



RoMania

*Castles and Palaces
in Romania*

Romania – General Information

Official name: Romania.

Official language: Romanian.

Romania is located in southeastern Europe and borders Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova (in the east and north), Hungary (in the west and northwest), Serbia (in the southwest) and Bulgaria (in the south). The country's surface area is 238,391 km².

Flag: Blue, yellow and red, in vertical stripes, from left to right, respectively.

Form of government: Parliamentary Republic.

Population: 21,733,556 inhabitants (2003), of whom 89% are Romanian. The main minorities are Hungarians and Szeklers (Secui) (7.1%), Roma (Gypsies) (1.7%).

Religions: Christian Orthodox (86.8%), Catholic (5%), Greek-Catholic (1%), Protestant (3.5%)

Capital: Bucharest (2,064,000 inhabitants), first mentioned in 1459.

Official time: GMT +3 hours in summertime (from the last Sunday of March to the last Sunday of October), and GMT +2 hours in the remainder of the year.

Climate: Temperate continental. The average summer temperature is between 22° and 24°C, although maximum temperatures can reach 38°C. In winter the average temperature is typically below -3°C.

Units of measurement: Metric. 1 km = 0.62 miles.

National currency: LEU (RON). 1 Leu = 100 Bani.

Currently circulating banknotes: 1, 5, 10, 50, 100 and 500 Lei. Current circulating coins: 1, 5, 10 and 50 Bani. Currency exchange: at banks and currency exchange offices in hotels, airports and stations, in supermarkets or on main roads in the cities. Avoid changing money at unauthorized locations. Credit cards: larger hotels, restaurants, shops and supermarkets in the major towns and cities typically accept credit cards (American Express, MasterCard, Diners Club and Visa). The number of outlets accepting cards is increasing rapidly.

Emergency services telephone number: 112

Official public holidays: December 1st - Romanian National Day, January 1st and 2nd - New Year, May 1st - Labour Day, first and second day of Easter, December 25th and 26th - Christmas.



An interesting combination of Eastern subtleties and Western pragmatism and pomp, Romanian architecture has stylized various influences over more than seven centuries. Apart from the German Gothic, the Austrian Baroque or the Italian Renaissance, there are in Romania original creations as well, like the Brancovan style of the 17th century and the neo-Romanian one, of the 19th century.

Transylvania, central Romania, boasts nowadays tens of Saxon strongholds and fortified churches. In the Carpathians, at Bran, tourists seek Dracula; the Corvin Castle, with its series of towers, retains the spirit of the medieval knights, while Lázár castle retains the memories of old princely families. The several hundred years of influence of the great Habsburg empire brought to big Transylvanian cities, like Oradea, Cluj-Napoca, Arad, Sibiu, the Viennese baroque, and sumptuous palaces with tall windows and gilded decoration.

Moldavia, known for its religious art and painted churches, adopted in its buildings the Gothic style; the Ruginoasa Palace and the Culture Palace in Iași, two interesting examples in this respect.

Wallachia, southern Romania, was the country of the Brancovan-style architecture. Churches and palaces built by rulers, became to know the lavishness of details in carving. Byzantine arabesques, vegetal and animal motifs were employed together in the decoration of the doorways, balustrades, columns and terraces. The Palace at Mogoșoaia points out the artistic ideas promoted by Constantin Brâncoveanu.

The 19th-20th centuries brought about the Royalty, Little Paris and big fortunes. The Capital was filled with luxurious residences: Sutu, Cantacuzino, etc. Carol I built the most modern castle of the time, Peleş, at Sinaia, and Queen Maria asserted her taste for symbols, precious metals and Art Nouveau at Peleşor and Cotroceni Palace.

Communism and the mania of grandeur generated the modern symbol of Bucharest city: the People's House, the world's second largest building next only to the American Pentagon.

You haven't imagined such variety of styles in Romania? Keep turning the pages . . . we haven't told you everything yet!

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Peleş Castle



Peleş Castle in Sinaia is the most beautiful residence of Romania's former Royal Family. Judging by its slender façade and sharp profile, it resembles a hunting castle. Outside, the German Neo-Renaissance blends with the Italian one. The seven terraces are adorned with wells, vases, and columns. King Carol I's statue appears as looking towards the park and the woods. His wife, Queen Elisabeta, is represented sitting, while sewing. In contrast with this first image, apparently unsophisticated, the inside is impressively diverse. The 160 rooms take you from the German Baroque, to the Rococo, through the Italian Renaissance, up to Turkish or Hispanic-Moorish salons. The foundation of the castle was laid in 1875 by Prince Carol of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, on the place called Pietrele Arse ('Burnt Rocks'). The construction was entirely paid for from his own funds and in 1883, when completed, Peleş would become Europe's most modern castle. It was provided with central heating and a mobile ceiling in the official lounge. The castle was built to initial plans drawn up by Wilhelm Doderer, followed by architect Johannes Schultz from Lemberg. Between 1893 and 1914, Karel Liman managed the extension and refurbishing.



On entering the museum, tourists will be able to admire the official lounge and stairway, decorated with Aubusson French tapestries, bas-reliefs and alabaster statuettes. The walls are panelled with walnut wood combined with noble and exotic wood. The stained glass ceiling is mobile, set in motion either electrically or manually.

The armouries have on display over 4,000 European and Oriental pieces dating from the 15th-19th centuries. Along with panoplies, German armours for rider and horse, you will see yataghans, daggers with crocodile skin handles laid with sapphires and ivory, an African shield and many other items.



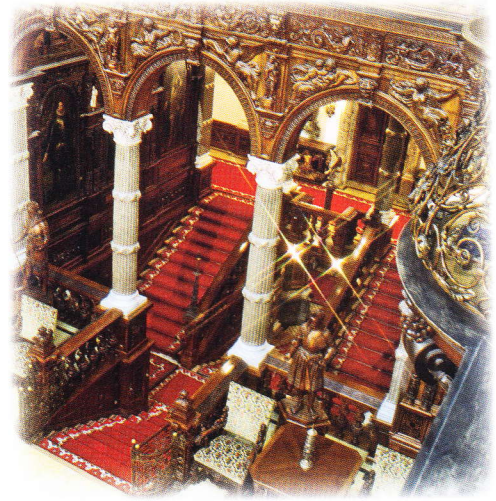
The council chamber, the study with the desk by which Carol I used to meet his guests standing, the library with books in German, Latin, French, and Italian, and the secret stairway leading to the Royal quarters, are all amazing by their boiserie. In the old Music Room, the paintings illustrate German tales put into verse by Elisabeta, Queen of Romania, known also by the pen name of Carmen Sylva, and the stained glass illustrates Romanian folk legends, put to verse by poet Vasile Alecsandri. The furniture, carved in teak wood, was a gift to the king from the maharajah of Kapurtala.

The Florentine room, used for parties, has cast bronze doors. The marble fireplace is decorated with bronze reductions after Michelangelo's statues from the Medici Chapel. The ceiling, carved in lime wood and gilded, is decorated in the middle with a painting, a replica of Giorgio Vasari's, which is reflected in the Venetian mirror between the thrones.

The Turkish salon's ceiling and walls are decorated with hand-made silk embroideries. Another hall, the Moorish one, which reminds one of the Alhambra, is gleaming with gilded stucco.

The first movie projection in this country was given in 1906 in the theatre hall. It has 60 seats apart from the royal box, and the ceiling painting and the decorative fresco here are designed by the Austrians Gustav Klimt and Frantz Matsch.

Nearby attractions: Sinaia mountain resort (Sinaia Monastery, founded in 1695, Sinaia Casino, the second smartest casino in Europe until 1947, composer George Enescu's house), the Bucegi Tableland with the rocks called Babele (the Old Women) and Sphinxul (the Sphinx).



Access by car: 120 km from Bucharest,
48 km from Braşov (E60)
Address: Muzeul Naţional Peleş
Str. Peleşului nr. 2, 106100 Sinaia, jud. Prahova
Phone: 0040-244-310.918; **Phone/Fax:** 0040-244-312.416
e-mail: museum@peles.ro, pr@peles.ro;
web: www.peles.ro
Opening hours: Summer (15 May - 15 September):
Monday closed; Tuesday 11:00-17:00
Wednesday - Sunday 09:00-17:00
Winter (16 September - 14 May):
Monday, Tuesday - closed; Wednesday 11:00-17:00
Thursday - Sunday 09:00-17:00

Pelișor Castle



Access by car: 120 km from Bucharest,
48 km from Brașov (E60)

Address: Muzeul Național Peleș

Str. Peleşului nr. 2, 106100 Sinaia, jud. Prahova

Phone: 0040-244-310.918; **Phone/Fax:** 0040-244-312.416

e-mail: museum@peles.ro, pr@peles.ro; **web:** www.peles.ro

Opening hours: Summer (15 May - 15 September):

Monday closed; Tuesday 11:00-17:00;

Wednesday - Sunday 09:00-17:00

Winter (16 September - 14 May):

Monday, Tuesday - closed

Wednesday 11:00-17:00; Thursday - Sunday 09:00-17:00

In the museum complex at Sinaia, besides Peleș Castle, which Queen Maria used to call "The Big Palace", one can visit Peleșor Castle. Built between 1899 and 1902 by Czech architect Karel Liman and decorated by the Viennese Bernhard Ludwig, Peleșor was, starting since 1903, the summer residence of Romania's second king, King Ferdinand of the Hohenzollern dynasty. His wife, Maria, asserted herself as a prominent personality of her time, earning the surname of Artist Queen.

