

RESTAURANTS IN BUCHAREST

ROSSETYA RESTAURANT

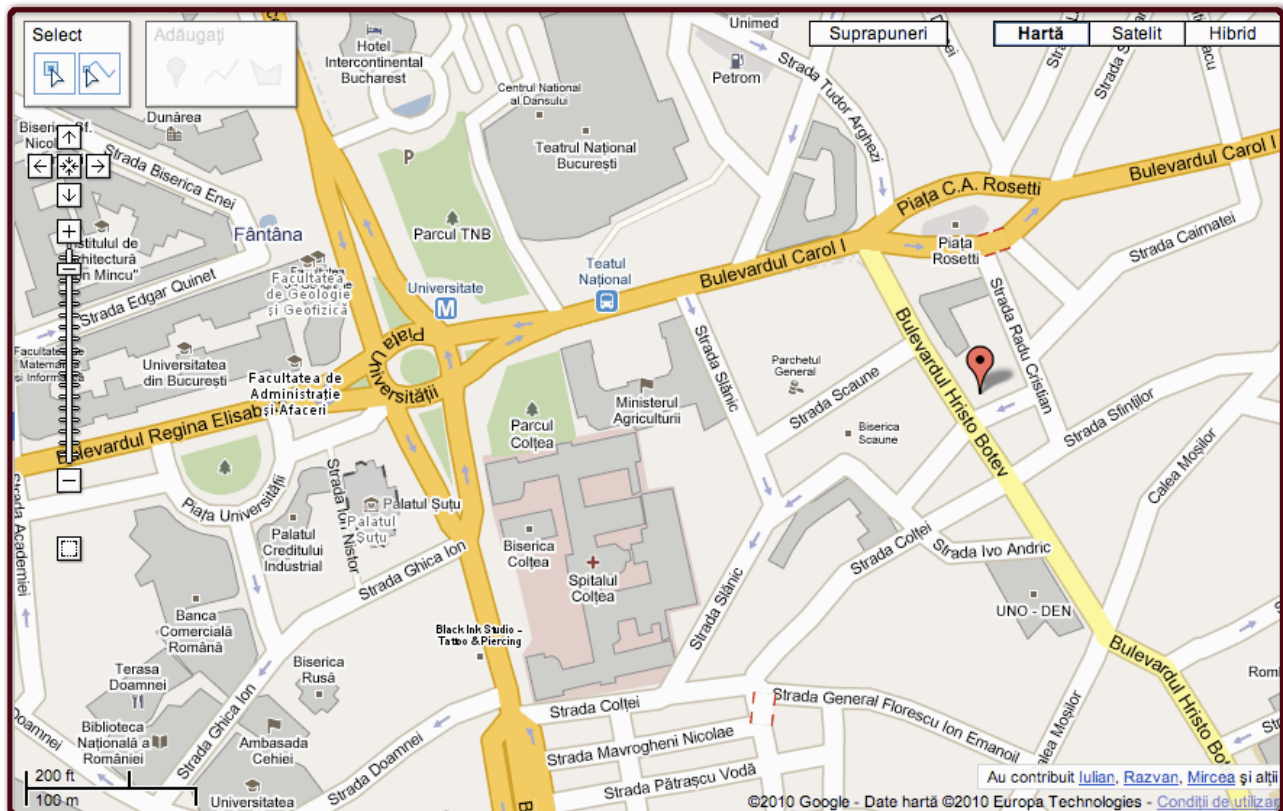
One can walk on along the Hristo Botev without even noticing this place. And, as always in this city, this is a good sign, for it keeps away the fitze crowd. But, the very moment one steps inside, it all changes, we go back in time to the mid 19th century and some Wallachian mansion, both in terms of 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). And do not forget to end with one of their fine 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>



BLANDUZIEI RESTAURANT

This place used to be quite bad, but then they refurbished it and now it is way better than the infamous Terasa Doamnei next door, with its bad service. They serve the regular no frills traditional dishes at a reasonable price, while the terrace next door (which also belongs to them) is a nice place to relax in summer. In autumn it hosts a great "mustărie", where they bring **freshly made grape must**, very sweet and refreshing before it turns into wine. I like the way the waiters

calculate your bill at the end, by just casting a smart glance over your empty dishes (but they do not overcharge). I also like the lăutar band that has a low key, pleasant repertoire and do not (usually) annoy customers by coming to play at tables. When there is no live music, they play a list of Oltenia songs and even that in low volume which is a welcome thing in this country.

Among the recommended dishes there is the 'ciorbă de perișoare' (En. meatball soup with sour cream, topped with fresh dill), very popular with Bucharestians at home, but not so frequently found in restaurants; the pastrami is not bad either, while the papanashi get a 7 out of 10 due to the jam which has not passed my test.

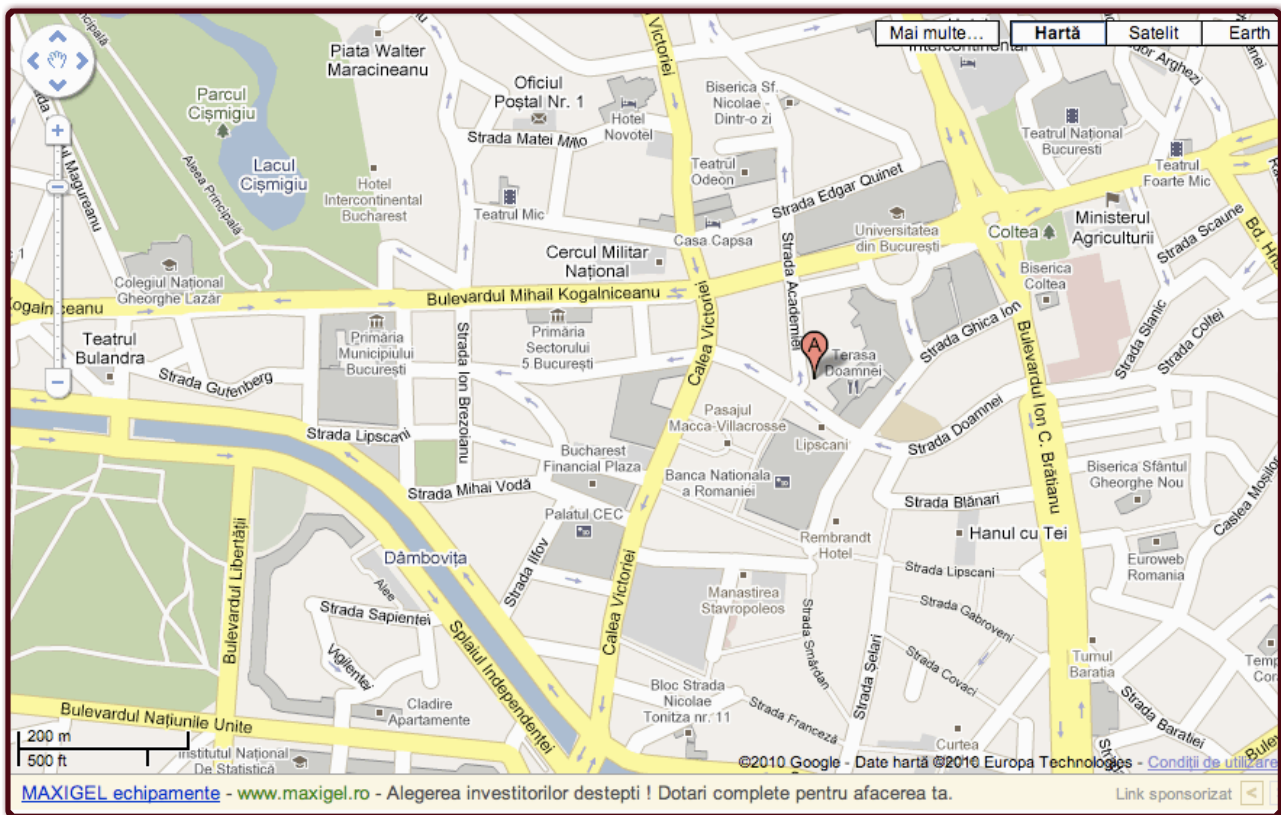
I like the typical Oltenia honesty with which they end the menu:

If you enjoyed it, tell others too. If you didn't enjoy it, tell us only. (ad literam in English in the menu)

GPS - N44 26.034 E26 05.989

It lies just to the back of the National Bank.

Str. Academiei 2



CARU' CU BERE RESTAURANT

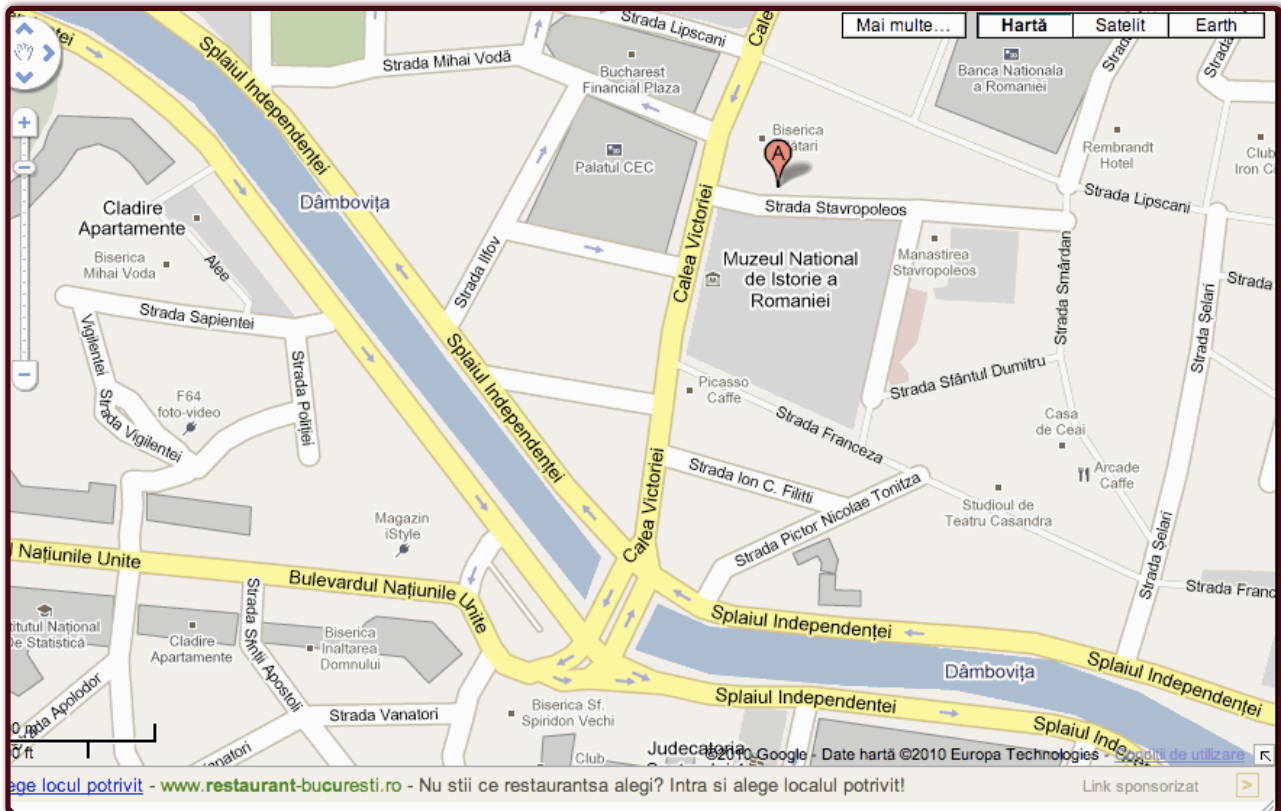
Founded for the first time in Zlătari Inn in 1879, the restaurant then moved to the actual location, in a landmark building designed by Architect Zigfrid Kofczinsky in Neo-Gothic style. Stained glass windows, an impressive interior decorated in a mock German beer house style, as well as a traditional, 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.

