

DAY 13—TUESDAY, JUNE 19

Ternopil and Overnight to Kyiv

I was now in the habit of waking up before 6:00 am, beating my wake-up call.

I had time to review my notes from yesterday before going to breakfast. I decided to check on the logistics about over-night train to Kyiv. After breakfast, I went to the front desk to see Tatyana, our contact person from the Ukrainian travel company. When I asked to see Tatyana, another woman also named Tatyana appeared. When I asked her about our train arrangements, she said wasn't aware of them. I asked her, if the other Tatyana would be here soon. She told me that Tatyana was off for the day and that she had not been informed about our arrangements, but that she will find out. She disappeared into an inner office and shortly after a young man named Ruslan approached me and told me in good English that he had our tickets and will be escorting us to the train station. He told me that we should be in the lobby at 8:00 pm and that there will be taxis to take us to the station. He assured me that he would be with us until we were safely aboard our train.

Wayne, Romana and I headed out for day two at the archives. The staff had conveniently put the spravi we were still searching at yesterday's close in a steel cabinet. I had some luck in finding ancestral records for my aunt Anne Onyschuk (nee Budyk). I marked the pages with pieces of paper for Xeroxing when I have finished my search. While there, an American and her guide came in to do some research. Since they spoke English, I introduced myself. The guide recognized my name from visiting our TUGG site and gave me his card. I told him that I would add him to our list of translator/guides.

Since, we were told that we would have to check-out at noon, we made our way back to the hotel. The hotel agreed to let us store the bags in one of the rooms until 8:00 pm. One of the Vizniowski's offered their room for storage. Room 521 became a convenient place to rest for those who were feeling the effects of the trip. We agreed to meet for supper at 5:30 at the "Europa" restaurant, which was on the same street as the archives.

Romana had to visit a RAHS office and asked if I could pick up the bundle of pages that she had, yesterday, asked to be Xeroxed at the archives. I headed back to the archives to finish my research and had the pages I had earmarked Xeroxed.

I found out that the cost of Xeroxing was related to each sprava. They quoted me a price of 60 HUA (\$12 CAN) per sprava. At first I thought they were referring to each page. They said no, it was for the pages you earmarked from each sprava. So, even if I earmarked one page or 50 pages from one sprava, the price would be the same, namely 60 HUA, in either case. This was quite a bargain. I had earmarked a large number of pages from two sprava, so my bill came to 120 HUAs or about \$24 Canadian. They also xeroxed the pages on large ledger-sized paper. The Xeroxing was done in a small office down the hall from the reading room where a young man did the Xeroxing for you.

I enquired about the Xeroxing that Romana had ordered yesterday and they said they would look for it. There were four others lined up for the Xerox and I was in need of a snack, so I told the staff I would return in an hour for the material. Directly across the street from the archive is a café called “Kafe Stare Misto,” Old City Café. I ordered a delicious bowl of borshch, a beer and people-watched.

When I returned to the Xerox room, I was given my bundle of pages and paid 120 HUAs. I asked about Romana’s material and they hadn’t yet found it. The woman I asked said she would continue to look for it. I told her that I will wait outside in the hallway. The hallway serves as a small museum with pictures of writers and detailed write-ups about their lives. There were old books and manuscripts in glass counters with descriptions. There was also old book-binding equipment, such as stitching machines and paper presses. I tried to read the descriptions, but my knowledge of Ukrainian was too limited. I saw the woman enter a number of offices and finally she left, along with a number of staff as the office closed at 5:00 pm. She offered me no explanation, even though she saw me waiting in the hall.

Rather than return to the hotel, I went to the “Europa” restaurant, where we had agreed to have an early supper. It was situated just north of the Potato House restaurant. The “Europa” is more upscale and has a large outdoor patio with a green awning and expensive-looking outdoor furniture. I told the waiter that I was expecting nine more and he seated me at a large table.



Most of the patrons were young and fashionably dressed. They spoke Ukrainian with the odd Russian word thrown in. At 5:30 pm the rest of the group arrived and we joined two tables together, to give us more room.

The menu was in Ukrainian and English with higher-priced, European and Ukrainian dishes. I had read in one travel book, that you can judge a

Ukrainian restaurant by the price it charged for its borshch. A decent restaurant would charge from 4-8 HUAs for borscht. Anything over 8 HUAs would be pretentious. We were definitely in a pretentious restaurant and like the other pretentious restaurants I have been to, the portions were small. This was our most expensive restaurant to-date, but we would later encounter other more expensive restaurants in Kyiv. We ordered our customary borscht and varynyky and other delicious dishes.

When Romana arrived, I had to explain that they could not find her Xeroxed material. She was disappointed and mentioned that perhaps one of her relatives could retrieve the Xerox bundle and ship it to her.

After supper, we walked back to the hotel recovering our bags from room 521 and lugged them to the lobby where we awaited Ruslan's arrival. While waiting, Romana realized that she had mislaid her credit card and returned to room 521 to use the phone to call the credit card bank to cancel the card, in case it was stolen. She could not get through. Hopefully the card was simply mislaid and not stolen.

At 8:00 pm Ruslan arrived with our tickets. He had arranged for five taxis to ferry us in groups of two, to the train station. Romana was still trying to get through to the credit card company as the taxis started out. Finally she had to abort the call and we took the last taxi to the station. Ominously a thunderstorm accompanied our drive with plenty of lightening and claps of thunder. The driver refused to take a tip, saying that it was covered. We had to run into the station to avoid getting soaked. Ruslan was waiting in the entrance-way for us to assemble. Once we were all together, he passed out our tickets and explained the boarding procedure. We were each assigned separate numbered berth. Mine was in room 7 in car #9.

While we were waiting for the train, I took pictures and film of the train station. This amused many Ukrainians, who were probably wondering, “Why would anyone want to take these pictures?” Although it was destroyed during WW II, the station was rebuilt in its old architectural splendor. My father and uncles passed through this station on their way to Canada. Perhaps I was looking at the same interior as they would have seen.



When our # 98 train was about to arrive, Russlan escorted us to the tracks outside the station. Fortunately, the storm was over and we could see the clouds scudding off in the distance. We went across a couple of tracks to a narrow walk-way where we waited for our train. It was due to arrive at 9:58 pm. As the train pulled in on time, we were on the look-out for car #9. As the train slowly stopped, we quickly made our way to our car. There were a



dozen burly men who bulled there way to the front of the line. They looked like they were police by their short hair and arrogant demeanor. Ruslan stayed with us until we were aboard and helped lift our luggage up the narrow stairway into the car. A woman in uniform took our tickets and showed us where our rooms were located.

Harry Hrynkiw waiting for the train

Each room had two long bench-seats facing each other. The seats had a mattress with bedding and could lift up to provide storage below. The sliding door to the narrow hall was at one end of the bed-seats and a window was at the opposite end. There was netting on the walls behind each bed-seat, which served as a place to store items.

After we were settled in, the lady in uniform arrived to take orders for tea, wafer-cookies and beer. I ordered all three and joined the others in our group who were enjoying the view out the hallway windows. The windows slid

down offering a clear view, as the countryside whizzed by. After it got too dark we returned to our rooms and called it a night.

