

Defence and Dialogue in Eastern Europe

July 31 – August 5, 2017

Bucharest

## Your guide to Bucharest for #DDEE Event



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# BUCHAREST, ROMANIA

## MIDDLE AGES

Unlike plenty other European capitals, **Bucharest** does not boast of a millenniums-long history. The first historical reference to this city under the name of Bucharest dates back to the Middle Ages, in 1459.

The story goes, however, that Bucharest was founded several centuries earlier, by a controversial and rather legendary character named Bucur (from where the name of the city is said to derive). What is certain is the area on which nowadays Bucharest stretches has been inhabited since ancient times.

As said, the city was first mentioned in 1459, in a document issued by the court of Prince **Vlad the Impaler**, the prince (voievod in Romanian) who allegedly inspired the creation of the world renowned character of Dracula. It was in those times that Bucharest started to grow as an important economic and political center of Wallachia. The Old Princely Court is the most important architectural complex which reminds of those times.



## MODERN ERA

For several centuries after the reign of Vlad the Impaler, Bucharest, irrespective of its constantly increasing chiefdom on the political scene of Wallachia, did undergo the **Ottoman rule** (it was a vassal of the Empire), the Russian occupation, as well as short intermittent periods of Hapsburg domination. Lipscuri Street (Strada Lipscuri), which now delineates the historical quarter of Bucharest, was back then the main thoroughfare, crossing the center of the old city.

It was in 1881 that it became the capital city of the **Principality of Romania**, after the unification of Moldavia and Wallachia. Much of the medieval architectural heritage was destroyed in a fire in 1847, but the modern era brought a new period of prosperity. A strikingly modern city was being built, and the architectural landscape and urban layout brought international fame to Bucharest, such that the city was dubbed the **Little Paris**, and Calea Victoriei, one of the most celebrated avenues in nowadays Bucharest, was often compared with Champs Elysees.

One of the gloomiest episodes of the early 19th century refers to the moment when the population was stricken by the so-called **Caragea's plague**, an epidemics which killed about one quarter of the population.

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## CONTEMPORARY AGE

*It was in 1918 (December the 1st, more precisely) that Transylvania was united with the previously constituted Principality of Romania. Hence, Bucharest became the capital of the entire country, after a 2-year period when the capital of the Principality was transferred to Iași due to the fact Bucharest was under German occupation (1916 to 1918, during **World War One**).*

*The period between the two world wars was exceptionally favorable to Bucharest. It was precisely then that the city experienced its cultural heydays. Casa Capșa, already acknowledged as a landmark of social, political and cultural meetings and debates, continued to enhance its prestige, both nationally and at international scale. However, subsequently to World War Two, once the **Communist regime** took over the political scene, much of the historical Bucharest lost its coordinates, at least architecturally speaking.*

*At present, Bucharest undergoes a constant and deep urban planning renewal, the much awaited facelift focusing, in part, on restoring whatever medieval and modern era heritage survived in time. The bewilderingly miscellaneous picture of Bucharest is, in fact, comprehensive enough to accommodate both spectacular elevated touches and grotesque dull shades, and not only architecturally speaking, but from the point of view of all that is related to the city (culture, people's customs, infrastructure and so on).*

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What you can  
visit in  
Bucharest:



*PALACE of the PARLIAMENT – the 2<sup>nd</sup> world's  
largest administrative building*

The Palace of the Parliament is the main attraction in Bucharest. Built by the Ceausescu regime in the 1980's, you can easily see it from every corner of the city thanks to those 84 meters that rise above the ground level. Its surface of 330.000 square m makes it the second biggest building in the world, after the Pentagon. We don't really know if this was what Ceausescu wished. He foremost wanted the palace to become the seat of political and administrative power. And that citizenry to take pride in with a house this monumental and elegant, a house only for them – hence the local name: The People's House. In the underground, at the top floor, is an anti-atomic bunker that can shelter more than 100.000 people and which is linked to 20 km catacombs with the main institutions of the country.

