

EUROPE · HISTORY · ARCHITECTURE · CITY BREAKS · CULTURE · FOOD · MOUNTAINS



Ukraine

Kyiv's golden-domed monasteries have stood through centuries of upheaval, Lviv's old town carries a distinctly Central European character, and the Carpathians offer wooden churches and high summer meadows. Since Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022, travel here has been shaped by war, so check the FCDO advice closely before considering any trip.

 **The UK Foreign Office (FCDO) advises against all travel to parts of Ukraine.**
Read the latest FCDO travel advice before planning a trip. Your travel insurance may be invalid if you travel against FCDO advice.
FCDO advice last updated 2 October 2026.

 CAPITAL Kyiv	 CURRENCY Ukrainian hryvnia (UAH) £1 ≈ UAH 60.17	 LANGUAGE Ukrainian, Russian	 BEST TIME May-Sep
 DAILY BUDGET £30-£150 ££ Moderate	 PLUGS Type C, F 230V · adapter needed	 FLIGHT FROM LONDON 2h 30m direct to RZE ~£50-£200 return	 TIME ZONE UTC+2 standard time

Ukraine is the second-largest country in Europe, and its map divides roughly into a western region shaped by Polish and Austro-Hungarian history and a vast centre, south and east of steppe and great rivers. Before 2022, a first trip usually paired Kyiv's monasteries and boulevards with Lviv's coffee houses, linked by a fast or overnight train, then added Odesa's Black Sea seafront or a loop through the west: the fortress town of Kamianets-Podilskyi, Habsburg-era Chernivtsi and the Carpathian villages around Yaremche.

Since the full-scale invasion, any visit needs careful thought, up-to-date FCDO advice and suitable insurance, and conditions can change quickly. Ukraine has long been excellent value, with cheap trains, superb cafés and a restaurant scene that has grown fast. People are warm, direct and proud, and many younger Ukrainians speak good English. Expect slick digital services, with contactless payment almost everywhere, alongside Soviet-era infrastructure. Those who visit are often struck by how determinedly Ukrainian cities keep their cultural life going.

Top 5 highlights

- 1

SACRED SITE

Kyiv Pechersk Lavra

Founded in 1051, this cave monastery above the Dnipro mixes golden-domed churches, a 96-metre bell tower and candlelit underground passages lined with the mummified remains of monks.
- 2

ARCHITECTURE

Lviv's old town

A UNESCO-listed tangle of Renaissance merchants' houses, baroque churches and cobbled lanes around Rynok Square, best enjoyed slowly from its famous coffee houses, chocolate shops and cellar bars.

3

HISTORY

Kamianets-Podilskyi

A storybook castle on a rocky spur guards an old town almost encircled by the Smotrych river canyon. Climb the towers, walk the canyon rim, and stay overnight to see it all lit up.

4

NATURE

Carpathian Mountains

Hoverla, Ukraine's highest peak at 2,061 metres, crowns the Chornohora ridge, a summer hiking area of meadows and shepherds' huts. Base yourself in Yaremche or Vorokhta, and look out for wooden Hutsul churches.

5

ARCHITECTURE

Chernivtsi University

The former Residence of Bukovinian and Dalmatian Metropolitans, a fantastical red-brick complex with patterned tiled roofs, now houses Chernivtsi University and is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Biggest cities

LARGEST CITY

Kyiv

≈ 3 million people

St Sophia's Cathedral, the Pechersk Lavra, St Michael's golden domes and the steep Andriivskiy Descent anchor a green, hilly capital with a thriving café and arts scene.

2ND LARGEST CITY

Kharkiv

≈ 1.4 million people

A big university city near the Russian border, known for the Constructivist Derzhprom building on vast Freedom Square and its energetic culture; check the FCDO advice before considering it.

3RD LARGEST CITY

Odesa

≈ 1 million people

The Black Sea port of the Potemkin Stairs, a grand opera house and a UNESCO-listed historic centre, famed for its humour, Jewish heritage and seaside summers.

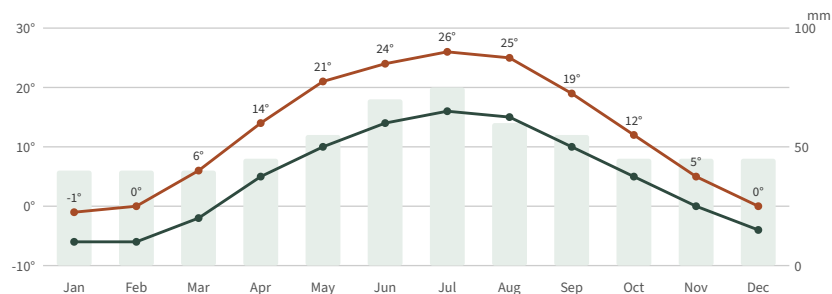
Populations are pre-2022 estimates; displacement since the full-scale invasion has changed them considerably.

When to go to Ukraine

Best time: **May–Sep.**

**Average climate in Kyiv**

— High °C — Low °C — Rain (mm)

**Festivals & events**

Jan, Dec

Christmas in Lviv

Since 2023 Ukraine has celebrated Christmas on 25 December; Lviv's market, vertep nativity plays and roaming carol singers make the western city the place to see it.