The theory behind traveling on a sleeper is that you will arrive, fully-rested at your destination and have the whole day ahead of you. Well, getting to sleep is one thing. First, trains are noisy affairs. They clack along as the wheels hit each rail joint. They screech as the train slows, which occurs at every stop. They rock and roll as the train negotiates curves. They jerk, every time they start to slow down or speed up. In addition, bright lights periodically will flash into your room, much like lightning with every lit structure the train passes near. Trains also pass each other, in the night. This passing creates a roar with a Doppler effect. Finally trains sound their horn at every crossing. This is not a formula for a restful sleep. Every time I started to doze off the train would do something to remind you that you are on a train and you must be alert to that fact. The 465 kilometer trip between Ternopil and Kyiv, takes eight and one-quarter hours. That means that the train averages a little over 56 kilometers an hour. The slowness is accounted for by the many noisy stops made along the way.

DAY 14—WEDNESDAY, JUNE 20

Kyiv

When I was finally not aware of my surroundings and sound asleep, the lady in the uniform was knocking on my door to remind me that it was 5:45 am and that we will be arriving shortly (6:15 am) in Kyiv. She gave me back the ticket that she took from me when we boarded. We had 30 minutes in which to freshen up for the day ahead and one tiny washroom to do it in.

The English have a phrase “can I knock you up,” which translates “can I wake you up.” Perhaps there should be a phrase “to knock you out,” which would mean to get a good night’s sleep. I certainly would have enjoyed a good “knock you out” sleep.

We arrived on time at 6:15 am. As we disembarked the train we saw a young woman carrying a TUGG sign. Her name was Tatiana and she escorted us through the station to our bus. This is a busy station. We lugged our luggage up three verrry long flights of stairs, then along a verrrry long corridor to our bus. This station could use escalators and moving walkways. Once aboard, Tatiana welcomed us to Kyiv and gave a brief tour spiel as we were driven



to the Hotel Rus. Tatiana stayed with us until we were each assigned our rooms and into the elevators. The elevators could only be operated by using your room key card. This was to stop unsavory characters from using the elevators and knocking on your room door. To further add to the security were three or four large beefy characters always at the entrance of the hotel, watching who was going into the hotel.

The Hotel Rus is located in the heart of Kyiv at 4, Hospitalna Street. It is near the Palace of Sports (Palats Sportu), and the city's main and well-known Kreschatyk Street, where many of the events of the “Orange Revolution,” took place. The name RUS comes from the Kyivan Rus, once a country uniting Slavic principalities with the capital in Kyiv.

The hotel features seven restaurants and bars. A large dining room called the “Russian Hall” was where we had our sumptuous buffet breakfasts. Complimenting our breakfast was the sound of a pianist playing light

classical music at the entranceway to the “Russian Hall.” This buffet was by far the best we would experience on our tour. It had a very large choice to select from including smoked salmon and other delicacies.

There is a sushi-bar on the first floor in the lobby of the hotel. Adjacent the front entrance is an outdoor cafe called “Oasis.” It was a great spot to wait and relax with the others in our group. You could see and hear other foreigners conducting business in various languages at the outdoor tables. You could tell that they were negotiating their investment plans in Ukraine. The Oasis offered a wide choice of snacks and drinks. You could also order sushi from the sushi-bar inside the hotel.



After unpacking and a quick shower, I made my way to the “Russian Hall,” where I joined some of our group who were already enjoying breakfast. I checked out the various food stations and helped myself to smoked salmon along with other delicious items.

Van, Mary Ellen and Wayne planned to walk down Khreschatyk Boulevard, which was near our hotel. I agreed to meet them under the Monument of Independence at the Maidan Nezalezhnosti (Independence square), which is at the opposite end of the street. I would taxi to our rendezvous, since my calf was still sore.

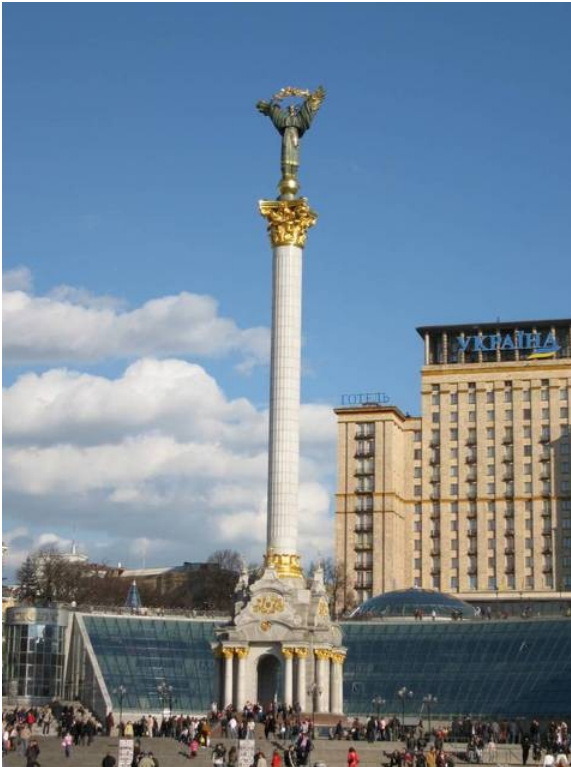
The Khreschatyk Boulevard

Khreschatyk Boulevard is the main street of Kiev. In the past, Khreschatyk used to lie in a valley with a river surrounded by forest. The valley was called Khreshataya Dolyna (Crossed) because it was intersected by many ravines, thus the name "Khreschatyk". Within this valley was a road which served as a very important transit route. When looked at from above, the valley resembles a cross.

The entire street was completely destroyed during World War II by the retreating Red Army and rebuilt in the neo-classical style of post-war

Stalinist architecture. The street has been significantly renovated during the modern period of Ukraine's independence. It is an eight lane wide boulevard shadowed by an elegant array of ancient chestnut trees that add warmth to Kiev's splendid architecture. The area includes many shops, international boutiques, banks, luxurious restaurants, cafes, hotels and various governmental buildings.

On weekends and holiday breaks, the road is closed to traffic and made into a pedestrian walk-way. The Khreschatyk is always a source of vibrant entertainment, whether people watching or enjoying street performers &



concerts. Khreschatyk Boulevard connects to three squares: Besarabs'ka, Yevropeis'ka (European) and the very famous Maidan Nezalezhnosti Independence square, which is famed for the Orange Revolution.

At the Maidan Nezalezhnosti is a giant monument called the “Monument of Independence,” commemorating the 1991 revolution. The monument is designed in the Ukrainian baroque style with a white marble column over 40 meters tall and crowned by a 12-metre high statue of the protecting goddess **Berehynia**. She holds a branch of a guelder rose, a symbol of female beauty and a symbol of Ukraine. Berehynia symbolized a pagan goddess, a protectress of the house and of everything living. Originally, obscure shadowy ghost-like fairies, Berehynias lived along the rivers, lakes and

ponds and were considered ill-tempered and dangerous. A water-bank where one was thought to be found was to be avoided by young men and women, especially in the dark. Berehynia is now remembered as matriarchic goddess-protectors. This rebirth of the Berehynia started only in the late 1980s by several Ukrainian writers who sought to personify their vision of an ideal Ukrainian woman.

The taxi took only a few minutes to drop me off at the Maidan Nezalezhnosti at the north end of Khreschatyk Boulevard. The Khreschatyk measures only 1,300 meters long from the south end to the north end.

While waiting for the Van, Wayne and Mary Ellen to arrive, I took pictures of the Maidan and the “Monument of Independence.” Because Khreschatyk is so wide and the traffic so heavy, there are decorative railings that have been erected to prevent pedestrians from crossing. To get across the street, you must use a pedestrian subway or underground passageway. There are signs indicating that you must cross at these pedestrian subways. It would be a suicide mission if one attempted to walk across this extremely busy eight-lane boulevard. Eventually they arrived and had to cross the road via an underground passageway.

