

Eastern Europe

18 DAYS/17 NIGHTS - GROUP TRAVEL
SUGGESTED ITINERARY - CAN BE CUSTOMIZED



Discover the beauty of Eastern Europe with this itinerary which features the highlights of former Iron Curtain countries. Immensely rich in culture – and fascinating in its 20th century evolution - learn the history of Eastern Europe from antiquity to the Middle Ages to the Warsaw Uprising through the Cold War to the present. Experience the beauty and heritage of its capital cities' Old Towns. Explore its green, serene parks. Try traditional cuisine at neighborhood restaurants, bakeries and cafes, many of which have been in business for over a century.



DAY 1 ~ ARRIVE PRAGUE

Arrival in picturesque Prague, the capital of the Czech Republic. After exiting customs, meet your local guide in the terminal's arrivals hall. Travel by private coach to Prague Castle, whose origins date back to the 9th century. Here your group will enjoy a guided walking tour of the castle complex, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The guided tour will feature the St. Vitus Cathedral, the Old Royal Palace, the Basilica of St. George, the 16th century Golden Lane and Daliborka Tower. After the tour at Prague Castle your group will proceed to the Old Town Square. There will be free time to have lunch on your own. Afterwards your group will be transferred to the hotel for check-in. Your group has the rest of the afternoon free to explore. This evening a local assistant will accompany your group to a local restaurant by private coach. Afterwards, you may either return to the hotel by coach with your assistant - or stay in Prague's beautiful Old Town on your own to check out the city's famous jazz clubs, pubs and nightclubs.



DAY 2 ~ PRAGUE

After breakfast, meet your local guide in the hotel lobby for a morning excursion by private coach to the spectacular Karlstejn Castle, a medieval structure commissioned by Charles IV in the 14th century. Your group will enjoy an excellent guided tour with admission included inside the castle. Before returning to the hotel in Prague, your group will have lunch at a local restaurant that serves up traditional Czech fare (included). Upon arriving to the hotel, enjoy the remainder of the afternoon to visit more in Prague on your own. A group dinner is not included on today's program, but all group members should be back to the hotel at the agreed meeting time for tonight's performance at the State Opera House or concert venue.



DAY 3 ~ PRAGUE

After enjoying breakfast in the hotel, enjoy a free day to continue exploring Prague on your own. The hotel's check-out time is generally at 12:00 noon, so if you've planned a lot of sightseeing for today and don't want to return to the hotel at midday

INCLUSIONS

- 2 nights each in Prague, Warsaw, Budapest, Sofia, and Bucharest
- 1 night each in Banska Bystrica, and Plovdiv
- 3 nights in Krakow
- 2 overnight trains
- Breakfast daily
- Lunch and dinner per itinerary
- Ground transport via air conditioned luxury coach
- English speaking assistant and guides
- Admission tickets as outlined in itinerary

HIGHLIGHTS

- Walking tour of Prague, including a guided visit of Prague Castle
- Opera or Concert performance at Prague's State Opera House
- Guided tour of the Warsaw Uprising Museum and the Fryderyk Chopin Museum
- Chopin Concert at Lazienki Park
- Visit Bulgaria's Boyana Church and Bachkovo Monastery
- Tour of the Romanian Peasant Museum & the Romanian Parliament
- Tour of the Wielicka Salt Mine



to check-out, the most convenient option might be to have breakfast, check out and store your baggage with the reception staff. During today's free time, consider cruising down the Vltava River, blending in with the locals at a neighborhood café – or checking out some of Prague's lovely artisan shops; you'll find many that create old-fashioned marionettes. At the agreed meeting time, meet your group members and local assistant in the hotel lobby and transfer to the rail station by private coach. Bid Prague farewell as your group departs on a comfortable, overnight train to Warsaw, Poland.



