

RESTAURANTS IN BUCHAREST

ROSSETYA RESTAURANT

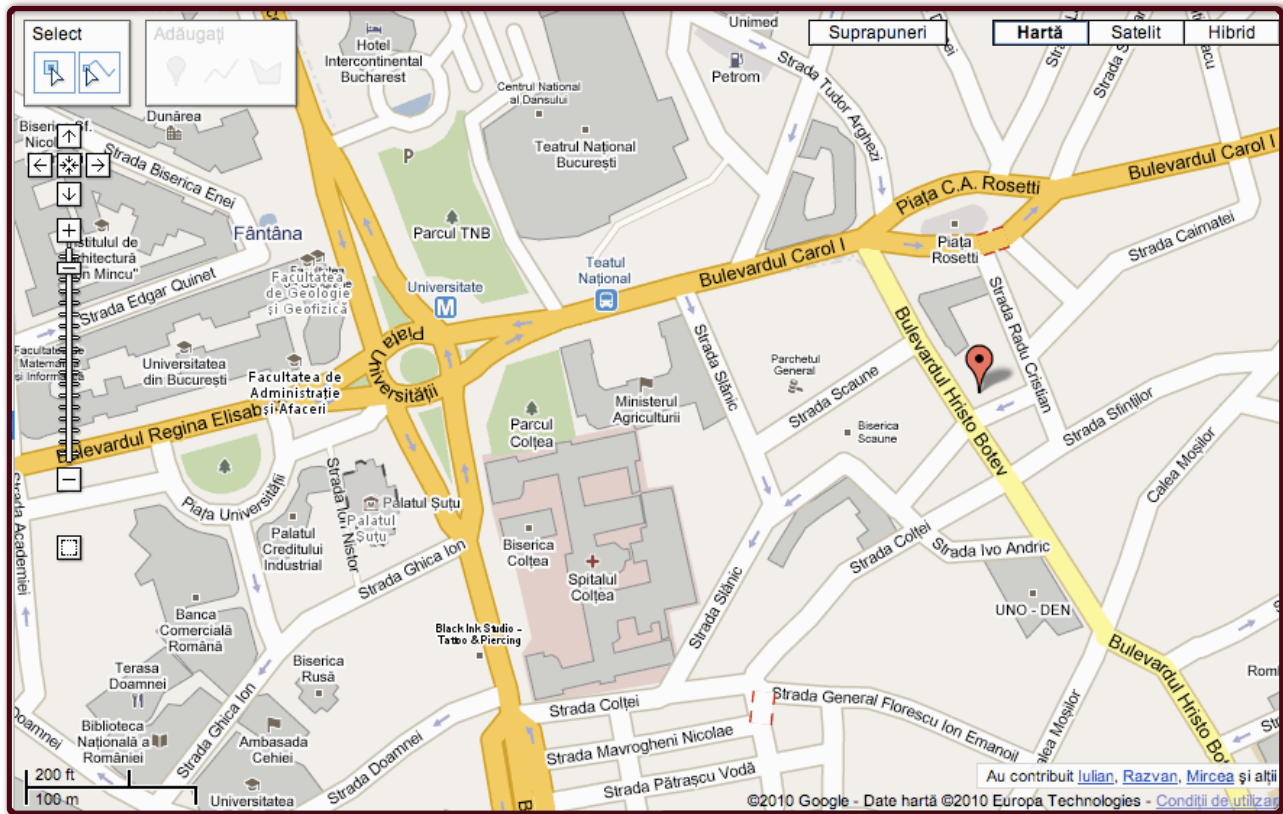
One can walk on along the Hristo Botev without even noticing this place. And, as always in this city, this is a good sign, for it keeps away the fitze crowd. But, the very moment one steps inside, it all changes, we go back in time to the mid 19th century and some Wallachian mansion, both in terms of atmosphere and cooking. The decoration is simple and enchanting, lacking the ado in other places. A few pictures on the wall, the honey-coloured wallpaper imitating silk and those same colour upholstered chairs invite one to sit down and enjoy a meal. Service is fast, but quiet and discrete for once in this city.

The food here is not sophisticated, it is just traditional with a bourgeois touch. The menu has them all, starting with cold platters: try the fresh, smoked cheese or the brânză de burduf (spicy cheese), the aubergine salad, the ghiudem - hard, dry and spiced sausages), as well as the dry salami and ham. Then continue with some Pleșcoi sausages, spiced pork and rice stuffed cabbage, mutton stew with fresh garlic sauce or pork stew with polenta (or just some polenta with cheese and sour cream). Do not forget to end with one of their deserts, even if not on the fancy style: a wholesome portion of apple pie, some papanashi (cheese-filled donuts topped with jam and sour cream), creme brulee or "plain" green walnut jam.

Do not expect glamour at the Rossetya, but rather expect good and efficient service, a smile, good Romanian traditional meals, as well as a touch of 19th century elegance. Ay, and expect a human (as opposed to the nouveau riche, imbecile) approach. Bon appetit!

GPS - N44 26.122 E26 06.401

Address: 9 Dimitrie Bolintineanu (at the crossing with Hristo Botev, close to Rosseti Square), <http://www.rossetya.ro>



CARU' CU BERE RESTAURANT

Founded for the first time in Zlătari Inn in 1879, the restaurant then moved to the actual location, in a landmark building designed by Architect Zigfrid Kofczinsky in Neo-Gothic style. Stained glass windows, an impressive interior decorated in a mock German beer house style, as well as a traditional, more austere cellar, together with the house beer (supposedly following a secret recipe), all join hands to create a unique experience. And, if until a few years ago the service was from bad to worst, nowadays it is improving (even though exceptions and "I do not know, wasn't me" situations still occur. But

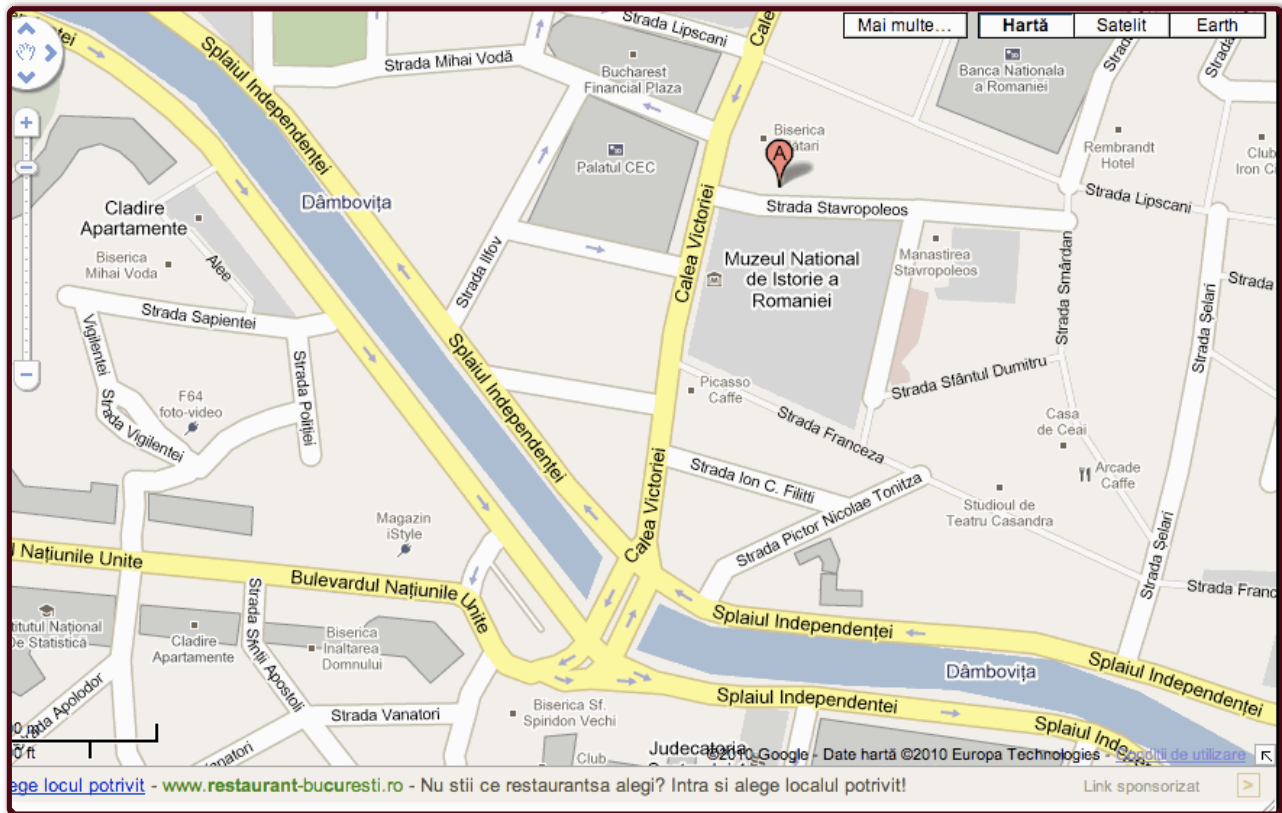
even so, an evening at the Caru' cu Bere is a fine experience with their live music and traditional dances from different parts of the country, as well as with the fine (even though a bit crowded) terrace. In autumn (end September and all October) they also serve **grape must**.

Book ahead, it tends to be full for dinner (the show starts at around 7:30 PM), while if you want to explore the building at ease, go there for lunch. Mind you the 'non smoking area' actually is half of the main hall and smoke tends to travel from the smoking area in there, as there is nothing to separate the two halves. Therefore, if you have a problem with that, better book a table on the terrace and only visit inside. The service varies widely according to the number of customers, but this is not a place where promptness should be expected.

