

Weekend in Ternopilshchyna.

You have seen all parts of Kiev, eaten shashlik in Hidropark, wandered on Trukhanov island and visited Pirogovo, Chernigov and Uman' and now have no idea how to spend efficiently your weekend... I would suggest then a two days trip which can satisfy the most demanding character and a busy person.

Buy a ticket to Ternopil first. The train Kiev-Lviv arrives so early in the morning that you will have time not only for visiting nearest neighborhood but for having a dinner at one of the numerous cozy cafés or restaurants and getting on the returning train at the same day. But if you want to give a close look at this small, pretty, and clean town book the room at one of its hotels "Ternopil" or "Halichina". On the following day take a slow walk around the lake (from the window of the hotel "Ternopil" you saw reflecting night lights the evening before), have a lunch at the very nice café "Stare Misto" (fresh carrot juice, salads, delicious main course), mess around in the old part of town and drop in souvenir shops; observe seven churches, enjoy some of the spirit of Christianity and save the evening for a big visit to a restaurant "Stary Mlyn". "Stary Mlyn" is actually not only a restaurant but a complex of an antique shop, a sauna and a museum. Take your time to investigate all three floors of it. You will find there all sorts of things. Ceramic dishes, exclusive samovars, funny stories, old photos and other rare items decorate the walls, shelves and beams of the place.

If you like fish, order a carp baked in salt, the best you have ever had. The biggest will cost you not more than 10 bucks. Borsch is in the loaf of brown bread, deruny (potato pancakes) are served on a frying pan as one big pancake and stuffed with anything you want – vegetables, mushrooms, meat. Complete your feast with a good cup of coffee "Illy".

Ask a waitress to pack for you an additional set of varenyky with cherry or some sweets. It will be put in a branded paper bag with a picture of the old windmill, which would remind you of one of the best restaurants in Ukraine.

However, my goal is not to keep you sitting all the day at the table even if it is the best place with the most delicious food. I want to take you, my reader, and to show Ukraine, its charming landscapes with palaces, ruined castles on hills, pretty white, yellow and blue churches, twisting rivers and roads, fresh crisp air and kind inhabitants.

Leave the observation of Ternopil for the following day and on the morning of your arrival drop your bag at the hotel and go directly to a bus station. Every 30 minutes there is a bus or marshrutka to Vishnevets'. In 80 minutes you will cross the Gorin' river and a blue church on the right hand will be your signal to stop you at the cross road and here get off the bus. Take a left turn passing a big yellow sign which tells travelers that they are on their correct way to the palace of Vishnevets' and its park.

Vishnevets is a townlet of Volin' region which first recorded in 1395y. The castle and outpost was founded by Dmytro Korybut, a son of a great Lithuanian prince.

From the XV – XVIII centuries Vishnevets' was a private dominion of Volin' princes Korybut –Vishnevetsky and the main south trade route passed Vishnevets'.

The first castle was built in the 15th century on the right bank of the Gorin' river and within centuries had been ruined and renovated many times. The prince Mykhail Vishnevetskyi pushed it back to the left, higher bank for better military defense.

During the Polish-Ottoman war in 1675 the palace was captured and destroyed. The last prince of the Vishnevetsky clan started the renovations in 1720 and transformed the castle into a luxurious palace in the French Renaissance style. The great French writer Honore de Balzac visited this palace and called it “Polish Versailles” and nowadays you can see this construction without changes.

A grand old park surrounds the palace – the landscaping of the end of 19th century. It has two parts: Italian garden and English Regular Park. The alleys are decorated by arbors, benches, sculptures; however the main elements of this park are lime trees which were planted in XVIII century and now adorn the area with their old freaky trunks.

There are many legends about this park and one is about two tree-nymphs. Forbidden daylight, they had been playing around carelessly the whole night, failed to hear the cockcrow, and missed the time. When the dawn broke the nymphs tried to hide in the hollow of the biggest tree but were caught by the first sun’s rays and in a split second metamorphosed into the fabric of the tree, where they remain.

The collectors of soviet period “antiques” will be happy to see an alabaster sculpture “Madonna with a child” – one of the numerous sculptures erected in 1950-60’s in all cities and villages of former Soviet republics. The characters for those sculptures were soviet labors, pioneers, soldiers, sportsmen. Most of them were destroyed after “perestroika” and unlikely to be found in big cities. However, in small towns and countryside you can see some of them and the “Madonna” in Vishnevets’ is one which survived and stays in a very good condition.

Enjoy the smell of flowers, inhale cool air of the lake, give a last glance at unique blue churches which decorate green fields and return to Kiev full of good memories about this country and its history.