Russia (i/ˈrʌʃə/; Russian: Росси́я, tr. Rossija; IPA: [rɐˈsʲijə] ( listen)), also officially known as the Russian Federation[12] (Russian: Росси́йская Федера́ция, tr. Rossijskaja Federacija; IPA: [rɐˈsʲijskəjə fʲɪdʲɪˈratsɨjə]), is a sovereign state in northern Eurasia.[13] At 17,075,200 square kilometres (6,592,800 sq mi),[14] Russia is the largest country in the world, covering more than one eighth of Earth's inhabited land area,[15][16][17] and the ninth most populous, with over 146.6 million people at the end of March 2016.[6][7] Extending across the entirety of northern Asia and much of Eastern Europe, Russia spans eleven time zones and incorporates a wide range of environments and landforms. From northwest to southeast, Russia shares land borders with Norway, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland (both with Kaliningrad Oblast), Belarus, Ukraine, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, China, Mongolia, and North Korea. It shares maritime borders with Japan by the Sea of Okhotsk and the U.S. state of Alaska across the Bering Strait.

The nation's history began with that of the East Slavs, who emerged as a recognizable group in Europe between the 3rd and 8th centuries AD.[18] Founded and ruled by a Varangian warrior elite and their descendants, the medieval state of Rus arose in the 9th century. In 988 it adopted Orthodox Christianity from the Byzantine Empire,[19] beginning the synthesis of Byzantine and Slavic cultures that defined Russian culture for the next millennium.[19] Rus' ultimately disintegrated into a number of smaller states; most of the Rus' lands were overrun by the Mongol invasion and became tributaries of the nomadic Golden Horde in the 13th century.[20] The Grand Duchy of Moscow gradually reunified the surrounding Russian principalities, achieved independence from the Golden Horde, and came to dominate the cultural and political legacy of Kievan Rus'. By the 18th century, the nation had greatly expanded through conquest, annexation, and exploration to become the Russian Empire, which was the third largest empire in history, stretching from Poland in Europe to Alaska in North America.[21