

## Country Profile: Fascinating Romania



### Romania-At-A-Glance

Chief of State: President Klaus Werner Iohannis  
 Head of Government: Prime Minister Nicolae Ciuca  
 Capital: Bucharest  
 Population: 18.5 million (2022 est.)  
 National Holiday/Unification Day: Dec. 1, 1918  
 (Unification of Romania and Transylvania)

Romania enjoys a considerable wealth of natural resources: fertile land for agriculture; pastures for livestock; forests that provide hard and soft woods; petroleum reserves; metals, including gold and silver in the Apuseni Mountains; numerous rivers that supply hydroelectricity; and a Black Sea coastline that is the site of both ports and resorts.

Map and Flag of Romania

The Romanian landscape is approximately one-third mountainous and one-third forested, with the remainder made up of hills and plains. The climate is temperate and marked by four distinct seasons. Although it is an extraordinary privilege for Romania to have four seasons, the country has so much to offer: the Carpathians and the Seashore, the Danube and its fabulous Delta, the orchards and the vineyards, the villages and their annual festivals, the large fields, and the seasons that fill a man's soul.

The four seasons create a different Romania, a Romania which looks like a temple: the peace of the colors, the endless poetry of the shadows, undeniable shapes, the hesitation of the footsteps, the longing of the innocence, the island of the silences, the kneeling of the twilight, the pride of the dawn, they all can become older or younger, sole landmarks of joy. "Nature never lies," the great Romanian poet Mihai Eminescu once said. "It never deceives, it never punishes."

The following are some awesome facts about Romania every tourist should know:

- Romania has a Merry Cemetery. The Merry or Happy Cemetery (Cimitirul vesel), located in the Maramureş County, in a tiny village, close to the Ukrainian border, is a unique tourist attraction.
- Romania has nine (9) UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Seven are cultural sites and 2 are natural. Click here to view the 9 properties inscribed on the World Heritage List.
- Romania has the World's Second Largest Administrative Building. After the Pentagon, the Palace of the Parliament is the world's largest administrative building. It has more than 3000 rooms.
- Romania has Europe's tallest Rock Sculpture. The rock sculpture of Decebalus is 55 meters or 180.45 feet high.

Romania is authentic, natural, and cultural. It is a dynamic country rich in history, arts, and scenic beauty. You must see this hidden gem that offers everything from phenomenal landscapes to traditional Romanian dishes - you will not regret it. You will make friends there, and you will want to come back very soon.

We would like to express our appreciation to the Consulate General of Romania in Miami for contributing to this article.

DECEMBER 2022

Division Director's Message



**U. Desmond Alufohai**  
 Director

Protocol & International Affairs Division  
 Miami-Dade Aviation Department (MDAD)

As we close the door on 2022 in preparation for a clean slate in 2023, it is customary to reflect on the past twelve months as we anticipate the excitement and new opportunities for the coming year. The global pandemic has proven to be one of the most challenging events in recent times, but we are forging on.

The good and bad moments and every experience makes us who we are. Whether you experienced successes beyond your wildest dreams or became a stronger person for the hardships you endured, the coming year provides a new horizon, potential for more successes, and numerous opportunities for personal and professional growth. Change is inevitable and change is always constant!

From all us of here at the Protocol and International Affairs Division, we wish you happy holidays, success and great health in the coming year and beyond.

We would like to express our appreciation and gratitude to our guests for joining us at our end-of-year holiday reception held on December 2<sup>nd</sup>, which included the kick-off of the 2023 World Travel & Tourism EXPO. We also take this opportunity to welcome the new Consul General of Consulate of Grenada in Miami and salute all nations celebrating their independence and or national day in December. As always, please be safe!

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# DIPLOMATIC & CONSULAR RELATIONS

## Meet the New Consul General of Grenada in Miami, Florida



**Mr. Alexander Shnaider is Consul General, [Consulate General of Grenada in Miami](#).** He was born in St. Petersburg, Russia in 1968. His family emigrated to Israel from the former Soviet Union in 1972, when he was aged 4, and subsequently to Toronto, Canada when he was a teenager. He was educated in Canada, and this culminated in his being awarded a Bachelor of Arts (honors) degree in Economics from York University, Toronto in 1992.

