

BRIEF ANCIENT HISTORY

Ancient Romania was inhabited by Thracian tribes. The Greeks called them Getae, the Romans called them Dacians, but they were actually a single Geto-Dacian People. In the 1st century BC, a Dacian state was established to meet the Roman threat.



(Roman soldiers)

The last king, Decebalus, consolidated this state, but was unable to prevent the Roman conquest in 105-6 AD. Most of present Romania, including the Transylvanian plateau, came under their rule. The Romans brought with them a superior civilization and mixed with the conquered Dacian tribes to form a Daco-Roman people speaking a Latin tongue.

BRIEF MEDIEVAL HISTORY

Faced with Goth attacks in 271, Emperor Aurelian decided to withdraw the Roman legions and administration south of the Danube River, but the Romanised Valach peasants remained in Dacia. Waves of migrating peoples, including the Goths, Huns, Avars, Slavs, Bulgars and Hungarians, swept across this territory from the 4th to 10th centuries. The Romanians survived in village communities and gradually assimilated the Slavs and other people who settled there. By the 10th century a fragmented feudal system was ruled by a military class that appeared.

The Romanian-speaking feudal principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia appeared south and east of the Carpathian Mountains in the 14th century.

Throughout the 15th century they offered strong resistance to Turkish expansion to the north. Mircea the Old, Vlad Tepes and Stefan the Great became legendary figures in this struggle. Vlad Tepes 'the Impaler', ruling prince of Wallachia from 1456-62 and 1476-77, inspired the tale of Dracula by his habit of impaling his enemies on stakes. (The vampires originated in the imagination of 19th century Irish novelist Bram Stoker.)

In 1600 the three Romanian states (Transylvania, Moldavia, and Wallachia) were briefly united under Michael the Brave (Mihai Viteazul) at Alba Iulia.

In 1859, with French support, Alexandru Ioan Cuza was elected to the thrones of Moldavia and Wallachia, creating a national state, which took the name Romania in 1862. With Russian assistance, Romania declared independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1877. After the 1877-78 War of Independence, Dobrogea became part of Romania.

WORLD WAR I

In 1916 Romania entered WW I on the side of the Triple Entente (Britain, France and Russia). The objective was to re-unite with Transylvania, where two-thirds of the population was Romanian. During the fighting, the Central Powers occupied Wallachia but Moldova was staunchly defended by Romanian and Russian troops. With the defeat of Austria-Hungary in 1918, the unification of Banat, Transylvania and Bucovina with Romania was finally achieved.

WORLD WAR II

In the years leading up to WW II, Romania, under the able guidance of foreign minister Nicolae Titulescu, sought security in an alliance with France, Britain and the Little Entente (Romania, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia). It signed a Balcan Pact with Yugoslavia, Turkey and Greece, and established diplomatic relations with USSR. These efforts were weakened by the Western powers' appeasement of Hitler and by King Carol II, who declared a personal dictatorship in February 1938. After the fall of France in May 1940, Romania was isolated. General Antonescu

forced Carol II to abdicate in favor of his son Michael and imposed a fascist dictatorship with himself as leader. German troops were allowed to enter Romania in October 1940. In June 1941 Antonescu joined Hitler's anti-Soviet war. Anti-Nazi resentment, smoldered among the Romanian soldiers and people. As the war went badly and the Soviet army approached Romania's borders, a rare national consensus was achieved. On August 23rd, 1944 Romania suddenly changed sides, captured 53,159 German soldiers who were in Romania at the time, and declared war against Nazi Germany. By this Dramatic act, Romania salvaged its independence and shortened the war. 500,000 Romanian soldiers died while their country was on the Axis side (Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy and Japan) and another 170,000 died after it joined the Allies.

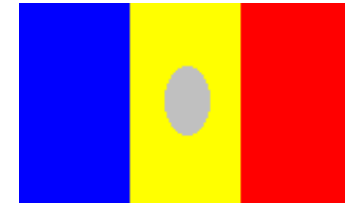
POST WORLD WAR II

After national liberation, the government of Dr. Petru Groza launched Romania's "social liberation". Parliamentary "elections" held in November 1946 were won by the progressive parties. A year later, the monarchy was abolished and a Romanian Peoples Republic proclaimed. The Communist and Social Democratic parties united as the Romanian Workers' Party in 1948, the name being changed back to the Romanian Communist Party in 1965. Between 1965 and 1989 Romania was led by the communist dictator Nicolae Ceausescu. Ceausescu's megalomania is illustrated by the various grandiose projects that he initiated: the Danube Canal opened in 1984; the Transfagarasan Highway; the disruptive redevelopment of south part of Bucharest into a new political centre (1983-89); the building of Bucharest Metro (opened in 1985); etc. In March 1989 Ceausescu arranged lavish public celebrations to mark the paying off of Romania's \$10 billion foreign debt. His greatest blunder, however was to export Romania's food to help pay the debt, as this created food shortages within Romania.

THE 1989 REVOLUTION

The spark that ignited the revolution in Romania came on December 15th, 1989 when Father Laszlo Tokes spoke out publicly against the dictator

(Ceausescu) from his small church in Timisoara. On December 20th negotiators from Bucharest arrived in Timisoara to buy time until fresh troops could be sent to the city, and newly arrived Special Forces (Securitate) units began firing on the demonstrators once again. Trainloads of elite troops were dispatched to the city with orders to crush the rebellion.