Maidan Nezalezhnosti

“Maidan,” originally a Persian word, means square in Ukrainian. It received its name in 1991 in the aftermath of the Ukrainian accession to independence. Nezalezhnist (independence) commemorates the Ukrainian independence achieved in 1991.

The square has six fountains, the Monument of Independence and an artificial waterfall. One of the fountains of the square is decorated with statues of legendary brothers Kie, Schek, Horiv and their sister Libed. This sculpture composition depicts the four founders of the city. There are also statues commemorating the folklore hero Cossack Mamay,



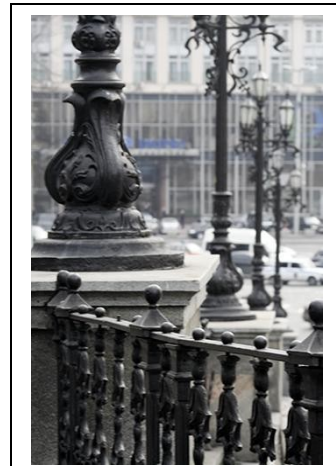
the city's historic protector Archangel Michael as well as, the protecting goddess Berehynia.

An underground shopping mall, the Globus (The Globe), was built under Maidan Nezalezhnosti to replace the old and shabby giant underpass formerly dubbed by Kievans as Truba (the Tube).

Another large shopping center, Metrohad is located underground on Kreschatyk St. This is a huge chain of all kind of shops and stores, restaurants and fast-food restaurants, all constructed under the main traffic lines in order to save the historical appearance of the city center.

The biggest protests of the “**Ukraine without Kuchma**” campaign and the “**Orange Revolution**” took place in this square. Maidan Nezalezhnosti received global media coverage in late 2004 during the Orange Revolution, as hundreds of thousands of protesters gathered in the square and pitched tents for several weeks, enduring the cold and snow.

After exploring the Maidan, we climbed a narrow, winding, cobble-stone, pedestrian roadway, which passed by the National Philharmonic building. We could hear the orchestra rehearsing. On one side of this road was a very ornate metal fence and steep hills on the other. When we reached the top of the road, we entered Kreschatyk Park. As we were entering the park a fine misty rain greeted us as it cooled the muggy humid air. We would soon be seeking shelter from this fine rain.



Dominating the park is a huge, 30 meter-long, rainbow-shaped titanium arch, called the “Friendship Arch,” built to commemorate friendship between the

Ukrainian and Russian people. Underneath it stands two thickset statues representing each country. One is made of bronze and depicts a Russian and Ukrainian worker holding up The Soviet Order of Friendship of Peoples and the other is made from granite and depicts the participants of the Pereyaslavskaya Rada of 1654.

There was an old man feeding pigeons. I later asked about him and was told that he sat in the same area near the “Friendship Arch,” from 10 am until 2 pm. He fed the pigeons with seeds that he bought from the money he got from tourists. He also gave the pigeons water from his water bottles. If you gave him 2 HUAAs he would give you a chance to take a photo of yourself with the pigeons sitting on your shoulders and hands. Next time I come to this park I would definitely have my picture taken.



There is a viewing deck with great views of the east bank of the Dnepr River, the Troieschina district and towards the north of the city, Podil and Obolon.

There were numerous kiosks for snacks and refreshments. Most were closed, this being mid-week and not the weekend. There were children’s rides, also closed, and platforms for performers. On the weekends, this park is probably alive with lots of family activity.





After taking pictures from the viewing deck we headed for cover to a nearby tent attached to a kiosk, where we enjoyed a nice cold beer and snacks. When the rain subsided, we headed back to the Maidan.

It was getting on in the afternoon and we were hungry, so we decided to try some new fare at an Irish pub called **O'Brien's**, located on 17a Mykhailivska Street, a five-minute walk from the Maidan. The pub is large and occupies a corner of an intersection. There are English advertisements on the outside windows for different brands of whiskey, such as “Jameson’s Whiskey.” We noticed that directly south of the building was a beer tent, which was also part of O’Brien’s and was open for business. So we opted to sit outside and enjoy the fresh air. They had a full bar and kitchen inside the tent and offered up a full menu, not just snacks. The menu included chicken wings, which I always order, if available, along with the standard Irish and English beers. Our waitress giggled when I asked her in Ukrainian, if she was Irish. I told her that I was Irish-Ukrainian and that my name was “O’nyschuk.” The food and the atmosphere was both pleasant and excellent



After we finished, we started our trek back to our hotel. My calf, started to ache, so I opted to take a taxi and meet them back at the hotel Rus.

O'Brien's Menu

Breakfast Menu—Homemade Dublin Breakfast, Shepard's breakfast, Farmer's breakfast, Light breakfast.

Starters—Cheese Sticks, Soup of the Day, Smoked Salmon, Assorted Cheese, Fried Calamari, Combination Starter, Chicken Wings, Garlic Cheese Bread, Fried mushrooms, Potato skins, Gumbo Soup, Creole potatoes, Chilli Diablo Soup, French Fries.

Salads—Chicken Caesar Salad, Greek Salad, Country Salad, Valencia Salad, Vegetarian Salad, Ham and pineapple salad, Leprechaun Salad, Sea breeze, Alpine Salad, Shannon.

Burgers—American Classic Burger, Beef burger Deluxe, Cheeseburger

Chicken dishes—Chicken schnitzel, Chicken fillet with "Parmesan" sauce, Chicken fillet in bacon, Chicken Kiev, Chicken "fingers", Chicken "Cajun", Chicken Curry.

Steaks—"Butterfly" Steak, "Chicago" Steak, 12 oz steak in garlic butter, Rib-eye Steak, "Porterhouse" Steak, "T-bone" Steak, Steak "Niagara".

Main Traditional Dishes—Homemade Dublin Breakfast, Irish Stew, Chicken-n-mushroom boxty, Shepherd's Pie, Lamb Chops, Grilled pork, Pork Chops, Barbeque Pork Ribs, Fish and Chips, Grilled sausages with Honey-Soya sauce, Wiener Schnitzel, Pork fillet with mustard and pepper sauce, Country barbecue, Veal ribs with grenadine sauce

Delicacies—Baked cod under cheese with spinach, Grilled Prawns, Salmon Steak, Naples halibut.

Sandwiches—Sandwich with cheese and tomato, Sandwich with ham and cheese, B. L. T., Irish Club Sandwich (with chicken and French fries)

Desserts—Cheese cake, Hot Chocolate, Apple Pie with Ice-cream, Fruit salad, Ice-cream with fruit and hot chocolate, Pancake Elite

I was feeling a bit bushed, so I decided to have a "power nap," until 6:00 pm. I joined the group at our usual time at 7:00 pm in the lobby. Carol Jane had earlier asked the hotel clerk for the name of a nearby, good restaurant and was told that "The Korona," on Rohndinskaya Street, was very nice. The restaurant was attached to a casino. It had a European menu, including Ukrainian cuisine. The interior included a number of aquariums and the décor resembled a chromed interior of a ship, including decorative portals.

The menu offered beef liver, which I enjoy on occasion, so I ordered it along with some borscht.

