

# Ukraine Україна

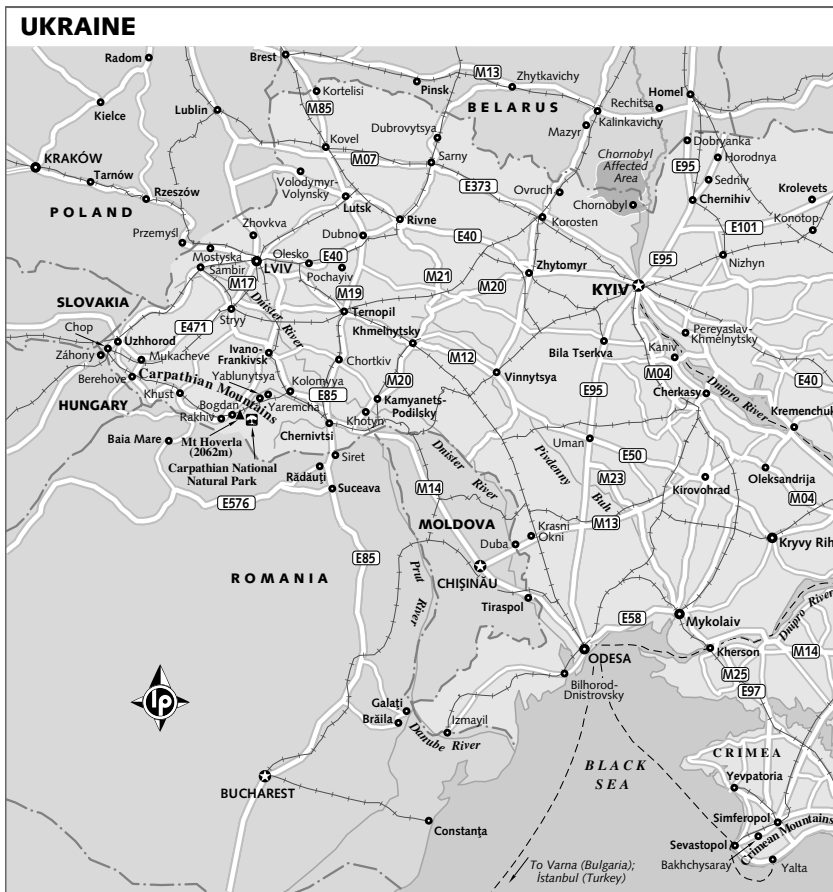
The West cheered heartily for Ukraine's mutiny in orange – the flashiest 'colour revolution' by far – and a rousing sense of rebellion and thirst for change still lingers in the air here. You can feel it when you're in the awesome, frenetic capital – Kyiv, where peaceful but passionate protests break out at the drop of a hat, and where citizens flaunt bold fashions and fresh attitudes as they smoke, drink, dance and sing wherever and whenever they want. You can see it along the resort-speckled coasts Odesa and Crimea, where reconstructions and renovations are turning the run-down architectural pearls of the Black Sea into eye-catching beauties, ready and eager for your business. And you can hear it in the super-nationalistic western region, where the purest strains of the Ukrainian language are spoken with zeal under the Gothic eaves of Old World cafés.

It's an exciting time to be here, to bear witness to it all. And they *want* you here. Ever since this hulking giant of a country broke through the chains of repression and corruption, it's been striking poses and flexing its muscles at the West. Visas are no longer required for most Westerners, so there's no good reason you shouldn't accept the invitation and take your explorations to the very edges of Eastern Europe.

## FAST FACTS

- **Area** 603,700 sq km
- **Capital** Kyiv (Kiev)
- **Currency** hryvnia (hry); €1 = 6.44hry; US\$1 = 5.05hry; UK£ = 9.47hry; A\$1 = 3.82hry; ¥100 = 4.51hry; NZ\$1 = 3.12hry
- **Famous for** Orange Revolution, poisoned president, Chernobyl, football striker Andriy Shevchenko
- **Official Language** Ukrainian
- **Phrases** *Doh-brih dyen* (hello), *ya nih rah-zoo-mee-yu* (I don't understand), *dya-koo-yoo* (thanks)
- **Population** 46.5 million
- **Telephone codes** country code ☎ 38; international access code ☎ 8+ 10
- **Visa** required for Australians and New Zealanders, arrange in advance (\$80-290), see p904





## HIGHLIGHTS

- Cover all bases in **Kyiv** (p865), where religious landmarks and wild nightlife peacefully coexist.
- Lose the map and lose yourself in the winding, narrow, cobblestone alleys and gorgeous Old World buildings of **Lviv** (p874) that are best explored aimlessly and on your own.
- Warm your buns where so many locals do – in **Odesa** (p885), the hotbed of Ukrainian hedonism.
- Take the longest, most stunning trolleybus ride in the world to the palace-lined, horseshoe coast of **Yalta** (p895).
- Take a detour to little, undiscovered **Kamyanets-Podilsky** (p883), set on a tower-

ing island of rock and surrounded by a deep ravine. This place is begging to be an epic movie backdrop.

## ITINERARIES

- **One week** Split your time evenly between Kyiv and Lviv (if you want to chill) or Odesa (if you want to party).
- **Two weeks** Spend five days in Kyiv, two in Lviv, then choose a week in Odesa or Crimea, making Yalta your base.

## CLIMATE & WHEN TO GO

Inland Ukraine enjoys a relatively moderate continental climate. The hottest month, July, averages 23°C, while the coldest, January, is literally freezing. Along the coast, Yalta and



Odesa enjoy a marginally subtropical climate and are much milder in winter. See climate charts on p912.

Near Odesa and in Crimea, tourism is at its peak from June to August, and accommodation is priciest then. The country basically comes to a halt during the first two weeks of May for a series of holidays, making a visit then both interesting and frustrating. For weather and crowds, mid-April to late May is the best bet.

## HISTORY

### Kyivan Rus

In 882 Oleh of Novgorod – of the Varyagi (a Scandinavian civilisation) – declared himself ruler of Kyiv. The city prospered and grew

into a large, unified Varyagi state that, during its peak, stretched between the Volga River, the Danube River and Baltic Sea. By the 11th and 12th centuries, the Varyagi state began to splinter into 10 rival princedoms. When prince of Suzdal Andriy Bogolyubov sacked Kyiv in 1169, followed by the Mongols 70 years later, the end of the Varyagi era was complete.

Prince Roman Mstyslavych regained control of Kyiv in 1203 and united the regions of present-day western, central and northern Ukraine. There was a period of relative prosperity under his dynamic son, King Danylo, and grandson Lev. During this time, much of eastern and southern Ukraine came under the control of the Volga-based, Mongol Golden Horde. Its empire was emasculated, however, in the 14th century by the Black Death, as well as by the growing military strength of Russian, Polish and Lithuanian rulers.

## Cossacks & Russian Control

By the turn of the 15th century, the uncontrolled steppe in southern Ukraine began to attract runaway serfs, criminals, Orthodox refugees and other outcasts from Poland and Lithuania. Along with a few semi-independent Tatars, the inhabitants formed self-governing militaristic communities and became known as *kazaki* (Cossacks), from the Turkic word meaning 'outlaw, adventurer or free person'. Ukrainian Cossacks eventually developed the self-ruling Cossack Hetmanate, which to some degree reasserted the concept of Ukrainian self-determination.

In 1648 Hetman Bogdan Khmelnytsky (aided by Tatar cavalry) overcame the Polish rulers at the battle of Pyliavtsi. He was forced to engage in a formal but controversial military alliance with Muscovy in 1654, but in 1660 a war broke out between Poland and Russia over control of Ukraine. This ended with treaties that granted control over Kyiv and northern Ukraine to Russia and territory to the west of the Dnieper River to the Poles.

During the course of the 18th century Russia expanded into southern Ukraine and also gained most of Western Ukraine from Poland, except for the far west, which went to the Habsburg Empire.

## The Early 20th Century

Following WWI and the collapse of tsarist power, Ukraine had a chance – but failed – to gain independence. Civil war broke out and

**HOW MUCH?**

- **Kyiv metro ride** 50 kopeks
- **Bottle of Medoff vodka** 25hry
- **Cup of brewed coffee** 7hry
- **Ticket to opera in Kyiv** 20hry
- **Ticket to football game at Dynamo stadium (Kyiv)** 15hry

**LONELY PLANET INDEX**

- **Litre of petrol** 3.10hry
- **Litre of bottled water** 2hry
- **Half-litre Chernihivsky beer** 4hry
- **High-quality matryoshka (stacking doll)** 50hry
- **Street snack (Kyivska perepichka – meat roll)** 4hry

exploded into anarchy: six different armies vied for power, and Kyiv changed hands five times within a year. Eventually Ukraine was again divided between Poland, Romania, Czechoslovakia and Russia. The Russian part became a founding member of the USSR in 1922, but Stalin looked upon Ukraine as a laboratory for testing Soviet restructuring while at the same time stamping out 'harmful' nationalism. Consequently, in 1932–33 he engineered a famine that killed millions of Ukrainians.

The Soviet Red Army rolled into Polish Ukraine in September 1939. The Germans attacked in 1941 and by the year's end controlled virtually all of Ukraine. Kharkiv and Kyiv were retaken by the Red Army, however, two years later. An estimated six million Ukrainians died

in WWII, which left most of the country's cities in ruin. After the war, the USSR kept the territory it had taken from Poland in 1939.

**Modern History**

After the failed Soviet counter-coup in August 1991, the Verkhovna Rada (Supreme Council) met, and speaker Stanslav Hurenko's memorable announcement was recorded by the *Economist* for posterity: 'Today we will vote for Ukrainian independence, because if we don't we're in the shit.' In December, some 84% of the population voted in a referendum to back that pragmatic decision, and Leonid Kravchuk was elected president.

The economy floundered, things seemed chaotic and people were largely dissatisfied with the results of their move for independence. Finally, the hryvnia, Ukraine's currency, was introduced in 1996, and a process of privatisation kick-started the economy. It wasn't until 1997, under President Leonid Kuchma, that inflation fell from an inconceivable 10,000% to 10%. The economy strengthened but not enough: the hryvnia felt the ripple effects hard from the 1998 Russian financial crisis, dipping 51% in value.

Presidential elections in October 1999 saw President Kuchma reelected in what were widely regarded as dubious elections. His credibility shrivelled further due to his relationship with former prime minister and money-lauderer Pavel Lazarenko, as well as his alleged association with the shocking murder of gadfly journalist Georgy Gongadze.

**The Orange Revolution & Beyond**

Kuchma knew he wouldn't be able to run in the October 2004 presidential elections, so he

got his crony Viktor Yanukovich to run for him instead. But both the international press and Ukrainian public were all about Viktor Yushchenko, who was poisoned a week before elections, allegedly by political foes, turning his ruggedly handsome face into... just rugged. A great media story.

Because no-one carried more than 50% of the votes in the first round of elections, a run-off was scheduled for November 21. The official results of this run-off had Yanukovich – who still had close ties with the reigning government and media – ahead by 3%, but exit polls showed Yushchenko ahead by 11%. Something was rotten in the state of Ukraine, and by the next day, about 500,000 people had peacefully gathered on Kyiv's maydan Nezalezhnosti (Independence Square), bearing flags, setting up tents, chanting, singing and having a good time. Kyiv citizens took into their homes complete strangers, hosted out-of-towners, and the media reported a marked drop in city crime during the span of the protest. The world was watching, and officials had no choice but to annul the run-off results.

But the protesters stayed on, sometimes numbering over a million and often withstanding freezing temperatures, until 26 December 2004, when a second run-off took place under intense international scrutiny. Yushchenko won with 52% and was inaugurated 23 January 2005. He chose lovely, powerful and crafty Yuliya Tymoshenko (also known as 'the Gas Princess' and 'Glamour Girl of the Orange Revolution') as his prime minister – a real 'beauty and the beast' story – but ended up firing her under pressure from his associates. But she's not going down without a fight, and plans to get her job back, come hell or high water.

As the saying goes, revolutions eat their children. Since Yushchenko's victory, his popularity has declined, with allegations of corruption, bad press about his obnoxious son and a Russian oil crisis. The country is impatient for improvement, and it seems no one can satisfy it.

**PEOPLE**

Ukraine's population of 46,500,000 has been steadily declining since independence. About 66% live in urban areas such as Kyiv, Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk, Odesa and Donetsk. Some 78% are Ukrainian and another 17%

**VOX POP**

*Name and age?* Klaudia Shevelyuk, 24.  
*Where were you during the maydan?* At home with my year-old daughter. In the evening my husband and I brought them food, hot drinks and warm clothes.  
*What makes you most proud about Ukraine?* Ruslana (2004 Eurovision Song Contest winner) and Andriy Shevchenko (football striker).  
*What is your favourite nighttime hangout in Kyiv?* Caribbean.  
*Favourite moment of the Orange Revolution?* The court decision announcement to overturn the 2004 presidential election results. This was considered to be the first victory of the Orange Revolution.

are ethnic Russians. The remainder includes Belarusians, Moldovans, Bulgarians, Poles, Hungarians, Romanians, Tatars and Jews. Almost all of the country's Tatar population (less than 250,000) lives in Crimea (see p892).

**RELIGION**

Almost 97% of Ukrainians are Christian, and most of those follow some sort of orthodoxy.

Orthodoxy in Ukraine has a complex history of its own, but basically, central and southern Ukraine mostly follow the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (UOC; with a Moscow patriarch), while the rest of the country follows the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (UAOC; with a Kyiv patriarch). To make matters more confusing, the UOC split in 1992, with a breakaway new church called the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Kyiv and All-Ukraine, which recognises the Kyiv patriarch.

But wait, there's more. The Uniate Church, which is also referred to as the Ukrainian-Greek Catholic Church, follows Orthodox worship and ritual but recognises the Roman pope as its leader. Uniate priests are the only Catholic priests in the world allowed to marry.

There are some very small Jewish minorities in all cities, while Muslim communities, primarily Tatars, live in Crimea.

**ARTS**

Many Ukrainians believe that to understand their heritage you must appreciate the significance of Taras Shevchenko, who was punished

**LOSE OR DIE**

During WWII, when Kyiv was occupied by Nazi Germany, the members of the talented Dynamo soccer team were challenged to a public match with a team of German soldiers. The Ukrainians formed a team called Start, and despite physical weakness brought on by the occupation, they started off ahead. At half-time German officers came into the locker room and commanded them to let up. Nevertheless, Start continued to play hard, and before the game finished the referee blew the whistle and called it off (with a score of 4-1).

The Germans reshuffled their players, and Start was offered another chance to lose. Instead they won. Next, Start was matched with a Hungarian team – and won again. Finally, the enraged Germans challenged Start to a match against their finest, undefeated team, Flakelf. When the 'Übermensch' of Flakelf lost, the Nazis gave up – and proceeded to arrest most of the Start players. They were executed at Babyn Yar (p870). There is a monument to them at Dynamo Stadium in Kyiv, and their story inspired the movie *Victory*, starring Sylvester Stallone and Pele.

by exile in 1847 for his satirical poems about Russian oppression. Arguably the most talented and prolific Ukrainian writer of the early 20th century was Ivan Franko, whose scholarly and moving works shed light on the issues plaguing Ukrainian society. He was, of course, imprisoned by the Russians. Lesia Ukrainka, a wealthy young woman whose frail health kept her indoors writing moody poetry, could be considered the Emily Dickinson of Ukraine.

In the cinema world, Aleksandr Dovzhenko's 1930 silent film *Earth* is considered by some critics to be one of the most significant films of all time. The most notable contemporary Ukrainian director (although she was born in a part of Romania that's now in Moldova) is Kira Muratova. Her absurdist, cruel style and fascination with the repulsive have earned her films much critical acclaim, if not a huge fan base.

The art of creating *pysanky* (brightly coloured, detailed eggshells), is uniquely Ukrainian. During Easter you will be able to find

some for sale (great souvenirs but hard to pack safely), and there are year-round wooden-egg samples for purchase.

Okean Elzy ([www.okeanelzy.com](http://www.okeanelzy.com)) is one of the country's bigger music sensations. The well-respected rock group sounds a little like the Clash and has a charismatic lead singer.

## ENVIRONMENT

The largest country wholly within Europe, Ukraine has a topography consisting almost completely of steppe: gently rolling, partially wooded plains, bisected by the Dnipro River. The only serious mountains are the Carpathians, in the west, and the Crimeans, in the south. A central belt of fertile, thick, humus-rich soil in Ukraine spawned the term *chernozem* (meaning 'black earth') and is what gave the country the nickname 'the breadbasket of Europe'.

Visitors don't come for rare-wildlife watching, but there is a good amount of diversity including elk, deer, wild boars, brown bears and wolves. Lots of geese and ducks, and

small furry mammals such as rabbits and muskrats, can be seen from trains. Ukraine has a few national parks, the most significant of which is the Carpathian National Natural Park (p882).

In addition to the destructive Soviet industrialisation of the countryside, Ukraine still suffers from the effects of Chernobyl (Chernobyl in Russian), the worst nuclear accident in history (see p864).

## FOOD & DRINK

Some tasty Ukrainian dishes are *varenyky* (traditional dumplings made with rolled dough), *borshch* (beet soup) and *holubtsi* (stuffed cabbage rolls). Chicken Kiev (*kotleta po-Kyivsky*), is a deep-fried butter-stuffed ball of chicken.

Crimea produces sweet wines, and champagne from around Odesa is surprisingly palatable. The most popular Ukrainian beers are Slavutych, Chernihivsky and Obolon.

Vegetarians can have a hard time outside Kyiv. Here's how to say 'I am a vegetarian (male/female)' – 'ya vyeh-gyeh-tah-ree-ahn-yets/-ka'.

## KYIV КИЇВ

☎ 044 / pop 2.66 million

The click of stilettoes on cobblestones, the woosh of expensive cars barreling down the boulevards, the dizzying aromas from ethnic restaurants and stylish cafés, and the eye-catching advertisements cleverly squeezed into every available space: This is the new, postrevolutionary Kyiv. It's flashy, fast and ready for action – and set amid the monumental Stalinist architecture and glorious gilded onion domes that have been pulling in tourists long before anyone even heard of a colour revolution.

Every last citizen here is feeling their free-market oats – from the babushkas hawking home-baked goods on the street to the high-level investors opening up more enterprises than a poor guidebook author can keep up with. That said, the ancient city – believed to be at least 1500 years old – is far less overwhelming and more laid-back than Moscow and St Petersburg.

Explore the Caves Monastery, where the mummified bodies of revered monks still receive the prayers and kisses of believers. Do some prime souvenir shopping on steep,

winding Andriyivsky uzviz. Catch a awe-inspiring glimpse of the gargantuan steel Soviet woman on the banks of the gentle Dnipro River. Take a leisurely stroll down vul Khreshchatyk to maydan Nezalezhnosti, the nerve centre of the Orange Revolution, and celebrate the country's victory with a Ukrainian beer at one of the city's many happening nightclubs. This is Kyiv. Vive la revolución!

## ORIENTATION

Kyiv's main street is vul Khreshchatyk, which heads northeast towards maydan Nezalezhnosti, the main square and centre of the Orange Revolution. On weekends Khreshchatyk is closed to traffic, and citizens flood the street.

The area north of the Old Town from around St Andrew's Church to Kontraktova ploscha is Podil, the historic merchants' quarter and river port.

Across the river, on the more working-class 'left' (east) bank, are a cluster of islands hugged by beaches and parkland.

## INFORMATION

### Bookshops

**Baboon** (☎ 234 1503; vul Bohdana Khmelnytskoho 39; ☎ 9am-2am; ☑ Universitet) A hipster bookstore-restaurant that for once has an English-language literature selection, which includes stuff other than *A Tale of Two Cities* and *Jane Eyre* and a used-book section. Decent food, espresso and live shows on weekend nights, when the place gets packed.

### Internet Access

Just next to the post office's main entrance is a 24-hour place charging 10hry per hour.

### Laundry

There are no self-service laundries, but hotel floor maids will do a good job for a reasonable rate. Many apartment rentals offer a washing machine.

### Left Luggage

Possible for a small fee at the train and bus stations. Also, your hotel will hold it for you for several hours, usually for free.

### Medical Services

**American Medical Centre** (☎ 490 7600, emergency ☎ 461 9595; [www.amcenters.com](http://www.amcenters.com); vul Berdychivsta 1; ☑ Lukyanivska) Handles routine and emergency medical and dental. Staff speak English.

## CHORNOBYL

*And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell up on the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters; And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.*

*From Revelations 8:10-11*

Chernobyl means 'wormwood'.

On 26 April 1986 reactor No 4 at Chernobyl nuclear power station, 100km north of Kyiv, exploded and nearly nine tons of radioactive material (90 times as much as in the Hiroshima bomb) spewed into the sky. An estimated 4.9 million people in northern Ukraine, southern Belarus and southwestern Russia were affected. Some people – especially the elderly, who cannot conceive of the dangers of this invisible stuff called radiation – have refused to leave, and even live off the small gardens they've planted by their homes. Undoubtedly the most tragically affected were the young and unborn children. For more information about the situation and how to help, visit [www.childrenofchernobyl.org](http://www.childrenofchernobyl.org), and watch the Oscar-winning documentary *Chernobyl Heart*.

Western monitors now conclude that radioactivity levels at Chernobyl are negligible, so organised tours of the site and surrounding 'ghost' villages have started to pop up. But visiting Chernobyl should not be a frivolous undertaking. Firstly, although the half-life of the thyroid-attacking iodine isotopes is long past, the dangerous plutonium ones will not decompose for another 20,000 or so years. (Although tour agencies may claim they won't go to plutonium affected areas, it's hard to imagine how an explosion of radioactive particles could be contained into certain zones). Secondly, the cement 'sarcophagus' that was built over the still-burning reactor is crumbling and unstable. Before jumping into a decision to take extreme tourism to the subatomic level, do your own research.

If you do decide to go, the standard price for a six-hour visit is about \$180. SAM Travel (p867) is a long-established company that organises trips. If you opt to play it safe and eschew Chernobyl itself, do pay a visit to the riveting Chernobyl Museum (p869) in Kyiv.

### CENTRAL KYIV

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### Money

Both ATMs and exchange booths signposted обмін валют (*obmin valyut*) are ubiquitous. Rates offered by exchange booths in hotels are not necessarily worse. Larger banks will cash traveller cheques and give cash advances on credit cards.

### Post & Telephone

**Central post office** (☎ 065; vul Khreshchatyk 22; ☎ 8am-9pm Mon-Fri, to 7pm Sun; M Khreshchatyk) Has a 24-hour phone office.