(Revolution's Flag)

On December 21st a remarkable thing happened. Ceausescu decided that he would address a mass rally in front of the Central Committee building in Bucharest to show the world that the workers of Romania supported him and approved his action against the 'hooligan' demonstrators in Timisoara. What went on behind the scenes may never be known but it's possible that Ceausescu was set up by conspirators within the Communist Party who wanted to engineer his downfall. At 12:30 PM as Ceausescu began to speak to the assembly from the balcony of the Central Committee building, youths that were being held back by three cordons of police a block away started booing. Tension mounted in the silent crowd and suddenly there was a strange crack of sound and Ceausescu was cut off in mid-sentence by shouts of disapproval. Pandemonium broke loose as the youths attempted to break through the police lines.

After a while Ceausescu, his wife and several others managed to escape by helicopter from the roof. The helicopter took the Ceausescus to their villa at Snagov, just north of Bucharest. The plan was that they would proceed to an air base near Pitesti, where a waiting jet would take them into exile outside Romania. Halfway to Pitesti, however, the helicopter pilot feigned engine trouble and set the chopper down beside a highway where the two Special Forces (Securitate) officers commandeered a passing private car. The party

then drove on to Tirgoviste, where the Ceausescus were arrested and taken to a military base.

On December 23rd Nicolae and Elena Ceausescu were tried together by an anonymous court, condemned and executed by a firing squad. The next day, their bodies were exhibited on TV, allegedly to stifle resistance by die-hard Special Forces (Securitate) units attempting to rescue them. It is now believed that the Ceausescus' speedy trial had much more to do with braking the revolution and saving former Communist Party members than in stopping the Special Forces (Securitate). Clearly, Nicolae and Elena knew too much and many people who are still in high office today might have been dragged down with them, had they been given an open trial.

Ion Iliescu was elected President of Romania, first in May of 1990, and again under the country's new constitution in September 1992. At the most recent presidential elections, on November 17th, 1996, Emil Constantinescu became the new president of Romania.

POPULATION, RELIGION, AND LANGUAGE



(Romanian Shepherd)

In 1992, Romania's population was 22,760,000, making it the second largest country after Poland in Central Europe. Ethnic Romanians account for 89.4% of the population. The primary religions practiced are Orthodox (86.8%), Roman Catholic (5.0%), and the remaining 8.2% are Protestant religions (Baptists, Pentecostals, Adventists, etc.) The country's official language is Romanian. English, French and German are widely spoken.

AREA AND MAJOR CITIES

Covering 91,500 square miles, oval-shaped, Romania is larger than Hungary and Bulgaria combined (about half the size of France). It is roughly the size of Oregon. Most of central and northern Romania is taken up by the U-shaped Carpathian Mountains. Transylvanian plateau occupies the centre of the U, and the Moldavian plateau lies to the east. The Carpathian Mountains account for about a third of the country's area. Another third of Romania is covered by hills and plateaus full of orchards and vineyards. The final third is a fertile plain where cereals, vegetables, herbs and other crops are grown.



(Romanian Ateneu from Bucharest)

The major cities of Romania include its capital, Bucharest (2,354,000), the Black Sea port of Constanta (350,000), Iasi (344,000), Timisoara (334,000), Cluj (328,000), Galati (326,000), and Brasov (323,000).

GREAT PEOPLE

Great minds have equally developed the sciences. Romania's medical school and biology-related sciences have been an international point of reference for more than a century now. Romanians have pioneered in, and developed fields like, cell biology, virology, neurology and gerontology. Emil Racovita (1868-1947) was the founder of the science of speleology. The first Nobel Prize awarded to a Romanian scientist was for biology: Professor George Emil Palade, now living in the U.S. The first flight in the world, by a self-propelled engine, was made in a prototype designed by Traian Vuia (1872-1950) in 1903. Pioneers in airplane construction and flight were also Aurel

Vlaicu (1882-1913), as well as the father of jet planes, Henri Coanda (1886-1972). Hermann Oberth (1894- 1980) was a great achiever of space science and rocket engineering. As early the 16th century, the visionary Conrad Haas (1509-1579) was designing rockets in the city of Sibiu. In the 20th century Gheorghe Buzatu helped to develop the Apollo rocket. Other Romanians have added important discoveries to: mathematics, Traian Lalescu, Gheorghe Titeica, and Grigore Moisil; physics, Horia Hulubei; electrotechnics, Dragomir Hurmuzescu; civil engineering, Anghel Silagy; sociology, Dimitrie Gusti; and ecology, Grigore Antipa

(This information has been selected from the Romanian Embassy in USA and Virtual Romanian WEB Pages)



UPPER ROOM
FELLOWSHIP MINISTRY

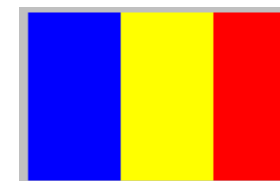
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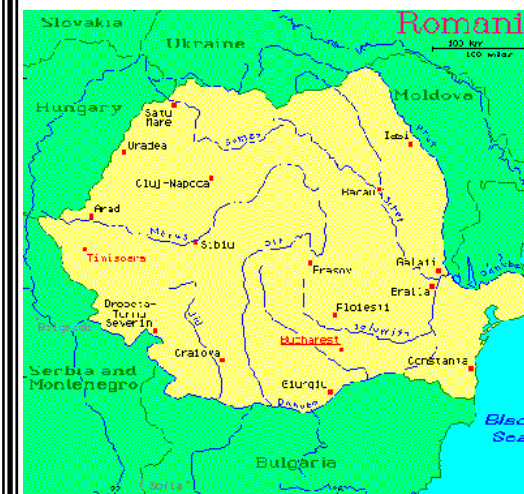
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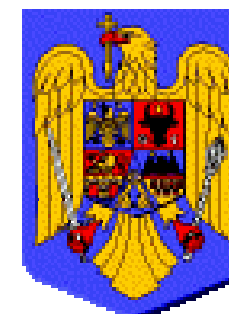
(Romanian Flag)

ABOUT



(Romanian Map)

ROMANIA



(Romanian Seal)