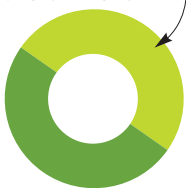


To find a man:

Skill with tongues

Language schools have a disproportionate number of women of marrying age. Here's the distribution in Education First classes.

50%
SHARE OF WOMEN IN EF'S FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSES IN RUSSIA, AMONG 7- TO 16-YEAR-OLDS



75%
SHARE OF RUSSIAN WOMEN IN EF'S LANGUAGE CLASSES, AMONG 18- TO 25-YEAR-OLDS



FROM RUSSIA

- ▶ Young ex-Soviet women are on the hunt for a man from the West
- ▶ The intelligent, well-bred women aren't exactly passive, however

Tatiana Kalchuk wants a husband. But the 26-year-old Odessa resident despairs of finding a suitable man in her home country. She's hunting for a Western man. "Some women are just looking for a man from the West because they want to move abroad," explains Kalchuk. "But I'm looking for the perfect husband. Men from the West are more gentleman-like and romantic. They'll call you and ask how your day was."

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, thousands of ex-Soviet women have mar-

0.86

There are 0.86 men per every woman in Russia. That figure dips to 0.84 men per every woman in the Ukraine.

keted themselves through "mail-order bride" agencies.

"There are more women than men in former Soviet republics," explains Dr. Olga Nikitina-den Besten, a Russian sociologist teaching in Paris. "Alcoholism and illness is a huge problem among the men, and



▶ Margarita Pisnya, 20, wants a Western husband.

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FOR LOVE

the men who aren't sick or dead are often already taken. A woman who doesn't marry in her 20s is likely to date a married man, which is obviously not a good prospect. So women look abroad."

But today, an increasing number of highly educated, young ex-Soviet women resemble Kalchuk, who has a master's degree and speaks five languages. They favor pursuit on their own terms.

"Russian women in particular have a high level of initiative," notes Nikitina-Besten. "And now their computer and language skills have increased so they can try to find men on their own. Meeting a man is a good motivation for learning a foreign language."

When the dating com-



"I've gone on dates with lots of Western men, but my impression is that they aren't very serious. They come here and go on dates with several women."

TATIANA KALCHUK

pany Anastasia launched in 1993, it arranged for Western men "romance tours" to Moscow and St. Petersburg. Today, the romance tours go to 13 ex-Soviet cities, with Odessa as the undisputed hot spot.

The company also runs dating giant Anastasiadate.com, which has 100 million visitors per year.

Fierce competition

For Western women, the growing trend is a thorn in the side.

"There's an antipathy that follows Russian women," observes Cervantes. "One told me that when she lived in Italy, women would glare when her Italian boyfriend put his arm around her."

A better life abroad, yes; but women insist their fervent mate-searching isn't just about money. "I could find a man with money and status here, but I want a man who cares about me," says Margarita Pisnya, who is looking for relationships with Western men aged 23-55 on Anastasiadate.

"Ex-Soviet women are very interested in relationships, but men have to understand that these women want to get married," explains Anastasia's managing editor, Larry Cervantes.

"They've been brought up to expect to be a wife and mother," he said.

"But they've also been brought up to please men."

ELISABETH BRAW

METRO WORLD NEWS IN LONDON

60 seconds with ...

PARTNER FOR LIFE, NOT JUST FOR SEX

Metro spoke with Russian-American couple Viktoria and Orris Strickland:

Why did you look for a Russian wife?

Orris: One of my co-workers was using one of the agencies, and at first I was "just looking" and not really serious about finding a wife. I wrote letters to a few different women and then Viktoria and I started writing letters. Our relationship has worked out better than I had ever hoped. I am the happiest I have ever been. Viktoria is



Viktoria and Orris

now pregnant with our first child.

What's your advice to other couples?

Viktoria: Be in love with each other and don't marry only because you want to go to the USA. Men in the U.S. want a wife and partner in their life, not just someone for sex. American men, at least my husband does, like to take care of me and help me. My Orris helps me clean our house and even sometimes cooks meals and I can relax.

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