DAY 4 ~ WARSAW
This morning your group will wake up in Warsaw, Poland. Meet your local guide on the platform as soon as your train pulls in to the station. After a quick, private coach transfer to Warsaw's Old Town, your group will begin its day with breakfast in a local café. Afterwards your guide will lead a fascinating tour of the Museum of the Warsaw Uprising. Here your group will learn the military background of the infamous, 63-day battle as well as hear about the civilians' experience of living in a city under siege. From here you will continue the morning sightseeing tour with a visit to the Fryderyk Chopin Museum to learn about Poland's most famous composer. Once the tour finishes at the hotel, group members will store their baggage with the reception staff (or check-in if the rooms are already ready). The afternoon is free for lunch and exploration on own. Consider checking out the former Gestapo Headquarters, now home to the Museum of Independence (note: children under 14 are not admitted). This evening at the agreed meeting time all group members will meet back in the hotel lobby to transfer to a local restaurant for a



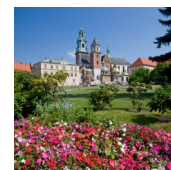
traditional Polish meal.



DAY 5 ~ WARSAW

After breakfast, your group will meet a local guide in the lobby for a sightseeing

tour by private coach of Warsaw's best attractions with admission included inside the Royal Castle. You'll also travel down The Royal Route, which was the route that Poland's kings and queens took from The Royal Castle in the Old Town south to Wilanów Palace. Today it is rife with splendid buildings, universities, shopping, palaces, historic landmarks and churches including Ujazdów Castle, the Presidential Palace and the royal summer residence dubbed the "Palace on the Water" located inside Łazienki Park. Pending availability, after the coach and walking portions of the tour and free time for lunch, the group will return to the beautifully landscaped Łazienki Park to attend a free Chopin concert before returning to the hotel by private coach. The rest of the day is free to enjoy exploring Warsaw.



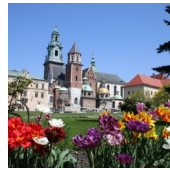
DAY 6 ~ KRAKOW

This morning enjoy breakfast and time to relax before checking out of the

hotel and transferring by private coach to the train station where your group will travel first class to the cultural city of Krakow. Meet your local assistant on the platform as soon as your train pulls in to the station. Then depart by private coach to the hotel where your group can check in and freshen up before meeting a local guide in the lobby for an introductory tour of Krakow by visiting the Old Town and the impressive Rynek Główny Square. See St. Mary's Basilica, Cloth Hall, the Town Hall Tower, the Barbican fortress Florianska Gate and the Royal Route. The tour will finish at a local restaurant for a group

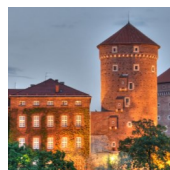


dinner of local dishes. Afterwards return to the hotel by private coach.



DAY 7 ~ KRAKOW

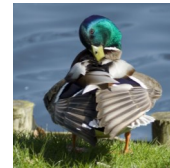
After breakfast in the hotel, your group will meet a local guide in the hotel lobby for a full-day tour of Krakow, with private coaching included. This morning's tour will consist of the Wawel Castle Complex. The castle dates back to the 10th century and for over 500 years was home to the Polish monarchy. Inside the complex the group will visit inside the Royal Cathedral, including the Cathedral Museum and the Royal Tombs. This is a place of intense pride for the Polish people. Also inside the complex the group will visit the Crown Treasury and Armory, home to national treasures and the Crown Jewels. After the visit the group will have time to break for lunch on own before continuing the tour by traveling to the former Jewish quarter of Kazimierz, a must-see while visiting Krakow and the location of much of the filming of Schindler's List. The tour will finish in the late afternoon at the hotel. The evening is free for group members to spend as they choose.



DAY 8 ~ KRAKOW

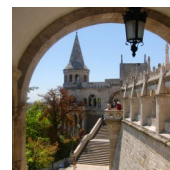
After breakfast in the hotel, your group will meet a local guide in the hotel lobby for a full-day excursion by private coach beginning with a guided tour of the former concentration camp of Auschwitz, which today exists as a Memorial and Museum. After the visit, the group will travel east to the city of Wieliczka for a tour of its interesting Salt Mine. (En route there will be an opportunity for group members to buy lunch). Composed of nine levels and concealed beneath the town, the mine surpasses a depth of 1000 feet and contains approximately 180 miles of

corridors, 3,000 chambers, magnificent chapels, underground lakes, original tools, carvings and murals. After the guided tour of the mine, the group will return to the hotel in Krakow. The evening is free for group members to spend as they choose. This evening is also free for group members to enjoy Krakow on their own.



