

A Cultural Journey



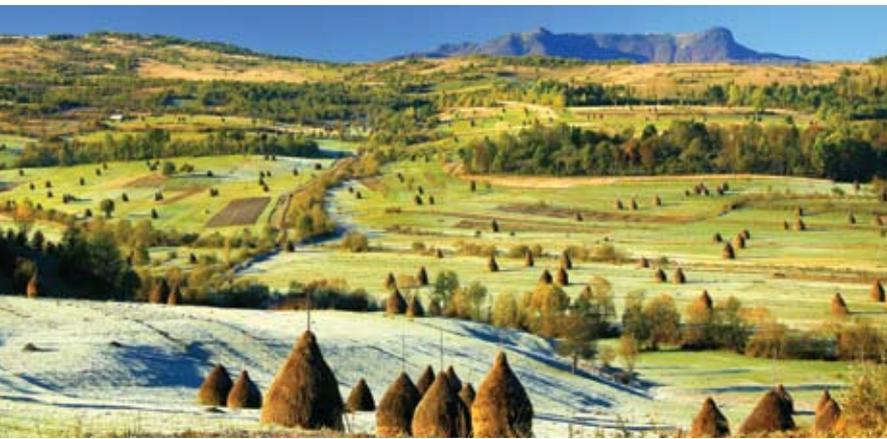

România
explore the Carpathian garden

Welcome to the Carpathian Garden!



Join us on a fascinating journey to a country rich in history and culture! Visit magical, legendary destinations, explore medieval fortresses, walk streets that have witnessed the unfolding of history, knock at the gates of castles and discover monasteries founded by medieval princes and painted by gifted artists. We also invite you too to savour delicious traditional dishes and wines with unique bouquets.

Whether you choose the luxury of a five-star hotel or prefer the cosy comforts of a guest house, in ROMANIA you will always feel welcome!



GENERAL INFORMATION

Geography: Romania is located in south-eastern Europe (2,900 km east of the Atlantic Ocean, and 900 km from the Mediterranean), where the 45° north latitude parallel meets the 25° east longitude meridian.

Accessibility: **By road** - European entrance/exit points into/from Romania: Borș, Nădlac, Petea, Turnu, Vârșand, Cenad (Hungary), Halmeu, Siret (Ukraine), Albița, Sculeni, Galați (Republic of Moldova), Negru Vodă, Giurgiu, Vama Veche (Bulgaria), Porțile de Fier I, Moravița (Serbia); **By plane** - main airports: Bucharest (Henri Coandă, Băneasa), Constanța (Mihail Kogălniceanu), Timișoara, Cluj-Napoca, Târgu Mureș, Suceava, Sibiu, Tulcea, Bacău, Iași, Oradea, Arad; **By sea** - harbours: Constanța and Mangalia.

Surface area: 238,391 km²

Population: 21.5 mil. inhabitants (2008)

Religion: Orthodox (87%)

State flag: 

Official language: Romanian. Many Romanians also speak English, French or German

Capital: Bucharest, 1,944,000 inhabitants (2008)

Other principal cities: Constanța, Timișoara, Iași, Cluj-Napoca, Brașov, Galați, Craiova, Ploiești, Brăila

Form of government: republic

Legal holidays: January 1st and 2nd; the first and second days of Easter; May 1st; the first and second days of Pentecost; Dormition of the Theotokos feast day; December 1st; the first and the second day of Christmas; two days for each of the three annual religious holidays, as designated by religions other than Christianity, for their devotees

Emergency services' telephone number: 112

Climate: varies between temperate and continental. During summer, the average temperature falls between 22°C and 24°C, but can reach 38°C. During winter, the average temperature falls to around -3°C, and can reach -30°C.

Romanian time zone: GMT + three hours during summer (from the last Sunday of March until the last Sunday of October), GMT + two hours for the rest of the year

Units of measurement: metric system (1 km = 0.62 miles)

National currency: LEU (1 leu = 100 bani)

Bank cards: large hotels, restaurants and shops accept credit cards including American Express, Master Card, Visa, Diners Club

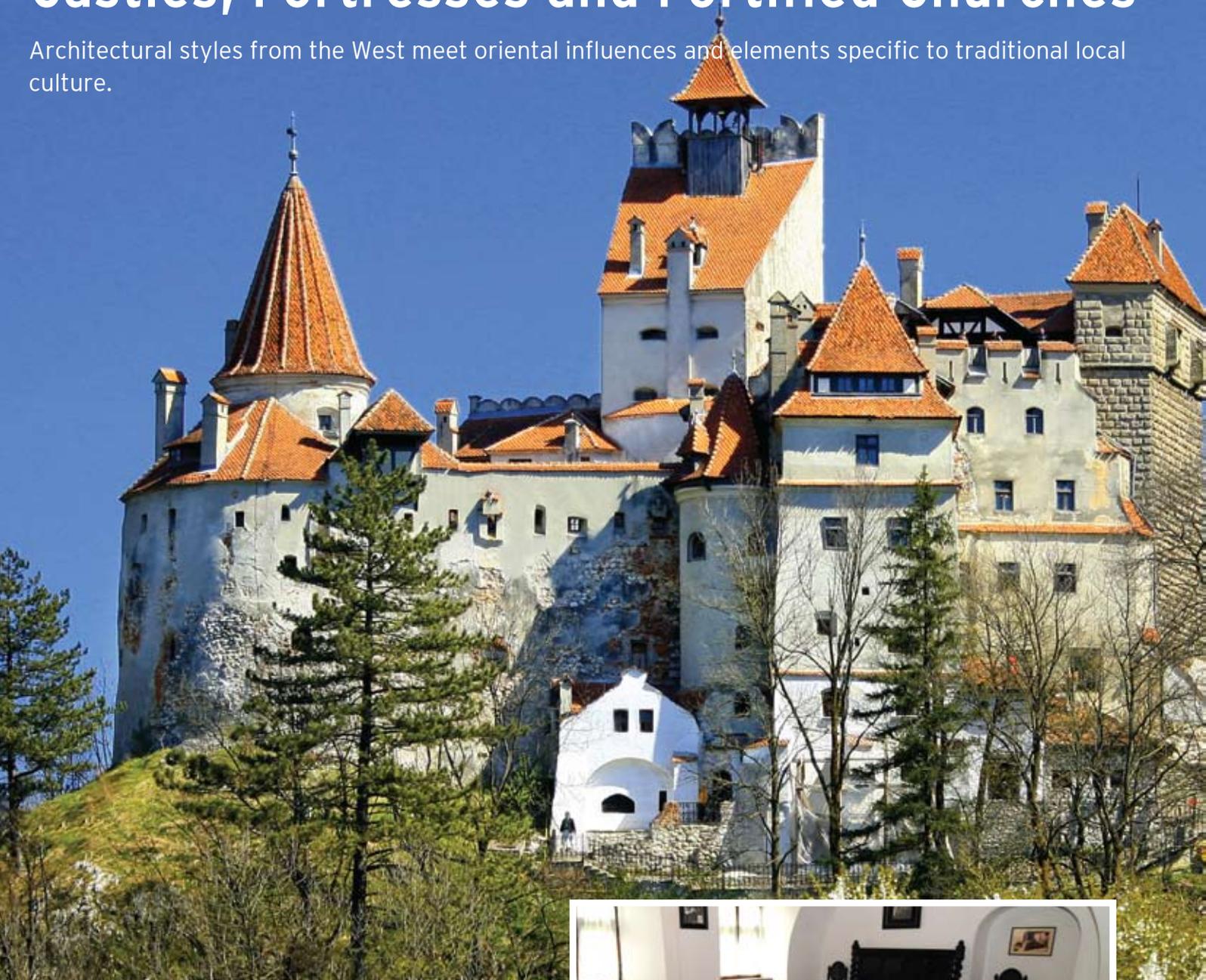


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Castles, Fortresses and Fortified Churches

Architectural styles from the West meet oriental influences and elements specific to traditional local culture.



Bran Castle

Thirty kilometres from Brasov, Bran Castle is known to tourists as 'Dracula's Castle', for the resemblance it bears to the castle described in Bram Stoker's novel. Starting in 1378, its construction used both wood and stone.

The castle had both a protective and a commercial role, as the Bran Pass has been for centuries one of the most important in the Transcarpathian area.

Over the centuries, many changes were made to the castle's architecture. In the 16th century, glass windows, and tiles were installed. A rectangular and a square tower were added, as was a new gate.

The old watch tower, dating from 1622, showcases the Romanian architectural style.



An interior in Bran Castle

Today, the castle houses the Bran Museum, where ceramics collections, furniture, weapons and armour are exhibited. In the castle yard is a small village museum with traditional houses from the Bran area.

www.bran-castle.com/en/

Access roads: national road 73 (E574) Braşov-Piteşti

Nearest airports: Bucharest (200km), Sibiu (170km)

Local accommodation: 2 to 4-star hotels, 2 to 4-daisy guest houses

Corvinilor Castle

Legendarily considered one of the world's scariest buildings, Corvinilor Castle, also known as Huniazilor Castle, is in fact the medieval fortress of Hunedoara, built in the 15th century and one of Transylvania's most important Gothic architectural monuments. The fortress was built by John Hunyadi, one of Europe's most important military and political leaders of the 15th century and father of the most famous Hungarian king, Matei Corvin. Over time, the building underwent important transformations, serving as both strategic fortification and feudal residence.



The castle has been used as location for several popular movies including Ghost Rider 2 starring Nicolas Cage.



Traditional instruments at the castle's annual festival.

So evocative is the fortress' medieval atmosphere, it is frequently used as a film location. If you want to experience this ambience yourself, and witness armoured knights fighting for the hearts of beautiful princesses, we invite you to *Days of the Castle* festival that takes place every year.

www.castelulcorvinilor.ro

Access roads: national road 7 (E68) Orăștie - Deva

Nearest airports: Sibiu (130km), Cluj (180km), Timișoara (200km), Arad (180km)

Local accommodation: 2 to 4-star hotels, 2 to 4-daisy guest houses

Peleş Castle

Rich in historic and artistic significance, Peleş Castle is one of Romania's most visited tourist attractions and one of the most important monuments of its kind in Europe. It has been built between 1873 and 1914, by order of King Carol I of Romania. Peleş was the first electrified castle in Europe, and had a dedicated electric plant. In 1896, the emperor of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Franz Joseph, visited the castle and was extremely impressed by its beauty and wealth. Set in a fairytale location in Sinaia (44 km from Brașov and 122 km from Bucharest), the castle was built in the predominant style of the German Renaissance, incorporating Rococo, Baroque, Gothic and Italian Renaissance elements. The castle was built of wood, stone, brick and marble and has more than 160 rooms. The wood decorations, both on the outside and inside, give the castle an unmistakable aesthetic. Around the castle are seven ledges decorated with statues by the Italian sculptor Romanelli, fountains and ornaments sculpted in stone and Carrara marble.