GPS - N44 25.916 E26 05.896

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/>



BISTRO ATHENEU

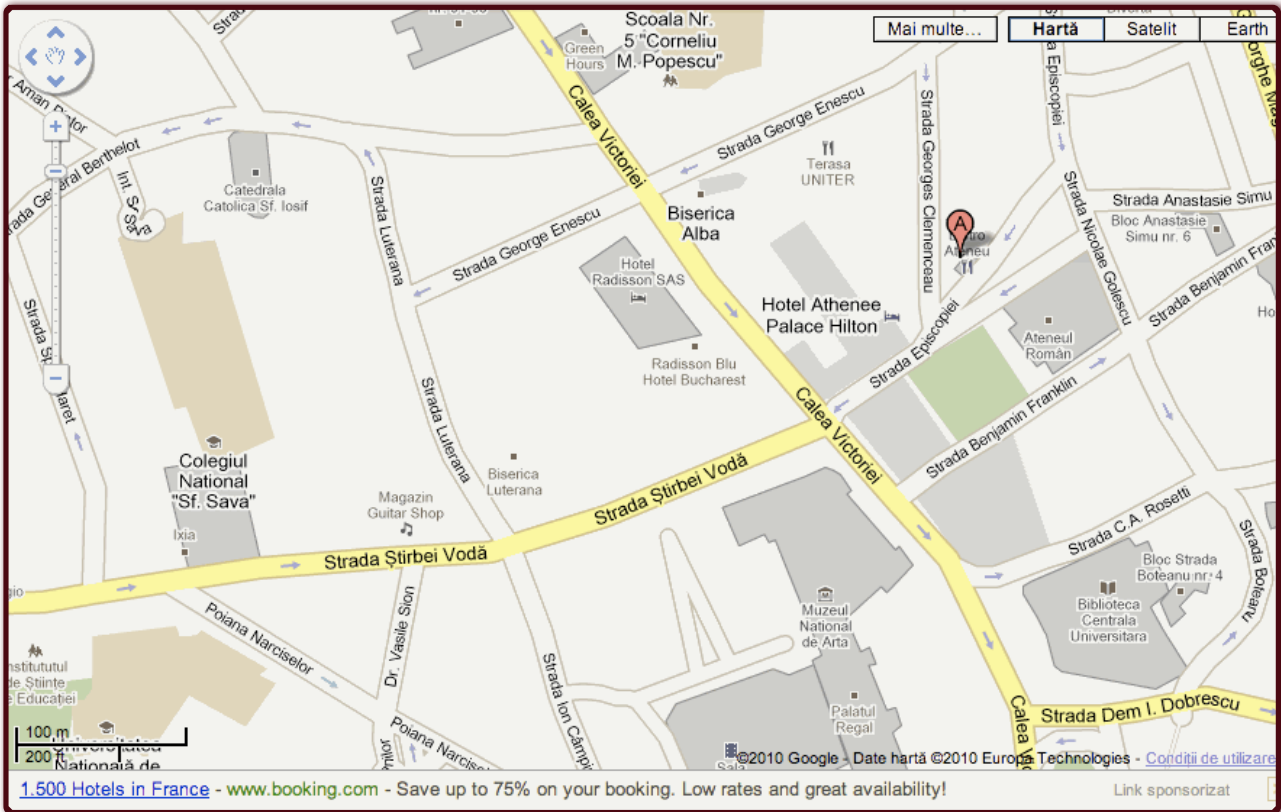
Just next to the Hilton and across the street from the Athenaeum, this might be a fine place to have dinner after a classical music concert. The decor is trying to create the atmosphere of interwar Bucharest, including street signs, murals and even a fountain, while some of the rooms have a clandestine touch, with interesting lighting systems that use even musical instruments. A couple of rooms have good views to the street nearby.

The menu is not very generous, but what they have there is always good. The menu comes on a blackboard and it is in Romanian only. So, unless your waiter speaks English (some do not), you have to try and make your way with the help of a guidebook, of fellow customers or of your common sense. The "varză a la Cluj" (Cluj style cabbage with spices), the musaca and the starters they have (especially the baked peppers, the zacuscă and the aubergine salad) are simple, but very good.

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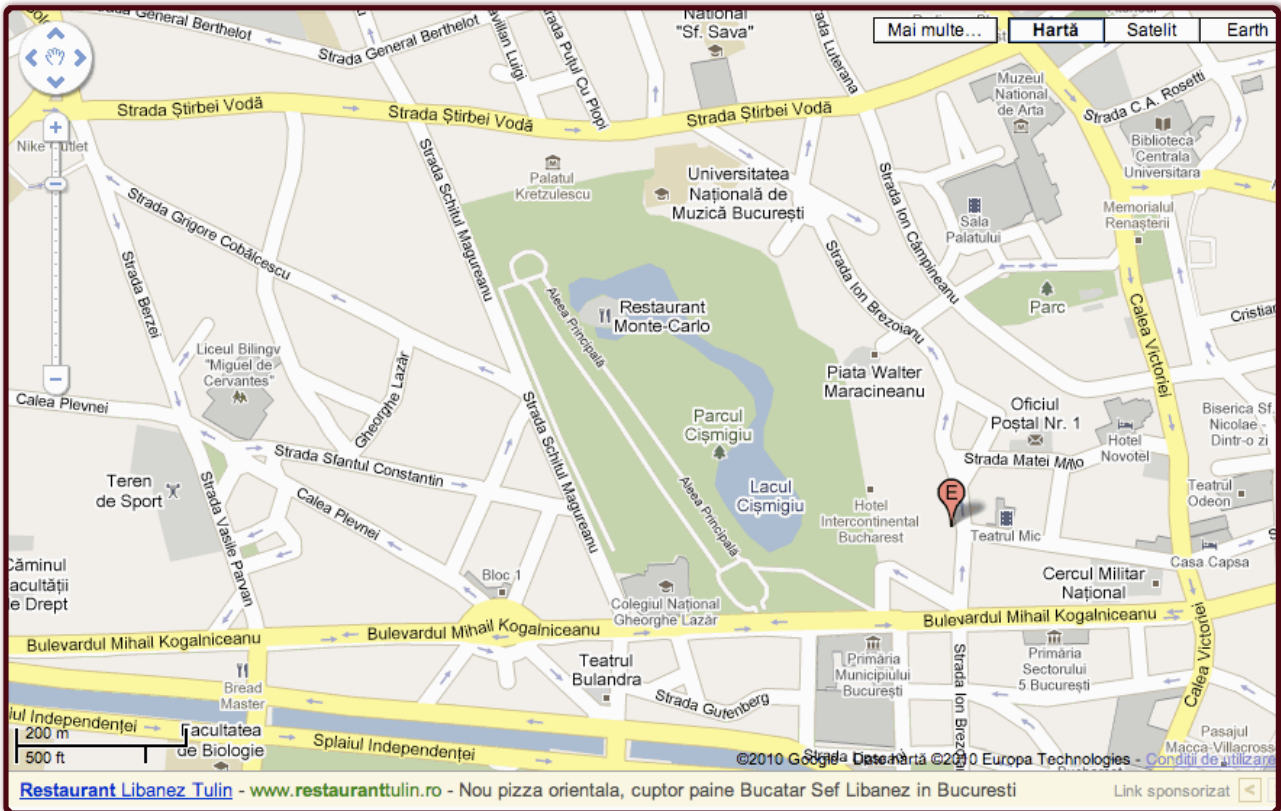
It lies across the street from the Athenaeum (if you are looking at the Athenaeum from its entrance steps, turn left and walked past its gate and across the street), near the Hilton and Revoluției Square. It is a pity the original location (larger) was reduced to just a couple of rooms...

Str. Episcopiei 3, <http://www.bistronet.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 La Cocoșatu' and La Gil. Amen.

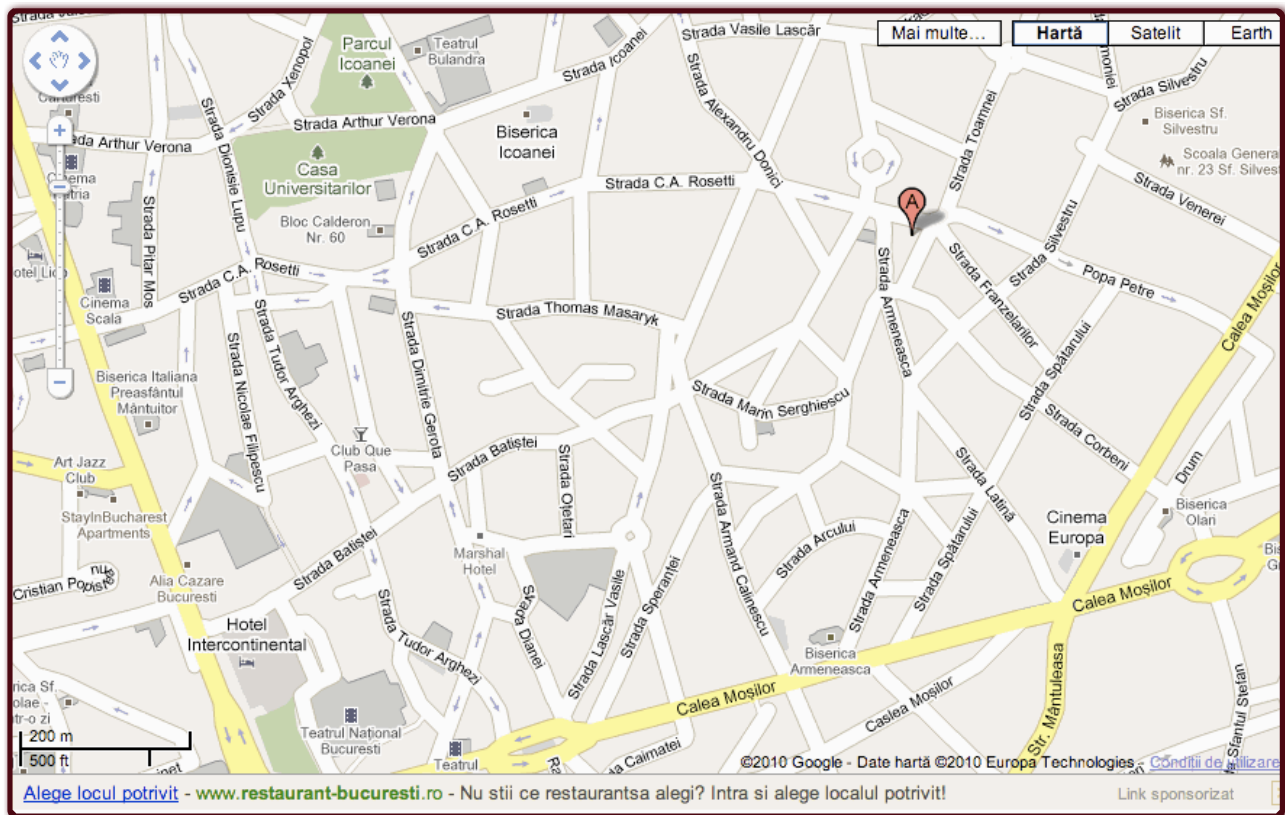
GPS - N44 26.131 E26 05.678

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. The pictures above are of the old location, at 23-25 Ion Brezoianu, 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 service (not necessarily polite) and a normal 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, zacusca and a glass of țuică (plum brandy), for we are in Wallachia... As for the local ciobas, 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 mămligă" (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). What this restaurant misses is a traditional, ancien monde **cafea turcească** and the pre-2010 decor which was simpler and fit the menu better than the actual chandeliers. But hell cares about the looks with such good dishes and, anyway, they've got a reportedly good espresso. So, stop playin', dinner's ready, children!

