

IWA

The International Women's Association of Bucharest

MAGAZINE



NOVEMBER 2018



Celebrating 40 years of bringing people together

Make Friends · Explore Romania · Support Charity

ACTIVITIES

registration for upcoming events is via our website: www.iwabucharest.ro
guests can find our calendar on the About Us page

Thanks to all our members for taking pics at our tours, coffees, lunches, charity visits, events and clubs. See more on our Facebook page.





A NOTE FROM GLADYS



Gladys Abankwa-Meier-Klodt
IWA President

on Tuesday, November 20th, we formally launch our anniversary celebrations with an evening reception and silent auction of members' handiwork. With "The Art of Turning 40," we hope to raise additional funds for our philanthropic endeavours.

Dear Fellow IWA members,

IWA is 40!

When Evelyn Zivetz, the wife of the then US Cultural Attache founded IWA along with a core group of foreign and Romanian women in 1978, she set out to combat the social isolation that accompanied the restrictive lifestyle imposed by the communist regime. Little could they have imagined that four decades on, as determined as ever, IWA would still be enriching the lives of expats and Romanians. It is a colossal achievement of longevity - few associations that survived the 1989 Revolution can lay claim to anything similar in Romania today.

We have inherited an IWA in its prime, which remains true to our founders' aim of promoting friendship among women of all nationalities while discovering Romania's many facets and helping to weave the social fabric of our host country through charitable work.

As IWA marks 40 years, this country celebrates a major milestone: 100 years since the founding of the modern Romanian state. Congratulations, Romania! We are honouring this anniversary with diverse activities during our "Discover Romania" season.

Mark your calendars and register on our website:

Speaking of which: Our main fundraiser, the annual Charity Christmas Bazaar takes place on December 9th at RomExpo. Each of us can help to make it a success: by volunteering to sell tickets, engage sponsors, decorate, set up, staff or dismantle - every effort you put in will be rewarded with the assurance that someone less fortunate will benefit directly. Please offer your support by writing to bazaar.iwabucharest@gmail.com.

In the coming months, we can look forward to explorations in and around Bucharest and Romania, journeys to foreign lands on the Cultural Kaleidoscope's ticket, and more of the clubs and activities that we all enjoy. Our weekly newsletter will keep you abreast of all the latest. If you'd like to see something that isn't yet offered, do consider initiating an activity or club. IWA is only as good as what you offer.

All that remains is for me to hope that as the days grow shorter and to-do lists longer, you find some moments of calm and serenity to reflect over the past year and prepare for the next. I wish you and yours a joyous holiday season and a meeting of intention with action in the new year.

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Women Who Make a Difference: Cosmina Pandele

Mayor of Berceni and Co-Founder of Second Chance Romania

— interview by Terry O'Donnell Parsons

Cosmina Pandele grew up in the village of Berceni, then moved to Bucharest after university. Like many areas in Romania, Berceni suffered economically after the end of communism when factories shut down. There was no support for the unemployed. "Life was not exactly how I saw it," she reflected. "In my own village, where I grew up, there were people with no electricity, with no running water, with no winter shoes."

In 2002, Cosmina decided to give Christmas gifts to villagers instead of to her family and friends. The project grew rapidly, and soon Cosmina and American Sara Blättler founded the charity organization Second Chance. It wasn't always easy, even though Cosmina was a local. "It was a time of change, it was a time of people not being so trustful," she said.

The association focused first on education, doing everything from giving school supplies to replacing outhouses with bathrooms. "All the real changes are made like this, people taking action and putting the shoulder to work." Second Chance continues to offer support to families in need, enabling their children to stay in school. They now also use sport as a tool, encouraging youth through a successful badminton program. It is Cosmina's dream to one day build a gym.

The first charity grant Second Chance ever received was from IWA. "We were trying to find something in the village that the people can produce that we can sell, that can be feasible. It was really impressive how people came together." Women

donated little bits of material and time. "We had a little tiny place with nothing in it. We worked on the floor." IWA visited and then donated sewing machine tables. Cosmina believes the importance was "not what they gave, it's how they inspired us. I feel like we are part of a big family, that does things for others. I always feel like somehow IWA is part of my family."

Hundreds of people from the villages are now involved, and about ten expats (new volunteers are always welcome). "You know, we are all volunteers in Second Chance. We want to make people understand it is so important to offer a little bit from what we have."

After learning mosaics from an expat volunteer, it took one year to prepare for their first sales exhibition. It took seven years of fundraising to build the Berceni community center. Second Chance "is an example of how a community can solve their own problems when people from the community get involved. That is our secret."

