

KIEV

After having had 2 nights in Minsk, we traveled to [Kiev](#), the capital of [Ukraine](#).

First a little about Ukraine:

Ukraine is the largest country in Europe after Russia. The landscape of Ukraine consists mainly of fertile plains or steppes, as well as high plains. Through these, rivers run like [Dnieper](#), [Dniester](#) and [Southern Bug](#). All these flow into the [Black Sea](#) or the [Sea of Azov](#). In the southwest, the Danube delta forms the border with Romania. The country's only mountain areas are the [Carpathian Mountains](#) in the west, where one finds Ukraine's highest mountain [Hoverla](#) (2061 m.) and the [Crimean mountains](#) on the Crimean peninsula all the way south of the country.



A little about Ukraine's history:

Ukraine's history stretches back at least 4,500 years BC and a number of different groups of people have lived and walked through the land area we know today as Ukraine. From about 800 AD Ukraine has been a core area for [East Slavic](#) culture, and they eventually established the [Kiev Empire](#) as the first Slavic state formation. Here Swedish [Varangians](#) had great influence. During the [Mongol invasion](#) of Russia, the Kiev Empire disintegrated. After this, the area has been part of [Poland](#) and [Poland-Lithuania](#) and eventually [Russia](#). Most of the country was fully integrated into the Russian Empire in the 19th century. The Russian Revolution led to great destruction and depletion of Ukraine. Hundreds of thousands of people were homeless and more than 1.5 million people were killed. Ukraine became part of the [Russian Soviet Federal Socialist Republic](#). In 1922, Ukraine became one of the republics that founded the [Soviet Union](#). World War II went hard over Ukraine. The total number of Ukrainian killed in World War II is estimated at between 5 and 8 million, and of the approximately 8.7 million Soviet soldiers killed, it is estimated that 1.4 million were ethnic Ukrainians. Ukraine became an independent state when the [Soviet Union dissolved](#) in 1991.



A little about the history of Kiev:

The town was probably founded in the 400s, then as an outpost in the [Khazar kingdom](#). It later became the center of eastern Slavic civilization, and became the capital of the Kiev kingdom from the ninth century. In the heyday of the city, it was one of the largest in Europe and had over 100,000 inhabitants. The Golden Age took a definitive end when the city was destroyed during the Mongol invasion of Russia. Kiev eventually became one of the most important cities in the Russian Empire. Kiev was the capital of the Ukrainian Soviet Republic from 1934.

We had made an appointment with the driver who had driven us around in Minsk the day before to pick us up at 11:00 on May 30th to drive us to the airport. He met up precisely and took us to the airport at the agreed price.

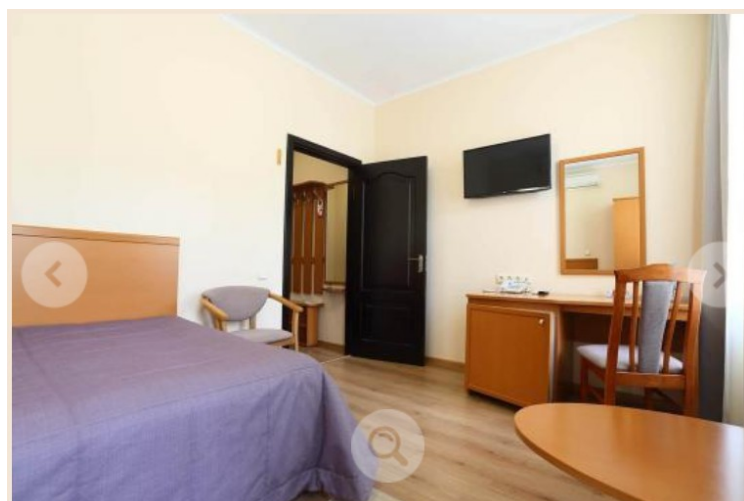
We had booked a ticket via [SuperSaver](#) on an aircraft operated by [Belavia](#). It was to depart from Minsk at 13.30 and arrive in Kiev at 14.30. That schedule was kept pretty good. We flew with a Boeing [737-300](#) with three seats on each side of the aisle.



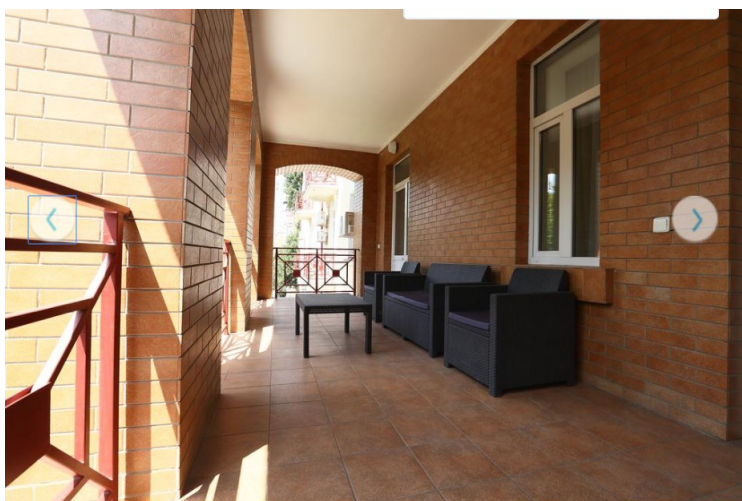
We landed at [Kiev International Airport, Zhuliany](#). To get to the hotel we had booked a transfer online. We wouldn't be fooled again. The company is called [Kiev Airport Transfer](#) and it was absolutely excellent.



We had booked at [Hotel Oberig](#). We had booked a room with a balcony. It turned out that the balcony was tiny. Also, the air conditioning did not work. We complained and were given room to change.



The room looked about like this.



There was a large terrace outside.

Having managed this, we were tired and hungry. We therefore ordered food via room service. We didn't want go down to the restaurant. The food was very good.



View from the terrace.



This was the driver we got to drive us around the city these two days.



The first stop was at [St. Nicholas Roman Catholic Cathedral](#).



At [The Motherland Monument](#). The monument is part of the [National Museum of the History of Ukraine in the Second World War](#).



The plant is commemorating the Great Patriotic War, which is the Russian term for the war between Russia and Nazi Germany.



There were many tanks.



Many statues.



The main building.



Next stop: A statue of [Kiev's founders](#), Kyi, Shchek and Khoryv and the sister Lybid. It is located on the right bank of the Dnieper.



Then we drove over this bridge that crosses the [Dnieper](#). There are many islands in the river. Dnepr is the 4th longest river in Europe.



This is on an island called Venetian. Here is constructed a [hydropark](#) with water sports activities. There are beaches along the river and it is a very popular place in the summer. There is also a subway on the island.



