



Welcoming people for over 40 years

Making Bucharest Home

A concise guide for newcomers

2019

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Welcome to Bucharest - we're glad you have found us!

IWA has been extending a hand of friendship to women of all nationalities since 1978, creating a home away from home where we can form bonds and learn about and serve the community in which we live.

A relocation always means upheaval, and whether this is your first foreign assignment or you are a seasoned expat, a little support to ease the initial adjustment period is often very welcome.

Finding your place - figuratively and literally - in a new environment takes time and effort. How quickly you adapt will depend on a number of factors, which vary from individual to individual, even within the same family. Culture shock is real! Between euphoria and despondency, puzzlement and comprehension, the range of emotions is broad. Recognise them and allow yourself time to gradually get used to your new surroundings and situation. Doing the following can help:

- Get out and make friends - take the initiative!
- Keep up your hobbies or discover new ones
- Maintain mental and physical fitness
- Be realistic in your expectations
- Remember that with IWA, you are not alone!

Take a first step towards making Bucharest home by attending one of our informal newcomers' events. You'll meet kindred spirits who know exactly what you are going through and get to know more about Bucharest in the process.

Topics in this portable guide are limited to a brief, member-recommended overview of goods and services not always found in other publications. Far from exhaustive, the listings give you an idea of the options that are available, inviting you to explore further, with links to additional information. There is a short glossary of Romanian words for frequently encountered conveniences. A guide to Romanian word pronunciation will help you make yourself more easily understood.

Do visit the 'Members' section of our website at www.iwabucharest.com for access to additional settling-in tips, and while there, why not contribute your own finds to our information exchange forum, too? Your feedback will make future editions even more helpful!

ROMANIAN PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

You may find it useful to know how letters are pronounced if you have no familiarity with the Romanian language. The pronunciation reference is standard US English.

Letter	Pronunciation
â, î	similar to the 'i' sound in 'little'
ă	similar to the 'u' sound in the word 'umbrella'
ci	'ch' as in 'church': cinci is pronounced 'cheench'
ch	'c' or 'k' as in cake, kitchen: China is pronounced 'keena'
e	similar to the 'e' sound in 'elevator'
ea	similar to the 'ya' sound in 'yam'
g	'g' as in 'gland'. When followed by 'i' or 'e', it is pronounced as in the English words 'gin', 'gene'
gh	'ghi' and 'ghe' are pronounced 'g' as in 'guide', 'guest'
i	similar to the 'ee' in 'bee'. NOTE: 'i' is not pronounced at the end of a word, e.g., Otopeni is pronounced 'OtoPEIn'. At the end of a word, 'ii', as in copii, is pronounced 'coPEE'
j	the 'j' sound in 'pleasure'
o	'o' as in 'own'
s	's' as in 'lost'
ș	'sh' as in 'share'
ț	'ts' as in 'its'
u	'oo' as in 'soon'
z	'z' as in 'zoo'

GLOSSARY

A few words for amenities you are likely to encounter while out and about

amanet	pawnbroker
autoturism	car
bilet	ticket
brutărie	bread bakery
ceasornicărie	watchmaker
covrigărie, simigerie	local pastry specialties
croitorie	seamstress/tailor
farmacia	pharmacy
ieșire	exit
intrare	entrance
kinetoterapie	physiotherapy
măcelărie	butcher
mercerie	haberdashery, sewing supplies
schimb valutar	currency exchange
spălătorie	car wash
stomatologia	dentist's practice
toaleta	restroom/WC
femei/doamne	ladies
bărbați/domni	gentlemen

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Police - Fire - Ambulance..... 112
Poison (TOXAPEL) ... (021) 210.61.83 / 210.62.82
Water: 021 207 77 77
Gas: 021 92 81
Electricity: 021 92 91

BANKING

The currency is the leu, plural lei, abbreviated RON, in bank notes of 1, 5, 10, 50, 100, 200 and 500. European debit cards are widely accepted, as are major credit cards. ATMs are positioned very conveniently along all major roads and in shopping areas. Some dispense multiple currencies. Inquire at your bank about the charges that apply to the transactions you initiate.

