



National Trust for Historic Preservation

National Trust Tours



Budapest, Vienna & Prague By Luxury Rail
New Year's Aboard the
Golden Eagle Danube Express
December 27, 2026 – January 5, 2027

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New Year's Aboard the *Golden Eagle Danube Express*

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This winter, travel through the historical heart of Central Europe aboard the *Golden Eagle Danube Express*, a privately chartered luxury train that evokes the elegance of a bygone era of travel. From the comfort of your wood-paneled cabin, you will journey across the former Habsburg Empire, exploring the layered histories of its great capitals: Budapest, Vienna, and Prague.

Celebrate the turn of the year in Central Europe by luxury rail, traveling through imperial cities, preserved medieval towns, and winter mountain passes. This journey begins and ends in Budapest and moves through Vienna, Graz, Český Krumlov, Prague, and Košice, with curated experiences that draw out each destination's visual language of power, faith, and identity. From a private concert in Vienna to special access at Budapest's Royal Waiting Room and a New Year's Gala Dinner inside Vienna's City Hall, every moment is shaped by the beauty and history of its setting. All of it unfolds against a landscape of snowy rooftops, mountain vistas, Christmas markets, flickering lights, and grand architecture meant to be seen in winter.



Semmering Pass, Austria (top) and map of the region

TRIP HIGHLIGHTS

- During the magical holiday season, travel aboard the *Golden Eagle Danube Express*, a private train whose en-suite cabins, elegant restaurant cars, and Bar Lounge Car combine the comfort of a luxury hotel with the pacing of old-world rail.
- Explore the Habsburg history and classic culture of Budapest, Vienna, Prague, and other captivating destinations through guided tours of historical sites and architectural marvels.
- Ring in the New Year with an unforgettable Gala Dinner in Vienna, featuring the world-renowned Wiener Hofball Orchestra and the opportunity to waltz into the new year.
- At Budapest's Nyugati Station, attend a drinks reception in the Royal Waiting Room, built for Emperor Franz Joseph and Empress Elisabeth to stage imperial arrival and normally closed to the public.
- Enjoy special activities such as a Viennese waltz lesson, a private classical music concert in Prague, a traditional pumpkin seed oil tasting in Graz, and an optional visit to the Budwar Brewery.
- Witness breathtaking winter landscapes as the train traverses the Balaton Uplands National Park and climbs over the UNESCO-listed Semmering Pass, offering panoramic Alpine views.
- Marvel at the Festetics Palace in Keszthely, explore the Hungarian State Opera House, visit the gothic St. Vitus Cathedral in Prague, and discover the medieval charm of Košice.
- At Vienna's Heiligenkreuz Abbey, the world's oldest continuously inhabited Cistercian monastery, listen to the resident monks practice Gregorian chant, a tradition dating back 900 years.



Budapest, Hungary

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 27: DEPARTURE

Depart on an overnight flight to Budapest.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 28: BUDAPEST, HUNGARY

Arrive in **Budapest**, a city forged in 1873 from the unification of ancient Buda, Óbuda, and commercial Pest, sparking a “Golden Age” of growth and ambition. After a transfer to your hotel, you will have time at leisure before gathering for a welcome reception. R

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 29: BUDAPEST

Today’s exploration begins in the **Buda Castle District**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site on a limestone plateau that provides a physical record of Hungarian history. Here, you will visit **St. Matthias Church**, the coronation site for the last two Hungarian Habsburg kings, whose roof is covered in colorful Zsolnay tiles.

Nearby, you will see the **Fishermen’s Bastion**, an architectural fantasy built for the 1896 Millennial Celebrations, whose seven turrets represent the seven Magyar chieftains who founded Hungary.

