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# PORT EXPLORER



## CONSTANȚA

ROMANIA

Constanța is considered to be one of the oldest cities in Romania. As has been the case from the very beginning, Constanța's role is an economic link and vital port on The Black Sea. A couple of hundred miles south along the coast from Constanța is the Bosphorus Strait. A few miles north of Constanța is the mighty Danube River which flows through the heart of Europe. The Greek sailors in 600 BC knew exactly what they were doing when they chose this site to establish a trading post.

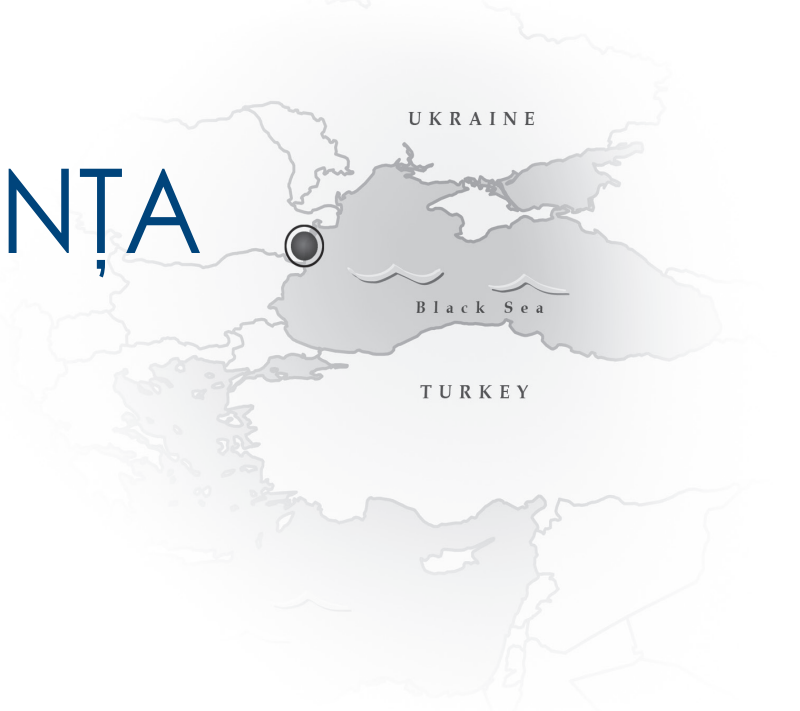
Constanța has grown over the centuries, through times of great prosperity and times of great challenge. Today the thriving city and metropolitan area is home to around 500,000 people. As a busy harbor and shipyard the city was and is one of the largest ports on the Black Sea. After more than 2,000 years Constanța remains a critical maritime link between Romania and the rest of the world.

