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Travel to **ROMANIA**

The Garden of the Virgin Mary

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E I K O N

Bucharest, 2024

Summary

| | |
|---|-----|
| Recomandation | 7 |
| Preface | 9 |
| I. What Kind of Country is Romania? | 19 |
| 1. The Future of Romania lies in its Youth | 25 |
| 2. Before World War I, Romania ranked as the World's Eighth-Largest Trading Nation | 29 |
| 3. Romania: "The Garden of the Virgin Mary" | 34 |
| 4. "Romania - Miss Europe?" | 41 |
| 5. The Warm-Hearted Nature of the Romanian People. | 43 |
| II. Exploring the Major Cities of Romania | 47 |
| Arriving in Bucharest from Henri Coandă Airport | 50 |
| 1. Bucharest: The City with Two Faces | 63 |
| 2. Sinaia: The Ultimate Summer Getaway in Romania | 165 |
| 3. Bușteni: "A Sanctuary for Healing" | 179 |
| 4. Brașov: Romania's Premier Tourist City | 191 |
| [Note] Dracula: Legend and Reality | 235 |
| 5. Sighișoara: A Journey Back to the Middle Ages | 249 |
| 6. Sibiu: The European Capital of Culture in 2007 | 273 |
| 7. Alba Iulia: An Ancient City with a 2,000-Year History | 299 |
| 8. Timișoara: Romania's Pinnacle of Standard Living | 335 |
| 9. Oradea: The City that Shines Like a Jewel | 377 |
| 10. Cluj-Napoca: The Heart of Transylvania | 395 |
| 11. Baia Mare and Sighet: | |

| | |
|---|-----|
| Twin Centers in Maramureș County | 433 |
| 12. Iași: The Cultural Hub of Romania | 465 |
| 13. The Largest Port City on the Black Sea with a 2,700-Year Heritage. | 515 |
| III. Romania and the Wonders of Mother Nature | 537 |
| 1. Carpathian Mountains: The “Eastern European Alps” | 537 |
| 2. The Forests of Romania: A Verdant Wonderland | 552 |
| 3. The Danube River and the Danube Delta: “Europe’s Amazon” | 554 |
| 4. The Black Sea: A Vast and Enigmatic Waterbody | 561 |
| 5. Lake Techirghiol: Nature’s Healing Gem | 567 |
| 6. Sovata Resort: The Largest Heliothermal Lake in the world | 568 |
| 7. Romania’s Premier Salt Mines: Unveiling Subterranean Wonders | 569 |
| 8. Trovanții: The Enigma of “Living Stones” | 572 |
| 9. Berca’s Breathtaking Romanian Mud Volcanoes | 575 |
| 10. The Graceful Cascade of the Bigăr Waterfall | 576 |
| IV. Basic Information and National Holidays | 579 |
| 1. Basic Information | 579 |
| 2. National Holidays and Anniversaries | 585 |
| V. Romanian Food | 590 |
| VI. Planning a Trip to Romania | 618 |
| 1. Using Public Transportation | 618 |
| 2. Reservations and Ticketing | 621 |
| VII. Attempting to Speak Romanian | 625 |

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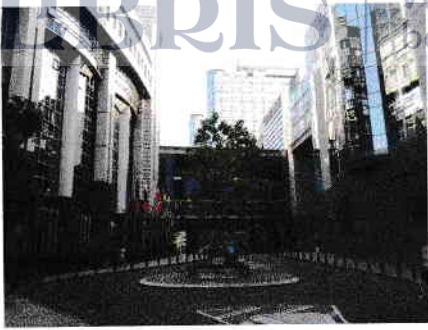
**I.
WHAT KIND
OF COUNTRY
IS ROMANIA?**

Romania, officially known as România, is a country often referred to as Rumania in English. It became a member of NATO in 2004 and joined the European Union in 2007. In terms of population, Romania ranks sixth among EU member states, and it holds the eighth-largest territory among the 27 EU nations.

