



Conclusion

Individually, the flags of the federal subjects each represent a specific region of Russia. The colors, designs, and symbols used are as diverse as the places they represent. While there are some flags that are similar, no dominant design type characterizes Russia's subnational flags. So, as a whole this set of flags is much more distinctive than the subnational flags of some countries, where the majority of the flags can tend to look alike.

Like the blocks of a quilt, the flags combine to tell the story of Russia and its people. A wide variety of cultural symbols illustrate the diversity of the many ethnic groups in the Russian Federation, but common elements also attest to similarities across the cultures. The use of religious symbols of Orthodox Christianity, Islam, Judaism, and Buddhism illustrates one consequence of the Euro-Asian location of Russia, attests to the influence of these faiths on the country as a whole, and demonstrates the resurgence of religion in post-Soviet Russia.

The sometimes chaotic history of Russia is clearly illustrated by the flags and their symbolism. This set of subnational flags unifies a diverse group of territories and peoples, and attests to the achievements of the Russian Empire at its height. Russia spans from Kaliningrad on the Baltic Sea in the west to the eastern coast on the Pacific Ocean. But the story of Russian history is not just one of imperial conquest; it is also one of defense against invasion from the east, from the west, and from the south. The scars of these conflicts on the national psyche, and especially those from the Great Patriotic War (World War II), are evident in the symbolism of the flags. Characteristics such as bravery, courage, steadfastness, and dedication to the defense of the country are repeated over and over again in the meanings of colors and symbols. In addition, more than one period of history is valued in modern Russia. Tsarist emblems and symbols of the Soviet period are recurring themes and have even been combined on several flags, showing that modern Russia has come to terms with the many conflicting elements of its past.

It isn't just the rich history of Russia that is on display in the flag designs. The vast geography of the world's largest country is clearly illustrated in the flags of the federal subjects. They represent the mountains of the Caucasus, the steppe, the taiga, the tundra, the warm regions in the south, and the extreme cold of Siberia and the northern regions. Water is a recurring theme with a vast array of rivers, lakes, and seaports represented on various flags. The richness of the land and bounty of nature that maintain the people are also important themes.

Yet, with all their diversity, one common theme spans this collection of flags. Many of the federal subjects draw upon some or all of the national colors to illustrate their unity with the Russian Federation. This demonstrates that, while each region and each group of people is unique and has its own story to tell, the true story of Russian success comes from the unity of its federal subjects. Together they contribute to the strength of the modern Russian state and will reap the benefits of cooperation to achieve their national goals.

