

TRAIN : **The Danube Express**
JOURNEY : Central European Classics (Budapest to Prague)
Journey Duration : Upto 8 Days

Day 1 - Budapest

Arrivals day in Budapest where you will be met and transferred to the five-star Four Seasons Hotel Gresham Palace for a two-night stay. Enjoy a welcome reception dinner in the elegant surrounds of this art nouveau landmark, where you can meet your fellow travellers on this highly anticipated journey.

Day 2 - Budapest

Budapest is actually two cities separated by the Danube. The old city of Buda and the imposing Royal Palace, dominates the city with stunning views across the Danube to the commercial heart of Pest. Our city tour includes the Royal Palace, St. Mathias Church and a panoramic view of the city from Gellert Hill. We will also see the Citadel, the Opera House, St Stephen's Cathedral, Heroes Square and the City Park.

The rest of the day is at leisure so you can stroll along the banks of the Danube, visit the historic Great Market Hall with its endless variety of delicious foods and wines or head to one of the city's famous thermal baths for a rejuvenating dip. Alternatively you can relax at the hotel and indulge in the hotel's luxurious spa with infinity-edge pool or make use of the state-of-the-art fitness centre. This evening we will enjoy a beautiful dinner cruise along the Danube.

Day 3 - Keszthely

After breakfast join the Golden Eagle Danube Express at Nagyati station after a reception in the Imperial Waiting Room and head to Keszthely on the western shore of Lake Balaton. The train is scheduled to be steam-hauled for the first part of our journey. At Keszthely we take a tour of the Festetics Palace, a beautiful Baroque palace built on castle ruins in 1745 and expanded 150 years later. Alternatively, you can enjoy a relaxing boat cruise on the calm waters of Lake Balaton. We re-join the train early evening and have dinner on board as the train heads for Austria.

Day 4 - Vienna and Bratislava

We can have a full day to savour the captivating Baroque elegance of romantic Vienna. Our tour of Austria's capital city includes the impressive Vienna Opera House, the majestic Ringstrasse and the awe inspiring St Stephen's Cathedral. This afternoon is free to stroll

along the Kärntnerstrasse, sample Vienna's famous cakes in the historic coffee houses or join a tour to the Imperial Schönbrunn Palace and Gardens.

Alternatively you can re-board the train for lunch and travel the short distance from Vienna across what was the 'Iron Curtain' to Bratislava, the capital city of Slovakia. Our tour there includes the medieval Old Town (Starý Mesto) where we stroll through the cobbled streets of 18th century pastel buildings and the stunning Bratislava Castle perched high above the city on a hill overlooking the Danube. Close to the castle, set amongst the many hillside luxury villas, is the imposing Soviet War Memorial at Slavín to learn about the city's strategic position situated just behind the Iron Curtain.

Day 5 - Krakow

Once a royal capital with an extraordinary history, and now a lively university town with fashionable bars and restaurants, Krakow is a fascinating city with beautiful monuments and an exuberant atmosphere. Highlights of the city include Wawel Hill, home to the Wawel Castle, an impressive blend of Gothic original architecture and a Renaissance Palace and Rynek Główny, known as the Main Market Square, it is Europe's largest medieval square. You can explore the city at your leisure in the afternoon and perhaps make the trip across the River Vistula to Podgórze, site of the Jewish Ghetto in Krakow and home to the Schindler factory - much of the film 'Schindler's List' was filmed here.

On our day in Krakow we also offer a number of included touring options as part of our *Freedom of Choice* programme outside of the city environs. Close to Kraków is Auschwitz-Birkenau, now a poignant museum was the largest of the Nazi concentration camps during World War Two where an estimated 1 million people perished.

Day 6 - Prague

A morning arrival into Prague after breakfast where we leave the *Golden Eagle Danube Express* and spend time to enjoy one of Europe's most magnificent cities. We will stay at the luxurious five-star Four Seasons hotel for two nights, renowned for its unique architectural structure and enviable location, just steps from the historic Charles Bridge.

Prague is one of the most beautifully preserved cities in Europe. It spans the Vltava River and is dominated by the 9th century Prague Castle, a stunning sight that can be seen almost anywhere in the city. Our tour takes in the Old Town Square with its many historic buildings and Astronomical Clock, the historic 14th century Charles Bridge and the Jewish Ghetto.

Day 7 - Prague

This morning in Prague is at leisure for you to discover the hidden treasures of this wonderful city. Stroll the medieval cobbled streets, relax in the ancient squares and admire the many architectural treasures of this 'City of a Hundred Spires'.

After lunch we join a vintage tram to travel through the city and Wenceslas Square, then up the hill to Prague Castle, the largest medieval complex in Europe and the gothic St. Vitus

Cathedral. The castle and its surrounding architectural gems occupy a hillside overlooking the city and river. Our tour includes the delightful Golden Lane and the Changing of the Guard at the castle entrance.

You have the option to join our Freedom of Choice tour to Municipal House, originally built to be an administrative and cultural centre. Located just inside the Old Town it was built on the area once occupied by the former Royal Court before it moved to Prague Castle. We'll have a Czech afternoon tea here and then visit its beautiful concert hall.

Day 8 - Prague

Following breakfast you will be transferred to the airport for onward flight departures. There is also an option to extend your stay in Prague for additional nights to explore more of this fascinating city.