Exchange

As with ATMs, exchange bureaux (SCHIMB VALUTAR/EXCHANGE) are very well distributed. Airport exchange bureaux generally offer much less favourable rates. Never be tempted to exchange money on the street!

Transfers

Apart from online banking, you may transfer cash at either your local bank or at a beneficiary bank. Photo ID and the beneficiary's CIF/CUI/CNF are required.

BUSINESS HOURS

Government institutions: 9am to 6pm

Banks: 9am to 5pm

Large supermarkets: open as early as 7:30am and close at 10pm, or later

Weekends: Many independent businesses operate until 2 or 3 pm on Saturdays and are closed on Sundays. Malls and larger shopping centres are open on Sundays. 'Mini markets' operate late into the night and every day of the week.

CHILDREN

Schools, and Bucharest with Kids are major resources:

www.bucharestwithkids.net

CLUBS

Social: IWA monthly coffee mornings, every third Tuesday of the month, are a chance to meet and make friends. Newcomers and Friends meetings are usually held on the first Thursday of the month. Our clubs have something for crafters, singers, sports enthusiasts, bookworms and more!

Details: www.iwabucharest.com

AFB – Accueil français de Bucarest – discover Bucharest in French

www.bucarestaccueil.com

Professional

Business Women Forum Romania: Free membership! www.bwfr.org

Professional Women's Network: Professional development and networking opportunities. www.pwnbucharest.ro

CNP

These initials stand for 'cod numeric personal' or personal numeric code, and it is often requested by the authorities and institutions as an authentication of identity. The process of acquiring one takes at least 3 weeks. Apply at Oficiul Romani pentru Imigrari in the Inspectorat General Roman pentru Imigrari, 29 Str. Nicolae Iorga. www.igi.mai.gov.ro/en

DRIVING

The legal driving age is 18. Third party liability insurance is the minimum required for all vehicles, as well as seatbelts when seated in front, a warning triangle and 2 reflective vests. Children aged less than 12 must be seated in the back. Only hands-free use of mobile telephones is allowed. There is a zero tolerance policy when it comes to alcohol consumption and driving, and snow tires are mandatory during the winter.

EU citizens may use their driving permits without restrictions in Romania. Holders of an international driver's permit may use it for up to 3 months; thereafter it must be replaced with a Romanian one. Applications for a license may take over 2 months and must be submitted with accompanying documentation to Serviciul Public Comunitar Regim Permise de Conducere si Înmatriculare a Vehiculelor.

Automotive Assistance:

Breakdown Service

Automobil Club Romania (ACR) Tel. 021 222 2222 www.acr.ro

Assistance24 (A24) Tel. 0372.500.000 www.a24assistance.ro

FOREIGN REPRESENTATIONS

Bucharest has over 50 resident embassies. It is recommended that foreign nationals register with their consulates. Foreign missions are listed here: www.mae.ro/en/foreign-missions

LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

There are opportunities to learn not only Romanian, but many other languages, as well. Courses are offered for different group sizes and abilities. Here are a few of the many options:

Romanian: Rolang www.rolang.ro

Chinese: Confucius Institute www.confucius.unibuc.ro/cursuri

English: British Council www.britishcouncil.ro

French: Institut Français www.institutfrancais.ro/

German: Goethe Institut www.goethe.de/ins/ro/ro/index.html

Italian: Istituto ital. de Cultura www.iicbucharest.esteri.it/iic_bucharest/it

Hungarian: Balassi Institut www.bukarest.balassiintezet.hu/ro/home-ro/

Japanese: Nobori Japanese Culture Ctr, Str Morilor 51, Tel. 0773 939 657

Russian: Centrul Rus de Stiintă si Cultură www.rou.rs.gov.ru/ro
Spanish: Instituto Cervantes www.bucarest.cervantes.es/ro/default.shtm

LEISURE

Bucharest hosts an enormous variety of cultural institutions, with something to suit every taste. The Enescu Festival (music) and annual events such as Noaptea Muzeelor (a night during which museums throw open their doors), Calea Victoriei Art Safari, street and specialty fairs, as well as theatre, and various film festivals are only a few of those that you can look forward to.

