

Fulbright Pre-Departure Orientation
July 20 -22, 2011

**PDO Guide
to
Moldova**



The information in this Guide was contributed by Fulbrighters who were in Moldova during the 2010-2011 grant cycle; namely, Malina Dumas, Melissa McDonald, Rebecca Ruck, Rod Garnett, Matthew Rellafor, Frank McCarty, Christopher Kelley, and Robert Czerniak.

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I. Introduction

You are almost certain to enjoy your stay in Moldova. Most Fulbrighters have been appreciated by Moldovans, and most Fulbrighters have appreciated and enjoyed their stay in Moldova.

Of course, each Fulbrighter experiences Moldova differently. The reasons for this vary. Location is one reason. Living in Chisinau is different than living in a smaller city.

This Guide cannot take into account all of the variables or even most of them. It does not try to. Instead, it more modestly offers basic, broadly applicable information and suggestions.

We hope this information and these suggestions help you. If the information you are seeking is not here, note your question on a margin of this Guide and ask it at the Pre-Departure Orientation. By giving you this Guide in advance of the PDO, we hope to make the PDO as effective and efficient as possible.

II. Housing

If you have not found housing before you arrive in Moldova, do not be unduly distressed. If you will be living in Chisinau, Chisinau has many hotels at a wide range of prices. Several of the boutique hotels are attractively priced, well-located, and comfortable. Expedia lists some of them. Apartment rental agencies also offer apartments by the day and week.

A. *Chisinau*

1. Location

a. *Centru (City Center)*

Housing in the city center, Centru, is generally more expensive than housing in one of the other districts—Botonica, Rîșcani, and Buiucani. Yet, it can also be the most convenient place to live because most of Chisinau's stores and restaurants are located in the Centru district. So are the main campus of Moldova State University and the campuses of other universities.

Centru is large, however. And the cost and convenience of housing within it varies.

By default, the best reference point for finding a conveniently located residence is Chisinau's main street, Stefan cel Mare. Living within five to seven blocks of Stefan cel Mare will put you close to most stores and restaurants and give you the most favorable access to public transportation to other parts of Chisinau.

Your specific interests or needs might cause you to favor a reference point other than Stefan cel Mare, however. But, irrespective of where you will be working in Chisinau, you are likely to want to spend considerable time in the city center. This consideration favors living in the city center near Stefan cel Mare.

b. *Rîșcani* and *Botanica* are mostly residential areas, although both have supermarkets, stores, restaurants, parks, and other amenities. Even if you do not live or teach in these areas, they are worth exploring.

2. Illustrative Housing Stories

- Malina Dumas - I booked an apartment through a website before arriving in Chisinau. This is the apartment I rented specifically:

<http://www.md4ever.com/apartment/kiv106/index.html>

The apartment was very nice and in a great location but much too big for me to live in alone and overpriced. Payment was convenient because I could use my credit card and a great Moldovan lady (who would later become a partner for another Fulbrighter's project) met me at the apartment and was very helpful to have as a first contact.

I was lucky that on my first day of work at an NGO in Chisinau one of my co-workers invited me to come live with her and her 16 year-old daughter. Living with a host family was one of the highlights of my time abroad. This arrangement benefited my cultural immersion immensely and my language skills improved much more than they would

have otherwise. I would recommend living with a host family for part of the time if it's something that interests you. I don't think it would be difficult to find a host on your own after you have made a few contacts. You can also save a significant amount of money and have the opportunity to try homemade Moldovan food. I paid my host family in dollars and did not have to worry about shopping for groceries and paying bills. That made life a lot easier.

- Rod Garnett - I lived in a medium sized apartment with a nice kitchen in the old part of Chisinau. This apartment was recommended to us at the PDO in July 2010 by another Fulbrighter who had lived there. The landlords would like very much to keep it inhabited by Fulbrighters. Rent was 380 Euros per month plus utilities which I paid in lei. You can contact Jana Tafi on email. She is the daughter of the landlords, but lives in Denmark. jana.tafi@gmail.com

My neighbors are great, and the building has a good renters association. During the year we have had upgrades on wiring as well as the appearance of the hallways. I am in Moldova studying nai, a potentially very loud musical instrument, and have been careful not to practice in the apartment very much. But I recently had some musicians visiting and we had some long tune sessions that the neighbors seemed to enjoy.

- Matthew Rellaford - In the course of my Fulbright I have lived in three different places with three different host families. One of these places, where I lived for eight months, was with a lady I met on a bus. The two other places were found for me through contacts with my affiliation. It is very easy to find a host family in Moldova, and I would highly suggest staying with a host family. However, you should be aware that there are a lot of hiccups with host families, so choose wisely.

One way that you can look for apartments and get a good deal is through www.makler.md When I was looking for apartments I found some good ones. The trouble with www.makler.md is that you usually have to call the person renting the apartment and typically that person doesn't speak English. Also you have to search in either Russian or Romanian for a place.

If you can swing, it I would suggest finding a place outside of Chisinau because true Moldova is outside of Chisinau for the weekends.

I lived a little in Chisinau, and then found a little border village called Varnița and am currently in the Transnistrian town of Grigoriopol. If you would like to live in either village I have contacts that you could contact. [Matthew's email address is at the end of this Guide].

- Frank McCarty - I was in Moldova for the fall term at the State University of Moldova, arriving in late August and leaving just before Christmas. While I needed to be there for the U.S. Embassy's Fulbright orientation, in fact it was more than two weeks later that

my first class began. While I wanted to get started ASAP, having those days relatively free gave me time to find a place to stay, take a map and wander parts of the city, and even take a few bus/streetcar rides just to see where various routes took you. It took a full month to begin to get to know some of the university professors, and, as you have no doubt heard, they are extremely busy especially near the start of a term. You'll need some patience at the beginning, but no doubt will make friends with colleagues and others.

I reserved an apartment for four days through one of the rental agencies (East/West) found on web sites. I also made arrangements ahead of time to go with Barbara—recommended as knowing landlords by Fulbright—during those first few days in Chisinau. She found several good spots and I rented a furnished apartment (#5) at 7 Iorga Street about 5 blocks from the university and 3 blocks from the U.S. Embassy and 5-6 blocks from Stefan cel Mare Street, walking through the park.

The rent was \$750 per month including weekly cleaning—each time about 2 hours—and all utilities. I brought enough dollars to pay for 2 months. My wife visited for 5 weeks after the first 6 weeks and she brought \$\$ as well. I recommend bringing \$\$ or euros that will last for at least 2-3 weeks with you. The apartment was spacious and had all needed items; large bedroom, small office room, kitchen, large living room, bathroom with shower/bath, internet access, cable tv (not much use), small clothes washer, and drying porch. It was well heated and had good hot water.

- Christopher Kelley - I lived in a furnished apartment at 30 Armeneasca Street, three blocks from Stefan cel Mare. The landlord, who works for the USAID outside of Moldova, learned I was coming to Chisinau from a U.S. Embassy employee and wrote to me offering the apartment. When I was in Chisinau a month before my Fulbright grant began, I looked at the apartment and rented it.

The apartment is in the oldest part of the city center in a Soviet-era building. It is large by Soviet-era standards—two bedrooms; a large, open hallway; a large living room; and a kitchen. The shower has plenty of pressure and is served by an electric hot water heater. The furniture is attractive and comfortable. A small washing machine is in the kitchen.

The apartment does not have autonomous heat; it is on the city's heating grid. Chisinau turns the heat on and off by the calendar, not by the outside temperature. Consequently, apartments on the grid can be very cold, as mine was for a memorable week.

Chisinau also gets hot. The apartment I lived in is on the top floor. An apartment on the top floor or otherwise exposed to the sun can be uncomfortably hot in the summer. This was true for my apartment.

The rent was 515 euros per month, plus utilities. In the winter, the cost of utilities exceeded \$150. Utilities included gas (the largest bill in the winter), cable television, electricity, water, and a land line.

The USD to euro exchange rate deteriorated from January to June. I was able to avoid some of this loss by bringing a large sum of euros to Chisinau.

My landlord asked for the final month's rent to be paid in advance.

I paid my utility bills at a nearby Victoriabank. The customary way of paying utility bills is at banks. At Victoriabanks, utility bills are paid at cashier window 2. I kept the receipts I received so that they would be available to my landlord.

Bills usually are delivered within one week of each other. Waiting until all the bills have arrived before paying any of them is more convenient than paying them as they arrive.

Check your bills carefully to be sure they are for your apartment and not another apartment. Mail occasionally is placed in the wrong mailbox.

