

For tours departing beyond 2010, itineraries may be subject to change. This will be confirmed by the publication of the 2011 brochure (issued in Oct 10).

2010
Tour Dossier

EXPLORE!

UKRAINE • MOLDOVA Dossier Ref. RKC

Moldova, Crimea & Kiev

Amended 16 Jun 2010. Valid from 01 Jan 2010 to 31 Dec 2010
Since first issue this dossier has been updated with amendments to the following sections: error on map, visa; meals day 9.

As our itineraries may be amended from time to time, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers, please ensure you have the most up-to-date copy of this dossier immediately before you travel. You can download the dossier from our website, www.explore.co.uk. Of course we will notify you of any significant changes, but sometimes minor changes may simply be added to the tour dossier.

JOINING TOUR ABROAD

15 days/14 nights Land Only
Lviv to Kiev

Join Lviv (day 1)

End Kiev (day 15)

Clients booked on 'Land Only' arrangements should make their own way to the joining point in Lviv. Please refer to separate 'Joining Instructions' for name and address of hotel and time of rendezvous with tour leader.

GROUP TRAVEL FROM LONDON

15 days/14 nights Tour including
Connecting Group flights
London-Lviv & Kiev-London

Depart from London Heathrow airport to join tour in Lviv (day 1 of Land Only Itinerary). Transfer to hotel.

Return from Kiev (day 15 of Land Only Itinerary) and arrive London Heathrow the same day.

Passengers with non-group flights booked through Explore should refer to their individual confirmation invoice for flight details. Transfers to and from the airport are not included unless purchased in addition to the tour package.

SPECIAL HIGHLIGHTS

Among the many highlights featured on this tour, we particularly mention:

- * **LVIV** Visit fascinating Old Quarter on guided walking tour.
- * **CHISINAU** Walking tour of Moldova's lively capital.
- * **ODESSA** Guided city tour of historic monuments and buildings.
- * **YALTA** Boat trip on Black Sea to 'Swallows Nest' & visit to Ai-Petri Plateau and

Carbon Offsets Included

As part of our responsible tourism policy we offset carbon emissions from all customer and staff flights booked by Explore. Our carbon offset partner is Climate Care. If you are making independent flight arrangements to join one of our tours, may we urge you to offset your carbon emissions through Climate Care, or a similar offsetting scheme.

- Chufut-Kale cave city.
- * **SEVASTOPOL** Visit the "Valley of Death". View 'Painted Panorama' & visit ancient Greek town of Chersonesos.
- * **KIEV** Visit Monastery of the Caves & St. Sofia Cathedral. (Outside only)

Still relatively unknown as a holiday destination, Ukraine is actually one of Europe's largest countries, slightly bigger than France. It also has a long and rich heritage. We begin our journey travelling from Ukraine's most elegant city, Lviv, to its energetic capital, Kiev. We head south-east from Lviv, making our way through the little known country of Moldova with its rich traditions, hospitality and history, to the south of Ukraine and the exotic Odessa on the Black Sea. We continue to the ancestral Tatar homeland of the Crimea at the foot of the country. It was here, on this spectacular peninsula in 1854, that the charge of the British Light Cavalry Brigade took place during the Crimean War. We spend four days exploring its diverse sunlit landscape of Black Sea coast, mountains, limestone caves, palaces, gardens and vineyards. Finally, we reach Kiev, Ukraine's cosmopolitan and cultural capital.

LAND ONLY ITINERARY

Be Prepared: While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day route as printed below, a degree of flexibility is built in to the itinerary. Overnight stops may vary from those suggested. In this region of Europe, trains may be subject to unforeseen delays and changes to schedule – all part of the inherent charm of rail travel.

Accommodation and Included Meals: please find the key to our accommodation ratings overleaf, and note that included meals are indicated in the itinerary below and are shown on the day they are provided (B = breakfast, L = lunch, D = dinner).

