

UKRAINE



Official Name:	Republic of Ukraine (Україна)
Location:	SE Europe, between Romania and Russia.
Size:	Slightly smaller than Texas.
Capital:	Kiev.
Population:	44,900,000 (July, 2012 estimate): #30 in the world.
Political System:	Republic: President w/PM, cabinet and unicameral legislature.
Race/Ethnicity:	Ukrainian, 77.8%; Russian, 17.3%; Belarusian, 0.6%; Moldovan, 0.5%; Crimean Tatar, 0.5%; Bulgarian, 0.4%; Hungarian, 0.3%; Romanian, 0.3%; Polish, 0.3%; Jewish, 0.2%; other, 1.8%.
Language(s) spoken:	<i>Ukrainian, Russian: Cyrillic alphabet</i> , left to right; Romanian, Polish, Hungarian.
Religion(s):	Ukrainian <i>Orthodox</i> (76.7%); <i>Uniate</i> (8%); <i>Roman Catholic</i> , 2.2%; <i>Protestant</i> , 2.2%; <i>Jewish</i> , 0.6%; other, 3.2% (many in name only).
Challenges:	Belarus (boundaries); Russia (Kerch Strait, Sea of Azov, Crimea*); Romania (Zmiynyy / Serpilor Islands, and navigational canal from the Danube to the Black Sea); transshipment point for opiates bound for Europe and Russia. *(At press time, Russia had occupied the Crimean Peninsula and, encouraged by the weak response of the West, was fomenting an uprising of the Russian population of eastern Ukraine).

Family:	<i>Patriarchal, patrilineal</i> , nuclear, but with many an extended family because of housing shortages and finances; the majority of marriage ceremonies are civil first and religious afterwards; grandparents usually help rear their grandchildren, an endeavor often shared with godparents (or “sponsors” in the west); all children live at home well into adulthood (sometimes even if they have been married), and care for elderly parents later, instead of placing them in “homes.”
Gender roles:	<i>GG</i> : #64/135 parity: 68.6%. A male-oriented, traditional society: men make most decisions, but major ones are a shared responsibility; women have equal education to that of men, hold nearly twice the professional posts men hold, and earn 71% of men's pay; however, they have no political power; theirs is the responsibility for rearing the children and caring for the home.
Proxemics:	Short: men and women shake hands (men wait for women to initiate) and make good eye contact: if they are family or close friends, they almost always hug and kiss on both cheeks (three times).

Caveats:	The elderly are accorded respect and preferential treatment. One gets to his theater seat by walking facing the audience; to face the stage would be rude behavior, frowned upon. Chivalry toward women is still practiced. One does not shake hands in a threshold, nor does one give an item to be carried to the other side. Young, unmarried men and women should not be made to sit at the corner of a table. Dinner guest may bring flowers (odd in number and never yellow) or a bottle of fine liquor; gifts are not opened when received. Guests remove shoes before entering a home. One who does not drink is suspect; a non-drinker need only take a sip. Once opened, a bottle must be finished and the empty bottle removed from the table. Most people celebrate <i>name days</i> . <i>Triskaidekaphobia</i> .
Education:	(Please, consult Part II)
Dates:	<i>SD</i> : 08.12.2009; <i>LD</i> : 8 December 2009.
Numbers:	<i>DD</i> : comma (3,14); <i>TS</i> : space or period (1 234 567 or 1.234.567). <i>NN</i> : <i>LS</i> / <i>SL</i> : 10 ⁹ = Миллиард (<i>milliard</i>), but 10 ¹² = trillion, et al.
Time:	24-hr Clock: 13:15. <i>GMT</i> : +2.
Name structure:	Male/Female: given name(s) + <i>patronymic</i> + surname: Petró Nicolaievich Lukashenko/Irina Nikolaieva Lukashenka (note feminine suffixes). A married woman usually takes her husband's surname: Irina marries Aleksei Gromyko and becomes Irina (Nikolaieva) Gromyka. Formality (title or <i>Pan/Panni/Panna</i> --Mr./ Mrs./Miss + <i>patronymic</i>) is a must when dealing with unknown persons; given names + <i>patronymic</i> still show respect but are less formal; plain given names are reserved for friends, family and children. On official records, surnames precede given names: Lukashenko, Petró Nicolaievich.
Diet:	A cuisine that relies heavily on starches (especially flour paste and potatoes) and creams; meat (primarily pork and beef), in stews, with potatoes and vegetables, or in sausages; poultry (famous for <i>Chicken Kiev</i>); dairy products (huge quantities of sour cream, yogurt, ice creams); many and varied grains (breads, crepes, pancakes, et al.); plenty of cabbage, cooked or pickled; many types of soups (<i>borscht</i> being very popular); few sweets; fresh fruit, in season; sodas, juices, coffee, tea; wine, various brandies, excellent vodkas.
Body Language:	Little gesticulation while conversing; the "okay" sign is vulgar; the "fig" means "nothing" and also shows approval; smiling at someone may be interpreted as flirting; it is rude to talk w/hands in pockets; one points w/entire hand, not with index (= uncultured); the "thumbs up" gesture or a nod conveys approval; women expect chivalry from men (open doors, carry packages, offer seats, stand when they enter); one "beckons" w/palm down and says "good bye" w/palm up.
Punctuality:	Mostly ignored; everything starts late, especially so if it happens to be an informal function.
Cultural Patterns:	Highly nationalistic, traditional; idealistic; cosmopolitan, well mannered; avid readers; they value knowledge, education and strong families; still adjusting to post-communist independence and personal initiative; optimistic; status conscious (everyone strives to own a <i>dacha</i>); many are prejudiced against Semites and "dark skinned" people; they have exuberant, emotionally-charged and awe-inspiring choirs that give impeccable performances of folk songs and church music; lovers of folk music (w/ <i>banduras</i>) and dance (<i>hopak</i>); famous for their ballets, their jewel-like Easter-eggs and their <i>iconography</i> ; they produce outstanding gymnasts; soccer is their national sport of choice.