With a rich history dating back to prehistoric times, Romania has faced numerous invasions from neighboring countries throughout its past. For instance, over a span of around 400 years between the Middle Ages and the Modern Period, Romanians engaged in 570 battles against the Ottoman Empire. Despite these challenges, Romanians managed to defend their nation and preserve their identity, earning a reputation as resilient and determined people by their neighbors.



NATO¹[Author Swadin]



EU and the European Commission in Brussels

Here is a Chronological Table of Romanian History:

- **82 BCE:** The Kingdom of Dacia was established by Burebista..
- **106 CE:** The Kingdom of Dacia fell to the Roman Empire, which ruled it until 275 CE.
- **After the 4th century:** Various migratory peoples invaded Romania, including the Goths, Huns, Slavs, Tatars, and others.
- **1330:** The Principality of Wallachia was established.
- **1347:** The Principality of Moldavia was established.
- **15th Century:** Wallachia and Moldavia became tributary states of the Ottoman Empire.
- **1600:** Prince Mihai Viteazul briefly unified Wallachia, Moldavia, and Transylvania.
- **1848:** The revolution affirmed Romanian national unity and identity.
- **1859:** Alexandru Ioan Cuza was elected as the first ruler after the unification of Wallachia and Moldavia.
- **1862:** The name 'Romania' was used for the country for the first time.
- **1866:** Carol I ascended to the Romanian throne.
- **1878:** Romania gained independence from the Ottoman Empire.



- **1881:** Romania became a kingdom, with Carol I as its first king..
- **1914:** World War I began, and Romania initially declared neutrality.
- **1916:** Romania entered World War I on the Triple Entente side and emerged victorious.
- **1917:** King Ferdinand I ascended to the throne.
- **1918:** Greater Romania was formed through the unification with Transylvania, Bessarabia, Bucovina, and Banat, a unification recognized by the Treaty of Trianon.
- **1930:** King Carol II ascended to the throne.
- **1940:** King Mihai I ascended to the throne.
- **1944:** Soviet troops entered Romania following a coup d'état led by King Mihai I, which overthrew the pro-German regime.
- **December 30, 1947:** The communist dictatorship began with the establishment of the Romanian People's Republic.
- **1965:** Nicolae Ceaușescu's dictatorship began.
- **1989:** The Romanian People's Revolution erupted, leading to the execution of Ceaușescu and his wife.
- **2004:** Romania joined NATO.
- **2007:** Romania joined the EU.

The Kingdom of Dacia, established by King Burebista in 82 BCE, fell to the Roman Empire in 106 CE, and it remained under Roman rule as an imperial province until 275 CE. However, due to the invasion of the territory by the Visigoths from the northern regions, the Roman Empire was forced to withdraw south of the Danube, which is now within the boundaries of present-day Bulgaria.

In the 14th century, the Principalities of Wallachia (1330-1859) and Moldavia (1347-1859) emerged in the south and east of Romania, respectively. The Principality of Transylvania (1570-1711) later took shape in the northern and western regions of Romania. In 1600, Michael the Brave (Mihai Viteazul: 1558-1601), the ruler of Wallachia, united the three principalities and designated Alba Iulia as the capital. However, in 1601, Michael was assassinated in Transylvania by Hungarian nobles with the support of the Habsburg Empire.



Greater Romania, 1918⁸ [Author Andrei Nacu]

By 1859, the united principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia began using the common name, România. Alexandru Ioan Cuza (1820-1873) was chosen by the nobility of both principalities as the first ruler of unified Romania. In 1877-1878, Romania secured independence from the Ottoman Empire (1299-1923), marking the beginning of an era of significant social progress.

The year 1918 holds profound significance in Romanian history. After World War I, Greater Romania (România Mare) emerged on December 1, 1918, as Bessarabia (now the Republic of Moldova), Bucovina, and Transylvania joined Romania. However, following World War II, Russia annexed Bucovina (the northern segment of the Moldavian province) and other portions of the Moldavian province (currently the Republic of Moldova).

