~ ROMANIA ~

Location: Southeastern Europe, bordering the Black Sea, between Bulgaria and Ukraine
Geographic coordinates: 46 00 N, 25 00 E
Map references: Europe
Area: total: 237,500 sq km
Land: 230,340 sq km
Water: 7,160 sq km
Area - comparative: slightly smaller than Oregon
Land boundaries: total: 2,508 km
Border countries: Bulgaria 608 km, Hungary 443 km, Moldova 450 km, Serbia and Montenegro 476 km, Ukraine (north) 362 km, Ukraine (east) 169 km
Coastline: 225 km
Maritime claims: territorial sea: 12 nm
Contiguous zone: 24 nm
Exclusive economic zone: 200 nm
Continental shelf: 200-m depth or to the depth of exploitation
Climate: temperate; cold, cloudy winters with frequent snow and fog; sunny summers with frequent showers and thunderstorms
Terrain: central Transylvanian Basin is separated from the Plain of Moldavia on the east by the Carpathian Mountains and separated from the Walachian Plain on the south by the Transylvanian Alps
Elevation extremes: lowest point: Black Sea 0 m
Highest point: Moldoveanu 2,544 m

Natural resources: petroleum (reserves declining), timber, natural gas, coal, iron ore, salt, arable land, hydropower
Land use: arable land: 40.82%
Permanent crops: 2.25%
Other: 56.93% (2001)
Irrigated land: 28,800 sq km (1998 est.)
Natural hazards: earthquakes, most severe in south and southwest; geologic structure and climate promote landslides.
Population: 22,300,000 aproxCapital (Bucharest): 2,200,000 approx Ethnic
Groups: Romanian 89.5%, Hungarian 6.6%, Roma 2.5%, Ukrainian 0.3%, German 0.3%, Russian 0.2%, Turkish 0.2%, other 0.4% (2002 census)
Religions: Eastern Orthodox (including all sub-denominations) 86.8%, Protestant (various denominations including Reformate and Pentecostal) 7.5%, Roman Catholic 4.7%, other (mostly Muslim) and unspecified 0.9%, none 0.1% (2002 census)
Languages: Romanian (official), Hungarian, GermanMany Romanians also speak English or French very well in the bigger towns and cities.

Romanians are naturally hospitable people and always eager to share stories of their village with travellers passing-by. You might even be invited into their home for a home-cooked traditional Romanian meal.

The principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia - for centuries under the suzerainty of the Turkish Ottoman Empire - secured their autonomy in 1856; they united in 1859 and a few years later adopted the new name of Romania. The country gained recognition of its independence in 1878. It joined the Allied Powers in World War I and acquired new territories following the conflict. In 1940, it allied with the Axis powers and participated in the 1941 German invasion of the USSR. Three years later, overrun by the Soviets, Romania signed an armistice. The post-war Soviet

occupation led to the formation of a Communist "people's republic" in 1947 and the abdication of the king. The decades-long rule of dictator Nicolae CEAUŞESCU, who took power in 1965, and his Securitate police state became increasingly oppressive and draconian through the 1980s. CEAUŞESCU was overthrown and executed in late 1989. Former Communists dominated the government until 1996, when they were swept from power by a fractious coalition of centrist parties. In 2000, the center-left Social Democratic Party (PSD) became Romania's leading party, governing with the support of the Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania (UDMR). The opposition center-right alliance formed by the National Liberal Party (PNL) and the Democratic Party (PD) scored a surprise victory over the ruling PSD in December 2004 presidential elections. The PNL-PD alliance maintains a parliamentary majority with the support of the UDMR, the Humanist Party (PUR), and various ethnic minority groups. Although Romania completed accession talks with the European Union (EU) in December 2004, it must continue to address rampant corruption - while invigorating lagging economic and democratic reforms - before it can achieve its hope of joining the EU, tentatively set for 2007. Romania joined NATO in March of 2004.

What is climate of Romania?

Because of its position on the south-eastern portion of the European continent, Romania has a climate that is transitional between temperate and continental. Climatic conditions are somewhat modified by the country's varied relief. The Carpathians serve as a barrier to Atlantic air masses, restricting their oceanic influences to the west and centre of the country, where they make for milder winters and heavier rainfall. The mountains also block the continental influences of the vast plain to the north in the Soviet Union, which bring frosty winters and less rain to the south and southeast. In the extreme southeast, Mediterranean influences offer a milder, maritime climate. The average annual temperature is 11°C / 51.8°F in the south and 8°C / 46.4°F in the north. In Bucharest, the temperature ranges -3°C / 26.6°F in January and 23°C / 73.4°F in July. Rainfall, although adequate throughout the country, decreases from west to east and from mountains to plains. Some mountainous areas receive more than 1,010 millimeters of precipitation each year. Annual precipitation averages about 635 millimeters in central Transylvania, 521 millimeters at Iasi in Moldavia, and only 381 millimeters at Constanta on the Black Sea.

