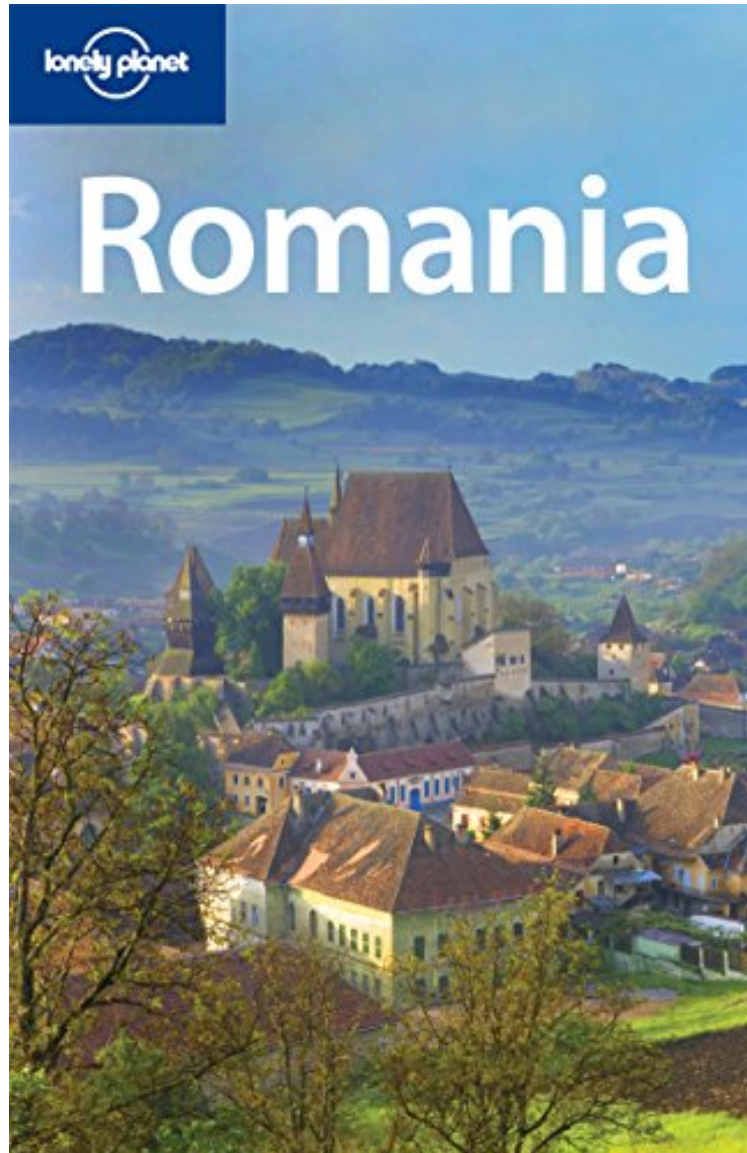


(Get free) Lonely Planet Romania (Country Travel Guide)

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Leif Pettersen, Mark Baker

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Leif Pettersen, Mark Baker : Lonely Planet Romania (Country Travel Guide) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Lonely Planet Romania (Country Travel Guide):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Looks good. Haven't used it yet By Roberta Pauley Looks good. Haven't used it yet. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A must for travelers to Romania. By Janet W. Well written and full of necessary information for Romania. 12 of 15 people found the following review helpful. Disappointing By a reader Lonely Planet, why have you forsaken us (inquiring- and budget-minded travelers)? The

guidebooks seem to be trending towards mediocre, and this is the worst one I've come across. It's short on both practical info. and historical/cultural context. The maps are largely useless. I would say that on average, about half of the streets go unnamed (not even in the tiny print). Another failing is the pronunciation guide, i.e., there is none for the consonants. One can infer a rule for the sound of, e.g., the letter "c" before the different vowels (s- or ch-sound) by looking at the phonetic spellings given, but there is no reason to make the reader do so much work. It would have been helpful to know more about business hours ("orar" or "program" in Romanian). LP says that "'Western-style' supermarkets and shopping malls are common in much of Romania". Well, if they say so; such are not common in the pedestrianised city centers where tourists otherwise have the most reason to be. I found that "non stop" convenience stores are abundant, so it is much easier to pick up necessities at odd hours than in, say, Germany or France. But it would have been very helpful to know that, e.g., there is a supermarket (Carrefour) in the Orchideea mall in Bucharest that stays open late. More generally, this LP has virtually nothing to say about what the old LP's called "self-catering". It would have been useful to know, e.g., that the "Angst" chain stores in Bucharest are groceries (wouldn't have guessed that from the name). And I wish I'd known sooner that Piata Amzei in Bucharest is the site of a nice produce market. It would be useful for vegetarians to know whether the ubiquitous ciorba (soup) is made with meat stock. (I'm guessing it is.) LP tells you that one can buy train tickets at the stations or at CFR offices, but doesn't specify where you can use a credit card to pay for them (not everywhere, I've learned). Also, trips on the line from Bucharest north to Brasov take about 2 hours longer than the times listed due to construction that's been underway since at least the summer of 2010. The introductory sections failed to answer some basic questions. For instance, who was Nicolae Balcescu, namesake of so many streets? (Leader of the 1848 Wallachian Revolution, according to Wikipedia.) Under the heading "Women in Romania", we are told about domestic violence and rape laws. Those are certainly important. But there is nothing about abortion policies, about which those of us are curious who have seen the film "4 mos., 3 wks. and 2 days" or who are old enough to remember the Romanian orphan crisis of the 1990s. But I bet we're not the market for this book. In place of information like this, we get a comparison between Vlad Tepes (the Impaler) and Dracula on such parameters as "Bi-curious" (apparently Vlad's "handlebar moustache" is a giveaway) and "Legend has it that Iasi's street system was plotted by a blindfolded, three-legged donkey. OK, we made that up, but look at the map--it's plausible". Not a great use of space, in my opinion. My irritation with this volume only increased when I read that a co-author's "weakness for pretty girls brought him to Romania in 2004". (The most generous interpretation I can put on this is that it is an obscure reference to the legend that the Romans stayed in Dacia because they found the Dacian women beautiful.) I guess obtaining useful information wasn't his priority in chatting up the locals. Post scriptum: I found the Rough Guide to Romania much more useful, although also more bulky and heavier.

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