



# Lviv & Western Ukraine

## Львів і Західна Україна

POP 5.85 MILLION / AREA 75,847 SQ KM

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### Best Places to Eat & Drink

- ➔ Masonic Restaurant (p109)
- ➔ Dim Lehend (p108)
- ➔ Korona Vitovta (p119)
- ➔ Kupol (p109)
- ➔ Kabinet Cafe (p110)

### Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Vintage (p107)
- ➔ Leopold Hotel (p108)
- ➔ Old City Hostel (p106)
- ➔ Hotel Zaleski (p119)
- ➔ Reikartz Medievale (p107)

### Why Go?

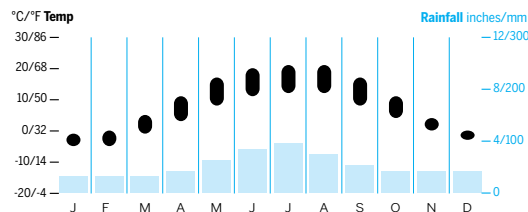
More quintessentially Ukrainian than the rest of the country, and distinctly more European, the west is all about its largest city, the Galician capital of Lviv. An emerging tourist magnet, the city is a truly captivating place, rich in historic architecture and with an indulgent coffeehouse culture, but only a fraction of the tourist hordes who choke similar city-break destinations such as Kraków and Prague. Piece-meal gentrification has made only small dents in 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 hop by bus, as are historic Lutsk, the olde-worldle spa at Truskavets and the golden domes of Pochayiv Monastery.

### When to Go

#### Lviv



**May** A great time to be in Lviv with simultaneous festivals filling the early part of the month.

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

**Aug** Pilgrims flock to 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 western 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



## Lviv & Western Ukraine Highlights

- 1 Do a spot of cobble-surfing in Lviv's **historical centre** (p96), packed with churches, museums and eccentric restaurants.
- 2 Make a caffeine-and-cake halt at Lviv's **coffeehouses** (p110), 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** (p101).

- 4 Join the Orthodox faithful for a pilgrimage to **Pochayiv Monastery** (p115) to find Ukraine's most devout atmosphere.

- 5 Take a turn around Lutsk's **old quarter** (p118)

for a blast from western Ukraine's past.

- 6 Head uphill to **Kremenets Fortress** (p116) for trip-stopping views of the town's many churches.

- 7 Catch a **festival** (p102) in Lviv – not difficult as there's something happening almost every day of the year.