

LIVING IN LVIV IN WARTIME:

A PRACTICAL GUIDE

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The purpose of this guide is to help people living in or visiting Lviv, the wartime capital for foreigners in Ukraine, to acquaint themselves with basic daily services.

Getting in and out

Lviv's main railway station is approximately 2.5 kilometres west of the city centre. Its location is here:

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/Lviv+Railway+Station,+Dvirtseva+Square,+1,+L'viv,+L'vivs'ka+oblast,+79000/data=!4m2!3m1!1s0x473add850a6cd175:0xf2adda97f76c5f26?sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjso8-lkoOEAxVA8QIHHCWA5cQ8gF6BAhcEAA>

There direct trains to Przemyśl in Poland and to all over free Ukraine. There are also trains to Warsaw in Poland that require a change of trains at the border. There are occasional trains to Budapest.

From Lviv railway station the easiest way into the historical city centre, where the greater majority of foreigners live, is by tram. Tram 1 is the easiest to use as it has stops at *Petro Doroshenko* or *Ploscha Rynok*, both of which are in the Old Town. Tram 6 also runs from the railway station and with greater frequency than Tram 1, skirting the northern end of the Old Town and stopping within a few minutes of the Opera House. Tickets for the tram and for all intra-city buses and *marshrutkas* (private mini-buses) cost 20 Gryvnas if the tickets are purchased on board from the driver. There is a system for buying cheaper tickets electronically but you need a Ukrainian bank account. If you are caught by the frequent ticket inspectors without a ticket, you pay a fine of 300 Gryvnas.

Taking taxis from Lviv Railway Station is ill-advised unless arranged in advance. There is no easy place to park, and there are touts who will rip you off.

Public transport becomes scarce after about 7pm.

There is also a bus station on a plot of land that looks like a giant car park adjacent to an enormous single-storey WC building, just in front of the railway station. A variety of domestic and international buses depart from this location, but it is not Lviv's main bus station which is called *Lviv Stryiskyyi* bus station and is several kilometres south of the centre. Many buses stop at both bus stations. Most people do not use *Lviv Stryiskyyi* unless they have no other option, because it is difficult to get to and from.

There is a timetable of sorts for the buses departing the bus terminal outside Lviv railway station in a two-storey shack on the left as you look out from the front of Lviv railway station, adjacent to a coffee shop and a liquor store. It is not obviously signposted as a bus station but you can buy tickets for some (but not all) of the buses departing Lviv railway station at a desk in there (if you speak Ukrainian). In practice the vast majority of people travelling from bus to or from Lviv buy their tickets on the internet. The bus station building at Lviv railway station has an extremely unsatisfactory waiting room upstairs. If you have to wait then it is better to use the waiting rooms at the railway station. One is free while the better one charges a 35 Gryvna entrance fee.

Lviv Airport is closed at the time of writing, like all airports in Ukraine.

You can take a *Bolt* taxi to the border with Poland at Medyka, which should cost about 40 Euros, and then walk across, taking another taxi or bus on the Polish side of the border to Przemyśl.

Curfew and conscription

Lviv has a curfew from Midnight until 5am during which virtually everything is closed. The Police are unlikely to bother you even during curfew hours, when they will be out in force, if you are obviously a foreigner or you are in military uniform. If you are out during curfew hours and you are stopped, apologise to the Police and go directly to your accommodation.

Do not attempt to check into hotels or other accommodation after about 10pm or you may experience difficulties.

If you need to get to or from the bus stations or the railway station during curfew then this is a legitimate excuse for breaking the curfew if you can show a valid train or bus ticket; but be aware that there is no public transport and very limited taxi services during these hours. You may have to walk to or from the relevant bus or railway station and this can be cold.

Adult Ukrainian males aged 27 or older are subject to conscription and they may be detained on the streets by the Ukrainian authorities and driven directly to military induction centres to begin training, without an opportunity to go home and collect any belongings, if they are stopped by the Ukrainian authorities and they cannot show identity documents exempting them from conscription. This happens quite frequently in Lviv, particularly early in the evening (5pm to 7.30pm) and later on (from 10pm), particularly in the centre of the city and the Old Town. If you are an adult male, carry your foreign passport to show to the authorities in case you are stopped.

Hotels

Lviv's accommodation options can be overpriced and some are downright shabby. Most visitors to Lviv stay in AirBnB rental apartments that can represent substantially better value for money. The following is a personal selection of our preferred hotels.