1. THE FUTURE OF ROMANIA LIES IN ITS YOUTH.

Situated in southeastern Europe, Romania remains relatively unfamiliar to many of us. When thinking of Romania, certain figures often come to mind, including the iconic vampire Dracula, gymnast Nadia Comăneci, and the infamous Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceaușescu.

Common associations with Romania include “The 25th Hour,” a novel written by Romanian author Constantin Virgil Gheorghiu in 1949, and “Waves of the Danube,” a waltz composed by Iosif Ivanovici in 1880. Gheorghe Zamfir (1941-present), known as “The Master of the Pan Flute,” is a notable composer and performer from Romania. Angela Gheorghiu (1965-present), born in Adjud, Romania, is considered one of the world’s top three greatest living sopranos, alongside Diana Damrau and Anna Netrebko.

NADIA COMĂNECI: “THE GYMNASTICS FAIRY”

Nadia Elena Comăneci, celebrated as one of the most exceptional athletes of the 20th century, was born on November 12, 1961, in Onești City, Bacău County. Nadia’s extraordinary talent as an elite gymnast was discovered when she was just 6 years old by gymnastics coach Béla Károlyi, who would later become the coach of the Romanian national team. In 1971, at the young age of 10, Nadia achieved victory at the Romanian National Junior Championship. Her successes continued with a European Championship title in 1975 and an American Cup victory in 1976. Remarkably, at the age of 14, Comăneci achieved a historic milestone by becoming the first gymnast in the world to receive a perfect score of 10 at the Montreal Olympics. Following her return to Romania, Nadia received honorary accolades from Nicolae Ceaușescu, the then-president of Romania. She was bestowed the title of “Hero of Socialist Labor” and was presented with the prestigious “Order of the Star of the Romanian Socialist Republic” award. This recognition made her the youngest Romanian



Nadia Comăneci in Montreal 1976¹

[Author Unknown (Comitetul Olimpic si Sportiv Roman)]

to ever receive such an honor. In appreciation, she was gifted a Dacia 1300 car, a check for 350,000 lei, and an opulent villa situated in the Bucharest Cotroceni neighborhood. Interestingly, Cotroceni was ranked 18th on a list of Europe's 20 trendiest neighborhoods by travel websites Travel Supermarket and Cozy Traveler.

Nadia has earned numerous nicknames, each reflecting her exceptional gymnastic abilities. Her groundbreaking feat of performing a backward somersault in the competition earned her the moniker "cold little flea," representing the epitome of skill on the uneven bars. Her graceful and seemingly weightless routines on the 10-centimeter-wide balance beam often drew comparisons to a butterfly in flight. She graced the covers of esteemed magazines and newspapers, including Time, Newsweek, and Sports Illustrated. In fact, Time, the renowned U.S. news magazine, celebrated her with the headline "She's Perfect," dubbing her a "fairy who materialized in human form." Throughout her Olympic gymnastics journey, Nadia achieved a remarkable seven "Perfect 10s." Her illustrious career culminated in 21 gold medals earned from World Championships and Olympics before her retirement in 1984.

Before the 1989 Romanian Revolution, she defected to the United States and later married American gymnast Bart Conner in 1996. Together, they lead the Bart Conner Gymnastics Academy. A testament to her global influence, she became the first female athlete to address the United Nations in 1999. In 2003, she authored the book "Letters to a Young Gymnast," and she currently dedicates herself to charitable endeavors worldwide.

In modern times, Romania proudly boasts one of Europe's fastest internet speeds, accompanied by the distinction of having the highest number of IT engineers per capita. This reputation has positioned Romania as a sought-after hub for multinational IT corporations seeking outsourcing opportunities. The country's information security software sector stands out as one of the best globally. A testament to this expertise is the fact that around 200 Romanian researchers were previously employed at the Microsoft headquarters in Seattle, USA. Leading IT giants, including Microsoft, Amazon, Hewlett-Packard, Oracle, Nokia, SAP, Intel, and Wipro, have strategically established offices in major Romanian cities such as Bucharest, Iași, Cluj-Napoca, and Timișoara. This concentration highlights Romania's ascendancy in the field of information technology. These cities serve as focal points

for the IT industry, employing approximately 200,000 professionals. Notably, the IT sector demonstrates robust growth, with an annual rate exceeding 10%, contributing around 6% to the country's GDP. A comprehensive survey by Catalyst Solutions has recognized IT giants like Oracle, Microsoft, IBM, Google, Vodafone, and Amazon as among the top ten "Most Wanted Employers" in Romania.

