



# BUCHAREST CITY GUIDE

## General information

Bucharest is located at the same latitude with the cities of Portland - Oregon; Montreal - Canada; Venice - Italy; and Bordeaux – France, the capital city of Romania has a population of more than 2,200,000.

- \* **Useful maps:** - [City Map \(Harta orasului Bucuresti\)](#)  
 - [Bucharest Subway Map \(Harta Metroului Bucuresti\)](#)  
 - [Bucharest Public Transportation map](#)

\* **Average temperatures in April (°C) (between 5,5 °C – 18 °C)**

Month	Bucharest	Western Romania	Central Romania	The Black Sea Coast
April	11	11	11	13

\* **Bucharest Useful Telephone Numbers:**

<b>Bucharest Area Code</b> ( <i>Prefix Bucuresti</i> )	21 or 31
<b>Ambulance</b> ( <i>Ambulanta</i> )	+4021 - 961 or +4021 - 112
<b>Police</b> ( <i>Politia</i> )	+4021 - 955 or +4021 - 9545
<b>Fire Department</b> ( <i>Pompierii</i> )	+4021 - 981 or +4021 - 112
<b>Local Archives</b> ( <i>Arhivele locale</i> )	+4021.313.9295
<b>City Hall</b> ( <i>Primaria</i> )	+4021.313.8660, +4021.315.0110
<b>Better Business Bureau</b>	+4021 - 980 or +4021.250.5447
<b>International calls</b> ( <i>Convorbiri internationale</i> )	+4021 – 971

## **Transportation between Henri Coanda International Airport and Bucharest city centre:**

- Distance from Bucharest airport to downtown: 18 km (11 miles).
- Several **Taxi companies** operate in Bucharest, and their rates can vary.  
Taxis can be called by using the touch screen computer (called *Dispecerat Automatizat Taxi*) available next to the Taxi Desk (*Taxi la Comanda*) located in the arrivals terminal. There is no flat rate taxi transportation available from Bucharest Airport to downtown.
- Rate / km: 1.39 lei to 3.50 lei (about \$1.00).
- There is no extra-charge for luggage.
- The average fare from the airport to downtown Bucharest is less than 70 Lei (the equivalent of \$23.00).

Source: [www.romaniatourism.com](http://www.romaniatourism.com)

- **Shuttle service** from/ to Bucharest airport:  
[www.shuttledirect.com/en/airport/OTP](http://www.shuttledirect.com/en/airport/OTP)  
[www.shuttle-bus-bucharest.com/www.bucharestairportshuttle.com/airport\\_shuttle.php](http://www.shuttle-bus-bucharest.com/www.bucharestairportshuttle.com/airport_shuttle.php)
- **Express Bus 783** offers daily service to the city centre, with stops at Baneasa Airport, *Piata Presei Libere*, *Piata Victoriei*, *Piata Romana*, *Piata Universitatii* and *Piata Unirii*. Bus 783 leaves from the Arrivals terminal every 15 to 20 minutes (every 40 minutes between 10:00p.m. and 6:00 a.m. The journey to downtown takes approximately 40 minutes.

*Note:* Before boarding the bus, please purchase a public transportation card ("*Activ Card*") available from at the 'RATB' ticket booth in the arrivals terminal or next to the bus stop.

The bus ticket booth is open daily from 6:00 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.).

One 'Activ Card' costs 3.70 Lei (about \$1.25).

To ride the bus you will also need to add value to your card (add 7 Lei for two trips from / to the airport or 3.50 Lei for one trip). Your Activ card must be validated as you board the bus.

### **Transportation between Henri Coanda International Airport and the main train station in Bucharest (*Gara de Nord*):**

- **By Bus - Express Bus 780** offers daily service to the main train station (*Gara de Nord*) with stops at: **Henri Coanda Airport** - Baneasa Airport - *Piata Presei Libere* - Clabucet - **Gara de Nord** - Str. Fluviului. The bus runs every 30 minutes from 5:30 a.m. to 11:05 p.m. during weekdays and 5:25 to 11:00 p.m. during weekends). It leaves from the international arrivals terminal; the journey to the train station takes 40 minutes to 50 minutes. A roundtrip ticket costs 7.00 Lei (about \$2.50).
- **By Train - Henri Coanda Express Trains** offer daily service from Balotesti (0.5 miles from the airport) to the main train station (*Gara de Nord*) with one stop at Mogosoaia. Trains run hourly from 5:56 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.; the journey from the airport to the train station takes about one hour and 10 minutes. One-way ticket costs 6 Lei (\$2.20). Transfer from Balotesti train station to the International Arrivals Terminal is included.  
 Note: Tickets can be purchased at the CFR booth International Arrivals Terminal.

## **City Tours**

### **Bucharest - Hop On/ Off Sightseeing Bus Tours**

Hop-on, hop-off bus tours are operated daily - during the warm season - on a fleet of new double-decker buses. Travelers can get an introduction to Bucharest's fascinating architectural mix and get familiar with the city's central neighborhoods and places of interest in less than one hour.

