



## Common Places: Mythologies of Everyday Life in Russia

By Svetlana Boym

Harvard University Press. Paperback. Condition: New. 384 pages. Dimensions: 9.1in. x 6.1in. x 0.9in. What is the real Russia? What is the relationship between national dreams and kitsch, between political and artistic utopia and everyday existence? Commonplaces of daily living would be perfect clues for those seeking to understand a culture. But all who write big books on Russian life confess their failure to get properly inside Russia, to understand its doublespeak. Boym is a unique guide. A member of the last Soviet Generation, the Russian equivalent of our Generation X, she grew up in Leningrad and has lived in the West for the past thirteen years. Her book provides a view of Russia that is historically informed, replete with unexpected detail, and everywhere stamped with authority. Alternating analysis with personal accounts of Russian life, Boym conveys the foreignness of Russia and examines its peculiar conceptions of private life and common good, of Culture and Trash, of sincerity and banality. Armed with a Dictionary of Untranslatable Terms, we step around Uncle Fedia asleep in the hall, surrounded by a puddle of urine, and enter the Communal Apartment, the central exhibit of the book. It is the ruin of the communal utopia...

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