



## Romania 2016 Crime & Safety Report

Travel Health and Safety; Transportation Security; Stolen items; Theft; Fraud; Assault; Financial Security; Drug Trafficking; Human Trafficking; Counterfeiting; Cyber; Winter weather; Riots/Civil Unrest; Earthquakes; Disease Outbreak

Europe > Romania; Europe > Romania > Bucharest

2/9/2016

### Overall Crime and Safety Situation

Post Crime Rating: Low

### Crime Threats

Most crimes against visitors are limited to crimes of opportunity. Travelers should be aware of scams involving individuals posing as plainclothes police officers; approaches of “quick friendship” at train/subway stations; and pickpocketing in crowded areas. Historically, panhandlers – often groups of children -- can be aggressive and have resorted to grabbing/tearing clothing in their efforts to distract and steal from their target.

Extreme care should be taken when patronizing “night clubs,” which can charge exorbitant prices and are relentless in pursuing payment. Additionally, simple assaults directed against Americans outside of clubs, usually late at night, after alcohol has been consumed and the

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victim is alone are possible.

Credit card and Internet fraud are among the most common crimes affecting foreigners.

Organized crime threats include drug smuggling, cyber crime, human trafficking, financial crime, and counterfeiting. Romania is actively fighting Trafficking in Persons (TIP) and illegal migration as part of its role as a guardian to one of the European Union's main external borders. Economic and financial crimes continue to be a threat, and the authorities expect an increase of illegitimate activities like cigarette and alcohol smuggling and sales of counterfeit products due to unfavorable economic conditions all over the world.

### Cybersecurity Issues

Cyber crime is a major threat and a constant challenge for the local law enforcement, as it grows constantly and spreads across the borders, despite the efforts of the authorities to combat this phenomenon through international cooperation. Phishing, credit card fraud, fraudulent electronic bids, and hacking are some of the notable trends. One of the continuing priorities of the General Inspectorate of the Romanian Police is to increase the effectiveness of its counter-organized crime units in order to react to the new threats and challenges posed by criminals in the region.

### Other Areas of Concern

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The SE Ferentari area of Bucharest has a higher rate of drug crimes and warrants extra awareness.

## Transportation-Safety Situation

### Road Safety and Road Conditions

Driving is hazardous and is perhaps the biggest safety concern that visitors will encounter. At times, there is little regard for commonly accepted rules of the road. While traffic codes were improved legislatively, the government eased enforcement.

Visitors who self-drive must familiarize themselves with Romanian traffic laws. It is advised that travelers driving between cities do so only during the day, as there is little lighting on roads outside of major cities. Drivers should be aware of pedestrians, farm animals, and no shoulders when driving in the countryside. Additionally, if an accident takes place in a rural location between cities, emergency medical response may be severely delayed and will not meet U.S. standards.

Romania experiences severe winters, and it is important to note that roads are not maintained to the same standard as those in the U.S. Travelers must be prepared for these conditions and expect lengthy delays if traveling by vehicle, train, or air during the winter.

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## Public Transportation Conditions

Train travel is inexpensive, convenient, and can be enjoyable if you are careful. Crimes against train passengers are not uncommon, particularly in the rural areas and on overnight trains. A number of thefts and assaults have occurred on trains, including thefts from passengers in closed compartments. If you are considering a trip via train in the near future, please consider the following advice:

Do not travel alone IF you can avoid it. Without exception, every incident reported to the Embassy has involved a lone traveler. This is especially true if you are contemplating taking an "overnight train." If you are traveling with a small group on the overnight train, RSO suggests that you sleep in shifts. This will allow you to protect your belongings.

Do not leave your personal property unattended while you use the restroom or visit another railcar to purchase a snack. The majority of the thefts reported to RSO involve this scenario. Laptops, cell phones, I-pods, wallets, and purses are the favorites.

Avoid spending a great deal of time at the train station, particularly late at night. Travelers have reported approaches of "quick friendship," pickpocketing in crowded terminals, aggressive panhandlers, and encounters with inebriated/emotionally disturbed individuals.

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If you are approached by someone claiming to represent the rail company, and there is a dispute about your ticket, DO NOT relocate to the crew coach to resolve the disagreement.

Your accommodation and class of service while traveling by train can make a difference. We strongly urge you to pay a little extra for the roomier first class seating options, which afford more privacy. Comfort and privacy decrease with lower classes of service.

Visitors should exercise care and rely on the recommendations of hotels and dining establishments when selecting taxis. Dishonest cab drivers have been known to take advantage of unsuspecting visitors.

## **Terrorism Threat**

Post Terrorism Rating: Medium

### Local, Regional, and International Terrorism Threats/Concerns

There have been no recent cases or reports of regional terrorism in Romania. While the possibility of an international or transnational terrorism incident targeting Americans in Romania is unlikely, you should still adhere to basic security practices.

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## **Political, Economic, Religious, and Ethnic Violence**

Post Political Violence Rating: Low

### Civil Unrest

Since the collapse of the former communist regime in 1989, Romania has had no major instances of civil unrest, although large protests occurred in 2015 against government corruption following a disco fire that resulted in the deaths and injuries of several hundred patrons. The government grants permission to groups who wish to assemble for demonstration purposes, and a permit is required by these groups in accordance with Romanian law. Demonstrations are normally well-contained, and the police are close at hand, and no major anti-American protests have occurred. Nevertheless, for general safety purposes, it is wise to stay away from these gatherings and be alert to the fact that normal traffic patterns can be disrupted during and just after the event.