Day 1. Join tour Lviv
Arrive Lviv and check-in at hotel. **2 nights hotel. H+.**

Day 2. Exploring Lviv
Almost half of the architectural monuments located in Ukraine are concentrated in Lviv. This remarkable city stands at the crossroads of Western and Eastern Europe and is the most impressive cultural centre in Western Ukraine. Throughout its history, Lviv has been influenced by many countries and cultures including the Halychsko-Volynske Principality, Rytch Pospolyta, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Western Ukrainian National Republic, Poland, and the USSR. Ukrainians, Armenians, Poles, Germans,

Earth Matters

- The use of trains on this tour reduces our impact on the environment and gives us the opportunity to experience the local culture close hand.
- We provide local guides in most cities, thus generating employment and allowing our passengers a unique insight into the local history and culture.
- For further information on responsible travel go to <http://www.explore.co.uk/ResponsibleTourism/>



Jews, Greeks, Italians, French and Scots have all lived in the territory of Lviv and every nation has left some traces of their traditions, history and culture. Lviv is thus a treasure-chest of cultural and artistic riches. We spend the morning here on a guided walking/orientation tour of the old quarter, passing by Ploshcha Rynok (the old market square), the Cathedral, Boyim Chapel, the Dominican Church and Monastery and the Old Rus Quarter. The rest of our time here is left free for you to enjoy at your leisure. You may choose to visit the locally famous Cemetary of Lytschkiv or the Museum of Brewing. **(Included meals: B).**

Day 3. Drive to Ternopol
This morning we drive east, bringing us to the town of Ternopol. The city itself has had a turbulent recent history with five different countries staking claim as rulers in the last century alone. Founded in 1580 it is still considered a young town. Our afternoon is set aside for a guided sightseeing tour of this young city which will include the Old Castle, Galitsky Square and the Dominican Church. **Overnight hotel H+ (Included meals: B).**

Day 4. Drive to Chernivisti
Today we head south to Chernivisti the capital of Ukraine's youngest province, Bukovina. Chernivisti's cosmopolitan reputation stems from a time of Austrian rule. For 250 years this city ranked third in size behind Vienna and Prague in Austria's empire. An independent stock exchange increased its inhabitants wealth and the opening of its own university offered a place for Ukraine's growing intellectual community in the late 19th century. Today, even after Romanian rule and Soviet annexation, Chernivisti continues to uphold its unique cosmopolitan feel with almost 100 different nationalities present. Our afternoon tour includes the Old Quarter, Theatre Square, the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit and the impressive architecture of the National University of Chernivisti. **Overnight hotel H+ (included meals: B).**

Day 5. Drive to Chisinau in Moldova
This morning takes us to the Ukraine-Moldova border. After making our way through the border formalities we head southeast to the very centre of the country and the capital, Chisinau. Moldova has had a very chequered history, which includes the recent nationalist movements of the 1990s leading to its freedom from the Soviet Union

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and the ensuing power struggles which followed. Today you will find the Moldovans to be some of the friendliest people in Europe and nowhere is that more obvious than the vibrant capital of Chisinau. **2 nights hotel H+ (Included meals B).**

Day 6. In Chisinau

Our guided sightseeing of this lively capital takes in the Orthodox Cathedral, Central Park, Arc de Triomphe and the imposing Government buildings. The afternoon is left free for personal exploration or you may wish to join an optional excursion to the famous Melestici Mici wine cellars situated a short drive from the capital. The Melestici Mici wine cellars offer a unique insight into why Moldovan wine is so highly regarded around the world. Limestone was and still is extracted here for building materials in the major towns and cities of Moldova. What remains has been turned into a huge underground wine labyrinth with streets and avenues holding such names as Cabernet, Feteasca, Riesling, Aligote, Sauvignon, all corresponding to wine brand preserved along the niches! These underground streets stretch over 60km, storing the wine between +10°C - 12°C and around 97-98% humidity. **(Included meals: B).**

Day 7. Drive to Odessa in Ukraine

This morning we continue our journey to Odessa on the Black Sea, first leaving Moldova and then entering back into Ukraine. Odessa was founded in 1794 by Katherine the Second with the purpose of establishing a mighty seaport, fortifying the southern borders of the Russian Empire. Odessa has become one of the wealthiest cities of the region and the largest seaport in Ukraine. We spend the afternoon on a guided city tour of some of Odessa's many historical monuments and buildings. In the very heart of Odessa, Deribasovskaya Street has a unique character with magnificent architecture: Ukrainian people leisurely sitting on cobblestone terraces of numerous cafes and restaurants, shaded by big linden trees. Deribasovskaya leads to the City Gardens with their fountain, old summerhouse and sculpture of lion and lioness. Primorsky Boulevard is most reminiscent of Old Odessa, once home to Odessa's wealthy merchants. We take a walk along the sea front Boulevard overlooking the port of Odessa, admiring the architecture from years gone by. Built in 1837, the Potemkin Steps are the best place to view the busy port and bay. There is also the chance for an optional trip to Odessa's Catacombs. The underground sandstone mines were used by resistance fighters during WW2. **Overnight hotel H+ (Included meals: B).**

Day 8. Optional sightseeing in Odessa; overnight train to Crimea

With an early evening overnight train departure there is a full day set aside here in Odessa.