He is a fluent Russian-speaker, and he was able to utilize his language proficiency and family contacts to broker steel export deals in the early days following the collapse of the Soviet Union. His company was able to supply much-needed hard currency and made pre-payment for supplies of ferrous products to a variety of steel producers in Eastern Europe, the Far East and South America. This enabled Mr. Shnaider to influence producers to supply him regularly and on time, and relationships were built which secured continuous access to low-cost, high-volume commodities.

Over this period Mr. Shnaider built up the equity of his company, Midland Resources Holding Limited, and gained an impeccable reputation for fair dealing and delivering on promises. In 1999 Midland acquired a controlling stake in JSC Zaporizhstal, Ukraine's 4<sup>th</sup> largest steel producer, and actively traded its export production until disposal and exit from the steel sector in 2010. The Midland Group became an international investment holding company, with assets in both Europe and North America.

Additionally, from 2015 – 2016 he invested in Mishorim Real Estate Investments Ltd. ("Mishorim") and Skyline Investments Inc. ("Skyline") - public corporations traded on the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange.

Mr. Shnaider is a controlling shareholder of the following corporations:

- \* Mobile Telephony: major stake in Wind Mobile (Canada), exited on roll-out to major industry player, 400% return over approximately 2 years. Exited in 2016.
- \* Financial investments: listed and un-listed securities, secured lending, mezzanine financing.
- \* Smaller investments in manufacturing, retail, hospitality, and luxury goods
- \* Invested in 2 Canadian hotel groups, Pomeroy Lodging and Holloway Lodging.
- \* Invested in Brands International a Canadian manufacturer of hand sanitizers and antibacterial soaps (FDA and Health Canada approved).

Throughout his life and career, he has been involved in philanthropy providing considerable financial and other contributions to support causes which he considers important and beneficial to society and his community.

Mr Shnaider is a recognized major donor to:

- \* Sinai Health Foundation in support of Research Chair in Thyroid Oncology
- \* Toronto General & Western Hospital Foundation in support of their hospitals at the University Health Network and the Krembil
- \* Discovery Tower and the Brain Campaign at Toronto Western Hospital, UHN
- \* Sunnybrook Foundation in support of Waks Family Chair in Maternal Fetal Medicine Research and the Schulich Heart Center
- \* Sunnybrook Foundation
- \* St. John's Rehab
- \* The Princess Margaret Hospital Foundation
- \* Ronald McDonald House Charities Toronto

Mr Shnaider served as a board member of the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Toronto, a Jewish global human rights organization, and supported many important events through sponsorship and direct participation and he is President of the Jewish Russian-speaking Community Centre of Ontario and a regular contributor to the Jewish National Fund of Canada and UJA Federation of Greater Toronto.

Mr Shnaider is recognized as a main sponsor of Colel Chabad, a US-based organization that aims to strengthen the commitment of American Jews to the community. Chabad operates soup kitchens, grants free medical services to the needy, celebrates Bar/Bat Mitzvahs for orphans, manages daycare centers, and supplies home heating at subsidized prices, alongside many other community-oriented initiatives.

Mr. Shnaider rescued the ailing Jordan Formula One motorsports team in 2005, operating and investing in the team for 2 years before passing it on to a Dutch consortium with automotive interests. He owned a majority stake in Maccabi Tel Aviv soccer club for three years from 2007.



# CONSULAR CORPS OF MIAMI HOLIDAY RECEPTION



L-R: Jimmy Nares, Section Chief, Marketing Division, MDAD; Javier Placencia, President & CEO, World Tourism EXPO, Ralph Cutié, Director & CEO, MDAD, and U. Desmond Alufohai, Director of Protocol & International Affairs Division, MDAD.

