

**Euro-Asia Division**  
**Fast Facts and Mission Posts**  
**First Quarter 2021**

**Kyrgyzstan**

1. The Kyrgyzstan Mission is part of the Southern Union Mission within the Euro-Asia Division. It has 11 churches and 12 companies and a membership of 664. With a population of 6,457,000, there is one Adventist for every 9,724 people.
2. Around 90% of the population of Kyrgyzstan is Muslim, and the Kyrgyzstan Mission runs a ministry for Adventist-Muslim Relationships.
3. Kyrgyzstan is a mainly mountainous country in Central Asia. It is bordered by Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and China.
4. For most of its history it has been inhabited by various clans and tribes, although it has on occasion been occupied by foreign powers. In 1991, after the break-up of the Soviet Union, it established itself as an independent state.
5. The capital of Kyrgyzstan is Bishkek, formerly Pishpek (and renamed Frunze during the Soviet years) and is located near the norther border, where it was originally a fortress built to control the caravan routes into the country. It now has a population of more than 1 million.
6. The flag of Kyrgyzstan is a yellow sun on a red background. The 40 rays of the sun refer to the 40 tribes united under the ninth-century hero, Manas, to fight off the invading Uyghurs. The diagonal stripes in the center of the sun represent the crown of the yurt, the traditional dwelling of the nomads of the Central Asian steppes.
7. Kyrgyzstan was an important intersection on the Silk Road — the network of trade routes that connected the East with the West for 2,000 years. Its name came from the extraordinarily profitable commerce in Chinese silks carried out along the length and breadth of the routes.
8. The Tian Shan (The Mountains of Heaven) is a mountainous region in Central Asia consisting of a series of mountain ranges. Eighty percent of Kyrgyzstan lies within the Tian Shan and its two highest peaks are found on Kyrgyzstan's borders. The highest, at 24,406 feet (7,439 meters) is Jengish Chokusu (Victory Peak) on the border with China. The second highest, at 23,000 feet (7,010 meters), is Khan Tengri (Lord of the Spirits), on the Kazakhstan border.
9. The nation's largest ethnic group (73.3%) are the Kyrgyz. Historically nomadic, the Kyrgyz moved with their herds of sheep, horses, and yaks, living in portable round tents called yurts. Most Kyrgyz herders are still semi-nomadic and take their herds into the mountains during the summer.
10. Horse riding is still important in Kyrgyz culture and many of the traditional games and national sports in Kyrgyzstan reflect this. Horse racing is, of course, very popular, particularly long-distance races. A few other games include:
  - Ulak Tartysh, popular across Central Asia and known by a variety of names, resembles a cross between polo and rugby in which two teams of mounted players attempt to move the carcass of a calf or goat into the opposition's goal.
  - Jumby Atmai, in which the contestants shoot at and try to break a string holding a bar of metal while at a gallop.

- Oodarysh involves the riders wrestling, each attempting to throw the other from his horse.
  - Tyin Emmei, in which the riders try to pick up a coin from the ground at full gallop.
11. Falconry is a traditional pastime in Central Asia, particularly hunting with eagles. The Kyrgyz name for the golden eagle is *bürküt* and the handler is a *bürkütchü*.
  12. Another indication of how important horses are to the Kyrgyz culture is the popularity of the drink Kumis, a fermented drink traditionally made from mare's milk.

