

Chisinau

Photo: Leonid Andronov/Shutterstock.com



visualpower/Shutterstock.com

Chisinau appears to have little to no concern for the superficial – still very much rough around the edges and with scant tourist infrastructure, the Moldovan capital conquers with precisely its uncharted quality, an authenticity guaranteed to make off-the-beaten-path aficionados' and Soviet era enthusiasts' hearts flutter with excitement. The country's genuinely welcoming populace, free-flowing wine and overtly low travel costs all ensure its relatively obscure status isn't long to stay.

NOTE: This Guide has been limited to 20 points of interest per section. For the full guide, please visit ArrivalGuides.com



Constantin Plugari/Shutterstock.com



FrimuFilms/Shutterstock.com

QUIZ

*What Type of Traveller
Are You Based on
Your Travel IQ?*

TAKE THE QUIZ

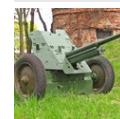
Top 5



Triumphal Arch & Nativity ...
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Stefan cel Mare Central Park
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Military Museum
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Cricova Winery
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THE CITY



Calin Stan/Shutterstock.com

With visitor numbers fixed at only a few thousand annually, Moldova remains among Europe's least visited countries, with the capital of Chisinau (Kee-shee-nau), by extension, one of its least travelled-to cities. It's a state of affairs bound to change with the coming few years, so making your way to Chisinau while its naiveté remains unperturbed is a possibility that certainly won't be around for too long.

There is plenty to do in and just out of Chisinau, and the impression one is left with following a city tour largely depends on the weather - the absence of sunshine can make Chisinau feel rather bleak and bring out the ubiquitous grey tones, whereas a bright summer day may highlight the Chisinau's abundant greenery and make for a pleasant walk in one of the parks, or people-watching at an outdoor cafe.

An excursion many find exhilarating is a short, often one-day tour down to Transnistria, a self-proclaimed independent republic that feels a lot like an open-air museum of Soviet nostalgia, not least thanks to the ubiquitous statues of Lenin dotting the capital of Tiraspol.

DO & SEE



FrimuFilms/Shutterstock.com

The city's main artery is the Stefan cel Mare Boulevard, one of many Moldovan landmarks named after the revered Stephen III of Moldavia, whose monument also marks the entry to Chisinau's central park (named, likewise, after the 16th century prince). From here, it's a manageable walk to most of Chisinau's city centre attractions. The city is delightfully green, and its pleasant parks readily provide refuge on hot summer days.

Triumphal Arch & Nativity Cathedral



Chisinau's Cathedral Park (Parcul Catedralei) is marked by two main attractions: the Nativity Cathedral, the city's primary Moldovan

Orthodox place of worship, dating to the 19th century, and Chisinau's very own Triumphal Arch, also known as the "Holy Gate".

Photo: Leonid Andronov/Shutterstock.com

Address: The Great National Assembly Square, Chisinau

Stefan cel Mare Central Park



The country's oldest park spans an impressive 7 hectares, and is very popular with the local populace, especially so during the summer months. Children's playgrounds and merry-go-rounds are in operation, making the park a good choice for families. Some of the highlights include the Avenue of the Classics of Moldovan Literature, containing busts of prominent Moldovan and Romanian authors and political figures, and the Alley of Friendship, where celebrity city visitors (the likes of Yuri Gagarin) planted a tree each.

Photo: FrimuFilms/Shutterstock.com
Address: Stefan cel Mare si Sfant Boulevard, Chisinau

Military Museum



One of the city's lesser-known highlights, the museum offers informative insight into the country's past, including WWII and Chernobyl nuclear catastrophe involvement, and covers a substantial period of Soviet regime, also detailing events that happened outside of present-day Moldova. Information in English is scarce, but many of the exhibits are self-explanatory. The outdoor display of Soviet military machines can be accessed free of charge.