A refined aesthete, Maria created an original style. In the decoration of Peleșor, Art Nouveau elements borrow Byzantine and Celtic features giving rise to "The Golden Bedroom", "The Chapel" and "The Golden Chamber". The Art Nouveau decorative art collection comprises works by such artists like É. Gallé, brothers Daum, J. Hoffman, L.C. Tiffany, and Gurschner.

The official hall, simple and bright, is decorated with oak-wood cassetons. The paintings, drawings and water-colours feature Maria with her children. King Ferdinand's solemn study resembles the German Neo-Renaissance from Peleș. "The Golden Bedroom" is furnished with pieces made in 1909 in the arts and crafts workshops at Sinaia, to the Queen's plans and drawings. Maria's study, arranged in an interior dominated by Brancovan-style columns, has a fireplace that is specific to Romanian interiors. The chairs and desk are decorated with Maria's symbols; the lily and the Celtic cross. It was the Queen's wish to spend the last moments of her life in the Golden Chamber. Here, the gilded walls are decorated with thistle leaves that resemble the emblem of Scotland, Maria's native land.



Julia Hasdeu Palace

Once upon a time, there was a beautiful, smart and very talented girl. Her name was Julia Hasdeu and she was the only child of scholar B.P. Hasdeu (1838-1907), an extremely learned person, man of letters, historian, writer and journalist. Born in Bucharest on 14 November 1869, Julia was a wonder child: at the age of four she learned reading and writing by herself, at seven she started to write prose and poetry, and at eleven, after graduating from secondary school and the Conservatory (piano and singing), while studying at the Sévigné College in Paris, she was the best student in her grade.

Choosing the Sorbonne Faculty of Letters and Philosophy, the young girl wanted to get her doctorate at the age of 20; a dream that never came true. Like many others, Julia died at 18 from tuberculosis and was buried at the Bellu Cemetery, in Bucharest. The scholar built the castle-temple at Câmpina, between 1894 and 1896, believing he was given inspiration by the soul of his deceased daughter.

Two stone side towers guard the big tower – the dome or temple proper. A monumental door, decorated with symbols, mottos and a coat of arms, guarded by female sphinxes seated on stone thrones, represents the temple gate. Through it, one meets the sacred: the access through parallel mirrors that reflect your figure in an infinite number, the recollection in front of the big Crucifix, the whole ensemble being also the symbol of the Holy Grail adorned with a life-size statue of Jesus.

The side towers shelter lay spaces, meant for the reception of guests, study, rest, but also for ... spiritualistic experiments. The séances used to be held in a dark room, around a medium. An interesting show recalls the last studies of B.P. Hasdeu into the communication with the dead.

As his daughter had been given to him out of love for the other Julia – his wife, the castle dedicated to the two was named Julia Hasdeu.

The "Celebration of the two Julias" is marked every year on the 2nd of July.

Nearby attractions: the Nicolae Grigorescu Memorial Museum in Câmpina, the Prahova Valley, the professional golf courses at Breaza, Posada Hunting Museum.



Access by car: 33 km from Ploiești,
and 93 km from Bucharest (E60)
Address: Muzeul Memorial "Bogdan Petriceicu Hasdeu"
Bd. Carol I nr.199,
105600, Câmpina, jud. Prahova
Phone/Fax: 0040-244-335.599
e-mail: pahasdeu@yahoo.com
web: www.cimec.ro/muzee/hasdeu/index.htm
Opening hours: Monday closed
Summer (1 March – 31 October):
Tuesday-Sunday 9:00 – 16:30
Winter (1 November – 28 February):
Tuesday-Sunday 8:00 – 16:00

Bran Castle



Bran is known to tourists as the castle of Count Dracula after British writer, Bram Stoker, based his famous novel somewhere in Transylvania. For the main character, the Count, he drew inspiration from the medieval stories written about the Wallachian prince Vlad Țepeș (Vlad the Impaler). In recognition of the battles he fought, the Prince's father was titled Knight of the Dragon Order, an organization set up by Hungary's King Sigismund for the purpose of defending Christendom against the Turks. People nicknamed him Vlad Dracul (The Devil), because of the symbol on his coat of arms – a dragon (the Romanian word "Dracul" originates from the Latin "draco", meaning dragon). A token of his belonging to the "Order of the Dragon", the Wallachian ruler used to sign the official deeds, Dracula. The cognomen of "Dracula" was soon taken over by the historiography of the time, spreading in various forms all over Europe. The writer also drew on the legends about the bloody ways Vlad Țepeș used to kill enemies, thieves and traitors. What earned him his surname was the impaling. They say all convicts met with the same fate, except that for the rich ones the point of the stake that would pierce them was gilded.

Built between 1377 and 1382 by Brașov county residents, Bran castle stands 60 m above the surrounding landscape; a position that gave it a strategic military role in the Middle Ages. The Castle was first documented in a deed issued on 19 November 1377 by Louis I d'Anjou, whereby Brașov residents were granted the privilege to build the City "on their own work and expense". In exchange, the king would confirm the subordination of 13 settlements to the stronghold.

Transferred to the possession of the Prince of Wallachia, Mircea cel Bătrân (Mircea the Old), in 1395, pursuant to a treaty of alliance with Sigismund of Luxembourg, the Fortress of Bran would play an important commercial role.



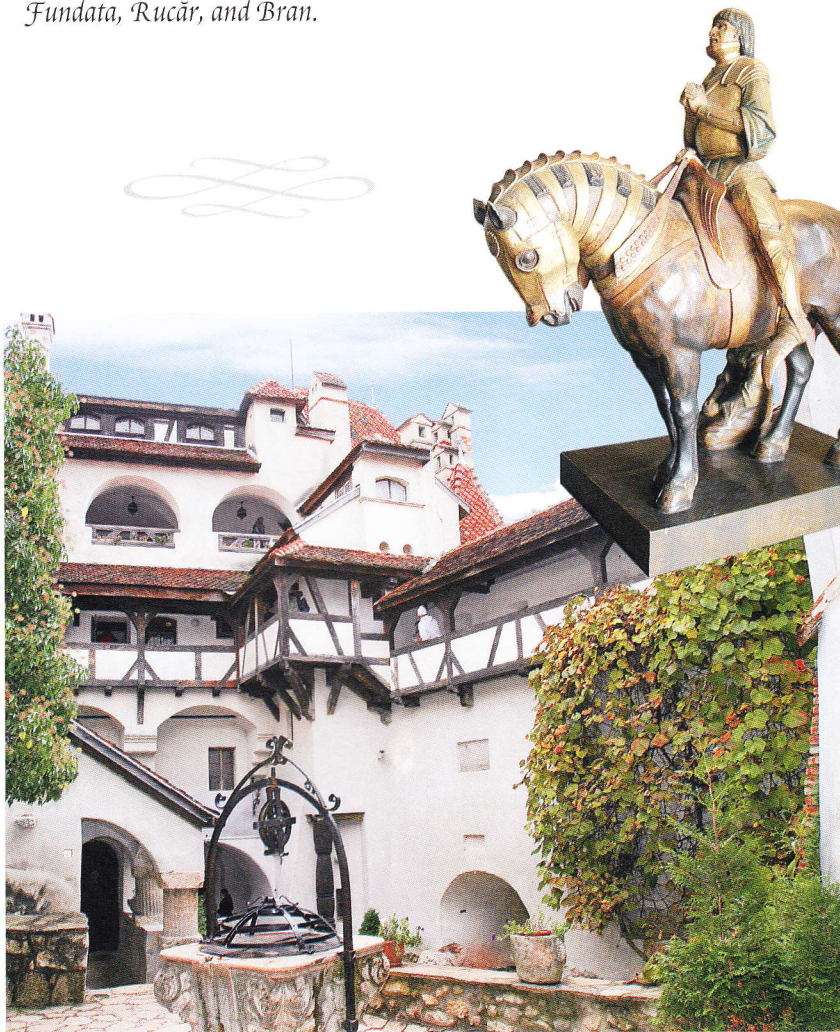
Since it was on the border between Wallachia and Transylvania, customs houses existed from where tolls were levied on merchandise.

On the northern side was the watch tower, from where, on a clear day, one could see as far as 30 km. The valley and the roads were watched from its top. At the rectangular gate tower, the enemies were met with buckets of hot tar, resin or wax; hence its name – the Black Tower. The powder magazine was in the circular tower and on southern side was the mobile oak-tree gate with iron ornaments.

The modern history of Bran began in 1920, when the castle was donated to the royal family. On December 1, 1920, Braşov City Council donated the Castle to Queen Maria, in recognition of her contribution to the accomplishment of the Great Union of December 1, 1918. Between 1920 and 1927 the stronghold was restored under the direction of the Royal Court architect, Karel Liman. He changed it into a plush summer residence, surrounded it by a park, with promenade alleys, a lake, wells, terraces, and a Tea House, where the Queen used to spend her afternoons.

Since 1957, Bran Castle has been opened to the public as a museum. The secret stairway, the fresco of the princesses, King Ferdinand's four-poster bed and, above all, Dracula's legend, attract hundreds of thousands of tourists every year.

Nearby attractions: The Bran village Ethnographic Museum, Trails in the Bucegi and Piatra Craiului Mountains, Agrotourism in Şirnea, Moieciu, Fundata, Rucăr, and Bran.



