

# Welcome to Bucharest: **ErasmusWay** Survival Guide

Where it all started: my Erasmus semester in Spain...







Note: This guide was created by a former international student who lived abroad for **5 years** and understands the challenges students face when arriving in a new country. It is offered free to universities and student offices to help incoming students adapt faster, feel more supported, and avoid common mistakes during their first weeks in Bucharest, Romania. (Story Below)



# My Story – and why I created this

I built *ErasmusWay* on something simple: experience, not theory.

Five years ago, when I left Romania at 18, I stepped into the unknown with nothing but a backpack, a suitcase, and a big dream. I moved to the **Netherlands** to study, and suddenly everything around me was new, the language, the culture, the weather, the food, the rules... even the way people rode their bikes felt like another world.

Later, during my Erasmus+ exchange semester in my third year of bachelor, in **Spain**, **Barcelona**, I learned once again how incredible, but at the same time overwhelming, it can be to start fresh in a new country. Exchange semesters are magical. They're six months of meeting people from everywhere, traveling, making memories you'll remember for the rest of your life.

But behind the excitement, I also knew the other side of the story:

- the stress of finding housing in a foreign system
- figuring out transportation in the first days
- adapting to new habits, new paperwork, new everything
- feeling lost because everything moves fast and your exchange ends before you blink

And the truth is simple:

You want to spend those six months living — not struggling.
...That's exactly why I started *ErasmusWay*.

# Created by a former student, for international students.

A place built by someone who has lived the same journey you're starting now, the confusion, the excitement, the culture shock, the late nights, the friendships, the memories. Because once you take this path, once you live abroad and become part of the international community, you never really return the same. You carry those moments with you forever, the people, the stories, the adventures, the versions of yourself you discover along the way.

*ErasmusWay* exists to make your transition easier, your stay smoother, and your experience unforgettable. So, you can focus on what truly matters: **having the best time of your life.** 



# Money Made Easy: Surviving Bucharest Without Going Broke

Hey guys, I know you are excited about the exchange... I felt the same. BUT...Let's be real for a second: nothing kills the excitement of moving abroad faster than money problems. Before you even hit your first party in Old Town (Centru Vechi), you need to understand how to actually pay for things here, without losing half your student budget to hidden fees and bad exchange rates.

This quick guide gives you the tools I wish I had when I left Romania at 18 with just a backpack, a suitcase, and five euros to my name.

Let's make sure you keep your money for coffee, travel, and nights out — not the banks or scammers!

# REVOLUT - Your Wallet's Best Friend in Bucharest

If you don't have Revolut yet, do yourself a favor and set one up before arriving. It's the easiest, fastest and most international-student-proof way to handle money in Romania.

Most Erasmus students use Revolut because it's:

- ✓ simple to set up before you arrive
- √ perfect for paying by card anywhere
- ✓ great for managing multiple currencies
- ✓ ideal for quick money transfers between friends

It basically works like a debit card — without all the bank drama.

BUT... Revolut Has a Catch (Withdrawal Limit)

If you need cash, read this part twice!!

**6** Your limit on Revolut Standard is 800 RON/month.

That's roughly:

- €157/month
- or 5 ATM withdrawals



#### After that:

- Revolut charges ~2% fee (or minimum 5 RON).
- ATMs might charge their own fee too always check the screen.

#### Tips to avoid losing money:

- Convert your home currency → RON inside the Revolut app (best rates)
- Withdraw at bank ATMs, not random tourist ones
- If you need a lot of cash (rent deposit, travel), use a local bank card instead

# 💡 ErasmusWay Tip

If you're paying by card and the machine asks: *Charge in your home currency?*Always choose **RON**.

Charging in EUR/GBP/USD uses horrible conversion rates

#### **†** How to Make Revolut Work for You

Here's how to use it *smartly*:

- Use Revolut for everyday payments (cafés, restaurants, supermarkets)
- Stay within the **800 RON** monthly withdrawal allowance
- Plan bigger withdrawals ahead
- Keep a backup card (your home bank OR a local bank account)
- Upgrade to paid plans only if you withdraw cash often

# And Always Remember...

"Every euro you save on fees is a euro you can spend on shawarma at 3 AM."

- Me, after too many night-outs during my student years



#### Local Bank Accounts: Do You Even Need One?

- Opening a Romanian bank account is **not mandatory**, but very useful for everyday expenses, paying rent, receiving scholarship/funds, etc.
- Requirements typically include: a valid passport, proof of being a student documentation, and proof of address in Romania (rental contract or similar).
- Top 2 banks for internationals:
  - 1. ING Bank Romania very good English support, no/low monthly fees, easy digital banking.
  - 2. Banca Transilvania large network, many student-friendly features.
- For students staying 6 months (short-term exchange), it might be enough to rely on your home bank card + digital banking and open a local account only if needed.

### ErasmusWay Note:

Most students who stay at *ErasmusWay* start with Revolut because it's quick and stress-free and then open a local bank account later if they need more flexibility. We include all the bank info, nearby branches and recommended ATMs in our **Welcome Pack**, so you always know where to go.