- Bob Czerniak - My wife Beth and I lived at Strada Nikolai Iorga 9 apartment 30 about four blocks north of Stefan Cel Mare in Centru. There are many vacant apartments in the Soviet-style apartment blocks. We rented our apartment from Veronica Kirau. If there are other Fulbrighters in Chisinau before you, they can help provide contacts. Rod Garnet helped us to find our apartment. It was a two bedroom, with a large dining room, kitchen, and study. Our total living costs were about \$800 per month which broke down into the following categories and amounts:

Rent	\$560
Heating	\$150 (in the coldest months)
Electricity	\$30
Television	\$12
Internet	\$12
Water	\$18
Drinking water	\$18 (my wife was concerned about heavy metals in the tap water so we used home delivered bottled water from Apa Buna)

It appears that most landlords prefer euros for rent. Our landlord came to the apartment once per month to collect payment for our rent and utility bills (this was done in lei), we paid her and she paid the bills.

One of the best things we did was to rent an apartment with its own unit for heating the apartment. If you have an apartment that is heated through the central heating plant of the city (most apartments), you may find yourself without heat in March when it can still be quite cold.

Other Cities

- Melissa McDonald - In areas other than Chisinau, the embassy will provide temporary housing that you may opt to continue. I asked the embassy to provide a list of average rates because they left it up to us to negotiate with host families. Your landlord or host family will want cash and possibly dollars on a monthly basis. Make a set contract you both agree on (all inclusive bill, breakdown of utilities, meals etc). In the case where you want to find your own living quarters you will likely find that many apartments are unavailable, however, this is not likely. Your best option is to have colleagues or local contacts ask around for you. Make sure you are getting a fair rate for these housing options.

- Rebecca Ruck - When I arrived in Cahul, the Embassy had not been able to find me housing and left it up to my co-teacher to find housing for me. I lived in an apartment in the Lepaevka district of town. Before you make a final decision on an apartment, I would suggest talking to some of the Peace Corps volunteers in Cahul. They can give you a copy of their housing contracts, which list the average cost of rent, utilities, and other expenditures. If you choose to live with a host family, there is also a version of this contract that has the cost of food included in the price. The average rate for an apartment in Cahul is 100 Euros without utilities. I paid 130 Dollars a month for my apartment and paid around 100 Dollars a month for my utilities. The best advice I can give you is to talk with your coworkers at the university. They will be your best resource in finding housing in Cahul.

III. Safety

1. Personal Safety

- Malina Dumas - Crossing the street is the biggest safety hazard in Chisinau. It's not common to see a woman walking around by herself at night so I wouldn't necessarily recommend doing that. Avoid crossing through parks at night. There aren't nearly as many outwardly drunk men waiting around to harass you on the street like there tend to be in Russia so that was a welcome change. I lived in a well-lit area right in the city center that was especially safe because of all the government buildings with 24-hour guards so that helped make me feel secure. I think it's worth a little extra money to live in a nice neighborhood especially if you're living by yourself.

- Melissa McDonald - Like anywhere you should be aware of your settings and not walk alone late at night (especially as a woman). I never felt like my safety was in danger but the lack of street lights and amount of people on the streets often made me feel a little uneasy. Just have someone escort you home!

I never walked around with a lot of cash or carried my passport once I had my legitimatia but, again, like you would in the US, be aware of your belongings and keep your purse or

wallet close to your body.

- Rebecca Ruck - Cahul is a safe town. I would suggest not speaking many English on public transportation because it draws a lot of attention. There are very few women that walk around alone at night, so I would suggest not doing this after 9pm. When I got back to my apartment after 9pm, I would have a male friend walk me home. In general, it is not a good idea to carry a lot of money around. I always carried my legitimatie with me and took my passport with me when I traveled to Chisinau. I was never asked to show my documents in Cahul or Chisinau, but it is a good idea to carry them with you just in case.

- Frank McCarty - At first, I took passport and a money belt when I went out, but after about 10 days, I took only a copy of my passport in my wallet. I never experienced any issues with personal safety or with safeguarding cash and property. I'd keep valuables and money in your apartment in some locked area—suitcase, locked shelf, etc.—because landlord/cleaning people were occasionally there when I was absent. If you use reasonable caution, I would have no worries unless you frequent late night clubs or questionable places where greater care is needed.

- Matthew Rellaforde - I find Moldova to be incredibly safe, and, in fact, I feel more at risk walking on the streets of Provo, Utah, than I do in Chisinau.

My experience has been a lot with Transnistria. Transnistria is totally safe and rarely lives up to any of the horror stories that are told by exaggerating backpackers. I've crossed the border hundreds of time and rarely have problems. The few times I've been called out of the bus to talk with a border guard, I've been able to leave or enter without any problem. In fact they let me enter at spots that they don't typically let internationals enter.

If you're ever planning on driving in Moldova or Transnistria the police will try and pull you over a lot. And when they see that you're from the States they'll try to take no less than \$20 off you. If you're in Moldova, play the Embassy card and tell them you'll call the Embassy, or have them fill you out a ticket if you in fact did something wrong. In Transnistria, they'll threaten to take away your license and rip up your driving permit. If you play the English card, and act like you don't understand and say "All I have is 20 lei" they'll eventually take it and let you go. Cops here usually expect a 20-30 lei bribe from their victims. So eventually they'll give the same preference to you if you refuse to pay more.

- Christopher Kelley - Chisinau is safe. Prudence is appropriate, of course.

The biggest hazard you are likely to face is a daily one—crossing the street. Be careful crossing streets. I repeat: Be careful crossing streets. Always.

Be humble, too. Even if you have the right of way, you are no match for an automobile. And scolding careless drivers with so much as a dirty look is not prudent. Just be patient.

Standing on the corner an extra minute or two will not kill you. The alternative might.

Dogs sometimes can be overrated as a hazard. But give them heed, too. If you are a runner, occasionally a dog will zero-in on your ankles. Although these dogs do not understand English, yell at them will likely keep them at bay. And the old “bend down pretending to pick up a rock” trick can work, too. (By the way, the dogs have their problems. They tend to be run over at night. Walk or run the streets before dawn, and you will see the results.)

Chisinau’s infrastructure is poor. Tripping hazards abound on Chisinau’s sidewalks. Many streets do not have street lights, which adds to the hazard of putting a foot in the wrong place.

Bring a small flashlight for dark apartment stairwells. A LED flashlight is a good choice. Bring two; you might misplace one.

- Bob Czerniak - Chisinau is a safe place. In the six months we lived here there were two murders (compare that to most US cities). Common sense is your best guide. We felt safe walking to or from concert in Centru as late as 10 p.m. at night. We had no problems with pickpockets, but we were still careful about how much money we carried.

2. *Safeguarding Cash and Other Property*

- Christopher Kelley - I carried my wallet in my front pocket. Wallets designed as front-pocket wallets, however, are likely to be too small to hold the identity card (resident permit) you will be given and told by the Embassy to carry at all times.

In my apartment, I kept cash in a half-full cereal box and under the ironing board cover. I had done the same when I was a Fulbrighter in Ukraine. In Ukraine, this mattered because my apartment was burglarized, and all my valuables were stolen except my cash.

In my Chisinau apartment, hiding money probably was over-cautious. I forgot to lock my apartment door at night about two times a week every week and nothing came of this. But if you want to hide your money, do not hide it in books or in the freezer or tape it under drawers and tables. These are common hiding places—too common to be secure.

IV. Attire

1. *Shoes and Shoe Care*

- Melissa McDonald - Shoes are a big part of Moldovan culture. Keeping them clean and in good shape are important. Females who wish to fit in and look professional at work should pack black heels/boots. My rain boots were looked at strangely but were very useful on the muddy streets. A trendy but sturdy pair of winter boots will help you out

during the winter as well. Open toed shoes are really not worn in the spring; expect to see a lot of flats. Again these are only suggestions, but Moldovans tend to stare at your feet if you wear something out of the norm.

- Rebecca Ruck - Moldovan style is a very important part of their culture. I would suggest packing two pairs of flats, a pair of heels, a nice pair of boots, a pair of flip-flops, and a pair of good winter boots. You can buy these once you get to Chisinau, but selections were slim in Cahul and boots were usually overpriced. I think my biggest lifesaver was YakTraks. I would suggest bringing at least one pair. In Cahul, they do not salt the roads when it snows, so ice is your biggest threat.

- Christopher Kelley - Clean shoes are important, as is attire generally. Keep your shoes clean. I brought shoe care supplies with me, including Sno-Seal waterproof dressing. Sno-Seal works well on dress shoes; it is not just for boots. You also can purchase polish, polish applicators, and brushes in Chisinau, but these are items that easily fit in a suitcase.

Granted, it is troublesome to keep shoes clean in snowy, muddy, and dusty weather, which covers all of Moldova's seasons. But if you walk around in dirty shoes, you will be about the only person in Chisinau who does.

Bring comfortable shoes. You probably will walk in Moldova more than you walk in the U.S.

