

Dalmatian Express: Dubrovnik to Budapest

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Overview

The Highlights

- Expert-led tours of Budapest, Dubrovnik, Belgrade, Sarajevo, Mostar, and many smaller towns in between;
- Narrow-gauge heritage railway from Sargan Vitası to the town of Visegrad in Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- Walking tour of Sighisoara, rumored to be the birthplace of Dracula — and one of the best-preserved fortified medieval towns in Europe;
- Walking tour of picturesque Tokaj, the center of the Tokaj-Hegyalja wine district. After the tour, enjoy lunch and a wine-tasting at one of the local cellars;

- Two nights at luxury hotel in Dubrovnik;
- Two nights at five-star Four Seasons Gresham Palace Hotel in Budapest;
- Six nights on Europe's most comfortable luxury train: *Golden Eagle Danube Express*;
- Fully inclusive of meals, drinks, gratuities, touring, & transfers.

The Tour

Experience Southern Europe from an entirely different perspective on the Dalmatian Express on the [Golden Eagle Danube Express](#). Glide by rail from historic Dubrovnik on the stunning Dalmatian Coast through the captivating Balkans to Budapest.

Itinerary

Day 1: Dubrovnik, Croatia

Arrive in Dubrovnik and transfer to a luxury hotel for a two-night stay. Enjoy a welcome reception dinner in the elegant surrounds of the hotel, where you will meet your fellow travelers on this highly anticipated journey.

Day 2: Dubrovnik, Croatia

Since its foundation in the 13th century, Dubrovnik has been attacked and restored many times over. It is one of the great cities of the Mediterranean, essentially unchanged for 700 years.

Embark on a tour of the city, traveling through Ploce Gate to visit the Franciscan Monastery, with one of the world's oldest pharmacies, the Old Harbour, St. Laurence Fortress and the Rector's Palace.

Day 3: Mostar & Sarajevo, Bosnia & Herzegovina

After breakfast, travel by bus (81 mi) from Dubrovnik to the historic city of Mostar, a crossroads of many civilizations, cultures and three religions. Mostar was one of the most important cities of the Ottoman Empire. The town's renowned stone arch bridge linking the Christian and Muslim areas was re-built in the summer of 2004.

Visit Turkish House and the mosque before walking through the narrow bazaar streets, where you can shop for traditional souvenirs and handicrafts.

The *Golden Eagle Danube Express* is waiting at the station in Mostar. Settle into your private en-suite cabins as you make the short journey across Bosnia & Herzegovina to Sarajevo.

The Bosnian capital of Sarajevo is an intriguing blend of Eastern and Western culture; it has mosques and minarets, an ancient bazaar and an atmospheric old Turkish quarter. Sarajevo suffered from the longest siege of a capital city in the history of modern warfare.

Discover the city's poignant history through a truly absorbing tour detailing the horrors of the Balkan War. The scars of war are still evident as we travel past war-torn buildings and make a special visit to the Tunnel Museum under Sarajevo Airport. Your guide, who lived through the 1992-1996 conflict, brings to life in touching fashion the struggles the citizens of Sarajevo faced during the siege of the city.

Day 4: Belgrade, Serbia

Enjoy the pleasures of life on board the *Golden Eagle Danube Express* as the train winds through the countryside towards Serbia. Arrive this morning in the Serbian capital, Belgrade — which was also the former capital of Yugoslavia. Located at the strategic meeting point of the Danube and Sava Rivers, this cosmopolitan city has fortifications from Celtic times, medieval tombs and Turkish baths.

Your full-day city tour includes the 'House of Flowers' – the mausoleum of Josip Tito, the Town Hall, Republic Square and Knez Mihajlova Street, 'Varos' Gate, and a visit to the mighty Kalemegdan Fortress.

Day 5: Podgorica & Bar, Montenegro

In the morning, arrive in Podgorica. Given it has undergone five name changes, passed through the empire of the Romans, Ottomans and the Austro-Hungarians, and twice been wiped off the map entirely, it is little wonder that Podgorica seems permanently gripped by an identity crisis. Its streets are a hotchpotch of Ottoman oddments, Austrian shopfronts, communist tower blocks and modern shopping malls.

Spend the afternoon in Bar and enjoy a short sightseeing tour of the charming coastal town.

Day 6: Sargan Vitasi, Serbia

Today, take a section of the scenic narrow-gauge heritage railway from Sargan Vitasi towards the town of Visegrad. The full line is an engineering marvel through the mountains of Serbia. The system of loops and hairpin bends is known as the 'Sargan Eight'. The average gradient is 1 in 55, and the line goes through 22 tunnels; the longest at the summit is a mile long.

Day 7: Timisoara & Sighisoara, Montenegro

Arrive early morning into Timisoara, particularly known for its Secessionist architecture. The central square, Piata Victoriei, is surrounded by baroque buildings and the Metropolitan Orthodox Cathedral, with its mosaic-patterned roof tiles and icon gallery. Explore the first European city that used the horse-drawn trams (1869) and electrical street lightning (1889) and the first Romanian city that, in December 1989, declared itself free of the Communist regime following

the start of the revolutionary uprising.

Enjoy lunch back on board the train and take time to relax before a late afternoon arrival 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. Burgher houses and ornate churches line its cobbled streets.

Day 8: Sibiu & Cluj Napoca, Romania

This morning continue onto Sibiu, known specifically for its Germanic architecture in the Old Town due to the legacy of 12th-century Saxon settlers. The remains of medieval walls and towers, including the 13th-century Council Tower which connects the two main squares, are still visible today.

Return to the train for lunch as we head for the university city of Cluj Napoca, located in the heart of Transylvania, where we enjoy a city tour. No visit to Transylvania is complete without trying chimney cake (Kurtoskalacs). This pastry was created in Transylvania and it is baked to perfection here.

Day 9: Debrecen & Tojak, Hungary

In the morning, head across the Great Hungarian Plain to its capital city Debrecen, a pleasant provincial town with colorful piazzas and spacious parks. Enjoy a walking sightseeing tour through the city's iconic streets and squares.

Tokaj is a picturesque historical town of old buildings nestled by the confluence of two rivers. It is the center of the Tokaj-Hegyalja wine district where the mineral-rich volcanic rock makes for strong-bodied sweet wines. Enjoy a lunch and wine tasting at one of the local cellars.

At night arrive at our final destination, Budapest, where you will be transferred to the Four Seasons Hotel Gresham Palace for a two-night stay.

Day 10: Budapest, Hungary

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 River to the commercial heart of Pest. Our city tour includes the Royal Palace, St. Mathias Church and a panoramic city view from Gellert Hill. We will also see the Citadel, the Opera House, St Stephen's Cathedral, Heroes Square and the City Park.

The rest of the day is at leisure. Stroll along the banks of the Danube, visit the historic Great Market Hall with its endless variety of delicious foods and wines, or head to one of the city's famous thermal baths for a rejuvenating dip. Alternatively, you can relax at the hotel and indulge in the luxurious spa with infinity-edge pool or make use of the state-of-the-art fitness center.

Day 11: Budapest, Hungary

Following breakfast on the final morning, transfer to the airport for onward departures.

Why not extend your stay in Budapest to explore more of the city at your leisure? Please contact us for hotel options, touring programs, and rates.

Dates & Prices

More

Included in the tour price:

- Arrival and departure transfers
- A generous drinks allowance, including wine, with lunch and dinner
- All gratuities
- All off-train touring and entrance fees, 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
- Porterage of bags; your bags will be transferred between the hotels and the train