### Travel Agencies

There are no tourist information centres, but there are plenty of travel agencies, which do city tours as well as day trips to the Chornobyl Exclusion Zone (p864). Two of the most reliable and popular are:

**New Logic** (☎ 206 3322; vul Mykhaylivska 6a; M Maydan Nezalezhnosti) Popular for weekend city sightseeing tours.

**Sam Travel** (☎ 287 5019; vul Chervonoarmiyska 34; M Ploscha Lva Tolstoho) A popular choice for Chornobyl.

### SIGHTS

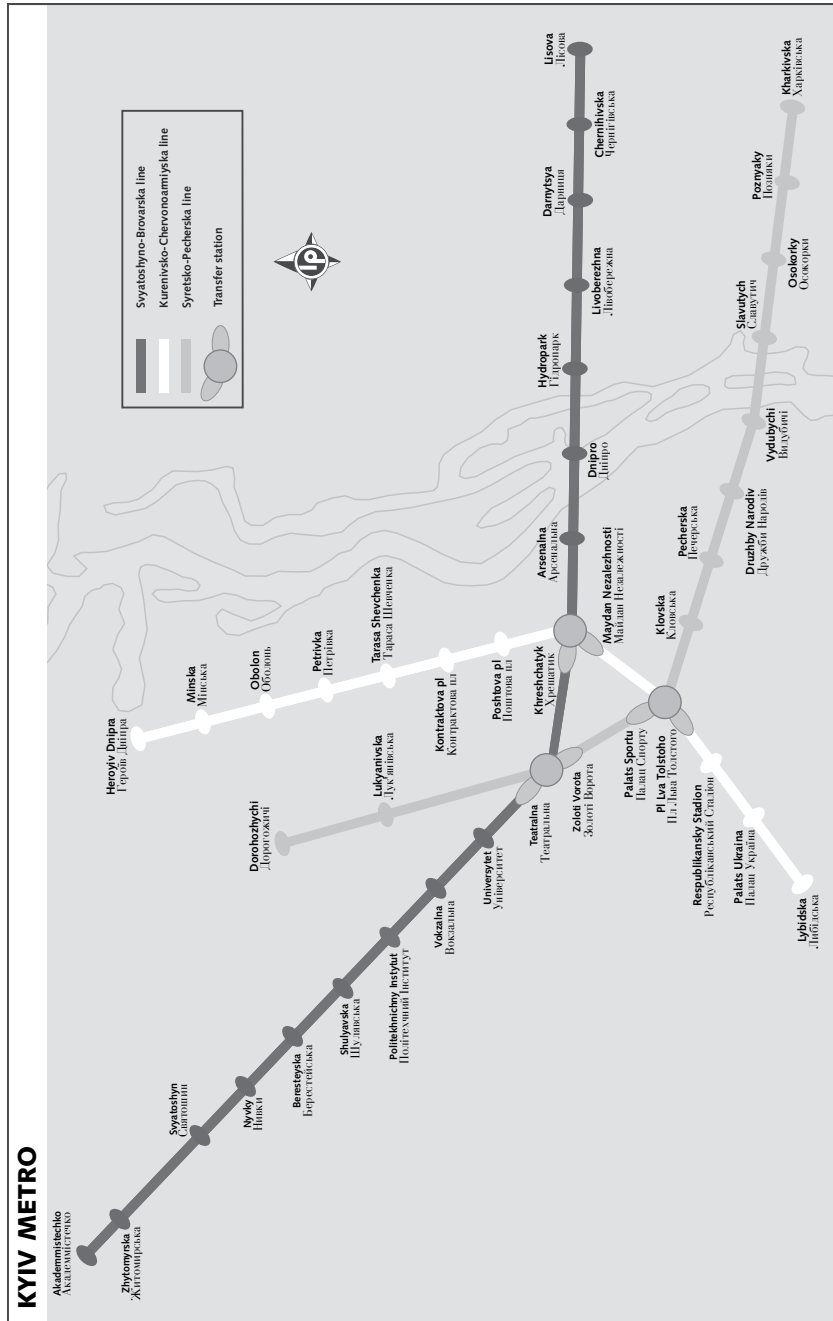
#### Caves Monastery

Rolling across 28 hectares of wooded slopes above the Dnipro River, the **Caves Monastery** (☎ 290 3071; vul Sichnevoho Povstannya 21; adult/child incl map 16/8hry; ☎ upper lavra 9.30am-6pm, lower lavra sunrise-sunset, caves 8.30am-4.30pm), also known as the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra, deserves at least a half-day. It is the single most popular tourist site in the city, a highlight of visiting Ukraine and arguably the spiritual heart of the Ukrainian people.

The two sets of **caves** are a few minutes' walk southeast of the cathedral and through the southern gate; buy a candle at a kiosk on the way. Inside the caves, dozens of niches contain glass-topped coffins holding the blanketed bodies of the monks; believers kneel and pray at the coffins, and kiss the glass tops as well.

The **excursion bureau** (☎ 2913171) is on the left just past the entrance but unofficial guides lingering offer better two-hour tours in English for just 50hry per small group.

The museums and churches inside the preserve have extra admission fees (3hry to 6hry each) and are open daily from about 10am to 5pm. Most museums are rather esoteric; the only one that is interesting for anyone is the Museum of Microminiatures.



**KYIV IN TWO DAYS**

Muse over mummies at the **Caves Monastery** (p867), then scoot to the nearby **Museum of the Great Patriotic War** (right) and **Rodina Mat** (right).

Imagine 1 million orange-clad protesters at maydan Nezalezhnosti, preferably on a weekend, when Khreshchatyk is pedestrian-only. Move on to **St Sophia's Cathedral** (below) and **Andriyivsky uzviz** (below). Catch a live show at **Art Club 44** (p871) or go dancing at **Caribbean Club** (p872).

**St Sophia Cathedral Complex**

The city's oldest standing church is **St Sophia's Cathedral** (Sofiytsky Sobor; ☎ 278 2083; Sofiyivska ploscha; grounds 1hr, adult/child 11/4hr, bell tower 3hr; ☎ 10am-5.30pm Fri-Tue, to 4.30pm Wed, grounds 8.30am-8pm; ☎ Maydan Nezalezhnosti). Built from 1017 to 1031 and named after Hagia Sofia (Holy Wisdom) Cathedral in Istanbul, its Byzantine plan and decoration announced the new religious and political authority of Kyiv. Prince Yaroslav himself is buried here. Perhaps most memorable aspect of a visit is the cathedral's interior, where there are 11th-century mosaics and frescoes.

**Andriyivsky Uzviz**

Your visit to Kyiv wouldn't be complete without a walk along steep, cobblestoned Andriyivsky uzviz (Andrew's Descent), one of the oldest streets in town. Avoid the incline by taking the **funicular** (tickets 50 kopeks; ☎ 6.30am-11pm; ☎ Poshtova Ploscha) to the top of the hill, where you'll find the **St Michael's Monastery**, with its seven-cupola, periwinkle cathedral. Further down the street is the gorgeous baroque **St Andrew's Church** (admission 4hr), built in 1754 in St Petersburg. Across from St Andrew's, up a small flight of stairs and on the ground before the National Museum of Ukrainian History are the **Desyatynna Church ruins**. Prince Volodymyr ordered it built in 989 and used 10% of his income for it, hence the name (*desyatyn* means 'one-tenth'). In 1240 it collapsed under the weight of people who took refuge on its roof during a Tatar siege.

From here, take souvenir stall-lined Andriyivsky uzviz down the hill to start your descent into the realm of *matryoshkas* (stacking dolls) and McLenin T-shirts.

**Museums**

For most people the following are the most interesting museums; little is posted in English.

**Chornobyl Museum** (☎ 470 5422; provulok Khoryrya; admission 5hr; ☎ 10am-6pm Mon-Fri, to 5pm Sat, closed last Mon of month; ☎ Kontraktova Ploscha) This artistic and moving display is a must-see.

**Bulgakov House-Museum** (☎ 416 3188; Andriyivsky uzviz 13; admission 3hr; ☎ 10am-5pm Thu-Tue; ☎ Kontraktova Ploscha) The beloved author of *The Master & Margarita* lived here in the early 20th century, and his home has been turned into a museum. It's often booked in advance with tour groups.

**Pyrohovo** (☎ 226 5542; vul Chervonopraporna; admission 10hr; ☎ 10am-4pm Thu-Tue) This outdoor museum holds 17th- to 20th-century wooden cottages, churches, farmsteads and windmills. Take *marshrutka* (minibus) 24, trolleybus 11 or bus 27 from the Lybidska metro station; the entrance is hard to miss. A taxi will cost about 50hr each way.

**Museum of the Great Patriotic War** (☎ 295 9452; vul Sichnevoho Povstannya 44; admission 4hr; ☎ 10am-4pm Tue-Sun) features triumphant displays of Soviet heroism. Visible from miles around is **Rodina Mat** (Defence of the Motherland Monument), a 62m-high titanium statue of a valiant woman with shield and sword.

**Other Sights**

Originally erected in 1037 but reconstructed in 1982, the **Golden Gate** (Zoloti Vorota; vul Volodymyrska 40A; ☎ Zoloti Vorota) was the original entrance into Old Kyiv. It has long been closed for repairs that don't seem to be taking place, but a glimpse from the street is interesting (notice the chapel at the top).

The very Gaudi-like **Chimera Building** (vul Bankova 10; ☎ Khreshchatyk), with its demonic-looking animals and gargoyles, is probably

**TOP FIVE REASONS TO HAVE HEALTH INSURANCE IN KYIV**

Affliction	Culprit
3rd-degree burn	Molten butter explosion from chicken Kiev
Broken nose	Metro door face-slam
Busted assbone	Marble stairs in winter
Charley horse leg cramp	Karate chop from Metro turnstile
Chest puncture wound	Stiletto love, baby

the weirdest building in the city. It was constructed at the beginning of the 20th century by architect Vladislav Gorodetski, an eccentric genius who made it his home.

The baroque, 18th-century **Mariinsky Palace** (vul Hrushevskoho 5; **M** Arsenalna) is surrounded by a lovely park with great city views, but entrance to the palace is not allowed.

The **Bessarabsky Market** (ploscha Bessarabska; **M** Lva Tolstoho) is a large covered place that sells for the most part produce, meats and honey; it can make for nice photos.

The metal-rainbow **Monument to the Unification of Russia & Ukraine** (**M** Maydan Nezalezhnosti) offers excellent vistas of the city along the Dnipro; there's also a good viewpoint at Mariinsky Palace (above).

Just outside metro Dorohozhychi is **Babyn Yar**, the location of a WWII execution site and mass grave used by Nazis. Over 100,000 Kyiv citizens – mostly Jews – were murdered here from 1941 till 1943. Actually, the monument is in the wrong spot. A small marble monument nearby marks the actual place of execution. See also the boxed text on p862.

## SLEEPING

If you're staying in Kyiv for more than a few days, you may find it more worthwhile to book an apartment online with one of many reputable companies. Tried and true are **Teren Plus** (☎ 428 1010; www.teren.kiev.ua) and **UA Apartments** (☎ 205 9292; www.uaapartments.com). Rates start at around US\$40.

The follow listings show high-season, weekday rates; weekends are cheaper in Kyiv.

## Budget

**St Petersburg** (☎ 279 7364; s-peter@i.kiev.ua; bulvar Tarasa Shevchenka 4; s 294-343hry, d 381-572hry, s with shared bathroom 143-165hry, d with shared bathroom 172-196hry, tr with shared bathroom 237-270hry) Staffed by relatively friendly women who are happy to have a job where they can watch trashy TV between customers, St Petersburg's rooms are worn down, but some have a little charm or have remodelled bathrooms. The shared bathrooms are clean and turn the place into an incredible bargain, but the place may be bought up soon.

A good deal is hard to find, and that includes **IYH Kiev** (☎ 331 0260; www.hihostels.com.ua; vul Artema 52A, bldg 2, 5th fl; dm 117hry). Rooms are new and simple; no kitchen. Wi-fi (not free) and a computer are planned for the near future. A detailed map is on the website. **IYH Yaroslav**

(☎ 331 0260; www.hihostels.com.ua; vul Yaroslavska 10; dm 110-130hry) is easier to find and in Podil.

## Midrange

**Sherborne Guest House** (☎ 295 8832; www.sherbornehotel.com.ua; provulok Sichnevyy 9; ste 364-936hry; **M** Arsenalna) Each cosy apartment in this building differs in décor and layout (many have slanted ceilings). On-site staff are helpful and speak English, and the prices are great.

**Hotel Express** (☎ 239 8995; www.expresskiev.com; bulvar Tarasa Shevchenka 38/40; s 236-600hry, d 834hry, ste 1282-1627hry; **☎** **☎** **☎** **☎** **M** Universitet) There's nothing Soviet left about even the lowest-priced rooms with shared bathroom (there are only a few, and you'll have to request them specifically), which are by far the best deal – so-called improved rooms hardly differ.

**Hotel Ukraina** (☎ 279 0266; www.ukraine-hotel.kiev.ua; vul Instyutskya 4; s 335-490hry, d 450-560hry, ste 450-990hry; **M** Maydan Nezalezhnosti) Location is the best reason to stay in this Stalinist Hotel overlooking the cradle of the Orange Revolution, maydan Nezalezhnosti. The staff aren't thrilled to be at work, and service with a smile isn't likely, but they aren't rude either. Count the number of women on staff with bright-red dyed hair.

**Sunflower B&B Hotel** (☎ 279 3846; www.sunflowerhotel.kiev.ua; vul Kostolna 9-41; d 610-712hry; **☎** **☎** **☎** **☎** **M** Maydan Nezalezhnosti) The yellow, Western-standard rooms are spacious and quiet, with light-wood floors and comfortable beds. You'll also get free in-room DSL and continental breakfast (with a warm pastry), delivered, on request, on a cart by English-speaking staff. There are only a few rooms (all doubles, some with kitchens), so book in advance.

## Top End

**Hotel Vozdvizhensky** (☎ 531 9900; www.vozdvyzhensky.com; vul Vozdvizhenska 60; s 750-1380hry, d 990-1800hry, ste 1560-2100hry; **☎** **☎** **☎** **☎** **M** Poshtova Ploscha) Catering mostly to foreign couples, Vozdvizhensky exudes confidence and style. The minimalist Western-standard rooms themselves are not so impressive, but beds look and feel fantastic. Apart from flooring, standard and superior rooms hardly differ.

If money is no object, you won't be disappointed by **Radisson SAS** (☎ 492 2200; www.kiev.radissonsas.com; vul Yaroslaviv Val 22; s 1872-2195hry, d 1872-2324hry, ste 2582-5486hry; **☎** **☎** **☎** **☎** **M** Zoloti Vorota) or **Premier Palace** (☎ 537 4500; www.premier-palace.com; bulvar Tarasa Shevchenka 5-7/29; s 2175-2485hry, d 2610-2740hry, ste 2795-9315hry; **☎** **☎** **☎** **☎** **M** Teatralna).

## EATING

If this list isn't long enough, stop by a fancy hotel for a copy of *Gourmet Guide* (although it focuses on pricier places) or the *Kyiv Business Directory*, on sale outside the Central Post Office. Also see www.chicken.kiev.ua/eng.

**Shalena Mama** (Crazy Mama; ☎ 234 1751; vul Tereshchenkivska; mains 15-50hry; ☎ 24hr; **M** Teatralna) It's all an homage to the Rolling Stones, and clear by the Thai-Western menu, where every dish is named for a song: Angie, Sympathy for the Devil, you name it.

**Pervak** (☎ 235 0952; vul Rognydynska 2; mains 25-65hry; ☎ 11am-last customer; **M** Ploscha Lva Tolstoho) Soviet style is super-hip at Pervak, which serves high-quality Ukrainian food and has a popular and fun bar scene, as well as live music. Old Soviet black-and-white talkies play on screens throughout the restaurant.

**La Bella** (☎ 279 2701, vul Pushkinska 7; mains 30-75hry; **M** Teatralna) Even real Italians will enjoy the simple, thin-crust, oven-fired pizzas here, and the pasta is done right too (try the spaghetti carbonara). The large place hasn't caught on yet and is usually very quiet.

**Mambo** (☎ 522 8224; bulvar Druzhby Narodov; mains 30-100hry; ☎ noon-2am; **M** Lybidiska) If you are yearning for some good Latin food (possibly more like Mexican-American) and tasty steaks, Mambo is well worth the trip. Outdoor seating, live world music, and good service round out the dining experience. From the metro, walk to Druzhby Narodov, go left, and it's about 150m down on the left, after Hotel Druzhba.

**Za Dvoma Zaitsami** (☎ 279 7972; Andriyivsky uzviz 34; mains 45-130hry; ☎ 11am-11pm) Here's a precious little restaurant for a precious little street. The décor is Ukrainian kitsch, and the food, which is surprisingly delicious for such an obvious tourist trap, focuses on rabbit. (The name

means 'chasing two hares' and was named for a popular Soviet film).

**Gurme** (vul Chervonoarmiyska 12; mains 5-10hry; ☎ 10am-8pm; **M** Ploscha Lva Tolstoho) and **Puzata Khata** (☎ 246 7245; vul Baseyna 1/2A; mains 5-15hry; ☎ 8am-11pm; **M** Teatralna) are both cheap, popular cafeteria-style places; the food isn't spectacular but isn't bad either.

## DRINKING Cafés

There are so many cafés that you won't struggle to find a good cup of joe with decent atmosphere. **Pret-a-Cafe** (☎ 425 1297; Andriyivsky uzviz 10A; ☎ 11am-11pm; **M** Kontraktova Ploscha) is stylish and makes a welcome respite from souvenir shopping on the *uzviz*. Try the chocolates. Also, the bookshop Baboon (p865) has good espresso.

## Bars

**Art Club 44** (☎ 229 4137; vul Khreshchatyk 44; cover varies; **M** Teatralna) Lots of beer, booze and food (try the pea soup) at this locally famous live-concert venue.

**Baraban** (☎ 229 2355; vul Prorizna 4A; ☎ 11am-11pm; **M** Maydan Nezalezhnosti) It's not readily apparent why this small, smoky place ('The Drum' in English) is so recommended; it has a history of cool clientele (journalists and the like). It's hard to find (in the back of a courtyard).

**Blindazh** (☎ 228 1511; Mala Zhytomirskya 15; **M** Maydan Nezalezhnosti) This dive bar is decked out with war paraphernalia and Soviet-era posters (one has been changed so that a pipe-smoking Stalin proclaims 'We Shall Overcome Cottonmouth'). The Doors, Kino and other music associated with wartime is played. People come for the moody atmosphere and inexpensive libations, not for the food, which makes army rations seem preferable.

**The Wall** (Stina; ☎ 235 8045; Bessarabsky ploscha 2; **M** Teatralna) It's easy to miss this smoky place on the back side of the Bessarabsky Market. Look for the red sign over the door.

**Golden Gate** (☎ 235 5188; vul Zolotovoritka 15; **M** Zoloti Vorota) and **O'Brien's Pub** (☎ 229 1584; vul Mykhailivska 17A; **M** Maydan Nezalezhnosti) are two Irish-style pubs popular with expats.

## ENTERTAINMENT Nightclubs

Inventive small concerts are held at Art Club 44 (above) and Baboon (p865). The following are some fun clubs that don't focus on gambling and stripping (which are well marketed

### AUTHOR'S CHOICE

**Himalaya** (☎ 270 5437; vul Khreshchatyk 23; mains 15-60hry; **M** Khreshchatyk) This may be the only restaurant in the world that actually has improved with time. The Indian food here is great, and the raised location along Khreshchatyk is great for scoping the main-street scene. If you can't enter from Khreshchatyk, go through the huge arch just north of the restaurant, walk uphill, take the first right, and go about 100m.



and need no review here). Most charge a cover that varies (probably 20hry to 50hry) depending on what's up.

**112** (☎ 230 9633; vul Chervonoarmyiska 5, Arena Complex; ☎ 9pm-4am; **M** Ploscha Lva Tolstoho) This sequel to long-time party club 111 (now closed) is the number-one spot for expats and those who want to meet them.

**Caribbean Club** (☎ 235 5222; vul Kominternu 4; ☎ 4pm-last customer Mon-Fri, from 6pm Sat & Sun; **M** Ploscha Lva Tolstoho) Kyiv's premier Latin disco; great dancers strut their stuff.

**Docker's ABC** (☎ 278 3456; vul Zankovetskoyi 15/4A; ☎ 24hr; **M** Khreshchatyk) By day a café-bar, Docker's is best once the sun goes down, when it opens up as a popular nightclub.

**Shooters** (☎ 254 2024; vul Moskovska 22; ☎ 24hr; **M** Ploscha Lva Tolstoho) Wild, sexy and welcoming; staff wear kilts for some reason.

## Performing Arts

If you're looking for something a little more refined, you're also in luck – there's plenty of performing arts, and you won't have to blow your budget. Tickets can be purchased in advance at the **Teatralna Kasa** (vul Khreshchatyk 21; **M** Khreshchatyk). Same-day tickets can be purchased at the venue.

**National Opera Theatre** (☎ 2347165; www.opera.com.ua; vul Volodymyrska 50; **M** Zoloti Vorota) Performances at this lavish opera house are a grandiose affair.

**Ivan Franko National Drama Theatre** (☎ 279 5921; ploscha Ivana Franka 3; **M** Khreshchatyk) Highly respected performances.

**National Philharmonic** (☎ 228 1697; www.filarmonia.com.ua; Volodymyrska uzviz 2; **M** Maydan Nezalezhnosti) Housed in a beautiful white building. Inside is a phenomenal organ.

**House of Organ & Chamber Music** (☎ 268 3186; vul Chervonoarmyiska 75; **M** Palats Ukraina) Classical concerts are held in the cool Gothic St Nicholas' Church.

**Dynamo Stadium** (☎ 229 0209; vul Hrushevskoho 3; **M** Maydan Nezalezhnosti) Ukraine's most beloved stadium, named after Ukraine's most beloved football team.

## SHOPPING

Without a doubt, the place to shop for souvenirs is along Andriyivsky uzviz. Western-style malls and shopping centres are fast becoming ubiquitous in the town centre, even though the number of people who can shop there hasn't quite justified the sheer quantity of them.

### WORTH A TRIP

It's a pricey taxi ride (100hry each way), but if you get a group together, it's worth a trip to ride out to the Kyiv suburb of Brovary to the **Megamarket** (☎ 200 1400; vul Kyivska 316; 60-80hry), where there's a huge shopping centre with a place for carting. You get your own helmet and coveralls, the cars are fast, the track is gnarly, and beer and snacks are served in the upstairs bar while you wait your turn. There's a climbing wall too.

## GETTING THERE & AWAY

### Air

The **Boryspil international airport** (☎ 490 4777; www.airport-borispil.kiev.ua) is 35km from central Kyiv. All international flights use Terminal B; Terminal A is used for daily flights to Lviv and Odesa.

Most domestic flights and some charters to other CIS countries arrive and leave from **Zhulyany Airport** (☎ 242 2308; www.airport.kiev.ua, in Ukrainian); it's conveniently close to the centre (about 8km away). There are regular flights to Ivano-Frankivsk, Lviv, Odesa, Simferopol and Uzhhorod.

From Kyiv, there are weekday-only flights to/from Lviv (525hry, 1½ hours) and several daily flights to/from Odesa (525hry, one hour).

**Kiyavia** (☎ 490 4902; vul Horodetsko 4; www.kiyavia.com) works well for booking domestic flights; offices are all over the place.

### Bus

Almost all long-distance buses, including Autolux, use the **Central Bus Terminal** (☎ 265 0430; ploscha Moskovska 3; **M** Lybidska). To get there from Lybidska metro station, take minibus 457 (1.50hry), trolleybus 4, 11 or 12, or tram 9 or 10 one stop.

Trains are more comfortable than buses. If it must be bus, try the privately owned **Autolux** (www.autolux.ua), which goes between Kyiv and Ivano-Frankivsk, Lviv, Odesa, Simferopol and Uzhhorod. All routes stop at Boryspil Airport and the Kyiv train station. The website allows for online booking.

