

COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN ROMANIA AND PORTUGAL. MY PORTUGUESE EXPERIENCE



**INTERCULTURAL STUDIES
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INTRODUCTION

Culture is a complex principle of behavior, values, beliefs, traditions and art that is passed from generation to generation. Culture finds its meaning in the life of an individual and of society. Culture is a part of every society and creates an attitude of belonging as well as a close union and communication between people from that society. Culture covers various aspects of communication, including attitude, label, beliefs, values, customs, rules, food, art, jewelry, clothing style, tradition, music and much more. Each society has a different culture, which confer identity and uniqueness.

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF ROMANIA

Romania is situated in the southeastern part of Central Europe and shares borders with Hungary to the northwest, Serbia to the southwest, Bulgaria to the south, the Black Sea to the southeast, Ukraine to the east and north and the Republic of Moldova to the east. Romania is the 13th biggest country in Europe with 238.391 square km. It stretches 514 km from North to South and 720 km from East to West.



Romania's territory features splendid mountains, beautiful rolling hills, fertile plains and numerous rivers and lakes. The Carpathian Mountains traverse the centre of the country bordered on both sides by foothills and finally the great plains of the outer rim. Forests cover over one quarter of the country and the fauna is one of the richest in Europe including bears, deer, lynx, chamois and wolves. The legendary Danube River ends its eight-country journey at the Black Sea, after forming one of the largest and most biodiverse wetlands in the world, the Danube Delta¹.

¹ *** <http://romaniatourism.com/location.html>

CHAPTER I

ROMANIA CULTURE AND CIVILIZATION

HISTORY

At the intersection of the Balkans, the Orient, the Occident and the Slavic Region, Romania owns a turbulent past but got nevertheless its own identity in spite of the invasions and occupations. In the 1st century B.C. Dacia was created on today's Romanian territory. Later, between 101 and 106 A.D., the Romans invaded this land and settled here.



Source: *** <https://wwwromania.wordpress.com/2013/05/09/istoria-romaniei-9-mai/>

From the 3rd to the 12th century, the territory came across many other invasions from the Slaves, Huns, Hungarians, Turks and Mongols. The Slaves (in the 6th century) left some marks in the current Romanian language and the Hungarians were the only ones who settled for a longer time, in Transylvania.

During medieval times, the Romanians lived in three provinces: Wallachia, Moldavia and Transylvania. The provinces got united for good in 1918, to form the present Romanian state². Every year on the 1st of December, Romania celebrates the Great Union Day, which became the National Holiday.

As decades passed, and after the Second World War, Romania experienced a communist regime, the totalitarian regime of Nicolae Ceaușescu. In 1989, the dictatorship was pushed down and a democratic political system was re-established. A new constitution was adopted in 1991. Today Romania is part of important international organisations like NATO (2004) and the European Union (2007).

² *** <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romania>

Romanian History means conventionally the History of the geographic region of Romania, the peoples who lived on our lands and the modern Romanian state. It is one of the most debated issues in Romanian historiography and an issue which really shows the problem of origins.

The sanctuaries of the ancient Dacian Kingdom capital, Sarmizegetusa Regia



Source: *** http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Romania

CULTURE OF ROMANIA

The culture of Romania is unique and it is the product of its geography and its distinct historical evolution. Romanians are the descendants of the ancient indigenous people of the Balkans, but have been romanized. The Dacian people, one of the major indigenous peoples of the Balkans are the predecessors of the Proto-Romanians³.

Romania's History has been full of rebounds: the culturally productive epochs were those of stability, when the people proved quite an impressive resourcefulness in making up for less propitious periods and were able to rejoin the mainstream of European culture.



Source: *** http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture_of_Romania

³ *** http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture_of_Romania

The most striking thing about Romanian culture is the strong folk traditions which have survived to this day due to the rural character of the Romanian communities, which has resulted in an exceptionally vital and creative traditional culture. Romania's rich folk traditions have been nourished by many sources, some of which predate the Roman occupation. Traditional folk arts include wood carving, ceramics, weaving and embroidery of costumes, household decorations, dance, and richly varied folk music.

