

## Information for Visitors to Ukraine

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By Mike Manna, Youth Ministry International Missionary,  
National Center for Youth Ministry Director, Kyiv, Ukraine

### Before Coming

1. A passport is required for anyone doing international travel and Ukraine is no exception. Make sure you have a passport that is good for an additional 6 months beyond your expected entry date to Ukraine.
2. A visa is **not required** for entry into Ukraine for all American citizens, Canadians, and EU citizens if you are coming for less than 90 days.
3. For immunization recommendations, please go to the Center for Disease Control Website's Ukraine section at <http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/destinationUkraine.aspx> . Our mission requires that each person have up to date routine vaccinations and a current tetanus shot.
3. Electricity is different in Europe including Ukraine (220 volts). You will need adapters and/or converters to use hair dryers, battery chargers, etc. These are available at your local Radio Shack. Ask for European converters or adapters if you'd like. Laptops do not need a converter, only a plug adapter.
4. Gift giving is common in Ukraine. Gift recommendations for Ukrainians: Christian youth enjoy Christian CDs and music (it is no problem that it is in English); or maybe Christian ties. Churches and families love Christian decorations for their walls such as posters and art work. Missionaries love snacks and candy from home that they can't get in Ukraine (such as Cheetos, Reese's peanut butter cups, butterfingers, and root beer). Please see our mission's policy concerning money gifts below.

### Money

1. If you bring cash, **MAKE SURE YOU BRING NEW AMERICAN DOLLAR BILLS!** They will not exchange older-looking bills, bills with writing, or torn bills. Denominations of \$20 or \$100 are best.
2. ATM machines are fairly safe to use in Ukraine, but there have been problems with some ATM scams. Some debit cards don't work in all machines, but for the most part, this is no problem. There is a 3% charge on machines if you want American dollars, but there is no local charge at the machine if you want Hryvna, the national currency. But be careful, your U.S. bank may charge you as much as \$7.00 per transaction. Machines are located at all major cities in Ukraine. There are more than 1000 ATM machines in Kyiv including one in our own apartment building. **Be sure to let your American bank know that you will be using it overseas if you plan on using it.** Sometimes the bank may try to protect you and freeze the account after it has been used abroad.

3. This is a cash-based society – no checks are used in Ukraine. The exchange rate has fluctuated a great deal in 2008 and 2009. The dollar is currently worth around 8 Hryvna. (A McDonald's combo meal costs about 30 Hryvna or \$3.75.) You can exchange U.S. Dollars in hundreds of locations in Ukraine. The worst exchange rate will be at the airport.

4. Do not use credit cards in restaurants or stores unless you are sure the establishment is safe. You may not have the same credit card protection in Ukraine as in the U.S.

5. Our mission's policy is that gift money for Ukrainians must be given to our Ukrainian director (specifically Mike Manna), and agreed upon for ministry use, and not personal usage. Money is definitely needed, but can often cause jealousy problems with others and affect future ministry opportunities. There are so many needs in Ukraine that we must be careful in how we distribute these funds. Remember that Ukrainians who know how to speak English may not be the best recipients of ministry funds.

## **Entry**

1. At passport control or on the airplane, you will have to fill out a small form called an "immigration form." Write down the name of the address where you will be staying and all the other information required. **IMPORTANT:** Fill out both sections of the form completely on entry. You do not need a visa, so you can skip those lines on the form. If you are not traveling with children, you do not need to list your children's names either.

2. After getting your baggage, you need to go through the customs' exits. Customs in the past was a little scary, but it is very easy now. **You do not need to fill out a declarations form** (unless you are bringing in a musical instrument). You do not even need to speak to a customs official anymore. **GO THROUGH THE GREEN EXITS, NOT THE RED.** You may need to put the luggage through an x-ray machine. If a customs official talks with you, tell him that your items are *personal belongings* and that you don't have gifts. You do not need to claim computers or digital cameras. You are allowed to have \$3,000 per person as you enter.

## **During Your Visit**

1. Carry a copy of your passport on you at all times, and leave your real passport in a secure location (such as your locked room) after you have arrived. The exception to this rule is if you are traveling around the country - then you must have your passport. It is not common to need this for identification any more, but it is a very good idea to protect your real passport from theft.

2. Theft is still a major concern in Ukraine. Protect your belongings. Always lock your room if possible.

3. Russian and Ukrainian are very difficult languages. There are very few English speakers around, so you may need a translator to get around if you do not know any Russian. This is not like other European countries if you have traveled abroad. If you are desperate, look for a Ukrainian college student – they are the most likely to know English. Russian is still the most

highly spoken language in Kyiv, Eastern Ukraine and Crimea. But if you go to villages, Western Ukraine or are speaking to children – Ukrainian is mainly used.

4. Grocery stores are now common in all major cities. But you will most likely need to use the bazaars, small stores, or kiosks to purchase items in other areas. It is best to bring small denominations of Hryvna to these locations. US Dollars are not accepted in any stores.

5. During the summer, the attire in Ukraine is very European. You have to be especially careful of what you see on the beaches. Modesty has a different meaning here – even with Christians. You also must be careful in watching TV past 11 pm, because shows can reveal more than you want to see.

6. The temperature fluctuates – just check an internet weather site and look at the forecast for your trip and city. It can get very cold in the winter.

7. Ukrainians in Kyiv wear beautiful clothes on the street and at church. They keep their clothes very clean and if they have a little money, they dress in the latest styles. They dress European. Sometimes Americans look shabby in comparison, but casual clothes are starting to come in. Jeans were not the norm a few years ago, but now you see them everywhere. *Our seminary does not allow student or professors to wear jeans to class.*

## **Ministry**

1. Please remember that the evangelical church is not new in this country and the people have been sharing the gospel for the past 200 years. As Westerners, we have come to assist and work alongside our Christian brothers and sisters. Remember that we don't have all the answers. Ukrainians have a great deal of knowledge on what works and what doesn't work. But we still have a lot we can offer as well. We always recommend that you work directly with a Ukrainian church or ministry. For the most part, using public places (including schools) for evangelism without special permission is prohibited.

2. Suggested evangelization materials: The best would be books and tracts in Russian or Ukrainian, but another good option is the Evangecube products which are not limited by language. Go to [www.evangecube.org](http://www.evangecube.org) for more information. Ask the Ukrainian church you are ministering with for suggestions. We also recommend the “3-story” evangelism training program from Youth for Christ which is available in English and Russian. Go to [www.3story.org](http://www.3story.org) for more information.

**Thank you so for planning on coming to Ukraine! This is a wonderful country and should be visited and re-visited by everyone!**