### **Fast Facts**

**Current status:** Available effective May 1, 2014

**2015 Dates of operation:** (exact date TBA)

**Hours of operation:** 10 am - 10 pm

**Frequency:** every 15 minutes

**Source:** [www.romaniatourism.com](http://www.romaniatourism.com)

**Total length of the route:** 9.5 miles

**Number of stops:** 14 ([see/print map](#))

Sights and major attractions include: Village Museum (*Muzeul Satului*), Arch of Triumph (*Arcul de Triumf*), Natural History Museum (*Muzeul Antipa*), Geology Museum (*Muzeul de Geologie*), Museum of the Romanian Peasant (*Muzeul Taranului Roman*), Headquarters of the Romanian Government (*Palatul Victoria*), The Romanian Athenaeum (*Ateneul Roman*), National Museum of Art (*Muzeul National de Arta*), Church Cretulescu (*Biserica Cretulescu*), The Savings Bank (*Palatul CEC*), National History Museum (*Muzeul National de Istorie*), Parliament's Palace (*Palatul Parlamentului*), Romanian Patriarchy (*Patriarhia Romana*), Manuc's Inn (*Hanul lui Manuc*), Bucharest University (*Universitatea*), Museum of the City of Bucharest (*Muzeul Municipiului Bucuresti*), National Theatre (*Teatrul National*), Academy of Economic Studies (*Academia de Studii Economice*)

**Day ticket (card):** Adults: 25 lei (about \$8.50) ; Children (up to 7 years old): free; Youth (7 to 18 years old): 10 lei (about \$3.50) ;

[BucharestCityTour.ro](http://BucharestCityTour.ro)

**Note:** Tickets can be purchased on board and are valid for 24 hours from the time of validation.

**\* Average Taxi fares:**

Initial Fee: 2.0 Lei (\$0.7)

plus 2.0 Lei / km (\$1.12 / mile)

Check the taxi fares and ask the driver to confirm the approximate cost of the ride, if not sure. Please note that some taxi companies may post and/or charge up to five times the fares indicated above.

Alfa - +4021 - 9488

As - +4021 - 9435

Cristaxi - +4021 - 9461

Cobalcescu - +4021 - 9451

Fly - +4021 - 9440

Leone - +4021 - 9425

Meridian - +4021 - 9444

Mondial- +4021 - 9423

Perozzi - +4021 - 9631

Prof Taxi - +4021 - 9422

Speed - +4021 - 9477

Taxi 2000 - +4021 - 9494

For a free Bucharest Taxi Fare estimate please visit [www.TarifTaxi.ro](http://www.TarifTaxi.ro)

Fare estimates offered by TarifTaxi.ro are for the shortest route/ normal traffic conditions.

Actual fare may be more – or less - than predicted.

## **Bucharest free Wi-Fi / HotSpots**

**Public spaces & parks:**

**(HotSpot / Address)**

Piata Universitatii (University Square)

La Biblioteca (The Library)

**Source:** [www.romaniatourism.com](http://www.romaniatourism.com)

Orange Concept Shop	Calea Victoriei
Orange Studio	Piata Victoriei (Victoriei Square)
Parcul Herastrau (Herastrau Park)	Gradina Japoneza (The Japanese Garden)
Expres Olimp	Bulevardul Iuliu Maniu 1 - 3
Lacul Tei	Strada Inginerilor
Strandul Moghioros (Moghioros Pool)	

### **Cafés and Restaurants:**

Café Galanto	Strada Vasile Alecsandri 3
Café Turabo	All Turabo cafés
La Gazetta Café	Strada Hristo Botev 18-20
Café Milena	Calea Mosilor 308
Café Fuchsia	Strada Brezoianu 18
Café Nigeria	Strada Toamnei 63
Café 'La Prieteni'	Strada Selari 9
Café Cafenescu	Strada Econom Stoicescu 33
Dreamer's Pub	Calea Plevnei 27
City Gril	All City Grill Restaurants
Restaurantul Drumetului	Aleea Compozitorilor

### **Malls:**

Carrefour Orhideea Mall	
CityMall	
Auchan	Titan

### **Fast Food Restaurants**

McDonalds	All McDonalds in Bucharest
K F C	All KFC
Pizza Hut	
Pizza Maxx	Splaiul Independentei 290 (Complex Regie)

### **Universities**

Romanian – American University	
Academy of Economic Studies	Calea Dorobantilor

### **Clubs**

TONKA	Strada Biserica Amzei 19
Club Texas	Splaiul Independentei (Complex Regie)

More WiFi HotSpots: [www.WiFiCafeSpots.com/wifi/city/RO--Bucharest](http://www.WiFiCafeSpots.com/wifi/city/RO--Bucharest).

## **Shopping**

### **\* Shopping Centers**

#### **Afi Palace Cotroceni Mall**

Address: Blvd. Timisoara

Tel: (31) 425.75.10

Web: [www.aficotroceni.ro](http://www.aficotroceni.ro)

Open: Mon. – Sun. 10:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.

#### **Baneasa Shopping City**

Address: Sos. Bucuresti – Ploiesti 42

Tel: (21) 306.06.58

Web: [www.baneasashoppingcity.ro](http://www.baneasashoppingcity.ro)

Open: Mon. – Sun. 10:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.

#### **Bucuresti Mall**

Address: Calea Vitan 55-59, Bucharest

Tel: (21) 327.67.00

Web: [www.bucurestimall.com.ro](http://www.bucurestimall.com.ro)

Open: Mon. - Sun. 10:00am - 10:00pm

#### **Grand Arena Mall**

Address: Blvd. Metalurgiei 12-18, sector 4

Tel: (31) 425.75.14

Web: [www.grandarena.ro/orar.php](http://www.grandarena.ro/orar.php)

Open: Mon. – Sun. 10:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.

#### **Liberty Center**

Address: Str. Progresului 151 - 171

Tel: (21) 369.98.75

Web: [www.libertycenter.ro](http://www.libertycenter.ro)

Open: Mon. – Sun. 10:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.

