

17 TOP EXPERIENCES



Kyievo-Pecherska Lavra, Kyiv

1 Discover mysteries of Eastern Orthodoxy and descend into catacombs to see mummies of much-revered saints on an excursion to the holy of holies for all eastern Slavs. Founded as a cave monastery in 1051, the *lavra* (p43) is filled with golden-domed churches, baroque buildings and orchards. Religious ceremonies take place in lavishly decorated, icon-filled interiors, accompanied by beautiful choir singing and attended by crowds of pilgrims and monks. There are great collections of Scythian gold, micro-miniatures and more in museums located on the premises. Dormition Cathedral (p45)

Carpathian Landscapes

5

2 By and large Ukraine is as flat as a topographically challenged *blin* (pancake), which makes its bumpy bits all the more special. Ukraine's slice of the Carpathian arc barely reaches over 2000m, but its soothing wooded slopes, rough stony trails, flower-filled upland pastures and wide, snaking valleys make this prime hiking, biking and skiing territory. Needless to say, the Carpathians (p119) are home to Ukraine's highest peak, Mt Hoverla, a fairly easy trek from nearby villages, as well as several ski resorts. Carpathian countryside, near Uzhhorod