DAY 9 ~ BANSKA BYSTRICA

This morning after breakfast and check-out, group members will board the private coach to travel south to the former mining town of Banska Bystrica in Slovakia. This pretty town, which is surrounded by mountains, has steadily become a popular place to visit over the last few years. It was also the scene of one of the largest anti-Nazi uprisings in Europe. Upon arrival to the hotel, group members can check in and enjoy some free time for lunch. Afterwards, a local guide will provide a walking tour of the historic town center. Once the tour ends at the hotel, the group is free for remainder of the day to explore Banska Bystrica.

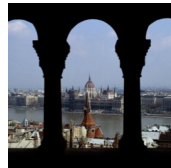


DAY 10 ~ BUDAPEST

After breakfast and check-out the group will continue traveling south by private coach to Budapest, Hungary's beautiful capital city. Upon arrival to the hotel, group members will store baggage with the reception staff and proceed on an afternoon panoramic, sightseeing tour of Pest's inner, historic area. (During the tour there will be an opportunity to for the group members to buy a quick lunch en route). See the 12th century Inner City Parish Church, Vajdahunyad Castle, Andrassy Boulevard, Budapest's Parliament, the Opera House, St. Stephen's Basilica, Váci utca street - famed for

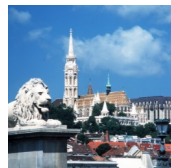


shopping & strolling – the Dohány Synagogue, the second largest working synagogue in the world- Heroes' Square, city park and Vajdahunyad Castle. The tour will finish at the hotel. After check-in and time to freshen up, the group will have a traditional Hungarian dinner in the hotel's restaurant.



DAY 11 ~ BUDAPEST

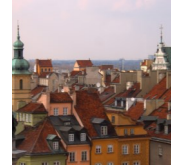
After breakfast in the hotel, your group will meet a local guide in the hotel lobby for a morning tour of historic Buda and the Castle District (private coach included). Cross the Chain Bridge, which connects the neighborhoods of Buda and Pest and then ascend to visit this UNESCO World Heritage Site. The tour will feature Matthias church, the Budapest History Museum, located inside Buda Palace, and the Fisherman's Bastion with its marvelous panoramic view. During the tour the group will stop in a neighborhood café for coffee and a pastry. The tour will finish back at the hotel. The remainder of the day is free to explore Budapest. This capital city contains truly excellent museums; consider visiting one or two this afternoon. For tonight, consider attending a performance at the Opera House – or find a wine bar where you can taste local vintages. Hungary does produce some world-renown wines.



DAY 12 ~ BUDAPEST

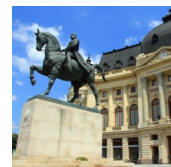
There's no rush this morning so feel free to relax before checking out. The group will then head with a local guide to the historic Gundel Restaurant for brunch. (This place has been in business since 1879 and is famous for its delicious pancakes). After brunch depart with your local guide and private coach to the town of Szentendre, a lovely town north of Budapest renowned for its artistic

community. The guide will accompany your group through its historic neighborhoods and galleries. Afterwards there will be free time to explore and shop. At the agreed meeting time, the group will return to Budapest and transfer directly to the train station to board an overnight train to Bucharest, Romania.



