Castles of Transylvania on the Danube Express: Istanbul to Budapest

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Overview

The Highlights

- Travel through four European countries, with four nights on board the *Golden Eagle Danube Express*

- Sightseeing tour of Istanbul

- Special dinner in Bran Castle, the alleged inspiration for Bram Stocker's Dracula

- Peles Castle in Romania, considered by many one of the most stunning castles in Europe

- Accommodation at five-star Four Seasons Bosphorus (or similar) in Istanbul for 1 night

- Accommodation at five-star Four Seasons Gresham Palace (or similar) in Budapest for 1 night

The Tour

Absorb the vibrant cultures, ancient castles, and spectacular scenery on this 7-day "Castles of Transylvania" journey aboard the *Golden Eagle Danube Express*.

Delve into the history surrounding Romania's most infamous historical figure, Vlad the Impaler – or as he is more commonly known, Count Dracula – on this 7-day rail cruise of Transylvania.

Itinerary

Day 1: Istanbul, Turkey

Arrive into Istanbul, where you will be met and transferred to the luxurious Four Seasons Bosphorus (or similar) for a one-night stay.

This evening, we will enjoy a welcome reception dinner, giving you the opportunity to meet your fellow travelers.

Day 2: Istanbul

Istanbul is the fabled city that spans Asia and Europe. Today, you will have the option to choose one of two of Istanbul's must-see historic sites and see how old meets new and east meets west.

The first option is to visit the Sultan Ahmet Mosque (the Blue Mosque), one of the most famous monuments in both the Turkish and Islamic worlds. The Blue Mosque a superb creation in the classical Ottoman style and features six towering minarets and 260 windows illuminating its vast main chamber, which is decorated with more than 20,000 Iznik tiles.

Alternatively, you may choose to visit Hagia Sophia, now a museum. Built in the 6th century by the Emperor Justinian, this was one of the largest basilicas in the Christian world. After the Ottoman conquest, it was converted into a mosque and is today one of the most magnificent museums in the world. Take a moment to linger and admire the fine Byzantine architecture.

Later this afternoon, board the *Golden Eagle Danube Express*, to begin your rail journey through Bulgaria and Romania to Budapest.

Day 3: Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria

This morning, enjoy the views from our private train as we climb over the Shipka Pass and arrive at our first stop, Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria's ancient capital. Nestled in a magnificent mountain

setting, the stone houses seem perched one above the other on the steep banks of the Yantra River.

Your tour today includes the superbly preserved medieval Tsarevets Hill and Castle. There will also be free time to wander through the narrow alleyways of the ancient city.

This evening, relax in the Bar Lounge Car before dinner as our train continues through the scenic landscape and heads across the Romanian border.

Day 4: Sinaia & Brasov, Romania

Overnight, the train twists and turns as it climbs over the Carpathian Mountains and threads its way through a dramatic landscape dotted with clear mountain streams.

This morning, we arrive in Sinaia for a tour of Peles Castle. The castle is considered by many one of the most stunning castles in Europe.

Returning to our private train for lunch, we continue onto Brasov in the afternoon for a visit to Bran Castle. Surrounded by an aura of mystery and legend and perched high atop a 200-foot-high rock, the 14th-century castle owes its fame to its imposing towers and turrets, as well as to the myth created around Bram Stoker's Dracula.

Following a tour of the castle and its surroundings, enjoy a gala dinner tonight inside the castle walls.

Day 5: Sighisoara & Sibiu, Romania

This morning, we make an early departure from Brasov and arrive after breakfast into Sighisoara for a walking tour of the town's main highlights. A World Heritage Site rumored to be the birthplace of Dracula, it is one of the best-preserved fortified medieval towns in Europe.

We return to the train for lunch as we continue onto Sibiu, known specifically for its Germanic architecture in the Old Town.

Tonight, we enjoy a final dinner on board our private train as we travel across the Great Hungarian Plain.

Day 6: Kecskemét & Lajosmizse, Hungary

This morning, we get the opportunity to explore Kecskemét, a fascinating city at the geographical center of Hungary, before the train heads to Lajosmizse for a spectacular 'Puszta' horse show.

We then arrive late afternoon at the historic Hungarian capital, Budapest, located on the banks of the magnificent Danube, where we will enjoy a one-night stay in the five-star Four Seasons Gresham Palace hotel (or similar).

This evening, we will enjoy a farewell reception dinner to reflect on your journey.

Day 7: Budapest, Hungary

Following breakfast in the hotel, you will be transferred to the airport for your flight home. Alternately, choose to extend your stay in Budapest for additional nights to explore more of this fascinating city.

Dates & Prices

2027 Dates

May 28 - June 3
October 12 - October 18
October 28 - November 3

Accommodation	Double	Single	Deposit
Deluxe Class	$15,600	$23,300	25%
Superior Deluxe Class	$20,100	$33,500	25%

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

2028 Dates

June 5 - June 11
October 2 - October 8
October 31 - November 6

Accommodation	Double	Single	Deposit
Deluxe Class	$16,300	$24,300	25%
Superior Deluxe Class	$21,050	$34,950	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

A minimum of emergency medical and evacuation travel insurance is required for this journey.

Extend this journey by booking the Balkan Explorer journey beforehand - beginning in Venice and ending in Istanbul.