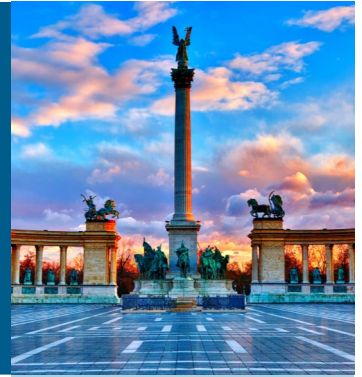


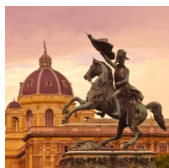
Chasing Magyar Kings, Bohemian Dukes and Holy Roman Emperors: The Best of Vienna, Budapest and Prague

11 DAYS / 10 NIGHTS — GROUP TRAVEL

SUGGESTED ITINERARY — CAN BE CUSTOMIZED



While Vienna, Prague and Budapest have undoubtedly been influenced by their former Austrian Habsburg rulers, this Central European itinerary will show you that each is absolutely distinct and unique! Vienna oozes classical elegance and houses some of the best museums and classical music venues in Europe. Budapest, a true melting pot of Western and Eastern cultures, is undeniably charming and home to geothermal baths, beautiful architecture and amazing views of the Danube. Prague, with its timeless Old Town and ancient Castle District, possesses an ambience unlike anywhere else in the world. Spend a week and a half getting to know three of Europe's most beautiful capital cities.



DAY 1 ~ ARRIVAL TO VIENNA

Welcome to Austria! Upon arrival an assistant will meet your group in the terminal's arrivals hall and accompany it by private coach to the hotel in Vienna. As this is the arrival day, we have not scheduled any activities until dinnertime. Please note that if your group arrives before the hotel's official check-in time (generally 3:00 pm) you are more than welcome to store baggage with the reception staff so that you can set out and begin to explore Austria's elegant, riverside capital.

The ancient city of Vienna was once home to some of Europe's most powerful rulers, and their patronage is still evident today in this cultural mecca's grand boulevards, superb museums, splendid palaces, and unrivaled classical musical scene. This afternoon consider paying a visit to one of Vienna's impressive museums, or as Austria's capital is world-famous for its coffee houses, why not pop into one for a café and a Viennese pastry (or two)?

This evening your group will dine in the hotel's restaurant.



DAY 2 ~ DAY TOUR OF OLD TOWN

After breakfast in the hotel, a local guide will meet your group and take it on a full-day guided sightseeing tour of Vienna's Innere Stadt (1st District), which contains its Old Town. This entire area has been classified as an official UNESCO World Heritage Site. Being a political and cultural capital for the House of Habsburg, Vienna served as a capital of the Holy Roman Empire, the Austrian Empire, and later the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The dynasty's patronage long encouraged art, music and science, and as a result, the city of Vienna today is truly a treasure-trove of cultural attractions. Today's tour will take place inside of Vienna's famed Ring. Your guide will show your group Stephansplatz, which is home to Vienna's iconic St. Stephen's Cathedral. You'll stroll down Kärntnerstrasse, Vienna's most-famous shopping avenue and see the nearby Vienna State Opera House.

Most of your time today will be spent touring the imperial Hofburg Palace, which was the winter residence of the Habsburg kings and emperors. Today it is the official

INCLUSIONS

- **Accommodations:** Vienna 4 nights, Budapest 3 nights, Prague 3 nights
- **Meals:** Continental breakfast daily. Lunch and dinner as noted in itinerary
- **Air-conditioned, private coaching**
- **English-speaking assistants and guides**
- **Admission tickets and sightseeing excursions as outlined in the itinerary**

HIGHLIGHTS

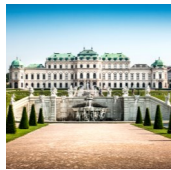
- **Tour Schönbrunn, the Habsburg's Winter Palace and a UNESCO World Heritage Site**
- **Dinner in a traditional wine tavern in the Vienna Woods**
- **Wachau Valley day trip featuring Melk Abbey and a Danube River Cruise**
- **Free days at leisure in Budapest and Prague**
- **Walking tours in Győr, Hungary; Komárno, Slovakia; and Szentendre, Hungary**
- **Inside visits to Hofburg Palace, Prague Castle, Buda Castle and Krivoklát Castle!**