Grand Hotel, *Svobody* 13. Probably Lviv's finest and most expensive hotel.

Ibis Styles, *Shukhevycha* 3. A reasonably priced contemporary business-standard hotel, just on the edge of the Old Town.

Kryva Lypa Hotel, *Kryva Lypa* 3a. Just behind *Svobody*, the main avenue running through Lviv, this reasonably priced hotel is in a courtyard full of bars and restaurants.

Best Western, *Shevska* 4. A perfect location and well appointed rooms to a European standard.

Dream Hostel, *Ploscha Rynok*. A perfect location and a modern building. Mostly hostel-style bunk beds but with much coveted single rooms (book well in advance) and a sociable communal area where you can do your own cooking and meet other travellers passing through.

Bars

Bars in Lviv are generally open until 11pm, with last orders for drinks strictly speaking supposed to be at 10.30pm.

Tsehla (sign only in Cyrillic), *Brativ Rohatyntsi* 9. The most popular bar in Lviv with the foreign volunteer community. Rowdy on Friday and Saturday evenings; live music on Sunday and Monday evenings; the foreign volunteer community typically arrives from 9pm onwards. It is also known by the foreign volunteer community and even by some English-speaking Ukrainians as “Mano’s Bar” (although it has nothing to do with a person called Mano save that he goes there frequently) and it can be found on Google Maps if you search for “Mano’s Bar” (but not if you search for Tsehla).

Choven (sign also only in Cyrillic), *Vermynska* 33. A more traditional pub, with a bar area and also extensive seating where you can enjoy a wide menu of good quality food. Also tends to be extremely busy on weekends (meaning Fridays through Sundays).

Lazy Dog, *Krakivska* 9. A relaxed American-style bar with bar seating and a friendly vibe

Pravda Beer Theatre, *Ploscha Rynok* 32. A large, cavernous bar on the ground floor, with a more intimate set of tables and bar stools downstairs in the basement

Dobryi Drug, *Sichkovich Striltsiv* 3.

Bilyy Nalyv, *Serbska* 4. A cider bar.

Gas Lamp, *Verminska* 20. An English-style pub that is also a restaurant

Masoch Cafe and Kryivka (see restaurants section below) also have thriving bars; you do not have to eat.

Bad Boy, *Stryyska* 200a. A wine seller's with a coffee shop upstairs where you can also taste wine.

Other suggestions include "The Room", "12 Steps", "Hide", "Port" and "Mad". All these can be found using Google Maps. In other words, Lviv has a lot of bars.

Nightclubs

We know of two functioning nightclubs in Lviv during wartime. In theory both are supposed to close at 11pm. In practice the former does while the latter routinely stays open all night.

G-Zone, *Svobody* 16. Opens at 6pm Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays.

Split Club, *Miskeyvicha Square* 6/7 (just on Svobody Avenue near the King Danylo monument - with a huge sign). Also has strip shows nightly.

There is a strip club called Eros on the corner of *Ploscha Rynok* and *Serbska* right opposite the Town Hall, It is routinely open past curfew hours, particularly in the summer, and it is notorious for rip-offs.

Restaurants

Here are some suggestions being personal favourites of the author, all of which are located in the Old Town. Generally restaurants take last orders for food and alcohol at 9pm. There are a handful of exceptions. None of these places are particularly expensive; some other more expensive restaurants are available. Generally reservations are not necessary.

Kryivka, *Ploscha Rynok* 14. This restaurant is in the basement in a building on the south side of the square behind a wooden door itself inset behind an arch. There is no sign. To enter, you knock on the wooden door and when the slot opens, you say "*Slava Ukraini!*". This is the password. There is then a shop selling Stepan Bandera and similar memorabilia on the ground floor and a restaurant and bar in the basement. It has a wartime guerrilla paramilitary theme and is great fun.

Khinkal'nya, *Ivana Fedorova* 14. Hidden behind a building front, again with no obvious sign, this Georgian restaurant serves a variety of traditional Georgian dishes and wines.

Marevo, *Virmenska* 5. A delicious Italian-style restaurant that can get very busy on weekends over the lunchtime period.

Masoch Hotel and Cafe, *Serbska* 7. A high-end restaurant serving food at reasonable prices, and offering complimentary corporal punishment to diners (although it is not obligatory). Generally open later.