As to attire generally, Moldovan students dress better than U.S. students. I teach at a law school in the U.S. where the lawyer's uniform is the standard faculty attire. This was the standard attire at Moldova State University's law school, too.

2. Ice Traction Aids

- Christopher Kelley - I brought "Stabil.icers Sport" (www.32north.com) ice-traction outsoles. Available from running goods suppliers, they are designed for running shoes but can be used on other shoe types. I never used them in Chisinau. But I have used them elsewhere and recommend them.

In the winter, I ran before dawn on the streets, which are cleared overnight. The sidewalks are too icy to run on. They are not clear of ice in many places until the ice melts. Ice can become quite elderly in Moldova.

If you are going to wear ice traction gear, think about where you will put the gear when you enter buildings. They will be wet and dirty if you have worn them to get to the building. I favor zip-lock plastic bags for many purposes, including waterproof storage.

- Bob Czerniak - Moldova does not clean its sidewalks in the winter. They can be icy.

Using Yak traks (from REI) as a clip on to your shoes can help with traction.

3. *Clothing*

a. Professional Attire

- Melissa McDonald - Women should expect to dress appropriately for work. Skirts and dresses are very common. You will see less women in pants but I often wore pants and a nice top, this was acceptable. Be aware that you don't need a lot of clothing. Moldovans believe in having a few quality outfits, as opposed to Americans with big closets. Pack things you can mix and match that will last. If you aren't living in Chisinau, make sure you pack clothes that don't need to be dry-cleaned.

- Malina Dumas - I don't have much to add to what has been covered by the others already, but I want to emphasize that you shouldn't plan on doing any shopping for clothes in Moldova. Everything is more expensive than in most of Europe and the US and the quality isn't always great. You should bring whatever you think you'll need. You will probably feel underdressed most of the time (women only), but it's also important to be comfortable because you'll probably be doing a lot of walking on sidewalks that are in disrepair.

- Rebecca Ruck - If you are working at a university, you need to wear business casual attire regularly. The style of dress is more formal in Moldova. If you dress nicer, your coworkers will respect you more. Dressing up for classes is a symbol of respect, so you will fit into Moldova culture more if you wear similar clothes. Sometimes I would wear dressy jeans to class, but I always complimented it with a nice top. I would pack two skirts and two nice dresses. I brought a suit for nicer occasions.

- Frank McCarty - People in Chisinau like to look nice when they go out even at the university. While for presentations, I usually wore a coat and tie, for classroom work I often wore only shirt and tie or shirt and blazer but not shirt, tie and coat. I found people at the university expected professors to dress similar to professional people in big cities in U.S. During the days I was at university but not teaching, I'd generally have a coat without tie when it was a little cool and only a shirt and slacks when it was warmer. If you're meeting special people, a suit is better than sport coat. Casual wear is about the same as in the U.S., but as in most of Europe very little wearing of shorts even in warm weather.

You can buy most of what you need in clothing in Chisinau, but suits and shoes are quite different in styles than in U.S. I brought all clothes I needed and bought almost nothing. You can buy some winter hats and gloves and scarves there. As for winter shoes, I'd bring some sturdy winter shoes with some type of tread—not smooth—on the bottom. Women will definitely want dress boots. I'm from Michigan, so while it does get cold there, it is not unusual for those from northern U.S. climates.

- Christopher Kelley - I taught in a blazer and tie, although I often removed my blazer. I wore washable wool pants and dress chinos. My pants were dark colored: navy blue, charcoal, and olive.

I wore wash-and-wear shirts. I ironed them as soon as I removed them from the washer, which also helped to dry them.

I favor light-blue dress shirts over white shirts because they are easier to keep clean if your apartment does not have a washing machine.

I taught four days a week, sometimes five days. I should have brought two blazers given the amount of wear without dry cleaning that my single blazer suffered.

- Bob Czerniak - I wore a coat and tie four times in six months. To some degree it depends on how often you will attend formal functions.

b. Casual Attire

- Christopher Kelley - Polo-style shirts are nice for casual wear in the spring and summer. Chisinau summers can be really hot. I wore shorts in my apartment but not on the street.

- Bob Czerniak - Short sleeve shirts are important after May probably through August. We did not bring them (we arrived in January), but purchased some at the Piata Central and some at Malldova.

c. Winter Wear

- Melissa McDonald - In the winter it will likely be very cold in your house during the day and even colder at your school. Make sure to pack a few turtlenecks and sweaters. Wearing long silk underwear or tights under your clothes is helpful too.

- Rebecca Ruck - In the winter, you should bring a winter coat that will keep you warm in 15-degree weather. It gets very cold and dressing in layers is essential. I would bring a pair of earmuffs, a warm scarf, several pairs of long underwear and at least four pairs of heavy winter socks.

- Matthew Rellaford - I don't think you'll need to worry too much about clothing. A lot of people here have European mountaineering jackets, etc., so you can bring your Columbia gortex coat and fit in. Bring lots of clothes with you because clothing is really expensive here. Bring a nice warm coat, warm hat, warm wool socks, and thermals. I didn't come prepared and thought Moldova would have the same, mildish winters that I grew up with in Utah. Whilst it wasn't much colder in Utah, I had a car there and warm buildings to keep me warm wherever I go. Here you have cold busses, cold streets, and cold homes depending on where you live.

Particularly bring some good warm shoes that don't look like snowboarding boots and are stylish. I would buy lots of pairs of wool socks as well.

- Christopher Kelley - Moldova winters are cold. Bring warm clothes. I wore a waxed canvas coat with a removable liner (Barbour), which allowed me to adjust it for the temperature. The coat weighs a ton, however, and I was pleased when I no longer needed it.

I wore silk or microfiber underwear. Both are lightweight and dry quickly. And, apart from long underwear, silk and microfiber underwear will work in all seasons.

Classrooms can be over-heated or under-heated. Dressing in layers can be useful.

- Bob Czerniak - I used a fleece jacket, scarf, a North Face parka, a wool hat, and gloves. This with a sweater, wool pants, and long underwear (top and bottom) was more than adequate to stay warm.

4. *Laundry and Dry Cleaning*

- Rebecca Ruck - There were no drycleaners in Cahul. I would suggest bringing very few dry clean-only outfits unless you want to commute to the capital with your dry cleaning. I washed my laundry by hand for a year, which was a bit daunting at times. If this will bother you, I would suggest looking for an apartment with a washer. There are very few in Cahul with washers, and most of my friends did their laundry by hand.

- Matthew Rellaford - Read this carefully: There are no laundromats in Chisinau. I know, it's hard to believe, but I searched and searched and didn't find any. I would suggest getting a place with a washing machine. Most average, middle class families have washing machines now. Having to do clothes by hand is miserable, not as clean, and takes up a lot of time.

- Frank McCarty - As for laundry and dry cleaning, I did my own laundry and hung things out to dry on the drying porch. The washer was small so I did fairly frequent loads, but everything would dry in a day or less. I ironed as needed.

There are several dry cleaners in town—including one at Sun City mall on Puskin near Stefan cel Mare. The expats web site also recommends some. I once took bus or cab to Malldova and dropped off dry cleaning there, but actually did not make use of dry cleaning.

- Christopher Kelley - My apartment had a small washing machine. I dried my clothes on a drying rack on my apartment's balcony. Drying is slow in the winter. I dried sheets in the winter by folding them and putting them on radiators. This dried them in about eight hours. In the summer, sheets dried in four or five hours on a sunny balcony.

Blue jeans can be ironed dry or put over a radiator to dry. On a hot, sunny day, my apartment's balcony could dry a bucket of water in an hour. Or so it seemed.

I did not use dry-cleaning services. Chisinau has them, but none were close to my apartment. I brought a suit but wore it infrequently.

If your apartment does not have a washing machine, you can use your feet for the agitation cycle if you wash your clothes in the shower.

- Bob Czerniak - Our apartment had a small washing machine and a drying room. It took a little over 24 hours for pants to dry. Everything else took less time. I brought all wash and wear clothes so did not use dry cleaning services.

V. Money

1. Cash v. ATMs

- Malina Dumas - I think it's best to bring as much cash as you can in euros or dollars. I have Bank of America and it hits me with outrageous fees to take money out of an ATM abroad; as much as \$8 for each transaction. Considering many ATMs in Moldova won't give you more than a couple hundred dollars, using my debit card only would not have been a good plan. I'll echo what Chris said about making sure the bills are crisp. You can run into problems exchanging bills that are sub-par.

- Melissa McDonald - Last orientation someone suggested I get a USAA debit card because they won't charge you for international withdrawals. Anyone may open a USAA account, regardless of military relations. ATMs have their own charges but this definitely saved me some money. Like everyone else I took out large sums at once.