Although walking back to the hotel wasn't far, it entailed a steady climb up hilly streets to our hotel. Rather than further aggravating my calf, I hailed a taxi. Harry and Margaret Hrynkiw joined me, since they were all walked out. The ride was only a two minute ride and the cabby tried to stiff us for 40 HUA. I told him that this was way too much for two minutes of his time and gave him 10 HUA. I told him to call the police if it was too little, and stormed past the hotel guards.

This evening, I washed some underwear in the sink and hung them on the heated chrome towel rack in the bathroom and turned in. A heated towel rack is a nice and useful feature and should be in every hotel washroom.

A Bit on Kyiv

Kyiv (also Kiev) is situated on the Dnepr River and the capital city of Ukraine. After a rough and turbulent history, the town has become an interesting array of old and new buildings. More and more of the culture is being influenced by the characteristics of both Western and European customs, yet the Ukrainians that live here still cling proudly to tradition. Recently catapulted onto the world scene by the nuclear reactor



blast at Chernobyl, the city of Kiev is a world away from the tragedies of the past.

The modern city of Kiev is home to roughly three million people. Some of these people are foreign diplomats while others are students from other parts of the world. Thus, Kiev has a somewhat cosmopolitan feel. While many of its greater architectural and art treasures were destroyed in the Second World War. That

which was left has been restored and now proudly adorn the face of this picturesque city.

The name of Kiev comes from the name of Kyi, one of four legendary founders of the city (brothers Kyi, Shchek, Khoryv and sister Lybid'). During its history, Kiev, one of the oldest cities in Eastern Europe, passed through several stages of great prominence and relative obscurity. The city is believed to have been founded in the 5th century as a trading post in the land of Early East Slavs. It gradually acquired eminence as the center of the East Slavic civilization, becoming in the tenth to twelfth centuries a political and cultural capital of Rus', a medieval East Slavic state.

Completely destroyed during the Mongol invasion in 1240, the city lost most of its influence for the centuries to come. It was a provincial capital of marginal importance in the outskirts of the territories controlled by its powerful neighbors: first the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, followed by the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and Russian Empire.

The city prospered again during the Russian industrial revolution in the late 19th century. After the turbulent period following the Russian Revolution of 1917, from 1921 onwards Kiev was an important city of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, and, since 1934, its capital. During World War II, the city again suffered significant damage, but quickly recovered in the post-war years remaining the third largest city of USSR.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Ukrainian independence of 1991, Kiev remained the capital of Ukraine.

DAY 15—THURSDAY, JUNE 21

Kyiv—Tour

I woke up at 4:30. Tried to sleep, but couldn't. My wake up call came at 6:00 am. At 8:00 am I joined Gary and Glenn for breakfast. We chatted about the state of the Ukrainian economy.

I returned to my hotel room where I made notes about the trip arrangements for future reference. After dozing off while reading the English-Ukrainian *Kyiv Weekly* paper, the maid woke me when she knocked on the door. It was after 11:00 am and she wanted to clean the room, so I obliged her and headed to the lobby where I had a snack, consisting of a rich chocolate-nut cake. It looked like another hot day ahead of us.

At 2:00 pm, we will have our guided tour and I have some time to kill. I decided to explore the hotel boutiques to see if there were any bargains and to buy items for the folks back home. The prices seemed very reasonable, so I bought 2 shawls and a runner for 455 HUAs, about \$91 CAN.

I later joined Harry and Margaret for lunch on the patio outside the front door. We exchanged stories about our finds and purchases.

At 2:00 pm, the group met in the lobby for our guided tour of Kyiv. The guide turned out to be Tatiana, who was the guide who greeted us at the train station. We boarded an air-conditioned bus which took us down Taras Shevchenko Boulevard and past the Taras Shevchenko University, where 25,000 students attend. Tatiana stated that there were 145 universities in Kyiv (30% are private). She probably meant that there are 145 university buildings.

We next drove by the *Museum Of Russian Fine Arts* located on Tereshchenkivska St. The Museum is in a mansion built in mid-1880s by the sugar baron and patron of arts Fedor Tereshchenko. The Museum is famous for its considerable collection of works by Russian artists, second only to The Hermitage in St. Petersburg, Russia.

Our first stop was the *St. Volodymyr Cathedral* on Taras Shevchenko Boulevard. The Cathedral is more recent and was built from 1862-1882 in the Russian pseudo-Byzantine style. The cathedral belonged to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. Tatiana took a moment to explain the main

differences and controversy going on with the churches in Kyiv. The ownership of St Volodymyr's Cathedral was an issue of controversy between two major Orthodox churches in Ukraine: the **Ukrainian Orthodox Church** and the **Ukrainian Orthodox Church - Kiev Patriarchy**.

Currently, in Ukraine the three major Ukrainian Orthodox Churches coexist, but often compete. There is the ***Ukrainian Orthodox Church***, the ***Ukrainian Orthodox Church - Kiev Patriarchate***, and the ***Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church***. Additionally a significant body of Ukrainians belong to the Eastern Rite ***Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church***, and a smaller number are in the ***Ruthenian Catholic Church***.



Next we drove by The ***National Opera House***, which is located on Volodymyrska Street and the corner of Bohdana Khmelnytskoho Street.

En route Tatiana pointed out two restaurants, which she highly recommended, the ***Pervak*** and the ***Domashnya Kukhnya***. The Pervak, which is located on Rohndynska Street, serves up authentic Ukrainian cuisine including; borshch, shashlik, grilled meats and sausages, varynyky and holubtsi. The Domashnya Kukhnya is located on Khmelnytskogo Street. Here, cash-conscious tourists can feast on cheap Ukrainian food in a buffet-style establishment. Tatiana added that there were over 80 different varieties of Borshch in Ukraine.

We next saw a monument to Mykola Lysenko, composer, music folklorist, pianist, pedagogue and prominent public figure, was also the founder of the Ukrainian national school of music. Lysenko derived his creative inspiration from songs of his native land and was an ardent promoter of Ukrainian folk music.



Unfortunately, we drove by and did not stop to see the famous **Golden Gates of Kiev** (*Zoloti Vorota*). The Golden Gates were under repair.

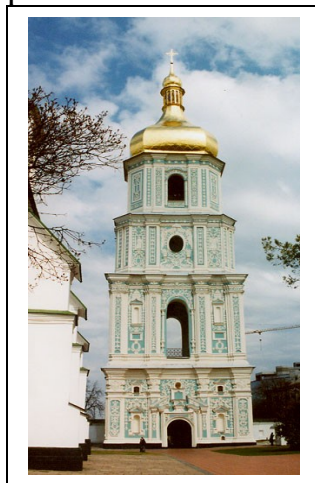
The *Zoloti Vorota* was a historic gateway in the ancient city walls of Kiev. This gateway was constructed by *Yaroslav the Wise*, Prince of Kiev, in



1070. It was reputedly modeled on the Golden Gates of Constantinople, from which it took its name. In 1240 it was partially destroyed by *Batu Khan's Golden Horde*. It remained as a gate to the city (often used for ceremonies) through the eighteenth century, although it gradually fell into ruins.

In 1832 the ruins were excavated and an initial survey for their conservation was undertaken. Further works in the 1970s added an adjacent pavilion, housing a museum of the gate. In 1982, the gate was completely reconstructed for the 1500th anniversary of Kiev, although there is no solid evidence as to what the original gates looked like.

Next we stopped to visit *St. Sophia's Cathedral*. Construction was started on St. Sophia's in 1017 and declared finished in 1037.



