

Romanian Cuisine

While Romania is better known internationally for Dracula, Transylvania, and Nadia Comaneci, its lesser-known cuisine is something well worth exploring.

Traditional Romanian food brings together a mix of ingredients and are heavily influenced by Balkan, Turkish, Serbian, German, and Hungarian cuisines. Due to this enriched experience, Romanian food is varied, filling, and very savory.

☆ [Top 10 most popular dishes in Romania](#)

1. **Sarmale** (Cabbage Rolls)



This is a real comfort food that you can find at every traditional Romanian wedding, or that you can smell on the street during Christmas and New Year holidays. It is made of minced meat (usually pork or in combination with beef) mixed with spices, rice, and onions, then rolled up in sour (fermented) cabbage leaves, and boiled for hours in a special sauce made of tomato juice, and other secret ingredients.

2. **Mămăligă** (Polenta)



Usually a side dish for sarmale or served plain with sour cream and Romanian cheese, mămăligă is made from corn flour boiled in water with a pinch of salt and a few drops of sunflower oil. It's very healthy and also pairs well with gravies or stews.

3. **Mici** (Grilled Minced Meat Rolls)



Literally translated as “Small ones” because they used to be only as big as an adult finger, Mici are truly delicious and very popular on barbeques, street food, cottage weekends, and birthday celebrations. It's another food that can be smelled from miles away and makes you mouth water; and it is easy to make. All you need is minced pork and beef mixed with garlic, spices, and sodium bicarbonate. Form the mixture into small sausage-like portions and put them on the grill.

Juicy on the inside, crispy on the outside, you can savor them best with only mustard and bread.

4. Ciorbă de burtă (Beef Tripe Soup)



For a bold and brave experience when traveling abroad, you have to try one of the most popular soups in Romania – Beef Tripe Soup. While the name may not sound too appealing, it's a real delicacy and is sure to make your tongue dance. Considered the ultimate hangover remedy, Tripe Soup is made from the stomach of a cow, vegetables, and special bones, flavored with lots of garlic and soured with

vinegar. Hot chili peppers go with it very well.

5. Pomana Porcului (Honoring The Pig)



This dish comes from an old rural tradition, and the two are best experienced together to get the true taste of it. The tradition takes place in the cold, crispy air of December, when pigs are sacrificed for Christmas dinner. Fresh meat cut from a recently slaughtered pig is fried in its own fat in a deep pan. This savory food goes down well served with authentic pickles. Restaurants often have this meal on the menu, but if the pig is not freshly slaughtered, it doesn't have the same taste.

6. Jumări (Greaves)



From the same sacrifice of the pig, Romanians make a crunchy, salty starter called jumări from frying bits of bacon and pig fat. This is best served warm and always accompanied with raw onions and a shot of țuică, the traditional plum brandy, as a digestive. As delicious as it may be, you don't want to overdo it if you still want your pants to fit.

7. Cozonac (Sweet Bread)



There is no Christmas or Easter without this traditional Romanian dessert. The pride of every cook, Cozonac can be a real challenge for a household because it has to be done right. Kneading the dough is demanding work and the whole process

takes a while, but the result is truly rewarding. This Romanian dessert is a type of sweetbread filled with sweet walnut paste, poppy seed paste, or Turkish delight and raisins. It can also be found all year round in stores or fairs, but nothing compares with the taste of a homemade one.

8. Drob de miel (Lamb Haggis)



Lamb Drob is a festive Easter dish that looks like meatloaf with boiled eggs inside. But this tasty appetizer is much more than meets the eye. Minced lamb offal, green onions, eggs, and bread dipped in milk are baked together along with fresh cut herbs, such as dill, parsley and garlic.

9. Papanashi



Returning to desserts, Papanashi always makes you come back for more. Originating from the northern part of the country, this calorie bomb is very popular among all Romanians with a sweet tooth. It's a donut shaped cottage cheese and semolina mixture that is first fried and then covered in sour cream and jam, preferably blueberry. This sour and sweet combination is a complete delight for your senses and feast for your eyes.

10. Salata De Boeuf (Beef Salad)



No dinner party is complete without Beef Salad. This festive dish is really easy to make from ingredients "saved" from making a soup. Along with vegetables and meat cut into small cubes, the dish includes mayonnaise and is completed with pickles. The original recipe is made with beef, but nowadays many Romanians replace the beef with chicken.