

Kiliya

UKRAINE



*Three thousand years of human history
in an environment blessed by nature*

WELCOME TO KILIYA ...
... 2700 years and counting!



KILIYA sightseeing ...

Kiliya (population 23,000) is a small southern town in Ukraine, situated on the banks of the Danube, bordering Romania. The founding of Kiliya dates back to the Seventh century B.C. – 2700 years ago! Within the time of its existence, Kiliya has been part of several different countries. In one period it was a Turkish town, with mosques, stone bathhouses and eastern-style bazaars. Then the town was under Moldovan rule, reconstructed as a fortress for war, and featured orthodox churches. The town passed to Romanian hands, and later belonged to tsarist Russia. People of many different cultures have lived here — Greeks, Romans, Tatars, Turks, Hungarians, Jews, Moldavians, Romanians, Ukrainians, Russians, Bulgarians and Germans — so Kiliya is a bouquet of Bessarabian nationalities!

The long history of Kiliya is preserved in several sites: the vestiges of deep moats that once surrounded the powerful fortress, and the bell tower of the fortress church; St. Nikolai Church, built in 1476 in the catacomb style; the estate of Countess Tolstaya.

Along with ancient history and unique monuments, Kiliya is famous for its vineyards, for its own brand of dairy and meat products, and for herring from the Danube. Kiliya welcomes you to come stroll its pleasant parks and quiet streets and enjoy the soft air and special fragrance of our southern climate. Experience the warmth of our friendly people. Taste delicious Bessarabian dishes, and of course sample our famous local wines: *Danube Garland, Old Kiliya, Danube Colors ...* and more!

Kiliya Town
57 Lenin Street | Kiliya | Odessa oblast | 68303
Ukraine



- Kiliya Town Museum (1)
- Danube River (2)
- Churches
 - Nikolaev (4)
 - Pakrovskaya (3)
 - Dimitrovskaya
-
- Bazaar (11)
- Library (12)
- War Monument (7)
- Ancient Fortress (8)
- City Park (9)
- Romania view (10)

Regional Excursions

City Tour

- Kiliya Churches
- Historic Sites of Kiliya
- The Great Patriotic War, "Kiliya – Veke" action

Environmental Tours

- **Danube Trail**
 - Bicycle Tour
 - Walking Tour
 - Camp-out
- **Danube River Delta Biosphere Region**
- **Danube Wetlands and Waterways**





KILIYA ... HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS

What does the name Kiliya mean?

In antiquity our city had not one name, but several. "Likostomon" was the name given to the city by the ancient Greeks, translated as "the wolf's mouth". Why such a fierce name for a small, quiet town on Danube? The name acknowledges the treacherous currents and circulations of the river, which often became a dangerous snare for enemies during times of war.



The next name given to our town was "Akiliya." Legend says that Alexander the Great of Macedonia named the town after the god Achilles.

There are three more versions of the name story. Two are plausible, but very prosaic. The first of these claims that the name Kiliya is connected with the yellow clay of the coast on which the city is located. (*kiliya* in Turkish means 'yellow coast'). In the next version, the name refers to the numerous warehouses and storehouses filled with grain that have always been a part of the Kiliya landscape (*kil* in Byzantine language is a grain warehouse). The third version, unusual and romantic, suggests that "in its silence and peacefulness, Kiliya may remind one of a monastic cell."



How old is Kiliya?

The date of the foundation of the city is unknown, although we know that human beings have inhabited this site for approximately 2700 years. Greek and Roman artifacts have been found. Historians place the founding date in 878, and that date has now been officially adopted by our Cabinet Ministry. In the 11th century, Kiliya was included in descriptions of the Volynsk principedom, as having a port and engaging in trade, and listed in Volynsk annals. In 1319, Kiliya, under the Greek name Listomon, first appeared on sea charts for the Genoa merchants and sailors.

History of Kiliya's fortress

Kiliya, rich with bread grains and vineyards, gardens and fertile fields, has always been a sweetmeat for conquerors. In 1465, the city started construction on a fortress for protection against the Turk and Tatars. 800 stonemasters and masons, with more than 17,000 ancillary workers, raised the fortress walls and dug moats. The fortress was surrounded by a three-fold ring of walls, deep water-filled moats and unapproachable towers, from which poked the barrels of guns ready to accept any fight and reflect any siege. It was all but impossible to break into this fortress.