Other places of interest include Odessa's Art Gallery, Pushkin's residence and the city's synagogue. There is also the chance for an optional trip to Odessa's Catacombs. The underground sandstone mines were used by resistance fighters during WW2. **Overnight sleeper train with bedding (included meals: B).**

Day 9. Bus to Yalta & Black Sea boat trip

We arrive at Simferopol station and transfer to Yalta whose setting is stunning, positioned between the Crimean Mountains and the Black Sea in a thin cypress-strewn strip. In the afternoon your tour leader will orientate you on the 'Naberezhna Lenina' - a vehicle free waterfront promenade with art markets, gardens, jetties and beaches. Later, we'll take a boat trip on the Black Sea to view the coastline and the fairy-tale castle 'Swallow's Nest' perched at the top of a sheer cliff on Cape Ai-Todor. **3 nights hotel H+.**

Day 10. At leisure in Yalta

Today is left free for you to perhaps visit places of interest in and around Yalta: home to 28,000 species - the Nikitsky Botanical Gardens (5 km east of Yalta) are worthy of a visit for the views and sheer variety. Alternatively, visit Livadia Palace (3 km west) for the historical significance. It was here, in February 1945, when Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill held their Yalta Conference and confirmed earlier decisions on the carve-up of Europe. The Italian Renaissance-style palace was built in 1911 as a summer residence for Tsar Nicholas II. If you are feeling active you could follow the coastal path westwards to the 'Swallows Nest'. If you have a passion for wine, head for Massandra by local bus or taxi (5km east) and visit the Massandra wine tasting complex. Grapes have been harvested there since 1785. Whilst in Alupka, the Alupkinsky (Vorontsov) Palace and Park complex is definitely worth a look. It has a stunning coastal setting. For even better views of the Black Sea and some easy walks on a plateau, a cable car operates up to Mt. Ai-Petri. **(Included meals: B).**

Day 11. Exploring the Crimean Peninsula

We include an excursion by charter bus today to visit some of Crimea's natural and man-made wonders. Heading northwest from Yalta we drive along the coastal road to Bakhchysaray, our next destination. Where we'll visit the 16th century Khans' Palace (Tatar rulers' palace), the Uspensky Monastery and there is a strenuous uphill walk (40 mins) to Chufut-Kale, the biggest limestone cave city of southwest Crimea. This remarkable city was settled between the 6th and 12th centuries with the occupants carving rooms and steps out of the limestone hills. **(Included meals: B).**

Day 12. Drive Sevastopol; overnight train to Kiev

After breakfast we depart Yalta and drive west around the Crimean coast to

Sevastopol. Our first stop will be on Sapun Hill, the site where Lord Raglan ordered and witnessed infamous "Charge of the Light Brigade". We'll spend some time at the harbour - usually dominated by Russia's Black Sea Navy Fleet (Ukraine has leased the port to Russia) and view the painted panorama, depicting the 'Defence of Sevastopol' during the Crimean War. Sevastopol was the focus of the war, bombarded and besieged for 349 days by the British, French and Turks in 1854-1855. We also plan to visit the excavated ruins of the ancient Greek city of Chersonesus (founded in 422 BC) before catching our final overnight train. **Overnight sleeper train with bedding (included meals: B).**

Days 13 & 14. Sightseeing in Kiev

Our arrival in Kiev is scheduled for late morning so our guided city tour of Ukraine's capital will be in the afternoon. Between the 9th and 11th centuries Kiev was capital of Kiev Rus state, from which all later Russian states were descended. Although Ukrainian nationalism is strong you will still hear Russian spoken, as Kiev's ties are unequivocally linked to Russian culture and history. Situated on the banks of the River Dnipro, this ancient city has been inhabited for almost 2,000 years. During our time in Kiev we'll see some fascinating sites, including the beautiful Santa Sophia cathedral (from the outside only) and the Lavra Historical and Cultural Reserve (by metro) - with an extraordinary visit to the 'Monastery of the Caves', founded in AD1051. The labyrinths provide all the natural conditions for mummification and its striking underground churches still attract many religious enthusiasts. **2 nights hotel H+ (included meals: Bx1).**

Please note: on some departures your Tour Leader will be relocating in the morning of day 14, to join the next RKC tour. A local guide will escort you until your tour finishes.

Day 15. Tour ends in Kiev (Included meals: B).

