

**SAKHALIN STATE UNIVERSITY**



**Sakhalin State University Handbook  
for International Students**

Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk

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This booklet outlines fundamental questions and adaptation problems for  
international students in Sakhalin State University.

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Dear friend!

We are happy to welcome you here in Sakhalin State University, Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, Russia!

Studying abroad is a dream for many foreign students now. On the other hand it's a common thing for young people to leave their families to get the desired education abroad, but the first steps in another country are always the most difficult.

You have to adjust not only to the University and the dorms life, but to life in a foreign country in general. It's not always easy to deal with the adaptation process.

That's why we wrote this booklet for you.

We hope it will help you to overcome any difficulty you might face in the very beginning of your study abroad program!

Home, sweet home is far behind. You are in Russia now. We are ready to help you with the rapid adaptation process in our wonderful country as well as to provide you any assistance within the Russian legislation. Therefore we kindly ask you to read carefully the information below and our recommendations, and to keep them in mind.

**Russia** (official name - **Russian Federation** (RF) is a transcontinental country located in Eastern Europe and Northern Asia.

The population of Russia is 146 793 744 (as of 2020). It extends from the Baltic Sea in the west to the Pacific Ocean in the east, and from the Arctic Ocean in the north to the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea in the south. Russia covers over 17,125,200 square kilometres spanning more than one-eighth of the Earth's inhabited land area.

Russia is the world largest country by area and the ninth largest by population.

The capital of Russia is Moscow. Official language is Russian.

Form of government is a federal presidential republic.

The currency of Russian Federation is Russian Rouble (RUB).

## **YUZHNO-SAKHALINSK - THE CAPITAL OF SAKHALIN REGION**

**Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk** – is the center of Sakhalin Region which includes Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands, 9400 kilometers away from Moscow. Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk is the 6<sup>th</sup> biggest city in the Far East region. The population is 200 635 (as of 2020).

The town is situated in the wide valley of the Susuya River, 25 km from the Sea of Okhotsk. The climate is moderately monsoon. It is the biggest transportation hub on the island, the place of intersection of the highways of regional significance, railroads and airways.

It was founded by Russians in 1882 as a convicts' village Vladimirovka (when Sakhalin was a zone of penal servitude and exile). In 1905 after the Russian-Japanese war it was renamed as Toyohara (southern part of Sakhalin belonged to Japan till 1945). In 1946, soon after the end of World War II, it was once again renamed as Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk (in accordance with its location in the south of the island).

So welcome to Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk city – the capital of Sakhalin Island, one of the most remarkable places in the Far East of Russia.

## **Climate**

The unbearable cold in Russia is a myth. Even though one third of Russia is located above the Arctic Polar Circle, all big cities are placed in a moderate climatic zone. Russian climate is extremely variable. For instance, in Sochi, the capital of 2014 Winter Olympic Games, average winter temperature is +5 degrees Centigrade (Sochi is situated in the subtropical latitudes).

The average annual temperature in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk is 2.8 °C. The coldest month is January with daily temperature averaging around -12.2 °C; the warmest is August with an average daily temperature of +17.3 °C.

Due to high humidity it gets hot and stuffy even in the shade starting at +22 °C. Usually you feel warm and comfortable when the temperature is about +18-19 °C .

## **How to stay safe in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk?**

Despite the existing prejudice, life in Russia is no less dangerous than it is in Tokyo, Seoul or Harbin. Below are some recommendations that, if followed, will keep you safe and comfortable during your stay in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk city.

Don't trust strangers with your belongings, money and documents.

Use common sense and do not walk/travel around the city alone without your identification documents, especially in the beginning of your study abroad program. It's better to walk along the streets late at night in the company of good friends.

You may stay and move freely within the territory of Russian Federation if you are sure to have with you the following documents: national passport with the valid visa, migration card with the border crossing mark and tear-off part of the notice form of arrival to the Russian Federation with the mark of Federal Migration Service regional office certifying the migration registration. You must show the above documents to the law-enforcement authorities (police) in case of identity check (student card is not enough).

Be careful when coming back to the dormitory at night (the door is closed at 11 p.m.) Try not to draw attention to yourself showing your money or other valuables openly.

You'd better walk in the evening along central avenues and streets, not the ones where there are no lights, no houses, no people.

Don't drink too much alcohol and don't show up in public places intoxicated.

Be extremely cautious when crossing the street.

Your stay in Russia should go safely. We're simply warning you about possible risks so you could avoid them. Forewarned is forearmed.

### **Clothes**

What to wear – depends on the season. Winter clothes – a cap, a scarf, a warm winter coat and boots – are definitely necessary. There's a tendency in Russia to wear clothing of different colors. Still it's a matter of your own choice.

The most important thing you need to remember is that the students of our University should look neat and give preference to the business style of clothing.

