

Christmas Markets of Central Europe

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Overview

The Highlights

- Travel through three European countries, with two 5-star hotel nights in Budapest, three nights on board the *Golden Eagle Danube Express*, and two 5-star hotel nights in Munich.
- Sample bountiful Christmas Markets in Budapest, Vienna, Salzburg, and Munich
- Enjoy a Christmas concert of classic Viennese folk songs
- Ride on a 'Fiaker' (horse-drawn carriage) and sample traditional Pirker gingerbread by St. Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna
- Tour iconic palaces: Hofburg Palace, Schönbrunn Palace, and Mirabell Palace

- Sample Munich's Bavarian traditions with mouth-watering Brätwurst and freshly roasted chestnuts
- Dynamic guided city tours across Central European cities

The Tour

Explore one of Central Europe's finest traditions — the 600-year-old holiday spirit of “Christkindlesmarkts,” or Christmas Markets. Enjoy a magical foray across Hungary, Austria, Germany, and the snow-capped Alps, all while relishing top-level service and dining aboard the [*Golden Eagle Danube Express*](#).

Itinerary

Day 1: Budapest

Arrivals day in Budapest, where you will be met and privately transferred to the Four Seasons Hotel Gresham Palace (or similar) for a two-night stay. Enjoy a welcome reception dinner this evening where you will meet your fellow travelers.

Day 2: Budapest

Budapest is actually 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 Castle District, 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 Budapest Nyugati station to enjoy a drinks reception before boarding the *Golden Eagle Danube Express* for departure. To mark the beginning of your voyage of a lifetime, a private brass band will perform as the train departs from the station, and the uniformed train staff will 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, before winding through Hungary’s whimsical wintery landscapes and arriving at our first stop – Vienna, Austria.

This evening, we travel to Schönbrunn Palace where an exclusive after-hours private entrance awaits. With the palace bathed in soft golden light, enjoy a guided tour reserved solely for our group – a rare opportunity to wander through the opulent halls and staterooms.

We will then return to the train to indulge in a decadent dinner – freshly prepared using the finest locally sourced ingredients and regional delicacies.

Day 4: Vienna

Vienna is a beautiful city to explore at any time of the year, but wintertime is an extra special experience. Exquisitely illuminated with hanging lights of the Christmas markets, Vienna's squares are brimming with culinary treats, handmade gifts, and quaint ornaments.

Today, we will enjoy a 'fiaker' horse and carriage ride through the heart of the city, arriving in style for a private classical concert at Palais Daun-Kinsky – an elegant Baroque palace setting the perfect scene for an intimate musical performance. Afterwards, we will embark on a panoramic city tour, with the option to visit the Museum of Fine Arts, Austria's largest art museum and a masterpiece of 19th-century architecture.

Alternatively, you may wish to explore the Christmas market at Maria-Theresien-Platz, or visit the magnificent Hofburg Palace, the historic seat of Habsburg power since 1279. Once the dynasty's winter residence, this grand complex now serves as the official home and workplace of the President of Austria – a fascinating glimpse into the city's imperial past and vibrant present.

Afterwards, we return to the *Golden Eagle Danube Express*, where a decadent dinner awaits. Enjoy a glass of fine wine as the train's elegant dining car becomes your sanctuary for the night, the rhythmic sound of the rails accompanying a perfect close to your magical Viennese adventure.

Day 5: Salzburg

Like a picture from the pages of a fairy-tale, Salzburg perfectly captures the charming coziness of the festive season. The city sits snugly in the northern foothills of the Alps, 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, located 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

After a leisurely breakfast onboard our private train, we embark on a visit to the illustrious Fortress Hohensalzburg, one of Austria's most iconic landmarks and a proud symbol of Salzburg's rich medieval heritage. Perched majestically atop the Festungsberg hill, this fortress has stood watch over the city for more than 900 years — a lasting testament to Salzburg's power and prestige. During our guided tour, we'll uncover its fascinating history, from its origins as an archbishop's residence to its later transformation into a mighty military stronghold.

Afterwards, enjoy free time in the heart of Salzburg. Stroll through the atmospheric old town, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, pausing for a slice of the city's famous Sachertorte or a warm coffee as church bells echo across the rooftops.

We then return to the train for lunch, savoring a freshly prepared meal in the elegant Restaurant Cars as we journey through spectacular Bavarian scenery, crossing the border into Germany en route to our final stop — Munich.

By late afternoon, we arrive and check in to our centrally located five-star hotel for a two-night stay. This evening, experience true Bavarian hospitality with a private visit to Paulaner am Nockherberg, one of Munich's most legendary beer halls and breweries. Hosted personally by the owner, our group will enjoy an exclusive beer tasting and dinner, pairing Paulaner's finest brews with a curated menu of traditional Bavarian delicacies — the perfect finale to a day steeped in history, culture, and culinary delight.

Day 7: Munich

We begin the day with a visit to Motorworld Munich, a haven for automotive enthusiasts featuring luxury and classic car showrooms, expert workshops, and immersive exhibition spaces celebrating the world of motoring. Afterwards, enjoy a guided walking tour of the celebrated Christmas market, where you can sample local delicacies, admire handcrafted gifts, and absorb the joyful spirit of the season.

For those who prefer to savor the festive atmosphere at their own pace, there will also be time for leisurely shopping in Munich's elegant boutiques — the perfect opportunity to find a final keepsake from your unforgettable journey.

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 flight departures.

Dates & Prices

2026 Dates

December 3 - December 10

Accommodation	Double	Single	Deposit
Deluxe Class	\$11,600	\$17,450	25%
Superior Deluxe Class	\$15,000	\$24,500	25%

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

2027 Dates

December 3 - December 10

Accommodation	Double	Single	Deposit
Deluxe Class	\$13,100	\$19,700	25%
Superior Deluxe Class	\$17,000	\$27,600	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