

My first visit to Kiev, 26-31 July 2015

I am just back from a visit to Kiev. When I landed at Borispil International Airport, I expected to come to a city with a lot of military personnel with machine guns standing on every corner of the streets, watching us all the time. I did not see them anywhere, and I have been at many places in the city.

Kiev is a very peaceful and beautiful city. During 9 hours or more walking, I can assure you that I did not feel unsafe at all. I walked the streets, passed the government buildings, walked over the big central square for freedom, Maidan Nezalezhnosti, known from the television programs over the Euromaidan last year where snipers shot down more than hundred freedom demonstrators, and also visited a couple of the many beautiful churches in this city. I saw many people laughing, having a good time together, young people kissing, mothers with their children in prams and elderly people looking like they were really enjoying life, but I did not see or feel fear anywhere. Nowhere, really. The people of Kiev seemed to be happy.

I walked through the beautiful parks of the city at night, sat down to relax on a bench and stood at the highest viewpoints looking over this big city full of lights. I also registered that there was a lot of people walking through these parks alone, men and women as well. They looked like they had nothing to fear.

Kiev has got a lot of good restaurants, serving very delicious food for a nice price and a lot of interesting musea.

The overall impression that I have got is that Kiev is on its way to be one of the nicest cities of Europe. It has got a very organized public transport system with one of Europe's most developed underground. It is a peaceful city, with a lot of things to do for people visiting it. It is very clean, much cleaner than all the other big cities that I have been visiting in Europe the last years. The impressions I have got during my first visit to Kiev, has changed my thoughts about this city a lot, in a very positive way. When I come there next time, I will be much more relaxed.

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