GPS - N44 26.503 E26 06.732

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 lead your nose guide you, hopefully not straight into their kitchen.

LA BERBECU' RESTAURANT

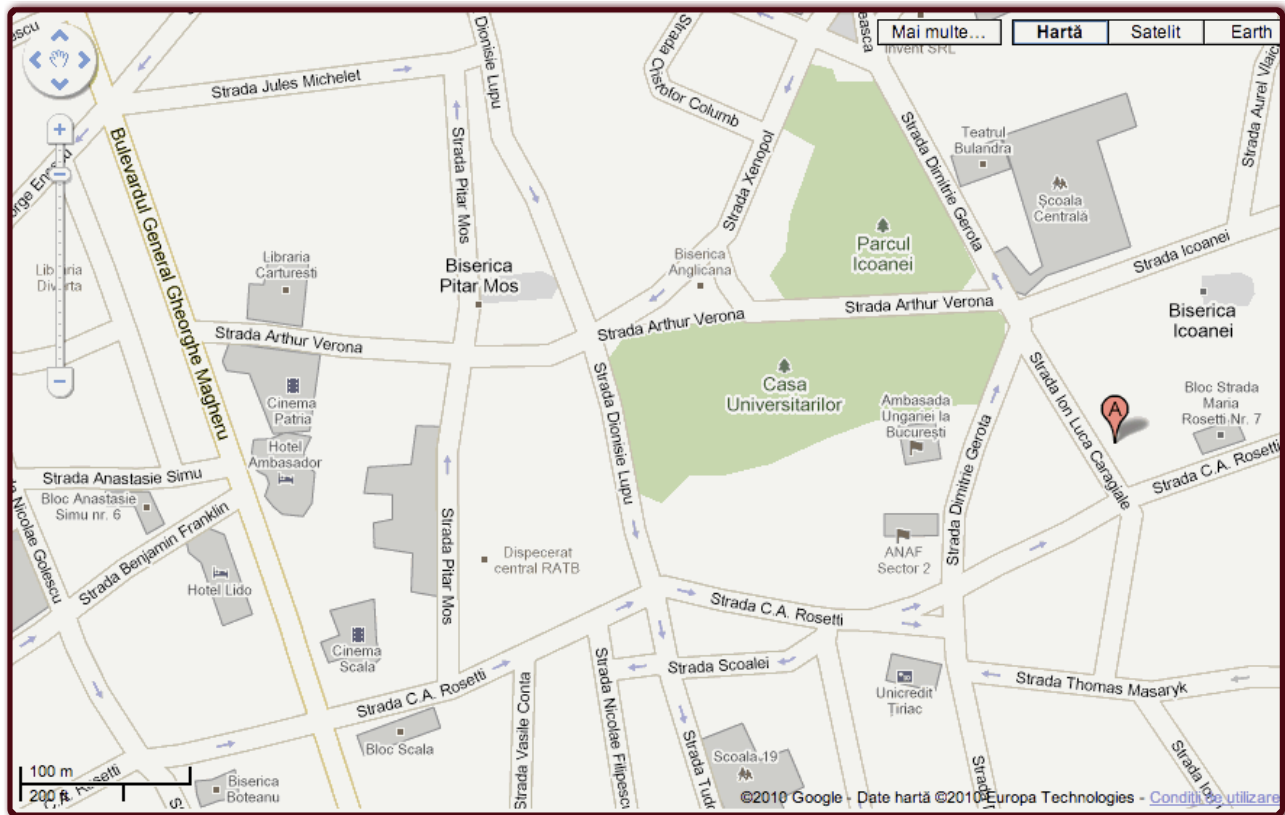
La Berbecu' is a small one, but they have some of the best palincă and țuică in Bucharest, as well as a good sense of humour and very good dishes. Have I mentioned fast service? No, I do not own the place. The small terrace is nice on a summer night, while the place on the first floor is great in winter. It is on the way to the Nicorești, should you get hungry on the way back (from EUR 6-7 for a menu).

They are excellent with grills, from pork to fish, and polenta tastes as my grandmother used to cook it. As a particularity, they have great beans and the smoked "ciolan", as well as the home-made sausages (cârnați de casă) are superbly done; they go greatly with some beans (Ro. fasole). The mujdei (fresh garlic sauce) is one of Bucharest's best, as it is always fresh and it can best join a chicken or carp steak.

From Magheru Avenue take Rosetti Street to the East and stick on it until the street opens up a little (Caragiale Street comes next after J.L.Calderon Street); the restaurant lies to the left, it has a wooden gate.

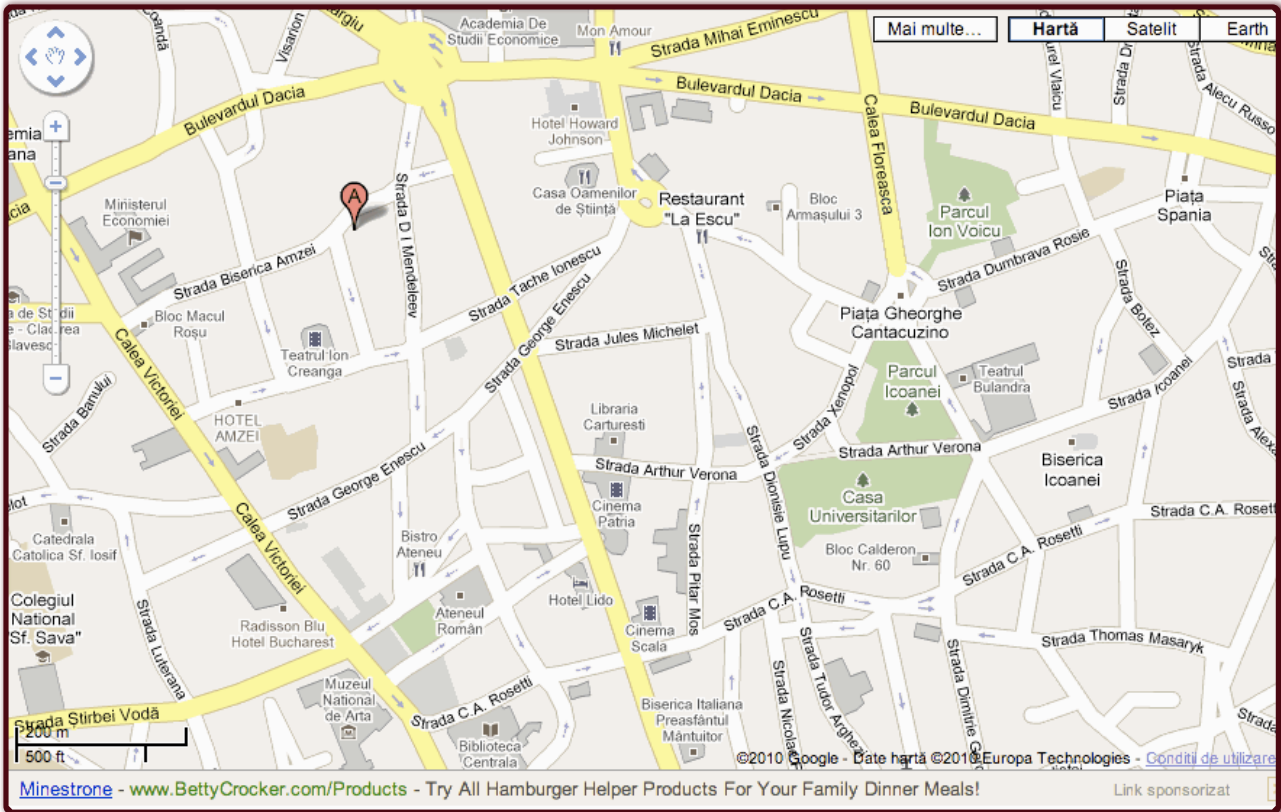
GPS - N44 26.530 E26 06.341

Note: while it is officially closed on Sundays, the restaurant was reportedly closed a few times during normal working hours. Better call to check whether it is open. Str. I.L. Caragiale 30, tel.: 021-2103907



MAZAGRAN RESTAURANT

This place is hosted in a greatly restored villa just off Amzei Square. It has a few different saloons and an interesting bar/club in the basement. It serves a mixture of international (on the modern European side) and Mediterranean cuisine.



The service is generally OK. In summer they have a nice terrace in front of the house, from where one could see those desperate drivers honning each other down on Biserica Amzei Street, as well as people going to the market or youngsters of the high school next door. Now that is impossible, as, for some reason that beats me, they have surrounded the terrace with some Big Brotherish plastic panels, so as to put a fence between their customers and the madding crowd. It lies next to Amzei Square and not far from Romană Square.

