

CULTURAL WALKING ADVENTURE

Prague to Budapest

Czech Republic, Austria & Hungary

CLASSIC JOURNEYS
THE WORLD'S FINEST WALKING TOURS



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*Classic Journeys
provides unbeatable
access to experiences
around the globe.”*

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TRAVEL + LEISURE

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. 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. When you're sipping wine from the terraced vineyards along the Danube valley, 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.

The Classic Journeys Difference

- ACTIVE HIKING & WALKING
- LOCAL WELL-CONNECTED GUIDES
- PREMIERE HOTELS
- FOODIE FOCUSED
- HANDCRAFTED TRIP DESIGN
- MORE IS INCLUDED

What's Included

- 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
- Gratuities for hotels, meals, and baggage
- All land transportation during the trip

Above & Beyond Benefits

→ PRIVILEGED ACCESS EVENTS

One-of-a-kind access to remarkable people, places and activities arranged just for you.

→ WINE ON US

In many regions, we uncork wonderful local wines at every dinner, compliments of Classic Journeys.

→ INVISIBLE CHECK-IN

When your group arrives, we whisk you and your bags to your room immediately. No waiting – no tipping.

→ PERFECT PAIRINGS DINNERS

A special dinner prepared by one of our favorite chefs with a procession of wines tailored to each course.

Terrain

Easy to moderate on good trails, with van support.

DAY 1 »

Prague

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.

MEALS: D OVERNIGHT: PRAGUE

DAY 2 »

Cesky Krumlov

We drive south through rolling countryside dotted with farmsteads, pastures and thick swathes of forest. Then, at just the right spot, we leave our minicoach for a lovely 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 brewmasters. 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.

MEALS: B, L, D OVERNIGHT: CESKY KRUMLOV

DAY 3 »

Cesky Krumlov

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.

MEALS: B, D

OVERNIGHT: CESKY KRUMLOV

DAY 4 »

Austria / Durnstein

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 a 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.

MEALS: B, D

OVERNIGHT: DURNSTEIN

DAY 5 »

Durnstein

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. (By the way, 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.

MEALS: B, D

OVERNIGHT: DURNSTEIN

DAY 6 »

Vienna / 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 Korzó, 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.

MEALS: B, D

OVERNIGHT: BUDAPEST

DAY 7 »

Budapest

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, 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.

MEALS: B, D

OVERNIGHT: BUDAPEST

DAY 8 »

Budapest

We part company after breakfast. Rail and air connections are all very convenient. 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.

NIGHTS: 1 nights



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.

NIGHTS: 2 nights



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.

NIGHTS: 2 nights



Prestige Hotel Budapest

Prestige Hotel Budapest is located in the heart of the city center. Offering a real cosmopolitan, pulsing milieu, at the same time offering peace and intimate retirement.

NIGHTS: 2 nights

Arrival & Departure

→ ARRIVAL DETAILS

START LOCATION: **Lobby of Hotel Pariz**
START CITY: **Prague**
START TIME: **1:00 PM**

→ DEPARTURE DETAILS

END LOCATION: **Lobby of Prestige Hotel Budapest**
END CITY: **Budapest**
END TIME: **9:00 AM**