

INSIGHTS INTO UKRAINIAN AND UK CULTURE

A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR
UKRAINIANS IN THE UK
AND UK HOSTS



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Content was reviewed by the Ukrainian Club of Edinburgh

WELCOME TO THIS BRIEF CULTURAL GUIDE

Introduction

Through the UK government's Homes for Ukraine scheme, it is important for us to note the inevitable challenges faced by Ukrainians who have been forced to flee their own homes and the UK hosts, adapting to the sharing of their homes. Having a better understanding of cultural differences may help both Ukrainians and UK hosts enjoy a more harmonious living experience together.

Culture is complicated. Our individual cultural make up is influenced by much more than our nationality. National culture is just one way of looking at cultural difference and this means that the information that the Refugees and Persons Who Seek Asylum (RAAS) group has put together represents a tendency or a trend and may not map onto an individual directly.

It is worth mentioning that cultural research is largely based on peace time activity. How we react in stressful and distressing situations can transcend culture and cause unexpected behaviours.

We hope this guide can help build confidence and offer an insight into cultural attitudes, views and behaviours.

GENERAL INFO

Ukraine is a diverse country in Eastern Europe with a mix of Eastern and Western European traditions and influences. Although it is the second largest country in Europe and shares similar cultures with neighbouring countries such as Russia, Poland and Belarus it is not a member of the EU. It is an old nation but a new state becoming independent again in 1991 with the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Some see this as an unnatural break in the unity of Slavic peoples.

Culture has been central to Ukraine's response to threat from Russia which has sought to create identity rifts in Ukrainian society to promote a divisive historical and cultural narrative. The invasion has no doubt solidified a sense among Ukrainians that their identity is distinct and that they are in no way Russian.



Capital: Kyiv (pronounced Kay yeev)

Time Zone: Kyiv is GMT plus 2 hours

People: 44.8 mn. Ukrainian 78%; Russian 17.3%; Belarusian, Moldovan, Crimean Tatar, Bulgarian, Hungarian, Romanian, Polish all under 1%

Languages: Ukrainian (official) 67.5%; Russian (regional language) 30%; other 3%

Religion: Ukrainian Orthodox; Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church; Roman Catholic, Protestant, Muslim, Jewish

Ukraine is the second largest country in Europe. It is bordered by Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Moldova to the west; Belarus to the north; Russia to the east and the Black Sea and Sea of Azov to the south. The landscape is diverse and ranges from treeless plains to marshes and forests. About 65% of the plains are cloaked by rich black earth which accounts for Ukraine's high output of vegetables, grain and other commercial crops.

HOSPITALITY

Hospitality is a byword for Ukraine. Even in the hardest times when shops are empty and food lines are long the spirit of hospitality remains. The best food is always for the guest and it is not uncommon for guests to honour the host by asking for second helpings. *In the UK in an informal or family setting it is perfectly permissible to do this too.*

Due to economic hardships during the Soviet era, Ukrainians have become accustomed to dining out on special occasions. They love to have fun, socialise after work, drink horilka (Ukrainian strong spirit) and raise plenty of toasts. *People in the UK also tend to dine out on special occasions, have fun and socialise after work. There is also a very active pub culture in the UK and it is not unusual to meet friends any time for a drink-or several!*

Tea

The culture of tea is as significant in Ukraine as it is in the UK but it is taken a little differently. A common choice is black tea with lemon and sugar-or honey. Another one is black tea with confiture/jam. *Tea with milk, the way it is taken in the UK, is not as popular.*



Bread

Ukrainians love bread. Not necessarily toast bread but loaf bread-sourdough, wholemeal etc. And when there is bread being consumed so is butter, preferably regular butter and not the easy spread one.

INGREDIENTS THAT ARE COMMON IN A UKRAINIAN HOME

Here is a list of ingredients that are commonly found in a Ukrainian home. Having several of these items in your pantry as a UK host will make them feel more welcomed and comforted. Olia Hercules cookery books provides a good source for Ukrainian recipes. <https://oliahercules.com/>

Pantry

- Unrefined sunflower oil (Clearspringuk)
- Tinned tomatoes
- Honey
- Sauerkraut
- Fermented gherkins
- Toasted Buckwheat (Polish shop)
- Good rye bread (especially with coriander and caraway seeds)
- Some fluffy white bread or sourdough
- Basmati rice
- Red kidney beans
- Frozen sour cherries
- Camomile tea
- Apricot jam/preserve
- Raspberry jam
- Some English biscuits
- Poppy seeds
- Sunflower seeds
- Pumpkin seeds
- White flour

Meat

- Mince (pork or beef)
- Good chicken
- Chipolata or other plain sausages
- Kabanos sausages
- Lardo, pancetta or streaky bacon

Fresh food

- Fresh Dill (a lot of it)
- Beetroot
- Potatoes
- Cabbage
- Carrots
- Onions
- Garlic
- Spring onions
- Apples
- Clementines
- Lemons
- Mushrooms (fresh & dry)

