



EASTERN EUROPE

DAY 1

WELCOME TO PRAGUE

This afternoon we'll jump right in and enjoy a meandering walking tour from our neighborhood to Prague's colorful and historic Old Town Square. We'll end our evening over a hearty dinner together.

Moderate walking: 2–6 miles throughout the day with some hills and stairs. No bus. Sleep in Prague.

DAY 2

ROYAL, PRESTIGIOUS PRAGUE

This morning we'll hop aboard a local tram to take us across the Vltava River and up the hill to the most massive castle complex in continental Europe: Prague Castle. We'll tour the impressive St. Vitus Cathedral, Old Royal Palace, St. George's Basilica (when available), and the Golden Lane. You'll then have free time for lunch and more sightseeing on your own. This evening is a great time to catch a classical concert or experience the quirky and uniquely Czech Black Light Theater.

Strenuous walking: 2-8 miles throughout the day with lots of hills, stairs, and uneven terrain. No bus. Sleep in Prague.

DAY 3

MORAVIAN COUNTRYSIDE AND KRAKÓW

Today we'll leave the city and drive east into mountainous Moravia, stopping along the way to enjoy some free time for lunch and exploration. Then we'll cross into Poland on our way to tonight's destination: the surprising city of Kraków, Poland's cultural crossroads and melting pot. We'll take an orientation walk to the lively, historic market square and enjoy a traditional Polish dinner together.

Light walking: 2–4 miles throughout the day on mostly level terrain. Bus: 7 hours. Sleep in Kraków.

DAY 4

HISTORIC KRAKÓW

This morning we'll meet a local guide and wind our way through the story of Kraków. We'll marvel at Wawel Castle, the spiritual home of the Polish nation, and Wawel Cathedral, the resting place of Polish royalty and saints. We'll visit historic St. Mary's Church — the only tower in the world where a bugler has played every hour for the past 600 years (and boy is he tired). We'll also learn about the life and impact of local legend Pope John Paul II as we trace his footsteps on our walking tour through the heart of Kraków. Your afternoon is free to discover more of this pleasant city on your own. Visit a museum or two, or go rent a bike!

Moderate walking: 2–6 miles throughout the day with some hills and stairs. No bus. Sleep in Kraków.

DAY 5

LESSONS OF THE PAST

This day takes on a very different tone, as we visit the concentration camp site of Auschwitz-Birkenau (when available), where at least 1.1 million innocent people were systematically murdered during World War II. Today, this is a powerful place for learning, reflection, and remembrance. After we return to Kraków, your evening is free. Moderate walking: 2–6 miles throughout the day with some hills and stairs. Bus: 3 hours. Sleep in Kraków.

DAY 6

DRIVE TO EGER

We'll begin our morning with a drive through the scenic Tatra Mountains and the rolling hills of Hungary's famous "Bull's Blood" wine-growing region. Our destination is the town of Eger, where the townspeople (with some help)



turned back an Ottoman invasion of central Europe in 1552. Our day will end with a Hungarian dinner near the town of Eger.

Moderate walking: 2–6 miles throughout the day with some hills and stairs. Bus: 8 hours. Sleep in Eger.

DAY 7

HUNGARY, GREAT AND SMALL

This morning, you'll have time to soak in Eger's Baroque beauty. Later we'll visit a local school, where we'll sit down and chat with a teacher and enjoy lunch together in the cafeteria. Then we'll learn about the region's deservedly famous wines with a tour and tasting at a local winery. Our destination this evening is Budapest, the mighty Magyar capital on the Danube, where after an orientation walk, we'll enjoy dinner together.

Light walking: 2–4 miles throughout the day on mostly level terrain. Bus: 4 hours. Sleep in Budapest.

DAY 8

BUSTLING BUDAPEST

The rich history of Pest has created a city that's a puzzle of neo-Baroque, neo-classical, and modern architecture. On our walking tour this morning, we'll crane our necks at Europe's largest parliament building and learn how Hungarians coped with half a century of fascist and communist tyranny. We'll break for lunch, giving you free time to wander through the Great Market Hall — an architectural gem and the city's largest indoor market — and treat your senses to a few paprika-infused delicacies. Later this evening, we'll end our day together with a relaxing cruise on the Danube.