Lotus Zaika, *Pekarska* 35. An Indian restaurant about 10 minutes' walk from Lviv's Old Town.

Atelier 19, *Staroievreiska* 19. Italian restaurant including excellent pizza. Perfect for a post-opera meal.

Om Nom Nom, *Rymlyanyana* 10. An exclusively vegan restaurant very popular with some international volunteers.

Red Berry, *Ivana Franka* 18. Known for good meat and tasty gibbs.

Copy centre

Lviv has very few offices with western standards of printing services. Even printing simple A4 documents can prove difficult.

One exception we have found is a "Copy Centre" in central Lviv and its address is Mykoly Kopernika Street 16. Here is a link to its location of Google Maps: <https://maps.app.goo.gl/2fdLunW8um3M7Mek7>

This Copy Centre can do both large and small jobs but you have to physically go there and explain what you want. It has at least one mass photocopier of the kind you typically find in a law firm, and it seems reasonably reliable. The prices are very modest. The opening hours are 8am to 7pm Monday to Friday; 10am to 6pm on Saturday; 10am to 5pm on Sunday; some of the staff speak reasonable English. You take the documents you want printing with you on your mobile telephone and you email them to the Copy Centre or send them via the Telegram App while in store. Do not think that they will do a job remotely; to repeat, you must go there in person and explain exactly what you want.

Post Office

Nova Poshta, the national post office, has a branch, number #77, just behind Svobody Avenue at the intersection with Petro Doroshenko Street in central Lviv. You can send mail on a “sender pays” or a “receiver pays” basis to any other branch of Nova Poshta in Ukraine. Both sender and recipient need Viber installed. The sender and recipient identify one another by reference to their Viber account numbers. There is no personal mailbox delivery of mail in wartime Ukraine. When a letter or parcel arrives for you at a branch of Nova Poshta, you will receive a Viber message together with instructions on whether there is a fee to pay and a deadline within which to collect it failing which storage charges will accrue. You can have mail delivered to you on a *Poste Restante* basis at Nova Poshta provided the sender has your Viber number.

You can also have international mail delivered to you at Nova Poshta #77 and you can send mail internationally, although this can be a lengthy process as the customs inspection will take place on the spot by a Ukrainian post office official and a list of all the articles you are exporting will be drawn up while you wait.

The post office is located inside a shopping mall and it is open from 7am to 9pm every day. Its location is here:

[https://www.google.com/url?
sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwjp2tPjk4SEAxW61QIHHeWLDjIQ_BJ6B
AhaEAg&url=/maps/place/Nova+Poshta+%E2%84%9677/@49.839712,24.027366,15z/data=!
4m2!3m1!1s0x0:0xfc200a04a545ba50?
sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjp2tPjk4SEAxW61QIHHeWLDjIQ_BJ6BAhOEAA&usg=AOvVaw0gi_cwK08K
G1JD8hUgVcZ4&opi=89978449](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwjp2tPjk4SEAxW61QIHHeWLDjIQ_BJ6BAhaEAg&url=/maps/place/Nova+Poshta+%E2%84%9677/@49.839712,24.027366,15z/data=!4m2!3m1!1s0x0:0xfc200a04a545ba50?sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjp2tPjk4SEAxW61QIHHeWLDjIQ_BJ6BAhOEAA&usg=AOvVaw0gi_cwK08KG1JD8hUgVcZ4&opi=89978449)

Lviv Opera House

Lviv hosts one of the most famous Opera Houses in Europe and it is impossible not to walk by it as it is arguably the city’s most distinctive landmark.

The Opera House has several performances each week of all of classical music, ballet and opera, traditional and contemporary. You can survey the schedule at www.lviv.opera.ua (the site is also in English) and you should buy tickets in advance on the website. Some popular operas and ballets sell out weeks in advance.

You should arrive 15 minutes before the scheduled commencement of the performance you are attending. There is no dress code. Tickets are extremely reasonably priced by international standards.

Volunteering opportunities in Lviv

Lviv Volunteers Kitchen, *Bulevar Himichna*. Directions: walk north on the main road behind the Opera House with the Hotel Lviv (warning: do not stay there) on your left. Pass the Forum shopping centre on your left and keep going. Cross under the railway bridge and take the first left. It is the second gate on the left. About 15 minutes' walk from the Opera House.

