

LISTENING:

TULA - THE CITY OF THE PRYANIK & SAMOVAR

Today we're going to be taking a look at the town of Tula and finding out what the town is known for. Also, we'll dip into some of the history and check out the tourist attractions. But first up, how to get there ...



Listen to the radio program produced by 'The Voice of Russia' and decide if the statements below are True or False. If False, make all necessary corrections.

- 1) Tula is actually not very far away from Moscow and is very easy to get to, using the two cheapest and easiest options that are the 'electrichka' and 'marshrutka'. – T / F
- 2) The 'marshrutka' is essentially a converted minivan that usually carries about 14 passengers; they usually follow bus or train routes. – T / F
- 3) Tula, the city capital of the Tula region, is situated on the Upa River which is a tributary of the Volga. – T / F
- 4) Tula is the second Russia's oldest metallurgical center that also produces heavy and light machine tools. – T / F
- 5) A 'pryanik' is a traditional Russian cookie made with honey and gingerbread, but they don't look anything like the traditional chocolate chip cookies. – T / F
- 6) A samovar literally means a 'self-boiler' and is basically a heated metal container that was traditionally used to heat and boil water in and around Russia, as well as in other Central, South-Eastern, Eastern European countries, and in the Middle-East. – T / F
- 7) Samovars used to be traditionally heated with coal, charcoal or kerosene, but now many samovars use electricity and work in a similar manner as an electric water boiler. – T / F
- 8) Tula state arms museum is actually a very cool museum as it has a unique collection of guns dating back to the 14th century. – T / F
- 9) The Pryanik Museum is one of the city's oldest museums, and it continues to become more and more popular every year. – T / F
- 10) The Tula Kremlin is in the city center and is a monument of defensive architecture. – T / F
- 11) The Tula Kremlin combines the traditions of Old Russian architecture with the achievements of the Western European art of fortification. – T / F
- 12) Yasnaya Polyana is fourteen kilometers north-west of the city and it was here that Tolstoy wrote his celebrated novels 'War and Peace' and 'Anna Karenina'. – T / F
- 13) V.I. Dal's interpretation of the word 'tula' was 'hidden, inaccessible place since it sounds like similar Russian words 'zatulye' (fence or shelter), or 'pritulye' (refuge) for defense.' – T / F
- 14) The famous Russian tsar Peter the Great visited Tula in 1712 and he commissioned goldsmiths to build first Russian armament manufacture. – T / F
- 15) The Tula Region was formed within its present boundaries on September 26, 1937. – T / F
- 16) In 1966, Tula was awarded the title of hero city for its brave efforts during the Second World War. – T / F

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Today we're going to be taking a look at the town of Tula and finding out what the town is known for. Also, we'll dip into some of the history and check out the tourist attractions.

But first up, how to get there. Tula is actually not very far away from Moscow and is very easy to get to. The two cheapest and easiest options are the *elektrichka* and *marshrutka*. I'll just explain what those are real quick since listeners unfamiliar won't know. An *elektrichka* is like a suburban intercity train, and it's what you take to reach the Moscow region, so basically to get out of Moscow. The *marshrutka* is essentially a converted minivan that usually carries 14 or so passengers, they usually follow bus or train routes but they can get quite cramped. The journey from Moscow to Tula takes about 2-2.5 hours depending on traffic or the train you get, but both will give you a bit of a taste of real Russian transport.

So here we are in Tula, the city capital of the Tula region on the Upa River which is a tributary of the Oka. It is an important rail and highway hub and a manufacturing city of the Moscow industrial region. Tula is Russia's oldest metallurgical center that also produces heavy and light machine tools. Also it's known for its weapon production and some other curious things.

Along with weapon production, Tula is also known as a bit of a sweet city since that's where Russian *Pryaniki* are made. For those who don't know, a *pryanik* is like a traditional Russian cookie made with honey and gingerbread, but to look at they don't look anything like the traditional chocolate chip cookies you might be used to seeing. Another interesting fact for interested listeners is that the word pops up in Russians sayings and idioms too, for example in Russia a stick and carrot approach is translated as a whip and *pryanik* approach, same idea, different treats.

Tula is also a really famous as Russian *samovar* production center. Again, you might be wondering just what one of those is. A *samovar* literally means a "self-boiler" and is basically a heated metal container that was traditionally used to heat and boil water in and around Russia, as well as in other Central, South-Eastern, Eastern European countries, and in the Middle-East. Since the heated water is usually used for making tea, most *samovars* have an attachment on the tops of their lids to hold and heat a teapot filled with tea concentrate.

They used to be traditionally heated with coal or charcoal, but now many newer *samovars* use electricity and heat water in a similar manner as an electric water boiler. It's like a big traditional Russian kettle really, but if you had the space to bring a smaller one back from your travels, you'd have a really nice and unique Russian souvenir on your hands from the town most famous for them.

