

# Soviet Union (USSR)



**ended in 1991**

# History of Russia

From the 1970's - Present Day

By Morgan Waugh, Braxton Smith, and Reed Ramirez

# Russian Federation



**Began after USSR collapsed**

**Economy** - As a communist country, the Soviet Union's government had complete control of the economy. Because of the way that the state handled all of Russia's economic sectors, the economy remained widely old - fashioned and unmodernized. The industrial and economic systems seemed almost hopelessly inefficient and underdeveloped.

**Culture and Society** - The culture and society of the Soviet era was very restricted because of the communist system. As a classless society, everyone was treated equally, and no one was above or below everyone else. Culture was not allowed to flourish majorly, as everyone was forced to obey the militancy of the communist government. The hearty and burly culture of the Russians would not be forgotten, though. As for religion, the Soviet era imposed a strict policy of militant atheism.

**Physical Structure** - Russia is the largest country in the world at nearly 6.6 million square miles. With such a large land mass comes a wide variety of terrains and climates. With everything from mountain ranges to plains to swamps and even a desert, Russia truly has it all. Most of Russia experiences long, cold winters and brief, mildly warm summers. In 1970, Russia's population was 130.4 million. However, Russia's population fluctuates a lot, mainly due to migration. When the USSR collapsed in 1991, Russia had reached a population of 148.6 million.

**Economy** - Modern Russia's economy is a more market - based system. However, there is still a predominant statist system prevalent, and as a result of this, a priority of the economy is putting money in the hands of political leaders. In 1990 economic reforms caused most industry to be privatized.

**Culture and Society** - After the Soviet Era, culture in Russia was influenced by the new market system. Businesses became more prevalent, and Russia became more consumerist. Shops, restaurants, fast food, and all kinds of other businesses started to grow exponentially without the restrictions of a communist government. Religion was not allowed in Russia under soviet rule, but religious freedom was written into law in 1993. Religion in post - Soviet Russia is widely varied. Although Russia has no official religion, the traditionally most common religions are the Russian Orthodoxy, Judaism, Islam, and Buddhism. Traditional Russian culture also made a comeback with the fall of the communism. Foods were often hearty and strong in taste, with flavorings such as mustard, horseradish, and dill being common. Hospitality is a big part of Russian culture. Guests are given the best food that the house has to offer, and it wouldn't be a Russian dinner without a sizable serving of alcohol.

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Russia's population is concentrated mainly in urban areas near borders. In fact, any population further inland is extremely dispersed.

**Political Structure** - From its inception to its dissolution, the USSR was a communist nation ruled under a leader called the General Secretary. The Communist government controlled all resources and economic systems of the nation. Leonid Brezhnev ruled from 1964 - 1982. Yuri Andropov's short rule lasted from 1982 - 1984. Konstantin Chernenko's rule was even shorter, from 1984 - 1985. Mikhail Gorbachev took power from 1985 until the collapse of the USSR in 1991.

**Key Events** - 1979 - The Soviet Army invades Afghanistan, starting the Soviet-Afghan War. 1989 - The iron curtain was seriously beginning to collapse; the opening of the Berlin Wall is a prime signifier of this. 1991 - The USSR collapses, after a long history of nationalist parties fracturing the nation. This also represents the end of the Cold War.

**Physical Structure** - The physical structure of Russia after the Soviet collapse remains mostly the same. The population still fluctuates due to migration, and concentration is still centered in urban areas. The Russian population currently sits at an approximate 143.4 million.

**Political Structure** - The current government of Russia is a Federal Republic led by a president. It functions with a market economy. The first president of the Russian Federation was Boris Yeltsin, who was in office from 1996 - 1999. Vladimir Putin was elected afterwards, from 2000 - 2008. Dmitry Medvedev served 2008 - 2012, then Vladimir Putin was reelected, where he remains in office today.

**Key Events** - 1996 - The first Russian presidential election is held; Boris Yeltsin is elected. 1999 - Boris Yeltsin unexpectedly resigns; Vladimir Putin takes his place. 2010 - The START Treaty is signed, reducing the nuclear weapons arsenals of Russia and the US by one third. 2014 - The Republic of Crimea is adopted into the Russian Federation.