Golden Eagle Danube Express

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Overview

On May 2, 2015, the Danube Express officially became the *Golden Eagle Danube Express*. Golden Eagle Luxury Trains of UK took over operations and held a renaming ceremony, attended by His Royal Highness Prince Michael of Kent.

The *Golden Eagle Danube Express* carries up to 62 passengers and offers some of the best sleeping accommodations in mainland Europe.

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It comprises seven sleeping cars, a lounge car and two dining cars. Four of the sleeping cars contain Deluxe cabins, while three new sleeping cars contain Superior Deluxe accommodations.

Well-planned itineraries on the *Golden Eagle Danube Express* take in highlights of Eastern and Western Europe, such as Budapest, Vienna, Prague and Sarajevo.

Tours on the *Golden Eagle Danube Express* are fully inclusive (food, drinks, gratuities, touring, transfers), making it a truly worry-free adventure.

View a report by IRT Society Vice President Angela Walker on the Danube Express' May, 2015 inaugural trip, plus details of the train. For additional details on the train's signature Balkan Odyssey itinerary, please see Ms. Walker's report.

Accommodations

There are seven sleeping cars. Four contain Deluxe cabins, and the other three contain Superior Deluxe cabins.

All cabins are air conditioned and have in-cabin Wi-Fi. Robes, slippers, towels and luxurious L'Occitane toiletries are provided for all passengers. One attendant manages each car, making up the beds in the evening and providing morning tea/coffee on request.

Superior Deluxe Cabins

The *Golden Eagle Danube Express*' 12 newest cabins are called Superior Deluxe. These spacious cabins (93 square feet including the bathroom) feature a large double bed (6 ft., 2 in. x 5 ft) which converts to a full-length sofa by day.

Other features include two picture windows (one of which opens partially), wardrobe, safe, table and two chairs. The en-suite bathroom has a cubicle shower, sink, toilet and towel warmer. These cabins have remote controlled air-conditioning and heating, as well as power sockets and USB ports.

Deluxe Cabins

Deluxe cabins are also quite spacious (83 square feet including the bathroom) and comfortable. Each cabin has two lower beds in an L-shape configuration, which converts to seating during the day. Bed dimensions are 6 ft., 1 in. x 2 ft., 7.5 in.

The en-suite bathroom contains a cubicle shower, sink, toilet and towel warmer. Air conditioning and heating are individually controlled.

There is also a small wardrobe, safe, cupboard, power sockets and luggage rack above one bed. But be advised: storage space is limited, especially in the bathroom.

Dining

Two dining cars seat 42 passengers each (much more than the train's 64-passenger capacity). The dining cars are attractive and comfortable, offering tables for two or four. One has a green and cream color scheme; the other is crimson and beige. Tables are set with white tablecloths, crystal glassware and china emblazoned with the double-headed eagle logo of Golden Eagle Luxury Trains.

Breakfast is taken on board. Choose from the buffet of fruit, breads, cereal, cold meats and cheeses. Hot breakfast (omelette, French toast, bacon, sausage) is available on order.

On-board meals are usually three courses, with meat and vegetarian choices. A cheese and fruit course is added with dinners on board. Carefully selected wines are included with lunch and dinner.

Sample starters: asparagus with hollandaise sauce; zucchini rolls with ricotta stuffing, served in a chargrilled pepper sauce with basil olive oil; and foie gras terrine with spicy apricot chutney and toasted challah bread.

Sample main course options: Moroccan baked vegetables with prunes and spicy couscous and beer-braised beef cheek with malted onions and ale sauce, served with carrots, green beans and onion mashed potatoes.

Desserts are equally sumptuous.

Lounge Car

The lounge/bar car is the social center of the train. The lounge car seats approximately 30 – not enough to accommodate the train's capacity.

But it is rare, if ever, that all passengers visit the lounge for a pre-dinner drink or nightcap at the same time (all drinks are included in the tour fare).

A pianist entertains in the evenings; the bar car remains open until the last guest retires.

IRT Insights

Service on board is good; the train staff is professional and hard-working.

On our trip several years ago, some staff still were struggling with English, but they are affable and eager to please. The train's guest relations manager is excellent.

Journeys on the Golden Eagle Danube Express are fully inclusive of transfers, food, drinks (all alcohol except premium wines), gratuities and all touring.