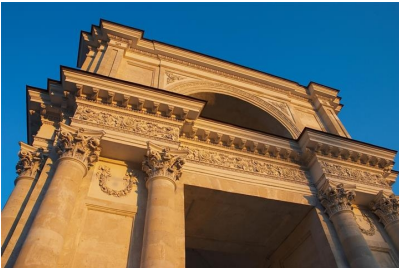


# Moldova: The Challenges of the Tourism Industry

The Republic of Moldova in Eastern Europe borders Ukraine and Romania. Being a land locked country does not stop Moldova from being a very interesting tourist destination that attracts more and more visitors.



## What's on Offer

The tourism industry of Moldova focuses on four aspects of tourism which are; wine, rural, cultural and the health and beauty sector is also coming up fast. The rural sector focuses on giving tourists a native experience of Moldova. Tourists can spend time in the country side and fully take part in the rural activities there. They stay in traditional homes and mingle with the natives. They can also take part in crafts making and enjoy nature in its pure form.

Moldova is widely known for wine production as well. There are several wineries and some allow guests to tour their premises. The wine expeditions involve visiting vineyards in the country side, cellars, storage facilities and processing factories. The visitors get the chance to see the entire processing activity and sample the final product.

Moldova also has rich culture that attracts tourists all year round. For a country that has 87 museums, it is with no wonder that they have a lot of arts to show. Tourists visit cultural sites such as cave monasteries, noble mansions, domestic architecture and Roman fortifications. The best part is that the capital city houses some of these items hence making it easy for tourists to indulge in the culture.



The health and beauty sector is becoming a major contributor in the industry. The health resorts such as Bucuria-sind will join the tourism band wagon when they receive proper infrastructure to facilitate

tourism attraction.

## **The Numbers**

The tourism industry of Moldova is a major contributor to the economy in a number of ways. 2013 saw the rise of tourism services by 1.6% in comparison to 2012. The number of tourists that departed and arrived increased by 4.4% and 6.1% respectively.

The total contribution of Travel & Tourism to GDP was MDL 2.4bn (2.6% of GDP) in 2013, and is forecast to rise by 3.4% in 2014, and to rise by 3.5% pa to MDL 3.5bn (2.2% of GDP) in 2024.

Leisure travel spending (inbound and domestic) generated 55.9% of direct Travel & Tourism GDP in 2013 (MDL 3.6bn) compared with 44.1% for business travel spending (MDL 2.8bn).

Domestic travel spending is expected to grow by 3.6% in 2014 to MDL 2.9bn, and rise by 6.3% pa to MDL 5.4bn in 2024.

## **The Challenges**

Tourism involves both the domestic tourism and external tourism. The domestic tourism sector of Moldova seems to be suffering. In 2013, the number of internal tourists decreased by 10.6%. This can either mean the internal market is suffering financially hence they are not able to take part in leisure activities, or the industry has laid too much emphasis on attracting foreign tourists.

Business spending is lower than that of leisure spending. This could mean that Moldova tourism lacks enough incentive for the business travelers.



Experts have revealed that these statistics are calculated from the tourists that use tour operator services. This is just a small number of the tourists that visit the country both internally and foreign. As such, the statistics provided are underestimated since only a small number is catered for.

The tourism industry should put in more effort in to domestic tourism since it is still a major contributor to the economy. However, domestic tourism might not be failing as perceived by the statistics. This is because most domestic tourists plan their own trips without involving tour operators. As such, this large number is not included in the statistics.

The tourism industry should find a new assessment strategy that will incorporate the solo trips planned by tourists. In this way, they will get the real overview of the situation. With proper addressing of infrastructure and employment, the contribution of tourism to the economy will increase.

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