Note: As of end 2013, the faade was under restoration, scaffoldings included, but the restaurant is open as usual.

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5 Stavropoleos (the easiest access is from Calea Victoriei, as you look at the National History Museum, take the street to the left of it and soon find the restaurant to your left, just past Chocolat Cafeteria), <http://www.carucubere.ro/>



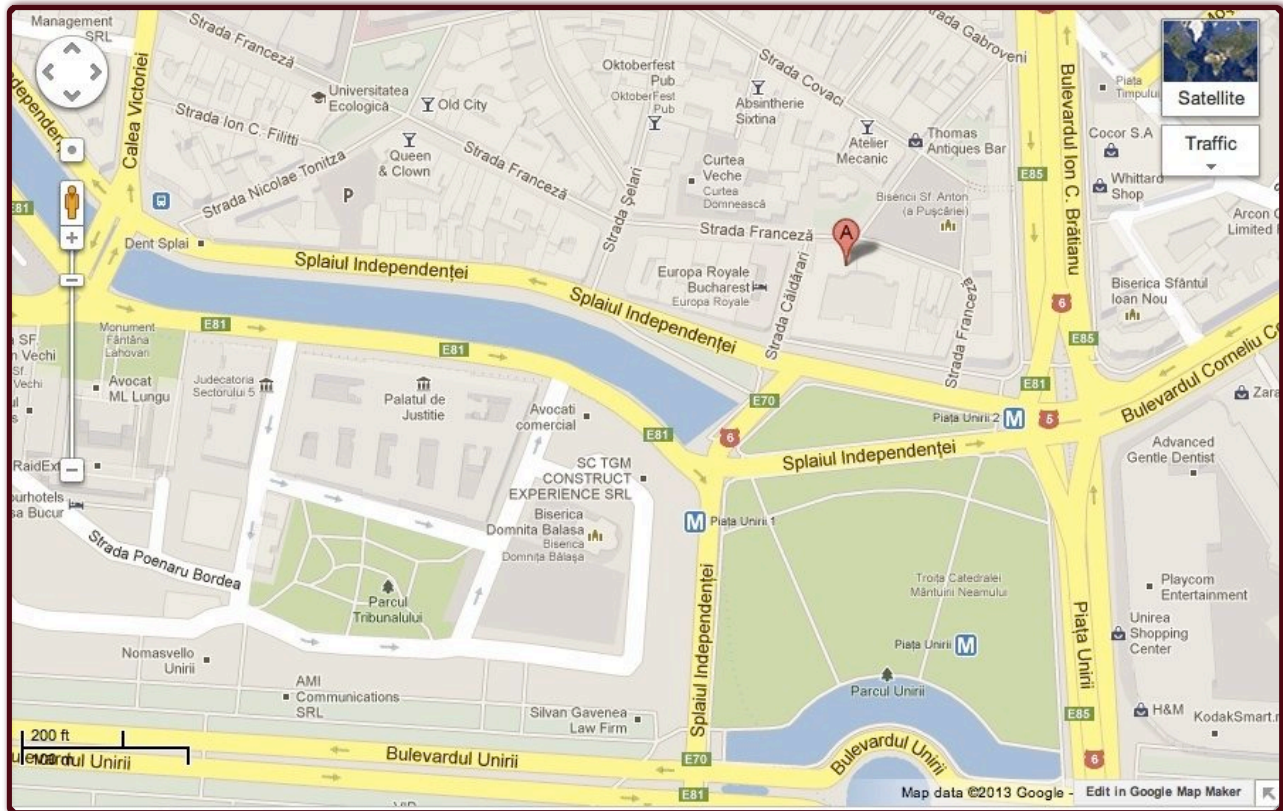
HANUL LUI MANUC

A heritage, historic location featured on city tours, in guidebooks and even novels.

The inn was built by Armenian merchant Emanuel Mârzaian - a.k.a. Manuc Bey - in 1808. There were 107 rooms upstairs and the typical inner yard hosted a cafeteria and a small terrace, apart from the grounds where the horse-pulled carts could be brought in. As time passed, shops were hosted in the Southern wing. While the building was restored a few times and hence the occurrence of various changes, the last works tried to bring it as close as possible to the initial structure. Nowadays there are a few cafeterias in the Southern wing, with access from the Piața Unirii, of which the Manuc Levantin (Lebanese restaurant), the Bistro Manuc and the Manuc Cafe belong to the Hanul lui Manuc management. The centerpiece hosts an extensive traditional restaurant terrace which also provides access to two event halls. The inn can be accessed through the main entrance on Franceză Street or through the three restaurants, from Unirea Square. The accommodation rooms upstairs are still closed, as they are doing lengthy renovation works there.

While it might not have the best service in town, the Hanul lui Manuc is a recommended experience, with its archways, Turkish style carved wood columns and stucco decoration, as well as the wood shingle roof. And then, it provides a welcome, relaxed break from the bustling Unirea Square and its traffic. One can opt for one of the two restaurants (Romanian and Lebanese), the bistro or for the cafeteria that also serves sweets. Menu-wise, apart from the typical bunch

of espressos and a few cocktails, the cafe offers a good Turkish coffee and a delicious biscuit cake plus a not very comprehensive wine list, but where one can find a recommended Crâmpoșie (white) and Novac (red) of Prince Știrbey Vineyards. The traditional restaurant has the typical platters of cold cuts, cheeses and grills; apart from that, the stuffed peppers and the vegetable moussaka are recommended, and so is the carrot, ginger and walnut cake. The best place to be, disregarding of the venue you choose (or have to choose according to availability), is the first floor balcony, the so-called 'cerdac'. The cafe has the Western part of it, the traditional restaurant occupies the wide, central balcony and the Levantine restaurant terrace is sandwiched in between.



Especially for dinner, bookings are strongly recommended, even though I would recommend the place for early lunch or a lazy afternoon hangout, which would allow for a lengthy, relaxed exploration of the whole place. It can be expectedly noisy in the evening.

GPS - N44 26.706 E26 05.744

62-64 Franceză, tel.: 0769075844, <http://www.hanulluimanuc.ro/>, cafemanuc@hanulluimanuc.ro

VATRA RESTAURANT

Vatra Restaurant is a not so big restaurant that serves tasty Romanian dishes at affordable prices just next to Cișmigiu Gardens (from EUR 8-10 up for a menu).

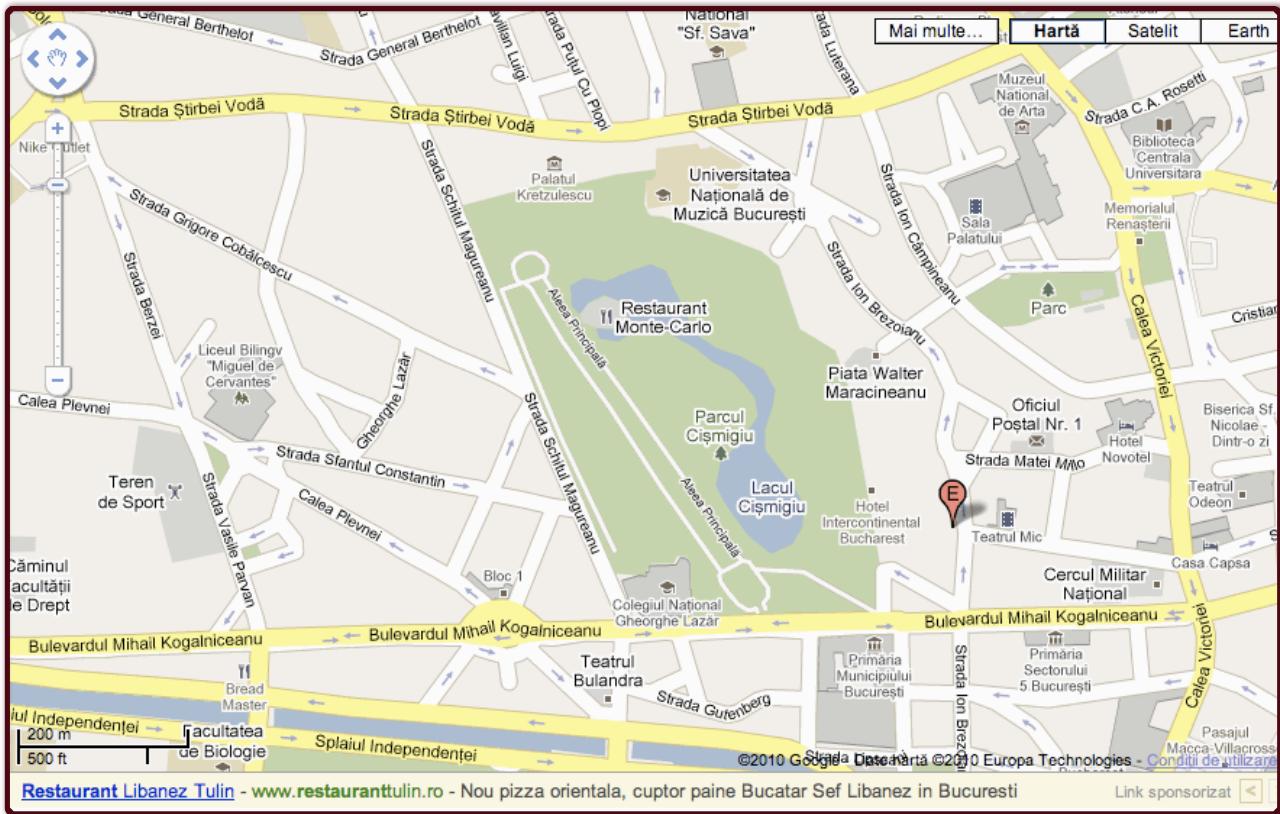
The good thing about this place is that it lacks an orchestra. So you can focus on the food and the efficient service. Enjoy the Balkan show later on in another location, joined by bottles of wine to keep you bemused from the slow service, for here they mean business. And time.

