

## World Cup 2018

With less than a fortnight to go, you undoubtedly must have heard of the upcoming world football event.

5 However, just in case, here is some information about the 21<sup>st</sup> FIFA World Cup to put you in the know.

### World Cup 2018

On June 14 the World Cup 2018 will kick off in Moscow, Russia, with a football  
10 match between the host country and Saudi Arabia. During a month long period, 32 teams from countries all over the world will compete for the World Cup trophy. The 64 matches will take place in 12  
15 venues spread across 11 cities. To make travel time for players and fans between the cities manageable, the chosen cities are all within European Russia.

### Stadiums

20 The prime stadium is the Luzhniki Stadium in Moscow, hosting both the opening match as well as the final on July 15. With good reason too, as it is the largest stadium at this event, with a  
25 capacity to seat 81,000 football fans. The remaining 11 stadiums vary in size, the second largest seating 68,134 people and the smallest seating just over 35,000. The teams that win and move on in the  
30 competition will see a diverse number of stadiums. For example, quarter-finals are in Sochi, Kazan, Novgorod and Samara, and semi-finals are in Moscow and St Petersburg.

### 35 Qualifiers

Not any national team can play at a World Cup. Of the 32 nations, only one, the hosting nation, qualifies automatically. All

other countries have been determined  
40 through qualifying competitions. Dividing the globe up into a series of world zones, 13 teams from Europe will participate, as well as 5 from Africa, 3 from Central America, 5 from South America, and 5  
45 from Asia. Notable newcomers are Iceland and Panama, qualifying for the first time ever.

### More facts

After being  
50 awarded the hosting rights at the end of 2010, Russia started preparing for the big event.  
55 The official logo, unveiled in 2014, represents cosmic outer space exploration, and is further decorated in Russia's rich artistic tradition. There is also a mascot: a wolf called Zabivaka  
60 which means "the one who scores" in Russian. The budget of \$11 billion has been used mainly for infrastructure such as airport renovations and new hotels. Around 35,000 volunteers, both in and out  
65 of the venues, will be available to assist the world cup visitors.



### Favourites

Knowing who will win, of course, is unpredictable. However, the most bets  
70 are on Germany, as the World Cup holder. They are not playing convincingly at the moment, yet are sure to rise to the occasion. Other favourites are Brazil, France and Belgium. Although Messi  
75 would love to win just once with his homeland Argentina, the odds are against him.

Sources: [www.ad.nl](http://www.ad.nl); [www.en.wikipedia.org](http://www.en.wikipedia.org);