Booking a Single Room

All of our tours are planned and operated on a twin-share basis, meaning that the standard cost is based either on individual travellers sharing accommodation with another group member of the same sex, or people who book together sharing accommodation. On this particular tour we are pleased to be able to offer customers the option of pre-booking a guaranteed single room. Due to the variety of accommodation used on this tour, single rooms are available for a majority of the nightstops, however it would still mean sharing on the overnight train.

EXPLORE ACCOMMODATION RATINGS : An important feature of many Explore tours is the wide range of accommodation used, and since the beginning our philosophy has been to select accommodation to suit the itinerary - not the other way round.

To help gauge the comfort level on your chosen tour, we have graded the accommodation standards at all night-stops using the rating guide below. Please keep in mind however that standards can vary from one trip to the next, and occasionally we may need to change a night-stop without advance warning.

Hotels / lodges / guesthouses - or similar

H++ : Comfortable hotels, lodges or guesthouses with twin or single rooms and en suite facilities. With air-conditioning/heating where appropriate and with reliable hot and cold water. Generally good levels of service and often with added amenities such as restaurant, bar, gardens or swimming pool.

H+ : Standard hotels, lodges or guesthouses, usually with twin or single rooms and en suite facilities. These are generally standard, no-frills hotels with adequate amenities and service standards. Whilst comfort levels are perfectly acceptable to most, please don't expect too much! These are often small, family run establishments.

H : Basic hotels, lodges or guesthouses (also village houses, mountain huts, hotels etc often come into this category). Accommodation may be communal or dorm-style, and WC / washing facilities are usually shared. Running hot and cold water may be unreliable or even unavailable. These can be the most rewarding and memorable places to stay, but comfort levels are low.

Camping

C++ : Comfortable, full service camping generally in permanent, fixed camps with walk-in tents, proper beds and often with en-suite facilities and other amenities such as dining area, bar, gardens and a swimming pool. Your bed-linen is provided.

C+ : Standard camping in private or public campsites, usually with WC and washing / showering facilities in a shared ablutions building. Typically in two person tents, and some level of participation is often required. Generally bed linen or sleeping bags are not provided.

C : Basic camping in wild camps where facilities / amenities may be limited or non-existent. Generally there is no running water, and we dig a temporary bush toilet. Two person tents are often used, but occasionally we sleep under the stars. Participation normally required and sleeping bags usually not provided.

Note: other accommodation, for example, aboard boats or on overnight sleeper trains is described individually at the appropriate point in the tour itinerary above.

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PERSONAL EXPENSES

You will need some extra money to cover meals not included in the tour price, other sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

Foreign Exchange

Local Currency: The Ukrainian national currency is the Hryvnia and Moldova is the Leu.

Recommended Currency for Exchange: Take USD or Euro cash or preferably a mixture of the two. You can only leave Ukraine with a maximum of USD 3,000. Anything over this amount will be confiscated.

Where to Exchange: Most major towns - your Tour Leader will advise you on arrival.

ATM Availability: Major towns and cities have ATM's for cash withdrawal, although cash machines in Moldova often do not work please do not rely on them.

Credit Card Acceptance: In major restaurants.

Travellers Cheques: Travellers cheques are very difficult to change in the Ukraine and Moldova.

Additional Information: Scottish notes are not accepted. All bank notes must be in good condition.

Up-to-date information re: global exchange rates can be obtained at <https://www.currency-express.com/explore/>

Meal Plan

Local Food and Drink: 12 breakfasts are included on this trip; please be prepared to pay for all other meals. Prices quoted are correct as of the date this dossier was originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations. Please note that costs for drinks and meals can vary depending on location and the prices below are given as an average guide only.

	UK	Moldova	Ukraine
Coffee/Tea	£1.20	£1.00	£1.00
Soft Drink	0.80	0.80	0.80
Bottle of Water	0.80	0.70	0.70
Bottle of Beer	2.50	2.40	2.40
Bottle of Wine	10.00	10.00	10.00
2 Course Meal*	10.00	10.00	10.00
3 Course Meal**	18.00	14.00	14.00

*Cheap local fare in a small cafe or restaurant.

**Typical food in a simple, reasonably comfortable mid-range restaurant.

Tipping

Local Staff: In this area, tipping is a recognised part of life, and some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of services provided. Accordingly, you should allow £10 tipping.

Tour Leader: At your discretion you might also consider tipping your tour leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

Other Sightseeing

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date this dossier was originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations.

ODESSA Visit to Catacombs £15.00.

YALTA Allow approx. £10.00 for local buses/taxis and entrance fees for local sites: Livadia Palace, Botanical Gardens, Alupkinsky Palace.

