PALACE TOURS
Travel Like Royalty



PALACE TOURS

Danube Express Luxury Train: Castles of Transylvania

6 Nights • Luxury Experience

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Overview

Absorb the vibrant cultures, ancient castles and spectacular scenery of Transylvania on this exclusive rail cruise aboard the Golden Eagle Danube Express.

ISTANBUL - VELIKO TARNOVO - SINAIA (PELES CASTLE) - BRASOV (BRAN CASTLE) - SIGHISOARA - SIBIU - KECSKEMET - LAJOSMIZSE - BUDAPEST

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

Tour Istanbul’s magnificent historical sites

Delve into the history surrounding Romania’s most infamous figure, Vlad the Impaler

Explore the UNESCO-honoured medieval citadel and colourful streets of Sighisoara

Enjoy a private dinner inside the castle walls of 14th century Bran Castle

See a traditional Hungarian ‘Puszta’ equestrian show

Admire the medieval and Baroque splendour of ancient Budapest

DAY BY DAY

Your Itinerary



DAY 1

ISTANBUL

Arrive into Istanbul where you will be met and transferred to the iconic five-star Four Seasons Sultanahmet hotel for a one-night stay. A century-old neoclassical home located in the tranquil sanctuary of the Old City and steps away from the top historic attractions of the Blue Mosque and Hagia Sophia, this boutique hotel offers a calming space filled with charm and sophistication.

This evening we will enjoy a welcome reception dinner, giving you the opportunity to meet your fellow travelers.

Why not extend your stay in Istanbul to explore more of the city at your leisure? Please contact us for hotel options, touring programmes and rates.

DAY 2

ISTANBUL



Istanbul is the fabled city that spans Asia and Europe. Today see how old meets new, east meets west when we visit a selection of Istanbul's must-see historic sites.

One of the most famous monuments in both the Turkish and Islamic worlds, the Sultan Ahmet Mosque (the Blue Mosque) is a superb creation in the classical Ottoman style and features six towering minarets and 260 windows illuminating its vast main chamber, which is decorated with more than 20,000 Iznik tiles.

Now a museum, Hagia Sophia was built in the 6th century by the Emperor Justinian and was one of the largest basilicas in the Christian world. After the Ottoman conquest, it was converted to a mosque and is today one of the most magnificent Grand Mosques in the world. Take a moment to linger here to admire the fine Byzantine architecture.

The largest and oldest palace in the world and primary residence of the Ottoman Sultans from 1465 to 1853, Topkapi is the crown jewel of the Ottoman Empire. With its treasury and exotic buildings overlooking the Golden Horn, your visit to Topkapi promises to be a truly fascinating experience.

Late afternoon we join our private train, the Golden Eagle Danube Express, to begin our rail journey through Bulgaria and Romania to Budapest.



DAY 3

VELIKO TARNOVO

This morning we enjoy the views from our private train as we climb over the Shipka Pass and arrive at our first stop **Veliko Tarnovo**, Bulgaria's ancient capital. Nestled in a magnificent mountain setting, the stone houses seem perched one above the other on the steep banks of the Yantra River.

A tour includes the superbly preserved medieval Tsarevets Hill and Castle and there is free time to wander through the narrow alleyways of the ancient city.

This evening relax in the Bar Lounge Car before dinner is served as our train continues through the scenic landscape as we head across the Romanian border.

DAY 4

SINAIA



Overnight the train twists and turns as it climbs over the Carpathian Mountains and threads its way through the dramatic landscape with crystal clear mountain streams.

This morning we arrive in **Sinaia** for a tour of Peles Castle. The castle is a masterpiece of German new-Renaissance architecture, considered by many one of the most stunning castles in Europe. Commissioned by King Carol I in 1873 and completed in 1883, the castle served as the summer residence of the royal family until 1947. Its 160 rooms are adorned with the finest examples of European art, Murano crystal chandeliers, German stained-glass windows and Cordoba leather-covered walls.

Returning to our private train for lunch we continue onto **Brasov** in the afternoon for a visit to Bran Castle. Surrounded by an aura of mystery and legend and perched high atop a 200-foot-high rock, the 14th century castle owes its fame to its imposing towers and turrets as well as to the myth created around Bram Stocker's Dracula. Following a tour of the castle and its surroundings we will enjoy a gala dinner tonight inside the castle walls.