The arts

A useful mobile resource for those seeking leisure time gratification is the **culturetrip app**.

Culture and Leisure: <http://seebucharest.ro/#all/all//>

Museums: www.inyourpocket.com/bucharest/

Events: www.zilesinopti.ro/bucuresti

Cinema: www.diseara.ro/en/tonight/movies/bucuresti

Dining: over 200 recommendations on the [Restocracy app](#)

Sports

A useful resource for sporting activities in the city is www.inyourpocket.com/bucharest/Leisure, where you will find information about swimming pools, parks and gardens, golf, horseback riding, walking and jogging, skating, tennis, cycling and more!

LOST ITEMS

Bucharest doesn't have a pound for lost and found objects, but some citizens have taken on the task themselves. Try your luck at retrieving lost or returning found items at www.obiectepierdutesaufurate.ro

Lost credit cards: Call your bank immediately to report the theft.

A list of bank contact numbers can be accessed at www.efin.ro/credite-banci

MEDIA

City Compass/Romania Insider - excellent resources for everyday life and news for the new Bucharest resident. www.romania-insider.com/

OZB - English language lifestyle magazine www.ozb.ro

Nine O'clock - weekday local and international news www.nineoclock.ro/

MEDICAL CARE

Private and public facilities cater to the needs of local residents. Many private healthcare providers, most prominently MedLife and Regina Maria, run a network of clinics and hospitals located around Bucharest. Visit their websites for more information and ask around for personal recommendations. It is a good idea to know the location of your nearest facility.

Emergencies:

Ponderas Academic Hospital: Str. Nicolae Caramfil 85A, Sector 1.

Floreasca Emergency Hospital www.urgentafloreasca.ro

Pediatric emergencies: Spitalul Clinic de Urgenta pentru Copii Grigore Alexandrescu, Bulevardul Iancu de Hunedoara 30-32

Emergency rabies vaccination: Victor Babes Hospital spitalulbabes.ro

Pharmacies

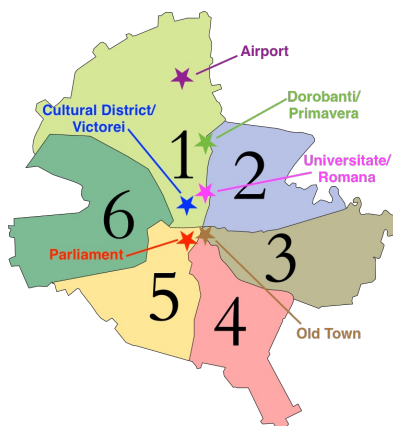
There's a pharmacy on almost every corner dispensing prescription medication as well as over-the-counter health aids. Many offer loyalty cards which entitle customers to discounts of up to 20% and several other benefits. Catena, Helpnet and Sensiblu have the widest reach.

Vaccinations

Rabies, Hepatitis B and FSME inoculations are recommended for long-term residents. West Nile fever, a serious viral infection transmitted by day-biting Aedes mosquitoes, has appeared in the Romanian countryside recently and repellent precautions are advised when travelling outside of Bucharest.

NEIGHBOURHOODS

Bucharest's neighbourhoods are as diverse as its architecture. From stately mansions and splendid late 19th and early 20th century buildings to communist era 'palaces' and prefab concrete residential blocks, each has its own story and attractions. Start getting to know your neighbourhood at www.inyourpocket.com/bucharest.



Bucharest and its districts
Image Credit: Bogdan Giusca

Sector 1 www.primariasector1.ro

This sector is home to the capital's most important museums and cultural institutions. It has the largest surface area, and smallest population density. Affluent neighbourhoods host most of the diplomatic missions located in the city.