Access by car: 168 km Bucharest-Braşov (E60), and 27 km from Braşov (DN73)

Address: Muzeul Bran
Str. Gen. Traian Moşoiu nr. 498,
507025, Bran, jud. Braşov

Phone: 0040-268-238.333; **Fax:** 0040-268-238.335

e-mail: contact@muzeul-bran.ro

web: www.brancaستمuseum.ro

Opening hours: Summer (1 May-31 October):

Monday 12:00-18:00

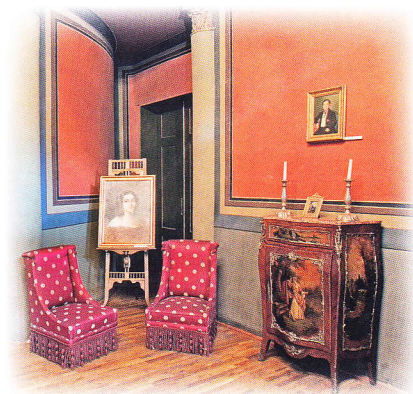
Tuesday-Sunday 9:00-18:00

Winter (1 November-30 April):

Monday closed

Tuesday-Sunday 9:00-16:00

Suțu Palace



Famous for the resplendent balls given there at the time when Bucharest was also known as Little Paris, the Suțu Palace was built in neo-gothic style between 1832 and 1834, for the foreign minister Costache Suțu, to designs of architects Johann Veit and Konrad Schwinck. In 1862, the palace was redecorated by sculptor Karl Storck. He created three arcades, a monumental stairway parted in two, and fitted in the front wall a huge mirror brought from Murano. Above it, one can admire the portrait of Irina, Grigore Suțu's wife. Of the original interior decoration only the painted ceilings, the stucco, the parquet flooring and the tile stoves are preserved.

Since 1959, the building has housed the Bucharest City Museum, being the repository of inestimable values bespeaking the city's past. C.A. Rosetti's donation of June 1929 was core to the prehistoric department's collection. The archaeology collection comprises cultures belonging to the Neolithic (Dudești, Gumelnița, Boian) and to the Geto-Dacian age, represented by useful items or ritual pieces. The Goddess of Vidra (the Gumelnița culture) and the helmet of Budești can be seen near bronze statues featuring Venus and Apollo. The museum also has on display numismatic collections, old documents, maps, prints, engravings, arms collections, uniforms, sacerdotal items, as well as a large library. Among the most valuable exhibits, one can admire the sword of Prince Constantin Brâncoveanu, adorned with precious stones, the birth certificate of Bucharest (the deed issued by Vlad Țepeș's - Vlad the Impaler's - chancellery on 20 September 1459), the Bible of Șerban Cantacuzino (1688 - the first Bible in Romanian) and the arms of the United Principalities with the motto "Toți în unu" ("All in One").

Nearby attractions: Suțu Palace is close to the geographic centre of Bucharest, in the University Square, near Colțea Church (1702-1704), the Russian Church and the National Theatre.



Address: Muzeul Municipiului București
Bd. I. C. Brătianu nr.2, sector 3,
030174, Bucharest
Phone: 0040-21-315.68.58, 0040-21-313.85.15
Fax: 0040-21-310.25.62
e-mail: mmb@b.astral.ro
web: http://www4.pmb.ro/wwwt/wwwcs/muzeu/muzeu_sutu/muzeu.htm
Opening hours: Monday closed;
Tuesday - free entry
Tuesday - Sunday 09:00-17:00

George Grigore Cantacuzino was thought to be Romania's wealthiest citizen in 1899. As Prime Minister and nicknamed 'The Nabob', it was his wish to have the smartest residence in Bucharest. Using designs of architect I.D. Berindei, the Cantacuzino Palace was built between 1898 and 1900 as one of the Capital's most elegant buildings. Known also as the House with Lions, the palace, erected in eclectic French style, has stone balconies and tall, arched windows on the ground floor, and wrought iron balconies and rectangular windows upstairs. Two stone lions, leaning on their forelegs guard each side of the entrance stairway. Extending above it, there is a porte-cochère, a gracious glass shell with iron ribs.

The palace houses today the George Enescu National Museum. The sumptuous interior is largely original and inside one can admire paintings by great artists of the time: G.D. Mirea, Nicolae Vermont, Costin Petrescu, and outside – decorations by sculptor Emil W. Becker. The house where Enescu lived with bedrooms and study is behind the master building.

A famous violinist, Enescu studied at the Vienna Conservatory, where he met Brahms and gave also his first concerts. In Paris, he graduated, with First Prize for violin, from the French Conservatory, in 1899. The Romanian Rhapsodies, composed in his prime, earned him national and international eulogy. In 1936, the Oedipe tragic opera was premiered in Paris, and for that composition Enescu was awarded the French Legion of Honour. A member of the Romanian Academy and corresponding member of the Institute of France, George Enescu was the teacher of Yehudi Menuhin and of many other violinists. Every other year, Romania organizes the George Enescu International Festival and Contest.

Nearby attractions: the Romanian Academy, the Writers' House (Vernescu House).

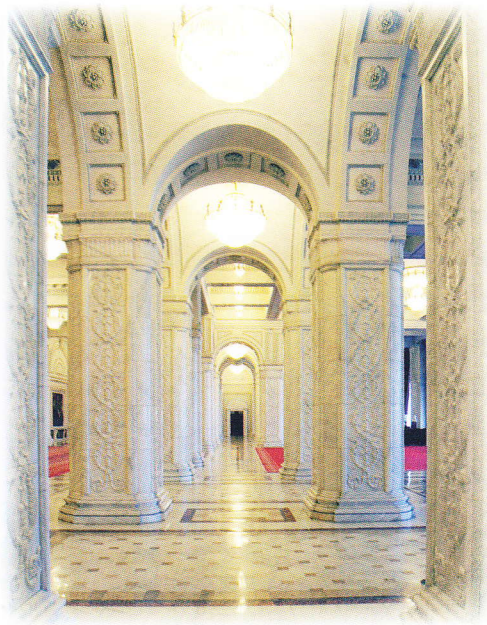


Cantacuzino Palace



Address: Muzeul Național „George Enescu”
Calea Victoriei nr. 141, sector 1,
010071, Bucharest
Phone: 0040-21-318.14.50
Fax: 0040-21-312.91.82
e-mail: muzeu.enescu@rdsmail.ro
Opening hours: Monday closed
Tuesday - Sunday 10:00-17:00

Parliament Palace



Known by the name of People's House, the Parliament Palace has become one of Bucharest city's symbols. It is entered in the Guinness Book of World Records as the second largest public service building in the world, next only to The Pentagon. With a floor space of 330,000 square metres and a volume of 2,550,000 cubic metres, the building is the third largest man-made structure in the world, next to the Cape Canaveral Space Centre in the US and the Pyramid of Quetzalcoatl in Mexico.

In the '70s, the former Communist President Nicolae Ceaușescu made several state visits in Asia. Impressed by the size of the buildings, he came home with the idea of having a similar one built for Romania. When the earthquake in 1977 dilapidated the buildings in the city's old part, it was decided that they be torn down. Thousands of people moved then to other homes and about 30 churches in those places vanished.

The construction of the People's House started in 1984. In 1989, it was 60% finished. Building works were resumed, so only 10% remains now to be finished.

The building works took the effort of 20,000 workers. The design activities of the 300-strong team of architects were managed by Anca Petrescu. The dimensions of the People's House are impressive: the façade is 270 m long, the sides are 240 m long, and it is 84 m high and 92 m deep beneath the ground. The structure has 12 floors, 4 basement floors and a nuclear bunker, 1,100 rooms: 440 offices, lounges, and rooms for scientific, cultural and political events. The largest assembly halls measure between 1,000 and 1,500 square metres each. Two of the assembly halls can seat 1,200 and 850 respectively.

The building also has two monumental galleries, 180 m long and 18 m high. The biggest hall is the Union Hall.



All materials used in the construction are of Romanian origin: white, pink or yellow marble brought from Rușchita, Moneasa, Gura Văii, and Alun, and oak and beech wood. For the chandeliers, approximately 3,500 tons of Medias crystal was brought there. The biggest chandelier weighs 3 tons and takes 7,000 bulbs to shine. To look even larger, the lobbies were fitted with crystal doors. As decoration, apart from the arabesque friezes on the walls, a sketchy map of the palace is inlaid in some parts of the marble flooring.

The People's House accommodates Romania's Parliament. The Chamber of Deputies entrance is on the side named Izvor, next to the entrance for tourists. On the decision of the Chamber of Deputies, an International Conference Centre was established in May 1994, a place where the Crans Montana Forum held its proceedings. "In this magnificent place have met together, at the cost of big sacrifice, after endless years and against any logic and anyone, the Romanian people's art and creativity. Let us forget the one who is said to have ordered it built and revere instead the ones who have actually built it." (Jean Paul Carteron, President of the Crans Montana Forum). You will find here also the National Museum of Contemporary Art, which plays host to temporary art exhibitions.

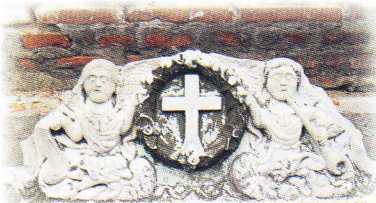
Rooms can be rented here for various events and upon payment of an admission charge, tourists are provided with guided tours.

Nearby attractions: the Metropolitan Church and Palace, the Mihai Vodă church, Unirea Shopping Center, the river Dâmbovița.



Address: Palatul Parlamentului
Str. Izvor nr. 2-4, sector 5, 050563, Bucharest
Phone: 0040-21-312.17.80, 0040-21-402.14.20
Fax: 0040-21-312.09.02
e-mail: cic@cdep.ro
web: www.cdep.ro/cic/
Opening hours: daily, 10:00-16:00 or on request for tourist parties

Curtea Veche Princely Palace



The Princely Palace or Princely Court is the oldest feudal monument in Bucharest, the city that, for more than two centuries was residence of the Wallachian rulers, coexisting, until 1660, with the old capital – Târgoviște. After 1660, Bucharest remained the only capital of Wallachia and in 1862, became the capital of the United Romanian Principalities, then Romania.