#### **Mario Plaza**

Address: Calea Dorobantilor 172, Bucharest

Tel: (21) 230.47.71

Open: Mon. - Sat. 10:00am - 9:00pm, Sun. 10:00am - 2:00pm

#### **Plaza Romania Mall**

Address: Blvd. Timisoara 26, Bucharest

Tel: (21) 407.84.16

Web: [www.plazaromania.ro/index.php](http://www.plazaromania.ro/index.php)

Open: Mon. - Sun. 10:00am - 10:00pm

#### **Unirea Shopping Center**

Address: Piata Unirii 1, Bucharest

Tel: (21) 303.03.07

Source: [www.romaniatourism.com](http://www.romaniatourism.com)

Web: [www.unireashop.ro](http://www.unireashop.ro)

Open: Mon. - Sat. 9:00am - 10:00pm; Sun. 9:00pm - 8:00pm

### **World Trade Plaza**

Address: Blvd. Expozitiei 2, Bucharest

Tel: (21) 202.44.50

Web: [www.wtcb.ro/shopping\\_gallery.html](http://www.wtcb.ro/shopping_gallery.html)

Open: Mon. - Sun. 8am - 8pm

### **\* Fresh Products Markets (Piata)**

#### **Piata Amzei**

Address: Str. Christian Tell 6, Bucharest

-(between Calea Victoriei and Blvd. Magheru near Piata Romana)

Tel: (21) 211.67.26

This is the city's most centrally located outdoor market. Small stores surrounding the outdoor market carry meats, medicinal plants and flowers.

#### **Piata Dorobantilor**

Address: Blvd. Radu Beller 3-5, Bucharest

Tel: (21) 231.92.99

Upscale neighborhood market with a selection of fresh produce and flowers

#### **Piata 1 Mai**

Address: Blvd. Ion Mihalache 123, Bucharest

Tel: (21) 317.14.63

Resembling an Oriental bazaar, this is the place to find everything from fresh cheese and eggs, fruits and vegetables, to flowers and household items.

#### **Piata Obor**

Address: Campul Mosilor 5, Bucharest

Tel: (21) 252.69.54

Bucharest's biggest outdoor market; here, you can find here a food market and a mini-bazaar.

### **Antiques**

If it is antiques that you fancy, Bucharest provides plenty of opportunities to fulfill your every whim. Antiques can be found in art galleries along Calea Victoriei and around the Old Historical Center (Lipscani street).

#### **Thomas Antiques**

Str Covaci 19 (zona Lipscani)

030094 Bucharest, Romania

[www.thomas-antiques.ro](http://www.thomas-antiques.ro)

Open: Sun-Mon. 10:00am - 10:00pm; Fri, Sat. 10:00am - 12:00am

#### **Amadeus Antiques**

Address: Str. Quinet 3, Bucharest

Tel: (21) 315.10.83

Open: Mon. - Fri. 10:00am - 6:00pm; Closed Sat. & Sun.

#### **Craii de Curtea Veche**

Address: Str. Covaci 14, Bucharest

Tel: (21) 314.83.04

Source: [www.romaniatourism.com](http://www.romaniatourism.com)

Open: Mon. - Fri. 10:00am - 6:00pm; Sat. 10:00am - 3:00pm; Closed Sun.

### **Da Vinci**

Address: Calea Victoriei 118, Bucharest

Tel: (21) 210.40.94

Open: Mon. - Fri. 9:00am - 6:00pm; Sat. 9:00am - 3:00pm; Closed Sun.

### **Galeria de Arta Dorobanti**

Address: Str. Tudor Stefan 13, Bucharest

Tel: (21) 231.49.53

Open: Mon. - Fri. 10:30am - 6:30pm; Sat. 11:00am - 3:30pm; Closed Sun.

### **Hanul cu Tei**

Address: Str. Lipscani 63, Bucharest

Tel: (21) 315.56.63

Open: Mon. - Fri. 10:00am - 6:00pm; Sat. 10:00am - 3:30pm; Closed Sun.

### **Quasar Antiques**

Address: Calea Victoriei 63-81, Bucharest

Tel: (21) 313.47.26

Open: Mon. - Fri. 10:30am - 7:30pm; Sat. 10:30am - 2:30pm; Closed Sun.

Web: [www.quasarantiques.ro](http://www.quasarantiques.ro)

## **Art Galleries**

### **Galeria 23**

Address: Str. Lipscani 63 - 65, Bucharest

Tel: 740.819.826

Web: [www.hantei23.com](http://www.hantei23.com)

Open: Mon. - Fri. 10:00am - 6:00pm; Sat. 10:00am - 2:00pm; Closed Sun.

### **Galeria Galateca**

Address: Str. C. A. Rosetti 2-4, Bucharest

Open: Mon. - Sun. 11:00am - 7:00pm

### **Galeria Galateea**

Address: Calea Victoriei 132, Bucharest

Tel: (21) 659.38.14

Open: Mon. - Sat. 11:00am - 7:00pm; Closed Sun.

### **Galeria Hanul Cu Tei**

Address: Str. Blanari 5-7, Bucharest

Tel: (21) 313.01.81

Web: [www.hanulcutei.ro/index.php](http://www.hanulcutei.ro/index.php)

Open: Mon. - Sat. 11:00am - 7:00pm; Closed Sun.

### **Galeria Nemtoi**

Address: Calea Victoriei 126, Bucharest

Tel: (21) 312.98.00

Web: [www.nemtoigallery.com/](http://www.nemtoigallery.com/)

Open: Mon. - Fri. 10:00am - 8:00pm, Sat. 10:00am - 6:00pm; Closed Sun.

Source: [www.romaniatourism.com](http://www.romaniatourism.com)

### **Galeria Noua**

Address: Str. Academiei 15, Bucharest

Tel: (21) 322.81.59

Web: [www.galerianoua.ro](http://www.galerianoua.ro)

Open: Wed. - Sun. 11:00am - 7:00pm; Closed Mon. & Tue.

### **Galeria Orizont**

Address: Blvd. Nicolae Balcescu 23A, Bucharest

Tel: (21) 315.89.22

Open: Mon. - Fri. 10:00am - 7:00pm; Sat. 10:00am - 2:00pm; Closed Sun.

### **Galeria Simeza**

Address: Blvd. Magheru 20, Bucharest

Tel: (21) 659.38.25

Open: Mon. - Fri. 10:00am - 6:00pm; Sat. 10:00am - 2:00pm; Closed Sun.

