

EMP5126



# PASSPORT SERIES

## EASTERN EUROPE AND RUSSIA



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\*All statistics are based on information from 2010.

\*\*For further information on pronunciations, research foreign language dictionaries and/or the Internet.

# METRIC CONVERSIONS

The purpose of this page is to aid in the conversion of measurements in this book from the English system to the metric system. Note that the tables below show two types of ounces. Liquid ounces measure the volume of liquids and have therefore been converted into milliliters. Dry ounces measure weight and have been converted into grams. Because dry substances such as sugar and flour may have different densities, it is advisable to measure them according to weight rather than volume. The measurement unit of the cup has been reserved solely for liquid, or volume, conversions.

Conversion Formulas				
when you know	formula	to find		
		when you know	formula	to find
teaspoons	$\times 5$	milliliters	$\times .20$	teaspoons
tablespoons	$\times 15$	milliliters	$\times .60$	tablespoons
fluid ounces	$\times 29.57$	milliliters	$\times .03$	fluid ounces
liquid cups	$\times 240$	milliliters	$\times .004$	liquid cups
U.S. gallons	$\times 3.78$	liters	$\times .26$	U.S. gallons
dry ounces	$\times 28.35$	grams	$\times .035$	dry ounces
inches	$\times 2.54$	centimeters	$\times .39$	inches
square inches	$\times 6.45$	square centimeters	$\times .15$	square inches
feet	$\times .30$	meters	$\times 3.28$	feet
square feet	$\times .09$	square meters	$\times 10.76$	square feet
yards	$\times .91$	meters	$\times 1.09$	yards
miles	$\times 1.61$	kilometers	$\times .62$	miles
square miles	$\times 2.59$	square kilometers	$\times .40$	square miles
Fahrenheit	$(^{\circ}\text{F} - 32) \times \frac{5}{9}$	Celsius	$(^{\circ}\text{C} \times \frac{9}{5}) + 32$	Fahrenheit

## Equivalent Temperatures

$32^{\circ}\text{F} = 0^{\circ}\text{C}$  (water freezes)  
 $212^{\circ}\text{F} = 100^{\circ}\text{C}$  (water boils)  
 $350^{\circ}\text{F} = 177^{\circ}\text{C}$   
 $375^{\circ}\text{F} = 191^{\circ}\text{C}$   
 $400^{\circ}\text{F} = 204^{\circ}\text{C}$   
 $425^{\circ}\text{F} = 218^{\circ}\text{C}$   
 $450^{\circ}\text{F} = 232^{\circ}\text{C}$

## Common Cooking Conversions

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup = 120 milliliters  
 12 fluid ounces = 354.88 milliliters  
 1 quart (32 ounces) = 950 milliliters  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  gallon = 1.89 liters  
 1 Canadian gallon = 4.55 liters  
 8 dry ounces ( $\frac{1}{2}$  pound) = 227 grams  
 16 dry ounces (1 pound) = 454 grams

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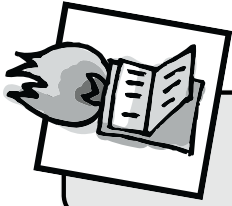
# BELARUS



# WELCOME TO BELARUS!

After seventy years as a republic of the Soviet Union, Belarus (Byel-uh-ROOS) has been independent since 1991. However, it still maintains close ties to Russia. In 1999, Belarus and Russia signed a friendship and cooperation pact to maintain their political and economic ties. But neither their governments nor their economies are integrated yet.

The first president of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko, has maintained an extremely tight hand on the country since his election in 1994. Today there continue to be many government restrictions on basic freedoms. As with the old Soviet Union, Belarus is still cloaked in secrecy. People in the West hear little about it. So let's explore!



## ***FAST FACTS***

<b>Official Name:</b>	Republic of Belarus
<b>Location:</b>	Eastern Europe Belarus is bordered by Russia to the north and east, Ukraine to the south, Poland to the west, and Lithuania and Latvia to the north.
<b>Population:</b>	9,612,632 (2010 estimate)
<b>Capital City:</b>	Minsk
<b>Area:</b>	80,155 square miles (2010 estimate); Belarus is a bit smaller than the state of Kansas.
<b>Major Languages:</b>	Belarusian Russian
<b>Major Religion:</b>	Eastern Orthodox: 80% Other (including Roman Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, and Muslim): 20%
<b>Currency:</b>	The Belarusian ruble (paper only); 1 ruble = 100 kapeikas (kă-pā-kăs) There are eleven Belarus bank notes, ranging from 10 rubles to 100,000 rubles. There are no coins in Belarus.
<b>Climate:</b>	Cold winters and warm summers. Some parts of Belarus have sub-zero temperatures more than a third of the year.
<b>The Land:</b>	Generally flat with much marshland
<b>Type of Government:</b>	Presidential Republic
<b>Flag:</b>	A red horizontal band at the top signifies past struggles and oppression. Below this is a green horizontal band that is one-half the width of the red band; it represents hope and the country's many forests. The white vertical stripe on the hoist side of the flag has Belarusian national ornamentation in red.



**National Emblem:** The National Emblem of Belarus features a ribbon in the colors of the national flag, a map of Belarus, wheat ears, and a red star. At the bottom of the emblem is the name of the country. The elements on the emblem are not tied to any official symbolism.

**National Flower:** Centaurea (basket flower)  
(Unofficial)

**National Symbol:** the Stork

**Motto:** “Zhive Belarus!” (“Long live Belarus!”)



## Natural Environment

Belarus is one of only 44 landlocked countries in the world. It has large areas of marshy land, and about 40 percent of it is covered by forests. It has 11,000 lakes and three major rivers: the Neman, the Pripyat, and the Dnepr (nē-per).

