

WOMEN-TO-WOMEN TOUR – UKRAINIAN CARPATHIANS

This women-to-women tour brings us to the southwest of Ukraine, an area that borders Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and Romania. We will meet women with a typical though special way of living in the Carpathians. We wander through picturesque villages and hike over the stunning mountain ridge of Chorno Hore, a popular mountain area with views over Ukraine and Romania. Following old border-poles from Polish/Czechoslovakian times, we walk north and climb the tops of Pip-Ivan (2,028m) and Hoverla (2,061m). Other highlights of the tour include interesting visits to women such as the artistic Oksana in Verkhovyna, craftswomen in Kosiv and Yavoriv, and master embroiderer Olga P. and folklore singer Olga B. in Nadvirna.

- **When:** Friday 18 May – Sunday 27 May 2012 (10 days)
- **Supervision:** Tilia Maas Geesteranus (Dutch woman living in Ukraine) and Lesya (mountain guide)
- **What:** A tour that combines 4 days of mountain hiking in the area of Chorno Hore with visits to Ukrainian women with a typical but special way of living. Stay-over in hotels, *sadeba's*¹ and tents.
- **Costs:** 900 euros per person

SEE BELOW FOR A DETAILED ITINERARY AND MORE INFORMATION



Hutsul woman



Unique flora of the Carpathians



Village woman offers apples

DAILY ITINERARY

DAY 1 (Friday 18 May):

- Arrival in Lviv in the afternoon, pick-up from the airport and check-in hotel George².
- We'll have a cup of coffee with pastry in the cosy centre of Lviv.
- Afterwards, we'll make a short excursion through the city centre.
- We finish our walk at the Solomiya Krushelnytska museum (excursion in German)³.

¹ A *sadeba* is a family-run accommodation. It can be a cottage with several rooms (incl. bathroom) with a common kitchen and living room, or a couple of comfortable rooms (also with bathroom in the room) in the family's house.

² www.georgehotel.com.ua. Rooms are on the basis of Standard Class, double room.

³ Solomiya was a first-class opera singer. The museum is situated in her former house. After the tour we will enjoy a small performance of Philharmonic singers accompanied by a Conservatorium pianist. <http://www.salomeamuseum.lviv.ua/en/>.

- Around 20:30 we'll have supper in jazz club Dzyga⁴.

DAY 2 (Saturday 19 May):

- After a welcome breakfast we check out (09:30) and drive south. The first stop comes after 10km, where we meet Yljana and her mother, the founders of the eco-tourism initiative of Kalynovy Rai⁵. They are unique in terms of creating ideas *and* implementing them! They will show us their museum and we take a short walk on the eco-trail they have developed.
- At 12:30 we continue our way south. We make a quick stop for lunch before arriving in Sheshory (nearby Kosiv) around 17:00. Sheshory is a lovely small village in the heart of the foothills of the Carpathians. We will spend the night here in a *sadeba*.
- We get settled into our accommodation and have some free time before supper around 7pm. The meal will be a Ukrainian barbecue (*shaslik*)! For vegetarians we will have grilled vegetables. We can enjoy live music in the nearby restaurant afterwards.

DAY 3 (Sunday 20 May):

- Breakfast and packing our luggage. At 09:30 the bus picks us up.
- Today we'll drive through beautiful hilly landscape of the foothills of the Carpathians to explore the villages of Kosiv and Yavoriv, where we will meet several craftswomen and artists. This is the main region where souvenirs from the Carpathians come from – it's known for its woollen blankets, leather goods, stained glass, wood carvings, icons and ceramics. Some of the women will give a workshop and show us some of the tricks of their trade.
- Around 5pm we arrive in the village of Verkhovyna. This evening and tomorrow night we will sleep at Oksana's house⁶. She is an artistic Ukrainian woman who gave up her job at the local administration to work on building her *sadeba* – a beautiful and unique accommodation with a lovely garden. The whole architecture, decoration and construction is hers. A one-of-a-kind Ukrainian woman!
- Together with her mother, Oksana prepares us a tasty evening meal.



Part of the self-made interior at Oksana's Shepherds milking goats and sheep

Fresh cheese

⁴ <http://dzyga.com/index.php?lang=en>

⁵ <http://www.kalynovyrai.com.ua/en/>

⁶ <http://www.karpaty.info/en/uk/if/vh/verkhovyna/houses/tsikava.sadyba/>.

DAY 4 (Monday 21 May):

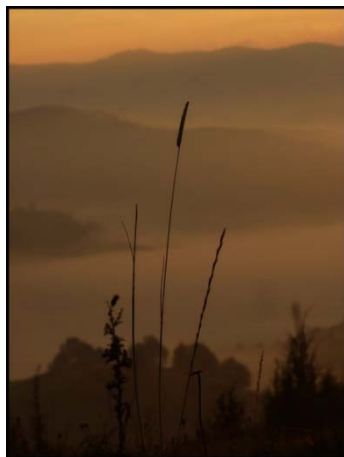
- After breakfast we'll leave around 9am to visit the village of Putyla. We'll meet the mother of Natalia – she divorced her husband many years ago, keeps bees and lives as a typical Ukrainian village woman. We'll also meet a female shepherd who herds her 60 sheep and 100 lambs in the hills. The bus drops us off and the last kilometre we walk-up into the hills. She will show us milking the sheep and how to process the milk into cheese.
- Around 6pm we're back home at Oksana's, enjoy free time in the colourful garden and have supper.

