

The Russian Troika

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No doubt you've seen photos or artwork depicting a troika, which is a traditional Russian sleigh pulled by a trio of horses. The center horse of the troika moves at a fast, extended trot. The two outside horses, called "wing horses," are permitted to canter. To prevent the wing horses from interfering with the center horse, their heads are slightly bent to the outside with a specific part of the harness. The Orlov Trotter, a breed developed in Russia, is considered the supreme troika horse because of its sturdy conformation, long stride and speedy trot. Troika racing is still popular in modern Russia, and some driving enthusiasts throughout North America partake of the hobby during the winter months. As you can imagine, a sleigh ride in a troika is a breathtaking experience!