

EXPLORE!

BEST SELLER

Chernobyl Photography Short Break

5 days

Ukraine - Trip code KCB



Chernobyl Photography Short Break

Back in 1986 the Number 4 nuclear reactor at Chernobyl exploded with catastrophic consequences. Since then an Exclusion Zone has been put in place around the plant and nature has reclaimed the towns and vehicles left within this. On this exciting long weekend we will spend two full days and stay overnight in the Chernobyl area accompanied by an expert guide and our local Explore Leader. We spend the maximum amount of time permitted exploring as many places as we are allowed to go. David Short will also be on hand to help you get the perfect photographs of this uniquely haunting location. We spend time in Ukraine's capital, Kiev, where we visit the Chernobyl Museum, the Lavra Historical and Cultural Reserve and Arsenalna, the deepest metro station in the world. Please note that in order to be permitted to enter the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone and to travel on this holiday you must be at least 18 years old.

Trip highlights

- ★ **Chernobyl** - Spend two days inside the Exclusion Zone and discover the ghost town of Pripyat, the Red Forest, Chernobyl Docks and the shell around Reactor Number 4 amongst other unique sights
- ★ **Kiev** - Walking tour of the city's highlights including Mother Motherland, a 100 metre tall statue to honour the Heroes of the Soviet Union
- ★ **Lavra Reserve** - Explore this ornately decorated monastic complex best known for its expansive catacombs
- ★ **David Short** - Our photography expert will help you capture this truly exceptional experience

ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

Standard

Our standard, mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service, often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en suite facilities.

TRIP PACE:

Full on

Full on paced trips are for travellers who like their holidays packed with activities and experiences, moving on quickly from place to place with lots of early starts and long, busy days. Some may find them tiring, but others get a buzz from packing their precious holiday-time as chock-a-block full of new experiences as possible!

GROUP SIZE:

8 - 14

Maximum group size ranges from between 6 to 20 people, depending on the type of trip, the transport and accommodation used and activities included. We rarely have groups that are smaller than five or six people and the average is 12 people plus an Explore leader.

Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

DAY 1 - Join trip in Kiev

Our exciting and unique long weekend begins in Ukraine's capital city, Kiev. After checking in to our hotel and meeting the group, along with our local Explore Leader and our photography guide David Short, this evening is at leisure for you to enjoy your first taste of the city's nightlife. Throughout this short break you will be accompanied by David Short, who is one of Explore's most experienced and popular Leaders. He is passionate about uncovering new and inspiring locations and combining this with his other great love, photography. This itinerary has been planned to make the most of the incredible photo opportunities available and to get under the skin of this unique destination. David is an excellent photographer who was trained by, and has worked for, the BBC as a cameraman. Although this trip is not one where we teach people how to take photos, David will be on hand to pass over tips and advice on how to take great pictures, so it is perfect for both the keen amateur photographer and enthusiasts alike.



Accommodation: Hotel Rus (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 2 - Kiev walking tour, Chernobyl Museum and the Lavra Reserve

This morning we will go on a guided walking tour of Kiev, which is situated on the banks of the River Dnipro. This ancient city has been inhabited for almost 2000 years and it was once the capital of the Kievan Rus State, from which all later Russian states were descended. Although Ukrainian nationalism is stronger than ever, you will still hear Russian spoken here today. During our tour we'll see the onion domed exterior of Santa Sophia Cathedral, the Golden Gate which was once the main entrance to the city, Saint Andrews Baroque church and Mother Motherland, a 100 metre high statue to honour the heroes of the Soviet Union. We also visit the Chernobyl Museum. Exhibits are designed to teach us of the scope of the nuclear disaster and to ensure that the lessons learnt

from this terrible accident aren't forgotten. This afternoon we take the metro to Arsenalna, which is the deepest station in the world. We continue by metro to the Lavra Historical and Cultural Reserve and visit the remarkable 'Monastery of the Caves' founded in AD 1051, where the labyrinths provide all the natural conditions needed for mummification. We have a guided tour of the caves and Belfry Tower and have time in either the Museum of Miniatures or the Museum Of Historical Treasures and the Holy Trinity Church. The rest of the afternoon is free for you to discover more of the city. If you have enough time then a short distance from the Cultural Reserve you might like to visit the Museum of the Great Patriotic War, which is one of the largest museums in Ukraine and tells the story of the German-Soviet War in iconic and Brutalist style. It has over 300,000 items on display and the memorials here are spread over 25 acres.