DAY 5 (Tuesday 22 May):

- Today we'll start our hike in the mountains! We pack our luggage, meet our mountain guide Lesya and get picked up by our bus at 9am to bring us to the starting point⁷.
- From about 10am to 5pm we walk up towards the beginning of the Chorno Hore ridge, to Pip-Ivan (2,028m). We'll climb about 1,000 meters of elevation this day, with a nice hike through alpine meadows and forests, passing special rock formations over the first part of the ridge. Pip-Ivan was built as an observatory by the Polish, but never used as such. Nowadays it's a popular destination for hikers.
- We pitch our tents, prepare supper and enjoy the splendid views over Ukraine and Romania.

DAY 6 and 7 (Wednesday 23 May and Thursday 24 May):

- Between 8am and 10am we'll have breakfast, pack our bags and prepare for the day's hike.
- We walk to the northwest, over the ridge and above the tree line, towards Ukraine's highest mountain, Hoverla (2.061m), and maybe farther (depending on the speed of the group). From the ridge we have splendid views over the Ukrainian Carpathians (north), towards the plains (east) and Romania (southwest). We walk past fresh mountain lakes and old boundary stones.
- Around 5pm we pitch the tents, prepare supper, make a small campfire and enjoy the mountain silence.



⁷ It is very likely that you will not need all of your luggage during the hike. Those things you do not require will be taken to our accommodation on day 8 after the hike.

DAY 8 (Friday 25 May):

- We get an early start and slowly descend back to the civilised world where our bus awaits us.
- At our destination, around 4pm, we drive towards the village of Tatariv. We say goodbye to Lesya and get ourselves settled into Natalia's guesthouse Anastasia⁸. Natalia is a cool woman and mother of three. She runs a guesthouse with beautiful rooms in traditional style: wood, woollen blankets (and ones that don't itch) and embroidered linen. She started a tourist information point on her own. The food from her kitchen is tasty and traditional.
- After our 4-day trek we relax a bit (they have a great sauna⁹!) and have supper around 7pm.
- We'll enjoy a modest music evening organised by Natalia, with Hutsul-style clothes and a photo session for those who like.

DAY 9 (Saturday 26 May):

- It's already time to say goodbye to Natalia. At 10am we drive north.
- In Nadvirna we meet Yljana – a biology teacher and former WWF employee. Yljana will take us to meet a few interesting women: the famous embroiderer Olga P. (who is also said to be a traditional pharmacist) and after lunch we'll meet another Olga, Olga B. She sings in the folklore band "Wisp" and is head of the tourist department of Nadvirna.
- Around 4pm we drive back to Lviv, where we arrive around 19:30. We check in again at the George Hotel. The last evening is free for everyone to do as they wish. (Of course, we can decide to have supper together!)

DAY 10 (Sunday 27 May):

- Until around 12 noon everyone is free to enjoy breakfast, explore the city one last time (on Sundays the many church bells sound wonderful), or buy that souvenir they've had their eye on.
- At 12:00 we meet at the George Hotel and take the taxi to the airport. There we'll say goodbye after a special week.



⁸ tatariv-tour.info

⁹ Extra costs are involved.

General information


The idea behind the tour. This is a tour that combines visits to Ukrainian women and hiking in the mountains. During the tour we get an impression of Ukrainian women's lives and especially those living in the Carpathians. The Carpathians are known for their diversity of cultural groups, like *Hutsul*, *Boiki* and *Lemki*. This tour is not meant as a feministic parade – we are not against men. But to be with women only can be fun and allows us to perceive Ukrainian life from a certain perspective. Importantly, this tour aims to add to local women's *empowerment* – by visiting them with Western European women and with the help of translation, we aim to stimulate a discussion about the unique lives and traditions of people living in the Carpathians and to cherish their cultural heritage. This heritage is nowadays easily forgotten due to the vast amount of poverty-driven labour migration to Western Europe.

Level of difficulty. For the purpose of mountain hiking, the participants of the tour should have a normal to good level of fitness and be able to carry their rucksack with (part of the) tent and food (approx 10-15 kg in total) for four days. The hike in general is not difficult and reaches a maximum height of 2,061m. The first and last days of the hike will see the greatest elevation change (max. 1,000m). The other days we mainly walk over the ridge. During the trip we sleep in *sadebas* and during the hike we sleep in tents. Please see the list of necessary equipment.

Visa. Ukraine is not part of the EU. When crossing the border people obtain a tourist visa. It is free of charge and valid for 90 days (to be used within 180 days; the leftover 90 days one is not allowed in).



Practical information

- Group: 6-12 persons (excl supervision). The tour requires a minimum of 6 persons.
- Requests for one-person rooms are arranged separately and additional costs will be incurred.
- Bookings should be made **before 18 March 2012 through travel agency Get-travel** (affiliated to SGR ) , Veldhoven, the Netherlands.
 - Email: gettravel@reizen.demon.nl
 - Telefoon: +31 (0)6 – 27631666 (mobile)
- **Inclusive:**
 - **Return flight Amsterdam - Lviv (1 transfer)** (for cost of the tour without flight, inquire at Get-travel)
 - Accommodation: Two nights in a hotel in Lviv and four nights in comfortable *sadebas* (the other three nights we stay in our tents!)
 - Transport with a private bus during the tour (from Lviv to the destinations and back to Lviv)
 - Professional supervision
 - Meals 3x a day (supper on day 9 excluded)
- **Exclusive:**
 - Drinks during lunch and supper
 - Supper on day 9
 - Material for the mountain hike, such as tent, mat and rucksack (see equipment list for details)
 - Travel insurance and trip cancellation insurance

See [Travel Conditions](#) and [List of necessary equipment](#) for more details.

Pictures by Olenka Grencheshen, <http://libertang-o.livejournal.com/>, Marleen Botermans and Tilia Maas Geesteranus.