A panoramic tour of Pest includes views of the **Hungarian Parliament Building** and **St. Stephen’s Basilica**, whose domes were both built to a height of exactly 315 feet to symbolize the balance between church and state. After lunch, a special guided tour takes you inside the **Hungarian State Opera House**. A Neo-Renaissance jewel by architect Miklós Ybl, this venue features some of Europe’s best acoustics. Dinner is at leisure. B,L

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 30: BUDAPEST / BOARD GOLDEN EAGLE DANUBE EXPRESS / KESZTHELY

This morning, you are invited to a drinks reception in the **Royal Waiting Room** at Budapest’s **Nyugati Station**, a space built for the exclusive use of Emperor Franz Joseph I and Empress Elisabeth (“Sisi”) and normally closed to the public.

You will then board the **Golden Eagle Danube Express**. Settle into your cabin as the train travels through the winter scenery of **Balaton Uplands National Park**, a UNESCO Global Geopark of eroded volcanic buttes.

Arriving in **Keszthely**, on the shore of Lake Balaton, you will tour **Festetics Palace**, a lavish Baroque home. Its Helikon Library is the only substantial aristocratic private library to have survived intact in Hungary, saved during World War II when the palace librarian walled off its entrance to hide it from advancing Soviet troops. This evening, enjoy dinner on the train. B,R,L,D

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 31: GRAZ, AUSTRIA / VIENNA

Arrive in **Graz**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, whose city center reflects its history as a Habsburg residence and a cultural crossroads with the Italian Renaissance. A walking tour takes you through its Renaissance courtyards and baroque palaces. You may also enjoy an optional tasting of Styrian pumpkin seed oil, a prized regional specialty known as “black gold.”

Reboard the train for lunch and travel over the **Semmering Pass**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and the world’s first standard-gauge mountain railway. This monumental feat of 19th-century engineering created a new relationship between technology and nature, with 16 viaducts and 15 tunnels, making the Alps accessible for the first time.

Upon arrival in **Vienna**, Austria’s capital, you can join a Viennese waltz lesson, an engagement with a dance that evolved from a scandalous folk custom to a symbol of Habsburg imperial culture. This evening, you will attend a special **New Year’s Eve Gala Dinner** in the grand ballroom of the **Vienna City Hall**, with a performance by the **Wiener Hofball Orchester** to ring in the new year. B,L,D



New Year's Eve Gala, Vienna City Hall, Austria



Christmas Market, Schönbrunn Palace, Vienna, Austria

FRIDAY, JANUARY 1: VIENNA

After brunch on board, you will have a choice of excursions.

Option 1: A guided tour takes you through **Schönbrunn Palace**, the magnificent 1,441-room Rococo summer residence of the Habsburg emperors. You will also have time to visit the **Christmas Market**, held in the palace's grand forecourt.

Option 2: Visit **Heiligenkreuz Abbey**, the world's oldest continuously inhabited Cistercian monastery, founded in 1133 and nestled in the Vienna Woods. A guided tour of this Romanesque and Gothic structure offers the chance to hear the resident monks practice Gregorian chant, a tradition of sung prayer that has echoed within these same walls for nearly 900 years.

You will come together for **a horse-drawn Fiaker carriage ride** through the city's cobbled streets, an experience through the authentic soundscape of imperial Vienna. The day concludes with a special private concert featuring the **Vienna Supreme Orchestra**. Enjoy dinner on the train. BR,D

SATURDAY, JANUARY 2: ČESKÝ KRUMLOV, CZECH REPUBLIC / PRAGUE

Your day begins in **Český Krumlov**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The town's remarkable state of preservation is a direct result of being bypassed by 19th-century industrialization, leaving its medieval street plan and architectural ensembles undisturbed.

After an introductory guided walking tour, you will have time to explore on your own or join an optional visit to **a local brewery** for a tasting of the original Budweiser beer, a product born from a 19th-century struggle for Czech national identity against the region's dominant German establishment. After lunch on board, you will continue to **Prague**, where you will enjoy dinner in the city, followed by a private classical music concert. B,L,D

SUNDAY, JANUARY 3: PRAGUE

Start your day with **a vintage tram ride**, a journey that traces the paths of Prague's transformation into a modern metropolis at the turn of the 20th century. The ride concludes at **Prague Castle**, the world's largest coherent castle complex, with a millennium of continuous use as a seat of power.