📍 [Address:](#) Strada Izvor 2-4

[Opening hours:](#)

09:00 – 17:00 (the last tour starts at 16:30)



*The CANTACUZINO PALACE – one of the most  
luxurious castles hosting The National Museum of  
Music*

The National Museum of Music is hosted in one of the most beautiful buildings from Bucharest, Cantacuzino Palace. Built in 1901 – 1902, by Gheorghe Grigore Cantacuzino, known as “The Nabob” (former mayor of Bucharest, leader of the Conservative Party), the architectural ensemble was designed by the architect Ioan D. Berindei. A luxurious entrance, shaded by a giant dome in the most authentic style Art Nouveau informs that here the luxury and the refinement of the époque gathered to build up on what was the Bridge of Mogoșoaia yesterday, today Victoriei Street, at number 141, one of the brightest and imposing palace of Bucharest. In the house behind the Palace that can be seen even from the street, lived between 1945 – 1946 the genius Romanian composer.



*ROMANIAN ATHENEUM – the Romanian house of music*

Symbolic edifice of the national culture, the Romanian Atheneu built in the heart of Bucharest 120 years ago (1886-1888), has become the architectural and spiritual landmark of a whole nation, not just of Capital city. It was here that great Romanian personalities and scientists have lectured, that both established and young professional musicians have given concerts, numerous orchestras and soloist of international level have performed, it was from here that masterpieces of the national music literature have been launched.



📍 [Address:](#) Str. Franklin 1-3

[Opening hours:](#)

- Monday: closed
- Tuesday – Friday: 12:00-19:00
- Saturday – Sunday: 16:00 – 19:00

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### ROYAL PALACE (*The National Museum of Romanian Art*)

The National Art Museum of Romania owns the richest collections of medieval and modern Romanian art, European art, decorative arts and oriental art in the country. The former Royal Palace on Calea Victoriei hosts the National Gallery (including the Old Romanian Art Gallery and the Modern Romanian Art Gallery) and the European Gallery. Here you can also visit the Throne Hall and other places of historical interest, as well as numerous temporary exhibitions.

Under the aegis of the museum also works Museum of Art Collections, K.H. Zambaccian and Theodor Pallady Museum.

📍 [Address:](#) Calea Victoriei 49-53

[Opening hours:](#)

Closed: Monday and Thursday  
Wednesday – Sunday: 11:00-19:00

🎫 [Entrance fee:](#) 10 - 50 RON (depends of the gallery that you want to see)



THE ARCH OF TRIUMPH

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Initially built of wood in 1922 to honor the bravery of Romanian soldiers who fought in World War I, Bucharest's very own Arc de Triumpe was finished in granite in 1936. Designed by the architect, Petre Antonescu, the Arc stands 85 feet high. An interior staircase allows visitors to climb to the top for a panoramic view of the city. The sculptures decorating the structure were created by leading Romanian artists, including Ion Jalea, Constantin Medrea and Constantin Baraschi.

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📍 [Address:](#) str. Victoriei 141

[Opening hours:](#)

- Monday – Closed
- Tuesday–Sunday: 10:00-17:00



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## HERASTRAU PARK

With its 110 ha. surface, Herastrau Park is the biggest park of Bucharest. Before 1930, the area on which the park is today, was a wetland that went drained in 1930-1935. We recommend a walk here especially after dawn and during the week. In beautiful week ends is very crowded. As main attractions, we can list - Roses Island, Japanese Garden, Caryatid Alley and the statue of General de Gaulle. If you are passionate, a tour with hydro-bicycle can be an interesting experience.



## CISMIGIU GARDEN

Designed in 1845 by the German landscape architect Carl Meyer, the garden opened to the public in 1860. The name, Cismigiu, comes from the Turkish *cisma*, meaning "public fountain." More than 30,000 trees and plants were brought from the Romanian mountains, while exotic plants were imported from the botanical gardens in Vienna. Cismigiu is Bucharest's oldest park and a great place to stroll and enjoy a break from the hectic city. Set amid green lush lawns and winding paths, the park offers a lake with rowboat rentals, a beer garden, a playground for children, a chess area for amateurs and plenty of park benches for relaxing and people-watching.