We see the bridge in the background.



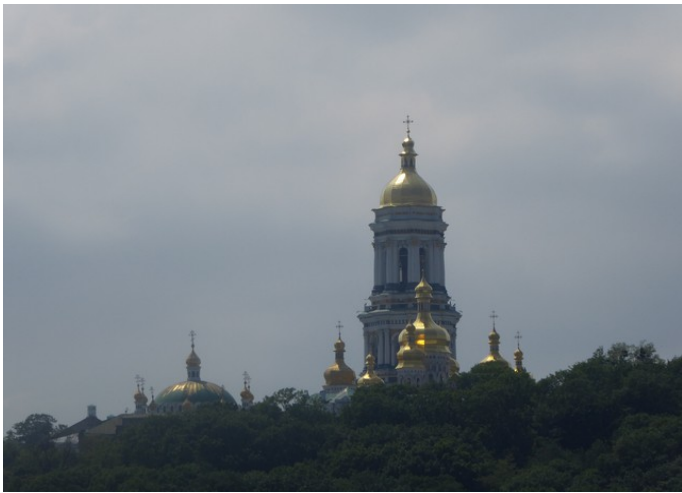
Beach.



The Motherland Monument on the other side of the river.



Churches.



Us.



Boat traffic on the river.





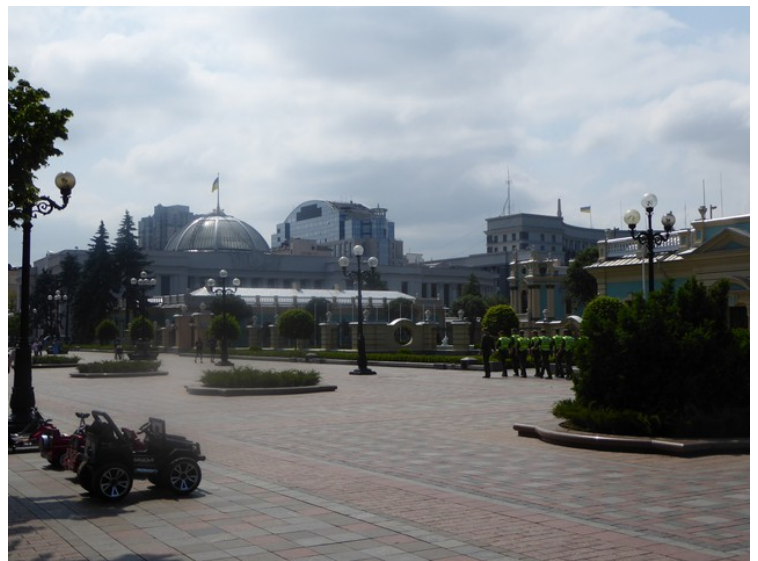
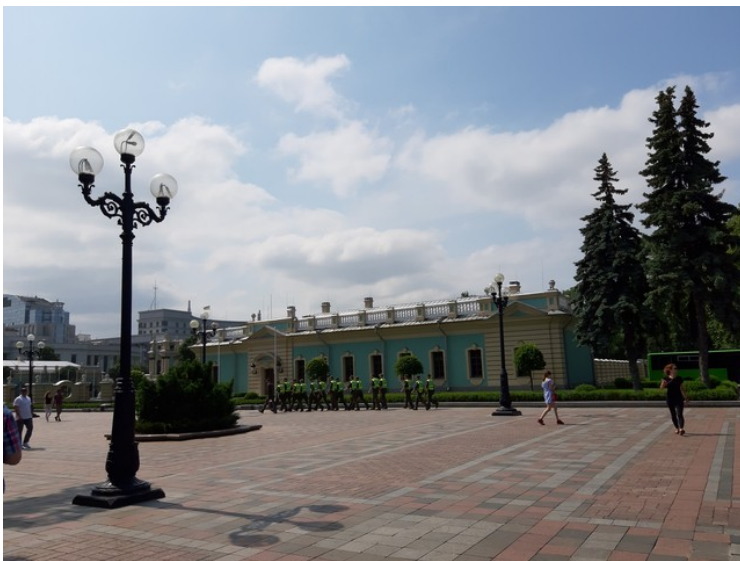
On the road again.



The next stop is [Askold's Grave](#). [Askold](#) was a prince from Kiev and helped to form the first Viking kingdom at Dnieper.

[Kiev.info](#) [Discover-ukraine](#)

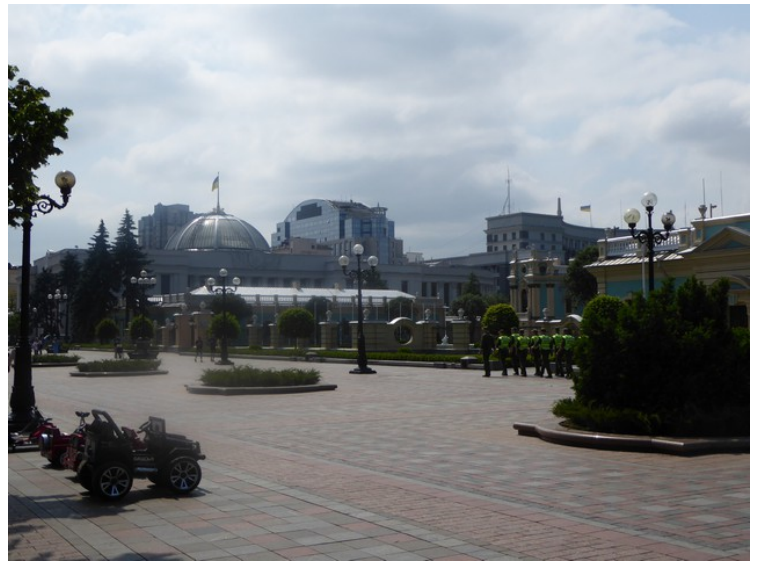




The next stop is at [Mariyinsky Palace](#), which is located at the [Constitution Square](#). It is the public residence of the Ukrainian President. The palace was completed in 1752. Early in the 19th century it was destroyed by several fires. It was rebuilt in 1870 using old drawings. It was also damaged in World War II but was restored in the late 1940s and late 1980s.



Anne Berit takes a picture of me while taking a picture of the buildings.