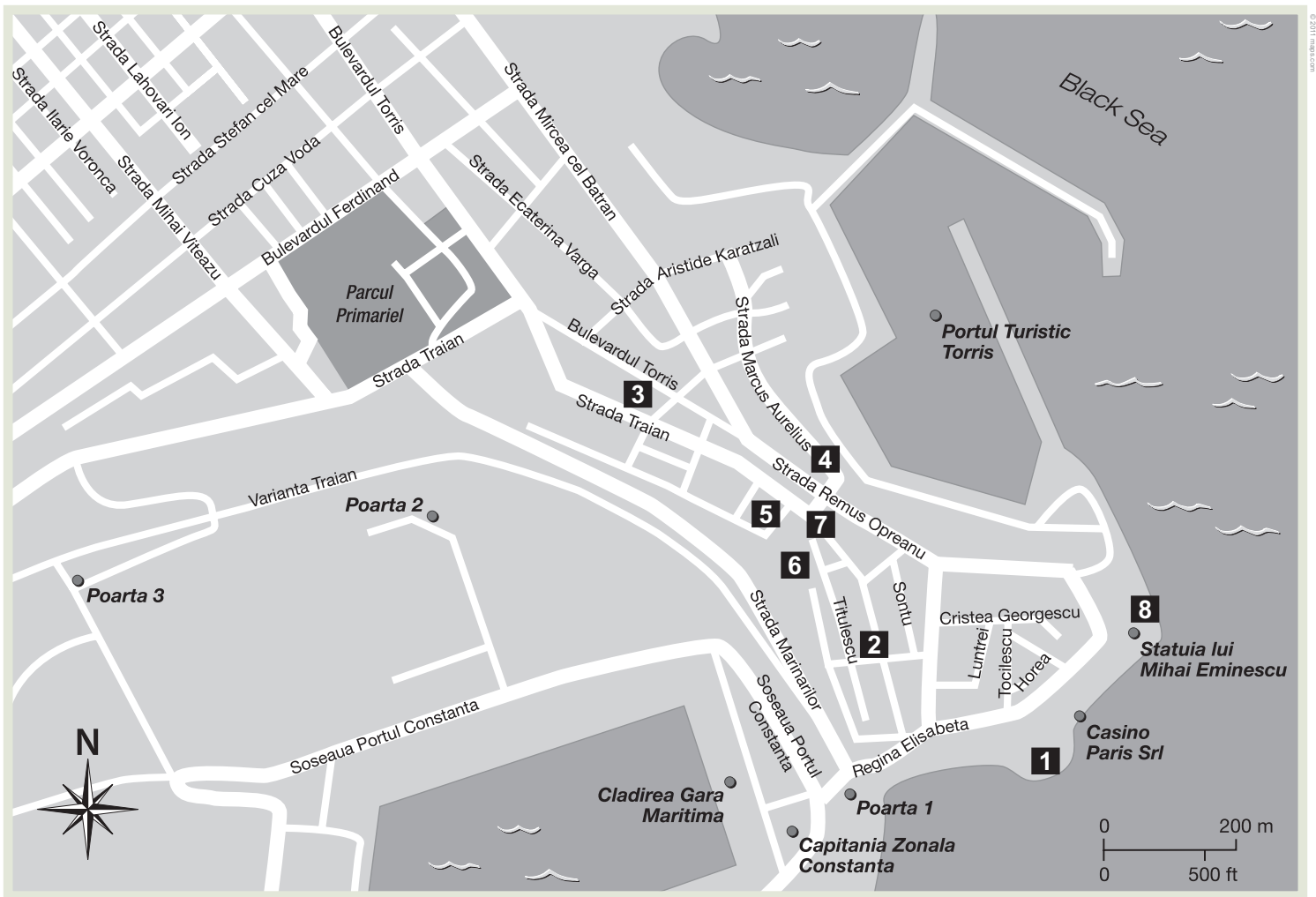
### HISTORY

The Romanian port city we know today as Constanța was founded by early Greek sailors and trade merchants around 600 BC. It was to be a commercial gateway to the people of the region, the Getae (or Dacia). At this time the Greeks were spreading their sea-trading empire throughout much of the Mediterranean and Black Sea. The Greeks called their new colony Tomis.

A great king by the name of Burebista united many powerful tribes in this land. Burebista ruled the region from 82 – 44 BC. Due to the fighting prowess of his warriors the king and his people were highly respected by the Romans. None the less, Julius Caesar planned to attack and conquer the region. By sheer coincidence, in 44 BC both men were assassinated by traitors from their inner circles. The legions of Rome eventually swept over the land and turned much of modern Romania into a province of the Empire. Constanța would eventually become an important Roman trading port.

In the early days however, the Romans apparently had little regard for the port town of Tomis (Constanța). It was to here the famous and popular Roman poet, Publius Ovidius Naso (Ovid) was exiled in 8 AD. Ovid said it was all because of “a poem and a mistake” ... a mistake he never made reference to again. Ovid had angered Emperor Caesar Augustus and the gentle poet was fortunate to leave with his head. He was banished to Tomis ... or as Ovid so famously described it at the time: “... a cultural wasteland on the remotest margins of the empire.” He would never see his beloved Rome again. Yet, despite Ovid's broken heart, his congenial personality won the admiration of the people. He studied the culture, became fluent in the language and wrote verse in the local vernacular. Romania and the city of Tomis had the last laugh. Today, forgotten by most, the great poet remains highly respected, revered and remembered in Constanța. Statues were built and a nearby town was renamed in his honor. The man whom Rome cast out was adopted as a son of the people and is now considered





by many to be Romania's first poet.

After the division of the empire in 286 AD the Black Sea port of Tomis came under the control of Eastern Rome. Tomis was renamed in honor of Flavia Julia Constantia, Emperor Constantine's half-sister. The port of Constanța was taken under Ottoman control in 1419. With the complete fall of Eastern Rome to the Muslims in 1453, nearly 1,000 years of Byzantine rule came to an end. It was over 450 years before Romania was able to break away and declare independence from the Ottoman Turkish Empire.

By the 20th century Constanța remained the most vital port in Romania. Following the quick defeat of France and the withdrawal of England from the European continent in the early days of WWII, Romanian fascist Ion Antonescu took power in a coup d'état. He cast Romania's lot with Hitler's Axis Powers. Romania's oilfields at Ploiesti and the hundreds of thousands of the young men who joined the German Army combined to form an indispensable cog in Hitler's war machine. Romania soon joined Germany in the ultimately disastrous Operation Barbarossa, the surprise attack on the Soviet Union.

The people of Romania lived under Communist control (Soviet and Romanian) from the end of WWII up until the 1989 Romanian Revolution and the popular overthrow of the dictator, Nicolae Ceaușesc.

The free, independent and democratic nation of Romania joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 2004. On January 1, 2007 Romania took its place as a member state of the European Union. If Ovid had been here he would have most assuredly written a poem.