The sarmale taste OK and come in reasonable portions, the mici are the best I've ever met in a Romanian restaurant, the ciorbă de burtă is as good as it is in Mrs. Fota's **Manoir Mignon** up North in Bukovina (connoisseurs know what I am referring to, just think of that sour soup thickened with a lot of real sour cream and coming with large pieces of tripe...), they also have better than average papanashi, while their "Romanian peasant starters platter" is impressive, with all those stripes of șorici hanging around... They serve some of the best "restaurant mici" in town (usually the mici to be found in restaurants as opposed to terraces are not so good), except, of course, for Gerard or La Gil. Amen.

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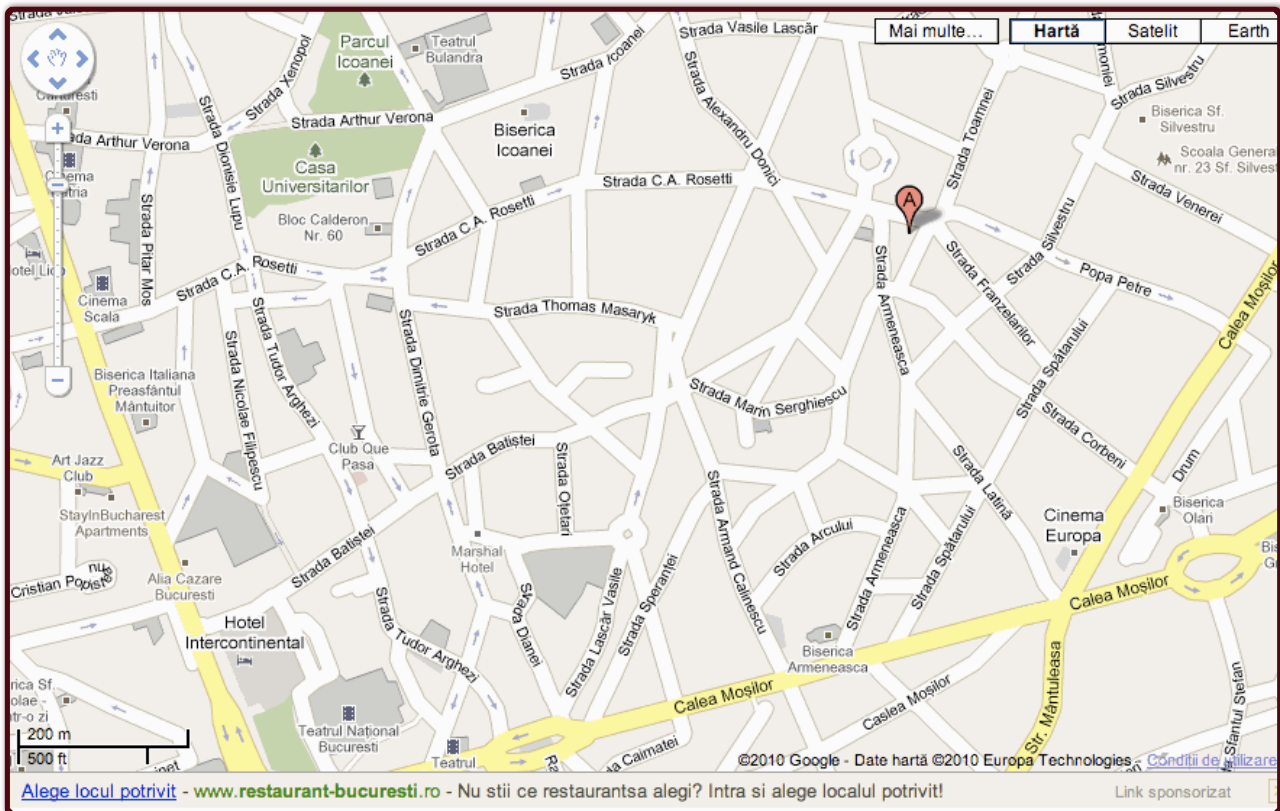
It lies near Bucharest's central gardens (Cișmigiu Gardens), from University Square take Elisabeta Avenue to the West and turn to the right 10 minutes later, on Brezoianu Street. Old customers: please note that the old location, at 23-25 Ion Brezoianu, is no longer in use. The new, larger one lies 50 m. South, closer to the Elisabeta (as shown on the map).

Str. Ion Brezoianu 19, <http://www.vatra.ro>



NICOREȘTI RESTAURANT

Low prices (an average 3 course meal starts at EUR 10), fast (well, not necessarily pampering) service and a down-on-earth place for regular people, just like you and me (I hope), no fanciness around. Hai noroc și sănătate!



One starts with some boiled șorici (pork skin), fish eggs, zacuscă and a glass of țuică (plum brandy), for we are in Wallachia... As for the many local ciorbas, they are all very good here, whether it is about the rare (in restaurants) ciorbă de lobodă (pigweed soup) or the borș de miel (lamb sour soup) or borș de crap (carp sour soup). Top mains include mutton pastrami with polenta or Pleșcoi sausages with mashed beans (ask them to have the mashed beans served cold, as they should be), a glass of Cabernet Sauvignon from Cricova or from Sâmburești - Castel Bolovanu aside. Otherwise, I would anytime go there for a big, healthy portion of "hamsii cu mujdei și mămăligă" (salted, dry and fried anchovy fish served with polenta and fresh garlic sauce), joined by some dry Sauvignon Blanc from Chateau Domenii. And the finale is just as gloriously not fancy, yet hellishly tasty: a light lapte de pasăre (eggwhite and milk stir) or, for the still mighty, some of the tortul casei (a brilliant chocolate cake your grandmother probably still had a chance to taste when a little girl). Complete your gossip session over dessert with an ancien monde cafea turcească. What they miss is the pre-2010 decor which was simpler and fit the menu better than the actual chandeliers. But hell cares about the looks when one pops into a gifted cook. So stop playin' and mockin' at overweight grandma children, dinner's ready!

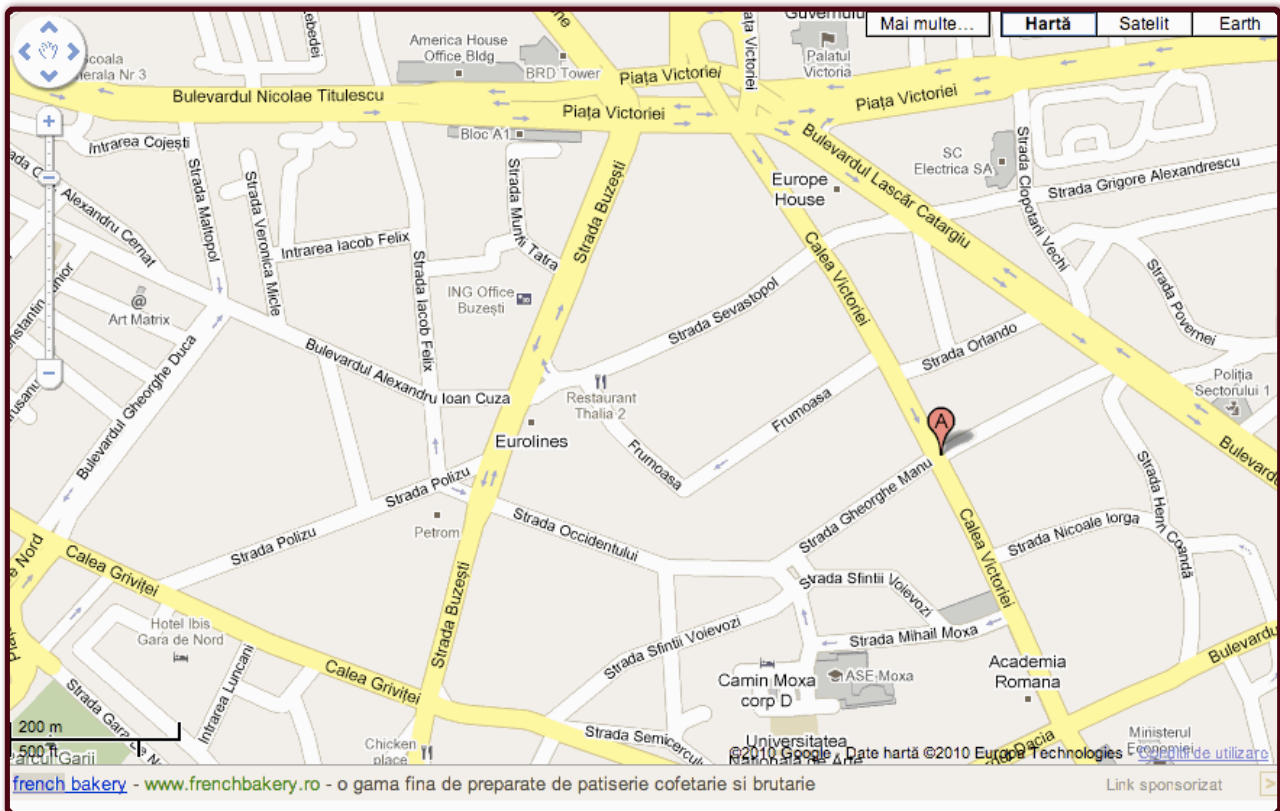
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From Magheru Avenue that crosses the center, head to Scala Cinema and from there head to the East on Rosetti Street which you follow for about 15 minutes. After crossing the tramway lines, go still on for about 200 m. and find the restaurant to your right, just before the street turns lightly to the left.

