**Ukraine**

**Location**

Ukraine is located in the Eastern Europe between 44 and 52 degrees latitude. The country borders Poland, Romania, and Moldova in the west, Russia in the east, Belarus in the north, and the Black Sea in the south. Ukraine is slightly smaller than Texas, covering 603,700 sq km, 2,782 km of coast line and a total of 4663 km land boundary.

**Geography**

Ukraine is mostly a steppe, a vast semi-arid. grass-covered plain. The mountains of Ukraine, Carpathians in the west and Crimean Mountains in the Crimean peninsula are not very high and are covered with mixed forests of pine, beeches, fir-trees, elms, and oaks. Mount Hoverla in the Carpathians is Ukraine's highest peak at 6,762 ft. Carpathians Mountains receive twice as much rainfall as the surrounding areas and enjoys the Danube and the Vistula rivers. More than 40 percent of the country’s water supply comes from this area. The Danube River is also important for the transport and economy of Ukraine. The Dnieper River, the third major European river that flows through central Ukraine and forms the country’s main river network, is one of the country’s main sources of hydroelectric power. Ukraine is rich in natural resources, primarily coal, iron ore, manganese, nickel, and uranium.

**Climate**

Ukraine has a subtropical climate due to its situation on the Crimean Peninsula. Temperature is disproportionately distributed with the lowest temperature in the east and southwest and highest in the west and north. With the average winter temperature of -20 Centigrade in the north to -3-5 in the south winters vary from cool along the Black
Sea to cold farther inland. Regular snowfalls everywhere except the south and frozen rivers and lakes are the spirit of the country’s winters. Summers are quite hot in the south and warm across the greater part of the country. Climate conditions make Ukraine a good agricultural land.

History

During the 10th and 11th centuries, Ukraine was the center of the largest and most powerful state in Europe. Kievan Rus eventually became incorporated into the Polish-Lithuanian Common wealth. After an upraising against the Poles, the new Ukrainian state, the Cossack Hetmanate, was established. During the 18th century, most of the country was absorbed by the Russian Empire and later during 1920, it was absorbed by the Soviet Union.

The country finally achieved its independence in 1991 after the fall of USSR.

Important Dates

Important dates on Ukraine’s calendar are: January 1 - New Year’s Day, January 9 - Orthodox Christmas, January 14 - Orthodox New Year, March 8 - Women’s day, April 21 - Orthodox Good Friday, April 23 - Orthodox Easter, April 24 - Orthodox Easter Monday, May 1 - May day, May 9 - Victory day, June 11 - Radonitsa, June 12 - Radonitsa Monday, June 28 - Constitution day, August 24 - Independence day,

Population

Records from 2005 show a population of approximately 48 million. 15.6% percent of the population were from 0 to 14 years old, 68.8% were 15 to 64 years old and 15.6% were 65 and over in 2005. With a death rate of 16.42 per 1000 and a birth rate of 10.49 per 1000, there was a reported 63% decrease in population in 2005.

Currency
The official currency of Ukraine is the Hryvnia (UAH). 5 UAH approximately exchange for 1 USD.

**Education**

Reports from 2003 indicate a 99.7% total literacy rate. It is reported that 99.8% of men and 99.6% of women are literate.

**Language**

Ukrainian language or Українська мова, formerly called Ruthenian, or Little Russian is an East Slavic language spoken in Ukraine and in Ukrainian communities. Ukrainian is written in a form of the Cyrillic alphabet and is closely related to Russian and Belarusian. The language is, in fact, a lineal descendant of the colloquial language used in Kievan Rus.

**Religion**

Freedom of religion is guaranteed by Ukraine's constitution. Records from 2004, shows the following distribution of religion in Ukraine: Ukrainian Orthodox - Kiev Patriarchate 19%, Orthodox 16%, Ukrainian Orthodox - Moscow Patriarchate 9%, Ukrainian Greek Catholic 6%, Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox 1.7%, Protestant, Jewish and none 38%.

**Agriculture**

The climate of Ukraine is suitable for both winter and spring crops. With an average annual precipitation of approximately 24 inches and roughly 42 million hectares of agricultural land, the ability of agricultural produce is very high in Ukraine. Cultivated land is farmed with grains, technical crops, forages, potatoes and vegetables. Gardens, orchards, vineyards, permanent meadows and pastures are also part of the agriculture land.
**Trade**

Ukraine’s exports amount to $38.22 billion a year. Ukraine’s export partners are: Russia, Germany, Turkey, Italy, and the U.S. The country imports $37.18 billion a year in goods.

**Food**

Ukrainian cuisines include many dishes inspired by other cuisines such as Turkish and Polish. Vegetables, fruit, pork, mushrooms and herbs are major ingredients of the country’s dishes. Ukrainian cuisines have influenced other cuisines such as Russian.

**Landmarks**

There are numerous sites to visit in Ukraine. Colossal titanium statue of "Mother Russia," Orthodox churches and monasteries and the Pechersk Lavra Monastery are some of the most famous sites. Some of the other famous landmarks are St. Sophia’s Cathedral and sole remaining gate of the old walled town, the Golden Gate.

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