Visiting hours: Summer (May 15th - September 15th)

Monday closed, Tuesday 11:00-17:00, Wednesday - Sunday 09:00-17:00

Winter (September 16th - May 14th)

Monday and Tuesday - closed, Wednesday 11:00-17:00, Thursday - Sunday 09:00-17:00

www.peles.ro

Access roads: national road 1 (E60) Bucharest-Brașov

Nearest airport: Bucharest (120km)

Local accommodation: 2 to 4-star hotels, 2 to 4-daisy guest houses

An authentic architectural treasure in the Carpathians, Peleş Castle is a highlight of any visit to Romania.





Poienari Fortress

For those who want to feel the drama of history and the echoes of past battles, the combat-ready fortresses offer a vivid journey back in time. The Romanians built fortresses, castles and fortified churches for their protection. According to some sources, Poienari Fortress was built as a refuge at Argeş' Keys in the 15th century, by order of Voivode Vlad Ţepeş , known as 'Dracula'. Others believe that only its later reconstruction is his work.

Access roads: Căpăţânenii Pământenii, Argeş county, on national road 7C Transfăgăraşan (Curtea de Argeş - Cârţişoara)

Nearest airports: Sibiu (70km), Bucharest (180km), Craiova (190km)

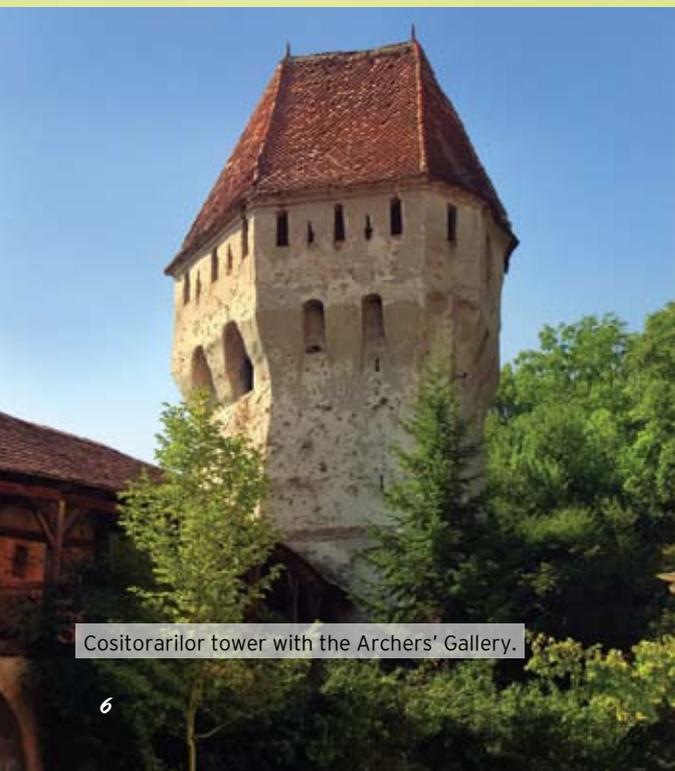
Local accommodation: 2-3 stars hotels, 2-3 daisies guest houses

Sighişoara Fortress

Every summer for three days, the *Medieval Art Festival* takes place in Sighişoara, and sees artists, souvenir vendors, and tourists walking the fortress' streets in the costume of feudal knights.

Located in the middle of the country on the shores of the river Târnava Mare, Sighişoara is both museum and living city and is one of the few inhabited fortress cities in Europe. A stroll on the fortress' streets feels like a journey back in time to a medieval world and this unique combination of military, civil and ecclesiastic architecture was included in 1999 on UNESCO's list of World Heritage sites. The walls 930 metres long are guarded by 14 defense bastions and towers, each built by one of the city's guilds.

Between 1431 and 1435, Vlad IInd nicknamed both 'the Devil' and 'the Dragon' lived in Sighişoara, waiting for the moment he would become the ruler of Walachia. It is said that in 1431 his son, Vlad Ţepeş, was born here.



Cositorarilor tower with the Archers' Gallery.



Sighişoara's landmark is the Clock Tower, unique in Romania for its figurines.

www.sighisoara-transilvania.ro

Access roads: Located on national road 13 (E60) Tg. Mureş - Braşov

Nearest airports: Tg. Mureş (60km), Sibiu (100km)

Local accommodation: 2 to 4-star hotels, 2 to 4-daisy guest houses



Râșnov Fortress

In the fortress' Feudal Art Museum, armour, weapons, furniture, and the region's traditional clothes are displayed.

Village fortresses represent a defence measure typical of the Transylvania region. The best preserved of all, Râșnov Fortress was the first fortress encountered by armies invading Transylvania through Bran Pass on the roads leading through Bârsei County. Local villagers built Râșnov to defend themselves from Turkish and Tartar invaders - it was truly their only chance for survival. When the alarm was sounded, the people took refuge here, bringing with them the animals from their fields, and keeping them in the castle's outdoor courtyard. The walls are five metres tall and up to one and a half metres thick.

Inside the fortress there's a small restaurant, where you can taste traditional fare. You can also try your hand at archery or plant a rose in the courtyard.

Access roads: national road 73 (E574) Brașov-Pitești

Nearest airports: Bucharest (180km), Sibiu (150km)

Local accommodation: 2 to 4-star hotels, 2 to 4-daisy guest houses

Făgăraș Fortress

Erected at the beginning of the 14th century on the former site of a wooden fort, and surrounded by a water-filled moat, Făgărașului Fortress is an imposing monument. For a long time it was the residence of Transylvania's princes. Voivode Mihai Viteazul, who in 1600 united Romania's principalities for the first time, found shelter here during the nobility's rebellion. At the fortress's entrance is a sculpted bust of Lady Stanca, Voivode Mihai's wife, a reminder of those dramatic times.

Over the years, the building was renovated and fortified, and in the 17th century, the surrounding moat was widened and connected by a secret channel to the Olt River. During the same period a mobile bridge was also built at the entrance. When the time of the totalitarian regime came, the fortress served as a place of incarceration where fighters from the anti-communist resistance in the mountains were held.

Today, the fortress is the Museum of Făgăraș Country, featuring history sections for both the city and Făgăraș Country, as well as the Municipal Library.

ghidulmuzeelor.cimec.ro/selen.asp

Access roads: national road 1 (E68) Brașov-Sibiu

Nearest airports: Sibiu (80km), Tg. Mureș (160km)

Local accommodation: 2 to 4-star hotels, 2 to 4-daisy guest houses





Biertan - the Fortified Church

Biertan was among the first settlements established by Saxons in Transylvania. The village's first historic records appear in documents from 1283. For almost three centuries (1572-1867) Biertan was the headquarters of the Transylvanian Saxon episcopacy, which approved the construction of one of Transylvania's strongest village fortresses around Biertan's fortified church. In 1993, the site won UNESCO World Heritage status. Tourists can take part in a Medieval Treasure Hunt, with clues, mystery trails and archery. For those who would like to explore the trails in the area, rental bikes are available. The valleys also re many mountain biking routes, including Biertan to Copșa Mare, Biertan to Richiș.

Access roads: county road 141B, from national road 14 Mediaș - Sighișoara
Nearest train station: Mediaș (26km)
Nearest airports: Sibiu (80km), Târgu Mureș (90km)
Local accommodation: 2 to 3-daisy guest houses
www.biertan.ro





Viscri

Nine kilometres from the national road between Braşov and Sighişoara, the Saxon fortress in Viscri village is the oldest, best preserved and perhaps most spectacular village fortress in Transylvania. It sits on a hill in the village, surrounded by a forest. With stone foundations and wooden upper sections, the fortress comprises two barricading walls and four towers. Carefully restored, this medieval building is perhaps the best representation of Saxon influence to be found in Transylvania.

Viscri is the only village in Romania included on the UNESCO World Heritage list. Restored houses are the same shade of blue they were centuries ago, and visitors can stay in guest houses with authentic Saxon furniture and sample traditional Saxon dishes. On a walk through the neighbouring forest, you may see deer or wild boars.



The interior of the church in Biertan.

Access roads: 9 km from national road 13 (E60), between Braşov and Sighişoara, in Buneşti commune
Nearest airports: Târgu Mureş (120km), Bucharest (240km)
Local accommodation: 2-3 daisies guest houses
www.crit.ro/viscri_home.html

Monasteries - Religion and Art

The Ottoman Empire tried several times to invade Europe, but the Romanian principalities Moldavia, Transylvania and Wallachia succeeded in defending their autonomy, and became a true 'Gate of Christianity' in the East.



Putna Monastery

Putna Monastery is the oldest monastery continuously used for its monastic purpose in Bucovina. It was founded in the 15th century, at the same time as the necropolis of Voivode Stephen the Great. The Putna monastery was also an important cultural centre. Manuscripts were copied here, and precious miniatures made, now housed in the monastery's museum. One of the priceless exhibits is the collection of medieval embroideries sewed with gold and silk strands, the most important in south-eastern Europe.

Every year celebrations are held on July 2nd for Saint Stephen the Great Day, and on August 15th for the monastery's patron saint.

The monastery is open to visitors daily between 7:00 and 21:00

The museum is open between 9:00 and 17:00.

Pilgrims will be offered accommodation and food where possible.

www.manastirea-putna.ro/putna-eng.htm

Access roads: 30 km from Rădăuți, county road 209E

Nearest airports: Suceava (82km), Iași (245km)

Agapia Monastery

One of the largest convents in Romania, Agapia Monastery was built in the 17th century, and has been renovated several times through the centuries. In the 19th century it was completely restored, the large church painted this time by young Nicolae Grigorescu, who became one of the greatest Romanian artists in history. These interior wall paintings are the monastery's principal treasure. Agapia Monastery's serene atmosphere, combined with the area's beauty and the contrast between colourful floral displays and the buildings' white walls fascinate visitors. No wonder many Romanian artists came here to find the peace they needed to unlock their creativity. Founded in 1927, Agapia Monastery's museum was the first of its kind in Moldavia. Exhibits include icons, liturgical vestments, metal-bound books, religious embroideries and carpets made by Agapia's nuns.

The monastery is open to visitors daily between 7:00 and 21:00.

The museum is open between 8:00 and 17:00.