Str. Toamnei 14 (not far from Calea Moșilor). An easier access might be from Calea Moșilor, along Popa Soare Street. As of October 2011, the restaurant did not have its once big commercial in the pictures above, so look carefully or let your nose guide you, hopefully not straight into their kitchen. Or actually... Anyway.

LA TAIFAS RESTAURANT

Just imagine a lazy summer afternoon and a small terrace between two cosy houses, with a relaxed atmosphere. Imagine people chatting forever. That is La Taifas, for Romanians love their taifas, their endless chat. It is part of the national pride and profile, it is part of the local customs and also an important, influent element of the country's GDP (a drawback, but who cares, we are at lunch). And then, while floating in this dreamy world, imagine some dreadful noise coming from the construction site across the street: wake up, my dear, and ask for another pint of house wine, for you are still in Bucharest and not in Southern France!



Well, but what if you go there on a rainy autumn day, on a cold winter afternoon, or on too cool a spring evening? Well, then walk inside (inside the house on your left as you enter the yard), turn right when at the reception desk, say the magic

words "Salonul Levantin" if asked by the staff where the hell you are heading, be self-possessed and walk past the saloon and through the reddish door, then up the reddish stairs, then find an available table and sit on pillows. What a pity they do not have water pipes (but I have convinced them to allow me bring my own)! Bookings are recommended especially for the above-mentioned saloon.

The menu (written in chalk on black boards) is similar to what they have at Bistro Athenaeum (for they share the same good management). Apart from those dishes mentioned there, I would recommend the Kofta Levantin or the chiftea levantină in Romanian.

Of an always mumbling and complaining nature, I have a couple of recommendations for the management: green tea with fresh mint leaves served in tall glasses, black tea coming from metal pots from the High Atlas, Syrian water pipes, Damascus-like baklava, Tehran sheep tongue stew served with rice and spices, aish bi zaatar bread from Yemen, as well as some Beirut mezze. Anyway, even without these things, they are good people, but I could not help myself.

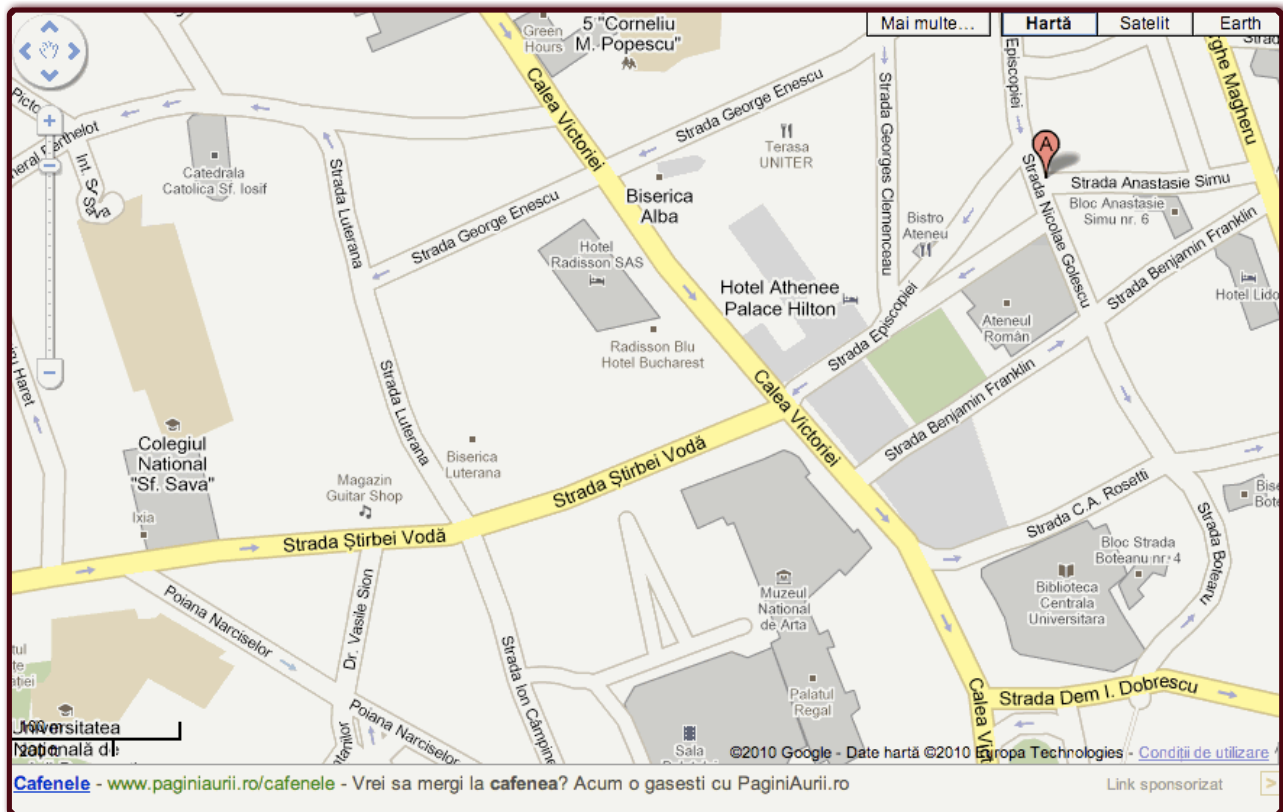
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It lies just behind George Enescu Museum (Cantacuzino Palace), along a street breaking from Calea Victoriei to the West. Str. Gheorghe Manu 16, <http://www.bistronet.ro>

GRAND CAFE GALLERON

The Grand Cafe Galleron got its name from the architect that designed the buildings of the National Bank and of the Romanian Athenaeum.

Every room has been designed (and subsequently furnished) in a different style. If you go there with friends, you might like the Library Room. If you go with your business partner or with your lover, you might book the Cigar Room. If you only want to have a (great) mushroom soup, you could try the main room by the entrance. Otherwise, you could very well try the Orangerie with its tall chairs and fine view to the street nearby. The wi-fi room (the central room of the house) provides free internet access to guests. The service is very good and the place served a great breakfast, as well as some fine main dishes (the calamari and the assortment of cheeses are especially recommended). Just as a reminder that you are in Bucharest, toilets are located down the same hall with the kitchen, and all waiters / people going and coming from the toilet go through the non smoking room.



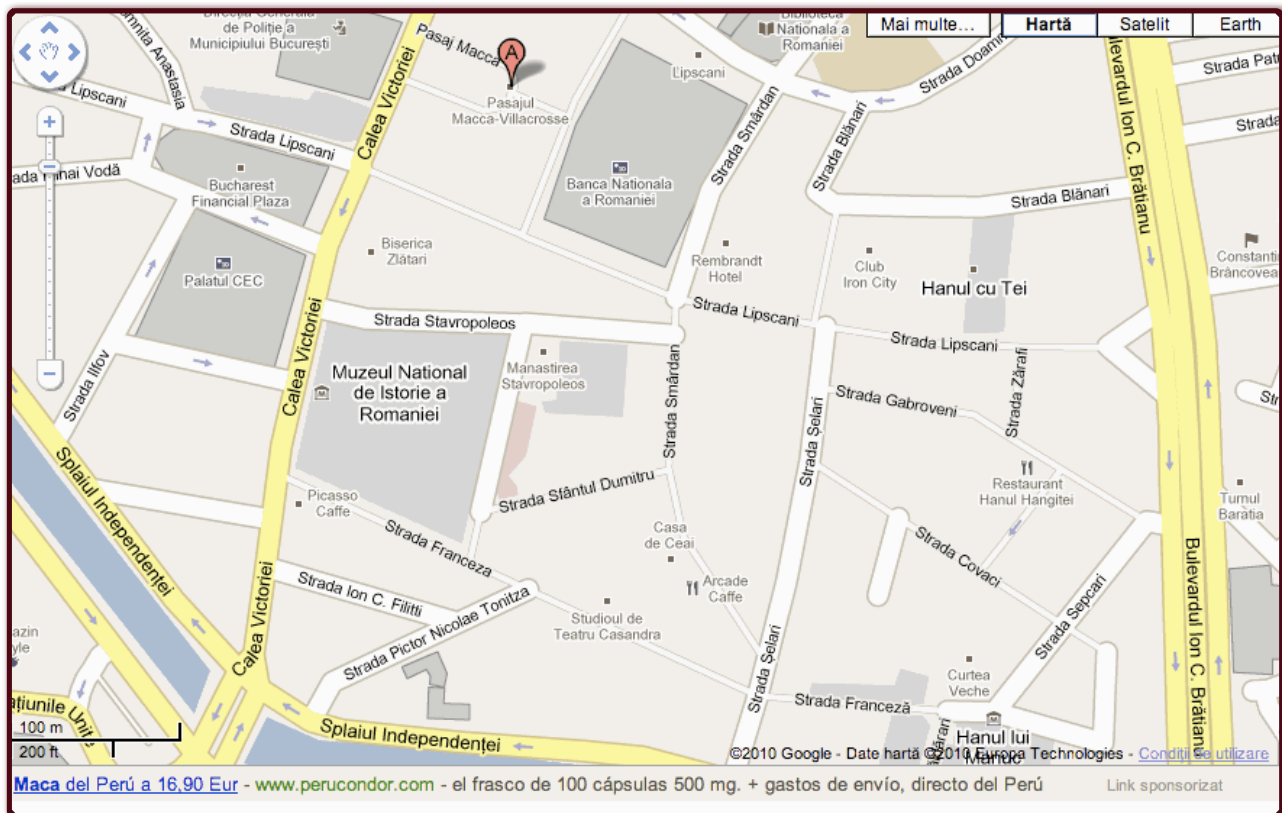
GPS - N44 26.525 E26 05.854

It lies just to the back of the Romanian Athenaeum. Str. Nicolae Golescu 18A, <http://www.grandcafegalleron.ro/>

MACCA - VILLACROSSE PASSAGE

This is a strange (but not unique) and comfortable concept: the covered street. It has got a French look but definitely an Oriental origin, as it used to host many little shops belonging to different merchants.