ARTS AND CRAFTS

In the “Merry Cemetery” of Săpânța, bordering Ukraine, carved wooden crosses are painted in traditional Voronet blue, which is an intense shade of blue, and embellished with fanciful borders, renderings of the deceased and often anecdotes of their lives. An erstwhile town Mayor is memorialized with anecdotes of his womanizing ways.



Source: *** <http://romaniatourism.com/arts.html>

Easter is a significant celebration in Romania as more than 86.5 % of the population is orthodox. The most readily recognizable examples of Romanian art are the famed painted eggs, specially prominent around Easter time. Painting of real hollowed-out eggs was an integral part of preparations for this festival of renewal. Women and children gathered in someone’s home and spent a day painting and gossiping.



Source: *** <http://romaniatourism.com/arts.html>

Romanian pottery is still made mainly on traditional kick-wheels with simple finishing tools. Shapes, sizes and patterns reflect the different clays and cultures of diverse areas where they are produced. Color glazes and decorations vary from strong geometrics, to delicate flowers, animals and humans. There are approximately 30 pottery centers throughout the country, each with its own distinctive style, but the main areas are in Horezu in Oltenia; Miercurea-Ciuc and Corund in western Transylvania; Baia Mare near the northern border and Rădăuți and Marginea in Moldavia⁴.



Source: *** <http://www.flickriver.com/places/Romania/Valcea/Horezu/search/>

Maramures is the area to see the art of woodwork. Homes are trimmed in elaborate carved wood, wooden gates and even fences are intricately carved. Historically, in this area, a family's community status was displayed through the gate; the more elaborate, the more important the family.



Source: *** <http://romaniatourism.com/arts.html>

Textile weaving is the most widespread craft in Romania, handed down from generation to generation, using distinctive family patterns along with those specific to

⁴ *** <http://romaniatourism.com/arts.html>

different districts. Looms still are common in homes and women weave and embroider from childhood through old age. The predominant fibers, wool and cotton are woven into rugs, wall hangings, table covers and clothing.



Source: *** <http://romaniatourism.com/arts.html>

Masks are linked to folk festivals held predominantly in Maramures and Moldavia. Typically made from hides of sheep, goats or cows, the masks are adorned with fabric, hats, pompoms, metallic bits, feathers, beans, straw and animal horns to represent bears and goats. They're traditionally worn to welcome in the New Year during a couple of weeks in December and early January.



Source: *** <http://romaniatourism.com/arts.html>

Rugs and embroidery are technically textile but these deserve their own category, because no other textiles so dramatically reflect their regions of origin. As varied as different areas attractions, these Romanian work of art are displayed on surrounding fences and on interior walls of the traditional houses in Romania.



Source: *** <http://ad hoc.ro/hellodambovita/articol/16/>

Music and dance represent a lively part of the Romanian folklore and there is a great variety of musical genres and dances. Sentimental music is the most valued, and we consider our *doina* (a sad song either about one's home or about love, composed like an epic ballad) unique in the world. Maria Tănase, Maria Lătărețu, Maria Ciobanu and Ileana Sararoiu are one of the greatest Romanian folk singers and today Grigore Leșe and Taraful Haiducilor are two of the most famous musicians. The dances are lively and are practiced throughout Romania by a large number of professional and amateur groups, thus keeping the tradition alive; *Hora* is one of the most famous group dances but men's folk dances such as *călușari* are extremely complex and have been declared by UNESCO to be "Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritages of Humanity".



Source: *** http://tourguideromania.blogspot.pt/2013_07_01_archive.html

ARTS OF ROMANIA

The topic of the origin of the Romanians began to be discussed by the end of the 18th century among the Transylvanian School scholars. Several writers rose to prominence in 19th century, including George Coșbuc, Ioan Slavici Mihail Kogălniceanu, Vasile Alecsandri, Nicolae Bălcescu, Ion Luca Caragiale, Ion Creangă, and Mihai Eminescu, later being considered the greatest and most influential Romanian poet, particularly for the poem *Lucefărul*. In the 20th century, Romanian artists reached international acclaim, including Tristan Tzara, Marcel Janco, Mircea Eliade, Nicolae Grigorescu, Marin Preda, Liviu Rebreanu, Eugène Ionesco, Emil Cioran, and Constantin Brâncuși. Romanian-born Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1986, while writer Herta Müller received the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2009. In cinema, several movies of the Romanian New Wave have achieved international acclaim. At

