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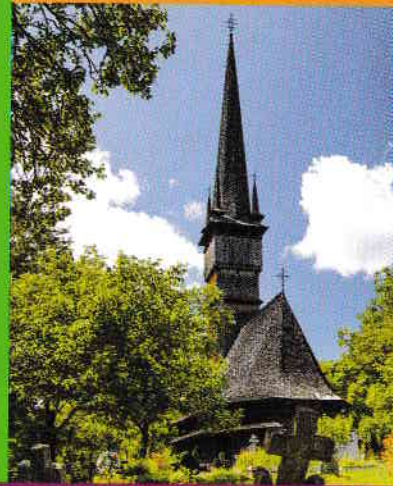
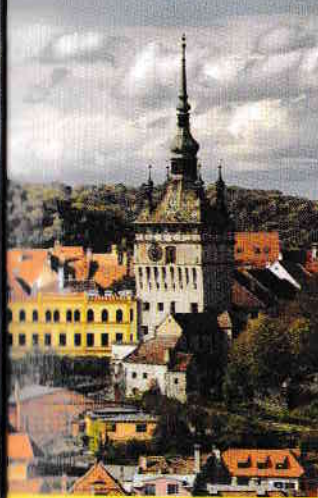
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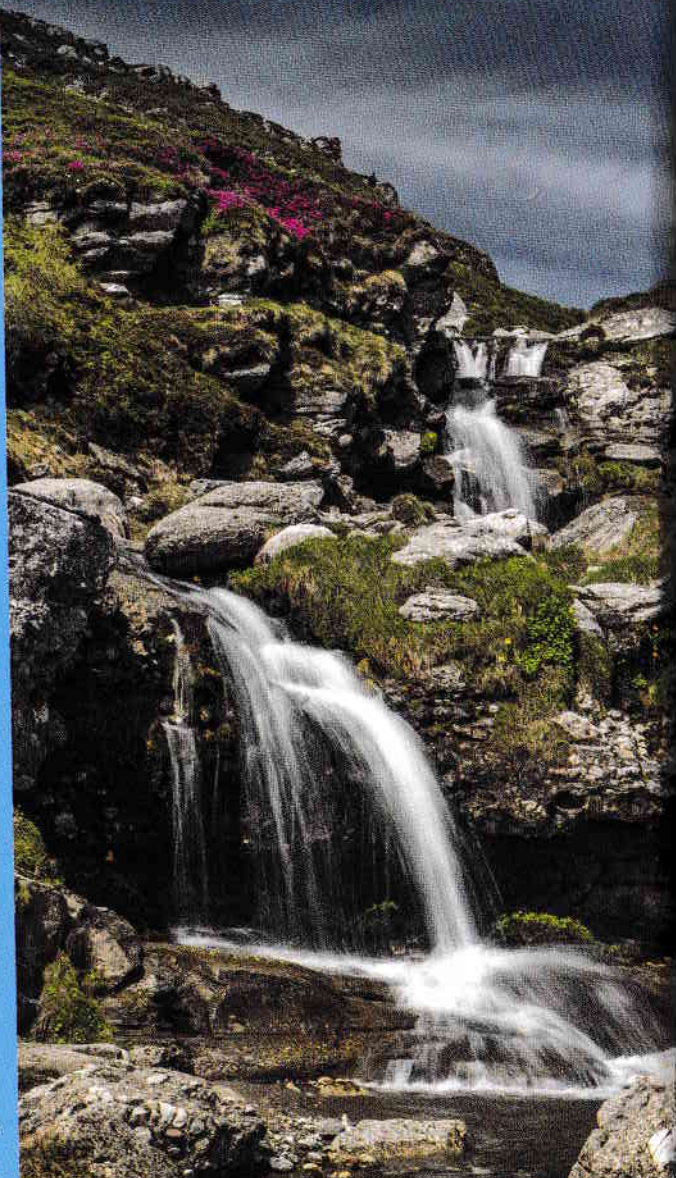
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Romania



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URDIS

Welcome to Romania!

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Lying on the eastern flank of the European Union, of which it became a member in 2007, Romania incorporates the old provinces of Wallachia, Moldavia, and Transylvania, regions that more or less share the same historical evolution, but inhabited in the majority by Romanians, the only descendants of the Romans, other than the small Romansh group, to have preserved that name. For centuries situated on the frontier of large empires: the Roman, the Ottoman, the Habsburg, and the Russian, the Romanian provinces absorbed multiple ethnic influences and cultural models. This synthesis, resulting from its rich experience of diversity, and its enormous natural heritage are the principal advantages that make Romania a country not only worth visiting but also getting to know more closely.