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residence of the President of Austria. This enormous palace complex plays host to many residences, offices and museums including the Spanish Riding School, the National Library, the Burgtheater, the Natural History Museum, the Museum of Fine Arts, and the Imperial Chapel, where the famed Vienna Boys Choir performs on Sunday mornings from September to June. Your group will specifically go inside the Imperial State Apartments (Kaiserappartements) to see what home was like for the Habsburg emperors and their families. You will then continue to the Imperial Treasury (Schatzkammer), which is arguably the world's greatest treasury.

The tour will finish up back at the hotel, and the remainder of the day is at leisure. For information on Vienna's nightlife and excellent restaurant scene, please feel free to ask your guide.



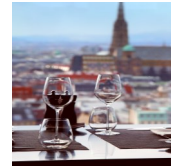
DAY 3 ~ SIGHTSEEING IN VIENNA

After breakfast in the hotel, your group will dive straight back into the world of Habsburg splendor. Today's first visit will be to the Kunsthistorisches Museum, which is Vienna's Museum of Fine Arts. Many of the museum's collections were amassed by the Habsburg rulers from their extensive territories. Quite simply, this is one of the finest art museums in the world!

Afterwards your group will board its private coach and travel southwest to Schönbrunn, the Habsburg's magnificent baroque summer palace. This UNESCO World Heritage Site, which has well over 1,000 rooms, is the location where a six-year-old Mozart wowed the Empress Maria Theresa (mother of Marie Antoinette) with his extraordinary musical talent in the late 1700s.

After touring the palace's state rooms, 18th-century rooms associated with the Empress

Maria Theresa, and the private apartments of Emperor Franz Joseph I and Empress Sisi, your group will return to the hotel in Vienna. There is nothing scheduled this evening. However, as Vienna has such a wonderful classical music scene, your group might consider attending a performance at the symphony or opera.

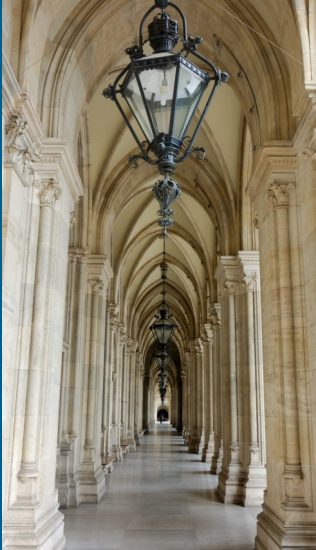


DAY 4 ~ WACHAU VALLEY EXCURSION

After breakfast in the hotel, today your group will set out on an exciting sightseeing excursion to the Wachau Valley. This extremely picturesque area, which is found along the Danube River, is another UNESCO World Heritage Site. Today's excursion will take you west through the Vienna Woods to a fairytale land of vineyards, castles, sleepy villages and historic abbeys.

As part of today's tour, your group will leisurely cruise the Danube from the pretty wine town of Spitz to the ancient town of Melk, which is home to the famed Benedictine Melk Abbey. This baroque masterpiece, which dates back to the 11th century, is a true symbol of Austria and one of the most-important monastic sites in the world. Your guide will lead your group on an interesting tour of the abbey before returning to Vienna in the late-afternoon. (Please note that the Danube river cruises generally only operate from April to October. In the event that your group is vacationing in Austria outside of this time period, this area is still well worth a visit! Instead of the river cruise, we could arrange for your group to have a special lunch of regional specialties in Melk).

After returning to the hotel in Vienna, enjoy some time to relax and freshen up before tonight's group dinner in Grinzing, an area located on the outskirts of the Vienna Woods. Grinzing is best characterized by its "heurigen" or



traditional wine taverns. Enjoy a memorable last evening in Austria before returning to the hotel (roundtrip transportation to Grinzing is included).