Access roads: national road 15C Târgu Neamț - Piatra Neamț

Nearest airports: Suceava (90km), Iași (120km), Bacău (120km)

Local accommodation: 2 to 4-star hotels, 2 to 4-daisy guest houses





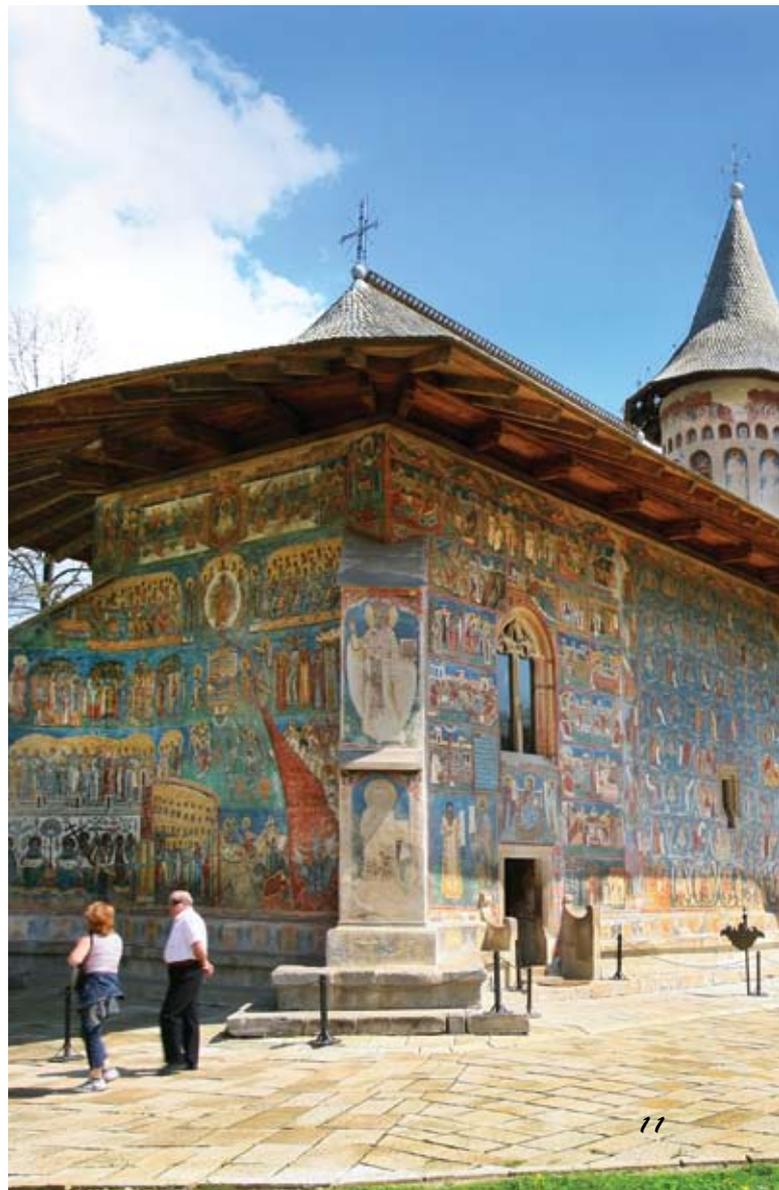
Three months, three weeks and three days. That is how long it took to build Voroneț, perhaps Moldova's most precious jewel.

Voroneț Monastery

Legend has it that during one of his many wars with the Turks, Voivode Stephen the Great went to the Voroneț Convent to seek advice. He then returned to battle, and won. Stephen kept his promise to Voroneț's monks and as a sign of appreciation built a church. Small but extremely beautiful, the Voroneț Monastery was nicknamed the Oriental Sistine Chapel, and the shade of blue that permeates the wall paintings is famous all over the world. Close to the city Gura Humorului, the Voroneț Monastery is one of the few historic religious establishments which has, for the most part, retained its original form.

Most of the interior paintings date from the reign of Stephen the Great. The exterior paintings were added later, during the reign of Petru Rareș, Stephen the Great's son. The church's artworks are considered the best representation of Moldavian feudal art. *Doomsday* is a masterpiece, unique for its massive composition and imaginative flight, its biblical faces seemingly alive. The wall paintings are distinctive for their bright colors, echoing those of the natural surroundings, their greens and blues natural vegetable colours sourced from local plants.

The monastery is open to visitors daily, in summer between 8:00 and 20:00, and winter between 9:00 and 16:00
Access roads: DN 17 (E576) Suceava - Câmpulung Moldovenesc, 32 km from Suceava
Nearest airports: Suceava (32 km), Iași (210 km)
www.romanianmonasteries.org/bucovina/voronet
Local accommodation: 2 to 4-star hotels, 2 to 4-daisy guest houses



Sucevița Monastery

Built in the 16th century, and combining Gothic and Byzantine artistic elements with the style established during the reign of Stephen the Great and that of the wooden churches of the Maramureș area, Sucevița has a special value, and the church has become a UNESCO World Heritage site. The exterior painting, famous for its shade of green, illustrates epic biblical tableaux from Old and New Testaments. It is considered the final extravagant example of the tradition of painting church façades which marked the reigns of Stephen the Great and Petru Rareș.

The monastery is open to visitors daily between 7:00 and 21:00

The museum is open between 9:00 and 17:00

www.manastiresucevita.ro

Access roads: national road 17A Rădăuți-Câmpulung Moldovenesc

Nearest airports: Suceava (70km), Iași (230km), Cluj-Napoca (290km)

Local accommodation: 2 to 4-star hotels, 2 to 4-daisy guest houses

According to local legend, a woman carried the stone used to build Sucevița Monastery for thirty years to redeem herself.

Moldovița Monastery

During the reign of Petru Rareș Moldavian Christian art reached its peak, in churches' interior paintings, but even more in those on the exteriors, which became more important than the architecture. Moldovița's exterior paintings are true masterpieces whose remarkable preservation over the centuries has left their splendour undimmed by time.

The Moldovița Monastery is located 27 km from Câmpulung Moldovenesc city, where you can find accommodation and tourism information.

Access roads: DN 17 A Rădăuți-Vatra Dornei

Nearest airports: Suceava (100km), Iași (260km), Cluj-Napoca (260km)

Local accommodation: 2 to 4-star hotels, 2 to 4-daisy guest houses

The interior and exterior paintings in Moldovița Monastery's church date back to 1537.



Cozia Monastery

The Cozia Monastery, built by Mircea the Elder in the 14th century, is located deep in nature, in a forest of fir, beech, oak and lime trees. At the entrance into the Olt River's gorge, Cozia provided shelter during battles as well as a place for prayer. Over the centuries, the monastery's church caught fire several times, and its tower suffered severe damage. But even after 600 years its ornate, three-armed voivodal cross survives, with globes made of red gold. Fixed in a large block of stone shaped like a Turkish turban, its setting was by order of Voivode Mircea the Elder, as a symbol of victory over the Ottomans.

The monastery is open to visitors daily between 6:00 and 22:00

The Museum is open daily between 8:00 and 20:00

www.manastirea-cozia.go.ro/summary.htm

Access roads: national road 1 (E68) Râmnicu Vâlcea-Sibiu

Nearest airports: Sibiu (90km), Bucharest (200km), Craiova (140km)

Local accommodation: 2 to 4-star hotels, 2 to 4-daisy guest houses, balneoclimateric health resort Călimănești

Horezu Monastery

The Monastery of Horezu sits in picturesque surroundings, 40km west of Râmnicu Vâlcea city and 3 km from Horezu city. It is the biggest monastery in Wallachia. A prized UNESCO monument, Horezu was founded by the Wallachian Voivode Constantin Brâncoveanu, as a necropolis. But his body never lay there. In 1714, he and his sons were tortured and killed for his refusal to renounce Christianity. Recently sanctified by the Romanian Orthodox Church, Constantin Brâncoveanu was a great ruler and visionary diplomat in medieval Europe. He fought the Ottoman expansion, at the same time strongly supporting art and religion. Hugely wealthy, he built a series of monasteries, churches and palaces in what was later called 'Brâncovenesc style', a strong influence on Walachia's architecture. The interior decoration was completed in 1694.



The monastery is open to visitors daily between 7:00 and 21:00.

The museum is open between 9:00 and 17:00.

www.romanianmonasteries.org/other-monasteries/horezu

Access roads: national road 67, Ramnicu Valcea-Tirgu Jiu

Nearest airports: Craiova (120km), Sibiu (150km), Bucharest (230km)

Local accommodation: 2 to 4-star hotels, 2 to 4-daisy guest houses



On the way to the Monastery of Horezu, you can immerse yourself in the folk art of the area. The beauty of painted Horezu ceramics is famous all over the world. The designs are zoomorphic, with the rooster Horezu ceramics' signature symbol. Fish, one of the oldest symbols of Christianity, also decorate many of the painted containers, and rosebuds, fir trees (symbolizing immortality), clover (luck), clusters, leaves, stems and the Tree of Life' are also to be found.

The Horezu Depression was in 2008 designated a 'European Destination of Excellence', along with 19 other destinations in Europe, as part of the European Destinations of Excellence project, whose themes were tourism and hidden local heritage. Launched by the European Commission, the project was implemented by national tourism authorities in each participating country.



A natural washing machine. Clothes to be laundered were put inside these wooden baskets and washed by the falling river water.

The Maramureș County sits in one of the Carpathian chain's depressions, surrounded by densely forested mountains which saw woodcrafts thrive here. The Maramureș area has much for tourists to discover in all seasons, from hiking in the mountains and extreme sports opportunities to cultural and religious exploration. The region is especially famous for its historic architectural monuments - charming traditional houses, ornate wooden gates and exquisite wooden churches with pointed towers.

Descendants of the Dacians, the people of Maramureș County are said to be the best guardians of the secular traditions. Local traditions - clothes, folk customs, delicious cuisine and famous beverages - are almost unchanged for millennia, and make every vacation here unforgettable, whatever the season. Winter has special charm. Every year, on December 17th, Lăpușului country hosts the *Winter Customs Festival*, with carols, games and all kinds of masks. In Sighetu Marmației celebrations begin on the second day of Christmas, with carolers from all the villages in the area giving their best performances.

Maramureș' wooden churches have brought the region fame. Tourists come to visit these architectural treasures, the finest expression of Maramureș' artistic tradition and skill in woodcrafts. Together they form a special museum, and also a place for prayer. Signature features include joinery, cladding and carved

Maramureș County





Mocănița - a forest train turned tourist attraction.

The Bârsana Monastery is a major tourist and pilgrim destination in the Maramureș County.



decorative elements symbolising plants, animal and geometric forms.

Acknowledging the value of these places of worship, UNESCO has added eight of the oldest and best-preserved ones to its list of World Heritage sites. Narrow but tall (among the tallest wooden churches in the world), with thin towers towards the buildings' western ends, the churches express the cultural uniqueness of this mountain area in northern Romania.

Mocănița is a forest train which has become a tourist attraction. A trip on the Mocănița through the valley of the Vaser, a river from Maramureș and tributary of the Vișeu, is something you won't experience anywhere else in the world. Built between 1930 and 1933, this narrow-gauge (760 mm) railway stretches for 56km between Vișeu and Izvorul Comanului and, starting from an altitude of 600m in Vișeu, climbs to 1,100m. Being a forest train, the Mocănița's schedule is not strict. During the summer it usually leaves at 6am.

www.museummm.baiamare.rdsnet.ro

www.mocanita.com

Access roads: Bârsana - national road 17C
Sighetul Marmăției - Năsăud

Nearest airports: Baia Mare (100km), Cluj-Napoca (180km)

Local accommodation: 2 to 4-star hotels, 2 to 4-daisy guest houses

Prehistory and Antiquity

The territory which makes up modern-day Romania has been inhabited since time immemorial. Experts estimate that the first traces of human life here date back around 1.5 million years.



