

World Cup 2018

In just over a week, the 21st FIFA World Cup will kick off in Russia. Starting on June 14 and ending on July 15, 32 nations from around the world in a total of 64 matches, will show all their skills and techniques with a football. They will share in their desire to win, and be a part of a magical world event. Here is more information to help you qualify as a world cup 'know it all.'

Stadiums

The Luzhniki Stadium in Moscow will host both the opening and final matches. Of all the 12 stadiums in the 11 cities, this one is the largest, seating 81,000 football supporters. The other 11 stadiums are different in size, the second largest seating around 68,000 people and the smallest seating just over 35,000. The teams that win and move on in the competition will see many different cities and stadiums. For example, Sochi, Kazan, Novgorod and Samara for the quarter-finals and Moscow and St Petersburg for the semi-finals.

Qualifiers

Not any country can play at a World Cup. Of the 32 countries, only one, the hosting nation (Russia), qualifies automatically. All other countries have won a place through qualifying competitions. There are 13 teams from Europe that will take part, 5 from Africa, 3 from Central America, 5 from South America, and 5 from Asia. For the first time ever, Iceland and Panama will play in the World Cup.

More facts

After being named the next World Cup hosting nation at the end of 2010, Russia started preparing for the big event. The official logo, presented in 2014, shows the importance of space exploration, and is decorated in a typical Russian artistic way. There is also a mascot: a wolf called Zabivaka which means 'the one who scores' in Russian. The budget of \$11 billion was used to modernise airports and build new hotels. There will be around 35,000 volunteers, both in and out of the stadiums, to help the fans.



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Favourites

No one knows who will win the World Cup. However, many bets are on Germany, as the World Cup holder from 2014. Other favourites are Brazil, France and Belgium. Messi would love to win with his homeland Argentina, but at the moment it does not seem likely.

Sources: www.ad.nl; www.en.wikipedia.org;

Words to help you

the desire = a strong feeling that you want something
the space exploration = finding out more about space