Accommodation: Hotel Rus (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 3 - Guided tour and photography tips in Chernobyl

This morning we set off on our exciting explorations to the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone, which is about two hours' drive from the city. We will spend the next two days exploring the site and we even stay overnight in a hotel here. The accident at Chernobyl was the result of a flawed Soviet reactor that was being operated by inadequately trained staff. Ukraine's isolation during the Cold War meant that their safety culture was lacking and this was a major contributing factor in the accident. At the nuclear power plant there were four reactors and a further two being constructed when on the 26th April 1986 Reactor 4 exploded twice, killing two workers and releasing at least 5% of its radioactive core into the atmosphere. A further 28 people died of radiation poisoning following the accident. At the time this was the largest uncontrolled radioactive release recorded and large quantities of radioactive material were released into the air for about 10 days after. This caused grave social and economic disruption to Ukraine, but also neighbouring Belarus and Russia. Chernobyl is about 130 kilometres north of Kiev and only 20 kilometres from the Belarusian border. The city of Pripyat was built 3 kilometres from the site to house the plant's workers and, at the time, it had 49000 inhabitants. The old town of Chornobyl had a smaller population and is further away. Within a 30 kilometre radius of the power plant, there was a population of up to 135000 people. Pripyat was evacuated the day after the accident and is now a ghost town. About 200000 people, known as liquidators, from throughout the Soviet Union were involved in the clean up during the year after the disaster. They all received high doses of radiation. In the years that followed many more liquidators were onsite but the radiation levels were far lower. Surprisingly after the accident the other reactors at Chernobyl were restarted. Their safety was improved in the early 1990's but due to energy shortages the last of the remaining three reactors wasn't turned off until December 2000. Almost 6000 people worked at the plant every day up until then and their radiation dose has been within internationally accepted limits. Reactor 4 was enclosed in a large concrete shelter which was erected quickly after the incident and contained around 200 tonnes of highly radioactive material. The old shelter only had a shelf life of around 30 years and at the end of 2016 a huge 'New Safe Confinement' structure was built on the site and moved into place over the old shelter. It is the world's largest movable structure and inside a team of robotic cranes are going to be taking the old shelter and radioactive core apart in an effort to make the area safe again. In 2010 Belarus announced that it was to settle back thousands of people into the 'contaminated areas' and by 2011 Chernobyl was declared safe enough to be recognised as a tourist attraction. Interestingly in 2015 a major scientific study found that the mammal population in the Exclusion Zone was thriving, despite land contamination, which was contrary to what experts had believed would be the case. The Przewalski's horse was close to extinction, but in areas around Chernobyl their population is increasing. Moose, deer, beavers, owls, brown bear, lynx and wolves have also all been spotted and appear to be prospering. On our first day of discovery we will most likely explore Pripyat including the fairground, hospital, hotel, bus station, fire station, football stadium, sports centre, elementary school, kindergarten, police station, Palace of Culture, church and the 'bridge of death'. We'll also see the Red Forest, Chernobyl Docks and the concrete casket around Reactor Number 4. The attractions seen in the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone may vary depending on local conditions and restrictions, but we'll see the most possible during our two days spent here. This evening we will have the unique experience of staying within the Exclusion Zone in a small hotel within the town of Chernobyl. The bedrooms are simply decorated and there are three bathrooms shared between every five bedrooms. There is a restaurant and bar where we will enjoy a traditional Ukrainian meal this evening.



Accommodation: Desiatka Hotel (or similar)



Simple Hotel



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 4 - Further explorations of the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone

Today we will most likely see Pripyat's swimming pool, grammar school and music school and visit the secret Soviet Duga Radar Facility. We will also hopefully get the chance to speak with people still living within the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone, who made the decision not to leave their homes after the disaster and have been living off grid ever since. Late this afternoon we drive back to Kiev for our final free evening in the city.



Accommodation: Hotel Rus (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Lunch

DAY 5 - Trip ends in Kiev

The trip ends after breakfast at our hotel in Kiev.



Meals Provided: Breakfast



Why book this trip

We spend two days and stay overnight within the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone, which is the maximum amount of time permitted, and whilst here we will explore with a local guide as many places as we are allowed to go. David Short, our photography expert, will be on hand to help you take the perfect photographs of this uniquely haunting location. We also spend time in Ukraine's capital, Kiev, where we visit the Chernobyl Museum.

What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 4
Lunch: 2
Dinner: 1



Transport

Bus
Train



Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader
Driver(s)
Guest Lecturer
Local Guide(s)



Accommodation

3 nights standard hotel
1 nights simple hotel

Trip information

Country information

Ukraine Holidays & Tours

Climate

Ukraine has a temperate continental climate. Summers in are generally hot, sunny and less humid than in Central Europe, with temperatures normally between 18 to 25°C. In fact, the early autumn period is often compared with an Indian summer, dry and sunny. Winters are cold and snowy with temperatures averaging between -8 to -12°C. The wettest area in Ukraine is the Carpathian Mountains where it can rain at any time of year.

Time difference to GMT

+2

Plugs

2 Pin Round

Religion

Orthodox Christian

Language

Ukrainian

Budgeting and packing

Clothing

All visitors to the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone must wear full length trousers (not shorts or skirts) and long-sleeve shirts/jackets and please avoid clothing with lots of zips. It's advisable to wash your clothes and to shower after your visit. We therefore recommend that you take old clothes that can be easily washed or even thrown away. Women should bring a headscarf for religious site visits.

Footwear

In the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone you must wear closed toed shoes (not sandals or flip flops). There will be a considerable amount of walking on this short break, so it's best to take comfortable shoes with good grip. We recommend using older shoes that can be

easily washed or thrown away if necessary.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

One main piece of baggage and a day pack. Remember you are expected to carry your own luggage so don't overload yourself.