Dairy

- Frozen varenyky or pierogi dumplings (Polish shop)
- Full-fat creme fraiche, sour cream or yogurt (big tub)
- Eggs
- Full fat milk
- Good butter
- Twarog cheese (Polish shop)
- Emmental or gouda cheese
- Good vanilla custard
- Kefir or ryazhanka (baked milk yogurt)

COMFORT

Eastern European houses tend to be very warm in winter. Many people live in blocks of flats and these are communally heated by the Council so heating is “blasting”. It is a surprise to most Eastern Europeans when they visit their British friends how cold the houses are. *This has been made worse in the UK by the energy crisis and the rising cost of fuel.*



It might be a good idea to offer your Ukrainian guests an extra blanket or hot water bottle while they adapt to their new home.

Slippers are very important and worn in most Ukrainian homes. It is very likely that your guests will either bring slippers with them or wish to purchase a pair. Some people change into “loungewear” as soon as they come into the house. Many were told by older generations that wearing “out of the house” clothes inside brings in dust and dirt from the streets and they will insist on wearing two different outfits throughout the day depending on whether they are in or out. *This is not so common in the UK.*



COMMUNITY SPIRIT

Ukrainian society has always been based on close ties. Community spirit is evident in times of hardship, sadness and joy. It becomes a survival mechanism to enable the nation to get through its tragic history.

Over 70% of Ukrainians live in small apartments with two or three bedrooms, often with three generations under one roof. Families are close knit and the extended family is a source of help and support and there is a strong tradition of duty and responsibility for the elderly.



Ukrainian villages still keep the tradition of helping each other with the harvest, such as when neighbours, friends and relatives all come over for a “potato digging party”. *A little like the camaraderie displayed in “tattie week” in Scotland in the past. Regrettably this has become a less apparent feature of British culture, linked with a tendency towards individualism.*

In the Ukraine, sometimes parents are known to be over protective towards their children. There is a joke “Let me help my children until they retire”. *The Western idea of fleeing the nest is replaced by the notion of a life-long close bond with parents.*

On the whole Ukrainian community culture encourages an outgoing and sociable attitude, with people feeling comfortable to sing and dance in groups as well as enjoy being outdoors.

WOMEN IN SOCIETY

Throughout Ukrainian history with its centuries of trials and wars men were away fighting for their country-as now- and strong, independent minded women raised children and farmed the land. The sense of duty towards family and children has resulted to a certain extent in Ukrainian women being seen as a “hearth keepers”. Ukraine is mostly a patriarchal society and sometimes women are seen in their traditional roles. Chivalry is an important part of male behaviour and men often assist women with coats and heavy bags and stand up when a woman enters the room on social occasions.

Ukrainian women take care of their appearance and fashions are similar to those in Western European countries.

Older women may dress more conservatively and sometimes in rural areas wear dresses and cover their heads with scarves.

In the UK attitudes towards gender roles in work and at home are changing with a moving away from views of men as breadwinners and women as homemakers. However, women make up two thirds of those in low paid jobs and at the other end of the pay spectrum female bosses earn three quarters of what their male colleagues earn.



Olena Zelenska, Wife of President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine, in 2019 in Riga, Latvia.

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS: UKRAINE

The Ukrainian generosity of spirit is evident in the inclusive way they enjoy their celebrations. The following are the key holidays which Ukrainians may wish to celebrate when in the UK.

New Year's Day

According to surveys January 1st, New Year's Day is the favourite Ukrainian holiday.

Orthodox Christmas – 7th January

Ukrainians celebrate Christmas according to the Julian calendar which therefore means Christmas falls on the 7th January. Christmas is a holy day full of church, food and family. Ukrainian Christmas dinner consists of 12 traditional dishes which symbolise the 12 apostles.

International Women's Day, March 8th

This is a fully fledged celebration in Ukraine and a day of ultimate leisure for women. Spring flowers and compliments for the women.

St Nicholas Day – 19th December

This is the day that marks the beginning of the winter holiday season and when Ukrainian children receive gifts.



Easter

Easter baskets are filled with butter, meat, salt and sugar (cake) - all things fasted from during lent. Baskets are taken to church on Easter Saturday to be blessed and to break the fast eaten for Easter breakfast.

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS: UK

Many of the holidays in the UK are similar to those in Ukraine. Christmas is celebrated in the UK with gift giving and family gatherings. The festivities continue the day after Christmas, Boxing Day, which traditionally was when wealthy people would give their servants a Christmas box.

