The Russian Alphabet

Ру́сский алфави́т

А а
a as in “f**a**ther”

там tam
there

Б б
b as in “**b**ank”

банк bank
bank

В в
v as in “**v**an”, not b!

вот vot
here is

Г г
g as in “**g**o”, always hard, never like “gem”

гита́ра gi-TA-ra
guitar

Д д
d as in “**d**og”

дом dom
house, home

Е е
ye as in “**ye**s”, not e as in “me”

нет nyet
no

Ё ё
yo as in “**yo**-yo”, and it’s always stressed

ёлка YOL-ka
fir tree

Ж ж
zh, like the “s” in “plea**s**ure”. It looks like a beetle (жук)!

журна́л zhur-NAL
magazine

З з
z as in “**z**oo”. It looks like the number 3!

ва́за VA-za
vase

И и
ee as in “s**ee**”. It looks like a backwards N.

такси́ tak-SEE
taxi

Й й
y as in “bo**y**”, a short glide next to a vowel

мой moy
my

К к
k as in “**k**ite”, without the puff of air

как kak
how

Л л
l as in “mi**l**k”, a deep, “dark” L

ла́мпа LAM-pa
lamp

М м
m as in “**m**ap”

ма́ма MA-ma
mum, mom

Н н
n as in “**n**o”, not h!

нос nos
nose

О о
o as in “m**o**re”, when stressed

кот kot
cat

П п
p as in “**p**en”

парк park
park

Р р
a rolled **r**, like in Spanish or Italian, not p!

рука́ ru-KA
hand, arm

С с
s as in “**s**un”, never k

сок sok
juice

Т т
t as in “**t**op”, with the tongue touching the teeth

тот tot
that one

У у
oo as in “b**oo**t”, not y!

у́тро OO-tra
morning

Ф ф
f as in “**f**un”

футбо́л fut-BOL
football, soccer

Х х
kh, like “ch” in Scottish “lo**ch**” or German “Ba**ch**”

са́хар SA-khar
sugar

Ц ц
ts as in “ca**ts**”

центр tsentr
centre

Ч ч
ch as in “**ch**eck”, always soft

чай chay
tea

Ш ш
sh as in “**sh**ut”, said with the tongue pulled back

шко́ла SHKO-la
school

Щ щ
a long, soft **sh**, as in “fre**sh sh**eep”. Often written “shch”.

борщ borshch
borscht

Ъ ъ
hard sign: rare. It adds a tiny break before a “y” sound.

подъе́зд pad-YEST
building entrance

Ы ы
a deep **i**. Say the “i” in “b**i**t” with your tongue pulled back.

ты ty
you (informal)

Ь ь
soft sign: makes the consonant before it soft (often written ’)

мать mat’
mother

Э э
e as in “b**e**t”, the plain partner of E

э́то E-ta
this is

Ю ю
yu as in “**you**”

меню́ mi-NYU
menu

Я я
ya as in “**ya**rd”

я ya
I

Look and sound like English · Look English, sound different · New shapes, familiar sounds · Vowels that soften · New sounds and two signs

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