Bucharest city guide

In the early 20th century, Bucharest came to be known as the “Paris of the east” thanks to its Art Nouveau architecture and grand municipal buildings, often French-designed. While the remnants of Communism are still palpable throughout, the city has its sights set firmly on the future, though never forgetting its history. Trendy outdoor cafes and high-street shops live side-by-side with gorgeous Orthodox churches and world-class art galleries in the old town, all overlooked by the imposing Palace of Parliament. Below you will find more information that will help you in discovering the city.

I. What to see

1. **Palace of Parliament** (aka the People’s House, [www.cdep.ro](http://www.cdep.ro))
   Constructed at Ceaușescu’s behest, its scale and opulence are head-spinning: 12 storeys (including four underground levels, one nuclear bunker), 1,100 rooms, 4,500 chandeliers, and so on – although apparently not even 700 architects could satisfy Ceaușescu’s, or rather his wife’s, ever-changing whims. Guided tours (£5) take in a dozen or so of the largest and most extravagant rooms and conclude on the balconied terrace, affording fabulous views down bulevardul Unirii.

2. **Piata Revolutiei (Revolution square)**
   The square was the focal point of fighting during the 1989 revolution, which led to the end of the dictator’s regime.

3. **Romanian Athenaeum**
   The majestic heart of Romania’s classical music tradition

4. **Carturesti Carusel**
   Ranked in top 10 most beautiful bookshops in the world.

5. **Stavropoleos Church**
   Ornate carvings in stone and wood both inside and out, is an architectural must-see.

6. **National Art Museum**

7. **Mogosoaia Palace**
   It is about 10km north-west of the centre. Designed by the 17th-century ruler of the Wallachia region, Constantin Brâncoveanu (who occasionally resided here), it’s a red-brick structure typical of the region, and the interior retains some lovely detail, not least dazzling Venetian mosaic flooring and carved wooden doors. After, it’s worth taking a walk around the grounds and woods.

8. **National Museum of Art**
   The National Museum of Art is in the grounds of the old Royal Palace.

9. **National Village Museum**
Comprising some 300 dwellings – churches, workshops, windmills and so on – there’s much ground to cover, so keep a keen eye out for the ingenious dug-out (or “pit”) homes from Oltenia and the iconic wooden churches from Maramureş in northern Romania.

Transgaz, the host company, will have a touristic corner in Radisson Blu Hotel in the period 13-15 June, where you can arrange any touristic activity you wish to have.

II. Where to walk/run (and eat)

Cismigiu Gardens (10 minutes walk from Radisson Blu Hotel)
It is the oldest and largest park in central Bucharest. It’s a welcome dollop of green space in the city and there’s a boating lake for would-be rowers. **Where to eat:** Energiea

Herăstrău Park
The lakeside restaurants on Herăstrău Lake are the perfect spot for a sundowner. **Where to eat:** Biutiful by the Lake, Casa di David, Aqua

For walking tours, please visit this website: [https://www.gpsmycity.com/gps-tour-guides/bucharest-516.html](https://www.gpsmycity.com/gps-tour-guides/bucharest-516.html) or contact Transgaz touristic point at the conference registration desk

III. Where to eat

As Romanians are known for being great foodies, the café and restaurants are quickly expanding. Tip is also important in bars, cafes, restaurants – except of fast-food places. It is usually 10% of the bill.

Please find below several restaurants and cafes you don’t want to miss:

**Romanian cuisine:**
- Caru’ cu Bere (**must see**, recommended time: lunch and dinner)
- Lacrimi si Sfinti (recommended time: dinner)
- Zexe ZAHANAUA GASTRONOMICĂ (recommended time: lunch and dinner)
- Mahala
- Avoid (!) La Mama

**Romanian dishes you want to have:** sarmale (ground meat and rice wrapped in cabbage), the typical Romanian take away at any bakery – placinta cu branza (fried bread and cheese), ciorba de burta (soup made out of beef tripe – delicious) and papanasi (fried or boiled pastry resembling a small sphere, usually filled with a soft cheese such as urdă and any kind of sour jam).

