

CENTRAL EUROPE ABOARD THE DANUBE EXPRESS

Board the Golden Eagle Danube Express for visits to celebrated centres of culture, art and history. From Budapest to Vienna, Central Europe's capital cities and majestic metropolises reveal the lifestyles of former monarchs; the ingenuity of composers, artists and architects; and the devastation of war. Between each destination, we gaze beyond the windows of our train at the astonishing scenery that only Europe can deliver. Reserved for just 32 guests.



A JOURNEY OVERVIEW

Budapest - Kraków - Warsaw -
Malbork - Gdańsk - Berlin - Dresden
- Prague - Salzburg - Vienna

15 Days Rail Journey

Departing 31 May 2027

Day 1 Budapest (Hungary)

In Budapest, you will be met at the airport for your private transfer to Four Seasons Hotel Gresham Palace. Take the opportunity to relax prior to our Welcome Dinner at Kollázs Brasserie & Bar, within the hotel.

Day 2 Budapest

This morning, we head to City Park, an expansive green space in the heart of Budapest. Within the park, the House of Music Hungary presents an immersive audiovisual experience at its Sound Dome. We also take in the striking landscape design and cultural landmarks of the area. At the nearby House of the Hungarian Millennium, a tasting of local wines takes place within a charming Neo-Renaissance villa.

This afternoon, explore historic Castle Hill, a World Heritage site known for its medieval architecture. Advancing our way along a set of steep steps, we pause periodically to absorb impressive panoramas of the city below us. Our explorations of the Buda Castle District include visits to Matthias Church and Fisherman's Bastion, as well as St Stephen's Hall, should time permit. Tempted by the offerings of a local confectionary, we reward our efforts with coffee and cake.

Day 3 Budapest

With cultural choices on offer today, we select our preferred Your World experience:

- ★ Take a tour of Esterházy Palace, the former residence of the Esterházy family, once the greatest landowners in Hungary. The grand Baroque palace sits on the shores of Lake Öreg, while inside you will see the Great Hall, the Countess' Suite, and the property's extensive library. Lunch will be served at the eminent Platán Restaurant. Within the small village of Majk, you will then learn about the monks who once resided in the hermitage here, producing herbal medicines in silence and seclusion.
- ★ For those looking to become acquainted with the tastes and terroir of the region, head to Haraszthy Winery. After sampling some local gourmet cheeses and ham, savour a selection of the vineyard's finest varietals during a tasting. You will also be shown around the production facility, bottling room and wine cellar.

Upon returning to our hotel, we compare notes of our respective experiences over dinner. The evening also gives us the opportunity to meet our fellow train passengers and crew.

Day 4 Budapest, Embark Golden Eagle Danube Express

Take the morning as you please, before we depart for the station. Assembled for a drinks reception, we take in the grandeur of the Royal Waiting Room, before a brass band grants us a private performance. As the train pulls away from the platform, we are shown to our cabins. Settle in before we adjourn to the restaurant car for dinner.

Day 5 Kraków (Poland)

Having crossed into Poland, our train makes its first stop at Oświęcim, the station for Auschwitz-

Birkenau. Here we join a moving guided tour of the notorious concentration camp and its museum. From here, we continue by coach to Kraków, enjoying lunch in the Old Town. This afternoon, we also descend deep into the Wieliczka Salt Mine. Emerging from a narrow, winding tunnel, we find ourselves face to face with several life-size statues of historical figures, having been skilfully sculpted from the salt. The vast Chapel of Salt – which continues to be used for Mass – has been similarly fashioned from the mine's salt.

Should you not wish to visit Auschwitz-Birkenau or the Wieliczka Salt Mine, a guided walking tour of Kraków's Old Town, including visits to Wawel Royal Castle, as well as the Jewish Quarter, can be arranged.