## **Important places to visit in Bucharest:**

### **1. Landmarks**

#### **House of the Free Press:**

*(Casa Presei Libere)*

*Address: Piata Presei Libere 1*

An impressive edifice standing in the northern part of the city, since 1956,

*Casa Scanteii* (as it is still universally known) was designed by architect

Horia Maicu. There is no doubt that the building is a smaller replica of the Lomonosov University in Moscow - Russia (inaugurated in 1953).

Between 1956 and 1989, the House of the Free Press housed almost all of Romania's capital printing presses and headquarters of print media companies.

Today, it carries out much the same function but the southern wing is now the home of the Bucharest Stock Exchange.

#### **The Arch of Triumph**

*(Arcul de Triumf)*

*Address: Piata Arcul de Triumf*

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 Triomphe was finished in Deva 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.

#### **Calea Victoriei**

*(Victory Avenue)*

**Calea Victoriei** is Bucharest's oldest and arguably, most charming street. Built in 1692 to link the Old Princely Court to Mogosoaia Palace, it was initially paved with oak beams. The street became Calea Victoriei in 1878, after the Romanian

**Source:** [www.romaniatourism.com](http://www.romaniatourism.com)

War of Independence victory. Between the two world wars, Calea Victoriei developed into one of the most fashionable streets in the city.

Stroll along this street from Piata Victoriei to Piata Natiunilor Unite to discover some of the most stunning buildings in the city, including the **Cantacuzino Palace**, the historical **Revolution Square**, the **Military Club**, the **CEC Headquarters** and the **National History Museum**.

### **Cantacuzino Palace**

*(Palatul Cantacuzino)*

*Address: Calea Victoriei 141*

#### *Admission charge*

Grigore Cantacuzino was thought to be one of Romania's wealthiest citizens in 1899. As Prime Minister, it was his wish to have the most elegant residence in Bucharest. Using the designs of architect Ion Berindei, the Cantacuzino Palace was built between 1898 and 1900 in eclectic French style. Combining a neoclassical architectural style with art nouveau elements, it features wrought iron balconies, tall arched windows and a porte-cochere (an elegant wrought-iron doorway) flanked by two lions. Today, the palace houses the **George Enescu Museum**

### **Revolution Square**

*(Piata Revolutiei)*

The square gained worldwide notoriety when TV stations around the globe broadcasted Nicolae Ceausescu's final moments in power on December 21, 1989. It was here, at the balcony of the former Communist Party Headquarters, that Ceausescu stared in disbelief as the people gathered in the square below turned on him. He fled the angry crowd in his white helicopter, only to be captured outside of the city a few hours later.

The square's importance stretches back long before the dramatic events of the 1989 Revolution. On the far side of the square stands the former **Royal Palace**, now home to the **National Art Museum**, the stunning **Romanian Athenaeum** and the historic **Athenee Palace Hotel**. At the south end of the square, you can visit the small, but beautiful, **Kretzulescu Church**.

### **The Royal Palace**

*(Palatul Regal)*

*Address: Calea Victoriei 49-53*

Erected between 1927 and 1937 in neoclassical style, the palace was home to King Carol II and to his son, King Mihai I, until 1947, when the monarchy was abolished in Romania. It was inside the halls of this palace that King Mihai, aged 18, led a coup that displaced the pro-Nazi government during the World War II and put Romania on the Allies' side. Today, the former Royal palace houses the **Romanian National Art Museum**.

### **The Romanian Athenaeum**

*(Ateneul Roman)*

*Address: Str. Benjamin Franklin 1 ([map](#))*

*Tel: (21) 315.00.26 or 315.25.67*

[fge.org.ro/filarmonica-george-enescu](http://fge.org.ro/filarmonica-george-enescu)

The work of French architect Albert Galleron, who also designed the National Bank of Romania, the Athenaeum was completed in 1888, financed almost entirely with money donated by the general public. One of the preeminent public

**Source:** [www.romaniatourism.com](http://www.romaniatourism.com)

fundraising campaigns ever in Romania, the "Give a penny for the Athenaeum" campaign saved the project after the original patrons ran out of funds. With its high dome and Doric columns, the Athenaeum resembles an ancient temple.

The lobby has a beautifully painted ceiling decorated in gold leaf, while curved balconies cascade in ringlets off a spiral staircase. A ring of pink marble columns is linked by flowing arches where elaborate brass lanterns hang like gems from a necklace. Inside the concert hall, voluptuous frescoes cover the ceiling and walls. Renowned worldwide for its outstanding acoustics, it is Bucharest's most prestigious concert hall and home of the Romanian George Enescu Philharmonic.

### **Athenee Palace Hotel**

*Address: Str. Episcopiei 1-3*

Built in 1914 by French architect Teophile Bradeau, the Athenee Palace (currently a posh Hilton hotel) was made famous in Olivia Manning's novel, *Balkan Trilogy*, as a centre of intrigue and espionage during World War II. British and German diplomats plotted, schemed and spied on each other in the epoch atmosphere of the hotel's English Bar, while a host of rich and famous gathered and intrigued as their society collapsed around them. The hotel suffered heavy bombing during the war and consequently, was rebuilt in 1945.

### **Kretzulescu Church**

*Address: Calea Victoriei 47*

Nestled amid the other historical buildings in Piata Revolutiei, this small red-brick Orthodox church was built in 1722 by the great chancellor lordache Kretzulescu and his wife, Safta (a daughter of Constantin Brancoveanu) in the Brancovenesti architectural style. The interior frescoes were executed around 1860 by the famous Romanian painter Gheorghe Tattarescu.

### **Royal Palace Great Concert Hall**

*(Sala Palatului)*

Located next to the Royal Palace, the concave-roof structure was built in 1960 to accommodate the 3,000 Communist party members who every five years attended the communist party congress. It was on this stage that Nicolae Ceausescu would deliver his vision of a multilaterally developed socialist society. Today, the massive auditorium plays host to various conferences and events, including some of the George Enescu International Festival concerts.