**Rooftops:**
- Linea Closer to the Moon (**must** visit, recommended time: dinner)
- Pura Vida Sky Bar (cosy rooftop bar in the Old City centre, recommended time: evening)

**Fine dining:**
- The Artist
- Le bistrot francaise

**International:**
• **Fratellini** (great ambiance, food, recommended time: all day)
• **Mozzafiato** (recommended time: all day)
• **Shift Pub** (good food for any time of the day, recommended time: all day)
• **ALT Shift** – Control (with garden, recommended time: all day)

**Bohemian garden bars and restaurants:**
• **Gradina Eden** (close to Radisson Blu Hotel, recommended time: all day)
• **Café Verona** (close to Radisson Blu Hotel, recommended time: all day)
• **Dianei 4** (recommended time: all day)
• **Simbio** (recommended time: all day - they have breakfast all day)

**For coffee lovers:**
• **Origo** (Best coffee in town! – close to the Old City Centre)
• **M60** (Scandinavian style café – for coffee and cake – recommended time: brunch and afternoon tea/coffee)
• **Orygyns** Specialty coffee
• **Frudisiac** (great food and smoothies, nice setup, nice people – recommended time: brunch)
• **Creamier** (great ice cream and coffee – close to Radisson Blu Hotel)

If you didn’t know: Francesco Illy, the founder of the Italian coffee roasting company, was born in Timișoara, Romania. He later moved to Vienna, and then the Italian city of Trieste. He didn’t make a 2006 list of the 100 Greatest Romanians, however, which was topped by Stephen the Great and featured the likes of Nadia Comăneci and Gheorghe Hagi.

**For vegans:**
• **Barca**
• **Rawdia**

**Best fast-food:**
• **Calif** (recommended time: all day)

**After dinner – evening activities:**
• **Fratelli**
• **Nuba**
• **E3 by Entourage**
• **Control Club**

**IV. SPA and relax**

If you will stay over the weekend and wish to have some time to relax – **Therme SPA** is one of the largest wellness centres in Europe. With several thermal-water pools, a lot of exotic plants that give it a botanical garden feel and various aqua-gym activities, it’s a great escape from the usual city chaos.

**V. Other practical information**

**Before visiting, a bit of Romanian history:**
Currency in Romania

Although Romania is part of the European Union, it does not use the Euro. The currency used in Romania is the Romanian leu (RON). For the most up to date exchange rates click here. In general, 1 EUR = around 4.6 - 4.7 RON.

Travelling around:

Uber is the most efficient way to travel around. However, for public transport, please visit this website for maps and more details. The price for two journeys with the metro is 1.2 EUR. Bus – less than 50 cents.

Travelling from Otopeni Airport – city centre is most easily done by taxi and would cost around 12 EUR. It takes aprox. 25 mins. Otopeni airport is 17km north of the city centre.

Attention: Taxi drivers don’t accept credit cards of any kind. Please make sure to have RON with you.

Bucharest is safe:

No terrorism, low violent crime, no pickpockets.

Learn the basics of Romanian:

Hello! = Buna! (informal) and Buna ziua! (formal)
How are you? = Ce faci?
Bye-bye! = Pa pa! (informal)
Good bye! = La revedere! (more formal)
Good morning! = Buna dimineata!
Good evening! = Buna seara!
Thank you! = Multumesc! or Merci!
Please = Va rog
Nice to meet you = Incantat (for male) and Incantata (for female)
Sorry! = Scuze! (informal) or Imi pare rau (more formal)
How much does it cost? = Cat costa?
Where do I find.../Where is... (the airport)? = Unde este... (aeroportul)?
Cheers! = Noroc! (it means ‘luck’)

Enjoy your stay in Bucharest!