She's been mayor for about two and a half years. "I was never thinking I would become the mayor of Berceni." She says the idea came from the villagers, who felt they didn't receive enough support from the town administration for community projects.

Cosmina's advice to those who want to make a difference in the world is to "never stop believing that things will happen: miracles happen."



Works in Progress: IWA creates mosaics with Second Chance



The IWA Charity Christmas Bazaar



Bazaar ABCs

All day on Sunday 9 December — doors open at 10 a.m. and close at 4 p.m.

Bringing our world together in the spirit of giving

Charity funds we raise are given to a wide range of local NGOs through IWA Charity Committee grants. We help diverse groups including sex-trafficking victims, children, the elderly, disabled, ill, homeless people, refugees and more.

Donate

... goods: as an individual or a business you can donate goods to a national table or make a cash donation directly to the IWA Charity Committee.

... time: volunteer at your national table — it's a fun day with a lot of smiles!

... skills: help the organizing committee with tasks large or small, from home or on the day.

Email bazaar.iwabucharest@gmail.com to be involved and we will put you in touch with your Country Coordinator or our Sponsorship Team.

Fees? Tickets are just 10 RON (children under 10 are free). Buy lots of tickets and give them away to friends and coworkers.

Glögg & Glühwein (also known as mulled wine or hot cider) await you.

How? Volunteers from the local and international community, diplomatic missions, cultural centers, and business partners come together to showcase their traditional food, handicrafts, decor and more.

IWA was founded in 1978, and is now a registered independent, voluntary, charitable, non-profit and non-political organization. Make friends — explore Bucharest — support charity and join us!

Just the right place to shop before the holidays.

Kids' Corner upstairs with fun activities.

Lots of people, fun and food!

Music and dance performances all day.

No one is forgotten! The holiday spirit of giving and sharing is our motivation.

Outreach — we give any leftover food and items donated by our community members and business sponsors to charities immediately after the Bazaar.

Pleasure to meet you there!

Quite a variety of entertainers and performers!

Rquests for grants are welcome from NGOs across Bucharest — see our website www.iwabucharest.ro for details. We also encourage IWA members to join the Charity Committee to see where the money goes and get involved.

So much yummy food to try right on the spot!

Transparency is key — All charity applications are carefully reviewed and NGOs are visited before and after funding, to ensure the best possible use of our donations. IWA is an all-volunteer association, and we are audited to ensure best financial practices.

Unexpected treasures can be found at our country tables!

Volunteers welcome!

Where? The Bazaar is at Romexpo (Pavillion C3) the Bucharest Convention Centre near Piața Presei Libere, from the entrance off Blvd Expozitiei. There are several halls, Pavillion C3 is at the back-right.

Xmas is coming! Get your gifts at the IWA Bazaar!

You are welcome! Check out IWA's other events and activities with a trial membership. Join via our website, www.iwabucharest.ro

Zap the winter blues away by spending a day at Romexpo with us!



Please join our annual multicultural celebration in support of charity, with entertainment and shopping and food galore, on Sunday 9 December 10am - 4pm at Romexpo C3

Email us to find out how you can volunteer to support your country or donate directly to the charity committee: bazaar.iwabucharest@gmail.com

2018 PARTICIPANTS

- Argentina
- Armenia
- Belgium
- Brazil
- Bulgaria
- Chile
- China
- Colombia
- Croatia
- Czech Republic
- Cuba
- Egypt
- Estonia
- France
- Guatemala
- Georgia
- Germany
- Ghana
- Greece
- Holy See
- Iceland
- India
- Indonesia
- Israel
- Italy
- Japan
- Kenya
- Kuwait
- Lebanon
- Lithuania
- Malaysia
- Madagascar
- Moldova
- Morocco
- Order of Malta
- Nigeria
- Palestine
- Peru
- Portugal
- Romania
- Russia
- Slovakia
- Slovenia
- South Africa
- South Korea
- Spain
- Sudan
- Thailand
- Turkey
- Ukraine
- United Arab Emirates
- United Kingdom
- United States

countries represented as of magazine press time (31 October)





The IWA CHARITY COMMITTEE

“IWA supports charitable organizations in the greater Bucharest area by providing grants for short term projects in order to improve the lives of disadvantaged Romanians.”

All requests are carefully reviewed and organizations are visited before and after funding, to ensure the best possible use of our donations. IWA is an all-volunteer association and is audited yearly to ensure best financial practices. We welcome new grant applications!

RECENT GRANTS

Concordia Humanitarian Organisation

Offers support to disadvantaged children and families.
Grant: 23520 lei for washing machine, kitchen utensils, laptop, and shower cabin.

