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From Dracula's Castle to Medieval Castles a 14-night one-of-a-kind Halloween Tour

Includes:

7-night Romania land tour featuring Halloween celebration at "Dracula's Castle"

7-night Gems of Southeast Europe All-inclusive AMAwaterways River Cruise

Sun, October 20, 2024 - Mon, November 4, 2024

Exploring 5 countries in Southeast Europe, this tour includes a 7-night land tour in Romania featuring a Halloween celebration at "Dracula's Castle" followed by experiencing cruising aboard the award-winning AMAwaterways river cruise line.

Touch history in Hungary, Croatia, Serbia, Bulgaria and Romania, as we sail along the exotic lower Danube. Celtic fortifications, medieval towns and grand cities, along with the natural beauty of pastoral landscapes and the Danube's famed Iron Gates, showcase the best of eastern Europe.



Special pricing starting from \$6,279 per person for cabin with fixed window (double occupancy)

Airfare and travel protection insurance can be added to the package price.

In partnership with



October 21 - Day 1: Arrival



Airport pick-up

Welcome to Bucharest!

This day is reserved for your arrival and for giving you some recovery time from your jetlag.

Whatever time you land, we'll arrange a private transfer to take you from the airport directly to your charming hotel.



Check in at Hotel Lido

This beautifully designed boutique hotel has been restored to bring back the golden age into contemporary times.



Welcome dinner (included)

After you get cozy, we invite you for an orientation dinner in one of the symbol-restaurants of Bucharest, designed in neo-gothic and art-nouveau style more than a century ago.

Here you'll get introduced to the Romanian cuisine while we'll go over your travel plans, helping you with anything else you might need.

October 22 - Day 2: Explore Bucharest



10:00 - 3 hr

Walking tour of Bucharest

During the tour you'll get the chance to discover the 500-year old history of the city.

You'll discover why Bucharest was formerly known as "little Paris" as we stroll through the narrow streets, eclectic neighborhoods and take a look inside one of the most beautiful buildings of the "Belle Epoque".

We also explore the highlights of Romania's capital, from the medieval town, to the Jewish quarter and the Communist influence.



13:00 - 1 hr 30 min

Suggested lunch stop at Manuc's Inn

After some walking we sit for a lunch break in the oldest restaurant kept alive in Bucharest and try more of the delicious traditional cuisine.



15:00 - 1 hr 30 min

The communist side of Bucharest

No visit would be complete before exploring one of the largest, heaviest and most expensive buildings in the world: The Palace of Parliament or "House of the People" by its former name. With many stories to share and many secrets still hidden, the tour of this megalomaniac building is sure to awe you, even if in a controversial way.



Overnight at Hotel Lido

October 23 - Day 3: Sibiu via Transfagarasan Road



9:00 - 3 hr

Transfer Bucharest - Poenari



12:00 - 1 hr 30 min

Visit Poenari Fortress

This is the real castle of Vlad the Impaler (now commonly known as Dracula) and it is an impressive monument that will make you work if you want to see it as it is reachable only after climbing 1476 steps. The biggest reward of this effort is the stunning view from the top of the surrounding mountain peaks covered in ever-green forests. Vlad the Impaler's wife committed suicide here, when under siege by the Ottomans and her screams are still heard from the fortress to this day.

**13:30** - 4 hr**Drive on Transfagarasan towards Transylvania (food tour included)**

Today we'll cross the mountains on Transfagarasan highway, the passage between Wallachia and Transylvania, an entwined road that cuts right through the mountains (voted by Top Gear as the best road trip in the world!).

On our way we pass Poenari Fortress, the real outpost of Vlad the Impaler, and Vidraru Dam, the biggest in the country.

At the top we find Balea Glacier Lake where we stop to revel in the breathtaking landscape around us. It's the perfect spot for a stroll through the farmer's food stalls where we'll have our lunch (included).

**19:00****Check in at Art Hotel in Sibiu**

With a design specific to the boutique hotel concept, Art Hotel Sibiu is a "journey" among new and old textures and materials, preserved for hundreds of years, which now breathe at the same pace.

**Suggested dinner at Kulinarium**

If you like gourmet traditional dishes, you shouldn't miss this cozy restaurant, located right in the main square of Sibiu.

Among local stars are the "sarmale", rolled cabbage leaves filled with minced meat and spices inside, served with polenta and sour cream. Their vegetarian version with rice and mushrooms is also absolutely delicious!

Another option are the "mici", in translation "little ones", which are skinless sausages served with mustard and potatoes. But beware, they are not as little as their name implies!