### **Student Dining Room and Cafe**

You can always have a meal in a cafeteria, there're a few that are rather close to the University.

There are also University canteens where you can have a bite throughout the day.

It is no secret that the best way to save money is to cook yourself, and for that purpose our dorms have all the necessary facilities and equipment.

### **Transportation in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk**

Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk has a well-developed public transport network. The most popular means of transportation are buses and fixed-route taxi. The municipal bus fare is about 25 rubles per trip.

It's impossible to imagine life without taxi. Picking up and seeing off at the railway station and airport, shopping trips, coming home late – taxi will always be at your disposal.

## **HOUSING**

### **Arrival and applying for the dormitory**

Foreign students desiring to have pick up at the airport in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk should contact international department of their home university with their flight information (date of arrival and flight number). If you want to move into the dormitory you should inform international department of host university about this.

Upon arrival when moving into the assigned dormitory room you receive the room key and the bedding set. Students should make payment for the dormitory fee to the accountant department of SSU.

### **Dormitory rules**

- Students are not allowed to switch the assigned room with another student at liberty. (When caught on such switch, you should leave the dormitory)
- If you have a reason to switch the room, you can change the room after consulting with the International department of Sakhalin State University.
- Access to the room of the opposite sex is prohibited. (When caught in “romantic situations” with the opposite sex, expulsion from the dormitory shall occur.)
- Due to the risk of fire, any use of electric heating appliance and cooking in the room of dormitory is absolutely prohibited.
- Cooking should be done in the shared kitchen.
- When going out for a long time, ensure to turn off the lights, electronic appliances for energy saving.
- Never dispose the garbage in a place other than those designated. (When caught in this action, penal points will be imposed.)
- It is prohibited to leave the garbage in the hallways of each floor, as well as to dispose it out of windows. (When caught on such action, expulsion from the dormitory shall occur.)
- Smoking is prohibited in rooms and windows of hallways on every floor. (When caught on such action, expulsion from the dormitory shall occur.)
- For Internet access, each person should use one’s own IP address. (When caught while using the IP address belonging to others, the internet use of that person shall be prohibited.)

- Commonly shared areas (lounge, kitchen etc.) should be used keeping others in mind, and should be cleaned up after.
- Stealing other person's belongings from inside the shared refrigerator is absolutely prohibited.
- When vacating the room for a long time during vacation, students should completely remove their personal stuff from the room and return the keys to the administration office. If you fail to return those, you must pay the dormitory fee during the vacation.
- Goods belonging to the students should be taken care of. Take caution when storing cash and valuable goods. Students themselves are responsible for the loss of things or money.
- When any facility furnishing or equipment at the dormitory is damaged or lost, the student should restore them to their original status, or pay compensation.
- All furnished goods inside the dormitory are the property of Sakhalin State University, so they should be handled with extra care.

## **Bank**

There are a lot of banks in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk that provide such services as currency exchanges, deposits, withdrawals (using your credit card and ATM).

## **Cultural life**

There are currently three movie theatres in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk. The ticket prices vary a lot. You can get it for 250 rub, and you might also get it for more than 500 rub. We recommend you visit the link <http://afisha.sakh.com/cinema/> where you will find all the prices, showtimes, new movies, trailers in all theatres of our city.

You can also visit Chekhov international theatre center as well as Sakhalin puppet theatre. There is a great variety of performances in the theatre repertoire. The ticket prices vary.

### **The International Sakhalin Theatre Center named after Chekhov.**

Also named Chekhov Centre, the theatre is located in the very centre of Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk city. The Centre is already more than 80 years old and is the only drama theatre in Sakhalin region. After being refurbished in 2016, the theatre building became one of the most attractive in the city. Chekhov Centre is famous for its varied repertoire and high-quality theatrical production.

Link: <http://www.chekhov-center.ru/>

Directly close to the theatre is **Chekhov Square**. Today it is perhaps the favourite place for Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk' residents. In the square you can meet the heroes of Chekhov's classic works: the Lady with the Dog, Fat and Thin, the Man in the Case and others.

### **Sakhalin Puppet Theatre.**

The theatre was founded in 1981 by a small group of enthusiasts headed by an honored art worker Vladimir Ralchuk.

At present the theatre repertoire includes 40 various fairy tales and plays both for kids and for adults. The theatre caters for children aged between 18 months to 16 years of age, and even puts on special performances for adults. You'll find the Puppet Theatre just opposite the administrative building of Sakhalin State University.

The theatre has been visited by many famous master directors of puppet theatres from Moscow, Saint Petersburg and other theatres from Russia and abroad.

Link: <https://molute.ru/>

### **Sakhalin Regional Museum.**

Sakhalin Regional Museum is one of the oldest research and educational cultural institutions of the Sakhalin Oblast. Now it plays a prominent role among humanitarian scientific centers of the Far East.

