Ukraine Україна

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Kyiv** Get down and dirty with the capital's nightlife, and repent in the morning at one of many glorious churches (p1177)
- Lviv Sip a cappuccino or a beer beneath the Gothic eaves of this haunting city (p1181)
- **Best journey** Board a night train in the awesome capital, Kyiv (p1177), and wake up in lovely Lviv (p1181), a totally different Ukrainian world

FAST FACTS

- **Area** The biggest in Europe, at 603,700 sq km
- ATMs Widespread
- Budget At least 250hry per day
- Capital Kyiv
- Country code 🕿 380
- Famous for The Orange Revolution; Chornobyl
- **Head of State** President Viktor Yushchenko
- Languages Ukrainian (official), Russian
- Money Ukrainian hryvnia (hry);
 A\$1 = 3.75hry, CA\$1 = 4.55hry,
 ¥100 = 4.46hry, NZ\$1 = 3.15hry, €1 =
 6.44hry, UK£1 = 9.37hry, US\$1 = 5.02hry
- Phrases doh-brih dyen (hello),



ya nih rah-zoo-mee-yu (I don't understand), dya-koo-yoo (thanks)

- Population 48.4 million
- Time GMT/UTC +2
- Visas Required for Australians and New Zealanders; arrange in advance

TRAVEL HINTS

Watch out for the heavy entrance doors to the Kyiv metro stations – they really pack a punch. And if you're diving into your chicken Kiev for the first time, cut into it carefully; inside is a ball of hot melted butter that can spray like a geyser if you're not careful...

ROAMING UKRAINE

Kick around Kyiv for at least three days, and give Lviv your lovin' for two or more.

The spirit of rebellion still sizzles in Ukraine, where the Orange Revolution rocked the government walls, and the world at large, with its peaceful, successful protest against corrupt elections. Finally, democracy has taken a foothold, as the glamorous fashionistas, hip cafés and clubs, and speeding, expensive cars with tinted windows make clear: Ukraine is on the move – and it's tough to keep up.

The capital is awesome, with grand, ancient religious sites and more nightclubs than you can shake a Polaroid picture at. And just a train ride away is super nationalistic, Old World Lviv, where the purest strains of the Ukrainian language are spoken with pride under the Gothic eaves of fragrant cafés.

Since the revolution, visa restrictions have loosened, and most travellers don't need one anymore. With the recent opening of youth hostels, there's no good reason you shouldn't explore to the very edges of Eastern Europe.

HISTORY

Before the 13th century, Ukraine was yanked back and forth by nogoodniks such as the Huns and Mongols before settling in the hands of Russian princes. By the 15th century, groups of fierce, wild fighters calling themselves Cossacks (sort of like punks on horseback) fought anyone who encroached upon their borders or belief system (Orthodoxy).

In 1932 and 1933, Stalin engineered a famine, killing millions in Ukraine. In WWII, an estimated six million Ukrainians died.

Ukraine declared independence from the USSR in August 1991, and Leonid Kuchma was the scheming president until recently. He knew he wouldn't be able to run in the October 2004 presidential elections, so his crony Viktor Yanukovych ran instead. But the international press and Ukrainian public were all about Viktor Yushchenko, who was poisoned a week before the elections, allegedly by political foes, turning his ruggedly handsome face...just rugged.

Because no one carried more than 50% of the votes in the first round, there was a run-off, which showed Yanukovych as the winner. But people didn't buy it, and the next day 500,000 people gathered on Kyiv's maydan Nezalezhnosti with tents and orange flags. They stayed on in the snow, sometimes numbering over a million, until 26 December 2004, when a new run-off took place. Yushchenko won and was inaugurated in January 2005.

He chose lovely, powerful and crafty Yuliya Timoshenko (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 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

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

- Ambulance 03
- Fire 🕿 01
- Police 🕿 02

and a Russian oil crisis. Near-daily protests in Kyiv have been a reflection of the citizens' impatience at the sluggish pace of reform. In September 2005, the president fired Timoshenko under political pressure. And ironically, in August 2006, possibly in an attempt to patch up relations with powerful Russia-backed interests, Yushchenko named his former foe, Viktor Yanukovych, as prime minister.