Sector 2 - www.ps2.ro

Hosting the Armenian quarter, museums and excellent examples of modernist and avantgarde architecture.

Sector 3 - www.primarie3.ro/.ro

Boasts the largest population density. Old Town and the Jewish District are here. The site of the earliest interbellic architecture and open air concerts in August.

Sector 4 - www.ps4.ro

The vast urban nature reserve of Vacaresti is located here in the southern part of the city, as is Tineretului Park, with its serene lake.

Sector 5 - www.sector5.ro

The smallest sector by area, it is the home of the Parliament Building and Opera House, Medical Faculty and numerous prominent orthodox churches. Cotroceni Palace and the Botanical Garden are also located here.

Sector 6 - www.primarie6.ro

The most western district, it was built up primarily post WWII and is characterised by residential blocks, student hostels and large commercial spaces.

PETS

Veterinarian services Vetlife in Pipera comes highly recommended. Tel 021 267 4424. They are open 24/7, speak English and always have a vet on duty. www.vetlife.ro

Marcovet is also recommended in Pipera. www.marcovet.ro

Supplies Pet supplies can be found at large malls and Obor market. Zooplus has a wide selection with good quality, and the same products you can purchase in Germany. Free shipping for orders over RON179 and a customer loyalty plan. www.zooplus.ro

Animax.ro delivers free of charge for online orders over RON199.

Stray dogs roam Bucharest's neighbourhoods in conspicuous numbers. It is advisable to avoid large packs and have an updated rabies vaccination. Many of these animals may end up in shelters where they have an uncertain future. If you wish to acquire a pet, consider adopting one from such a facility.

Ask for vet recommendations in your neighbourhood - there is everything from mobile services, to esthetic and exotic pet care.

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS - See the full list at zileilibere.com

New Year	January 1, 2	Children's Day	June 1
Unification Day	January 24	Assumption	August 15
Orthodox Easter (3 days, in March or April, incl. Monday)		St Andrew's Day	November 30
May Day	May 1	National Day	December 1
		Christmas	Dec. 25, 26

Though not a public holiday, Martisor, celebrated on March 1, is a popular spring celebration dedicated to women, as is International Women's Day, on March 8. Name days have as much significance as birthdays.

RELIGIOUS SERVICES

Orthodox Christianity is the majority religion in Romania and places of worship are numerous. Some of the other faiths represented are:

Anglican - Church of the Resurrection, Str. Alexandru D. Xenopol 2

Catholic (French)- Chapelle de Sacré-Coeur, Str. Cpt. Av. G. Demetriade

Islam - www.salatomic.com/sub/Romania/Bucharest-Ilfov/QMFvboRiK7

Judaism - Choral Temple, Str. Sf. Vineri, nr. 9-11

RECYCLING

Recycling practices are still in early infancy in most parts of Bucharest. Efforts are being made in every district to provide public, curbside recycling facilities in the form of containers for glass, paper, packaging and clothes. Many supermarkets and malls also provide receptacles for these recyclables and larger items, and collect spent batteries, as well.

REPAIRS

Appliances and IT: Choose to visit them on site or use their collect and return service – Depanero repairs electrical equipment of any size or age.

www.depanero.ro

Clothes - ask for 'croitorie' recommendations

Watches - ask for 'ceasornicărie' recommendations

SHOPPING

Almost everything can be delivered to your home or office in Bucharest; supermarkets and eateries offer this service through their apps. Payment is in lei, and European debit cards are widely accepted, as are major credit cards in large shops.

Antiques: Hanul cu Tei, Palatul Marmorosch Blank, Obor area and Sector 3 (search for 'antichități')

Books; Many of the large bookstores take orders for foreign language books. The annual Bookfest at Romexpo in late May is a great opportunity to find out what's new.

Carturesti and Humanitas for all books; Nautilus and Carturesti and Friends for English books; Sitka: Children's books in European languages; Rare books: near the university, on Strada Academiei.

