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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY **Rumania**
SUBJECT **Recent Prices of Food and Clothing in Bucharest**

REPORT

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1. "Because of the difficult living conditions there, I left Rumania at the beginning of September 1953. At that time the following prices were valid for the various food commodities and other items listed below:

<u>Item</u>	<u>Price in Lei</u>
Dairy Products	
"Bread, wit. coupons, black, poor quality and manufacture, underbaked, price per kilo	1.40
<p><i>Note:</i> Bread is issued thru the so-called 'CENTRE DE PAIN' (Bread Center). It is issued either for coupons or for free. With coupons on 'A' ration card (for heavy workers) in the quantity of 350 grams per person per day, on 'B' ration cards (for office workers), 300 grams per day per person; on D1 ration card (wife) 250 grams per day; and on D2 ration card (for children) 250 grams per child. Bread centers are opened all days of the week from 5:30 AM to 12:30 PM and 3:00 PM to 7:00 PM, except Sundays and Holidays from 8:00 AM to 12:00 noon. People line up for bread even nowadays despite the fact that the situation has greatly improved because of the Youth Festival. Lining up for bread is caused by a bad distribution of bread to the bread centers.</p>	
"Bread, black, same type and quality as that distributed with coupons, but free, price per kilo	2.00

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<u>Item</u>	<u>Price in Lei</u>
"Bread, white, good quality, price per kilo	4.36
"'Chifle' (small round-type bread - approximately 50 gr) each <u>Note:</u> Sellers at the bread centers, provided they know someone well, sell bread in greater quantities (even the bread issued freely without coupons cannot be purchased in great quantities; in addition many times bread arrived at the bread centers with great delays) but at increased prices: Lei 3.00 per kilo	0.33
"Milk, watered, poor quality, skimmed, with coupons (issued only to either children or heavy workers (miners, etc), price per liter.1.10	1.10
"Milk, of excellent quality, brought at home by farmers, price per liter. <u>Note:</u> Milk is issued thru the Milk Centers, and owners of coupons have a special identification card issued by a Cooperative to which they belong. No prohibition exists for farmers - provided they have completed their quota and delivered it - on selling their products. However, it is pointed out that this applies <u>only</u> to farmers, as citizens of Bucharest are <u>not</u> allowed to do this business. Since milk is distributed on ration coupons to typographical workers $\sqrt{77}$ these workers sell their milk at the price of 2.00 per liter. This practice is especially prevalent during a milk shortage period.	2.50-3.50
"Eggs, in quantity of ten. <u>Note:</u> Eggs are distributed <u>only</u> without coupons thru the State Alimentary Stores. There is quite a bit of lining up for both milk and eggs; the latter being very scarce. Eggs can therefore be purchased more easily from farmers, either at the 'Halele Obor' (Obor market) or directly at home at the following price:	6.50
"Egg, good quality, fresh, prices depending on sizes, per egg	1.00-1.60
"Milk cream, known in Rumanian as 'Smantana,' a food item which cannot be found in any State Food Stores, but may be purchased only through farmers, either directly at home - provided one is a good client - or at the Obor market; nowadays, farmers are even selling their products on the streets of Bucharest (typical in the city; prohibited until this spring by Communist authorities) by loudly shouting and emphasizing the products on sale. Price per kilo, depending on quality	10.00-15.00
"'Branza de Vaca' (commonly known as cow-cheese or 'Telemea'), a food item not obtainable through coupons, but only on the free market either in State Food Stores or from farmers. Price per kilo, in State Food Stores	9.50-11.50
"'Branza de Vaca', of a much better quality, fresh, from farmers in the markets or bought at home <u>Note:</u> Food items should be understood as on the free market if it is not mentioned that they are on sale with coupons.	10.00-13.00
"Butter, with coupons, at State Food Stores, available in two grades: 1st quality	27.00
2nd quality	21.00
"Melted butter, for coupons, per kilo	24.00