The Bell Tower



St. Sophia's Cathedral.

During this time Kiev was located in a country know as Kyivian Rus. St. Sophia's Cathedral was for centuries the cathedral of Kiev's metropolitans. It was named after St. Sophia - the major holy place in Constantinople.

The main entrance to the Cathedral's courtyard is located in the base of the majestic 250-foot bell tower. It was erected at the end of the 17th century and has been rebuilt several times. The walls of the bell tower are abundantly decorated in ornamental details with portraits of Orthodox Apostles. In 1934 the site was made a State Architectural and Historic Reserve. This protection did not last long in Stalin's Russia. St. Sophia's Cathedral was located next to the official Communist Party and KGB headquarters. The officials noticed that their building was too small for their whole bureaucracy. They looked to expand into the area occupied by St. Sophia's Cathedral. The complex was to be dynamited but WW II started. With Germany invading, plans to demolish the holy site were abandoned.

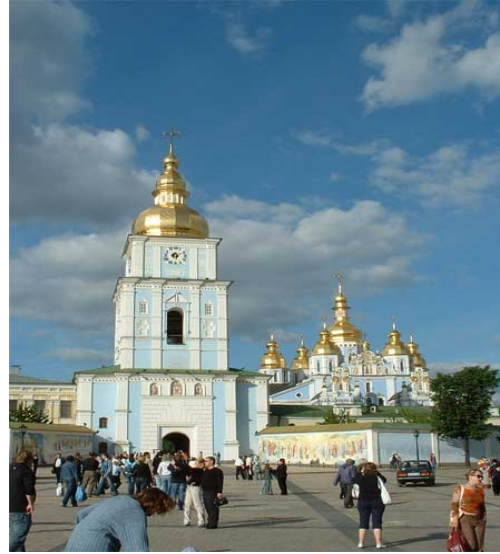
The extremely beautiful *St. Michael's Cathedral* is located one block from St. Sophia's Cathedral - it is on the other side of the Communist Party and KGB headquarters. St. Michael's Cathedral has been part of the Kiev landscape for the last 900 years. It was lost for a time under Stalin's Soviet control. In the 1930's the site of the Cathedral was given to the Party under KGB head Lazar Kaganovich for construction of a building. By 1937 the whole site of the Cathedral had been dynamited and all that remained was a heap of stones.

An Aside on Lazar Kaganovich

Kaganovich (together with Vyacheslav Molotov) took part in the All-Ukrainian Party Conference of 1930 and actively encouraged the policies of collectivization there that many historians argue led to the catastrophic 1932-33 Ukrainian famine (the Holodomor), in which millions of Ukrainians died. As an emissary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, Kaganovich traveled to Ukraine, the central region of Russia, northern Caucasus, and Siberia demanding the acceleration of collectivization and repressions against the *kulaks* (who were generally used as scapegoats for the slow progress of collectivization) and their supporters. In his book, *The Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivisation and the Terror-Famine*, Robert Conquest named Kaganovich together with Molotov, Pavel Postyshev and other Stalinist leaders of the USSR as having personal responsibility for the famine.



KGB headquarters



St. Michael's Cathedral

Then the building of the Soviet People's Committee was never built. In 1997- 2000 this incredible place was rebuilt with the support of the President of Ukraine and the city authorities. Outside the walls of the cathedral is the first monument in Ukraine dedicated to the memory of the 10 million victims of Stalin's imposed terror famine from 1932-1933, referred to as the 'Holodomor' with a moving statue and descriptive storyboard of the mass genocide of the Ukrainian people.



After viewing St. Michael's Cathedral we were bussed to a market area on *Andriyivsky Uzviz* where we saw paintings up for sale at the side of the street. Quite near to it is an Art Academy, so most of that artists/vendors were probably graduates of that Academy. It's sad to see how they are reduced to selling their paintings on the doorstep of the academy. Our bus stopped adjacent the spectacular ***Saint Andrew Church*** for a "pit-stop". We took a few minutes to briefly view the wares being sold. You can buy paintings, jewellery made of porcelain, leather, stones, pottery, clothing, woodcraft and babushkas and of course also the symbols of Soviet era such as big furry hats, old watches, cameras, medals decorated with the omnipresent red star, to "CCCP t-shirts" and the real soviet relicts, old medals, Lenin's busts and old uniforms. Here I picked up a shirt for my son Daniel for 20 HUAs.

The church is perched at the top of a hill, where there is a spectacular view of a part of Kyiv referred to as the **Podil** neighborhood (the traditional craftsmen's home area). From here the cobble stone street winds down a steep incline and is lined with crafts booths. After our stop, the driver turned the bus around, rather than going down the the steep road, and headed back to Khreschatyk Street.



The idea to build St. Andrew's Church originated with the Tsarina, Elizabeth Petrovna. She visited Kyiv in 1744 and laid the first foundation stone of the St. Andrew's church on Andreyevskaya Hill. Empress Elizabeth planned to take personal care of this church and sent her architect from Moscow to take direct charge of the building. Unfortunately, the Empress died before construction was completed. After her death the court took no interest in the Kiev church. It fell into a state of disrepair because there was not enough money to maintain it. Over the centuries the temple has needed

reconstruction, the repair work altered the appearance of the church. In 1963 the original building plans were found in Vienna, this made it possible to reestablish the original appearance during restorations in the 1970's. From the terrace of the church there is a very nice view of the Dniper River.

After a brief stop at the Maidan Nezalezhnosti on Khreschatyk, we headed to a large park overlooking the **Kiev-Pechersk Lavra** - Caves Monastery complex. The park is home to the **Botanical Gardens** and offers another great view of the Dniper River.

The nearby **Park of Glory** is a war memorial, with a vast and controversial monument of a woman with a sword and shield overlooking the river. The statue above is **Rodina Mat** (literally Nation's Mother, but formally called the



Defense of the Motherland Monument). She's 68 m tall, bears a soviet seal on her shield, and is highly visible from many parts of the city. Our guide indicated that the statue was erected during the Brezhnev era and wasn't too popular with Ukrainians.

After viewing the park from the bus, we headed back to our hotel. We relaxed at the patio bar over a few beers and at 7:00 pm decided to walk to a nearby restaurant called ***Kazbek***, located on Lesi Ukrainky Blvd. . They specialized in Georgian cuisine and the décor was of a typical Georgian house with a traditional stone stove for baking bread. This was the most expensive restaurant to date.

Harry, Margaret, Romana and I taxied it back to the hotel and called it a night.

DAY 16—FRIDAY, JUNE 22

Kyiv—Boat Trip

I was up at 5:00 am, beating my wake-up call. We had two more days left. The time has flown by too quickly. I read the English-Ukrainian ***Kyiv Weekly*** paper before going to breakfast where I joined the Vizniowski's. Today, we're planning to take the boat trip down the river in the afternoon. The Vizniowski's also want to take in the Pechersk Lavra - Caves Monastery complex in the morning. I bow out of this part, knowing that my calf is still sore from all the walking that it would entail. I decided to stay behind and write an account of the trip for the web site.

Romana joined me while I was finishing my second coffee. She had run into trouble with flight arrangements. She was staying behind in Kyiv and then flying back to Lviv and later Krakow for additional research. The booking agent told her that the initial flight she had arranged had been cancelled and that she would have to take a later flight, which would throw her schedule off.