Photo: adv/Shutterstock.com
Address: Strada Tighina 47, Chisinau
Phone: +373 22 272 056

National Museum of Ethnography and Natural History



The museum might as well be dubbed a collection of anything and everything, which in no way compromises its appeal, but rather makes it rank among the most curious Moldovan landmarks. From zoological exhibits and extinct animal reconstructions to traditional dress and folk artefacts, its expansive exhibits cover nearly everything under the Moldovan sun. Purchase an English-language booklet to help navigate exhibition rooms.

Photo: Iolanta Kli/Shutterstock.com
Address: Mihail Kogalniceanu 82, Chisinau
Opening hours: Tue-Sun 10am-6pm
Phone: +373 22 238 848
Internet: www.muzeu.md

Cricova Winery



A short 15-minute drive outside of Chisinau lies the country's arguably most sought-after attraction: the reputable Cricova Winery, whose products are held in high regard both locally and internationally. Guided tours of the winery and cellars are offered, many including tastings (call ahead).

Photo: Yvonne Pijnenburg-Schonewille/Shutterstock.com
Address: Strada Petru Ungureanu 1, Cricova
Phone: +373 22 604 035
Internet: www.cricova.md

Pushkin House Museum



Alexander Pushkin, the father of modern Russian literature, some of whose lines any Russian speaker is guaranteed to be able to recite from memory,

spent three fruitful years in this tiny house, exiled. It's a museum these days, and although scant English-language information is supplied in each room, anyone with a particular interest can benefit greatly from a guided tour.

Photo: Adam Jones/Flickr (image cropped)

Address: Strada Anton Pann 19, Chisinau

Opening hours: Fri-Wed 10am-4pm

Phone: +373 22 292 685

Dendrarium Park



One of the city's favourite parks offers a welcome respite on warm summer days. Its forte is the incredible diversity of plant and animal life, with

carefully curated green arrangements and blooming flowers delighting visitors. There is a children's playground on site.

Photo: Lucky Business/Shutterstock.com

Address: Ion Creanga 1, Chisinau

Phone: +373 22 719 029

Internet: www.dendrariu.md

Milestii Mici



One of Moldova's unmissable attractions is the Milestii Mici winery, located a short drive outside the city centre.

Book a guided tour of the world's largest wine cellar with a staggering 3,000,000 bottles, all contained in a former

quarry spanning dozens of underground kilometres. Only a manageable part of the storage space is visited, followed by a wine tasting and pre-bookable three-course meal at the on-site restaurant 70 metres under ground.

Photo: lmeleca (Leonid Meleca)/Shutterstock.com

Address: Milestii Mici Village

Phone: +373 22 382 333

Internet: www.milestii-mici.md

National Opera and Ballet Theatre



A classy evening out is best spent catching an opera or ballet performance at one of the best theatres of its kind in Eastern Europe. The

repertoire is regularly updated, and tickets cost a fraction of the price charged at comparable institutions across Europe.

Photo: maratr/Shutterstock.com

Address: Stefan cel Mare si Sfânt Boulevard 152, Chisinau

Phone: +373 22 245 104

Internet: www.nationalopera.md

DINING



Chumash Maxim/Shutterstock.com

Moldovan cuisine is largely made up of hearty staples like meat, potatoes and grains. It shows trace of Romanian, Russian and Turkish influence, and significant variation is present even within the relatively compact country itself,

with ethnic minorities (the Gagauz, Ukrainians and Bessarabian Bulgarians) having their own characteristic specialities. Mamaliga (a variation of polenta) is a ubiquitous Moldovan staple which often constitutes the base of a meal - have it with pork or beef, and wash it all down with fine wines from nearby wineries.

Gok-Oguz

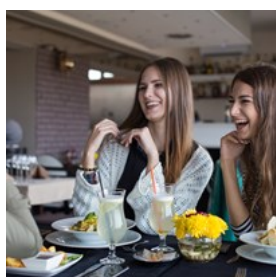


The charming, highly stylised Gok-Oguz specialises in Gagauzian cuisine, a unique blend of Russian, Romanian and Turkic flavours customary

in Moldova's south. Lamb is the speciality that comes in many forms, but the menu extends to include an abundance of further options.