the Cannes Film Festival, *The Death of Mr. Lăzărescu* by Cristi Puiu won the Prix Un Certain Regard in 2005, while *4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days* by Cristian Mungiu won the Palme d'Or in 2007. At the Berlin International Film Festival, *If I Want to Whistle, I Whistle* by Florin Șerban won the Jury Grand Prix in 2010 and *Child's Pose* by Călin Peter Netzer won the Golden Bear in 2013. Musicians like Angela Gheorghiu, Tudor Gheorghe, Gheorghe Zamfir, Inna, Fly Project, O-Zone have achieved various levels of international acclaim. At the Eurovision Song Contest Romanian singers have achieved third place in 2005 and 2010.

While there are great Romanian fine artists, among whom the 20th-century sculptor Constantin Brâncuși is probably the most famous. Works of Brâncuși are in various places, but one of the finest collections is in the city of Târgu Jiu, in Oltenia, province at the southern border of the Carpathian Mountains. "The Endless Column" (*Coloana Infinita*), "The Gate of the Kiss" (*Poarta Sarutului*), "The Table of Silence" (*Masa Tacerii*) and "The Alley of Chairs" (*Aleea Scaunelor*) are displayed in the city's main park as indicated by the great sculptor.

Each of them has a special meaning. For example "The Endless Column" is symbolically a column of infinite sacrifice, representing an axis of the world intended to support the sky for eternity. "The Gate of the Kiss" represents symbolically the transition to the other or another life. "The Table of Silence" is a symbol of family reunion and meditation. Brancuși's desire is that his revival of this ancient custom might be kept till our days.



Source: *** <http://www.financiarul.ro/2013/09/06/ce-reprezinta-masa-tacerii-poarta-sarutului-si-coloana-infinita/>

Classic music was and it is part of Romanian society. Notable Romanian composers of the 19th and 20th centuries include Ciprian Porumbescu, Anton Pann, Eduard Caudella, Mihail Jora, Dinu Lipatti and especially George Enescu. Also famous is the composer and conductor Sergiu Celibidache.



Source: *** http://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ateneul_Rom%C3%A2n

Nicolae Grigorescu is the first of the founders of modern Romanian painting, followed by Ion Andreescu and Ștefan Luchian. Nicolae Grigorescu became a symbol for the young generation of artists who, in the first decades of the twentieth century, sought to identify and bring to light the values of Romanian spirituality.



Source: *** http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicolae_Grigorescu

ROMANIAN WINE AND CUISINE

The central characteristic of the Romanian cuisine is its great variety. Traditional food is influenced by both neighbors and invaders. Turkish, Hungarian and Austrian cuisines played an important role. For example the popular main dishes are meat, cabbage rolls, sausages and stews. Romanian food is also influenced by Latin cuisine. Thus you can frequently find Italian and French dishes. The main ingredients used by Romanian chefs are meats such as pork, beef and lamb, fish, vegetables, dairy products and fruit.



Romania has one of the oldest wine making traditions in the world, its viticulture dating back more than 6000 years. Due to the hot dry summers, the location proved to be successful and the grape vineyards thrived. Since medieval times, wine has been the traditional alcoholic beverage of the Romanians. In 2014 Romania ranks as fourteenth country in terms of largest wine producers, Portugal being on thirteenth position.



Source: *** <http://www.metro.ro/public/Universul%20vinurilor>

CHAPTER II

PORTUGAL CULTURE AND CIVILIZATION

GENERAL INFORMATION

Portugal lies along the Atlantic coast of the Iberian Peninsula in south Western Europe. It shares a border with Spain in the east and north, while the Atlantic dominates the coastline in the west and south. Occupying about 16 percent of the Iberian Peninsula, Portugal (including Madeira and Azores islands) has a population of over 10 million people.



