the beauty of Moscow, and begin gliding along the smooth river surface. From here, the view of the city is quite different, so even those who are quite familiar with Moscow will be able to see it in a new light.

In the center of the city, there are 7 piers on the Moskva river, and one on Vodootvodny channel. To take a river cruise, all you have to do is to come to any of them and select the appropriate time and route. All piers are located close to bridges, subway stations, and historic attractions. The longest route is between Kievsky railway station and the Novospassky bridge.

Regular travel on the Moskva river is available in the period from April to October on Capital shipping company cruisers, or year-round, on icebreaker boats from the Radisson Royal yacht fleet.

Capital Shipping Company exists since 1933. “Water trams” cover the route in the city center every 20 minutes. They usually have two decks: the upper one is open, and the lower one has glass windows. The cruisers have bars where food and drinks may be purchased.

If you would like to disembark and visit some of the city hallmarks which will be abundant on your way, it might be better to buy a day ticket. This type of ticket entitles its bearer to an unlimited number of trips, embarking and disembarking the company cruisers as often as you please.
A novelty of this season is the “Stolichny” sightseeing cruiser. It is a special boat with a high draft allowing it to maneuver within the Vodootvodny channel. Its panoramic windows and audio system will prevent you from losing sight of any of Moscow hallmarks.

For instance, the “Golden Island” route, which starts at the Luzhkov bridge pier, includes a cruise of Vodootvodny channel with access to the Moskva river, and offers you the most renown sights of the capital, such as Christ the Savior Cathedral, Kremlin, St. Basil’s Cathedral, etc.

Among regular trips, we would like to highlight the route Kolomenskoye-Marjino which will introduce you to interesting places in the south of Moscow. And on the Klenovy boulevard pier, tourist groups to the Nikolo-Ugreshsky monastery are gathering. Tickets for it may be purchased in advance, or immediately before the trip – the tours begin every Saturday and Sunday at 10 am.

From the North River Station, there are regular long-distance cruises to the Radosti Bay, and to the Khimkinskoye Reservoir. This includes trips on those famous “Raketa” speed boats.

To see schedules, routes and other relevant information, as well as to purchase tickets, please visit the Stolichnaya shipping company: www.cck-ship.ru or by the multi-channel telephone: +7 (495) 225-60-70.

Good news for fans of river trips was also presented by the Radisson Royal fleet. Now, you do not need to wait until spring to enjoy a river cruise. Year-round passengers are provided with regular flights, restaurant menus, audio tours, free internet access, equipment for people with disabilities, and much more.

Inquiries about route specifics, menus, purchasing tickets and gift certificates (tickets with open date) of Radisson
Royal Fleet can be made on this site: www.radisson-cruise.ru or by calling: +7 (495) 228-55-55.

For those who want more, there are river cruises that provide long trips to other cities. Presently, there are no regular long-distance cruises from Moscow, but there are companies that offer their own river cruises. Tickets for such trips may be purchased from travel companies Mosturflot (Leningradskoye highway, 59. Tel.: +7 (495) 22-17-222, +7 (499) 65-29-444. www.mosturflot.ru), Vodochod (Leningradskoye highway 57/1. Tel.: +7 (495) 730-58-85. www.vodohod.com) or from travel agencies.

Interesting and convenient are weekend cruises. As a rule, they are offered to such ancient cities of Russia as Uglich, Tver, and Myshkin, and include sightseeing tours. Another very popular destination is St. Petersburg. These trips may include visits to some of these ancient cities and interesting places, such as Kizhi, Valaam, and Solovetsky monastery.

An integral part of the cultural life of any Russian, or even tourist, having enough time to explore the main attractions of the country, is a trip to the Golden Ring of Russia, a circle of ancient cities which managed to preserve their uniqueness through the centuries. There are also cruises to other cities in Russia, for example, to Nizhny Novgorod, Astrakhan, Kostroma, Samara, Rostov-on-Don, Azov, Kazan, and many others.

Ships depart from the North or South River stations.
North River Station
Leningradskoye highway house 51, building 2. Metro “Rechnoy Vokzal”

South River Station
Andropov avenue, 11, room 2. Metro “Kolomenskoye”.
Moskva River

River route

Kiev – Novospassky Bridge
Among the vast variety of river trips, we have chosen a route that allows you to see the main attractions of the capital. So, you begin your route from the **“Kievsky railway station” pier**. Do not forget to look around. Behind you is **Borodinsky bridge**, a remarkable monument to commemorate victory over Napoleon, **the “White House”, or the House of the Government of Russian Federation**, and one of Stalin’s skyscrapers, the **“Ukraina” hotel**. To your right, there is the building of the Kievsky railway station, and in front of you, the pedestrian Bogdan Khmelnitsky bridge. The cruiser begins to move forward, and soon you will see on your left some temples of **the Novodevichy Convent**. On your right, you will see another one of the skyscrapers, **the building of Moscow State University**. If you turn back, from this perspective some presently constructed buildings of the business center of **Moscow City** and the House on Mosfilmovskaya street will be visible.
The building of Moscow State University and the Luzhniki Stadium go slowly by, and here, is our first stop, the Vorobyevy Gory. A beautiful nature reserve is located here. Here, you may also see the unique Luzhnetsky metro bridge.