Bank Holidays

A bank holiday is a national public holiday in the United Kingdom, Republic of Ireland and the Channel Islands. The term refers to all public holidays in the UK, be they set out in statute, declared by royal proclamation, or held by convention under common law. Bank holidays can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/bank-holidays>

New Year's Eve

This is one of the most important dates on the calendar in the UK and usually celebrated with municipal fireworks displays, parties and gatherings to see the new year in. This is particularly so in Scotland where there is a tradition of "Hogmanay " and "first footing" to cross the threshold of neighbours and friends after midnight to wish them a Happy New Year. The 1st of January is a public holiday in England and both 1st and 2nd are holidays in Scotland.

Easter

Both Good Friday and Easter Monday are holidays in England and just Good Friday in Scotland. Good Friday is typically celebrated with Easter eggs, the Easter Bunny and "Hot Cross Buns.

Guy Fawkes or Bonfire Night

On 5th November 1605, Guy Fawkes planned to blow up the houses of Parliament. He failed and the occasion has subsequently been celebrated with fireworks and burning a "guy" on a bonfire.



GIFT GIVING

Gift giving is important in Ukraine. High quality local products and flowers are well appreciated. Flowers are brought to birthday parties and to teachers on the first day of school. Symbols of grief and symbols of reunion.

Your Ukrainian guests may well wish to give you flowers. It is important to note that the number, colour and type of flower all carry a special meaning. For example an even number of flowers is for funerals and yellow is a colour that expresses farewell.



Flowers in the UK are often given on special occasions like birthdays, anniversaries and Valentine's Day. There are no specific customs regarding quantity or type of flower although lilies do tend to represent bereavement and roses romance.

NAMES, GREETINGS AND FORMS OF ADDRESS

Names, greetings and forms of address

A full Ukrainian name consists of three parts: a family name, a given name, and a patronymic name which is a middle name.

Patronymic refers to a person's father's name: Petrovych (Petro's son); Petrivna (Petro's daughter). The patronymic name is used in formal speech and especially when approaching an elder or unknown person.

All three parts could be derived from one name which can be very confusing for British people, e.g. Petrenko Petro Petrovych. There is also a tradition of using the shortened form of the name or nickname.

For example, the popular but long name, Oleksandr, could be contracted to Sasha, Shura, or Sania. To make it maybe even more confusing to British people is that there is no direct equivalent in Ukraine of Mr, Mrs, Miss and Ms. You may use Pan (Mr) followed by (surname) for respect or Pani (Mrs).



To avoid a misunderstanding it might be wise to ask your Ukrainian guests how they wish to be addressed. At the same time indicate how you wish to be addressed.

GENERAL CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS

Many middle-class people in Ukraine are still financially struggling and many, especially the elderly, live below the poverty line. Despite this there is a growing affluent, professional class. Since independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, a greater array of consumer goods has become available and people aspire to the same sort of life style and luxuries as those in many Western countries.

The UK scores well on the OECD Better Life Index (2021) but currently many families are also struggling due to a combination of factors such as Brexit, impact of Covid, rising inflation and cost of living increases.

A **tradition of hospitality**, generosity and warmth which has its roots in the Ukrainian agricultural past.

An **optimistic attitude** to life despite its unpredictability and challenges.

A **sense of humour** and tendency to laugh at their own troubles.

An **attachment to the land** as people have been farming for hundreds of years.



GENERAL CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS

Attitude to Time

Ukrainians can have a more relaxed approach to time and less of a sense of urgency than is usual in the UK. Being late can be the norm; meetings are often cancelled or rescheduled. It is a good idea to confirm meetings and be patient.

Attitude to Space

Personal space tends to be closer than it would be in the UK due to years of communal living. Don't be surprised if your guests brush up against you, pat you on the shoulder or hug you.



Attitudes to Queueing

British people are renowned for queueing. Some people joke that it's what the British do best. There is even a code of conduct. It is associated with duty, taking your turn and fair play. And woe betide the queue jumper! Ukrainians have had their fair share of queueing particularly during the Soviet era.

COMMUNICATION

Language Used

Ukrainian is the official language of Ukraine. It is a Slavic language, written in the Cyrillic alphabet of 33 letters. It is closely related to Russian which is also a Slavic language and with which it shares over 50% of its vocabulary. Russian was also an official language during the Soviet period. It is still widely spoken and is the primary language of ethnic Russians and other ethnic group in Ukraine.

Ethnic minorities often speak their respective native languages including Polish, Hungarian and Romanian. Ukrainians can be gracious and polite but direct in their communication style relative to British people. *As a result they may sound abrupt to British ears.*

In March 2022 Ukraine asked the world to discard the outdated Russian version spelling of their cities. Kyiv not Kiev; Lviv and not Lvov; and Ukraine and not *The* Ukraine. The use of the article relates to the time before independence in 1991 when Ukraine was a republic of the Soviet Union. The distinction between Russian and Ukrainian spellings and pronunciations is vital to recognizing the two countries as separate entities.

Ukrainians enjoy conversation. If you offer the simple greeting, “*how are you*” you might receive a detailed response! And if in turn you answer simply “*fine*” this may be construed as unfriendly or curt behaviour.