READING UP

Everything Is Illuminated, by Jonathan Safran Foer, is the unforgettable, mostly fictional story of the author's trip to western Ukraine to find the woman who saved his grandfather from the Nazis.

THE CULTURE

The Ukrainian population is 78% Ukrainian and 17% Russian. The remainder includes Belarusians, Moldovans, Bulgarians, Poles, Hungarians, Romanians, Tatars and Jews. Almost all of the country's Tatar population (about 250,000) lives in Crimea.

Although most Ukrainians speak Russian, many people in Lviv will not use the language, and the number of English-language speakers is growing.

RELIGION

Nearly 97% of Ukrainian believers are Christian. Central and southern Ukraine mostly follow the Moscow-based Ukrainian Orthodox Church, while the rest of the country follows either the Kyiv-based Uniate Church (also known as the Ukrainian Catholic Church, and under the jurisdiction of the Vatican). There are some small Jewish minorities in cities. Muslim communities, primarily Tatars, live in Crimea.

ENVIRONMENT

On 26 April 1986, reactor No 4 at Chornobyl (Chernobyl in Russian) nuclear power station, 100km north of Kyiv, exploded and almost 9 tonnes of radioactive matter spewed into the sky. Roughly 4.9 million people living in northern Ukraine, southern Belarus and southwestern Russia were affected. Western



monitors now figure that radioactivity levels at Chornobyl are negligible, so organised tours of the site and surrounding 'ghost' villages occur, if you dare. A Web search will reveal agencies offering tours.

TRANSPORT

GETTING THERE & AWAY

AeroSvit, Ukrainian International Airlines and major European airlines fly to and from Kyiv's airports:

Boryspil Airport (a 490 7777; www.airport-borispol .kiev.ua) International flights, some domestic; 35km from centre.

Zhulyany Airport (242 2308; Povitroflotskii praspekt 92) Domestic and short international flights; 4km from Kyiv.

Boat

See www.ukrferry.com, www.lst.com.ua or www.eugeniatours.com.ua for details on boat travel on the Black Sea.

Bus

Apart from **Autolux** (www.autolux.ua) – a private company with comfortable domestic buses – train travel is far preferable.

Train

Passports are required for ticket purchases in Kyiv. Kyiv is a good hub, with daily trains to all surrounding countries and Ukrainian cities.



GETTING AROUND

Car rentals (Avis, Hertz and Europear) are available in Kyiv and Lviv, but sometimes only allow driving in the city.

КҮІV КИЇВ

☎ 044 / pop 2.66 million

The new Kyiv is flashy, fast and ready for action. Ukraine's capital has as much to offer as its more high-maintenance sister, Moscow – but with a gentler touch and lower price tag. Explore the Caves Monastery, where mummified monks still receive the prayers and kisses of believers. Do some souvenir shopping on steep, winding Andriyivsky

uzviz. Catch an awe-inspiring glimpse of the gargantuan steel Soviet woman on the banks of the gentle Dnipro River. Take a leisurely stroll down vulitsa 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

The main street, closed to motor traffic on Saturday and Sunday, is vulitsa Khreshchatyk. The Dnipro River flows north—south just east of the centre. Although there are some nice sandy beach areas along the east side of the river (called the Left Bank), the area is generally devoid of interest and somewhat dangerous at night.

Get a metro map in front of the post office.

INFORMATION

There are no tourist information centres in Kviv.

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

Hotel maids will do laundry for a reasonable rate. Many apartment rentals offer a washing machine.

Left-luggage offices are at the train and bus stations; hotels will hold luggage for free.

ATMs and currency-exchange booths are ubiquitous. Rates offered by hotels are not necessarily worse. Larger banks will cash travellers cheques and give cash advances on credit cards.