PRO ACT SUPORT Association

Support the social integration of people with intellectual disabilities.
Grant: 23500 lei for turkey butchery equipment

Renasterea Foundation

Works to consolidate civic responsibility in Romania, to raise cervical and breast cancer awareness and promote women’s health.
Grant: 25000 lei for purchasing 31 natural hair wigs to donate to oncology patients.

Saint Stephen Humanitarian Association

Supports impaired children with severe neurological damage.
Grant: 21000 lei for specialized equipment and software for the therapy room.

REMAR Peris

Shelters homeless women and children.
Grant: 25000 for the renovation and rehabilitation of the center.

Doctor Mamulea Association

Provides medical equipment and technical assistance to state hospitals.
Grant: 5000 Euro toward purchase of an ultrasound machine for Grigore Alexandrescu Pediatric Hospital. Special Joint Project with Verita Foundation and others. Total joint donation: 17000 Euro.

Casa Shalom

Supports vulnerable children who live in poverty, including offering basic life-skills education to children in order to help them integrate better in society.
Grant: 16000 lei for purchasing a washing machine, a dryer, an iron and an ironing board, 2 computers, printers and smart TV.

Fight for Life

Works to reward and stimulate unprivileged children, to broaden their horizons so that they appreciate the role of education in their life, and thus increase their odds of making better life choices.
Grant: 25000 lei for sending 37 children to their first summer camp.

Fundatia Inovatii Sociale Regina Maria

Provides free/low cost medical and educational services to underprivileged people.
Grant: 16310 RON for the purchase of sedation dental equipment.

Proceeds from the IWA Christmas Bazaar go to the IWA Charity Committee for distribution. Last year’s Bazaar raised a fantastic 218182 RON to support a wide range of projects at different organizations!





Stories

The Barbie Doll that Made it to the USSR

by Alecsandra Ecard

Before the 80s hit Romania, the people were living a sort of relaxed communism — a foreign music, Levi’s jeans type of relaxation. And more food. Then, after a visit to North Korea, where massive crowd displays showed Ceausescu a new possibility, things dramatically changed for Romania, and for the worse.

In 1988, when I was eight years old, I visited some friends of my parents. She was working as a flight attendant on international flights for TAROM, the national Romanian airline. To this day, I remember the shock I had when I entered their apartment. It was a different world. Decorations I had never seen before, and didn’t know existed, clothes, colors... She gave me a hair accessory that I’m sure I still have somewhere. I was familiar with planes and cabin crew, but she was traveling... *out*. I asked about her job and decided “this is what I want to do when I grow up,” simply because that meant traveling to places we could only dream about at that moment.

In those times, there was a store in Bucharest called Romarta, with clothes and toys, mainly for kids. I cannot say exactly how I knew about Barbie, since I wasn’t a doll fan anyway. But one day, there it was. A Barbie-like doll, long blonde hair, with a long sleeved mauve blouse and a long black skirt. Nothing playful or sexy, comrades! And I wanted it. I tried to remember how I raised the money for it, but my memory failed on this one. But I remember my satisfaction when I asked the vendor lady to give me the doll.

That summer, I went on holiday to a mountain resort in Moldova region, called Durau, near Ceahlau Mountains. One evening, the restaurant was full and we realized there was a large group of Russian tourists. Somehow, my mother started a conversation with a lady, then other ladies joined and there I was, using my poor English (which I was studying in school) to have my first conversation with a foreigner.

There was music, and everybody was dancing so two ladies took me with them on the dance floor. They asked me my name and I said “Alexander.” Why not the feminine, I don’t know. But I was dancing to Western music with a Russian lady and it felt like a different world. One lady was from Vladivostok. At the end of the evening, I wanted so much to give her a souvenir from me. She was coming from a faraway place by plane, and to me she represented almost the same thing as my parents’ friend. That evening, there was only one thing I had with me.

I like to think that someone from Vladivostok has a nice childhood memory with a Barbie that a Russian lady received from a little girl in Romania.



Beauty is in the eye of the beholder
Plato

IWA urban lovers and photo enthusiasts take the graffiti tour
photos by Alev Ibyudar





110 years after Manuc Bey completed the construction of his legendary Inn on the banks of the Dâmbovița River, Transylvania and the provinces of Banat, Basarabia, and Bucovina united with the Kingdom of Romania on 1 December 1918 - Unification Day.

The Unification arose from an ambiguity in the 1856 Treaty of Paris, which established the Danubian Principalities of Moldova and Wallachia. Although the Treaty mandated separate thrones for the Principalities, it did not prevent the same person from occupying both thrones. In 1859, the legislative and consul-

tative assemblies of the two provinces exploited this ambiguity by simultaneously electing Alexandru Ioan Cuza as their ruler. The election of a common ruler united the two principalities into the Kingdom of Romania.