The Annual Consular Corps of Miami Holiday Reception was held at the Miami International Airport Auditorium on Friday, December 2, 2022. The event was hosted by the Protocol and International Affairs Division, Miami-Dade Aviation Department. This year's event was sponsored by the [World Travel and Tourism \(WTE\) EXPO](#) and the [Center for International Trade Development \(CITD\) Miami](#). More than 200 guests from South Florida's diplomatic corps, and representatives from state and federal partners, leisure, hospitality, travel, and tourism sectors, and local business and community leaders attended the reception.

The event was also the kickoff for the first World Travel & Tourism Expo to be held June 13-15, 2023, at the Miami International Airport Convention Center. The purpose is to bring travel and tourism representatives from around the globe to meet with airlines, tourism bureaus, tour operators, cruise line, hotels, and other visitor organizations to discuss potential airline route

development and promote their destinations. Miami International Airport is hosting the event in conjunction with the following partners and sponsors: International Air Transportation Association, American Airlines, Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau, Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce, Miami-Dade County, Miami-Dade Beacon Council, International Trade Consortium, Sister Cities International, U.S. Commercial Service, World Trade Center Miami, etc. Business leaders and experts from the global travel and tourism industry will also discuss current challenges, emerging trends, and business opportunities. More than 2,000 travel professionals are expected to attend the EXPO.



Guests at the Annual Holiday Reception

# U.S. - AFRICA LEADERS' SUMMIT



Africa will shape the future — not just the future of the African people, but of the world. Rooted in this recognition that Africa is a key geopolitical player, [President Biden invited leaders](#) from across the African continent to Washington, DC, on December 13-15, 2022, for the U.S.-Africa Leaders' Summit.

President Biden believes U.S. collaboration with African leaders, as well as civil society, business, diaspora, women, and youth leaders, is essential to unlocking the potential of this decisive decade.

The 3-day summit continued efforts to [strengthen ties with African partners](#) based on principles of mutual respect and shared interests and values. It also served as an opportunity to listen to and collaborate with African counterparts on key areas the United States and Africa define as critical for the future of the continent and our global community. The summit built on our shared values to:

- \* Better foster new economic engagement
- \* Reinforce the U.S.-Africa commitment to democracy and human rights
- \* Mitigate the impact of COVID-19 and of future pandemics
- \* Work collaboratively to strengthen regional and global health
- \* Promote food security
- \* Advance peace and security
- \* Respond to the climate crisis
- \* Amplify diaspora ties

Delegations from all 49 invited African countries and the African Union, alongside members of civil society and the private sector attended the summit. The President, Vice President, and members of the Cabinet engaged extensively with leaders throughout the Summit.

[The first day](#) kicked off with a focus on the vital role of civil society and the strength of our African diaspora communities in the United States. It featured sessions on topics ranging from trade and investment; to health and climate change; to peace, security, and governance; to space cooperation.

The second day focused on increasing two-way trade and investment at the [U.S.-Africa Business Forum](#). CEOs and private sector leadership from over 300 American and African companies convened with the Heads of Delegation to catalyze investment in critical sectors, including health, infrastructure, energy, agribusiness, and digital. [President Biden closed the Business Forum](#) with remarks. Afterwards, he hosted a small group of leaders at the White House for a [discussion on upcoming presidential elections in 2023](#) and U.S. support for free, fair, and credible polls in Africa. He then hosted all 50 Heads of Delegation and their spouses for [dinner at the White House](#).

The [third and final day](#) was dedicated to high-level discussions among leaders, with President Biden opening the day with a session on [partnering on Agenda 2063](#)—the African Union's strategic vision for the continent. Next, [Vice President Harris chaired a working lunch](#). The President closed the day with a [discussion on food security and food systems resilience](#), a critical issue for our African partners who have been disproportionately impacted by the rise in food and fertilizer prices and disruptions to global supply chains as a result of Russia's war against Ukraine.

Source: <https://www.state.gov/africasummit/>



# BRIEFS & NOTES

## The History of Gingerbread and Gingerbread Houses



[Gingerbread](#), like no other confection, symbolizes the holidays, and the delicious combination of ginger with honey, treacle, or molasses has been a favorite for centuries. Although the origin of gingerbread is lost to history, the ginger root itself was first cultivated in China approximately 5000 years ago and was commonly used for its medicinal properties. According to some food historians, the first known recipe for gingerbread dates from 2400 BCE in Greece. In 992 CE, [Armenian monk Gregory of Nicopolis](#) brought gingerbread to the West when he settled in France.