Crafting supplies: Pictor, Rembrandt Art Centre, and Colorit all offer a wide range; Jumbo is a good source of holiday and household items

Picture Frames and Mirrors: Several clustered around the National University of Art

Distinctive boutiques and shops: Found along and around Calea Victoriei, around Dorobanti, Piata Amzei, Piata Floreasca.

Ethnic and Specialty Foods

Your supermarket of choice and Metro/Selgros have a foreign foods section but if you don't find what you are looking for...

Asia Supermarket, KJ Center, Oriental Market, indianfood.ro - Chinese,

Indian, Japanese, Korean and other Asian groceries

K-Life - organic groceries (Piata Amzei)

Berezka - Russian, CIS and Slavic groceries

Brot Manufactur- German breads

Vacamo - premium beef

Dancing Lobster Mercado - seafood, Portuguese foods

Belli Siciliani, Degusteria Francesca- Italian specialties

Home Electronics

Altex, Germanos, Media Galaxy

Home Furnishings

Ikea, Jysk, Mobexpert, Rovere

Home improvement

Brico Depot, Dedeman, Hornbach, LeRoy Merlin, Der Praktiker

Malls

Baneasa, Cotroceni, Park Lake, Promenada, Sun Plaza, Veranda, and more

Markets and Fairs

Antiques and flea markets

Palatul Marmorosch Blank, opposite the National Bank of Romania

(daily), Kiseleff Park (weekends), Carol I Park, Piata Libertatii (Sundays)

Piata Amzei (daily), Targul Vitan-Barzesti, Sos. Vitan-Barzesti/Splaiul Unirii

- biggest and busiest and Targul Valea Cascadelor (weekends)

Farmers: Farmers' markets are known as piata, the same word used for town squares. Piata Obor is more than that, and is definitely worth a visit.

Daily - Piata Obor, Piata Domenii, Piata Amzei, Piata Floreasca, Piata

Dorobanti, Piata 1. Mai, Piata Ramnicu Sarat

Weekends - Piata Taranului B-dul Unirii/Str. Nerva Traian

Flowers: Piata de Flori G. Cosbuc, Calea Rahovei 169.

Handicrafts: Peasant Museum, Marmorosch Blank Palace

Manufactured goods - Piata Obor, Romexpo

RomExpo - Bucharest's exposition centre - regular fairs are held throughout the year - furniture, antiques, IT, electronics, agriculture, clothing - and of course, our annual Christmas Charity Bazaar!

Sewing Materials and Haberdasherys S.C. Textil Design, 4 Str. Fabrica Chibrituri, Bucur Obor, SamExpo (Sos. Colentina), Calea Mosilor, Dragonul Rosu, Sharbek (Str. Lipscani).

Supermarkets:

Large Chains: Auchan, Carrefour, Kaufland, Mega Image, Profi

Discounters: Lidl, Penny Markt

Cash & Carry: Metro, Selgros - customer card required

Sports: Decathlon

Wholesalers

Dragonul Rosu, Doraly - cash sales, whole sale purchases (2+ items)

For additional IWA member recommendations and tips, please visit

<https://iwabucharest.ro/page-18123>.

TRAVEL AND MOBILITY:

Bicycles - public bike rental schemes are dotted around the city, notably around Piata Victoriei, the Atheneum and Kiseleff and King Mihai I (Herastrau) Parks. Free cycle sharing from Pedalo at the latter two locations (registration required) gratuito.ro/la-pedale-bike-sharing-gratuit-in-bucuresti

www.ive.ro

Bucharest Transport Authority: RATB www.ratb.ro Infoline (English): 021.9391.

Bus, tram, trolleybus and hop on-hop off city tour lines. Bus line 362 (Piata Presei or Piata Unirii) plies a route that takes in the major sights.

Underground trains: Metroex www.metroex.ro

Bucharest has 4 metro lines serving 53 stations on 71km of track.

