ROMANIA

Country name	Romania
State title	Romania
Name of citizen	Romanian
Official language	Romanian
Country name in official language	România
State title in official language	România
Script	Roman
ISO-3166 country code (alpha-2/alpha-3)	RO/ROU
Capital in official language	București
English conventional name of capital	Bucharest

Introduction

Romania is a country in south-eastern Europe, usually regarded as being wholly or partly in the Balkans. Its area is 238,000 km², almost identical to Ghana, Laos or the Australian state of Victoria, or slightly smaller than the US state of Michigan. The population has been falling since 1990. On 1st July 2020 the legally resident population was 22,142,000, down 0.1% as against 1st July, 2019.[1]

Geographical Names Policy

Official Romanian place names are those in Romanian, the country's official language. Romanian is written in Roman script (the Romanian alphabet contains the 26 standard letters of the Roman alphabet plus 5 modified characters). Names should be taken from official Romanian sources and all diacritics, hyphens and capitalisation should be retained.

Names should ideally be taken from sources produced following the 1993 spelling reform, whereby some words and names previously spelt with î were changed to be spelt with â. Spellings taken from older sources may need to be changed. For further guidance see the 'Script and diacritics' section of this document or contact PCGN.

Place names in minority languages may be found locally, and some minorities have recognised status at the local level, but these are not official place names and should not be used on UK products unless specifically required, in which case guidance should be sought from PCGN.

Country name

In Romanian, the spelling *România* has been used since the 1860s, apart from 1953 to 1964 when *Romînia* was the official form.

The English spelling of the country's name has changed twice since the 1860s. Until the Second World War, the spelling *Roumania* was common (based on French: *Roumanie*); in 1926 PCGN determined a preference for Romania but the spellings *Rumania* and *Roumania* continued to be widespread.

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[1] https://insse.ro/cms/en/content/permanent-resident-population-romania-1st-july-2020

Supported by Romania's preference for the spelling *Romania* to be used in English-language contexts, this form was formalised for British official use in 1970. **Romania** is now the standard spelling in English and should be used in all English-language contexts, unless exactly quoting an old source.

Language and toponymic background

The Romanian language

Romanian is the official language of Romania and Moldova. Romanian is one of the Romance languages, i.e. it is descended primarily from Latin. In vocabulary and grammar it most closely resembles French, Portuguese, Spanish and Italian.

However, there are aspects of vocabulary (including several geographical terms), grammar and pronunciation which are not of Latin origin, but instead originate from the non-Romance languages of Romania's numerous rulers or inhabitants over the past two thousand years and more, including Hungarian, Turkish, German, Greek and Slavic languages (e.g. Bulgarian and Russian).

The imposition of the Communist regime after World War 2 resulted in some villages, roads etc. being renamed after important Communists e.g. Brașov was renamed Orașul Stalin in 1950, reverting in 1960. This renaming very rarely affected natural features. Most such changes have been reversed since the overthrow of Ceaușescu in December 1989.

Script and diacritics

All the following rules and guidelines apply to the Romanian language only. Different rules apply to names in Hungarian etc.

Prior to 1860, Romanian was normally written in a version of the Cyrillic alphabet. Since 1860, only Roman script has been used in Romania. Romanian uses all 26 letters of the Roman alphabet, but the letters k, q, w and y are only used in obvious borrowings from other languages and are unlikely to be found in place names.

Five letters with diacritics are used:

Upper case	Unicode character	Lower case	Unicode character
Ă	0102	ă	0103
Â	00C2	â	00E2
Î	00CE	î	00EE
Ș	0218	ș	0219
Ț	021A	ț	021B

Notes:
Â â and **Î î**

A and **I** can both use a circumflex accent, identical to that found in the French words *pâté* or *gîte*. However, unlike in French these two **â** and **î** are pronounced in exactly the same way as each other (*î* and *â* both represent the sound /ɨ/). Their written usage has been changed several times since 1860.

Between 1953 and 1993 the letter **â** was not used at all except (after 1964) in the country name *România* and associated adjectives (*român*, *românească*, *românești* etc.). In all other words, **î** was used instead.

Since a spelling reform in 1993, both letters are in use. **Î** is found at the beginning or the end of a word; **â** is found word-medially.

Unfortunately, the best large-scale map series available of Romania dates from the 1990s and the change from **î** to **â** has not been made on some sheets. These maps were used as a source for the GEOnet Names Server (GNS) database so this is also sometimes out of date. The Romanian GeoPortal may also not always be consistent.

These changes do not always apply to personal names. People whose names include **î** may retain this spelling.

Table: Examples of the vowels **â** and **î**.

Old (pre-1993)	New (post-1993)
Cîmpulung	*Câmpulung* [name of a populated place]
pîrîu	*pârâu* [meaning 'stream']
Sfînt	*Sfânt* [meaning 'saint']
Tîrgovişte	*Târgovişte* [name of an administrative seat]
vîrf	*vârf* [meaning 'peak']

Ş ş and Ţ ţ

Romanian can be easily distinguished from any other national European language by its use of **s** and **t** with sub-comma (*virguliţă* in Romanian). This symbol should not be a cedilla, although this is often encountered where suitable fonts are not available. Times New Roman, as used in this document, displays these characters well (see table on page 2 for the correct Unicode encodings for these characters).

