

“ Halloween in Transylvania”

Vampire Vacation, Romania

Oct 29 - Nov 5, 2025

Price at end of the itinerary

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*Prepare your costumes for our new **AFS Monster Ball** at Count Dracula's castle for your spookiest Halloween ever! Our festivities begin with a toast of vampire wine, then on to the Torture Museum, a Middle Ages Witch Trial, and a night walk through a 15th-century graveyard. So many surprises await you to make this unforgettable. So creepy and authentic, even Vlad, the Impaler, would cringe on our new vampire vacation in a land bedtime forgot.*

Don't care to party? Our AFS culture vultures will love our daily walking tours on cobbled streets through medieval towns, the UNESCO World Heritage sites, and the architectural wonders of ornate churches and monasteries along the way. It's totally educational. Legends will unfold before your eyes as we tour the Saxon town of Brasov, medieval Sighisoara, Bucharest 14th-century Sibiu, Prahova Valley and gypsy villages in between.

Romania gives a fascinating insight into unique cultures, centuries old, as well as natural

beauty from the Carpathian Mountains to the Black Sea. The hills of Transylvania pop with living colors in fall. Each day, you'll learn of tales and myths. Our highlights: Tours of legendary Bran Castle dating back to 1377. Enjoy horse and carriage ride through countryside, daily walking tours, visit to the stunning Peles Castle, the Snagov Monastery and so much more.

Our past groups went all out on their costumes and ended up on Romania television. This year, seems everyone wants to celebrate here and it's bigger than ever, so we bought your tickets a year in advance. (I believe our GTL's will be contending to lead this. We already hear some of you want to extend on to Bulgaria.) Don't miss the most memorable party and Vampire Vacation to make this your best Halloween ever. It's wild, it's spooky and together we'll have a bloody good time!





Meet **Count Dracula**, the centuries-old vampire and proud Transylvanian nobleman. This descendant of the fierce Scythians and Attila the Hun resides in the hauntingly beautiful ruins of a castle nestled deep within the Carpathian Mountains. A conversation with Jonathan Harker offers a glimpse into Dracula's soul, revealing a deep-seated pride in his noble heritage and a longing for the past. Dracula's thirst for knowledge led him to the prestigious Scholomance Academy, a school of Black Magic located in the Carpathian Mountains near the city of Sibiu (also known as Hermannstadt). Here, he honed his dark craft, becoming the powerful vampire we know today.

The legend of Dracula, the iconic creature of the night, draws its roots from the dark history of Vlad Țepeș, the merciless 15th-century ruler of Wallachia. Bram Stoker's 1897 novel "Dracula" forever cemented the character of the bloodthirsty Count in our collective imagination. But few know that the name Dracula wasn't always associated with terror - it originated from the Order of the Dragon, a crusader order that Vlad and his father were part of. The chilling myths surrounding Dracula as a vampire stem from the haunting folklore of Transylvania, a land steeped in tales of the undead. Dracula's story intertwines with that of Vlad Țepeș, the infamous ruler of the Wallachians. Vlad, also known as **Vlad the Impaler** waged war against the German merchants of Brașov, who refused to pay him the dues owed from their trade. Bran Castle, situated near Brașov and along the path to Wallachia, played a pivotal role in these campaigns. As the closest pass to Brașov, it connected Vlad's seat of power in Târgoviște to the lands beyond. Though a work of fiction, Bram Stoker's Dracula draws inspiration from the rich history and folklore of the Carpathian region. The character of Count Dracula, with his noble pride and thirst for power, is a fitting tribute to the complex and often brutal figures of the past, like Vlad Țepeș.



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Our Glorious Goriest Itinerary



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Oct 29 – Fly USA to Bucharest

Many airlines fly here via Europe. Consider adding to stop over enroute on own if you like. More details to come in trip tips.



Oct 30 – Welcome to Romania!

Your adventure begins as you arrive at Henri Coanda Airport. Transfer to hotel.



