



# Lviv & Western Ukraine

## Львів & Західна Україна

POP 5.85 MILLION / AREA: 75,847 SQ KM

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### Best Places to Eat

- » Masonic Restaurant (p101)
- » Dim Lehend (p101)
- » Korona Vitovta (p111)
- » Kupol (p101)

### Best Places to Stay

- » Vintage (p97)
- » Leopold Hotel (p97)
- » Hotel Zaleski (p111)
- » Kosmonaut Hostel (p97)

### Why Go?

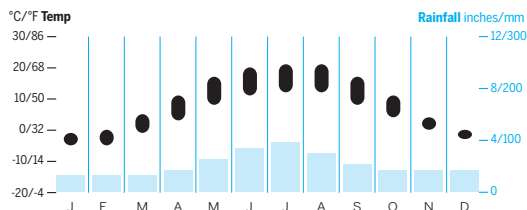
More quintessentially Ukrainian than the rest of the country, and distinctly more European, the west is all about its largest city, the Galician capital of Lviv. One of Ukraine's great hopes for tourism, the city is a truly captivating place, rich in historic architecture and with an indulgent coffee-house culture, but only a fraction of the tourist hordes who choke similar city-break destinations such as Krakow and Prague. Early signs of gentrification have yet to smother its shabby authenticity.

The Soviets ruled for only 50 years here, making the west the most foreigner-friendly province with less surly 'no-can-do' bureaucracy than in eastern regions. People here speak Ukrainian (rather than Russian) and show greater pride in Ukrainian traditions than elsewhere.

Away from Lviv, the moody Carpathian Mountains are a short bus ride away, as are historic Lutsk, the old-world spa at Truskavets and the golden domes of Pochayiv Monastery.

### When to Go?

#### Lviv



**May** Stroll through Lviv's centre on Sunday mornings, when church music wafts along the streets.

**July** Experience a Ukrainian summer of love at Pidkamin's Ethnofestival.

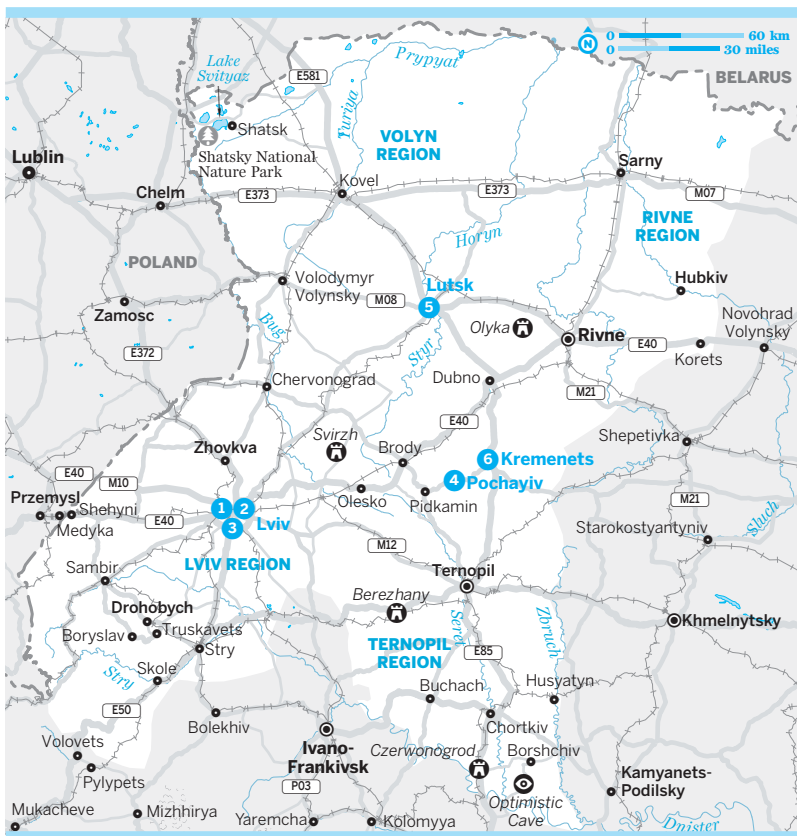
**August** Crowds of pilgrims gather at Pochayiv Monastery during the Feast of the Assumption.

## History

Mongols overrunning Kyivan Rus in 1240 never made it as far west as the powerful province of Galicia-Volynia. They did occasionally knock on its door, but the region was largely left to enjoy self-rule under King Roman Mstyslavych, his son Danylo Halytsky and his descendants.

This idyllic state was shattered in the 1340s when Polish troops invaded, but west-

ern Ukraine never lost its taste for independence. Several centuries of Polish domination saw the rise of a unique Ruthenian identity, which is the basis for much contemporary Ukrainian nationalism. Many Galician *boyars* (nobles) – often sent from Poland, Germany or Hungary – adopted the Polish language and Roman Catholicism. However, the peasants, also known as Ruthenians, remained Orthodox. They were



## Lviv & Western Ukraine Highlights

- 1 Do a spot of cobblesurfing in **Lviv's historical centre** (p89), which is packed with churches, museums and eccentric restaurants
- 2 Make a caffeine-and-cake halt at **Lviv's coffeehouses** (p102), some of the best in the country
- 3 Pay your respects to Lviv's great and good of yesteryear at the city's amazing **Lychakivske Cemetery** (p89)
- 4 Join the Orthodox faithful for a pilgrimage to **Pochayiv Monastery** (p108) to find Ukraine's most devout atmosphere
- 5 Take a turn around **Lutsk's old quarter** (p110) for a blast from Western Ukraine's past
- 6 Head uphill to **Kremenets Fortress** (p109) for show-stopping views of the town's many churches