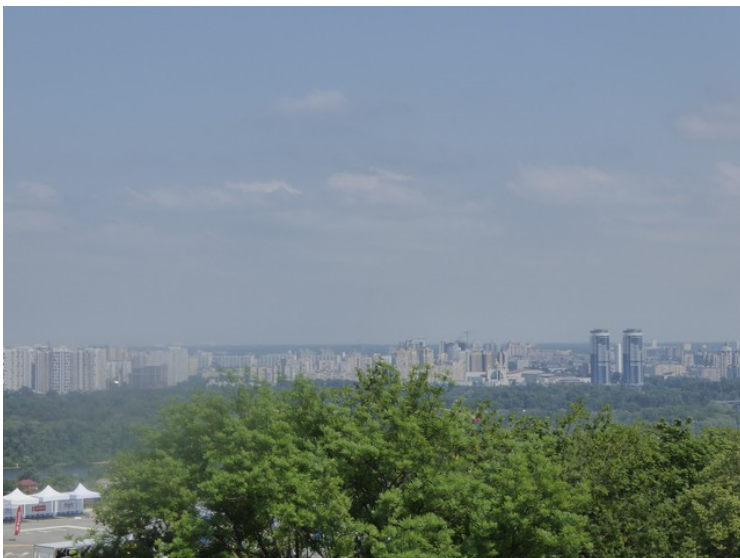
I took this picture.



Anne Berit took this picture.



At the end of the square outside the palace there is a viewing platform, which is supposed to be the best view out over Kiev. Here we look down on the roof of a congress and exhibition center.



Further on, we see the part of the city that lies on the eastern side of the Dnieper.



A statue of an old film camera.



Back to the palace.



This house is next to the palace.
Don't know what it is.



[Verkhovna Rada](#) is right next door. This is where the Ukrainian parliament meets. It was built in the years 1936-38.



Statues outside.



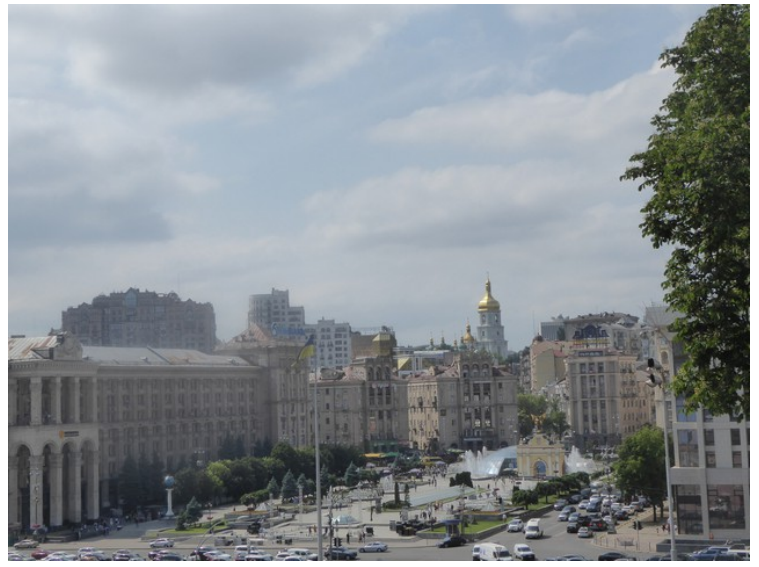
In the park, [Mariinsky Park](#), south of the Constitution Square is a statue av [General Vatutin](#). He is buried in front of the statue.



This is the [National Bank of Ukraine](#).
Nice building.



Here we have stopped and look down to the Independence Square. We see the [Independence Monument](#) dedicated to Ukraine's independence. It was built for Ukraine's 10th anniversary in 2001.



[Independence Square](#).
When we had taken these pictures, we returned to the hotel.



When we were eating in the evening, we went down to the combined bar and restaurant. We took a picture of the bartender. He was always gentle.

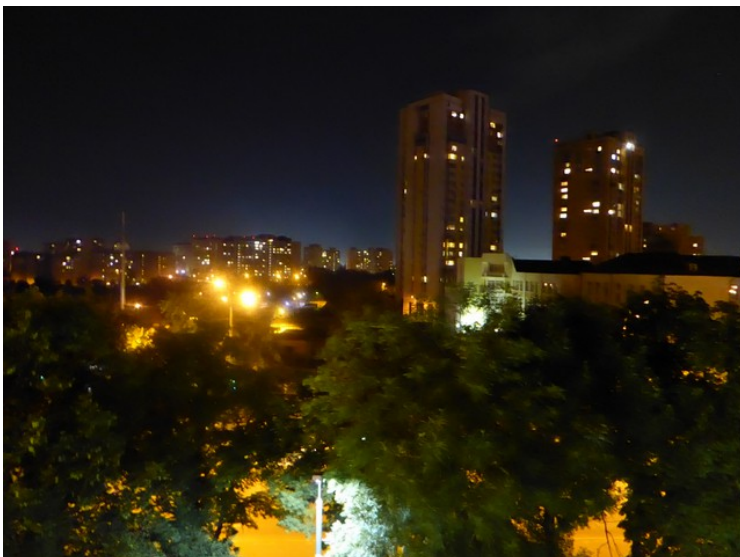


This is the wine we had that day.



The back of the bottle.

It is a red wine of the brand Kartuli Vazi produced in Georgia. It is made from Saperavi grapes.



This was the view from the terrace in the evening.



The next day we continued the sightseeing tour with the first stop at [Babij Jar](#). Here, over 150,000 Soviets were massacred during World War II.



The [monument](#) seen from the side. It was erected in 1976.



Many of the massacres were Jews, over 30,000. In 2001, they got their own memorial.



This is the [Golden Gate](#), which is one of the city gates of the ancient wall around Kiev.



It was built in the middle of the 11th century. It declined over time. It was completely restored in 1982.



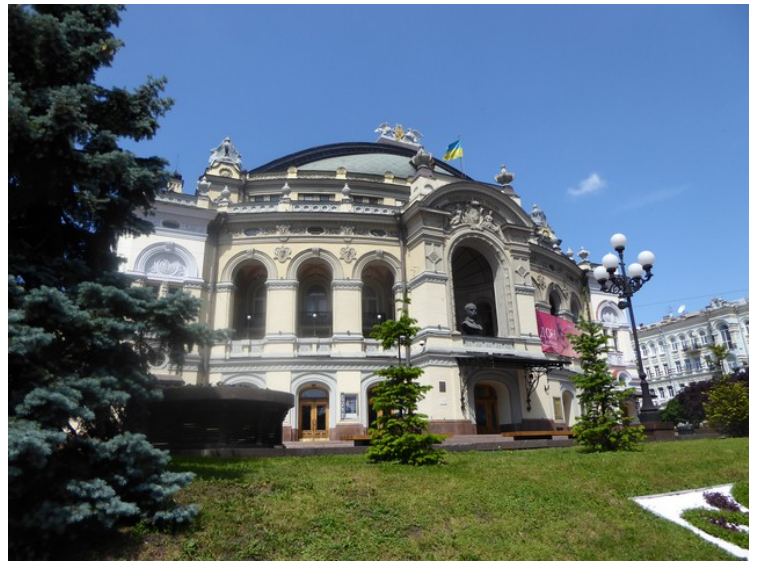
[Yaroslav the Wise](#), who had built this gate through the wall.



