

BRAN CASTLE



Bran Castle

Commonly known as Dracula 's Castle, the Bran Castle is situated near Bran and in the immediate vicinity of Braşov, and it is national monument and landmark of Romania.

The Bran fortress was built on a cliff, its position conferring an outstanding view towards the hills surrounding it. The fortress was used to protect Brasov against Turks and later served as a customs house on the pass between Transylvania and Wallachia.

Between 1395-1427 the castle belonged to Mircea the Wise, grandfather of Vlad Tepes (Dracula). In 1441 the Hungarians defeated the Turks here.



Bran Castle's inneryard

Since its foundation, Bran Castle was rebuilt several times and remains impressive. Each epoch in Bran castle's history bear the marks of the changes in style. This is why the Renaissance and the Romantic elements are blended with the former Gothic style.

The castle has four towers. The oldest tower, Powder House Tower, houses the Cannon's Gallery and the Gunner's Room. During the 15th century, the Observation Tower and Eastern Tower were added. In 1622 the Gate Tower was added, a Polish attic was attached and the south curtain wall was thickened up to 3,5m (11ft.) thick. More renovations took place in 1723 and in 1883.

On December 1st, 1920, the Brasov Town Council donated the Bran Castle to Queen Marie of Romania.

Being restored according to the plans of the Royal Court's architect, Carel Liman, the castle lost the appearance of stronghold, being turned into a beautiful royal summer residence. The castle was a royal residence until the expulsion of the royal family in 1948. Today it functions as a museum of medieval arts.

In addition to its unique architecture, the castle is famous because of persistent myths that it was once the home of Vlad the Impaler, a famous or infamous medieval warlord; however, there is no evidence that he ever lived there. According to most accounts, the Impaler spent two days in the Bran dungeon, on his flight from the Turks in 1462 following their attack on the Poienari fortress in the Arges Valley.



The Council Hall

The castle is open to tourists, who can view the inside by themselves or as part of a guided tour. At the bottom of the hill is a small park to which examples of traditional Romanian peasant structures (cottages, barns, etc.) from across the country have been moved.