In the second half of the 14th century, a brick stronghold covering some 160 square metres was built on the site, extended afterwards and enclosed within stone walls by Vlad Țepeș, in 1458-1459.

Besides its political role, the stronghold would become the centre of Bucharest's economic life around which gravitated merchants and craftsmen. The streets in this central part of the city took on the names of their occupations or of the cities of origin of the merchandise they were trading (Lipsca/Leipzig – Germany; Gabrovo – Bulgaria; Brașov).

The stronghold would go through important changes during the rule of Mircea Ciobanul (Mircea The Shepherd) who, after 1550, enlarged it, building a palace with vast cellars, as well as the Buna Vestire (Annunciation) Church nearby, which stands to this day.

The new princely palace was further extended, covering 3,000-5,000 square metres and, with its outbuildings some 25,000 square metres. After 1640, Matei Basarab renovated the Princely Court.

In the 17th century, the court was adorned with stone columns, marble stairways and mural painting.

By the end of the 17th century and the beginning of the next, other rulers too – Grigore Ghica, Gheorghe Duca, Șerban Cantacuzino, and especially Constantin Brâncoveanu – rebuilt and extended the palace. Alexandru Ipsilanti built in 1775 a new palace on the Dealul Spirii hill, near the Mihai Vodă Monastery, but the new residence, Curtea Nouă (The New Court) was abandoned after a few decades, in 1812, as several fires and earthquakes turned it into Curtea Arsă (Charred Court).

The old residence would get the name of Curtea Veche (Old Court), retaining for a while some of the functions of the princely court, but in 1798 it was auctioned, under Constantin Hangerli, and the locality remained, through its Main Street – Lipsani, the Capital's traditional merchant centre.

Nearby attractions: Hanul lui Manuc (Manuc's Inn) – the only inn still standing in Bucharest, restored, now a hotel; the old merchant streets – Covaci, Selari, Franceză; Hanul cu Tei (Lime Trees Inn) – antiques galleries.



Address: Palatul Voievodal Curtea Veche
Str. Franceză nr. 25-31, sector 3,
030104, Bucharest
Phone: 0040-21-314.03.75
Opening hours: Monday closed
Tuesday – Sunday 10:00-17:00

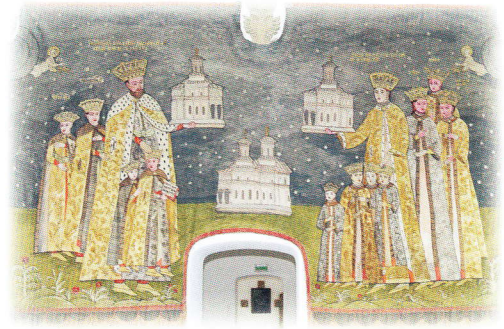
Brancovan Palace

Of all Constantin Brâncoveanu's residences, the Palace at Mogoșoaia is the best preserved one. To be found here is a combination of Wallachian decorative elements and Italian Renaissance features, in a style known in the Romanian cultural circles as Brancovan architecture. A synthesis of Byzantine tradition and cultural features of the Renaissance, with Baroque elements, the Brancovan style is characterized by lavish but never excessive decoration. The decorative sculpture with plant and animal motifs is abundant on the stone balustrades, delicately adorned capitals and finely twisted columns.

In January 1681, Prince Constantin Brâncoveanu bought an estate at Mogoșoaia, and then built a church (1688) and after that the palace (1702) on the lake shore. On the façade facing the water, you can see the most refined architectural element of the palace: the splendid loggia of Venetian inspiration, with trefoil arcades. In the beginning, both the belvedere and the rooms upstairs were decorated with stucco of Eastern influence and mural paintings representing portraits of the ruling family. The exterior facing with brick veneer was added in the course of the early 20th-century restoration.

Brâncoveanu was killed by the Turks in 1714, and one hundred years later the Mogoșoaia estate became the property of Prince Gheorghe Bibescu, who restored the palace between 1842 and 1848. His son, Prince Nicolae Bibescu, raised a new building, calling it "Elchingen Villa" in honour of his wife, Hélène-Louise Ney d'Elchingen, niece of the French Marshal Michel Ney. The palace rooms house an art collection donated by Liana and Dan Nasta, containing also 17th-century pieces, tapestries, furniture, icons, and embroideries. The basement, the cross-vaulted Cellar of the palace, is an exhibition space which, just like the Kitchen, shelters temporary exhibits of traditional artists.

Nearby attractions: Film Studios, the Știrbei Palace (19th century) at Buftea.



Access by car: 15 km from Bucharest (DN1A)

Address: Centrul Cultural Palatele Brâncovenesti – Mogoșoaia, Str. Valea Parcului nr. 1, 077135, Mogoșoaia, jud. Ilfov

Phone: 0040-21-350.66.19, 0040-21-350.66.20;

Fax: 0040-21-350.66.18

e-mail: pbbp1@artelecom.net;
office@palatebrancovenesti.ro

Opening hours: Monday closed

Summer (1 March – 30 September):

Tuesday-Sunday 10:00-18:00

Winter (1 October – 28 February):

Tuesday-Sunday 09:00-17:00

Royal Palace



The former Royal Palace now houses the Romanian National Art Museum, arranged in two galleries – the European Art Gallery and the National Gallery, with its two departments: The Romanian Old Art Gallery and the Romanian Modern Art Gallery.

The palace was restructured into its present form and look under King Carol II (1930-1940), to architect N. Nenciulescu's designs. The U-shaped building stretches around an official courtyard and has two main entrances. The entrance to the left was reserved for the King and his guests, and the entrance to the right – for official persons. Outstanding inside are "The Stairway of Princes", the theatre and its lobby, "The Throne Hall" and "The Royal Dining Room". The façades are coated with stone brought from the Baschioi (Tulcea County) quarry.

The European Art Gallery consists mainly of King Carol I's collection. It illustrates the major artistic schools: Italian, German, Austrian, Spanish, Flemish, Dutch and French.

Among the most valuable paintings, one can see a "Madonna and Child" by Domenico Veneziano, a "Crucifixion" by Jacopo Bassano, a "Madonna and Child" by Lucas Cranach the Elder, "The Three Graces" by Hans von Aachen, "Adoration of the Shepherds" and a "Virgin of the Immaculate Conception" by El Greco, the "Seasons" series by Pieter Bruegel the Younger, "Portrait of Giovanna Spinola Pavese" by Rubens and "Hamman Begging Esther for Mercy" by Rembrandt. Impressionism is illustrated by works signed by Claude Monet: "Boats at Honfleur" and "Camille", Sisley: "The Church at Moret, in Winter", Pissaro: "Orchard in Blossom" and Renoir: "Landscape with Houses".

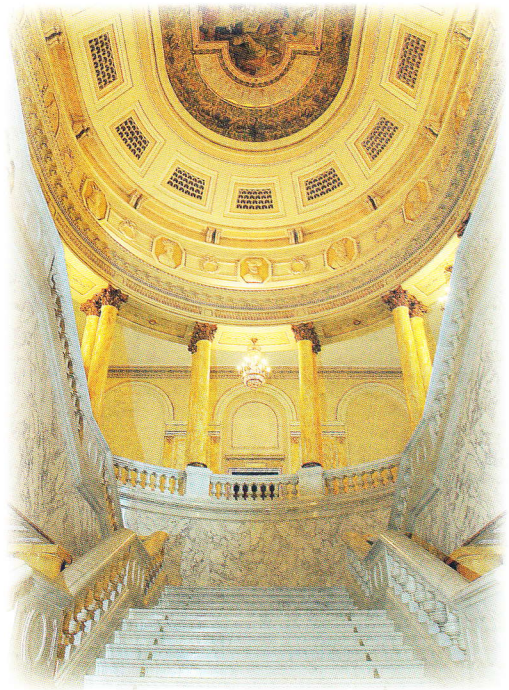
The Romanian Old Art Gallery within the National Gallery houses the largest and most complete collection of its kind in the country. Its stock of over 9,500 items comprises over 2,500 Byzantine-style icons, fresco fragments, 16th-17th century costumes and ornaments brought from the monasteries of Voroneț and



Dragomirna (Moldavia), Vad (Transylvania), Brâncoveni (Wallachia), tombstones, iconostases, church furniture, goldsmithery, crosses inlaid with precious metals and stones, sacerdotal embroideries, illuminated manuscripts and sculptures.

The Romanian Modern Art Gallery currently possesses about 8,100 paintings and more than 1,800 sculptures dating from the early decades of the 19th century up to the mid-20th century. One can find here on display works by Ioan Andreescu, Ștefan Luchian, Gheorghe Petrașcu, Theodor Aman, Nicolae Grigorescu, Theodor Pallady, Jean Al. Steriadi, and sculptures by Constantin Brâncuși, Dimitrie Paciurea, and Oscar Han.

Nearby attractions: Central University Library, Romanian Atheneum, Kretzulescu Church, Calea Victoriei Avenue.