Nowadays a few of them have turned into little bars and cafes, where the tables fill the whole street in summer and autumn. They have an Egyptian Cafe with waterpipes, a Blues Cafe with usually excellent music (I can finally say that about a place in this city, but what a pity the music blends in with the dreadful tunes played by the other terraces nearby), a Chinese, respectively an Egyptian Restaurant on the first floor and even a French Bistro (even though I personally do not vote for that one, too sticky a place)... Hum, and I have not mentioned the Romanian traditional place as well. The atmosphere is right, the crowd is generally great, coffee is fresh and not instant, they have a few Romanian beers to choose from, while in summer they also have a good variety of ice-creams. Music is loud though, different tunes come from different terraces and break in customer's ears, while especially during the weekend there tend to gather party people around. Not the place to read Saint Exupery. But one can try Barbu.



GPS - N44 26.014 E26 05.862 (the N entrance on Calea Victoriei)

Two entrances to the covered street come from the Calea Victoriei, just across the street from the central police station, while the other one comes from the Western side of the National Bank.

TEAHOUSE - CEAI LA COTROCENI

With an underground, quasi-clandestine touch, this tea house has no big commercial or signpost leading to it from the main street (even though it lies across the street from the main entrance to Cotroceni Palace). A small, next to unnoticeable sign, a small, not so well maintained yard and then a door that seems to lead to one's closet. Then a few stairs down and another door lead the connoisseur to this den of tranquility and relaxation, away from Bucharest's torrents. It might be a bit shocking to find this otherwise unadvertised place full during the evening, but one soon finds out the reasons. It is quiet, they serve good teas, home made cookies, as well as a good selection of jam and honey. Nothing much other than that, but it is more than what one needs to lay down and enjoy some peace in this madding world.

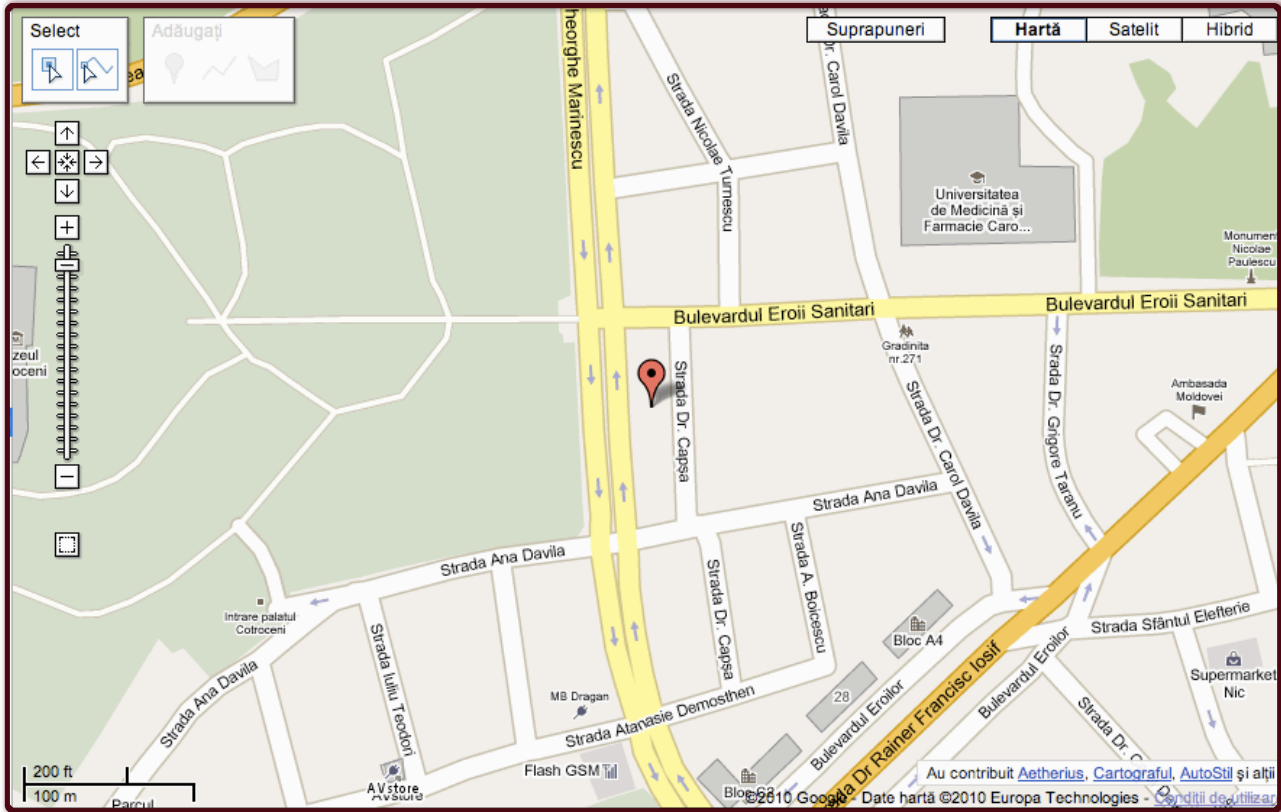
And then, there is the setting: a wooden table with those small stools, as well intimate sitting areas featuring pillows and small, Japanese style tables for the tea. If lucky enough, one can choose to sit on the "ground" level or on the first floor. There are no ashtrays (because smoking is thankfully not allowed), but one is provided a bell to call the waiter (of the young and smiling type, quite welcome in this country), a comprehensive menu of teas, ranging from Darjeeling to green

tea with jasmine, as well as dim light and low music. No wonder the place is popular with young couples. And no wonder they do not want too much promotion among the hip, noisy hordes outside. Let them keep it as it is. And let the hordes go elsewhere, where they can listen to Dub FM and drink pink juice-would-be liquids.

GPS - N44 26.024 E26 04.028

Str. Profesor Dr. Gheorghe Marinescu 25, tel.: 0721669535

The same good people run the bookshop at Vasiliada (on 12 I.C.Brătianu, across the street from St. Gheorghe Nou Church), which also hosts, on the first floor, another tea room with the same menu. And they also used to have the La Metoc, a beautiful garden in summer, which they closed for some reason.



TEAHOUSE - GREEN TEA

Located well off the beaten path, in Piața Traian area, in a neighbourhood of greatly restored Old Bucharest houses, the Green Tea is a connoisseur place.

A finely renovated and decorated house, including an Indian and a Japanese saloon, a nice attic room and a great terrace, with plenty of flowers.

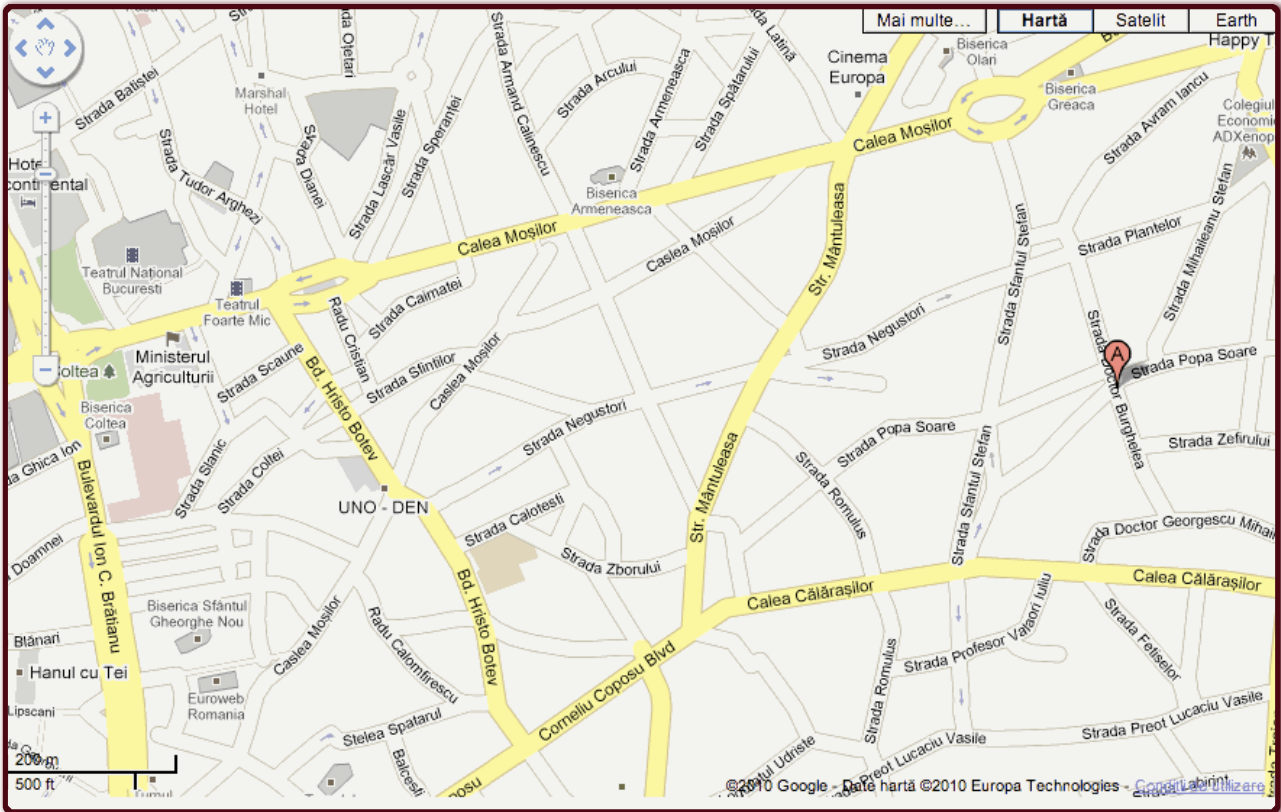
Why would you go there? For the many teas on offer, for the usually good, attentive service (and also prompt / efficient unless you ask for a waterpipe, which takes time, and extra coals even more time), as well as for a relaxed time. Oh, and I have saved the best for the last: order a Krantz, a lovely chocolate and candid sugar cake served with nut ice cream. Or vote for some of their exquisite jams, like the green nut jam. Also on my pro list: they do not serve beer, but only wine (by the glass for a change in Romania) and very few spirits. And, thank Nanak, no smoking inside (other than waterpipe), low and good quality music, and a fine crowd, without the Romanian Holy Trinity. And hell I like that clock that keeps on showing only green hours, to go with a glass of red wine and some platter of cheese.