## Russia

1. The Russian Federation is comprised of the West Russian Union Conference, with seven conferences; the East Russian Union Mission, with three missions; the Caucasus Union Mission, with two conferences and a mission; and the Far Eastern Union of Churches Mission.
2. There are 640 churches and 719 companies in Russia, with 42,466 members. With a population of 154,842,000, there are 3,646 people for each church member.
3. Adventism in Russia began as a lay missionary movement by German colonists who had emigrated from Russia to America in the 1870s. After being converted to Seventh-day Adventism, they began to send Adventist publications in the German language to their friends and family in Russia.
4. In the “purges” of the early 1930s many Adventist ministers and church members in Russia were arrested and exiled, often without any actual charges being made against them. The remaining ministers were denied full civil rights and were not allotted food rations, and their children were not allowed into schools. In addition, the ministers had to pay a special “professional tax,” which often exceeded their income, forcing them to leave the work.
5. The Russian Federation is the largest country in the world. At 6.6 million square miles (17 million km<sup>2</sup>) it covers nearly one-tenth of the earth’s land area.
6. Russia spans eleven time zones.
7. Russia paved the way in space travel. Although the U.S., in 1969, was the first country to put a man on the moon, the Soviets had launched the first orbiting satellite in 1957 and made the first human trip into space in 1961. Other accomplishments included the first spacewalk, the first space crafts to land on the moon, Venus, and Mars, and the launch of the first space station.
8. The matryoshka doll is a Russian nesting doll, a set of wooden figures that can be pulled apart to reveal a similar but smaller figure inside, with usually six or more in total. The shape of the doll is usually smoothly cylindrical with all the decoration being painted on, often elaborately. The most common theme is usually peasant girls in traditional dress, but it can be almost anything, including political figures and fairy tales.
9. Traditional Russian cuisine is diverse, reflecting the vast territory of the country, and was originally based on a hearty diet intended for people working outside in harsh climates, with lots of protein from meat, and carbohydrates from various grains, including rye, barley and wheat. Soups and stews made from vegetables, meat, and fish were prevalent. In recent centuries, more refined culinary techniques and food imports from abroad have been creatively incorporated into Russian cuisine.
10. Blini are Russian and Ukrainian pancakes traditionally made from wheat or occasionally buckwheat flour, and served with sour cream, butter, caviar, or preserved fruit. Originally these were made with leavened batter, but now they are usually thin unleavened pancakes, much like crepes.
11. During the twentieth century, particularly during the Soviet years, Russia produced internationally famous ballet stars, including Anna Pavlova, Vaslav Nijinsky, Maya Plisetskaya, Rudolf Nureyev, and Mikhail Baryshnikov.

12. Russian authors Leo Tolstoy and Fyodor Dostoyevsky are considered by many literary critics as the greatest novelists of all time.
13. In 1885, Tsar Alexander III commissioned Peter Carl Fabergé, a jeweler in St. Petersburg, to create a jeweled egg to give as an Easter gift to his wife, Maria. The egg was made of gold, with a white enameled “shell” which opened up to show a yellow yolk. This in turn opened to reveal a tiny hen, and inside this was a replica of the imperial crown, made from a diamond. Maria loved it so much that Alexander appointed Fabergé the official imperial goldsmith. Each year he created a new, and more elaborate egg for Maria, and after Alexander’s death in 1894, his son, Nicholas II, continued the tradition, ordering one for his mother Maria, and one for his wife Alexandra. In total, 52 imperial eggs were made, 46 of which still survive.
14. Lake Baikal, in Siberia, is the largest lake, by volume, in the world, with 5,670 cubic miles (23,615 cubic km) of water: nearly a quarter of the world’s fresh surface water. At its deepest, it reaches 5,387 feet (1,642 m), making it the world’s deepest lake as well.
15. Folk dancing is an important part of Russian culture and one of the most dramatic is the squat dance, usually performed by men, in which the men squat down, with their torsos held upright, and then alternately kick their legs out straight in front of them. The music is usually very quick, and the performers have to have very strong legs and excellent balance.
16. Parts of what is now Russia were conquered and settled by Vikings, known in that part of the world as Varangians, between the ninth and eleventh centuries.
17. Larisa Latynina, a former Soviet gymnast from what is now Ukraine, still holds the record for the most Olympic gold medals by a gymnast, with 9. Her record for individual event medals, with 14, was unbroken for 52 years.

