



True Colors of Kamchatka

Try telling someone you would like to go to Kamchatka and hundreds of questions would arise that you won't always have the answers to. Even European Russians do not know much about it, other than that "when it is 4 o'clock in the afternoon in Moscow, it is 12 AM in Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky", as the dependable radio interval tells us. After all, it is located on the opposite end of the country, at the very edge of the map and you can only get there after a very long plane journey.

However, the people who live in this fairly large region will tell you to just come and visit and it will be impossible to mistake this astonishing terrain and culture for any other.

After all, Kamchatka is made unique by the very fact of its existence.

Located in the north-eastern part of Russia, that "very very far" Far East, Kamchatka lies even further than Siberia and Vladivostok. If you get to ob-

serve it from above, Kamchatka looks like a big exotic ocean fish swimming in the neighboring waters of the Bering and the Okhotsk seas and the great Pacific Ocean.

The severe nature of the waters surrounding the peninsula of 270 thousand square kilometers, takes its toll on all parts of Kamchatka. The peninsula stretches from North-East to South-West for 1,200 km and even has its own mountains with two parallel

mountain ranges, the Middle and the Eastern range. There is a large number of rivers and lakes.

Kamchatka connects to the mainland with a narrow 93 km isthmus – the Parapolsky Dol. It is as if the gods who created this piece of land did not first want to connect it with the rest of the world, but changed their minds at the last minute. And as if reluctantly, they left the narrow strip of land for those souls daring enough to make a

pilgrimage to the far edge of the world to see its wonders with their own eyes.

The eastern coast of the peninsula is very uneven, boasting large bays including Avachinskiy, Kronotskiy, Ozernoy and others, and coves Avachinskaya, Karaga and Ossora. Rocky peninsulas Shipunsky, Kronotskiy, Kamchatskiy and Ozernoy are peaking out into the sea.

One of the most amazing things about the peninsula is its volcanic belt. Shaped in a semicircle, as if embracing this land stands this fiery chain necklace of the Earth. The belt consists of



THE KAMCHATKA REGION

Total Area: 472'300 square kilometers

Population: 322'079

Administrative Center: Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky

Twin Cities:
 Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky: Kushiro, Japan; Unalaska, USA
 Elizovo: Homer, USA

Time Zone: UTC/GMT+12

Tourist Centers:

- Tourist visit center of the Elizovskiy municipal district
www.welcomekamchatka.ru
 Elizovo, Ryabikova Street 1a
 Telephone: 8-961-961-85-58, 8962-282-52-65

- Kronotskiy Nature Reserve
www.kronoki.ru
- 684000, Kamchatka, Elizovo, Ryabikova Street 4,
 tel +7-41531-6-17-54, 7-39-05, 7-16-52
- Nature Park "Bystrinsky"
www.bystrinsky-park.com,
www.wildkamchatka.ru
- 684350, Esso village, Bystrinsky District, Lenina Street 8
 Tel. +7-41542-21-461;

How to Get There
 By plane: all major European destinations have a flight connection with Moscow and onwards to Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky. From the US: in the summer there is a direct

scheduled flight from Anchorage to Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky. You can also reach Kamchatka by cruise – and expedition ships.

Tourist Websites in English:
www.visitkamchatka.com

Where to Stay:

- Hotel "Petropavlovsk"
 Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky, Karl Marx prospekt 31a
www.petropavlovsk-hotel.ru
- Hotel "Avacha"
 Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky, Leningradskaya Street 61
www.avacha-hotel.ru
- Guesthouse "Antarius"
 Elizovskiy District, village Paratunka, Molchanova Street 22
antarius_star@mail.ru

Where to eat:

- Cafe "Boulevard"
 (European, Japanese, Italian cuisine)
 Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky, Pobedy prospect 67/2
- Restaurant "Coliseum"
 (European cuisine)
 Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky, Leningradskaya Street 61
- Cafe "Stary Zamok"
 (Russian, European and Japanese cuisine)
 Elizovo, Zavoiko Street 123
- Cafe "Ostrov"
 (European cuisine)
 Kamchatka, Elizovo, Sadovoe Koltso Street 1

