



Crimea КРИМ

POP 2.3 MILLION / AREA 26,200 SQ KM

Includes ➔

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Koktebel	195
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Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Café Ostrov (p179)
- ➔ Musafir (p175)
- ➔ Barkas (p179)
- ➔ Izbushka Rybaka (p182)
- ➔ Apelsin (p186)

Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Dilara Hanum (p173)
- ➔ Kichkine (p190)
- ➔ Corsair (p186)
- ➔ Fazanya Roshcha (p177)
- ➔ Dacha Koktebelica (p195)

Why Go?

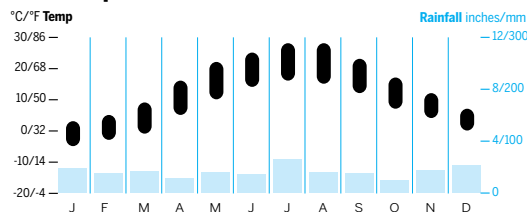
It might be attached to the mainland by a narrow isthmus, but in every other respect Crimea is an island, with its climate and inhabitants markedly different from the rest of Ukraine. From Romans to Russians, empires tried to grab this tiny gem of a region, but it always slipped away.

In Crimea's south, mountains rise like a sail as if trying to carry it away into open sea. Protected from northern winds, the coast is covered in lush subtropical vegetation. This is where Russian royals built summer palaces, later transformed into sanatoriums for workers.

The mountains are the heartland of Crimean Tatars – a nation of survivors, who brought back from 50-year exile their traditions of hospitality and excellent food. They live surrounded by limestone plateaus – a magnet for trekkers and cyclists who come here for great vistas and to explore ancient cave cities.

When to Go

Simferopol



May–Jun Feel the flower power as orchards bloom and mountains are covered in wild tulips.

Jul–Aug Beaches are packed but the sea is warm and the Kazantip rave is underway.

Sep–Oct Crowds wash away. Time for jazz in Koktebel and mountain hikes.

Crimea Highlights

- 1 Enter a top-secret Soviet nuclear facility in the fjord-like bay of **Balaklava** (p180).
- 2 Conquer the cave-city of **Mangup-Kale** (p175).
- 3 Get spooked by thousands of gravestones covered in ancient Hebrew script at **Iosofatova Valley** (p173).
- 4 Stay with Crimean Tatars, learn their heart-breaking story and sample their food in **Bakhchysaray** (p170).
- 5 Inspect both the Russian and Ukrainian navy on a cruise of **Sevastopol Bay** (p176).
- 6 Meet the Karaites – adepts of a little-known religion – at the *kenassa* (temple) in **Yevpatoriya** (p168).
- 7 Trek through the striking volcanic formations of **Kara-Dag Nature Reserve** (p197).
- 8 Take a breathtaking cable-car ride to the top of **Ay-Petri plateau** (p189).