These two small ceramic figurines are today considered masterpieces of Neolithic art. Belonging to the Hamangia culture, they can be seen at the National Art Museum in Bucharest.

Archaeological research has revealed traces of ancient civilizations, among them Hamangia, Gumelnița, and Cucuteni, whose ceramics are unique in Europe, and whose people practiced various cults. Hamangia culture is a Neolithic culture dating from the 4th to 2nd centuries B.C., and took its name from a village in Dobrogea. This culture had a long development period, extending until the Pontic version of Gumelnița culture appeared.

Sarmizegetusa

In western Romania's Orăștie Mountains, the most important remnants of the Dacian civilization can be found. The Dacians, 'the bravest and most honest of the Thracians', were true experts in military strategy. Under Emperor Traian, the Roman Empire took five years to defeat them, finally claiming victory in 106 A.D., when King Decebal committed suicide, and it was the union of these two civilizations that gave birth to the Romanian people. Located at an altitude of approximately 1,200 metres in Grădiștea Muncelului village in Hunedoara County, Sarmizegetusa Regia was the capital of pre-Roman Dacia. Excellent

builders, the Dacians used the technique of offsetting the mountain slopes, and wherever necessary, supported big platforms with strong walls. The fortress features on the list of UNESCO World Heritage sites.

A Dacian Stonehenge, Sarmizegetusa's complex of sanctuaries stands approximately 100 metres from the eastern gate of the fortress and is connected to it by a paved road. The large sanctuary is a representation in stone of the Dacian calendar. The solar disc made of andesite represents the sun and reflects the urano-solar character of the Getian-Dacian religion.

All six fortresses that formed Decebal's defensive system (Sarmizegetusa Regia, Lunca - Piatra Rosie, Costești - Blidaru, Costești - Cetățuie, Căpâlna and Bănița) now belong to UNESCO's Cultural World Heritage list.

Access roads: European road E68 - Orăștie - Grădiștea de Munte (31 km), Grădiștea de Munte - Dealul Grădiștii (8 km). To go to the ruins of the former Dacian fortress, leave from Orăștie and go towards Costești, following approximately 20 km of forest road

Local accommodation: 2 to 3-daisy guest houses



Sarmizegetusa Regia, the fortress on Grădiștei Hill, was the greatest of the Dacian fortresses.



Roman military camp Adamclisi

Adamclisi is a commune located 62km south-west of Constanta. During the winter of 101-102 A.D., it was the site of a great battle between the armies of the Dacian king Decebal and the Roman legions lead by Traian. Nearby, in an area of wooded mounds, lie the ruins of the Tropaeum Traiani monument and the relics of the Roman civil locality Civitas Tropaeensium which Traian founded. Over the centuries, the Turkish considered the imposing Roman monument a church. With a 30m diameter and a height of 20m, the monument has 54 bas-reliefs depicting battle scenes, and a museum of Dacian, Greek and Roman antiquities stands nearby.

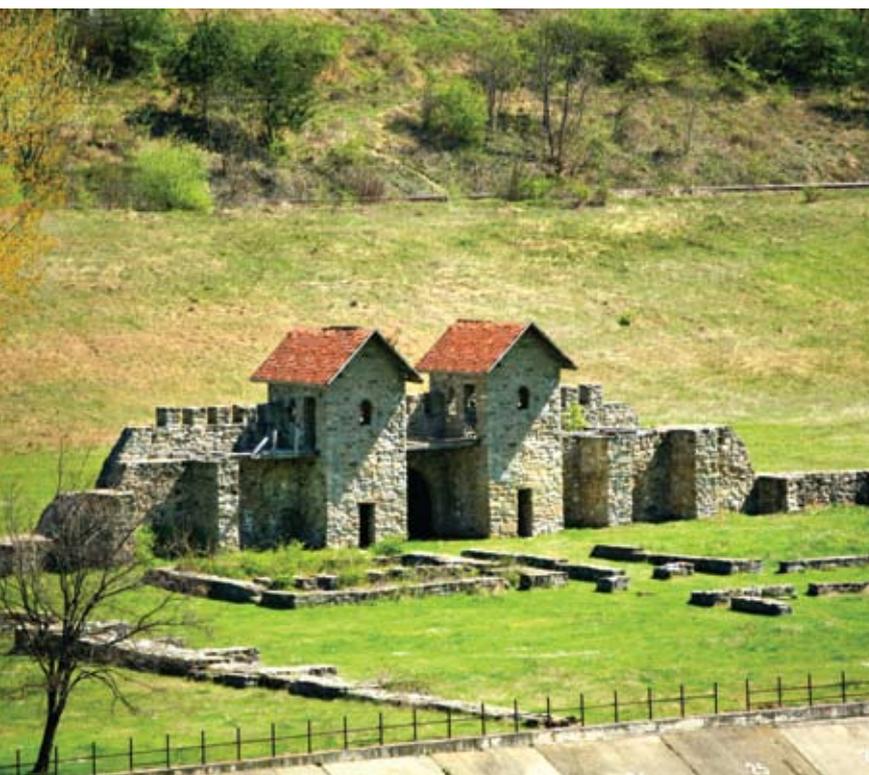


Adamclisi Archeological Museum

Tel.: 0241 / 614.562; 0241 / 614.563

Visiting hours: daily 8:00-20:00

www.cimec.ro/scripts/muzee/selen.asp



Roman military camp Arutela

The Roman military camp Arutela is located near Călimănești city, close to some thermal springs used for the camp's public baths, and dates back to 137-138 A.D. Located on the left shore of the Olt River, near Cozia Monastery, Arutela, with other camps around Cozia Peak, formed part of a line of defence against attacks from the hilly area to the East. The fortified construction was built of flagstones, and featured semicircular towers at the corners and square towers on each side of the praetorian gate. The main wall was built from large, rectangular blocks of rock, thin flagstones and unshaped rocks.

Access roads: national road 7 (E81) Râmnicu Vâlcea-Sibiu
Nearest airports: Sibiu (90km), Bucharest (200km), Craiova (140km)

Local accommodation: 2 to 3-star hotels, 2 to 4-daisy guest houses, balneoclimateric health-resort Călimănești

Folklore - Folk Customs and Traditions

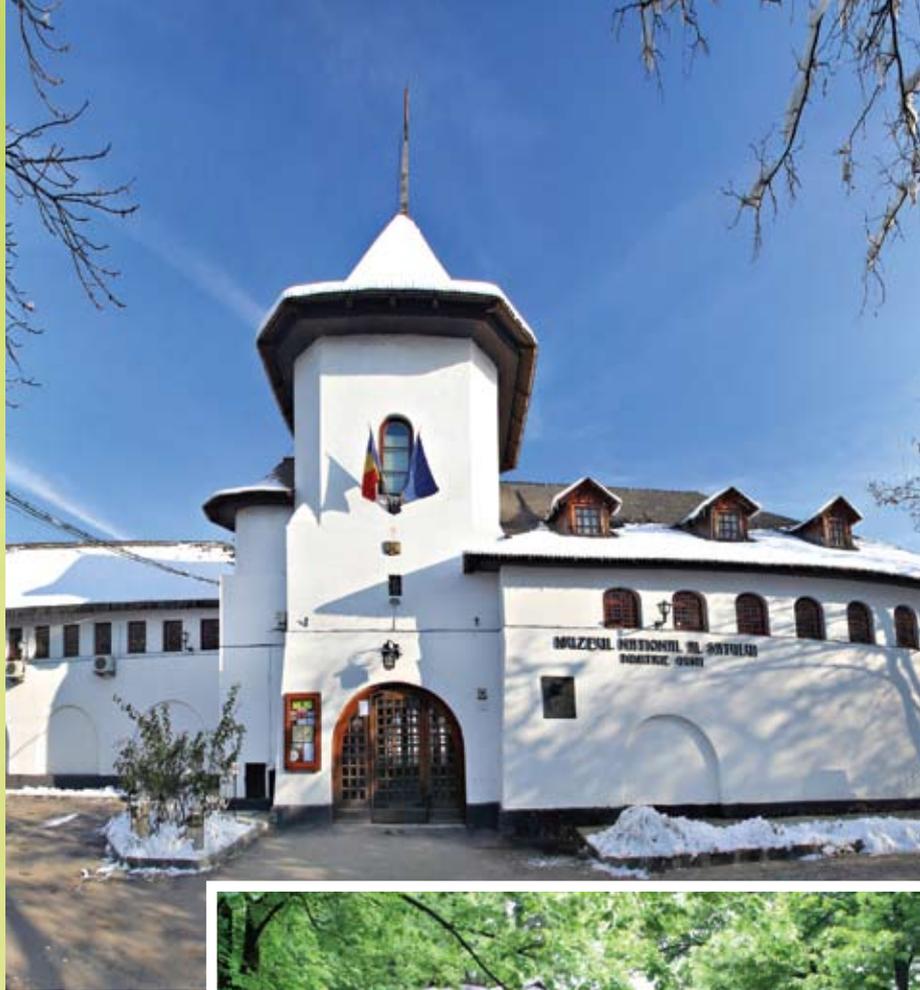
Proud of their traditions, Romanians welcome guests warmly, inviting them into their homes, offering them the finest dishes they can prepare, singing them beautiful folk songs and even inviting them to dance.

When you visit Romania, you will delight in discovering a place that is alive with legends, myths and traditions which have been cherished over centuries. Few countries in the world have preserved so many customs or have such love for their folk music and dancing. Unlike other peoples, Romanians adopted Christianity in peace, not as a result of war, and many of our customs still bear the mark of ancient rituals combined with profound respect for Christian values.

First-time visitors to our celebrations watch amazed and curious, and never forget the emotions they felt in those unique moments.

'Dimitrie Gusti' Village Museum

If you don't have time to travel the whole country and discover all of Romania's most fascinating customs, we invite you to visit Bucharest's 'Dimitrie Gusti' Village Museum. Founded in 1936 it was one of the first museums of its kind in the world. Besides the patrimony on show in the outdoor exhibition and the collections, the museum also has a rich archive of priceless historic-ethnographic value, comprising collections of manuscripts, studies, sketches, drawings, films and photographs gathered during the field research of the teams from the Bucharest sociology school which helped found the museum.



