



MOLDOVA —

A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

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Moldova you will discover in these pages is an imperfect, tactile and sensory interpretation, but these qualities best reflect the reality here.

It is curious how one can feel the essence of a country in any fruit or a gust of wind, but which fades away as soon as you try to view it as a whole. So, let's keep our senses sharp and pay attention to details.

Foremost, you have to understand that Moldova is very diverse, depending on the different times of the year, when visiting it.



## SPRING

We recommend coming to Moldova during the Spring. In March, you see how proudly people here wear martisoare (a spring talisman) on their chests and give each other the first flowers to bloom after the winter. April and May are enthralling thanks to flowering trees that adorn rural households' courtyards and urban apartment buildings. The Easter holidays are also unique, with whitewashed trees and the hustle and bustle of the night of the Resurrection. The first festivals start, terraces open, cherry flowers are in full bloom, and the parks' vegetation is tender and abundant.

## SUMMER

If you visit Moldova during the Summer, you can't go wrong. This season is the time of fruit, outdoor festivals, hiking, warm nights, and clear days, when you can fully enjoy nature, the charm of country life, and the smiles of villagers.



photo: Maxim Chumash

## AUTUMN

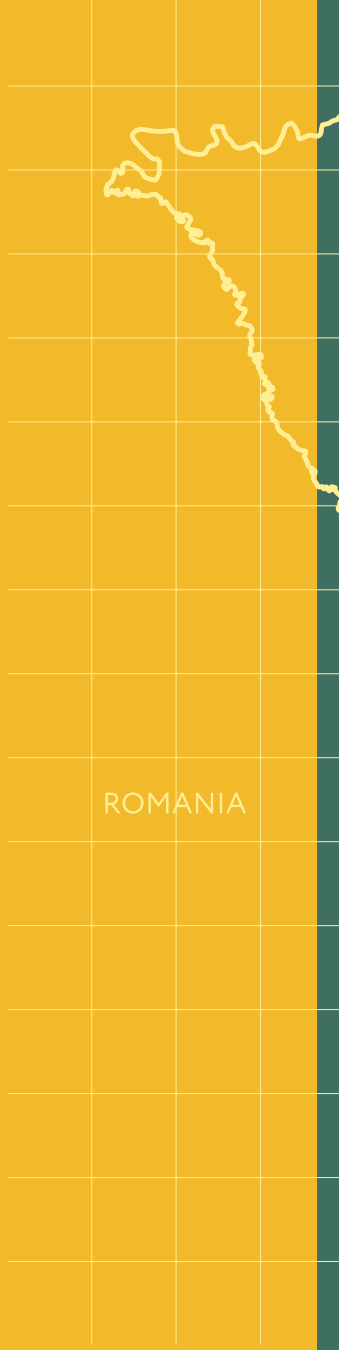
Autumn is the best time to get a taste of the Moldovan wine culture. The National Wine Day, the crops, and the fall colors add charm to this particular season. Autumn is the time to go harvesting grapes at one of many local wineries. And, if you find yourself in a rainier, grayer period, with fewer walks, make sure you have people who can advise you by your side, with whom you can find refuge in chit-chatting or story-telling and share a placinta (pie).

## WINTER

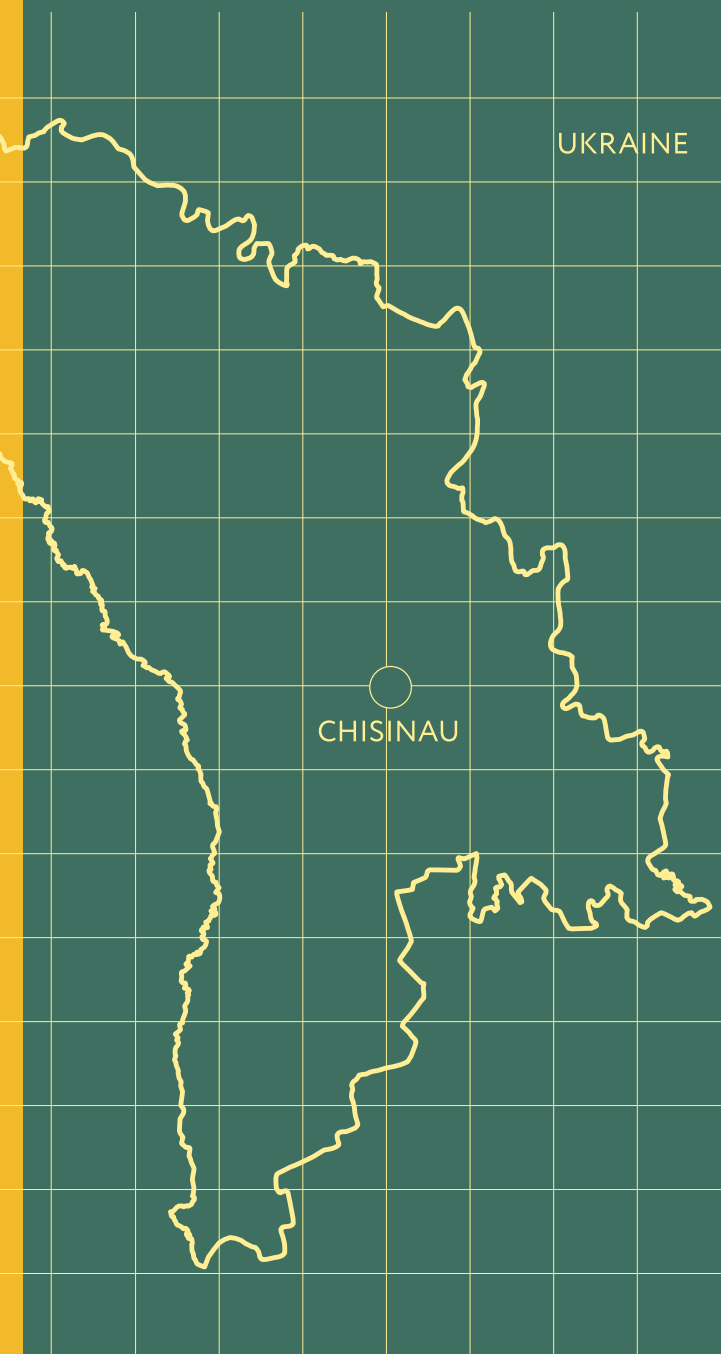
Although Moldovan winters can be a challenge, the beauty of the holidays, Christmas carols, New Year sewing & carols, winter traditions, and games add charm to even the harshest and coldest evenings.

# MOLDOVA IN FIGURES

## 2







Even though the Republic of Moldova is a small, new state on the political map, it has a rich history and a colorful culture thanks to its diversity. Moreover, Moldova is the country where fruits have flavor, and its wines are highly valued at international competitions, and the Internet speeds are among the fastest in the world.

Especially for people who prefer figures who do not know much about Moldova, we will define our discussion subject from the very beginning, as clearly and objectively as possible.

LOCATION Southeast Europe,  
between Romania and Ukraine

AREA 33 846 km<sup>2</sup>

CLIMATE Four distinct seasons:  
fragrant summers,  
golden autumns, mild winters,  
flourishing springs

FORM OF GOVERNMENT Parliamentary  
Republic

CAPITAL Chisinau

STATE FLAG



DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE The 27th of August 1991

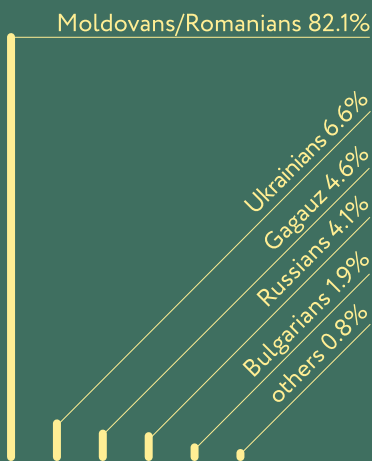
NATIONAL CURRENCY



Moldovan leu  
(± 0.05 EUR, at the exchange rate of November 2020,  
to find out the exchange rate of the day,  
visit the website [www.curs.md](http://www.curs.md))