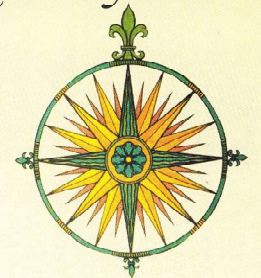
Address: Muzeul Național de Artă al României
Calea Victoriei nr. 49-53, sector 1,
010063, Bucharest
Phone: 0040-21- 313.30.30, 0040-21- 314.81.19
Fax: 0040-21- 312.43.27
e-mail: national@art.museum.ro
web: <http://art.museum.ro>, www.mnar.arts.ro
Opening hours: Monday, Tuesday - closed
Summer (1 May– 30 September):
Wednesday-Sunday 11:00-19:00
Winter (1 October - 30 April):
Wednesday-Sunday 10:00-18:00





Ukraine

Republic of Moldova



Ukraine

Hungary

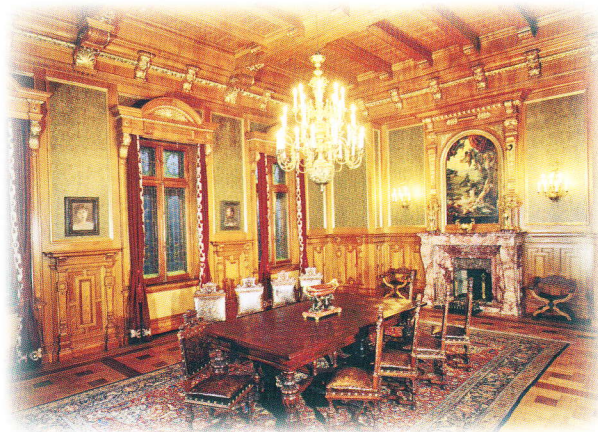
Serbia

Bulgaria

Black Sea



Cotroceni Palace



The Cotroceni Palace is the President of Romania's residence. The part of it that is open to tourists is the Cotroceni National Museum, arranged in the wing that used to be the quarters of the former Royal Family.

The Cotroceni monastery, the church, cells and princely houses making up the residence of Prince Șerban Cantacuzino (1678-1688), were built between 1679 and 1682. In the medieval department of the museum, you can tour the monastery's kitchen, the refectory, several cells and two halls that belonged to the former princely houses, spaces that are characteristic of the late 17th-century autochthonous building technique and architecture.

On the Cotroceni plateau, Prince Barbu Știrbei (1849-1853) made the princely houses his summer residence.

In 1893, King Carol I of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen commissioned the architect of the Royal House, the Frenchman Paul Gottreau, to build on the site of the former princely houses, a palace intended for the heirs to the throne – Prince Ferdinand and Princess Maria.

The interior of the Royal Palace at Cotroceni is intended to reconstruct as truthfully as possible, a certain style in decoration. The Official Hall with the marble stairway resembles the Paris Opera House, designed by Charles Garnier, in the French Neo-Classical style. A long hallway leads upstairs to the German Dining Room – decorated in German Neo-Renaissance style. Just as impressive, by their own styles, are the Hunting Room and the Flower Room.

Next door, is King Ferdinand's Study (the Library), the only place in the museum which needed no restoration. Formerly, the library was the repository of a large collection of botanical books that belonged to King Ferdinand. The Grand Reception Hall, redecorated between 1925 and 1926 by Romanian architect Grigore Cerchez in the Neo-Romanian style, neighbours and leads into the Cotroceni Royal Dining Room.

On the second floor of the Cotroceni Museum, you can tour the apartments of the former Royal Family: the German Apartment, decorated in German Neo-Renaissance style; the Oriental Room, first used by Queen Maria as a painting and pyrographic work studio; the Royal Apartment; the French Apartment and the Henry II Room. Just as interesting is the bedroom of Queen Maria, restored after the 1929 variant and the small Norwegian Room, a singular place which represents a redecoration of Queen Maria's boudoir. The last apartment, decorated in French style, is arranged in the space that used to be the nursery in the Gottereau period.

Between 1949 and 1976, the Cotroceni Palace changed its use, becoming the Young Pioneers' Palace. In 1984, the church of the Cotroceni monastery was torn down, upon Nicolae Ceaușescu's order. It is now being rebuilt. The Cotroceni National Museum was opened in the old wing of the Cotroceni Palace on December 27, 1991.

In 1994, the Cotroceni National Museum received the European Museum of the Year Award (from a Council of Europe agency) – Special Commendation 1994.

Nearby attractions: the building of the Faculty of Medicine, the Cotroceni residential district, the Military Academy, the Botanical Garden.



Address: Muzeul Național Cotroceni
Bd. Geniului nr. 1, sector 6,
060116, Bucharest
Phone: 0040-21-317.31.07 – Museum
tour reservation service
0040-21-317.31.06 – Public Relations
Fax: 0040-21-312.16.18
Opening hours: Monday closed
Summer (1 April – 30 September):
Tuesday – Sunday 10:00 – 18:00
Winter (1 October- 31 March):
Tuesday – Sunday 09:00 – 17:00

Guided tours of museum are provided in Romanian, English, French, Spanish, both for parties of 15 at the most and for individuals. The tours shall be reserved by phone 24 hours earlier and visitors shall produce an identification paper.



Ruginoasa Palace



Access by car: 60 km from Iași (DN28-DN28A),
and 11 km from Pașcani (DN28A)
by plane: Iași Airport
Address: Muzeul Memorial "A.I. Cuza",
707420, Ruginoasa, jud. Iași
Phone: 0040-232-734.087
Opening hours: Monday closed
Tuesday-Sunday 10:00-17:00

“Close to Târgul-Frumos are the charming estates of Ruginoasa. The traveller, hospitably received here, forgets about his troubles. . . He seems to find himself, transported as if by magic, in a castle described by Walter Scott. . .”, wrote in 1937 Constantin Negruzzi about one of Moldavia’s most beautiful buildings of his time.

The Palace at Ruginoasa, white, with gothic windows and lines, impresses its visitors today by the stories hidden within its walls. Built in the first decade of the 19th century by treasurer Sturdza, it was bought in 1862 by Alexandru Ioan Cuza, ruler of the United Principalities. The palace became in 1982 the “A.I. Cuza” Memorial Museum – to commemorate the first ruling prince of modern Romania.

On the ground floor, the documentary department is arranged, illustrating events of Cuza’s life and activity. Upstairs, the curators reconstructed with several original pieces that have been preserved to this day, the atmosphere of the life on the Ruginoasa estate: the family library with books brought from Paris; the study of His Highness, the Prince, with oak-wood furniture, the Gothic dining room with Sevres china and Baccarat crystal, all of them bearing the arms of the United Principalities; and the bedroom of Princess Elena Cuza, with fluffy lace and blue velvet.

After the death of A.I. Cuza and his two sons, Princess Elena left the Ruginoasa estate.

In 1907, the mortal remains of the Prince were reburied in the vault of the Church that was used as the palace chapel. They were held there until the beginning of World War Two, when the coffin was moved first to Curtea de Argeș, then to the Trei Ierarhi (Three Hierarchs) Church in Iași.

Nearby attractions: Iași city.



Culture Palace

The Culture Palace in Iași was built in Neo-Gothic style, between 1906 and 1925, to the designs of architect I.D. Berindei, on the site of the old princely court. It is a vast museum complex now. The wide rooms and smart galleries house collections of four museums: the Ethnographic Museum of Moldavia, the Arts Museum, the Museum of History and the Ștefan Procopiu Museum of Science and Technology.

The Ethnographic Museum of Moldavia has on display more than 12,000 items. The basic traditional occupations are illustrated by specific implements: the wooden plough, the wheat stone crusher, the cheese moulds. The New Year customs are lavishly represented as are the folk pottery, weavings and traditional Moldavian costumes.

The European Art Gallery of the Art Museum has on display paintings and sculptures belonging to the Italian, Spanish, Flemish, Dutch, French, German, Czech and Russian schools, from the 16th-20th centuries. You can admire there such works as "Pietà" and "The Virgin in Ecstasy" by Bartolomé Esteban Murillo, "Caesar Receiving the Head of Pompeius" by Peter Paul Rubens, "Venus and Cupid" by Paolo Veronese, etc. The Modern and Contemporary Romanian Art Gallery comprises works by famous artists: Gheorghe Tattarescu, Theodor Aman, Nicolae Grigorescu, Ștefan Luchian, Nicolae Dărăscu, Nicolae Tonitza, Camil Ressu, Alexandru Ciucurencu, Ion Țuculescu, and Corneliu Baba.

The Ștefan Procopiu Museum of Science and Technology comprises the following departments: "Power Engineering", "Sound Recording and Playing", "Telecommunications" and "Mineralogy-Crystallography". Moldavia's history is illustrated in the specially arranged museum by exhibits of history and archaeology from various ages.

Nearby attractions: the Trei Ierarhi and Golia Churches, writer Ion Creangă's Hut (Bojdeuca), the Galata and Cetățuia Monasteries, the National Theatre, the University and the Copou Garden.



Access by car: 393 km from Bucharest
(E85-E581-DN24)

by plane: Iași Airport

Address: Complexul Național Muzeal „Moldova” Iași
Piața Ștefan cel Mare și Sfânt nr. 1,
700028, Iași, jud. Iași

Phone/Fax: 0040-232-218.383

e-mail: contact@muzeul-moldova.ro

web: www.palatulculturii.home.ro

Opening hours: Monday closed;
Tuesday – Sunday 10:00-17:00

Brukenthal Palace

The Brukenthal Palace is one of the most important baroque monuments in Romania. Built in several stages, between 1778-1788, it was the official residence of baron Samuel von Brukenthal, governor of Transylvania. At the end of the building work, the baron brought there his art collections. Martin Hochmeister's Calendar for the year 1790 (*Hermannstadt im Jahre 1790*), already mentions among the city's attractions the painting gallery consisting of 800 paintings, arranged in 13 rooms of the Brukenthal Palace. According to the Baron's last will, the palace was opened for the public in 1817, thus being the first museum in this country and among the first ones throughout Europe. The Palace is now the repository of the Brukenthal National Museum collections, the Brukenthal Art Gallery and Library.

