# Grand Alpine Express on the Danube Express: Budapest to Venice

https://www.irtsociety.com/journey/grand-alpine-express-budapest-to-venice/



## Overview

### The Highlights

- Travel through Hungary, Austria, Switzerland, Slovenia,and Italy, with six nights onboard the comfortable *Golden Eagle Danube Express;*

- Two nights at a five-star hotel in Budapest, and two nights at a five-star hotel in Venice;

- City tours of Budapest, Vienna, Innsbruck, Zürich, Ljubljana and Venice;

- Lunch on beautiful Lake Como;

- Visit stunning Lake Bled in Slovenia;

- Scenic rail climbs at Semmering & St. Gotthard Pass;

- Ride on the Achenseebahn, Europe's oldest steam-powered cog railway;

- Private classical concert from the Vienna Residence Orchestra at Palais Daun Kinsky;

- Fully inclusive of meals, drinks, gratuities, touring, & transfers.

## The Tour

The Grand Alpine Express is a scenic feast for the eyes. From the classic capital cities of Budapest and Vienna, venture deep into the Austrian Tyrol before heading across the valleys of the Swiss Alps and onward through the Italian Lake District as you visit Como before heading into the lesser-known but equally beautiful country of Slovenia and its crown jewel, Lake Bled.

Traverse some of the most scenic railway lines in the world as the *Golden Eagle Danube Express* weaves its way through tunnels, across viaducts, and over mountain passes. Journey's end will be in the stunning maritime city of Venice, an outstanding mixture of Gothic and Renaissance palaces perched on the edge of the Italian coast. A perfect end to a memorable journey of alpine discovery.

Click here for a beautiful brochure with information about the Grand Alpine & *Danube Express.*

# Itinerary

## Day 1: Budapest, Hungary

On arrival in Budapest, you will be met at the airport and transferred to the Four Seasons Hotel Gresham Palace for a two-night stay. Enjoy a welcome reception dinner in the elegant surrounds of this art nouveau landmark, with its panoramic views across the River Danube, where you can meet your fellow travelers on this highly-anticipated journey.

## Day 2: 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.

Begin the day with a guided visit to the Hungarian Parliament Building. From here, a scenic coach tour takes you across the river to the historic Buda side, where you will explore the charming old town and Fisherman’s Bastion, enjoying panoramic views over the city.

This afternoon, continue your tour to the elegant Hungarian State Opera House for an exclusive private concert, an unforgettable cultural highlight in one of Budapest’s most magnificent venues.

The remainder of the day is at your leisure to explore this beautiful city and relax with the luxurious amenities of your hotel.

## Day 3: Vienna, Austria & Semmering Pass

The day begins with a drinks reception at Budapest Nyugati Station before boarding the *Golden Eagle Danube Express* for your scenic journey to Vienna. Settle into your private en-suite cabin before enjoying lunch in the dining cars.

Arrive in Vienna for a day full of discovery. Enjoy a horse-drawn carriage ride, a visit to Schönbrunn Palace, or free time to explore at your leisure. Later, witness a spectacular classical performance from the Vienna Residence Orchestra at Palais Daun Kinsky

In the late afternoon, rejoin the train and depart through central Austria toward the Alps. As evening falls, enjoy one of Europe's most spectacular rail journeys as we climb over the Semmering Pass, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

## Day 4: Lake Achen & Innsbruck, Austria

Continuing through the Alps, pass the renowned skiing village of Kitzbühel before arriving at Jenbach. After lunch, embark on a scenic drive to the idyllic Lake Achen.

Here, step back in time aboard the historic Achenseebahn, the oldest steam cog railway in Europe, as it carries you gently upwards to the shores of Lake Achensee. On arrival,  cruise across its crystal-clear alpine waters by boat, while enjoying coffee and traditional strudel onboard.

Later, continue to Innsbruck for a guided walking tour of this compact and picturesque city.

## Day 5: Zürich, Switzerland

Enjoy your morning on board the *Danube Express* and admire the scenery of Vorarlberg unfold as you pass through St. Anton, before crossing into Liechtenstein and then into Switzerland.

Here, the train traces the entire length of Lake Zürich, offering stunning views of shimmering waters framed by mountains, before arriving in the city itself. A classic Swiss fondue lunch awaits, offering an authentic taste of local heritage in the heart of the city.

This afternoon, you may choose to join a comprehensive guided walking tour explores Zürich's historic center, including a visit to the remarkable Fraumünster Church, followed by some free time at leisure. Alternatively, for those drawn to fine art, a brief guided walk is followed by a visit to the distinguished Kunsthaus Zürich.

Later, rejoin the train where you can relax and enjoy dinner on board as the train continues its scenic journey towards Italy, winding through breathtaking Alpine landscapes.

## Day 6: St. Gotthard Pass, Switzerland & Lake Como

Today promises some of the most spectacular scenery of the journey.