Romania is bordered on the north and northeast by Moldova, on the east by Ukraine, on the west by Hungary and Yugoslavia, and on the south by Bulgaria. The country has only 130 miles (209 kilometers) of coastline, where itborders the Black Sea in the southeast.

Surface features. A series of mountain ranges curves through northern and central Romania, forming a circular pattern. The mountains surround a vast flatland known as the Transylvanian Plateau. The mountains are, in turn, surrounded by plains on the east, south, and west. Romania's mountains are neither extremely high nor steep, and several passes cut through them. As a result, they are not major barriers to transportation. Most of them are from 3,000 to 6,000 feet (910 to 1,800 meters) high. Mount Moldoveanu, in the Transylvanian Alps, is Romania's highest mountain.

The Transylvanian Plateau lies about 1,200 feet (366 meters) above sea level, and Romania's plains lie at or near sea level. These flatlands have the country's best farmland and most of its cities and towns. Vast forests cover parts of the Transylvanian Plateau and the mountains.

Romania has many rivers. The longest and most important one by far is the Danube River. It flows about 900 miles (1,400 kilometers) through Romania. Most of the way, it flows west to east along the southern border. The Danube turns northward near the Black Sea, then eastward again, and empties into the sea. Most of Romania's other major rivers flow into the Danube from the north. They include, from west to east, the Jiu, Oltul, Arges, Ialomita, Siretul, and Prut.
Romania has about 2,500 lakes. Most of them are small. The biggest lakes lie near the Danube. Numerous tiny lakes add beauty to Romania's mountains.

Land regions. Romania can be divided into six land regions. They are Transylvania, Bukovina, Moldavia, Walachia, Banat, and Dobruja. Transylvania is the country's largest and most varied region. It extends throughout central and northwestern Romania, and includes most of the country's mountains, the Transylvanian Plateau, and the northwestern plain. The plateau and plain have good soil for farming. The plateau and the mountains

yield valuable forest products and minerals. The beauty of the mountains and their ski slopes and other recreation facilities make them a favorite vacation area. Several cities have grown up in Transylvania because of its rich resources.

Bukovina, northeast of Transylvania, is a thickly forested region in the Moldavian Carpathian Mountains. It has ski slopes and lovely scenery. The people of Bukovina live in small villages in the valleys.

Moldavia, Walachia, and Banat. Moldavia, in northeastern Romania, extends from Transylvania to the Prut River along the border with Moldova. Walachia, in the south, stretches from the southernmost mountains to the Danube. Banat, in western Romania, extends from the western mountains to Yugoslavia and Hungary. All of these regions have a similar physical makeup. The land in each descends from mountains near Transylvania, to hills, and then to plains. These plains are Romania's best farmland. Walachia has more people than any other Romanian region, chiefly because Bucharest is there. Banat has several cities, but Moldavia has few.

Dobruja is a small plain between the northern course of the Danube River and the Black Sea. The Danube Delta covers northeastern Dobruja. This marshy area has an amazing variety of wildlife. Sturgeon, the source of caviar, and numerous other kinds of fish live in its waters. About 300 species of birds, including the pelican, also live in the delta. Farmland covers most of southern Dobruja. The Danube-Black Sea Canal flows through this area. Completed in 1984, it provides a shortcut from the Danube to the Black Sea. Sandy beaches and beautiful seaside resorts line Dobruja's Black Sea coast. Constanta, Romania's major port city, is on the coast.

The Bucegi Range above is seen at dawn looking south from
the Postavaru Cabin above the Poiana Brasov Alpine skiing area.
Many mountain ranges along the 900 km long Carpathian Mountains
spine offer year-round access for hiking, climbing, wildlife
(bear, lynx, wolf, mountain goats).
A special quality of Romanian mountains is the presence
from late Spring to Fall of itinerant shepherds and their flocks in search of lush
pasture land. Rt: Wood carving at Postavaru Cabana,

The Danube Delta is an expansive wildlife refuge counting bird varieties in the thousands. Cormorants, swans, pelicans, ducks, and herons are most prevalent. Visitors have varied boat services available to explore the Delta from the city of Tulcea and can find pension lodgings in several remote fishing villages.

The Danube Delta extends over 5,600 square kilometers (about 1,400,000 US acres). At flood season seen above, the river rises nine to ten feet creating vast lakes, marshlands, and labyrinths of canals that shelter a huge diversity of wildlife. Fishermen spend long summer months in the marshes living in reed huts or cultivating the reeds. At the mouth of the Delta can be found caviar rich sturgeon. Travel through the Delta requires experienced guides many of whom count decades of knowledge of remote water routes and by-ways. At the end of the Communist era, under orders from Ceausescu, large areas of the Delta were drained and turned into farmland. Those misguided efforts are being reversed through reflooding programs.