The starting point for any visit to Romania should be its capital, Bucharest, a constantly changing conurbation. But also very much worth visiting are Jassy, Cluj, Braşov, Sibiu, Sighişoara, and Oradea, cities large and small, some of them bustling and noisy, others bohemian and provincial, as if frozen in time.

Whereas the first image you get of Romania is provided by its cities, the most authentic and original image is to be found in its villages. Despite industrialisation and urbanisation, the



rural habitat, certain customs, ancient crafts, and a way of life little changed by the modern world have been preserved in many villages in the valleys of Maramuresch, Bukowina, and the Motzenland. With its topography that descends in shelves from the heights of the Carpathians to the Black Sea, Romania's list of natural beauties is endless. Mountains cover a third of the country's surface area. More than half of the thousand-mile-long Carpathian mountain chain lies within Romania, forming a patchwork of naked peaks, forested slopes, alpine meadows, valleys, wild gorges, and passes. Forty per cent of Europe's mammal species live in the forests of the Carpathians and Sub-Carpathians, including the continent's largest population of large carnivores.

Around five per cent of Romania is a protected natural area, of which 2.43% consists of the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve, which has formed over the course of sixteen thousand years where Europe's second longest river empties into the Black Sea: a vast network of channels, lakes, pools, sandbanks, endless expanses of reeds, and the subtropical Letea and Caraorman forests, the Delta is a fascinating museum of biodiversity and is a UNESCO World Heritage site.

At the end of a holiday in Romania, you will find it hard to say what impressed you the most: the natural treasures with which the country is endowed, the spectacular buildings, or the traditions and customs that have stood the test of time.



2nd millennium B.C.

Gaeto-Dacians are attested within the Carpathian and Danube regions and in the 1st century B.C. form the Kingdom of Dacia under Burebista.

87-106 A.D.

King Decebal establishes his capital at Sarmizegetusa and consolidates the union of the Dacians.

101-102, 105-106

Roman Emperor Trajan conquers the greater part of Dacia. The Romans occupy Dacia until the year 271 and Latin forms the basis for what will later become the Romanian language.

4th-12th centuries

The territory of the Daco-Romanians is invaded by successive waves of migratory tribes.

9th-10th centuries

In Transylvania, the Banat and Partium Vlach statelets ruled by Gelu, Glad and Menumorut are attested, which attempt to hold out against invading Magyar tribes.

11th-13th centuries

Transylvania comes under the rule of the kings of Hungary, who bring in Saxon and Szekler colonists.

14th century

Through the union of older statelets, Wallachia is formed to the south of the Carpathians in 1330 and Moldavia to the east in 1359.

15th century (1448, 1456-1462 and 1476)

Vlad the Impaler consolidates the defences of Wallachia in the face of Ottoman expansion. Over the course of time, he will become a figure of myth and legend.

1457 and 1504

The reign of Stephen the Great, a fierce mediaeval knight and a brilliant strategist and statesman.

1599-1600

Michael the Brave briefly unites the Romanian-speaking principalities.

1711-1821

Moldavia and Wallachia are ruled by the Phanariots. The native aristocratic estates are restored after the uprising led by Tudor Vladimirescu (1821).

1775

The Habsburg Empire occupies the north-west of Moldavia, known as Bukowina.

1784 (the Horea, Cloșca and Crișan Revolt)

In Transylvania an uprising of the serfs against the Hungarian nobility is crushed.

1812

Bessarabia is annexed by the Russian Empire. It will remain under Russian rule until 1918, when it declares independence a few months before unification with Romania.

1828-1834

Following the Russo-Turkish War, Moldavia and Wallachia are occupied by the Russian Empire, which until 1834 imposes parallel military rule, passing the Organic Regulations, legislation that brings about a series of reforms.



1848

The ideas of the 1848 Revolution find an echo in the three Romanian provinces, but the revolutionary movements are crushed.

1859

The unification of the Romanian Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia under Alexander John Cuza.

1866

Carol of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen is elected ruler of Romania.

9 May 1877

Romania declares its independence from the Ottoman Empire. Dobrudja, ruled by the Turks since 1417, is reclaimed.