Equipment

Bring a water bottle, a sunhat, sunscreen and a torch with spare batteries. Some of the sights may be quite dark, so you may find a head torch handy. Whilst in the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone we recommend carrying wet wipes and mosquito spray and please remember that you must keep your passport with you at all times, so you may find keeping it in a sealed plastic bag useful. In case of emergencies we recommend that you carry sufficient medical supplies including a first aid kit and several days extra supply of any specific prescription medications that you require.

Tipping

Explore leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Explore Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

Local crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognised part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. Accordingly please allow £10.00 for tipping. In order to make things easier for you, the Explore Leaders may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the trip.

Country Information

Ukraine Holidays & Tours

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch price

£7.5

Dinner price

£15

Beer price

£1.3

Water price

£0.8

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

Hryvnia

Recommended Currency For Exchange

Pound Sterling, US Dollars (USD) and Euro cash can all be exchanged for the local currency. You can only leave Ukraine with a maximum of USD 3,000. Anything over this amount will be confiscated.

Where To Exchange

Most major towns and cities - your Explore Leader will advise you on arrival. Only exchange money at reputable places like banks, ATM's and official Forex Offices.

ATM Availability

Major towns and cities have ATM's for cash withdrawal.

Credit Card Acceptance

In the main towns and cities credit cards are accepted in most restaurants, hotels and larger shops.

Travellers Cheques

Travellers cheques are very difficult to change in the Ukraine.

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Bus, Train

Accommodation notes

Booking a Single Room

All of our group tours are planned and operated on a twin-share basis, meaning that the standard cost is based either on individual travellers sharing accommodation with another group member of the same sex, or people who book together sharing accommodation. Please refer to the tour notes where the single room option availability is detailed on a night by night basis for this tour, and the price for the available nights is detailed on the dates & prices tab by departure date. For Self-Guided trips the Single Room supplement offers the option of a single room each and is charged per person. The Single Room supplement also applies to the third person in a party of three that will be accommodated in a single room.

We spend one night within the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone at a simple hotel with three bathrooms shared between every five bedrooms. Bathrooms are equipped with a sink, shower and toilet. Bedrooms are simply decorated. The food served here will be traditional Ukrainian cuisine and there is a bar within the restaurant. In the evening the doors of the hotel will be locked at around 22.30 and we are not permitted to venture out into the Exclusion Zone without our guide being with us at all times.

Essential information

FCO Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice [click here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, [click here](#)

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Essential Information

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

Visa Information

Ukraine: UK, Canadian and US citizens do not require a visa. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office. In addition you will be required to carry a photocopy of your passport with you at all times in Ukraine for ID purposes. You should confirm all visa related questions with the relevant embassy prior to departure. It is also essential that you provide Explore with the correct passport information at the time of booking, as this will be required in order to request the permissions needed to enter the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone. Corrections and amendments may incur additional charges or result in your permissions not being granted, so please double check that the information we have for you is up-to-date and correct. This includes your passport number, full name as per passport (including middle names) and date of birth. If you intend to renew your passport please let Explore know at the point of booking and ensure that you have your new passport no later than six weeks prior to travel.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our [Essential Information](#) and [Booking Conditions](#).

Transfers

[Find out more about Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions before you book.](#)

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. [Read more about them here.](#)

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Included activities

Whilst in the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone there are a number of rules in place to ensure your safety and it's very important that you follow all instructions given to you by your local guide. Every visitor must have a valid passport with them at all times and in order to be permitted entry to the Exclusion Zone you must be at least 18 years old. This restriction is due to the fact that the human body is still growing below this age and it's therefore more vulnerable to the affects of radiation. During the two days we spend in the Exclusion Zone you'll receive a dose of radiation comparable to a small dose from an X-ray scan or to several hours spent in an airplane at altitude. In numbers, you will receive 5-7 micro Sieverts of gamma radiation, which is a non-harmful dose of radiation. To put this into context most nuclear power plants around the world set a safety limit for their employees of 50-100 micro Sieverts per day. Whilst in the Exclusion Zone all our meals will be included to ensure they're from a safe source. You are not allowed to smoke, eat or drink in open spaces whilst here. You are not allowed to eat any berries or drink water from open sources such as wells (tap water or bottled water is fine). In the Exclusion Zone you are allowed to take photographs and videos of everything and can take tripods with you. The only exceptions are restrictions at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant and the guarded checkpoints. You are allowed to take pictures and video in front of Reactor Number 4 from a safe distance. Your guide will advise us of any places where photos aren't permitted. You are not allowed to sit on the ground, put your belongings on the ground or touch vegetation or objects you find on the ground. Tourists are also not allowed to take artefacts that they have found in the area outside of the Exclusion Zone. In the Exclusion Zone there may be rubble underfoot and not all stairs will have banisters, so you need to be steady on your feet. Please wear shoes with good grip and that support your ankles.

Non refundable permits

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Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against hepatitis A and diphtheria. Check that your polio and tetanus vaccinations are up-to-date before travel. The UK Foreign Office currently recommends that you should consider whether to immunise against tickborne encephalitis and rabies. Consult your travel clinic for further advice. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider.
