

Flag of Ukraine: History and meaning

What is the history and meaning behind the Ukrainian flag?

The Ukrainian flag consists of two horizontal bands of equal width, with blue on the top and yellow on the bottom. The combination is commonly decoded as the sky above and the endless fields of wheat beneath it.



Photo: freepik.com

At the same time, the picturesque landscape seen throughout Ukraine does not exhaust the flag's meaning. Through centuries, the Ukrainian nation has seen a lot of struggle, a lot of the time under the same blue and yellow flag. Today, with Russia's brutal war against Ukraine, it symbolizes unbreakable spirit and dignity, devotion to the native land, and love for freedom to each Ukrainian.

What does Ukrainian flag look like?

The history of blue and yellow flag

The combination of colors goes back to the 13th century. The golden lion on the blue background was depicted on the coat of arms of Lviv during the [reign](#) of Prince Danylo Romanovych.

The flag got its modern look in 1848: it was used by the Supreme Ruthenian Council. That was the first representative Ukrainian political organization founded in Lviv (at the time – part of the Austrian Empire), an important step in Ukrainian national revival.

In the following decades, the symbol spread among Ukrainians. And in 1918, when Ukraine gained independence, even if for a short period of time, the blue and yellow flag was established as a national symbol.

The Soviet era that followed was marked by harsh restrictions on the use of such symbols, including the blue and yellow flag. Despite the repressions, many Ukrainians continued to embrace the flag as part of their national identity and resistance to Soviet rule.

With Ukraine restoring independence in 1991, the blue and yellow flag quickly returned to public life and became an integral part of the modern state. In 1992, the Ukrainian parliament adopted it as the official flag of Ukraine.



The national flag was brought to the Verkhovna Rada (Ukrainian parliament) on the day the Act on Independence of Ukraine was adopted. August 24, 1991.

Photo: Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine

The Day of the National Flag is celebrated each year on August 23, just before Independence Day. But the flag itself is celebrated much more often. It has become a symbol of national pride and unity. The flag flows at public events and government buildings, and is a common sight at sporting events and cultural festivals.

The blue and yellow flag has also sustained its role at the political and social protests. In 2014, the flag could be seen everywhere as Ukrainians were defending their right to a democratic and European future in the Revolution of Dignity.



One of the thousands of blue and yellow flags from the Revolution of Dignity.

Photo: Maxam Dondyuk

The same year, Russia invaded Ukraine. In Crimea, the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, Ukrainian flags were taken down by forceful occupation. And in the rest of the country, they were spread and shared as rarely before – to signify the rise of national consciousness and unity.

In 2022, as Russia launched the full-scale invasion, the Ukrainian flag became an even more prominent symbol – not only in Ukraine, but all over the globe.

A symbol of hope, as it flutters over resilient Ukrainian cities and towns.

A symbol of support, as blue and yellow fill squares and news feeds around the globe.

A symbol of resistance, as people continue to make and protect Ukrainian flags even under the temporary occupation.

A symbol of sacrifice, as it covers the coffins of heroes who were killed defending the country.

A symbol of gratitude, bravery, unity, future. A symbol of independent Ukraine and free Ukrainians.



Ukrainian servicemen raised the Ukrainian flag in liberated Vysokopillia, the Kherson region. September 4, 2022.

Photo: Kyrylo Tymoshenko, Deputy Head of the Office of the President of Ukraine





Ukrainian defenders returned the Ukrainian flag to the liberated Zmiinyi Island (Snake Island). July 7, 2022.

Photo: Ukrainian Ground Forces



People in liberated Kherson stop Ukrainian soldiers

to give them a hug and ask to sign the Ukrainian flag. November 12, 2022.

By Taras Ibrahimov / Suspilne



Rally in support of Ukraine in Munich, Germany

Photo: Reuters



The flag of Ukraine in Chernihiv. The city was surrounded by the Russian army, subjected

to brutal aerial bombardment and shelling, but did not surrender.

Photo: Serhii Nuzhnenko



Hundreds of people came to say their last goodbye to Roman Ratushnyi, an activist and Ukrainian defender. June 18, 2022, Kyiv.

Photo: Vladyslav Musienko





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