Then we will continue.



The next stop was at the [National Opera of Ukraine](#).



The opera from a different angle.



Decoration on the ground outside the opera.



Then we are in the Independence Square.
The statue of independence in the background with the archangel Michael at the top.

[Kiev.info](#)



[Lach Gates](#). Triumphal arch with archangel Michael with sword and shield. It was built in 2001 to commemorate one of the three city gates in the old city wall.



This is the way down to a large mall with a fountain. In addition to the large fountains that we see here, there are 6 smaller fountains, but they were not in operation when we were there. In the evening from 2100 to 2300 they are starting with lighting and music. They are called [Musical Fountains](#). [Video](#)



Some photos from the square.





Big buildings around the square.



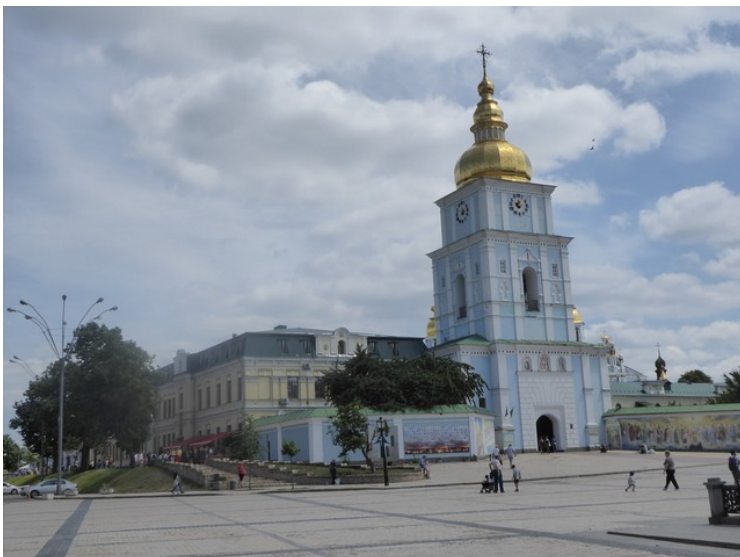
Bank



Original decoration outside a hotel. We parked the car outside the hotel.



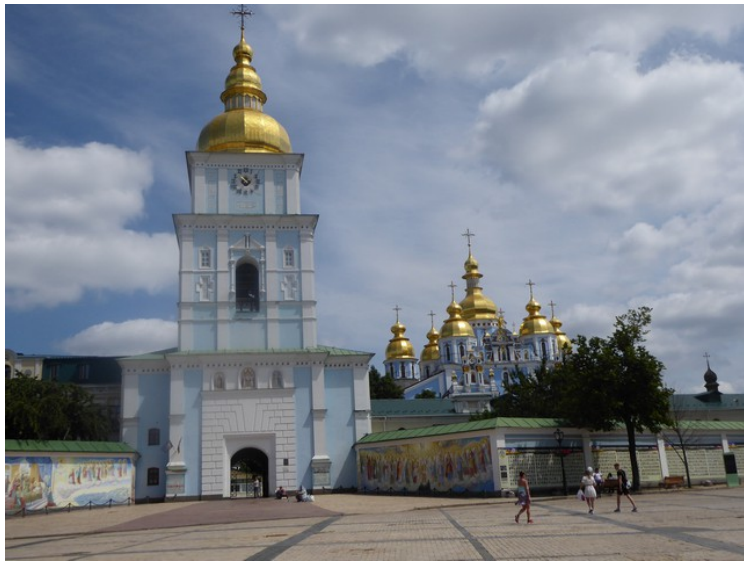
This is the [Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#).



Then we went in the direction of this monastery, [St. Michael's Golden-Domed Monastery](#). We see the bell tower at the front.



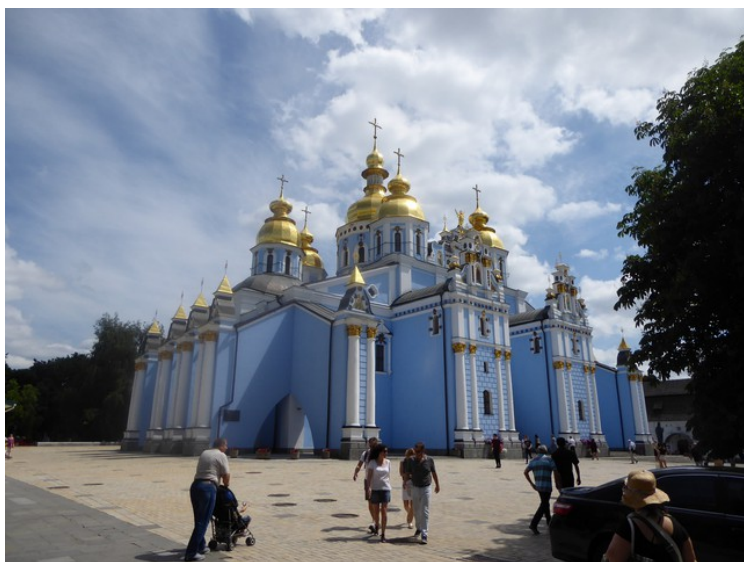
In the square in front of the monastery there is a statue of [Princess Olga](#). She was the first female regent in the Kiev Empire. She has [Andrew the Apostle](#) on one side and on the other side the saints [Cyril and Methodius](#).



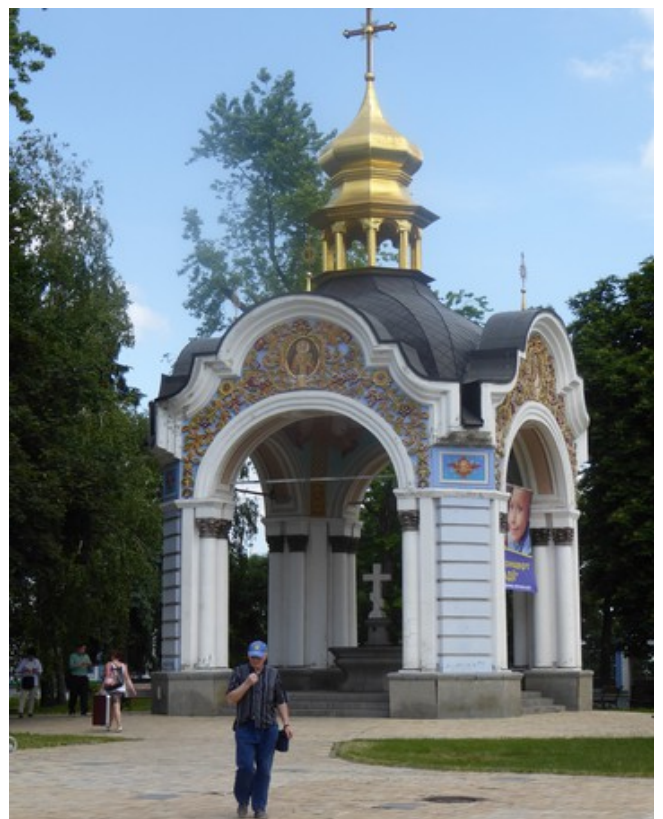
Here we see the monastery behind the bell tower.



