

## Title:

Siberia, Russia Part 5 - Khabarovsk and a Little Russian

## Word Count:

414

## Summary:

In this continuing series, we cover my move from San Diego to Chita, Siberia to be a professor at Chita State Technical University. We pick up the story outside the airport in Khabarovsk, Russia.

## Keywords:

sibera, russia, travel, travelogue

## Article Body:

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## Khabarovsk

Khabarovsk is an amazing city. Museums with works from Picasso, Rembrandt and other masters. A bustling downtown area with cafes, a lively music scene and architectural triumphs. Then again, maybe not. We were far more interested in finding a hotel with hot water and never ventured into the city.

Outside of the airport, we were a bit flummoxed by the fact there appeared to be no taxis. We quickly learned that practically any Russian with a car is also a taxi for hire. After 5 minutes of egging each other on, Grae made taxi arrangements and we were off. Apparently taking in our disheveled appearance after 3 days of traveling, our driver suggested the Intourist hotel. We readily agreed.

During communism, Intourist hotels were set up for exclusive use by foreigners. Ours was fairly nice and, importantly, had showers with copious amounts of hot water. You can see a picture at <http://www.lodging.ru/hotels/intouristkhab.asp>. After having returned to humanity with one of the best showers of my life, it was time to brush up on my Russian skills.

I am a huge fan of ice hockey. During the eighties and nineties, many of the best players were Russians. In interviews, they almost always talked about

learning English by watching television. If it worked for them, it would work for me. Not exactly.

As Grae showered, I flipped through the eight available channels. Sitcoms were a non-starter, but I eventually found a news channel. I see the images. I know what the images are. I hear the words being spoken by the reporters. I have absolutely no idea of what words go with what images. Okay, let's back up. What words do they use over and over? Damn, do they have to talk so fast? After 30 minutes, I have learned nothing, nada, zippo. My respect for Russians playing in the NHL has never been higher.

Might as well sleep on it. Yes, day three of the trip was finally done. My original prediction of a 2-day trip was out the window. Still, we were in Russia, so how much longer could it take? Pull out a map and take a look at the country. It is twice the size of the U.S.

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