

Delve behind the former 'Iron Curtain' to find medieval charm, a rich culture infused with religious devotion and some confronting reminders of W/WII.



From the lofty heights of Buda's Gellert Hill, look over the Danube to Pest's Parliament building bathed in the glow of twilight

Highlights of Eastern Europe

TOUR PACE

This feature packed tour is well paced with two-night stays virtually throughout. This allows time for both sightseeing and leisure in each of the towns and cities visited. All driving days are of a reasonable length with frequent stops for refreshments and photos.

HOTELS

The location of Cesky Krumlov's Old Inn hotel can't be beat - it's right on the main square. True to form, the Hilton, Sheraton and Marriott hotels on this tour are modern and stylish. In comparison, Budapest's Corinthia Grand Royal and the Palace Hotel in Prague are elegant and historical establishments, reflecting the grace and charm of their city center locations.

DAY 1 – DEPART USA. Board your overnight flight.

DAY 2 – VIENNA AT LEISURE. Welcome to Vienna - a city rich in Imperial history and musical tradition! On arrival at Vienna Airport, your *airport shuttle service* leaves for the tour hotel at 09:00, 12:00 & 15:00. Then you are at leisure. Perhaps stroll through the Stadtpark to see the statue of Strauss? Later, join your fellow guests for a *Welcome Drink*. Hotel: Hilton

DAY 3 – VIENNA SIGHTSEEING. *A local guide reveals the grandeur of the Schönbrunn Palace and there is time to wander in the formal gardens.* Then past the baroque *St Charles' Church* to see the *Opera, New Imperial Palace and Parliament* lining the Ring Road. *Cafés are an institution in Vienna; your guide points out some of the most famous and explains the history and role they play in local culture.* The rest of the day is at leisure. (BB)

DAY 4 – VIENNA – CESHY KRUMLOV. Enjoy a delightful drive along the *Danube* through the *Wachau Valley*. Vineyards cover hillsides overlooked by ruined castles like *Dürnstein*, where Richard the Lionheart was imprisoned. Join the motorway near the *Monastery of Melk* and continue to the Czech border. Your destination is the picturesque medieval town of *Cesky Krumlov*, nestled on the banks of the *Vltava*. *Walk through the narrow cobbled streets and arch covered footpaths for a guided visit of the fairy-tale red roofed castle, considered by many to be the finest in the land.* Hotel: The Old Inn (BB,D)

DAY 5 – CESHY KRUMLOV – PRAGUE. Drive north through the green Bohemian countryside to the golden city of *Prague*. On a *guided tour*, visit *St Vitus' Cathedral*, which is set inside the 1,000-year-old *Prague Castle*. Later, cross the river to explore the vast cobblestoned expanse of the *Old Town Square* and see its famous *Astronomical Clock*. Hotel: Palace/President (BB,D)

DAY 6 – PRAGUE AT LEISURE. A whole day at leisure in this most beautiful of cities. Stroll with your loved one across the romantic *Charles Bridge* or visit the *Jewish Quarter* where the world's oldest synagogue still operates. Perhaps join a tour to one of the nearby country castles, or dedicate the day to two of the most famous Czech products - fine crystal and beer? (BB,D)

DAY 7 – PRAGUE – DRESDEN – BERLIN. Drive high into Ore Mountains and cross the German Border to arrive in *Dresden*. Walk from the *Frauenkirche*, risen once again from wartime destruction, to the *Castle of the Electors of Saxony*, stopping at the unique *Saxon Wall* overlaid with Meissen tiles. Further on, see the courtyards of the *Zwinger Palace* and the *Opera House*. After some free time, head for the vibrant capital, *Berlin*. Hotel: Marriott (BB)

DAY 8 – BERLIN & POTSDAM SIGHTSEEING. *A local expert shows you the highlights of this reunited city.* Drive through the Tiergarten to the refurbished *Reichstag building* and see the *Brandenburg Gate*. On the eastern side, take the *Unter den Linden* past the *State Opera House* to the *Alexanderplatz*. Later, *drive to historic Potsdam to visit the Cecilienhof, where the 1945 Treaty was signed, and visit the gardens of Frederick the Great's Sans Souci Palace.* Consider enjoying an evening out in a lively local restaurant. (BB)

DAY 9 – BERLIN – POZNAN – WARSAW. Cross the border and head into Poland, passing the river port of *Poznan*. Take time for lunch en route before continuing to *Warsaw*. Hotel: Hilton/Sofitel (BB,D)

DAY 10 – WARSAW SIGHTSEEING. On a *guided tour*, see the 'wedding cake' *Palace of Culture* and the *Chopin Memorial* in the *Lazienki Park*. Pay your respects at the *emotive Monument of the Ghetto Heroes* and, finally, see the reconstructed *Old Town*, including the *Royal Palace*. *Tonight you are offered a selection of restaurants for your dining pleasure.* (BB,DA)

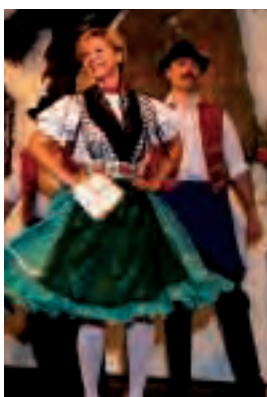
DAY 11 – WARSAW – CZESTOCHOWA – KRAKOW. Cross the Polish Plains to reach *Czestochowa*. Visit the 14C *Monastery of Jasna Gora*, famous for the *Black Madonna*. Further south you are invited to spend some reflective moments at the *Auschwitz Memorial and Museum*. *Birkenau* is also located nearby and you can climb the central watch tower, which overlooks the remains of the camp. Continue to historic *Krakow*. Hotel: Sheraton (BB,D)

DAY 12 – KRAKOW SIGHTSEEING. Join a *local guide* to tour *Krakow* – for centuries the seat of Poland's kings. Ascend *Wawel Hill* to visit the *cathedral* and meet the '*Wawel Dragon*'. Walk through the *Old Town*, past the *courtyard of Jagiellonian University* and medieval *Cloth Hall*, to visit the *14C St Mary's Church* (keep your eyes and ears peeled for the trumpeter in the tower). (BB)

DAY 13 – KRAKOW – BUDAPEST. Cross into Slovakia and stop for a photo at the *Oravsky Hrad Castle*. A gentle drive takes you through the *Tatra Mountains*, where peasants still live in *traditional wooden houses*. Head south to the Hungarian border and continue to *Budapest*. Hotel: Corinthia Grand Royal/Sofitel (BB)

DAY 14 – BUDAPEST SIGHTSEEING. *If you wish, join an included presentation about life with and without the Communists, about a childhood in the old regime and the changes since 1989.* Then gaze across the *Danube* from the *Citadel* atop *Gellert Hill* and ascend *Buda's Castle District* to visit *Matthias Church*. Admire the *immense Parliament building* from the *Fisherman's Bastion*. Over in *Pest*, visit *Andrassy Boulevard* and *Heroes' Square*. The afternoon is at leisure *before a fun evening of Hungarian cuisine and music.* (BB,HD)

DAY 15 – RETURN TO USA. *Your departure transfer* arrives at *Budapest Airport* at 08:00 and continues back to *Vienna Airport* arriving at 11.00am. (BB)



An evening of Hungarian Dinner and Music



The Old Town of Warsaw was reconstructed after WWII