1881-1947

Romania is proclaimed a kingdom and Carol I takes the title of King. The Romanian throne is subsequently occupied by

Ferdinand I (1914-27), Carol II (1930-40) and Michael I (1927-1930; 1940-47).

1916-1918

Romania enters the First World War on the side of the Entente. At the end of the war, the Austro-Hungarian and Russian empires disintegrate, and Romania unifies with Bessarabia (9 April), Bukowina (28 November) and Transylvania (1 December) to form the Greater Romania.

1 December 1918

The Grand National Assembly is held in Alba Iulia to mark the Union of Transylvania and Romania.

1941-1944

Marshal Ion Antonescu, who rules Romania dictatorially from 1941 to 1944, allies the country with the Axis in the Second World War.

23 August 1944

Marshal Antonescu is deposed and the Romanian Army joins the Allies. At the end of the war, northern Transylvania, annexed by Hungary, is returned to Romania, but the territories of Northern Bukowina, Bessarabia, and the Herța Land remain under the control of the U.S.S.R. and southern Dobrudja (the Quadrilateral) under the control of Bulgaria.

30 December 1947

Having forced King Michael to abdicate, the Communists proclaim the Romanian People's Republic.

1947-1965

Under Communist leader Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, the country remains within the Soviet sphere of influence.

1965-1989

Romania is ruled by Nicolae Ceaușescu, who imposes a national-communist dictatorship and implements policies of forced industrialisation and urbanisation.

December 1989

Ceaușescu is toppled from power after a large-scale popular uprising triggered by a revolt in Timișoara. Political pluralism is re-established and a market economy is adopted.

2007

Romania joins the European Union.

Be SMART!

Made from natural materials and featuring refined patterns in unique combinations of colours, traditional wall rugs, used as wall hangings, bedspreads, and covers for storage chests, were indispensable decorative elements of the 'good room' in traditional dwellings. They were the centrepiece of a bride's dowry, and also items of great significance in funeral rites. The technique for weaving wall rugs was passed down in the family from mothers and grandmothers and constitutes an expression of creativity and cultural identity,

a link connecting groups of different ages and social and economic backgrounds. Items requiring great labour, painstakingness, creativity, originality, and refinement, decorative rugs are one of the most important expressions of Romanian identity.



The March Day thong is a custom that has been studied closely since the nineteenth century, but whose origins are far older. A metal snowdrop, clover leaf, butterfly or any number of other such objects tied to a tasselled thong woven from a white and a red thread ('the rope of the days, weeks and months of the year,' as ethnologist Ioan Ghinoiu defines it) is exchanged between mothers and children, between boys and girls, and in times past was hung from doors and windows, from the horns of domestic animals, and from fruit trees. The March Day thong is regarded as a good-luck charm, a symbol of hope and renewal. In time the March Day thong has lost its magical function, but it is still something that links together all the members of the community. A symbol of friendship and the joy of spring, the tradition has been added to the UNESCO Intangible World Heritage list.

ROMANIA IN FIGURES

- **Surface area:** 238,397 km²
- **Population:** 19,317,984 (2021), 89.33% Romanian, 6.05% Hungarian, 3.44% Roma
- **Religion:** 73.6% Orthodox Christian, 6.3% Protestant, 3.9% Roman Catholic
- **Number of tourists:** 14 million (2024)

We know books



The Dance of the Swains

A demonstration of strength and virtuosity, and evidence of intercultural communication within a multi-ethnic region such as Transylvania, the dance of the swains is performed by boys and men aged from five to seventy, by Romanians, Hungarians and Roma alike, to mark traditional holidays and at weddings and fairs. One of the most athletic of the Romanian traditional dances, the dance of the swains includes various figures: leaping, heel-clicking both on the ground and in mid-air, cross-stepping, foot-stamping, leg-slapping, and finger-clicking. Its structure depends on the ethnographic area and the individual creativity of the dance leader. The Transylvanian dance of the swains enhances social cohesion and provides young men with the opportunity to consolidate their social status within the traditional community, particularly in front of unmarried young women and their families, with a view to marriage.



the carollers with money and ritual gifts; ring loaves, apples, walnuts. With deep roots in folk culture and traditions, carolling fosters solidarity between the band of young men and the rest of the community and helps reinforce the continuity of the ethical and aesthetic patterns of traditional society.

