

An aerial photograph of a European city, likely Prague, showing a dense cluster of buildings with red-tiled roofs. A prominent church with a tall, green spire is visible on the left. The city extends to a hillside in the background under a clear blue sky.

Czech Republic, Austria & Hungary

Czech Republic,
Austria & Hungary
Cultural Walking Adventure

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Time Travel in the Habsburg Empire

If you've ever wondered how it would be to time-travel, this compact visit to the Czech Republic, Austria and Hungary is for you. In Prague, Vienna and Budapest, you'll enjoy expertly guided walking tours that explore these one-time capitals of the Habsburg Empire whose spires and castles create the continent's most inspiring skylines. Out in the countryside, the sights are just as amazing. Powder-blue cathedrals leap up from the heart of valley towns. Incredibly intact villages are so perfectly preserved that the U.N. recognizes them as World Heritage Sites. Strolling through wide-open farmland, you'll be forgiven if you feel you've stepped back into feudal times. Whether you're sipping wine from the terraced vineyards along the Danube valley or hitching a ride on a friendly farmer's tractor, you'll marvel that these places still exist. And you'll bring home with you a rich slice of Europe's life and history that most travelers never see.

DAY 1

PRAGUE

- Explore the most walkable city in Europe, on foot and at eye level
- See firsthand how the Cold War created an accidental preservation of the incredible architecture

We meet in what may well be the most walkable city in Europe. Prague is compact, full of history and easy to navigate. So naturally, we'll start by taking a stroll with our guide. This magnificent city is our guide's hometown, and he loves to show it off. We'll cross the famous Charles Bridge (popular with artists, musicians and vendors), visit St. Vitus Cathedral and the Royal castle of Hradcany.

Immediately, you're exposed to a paradox you'll experience again and again in the days ahead: As repressive as Cold War regimes were, a lack of resources and an excess of neglect kept governments from bulldozing cities and towns. That almost-accidental preservation means you'll step into scenes that have gone essentially unchanged for centuries. Complementing those scenes, our guides share personal stories and historical anecdotes as we walk through the shaded orchards of Petrin Hill, past Strahov Abbey and down into the winding alleys of the medieval Mala Strana district, finally culminating at the Old Town Square.

Overnight: Prague

Meals: D

DAY 2

CESKY KRUMLOV

- Enjoy a scenic walk to Telc, one of 11 UNESCO cultural sites in the Czech Republic
- Learn how the craft of brewing is part of the heritage of the Czech Republic

We drive south through rolling countryside dotted with farmsteads, pastures and thick swathes of forest. Then, at just the right spot, we begin a scenic walk that leads to Telc, one of 11 UNESCO cultural sites in the Czech Republic. Its main square, rebuilt during the 16th century to complement the neighboring castle, is ringed by tight ranks of Gothic halls, Renaissance houses, and Baroque gables. It's one of the most photogenic townscapes you will ever see - and the miracle is that it's not a reproduction. Telc is the real thing! But then again, so is Cesky Krumlov where we settle in for the next two nights.

The Czechs have a well-earned reputation as brew masters. This afternoon, after a short but scenic riverside walk, we arrive at an authentic beer brewery. As we explore the facility in the company of our guide, we visit with the brewers and learn how this craft is part of the heritage of the Czech Republic. And of course, our hosts treat us to a tasting of their fine product.

Overnight: Cesky Krumlov

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 3

CESKY KRUMLOV

- Follow the Vltava River to a visit of Rozmberk Castle
- Experience a cultural immersion on an afternoon walk through bucolic countryside

Say "CHESS-key KROOM-loff" and you're close to passing your first test in the Czech language. In any language, this village is a remarkable place. It too is a UNESCO historic site, but of a different sort. The Vltava River snakes around the heart of the town. Over it all floats a magnificent castle that was the family seat of the Rozmberk family for over 300 years. The balconies are draped in flowers. Cafés hang out over the banks of the river. Apart from a guided walk, you'll also have time to roam and shop and lunch.

The afternoon proceeds with a walk in an altogether different setting. From the 13th century Vitkovek castle that seems to sit on the shoulders of a tiny village, we strike out into the countryside. On pasture and woodland trails, we pass close enough to barnyards to see farmers at work. You'll experience an hour or two of uncanny solitude when the only sounds are the wind in the grass or the distant ringing of a steeple bell.

Overnight: Cesky Krumlov

Meals: B, D

DAY 4

AUSTRIA / DURNSTEIN

- Cross the border into Austria for a visit with papermaking artisans at a historic paper mill

- **Finish a walk with an invitation from monks at a 12th century monastery**

In the historic sense, our whole week is spent in the old Habsburg Empire. But unlike the salt traders who used to ride these routes, today we have to cross national borders. So, at Dolni Dvoriste we enter Austria. You quickly notice a difference or two: village churches sprout eastern-style onion domes and the vineyards are more plentiful. From the village of Gross Pertholz we launch a light walk through a neat patchwork of fields with crops like you don't see back home: flax, for instance, or peas. Our destination is an historic mill where paper is still made by a process passed down through centuries of Austrian papermakers.