### **The Military Club**

*(Cercul Militar National)*

Address: Blvd. Regina Elisabeta 21

Tel: (21) 313.86.80

Standing guard imposingly, this neoclassical masterpiece, designed by Romanian architect Dimitrie Maimaroiu, was built in 1912 to serve the social, cultural and educational needs of the Romanian army. Banquets and official events are still hosted in the ballrooms, while the upstairs area is reserved for the army's library, as well as offices and classrooms for officer instruction. The main part of the building is off-limits to civilians, but the sumptuous restaurant and summer terrace is open to the public.

### **The Palace of the Savings Bank**

*(Casa de Economii si Consemnatiuni / CEC)*

Source: [www.romaniatourism.com](http://www.romaniatourism.com)

*Address: Calea Victoriei 11-13*

Boasting one of the most impressive neoclassical facades in the city, this structure was built in the 19th century to the design of French architect Paul Gottereanu (who between 1875 and 1900 designed more than 50 buildings in the city, to house the first Romanian Savings Bank. The square-shaped palace has a large central dome with metallic ribs separated by glass, which allows natural light to come in; there are also four smaller domes. The arch at the entrance, with its Corinthian columns, is a highlight of any architectural tour of the city.

### **Old Historical Center of Bucharest** ***(Centrul Vechi al Orasului)***

#### ***Lipscani District***

Perhaps the city's unique charm can be best observed in the area known as Lipscani, which consists of a jumble of streets between Calea Victoriei, Blvd. Bratianu, Blvd. Regina Elisabeta and the Dambovitza River. A once-glamorous residential area, the old city centre is now slowly being refashioned into an upscale neighborhood.

At the beginning of 1400s, most merchants and craftsmen - Romanian, Austrian, Greek, Bulgarian, Serbian, Armenian and Jewish - established their stores and shops in this section of the city. Soon, the area became known as Lipscani, named for the many German traders from Lipsca or Leiptzig. Other streets took on the names of various old craft communities and guilds, such as Blanari (furriers), Covaci (blacksmiths), Gabroveni (knife makers) and Cavafii Vechii (shoe-makers). The mix of nationalities and cultures is reflected in the mishmash of architectural styles, from baroque to neoclassical to art nouveau.

Today, the area is home to many art galleries, antique shops and coffeehouses. On a beautiful day, you can stroll down the narrow cobblestone streets and imagine the shopkeepers outside near their stores, encouraging people to buy their merchandise and negotiating prices with them. Don't forget to stop by Hanul cu Tei, which is a rectangular courtyard between Strada Lipscani and Strada Blanari, home to an array of art and antiques shops.

#### ***Manuc's Inn***

*(Hanul lui Manuc)*

*Address: Str. Franceza 62-64*

*Tel: (21) 313.14.11*

Built between 1804 and 1808 by the wealthy Armenian trader Emanuel Marzaian (called by the Turks, Manuc Bey), the inn was witness in 1812 to the preliminary talks of the Peace Treaty that put an end to the Russian -Turkish War (1806-1812). A favorite meeting and resting place for tradesmen in those times, Manuc's Inn has preserved to this day its old style and flavor. It now serves as a hotel with a restaurant, a wine cellar and a pastry shop.

#### ***The Beer Cart Restaurant***

*(Carul cu Bere)*

*Address: Strada Stavropoleos 3-5*

*Tel: (21) 313.75.60*

Opened in 1879, this famous restaurant and beer house soon became one of the most popular meeting places for Bucharest's literati who would gather to discuss matters of their time. Its neo-gothic architectural style is reflected both in the façades and the interior decorations: columns, arches, chandeliers, a wooden staircase, furniture and murals on the walls and ceiling.

**Source: [www.romaniatourism.com](http://www.romaniatourism.com)**

**National Bank of Romania**  
(Banca Nationala a Romaniei)

Address: Str. Lipscani 25

The National Bank of Romania (BNR) stands on the site of one of the most famous buildings in Romania: the Hanul Serban Voda, which from 1678 until 1883 was the home of various institutions ranging from a pub to an inn to a girl's dormitory! After two fires gutted the building, however, the land was leveled and in 1883, work began on the BNR, completed to the designs of French architects Cassien Bernard and Albert Galleron in 1885. Built in neoclassical French style, the building boasts a facade with Corinthian columns and an enormous central banking hall. The passing of time has left its marks on the building, but it remains a classic worthy of admiration.

**Parliament Palace**  
(Palatul Parlamentului)

Address: Calea 13 Septembrie 1,  
Intrarea A3  
Tel: (21) 311.36.11  
Hours: Mon. - Sun.  
10:00am - 4:00pm  
Admission charge

(English guided tour available)

Built by Communist Party leader, Nicolae Ceausescu, the colossal Parliament Palace (formerly known as the People's Palace) is the second largest administrative building in the world after the Pentagon. It took 20,000 workers and 700 architects to build. The palace boasts 12 stories, 1,100 rooms, a 328-ft-long lobby and four underground levels, including an enormous nuclear bunker.

**The Palace of Parliament it is the world's second-largest office building in surface (after the Pentagon) and the third largest in volume (after Cape Canaveral in the U.S. and the Great Pyramid in Egypt)**

**The crystal chandelier in the Human Rights Hall (Sala Drepturilor Omului) weighs 2.5 tons**

**Some of the chandeliers have as many as 7,000 light bulbs**

When construction started in 1984, the dictator intended it to be the headquarters of his government. Today, it houses Romania's Parliament and serves as an international conference centre. Built and furnished exclusively with Romanian materials, the building reflects the work of the country's best artisans.