Open 8am to 8am Monday to Friday; 11am to 7pm Saturday; 12pm to 6pm Sunday (approximately). No prior appointment required. Look for the "MUZCool" sign and then enter the site and the entrance is around the back of the building with the MUZCool sign.

The work involves principally chopping vegetables and preparing food for cooking. Able bodied men will also frequently be asked to carry heavy loads. No website. By far the easiest and most productive volunteering opportunity in Lviv for those wishing to undertake manual labour.

Location here on Google Maps:

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/>

[MUZcool+альтернативна+музична+школа+#моямузиканестихне/](https://www.google.com/maps/place/MUZcool+альтернативна+музична+школа+#моямузиканестихне/@49.8524901,24.0210273,17z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m6!3m5!1s0x473add90edf9f775:0x903c5b88dd96512!8m2!3d49.8524901!4d24.0210273!16s/g/11hq00sstc?entry=ttu)

[@49.8524901,24.0210273,17z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m6!3m5!](https://www.google.com/maps/place/MUZcool+альтернативна+музична+школа+#моямузиканестихне/@49.8524901,24.0210273,17z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m6!3m5!1s0x473add90edf9f775:0x903c5b88dd96512!8m2!3d49.8524901!4d24.0210273!16s/g/11hq00sstc?entry=ttu)

[1s0x473add90edf9f775:0x903c5b88dd96512!8m2!3d49.8524901!4d24.0210273!16s/g/](https://www.google.com/maps/place/MUZcool+альтернативна+музична+школа+#моямузиканестихне/@49.8524901,24.0210273,17z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m6!3m5!1s0x473add90edf9f775:0x903c5b88dd96512!8m2!3d49.8524901!4d24.0210273!16s/g/11hq00sstc?entry=ttu)

[11hq00sstc?entry=ttu](https://www.google.com/maps/place/MUZcool+альтернативна+музична+школа+#моямузиканестихне/@49.8524901,24.0210273,17z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m6!3m5!1s0x473add90edf9f775:0x903c5b88dd96512!8m2!3d49.8524901!4d24.0210273!16s/g/11hq00sstc?entry=ttu)

Domivka Dog Shelter

Full details here:

<https://www.volunteeringukraine.com/volunteer-opportunities/domivka-shelter>

The work here involves walking dogs held in shelters that have been abandoned by their owners who were unable to care for them as they fled Ukraine or became internally displaced persons.

Location is ten minutes' walk east of the Old Town.

Pasta Cafe, *Dudaeva 3*.

Facebook account: <https://www.facebook.com/pasta.cafe1/>

boiarvv@gmail.com

+380 93 424 5100 (English spoken)

Do not turn up unannounced; this volunteers' kitchen keeps a roster and only needs a limited number of people each day. They are located within a restaurant in central Lviv.

Work involves preparing food, principally pasta and sauces, and packaging it.

INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEER CENTER, *Yaroslava Stet'ska* 11, 10am to 8pm Monday to Thursday, 10am to 6pm Friday, 12pm to 6pm Saturday and Sunday. A general advice centre for international volunteers where you can “drop in” without an appointment and obtain advice on volunteering opportunities and a variety of other issues relating to the volunteering sector in Ukraine.

You can also contact them by telephone on +380 97 104 3203 (English spoken).

This telephone number accepts regular calls, WhatsApp, Viber, Telegram and Signal calls or messages.

Also contact the IVC on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/internationalvolunteercenterlviv>

Or email the IVC coordinator, shannon@ivc-ua.org or the general email address contact-ivc@ivc-ua.org

IVC offers the following services:

- 30% discount on selected hotel / hostel accommodation
- Taxi / car service to / from the border
- Storage of volunteers' luggage
- Visa support letters from an NGO

IVC is the best place to contact for general advice and information about volunteering opportunities in Lviv. They can advise on a full range of other volunteering opportunities not mentioned here.

There are several other volunteering opportunities of various kinds in Lviv that you might read about on the internet; but these are the ones we recommend.

Apartment rental

Use AirBnB and negotiate with landlords for longer stays. AirBnB charges no commissions in Ukraine and acts as a trusted escrow agent by landlords and tenants; they take funds in advance from tenants but do not release them to landlords until the expiry of the rental period that the tenancy covers (or monthly, for longer leases) and no problems have been reported.

AirBnB is well trusted by Ukrainians and foreigners alike in Lviv and its reputation defeats the purpose of using any other service, which might require cash deposits taken up front that then

might be arbitrarily withheld, and the like. All reputable landlords will be listed on AirBnB; those that are not you may not wish to do business with.

