

Getting here and advice about your stay

Entry requirements

Visas

British citizens are allowed to enter Ukraine without a visa for visits of up to 90 days within a 180 day period. Otherwise, you will need to get a visa. For more advice on entry requirements contact the Ukrainian Embassy in London or Consulate General in Edinburgh. See: <https://uk.mfa.gov.ua/en/consular-affairs/contacts>.

You do not need to complete an immigration card. Immigration officials may require you to scan your fingerprints as part of biometric data collection at border crossing points. For more details, visit the website of the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine. See: <https://dpsu.gov.ua/en/activity/propusk-cherez-kordon/>.

Proof of financial means

You may be asked to provide evidence that you have sufficient funds to support you during your stay. The Ukrainian authorities accept the following as a proof of sufficient funds: cash, bank cards along with bank statements, accommodation bookings, tourist vouchers, a letter from the person or company you are visiting stating that they will cover your expenses, a return ticket or onward travel ticket. You can find more information on the websites of the Ukrainian Embassy in the UK at: <https://uk.mfa.gov.ua/en/consular-affairs/contacts> and State Border Service of Ukraine at: <https://dpsu.gov.ua/en/activity/propusk-cherez-kordon/>.

Passport validity

If you are travelling without a visa, your passport should be valid for the proposed duration of your stay. No additional period of validity beyond this is required. If you are applying for a visa, your passport may need to have an additional period of validity. Check with the Ukrainian Embassy in London at: <https://uk.mfa.gov.ua/en/consular-affairs/contacts> for further details.

UK Emergency Travel Documents

UK Emergency Travel Documents are accepted for entry, airside transit and exit from Ukraine.

Customs regulations

You can find general information about importing and exporting items on the website of the State Fiscal Service of Ukraine at: <http://sfs.gov.ua/en/>.

There are strict customs regulations governing the export from Ukraine of antiques and items of historical interest. If in doubt seek prior permission from the customs authorities. Telephone: (+38 044) 454 16 13, or email: idd@sfs.gov.ua.

Bringing your car to Ukraine

Non-residents are allowed to bring a vehicle for personal use into Ukraine for up to one year. There is no need to complete a customs declaration form. The vehicle can only be used in Ukraine by the person that brought it into the country. The vehicle cannot be used for commercial purposes, dismantled, sold or rented to other people. If you want to do any of these things, you will need register the vehicle in Ukraine and pay the appropriate customs tax.

You must take the vehicle out of Ukraine within the required timeframe, or place it into the customs regime of the State.

If your vehicle breaks down and cannot be fixed, you should inform the customs service and provide them with evidence that it cannot be repaired. You may then dispose of the vehicle through the official channels of the customs service.

If you bring a private vehicle into Ukraine with the intention of transiting the country, you may be asked to complete a customs declaration form and pay a deposit.

You can find more information on bringing your car to Ukraine on the website of the State Fiscal Service of Ukraine at: <http://sfs.gov.ua/en/>.

[Source – FCO Travel Advice/gov.uk (Oct 2018)]

Money

ATMs are available and credit cards are widely used in cities. Cloning of credit and debit cards is common. You should be vigilant when using ATMs and not let your card out of your sight during transactions. Outside cities you should make sure you have sufficient cash in local currency.

The official currency of Ukraine is the Ukrainian Hryvnia (UAH). US Dollars and Euros are the easiest currency to exchange in Ukraine. Sterling may also be exchanged at a more limited number of sites. Scottish and Northern Irish notes are not accepted. You should only use official exchange booths and make sure you are given a receipt.

You will need to present your passport if you wish to exchange currency worth UAH 150,000 or over. Keep the receipt as you may need to produce it if you exchange money back on departure.

[Source – FCO Travel Advice/gov.uk (Oct 2018)]

Local laws and customs

Penalties for being caught in possession of drugs are severe.

Smoking and drinking alcoholic drinks in public places is officially banned. Public places include transport, bus stops, underground crossings, cultural, sports and governmental establishments, playgrounds and parks.

Carry your passport at all times for ID purposes. Police may carry out passport checks on foreign nationals, particularly in the central area of Kyiv. Police officers should introduce themselves (name, post, rank, reason for ID check) and present a document verifying their position. Your original passport is required since no other document can provide information on your legal status in Ukraine. If you are detained because you have been unable to present your passport, you should ask for an official report.