Visitor schedule for the outdoors exhibition:
Monday - Sunday: 9:00-17:00
Visitor schedule for the exhibition hall:
Monday and Tuesday: closed
Wednesday - Sunday: 9:00-17:00
www.museum-satului.ro



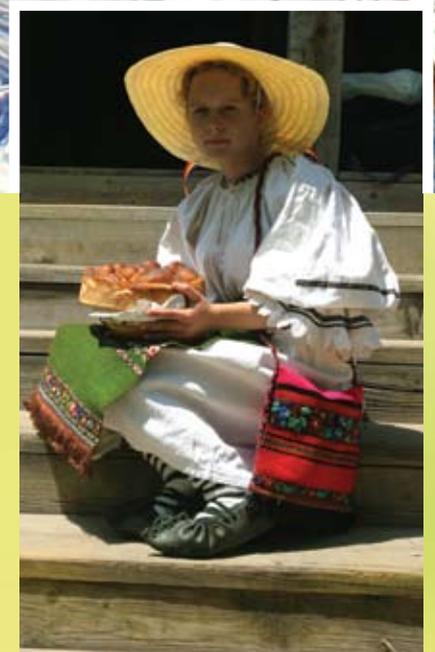
Mărțișorul

According to the old Roman calendar, March 1st was the first day of the year and marked the beginning of the celebration of Mars, god of the forces of nature, of spring and agriculture. Every year on this day we renew our hope, optimism, faith and strength. We invoke this time's triumph of resurrection and regeneration by giving our loved ones 'mărțișor', small symbolic totems woven from two combined threads, one red and one white, to wish each other happiness and luck.



Winter Celebrations

A winter holiday spent in a Romanian village can be a unique experience. On Christmas and New Year's Eve, children and young people go from door to door singing carols, and young men perform the 'goat' or 'bear' dance. The 'goat' dance used to be a ceremonial, religious element of agricultural celebrations, a ritual designed to bring fertility for the following year, herds full of animals and abundant crops. The dance is accompanied by a wooden flute, and at its end one of the young men, approaching the table where the visited family sit, wishes them good fortune for the following year. The young men dance with the lady of each house and her daughters and then, refreshed with treats provided by their hosts, offer thanks and take their leave.



Romanian hospitality

It is impossible to enter a Romanian household and not be offered whatever food the hosts have on the table, or a glass of wine or rachiu - a traditional type of brandy. Romanian cuisine has countless culinary customs and traditions, which use both foods specific to the region and ingredients and methods from the gastronomic cultures of other peoples whose destinies have intertwined with Romania's throughout history. The abundance of wildlife in the Romanian forests also inspired a rich variety of meat dishes and delicacies.



Easter eggs

Perhaps Easter's most picturesque tradition is the painting of eggs. Generally, it is women and girls who carefully decorate eggs, presenting each traditional motif in versions which vary according to the area, and the eggs' sizes. Painted eggs are a symbol of Easter customs, beliefs and traditions, representing an element of spiritual culture that is specific to Romania. Using wax, many Romanians create extremely beautiful decorative motifs that recall ancestral traditions.



Handcrafts

In so much of today's world, tradition and ancient crafts seem suffocated by modernism. Many weaving workshops, for example, closed long ago. But in the south of Romania, there are still women weaving, their hands creating stunning treasures. And while their skills are appreciated by well-known designers, fame is not their ambition. In households in Oltenia, this old tradition lives on, and its products continue to delight the eyes of visitors.

Folk Dances

If you are lucky enough to be invited to a Romanian wedding, don't hesitate to accept! Every wedding is celebrated with folk dances and fiddlers. *Hora*, *învârțita*, *hațegana*, *bătuta*, *călușarii* are some of the traditional dances, each representing a different region of the country. Perhaps the most spectacular and dynamic dance from Romanian folklore is the *călușarii* (a UNESCO World Cultural heritage monument), a complex, ritualistic dance which relates to fertility and healing and stirs up a delirious, tireless outpouring of human energy. Dramatic jumps suggest the human desire to transcend the Earth or man's own condition, in a dynamic representation of inner feelings. The costumes of the *călușarii* dancers combine the colours white, signifying purity and chastity, and red, which protects against the evil eye.



Songs for the soul

Of all Romania's many folk songs, none has more emotive power than the *doina* (a UNESCO World Cultural heritage monument), and a *doina* performed on a panpipe flute creates a visceral reaction in its listeners. The precise origin of the panpipe is not known for sure, and archeology and history record its use all over the world. It is thought that the instrument was introduced into Romanian culture following contact with the Greeks, on the shores of the Black Sea, and the hollow shape of the panpipes played here is recognised worldwide as a Romanian variation. Although an ancient musical instrument, the panpipe has won new appreciation in recent decades, notably because of Hollywood films with soundtracks featuring panpipe players.



The Merry Cemetery

Death is a solemn event, but the Merry Cemetery in Săpânța, Maramureș, famous for its vividly painted wooden crosses, and simple paintings celebrating scenes from the lives of its deceased residents, proposes a different view.

Many of the crosses also bear verses, recalling those memorialised in light-hearted ways. The cemetery's particular character was inspired by Dacian culture, whose philosophy enshrined belief in immortality and celebrated death as a reason for joy, as it marked loved ones' passage to another, better life.

A local craftsman sculpted the Merry Cemetery's first funeral inscription in 1935, and by 1960 the cemetery thronged with around 800 such crosses, made of oak wood, making it a unique outdoor museum and cherished tourist destination.



www.romanianmonasteries.org/maramures/sapanta

A Tapestry of Cultures

For centuries, people speaking diverse languages, belonging to various cultures and practising different religions have lived together peacefully in Romania.

Multiculturalism is our reality. It embraces cultural variety and pluralism, and the cultural identities of Romania's minority communities. Cultural borrowing, the intermingling of customs, continuous competition between Romanian, Transylvanian Saxon, Hungarian and other influences inform every day. If you visit Transylvania, you will witness how closely Romanians' houses resemble those of Transylvanian Saxons and Hungarians, each one more charming than the last. Visit Dobrogea and you can sample Turkish baklava in Romanian pastry shops, while in southern Romania tasty meatballs are customary fare. The Romanian language is enriched by many words borrowed from

immigrant cultures. All our tribes have co-mingled, bringing about a wisdom rooted in tolerance. On the streets of Transylvania you will often see Romanian, Hungarian and Transylvanian Saxon children playing together. Growing up together, they learn mutual respect instinctively. Architectural, historical and religious monuments are some of the visible expressions of our minority cultural inheritance. Sibiu's Brukenthal Museum, the oldest museum in Romania, and the historic centre of Sighişoara city, a UNESCO World Heritage site, showcase our German community's cultural achievements. Many of Transylvania's castles belong to the Hungarian aristocracy.

Romania's Jewish community's history stretches back around two millennia. The Yiddish language, much used between the wars by Romanian Jews, is very little spoken among today's Jewish population. Several temples and synagogues have stood on Romanian soil, some of them declared historic and architectural monuments, and protected by law.



Hungarian dancers.

The Hungarians minority is Romania's largest. Most Hungarians live in the Transylvania area, which has been shaped by Hungarian influence. Proud of their cultural inheritance, they speak and study in Hungarian and maintain traditions including folk costume. Over 1,000 Hungarian children and teenagers, most of them from the Harghita County, take part in a traditional folk dance festival, which takes place in the Miercurea Ciuc municipality.



Interior of the synagogue in Craiova.



Participants at the celebration of the Roman Catholic patron saint (the Kerwei), one of the most important traditions for Romania's German community.

The influences of Romania's diverse ethnic communities contribute to a fluid, evolving universe of culture, art and spirituality. The beauty and spirit of the various traditions' songs and dances, their arts and crafts enrich the nation's cultural life. And Romania's unique blend of customs and traditions drawn from all its communities takes centre stage at the festivals that take place every year.



Group representing a Turkish community from Romania.

The first German settlers came to live in Romania more than 850 years ago. Romanian Germans today are not a compact, unitary group, as their ancestors came from many parts of Europe, some willingly, invited by Romanian rulers to share a better standard of living than their own country afforded them, others driven here by circumstance over the centuries. Without a single, unifying cultural connection, and speaking various dialects of the German language, they have integrated as various small and distinctive communities. Although today very few Transylvanian Saxons remain, most of them seniors, pass through Transylvania and their cultural footprint can be seen everywhere, nowhere more than in the spectacular fortified churches they built over the centuries for defence.



Romany craftsmen.

The exact date of the Romany people's arrival in today's Romania is not known, but experts estimate it is around 1000 AD. The first references to Romany people appear in documents from Moldavia and Transylvania from the 15th century. Historians and sociologists believe that many of the Romany arrivals came as Tartar slaves, captives of the Golden Horde. Not until the first decades of the 19th century were they released from bondage. In the Middle Ages, most Romany people from Romanian territories were slaves for the nobility, voivodes or at the monasteries, mainly as coopers, blacksmiths, goldsmiths, tinkers or fiddlers. Today, traditional Romany occupations - principally jobs in crafts - no longer thrive.

Museums: Honouring the Past

Take a walk through our museums. And please don't just admire the priceless exhibits. We invite you really to get to know us - everything you see here defines what it is to be Romanian.

National Museum of Romanian History Bucharest

The National Museum of Romanian History occupies 8,000m², and its 60 exhibition halls present an exceptional collection. Find proof of human habitation in Romania as early as the Paleolithic period (600,000-6,000 years B.C.), discover the culture of the Geto-Dacians, the Dacian-Roman battles and Dacia's transformation into a province of the Roman Empire, the emergence of the state's power structures in Medieval society, the Fanariot reigns, the bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1848, independence, two world wars and the impact of Russia.

Visiting hours: Wednesday - Sunday: **summer visiting hours** 10:00-18:00, **winter visiting hours** 9:00-17:00; Monday and Tuesday: closed
Admission: about 2 euro



Reproduction of the Traian's Column, at the National Museum of Romanian History.



National Museum of Art - Bucharest



'Grigore Antipa' National Museum of Natural History – Bucharest

A visit to the 'Grigore Antipa' National Museum of Natural History offers a fascinating journey through time, from the beginning of the Universe to the present. Visitors can learn about our planet, how life-forms have evolved and how the diversity of life forms that share every corner of our world came to be. Exhibits feature sophisticated audio-visual installations, illuminating insights into Earth's biodiversity and habitats both in Romania and the wider world. Spaces are dedicated to interactivity and multimedia exhibits and dedicated spaces are set up like laboratories, where visitors can perform or observe scientific experiments, demonstrations and laboratory work. There are facilities for hearing-impaired and visually impaired people, restful spaces, playgrounds, rooms for education and entertainment and the museum hosts programs which invite the public to get involved.

The skeleton of a *Dinotherium gigantissimum*, a 4.5m prehistoric elephant, discovered on Romanian soil, is the museum's largest exhibit.

Visitors can see reconstructed fossils, 3D movies on plasma screens, an accurate recreation of an 11m-long cave, and fish from the Black Sea in dioramas devised by Dr. Grigore Antipa. The animals are presented by bioregion, in themed rooms and their superstar, the elephant ancestor discovered on the Moldavian Plateau in 1894, has pride of place. Named *Dinotherium gigantissimum* - 'frightening animal' - this magnificent beast now welcomes museum visitors, at the building's visual axis.

