

## Preparing For Your Journey: Romania

### General Information

**Visas:** are not required for US, EU, Canada and Japan citizens for fewer than 90 days of travel. Visas are required for citizens of Australia and New Zealand. Visa must be obtained in advance at consular offices.

**Customs:** Valuable goods, jewelry and foreign currency over the value of \$10,000 must be declared when entering the country. The endorsed customs declarations are required when leaving the country. It is forbidden to export cultural, historic or artistic value as well as Lei (currency) in excess of \$250,000.

**Vaccinations:** not required

**Topography:** Romania's terrain consists of a range of mountains, hills and plains, the Danube Delta and the Black Sea Coast.

**Climate:** Romania has a temperate-continental climate with moderate features, characteristic for Central Europe: hot summers; cold winters. Very distinct seasons. If you visit the country during winter, pay heed to the abundant snowfalls, especially if you are in the mountain area. The annual average temperature depends on latitude and ranges from 8 degrees Celsius in the North and 11 degrees Celsius in the South, with temperatures of 2.6 degrees Celsius in the mountains and 11.7 degrees Celsius in the plain. Summer nights in Brasov can be a little chilly.

**Clothing:** Pack a warm pullover, a light raincoat and good walking shoes. Wool sweaters and hats can be purchased from roadside vendors when traveling through the mountains. Footing can be uneven when walking in the medieval villages with old cobbled streets.

**Languages:** The official language is Romanian, of Latin origin. Some Hungarian and German are spoken in Transylvania and in the border areas, while mainly English and some French are spoken by those connected with the tourist industry.

**Currency:** Romania was recently accepted into the EU, so Euros are accepted. In this transitional period the national currency, the leu (plural lei), is also still accepted. Coins come in denominations of 1, 5, 10, 20, 50 and 100 lei, while notes are issued in denominations of 200, 500, 1000, 5000, 10,000 and 50,000. Romania uses periods rather than commas to denote thousands, thus 10.000 means 10,000.

Keep your exchange vouchers, they may be requested when you pay for things in lei. Dollar bills are a readily negotiated currency and it is a good idea to bring some along. ATM machines are everywhere so this is the easiest method. There are also Currency Exchange Offices (Casa de Schimb) at the airport and main towns.

Small vendors cannot change large bills. It is best to carry several 100 lei coins and 500-1000 lei bills.

**Hotels:** Some hotels expect you to leave the hotel key at the front desk when going out; check the policy where you stay. They may also hold your passport. When in your room, keep your key in the door. The maids here don't knock before entering; they just try their key and if it opens the door, they will enter the room unannounced.

**Laundry:** There are no laundry facilities outside the hotels. The hotels charge an arm and a leg. Often, the hotels are not using washing machines; they are dry cleaning. Ask at the hotel reception desk if it is unclear.

**Internet:** Most all hotels have free wifi.

**Time Zone:** GMT+2 hours. At noon in Romania it is 11:00 in Paris and Berlin, 10:00 in London, 06:00 in New York, 03:00 in San Francisco, 19:00 in Sydney and 13:00 in Moscow. Summertime: GMT+3 hours. Summer time change is in effect from the last Sunday in March to the last Sunday in October.

## Getting There

**What to do if you miss your flight:** At the airport request assistance from the ticketing agent of your airline to re-book on next available flight. Next, call the contact number on your ID card to inform them that your arrival has changed. If you call us, by the time we get the message, it will be too late to inform our associate.

### Travel Insurance

Trip cancellation/travel insurance is suggested. We use Travelex. The brochure/application is enclosed. Submit insurance application within 3 weeks of deposit to waive pre-existing conditions.

### Packing Suggestions

The weather is generally pleasant with sunny days and moderate evenings; occasional showers. Evenings in the mountains can be chilly. Lightweight casual clothing, sun hat, a sweater, light jacket, rain poncho and of course comfortable walking shoes. The cobbled streets mean uneven footing.

### Arrival

You will be met at the airport and transferred to your hotel. After collecting baggage, follow the lines through customs and immigration to the exit. The Romania airport is quite small. Outside the exit, your driver will be waiting holding a placard with the name Original World.

## On the Journey

In Romania one person will be both driver and guide.

**Calling Internationally** is a bit difficult. You can use a US calling card in the hotels, but they will add a surcharge so ask first to find out costs. For public phones you need to purchase two calling cards. There are international cards available that have very good rates for calling the US, Canada or other parts of the world. You need a local calling card in order to dial the access code for the international card. You may also use this local card at hotels as it will be a local call. Alternately you can purchase an unlocked mobile phone and a SIM card for Romania. Your guide can assist you in using the calling cards.

**Internet:** most hotels have wifi, there will not be wifi at the guesthouse in Maramures. Internet cafes are in all towns and they are open late sometimes until 2:00 am. Cost is very inexpensive.

**Money Exchange:** There are ATM machines everywhere, even in the smallest towns. There are also exchange offices in the main cities.

**Meals:** The approximate cost of meals not included in the tour are \$12-15 lunch and \$20-25 dinner.

**Suggested Tipping Guideline:** Tips are not included on the bills and when meals are included in the tour, the tips are not. 10 - 15% depending on the place and service. **Guide/Driver:** \$8-10 per day per person.

**What to do if you need medical attention:** Ask your escort for assistance in finding a doctor or medical facility. If you have purchased travel insurance, be sure to save all receipts. If you have a serious illness or accident that requires extensive treatment or hospitalization or if you need to return home early, contact your travel insurance company for best instructions.

If you have purchased Travelex insurance, you may call collect 905-523-7066 (or call their London office which may be easier to reach 44-127-322-3000; fax: 44-127-332-7848). They have a list of approved doctors and facilities. They will also require you to obtain a 'fit to fly' letter from the attending doctor as well as a report on your medical condition. If there are major medical expenses, Travelex will handle payment directly to the medical facility provided you follow their instructions.

## Assistance Throughout the Journey

Please discuss with your guide any special needs or concerns that may arise during the journey. He/She will do everything possible to accommodate you.

**NOTE:** We suggest you carry with you a copy of the front page of your passport, our ID card with local contact numbers, your insurance benefits brochure and our preparation notes. The above information is accurate to the best of our knowledge, but always subject to change.