Eastern Europe Discovery on the Danube Express: Budapest to Vienna

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Overview

The Highlights

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

- Music lovers rejoice! Enjoy a private Chopin recital in Warsaw, organ concert at Oliwa Cathedral in Gdansk, visit to Mozart's former residence, and a private concert at the House of Mozart in Vienna, featuring the Vienna Supreme Orchestra;

- Visit the somber Auschwitz-Birkenau World Heritage Site for a deeply moving guided tour;

- Discover the rich history of coastal Poland, a key location in World War II;

- Explore the transformation of Berlin as you travel around this modern unified city by bicycle, bus — or even drive your own VEB Trabant;

- Learn about the 800-year old history of winegrowing in Saxony at a local vineyard with wine tasting;

- Take in Prague from the Vltava River aboard a relaxing cruise by private boat;

- Delve into Vienna's lively Nashmarkt or explore the famed Schönbrunn Palace.

The Tour

Discover the centuries-old influence of renowned empires as you take a 12-day voyage across modern Eastern Europe aboard the *Golden Eagle Danube Express*. Take in the incredible architecture, intriguing history, and delicious delicacies of some of Europe's most iconic cities. And music lovers rejoice — several special recitals and concerts are included.

Itinerary

Day 1: Budapest

On arrival in Budapest, you will be met at the airport 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, Opera House, St Stephen’s Cathedral, Heroes Square, and the City Park.

Enjoy the rest of the day at your 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 their spa or fitness facilities.

Day 3: Budapest

This morning is at leisure for further exploration of Budapest.

This afternoon, enjoy a drinks reception at Budapest Nyugati station before boarding the *Golden Eagle Danube Express*. Your steward will show you to your private cabin, where you can rest and unpack as the train departs.

This evening, enjoy your first dinner on board, served in the lovely dining cars.

Day 4: Krakow

This morning the train makes a scheduled stop at Oswiecim, the station for Auschwitz-Birkenau, where we will have a tw-hour visit to the location of the evocative concentration camp and museum. Declared by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site, we embark upon a deeply moving guided tour that stands as a stark reminder of the horrors that took place here.

We will continue by coach into the center of stunning Krakow, where we have lunch overlooking the beautiful Old Town Square. Once a royal capital with an extraordinary history, and now a lively university town with fashionable bars and restaurants, Krakow is a fascinating city with beautiful monuments and an exuberant atmosphere.

After lunch we will walk the streets of the Old Town, including a visit to Wawel Royal Cathedral, followed by a panoramic tour of the Kazimierz Jewish district.

Day 5: Warsaw

This morning we arrive to the Polish capital of Warsaw, a city of extraordinary transformation once almost destroyed by war. When you cross the Vistula River and look at the Old Town from a distance, you will be struck by the unusual panorama of the city: skyscrapers rise above the red roofs of the Old Town as historical buildings blend in harmoniously with modern architecture.

Our guided tour takes us on a journey through the Old Town and along the Royal Route before heading into the area of the former Warsaw Ghetto. The Old Town boasts a nostalgic charm with its colorful townhouses and the exceptional atmosphere of its narrow streets. The Royal Route connects three former residences of Polish rulers: Royal Castle, Royal Lazienki, and Wilanów Palace. Our tour ends at Lazienki Royal Park, where we enjoy lunch at the Belvedere Restaurant situated in the park.

Later, we are privileged to experience a private Chopin piano recital at one of the historical palaces in the park before returning to the train for dinner and onward travel.

Day 6: Malbork and Gdansk

This morning we visit Malbork whose castle, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, was the seat of the Teutonic State from 1280. Teutonic Knights originally built a fortified monastery here, later known as the Upper Castle. In the 13th century, a huge brick fortress was completed and stands overlooking the River Nogat. The museum houses valuable collections of artistic amber wares, old weapons, and military equipment.

We return to the train for lunch and continue our journey through Poland towards Gdansk.

The coastal region of Poland has an important place in Polish consciousness as a key location at the start of World War II in September 1939. We spend the afternoon exploring the waterfront shipbuilding city of Gdansk. Our visit will include the remarkable European Solidarity Centre in Gdansk, which presents the history of the political changes leading to the collapse of communism and the Soviet Union.