COMMUNICATION



Let your guests introduce difficult topics such as the war and the hardships experienced by the country over the decades.



Facial

expressions can be reserved and smiling at strangers is rare. Approval can be expressed by nodding the head or giving the thumbs up gesture rather like in the UK. *Pointing the index finger is considered rude.*



Saying “Thank you”

This is not as widely used as in the UK. In Ukraine it tends to be reserved for strangers or professional acquaintances. By constantly saying “thank you”, you may be implying that that person is not a friend.



Singing

Ukrainian folk culture and singing are expressions of the Ukrainian national identity. Ukrainians love singing after meals or whilst drinking an alcoholic beverage.

Additional Resources

- Ukrainian Embassy: <https://uk.mfa.gov.ua/en>
- **Association of Ukrainians in Great Britain (AUGB)** - <https://www.augb.co.uk>
- Official government site/: Moving to the UK from Ukraine. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/move-to-the-uk-if-youre-from-ukraine>
- Refugease: <https://www.refugease.org/resources-for-ukrainians>
- UNCHR UK Ukraine information: <https://www.unhcr.org/uk/unhcr-uk-information-and-links-on-ukraine-situation.html>
- Open University: Free online courses and resources. <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/supporting-ukrainians>

Financial Times Q&A Guide for Ukrainian Refugees and UK Hosts

As Ukrainian refugees begin to arrive in the UK, Financial Times reporters and editors have created a guide to help would-be hosts and their refugee guests navigate the complexities of moving to Britain and settling in. Published as part of the FT's [Financial Literacy and Inclusion Campaign](#), this Q&A will be updated as the [Homes for Ukraine](#) system changes or new questions arise.

Is there a fixed period for Ukrainians to stay as guests in UK homes and if so, what happens when it ends?

Host families are asked to provide a home for their Ukrainian guests for [at least six months](#). After that, the new arrivals will be expected to find a new host or accommodation of their own unless hosts extend their hospitality. Once a host registers their interest on the government website, they share their offer on websites run by charities such as [Opora](#), where refugees also go to search for accommodation.

What expenses are hosts expected to cover when providing a home for guests?

Hosts are expected only to offer their Ukrainian guests accommodation, not to cover food and living expenses — though some may wish to provide this. Hosts cannot charge guests rent or for any costs incurred but they can request what the [UK government guide](#) describes as “a reasonable contribution to any common household bills such as food and utilities”. Guests who feel they are being asked to contribute an unreasonable amount should raise the matter with the local council, which also inspects hosts' homes before refugees' arrival.

Every guest will be entitled to an initial payment of £200 from the local council to help with the costs of settling in and meeting their immediate needs. Hosts are entitled to an optional payment of £350 a month for up to a year, though they are free to refuse the money if they don't need it.

Source:
<https://www.ft.com/content/732a2cb2-3160-4f4a-b736-dc282ccbdd83?shareType=nongift>

What do refugees need to open a bank account?

Banks typically ask applicants for an address, which can be the host's; a Ukrainian passport or national identity card; and documentation showing the person's immigration status, such as a biometric residence permit (BRP), which, according to the government, refugees on a visa can collect on arrival. This document, which anecdotal evidence from some readers suggests may take some time to obtain, serves as proof of guests' right to work and to rent property.

While guests may apply for a bank account online, most lenders suggest coming into branches, if necessary with a host, especially when documentation is not available.

Fintechs including Revolut and Monzo offer to set up accounts without a visit, and require a phone number, a physical address and a Ukrainian passport or identity card.

Once an account is open, money can be transferred from a Ukrainian bank as needed.

How do refugees get a new phone contract on arrival in the UK?

At the time of going to press, Vodafone and Three had offered free Sim cards to refugees arriving in the UK while other operators were not charging existing customers for calls and texts between Ukraine and the UK. If someone from Ukraine applied for a contract with a UK provider they would need to pass a credit check and have a credit or debit card registered at the address they are applying from, proof of identity and proof of address.

The simplest option, regardless of the provider, would be a pay-as-you-go Sim card that can be cancelled at any time.

How much does it cost to live in the UK?

The average UK household last year lived on [£2,616 a month](#), including spending an average of [£750 a month](#) on a two-bedroom home. Rents are double this in London.

How do refugees access social benefits and healthcare?

Details on how to claim financial support are on page 12 of the [UK government welcome guide](#). To obtain payments, you will typically need bank or credit union account details; an email address; and proof of identity.

Healthcare is free for Ukrainian refugees. The UK government recommends [registering with a general practitioner \(GP\)](#) — a local doctor — on arrival.

Refugees will not initially be eligible for housing benefit. But if a guest wishes to leave a host family and rent privately, or when their sponsorship ends, refugees will be able to rent a property like anyone else, and claim housing benefit if needed.