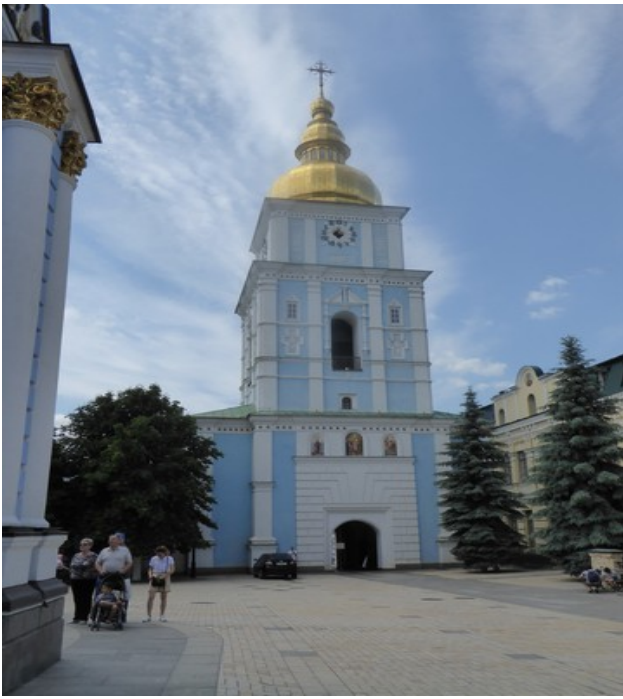
Decoration on the wall at the entrance.



When we come through the bell tower, the monastery looks like this.



In one corner of the area is a small chapel.



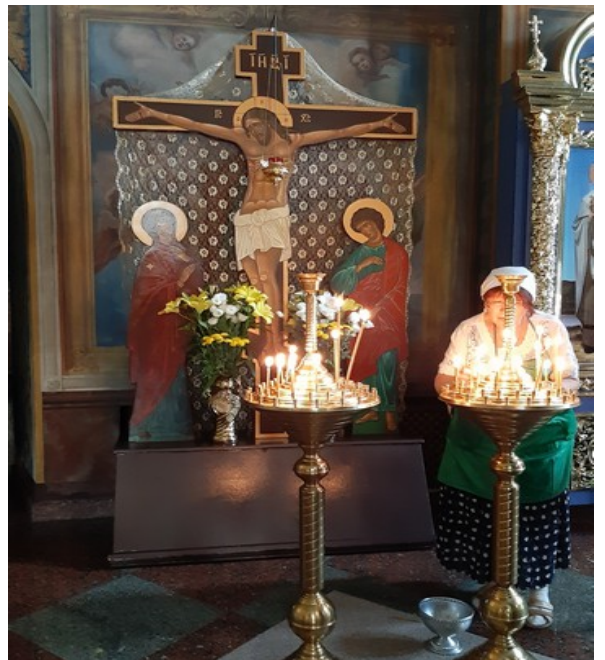
The bell tower seen from the inside.

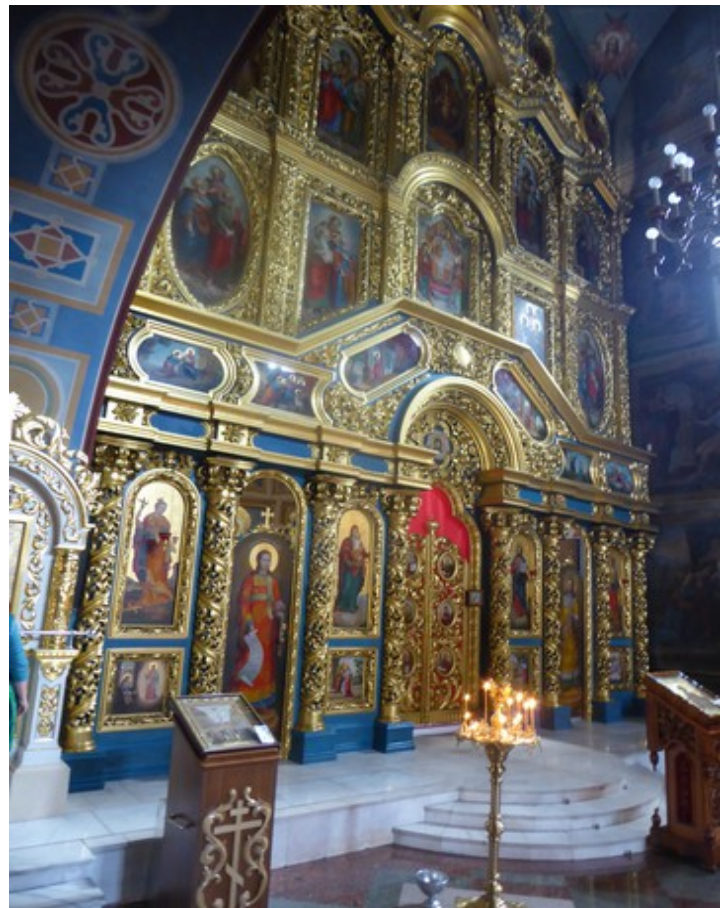
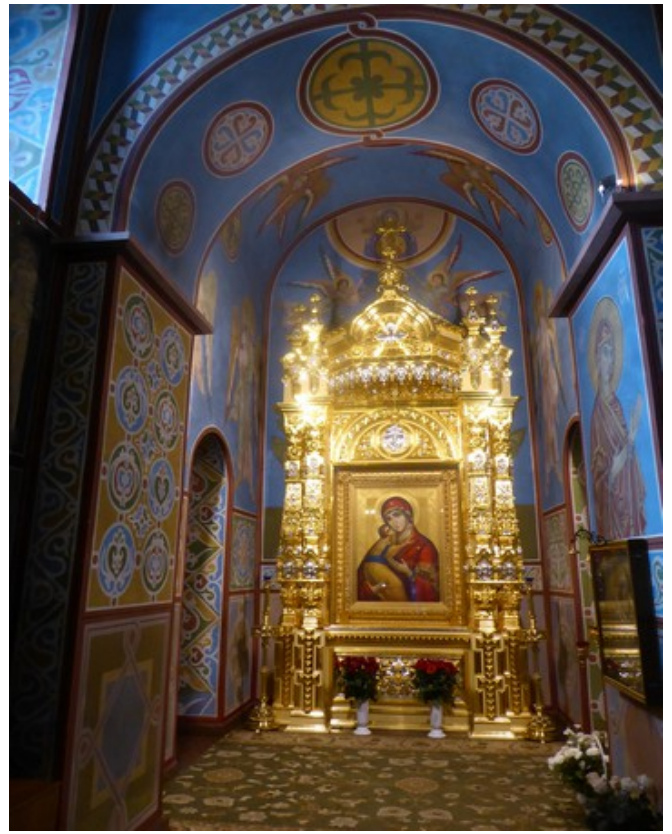