After breakfast, I decided to try the hotel's internet services. Their computers were extremely slow and I could not get my internet server to respond. So I gave up and went to my room and prepared some notes. Later I went to the Patio Bar and had an order of Sushi, while I waited for the gang to return from the Pechersk Lavra.

After their return, we decided to hire three taxis to take us to the ***River Terminal*** where there are short boat tours on the Dnepr. The Vizniowski's took the first two taxis and Harry, Margaret and I would take the third taxi. Well the driver of the third taxi decided to take his break. I asked him how can I get a taxi and he told me to go to the front desk of the hotel lobby and they would call one. I went inside and the desk clerk told me that there would be a white taxi coming in about ten minutes. In ten minutes a red taxi pulled up and waited a moment before taking off. I went back to the clerk, inquiring about the whereabouts of our taxi. She again called and said that the taxi had come but no-one approached him. I asked her what colour was this taxi and she said it is red. I told her that she clearly told me white. She apologized for telling me red as she turned that same colour. Finally the RED taxi came back and we were on our way to the River Terminal. This little mistake didn't bode well for our river tour.

The driver took us to the terminal and dropped us at one end of it—the wrong end. But we didn't know yet. We looked for the Vizniowski's but couldn't see them. We assumed that they went on, thinking that we got lost. We stood in a line, where the locals were carrying picnic baskets and other paraphernalia for a cook-out. We finally found someone who could explain to us that this part of the terminal was for the ferry boat to **Trukhanov Island** and not the boat for the river tour. He told us that we had to go to the other end of the terminal.

We finally made our way to the other end, where there were ticket booths and bought three tickets for the grand total of 15 HUAs -\$3.00. After another ten minutes our boat arrives and we are finally aboard. The boat is equipped with a bar and a small canteen with a limited choice of snacks. We found a table and chairs right by the railing with a good view of the river. Harry and I decide to see what was available at the canteen/bar and we bought some beer and nuts.

The tour gave us an excellent panoramic view of the city. From this perspective we could really appreciate the vast acres of land preserved as green space. There is no doubt the Motherland figure dominates the high ridge above the Dnepr as we could see it long before we come abreast of it. The tour also afforded a good look at the beaches on the east bank. The boat went as far as the Paton Bridge and turned around. The trip was a little over an hour and very reasonable at five HUAs per person. It had been quite warm this afternoon and the breeze on the river was a welcome relief.



Trukhanov Island, where we almost ended up, is where thousands of Kyivites hang out at Kyiv's many beaches during hot summer days. As we drove by the island we saw hundreds of sun-bathers and a few brave soles splashing in the water, which appeared cool. We could see very tall sand structures on the beach, some at least fifteen feet high. You could see some large summer dachas nestled among the trees. On the next trip, I might make a side trip to explore this island.

One of the most imposing city sights you can find in Kyiv is the '**Rodina Mat**' statue. It stands 68m tall, on a 40m base and weighs over 500 tons.

Contrast this with the *Statue of Liberty*. It measures 93.5m from the foundation of pedestal to torch end and weighs 225 Tons.

This gigantic statue of the Mother land, is quite incredible to see and although it's not loved by the Ukrainian locals (the statue holds the USSR symbol), it is appreciated by discerning holiday travelers.

As we approached the Paton Bridge and were turning back we saw the Vizniowski's on another boat. We waived but weren't sure if they saw us. Their boat arrived back at the dock before ours. As we headed to where the Taxis lined up, we saw the Vizniowski's sitting on the terrace of a boat restaurant called the *Khutorok*. We crossed over the boarding ramp and got a table adjacent their table—there was no room to join the tables together.

The Khutorok is a picturesque Ukrainian restaurant on the water with an excellent view on the Dnepr from the terrace. The outside of the boat is hung with lights and potted flowers.

The menu is interspersed with pages of turn-of-the-century advertisements and photos of old Kyiv, as if pulled from a pre-revolution newspaper. It boasts a sizable array of traditional Ukrainian dishes – borshtch, pelmeny, varynyky, potato pancakes, shashlik and pancakes with caviar.



Горбушин Hunchback Salmon	40/55/100/30	85.00
Кетовая Siberian Salmon	40/55/100/30	87.00
Стелаяди Sevryga Sterlet	40/25/100/30	370.00
Осетровоя Osetr	40/25/100/30	420.00
Белужья Beluga	40/25/100/30	487.00



Курные сердечки с овощами Chicken Hearts with Vegetables	250	40.00
Колбаски домашние с аджикой Home-made Sausages with Adjika - spicy pepper mix	200/65/50	87.00
Ушат раков в прином вкваре Bucket of Boiled Crawfish	1 кг/кг	295.00
Первые блюда Soups		
Холодные супы Cold Soups		
Суп из помидор с красной рыбой Tomato Soup with Salmon	250/50	39.5

Two Pages from the Menu

This was by far the priciest restaurant we had seen. The cheapest item, borscht went for 33 HUAs. Lamb-chops with roast potatoes and hazelnut sauce were a mere 250 HUAs. Those more adventurous ones could spend 295 HUAs for a bucket of boiled crawfish. If you wanted to show off, the beluga caviar was merely 487 HUAs. For the peasant in you, you could have

home-made sausages with a spicy mix for only 87 HUAs. The great thing was, that the bread was free. After we ordered our beers, a basket of bread shortly followed. Its assortment of white, dark, and grain looked promising, but a bite revealed that it had been sitting sliced and covered under a light napkin for some period of time before reaching our table.

After choking over the prices, I ordered a very pretentious bowl of borshch for only 33 HUAs. I expected to get a tureen; instead I got a small cup, masquerading as a bowl. In expensive restaurants the rule seems to be, “the higher the price, the smaller the portion.” For these prices, I was hoping to at least see one or two billionaires, such as Rinat Akhmetov or Kostyatin Zhevago or maybe even a millionaire or two. They could afford these prices. Unfortunately, all I saw was our crew of retirees and working stiff, who were seeking our roots, a few other tourists and some restaurant staff, who were seeking our tips.

After we finished we decided to explore the interior dining room of the boat and use their washrooms. Inside there are log-cabin walls hung with rugs. There are many relics portraying traditional Ukrainian village life, from embroidered natural linen tablecloths to ceramic plates on the walls to embossed copper plating shining from the windowsills. There is a facsimile of a village house, with white stucco walls and a thatched grass roof. Glass windows are backlit for a warm glow. Directly across is a traditional clay-tiled stove like those used in some Ukrainian homes for their winter heat.

After our boat meal, we caught three cabs to take us back to the Hotel Rus. I had a nap and woke up a bit hungry. I was in the mood for some sushi, so I went to the Sushi Bar in the hotel and enjoyed a nice spread and a dark beer for 100 HUAs. As I was finishing, Wayne stopped by and joined me. He had come for some bottled water, which he ordered at the bar.

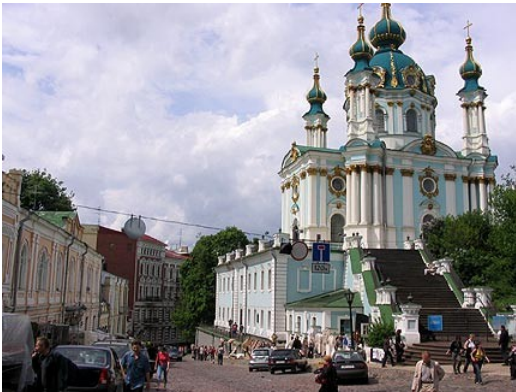
Later, I watched the BBC and read myself to sleep.