A guided tour takes visitors through a small section of dazzling rooms, huge halls and quarters used by the Senate (when not in session). The interior is a luxurious display of crystal chandeliers, mosaics, oak paneling, marble, gold leaf, stained-glass windows and floors covered in rich carpets.

## **2. Historic Churches**

**Apostles' Church**  
(Biserica Sfintii Apostoli)

Address: Str. Sfintii Apostoli 1  
Tel: (21) 336.07.84

Source: [www.romaniatourism.com](http://www.romaniatourism.com)

One of the oldest churches in Bucharest (with parts dating back to the 16th century and a steeple built in 1715), the Apostles' Church is brimming with some rather strange portraits that are well worth seeing.

### **Metropolitan Church**

*(Biserica Patriarhiei)*

Address: Aleea Dealul Mitropoliei

Set atop one of the city's few hills, known as Mitropoliei, the Metropolitan Church has been the centerpiece of the Romanian Orthodox faith since the 17th century. The church was built by Constantin Serban Basarab, ruler of the province of Walachia between 1656 and 1658, to a design inspired by the Curtea de Arges monastery. It became the Metropolitan Church in 1668 and the seat of the Romanian Orthodox Church in 1925.

The Byzantine interior, containing the most dazzling of the city's iconostasis, as well as a couple of exquisitely carved side altars, bestows great beauty on the services presided over by the Romanian Patriarch. A huge crowd gathers here for the Easter midnight service.

The outstanding bell-tower at the entrance was built in 1698 and restored in 1958. Next to the church, and closed to the public, is the **Patriarchal Palace**(1708), residence of the *Teoctist*, supreme leader of the Romanian Orthodox Church.

### **Stavropoleos Church**

*(Biserica Stavropoleos)*

Address: Str. Stavropoleos 4

Tel: (21) 313.47.47

The Stavropoleos Church was built in 1724 by the Greek monk Ioanikie Stratonikeas. Featuring a combination of Romanian and Byzantine architecture, it has a beautiful façade and a delicately carved columned entrance. Surrounded by a peaceful garden, it is an architectural jewel, with beautiful frescoes and wood-painted icons. The mass (in Romanian) is worth viewing if you can find room in this small and cozy church.

### **St. Joseph's Cathedral**

*(Catedrala Sfantul Iosif)*

Address: Str. G-ral Berthelot 19

Tel: (21) 312.12.08

Constructed in red brick between 1873 and 1884, this Roman Catholic cathedral is an architectural masterpiece combining both gothic and Roman elements.

Organ recitals are held every week.

### **St. Nicolas Church**

*(Biserica Sfantul Nicolae)*

Address: Str. Ion Ghica 9

Tel: (21) 314.64.50

Built in 1909 by the Russian Tsar Nicholas II for 600,000 gold rubles, this Orthodox Church has a wooden, gold-gilded iconostasis allegedly modeled after the altar in the *Archangelskiy Cathedral* in Moscow.

Source: [www.romaniatourism.com](http://www.romaniatourism.com)

### **3. Museums**

#### **Art Collections Museum**

*(Muzeul Colectiilor de Arta)*

*Address: Calea Victoriei 111*

*Tel: (21) 212.96.41*

*Web: [www.mnar.arts.ro/muzsatelit/EN\\_muzcolectiilor.php](http://www.mnar.arts.ro/muzsatelit/EN_muzcolectiilor.php)*

*Admission charge*

Founded in 1978, the Art Collections Museum, a branch of the National Art Museum, houses private collections donated over the course of time. Collections include European as well as Oriental art works.

#### **Bucharest History & Art Museum**

*(Muzeul Municipiului Bucuresti)*

*Address: Blvd. I.C.Bratianu 2*

*Tel: (21) 315.68.58*

*Web: [www.muzeulbucurestiului.ro/main.html](http://www.muzeulbucurestiului.ro/main.html)*

*Open: Wed. - Sun. 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.; Closed Mon. & Tue.*

*Admission charge*

Housed in the neoclassical **Sutu Palace**(1834), the museum features some 300,000 artifacts, from coins, books, maps, engravings, paintings, arms and furniture to old traditional costumes. Among the most valuable exhibits are the document attesting for the first time the name of the city of Bucharest, issued by Vlad Tepes in 1459, and a sword set in precious stones that belonged to Prince Constantin Brancoveanu (1688-1714).

#### **Cotroceni Palace & Museum**

*(Muzeul National Cotroceni)*

*Address: Str. Geniului 1*

*Tel: (21) 317.31.07 or 430.44.85*

*Open: Tue. - Sun. 9:00am - 5:00pm; Closed Mon.*

*Admission charge (Guided tours are available in English)*

*Note: Guests are received by appointment only; please call for reservations.*

A former royal residence built between 1679 and 1681 by Prince and ruler Serban Cantacuzino, the palace was home to King Carol I, who made important changes in its architecture. At the end of the 19th century, Heir-to-the-Crown Ferdinand ordered the partial demolition of the palace, which was later reconstructed by French architect Paul Gottereau in neoclassical style. In 1977, Nicolae Ceausescu transformed it into an official guesthouse with the addition of a new wing. After 1990, the old wing of the palace became a museum. The Oriental Hall, the Norwegian Hall and the Queen's Chamber are almost unchanged from the original design and are worth visiting. Very important collection of medieval art also can be seen here. The new wing serves as the seat of the Romanian Presidency.