A side door at the monastery.



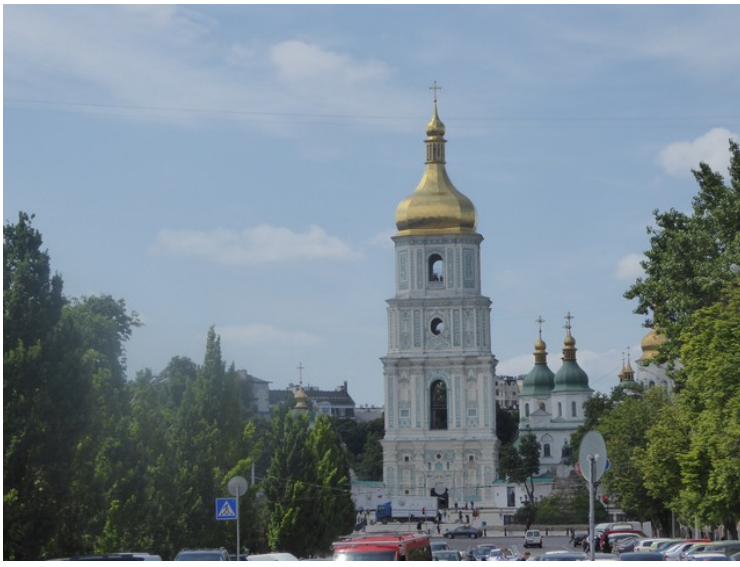
Then we go in.





The monastery was richly decorated inside.

More decorations on the outside.



The bell tower at St. Sofia Cathedral.



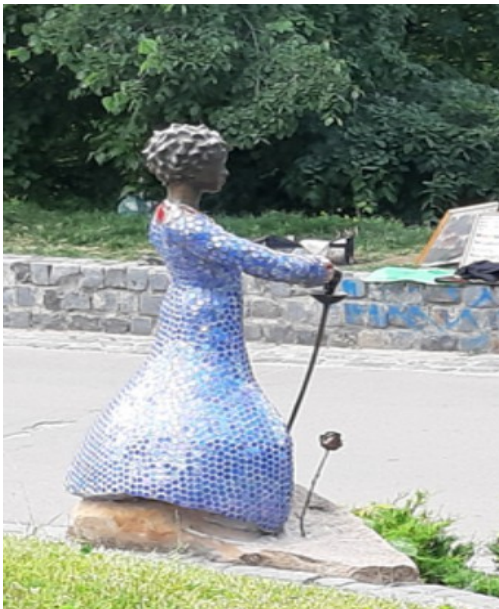
When we were to pick up the car to drive on, we almost took the wrong car.



Here we have come to a park called [The Landscape Alley](#).

[The Culture Trip](#) [Ukrainetraveler](#) [Discover-Ukraine](#)

The street is meant to be a viewpoint over old Kiev, and was created in 1980, but eventually it has been filled with all of these mosaic figures. In 2009, a playground was built as well.





Us.

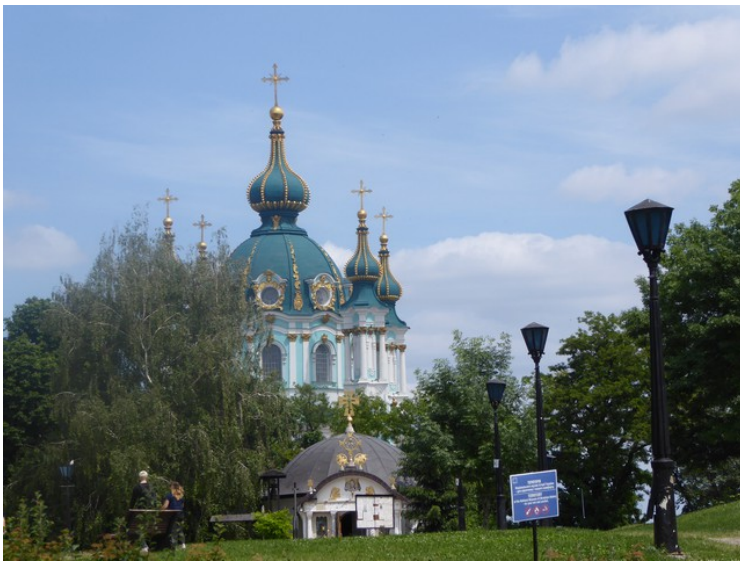
View.



More views.



Sales kiosk.



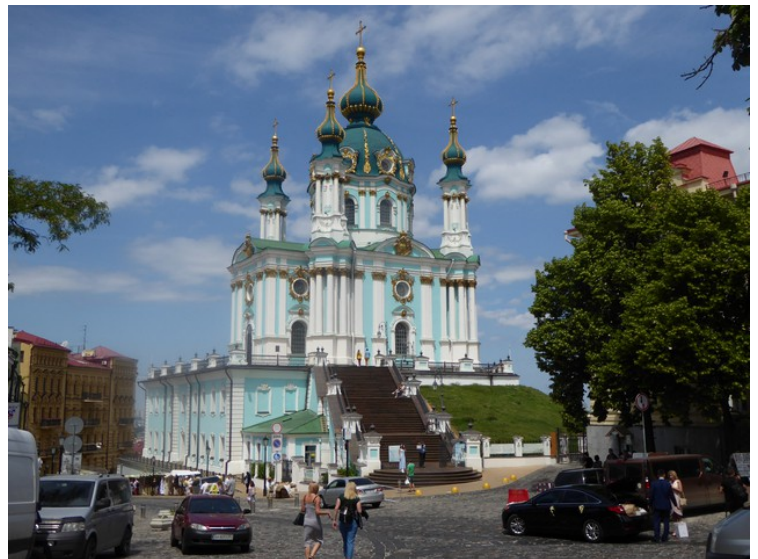
We see the St. Andrew's Church in the background.