Peat, oil and natural gas, granite, limestone, chalk, sand, gravel, and clay are among the natural resources of this country. Unfortunately, about 70 percent of the radiation from the Ukraine’s nuclear disaster at Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant in 1986 (one of the reactors exploded) entered Belarus. As of 2005, about 20 percent of its land (mostly farmland and forests in the southeast) is still contaminated. The agriculture that had once been a part of the country has, in large part, been destroyed.

### *Plants and Animals*

About 80 percent of the plants in Belarus are made up of thousands of species of algae and fungi! In the sky, on the land, and in the water, you’ll find 310 species of birds, 13 species of amphibians, 7 species of reptiles, and 46 species of fish that are indigenous to Belarus. Of the 76 types of mammals found in Belarus, the European bison is the best known. It’s also the fastest-growing! The country’s program to conserve and reintroduce the bison has swelled the number of bison in Belarus to several hundred. Belarus now has the world’s largest population of bison.

## UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Belarus

Belarus has four UNESCO World Heritage Sites of cultural significance maintained by UNESCO’s World Heritage program. These include the Mir Castle Complex (built in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries), the Niasvizh Castle (built in the 16<sup>th</sup> century), and the Belovezhskaya Puscha (an ancient forest on the border of Belarus and Poland). The fourth site, the Struve Geodetic Arc, is one of a chain of arcs that go through nine other countries; they were used to survey the shape and size of the earth before the age of satellites.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

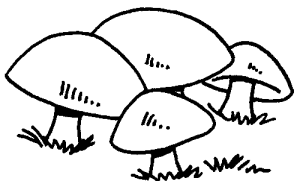
Date \_\_\_\_\_

# PLANTS AND ANIMALS OF BELARUS

Belarus is filled with plants and animals! Find them in this word search. The words can be listed across, down, up, or backwards.

- |          |           |           |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| ASH      | BISON     | ELK       |
| HORSE    | POTATO    | WHEAT     |
| BEAVER   | CENTAUREA | FALCON    |
| MUSHROOM | RYE       | WILD BOAR |
| BERRIES  | DEER      | GOAT      |
| OAK      | STORK     | WOLF      |
| BIRCH    | EAGLE     |           |
| PINE     | TURKEY    |           |

W	D	C	E	N	T	A	U	R	E	A
I	E	H	A	I	S	J	A	S	M	S
L	B	F	L	O	W	E	S	R	O	H
D	O	K	D	S	H	O	R	P	O	R
B	E	R	R	I	E	S	T	O	R	K
O	L	O	E	Z	A	H	U	T	H	A
A	K	G	O	A	T	N	R	A	S	O
R	E	V	A	E	B	C	K	T	U	D
B	I	S	O	N	L	H	E	O	M	P
F	A	L	C	O	N	R	Y	E	C	I
X	O	P	N	E	O	E	L	R	H	N
B	I	R	C	H	D	E	A	G	L	E
Q	A	K	N	I	T	D	E	I	A	T





# A HISTORY OF BELARUS

## Early History

There were probably settlements in Belarus about 10,000 years ago. But recorded history begins with the Baltic and Slavic tribes who settled in the area in the early centuries CE.

The emerging country was absorbed into the Kievan (kē-efun) Rus state about 862 CE near the present-day city of Novgorod in northwestern Russia. Belarus later became part of what was called Litva, which included modern Belarus and Lithuania. Belarus was the birthplace of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania—a state that became the largest in Europe by the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Belarusian was the state language of the Grand Duchy until 1697.

## Decades of Turmoil

The Russian Empire occupied Belarus from the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century until 1918. In March of 1918, Belarus declared itself a National Republic. But it wasn't one for long! The Bolshevik revolutionaries forcibly absorbed it into what became the Soviet Union. In 1922, it became a founding member of the Soviet Union.

In the 1930s, Belarus suffered severely under Joseph Stalin, the Soviet Union's brutal dictator. Stalin ordered the execution of 100,000 Belarusian intellectuals, political opponents, and others. Thousands more were sent to labor camps in Siberia, the eastern region of current-day Russia where criminals were punished with imprisonment.

Belarus fared little better in the 1940s. Nazi Germany invaded it in World War II. During the Nazi occupation from 1941 to 1944, Germany severely damaged the Belarusian infrastructure, economy, and national spirit. The capital of Minsk was almost completely destroyed. Some 2.2 million people were killed (about a third of the population), which included most of the country's Jews. The population did not regain its pre-World War II levels until 1971. Many villages were burned. The country also lost half of its economic resources. In 1944, the Soviet Red Army drove the Germans out of Belarus. The outcome of World War II established the country's present borders.

Belarus was among the founders of the United Nations in 1945 and began to work toward rebuilding the Soviet Union. It became a major manufacturing center that brought many ethnic Russians into the country for jobs in the factories. Stalin began the "Sovietization" of Belarus to isolate it as much as possible from the West. He placed Russians from various parts of the Soviet Union in the Belarusian government. Severe restrictions were placed on speaking the Belarusian language and observing its customs. Stalin's successor, Nikita Krushchev, continued this policy.

## The Chernobyl Disaster

In 1986, Belarus was heavily affected by radioactive fallout from the nuclear explosion at Chernobyl (in the neighboring Ukraine). Hundreds of thousands of people absorbed high doses of radiation. Around 20 percent of the farming land is still contaminated and unusable. Many villages remain abandoned.