

ROMANIA

Geography

Romania is situated in South-Eastern Europe, between latitudes 43-37'07" and 48-15'06" North and longitudes 20-15'44" and 29-41'24" East, extending approximately 480 km North to South and 640 East to West.

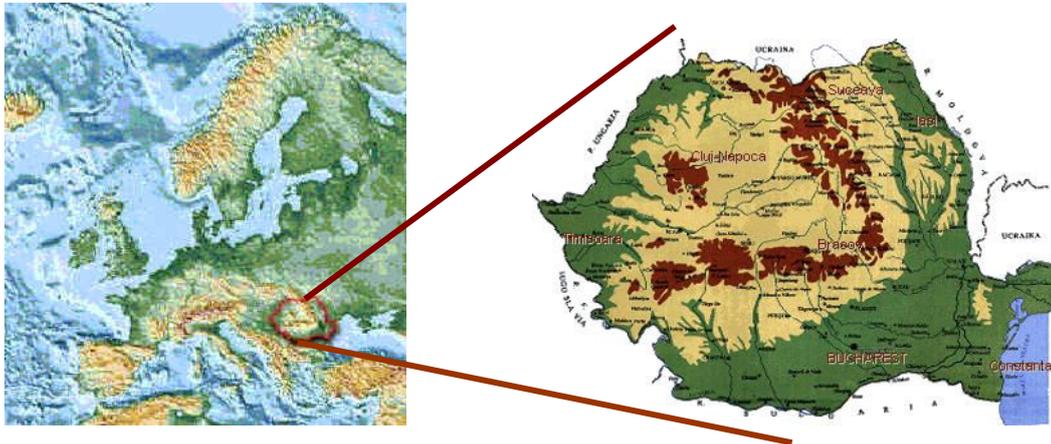
The country has an area of 237,500 sq. km and a population of over 23,000,000 of which 89% are Romanians, 7% Hungarians, 2% Gypsies, with small minorities of Germans, Ukrainians, Serbs, Slovaks, Turks, Czechs, Greeks, Jews, Armenians, Poles, Albanians...

The Carpathians form a mountainous arch in the centre of the country, bordered on both sides by hills and plateaus and there are great plains off the outer rim.

Forests cover over a quarter of the country and the fauna is one of the richest in Europe including wolves, bears, deer, lynx and chamois.

The mighty Danube forms the southern boundary of the country ending with the Delta or the Black Sea, a haven for countless local and migratory birds.

Countries sharing borders with Romania are Hungary, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, the Republic of Moldavia and the Ukraine.



Standard Time

East European zone lime (GMT + 2 hours). Romania lies in the same time zone with the Republic of Moldova, Finland, Greece, Israel, Egypt and the Republic of South Africa.

History

The territory of Romania has been inhabited since the Paleolithic. The ancestors of the Romanian people are the Dacians, fierce warriors subdued by the Romans under Trajan in two extremely difficult campaigns at the beginning of the 2nd century AD. However, the relatively brief Roman occupation (165 years) left a lasting legacy: the Latin language which survived the numerous subsequent invasions of migratory peoples.

Over the years a Romanian identity developed progressively with the formation of the feudal states of Walachia and Moldavia in the 13th and 14th centuries. Centuries of fighting against the Turks ensued in these states. Meanwhile Transylvania was occupied successively by the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian Empires.

Finally Moldavia and Walachia were united in 1859, independence was achieved in 1877, and union with Transylvania in 1918.

The communist rule established after the 2nd world war lasted 45 years and ended with the revolution in December 1989.

National Day

December 1 was adopted as National Day in 1990, being the day of celebration of the Great Assembly of Alba Iulia which voted for the union of Transylvania with Romania and which symbolize the union of all Romanians within a single state and the achievement of the unity of Romanian national state.

National Flag

Proportion 3/2, three equal vertical stripes red, yellow, and blue (near to the staff). In December 1989 the emblem on the yellow stripe was removed. The tricolor flag was adopted for the first time as national flag during the 1848 Revolution in Walachia.



State Anthem (since 1990)

Awake, Ye, Romanian, from your lethargic sleep/ In which your barbarous tyrants have sunken you so deep. Lyrics: Andrei Muresanu, music: Anton Pann. The song was popular during the 1848.

Climate

The climate is continental-temperate, characteristic for Central Europe (hot summers, cold winters, very distinct seasons, abundant snowfalls especially in the mountains). The southern regions are the warmest.

Annual rainfall averages are 677 mm, but they are higher in the mountains (1,000 - 1,4000 mm) and below the average on the sea coast (below 400 mm).

Average temperatures in different parts of the country are:

	Summer [° C]	Winter [° C]	Average [° C]
Black Sea Coast	20.0	2.4	11.2
Bucharest	21.8	0.6	11.2
Cluj-Napoca	18.2	-2.6	7.8
Predeal	14.5	-4.5	5.0
Danube Delta	20.8	2.3	11.5
Timisoara	21.2	0	10.6

Please note that in summer, during the day, there were recorded temperatures as high as 35 degrees Celsius.

Clothing

Apart from clothes fashionable for the current season, it is always advisable to pack a warm pullover, a raincoat and good walking shoes. Very warm clothing is recommended in winter. In any event clothing is good value in Romania so you can always purchase additional items once you get there if necessary.

Major Cities and Their Population

Bucharest: 2,300,000; Brasov: 353,000; Timisoara: 333,000; Iasi: 333,000; Cluj-Napoca: 318,000; Constanta: 316,000; Sibiu: 169,000; Targu Mures: 165,000; Suceava: 106,000.

Language

The Romanian language is the mother language of around 90% of the country's population. The easternmost representative of the family of Romance languages, Romanian descends directly from the Latin. The citizens belonging to ethnic minorities may freely use their mother language in schools, administration, justice, the media, and culture.