Visiting hours: Wednesday - Sunday: 10:00-1:00 (visitors are only allowed in the museum until 17:00)
Monday and Tuesday: closed
www.antipa.ro



The National Museum of Art is the country's most important art museum, and houses the European Art Gallery, reopened in 2000 in the building's south section. The collection of paintings was founded on 214 works which belonged to King Carol I, to which paintings belonging to other members of the royal family were added. The king bequeathed paintings by El Greco, Rembrandt, Bruegel the Elder, Rubens and Domenico Veneziano. After 1948, the collection was extended with works from liquidated museums and private collections. Today, the gallery's heritage comprises nearly 3,000 paintings and sculptures. Already in its sixth year, Open Museum Night is a successful event initiated by Ministry of Culture and Communication. As if responding to some magical call, thousands of visitors flock to the museums to honour history every May 18th.

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF ART 49-53 Calea Victoriei, 010082
Information: Tel: +4 021 313.30.30 Fax: +4 021 312.43.27
Visiting hours: Wednesday - Sunday 11.00-19.00 (May- September)
10.00-18.00 (October - April); Closed: Mondays and Tuesdays, January 1st, the first and the second day of Easter, the first and the second day of Pentecost, May 1st, August 15th, December 1st, 25th and 26th
www.mnir.ro; Admission: depending on exhibition, about 2 euro

Palace of Culture in Iași

Inaugurated in 1925, this building served as Palace of Justice until 1955, when it hosted some of Iași city's most prestigious cultural institutions, now united within the Moldova National Museum Complex. This banner comprises the Moldavian History Museum, the Moldavian Ethnographic Museum, the Art Museum and the Stefan Procopiu Museum of Science and Technique. In the palace's north-east wing is the Gheorghe Asachi Municipal Library. The palace was built partly on the ruins of medieval princely establishments mentioned in documents from 1434. The decoration of some halls used a material patented for the first time by Henri Coanda. Named bois-ciment, its finish imitates oak wood.

www.palatulculturii.ro



The Palace of Culture in Iași is a powerful symbol of Moldavian culture.



Inside ASTRA Museum of Traditional Folk Civilization, near the museum's main entrance.



ASTRA Sibiu National Museum Complex

The ASTRA Museum sprang from the desire of the people of Ardeal to define their ethno-cultural identity, as guardians of Austro-Hungarian culture and in the spirit of the cultural emancipation of all peoples from Central and South-East Europe. Models already existed in museums exploring Transylvanian Saxon, Hungarian and Szekler cultures. In 2001 the ASTRA National Museum Complex opened, comprising the Museum of Traditional Folk Civilisation, the Museum of

Transylvanian Civilisation, the Museum of Székely Ethnography, the Museum of Romany Culture and Civilisation and the 'Franz Binder' Museum of Universal Ethnography.

Visiting hours: Tuesday - Sunday, 9:00-17:00

Outdoor Museum: Monday - Sunday, 9:00-17:00

www.museumastra.ro

Admission ticket: between 2 and 4 euro, depending on exhibition



National Brukenthal Museum, Sibiu

Sibiu's National Brukenthal Museum is one of Romania's most important cultural establishments. Its collections were gathered by Baron Samuel von Brukenthal, governor of Transylvania in the 18th century, and it first opened to visitors in 1790, three years before Paris' Louvre Museum opened. The museum comprises Brukenthal Palace, the History Museum, the Natural History Museum, History of Pharmacy Museum and the Museum of Weapons and Hunting Trophies. Each of these buildings is itself a historic monument.



Summer visiting schedule (March 21st - October 21st): Tuesday - Sunday, 10:00-18:00; closed Mondays and the first Tuesday of each month.

Winter visiting schedule (October 21st - March 21st): Wednesday - Sunday, 10:00-18:00; closed Mondays and Tuesdays

Museum is closed on December 25th, 26th and January 1st, 2nd

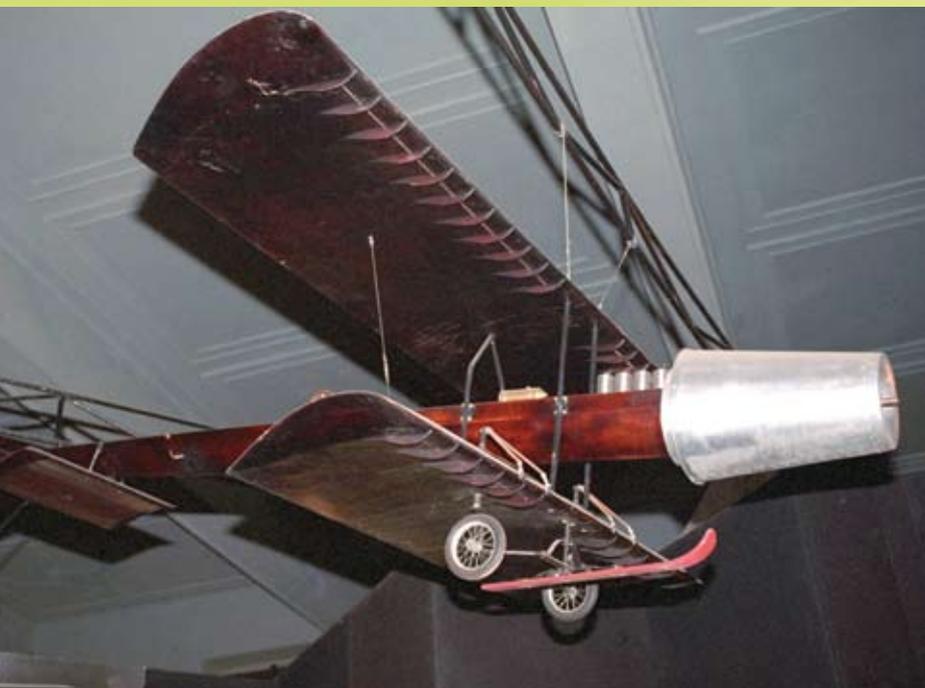
www.brukenthalmuseum.ro

Admission ticket: between 2 and 4 euro, depending on exhibition



Distinguished Romanians - Worthy Contributors to Human History

Meet some of the remarkable Romanians who over history have been true ambassadors for our country in the world.



A leap forward in Aviation History

The Romanian Air Force Museum reveals many fascinating surprises. As newspapers around the world reported, Traian Vuia was the first man to fly a craft heavier than air, equipped with its own takeoff, propulsion and landing systems. Thanks to Aurel Vlaicu, Romania was the second country in the world to use aircrafts in military manoeuvres. The Romanian Henri Coanda built the first airplane with reactive propulsion, the first airplane without a propeller.

Romanian Air Force Museum

Visiting hours:

Tuesday - Friday: 09:00-16:00

Saturday and Sunday: 10:00-17:00

www.roaf.ro

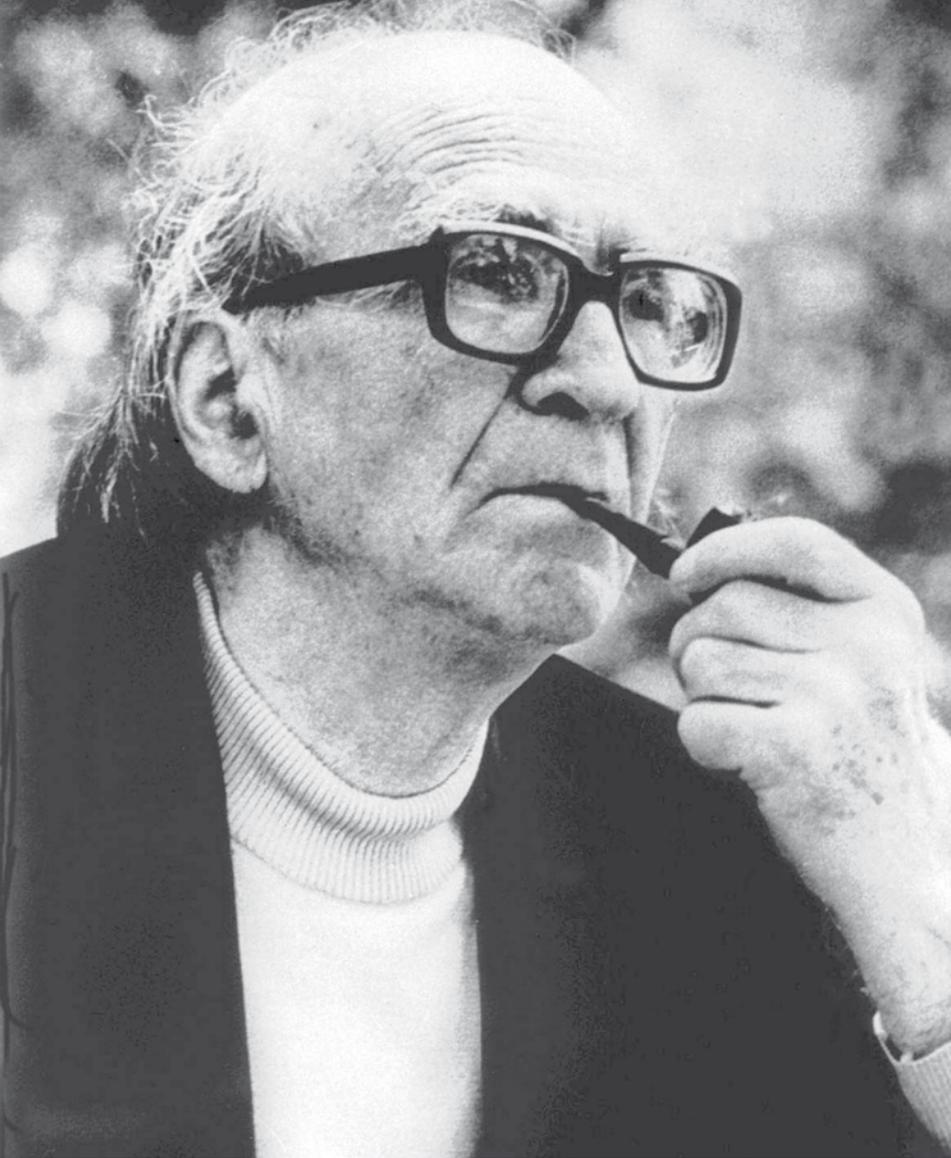
www.360trip.ro/museumaviatiei

Ana Aslan, the woman who held back time



Major political and cultural personalities from all over the world consulted Ana Aslan, the Romanian doctor and specialist in gerontology, for treatments with Gerovital, a revolutionary product designed to slow the aging process. Aslan was instrumental in the foundation of the world's first Geriatrics Institute in 1952, and also developed the anti-aging product Aslavital, patented and rolled out for industrial production in 1980.





