



DRACULA'S TRANSYLVANIA GRAND TOUR



with DACRE STOKER
Romania
June 1st-11th 2024

Over the course of this trip, we will immerse ourselves into the culture and history that so much influenced Bram Stoker in writing the novel *Dracula*. Absorb the atmosphere, learn the history, and experience the dramatic beauty of multiple locations, together with knowledgeable guides. We will visit medieval walled cities, idyllic German Saxon villages in Transylvania, and we will experience the dramatic landscapes beyond the Carpathian Mountains.

Group leader: *Dacre Stoker, great-grandnephew of Bram Stoker & international best-selling author*
Tour manager: *Nora Vintila, certified local guide*



ITINERARY

DAY 1

Saturday June 1st / Cluj overnight **D**

Introduction to Romania & Dracula



Welcome to Transylvania! Meet and greet at a central hotel in Cluj. We welcome you with the traditional Romanian cherry liqueur and delicious cookies. Walking tour of the university town, with readings from the novel *Dracula* by Dacre Stoker. In the early evening, we get together for an introduction into the *Dracula* concept. We explore **Bram Stoker's Count Dracula and history's Vlad Dracula**. Dacre gives us valuable insights of his uncle's novel writing research during an audiovisual presentation. The welcome dinner is served at a charming local restaurant, part of a cultural heritage building with walls impregnated with memories from the early 1900's.



DAY 2

Sunday June 2nd / Sebes overnight **B, L, D**

Underworld & mountain tops

We leave Cluj in the morning and head towards central Transylvania. We stop for a visit in the Turda **Salt Mine**, 3000 ft under earth surface. We then have lunch in a Hungarian manor, at the **foothill of Rock of the Szekely**, with the amazing backdrop of the Western Caprathians. We arrive in the medieval town of Sebes, called Mühlbach in German, later this afternoon, and check in at a hotel guarded by the old fortress from 1387. An **organ music moment in the gothic church** introduces us into the proper Transylvanian atmosphere. Dinner is served at the hotel, with **medieval knights'** entertainment and local **folklore**.

DAY 3

Monday June 3rd / Sebes overnight **B**

Corvinus & wine



An excursion to **Corvinus Castle** takes us back in time by 600 years, to learn about local nobleman John Hunyadi, mentioned in the inspiration sources for Bram Stoker's novel. We continue to yet another quantum leap experience in Alba Iulia, a quaint town where history blends into everyday life. We take a guided walk, visit the Catholic Church as well as the Orthodox Cathedral, and pass by the remains of the Roman Castrum as well as the imposing 1700's citadel from Habsburg times of glory. After some free time for lunch and shopping, we reunite for an exquisite **wine tasting in the catacombs of the Vauban citadel**.

DAY 4

Tuesday June 4th / Sebes overnight **B, D**

The town of 1000 eyes & countryside superstitions



Sibiu is guide Nora's hometown, and also previously European cultural capital. Nora takes you on a pleasant and very interesting guided walk of the "town of 1000 eyes", as Sibiu is called. Except for the rich local history, we discover the work of the **Scottish writer Emily Gerard**, who lived here between 1893 and 1895, **writing the essay Transylvanian Superstitions**. Gerard is the one who introduced the term "Nosferatu" into mainstream literature and inspired Bram Stoker in the writing of his novel.

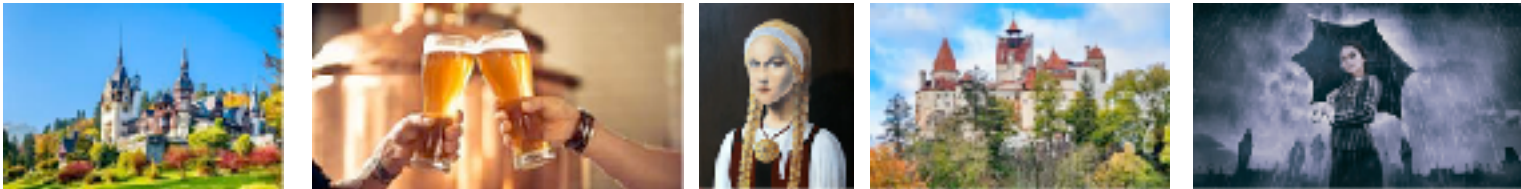
There will be a few hours of free time for lunch on your own, as well as shopping after the tour. A homemade dinner is served at a local **sheep farmers' family**, who reveal their rough way of life and their constant fight against their eternal fiend: the wolf.

We gather for a storytelling session, with Dacre reading "Transylvanian Vampire Tales" and Nora playing guitar and revealing some of the Romanian superstitions still vivid today.

DAY 5

Wednesday June 5th / Bran overnight **B, D**

Dracula's Castle



Traveling to "Dracula's" Castle, we stop for a coffee break next to the picturesque renaissance fortress of Fagaras. In Brasov later on, Nora takes us on a guided walk through the old town, passing by the Black Church, as well as by the house of **Katharina, known as Vlad Dracula's mistress**, for whom he's said to have nurtured eternal love. Free time for shopping and lunch. In

Bran, we stay at a boutique inn close to Bran Castle. During the **castle visit, Dacre will graphically explain how he discovered imagery connections between this castle and the way in which Bram Stoker described the castle exterior**. The vampire dinner is served close to the castle. Bring your gothic/victorian/vampire accessories if you wish to enhance the atmosphere!

DAY 6

Thursday June 6th / Bran overnight **B, L**

"Castlemania": Royal Peles Castle & Cantacuzino Castle

We start the morning with a visit to "**Nevermore Academy**". Cantacuzino Castle is the filming place of the popular Netflix series *Wednesday* and also a perfect viewpoint for the majestic Carpathians. We then visit **beautiful Peles Castle**, symbol of fictional "Aldovia" built in Neo-renaissance style by the first king of Romania. A tasty lunch is served on the castle premises. Back in Bran, free time for dinner on your own.

