

EUROPE · HISTORY · ROAD TRIPS · MOUNTAINS · HIKING · WILDLIFE · OFF THE BEATEN PATH

 *Romania*

Romania's big draw is Transylvania: Saxon fortified churches, Sighișoara's clock tower and Carpathian beech forests home to bears, with Bran Castle playing up its loose Dracula link. Beyond lie Maramureș's wooden churches, Bucovina's painted monasteries and the Danube Delta's pelicans. Prices are among the EU's lowest, and horse-drawn carts still share some rural roads.

 Before you go, read the UK government's travel advice for Romania and entry requirements (visas, passport validity). Last updated by FCDO 18 September 2026.

|                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  CAPITAL<br><b>Bucharest</b>                    |  CURRENCY<br><b>Romanian leu (RON)</b><br>£1 ≈ RON 6.34 |  LANGUAGE<br><b>Romanian, Hungarian</b>                         |  BEST TIME<br><b>May–Jun, Sep</b>           |
|  DAILY BUDGET<br><b>£35–£170</b><br>££ Moderate |  PLUGS<br><b>Type C, F</b><br>230V · adapter needed     |  FLIGHT FROM LONDON<br><b>3h 10m direct</b><br>~£60–£220 return |  TIME ZONE<br><b>UTC+2</b><br>standard time |

Romania is roughly the size of the UK, and its best experiences are rural. Most first trips run from Bucharest or Cluj-Napoca into Transylvania, basing themselves in Brașov for Bran, Râșnov and Peleș Castle, then moving on to Sighișoara, Sibiu and the fortified churches of villages such as Biertan and Viscri. With more time, go north to Maramureș's wooden churches and Bucovina's painted monasteries, drive the Transfăgărășan road over the Făgăraș mountains in summer, or head east to the channels and reed beds of the Danube Delta.

Costs are low by European standards, especially outside Bucharest, and guesthouses in Saxon villages offer home cooking and genuine hospitality. Roads have improved but remain slow, with lorries and horse-drawn carts on two-lane routes, so plan shorter driving days. Trains are cheap and scenic but rarely quick. Bucharest divides opinion, with belle époque boulevards beside communist-era blocks and the colossal Palace of the Parliament. Romania suits road-trippers, hikers, wildlife watchers and anyone curious about a rural Europe that has largely vanished elsewhere.

Top 5 highlights

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HISTORY

**Saxon fortified churches**

UNESCO lists seven Transylvanian villages, most of them Saxon, whose churches were fortified against raids from the 13th century onwards. Stay in a restored farmhouse in Viscri or Biertan to see haymaking, horse-carts and village life.
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HISTORY

**Sighișoara**

A UNESCO-listed, still-inhabited medieval citadel on a hill, with a 64 m clock tower, a covered wooden stairway up to the hilltop church, and the house where Vlad the Impaler is said to have been born.

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## SACRED SITE

**Painted monasteries of Bucovina**

Churches from the 15th and 16th centuries covered inside and out in frescoes. Voroneț's intense blue Last Judgement is the most famous, with Sucevița and Moldovița a short drive away; all are UNESCO-listed.

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## WILDLIFE

**Danube Delta**

One of Europe's largest wetlands, a maze of channels, lakes and reed beds where over 300 bird species have been recorded, including great white and Dalmatian pelicans. Base yourself in Tulcea or a village guesthouse and explore by boat.

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## ADVENTURE

**Transfăgărășan road**

Built in the early 1970s as a strategic military route, this hairpin-laden road climbs to 2,042 m at Bâlea Lake in the Făgăraș mountains. The high section usually opens only from July to October, depending on snow.

**Biggest cities**

## LARGEST CITY

**Bucharest**

≈ 2.5 million people

Give it a day or two: the vast Palace of the Parliament, the Old Town's bars, Calea Victoriei's belle époque buildings and the open-air Village Museum in King Michael I Park.

## 2ND LARGEST CITY

**Iași**

≈ 500,000 people

Moldavia's cultural capital, with Romania's oldest modern university (1860), the turreted Palace of Culture and the stone-carved Church of the Three Hierarchs; a good stepping stone to Bucovina.