There's even a Russian proverb that states "You don't take a *samovar* to Tula" which is similar in meaning to our saying 'when in Rome, do as the Romans do'.

Another nice little fact for listeners is that Leo Tolstoy lived and was buried near Tula, but we'll get into that when we look at the sights.

Now you know a little bit about the town in general, you're probably wondering what you should visit. Well, seeing as, sweet biscuits, *samovars* and weapons are three things the town is most famous for, that would be a good place to start.

So for people like me who are interested in war museums and alike a good first stop would be the Tula state arms museum. This is actually a very cool museum since it has a unique collection of guns dating back to the 16th century right up to today which gives you the chance to look at the evolution of arms and compare the achievements between Russian and foreign gun smiths and you'll admit this type of cultural comparison is not something you can find just anywhere.

For the less weapon-hungry of you, you could take a look at the Tula Samovar museum which holds over 300 different types of samovar of all different shapes and sizes. If you didn't know what a Samovar was before visiting Tula, you sure after a visit to this museum!

Once you'll filled up on Samovars, head over to the Pryanik museum, which is one of the towns youngest museums, but one which is becoming more and more popular every year. You can learn all about the history of the pryanik and see all kinds of examples, including the largest pryanik in Russia!

Next on your list you will probably want to see the Tula kremlin which has been around for 500 years! The Tula Kremlin is in the city center and is a monument of defensive architecture. Construction of the fortress, which was the main southern defense line of the Muscovite state, went on during the difficult times of the Crimean Tatar attacks on Russian lands. The craftsmen who built the Tula Kremlin combined the traditions of Old Russian architecture with the latest achievements of the Western European art of fortification. And what's more, Russian stonemasons along with Italian architects who had built the Moscow Kremlin at the end of the 15th century took part in construction, so it's something great to explore and photograph.

Now because of time constraints, I can't take you through all the interesting sights since there are so many that attract a lot of tourists and visitors. But you can find at least 12 other museums to look at, along with parks and nice cafes to rest up and enjoy the old and historic city.

But in any case, make sure you spare the time to visit the Tula region's most popular attraction among tourists from all over the world which is Yasnaya Polyana, the home and burial place of none other than Leo Tolstoy. Yasnaya polyana it is fourteen kilometers south-west of the city and was here that Tolstoy wrote his celebrated novels War and Peace and Anna Karenina. Here you can visit his estate which became a museum in 1928. The authenticity of the furnishings, and of the works of art, and the library, which belonged to the writer's family, makes it one of the most unique museums in the world and the interior of the house is kept as it was in 1910 making it a really special and unique place to visit, like time traveling into a place of Russian literary history.

As you can see, or should I say hear, I've only been able to scratch the surface of what there is to see, but you can rest assured that you won't be short of things to see. But having looked a bit at the town, why don't we take a step back into the history of this town?

The town of Tula was first mentioned in 14th century and at that time Tula was a fortress of the Ryazan Principality but later, after it was captured by Moscow state and the Tula Kremlin, that we mentioned earlier, was built in 1530.

There are some different ideas as to how Tula got its name, one of them is associated with the Tulitsa River, on which the city was built. But, there is another and in my opinion more interesting theory linked to Vladimir Ivanovich Dal who was the author of a famous thesaurus of the Russian language, originally published between 1903 and 1909. According to this interpretation the word "tula" as could mean "hidden, inaccessible place since it sounds like similar Russian words zatulye (fence or shelter), or pritulye (refuge) for defense."

The Famous Russian tsar Peter the Great visited Tula in 1712 and he commissioned blacksmiths to build first Russian armament manufacture. Several years later Tula became the largest ironworking center of Eastern Europe, giving it the weapons reputation it still has to this day. In the 18th century Tula was also known as a major center for the production of iron and cast iron goods and it grew along with the arms industry. In 1778 the

armorers F.I. Lisitsyn set up a factory for industrial production of samovars, which as we know, later gave it something else to be famous for.

The city grew rapidly in the early 20th century as a result of arms production during the Russo-Japanese and First World wars. Tula's factories also manufactured weapons for the Red Army during the Civil War from 1918-1921. The Tula Region was formed within its present boundaries on September 26, 1937. From October through December 1941, when the front line passed through the city's southern edge, city residents along with Red Army units defended Tula against Hitler's forces. After the war ended, the people of the city and other parts of the region started rebuilding housing and industrial facilities. Within a short period, the region's economy was restored and Tula became a center of the engineering and metalworking industries. In 1976, Tula was awarded the title of hero city for its brave efforts during the Second World War.

So coming back to the present, you can be sure that Tula is a beautiful old city and a major cultural, industrial, and scientific center of the region which is definitely worthy of your attention, whether it's weapons, cakes or samovars that interest you.