From Kyiv, state-run buses go to Odesa (55hry to 60hry, 8½ hours, 21 daily), Simferopol (105hry, 16 hours, one daily), Lviv (55hry, 11 hours, six daily), Kamyanets-Podilsky (57hry, 12 hours, two daily), Ivano-

Frankivsk (75hry, 11 hours, five daily) and Uzhhorod (88hry, 14 hours, two daily).

### Train

The modern **train station** (☎ 005; ploscha Vokzalna 2) is located right next to the Vokzalna metro station. Foreigners must go to windows No 40 or 41; to get there, use the main escalator, walk forward to the end of the station, and go right. The **train ticket office** (☎ 050; bulvar Tarasa Shevchenka 38/40; ☎ 8am-7pm Mon-Fri, to 6pm Sat & Sun), next to the Hotel Express, is usually less hectic for ticket purchase. For non-CIS destinations, go to Hall No 1, down a hallway on the left as you enter the main area.

Trains from Kyiv go to Uzhhorod (*kupeyny/platskartny* 62/42hry, 17 hours, four daily), Ivano-Frankivsk (52/32hry, 13 hours, two daily), Kamyanets-Podilsky (32/22hry, 12 hours, one daily), Lviv (44/26hry, 10 hours, six daily), Odesa (60/44hry, 15 hours, five daily), Sevastopol (62/41hry, 17 hours, two daily) and Simferopol (*kupeyny* 56hry to 79hry, *platskartny* 38hry, 15 hours, one daily).

For more information about train travel, see p906. For definitions of the train classes given above, see p938.

## GETTING AROUND

### To/From the Airport

The usual way to Boryspil airport (10hry, 45 minutes) is on an **Atass bus** (☎ 296 7367). Buses depart from the bus stop at ploscha Peremohy (4am to midnight) and from the train station (5am to 3.30am) every 15 to 30 minutes, although they leave once an hour until 6am. At Boryspil, buses arrive/depart from in front of the international terminal. A taxi will set you back about 100hry.

**Autolux** (www.autolux.ua) buses also travel between Boryspil and Kyiv's main bus and train stations (35 mins); you can book on the website.

To get to Zhulyany airport, take trolleybus 9 from ploscha Peremohy (40 minutes) or a taxi (about 40hry for a 20-minute ride).

### Boat

At the **Boat Passenger Terminal**, near metro Poshtova Ploscha, boats leave when full for rides lasting 1½ to 3½ hours, from April to November and starting about 10am (adult 20hry to 40hry, child 10hry to 20hry). Beer and snacks are sold on board. The whole thing is thoroughly unorganised. Currently

there are no long-distance Dnipro boat trips.

## Public Transport

Kyiv's metro is clean, efficient, reliable and easy to use, especially if you read Cyrillic. Trains run frequently between around 6am and midnight on all three lines. Single-ride tokens (*zhetony*) cost 50 kopeks and are sold at entrances; there are also token-vending machines that only sometimes work.

Tickets for buses, trams and trolleybuses cost 50 kopeks and are sold at street kiosks or directly from the driver or conductor. Mini-buses (*marshrutki*) cost 1hry to 1.50hry; pay the driver upon entering.

## Taxi

Catching a taxi from the train station, on ploscha Peremohy and outside hotels, inevitably incurs a higher price, so try to find one elsewhere on the street. From the train station to the centre may cost 30hry. Try to look for newer, official-looking cars, which are more likely to have a meter and hence won't rip you off. Catching metered cabs on the street is rare. By phone, try **FM Taxi** (☎ 502 0502), which has a standard, metered rate of 15hry for the first 4km, then 1.50hry per kilometre. You can also flag down a private car and negotiate a price if you speak the language.

# WESTERN UKRAINE

It doesn't get more Ukrainian than this. Nowhere in the country are the people so passionate about their original culture and language than in Western Ukraine. Here, countless monuments and references to Cos-sacks, dissidents and other patriots vouch for Ukrainian pride, and speaking Russian is just plain gauche. The region wasn't annexed by the USSR until 1939, and somehow escaped bombing during WWII, so both the architecture and the attitudes have, for the most part, managed to avoid the Soviet influence, leaving it with a relaxed, Central European look and feel.

Strangely enough, Western Ukraine is still largely undiscovered by foreign visitors – and not for want of attractions. The city of Lviv is an unpolished gem, and the motley architecture and sooty beauty of its Old Town was enough for Unesco to deem it a World



Heritage site in 1998. Even many Ukrainians don't really know about little Kamyanets-Podilsky, an ancient town perched on a island of rock in the middle of a deep ravine – but visit it once, and you'll never forget it. And let's not forget the Carpathian Mountains, where hiking, biking and skiing adventures in remote, almost untouched locales are relatively inexpensive and easily arranged.

Before travelling between this region and Odesa, read the boxed text on p891.

## LVIV ЛЬВІВ

☎ 032 (7 digits), 0322 (6 digits) / pop 745,000

Gorgeous and glorious, Lviv knows it's next up on the list of hot new Eastern European destinations. And with an English-speaking service industry, new youth hostels and quality hotels, and the only tourist information centre in the country, it's just waiting to be adored by you.

The Old Town, a Unesco World Heritage site, is jam-packed with ornate churches and historic buildings in a mishmash of styles ranging from rococo to baroque and Renaissance to Gothic. Wandering through the seemingly endless network of narrow cobblestone alleys, and cowering under the piercing stares of hidden gargoyles and sudden statues, Lviv's atmosphere of mystery is absolutely enticing. If you're not already a photographer, artist or writer, this city and its secrets will inspire you to become one.

## Information

**Central post office** (☎ 065; vul Slovatskoho 1;

☎ 8am–8pm Mon–Fri, 8am–4pm Sat, 9am–3pm Sun) The telephone office around the corner is open 7am to 11pm daily.

**Internet Klub** (☎ 722 738; vul Dudaeva 12; per hr 4hr; ☎ 24hr) Has about a dozen computers with a relatively speedy connection, as well as cheap international calls.

**Khuru Books** (☎ 722 550; ploscha Mitskevycha; ☎ 10am–6pm Mon–Fri, to 3pm Sat) Weirdly compartmentalised, with separate sections having separate entrances. At least one section has local maps and guides; another section has some novels in English.

**Oschadnyy Bank** (☎ 272 793; vul Sichovykh Striltsiv 9) Full banking services, including Western Union; cashes traveller cheque.

**Tourist information centre** (☎ 975 767; www.tourism.lviv.ua; vul Pidvalna 3; ☎ 10am–1pm & 2–6pm Mon–Fri) English-speaking staff arranges city tours and day trips in many languages. They have plans of moving back to the *ratusha* (town hall) on ploscha Rynok.

## Sights

In addition to doing the walking tour (below) and checking out some museums, make a point of visit the **Lychakiv Cemetery** (vul Mechnikova; admission 4hr; ☎ 9am–5pm Mon–Fri), and bring a camera – it's one of the loveliest cemeteries in Eastern Europe. If you get on tram 7 at the stop on vul Pidvalna, it arrives right in front of the cemetery five stops later (if you get confused, ask for the *klad-bee-sheh*).

There are loads of museums in town, the **National Museum** (☎ 742 280; prospekt Svobody 20; admission 14hr; ☎ 10am–6pm Sat–Thu) features 15th- to 19th-century icons and works by Ukrainian artists. The interior of the building itself is impressive as well.

The **Arsenal Museum** (☎ 721 901; vul Pidvalna 5; admission 3hr; ☎ 10am–5pm Thu–Tue) has chronologically arranged weaponry from around the world, as well as some English-language city guidebooks for sale.

There are two branches of the **Museum of Ethnography & Historic Artefacts** (☎ 727 808; ploscha Rynok 10 & prospekt Svobody 15; admission 2hr; ☎ 10am–5.30pm Tue–Sun). Both buildings hold exhibits on farm culture and village life in the Carpathians, including furniture, woodcarvings, ceramics and farming implements.

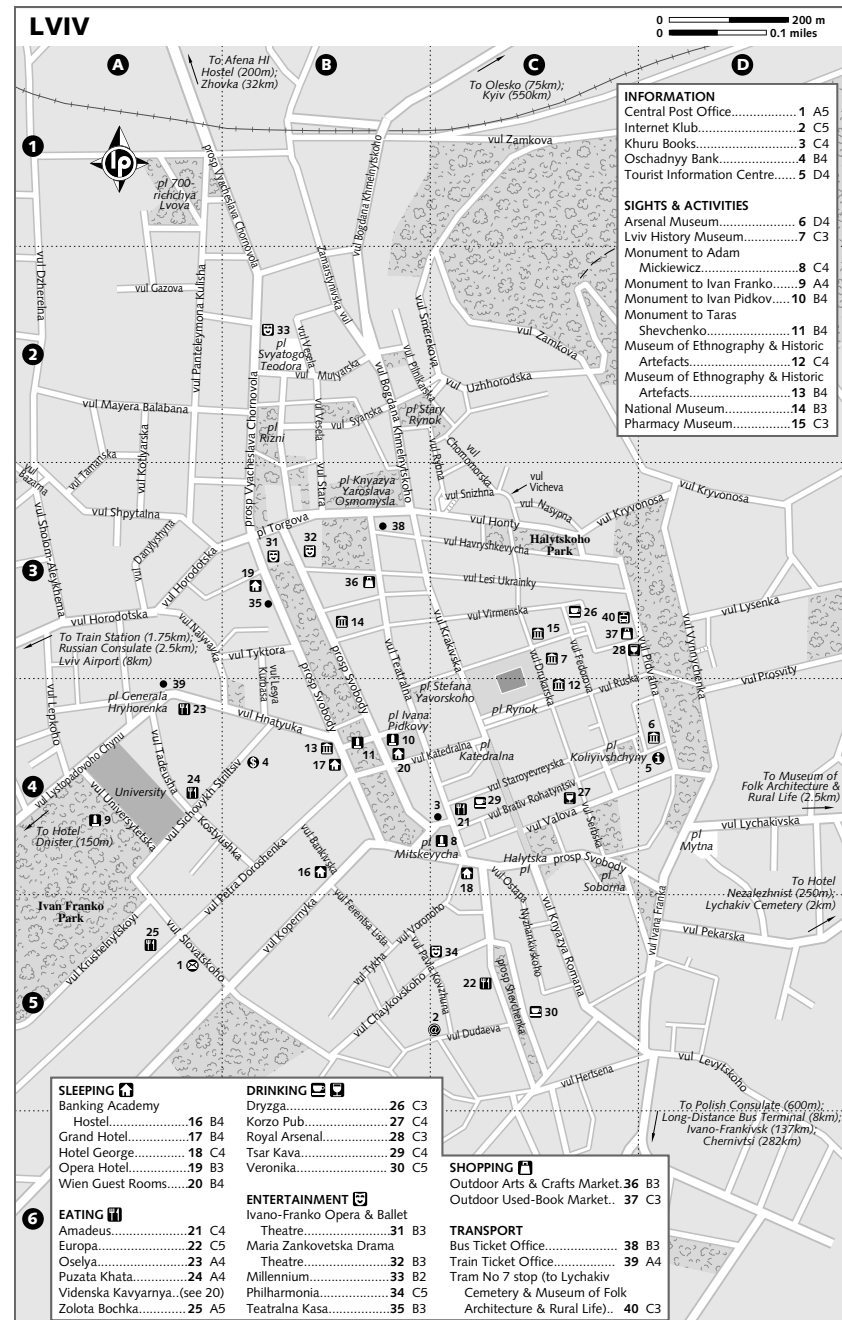
The **Lviv History Museum** (☎ 720 671; ☎ 10am–6pm Thu–Tue) is split among three collections surrounding ploscha Rynok, at No 4, 6 and 22.

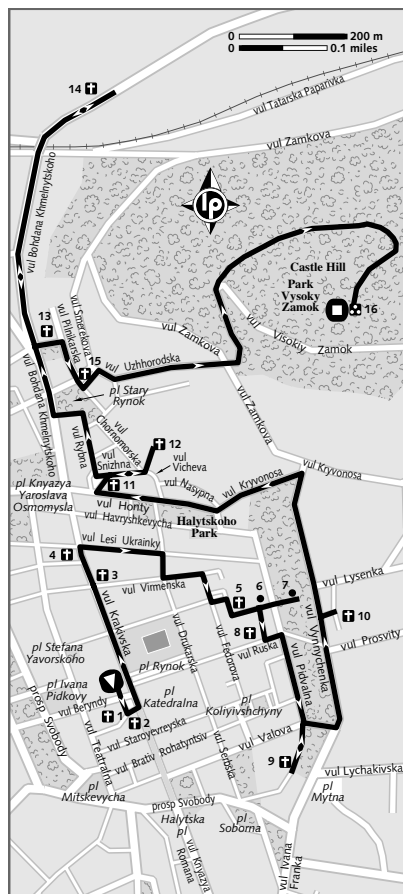
The **Pharmacy Museum** (☎ 722 041; vul Drukarska 2; admission 1.50hr; ☎ 10am–6pm Mon–Fri, to 4pm Sat & Sun) is in the back of a functioning pharmacy that dates back to 1735. Pay the pharmacists to open it up for you, and walk into a world of containers, drawers and other gadgets for herbs and tinctures and salves. You can buy a small bottle of medicinal 'iron wine'.

The **Museum of Folk Architecture & Rural Life** (☎ 718 017; vul Chernecha Hora 1; adult/child 1.50/0.75hr; ☎ 11am–7pm Tue–Sun Apr–Oct, to 6pm Nov–Mar) is a large park that holds over a hundred old wooden homes and churches. Take tram 7 four stops from vul Pidvalna, continue in same direction and turn left on vul Krupyarska (Крулярська), and follow the signs.

## Walking Tour

This 5km tour starts at ploscha Rynok (Market Square), the hub of political and commercial life during the Middle Ages. In 1998 it was declared a Unesco World Heritage site. The town hall (*ratusha*), which takes up the majority of space in the square, was





originally built in the 14th century, but it has been rebuilt several times since then: once in the 16th century when it was demolished by fire and most recently in 1851. From the southwest corner of the square, walk south to ploscha Katedralna, where you can't miss the **Roman Catholic Cathedral (1)**. It took more than a hundred years to build (1370–1480) and therefore a few different styles (Gothic, Renaissance, baroque) are apparent. On the north side, you'll find a relief of Pope Jean Paul II, erected to commemorate his 2001 Lviv visit. At the southeastern corner of the cathedral is the 1617 **Boyim Chapel (2)**, the burial chapel of a wealthy Hungarian merchant family. Look up, and you'll see an atypical statue of Christ, who seems to be mournfully observ-

ing the mess we wretched sinners have made of this world.

Head back toward ploscha Rynok, and go a block north of it onto Krakivska; on the right, you'll see the 1363 **Armenian Cathedral (3)**. Go inside to admire the atypical and evocative frescoes. Continue north to vul Lesi Ukrainky, where you'll find the late-17th-century, twin-bell towered **Transfiguration Church (4)**, the first in the city to revert to Ukrainian Catholic after independence. Turn east onto vul Lesi Ukrainky then right onto Drukarska, left onto Virmenska, and right onto Fedorova. Almost immediately on your left is a square, where you'll see the 1745–64 **Dominican Church & Monastery (5)**, distinguished by its large dome and its rococo, baroque and classical features. Just a bit further east is the arched façade of the **Royal Arsenal (6)**. Built between 1639 and 1646, it once held weapons to be used in wars against the Turks; it now holds the city's archives. The statue here is of Federov, a 16th-century monk who brought printing to Ukraine (perhaps why there's an outdoor used-book market here as well). Cross vul Pidvalna and head toward the 1554–56 **Gunpowder Tower (7)**. Over the last four centuries the bottom 2m of the tower have slowly become covered in soil.

Head back across Pidvalna, turning south at the Royal Arsenal, to one of the most memorable moments of the tour. To your right, you'll find the **Assumption Church & Three Saints Chapel (8)**. The church (1591–1629) is easily distinguished by the 65m-high, triple-tiered Kornyakt Bell Tower (1572–78). The Three Saints Chapel (1578–91) is nestled beneath the tower and built into the north side of the church, in a wonderful little courtyard. Together, the two structures are considered to be the historic centre of the city.

Continue south on Pidvalna for about 200m to the 17th-century **Bernardine Church & Monastery (9)**, now the Ukrainian Catholic Church of St Andrew – a major Lviv landmark. Go back the way you came on Pidvalna, turning right onto vul Valova and then left onto vul Vynnychenka. Head north about 200m to the 1644 **St Mary Carmelite Monastery (10)**. Some fragments of its original defensive walls can still be seen. Walk back to Vynnychenka, and continue north about 300m to Kryvonosa, where you'll turn left. Continue west on this street, which turns into vul Honty, for about 400m. On your right, up a small set of steps, is the tiny 18th-century

stone church, the **Church of Maria Snizhna (11)**. After the church, turn right onto Snizhna, pass vul Rybna, and on your left, through a cast-iron gate, is the **Nunnery of the Benedictines (12)**. Note the detailed, crown-like stone carving at the top of the tower. Return to the corner of Rybna and head north on that street, through ploscha Stary Rynok (Old Market Square), then up Bohdana Khmelnytskoho to the green-domed **St Nicholas Church (13)**. Dating from the 13th century and remodelled in the 16th century, its Old Rus Quarter is an excellent example of early Byzantine architecture.

Continue north, and when you reach the railway tracks go through the underground passageway then continue north for about 100m to the **Church of Good Friday (14)**. It was originally built in the 13th century, but was reconstructed in the mid-17th century. If you can get inside, there is a beautiful 17th-century iconostasis.

Go back the way you came, under the tracks. Make a left just past St Nicholas Church, then a right onto Pylnykarska. When you get to ploscha Stary Rynok, make a left, and you'll see the humble little brick-and-stone church of **St John the Baptist (15)**, built in 1260.

Take Uzhhorodska, the road just south of the church, for about 200m, cross Zamkova and then veer left up a road that leads to the **High Castle (16)**. At the top of the hill (the wind can be strong), you'll have an all-inclusive view of what you've seen up close – although you may have to squint through some trees.

## Sleeping BUDGET

Unlike Kyiv, Lviv is starting to see more good low-cost accommodation options.

**Banking Academy Hostel** (☎ 296 5734; www.hihostels.com.ua; vul Kopernyka 14; dm 120hry) The only hummer about this awesome new hostel is that at least for now, it's only open July and August. Reception is open 9am to 6pm daily, so give notice if you will arrive later.

**Afena** (☎ 296 5834; www.hihostels.com.ua, vul Khy-mychna 49A; dm 120hry) This is another good HI hostel option. It's not quite as central (linked by buses), but it's open year-round.

**Hotel Nezalezhnist** (☎ 757 214; fax 754 561; vul Tershakivtsiv 6A; s/d 120/130hry, d with shared bathroom 80hry) Nezalezhnist is Soviet-style, but with sunshine and church views. Some rooms here even have

a spot of personality... leopard-print blankets on the beds. Hot water is only available from 7am to 11am, so set your alarm clock if you plan on a relaxing shower in the morning. From the train station, take tram 9a to the end of the line, walk east on Pekarska, go right on Tershakivtsiv and walk 100m.

## MIDRANGE

**Hotel George** (☎ 725 952; www.georgehotel.com.ua; ploscha Mitskevycha 1; s/tw 319/388hry, s/tw with shared bathroom 154/187hry) In a way, the George is almost as grand as the Grand – but it's a weary sort of grandeur, and little fuss is made over it. The rooms with shared bathrooms are a super-duper deal. Staff speak some English and are good-humoured.

**Wien Guest Rooms** (☎ 444 314; www.wienhotel.lviv.ua; prospekt Svobody 12; s 330–520hry, d 360–550hry, ste 650–700hry; ☎ ☎) Hidden from view, deep behind Videnska Kavarynya (p878), little Wien doesn't get any street traffic. Nevertheless, its 20 freshly renovated, cosy rooms host a steady stream of people in the know. The kind and English-speaking reception, tasteful and elegant décor, and totally agreeable pricing are what make it so successful.

**Hotel Dnister** (☎ 974 317; www.dnister.lviv.ua; vul Mateika 6; d 400–800hry, ste 1000–1500hry; ☎ ☎) Don't judge the Dnister by its Soviet-style cover. True, its 1970s brown-and-yellow exterior makes it look like a large rectangular bumblebee, but inside is a totally different tale. Take a trip to the top-floor restaurant, where the glorious panoramic city view blows the one from Castle Hill out the water.

## TOP END

**Grand Hotel** (☎ 724 042; www.ghgroup.com.ua; prospekt Svobody 13; s 530–630hry, d 795–885hry, ste 975–1590hry; ☎ ☎ ☎) With a long history as the classiest joint in town, the Grand is the proud peacock of Lviv hotels. What you're paying for, and paying for well, is the history and, as the name implies, the grandeur of the place. Where the lustre fades is in service, which does the job but can leave you cold.

**Opera Hotel** (☎ 225 9000; www.hotel-opera.lviv.ua; prospekt Svobody 45; s 420–520hry, d 620–780hry, ste 920–1520hry; ☎ ☎) Making its big debut in 2005, the Opera is the new kid in town. Whereas the décor and ambience are more modern than one would expect, service harkens back to the good old days: we even got a curtsy from the maid.

## Eating

In addition to these listings, there are several good outdoor cafés on the east side of prospekt Svobody.

**Puzata Khata** (☎ 240 3265; vul Sichovykh Striltsiv; mains 5-15hry; ☎ 8am-11pm) This popular cafeteria-style chain serves up Ukrainian staples, and unlike the one in Kyiv, there is plenty of seating.

**Europa** (☎ 725 862; prospekt Shevchenka 14; mains 12-30hry; ☎ 8am-11pm Mon-Fri, 10am-10pm Sat & Sun) Small, cosy and relatively quiet, Europa is a good place for a filling meal of Ukrainian food. Only the TV is a drawback to the ambience, but if the weather's nice, there is a small amount of sidewalk seating.

**Zolota Bochka** (☎ 727 804; vul Doroshenko 38; mains 15-35hry; ☎ 10am-10pm) Locals recommend this humble little eatery for its simple Ukrainian food.

**Oselya** (☎ 272 1601; vul Hnatyuka 11; mains 5-50hry) It's lined with kitschy Ukrainian décor from floor to ceiling, but can be deserted, making one wonder whether the place is open. However, it usually is, delivering honest-to-goodness Ukrainian and central European cuisine.

**Videnska Kavyarnya** (☎ 722 021; www.wientkaffe.lviv.ua; prospekt Svobody 12; mains 8-60hry; ☎ 10am-11pm) One of many popular restaurants with spring and summer sidewalk seating; this one offers billiards inside, Ukrainian cuisine and an English-language menu – although the bizarre translation ('veal' translated as 'teleoosze'?) may make the Ukrainian menu more helpful.

**Amadeus** (☎ 978 022; ploscha Katedralna 7; mains 30-100hry; ☎ 11am-11pm) This small, bistro-like restaurant is perfect for romance, with meals like risotto or fondue for two. The food (regional and European cuisine) is scrumptious. There's no TV; the music is lilting and at a mild volume – sometimes there is live accordion music.

## Drinking

There are plenty of little bars to discover in town too, and most restaurants have good

beer on tap. The numerous summertime sidewalk cafés along the east side of prospekt Svobody are a great place to sit under an umbrella and sip on a Ukrainian tap beer.