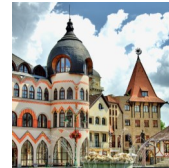
DAY 5 ~ VIENNA – GYŐR – KOMÁRNO - BUDAPEST

After breakfast and check-out, your group will bid farewell to Austria and head east by private coach to the Hungarian capital of Budapest. En-route, enjoy interesting sightseeing beginning with a stop in the Hungarian town of Győr. Nestled near Hungary's northwestern borders with Austria and Slovakia, the ancient city of Győr lies at the confluence of three rivers: the Danube, Rábca and Rába. This morning your group will enjoy a one-hour walking tour of Győr before continuing east to the river port town of Komárno, Slovakia.

Upon arrival you and your fellow travelers will have free time for lunch before setting out on a one-hour walking tour of Komárno. Prior to the conclusion of World War I, Komárno was actually located in Hungary. Today the city has retained something of its former Hungarian past, which you will see during your walking tour of its Old Town. Afterwards your group will proceed directly to the hotel in Budapest. After check-in and time to freshen up, your group will feast on Hungarian specialties in the hotel's restaurant, and tomorrow you will begin sightseeing in Hungary's historic capital.

After visiting Vienna, Budapest is a natural follow-up as it was a culturally and politically important city for the Austrian Habsburg rulers; its location led to it being caught in a very frequent tug-of-war between the Holy Roman Empire to the west and the powerful Ottoman Empire to the south. Budapest was also the official second capital of the powerful Austro-

Hungarian Empire. That being said don't make the mistake of thinking it too similar to Austria. Having played host to Celtic tribes, Roman legions, nomadic Magyars, Tatar raiders and Ottoman invaders, Hungary is nothing if not a fascinating melting pot!

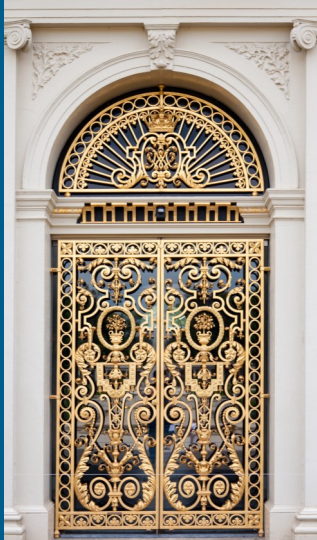


DAY 6 ~ SZENTENDRE AND BUDAPEST SIGHTSEEING

After breakfast in the hotel, today your group will set out on an exciting day of sightseeing. Today's tour will begin with a short drive north to the pretty Hungarian town of Szentendre, a popular excursion from Budapest. Szentendre is known for its Slavic influences (particularly Serbian), baroque architecture and thriving artist community, and during your visit this morning, you'll find no shortage of galleries or museums. After a guided walking tour, your group will return to central Budapest to learn all about this strikingly-beautiful city.

Interestingly, Budapest didn't exist prior to 1873 but instead was three distinct cities: Buda, Pest, and Óbuda. The city's political and cultural development led to its becoming the truly enchanting capital city that you will visit today. You will not run out of things to do in Budapest as it is home to gorgeous architecture, one of the largest synagogues in Europe, a wonderful café culture, terrific classical music venues and geothermal baths where locals and visitors alike can soak their troubles away. Its numerous UNESCO World Heritage Sites, which include Andrassy Avenue, the Buda Castle District, the riverbanks, Heroes' Square and the Millennium Underground Railway, straddle both sides of the Danube.

During today's sightseeing tour of Budapest you will see its famed Parliament building along with the Széchenyi Chain Bridge. Afterwards your group will visit the Buda



Castle District including Matthias Church, the Fisherman's Bastion and the Hungarian National Gallery, which is located inside the Royal Palace. The tour will finish back at the hotel, and your group has the evening at leisure in Budapest.



