

# Moldova

Moldova became an independent republic following the collapse of the USSR in 1991. Moldova is a country in Eastern Europe sandwiched between Romania and Ukraine. It enjoys a favorable climate and good farmland but has no major mineral deposits. As a result, the economy depends heavily on agriculture.

Moldova lies between two large rivers, the Prut in the west, which forms the border with Romania, and the Dniester in the east. The Transnistria region, on the left bank of the Dniester, was attached to Moldova before the WW2. Transnistria is now a breakaway province.

A historic passageway between Asia and Southern Europe, Moldova was often subject to invasion and warfare. It is historically part of a greater Moldavia, the main part of which was an independent principality in the 14th century and came under Ottoman Turkish rule in the 16th century. It became a highly fortified Turkish border region and was a frequent target in Russo-Turkish wars. East historical

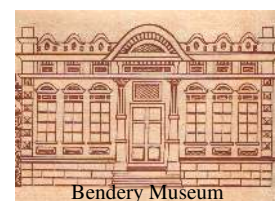
Moldavia (current Moldova) passed to Russia in 1791. Russia acquired further Moldavian territory in 1793 and especially in 1812, when the Russians received all of Bessarabia (the name for the area of Moldavia between the Prut and Dniester rivers). The rest of Moldova remained with the Turks and later passed to Romania, which seized Bessarabia in 1918. In 1940, Bessarabia became a part of the Soviet Union, and later included more of the country until Moldova's independence on August 27, 1991.



Moldova's fertile soil supports wheat, corn, barley, vegetables, sugar beets, sunflowers, and tobacco, as well as extensive fruit orchards, vineyards, and walnut groves. Horticulture is important for the production of rose oil and lavender. Beef and dairy cattle are raised, and there is bee-keeping and silkworm breeding. Industries include food processing, winemaking, major appliances textiles, and foot



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wear. The country remains undeveloped industrially and ranks as one of the poorest nations of Europe. Exports include foodstuffs and textiles. Moldova imports all of its oil, coal, and natural gas, as well as machinery, chemicals, and automobiles. The principal trading partners are Russia, Ukraine, and Romania.

The capital of Moldova is Chisinau. Its population is 592,900 (2007) which grows to 911,400 in the entire metropolitan area. It is home to 12 public and 11 private universities. The proportion of green spaces in Chisinau is one of the highest among major European cities.



In Soviet period Moldova produced fruits, vegetables, grape and wine for the whole empire. The collective farms were huge and intensive. In present day Moldova, arable land is privatized and agriculture is much less intensive. But remaining domination of arable lands (76% of whole territory) creates problems of environmental nature. Last period the draughts became the obstacle for agriculture as well as high competitiveness of international agricultural market.

Sixty percent of Moldovans live in rural areas, which is too much for agriculture and this balance produces poverty and massive emigration.

Moldova is a very multicultural country where many ethnic groups live. Cultural traditions are well-developed and popular, as well as handicrafts. Moldavian dances are melodic and fast. It is a hospitable and cheap country for tourism, especially its rural, ethnic, agricultural and ecologic kinds.

General Facts:

- Total Population: 3.6 million (UN, 2009)
- Area: 33,800 sq km (13,050 sq miles) which is slightly larger than Maryland
- Major languages: Moldovan (official, virtually the same as the Romanian language) and Russian
- Alphabet: During the Soviet era, Moldovan was written in Cyrillic, but the Latin script was reintroduced in 1989.
- Religion: Eastern Orthodox 98%, Jewish 1.5%
- Food: Based on meat, fish, vegetables, cereals, and cheese. Ground corn served with sour cream and Moldovan cheese, which is made of sheep milk.

For more information:

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/md.html>

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