Day 6 Warsaw

Further north, we arrive in the capital, Warsaw, along the storied Vistula River. Decimated during World War II, the city's transformation since that time is extraordinary. Skyscrapers soar over the red-roofed buildings of the Old Town, which we explore during a guided tour. Follow the Royal Route, whose grand structures include the Royal Castle, Krasiński Palace and Garden, and the Presidential Palace. Within the former Warsaw Ghetto, we come to the Polin Museum of the History of Polish Jews, which commemorates the 1,000-year history of Polish Jews, their customs and communities.

This evening, we take our places within the intimate Fryderyk Concert Hall for an exclusive Chopin recital.

Day 7 Malbork, Gdańsk

Our train brings us to Poland's far north, and the town of Malbork, whose astonishing red-brick castle is the scene of this morning's discoveries. Overlooking the River Nogat, the castle was built in the 13th century by Teutonic knights. Its museum houses a collection of amber artefacts and historical weapons, while the castle's courtyard reveals a surprising stockpile of preserved boulders, once fired at the castle by catapult by hopeful invaders.

Return to the train for lunch as we continue to Gdańsk, centre of Poland's shipbuilding industry and celebrated for its pioneering role in the country's trade union movement. Explore the waterfront city and visit the European Solidarity Centre, whose innovative design sees the building leaning at a slight angle, which is said to symbolise the dynamism inherent in the movement's struggle for change. Fascinating exhibits detail Cold War history, the decline of communism, and the workers' strikes that gave rise to solidarity.

Tonight, the ethereal resonance of Oliwa Cathedral's grand organ inspires during a concert. Afterwards, we explore the city's market street, Długi Targ, which is lined with the brightly-coloured facades of its merchant houses.

Day 8 Berlin (Germany)

Crossing into Germany, our train soon pulls into Berlin, where we alight and explore the dynamic capital.

Your World experiences give us the opportunity to delve into Berlin's fascinating history:

- ★ Behold the iconic monuments of one of 20th-century Europe's most significant cities. See the remnants of the Berlin Wall, which once separated east and west. Close by, the Brandenburg Gate stands as a towering landmark to the country's former division and subsequent reunification. At the Reichstag, learn about the German Constitution, as well as the historic decisions that have been made in this striking building. After your tour, take some time to explore the poignant Checkpoint Charlie Museum.
- ★ Alternatively, get behind the wheel of a VEB Trabant, a humble automotive relic of Cold War East Germany. Drive down Karl-Marx-Allee, lined with many apartment blocks in the Stalinist Empire architectural style. Pass by East Side Gallery, an extensive open-air art gallery running along the banks of the Spree River. And cross the impressive neo-Gothic Oberbaum bridge to the vibrant neighbourhood of Kreuzberg.

Perhaps spend some time shopping along the celebrated Kurfürstendamm this afternoon.

Day 9 Dresden, Prague (Czechia)

Further south, we arrive in Dresden, within the region of Saxony. Discover the history of the grand Baroque Frauenkirche, the Church of Our Lady. The city is replete with buildings designed in the Baroque and Rococo styles, which we also admire on our travels. Upon returning to the train, we enjoy lunch and cross the border into Czechia late this afternoon. Spanning the Vltava River, the city of Prague is one of Europe's best-preserved cities, whose soaring spires and colourful facades evoke the splendour and style of earlier times. Explore the Old Town, including the Jewish Quarter and the famed Astronomical Clock. Then cross the Charles Bridge to discover Prague Castle, the world's largest ancient castle complex.

Early this evening, pay a visit to the Art Nouveau Municipal House. The historic building – formerly the royal residence and military barracks – features a grand concert hall. We take our seats for a magnificent opera performance, followed by a sumptuous dining experience in the stylish restaurant within Municipal House.

Day 10 Prague

This morning, we return by tram to the castle area to admire St Vitus Cathedral. The imposing Gothic church occupies a prominent position within the Prague Castle complex, overlooking the city and the Vltava River. Explore the Old Town as you please following lunch, before we make our return to Golden Eagle.