Where to Have Fun:
 Entertainment center "Rollerdrom"
 Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky,

Tushkanova Street 1a
 (Concert hall, roller-skating, rollercoaster, cafes, etc.)
 Shopping and entertainment center "Pyramid"
 Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky, Kosmicheskaya Street 3
 (bowling, bar, cafe, cinema, gaming machines, billiard)

In Case of Emergency:
 Search-and-rescue team
 +7 (4152) 41-03-95
www.41.mchs.gov.ru,
 e-mail: emercom@kamfire.iks.ru
 Police – 01 (mobile 001)
 Ambulance – 03 (mobile 003)

Nearest Foreign Consulates:

- Consulate General of Germany:
 Novosibirsk, Krasniy Prospekt 28
 Phone: (383) 231-00-20, 223-14-11, 231-00-52.
- Embassy of Switzerland Moscow
 Moscow, Ogorodnaya Sloboda lane 2/5.
 Phone: (495) 258-38-30.
www.eda.admin.ch/eda/rus/home/rep/eur/vrus/embmos.html
- British Consulate
 Novosibirsk, Karl Marx prospekt 26/4, office 207
 Tel: (495) 784-7144
- The French Republic
 Moscow, Bolshaya Yakimanka Street 45
 Phone: (495) 937-15-00.
- Consular Section: Moscow,
 Kazansky lane 10.
 Phone: (495) 937-15-00/15-98.

with 29 of them still active! Here is the largest volcano in Eurasia – the Kluchevskaya Sopka, which reaches 4750 meters in elevation.

Along with volcanoes live the geysers that are sometimes called "the miracle of the Earth". After all, in their essence, geysers are the children of volcanoes, despite the fact that geysers are fountains of boiling water ejaculated to the earth surface, while volcanoes "breathe" lava, ash and even stone "bombs".

The Valley of Geysers in Kamchatka is located in the Kronotskoye State Biosphere Reserve, included on the UNESCO World Heritage list. It was discovered only 72 years ago in 1941 by Russian geologist Tatyana Ustinova, who managed to prove the existence of the valley of geysers in Kamchatka. Nobody knew about it for a long time, since this area was inaccessible to humans.

The Valley of Geysers was partially destroyed in the 1980s, and damaged by a mudflow in 2007. However, today it is open for access again. Bathing in the hot springs of the valley is sometimes compared to the mythical bathing in sacred rivers. But apart from the fantastic sensation of sitting in a geyser, these baths are also do wonders for the health, since the 95 degree geyser water is enriched by all possible elements and minerals. Not to mention it is certainly more exciting than any spa resort in the world.

The Valley of Geysers in Kamchatka has been recognized as one of the Seven Wonders of Russia.

According to archaeologists, Kamchatka was already inhabited by about

15,000 years ago at the time of the Sargatan glacier. Ancient hunters, whose artifacts were found at the Ushkovskiy archeological site, became the first settlers in North America, having passed through Kamchatka and Chukotka. In fact, the current native peoples of Kamchatka are the real, albeit distant ancestors of the North American Indians!

To this day, the Kamchatka region is home to many ethnicities, including the Aleuts, the Itelmens (meaning "those who live here"), the Koryaks (both "onshore koryaks" and "deer-breeding Koryaks"), Chukchi (ancient inhabitants of the continental north-east of Siberia, born reindeer hunters and fishermen), the Evens and the Kamchadals. Kamchadals are a relatively modern occurrence, and is the name given to children born from marriages between Russian and Itelmens. The name "Kamchadals" originates from the late 17th century. Most of these peoples survive by fishing, hunting, and gathering wild plants.

Each of these ethnic groups kept their own cultural traditions and lan-



Elena Safonova

guages, many of them now endangered. They manage to preserve their traditional diet and a way of life, especially those who live in the most remote areas of Kamchatka. Practicing folklore through song and dance ensembles helped the small peoples of the North maintain their ethnic nature and preserve the customs of their ancestors, which is not an easy feat in today's world, even while living at some distance from the "great modern civilization."

