

## RELIABLE INFORMATION ON UKRAINE

For UpToDate reports, see *Kyiv Independent* newspaper/digital media

- Overall geography and history— A country about the size of Texas with a population close to that of California, Ukraine is the second largest country in Europe. It has long been of geopolitical interest to its neighbors due to its unusually rich resources such as iron ore and its “chornozem” fertile soil. It is more than images of Chernobyl or war. It’s a beautiful country. Ukraine’s flag—blue above gold—symbolizes its vast wheatfields and clear skies. For centuries, Ukraine has been called “the breadbasket of Europe,” and it is still one of the top five producers of grain in the world. Its abundance, however, is one reason why it is so desirable to Russia and why it has often been invaded in the course of its long history.

*Search: Timothy Snyder + Harvard Petryshyn lecture (hour-long video)*

*Articles and Books in Ukraine by Anne Applebaum, Serhii Plokyh, Marci Shore, Timothy Snyder*

- Economic resilience. Despite the ravages of the Soviet years at Putin’s meddling, Ukraine has made great strides economically during its 30 years of independence since 1991. Many international companies created partnerships with companies in Ukraine. Kyiv and Lviv became popular travel destinations. Ukraine boasts some of the best tech/science education and innovation in the world. Among famous Ukrainian-American engineers are Igor Sikorsky (inventor of the helicopter) and Steve Wozniak.

*Search: Euromaidanpress + Silicon Valley*

- Ethnic diversity and pluralism — Ukraine's constitution explicitly states tolerance of all religions, races, ethnicities, and sexual orientation. The millions of protesters during the Revolution of Dignity of 2014 were of diverse backgrounds. Its current president Zelensky, of Jewish descent was elected in 2019 in a landslide. He is currently the only Jewish head of state outside of Israel. Ukraine’s free, multi-lingual, and multi-cultural society made it a magnet for many Russian citizens. This has been a great threat to Putin's Russia.

*Search: WBUR On Point + Ukraine*

- Deep religious roots and devotion to social justice — Many religions are deeply rooted in Ukraine. Christianity was first adopted in Kyiv in the 10th century (before the cities of St. Petersburg and Moscow even existed). After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, religious worship of all faiths has been revitalized. Traveling across the country from Kyiv to Lviv, one can see each field and village punctuated by churches. The Menorah Jewish Center and Holocaust Museum in Dnipro is the second largest Jewish community centers in the world.

*Search: Archbishop Borys Gudziak + EWTN, or Rabbi Bleich + Ukraine*

- Cultural vitality — For centuries, Ukraine has been known and celebrated as a singing nation. Kyiv alone boasts several full-time professional choirs. It has created a stir internationally with its Eurovision winners Ruslana, Jamala and finalist last year Go\_A and its bands like Dakha Brakha.

--See *Wild Dances*, which won the book-of-the-year award from the American Musicological Society. Its author Maria Sonevytsky was on UCB’s music faculty, now at Bard College.

- Commitment to democracy and sovereignty — In the Revolution of Dignity of 2013-14, millions took to the streets of Kyiv to defend Ukrainian democracy and self-determination. On just one day during the Revolution of Dignity, 100 protestors were massacred by Russian-trained snipers. Today’s war and its brutal escalation are a continuation of that struggle.

*See video from 2014 Revolution of Dignity: I am a Ukrainian + youtube*

## INFORMATION ON CHARITIES HELPING UKRAINE

### **Nova Ukraine** (no ribbon baskets)

<https://novaukraine.org>

Based in the Bay Area. In this time of war, it is focusing all efforts on humanitarian aid to everyday people and families affected by war in Ukraine. Nova Ukraine has an established, proven network of trustworthy partners on the ground in Ukraine. Money from donations is allocated daily to frontline volunteers providing emergenc resources to both refugees and citizens who have remained in the war zone.

### **Sunflower of Peace** (yellow ribbon baskets)

<https://www.facebook.com/sunflowerofpeace>

To use the site you must log in to Facebook

Sunflower of Peace is US-based 501(c)(3) registered non-profit organization whose current mission is to provide medical and humanitarian aid for people affected by violence in Ukraine. Sunflower of Peace started its first fundraiser in 2015 with a purpose of helping people who were affected the war in Eastern Ukraine. As the organization grew bigger, it started providing help to orphans, internally displaced persons. The organization raised thousands of US dollars and provided hundreds of medical workers in Ukraine with equipment they lacked in the times of drained resources and even larger needs.

### **Revived Soldiers Ukraine** (blue ribbon baskets)

<https://www.rsukraine.org>

Revived Soldiers Ukraine is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing aid to the people of Ukraine so that they may fulfill fundamental rights and freedoms such as the right to affordable medical care, freedom of political/religious view, and an adequate standard of living. It works to promote awareness of human rights while delivering humanitarian aid to those in need. Its goals is to provide medical aid and sustainable living standards to Ukrainian soldiers and their families as well as civilians affected by military conflict. It suggests helping Ukraine by making purchases on Amazon.

### **Other: Razom for Ukraine**

<https://razomforukraine.org>

Based in New York. Razom, a 501(c)(3) organization, was born out of the Revolution of Dignity in 2014 when millions of people worked together and risked their lives to build a pathway to a better future for Ukraine. Those who were unable to be in Ukraine during this time, wanted to do their part to help the movement as best they could from abroad. Many sent funds and supplies to sustain the community built on the Maidan through the winter, but they also took to the streets in their own cities to raise awareness and amplify voices from Ukraine in the West. To donate, click on "What Can You Do To Help Right Now" and for a list of where your donation will go.

### Other information:

Search: New Yorker Radio Hour + Ukraine; op-eds by Anne Applebaum, Fiona Hill, Timothy Snyder

Films: Documentary *Winter on Fire* (2014 revolution) and *Mr. Jones* (on the '30s Holodomor) *Klondike* (2022)