The baroque rooms, the reception and music rooms still preserve original pieces of the Palace: Rococo and Neo-Classical stoves, the red silk tapestry and the Oriental-style painted wallpaper, the Murano chandeliers and pieces of 18th-century Transylvanian furniture.

Baron Samuel von Brukenthal's European painting collection counts about 1,200 works of the major European painting schools from the 15th-18th centuries: Flemish-Dutch (Marinus van Reymerswaele and Frans Floris Van Vriendt, Peter Paul Rubens and Anton van Dyck), German and Austrian (Lucas Cranach the Elder, Schwab von Wertinger, portrait artists like Christoph Pauditz, a famous pupil of Rembrandt, and Jan Kupetzky or Martin Meytens, landscapists, and also painters of religious and mythological scenes).

The Italian school, although represented by a relatively small number of works as compared to the other schools, is important thanks to works by Alessandro Botticelli, Tullio Lombardo, Tiziano Vecellio, Paris Bordone, Sebastiano Ricci, Alessandro Magnasco.

The Transylvanian painting collection contains a large number of portraits dating from the 16th-18th centuries, important especially from an historic and documentary point of



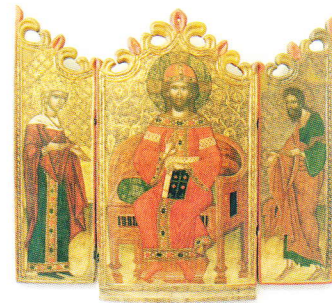
view, a genuine gallery of illustrious figures of the Transylvanian Saxon patricians. Lucas Hirscher's portrait by Braşov painter Gregorius is considered to be the first lay portrait in the history of the national painting.

The modern and contemporary art collection focuses on the major moments of development of the Romanian painting, through reference names as: Nicolae Grigorescu, the father of modern Romanian painting, Theodor Pallady, deemed to be the most representative inter-war painter, Hans Mattis Teutsch, the first abstract painter, Corneliu Baba and Alexandru Ciucurencu, fathers of the contemporary Romanian school of painting.

The Bruckenthal Museum is the repository of an important decorative art collection consisting of shrines, carvings, lay and religious silver items (15th-18th centuries), glassware, Oriental rugs and furniture, objects of outstanding artistic value, the style and technique standing proof to their belonging to the Central-European space as well as to the originality of this cultural area. The pomp of the religious service in the Catholic churches, prior to the Reform, shows in the ornamental lavishness of numerous objects, among which we should mention the crucifix of the Evangelical church of Cîsnădie (around 1500), the chalices decorated with enamel and filigree, in the manner known as "modo transilvano".

From the 16th-18th centuries, the museum has on display various silver items and ornaments, made by the Transylvanian silversmiths with borrowed decorative forms and motifs used in famous European workshops. The collection boasts ten pieces from the creation of the most celebrated artist from Sibiu, Sebastian Hann (who created between 1675 and 1713), the most famous being the Mug of Mathias Semriger, dated 1682. Bruckenthal Library is the repository of an exceptional art wealth, of which the incunabula and rare books collections are to be pointed out.

Nearby attractions: the old center of the city (Sibiu was proclaimed the European Cultural Capital for the year 2007), ASTRA - Museum of Transylvanian Folk Civilization. Răşinari, Sibiel, Mărginimea Sibiului – agritourism.



Access by car: 274 km from Bucharest (E70-E81)
by plane: Sibiu Airport
Address: Muzeul Brukenthal, Galeria de Artă,
 Biblioteca Brukenthal,
 Piața Mare nr. 4-5, 550163, Sibiu, jud. Sibiu
Phone: 0040-269-211.699, 0040-269-217.691
Fax: 0040-269-211.545
e-mail: info@brukenthalmuseum.ro
web: www.brukenthalmuseum.ro
Opening hours: Monday closed
 Summer (1 April – 30 September):
 Tuesday – Sunday 9.00 - 17.00
 Winter (1 October – 31 March):
 Tuesday – Sunday 10.00 - 16.00

Culture Palace



No tourist visiting Târgu Mureș can miss . . . The Mirror Hall. It is to be found in the smartest building downtown – the Culture Palace. It was built between 1911 and 1913 by architects M. Komor and J. Dezső and it evinces Secession style features. The façade, which looks gilded, is decorated with mosaics and the elegant roofing is of blue and red ceramic tiles.

The name of the famous hall is given by the two large Venetian mirrors adorning its side walls. What is fascinating though is the light coming through 12 stained glass windows of rare beauty. Designed by Nagy Sándor and created in Budapest in 1913, they are illustrated with scenes from Szekler ballads.

The prevailing theme is love, in four instances. In the first, a rich woman flees her home, afraid of thieves. In the forest, frightened by some noise, she deserts her children, running away with a chest full of money. The profane love is experienced by a young girl, who goes away, in search of her lover. Among the obstacles she encounters, there is a meeting with the Devil. The third stained glass story is the tragedy of the forbidden marriage. A poor peasant's daughter is drowned in a lake, but her body surges up, in a lily. The last work expresses the sacred love of the Virgin Mary, ascended to Heaven. Other large stained glass windows render scenes from the Transylvanian peasants' lives and traditions.

The Culture Palace boasts other valuable attractions. In the Concert Hall, there is one of the largest and most valuable organs in Romania: 4,463 pipes and 63 registers. The entrance lobby resembles the Far East with its deep green and fresco decoration. The building also shelters the County Library, the Art Museum and the Museum of History and Archaeology, as well as galleries for contemporary art shows.

Nearby attractions: the Orthodox Cathedral, the biggest in the country; Teleky-Bolyai Library, medieval city (15th century), Reformed Church (1442), and Zoo.



Access by car: 337 km from Bucharest (E60)
by plane: Târgu Mureș Airport

Address: Palatul Culturii
Str. George Enescu nr. 2,
540052, Târgu Mureș, jud. Mureș

Phone/Fax: 0040-265-267.629

Opening hours: Monday closed

Summer (1 May – 31 August):

Tuesday – Sunday 09:00-18:00

Winter (1 September – 30 April):

Tuesday – Sunday 09:00-16:00

Lázár Castle

Built as a residence by the Lázár family in 1532, on the site of earlier structures, the edifice acquired the glamour of a court a hundred years later. Ștefan IV Lázár, governor of the districts of Ciuc, Gheorghieni and Cașin, extended the castle, making it a symbol of his position. Gabriel Bethlen, Prince of Transylvania between 1613 and 1629, spent his childhood in the castle at Lázarea.

The Renaissance influence is conspicuous in the architectural elements. The southern walls are adorned with a crenulated and painted cornice. On three of the corner bastions, resembling the Italian style, there are inscriptions and frescoes with arms. The fourth tower stands out with a quite unusual feature – it was built with ... seven sides. The bastions have fire openings on the ground and second floors and tar openings on consoles.

The stronghold was of no major strategic importance, being used mainly as a residence. It was devastated and set ablaze by the Habsburgs in 1706, rebuilt and burnt down again, 40 years later. With the passing of the years, the castle at Lázarea was abandoned and became more and more dilapidated. The situation was stopped from further worsening after 1960, when it was included in a restoration program. Of the formerly lavish inventory, only one piece was preserved: an inlaid chest. The restoration works, that covered several decades, were meant for the reconstruction and consolidation of the southern bastions, the Red Bastion, the north-western body called "The Knights' Hall", and the reconstruction of the southern façade-crenellated cornice.

In the restored rooms, temporary exhibitions of traditional artists and artisans are annually arranged, on the occasion of creation camps.

Nearby attractions: Lázarea, the 15th-century fortified church and the 16th-century Franciscan monastery, resorts of Lacul Roșu, Izvorul Mureșului, Cheile Bicazului.



Access by car: 63 km from Miercurea Ciuc (DN12), Bucharest-Miercurea Ciuc 270 km (E60-DN12), 6 km from Gheorghieni (DN12)
Address: Castelul Lázár
Aleea Bastionului nr. 67,
537135, Lázarea, jud. Harghita
Phone/Fax: 0040-266-364.030
e-mail: kastely@artelecom.net
web: www.lazar_kastely.ro
Opening hours: Monday closed
Tuesday-Sunday 09:00 – 17:00

Bánffy Palace



Built in Baroque style by architect J.E. Blaumann between 1774 and 1785, the Bánffy Palace towers above Unirea Square in Cluj-Napoca. The central motif of the main façade is the coat of arms of the Bánffy family, held by winged and crowned gryphons. Statues of ancient deities surround it. The bold tenure of the warrior – Mars, joins the wisdom – Athena, music and poetry – Apollo, and hunting – Diana, recalling the natural occupations of an aristocrat. At opposite ends, Hercules and Perseus represent the triumph in the fight of good with the forces of evil. The rectangular building's entrance is dominated by a loggia.

The Palace houses the Cluj-Napoca Art Galleries, with an extremely valuable stock of Romanian and European art: paintings, black-and-white and decorative art (15th-20th centuries). The exhibits include remarkable pieces of medieval art, like the triptych altarpiece of Jimbor, dating from the 16th century, as well as wood icons from the 17th-18th centuries. You can also admire creations by celebrated artists like Grigorescu, Luchian, Paciurea, Pallady, Ressu, Steriadi, Han, Medrea and Ladea, as well as Cluj-Napoca artists like Pop, Szolnay, Capidan, Bogdan, and Ciupe. The palace is also the repository of cultural assets recorded in the National cultural heritage.