The museum is based in a building constructed during Japanese period. In 1937 Japanese specialists built a museum for the Governor of Karafuto and local community. The museum was built in accordance with traditional Japanese teikan zukuri ("imperial crown") architecture. It is the most beautiful building of Japanese style in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk. After World War II Sakhalin Regional Museum was opened for visitors on May 11, 1946 in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk in the former Karafuto museum.

The Museum has valuable collections of 200,000 objects, based on natural history, archaeology, cultures of the indigenous peoples (Ainu, Wilt (Oroks), Nivkhs), history and economy of Sakhalin and Kuril Islands. The most interesting of them are displayed in exhibition halls. Unique exhibits characterize land and marine flora and fauna of the islands, depict mysteries of ancient cultures and peoples, and tell about exploration history of Sakhalin and Kurils by Russian, European and Japanese investigators. Display on the 2-nd floor of the Museum depicts history of the island's region at the end of XIX - XX centuries.

The museum building is surrounded by a cosy, Japanese-style park with fountains and ponds. There is also a separate exhibition dedicated to regional history in the park itself.

Link: <http://old.en.sakhalinmuseum.ru/>

## **Literature and Art Museum dedicated to Chekhov's book «Sakhalin Island».**

The museum was opened on September 29, 1995. The exposition of the museum is dedicated to the "Sakhalin Island" book that was written by Chekhov after his trip to the island in 1890 (i.e. the museum is devoted to a single book). The genuine exhibits of that time, personal belongings of the writer and his family recreate a historical era and help visitors discover the reasons why Anton Chekhov committed himself to what some of his contemporaries called "an incredibly unreasonable act".

The collection of the museum was based on the private collection of G. Miromanov, a regional ethnographer. Today the museum has more than 3,000 items stored in its main fund and 10,000 items stored in its scientific supplementary fund. The exhibits of the Museum include authentic objects that belong not only to Chekhov's family, but books with dedications written by outstanding science and culture figures, works of pictorial art and many other things that confirm the universal love people have for the Russian genius.

Chekhov and Sakhalin are inseparable, the name of Anton Pavlovich Chekhov and his book are symbols in our island that unite cultural space of Sakhalin Island. The museum plays a crucial role in preservation and popularization of A. Chekhov in the region.

Link: <http://chekhov-book-museum.ru/>

## **Sakhalin Regional Art Museum.**

The Sakhalin Regional Art Museum was opened in 1983. It is one the youngest museums in Russia.

In March 25<sup>th</sup>, 1989 the museum moved to the building of the former Japanese bank "Hokkaido Takuseku". This building was constructed in the early 1930s. In the 1980s, the building was reconstructed and then handed over to the museum. This building is in the center of Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk. It is considered to be a historical and architecture monument, an example of the architectural diversity of the city. A big hall on the first floor is for all kinds of exhibitions. The second floor halls have three permanent expositions, devoted to Ancient Russian and Korean Art.

The museum often organizes parties for employees of various companies. Under these company sponsored programs, employees can see new exhibits and informally communicate.

There are about 7000 items in the collection now. It includes Russian ancient art, Russian art of the 19th century, Russian art of the first quarter of the 20th century, folk decorative art, fine arts of the West. There is also a collection of the works of the artists of the Russian Far East. The collection and promotion of Russian Far East art is one of the main priorities of the museum.

Link: <https://sakhartmuseum.ru/>

### **«Pobeda» («Victory») Museum and Memorial Complex**

In early September of 2016, a large-scale military-historical museum was opened in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk. The first visitors were introduced to spectacular panoramas and 3D interactive exhibits of “Landing Party on Shumshu. The Last War Island” and “Handasa Police Post Assault” dedicated to the liberation of Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands in 1945. You can see a recreated coastline, landing crafts, tanks and sculptures of soldiers. Some panorama characters are prototypes of the real battle participants.

Today the exhibitions include “1904-1905 Russo-Japanese war”, “Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands during the World War II period”, “Sakhalin on the home front”, “Local conflicts” (dedicated to Sakhalin participants of local conflicts in the 20-21 centuries).

The museum chronicles the liberation of eastern territories from the enemy: there's day-by-day entries on dates of battles, the names of commanders and participants, and the directions of the troop movements are shown.

The exhibition contains a lot of interactive units. When touching the screen with your finger, you can see letters, receipts and other documents of those days in detail.

Lovers of military equipment and vehicles should take a look at the full-scale model of the Japanese tank and a copy of the Soviet armored car, which is also included in one of the panoramas. Besides interesting exhibits, the new complex impresses with a beautiful view of the city and magnificent illumination at night.

Link: <https://pobeda-sakhalin.ru/>

### **«Russia – my history» History Park.**

The historical park in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk comprises four large halls and some 86 exhibition spaces. The multimedia exhibitions were created using largely innovative visual technologies, such as video graphics, animation, 3D modeling, and digital recreations.

