Quick view

Cluj-Napoca – a brief overview

The gateway to northern Transylvania, with its dramatic mountains and vampire legends, Cluj-Napoca served as the Transylvanian capital several times during the expansion and contraction of the Austro-Hungarian empire. It’s an atmospheric place, with graceful medieval buildings and some excellent museums dotted around the historic centre.

It also has some of Transylvania’s best nightlife, fuelled by a young and energetic student population. Spend some time in the city’s cafés and bars and you’ll discover that there’s always something interesting going on in Cluj-Napoca, particularly during the Transylvania International Film Festival every May.

Romania

General Information

Country overview

There aren’t many countries in Europe where farmers still drive horse-drawn wagons and covered markets dominate over shopping malls, but then Romania isn’t quite like other places. While other Eastern Bloc members have seen their cities spruced up and populated with boutique hotels, international restaurants and quaint attractions, this traditional country still clings to its dog-eared charm. Yes, you’ll find the usual smattering of resort towns clustered around the Black Sea Coast, but outside the tourism hotspots Romania dances to the same rhythm it’s tapped out for a hundred years.

Geography

Romania is bordered to the north and east by Moldova and Ukraine, the southeast by the Black Sea, the south by Bulgaria, the southwest by Serbia and in the west by Hungary. The country is divided into four geographical areas. Transylvania (a belt of Alpine massifs and forests) and Moldavia compose the northern half of the country, which is divided down the middle by the north-south strip of the Carpathian Mountains. These comprise of 14 mountain ranges above 2,000m (6,560ft) with Moldoveanu Peak at 2,544m (8,300ft) the highest point. The terrain around here is a mix of extinct volcanic cones, lunar plains, thick forests and glacial lakes – perfect for hiking, cycling and adrenaline sports.

South of the east-west line of the Carpathians lies the flat Danube plain of Wallachia with the capital Bucharest, its border with Bulgaria being defined by the course of the Danube. The Danube Delta, the best-preserved of its kind in Europe and a haven for wildlife, is a biosphere reserve and a biodiversity World Heritage Site. Romania’s other major rivers include the Olt, the Siret and the Mures.

Romania’s coastline runs for nearly 200 km (120 miles) along the Black Sea, incorporating the port of Constanta and the Danube Delta.

General knowledge

Key facts

Population: 21790479

Population Density (per sq km): 91
Capital: Bucharest.

Language
Romanian is the official language. Some Hungarian and German are spoken in border areas, while French and English are spoken by those connected with the tourist industry.

Currency
New Leu (RON; symbol (plural) Lei) = 100 bani. Notes are in denominations of Lei500, 100, 50, 10, 5 and 1. Coins are in denominations of Bani50, 10, 5 and 1. (Old notes were in denominations of Lei1,000,000, 500,000, 100,000, 50,000 and 10,000 and coins in denominations of Lei5,000, 1,000, 500 and 100.)

Electricity
230 volts AC, 50Hz. Plugs are of the two-pin type.

General business opening hours
Mon-Fri 0900-1700.

Public holidays
Below are listed Public Holidays for the January 2019 – December 2020 period.

2019
- Anul nou (New Year’s Day): 1 and 2 January 2019
- Paştele (Orthodox Easter): 28 and 29 April 2019
- Zia muncii (Labour Day): 1 May 2019
- Zia Copilului (Children’s Day): 1 June 2019
- Doua Zi de Rusalli (Orthodox Whitsun): 16 and 17 June 2019
- Adormirea Maicii Domnului (Assumption Day): 15 August 2019
- Zia Stantul Andrei (St. Andrew’s Day): 30 November 2019
- Zia Naţională (Republic Day): 1 December 2019
- Crăciunul (Christmas): 25 and 26 December 2019

2020
- Anul nou (New Year’s Day): 1 and 2 January 2020
- Paştele (Orthodox Easter): 19 and 20 April 2020
- Zia muncii (Labour Day): 1 May 2020
- Zia Copilului (Children’s Day): 1 June 2020
- Doua Zi de Rusalli (Orthodox Whitsun): 7 and 8 June 2020
- Adormirea Maicii Domnului (Assumption Day): 15 August 2020
- Zia Stantul Andrei (St. Andrew’s Day): 30 November 2020
- Zia Naţională (Republic Day): 1 December 2020
- Crăciunul (Christmas): 25 and 26 December 2020

All information subject to change.