GPS - N44 26.706 E26 05.744

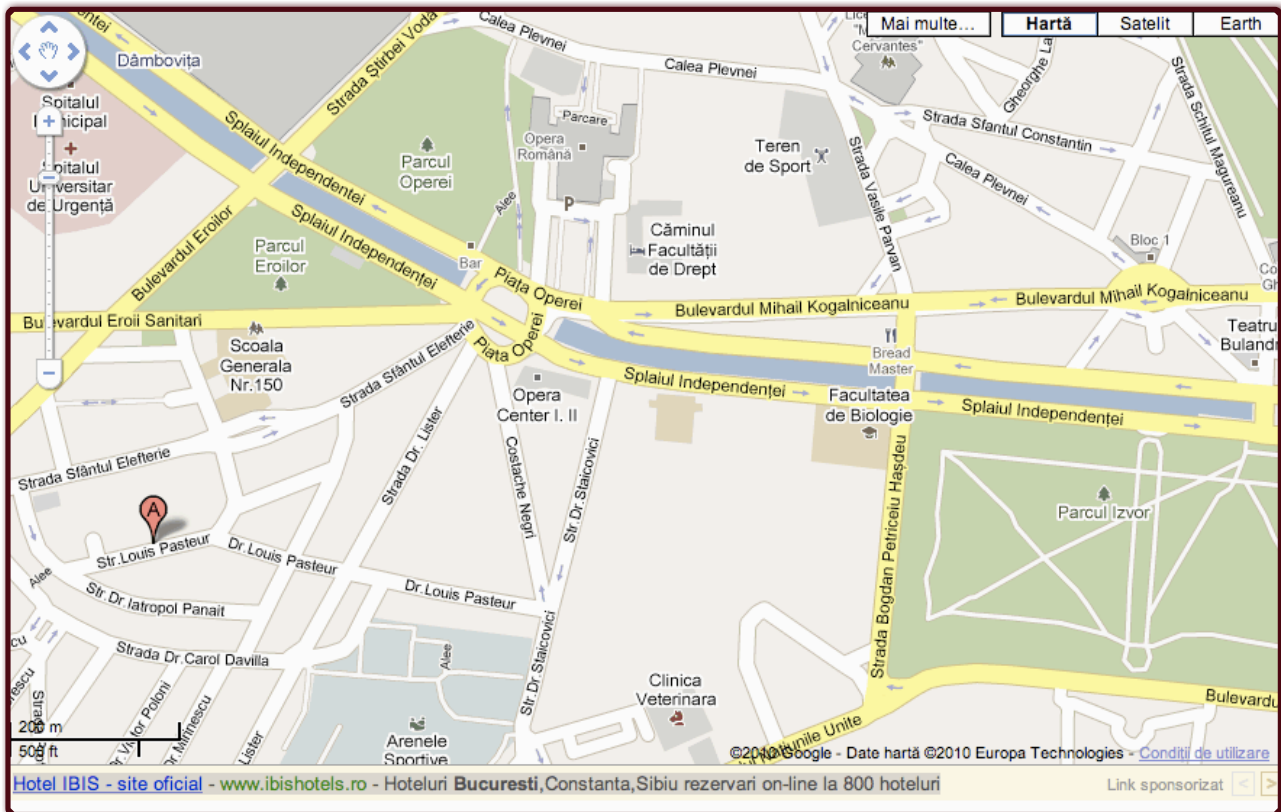
Str. Biserica Amzei 30, <http://www.mazagran.ro/>

SILVIU'S RESTAURANT

Located in the interwar, chic **quarter of Cotroceni**, this is a well hidden gem. The restaurant is hosted by an Italian style villa with a fine backyard (great for a summer lunch or dinner), while interiors are elegant, even though not overcrowded. Fine mirrors, a 'warm' marble chimney, as well as two small dining rooms, not to mention Zamfir Dumitrescu's paintings (most for sale), all bring a special touch in this city where everything is meant to impress and not to please. And then, there is the menu. Not impressive, but great. Not addictive, but exquisite. And that charismatic waiter that knows more than he shows, with some of the best service in town. Recommendations: any pasta (especially the gnocchi but not only that), as well as the baked apple with honey and nuts.

GPS - N44 25.927 E26 04.425

44 Louis Pasteur, <http://www.silviusrestaurants.ro/> (10 minutes walking from Eroilor Metro Station)



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!

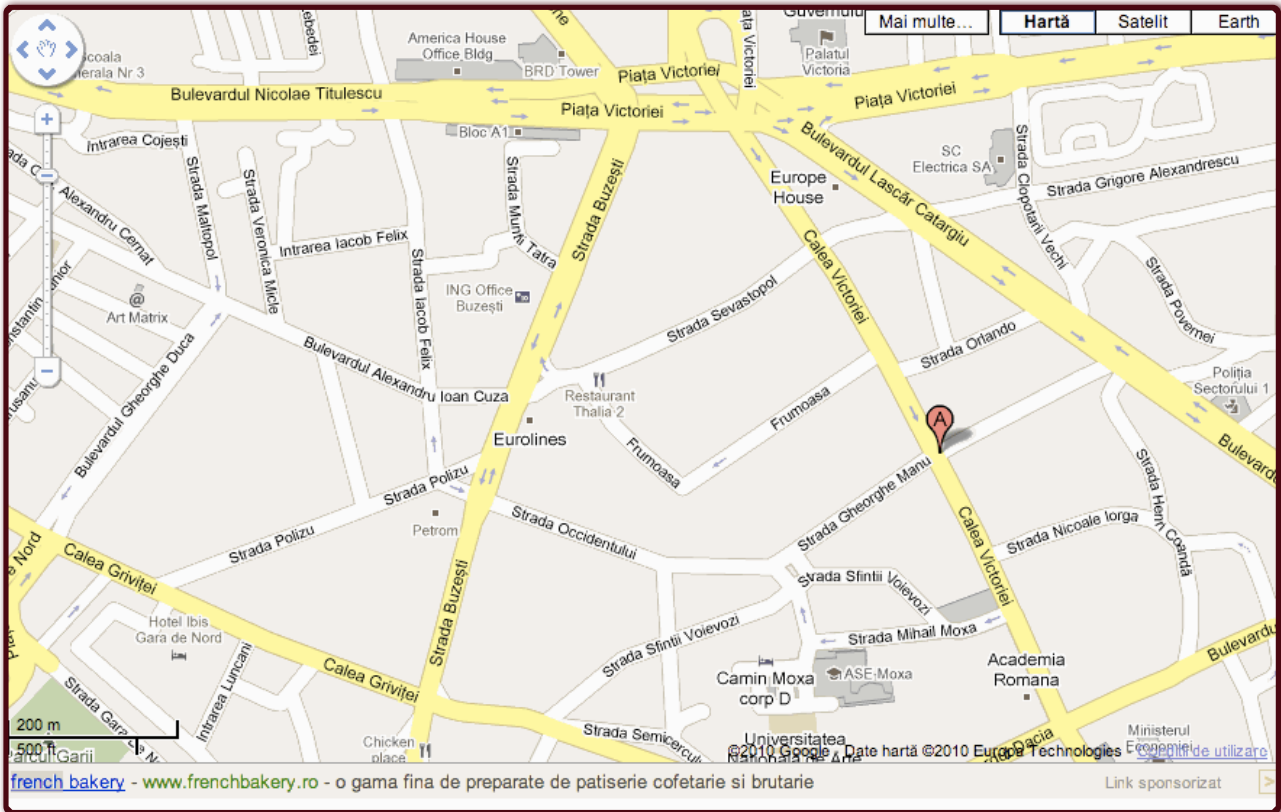
Well, but what if you go there on a rainy autumn day, on a cold winter afternoon, or on too cool a spring evening? Well, then walk inside (inside the house on your left as you enter the yard), turn right when at the reception desk, say the magic words "Salonul Levantin" if asked by the staff where the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

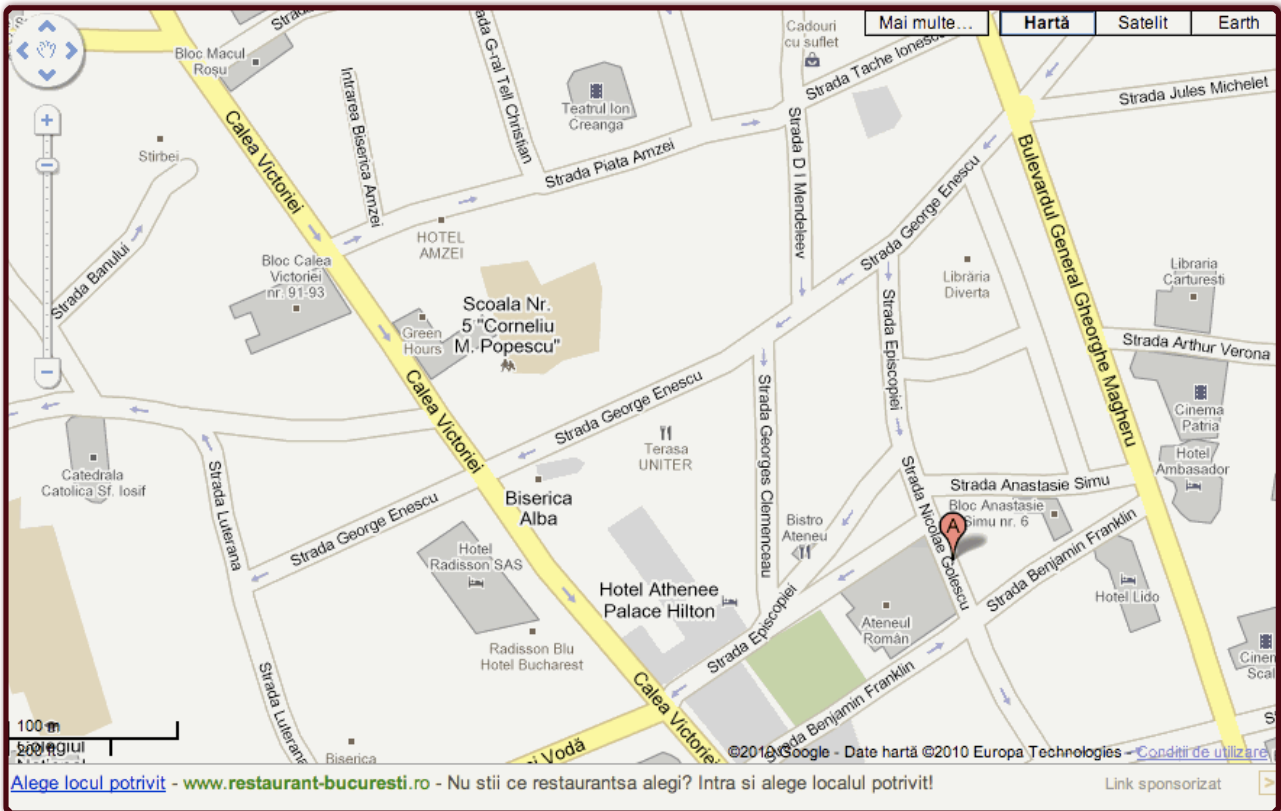
GPS - N44 26.896 E26 05.319

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>



MENUET RESTAURANT

The menu is rather international, but the food is well cooked and the service is fine. However this place is recommendable especially for the ambiance.



