



This map depicts the topography of the Volga River. What are some key facts about the Volga?

- It's the longest in Europe - 2,294 miles long.
- Its source is in the Valdai Hills, around 200 miles from St. Petersburg. It flows into the Caspian Sea.
- The Volga's drainage basin includes much of Western Russia. That area encompasses about eleven of Russia's twenty largest cities.
- A beautiful city, along the Volga, is the very old city of Yaroslavl which was founded in the eleventh century. It has beautiful buildings with awesome frescoes.
- The Volga is so wide, in some places, that one cannot see the other side. Very large reservoirs, some among the largest in the world, are located along the Volga's banks.
- For most of its length, the Volga is navigable. Because of its navigability, the river has long been used for transporting goods. However ... the river is usually frozen for several months each year.
- Europe's largest estuary is the Volga delta. Flamingos and pelicans can all be found there - the only place in Russia where that occurs.
- Stalingrad - now known as Volgograd - is a city located on a bend of the river. It was the scene of a deadly battle during WWII.
- Caviar comes from sturgeon, and huge sturgeon live in the Volga. Not surprisingly, Russia is famous for its caviar.
- The caviar industry has been damaged, however, by pollution in the Volga. Because it is so long, many factories are located along the Volga. Those factories dump billions of cubic yards of waste into the river, year after year.
- Every year, especially when the weather is good, tourists enjoy river cruises along the Volga River.

A key city, during the reign of Ivan the Terrible, was Kazan. Kazan not only has access to the Volga River, it also has the Kama which flows nearby.

Today, Kazan remains an important city in Russia. During Ivan the Terrible's day, it was so important that it posed a threat to the ruler of Muscovy.

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