



Halloween Starts Early in Transylvania

In the crass spirit of Christmas commercialization - which starts right after Halloween - we thought equal time ought to

follow the Christmas holidays for marketing Halloween 2007. So in the spirit of eager and early holiday commercialization, we offer this hype for "Halloween In Transylvania - with Vlad the Impaler."

Next year will be the 110th anniversary of Dracula, Bram Stoker's 1897 novel that popularized the myth of vampirism. To commemorate the book, and celebrate the Halloween holiday, there'll be a 10-day tour winding through Romania's Carpathian mountains deep into the heart of Transylvania where you'll follow in the footsteps of Stoker's hero, Jonathan Harker and his confrontation with Count Dracula, perhaps based on real-life Vlad Tepes, better known as Vlad the Impaler.



Bran Castle, dubbed Dracula's Castle and reportedly for sale.

During the tour, you'll visit legendary castles, party in Dracula's birthplace, Sighisoara Citadel, and lunch in the house where Vlad the Impaler was born. You'll be offered the same meal Stoker's hero ate when in Bistrita citadel. In Tokaj you'll have a wine tasting with the same wine Dracula served his guests. You'll have accommodations, candle lit dinner and a camp fire with all the right stories in Dracula's Castle - Bram Stoker's imaginary bastion where, in Borgo Pass, he placed the bloody Count Dracula.

In the village of Maramures, you'll meet famous woodcraftsman Grigore Tulean who'll teach you how to make a special stake for killing a vampire. It's said that the ancient ritual of preparing the dead with a stake or needle through the heart is still practiced in some remote regions.

The magic world of Romanian folklore will be brought to life by the famous Romanian ethnographer, Mihai Dancus, while visiting the Village Museum in Sighetul Marmatiei. And in Misiuga, you'll meet at least one of Dracula's descendents when the Baron of

Dracula welcomes you to his windswept tower in Bistrita citadel.

Come to think about it, Dracula's actually a rather modern person. He parties all night long, spends all day sleeping (OK, in a coffin - which is admittedly a bit kinky), never says no to a drink (bloody, from the source, neither shaken nor stirred). He's rich, never ages and lives in a private castle. What a catch.

If you don't have a reflection in the mirror, you decompose when sun light strikes you, you're over 200 years old, and have an inordinate fondness for Bloody Marys, the tour's free. Otherwise, it's about US\$1,800.

Full info at www.visit-transylvania.us/romania-travel-transylvania/halloween-dracula-tour.html.

Reservation info at www.visit-transylvania.us/reservations.html.

They'll even arrange a Gothic costume for you for the Halloween party!

- Rich Steck & Judi Janofsky