

TRAIN : The Danube Express

JOURNEY : Christmas Markets Of Central
Europe (Westbound)

Eastbound Journey Duration : Upto 8 Days

Day 1 BUDAPEST

Arrivals day in Budapest, where you will be met and transferred to the Four Seasons Hotel Gresham Palace (or similar) for a two-night stay.

Enjoy a welcome reception dinner in the elegant surroundings of this art nouveau landmark where you can meet your fellow travelers ahead of this highly anticipated journey.

DAY 2 BUDAPEST

Budapest is an alliance of 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.

Enjoy the rest of the day at your leisure. Make sure to take the opportunity to stroll through the many Christmas Markets scattered around the city. You may want to visit the historic Great Market Hall with its endless variety of delicious foods and wines or warm up and head to one of the city's famous thermal baths for a rejuvenating Christmas dip.

DAY 3 VIENNA

Late morning, you will be transferred to Nyugati station to enjoy a drinks reception in the impressive Royal Waiting Room before boarding the *Golden Eagle* Danube Express. Marking the beginning of your voyage of a lifetime, our private brass band will perform as the train departs from the station, and our uniformed train staff will be there to escort you to your private en-suite cabin.

As you settle in and enjoy your first delicious lunch onboard, the train will weave its way out of Budapest's Nyugati station, before winding through Hungary's whimsical

wintery landscapes, before arriving at our first stop – Vienna.

In the afternoon we will explore this beautiful Austrian city, with a panoramic tour of the breath-taking grand boulevard encircling Vienna's historic quarters. From here we will enjoy a traditional 'Fiaker' (horse-drawn carriage) ride through the charming city streets, before sampling the traditional Pirker gingerbread in front of magnificent St Stephen's. We will then return to the train to indulge in a decadent dinner – freshly prepared, using the finest local sourced ingredients and local delicacies.

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DAY 5 SALZBURG

Like a picture from the pages of a fairy-tale, Salzburg perfectly captures the charming cosiness of the festive season. The city sits snugly in the northern foothills of the Alps, set against a backdrop of snow-capped peaks, cut in half by the curves of the Salzach River. The Christmas markets, Advent concerts and local traditions continue to charm visitors in the magical city of Mozart.

This afternoon we explore the heart of the city, starting at Mirabell Palace. Listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the baroque 17th century palace is easily one of the most stunning landmarks in the city and made famous in more modern times as a location used in *The Sound of Music*.

A short distance from the palace on Market Square (Marketplatz) we will see the former Mozart Residence, now a museum. From here we will cross the Makartsteg bridge into the Old Town and walk along the Getreidegasse, Salzburg's most famous street which is renowned for its wrought-iron trade signs and the birthplace of Mozart.

The rest of our time in Salzburg will be spent at the Salzburger Christkindlmarkt, one

of the most beautiful and oldest Christmas markets in the world, which is held on Domplatz and Residenzplatz. Its unique location in the middle of the World Heritage Old Town of Salzburg, the traditional stalls and its long history make the Salzburg Christmas market something very special. The Christkindlmarkt offers incomparable holiday ambiance – bells ring out from onion-domed churches, the scent of fresh pine mingles with the aroma of cinnamon-sprinkled mulled wine in the crisp winter air, and cheerful groups huddle around festive market stalls.

DAY 6 SALZBURG & MUNICH

Following a leisurely breakfast onboard our private train, we make a visit to the DomQuartier, a unique cultural highlight in the heart of Salzburg. Over 400 years ago, the powerful prince archbishops began to transform the wealthy city of Salzburg into a baroque jewel and an urban masterpiece was created, which is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The Residenz and cathedral area, complemented by the Benedictine monastery of St. Peter can be experienced as a continuous tour. The terrace above the Cathedral Arches reveals stunning views of the Salzburg historic district as well as the mountains surrounding the city. A special view to end our time in Salzburg.

We return to the train for lunch and from the Restaurant Cars enjoy the spectacular Bavarian scenery as we head across the border into Germany for our final stop in Munich.

DAY 7 MUNICH

Electrified by the indescribable buzz of yuletide cheer, Christmas in Munich is truly magic. One of the most famous of all the city's Christmas markets is located on Marienplatz in the heart of the city. This centuries-old market, which had its beginnings in the 1600s, is a fresh mix of old and new – keeping to older Bavarian traditions, with mouth-watering Brätwurst and freshly roasted chestnuts, presented alongside decadent sweet treats and intriguing electric creations. Watching over, a majestically illuminated Christmas tree casts a charismatic glow over the bustling square – perfectly adding to the festive feel.

This evening we enjoy a Farewell Dinner and reflect on the memories made from this wonderful winter escapade across Central Europe.

DAY 8 MUNICH

Following breakfast in the hotel you will be transferred to the airport for onward departures.

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