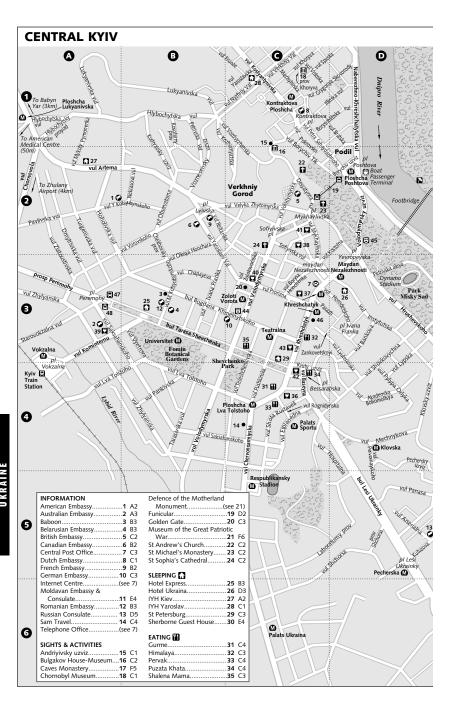
American Medical Centre (490 7600, emergency 461 9595; www.amcenters.com; vulitsa Berdychivsta 1) English-speaking dental and medical services at American standards. West of the centre.

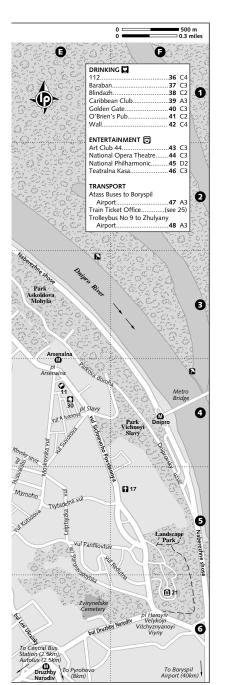
Baboon (234 1503; vulitsa Bohdana Khmelnytskoho 39) A hip bookstore-restaurant—performance venue.

Central post office (a 065; vulitsa Khreshchatyk 22)
Has a 24-hour phone office.

Sam Travel (287 5019; vulitsa Chervonoarmiyska 34) City tours and popular Chornobyl tours.

SIGHTS





GETTING INTO TOWN

From Boryspil airport, taxis cost 100hry (45 minutes). For 10hry, half-hourly Atass buses go to the train station and ploshcha Peremohy. From Zhulyany airport, take trolleybus 9 (40 minutes) to ploshcha Peremohy; a taxi is 40hry.

The train station is linked to the metro. From the Central Bus Station take minibus 457 (1.50hry), trolleybus 4, 11 or 12, or tram 9 or 10 one stop to metro Lybidska.

St Sophia's Cathedral (278 2083; Sofiyivska ploshcha; adult/child 11/4hry, grounds 1hry, bell tower 3hry; 10am-5.30pm Fri-Tue, 10am-4.30pm Wed, grounds 8.30am-8pm) holds a monastery and the city's oldest church (built 1017−31). The entire complex is on Unesco's World Heritage List.

Your visit wouldn't be complete without a walk along steep, cobblestoned **Andriyivsky uzviz** (Andrew's descent), one of the oldest and definitely the quaintest street in town. It's lined with souvenir stands. Avoid the incline by taking the **funicular** (admission 50 kopeks; \mathfrak{D} 6.30am-11pm; \mathfrak{M} Ploshcha Poshtova) to the top, where you'll find **St Michael's Monastery**, and further down, the 1754 **St Andrew's Church**. From there, you can spend an hour or two shopping down the uzviz (descent).

Erected in 1037, the **Golden Gate** was the original entrance into Old Kyiv. It was under reconstruction during research, but it's still worth a glimpse from the street. Notice the chapel at the top.