#### **George Enescu Museum**

*(Muzeul National George Enescu)*

*Address: Calea Victoriei 141*

*Tel: (21) 318.14.50*

**Source: [www.romaniatourism.com](http://www.romaniatourism.com)**

*Open: Tue. - Sun. 10:00am - 5:00pm; Closed Mon.  
Admission charge*

The museum, housed in the Cantacuzino Palace, displays documents and various objects that belonged to the great Romanian composer and violinist George Enescu (1881-1955), including a Bach music collection he received as a gift from Queen Elisabeta of Romania. A world-class violinist, Enescu studied at the Vienna Conservatory, where he met German composer Johannes Brahms and where he also gave his first concerts. In Paris, Enescu graduated from the French Conservatory in 1899. His best-known works, the *Romanian Rhapsodies*, earned him national and international fame. In 1936, his **Oedipe** tragic opera premiered in Paris and Enescu was awarded the French Legion of Honor award for the composition. A member of the Romanian Academy and corresponding member of the Institute of France, George Enescu was the teacher of renowned violinist Yehudi Menuhin. Every two years, the Romanian Athenaeum celebrates the maestro by hosting the [George Enescu International Festival](#).

### **Grigore Antipa Natural History Museum**

*(Muzeul National de Istorie Naturala)*

*Address: Sos. Kiseleff 1*

*Tel: (21) 312.88.63*

*[www.antipa.ro](http://www.antipa.ro)*

*Open: Tue - Sun 10:00 am - 8:00 pm (last admission 7:00pm). Closed on Mondays.*

*Admission charge*

Recently renovated, this museum is the largest natural history museum in Romania, housing collections of reptiles, fish, birds and mammals. More than 300,000 artifacts and specimens are on display, including a dinosaur fossil. A whole floor is dedicated to sea life and features examples of whales, dolphins and seals. The museum also contains a beautiful butterfly collection.

### **Minovici Museum of Ancient Western Art**

*(Muzeul de Arta Veche Apuseana)*

*Address: Str. Dr. Minovici 3*

*Tel: (21) 665.73.34*

*Note: The museum is currently closed.*

*Admission charge*

In addition to the small renaissance art collection of Dumitru Minovici, who made barrels of lei in the oil business in the 1930s, the museum features Belgian tapestries, Dutch furniture, Swiss stained glass, a complete library and Italian paintings from the 16th and 17th centuries.

### **Museum of the Romanian Peasant**

*(Muzeul Taranului Roman)*

*Address: Sos. Kiseleff 3*

*Tel: (21) 317.96.60*

*Email: [info@muzeultaranuluiroman.ro](mailto:info@muzeultaranuluiroman.ro)*

*Web: <http://www.muzeultaranuluiroman.ro/home.html>*

*Open: Tue. - Sun. 10:00am - 6:00pm; Closed Mon.*

*Admission charge*

**Source: [www.romaniatourism.com](http://www.romaniatourism.com)**

Opened in 1906, the museum features the richest folk art collection in Romania, with over 90,000 artifacts that trace the colorful and diverse cultural life of the Romanian people. The *Pottery Collection* includes some 18,000 items, representative of the most important pottery centres in the country. The oldest ceramic item found in the museum bears the inscription 1746. Equally impressive, the *Costume Collection* comprises almost 20,000 traditional folk costumes, some dating from the beginning of the 19th century, giving visitors insight into the styles and traditions of the Romanian peasants.

The displays dip into all aspects of life in the Romanian countryside. Exhibits of agricultural tools, carpets, icons, furniture, photographs and films build up a complete picture of Romanian folk culture. In one of the galleries, you can see a wooden church and in another, a wooden peasant house. Four more wooden churches stand in the outdoor museum area. In 1996, the museum was named **European Museum of the Year**. Visitors can buy regional handcrafts and textiles in the museum's extensive gift shop.

### **National Art Museum**

*(Muzeul National de Arta)*

*Address: Calea Victoriei 49-53*

*Tel: (21) 313.30.30*

*Email: [national.art@art.museum.ro](mailto:national.art@art.museum.ro)*

*Web: [www.mnar.arts.ro/EN\\_home.php#](http://www.mnar.arts.ro/EN_home.php#)*

*Open: Wed. – Sun.. 11:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. (May - September);*

*Wed. - Sun. 10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. (October - April); Closed Mon. & Tue.*

*Admission charge (English guided available)*

Romania's leading art museum was founded in 1948 to house the former Royal Collection, which included Romanian and European art dating from the 15th to the 20th century. Located in the neoclassical former Royal Palace, set amid a wealth of historic buildings such as the Romanian Athenaeum, Kretzulescu Church and the Hotel Athenee Palace-Hilton, the museum currently exhibits over 100,000 works divided into two major sections. Its National Gallery features the works of major Romanian artists, including Grigorescu, Aman and Andreescu. There is also a roomful of early Brancusi sculpture, such as you won't find anywhere else, demonstrating how he left his master, Rodin, behind in a more advanced form of expression. The European Gallery, comprising some 15 rooms, displays little-known art gems from the likes of El Greco, Monet, Rembrandt, Renoir, Breughels (father and son) Cezanne and Rubens. If you only have time to visit one gallery, make it the Romanian one. It is the most complete collection of Romanian works of art in the country and quite possibly, the world.

### **National Geological Museum**

*(Muzeul National de Geologie)*

*Address: Sos. Kiseleff 2*

*Tel: (21) 212.89.52*

*Web: [www.onlinegallery.ro/mgeo\\_flori-mina.html](http://www.onlinegallery.ro/mgeo_flori-mina.html)*

*Open: Mon. - Sun. 10:00am - 4:00pm*

*Admission charge*

Impressive collections of minerals and quartz formations specific to the area are found here, including a well-presented geological structure of Romania.

### **National History Museum**

*(Muzeul National de Istorie al Romaniei)*

*Address: Calea Victoriei 12*

*Tel: (21) 315.82.07*

*Source: [www.romaniatourism.com](http://www.romaniatourism.com)*

*Open: Tue. - Sun. 10:00am - 6:00pm; Closed Mon. (May - September);  
Tue. - Sun. 9:00am - 5:00pm; Closed Mon. (October - April)  
Admission charge*

Housed in a 1900s neoclassical building that once served as the city's main post office, the museum offers a great introduction to the exciting history of Romania. Spread throughout 41 rooms, the exhibits recount the country's development from prehistoric times to the 20th century. The highlight is the *National Treasury Hall* where visitors can enjoy a dazzling display of some 3,000 gold items, including jewelry and valuable Neolithic artifacts.