- Rebecca Ruck - I would also suggest getting a USAA debit card. When I took out money, I took it out in large sums to avoid transaction fees. I brought extra cash from the US with me. I would highly recommend doing this in case you lose your banking card or other situations arise. When I was in Kyiv for the Fulbright orientation, I had my identity stolen and my card had to be deactivated. The extra cash I brought with me from the US provided me with cash until I received my new banking card. In Cahul, I withdrew money from the same bank that Peace Corps volunteers did. There is an ATM in the mayor's office, which is directly right of the university.

- Rod Garnett - I knew about the need for Euros before coming to Moldova. My rent is paid in Euros and I have purchased musical instruments in Euros. I also paid for my nai lessons with Euros. This means that I have used Euros for rent, lessons, and instruments, and lei from ATMs for everything else. I have not used a credit card here yet.

- Matthew Rellaforde - At Moldincombank on strada Vlaicu Pircalab very close to the intersection with Stefan Cel Mare, you can get dollars and euros from the ATMs. That's the only place I've found for getting dollars out.

- Frank McCarty - I'd bring 2-4 months of cash from the U.S. You can change \$\$ to lei in dozens of spots in Chisinau without fees because so many Moldovans receive money from those working in other countries. I would not seek to pay in dollars or euros. However, some places (landlords, foreign travel) that deal more with foreigners will ask you to pay in \$\$ or euros. Quite a few places take credit cards and I used at the grocery store, restaurants and some shops. Make sure you know ahead of time how your credit cards charges for foreign currency (lei) transactions. I used two different cards and each charged what I regarded as quite reasonable fees.

For ATMs, I found my visa credit/debit card charged \$3.50 for each transaction, so when I used the ATM I would get several weeks or a month's worth of leis so the cost per \$\$ was minimal. I found an ATM on Stefan cel Mare near Pushkin that I used. It is on the street just past Pushkin and I always got a receipt and never had any problems. Use the ATM during daylight hours at a non busy time. The Moldencom Bank ATMs can give you Euros from the ATM.

- Christopher Kelley - I brought USDs and euros. I do not recall exactly how much I brought, but I brought at least \$5,000 in USD and euros.

Be sure the money you bring is relatively new and clean. One hundred dollar bills are best.

Plan ahead. Your local bank might have to order euros and clean \$100 bills for you.

I carried credit cards but did not use them in Chisinau except on internet transactions.

While I was in Chisinau, one of my credit card accounts was hacked and purchases were made with the card number in the U.S. The credit card company cancelled the card. Obviously, having your credit card cancelled while you are in Moldova can be inconvenient because the wait for a replacement card can be lengthy. In my case, this did not matter because I had another card. But it was a reminder of the limits of relying on a single credit card while you are abroad.

You will spend money in Chisinau. It is not an inexpensive place to live.

2. *Best ATM Machines*

- Christopher Kelley - ATM machines are ubiquitous in Chisinau. The ATM in the McDonald's on Stefan cel Mare dispenses only 100 and 50 lei bills when a large sum—2,000 lei, for instance—is withdrawn. This is good. Larger denominated bills are

more difficult to spend except to pay utility bills, restaurant tabs, and supermarket purchases. Using a large bill at a kiosk is likely to annoy the vendor, assuming the vendor accepts the bill.

I usually withdrew 2,000 or 3,000 lei at each ATM visit. The maximum withdrawal allowed is 3,000 lei.

During the spring of 2011, the USD - Moldovan lei exchange rate appeared to average around 1 USD for 11.50 lei. The arithmetic is easier if you pretend 1 USD will buy 10 lei.

Using a 1 to 10 exchange rate for convenience will be close enough for most purposes. For instance, if you tell yourself you have spent \$20.00 each time you spend 200 lei, you will err by less than \$3.00. At a 1 to 11.5 exchange rate, 200 lei is \$17.39.

Be sure to tell your bank card and credit card issuer(s) that you will be in Moldova. Otherwise, you risk having your card(s) blocked.

I carry bank ATM cards from two banks when I am abroad. This saved me a lot of grief when I was a Fulbrighter in Ukraine in 2005 and left one of the cards in an ATM machine.

- Bob Czerniak - The Victoria bank ATM's, located throughout the city, were excellent. They never failed to work and did not charge a service fee when we used our debit card.

VI. Medicine, Cosmetics, and Other Personal Items

- Rebecca Ruck - Bring your own medicine. I arrived to Moldova with half a suitcase full of medicine. While this was a bit excessive, I always felt better having the medicine available if I needed it. Medicine is very different in Moldova and in Cahul; you will not be able to find the medicines you are accustomed to in America. Here is a list of medicines that I would recommend:

Antibiotics: Cipro, Flagyl, Levaquinn, Augmentin;
Miscellaneous: Centrum Multivitamin, Pepto Bismol, Tums, Imodium, Tylenol, Tylenol PM, Dayquil, Benadryl, and;
Anything else you think you might need.

I would also suggest bringing lamisil, antibiotic cream, and hydrocortisone cream.

I twisted my ankle during my first week in Moldova and was surprised to find that local pharmacies have neither Ace Wraps nor Ice packs. If you have room, it would be a good idea to bring both. In addition, I brought a small first aid kit with me that was always nice to have around.

- Frank McCarty - Bring your own medicine. I think aspirin and some other over-the-counter stuff would be all right to purchase, but you should have a good supply with you. The Embassy doesn't want you to be using its mail service too often, but you could probably have needed refills shipped to you at the Embassy. Fortunately, I had what I needed and did not need to purchase such items. I'd consult with the Embassy for sources if you do need them; they have and will provide you with good info.

- Matthew Rellaford - Go to Prima Medica for your healthcare needs. It's on Vasili Alexandri and is recommended by the Embassy. It usually costs between 150-250 lei for a consultation with a doctor. If you need to get an x-ray you can go to the state of the art German Diagnostic Center and get an x-ray for 200-250 lei.

I got a bad sinus infection but antibiotics you can buy over the counter, so I was able to treat myself with a doctor's advice.

- Christopher Kelley - Bring enough prescription medicine to cover your needs. You can get just about anything else you will need in Chisinau, unless you favor the very newest, 100-blade razor cartridges. Chisinau is at the four-blade cartridge stage; I did not see any Schick Hydro five-blade cartridges in Chisinau. But I am sure they will be there soon.

But bring at least a two-week supply of everything you will need. You will have enough on your mind during your first days in Moldova.

Make sure aspirin, vitamins, and the like are still within their "use-by" limit. I brought aspirin that had expired five years earlier.

You will get sick. Bring your favorite over-the-counter medicines, especially the magic potions that dry up congested lungs and noses. Have enough with you for at least two bouts with lung and nose congestion. And bring handkerchiefs.

If you have rented a furnished apartment, you might not have rented towels, shampoo, and soap. Unless you know you will have a towel in your apartment waiting for you on your first night in Moldova, bring a lightweight one. You will want a shower when you arrive. You do not want to have to roll on the floor to dry yourself.

Bring a corkscrew. I spent several wine-starved nights before I found a corkscrew in the large No. 1 supermarket in the Sun City shopping center on Puskin Street. Curiously, in a county that justly prides itself on its wine, corkscrews are not easy to find.

I got haircuts at a high-end beauty salon on Armeneasca Street near my apartment, Salon Afrodita (www.afrodita.md). There was always someone there who spoke English. A failure to communicate with someone wielding scissors can be unfortunate.

VII. Food

1. *Grocery Stores*

- Melissa McDonald - There are grocery stores in cities other than Chisinau. You will find a wider selection of produce at the markets.

- Rebecca Ruck - Cahul has a lot of alimentars, or small markets. You can buy your vegetables at the vegetable market. There is a nice grocery store (with aisles) called Modern Market that is near Lapaevka. You can take the number five bus and get off on the station directly after the bus station stop if you are coming from the center. Modern has the most selection and the staff is very friendly.

I brought a set of reusable bags with me. This was a great purchase because you have to pay extra for bags in Moldova. I used Envirosax bags and found them very useful during my time in Moldova.

- Frank McCarty - You will be pleasantly surprised by Chisinau; a lot of very good and reasonably priced food. I shopped at the No. 1 market because it was close, but occasionally went to larger markets with better selection. You can easily find transportation to them by bus or van, but taxis are very reasonable too. I'd recommend shopping at several places, unless one is great and very convenient, until you know what you can find at each and then do what suits you. The "farmer's market" is great for cheese, fresh fruits and vegs; I usually purchased meat and fish at grocery store. Stick mostly with chicken and pork meat; good beef is difficult to find.

- Christopher Kelley - I shopped at No. 1 supermarkets almost exclusively. Product selection varies by store size. None are Alice's Restaurant where you can get anything you want. But if you cannot find it, you probably do not need it.