Do hosts get a reduction on council tax for housing a refugee?

Empty or second homes will be entitled to keep a 50 per cent council tax discount if they are used to house Ukrainian refugees.

What if the relationship between refugee and host breaks down?

If the host and guest can no longer live under the same roof, the Department for Levelling Up says it “will seek to find a further sponsor through rematching”.

“If another suitable sponsor cannot be found, the Ukrainian family will be entitled to housing support [from the local council],” it says.

How quickly can guests obtain work in the UK? Can a host take in someone on the basis that he or she will work for them by agreement — as, say, a nanny, cleaner or in an on-site farm shop?

Ukrainian guests have an immediate right to work wherever they choose. This may also include working for a host, but under the usual rules of employment, including observing the [minimum wage](#), which ranges from £9.50 an hour for those over the age of 23 to £4.81 for apprentices.

Employers must check that refugees are allowed to work in the UK before employing them. The biometric residence permit (BRP), which refugees on a visa can collect on arrival, serves as proof of their right to work.

Organisations including [Employ Ukraine](#) match Ukrainians with employers before they arrive in the UK. Refugees may also take steps to set themselves up as self-employed while receiving state benefits. Details are given in [a government guide](#).

Will guests able to continue their old jobs by homeworking be eligible for any additional support to reflect the higher cost of living in the UK?

There is no specific state support available, but benefits such as universal credit are available to people of working age on low income, whether self-employed, part- or full-time employed. Universal credit payments are [reduced at a steady rate](#) once you earn more than £344 a month if you are also getting help with housing costs, or £573 if not.

What are the arrangements for refugees to return to the UK if they leave the country briefly during the stay with the host?

Ukrainians on the Homes for Ukraine scheme are able to leave the UK temporarily and return. However the government advises against doing so until a BRP has been issued and collected.

How can refugees check their sponsor is registered with the government? And how can a refugee guard against traffickers and other criminals if they find sponsors via social media?

Before a visa is granted, [sponsors and guests](#) must undergo security checks. Getting a visa from outside the UK is much easier with [a sponsor](#) already lined up in the UK, pushing for permission to be granted to prospective guests. The British Red Cross has published [guides](#) in English, Ukrainian and Russian to help refugees stay safe, along with other useful advice.


Can refugees use their Ukrainian driving licences to drive or rent vehicles in the UK?

Yes. Some rental car companies may require Ukrainians to produce an international driver's permit or a translated version of their licence.

Ukrainians can drive in the UK for 12 months before they need to exchange their Ukrainian permits for a UK licence.

Do hosts need to tell their home insurer if they take in refugees?

The [Association of British Insurers](#) says hosts do not need to inform their [insurer](#) if they “want to temporarily house refugees who have been displaced from the conflict in Ukraine as non-paying guests”. But once a full 12 months has passed and the policy comes up for renewal, they should tell an insurer if the refugees are still there.



What do refugees need to do to bring their pets to the UK?

A pet dog or cat needs to be chipped and vaccinated against rabies. Owners need to wait 30 days for a blood test to certify the animal has developed antibodies against rabies. This has to be added to the pet's passport and owners need to go to an EU-registered vet and ask for a certificate approving travel to the UK.

If these requirements are not met, refugees will have to place their pet in quarantine for four months and the UK government will meet the costs. Owners may be able to collect their animal sooner than four months if they are deemed healthy before then. To make the necessary quarantine arrangements, email the Animal and Plant Health Agency at pettravel@apha.gov.uk or call +44 3000 200 301 and select option 2.

What gifts should I bring my host?

This is a question that comes up frequently in social media chatter among Ukrainians fleeing a country which prides itself on its hospitality. The answer is nothing, but some Ukrainians waiting for visas to arrive have already begun planning the basket of treats they will present to their hosts. Meanwhile, some UK hosts are discussing what to put in welcome hampers for their Ukrainian guests.

Reporting by Robert Wright, Siddharth Venkataramakrishnan, Delphine Strauss, Anna Gross, Federica Cocco, Ian Smith, Ana Kozlova, Leyla Boulton.

The reference to the Biometric Residence Permit has been amended to reflect reader feedback.