DAY 17—SATURDAY, JUNE 23

Kyiv—Last Day and Shopping

I beat the wake-up call again. Today is our last full day in Kyiv and I still have some gifts to buy.

Tomorrow, we will be leaving at 6:00 am, which will be before the dining room is open for breakfast. Instead we will be getting a “boxed breakfast,” en route to the airport. This morning, I decided to take full advantage of the magnificent, buffet breakfast. I think that the others in our group were probably thinking the same, as I noticed their plates were piled high with delicacies such as smoked salmon, crab salad and other items one rarely finds at breakfast time. I went to the trough twice and felt quite stuffed.



We're each going to do our own thing today and decide meet for supper in the lobby at 7:00 pm. I decided return to market area on *Andriivsky Uzviz* also called **Andriivsky Spusk**, where on Thursday; we saw paintings, crafts and various souvenirs up for sale. First, I did a walk down the street, to scout out what was being sold. I was specifically looking for the Oblast road maps, any interesting shirts or hats and small interesting items, which

wouldn't take up much room in my suitcases. As I walked down and briefly peered in each stall, I was beset by a vender, claiming that their wares were the best on the street. I learned to respond by saying "the people in the next stall say that theirs was the best, who's right?" They would laugh and so would I. After about an hour, I determined which stalls I would return to. I ended up picking up a number of shirts, a wooden flute, a few souvenir books, a military map-bag, water-canteen and a military hat all from Kaboul. I wondered if any of the soldiers who carried these military items I purchased were involved in a battle. I also purchased a CD from a street musician, who was playing classical guitar. He was extremely talented and obviously a graduate of a conservatory.

If you start at the top of the street and proceed towards the Podol, you will see vendors selling paintings, sculptures and other art. Before the street curves down a steep slope, on the right side is the magnificent **Andreevskaya Church** with its classical Russian baroque style architecture. A picturesque terrace stretches around the church. It is said that famous writer **Nikolay Gogol** adored the surroundings of Andreevskaya Church and enjoyed walking along this, his favorite place.

Andreevsky Spusk is also closely connected with the the writer, **Mikhail Bulgakov**. He lived in the house number 13. Today this house is a Museum devoted to Bulgakov. The neighboring house number 15 has an unusual architecture resembling a medieval castle. Among the citizens of Kiev this house is called **Richard Coeur de Lion's Castle** after the hero of a novel by Sir Walter Scott. On the right side of this house there are stairs, which if you climb will offer a splendid view of the Podol, the Dnepr and its bridges, as well as houses of the left bank.



On the Spusk there is a museum dedicated to this ancient street. Its exposition outlines the history of Andreevsky Spusk and contains pictures, photographs, engravings and other exhibits. Andreevsky Spusk is one of the oldest streets in Kiev. In ancient days it was

the shortest way from the Upper Town to the Podol, or the Lower Town, where the merchants and craftspeople used to live.

Today, the Spusk is one of the places attracting Kiev's bohemians. This street is often called Kiev's Montmartre. At any time one can see here artists displaying their works. Here, there are artists, who will draw your caricature. It is also the place where singers and actors give their performances.



You will also see many small bars and cozy cafes where it is pleasant to spend an hour or two. I ended up having my traditional lunch of borshch and varynyky, in one of the canopied cafes. Later I would have a beer in another café with a welcoming, cool interior. If you like to people-watch, pick one of the canopied cafes, order a beer, sit back and observe—it's a great place to spend an afternoon.

In the street stalls, I found vendors selling new and old books, maps, new and antique jewelry, trinkets, postcards, pottery, wooden carvings, military paraphernalia such as (war medals, binoculars, hats, helmets, instruments, uniforms), old cameras, posters, music CDs, musical instruments, refrigerator magnets, candles and countless other souvenir items. If you want to purchase a souvenir to take back, this is the street to find it.

In the old converted homes, you will find a pottery shop, many handicraft shops, bookstores, several small theatres, picture galleries, coffee shops, various cafes, museums as well as souvenir stores.

Andriyivsky Uzviz ends near the Kontraktova Ploshcha (Square), which is the oldest square in Kyiv, going back to the Kievan Rus period. I hailed a cab and was back at the hotel at around 5:30 pm. where I found a table at the patio bar outside the front entrance. Here I made notes in my diary while my memory was still keen. Dark clouds quickly rolled in quickly followed by

light rain. Shortly after, a slightly damp, Carol Jane arrived just ahead of her brothers. She wasn't as wet as her slower moving brothers would become. Next, Wayne and Mary Ellen arrived fairly soaked. Wayne complained that he was fighting "Kozak's Revenge." So far the rest of us had been lucky with the water, with everyone drinking bottled water. Perhaps the "Revenge" resulted from a salad that was not properly washed. When traveling, I always avoid eating green salads, knowing that they could easily harbor some alien bug, which can translate into stomach or intestinal problems. Next Harry and Margaret arrived and it really started to pour. Finally Gary, Glenn and Van sauntered up, thoroughly soaked. They seemed to be enjoying the cooling rain. We had to move our tables a couple of times to avoid the rain, which was now being wind-whipped and falling on an angle.

We decided, that since the rain didn't seem to be abating, to eat our last supper in the hotel dining room. We agreed to meet at 7:00 pm and went to our rooms to freshen up.

When we entered the dining room, there was only one other table occupied. I was concerned that even though their breakfast buffets were spectacular, perhaps their supper weren't so great and this accounted for the empty room. We were seated in a corner area with a partitioned wall which added some privacy. The waiter handed us a large menu, which had a great variety of selections, which were reasonably priced.

This was our last night in Ukraine and we were sad to know that we would soon be leaving this country that so grown on us. The sixteen days had flown by too quickly, however we commented that it also felt like we had been here for months, with all we had seen and all we had traveled and walked and eaten and drank.

We ended the evening by splurging on some rich desserts and proposing toasts to a better Ukraine and to our return. Tomorrow was coming soon so we returned to our hotel rooms and packed for our early departure.

DAY 18—SUNDAY, JUNE 24

Home to Toronto

This time my wake-up call was for 5:00 am, but I was already up and had had my shower. I packed my carry-on bag and made sure I had everything by checking under the bed and behind the bathroom door. On a previous vacation, I had left an expensive shirt hanging on the bathroom door hook, so I learned to always check the bathroom door hook.

When I entered the lobby, everyone else had already ensconced themselves in the comfortable lobby chairs waiting for the bus. There were large paper bags on a table containing our “boxed-breakfast.” The bags were loaded with an apple, an orange, a sandwich, buns, some other snack items and a bottle of water, enough to feed a small family.

Our bus arrived on-time at 6:00 am and we were soon speeding down a dark, empty and very smooth highway towards Boryspil International Airport, which was 30 kilometers away. En route, we could see the many factories which operated on the outskirts of the city and the occasional Kyievan walking on the side of the road.

When we arrived at Terminal B of Boryspil the sun was just coming up. We retrieved our luggage and made our way into the airport looking for the Austrian Airlines counter. Boryspil is a busy airport as was evidenced by the surprising number of people also catching early flights.



After checking in we proceeded to the waiting area for our gate. I decided to partake of my breakfast before our flight arrived. Our flight, Austrian Air #7172, was scheduled to leave Boryspol at 8:00 am, Kyiv time and arrive in Vienna at 9:00 am, Vienna time. The flight is actually 2 hours given the different time zones. From there we will transfer to Austrian Air flight #71, scheduled to leave at 11:20 am for the long flight to Toronto. This is the worst part of the trip, but certainly nowhere near the ordeal our parents and grandparents went through

to reach Canada and then travel halfway across Canada, inland. But it still would be a very long day.