Capitalisation and hyphenation

Words should be capitalised and hyphenated as they appear in reliable Romanian sources.

International Boundaries

Since the early 1990s, Romania has had international boundaries with Bulgaria, Serbia, Hungary, Ukraine and Moldova. From 1945 to the early 1990s, the neighbouring countries were Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Hungary and the USSR.

Administrative structure

The first order administrative (ADM1) division of Romania is the *judeţ* (plural: *judeţe*), usually translated as "county". There are 41 of these, plus the municipality of Bucharest (Bucureşti). The division of Romania into *judeţe* has existed since 1859, except for the period 1950 to 1968. The most recent change was in 1997, when Ilfov was created. Most *judeţe* are named after rivers or chief towns. The word *judeţ* followed by a toponym becomes definite as *judeţul*. A map of the administrative structure of Romania can be found here: https://insse.ro/cms/files/Publicatii_2020/84.Repere_economice_si_sociale_Statistica_teritoriala/reper e_economice_si_sociale_regionale_2020_statistica_teritoriala_cd_rom.pdf .

County (Judeţ)	County seat (Reşedinţa)	Notes
Alba	Alba Iulia	
Arad	Arad	
Argeş	Piteşti	

County (Județ)	County seat (Reședința)	Notes
Bacău	Bacău	
Bihor	Oradea	
Bistrița-Năsăud	Bistrița	
Botoșani	Botoșani	
Brașov	Brașov	Named Orașul Stalin between 1950 and 1960
Brăila	Brăila	
-	București	Municipiul București (Bucharest Municipality) functions as an ADM1 at the same administrative level as the counties
Buzău	Buzău	
Caraș-Severin	Reșița	
Călărași	Călărași	
Cluj	Cluj-Napoca	
Constanța	Constanța	
Covasna	Sfântu Gheorghe	Former spelling: Sfîntu Gheorghe. Hungarian names: Kovászna / Szentgyörgy (Hungarians formed 74% of the county's population in 2011).
Dâmbovița	Târgoviște	Former spellings: Dîmbovița / Tîrgoviște
Dolj	Craiova	
Galați	Galați	
Giurgiu	Giurgiu	
Gorj	Târgu Jiu	Former spelling: Tîrgu Jiu
Harghita	Miercurea Ciuc	Hungarian names: Hargita & Csíkszereda (Hungarians formed 85% of the county's population in 2011).
Hunedoara	Deva	
Ialomița	Slobozia	
Iași	Iași	
Ilfov	București	
Maramureș	Baia Mare	
Mehedinți	Drobeta-Turnu Severin	
Mureș	Târgu Mureș	Former spelling: Tîrgu Mureș
Neamț	Piatra Neamț	
Olt	Slatina	
Prahova	Ploiești	
Satu Mare	Satu Mare	
Sălaj	Zalău	

County (Județ)	County seat (Reședința)	Notes
Sibiu	Sibiu	
Suceava	Suceava	
Teleorman	Alexandria	
Timiș	Timișoara	
Tulcea	Tulcea	
Vaslui	Vaslui	
Vâlcea	Râmnicu Vâlcea	Former spelling: Rîmnicu Vîlcea
Vrancea	Focșani	

Place names in other languages

Since 1991, minority languages have been granted a degree of legal, official status in areas where minorities constitute over 20% of the population. This extends to the use of place names and primarily affects areas of Transylvania with a Hungarian-speaking population. Some Hungarian sources provide a Hungarian name for every single village, river and mountain in the pre-1918 Hungarian regions, including areas that have or had very few Hungarian inhabitants. Hungarian and other names may be encountered in many sources (including road signs) but should not be added on a map as alternative names without further guidance from PCGN.

Sources and useful references

- BBC Country Profile: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-17776265
- CIA World Factbook: https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ro.html
- FCDO Travel Advice: https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/romania
- Romanian Geoportal: https://geoportal.ancpi.ro/portal/home/
- International Organization for Standardization (ISO): www.iso.org
- ISO Online Browsing Platform (OBP): https://www.iso.org/obp/ui/
- Languages: www.ethnologue.com; www.omniglot.com
- US Board on Geographic Names GEOnet Names Server (GNS): http://geonames.nga.mil/gns/html/
- Changes of Romanian place names during the communist era, Ion Nicolae http://humangeographies.org.ro/articles/11/5NICOLAE.pdf in *Post-communist Romania: Geographical Perspectives, edited by Duncan Light and David Phinnemore, Liverpool Hope Press, 2000, pp. 1-6*
- Historical dictionary of Romania by Kurt Treptow and Marcel Popa. The Scarecrow Press, Inc. Lanham Maryland & London. 1996.
- https://www.pinterest.com/pin/457256168396433362/ (Map of Romanian dialects)
- http://www.istro-romanian.com/history/history-language.htm (Text and map of Romanian dialects)
- http://www.lowlands-l.net/anniversary/romana-info.php (Text and map of Romanian dialects)
- Romania National Statistics Institute: https://insse.ro/cms/en