This is a [Tithes](#) monastery. Vladimir set aside a tenth of his income to build a church and this monastery. The Church no longer exists.



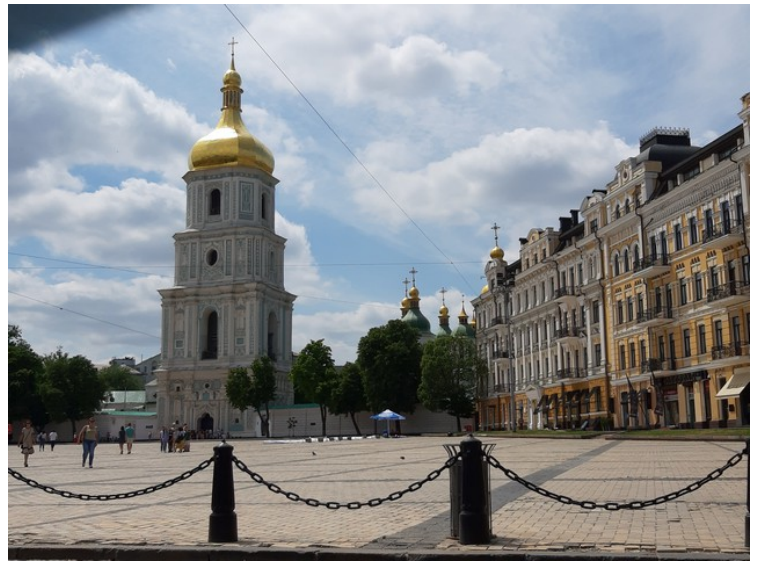
As we drove on, we drove past the upper end of the street [Andriyivskyy Descent](#). This was an artisan street in the 17th-18th century. It is only open for goods transport.



[St. Andrew's Church](#)
The ground under the church is unstable and one is now afraid that the foundation will crumble.



This is a monument to [Bohdan Khmelnytsky](#). Bohdan Khmelnytskyi was a Cossack leader that led an uprising against Poland-Lithuania and stood behind a treaty that united Ukraine with Russia.



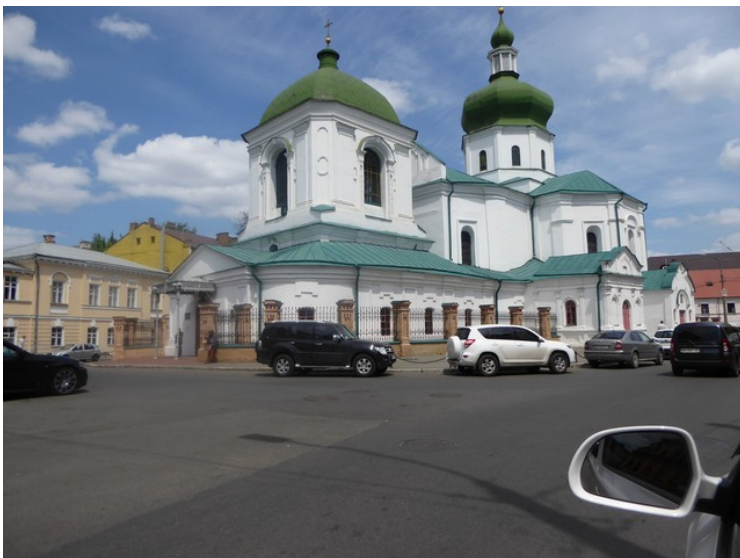
The statue stands on the square in front of the St. Sofia Cathedral. The bell tower with the cathedral in the background.



This church is called Khram Svyatoho Vasylya Velykoho Ukhts



A statue outside.



[Mykola Prytyska Church](#) is situated in [Podil](#), which is one of the oldest districts in Kiev.



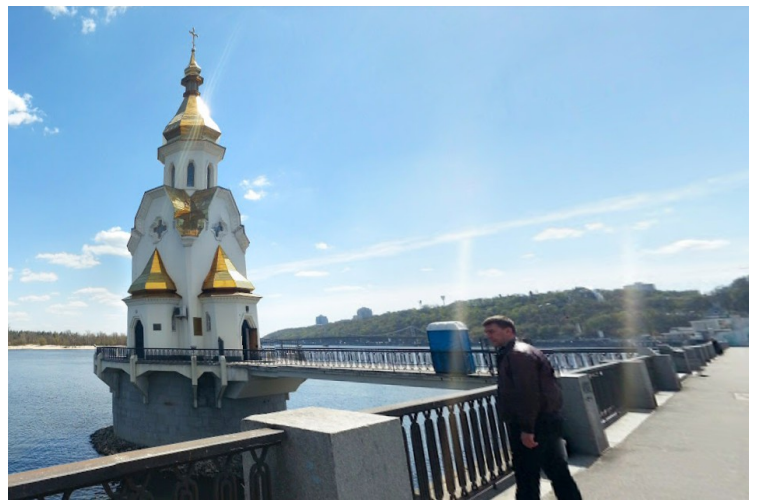
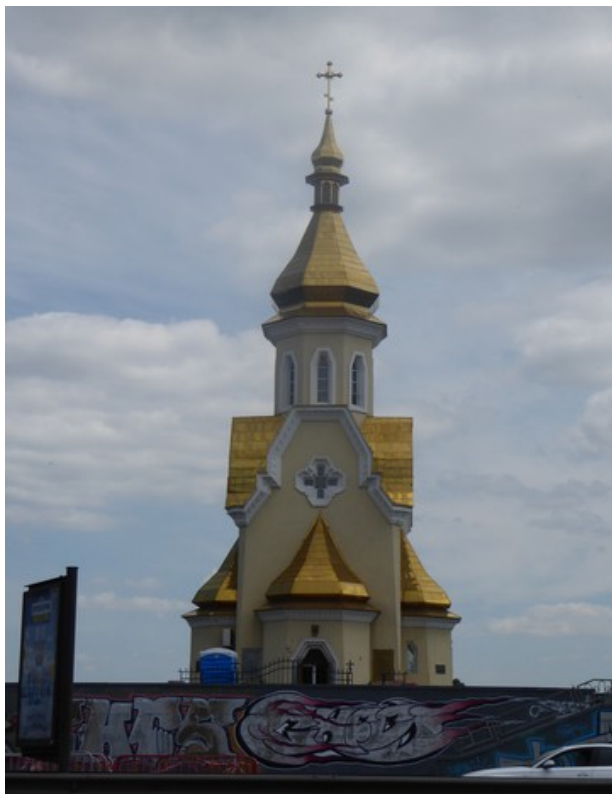
[Pyrohoshcha Dormition of the Mother of God Church](#) was built in 1130 and was for a long period of time the main church in Kiev.