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## NATIONAL HISTORY MUSEUM OF ROMANIA

*The imperial aspect of the museum will get your attention for sure. Considered the most important museum of the Romanian state, it has gone through a wide process of renewal. Inside you will find objects with a great historical value found on the actual ground of Romania since prehistorically times until today. The main attraction is “Broody chicken with golden broods”! At the entrance it is a permanent exhibition with photos from the communist period. Moreover, on the museum’s stairs you will find a naked man holding in his arms a she-wolf. Can you figure out what it is? People from Bucharest make jokes about it saying that is dedicated to the big number of stray dogs that existed on the capital streets until recently and that the authority does not have any more funds left to dress the man. In reality, the statue represents Traian the Emperor holding in his arms the she-wolf of Rome. It is an issued statue!*



[Address:](#) Calea Victoriei 12

[Opening Hours](#)

Monday – Tuesday – closed

Wednesday – Sunday: 10:00 – 18:00

[Entrance fee:](#) 10 RON (adults)

## MUSEUM OF THE ROMANIAN PEASANT

The Museum of the Romanian Peasant started as a collection of traditional materials in 1875 and it has grown progressively, turning into one of the most original expositions of cultural art and traditional objects not only from Romania, but from the entire Europe. The host of the Museum it is a neo-romanian building and it is considered a historical monument. In 1996 it received the prize *for the Museum European of the Year. National Geographic advise their readers to put the museum in front of their ‘to visit’ places list in Bucharest. It surely deserves its place, we could not agree more.*



[Address:](#) Soseaua Pavel Dimitrievicei Kiseleff 3

[Opening Hours:](#) Tuesday – Sunday: 10:00 – 18:00

[Entrance fee:](#) 8 RON (adults)

## „DIMITRIE GUSTI” VILLAGE MUSEUM

Made in 1936 with the effort of Professor Dimitrie Gusti (1880 – 1955), founder of Romanian sociology school, National Village Museum is one of the first ethnographic museum in the world and the second ethnographic museum open-air in the world, after the one in Stockholm. Take 2-3 hours to spend here, because it is definitely worth it. The museum has more than 100.000 square meters/1076 ft. and is organized in typical villages. In the museum, you come through a chain of trees that will lead you to almost 300 authentic rustic structures from every Romanian region.



[Address:](#) Kiseleff 28-30

[Opening hours:](#)

Monday – Sunday: 09:00-

17:00

[Entrance fee:](#) 10 RON (adults)

## WHERE TO EAT/DRINK

1. **CARU' CU BERE (STR. STAVROPOLENOS 5)**
2. **VATRA (ACTOR ION BREZOIANU 19)**
3. **JOURNEY PUB (GEORGE ENESCU 25)**
4. **STORAGE ROOM (SMÂRDAN 35)**
5. **CASA CAPSA RESTAURANT (CALEA VICTORIEI 36)**
6. **VALEA REGILOR (CALEA VICTORIEI 20)**
7. **PIZZA HUT (CALEA DOROBANTI 5-7)**
8. **LA MAMA (REGINA ELISABETA 11-13)**
9. **LA PLACINTE (BULEVARDUL DACIA 20)**

*In the Romanian cuisine, **SARMALE** is a national dish, and may use cabbage leaves, young leaves of grapes, or patience dock, or coltsfoot as wrapping.*



***TOCHITURA** is a traditional Romanian dish like a stew made from beef and pork in tomato sauce, traditionally served with over-easy eggs, mamaliga and salty sheep cheese called telemea*



***PAPANAȘI** is a Romanian traditional fried or boiled pastry resembling a small sphere, usually filled with a soft cheese such as urda and kind of sour jam.*



## NIGHTLIFE IN BUCHAREST: Bars, Pubs & Clubs

Of all the wonderful things that Bucharest has to offer, nightlife is not the least of them. There is something for everyone in this town, and we mean everyone. What's more, Bucharest is *safe*. You will not have to worry about wandering the streets late at night.