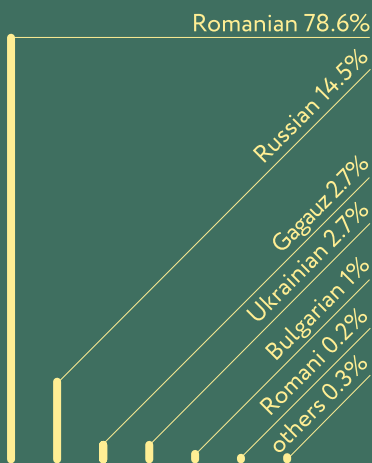
POPULATION 2.64 million inhabitants

## ETHNIC GROUPS



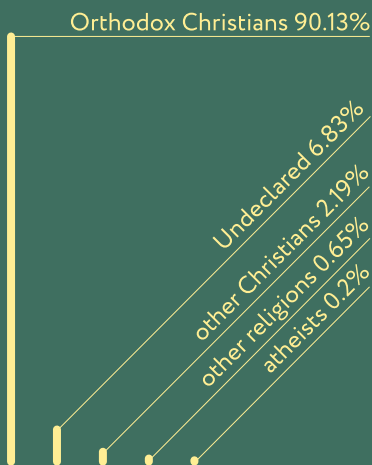
° according to the 2014 census

## SPOKEN LANGUAGES



° according to the 2014 census

## RELIGION

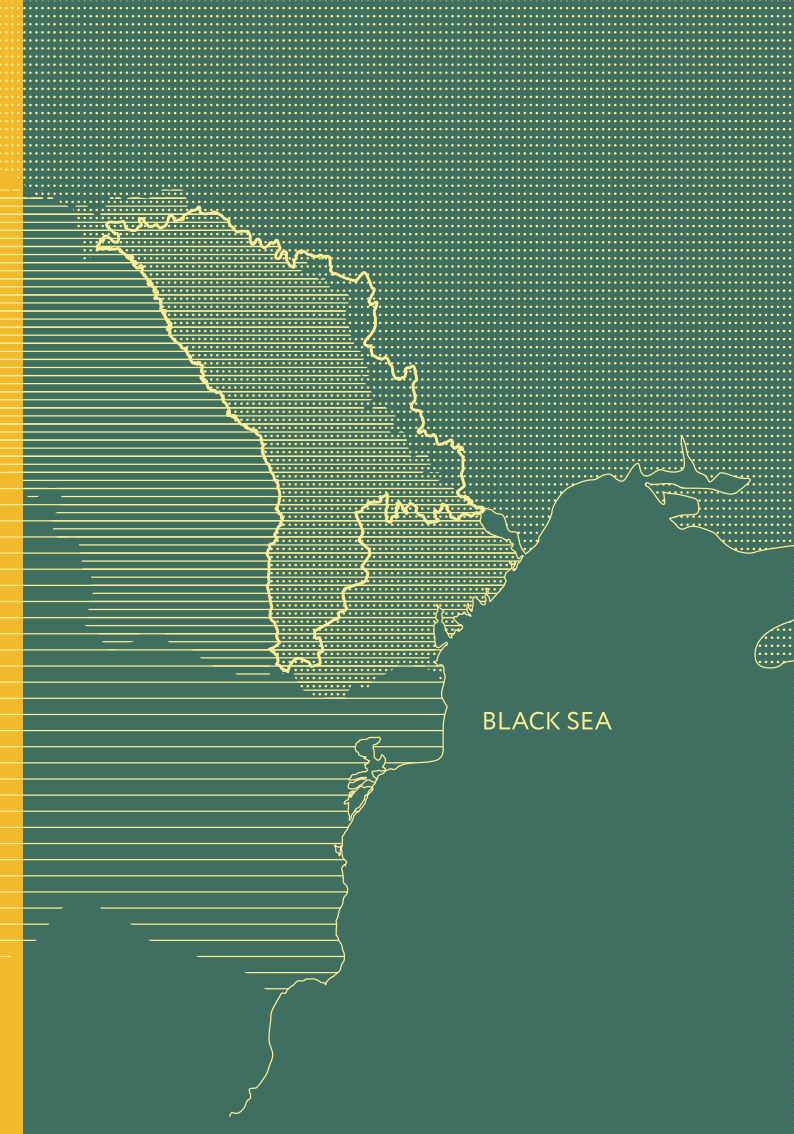


° according to the 2014 census

# HISTORY OF MOLDOVA

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==== The Country  
of Moldova  
1359-1812

..... The territory  
of Russian Empire  
and USSR

==== Bessarabia  
as part  
of the Kingdom  
1918-1940

 Republic of Moldova  
in USSR 1945-1991  
and as an independent  
state 1991-present

Located in the contact area of different cultural and historical currents – namely the Carpathian-Balkan, Central European, and Eurasian – over several millennia, it has combined various cultural traditions of the Proto-Indo-European populations (Cucuteni-Tripoli culture), as well as of the most archaic branches of the Indo-Europeans, including the Thracians, Celts, Romans, Slavs, Goths, Huns.

# WHEN MOLDOVA DID NOT EVEN EXIST

In antiquity, the territory of the Republic of Moldova was inhabited by Dacians. After two wars, a part of the territory of Dacia (nowadays Transylvania, Oltenia, Dobrogea, and Bugeac) was made into a Roman province. Although the Republic of Moldova's territory has never been occupied by the Romans, except for the southern regions, it is supposed that the Romanization process took place due to the economic ties between the Romanized Dacians and the free Dacians.

# MOLDOVA OF STEPHEN THE GREAT AND SAINT



photo: Mihaela Alaiiba

The Country of Moldavia was founded in 1359. Due to its geographical location, it fell under the influence of the Great Powers of that era: the Kingdom of Hungary, Poland, and the Ottoman Empire.



In the Middle Ages, Moldova was ruled by a monarch called “Domn” (from the Latin ‘dominus’) or “Voevod” (Voivode). The Domn wore a crown, minted coins, issued laws, and was the army’s Commander-In-Chief. Moldova had many rulers but reached its maximum extent and power during Stephen’s time, nicknamed “the Great”. He was the most famous Moldavian ruler, who fought in 36 major battles and won 34 of them. During his reign, a political and social balance was established in the country. In 1992 he was canonized and received the full name “Stephen the Great and Saint” (“Ștefan cel Mare și Sfânt”).



photo: @vershinin89

## MOLDOVA UNDER THE OTTOMAN PORTE

At the beginning of the 16th century, Bogdan, Stephen’s son, had to acknowledge the Ottoman Porte’s suzerainty. Since then, the Principality of Moldova became the vassal of the Ottoman Empire and paid tribute to the Porte. The Porte appointed the rulers, and their reign depended heavily on the nobility’s relationship (local aristocracy). At that time, anyone who could afford it could buy the throne. At the beginning of the 18th century, the Phanariot Regime was established in Moldova, and it lasted more than a century. It was a form of vassalage managed by the Greeks of the Fener neighborhood in Istanbul.

In 1792, the Treaty of Iasi forced the Ottoman Empire to cede the territories it controlled in Transnistria to the Russian Empire. This way, the Russian Empire came to have a common border with Moldova.

# TSARIST BESSARABIA

In 1812, following the Russo-Turkish War (1806-1812) and the Bucharest Peace Treaty, the eastern part of the Danube Principalities of Moldova, located between the Prut and Dniester rivers, later renamed "Bessarabia", was annexed to the Russian Empire, as a Russian governorate (or guberniya) until 1918.



photo: National Archives Agency, photo library

# BESSARABIA AS PART OF THE KINGDOM

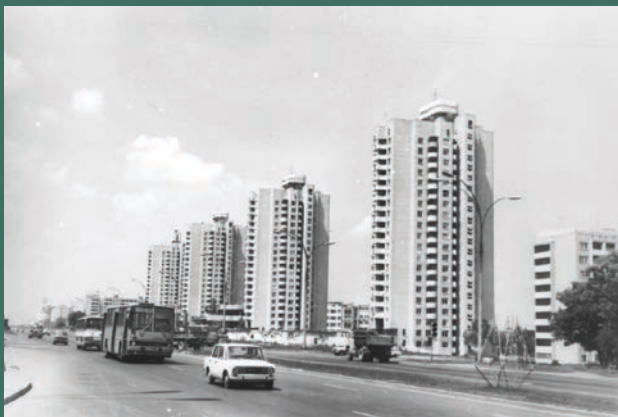
In 1918, the supreme body of state power in Bessarabia, the Council of Country, decided to unite the county with the Kingdom of Romania. This union lasted until 1940, when, as a result of the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact of 1939, was annexed to the Soviet Union. Bessarabia entered World War II as part of Romania and returned under the USSR ruling at the end of it.



photo: National Archives Agency, photo library

# SUNNY MOLDOVA

photo: National Archives Agency, photo library



During the Soviet period, the Moldovan Soviet Socialist Republic was created and subordinated to the Moscow authorities. Thanks to the fertile soil and intense focus on the region's agriculture sector, the rich fruit and vegetable crops, and especially the production of quality wine, the Republic was called "solnechnaya", Russian for – "sunny."

## REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA – INDEPENDENT STATE

On the 27th of August 1991, Moldova declared its independence and sovereignty. Among the key events that followed the proclamation of independence was the adhering of the Republic of Moldova to the UN on the 2nd of March 1992, the approval of the Constitution on the 29th of July 1994; the modern history of the Republic of Moldova also includes the liberalization of visa regime with the EU Member States on the 28th of April 2014 and signing of the Association Agreement with the European Union on the 27th of June 2014.

# MOLDOVA FROM HEARSAY

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photo: National Archives Agency, photo library



Lonely Planet

The least explored destination in Europe, according to “Lonely Planet”, 2013.



National Geographic

Top 10 places that worth more travelers, according to “National Geographic”, 2017.



Bloomberg

Bloomberg: TOP 10 most demanded destinations, Moldova – + 19.6%, 2018.

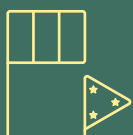


Winerist

Top 10 destinations for wine and gastronomic tourism, according to “Winerist”, 2020.



Most Moldovans are bilingual and fluent in at least one foreign language.



Although it is one of the smallest countries in Eastern Europe, the Republic of Moldova has an autonomous region: Gagauzia.



The second official language of Gagauzia, located in the southern part of Moldova, is a Turkish language, carefully preserved by the 200,000 speakers.



Here you will find the largest village in Europe – Congaz.



Transnistria — a region that includes the settlements located on the Dniester river's left bank, is under the Republic of Moldova's jurisdiction.



The northern city, Soroca, is considered the "capital of the Roma people". Here the "King of the Roma" lives, who is the baron of the Roma people in Moldova.



photo: Mihai Stamati



During the times of the Soviet Union, Moldova produced food for astronauts. Here, unique technologies and methods of production and storage of fruit and berry products were developed.



The first cosmonaut in the world, Yuri Gagarin, spent 2 days in Cricova underground cellars.



photo: National Archives Agency, photo library





Moldovans love the New Year so much that they celebrate it twice: the new and old styles, i.e., on the 31st of December and the 13th of January.



The largest animal that has ever lived in this territory was the “Deinotherium”, an elephant-like breed. This animal’s skeleton is now displayed at the Ethnographic Museum and is considered the second largest in Europe.



Black soils (chernozem) in Moldova are the most fertile soils in the world.



The Struve geodetic arch, located in Rudi village in northern Moldova, is included in the UNESCO World Heritage List.



In 2017, Moldova ranked 7th among world walnut producers.



Here you will find the Eiffel Bridge – the bridge crosses the Prut river and connects Ungheni town in the Republic of Moldova with the Ungheni commune, Romania. The bridge was designed and built by Gustave Eiffel’s company, the Eiffel Tower creator in Paris.

# NAMES COMING FROM MOLDOVA

## JOC

The National Ballet of Moldova is named after the Romanian folk dance – “joc”. From 1957 to 2017, “JOC” was led by the first ballet master and artistic director Vladimir Curbet (“People’s Artist of the USSR”), who created and developed the ensemble’s repertoire. Over the years “JOC” participated in almost 8,000 concerts in about 70 countries around the world.



## NOROC – BEATLES OF THE SOVIET UNION

In the mid-1960s, a pop-rock and folk band was established in Chisinau that made history – “Noroc”. The band was created in 1967 in Chisinau by the composer Mihai Dolgan. The band was top-rated throughout the Communist Bloc, and some songs by Moldovan artists reached the European music charts.

## CLEOPATRA STRATAN

Cleopatra Stratan is a singer from the Republic of Moldova who debuted at only 3 years old with the album “La vârsta de trei ani” (‘At the age of three years’) released in 2006. She holds six world records: The youngest singer who recorded an album; The youngest performer in a live concert; The best paid young artist (10,000 EUR for a single song – money donated publicly for charitable purposes); The youngest performer to receive three MTV awards; The youngest singer to record a national hit (a song ranked No. 1 in national charts).



photo: JOC

## ANDREW RAYEL

A producer of trance music and DJ from the Republic of Moldova. In 2012, Rayel was ranked 77th in the top 100 best DJs in the world, according to DJ Magazine, and in 2013 he climbed to 28th place, winning the title of 'the best climber' in the ranking. His rise to the top continued in 2014 when he ranked 24th. Andrew's tracks are frequently mixed by DJs and producers worldwide, including by Armin van Buuren, Tiesto, W&W, Dash Berlin, Hardwell, and others.

## O-ZONE

The famous "Numa song" that conquered the whole world is the hit called "Dragostea din tei", produced in 2003 by the band "O-zone" from the Republic of Moldova. In February 2009, Dan Balan became the first Moldovan composer to ever be nominated for Grammy Awards as co-author of the super hit "Live Your Life" performed by the singer Rihanna and the rapper T.I., which begins with the motive "Miya hee, miya ho, miya hu, miya ha-ha".

WINE OF MOLDOVA —  
A LEGEND  
ALIVE

photo: @frimufilms



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**3000** The history of Moldovan wine begins 3,000 years B.C., the vine being grown here as far back as 7000 years B.C. Over time, wine has been a currency of exchange, and a trophy of fights won. In the end, it has become the national product of Moldova.

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**20** Today, the Republic of Moldova is the 20th largest wine producer in the world.

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**19** Moldova ranks 19th among wine exporters in the world.

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**1** 1st in the world in terms of density of vineyards.

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**6** Moldova is the 6th in Europe in terms of vine area.

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**199** Wineries.

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**7%** Wineries account for 7% of the country's total exports, wine ranking first in the export of the agri-food sector.

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**112 mi ha** The area of planted vines.

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**50** Varieties of vines.

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The shape of the grape on the map turned out to be symbolic, as the Republic of Moldova is located in the Black Sea basin, the vine's origin. Our vineyards are located at latitude 46-47° like other wine regions that are famous in Europe. The vineyards have a favorable terroir for the production of quality wine, red in the southern areas and white mainly in the country's center.

The viticultural area is divided into three historical wine regions: "Valul lui Traian" (southwest), Stefan Voda (southeast) and Codru (center), and Divin for divines (the entire territory of the Republic of Moldova). The wines produced here are marked with a protected geographical indication. Local varieties: Feteasca Alba, Regala, Neagra; Rara Neagra, Plavai, Viorica, and others provide Moldovan wine with particular aromas and depths that are interesting to the international market.

## THE LARGEST FUNCTIONAL CELLARS IN THE WORLD

There are 2 of the largest functional cellars in the world on the Republic's territory: Milestii Mici with 200 km of underground labyrinths and Cricova with 120 km.

The underground wine town of Cricova covers an area of 53 ha. Like in a real city, where there are traffic lights and road signs, all located at a depth of 35-80 m.



## THE MOST EXTENSIVE COLLECTION OF WINES GLOBALLY

In 2005, the Guinness Book of Records included the Republic of Moldova with the most extensive collection of wines globally – 1.5 million bottles, known as the “Golden Collection”. It is stored at a depth of over 80 meters in the underground galleries of Milestii Mici. The oldest wine in the collection dates from 1969.