Transylvania Rolling Hills and Saxon Village in the southern portions of Transylvania. Numerous settlements dating as early as the 13th century retain their architectural quality and many feature unique fortified churches as strongholds against invaders. Village pensions offer affordable shelter and opportunities for horse or carriage rides on local trails.

The vast, flat fertile fields of Wallachia stretch south of the Carpathian Mountains to the Danube River and eastward toward the Black Sea. Hand labor is still widely applied even on the huge expanses of once collectivized farms.

"The fire of life" cave

Waterfall in Beusnita's valley

Monastery in Ialomicioara's cave

Romania, more than two thousand caves are waiting to be explored and hundreds to be discovered, here in Transilvanian's mountains. You can choose any path you want, you can follow an original route-marked one or not, always with an very experienced guide (from the area)! The ortodoxian Romanian monastery -many of them belonging to the universal patrimony and destroyed by the communist system-were rebuilt from scratch/ruins, in the caves' walls.

The Sfinx in Bucegi

The Sfinx is a real defender of Romania pure positive energies. In a certain night... at a certain moment... Bucegi mountains become a door to other worlds.

Being two thousand years, Sarmizegetusa is one of the oldest fortress of Romania ancestors: the dacians. The walls, the ancient calendar and the clock includes original elements. As other gone civilizations, the dacians' hides unelucidated mysteries.

BRAN CASTLE FROM BRAŞOV

Everyone in the modern World knows about the famous Count Dracula. Here is a picture of him and the infamous Bran Castle which is considered in folklore to have been his castle. Bran Castle is standing today as seen in the picture.

Dracula's original castle lies in ruins. The person who Count Dracul was based on was a Prince named Vlad Ţepes. Vlad was born in Sighisoara in 1431. In the 15th century, Romania was made up of a number of small states, each with an

independent ruler. Vlad Tepes was a ruler for a state called Wallachia not Transylvania. Wallachia is located just south of Transylvania.
The name "Dracula" was first held by his father also named Vlad. The name means "Son of a Dragon". Vlad senior received the name because he was part of the Order of the Dragon, an order created by the Holy Roman Emperor Sigismund. The Order of the Dragon was designed as an alliance to fight the Turks. Vlad Tepes assumed the name from his father. In current day Romanian, the word "Dracu" is synonymous with the word "Devil". "Dracula" is therefore referred to as one who is Devil-like.

As a ruler, Vlad Tepes probably had some "Devilish" habits such as drinking human blood. This was likely done to promote fear. It was not unusual in those times for the victor of a war to "drink the blood of his enemy". Whether Dracula took it a few steps further it is not known for certain.



VLAD ŢEPEŞ

1428/29 Vlad Tepes, the son of Vlad Dracul, is born.

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1463 Vlad Tepes becomes Prince of Wallachia and moves to Tirgoviste.

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1442 Vlad Tepes is imprisoned with his father by the Turks.

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1443 Vlad Tepes becomes a hostage by the Turks.

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1447 Vlad Dracul is beheaded.

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1448 Vlad briefly attains the Wallachian throne. Dethroned, he goes to Moldavia and befriends Prince Stefan.

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1451 Vlad and Stephan flee to Transylvania.

*

1455 Constantinople falls.

*

1456 John Hunyadi assists Vlad Tepes to attain Wallachian throne. Vladislav Dan is executed.

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1458 Matthias Corvinu succeeds John Hunyadi as King of Hungary.

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1459 Easter massacre of boyers and rebuilding of Dracula's castle. Bucharest is established as the second governmental center.

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1460 Attack upon Brasov, Romania

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1461 Successful campaign against Turkish settlements along the Danube, Summer retreat to Tirgoviste.

*

1462 Following the battle at Dracula's castle, Vlad flees to Transylvania. Vlad begins 13 years of imprisonment.

*

1475 Summer wars in Serbia against Turks take place. November: Vlad resumes throne of Wallachia.

*

1476/77 Vlad is assassinated.

And now.... Are you hungry? Come with me..!

... to taste the traditional romanian food...

Soup with meatballs (Ciorbă de perişoare)

Mix well by hand:

* 2.5 lb hashed meat
* 1 onion finely chopped
* ½ cup cooked rice
* 1 egg
* finely chopped fresh dill and parsley to your taste
* salt and pepper.

Make meatballs ca. 1 inch in diameter, roll them in flour, and set them aside. Fill about half of a 4 quart stock pot with cold water. Add to the water the following vegetables:

* 2 carrots shredded

* 1 parsley root

* ¼ celery root

* 1 onion or a few green onions

* a handful of leustean (lovage) herb, bruised (reserve for later)

When the vegetables are softened, add 1 cup of rice. After the rice is cooked, add the meatballs one by one. Let the meatballs cook through then add 1 chopped tomato, chopped green pepper, parsley, and celery leaves.