A 10<sup>th</sup> century manuscript from the Micy Abbey, a Benedictine monastery, recounts how Gregory made cakes with honey and spices. After he taught the French, they taught the Germans, who then brought gingerbread to Swedish monasteries. Others believe that gingerbread first became popular in Europe at the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century when returning crusaders brought back the custom of spicy bread from the Middle East. By the 15<sup>th</sup> century Germany had a gingerbread guild, Swedish nuns were baking gingerbread to ease indigestion, and monks throughout Europe were baking and molding gingerbread into images of saints to be used during religious ceremonies. The Court of Queen Elizabeth I is often credited with developing figure-shaped gingerbread, where the biscuits were made in the likeness of important guests and dignitaries to flatter and impress them. By 1598 gingerbread was so popular, that Shakespeare included it in *Love's Labour's Lost*: "An I had but one penny in the world, thou should'st have it to buy gingerbread."

English colonists brought gingerbread to the New World, and the first American cookbook, *American Cookery* (1796) by Amelia Simmons included three recipes for gingerbread. German bakers had been making gingerbread houses since the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and these elaborate creations became associated with Christmas. Their popularity rose during the early 1800s, especially after the Brothers Grimm published "Hansel and Gretel" in 1812. In the story, the siblings stumbled upon a gingerbread house deep in the woods. This inspired the German gingerbread guilds to make festive snowy cottages from the spicy-sweet treat.

The [largest gingerbread house](#) was created and built by Traditions Club, Bryan, Texas, on November 30, 2013. It required a building permit, and 4,000 gingerbread bricks were used. The house was 18.28 m (60 ft) long, 12.8 m (42 ft) wide and 3.07 m (10.1 ft) tall at its highest point. The [largest gingerbread town](#) in the world is built annually in Bergen, Norway. Nuremberg, Germany, holds the title of "[Gingerbread Capital of the World](#)". [Gingerbread House Day](#) is celebrated annually on December 12 to honor the custom of making gingerbread houses.

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## Origins of North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) Tracking Santa



Every day of the year, NORAD defends North America using an all-domain and globally integrated approach to track everything that flies in and around Canada and the United States. On December 24, NORAD adds a special mission: [Tracking Santa](#).

Like many origin stories, NORAD's mission to track Santa began by accident. In 1955 a young child, trying to reach Santa, dialed the misprinted phone number from a department store ad in the local newspaper. Instead of calling Santa, the child called the Continental Air Defense Command (CONAD) Operations Center in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Air Force Col. Harry Shoup, the commander on duty that night who answered the child's phone call, was quick to realize a mistake had been made and assured the child he was Santa. After more incoming calls, Shoup assigned a duty officer to continue answering calls and a tradition was born, that continued when NORAD was formed in 1958.

Each year since, NORAD has dutifully reported Santa's location on December 24 to millions of children and families across the world. Because of the support, services, and resources generously provided by volunteers and our government and corporate contributors, NORAD Tracks Santa has persevered for more than 65 years.

In fact, what started because of a typo has flourished and is recognized as one of the Department of Defense's largest community outreach programs. Each year, the NORAD Tracks Santa Web Site receives several million unique visitors from more than 200 countries and territories around the world. Volunteers typically answer more than 130,000 calls to the NORAD Tracks Santa hotline from children across the globe.

# BRIEFS & NOTES

## First Trans-Atlantic Radio Transmission



Guglielmo Marconi

On [December 12, 1901](#), Guglielmo Marconi (1874 – 1937) successfully sent the first radio signal across the Atlantic Ocean. The signal, the Morse code for the letter “S” was sent from Poldhu, Cornwall to Newfoundland, Canada, 2,100 miles away. The Italian physicist, inventor, and radio pioneer became interested in the transmission of radio waves after learning of the experiments performed by German physicist Heinrich Hertz.