The mythological image of the creator of the Kamchatka land, the progenitor of nations, is the same for both the Koryaks and the Itelmens. The Big Raven (Kutkh in the Itelmen language and Kutkynnyaku in Koryak) is the main protagonist in the Koryak and Itelmen folklore. He is associated with many of their beliefs and practices.

And, of course, the one animal this region cannot do without is the reindeer. The deer was everything to the native inhabitants of Kamchatka. It provided them with food and clothing, and means of livelihood. The reindeer is the protagonist of many heroic tales, where he acts as a wondrous assistant and savior to the man.

Unfortunately the wild reindeer is an endangered species, and was included to the Red Book of Kamchatka in 2006. Within the peninsula, wild reindeer has been preserved only in the Kronotsk reserve. Based on the

research conducted in 2009 and 2010, the entire population of reindeer on the peninsula is less than 1100 and continues to decline, despite the complete ban on hunting and intense efforts to save these animals.

However, there is hope that the whole area, including mountain and volcanic zones east of Kamchatka, could soon become a place for the revival of the wild reindeer. And in order to save and grow their population, there are full prohibitions on entering the places of reindeer habitat.

Kamchatka is a stern natural paradise that is worth thousands of kilometers for. ■



Event Tourism in Kamchatka

Kamchatka is a relatively new tourist destination. However, the region is boasting many events that are worth changing your itinerary for. There is a multitude of national and ritual holidays, but the event possibilities of this area do not stop here.

Every season can offer travelers its own special holiday. And, given the seasonal nature of tourism in Kamchatka, there is a lot to choose from and all visitors are welcome to take part in the events. To take part in the national holiday is a great honor for visitors and hosts alike.

SLED DOG RACE "BERINGIA"

Sled dog races have been held in northern Russia for centuries. Initially, they were competitions between cargo-carrying sleds or took place as a fun activity during national holidays. The rebirth of sled dog races in Russia happened in the late 1980s, with the initial races held in Kamchatka and Chukotka. However, they are now popular in many northern countries of the world.

Sled dog racing is a great sport, filled with unforgettable emotions for participants, spectators and fans alike. The dog sled race "Beringia" was first

held in January 1990 and has since become an established tradition. The length of the highway "Beringia 90" is 250 kilometers. "Beringia 91" is 1,980 kilometers in length and the "Beringia 92" is 2044 km, which was recorded in the Guinness Book of Records as the longest dog sled races in the world.

The competition remains the longest sled dog race in Eurasia, with the distance of over 950 kilometers. In 2010, "Beringia" became an official holiday of the Kamchatka Region. The main prize of the race is the Russian SUV UAZ "The Patriot", given out by the region's governor.

When: March

The route: the start is in Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky, finish in the village of Tilichiki

The sled dog race "Beringia-2014" will follow a new route, which was decided at the first meeting of the working group under the chairmanship of the Deputy Prime Minister of the Kamchatka Region Aleksey Voitov.

The initiative to change the route belongs to the mushers. "Beringia – 2014" will start in Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky, with a grandiose celebration at the Vitaly Fatyanov biathlon complex. The race track will then pass through Milkovo, where another celebration will be



held, Klyuchi and Ossorio. The finish is scheduled in the village of Tilichiki.

"Beringia" will not be passing through Esso this year. The district began a large-scale reconstruction of the rural stadium and the whole year will be spent preparing the sports facility for "Beringia - 2015".

The working group of the organizing committee also considered the initiative to change the route and double it in length in 2015. The plan of the organizing committee is to hold this "Beringia" on the two coasts of the peninsula, starting in Esso and reaching the west coast of Ossory, the race will turn south and come to Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky on the east coast.





Length of the Route: Changes every year, is about 950 kilometers in length. There are 15 stages in the race.

THE REINDEER HERDER'S DAY

The Bystrinskiy district in the Kamchatka region is usually first to celebrate the Reindeer Herder's Day. The



holiday is designed to honor the best workers on reindeer farms. The many events of the day include an exhibition of photographs and children's drawings, a performance by national music groups, an exhibition and sale of arts and crafts products and, finally, the grand reindeer race.

After an almost 30-year break, the North all-around was revived in 2009. The competition involves teams from different parts of the Kamchatka region.

