**Romanian festivals and traditions**

Romania enjoys a rich, cultural heritage; each community hosts its own list of festivals and traditional celebrations. Ancient dances and archaic forms of music often accompany local festivals. Many of the observances are a mixture of Orthodox and more ancient pagan rituals. Visitors are invited to join in local traditions, making festivals an integral part of experiencing the local culture.

**February**

**Dragobete**: Romania’s version of Valentines Day is celebrated on February 24th in villages across the country. On this day, Romanians pay tribute to Dragobete, a local variation on Cupid. This day also marks the beginning of spring and is recognized as the onset of the mating season for birds.

**March**

**Fire Wheel**: Orthodox Lent is celebrated with a blazing wheel of fire lit in Sinca Noua. Locals gather after dark at the foot of a local hill, at the top of which young men light wheels of hay on fire in a sort of purification rite. The ritual is followed by feasting, dancing and plenty of celebration.

**April**

**Orthodox Easter**: Romania’s most important Christian holiday, Easter begins traditionally begins on Saturday evening. Locals prepare special dishes and painted eggs, which are sometimes taken to the church for a special blessing. Resurrection Mass is given just before midnight, after which churchgoers leave with lit candles which they carry home and use to light their own candles. Roast lamb and a sponge cake with poppy seeds and nuts (*cozonac*) are eaten at the traditional feast.

**May**

**Festivinum Wine Festival**: held throughout the month of May, this widely celebrated wine festival visits Bucharest, Constanta, Iasi and Cluj-Napoca. Multiple vineyards from across the countryside come together and present wine enthusiasts with the opportunity to sample their finest vintage. Live music and plenty of entertainment is also scheduled.

**June**

**Traditional Crafts Fair**: an exhibition of local handiwork is held in Bucharest at the Village Museum. Craft demonstrations cover textile weaving, woodcarving, glass blowing, pottery sculpting, rug weaving, embroidery and egg painting.

**Street Music Festival**: the streets of old-town Bucharest come alive late in June, when songs and melodies from the Old World are revived for a weekend. Performances are held in several venues including Bacani, Gabroveni, Lipscani and Selari.

**Medias Medieval Festival**: the old Saxon city of Medias (in Transylvania) hosts a vibrant medieval festival late in June. Participants don period costumes and take part in parades, stage performances and live musical performances. Art exhibitions and activities for families are also planned.

**July**

**Cherry Fair**: the little town of Brancovenesti (15 miles outside of Targu Mures) ushers in the beginning of summer with a pleasant folk festival. Traditional songs and dances from Transylvania are held across the village, and fresh cherries are widely available.

**Medieval Sighisoara**: this festival of medieval crafts and art forms is held in Sighisoara, one of the finest medieval towns in all of Europe. The music of troubadours highlights street performances, costumed parades, and several medieval ceremonies. The aura of Medieval Transylvania is truly bought to life here in Dracula’s home town.

**August**

**Garana Jazz Festival**: the small village of Garana, nestled into the Semenic Mountains, is the ideal setting for a summer jazz festival. Jazz concerts are held over the course of three days, and there are several peripheral activities like art exhibitions, book releases and even a circus.

**Prislop Pass Folk Festival**: this event is held on the second Sunday of August at Prislop Pass, seven miles outside of Borsa. Participants arrive in period costumes and join feasts and folk dances, the most celebrated of which is the *hora*(a circle dance from Romania). The *hora* represents a coming-together between the states of Moldova, Maramures and Transylvania.

**September**

**Sibiu Pottery Fair**: this is Romania’s most prestigious pottery fair. Master potters gather at the ASTRA Museum in Sibiu early in September, where they showcase their work and perform public exhibitions of their craft.

**October**

**Concert in the Cave**: an unlikely venue for a classical music concert, Romanesti Cave (40 miles outside of Timisoara) has hosted the Banat Philharmonic, the State Philharmonic and the Royal Danish Symphonic in past years. The natural acoustics in the cave create a truly magical experience.

**Harvest Day Festival**: many small villages across Romania host festivals that celebrate the onset of harvest season. In many cases, these celebrations have historic roots dating back two centuries or more. One of the most well-known festivals takes place in Rameti, and features harvest rituals and traditional dances.

**December**

**Christmas Festival**: many Romanian towns host lavish Christmas festivals during the holiday season. Traditionally, Christmas carols are an important part of the Christmas season in Romania, and many families will slaughter a pig and invite their friends, extended family members and neighbours to a lavish Christmas feast.

**Winter Customs Festival**: immediately after Christmas, the city of Sighet hosts the famous Winter Customs Festival. The celebration is highlighted by a spectacular parade alongside festive dances, carolling and rides.