The coolest museums include the moving, must-see artistic display at Chornobyl Museum (2 470 5422; provulok Khoryva; admission 5hry; Y 10am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-5pm Sat, closed last Mon of month). Also try Bulgakov House-Museum (416 3188; Andriyivsky uzviz 13; admission 3hry; 10am-5pm Thu-Tue), where the author of The Master & Margarita lived in the early 20th century. It's often booked in advance with tour groups. The Museum of the Great Patriotic War (295 9452; vulitsa Sichnevoho Povstannya 44; admission 4hry; Y 10am-4pm Tue-Sun) has triumphant displays of Soviet heroism. If you even approach the area, you'll soon see on the horizon the 108m-tall metal Soviet woman that is 'Rodina Mat', or the Defence of the Motherland Monument. For decades, she has been affectionately known as 'Tin Tits' among expats.

SLEEPING

A good option is to rent an apartment. Try Teren Plus (428 1010; www.teren.kiev.ua) and UA **Apartments** (**a** 205 9292; www.uaapartments.com).

The following options list high-season, weekday rates; Saturday and Sunday are

IYH Kiev (331 0260; www.hihostels.com.ua; bldg 2, 5th fl, vulitsa Artema 52A; dm 117hry) A good deal is hard to find, and so is this place. Rooms are new and simple; there's no kitchen. A detailed map is on the website.

IYH Yaroslav (331 0260; www.hihostels.com.ua; vulitsa Yaroslavska 10; dm 110-130hry) Easier to find than the IYH Kiev and in Podil, a cute older neighbourhood.

St Petersburg (279 7364; s-peter@i.kiev.ua; bulvar Tarasa Shevchenka 4; s with private bathroom 294-343hry, d with private bathroom 381-572hry, s with shared bathroom 143-165hry, d with shared bathroom 172-196hry, tr with shared bathroom 237-270hry) Staffed by women happy to have a job where they can watch The Swan between customers. The shared bathrooms are clean and turn the place into an incredible bargain, but the place may be bought up soon. Sherborne Guest House (295 8832; www.sherborne hotel.com.ua: Sichneviv provulok 9: ste 364-936hrv) Awesome apartments make this good for small groups. On-site staff speak English.

Hotel Express (239 8995; www.expresskiev.com; bulvar Tarasa Shevchenka 38/40; s 236-600hry, d 834hry, ste 1282-1627hry; 🔀 💷 ; M Universitet) The rooms with shared bathroom are the best deal, but there are only a few and you'll have to request them specifically; 'improved' rooms are hard to tell from the unimproved ones.

Hotel Ukraina (279 0266; www.ukraine-hotel.kiev .ua; vulitsa Instytutska 4; s 335-490hry, d 450-560hry, ste 450-990hry) Location is the best reason to stay in this Stalinist behemoth overlooking maydan Nezalezhnosti.

EATING

Gurme (vulitsa Chervonoarmiyska 12; mains 5-10hry) and Puzata Khata (246 7245; vulitsa Baseyna 1/2a; mains 5-15hry) are cheap, popular caféterias.

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

Himalaya (270 5437; vulitsa Khreshchatyk 23; mains 15-60hry) Great Indian, and the location along

Khreshchatyk is good for scoping the mainstreet scene.

Book accommodation online at lonelyplanet.com

Pervak (235 0952; vulitsa Rognidynska 2; mains 25-65hry) Soviet style is super-hip here. There's high-quality Ukrainian food, a fun bar scene and sometimes live music. Old Soviet movies play on screens throughout the restaurant.

DRINKING & CLUBBING

Most clubs have a cover that varies (10hry to 50hry). Extensive lists of performances are featured in What's On, available at Baboon (p1177), where there are often small concerts.

Art Club 44 (229 4137; vulitsa Khreshchatyk 44; cover varies) Lots of beer, booze and food (try the pea soup) at this locally famous liveconcert venue.

Baraban (229 2355; vulitsa Prorizna 4a) Called The Drum in English, Baraban 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 Zhytomirska 15) A dive bar is decked with war paraphernalia. The food sucks

Wall (235 8045: Bessarabska ploshcha 2) Look for the red sign over the door.