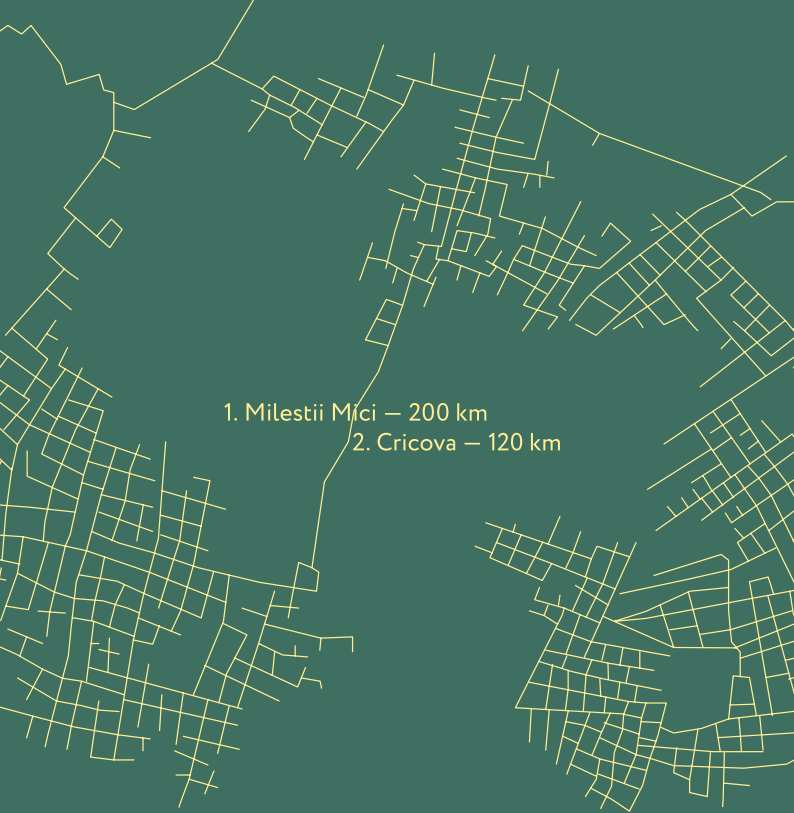


## TAKE HOME

COLLECTION WINE





- 
1. Milestii Mici – 200 km
  2. Cricova – 120 km

● In 2016, the wine was included in the list of food products in the Republic of Moldova.

● In 2018, the Republic of Moldova hosted the 3rd UNWTO Global Conference on Wine Tourism for the first time – the most important international event in the field.

● In 2019, Moldovan wines participated in 43 international competitions, from which they brought home 842 medals, of which – 345 golden, 263 silver, and 132 bronze medals.

GOLD  
345

SILVER  
263

BRONZE  
132

# INTERNET AND

# TELECOMMUNICATIONS

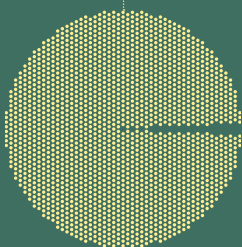
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photo: [www.bessarabia.info](http://www.bessarabia.info)



You will be surprised to find out how friendly the Republic of Moldova is for Internet users. Our country ranks 5th in the world after Singapore, South Korea, Malta, and Monaco according to the percentage of coverage of the population with Internet gigabit and 6th in global accessibility, according to the average cost of broadband connection.



4G and fiber optic coverage is about 98%!

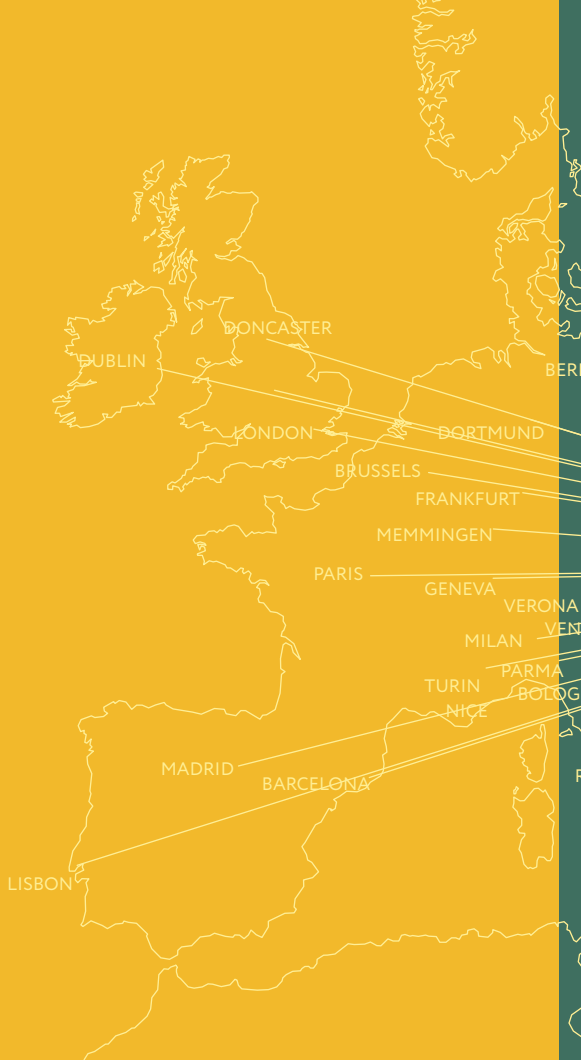
You can access high-speed Internet, 4G, and fiber optics in the Republic of Moldova at a subscription price starting from 9 EUR per month.



Getting a SIM or modem card to connect to the Internet and setting up a convenient package does not take more than a few minutes and is possible right before leaving the Airport. Moreover, you can opt for an e-sim card, which can be set anywhere and anytime.

# TRANSPORT

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## TO THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

Chisinau Airport (IATA: KIV; ICAO: LUKK), located 13 km from the center of the capital, has a capacity of over 5 million passengers and operates charter and scheduled flights, connecting 40 destinations around the world.

Recently, a series of modernization and improvement works have been carried out, which have brought Chisinau International Airport awards and mentions in international competitions and the reputation of a comfortable and green airport.

# TO THE CAPITAL

Right in front of the arrival door, the trolleybus no. 30 stops, which is the most accessible shuttle transport in the world, the fare is only 2 MDL (10-euro cents). It arrives every 20 minutes and, after some 30-40 minutes or so, you will get to downtown Chisinau.



# THROUGH THE CAPITAL

## TROLLEYBUS

The trolleybus network covers almost all city sectors and some municipality localities; you have to check the schedule because each route has its program and runs until different times.

## MINIBUS

The alternative to trolleybuses are minibuses, the so-called “rutiere” (share taxis). They work according to a systematized hitchhiking system: although they have predefined stations, they can often be stopped at any street corner. The fare is 3 MDL (15 euro cents). The state does not manage these vehicles.

## RENT-A-CAR

If you have a driver’s license and the desire to drive through the urban traffic, you can choose to rent a car. You can also rent a car with a driver, who, if you are lucky, can be a good guide.





photo: Maxim Chumash



€0,1



iTaxi



€0,15



€1,25 + €0,2/KM

YandexGo

## TAXI

Taxi is an affordable alternative in Chisinau; the price per km is about 0.20 EUR, and the starting fee is 1.25 EUR. There are two mobile taxi applications in the country – iTaxi and YandexGo – they are easy to contact, and payment can also be made by bank card. Some tourists also use taxis to travel around the country because the fare is reasonable and allows much more freedom of movement than public transport (which in some regions may no longer run after certain hours).

# THE CAPITAL

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photo: Anastasia & Alex Curly



# A WALK THROUGH THE STREETS OF THE CAPITAL

## TSARIST CHISINAU (1812-1918)

This period is distinguished by Italian architecture elements of eclectic style from the Renaissance period. Alexander Bernardazzi was between 1850-1878 the town's chief architect, and many of the state buildings were built eclectic style according to his designs, with influences of the Florentine Gothic style.

### Chisinau City Hall



### National Museum of Art



photo: [www.bessarabica.info](http://www.bessarabica.info)

photo: [www.bessarabica.info](http://www.bessarabica.info)

Metropolitan  
Cathedral of Chisinau



photo: [www.bessarabica.info](http://www.bessarabica.info)

Urban villa  
of Vladimir Herta



photo: [www.bessarabica.info](http://www.bessarabica.info)

## INTERWAR CHISINAU (1918-1940, 1941-1944)

In the interwar period, Chisinau became one of the great urban centers of the Kingdom of Romania, with an active cultural and economic life and a cohesive academic community.

Many detached houses, urban villas, apartment buildings in a specific style, close to the Art of 1900 and commonly called Neo-Romanian style or Modern Romanian style were built in Chisinau.

