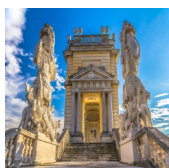


Exploring Austria and the Czech Republic: The Best of Vienna, Prague and Salzburg

11 DAYS / 10 NIGHTS — GROUP TRAVEL
SUGGESTED ITINERARY — CAN BE CUSTOMIZED



This 11-day tour was designed to take your group from the banks of the Danube, past the Vienna Woods, through historic Bohemian towns, to a fairytale city found along the River Vltava and lastly to the northern frontiers of the scenic Alps. We guarantee that you cannot find scenery much better than this! If remarkable royal castles, pretty baroque towns, top-notch classical music venues, and out-of-this-world landscapes are on your travel bucket list, this is the itinerary for you!

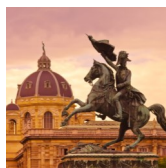


DAY 1 ~ ARRIVAL TO VIENNA

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

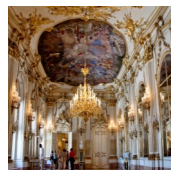
HIGHLIGHTS

- **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 day in Prague**
- **Walking tours in the historic Bohemian towns of Třeboň and Český Krumlov**
- **Inside visits to Hofburg Palace, Prague Castle, and Křivoklát Castle!**
- **The Sound of Music tour in Salzburg**
- **Day trip to the Bavarian Alps in Germany**



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 Vienna before returning to the hotel (roundtrip transportation to Grinzing is included).



DAY 5 ~ VIENNA – TŘEBOŇ - PRAGUE

After breakfast and check-out, your group will bid farewell to Vienna, head north by private coach, and cross into the Czech Republic. While your destination is Prague, en-route your group will stop and visit the Bohemian town of Třeboň. This historic, walled city is home to some very pretty baroque and renaissance architecture. While in Třeboň, your group will have free time for lunch, followed by a guided walking tour before re-boarding the coach and traveling north 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

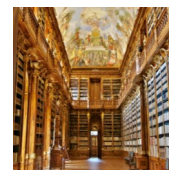
cultural and architectural offerings date from their reigns. The city’s heritage is so rich that its entire historic center is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.



DAY 6 ~ 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 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 7 ~ 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’re 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 Prague.



**DAY 8 ~ PRAGUE -
ČESKÝ KRUMLOV -
SALZBURG**

After breakfast and check-out, your group will travel south by private coach to visit one of the Czech Republic’s most popular tourist attractions: the pretty Bohemian town of Český Krumlov. The town’s historic center, which comprises the famed Český Krumlov Castle, is an official UNESCO World Heritage Site. Upon arrival to Český Krumlov, your group will enjoy a walking tour of its beautiful Old Town, followed by free time to buy lunch before proceeding southwest to Salzburg.

Upon arrival to the hotel in Salzburg, check in and take some time to freshen up before tonight’s group dinner in the hotel’s restaurant, which will feature regional specialties and Austrian wines. Tomorrow you will begin your sightseeing in the musical, mountainous city of Salzburg!

Located at the northern edge of the Alps along the banks of the Salzach River, Salzburg’s incredible alpine vistas will make you feel a world away from the imperial city of Vienna. This is one of the only parts of Austria that was not ruled for many centuries by the Habsburgs. After gaining independence from the Bavarian (German) Wittelsbach dynasty in the late 14th century, Salzburg was actually an independent state in the Holy Roman



Empire (and run by Prince Archbishops) until it officially became part of Austria in the beginning of the 19th century.

While Salzburg was heavily bombed in World War II, much of the fantastic baroque architecture found in its Old Town was not destroyed. As a result, Salzburg’s Old Town is quite a rare example of an authentic, Austrian alpine city. Its entire historic area is an official UNESCO World Heritage Site. In addition to its architecture, Salzburg today is known for scenic surroundings (many of which were featured in *The Sound of Music*) and wonderful music festivals, many of which pay homage to Salzburg’s most famous son: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.



**DAY 9 ~ SALZBURG
AND THE SOUND OF
MUSIC**

After breakfast in the hotel your group will head off on an exciting, guided tour of scenic Salzburg (combination coach & walking). As you explore the historic center of Mozart’s hometown, your guide will point out the sights related to *The Sound of Music* film. Admire the exquisite Mirabell Gardens, where the song “Do-Re-Mi” was filmed, the famous Horse Trough, the great Festival hall, St. Peters Churchyard and the monumental Domplatz. You will also visit the birthplace of Mozart on the historic Getreidegasse Street. After free time for lunch, travel to the shores of Lake Mondsee to see the famous church where the wedding of Maria and Captain Von Trapp was filmed. The tour will finish back at the hotel in the afternoon, and you have the evening at leisure to enjoy Salzburg.



**DAY 10 ~ BAVARIAN
ALPS TOUR**

After breakfast in the hotel, your group will travel south, crossing the border with Germany into the



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heart of the Bavarian Alps. As part of your sightseeing tour, your group will travel to the mountain retreat of Obersalzburg, a particularly beautiful area that was often frequented by Adolf Hitler and senior members of the Nazi party. While there your group will stop to appreciate the spectacular views from the Kehlsteinhaus (“Eagle’s Nest”), which was a teahouse originally constructed for Hitler’s 50th birthday. You will then descend back down to the truly lovely alpine town of Berchtesgaden, where you will have time for lunch. From there it’s on to the famed Berchtesgaden salt mines, where you will have the opportunity to learn all about working underground!

This area (and Salzburg in particular) has always been deeply impacted by the presence of salt mines. As we know, salt was historically always an extremely valuable commodity. (In fact, the modern word “salary” originates from when Roman soldiers used to receive their pay or “salarium” in salt). Much of the Salzburg’s Prince-Archbishops’ wealth came from the salt mines, and the name Salzburg actually translates to “salt castle.” Before returning to the hotel in Salzburg, your group will also venture inside Berchtesgaden National Park, a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, to see the park’s magnificent Königssee (Kings Lake).

Your last evening in Salzburg is at leisure.



DAY 11 ~ DEPARTURE FROM SALZBURG

After breakfast and check-out your group will travel by private coach to Salzburg Airport for its return flight to the USA or Canada. (Note: if flight itineraries or rates are better from Munich, your group could easily add a night in Munich and use Munich Airport instead of Salzburg Airport).

WHY TRAVEL WITH US?

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