In 1484, Kiliski fortifications sustained five Turkish sieges. For more than a month, Sultan Bajazid stood at the walls, trying to seize the city. While five military attempts were unsuccessful, gold eventually provided the way in. History has kept silent about the name of the traitor who succumbed to bribery and secretly opened the gate of the fortress one night, but suspicions point to the main customs officer Nikolo, originally a Genoese and known by the nickname "Long Hand". For more than 300 years after this breach, the fortress served the Turkish sultans as a jumping-off place for attacks on lands nearby. Turkish traveller Evlija Chelebi described the Kiliya fortress in the 17th century as an incomparably strong construction, with three its layers of walls.

In later years, as human history outlived the need for a fortress, the walls were disassembled by city dwellers for construction of houses. Now all that remains of the deep moat trenches is a pond in the city park, and of the once-powerful fortress only the bell tower of the serf church stands.

Katya & Masha

Near to Kiliya in the Danube River are two small islands marked by gardens and vineyards. There is a beautiful, but sad legend connected with these islands. In the 15th Century, Kiliya belonged to the Turkish sultan. At this time the city was considered the most fearful place in Bessarabia, and the inhabitants of the neighboring cities and villages regarded the town with horror. For from the town of Kiliya, the Sultan made slave raids, taking beautiful girls for his harems and strong healthy boys for his workers. During one such raid, two took flight and rushed into the muddy waves of the Danube, preferring to drown rather than live in bondage on foreign land at the hands of the enemy. These brave freedom-loving beauties are memorialized in the names of the islands, Katya and Masha, near where they were lost to the water.