# FIRST WEEK ESSENTIALS — Your "Don't Panic" Starter Pack

- ✓ Because the first 48 hours abroad are a beautiful mix of excitement, confusion, and mild emotional damage.
- ✓ Let's make sure your first days in Bucharest are smooth, cheap, and drama-free.
- ✓ Screenshot this section, print it, tattoo it, whatever works for you.
- **1. Getting From the Airport to the City Centre** (A mission that feels harder than it should be)
  - ✓ Congratulations!! You've landed in Bucharest!
  - ✓ Now you face your first Romanian challenge:

"How do I get to the city centre without being overcharged, confused, or emotionally destroyed?"

Don't worry, I've got you.

Here are your options U

#### Option 1: Airport Bus 783 (Cheap & Easy)

- Leaves every 15–30 minutes
- Costs around 5–8 RON (€1–€1.50)
- Drops you in the city centre (Piața Unirii)
- Runs day & night

#### **Best for:**

- 1. Students on a budget
- 2. Students pretending to be on a budget
- 3. Students who want the "local experience"
- Option 2: Bolt / Uber (Most Comfortable)



- Costs around **45–70 RON** (€10–€15)
- Door-to-door
- No drama, no negotiations
- Perfect after a long flight

## Warning:



# **P** ErasmusWay Tip

If a random guy inside the airport whispers "Taxi? Good price, friend" ... Pretend you're deaf.

## Option 3: Airport Taxi (Be Careful)

- Official taxis are OK
- But ALWAYS choose: 1.69 RON/km on the screen
- Avoid anything that looks like: 3.50 RON/km or "free price"

#### Pro tip:

If you see a taxi driver smiling too much, RUN.



# We've got you.

# At *ErasmusWay*, your airport pick-up is included, so:

- # you don't have to drag your luggage across Bucharest
- 😤 you don't have to argue with taxi drivers about "special prices"
- 🛞 you won't get lost 7 minutes after landing
- 😝 you start your Erasmus experience calm, not stressed
- 놀 you arrive safely, comfortably, and already feeling at home



- ✓ We meet you in the arrivals hall (yes, with your name), help with baggage, bring you straight to your apartment, and answer all your first questions.
- ✓ Because your first hour in Bucharest shouldn't feel like a side quest.

#### 2. Get a SIM Card (Do NOT get one at the airport)

✓ Do. Not. Even. Think. About. It.
Unless you enjoy donating €20 to "Airport Economics".

#### Best options in the city:

- 📶 **Digi Mobil** cheapest, huge data packages, very student-friendly
- **III** Orange good quality, more premium
- **III Vodafone** solid coverage everywhere

#### Insider pick: Digi

You can get **unlimited data** for the price of two coffees in Amsterdam. I'm not joking.

- 3. Get a Transport Card (The magic plastic that saves your life)
  - ✓ You will use the metro. Every. Single. Day.

# But don't worry — we've got you!

At *ErasmusWay*, the monthly metro subscription is **already included in your room price**, so you don't have to run around the city on your first day trying to figure this out.

If you prefer another type of housing and want to handle it yourself, here's exactly how to do it \_\_

#### How to get your own metro subscription:



- 1. Go to any metro station
- 2. Say: "abonament lunar" (monthly pass)
- 3. Pay
- 4. Tap it at the metro gates
- 5. Enjoy your new status as a Bucharest public transport champion

#### Apps you MUST download:

- InfoTB for buses/trams
- **Weak Solution** When the second with the sec
- Mean Google Maps works perfectly in Bucharest

## 4. Groceries & Essentials (Where your money disappears)

#### Here's the truth:

- Lidl = cheap, efficient, German energy
- Mega Image = everywhere, open late, slightly robbery vibes
- Carrefour = you think you're saving money but... you're not
- **Kaufland =** good prices, huge selection

# 5. Emergency Stuff (Just in case you fall off a Lime scooter)

#### Important numbers:

- # 112 Emergency services
- Urgent care: Regina Maria or MedLife (English-speaking private clinics)
- \$\square\$ 24/7 pharmacies: everywhere in city centre
- **A** Police: **112**



# **Parasmus Way Tip**

Do NOT rely on Google Translate Romanian → English for medical stuff. You might walk in with a headache and walk out registered as a tractor.

# 6. Join Student Groups (Your shortcut to instant friends)

The fastest way to meet people in Bucharest:

- *ErasmusWay* WhatsApp group:
- SN Bucharest
- Erasmus Bucharest 202X"
- 🞉 Follow clubs on IG (Bucha students LIVE on Instagram)

#### **Bonus:**

Erasmus students here become friends FAST. You'll have weekend plans before you learn how to say "Bună".



# NIGHTLIFE & SOCIAL LIFE — The Part You've Been Waiting For

Let's be honest... this is why you really opened the guide.