Ukrainian officials generally only speak Ukrainian and Russian.

Do not take photographs near government or military establishments.

Although homosexuality is not prohibited by law, public attitudes are less tolerant than in the UK and public displays of affection may attract negative attention. There is no provision under Ukrainian legislation guaranteeing freedom from discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation. The Kyiv Pride parade in June 2018 passed off without incident. See the UK Government's information and advice page for the LGBT community at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/lesbian-gay-bisexual-and-transgender-foreign-travel-advice> before you travel.

Corruption remains a major problem. If you think you have been mistreated by an official then you should report your case to the relevant government department:

- you can make a complaint about political corruption and mistreatment from the authorities to the National Agency on Corruption Prevention at: <https://nazk.gov.ua/report-corruption> or telephone (+38 044) 200 06 91
- complaints about immigration issues should be raised with the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine at: <https://dpsu.gov.ua/en/contacts>; telephone: (+38 044) 527 63 63; email: dovira@dpsu.gov.ua
- corruption by the police should be reported to the General Prosecutor's Office at: <https://en.gp.gov.ua/ua/index.html>; telephone: (+38 044) 200 76 24; online form: <https://www.gp.gov.ua/ua/treatment.html>

- you should complain about customs officials to the State Fiscal Service of Ukraine at: <http://sfs.gov.ua/en/>; telephone: (+38 044) 284 00 07; or send your scanned signed enquiry to: zvernennya@sfs.gov.ua

[Source – FCO Travel Advice/gov.uk (Oct 2018)]

Safety and security

Political situation

The situation in Kyiv and other areas outside Donetsk and Luhansk is generally calm. However, public demonstrations do regularly take place. Policing of these events may include road closures. You should avoid all demonstrations and take extra care at public gatherings. In Kyiv, the areas around Maydan Nezalezhnosti (Independence Square) and government buildings such as the Verkhovna Rada (parliament building) and the National Bank of Ukraine are most frequently affected.

Pay close attention to your personal security and monitor the media for information about possible safety or security risks. You should avoid demonstrations and public gatherings, as even peaceful protests may turn violent.

Eastern Ukraine

The security situation in the southeastern parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts of Ukraine remains highly unstable with ongoing clashes between Ukrainian armed forces and Russian-backed armed separatists. The UN calculates this has resulted in over 10,300 deaths and approximately 1.5 million internally displaced people residing permanently in government-controlled areas of Ukraine. Civilians continue to get caught up in the fighting.

If you travel to eastern Ukraine to fight, or to assist others engaged in the conflict, your activities may amount to offences against UK terrorism or other legislation and you could be prosecuted on your return to the UK.

The FCO is not able to provide consular services to anyone in the parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts not currently under control of the Ukrainian authorities.

Crimea

The FCO is not able to provide consular services to anyone in Crimea.

Russian forces and pro-Russian groups have established full operational control in Crimea. Following an illegal referendum on 16th March 2014, Russia illegally annexed Crimea on 21st March 2014 and tensions remain high.

Ukrainian International Airlines have cancelled all flights to and from Simferopol.

All train and official bus services to Crimea have been cancelled. To enter or exit Crimea, foreign nationals will need to provide their passport and a special permit issued by the State Migration Service of Ukraine. See: <https://uk.mfa.gov.ua/en/press-center/comments/3952-rules-on-entry-into-and-exit-from-crimea>.

The European Union has imposed restrictions on economic relations with Crimea following its illegal annexation by Russia. These restrictions apply to all UK people and companies and include an import ban, a full ban on investment and a prohibition on supplying tourism services in Crimea. Exports of further key goods for certain sectors are also banned. See: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/sanctions/ukraine-crisis/>.

The Crimean sea ports of Kerch, Sevastopol, Feodosia, Yalta and Yevpatoria have been designated by the Ukrainian authorities as closed to international shipping.

Crime

Most visitors to Ukraine experience no difficulties. Serious crime against foreigners is relatively rare, but incidents do occur. In some cases attacks have been racially motivated.

You should report any incidents to the police by dialling 102. A list of local translators is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ukraine-list-of-interpreters>.