Do not expect bargains, however. Supermarkets are expensive. Indeed, Chisinau is expensive, excepting the open-air markets, public transportation, and wine.

You are likely to shop for groceries often. The plastic bags at the No. 1 stores are tough enough to hold a horse, but you will not want to carry a horse six or seven blocks from the store to your apartment. If a day passed when I was not in a Number 1 store, I do not remember it. Just keeping water, juice, yogurt, cereal, and wine in stock sent me to the No. 1 store daily.

Eastern European fruit juices are great. I favor Ukraine's Sandora. Lurking behind many, if not most, of the prominently displayed brands is the respective company's owner: Coca-Cola or Pepsi. But, fortunately, Coke and Pepsi have not turned all beverages into sugared water.

- Bob Czerniak - Basically, anything you can buy in a grocery store in the US, you can find in one form or another in one of the three large grocery stores in Chisinau (Forchette's (at Malldova), Numerul 1 Hypermarket (on Dacia), Greenhills (at the Plaza on Decibal). There are many smaller grocery stores, Fidesco and Numerul 1's, throughout the city, but these three are similar in size and product variety to US stores. They also accept US credit cards. Here is list of typical US products and some others that can be purchased in these stores:

Tide

Colgate toothpaste

Nestle products

Activa yogurt

Dannon yogurt

Thai hot sauce

Kikkoman Soy sauce

Gillette razors and shaving cream

Mars candy bars

Coke and Coke light, Fanta, Pepsi

Thai Hot Sauce

Kellogg's cereals

Fresh fruit and vegetables from Turkey and north Africa (most better than US products)

Meat (pork, chicken, some beef) can be purchased in cuts that familiar to US consumers

Fish (smoked and fresh, i.e., live or prepared) that is excellent

Tuna from Russia that is outstanding

Excellent salmon

Excellent sardines from Portugal

2. *Restaurants*

- Rebecca Ruck - Cahul has a good selection of restaurants. Andy's Pizza is good if you are craving American Food. There is Vulcan Cafeteria if you want cheap and tasty cafeteria food. Marco Polo has good traditional Moldovan food, as does this restaurant located under the Azalia Hotel. Bistro is a great place to get swarma if you want to try it!

- Frank McCarty - You'll find many restaurants and cafes. I like the yellow café on Pushkin about a block off of Stefan cel mar but also ate fairly regularly at some university cafeterias and coffee spots. The quiches at the French deli are great as are their desserts. The expat group meets weekly at different restaurants and I found that a great way to meet people and try different places. Sometimes the choices are pricey by Moldovan standards, but not bad for a nice night out by U.S. standards.

- Christopher Kelley - Chisinau is flush with nice restaurants. The nice ones are priced accordingly. I ate in them often enough to give a caring financial planner a coronary. But they offer truly good food of all sorts. Give the Loft and Carmelos a try. Within a

month, you will have recommendations of your own. English-language menus are common at the more up-scale restaurants.

VIII. International Mail

- Rebecca Ruck - I had several packages sent to me in Cahul. My packages were sent with tracking numbers and when they arrived at the Post Office in Cahul, I received notification that they had arrived. Taking a Moldovan with you to get your package at the post office will help you immensely. If the staff finds out that you are American then you might have to pay unnecessary fees. You will only be able to pick up international packages on Tuesday and Friday in Cahul. Your package will be checked by customs on these days so be prepared to talk to a customs official. Your packages from America should not have new items and if they are new, make sure the tags are removed before sending them to Moldova.
- Frank McCarty - This is difficult. You can use the Embassy for a few packages and letters to or from you, but not on a regular basis. I mailed via the main post office on Stefan cel Mare and had no problems, but you do wait and wait and see bureaucracy in action. Cost is a bit high, but manageable for small parcels.
- Christopher Kelley - International parcels must be picked up at the post office across the street from the train station. Include your mobile telephone number on the address label if you know it before the parcel is shipped. I had a Moldovan SIM card before I moved to Moldova as a Fulbrighter. If you want to know your telephone number before going to Moldova and you will not be the first to arrive, consider asking the first Fulbrighter in your group to arrive in Moldova to buy a SIM card for you and to send you its number.

Even in a mobile number's absence, however, you probably will be called when the parcel arrives. Though I did not know my apartment's land-line number, the post office knew it and called me when my packages arrived. The callers did not speak English. Still, the purpose of each call was clear. All you need to recognize is the Russian word for post office.

You will need your passport to retrieve the parcel. At the end of the process, you will be ushered into a room where the parcel will be opened and inspected for contraband. The postal employees who do this speak English and are courteous. After the parcel is inspected, it will be resealed and given to you. Expect the process to take up to an hour, depending how many others are doing the same thing at the same time.

Consider using Meest America for shipments that are not eligible for the diplomatic pouch. Meest America is expert at shipping to and from eastern Europe.

IX. Internet Access and Mobile Phones

- Rebecca Ruck - I used an Orange USB for internet and found it useful when I was in town. However, I lived in an apartment complex and received very bad reception there. I would suggest buying the highest memory option because you can have unlimited downloading at night if you so desire. There is no WiFi in Cahul, so if WiFi is something you really need, then I would suggest buying the DSL internet and bringing your own router from the US. If you need internet in the classroom then go with the Orange USB. You will need a Moldovan to go with you. My coworker and I shared an internet plan and I paid her a monthly fee. Otherwise, I would suggest getting DSL.
- Rod Garnett - There is a good, fast internet connection in my apartment, but it took me about two weeks to get it working. During the day I find the American Resource Center to be a great place to do email and various kinds of work. The people there have allowed me to study and work there whenever it is open.
- Frank McCarty - I had internet access at my apartment so that is where I prepared things. There is access at the state university, but so many people seek to use so few access points, it doesn't make sense to use it there. The American Resource Center –just across from the U–also is a good spot. You can check out books and materials there and can use their computers–not daily but occasionally.
- Christopher Kelley - I used an Orange USB modem for internet access. Its advantage was that, theoretically, I had internet access everywhere, including in the classroom. Its disadvantage was that it did not invariably work well. At times, the Orange 3G speed was too slow to load gmail, even in HTML. My students who used Orange USB modems complained about the poor performance of their Orange USB modems, too.

Overall, I would rate Orange at 3 on a 1 to 10 scale. If you favor a USB modem, consider Moldcell, the other major mobile phone provider in Moldova. I have not used a Moldcell USB modem, but almost every time I used my Orange USB modem, I was tempted to switch to Moldcell. With either provider, you will save a few dollars, maybe considerably more, if you bring your own USB modem.

You are supposed to have a resident permit to get contract-based internet service with Orange. I was able to sign-up for contract service on my second day in Chisinau with a variation of the Monty Python, “wink, wink; nudge, nudge” approach. I cannot explain it, but the second representative I spoke with let the absence of a resident permit pass after the first representative waved me off because I did not then have my permit. (I received my permit about 30 days after entering Moldova.) Maybe just chatting up a storm and smiling helped. Or maybe the resident permit rule is frequently honored in the breach.

In any case, bring your computer to the main Orange store near the McDonald's on Stefan cel Mare if you want to try Orange internet service. Monthly rates are based on

how much data you want to receive. I paid 200 lei per month (less than \$20.00) and never hit the data limit downloading law review articles and monographs.

If you want to try a Moldcell USB modem, the main Moldcell store is on the other end of Stefan cel Mare relative to Orange's main store, roughly across the street from the UNIC shopping center.

DSL service is available in most areas in Chisinau. And most restaurants have wi-fi. So do some Chisinau parks, but they are impractical places to use wi-fi in the winter.

I brought unlocked mobile phones with me. I used both Orange and Moldcell pre-pay mobile phone service. You can buy a SIM card at any of the countless Orange and Moldcell mobile phone franchise stores. You recharge pre-pay phones by purchasing cards with scratch-off surfaces covering the code or at vending machines designed for this purpose.

Mobile phones are less expensive in the U.S. than they are in Moldova. But you can buy bottom-of-the-line Nokias and Samsungs in Moldova at low cost. These phones have enough plastic in their construction to be melted down into nice ashtrays if you want to put them to this purpose after you are finished with them. They work, however.

As soon as you get a SIM card, take a few minutes to enter the U.S. Embassy contact numbers you will be given or already have. Mobile phones can summon emergency help, so you want the numbers you might need stored on your phone.

On Orange, calls to the U.S. are expensive. My casual impression was that Moldcell international calling was less expensive. Of course, Skype is the least expensive option.

- Bob Czerniak - Internet access is excellent and inexpensive. You can use in house wired connections. You can also use Orange cell phone with wireless connection that work fine.