DAY 5

SIGHISOARA

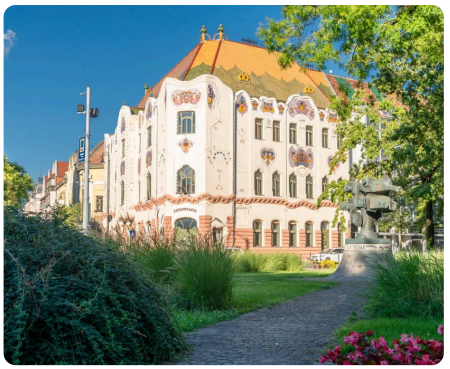
This morning we arrive after breakfast into **Sighisoara** for a walking tour of the town's main highlights. A World Heritage site rumoured to be the birthplace of Dracula, it is one of the best-preserved fortified medieval towns in Europe. Burgher houses and ornate churches line its cobbled streets.

We return to the train for lunch as we continue onto **Sibiu**, known specifically for its Germanic architecture in the Old Town due to the legacy of 12th-century Saxon settlers. Around the city today can be seen the remains of medieval walls and towers, including the 13th-century Council Tower which connects the two main squares.

Tonight, we enjoy a Farewell Dinner on board our private train as we travel across the Great Hungarian Plain.

DAY 6

KECSKEMÉT / LAJOSMIZSE



This morning we get the opportunity to explore Kecskemét, a fascinating city at the geographical centre of Hungary before the train heads to Lajosmizse for a spectacular ‘Puszta’ horse show.

We then arrive late afternoon at the romantic and historic Hungarian capital, Budapest, located on the banks of the magnificent Danube, where we will enjoy a one-night stay in the five-star Four Seasons Gresham Palace hotel (or similar), a unique art nouveau landmark which combines historical elegance with ultra-modern comforts.

This evening we will enjoy a farewell reception dinner at a local restaurant, giving you the opportunity to reflect on your journey through this fascinating part of Europe.



DAY 7

BUDAPEST

This morning, after an overnight stay at the Four Seasons Gresham Palace, we enjoy our final breakfast on the tour.

Why not extend your stay in Budapest to explore the Hungarian capital at your leisure? Please contact us for hotel options and rates.

DATES & PRICING

Departure Dates & Rates

DEPARTURE DATE	CLASS / CABIN	SINGLE	DOUBLE (PP)
May 28, 2027	Deluxe Class	**€19,900**	**€13,300**
	Superior Deluxe Class	**€28,600**	**€17,200**
	Deluxe Class Early Bird	**€19,650**	**€13,050**
	Superior Deluxe Class Early Bird	**€28,350**	**€16,950**
Oct 12, 2027	Deluxe Class	**€19,900**	**€13,300**
	Superior Deluxe Class	**€28,600**	**€17,200**
	Deluxe Class Early Bird	**€19,650**	**€13,050**
	Superior Deluxe Class Early Bird	**€28,350**	**€16,950**
Oct 28, 2027	Deluxe Class	**€19,900**	**€13,300**
	Superior Deluxe Class	**€28,600**	**€17,200**
	Deluxe Class Early Bird	**€19,650**	**€13,050**
	Superior Deluxe Class Early Bird	**€28,350**	**€16,950**
Jun 5, 2028	Deluxe Class	**€20,900**	**€14,000**
	Superior Deluxe Class	**€30,050**	**€18,100**
	Deluxe Class Early Bird	**€20,650**	**€13,750**
	Superior Deluxe Class Early Bird	**€29,800**	**€17,850**
Oct 2, 2028	Deluxe Class	**€20,900**	**€14,000**
	Superior Deluxe Class	**€30,050**	**€18,100**
	Deluxe Class Early Bird	**€20,650**	**€13,750**
	Superior Deluxe Class Early Bird	**€29,800**	**€17,850**

DEPARTURE DATE	CLASS / CABIN	SINGLE	DOUBLE (PP)
	Superior Deluxe Class	€30,050	€18,100
	Deluxe Class Early Bird	€20,650	€13,750
	Superior Deluxe Class Early Bird	€29,800	€17,850

Rates shown in Euro (EUR). Approximate USD equivalents available upon request.

Rates shown are per person. Single rate applies to single occupancy; Double rate applies per person in double occupancy.