## 3RD LARGEST CITY

**Constanța**

≈ 420,000 people

Romania's main Black Sea port, ancient Tomis, where Ovid was exiled. See the Roman mosaic floor, the Carol I Mosque's minaret and the art nouveau Casino, then head north to Mamaia's beach strip.

Ranked by functional urban area (Eurostat, 2018). Counted as single municipalities in the 2021 census, Cluj-Napoca (about 290,000) is Romania's second city, followed by Iași, Constanța and Timișoara.

**When to go to Romania**

Best time: **May–Jun, Sep.**

Jan

Feb

Mar

Apr

May

Jun

Jul

Aug

Sep

Oct

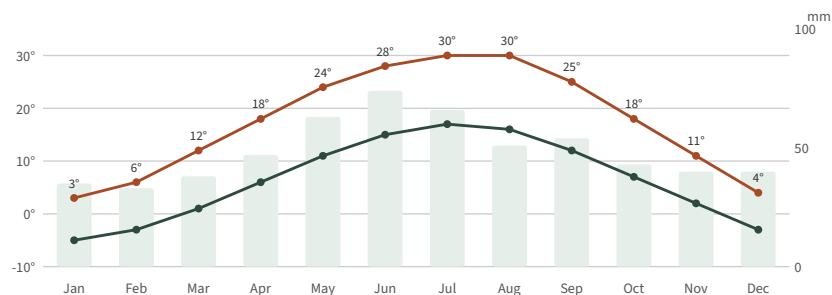
Nov

Dec

■ Best ■ Good ■ Mixed ■ Poor

**Average climate in Bucharest**

— High °C — Low °C ■ Rain (mm)



# Festivals & events

|     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Jun | <b>Sibiu International Theatre Festival</b><br>One of the world's largest performing-arts festivals fills Sibiu for around ten days each June with theatre, dance and concerts, many of them free street performances in the old squares. |
| Aug | <b>Untold</b><br>Romania's biggest electronic music festival takes over Cluj-Napoca's Central Park and stadium for four days in early August, drawing international headliners and huge crowds.                                           |
| Dec | <b>Winter customs</b><br>Around Christmas and New Year, villages in Maramureş and Bucovina keep up carol singing door to door, masked goat and bear dances, and long family feasts.                                                       |

## How much does Romania cost?

|                                                                                          |                                                                                                    |                                                                                                           |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| SHOESTRING<br><b>£35</b><br>per person / day<br>≈ RON 222<br>hostels, street food, buses | MID-RANGE<br><b>£80</b><br>per person / day<br>≈ RON 507<br>3-star hotels, restaurants, some taxis | COMFORTABLE<br><b>£170</b><br>per person / day<br>≈ RON 1,078<br>4-star+, guided trips, private transfers |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Estimates per person per day, excluding flights. Prices vary by season and city.

## Food to try

### Sarmale

Cabbage leaves, often pickled, rolled around minced pork and rice and slow-baked with smoked meat; served with mămăligă and soured cream, and essential at Christmas and weddings.

### Mămăligă

Maize porridge served with stews, or as mămăliguță cu brânză și smântână, topped with salty sheep's cheese and soured cream.

### Mici

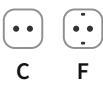
Skinless grilled rolls of minced beef, lamb and pork, heavy on garlic and spices, eaten with mustard and beer at every summer barbecue and market.

## Getting around

CFR trains are cheap and connect most cities, but slowly: Bucharest to Braşov takes around three hours and Bucharest to Cluj most of a day. Buses and maxitaxi minibuses fill the gaps. A hire car is the best way to reach Saxon villages, Maramureş and Bucovina; buy the rovinietă road vignette online. Domestic flights link Bucharest with Cluj, Iaşi and Timișoara, and Bolt and Uber work in the cities.

## Practical information

### PLUGS & VOLTAGE



230V — bring a UK-to-C/F adapter

### DIALLING CODE

+40

### EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Telephone: **112** (ambulance, fire, police)

Source: FCDO “Getting help”

### TIME ZONE

UTC+2 (standard time)

#### TAP WATER

Generally safe to drink

#### DRIVING

On the right

#### TIPPING

Leave around 10% in restaurants, ideally in cash even when paying by card, and round up taxi fares; guides and drivers appreciate a tip.

