

Paris to Istanbul Annual Journey on the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express

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Overview

The Highlights

- The *Venice Simplon-Orient-Express* itself, with lovingly restored 1920s-era cars, five-star dining and stellar service;
- New for 2023: drinks now included during meals and in the bar car! (Premium wines, champagne and liquors at additional cost. Grand Suite guests also get free-flowing champagne in their cabins);

- Stays at exclusive, five-star hotels in Budapest and Bucharest;
- Romania's Peles Castle, built in 1883 and considered one of Europe's finest royal palaces;
- Budapest city tour, including Danube cruise and lunch at a local restaurant;
- City tour and private dinner in Bucharest;
- Sumptuous four-course dinner each night on the train, including cheeseboard, coffee, tea and petit fours;
- Musical events throughout;
- A perfect blend of three overnights on luxury train and two nights in deluxe hotels;
- The ambience of the train's lounge car, with live pianist in the evenings;
- Private transfers to/from station/hotel in Paris; shared small group transfers in Istanbul to/from station/hotel (Grand Suite guests have private transfers in both cities).

The Tour

The Paris to Istanbul journey (or vice versa) is THE most exclusive and glamorous way to celebrate a milestone anniversary or birthday.

This once-a-year, six-day luxury rail voyage from Paris to Istanbul or from Istanbul to Paris on the [Venice Simplon-Orient-Express \(VSOE\)](#) is a true 'trip of a lifetime'. Travel through seven countries in elegant style.

New for 2023: this iconic journey is more inclusive than ever before. Enjoy private transfers in Paris, small group transfers in Istanbul (Grand Suite guests have private transfers in both cities), and included drinks during meals and in the bar car throughout your journey (Premium wines, champagne and liquors at additional cost). Grand Suite guests also get free-flowing champagne in their cabins.

Food, wine, service, off-train tours, atmosphere: everything is over-the-top — especially if you book one of the new Grand Suites. (For more info on the Grand Suites, read [Rachel Hardy's blog post and see her magnificent photos.](#))

There is palpable excitement at every stop as the *VSOE* luxury train travels through France, Switzerland, Austria, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey. The world's most authentic luxury train, the *VSOE* is the real deal, complete with coal-heated sleeping cars and windows that open. Enjoy gourmet meals in one of the train's three sumptuous diners, or a late-night drink in the classy bar car.

Itinerary

Day 1: Board VSOE in Paris

Your private driver meets you at your hotel and transfers you to the station today for a mid-afternoon departure.

Board the gleaming blue and gold carriages of the *Venice Simplon-Orient-Express* at Paris' Gare de l'Est station. After being greeted by your personal steward, settle into your private cabin. Later, enjoy a delicious gourmet dinner in one of the beautiful restaurant cars and perhaps linger in the bar car before retiring to your cabin for the night.

Day 2: Hungary

Relax and enjoy the sublime scenery as the *Venice Simplon-Orient-Express* travels into Hungary. Continental breakfast is served in your cabin, and lunch will be taken in one of the opulent dining cars. On arrival in Budapest, you will be transferred to your luxury hotel for a one-night stay. Prepare for a wonderful cocktail reception and dinner on the River Danube.

Day 3: Budapest

After breakfast at your hotel, enjoy a guided tour of the historic Budapest, including the majestic Hungarian Parliament Building. Lunch will be at a local restaurant featuring Hungarian specialties. Rejoin the train late afternoon and perhaps enjoy an aperitif in the Bar Car before dinner as the train travels toward Romania. Overnight on board.

Day 4: Peles Castle; Bucharest

Savor continental breakfast in your cabin as the train rolls through Romania. A delicious brunch is served in the dining cars as you approach the mountain town of Sinaia. Disembark for a visit to beautiful Peles Castle, a fairytale palace built by Romania's King Carol as his summer retreat. The castle was also visited by the very first Orient-Express passengers in 1883, at the King's personal invitation. Rejoin the train to complete the short journey to Bucharest, and transfer to your hotel. Dinner with musical entertainment will be served at a private venue in Bucharest.

Day 5: Bulgaria

This morning, rejoin the *Venice Simplon-Orient-Express* as the train travels south across the Danube and into Bulgaria. After another fabulous lunch on board, this afternoon, a stop is made at the delightful seaside resort of Varna on the Black Sea coast, where you alight for an aperitif on a private estate. An unforgettable dinner is served as the train crosses the ancient Thracian Plain. Celebrate your last night on board the *Venice Simplon-Orient-Express* with a drink in the bar car while enjoying the resident pianist.

Day 6: Istanbul

Continental breakfast is served in the comfort of your cabin as the train approaches Turkey. A stop is made at the border crossing point of Kapikule for customs formalities. After a special Turkish-inspired lunch on board, the *Venice Simplon-Orient-Express* arrives in Istanbul at the end of a fascinating and unique journey across seven countries and cultures.