Here we drove past the lower end of Andreevsky Decent



Podolsky Church of the Intercession.
The bell tower in the foreground.



This a cut from Google Maps.

Tserkva Mykoly Chudotvortsya
This church is placed in the river.

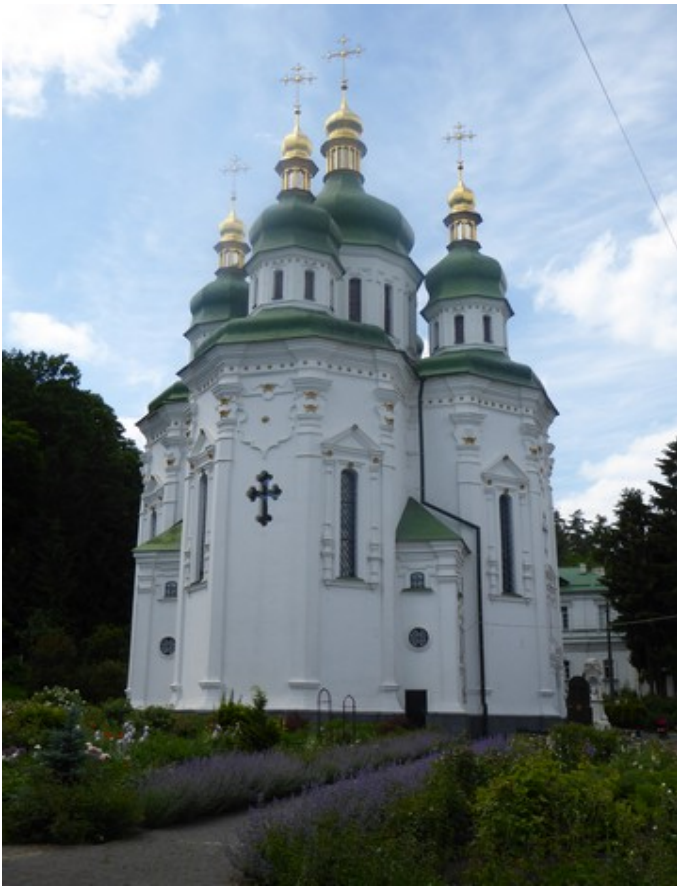


While we were driving I got a picture through the car window of [People's Friendship Arch](#). It was set up in 1982 to commemorate that the Soviet Union was 60 and that Kiev was 1500 years.



The [Vydubitsky Monastery](#) dates from 1070.
Below some pictures from the monastery.







Then a few picture from inside the church.





St. Michael Church.



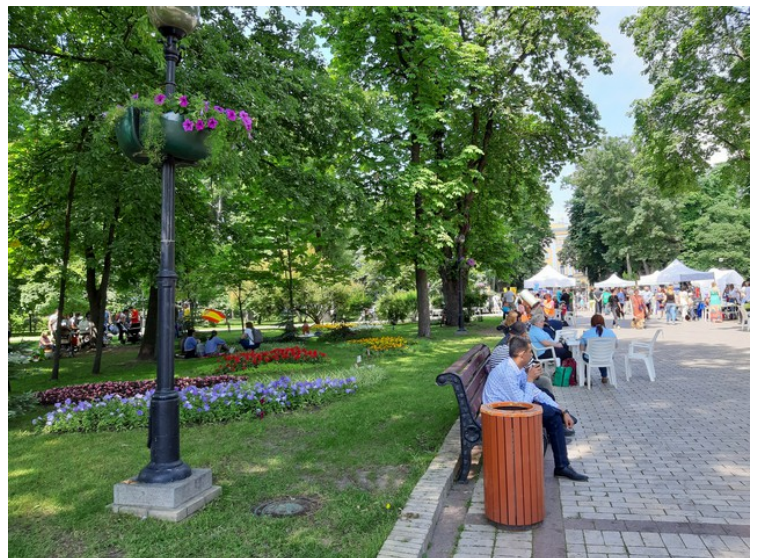
Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv. It is said to be the best university in Ukraine. Within the Soviet Union, only the universities of Moscow and Leningrad were ranked higher.



Taras Shevchenko Park



Statue for Taras Shevchenko. He is considered by many as Ukraine's national poet.





This day, it appeared to be an activity day for people with disabilities.



A trolley bus is used as a sales kiosk.



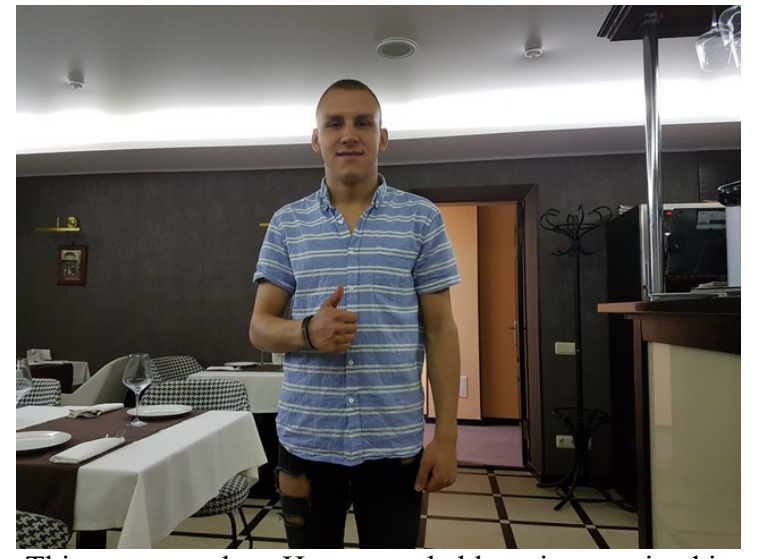
[St. Volodymyr's Cathedral](#). In 1852 it was decided to build a church to remember that it was 900 years since the baptism of Kiev by [prins Vladimir](#).



Then we had dinner at the hotel. This evening we had white wine for our food. It is the first time we have experienced that the waiter has emptied the entire bottle in the glasses right away.



There was good food there and we asked if we could take a photo of the chef. The chef wouldn't show up, but we got another of the staff to take the picture.



This guy served us. He was probably quite untrained in his job. He pulled up the bottle of wine bottle without first removing the metal foil that sits on the outside of the cork. Then it became hard to open. It was he who poured full glasses immediately.