DAY 7

Friday June 7th / Sighisoara overnight **B, D**
Genuine Siebenbürgen



We travel towards Sighisoara after breakfast. On the way, we stop by in one or two of the colorful Saxon villages. We visit the fortified church, a dominant feature in the medieval structure in most Transylvanian-German villages. We learn about the very disciplined way in which the Saxons organized their life, in order to survive in front of enemy attacks throughout the centuries. We taste some of the traditional chark offered by our Saxon host, who keeps the Germanic tradition alive. We arrive to Sighisoara, the birthplace of Vlad Dracula.

During a guided walk, we get to know the UNESCO walled city, one of the last remaining medieval citadels still inhabited to this day. We sleep in a heritage building, nowadays a comfortable hotel, but still keeping the architectural charm of centuries past.

DAY 8

Saturday June 8th / Sighisoara overnight **B, D**
The fairy-tale town

Today we see the charming colorful town of Sighisoara in a new light. We explore an exhibition dedicated to the personality of Dracula, and a museum presenting medieval life. There will be a few hours of free time for lunch on your own, and for leisurely walks.. After dinner in the house where Vlad was born, we enjoy a wine & vampire movie evening in the cellar of the hotel, together with Dacre.

DAY 9

Sunday June 9th / Bistritz Region overnight **B, D**
Bistritz & more Dracula connections

We leave Sighisoara after breakfast and head towards the region of the Borgo Pass. On the way, we take a short walk in Bistritz, passing by the old location of Hotel Goldene Krone, the last stop of Jonathan Harker before he was taken on the coach to Castle Dracula in the novel. Free time for individual lunch and shopping. We check in at a hotel in the Bistritz area later on. Dacre concludes the trip with a final talk. Goodbye dinner is served comfortably at the hotel.

DAY 10

Monday June 10th / Cluj overnight **B, L**
The Borgo Pass

We start to cross the magnificent scenery of the Borgo Pass. Here, Dacre helps us understand how Bram Stoker reasoned when placing Dracula's fictional castle in this region. We visit a little monastery, have lunch and then continue our road towards Cluj, where we arrive in the late afternoon. Dacre says goodbye.

DAY 11

Tuesday June 11th **B**

Last day (for those not choosing the optional hike extension)

After a last breakfast on Romanian grounds, it's time to depart towards the airport. Your local guide Nora Vintila and your Dracula-host Dacre Stoker say LA REVEDERE!

Optional extension (surcharge 280 €/pers) with Dacre Stoker



For those willing to take a hike in the Calimani National Park of the Eastern Carpathians, the trip can continue from the Borgo Pass into the region of Bukovina. We stop by at the visitor's centre of the Calimani National Park, to get an overview of the geography, geology and wildlife of the area. Crossing the Carpathian chain, we arrive to a rustically placed inn, where we accommodate for the coming two nights.

Dacre reads and analyzes the final chapter of the novel Dracula.

Bookable only for guests who already booked the main itinerary. Min 2 pers need to book for the extension to be organized.

For those choosing the extension: please note that the itinerary is prolonged by one day and book your return flight accordingly. Accommodation only available in shared double rooms with king/queen beds. Extra beds (folding) can be provided upon request.

Extension program

DAY 10

Monday June 10th / Calimani overnight **B, L, D**

The Borgo Pass

We start to cross the magnificent scenery of the Borgo Pass. Here, Dacre helps us understand how Bram Stoker reasoned when placing Dracula's fictional castle in this region. Picnic lunch. Stop at the Visitors' Centre of the Calimani National Park. Check in at local log cabin. Traditional dinner.

DAY 11

Tuesday June 11th / Calimani overnight **B, L, D**

Hike day

This is a hiking day. We leave early in the morning and the destination is the extinct volcano site of the mountain top where Bram Stoker placed Dracula's fictional castle.

We have a picnic lunch on the way. We return to our inn in the early evening and enjoy a well deserved dinner and a relaxing movie night introduced by Dacre.

DAY 12

Wednesday June 12th **B**

After a last breakfast on Romanian grounds, it's time to depart towards the Cluj airport. Your local guide Nora Vintila and your Dracula-host Dacre Stoker say LA REVEDERE!

PRICE for the MAIN ITINERARY
2780 €/pers, including:

- accommodation 10 nights in double occupancy in top rank hotels (single room supplement 470 €)
- transfers by private coach/minibus
- activities, entrance fees according to program
- Dacre Stoker as tour leader & Dracula expert
- Nora Vintila as tour manager & Transylvanian history expert
- meals according to program, marked in **blue**, B=breakfast, L=lunch, D=dinner: 10 breakfasts, 3 lunches, 7 dinners, excluding all beverages. Please note the meals can change to suit the itinerary, but they will be balanced accordingly.

The price excludes: flight, insurance, single room supplement, optional extension to Calimani, beverages, gratuities for staff (tips), flight, excursions or activities other than those mentioned.

Please note that all activities are subject to change, due to local conditions and safety. We can assure you that Experience Transylvania and Dacre Stoker strive for the perfect experience for you as a guest, which is why we might change certain activities for better or more appropriate ones, in case the itinerary, the weather conditions or the safety of the sites impose that.

Deadline for all bookings: January 30th 2024

Seats on this tour are limited!

By submitting your booking request, you simply inform us of your wish to join this tour. At the moment, this submission does not involve any obligations for you as a tentative guest. The contract between you as a traveler and Experience Transylvania as an organizer starts when you've received the final program, along with the terms & conditions, and when you've paid your booking fee amounting 300 € (non-refundable).

Book the tour via the QR code. Email us if you have any questions: info@transylvania.se

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