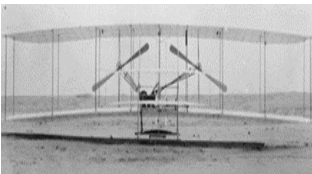
Starting in 1894, Marconi began his own experiments and by 1899, he succeeded in sending a transmission across the English Channel. Ironically, when he sent his groundbreaking transmission in 1901, he proved his detractors correct. The radio signal did not follow the curvature of the earth, as he believed, it was headed into space when it was reflected off the ionosphere and bounced back down toward Canada. In 1909, Marconi and German radio innovator Ferdinand Braun were awarded the Nobel Prize in physics. Marconi’s technology revolutionized international communication and throughout his life, Marconi continued to play a leading role in radio discoveries and innovations.

## [Deepest Point on Continental Earth](#)

On December 12, 2019, the results of the *BedMachine Antarctica Project* were announced. This six-year-long project created an accurate bedrock map of the continent and identified the deepest point on continental Earth. The canyon, located in Queen Mary Land, East Antarctica, is buried under the ice of the Denman Glacier and reaches a depth of 11,500 feet (3.5 kilometers) below sea level. By comparison, the lowest exposed land on Earth, the Dead Sea, is 1,355 feet (413 meters) below sea level. The Mariana Trench in the Western Pacific is the deepest point on Earth, reaching a depth of 36,037 feet (10.9 kilometers), but it is an oceanic trench and geologically part of the oceanic crust.

## The First All-Metal Aircraft, the “Tin Donkey” Takes Flight

Only 12 years after the Wright brothers completed the first sustained flight in a heavier-than-air, powered plane in 1903, [the Junkers J1](#), nicknamed “*Blechesel*” (“*Tin Donkey*”), took flight on December 12, 1915. Before the J1, aircraft were made out of wood and covered with woven cloth to enclose the airframe.



1903 Wright Flyer



1915 Junkers J1

The J1 was a true revolution in aircraft structural design as it was practically an all-metal aircraft. Since it was designed primarily to demonstrate the airworthiness of Junkers’ concept for metal-based airframes and structures, the J1 only flew 3 times between December 1915 and January 1916. It was revolutionary because it was a sleek, low drag design that completely eliminated the need for major exterior bracing struts and heralded the future of aircraft design.

## Day of Eight Billion

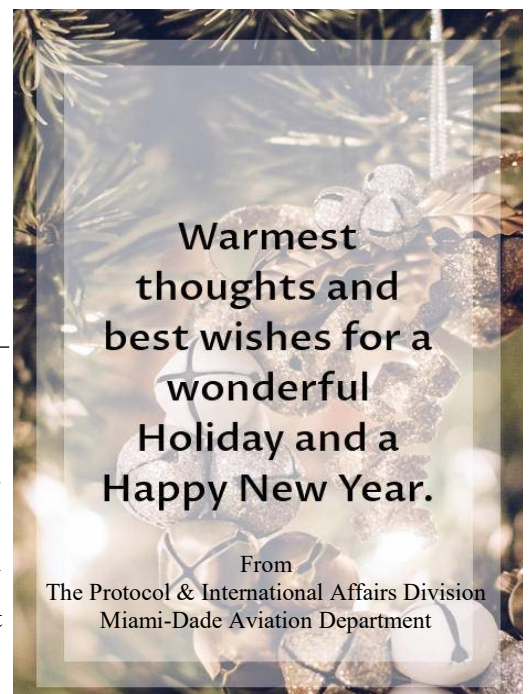
The world’s population has now reached an estimated 8 billion. The honor of the [8-billionth person goes to a baby born in the Dominican Republic](#) on November 15, 2022. According to the United Nations, this unprecedented growth is due to the gradual increase in human lifespan owing to improvements in public health, nutrition, personal hygiene, and medicine. It is also the result of high and persistent levels of fertility in some countries.



While it took the global population 12 years to grow from 7 to 8 billion, it will take about 15 years - until 2037 - for it to reach 9 billion, a sign that the overall growth rate of the global population is slowing.