Photo: rocharibeiro/Shutterstock.com
Address: Calea Orheiului 19/A, Chisinau
Opening hours: Daily 10am-11pm
Phone: +373 22 468 852
Internet: www.gok-oguz.md

Gastrobar



Gastrobar is all the rage in savvy circles, an establishment both upscale in quality and casual in demeanour, with an extensive menu of

international specialities and an inviting atmosphere with no pretence. Thursdays and Fridays see deliveries of fresh oysters.

Photo: Gendesign/Shutterstock.com
Address: Alexandru Bernardazzi 66, Chisinau
Phone: +373 689 06 545

Madam Wong



Madam Wong is a fantastic find for lovers of Asian cuisine, "Asian" in the broadest of terms, ranging from Japanese to Indian, via China, Vietnam and a few other culinary traditions.

Prices are staggeringly low for the quality and assortment.

Photo: 9to9studio/Shutterstock.com
Address: Pushkin 44/1, Chisinau
Phone: +37360902000
Internet: www.madamwong.md

Forshmak

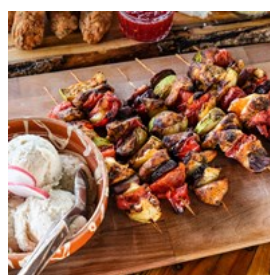


Forshmak captures the nostalgic feel of old Chisinau while elevating straightforward dishes familiar to any Moldovan from a young age, and

does so in a heavily stylised interior designed to evoke pleasant associations. If you're dining with a Russian speaker, ask them to solve the crossword puzzle on your table - the reward is a free serving of forshmak, the restaurant's namesake dish.

Photo: Aksenya/Shutterstock.com
Address: Constantin Negruzzi Boulevard 2/4, Chisinau
Phone: +373 788 88 829
Internet: www.forshmak.md

Vatra Neamului



One of the best choices for traditional Moldovan dining in Chisinau, Vatra Neamului features local specialities and provides for a complete cultural immersion experience with live music played in

the evenings.

Photo: Calin Stan/Shutterstock.com

Address: Puskin 20b, Chisinau

Phone: +373 22 226 839

Internet: www.vatraneamului.md

Grill House



A consistent locals' favourite, Grill House holds up the promise of its name by offering up a delicious array of freshly grilled meats, alongside a

selection of scrumptious pasta dishes, salads, and desserts. It's fantastic value for money.

Photo: Rawpixel.com/Shutterstock.com

Address: Armeneasca 24, Chisinau

Phone: +373 790 00 010

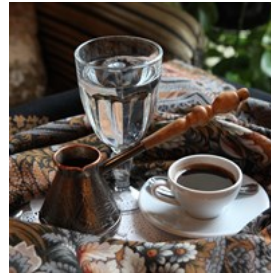
CAFES



nelen/Shutterstock.com

Cafe culture is on the rise, and every year sees welcome new additions to the Chisinau cafe scene. Tucan Coffee is a trendy coffee shop chain that rose to prominence in recent years, alongside thematic cafes and restaurants serving up Soviet nostalgia on a plate. The best on-the-go bite one can have in Chisinau is a placinta - a typical stuffed pastry with cheese or other fillings.

Coffee Molka



Coffee Molka wears its speciality as a badge of honour, making for an entertaining look around with its impressive collection of vintage

coffee grinders displayed proudly on shelves. Coffee is taken seriously here (try the traditional Turkish espresso), and casual live music evenings are hosted.

Photo: Sergey Bezgodov/Shutterstock.com

Address: Mihai Eminescu 72, Chisinau

Opening hours: Daily 8am-10pm

Phone: +373 22 212 654

Rozmarin



Rozmarin looks and feels like it could easily fit in anywhere in Europe, including upcoming neighbourhoods of trendsetting

Scandinavian capitals. The menu is extensive and leans heavily towards Italian flavours. The main selling point is their bread: baked freshly in-house and used in the cooking of mouthwatering sandwiches.