112 (230 9633; vulitsa Chervonoarmiyska 5, Arena Complex) The number one dance club for expats and those who want to meet them.

Caribbean Club (235 5222; vulitsa Kominternu 4) Kviv's premier Latin disco; great dancers strut their stuff.

Golden Gate (235 5188; vulitsa Zolotovoritska 15) and O'Brien's Pub (229 1584; vulitsa Mykhaylivska 17A) are two Irish-style pubs popular with expats.

ENTERTAINMENT

Schedules and advance tickets (cheeeeap!) are available at the teatralna kasa (vulitsa Khresh-

GETTING INTO TOWN

Marshrutka (a minivan that runs as a private bus) 95 links the airport and the centre, as does trolleybus 9 from the university building on vulitsa Universytetska. A taxi there will cost 25hry to 35hry.

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

Marshrutkas 71 and 180 from prospekt Svobody or trolleybus 5 from ploshcha Petrushevycha go to/from the long-distance bus terminal.

chatyk 21); same-day tickets are available at the

National Opera Theatre (234 7165; www.opera .com.ua; vulitsa Volodymyrska 50) A performance at this lavish opera house is a grandiose affair.

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

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Kyiv's Central Bus Station (265 0430; ploshcha Moskovska 3) is about 3km south of the centre.

The modern train station (© 005; ploshcha Vokzalna 2) is next to Vokzalna metro station. Foreigners must use windows No 40 or 41; to get there, use the escalator, walk towards the end of the station and go right. The train ticket office (© 050; bulvar Tarasa Shevchenka 38/40), next to Hotel Express, is less hectic. For destinations in the Commonwealth of Inependent States (CIS), go to Hall No 1, down a hallway on the left as you enter the main area.

Tickets for buses, trolleybuses and trams are 50 kopeks; minibuses are 1hry to 1.50hry. Kyiv transport runs from 5.45am to 11pm. The metro costs 50 kopeks.

Taxis are easy to find, but drivers rarely use their meter - set a price beforehand. By phone, try FM Taxi (502 0502), which has a metered rate

LVIV JIBIB

☎ 032(2) / pop 745,000

Gorgeous and glorious, Lviv (Lvov in Russian) knows it's next up on the list of hot new Eastern European destinations. The city's atmosphere of mystery is absolutely enticing, and if you're not already a photographer, artist or writer, Lviv will inspire you to become one. The cityscape is an unforgettable vision of Gothic, Renaissance, baroque and neoclassical buildings smudged black with age, and the quiet alleys and mesmerising façades make Lviv the type of place you can happily get lost in.

INFORMATION

If a Lviv phone number has seven digits, the area code for it is 3032; if it has six, it's **☎** 0322.

Internet Klub (72 27 38; vulitsa Dudaeva 12; per hr 4hry; (24hr) Cheap international calls, too. Khuru Books (72 25 50; ploshcha Mitskevycha)

Weirdly compartmentalised, with separate sections having separate entrances.

Main post office (2 065; vulitsa Slovatskoho 1) The telephone office around the corner is open 7am to 11pm. Oschadnyy Bank (27 27 93; vulitsa Sichovkyh Striltsiv 9) Full banking services, including Western Union and traveller's cheque cashing.

Tourist Information Centre (2 97 57 67; www .tourism.lviv.ua; vulitsa Pidvalna 3) English-speaking staff arrange city tours and day trips in many languages. There are plans to move the centre back to the ratusha (city hall) on ploshcha Rynok.

SIGHTS

There are lots of museums in the old town, but nothing's signed in English. The main draw is exploring the meandering alleys lined with amazing architecture. Apart from wandering around the gorgeous old town and ogling the architecture, you can head to the High Castle for hilltop views.