In an attempt to further unite itself with Transylvania, Bucovina, and Basarabia, the Kingdom of Romania entered World War I in 1916 on the side of the Allied Powers. Two years later, after the Bolsheviks withdrew Russia from the war, Romania was forced to sign the humiliating Treaty of Bucharest with the Central Powers, in May 1918. This Treaty reduced Romania's territory prior to the end of the war, in November 1918.

The great losses suffered by the German Empire and Austria-Hungary came at a time when Romanians in the occupied provinces fought for political, diplomatic, and military independence. This struggle inspired the Romanians in the provinces to participate in the National Assembly in Alba Iulia on December 1 when the Union of "the territories inhabited by them with Romania" was decided (excerpt below).

"I. The National Assembly of all Romanians in Transylvania, Banat and the Hungarian Country, gathered by its rightful representatives at Alba-Iulia on the 18th of November/1st of December, decrees the unification of those Romanians and of all the territories inhabited by them with Romania. The National Assembly proclaims above all the inalienable right of the Romanian nation to the whole Banat bordered by the Mures and Tisa rivers and the Danube." (first article of the Resolution)

sources:

<http://epochtimes-romania.com/news/marea-unire-de-la-1-decembrie-1918---94046>

http://www.cimec.ro/Istorie/Unire/rezo_eng.htm

https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marea_Unire



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Restaurant Review



HANU' LUI
MANUC
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Hanu Lui Manuc

by Gillian Adamson

Hanu Lui Manuc Restaurant is part of Manuc's Inn. The Inn itself was built in 1806 and it's the oldest operating hotel building in Bucharest. As well as the popular restaurant, the Inn houses a few bars, a coffee-house and several stores. As we have not been in Bucharest long, this seemed the perfect place to try some traditional Romanian food.

We sat on the covered balcony that overlooks the inner courtyard, where caravans of merchants, in the late 1800s and early 1900s, would have left their carts of luxurious and lucrative goods along with their animals overnight.

We ordered an *Escalope of Foie Gras* with apples and cognac to share, and a first timer for us both,

traditional *Ciorba de Burta* or Spicy Tripe Soup. The Foies Gras was wrapped in a berry jelly, which we assumed also had the cognac in it, and was accompanied by an onion chutney and rock salt. It was an excellent dish; the duck liver was creamy and went well with the 'not so sweet' jelly and chutney. The Tripe Soup surprised me. I hadn't had tripe before, but I soon realised that the tripe was just a carrier for the flavours it was cooked in. The texture of the tripe was that of soft calamari and the soup was highly flavoured with garlic, chilli and cream. It was very tasty, but having said that, I wouldn't order it again.

For main course, Mr A had *Sarmale*, traditional pork stuffed cabbage leaves served in a highly-flavoured tomato-based sauce. It was delicious and the leaves were packed with pork. For my main

course I had the Dobrogea stew, another very popular traditional dish of pork, chicken, veal liver and sausage stewed in red wine, garlic paste and pepper, and served with polenta with a fried egg on top of it and grated white cheese on top of that. My goodness this was hearty and full of flavour, despite the veal liver being quite dry and the sausage a bit chewy. The fried egg on top of the polenta and covered in a type of goat's cheese seemed incredibly over indulgent, but who can argue with tradition? I loved it!

I've discovered that you can get pretty much any type of food in Bucharest, but I urge you to try the traditional dishes as well. They're flavourful, plentiful and hearty. Would I go again? Of course! However, a bit of advice: wear loose fitting clothing when you go for a meal, or you won't be very comfortable when you've finished!



did you know? Manuc's Inn was built in 1808 as a *caravanserai*, a roadside inn for travelers. It was owned by an Armenian businessman known by his Turkish name, Manuc-bei. The inn still retains its basic structure despite many renovations. In the 1800s, it was Bucharest's most important commercial complex, with wholesalers, stores, and rooms for offices or living. On the side overlooking the Dambovita river (which is now channeled), it had a stone pier for boats.

sources: Wikipedia and "Caravanserais" by Ursula Fait
photo: Hanul lui Manuc pictat de Lancelot în 1860



Life, Eggplants and *Salata de Vinete* from Lauren Wilson



This summer I passed the one year anniversary for a few major life changes. First, it marked the one year of taking a step away from the corporate world to return to school; second, it marked one year away from home in Canada and living in Bucharest; and third, it marked a reversal of

my hate for eggplant. I've tried to like eggplant over the years, trying different recipes without success. That was until I tried just a little bit of homemade *salata de vinete* made by my friend's grandmother, just enough to not be rude... life changed and all of the *salata de vinete* was devoured!