The *Căluș* is an ancient Romanian dance, whose origin was either a Dacian folk dance or Roman theatre. It is performed in the south of the country at Whitsuntide (Pentecost) by bands of five, seven, nine, eleven or more (always an odd number) of young men, each of whom plays a well-defined rôle, such as the Mute, the Overseer, the Overseer's assistant, and the Flag Bearer. The *Căluș* is a ritual dance with a magical function, which involves foot-stamping, heel-clicking, and leaping to the accompaniment of shouts. In a state of euphoria, the *Căluș* dancers perform to music played by fiddlers. The oldest recorded *Căluș* melody dates from the seventeenth century, but the ritual is far older. In the past, people believed that the dance brought fruitfulness, drove out evil spirits, and exerted healing powers.

The tradition of roving bands of carollers, placed on the UNESCO Intangible World Heritage List in 2013, dates back to a ritual to mark the winter solstice, possibly Roman in origin, over which Christian rituals have been superposed. In the present day, it is practised in most Romanian villages on Christmas Eve by young men who go from house to house singing traditional seasonal songs that venerate human labour and a love of nature. Householders reward

Carolling

The Căluș Ritual

Romanian cuisine owes its diversity and wealth of different tastes and aromas to the country's geographical position and tumultuous history. A synthesis of Turkish, Balkan, Russian, German, Austrian, Hungarian and French gastronomic traditions, Romanian dishes are delicious. Every major religious holiday has its own special menu, and on such occasion meals for the extended family are a tradition.

- **Zacuscă** – a vegetable spread made from roasted aubergines and peppers, onion, and tomatoes, which is made in autumn and preserved for the winter.
- **Shepherd's Bulz** – maize porridge filled with cheese and sausages and browned on a traditional hob or in the oven.
- **Mititei (mici)** – small rolls of grilled minced beef, pork and lamb seasoned with garlic and condiments, and served with bread and mustard.
- **Tripe Ciorbă** – a filling *ciorbă* made from boiled beef tripe with cream, egg yolks and vinegar served piping hot with chili peppers and garlic.
- **Rădăuți Ciorbă** – made from chicken and vegetables, seasoned with cream, egg, garlic and vinegar.
- **Meatball Ciorbă** – a *ciorbă* with pork or beef meatballs, rice and condiments boiled in a mixture of vegetables and borsh.
- **Bean Ciorbă with smoked meat** – a thick *ciorbă* made from beans, smoked pork on the bone, root vegetables, and tomato paste.
- **Sarmale** – pickled cabbage or vine leaves stuffed with minced meat, rice and condiments, cooked over a low flame in tomato sauce with pork on the bone.



- **Cabbage à la Cluj** – a dish specific to Transylvania, similar to *sarmale*, but with the cabbage, rice and minced meat layered rather than in rolls.
- **Moldavian tochtură** – a stew made from fried pork, sausages, bacon on the bone, and smoked bacon fat, served with maize porridge, fried egg and cheese.
- **Cozonac** – a traditional Easter and Christmas dessert, similar to panettone, made from fluffy dough stuffed with walnut, cocoa, Turkish delight or poppy seeds, baked until golden brown.



- **Pască** – an Easter dessert made from sweet *cozonac* dough stuffed with cottage cheese, egg and raisins.
- **Papanashi** – doughnuts with cottage cheese, served hot with cream and jam, usually blueberry.
- **Plum dumplings** – dumplings made from potato and flour dough, stuffed with plums. Once boiled, they are rolled in sugared breadcrumbs and cinnamon.

Drinks:

- **Palincă** – traditional beverage from Transylvania, with a high alcohol content (around 52% proof), made by fermentation and distillation of various kinds of fruit (plums, quinces, pears, apples). In Maramuresch it is called *horincă*.
- **Tulcă** – alcoholic beverage made from plums using the same method as palinka, but which is usually weaker.
- **Atust** – juice obtained from fresh grapes during the first stage of the winemaking process.
- **Fruit liqueurs** – traditionally made from blueberries (*afine*), raspberries (*zmeură*), or sour cherries (*vișine*) fermented with sugar to which alcohol is added, and which are called *afinată*, *zmeurătă*, and *vișinată* respectively.
- **Wine** – Romania is the sixth largest wine producer in the European Union. Prize-winning wines are produced at Budureasca, Jidvei, the Negarcea Royal Estate, the Sâmburești Estates, SERVE, Recea, Crama De Matei/Cali de la Letea, and Gârboiu.