## December was originally the 10<sup>th</sup> Month of the Year

The ancient [Roman calendar](#), in use from 750 BCE to 45 BCE, had 10 months, beginning with March, and ending with December. Because it was the 10<sup>th</sup> month, December was named “decem”, the Latin word for “ten”. At first, the winter days between December and March were not included in any month, until January and February were created. January was placed at the beginning of the calendar, while February at the end, where it remained until [452 BCE](#) when it was placed between January and March. When Julius Caesar transformed the Roman calendar into the Julian calendar in 45 BCE, December gained an extra day to become the 7<sup>th</sup> and last month with 31 days. Although it has not been the 10<sup>th</sup> month since at least 452 BCE, December’s name was never changed, and it will forever remain a 10 in our hearts.



# INDEPENDENCE AND NATIONAL DAYS (DECEMBER)

**December 1, 1640 – Portugal:** The day commemorates the restoration of Portuguese independence after 60 years of Spanish rule.

**December 1, 1918 – Romania:** Great Union Day, marks the unification of Transylvania, Bessarabia, and Bukovina with the Romanian Kingdom.

**December 1, 1958 – Central African Republic:** On this date, the French colony of Ubangi-Shari was granted independence within the French Community but remained part of the French Empire in Africa. The country was renamed the Central African Republic when it gained full independence from France on August 13, 1960.

**December 5 - Thailand:** The birthdate of the late King Bhumibol Adulyadej is celebrated as Thailand's National Day.

**December 5, 1972 - United Arab Emirates:** On this day, known as Union Day, six of the seven emirates formed a federation, founding the UAE. The 7<sup>th</sup> joined on December 10, 1972.

**December 6, 1917 – Finland:** Finland gained independence from Russia on December 4, 1917.

**December 9, 1961 – Tanzania:** Tanganyika gained independence from Britain on December 9, 1961. In 1964, it merged with Zanzibar to become Tanzania.

**December 11, 1931 – South Africa:** On this day in 1931, South Africa gained independence from Great Britain, but retained the British monarch as its head of state. On May 31, 1961, the country became a republic, severing all formal ties with Great Britain.

**December 11, 1958 – Burkina Faso:** Republic Day commemorates the day that Upper Volta became an autonomous republic in the French Community. It gained independence from France on August 5, 1960. On August 4, 1984, Upper Volta was renamed Burkina Faso.

**December 12, 1963 – Kenya:** “Jamhuri Day” celebrates Kenya’s independence from Britain and the establishment of the Republic of Kenya.

**December 13 – St. Lucia:** Feast Day of St. Lucy, patron saint of St. Lucia, is celebrated as the National Day.

**December 16, 1971 – Bahrain:** After gaining independence from the United Kingdom on August 15, 1971, Bahrain gained independence from British protection on December 16, 1971.

**December 16, 1991 – Kazakhstan:** On this day, Kazakhstan gained independence from the Soviet Union.

**December 17, 1907 – Bhutan:** On this date, Bhutan became a unified kingdom under Ugyen Wangchuck, its first hereditary king. On August 8, 1949, Bhutan signed the Indo-Bhutanese Treaty of Friendship with India, which maintained Bhutanese independence.

**December 18, 1878 – Qatar:** Founder’s Day, Qatar’s National Day, celebrates the country’s unification in 1878. Qatar gained independence from Britain on Sep. 3, 1971

**December 20, 1999 – Macau:** On this day in 1999, Portugal formally returned Macau to China.

**December 24, 1951 – Libya:** Libya gained independence from Italy on this day.

**December 26, 1990 – Slovenia:** Independence and Unity Day are celebrated on December 26<sup>th</sup> to commemorate the official proclamation of the Slovenian independence referendum on December 26, 1990.

**December 29, 1911 – Mongolia:** Mongolia declared its independence from the Manchu-led Qing Empire in 1911 but did not achieve full independence from China until July 11, 1921. December 29<sup>th</sup> has been celebrated annually since 2011.

## ABOUT US

The core mission of MDAD’s Protocol and International Affairs Division is -

*To facilitate the movement of official guests, delegations, dignitaries and VIPs through MIA and support the airport’s international programs and initiatives.*

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