

„Just do it“



Going abroad with a child? That's possible. Saskia Keilbach studied in Moscow for one semester. With her: her child and partner. We asked her about her time in Russia.

Why did you want to study in Moscow?

"My parents come from Kyrgyzstan (former Soviet Union) and emigrated to Germany four years before I was born. Growing up in the middle of an extended Russian family, I was strongly influenced by the Russian mentality and culture. I also try to raise my daughter bilingually, with the culture so familiar to me through books and fairy tales. When I started planning my semester abroad, it was immediately clear to us: Russia! And since I am a fan of big cities, we decided to go to Moscow."

What did you like most about Moscow? What did you particularly like about the partner university?

"Moscow is an overwhelming metropolis. It is an ultra-modern, lively city that never sleeps. With its many historic squares and beautiful and magnificent architecture, this city radiates an incredible amount of charm. With endless gastronomy and colourful delicious food, cafes, bars, museums, galleries, sights, fashion, programme and festivities within the city, Moscow brings everything your heart desires. It is also a very child-friendly city. At various places the young visitors/guests are gladly spoiled with small attentions. We have registered our daughter Amelie in a "children's club", which she could visit several times a week. Since she was incredibly pleased with the loving programme with lots of music, theatre and dance, we were able to leave her there for a few hours without any problems, which made my everyday life at university a lot easier. There are several children's clubs in every district of Moscow, as they are also very popular there and offer a practical alternative for parents who are still looking for a kindergarten or who want to promote exchange and interaction between children as

early as possible. There are also many exciting children's theatres and attractions for families in general.

The university offers a large and broad range of humanities courses as well as business courses. The demands placed on students are very high, but this has allowed me to take a lot with me and expand my field of knowledge immensely. In addition, the university offers numerous language courses for different languages and levels. The location of the university is unbeatable. It is right in the centre, surrounded by great restaurants and cafes and right next to a central and very well connected metro station in the middle of the Moscow Ring.”

How family-friendly is the russian state university for the humanities?

“In general, I was very positively impressed by the university for the humanities. But unfortunately, the university is not family-friendly. There is no university kindergarten or special support for students with children. However, such an exchange was a first for the RGGU. But I was very well received and always provided with good information if I had any questions. My absence at some of the sessions (when there was no support from my family) was generally handled with understanding by the lecturers.”





What was particularly challenging for you?

“Unfortunately, the public transport infrastructure is not at all suitable for parents and children or for the disabled. Lifts are a rarity. So, I had to carry the pram down the stairs or use escalators. This was possible with support, but unfortunately difficult to do alone. However, the buses and the incredibly cheap taxis offer a pleasant solution.”

What would you advise young parents planning a semester abroad?

“Just do it. I had so many fears and spent so much time looking for a kindergarten and planning, but in the end everything turned out well and turned out positively. I also have to mention here that this is

largely thanks to the Kids' Club. All in all, it is such a great experience for the whole family and an intensive language development for the child, because since then I can communicate with Amelie in Russian without any complications. Nevertheless, reliable support from family or partner is important. Without my partner, or my mum, who has temporarily changed my partner for work reasons, this experience would be unimaginable for me.”

Photos: Saskia Keilbach