

Pillars of Peace - Romania

The country

Romania is a country which lies in southeastern Europe. It has an area of 238,397 km² and a population of 19 million people (2023). Romania is the twelfth-largest country in Europe and the sixth-most populous member state of the European Union.

The capital of the Romania is Bucharest.

Romania is neighboring Ukraine to the north, the Republic of Moldova to the northeast, the Black Sea to the southeast, Bulgaria to the south, Serbia to the southwest and Hungary to the west.

It has a very balanced topographic structure, with roughly one third mountains (the Carpathian Mountains), one third hills and one third plains. It is bound by the Danube River to the south and the Prut River to the east.

The Romanian people are descendants of the Dacians who lived in the mountains north of the Danubian Plain and in the Transylvanian Basin, and of the ancient Romans who conquered southern Transylvania under the emperor Traian in 105.

This identity has somewhat been reshaped following the centuries-long interaction of the Romanians with the migration waves, with the occupants that came, throughout the centuries (such as the Ottomans) and with its neighbors (of the Slavic family).

Still, the Romanian language remains one of the Latin / Romance family, alongside others such as French, Italian or Spanish.

The climate of the country is predominantly temperate-continental and includes four distinct seasons.

Romania comprises a number of geographic regions: in the eastern part of the country – Moldova (next to the independent Republic of Moldova); in the southern part of the country – Wallachia; in the southeast, with its Black Sea coastline – Dobruja; in western Romania – the historic Banat region; in the northeastern part of the country – Transylvania.

The country is divided into 41 counties and the municipality of Bucharest.

The stone

Among the counties of Romania, one of them is Prahova, from which the stone in this project originates. Although this is a normal river stone, its presence among the pillars of peace is significant in many ways. Behind it lie the people, the history and the geography and of an entire Romanian realm...

This stone comes from the village of Brebu Mănăstirei, situated in the Doftana Valley, in the Prahova County, in Romania. However, most probably it got there from the Doftana River, which runs close by.

The Doftana River has its source in the Paltinu Mountain. Although it is not large at its origin, it is fed by 17 streams along its 50 km length until it flows into the Prahova River, accumulating a basin area of 418 km². Its volume of water has led to the construction of the Paltinu Reservoir and Paltinu Dam at the confluence of the Doftana River with the Păltinoasa and Secăria streams. This hydropower system supplies drinking and industrial water to the municipalities of Câmpina and Ploiești, as well as to the Brazi industrial platform, and also produces electricity with a 10 MW micro-hydropower plant.

The village of Brebu Mănăstirei is well-known for manifestations such as the Festivalul Cașcavelei (The Cașcavelei Festival) and Festivalul Dulceței (The Jam Festival).

In fact, cașcaveaua is a typical product for this region. It is an unfermented, very lightly salted and smoked curd that combines the essence of wild flowers with the bitter taste of mustard. The curd has been produced for hundreds of years in the Doftana Valley and has its own festival, held annually in September.

Another important historical landmark of Brebu Mănăstirei is the Casa Domnească (The Brebu Ruler's House).

The Brebu Ruler's House is one of the oldest medieval houses in the Wallachian area, mentioned for the first time in 1640, in the time of ruler Matei Basarab. It was the residence of the ruling families, both in times of peace and war. It had a defensive-military character, but also for prayer, as the Brebu Monastery is located in its courtyard. This building's construction was completed in 1690, during the reign of ruler Constantin Brâncoveanu.

Today, it is the venue for cultural events and also a museum which can be visited, as its interior is a journey into the Romanian Middle Ages (a collection of old books and other valuable documents of the time, icons, medieval clothing and personal belongings).

In the immediate neighbourhood of Brebu there is another historic landmark: the Doftana Prison (Închisoarea Doftana). This is a former Romanian penitentiary located in the village of Doftana, in the municipality of Telega, a few kilometres from Brebu and around 100 kilometres north of Bucharest. Built in 1895, the prison was used in the 1930s to incarcerate political prisoners (particularly Communists). Under the Communist regime, it was transformed into the Romanian Communist Party Museum. Although it has been closed and abandoned, it remains one of the places that were deeply revered by the Communist Party and the dictator Nicolae Ceauşescu who was one of the communists that spent time imprisoned there.