#### ETIQUETTE

In Orthodox monasteries women should cover their heads and shoulders and men remove hats. Give flowers in odd numbers, as even numbers are for funerals, and greet shopkeepers with 'Bună ziua'.

#### MAIN AIRPORTS

Henri Coandă International Airport (OTP), Bucharest; Avram Iancu Cluj International Airport (CLJ), Cluj-Napoca; Sibiu International Airport (SBZ), Sibiu

## Visas & entry for Romania

Shown for a British passport.

**No visa needed**

You can travel without a visa to the Schengen area, which includes Romania, for up to 90 days in any 180-day period. This applies if you travel: as a tourist; to visit family or friends; to attend business meetings, cultural or sports events; for short-term studies or training.

The requirements for working in Romania are different.

From the UK government's FCDO entry requirements for British passport holders — read the full page for passport validity, permits and exceptions.

## Health & vaccinations



See a travel health nurse, GP or travel clinic **6–8 weeks before you go**. Make sure routine UK vaccinations (such as MMR and diphtheria-tetanus-polio) are up to date.

#### RECOMMENDED FOR MOST TRAVELLERS

Hepatitis A

Tetanus

#### SOMETIMES ADVISED — DEPENDS ON YOUR TRIP, ACTIVITIES AND HEALTH

Hepatitis B

Measles

Rabies

Tick-borne encephalitis

Tuberculosis

#### YELLOW FEVER CERTIFICATE

No yellow fever certificate is required to enter.

#### MALARIA

**No malaria risk**

Source: TravelHealthPro (National Travel Health Network and Centre), checked 21 October 2026. This is a summary, not medical advice.

## Public holidays in Romania

The next 12 months. Banks, offices and some sights may close, and transport and hotels get busy around these dates.

|                 |                                                |
|-----------------|------------------------------------------------|
| Mon 30 Nov 2026 | Saint Andrew's Day                             |
| Tue 1 Dec 2026  | National Day                                   |
| Fri 25 Dec 2026 | Christmas Day                                  |
| Sat 26 Dec 2026 | Christmas Day                                  |
| Fri 1 Jan 2027  | New Year's Day                                 |
| Sat 2 Jan 2027  | New Year's Day                                 |
| Wed 6 Jan 2027  | Epiphany                                       |
| Thu 7 Jan 2027  | Saint John the Baptist                         |
| Sun 24 Jan 2027 | Unification of the Romanian Principalities Day |
| Fri 30 Apr 2027 | Good Friday                                    |
| Sat 1 May 2027  | Labour Day                                     |
| Sun 2 May 2027  | Easter                                         |
| Mon 3 May 2027  | Easter                                         |
| Tue 1 Jun 2027  | Children's Day                                 |
| Sun 20 Jun 2027 | Pentecost                                      |
| Mon 21 Jun 2027 | Pentecost                                      |
| Sun 15 Aug 2027 | Dormition of the Mother of God                 |

National holidays only. Dates based on lunar calendars can move by a day or two depending on official announcements.

## Useful phrases in Romanian

| ENGLISH           | ROMANIAN   | SAY IT            |
|-------------------|------------|-------------------|
| Hello             | Bună ziua  | BOO-nuh ZEE-wah   |
| Thank you         | Mulțumesc  | mool-tsoo-MESK    |
| Please            | Vă rog     | vuh ROG           |
| Excuse me         | Scuzați-mă | skoo-ZAHTS-ee-muh |
| How much is this? | Cât costă? | kuht KOS-tuh      |

## Know before you go

- Brown bears are common in the Carpathians, even on the edges of Braşov: never feed them, keep food sealed when camping, and hike in groups on popular trails.
- Carry some lei in cash for village guesthouses, monastery entry and markets; cards work widely in cities. Use bank ATMs and decline the machine's offer to convert the charge.
- Street-hailed taxis can overcharge, so use Bolt or Uber in cities, especially at Bucharest's Gara de Nord station and Henri Coandă airport.