

Things to know About ROMANIA

1.THE COUNTRY

Romania, the twelfth largest country in Europe, is situated in SE Europe, halfway between the equator and the North Pole and equidistant from the Atlantic Coast- to the west and the Ural Mountains to the east. Romania shares the border with the Ukraine and Moldova to the north and the east. Bulgaria lies to the south, Serbia and Montenegro to the southwest, and Hungary to the west. In the southeast, 245 kilometers of Black Sea coastline provide an important outlet to the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean. Romania's natural landscape is equally divided among mountains, hills and plains. The Carpathian Mountains reach elevations of more than 2,400 meters while the Danube Delta is just a few meters above sea level.

It has a population of about 22,000,000 inhabitants and an area of 238,391 km².

Its capital, Bucharest is located in the S-SE part of the country and it's the most important economical and socio-cultural city of Romania.

Number of bird species: 396.

2.TIME

Romania is in the Eastern Europe time zone (GMT + 2) and this changes to Daylight Saving Time/Summer Time (GMT + 3) from last Sunday of March to last Sunday of October.

3.CLIMATE

The climate is temperate-continental. Summers are dry and hot and on the Black Sea Coast summer temperatures are moderated by the sea breeze. Winters are cold and it snows throughout most of the country. Coldest winters are in the Carpathian Mountains, where there is snow from November to April, and mildest on the coast. Rainfall, although adequate throughout the country, decreases from west to east and from mountains to plains.

Required Clothing

Lightweights are worn in summer on the coast and in low inland areas. Warm, water and wind resistant clothes are needed in winter and throughout the year in the uplands. Rainwear is recommended throughout the year.

4. TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

Citizens of the countries of the European Union can enter Romania with their Identity Card. For all overseas/ non-EU visitors, passport is required and has to be valid for at least six months from the date of entry into Romania. American and Canadian citizens, as well as citizens of Australia, New Zealand and most European countries do not need an entry visa to visit Romania, for stays up to 90 days. Citizens of any other country should check the visa regulations that apply to them with the nearest Romanian Consulate.

5.SAFETY

When not travelling on tour with us, maintain a level of personal security awareness. There is the risk of petty theft in large towns, especially in Bucharest, and of pickpockets and bag snatchers in crowded areas (near exchange shops, hotels, on public transport - mainly railway stations and inside airport terminals). Do not hand over your passport in public.

6.HEALTH

At present no immunizations or unusual health precautions are necessary or required, though tourists should consult their GP before they arrive. If you're an EU citizen, an European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) available from health centres covers you for most medical care.

Tourists are strongly advised not to drink water from the tap, especially while they are traveling into the Danube Delta. If you are travelling during the warm season an insect repellent is recommended. In winter time, use a face & hands moisturizing cream and stash a lip balm in your pocket, but most important keep your whole body hydrated.

In Romania the medical services are available in state and private health unites throughout the country. Romanian doctors are known for their high standard of medical education. For any medical emergency please dial 112 - emergency call through public and mobile telephone networks in Romania (0040112 if you dial from your personal mobile phone).

7.TRANSPORTATION

Flights

Bucharest –the capital city of Romania has 2 international airports situated to the north: Henri Coanda (OTP) airport - the largest and busiest, which handles the majority of mainline flights to Romania and the domestic flights as well, and Aurel Vlaicu (Băneasa) airport where low-cost flights/charters arrive (Blue Air and Wizz Air have a hub on the airport, connecting Bucharest to destinations in Italy, Spain, Britain, Germany, Belgium and France). Other international airports are in Timișoara (to the west), Cluj-Napoca (in Transylvania) and Constanța (at the seaside).

TAROM, the national airline, offers international flights to Europe and worldwide destinations as well as daily flights to major Romanian cities (Timișoara, Oradea, Cluj Napoca, Iași and others).

Trains

Romania has a well-developed railway network that covers almost the entire country. Most popular trains are Accelerat and Rapid. They are usually on time and require a seat reservation along with the ticket. The fastest and expensive are Inter-City Trains (Inter City) and the so known “Săgeata Albastră” trains. Rapid and Inter City trains have dining cars and sleepers (overnight or long distance trains only). CFR Călători is the national train operating company for passenger transport.

Bucharest is the only city in Romania which has a subway train.

Buses

Most cities offer efficient and not very expensive bus, trolleybus or tram transportation. There are several bus companies that offer fast connections between Romania's main cities. In the summer, Bucharest and Constanța offer a city tour by double-decker bus.

Taxi

Taxis are available in every city and town of Romania. All Taxis should be equipped with meters. Calling a taxi company is always a good idea than hailing on the street. Taxi drivers approaching you at the airport or at the train station in Bucharest are likely to inflate their rates and we strongly recommend you to avoid them. For longer trips outside the city limits, like going to the airport, it is advisable to agree on the fee before getting in. In small towns, using a taxi is affordable and very convenient.