Boryspil airport actually has three separate terminal buildings. The main terminal, and the one that everyone usually refers to when they refer to Boryspil, is Terminal B. The VIP terminal is terminal C, and there is another small terminal called Terminal A which is used for some domestic flights.

In Terminal "B" there are several cafes, two Irish pubs and a restaurant on the first floor. There are several duty free shops in the waiting room and throughout the airport there are a lot of news-stalls and souvenir outlets where you can purchase guidebooks of different cities of the world, magazines, clothes, perfume, souvenirs, cameras and film. Here you could also find airline offices, travel agencies, banks, a business center and Internet access.



Passengers travelling abroad have to go through passport control with the necessary documents. There are two distinct channels governing how you are processed. Posted high on the wall are instructions on which channel one must take. There is a **Red Channel** for those that have declarations to make and there is a **Green Channel** for those with nothing to declare. The rules are written in English and they are not difficult to interpret.

You get to use the **Green Channel**, if you *haven't got in your possession*: "Bank metals, weapons, explosives, poisonous, narcotic, psychotropic, drastic substances and medicine, radioactive materials, antiques and works of art, musical instruments, printed materials, audio, audiovisual materials, other stored information sources, flora and fauna objects, their parts and products obtained of them and goods the total value of which doesn't exceed the sum equivalent to 200 euros."



In the event you exceed any of these thresholds, you are supposed to list all items on the Declaration form and use the **Red Channel**. None of us qualified to use the Red Channel.

After passing through Passport Control, we waited in the Departure Hall until our flight was called. We next went through the security checkpoint, which was at our gate. Once these checks were completed we proceeded to our plane.

Our plane was 20 minutes late, leaving Boryspol at 8:20 am. During the flight we were given a light snack and drinks. Soon we would land in Vienna and have to go through their customs and check procedures.

Austrian Airlines flight #7172 arrived in Vienna at 9:05 am, Vienna-time. We had to transfer to Austrian Airlines flight #71, scheduled to leave at 11:20 am.

Vienna Airport



Vienna check-in procedures call for being at the airport 3 hours before an international flight. Connecting passengers, whose luggage is being automatically transferred from one plane to another, can proceed to Gate Check-in. Here, you receive your boarding pass at the gate. Your ticket and/or passport will be checked at the boarding pass and passport control.

If you are checking in at the gate, you may enter with a valid ticket. If you want to go directly to your gate, you follow the yellow signs that show the way. If you have some spare time there are plenty of shopping opportunities, bars and restaurants.

Before you enter the gates, a security control will be carried out. Passengers are also subject to a metal detector test. Before you walk through the frame, passengers must remove their belts and show the security personnel any metal objects you are carrying, i.e. money, keys, etc. These are placed in a tray and accompany your hand luggage through the x-ray screener.

We searched out the gate for flight #71. As we passed through the, general area where there were many boutiques, cafes, bars and interesting places to sit and relax, I spot my brother-in-law, Jim and his wife Brigitte sitting at an open restaurant table. They have just spent a few weeks in Hungary and were returning to Toronto on the same flight #71. I told them that I will see them at the boarding gate, that our group was determined to get there early and wait.



We decide to quickly make our way through security and find our waiting area for the connecting flight. I remembered the belt rule here and went through the same procedure of taking my belt off, while they checked me with the metal-detector wand. Again, my titanium hip set off the alarm and I explain to the security man about my new hip. He waved me through, as I held up my pants with one hand and carried my carry-on luggage, with my other hand. Next time, I will wear suspenders. Hopefully they won't ask me to remove them.



Now we only had a 90 minute wait. The waiting area was already very crowded and it was difficult finding seats near each other. Eventually Jim and Brigitte arrived and I introduced them to our group. I chatted with Jim about his Hungarian trip and we compared notes. I had been to Hungary a few years earlier and seen the same relatives that he had seen.

Soon they were announcing our flight and we made our way to our seats. Our group was seated fairly close together, but not close enough to chat. Jim and Brigitte were seated at the last row at the tail of the plane. I got a seat next to a young fellow, who was returning from Austria, where he was doing some business for his company in Canada. Unfortunately, he had spent only

one day in Vienna at a hotel, where his business was conducted and had to return home after his meeting. His company wouldn't allow him to spend a few extra days visiting Vienna. I guess he wasn't high up in the pecking order. He was an engineer, originally from Mexico and now was living in Toronto, which he really liked. We chatted on and off and caught some shut eye.

The flight went smoothly and we were again fed a full meal and snacks along with the free booze. I made sure to drink lots of water to offset the effects of jet travel.

We arrived in Toronto at 2:50 pm, Toronto time. The airport processing went smoothly and we were soon hauling our luggage off the conveyer belts. There were no hassles going through customs. It took until 3:30 pm to clear customs and we were soon going through the glass doors which led outside to the reception area and to the parking lot. Joanne was waiting at the ramp outside the doors and gave me a warm hug and one for her brother. We first drove to Jim and Brigitte's home in Toronto and then to our home in Aurora.

Even though I was exhausted and much in need of sleep, my adrenalin was pumping and I could not go to bed until around midnight, Aurora time.

THE DAY AFTER—MONDAY, JUNE 25

Today is a day of reflection about what I had just experienced—a real emotional roller-coaster. The trip was far more than I had expected. While I am glad to be home, I am saddened about what I had to leave behind. I saw faces and heard voices that brought back memories of my parents, aunts and uncles.

I was overwhelmed by the warm greetings that I had experienced. I had walked where my father and his parents had walked. I had eaten the same food and seen their countryside that they had loved, but had to leave.

Ukraine is a nation, with a long, rich history, but yet it is a young nation-state, now finding its way. For centuries, the nation of Ukraine was dominated and controlled by other nation-states and could not develop its own political culture. Ukrainians had to march to someone else's tune. They had to march under the Turkish, Tatar, Swedish, Lithuanian, Polish, Russian, Austrian, German and Soviet states, before they achieved an independent state in 1991.

Today, they are fighting corruption, inherited from these old systems. The stifling remnants of Stalinism are still deeply entrenched in government. Bureaucrats have enriched themselves through unbridled corruption and have resorted to assassinating a courageous journalist for speaking out. Unfortunately the bureaucrats have only exchanged their grey fedoras for silk top-hats and have moved from running the country to owning it. There is an old saying about politics. "The old crap hangs onto the new."

The corruption that originated under Stalin has taken on new forms and **must** be cleaned up before the ordinary Ukrainian can benefit and want to stay. The Orange Revolution had brought some hope for the future, but today, nothing of substance had changed or filtered down to the average Ukrainian. With the turmoil in the past year, between the billionaire and millionaire members of parliament and the seeming failure of the Orange Revolution, it is difficult to be optimistic about the future of Ukraine. These members of parliament want only one thing, to further enrich themselves and protect themselves from any corruption charges.

I am optimistic that Ukraine will eventually be purged of this corrupt class and one day stand proud in the eyes of the world and its people. I would say

to everyone, make the pilgrimage. Do it before you get too old. See your ancestral home. Walk where your parents and grandparents walked. See the rolling hills and the rivers they swam in. Ukraine is becoming a great vacation spot and is attracting many European visitors. See it before it changes too much!

Mnohaya lita!