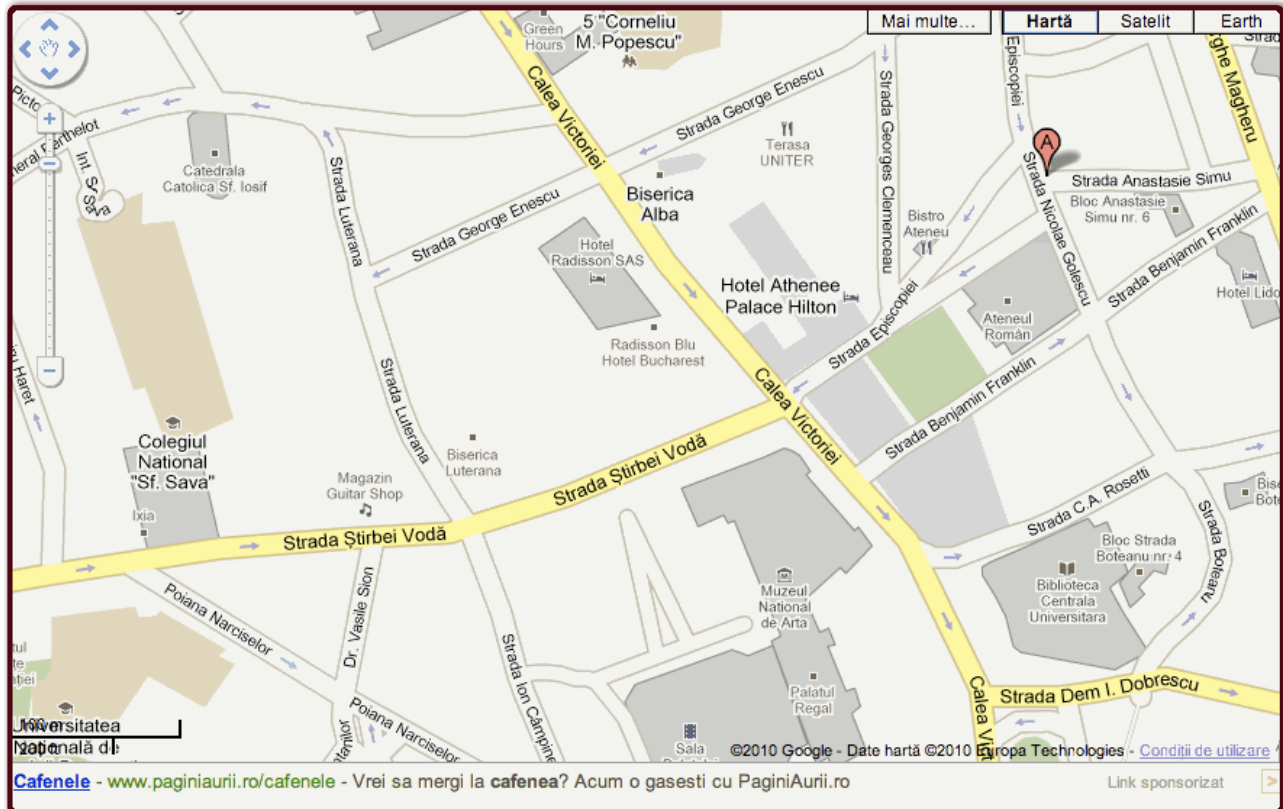
Half under the ground, the restaurant is decorated with paintings, statuettes, old style mirrors and other art that make it very warm and cosy. It makes it for a good option after an evening at the Athenaeum (together with the Bistro Athenaeum). It is one of those small, hidden places that are enchanting through their very existence. And Bucharest has some of those. Very well hidden usually. Service is slow, even for Romania.

GPS - N44 26.494 E26 05.877

Str. Nicolae Golescu 14

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/>

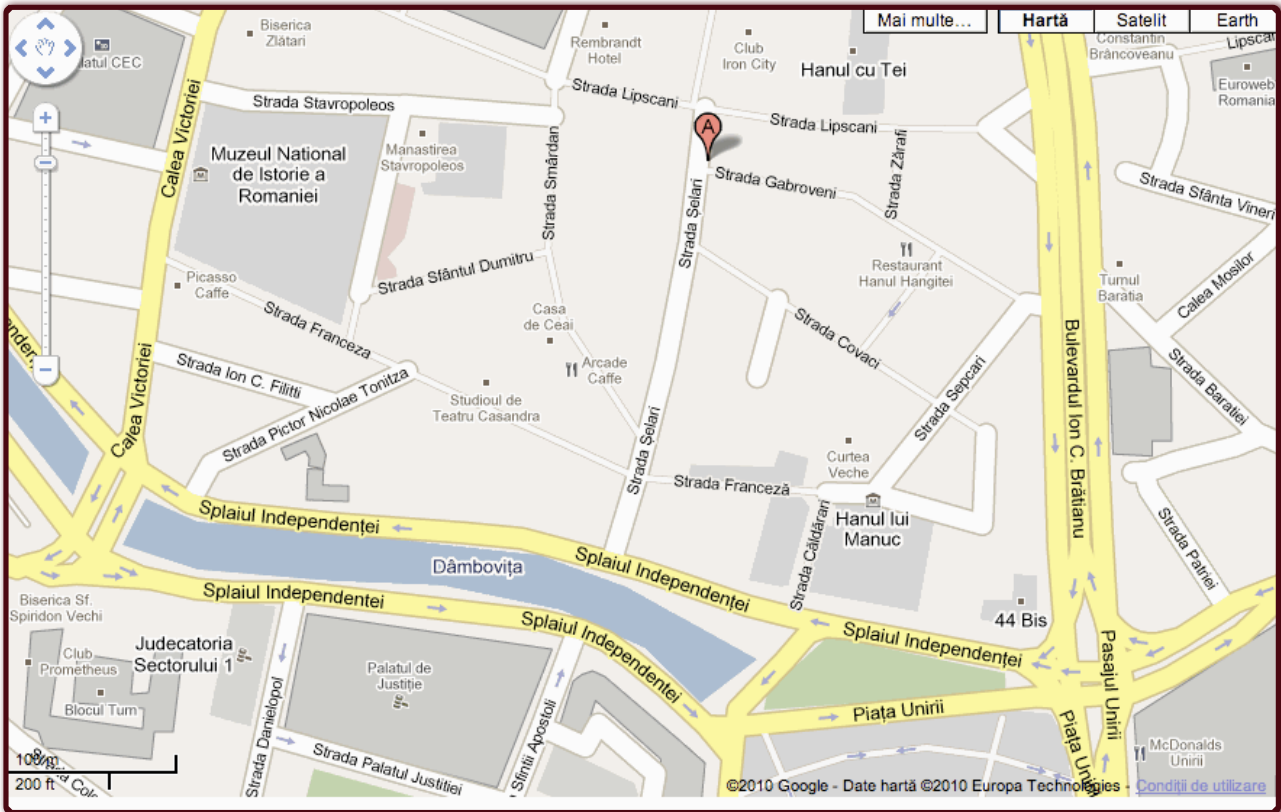
GARA LIPSCANI

Gara Lipscani is a student & poor favorite, with a poor, simple and cheap lively place. What does this mean? Simple: food comes fast, food is tasty, food is cheap. Therefore food is good. And no, it is not a restaurant, but they have food. Then: beer comes fast, beer is cheap, and beer is tasty. Then beer is good. You've missed the train anyway, so have another beer.

GPS - N44 25.898 E26 06.060

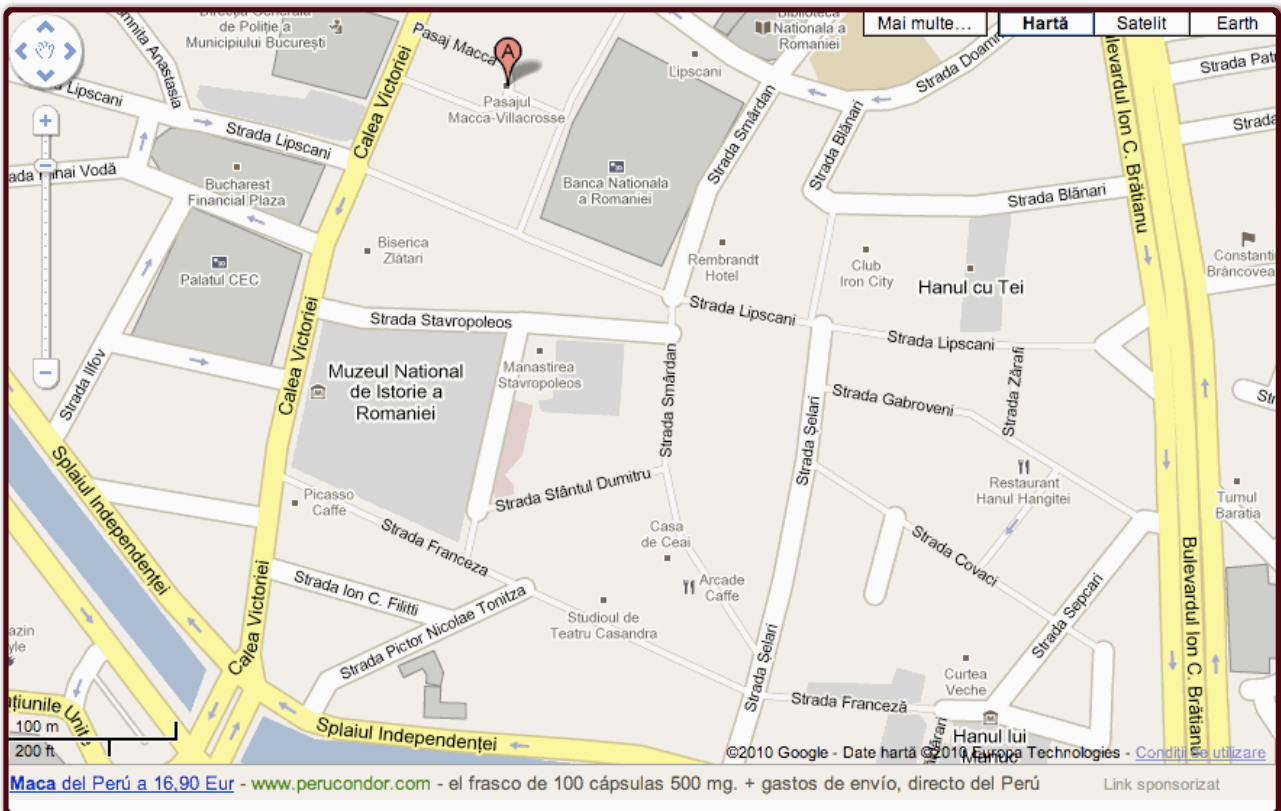
Walk on Lipscani until it meets the Șelari or follow the Șelari until it meets the Lipscani. Uhh, you've got me confused now.

Str. Lipscani 38, entrance from Șelari Street



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.



