

Hunt, try tasty draniki and rest at a sanatorium...

Tourists from abroad are attracted by low prices, European quality and Belarusian national traditions

By Oleg Onufriev

Why did nearly 450,000 foreign citizens apply for Belarusian visas last year? Of course, some were businessmen attending international scientific and professional conferences and many Western tourists came to visit the IT Park. Yet more were tourists eager to learn about our history, culture and way of life, stresses the Deputy Head of Tourism at Tsentrikurort, Yelena Brok.

She tells us, "Most foreign guests to Belarusian health resorts and national parks were from Russia, with Lithuanians also frequent visitors to health resorts. As a rule, they bring their families too. Naturally, large events like the *Slavianski Bazaar* and New Year celebrations also attract groups — particularly of

young people."

The safest and most affordable European capital

European tour operators usually stress this element to tourists considering coming to Minsk. Clearly, those from Western Europe appreciate the fact, as the growing number of entry visas show. The capital also offers European level hotels and reasonably priced inbound flights, in addition to unspoiled countryside — as is rarely found elsewhere these days. Additionally, many Belarusian cities boast unique ancient architecture.



Gym at Naftan Sanatorium

According to a study by Viapol Travel Company, middle-aged visitors dominate, with over 40 percent aged 36-55. Over 20 percent are 25-35 years old and, interestingly, more than 70 percent have higher

education. About 60 percent of foreign tourists place Minsk as their primary destination, with Grodno leading among large cities and Nesvizh, Mir, Postavy, Glubokoe, Kamenets, Vetka, Pruzhany, Mstislavl, Logoisk and Braslav being the other main attractions.

Kalyada and Zavirukha

Various events through the year will draw tourists from far and near. One of the first is a dog sled race held from 26th to 27th January, at Raubichi, which is gathering over 100 participants from around the world. The final schedule for 2013 was agreed in December.

Returning valuable folio by joint effort

Museum in Mogilev acquires book worth 5,000 Euros

Written by famous inventor Kazimir Semenovich, the edition was released in German, in Frankfurt-am-Main, in 1676. It details the history of artillery and is the best preserved edition as yet acquired

by Belarus. The National Library holds other editions: two in Latin and one in French. According to Alexey Batyukov, the Director of Mogilev's History Museum, a special display window is being prepared, to allow everyone to admire the folio.

Visitors easily able to find their way

Tourists can now easily orient around Minsk's centre

The first information stands have been installed in Svobody Square, enabling tourists to locate interesting sights, as well as the nearest ATM, pharmacy, WC, taxi rank or restaurant. All inscriptions are in Belarusian and English.

The project is being implemented by the Belarusian Association of Transport Experts and Surveyors (BAES) and by Minsk Information and Tourist Centre, using a concept of spatial orientation for pedestrians. Tourists will be offered the most convenient routes to their destination, with accuracy of up to one metre, following similar technology in Berlin, Warsaw and London.



City information

In all, 44 points are to be installed citywide, with stands soon appearing on the squares of Nezavisimosti and Privokzalnaya.

Documentary and detective

Works which reveal to the public little known fragments of domestic history are invaluable to the nation

By Lyudmila Ivanovskaya

The latest novel by famous writer and author of many popular books, the much awarded Natalia Golubeva, is set during the First World War, when armies passed through Belarusian lands, destroying cities and destinies, amidst sorrow and heroism. Few works are devoted this period, so the launch at Minsk's Presentation store gathered not only editors and writers but historians and archive and museum workers.

Ms. Golubeva's *Kameya Salidat* (Cameo Salidat) is a detective story based on extensive professional research, since Natalia is a candidate of historical sciences. While working in the archives, she read many unique documents which revealed aspects of the war previously considered.

Of course, the dramatic events of the early 20th century are an intriguing background for the plot. We follow brave intelligence officers, noble nurses on the battlefield and the psychological weapons of the time. She calls her work a family saga, with romance as well as action and mystery. We move between modern day politics and the past, while the characters are portrayed with realism. Valery Nadtachaev, a book consultant, writer and mili-



Presentation of the *Kameya Salidat* novel by Natalia Golubeva

tary historian, is convinced that her characters are inspired from real life.

The novel — published by the Petrus Brovka Belarusian Encyclopaedia Publishing House — is sure to prove popular while playing a role in encouraging feelings of patriotism among the younger generation, preserving our historic memory. Next year marks the 100th anniversary of the start of that long

Everything in good time

By Piotr Semenovskiy

National Library of Belarus negotiates acquisition of two rare editions

"We're now negotiating the purchase of two very valuable editions from the legacy of Belarusian book culture. They're estimated to be worth dozens or, even, hundreds of thousands of US dollars, but we hope that talks will be successful," notes Roman Motulsky, Director of the National Library.

Until the deal is struck, he is reluctant to share details, noting that this 'usually harms negotiations rather than bringing anything good'. He stresses that 2012 — the Year of the Book — was very fruitful for the National Library, which purchased over 150 rare and valuable editions.

"One of the most valuable is a book by Belarusian Kazimir Semenovich, entitled *The Great Art of Artillery*; the first edition was published in Amsterdam around 1650-1651. He laid the foundations of contemporary rocket science, inspired by Napoleon and Peter I, Korolev and Tsiolkovsky. This rare edition shows that, even many centuries ago, our country's scientific knowledge was well-developed," he emphasises.

Mr. Motulsky tells us that the library's mission is to collect and preserve the country's literary legacy. "It's no easy task, as many valuable Belarusian books have been removed beyond our borders and it's difficult to reacquire them. However, we hope that we'll be able to return more rarities in 2013," he asserts.