

## TOUR: KIEV-ODESSA-LVIV

10 days/9 nights



*In the beginning there was Kiev (Kyiv). Long before anyone knew what Ukraine and Russia were, the city's inhabitants were already striding up and down the green hills, idling hot afternoons away on the Dnipro River and promenading along Kreshchatyk – then a stream, now the main avenue. From here, East Slavic civilization spread all the way to Alaska. But, thanks to its many reincarnations, there are few signs of ageing on Kyiv's face. Wearing its latest, national-capital hat, it reveals itself as young, humorous and rebellious – and the stage for two revolutions in only one decade.*

### DAY 1 KIEV

#### Arrival in Kiev

*Kiev is not only the capital of Ukraine but also the mother city for all Eastern Slavic peoples. Kievan Rus, the state from which Ukraine, Russia and Belarus are all descended, was established here between the 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries. The modern centre and the remains of the old city are both on the hilly west bank of the mighty Dnipro River. Today Kiev is the city to be admired up close and from afar, a dramatic skyline and a charismatic blend of business, art and culture. It is perfect mix of international flair and regional traditions place it on a par with other world-class metropolises.*

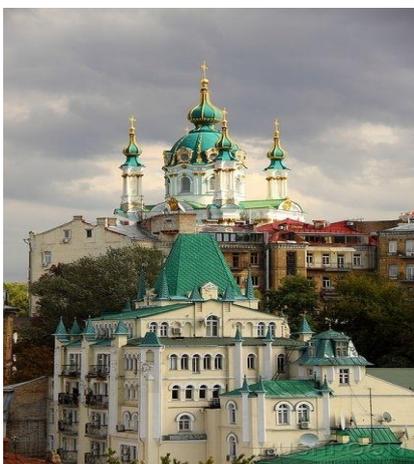
Meeting with guide.

Transfer to hotel.

Check in hotel.

Evening is at leisure for personal exploration of this beautiful city, cultural events and concerts and of course exciting night life.

### DAY 2 KIEV



Today our tour starts in the Old Town of this ancient city. En route we will see **University, Opera and Ballet Theatre**, the historic main gateway into the ancient city **Golden Gate**, newly renovated **Michael's Cathedral** and St. **Sophia Cathedral (outside)**, the UNESCO heritage site and the city's oldest standing church, that was built in 1017-31. Continue to the charming **Andriyivsky slope** the oldest and steepest street in Kiev with picturesque **Andrew's church**, an inspired Baroque interpretation by Rastrelli. Art galleries, shops and studios are in abundance, making the slope a hot spot for Ukrainian crafts and art works.

Enjoy exciting **funicular cable car ride** to ancient **Low Town District of Podil** that rests on bank of the mighty Dnipro River. Podil is famous for its numerous markets and fairs, **the port**, endless number of historic buildings including Kiev's **first pharmacy, post office**, aqueduct, **Mohyla Academy** all of which we will see this afternoon.

Continue to the principal street of the city **Khreshatik** and famous **Independence square**, better known as **Maidan**, the site of two recent revolutions, beautiful fountains, chestnut trees alley and endless choice of bars and restaurants to enjoy after the tour and make friends with locals.



### DAY 3 KIEV

#### Optional

**Excursion to Chernobyl (11 hours)** – tour inside the **30 km exclusion zone** is a fascinating and worthwhile experience. It offers a window into a world that no longer exists – like a modern-day Pompeii. It is a unique opportunity not only to see the site of the worse nuclear disaster but also an invitation to travel back in time. See **Nuclear Power Station** and visit nearby **“ghost town” of Pripjat** with abandoned schools and houses, stop near **“Red Forest”** back-grounding by crackling sounds of Geiger counters and meet local re-settlers who moved back to native village after evacuation.

Amount of radiation one gets during the trip is similar to trans-Atlantic flight level and less than x-ray scanning.

Return to Kiev.

### DAY 4 KIEV – ODESSA Travel Options

Optional our destination is another UNESCO heritage site of **Kiev-Caves Lavra Monastery**. Founded three km south of where Kiev stood in 1051, the **Caves Monastery** was Kievan Rus first and for a long time most famous monastery. Spread across wooded slopes above the Dnipro River, it is a unique array of gold-domed churches, **underground labyrinths lined with mummified monks**, and elegant monastic buildings turned into museums.

Transfer to railway station or airport.

### **OPTION A domestic flight**



Regular one our flights are available daily from both Kiev Borispol (KBP)

### **OPTION B intercity train**

Intercity trains run daily between Kiev and Odessa.

Evening 16:40-23:38

There's also an overnight train option available with 2 or 4 berths sleeper compartments.

Timings are: 21:15-06:19

Arrival in Odessa.

Check in hotel.