October 24 - Day 4: Corvin Castle and Sibiu

**9:00** - 1 hr 30 min**Transfer Sibiu - Corvin Castle****10:30** - 2 hr 30 min**Visit Corvin Castle**

Our second stop of the day is Corvin or Hunyad Castle, the largest medieval castle in Romania and one of the most beautiful in Europe, built over six centuries ago in Renaissance-Gothic style. There are many legends linked to this place, one of it being the place where Vlad the Impaler was held prisoner by the Hungarians, some people believing he is now haunting the castle. No wonder it constantly features in ghost documentaries and horror movies (most recent one: The Nun).

**13:00** - 1 hr**Street food break**

Here, we will get a chance to grab lunch from the many food stalls around the castle or to go for a delicious bubble waffle, savored in front of the castle.

**14:00** - 1 hr 30 min**Transfer Corvin Castle - Sibiu****16:00** - 2 hr**Walking tour of Sibiu**

Sibiu is one of the most important cultural centers in the country, being named the European Capital of Culture in 2007, Europe's 8th most idyllic place to live in by Forbes and the European Gastronomy Capital in 2019.

It was formerly the center of Transylvanian Saxons and has a rich history as a major trading center. We take a walking tour of the town's many squares to observe its unique architecture (the buildings have eyes!), different churches and medieval walls, towers and bastions.

**Suggested dinner at Hochmeister**

With a multi-ethnic background and a diverse cuisine full of impressive dishes, there is no shortage of amazing restaurant to choose from.

If you want to try Romanian recipes with a twist give this off-the-beaten-path restaurant a try.



Hochmeister

Str. Timotei Popovici Nr. 9, Sibiu, Sibiu, România, 550164
+40 771 335 577



Overnight at Art Hotel in Sibiu

October 25 - Day 5: Sighisoara and Viscri



9:00 - 1 hr 30 min

Transfer Sibiu - Sighisoara



10:30 - 2 hr

Walking tour of Sighisoara Medieval citadel

Welcome to Sighisoara, one of the most beautifully preserved inhabited citadels in the world! This UNESCO gem is home to medieval buildings, hidden chambers, burgher houses, towers and ornate churches full of myths and legends. It is here that Vlad the Impaler was born, who served as inspiration for one of the biggest legends in international folklore, Count Dracula. We will walk around the cobbled streets and find out more about this medieval town which is one of the few left intact in Europe!



12:30 - 30 min

Transfer Sighisoara - Saschiz/Viscri



13:00 - 2 hr

Homecooked feast in Saschiz

The church of St Stephen has Saxon origins, being also inscribed in UNESCO Heritage List, but the highlight here will be a delicious lunch prepared by a local villager with farm to table ingredients, including traditional drinks.



15:30 - 1 hr 30 min

Walk around the village of Viscri

Walk around the village and explore the 12th-century fortified church built by the Saxon community, part of the UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

Viscri is a village that managed to preserve its rural charm so much that made Prince Charles buy a property here and spend his summer holidays in the Transylvanian countryside.

We take a walk that seems forgotten by the modern world, as the houses are relics of another time, more peaceful and more connected with nature and traditions.



17:00 - 1 hr 30 min

Transfer Viscri - Brasov



18:30

Check in at Schuster Boarding House in Brasov

An old mansion restored to its proper glory is welcoming us right of the heart of Brasov's historic center.

October 26 - Day 6: Brasov and Bran Castle



9:00 - 3 hr

Walking tour of Brasov

We start the morning by exploring the city in which we spent the night, strolling through more than 800 years of living history, as Brasov is a former trading outpost located right in the middle of the mountains.

We walk through the narrowest street in Eastern Europe, visit the Black Church – an important turning point in religious affairs during medieval times – and we discover the foundation of the very first Romanian school, where a different type of church awaits us.



12:00 - 1 hr

Transfer Brasov - Bran Castle



13:00 - 1 hr 30 min

Suggested lunch stop at DOR / Parc Restaurant

Stop for some Transylvanian treats right next to the castle, with a beautiful view over it. In here, the chef does an amazing job with the "jumari" spread, essentially fried pork fat, or the Romanian-style ribs.

For your sweet tooth, make sure you try the "papanasi": sweet cheese dough topped off with sour cream and forest fruits jam.



14:30

Check in at Casa din Bran

A wonderful inn with authentic local decorations, located very close to the castle.



19:00

Visit Bran Castle and Halloween Party

After we awe at how modern kings and queens used to live, we get a different feeling when we arrive at the Bran Castle. With a rich and controversial history, we try to debunk the real mystery behind the fortress commonly known as "Dracula's Castle".