Strenuous walking: 2–8 miles throughout the day with lots of hills, stairs, and uneven terrain. Boat: 1 hour. No bus. Sleep in Budapest.

DAY 9

OLD BUDAPEST

Today we'll focus on the Buda side of the Danube, starting up on Castle Hill for a bird's-eye view of sprawling Pest, followed by a walking tour that takes us past the imposing Royal Palace and into Budapest's greatest church, the sumptuously gilded Matthias Church. When we've finished here, your guide will be happy to orient those interested to the ornate and traditional public thermal baths.

Moderate walking: 2–6 miles throughout the day with some hills and stairs. No bus. Sleep in Budapest.

DAY 10

NATURAL WONDERS OF CROATIA

After breakfast we'll drive out of Hungary and into Croatia. Just across the border, we'll be welcomed with a fresh, family-prepared lunch in a pleasant farm setting. Then we'll drive on to our destination, the deep greens and blues of Croatia's water wonderland and one of Europe's premier nature preserves: Plitvice Lakes National Park. After dinner together, you'll sleep soundly, surrounded by the quiet of nature.

Light walking: 2–4 miles throughout the day on mostly level terrain. Bus: 7 hours. Sleep in or near the national park.

DAY 11

FROM THE FORESTS TO THE SEA

This morning we'll hike along rustic boardwalk trails connecting the idyllic forests, travertine stone cliffs, clear blue lakes, and gushing waterfalls of Plitvice Lakes National Park. We'll learn how the park is creatively protecting its delicate environment, including the use of electric trams and boats. We'll take a lunch break to replenish ourselves, then give our legs a rest as we drive to the Istrian peninsula on the Adriatic Sea. Our destination is the enchanting seaside town of Rovinj, where we'll enjoy a sunset dinner.



Strenuous walking: 2–8 miles throughout the day with lots of hills, stairs, and uneven terrain. Bus: 4 hours. Sleep in Rovinj.

DAY 12

FREE DAY IN ROVINJ

Take a "vacation from your vacation." The entire day is yours to enjoy the sun, gelato, seafood, and lazy ambience of Rovinj. Wander through the narrow streets, watch local fishermen bring in the day's catch, or head to the beach for sun and a swim. We'll compare notes at an informal happy hour early this evening. Light to strenuous walking (your choice). No bus. Sleep in Rovinj.

DAY 13

SLOVENIAN COUNTRYSIDE AND LJUBLJANA

Today we'll head to the azure jewel of Lake Bled, at the foot of Slovenia's Julian Alps. Along the way, we'll stop in Ljubljana for a tour highlighting some of the city's famous landmarks and free time to make your own discoveries. After exploring the capital, we'll continue through the verdant Slovenian countryside on our way to our final destination: a pristine lake ringed by forests and hiking paths. Light to strenuous walking (guide's choice). Bus: 5 hours. Sleep in Bled.

DAY 14

DELIGHTFUL LAKE BLEED

Today we'll take a traditional *pletna* boat ride together to Lake Bled's chapel-topped island, where local tradition requires each would-be husband to carry his bride up the 99 steps from the boat dock to the church at the top (four in five are successful). Your afternoon is free to hike to the castle and its panoramic viewpoint, take a scenic walk around the lake (stopping for a *kremšnita* cream cake), or rent a bike to explore even more. Tonight we'll rendezvous for a special dinner together, sharing travel memories and toasting new friends. *Na zdravje!* Moderate walking: 2–6 miles throughout the day with some hills and stairs. Boat: 1 hour. No bus. Sleep in Bled.

DAY 15

TOUR OVER AFTER BREAKFAST

Breakfast is provided, but there are no group activities today. Ljubljana's airport is just 30 minutes away, and there are nearby train connections to Munich, Vienna, and other European cities. Whatever your plans, your guide will help you get on the right track.

