

## Moldova

### History

The Republic of Moldova is a small country, favorably situated in the Southeast part of Europe, neighboring Romania to the West and Ukraine to the East. This piece of land boasts a rich history, abundant in dramatic and agitated events.

From the XIV century it was a part of the Moldova Principality, situated between Oriental Carpathians and the Nistru River, in the north bounded by Hotin, and in the South – by the Low Danube and the Black Sea.

Following the Peace concluded in Bucharest, in 1812, a part of this territory was assigned to Czarist Russia, which called it Basarabia - an older name, earlier attributed to the southern part. The aim was to identify this territory as a separate geographic entity from the Moldova Principality.

The Independence of the Democratic Republic of Moldova was proclaimed in January 1918. And later, on March 27 1918 it was decided to re-unite it with Romania. The next annexure process took place in 1940, following the Molotov - Ribbentrop summit. According to this, Basarabia became part of the USSR and was proclaimed as the Soviet Socialist Republic of Moldavia. It comprised only nine Basarabian counties and six districts from the left bank of the Nistru River. The present territory of Moldova is smaller compared to the area attributed to Russian authorities in 1812, since the North Hotin, Acherman and the southern Ismail were given up in 1940 by the Soviet authorities to Ukraine.

Due to the restructuring process that started in the Central and Eastern Europe, in June 1990 Moldova proclaimed its sovereignty, and on August 27, 1991 – its State Independence. In March 1992, the Republic of Moldova became a member of the United Nations. Kishinev (better known as Chisinau) is the capital of Moldova.

### Language

According to the constitution of the Republic of Moldova, the state language in Moldova is Moldavian, functioning on the Latin alphabet basis. As a state language, it is used in all political, economic, social and cultural domains, and is the inter-ethnic language of communication in Moldova.

The state language acts as the working language in the activity of all state bodies, state administration and public authorities. The translation into Russian is assured.

Russian along with Moldavian is used as a communication language among different nations.

Due to the multitude of ethnic groups inhabiting Moldova, you will also hear some languages, such as Ukrainian, Russian, Bulgarian, Jewish and Gypsy (Romney) spoken

The most frequent spoken foreign languages are English, French, German and Italian.

### **Population**

The Republic of Moldova has a population of 4.2643 million and is one of the most densely populated European countries. Population density is 126.2 persons per square kilometre.

Moldova is populated by different ethnic groups. A breakdown of major ethnic groups is as follows: Moldovans – 64,5%, Ukrainians - 13,8 %, Russians – 13 %, others (Gagauzians, Bulgarians, Jews, Byelorussians, Germans, etc.).

A high ratio of the population lives in the rural area. The urban population represents 45 %. The major cities of Moldova include the capital city, Chisinau (over 700,000 people); Tiraspol (apr. 200,000); Balti (160,000); Tighina (140,000).

### **Religion**

Christianity and Judaism are the most common religions in Moldova. The first represented by about 1800 communities, the latter by 7 communities. The majority adheres to the Russian Orthodox Church, which incorporates almost 95% of orthodox Christians out of the entire population of the country. There are 1034 churches, 36 monasteries and 7 hermitages with approximately 5000 priests, deacons, curates, etc.

The head of the Orthodox Church of Moldova (Moldova's Metropolitan) is His Grace Vladimir, the Metropolitan of Chisinau and all Moldova. The church is subdivided into 4 dioceses: Chisinau, Edinet and Briceni, Cahul and Lapusna, Dubasari and Tiraspol. An office of locum tenens operates in the city of Balti.

The religious personnel is mainly trained within the Chisinau Theological Academy, Theological Seminary ("Noul Neamt Monastery", in Chitcani), the Spiritual Lyceum for girls (Suruceni Monastery), the Spiritual Lyceum for boys ("Nasterea Domnului" Monastery, in Zabriceni).

The Constitution of the Republic of Moldova guarantees the religious freedom of its citizens (art. 31). Each citizen has the right to share any religion, individually or in group, to spread this faith, to exercise their cult either in a private or public, as long as it does not contradict the Constitution and the law in force.

### **Chisinau**

Chisinau is a significant administrative, political, economic, scientific, cultural and tourism center of the Republic of Moldova. The first historic record of the name Chisinau goes back to July 17 1436. The name derives from a word meaning "spring, pump, pipe".

The Capital of Moldova, Chisinau, called the city “made from white-stone, washed by green seas”, is situated in a beautiful valley of the River Bic. The first record of the settlement dates from 1436, by that time the town extended over the seven surrounding hills. In the beginning a small market town, Chisinau became in the XIX c. the administrative centre of Basarabia. The city quickly evolved. In a short time numerous buildings were constructed in different architectural styles. Roads, new services and agricultural markets appeared. Chisinau became unique through the original creations of well-known architects such as Bernardazzi, Sciusev, etc. n. The city is located on seven hills and stretches over 120 km<sup>2</sup>. The population of Chisinau is over 752 thousand. Chisinau is crossed by two rivers – the Bic and Isnovat. The climate is moderate continental. The City is divided into 5 sectors: Centre, Buiucani, Botanica, Riscani and Ciocana. The Greater Chisinau area comprises 18 territorial administrative areas: 1 municipality, 6 towns, 8 communities and 3 villages. The local administrative state body is the City Hall of Chisinau.

Surrounded by green parks, the centre of the City has preserved its houses from the XIX c., without too many high buildings. The latter are, in particular, the governmental and public establishments featuring modern architecture.