Club of Officers  
(future Moldova hotel,  
today Mobiasbanca headquarters)



photo: Archive, photo library

Palace of Culture  
(future "M. Eminescu"  
National Theater)



photo: [www.bessarabica.info](http://www.bessarabica.info)

### Private house

(68, Alexei Mateevici St)



### Private house

(72, București St)



## SOCIALIST MODERNISM (1955-1991)

Socialist modernism is an approach of architecture that is specific to the countries of the former socialist bloc, which is characterized by the use of new materials and technologies, geometric shapes, and repetitive structures. In 1955-1970, the MSSR passed through a significant necessary urban development process thanks to industrialization. During this period, many buildings were built for academic, cultural, and medical institutions.

### “Romanita” collective housing tower-building





Chisinau Circus



photo: [www.bessarabica.info](http://www.bessarabica.info)

Cosmos Hotel

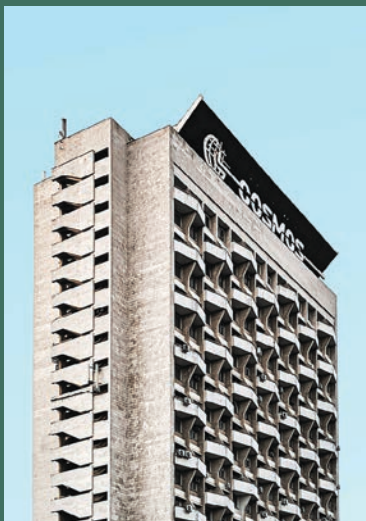


photo: Sasha Pleshko

## NEW CHISINAU (1991-PRESENT)

Although the post-Soviet period led to architectural and urban pollution of the city, today, new urban oases designed and built for the benefit of society arise in the capital after a period of improvisations.

It is a stage of maturity for the city and society, a period in which we are increasingly aware of architectural monuments' importance and value. In this context, maintenance and renovation works of the damaged buildings have started.

Artcor



photo: Volker Kreidler / Artcor

## Oliva



## Organ Hall



# MAKE YOURSELF AT HOME



Whether you are here on a business trip or come to visit the capital, be at peace, you have several accommodation options in the city. You can opt for a hotel room, especially since there are two international luxury residential hotel chains present in the city and a wide range of small boutique hotels. In addition to accommodation, they also offer other essential business facilities, such as conference and meeting spaces.

Since the 2000s, several hostels have appeared in Chisinau, the price of which starts from 5 EUR per night. Moreover, on the Airbnb and Booking platforms, you can find a wide range of apartments that can be rented even for a short term.



Radisson Blu  
Leograd Hotel



Courtyard  
by Marriott



Several hubs in the city offer both coworking space and private offices that can become a comfortable place to work for your stay. The little joys of Chisinau are, like other European cities, cafes and restaurants. In recent years, this field makes up happy with delicious news. In Chisinau and other cities and towns in the country, you will find cafes and pastries offering the classic croissant and pain au chocolat comparable to those in Parisian pastries. If you prefer, you will also find raw-vegan cakes, matcha tea, or cappuccino with vegetable milk. You can find places like this, especially in the city's central part, on the busier streets of Chisinau and even in parks.



photo: Anastasia & Alex Curly

The number and specifics of restaurants are also growing; it is unnecessary to be an amateur of Moldovan cuisine to eat tasty dishes in the capital. Restaurants here offer a wide variety of options, with local, Mediterranean, or Asian specifics and, more recently, fusion cuisine that combines a little of everything – they will not fail to amaze you with their hospitality and the skill of the chefs.





photo: Mihaela Alaiba

# WANDER LONG AND WIDE

# THE FORESTS OF MOLDOVA

Moldova's lands are home to forests with well-preserved biodiversity. Some of them are protected by the state, forming 69 nature reservations covering a total area of 326.6 thousand ha.



## CODRU

Codru is the oldest and richest local reservation, with an area of 5,177 ha, founded in 1971. Here about 1000 species of plants and over 10,000 species of insects are protected.

The reservation has prepared rest areas at the lakeside, gazebos, and accommodation for those who want to linger in this forest massif.

## PLAIUL FAGULUI

Plaiul Fagului (County of Beech) is home to more than 142 species of birds and 49 species of mammals. The Ecological Information and Education Centre, established in 2018, will provide you with interesting information on the reservation ecosystems, flora, and fauna.

There are several lakes here, with gazebos located near them, where visitors can rest. Fishing is allowed on the lake shores. There is also a small hotel with 12 places of accommodation.



photo: Mihaela Alaița

## PADUREA DOMNEASCĂ

Padurea Domneasca (The Royal Forest) is the oldest forest massif in the country and one of the oldest meadow forests in Europe. The reservation was established in 1993, and 86% of the territory is covered with meadow forests.

It is the home of 159 species of birds, of which 107 are sedentary. “Tara Batlanilor” (The Country of Herons) – the Kingdom of birds hosts a distinct colony of wading birds that nest in oaks. Five bison live on the reservation territory, for which 32 ha of forest have been allocated.



photo: Maxim Chumash

# MEADOWS AND WATER BASINS

## NISTRU DE JOS RESERVATION

Nistru de Jos (Lower Nistru) can be visited throughout the year and is the richest protected area in the country with 83 species of fish, 288 species of birds, 54 species of mammals, and 950 species of plants. Ash meadow forests and tall grass meadows are an ecosystem of pan-European importance.

The reservation lies on a total area of 60 thousand ha. It includes 18 natural complexes, archeological and historical sites, wineries, and tourist stops that will be interesting to each reservation visitor.



photo: Victor Garstea





photo: Victor Garstea

## PRUTUL DE JOS

In the southern part of the Republic of Moldova, where the Prut river flows into the Danube, you can find the Lower Prut Biosphere Reservation. Since 2018 it has been part of the UNESCO World Network.

Beleu Lake hosts flocks of pelicans every year, and during May-July, white and yellow water lilies bloom here, which you can see opening up at sunrise. To fully enjoy the beauty of this water basin, go on a trip on the lake and enjoy the incomparable views opening from the water.

# CLIFFS

## ORHEIUL VECHI

The cultural and natural reservation “Orheiul Vechi” is the most important cultural site in the Republic of Moldova and includes five promontories: Cave, Butuceni, Potarca, Selitra and Scoc. Their territory keeps the ruins of certain fortifications, houses, baths, places of worship, cave monasteries dating from the Tatar-Mongol (XIII–XIV centuries) and the Moldovan (XV–XVI centuries) periods.

**PROMONTORY**, promontories, s. n. A high, rocky strip of land that advances into the sea or ocean. – From Latin promontorium, Fr. promontoire.



photo: Andrei Paul

Orheiul Vechi is one of the most developed tourist areas in the Republic of Moldova, being attractive for tourists due to both the impressive natural landscape and the area’s infrastructure, the network of guesthouses, and tourist routes.





photo: Mihaela Alaiba

## DURUITOAREA VECHE GROTTO

Duruitoarea Veche Grotto (Old Duruitoarea Grotto) housed the prehistoric man 250-300 thousand years ago and kept in reasonable condition to the present day. From the bottom of this gorge, you can hear the roar of a stream, which gave this place its name.



photo: Victor Gars tea

## VARATIC GORGE

In the distant past, the current territory of Moldova was the bottom of the Sarmatian Sea. Experts say that Varatic Gorge lies on a massive reef formed of coral skeletons. The area can be explored on a river trip, by bike, or during adventurous hikes.



photo: Roman Friptuleac



## EMIL RACOVITA CAVE

Thanks to its length, Emil Racovita Cave ranks the third gypsum cave in the world. It is located at the intersection of three states: the Republic of Moldova, Romania, and Ukraine. The Cave's only entrance is on the Republic of Moldova's territory, near Criva village, Briceni district.



The Cave is mapped over about 91 km and includes galleries and labyrinths with 3-4 levels. The Cave impresses its large halls of 60-100 meters long and 30-40 meters wide. The Cave's karst gaps have over 90 lakes and natural 'wells' with a depth of 16-20 meters. There are times when access to the Cave is restricted, so we recommend checking before you visit.

photo: speleo.md



Ukraine

Moldova

topography of Cernauti speleological club

FEEL

MOLDOVA



photo: Diana Selagor

# VISIT THE WINERIES OF THE COUNTRY

There are 199 wineries in the Republic of Moldova, 32 of which are open to tourists. In addition to the classic tastings, many of them offer accommodation, guided tours with stories of winemakers, gastronomic workshops, and many other experiences that will make you understand our culture and passion for the wine we make.