In 1999, Romanian scientist Eugen Pavel introduced and patented the Hyper CD-ROM. Bitdefender, a global player established in 2001 and headquartered in Bucharest, is a leading internet security software company operating in over 100 countries through a network of offices and partners. Bucharest also witnessed the rise of UiPath in 2016, a pioneering company in robotic process automation (RPA), achieving the status of the world's top-ranked entity in its domain. Notably, UiPath is Romania's first unicorn, signifying a startup with a valuation exceeding 1 billion dollars. In a significant acquisition, prominent US venture firm Fitbit acquired Romanian startup Vector in 2017. Eric Friedman, co-founder of Fitbit, praises Romania's startup ecosystem



Microsoft Headquarters in Bucharest

in an interview with the Financial Times. He highlights the active presence of young tech entrepreneurs, often in their early twenties, who possess imaginative prowess and the audacity to challenge the global startup landscape. This growth is supported by increasing investment funds and business angels that provide backing to a growing array of technology-based startups.

Another noteworthy startup, CryptoDATA TECH, specializes in developing products and services rooted in blockchain technology, ensuring robust user security and data encryption across diverse applications.

Romania has undoubtedly made remarkable strides in sectors like IT, auto parts, and chemistry. However, in terms of overall economic development, there is still progress to be made to match the prosperity levels of more advanced European countries. Over the past 15 years, Romania has achieved impressive economic and consumption growth rates, ranking first and second, respectively, within the EU. By 2022, Romania's per capita GDP had exceeded 10,700 euros. Importantly, 2022 Eurostat data indicates that Romania has surpassed Portugal and Hungary in terms of GDP per capita, measured using purchasing power parity.

Romania's GDP has already outpaced that of Hungary, Greece, Portugal, and the Czech Republic, and experts predict further growth that could potentially surpass Austria's. IMF statistics reveal that Romania's GDP in 2021 was approximately equivalent to the combined GDPs of Hungary, Serbia, and Bulgaria. Furthermore, the IMF forecasts that Romania's per capita income will reach 76% of the EU average by 2026.

Following World War II, West Germany experienced a remarkable economic upturn often referred to as the "Miracle of the Rhine." Similarly, South Korea's impressive economic growth in the 1980s earned it the nickname "The Miracle on the Han River," establishing it as one of Asia's four dragons. Since 2017, Romania has earned the moniker "Eastern European Tiger" due to its rapid economic advancement in recent years. With this momentum, it is hopeful that Romania might soon be known as the "Miracle of the Olt River."



Olt River

2. ROMANIA WAS THE EIGHTH-LARGEST TRADING POWER IN THE WORLD.

Ceașescu's admiration for the leadership models of China and North Korea had a significant impact on Romania's policies and decisions, which ultimately led to detrimental effects on the economy and the well-being of the population. During his visits to North Korea in the 1970s and 1980s, Ceașescu was impressed by the cult of personality around Kim Il-sung, the supreme leader of North Korea, and drew inspiration from the North Korean model for implementing certain policies in Romania.

Four key policies that Ceașescu implemented, inspired by North Korea, were:

- 1) Systematization Program for Bucharest: Ceașescu initiated a program to reshape Bucharest, Romania's capital, based on the city planning model of Pyongyang, the capital of North Korea. This program aimed to transform Bucharest into a showcase of socialist development. However, the implementation of this program led to the demolition of historic neighborhoods, displacement of residents, and the construction of large apartment buildings lacking essential amenities.