The main foreign languages used in Romania are: English, French, and German. From the mid-19th century to the 1960s, the main foreign language used in Romania was French, to a certain extent, German.

Religion

Most Romanians are Orthodox Christians (87%). Catholics of the Oriental and Roman rites are well represented (5%). There are also Reformed / Lutheran (3%), Unitarian (1%), Neo-Protestant, Armenian, Muslim and Jewish communities. Religious freedom is guaranteed by the Romanian constitution.

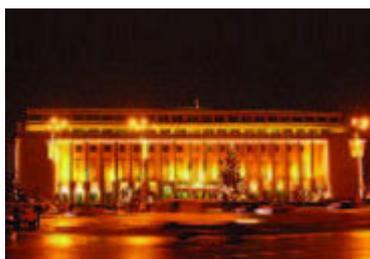
The Political System and the Public Administration

According to the Constitution adopted in 1991, Romania is a parliamentary republic with a bicameral Parliament. The president of the country, the senators and the members of the lower chamber are elected every four years by universal secret ballot.

There are numerous parties taking part in the Romanian political life, but only the important ones are represented in Parliament. The ethnic minorities also have such a representation.

Democratic rights and freedoms are guaranteed by the Constitution.

Romania's territory is divided into 40 districts administered by prefects: the mayors of municipalities, towns and villages are subordinated to the district administration. Bucharest, the capital, has its own administration, similar to that of the districts.



International Membership

Romania is part of the European Union and NATO.

Romania has diplomatic and consular relations with 164 states and is a member of UNO, IAEA, IBRD, FAO, IFAD, GATT, ICAO, ILO, IMO, WMO, WIPO, WHO, UNIDO, ITU, UNESCO, UPU.

Weights And Measures

The metric system is in force since 1866.

Currency Exchange

The national currency is the *leu* (plural *lei*). Its subdivision is called *ban* (plural *bani*). Coins come in units of 1, 5, 10, and 50 *bani*. Bills come in units of 1, 5, 10, 100 and 200 *lei*.



Euro bills are the most readily negotiated currency in Romania and it is a good idea to take some with you preferably in bills of lesser value.

Avoid the black market exchange as this is an illegal operation and subject to punishment according to the law.

Foreign currency can only be exchanged at banks and authorized exchange offices. As rates can vary from one place to another it is wise to shop around. Keep the exchange receipts.

While credit card use is becoming common, it is wise to ask before counting on credit card payment for accommodation, meals or purchases. Cash advances on credit cards can be taken out at most city banks. ATMs, called *Bancomate*. You can get cash from most ATMs in lei.

Getting There By Air

Regular and charter flights of Romanian airlines (namely Tarom) and of the foreign airlines with offices in Bucharest (Delta, Air France, Lufthansa, Alitalia, Swissair...) connect Bucharest with the world's major airports.

Romania's international airports are Bucharest - Otopeni, Constanta-Mihail Kogalniceanu, Timisoara, and Cluj-Napoca.

Otopeni International Airport in Bucharest is situated 18 km away from the city centre. The centre can be reached by airport coach (fare 600 lei) or by taxi. Check with your travel agent as tour operators can often supply transfers at very competitive rates.

Getting There By Rail

International express trains connect the main central European capitals with Bucharest, the Black Sea coast and the main cities in the country. Romania is a member of the International Railway Tariff System RIT and Inter Rail.

Getting There By Road

The access ways to Romania are: Berlin, Warsaw, Budapest-Petea E 81: Vienna, Prague, Budapest-Bors E 60 or Nadlac E64 or Varsand E 671: Trieste, Belgrade-Moravita E 70 or Portile de Fier E 70: Athens, Tirana, Sofia-Giurgiu E 85; Istanbul, Sofia- Vama Veche E 87: Moscow, Kiev, Kishinev-Albita E 580; Warsaw, Kiev, Chernowitz-Siret E 85. All roads are marked in accordance with international regulations. Cars are driven on the right side of the road and can overtake on the left.

Distances between Bucharest and various main cities are: Athens-1252 km, Berlin-2154 km, Berne (Zurich)-2125 km, Brussels-2394 km, Bonn-2100 km, Budapest-893 km, Copenhagen-2587 km, Frankfurt-2100 km, The Hague (Amsterdam)-2428 km Helsinki-2900km, Istanbul -704 km, Kiev-1065 km, Kishinev-445 km, Lisbon-4120 km, London-2577 km, Madrid-3530 km, Minsk-1650 km, Moscow-1963 km, Oslo-2820 km, Paris-2401 km, Prague-1465 km, Riga-1955 km, Rome-2149 km, Sofia-407 km, Stockholm -3100 km, Vienna - 1100 km. Warsaw-1797 km.

If you come to Romania by car, bring your driving license, car papers and green card.

Tourist Visas

Romania is a European Union member, so there is no visa requirement for citizens from EU member states.

Entry or transit visas may be obtained from the diplomatic and consular offices of Romania abroad by all those in possession of a valid passport, recognized by the Romanian state. Applicants must prove they have the means to support themselves financially for the period of their stay in Romania.

When To Come

Romania is indeed a country for all seasons. A country for lazing in the sun and taking it easy, touring for cultural enrichment, for winter sports, hiking, boating and activities of all kinds.

Thus, the best time to come over depends on what you want to do! Holidays on the Black Sea coast are most enjoyable between June and September. On the other hand, winter sports in the Carpathians are best practiced from Christmas to March. Spring and autumn are perfect for touring vacations throughout the country, while Bucharest is at its best from spring to autumn, although not lacking charm in winter too.

This is the time to enjoy the opera season, attend concerts, and taste the hearty Romanian cuisine in warm and welcoming restaurants.