Source: *** <http://www.wordtravels.com/Travelguide/Countries/Portugal/Map>

Despite its relatively small size, the country boasts a great diversity of geographical features, from golden plains to mountainous zones.

The name of Portugal itself reveals much of the country's early history, stemming from the Roman name *Portus Cale*, a Latin name meaning "Port of Cale" later transformed into *Portucale*, and finally into *Portugal*. Portugal, as a country with a long History, is home to several ancient architectural structures, as well as typical art, furniture and literary collections mirroring and chronicling the events that shaped the country and its people. It has a large number of cultural landmarks ranging from museums to ancient church buildings to medieval castles, which testify its rich national cultural heritage.

Portugal modernized its public cultural facilities, in addition to the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation established in 1956 in Lisbon. These include the Belém Cultural Centre in Lisbon, Serralves Foundation and the Casa da Música, both in Porto, as well as new public cultural facilities like municipal libraries and concert halls that were built or renovated in many municipalities across the country. Portugal is home to fifteen UNESCO World Heritage Sites, ranking it 8th in Europe and 17th in the world.



Source: *** <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Serralves>

PORTUGUESE CULTURE

Portuguese culture is based on a past that dates back to prehistoric times and has been heavily influenced by a rich variety of countries and customs over the years. The eras of the Roman and Moorish invasions as well as the ancient societies before that have all left their traces in a rich legacy of archaeological remains that can be found throughout Portugal.

The ancient cave paintings at Escoural, the Roman township of Conímbriga, the Temple of Diana in Évora and the typical Moorish architecture of the southern towns Olhão and Tavira are just some examples of extraordinary cultural gems that can be found in the country.

Throughout the centuries, Portugal's arts have been enriched by foreign influences, including Flemish, French and Italian. The voyages of the Portuguese discoverers opened the country to Oriental inspiration and the revelation of Brazil's wealth of gold and jewels fed the Baroque flame in decoration.

Portugal is famous for its explorers and navigators who sailed around the world during the Age of Discovery. Vasco da Gama opened up sea routes from Europe to India while Fernão de Magalhães (known as Magellan) was the first to circumnavigate the globe.

Portuguese names have also been influential in the arts, including poets Luís de Camões and Fernando Pessoa. The most treasured aspect of Portuguese culture is *Fado*, a style of music that emerged in Alfama but is also a traditional part of university life in Coimbra. Beloved across the nation as a true expression of Portuguese *saudade*, this yearning, melancholic music has a heartfelt, almost operatic style and is performed in *Fado* Houses, generally accompanied by Portuguese guitars. One of the best-known *Fado* songs, “Casa Portuguesa” by Amália Rodrigues, has the lyrics: “In a Portuguese house, there is good bread and wine on the table and if someone knocks at the door, they sit at the table with us”. This epitomises the spirit of Portuguese hospitality – humble, charming and welcoming⁵.

ARCHITECTURE

Traditional architecture is distinctive and includes the Manueline, also known as Portuguese late Gothic, a sumptuous, composite Portuguese style of architectural ornamentation of the first decades of the 16th century. A 20th-century interpretation of traditional architecture, Soft Portuguese style, appears extensively in major cities, especially Lisbon.



Source: *** <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portugal#Culture>

⁵ *** <http://www.portugal-live.net/UK/essential/general-portuguese.html>

CUISINE AND WINE TRADITION

Portuguese cuisine is diverse. The Portuguese consume a lot of dry cod (*bacalhau*, in Portuguese), for which there are hundreds of recipes. There are more than enough *bacalhau* dishes for each day of the year. Two other popular fish recipes are grilled sardines and *caldeirada*, a potato-based stew that can be made from several types of fish.

Typical fast food dishes include the *francesinha* (“Frenchie”) from Porto, and *bifanas* (grilled pork) or *prego* (grilled beef) sandwiches, which are well known around the country.



