

MOLDOVA

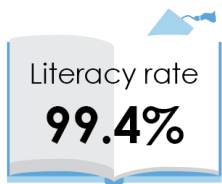
Moldova emerged as an independent republic following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. It is a landlocked country with varied terrain including forests, rocky hills, and vineyards. It is bordered by Romania and Ukraine. Its economy relies heavily on agriculture. It is known for its wine regions and is home to some of the world's largest wine cellars. Its capital, Chişinău, has Soviet-style architecture. Its National Museum of History exhibits art and ethnographic collections that reflect cultural links with neighboring Romania. Two-thirds of Moldovans are of Romanian descent. The languages are virtually identical and the two countries share a common cultural heritage. The disputed industrialized territory to the east of the Dniester River, known as Transnistria, was formally an autonomous area within Ukraine. Transnistria's independence has never been recognized, and the region exists in a state of limbo. This area is mainly inhabited by Russian and Ukrainian speakers. The currency used throughout Moldova is the leu.



Population
4,025,039

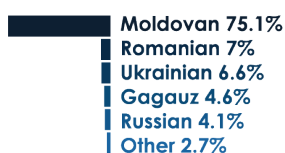


13,070 MI²
Slightly larger than
Maryland

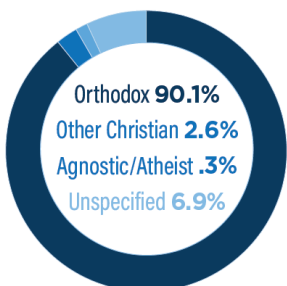


Literacy rate
99.4%

Ethnicities



Religions



FAMILY LIFE

Households usually consist of 2-3 generations, and extended family often lives nearby. It is common for both parents to work and often both parents are seen as financially responsible for the family. In some families, mothers are considered more of the authority figure and decision maker. The wife might make the financial decisions, while the husband is expected to bring in the income.

It is considered normal for family members to have time to themselves and to pursue their own individual activities. Siblings of the same gender commonly share rooms. It is not common for siblings to share personal items, and asking permission before borrowing is expected. Meals are commonly eaten together, and sometimes separately, depending on schedules.

It is common for children to help out with household chores according to traditional gender roles. Mothers usually cook for the family and daughters may be expected to help out. Teenagers are expected to show respect to their family members by being polite, sincere, and obedient. Other responsibilities include arriving on time to school and managing homework and extracurricular activities. Parents usually give their children pocket money for daily transportation and lunch expenses, and sometimes for social activities or buying personal items. It is common for students to work during the summer and part time during the school year.

Parents may be involved in monitoring their child's online and computer activity. They are not usually involved in the extracurricular activities of their children, but may support them financially in these endeavors. Large decisions are usually discussed as a family, yet parents encourage their children to be independent and make their own decisions.

Owning pets is common in Moldova. In an apartment, families tend to own small animals such as cats, dogs, and hamsters. In larger houses, families may own more animals that are kept outside. Usually pets are not treated as family members.

FRIENDSHIP

Friendships are commonly formed in school and extracurricular activities, and with relatives and neighbors. It is acceptable for teenagers to socialize in groups or one-on-one with friends of both genders. The term "friend" is used sparingly and only to refer to very close relationships.

Communication between family members and friends is informal and direct. It is considered normal to express an opinion or feelings about a situation openly. It is acceptable for teenagers to share negative emotions and disappointment with close friends and family members but not with others.

SCHOOL LIFE

Students generally take 12-14 subjects, but each subject doesn't necessarily meet every day. Students have the option when they enter high school to specialize either in humanities (history, literature, and foreign languages) or sciences (physics, biology, and mathematics). Their class schedule will vary depending on which they choose, and they will also have less-intensive classes in the other sphere. Grades are based on class participation, homework, written and oral tests, and mid and final semester examinations. Classes are mixed gender and students remain with the same group of students throughout high school, and rotate classrooms. Students study each subject at the same level of difficulty.

Schools have a zero tolerance policy regarding fighting and bullying. Parents are told immediately if this occurs, and students may be suspended and sometimes expelled. Cheating is also prohibited in schools and, if caught, a student might receive a warning or fail the given exam. Students are not usually expelled for cheating and in general it is tolerated. Students usually dress formally for school and some schools have uniforms. For lunch, students usually bring food from home or buy something at the school cafeteria or a nearby market.

The relationship between students and teachers is very formal. Students show respect to teachers by being engaged learners, listening, and completing assignments. Using nicknames between teachers and students is not common. Parents are permitted to come to the schools any time to ask teachers about their children's academic performance. There are also at least two parent-teacher meetings a year. Report cards are distributed at the end of the semester.

Schools theoretically offer a variety of extracurricular activities, yet in reality, options are very limited and based on funding availability. Students participate in activities based on their interest and ability to pay for them.

FOOD

When hosting guests, Moldovan families cook a lot of food. Refusing the food they offer may be viewed as impolite. It is normal to ask restaurants to wrap uneaten food to take home. Vegetarianism is becoming more common, especially among the younger generation.

RELIGION

Religious families may go to church regularly, but most families only attend religious services on holidays like Christmas and Easter. Children are not expected to attend church with their parents if they would rather not. Churches are not viewed as community centers, but as places of worship. Some families choose to fast once or twice a year leading up to Christmas or Easter. Easter is a very important holiday during which families usually go to church, decorate eggs, and eat traditional cake.

PERSONAL CARE

Moldovans usually shower once a day. It is considered unclean to wear the same clothes more than twice in a row. Parents usually do the laundry for the family but sometimes teenagers help out as well. Teenagers are expected to clean up after themselves, but this depends on the family. Family members have both a bath towel and hand towel in the bathroom.



The Future Leaders Exchange (FLEX) program is sponsored by the U.S. Department of State. FLEX provides competitively selected secondary school students from 22 countries in Europe and Eurasia with the opportunity to spend the academic year in the U.S. living with a volunteer host family and attending a host high school. Begun in 1993, FLEX now has over 29,000 alumni.