**Korzo Pub** (☎ 296 7092; vul Brativ Rohatyntsyv 10; ☎ noon-midnight Sun-Thu, to 2am Fri & Sat) Bars are thin on the ground in Lviv, and this is the closest the city has to an Irish pub. There's food (not great), and sometimes a happy hour from 6pm on Thursday. Expats and locals alike come here.

**Tsar Kava** (☎ 720 093; ploscha Rynok 27; ☎ 9am-10pm) A little gem of a sweet shop, whose coffee and pastries are popular with the refined folk. It's tucked away behind the Roman Catholic Cathedral – a very cool location.

**Veronika** (☎ 297 8128; prospekt Shevchenka 21; ☎ 10am-midnight) The choice of gorgeous pastries and chocolates brought tears to this guidebook writer's eyes and had her singing Elvis Costello out on the café's summer terrace. There's also downstairs seating.

## Entertainment

For a perfect evening, enjoy a drink at one of the cafés and a performance at the beautiful **Ivano-Franko Opera & Ballet Theatre** (☎ 728 562; prospekt Svobody 28; tickets 40-300hry) or the **Philharmonia** (☎ 741 086; vul Chaykovskoho 7; tickets 30-90hry). If you speak Ukrainian, see a play at the well-respected **Maria Zankovetska Drama Theatre** (☎ 720 762; vul Lesi Ukrainky 1). Tickets are sold on site or at the **teatralna kasa** (☎ 233 3188; prospekt Svobody 37; ☎ 11am-2pm & 5-7pm).

**Millennium** (☎ 230 3591; prospekt Vyacheslava Chornovola 2; admission 15-40hry; ☎ 9pm-late Tue-Sun) boasts four bars, a disco and billiards, as well as hookah rentals. Women are admitted free on Tuesday and Wednesday.

## Shopping

Souvenirs and gifts of all sorts – including T-shirts that say, in Ukrainian, 'Thank God I'm not a Muscovite' (only using a more derogatory term for them) – are sold at the **outdoor arts and crafts market** (☎ morning-sunset), off prospekt Svobody. If you're into old books, there's a quirky **outdoor used-book market** (☎ morning-sunset) by the Royal Arsenal.

## Getting There & Away

### AIR

The **Lviv airport** (☎ 692 112; www.avia.lviv.ua) is about 9km west of the centre. It's small and basic (no ATM or currency exchange). There

are mostly domestic flights, and the main international flights are via Vienna on Austrian Airlines. Word has it you should make sure you have more than 30 minutes to transfer in Vienna – no matter what the airline says – if you want your baggage to arrive at your final destination the same time you do.

From Kyiv, there are weekday-only flights to/from Lviv (525hry, 1½ hours).

### BUS

Lviv has eight bus terminals, but only one is of use to most travellers – the **long-distance bus terminal** (☎ 632 473; vul Stryiska 271), about 8km south of the city centre. Advance tickets for public buses to Ivano-Frankivsk (20hry, three hours, hourly) and Kyiv (65hry, nine hours, three daily), as well as international destinations (see p904), are sold at the **bus ticket office** (☎ 971 108; vul Teatralna 26; ☎ 9am-2pm & 3-6pm); it's easy to walk past the place, which is also a CD shop – look for the 'kaca' sign. Bus information (not in English) can be had at ☎ 004 until 8pm.

Privately run **Autolux** (www.autolux.com.ua) also operates from the long-distance terminal, sending nice, modern buses regularly to Kyiv and other cities; see the website for details.

### TRAIN

The **train station** (☎ 353 360, 261 906; ploscha Dvirtsseva) is 1.75km west of the city centre. Tickets can also be obtained from the **train ticket office** (☎ 748 2068; vul Hnatyuka 20; ☎ 8am-8pm Mon-Fri, to 6pm Sat & Sun, closed 2-3pm); have your passport (or a copy of it) ready, and be prepared to stand in line, especially in spring and summer. Each window closes for ten minutes an hour. For train information (not in English), call ☎ 005.

From Lviv, there are trains to Kyiv (*kupeyny/platskartny* 47/29hry, 10 hours, four daily), Odesa (45/29hry, 12 hours, two daily), Uzhhorod (18/11hry, seven hours, four daily), Ivano-Frankivsk (16/10hry, 2½ hours, one daily) and Simferopol (67/44hry, 25 hours, one daily).

## Getting Around

Unless you're going somewhere off the map provided here, walking is the best option.

*Marshrutka* 95 links the airport and the centre, as does trolleybus 9 from the university building on vul Universytetska. A taxi there will cost from 25hry to 35hry.

Tram 1 or 9, or *marshrutka* 66, 67 or 68 link the train station with prospekt Svobody and ploscha Rynok.

*Marshrutka* 71 and 180 from prospekt Svobody or trolleybus 5 from ploscha Petrushevycha go to the long-distance bus terminal.

There are multitudes of *marshrutki* marked Центр (Centre), and any of these should traverse the main part of prospekt Svobody.

## UZHGOROD УЖГОРОД

☎ 03122 (5 digits), ☎ 0312 (6 digits)  
pop 110,000

The pretty, quiet Transcarpathian town of Uzhhorod (Uzhgorod in Russian) is the southern gateway to the Ukrainian section of the Carpathian Mountains. It's split in half by the Uzh River, which separates the New and Old Towns. There's a split in population too, as Uzhhorod is home to both a pronounced and poor Roma population and a conspicuous nouveau-riche contingent. It's an ideal staging post for anyone travelling to/from Slovakia or Hungary but is probably too far off the beaten track for other travellers.

## Information

Banks, exchange offices and ATMs are easy to find in the town centre. For internet access, try **Planeta I-Net** (naberezhnaya Nezalezhnosti 1; per hr 2hry; ☎ 24hr), which is poorly run by a bunch of rowdy boys. There are other options, but it's the easiest to locate – right at the end of the pedestrian bridge on the centre side of the river.

## Sights

The 16th-century **Uzhhorod Castle** (vul Kapitulna; adult/child 5/2hry, grounds only 1hry; ☎ 9am-5pm Tue-Sun) is on a hill 400m northeast of the main square. It has a museum, but best is the sweeping view of the region from its grounds. If you have trouble finding it, ask for the *zamok*. Across from the castle is the open-air **Museum of Folk Architecture & Rural Life** (adult/child 4/1hry; ☎ 10am-5pm Wed-Mon). Transcarpathian abodes, tools and crafts are on display.

Downhill from the castle is the twin-towered, yellow 1640 **cathedral** (vul Kapitulna).

You can explore the ruins of the **Nevisky Zamok** (Bride-to-Be Castle), 12km from the city (taxi 50hry return). The castle was first mentioned in chronicles in the 14th century, and rumour has it villagers used to hide women during enemy attacks. Views from the castle are jaw-dropping.

### AUTHOR'S CHOICE

**Dyzga** (vul Virmenska 35) Come admire the local graffiti artists and check out some paintings at this café-cum-arts-centre. It's super chilled-out, attracting bohemian, alternative types. Caffeine and alcohol are both served.

## Sleeping & Eating

**Hotel Svitank** (☎ 643 852; www.tok-svitank.uzhgorod.ua; vul Koshytska 30; s 133-164hry, d 102-322hry, d/tr with shared bathroom 84/117hry) It used to be the cheapest place in town, but Svitank has been remodelled (in a sort of tacky way). Now only the cheapest rooms make it worthwhile.

**Hotel Uzhhorod** (☎ 35 060; hotel@email.uz.ua; ploscha Khmelnytskoho 2; s 119-239hry, d 189-239hry, ste 199-370hry; 🍷) This remodelled Soviet monster knows the meaning of service (chocolates on your pillow in the pricier rooms) and is a good choice if staying at Atlant. It's a pleasant 10-minute walk along the river to the centre of town.

**Atlant** (☎ 614 095; www.hotel-atlant.com; ploscha Koryatovicha 27; s 120hry, d 165-200hry, ste 225-310hry; 🍷) These modern rooms are as sweet as can be and awesome value – especially the singles, which are on the top floor (no lift) and have skylights and slanted ceilings. It's a small place though; book ahead if you can.

**Cafe Da Da** (☎ 32 346; vul Kapitulna 5; mains 3-20hry; ☺ 7am-10pm) Funky-arty-bohemian is what it is, just down the hill from the Uzhhorod Castle. Not much serious food here – mostly snacks and beverages.

**Kaktus Kafe** (☎ 32 515; vul Korzo 7; mains 8-25hry; ☺ 10am-11pm) Probably the most popular hang-out in town, this smoky, noisy joint is full of beer- and coffee-drinkers. The theme is decidedly Wild West upstairs; downstairs it seems to be Aztec. The food is pretty good, but the service can be slow.

**Delfin** (☎ 614 963; Kyivskaya naberezhnaya 3; mains 8-45hry, ☺ 11am-11pm) Locals consider this one of the better restaurants in town. European and Ukrainian dishes are served, but it's known for its grilled meats and rooftop terrace. You can find it at the end of the pedestrian bridge on the non-centre side of the river (you'll have to go upstairs once you get to the building).

## Getting There & Away

The bus and train stations are across the street from each other. A **taxi** (☎ 051) within Uzhhorod will set you back 5hry or 6hry.

## BUS

Twice-daily buses go from the **bus terminal** (prospekt Svobody) to Ivano-Frankivsk (42hry, 10 hours) and Lviv (34hry, four hours). You can also get very cheap, uncomfortable buses to Slovakia and Hungary here (see p904).

## TRAIN

The newly built Uzhhorod train station is fab. One building is for local electric trains only.

Trains go to Kyiv (*kupeyny/platskartny* 62/45hry, 19 hours, two daily), Lviv (25/18hry, eight hours, one daily), and Odesa (65/48hry, 12 hours, one daily).

## IVANO-FRANKIVSK ІВАНО-ФРАНКІВСЬК

☎ 03422 (5 digits), 0342 (6 digits) / pop 204,000  
If the type of storefronts within its tranquil pedestrian precinct are any indication, reading, eating pizza and drinking coffee must be the favourite pastimes of the people of Ivano-Frankivsk. Although it's theoretically the traditional cultural and economic capital of the Carpathian region, there's little to see and do. Nevertheless it's a spacious, relaxed and well-manicured city, and it works great as a jumping-off point for adventures into the mountains or visits to the traditional villages of the Hutsuls (p882).

## Information

Currency exchanges, ATMs and Western Unions are common at banks and are easily found along the pedestrian zone of vul Nezalezhnosti. Bookshops seem to be everywhere, too.

**Central post office** (☎ 231 041; vul Sichovykh Striltsiv 13A)

**Bukinist** (☎ 23 828; vul Nezalezhnosti 19; ☺ 10am-6pm Mon-Fri, to 2pm Sat) Friendly staff and local maps. There are two bookstores under the white columns here; Bukinist is the smaller one, with the far-right corner entrance.

**Internet Centre** (☎ 552 580; vul Nezalezhnosti 5; per hr 7hry; ☺ 24hr) Not well-marked; between the bank and the casino. Calls here are cheaper than at Ukrtelecom.

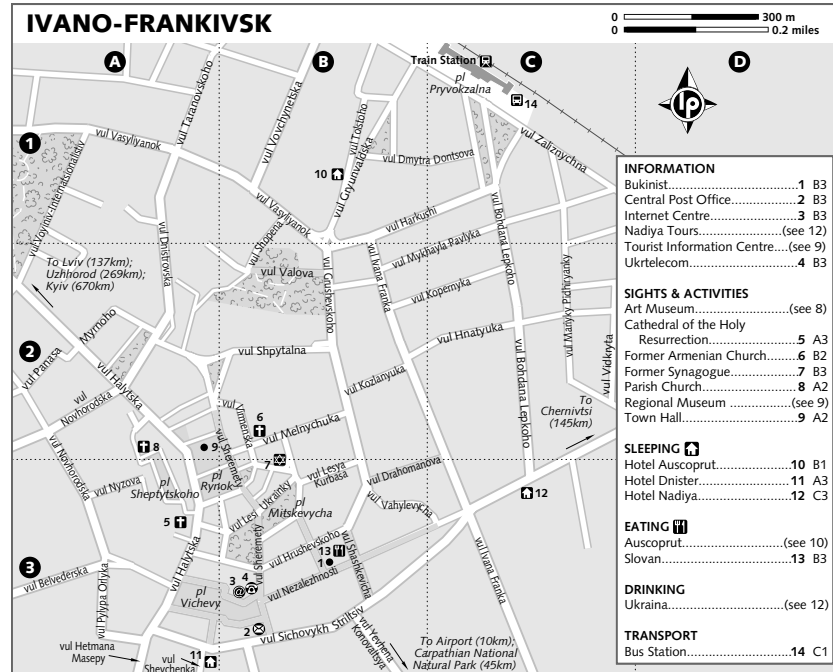
**Nadiya Tours** (☎ 537 042; nadia@utel.net.ua; vul Nezalezhnosti 40) In Hotel Nadiya; does Carpathian tours.

**Tourist Information Centre** (ploscha Rynok 4; ☺ 11am-4pm Mon-Fri) In the Town Hall; lots of pamphlets (none of them particularly useful) and a couple of maps.

**Ukrtelecom** (☺ 7am-11pm) Domestic and international phone office; across from the post office.

## Sights

Don't miss the **Art Museum** (☎ 30 039; ploscha Sheptytsky 8; admission 3hry; ☺ 11am-6pm Tue-Sun). Housed in the 1672-1703 **Parish Church** (also known as the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary), this peaceful museum focuses on religious art and icons.



Ploscha Rynok is dominated by the **Town Hall** (built in 1695, but totally redone in 1929-32 in a boring constructivist style with some Art Deco elements), which houses the two-storey **Regional Museum** (☎ 22 326; ploscha Rynok 4A; adult/child 60/40 kopeks; ☺ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun), covering a broad range of exhibits. (Look for the beautiful old faded *pysanky*.)

Diagonally opposite the Art Museum and Parish Church is the resorted baroque **Cathedral of the Holy Resurrection** (ploscha Sheptytsky 22), a Ukrainian Greek Catholic church. If you happen to be around during Catholic Easter, you'll probably see an orange-neon Христос Воскресе! (Christ has Risen!) sign inside – which looks pretty out of place with the beautiful iconography that surrounds it.

East of the square is the 1742-62 **former Armenian Church** (vul Virmenska 6) with its attractive baroque façade and rounded bell towers.

During the city's Nazi occupation (1941-42), almost the entire Jewish population of Ivano-Frankivsk was wiped out. Around the corner from the entrance to a **former synagogue** is a memorial to 27 Ukrainians killed by Germans during WWII. There is no mention of

the city-wide genocide. The synagogue itself is now a faded, salmon-coloured travel agency, bearing just a single Star of David on high as testament to its original purpose.

## Sleeping & Eating

Nadiya and Auscuprut have decent restaurants (Nadiya's restaurant is called Ukraina), and vul Nezalezhnosti has several dining options.

**Hotel Dnister** (☎ 23 533; vul Sichovykh Striltsiv 12; s/d with shared bathroom 50/80hry, d 150-300hry) Dnister has decent staff but depressing rooms, and the shared bathrooms could use a little scrubbing. There is no hot water after midnight, and even when there is hot water you'll have to let it run for about 10 minutes before it starts to warm up.

**Hotel Nadiya** (☎ 53 775; www.nadia.if.ua; vul Nezalezhnosti 40; s 120-270hry, d 300-340hry, ste 390hry) The grand white marble lobby might make you think the rooms cost a fortune here, but it's not the case. Formerly a more Soviet-style place called Hotel Ukraina, Nadiya is getting a makeover from the ground up, but so far only the ground really shows it. The rooms

are relatively nice and good value but don't match the expectations the lobby gives. Prices will rise as remodelling continues. Right next door is a supermarket with a deli.

**Hotel Auscoprut** (☎ 23 401; auscoprut@ivf.ukrpack.net; vul Gryunvaldska 7/9; s 180-320hry, d 240-400hry, ste 450-550hry; 🍷) Auscoprut is an Austrian-Ukrainian joint venture housed in a small beautiful 1912 baroque building with stained glass. Staff are professional and speak English, and the lift is modern, although the stairs are a prettier way to get up and down. The onsite restaurant isn't bad.

**Slovan** (☎ 712 594; vul Shashkevicha 4; mains 10-37hry; 🍷 11am-midnight) With yummy pizzas and the standard Chicken Kiev, as well as bold dishes such as Tijuana chicken and stewed rabbit in wine sauce, Slovan is the clear favourite in town. Staff are more eager to please than most. The décor borders on tasteful and in spring and summer there's outdoor seating in a pedestrian area.

### Getting There & Away

From the **airport** (☎ 598 348), 10km south of the city centre, there are daily flights to Kyiv (125hry to 510hry), by **Kyivavia** (www.kiyavia.com). Buses 21, 24 and 65 (1hry, 30 minutes) leave every 15 minutes from the train station and go to the airport.

The train station and bus station are conveniently right next to each other, on ploscha Privozksalna.

There are trains to Kyiv (*kupeyny/plat-skartny* 51/29hry, 14 hours, one daily), Lviv (21/15hry, 3½ to seven hours, two daily), Odesa (44/30hry, 21 hours, odd dates), and Uzhhorod (25/18hry, 11 hours, odd dates), as well as *kupeyny* only trains to Simferopol (85hry, 33 hours) in summer.

Buses from Ivano-Frankivsk go to Kyiv (66hry to 70hry, 12 hours, four daily), Lviv (16hry to 19hry, 3½ hours, 20 daily) and Uzhhorod (35hry, nine hours, four daily). There is also a single daily bus that goes straight to Kyiv's Boryspil airport (90hry, 12 hours).

### CARPATHIAN MOUNTAINS

One of the least-developed areas in all of Europe is the easternmost section of the Carpathian Mountains, which cut through the lower corner of Western Ukraine. Among the undulating ridges lives a cluster of various ethnic groups, including the Hutsuls, who, despite their clear Romanian ties, have turned

out to be a source of pride to the Ukrainian national identity. (Fuel was added to the fire when Ruslana Lyzhychko won the 2004 Eurovision Song Contest with *Wild Dances*, incorporating some sexed-up Hutsul dance moves and vocals.)

In addition to the Hutsuls, many other mountain dwellers still live traditional lifestyles and speak in dialects coloured by the tongues of neighbouring Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and Romania. Roads are still bad, and the economy is still quite poor, so in most areas, the only vehicles you see may be old Soviet military off-road vehicles and horse-drawn carts.

The Carpathians are home to Ukraine's highest peak, Mt Hoverla (2062m) and its largest national park, and there are opportunities for camping, homestays, hiking, mountain biking and most of all skiing in some of the wildest natural areas on the continent.

### Carpathian National Natural Park

About 45km south of Ivano-Frankivsk lies the Carpathian National Natural Park (CNNP), Ukraine's largest at 503 sq km. Despite the status of the land, industrial logging still takes place, and only about 25% of the park area is actually protected. Founded in 1980, the CNNP shelters wolves, brown bears, lynx, bison and deer. Hutsuls still live in the park, and the country's highest peak, Mt Hoverla (2062m), is here as well. Wild camping is allowed, although you have to pay an entrance fee (adult/child 6/2hry). Fires are also prohibited, although this is largely ignored.

**Yaremche** is a tourist Hutsul village, with lots of folk crafts on sale and several 'Hutsul' restaurants. It is probably the most obvious place for a home base, as it's easy to reach and makes a good staging point for a Mt Hoverla ascent. From Ivano-Frankivsk, there are dozens of buses and *marshrutki* to Yaremche (7hry, 1½ hours). There is a good range of accommodations, from rented rooms and cottages to hotels. You can book in advance via their websites.

### Snow Sports

The area is still largely undeveloped, but Ukraine's small collection of ski resorts offers one European-standard resort and several inexpensive options, with both hotel and homestay accommodation on site or nearby. Rentals are no problem, although except for

Bukovel, the equipment might be older. The season lasts usually until early May. You can arrange package ski trips through **Pilgrim** (www.pilgrim.lviv.ua) and **Lviv Ecotour** (www.lviveco.tour.com), or book your own accommodation online through www.skiukraine.info, which also provides transport details. Homestays can be arranged in advance via **Rural Green Tourism** (www.greentour.com.ua/en/orders).

**Bukovel** (☎ 0342 559 546; www.bukovel.com; lift tickets 100-11hry, rentals 55-65hry), not far from Ivano-Frankivsk, is Ukraine's newest resort and meets European standards. Lines are rarely longer than five minutes for the modern chairlifts, and night skiing, snow machines, a ski school, a medical centre and new rental equipment are all on offer. Accommodation in cottages is pricey, but you'll get a 9% discount for advance booking, and there are some more economical triples as well. Cheaper accommodation can be found in Yarmeche, 30km away, which has buses to/from the resort. **Transfers** (☎ 38-050 373 3251; fax 38-0342 559 389; natalia@bukovel.info) from Ivano-Frankivsk start at 190hry. Hint: last we heard, lift tickets could be shared with a buddy while you take a break.

Just 120km from Lviv, **Slavsko** (☎ 38 0322 42 242; www.slavsko.com.ua, in Ukrainian; lift tickets 50-100hry), called Slavsko in Russian, is the most popular and easiest to reach. There are four mountains here, making up the country's greatest variety of slopes. The downside? There's only one chairlift (the rest are tows), large moguls can be a problem, rentals are not-so-new and there are sometimes long lines on weekends and holidays. If you're willing to fork out 100hry though, you'll get VIP status and go right to the front. Three well-priced **hotels** (www.skiukraine.info) are nearby, and at the train station, people offer cottages for rent. There are at least three daily trains between Uzhhorod and Kyiv that stop in Slavsko.

A favourite for hardcore skiers and snowboarders, **Drahobrat** (☎ 03132-42 009; www.ski.lviv.ua/drahobrat; 4hry per lift) is the tallest, longest slope (base at 1300m, elevation drop up to 350m). As such, it gets the most snow and longest season but has more inclement weather. Since it's hard to get to (a two- to three-hour bus or car ride), it's worthwhile only if you stay a few days. There are only tow lifts, but slopes are well groomed, and lines are not much of a problem. Take a bus or taxi from Ivano-Frankivsk train station to Yasinya. At the bottom of the road in Yasinya, old Soviet

vehicles wait to take you 18km to the resort (80hry to 120hry per car). Homestays aren't available, but well-priced accommodation can be booked online (www.skiukraine.info).

Since it used to be a Soviet training base for Olympic skiers, **Tysovets** (www.skiukraine.info/resorts/tysovets.shtml; lift tickets 60hry, rentals 40-90hry) is still run by the Ministry of Defence, so don't be surprised if you see uniformed soldiers shovelling snow. Everything is dirt cheap here, and slopes are nice and wide, but the facilities are pretty run-down. There's one single-chairlift; the rest are tows that are slow enough to create lines on weekends. Take the train to Skole, on the Kiev-Uzhhorod line, and hire a driver to take you 32km to the resort (80hry to 100hry). There is a separate bunny slope next to the parking lot; day passes for that cost a separate 60hry. There are hotels on site, which can be booked via www.skiukraine.info.

### КАМ'ЯНЕЦЬ-ПОДІЛЬСЬКИЙ

☎ 03849 / поp 100,000

It's a mystery why Kamyanets-Podilsky has gotten so little attention for so long. Unless you later get hit over the head with something hard and heavy, the arresting sight of the fortified hamlet, perched high on a towering island of rock above the lush Smotrych River canyon, will stay with you for the rest of your life.