Be alert to the possibility of street crime and petty theft, which is on the increase in Kyiv. Foreigners may appear to be lucrative targets. Where possible, avoid walking alone late at night in dark or poorly lit streets. Keep valuables and cash safe and out of sight, especially in crowded areas, tourist spots, and public transport, where pickpockets and bag snatchers operate.

A common scam is to drop a wallet or bundle of money in front of a tourist. The criminal then “finds” the money and asks if it is the tourist’s or offers to share the money with them. If you are approached in this way, you should walk away without engaging in conversation.

Do not lose sight of your credit cards during transactions.

Some British nationals have reported being charged inflated prices in bills from bars, cafes and restaurants. If you have any concerns, take care to confirm the price before ordering and check the bill and receipt against the price of ordered items from the menu.

Theft of and from vehicles is common. Do not leave documents or money in your vehicle.

Unregulated taxi drivers can overcharge. Use official taxis, which have the name and telephone number of the taxi company on the side of the door and on the top of the taxi.

Do not leave drinks or food unattended as they could be spiked. Beware of accepting drinks from casual acquaintances.

Terrorism

Terrorists are likely to try to carry out attacks in Ukraine. The Ukrainian authorities have announced that they have disrupted a number of planned attacks, including in Kyiv. Attacks have mainly been aimed at official Ukrainian targets, but could happen anywhere and could affect Western interests and places visited by foreigners.

British nationals have not been specifically targeted, but you should remain vigilant and avoid large gatherings and demonstrations.

There is a heightened threat of terrorist attack globally against UK interests and British nationals, from groups or individuals motivated by the conflict in Iraq and Syria.

Find out more about the global threat from terrorism, how to minimise your risk and what to do in the event of a terrorist attack, at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/reduce-your-risk-from-terrorism-while-abroad>.

[Source – FCO Travel Advice/gov.uk (Oct 2018)]

Travel advice

Local travel

Bus, trolleybus and tram tickets normally need to be validated by being 'punched' when you board. You can be fined on the spot if you are travelling with a ticket that has not been validated.

There is a wide network of minibuses. The fare is normally displayed on the window inside the minibus. You may need to pass your money to the driver via other passengers.

There is now a metro connection to Kyiv city centre from Boryspil International Airport. Alternatively, you could reach the city centre by taxi. You should only use registered taxi companies. Another alternative is to take the 'Sky Bus' from the airport to the city

centre (via Kharkivska metro station to the main railway station “Pivdenny”). You can buy a ticket from the driver.

Use official taxis which display the name and telephone number of the taxi company. Where possible ask your hotel to get a taxi for you or ask for the telephone number of a reputable taxi company. You should agree the fare before getting into the taxi.

Chernobyl

A number of local companies offer tours to Chernobyl. Some areas around the reactor are covered by an exclusion zone, and you may need to get a permit and travel with a guide. According to the International Atomic Energy Agency, although some of the radioactive isotopes released into the atmosphere still linger, they are at tolerable exposure levels for limited periods of time. The State Agency for Managing the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone has issued safety instructions and advice for people visiting the exclusion zone. See: <http://dazv.gov.ua/en/news-and-media/do-you-know-which-rules-of-safety-are-available-and-why-do-you-need-to-follow-them.html>.

Road travel

You must have a valid International Driving Permit to drive legally in Ukraine, as well as your UK driving licence. See: <https://www.gov.uk/driving-abroad>. Make sure you have original vehicle-registration papers, ownership documents and insurance papers available at all times. These will be required if you are stopped by the police and when crossing borders. This also applies to rental vehicles. If you do not have these papers when stopped by the police they have the right to impound your vehicle and charge you for this.

If you intend to rent a vehicle for your travel to Ukraine, you should check with the car hire company and insurance company for their policy on renting cars in Ukraine and any other country you will pass through, especially non-EU countries. Ensure they provide you with a rental agreement permitting you to cross the border into Ukraine.

Local driving standards are poor. Street lights are weak, speed limits, traffic lights and road signs are often ignored, and drivers rarely indicate before manoeuvring. There are a high number of traffic accidents, including fatalities. Speeding, drink driving and infrequent use of helmets, seat belts and child restraints in vehicles are the main contributing factors.