### **Popular Tourist Sites**

**Stefan cel Mare Boulevard** is the city’s principal artery, where the most important national administrative establishments are located (Presidency of RM, the Parliament of RM, the Government of RM, Municipal City Administration, etc.), and cultural centers (National theatre “M. Eminescu”, Organ Hall, Theatre of Opera and Ballet, cinema “Patria”, etc.) On national holidays and on the City’s Day in the biggest square “Piata Marii Adunari Nationale” a series of manifestations and cultural mass manifestations are organized. **The old City** is situated in a historical zone, where more than 700 houses from XIX c. have been preserved, arranged on the principle of closed housing estates, 18 old churches, including the “Cathedral”, modern governmental and public establishments, important theatres, museums with original collections, big parks, and monuments. The museums located here, recall the atmosphere of the past centuries, especially The National Museum of History of Moldova, The Museum of Ethnography, The Museum of Archaeology, etc. The old City is also the location for many embassies and different foreign representative offices in Moldova

### **Traditional Food and Drink**

Moldovan cuisine has had a great influence on the traditional food of the other nationalities that live on this territory. At the same time, some elements have been incorporated from Ukrainian, Bulgarian, Gagauzian and Russian cuisine, as well as elements taken some centuries ago from Greek and Turkish food.

The ingredients used in the traditional meals are: a variety of vegetables like tomatoes,

green peppers, aubergines, white cabbage, beans, onions, garlic, etc. The vegetables are used for salads and sauces; they are baked, pickled, salted, and canned thus becoming a real food art. The maize and maize flour give a specific color to the traditional meals, like soups, biscuits, flakes, alcohol free drinks, etc. The most common is “mamaliga” – a maize porridge or polenta with a fine and delicious taste. "Mamaliga" is served together with diced meat, cheese, fried meat, cream, etc.

Meat cooked for the first and the second course has a special place in the Moldovan food. The most common are chicken soup, goulash, roast meat, grilled minced meat rolls, etc. A lot of meat courses are grilled over charcoal. There is not a holiday without cabbage rolls, meat jelly, noodles, etc. The traditional table is not complete without biscuits, pies, cake dipped in syrup and fruit.

In different parts of Moldova there are local cuisines. In the east, the Ukrainians prefer borsch, in the south the Bulgarians can offer a delicious chicken sauce – mangea, and the Gagauzians may serve you sorpa – a spicy ram soup, and the Russians will offer you their traditional pelmeni – a kind of roll stuffed with meat.

The Moldovan cuisine is served with a variety of traditional drinks: stewed fruits, juices, as well as alcoholic drinks like: wine, brandy, "tuica" – plum brandy, etc.

Wine growing in Moldova is a century-old tradition. The famous Moldovan wines are well known and appreciated at home and far beyond the country borders. The wines can be dry, sweet and strong, they have a varied bouquet of flavours and colours. For wine producing European vines are used such as: Sauvignon, Cabernet, Muscat, etc., as well as Moldovan varieties: Feteasca, Black Rara, Moldova, etc. Strong drinks such as plum brandy, are produced using traditional methods. Wine tastings are offered in most Moldovan cellars.

### **Currency**

The national currency, the Moldovan Leu, was introduced on the 29th of November 1993. The National Bank of Moldova was established in 1991.

The current banknote series was introduced by NBM between 1993 and 1995.

Banknotes: ONE LEU; FIVE LEI; TEN LEI; TWENTY LEI; FIFTY LEI; ONE HUNDRED LEI; TWO HUNDRED LEI, FIVE HUNDRED LEI. Coins: 1 bani; 5 bani; 10 bani; 25 bani; 50 bani. (1 Leu = 100 bani)

## Hotel Accomodations

**While in Chisnau, we will be staying at a 4 star hotel, Hotel Cordu, See information below. The Codru was recommended to us by Keystone, the US sponsoring agency for this portion of the tour.**

Codru	
Category	★★★★
City	Chisinau
Address	127, 31 August 1989 str., Chisinau, Republic of Moldova, MD-2012
Phone	(373-22) 20 81 04, 20 81 16
Fax	(373-22) 23 79 48
E-mail	<a href="mailto:reception@codru.md">reception@codru.md</a>
WWW	<a href="http://www.codru.md">www.codru.md</a>
Conference halls	5
Hall total capacity	284

"CODRU" is a Hotel Complex with 3 modern buildings and it functions successfully from the 1974 year. Being situated right in the center of the capital, 20 minutes from the International Airport of Chisinau, "CODRU" Hotel Complex is a luxury hotel and it is considered to be the most important reference point for all the official republican and international



delegations, and also for businessmen who come to the Republic of Moldova.



The Parliament of the Republic, The Presidency, The Government, the Ministries, the Embassies, and the international representations, accredited in the Republic of Moldova are the main attractions points of the capital located at only a few minutes from the Hotel.

"CODRU" is located in a residential district, without the usual city noise and has the comfort and the equipment of a high class hotel, offers not only ideal conditions for the organization of the official and business meetings, but also an unforgettable stay.

Every room is equipped with air-conditioner, colour TV by cable, direct and international phone, mini-bar, refrigerator, hair-drier, shower or bath tub, radio and other necessary things for a distinguished stay.

The comfortable rooms are decorated delicately in pastel colours, in a quiet and harmonious atmosphere.

### **Transportation in Moldova**

We will transfer over to a van at the Romanian border courtesy of Keystone Human Services (the U. S. agency involved in programs in Moldova). Igor will be our driver and guide throughout our stay in Moldova.

### **Our Hosts in Moldova**

Keystone human Services International is the US sponsor. Lucia Gavrilita, Executive Director of Speranta Day Care Center in Chisnau, will be our local host. Lucia was recently at the ANCOR Conference in San Diego and met a few of the tour members there.