

Ukraine History

The territory of modern Ukraine has been inhabited since 32,000 BC. During the Middle Ages, the area was a key center of East Slavic culture, with the powerful state of Kievan Rus' forming the basis of Ukrainian identity.

Following its fragmentation in the 13th century, the territory was contested, ruled, and divided by a variety of powers, including Lithuania, Poland, Austria-Hungary, the Ottoman Empire, and Russia. A Cossack republic emerged and prospered during the 17th and 18th centuries, but its territory was eventually split between Poland and the Russian Empire, and finally merged fully into the Russian-dominated Soviet Union in the late 1940s as the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic.

In 1991, in the aftermath of the Soviet Union's dissolution at the end of the Cold War, Ukraine gained its independence. Before its independence, Ukraine was typically referred to in English as "The Ukraine", but most sources have since moved to drop "the" from the name of Ukraine in all uses.

Following its independence, Ukraine declared itself a neutral state; it formed a limited military partnership with Russia and other CIS countries, while also establishing a partnership with NATO in 1994.



In 2013, after the government of President Viktor Yanukovich had decided to suspend the Ukraine-European Union Association Agreement and seek closer economic ties with Russia, a several-months-long wave of demonstrations and protests, known as the Euromaidan, began. It later escalated into the 2014 Ukrainian revolution, which led to the overthrow of Yanukovich and the establishment of a new government. These events formed the background for the annexation of Crimea by Russia in March 2014, and the War in Donbass in April 2014.

On January 1, 2016, Ukraine joined the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area with the European Union, which aims to modernize and develop Ukraine's economy, governance, and rule of law to EU standards and gradually increase integration with the EU Internal Market.

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