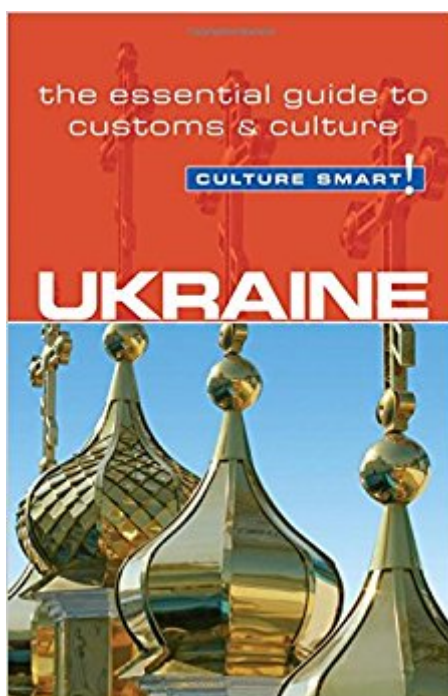


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Ukraine - Culture Smart!: The Essential Guide To Customs & Culture



Synopsis

This revised and updated edition of Culture Smart! Ukraine reveals a country in the throes of change. The euphoria of the famous Orange Revolution has vanished. The momentum for reform has been checked and the forces of authoritarianism have returned. Even so, modernization continues apace and people are eager to be seen as European. The recent political instability highlights the contradictions of Ukrainian society. Ukrainians are proud of their roots, and reticent about the traumas of their past; the country participates in international space programs and produces the world's largest aircraft, but still lives in a world of superstitions. The Ukrainian way of life is intertwined with ancient customs, the old Soviet legacy, and the search for a new European identity. What strikes visitors to this fascinating and important country is the heady mix of ancient history and youthful energy, the resilience of the people, and their generosity of spirit. For the twentieth anniversary of its independence, Ukraine received quite a present—hosting the key matches of Euro 2012. Now it has a game of its own: to show the world that it is a serious player. This new edition of Culture Smart! Ukraine will enable you to visit the country with open eyes. It describes the history that has shaped the Ukrainian psyche, explains present-day values and attitudes, and offers practical advice on what to expect and how to behave. It aims to make you feel at ease, whether you are shopping in a market, dining out, or attending a business meeting.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Culture Smart! has come to the rescue of hapless travellers, Sunday Times Travel - ...the perfect

introduction to the weird, wonderful and downright odd quirks and customs of various countries, Global Travel - ...full of fascinating, as well as common sense, tips to help you avoid embarrassing faux pas, Observer - ...as useful as they are entertaining, Easy Jet Magazine - ...offer glimpses into the psyche of a faraway world, New York Times. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Anna Shevchenko is a Ukrainian-born business development consultant and the managing director of 3CN, a British-based company specializing in cross-cultural risk management. She speaks seven languages, and has an M.Phil. degree from the University of Cambridge. Anna has worked with key government and industry decision makers in Britain and Europe and across the CIS. She is the author of numerous articles and two books on cross-cultural communication, as well as two novels set in Ukraine: *Bequest*, published in 2010, and *Tony's Game*, out in September 2012.

The book tries to intimidate readers regarding customs and superstitions but things are far more relaxed than the book made out to be. As of my two Ukraine visits in 2011 and 2012, this book is outdated. The book says that clearing customs is very difficult and the customs agents are stone cold stern and foreigner-hating. This isn't true, customs was a snap, agents very nice and my bags were never even inspected either time on arrival to Kiev from U.S. and certainly not when flying within Ukraine. Traditions/superstitions info was also outdated - e.g. it is NOT required to keep up with the host's alcoholism/toasting; anyone, not just the toastmaster, can toast; the young people I spent time with rolled their eyes and laughed out loud at the book's advice on flower giving (number and colors), not opening windows in a train because of "drafts", and many other superstitions: the urban 20-somethings don't believe in this stuff anymore. Contrary to what the book said, money-changing in the cities is a snap, there's a place to do it on almost every block and they don't try to rip you off. I followed the book's advice on gentlemanly manners, holding doors open, standing when a lady stands etc - and it was over the top, the well-bred ladies I was with were noticeably embarrassed by such treatment; none of them were used to it. (Can't say it hurt anything though.) Contrary again to what the book says, nobody batted an eye when I went hatless in winter. The above info might be useful in small western towns and around old folks, but useless in cities. The rest of the book is adequate, but you don't need this book to learn it; any guidebook will do, e.g. lonely planet beats it hands down re: useful info: where to stay, eat, what to see.