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Item	Price in Lei
"Butter, of excellent quality, fresh, on sale in small packages from farmers; 250 grams for lei 6.00, price per kilo <u>Note:</u> This is the only butter, fresh butter supplied by farmers, which can be used for breakfast, since all butter in State Food Stores is no good.	24.00
"Pork fat, price per kilo (on sale and obtainable only from farmers), price per kilo. <u>Note:</u> Despite the fact that melted pork fat is supposed to be distributed on coupons, this food item cannot be found in any State Stores at Bucharest. In exchange, State Food Stores, distribute ' <u>Slanina de Porc</u> ' (Pork bacon) at the price mentioned below:	40.00
" <u>Slanina de Porc</u> ', price per kilo with coupons	14.00
"Meat: 1st quality, for ' <u>Fripturi</u> ' (beefsteak) 2nd quality, more bones than meat 3rd quality, only skin and bones	9.85 7.45 5.50
<u>Note:</u> Meat is on sale throughout the State Butcher Stores which get the meat from State Enterprise called COMCAR (Commerce of meat). Meat is distributed <u>only</u> for coupons in State Butcher's Stores, but this holds true only for the meat on sale with coupons: cow meat. There exists, however, a free distribution (without coupons) of ' <u>Berbec</u> ' meat (goat) throughout State Butcher Stores (see price below). The procedure for sale of meat is as follows: lining up for the delivery of coupon (any member of the family can collect the meat ration); delivery of coupons to cashier for the needed quality and quantity of meat; issuance of another pencil-written note indicating quality and quantity of meat. Said note is handed to the seller, who cuts meat, weighs it and then wraps it in a small piece of paper (shortage of paper and paper bags in State Stores is less acute nowadays). However, purchaser cannot check quantity and quality, but must rely on the seller who cuts the meat. Quantity of meat issued with coupons on ration cards is as follows: 350 grams per week per person with 'A' ration cards, 300 grams per week per person with 'B' ration cards, 250 grams per week per person with D1 and D2 ration cards.	
"' <u>Berbec</u> ' meat, price per kilo	5.95
"Calf meat, good quality, without coupons, only from farmers, price per kilo	14.00-16.00
"Salami, price per kilo (without coupons)	27.00-28.00
" <u>Krakauer</u> type of salami, price per kilo	14.85
" <u>Parizer</u> (Mortadella), price per kilo	11.35
" <u>Carf</u> type of ham, of poor quality, almost inedible (all blood taken out), price per kilo	7.00
" <u>Toba</u> type of salami, price per kilo	14.85
"White corn flour, with coupons (750 grams per person per month), price per kilo	3.25
" <u>Polenta Mamaliga</u> flour commonly called <u>Malai</u> , price per kilo <u>Note:</u> Polenta flour cannot be obtained in State Food Stores but only from farmers at the Ober market.	7.00-9.00

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<u>Item</u>	<u>Price in Lei</u>
"Sunflower seed oil, with coupons (from 500-750 grams per month per person, depending on type of food ration card), price per lt.	4.75
"Sunflower seed oil, without coupons, directly from farmers at the Obor market, price per lt. Note: No edible olive-oil existed in Rumania. On 23 Aug 53, a special distribution of sunflower seed oil took place, in addition to the normal ration obtainable through coupons. Distribution was in the quantity of 750 grams per person, at lei 4.75 per lt.	25.00-28.00
" <u>Branza de Burduf</u> ', type of cheese, per kilo Note: The famous Rumanian Braila cheese does not exist on the Bucharest market and in State Stores.	9.50
"Halva, Turkish-type of sweet, per kilo Distribution of this item takes place throughout State Food Stores every two or three weeks.	6.80
" <u>Rahat</u> ', Turkish-type of sweet, per kilo	11.20
"Plum Jam, on sale in 2 qualities: 1st quality, per kilo 2nd quality, per kilo	6.85 5.25
"Note: Pure coffee is not on sale in State Stores, there is some on the black market, but I do not know the prices. This kind of black marketeering was so dangerous that I preferred not to mix with it at all.	
"Sugar, with coupons, (500 grams per person monthly) price per kilo	9.00
"Sugar, black market prices, per kilo	25.00-30.00
"Ersatz coffee, price for a 250-300-gram package	2.00
"Salt, per kilo	3.00
"Vanilla, price per small bag	5.00
"Vanilla, price for one <u>Baton</u> (pure vanilla)	6.00
"Note: Pepper is not obtainable either through State Stores or on the black market	
<u>"Vegetables & Fruits</u>	
"Note: No coupons are necessary for vegetables and fruits. Items are sold in all Bucharest markets and the following prices hold true, particularly for the Obor market, where I used to shop.	
"Tomatoes, per kilo (depending on quality)	1.80-3.00
"Potatoes, per kilo	2.00-3.00
"Carrots, per kilo	4.50-6.00
"Onions, per kilo	2.50-3.50
"Garlic, per <u>Fune</u> (special confections)	6.00-8.00
"Peppers, per pepper per ten peppers	0.10 1.00

