

# Aurelian Odyssey: Paris to Cappadocia

<https://www.irtsociety.com/journey/aurelian-odyssey/>



## Overview

---

### The Highlights

- Travel through seven countries with nine nights aboard the private *Golden Eagle Danube Express*
- Five-star luxury hotel stays in Paris, Istanbul, and Cappadocia
- Cross the breathtaking Semmering Pass and ride the underground train through Postojna Caves
- Private classical concert in Vienna
- Explore UNESCO World Heritage Sites including Goreme Open Air Museum and the ruins of Hierapolis

- Walk the marble streets of Ephesus and discover Ozkonak Underground City
- Sightseeing tour of Istanbul, including a private Bosphorus cruise & Topkapi Palace
- Exclusive onboard Gala Dinner and optional sunrise hot-air balloon flight over Cappadocia

## The Tour

This extraordinary luxury rail journey aboard the *Golden Eagle Danube Express* travels from Paris through the heart of Europe and onward to Istanbul and Cappadocia. This elegant voyage blends iconic cities, dramatic landscapes, and refined onboard service, with highlights including the scenic Semmering Pass, the underground train through Postojna Caves, and private performances along the way.

Discover UNESCO World Heritage sites and ancient wonders such as Ephesus and Hierapolis with expertly guided tours. Immerse yourself in Istanbul's rich and historic culture, including a private Bosphorus cruise and visits to Topkapi Palace and the famous Spice Market.

Enjoy the comfort and relaxation of five-star service in your hotels and on the train, creating a seamless and unforgettable experience.

## Itinerary

---

### Day 1: Paris

On arrival in Paris, you'll be greeted and transported to a luxurious five-star hotel in the city center for a one-night stay.

Enjoy a welcome reception dinner with your fellow travelers.

### Day 2: Champagne

Enjoy a champagne drinks reception at Paris Gare de Lyon Station, where you will board the *Golden Eagle Danube Express*. Settle into your private cabin as the journey begins across the French countryside towards the train's first destination: Champagne.

Champagne is famous for its top-quality sparkling wines, with its beautifully maintained vineyards spreading across rolling hills in a captivating display of green and gold. Aside from its renowned drink, the region is also home to historic cathedrals and majestic architecture, telling stories of medieval greatness.

Enjoy lunch and dinner on board the train.

### Day 3: Vienna

After breakfast, enjoy the afternoon as you travel through the stunning Austrian countryside, passing through the magnificent Alps.

Enjoy drinks in the Bar Lounge Car, featuring an array of cocktails crafted by the train's world-class bar staff, as you travel towards Vienna.

In the early evening, arrive in Vienna, a city of elegance. Enjoy a delicious dinner and immerse yourself in culture with a private classical concert by the renowned Vienna Supreme Orchestra.

## Day 4: Postojna

Enjoy a relaxing morning onboard the train, taking in the beautiful scenery.

Indulge in a culinary masterclass led by the train's Catering Manager and Head Pastry Chef, offering a taste of opulence through confectionary delights.

At night, embark on a refined adventure into the mystical Postojna Caves. Board an underground train to explore magnificent halls adorned with intricate cave formations and mysterious creatures, accompanied by the soulful sounds of a saxophonist.

## Day 5: Belgrade

Begin your day with an exclusive tour of Tito's famous blue train, a relic from Yugoslavia's history. Then, treat yourself to a traditional Serbian feast, full of bold and diverse flavors.

Experience Serbian hospitality as you sample Rakija, Serbia's beloved drink, at the city's oldest brewery. Enjoy a tasting of different varieties of Rakija.

Before rejoining the train, enjoy free time to wander through Belgrade's bustling streets.

At night, join your fellow travelers to a luxurious Gala Dinner prepared by Head Chef Ramon Batta. Each dish takes you on a sensory journey, capturing the essence of our destinations with local flavors. Chef Ramon combines taste and culture in every course.

## Day 6: Sofia

Enjoy a morning of relaxation in the Bar Lounge Car as you head towards Bulgaria.

Sofia, one of Europe's oldest cities, offers a rich history dating back around 7,000 years. Explore its magnificent architecture, including Orthodox churches and historic ruins like the Roman city of Serdica. Visit the City Garden and admire landmarks like the National Theatre Ivan Vazov and the Presidential Palace.

Continue the adventure with a special experience in the Royal Palace. You'll enjoy a private performance by the famous Vanya Moneva Choir, known for their mesmerizing vocal masterpiece "Cosmic Voices," which enchanted audiences at the Olympic Games in Tokyo.

## Day 7: Istanbul

Arrival into the city of Istanbul.

The day is yours to explore this fascinating city at leisure before you enjoy a wonderful Farewell Dinner on the scenic banks of the Bosphorus.