Complimentary small group transfers to city center hotels in Istanbul upon arrival (Grand Suite guests have private transfers included).

Reverse itinerary

Day 1: Istanbul

Complimentary small group transfers are included today from your hotel to the train station. (Grand Suite guests will be transferred privately).

Late afternoon, step aboard the gleaming blue and gold carriages of the *Venice Simplon-Orient-Express* as the train departs Istanbul. Dinner is a sumptuous affair, prepared on board by our skilled chefs and served in one of the beautifully restored dining cars. Afterwards linger in the Bar Car, listening to the pianist tickle the ivories of the baby grand, before retiring for the night.

Day 2: Bucharest

Begin the day with continental breakfast served in your cabin as the train winds its way through Bulgaria and into Romania. Soak up the scenery rolling by your window as you enjoy a delicious brunch in the dining car. Soon afterwards the train arrives in Bucharest. Transfer to your Bucharest hotel for a one-night stay. Dinner this evening will be in a private venue with musical entertainment — always a highlight of the journey.

Day 3: Peles Castle

This morning rejoin the train and enjoy a delicious brunch in the restaurant cars as the train journeys towards the mountain town of Sinaia and its Peles Castle, the summer home of the former King Carol. This beautiful jewel box of a castle was also visited by the very first Orient Express guests in October 1883, at the personal invitation of the King. Return to the train in the late afternoon for a relaxing journey towards Hungary. Enjoy another delectable dinner and night on board.

Day 4: Budapest

On arrival in Budapest, enjoy a short orientation coach ride through the city followed by a panoramic cruise along the Danube, soaking up the city's graceful architecture and timeless beauty. Arrive at your hotel after lunch.

Enjoy time at leisure in the Hungarian capital before a delightful dinner at a nearby private venue for dinner featuring local specialties. Overnight in an elegant Budapest hotel.

Day 5: Hungary

Rejoin the train in time for lunch, which is served as it winds through the vineyards and forests of Hungary. Enjoy a leisurely day on board and a final delectable dinner in one of the beautiful dining cars.

Day 6: Paris

Enjoy your final breakfast in your cabin as the train travels through Switzerland before entering France. Early morning, alight to take a stroll around a celebrated champagne house. Reboard the train for a delicious farewell lunch prepared by the skilled chefs before all too soon the train arrives into Paris Gare de l'Est station.

Your private transfer driver will meet you at the station and transfer you to your Paris hotel for a seamless end to your adventure.

Dates & Prices

2023 Dates

August 25 - August 30

September 1 - September 6

ACCOMMODATION	Double	Single	Deposit
Historic Twin	From £17,500	From £35,000	50%
Suite	From £35,000	From £70,000	50%
Grand Suite	From £55,000	From £110,000	50%

All pricing is per person.

Tour is priced in British pounds. For approximate pricing in US Dollars or other currencies, view estimated exchange rates.

Pricing varies based on availability and is subject to change daily. Contact us to confirm pricing and availability for your desired accommodation. No installment plans or interim payments are possible with this particular journey.

To book, or for more information: Please call us at (800) 478-4881 (1-502-897-1725 if outside the US/Canada), or e-mail us. You can also fill out our booking request form online.

More

All meals and off-train tours included except where noted. Traditional gratuities to train staff not included.

New for 2023: this iconic journey is more inclusive than ever before. Enjoy private transfers in Paris, small group transfers in Istanbul (Grand Suite guests have private transfers in both cities), and included drinks during meals and in the bar car throughout your journey (Premium wines, champagne and liquors at additional cost).

Grand Suite guests also have the following amenities included: private check-in, private transfers to/from train station, complimentary designer bathrobes, all-suite accommodation at hotels in Bucharest and Budapest, free-flowing Champagne on board, private off-train excursions, and meals that can be served in your suite if you desire maximum privacy. Each Grand Suite includes a private bathroom with shower, washbasin, and toilet, living area with space for private dining, and a sofa which can be converted into an additional bed in the evening.

See a full description of the [Grand Suites and other VSOE accommodations](#).

Alert: These journeys typically sell out about a year in advance. Contact us to ASAP to reserve your cabin.

Note: Turkish visa required in advance for this journey for US citizens. Visa needs for travelers from other countries may differ.

We are happy to arrange any pre- or post-tour extensions.

Suggested tour extensions:

- Pre- or post-tour stay in Paris with visit to Louvre, Eiffel Tower, and Musee d'Orsay with private guide.
- Pre- or post-tour 3-night stay in Istanbul. Visit Hagia Sophia, Blue Mosque, Cistern, nostalgic tram, and spice market with private guide.
- Cruise opportunities from Istanbul abound. Please inquire.