Travel etiquette
How to fit in

Social Conventions
A handshake is the most common form of greeting, but Romanian men may kiss a woman’s hand when being introduced. Mr or Mrs should be used when greeting someone for the first time. Visitors should follow normal European courtesies on social occasions. Dress tends to be rather conservative but casual wear is suitable. Beachwear should not be worn away from the beach or poolside. If
visiting a home, a small wrapped gift should be given to the host, such as flowers or chocolates (to women only), wine or liquor. Flowers should be given as a gift in odd numbers only. Many Romanians are smokers and gifts of Western cigarettes are greatly appreciated.

Other well-appreciated gifts include toiletries.

Photography
Military installations should not be photographed. Some tourist attractions require visitors to pay a fee (sometimes hefty) for taking photographs.

Smoking
The Romanian government bans smoking in every public place, but, as in many countries in Eastern Europe, smokers have little respect for non-smokers and for smoking laws. Smoking is forbidden on planes, on buses and on some trains. Luxury hotels have designated no-smoking floors but very few restaurants have no-smoking sections.

Health
Main emergency number: 112

Food & Drink
Mains water is normally chlorinated, and whilst relatively safe, may cause abdominal upsets; bottled water is available. Milk is pasteurised and dairy products are safe for consumption. Local meat, poultry, seafood, fruit and vegetables are generally considered safe to eat.

Other Risks
Hepatitis C and tuberculosis occur and hepatitis B is endemic. Stray dogs may carry the tick-borne African typhus disease and rabies is also present. If bitten, seek medical advice without delay. There have been confirmed outbreaks of avian influenza (bird flu) in the Danube Delta, Transylvania and Bucharest. The Romanian authorities have taken measures to contain the outbreaks and no human infections or deaths have been reported. In 2012, several cases of the West Nile Virus were reported by the Romanian National Institute of Health, and travellers to the Danube Delta are recommended to wear long-sleeved shirts and trousers and to apply insect repellent.

Phone calls & Internet

Telephone
Country code: +40

Mobile telephony and Internet
Since June 2017, EU citizens traveling within the EU, and also in Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein have been able to use their cell phones and surf the Net without incurring any extra charges: In other words, customers pay the same price for phone calls, text messages and data volume as they do at home. Restrictions do apply to the constant use of SIM cards abroad, however, and caps may be set on data packages. For full details, contact your mobile telephony provider in your country. Travelers using a SIM card from a non-EU state do not benefit from the new arrangement.
Free Internet access via Wi-Fi is possible in many busy tourist spots. When using public Wi-Fi networks, it is a wise precaution to ensure encryption of all passwords, credit card details and banking TANs entered. Use of a VPN app or security software to check the safety of a hotspot is recommended.

**Top 10 sights**

**Top 10 sights in Cluj-Napoca**

**St Michael’s Church**

Founded in the 14th century, the Gothic church of St Michael is one of the largest in Transylvania. The original church was constructed shortly after Cluj-Napoca was established, but the building expanded over the centuries and the lofty tower, which offers stunning views over the city, was added in 1859.

Piaţa Unirii
Cluj-Napoca
Romania
Tel: +40 264 592 089

**Muzeul de Arta (National Art Museum)**

Set in the handsome baroque Banffy Palace, the National Art Museum displays an impressive collection of local artworks, tracing the development of Romanian art through the centuries. The collection also includes works from across Europe and a 16th-century church altar.

Piaţa Unirii 30
400098 Cluj-Napoca
Romania
Tel: +40 264 596 953

**National History Museum of Transylvania**

The city’s history museum displays an eclectic collection of antiquities, from Egyptian mummies to weapons from the ancient Dacian civilisation, the original inhabitants of Romania. Temporary exhibitions are being held until the main galleries reopen after an extensive renovation.

Strada Constantin Daicoviciu
Cluj-Napoca
Romania
Tel: +40 264 569 952

**Ethnographic Museum of Transylvania**

This child-friendly museum is devoted to traditional life in Romania, with displays of old tools, kitchen implements, weapons, handicrafts and toys. The museum also runs the open-air Ethnographic Park on the outskirts of the city, with a collection of traditional buildings, accessible by bus from the centre.

Memorandumului str. 21
400000 Cluj-Napoca
Romania
Tel: +40 264 592 344
**Piața Unirii**

The main square in Cluj-Napoca is dotted with historic landmarks, from the towering spire of St Michael’s Church to crumbling Roman ruins and a famous statue of the Hungarian king Matthias Corvinus, who was born in Cluj-Napoca in 1443.

Piața Unirii
400098 Cluj-Napoca
Romania

**Fortress Hill**

The Fortress Hill, or Dealul Cetatuia, offers stunning views over the city. The hill is crowned by the Belvedere Hotel and an enormous crucifix, and dotted around the summit are remnants of the Austrian fortress that guarded the city during the Austro-Hungarian era.

