

Luzhniki Stadium



Luzhniki Stadium is the national stadium of Russia, located in its capital city, Moscow. The full name of the stadium is **Grand Sports Arena of the Luzhniki Olympic Complex**. Its total seating capacity of 81,000 makes it the largest football stadium in Russia and one of the largest stadiums in Europe.

Luzhniki was the main stadium of the 1980 Olympic Games, hosting the opening and closing ceremonies, as well as some of the competitions, including the final of the football tournament. A UEFA Category 4 stadium, Luzhniki hosted UEFA Cup Final in 1999 and UEFA Champions League Final in 2008. The stadium also hosted such events as 1973 Summer Universiade and 2013 World Championships in Athletics. It was named the main stadium of 2018 FIFA World Cup and hosted 7 matches of the tournament, including the opening match and the final.

Today it is mainly used as one of the home stadiums of the Russia national football team. The stadium is used from time to time for various other sporting events and for concerts. It is also used to host Russian domestic cup finals.

Location

The stadium is located in Khamovniki District of Moscow, south-west of the city center. The name *Luzhniki* derives from the flood meadows in the bend of the Moskva River where the stadium was built.

History

On 23 December 1954, the Government of the USSR adopted a resolution on the construction of a stadium in the Luzhniki area in Moscow. The decision of the Soviet Government was a response to a specific current international situation. The 1952 Summer Olympics in Helsinki brought the Soviet team 71 medals (of which 22 gold) and second place in the unofficial team standings.

It was a major success, but the increased athletic development of the Soviet Union, which was a matter of state policy, required the construction of a new sports complex. The stadium was built in 1955–56 as the Grand Arena of the Central Lenin Stadium. Building materials came from various parts of the USSR. Because the soil was heavily waterlogged, almost the entire area of the foundations of the complex had to be raised half a meter. 10,000 piles were hammered into the ground and dredgers reclaimed about 3 million cubic meters of soil.

The stadium was officially opened on 31 July 1956, having been built in just 450 days. It was the national stadium of the Soviet Union, and is now the national stadium of Russia.

The stadium was the chief venue for the 1980 Summer Olympics, the spectator capacity being 103,000 at that time. The events hosted in this stadium were

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the Opening and Closing Ceremonies, Athletics, Football finals, and the Individual Jumping Grand Prix.

In 1992, the stadium was renamed Luzhniki Stadium. An extensive renovation in 1996 saw the construction of a roof over the stands, and the refurbishment of the seating areas, resulting in a decrease in capacity.

Luzhniki Stadium was chosen by UEFA to host the 2008 UEFA Champions League Final won by Manchester United. In August 2013, the stadium hosted the World Athletics Championships.

Renovation for FIFA World Cup

The original stadium was demolished in 2013 to give a way for the construction of a new stadium. The self-supported cover was retained. The facade wall was retained as well, due to its architectural value, and was later reconnected to a new building. Construction of the new stadium was completed in 2017.

The 2018 FIFA World Cup was awarded to Russia and Luzhniki Stadium was selected by the Russia 2018 FIFA World Cup bid as the venue for the opening match and also the final, which was held on 15 July 2018. Like Rome's Stadio Olimpico, London's old Wembley Stadium, Berlin's Olympia stadion and Munich's Olympia stadion, Luzhniki Stadium has hosted the finals of the FIFA World Cup and UEFA's European Cup/Champions League and featured as a main stadium of the Summer Olympic Games.

The stadium's capacity was increased from 78,000 to 81,000 seats, partly caused by the removal of the athletics track around the pitch. Luzhniki arena has a typical stadium structure. The shape of a bowl with several entrances makes it easy for visitors to get to their seats effortlessly. All seats are divided into four main categories regardless of the upper or lower row, although the price is often lower when it comes to upper-row seats.

The stadium stands included special observation areas for people with disabilities, which offered space for wheelchairs and accompanying persons. In addition, after the reconstruction, the stadium was equipped with special extra-wide seats for plus-size spectators. Additional services for spectators available at the stadium include navigation assistance from volunteers, storage rooms, registration of children, lost-and-found department, and audio descriptive commentary for blind or visually impaired fans.

Playing surface

It was one of the few major European football stadiums to use an artificial pitch, having installed a FIFA-approved Field Turf pitch in 2002. However, a temporary natural grass pitch was installed for the 2008 UEFA Champions League Final. In August 2016 a permanent hybrid turf was installed, consisting of 95 percent natural grass reinforced with plastic.

How to get to

The stadium is a part of the Luzhniki Sports Complex facilities and has the same address. The arena is located 6 km south-west of the city centre. Surrounded by the Moskva River and parklands, the arena boasts a great location accessible from two different metro lines. Visitors can use two different metro stations: Sportivnaya metro station is the closest spot to the stadium and Vorob'yovy Gory station is an alternative for those who want to walk about 15 minutes enjoying the scenery. Both stations refer to the red metro line. It will take you about 10 minutes to reach them from the city centre (Okhotny Ryad or Biblioteka metro stations). One metro ride will cost you about \$1, no matter where you need to go.

Taking a bus will hardly be a good option. It will be more time-consuming considering traffic jams. The tube is still a better alternative unless you need to get to the stadium from Kievsky railway station

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or Belovezhskaya street. Buses 157 and 132 will take you directly to Luzhniki Stadium. The ticket costs \$1 (the price is equal to metro tickets).