When: first Sunday of March

The program of events: national triple jump, jumping over the sled, cross-country running with a stick, throwing of tynzyan onto a khorey (tynzyan is a rope-lasso for catching reindeer,

khorey is a wooden pole for driving a deer team) and ax throw.

NATIONAL HOLIDAY "THE DAY OF THE FIRST FISH"

The Day of the First Fish is an ancient ritual celebration of indigenous people of Kamchatka. The day is still revered by all ethnic peoples of the peninsula. This tradition originates from the ancient beliefs of the indigenous people of Kamchatka that conducting a few ceremonies is essential for a successful fishing season. One of the rituals includes walking through a wooden archway in order to cleanse evil spirits from the body, another is to make offerings to the fire.

When: first Sunday of June

NATIONAL HOLIDAY "NURGENEK"

This holiday is celebrated on the day of the summer solstice. According to ancient beliefs of the Even people, the gates of heaven open only on certain days of the year, including the 22nd, 23rd and 24th of June. These days mark the beginning of a new year and the beginning of a "new sun".

The ritual begins at midnight. Two ritual fires are lit near the sacred trees and a sprig of juniper is thrown into the flames in order to cleanse the world of evil. By stepping through the first ritual fire, you bid farewell to the old year, the fierce winter and leave all your troubles to the raging flames.



Skipping over the second fire opens up a passage to the New Year. The participants then turn their mind to the sun and say "Let the New Year bring me luck!" and come to two larches connected with a tight rope called "delburge" and attach a piece of fabric to it, symbolizing their sacred wish.

When: Third Sunday in June
The program includes: national workshop and theatrical productions of the tales of indigenous peoples, a series of games titled "Tundra does not like the weak", an ethnically-themed disco and dance marathons for adults and children.

KAMCHATKA REGIONAL FESTIVAL "LET'S SAVE THE SALMON TOGETHER!"

Kamchatka regional festival "Let's save the salmon TOGETHER!" takes place at the festival site in the village of Ust-Bolsheretsk.

The status of the main event, which is the Kamchatka regional sport fishing championship, is growing in significance every year. The championship sets the tone for the all-Russia festival "People's fishing".

When: mid-September

"KHOLOLO" HOLIDAY

Koryak ceremonial feast of the seal "Khololo" is a holiday, which marks the end of the seal hunting seasons. It is traditionally celebrated by the Koryak people who live on the shore. "Khololo" is a concentration of ancient customs, ritual dances and songs. The holiday begins with the rituals of "Thanksgiving" and "Atonement".

The guests of the festival get to taste the original Koryak national dishes of meat and fish, listen to the indigenous songs and music, including the playing of the tambourine, watch the Koryak rituals and competitions, where women are challenged in dancing and men in their strength, agility and prowess.

When: First Sunday of November

INTERNATIONAL SKIING RACE THE "AVACHINSKIY MARATHON"

The "Avachinskiy Marathon" has been held in Kamchatka since 1984. Over the years, it was attended by many



THE DAYS OF TOURISM IN THE KAMCHATKA REGION

When: June – October 2014

International Days of Tourism is a perfect opportunity to get to know the Kamchatka Region in the best of seasons. There is an event catering to every taste during those months. The most spectacular event of the festival is watching the sunrise on the Pacific coast.

skiing and biathlon celebrities from Russia and abroad. Since 2005, the "Avachinskiy Marathon" has been a part of the International Ski Federation calendar, and the Russian ski marathon Super Cup Grand Prix Rus-sialoppet.

When: April 21st

Location: The marathon passes by the base of the Avachinskiy volcano.

The "Volcano Day" takes place between the end of July and the beginning of October. During the event, there are planned hikes to several volcanoes of Kamchatka, including Avachinskiy, Mutnovskiy and Gorely. Needless to say, the view from the top of those fiery mountains is quite spectacular. ■



Turning Kamchatka into a Comfortable Tourist Destination

How do we best present to the world the great potential of Kamchatka? Russian Travel Magazine correspondent Elena Safonova discussed the development of the regional tourism industry this with the head of the Tourism Agency of Kamchatka Gevork Shkhiyan

You've been heading the Tourism Agency of Kamchatka for a year and you were in tourism business for a long time before that. What was more exciting for you?

