

MOLDOVA – COUNTRY OF SUNSHINE AND HILLS



Rich with history and fertile soils that produce abundant vineyards, Moldova is an unjustifiably forgotten tourist destination, as yet untouched by the budget airline brigade. In this land-locked eastern European country, you can wander round vast monasteries, sample the local wines, or trek through ancient forests.

Despite remaining one of the poorest countries in Europe, the people are friendly and welcoming, and the main centres, such as the capital Chisinau, have everything a visitor could need.

Location: Moldova is a small country situated in the Eastern Europe and sandwiched between Ukraine and Romania. Its major part lies between Prut and Dniester rivers. Moldova is close to Black Sea however it is a landlocked country. Thanks to close location to the sea climate in Moldova is temperate continental. Summers are warm and winters are mild.



Nature: Moldovan sceneries are very picturesque and are mostly represented by hilly river-cut plains. North of the country is more hilly if compared to the south that is well endowed with lakes, rivulets and other tanks. All rivers in Moldova belong to Black Sea basin. The biggest rivers are Dniester and Prut.

Agriculture: Moldova is not rich in natural resources, but its proximity to the Black Sea gives it a mild and sunny climate. This makes the area ideal for agriculture and food processing. The fertile soil supports wheat, corn, barley, tobacco, sugar beets, and soybeans. Beef and dairy cattle are raised, and beekeeping is widespread. Moldova's best-known product comes from its extensive and well-developed vineyards concentrated in the central and southern regions. In addition to world-class wine, Moldova produces liqueurs and champagne. It is also known for its sunflower seeds, walnuts, apples, and other fruits. Moldova is the major supplier of agricultural products in the region.



Cuisine: Traditional Moldovan cuisine is famous for its wide variety. It developed under influence of many cultures of the peoples who lived on this territory during the past centuries: Ukrainians, Russians, Greeks, Jews, Germans and others.



National specialities are mititeyi (small grilled sausages with onion and pepper), mamaliga (thick, sticky corn porridge) which is served with brinza (feta cheese) and tocana (pork stew). They should be tried with sweet-and-sour watermelons and apples.

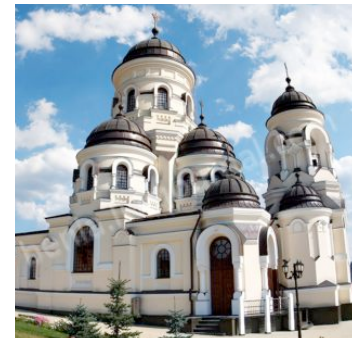


There are more than 100 varieties of excellent wines produced in Moldova. Among them are white wines that include Aligote, Riesling and Sauvignon, red wines that include Moldovan Cabernet and Merlot and Doina or Nistru brandy, an ideal accompaniment for desserts.

Economy: Moldova remains one of the poorest countries in Europe. It has a temperate climate and good farmland but has no major mineral deposits and must import almost all of its energy supplies. As a result, the economy depends heavily on agriculture, particularly fruits, vegetables, wine and tobacco.

Government: Republic since 1991. Gained independence from the Soviet Union in 1991.

Tourism: Although it has a small area, Moldova is very attractive as a tourist destination. It has a great potential thanks to an unusual diversity of landscape reservations and scenery and unique geological monuments of European and world value. At present the most demanded in Moldova are rural, wine, cultural, health and beauty tourism.



Languages: The state language of Moldova is Romanian, officially referred to as Moldovan. Russian is also widely spoken in the country, both as a first and second language. Ukrainian and Gagauz are recognized minority languages, with official status in areas with high concentration of speaker populations. English and, to a lesser extent, French are popular foreign languages taught at most schools in Moldova.

Religion: Mostly Eastern Orthodox Christian and other Christian denominations. A small amount of the population are Jewish.

Weather and climate: Very mild and pleasant. Temperate with warm summers 20 to 23°C (68 to 73°F), crisp, sunny autumns and cold, sometimes snowy, winters.

Required clothing: Mediumweights, thick coat and waterproof shoes for winter; lightweights for summer. A light raincoat is useful.