The down side: the young staff they employ has an innocent and usually good approach, but it is also clumsy at times. Cakes can come in a big portion today, just to be reduced to dwarf size tomorrow. But they are trying and the small errors they make are not on purpose. So they get a thumb up. Good people, finally...

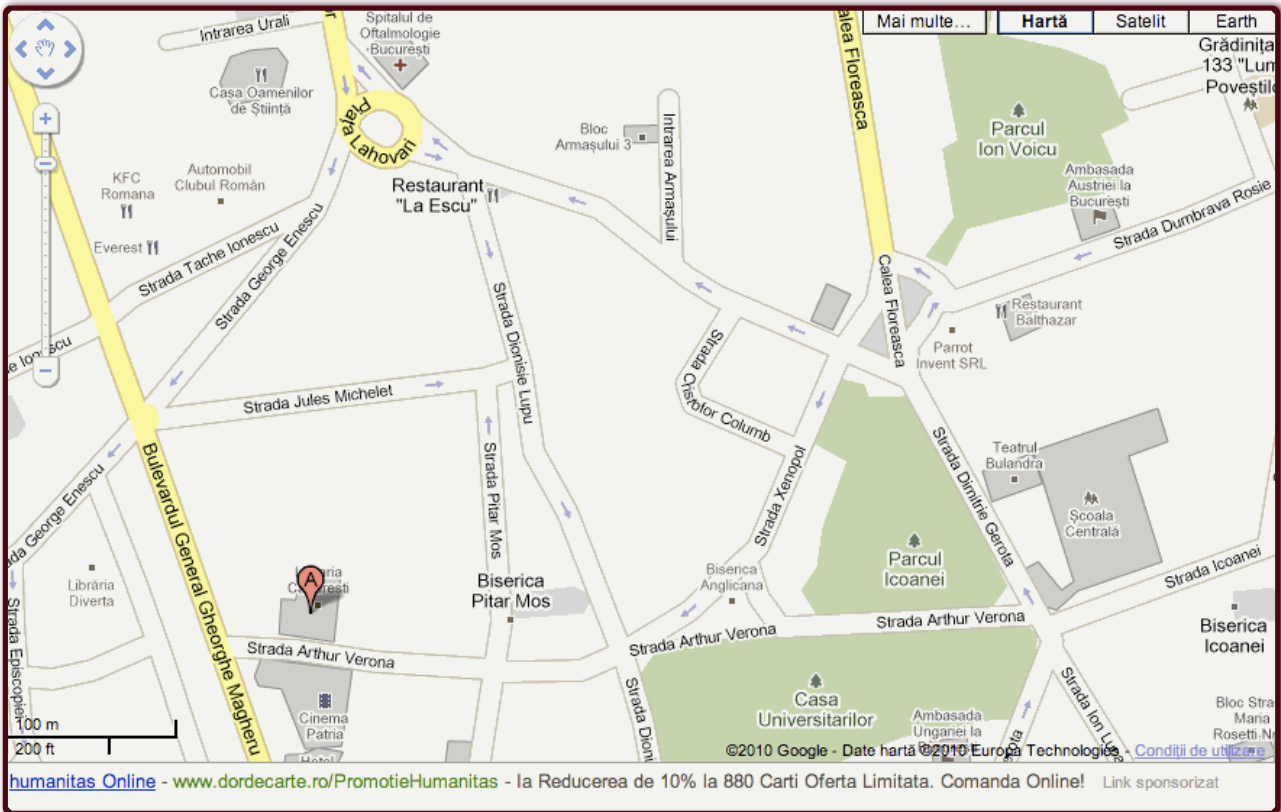
GPS - N44 26.045 E26 07.127

A street to the back of the old Piața Traian (nowadays a Mega Image Supermarket).

Str. Doctor Burghilea 24, <http://www.greentea.ro>



TEAHOUSES - CĂRTUREȘTI



Tea is not supposed to be a sweet, pleasant and convenient drink one can have while riding a bike, working or eating a hamburger on the underground train. Tea is an experience and a discovery in the same time. And what can come as a

better companion for a great cup of tea, if not a book? In the relaxed, but not exceedingly relaxing space at the Carturești (look in the Shopping section for more data), they have a Tea Room. Sit down on a labelled chair and enjoy a comprehensive guide of the tea at first. Then make up your mind and have your own combination of a tea and a 'dulceață', exactly as these two sine qua non elements of the once upon a time Bucharest (yet not all the way lost) were described by Caragiale, Eliade or Rebreanu.

GPS - N44 26.579 E26 05.947

The tea room is located in the villa hosting Carturești Book Store, as you enter, the second room to the left. The bookstore lies on Bălcescu Avenue, just next to Patria Cinema. Str. Pictor Verona 13, <http://www.carturesti.ro>

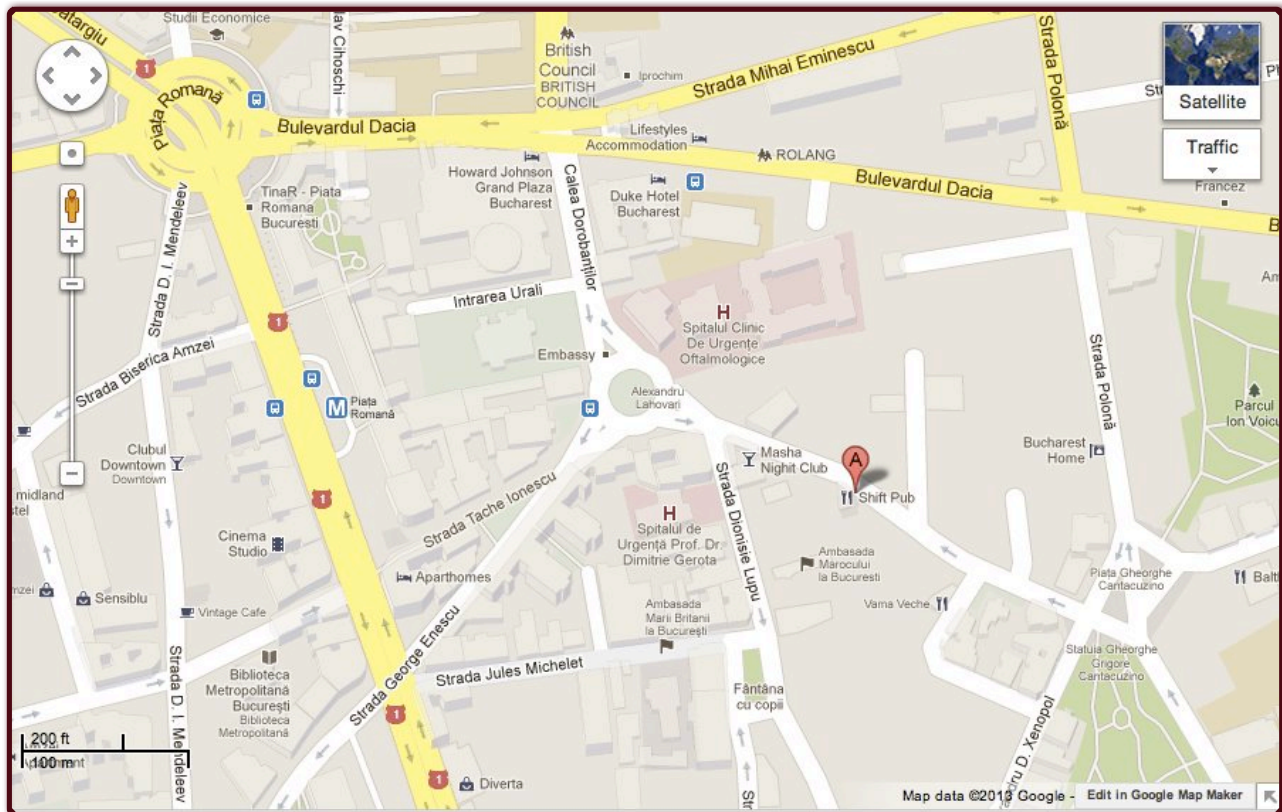
TEAHOUSES – BERNSCHUTZ

Say you are tired of the *comme il faut*, standard cafes and restaurants in the Old Town open air mall, that you want a break from standard Irish bars, French cuisine, *insalata Caprese*, fancily served kebabs, while that loud music coming from all other terrace has been, well, enough. Or maybe you just want something different. While definitely not of a unique concept, Bernschutz comes with a good selection of teas (my favourites are a Marybong FTGFOP for special occasions, an Earl Grey for breakfast, a Russian Samovar during the afternoon and - sometimes - a Jasmine pearls fitză). I personally found their teas to be better preserved than those at competitor Demmers; visiting a tea estate in Sri Lanka and tasting many teas in the Subcontinent might have made me picky though. Furthermore, Bernschutz comes with two fine places where one can have a cuppa joined by various delicacies such as Italian nougat with chocolate chips and peanuts, cookies and a quite good home made carrot cake not so frequently met in Bucharest. On the negative side, I hat... no, I totally despise those Barbie Girl cups they serve tea in: dramatically oversized, looking more like soup bowls, they are decorated with floral patterns that are simply overdone if not all the way grotesque. I believe using traditional tea pots and regular cups would be an more appreciated, down-on-earth solution.