These are quite different lines of work. Business is a relatively free flight, there is a lot of space for creativity. Public service is something quite different. There are regulations and laws you have to follow, create and improve. In my view, the goal of public service is to create the right conditions for business.

Does your experience in business help you now?

Of course. I know which direction to go in, who to consult with. Years of work in a travel agency gave me good contacts in local and international tourist companies. I have a clear idea that business needs more tourist sites, newsstands, visitor centers, and so on. In general, anything that makes the stay here more comfortable. And it's one of the goals for me as the head of the tourism agency of the region.

If you were a foreign tourist, what would you like to see in Kamchatka?

First of all, I would enjoy the wildlife. This is Kamchatka's

main brand. I became convinced in it once again during the International Tourism Forum, which was held here in September. It showed that eco-tourism is the right direction. And I would like Kamchatka to become a center of eco-tourism in the Far East, and in Russia as a whole. And we have everything to achieve this - unique natural resources and the knowledge of how to organize tourism without damaging them.

Event tourism has recently become very popular. Do you consider it key for Kamchatka?

Yes, of course. Days of culture and tourism in Kamchatka appeared on our events calendar this year. We are also planning to hold them in 2014. This event allows tourists and locals alike to get to know the Peninsula. In addition, the Days of Culture and Tourism is an opportunity to establish a dialogue between the government and representatives of the tourism industry from all over the world, to work out major issues and avenues for cooperation.

The Day of Volcano in August and the ascent to the volcano Avachinskiy is important as well. Now we are working on how to transform this holiday, so it does not damage the environment. Another important event of the year that is certainly worth seeing is the national Itelmen holiday "Alkhalalay". This is a big cultural event that allows people to find out how indigenous residents of Kamchatka lived in the past, participate in their national ceremonies and taste the cuisine of the North. Also on the calendar is the sled dog races "Yelizovsky Sprint" and "Beringia". These activities are imbued with the spirit of the North.

What kind of help can foreign travel companies who want to organize a trip to Kamchatka expect?

We can provide all the information about tourism companies that work with us on the peninsula. For this we have a website www.visitkamchatka.ru. In addition, before the end of 2013, we will get a tourist information center, which will be attached to the agency for tourism of the region, the main goal of which is to provide maximum information about the region to tourist companies and individual travelers. In addition, we always welcome those who visit our stands at various exhibitions of tourism products. This year we participated in exhibitions in Japan, Germany and other countries. In London, we will present a lot of interesting projects.

Kamchatka is a vast area and many of its spots are difficult to access. Sometimes there are no roads or trails to speak of and at times, even transportation. Can you be sure that tourists will receive help in case of emergency?

Kamchatka is not for individual tourists. And that is one of its features. To enjoy the trip and not get into trouble, it is best to deal with professionals. All tour operators here are working closely with the Ministry of Emergency Situations. We are constantly kept informed about all possible natural disasters, when you can go hiking and when it's best to abstain. All the guides and the rest of the agency staff have received security training. Also, health and life insurance operates in Kamchatka, as in the rest of the world.

What would you recommend people looking to invest in Kamchatka?

The money should be invested in infrastructure. But this should not be on the level of "here, we need this, build it". Any investment should be justified. It makes no sense to build a five-star hotel in a place that is seldom visited. That is why we are making an investment map of Kamchatka. We are studying how many tourists a certain area can take and in what season. Based on the results, we will form an investment proposal. This is to ensure that investors, tourists and Kamchatka itself got what is really needed. We still need hotels and hostels. For example, there are not enough 4 and 5 star hotels in Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky. But this type of accommodation is in demand.

Kamchatka has the Pacific Ocean on one side and the Sea of Okhotsk on the other. This is a great opportunity for the development of cruise tourism, isn't it?