DAY 13 ~ BUCHAREST

This morning your group will wake up in Bucharest, Romania. Meet your local guide on the platform as soon as your train pulls in to the station. From here, the sightseeing of Bucharest will commence! (During this tour a stop will be made at a local café for coffee & a pastry and free time will be given later for lunch). Known for its tree-lined boulevards, Belle Époque architecture and lively nightlife, Romania's capital was once known as the "Little Paris." Remodeled, in the late 19th century, by French and French-trained architects, the city even has its own "Arcul de Triumf" located on the elegant Soseaua Kiseleff, a boulevard longer than Paris' famed Champs-Élysées. The tour will also feature the fascinating Museum of the Romanian Peasant and the Palace of the Romanian Parliamentary Palace, the second largest administrative building in the world; it's second only to the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. After the tour, the coach will transfer the group to the hotel to check-in. After having time to freshen up, it will transfer by private coach to Casa Doina for a special dinner in this 18th century Romanian villa-restaurant.



DAY 14 ~ BUCHAREST

Today the group has a full day to explore Bucharest on its own. Consider visiting the acclaimed National Museum of Art, the Orthodox church of Biserica Stavropoleos,



Why Should You Encourage Your Travel Agent to Book Your Group Through Us?

Ease of Use

Experience

Flexibility

Peace of Mind

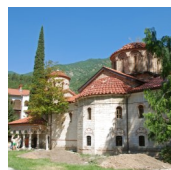


the Controceni Museum or the National Village Museum.



DAY 15 ~ PLOVDIV

After breakfast and check-out, the group will board its private coach and travel to south to Ruse, Bulgaria, a city often referred to as “Little Vienna.” Upon arrival in Ruse, meet your local guide who will take your group on a walking tour. Ruse is known for its Baroque and Rococo architecture. After the walking tour, there will be time for everyone to buy something for lunch before re-boarding the coach to continue traveling south to the historic city of Plovdiv, which contains truly impressive, ancient ruins. Bulgaria, the oldest state in Europe, is extremely rich in archeological heritage. You’ll travel through its the central plains, thought to be home to Europe’s oldest civilization, the tribes of Thracian. This part of Bulgaria is called “The Valley of the Kings.” Upon arrival in Plovdiv, the group will check in to the hotel and then have free time to relax or set out to visit Plovdiv, considered by many to be the cultural capital of Bulgaria. Dinner will be included in the hotel’s restaurant tonight.



DAY 16 ~ SOFIA

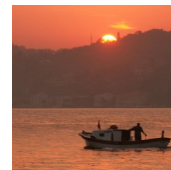
After breakfast and check-out, the group will set off with a local guide for a walking tour of Plovdiv’s Old Town. Afterwards, it will travel half an hour by private coach to the Bachkovo Monastery, which was founded in the 11th century. Its rich history and spectacular art collection has made it a UNESCO World Heritage Site. After a guided tour and a break for lunch on own, the group will travel west to Sofia, the capital of Bulgaria. Upon arrival, the group will check in and have free time to relax. Later in the evening, meet your local assistant in the hotel lobby who will

accompany your group on foot to a nearby restaurant for an evening of traditional Bulgarian cuisine.



DAY 17 ~ SOFIA

After breakfast, all group members will meet a local guide and board a private coach for transfer to the UNESCO World Heritage Site of the Boyana Church, one of the most complete and perfectly preserved monuments of eastern European, medieval art. Constructed in the 10th century, the Eastern Church was enlarged at the beginning of the 13th century. The second church’s 13th century frescoes contribute to the complex’s important collection of medieval paintings. The ensemble is completed by a third church, which was built at the beginning of the 19th century. After the guided visit, we’ll return to the center of Sofia for a lunch break followed by an afternoon walking tour through Sofia’s lovely Old Town. The tour will feature the Alexander Nevski Cathedral (including the crypt’s Icon Museum), the Eternal Flame of the Unknown Soldier, the Church of St. Sofia, the Russian Church of St. Nicholas, the Archeological Museum (admission included), the Rotunda of St George, St. Nedelya Church, the Banya Bashi Mosque, the Sofia Synagogue and the lively street of Zhenski Pazar. The tour will finish at the hotel, and everyone will have time to relax and freshen up before tonight’s farewell dinner.



DAY 18 ~ SOFIA

After check-out, your group will transfer this morning to Sofia, Bulgaria international Airport for your return flight to the USA.

For information and reservations, please see your professional travel agent