Here the recipe as taught to me by my friend's grandmother:

- 2 or 3 medium sized eggplants (make more, you won't regret it!)
- 1 medium onion, chopped super fine (I like onion, you may want to start with less than this.)
- 2 tablespoon mayonnaise (I just use sunflower oil as a substitute to avoid eggs. Olive oil is not recommended.)
- 2 teaspoon salt

On the grill or stove top, grill the eggplant. I grill mine on a gas stove top using the metal tray from the oven. Grill them until the skin is well charred to get a smokey flavour, turning them to ensure they are evenly cooked

through. You can bake the eggplant but it will be missing that smokey flavour.

While the eggplant is cooking, chop the onion, very fine. To help it soften, mix in half of the salt and let it sit before chopping through again. The more fine / paste-like you can get the onions, the better!

Take the roasted eggplant off the grill and let it cool. Once cooled, peel off the skin. At this point some liquid has drained out. Discard this and place the peeled eggplants in a sieve and let them further drain for about half an hour to one hour.

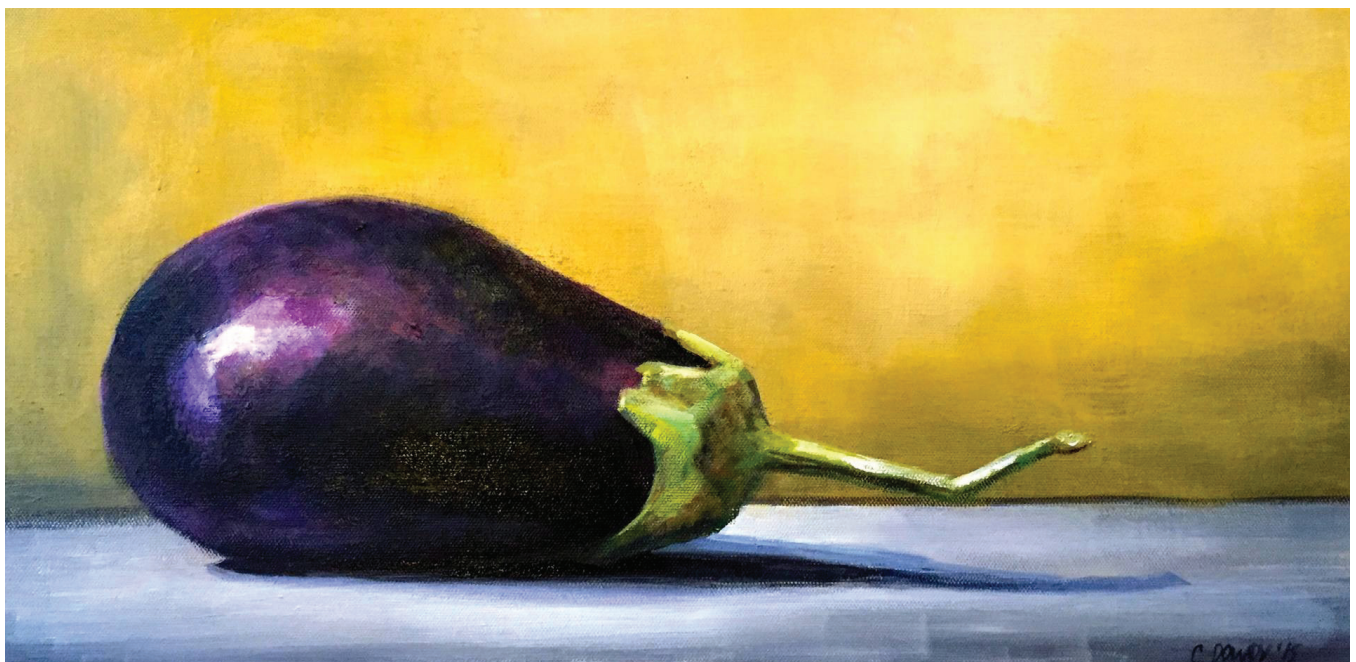
Next, chop the eggplant. Traditionally this is done with a wooden knife. You do not want to use a metal knife as this will cause the eggplant to discolour. I have used a ceramic knife. I like to chop until it is a paste-like consistency but you can choose to leave it with some chunks based on your preferred texture. NOTE: you do *not* want to try to shortcut this step by using a blender or food processor. The seeds of eggplant are bitter and if you blend it, you will release this bitterness into the spread.