[Maca del Perú a 16.90 Eur - www.perucondor.com](http://www.perucondor.com) - el frasco de 100 cápsulas 500 mg. + gastos de envío, directo del Perú [Link sponsorizat](#)

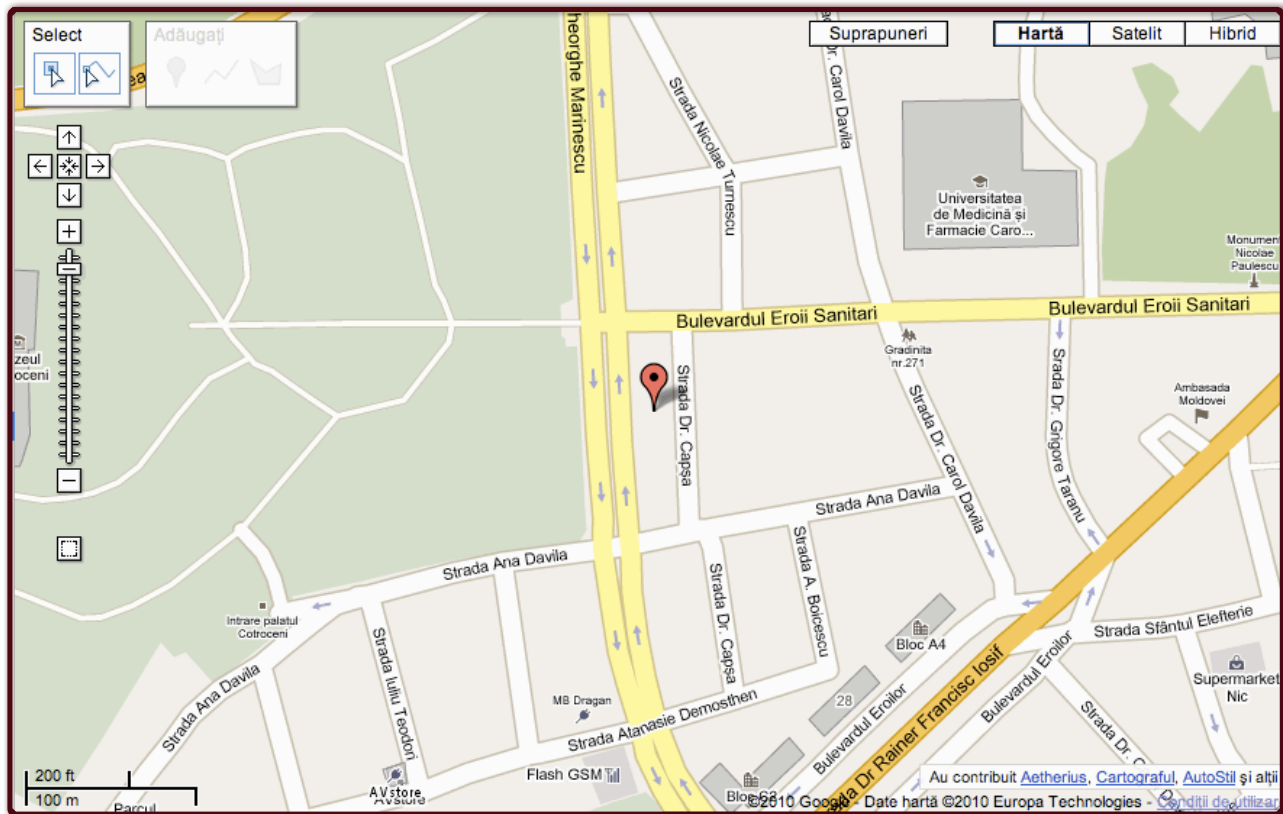
Nowadays a few of them have turned into little bars and cafes, where the tables fill the whole street in summer and autumn. They have an Egyptian Cafe with narghiles, a Blues Cafe with excellent music (I can finally say that about a place in this city, but what a pity the music blends in with the dreadful 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. No 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.

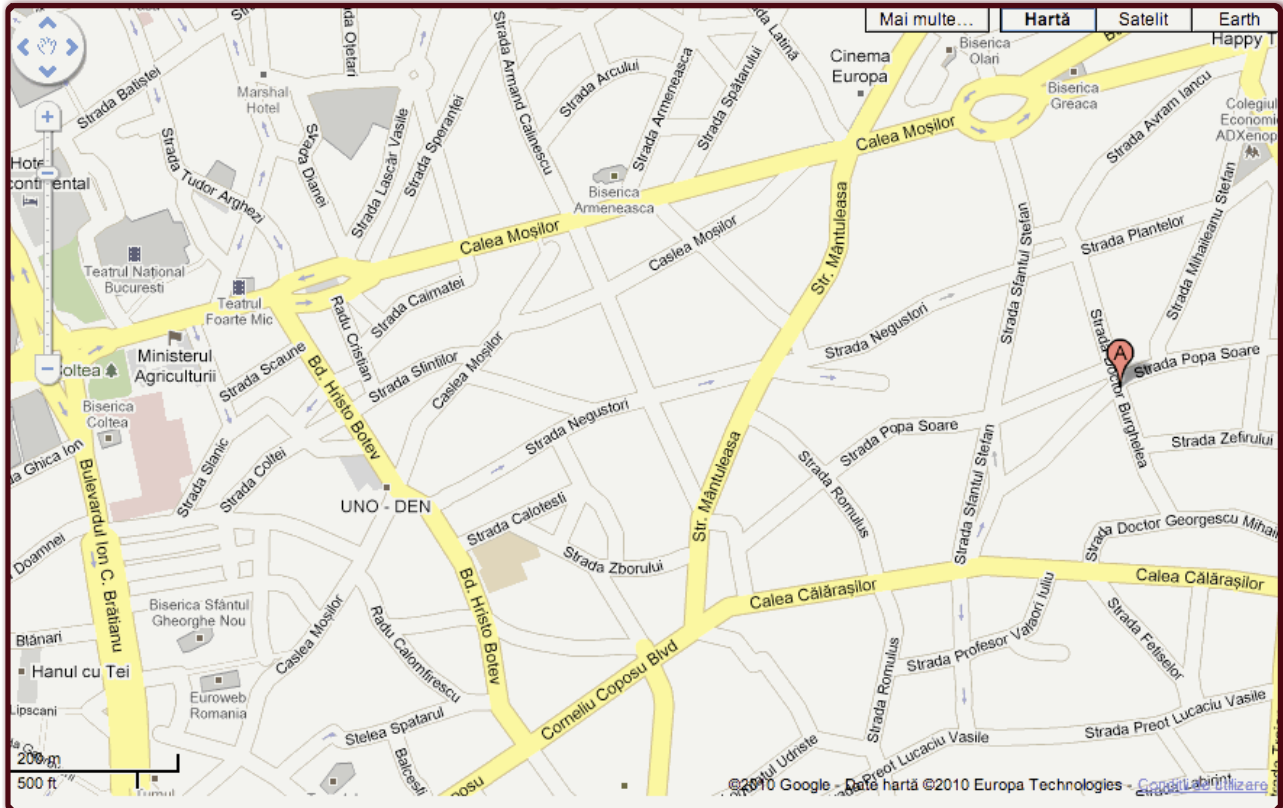
GPS - N44 26.024 E26 04.028

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 Piata 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

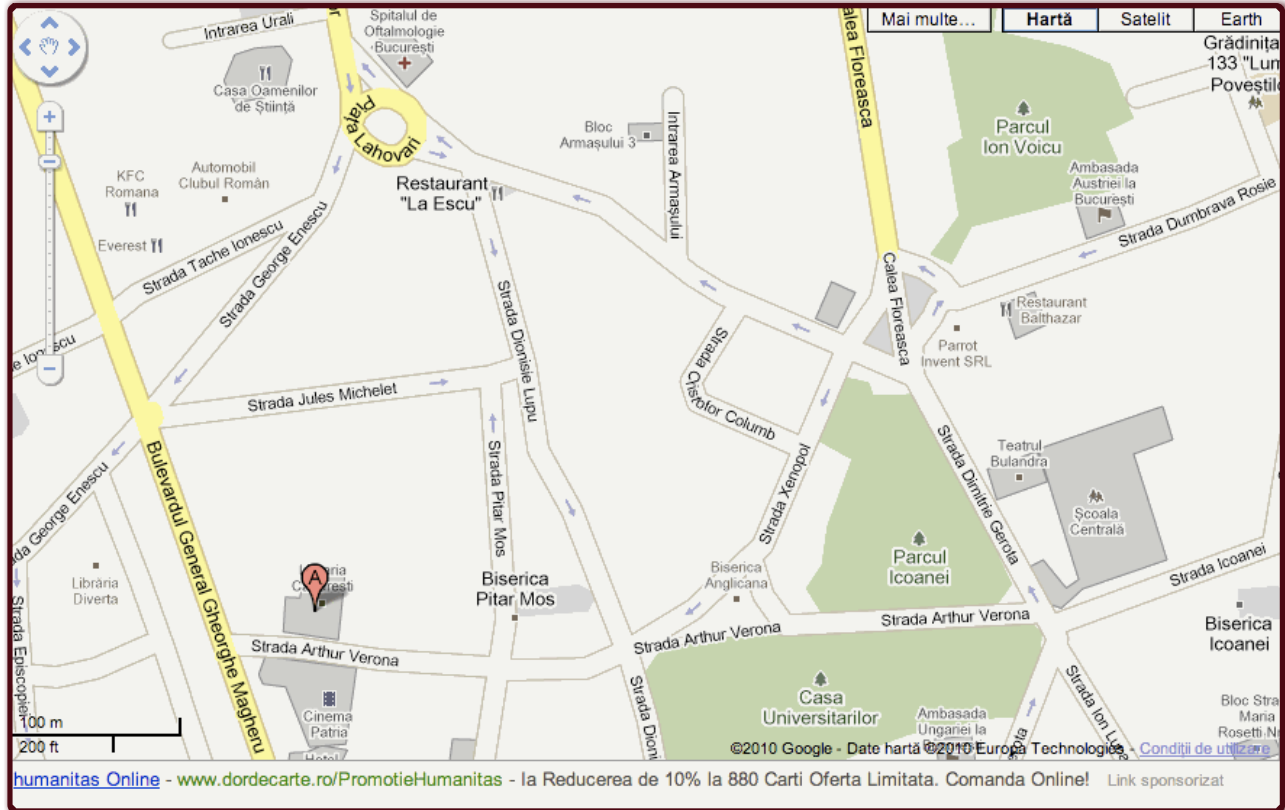
Tea is not supposed to be a sweet, pleasant and convenient drink one can have while riding a bike, working or eating a hamburger on the underground train. Tea is an experience and a discovery in the same time. And what can come as a better companion for a great cup of tea, if not a book? In the relaxed, 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>



