

# Travel report from St. Petersburg

A QUARTER OF A CENTURY HAS ELAPSED SINCE THE POLITICAL CHANGE IN RUSSIA, AND THE CHANGE OF GENERATIONS IN THE BAKING INDUSTRY ALSO OCCURRED LONG AGO. SUCCESSFUL EXAMPLES ARE TO BE FOUND IN ST. PETERSBURG



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**+** The wheat has separated from the chaff in the baked goods industry. What remains are a few successful large industrial companies, while the rest await the final curtain. New arrivals include creative private companies who are populating the gastronomic scene in and around St. Petersburg with modern bakery-café concepts or who, like Khachatur Sugyan, are making a big personal commitment to found new businesses in the region that distribute through their own network of branches and also supply the retail and caterers with baked products that are superior to mass-produced goods.

## Bushe café and pastry shop

Bushe is one of the new bakery-café chains in St. Petersburg with a strong focus on their gastronomic competence. Founded in 1999, the company now operates its own network of branches with ten locations in St. Petersburg, and also supplies

retail firms and large hotel chains. The range of breads extends from Scandinavian specialties to Mediterranean olive ciabatta. It is obvious from the praises on the web and in the social media that their muffins, cakes and gateaux are also popular. Bushe is said to be in the process of establishing a second mainstay business in Moscow. [www.bushe.ru](http://www.bushe.ru)

## Michel's Bakery

The French baker and confectioner Michel Galloyer has also sold his bakery-café concept to Russia, among other places. Four bakery-café are currently trading under his name at prestigious locations in St. Petersburg, offering French baking artistry and confectionery for consumption on the spot or to take away. Breakfast, sandwiches and a small menu with hot and cold dishes are also available in the café.

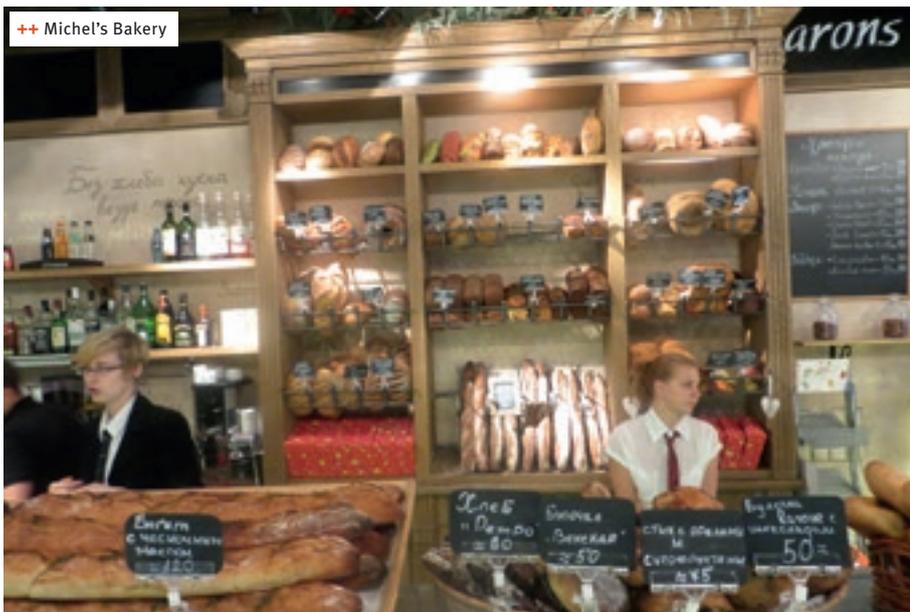
[www.michellebakery.ru/eng](http://www.michellebakery.ru/eng)



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**The Lenta self-service store**

Lenta is a chain of Russian self-service stores that are regarded as inexpensive. The shelf of pre-packed loaves offers a 780 g rye bread from the Karaway Bakery in St. Petersburg for RUB 25, which is at most EUR 0.57. A 500 g toast bread from Chlebnydom, the Finnish Fazer Group subsidiary also based in St. Petersburg, costs RUB 40.59 (approx. EUR 0.93). However they also bake on the spot, and a plain 400 g wheat loaf then costs RUB 20 (approx. EUR 0.46). Gigantic savory filled piroshky can be bought in the passage in front of the bread department, also as portions, the price for 100 g being between RUB 13 and 18 (EUR 0.30–0.41) depending on the filling. [www.lenta.com](http://www.lenta.com)