Later, we enjoy an organ concert at Oliwa Cathedral and a visit to Dlugi Targ (Long Market), one of the most beautiful streets of old Gdansk.

Day 7: Berlin

While enjoying breakfast on board, we will arrive into Berlin for a full day's program. After years of division, Berlin has risen once again to become one of Europe's most glamorous capital cities, with superb museums, fine churches, wide boulevards, and a thriving cultural life.

You have the choice this morning to see the city either by bicycle or bus. Both tours include highlights of both East and West Berlin and the Reichstag, the famous Renaissance style building that once again houses Germany's parliament. After the tour, enjoy lunch with stunning views of the Brandenburg Gate and the Reichstag.

This afternoon you can choose to take in more of the city’s sights including the East Side Gallery Berlin Wall memorial, with the opportunity to drive a VEB Trabant - your very own authentic East German vehicle. A unique hands-on experience across the once-divided city of Berlin!

Or, for guests who do not want the driving experience option, there will be free time to explore on your own. Suggestions include a visit to one of the city's many museums, a contemplative stroll through nearby memorials, or shopping along the elegant Kurfürstendamm boulevard.

Day 8: Dresden & Prague

This morning we arrive in the city of Dresden, located in the region of Saxony. We will leave the city behind to enjoy a visit to nearby Wackerbarth Castle, nestled in the delightful landscapes of the Elbe Valley. The castle has become synonymous with elegant wines, sparkling wines, and Saxon joie de vivre. It now presents the 800-year-old tradition of winegrowing in Saxony in its most stylish form. Here we will have a tour of the vineyard and experience a wine tasting featuring three of the estate’s wines.

We return to the train for a late lunch as we head to the Czech Republic. Late afternoon arrival into Prague, where we will enjoy dinner in a local restaurant and have time to wander through the Old Town this evening.

Day 9: Prague

Prague is one of the most beautifully preserved cities in Europe. It spans the Vltava River and is dominated by the 9th- century Prague Castle, a stunning sight that can be seen almost anywhere in the city. Our tour takes in the Old Town Square, with its many historic buildings and Astronomical Clock; the historic 14th-century Charles Bridge; and the Jewish Quarter.

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

Later, we join a vintage tram to travel through the city up the hill to Prague Castle and the gothic St. Vitus Cathedral. The cathedral's hillside location overlooking the city provides great views of the surrounding architectural gems and river. To round out our evening, we will take a relaxing cruise up the River Vltava by private boat, with cocktails served on board.

Day 10: Salzburg

Today we explore the heart of Salzburg, 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, renowned for its wrought-iron trade signs and as the birthplace of Mozart.

Then, we will visit Hellbrunn Palace, which has enchanted its visitors with its 'trick' fountains for more than 400 years. The idyllic location in the south of Salzburg served as a summer retreat for the Prince-Archbishop of Salzburg. Its baroque exterior conceals an exuberant interior made for entertaining, though the real draws are the whimsical trick fountains (Wasserspiele) in the gardens.

Day 11: Vienna

Today we enjoy our final breakfast on board as we leave Salzburg on a majestic morning's journey over the breathtaking Semmering Pass before a lunchtime arrival into Vienna. There, we will say goodbye to the *Golden Eagle Danube Express* and its crew.

A seductive metropolis of elaborate palaces, renowned coffee houses, classical music, and enchanting opera, Vienna is a magnificent city that continues to enthrall. Today's program will allow you to sample the lively Naschmarkt, home to over 100 food and antique stalls; the famous Schönbrunn Palace; or free time to explore on your own.

This evening, we will enjoy a private concert at the House of Mozart, featuring the Vienna Supreme Orchestra.

Overnight at a five-star hotel in the city.

Day 12: Vienna

Following breakfast, you will be transferred to the airport for onward flight departures.

Dates & Prices

2027 Dates

June 7 - June 18

Accommodation	Double	Single	Deposit
Deluxe Class	$26,300	$39,400	25%
Superior Deluxe Class	$33,600	$56,000	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 9 - June 20

Accommodation	Double	Single	Deposit
Deluxe Class	$27,500	$41,150	25%
Superior Deluxe Class	$35,050	$58,450	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