There is no doubt that using prepaid sim cards is the way to go in Moldova. You can pick a phone for about \$50 that will make and receives call and instant messaging plus have a calculator, calendar, and games. If you buy a phone that is only for Moldova, it cannot be used in another country even if you change out the sim card. Buy a phone that can be used outside the Moldova, then when you arrive, for example in Hungary, buy a sim card there. Switch out the Moldova card (don't throw it away because it still has money on it) and use your phone. When you get back to Moldova, put in the Moldova card. The sim cards cost about \$10 minimum. This worked for us in Turkey (where I made a few calls to the US) and Romania.

X. Transportation

- Rebecca Ruck - Cahul has a great bus and routiera network, so you will really appreciate the transportation options available to you. Buses run from 6am until 9pm at night. I often took the bus to work and it cost me 3 lei per ride. Getting to Chisinau can be a bit of a hassle. You can leave from the center gate or the north gate. If you take a big bus, then it will take you 3-4 hours to get to Chisinau. Routieras are sometimes faster, and I would highly suggest taking an “elicited routiera”. These are private vans that will take you directly to the capital without stopping in Cantemir and Leova. This is the fastest option. You will find these routieras at the central gate in Cahul, and they are only sometimes available. In Chisinau, you can also find these routieras directly across from the South Gate. If you are standing on the side of the South Gate where the busses are lined up, then go across the parking lot and up a set of stairs to a garage area. There will be men shouting “Cahul,” and these will be your elicited routiera drivers.

The transportation website I used most was www.autogara.md

- Rod Garnett - I take trolleibuses and minibuses everywhere in Chi?in?u. There are also good buses to nearby villages like Cricova. The minibuses are faster, but the trolleibuses are often nicer because they have regular stops and even if they are crowded they do not feel quite as claustrophobic as a full minibus.

Bob Czerniak and I enjoyed renting a car for two days to drive to Giurgiule?ti. The driving was pretty easy, but very bumpy on the rough roads. The rental agency was easy and convenient, and while the car was not in perfect shape (lots of scrapes and dents and missing tail lights) they were very helpful and happy when we returned it on time.

- Frank McCarty - Chisinau is very easy to get around in. Frankly, I walked most places—even if it was 20 minutes away. In poor weather, I’d take the bus-streetcar or minivan. The Chisinau internet transportation site—see Bob Czernick’s comments—is excellent to show you routes. However, I also just paid attention regarding the numbers on routes and at places I tended to go and found which ones to use. If you’re going to a person’s house, I recommend a cab. If a place within 10-15 minutes, either walk or find out from the place or via internet what number and type of transportation to use. If you’re giving a talk someplace, ask them—how do I get there from Stefan cel mare? For taxi, you’ll probably need to learn the pronunciation of your street and the apartment complex number and a few words. Find a recommended taxi number or two or three to use to call and always use them. Some have people who can and will speak English, but others will work with you to understand your requests.

When I crossed the border by car to Odessa, Ukraine, and Brasov, Romania, I hired a car and driver. We used the service and found them to be quite good. It is not cheap, but it is safe, you have someone to help you across the border and even in the places you are going and street signs and driving customs in these countries—both in city and rural

areas—is difficult to manage.

- Christopher Kelley - I walked everywhere in Chisinau except to the airport and the south bus station. (The south bus station is for buses going to Romania; the north bus station is for buses going to Ukraine; the central bus station is for bus service within Moldova.) My walking commute to Moldova State's law school took about an hour each way. When the sidewalks were icy, another 10 or 15 minutes were required.

I used taxis to go to the airport and the south bus station.

The airport is small and fairly new. Arrivals and departures are in the same terminal.

The airport is nice, too. It offers free wi-fi, although you are not likely to notice or need this when you arrive.

You must make your own arrangements to get from the airport to wherever you are going. Taking a taxi is the default option.

Taxi fare to and from the city center and the airport varies from 60 to 100 lei, although it might be higher when you arrive. Even if it is twice this much, you are not going to walk from the airport to the city center. And you will likely wait for a long time for a mini-bus or a full-sized bus. Take the taxi. Pay what it costs and forget about it.

You can exchange money at the airport. Several banks have booths near where you will enter the airport after collecting your luggage. The airport has at least one ATM. This ATM is located on the departures side of the airport, which is only a few steps from the arrivals side. If one of the bank booths is open, I recommend changing a \$100 bill there. You will then have over 1,000 lei, which probably will be ten times as much as you will need to take a taxi from the airport to the city center.

Representatives of taxi companies will be standing near the exit to the airport that is closest to where you will enter the terminal after collecting your luggage. Ask one of them for a taxi. They speak enough English to make the arrangements. If you have only a street address for your destination and are uncertain if you can pronounce the street name correctly, write your destination on a piece of paper and show it to whoever needs to know where you want to go, including the taxi driver.

I tipped taxi drivers 20%. I used the same rate for all tips.

I have been told that Moldcell sells SIM cards at a location near the airport baggage carousel; that is, before you enter the main terminal.

All of the airline employees I have dealt with at the airport speak English fluently.

As you collect your baggage, collect your thoughts. If you just flew across the Atlantic, you are going to be tired.

Flying in and out of Chisinau (KIV) is pricy. If you want to save money on flying somewhere while you are living in Moldova, consider taking a bus to Iasi, Bucharest, Odesa, or Kyiv and flying from there. Consider the hassle of doing this, too.

- Bob Czerniak - Here is the best website, I've found for transportation in Chisinau- <http://www.chisinau.md/tabview.php> It includes information for autobuses, trolley buses (electric) and the van taxis (maxitaxis, mashutkas, minibuses) The trolley buses are excellent, but many are old. Chisinau just received 25 new trolley buses (they should have 70 more by summer of 2012) which are fine to ride. The LukOil and Moldasig buses are also excellent. They do become crowded so be patient. If an older person gets on the bus, usually someone will give them the seat so don't hesitate to do this. There is a ticket person on every bus (don't worry she'll find you) who collects the two or three lei fee and will provide you with a ticket. Taxis are easy to find. They cost no more than 40 lei (\$3-4) to go almost anywhere in the city. You can even find them outside grocery stores to give you a ride after shopping. The maxitaxis are everywhere. They are fast and inexpensive (3 lei). They are crowded most of the time. If you can get a seat, take it because it won't last long. These vehicles are built to hold about about twenty people seated and perhaps six standing, but they can have as many as 35 people on them so be aware of whether you are claustrophobic or not and make sure you are in a place where you get off at your stop.

XI. Recreation

- Malina Dumas - Definitely make sure to travel around Moldova! You can arrange tours to all the must-see areas through the Chisinau Hostel which is easy because they speak English and set everything up for you. Go to Soroca, Orhei Vechi, Milesti Micii and/or Cricova (the big wine cellars,) and head south to check out the region of Gagauzia. If you want a contact to introduce you to Gagauzia, I can put you in contact with my friend Aliona who likes to meet foreigners and speaks very good English in addition to Russian.

- Frank McCarty - I'd recommend travelling some in Moldova. You may be able to go with U.S. friends, Moldovan friends or even tourist groups. I did not try things like golf or beach activities that I normally enjoy. I'd ask colleagues at your work or maybe through the expats group. Say—I like to do XX—where and how do I find others who also enjoy. I know some who did swimming and tennis via expat contacts.

- Christopher Kelley - I ran daily and used an indoor rower that I shipped to Chisinau. Chisinau has many fitness centers.

- Bob Czerniak - There are excellent facilities for aerobics, exercise equipment, swimming, and tennis (indoor clay courts) just east of Strada 31 August between

Banelescu Bodoni and Pushkin. There are outdoor courts at the Riscani campus of the Technical University off Studentilor.

XII. Language and Language Learning

- Malina Dumas - I think it's a good idea to pick up some Romanian even if you speak Russian. A lot of Moldovans will really appreciate that. Violeta is an excellent tutor. I took Russian lessons from Andrei Burencov, who is also an excellent person to meet with to learn about the history of the region as his specialty is history. He loves to share his knowledge about anything and everything. He told me I could put other Fulbrighters in contact with him; he would be more than happy to meet you for coffee. His number is 079500005.

- Rebecca Ruck - People in Cahul will speak both Russian and Romanian. There are many English speakers in Cahul, and if you want to find private language lessons, then it will be possible.

- Rod Garnett - I took two Romanian language classes per week at Casa limbii române on Mateevici Str. <http://www.chisinau.md/pageview.php?l=ro&idc=490> My class was taught in Russian. The teacher I had was excellent, and my colleagues in the class of about 18 were very friendly. The class experience was great and I was fortunate that it was near the Academy of Music.