### History

The Old Town is broken into different quarters, and under the medieval Magdeburg Law, the main settlers – Ukrainians, Poles, Armenians and Jews – each occupied a different one. In the town's heyday, during the inter-war period, there were five Roman Catholic churches, 18 Orthodox churches and a Jewish community of 23,500 served by 31 prayer houses. During WWII the Germans used the Old Town as a ghetto, and an estimated 85,000 people died there. Intensive fighting and air raids destroyed some 70% of the old town, and only 13 churches survived.

### Orientation & Information

The fortified Old Town is accessible by two bridges. The western bridge takes you to the castle and the eastern bridge heads to the New Town. The road (partially called vul Starobulvarna) between the two bridges passes ploscha Virmenskyi (old town square).

Many hotels offer internet access, but we've yet to find an internet café.

**Avaal Bank** (☎ 23 344; vul Starobulvarna 10) Changes money, cashes travellers cheques and gives credit card cash advances.

**Post & phone office** (vul Soborna 9)

### Sights & Activities

The walk across the bridge to the Old Town is probably one of the best parts of visiting Kamyanets-Podilsky. Once you're there, the main sight is the **old castle** (vul Zamkova; admission 4hry; ☞ 9am-6pm), which was originally built of wood in the 10th century but reconstructed of stone some 500 years later. On the north side of the courtyard is the **Ethnographic Museum** (admission 3hry; ☞ 9am-5pm), not a big deal. Behind the castle, to the west, is the **new castle**, a series of earth ramparts and 17th-century stone walls.

The faded salmon-coloured **Dominican Monastery & Church** (ploscha Virmenskyi) features a tall bell tower. It was founded in the 14th century but was expanded in baroque style in the 18th century. In a park just to the north is the 14th-century **Town Hall**, currently under reconstruction.

Another 500m further the north is the 16th-century **Cathedral of SS Peter & Paul** (vul Tatarska). About two minutes' walk further north is the 16th-century **Porokhovi Gate** and the seven-storey, stone **Kushnir Tower**.

If you're game, you can arrange for a **bungee jump** 54m into the canyon from rickety old 'Running Deer' bridge. Contact **Bungee Jumping** (☎ 8-067 906 6713, 294 0099, 262 0977; [bungee@kp.rel.com.ua](mailto:bungee@kp.rel.com.ua); s/tandem 200/400hry) or Filvarky Centre (☎ 34 024, 33 606; [www.filvarki.km.ua/en/index.html](http://www.filvarki.km.ua/en/index.html); vul Lesi Ukrainki 99), which does jumps as well as **hiking and biking tours**.

### Sleeping

**Hotel Ukraina** (☎ 32 300, 39 148; vul Lesi Ukrainki 32; d 44hry, ste 1000-180hry) It feels lonely inside this hotel, which used to be the city favourite – long, long ago. Now, reception seems surprised to see anyone walking through the door. It's fair value though, with a cosier feel than the others and an attempt at cheer in décor. There is no lift or restaurant.

**Hotel Smotrich** (☎ 30 392, 30 322; vul Soborna 4; d 80hry) It's a large Soviet-style place, but only two floors are serviced. Rooms have yet to see the sweet touches of Western remodelling, but some have pretty views of the Old Town.

**Filvarky Centre** (☎ 34 024, 33 606; [www.filvarki.km.ua/en/index.html](http://www.filvarki.km.ua/en/index.html); vul Lesi Ukrainki 99; s 70-80hry, d 95-125hry, ste 120-260hry) In a peaceful location near a park, Filvarky is a hotel 'complex' set apart from the action and offers a bit more to do – billiards, sauna, tanning, tennis and massage – plus it arranges bungee jumps and cycling tours.

**Gala Hotel** (☎ 28 106; [www.hotelcomplex-gala.com.ua](http://www.hotelcomplex-gala.com.ua); vul Lesi Ukrainki 84; d 200hry) This new kid on the block is not far from the western, pedestrian bridge that leads to the rock island. It's good value – even more so if you have three or four people, as rooms with a fold-out couch are just 220hry.

**Hetman** (☎ 067-588 2215; [www.hetman.mkc.com.ua](http://www.hetman.mkc.com.ua); Polski rynek 8; d 350-400hry, ste 450-500hry) Also new, the Hetman has the lucky status of being the only hotel in the Old Town and is housed in a renovated building dating back to 1735.

### Eating

**Gostinny Dvir** (vul Trotyiska 1; mains 5-10hry) Probably the best joint in the Old Town, and great for a heavy, meaty, stick-to-your-ribs feast. If you don't eat flesh though, let them know, and they should be able to work something out for you.

**Pizza Chelantano** (vul Knyaziv Koriatorychiv; pizzas from 5hry) Like everywhere in Ukraine, this pizza chain is popular with the young crowd. Mayonnaise salads and *blini* (pancakes), as well as espresso drinks, can be ordered here too. Look for the plastic palm tree.

**Kafe Pid Bramoyu** (shashlik & mains 3-20hry) On the bridge and overlooking the castle and canyon, the view here is outstanding, but the lazy staff needs bucking up.

### Getting There & Away

The train station is 1.3km north of the bus terminal. A taxi into town should be about 6hry, or you can take bus 1 into the new or old Town. The only direct trains are to/from Kyiv (*kupeyny/platskartny* 32/22hry, 12 hours, one daily) and Odesa (*platskartny* 25hry, 16 hours) on odd dates only.

The **bus terminal** (vul Koriatovyichiv) is 500m east of the new town, and about 1km from the bridge that leads into the Old Town. There are direct bus services to/from Kyiv (57hry, 12 hours, two to four daily), but if you can get to Chernivtsi (easily reached by train or bus from all over), there are another three buses from there (14hry, 2½ hours).

A taxi ride within the town costs from 4hry to 6hry. Once in town, things are all pretty walkable though.

## ODESA ОДЕСА

☎ 0482 (6 digits), 048 (7 digits) / pop 1.01 million It's a whirlwind of dust and cars, a cacophony of construction and celebration, a bubbling melting pot of ethnicities and lifestyles. It's part industrial port city and part summer getaway, where people come in hordes to laze on beaches and stroll through leafy streets lined with ornate architecture. It's raw and real, and it shoulders with nonchalance the extremes of decay and luxury.

Yes, Odesa is decadent. But it's not segregated. Here, cultures don't clash, they click. Stately townhouses mix with slums, nouveau riche bump elbows with bums – and it's all as natural as can be. Look at the street names and you'll see what you're dealing with: Jewish Street, Bulgarian Street, French Street, Italian Boulevard...who *doesn't* have an accent here? With all these varied tongues lashing, it's no wonder the lively Odesan patter is a wellspring of hip Russian slang. And then there's the joking. When you live in a city this wild, you better learn to laugh about it. Odesans do; they seem to have a hereditary talent for brassy wisecracks and snappy witticisms, and their sense of humour is legendary in the Russian-speaking world.

To see the reckless driving, the neglected gorgeous buildings and litter-lined gutters, you'd hardly think Odesans are proud of their city. Think again. With a rich history as a crossroads of cultures, languages and trade, Odesa has always had a glamorous, cosmopolitan status. During Soviet times,

Odesa was *the* place to see and be seen, to work off that collective farmer's tan, to kick back drinks and kick-dance your ass off as the full moon rises above the big Black Sea. Now, long after the iron curtain has dropped, Russians and Ukrainians are free to summer within their means instead of within their government's restrictions. They can go anywhere they want, but they still want Odesa. It's crazy and cool, a culture all its own and – to Odesans at least – it's the centre of the universe. Which leads to the famous local attitude: 'I'm from Odesa. Who the hell are you?'

### HISTORY

Before it became part of the Russian empire, modern-day Odesa was, among others, a part of the Greek empire, the Roman empire, and the Golden Horde. In the second half of the 15th century, the Turks founded a settlement named Hadjibey here, building a fortress around it.

Meanwhile, Catherine the Great was eyeing the place, imagining it as 'the St Petersburg of the South' and in 1789, her dutiful lover, General Potemkin, captured the fortress for her. In 1815, things really began to boom when the city became a duty-free port, and a huge demand for labour arose. Newcomers were encouraged with free land and a five-year tax-free status, and soon the city became a refuge – 'Odesa Mama' – for runaway serfs, criminals, renegades and dissidents.

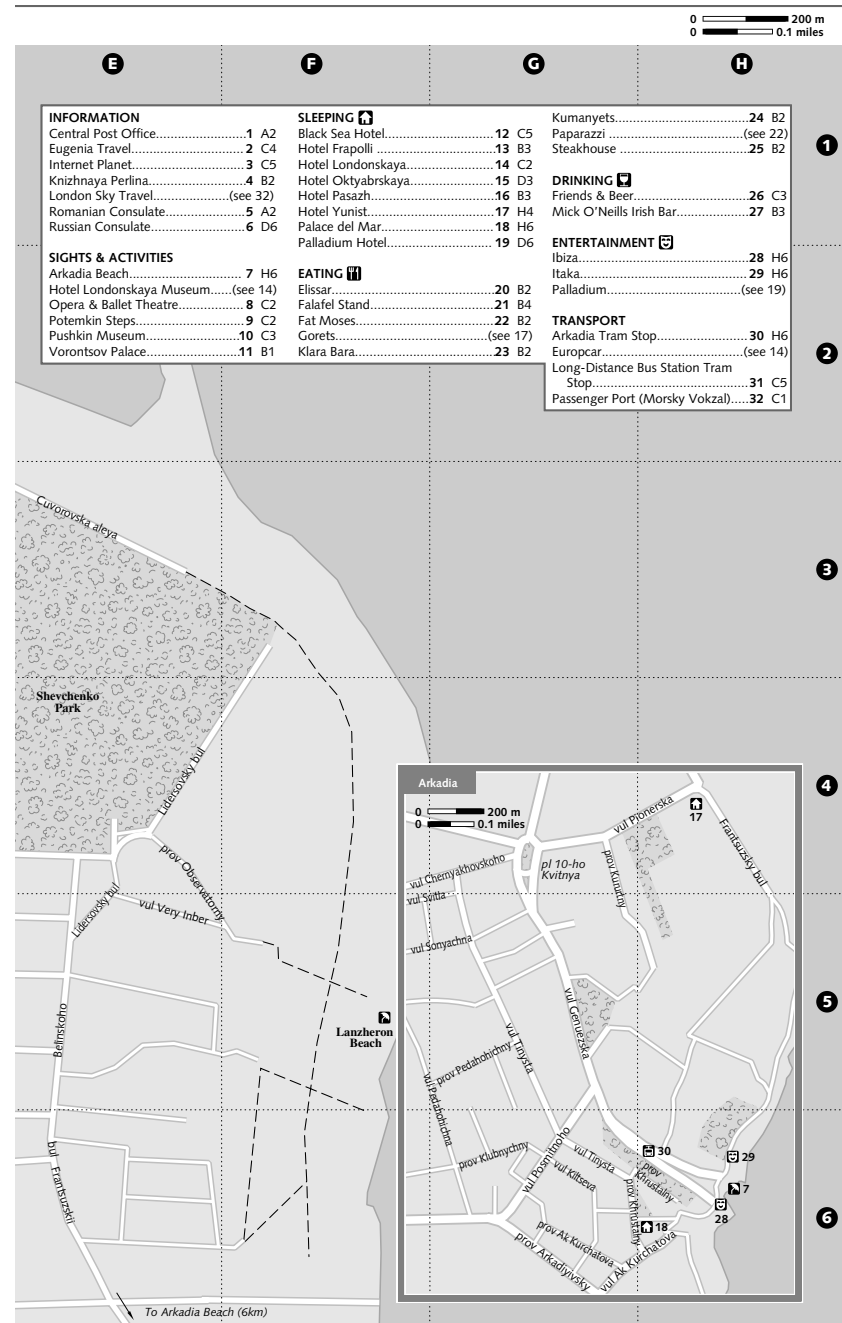
Odesa was the crucible of the early 1905 workers' revolution, with a local uprising and the mutiny on the battleship *Potemkin Tavrichesky*. And between 1941 and 1944, Odesa sealed its reputation as one of Stalin's 'hero' cities, when partisans sheltering in the city's catacombs (see p889) during WWII put

### THE JOKE'S ON YOU

*A lost tourist in Odesa stops a local to ask where vul Derybasivska is. The Odesan immediately smiles and says 'Where are you from?' The tourist says he's from Zhitomir. The Odesan exclaims 'What a coincidence, my grandmother came from there!' and launches into an drawn-out account of his family's history, how they struggled during the war, how they could barely feed their children... It goes on for half an hour before the tourist loses his patience and repeats his question.*

*'Jesus Christ,' says the Odesan. 'Would you stop wasting my time? We're standing on Derybasivska!'*

On that note, you may as well entirely disregard the street signs posted on poles on corners – they are usually twisted to point the wrong way.



<b>INFORMATION</b>		<b>SLEEPING</b> 🛏		Kumanyets.....24 B2	
Central Post Office.....1 A2	Eugenia Travel.....2 C4	Black Sea Hotel.....12 C5	Hotel Frapoli.....13 B3	Paparazzi.....(see 22)	Steakhouse.....25 B2
Internet Planet.....3 C5	London Sky Travel.....(see 32)	Hotel Londonskaya.....14 C2	Hotel Oktyabrskaya.....15 D3	<b>DRINKING</b> 🍷	Friends & Beer.....26 C3
Knizhnaya Perlina.....4 B2	Romanian Consulate.....5 A2	Hotel Pasazh.....16 B3	Hotel Yunist.....17 H4	Mick O'Neills Irish Bar.....27 B3	
Russian Consulate.....6 D6		Palace del Mar.....18 H6	Palladium Hotel.....19 D6	<b>ENTERTAINMENT</b> 🎬	Itbiza.....28 H6
<b>SIGHTS &amp; ACTIVITIES</b>	Arkadia Beach.....7 H6	<b>EATING</b> 🍴	Ellisar.....20 B2	Itaka.....29 H6	Palladium.....(see 19)
Hotel Londonskaya Museum.....(see 14)	Opera & Ballet Theatre.....8 C2	Falafel Stand.....21 B4	Fat Moses.....22 B2	<b>TRANSPORT</b>	
Potemkin Steps.....9 C2	Pushkin Museum.....10 C3	Gorets.....(see 17)	Pushkin Museum.....(see 17)	Arkadia Tram Stop.....30 H6	Europcar.....(see 14)
Vorontsov Palace.....11 B1		Klara Bara.....23 B2		Long-Distance Bus Station Tram Stop.....31 C5	Passenger Port (Morsky Vokzal)....32 C1



### ODESA'S CINEMATIC CLAIM TO FAME

Fame was showered upon the Potemkin steps (below) by Russian film director Sergei Eisenstein (1898–1948), who used them to shoot a massacre scene in his legendary 1925 film *Battleship Potemkin*. The silent B&W epic told the tale of mutiny aboard the battleship *Potemkin Tavrichesky*, sparked off by meagre, maggot-ridden food rations. As local Odessans run down the steps towards the ship in support of the sailors' uprising, they are fired on by Tsarist troops. Blood spills down the steps, and a runaway pram, baby inside, methodically bounces down; a brilliant trick that induces strong feelings of tension, suspense and impotence in the viewer.

The film was considered too provocative by the authorities and was banned. It was not screened in Europe until 1954. In Britain it became the second-longest-running ban in cinema history. Meanwhile, the film's most spellbinding scene (that of the runaway pram) has been 'borrowed' numerous times, including in Brian de Palma's *The Untouchables* (1987).

up a legendary fight against the occupying Romanian troops (allies of the Nazis).

Jews initially came to Odesa to escape persecution, but tragically suffered the same fate here. In the early 20th century, they accounted for one-third of the city's population, but after horrific pogroms in 1905 and 1941, hundreds of thousands emigrated. Many moved to New York's Brighton Beach, now nicknamed 'Little Odesa'.

### INFORMATION

Banks with ATMs and Western Union offices are all over the place and easy to spot.

**Central post office** (☎ 266 467; vul Sadova10)

**Eugenia Travel** (☎ 220 554; janna@eugen.intes.odessa.ua; vul Rishlevska 23) English-speaking staff arranges tours and travel; prices can be high.

**Internet Planet** (☎ 724 2177; vul Rishlevska 58; per hr 6hr; ☎ 24hr) Hip and air-conditioned, with a snack bar, cheap phones and photo exhibits.

**Knizhnaya Perlina** (☎ 358 404; vul Derybasivska 14; ☎ 10am–6pm Mon–Sat) Maps and picture books on Odesa; the basic classics of English-language literature.

**London Sky Travel** (☎ 729 3196; www.lst.com.ua; Sea Passenger Terminal, vul Primorskaya 6) Does visas, tours and hotel bookings, as well as Black Sea speed ferries.

**Odesa Globe** (www.odessaglobe.com) News and basic city information.

### SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

Everyone eventually gravitates toward **Prymorsky bulvar**, a shady promenade. At southeast end is the **Town Hall**, and the northwestern end is the 1826 **Vorontsov Palace**, the residence of a former governor (not open to the public). The terrace behind the palace offers brilliant views over the port. To the left, leading to a park and the pleasing pedestrian extension of the promenade, is the 'Mother-in-Law Bridge,'

supposedly built at the request of a communist official to make it easier for his wife's mother to go home at night, leaving him in peace. Most famous here is the sweep of the **Potemkin Steps** (see the boxed text on above). These 192 water-front steps (1837–41) spill down the hillside from a statue of the Duke de Richelieu toward the Black Sea; they are best viewed from the bottom, where they seem higher than they are, thanks to a gradual narrowing from bottom (21m wide) to top (13m wide).

Another big tourist hot spot is Odesa's main commercial street, **vul Derybasivska** (mostly pedestrian), named after the Frenchman De Ribas, who led the capture of Odesa from the Turks in 1789. Most of it is closed to traffic, and people flock here to stroll alongside sidewalk cafés and do some souvenir shopping.

On vul Lanzheronivska, facing down vul Rishlevska, sits the elaborate **Opera & Ballet Theatre**. It was designed in the 1880s by Viennese architects Ferdinand Fellner and Hermann Helmer in the Habsburg baroque style that was popular at the time, with a number of Italian Renaissance features thrown in to liven up the ensemble. It's long been closed for renovations, but they look like they're almost done.

There are many museums in Odesa, but few are interesting to foreigners – it's the city they want to see. However, one that literature-lovers might appreciate is the **Pushkin Museum** (☎ 251 034; vul Pushkinska 13; admission 4hr; ☎ 10am–5pm Tue–Sun), where the romantic writer spent his first Odesan days after being exiled from Moscow by the tsar in 1823 for radical ideas. Once here, Governor Vorontsov kept him busy with humiliatingly petty administrative jobs, so it took him an entire 13 months to stir up enough scandal (including an affair with Vorontsov's wife) to be thrown out of Odesa too.

The Hotel Londonskaya (p890) is gorgeous (worth a look around no matter what) and has a small, 3rd-floor **Hotel Londonskaya Museum** (Primorsky bulvar 11; admission free; ☎ 24hr) showing photographs and memorabilia of famous people who have stayed there over the years.

A trip to the **Nerubayske catacombs** (see boxed text, below) is a highlight, especially if you've never done a tour of this type of underground passageway before.

The beaches are a big draw for Russians and Ukrainians, but apart from the club scene during the summer at **Arkadia Beach**, foreigners aren't going to think much of the rather unattractive coast. To get there, take tram 5 down lovely, sanatoria-lined **Frantsuskii bulvar** to the end of the line. **Lanzheron Beach** is closer to the centre and a bit more family oriented, with a dilapidated fun fair.

### SLEEPING

During summer it's pretty easy to arrange a private room in the home of one of the older ladies hanging around the train station. Expect to pay 40hry to 70hry per person per day including meals, and try in advance to figure out its location and proximity to public transport.

From June to August it's highly recommended that you book hotels in advance. Prices here are for the high season; from September to May, rooms, particularly at pricier hotels, can be as much as 50% less.

### Budget

**Hotel Pasazh** (☎ 728 5500/01/02; passage@londred.com; vul Preobrazhenska 34; s 65–175hry, d 100–225hry, ste 325hry; ☎) Dilapidated? Yes, but it's in a beautiful old central building (which might soon close for renovations), and it has the lowest prices you'll find. Pasazh does offer one touch of modernity: a good internet centre (open 9am to midnight, 7hry per hour).

**Hotel Yunist** (☎ 738 0404; yunist@te.net.ua; vul Pionerska 32; s & d 130–429hry; ☎) Being in a monolith away from the centre has its advantages – that's right, views! Cheaper options share a bathroom with the neighbouring room. Take tram 5 or *marshrutka* 194 or 195 down lovely Frantsuskii bulvar, and ask to get off at 'Sanitoria Rossiya'. Goretz (p890) is around the corner.

### Midrange

**Hotel Oktyabrskaya** (☎ 728 8863; info@oktyabrskaya.od.ua; vul Kanatna 31; s 200–300hry, d 150–300hry, ste 400–700hry; ☎) In an elegant, worn building, Hotel Oktyabrskaya thankfully evokes only a little of the proletariat revolution its name refers to. Think red marble walls, polished old parquet floors, wide, banistered staircases, and soaring ceilings. Rooms waver between tacky and cute, differing mostly in hue. It's a fantastic deal.

**Black Sea Hotel** (Chornoye More Hotel; ☎ 300 904; blacksea@bs-hotel.com.ua; vul Rishlevska 59; s 350hry, d 450–500hry, ste 600–800hry; ☎ ☎ ☎) People choose

### THE ODESA UNDERGROUND

The limestone below Odesa is riddled with more than 1000km of catacombs (so some buildings in the city are literally sinking). They weren't used as cemeteries, but were formed by Cossacks and other residents who mined the land for the limestone, which was used to build the city. The resulting network of tunnels turned out to be a great place for smugglers, revolutionaries and fugitives throughout history.

One network of tunnels in Nerubayske, 12km northwest of Odesa, sheltered a group of partisans during WWII. This event is explained at the **Museum of Partisan Glory** (admission 6hry; ☎ 9am–4pm), which includes a fascinating, flashlight tour of the catacombs, with exhibits showing what life was like for the underground fighters who hid and lived here when they weren't derailing Nazi trains or otherwise thwarting the fascists.

You can just show up in Nerubayske in a taxi (80hry return trip), but you may have to rustle up staff to open the doors if they're not expecting you, and tours will be in Russian only. In summer, Russian-language tour guides tout trips from the train station. If you don't know Russian, it's still interesting to visit, but Eugenia Travel (opposite) and other agencies do tours in English and other languages (about 125hry).

Keep in mind that it will be dark and close in the catacombs (claustrophobes beware), as well as chilly – no matter how warm the day is. Each year at least one person wanders into a catacomb entrance they discover around Odesa and never comes out. Don't be one of them. Stick to the tour.

partially remodelled Chornoye More out of convenience (near the train station), but you could luck out and get a view of the silver and yellow Panteleymonovsky Church, whose recent facelift was clearly done with a more devoted hand.

**Hotel Frapolli** (☎ 356 801; [frapolli@te.net.ua](mailto:frapolli@te.net.ua); vul Derybasivska 13; s/d/ste 316-669hry, d 474-827hry, ste 827-1143hry; 🍷 🍷) The location is primo but the vacuous, standardised rooms are completely starved of any imaginative elements. Anyway, you can stoke up on visual input from your in-room PC with pay-by-the-hour internet access, or take a meal in the hotel's glass-covered sidewalk restaurant and feast your eyes on what walks by.