Day 11 Salzburg (Austria)

Pulling into Salzburg, we alight the train and head straight to Mirabell Palace. The Baroque 17th-century palace and World Heritage site reveals its intricately styled Marble Hall. These elegant interiors play host to weddings and musical performances, while the palace's exterior and fountain

may be recognised from *The Sound of Music*. At nearby Market Square, we look upon the former residence of Mozart, before crossing the Makartsteg bridge and into the Old Town. Traverse the city's famous Getreidegasse; the vibrant street taking us past a succession of shops, each embellished with the city's signature wrought-iron signs.

A short drive then brings us to Hellbrunn Palace. The 17th-century property is renowned for its 'trick fountains', a series of themed water features that surprise with their sporadically spraying jets. The extensive grounds are also adorned with statues and sculptures, as well as the fabled pavilion from *The Sound of Music*. Inside the palace, this one-time summer retreat of the Prince-Archbishop of Salzburg reveals rooms of dazzling frescoes and artwork, both historical and contemporary.

Day 12 Vienna, Disembark Golden Eagle Danube Express

Our final leg has us travelling east to the capital, Vienna. Along the way, the Golden Eagle Danube Express navigates the spectacular Semmering Pass, crossing a series of stone arch bridges before awe-inspiring scenery. Arriving around midday, we bid farewell to our train and crew and set out to explore. Our experiences here are naturally imbued with music and culture. This afternoon, we are guests at a private concert by the Vienna Supreme Orchestra. Then experience the grandeur of Schönbrunn Palace, whose vast and opulent interiors reveal the extraordinary wealth once enjoyed by the powerful Habsburgs. You are, of course, free to explore Vienna on your own terms, should you choose. This evening, we enjoy the first of our three nights at The Ritz-Carlton, Vienna.

Day 13 Vienna

Following breakfast at our hotel, join your preferred Your World experience:

- ★ Take in the splendour of Belvedere Palace. The grand Baroque complex is surrounded by abundant gardens, statues, and a large pond. Within the palace, an extensive art collection features Gustav Klimt's renowned painting *The Kiss*, along with works by other Austrian masters, including Egon Schiele and Oskar Kokoschka. Elsewhere, elaborate frescoes adorn several magnificent halls. Having explored the palace, you will also be given the opportunity to participate in a metal and gossamer gold leaf workshop.
- ★ Experience Vienna as the locals do. In Hundertwasser Village, see colourful buildings designed in irregular forms, and the incorporation of natural elements into an urban environment, by the artist and architect, Friedensreich Hundertwasser. At the Kunst Haus Wien museum, also designed by Hundertwasser, see a further collection of cutting-edge, contemporary art. Afterwards, take a stroll along the Mariahilferstrasse, one of Vienna's most famous shopping streets. Along the way, discover the initiatives of a sustainable fashion business and a zero-waste grocery store.

This evening, a selection of Vienna's restaurants is on offer for dinner.

Day 14 Vienna

Today, Your World experiences delve deeper into all things Vienna:

- ★ Arrive at Hof Palace, once the summer residence of Maria Theresa, the 18th-century ruler of the Habsburg Empire. Its vast and meticulous Baroque Garden leads to a most splendid facade. Be invited in for royal teatime for a glimpse at the life once enjoyed by the Holy Roman Empress.

- ★ Take a drive across Lower Austria's rolling hills. At the magnificent Melk Abbey, wander marble halls, passing the painted portrayals of centuries of former rulers. See its ornate church and prestigious library, complemented by its exquisite 18th-century fresco. The abbey also enjoys sweeping views over the Wachau Valley and the Danube River. During your return to Vienna, stop in at Krems an der Donau, the beautiful riverside town known for its striking Steiner Tor city gate. Its charming townhouses, cobbled lanes, and notable wine culture also make for a great day out.

Celebrate our grand journey this evening during a Farewell Dinner.

Day 15 Vienna

Enjoy a final breakfast and farewell your fellow guests and Tour Host Team, before joining your private transfer to the airport.