**Stockmann luxury department store**

Nevsky Prospekt is one of the noblest addresses in the St. Petersburg retail, and is where the Finnish retail group Stockmann has opened a small exclusive department store with a food department in the basement. Most of what is offered here has also been produced on the spot and the loaves of bread, packed in paper bags with a see-through window, lie in the displays and baskets. Two croissants here cost RUB 35 (0.80 EUR), a baguette is RUB 39 (EUR 0.89), a garlic baguette is RUB 55 (EUR 1.26), and a dark, slightly sweetish-tasting 400 g Borodinsky loaf costs RUB 30 (EUR 0.69). However, of course there are bought-in products such as Harry's American Sandwich toastbread at RUB 75 for 470 g, equivalent to EUR 1.72. [www.stockmann.ru/portal/14800](http://www.stockmann.ru/portal/14800) ▶



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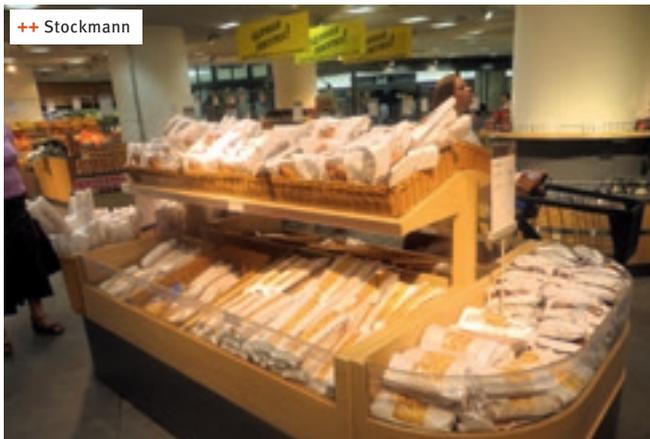
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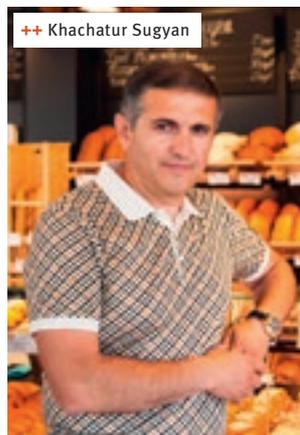


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### Chlebnaja Usadba Bakery, Volosovsky district, Leningrad Oblast

Khachatur Sugyan is an Armenian by birth whose degree course in Agricultural Sciences brought him to Leningrad/St. Petersburg. When he passed his examination in 1991 and was sent to Volosov as an agronomist, the new era in Russia had already started but the pay in the state-owned companies was lousy. Four years later Sugyan gained the confidence to become independent and started his own bakery. According to the young entrepreneur: "At first we tried to copy the products of the big factories, but soon realized that could not be the right way forward." A new production unit with modern plants, good working conditions for the employees and also the opportunity to use artisan methods (e.g. sourdoughs, sponge doughs and bakery refrigeration) was planned and built. In parallel Sugyan developed the concept of his own distribution chain. Today Khachatur Sugyan operates eight shops in villages and small towns in the St. Petersburg region. In four of the shops the goods are sold unpacked, in the others they are packed alongside other foods. In addition Chlebnaja Usadba now supplies more than 300 major customers and catering chains in the region. The four pure baker's shops receive deliveries two to three times a day, all the others once daily. The proportion sold through his own shops is currently around 20 %.



One way to increase this percentage are new locations with modern furnishings like the pavilion currently being inaugurated in Volosov very near the town's two central supermarkets. The brightly lit sales area with a modern counter, oven, coffee bar and stand-up café offers a modern product

range of breads, confectioneries, long-life baked goods and snacks such as piroshky with various fillings. A proportion of the breads and confectionery products arrive from the production unit fully finished, while the remainder are delivered 80–85 % pre-baked, are stored in the back room or in a refrigerator and are progressively baked off. Sugyan says: "We rely mainly on pre-baked products."

Sugyan has a good reputation as a supplier of superior quality bread, and the business with snacks, mainly piroshky and sandwiches, is also booming since his own modern shops opened their doors at public transport junctions such as the rail station or in the shopping district. An expansion of the production building, which should create a considerable increase in production capacities, is already at the planning stage, as are the next shops. Sugyan says: "With creativity and good quality one can also be successful in rural areas, even if the prices there are distinctly below those in the St. Petersburg metropolis." +++





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