Photo: Rawpixel.com/Shutterstock.com

Address: Stefan cel Mare si Sfânt Boulevard 202, Chisinau

Phone: +373 680 23 330

Internet: www.rozmarin.md

More Info: Kentford Building

Propaganda Cafe



Picking up on the city's trend of eateries and cafes designed to emulate a forgone era (the 20th century tends to get most traction), Propaganda

plays with the Soviet times in its name, dish titles, and interior design choices. It attracts students and local elites, especially so on live music nights.

Photo: Bobex-73/Shutterstock.com
Address: A. Şciusev 70 Chisinau
Phone: +373 600 96 666

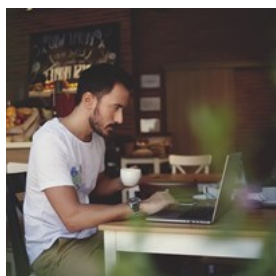
La Placinte



For cheap and cheerful local eats, try one of La Placinte's several Chisianu locations. Finish off your meal of traditional Moldovan specialities with an actual placinta - a soft pastry of layered dough filled with soft cheese or another stuffing (these are ubiquitous in town).

Photo: Kirill Z/Shutterstock.com
Address: Mitropolit Dosoftei St 100, Chisinau
Phone: +373 22 211 211
Internet: www.laplacinte.md

Tucano Coffee



The trendiest coffee shop chain in town continues to attract patrons to its four locations each named after an established coffee nation. Particular focus is placed on presentation, each cup crafted to look like a work of drinkable art. Sandwiches, bagels, salads, and a variety of desserts are on offer too.

Photo: GaudiLab/Shutterstock.com
Address: Alexander Pushkin St 15, Chisinau
Phone: +373 699 43 275
Internet: www.tucanocoffee.com

BARS & NIGHTLIFE



Vershinin89/Shutterstock.com

Chisinau is known to have an active nightlife, fuelled in part by quality Moldovan wines (which are also unbelievably low-priced), and part the animated spirit of the capital's young residents. The city has seen a few trend-setting establishments open their doors in recent years, slowly but surely setting counter example to some of the tired flashing-lights-and-go-go-girls clubs that once monopolised the local clubbing scene.

PartyZAN Game Club



Hidden in plain sight, this semi-private game club can be accessed by regular members or those who are determined enough to wait for the ringing door bell to have an effect. Board game lovers will rejoice at the broad selection of free-to-rent games, while others will certainly delight in pool, darts, table soccer, and other active pursuits.

Photo: Gohengs/Shutterstock.com
Address: Onisifor Ghibu 9/1, Chisinau
Phone: +373 22 581 048
Email: partyzanclub@mail.ru

Kira's Club



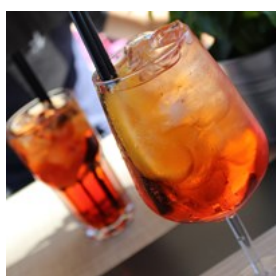
This cool, somewhat underground space is a favourite among trendy local youth and those who happen to be let in on its existence. In pleasant contrast to many old-school, quintessentially Eastern European night clubs, Kira's is a no-pretence, inviting location with an extensive Asian-leaning menu, a plethora of drinks, and late-night dance parties.

Photo: AlessandroBiascioli/Shutterstock.com

Address: Veronica Micle 7, Chisinau

Phone: +373 797 40 927

Mojito



Mojito does not exactly have any standout features, but its prime location smack in the city centre and round-the-clock hours of operation make it a highly popular gathering place, especially so during the summer months, when its outdoor terrace teems with cocktail-drinkers both day and night.