- ✓ You survived your first 48 hours, got your SIM, handled your transport card, didn't get scammed by a taxi driver (hopefully)...
- ✓ So now it's time to talk about the real Erasmus priorities:
- 🕺 making friends
- 🞉 going out
- discovering clubs
- eating greasy food at 3 AM
- ond building memories that will haunt you in the best way possible

#### Welcome to **Bucharest after dark**.

# 1. Old Town (Centrul Vechi) — The Student Playground

This is where you'll end up 90% of the time.

#### Popular spots:

- P Nomad Skybar rooftop vibes
- 🞧 Expirat cool music, alternative crowd
- b Line / Shoteria shots, energy, chaos
- Club Soho the place you'll swear you'll never go back to, then go back
- **fire Club** OG student spot

#### What to expect:

- · Erasmus students everywhere
- Cheap drinks
- Loud music
- · Questionable decisions
- A shawarma in your hand at 4 AM



#### Warning:

Anyone who says "Let's go for one drink" is lying.

There is no such thing.

# 💃 2. Control Club — The Hipster Embassy

If you're tired of Old Town, Control is your cultural reset.

#### Expect:

- live bands
- indie music
- alternative people
- surprisingly good drinks

#### Dress code:

"Technically casual, but also ironically stylish."

# 🗓 3. Fratelli / Nuba / BOA — The Fancy Nights

These are the places where:

- You might see influencers
- someone will definitely pour champagne on themselves
- and the DJ looks like he hasn't slept since 2015.

Expensive but fun.

Go with a group — never alone.

The vibes? Boujee with a sprinkle of chaos.

# 🍷 4. Chill Bars to Actually Talk to People

Because not every night needs strobe lights and regrets.

• **Eden** — hidden garden vibes



- P Have a Cigar chill, good music
- Tloreasca Bars more classy, good for dates
- Beer O'Clock craft beers and friendly locals

Perfect for meeting new people without shouting.

## 5. Late-Night Food (Where the Magic Happens)

You are not truly an Erasmus student until you eat something at 3–5 AM.

- **Oristor Kebab** religion
- WcDonald's Unirii where club nights end
- **Q** Pizza Colţ (pizza slices everywhere)
- Ogros Thessalonikis solid choice

!!! Calories don't count in Erasmus.

Ask any doctor.

# ErasmusWay Note:

Our residents become friends ridiculously fast because everyone starts together, gets picked up from the airport, and usually ends up going out in groups during the first week. Most ErasmusWay apartments have the magic power of turning strangers  $\rightarrow$  best friends  $\rightarrow$  "Let's go out tonight?" in 48 hours.

# 6. What to Be Cautious About (The "Don't Mess Up" Section)

# X Taxi Traps

If a taxi driver in Old Town offers you a "special student price,"

✓ That price is special for him, not you.

#### Use **Bolt** or **Uber**.

Always!!

X Overpriced Drinks



- ✓ If someone hands you a drink you didn't order, **DO NOT DRINK IT.**
- ✓ If someone asks you to "join their table", check the menu before sitting, some places add mystery fees.

#### X Street Characters

If someone tries to sell you:

- "VIP access"
- "Cheap club entry"
- "Best shots in Bucharest"
  - → Smile. Walk away. Keep walking.

#### X Too Much Confidence

The rule is simple:

If you can't pronounce the club's name anymore, it's time to go home.

# ErasmusWay Tips

- Never leave your drink unattended
- Don't go home alone (group up)
- Share live location with friends
- Don't accept random rides
- Keep enough battery for the Uber/Bolt ride home
- Screenshot your address on day 1
- Keep a small amount of cash on you



# Need Help? I'm Here for You.

Because every international student deserves someone they can message when things get confusing.

Moving to a new country can feel overwhelming — new rules, new city, new culture, new everything.

If you ever feel stuck, confused, stressed, or just need someone in Bucharest who gets it, you can always reach out.

# I'm happy to help with:

- ® navigating the city
- III transport, SIM, banks
- ineighborhoods & safety
- Meeting people & student groups
- general questions before or after arrival

You don't need to stay with *ErasmusWay* to contact me — I'm here for all international students.

# Scan or join the link below to make your first friends:

https://chat.whatsapp.com/JLbW9tjCbmKA4lYiSQMuyA





# Join the International Students WhatsApp Community

A free community group where students can ask questions, get quick help, and meet others even before arriving!!!

It's open to everyone coming to Bucharest, whether you stay with us, elsewhere, or have no housing yet.

# Scan the QR code or join via link

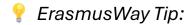


- My Contact Details
- Email:
- 👉 vaduvaleo2002@gmail.com
- Phone / WhatsApp:
- **+40** 757 049 998
- Instagram:
- 👉 leo.vaduva



# Why I Do This

- ✓ I was an international student too, moved abroad at 18 with a suitcase and pure chaos in my heart.
- ✓ I know exactly how confusing those first days can be.
- ✓ I want to be the support that I never received when I moved to a new country!!!
- ✓ So, if you ever need help, a quick answer, or just a friendly voice in Bucharest... don't hesitate.
- ✓ Send a message. You're not alone here.



The easiest way to survive your first week abroad?

Have at least one person in the city you can text for help.

Consider **me** that person.