**Palladium Hotel** (☎ 728 6651; [welcom@hotel-palladium.com.ua](mailto:welcom@hotel-palladium.com.ua); Itlyansky bulvar 4; d 488-746hry, ste 1050-1394hry; 🍷 🍷) Architecturally, Palladium looks like someone put a bank and a Roman coliseum into a teleportation device and pressed 'Go'. Rooms are appointed in pastels, with minimalist décor (a Schiele print here, an orchid there) and fine-textured carpets. Bonus: as a guest, you'll get free admission to both Itaka and Palladium nightclubs.

## Top End

**Hotel Londonskaya** (☎ 738 0110; [www.londred.com](http://www.londred.com); Primorsky bulvar 11; s 594-740hry, d 756-902hry, ste 1134-3348hry; 🍷 🍷) Ever since the magnificent Londonskaya opened its doors in the mid-19th century, it has been attracting members of the cultural elite. Last refurbished in the early 1990s, the hotel could use some refreshment (smudged walls and furniture showing signs of wear). Nevertheless, with iron-lace balustrades, stained-glass windows, crystal chandeliers, parquet flooring and an inner courtyard, the Londonskaya oozes grand Regency charm.

**Palace del Mar** (☎ 301 900; [www.palace-del-mar.od.ua](http://www.palace-del-mar.od.ua); provulok Khrustalny 1; d 1155-2420hry, ste 2613-4050hry; 🍷 🍷 🍷) Set apart from Arkadia beach's thumping summer nightlife, Palace del Mar feels like an 1930s European estate. Rooms vary in size according to price but otherwise are similar: spacious, minimalist, yet warm design (with fuzzy white wall-to-wall carpet and light colours) beautiful beds, and bathrooms with all the niceties. You will take your meals in a sunny dining hall whose *coup de grâce* is an unforgettably stunning stained-glass ceiling. Staff are professional, gracious and ready to smile. You will feel special.

## EATING

On the corner of vul Preobrazhenska and Troyitska, there's a great cheap falafel stand (5hry to 6hry).

**Kumanyets** (☎ 376 946; vul Havana 7; mains 20-50hry) This is a full-on Ukrainian-themed restaurant with down-home country dishes. Friendly staff wear kitschy costumes with nary a tic of irony.

**Elissar** (☎ 496 498; vul Derybasivska 18; mains 10-60hry) If *shashlik* is no longer 'ethnic' enough for you, never fear. Elissar offers tasty Lebanese dishes – including *labneh* (yogurt cheese) – in addition to its European menu. The footpath seating is perfect, and if you're cold, they'll give you a wool blanket.

**Klara Bara** (☎ 200 331; vul Deribasivska; mains 30-65hry) Tucked away in a quiet corner of the city garden, this modern ivy-covered café and restaurant has a cosy atmosphere. It serves European fare with Thai touches, plus brilliant Turkish coffee.

**Steakhouse** (☎ 287 775; vul Derybasivska 20; mains 30-135hry) Meat and potatoes are what it's all about at this super-stylish eatery with hot staff and an open kitchen. The coffee drinks are yummy and artistically presented. Make sure you drink enough to pay a visit to the surprising bathrooms. Bonus: free wi-fi.

**Fat Moses** (☎ 714 4774; vul Yekaterynynska 8/10; mains 15-45hry) This cosy, unpretentious bistro-style joint has an eclectic menu of includes souvlaki, Hungarian goulash and Jamaican chicken.

**Paparazzi** (☎ 348 070; vul Yekaterynynska 8; mains 40-55hry) Next door to Fat Moses, this more fashionable outlet is loved for its stone-grilled meats.

**Gorets** (☎ 358 938; vul Pionerska 32; mains 10-60hry) It doesn't warrant a special trip, but if you've decided to take tram 5 down Frantsuzskii bulvar for a joyride – or if you're staying at Hotel Yunist – the *shashlik* here are tasty.

## DRINKING

**Friends & Beer** (Druzya i Pivo; ☎ 769 1998; vul Derybasivska 9) This recreated charming USSR-era living room is proof that 'Retro Soviet' doesn't have to mean political posters and constructivist art.

**Mick O'Neills Irish Bar** (☎ 268 437; vul Deribasovskaya 13; 🍷 24hr) Two storeys of wooden railings and all the trappings of pub décor (paper money from all over the world, billiards, pinball machines) set the scene for this restaurant and hangout.

## ENTERTAINMENT

Odesa has dozens of clubs, ranging from the flirty to the seriously sleazy. Striptease performances are common, even at the more respectable end of the spectrum. Door prices range from 10hry to 50hry.

**Ibiza** (☎ 777 0205; Arkadia beach; ☺ summer) A white, free-form open cave structure and a fun pick-up joint.

**Itaka** (☎ 349 188; Arkadia beach; ☺ summer) This seaside amphitheatre tips a nod to Odesa's Greek name with columns and statues right out of ancient Athens.

**Palladium** (☎ 728 6566; Itlyansky bulvar 4) Flashy new Palladium shares ownership with Itaka and is the city's best year-round club. Multiple levels, a crazy design and gorgeous clientele make it hot hot hot.

## GETTING THERE & AWAY

**Air** The Odesa **airport** (☎ 006, 658 186, 213 576) is located about 12km southwest of the city centre. For ticketing, try **Kiyavia** (☎ 276 259), at the train station. From Kyiv, there are several daily flights to/from Odesa (525hry, one hour).

## Train

The **train station** (☎ 273 357; ploscha Pryvokzalna) is a big busy place. Tickets for future dates or with non-CIS destinations must be purchased at the **Service Centre** (🕒 7am-9.30pm), which can be found inside the station; look for the sign 'Сервисний Центр'. To find it from the main entrance of the station, go right and walk to the end, turn left past the pharmacy and look for the signed double doors. Once you're there, go to **window 5** (🕒 8am-7pm) for non-CIS destinations. All other windows will be able to help with train tickets for future dates.

Trains from Odesa head to Kyiv (*kupeyny/platskartny* 60/50hry, 11 hours, three daily), Uzhhorod (55/35hry, 20 hours, one daily), Lviv (59/42hry, 12 hours, one daily) and Simferopol (45/27hry, 13 hours). On odd dates there are *platskartny*-only trains to Kamyanets-Podilsky (25hry, 16 hours); on even dates there are daily trains to Ivano-Frankivsk (48/32hry, 21 hours).

## Bus

The **long-distance bus station** (☎ 004; vul Kolontaevska 58) is 3km southwest of the city centre. To get to the bus station, from ploscha Pryvokzalna take tram 5 (heading away from

## AVOIDING MOLDOVA

It used to be possible, when travelling by train or bus between Western Ukraine and Odesa, that you might pass a bit through Moldova, which requires a visa for entrance. We've been assured this is no longer the case, but to be on the safe side, when buying a ticket, ask: 'Ts-ey id-e cher-ez Mol-do-vu?' (Does this go through Moldova?) or point to this: Цей тae чepes Молдову? And if it does...wait for the next one.

Arkadia) to the end of the line. Once or twice a day, buses leave from Odesa for Sevastopol (73hry, 13 hours), Simferopol (70hry to 80hry, 12 hours) and Yalta (70hry, 15 hours), and there are eight or more daily buses to Kyiv (45hry to 60hry, eight hours). From the same terminal, **Autolux** ([www.autolux.com.ua](http://www.autolux.com.ua)) runs modern, comfortable private buses to Kyiv, Boryspil airport and other Ukrainian destinations.

## Sea

From the **passenger port** (vul Primorskaya), there are regular ferries to Istanbul and Varna (p932) and to other Ukrainian Black Sea destinations, such as Yalta and Sevastopol (see London Sky Travel, p888).

## GETTING AROUND

From the airport, Bus 129 goes to the train station; bus 101 goes between the airport and ploscha Hretska, in the centre, southwest of vul Deribasivska.

From the train station, bus 137 and 146 go to ploscha Hretska (a 20-minute walk). Bus 155 and 109, and trolleybus 4 and 10, go up vul Pushkinska before curving around to vul Suvorova past the passenger port and the foot of the Potemkin Steps.

Tram 5 goes between the train and long-distance bus stations. To get to the latter, take the tram away from Arkadia to the end of the line. Walk to the front of the tram and take the first street right, then look for the coaches down this street.

Taxis in Odesa charge incredibly high prices. Hotels will say a taxi from the airport should cost 25hry, but you're more likely to pay three times that, as the taxi drivers are stubborn when it comes to fleecing tourists. When taking a taxi from your hotel, ask the

front desk to call one for you, and ask them to agree on a price over the phone. You're more likely to pay the right price that way than if you just flag one down from in front of the hotel by yourself. **Elit-Taxi** (☎ 371 030) has reliable service.

Rental cars for use in the city only can be arranged through **Europcar** (☎ 777 4011; www.europcar.ua; Primorsky bulvar 11; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat) in the Hotel Londonskaya.

## CRIMEA КРИМ

Astounding landscape, enchanting palaces, a fascinating past and warm climes... sound good? It is good. No wonder this peninsula has had such a hot-potato history, fought over by the Greeks, Khazars, Tatars, Mongols, Huns, Genoese, Ottomans and Russians. It's a long haul from Kyiv, but if you can make it down this far south, you'll feel as if you've been to two completely different countries. And in a way, you have, since the Crimea is an autonomous republic, with its own constitution, legislature and government.

Today, most visitors to the 'Russian Riviera' concentrate on Yalta and its nearby attractions, although Bakhchysaray is well worth an overnight, and the inland cities of Sevastopol and Simferopol exude a little charm of their own. The more adventurous take advantage of the rare hiking opportunities in the soaring, little explored Crimean Mountains.

### History

The blunder-strewn, stalemated Crimean War of 1854-56 was a classic clash of imperial ambitions. Much to the chagrin of its rival empires, Russia wanted to take over the faltering Turkish Empire, and when Tsar Nicholas I

sent troops into the Ottoman provinces of Moldavia and Wallachia (ostensibly to protect the Christians there), the British and French assembled in Varna (now in Bulgaria) to protect Istanbul. Both sides lost about 250,000 soldiers in the war, many from bad medical care – to which British nurse Florence Nightingale drew attention.

As soon as the 1860s, however, Crimea became a chic leisure spot when Russia's imperial family built a summer estate at Livadia, on the outskirts of Yalta (the same palace later used for the post-WWII Yalta Conference of Churchill, Stalin and Roosevelt).

During the civil war that followed the Russian revolution (p696), Crimea was one of the last 'white' bastions. The Germans occupied the peninsula for three years during WWII and Crimea lost nearly half its inhabitants, and then the population was drained once again by Stalin (see the boxed text, below).

Throughout the Soviet era, millions came each year to Crimea, attracted by the warmth, beauty, beaches and mountain air. In 1954 Khrushchev transferred control of the peninsula to Ukraine, but the inhabitants of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea have more in common with Russia, and have been working to make Russian the official language – even trying to return the land to Russian rule.

### SIMFEROPOL СИМФЕРОПОЛЬ

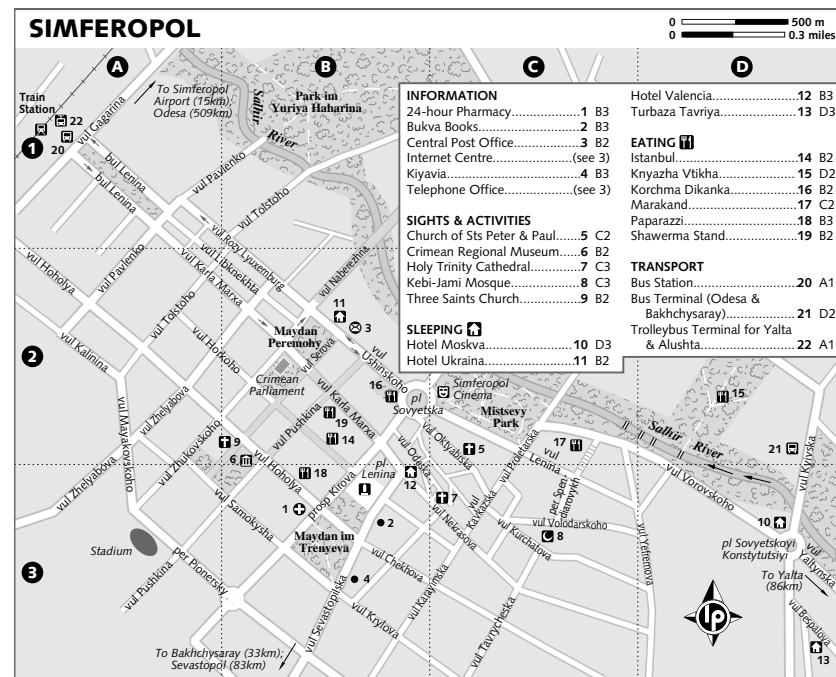
☎ 0652 / pop 340,000

With a glut of exhaust-spewing *marshrutki* honking to get around each other, the capital of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea definitely looks, sounds and smells like the regional transport hub it is. Attractions are minimal, so most visitors are only in town for a short spell before they head further south to the Black Sea coast or to nearby Bakhchysaray

#### CRIMEA'S TATAR POPULATION

On 18 May 1944 Stalin accused Crimea's Tatars of collaborating with the Nazis, and deported the entire Muslim population to Central Asia and Siberia. The Tatar language was banned and all traces of the culture were obliterated. Crimea was repopulated with Ukrainians, Russians, Bulgarians and Germans. It is estimated that more than 46% percent of the Tatars died during deportation.

Since the late 1980s, about 260,000 Tatars have returned to their lost homeland and have been trying to re-establish themselves and their culture. It hasn't been easy. Few speak their Turkic mother tongue and many still live in poor, slumlike conditions with no water or electricity. However, the Ukrainian government has started giving money to the cause of the returning deportees, and conditions are improving. You will probably see new Tatar homes being constructed in the foothills.



(p898). Don't worry if you'll be here a day or two – you can easily spend a few highly pleasant hours off the main streets, strolling along peaceful pedestrian avenues. In recent years, a lot of money has been spent on renovating the city, which you'll see in the rowdy construction areas and freshly painted façades.

### Information

**24-hour Pharmacy** (☎ 546 911; prospekt Kirova 22)

**Bukva Books** (☎ 273 153; vul Sevastopilska 6;

☎ 9am-8pm Mon-Fri, to 7pm Sat, to 6pm Sun) Offers a small selection of English-language classics and several Crimea-related maps.

**Central post office** (☎ 272 255; vul Rozy Lyuxemburg 1) Also has an ATM, telephone office and internet centre (Zhry to 3hry per hour), all with 24-hour access (post office has typical hours).

### Sights

The attractions of Simferopol aren't going to leave much of an impression. Most enjoyable during a visit is a tranquil walk along the Salhir River, which is dotted with willow trees. Also, strolling the pedestrian zone of vul Pushkina makes for good window-shopping

and people-watching, especially because there are benches to rest on along the way.

**Three Saints Church** (vul Hoholya 16), **Holy Trinity Cathedral** (vul Odeska 12) and **Church of Sts Peter & Paul** (vul Oktyabrskaya) are three Orthodox churches in town and worth a gander because of the ornate mosaic iconography on the façades. East of the centre, up the quaint vul Kurchatova, is the restored 1502 **Kebi-Jami Mosque**, overlooking a sort of slummy neighbourhood repopulated by Tatars. It was reconstructed in the 17th century and is the oldest building in the city.

The town's **Crimean Regional Museum** (☎ 276 347; vul Hoholya 14; admission 6hry; ☎ 9am-5pm Wed-Mon) features a geology room with mastodon jaws, a natural history (read: taxidermy) room, a Christian history room, and a WWII history room.

### Sleeping

**Hotel Moskva** (☎ 237 520; fax 239 795; vul Kiyvska 2; s 100-190hry, d 222hry, ste 290-500hry) You'd almost have to be a masochist to stay at the haggard Soviet extravaganza that is Hotel Moskva. Curmudgeonly staff sit at reception, just

waiting to be difficult. Rooms are passable but don't make up for the rude service; they really push the suites too.

**Turbaza Tavriya** (☎ 638 914; vul Bespalova 21; s 115-170hry, d 160-240hry) This tranquil, hill-side place is a bit far from the centre, but not much further than similarly priced Hotel Moskva, which it beats by a long, long, long shot. It consists of two buildings; one has been fully renovated, the other partially so (no lift or in-room phone, but otherwise, rooms are similar to the other building's). *Marshrutki* 15 and 17 go here from ploscha Sovyetska. It's popular, and rightfully so; call ahead if possible.

**Hotel Valencia** (☎ 510 606; www.valencia.crimea.ua; vul Odeska 8; s 101hry, d 202-353hry, ste 303-580hry; ☎) An odd hotel fusion of Crimea and Spain. Cheerful and professional staff work at the hotel and its good restaurant and rooms (each one different) are a great value. There are only a few though, so book in advance if you can.

**Hotel Ukraina** (☎ 510 165; jscukrcomp@crimea.com; vul Rozy Lyuxemburg 7; s 260-370hry, d 420-480hry, ste 800hry) Talk about covering all bases. In your first five seconds here, you'll think you've entered a five-star hotel, with a very chi-chi façade and lobby (fanciful doormen, a pianist, gold-painted frumpy etc) Service seems four-starrish, and the hastily remodelled but Western-style rooms rank at about three stars.

## Eating

Several restaurants with outdoor seating line vul Ushinskoho.

**Paparazzi** (vul Hoholya 5; mains 25-100hry; ☎ 8am-last customer) Surround yourself with pop culture, a hipster interior, and a wide-ranging menu (even foie gras) as you compete with your friends in an electronic darts tournament.

**Istanbul** (☎ 527 862; vul Horkoho 5; mains 10-30hry; ☎ 11am-11pm) As one of many cellar-style restaurants in Simferopol, this Turkish place has a small, not very Turkish menu, although it is a dependable place for quality *shashlik* (there are some veggie options as well). Seating is at picnic tables, and Turkish music videos are played.

**Marakand** (☎ 524 698; vul Vorovskoho 17; mains 5-9hry; ☎ 9am-11pm Mon-Sat) Here's an authentic Central Asian-style open-air tea house and restaurant, where you can get *plov* (meat and rice), *manty* (large meat-filled dumplings) and *shashlik* (shish kebab) grilled over an open fire before your eyes. The local Muslim

community hangs out here, drinking tea and chewing over debates; in spring, you can see a small waterfall nearby.

**Korchma Dikanka** (☎ 290 608; vul Ushinskoho 2/46; mains 10-25hry; ☎ 9-5am) With murals, costumed staff, wooden tables and typical Ukrainian food, this central and popular eatery is thankfully not too loud with the Russian pop music it plays. In addition to *varenyky*, *pelmeni* and *blini*, you can sample *holubtsi*.

**Knyazha Vtikhha** (☎ 251 020; vul Turgeneva 35; mains 20-40hry; ☎ noon-midnight) Talk about all-out with the Ukrainian folk theme. In warm months you can dine outside in your own little hut. Inside, live music is played. To find it, walk along the north bank of the river until it makes a sharp left, then look for the white building with shutters and cars out front.

**Shawarma stand** (cnr of vul Karla Marksa & vul Pushkina; 5-10hry; ☎ 11am-9pm) Grab a quick hot meal from this popular stand.

## Getting There & Around

**Simferopol airport** (SIP; ☎ 006, 295 516; www.airport.crimea.ua) is 15km northwest of the town centre and accessible by trolleybus 9 (50 kopeks, 30 minutes) and *marshrutki* 49, 50, 98, 113 and 115 (1hry, 20 minutes), which ply bulvar Lenina.

For local transport around town, *marshrutki* are the way to go – in fact, the city is clogged with them, so walking is another good option. See p730 for information on flagging one down.

There are two places to catch buses, the **bus station** (☎ 252 560), which is next to the trains station, and the **bus terminal** (☎ 275 211), which is near Hotel Moskva. The one on vul Gagarina, at the end of bulvar Lenina and next to the train station, is in a small pink building behind the McDonald's. From here, dozens of *marshrutki* leave for destinations around Crimea (except Bakhchysaray), including two to Yalta (19hry, two hours, four hourly) and to Sevastopol (19hry, two hours, four hourly). The bus terminal on vul Kyivska, by Hotel Moskva, has regular buses and minibuses to Odesa (70hry to 80hry, 12 hours, four daily) and Bakhchysaray (6hry, one hour, seven daily), as well as to other destinations around Crimea, including Sevastopol (20hry, two hours, 20 daily).

The **train station** (☎ 005, 243 418, 242 350) is at the end of bulvar Lenina. Most trains to/from Simferopol are very busy, especially from June

to August, so book your tickets as early as possible. To Kyiv, (*kupenyi/platskartny* 75/42hry, 15 hours) there are at least two daily, and once-daily trains leave for Lviv (75/50hry, 26 hours) and Odesa (41/27hry, 15 hours). See p904 for information on getting to Minsk, Moscow and St Petersburg from here.

From 5am to 8pm, the world's longest – and slowest! – trolleybus ride leaves from the **trolleybus terminal** (vul Gagarina), next to the train station, for Yalta (11hry, 2½ hours, every 20 minutes), stopping in Alushta. It's not the most time-efficient method of transport, but it's definitely a novelty. The views along the way are spectacular, but if you don't want to dawdle, the Yalta-bound *marshrutki* take the same route and zip by the trolleys.

## YALTA ЯЛТА

☎ 0654 / pop 81,000

Once you start to descend the craggy Crimean Mountains toward the sparkling Black Sea, you'll soon realise that the journey itself is one of the greatest aspects of a visit to the seaside resort town of Yalta, a vacation hot spot for more than 200 years.

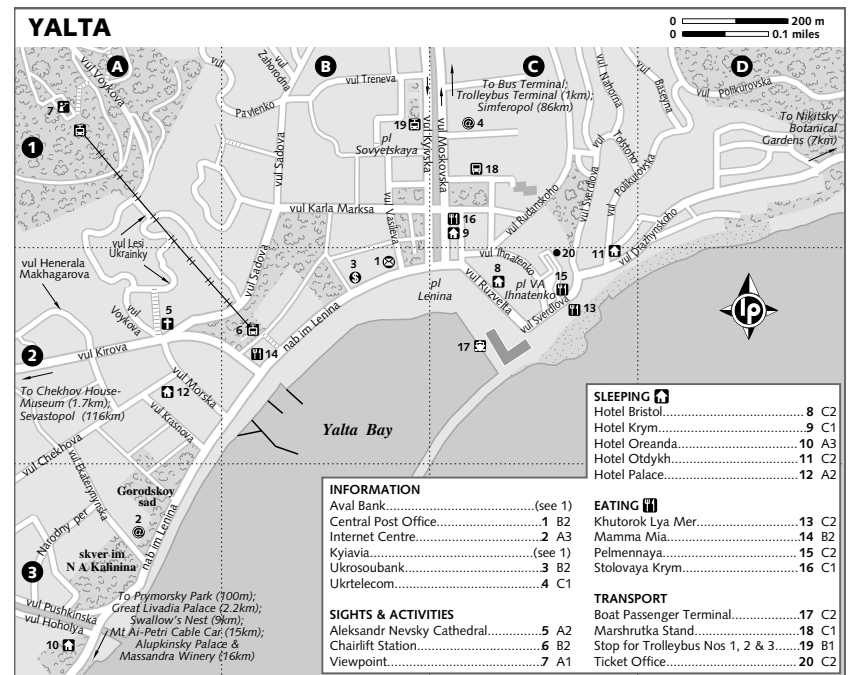
In town, you'll find a lively waterfront promenade, lined with tiny flashing casinos, touristy restaurants, touts beseeching you to touch their monkey while they take your picture, and desperate artists offering to draw an unflattering caricature of you. In fact, especially after recent renovations, Yalta seems like a caricature of itself – sort of a painted-up, exaggerated version of what a resort town is supposed to look like. Some people love Yalta, and some think it's silly, but everyone is impressed once they turn their back on the waterfront and gaze up at that grand amphitheatre of mountains cupping the coast. That, as well as the nearby attractions – historic palaces, lush botanical gardens, cable-car rides up to staggering cliffs – are what makes Yalta the popular destination it always has been and always will be.