Nearby attractions: an important cultural and university centre, Cluj-Napoca is one of the most beautiful cities in Transylvania.

Attractions to visit include the birthplace of Matei Corvin, King of Hungary between 1458-1490, and the Speleology Institute, founded in 1921, by scientist Emil Racoviță; the first of its kind in the world. The Botanical Garden boasts more than 11,000 plant species.

Outstanding architectural highlights include the buildings of the National Theatre, the Opera House and St. Michael's Church.

Access by car: 440 km from Bucharest (E70-E81),
153 km from Oradea (E60)

by plane: Cluj-Napoca Airport

Address: Muzeul de Artă Cluj-Napoca
Piata Unirii nr. 30, 400098, Cluj-Napoca, jud. Cluj
Phone: 0040-264-596.952; 0040-264-596.953
e-mail: macn@cluj.astral.ro

web: www.cimec.ro/muzeel/cluj/cluj.htm

Opening hours: Monday, Tuesday – closed

Summer (1 May – 30 September):

Wednesday – Sunday 12:00 – 19:00

Winter (1 October – 30 April):

Wednesday – Sunday 11:00 – 18:00

Baroque Palace

The Palace in Oradea, The Canons' Corridor and the Roman-Catholic Basilica nearby make up the biggest Baroque complex in Romania. Built between 1762 and 1770, as a replica of the Belvedere Palace in Vienna, the edifice is the doing of Austrian architect Franz Anton Hillebrand, the architect also of the Cardinals' Palace in Bratislava and the Royal Palace in Buda.

The U-shaped building has three floors and a roofing specific to Baroque style. In the beginning, it was meant to be the Seat of the Roman-Catholic Bishopric of Oradea. The façade decoration sticks to the principles of symmetry, with remarkable pilasters, Ionic capitals, festoons, and folds. In the palace's Chapel, you can admire paintings on the theme of "St. Borromeus Praying during the Pest Epidemic", signed by the artist of Bavarian origin, Johann Nepomuk Schöypl. Francisc Storno was the designer of the Renaissance-inspired decoration of the Festive Hall.

The Palace counts 120 rooms and 365 windows, as many as the days of the year. Among its distinguished guests there were Empress Maria Theresa and her son, Joseph II, who took a trip to Transylvania in 1771.

The Complex houses today the Criş Land Museum, arranged in four departments: History, Art, Ethnography and Natural Sciences, with a stock of over 370,000 exhibits.

Nearby attractions: Downtown Oradea, you can visit the Orthodox Church, the bazaar built in 1900 in eclectic style, the Rimanočzy Palace, the Theatre, the Poynar House. The famous Băile Felix spa is 8 km from the city. You can also visit the Natural Reserve with thermal water lilies nearby.



Access by car: 592 km from Bucharest (E70-E81-E60)
by plane: Oradea Airport

Address: Muzeul Țării Crișurilor
Bd. Dacia nr. 1-3, 410464, Oradea, jud. Bihor

Phone: 0040-259-41.27.24; 0040-259-41.27.25

Fax: 0040-259-47.99.18

e-mail: contact@mtariicrisurilor.ro

web: www.mtariicrisurilor.ro

Opening hours: Monday closed

Summer (1 April – 31 October):

Tuesday – Friday – Sunday 10:00-18:00

Winter (1 November – 31 March): Daily 09:30-16:00

Bánffy Castle



Formerly known as the Versailles of Transylvania, Bánffy Castle in Bontida was built in several stages, starting from the 16th century. The castle towers are evident on the banks of the River Someş from Răscruci village, on the road from Cluj-Napoca to Dej.

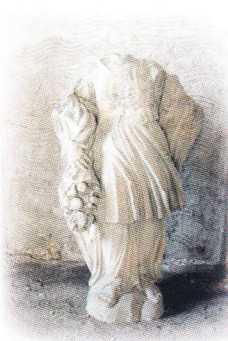
Dénes Bánffy inherited the property when he was 12. He spent his youthful years in Vienna, at the court of Empress Maria Theresa and started the reconstruction of the castle in 1747, when she sent him up to Transylvania as high dignitary in charge of the imperial stud farms. The new structures, designed in the spirit of the Viennese Imperial Baroque style, consisted of: a riding hall, stables and servants' quarters. The yard of honour was decorated with more than 30 baroque statues, representing characters from Ovid's Metamorphoses. József Bánffy tore down the gate building in 1820, thus enlarging the yard, and built a watermill near the castle. The English-style park in the vicinity was also his achievement.

The estate was devastated in the autumn of 1944, when the retreating German troops set it on fire and plundered it. The furniture, the library, the famous gallery of portraits and the sculpture gallery vanished. The plush interiors can be seen now only in several period photos.

The dilapidated condition and importance of the castle at Bontida was officially confirmed in 2000, when this architectural monument was included in the list of the World's 100 Most Endangered Sites.

The estate is currently undergoing an important process of restoration and reconstruction, meant to redeem it to its former glory. One of the castle buildings, starting this year, houses the Centre of Specialization in Built Heritage Rehabilitation, sponsored by the Transylvania Trust Foundation and the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (Great Britain). Bontida Cultural Days and other cultural activities are held here every year.

Nearby attractions: Cluj-Napoca city.



Access by car: 33 km from Cluj-Napoca
DN1C (E576) toward Dej

by plane: Cluj-Napoca Airport

Address: Castelul Bánffy,
Comuna Bontida nr. 246,
407105, jud. Cluj

Phone/Fax: 0040-264-435.489

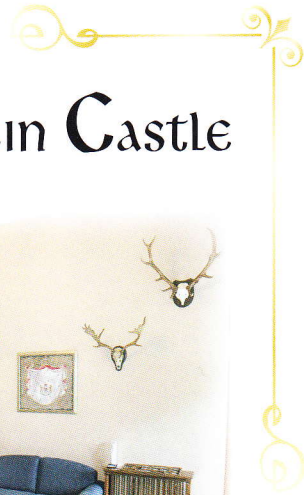
e-mail: bhct@transylvaniatrust.ro

web: www.transylvaniatrust.ro,

www.heritagetraining-banffycastle.org

Open hours: Monday – Sunday 09:00-19:00





Royal Săvârşin Castle

Returned to the possession of the Royal Family, after having been renovated and refurbished, the Castle at Săvârşin is now open to tourists.

The current estate exists on the site of a hunting house built around 1680 by the Forray family. When Andrei Forray, who took a passionate interest in botany, married Julia Brunswick, he turned the park surrounding the house into a garden with rare species. The oak trees are more than 350 years old and the walnut trees, more than 170 years old.

The Castle as one sees it today was built in Neo-Classical style in the 19th century. Its architecture is simple, with no ornamental flowering. The estate, bought by Queen Elena, was lost after the Royal Family's exile. It was returned to King Mihai in 2001.

The furniture was brought from the Royal Family's former residence near Florence. "The Bedroom with pink bathroom" still keeps in the bathroom the toiletries of Florence pink faience that once belonged to Queen Elena. "The Blue Room" is furnished in Art Nouveau style, reconstructing the royal atmosphere of the '20s.

The English-style park is a combination of wild growth with décor elements thought out by Queen Elena. The avenues are laid with cinders and sand and the bridge and stairways leading to the lake with an isle in the middle are made of wood. At present, one can tour and also rent rooms at Săvârşin, on the ground floor and upstairs, in one wing of the castle.

Nearby attractions: Arad and Deva cities, Zarand Mountains, the Wooden church at Troaş.



Access by car: 91 km from Arad (E68), and 63 km from Deva (E68)

by plane: Arad Airport

Address: Domeniul Regal Săvârşin
317270, Săvârşin, jud. Arad

Phone: 0040-257-557.447; **Fax:** 0040-257-557.525

e-mail: castle@savarsincastle.com,
castel@castelsavarsin.ro

web: www.castelsavarsin.ro,
www.savarsincastle.com

Opening hours: Monday-Sunday 09:30-18:30



Macea Castle



Access by car: 25 km from Arad and 6 km from Curtici
by plane: Arad Airport
Address: Complexul Cultural Macea, Bd. Revoluției nr. 81,
310130, Macea, jud. Arad
Phone/Fax: 0040-257-535.980
Opening hours: Daily 08:00 - 16:00



Mihai Cernovici built a manor at Macea in 1724. Concomitantly, he started the development of a park in the nearby woods. The building was extended between 1820 and 1866, acquiring architectural features specific to the Secession style. New species of ornamental trees were planted, flower beds were arranged, and a pool with an artesian well was built. The over 300-year old yew, chestnut and maple trees earned for the place, the statute of Dendrological Park, proclaimed in 1968. You will see there also rare specimens of wild *Gingko biloba* L. and *Platanus acerifolia* Willd.

Since 1990, both the 20.5 hectare park and the castle are a university scientific teaching base, included in the Macea Cultural Complex run by the Vasile Goldiș West University in Arad.

The Botanical Garden has departments of medicinal, aromatic, toxic, ornamental and water plants and a nursery. In the "zoo" department, the bushes are guided to grow, since 1982, into patterns imitating reptile, bird or mammal species.

The Macea Castle houses the rooms of the Ethnographic Museum (with exhibits specific to the area) and the Botanical Museum (with an interesting collection of fungi) as well as an original Museum of Cartoons. Illustrious figures of national history are commemorated in a complex of monumental art. Scientific meetings, summer camps and courses, student congresses, drama and music shows, the Festival of the Criș Valley Romanian songs and costumes, and the Humour Festival are annual events organized there.