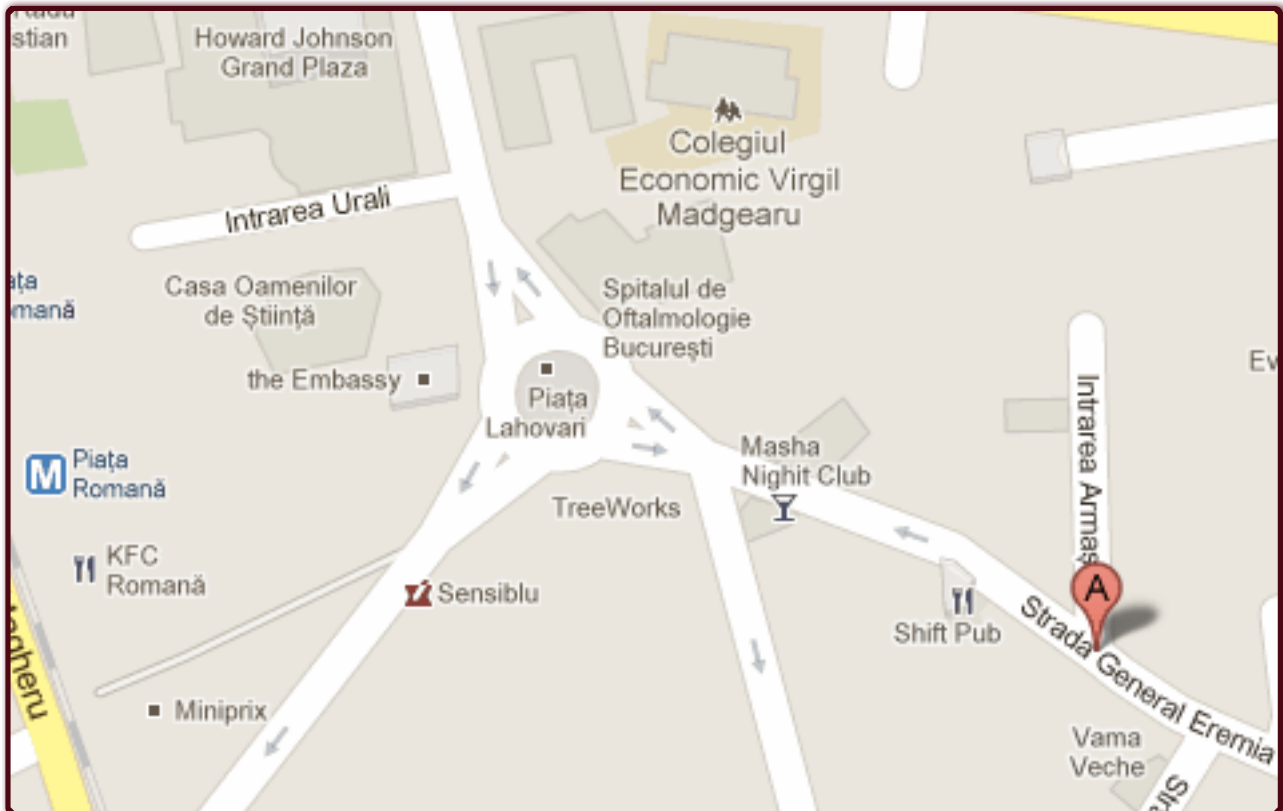
TEAHOUSES – BERNSCHUTZ

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 set in the middle of all buzz, fizz and tap tap, on Smârdan Street in the Old Town; they also have a few tables outside there, but, unless you go early, it is plain noisy. Better sit on those tall chairs inside and watch the hip-hop, top-top self-entitled 'smart', otherwise plain madding crowd outside.

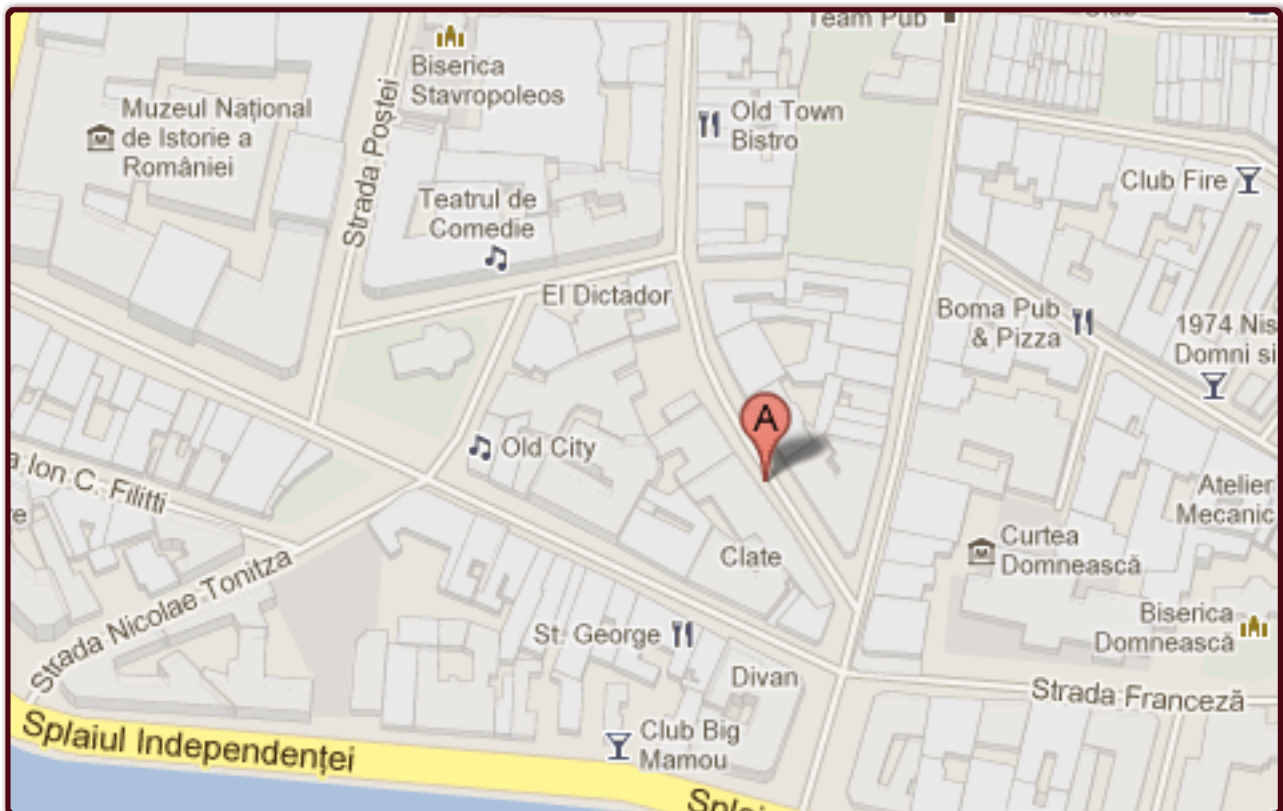
General Eremia Grigorescu location - GPS - N44 26.039 E26 06.08

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



Smârdan (Old Town) location N44 25.049 E26 06.00

Address: 30 Smârdan (near the crossing of Smârdan and Şelari streets), <http://bernschutz.com/>



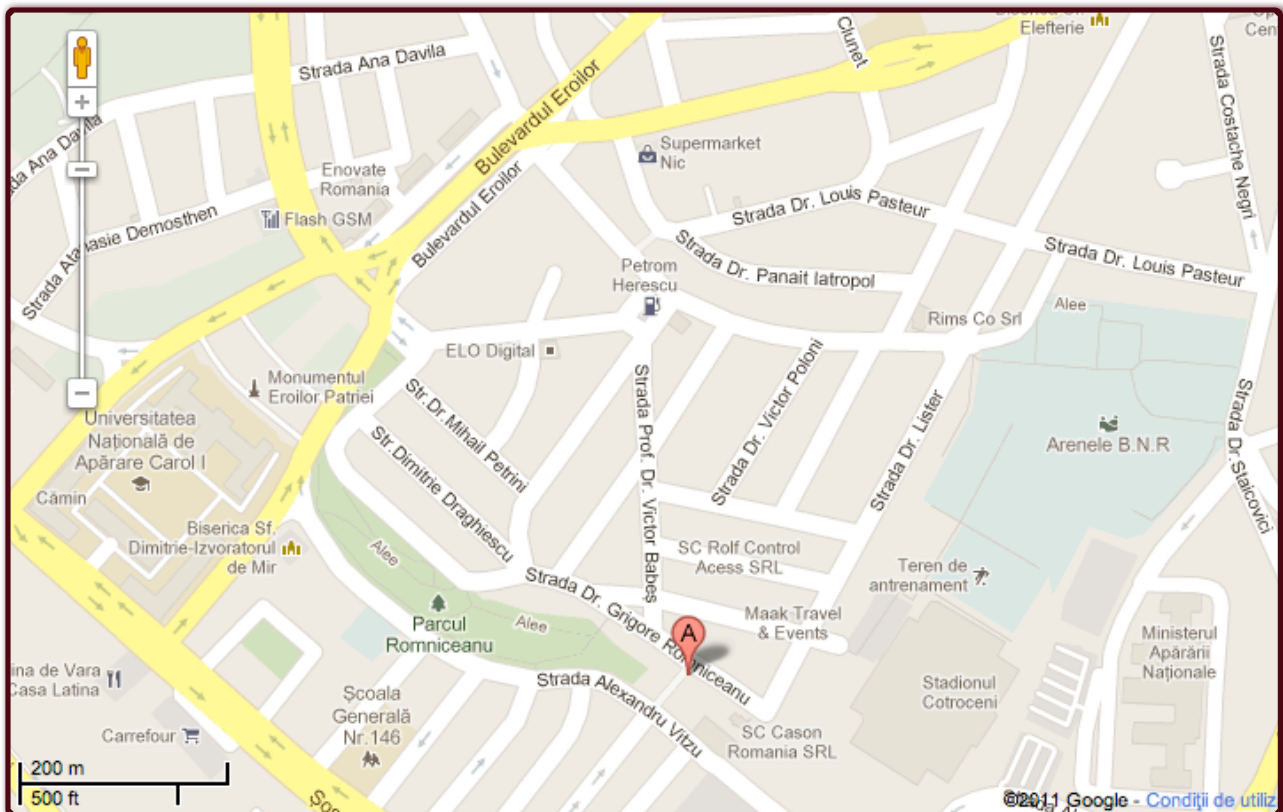
TEAHOUSES - INFINITEA

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 do-it-yourself store label attached.

The menu does not have a that extensive 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_infinitea@yahoo.com.

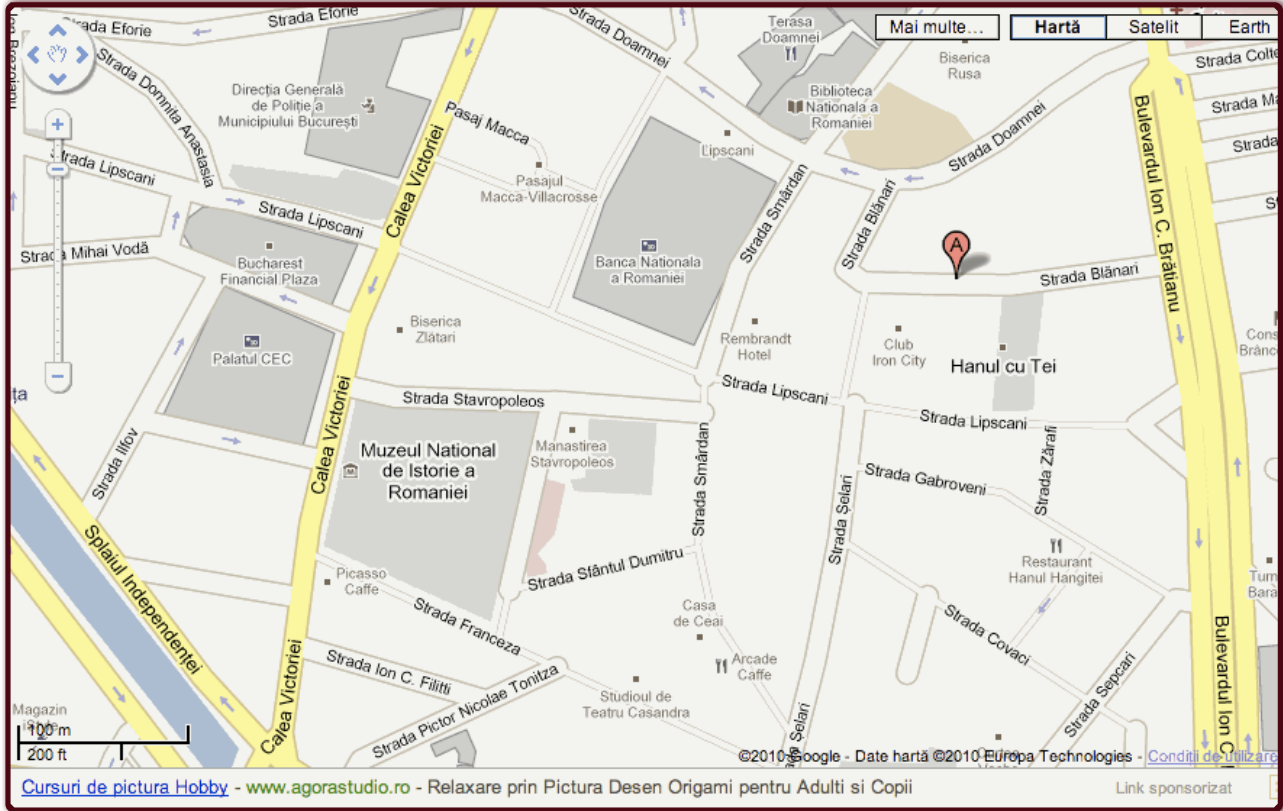


CLUBS - CLUB A

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.