All of my classes at the Academy of Music have been in Romanian as well as my nai lessons. I find that most musicians do not speak English, but are very easy to work with in Romanian. I also have assisted a colleague with translating articles and she has assisted me with translating a paper that I read in Romanian at the Academy of Science. I have hired two translators, one for written Russian and one to assist me with written Romanian and interviews in Romanian.

I still do not feel very proficient in Romanian or Russian language, but have enjoyed studying and learning both very much this year.

- Frank McCarty - I took some Romanian lessons through the university's American Studies Center. Helen has contacts with young Moldovan teachers who will give group or individual lessons. I had studied some other romance languages so going with Romanian made more sense to me than with Russian, but either could work for you. You can do it as much or as little as desired, but I'd recommend at least once a week for 2-3 months.

- Christopher Kelley - Most people under 30 in Chisinau know some English. Rarely was I anywhere where no one spoke English.

I encourage you to consider Malina's suggestion to meet Andrei (Andrew) Burencov for

Russian lessons or conversation or both.

The Moldovan students I knew best asked me about ways to improve their English. I recommended that they listen to the lectures and other presentations on the Fora.tv website. The vocabulary and content on Fora.tv is immensely richer than the same in English-language movies. Every student who later visited Fora.tv thanked me for introducing them to it.

- Bob Czerniak - Without a doubt Violeta from the Limba Romana is one of the best teachers I've ever had. She teaches Russian and Romanian and is willing to teach either one. She does give private lessons that cost \$10/hour. She is just outstanding. Although she does not speak English, it doesn't matter. Her phone number is 079726951 or 060092677

XIII. Teaching

- Melissa McDonald - Students are very welcoming and excited to have an American teacher. Be aware that Moldovan teaching styles include a lot of reading and translating so initially your students may be shy. Academic dishonesty is very common (in all forms possible). Be aware of that and set your expectations early!

- Rebecca Ruck - I had a great experience teaching at the university. Students were excited to meet an American, and I found the experience very rewarding. I found that coming to class with a smiling face and being over friendly went a long way. Students will find you very approachable if you offer to help them outside of class and take the time to help them understand the material. Cheating is very common. It is a part of their culture, and unfortunately, they will continue to cheat after multiple warnings. My best advice would be to take their phones, notebooks, and bags at the beginning of class and keep them in the front of the classroom. I had to be the enforcer in the classroom, as my Moldovan coteachers were weary of disciplining the students. That being said, going on an anti-cheating crusade will not get you very far. You are a guest in their culture and should expect the learning and teaching styles to be different.

I taught English Grammar, American Culture, and British Culture. I would contact the university ahead of time and ask what classes you will be teaching. I brought American magazines, pictures from America, many menus, and other teaching materials in advance. These were great to use in the classroom and my students appreciated authentic material. I also brought a miniprojector, which was a great purchase. Students love multimedia material and very rarely see it in the classroom. I also brought a small portable printer with me. This was perhaps the best purchase I made. Printing is available in Cahul, but there are often long lines. You might also consider bringing a small scanner. I would have loved to have one when teaching!

I also had an English Club, which was very successful. High school students mostly came

to my clubs and it was a rewarding experience. Students are very eager to learn English in Cahul. I attracted students by going to the local high schools, and putting up signs at the university. I teamed up with a Peace Corps volunteer. He taught beginning English speakers while I held a conversation club. I bought Apples to Apples and I would highly suggest bringing this game. It is great for vocabulary practice and students really loved it. I think bringing a game like Cranium or 20 questions would also be a super idea.

- Frank McCarty - The big surprise here has been noted by others. During my first few classes, I thought there were about 22 people in the class. After 3-4 meetings, I gave a quiz that I had let all know about and over 30 showed up. Assignments were often handed in late, but some were of quite good quality. A few were very good students and many others with non-class things on their minds. During the exam, students talked and copied from each other. My Moldovan colleague said something once or twice, but students continued on in their routine.

- Christopher Kelley - I traveled to Chisinau three times before I moved to Chisinau as a Fulbrighter. I taught legal writing in English by DVC to law students at Moldova State University during the 2010 spring semester. I met with those students in May 2010 to give them certificates for completing the course.

I also met with all of the students I taught at Moldova State University's law school a month before I came to Moldova as a Fulbrighter. That meeting was to ask them what they wanted me to teach.

Not that this helped much. I taught too many courses. My teaching suffered as a result. And because I was teaching two courses for the first time, I spent almost all my time teaching and preparing to teach. Do not do this. Say "no" to requests to teach more when you have reached the teaching load you can handle competently.

Consider using PowerPoint, videos, and other computer-based teaching aids. In addition to a lightweight computer, I brought a LG ultra-portable projector to Moldova, a projector I have used in Belarus and Ukraine under circumstances similar to those in Chisinau classrooms. None of the classrooms I used was ideal for projecting. Nonetheless, except on a few occasions when the classroom was flooded with sunlight, the projector worked well enough.

If you use a projector, you will need an extension cord. Extension cords are easy to find; all of the electronics stores have them.

If you plan to show videos, you also will need speakers. Finding speakers loud enough to project sound in a large classroom yet portable enough to carry is challenging. But most computer stores in Chisinau sell a variety of speakers. You will have to decide on what end to make the compromise—volume or portability.

Class attendance was lousy, a phenomenon that I am told is endemic in higher education in Moldova. It is hard not to take this personally, even after you are told not to take it personally.

Because of the possibility that your students will not see you as the Pied Piper and come to every class, consider making each class session a more or less independent unit of the whole course. This way, the students who attend irregularly will get something out of each class and will not be so thoroughly discouraged that they will stop coming to class.

None of my courses was offered for academic credit. Only one was graded, but solely for purposes of a transcript notation. In the graded course, a small fraction of the students earned their grades; the others received a gift.

I also taught at a law firm and at the Institute for Justice. The weekly course at the law firm was fun. I had arranged to do this before I came to Chisinau.

If you really want to have fun, teach with another Fulbrighter. Malina Dumas taught “my” negotiations skills course at the Institute for International Relations.

All of my teaching was in English.

I distributed my assignments by email. If you are going to use email to communicate with your students, try on the front-end to get their email addresses in legible form. Circulating a sign-up sheet in the first class is not a good way to do this unless you can infallibly decipher handwriting. If you do not get the email addresses in legible form, you are going to waste a lot of time with emails that bounce back to you. An alternative is to ask someone, perhaps the student monitor for the class, to send you the addresses in an email.

Consider buying a printer, although you can use the printers at the American Resource Center. Reading from a printed page is easier on the eyes than reading on a computer screen. Plus, easy access to a printer makes it easier to create class notes and “hand-outs.”

I had little contact with professors at Moldova State’s law school. I was introduced to the faculty at the first faculty meeting of the semester. Thereafter, I rarely saw other faculty members because I was in the building only for my classes. I did not have an office.

Also, because faculty pay is very low, faculty members often teach at more than one institution. Consequently, they, too, are in the building only for their classes.

Outside of the classroom, faculty-student interaction is not common. If you teach at a university, your students are likely to appreciate any extra time that you can spend with them. Be aware, however, that students are busy. Many have jobs, and for this and other reasons they have busy schedules. Thus, when your class sessions end, your students are

not likely to linger.

- Bob Czerniak - Teaching Moldovan students was an interesting experience. I worked with Architecture, Planning and Logistics graduate students from two different campus of the Technical University. The first thing you will notice is that the facilities are often in poor shape. The rooms are cold, the equipment is sparse, and the blackboards can be a disaster. The facilities vary from faculty to faculty. The students I worked with came in three groups: 1) students who would do well in US universities (about a third) they attend all classes, do well on exams, turn in work on time, and are curious about the subject matter and willing to discuss it; 2) students who come to class when they can (about half the class), do OK on exams, turn in work when they can (some is very late), and will occasionally participate in class discussions; 3) students who rarely come to class (one sixth), don't do well on exams, and will turn in all work late if at all. The surprising thing about the third group is that they fully expect to pass the class.

Often Moldovan instructors will allow students to retake exams until they pass. I gave exams one time. I had to physically separate some students so they wouldn't copy from each other's exams or talk to each other about exam questions. I found out after my first experience with this that it is not uncommon.

They will also allow each other to use a common set of homework solutions so it is important to put something in the homework that requires individual answers. I would discuss how to handle all this with department chairs ahead of time. Finally, make sure you know the schedule for classes. Moldova has many holidays that can disrupt class schedules. I gave a final exam in the last week of classes which is rare. The final exams can be spread over a whole month so I would discuss the timing of finals with the chair.

My classes were taught in English with simultaneous translation in Romanian. This was a hard way to teach especially if you are used to interaction with students. You need powerpoints that are straightforward and free of jargon. All my powerpoints, exercises, exams were translated into Romanian (they were presented to students as bilingual documents). Exams were written in English or Romanian. I had a translator help me with correcting exams.