*Odessa is a city straight from literature – an energetic, decadent boom town. Its famous Potemkin Steps sweep down to the Black Sea and Ukraine's biggest commercial port. Behind them, a cosmopolitan cast of characters makes merry among pastel neoclassical buildings lining a geometrical grid of leafy streets. Immigrants from all over Europe were invited to make their fortune here when Odesa was founded in the late 18th century by Russia's Catherine the Great. These new inhabitants, particularly Jews, gave Russia's southern window on the world a singular, subversive nature.*



### **DAY 5 ODESSA**

The site of Odessa, used as both major port and fort, was controlled from 1526 to 1789 by the Ottoman Turks. During its expansionist campaign in the 18th century, Russia took this coastal region & constructed a new port at Odessa, rebuilding the town & naming it after the ancient Greek colony Odessos, thought to be nearby.

Taking in the main highlights of Odessa this morning tour involves some walking. The city center was designed to a classical plan with wide tree-lined streets, stretching south from

***Prymorsky boulevard.*** Its beauty lies in the early 19th century buildings, the shady promenade, the park tumbling towards the sea and the sweep of the impressive ***Potemkin Steps***. The 193 steps, built between 1837 and 1841, descend from a ***statue of the Duc de Richelieu*** in a Roman Toga. At the eastern end a ***Pushkin statue*** and a British ***Tiger Gun***, captured in 1854 during the Crimean campaign, stand before the pink-and-white colonnaded ***Odessa City Hall***. At the western end of the boulevard is the ***Palace of Vorontsov*** – the residence of a former governor of the city built in 1826 in a classical style with surprising Arabic detailing on the interior.

#### **DAY 6 ODESSA**

Optional **Catacombs** – the sandstone on which Odessa stands is riddled with about **1000 km of tunnels**, quarried out for building in the 19th century. They have been used by smugglers, revolutionaries, and WWII partisans. Your morning tour includes the visit to one of the networks of tunnels in Nerubayske village on the north-west edge of Odessa, which sheltered a group of partisans during WWII and now has been turned into the ***Museum of Partisan Glory*** which is also known as ***Catacombs***.

#### **DAY 7 ODESSA**

Time for a leisure.

Transfer to airport

**domestic flight** via Kiev Borispol (KBP) or overnight train to Lviv 22:29 - 09:02

#### **DAY 7 LVIV**

Arrival in Lviv

Transfer to hotel.



***LVIV*** was founded as a hilltop fort in the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century by Danylo Halytsky, prince of Galicia and Volyn, a former western principality of Kyivan Rus. Lviv is now regarded as one of the main cultural centres of today's Ukraine. The historical heart of Lviv with its old buildings and cobblestone streets has survived Soviet and Nazi occupation during World War II largely unscathed. The city has many industries and institutions of higher education such as Lviv University and Lviv Polytechnic. Lviv is also a home to many world-class cultural institutions, including a philharmonic orchestra and the famous Lviv Theatre of Opera and Ballet. The historic city centre is on the **UNESCO World Heritage List**.

Our morning tour of Lviv includes an orientation tour of this charming city with its elegant buildings, numerous Catholic and Orthodox churches, **Jewish quarter, ancient Armenian Cathedral, Boimiv chapel**, the oldest functioning **Pharmacy-museum** in the city which occupies a 16<sup>th</sup> century building on the **Market Sq.** – the hub of Lviv life from the 14<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Today it is the best-preserved urban area in Ukraine. And of course, we will pay a visit to the city's elegant **Opera and Ballet Theater**, architectural gem of Lviv built in the Neo-Renaissance style in 1901 and now considered to be one of the most beautiful theatres in Europe.

#### DAY 8 LVIV

Today we will visit the **High Castle Hill**, the 14<sup>th</sup> century remains of a stone castle that replaced the earlier 13<sup>th</sup> century wooden fort with excellent 360<sup>o</sup> panorama of the city.

Proceed by bus to fascinating **Lychakiv Cemetery**. Each year Lviv tourists flock to Lychakiv Cemetery to behold its melancholic beauty and to ponder the history of its famous dead. One of the top tourist stops in Lviv, the cemetery is among the oldest necropolises in Europe with many funeral monuments that are works of art. Some have compared the cemetery to Pere Lachaise in Paris. But back in 1783 beauty was not a concern of the Lviv Town Council, when it ordered the closing of all cemeteries within the city limits. This action was taken to enforce an order of Austrian Emperor Joseph II to improve sanitary conditions in the 18th century city. Burial plots were established outside the Lviv's existing city limits, and Lychakiv Cemetery was officially opened in 1786. Only prominent citizens such as priests, politicians, military leaders and public figures were buried in the cemetery. Lychakiv Cemetery is a real gem for photographers.

Overnight in Lviv; evening is at leisure; optional performances are available at the Opera and Ballet Theater.

#### DAY 9 LVIV

Breakfast at the hotel

Tour to Olesko Castle (80 km), first mention of which existence dates back to 1327, is an outstanding monument of history and architecture of Ukraine of XIII-XVIII centuries. This castle can be proud that it is one of the few fortifications in Ukraine, which has been fully restored from ruins, and joined the Lvov National Art Gallery. Nowadays the Olesko castle displays the collections of antique art and furnishings from 16-17 centuries,



sculptures, paintings, weapons and objects used in everyday life from different epochs. Castles. The Olesko castle attracts tourists by beautiful medieval architecture as well as by fantastic art collections.

**DAY 10 LVIV**

Breakfast at the hotel

Check out.

Transfer to airport.