Lychakiv Cemetery (vulitsa Mechinikova; admission 4hry; 9am-5pm Mon-Fri) is one of the most beautiful in Eastern Europe. Take tram 7 five stops from vulitsa Pidvalna (by the outdoor book market) to Lychakivska Kladovyshche.

The Pharmacy Museum (72 20 41; vulitsa Drukarska 2; admission 1.50hry; 🕥 10am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat & Sun) is in the back of a functioning pharmacy that dates to 1735. Pay the pharmacists to open it up for you, and walk into a world of containers, drawers and other gadgets for herbs, tinctures and salves. You can buy a small bottle of medicinal 'iron wine'.

SLEEPING

Hotel Lviv (79 22 70; fax 72 86 51; praspekt Chornovola 7; s with private bathroom 100-120hry, d with private bathroom 135-200hry, s/d with shared bathroom 50/110hry)
The worst choice for pleasantness; but it does OK in a pinch.

Hotel Nezalezhnist (75 72 14; fax 75 45 61; vulitsa Tershakivtsiv 6a; s/d with private bathroom 120/130hry, d with shared bathroom 80hry) It's Soviet, but with sunshine, church views and leopard-print blankets. Hot water is available only from 7am to 11am. From the train station, take tram 9a to the end of the line, walk east on Pekarska, go right on Tershakivtsiv and walk 100m.

Banking Academy Hostel (296 5734; vulitsa Kopernyka 14; dm 120hry; (Jul & Aug) The only bummer about this awesome new hostel is it's only open July and August.

Afena (296 5834; vulitsa Khymychna 49A; dm 120hry) A good HI hostel option. It's not quite as central (linked by buses), but it's open year-round. See www.hihostels.com.ua for booking and other Lviv hostel options.

Hotel George (72 59 52; www.georgehotel.com .ua; ploshcha Mitskevycha 1; s/tw with private bathroom 319/388hry, s/tw with shared bathroom 154/187hry) The George has a weary grandeur that's very charming. The rooms with shared bathroom are a superduper deal. Staff speak some English and are good-humoured.

EATING & DRINKING

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

Puzata Khata (240 3265; vulitsa Sichovykh Striltsiv; mains 5-15hry) This popular caféteria-style chain serves up Ukrainian staples.

Europa (72 58 62; prospekt Shevchenka 14; mains 12-30hry) Small, cosy and relatively quiet, Europa is a good place for a filling meal of Ukrainian

Dryzga (vulistya Virmenska 35) Caffeine and alcohol are both served at this bohemian café/arts

Korzo Pub (296 7092; vulitsa Brativ Rohatvntsiv 10) Expats and locals both enjoy this Irish-style pub; eat elsewhere.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

The Lviv airport (69 21 12; www.avia.lviv.ua) is 9km west of the centre. There are flights Monday to Friday only to/from Kyiv.

The **train station** (**3**5 33 60, 26 19 06; ploshcha Dvirtseva) is 1.75km west of the centre. Get tickets at the train ticket office (748 20 68: vulitsa Hnatyuka 20); be prepared to stand in line a while. There are four daily trains to Kyiv.

The long-distance bus terminal (63 24 73; vulitsa Stryiska 271) is 8km south of the centre. Advance tickets for public buses to Kyiv (three daily) and international destinations are sold at the bus ticket office (297 11 08; vulitsa Teatralna 26) - look for the каса sign. Privately run Autolux (www.autolux.com.ua) operates from the long-distance terminal, sending nice, modern buses to Kyiv and other cities; see the website for details.

GETTING AROUND

Walking is the best option around central Lviv. There are multitudes of marshrutki (minivans that run as private buses) marked Центр (Center); any of these should traverse the main part of prospekt Svobody.

UKRAINE DIRECTORY

ACCOMMODATION

Book travel and accommodation well in advance during the 1 May holidays. Hostels are just starting up in Ukraine; check www .hihostels.com.ua/en for details.

Most budget hotels are unsightly Soviet monstrosities built in the '60s and '70s. Rooms are often well-worn with outdated furniture, but are reasonably comfortable.