Known to most locals as Centrul Vechi (the Old Centre), Bucharest's Old Town is now the point 0 of entertainment and the best area for having fun in Bucharest. More than 140 restaurants, pubs and clubs, attracts every night a huge number of tourists and locals. Prepare to party till sunrise with good music and nice people on street: Lipscani, Smârdan , Blănari, Covaci and The French Street. They are always waiting for partying people..

Note that tickets for most of the events can be purchased online (<https://www.inyourpocket.com/bucharest/events>), as well as at the box offices of the venues themselves and a variety of ticket resellers. The best of these is Diverta. There are branched on the third floor of Unirea Shopping Centre, and in the basement of the Bucuresti Mall. You can also find tickets for most events on the sale point of [bilete.ro](http://bilete.ro).



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## 10 BEST PLACES TO VISIT IN ROMANIA

Romania attracts millions of tourists each year with its scenic landscapes, unique culture and historically significant landmarks. There are so many beautiful reasons to visit Romania. Whether you're looking for soaring mountains to climb, warm waters to bathe in, forests to explore or plains to run across, Romania has it all. Furthermore, since this country is rich in history, Romania boasts some of the most amazing castles and forts that were built hundreds of years ago. We will now present a list containing 10 of the most incredible places to visit in Romania. All you have to do is pick the ones that you like best and head over to this wonderful and picturesque country.

1. PELEȘ CASTLE - is undoubtedly one of the most exceptional tourist attractions in Romania, boasting a fabulous architecture and a rich heritage, it's near Sinaia in Prahova County.
2. BRAN CASTLE also known as DRACULA'S CASTLE, Brasov.
3. CORVIN CASTLE, This Gothic-Renaissance masterpiece was commissioned by John Hunyadi in 1446, can be found in Hunedoara.
4. THE NEAMȚ CITADEL – is perhaps one of the most impressive citadels in Romania, it is close proximity to Targu Neamt in Neamt County.
5. THE TRANSFĂGĂRĂȘAN, is one of Romania's most exceptional roads in the world, and it can be found in the Southern Carpathians.
6. THE TRANSALPINA is a road that can be found in the Parâng Mountains in Romania, and it is currently the highest road in the country. The road connects the Novaci city and the Sebeș city.
7. TURDA SALTWORKS, this place was a very important salt source ever since the times of the Roman Empire, but salt mining was particularly popular between the 15th and 17th century. I the most beautiful saltworks from Romania.
8. DANUBE DELTA - Tulcea County, in the Dobrogea region of Romania, and it is one of the largest and most well preserved deltas in Europe.
9. SIBIU - the former European cultural capital in 2007.
10. Romanian seaside – MAMAIA.



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! USEFUL TO KNOW IN CASE OF EMERGENCY SITUATIONS



**TAXI:**

*UBER Bucharest (NO cash pay needed!) -*

[www.uber.com/cities/bucharest](http://www.uber.com/cities/bucharest)

*CRISS TAXI – 0219466 (1,39 lei/km)*

*SPEED TAXI – 0219477(1,39 lei/km)*

*MERIDIAN TAXI – 0219444 (1,39lei/km)*

*AUTO COBALCESCU – 0219451*



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## HOSPITALS IN BUCHAREST

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*Floreasca Emergency Hospital | 8, Floreasca Street*

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*Central University Emergency Hospital | 169, Independency Street*

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*Bagdasar Arseni Hospital | 12, Berceni Street*

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*Private Hospital Regina Maria | 20, Cotroceni Street*

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1 EUR = 4,50 - 4,55 RON (05 June 2017)

1 USD = 4,00 – 4,05 RON (05 June 2017)

1 GBP = 5,10 – 5,15 RON (05 June 2017)