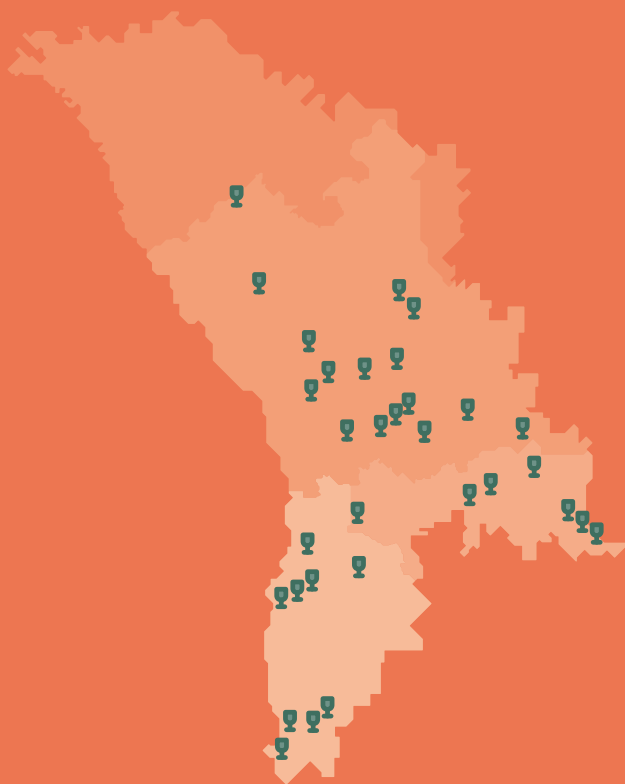


photo: Maxim Chumash

## PGI REGION "CODRU":

1. Asconi Winery
2. Atu Winery
3. Barza Alba
4. Branesti Cellars
5. Castel Mimi
6. Chateau Vartely
7. Chateau Cojusna
8. Crama Mircesti
9. Crama Tudor
10. "Cricova" Associated Wine Factory
11. Kvint
12. Hincesti Winery
13. Mihai Sava
14. Quality Wines Industrial Complex "Milestii Mici"
15. Poiana Winery
16. Tronciu Winery

## PGI REGION "STEFAN VODA":

17. Chateau Purcari
18. Et Cetera
19. Gogu Winery
20. Leuntea-Vin
21. Salcuta Winery
22. Pripa Vineyards
23. Javgur Winery

## PGI REGION "VALUL LUI TRAIAN":

24. Corbu Winery
25. Kara Gani
26. Gitana Winery
27. Vinaria din Vale
28. Vinia Traian
29. Wines of Comrat
30. Fautor Winery
31. Novak
32. Podgoria Vin

## TAKE HOME

A WINE  
DIRECTLY FROM  
THE WINEMAKER

## SPEND A NIGHT IN A LUXURY BARREL

To truly understand the passion of the people here for wine and the entire philosophy around it, we have to tell you about it as well. One of the wineries in the country offers the possibility of accommodation inside a wine barrel. We assure those who are afraid of narrow spaces that there is no need to worry, as the barrel has an area of 24 square meters and has a panoramic window, an air conditioner, a bathroom, and a balcony.



photo: Purcari

## ENJOY SPA PROCEDURES WITH GRAPES AND WINE

We continue to evoke Moldovans' love for the vine and urge you to enjoy SPA procedures with care products made from wine and grapes. Jacuzzi, sauna, therapeutic wine tastings, massage with oil extracted from grape seeds, and even wine baths all provide maximum relaxation and invigoration.



# TRAVEL IN TIME

People passionate about the Soviet period can visit the Transnistrian region, where things have changed very little in the last 30 years. The monuments of Vladimir Lenin, the sickle and the hammer – the symbols of the communist party, as well as the wide and orderly boulevards of the city of Tiraspol, bring you into the atmosphere of the Soviet regime.

If you have come to visit these places, it is worth buying a bottle of “divin” produced in the region, a box of red or black caviar, to share the taste of travel with those at home.

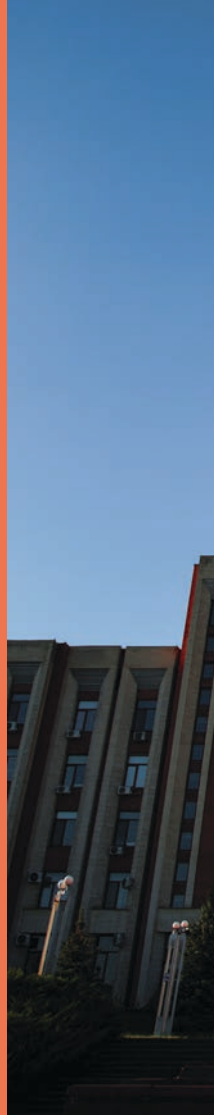




photo: Victor Garștea

## TAKE HOME

DIVINE  
IN KINKY BOTTLES



# GUEST IN THE “CASA MARE”

National guesthouses offer experiences worth living. In Moldova, we highly appreciate handi-crafts created with skill and grace. In the past, every girl “ready to get married” had dowries which she prepared, together with her parents, with great care for her marriage, and until then, she kept it holy in the “Casa Mare”.



**DOWRY 1** Totality of material goods given to a girl (or a boy) when she (he) marries and is considered, during the marriage, the property of the person who brought it.



**CASA MARE 1** A house or the largest room for guests. Here the most precious things are kept, and family holidays and sittings are held.



photo: Michele Grima

The objects that were once found in the “Casa Mare” today have become museum exhibits but are also found in national guesthouses. If you choose to stay in such a place, you will find out what is the result of long winter sittings, how the endless patience resulting in woven rugs, crocheted tablecloths, embroidered towels, encrusted windows, and whitewashed walls of houses looks like.





## WALKTHROUGH LAVENDER FIELDS

Lavender fields can be found in all regions of Moldova. Essential oil appreciated in many countries of the world is extracted from lavender.

During the plants' blooming period, the fields' landscapes gather curious tourists, fashion bloggers, photographers, and sometimes even all together, at recreation and self-care festivals.

◦ Lavender blooms 2-3 times a year, between May and September.



# VISIT A MONASTERY

As we are a country with over 90% Orthodox Christians, we have many holy places maintained in excellent condition. Regardless of faith, a visit to a monastery can be interesting thanks to both the quietness and beauty of the area and the architecture and atmosphere in which they are built.



## CURCHI MONASTERY



photo: Adrian Gojan / frimufilms

## CAPRIANA MONASTERY



photo: Roman Friptuleac



photo: Rudi Monastery, Anastasia Sersun

## ORHEIUL VECHI CLIFF MONASTERY

photo: Roman Rybaleov



## TIPOVA MONASTERY



# GO TO A FESTIVAL

Moldova is a country with the most unusual festivals. This is not the case of big festivals with many scenes, days, and nights of non-stop music; there are different soulful festivals. The period of May-October is very crowded with events, which are worth visiting.

Many of the national festivals are dedicated to traditions and crafts. There is a whole movement aimed at rehabilitating traditional dress and handmade objects made by local craftsmen. Ia Mania, iProsop, Big Sunday festival, Beautiful Bessarabian Carpet, Traditional Clothing Day, At the Fireplace of the Potter Vasiliu Gonciari, Carpet of Longing, Potters' Fair are just some of them.



## THE NATIONAL WINE DAY

The National Wine Day is the only national day dedicated to wine in the region.

If you have heard of Oktoberfest, it will be easy for you to imagine what the National Wine Day in Moldova is. The scope of the event has been expanded from edition to edition in the 20 years. The Moldovan wine is becoming more and more appreciated, and this holiday has become a business card of the Republic of Moldova. In addition to the big event with tastings and sales, each winemaker presents its wine on the Grand National Assembly Square, the Wine School, the Peasant Court; during this period, a series of smaller events are organized at wineries and wine collections in the country.





photo: Castel Mimi



photo: Calin Stan

## IA MANIA

Ia Mania is a festival dedicated to the national blouse. It takes place every year at the beginning of July, in Holercani village. Ia Mania has become, over time, a festival that celebrates not only the national blouse as an element of folk costume but also the real beauty of Moldovan folklore and traditions.



photo: Maxim Chumash

Ia, ias, s.f. 1. Women's blouse characteristic to the Romanian national dress, made of white cotton, linen, or borangic fabric and adorned at the neck, chest and sleeves with selected seams, usually with geometric motifs, with butterflies, with beads, etc.