Ahead is a noteworthy building of the Presidium of the Russian Academy of Sciences, which is well marked by its crowning golden feature of an original design, nicknamed by locals as “golden brains.”

You pass under the bridge, and your next stop shall be Frunzenskaya embankment. On the right side, Neskuchniy garden and an approaching pier are visible.

The Central Park of Culture and Relaxation named after Gorky. It is always very lively here. If you have time, you can get off at this stop and take a walk at the newly landscaped park.

Disembarking again from this pier, you will be floating under the Pushkinsky bridge, and soon see a beautiful bright church on your right, the church of St. Nicholas in Khamovniki. It was built in the late XVII century, and represents the Russian ornamental style quite popular in Moscow. Incidentally, the area that you pass is called Khamovniki not because being inhabited by poorly educated people. In the old days, khamovniki were weavers, and this profession gave its name to the area where they settled. There are several places named after craftsmen in Moscow, such as Textilshiki, Kozhevniki, Pechatniki, etc.

Here, in front of you, is one of the most famous bridges of Moscow, – the Krimsky bridge, with same name pier right in front of it. If you leave here and go across the bridge, you can visit the Central House of Artists, a branch of the State Tretyakov Gallery on Krimsky Val, and Museon Park of Arts.

Directly in front of you is one of the most criticized Moscow’s monuments,
a monument to Peter the Great. And on your left, you already see the golden dome of the Christ the Savior Cathedral. But first, do pay attention to the two buildings which will appear in front of you a little earlier.

The first house (Prechistenskaya embankment, 29), a red brick building looking like a gingerbread house, was built in 1901 to the design of the famous Russian artist V.M. Vasnetsov. During World War II, there was the headquarters of the Normandie-Niemen squadron, and now, this house is the residence of French Ambassador, as indicated by the flags of France and the European Union.

A little further, there is another building (Kursovoy side street, 1), made by mixing two seemingly not combinable architectural trends: modernism and neo-Russian style. However, the building has turned out wonderfully harmonious and very beautiful.

Majestically swims past you Christ the Savior Cathedral, or Cathedral of the Nativity. The current building was created between 1994-1997, on the site of the church demolished in 1937. The old church was erected in honor of the victory over Napoleon’s army, and was being built for almost 44 years. Now, this is where the main celebrations worship services are held.
Vodootvodny channel moves to the right and you continue your journey on the Moskva river. The next pier, the Estrada Theater, is located behind the Patriarshy bridge. Between two Bolshoy bridges, the Kamenny and Zamoskvoretsky, you will see a panorama of **Kremlin**. Ancient walls and towers, churches, glittering domes, gold-sparkling Grand Kremlin Palace, all parts of this panorama is symbolic of Moscow and Russia. Following the Moskvoretskaya corner tower, a Red Square view opens up.

Then, almost opposite to each other, are two architectural monuments. On the left is **the building of the Imperial Orphanage**, which was built in 1764, and reinforced and rebuilt up until 1960, and on the right is **the church of St. Nicholas in Zayaitskoye**. Its name has long been giving a cause for pondering to the toponymy specialists. Indeed, the fact that Ural river was formerly called Yaik is known to all, so, obviously, Zayaitsky means located across the river Yaik, which is also clear. But what is the connection between the Urals and Zamoskvorechye? The explanation is most often found in the fact that people migrated from those places came to settle here. This church was built in the years 1749-1759 in Baroque style.
Now you are floating under Bolshoy Ustinsky bridge, so note that the left side of Moskva river branches off as a lesser stream – this is Yauza. There on the left is one more “Stalin’s” skyscraper, **the house on Kotelnicheskaya embankment**. At various times, there lived many famous people, including actress Faina Ranevskaya, ballerina Galina Ulanova, director Yuri Lyubimov, and many others. The cruiser makes the penultimate stop here.

On the right, you will soon see another beautiful building with columns – **the building of the New Kriegskomissariat** (institution for the supply of the army). It was built in 1776-1780.

And on the Bolshoy Krasnokholmsky bridge, on the right, a glass building with a treble clef sign on the roof will be seen. This is **Moscow International House of Music**.

The last, and, for non-looping routes, the final stop of this way is called Novospassky bridge. It was named after the nearby **Novospassky monastery**. If you choose to see it, do not forget that there is another monument, **Krutitskoe Podvorye**, nearby.