Photo: Nienke Dek/Shutterstock.com

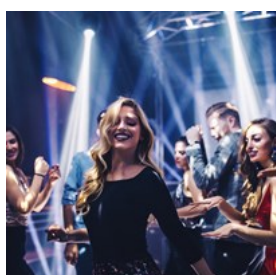
Address: Tricolorului, Chisinau

Opening hours: 24/7

Phone: +373 601 91 111

Email: restaurantmojito@gmail.com

Sky Bar



This flashy, upscale bar and club is unique for its rooftop setting that affords panoramic views of Chisinau. Come here if you have cash to spare, and if a quintessentially Eastern European

clubbing experience complete with go go dancers and flashing neon lights is your idea of fun.

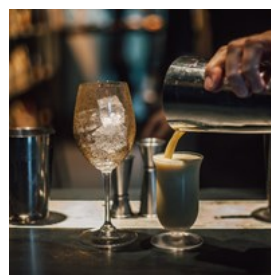
Photo: bbernard/Shutterstock.com

Address: Albisoara 4, Chisinau

Phone: +373 767 39 739

Email: chisinau.skybar@gmail.com

Barbar



One of the city's hipster haunts, Barbar is a cafe by day and bar/club at night. It's a casual venue that draws a young-ish crowd of locals to its rowdy weekend parties and nighttime events.

Photo: Aleksandrs Muiznieks/Shutterstock.com

Address: Mihai Eminescu 45, Chisinau

Phone: +373 785 13 513

Email: barbarcomix@gmail.com

SHOPPING



Yvonne Pijnenburg-Schonewille/Shutterstock.com

Shopping is an enjoyable affair in Chisinau, with plenty of local products on offer to suit any budget. Apart from a couple of bottles of wine that every visitor simply must make room in their suitcase for (if in doubt, go for Cricova, Mileştii Mici or Purcari), there are Moldovan art and traditional crafts, which span knit accessories and embroidery, wood and stone carvings, pottery, woven rugs and intricately painted

souvenir eggs.

Carpe Diem Wine Shop & Bar



This right here might just be your favourite Chisinau discovery. Carpe Diem Wine Shop & Bar boasts insanely knowledgeable staff,

trained to provide comprehensive information on all things Moldovan wines and arrange tastings based on customer preferences. It's best to book a tasting in advance, but try your luck and pop in even without a prior reservations. Wines are also sold by the bottle - you might have to do a double-take to confirm prices are, indeed, that low.

Photo: Africa Studio/Shutterstock.com

Address: Columna 136/3A, Chisinau

Phone: +373 22 844 846

Internet: www.wineshop.md

Piata Centrala



This busy central market is where locals shop for all manner of produce sourced from around the country, with some cheap knick knack imports

thrown into the mix. If you're lucky, you might come across a few vendors peddling original Soviet memorabilia. In the souvenir department, hand-made socks, scarves and other accessories are good purchases.

Photo: Ververidis Vasilis/Shutterstock.com

Address: Strada Tighina, Chisinau

Phone: +373 22 277 848

Galeria L



For quality artwork produced by local creators, try this shop cum gallery at the corner of Pushkin and Bucuresti Streets. Art is both exhibited (entry to the gallery comes at a micro fee) and sold.

Photo: Viacheslav Nikolaenko/Shutterstock.com

Address: București 64, Chisinau

Phone: +373 22 221 975

MallDova



To do all your shopping under one roof, try the MallDova shopping centre, the first one of its kind in the country, inaugurated nearly a decade ago. Expect local and international brand stores, along with a selection of dining and entertainment options.

Photo: Syda Productions/Shutterstock.com

Address: Arborilor 21, Chisinau

Internet: www.shoppingmalldova.md

Kuki Jewellery



home.