The exhibition area is divided into four sections: “Rurikids”, “Romanovs”, “1917–1945. From great upheavals to the great victory” and “Russia – my history. 1945–2016”. Special importance is placed on regional content generated in cooperation with local history experts and leading researchers of the Sakhalin Region.

Link: <https://myhistorypark.ru/?city=yuz>

In addition, there are a number of other museums in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, such as the Railway Museum (museum of history of the Sakhalin railroad), the Educational Archeological Museum at SSU, and others.

### **Sakhalin Zoo-Botanical garden.**

The park not only exhibits animals, but also participates in the international rare and endangered species protection programs, as well as holds various exhibitions, competitions and conferences. School kids gain additional knowledge about zoology and ecology when they go on field trips to the zoo-botanical garden.

The zoo-botanical garden's collection has hundreds of plant, fungi and animal species, including 94 animals species listed in the red book.

Located in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk park zone, the garden represents a traditional family time place all year round.

Link: <https://www.sakhalinzoo.ru>

### **«Octyabr» Cinema and Concert Hall.**

The cinema and concert hall opened its doors on November 15 1967. Located on Kommunistichesky Avenue, the region capital's most beautiful street, "Octyabr" is rightly one of most favorite leisure areas for inhabitants of Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk and guests of the city .

Today "Octyabr" has two cinema halls with modern equipment. Its work is not limited to movie screening; the venue is widely used for organizing and holding cultural events that facilitate the fulfillment of Sakhalin region residents' cultural and spiritual needs. The significant event carried out on its territory is "Edge of the World" ("Krai Sveta") annual international film festival.

In the lobby you will find cozy cafés and movie ticket vending machines.

### **Cinema and Concert Hall «Komsomolets».**

"Komsomolets" cinema and concert hall is one of the oldest movie theatres in Sakhalin that has attracted more than one generation of Sakhalin spectators.

After its reconstruction in 2006 "Komsomolets" looks like a modern cinema with 197 seats, featuring high-quality film screenings and a high level of audience service.

The movie theatre operates on the basis of newest systems providing excellent picture and sound quality. Its doors are open not just for movie-goers: “Komsomolets” is a hot spot for holding festivals, concerts, competitions and conferences in various areas of the region’s capital life. There are mass events organized on the territory of “Komsomolets” for children and young people dedicated to national holidays and commemorative dates.

Classic style facade and interior with appropriate decorative elements of interior design create majestic atmosphere and invites guests to a comfortable rest.

**City Park of Culture and Recreation named after Y. Gagarin** is the most unique park in the Far East; it is a multi-purpose art center of leisure and natural environment entertainment industry. This park was founded in the Karafuto era with a picturesque pond, the Tamagava stream and laid paths for visitors.

You can take a walk around picturesque alleys of the park and enjoy some fresh air. There are public events featuring artistic collectives of the city and the region held on the park’s grounds every weekend, as well as a variety of fun events aiming at various targeted audience, from little kids to the elderly.

Gagarin Park is a unique recreational area that combines scenic forest zone with two lakes and modern infrastructure.

There is a real railway for children with a half-century history operating on the park territory, and Lake “Verkhneye”– a wonderful place for riding catamarans on a water smooth surface.

Link: <https://sakhalin-park.ru/>

## **Field trips**

You can go to all places of interest and see everything with the help of our University. The Department of Services and Tourism of SakhGU arranges interesting and informative field trips around the city. There are thousands of places in Russia that you just may visit before you leave the country. And yet, any foreigner’s first introduction to Russia starts with **visa**.

## **Visa and Registration**

To enter the Russian Federation you’ll need to submit a valid identity document which is acknowledged as such by our country (usually a passport) and a visa.

The purpose of your visa (study) must comply with the type of visa granted to you. Our international department deals only with student visa based on the invitations from the University. You should be offered a migration card form while crossing the Russian Federation state border.

Upon your arrival at the University you must immediately, within one working day, visit:

International Department of the University (office 9, 33, Kommunistichesky Ave., Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk) and submit all the documents required for the initial migration registration.

Documents which you must have for initial migration registration visa:

- Passport with the valid visa
- Original of migration card with border crossing mark
- Standard application form for migration registration
- Two photographs (3\*4 cm)

Our migration legislation isn't simple. It's quite difficult to grasp everything at once. Therefore, we will try our best to answer the most important questions concerning passport, visa, registration, extension of stay period in RF, etc.

### **Health Insurance**

Prior to the arrival in Russia you must purchase a medical insurance package in your country which covers any illnesses and injuries you may suffer during your stay in Russia. If you don't have it you are requested to purchase medical insurance package in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk immediately (international department officers will render assistance to you).