CHISINAU Melestici Mici Winery. Up to £36.00 (minimum 4 people required). This may need to be booked on arrival – please ask your tour leader.

MOLDOVA Working cave monastery visit and dinner in a local farmhouse. Up to £40.00 (minimum 4 people required). *Also allow another £10.00 for various other museum and site entrance fees during the tour (depending on your interests).*

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Seasonal Climate

Summers in Ukraine and Moldova are generally hot and sunny and less humid than in Central Europe, with temperatures often reaching into the 80's. In fact, the early autumn period is often to be compared with a true Indian summer, dry and sunny. The first snows in the Crimean Mountains usually start in November.

Additional information and climate charts can be accessed at <http://www.explore.co.uk/weather>. Seasonal weather patterns can be unpredictable. Up-to-date information on the weather worldwide can be found by following the BBC weather link on this page.

Visa Requirements

Ukraine: Visas are not required by citizens of the UK, USA or Canada.

Other nationalities should consult the relevant consulate.

Please be aware you are required to carry a photocopy of your passport with you at all times in the Ukraine for ID purposes.

Moldova: EU, USA and CAN citizens do not require a visa for Moldova, other nationalities should consult the relevant consulate. Be warned, this process can take up to **2 months during this process passports remain with the embassy.**

All visa information is subject to change. You should confirm all visa related issues with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

IMPORTANT NOTE FOR AUSTRALIAN PASSENGERS:

Please note that transit visas are no longer accepted for this tour. You will need to apply for a full visa. We have been informed by the Moldovan Embassy that as there is no Embassy or Consulate in Australia or New Zealand your application should be made to the Moldovan Embassy in London. Once your application has been received it may take up to two months to obtain the visa and additional time for them to return your passport to you by post.

Vaccinations & Protection

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against hepatitis A and diphtheria. Check that your polio and tetanus vaccinations are up to date before travel. The UK Foreign office currently recommend that you should consider whether to immunise against tick-borne encephalitis and rabies. Consult your travel clinic for further advice. **Special Note:** Vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed before departure.

The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider.

Electric Supply and Plugs

For comprehensive information regarding voltages and plug types in use in the countries visited, follow the relevant link at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Traveladvice/>

Insurance

Travel insurance is compulsory for all bookings. You must take your policy document with you on tour, as your tour leader will ask to see this at the start of the trip. Your documentation must state in writing that you are the named policyholder and that the cover is valid for your period of travel. Your policy document must also indicate that you have medical expenses and emergency repatriation cover and a 24-hour contact telephone number for your Insurance Company must be shown on your documentation in case of emergency.

If you are unable to provide all this information at the start of the trip you will not be allowed to join the trip. If you have purchased Explore Insurance you should carry the Master Certificate leaflet with you, which outlines the conditions of the policy together with a copy of your Confirmation Invoice, which is your proof of purchase of insurance. Explore Worldwide are an Appointed Representative of Campbell Irvine Limited, who is authorised and regulated by the Financial Services authority.

Know Before You Go

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination including safety and security, local laws and customs, entry requirements and health. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office Advice follow the link at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Traveladvice/>

PACKING FOR YOUR TRIP

A complete list of clothing and personal gear is contained in Explore's '**General Information Booklet**', available after a booking has been accepted. Here we make a few specific recommendations with regard to your tour.

Luggage: One main piece of baggage and a daypack for personal items. Total allowance: **44lbs/20kgs. Remember that you'll have to carry your own luggage at railway stations up and down long flights of steps and on/off trains – so don't overload yourself.**

Clothing: Pack essentially for '**All Tours**' with lightweight clothes during the day plus some warmer clothes for colder nights. Bring a lightweight rain-jacket, swimwear and a small towel. Women should bring a headscarf for religious site visits.

Footwear: Comfortable shoes with good grip and sandals.

Equipment: Bring a water bottle, mosquito repellent, a sunhat, sunscreen and a torch.

Books: Borderland: Anna Reid The Ukrainians- Unexpected nation: Andrew Wilson.

Trek Kit Bag: For an exclusively designed Explore Trek Bag, follow the relevant link at www.nomadtravel.co.uk/explore

Personal First Aid Kit: For an exclusively designed Explore Medical Kit, visit www.nomadtravel.co.uk/explore

Need help on clothing or equipment?

Then we suggest you contact Nomad Travel, our equipment partner, who specialise in kitting people out for adventurous travel. You receive a special 10% discount in-store or online. Visit one of their stores, phone 0845 260 0044, or visit their website www.nomadtravel.co.uk/explore for further information.

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