## Information

**Aval Bank** (ploscha Lenina) Booth No 14 of the post office handles Western Union and cash advances.

**Central post office** (☎ 312 073; ploscha Lenina 1; ☎ 8am-8pm)

**Internet Centre** (vul Ekaterynynska 3; per hr 5hry; ☎ 9am-10pm) Ten slow computers run by bratty



post-teen gamers. But unlike at Ukrtelecom, you won't have trouble getting a computer. Go through the gate and take the door on the left.

**Ukrosoubank** (naberezhnaya imeni Lenina 5) Western Union and outdoor 24-hour ATM.

**Ukrtelecom** (vul Moskovska 9; per hr 5hry; ☎ 24hr) Internet and phone calls; computer access often requires a long wait.

## Sights

### CITY CENTRE

The **promenade**, naberezhnaya imeni Lenina, stretches past numerous piers, palm trees, restaurants, boutiques and souvenir stalls to **Prymorsky Park**, where there are some carnival-type rides. It starts at **ploscha Lenina**, the centre of activity. Here there are plenty of benches for people-watching under the shadow of a statue of Lenin. The former Soviet leader gawks at the McDonald's across the way as if it were the devil himself. In spring and summer a chess teacher who specialises in teaching children hangs out here; even if you opt out of a lesson, it's fun to watch the kids play with him.

Although swimming isn't an option along the promenade, you can descend to a few short lengths of beach, which is all rocks – most of them flat and perfect for skipping along the placid, rather plain waterfront.

Anton Chekhov was a crafty short-story writer and one of the most esteemed playwrights in the world. He wrote *The Cherry Orchard* and *Three Sisters* in what is now the **Chekhov House-Museum** (☎ 394 947; vul Kirova 112; adult/student 15/8hry; ☎ 10am–5pm Wed–Sun, Tue–Sun Jun–Sep), the small estate where he suffered from, and eventually died of, tuberculosis. Take *marshrutki* 6 or 8 (not 8a), which go by every 15 minutes from the west side of vul Kyivska; ask for 'dom mu-zeyey che-kho-va'. At the stop, cross the street and go down some stairs to the museum area. Included in the price of admission is a tour (in Russian only) from women who are obviously passionate about the place, and the grounds are lovely.

The 1903 **Aleksandr Nevsky Cathedral** (vul Sadova 2) is a beautiful example of neo-Byzantine architecture. The architect was Nikolai Krasnov, who designed many palaces on Crimea's southern coast.

There is a mediocre **chairlift** (10hry return; ☎ 10am–5pm Apr–Sep) Buy your ticket, step into a big dented bucket, and you're off, swinging above dilapidated rooftops to a bizarre

pseudo-Greek temple and **viewpoint**, called Darsan. The boarding point is behind naberezhna Lenina 17, along vul Kirova.

### OTHER SIGHTS

Many travellers hang in Yalta not because they're into the resort Yalta vibe, but because it makes an excellent base from which to see Crimea's spectacular historic and natural sights. We've just listed the basics (in order of spectacularness), but if you've time, there is much more to discover along the coast. See p898 for information on getting to these places. And don't forget a day trip to Bakhchysaray (p898) is possible.

Get a picnic lunch and a bottle of wine and find a secluded spot to enjoy them in the Alupka palace-park complex, 16km southwest of Yalta. The setting is peaceful and beautiful, and the majestic **Alupkinsky Palace** (adult/child 20/10hry; ☎ 9am–4pm, longer in summer), built for Count Mikhail Vorontsov, is quite impressive. It happens to be where Churchill stayed during the Yalta Conference. The palace grounds and park are free; only the interior requires paid admission.

About 1km east of Alupka, on the way back toward Yalta, is the **Mt Ai-Petri cable car** (kanatnaya dorozhka; return trip 40hry; ☎ 11am–3pm, hr vary greatly). It's a truly dizzying ride across the foothills and up the mountain's sheer face, during which you overlook the coast and the sea. At the summit, there are expansive views inland, too.

In February 1945 Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill shaped the face of postwar Europe at the Yalta Conference in the **Great Livadia Palace** (☎ 315 579; admission adult/child 15/7hry; ☎ 10am–4pm Thu–Tue), 3km southwest of central Yalta. Included in the price is a one-hour Russian-language tour, although you're welcome to stroll through on your own. It features photos and memorabilia about this historic event, as well as displays about the palace's original owner, the last Russian emperor, Nicholas II. He spent just four seasons here with his family before they (the Romanovs) were all arrested by the Bolshevik revolutionaries and eventually shot. If you go by *marshrutka*, carefully cross the street where it stops for you, and make your descent. Go down stairs on the left by the orange building. You'll eventually find it if you keep descending.

The **Nikitsky Botanical Gardens** (adult/child 6/3hry; ☎ 8am–6pm) are worth a visit for their

beauty and views. Tumbling down 3 sq km of hillside to the sea, they are home to 28,000 species, including 2000 rose types, a 500-year-old yew tree and a 1000-year-old pistachio tree.

Fifty metres in the opposite direction from the bus stop at Alupka, and back up the road down which you came, is the **Massandra winery** (☎ 721 198; admission 20hry; ☎ tours Tue–Sat May–Nov, Tue, Thu & Sat rest of year). Here you can participate in a tasting tour of Crimean wines, although dry wine lovers will be disappointed. Between May and November, tours kick off at 11.30am, 12.30pm, 3pm, 4pm and 5pm. The rest of the year there are tours at 11.30am and 3pm, and at 11.30am on Saturday.

Possibly the most internationally famous landmark on the peninsula is the cliff-side castle known as the **Swallow's Nest** (lastochkino Gnizdo; admission 2–8hry; ☎ 8am–6pm Tue–Sun). Honestly, although it looks great on a postcard or a travel brochure, the Swallow's Nest is weirdly small, unimpressive and fake-looking. From the castle-like building, you may see dolphins frolicking (or is it a feeding frenzy?) in the distance. Be prepared for a lot of stairs (which start next to the Kodak stand).

## Sleeping

Hotel prices fluctuate seasonally, peaking in July and August and during the new year season, when reservations for all hotels are recommended. We've listed the highest rates. Many hotel rooms have air-conditioning in their pricier rooms, but hot water can be spotty here and throughout Crimea. Yalta is crawling with hotels; the ones reviewed here are most central.

Also, women hang around the main bus terminal offering private rooms (see p902). There are signs all over town with phone numbers of people offering rooms; look for variations containing the words 'сдам, жильё, квартира'.

**Hotel Krym** (☎ 271 701; baza@hotelkrim.yalta.crimea.ua; vul Moskovska 1/6; s 40–55hry, d 90–250hry, tr & q 105–345hry; ☎) You'll have to step up the charm to crack a smile from the staff at Hotel Krym, designed by architect Krasnov (who also did the Livadia Palace, among others). But you can't beat the prices or the location (expect noise, especially in summer). The cheaper rooms for each category have a shared bathroom, and the priciest doubles and triples have air-conditioning.

**Hotel Otdykh** (☎ 353 069; www.yalta-otdykh.com; vul Drazhynskoho 14; s 160–335hry, d 220–490hry; ☎) Once a 19th-century brothel for visiting government dignitaries, Hotel Otdykh perches high on the oldest street in town, removed from the main hustle and bustle (although the 1st and 2nd floor get some street noise). Rooms have sea views and are sunny in the mornings, and on Sunday you can hear church bells. Staff speak some English, a so-so set breakfast is included (although otherwise, the restaurant is good), and discounts are given for longer stays.

**Hotel Bristol** (☎ 271 603; www.hotel-bristol.com.ua; vul Ruzvelta 10; d 120–180hry, ste 240–280hry; ☎) Service seems to have declined over the years at Hotel Bristol, which once seemed to aspire to a greater stature. But prices have declined as well, and the large, chintzy Western-style rooms (many with big bathtubs) are good value. Breakfast is included.

**Hotel Palace** (☎ 324 380; fax 230 492; vul Chekhova 8; s/d 450/550hry; ☎) It's true – the building has a palatial quality, with a pretty marble staircase (no lift) decorated with interesting Crimean art on the walls to make the time pass as you trudge up and down. The spacious rooms often have large balconies (great for watching fireworks) with sea views, and the bathrooms are remodelled. It's become overpriced, but in the off season it could be good value.

**Hotel Oreanda** (☎ 274 250; www.hotel-oreanda.com; naberezhna imeni Lenina 35/2; s 1155–1345hry, d 1695–2055hry; ☎) The Oreanda offers great service and most of the luxuries you would expect in a top Western European city hotel (large rooms, in-room internet access, two pools, a Turkish bath...) Not surprisingly, it is overpriced, but if you're ready to splash out, this is the place.

## Eating

The waterfront walkway is dotted with several cute little places to eat, and there are many well-signed super-cheap cafeterias (Столовая) around town as well. One is **Stolovaya Krym** (mains 5hry; ☎ 8am–7pm), associated with the budget hotel next door.

**Pelmennaya** (☎ 323 932; vul Sverdlova 8; mains 6–12hry; ☎ 10am–8pm) Not far from Hotel Otdykh, this hole-in-the-wall place is great for a quick hot bite with Yalta's working class. *Pelmeni*, of course, is the main offering, but *blini* and a few other dishes can be had here too.

**Mamma Mia** (☎ 234 372; naberezhnaya imeni Lenina 15; mains 23–55hry; ☎ 10am–8pm, summer till last customer)

This cellar-like restaurant has pop music that doesn't fit with the yummy thin-crust pizzas, which you can cover with another crust for 3hry more. But wait, there's more – spaghetti, ravioli and risotto too, as well as meats and fish. You can watch the puffy-hatted pizzaman bake your pie in the red-hot oven while you debate whether the restaurant's mascot is really Mamma or actually Uncle Guido in drag.

**Khutorok Lya Mer** (☎ 271 815; vul Sverdllova 9; mains 25-95hry; ☎ 11-2am) This place is decked out like a wooden ship, but the menu (available in English) strangely features more meat than fish, such as the daring bulls' balls with horseradish. There's an eclectic wine list with Crimean, Georgian and Aussie selections. Book ahead to make sure you get a seaweed table.

### Getting There & Away

There are no trains or flights to Yalta. However, if you plan to take a train or plane from Simferopol and want to get your ticket while in Yalta, there is a two-storey **ticket office** (☎ 8am-7pm). It's sort of strangely located. First find the Pelmennaya restaurant. Take the stairs between it and the next building; the office is on the right. The first floor charges 10hry more for 'better' service. A branch of **Kiyavia** (☎ 325 943; ploscha Lenina) is in booth No 13 at the post office.

Trolleybuses to/from Simferopol (p895) start/finish at the **trolleybus terminal** (vul Moskovskaya). Opposite that is the **bus terminal** where buses leave for Bakhchysaray (25hry, 2½ hours, thrice daily) – the 11am departure is most prudent for a day trip. Half-hourly buses go to Sevastopol (20hry, two hours) and Simferopol (20hry, two hours). The daily Odesa-bound bus (90hry, 14 hours) departs at 4.50pm. If you happen to be jetting off to Chişinău in Moldova (see p506), a daily bus leaves at 2.05pm (130hry, 18½ hours), stopping in Odesa (100hry) at 3.30am.

There is a **boat passenger terminal** (morskoy vokzal; ☎ 320 094; vul Ruzvelta 5), but it seems to be deserted. However, it is possible to reach Odesa on London Sky Travel's speed ferry (see p888) as well as Istanbul and Varna (p891).

### Getting Around

A trolleybus ride is 40 kopeks. *Marshrutki* within the town are 1hry. Taxis within the town are relatively expensive (7hry to 10hry), and drivers are not particularly eager for your business (hard to bargain). They hang out

around hotels and busy intersections, lazily playing chess, backgammon or *durak* (a popular card game) on benches designated specifically for them. What a life. **Avka-Trans Taxis** (☎ 231 085, 8-067 563 0444) are metered and cost half as much around town. They're often found at the intersection of vul Ruzvelta and naberezhna Lenina.

To get to/from the terminals, take trolleybus 1, 2 or 3 along vul Moskovskaya/Kyivskaya; most *marshrutki* along those streets also go to/from the terminals.

Just off vul Moskovska, there is a *marshrutka* stand where these minibuses go to sights just outside of Yalta. *Marshrutki* 27 and 32 (3.50hry) stop at Livadia, Swallow's Nest, and the Mt Ai-Petri cable car, stopping and turning around at Alupka (where Massandra Winery is). *Marshrutka* 34 goes to Nikitsky Gardens (3hry).

### БАКХЧЫСАРАЙ БАХЧИСАРАЙ

☎ 06554 / pop 33,000

There are three great reasons to make it out to this tattered old town: the remarkably well-preserved Khan's Palace, dating back to the 16th century; the still-working Uspensky Monastery, built into sheer cliff walls; and the 6th-century cave city of Chufut-Kale. Many locals but few foreigners make it out this way, which is a shame as the attractions and vistas here are some of the most unforgettable on the peninsula.

Once the capital of the Crimean khanate (a spin-off from the Golden Horde), Bakhchysaray (bakh-chee-sah-*rai*) is a dusty, run-down place 33km southwest of Simferopol and about 64km northwest of Yalta. It's split into a new town and old town, where all the great sights are located (old town is known both as *stary gorod* or *starosel'ye*).

### Sights

The remarkable **Khan's Palace** (Khansky Palats; www.hansaray.iatp.org.ua; vul Lenina 129; adult/student & child 16/8hry; ☎ 9am-5.30pm Jul-Aug, to 4.30pm Wed-Mon May, Jun, Sep & Oct, to 4.30pm Thu-Mon Nov-Apr) was built by Russian and Ukrainian slaves in the 16th century and has been relatively well maintained since it was spared destruction by Catherine the Great in the 18th century.

Even visitors who have had enough of visiting churches and monasteries will not regret visiting the **Uspensky Monastery** (admission free). Built into the side of a cliff (note the frescoes

high up above on the cliff walls!), the working monastery has such a lovely and romantically devout feel, you may even consider signing up for monkhood yourself. The water there is said to have miraculous healing properties, and you'll see visitors filling their plastic Coca-Cola bottles with the stuff. Look across to the opposite cliffs for wild peacocks – you're likely to hear their persistent calls before you see them.

Next up is the 6th-century cave city of **Chufut-Kale** (admission free). It's a 1.5km uphill walk (much of it shady) – along the way you'll see the entrance to a Dervish and Muslim cemetery that is in ruins; only a couple of tombstones are still legible. Chufut-Kale, a honeycomb of caves and structures where people took refuge for hundreds of years, is an exciting and breathtaking place to explore. Although the joint entrance to the Uspensky Monastery and Chufut-Kale looks a bit touristy, the 1.5km uphill (but shady) walk to the cave city ensures it's not too overrun with people. Although you might see people asking you to pay for entrance, just ignore them. It's free.

### Sleeping & Eating

If you get stuck in town, or if you have fallen in love and want to stick it out another day or two, **Prival** (☎ 47 846, 52 270; fax 47 235; vul Shmidta 43; www.prival.crimea.com; dm 30hry, d 180-200hry, 2- to 4-person cottages 180-400hry) offers breathtaking vistas of the limestone cliffs, a sauna, pool, Jacuzzi, a tennis court, a restaurant... Cheap triples and quads are available too. It's a well-signed 0.5km from the entrance to the Khan's Palace. You can just show up, but keep in mind that it gets booked up from time to time with large groups.

### Getting There & Around

Enjoying all three sights as a day trip from Yalta is nearly impossible without a car. If, like many, you've made Yalta your Crimean home base and want to see everything in Bakhchysaray from there, consider making two trips or staying the night.

Because buses and trains connect Bakhchysaray with Simferopol and Sevastopol super frequently and until the evening, it's more feasible to conquer all three attractions as a day trip from one of those cities. The bus from Yalta leaves at 11am (23hry, 2½ hours) and returns at 4pm. Consider buying

your return ticket in advance if you're taking this bus, which is small and often full. You can also catch a train to Kyiv (*kupeyny/plat-skartny* 55/44hry, 17 hours, two daily) if you so desire.

All stop at the train and bus stations (located together); ask for the 'vag-zal.' Once there, take any *marshrutka* (1hry) marked *Срапоценсе* and ask for *khansky palats*. Having visited the palace, you can stick out your hand for a *marshrutka* to take you further up the road to Uspensky Monastery and Chufut-Kale – they are all going that way now, and you get off at the end of the line, when the *marshrutka* turns around. Walk up the paved path to the monastery, and keep walking to get to Chufut-Kale.

Buses to Sevastopol (7hry, one hour, every 40 minutes) run until 7pm and buses to Simferopol (5hry, one hour, every 20 minutes) run until 5pm. Trains are another option: the last one to Simferopol (3hry, 45 minutes, eight daily) leaves at 9.30pm; the last to Sevastopol (3hry, seven daily, 1½ hours) leaves at 9.45pm.

### SEVASTOPOL СЕВАСТОПОЛЬ

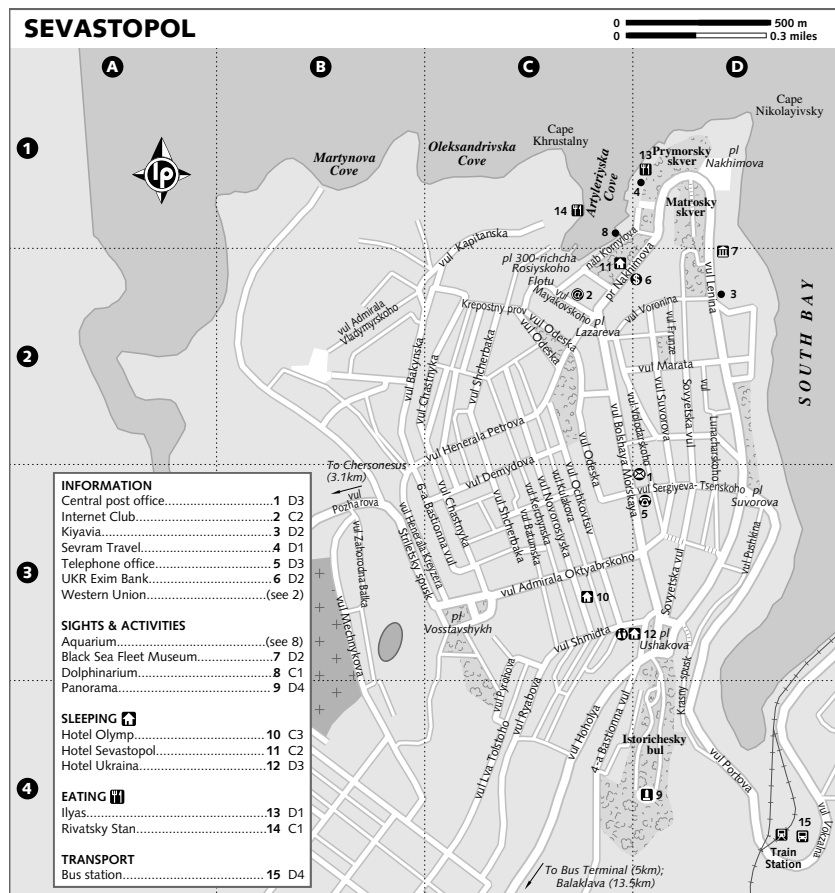
☎ 0692 / pop 328,000

Do you love a man in a uniform? Are you fascinated with all things Crimean War-related? If you've answered 'yes' to either of these questions, a visit to Sevastopol is a must. Otherwise, it's not particularly rife with things to do or sights to see – but the look and feel of Sevastopol does stand out among other Crimean cities. It dons a characteristic civic pride, and its whitewashed buildings, litterless streets, polite population and sharply dressed officers combine to form a pleasant impression of a city that is, so to say, in shipshape.

### History

Modern Sevastopol (see-va-*stope*-all in Russian) has an attractive appearance, but it was a different story when the city was making international headlines during the Crimean War. After 349 days of bombardment by the British, French and Turks in 1854–55, it lay devastated by the time of its defeat. Arriving 10 years later, Mark Twain still felt moved to remark, 'In whatsoever direction you please, your eye scarcely encounters anything by ruin, ruin, ruin!'

History repeated itself in 1942, when the city fell to the Germans after a brutal 250-day



siege. Stalin promptly proclaimed it a 'hero city' for holding out so long. Today only 10 buildings in town date from before 1945. As a military centre, Sevastopol was a 'closed' city (no tourists allowed) until 1996, and Russia has a lease on the port until 2019.

### Information

There are 24-hour ATMs along prospekt Nakhimova and vul Bolshaya Morskaya.

**Central post office** (☎ 544 881; vul Bolshaya Morskaya 21; ☎ 9am-7pm Mon-Fri, to 2pm Sat) Internet access available too.

**Internet club** (vul Mayakovskogo 4; club ☎ 24hr) About 10 not-slow computers.

**Kiyavia** (☎ 542 829; vul Lenina 13; ☎ 9am-2pm & 3-7pm Mon-Fri) Plane tickets.

**Sevram Travel** (☎ 555 878, 550 829; office@sevram.com; Office 63, Palace of Childhood, prospekt Nakhimova 4) City tours with Crimean War specialists in English and other languages. Located in the building's eastern rotunda.

**Telephone office** (☎ 9am-10pm) Near the post office.

**UKR Exim Bank** (prospekt Nakhimova 15; ☎ 9am-4.30pm Mon-Fri) Offers ATM and credit-card advances.

**Western Union** (vul Mayakovskogo 4; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat & Sun) Same building as the internet club.

### Sights

The major Crimean War sight in town is the **Panorama** (Istorichesky bulvar; admission 12hry; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun), a massive painting with 3D elements depicting the defence of Sevastopol. The **Black Sea Fleet Museum** (☎ 542 289; vul Lenina 11;

admission 15hry; ☎ 10am-5pm Wed-Sun, closed last Fri of month) provides colourful displays about the controversial Russian fleet; no English assistance is on hand. The Crimean War and naval history aside, the ruins of the ancient Greek city of **Chersonesus** (admission 10hry; ☎ 9am-7pm) are fun to explore. Founded in 422 BC, Chersonesus (Kheroneses locally) is the spot where Volodymyr the Great was famously baptised as a Christian in AD 989, thus launching what would become the Russian Orthodox Church. Except at the height of summer, when some *marshrutki* go there, a taxi (10hry) is the only option. Get your hotel to call.

Sevastopol is known for its **Dolphinarium** (☎ 559 955; naberezhnaya Kornilova 2; admission 18hry; ☎ 10am-4.30pm Tue-Sun) and adjacent **Aquarium** (☎ 543 892; adult/child 6/3hry; ☎ 9am-7pm); conditions for the animals were not particularly uplifting. It's doubtful, but perhaps that's what's being improved.