Overnight stay at a five-star hotel.

## Day 8: Istanbul

Your day begins with a visit to the Hippodrome Square, the former social heart of Byzantium. Continue to the Blue Mosque, a stunning architectural marvel crowned by six minarets and adorned with over 20,000 blue tiles. This is followed by a visit to Hagia Sophia, a magnificent structure that served as a cathedral, mosque, and now a museum, showcasing the fusion of Christian and Islamic art.

After a refined lunch at a local restaurant, immerse yourself in the famous Spice Market, where you can find souvenirs, abundant spices and every variety of Turkish Delight.

This afternoon, you will be transferred to board the *Golden Eagle Danube Express* for your onward journey.

## Day 9: Izmir & Ephesus

This morning, wake to the vibrant city of Izmir, one of Turkey's most important port cities with a rich blend of Greek, Roman, and Ottoman influences. After a visit to Agora, a well-preserved marketplace from the Roman era, the journey continues to the fabled ancient city of Ephesus.

Wander through the marble streets of Ephesus, where grand temples, amphitheaters, and the awe-inspiring Library of Celsus remain as a testament to the city's former glory as one of the most important cities of the ancient Mediterranean. Feel history come alive as you stand where the philosopher Heraclitus once stood. After this enchanting tour, you'll re-board the train, ready for the next destination.

## Day 10: Denizli - Hierapolis & Laodicea

Arrive in Denizli for a full-day exploration of the mesmerizing ruins of Hierapolis, a UNESCO World Heritage site. Built atop the famous hot springs, this Greco-Roman city was a spiritual and healing center. Stroll through the ancient necropolis, and take in the grandeur of the theatre, with sweeping views over the surrounding landscape.

Continue to Laodicea, another ancient city that played a pivotal role in early Christian history, known for its wealth and textiles. The juxtaposition of sacred history and silent ruins will leave an indelible mark on your soul.

## Day 11: Ankara

Wake to the capital city, Ankara, a bustling metropolis where the pulse of modern Turkey beats

strong. Your visit will include the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations, a treasure trove of artefacts that trace the timeline of this region's civilizations, from the earliest Neolithic settlements to the Hittites and beyond.

Next, pay homage to Turkey's founding father at the grandiose Mausoleum of Ataturk. Set atop a hill, this monumental structure is not only a shrine to one of history's great leaders, but also an architectural masterpiece, embodying the strength and ambition of a newly born nation. Enjoy lunch at the elegant Divan Çukurhan, a historic inn turned into a luxury hotel, before re-boarding our train.

## Day 12: Cappadocia

Enjoy your final breakfast onboard before arriving in Kayseri and transferring to Cappadocia, known for its unique landscapes shaped by volcanic activity and erosion.

Your tour begins at the Ozkonak Underground City, a hidden subterranean labyrinth that once sheltered entire communities from invaders.

After lunch at Bizim Ev Restaurant, explore the magical Pasabag and Devrent Valleys, filled with fairy chimneys and dreamlike landscapes.

End the day relaxing at the luxurious five-star Yunak hotel for a two-night stay.

## Day 13: Cappadocia

Begin your day with an optional hot-air balloon ride, soaring over Cappadocia's stunning landscapes as the sunrise paints the valleys in golden light. This wonderful experience allows you to see the natural beauty of Cappadocia from a truly unique vantage point.

Afterward, visit the Goreme Open Air Museum, a UNESCO World Heritage site that holds some of the finest rock-cut churches in the world, adorned with ancient frescoes. A stop at Pigeon Valley, Uchisar, and Ortahisar towns will round off your day, before enjoying a lavish farewell dinner at the spectacular Maara Konak.

## Day 14: Cappadocia

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

## Dates & Prices

---

### 2026 Dates

September 12 - September 25

Accommodation	Double	Single	Deposit
Deluxe Class	\$32,800	\$48,000	25%
Superior Deluxe Class	\$41,550	\$58,500	25%

Prices are shown in USD and are based on quarterly exchange rates. Prices are subject to change quarterly. All prices are per person.

## More

---

For a first-hand report of Angela Walker's journey on the *Golden Eagle Danube Express*, [click here](#)

Included in the tour price:

- Arrival and departure transfers
- A generous drink allowance, including wine, with lunch and dinner
- All gratuities
- All off-train touring, with personal headsets to make it easy to hear your guide
- Complimentary tea, coffee, and bottled drinking water are available in your cabin 24 hours a day
- An on-board doctor, with medical facilities, is available, should the need arise
- 24-hour service attendant
- Porterage of bags; your bags will be stowed for you on the train and transported to your hotel at the end of your trip