

# Vacation with Vampires in Transylvania

As everybody can imagine Transylvania is all about stunning scenery and terrific places. Everyone knows and fears Dracula; still everyone wants to travel to Transylvania. Start packing without any worries.



Add turtlenecks, garlic and scarves to the top of the packing list, muster some courage, and summon your sense of adventure. The ultimate adventure awaits in a distant land where a 15th-century ruler terrified all who dared to challenge his ways.

Transylvanian lovers, culture and history fans, adventure seekers can explore Transylvania solo or seek courage in numbers on one of the increasingly popular Dracula tours. The commercial tours find their own ways to inflict a bigger bite of vampire pop culture for victims—er, visitors. Outfitters may throw vampire balls, host Halloween costume contests, show classic Dracula films on board the bus or hand out small cross necklaces and survivor certificates to their brave travelers.



## A Vampire's Lineage

The vampires caricatured for silent films, best-selling novels, cereal boxes and even “Sesame Street” all descended from Vlad III Draculea, a Romanian prince who reigned in the 15th century. The prince earned the nickname “Vlad the Impaler” for the merciless ruler’s gruesome method of doing away with enemies. His given surname, Anglicized as “Dracula,” is derived from the word meaning either “dragon” or “demon” in his native tongue.

Irish writer Bram Stoker drew inspiration from Vlad the Impaler for his novel “Dracula,” published in 1897. The book’s antagonist, a vicious Romanian count with a thirst for young blood, rises from his coffin bed and masochistically preys upon British newlyweds Jonathan Harker and Mira Murray. Decades later,

the iconic vampire gave actors, including Bela Lugosi, Brad Pitt, Tom Cruise and Gary Oldman film roles they could really sink their teeth into.

### **Retracing Dracula's Tracks**

If they dare, travelers on the Dracula trail can follow the vampire prince from birth to burial. Vlad Dracula entered this world in the Transylvania town of Sighisoara, noted for one of the region's few walled fortresses. The house of Dracula's birth, marked with a modest plaque on the door, now multitasks as a restaurant serving Romanian cuisine and a small museum of medieval weapons used during Vlad's rule. Although Castle Bran is strongly associated with Vlad Dracula, the foreboding edifice actually has the weakest historical ties to the Impaler. Perched at the apex of a narrow, climbing road near the city of Brasov, the massive stone building clearly inspired the cinematographers and animators who worked on just about every "Dracula" film project.



### **The Real Dracula**

What remains of Vlad Dracula's real abode can be found about 50 miles northwest of Bucharest near the town of Tirgoviste. The fortress ruins are almost inaccessible, requiring a climb of 1,500 steps up a mountain that overlooks a river basin. The castle served Dracula as a refuge from advancing enemies as well as a place to watch their demise. Among the palace ruins, visitors can make out the overlook tower from which Vlad viewed impalements that took place in the courtyard.

Vlad the Impaler's own finale happened by assassination, after which his remains are said to have been entombed in the Snagov monastery just north of Bucharest. The 16th-century monastery, accessible only by boat, is situated on an island in the middle of a lake. Romanians still revere the ruler who defended their nation against the Turks, and continue to honor Dracula with a portrait and vases of fresh flowers near his resting place.



<http://www.visit-transylvania.eu>

<http://www.visit-transylvania.co.uk>

<http://www.dracula-tour.com>

Date: 2010-10-25

Article link:

<https://www.tourism-review.com/travel-tourism-magazine-dracula-tour-vacation-full-of-adventure-article1345>