Bucharest, known for its wide, tree-lined boulevards, glorious Belle Époque buildings and a reputation for the high life (which in the early 1900s earned its nickname of "Little Paris"), Bucharest, Romania's largest city and capital, is today a bustling metropolis. Legend has it that the city of Bucharest was founded by a shepherd named Bucur, whose name literally means "joy." His flute playing reportedly

dazzled the people and his hearty wine from nearby vineyards endeared him to the local traders, who gave his name to the place. There's plenty to do and see here from handicraft markets to cool museums.

This evening, we enjoy a spooky Welcome Dinner featuring a Dracula-themed experience, where you'll dine in a setting inspired by the legendary vampire tales and toast vampire wine with your fellow travelers.

Romanian cuisine is a delicious blend of hearty meat dishes, fresh vegetables, and fragrant spices, reflecting the country's rich cultural heritage. Traditional dishes like sarmale (stuffed cabbage rolls), mămăligă (polenta), and ciorbă (soup) are flavorful and satisfying. With its emphasis on locally sourced ingredients and time-honored cooking techniques, Romanian food is a culinary delight that showcases the best of the country's gastronomic traditions.



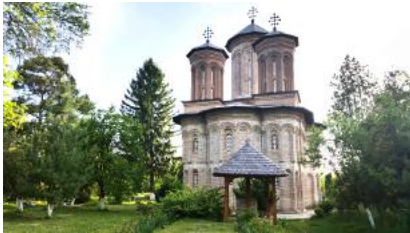
meals included: welcome Dinner

Overnight: Ramada Plaza by Wyndham 4* or similar



Oct 31 – Bucharest, Sinaia, Brasov - Castle & Monistary

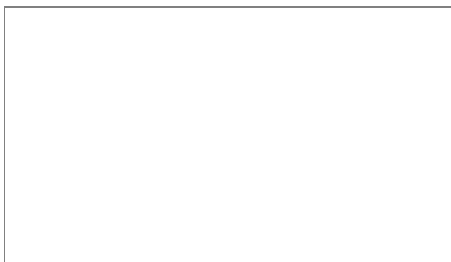
About Transylvania: It's a region in central Romania, is known for its well-preserved medieval towns, fortified churches, and picturesque villages. The scenic beauty of the Carpathian Mountains, rolling hills, and lush forests makes it a nature lover's paradise. Visitors are drawn to Bran Castle, often called Dracula's Castle due to its association with the legend of Vlad the Impaler, the historical figure who inspired Bram Stoker's vampire. The rich cultural heritage, including traditional folk architecture, handicrafts, and lively festivals, offers a glimpse into a bygone era. Exploring Transylvania is like stepping back in time, with its unique blend of natural splendor and historical charm.



Begin your day with a hearty breakfast before embarking on a fascinating excursion. Travel to **Snagov Monastery**, situated on a serene island in Snagov Lake. This historic site is reputed to be the final resting place of Vlad Ţepeş, the inspiration for Dracula. Explore the monastery and its tranquil surroundings. You'll appreciate the beautiful frescoes and icons that remain

today in this place of worship.

Next, drive through the **Prahova Valley** to Sinaia, the "pearl of the Carpathians", famous for skiing and adventure sports. We visit stunning **Peles Castle**, the opulent summer residence of Queen Mary, nestled in the Carpathian Mountains. Its fairytale-like architecture and lavish interiors are sure to captivate you. This Neo-renaissance castle was built in 1873. It is fully furnished with priceless art, exquisite furniture, 800 stained glass windows and 170 rooms, each depicting a European country.



Continue your journey to Brasov around 3 hours. Brasov is one of the most beautiful and visited places in Romania. It was founded in 1211 by the Teutonic Knights on an ancient Dacian site. In the 13th century, Brasov was settled by the Saxons and shortly became one of Transylvania's seven-walled citadels, Siebenburgen. Check into our hotel in time for a group dinner.