Other than that, they have two locations which could remind one of Beauty and the Beast not in terms of service or looks, but definitely of environment. First, there is the serene place set in a beautiful period property complete with narrow (but equally lovely) 3 table terrace on Eremia Grigorescu Street near the fine Grădina Icoanei and Lahovary Square; they could have been (a lot) more careful with setting that wallpaper in though. If you get there, take the time to explore the streets around, with fine 19th and early 20th century houses, as well as with the Școala Centrală or Dărvari Convent. The second location is the glitz'n fitz place behind Șuțu Palace, just off the Piața Universității.

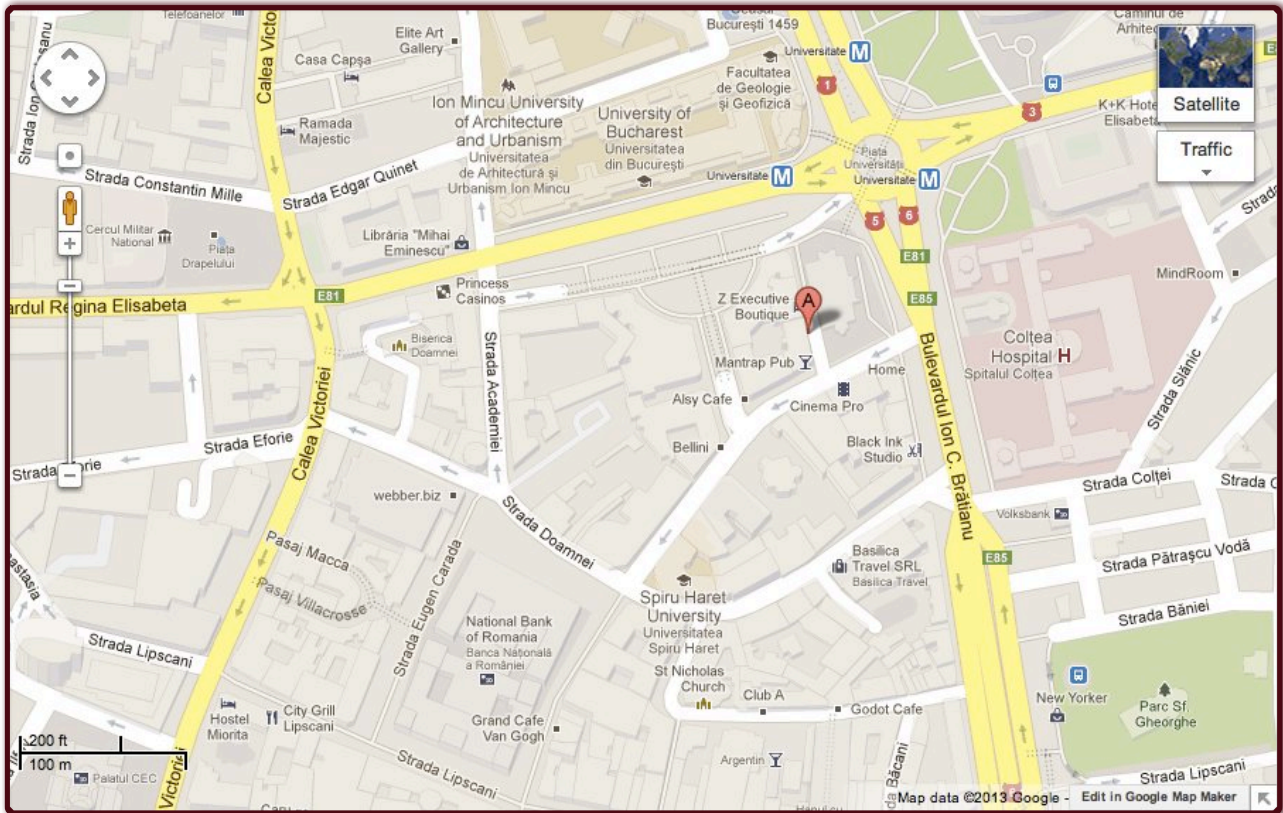
General Eremia Grigorescu location - GPS - N44 26.039 E26 06.08

Address: 5 General Eremia Grigorescu (between Lahovary Square and Grădina Icoanei), <http://bernschutz.com/>

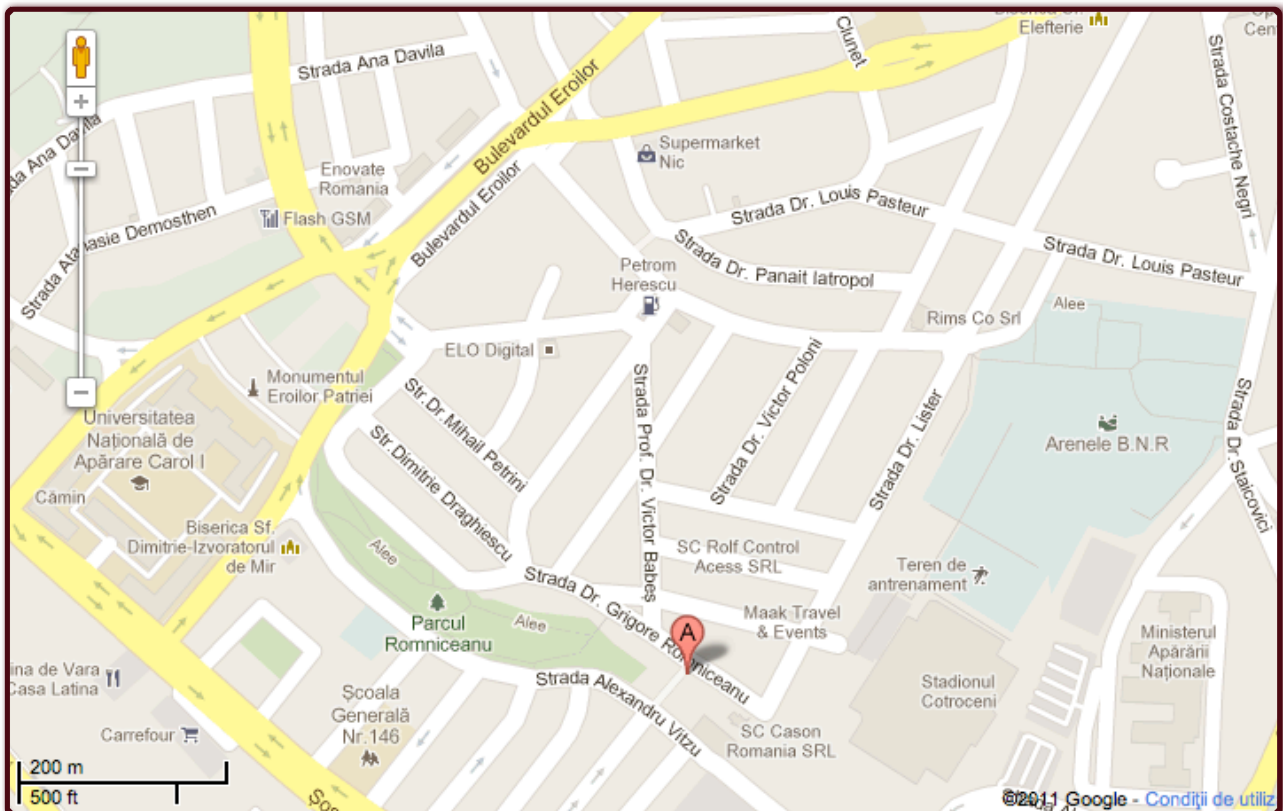


The Toma Caragiu (University Square) location

Address: 3 Toma Caragiu (entrance through 6 Ion Nistor, just behind Șuțu Palace), <http://bernschutz.com/>



