

# 2010 "THE HISTORIAN": THE TOUR

## ROMANIA & BULGARIA



### CULTURE, FICTION AND HISTORY

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*The novel, Kostova's first, appeared on the New York Times bestseller list during the summer and fall of 2005 and it was named the 2006 Book Sense "Book of the Year" in the Adult Fiction Category.*

*While nominally a modern re-telling of the Dracula story, *The Historian* delves deeply into the nature of history and its relevance to today's world. The movie is in the shooting process and will be released in 2010.*

*A mixture of culture, fiction and history, all in a Spiritual Journey as well as Physical one. Dive into a medieval world that Vlad the Impaler - Dracula once ruled with despotism and butchery close at hand. Explore Old Europe first hand.*

*"What comes to your mind when you think of the word Transylvania, if you ponder at all? Yes, as I thought....wisely you don't. But what comes to mind are mountains of savage beauty, ancient castles, werewolves and witches - a land of magical obscurity."*

**Guaranteed Departures (with a minimum of two travelers): except for Thursday and Friday.**

#### **Day 1: Bucharest, Romania**

Arrival to Bucharest Coanda International Airport. Meet and greet by your specialist English speaking tour guide. Orientation tour on the way to your hotel. Check in and time at leisure. In the evening enjoy a Romanian Welcome Dinner with a Folklore Show.

***T D Accommodation in Bucharest at Hotel Berthelot\*\*\*\****



#### **Day 2: Bucharest / Curtea de Arges / Poienari Fortress / Cozia / Sibiu**

Hot buffet breakfast at hotel. Morning orientation tour of **Bucharest** then drive north on the way of Curtea de Arges – one of the former capitals of the *Principality of Wallachia, the fief of Vlad*. Brief stop at the former Princely Court in Curtea de Arges. Visit the exquisite Monastery Church where three of the Romanian Kings are buried. Continue to the famous **Fortress**

**of Poienari** - the first Romanian site mentioned in the book and related to Vlad the Impaler – Dracula. This is the actual castle built by him. Later drive along the Olt River Canyon, one of the most picturesque roads in the entire country. Stop at Cozia Monastery featuring a complete Last Judgment Fresco. ***Cross the mountains into Transylvania*** and observe the change of the village architecture. Reach Sibiu. Brief orientation tour on the way to the hotel. Overnight in Sibiu's famous Romans' Emperor Hotel, first built at the end of the 18th century. Dinner on own. Suggested

Crama Sibiul Vechi, one of the best restaurants in town, serving all Transylvanian dishes and the local Ausbruch wine.

***B Accommodation in Sibiu at Imparatul Romanilor Hotel \*\*\*\****

*Hotel Imparatul Romanilor, located in the old part of Sibiu near the main square, in a 16th century building built in traditional Transylvanian Renaissance style, a former merchant's hall transformed into hotel in the 18th century, with many famous guests: Emperor Franz Joseph II, composers Franz Liszt and Johann Strauss, as well as Prince Charles and many others.*

**Day 3: Sibiu / Sighisoara**

Hot buffet breakfast at hotel. Start your day with a leisurely walking tour of **Sibiu**, the European capital of Culture in 2007. Visit the old surrounding defense walls and the remaining towers each belonging to a certain guild. One of the landmarks of Sibiu is the Bruckenthal Museum assembled by baron Bruckenthal, governor of Transylvania at the beginning of the 19th century. The Evangelical Cathedral was completed in its actual shape in 1520, but inside, there is an exquisite fresco of the Crucifixion on the north wall of the choir dating from 1445. It was here that in 1510 the son of Vlad, Mihnea the Bd was stabbed to death. Continue to the Passage of Stairs linking the Upper town to the Lower town, the 1859 Liar's Bridge and the Byzantine style Orthodox Cathedral, a replica of St. Sophia in Constantinople. In the afternoon drive to Sighisoara - World Heritage Site and the only still inhabited medieval citadel in Europe. Accommodation in either one of the three hotels in the Upper Town also known as the "Citadel". Tonight dinner is included at the actual Birthplace of Vlad Dracula.

***B D Accommodation in Sighisoara at Hotel Sighisoara \*\*\* (In the Upper Town)***



**Day 4: Sighisoara**

Hot and cold buffet breakfast at hotel. Before starting your walking tour of old **Sighisoara** attend a lecture on Vlad the Impaler –Dracula, what is truth and what fiction. Sighisoara is one of a kind. A World Heritage Site, this is the only still inhabited medieval citadel in Europe. It was developed by the German settlers as of late 12 C. It stands on a network of tunnels and

catacombs and, according to one version of the myth; this is where the Pied Piper brought the children of Hamelin after their ungrateful parents refused to pay him his due. Walking tour includes the two squares of the Citadel (Upper Town), the Scholars' Staircase, the Ducklings' Square, the Tinsmiths' Tower, the House with Antler, the Tower with Clock (climb up for a great view), the Torture Chamber and the Weapon Museum. Sighisoara is the place where the famous Vlad the Impaler Dracula was born in 1431. The rest of the day is at leisure or drive 20 miles to **Biertan** - UNESCO World Heritage Site for a visit of the former Seat of the Lutheran Bishops between 1516 and 1867. Optional plum brandy and sausage tasting in one of the local distilleries (@ 15 Euro Dollars per person). Dinner on your own.