## Ukraine

1. Ukraine has a long Christian history. In 988, Prince Vladimir of Kiev, known as Vladimir the Great, negotiated a marriage to Anna, sister of the Byzantine emperor, Basil II, and converted to Eastern Orthodox Christianity. Subsequently he destroyed many of the pagan shrines and established a number of Christian churches.
2. A 2018 survey in Ukraine found that around 72% of the population declared themselves religious. Of these, 67% are Eastern Orthodox, 9% Greek Catholic, 1% Latin Catholic, 2% Protestant and 8% unspecified Christian. The remainder are “not affiliated with these religions” or are part of the tiny minority Jewish, Buddhist, Hindu, and pagan worshippers.
3. The Adventist message was preached in the area for the first time on the Black Sea coast in the Crimea and the Caucasus by German missionaries, Perka and Kandad. After a baptism in 1886, the first Seventh-day Adventist church with 17 members was established in the village of Berdibulat.
4. The Orthodox Church, and later the Communist Party, were hostile to Adventism in Ukraine. Many church members and pastors were persecuted for their beliefs and spent many years in prison: some died in camps during Stalin’s time. Because of this, the church was developed as an underground institution, and the establishment of Adventist Church organization only began in 1978.
5. The Ukrainian Union Conference has eight conferences and a mission. There are now 810 churches, 267 companies, and 45,267 members. In a population of 42,037,000, that’s 929 people per church member.
6. Ukraine is located in eastern Europe and is the second-largest country on the continent after Russia. The capital, Kyiv, is in the north of the country, on the Dnieper River.
7. Ukraine is bordered by Russia to the east, Belarus to the north, Hungary, Slovakia, and Poland to the west, and Moldova and Romania to the southwest. The south of Ukraine is coastlines on the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov, separated by the Crimean Peninsula.
8. Ukraine declared independence after the break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991.
9. Ukraine has a number of nature and game reserves, reflecting its commitment to the conservation of its natural heritage, particularly the steppes. The first of these, Askaniya-Nova, began as a private wildlife refuge in 1875; today it has a successful program of breeding endangered species, including the onager and Przewalski’s horse.
10. The national dish of Ukraine, and the one most familiar to foreigners, is borsch, a soup made primarily from beets, as well as other vegetables such as cabbage, potatoes, tomatoes, carrots, and onions and often flavored with garlic and dill. There are around 30 different kinds of Ukrainian borscht.
11. Two other favorites are varenyky, a kind of boiled or fried dumpling like pierogi, and holubtsi (cabbage rolls).
12. Ukraine has the fourth-highest number of certified IT professionals after the U.S., India, and Russia.

**Recipe: Kyrgyzstan****Kyrgyz Gingerbread***Ingredients*

⅓ cup (70 g) shortening

½ cup (66g) sugar

1 egg

2½ cups (300g) flour

2 tsp (10ml) baking soda

1 tsp (5ml) salt

1 tsp (5ml) ground cloves

1 tsp (5ml) ground ginger

½ tsp (2.5ml) cinnamon

1 cup (240ml) molasses

1 cup (240ml) hot water

*Instructions*

Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C). Butter and flour a 9x9 inch (23x23 cm) cake pan.

Mix flour, baking soda and spices together and set aside.

Mix molasses and hot water and set aside.

Cream shortening and sugar. Add egg and mix well.

Alternately add dry ingredients and molasses mixture to creamed mixture. The batter will be thin.

Pour into cake pan and bake for 45 minutes or more until a toothpick comes out clean.

Cool in pan for 5 minutes before turning out.

Serve with whipped cream flavored with pure vanilla and sweetened with sugar.

*Adapted from recipe at [bit.ly/KyrgyzGB](http://bit.ly/KyrgyzGB)*

**Game: Russia****Cossacks & Robbers**

The children divide themselves into two teams. One group is Cossacks, and the other group is Robbers. The Cossacks have a “camp,” and one Cossack stays behind to keep watch. The Robbers run away and hide, and the Cossacks try to find them. When a Robber is caught, they are kept prisoner back at the Cossacks’ camp. The game ends when all Robbers are caught.

Let’s Play – давай играть – [davay igrat]

Run! – беги! – [begi]

Let’s run – Побежали! – [pobezhali]

Your turn – твоя очередь – [tvoya ochered]

Close your eyes – закрой глаза – [zakroy glaza]

Catch! – лови! – [lavi]

Ball – мячик – [myachik]

**Song: Russia****The Song of the Volga Boatmen**

<b>Russian</b>	<b>Transliteration</b>	<b>English</b>
Эх ты, Волга, мать-река, Широка и глубока, Ай-да, да ай-да, Ай-да, да ай-да, Волга, Волга, мать-река	Ekh, ty, Volga, mat'-reka, Shiroka i gluboka, Ai-da, da ai-da, Ai-da, da ai-da, Volga, Volga, mat'-reka	Oh, you, Volga, mother river, Mighty stream so deep and wide. Ay-da, da, ay-da! Ay-da, da, ay-da! Volga, Volga, mother river.
Эй, ухнем! Эй, ухнем! Ещё разик, ещё да раз! Эй, ухнем! Эй, ухнем!	Ey, ukhnyem! Ey, ukhnyem! Yeshcho razik, yeshcho da raz! Ey, ukhnyem! Ey, ukhnyem!	Yo, heave ho! Yo, heave ho! Once more, once again, still once more Yo, heave ho! Yo, heave ho!

Tune: [bit.ly/Volga-Boatmen](http://bit.ly/Volga-Boatmen)Source: [bit.ly/Wiki-Boatmen](http://bit.ly/Wiki-Boatmen)