## THE POTTERS' FAIR

The Potters' Fair is probably one of the oldest events in the country, and it takes place annually in September, in Iurceni village, Nisporeni district. This event brings together skilled artisans who come to display their most beautiful pots, jugs, and other clay objects. Everything at the fair is, of course, for sale. Find a place in the trunk for your new pots, and watch out for speed bumps!



## HODINA

This festival is about resting with loved ones. The festival takes place in Pohrebea village, on the Nistru riverbank, in a poplar alley. The atmosphere is warm and friendly, hammocks, colorful flags are hanging everywhere, children's playgrounds are improvised, there is music and food, this time vegetarian one and fish. It's a great time to enjoy the last month of Summer fully.

photo: Klumea



## HEDERLEZ

It is a festival that came to us from the Turkish peoples and celebrated the rebirth of nature and the return of animals to the fields, to pasture. At the beginning of May, the horse farm in Ceadir-Lunga town hosts the Hederlez festival. On this day, "Atil At" equestrian competitions are held, during which you will have the opportunity to learn at least about the history of this place, the people here, and their expressive and colorful culture.

photo: Tourism Informational Center Gagauzia





## DESCOPERA

It is the only open-air classical music festival in Eastern Europe, which takes place annually on the Orheiul Vechi cultural and natural reservation territory. Performances are held in a natural amphitheater, which provides ideal sounds for the symphony orchestra and opera singers' voices.



photo: DescOpera

## ETHNO JAZZ

The jazz music festival begins its history in 2002, when the members of the Trigon band, the leading jazz band in Moldova, decided to celebrate their first decade of activity with a beautiful anniversary concert, in which they would sing with colleagues from several countries of the world. This event's synergy and beauty brought it to its 18th edition in 2020, and we are sure that it will continue in the future.



photo: Iris Cretu





photo: EtCetera Wine

DRINK  
WHAT  
MOLDOVANS  
DRINK

# HOMEMADE DRINKS

In addition to the awarded and world-famous wine, if you visit Moldova, it is worth tasting what does not reach the export but will certainly add color to your experience in this country.

First of all — homemade wine, and in autumn — tulburel (young wine). Almost every household in Moldova makes wine from his grapes, which must be served in the cellar, at the mouth of the barrel, from a glass. Visinata (cherry liqueur), gutuiata (quince liqueur), caisata (apricot liqueur), zmeurata (raspberry liqueur), there is a great range of liqueurs made at home from various seasonal fruits. Compote is the most popular juice in Moldova. You can taste artisanal rachiu (spirit), also known as samahonca, basamac, tuica or tarie, rather in the country's northern settlements.



## HOMEMADE WINE

barrel wine made in house conditions by a householder who respects traditions.



## TULBUREL

Young wine, which has not yet cleared.

## VISINATA

Low alcohol drink made from cherries.



## COMPOT

Food product made of fresh or dried fruit boiled in sweetened water. — From Fr. compote.



photo: Nata Albot

## RACHIU

Generic name given to the various strong alcoholic beverages obtained naturally by distilling wine, fruit, fermented juices, cereals.

# EAT MOLDOVAN FOOD



2

photo: Roman Rybaleev



Moldovan cuisine is distinguished by simple, fresh, and natural ingredients gathered in the most delicious local recipes and inherited from the peoples who wrote our history.

photo: Roman Rybaleov



## TOP

Everyone likes Moldovan placinte (pies) without exception. Every housewife is proud of her placinte and swears that you will never eat such placinte in another house. And, oddly enough, she's right. Therefore, try the placinte proposed by each housewife until you find the one that will fall to your heart.

**PLACINTA**  
(pie)

Pastry dish made of dough sheets with a filling of cheese, meat, fruit or vegetables between them.

photo: Roman Rybaleov



# HOT DISHES

The love for Moldova certainly passes through its national cuisine. The hot dishes always start with a homemade zeama (soup), which is said to “anoint the soul”, especially after a visit to wineries. After a good zeama, the bread of Moldovans, mamaliga (polenta), comes which is served with tocana (meat stew) or fried fish, sheep cheese, and sour cream. Our mamaliga’s charm is that it bakes until it becomes hard and is cut with a thread after it is overturned from the pot. Miniature or giant sarmale (stuffed cabbage leaves), depending on the region, woven into fresh or pickled cabbage or vine, maple or horseradish leaves are another superstar of local cuisine.

**MAMALIGA**  
(polenta)

Food cooked from cornflour (less often from millet, buckwheat flour, etc.) boiled in water.



photo: Nata Albot

**ZEAMA**  
(soup)

Traditional Moldovan soup prepared from chicken, vegetables, homemade noodles, sour borscht (pickle) and greenery. It is traditionally served with hot peppers, cream, and a slice of baked bread.



photo: La Plăcinte

## SARMA (stuffed cabbage leaf)

Culinary preparation of minced meat (mixed with rice and other ingredients) wrapped in cabbage, vine leaf, etc.



photo: Nata Albot

## COLD DISHES

In the cold period of the year, no meal starts without these typical Moldovan appetizers. Racitura (meat jelly) is a love or hate experience, explained to foreigners as “jelly of boiled meat”. As strange as it may sound, its taste can be as surprising. And to surprise you, even more, we invite you to taste pickles. Here, in addition to tomatoes and cucumbers, you can taste cabbage, apples, zucchini, hot peppers, and even watermelons in jars or barrels.

## RACITURA (meat jelly)

Cold food cooked from poultry, pork, etc., boiled for a long time in spicy soup, which coagulates after cooling.



photo: Nata Albot

## PICKLES

Fermented vegetable or fruit, preserved in brine or vinegar.



photo: Roman Rybaleov



# SWEET DISHES

We will start with “baba”; a traditional dessert baked slowly over long hours in an oven with wood. Unfortunately, it is not easy to find it in restaurants, but it is worth searching.

In Moldova, confitures are a great pride of housewives and a passion of children. They can be made from strawberries, blueberries, walnuts, white cherries, rose petals, and many other seasonal tasty things. Find your favorite taste, and don't forget to take a jar for those at home.

## BABA

A traditional dessert of Moldovan cuisine. The real recipe is abundant in eggs and dairy and needs long baking in the oven.



photo: Roman Rybaleov

## CONFITURE

Food made from fruit or flower petals boiled in sugar syrup. Delicious food; goodie.



photo: Nata Albot

TAKE  
HOME

A JAR OF CONFITURE

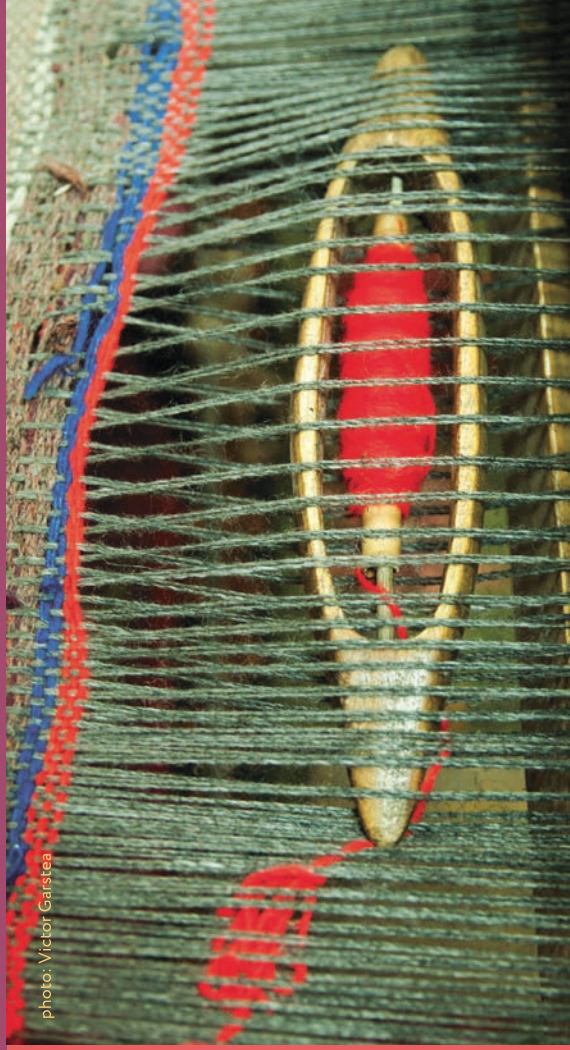


photo: Victor Garstea

SET TO WORK

3

If we have mentioned that Moldova is a tactile experience, it is necessary to dirty our hands and sometimes our feet to delve into this country's culture.