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<u>Item</u>	<u>Price in Lei</u>
"Hot peppers (small sizes), for one handful"	0.50
"Cucumbers, per kilo	3.00
"Salad, per bundle of either four, five or six heads	1.00
"Celery, per kilo	4.00-5.00
"Grapes, per kilo	3.50-8.00
"Pears, per kilo	4.00-5.50
"Apples, per kilo The most expensive type of apple was the <u>Ionstane</u> apple.	4.00-12.00
"Peaches, per kilo	6.00-8.00
"Plums, per kilo	2.00-3.50
"Apricots, per kilo	4.00-8.00
"Strawberries, per kilo	3.50-12.00

Note: Apricots and strawberries were still on sale during the early days of August 1953. There was a great shortage of fruit and vegetables at Bucharest, at least until a few days prior to the opening of the Youth Festival, when by a so-called 'Communist miracle' the scarcest-type of items appeared throughout the market. This holds true particularly for tomatoes and potatoes which could not be found until the last days of July 1953. During the Festival, the Communist authorities obviously wanted to make a parade of the abundance of food items at Bucharest for the delegates of the Youth Festival. The abundance was so great, that even a song appeared during those days entitled 'Don't Go Away, Stay for Another While', because it was known by the people, that after the departure of the last delegation (some delegates were still at Bucharest) the shortage of food items would again become great and strongly felt.

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"Olives, price per kilo in State Food Stores	25.00
"Lemons, on sale only in State Food Stores, price per lemon, depending on size, from	3.50-4.50
Note: Lemons were hardly obtainable until the Youth Festival of August 1953. On that occasion an abundance of lemons, and generally all food commodities, existed in all State Food Stores.	
"Mad apples, price per kilo	4.00-5.00
"Fish	
" <u>Scrumbie Afumicata</u> , smoked type of fish, per kilo	32.00
" <u>Chefal</u> -type of fish, per kilo	18.00
" <u>Crap</u> -type of fish, per kilo	6.80
" <u>Stiuca</u> -type of fish, per kilo	5.00
" <u>Albisoara</u> -type of fish, per kilo	5.50
" <u>Somn</u> -type of fish, per kilo	5.00

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<u>Item</u>	<u>Prices in Lei</u>	<u>Prices in Lei</u>
	<u>Per Liter in State Food Stores</u>	<u>In Restaurants Same Type of Wine</u>
<u>"Wines</u>		
"White wine	5.46	6.44
"Dealul Mare either black or white	6.51	8.17
"Odobesti, black	8.41	11.30
"Odobesti, white	10.50	14.00
"Feteasca or Riesling, white	12.85	18.00
"Nicoaresti, white	15.35	21.00
"Spumos, white in 3/4 liter bottles, per bottle	13.00	18.00
"Black vermouth, local product	15.00	22.00
"White vermouth, local product	18.85	24.00
"Sampanie, sparkling wine	30.00	45.00
"Beer, per 1 lt bottle	2.00	2.00
"One Halba (1/2 liter)	1.50	1.50
"One Tap (1/4 liter)	1.00	1.00
<u>"Brandy and Liqueurs</u>		
"Tuica Batrana-type of brandy	19.00	21.00
"Tuica-type of brandy	14.00	18.00
"Rum	20.00	25.00
"Secarica-type of brandy	12.50	16.50
"Arason-type of brandy	12.50	16.50
"Vodca made in RPR	16.00	20.00
<u>/Vodka made in People's Republic of Rumania?/</u>		
"Rachiu de Portocale (orange brandy)	12.50	16.50
"Rachiu de Menta (mint brandy)	12.50	16.50
"Tescovina type of brandy	18.50	24.00
"Drojdie-type of brandy	21.00	26.50
"Mandarin liqueur		
"Nut liqueur		
"Peach liqueur		
"Orange liqueur		
All type of liqueurs are on sale respectively for 1/4, 1/2 and one liter as follows:		
for 1/4 of a liter	8.00	10.00
for 1/2 a liter	13.00	18.00
for one liter	24.00	30.00

Note: The price for the deposit for one bottle ranges from one to three lei depending on size. Prices of wine in restaurants, especially for the first two or three grades of wine, hold true for third category restaurants also. The others for first and second category restaurants /sic - possible meaning: Prices for other grades of wine apply only to first and second category restaurants./ In any restaurant, wines are usually sold by the baterie system (which consists of selling one liter of wine, one liter of soda water and ice). Prices are somewhat higher than those mentioned above if the restaurant has an orchestra. Soda water prices are /amount not specified/: 1.10 lei (if taken home from Food Stores) and 1.50 lei in restaurants. Normally a laterie of wine (of middle type and quality) in a restaurant with an orchestra is priced between 38.00-45.00-50.00 lei