Source: *** <http://conexaoportugal.com.br/tag/francesinha/>

Portuguese wines have enjoyed international recognition since the times of the Roman Empire, which associated Portugal with their Bacchus god. Today, the country is known by wine lovers and its wines have won several international prizes. Some of the best Portuguese wines are: Vinho Verde, Vinho Alvarinho, Vinho do Douro, Vinho do Alentejo, Vinho do Dão, Vinho da Bairrada and the sweet Port Wine, Madeira Wine, Moscatel from Setúbal and Faveiros. Port and Madeira are particularly appreciated in a wide range of places around the world.



Source: *** <http://www.dreamstime.com/stock-images-portugal-douro-valley-grapes-image4157134>

MUSIC AND VISUAL ARTS

Portuguese music encompasses a wide variety of genres. The most renowned is *fado*, a melancholic urban music originated in Lisbon, usually associated with the Portuguese guitar and with *saudade*, or longing. Coimbra *fado*, a unique type of "serenading" *fado*, is also noteworthy. In addition to *fado* and folk, the Portuguese listen to pop and other types of modern music, particularly from North America and the United Kingdom, as well as a wide range of Portuguese, Caribbean and Brazilian artists and bands.

Portugal has a rich history in painting. The first well-known painters, who date back to the 15th century – like Nuno Gonçalves – were part of the Gothic painting period. José Malhoa, known for his work "Fado", and Columbano Bordalo Pinheiro (who painted the portraits of Teófilo Braga and Antero de Quental) were both references in naturalist painting.



Source: *** [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:1-Casa_da_Musica-exterior_\(1\).jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:1-Casa_da_Musica-exterior_(1).jpg)

SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ROMANIA AND PORTUGAL

SIMILARITIES

Both cultures have in common the Latinity, the related languages that make communication easy between people. Family is also important in both cultures due to its role in keeping the unity and transmitting the traditions generation by generation.

We have in common the History of producing wine that shaped our tastes and food behaviors during the centuries, the hospitality and warmly welcoming of the people.

In terms of music the both of us are very similar, we have our *doina*, a sentimental Romanian song and Portugal has *Fado* music, which expresses deep Portuguese feelings that people live and have lived through History.

DIFFERENCES

Each society has a different culture, which confers identity and uniqueness. Romanian and Portuguese cultures are distinguishable since they have their own specificities shaped by historical and geographical conditions, but due to the influence received by other population that have passed through our lands.

I believe that in our culture handicraft has a unique place among History. I can mention the Romanian painted eggs, related to religion and Easter holiday, our own traditional dances and our way of living over the centuries.

MY PORTUGUESE EXPERIENCE

Being abroad makes you love and value more your own culture. Tasting and experiencing other languages, culture and food deepens in your heart a feeling of pride and joy. Being an ambassador of your country represents a happiness that you can live while traveling or living abroad. It is a unique feeling that shows you what your values and beliefs are and what makes of you a good Romanian.

“Eu não sou português, mas gosto de Portugal, gosto muito do Porto, a cidade invicta. Eu sou romeno e sempre serei, mas eu digo uma coisa: a vossa cultura é muito parecida com a nossa, a vida tem o mesmo sentido aqui que na minha terra”.

I like your country because you have warm and friendly people, the weather is beautiful and here I can learn how to live and adapt to other culture that is in some points the same, although it has also strong specificities. Learning a language like Portuguese helped me to enrich my language skills, to communicate better with other cultures and to stay in contact with the world, all of this because of being part on an International program, Erasmus +. Besides my personal taste, here I can develop new skills in terms of professional career and expand my knowledge. Living here helps me to find my own identity, shaping my own culture and way to live my life.

CONCLUSION

As a short conclusion, we observe that culture means all the elements that define a society, a group and a person. Besides the own beliefs, the humanity is the universal language of the coexistence of cultures. Romanian and Portuguese cultures have both similarities and differences, but what distinguishes them is the historical preoccupations, the simple way to see and live life.

Living here in Portugal and being interconnected with Portuguese culture made of me a more tolerant person in a cosmopolite society, but it also made me proud of being Romanian, representing my country overseas and not forgetting my true origin. I want to say that in the end people will judge you anyway, but we don't need to live impressing others, but instead impressing ourselves, because no matter what religion you have, what clothes you wear or which music you listen to, finding yourself and living your life in a free way makes you know who you are and what you want to achieve.

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