



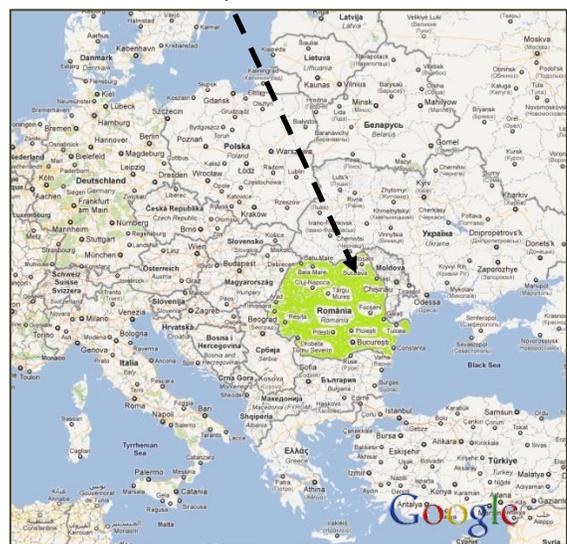
# Trekking the Planet

Discovering the Cultural and Natural Significance of the World



## Where are we now?

- Darren and Sandy are in Gura Humorului, Romania, located at 47° N and 26° E.
- We have traveled approximately 33,826 miles (54,438 kilometers) from our starting point in California.



## People and Culture

- The name Romania was derived from being a province of the Roman Empire from about 100 to 271 A.D. Romania was part of several other empires, including the Hungarian and Ottoman. In 1859, two Ottoman principalities broke away to form the Kingdom of Romania.
- Romania gained land at the end of World War I. After World War II, it lost territory and became a member of the Soviet Union's Eastern Bloc. A revolution in 1989 led to the overthrow of their leader and a move toward democracy. Romania joined the European Union in 2007.
- The vast majority (almost 90%) of Romania's 22 million inhabitants are ethnically Romanian. The largest minority groups are Hungarians (about 7% of the population) and Gypsies (about 2% of the population).
- The official language is Romanian, which is related to Italian, French, Spanish and Portuguese. The currency is the leu. Romania is expected to adopt the Euro in 2015.
- Transylvania is a region located in central Romania. It united with Romania after World War I. It was the setting for Bram Stoker's 1897 novel *Dracula*. The area is now associated with vampires. Several castles are in the region, including Bran Castle, are linked to the Dracula legend.

### Did you know?

Oină is a traditional Romanian team game, with a history dating back to 1364. It has some similarities to baseball. Soccer, basketball, rugby and handball are also popular. Romania reached international fame with its tennis and gymnastics stars. Ilie Năstase was ranked number 1 in the tennis world in the 1970's. Nadia Comăneci was the first gymnast to score a perfect 10. This occurred during the 1976 Summer Olympic Games.

*Nadia Comăneci*  
(sources:  
[Wikipedia.org](http://Wikipedia.org),  
[Flickr.com/Dave  
Gilbert](http://Flickr.com/DaveGilbert))



*Bran Castle*  
(source:  
[Eurotrotters.com](http://Eurotrotters.com))



10 Romanian lei equal to about \$3.35  
(source: [Flickr.com/David Holt](http://Flickr.com/DavidHolt))

## The Danube Delta

The Danube River is the second longest in Europe, flowing through 10 countries and four capitals. The last 190 miles (306 kilometers) of the river runs through Romania and it empties into the Black Sea through the Danube Delta. A UNESCO World Heritage Site, the delta has the third largest biodiversity in the world, after the Great Barrier Reef in Australia and the Galapagos Archipelago in Ecuador.



sources: [RomaniaTourism.com](http://RomaniaTourism.com),  
[Wikipedia.org](http://Wikipedia.org)



The Transylvanian Alps in the Carpathian Mountains (source: [Famouswonders.com](http://Famouswonders.com))

## Nature and Environment

- Romania is about the size of the U.S. state of Oregon and is the 12<sup>th</sup> largest country in Europe.
- Forest comprises about 13% of the land and Romania has one of the largest undisturbed wooded areas in Europe. This has resulted in 60% of all wild European brown bears and 40% of all wolves living in Romania. There are 13 national parks in the country.
- The Carpathian Mountains run down and across the center of Romania and contain 14 peaks higher than 6,600 feet (2,000) meters. It is a popular place for skiing and hiking.
- About 45 miles (70 kilometers) of Black Sea coastline is in Romania. The Black Sea is about 730 miles (1,175 kilometers) at its longest west-east length. It is linked to the Atlantic Ocean via the Mediterranean and Aegean Seas.



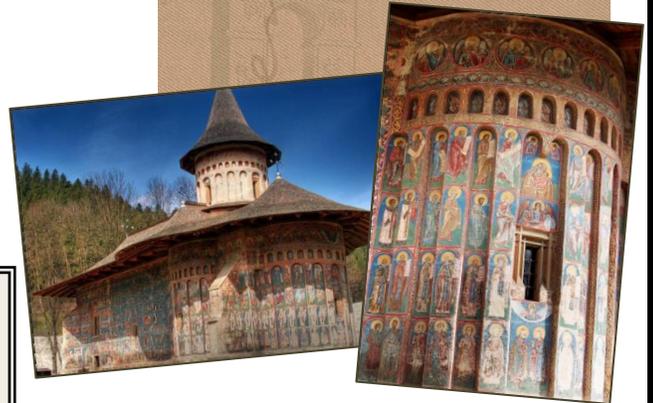
source:  
[Thefullwiki.org](http://Thefullwiki.org)

## Our Plans

- We have left Hungary and are now in northern Romania. We will spend the next few days visiting the Transylvania region and the Painted Monasteries.
- After leaving Romania we will move on to Bulgaria. After spending three days there we will visit the Balkan area of Europe, which includes the countries of Serbia and Croatia.
- As we continue our journey through Eastern Europe, send us any questions or comments that you may have. We will try to answer them in one of our upcoming emails.

## Painted Monasteries

Located in the northeastern Romanian foothills are a series of monasteries that are covered with external fresco paintings. Many of these were built in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries as thanks for battle victories. Eight of these churches are included on the UNESCO World Heritage List.



sources: [Brasovtravelguide.ro](http://Brasovtravelguide.ro),  
[Flickr.com /Waqas Ahmed](https://www.flickr.com/photos/WaqasAhmed/)

## More Information

- <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/598>
- <http://travel-island.com/interesting.places/romania.html>
- <http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0107905.html>
- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romania>
- [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romanian\\_leu](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romanian_leu)
- <http://travel.nationalgeographic.com/travel/countries/romania-facts/>
- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transylvania>
- <http://lifestyle.iloveindia.com/lounge/facts-about-romania-1709.html>

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