Among the displays are the 12 pieces of the 4th century Pietroasele Treasure Collection. First presented at the 1867 World's Fair in Paris, it was considered the most valuable treasure collection in the world (the tomb of Tutankamon had not yet been discovered). One year later, the collection was displayed at the Second Annual International Exhibition in London and in 1872, at the International Exhibition in Vienna.

### **National Military Museum**

*(Muzeul Militar National)*

*Address: Str. Mircea Vulcanescu 125-127  
Tel: (21) 638.76.30  
Open: Tue. - Sun. 9:00am - 5:00pm; Closed Mon.  
Admission charge*

Founded in 1972, the museum illustrates the most important battles for independence and freedom in Romanian history. The museum features collections of Oriental and Occidental weapons, Romanian and foreign uniforms, military medals and awards, trophies, artillery, canons and airplanes as well as a library of historical military documents. The centerpiece is the 1989 Revolution exhibit, displaying mainly personal belongings donated by families of soldiers and civilians killed during the upheaval.

### **National Museum of Contemporary Art**

*(Muzeul National de Arta Contemporana)*

*Address: Calea 13 Septembrie 1,  
entrance E4  
Tel: (21) 411.10.40  
Email: [info@mnac.ro](mailto:info@mnac.ro)  
Web: [www.mnac.ro](http://www.mnac.ro)  
Open: Wed. - Sun. 10:00am - 6:00pm;  
Closed Mon. & Tue.  
Admission charge*

Bucharest's newest museum, the MNAC, as it is often called by museum-goers, displays works of Romania's contemporary artists as well as many temporary exhibits by international artists. The museum is housed in a wing of the Palace of Parliament, the space which would have served as Nicolae and Ileana Ceausescu's private apartment (where just the bathroom occupied 680 square feet, while the adjoining boudoir was three times that size).

### **National Museum of Old Maps & Books**

*(Muzeul National al Hartilor si Cartii Vechi)*

*Address: Str. Londra 39  
Tel: (21) 230.44.68  
Email: [muzeulhartilor@artelecom.net](mailto:muzeulhartilor@artelecom.net)  
Source: [www.romaniatourism.com](http://www.romaniatourism.com)*

*Open: Wed. - Sun. 10:00am - 6:00pm; Closed Mon. & Tue.*  
*Admission charge*

Though it may not house the world's biggest collection, this museum is worth a visit, especially if you are interested in old maps and books.

### **Village Museum**

*(Muzeul Satului)*

*Address: Sos. Kiseleff 28-30*

*Tel: (21) 317.91.03*

*E-mail: [contact@muzeul-satului.ro](mailto:contact@muzeul-satului.ro)*

*Open: Mon. 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.;*

*Tue. - Sun. 9:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.*

Founded by royal decree in 1936, this fascinating outdoor museum, the largest in Europe, covers some 30 acres on the shores of Lake Herastrau in Herastrau Park. It features a collection of 50 buildings representing the history and design of Romania's rural architecture. Steep-roofed peasant homes, thatched barns, log cabins, churches and watermills from all regions of the country were carefully taken apart, shipped to the museum and rebuilt in order to recreate the village setting. Throughout the year, the Village Museum hosts special events where you will have a chance to witness folk artisans demonstrating traditional skills in weaving, pottery and other crafts. Folk arts and crafts are available at the museum gift shop.

## **4. Parks & Gardens**

### **Cismigiu Garden**

*(Gradina Cismigiu)*

*Address: Blvd. Regina Elisabeta (across from Bucharest City Hall)*

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.

### **Botanical Garden**

*(Gradina Botanica)*

*Address: Sos. Cotroceni 32 (across from Cotroceni Palace)*

*Tel: (21) 410.91.39*

*Open: Mon. - Sun. 8:00am - 5:00pm*

*Admission charge*

Opened in 1891, the garden features over 5,000 varieties of plants from Romania and around the world. The garden also encompasses a beautiful building in the Brancovenesc architectural style, housing the Botanical Garden Museum. Here, you can peruse manuscripts, old botanical research devices and a collection of artifacts made of vegetal materials.

**Source: [www.romaniatourism.com](http://www.romaniatourism.com)**

Locals treat the gardens as a park, and on warm afternoons, you may see more young lovers than plants. The huge greenhouses are open Tue, Thu, Sat, Sun, 9am - 1pm.

### **Carol I Park**

*(Parcul Carol I)*

*Address: Calea Serban Vodă*

This large park is one of the most beautiful in the city and contains a massive monument that once housed the remains of communist leader Gheorge Gheorgiu Dej, as well as the eternal flame that marks the grave of the Unknown Soldier. Designed by French landscape architect Eduard Redont in 1900s, the park offers pleasant walks down tree-lined paths, a good view of central Bucharest (from the monument) and plenty of photo opportunities. In summertime, the park's Arenele Romane is the stage for open-air concerts.

### **Herastrau Park**

*(Parcul Herastrau)*

*Address: Sos. Kiseleff 32*

Spread over some 400 acres, from the Arch of Triumph to the Baneasa Bridge, the park is home to numerous attractions, including a boat rental complex, tennis courts, and a rather old-fashioned fairground. In the summertime, many terraces open up on the shores of the lake. For an overview of the park, take a ride around the lake on the ferry or rent your own boat. The park is also home to the Village Museum.

The area surrounding the park holds even greater treasures.

The streets between Bulevardul Mircea Eliade and Soseaua Kisileff contain extraordinarily beautiful houses in architectural styles ranging from 19th century neoclassical to 20th century art nouveau and modern luxury villas.

This is where Bucharest's elite once lived - and still do today.