Dealul Cetatuia, Strada Călărașilor
400000 Cluj-Napoca
Romania

**Alexandru Borza Botanical Garden**

Set amid campus buildings in the university quarter, the city botanical gardens were laid out in 1930, and the spot has been a favourite retreat for locals ever since. Scattered around the gardens are Asian-style pavilions and Roman relics from the ancient city of Napoca.

Strada Republicii 42
400015 Cluj-Napoca
Romania
Tel: +40 264 597 604

Opening times:
Daily 0900-1600 (mid-Sep to mid-Apr)
Daily 0900-1800 (mid-Apr to mid-Sep)

www.ubbcluj.ro/en/structura/sport/gradina_bot...

**Házsongárd Cemetery**

The city cemetery is lined with the elegant mausoleums of great citizens of Cluj-Napoca, including several Romanian national heroes. In use since the 17th century, it's an atmospheric place to wander and escape the city bustle.

Strada Matei Basarab
Cluj-Napoca
Romania

**Pharmaceutical Museum**

The Hintz House, the former mansion of the wealthy Hintz family, was the location of the city’s first pharmacy, which opened to the public in 1573. Today, the house contains a fascinating Pharmaceutical Museum, with tours of the ancient medical tools and apothecary jars led by a white-coated pharmacist.

Piața Unirii 28
400098 Cluj-Napoca
Romania

Opening times:
Mon-Wed and Fri 1000-1600
Thu 1200-1800
Hoia Baciu Forest

Allegedly the world’s most haunted forest, this area of woodland beyond the Ethnographic Park has supposedly seen everything from ghosts to UFOs. Many report strange noises in the forest and the bizarrely shaped trees certainly create a spooky atmosphere.

Cluj-Napoca
Romania
www.hoiabaciuforest.com

Shopping in Cluj-Napoca

Key Areas

Shopping in Cluj-Napoca is centred on the old city, particularly around the Piața Mihai Viteazul and Piața Unirii and along Bulevardul Eroilor, but there are some interesting boutiques dotted around the university quarter too.

Markets

Several bustling markets in Cluj-Napoca sell local produce and Transylvanian delicacies; the farmers’ market at Piața Mihai Viteazul attracts plenty of local stallholders every second Saturday.

Shopping Centres

Cluj-Napoca has a handful of modern malls on the outskirts, full of local and international brands. The Polus Centre on Strada Avram Iancu and the Iulius Mall on Strada Alexandru Vaida Voievod have the best selection of stores and franchises.

Restaurants

Dishes from Hungary, Romania and Italy dominate menus in Cluj-Napoca. A handful of local restaurants are swapping tradition for reinvention however, with innovative menus using local ingredients like ceps mushrooms from the Transylvanian hills.

Baracca

A sleek loft-style eatery serving imaginative dishes prepared with traditional Transylvanian ingredients.

Strada Napoca 8A
400009 Cluj-Napoca
Romania
Price: Expensive

Napoca 15

Stylish dining in an elegant courtyard mansion in the old city, with a compelling wine list and strong Italian influences.

Strada Napoca 15
Price: Moderate
VIA Restaurant
Set in a baroque palace with a romantic summer terrace, VIA offers a sophisticated menu that traipses from Romania to Italy via Spain and France.

Strada Inocenţiu Micu Klein 6
400087 Cluj-Napoca
Romania
Tel: +40 264 593 220
Price: Moderate

Bricks
A one-time beer hall reinvented as chic modern bistro, with a globe-trotting menu and a prime riverside location.

Strada Horea
Cluj-Napoca
Romania
Tel: +40 364 730 615
Price: Moderate

Camino
An informal courtyard café tucked away in the heart of the old city, with Italian-inspired offerings in the kitchen and a loyal local following.

Cluj-Napoca
Romania
Tel: +40 749 200 117
Price: Cheap

Nightlife in Cluj-Napoca
As a university town, Cluj-Napoca offers plenty of entertainment after hours, from moody cellar bars and jazz clubs to cavernous nightclubs and elegant theatres and music halls. Many of the best nightspots are south of the centre in the bustling university quarter.

Janis Club
A legendary dance club, with nightly parties, neon-coloured drinks and DJs spinning rock, dance and pop.

Bulevardul Eroilor 5
400129 Cluj-Napoca
Romania

Diesel
The top choice for glitz and glam in the heart of Cluj-Napoca, with cool cocktails, cool DJs and even cooler patrons.
**Atelier Café**

A modern take on the jazz café, with live shows, arty events, and chairs and lanterns made from corrugated cardboard.