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

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 3pm. Shops often open until about 8pm Monday to Friday and all day Saturday. Most bars and restaurants tend to open from 10am until 11pm or midnight; clubs stay open later.

EMBASSIES & CONSULATES Ukrainian Embassies & Consulates

Australia (2 02-6230 5789; www.ukremb.info; Level 12, George Centre, 60 Marcus Clarke St, Canberra) Canada Ottawa (613-230 8015; www.ukremb.ca; 311 Metcalfe St): Toronto (416-763 3114; fax 416-763 2323; 2120 Bloor St West)

France (331 43 06 07 37; fax 331 43 06 02 94; 21 ave de Saxe, Paris)

Germany (4930 2888 71 16; www.botschaft-ukraine .de; Albrechstrasse 26, Berlin)

16 Eglin Rd, Ballsbridge, Dublin)

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

UK (**a** 044-7243 8923; www.ukremb.org.uk; 78 Kensington Park Rd, London)

USA Washington (202-333 7507/08/09; www .ukraineinfo.us: 3350 M St NW, Washington, DC); 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 (A /fax 235 7586; vulitsa Kominternu 18) Belarus (\$\infty\$ 537 5200; ukraine@belembassy.org; vulitsa M Kotsyubynskoho 3)

Canada (**a** 270 7144; www.kyiv.gc.ca; vulitsa Yaroslaviv Val 31)

France (278 8728; www.ambafrance.kiev.ua; vulitsa Reitarska 39)

Germany (247 6800; www.german-embassy.kiev.ua; vulitsa Bogndana Khmelnytskoho 25)

Moldova (280 7721; moldoukr@sovamua.com; vulitsa Sichnevoho Povstannya 6; (M) Arsenalna)

Netherlands (490 8200; nlambkie@ukrpack.net; Kontraktova ploshcha 7)

Romania (234 5261; romania@iptelecom.net.ua; vulitsa M Kotsyubynskoho 8)

Russia Kyiv (294 7936; embrus@public.icyb.kiev.ua; vulitsa Kutuzova 8); Lviv (69 20 36; consrus@lviv .gu.net; vulitsa Patona 7a)

UK (490 3600; www.britemb-ukraine.net; vulitsa Desyatynna 9)

USA (**a** 490 0000; www.usemb.kiev.ua; vulitsa Y Kotsyubynskoho 10)

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

International Labour Day (1 May) is always a big deal. On the last weekend of May, the capital celebrates Kyiv Days.

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

INTERNET RESOURCES

Try the huge www.brama.com; click on TravelBB for a traveller's forum about Ukraine

MONEY

One hryvnia equals 100 kopeks. The only things you can legally pay for in US dollars are international flights and foreign visas. ATMs, currency exchanges and Western Unions will never be hard to find

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 services take a week to 10 days.

TELEPHONE

Every city and large town has a telephone centre (many open 24 hours), usually near the central post office. Pay in advance (you will get change for unused time). Public phones are a hassle. Operator assistance can be reached 24 hours a day at 8-191/2/3/4; it's possible but problematic to speak in English to an operator.

When dialling Ukraine from abroad, dial **1** 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 at 8-100-13

For interstate calls within Ukraine, dial **a** 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.

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

VISAS
For stays of up to 90 days, visas are no longer required for EU, US, Swiss, Canadian and lananese citizens. Australia and lananese citizens. Japanese citizens, Australians and New Zealanders still need visas (and the visas should be obtained before you leave home; not in a neighbouring country). Point-of-entry visas are not issued. Comprehensive information about application and fees can be found at www.ukremb.info.

© Lonely Planet Publications. To make it easier for you to use, access to this chapter is not digitally restricted. In return, we think it's fair to ask you to use it for personal, non-commercial purposes only. In other words, please don't upload this chapter to a peer-to-peer site, mass email it to everyone you know, or resell it. See the terms and conditions on our site for a longer way of saying the above - 'Do the right thing with our content.'