Mircea Eliade

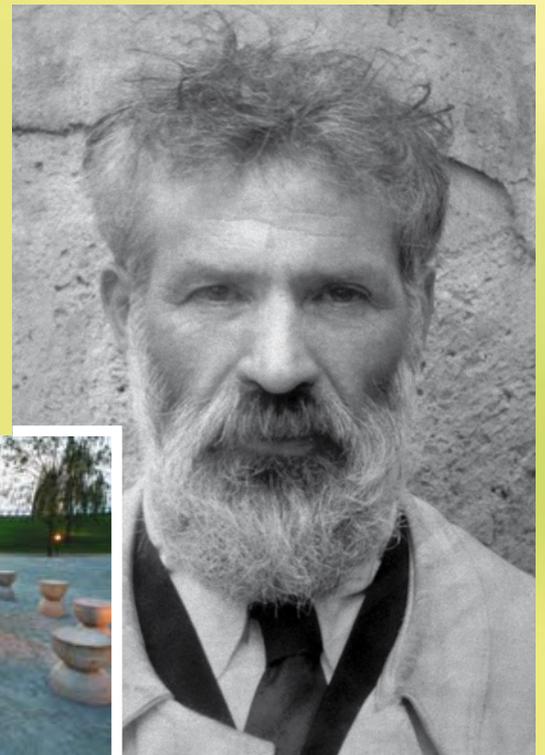
At present, Mircea Eliade's manuscripts have a special home in the National Museum of Romanian Literature, even though for a long time he did not please the communist regime. A well-known cultural figure all over the world, this philosopher and historian of religions was a professor at the University of Chicago, became an American citizen in 1966, and was given the honorary title 'Distinguished Service Professor'. Eliade authored 30 scientific volumes, literary works and philosophical essays which were translated into 18 languages, and approximately 1200 rigorously researched articles addressing extremely diverse themes. His complete work would fill over 80 volumes - excluding his personal journals and unpublished manuscripts.

National Museum of Romanian Literature

Visiting hours: Tuesday - Sunday: 9:00-17:00

Monday: closed

www.mnlr.ro



Constantin Brâncuși

Constantin Brâncuși was a key figure in the renewal of contemporary sculpture's expression. Leading auction houses worldwide have sold his works to elite collectors, but anyone can admire some of his sculptures in peace, in the Romanian city Târgu Jiu. The sculpture collection brings together three components in an homage to the heroic soldiers who lost their lives in the First World War - The Table of Silence, The Kiss Gate and the Endless Column.



Anghel Saligny

If you take the motorway from Bucharest to the Black Sea coast, you cannot miss the railway bridge over the Danube at Cernavodă. Built by Anghel Saligny between 1890 and 1895, it is a true monument to Romanian engineering and marks an innovation in bridge construction. At the time, it was the longest bridge in Europe and among the most important large-scale metal bridges in the world. Anghel Saligny was a remarkable civil engineer, a pioneer of construction technology using metal and reinforced concrete, and an accomplished inventor.

Eugen Ionescu

Theatre productions often provide food for the soul, and a truly inspiring play, well acted, brings positive energy to the bustle of our everyday lives. Perhaps more relevant than ever, Eugen Ionescu's *The Chairs* is an existential 'tragic farce' in which the human being is transformed into a simple object, stripped of any distinguishing qualities. Known outside Romania as Eugène Ionesco according to the French spelling, this son of a Romanian father and a French mother, became one of the foremost playwrights of France's 'Theatre of the Absurd' and a member of the French Academy. Ionescu's prolific output amounts dozens of books and hundreds of studies, doctor's degree theses, international colloquies, symposia and festivals.

<http://en.bulandra.ro/>



Music and ballet

What could be a more uplifting end to the day than an evening at the opera or ballet? And when the poster announces a performer of international standing, audiences are in for a rare treat. Since the end of the 19th century, Romania's opera audiences have become accustomed with the works of the world's great composers. Romania's most famous soprano is Haricleea Marturary, nicknamed Darclée by Saint-Saens. The role of Tosca in Puccini's opera of the same name was composed especially for her.

Today, Bucharest's National Opera is evolving other world-class Romanian artists.

In the 1960s, Romania's leading soloists earned an important place in ballet's gallery of stars, performing on the great international stages in competitions and festivals. The current repertoire includes masterpieces like *Romeo and Juliet* by Sergei Prokofiev, *Swan Lake* and *The Nutcracker* by Tchaikovsky, *Carmina Burana* by Carl Orff, *Daphnis and Chloe* by Maurice Ravel and *Corsair* by Adolphe Charles Adam.

www.operanb.ro





The 'George Enescu' International Festival

If your pleasure is to fill your soul with music of the highest quality, we invite you to the 'George Enescu' International Festival. This combined festival and competition was launched in 1958, three years after the composer's death. Over the years, the festival which takes place at the Roman Athenaeum and Radio Hall has drawn performances from the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Herbert von Karajan, the London Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Sir John Barbirolli and many other talents of world renown. The festival's competition element offers a platform to young performers and includes sections for piano, violin, cello and composition. The competition is open to all entrants, regardless of citizenship.

George Enescu (1881-1955) was the most important Romanian Musician of his time. Composer, violinist, pianist, conductor and teacher, Enescu studied in Vienna and Paris. He conducted Ludwig Van Beethoven's Ninth Symphony for the first time in Romania, and compositions by Claude Debussy, as well as his own creations including Symphony No. 2 (1913) and Orchestral Suite No. 2 in C Major (1915). Enescu's international celebrity rests especially on his Romanian Rhapsody No.1, which was made popular by Leopold Stokowski, conductor of the Philadelphia Philharmonic Orchestra.

www.festivalenescu.ro; <http://concurs.festivalenescu.ro/>



Suggested Cultural Itineraries

BUCHAREST AND SOUTHERN TRANSYLVANIA

Itinerary: Bucharest - Sinaia - Braşov - Sighişoara - Sibiu

Duration: 5 days

Best accessed by: train or car

» **Day 1:** Bucharest

Explore Bucharest, our capital city. In the evening enjoy a concert by George Enescu Philharmonic Orchestra or travel to Valea Călugărească, Romania's premier wine regions. After wine tasting and dinner, return to Bucharest.

» **Day 2:** Bucharest - Sinaia - Braşov (166 km)

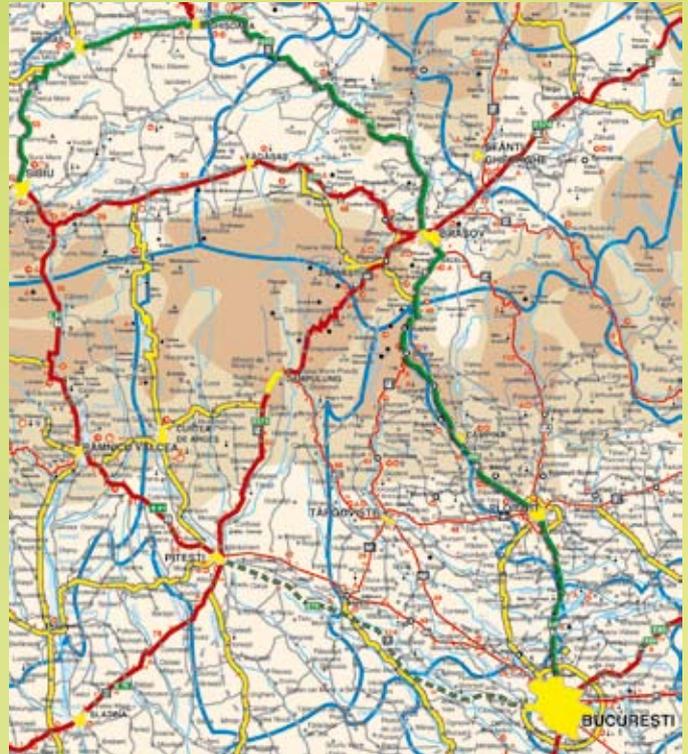
Drive or take the train to Sinaia and visit the Peleş Castle. Built in 1883, Peleş Castle is a masterpiece of German Renaissance architecture. The smaller Pelişor Castle features a unique collection of Viennese furniture and Tiffany glassware. Continue straight to Braşov or from Predeal take a 50 km detour to the village of Bran to visit the 14th century Bran (Dracula's) Castle then continue to Braşov. Overnight in Braşov.

» **Day 3:** Braşov - Sighişoara (116 km)

Sightseeing in Braşov. Highlights include: Council Square, the beautiful Saint Nicholas Church, Braşov Fortress, the Franciscan monastery. Do not miss the Black Church whose name is attributed to a fire started in 1689 by disgruntled invaders unable to breach the city's walls. Sightseeing in Sighişoara, one of the best-preserved medieval towns in Europe. Visit the Clock Tower, Church on the Hill, Scholars' Wooden Staircase, Venetian House, Hermann Oberth Square. Overnight in Sighişoara.

» **Day 4:** Sighişoara - Sibiu (178 km)

Sightseeing in Sibiu. Highlights include: Main Square, Huet Square



and the Evangelical cathedral, Bridge of Lies, Goldsmith Square, Great Square, Orthodox Cathedral, Roman Catholic Church, City Hall Tower. Overnight in Sibiu.

» **Day 5:** Return to Bucharest via Oltului Valley (282 km), or, in the warm season, on the scenic mountain road Transfăgărăşan.

STARTING FROM BUCHAREST: DISCOVER WALLACHIA

Itinerary: Bucharest - Târgovişte - Curtea de Argeş - Râmnicu

Vâlcea - Cozia - Horezu - Sinaia - Bucureşti

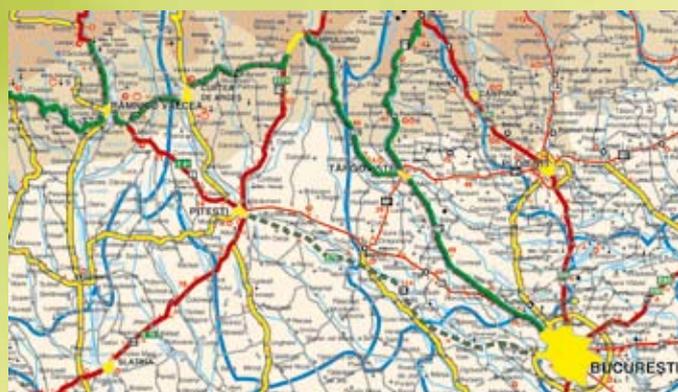
Duration: 5 days

Best accessed by: car

» **Day 1:** Explore Bucharest, Romania's capital city. Overnight in Bucharest.

» **Day 2:** Bucureşti - Târgovişte - Curtea de Argeş (186 km)

Drive to Târgovişte and visit the Princely Court. From Targovişte



continue to Curtea de Argeş to visit the 16th century Curtea de Argeş Monastery (Mănăstirea Curtea de Argeş) and the 14th century Princely Court (Curtea Domnească). Overnight in Curtea de Argeş.

» **Day 3:** Curtea de Argeş - Râmnicu Vâlcea - Călimăneşti (Cozia) (90 km)

On the way to Râmnicu Vâlcea, you can visit the church Dintr-un Lemn din Frânceşti (25km de Râmnicu Vâlcea). From Râmnicu Vâlcea, follow the Olt Valley. Spend a night in a private farm where you can enjoy homemade cheeses and grilled lamb pastrami, or even in a monastery. Enjoy the Călimăneşti area's local thermal and mineral waters. Visit the Cozia Monastery on the Olt Valley, built in the 14th century by the Wallachian voievode Mircea cel Bătrân. Overnight in Călimăneşti.