Nearby attractions: Castle at Șofronea (14 km), Arad city.



Corvin Castle

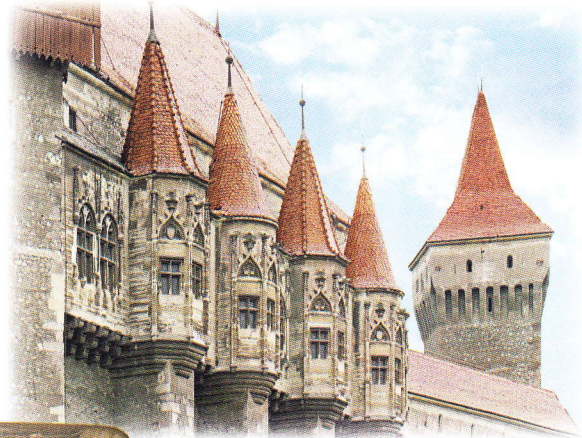
Raised in the 14th century, on the site of an old fortification and on a rock at the foot of which the Zlăsti creek runs, the castle was first documented in 1409, at the time of Sigismund of Luxembourg. In terms of architecture, it combines Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque styles.

One of the largest and most celebrated properties of Prince Iancu of Hunedoara, the castle went through major changes under his rule; becoming not only a fortified strategic place, but also a residence. In time, the structure of the castle was changed, getting more towers, halls and official lounges. The gallery and the keep – the last defence tower (known as “Ne boisa” or “Don’t be afraid” in Serbian) have remained as they were at the time of Iancu of Hunedoara, as has the Capistrano Tower (named after a famous monk living at the court).

Just as interesting are: the Knights’ Hall (a big party hall), the Mace Tower and the White Bastion (used to store food), and the Diet Hall where you can admire painted medallions of princes’ portraits, like Matei Basarab of Wallachia and Vasile Lupu of Moldavia. In the northern wing, where there is the “Matei Loggia”, one of the earliest manifestations of the Renaissance in Transylvania, you can still see fragments of a painting recalling the legend of the raven, according to which the raven is the origin of the name of the descendants of Iancu of Hunedoara – Corvin (from the Latin “corvus” = Romanian “corb” = English “raven”).

The Castle was restored and turned into a feudal art museum.

Nearby attractions: Deva stronghold, Dacian vestiges at Sarmizegetusa Ulpia Traiana, Aurel Vlaicu Memorial Museum in Hunedoara, church at Densus, Retezat National Park.



Access by car: 20 km from Deva (DN68B)

Address: Muzeul Castelul Corvineștilor
Str. Curtea Corvineștilor nr. 1-3,
331141, Hunedoara, jud. Hunedoara

Phone: 0040-254-711.423; **Phone/Fax:** 0040-254-718.028

e-mail: castelhd@yahoo.com

web: www.castelulcorvinilor.ro

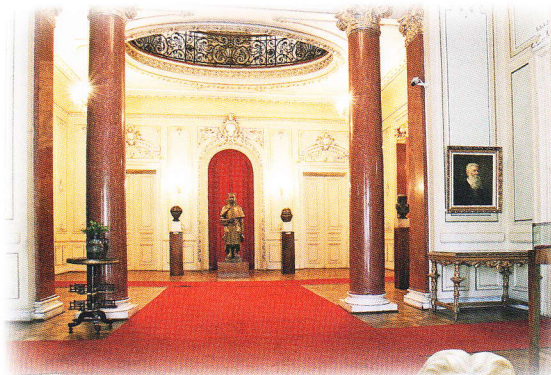
Opening hours: Summer (1 April -31 October):

Monday 09:00 – 15:00, Tuesday – Sunday 09:00 – 18:00

Winter (1 November – 31 March):

Monday 09:00 – 15:00, Tuesday – Sunday 09:00 – 16:00

Jean Mihail Palace



The story goes that a wealthy resident of Craiova city wanted to coat the palace he was building with gold coins. However, King Carol I would not allow it unless he managed to have the coins set... on their edges.

That was the legend. The Jean Mihail Palace was in fact designed by French architect Paul Gottereau in late Baroque style. Built between 1900 and 1907 for Constantin Mihail – one of Romania's wealthiest men at that time – the palace resembles, by style, the French academism.

The façade was coated with slate and the rooms equipped from the onset with electricity and central heating. Highest-quality materials and foreign workers were brought there. The stucco was partly gilded and the walls covered with Lyon silk hangings. The palace, decorated with Venetian mirrors, Murano crystal chandeliers, and stairways made of Carrara marble, was the residence of the Mihail family.

The father died before the palace was finished. The elder son lived and squandered his wealth away in France, and Jean, the other son, never actually enjoyed the luxury and amenities of the new residence. He lived withdrawn in only one room which was often not heated in winter time. He carried on and increased the family's wealth, becoming one of the richest men in the country. However, as there were no descendants, this huge fortune was donated to the Romanian state. King Carol I and family, and King Ferdinand were guests to the Jean Mihail Palace.

Since 1954, the palace has housed the galleries of the Art Museum. They have on display nearly 12,000 pieces: more than 2,200 Romanian paintings, 200 foreign paintings, over 6,500 black-and-white decorative art works, and other works. The sculpture collection of more than 200 pieces includes also works by the famous Constantin Brâncuși: "Child's Head", "Head of a Young Girl", "Female Torso", a version of the "Kiss".

Nearby attractions: Casa Băniei (The Governorate Hall, 1699, the city's oldest monument), the Bibescu-Romanescu Park, the University.

Access by car: Bucharest-Craiova 234 km (E70)
by plane: Craiova Airport
Address: Muzeul de Artă, Calea Unirii nr. 15,
 200419, Craiova, jud. Dolj
Phone: 0040-251-412.342
Opening hours: Monday closed
 Tuesday – Saturday 10:00-17:00
 Sunday 09:00-17:00

Tourism Information and Promotion Offices ABROAD

AUSTRIA

Währingerstrasse 6-8, 1090 VIENNA
Phone: 0043-1-317.31.57
Fax: 0043-1-317.31.574
e-mail: rumaenien@aon.at

BELGIUM

17 A Avenue de la Toison d'Or, 1050 BRUSSELS
Phone: 0032-2-502.46.42
Fax: 0032-2-502.56.22
e-mail: info@roumanie-tourisme.be
info@roemenie-toerisme.nl
www.roumanie-tourisme.be
www.roemenie-toerisme.nl

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

9G Oriental Kenzo Office Building,
48 Dongzhimenwai Str.,
Dong Cheng, 100027 BEIJING PRC
Phone: 0086-10-65.66.01.36
Fax: 0086-10-65.66.01.37
e-mail: info@romaniatourism.cn

FRANCE

7, Rue Gaillon, 75002 PARIS
Phone: 0033-1-40.20.99.33
Fax: 0033-1-40.20.99.43
e-mail: info@guideroumanie.com

GERMANY

20a Budapesterstr., D-10787 BERLIN
Phone: 0049-30-241.90.41
Fax: 0049-30-24.72.50.20
e-mail: berlin@rumaenien-tourismus.de
www.rumaenien-tourismus.de

Dachauerstr. 32-34, D-80335 MÜNCHEN
Phone: 0049-89-515.67.687, 0049-89-515.67.688
Fax: 0049-89-515.67.689
e-mail: muenchen@rumaenien-tourismus.de

HUNGARY

Hercegprimas ut. 9, 1051 BUDAPEST
Phone: 0036-1-269.49.61
Fax: 0036-1-269.49.57
e-mail: romaniatourism@t-online.hu
office@romaniaturizmus.hu
www.romaniaturizmus.hu

ISRAEL

135 Ben Yehuda Str., TEL AVIV
Phone/Fax: 00972-3-527.67.46
e-mail: rominfo@zahav.net.il

ITALY

Via Torino 95, Galleria Esedra, 00184 ROME
Phone: 0039-06-488.02.67
Fax: 0039-06-4898.62.81
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JAPAN

160-8308 Hanawa Bldg. 4F,
1-8-5 Kamezawa Sumida-ku, TOKYO
Phone: 0081-3-5819-1929
Fax: 0081-3-5819-1928
e-mail: info@romaniatabi.jp
www.romaniatabi.jp

UNITED KINGDOM

22 New Cavendish Str., LONDON W1G 8TT
Phone: 0044-20-7224.36.92
Fax: 0044-20-7935.64.35
e-mail: romaniatravel@btconnect.com

REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

Bd. Stefan cel Mare no.4, CHISINAU
Phone/Fax: 00373-22-273.555
e-mail: romtur@ch.moldpac.md

RUSSIA

Ul. Bolshaya Marinskaya 9, 3rd floor, office 313,
129085 MOSCOW
Phone: 007-495-615.95.57
Fax: 007-495-615.65.66
e-mail: mt@futures.msk.ru
www.RomaniaTravel.ru, www.RomaniaTourism.ru

SPAIN

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

SWEDEN

Gamla Brogatan 36-38, 111 20 STOCKHOLM
Phone: 0046-8-21.02.53
Fax: 0046-8-21.02.55
e-mail: rotoscand@telia.com

U.S.A.

355 Lexington Avenue, floor 19, NEW YORK, NY10017
Phone: 1-212.545.84.84
e-mail: info@RomaniaTourism.com
www.RomaniaTourism.com



NATIONAL AUTHORITY FOR TOURISM

Bulevardul Dinicu Golescu nr. 38, sector 1, 010873, București, România

Telefon: 0040-21-314.99.57; Fax: 0040-21-314.99.60

e-mail: promovare@mturism.ro

www.romaniatravel.com