

Moldavia



Chisinau
March 13-16, 2013



Chisinau

After a stop-over in Riga (from Stockholm) it is only 2h 20min flight to get to Chisinau, the capital of Moldova. 3 days and 2 nights does not really give you time to see more than the capital and its surroundings. We decided to explore the city as much as possible by foot. This is also usually the best way to get a feeling for a city, its architecture and character. There is really not a lot of information, or good guide books, available on the city and country.

I would recommend the "app" Triposo and to use www.tripadvisor.se for restaurant recommendations.

In terms of sights and old architecture I did not find Chisinau particularly interesting. Yes, there are a few things to see such as the Pushkin museum, the Nasterea Domnului Cathedral and the Jewish cemetery which are all listed as worthwhile. Again, "getting lost" on foot is by far the most interesting way to take in the city. The main street Stefan cel Mare runs through the city centre and is a good starting point..



"Walk-about" in Chisinau...

We were fortunate with the weather ca: 12-15 degrees when the sun was out. We got a lot of exercise from just walking around and exploring the city on foot!



The city market

Where it all happens – colourful and packed with people...

The outdoors city market is located in the city centre between Stefan cel Mare and Street Armeneascha. This market is huge and filled with just about anything one could need as a Moldavian: Meat, fish, vegetables and food in general as well as clothes and miscellaenous articles.

This is a genuine market with no tourists (there were actually very few tourists in Chisinau – full stop). This is possitive as people are curious and easy to make contact with – even though there is a language barrier. We were invited to try just about anything on sale including the occational homemade brandy. Try their home made cheese also – delicious.

This is also by far the best place to take photographs. Most people don't mind being photographed, but be careful anyway and ask before. There is still some old style "sovjet suspiciousness" to be found.

There are some foodstalls and smaller "eateries" where one can stop and get a bite to eat as well. Otherwise, try the many restaurants on and off the main street. There is really quite a good selection. If you want to play it safe – there is always the Mac Donalds option.

In the evenings we found that many of the listed and recommended restaurants were fully booked – so book ahead!

I would recommend the following restaurants; *Tucano Coffee* on Pushkin street. *Pegas* on Albisoara 20/1 (int'l cuisine). *La Taifas* on Bucuresti str 67 is a must (best traditional moldavian food in town). *Cafe Cafe* (ranked no 1) or *Cactus* or the *Veranda*.



Prestige Hotel of Pushkin street !



Tucano Coffee on Pushkin street

This "apartment" hotel can be booked over the internet. Last time I checked it was rated 4.3 (5) and is quite affordable. The location is very convenient on Pushkin street, which is just a couple of streets off the main street – Stefan cel Mare.

They don't serve breakfast, but there is an excellent place just 200 meters outside – *Tucano Coffee*



The receptionist at the hotel is not the most client oriented on this planet! Consider yourself having been warned!

Cricova a Moldivian winery

A taxi drive 30 minutes outside of Chisinau lays the Cricova winyard and production facilities. Book ahead to make sure you get a guided wine-tasting tour!



The wine cellars of Cricova is the second largest wine cellar in Moldova, after [Milestii Mici](#) (largest in the world). It boasts a mere 120 kilometres (75 mi) of labyrinthine roadways, versus MM's 200 kilometres (120 mi), tunnels have existed under Cricova since the 15th century, when limestone was dug out to help build [Chişinău](#). They were converted into an underground wine emporium in the 1950s.

Half of the roadways are used for wine storage. The roads are named by the wines they store. This "wine city" has its warehouses, tasting rooms and other facilities underground. It goes down to 100 metres (330 ft) below ground and holds 1.25 million bottles of rare [wine](#). The oldest wine dates back to 1902. The temperature is maintained at about 12 °C (54 °F) all year round (which is perfect for wine). This place is especially famous for hiding Jews in wine barrels during the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union.

The territory used to be a mine for [limestone](#), a building material. Some of these premium wines are really very good! Buy som and bring home!





Chisinau, Moldavia...

Chişinău (Romanian pronunciation: [kiʃiˈnəw]; historically also known as **Kishinev**, from **Russian**: Кишинёв) is the capital and largest city of **Moldova**. It is also its main industrial and commercial centre, and is located in the middle of the country, on the river **Bîc**. According to January 2012 official estimates, Chişinău proper has a population of 667,600 and the municipality of Chişinău is home to 800.600 residents.[3]

Chişinău is the most economically prosperous locality in Moldova, and its largest transportation hub. As the most economically and socially important municipality in Moldova, the city has a broad range of educational facilities.

