



ProjectsAbroad

Salutare Moldova

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Volunteers at Old Orhei, in a typical Moldovan old kitchen

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Japca Monastery

The Japca Monastery, situated on the shore of Nistru River at the distance of 10km from Camenca town, is the only monastery from Basarabia which was never closed by the Soviet authorities. This monastery has a rare location due to the beauty of the horizon that gladdens tourists' eyes. The rocks above the monastery, but especially above the old hermitage, the Nistru windings, which can be seen from far away and the gardens that surround it make up the special beauty of the monastery. The Japca locality dates back to the 17th century. According to the majority of the records, the estate and the hermitage are named Japca, some named Jabca or even Sabca. The first mention of the hermitage dates to May 25th, 1693; not being registered in other historical records, this date remains a disputable one. A Zasciuc says the foundation stone of the hermitage was put by hieromonk Iezechiil, who came from Lemberg in the 17th century. According to other records, this monk came from Deleni Monastery of Moldova. He lived in the woods, at the top of the hill, where he had built a little church and some cells in stone dedicated to The Raise of the Saint Cross Festival. According to some sources from the archive, the hermitage existed before 1764. There is a document which refers to a trial in 1796, when abbot Teodosie brought as witness hieromonk Nicodim who lived before him in the hermitage. On the other hand, freeholder's estate Japca isn't that old, because the elder people which owned the lands: Budeci, Malai-Rau and Furdui, had lived during the supervision of Constantin-Voda Mavrocordat (1733-1735; 1741-1743; 1748-1749). It can be concluded from here that, before 1764, the hermitage was not well organised yet. Being accepted by most of historicists, 1770 is the foundation year of the church, the time when the monks left their cells built in stone and settled down the hill, where the actual monastery is standing now. Hieromonk Nicandru, who came to Japca from the Metropolitan Church of Iasi, was Teodosie's successor in the period 1808- 1810. Hieromonk Calist was the lead of the hermitage along the years 1810-1818. In 1818 Japca hermitage got the statute of monastery. During World War I many nuns had taken refuge from the Russian Poland to Lesna Monastery near the hill. Based on the decision of Saint Sinod from Sankt-Petersburg, beginning with April 20th, 1916, Archbishop Atanasie of Basarabia told the nuns from the Lesna Monastery to settle to the Japca one. And, the monks were transferred to the Harjauca Monastery. In 1940 the nuns and sisters had been chased away from the monastery, the authorities from Japca locality with the Soviets permission, confiscated all the fortune of the saint place. Still, in 1941, with the arrival of the Romanian army, the nuns came back to the monastery and got back all the goods. The summer church, built in 1915, has three sanctuaries situated in the east side: centre-Raise of God Festival, right-Changing of the Face, left- Saint Cross. Japca Monastery follows Russian rules and traditions. Here, nobody eats meat and the Psalm book is read. The tourists who visit this monastery are impressed by the conservatism that reigns all the place - there is no electric power, because it is considered to be evil.



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Project Update

By Kolosov Catherine,
Legal Company "INVICTUS"

Valuable experience

On 14 January 2011 was the last working day of Mark Von Geier, a volunteer from the UK, in the "INVICTUS" law firm, www.invictus.md. We are pleased of two-month collaboration with the future lawyer, who, while studying at Leeds University, UK, thanks to the program **Projects Abroad** came to Moldova to share experience in legislative sphere of human activity.

My first acquaintance with Mark has been through the internet, where I was able to determine that Mark is studying to become a lawyer, and it certainly was interesting to share experience in law between the two countries.

In fact, everything went according to another scenario. Mark distinguished himself as an expert in the field of marketing and business development. The lawyer and the marketer - I thought - hmm, interesting combination in one person. I wanted to see Mark in the work field. I was not disappointed. The tasks posed in front of Mark were all performed with precision. In his work Mark offered his ideas, which have been successfully implemented. With his help it has been developed a new service that will allow us to reach a new market of customers. Mark spent much time working on the site. In the end we were satisfied. He has added new sections and changed the front page.

We fully relied on Marks advice for two reasons. Firstly, a new employee, the new solution, a new opinion, the new look. Second, it is important for us to have a Western approach. This was due for the company's interest in entering on the international level, offering services to foreign customers on the territory of the Republic of Moldova, as well as outside it. Thirdly, being a law student and having representation and interest in marketing research, Mark has applied his knowledge into practice.

