



The Other Side of Russia: A Slice of Life in Siberia and the Russian Far East (Eugenia & Hugh M. Stewart '26 Series on Eastern Europe)

Sharon Hudgins

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Travel to post Soviet Siberia and the Russian Far East with author Sharon Hudgins as she takes readers on a personal adventure through the Asian side of Russia—an area closed to most Westerners and many Russians prior to the 1990s. Even today, few people from the West have ridden the TransSiberian railroad in winter, stood on the frozen surface of Lake Baikal, feasted with the Siberian Buryats, or lived in the "highrise villages" of Vladivostok and Irkutsk.

One of the few American women who has lived and worked in this part of the world, Hudgins debunks many of the myths and misconceptions that surround this "other side of Russia." She artfully depicts the details of everyday life, set within their cultural and historical context—local customs, foods, and festivals, as well as urban life, the education system, and the developing market economy in postSoviet Siberia and the Russian Far East.

Hudgin's prose shines in her colorful descriptions of multicourse meals washed down with champagne and vodka, often eaten by candlelight when the electricity failed. The author's accounts of hors d'oeuvres made of sea slugs and roulades of raw horse liver will fascinate those with adventuresome tastes, while her stories of hosting Spanish, French, and TexMex feasts will come as a surprise to anyone who thinks of Russia as a gastronomic wasteland.

Readers of *The Other Side of Russia: A Slice of Life in Siberia and the Russian Far East* will find themselves among the guests at Christmas parties, New Year's banquets, Easter dinners, and birthday celebrations. They will experience the challenges of living in highrise apartment buildings often lacking water, heat, and electricity. Above all, Asian Russia's natural beauty, thriving cities, and proud people shine from the pages, proving it is not only a land of harsh winters and vast uninhabited spaces, but also home to millions of Russian citizens who live and work in modern metropolises and enjoy a rich cultural and social life.

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