I used a video projector that I purchased at the Ippon store in Chisinau on Strada Banelescu Bondoni about five blocks east of Stephan cel Mare near the Economics University. It was about \$500 and worked fine. You will also need an extension cord. A young man there named Nikolai (he speaks a reasonable amount of English) can take care of any computer or electronic needs.

XIV. Research

- Malina Dumas - If you want to arrange a meeting with someone or work with a new contact, go into that person's office and talk to her directly. You can pretty much forget

about accomplishing anything by e-mail. Phone calls can work, but you get miles further when you talk to a person face to face in Moldova. More often than not that person will be more than willing to help you out with your research and provide you with more contacts so it's worth it to make the effort to arrange meetings with as many people as you can, even if that person's specialty isn't exactly related to what you are working on. You never know who they might be able to link you up with. Moldova, and Chisinau especially, is a small place and you will find that many of the people you meet know each other.

In order to conduct research or implement projects in areas outside of Chisinau, it might be helpful to be in contact with Peace Corps Volunteers. They will be more than happy to introduce you to the people in their communities that are more remote and give a better picture of the true state of Moldova. You won't have a problem meeting Peace Corps Volunteers if you ever leave your apartment, but if you want contacts I have them and can help you find out who might be best to help you out with your research. There are European volunteers around too, mostly in Chisinau. I wish I had gotten to know them earlier and collaborated with them more. It's useful to share experiences.

Initially I had wanted to audit courses at one of the universities but it proved very difficult to make that happen. It is very easy, however, to give lectures on any subject whenever you want. You will be asked to give lectures or run discussion groups by at least three different universities or education centers. These opportunities are great for meeting students and adults who can give you insight about Moldovan politics and culture and in return they are eager to hear about the United States as well. I met a lot of great people through these groups so I would recommend accepting these offers to come speak.

- Rod Garnett - My research is in both anthropology and ethnomusicology. I started studying nai with an excellent and very demanding teacher in mid-October and have had as many as five lessons in a week since then. I have also done extensive ethnography including field notes and a series of interviews. The interviews have included using IRB forms from my university, which the Moldovan interviewees find to be very puzzling. People love to talk about their music and have all been genuinely pleased to have someone from another place interested in them and their music making. I have done many interviews on my own in Romanian and English, but find that the results are richer when I have a translator with me. I am working with a translator who helped me with some presentations at the Academy of Music. She is very bright and careful to represent the information accurately.

- Frank McCarty - I didn't do any research except to read more about Moldova and the region.

- Bob Czerniak - If you plan on doing any historical research that relates to government activity, you need a Russian translator because most documents older than 20 years most

likely will be in Russian. It surprising how many government officials speak Russian. I worked with a few officials. All were helpful. Data generally costs money so be prepared. Most recent documents can be obtained in electronic format.

XV. Gifts and Academic and Event Certificates

- Malina Dumas - I wish I had brought more gifts to give to people from the United States. Students like t-shirts with stuff written on them in English. You will see many that make little to no sense. It's worth it to bring some souvenirs from your state and some products that aren't so common in Europe. Maple syrup and specific kinds of peanut butter are popular. You can get "peanut butter" in the grocery store but I think it's Skippy that the Moldovan students who have worked in the US like.

People are probably going to ask you to buy them computers and other electronics to bring back to them or send to them in Moldova because they believe they are much less expensive in the US. Just a heads-up.

- Melissa McDonald - Basic things like keychains or magnets that have words from your city or hometown are helpful to have on hand any time. Throughout the year many Moldovans asked for vitamins, American over-the-counter medicine, and candy. Women really appreciate vitamins. Small candles also make a nice gift.

- Rebecca Ruck - I brought many key chains with me to Moldova. Moldovans love key chains and they are easy to pack. Bringing gifts from your hometown are also popular.

- Christopher Kelley - Students like certificates signifying their completion of a course or other activity for which they will not receive academic credit. I used a PowerPoint template I found on the Microsoft website to create them. I was not fond of the template, however. If you know how to create templates or have MS Publisher or other document design software on your computer, you might do better than relying on a stock template.

As for gifts, I gave away copies of John Steinbeck's *Travels with Charley*. It is about America, at least as it was in 1961. The writing is timeless, however. Unfortunately, I did not bring enough copies.

XVI. Toasts and Alcohol

- Melissa McDonald - Be aware that toasting and drinking is a large part of culture, especially because Moldovans make their own wine. On an average night with a family you may drink a few shots to your health or several if something good happened that day (or you got a new TV). Anytime you are invited to someone's house expect to drink. You will always eat and drink at the same time. If you can give a short toast, you will be respected and appreciated. **DO NOT TRY TO OUTDRINK A MOLDOVAN** and keep an eye on your glass because it will be refilled without your approval.

- Christopher Kelley - Immoderate alcohol consumption is a hazard of meals and other occasions where toasts are offered. Typically, brandy or vodka is the culprit. The proper way to drink to a toast is to consume the brandy or vodka in one swallow.

If you say you do not drink, then do not be seen drinking a few days later. You can say you have had enough. You also can ask for less alcohol in each serving and then say you have had enough when that time comes. Most hosts will understand that you are not used to consuming brandy and vodka in the customary manner. If you choose to get ridiculously drunk, make sure someone trustworthy is there to look after you.

XVII. Books, Monographs, and other Resources about Moldova

- Frank McCarty - There are some good relatively short articles about Moldova and its history on various internet sources. I'd try to bring some Amazon books about Moldova with you or read before coming.
- Christopher Kelley - Amazon.com is as convenient place as any to find and acquire books about Moldova.

Consider bringing with you Andrei Brezianu & Vlad Spânu, *Historical Dictionary of Moldova* (2d ed. 2007), which is available from Amazon. You might find its dictionary format useful for learning more about places, people, and events in Moldova.

Ukraine's Institute of World Policy recently published *Scenarios for the Development of the Transnistria Conflict: Challenges to European Security*. It is the best analysis of the Transnistria conflict that I have found. It is in Ukrainian and English:
http://iwpp.org.ua/img/IWP-Transnistria_FULL.pdf.

More about Transnistria can be found in Nicholas Dima, *Moldova and the Transdnestr Republic* (2001), which also is available at Amazon. Dima's book offers a review and analysis of Moldovan history, though not an unbiased one.

A good overview of socioeconomic matters in Moldova can be found in Giovanni Andrea Cornia, *Poverty, Inequality and Policy Affecting Vulnerable Groups in Moldova*, Innocenti Working Paper No. 2006-05 (UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre 2006)
<http://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/431>

XVIII. Miscellaneous

- Malina Dumas - If you play a musical instrument, bring it. I think learning some of the traditional Moldovan music and getting together to play music with the locals is a fantastic way to interact with the culture and make connections with people. It's not something that would be difficult to arrange.

- Frank McCarty - Try to find a way to visit colleagues in their homes or apartments or ask if they can go with you to a nearby site. It can be difficult to get time with local people because they are busy making a living and being with their families, but they will enjoy being with you a couple of times and you'll enjoy the experience. Similarly, I did a few things with some of the ex-pats in Chisinau. I did not want to spend a great deal of time with the group, but enjoyed a number of their activities. My contact was Rich Roesing at the U.S. Embassy; the web site is chisinauexpats@yahoo.com.

- Christopher Kelley - Consider bringing an e-reader, an iPad, or both. When I agreed to teach a course that I had not planned to teach, the ability to get books using my Kindle account was wonderful. And an iPad is great for reading newspapers. Incidentally, Amazon's Kindle does not provide 3G access to Moldova.

Bring an ample supply of business cards.

If you like to staple paper, tape things, highlight text, and the like, bring a small stapler, tape, highlighters, and any other office supplies you favor. Of course, you can buy these sorts of supplies in Chisinau. But bringing a few supplies with you can be convenient in the short-term.

You will need plug adapters (standard European two-prong) for your computer and other electronic equipment. I favor Walkabout Travel Gear for this sort of stuff:

<http://www.walkabouttravelgear.com/>

Computers, iPods, iPads, mobile phones, and the like are dual voltage. You will not need an electrical current converter for them. If you are bringing an item that works only on 110/120 volts, you will need to bring a converter so that they will operate on 220/240 volts. Portable converters are available from Walkabout Travel Gear and other sources, but even the smallest ones are heavy for their size.

Volunteer for one or more English conversation groups at the Educational Advising Center at 16 Puskin. When you arrive in Moldova, you will learn more about the EAC, the American Resource Center, and other places where you meet and work with students and others.

The books I shipped through the State Department arrived within three or four weeks. I shipped them in extra-sturdy boxes that I purchased on the internet.

Chisinau is a remarkably pleasant place to live. Moldovans are justly known for their hospitality.

XIX. Contributor Email Addresses

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