DAY 7 ~ BUDAPEST FREE DAY

After breakfast in the hotel, enjoy a full day to visit Budapest on your own. Despite the fact that this is one of Europe's largest cities, you will find that is surprisingly easy to visit many of its main attractions on foot. Today consider checking out one of Budapest's lovely parks (Városliget "City Park" or the parks on Margaret Island are all good choices), visit Heroes' Square, tour the Budapest Holocaust Memorial Center, or relax at one of Budapest's amazing thermal springs spas.



DAY 8 ~ BUDAPEST – BRATISLAVA - PRAGUE

After breakfast and check-out, your group will travel north by private coach to Bratislava, the capital of Slovakia. Located on the banks of the Danube only 40 miles east of Vienna, Bratislava was the capital of the Austrian-led Kingdom of Hungary for almost 250 years. Its iconic castle was a major cultural center under the patronage of Austrian Empress Maria Theresa. The chief charm however of Bratislava is simply its Old Town, which is home to truly beautiful medieval and baroque architecture. While there your group will have a 2-hour guided walking tour followed by time for lunch before re-boarding the coach and traveling northwest to Prague.

Upon arrival to the hotel in Prague, check in and take some time to freshen up before tonight's group dinner in the hotel's restaurant. Tomorrow you will begin your

sightseeing in the Czech Republic's historic capital.

Much of the fairytale-like beauty found in Prague can be credited to its 14th-century ruler: Charles IV. As both the King of Bohemia and the Holy Roman Empire, his patronage ushered in an era of art, culture, architecture, and scholarship in Bohemia; a true Golden Age. During his reign, Prague became the imperial capital of the Holy Roman Empire. A second Golden Age in Prague took place in the late 16th century during the reign of Emperor Rudolf II, who despite being a Habsburg chose to rule from Prague instead of Vienna. His fostering of both science and art allowed Prague to blossom even further. After his reign, the Austrian Habsburgs continued to rule over Prague for the next three centuries; until the end of World War I. Today, many of Prague's magnificent cultural and architectural offerings date from their reigns. The city's heritage is so rich that its entire historic center is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.



DAY 9 ~ PRAGUE CASTLES TOUR

After breakfast in the hotel, your group will set out by private coach on a full-day royal castles sightseeing tour featuring Křivoklát Castle and Prague Castle. Dating back to the 12th century, Křivoklát Castle was the home of Bohemian kings and princes for centuries (as well as political prisoners during the Middle Ages). The castle's interiors are absolutely stunning; its library and royal chapel in particular. After touring the castle and free time for lunch, your castle sightseeing tour will continue with a visit to the Prague Castle complex, which is composed of many structures including towers, houses and churches. One can easily spend an entire day there and still not see everything. During your tour this afternoon your group will tour St. Vitus Cathedral, St. George's Basilica, the Old Royal Palace, Golden Lane and Daliborka



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Tower, all of which form part of a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The sightseeing tour will finish up back at your hotel, and the evening is at leisure for you to enjoy Prague.



DAY 10 ~ PRAGUE FREE DAY

After breakfast in the hotel, enjoy a full day at leisure to visit Prague on your own. As most of yesterday's sightseeing in Prague took place up in Hradčany, the Castle District, today we recommend you explore Prague's medieval Old Town, which in Czech is known as "Staré Město." There you will find a multitude of interesting sights, some of which; like the 13th-century Old New Synagogue; are located in Josefov, Prague's Jewish Quarter. Another must see is Prague's magnificent Old Town Square, which is home to the city's 15th-century Astronomical Clock. For postcard-like views of the Vltava River, we suggest you stroll across the city's iconic Charles Bridge. Lastly, if you are a fan of the Czech Art Nouveau artist, Alphonse Mucha, you must pay a visit to the Mucha Museum, which is housed inside the baroque Kaunický Palace.

This evening your group will dine in a local restaurant on its last evening in Central Europe.



DAY 11 ~ DEPARTURE FROM PRAGUE

After breakfast and check-out, your group will transfer by private coach to Prague Václav Havel Airport for its return flight to the USA or Canada.

WHY TRAVEL WITH US?

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