Mix together the eggplant, onion, oil and salt. It tastes best if you now let it rest and provide time for the flavours to mix but I can never wait! Enjoy on some fresh bread. It can be served topped with slices of tomato or *telemea* cheese. I like to add just a little extra salt to a (very) healthy ratio of *salata de vinete* to bread.

Tip: roast eggplant in late summer while it is in season, peel off the skin, drain, mash, and freeze to meet *salata de vinete* cravings, year long! (Spoiler, my freezer may be full of eggplant right now!)



Eggplant on Gold by Christina Dowdy



Bulgarian Bean Cake from Anna Cekova



Ingredients:

- 8 eggs
- 400g small white beans, boiled until soft
- 13 tablespoons sugar
- 1 pack baking powder (soda and lemon acid)
- 1 pack vanilla sugar
- a couple drops of rum
- 370g rose hip jam (in Romanian "pasta de macese")
- 200-300g quince and/or plum jam (by taste)



Directions:

1. The eggs are beaten to white with the sugar
2. The boiled and drained beans are mashed
3. The beans are added to the eggs/sugar mixture, also added the baking powder, vanilla, and a little bit rum
4. The mixture is split into two equal portions. The two portions are baked slowly (in oven 150°C), separately in two baking pans/trays (the pans/trays are covered with vegetable oil and flour)
5. After the cake is baked, they are left to cool down and we put between the layers the rose hip jam
6. The cake is decorated in the middle with plum jam and around it is added another jam
7. It is good to serve with ice-cream or sour cream (with icing sugar)
8. Bon appetite!

Eric's Fiesta Pinwheels from Eric Ali



- 8oz cream cheese
- 1/2 cup sour cream
- 1/4 cup *picante* sauce
- 2 Tbs taco seasoning
- 4 oz. chopped olives
- 4 oz. can of green chilies
- 1 cup finely shredded cheddar
- 1/2 cup chopped green onions
- 6-8 Tortillas
- Salsa for dipping

In a bowl, beat cream cheese, sour cream, *picante* sauce and taco seasoning until smooth. Stir in olives, chilies, green onions and cheese. Spread on each tortilla about 1/2 cup of mixture. Roll up each tortilla and wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate for 3hrs or overnight. Slice into 1 inch pieces and serve with salsa.

**This recipe is full of ingredients easily purchased from North American grocery stores to fill suitcases flying across the Atlantic — feel free to substitute with local fresh and dried chilies and make it as spicy as you like !*



words you can use

- dessert — *desert*
- birthday cake — *tort*
- (pretty much any other) cake — *prajitura*
- pancakes — *clatite*
- cookie — *biscuit*
- pie — *placinta*
- ice cream — *inghetata*
- sweet bread — *cozonac*
- bonbons — *bomboane*
- icing — *glazura*
- patisserie cream — *crema*

HOLIDAYS

Our international community is blessed to be able to celebrate local holidays, the religious and traditional days that mark our childhoods and our lives, and the festivities of our friends. What do you celebrate? Please share with us!

Diwali — Indian Festival of Lights by Gilu Thomas



Diwali, (pronounced as D-ee-w-ali) is also known as the Indian Festival of Lights. Traditionally, it is a Hindu festival celebrated to honor Rama returning to his people after 14 years of exile. During this period, Rama fought and won a battle against Ravana, the Demon King, and his demons, so it is seen as the triumph of good over bad, light over dark, and a time of great goodwill.

In the days preceding Diwali, every Hindu house would be cleaned or renovated and on the final day, the entire family would wear the clothes bought specially for Diwali, and light up their homes and balconies with lamps and offer prayers. It's also a time when friends and family visit and offer boxes of sweets. In the present day, Diwali is celebrated with great zeal and ardor across India and abroad, irrespective of one's religious orientation. In recent times we have seen Diwali celebrations taking place in the White House in Washington, and have even seen the Burj Al Khalifa in Dubai lit up for Diwali. This year, Diwali will be celebrated from Tuesday, 6th November to Saturday, 10th November.

Growing up as a child in Zambia, Africa, I remember the excitement of the annual Diwali party organized by the Indian community in Hindu Hall, Mufulira. We met our friends, dressed up in shiny, colorful ethnic outfits, and played games. Rows of tables were filled with colourful, mouthwatering Diwali sweets and other homemade food. The entire area was illuminated with fairy lights and traditional lamps, setting the mood for an evening lined up with various dance programs, recitals and plays. The Grand Finale took place when each kid had the chance to light hand held sparklers and then the sky was lit up by a huge Fire Cracker display.