Image Sources

Information Source:

- General information from this guide was sourced from the book from Da to Yes, Understanding the East Europeans by Yale Richmond and published by Intercultural Press Inc.
- Intercultural training orientations by Linda Pilling.
- Sources for specific content will also be cited on the specific page.
- Content was reviewed by the Ukrainian Club of Edinburgh

Image Source:

Women in Society

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Decoding UK & Ukraine Culture

A supplement to the *Insights Into Ukrainian and UK Culture Guide*



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De-Coding Culture – Ukraine & UK Culture Comparisons

How to Use This Guide

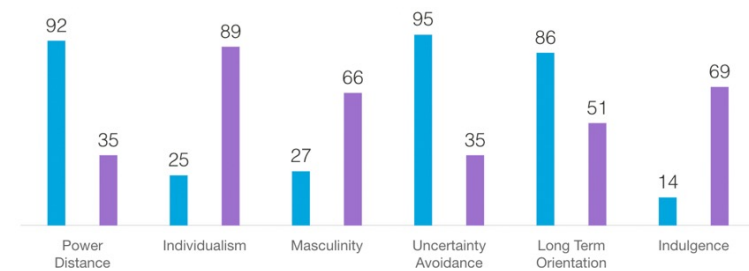
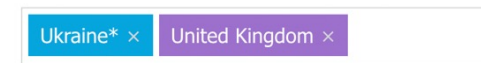
This guide has been produced to help people from the UK & Ukraine to develop respect & understanding of each other's cultural differences. The De-Coding Culture Comparison Guide below has been adapted from Hofstede Insights Country Comparisons website. The aim is to help people from the UK & Ukraine to seek a level of harmony when they are living in a cultural environment different to their own. Having intercultural knowledge allows us to understand the reasons why people from different cultures behave differently to that of our own. Having this knowledge may increase the likelihood of avoiding misunderstanding & build a positive rapport between the 2 cultures.

Format:

- You will see for each cultural dimension, a visual representation of the comparisons between Ukraine & UK, accompanying this is an overview of the cultural dimension to help provide context.
- You will see a description of each of the 2 country perspectives related to their score.
- Some probable observations, relating to the results of the score of each of the dimension are included in the table.
- There are some recommendations/considerations included, designed to stimulate your own thinking to develop strategies to manage these valuable relationships.

Scores

- Scores above 50 tend to be considered to be on the high side, below 50 on the low side
- Similar scores may suggest similar cultural attributes hence minimising the potential of challenges
- Identifying the scores with the biggest differences between 2 countries may suggest additional consideration
- Always remember when comparing country culture there is no "Right" or "Wrong" – just "Difference" see suggested "Solutions" to help bridge cultural gaps



Source: <https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/ukraine,the-uk/>

Caution

It is important to recognise that this guide is designed to simply help you make sense of cultural differences. It can be used as a starting point for developing a better intercultural understanding. However, please see below why you should be cautious with the scores provided from the cultural dimensions & proposed cultural value dimensions:

1. These scores are based on historical research & are not based on representative samples from each country (see Minkov, 2018).
2. The scores refer to national cultures & not the values of an individual. More specifically, we can all be aware of what behaviours or attitudes are expected of us by the cultural group we belong to; this does not mean we act upon these expectations. *e.g., Punctuality in Germany is deemed to be important; this does not mean that all Germans are punctual but have a 'right' to be angry if someone does not fulfil this group expectation.*

Perception of Societal Power



Perception of Societal Power – (Power Distance - PD)

- Different countries have different perceptions & levels of acceptance of power within their society – the levels of acceptance will vary from 1 country culture to another
- This shows the extent to which the less powerful members of a society may expect & accept that power is distributed unequally

UK Perspective – Helpful information & Advice to Ukrainians

Description of UK	What you may observe from UK citizens
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UK at 35 (low) British society believe inequalities amongst people should be minimized • Interestingly, the score is lower amongst the higher class than working classes, indicating a shift over time • This indicates a level of influence from the historical British class system – deemed an inherent tension in the British culture • Importance of birth rank versus where you are born should not limit life opportunities – People should be treated in some way as equals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People generally pay less regard to hierarchy & status • Equal rights are more expected, preferential treatment is seemingly not • In society, empowerment from individuals is more common • Respect, power & status are unrelated & something that should be earned • UK citizens are likely to challenge others in positions of authority <p>Recommendation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be prepared for interaction with UK citizens to be more direct & on a more equal standing

Ukrainian Perspective – Helpful information & Advice to UK

Description of Ukraine	What you may observe from Ukrainian citizens
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ukraine, at 92 (high), is a country where the notion of power difference is accepted within society • Hierarchy is an acceptable part of their society • Being the largest European country & part of the Soviet Union for 100+ years, Ukraine developed as a very centralized country, expecting decisions to be made by people of power 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expression of respect towards senior ranking people or the elderly • Accepting of large salary differences, this is not perceived to be unfair • Expect & accept decisions made by others they perceive to be in a position of power • Power is ascribed & cannot be lost, attitudes to people of authority will remain unchanged • They see wealth, power & status to belong together <p>Recommendation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always demonstrate respect to Ukrainians of rank & age • Be patient when communicating, you may need to politely seek clarification of detail when speaking to each other to avoid misunderstandings in communication

Individualism & Collectivism



“I” or “We” Society (Individualism)

- In an “I” or individualistic society people tend to look after themselves & their direct family only, more ‘Self’ focussed
- In a “We” or collectivist societies people tend to belong to ‘in groups’ which may include family & or friends, that take care of them in exchange for loyalty.