Brasov, a charming city in the heart of Transylvania, Romania, is a treasure trove of medieval architecture, rich history, and natural beauty. The city's historic center, with its colorful buildings, picturesque streets, and lively squares, is a joy to explore on foot. The iconic





Black Church, a stunning example of Gothic architecture, dominates the main square, while the nearby Rope Street is one of the narrowest in Eastern Europe. Visitors can enjoy breathtaking views of the city and the surrounding mountains from the top of Mount Tampa, accessible by a scenic cable car ride. From its well-preserved medieval fortifications to its lively cultural scene, Brasov offers a perfect blend of history, culture, and outdoor adventure.

Breakfast and Dinner

Overnight: Aro Palace 5* or similar



Nov 1 – Brasov - Count Dracula Party at Bran Castle!

After breakfast, enjoy a guided walking tour of Brasov. Discover the historical charm of the City Council Square, the Black Church (the largest Gothic church in Southeastern Europe), and the medieval Ecaterina's Gate. Stroll along Strada Sforii, one of the narrowest streets in Europe.

Bran Castle, commonly known as *Dracula's Castle*, is a must-visit destination for anyone traveling to Transylvania, Romania. Perched atop a hill, the medieval fortress dominates the surrounding landscape with its turrets, towers, and battlements. Stepping inside, you'll discover a labyrinth of grand halls, ornate chambers, and secret passages that bring to life the legends of Vlad the Impaler, the historical figure who inspired Bram Stoker's iconic vampire. The castle's museum showcases a collection of furniture and artifacts that reflect the luxurious lifestyle of Queen Marie, who once called the castle home. From the grandeur of the Great Hall to the forebodingness of the dungeons, Bran Castle is a place where myth and history intertwine, offering an unforgettable glimpse into Transylvania's fascinating past. We then tour the haunting, gothic Bran Castle, also called Dracula's Castle, which was built by the Saxons in 1377. Vlad Tepas, the Impaler (a.k.a Dracula) seized it in 1460. Learn the history of its residents and marvel at the macabre artifacts.

In the afternoon, prepare your costumes! They will be judged with prizes for the best ones, but you can dress anywhere you like. Transfer to Bran to visit the legendary Dracula's Castle. Participate in a Halloween-themed tour and party at the castle, immersing yourself in the spooky atmosphere of one of Romania's most famous landmarks. Evening at Bran Castle, the experience consists of a special Castle Tour, access to Halloween party and a 4-course meal with a glass of wine - surprises await.



The Count Special Guest Ticket – Your ticket includes entrance to the castle decorated in

Hollywood themes. Party on the grounds with music and special effects . It runs from 6PM to 4AM. (Please note – this is an invitation only. Other tour groups will be participating. The Gov. admin of Transylvania organizes it. AFS is not responsible for content changes of program. If you are claustrophobic, note it comprises special effects, actors interacting with visitors, dark corners and very low light.). We will arrange some scheduled bus rides available for the return journey from Bran Castle back to Hotel in Brasov.

Meals Included: Breakfast and Dinner Overnight: Aro Palace 5* or similar



Nov 2 - Sighisoara to Transylvania. Birthplace of Vlad

Sighisoara, a medieval town in Transylvania, Romania, is a living museum of the region's rich history and culture. The town's historic center, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is filled with colorful buildings, charming squares, and cobblestone streets that seem frozen in time. Visitors can walk along the town walls, climb the 64-meter-high Clock Tower, and explore the Church on the Hill, a beautiful Gothic church with stunning views. The house where Vlad the Impaler, the inspiration for Dracula, was born is now a popular restaurant, adding to the town's legendary appeal. With its well-preserved fortifications, picturesque architecture, and vibrant cultural scene, Sighisoara is a must-visit destination for anyone traveling to Transylvania.

After breakfast, we check out and travel approximately two hours to the birthplace of Vlad and a UNESCO World Heritage site. This medieval town has well-deserved fortifications and charming architecture.

Explore the cobbled streets in this perfectly intact 15th-century gem with nine towers, secret passageways and ornate churches crowned with a hilltop citadel. Here is the birthplace of Dracula. He ruled here 1456-1462. Enjoy a toast of “Vampire Wine” in his birth house, and you will love the Clock Tower, the Torture Chamber and the Weapons Hall.

At dusk, our festivities begin when we witness the reenactment of a **Middle Ages Witch Trial**.

