

# Ukraine

- Capital:** Kiev
- Religion:** Orthodox Christianity is the dominant religion in Ukraine, followed by 72% of the population. It is split between three Churches: Ukrainian Orthodox Church autonomous under the Patriarch of Moscow, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church under Kiev Patriarchate and the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church. Minorities include: Roman and Greek Catholics, Jewish, Muslims and others.
- Government:** Unitary semi-presidential republic with separate legislative, executive and judicial branches. The President is the formal head of state, elected in a popular vote for a five-year period. The country legislative branch comprises of a two-tier parliament and the *Verkhovna Rada*, the Supreme Council of Ukraine, composed of 450 deputies.
- Ethnic Groups:** Ukraine is not very diversified in terms of ethnicity. Ukrainians represent nearly 80% of the society. Russians make 17.3% of the population and the remaining fraction of the society belongs to other, minorities, including Belarusians, Ukrainians, Crimean Tatars, Armenians and others.
- Language:** The official language of the country is Ukrainian. There are 18 other officially recognized languages spoken in Ukraine. These are: Belarusian, Bulgarian, German, Hungarian, Moldovan, Polish, Romanian, Russian, Slovak and others.
- Currency:** The unit of currency is Ukrainian hryvnia (UAH), also called *hryvnya* or *grivna*. It is subdivided into 100 *kopiyok*.

- Ukraine is located in Eastern Europe and shares borders with the Russian Federation, Belarus, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Moldova. The country also borders with the Black Sea to the south and the Sea of Azov to the southeast. It is the largest country situated entirely within Europe.
- The country emerged in the 9<sup>th</sup> century, as the state of Kievan Rus, established by the Varangians and was the first recorded East Slavic state in the history. It became powerful in the Middle Ages but crumbled in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. By the 14<sup>th</sup> century, Ukrainian territories were ruled by three external powers: the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the Kingdom of Poland and the Golden Horde. By the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the largest part of the Ukrainian state belonged to the Russian Empire, while the remaining part was controlled by the Austro-Hungarian Kingdom.



- As a result of the Soviet aggression, in 1992 the country became the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. The Soviet government was hostile to the Ukrainian language and culture. In 1991, following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Ukraine managed to regain its independence.
- After becoming an independent state, Ukraine moved from the socialist (planned) to a market economy, however, this transition was difficult. Many of Ukrainians have fallen into poverty, especially in rural areas of the country.
- Ukraine is classified as a middle-income country by the World Bank. The most soaring problems are: corruption, bureaucracy, lack of developed infrastructure and transportation. The country economy relies heavily on the export to the European Union countries.
- Ukrainians have had to face long and turbulent times of economic and political instability and adopt themselves to constantly changing laws, rules and other circumstances. Having experienced such a difficult history as a nation, many Ukrainians have developed a fatalistic approach toward life.

## **Business and Social Etiquette**

- When doing business with your Ukrainian colleagues, you will soon realise that they are less formal than their counterparts from other countries.
- It is always advisable to book a meeting in advance, but don't expect the meeting schedule to be strictly adhered to, as it only serves as a guideline for a discussion. There may be also some time dedicated to a non-business chat. These activities serve to develop a relationship.
- Firm handshake is a popular greeting, both for men and women. This is a customary way of starting and finishing a meeting. Repeat your name while shaking hands.
- Business people dress formally: men should wear suits and ties, while women should wear suits or dresses.
- There is no special protocol for exchanging business cards. However, it is advisable to have business cards translated into Ukrainian. Including all advanced university degrees on a card, this will add to your credibility. If someone at the meeting does not have a card, record the information in your appointment book.
- The way business people are addressed is complicated, it depends on the situation and the level of relationship developed. Usually titles and surnames are used in business dealings, but these could be changed to first names in social situations.
- Hospitality is deeply embedded into Ukrainian culture. You will quickly experience it as you arrive in the country. You will be often offered food and drink. Business meetings are often held over meals, do not be surprised when invited to a meeting in someone's home.



- When invited, it is considered as polite to bring something with you, a bottle of liquor or a box of quality chocolates. Gifts are generally not opened when received. Flowers should be only gives in odd numbers and yellow flowers should be avoided.
- Toasts are an important element of dining. You will be expected to take toasts, usually with alcohol. The first toast always belongs to the host. Ukrainians can be suspicious toward people who do not drink. If you cannot or do not want to drink, tell your hosts you are on medications. But if you don't drink, do not clink an empty glass.
- Ukrainian people understand gender roles in a traditional way. You will see Ukrainian men opening doors to women, pouring their drinks, etc.
- Ukrainian people are very superstitious. The list of superstitions is long and most of them originate from the folklore. For example - do not shake hands or pass anything over a threshold. This is believed to bring bad luck in business and in general. You may be also warned not to sit on a stone step, because you are exposing yourself to harm by doing so.



## Language

- Ukrainian names are quite complicated. They comprise of the person's first name (given name), then a middle name and the last name (surname).
- The middle name is a patronymic of the father's first name formed by adding 'vich' or 'ovich' for a man, and 'ovna', 'avna' or 'ivna' for a woman. Following this rule: the son of Alexi will be: Alexivich and the daughter's patronymic will be: Alexivna.
- In business situations, academic and professional titles are in common use, followed by a surname. If someone does not have a professional title, use Mr, which in Ukrainian is '*Pan*' and Mrs/Ms, which is '*Pani*'
- When addressing a person use the full name, including the middle one, omit Pan/Pani.
- Business colleagues refer to themselves using first and middle names (patronymic).
- First names are only reserved for close friends and family members.

English	Ukrainian	Phonetics
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Hello	Привіт	Pry-vit
Good morning	Доброго ранку	Do-bro-ho-ran-ku
Good night	спокійної ночі	Spo-ki-ynoi-noc-hi
Good bye	до побачення	Do-po-ba-chen-nya
Yes	да	Da
No	немає	Ne-ma-ye
Please	Будь ласка	Bud-las-ka
Thank you	Спасибі	Spa-sy-bi
You're welcome	завжди будь ласка	Zav-hzdy-bud-las-ka
I don't understand	Не розумію	Ne-ro-zu-mi-ju