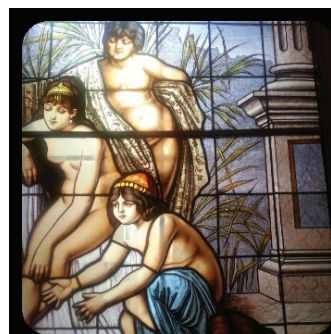
Always a happy time — even as an adult, I always look forward to Diwali and I am happy that the Indian diaspora in Romania is organizing a Diwali night here also in November.



photo by Abhinaba Basu / Flickr commons



Jūrmala, Latvia — photo by Wendy Weston



Berlin (middle), Riga (bottom), art exhibit (right)



The Sisterhood of the Traveling Cream

or

How to Spend a Fabulous Weekend Abroad with Fellow IWA Members

Trip Review — Irina Moreno

One sunny morning in October, we embarked on an art-filled trip to Berlin, Germany and Riga, Latvia. Berlin gave us the chance to visit Boros Collection, a private art collection housed in a former Nazi Bunker. To describe this collection as an amazing gathering of objects would be an understatement; we were blown away by the history of the building, selection of works, display, and viewer engagement. Dinner was fabulous and so was the centrally located hotel (Leonardo Hotel Berlin Mitte). The adventure continued the next day. We woke up really early (6:30am is early when you're having a blast the night before), ate breakfast, jumped on a plane for a well-deserved 2hr nap and, by 1:00pm, we were in Riga, Latvia.

Here is the scoop on Riga: capital of Latvia, a tiny country (under 2 million inhabitants as of 2017) tucked between Lithuania and Estonia; underrated destination boasting seven hundred beautifully restored Art Nouveau buildings and four thousand (yes, four thousand!) wooden houses; the place to drink Black Balsam, a herbal liqueur that has been curing all ailments since 1752 (just to be on the safe side, we drank a lot of it, covering all possible illnesses, past and future...).

We walked the city on foot, then dined at Muusu, an upscale restaurant in the old city. We also had a special guest, the Honorary Consul of Romania in Latvia, who joined us for dinner. By the time we made it to our hotel (Opera Hotel & Spa), it was almost midnight. The next day, we visited RIBOCA (Riga International Biennial of Contemporary Art). We were guided by the biennial founder who graciously carved time out from her busy schedule to show us around. We saw art that was new and amazing and... different, art that you could smell and sense and hear and experience! The four-hour visit was a multi-sensory affair that heightened not only our senses but also our understanding of where we are today as individuals and as a society.

The Honorary Consul couldn't stand being away from us for too long, so she joined our group for the tour of the biennial and, later, for a short visit of Jurmala, a high-end beach resort situated 25 km away from Riga. The day ended – again! – on a high note, with dinner at Melnie Mūki (Black Monks). Despite its name, there was nothing black at the restaurant except Black Balsam which we drank alongside wine and vodka and Baileys Irish Cream.



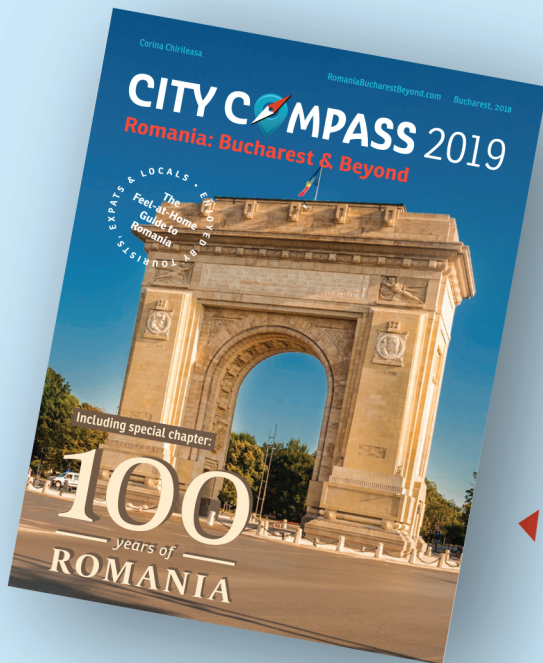
Speaking of cream, one of the members had a hand cream that we all shared: Kamchatka Snowdrop Hand Cream. This is how the Sisterhood of the Traveling Cream was formed. Since the cream is truly heavenly, we decided a trip to Tallinn is mandatory (apparently the closest place to buy the cream from is from a store in Tallinn, Estonia). Meanwhile, the Romanian Ambassador to Estonia brought some of the cream with her when she came to Bucharest and gave it to the Honorary Consul of Latvia, who happened to be in town at the same time. The Honorary Consul, in turn, gave it to one of the members. Lucky us!