This very small book (smaller format than a typical paperback, 168 pages, large font,

double-spaced, big margins) is in fact only about half about "customs & culture". Instead, there are long chapters on very general travel and historical info -- the sort of thing easily available on Wiki or in the travel guide you also undoubtedly will have (I use Lonely Planet; I am in Ukraine now). I read this little book in a couple hours, and while useful as a breezy history, there were only about 40 useful pages -- the best were the 18 pages of "Business Briefing" (the author is a business development consultant). Additionally, don't believe that this is a 2012 book -- it was first published in 2005 and most of the travel info seems from then. The author refers to river ferries from Kiev (long cancelled) and lists websites last update in 2008. Overall, don't let the low price fool you -- it's still not worth it. And, shame shame on the author, supposedly an M.Phil. from Cambridge and speaker of 7 languages, for putting her name on such a deceptive little book -- I would have loved 168 pages of "customs & culture" from her, but that's not in here.

While I visited over 60 times in 10 years (we have a team there), I never had an incident involving risk to me or my belongings. There is no need for a bodyguard or any of the multiple vaccines. I drove alone for much of the country, always got help in getting directions, gave rides to people asking on the roads (they always offered money, I never accepted) without a single incident but the usual traffic police taking bribes (yes, I was speeding). As an American I can't bribe any foreign agent, so... Kyiv is a great European Capital with the real charm of real antiquity unlike many fake cities in Europe that try to look old as a tourist attraction (tourist traps). A really old city is not perfect, so one will find that in Kyiv, Lviv and Odessa as well. All of them well worth the visit for travelers interested in seeing and experiencing the real centuries old cities of Europe. From Pagan idols, the Viking influences, Mongols invasions, all left their mark throughout the territory of this very interesting civilization. Back to the book: worth reading. I found that even after that many visits I was breaking some protocols the Ukrainians hold in high regard.

Anna Shevchenko has done an outstanding job in covering the entire spectrum of Ukrainian life in this book. There is such a marvelous wealth of information, insights, and advice, liberally sprinkled with humor, on the many diverse aspects of the country's traditions and way of life. I was really impressed by the scope of this work and on that basis I could do no other than bestow 5 stars on it. I believe it's a highly valuable resource for anyone traveling, studying, working or living in Ukraine. I will say, though, that under the caveat "culture" I expected a good deal more about the masterpieces of Ukrainian culture and those who contributed them: the artists, writers, composers, sculptors, poets,

etc. But the book is so packed with information and is so useful on a practical basis, that one can easily forgive these omissions. -- Reviewed by Robert Powers, Ukrainian Phrasebook, Dictionary, Menu Guide & Interactive Factbook

A great little introduction to Ukraine. Nice, pocket size book that travels well. Of course, with the recent Russian aggression in the Ukraine, the book will have to be updated at some point, but I would recommend this as a good introduction.

Not a bad book but not what I wanted to see and was lower than what I expected. I had hoped for something with more depth. Perhaps good for those just starting to learn about Ukraine but I wanted to see more about myths, such as when young women sit on cement or stone and a Babushka scolds them for it, etc. And, I wanted to read more about wedding traditions, much more. It lacks more than it provides in my mind...sorry. Not a bad book, just not what I needed to read.

simple, to the point and good reading. I went to Kiev this year and followed many of the book's items about Kiev accurately. Nice interest points of cultures and customs of Ukraine. I would recommend for interested readers.

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