



  
UKRAINE  
**LIFE IN  
CHERNOBYL  
DEAD ZONE**  
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Chernobyl town. A man waits for a show to begin at the House of Culture, where events such as concerts, recitals, conferences and meetings are organised for the entertainment of the population.

- ▶ After the nuclear incident in 1986, the Soviet government created a 30km exclusion zone around the power plant and evacuated 116 thousand residents
- ▶ Today 4000 people live in Chernobyl, one of the most contaminated areas on Earth, and the town offers them services, including cultural events and a gym
- ▶ There are also those who refused to leave the area after the disaster as well as workers who alternate 15-day shifts in the town with 15-day "decontamination periods" in their home towns
- ▶ Those working in Chernobyl include administrators, military personnel, firefighters, scientists and 2000 staff involved in keeping the power plant safe
- ▶ In 2065 work is scheduled to begin on decommissioning the reactors, but in the exclusion zone contamination will remain high for a further 200 thousand years



The Orthodox cemetery in Chernobyl. Former residents of the exclusion zone come to picnic at the tombs of their dead relatives, according to the Orthodox tradition.



A man trains at a gym in Chernobyl. Many come here after work in order to stay in shape.



Inside the Checkpoint at the ghost town of Pripyat. Victor has worked here as a guard for seven years: his task is to control access, verifying that those who enter have the necessary permits. His shifts last 12 hours. During the winter it is dangerous to venture far from the checkpoint because packs of hungry wolves roam the woods.



The Chernobyl nuclear power plant. Staff in the control room of reactor 2. Reactors 1, 2 and 3 continued to function for years after the incident at reactor 4. The dismantlement of the reactors is scheduled for 2065, when the levels of radioactivity within them have dropped. Until then the employees will have to continue to monitor the maintenance of the plant.

Following the nuclear incident in Chernobyl that occurred on April 26 1986, the Soviet government created a 30km exclusion zone around the power plant and evacuated 116 thousand residents. The area thus became a dead zone. But today, in spite of the fact that it is one of the most contaminated locations on Earth, Chernobyl is brimming with life. The town of Chernobyl, located within the exclusion zone and 16 km from the exploded reactor, is the main centre of daily life in the area. Prior to the incident it was home to 16 thousand people, today four thousand reside there. Most of them work in the local area, all linked in some way to the power plant, but not all of them.

In fact, the town of Chernobyl is still home to some samosely, so-called self-settlers who resisted evacuation from the area and remained or returned to live out their lives: people such as the painter Leonid, now famous as "the painter of Chernobyl", or Mihail, the music teacher at the school in Chernobyl before the incident and now a pensioner. The other inhabitants of this strange town are the staff of the administrative offices, workers involved in the disposal of radioactive material, the guards and military that control the area, firefighters and local police, but above all the personnel (around 2000 of them) who each day ensure the safety of the Chernobyl nuclear plant, at least until 2065, the year in which the decommissioning work on the reactors will begin.

There are also scientists involved in research on the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster and the monitoring of radioactivity in the area and at the plant. Around 100 scientists and employees work here. For all of these workers who live in Chernobyl – in shifts of 15 days – the town offers various services like any other Ukrainian town: four mini-markets, two canteens, a post office, a coach station that connects the exclusion zone with Ukraine's main cities, a cultural centre, a gym for keeping fit, a church in which to celebrate mass, and nowadays even three hotels for tourists. But in the exclusion zone contamination will remain high for 200 thousand years, even though today everything appears normal in the dead zone, especially in the bustling town of Chernobyl.



Priest Nikolai in the Orthodox church in the town of Chernobyl. At the time of the evacuation in 1986, he refused to leave. Since then he has always lived in Chernobyl town, continuing to celebrate mass for the community.



Workers at the end of their shift, at the bar in the main square in Chernobyl town.



Firefighters at an outpost located within the exclusion zone.



The hall of the Pripyat hotel in Chernobyl town.



A moment to commemorate the anniversary of the nuclear disaster. The commemoration ceremony is held every year on 26 April, in the main square of Chernobyl and culminates with an orthodox mass in memory of the victims.



Chernobyl town. A worker returns to his accommodation after the end of his shift.



ТЕА: ЧЕРГОВОЇ  
099-109-40-49  
097-166-29-87

**ВІДЧИНЕНО**  
з 8<sup>00</sup> до 23<sup>00</sup>  
**ПЕРЕРВА**  
На обід з 12<sup>00</sup> до 16<sup>00</sup>  
На вечерю з 20<sup>00</sup> до 21<sup>00</sup>

Одна доба пр  
в гуртожитках по вул  
бул. Кірова,  
Зміня - простий номер  
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- номер з покращеними  
(2) архівувати послуги WI-FI доступу до  
з/м по вул. Кірова, 15  
з/м по вул. Кірова, 34B

The reception of the hotel Pripjat. The tourists that arrive in Chernobyl for organised tours can choose between three different hotels. The Pripjat is the cheapest and has remained in keeping with the style of Soviet times.



The Chernobyl nuclear plant. Between reactors 2 and 3 is the "gold corridor", so-called because of the covering applied after the incident: highly contaminated, the corridor was covered in thick layers of lead and zinc. Today the radiation is over 30 times normal levels.



Chernobyl town. Yuriy, Valeri and Serhiy meet up sometimes at Serhiy's house to spend the evening together.



A game of ping pong at the gym in Chernobyl. Many workers come here to exercise after their shift in order to keep fit.



Chernobyl town. A worker returns to his accommodation after a shift at work.



A statue of Lenin in the square in Chernobyl. In the exclusion zone time has stood still since April 26 1986; for this reason, signs of the Soviet past are still visible. This is one of few places in the former Soviet Union where the statue of Lenin has not been removed.



Chernobyl town. Workers return to their accommodation after their shift.



Tamara, the director of the House of Culture in Chernobyl town and a keen opera singer, meets in her office with Serhiy to finalise the programme, which includes shows and cultural events.



The entrance to the bus station in Chernobyl town.



A firefighter inspects a vehicle at the fire station situated in the Chernobyl exclusion zone.



Two men train at the Chernobyl gym after finishing work.



A queue in a shop in Chernobyl. In the city there are four shops that sell necessities such as food and drinks. On sale are also alcoholic drinks, cigarettes and also souvenirs for tourists.



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