After lunch, a scenic walk leads to the Cistercian monastery of Zwettl founded in 1138. But be prepared for a surprise. Yes, it's a monastery...but it is anything but humble. In fact, the abbey is a mind-boggling Baroque confection, spilling over with gilded sunbursts and cherubim and frescoes. In the afternoon, we continue on to Durnstein where our gracious hotel sits just feet from the banks of the Danube. There's no way to get lost in this town so you may want to wander on your own or relax by the pool set in the hotel's walled garden.

Overnight: Durnstein

Meals: B, D

DAY 5

DURNSTEIN

- **Scout a trail that follows the lower terraces of the valley's vineyards**
- **Sip a glass of wine and enjoy the vineyard views on an afternoon river cruise**
- **Follow a trail up to Durnstein Castle where Richard the Lionhearted was held captive after the Crusades**

In the morning we have a short discovery walk through lovely Durnstein. (We wouldn't expect you to know this on your own, but there are some incredible views from the castle on the hill just above Durnstein. The catch is that the morning mist from the river valley makes the morning views not as great as those in the afternoons. So we'll return in the afternoon to take in the expansive views. We like to think local knowledge like this is another reason having a guide helps smooth your way.) Mid-morning, we've scouted a trail that follows the lower terraces of the valley's vineyards. You'll want to be sure to try these Austrian wines later at dinner. We don't see them so often at home, but they are rich, bright and fruity - and not at all sweet, as many people imagine.

The relaxing culmination to the day is a cruise on the Danube River. Sit back, sip a glass of wine, and enjoy a fresh perspective on the landscape we've wandered through in the last few days. For those who'd like, the late afternoon walk we mentioned earlier is available; it follows a trail up the crest to Durnstein Castle where Duke Leopold VI held Richard the Lionhearted after the Crusades. From its ruins, we have wonderful views back down to the village and along the Danube for miles in both directions. This evening we'll enjoy dinner at a charming, local wine tavern.

Overnight: Durnstein

Meals: B, D

DAY 6

VIENNA / BUDAPEST

- **Walk the Ring, the famed circular boulevard in Vienna**
- **Eat like (and with) the locals as you taste the Sachertorte and apple strudel in a coffeehouse**
- **Take an evening promenade along the Danube in Budapest**

Fuel up on muesli and yogurt...or go the sausage-and-cheese route for your final Austrian breakfast. This morning we drive through fertile farmland and densely wooded hills to the magnificent city of Vienna. We'll walk on the Ring, the famed circular boulevard lined with monumental buildings that capture the glory of the Habsburg Empire. We'll stroll the medieval lanes of the Inner City to Saint Stephen's Cathedral, Austria's pinnacle of Gothic architecture. Wander down The Graben, Vienna's famous street home to beautiful shops and cafes. Spend some time in a coffeehouse for lunch and live as the Viennese do. Later this afternoon, we continue on to Budapest.

Traveling from Vienna, we first reach the beautiful hills of the Hungarian capital Buda. As we cross over the magnificent Danube via the Elisabeth bridge, you begin to understand why Budapest is considered one of the most beautiful cities in Europe. After dinner, you may want to adopt the local tempo of life and take a stroll along the Korz6, a pedestrian-only promenade on the river. As the lovely skyline lights up, we love to claim a riverside bench and watch the Danube - and the residents - glide by.

Overnight: Budapest

Meals: B, D

DAY 7

BUDAPEST

- Explore the colorful hills of Buda on one side of the Danube and the cosmopolitan streets of Pest on the other bank
- Soak in the curative baths as the locals have done for nearly 2,000 years

We dedicate an entire day to a guided visit of Budapest. The colorful hills of Buda lie on one side of the Danube; the cosmopolitan streets of Pest crowd up against the other bank. Together, they create the cultural and commercial heart of Hungary. Along with our local friend, Zsofi (isn't it great to be able to say you saw Budapest with your local friend?), we start on the Pest side, visiting Europe's largest synagogue. We'll also take in Hero's Square and the Parliament building, which is graced by two-dozen slender towers and a vast dome. After lunch along cosmopolitan Vaci utca, we explore the fortifications on the Buda side. A stroll through the cobblestone streets reveals a rich jumble of a few centuries worth of architectural treasures. But the grand delight is Castle Hill leading up to the Royal Palace. This entire district was in ruins by the end of 1944. As the city dug out, archaeologists discovered medieval buildings and restored the castle walls to their former glory.

After an expansive day of discovery, you may want to make a detour to the Gellért Hotel. It's the oldest spa hotel in Hungary and grateful visitors have taken curative baths in its hot springs for nearly 2,000 years. Tonight, we'll host a festive farewell dinner. Then, if you're up for a lively last night, we recommend a foray to Vörösmarty tér, the impressive square where street musicians rule and you can relax with an after-dinner coffee at a sidewalk café.