## **Post-Specific Concerns**

### Environmental Hazards

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Several cities, to include Bucharest, are located in active seismic zones. The last major earthquake in Bucharest took place in 1977, with a loss of over 1,000 lives, and smaller quakes continue to take place on a frequent basis.

Civil authorities have plans in place for major disasters, but financial resources to prepare for natural disasters are not available, and local authorities would be quickly overwhelmed in such an event. Travelers should assume that in the event of a natural disaster authorities will determine priorities - with no guaranteed support for visitors.

### Drug-related Crimes

Romania is a major transit point for various drugs to include heroin from the East and cocaine from South America.

### Kidnapping Threat

Kidnappings are uncommon, though there continue to be "child custody" cases reported to the Embassy.

### Police Response

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The level of assistance that can be expected from police varies. Authorities are often ineffective at deterring crime, and response to emergency calls can be too slow to disrupt incidents in progress. Police do have the capability to conduct complex criminal investigations but are heavily burdened with petty crimes. If a victim desires a serious response by the local authorities, s/he must be prepared to devote time and effort to wade through local bureaucracy. If a visitor is on a schedule that precludes this time, it should be assumed that there will be no legal or law enforcement resolution of the incident.

Legitimate plain clothed police officers do not ask travelers to present identification.

#### How to Handle Incidents of Police Detention or Harassment

Call the U.S. Embassy at: 021-200-3300 (normal working hours) or 021-200-3433 (after hours and weekends).

#### Crime Victim Assistance

Call the U.S. Embassy at: 021-200-3300 (normal working hours) or 021-200-3433 (after hours and weekends).

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Local police phone numbers are:

Auto Accidents: 021-9545

Traffic Police: 021- 9544 / 021-323-3030

Any emergency: 112

## **Medical Emergencies**

### Contact Information for Recommended Hospitals/Clinics

#### Emergency Hospitals

##### Floreasca Emergency Hospital

8 Calea Floreasca Street, sector 1

Tel: 021-599-2300/2257

##### Emergency Hospital for Children

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"Grigore Alexandrescu"

30-32 Iancu de Hunedoara Street, sector 1

Tel: 021-316-9366/9365

Private Clinics

Sanador Hospital

9 Sevastopol Street, sector 1

Call Center 021-9699

Reteaua Privata de Sanatate "Regina Maria"

Many locations (clinics and hospitals)

Call Center 021-9268

Biomedica Clinic

111-113 Floreasca street, sector 1

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Tel 021-311-7793/7794

### Ambulances

State Ambulance: 112

Sanador Ambulance: Call Center 021-9699

Bio-Medica Ambulance: Telephone: 0788-246-004

### Recommended Air Ambulance Services

SOS Geneva, Tel: 0041-22-785-6464

### Country-specific Vaccination and Health Guidance

H1N1 flu virus has been identified in Romania. Visitors are advised to avoid areas identified by the government as being affected by this flu. An EU-approved H1N1 vaccination is available in Romania. Embassy Bucharest reminds all visitors coming to Romania to take all suggested precautions which may be found at:  
[http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/tips\\_1232.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/tips_1232.html).

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For additional information on vaccines and health guidance, please visit the CDC at:  
<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/romania>.

## **OSAC Country Council Information**

The Embassy has established a Country Council. Please send inquiries to RSO Bryce Miles at [milesba@state.gov](mailto:milesba@state.gov) or call 021-200-3450. To reach OSAC's Europe team, please email [OSACEUR@state.gov](mailto:OSACEUR@state.gov).

## **U.S. Embassy Location and Contact Information**

### Embassy Address and Hours of Operation

4-6, Dr. Liviu Librescu Blvd.,

District 1, Bucharest

015118 Romania

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Embassy Working hours: 8:00 am - 5:00 pm, Mon-Fri. Closed on American and Romanian holidays.

### Embassy Contact Numbers

Regional Security Officer: 021 200 3450 (milesba@state.gov)

Embassy operator: X 3300

Medical Unit: X 3445

Consular Affairs (American Citizen Services): X 3535

Political/Economic Section: X 3325 / 3424

Post One (during and after business hours): X 3433

Website: <http://romania.usembassy.gov/>

### Embassy Guidance

The loss or theft abroad of a U.S. passport should be reported immediately to the local police and the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate.

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## Tips on How to Avoid Becoming a Victim

### Scams

Visitors should be aware that money exchange schemes are commonplace, and some of these scams have become rather sophisticated, involving individuals posing as plain clothed policemen who approach the potential victim, flash a "badge" or other official-looking document, and accuse the victim of changing money illegally. Once approached, the victim is asked to prove that s/he did not change money illegally and is demanded to show the "policemen" his/her money or wallet. In many of these cases, the thieves succeed in obtaining money, passports, and cell phones carried by the victims. There are other variations to this scam; sometimes the individuals pose as "militia" and request passports for an "immigration inspection." If presented with a situation like this, the visitor should insist on the presence of a uniformed police officer. If approached by someone who offers to change money on the street or by someone who accuses you of changing money illegally, you should continue walking.

Exercise caution when traveling to Romania to meet individuals known only through contact over the Internet.

### Situational Awareness Best Practices

Travelers, particularly those who plan to visit large metropolitan areas, should be aware that organized groups of thieves and pickpockets (including very young children and well-dressed

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young adults) operate in train stations and on trains, buses, and other forms of public transportation.

When dining in restaurants, visitors should not hang handbags or suit coats on the backs of chairs. Wallets and other valuables can/will be stolen if caution is not exercised.

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