



Fangtastic! *Worlds best vampire spotting location*

By Tim Richards -Published August 22, 2011 FoxNews.com

Vampires and their stories seem to be enjoying an eternal renaissance in contemporary fiction and film. Anne Rice's Interview with the Vampire kicked off the modern raft of tales, and the popularity of more recent book and movie offerings like Twilight and True Blood shows that folks are, well, batty for vampire tales. So where can you go to learn more about these creatures of the night? Discover the top destinations with this excerpt from Lonely Planet's Best in Travel

Bran Castle, Romania

There's nothing better than going to the source, and in the case of vampire lore that's Vlad Țepeș, legendary ruler of Wallachia, now part of Romania . Țepeș became the scourge of the Ottoman empire and was fond of impaling entire Turkish forces sent against him. His bloodthirsty reputation inspired Irish author Bram Stoker to use him as the model for Dracula, and thus a legend was born. Bran Castle, one of his strongholds, now houses a museum dedicated to Queen Marie of Romania. It has an impressive clifftop profile, looking like the quintessential location for a vampire movie.



Vampire Bats, Costa Rica

The vampire bat has become inseparable from the legend of the vampire. Apparently inspired by a newspaper article about these inhabitants of South and Central America , Bram Stoker wove

their blood-sucking habits into his novel and the rest is history (or at least, folklore). These small bats do feed on animals' blood but rarely suck on humans, though there have been reported attacks in recent years in [Brazil](#) and [Venezuela](#) . One of the best places to see them in the wild is [Costa Rica](#) , especially within [Santa Rosa National Park](#) and [Corcovado National Park](#).

Musée Des Vampires, France

Hidden away in the Les Lilas district of [Paris](#) is an enigmatic museum devoted to the vampire. Visits can only be made by appointment, but once through the forbidding red door, the visitor is treated to an eclectic collection of books, photographs, weapons, masks, models, costumes and other curios referencing the vampire legend. There's also a creepy Gothic garden out the back. The [Musée des Vampires](#).

Forks, USA

When author [Stephenie Meyer](#) set her vampire novel [Twilight](#) in the small town of [Forks, Washington](#) , she had little idea of the wave of vampire tourism she was setting in motion. When [Twilight](#) went ballistic on the bookshelves, ardent fans headed for [Forks](#), neatly arresting the slow economic decline caused by its traditional mainstay, the timber industry, losing momentum. Now vampire fans can buy undead memorabilia, go on tours to locations that resemble [Edward and Bella's literary hangouts](#), and celebrate [Bella's birthday](#) on 13 September. [Dazzled by Twilight](#) offers three [Twilight-themed tours of Forks and La Push](#).

Vampire Tour of San Francisco, USA

Anyone who's read [Bram Stoker's Dracula](#) will remember [Mina Harker](#), whom [Dracula](#) attacked with the intent of transforming her into a vampire. Given that this curse was apparently lifted once he was destroyed, you might be surprised to find [Mina Harker](#) wafting about in 21st-century [San Francisco](#) , and sporting an American accent. But every weekend you can join [Mina](#) for a vampire tour of the city's historic [Nob Hill](#). It covers documented [San Francisco history](#) as well as speculative supernatural events, and attendees are encouraged to dress spookily. The [Vampire Tour of San Francisco](#) commences at 8pm each [Friday](#) and [Saturday](#).

Dracula Tour of London, UK

Given the British capital's starring role in the original Dracula novel, it makes sense that there should be a vampire tour of its darker nooks and crannies. This supernatural outing takes in a house in Highgate where the vampiric one apparently lived during his London sojourn. It also takes in the ghosts of Highgate Cemetery, the satanists of Highgate Woods, and other dark denizens. Curiously, the whole thing is then followed with a medieval banquet. Blood, presumably, is not on the menu. The Dracula Tour of London, run by [Transylvania Live](#), takes place nightly except Mondays

Pontianak, Indonesia

Vampiric creatures aren't just a Western obsession. Malaysia and Indonesia share the legend of the pontianak, supposedly the undead manifestation of a woman who has died during childbirth. This supernatural being is said to take the form of a beautiful woman, attracting men to their deaths by disembowelling them with her razor-sharp fingernails. You wouldn't really want to encounter one of these hellhounds, but if feeling brave you might visit the city of Pontianak, said to be named after the undead creature which once terrorised its men. Pontianak is the capital of the Indonesia province of West Kalimantan, on the island of Borneo.

Dracula's Haunts, Whitby, UK

Before Dracula reached London in the pages of Bram Stoker's novel, he came ashore at Whitby. The North Yorkshire seaport is famous for being the home base of 18th-century explorer Captain James Cook. However, no amount of historic circumstance can top Stoker's evocative description of the Russian schooner Demeter blown across Whitby's harbour with its dead captain lashed to the helm, crashing beneath the East Cliff before disgorging the vampire in the guise of a huge dog. As a result, Whitby has become a popular destination for vampire-fanciers. The [Whitby Gothic Weekend](#) is held twice-yearly, in April and October, and features concerts, markets and comedy nights.

Buffy locations, USA

Buffy the Vampire Slayer gained vampires a big new TV audience in the 1990s. If you loved seeing Sarah Michelle Gellar stake scowly-faced evil vampires while finding time to fall in love with a reformed one then you might like to visit the locations in and around Los Angeles where the series was filmed. The series' exterior scenes at Sunnydale High School were in fact filmed at Torrance High School. Shots of the fictional University of California at Sunnydale were taken at the UCLA campus in Westwood, and at California State University in Northridge. And the vampire mansion once lived in by Angel, Spike and Drusilla is the Frank Lloyd Wright –designed Ennis House near Griffith Park . You can find a comprehensive list of Buffy locations within the IMDb entry for Buffy the Vampire Slayer .

True Blood locations, USA

Bon Temps, Louisiana , is the fictional town in True Blood, the rightful heir to the vampire-mania stoked by Buffy. As with Buffy, the main character of the show is female, Sookie Stackhouse, who, like Buffy, falls in love with vampires. Unlike Buffy, vampires no longer hide from mainstream society — they have 'come out of the coffin' to drink a synthetic human blood (Tru Blood). But vampires aren't the only supernatural citizens of Bon Temps. Werewolves, werepanthers, faeries, shapeshifters and maenads also roam its streets. While all the human characters in the series pass through Merlotte's Bar & Grill, the vampires of the show frequent Fangtasia, a bar owned by the thousand-year-old vampire Eric Northman in Shreveport, Louisiana. The actual bar used for some of the filming is located in Long Beach, California , so if you want to be a fang banger then head to Alex's Bar . Other True Blood film locations are scattered over Southern USA and California. Seeing Stars has a site dedicated to finding these sights.

Originally published as "Fangtastic! The World's Best Vampire-Spotting Locations." © 2011 Lonely Planet. All rights reserved.