

TRAIN : The Danube Express

JOURNEY : New Year in Vienna

Eastbound Journey Duration : Upto 9 Days

Day 1 BUDAPEST

On arrivals day in Budapest, you will be met and transferred to the 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 celebratory journey over the New Year holidays.

DAY 2 BUDAPEST

Budapest is two cities separated by the River Danube. The old city of Buda and the imposing Royal Palace dominate the city with stunning views across the Danube to the commercial heart of Pest. Our city tour includes an exclusive visit to the Parliament building, followed by a panoramic coach tour of the city passing the Royal Palace, St. Mathias Church, Heroes Square and the City Park. We also make a visit to the Grand Market Hall, the oldest and largest indoor market in Budapest before lunch.

After lunch we visit the Hungarian State Opera House and learn about the building's history and view the stunning interior. This evening guests have 'dine around' options in the hotel for dinner.

DAY 3 KESZTHELY

After breakfast we'll transfer from our hotel to board the Golden Eagle Danube Express. We enjoy a morning drinks reception in the impressive Royal Waiting Room at Budapest Nyugati station before boarding our private train. After settling into your luxurious en-suite cabin, we'll make our first journey through the winter landscapes of Hungary to Balaton Uplands National Park.

Emerging from the National Park we'll arrive in Keszthely perched at the very western end of Lake Balaton. This picture-postcard town is filled with grand town houses and famously the site of Festetics Palace, a lavish baroque home fit for royalty. After a tour of the palace we'll continue into Austria overnight by train.

DAY 4 NEW YEAR'S EVE IN GRAZ & VIENNA

Arriving into Austria this morning we begin our exploration of the fantastic city of Graz at the foot of the Austrian Alps. We will transfer by coach to the city centre and have a short walking tour of Graz's range of renaissance courtyards and provincial baroque palaces. As part of our Freedom of Choice programme you can choose to take free time or enjoy a pumpkin seed oil tasting, complete with traditional, locally made bread and wine.

Leaving Graz late morning will be one of the real highlights of the journey. Cameras at the ready as we climb over the stunning Semmering Pass with its 16 viaducts and 15 tunnels. This UNESCO World Heritage Site provides an unrivalled panorama from the train, a spectacle that transcends ordinary views. After a gourmet lunch on board the train we'll arrive to Vienna to begin our New Year's Eve celebrations.

This afternoon we will have the opportunity to join in with an atmospheric Viennese waltz lesson at the Elmayer Dancing School for the group. No experience necessary! Tonight, a special New Year's Gala Dinner will be served inside the beautiful City Hall, Rathaus Vienna accompanying a performance by the renowned Wiener Hofball Orchestra. Music and waltzing will take us through to midnight.

DAY 5 NEW YEAR'S DAY IN VIENNA

After brunch and a leisurely morning onboard the Danube Express we'll offer Freedom of Choice options with either a visit to the Schönbrunn Palace for a guided tour, then have time at the Schönbrunn Christmas Market.

Alternatively select a visit to Heiligenkreuz Abbey, situated into the Austrian countryside (approx. 45 minutes) and have a guided tour of the second-oldest Cistercian monastery in the world and the oldest continuously active and inhabited one, founded in 1133, nestled in the Vienna woods.

Both groups then return to enjoy a beautiful horse-drawn 'fiaker' carriage ride along the cobbled streets of Vienna. Guests will also enjoy a special private concert featuring the Vienna Supreme Orchestra before returning to the train for dinner as we head to the Czech Republic.

DAY 6 CESKY KRUMLOV & PRAGUE

This morning we begin our day in the stunning town of Cesky Krumlov, declared a UNESCO World Heritage destination. The town's old town charm will be only enhanced by a dusting of snow and should make for a beautiful stop on our journey. A short introduction to the town will allow you to explore the town with

allocated free time. A perfect opportunity to grab a souvenir or two. We enjoy lunch in the town, and there is the option to visit the Budvar Brewery and enjoy a festive beer tasting!

We continue after a lunch on board the train to as we travel to one of the most beautifully preserved cities in Europe. Spanning the Vltava River, Prague is dominated by its 9th century castle, a stunning sight that can be seen almost anywhere in the city.

Tonight, we have a dinner in the city followed by a private classical concert.

DAY 7 PRAGUE

A full day to explore the city of Prague awaits today. We'll begin with a vintage tram to travel through the 'City of a Hundred Spires' up the hill to Prague Castle and the gothic St. Vitus Cathedral. The castle and its surrounding architectural gems occupy a hillside overlooking the city and river.

Lunch will be served nestled in the architectural treasures of this 'City of a Hundred Spires.'

The afternoon is free for you to visit more festive markets or take in more of the iconic sites of the city all within walking distance of the station. Before returning to the train we take a river cruise on Vltava river, that will allow our guests to view the festively illuminated town from different perspective.

Dinner will be served on board our private train this evening as we journey into Slovakia.

DAY 8 KOSICE

We start our final day of touring in one of the lesser-known gems of Central Europe, Kosice. The city was voted European Capital of Culture in 2013 and its medieval come cosmopolitan style is slowly drawing more visitors to this former cornerstone of Communist Czechoslovakia. We will take a highlights tour of the city, including the vast oval shaped central square, filled with relics from the 15th and 16th century.

This afternoon we will enjoy our final lunch on board the train before arriving into Budapest. On our arrival evening we check back into the Four Seasons Gresham Palace (or similar) for a one-night stay before a celebratory farewell dinner toasting the success of the tour.

DAY 9 BUDAPEST

Following breakfast on the final morning you will be transferred to the airport for onward flight departures.

There is also an option to extend your stay in Budapest for additional nights to explore more of this fascinating city.

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