Tourists from all over the world have a huge interest in the area of Kamchatka called the Commander Islands. This is a unique place, but getting there is not easy. We are interested in developing expedition tourism on suitable ships. These ships have equipment that allows travelers to get close to bird colonies and rookeries of sea animals. And in the coming years we are planning to pay more attention to cruises. Especially since one can stay in Kamchatka visa-free for up to three days. This time is enough to visit the wonderful corners of our region. For example, to fly on an excursion to the Valley of Geysers, visit the Avachinskayay volcanic belt and so on. ■





Culture and Tourism Week



Culture and Tourism week was held for the first time in the Kamchatka Region between the 12th and the 16th of September 2013. The week was positioned as an important and necessary event conducted by Russia's Ministry of Culture, and it became the initial step in the revitalization of domestic and international tourism to the Far Eastern Federal District. In addition, the event presented Kamchatka as an exciting tourism destination for Russian and international tourists alike.

It should be noted that the region had no experience in conducting such significant events. However, it was noted by all attendees and observers that the Culture and tourism Week demonstrated the highest level of quality and creativity.

The high number of attendees shows that the level of interest in the Kamchatka Region is higher and more obvious than ever and it's the right time to take advantage of this popularity. The week was attended by 250 visitors from various regions of Russia, as well as foreign countries including Italy, Korea, the United States and China.

There were 200 specialists in tourism and experts in related fields, as well as regional and municipal authorities, representatives of regional tourist information centers, eco-tourism professionals, representatives of the leading educational and research insti-

and culture, as well as Russian and foreign mass media.

The main event of the week was the International Forum "Ecotourism: Challenges and prospects of development of the Far East". The issues discussed at the forum covered a wide range of areas. Some of the key topics of the discussion included modern development of eco-tourism in the world and the Far East of Russia, ethnographic science and education and their contribution to the development of eco-tourism, as well as spas and water therapy. The people that gathered at the forum were united by the desire and aspiration to showcase the features and the possibilities of the Kamchatka Region in the best way possible.

The hospitable region of Kamchatka was able to not only surprise its guests with a warm welcome, but

also gave them a good taste of what it has to offer. Participants of every roundtable or section could get acquainted with the subject of their discussion before the meeting starts. They visited the Kronotskiy reserve with its Valley of Geysers, and Nalychevsky Park with its Malka springs, and the base of the Avachinskiy volcano. The visitors could also go to the ethno-cultural center "Pimchakh", get on board an expedition cruise ship "Professor Khromov," and even take part in the itelmen national holiday "Alkhalalai".

As the Minister of Culture of the Kamchatka Region Svetlana Aygistova has put it, "We felt special attention being paid to the ethnic culture of our region. I am sure this will be a good stimulus for new ideas and for the future development of domestic and international tourism." ■

Winter Tours in Kamchatka



Tourism to Kamchatka is pronouncedly seasonal in nature. As the locals say, it is better to come to Kamchatka either in deep winter or when the summer is in full swing. After all, no one likes the damp autumn air or the spring frost, when the nature especially begs to be photographed



Winter tourism in Kamchatka boasts well established routes and reliable tourist centers. Local tour companies offer a variety of options that cater to all tastes. The Kamchatka region has a remarkably well-preserved natural environment, with clear water lakes and rivers, and environmentally friendly products. Spending even a short time in this pristine environment has a long-lasting positive effect on one's health and the understanding of oneself as part of something bigger, while

being in this little-known corner of the planet.

Over the past few years, tourism in the Kamchatka region began to flourish in places such as the Valley of Geysers, Nalychevo Nature Park, Lake Kurilskoe, the Khodutkinskie and Malkinskie hot springs, rivers Zhupanova and Opala.

Kamchatka travel companies offer a wide range of environmental, adventure, sports, educational and extreme sport tours, including:

- hiking (or trekking) to the peninsula's unique natural and historical attractions, scenic landscapes, hot springs and volcanoes;
- climbing volcanoes, mountain peaks, rafting mountain and lowland rivers;
- observation of nature, flora and fauna;
- flying to the Commander and Kuril Islands, flights around active volcanoes;



• visiting country houses, fish and crab processing companies, fish hatcheries, farms, kindergartens and private families of Kamchatka.

Let's hear about some of these remarkable experiences in more detail.