The Pearl of Kiliya: St. Nikolai Church

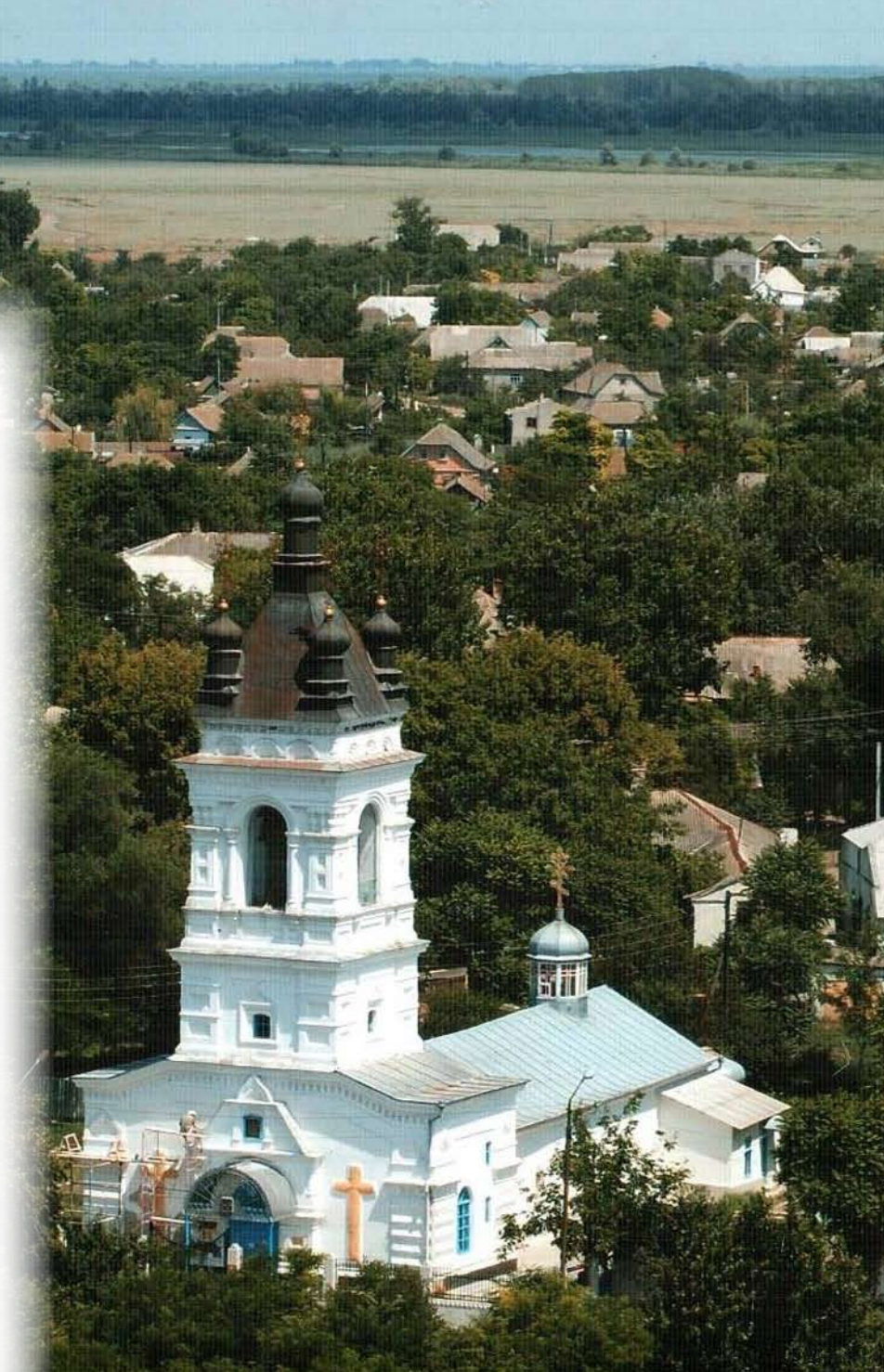
In the center of the old part of city, modestly nestled among small one-story houses, is a remarkable monument in the history of religion and architecture: Saint Nikolai's Church, which is included in the "Sights of the World" list by international cultural organization UNESCO. The church was first constructed in 1476 on the site of the destroyed church of Saint John, which was mentioned in historical documents dating to the 11th century. When Kiliya was under Turkish control, there was a ruling that Christian temples could not be taller than the top of the lifted spear of a Turkish horseman sitting on a horse — approximately 2.5 meters! Therefore, the masters building this church found a loophole: they carved the floor of the church down into the ground an additional 2.5 meters to allow the building to have a proper height. In all of Bessarabia, there remains only three such architectural examples.



In Soviet times, during a period of destruction of churches, the chapel was destroyed and the building equipped as a warehouse for the storage of coal, and then turned into a garbage dump with a refuse chute from a factory. The church was succumbing to desolation, and had begun to collapse. In 1970, against the risk

of reprisal from atheistic authorities, a group of citizens created an initiative to restore and revive the church; the work proceeded through the 1980's, but slowly. The first service in the restored church was celebrated in 1992. Although full restoration is still not complete, it is now possible to proclaim with confidence that the church has been rescued from destruction, living testament to the unique and fascinating story of this town and region....

VISIT KILIYA!



TOURIST INFORMATION

Travel Assistance & Reservations:

Tours & Excursions, Lodging Referrals

Tel: +38 048 434 2465 • Email: ekovavoronok@yandex.ru

Handcrafts & souvenirs

www.danube-souvenir.com

Web sites & related links

kiliya-od.narod.ru

Transportation

Autobus information: Main station, 58 Kollentaevskaya +38 048 732 5690
Privoz station, 5 Novashepnoi +38 048 777 7482

Train information: Main station "Odessa GL" +38 048 227 4242

How to get to Kiliya ...

- From **Izmail**: several minibus or autobus departures daily from autobus station near central bazaar (morning and early afternoon)
- From **Odessa**: many mini-van and autobus departures daily, both from main autobus station and "Privoz" autobus station near station and large Privoz bazaar.
- From **Kiev**: overnight bus from Central Autobus Station, daily departures or take train to Odessa and transfer to local autobus
- From **Europe, Asia and North America**: arrival airports Kiev or Odessa, then transfer to local transportation as above



Kiliya is situated on the Danube Delta, where the river flows into the Black Sea... a confluence of international waterways which has given the town a unique and rich history, and an important placement — both geographically and ecologically.