The Legal Company "INVICTUS" is very grateful to **Projects Abroad** and, personally, Mr. Igor Fonari for giving the opportunity to work with such volunteers, share experiences and acquire new contacts abroad.

This is our second experience in working with volunteers, and each time we learn about a new nation, a new culture, new lifestyle and new style of doing business.



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Volunteer Corner

By Eva Brüderle Learning Russian, Teaching German

Привет Молдова!

Im letzten Semester habe ich an der Uni einen Russischsprachkurs besucht. Einfach aus dem Grund, weil ich noch eine Fremdsprache lernen wollte. Um meine neu erworbenen Kenntnisse nicht wieder zu vergessen, beschloss ich, in den Semesterferien einen weiteren Sprachkurs in einem Land zu machen, in dem Russisch gesprochen wird. Moldawien ist sicherlich nicht das Land, an das man dabei zuerst denkt, weil die offizielle Landessprache Rumänisch ist. Mir gefiel jedoch die Idee, in einer Gastfamilie zu leben und auf diesem Wege ein Land, das man ansonsten wahrscheinlich nie besuchen würde, kennenzulernen.



Als ich nach einem zweistündigen Flug in Chişinău ankam, wurde ich dort von Tatjana von Projects Abroad am Flughafen empfangen und direkt zu meiner Gastfamilie gebracht. Für den nächsten Monat wohne ich im Stadtteil Riscani in einer 3-Zimmer Wohnung, zusammen mit meiner Gastmutter Angela, meiner Gastschwester Anna und dem Kater Cusa. Ich habe dort mein eigenes, wenn auch etwas kleines Zimmer. Das Bad, die Küche und das Wohnzimmer teile ich mir mit meiner Gastfamilie. Ich wurde sofort sehr offen

und freundlich aufgenommen. Selbstverständlich bekam ich auch sofort etwas zu essen. Obwohl die moldawische Küche normalerweise sehr fleischhaltig ist, ist es kein Problem, dass ich Vegetarierin bin. Am Abend verbringe ich viel Zeit mit meiner Gastfamilie. Wir sitzen in der Küche oder im Wohnzimmer, trinken Tee, reden oder schauen (natürlich russisches) Fernsehen. Meine Gastschwester spricht sehr gut Englisch, mit meiner Gastmutter kommuniziere ich in einer interessanten Mischung aus Englisch und Russisch.

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Meinen Russischunterricht habe ich bei Irina, einer erfahrenen Englisch- und Russischlehrerin. Der Unterricht findet in ihrer Wohnung statt. Ich bin die einzige Schülerin und dementsprechend anstrengend ist mein täglicher 3-stündiger Unterricht. Doch ich lerne sehr viel und schon nach einer Woche kann ich kleine Fortschritte erkennen und ich hatte auch schon genug Möglichkeiten, meine neu erworbenen Fähigkeiten in der Praxis zu testen. Zusätzlich erleichtert mir Irina den anstrengenden Unterricht durch die obligatorische Frage: „Вы хотите чай?“ (Willst du Tee?) die von mir immer dankend mit „ДА“ beantwortet wird. Das Deutsch-Unterrichten gehört eigentlich nicht zu meinem Projekt. Ich wollte neben meinem Russischkurs aber ein wenig mehr vom moldawischen Alltag kennenlernen. Igor hatte die Idee mit der Schule, an der Deutsch als Fremdsprache unterrichtet wird. Dort kann ich nun an zwei Tagen in der Woche bei Stunden hospitieren und darf auch selbst Stunden halten. Dies ist für mich besonders interessant, da ich Lehramt studiere.

Ich bin jetzt seit 10 Tagen hier in Moldawien und kann auf alle Fälle sagen, dass es eine Reise wert ist.