***B Accommodation in Sighisoara at Hotel Sighisoara\*\*\* (In the Upper Town)***

**Day 5: Sighisoara / Brasov / Dracula's Castle in Bran / Sinaia**

Hot and cold buffet breakfast. Leave Sighisoara in the morning. Journey south, crossing the picturesque Transylvanian Plateau with its colorful villages and fortified churches and citadels. Reach **Brasov** for a city tour. The visit to the 14C Black Church with its 4,000 pipe organ and over a hundred Anatolian prayer rugs is included. The attraction of the day is the well known Bran Castle also known as **Dracula Castle**. The castle was built in 1377 to safeguard the trading route between Transylvania and Wallachia, enlarged and restored a few times since then. Late afternoon arrival to Sinaia mountain resort. Named after St. Catherine Monastery on Mount Sinai, Sinaia became the unofficial capital of the Kingdom of Romania towards the end of the 19th century. Orientation tour of the resort including the famous Casino, inspired by the one in Monte Carlo. Once the famous Orient Express train use to regularly call here and it still does once a year on its way from Paris to Constantinople. Dinner on own.

***B Accommodation in Sinaia at Palace Hotel \*\*\*\****



**Day 6: Sinaia / Snagov Island / Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria**

Hot and cold buffet breakfast. In the morning visit one of the most important tourist attractions of the country: **Peles Castle and Gardens** in Sinaia, the royal residence of King Charles I of Romania and known as one of the most beautiful summer royal residences in Europe. This castle alone is worth your entire trip to Romania. On the way

to Bucharest make a detour to the **Lake and Island of Snagov**. This is where Vlad the Impaler Dracula is buried. Cross the lake on a row boat and meet the Abbot of the monastery. In the afternoon drive 40 miles south of Bucharest to the border town of Giurgiu where you will meet your Bulgarian Tour guide. Change vehicles, then cross the Danube on the Friendship Bridge. Continue to the town of Veliko Tarnovo for dinner at hotel and accommodation.

***B D Accommodation in Veliko Tarnovo at Hotel Gurko\*\*\****

**Day 7: Veliko Tarnovo / Kazanlak / Batchkovo Monastery / Plovdiv**

Hot and cold buffet breakfast at hotel. Morning sightseeing tour of **Veliko Tarnovo** (partly on foot), including stops at the historical Tsarevets Hill with the remains of the Royal Palace, the Patriarchate and the Fortress Gates. Stroll through the Samovodska Market Place, where you'll be taken in as pastry cooks, master goldsmiths, potters, and carvers still pursue their crafts as they did in centuries past. Then you are off to Kazanlak in the picturesque Valley of the Roses. Visit Assenova Fortress and then the famous **Batchkovo Monastery** in the Rodopi Mountains, beautifully described in the book. A guided visit of the monastery here is included. Later drive to Plovdiv for an orientation tour of this ancient settlement. Hotel check in. Evening at leisure with dinner on own.

***B Accommodation in Plovdiv at Dafi Hotel\*\*\* (or similar)***

**Day 8: Plovdiv / Rila Monastery / Sofia**

Hot and cold hotel breakfast at hotel. This morning take a guided walking tour of **Plovdiv's Old Town** including the Roman Amphitheatre – one of the largest in the former Roman World. Leave Plovdiv on the way to **Rila Monastery**. With its unrivalled architecture and murals, you'll understand why this marvel is included in the List of World Cultural Heritage. In the afternoon take a city



tour of **Sofia** including the Thracian gold and silver treasures displayed at the National History Museum. Visit Alexander Nevski Cathedral. Hotel check in. In the evening enjoy a Bulgarian Farewell Dinner.

***B D Accommodation in Sofia at Hotel Princess\*\*\*\****

**Day 9: Sofia Departure**

Hot and cold buffet breakfast at hotel. Transfer to Sofia International Airport for your return flight.

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**Tour price for 2010:**

**May through October:**

1,299 Euro per person for a group of two to three people and 1,167 for a group of four to six people

**March, April and November:**

1,249 for a group of two to three people and 1,099 Euro per person for a group of four to six people.

Prices are based on double occupancy. Single supplement is 190 Euro.

**Included features:**

- 8 nights at three and four star hotels (all centrally located)
- fully insured sedan/minivan with climate control, for the entire distance
- fuel & parking fees included
- all sightseeing tours & cultural connections
- *Vlad the Impaler - Dracula* Lecture in Sighisoara
- 13 meals: 9 breakfasts, 4 dinners (including the Welcome and Farewell Dinners)
- professional English speaking guides (driving) to accompany you throughout (guides are natives of their countries)
- city tours of Sofia, Bulgaria and Bucharest, Romania
- guides' expenses
- airport transfers
- admissions to museums, sites, churches as per itinerary
- portorage (except for customs areas)

- VAT and local tax
- detailed maps of Bulgaria and Romania

**You'll visit 3 UNESCO World Heritage Sites**

Historic Centres of Sighisoara and Sibiu, Romania, Biertan Fortified Church, Romania, Rila Monastery, Bulgaria

**Not included:**

- Other meals than stated
- Alcoholic beverages
- Photo/video fees at sites and museums
- Gratuities of any kind.