Here, you will visit the Gothic **St. Vitus Cathedral**. Its nearly 600-year construction makes it a living document of Czech art, combining 14th-century design with 20th-century additions, such as Alfons Mucha's magnificent Art Nouveau stained-glass window.

After lunch in the city and an afternoon at leisure, you will gather for **an evening cruise on the Vltava River**, which offers a clear view of how Prague's layout was dictated by the river's course. B,L,D

MONDAY, JANUARY 4: KOŠICE, SLOVAKIA / BUDAPEST, HUNGARY / DEBOARD

You will arrive in **Košice**, a city whose historical center is the largest in Slovakia. Unlike imperial capitals, Košice was shaped by merchants and artisans, its grandeur funded by the profits of trade.

A highlights tour includes its vast, spindle-shaped central square, which is lined with 15th- and 16th-century burgher houses and dominated by **St. Elisabeth's Cathedral**, a grandiose expression of Košice's medieval wealth.

After a final lunch on board, the train returns to Budapest. You will check into your hotel before gathering for a celebratory farewell dinner. B,L,D

TUESDAY, JANUARY 5: BUDAPEST / RETURN

After breakfast, you will transfer to the airport for your flight home. B



Prague Castle, Czech Republic

DISCLAIMER: This itinerary is subject to change at the discretion of Arrangements Abroad. For complete details, please carefully read the terms and conditions at www.arrangementsabroad.com/terms.

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Cover photo: Český Krumlov, Czech Republic

ACCOMMODATIONS

GOLDEN EAGLE DANUBE EXPRESS

The *Golden Eagle Danube Express* combines the comfort of a luxury hotel with the romance of classic rail travel. Settle into a spacious en-suite cabin, complete with large picture windows, adjustable lighting, air conditioning, Wi-Fi, and ample storage. Deluxe cabins convert from a sitting room by day to cozy lower beds at night, while Superior Deluxe cabins offer a king-size bed, two seating areas, and even more space to relax. Throughout the journey, attentive cabin attendants ensure every detail is handled.

Meals are served in elegant restaurant cars, with menus designed by the onboard chef using fresh, locally sourced ingredients. Wines from around the world, hand-selected by the company's founder, complement every lunch and dinner. The Bar Lounge Car serves as the train's social hub: a place to read, enjoy a drink, chat with fellow travelers, or listen to live piano music in the evenings. With its thoughtful design and exceptional service, the *Golden Eagle Danube Express* provides a refined, unhurried way to experience the route between destinations.



Golden Eagle Danube Express (top) and Lounge Car (above)

Four Seasons Hotel Gresham Palace, Budapest (or similar)

This Art Nouveau masterpiece, originally built in 1906, stands proudly on the banks of the Danube River, directly facing the iconic Chain Bridge. Guests can enjoy elegantly appointed rooms and suites, many offering breathtaking views of the city or the river. The hotel boasts exceptional dining options, a serene spa with an infinity pool, and impeccable service.



Four Seasons Hotel Gresham Palace, Budapest

PROGRAM RATES (PER PERSON)

Cabins	Double	Single
Deluxe Class	\$17,999	\$26,999
Superior Deluxe Class	\$23,999	Inquire

RATES INCLUDE

- Three nights hotel accommodations in Budapest; five nights cabin accommodations aboard *Golden Eagle Danube Express* as per itinerary
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary (B=Breakfast, BR=Brunch, L=Lunch, R=Reception, D=Dinner). Bottled water, soft drinks, juices, and coffee/tea with all meals; house wine and beer at all included lunches and dinners
- Enrichment program of lectures and talks
- Escorted sightseeing, transportation, and entrance fees for all included visits
- Airport/hotel/airport transfers for participants on arrival and departure days
- Taxes, service, and portage charges; gratuities to local guides and drivers; customary train gratuities

NOT INCLUDED IN RATES International airfare; passport/visa fees; meals not specified; alcoholic beverages other than what is noted in inclusions; personal items and expenses; airport transfers other than for participants on arrival and departure days; excess baggage; trip insurance; any other items not specifically mentioned as included.

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