Sour with fresh lemon juice to taste - start with the juice of one lemon (or brine from sauerkraut or a mixture of both). Add lovage herb. Simmer for 5 minutes. These soups are

meant to be reheated and taste better with age. The sour soups are traditionally soured with borş, a liquid made out of wheat bran mixed with water and left to ferment. They are sometimes soured with sauerkraut juice. The soups may be traditionally thickened with a mixture of sour cream and/or egg yolks.

Cabbage rolls (Sarmale)

1 large soured cabbage, 1 3/4 lb/750 g ground meat, 2 large onions, 2 tablespoons rice, 2 tomatoes or 500 mL tomato sauce, salt, pepper, sweet paprika and sour cream (optional).

Grind the meat with a raw onion. Place in a bowl and mix with rice, pepper, salt, paprika, and finely chopped onion. Mix everything well. Core the cabbage with a sharp thin knife. Carefully remove the cabbage leaves, one by one, so that they do not tear. Cut larger leaves in 2 or 3 and then place a little meat in each cabbage piece and roll in. The smaller the rolls are, the tastier they are.

Place a layer of rolls in the pan (take a deep one), then cover with a layer of chopped (julienned) cabbage and the bay leafs, then a layer of thinly sliced tomatoes. Do this layering until all the rolls are made. The last layer must be tomato slices and add tomato sauce. Then place in the oven so that the liquid is reduced. Serve hot with sour cream.

* When soured cabbage is not available, use cabbage leaves scalded in water.

Boeuf Salad (Salată de Boeuf)

2 potatoes, 4 carrots, 1 parsley root, 1 parsnip (optional, one can of green peas, 2 pickles, 1/2 lb (250 g) poultry breast or beef sirloin, 300g home made mayonnaise, 1 tablespoon mustard, salt and pepper.

You get the best salad by boiling carrots, parsley root and parsnip with the meat, then take the boiled vegetables and the meat, cut them in cube shape. Separately boil the whole potatoes with skin, then peel and cub them. Cube the pickles as well. Place everything in a bowl, add the peas, mustard and condiments. In a separate bowl, make mayonese. Add ¾ of the mayo mixture to the meat and vegetables and mix. Arrange on a serving platter. Smooth with a knife and then cover with the rest of the mayo mixture. Garnish with a few olives, hard boiled egg white, or egg slices, pickled red peppers, parsley, etc. Try to shape flowers, other designs and enjoy!

Romanian Walnut Panetone (Cozonaci cu nucă)

Romanian Panetone dough: 2 lbs/1 kg flour, 10 oz/300 g sugar, 1 1/2 cups milk, 6 eggs, 2 oz/50 g yeast, 7 oz/200 g butter, 2 tablespoons oil, vanilla stick, salt, egg for washing the dough, grease for the pans.
Make a starter from yeast and a teaspoon of sugar. Mix until the consistency of sour cream, add 2-3 tablespoons tepid milk, a little flour and mix well; sprinkle some flour on top, cover and let sit in a warm place to rise. Boil the milk with the vanilla stick (cut in very small pieces) and leave it on the side of the range, covered, to keep warm.

Mix the yolks with the sugar and salt, then slowly pour the tepid milk, stirring continuously. Place the risen starter in a large bowl and pour, stirring continuously, the yolk-milk mixture and some flour, a little at a time. Then add 3 whipped egg whites. When you finish this step, start kneading. Knead, adding melted butter combined with oil, a little at a time, until the dough starts to easily come off your palms. Cover with a cloth and then something thicker (like a blanket). Leave in a warm place to triple in bulk. If during kneading the dough seems too hard, you may add a little milk. If, on the contrary, the dough seems too soft, you may add a little flour.

Filling: 10 oz/300 g ground walnuts, 1 cup milk, 3/4 cup sugar, 1/4 cup rum, vanilla. Melt the sugar in the warm milk with vanilla in a pot on the range. When the sugar is melted, add the walnuts and keep stirring. After a few minutes of boiling, and after the filling has thickened, remove from heat and add rum. When the filling is cold, roll a sheet of dough about one finger thick, uniformly spread the walnut filling on top and roll like a jelly roll. Grease a bread pan, place the roll inside, let rise for a while. Wash with egg and bake at medium heat. Take out of the pan as soon as it is done, place on a cloth and let cool.

And now, if you do not want to take some kilos more, take a walk :))))

BUCUREŞTI









CONSTANŢA


PRIMARIA MUN. CONSTANTA


Şantierul naval - The Naval shipyard

TIMIŞOARA

GALAŢI

Well,

if I have to present you completly my country,

I need a lot of pages to do that...

So, if you like to know more about us,

visit Romania!

You'll be always welcome!

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