



The Carpathians

Карпати

POP 3.5 MILLION

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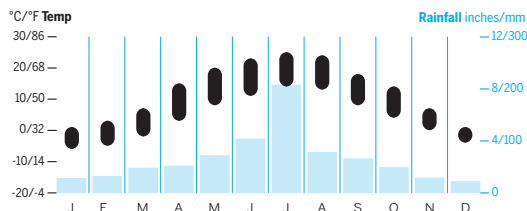
Why Go?

Clipping the country's southwest corner, the Carpathian arc has endowed Ukraine with a crinkled region of forested hills and fast-flowing rivers, a million miles from the flatness of the steppe. This is the land of the Hutsuls, whose colourful folk culture is laced through thin villages stretching languidly along wide valley floors. The Carpathians are rural Ukraine at its best, where tiered wooden churches dot hillsides, horse-drawn carts clip-clop along potholed roads, *babushkas* shoo geese, and *marshrutka* (fixed-price minibus) passengers cross themselves as they whizz past roadside chapels.

The 'Hutsulshchyna' may be Ukraine's epicentre of rural folk culture, but this is also a leading holiday spot. The local peaks have been a long-term hit with Ukrainian hikers and skiers; the Carpathian National Nature Park, the country's biggest, lies in this region, and within the park's boundaries rises Mt Hoverla – Ukraine's highest peak at 2061m. It's also home to Bukovel, Ukraine's glitziest ski resort.

When to Go?

Ivano-Frankivsk



Best Places to Eat

- » Reflection (p133)
- » Olenka (p130)
- » Beer Club 10 (p118)

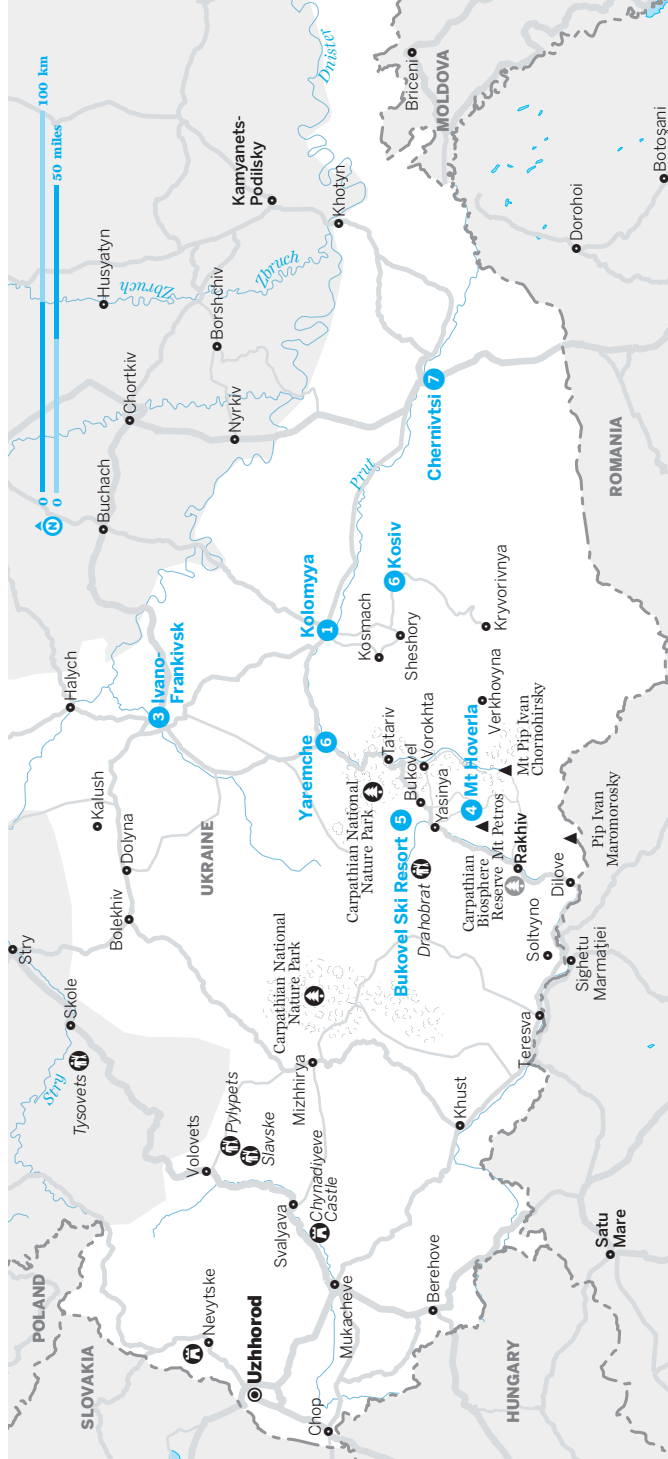
Best Places to Stay

- » On the Corner (p125)
- » Smerekova Hata (p130)
- » Good Morning B&B (p125)
- » Old Continent (p136)
- » Atrium (p117)

July Picnic on flower-filled *polonyna* (summer pastures) as you listen to the tinkle of cow bells.

September Say 'cheese' at the Hutsul cheese-making festival in Rakhiv.

December Enjoy some hearty Hutsul après-ski during the Carpathian ski season.



Carpathians Highlights

- 1 Set up base camp in **Kolomyia** (p124) to visit its museums and arrange hikes into the hills
- 2 Hire a two-wheeler to enjoy the ups and downs of Carpathian cycling trails created by the excellent **Bikeland Project** (p122)
- 3 Wander the pastel-coloured heart of **Ivano-**

- 4 Make an easy-going ascent of Ukraine's highest peak, **Mt Hoverla** (p120)

- 5 Snap on skis for a bit of downhill fun at ritzy **Bukovel Ski Resort** (p123)
- 6 Bargain hard for Hutsul souvenirs at markets in **Kosiv** (p127) and **Yaremche** (p121)

- 7 Join Bukovyna's student population at trippy **Chernivtsi University** (p131), one of Eastern Europe's most mind-boggling places of learning