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<u>Item</u>	<u>Price in Lei</u>
<u>"Clothing and Shoes</u>	
"Man's shoes, half leather, crudely finished, for coupons, per pair	79.87
"Man's leather shoes with leather soles (for winter season, called <u>Bocanci</u>), with coupons, per pair	134.00
"Man's galoshes, rubber, only on sale without coupons, per pair depending on quality	79.00-120.00
"Man's rubber <u>Sosoni</u> - similar type of galoshes, per pair - only without coupons	136.00
"Man's leather shoes with leather soles, without coupons, price per pair	180.00
"Ready-made man's suit, with coupons (80 coupons necessary for a suit)	280.00-400.00
<u>Note: I would not have worn the suit priced at 280.00 Lei, even if I had it free of charge as a gift. The quality was frightful.</u>	
"Material for a man's suit, price per meter, without coupons	140.00-180.00- 220.00-225.00- 260.00-288.00- 350.00
"Tailoring of a man's suit by a private tailor, trimmings included for suit: buttons and lining	400.00
"Cotton material for shirts, with coupons, per meter	12.50
"Cotton material for shirts, without coupons, per meter	14.80-16.50
"Ready-made shirt of cotton material; no coupons necessary per shirt	47.00-65.00- 78.00
"Ready-made shirt of silk material, without coupons, per shirt	148.00-200.00
"Man's handkerchief of cotton material; with coupons, per handkerchief (2 ration points for one handkerchief)	2.00
"Same type of handkerchief, free, each	5.00-6.00
"Man's socks made of cotton (with coupons - 2 ration points per pair), per pair	4.00
"Same type of socks, but without coupons, maximum price per pair. (Best type can be obtained only on free market.)	4.80-6.25- 8.00
"Man's wool underwear, each (price depending on sizes).	8.00-14.00
"Nylon stockings, probably local product, without coupons, on sale in State Stores, per pair	87.00
"Nylon stockings, black market prices, per pair, depending on quality (US)	160.00-150.00- 185.00-200.00
"Cotton necktie, only without coupons, per tie (Prices depend on quality.)	14.00-16.00- 25.00

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<u>Item</u>	<u>Price in Lei</u>
"Silk necktie, each	30.00-36.00
"Hat, each (local product)	85.00-95.00-125.00
"Winter coat (for men), with coupons	480.00
"Winter coat (for men), without coupons, (Prices depend on quality of material)	680.00-850.00
"Raincoat (for men) of <u>doe</u> material, each (on free market only)	350.00-380.00
"Raincoat (for men), only on free market, of a much better quality and finish (has some rubber inside), each	450.00
"Man's cap (normally blue, called in Rumanian <u>Basca</u>), each	8.00-15.00
"Man's lined cap (also <u>Basca</u>), each	18.00-21.00
"Festival-type of material for petticoats, in various colors and having various kinds of design representing the nations which participated in the Youth Festival), free, price per meter	16.50
<p>Note: This kind of material was manufactured specifically for the Festival, and its price was extremely low compared to good quality material. It was made especially so that participants in the Festival could see inhabitants of Bucharest lining up to buy materials throughout State Stores. The reason is obvious: When such a participant would return to his own country he would tell other people that in a 'democratic' country like Rumania, there was an abundance of goods.</p>	
"Man's leather shoes with rubber soles, special type called Festival, per pair (without coupons)	209.00
" <u>Doxa</u> -type of man's wrist watch, each	1,100.00
"The same type of wristwatch, but for a special price to the participants of the Festival (upon special identification by means of a card issued to each Festival participant by the Presidium of Bucharest), each	550.00
" <u>Mifa</u> -type of bicycle, Hungarian product, on sale only to <u>Stakhanovites</u> , each	795.00
"Inside tubes for bicycles, each	14.00
"Rubber tires for bicycles, each	34.00
" <u>Java</u> -type of motorbicycle, of CSR make, 350 cm ³ , each	5,900.00
" <u>Pioner</u> -type of radio set, local product, 3 + 2 tubes, 2 wave lengths (medium and long)	450.00
"Popular-type of radio receiver, local product, 4 + 1 tubes, 3 wave lengths (long, medium and short)	680.00
"Tubes for Pioner-type of radio set	32.00-40.00
"Tubes for Popular-type of radio set	45.00-60.00
<p>Note: Radio sets and all spare parts are on sale at the Ferometal State Stores.</p>	

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Item

Price in Lei

- "Live chicken, each
- "Live chicken, big sizes, each
- "Live turkeys, each
- "Live duck, each
- "Live goose, each

- 12.00-15.00
- 20.00-25.00
- 60.00-80.00
- 30.00-35.00
- 45.00-60.00"

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