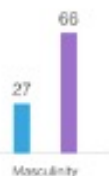
UK Perspective – Helpful information & Advice to Ukrainians

Description	What you may observe from UK citizens
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UK score of 89 the is amongst the highest of the Individualist scores, beaten only by some of the commonwealth countries like Australia & USA • British focus on the “I” & are private people • Children are taught from an early age to think for themselves & find out what their unique purpose is in life is & how they can uniquely contribute to society • The British advocate the route to happiness is through personal fulfilment • Affluence of Britain has increased throughout the last decade, wealth ‘spreading north’, leading to rampant consumerism & strengthening the ‘ME’ culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UK people are likely to place interest of the individual over the interest of a group • They consider value standards should apply to all (Universalism) – having the perception of equality for all • Individual opinions are important – expect to be asked for yours & expect others to express theirs • Communication is open & direct, there’s a free flow of information • People are likely to take individual initiative <p>Recommendation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try not to be surprised when you are spoken to directly • Be prepared to share your own opinions – this will be expected • Do not be afraid to take initiative yourself

Ukrainian Perspective – Helpful Information & Advice to UK

Description	What you may observe from Ukrainian citizens
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ukrainian’s low score of 25 adopt a “We” or collectivist approach • They tend to have close long-term commitment to strong cohesive groups, including family & friends • Group members tend to foster strong relationships, taking responsibility & protecting fellow group members • Loyalty is paramount, overriding social rules • They need to establish, authentic & trustful relationships with people before focussing on tasks or negotiations • In this kind of society, loyalty is paramount & offence can lead to shame & loss of face 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People generally put the interest of the in-group over that of the individual • Expect status & maturity to be valued • Anticipate opinions to be established by the in-group • Expect the value standards to differ for in & out groups <p>Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect the notion of “We” & the important role this plays in Ukrainian culture • Anticipate opinions to be established by the in-groups • Expect value standards to differ for in & out-groups

Perception of Societal Competition, Achievement & Success



Perception of Societal Competition, Achievement & Success (Masculinity)

- A high score on this dimension indicates that the society will be driven by competition, achievement & success
- Success being defined by the winner / best in field
- A value system that starts in school & continues throughout life
- The fundamental issue here is what motivates people, wanting to be the best (Masculine) or liking what you do (Feminine)

UK Perspective – Helpful Information & Advice to Ukrainians

Description	What you may observe from UK citizens
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Britain is a Masculine society (66), indicating they are driven by competition achievement & success • British culture of modesty & understatement can be difficult to understand in view of the seeming contradiction of being a masculine society • It is critical to understanding the British are used to being able to “read between the lines” in the context of ‘What is said is not always what is meant’ • People in the UK live in order to work & have a clear performance ambition, which may reflect in their day-to-day behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a general need for achievement & to excel (Ego needs) • People tend to live to work • Being competitive is seen to be positive • Expect strict accountability in work life balance to retrace the degree of achievement • Expect self-promotion to be accepted & expected behaviour <p>Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare yourself for some British people appearing ‘over-confident’ • British tend to strive to be high achievers & need to share their success with others • You may find they talk about themselves & their achievements • Adopt an empathetic view that the behaviours displayed are culturally driven & no offence is meant

Ukrainian Perspective – Helpful Information & Advice to UK

Description	What you may observe from Ukrainian citizens
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ukrainian’s low score of 25 (Feminine), have less desire to compete or succeed in society, the dominant values in society are caring for others & quality of life • The measure of success is the quality of life, not to stand out from the crowd as this is not admirable • When meeting a stranger Ukrainians understate their personal achievements, contributions, or capacities • They are modest & are expected to live accordingly • Dominant behaviour may be accepted from someone of authority, but not appreciated among peers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A general need for affiliation & levelling • People tend to strive for consensus & avoid conflict – this aligns with collectivist ‘We’ culture • People understate their performance; status is not important to show success • Quality of life & an enjoyable working environment are important • Trying to be better than others is neither socially nor materially rewarding <p>Recommendation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It may be necessary to encourage Ukrainians to share certain information and achievements to optimise their opportunity • Adopt a style of communication recognising cultural differences between the 2 country cultures

Societal Perception of Future Ambiguity



Societal Perception of Future Ambiguity (Uncertainty Avoidance)

- The extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations
- Beliefs & institutions are created within societies which are reflected in the score on Uncertainty Avoidance
- The score shows how a society deals with the fact that the future can never be known: should we try to control the future or just let it happen?
- Ambiguity may bring anxiety; different cultures have learnt to deal with this anxiety in different way