» **Day 4:** Râmnicu Vâlcea - Horezu (60km)

Return to Râmnicu Vâlcea. Drive to Horezu, where traditional painted ceramics can be seen. Visit the Horezu Monastery. Overnight in Horezu.

» **Day 5:** Horezu - Sinaia - Bucureşti (370km)

Drive to the mountain resort Sinaia. Visit the Peleş Castle and the Sinaia Monastery. Drive to Bucharest.

STARTING FROM TÂRGU MUREȘ: FORTIFIED CHURCHES FROM TRANSYLVANIA

Itinerary: Târgu Mureș - Sighișoara - Brașov - Sibiu - Alba-Iulia - Târgu Mureș

Duration: 7 days

Best accessed by: car or train

» **Day 1:** Târgu Mureș - Sighișoara (64 km)

Sightseeing in Sighișoara, one of the best-preserved medieval towns in Europe. Visit two of the fortified churches: Saschiz (visit the Saxon Fortress and the Clock Tower) and Viscri (visit the fortified church). Overnight in a hotel or in a guest house in Sighișoara.



» **Day 2:** Sighișoara - Brașov (116 km)

Travel to Brașov. Visit the village fortress in Rupea. Explore

Brașov's outstanding old town. Visit Prejmer, considered the strongest peasant fortification in medieval Transylvania. Its fortified church was built between the 15th and the 16th centuries. Overnight in Brașov.

» **Day 3:** Brașov - Sibiu (160 km)

Travel from Brașov to Sibiu. Visit the village fortress in Făgăraș. Visit Sibiu's Bruckenthal Palace and its rich art collections. Other attractions in Sibiu include Little Square (Craftsmen's Square), Bridge of Lies, Goldsmith's Square, the Orthodox Cathedral, several centuries - old churches and the City Hall Tower. Visit the fortress in Cisnădioara. Overnight in a hotel in Sibiu or in a guest house in Cisnădioara.

» **Day 4:** Sibiu - Alba-Iulia (70 km)

Travel from Sibiu to Alba-Iulia. Visit the fortress in Călnic, built in the 13th century. Visit the old city and the fortress in Alba-Iulia, the place of the first unification (after the Roman time) of the Romanian voivodates, in 1600. Overnight in a hotel in Alba-Iulia.

» **Day 6:** Alba-Iulia - Mediaș (155 km)

Travel from Alba-Iulia to Mediaș via Teiuș - Copșa Mică. Visit four of the most important Saxon fortified churches: Valea Viilor, Bazna, Biertan and Mediaș. Overnight in Mediaș.

» **Day 7:** Mediaș - Târgu Mureș (93 km)

Travel from Mediaș to Târgu Mureș via Sighișoara. Visit in Târgu Mureș the City Fortress and the Teleki Library a historic public library and current museum, containing one of the richest Transylvanian collections of cultural artefact.

STARTING FROM TIMIȘOARA: WESTERN ROMANIA'S ARCHITECTURE

Itinerary: Timișoara - Arad - Oradea - Timișoara

Duration: 3 days

Best accessed by: car or train

» **Day 1:** Timișoara

A walking tour of Western Romania's largest city should start in Union Square (Piața Unirii), a grand square built in Viennese style and flanked by colorful 18th and 19th century buildings. The Freedom Square (Piața Libertății) offers a great example of 19th century architecture. The town's main meeting place is Victory Square (Piața Victoriei), lined with cafes, bookstores and shops. Timișoara was the first European city to introduce horsedrawn trams (in 1869) and electrical street lighting (in 1889) - The Metropolitan Cathedral is a symbol of the city.

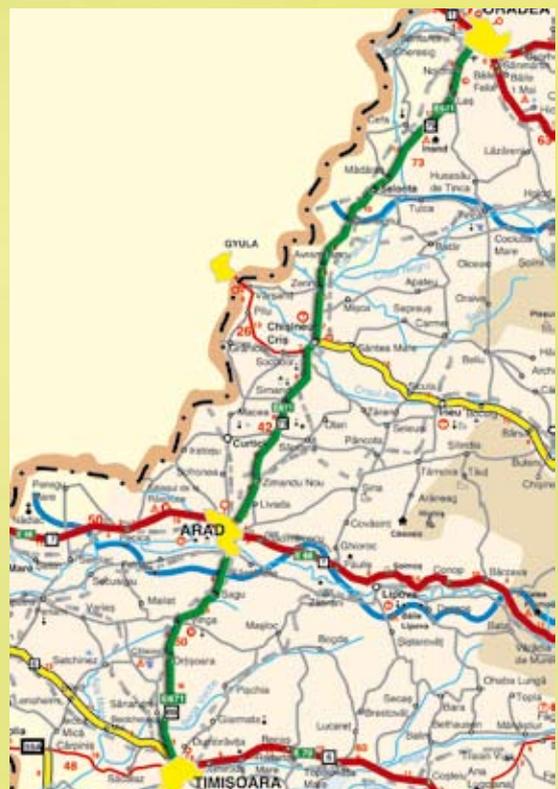
» **Day 2:** Timișoara - Arad - Oradea (165 km)

Travel to centuries-old Arad to see some impressive turn-of-the-century buildings, such as the neoclassical City Hall (1872-1874), the Palace of Culture (1913) and the Red Church. Do not miss the Serbian Church, with its Baroque interior; and the imposing Orthodox Cathedral. On Revoluției Boulevard there is an art gallery exhibiting furniture starting from the 17th century. Continue your journey to Oradea. Overnight in Oradea.

» **Day 3:** Oradea - Timișoara (165 km)

Spend the day in Oradea, one of the most picturesque towns in western Romania. Discover the city's 'Sezession' architecture.

Return to Timișoara or continue northeast to Maramureș, one of Romania's most unique, traditional, rural areas.



STARTING FROM IAȘI: THE PAINTED MONASTERIES

Itinerary: Iași - The Painted Monasteries - Iași

Duration: 3 days

Best accessed by: car

» **Day 1:** Iași

Starting from Iași, drive to the centuries old Cotnari vineyards. Take a wine tasting tour and try some of Romania's finest sweet white wines: Grasă de Cotnari, Tămâioasă and Fetească Albă. Enjoy dinner in a monastery and a Byzantine vocal concert by students from the Theological Faculty of Iași. Overnight in Iași.

» **Day 2:** Iași - The Painted Monasteries area

Drive northwest to Gura Humorului and discover the painted monasteries of Bucovina. Visit the three best-preserved 15th

century monasteries: Moldovița, Sucevița and Voroneț, the latter known as the 'Sistine Chapel of the East'. Overnight at a hotel in Gura Humorului or in one of the many B&Bs (pensiuine) in the nearby towns.

» **Day 3:** The Painted Monasteries Area - Iași

Return to Iași. Iași is often overlooked by many visitors but the city continues to be one of Romania's most important cultural centres and home to the country's first university. In 1565, Iași became the capital of the historic province of Moldova and for a short period of time, from 1859 until 1862, the capital of Romania.



STARTING FROM ORADEA: THE TRADITIONAL VILLAGES OF MARAMUREȘ

Itinerary: Oradea - Satu Mare - Maramureș villages

Duration: 3 days

Best accessed by: car or train and car

» **Day 1:** Oradea - Satu Mare (133 km)

Travel from Oradea northeast to Satu Mare. Overnight in Satu Mare. Sightseeing in Satu Mare: the impressive Secession buildings in the Great Square.

» **Day 2:** Satu Mare - Săpânța - Botiza (151 km)

After breakfast travel east to the village of Săpânța. Sightseeing at the Merry Cemetery. Continue 20 km east to the town of Sighetul Marmăției. Discover Maramureș' villages such as Vadul Izei, Barsana and Botiza. In Barsana visit the workshop of master wood-carver Toader Barsan, who represented Maramureș at the 2001 Smithsonian Festival in Washington, DC. Witness rural life, the traditional costumes still worn by the villagers, and the distinctive architecture. Overnight in a Maramureș village.

» **Day 3:** Botiza - Oradea (285 km)

Sightseeing at some of the area's wooden churches: Poienile Izei - famous for the representation of Hell on its main door, Ieud - featuring the oldest church in the entire region, Bogdan-Vodă and Surdești - at 54m one of the tallest wooden churches in the world.



ROMANIA'S TOURIST INFORMATION OFFICES ABROAD

AUSTRIA

Opernring 1, Stiege R, 4 Stock, Tür 404
A-1010 Vienna
Tel: (0043 1) 317.31.57
Fax: (0043 1) 317.31.574
e-mail: rumaenien@aon.at
www.rumaenien-info.at

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

9G Oriental Kenzo Office Building
48 Dongzhimenwai Street
Dong Cheng, 100027 Beijing
Tel: 0086-10-65.66.01.36
Fax: 0086-10-65.66.01.37
e-mail: china@romaniatourism.com

FRANCE

7, Rue Gaillon
75002 Paris
Tel: 0033-1-40.20.99.33
Fax: 0033-1-40.20.99.43
e-mail: info@guideroumanie.com
www.GuideRoumanie.com

GERMANY

Dachauer str. 32-34
D-80335 München
Tel: 0049-89-515.67.687
Fax: 0049-89-515.67.689
e-mail: muenchen@rumaenien-tourismus.de
www.Rumaenien-Tourismus.de

ITALY

Via Torino 95, Galleria Esedra
00184 Rome
Tel: 0039-06-488.02.67
Fax: 0039-06-4898.62.81
e-mail: office@romania.it
www.romania.it

POLAND

ul.Krakowskie Przedmieście 47/51
00-071, Warsaw
Tel/Fax: +48 22 826 40 10
e-mail: info.rumunia@wp.pl

RUSSIA

Masfilmovskaya Street No. 35, office 313
119330, Moscow
Tel: 007-499-143.87.65
Fax: 007-499-143.86.72
e-mail: romaniatravel@gtmail.ru
www.romaniatravel.ru

SPAIN

Calle Alcántara no. 49-51
28006, Madrid
Tel: 0034-91-401.42.68
Fax: 0034-91-402.71.83
e-mail: oficina@rumaniatour.com
www.rumaniatour.com

UNITED KINGDOM

22 New Cavendish Street
London W1G 8TT
Tel: (0044 207) 224.36.92
Fax: (0044 207) 935.64.35
e-mail: romaniatravel@btconnect.com
www.Romania.Travel

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

355 Lexington Avenue, 8th Floor
New York, NY 10017
Tel/Fax: 1 212.545.8484
e-mail: infoUS@Romania.Travel
www.Romania.Travel

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MINISTRY OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM

17 Aplodor street, North Side, Bucharest 050741

e-mail: info@mdrt.ro; www.mdrtr.ro