## WORK SIDE BY SIDE WITH A HOUSEMAN

In the villages of Moldova, people still have animals around the house, which are taken daily to hills to graze. Going to feed is a meditative and authentic experience.

If we plow properly and "the Lord has given rain", there will be a lot of work to be done. Depending on the season, we go to pick grapes, apples, cherries, corn. The smell and colors of the fruit worth the effort.



photo: Anatolie Poiata

In Moldova, milk is made from proper milk, not from powder. You can convince yourself of this by going to get your product directly from the source. It is not about special milking machines; the milking is done with bare hands, under the mentorship of an experienced housewife.



photo: Andrei Paul

# MEET A CRAFTSMAN

Craftsmanship in the Republic of Moldova is an art preserved through traditions and a means of earning money for many local artisans. You can support them by buying some of their creations or by participating in a workshop where they will teach you a little to do their job.

## POTTERY

Local potters make pots and jugs, cups, and trays of different sizes and shapes, mostly made of painted red clay or burnt black clay. The most common ornaments depict animals, plants and flowers, or geometric shapes. The shades of red, yellow, gray, and white colors are obtained from humus and colored clays, and burning copper brings the green color. Try your luck at the potter's wheel if you manage to rise a vessel, and you may go home with a cup or jug, the author of which you can proudly call yourself.



photo: Stella Dontu

## OSIER WEAVING

Weaving is one of the oldest handicrafts in human history, dating back to the Neolithic era, but it is today. Osier objects are ecological, durable, and fit into different interiors, creating an atmosphere of warmth and comfort. Our craftsmen can help you weave your basket for fruit, flowers, or memories.





## MOLDOVAN CARPET

The Moldovan carpet is rich in bright colors, drawings with a plant, figurative (animal and human), and symbolic motifs. The Tree of Life is one of the most profound symbols present in the first Country Brand developed and managed by the Invest Moldova Agency. The Moldovan carpet's art was included in the UNESCO List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. If you take a Moldovan carpet home, you will take with you a woven story that will keep you warm and longing.



photo: Iulian Ursachi



## SITTINGS

In the past, all household works were done in common; on winter evenings people gathered in houses at sittings and on warm days – in the yard, at claca (voluntary collective work performed by peasants to help each other and which is often accompanied or followed by a small party, jokes, stories). When someone was building a house, the whole community got involved and helped. The sittings were a kind of social networks in the past, where carpets and towels were woven and then adorned natural walls, not virtual ones; people were singing and talking in whispers, and turn. Now the settings are reproduced on the eve of the Christmas holidays, in some tourist boarding houses, where you can listen to folk songs or weave a twig basket.



photo: Castel Mimi

## TAKE HOME

- IE (NATIONAL BLOUSE)
- TOWEL
- COJOC (NATIONAL COATS)
- SHEPHERD'S HAT
- STRAW SHOES
- TRAISTA (NATIONAL BAG)
- LEATHER GOODS
- CARPETS
- JUGS
- CERAMIC PLATES
- WOVEN BASKETS OF VEGETABLE FIBERS
- WOOD PRODUCTS
- BARREL

GO TO

THE

MARKET

4





photo: Alina Grubnyak

Although there are supermarket chains in Chisinau and other cities and towns, Moldovans find a special pleasure in shopping at the market.

This “at the market” is even a social event, especially in villages. The market is held only once a week, usually on Saturdays, when people rest from household work.

Whether it is a country market or an urban one, here you will find the broadest range of seasonal fruits and vegetables. The smell and colors of this place will make you rediscover the authentic taste of crops.



photo: Anze Furlan

The most abundant are, of course, the markets from Spring to late autumn. In Spring, here you can find nettles, ramsons, and the first cherries. The season of sweet corn, strawberries, and apricots, peaches comes, followed by raspberries and blackberries, muskmelons, and watermelons. Autumn is rich in apples, grapes, nuts, quinces, and pumpkins of all shapes and colors. In the winter months, here you will find the exact products nicely placed in jars – cans are the treasures of housewives, which they take out of the depths of the earth through the mouth of the cellar to bring to market.

**NETTLE**, nettles, s. f. 1. A genus of herbaceous plants with stems and leaves covered with stinging hairs is used in the textile industry, medicine, and food.

**RAMSON**, ramsons, s. f. Edible bulbous herbaceous plant with white flowers, with garlic smell and taste.

## TAKE HOME FROM THE MARKET:

HONEY AND BEE PRODUCTS  
CONFITURE  
SUNFLOWER AND PUMPKIN SEEDS  
CANDY  
DRIED FRUITS  
NUTS

photo: Aleksandra Ignateva



# RESPECT THE TRADITIONS

5



Moldovans like celebrations, especially to organize parties in which they expand their family, here those who in other countries are called family friends become “fni” (god-children), “cumatri” (parents of godchild), “nanasi” (godparents), and other honorary titles.

## WEDDING

Our weddings are noisy, long, full of traditions, and very emotional. Preparations begin at least a year in advance and end 5 minutes before the end of the event, usually close to sunrise. A wedding means godparents, mothers-in-law, vornicei (the bride and groom's best friends), colaci (ring-shaped bread) and dancers, live music, “big table”, the bride's colac, sarmale, the tying of towels, the “undressing” of the bride, the bride and groom's dance and the bride's cake, the bringing of godparents at home with processions, all these shall be borne on your shoulders.



photo: Dumitru Hariuc

## CUMATRIE (RITUAL KINSHIP)



photo: Andrey Sayfutdinov

The next holiday, at which the wedding guests meet, is cumatria — the holiday after the child's christening. The words "99 de cumatri" are not only a verse but also a truth. In Moldova, cumatrii (godparents of a child) can be very numerous, becoming friends between them.

## CHRISTMAS CAROLING, NEW YEAR CAROLING, AND SOWING

During the winter holidays, a crowd of carolers is formed and walks from house to house to announce the New Year's coming or the Birth of Jesus. Their songs are accompanied by costumes, sometimes masks, musical instruments, among which the most important are the bell and the "ox", sound and health wishes. In the end, they receive gifts from hosts and are blessed to go and spread the news.



photo: Maxim Chumash

## EGG DECORATING AND EASTER MORNING

Decorating Easter eggs is an ancient tradition of pre-Christian origin, practiced in Central and Eastern Europe. In decorating eggs, the red color is traditionally used, as it symbolizes life, and the painted lines mean eternity. The decorating technique consists of drawing

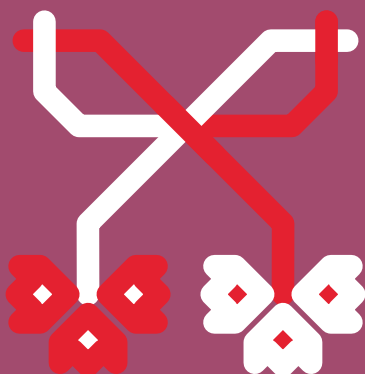
with melted wax and immersing the egg in the colored water. On Easter morning, everyone washes their face with red eggs to make it rosy and be healthy, and with coins to be rich and provided with everything all year round.



photo: @bobysbk

## MARTISORUL

The 1st of March brings with it a beautiful spring custom called Martisor. Martisor represents two intertwined threads, white and red, which means duality: life and death, health and disease, purity and passion. It is considered a symbol of Spring and is worn throughout March, after which it is attached to a flowering tree. Martisor has been included in the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in a joint file with Romania, Macedonia, and Bulgaria.



TAKE  
HOME  
MARTISOR