### CONSTANTA PLACES OF INTEREST

- 1** The **Casino** is one of the most popular and certainly one of the most identifiable sites in Constanța. The intricately beautiful building was constructed in the early 1900s.
- 2** The **St. Peter and Paul Orthodox Cathedral** was built in the late 1800s. The church serves as a monastery and the seat of Romania's Archbishop of Tomis.
- 3** The **Ethnographical Museum** has a vast collection of Romanian icons, jewelry, folk costumes and artifacts dating to the 18th and 19th centuries.
- 4** **Ovid Square** is in the heart of the Old City. In the square visitors will see the statue dedicated to the distinguished poet who was banished from Rome and exiled to Constanța in 8 AD.
- 5** The **Archeological Museum** faces Ovid Square. The museum has a superb collection of frescoes, gold jewelry and historic artifacts dating back to the 1st century BC.

**6** The **Roman Mosaic** was discovered in 1962. It is located near the Archeological Museum. The elaborate mosaic actually served as a walkway connecting the upper city with the shops, warehouses and busy docks of the Roman port.

**7** The **Great Mahmudiye Mosque** was built in 1910 at the behest of Romanian King Carol I. The mosque is named in honor of Mahmud II, Sultan of the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century.

**8** The **Genoese Lighthouse** was constructed in 1860. It stands on the site of an earlier lighthouse, which, being made of wood burned down in 1829. Years later when it was decided to rebuild, Italian stone masons were chosen from among the artisans already working on new projects throughout the city. Many of the masons were from the city of Genoa hence the people of Constanța referred to the structure as the Genoese Lighthouse.

### Beyond Constanța

The **Danube River Delta** is about two hours north of Constanța. Here the great river flows into the Black Sea. The protected wetlands are the largest and certainly one of the most significant bird sanctuaries in Europe.

**Bucharest** is an ancient city and the capital of Romania. Three hours west of Constanța, the city is graced with many splendid and historic buildings. **The Royal Palace, Parliament, the Patriarchal Church** and **Revolution Square** are among some of the favorite sites in the city.

### SHORE EXCURSIONS

To make the most of your visit to Constanța and the surrounding area we suggest you take one of our organized Shore Excursions. For information concerning tour content and pricing, consult your Shore Excursion Order Form or contact the Shore Excursion Desk. When going ashore, be advised to take only necessary items and secure any valuables onboard.

### LOCAL CUSTOMS

**Bargaining:** Prices are generally fixed. Some of the smaller shops may bargain.

**Tipping:** A service charge is usually included in your restaurant bill however a 5% -10% additional tip directly to your server will always be appreciated.

### LOCAL CUISINE AND DRINK SPECIALTIES

Romanians like their meats; beef, pork and chicken. Grilled fish, herring sturgeon or carp, is also popular. Appetizers may include a salad of boiled eggs, potatoes, pickles and carrots all combined with mayonnaise. Tochitura is a hearty stew which combines spices, meat and onions. Muraturi are pickled vegetables; everything from green tomatoes to the famous red peppers. For desert Romanians often enjoy clătite cu brânză. These treats are rolled crepes which have been filled with a mixture of sweet spices, raisins and cottage cheese.

Tuica is a very popular, very strong plum brandy which is of-

ten homemade. Wine seems to have arrived in Romania by way of the Greeks, around 3,000 years ago. Though rarely being one of the first European countries thought of when considering wine, Romania has a great reputation for quality and is actually one of the EU's biggest wine producers. When thousands of Frenchmen come to Romania every year to buy wine you know someone here is doing something right. The wine produced on the Dobruja Plateau near Constanța would make a nice addition to any collection. For information concerning tours of local vineyards consult your Shore Excursion Order Form or contact the Shore Excursion Desk.

### SHOPPING

The City Park Mall is the newest shopping venue in Constanța. It is located across from the Teatrul de Vara Soveja (Constanța Soveja Theater). The Tomis Mall is the oldest in Constanța and has been completely renovated. It is located in the center of the city. Next to the mall visitors will find the city's "pedestrians only" shopping area.

### CURRENCY

Romania's currency is the "leu". A member of the European Union since 2007, Romania is expected to convert over to the Euro around 2014. Depending upon the store or restaurant, major credit cards and traveler's checks are accepted. Local banks and the "Balkan Exchange" are the best and safest place to convert your money. Other currency exchanges usually have steep fees tacked on.

### TRANSPORTATION

Car rentals are available in Constanța. The city's public transportation consists of buses, trams, trolleybuses and taxis. Licensed and insured taxis are yellow, have the rates listed and are metered. Be sure the driver starts the meter.

### POST OFFICE

The Central Post Office (#1) is located at 79 - 81 Tomis Blvd.

### TOURIST INFORMATION

The Constanta Tourist Information Center is located at #36 Traian St.

### USEFUL WORDS AND PHRASES

Hello - Salut

Excuse me - Pardon

Do you speak English? - Vorbiți engleză?

How much is this? - Cât costă

Thank you - Mersi

Good Bye - La revedere

