

Ukrainian Culture & Foods

Country of Origin: Ukraine

Primary Language(s): Russian & Ukrainian

Percent of Iowa's Population: .0008%

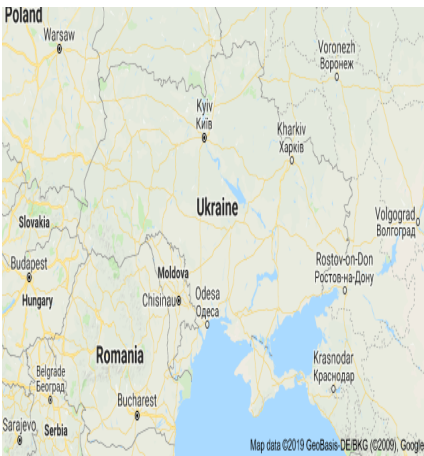
Background

Ukraine is located in Eastern Europe, with a population of 42.5 million. It's the largest country entirely within Europe. In the Middle Ages, it was a center of East Slavic culture. It merged into the Russian-dominated USSR in the late 1940's. In 1991, Ukraine gained its independence from the Soviet Union at the end of the Cold War.

Ukraine is a developing country & has the 2nd lowest GDP per capita. It has the lowest median wealth per adult in the world. It suffers from a very high poverty rate & severe corruption. Due to its vast farmland, it's one of the world's largest grain exporters. Ukraine also maintains the 2nd largest military in Europe, after Russia.

Significant natural resources are abundant, such as: iron ore, coal, manganese, natural gas, oil, salt, Sulphur, graphite, titanium, magnesium, kaolin, nickel, mercury, timber, & arable land. Despite this, there are a number of environmental issues, such as inadequate supplies of potable water, air & water pollution, deforestation, & radiation contamination.

The population has been shrinking by over 150,000 annually since 1993 due to its high emigration rate. The country suffers a high mortality rate from environmental pollution, poor diets, widespread smoking, extensive alcoholism & deteriorating medical care.



Rushnyk: embroidered decorative towels.

Education and Literacy

Ukraine places an emphasis on total access of education for all citizens.

Its literacy rate is 99.4%.

Ukraine has more than 800 institutions of higher learning.

It has the 4th largest number of post-secondary graduates in Europe.

Traditions, Customs, & Taboos

Ukrainians are heavily influenced by Orthodox Christianity. They have traditional gender roles. Men control the family as the head of household.

Grandparents play a large role in raising children. Families are typically made up of large, extended families, with several generations under one roof.

Their belongings are collective & they share communal property. The Easter egg, called Pysanky, originated in Ukraine.

Weaving & embroidery are culturally significant. Artisan textiles play an important role in Ukrainian culture, especially in wedding traditions. Use of color is very important & has roots in Ukrainian folklore.

Holidays & Celebrations

Christmas Eve, they celebrate by eating 12 meatless dishes. On Easter Sunday, their food is blessed the day before & isn't eaten until after Resurrection services. On the Holiday of the Transfiguration, traditionally August 19, apples & honey are eaten. During celebrations, it's customary for the host to offer a drink to guests, who must not refuse.

Other holidays:

International Women's Day on March 8: celebrated in the same context as Mother's Day.

Victory Day on May 9: remembers those who died during WWII.

Independence Day on August 24: Celebrated with parades & fireworks.

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Health Disparities

Ukraine has a high death rate & a low birth rate. They have a high mortality rate from preventable causes, such as alcohol poisoning, smoking, obesity, high blood pressure, & HIV. The high death rate from alcohol poisoning & smoking pertains to working class males.

The average life expectancy rate for men is 68 years; for females; 77 years.

Children are dying from diseases such as measles, pertussis, & diphtheria due to a poor vaccination rate. In 2016, Ukraine had the lowest routine vaccination rate in the world.

Traditional Foods & Meal Patterns

The traditional Ukrainian diet includes chicken, pork, beef, fish, & mushrooms. They eat a great deal of potatoes, grains, & fresh, boiled, or pickled vegetables. They generally avoid exotic meats & spices. Popular traditional dishes include Varenyky (boiled dumplings), Nalysnyky (a form of pancakes), Kapusniak (soup), Borscht (beet soup), Holubtsy (stuffed cabbage rolls), & Pierogi (stuffed dumplings). They prefer to eat at home, only going to restaurants for special occasions. Meal times: Breakfast 7a-10a, Lunch 12p-3p, Supper 5p-8p. Their main meal is dinner.

Considerations for WIC

*Communication styles/behaviors: They tend to be very quiet & mild mannered. They exude a quiet confidence. Their children are exceedingly well-behaved while at clinic. They keep a reasonable distance. They are respectful & will answer your questions, but aren't likely to provide additional dialogue. If the husband attends the appointment, he will answer most of the questions.

*They have some traditions that are opposite of what we teach, such as serving a thick cereal-like drink to their children in baby bottles until they are age 2 or so. Those traditions run deep, & they will not stray from them, so we need to be respectful of their culture.

*Sometimes they will attend an appointment with a friend; another WIC mom who is also Ukrainian. They provide good, positive support during the appointment, & are sometimes brought along as a translator if needed.

*They would rather not have home visitors, so when referring them to programs that have home visiting, such as Parents As Teachers, they decline that service. They do attend NEST Programs, & receive education/follow-up care in that way.

What's the Iowa Connection?

They migrated to the United States due to religious persecution of Pentecostals by the Russians. They left Ukraine & landed in Tacoma, Washington, then made their way to Chariton. They like Iowa because it reminds them of home with the cold climate & country living.



Pyskany: Ukrainian Easter Eggs

How are we Living?

In Iowa, they tend to have fewer children, & extended family live together. They have been purchasing older homes in need of repair; neighbors pool their funds to help each other purchase their homes.

They find work as welders in local factories, farmers, & many of them work at the Hy-Vee Distribution Center in Chariton.