UK Perspective – Helpful Information & Advice to Ukrainians

Description	What you may observe from UK citizens
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UK's relatively low score of 35 indicates a nation happy to wake up not knowing what the day brings & they are happy to 'make it up as they go along' changing plans as new information comes to light • British are comfortable in ambiguous situations – the term 'muddling through' is a very British way of expressing this • Generally, there are not too many rules in British society, but those that are there are adhered to <p><i>Example: British love of queuing which has also to do with the values of fair play</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is different is attractive! This emerges throughout the society in both its humour, heavy consumerism for new & innovative products 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expect people not to feel threatened by uncertainty & ambiguity – A big contrast to Ukrainian people • People think inductively, they focus on result/outcome & can be flexible on how to get there • Expect action to be preferred over reflection <p>Recommendation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As the UK & Ukraine have very different attitudes to societal ambiguity, consider sharing your concerns with each other should the need arise • Communicating with each other will be of paramount importance in managing this dimension difference

Ukrainian Perspective – Helpful Information & Advice to UK

Description	What you may observe from Ukrainian citizens
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ukrainian's high score of 95 shows they feel very much threatened by ambiguous situations – Their current situation included • They are reluctant to readily accept change & are risk averse • Relationship building & preparation is very important, preferring context & background information to situations they face • When Ukrainians interact with people considered to be strangers, they appear very formal & distant - At the same time formality is used as a sign of respect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is an inherent need for rules & formality to make the future as predictable as possible & to structure life <p>Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Endeavour to provide Ukrainians with detailed information to avoid ambiguity • Expect more formal communications until you become properly acquainted • Offer context & background information whenever possible

The Degree Societies Maintain Links with their Past



The Degree Societies Maintain Links with their Past (Long Term Orientation)

- Describes how every society has to maintain some links with its own past while dealing with the challenges of the present & future
- Societies prioritise these 2 goals differently
- Some societies prefer to maintain time-honoured traditions & norms compared to others who take a pragmatic approach: they encourage thrift & efforts in modern education to prepare for the future

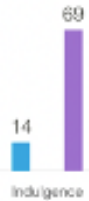
UK Perspective – Helpful Information & Advice to Ukrainians

Description	What you may observe from UK citizens
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UK's intermediate score of 51 has no dominant preference in British culture so cannot be determined • Lower scores prefer to maintain time honoured traditions & norms, suspiciously viewing societal change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UK being shorter term orientation than the Ukraine, people foster virtues related to past & present <i>e.g., respect for tradition & fulfilment of social obligations</i> • Their values may be present-oriented, such as freedom, rights, achievement & thinking for oneself – linking to individualism • There is little money spent on long-term investment & social pressure to 'Keep up with' spending & consumption may something Ukrainian's are not used to

Ukrainian Perspective – Helpful Information & Advice to UK

Description	What you may observe from Ukrainian citizens
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ukraine scores high at 86, which means that it is a very pragmatic culture • People believe that truth depends very much on the situation, context & time • They show an ability to adapt traditions easily to changed conditions • They have a strong propensity to save & invest, thriftiness & perseverance in achieving results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their values may be future-orientated, such as learning, adaptiveness, accountability, perseverance & self-discipline • People may be more open to change • People may strive for sustained & slow results • Truth may be seen as dependent on time & context; there may be more than 1 truth <p>Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenges are unlikely due to neutral stance of UK & pragmatic stance of Ukrainians, so more likely to accept this difference

Indulgent or Restrained Socialisation



Indulgent or Restrained

- Socialisation (how we are brought up) from childhood is what makes us 'human'
- Indulgence refers to the extent to which people try to control their desires & impulses, based on their upbringing
- Relatively weak control is called 'Indulgence'
- Relatively strong control is called 'Restraint'

UK Perspective – Helpful Information & Advice to Ukrainians

Description	What you may observe from UK citizens
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A high score of 69 indicates British culture is indulgent • People exhibit a willingness to realise their impulses & desires, regarding enjoying life & having fun • The British tend to have an optimistic attitude towards life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • British people have a more positive attitude towards situations • Smiling is seen as usual behaviour both in the workplace & socially • Enjoying life & having fun, doing what you want, is of higher importance • Being thrifty with spending of money is of lower importance <p>Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognise the indulgence of British culture is simply inherent of a way of life they have grown up with

Ukrainian Perspective – Helpful Information & Advice to UK

Description	What you may observe from Ukrainian citizens
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A low score of 14 shows the restrained nature of Ukrainian culture • A low score may indicate a tendency to be more pessimistic • Restrained societies put less emphasis on leisure time & control the gratification of their desires • Ukrainians perceive their actions are restrained by social norms & avoid indulgence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ukrainians are more concerned with 'maintaining order' than British people • Smiling at someone, especially a stranger, is seen as suspect • Enjoying life & having fun or doing what you want, is of less important • Being thrifty is of higher importance <p>Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stimulate conversations regarding cultural differences to develop intercultural understanding between the 2 cultures • Avoid overt indulgence in the company of Ukrainian's • Respect that Ukrainians may not be comfortable in social settings

References

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