Departing Zürich, you will travel along the shores of Lake Zug and Lake Lucerne before beginning the dramatic ascent towards the Gotthard Pass. Passing through the historic Gotthard Tunnel,

descend southwards through Lugano and cross into Italy, where the landscape softens into the beauty of Lake Como.

On arrival, embark on a private boat cruise across the lake's serene waters, framed by towering mountains and elegant villas. Disembark in the enchanting lakeside town of Bellagio for a scenic lunch and time at leisure to explore.

Returning by boat to Como, enjoy a guided tour of this historic town before rejoining the *Golden Eagle Danube Express.*

Dinner is served on board as the train continues its onward journey.

## Day 7: Verona, Italy

Enjoy a relaxing breakfast as the train arrives in Verona.

Disembark to visit the city's most extraordinary monument: the magnificent Verona Arena. Built in the 1st century AD, this remarkably preserved Roman amphitheater is one of the finest of its kind in the world and remains in active use today, hosting internationally acclaimed opera performances beneath the open sky.

Following a traditional Italian lunch, enjoy a guided walking tour through the historic center, discovering elegant piazzas, medieval lanes and architectural treasures that reveal the city's layered past.

The remainder of the afternoon is at your leisure to explore at your own pace. Rejoin the train for dinner and overnight on board.

## Day 8: Lake Bled & Ljubljana, Slovenia

The train crosses the border into Slovenia this morning. Admire the ever-changing views of alpine peaks as the train climbs through the Julian Alps before arriving at the stunning Lake Bled.

Guests can step aboard a traditional Pletna boat for a tranquil trip across the lake to its iconic island church. Alternatively, opt to explore the island and climb to Bled Castle, perched above the water, for breathtaking views over the lake and towards Slovenia's highest mountain. Or, if you're seeking a more leisurely experience, you can simply circle the island by boat before rejoining the bus for a panoramic drive to the charming medieval village of Radovljica, including a visit to a renowned chocolate shop for a delightful tasting.

Lunch is served at the elegant Tito's Villa, after which you take a short coach ride to Slovenia's enchanting capital, Ljubljana. Here, enjoy a guided walking tour through the historic center, followed by a scenic boat trip along the Ljubljanica River, winding directly through the heart of the city. Time permitting, there will also be an opportunity to explore at leisure and soak up the atmosphere of this vibrant, picturesque capital.

## Day 9: Postojna, Slovenia & Venice, Italy

After an overnight journey to Postojna, begin the morning with a private visit to the famous Postojna Caves, marveling at one of Europe's largest and most spectacular karst cave systems.

Continue south towards Mestre, and watch as the route then curves onto the three-mile causeway across the Venice Lagoon.

In the late afternoon, arrive at Venice Santa Lucia Station, situated on the Grand Canal, and bid farewell to the *Golden Eagle Danube Express* crew. Board a private boat to to be transferred to a centrally located hotel for a two-night stay.

After dinner, enjoy a private evening tour of St Mark's Basilica, offering a rare and unforgettable opportunity to experience one of Venice's most extraordinary landmarks in a more intimate setting.

## Day 10: Venice, Italy

Today, you may choose from a two carefully curated excursions. First, you may opt to join a guided walking tour beginning at the iconic Rialto Bridge. Stroll through Venice's winding streets and across its many bridges, uncovering the city's hidden corners and everyday life. The walk is followed by a short gondola ride, before enjoying lunch at an authentic Venetian restaurant.

Alternatively, embark on an excursion to the famous Venetian islands. Visit Murano for a traditional glassblowing demonstration and time to browse local workshops, before continuing to Burano, a charming group of small islands renowned for their brightly colored houses and centuries-old lacemaking tradition. Enjoy a guided walk through the island and a visit to a celebrated lacemaker, before rejoining the group back in Venice for lunch.

In the afternoon, enjoy free time to explore at your leisure, or continued the guided discovery with a walking tour of the magnificent St Mark's Square, the historic and cultural heart of the city.

The day concludes with a Farewell Dinner at the hotel, a perfect end to your alpine adventure.

## Day 11: Venice, Italy

Following breakfast in the hotel, transfer to the airport for onward departures, or opt to extend your Venice stay.

For a particularly elegant grand finale, consider a Venice-Paris onward journey on the *Venice Simplon-Orient-Express.*

# Dates & Prices

## 2027 Dates

April 30 - May 10

August 22 - September 1

| Accommodation | Double | Single | Deposit |
|---|---|---|---|
| Deluxe Class | $25,300 | $37,800 | 25% |
| Superior Deluxe Class | $32,400 | $54,200 | 25% |

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

## 2028 Dates

May 5 - May 15
September 2 - September 12

| Accommodation | Double | Single | Deposit |
|---|---|---|---|
| Deluxe Class | $26,400 | $39,450 | 25% |
| Superior Deluxe Class | $33,850 | $56,550 | 25% |

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

# 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.