Roads are of variable quality. Driving outside major towns at night can be hazardous. Avoid night-time travel wherever possible.

You must wear a seat belt. Using a mobile phone while driving is prohibited. There is a zero limit on drinking alcohol and driving.

Ukrainian law allows the police to stop a vehicle. The police officer should give their name and rank, explain why you have been stopped and make an administrative offence report. The police may film interactions with members of the public. Fines can be levied for minor offences such as illegal parking or jumping a red light. The police may be carrying a credit card terminal to collect payment on the spot, or fines may be paid online or at a bank within 15 days. See payment options at: <https://police.kiev.ua/statti/203-yak-splatiti-shtraf-pdr> (in Ukrainian).

In case of a road accident dial 102. Local officials generally only speak Ukrainian and Russian.

See the AA and RAC guides to driving in Ukraine, at: <http://www.theaa.com/driving-advice/driving-abroad> and: <https://www.rac.co.uk/drive/travel/country/ukraine/>.

Rail travel

If you travel by train, make sure your belongings are secure.

Do not agree to look after the luggage of a fellow traveller or allow it to be stored in your compartment

Train timetables and ticket reservations are available online on the Ukrainian Railways site at: <http://www.uz.gov.ua/en/>.

Air travel

You can find a list of recent incidents and accidents on the Ukrainian page of the Aviation Safety network at: <http://aviation-safety.net/database/country/country.php?id=UR>.

The FCO cannot offer advice on the safety of individual airlines. However, the International Air Transport Association publishes lists of registered airlines that have been audited and found to meet a number of operational safety standards and recommended practices – IATA Operational Safety Audit at: <https://www.iata.org/whatwedo/safety/audit/iosa/Pages/registry.aspx> and IATA Standard Safety Assessment at: <https://www.iata.org/whatwedo/safety/audit/issa/Pages/registry.aspx?Query=all>. These lists are not exhaustive and the absence of an airline from this list does not necessarily mean that it is unsafe.

The International Civil Aviation Organization has carried out an audit of the level of implementation of the critical elements of safety oversight in Ukraine. See: <https://www.icao.int/safety/Pages/USOAP-Results.aspx>.

Direct flights between Ukraine and Russia ceased on 25th October 2015, and on 25th November 2015 Ukraine banned all Russian airlines from transiting its airspace. Check latest developments with your airline or travel company before you travel.

[Source – FCO Travel Advice/gov.uk (Oct 2018)]

Travel insurance

Take out comprehensive travel and medical insurance before you travel. See the FCO Foreign Travel Insurance guidance at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/foreign-travel-insurance>.

FCO travel advice

If you are travelling to Ukraine for business, the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) website has travel advice to help you prepare for your visit overseas and to stay safe and secure while you are there.

For up-to-the-minute advice please visit the FCO Travel section pages on the gov.uk website: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/ukraine>.

Health

Visit your GP at least four to six weeks before your trip to check whether you need any vaccinations or other preventive measures.

Check the latest country-specific information and advice from the National Travel Health Network and Centre (NaTHNaC) on the TravelHealthPro website: <https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries> and by NHS (Scotland) on the FitForTravel website: <http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/destinations.aspx>.

Useful information and advice about healthcare abroad is also available on the NHS Choices website: <https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/healthcare-abroad/>.

There is no reciprocal healthcare agreement between the UK and Ukraine. Make sure you have adequate travel health insurance and accessible funds to cover the cost of any medical treatment abroad and repatriation.

State medical facilities in Ukraine are generally poor. Private clinics and hospitals offer a better standard of care, though these do not always meet Western standards and practices. If you are involved in an accident or taken ill, it is likely that you will be taken to a state hospital unless you can show that you have comprehensive medical insurance cover.

English is not widely spoken and British patients may face communication difficulties.

There has been an outbreak of measles in Ukraine. 4,782 cases were recorded in 2017. For more information and advice, visit the NaTHNaC website at: <https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/country/232/ukraine#CloutBreaks>.

If you need emergency medical assistance during your trip, dial 103 and ask for an ambulance. You should contact your insurance/medical assistance company promptly if you are referred to a medical facility for treatment.

[Source – FCO Travel Advice/gov.uk (Oct 2018)]

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