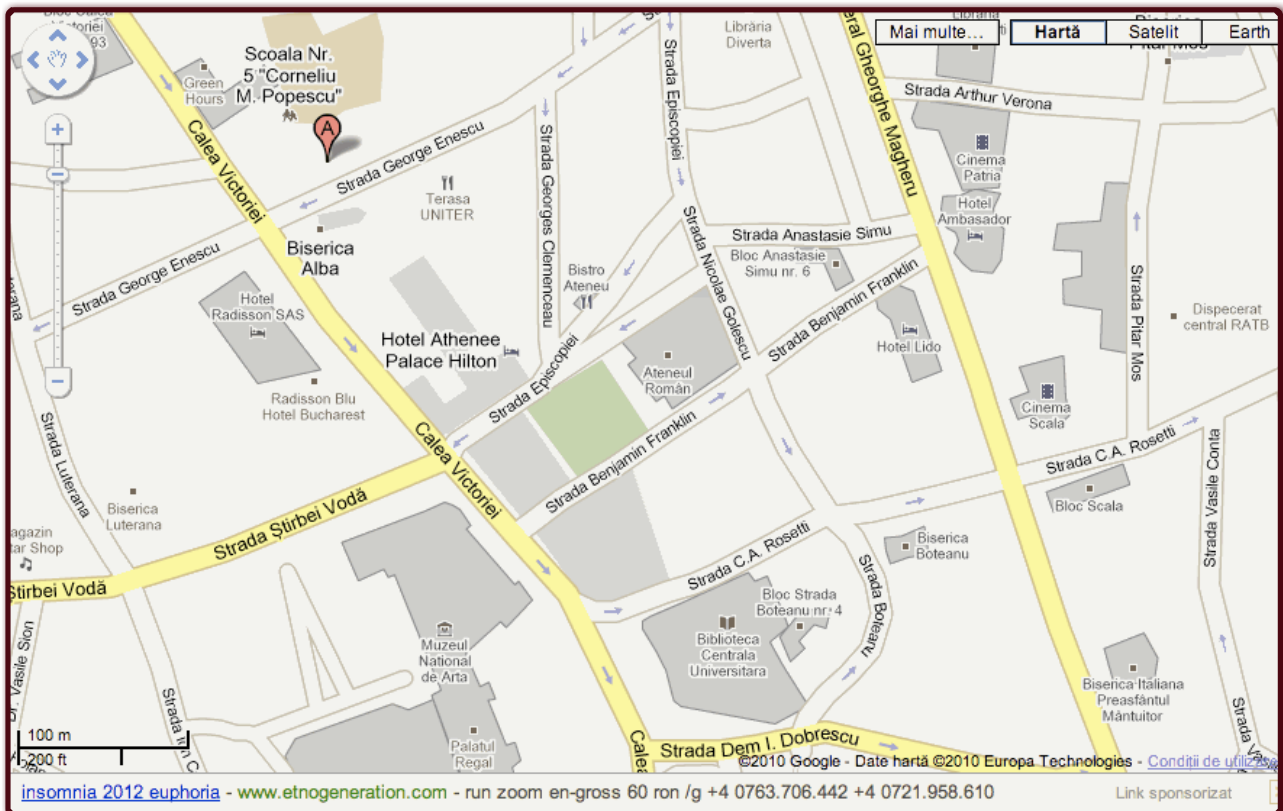
GPS - N44 25.954 E26 06.106

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



CLUBS - TERMINUS

Terminus was one of the harbingers of the nightlife in Bucharest. They have Guinness, they have Kilkenny and they also have – at times – Murphy’s Red. And good music. Cheers.

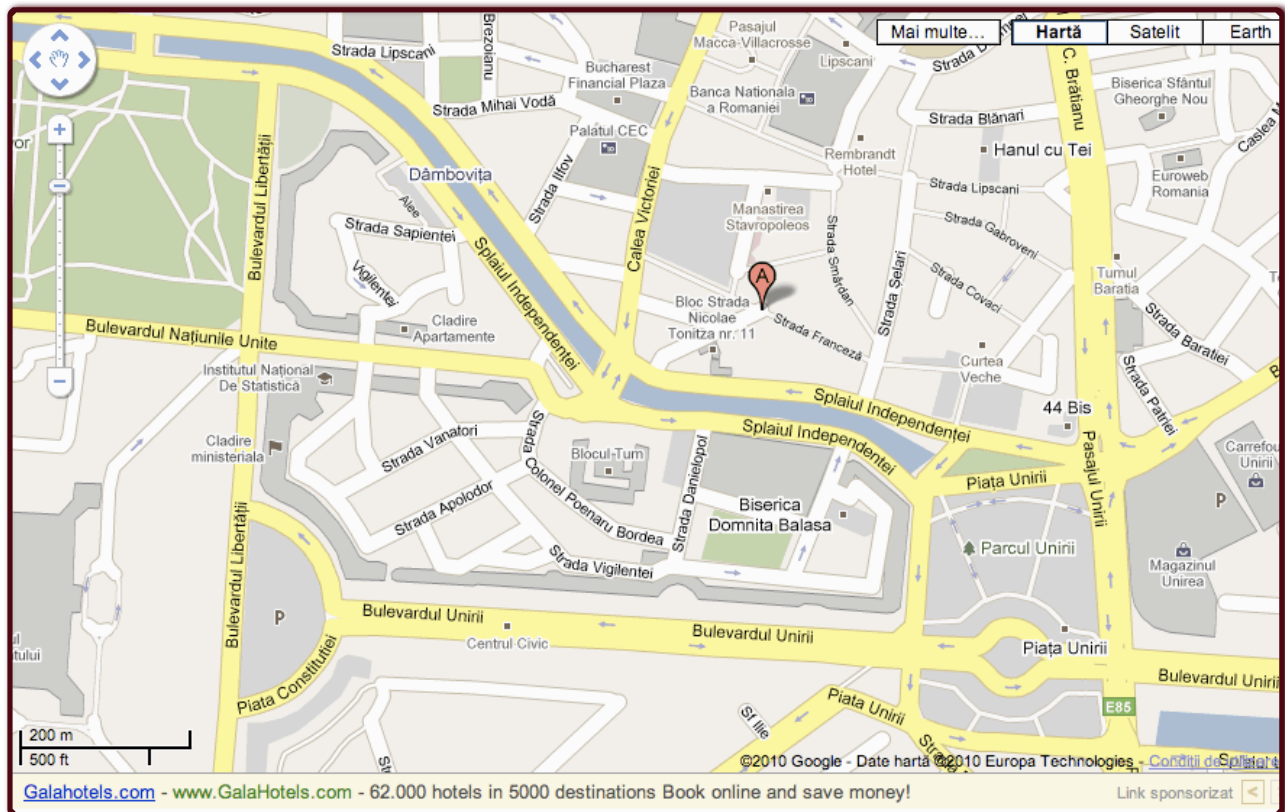


GPS - N44 26.540 E26 05.703

Take Victoria Avenue and, 5 minutes after passing by the Hilton, take Enescu to the right.
Str. George Enescu 5, <http://www.terminus.ro/>

THUMBS DOWN

Living in a country like Romania gives one the chance to witness enough stupidity for a millennium by just trying to... dine out. So, we find ourselves in the city centre, trying to get something to eat at 10 PM on a summer day, and we do not want to get into the pizza, sandwich'n shawarma thing. So we go to L'Harmattan, a Moroccan restaurant. The door is wide open, there is a big board saying they are open until midnight, the waitress is stuck to the bar chatting to the bar tender. We try to enter, the waitress turns her head in disgust and shouts with that impossible to translate Romanian "sictir": "It's closed!". In a low, always respectful, voice, we wonder how that can be, at which she starts mocking at us. We go on, along the same Franceză Street, to **Saint George**, a Hungarian Restaurant with which I had previous bad experiences (i.e. if one needs to make a group menu, he/she has to wait for 2 months until the manager returns from holidays and no, one cannot use the regular menu), but to hell, we are hungry. The restaurant is full, but we find a table. The waiter comes, his face sick and tired of yet another group of hungry fools: "Only if you want to drink something from the bar, otherwise it is closed". OK, we walk on, to one of the most narcissist places in town: the **Cafeneaua Bucurestiului d'Altădat'**. They had their first outlet in Braşov and now they opened this melange of English bar with a touch of French wallpaper and frozen food. Anyway, we sit down, are given the "good" piece of news that if we want to eat, we should hurry for the kitchen closes down in 15 minutes. We choose something and enjoy a glass of wine in the music provided by morons that parked their cars in the bus stop so that, every time the bus passes by, their alarm starts. Time passes by at first unnoticed, as we keep on chatting, but then it becomes painful. It's been half an hour, then more. Eventually food comes. The supposedly thick soup (so-called "cream soup") is as light as the French onion soup, and my Thai salad is simply disgusting, but I am too hungry to say 'no'; the meat is hard like the wooden table I am sitting at, it is salty as if it was salt with a touch of meat and not the other way around. The humus that comes aside is tasteless, which makes it for softening somehow the enormous quantity of salt in the meat; the only relatively good thing is the aubergine salad, even though it is pretty obvious it's been frozen and microwaved. The bread they bring is the most uninspiring (and untoasted) toast junk ever, it tastes and feels like chewing gum. We get on a cab and go home. I get off the car at Dristor and remember the line of people waiting at the shawarma place in Dristor at any time of the day and night. Now I see: those people are lucky, for they are being treated correctly as opposed to imbeciles wanting to eat in some supposedly high class restaurants in Bucharest.



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Verdict: no l'Harmattan (which meanwhile closed down, anyway, if you want to be treated right and to eat well Moroccan food, try **Annette** in Sofia, that is a totally different place), no **St. George** (if you want to eat Hungarian food and be treated with respect, go to Târgu Mureş' **Tempo Panzió**, or to Tuşnad's **Fortuna Restaurant**), and hell no **Cafeneaua Bucurestiului d'Altadat'** (if you want to get a glimpse of oldtimes' Bucharest, try **Rossetya**; if you want to eat local, try **Vatra**). And just for the sake of it, when trying to dine out in places you do not know, keep a sandwich in your handbag; just in case they are total frauds, as they very well might be. No GPS coordinates for such frauds. I only add a map so as to know what to avoid.

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.
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