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A COURT, A CAPITAL, A CONVENT: all in a day's trip to Targoviste

Trip Review — Gladys Abankwa-Meier-Klodt
Photos — *MOtography by MBN*



A former capital of the Romanian principalities and birthplace of the first printed book on Romanian soil, the many-storied city of Targoviste is an intriguing link between ancient and more recent Romanian history.

As dawn broke on October 3rd, fourteen of us gathered at Bucharest's Gara de Nord in keen anticipation of the day to come. Expertly guided by Targoviste native Prof. Stefan Popescu, on arrival, we proceeded down a chestnut tree-lined avenue leading into town on foot, viewing the military institution where the Ceausescu spent their last days and were executed, then continued past stately mansions into Casa Romantei, a repository of Romanian lyrical song traditions.

We visited two of the town's 33 churches, and made an impromptu stop at Targoviste's magnificent City Hall, where Mayor Daniel-Cristian Stan graciously received us. Reinvigorated by an ample lunch, we then surveyed the ruins of the Princely Court from the high vantage point of its Chindia tower. A short taxi ride then took us to Manastirea Dealu (the Convent on the Hill), where the Mother Superior herself recounted the history of this place where a sacred relic of Mihai Viteazul is interred. The ethnographic museum was our last stop before returning to the train station and Bucharest.



SECURITATE ARCHIVES
 In October, IWA members visited the archives of the communist-era Romanian Secret Police. For more information on the work of the archives, please visit their website: www.cnsas.ro

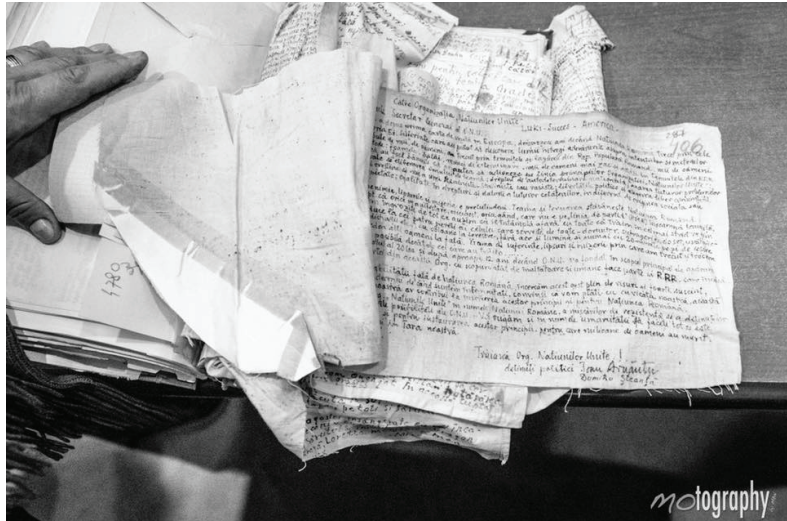
“In the small crowded reading room a man wearing thick glasses mutters curses as he leafs through a mound of files. In a corner, another silently studies a microfilm. I take a seat next to an Orthodox monk with a long beard and black robes and wait in trepidation. Finally, an attendant hands me my files. To my surprise there are two volumes. The spying on me had started earlier than I thought.” — Oana Lungescu

“It’s an evil library” — Germina Nagat
 (head of investigations at the CNSAS 2009)



“Now, it was one thing to experience the Securitate following and threatening us. But it is another thing to read the complete record of our daily lives, including the traps neatly laid out for us, to lure us into committing an offence, which we escaped simply by instinct or luck.” — Oana Lungescu

“There are records of dreams we recounted to each other in the mornings. The transcriber knew us so well, he or she was able to read and duly note our moods.” — Carmen Bugan



photos: MOtography by MBN

“Children, thousands of children, recruited to be informers. Forced to give information about the intentions of their families, about the remarks some teachers made in their lessons. And the youngest I’ve seen was 10 years old.” — Germina Nagat

quote sources:
 ° <https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-26838177>
 ° <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/romania-revolution-the-day-i-read-my-secret-police-file-1838206.html>



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- Full Membership: 350 RON (all memberships renew in September)
- Friends of IWA Membership: for working women and male spouses, with limited activities: 200 RON

Events are listed on our online calendar. Registration for activities is available only to members.

Updates are emailed regularly to members. If you are not receiving them, please check your spam. Email us if you still have problems and include your phone number.

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newsletter.iwabucharest@gmail.com
- *Host at event* of interest to our members (at reduced or no cost to IWA and our members) in coordination with our activities team: events.iwabucharest@gmail.com

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IWA is run by volunteers!

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Secretary: Gillian Adamson (British/Irish)

Charity Chair: Delia Sfetcu (Romanian)
supported by a large team

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Website support: Terry O'Donnell Parsons (American)

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