



# Romania

Status: Republic in southeastern Europe

Area: 92,043 sq. miles

Population: 21,666,350 (2015 est.)

Currency: 100 bani = 1 leu, \$1 = 4.16 Lei (2015)



6-para carmine stamp from 1862, Scott 12.



2-parale Prince Cuza from 1865 (Scott 22).

Romania is about the size of Oregon and bordered by, clockwise from the east, the Black Sea, Bulgaria, Serbia, Hungary, Ukraine and Moldova (once part of Romania). The city of Galați in eastern Romania is the largest port on the Danube. Romania was settled by Thracians about 200 BC and conquered by Rome in the first century of the Christian era. It was Rome's northeastern border province of Dacia for about two centuries. The Goths forced the Romans to withdraw south of the Danube, leaving the area open to wave after wave of Barbarian invasions for the next 500 years. In the 7th century, Bulgar domination allowed a rudimentary civic life to develop and later brought Christianity. The foundations of modern Romania were laid in the 13th century when Vlachs from Transylvania settled in two distinct regions, Walachia, which emerged as an independent state about 1290, and Moldavia, which followed in 1349.

The two new states were soon conquered by the Ottomans. During the 18th century they became the front lines in the struggles between Russia and Turkey. They also developed a sense of national awareness. After the Crimean war, the legislatures of Walachia and Moldavia voted for union under the name "Rumania." De facto union was effected on January 17, 1859, while they remained at least nominally under Turkish suzerainty. The union was officially ratified in 1861. During the Russo-Turkish War of 1878, Rumania declared its independence. The western

powers recognized it as a kingdom in 1881.

So, should the country be spelled "Rumania" or "Romania?" Several Internet sources acknowledge that both are technically correct and the "u" version came first. But, by the 19th century, the "o" form came into popular use as a way to acknowledge its Roman roots. Some of the country's earliest stamps spell it "Romania" and by the 20th century, this became the more accepted spelling.

In World War I, Romania sided with the Allies and gained Transylvania from Hungary. In World War II, it joined the axis powers and hoped to recover lands it had lost to the Soviet Union in 1940. In mid-1944, Romania switched sides and joined the Allies. Following the war, Romania became a Soviet-dominated "People's Republic." The repressive dictator Nicolae Ceaușescu ruled from 1965 until his ouster in 1989. Romania joined NATO in 2004 and the European Union in 2007.

The postal system was more advanced in the Danube principalities than in the Ottoman Empire generally. Around 1827, a Walachian prince established a biweekly courier service to the Austrian border for communications with Vienna. A postal contract was signed for service within Walachia as early as 1830. Probably influenced by postal developments in Russia, Moldavia issued its first postage stamps in January 1858 soon after the principality gained its autonomy from the Ottoman Empire. (The Ottoman Empire itself did not adopt postage stamps until 1863.)



A 1972 stamp (Scott 2373) promoting the Davis Cup (tennis) finals between Romania and the United States.

Soon after the union of the two principalities, stamps were produced locally for use in Moldavia and Walachia. The stamps depicted the two coats of arms side by side. In 1865, stamps were released inscribed "Romania" and depicting Prince Cuza. Cuza abdicated the following year, which necessitated new stamps with the image of the new Prince Carol I.

On April 22, 1867, Romania adopted the leu as currency. This was first reflected on postage stamps in 1868. The leu has remained in use despite several currency reforms.



The 1-bani from a set of 10 King Carol I stamps of 1906, Scott 186.



They are inscribed "1944," but a set of 11 patriotic stamps, including the 31-lei Gheorghe Lazar (Scott 563), were not issued until 1945.



Emperor Karl of Austria is on about four dozen stamps issued from 1917 to 1918 under Austria occupation, Scott 1N32.

For expanded text and additional illustrations, see [www.stamps.org/AP-Album](http://www.stamps.org/AP-Album).