Self driving

The self drive option is one of the most cost-effective ways to explore the fascinating regions of Romania. U.S. / Canadian/ Australian/ New Zealand and all European Driver licenses are valid for

driving in Romania for 90 days from the date of entry into Romania.

If you choose to drive a car, you are required to pay a road toll to allow you to use the national roads. Upon payment, ensure you receive and display the windscreen stickers confirming you have paid the toll. The cost for cars is about 3 Euros for a one-week vignette and about 7 Euros for one month, but prices may change. Tickets can be purchased at border points on entering the country, at post offices and at most petrol stations throughout Romania.

The standard speed limit, which may be varied by signs, is 50kph in localities, 90kph on open roads, 100kph on dual carriageways and 130kph on motorways (10kph less if towing and 20kph less if you have held your licence for less than a year).

When driving, be alert for horse-drawn carts and livestock especially at night.

Traffic police carry out frequent checks and it is essential that you not exceed the speed limit, ensure that your vehicle is roadworthy and have with you all your car documents, including evidence of insurance valid in Romania.

Road conditions are variable.

In Romania it is illegal to drive under the influence of alcohol.

8. CUISINE & DRINKS

For Romanians, breakfast is usually light, lunch is eaten in mid afternoon (when they arrive home from work) and dinner is served around 9.00 pm. From the big cities to small towns and resorts, restaurants are usually social places where people go to have a drink over a meal while discussing politics or business, or making friends. There are a variety of restaurants to suit all tastes and pockets, from deluxe restaurants offering sophisticated international cuisine to small traditional restaurants serving only tasty local dishes. In Romania, as in most countries, independent restaurants tend to be better than hotel restaurants, but in some places a hotel restaurant can offer better meals than the privately owned ones. Most known restaurants in the cities/towns/resorts serve a good variety of dishes for vegetarians.

Romania is home to more than 1/3 of the natural mineral springs in Europe. Bottled water is widely available. Some Romanian bottled waters are rated the best in the world for purity and taste and are exported to many foreign countries (ex. Biborțeni).

Romania produces excellent wines, some of which are exported all over the world. The red wine "Fetească Neagră" produced by Murfatlar or Beciul Domnesc and the white wine "Grasă de Cotnari" produced by Cotnari are the wines we strongly recommend you to taste. Romanian beers are excellent as well. "Țuica" (a potent plum brandy) which varies in strength, dryness and bouquet according to the production area is, along with the wine, a traditional drink in Romania, mostly enjoyed in Transylvania.

9. MONEY

The official Romanian currency is LEU (plural LEI) available in notes and coins. Banknotes come in value of 1 LEU, 5 LEI, 10 LEI, 50 LEI, 100 LEI, 200 LEI and 500 LEI, and coins in 5 BANI, 10 BANI and 50 BANI (the Romanian equivalent of pennies/cents).

Visitors are advisable to take their spending money in Sterling, USD and Euro notes in good conditions. Currency can be exchanged at banks and official exchange offices. Changing money on the street is illegal and not advisable. The LEU is currently undergoing a steady devaluation against hard currencies, like Sterling and Euro.

LEI cannot be used outside the country.

10. CREDIT CARDS

While their use has become very common today, credit cards are widely accepted in Romania, especially in the big cities. In Bucharest & other cities, major hotels, restaurants and shops will accept Visa and MasterCard. You can get cash in LEI from most banks and ATMs (called BANCOMATs) which are found in every city/town and resorts of Romania. There are ATMs at the airports as well.

11. TELEPHONE

International and local calls can be given from most of the hotels (directly from your room or through an operator) and from the orange public telephones located throughout the cities/towns/resorts. To use the public phones you need magnetic calling cards which can be purchased from the Post offices and shops, and sometime you may find them for sale at the hotel reception. When dialing outside the country, first dial (00) followed by the country cod, the area cod and the individual number. If you travel with your mobile phone, be sure you take a 2 pin electrical adaptor for your phone charger plug, and before you go ask your service provider what you have to do to use international roaming on your cell phone in Romania.

12. MAIL

Post offices are usually open Monday to Friday from 7.30 am to 7.30 pm and on Saturday from 7.30 am to 1.30 pm. There are many post offices throughout the cities and towns and a post office can be found in large villages. Mail distribution in rural areas without a post office is made by an Operative Postal Unit (a post man is distributing mail to several localities by car). Mailboxes are red and mostly located in front of the post offices or a hotel.

13. SOUVENIRS

Interesting purchases to make in Romania are embroidered table cloth and table napkins, ceramics, pottery, carpets, folkloric clothes, carved wood, porcelain, silverware and icons. Duty free shops at the international airports in Bucharest, Timișoara and Cluj are open.