Understated jewellery featuring ethnic patterns can make for some rather unique souvenirs for female travellers or friends and family back

Photo: Alena Ozerova/Shutterstock.com

Address: Alexander Pushkin 26, Chisinau

Phone: +373 695 77 038

Internet: www.kuki.md

TOURIST INFORMATION



melanie_10/Shutterstock.com

Passport / Visa



Visiting Moldova is visa-free (for tourist stays up to 90 days) for all EU citizens, as well as nationals of the USA, Canada, Albania,

Andorra, Armenia, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Barbados, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Chile, Ecuador, Georgia, Hong Kong, Iceland, Israel, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Liechtenstein, Macau, Macedonia, Malaysia, Monaco, Montenegro, New Zealand, Norway, Russia, San Marino, Serbia, Seychelles, Singapore, South Korea, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United States, Uzbekistan, and Vatican City. Nationals of countries not listed above must consult the website of the Moldova Ministry of Foreign affairs for up-to-date information on visa procedures.

Photo: TukTuk Design/Shutterstock.com

Internet: www.mfa.gov.md/entry-visas-moldova/citizens-additional-checks

Airport



The Chisinau International Airport, located only 13km outside of downtown Chisinau, is the country's main air hub, but is very compact in size regardless of the fact.

Of all the ways to reach town taxi is most convenient: use the official airport service and always confirm the price prior to boarding.

Public transportation is very inexpensive and is a great budget alternative. The trolleybus no. 30 runs from 6am to 11pm and hits most city centre locations en route. Taxi van no. 165 takes a similar route and departs at 10 minute intervals.

Photo: Juan Garces

Best Time to Visit



Chisinau may look admittedly grim during certain times of year, which might add to the appeal for those who come to soak in the grey Soviet aesthetic. The rest will do better planning a trip for the period from late spring to early fall, when temperatures are at their most comfortable and various events and festivals are held throughout the city and beyond.

Photo: VectorA/Shutterstock.com

Public Transport



The public transportation system of Chisinau includes buses, trolleybuses, trams, and fixed-route taxi vans, of which the latter are the fastest and most convenient.

When travelling by taxi van, ask the driver if the van stops next to a known landmark such as a large mall, monument, or square (routes are sometimes indicated in the front window). Prepare small change to pay fares on board (directly to the driver in mini-vans and a designated ticket vendor in trolleybuses).

As of 2018, it is also possible to purchase public transport tickets via QIWI terminals dotting the city, found at most shopping centres and many supermarkets.

Photo: Pierre-Luc Auclair

Taxi



Do not be fooled by the seeming abundance of taxi services in Chisinau - hiring a cab may prove overwhelmingly harder than expected. For many drivers, even those officially employed with a taxi company, making the trip to some locations proves so unprofitable they refuse to take orders altogether and opt for picking up passengers off the side of the road, charging upwards of 30% more than what the trip would have cost if pre-booked.

Best luck is rumoured to be had with apps, such as the Russian Yandex.Taxi and recently

launched Uber.

Regular official taxi service phone numbers always start with 14, and are always 5 digits.

Taxi Meridian

Tel.14222

Photo: ArrivalGuides

Pharmacy



There are plenty of pharmacies all throughout the city. Felicia is a chain whose outlets often operate on a 24/7 basis.

Photo: Gemma Garner

Address: Pushkin 28, Chisinau

Opening hours: 24/7

Internet: www.felicia.md

Post



The city's main post office is located at:

Photo: Andy Fuchs

Address: Bulevardul Ștefan cel Mare și Sfânt 134, Chisinau

Internet: www.posta.md

Telephone



373 - Moldova country code
2 - Chisinau city code

Photo: Jardson Almeida

Electricity



220 V, 50 Hz Type C and
F sockets

Photo: Stirling Tschan

Population

723,000

Currency

Moldovan leu

Newspapers

Kishinevskie Novosti (Chisinau News)
Moldova Suverena (Sovereign Moldova)
Nezavisimaya Moldova (Independent Moldova)
Literature si Arta (Literature and Art)

Emergency numbers

112
Fire: 901
Police: 902
Ambulance: 903

Tourist information

Moldova Tourist Information Centre
83 Stefan cel Mare Str., Chisinau
www.moldova.travel
Mon-Fri 9am-6pm