Apr–May

Easter (Velykden)

Baskets of painted pysanky eggs and paska bread are blessed at dawn church services, followed by spring songs and games, especially in Lviv and western villages.

Jun–Jul

Ivana Kupala

Midsummer night brings flower wreaths floated on rivers, bonfire jumping and folk rituals, most atmospheric in the countryside and at open-air museums such as Pyrohiv near Kyiv.

How much does Ukraine cost?

SHOESTRING

£30

per person / day

≈ UAH 1,805

hostels, street food, buses

MID-RANGE

£70

per person / day

≈ UAH 4,212

3-star hotels, restaurants, some taxis

COMFORTABLE

£150

per person / day

≈ UAH 9,026

4-star+, guided trips, private transfers

Estimates per person per day, excluding flights. Prices vary by season and city.

Food to try

Borscht

Beetroot soup with cabbage, potato and often beef or pork, served with sour cream and garlicky pampushky buns; its cooking culture was UNESCO-listed in 2022.

Varenyky

Half-moon dumplings stuffed with potato, cabbage, curd cheese or sour cherries, boiled and served with sour cream and fried onion.

Salo

Cured pork fat, sliced thin and eaten on rye bread with garlic: a Ukrainian staple that tastes far better than it sounds.

Getting around

Ukrzaliznytsia, the national railway, is the way to travel: Intercity+ day trains and overnight sleepers link Kyiv with Lviv, Odesa, Kharkiv and western towns, with tickets sold through its app. Ukrainian airspace closed to civil flights in February 2022, and since then most visitors have arrived by train via Przemyśl or Chełm in Poland, or by coach. In cities, Uklon, Bolt and Uber cover taxis, and Kyiv's metro is fast and cheap.

Practical information

PLUGS & VOLTAGE



C F

230V — bring a UK-to-C/F adapter

DIALLING CODE

+380

TAP WATER

Not safe — drink bottled or treated water

TIPPING

Leave around 10 per cent in restaurants and cafés if service is not included; round up taxi fares and tip guides.

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Ambulance: **103**

Fire: **101**

Police: **102**

Source: FCDO “Getting help”

TIME ZONE

UTC+2 (standard time)

DRIVING

On the right

ETIQUETTE

Use Ukrainian names and greetings – Kyiv, not Kiev – rather than defaulting to Russian. Remove shoes in homes, women should cover their heads in Orthodox churches, and give flowers in odd numbers.

MAIN AIRPORTS

Boryspil International Airport (KBP), Kyiv; Lviv Danylo Halytskyi International Airport (LWO), Lviv; Rzeszów-Jasionka Airport (RZE), Rzeszów — across the border

Visas & entry for Ukraine

Shown for a British passport.

No visa needed

British Citizen passport holders can enter Ukraine without a visa for visits of up to 90 days within a 180-day period. Ukraine has confirmed that this policy will continue to apply to British citizens until 30 January 2027.

If you’re planning to stay in Ukraine for longer than 90 days in a 180 day period, you need to get a visa. For more advice contact the Ukrainian Embassy in London or Consulate General in Edinburgh.

From the UK government's FCDO entry requirements for British passport holders — read the full page for passport validity, permits and exceptions.

Health & vaccinations

See a travel health nurse, GP or travel clinic **6–8 weeks before you go**. Make sure routine UK vaccinations (such as MMR and diphtheria-tetanus-polio) are up to date.

RECOMMENDED FOR MOST TRAVELLERS

Hepatitis A Tetanus

SOMETIMES ADVISED — DEPENDS ON YOUR TRIP, ACTIVITIES AND HEALTH

Hepatitis B Measles Rabies Tick-borne encephalitis Tuberculosis Typhoid

YELLOW FEVER CERTIFICATE

No yellow fever certificate is required to enter.

MALARIA

No malaria risk

Source: TravelHealthPro (National Travel Health Network and Centre), checked 21 October 2026. This is a summary, not medical advice.

Useful phrases in Ukrainian

ENGLISH	UKRAINIAN	SAY IT
Hello	Добрий день	DOB-ryi den
Thank you	Дякую	DYA-koo-yoo
Please	Будь ласка	bood LAS-ka
Excuse me	Вибачте	VY-bach-te

ENGLISH	UKRAINIAN	SAY IT
How much is this?	Скільки це коштує?	<i>SKIL-ky tse KOSH-too-ye</i>

Know before you go

Read the FCDO travel advice before considering any trip, and check that your insurance specifically covers Ukraine; many standard policies do not.

Book train seats early on the Ukrzaliznytsia app or website; popular routes, especially trains to and from Poland, sell out quickly.

Contactless card and phone payments are accepted almost everywhere, even in small cafés and on public transport, but carry some hryvnia for markets and rural areas.

Visa, health and safety rules change. Before you book or travel, check the FCDO travel advice (gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice) and TravelHealthPro (travelhealthpro.org.uk). Costs are estimates. © 2026 Pick My Trip.