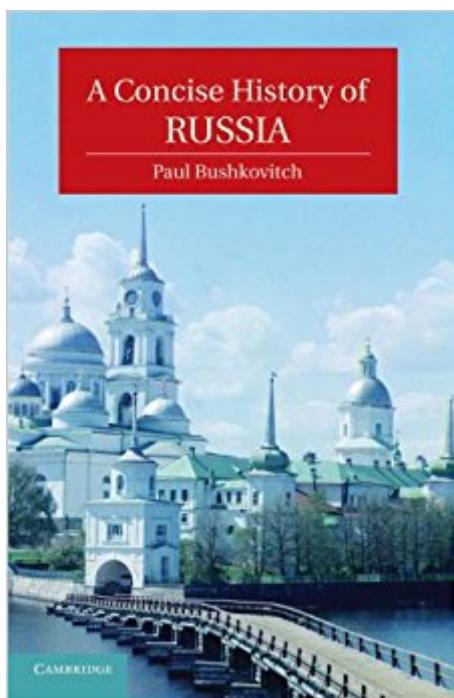


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A Concise History Of Russia (Cambridge Concise Histories)



Synopsis

Accessible to students, tourists, and general readers alike, this book provides a broad overview of Russian history since the ninth century. Paul Bushkovitch emphasizes the enormous changes in the understanding of Russian history resulting from the end of the Soviet Union in 1991. Since then, new material has come to light on the history of the Soviet era, providing new conceptions of Russia's pre-revolutionary past. The book traces not only the political history of Russia, but also developments in its literature, art, and science. Bushkovitch describes well-known cultural figures, such as Chekhov, Tolstoy, and Mendeleev in their institutional and historical contexts. Though the 1917 revolution, the resulting Soviet system, and the Cold War were a crucial part of Russian and world history, Bushkovitch presents earlier developments as more than just a prelude to Bolshevik power.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"For any student trying to get a grasp of the essentials of Russian history this book is the place to start. To cover everything from the origins of the Russian people to the collapse of the Soviet Union in one short book requires great skill, but Paul Bushkovitch is one of the leading experts on Russian history in the world and he manages this task with great insight and panache." Dominic Lieven, Trinity College, Cambridge University

"This is a lively and readable account, covering more than a thousand years of Russian history in an authoritative narrative. The author deals perceptively not only with political developments, but also with those aspects of modern Russian culture and science that have had an international impact." Maureen Perrie, University of Birmingham

"If you want to

understand Russia, and the story of the Russians, you can do no better than Paul Bushkovitch's *A Concise History of Russia*. Bushkovitch has performed a minor miracle: he's told the remarkably complicated, convoluted, and controversial tale of Russian history simply, directly, and even-handedly. He doesn't get mired in the details, lost in the twists and turns, or sidetracked by axe grinding. He tells you what happened and why, full stop. So if you want to know what happened and why in Russian history, you be advised to begin with Bushkovitch's masterful introduction."

Marshall Poe, University of Iowa "Both learned and accessible, this short history of Russia's troubled passage to the present tells a story of a state and a people who created an empire that much of the world saw as a threat. Whether as the 'Gendarme of Europe' or the 'Red Menace,' Russia and its Soviet successor (even Putin's Russia today!) have been as much misunderstood as they have been feared. Paul Bushkovitch brings us a sober reading of Russia's difficult rises and falls, expansions and contractions, reforms and revolutions. Rather than seeing the preceding millennium as a prelude to the seventy years of the Soviet Union, he gives us a rounded portrait of a country hobbled and humbled by its own geography, institutions like autocracy and serfdom, and grandiose plans to create utopia. Judicious in its judgments, this gracefully written work ranges from high politics to music and literature to open a window through which a reader might begin or renew an acquaintance with the enigmas that were Russia." Ronald Grigor Suny, University of Michigan "Bushkovitch avoids the pitfalls of generalization, giving a neat and succinct overview of many different areas that manages to be clear and concise without sacrificing too much detail."

George Gilbert, *European History Quarterly*

Accessible to students, tourists, and general readers alike, this book provides a broad overview of Russian history since the ninth century. Paul Bushkovitch emphasizes the enormous changes in the understanding of Russian history resulting from the end of the Soviet Union in 1991. Since then, new material has come to light on the history of the Soviet era, reshaping conceptions of Russia's pre-revolutionary past. Considering that Communism is no longer the predominant reason for interest in Russian history, other aspects of Russian history, culture, religion, and science are discussed in this book alongside political and social developments. Though the 1917 revolution, the Soviet system, and the Cold War were major parts of Russian history, Bushkovitch gives equal weight to each time period discussed.

A very good introduction covering many aspects of Russian history that are overlooked in more general accounts, but lacking depth overall. The shifts in the second half of the book between

leader-centric, cultural, and imperialist chapters became distracting. In condensing the dense subject, the author seemed to lose the ability to be a storyteller, but nevertheless enticed an interest in finding more sources for specific eras.

I find this history book a very good supplement to the more detailed Orlando Figes histories I've already purchased and read. You don't need to read it cover to cover at one go but it's full of well researched information that you can refer to at will or review as needed. For those only beginning their study of Russian history, it's a very clear and easy read that takes you from the founding of Russia as a country all the way to modern times and the Stalinist period. A good basic book to add to your library and excellent for those planning to travel there.

Any one going to Russia should read this book. It tells the whole story of Russia in one volume. Very clear and well written. He doesn't make this point, but makes clear that Putin's actions are rooted deep in Russian history.

Excellent and very well written book. Keeps the reader interested and provides facts without being dry. After I read it, I loaned it to my daughter. She also loved it.

The book provides a helpful overview of Russian history. Due to its limited length there were, of course, times when I wanted to know more about certain topics (for example Russia's various wars in the 19th century (including the Crimean War) are touched upon only briefly, and the Cold War only gets one chapter). However, the purpose of a concise history is to introduce you to the basics so you can determine which topics you want to read more about. Also, the book is refreshing in that it does not seem to have an agenda (at least as far as I could tell). The author's treatment of the Orthodox Church, Tsarist Russia, and the Soviet Union were critical where necessary but did not seem to betray a bias in any direction. My main complaint is that the writing style, while very readable, is somewhat dry and often uses repetitive sentence constructions (for example "to make matters worse" seems to appear on every other Kindle page).

Well written, clear and honest.

Excellent concise history of Russia

Despite the many excellent works on Russian history, decent single volume surveys are few and far between. Geoffrey Hosking and Abraham Ascher both have written short histories of Russia that, while good, left one wanting more (I was not that enamored with Hosking's longer survey). This book is significantly longer than either of them, and does a good job narrating and explaining Russian history.

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