### Sleeping

**Hotel Sevastopol** (☎ 466 400; fax 466 409; prospekt Nakhimova 8; s 50-205hry, d 80-330hry, tr 108-435hry) In a palatial, historic (no lift) building, Hotel Sevastopol exudes a sort of weary grandeur with Soviet accents. Bathrooms have water heaters, but they are small – so you can count on a hot two-minute shower.

**Hotel Ukraina** (☎ 542 127; fax 545 378; vul Hoholya 2; s 170-390hry, d 260-480hry) With a sort of awkward, hot-pink attempt at sleek style (throw pillows on the common room floors?), Ukraina is definitely a step above Hotel Sevastopol in service. The rooms have a brighter look, with shinier floors and slightly better furniture, but even the higher-priced rooms have that Soviet feel one only learns to love with time.

**Hotel Olymp** (☎ 455 758, 455 789; www.olymphotel.com; vul Kulakova 86; s/d 550/700hry; ☎ ☎ ☎) On a peaceful residential street and in a hopeful-looking new yellow building, Hotel Olymp stands out from the standard Sevastopol offerings. The faux-Greek motifs are a trifle chintzy, but there's a pool and sauna, and staff at this new hotel are eager to make the place successful, so you should sense that in the service.

### Eating

Cafés and restaurants abound in the main waterfront area. In the peaceful park surrounding the Panorama are several other decent eateries.

**Rivatsky Stan** (☎ 557 278; Harbour; mains 25-85hry; ☎ 11-3am) This is possibly the best seafood restaurant in Crimea, although it also serves delicious poultry, meat, lip-smacking salads and even frog's legs and snails. Its wooden deck on the waterfront is a lovely spot for a drink at dusk, although when cruise ships are in, they obscure some of the view.

**Ilyas** (☎ 544 766; prospekt Nakhimova 2; mains 10-25hry; ☎ 9am-11pm) You'll want a table by the window here, especially at midday when the harbour shimmers all they way out to the fort. The seafood isn't as spectacular, so you might prefer the Tatar menu of *shashlik*, *pilaf*, *manty* (large minced-lamb dumplings), *bureks* and *samosas*.

### Getting There & Around

The bus station and train station are within visible walking distance of each other. Any *marshrutka* (1.50hry, pay on exit) or trolleybus from the stations will take you to the centre (prospekt Nakhimova).

From the **bus terminal** (vul Vokzalna), you can catch a ride to Simferopol (17hry, two hours, 32 daily), Yalta (20hry, two hours, 20 daily) and Bakhchysaray (11hry, one hour, 22 daily). Once-daily buses to Odesa (73hry, 13 hours) are available for hardcore kopek-pinchers who can sleep in a chair.

From the Sevastopol **train station** (vul Portovaya), there are only trains to Kyiv (*kupeyny/platskartny* 60/40hry, 17 hours, twice daily) and international trains to Moscow, St Petersburg and Minsk, but many more trains leave from nearby Simferopol (p894).

## UKRAINE DIRECTORY

### ACCOMMODATION

Book travel and accommodation well in advance if you'll be anywhere in the country during the May 1 holidays. Know that some hotels actually charge a certain percentage for the 'service' of advance booking.

Organised camping grounds are rare anywhere in Ukraine and are usually at least 10km from the city centre. Wild camping is allowed, although you have to pay an entrance fee (adult/child 6/2hry). Fires are also prohibited, although this is largely ignored.

Hostels are just starting up in Ukraine, check www.hihostels.com.ua/en for information on top of what's provided in this book.



Most budget hotels are unsightly Soviet monstrosities built in the 1960s and '70s. Rooms are often well-worn with outdated furniture, but are reasonably comfortable, clean and cheap. Many hotels have cheaper rooms with a shared bathroom. Readers have reported foot fungus to be a problem in the country, so wear flip-flops (thongs) in shared showers. Hot water can be an issue at some budget hotels, especially in Odesa and in Crimea.

Midrange hotels or more expensive rooms in budget hotels may have more polite staff and remodelled, Western-style bathrooms.

Top-end hotels usually meet most Western standards of service and aesthetics.

Private rooms in family homes are a popular option in Crimea and Odesa, especially in the summer. Look for people with signs around their necks reading *кімнати* (*kimnati*, Ukrainian) or *комнаты* (*komnaty*, Russian), both of which mean 'rooms'. Before deciding, however, always check the exact location and proximity to public transport. The cost ranges from 45hry to 80hry per person per night.

## ACTIVITIES

Hiking opportunities are richest in the Carpathian National Natural Park (p882) and around Crimea (p892). Before arrival, try to buy the *Hiking Guide to Poland & Ukraine*, by Tim Burford, which describes different hikes around Ukraine. Available in Kyiv are the detailed Topograficheskaya Karta maps, though hiking trails are poorly marked on the maps or not at all. The virtually untouched slopes of the Carpathians are starting to become popular for snow sports (p882) between November and May. Bungee jumping in Kamyanets-Podilsky (p883) is now an option for the very brave.

## BUSINESS HOURS

Official working hours are 9am (or 10am) to 5pm (or 6pm) Monday to Friday, with an hour-long break anywhere between noon and 2pm. Shops often open until about 8pm on weekdays and all day Saturday. Most bars and restaurants tend to open from 10am until 11pm or midnight; nightclubs stay open later.

## EMBASSIES & CONSULATES

### Ukrainian Embassies & Consulates

**Australia** (☎ 02-6230 5789; www.ukremb.info; Level 12, George Centre, 60 Marcus Clarke St, Canberra 2601)  
**Belarus** (☎ 017-283 1990; fax 283 1980; vul Staravilenskaya 51, Minsk)

**Canada** Ottawa (☎ 613-230 8015; www.ukremb.ca; 311 Metcalfe St); Toronto (☎ 416-763 3114, fax 763 2323) 2120 Bloor St West)

**France** (☎ 01-43 06 07 37; fax 43 06 02 94; 21 ave de Saxe, Paris)

**Germany** (☎ 4930-2888 7116; www.botschaft-ukraine.de; Albrechtstrasse 26, Berlin)

**Hungary** Budapest (☎ 1-422 4120; emb\_hu@mfa.gov.ua; 77 Stefania ut, Magyarorszag); Nyiregyhaza (☎ 42-50 67 43; gc\_hu@mfa.gov.ua; Rakoczi ut 1, Pf 190)

**Ireland** (☎ 01 668 5189; emb\_ie@mfa.gov.ua; 16 Eglin Rd, Ballsbridge Dublin)

**Japan** (☎ 813-5474 9770; 5474 9772; 3-15-6 Nishi Azabu, Minato-ku, Tokyo)

**Netherlands** (☎ 3170-362 60 95; www.oekraine.com/core/embassy; 76 Zeestraat, The Hague)

**Moldova** (☎ 3732-58 21 51; emb\_md@mfa.gov.ua; 17 Vasile Lupu str, Chişinău)

**Poland** Warsaw (☎ 022-625 01 27; emb\_pl@mfa.gov.ua; 7 Aleja Szucha); Gdansk (☎ 4858-346 06 90; gc\_plg@mfa.gov.ua; ul Jaskowa Dolina 44); Krakow (☎ 4812-429 29 36; gc\_kra@mfa.gov.ua; ul Krakowska 41)

**Romania** Bucharest (☎ 01-211 69 86; emb\_ro@mfa.gov.ua; Calea Dorobantilor nr 16); Suceava (☎ 40230-531 345; gc\_ro@mfa.gov.ua; Mihaj Vitajzu 48)

**Russia** (☎ 495-229 1079; emb\_ru@mfa.gov.ua; Leontevsky pereulok 18, Moscow)

**Slovakia** (☎ 7-5441 26 51; fax 7-5441 26 51; Radvanska 35, Bratislava)

**UK** (☎ 020-7243 8923; www.ukremb.org.uk; 78 Kensington Park Rd, London)

**USA** Washington DC (☎ 202-333-7507/08/09; www.ukraineinfo.us; 3350 M St NW); New York (☎ 212-371-5690; www.ukrainesf.com; 240 E 49th St); Chicago (☎ 312-642-4388; www.ukrchicago.com; 10 E Huron St); San Francisco (☎ 415-398-0240; www.ukrainesf.com; 530 Bush St, Ste 402)

## Embassies & Consulates in Ukraine

The following are in Kyiv unless otherwise noted.

**Australia** (☎ /fax 044-235 7586; vul Kominternu 18/137; ☎ Vokzalna)

**Belarus** (☎ 044-537 5200; ukraine@belembassy.org; vul Kotsyubynskoho 3; ☎ Universitet)

**Canada** (☎ 044-270 7144; www.kyiv.gc.ca; vul Yaroslaviv val 31)

**France** (☎ 044-278 8728; www.ambafrance.kiev.ua; vul Reitarska 39)

**Germany** (☎ 044-247 6800; www.german-embassy.kiev.ua; vul Khmelnytskoho 25; ☎ Zoloti Vorota)

**Japan** (☎ 044-490 5500; www.ua.emb-japan.go.jp; Muzeynyy prov 4, 7th fl; ☎ Maydan Nezalezhnosti)

**Moldova** (☎ 044-280 7721; moldoukr@sovamua.com; vul Sichnevoho Povstannya 6; ☎ Arsenalna)

**Netherlands** (☎ 044-490 8200; nlambkie@ukrpack.net; Kontraktova ploscha 7; ☎ Kontraktova Ploscha)

**Romania** Kyiv (☎ 044-234 5261; romania@iptelecom.net.ua; vul Kotsyubynskoho 8; ☎ Universitet); Odesa (☎ 0482-23 62 98; konsulro@tm.odessa.ua; vul Pastyora 21, Odesa)

**Russia** Kyiv (☎ 044-294 7936; embrus@public.cyb.kiev.ua; vul Kutuzova 8; ☎ Pecherska); Odesa (☎ 0482-22 22 32; consul.rf.od@farlep.net; vul Kanatanaya 83); Lviv (☎ 0322-69 20 36; consrus@viv.gu.net; vul Patona 7A)

**UK** (☎ 044-490 3600; www.britemb-ukraine.net; vul Desyatynna 9)

**USA** (☎ 044-490 0000; www.usemb.kiev.ua; vul Y Kotsyubynskoho 10)

## FESTIVALS & EVENTS

**International Labour Day** (1 May) is always a big deal no matter where you are in the former Soviet Union; bigger cities have fireworks, concerts and other performances. On 24 August, **Independence Day**, each city in Ukraine hosts a festival and parade. On April Fool's Day (1 April), Odesa celebrates **Humourina**, a huge street carnival centred around comedy. In Kamyanets-Podilsky, there's a national hot-air balloon competition, complete with stunts, in mid-May; in September is the 'Tournament of Knights', complete with jousting and sword-fighting.

## HOLIDAYS

**New Year's Day** 1 January

**Orthodox Christmas** 7 January

**International Women's Day** 8 March

**Orthodox Easter (Paskha)** April

**Labour Day** 1-2 May

**Victory Day** 9 May

**Constitution Day** 28 June

**Independence Day** 24 August

**Catholic Christmas** 25 December

## GAY & LESBIAN TRAVELLERS

Homosexuality is legal in Ukraine, but few people are very 'out' here. Looking gay doesn't raise eyebrows – some straight men can look quite gay – nor do acquaintances mind it if they know you're queer. However, you rarely, if ever, see displays of affection between two gay men or two lesbians on the street, and it may create hostility.

## LANGUAGE

Ukrainian was adopted as the sole official language at independence. However, apart from the west, many Ukrainians (especially in the south), prefer to speak Russian. A hy-

brid of the two languages, called Surzhyk, is spoken in Kyiv and other major cities. In the Carpathians, some people living outside of city centres speak a Ukrainian dialect that is influenced by Polish, Slovak and Russian; they usually understand Russian, but it may be difficult to understand their accent.

## MONEY

The hryvnia (hry) is divided into 100 units, each called a kopek. In addition to the new one-hryvnia coins, kopek coins come in denominations of one, two, five, 10, 25 and 50 kopeks, while there are one, two, five, 10, 20, 50, 100 and 200 hryvnia notes.

The only things you can legally pay for in foreign currency (usually US dollars) are international flights and foreign visas. Although many hotels give prices in US dollars or euros, you will still be paying in hryvnia.

ATMs and foreign-exchange offices (euros and US dollars only) are easily found even in small cities in Ukraine, and Western Union seems to have a desk in most banks. Exchanging money on the black market is unnecessary and illegal. Avoid bringing travellers cheques – they're hard to change.

## POST

Normal-sized letters or postcards cost 3hry to anywhere outside Ukraine by ordinary mail or a bit more for express service. Domestic services take three days to a week; international takes a week to 10 days. There are offices of DHL and FedEx in many cities.

## TELEPHONE

Every city and large town has a telephone centre (many open 24 hours), usually near the central post office. To make interstate or international calls, pay in advance at the counter inside the telephone centre (you'll get change for unused time). Avoid using public phone booths, which require specific phonecards and are a hassle. Operator assistance can be reached 24 hours at ☎ 8-191/2/3/4; English is possible but problematic.

### EMERGENCY NUMBERS

- Ambulance ☎ 03
- Fire brigade ☎ 01
- Police ☎ 02

When dialling Ukraine from abroad, dial the country code (☎ 380), the city code (without the first zero) and then the number. To call overseas from Ukraine, dial ☎ 8 (wait for a tone, then) 10, followed by the country code, city code and number. You can reach an AT&T operator by dialling ☎ 8-100-11 and an MCI operator by dialling ☎ 8-100-13.

For interstate calls within Ukraine, dial ☎ 8, wait for a tone, then the city code (with its first zero) and number – there should always be a 10-digit combination. If a telephone number has seven digits, use the first two digits of the area code, but if the telephone number has five/six digits use the first four/three digits of the area code.

### Mobile Phones

To dial a local mobile-phone number within Ukraine, you must always prefix it with an ☎ 8, as if calling another town. Common codes for mobiles include ☎ 050 and ☎ 067.

European GSM phones usually work in Ukraine, but check with your operator. If you're going to be making several calls, it makes more sense to buy a local prepaid SIM card (from 37hry). Try **Golden Telecom** (☎ 490 5000; www.goldentel.com; Sofiyivska 1a, Kyiv). The main network operators **Kyivstar** (☎ 466 0466; www.kyivstar.net; Sichnevoho Povstannia 24, Kyiv) and **UMC** (☎ 500 0500; www.umc.com.ua; Leipsytska 15). Recharge cards are sold absolutely everywhere.

### VISAS

For stays of up to 90 days, visas are no longer required for EU, US, Swiss, Canadian and Japanese citizens. Australians, Israelis, New Zealanders and South Africans still need them. Point-of-entry visas are not issued. Comprehensive information about application forms and fees can be found at www.ukremb.info.

## TRANSPORT IN UKRAINE

### GETTING THERE & AWAY

#### Air

Most international flights use Kyiv's **Boryspil international airport** (KBP; ☎ 490 4777; www.airport-boryspil.kiev.ua). Odesa receives some international flights from nearby countries; Lviv does too but not as many. Simferopol gets some only in summer. There's no departure tax in the Ukraine.

Ukraine's international airline carriers are **AeroSvit** (☎ 235 8710; www.aerosvit.com) and **Ukraine International Airlines** (☎ 461 5050; www.flyuia.com).

The following are the main international airlines with offices in Kyiv. Complete airline information, including flight schedules, can be found in the quarterly *Kyiv Business Directory* (sold outside Kyiv's central post office).

**Aeroflot** (code SU; ☎ 245 4359; www.aeroflot.com)

**Air Baltic** (code BT; ☎ 238 2668; www.airbaltic.com)

**Air France** (code AF; ☎ 496 3575; www.airfrance.com)

**Austrian Airlines** (code OS; ☎ 230 0020; www.aa.com)

**British Airways** (code BA; ☎ 585 5050; www.ba.com)

**Czech Airlines** (code OK; ☎ 281 7449; www.czechairlines.com)

**Delta** (code DL; ☎ 246 5656; www.delta.com)

**El Al** (code LY; ☎ 230 6993; www.elal.co.il)

**Estonian Air** (code OV; ☎ 289 0520; www.estonian-air.ee)

**Finnair** (code AY; ☎ 247 5777; www.finnair.com)

**KLM** (code KL; ☎ 490 2490; www.klm.com)

**LOT Polish Airlines** (code LO; ☎ 246 5620; www.lot.com)

**Lufthansa** (code LH; ☎ 490 3800; www.lufthansa.com)

**Malév Hungarian Airlines** (code MA; ☎ 490 7342; www.malev.hu)

**South African Airways** (code SA; ☎ 490 6501; www.flysaa.com)

**Swiss International Airlines** (code LX; ☎ 490 6500; www.swiss.com)

**Transaero** (code UN; ☎ 296 7870; www.transaero.ru)

**Turkish Airlines** (code TK; ☎ 490 5933; www.thy.com)

### Land

#### BUS

Buses are far slower, less frequent and less comfortable than trains for long-distance travel.

From the Kyiv central bus station there are buses to Chişinău (59hry to 70hry, 9½ hours, four daily) and Moscow (97hry to 115hry, 20 hours, one daily), as well as some nonregular buses to Minsk (88hry, 12½ hours).

From Lviv, there are buses to Poland: Warsaw (85hry, 11 hours, four daily), Kraków (75hry, two daily, nine hours) and Przemyszl (30hry, three hours, 11 daily).

From Uzhhorod, there are one or two daily buses to the Slovak cities of Košice (29hry, three hours) and Michalovce (15hry, two hours), and to the Hungarian city of Nyiregyhaza (30hry, three hours).

From Ivano-Frankivsk, you can get to Chişinău (23hry to 60hry, 14 hours, once daily), Warsaw (125hry, 14 hours, three daily),

Kraków (108hry, 10 hours, daily except Tuesday), Prague (284hry, 24 hours, daily except Monday and Thursday) and Brno (244hry, 21 hours, daily except Tuesday).

From Odesa, there are nine daily buses to Chişinău (15hry to 25hry, seven hours).

From Yalta, there is one bus a day to Chişinău (180hry, 19 hours).

### CAR & MOTORCYCLE

Always drive across official border stations to avoid complications. Foreign drivers must have an International Driving Permit and must sign a declaration that they will be leaving the country with the car by a given date (no more than two months later). You'll also need vehicle insurance valid for the former Soviet Union. Policies bought at the border often prove useless, so buy beforehand.

### TRAIN

Most cities have two stations located right next to each other. The one for regular trains (that is, those listed in this book) is referred to as ЖД (*zhe-deh*), the abbreviation for 'railway.' The other, Пріміські, is for local electric trains that go to smaller villages not covered here.

To be safe, try to get tickets a day in advance; if you're travelling during the New Year or May holidays, or going to Odesa or Crimea anytime in summer, get tickets as early as possible.

The entire country is well-connected by train to many places in Russia, and less so to major places in Belarus. The following trains leave from Kyiv.

Destination	Cost kupeyny/platskartny (hry)
Belgrade	570/-
Brest	104/68
Budapest	535/-
Chişinău	195/105
Kraków	360/-
Minsk	102/66
Moscow	230/180
Prague	530/-
Sofia	445/-
St Petersburg	398/168
Warsaw	340/-

### Sea

**London Sky Travel** (☎ 38-048 729 3195; www.lst.com.ua), in Odesa, has twice-weekly speed ferries between Varna and Odesa (eight hours,

twice weekly); it has an office at the Odesa passenger port.

### GETTING AROUND

#### Air

In Kyiv, there are several offices of **Kiyavia** (☎ 056, 490 4949; www.kiyavia.com; vul Horodetskoho 4; ☒ Khreshchatyk). Tickets within the CIS can be booked by email through Kiyavia but must be picked up in person.

Domestic airlines include **Ukraine International Airlines** (☎ 461 5050, Kyiv; www.flyuia.com) and **Aerosvit** (☎ 235 8710, Kyiv; www.aerosvit.com), which have flights between Kyiv, Lviv, Odesa, Simferopol and Ivano-Frankivsk. In Kyiv, virtually all domestic flights arrive at and depart from **Zhuliany Airport** (☎ 242 2309; 92 Provotroflotsky prospekt). In winter, flights on smaller planes are sometimes delayed or cancelled.

### Bicycle

Despite zero biking infrastructure, cycling is becoming more popular in Ukraine, even as a means of intracity travel. City roads are too congested and crumbling to make riding in them really enjoyable, but in Kyiv, you'll see people doing it anyway, and there are a few places to get away. The website www.tryukraine.com/travel/cycling.shtml is a good resource.

### Boat

In Odesa, **London Sky Travel** (☎ 38-048 729 3195; www.lst.com.ua) offers high-speed ferries between Odesa, Sevastopol and Yalta.

### Bus

Travelling around the country by train is often far quicker and more comfortable than by bus. Most public buses are decrepit, but a few private bus companies, such as **Autolux** (www.autolux.com.ua), offer comfortable services between points in Crimea, Kyiv, Odesa and Lviv. Schedules and price information are available on the website.

Larger cities often have several *avtovokzal* (bus terminals) but only one normally handles long-distance routes of interest to travellers. Tickets can be bought one or two days in advance at the major bus terminal and sometimes at separate ticket offices in the city centres.

### Car & Motorcycle

To drive a private or rented vehicle to and around Ukraine you'll need an International

Driving Permit and acceptable insurance. Ukraine participates in the Green Card System (p934), so procure one in advance, as border guards have been known to sell useless policies.

Drive on the right. Unless otherwise indicated, speed limits are 60km/h in towns, 90km/h on major roads and 110km/h on highways. Speed traps are common and traffic police often wave you down without obvious reason. Fines for speeding start at 40hry but most officers are open to negotiation (meaning you pay less – 20hry – but don't get an official receipt).

It's a criminal offence to drive after consuming alcohol or without wearing a seat belt. Legally you must always carry a fire extinguisher, first-aid kit and warning triangle.

**Avis** ([www.avis.com](http://www.avis.com)), **Europcar** ([www.europcar.com](http://www.europcar.com)) and **Hertz** ([www.hertz.com.ua](http://www.hertz.com.ua)) have offices in Ukraine, including Kyiv, Lviv, Odesa, Simferopol and Yalta. Rental starts at 275hry a day (for a weekly hire). Check insurance and hire conditions carefully.

### Local Transport

Cheap but crowded trolleybuses, trams and buses operate in all cities and major towns. Tickets can be bought on board and *must*

be punched to be validated – look for others doing this to see how.

The fare for any given *marshrutka* (see p730) is displayed prominently at the front inside each bus; payment is usually taken upon entry but sometimes upon exit. To stop a *marshrutka*, simply hold out your hand and it will stop. Jump in, sit down, pass cash to the driver (a human chain operates if you are not sitting close enough) and then call out '*ostanove-tyes po-zha-lusta!*' when you want to get out and the driver will pull over.

Although it's often possible to hire an official taxi in larger towns, private taxis are a popular and surprisingly safe alternative, but difficult if you don't speak Ukrainian or Russian. Negotiate a price before you get in, and never get into a car if there's already a passenger.

### Train

Train travel is normally frequent, cheap and efficient. An overnight train is an economical way to get around, and most services are timed to depart at dusk and arrive in the morning (after dawn). For information on train classes and terminology, see p937.

If you will be travelling during the 1 May holidays, book tickets in advance.