Overnight: Budapest

Meals: B, D

DAY 8

BUDAPEST

- Enjoy some shopping or see the collection of Flemish and Dutch Old Masters at the Museum of Fine Arts

We part company after breakfast. On your own, you may want to get in some shopping or see the collection of Flemish and Dutch Old Masters at the Museum of Fine Arts.

Meals: B



Tour Hotels



Hotel Paris Prague

A landmark Art Nouveau structure, this beautifully restored hotel is located in the heart of Prague's Old Town. From the generously proportioned rooms, guests are just steps away from the gothic Powder Tower and the premier arts and shopping district.

OVERNIGHT: Prague | **NIGHTS:** 1



Hotel Bellevue

Set in the medieval heart of Cesky Krumlov, this fine property was created by combining several historic buildings. The cozy rooms are steps away from some of Europe's most scenic streets. There's also a fine restaurant as well as sauna and spa.

OVERNIGHT: Český Krumlov | **NIGHTS:** 2



Richard Lowenherz Hotel

On the banks of the Danube, this hotel is nestled between an ancient monastery and a soaring, sky blue Rococo church. The hotel, known for its extremely hospitable hosts, is just one quiet block from the village center.

OVERNIGHT: Dürnstein | **NIGHTS:** 2



Prestige Hotel Budapest

Prestige Hotel Budapest is located in the heart of the city centre. Offering a real cosmopolitan, pulsing milieu, at the same time offering peace and intimate retirement. Exceptional combination of magnificent architecture and divine cuisine, in perfect harmony.

OVERNIGHT: VIGYÁZÓ FERENC U. 5 | **NIGHTS:** 1

Tour Dates & Prices

To see the full list of dates and prices for this tour, go to our website by clicking [here](#).

Want to travel with just your group on a date of your choosing? Visit [CLASSICJOURNEYS.COM/PRIVATE](https://www.classicjourneys.com/private) to learn more about Private Journeys.

Trip Essentials

TRIP LENGTH	8 Days, 7 Nights
START	Lobby of Hotel Paris, Prague, Czech Republic
END	Lobby of Prestige Hotel Budapest, Budapest, Hungary
TERRAIN	Easy to moderate on good trails, with van support.

What's Included

- Award-winning hotels that provide you unlimited access to the people and places, culture and history you came to experience
- All breakfasts, 1 lunch and 7 dinners
- Full-time experienced guide(s) who are with you throughout the trip and handle behind-the-scenes logistics
- Admissions to scheduled events as noted in the detailed daily itinerary
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ENJOY THE UNEXPECTED

When you travel with Classic Journeys, you can expect handcrafted surprises built into every trip, but some things just can't be anticipated. Unusual weather, a once-a-year festival or an unscheduled site closing will inspire us and your local guide to improvise and modify this itinerary. Likewise, the hotels named here are used on the majority of our trips, but occasionally one of them can't accommodate us. If that happens, you can count on us to let you know before departure and make sure you're in a hotel of equal or better quality. It's our goal to make your trip exceptional!

**Any discount offered cannot be combined with other offers, and only applies to published (regularly scheduled public) departure dates in our catalogs or on our website.

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HANDCRAFTING TRIPS OF A LIFETIME.



At the end of the day, we fundamentally believe that every guest on every departure of every trip should have a trip of a lifetime. We're fortunate to play the role of well-connected friend, linking our guests with amazing guides, artisans, winemakers, hoteliers, restaurateurs, naturalists, and too many others to list here.

That's what motivates me and our team — in our La Jolla HQ and around the world — every day. Join Us!

Samuel
President & Founder



You can expect the highest standards:



Luxurious Lodgings:

Ours include coveted properties that appear in "World's Best" and "Gold List" rankings.



Included Activities:

You'll never be surprised with add-on fees on your activities that include snorkeling to cooking lessons.



Local Guides:

Your guides are locals who are always at your side like well-connected friends.



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With an average of just 10-12 guests, it's a small footprint that guarantees you access that's off-limits to larger groups.



Amazing Cuisine:

From Michelin-starred restaurants to lunch in a farmhouse kitchen, you'll have a seat for the region's signature dishes.



Unmatched Value:

"Excellent value" and "unbeatable access" are two of the reasons that Travel + Leisure has consistently voted us a World's Best Tour Operator.

You'll enjoy these handcrafted travel experiences in Czech Republic, Austria & Hungary...

- Exploring Telc, a UNESCO cultural site, and one of the most photogenic villages in the world
- Savoring fascinating visits to a local brewery, a Cistercian monastery and a paper mill
- Learning the fascinating histories of the Habsburg capitals of Prague and Budapest on guided walking tours
- Exploring from perfectly-sited historic hotels, including the grand and elegant Corinthia Hotel in Budapest
- Encountering experiences that most tourists could never even imagine because of your amazing local guide

"Martin was EXTREMELY knowledgeable and was more than willing to share information. I think our group had a particular desire to learn the history and culture, so this was a perfect match. By far the most well-informed guide I have had on any trip (we have done several trips with competitors in the past)."

-Brent K., Galveston, TX,