VOLCANIC HELI-SKIING

“Taking a helicopter to one of the Kamchatka volcanoes... The thick snow cover, a stunning, almost surreal winter landscape... steep descent ... We raced on skis to the foot of the volcano... I wanted to scream from the sensation of my own recklessness and the surrealism of the situation. None of our friends have ever skied on the virgin snow of a volcano! Safety train-

ing was, of course, mandatory and we were all accompanied by experienced guides. A helicopter was waiting at the foot of the volcano, ready to take us to the new peak”.

SKIING SITES:

- 1) Barkhatnaya Sopka volcano and the area of the Vilyuchinsky volcano (Vilyuchinsky 2,170 meters, volcanic ridges extending from 1200 to 2000 meters and slopes near the coast of the Pacific Ocean);
- 2) Volcano Mutnovskiy 2,323 meters, down the slopes on the outside of the crater;
- 3) The Area around the lake Verkhneavachinskoe, 1100 to 1800 meters

- and volcano Bakening, 2,270 meters
- 4) volcanoes of the Avachinskaya range (Avachinsky Volcano 2740 meters, Aag Volcano 2300 meters, Arik and Koryakskiy volcanoes 3456 meters);
- 5) Zhupanovsky Volcano 2900 meters.

DOG SLEDDING

Perhaps this seems like one of the easier activities, but don't be fooled – it still takes some practice to master. Dogs are very intelligent animals, but they have a character. Even when they are in the same team, and sense each other's strength, you have to watch them carefully and keep track of the overall situation. The feeling of riding in a dog sled is breathtaking though,

but it is easy to fall if you are careless. Dog sledding produces a special bond with the animals and they will be happy if you stay for a while to pet them.

HOT SPRINGS

Thermal springs are one of the unique features of the Kamchatka peninsula. The feeling of being immersed in their hot bubbling water cannot be compared with anything else. Some describe it as "swimming in milk" or "relaxing in heaven", others as "peace and harmony and self-discovery in a magic lake of a transcendent world". Others say it's all of these things at once. Don't be scared of high water temperatures, it feels wonderful in the winter. But be afraid of something else – the pull of Kamchatka hot springs is compulsive and you can't help but want to come back here again and again.

ICE FISHING

One of the most popular extreme sports in Kamchatka is ice fishing in marine bays, mountain lakes, rivers and streams. The winter fishing season here lasts from December to April, when the fish caught in cold and clean water, differs for its special taste and great preservation properties.

There is a lot of fish you can catch, including brook trout, rainbow trout, molokai (an exclusive form of coho salmon), grayling, smelt, flounder, saffron cod and Pacific herring.

A fishing trip usually starts in Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky. A helicopter or bus transports the fishermen to the sites which include Lake Kalagir, Avachinskaya Bay, Lesnichiy cordon Srednee Nalychevo, lakes Dalneye and Kronotskoye, Nachikinskoye lake and river Opala. Depending on the route, guests get a chance to race around the peninsula on a snowmobile or a dogsled.

HUNTING

Hunting has always been one of the most important means of livelihood in Kamchatka, and today it's also an exciting way to pass the winter months. The peninsula boasts an abundance of animal and game, such as bears, sable, ermine, mink, sea otters, walrus and



whales. There was more than enough for the indigenous people to eat and make warm clothing – kuklnyanki. Bear fat was used to heat and light the yaranga and cure various illnesses. Animal skins were used to sheathe the boat to and furs were bartered for necessary goods.

arrow, if it wasn't for the variability of the local climate. One has to be well-organized to find a suitable day for hunting, but the most important thing is to keep the fighting mood, so the local gods bless you with good luck.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION:

If you decide to visit Kamchatka in winter, think about the clothes first.

Extremely cold temperatures are rare in Kamchatka, but there is relatively high humidity and strong winds. You will need a waterproof jacket, a down jacket, warm winter pants, winter boots with studded rubber soles. A set of skiing and fishing clothes is also best to bring with you.

Don't forget a change of warm dry clothes, matches, salt and dry fuel. All of this packed in a polyethylene liner, just in case. A good GPS navigator and replacement batteries could be a savior in our time. The rest, such as ropes, tents, sleeping bags can be rented on the spot and it's better than paying for excess baggage. ■