We continue for a gloomy 14th-century **Graveyard Walking** tour, which takes around 1 hour. Description of the experience: ‘You will spot the final resting places of stone masons, builders, weavers, and blacksmiths. Interesting alleys await you to discover the witch stories. Be prepared for a little hike as you climb the world’s oldest wooden-covered stairwell to reach the summit.

In the evening, enjoy a horse-drawn carriage ride through the cobbled streets and explore the atmospheric cellar during a local Halloween celebration.

Meals Included: Breakfast and Dinner

Overnight: DoubleTree by Hilton 4* or similar.



Nov 3 - Sighisoara – Sibiu

After breakfast, proceed over the mountains approx. 2 hours to Sibiu., The largest medieval town in Transylvania and awarded the European Cultural Capital 2007.

Sibiu (Hermannstadt in German) was the largest and wealthiest of the seven walled citadels (Siebenburgen) founded in the 12th century by German settlers known as 'Transylvanian Saxons'. The riches amassed by its guilds paid for the construction of both impressive buildings and the fortifications required to protect them.

Afternoon - Explore the city's fortified churches and discover the vibrant traditions of the Gypsy villages in **Jina and Marginimea Sibiului**. Gain insights into the rich cultural heritage of the Romanian Gypsies. The villages in Transylvania are proud of their traditional architecture, rich cultural heritage, and stunning natural surroundings.

Continue a **city tour** of Sibiu's medieval center. Visit the Large Square with Brukenthal Palace, Haller House, and Council Tower; the Small Square with Liar's Bridge; and Huet Square with the Evangelical Church. Experience the blend of medieval charm and modern vibrancy in one of Romania's most beautiful cities.

Meals Included: Breakfast and Dinner Overnight: Continental Forum 4* or similar



Nov 4 – Sibiu to Bucharest City Tour

Enjoy breakfast and return to Bucharest, covering a distance of 280 km for a City Tour.

Admire iconic landmarks such as the Palace of the Parliament. Next, visit the Romanian Arch of Triumph. Built in 1922 to honor the Romanian soldiers who fought WWI, Bucharest's Arch of Triumph also symbolizes Romania's Latin heritage and its strong ties with France.

Continue and stop visit Victory Square Designed in 1692 to connect the Old Princely Court to Mogosoiaia Palace, Calea Victoriei (initially named Podul Mogoșoaiei) was originally paved with oak beams. In 1878, the street was renamed Calea Victoriei, to mark Romania's victory in its Independence War against the Ottoman Empire. Our tour will end with visit Roman Square, and University Square. With some free time for souvenir shopping and grazing at outdoor cafés.

Meals Included: Breakfast and Dinner. Overnight: Ramada Plaza by Wyndham 4* or similar

Nov 5 - Departure Home

After breakfast, leisure morning and transfer to airport for departure flight. *Note: In case the arrival flight is very late, also the departure will be later, so we will have enough time now for the city tour that was initially scheduled for the arrival day.*

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Land Price: \$1795 per person twins share. Based on 26 participants. Single rooms limited additional \$495

TOUR COST INCLUDES:

- Accommodation on twin/double sharing room basis at listed hotels above or equivalent
- Buffet breakfast at the hotel and 6 dinners as mentioned
- Welcome Dinner (Dracula themed) at Bucharest
- Halloween Special Party Ticket including dinner
- Witch trial experience and graveyard walk
- Horse carriage ride of Sighisoara medieval town
- Entrance fees as per itinerary: Dracula's Castle, Snagov Monastery, Peles Castle, Sighisoara Cellar, Fortified Church)
- Luggage service in the hotels
- All transfers, sightseeing's by luxury coach with Wi-Fi on board.
- English speaking driver & full-time tour manager with AFS GTL
- 1 bottle of mineral water daily during tours and transfers.
- All currently applicable taxes

Not included- gratuities \$90pp that will be added to your invoice for ease of distribution.

Have you read the Trip Tips yet? Scroll to the top of the page and click the link.

Itineraries are prepared up to a year ahead and things can change. Modifications may be made.

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