TEAHOUSES - INFINITEA



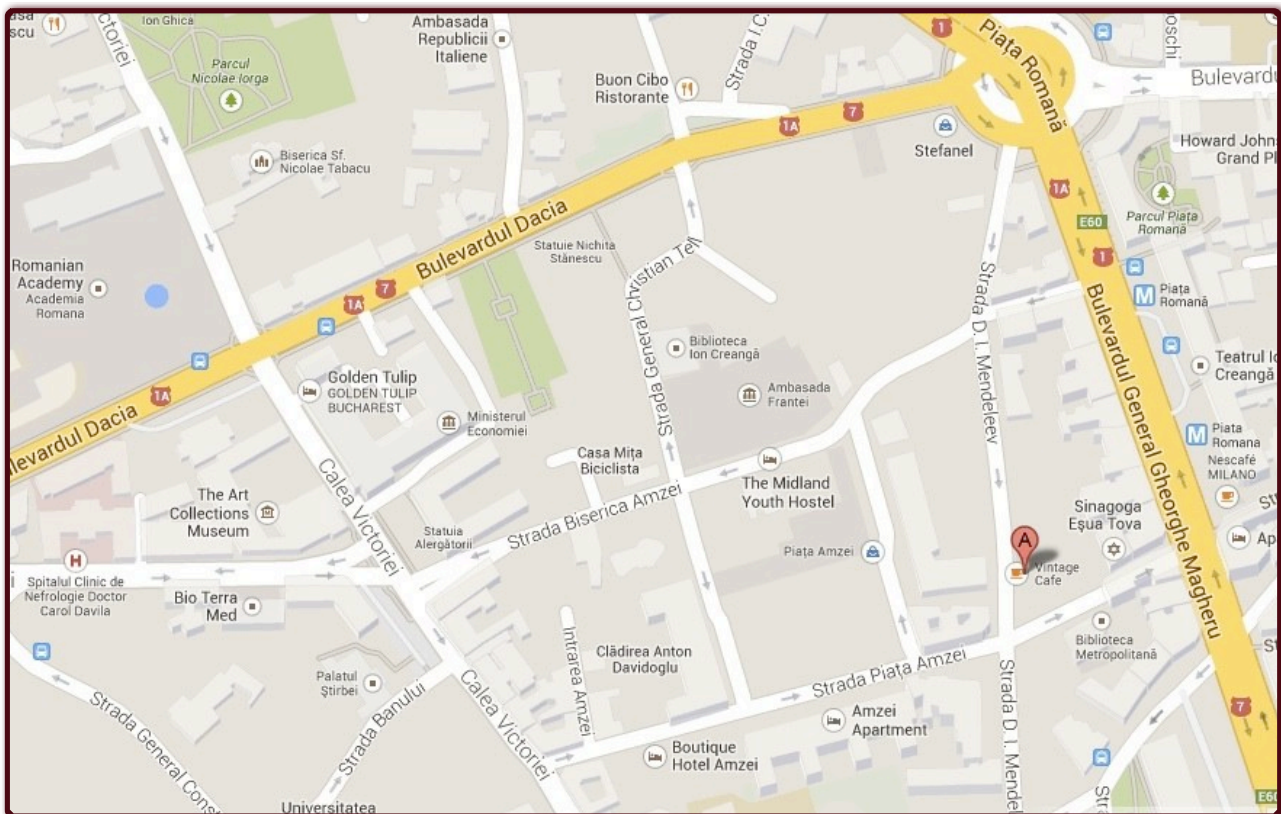
Set in the quarter of Cotroceni, this place will have you walk along streets bordered by beautiful period houses, most dating from the interwar time, with a few contemporary (mostly ugly and misplaced) inserts. The teahouse is set on the first floor of an airy property; pop inside and go past a small hallway into a large, warm and comfy room, where fine carpets, comfortable armchairs, bookshelves and chic lampshades, as well as plenty of other bits and pieces meet to provide a homey, natural place to be. In the right circle, it might just be a friend's living room and you might just have been invited for tea and sweets. In summer, the terrace is an excellent place to be, with several cast iron tables spread around in the shade provided by tall trees, with dim lights in the evening. Differently from other teahouses in town, the tea pots and cups here are thankfully more interesting and quite various, with far less of a Tzutz store label attached.

The menu does not have that extensive a list of teas like the Bernschutz or the nearby Ceai la Cotroceni, but they do not aim to get there either. With a few exceptions (among which an Earl Grey), the teas at Infinita are of the cocktail or fruit infusion kind, where tea, ginger, pepper, vanilla, marzipan, cardamom, mint and the usual plethora of berries are mixed in various ways to create interesting blends. Among other drinks, my attention was quickly drawn by the cafea la ibric, as well as, among desserts, by the various jams. The fruit tarts and cookies are good an addition, yet I had rather stay with a home made instead of a supermarket option. What is exquisite about this place, together with a couple of teas and that coffee, is the setting, both inside and on the terrace. One can get that sort of enchanting, cosy lounge in Bucharest only at Carol Parc's Piano Club. Gemütlichkeit.

GPS - N44 25.40 E26 4.19

Address: 7 Dr. Grigore Romniceanu (near Romniceanu Park and Arenele BNR Stadium). Bookings are recommended in the evening at 0723175300 or ceainaria_infinita@yahoo.com.

TEAHOUSES – CAMERA DIN FAȚĂ ('THE STREET SIDE ROOM')



One often finds the maître sitting outside or propped against a wall, chatting to one of the young waiters. A couple of steps in the rather crowded room and the garçon or fille quietly follows the stranger, a just smile and a polite greeting on the lips: 'welcome to the Street Side Room!'. The stranger sits down at a rather small table in a rather small room where every inch seems to have been carefully calculated so that both merchandise and décor – which means plenty of things – can fit in: jars of tea are stocked on shelves plying the wall to the left, those of coffee or candy lie on the central counter, coffee sacks are propped against it, tea and coffee serving china and glassware are exhibited on a shelf in the right hand corner. Stacks of old papers, newspaper-like menus where items, as well as the Room itself, come with a story, jars instead of ceiling lamps, grandma's doilies, old gas lanterns, uneven walls and several, but not exaggeratedly employed,

antiques make the stranger step into another world. One where everything, merchandise and merchants altogether come with a... story. And there would be no wonder if, while waiting for your cup of Ethiopia Djimmah or Gyokuro Asahi brews and staring through the window at passing cars, one starts wondering for not being able to see those freight-laden ships that brought in the merchandise. Recommended, it is.

On warm mornings (the place opens at 8:00), you might prefer sitting outside, at one of the only two tables placed on the sidewalk, and watch the city bustle, a steamy cuppa as company. The place is rather small, so book ahead if going there in the evening, especially during week-ends. The extensive tea and coffee menu goes both for locally served brews and for take away packs of 50 g. or more. They also have an online store service, as well as another venue on Temișana Street, but that is take away only.

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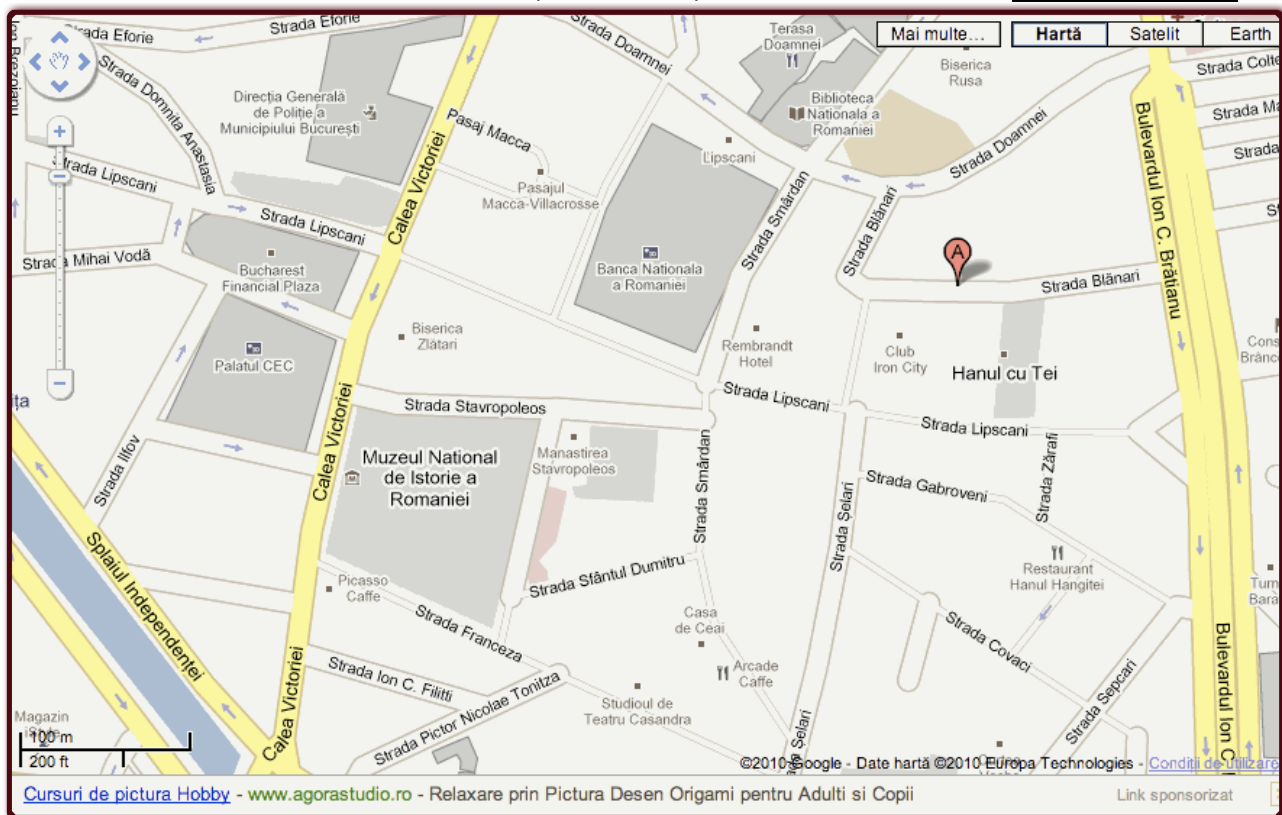
It lies close to Amzei Marketplace and not far from Romană Square, on 22 Mendeleev, <http://cameradinfata.ro/>

CLUBS - CLUB A

I am not a clubbing addict, so I have chosen to mention this place more for its history, rather than beat, dub, hip or tap. This was Bucharest's first club, which was born and raised under the caring wing of the University of Architecture. It hosts live (usually rock&folk) concerts frequently, and it gathers a rather young crowd. When there is no live music, it goes from Phoenix (the most famous Romanian rock band) to Led Zep or Everlast, with (many) intrusions of Abba and other dancing queens and tunes. Not bad, but the crowd could be better. And less of a teenage behaviour would be welcome.

GPS - N44 25.954 E26 06.106

It lies close to the National Bank; Blănari Street is parallel with Lipsyani Street. Str. Blănari 14, <http://www.cluba.ro>



Note: the information here reflects my opinion. It does not mean to be a complete presentation or an official, professional one. Just like anyone else, I tend to like, be indifferent or hate things according to my own preferences and perception of the world. If you want to drop me a line, there is a link for that at bucharestian.com. Thank you.