Tonight you will also get to experience Halloween at Bran Castle, probably the most exciting Halloween Party in Europe! So, bring your best costume and let's party together! Your ticket includes:

Vampire Gourmet Dinner at the Castle Restaurant. At 07:00 PM night creatures are invited to experience a tasting menu dinner of 4 courses.

Halloween Tour by Night (suitable for adults only) at 10 PM.

Halloween Party in the Royal Park (as long as they want to stay). Access is only allowed to adults (+18).

October 27 - Day 7: Peles Castle and return to Bucharest



10:00 - 1 hr

Transfer Bran - Sinaia



11:00 - 2 hr

Visit Peles Castle

Today we head to the fairytale Peles Castle in Sinaia, the royal palace built in Neo-Renaissance style, discreetly nested in the mountains. This summer residence was built for the first king of modern Romania and is boasting impressive interiors, being also the world's first castle fully powered by electricity.



13:00 - 1 hr 30 min

Suggested lunch stop in Sinaia

There are plenty of excellent restaurants at the foot of the castle and after your walk around the estate, you can stop for a taste of the local cuisine and admire the regal surroundings.

Our suggestion: Carol Gastro Bierhaus with their pumpkin soup and apple strudel dessert can make you feel a little closer to the former kings of Romania.

Alternatively, protect yourself from the evil spirits (before traveling to Bran Castle next day) with a local favorite: the garlic soup and gulas stew at Restaurant Alex.



Carol Bierhaus

Aleea Peleşului nr. 2, Sinaia, Prahova, România, 106100
+40 751 219 679



Restaurant Alex

Str. Theodor Aman nr. 9, Sinaia, Prahova, România, 106100
+40 244 315 497



14:30 - 2 hr

Transfer Sinaia - Bucharest



17:00

Check in at Hotel Lido

This beautifully designed boutique hotel has been restored to bring back the golden age into contemporary times.



19:00 - 2 hr

Farewell dinner

For your last night, we invite you for a farewell dinner in one of the most up and coming restaurants of Bucharest, with a reinterpreted cuisine where traditional meets modern. Deliciousness overload!



NOUA Bucătărie Românească (NOUA bucătărie românească)

Str. Popa Nan nr. 7, Bucureşti, Bucureşti, România, 024075
+40 21 794 3294

October 28 - Day 8: Departure



9:00 - 1 hr

Transfer from Bucharest to Giurgiu

Today we'll pick you up from the hotel and drop you off at the dock in Giurgiu to embark on your Ama Waterways cruise.

It will be hard to say goodbye to Georgiana and Vlad, but we'll try not to cry (no promises).

We have more adventures to explore... on to the cruise.



October 28 - Monday



GIURGIU.

Embark the ship in Giurgiu for your Gems of Southeast Europe cruise.

October 29 - Tuesday



ROUSSE.

Experience more of Bucharest or visit Bulgaria's ancient capital, Veliko Tarnovo, with its medieval fortress and multiple orthodox temples. You can opt instead to explore Rousse, known for its 19th- and 20th-century Neo-Baroque and Neo-Rococo architecture, and then afterwards visit the UNESCO-designated Rock-Hewn Churches of Ivanovo with frescos revealing exceptional artistry of 14th-century paintings. (B,L,D)



Excursions:

- Veliko Tarnovo Excursion
- Bucharest Excursion
- Rousse Walking Tour and Rock-Hewn Churches



October 30 - Wednesday



VIDIN.

Explore Vidin, one of Bulgaria's oldest cities, and surrounding areas with a choice of excursions. Discover Baba Vida Fortress, the largest preserved medieval castle in Bulgaria, or visit a local home for a demonstration of traditional Bulgarian yogurt and Banitsa, a pastry you will also get to make. You also have the option to take an exhilarating bike tour through Vidin. Continue on to Belogradchik, one of Bulgaria's natural wonders, where you can hike around its most spectacular rock formations. Alternatively, you can bike through Vidin or enjoy a wine tasting. (B,L,D)



Excursions

- Baba Vida Fortress and Vidin Walking Tour

OR Banitsa pastry and yogurt tasting

OR Vidin bike tour

- Belogradchik Hike

OR Vidin Wine Tasting



October 31 - Thursday



IRON GATES.