SMS tickets for express buses 780 and 783 (single fare, RON3.87) or the entire city network for a day (RON8.87, excluding suburban lines) may be purchased by sending a text to 7464 containing E780, E783, or A, respectively, if you have a Romanian mobile phone. Surface and underground transit tickets are sold separately or as an integrated ticket (unic) at kiosks near major bus stops and metro stations, respectively.

Tickets are available for single and multiple journeys; passes may be purchased for daily (RON8), weekly (RON25), monthly and annual travel. A single journey costs RON2.50; 10 journeys RON20. A discount of 50% for students and other special groups is available on tickets priced above RON20. Passes and discounted fares are available at Piata Unirii and some other stations with valid ID. Vending machines are few and far between.

Handicapped access

Bucharest's sidewalks are notoriously unfriendly for persons with reduced mobility. Ramps are rarely level, if they exist at all. Accessibility to public buildings is generally adequate and improving.

Taxis

Several taxi firms operate on Bucharest's roads. Yellow cab fares vary and are displayed near the hinge of the front door. Rates are between RON1.69 and 3.50/km. Seatbelts may not be available for passengers.

Cabs may also be hired via apps. One of these may be the right service for you: Black Cab, Clever Taxi, Taxify, Uber.

Long distance travel within Romania

Air: If the scenic route is not for you, a reasonably- priced alternative for reaching the further-flung corners of the country is by air. Blue Air, Ryanair, Tarom, and WizzAir bring those areas within an hour of Bucharest.

Train: CFR www.cfrcalatorie.ro

Bucharest has 4 train stations. The main station is Gara de Nord; most services commence and terminate there. Commuter connections are also available from Basarab, Baneasa and Obor stations. Tickets are available online; there are advance purchase reductions of 10-25% for minigroups of 2-5 adults, and of 50% for students under 18. There is an additional online purchase discount of 5%.

Bus/Coach: www.autogari.ro/Bucuresti/

Travel by coach or bus is often more convenient than by rail, as departures are more frequent and journeys may be shorter.

SERVICES

Key cutting, dry cleaning and phone repair services are found in most malls and local shopping areas. Ask a neighbour for specific recommendations.

Printers and copyshops are clustered near universities and institutions of higher learning, Piata Romana and Universitatii, for example.

STUDYING IN ROMANIA

Romanian universities are fully autonomous and ranked as some of the best in Eastern Europe. There are both publicly and privately funded institutions, and they attract students from all over the world, especially in the fields of medicine and technology. In a number of universities, courses are offered in English, French and German, among others.

Mutual recognition of higher education qualifications is enshrined in the UNESCO/Council of Europe Lisbon Recognition Convention, which covers (as of February 2017) all Council of Europe members with the exception of Monaco and Greece. In addition, Australia, Belarus, Holy See, Israel, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, New Zealand and Tajikistan, and increasingly reliably, Canada and the United States are included.

Qualifications from these countries are recognised as equivalent unless proven otherwise through assessments.

TELEPHONY

If you prefer not to tie yourself down to a mobile phone contract, you'll find a variety of pay-as-you-go options for as low as RON18/month for a generous amount of data and airtime. You can top up your credit at supermarkets, kiosks in public spaces and online (if you have a Romanian

banking card). A comparison of bundle offers is listed here:
www.finder.com/best-prepaid-sim-card-romania
www.lycamobile.ro

VOLUNTARY EMPLOYMENT

Charities

There are a large number of charitable organisations in Bucharest. IWA's Charity Committee is an autonomous group of volunteers that identifies worthy charitable projects by way of a rigorous vetting process and funds them. If you would like to donate some time to helping others less fortunate, the Charity Committee can make suggestions and would love to hear from you! We have regular clothing and other collection drives. Meetings take place on the second Tuesday of the month. Email the Committee: charity.iwabucharest@gmail.com or visit www.iwabucharest.ro/Charity-Get-Involved - and get involved!

NOTES