Supermarkets and hypermarkets

Central Lviv is dotted with small shops selling a variety of foodstuffs and clothing and personal items.

Some examples of higher quality stores are:

1. Arsen, supermarket, *Miskevycha Square 5*, just near *Svobody Avenue* near the King Danylo monument. A decent central large supermarket with reasonable prices.
2. Epicenter K, a hypermarket located about 2.5 kilometres north of central Lviv. Its address is *Bohdana Khmel'nyts'koho 188a* and it is next to the north Bus Station. The best App to navigate round Lviv by public transport is EasyWay.
3. Forum Lviv, a shopping mall just behind the Opera House.

Military hardware stores

There are lots of these in the vicinity of the Opera House, in particular near the green market which is principally on *Panteleimona Kulisha* (not open on Mondays). Much of the equipment for sale in the green market is either old-fashioned Russian army surplus that has entered Ukraine on the black market or has been held in reserves; or cheap Chinese equipment or clothing; or Ukrainian official military uniforms and equipment that have been sold to market traders by serving, retiring or deserting soldiers.

The best professional military stores are Kozak, *Dzhereina 18*, and the Army Shop in the Epicenter (see above: supermarkets and hypermarkets).

For souvenir military patches, the best vendor available is probably the man wearing military fatigues standing in front of Pravda Beer Theatre in *Plosha Rynok*, seven days a week until about 7pm and running a portable wooden shopping stand. He has military patches of every kind, including Ukrainian “volunteer” tridents (worn by a number of international volunteers and respected by soldiers on the front line); domestic flags (such as British / Ukrainian and American / Ukrainian flag patches), and many other things. Beware that the patches you buy might not cause

offence back home; some of them may contain pro-nationalist or pro-fascist emblems or use anti-Russian swear words. Some of them are obviously jokes (e.g. “CIA”; “SBU” - the Ukrainian equivalent) that should not be worn outside Lviv because someone might take them seriously. Use your common sense.

Guns and ammunition are not generally available for sale in Lviv (unlike in some cities in eastern and southern Ukraine). The Police, who are generally extremely heavily armed, will take a very dim view of the open carry of handguns in Lviv and you may be shot on sight.

Medical services

For a full list of doctors, surgeries and hospitals with appropriate medical specialities, approach the **International Volunteer Center** (see under “Volunteer services” above). Do not approach public hospitals without prior coordination with a person with local expertise. There are doctors in Lviv who speak English with a range of specialities, but unless you have a trauma emergency (e.g. a road traffic accident) book medical services in advance.

The city is awash with pharmacies but not all pharmacies stock all medications. You may have to go round several pharmacies before you find the medication you want. It is better to bring medications with you into Ukraine if that is possible.

Prescriptions are not generally required for medications, with the exception of certain psychiatric medications. Access to psychiatric services is extremely limited, there being only one English speaking psychiatrist (available privately) in Lviv. The range of psychiatric medications available in Ukraine is likewise limited but probably broader in Lviv than elsewhere.

Other miscellaneous services

Clothing alterations. Aybolt, *Petro Doroshenko* 13.

Hairdressers. Hair Factory, *Nalyvaika* 5, near the Opera House, has a good reputation and is pricier than many. There are many barbers and hair dressers dotted around the centre.

Tourist attractions

Lviv is awash with tourist attractions, having by far the largest concentration of churches and historical buildings anywhere in Ukraine and possibly anywhere in Europe. It rivals Venice or Dubrovnik for the beauty of its Old Town and the sheer number of historical and cultural buildings each adjacent to the other. The vast majority of these sights have remained open during wartime and we cannot hope to summarise them all here. However for those seeking more information there are three options:

1. A series of tourist souvenir shops on and around *Ploscha Rynok* sell guide books in a number of languages of varying quality.
2. Ye bookstore, *Tadeusha Kosytushka 5*, carries a number of English language guidebooks to Lviv. The other branches of Ye bookstore in Lviv have a much smaller number of English language publications
3. The following website has been recommended to us as providing free walking tours in both English and Polish, and it might be a good bet for an initial tourist's introduction to the city.

<https://freewalkingtour.com/lviv/old-town-lviv/>

**Ukraine Development Trust
Foundation for Development
www.development-foundation.org
+380 98 467 4579 (WhatsApp)**