Memorandumului, nr. 9
400114 Cluj-Napoca
Romania
Tel: +40 264 450 655

**La Stuf**

A moody basement bar from the team behind Janis, adorned with hippy murals and broken pianos and guitars.

Piaţa Unirii 19
400129 Cluj-Napoca
Romania

**National Theatre Lucian Blaga**

A elegant, Viennese theatre hall, staging shows by the Romanian National Theatre and Romanian Opera.

Piaţa Ștefan cel Mare 2-4
400192 Cluj-Napoca
Romania
Tel: +40 264 591 799

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**Calendar of events**

**Transilvania Rally**

Daring drivers speed, bounce and spin on gravel and asphalt in a testing course starting from Cluj-Napoca and racing round the neighbouring countryside. Thousands of fans gather at the roadside to cheer them on as they battle to gain control of the race.

**May 2019**
transilvaniarally.ro/

Venue: Rural roads around Cluj-Napoca

**Transilvania International Film Festival**

Romania’s first international feature film festival has been entertaining cinema lovers since 2002 and now attracts around 60,000 film fans to almost 400 screenings. It’s a terrific chance to catch new Romanian releases, take part in lively workshops and seminars, or mingle with the glitterati.
31 May - 9 June 2019
tiff.ro/
Venue: Various venues

**Très Court International Film Festival**

There’s no time to snooze during the movies at this nanofest, as each film is no more than three minutes long. Billing itself as ‘an event without borders’, the films are screened simultaneously in nearly 100 cities in over 20 countries.

7 - 16 June 2019
trescourt.com/en
Venue: Various venues

**Delahoya**

Inspired by Berlin’s Love Parade, Delahoya kicked off in 1997 and is Romania’s oldest electronic music festival. Live artists and DJs perform and spin house, drum ‘n’ bass and techno beats, keeping festival goers on their toes into the early hours.

June 2019
www.delahoyafestival.ro/
Venue: Padurea Hoia

**Jazz in the Park**

Launched in summer 2013, Jazz in the Park’s inaugural event saw crowds pouring into the park armed with picnics and blankets for a packed day of live jazz, folk, blues and classical music. The festival proved a hit and looks set to remain a favourite fixture on Cluj-Napoca’s summer calendar.

June - July 2019
www.jazzinthepark.ro/en/
Venue: Parcul Central

**Photo Romania Festival**

Every year, amateurs and pros land on Cluj-Napoca for 10 days of cutting-edge exhibitions, intense debates, creative workshops and photography competitions. Visitors might hear insights into sports photojournalism, pick up new Photoshop tips or attend a gala concert or fashion show.

October 2019
www.photoromaniafestival.ro/
Venue: Various venues

**Comedy Cluj International Film Festival**

Belly chuckles are guaranteed at this film festival dedicated to comedies. On the go for several years now, the competition invites professional submissions from across the globe as well as showcasing works by film students. Directors, actors and critics also take part in thought-provoking discussions and debates.
Hotels

Hotels in Cluj-Napoca

Cluj-Napoca has hotels for all budgets, from student-oriented hostels to atmospheric heritage properties and comfortable chain hotels. Many rooms have a slightly old-fashioned feel, but a number of hotels are pushing the boundaries with modern boutique styling.

Opera Plaza

Guests are drawn to this downtown hotel by superior dining and smart modern rooms with acres of floor-space.

Piața Unirii 30
400098 Cluj-Napoca
Romania
Tel: +40 264 569 952

Category: Expensive

Golden Tulip Ana Dome

A sleek, modern property offering stylish rooms with floral prints and flowing drapes and a handy location in the university quarter.

Piața Unirii 30
400098 Cluj-Napoca
Romania
Tel: +40 264 569 952

Category: Expensive

Hampton by Hilton Cluj-Napoca

Smart, modern and comfortable, the Hampton by Hilton is just minutes from the best of the city’s bars and restaurants.

Bulevardul 21 Decembrie 1989 67
400124 Cluj-Napoca
Romania

Category: Moderate

Hotel Confort

A stylish renovation with subtle earth tones and the latest tech has elevated this popular hotel to the boutique category.

Piața Unirii 30
400098 Cluj-Napoca
Romania
Tel: +40 264 569 952

Category: Moderate

Vila Meteor

Simple inexpensive rooms in a central location near the botanical gardens.
Piața Unirii 30
400098 Cluj-Napoca
Romania
Tel: +40 264 569 952

Category: Cheap