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Photos page

Volunteers' Happy Moments



Easter in Moldova

In this year Moldovans will celebrate Easter on 24 April (Orthodox Easter Day) and 25 April (Orthodox Easter Monday). The word "paste" from the Hebrew language - pesah - means passing. In Hebrew the word "paste" signifies the transition from slavery to freedom, for Christians it signifies the passage from death to life. The Easter season is the most significant and sacred time on the Orthodox Church calendar. Orthodox Easter consists of a series of celebrations (movable feasts) commemorating the resurrection of the Lord, Jesus Christ. In Moldova the spiritual preparations begin with Great Lent, a 40-day period of self-examination and fasting (including Sundays), which starts on Clean Monday and culminates on Lazarus Saturday. Clean Monday falls seven weeks before Easter Sunday. The term "Clean Monday" refers to a cleansing from sinful attitudes through the Lenten fast. The most religious Orthodox will keep the clean period throughout the 40 days, others will keep it for only one week. Usually, Orthodox don't eat meats, dairy or fish in the period of Great Lent; their food should be vegetarian. In the day of communion the Orthodox go to ask forgiveness from those they have wronged.



The Orthodox Christians attend liturgies during the Holy Week that leads up to Easter Sunday. People begin to gather in the churches and squares in cities, towns and villages by 11 p.m. for the Easter services. Large white candles are carried by just about all of the faithful. At midnight the church bells toll as the priests announce "Christos a inviat"! (Christ is Risen!). The crowds answer is "Cu adevarat a inviat" (Truly he is risen). Other Christians gather earlier in the morning around the churches where the priest bless the food baskets. The baskets are usually filled with bread, cheese, meat, eggs, butter, salt, and other types of food used for Paschal celebrations. The people leave the churches and crowded squares and make their ways to the homes of friends and relatives. The candles they carry are placed in each home and burn through the night to symbolise the Light returned to the world. Celebrations continue with the cracking of eggs and The Resurrection Table. Each person takes an egg and challengers attempt to crack each others' eggs. The breaking of the eggs is meant to symbolise Christ breaking from the Tomb. The person whose egg lasts the longest is assured good luck for the rest of the year.

The fasting period has ended and meat and dairy products can be eaten. The Easter egg is hard-boiled and dyed red to symbolise the blood of Christ. It was an important symbol connected with spring fertility rituals in many early civilisations.

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Moldovan Orthodox Christian communities still practice the tradition of laying Easter eggs and Easter bread on dead relatives' graves. "Pastele Blajinilor" or Parent's Day (The day of the Death) is celebrated one week after Easter, in the next Sunday in some villages, in others villages on Monday. This practice is a way of greeting the dead with news that Jesus Christ has risen.

In this day religious (church) services, festive family meals, Easter egg hunts and gift-giving takes place. They put the food on the graves and wait until the priest come to bless the food from the relatives graves, after the blessing the gift-giving takes place which usually consists of food, sweets, Easter breads, eggs and candles.



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Good and Tasty

"Pasca" or Easter cake

The ingredients are:

Sweet bread dough

- 2 cups flour
- 3 eggs
- 6 tbs. sugar
- 1 tbs. butter
- 1 tbs. oil
- 1 cup milk
- 25g yeast
- 1 tsp. Salt
- 1 tbs. rum
- vanilla extract
- 1/2 lemon -scraped skin

Filling

- 500g quark cheese
- 3-4 eggs
- 5 tbs. sugar
- vanilla extract
- ½ cup raisins
- 1/2 lemon-scraped skin



Cooking Instructions:

Follow the [sweet bread recipe](#) to prepare or to work with dough.

Make a finger - thick sheet from 2/3 of dough and put it into a round baking tray.

Knit the rest of dough and place it over the initial sheet, on the side of the tray. This is the rope of life in Romanian folk tradition. Let it rise for an hour.

Mix all the filling ingredients into a paste.

When the dough has risen enough place the filling in the middle. Brush it with an egg and place it quickly in the oven.

Let it bake for 45-55 minutes. Turn off the heat and let it cold slowly. Just open the oven's door a little bit.

Easter cake can have a cross from knitted dough over the filling. It's called cross "pasca" and is taken to the church on Easter to be sanctified.

Bone Appetite!

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Social Media

We invite all of you to join our Facebook Group: **Projects Abroad Moldova-The Official Group**

You will find here useful information, photos, and news about the projects, and information about Chişinău's events.

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=71172725834> .

A monthly update with Projects Abroad Moldova Newsletters: <http://www.projects-abroad.co.uk/volunteer-destinations/moldova/newsletters-from-moldova/>

and information about Projects Abroad Country Blog:

http://www.mytripblog.org/mod/blog/group_blogs.php?gl=true&group_guid=2943



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Thank you all for your collaboration! Thank you for being with us!

If you have anything you'd like to contribute, suggest, or comment on, please contact moldova@projects-abroad.org