The Iron Gates are some of Europe's most aweinspiring natural wonders. The Danube narrows as it winds through a series of magnificent gorges between the Carpathian and Balkan mountains, forming a natural border between Serbia and Romania. The ancient King Decebalus, the last king of Dacia, is proudly carved into the mountainside and always captivates travelers. After your scenic cruise, you will arrive at Golubac Fortress – one of the best preserved medieval fortresses in Europe – for a tour. (B,L,D)



Excursions:

- Scenic cruising
- Golubac Fortress tour



November 1 - Friday

BELGRADE.



Explore Serbia's capital, Belgrade, on a city tour, which includes the Kalemegdan Fortress and the Serbian Orthodox Temple of St. Sava. Or visit the Royal Palace – the official residence of the Serbian Royal Family – and tour the House of Flowers, the mausoleum of Marshal Tito, who became the first President of Yugoslavia; or hike to Belgrade Fortress. In the afternoon, enjoy a taste of the region by sampling Serbian plum brandy, Šljivovitz, and delicious local delights at the Quburich Distillery. For those wishing a more active adventure, join a guided bike tour. (B,L,D)



Excursions:

- “The City by Two Rivers” tour
 - OR Belgrade Royal Palace & Tito’s Memorial tour
 - OR Fortress hike
- Quburich Brandy tasting & Avala Mountain
 - OR Guided bike tour of Belgrade



November 2 - Saturday



NOVI SAD ILOK.

Discover Novi Sad, the “Serbian Athens,” on a walking tour to Dunavski Park and through Stari Grad, the Old Town center. If you prefer a more active exploration, join a guided biking tour or hike to Petrovaradin Fortress, a mighty stronghold no enemy has ever breached. Later in the day, cruise to Vukovar, a Croatian symbol of resistance, which you’ll better understand on your city tour showcasing the Ovčara Memorial and Eltz Castle. Alternatively, choose a wine tasting in Ilok, a center of wine production since Roman times, where you’ll sample its famous Grasevina, Traminac and Frankovka wines. (B,L,D)



Excursions:

Novi Sad

- “The Athens of Serbia” walking tour
 - OR Serbian Specialties Tasting
 - OR Petrovaradin Fortress hike
 - OR Novi Sad bike tour

Ilok

- Vukovar City Tour with Eltz Castle
 - OR Croatian wine tasting



November 3 - Sunday



MOHACS.

Visit Pécs, founded more than 2,000 years ago by the Romans, and the UNESCOdesignated Christian Necropolis; St. Peter's Basilica, the city's main Catholic cathedral along with its catacombs; and Széchenyi Square, the heart of Old Town Pécs. You will also see the Mosque of Pasha Qasim the Victorious, one of the symbols of the city. Or for wine connoisseurs, you'll want to go to the Szekszárd wine region, one of the oldest red wine growing areas in Hungary, established more than 2,000 years ago. You may also take an exhilarating guided bike tour from Mohács through Danube-Drava National Park. (B,L,D)



Excursions:

- Pécs excursion
 - OR Szekszárd wine tasting



OR Guided bike ride along the Danube

November 4 - Monday



BUDAPEST.

Disembark the ship in Budapest and prepare for your flight home. (B)

November 5 - Tuesday



OPTIONAL EXTENSION IN BUDAPEST.

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Amawaterways - Cabin Costs

Category	Description	Available	Double - pp	Single
SS	Suite - French Balcony & Outside Balcony, 350 sq. ft.	3	\$7,672.00	\$15,370.00
AA	French Balcony & Outside Balcony, 235 sq. ft.	4	\$6,372.00	\$9,571.00
AB	French Balcony & Outside Balcony, 235 sq. ft.	18	\$6,172.00	\$9,271.00
BA	French Balcony & Outside Balcony, 210 sq. ft.	6	\$5,972.00	\$8,971.00
BB	French Balcony & Outside Balcony, 210 sq. ft.	6	\$5,772.00	\$8,671.00
C	French Balcony, 170 sq. ft.	2	\$5,172.00	\$7,771.00
D	Fixed Windows, 170 sq. ft.	2	\$4,172.00	\$5,471.50

ADD THE PRE and POST RIVER CRUISE EXTENSION PRICING:

Romania Transylvania Halloween Party

Oct 21-28, 2024

This week-long land tour package highlights all Romania has to offer including the sought-after Halloween Party in Dracula's Castle. Enjoy 7 nights including accommodations, tours, party and airport transfers.

\$2,906.00*

Budapest

November 4-6, 2024

Stay longer and enjoy 2 additional nights in Budapest including accommodations, tours, and airport transfers.

\$995.00*

Additional Deposit: \$200 per person

**Single Supplements apply.*

Travel Protection can be added to your tour package for Approx. 8% of total tour cost.

Flights can be added to your tour package at 11 months prior to tour dates.