EARLY BIRD FARES

Book early, pay less

Plan ahead and you'll pay less for exactly the same journey. Every cabin on this tour has an Early Bird fare. Look for it in the booking calendar, right next to the regular fare: it is labelled "<cabin> Early Bird".

6 MONTHS OR MORE BEFORE DEPARTURE

Save €250

per person

3 TO 6 MONTHS BEFORE DEPARTURE

Save €150

per person

INSIDE 3 MONTHS

Regular fare

the Early Bird fare closes

CABIN	REGULAR DOUBLE (PP)	EARLY BIRD, 6+ MONTHS AHEAD	EARLY BIRD, 3–6 MONTHS AHEAD
Deluxe Class	**from €13,300**	**from €13,050** save €250	**from €13,150** save €150
Superior Deluxe Class	**from €17,200**	**from €16,950** save €250	**from €17,050** save €150

Double fares per person, two sharing; "from" is the lowest fare across the departures listed above. The saving depends on the cabin's regular price per person: €250 / €150 on journeys from €8,000, €150 / €100 from €5,000, and €50 on shorter trips. It's the same cabin, the same itinerary and everything included as before. The only difference is the price. Early Bird fares are limited to the cabins on each departure and close automatically. If you already know your dates, now is the time to book.

🏷️ **Look for Coupons and Special Rates on our website.**

Visit https://www.palacetours.com/tour/danube-express-luxury-train-castles-tour for the latest information.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Terms & Conditions

Booking & Payment

- **Deposit:** 30% of the total tour cost is due at the time of booking. The deposit is non-refundable.
- **Final payment:** the balance is due no later than 125 days before departure.
- Bookings made within 125 days of departure are payable in full at the time of booking.
- Fares are per person. Your written confirmation shows the exact amounts and due dates.

Cancellation

- **125 days or more** before departure: 30% of the total tour cost (the deposit)
- **Less than 125 days** before departure: 100% of the total tour cost

Changes

- **Date change:** free of charge, subject to availability, when requested 125 days or more before departure; after that, a fee of 15% of the total tour cost applies.
- **Cabin upgrade:** only the fare difference between cabin categories applies.
- **Cabin downgrade or passenger name correction:** free of charge up to 35 days before departure; within 35 days, EUR 500 per change.

Changes or cancellation by the train operator

If the train operator cancels or materially changes a departure, you will be offered a new date or an amended booking, a credit toward a future journey, or a refund of the amounts paid.

All cancellation, change, or update requests must be submitted in writing by email to travel@palacetours.com. A request takes effect only once we have received and processed it, and we will confirm the outcome to you in writing. Timeframes are calculated by reference to local time and business days at the destination; a request received outside business hours is treated as received on the next business day.

We strongly recommend purchasing travel insurance, including cancellation cover, from the moment you pay your deposit. For information on available plans, please visit www.palacetours.com/insurance.

COMMON QUESTIONS

Frequently Asked Questions

How long is Castles of Transylvania and what route does it follow?

It is a 6-night, 7-day journey from Istanbul to Budapest. The route runs Istanbul, Veliko Tarnovo in Bulgaria, Sinaia for Peles Castle, Brasov for Bran Castle, Sighisoara, Sibiu, then Kecskemet and Lajosmizse in Hungary before arriving in Budapest. Nights are split between five-star hotels at each end and your en-suite cabin on the Danube Express.

Where does the journey start and finish?

It starts in Istanbul, where you are met on arrival and transferred to a five-star hotel in the Old City for a one-night stay, and finishes in Budapest with a one-night stay at a five-star art nouveau landmark hotel and a farewell reception dinner. Book an arrival flight into Istanbul and a departure flight from Budapest; those flights are not included.

What do we see in Istanbul?

Day two is a full day in the city that spans Europe and Asia. The programme covers a selection of the must-see historic sites, including the Sultan Ahmet Mosque, known as the Blue Mosque, with its six minarets and more than 20,000 Iznik tiles, and Hagia Sophia, built in the 6th century by the Emperor Justinian and one of the largest basilicas of the Christian world.

What is Peles Castle?

Peles Castle at Sinaia is a masterpiece of German neo-Renaissance architecture and, for many, one of the most stunning castles in Europe. Commissioned by King Carol I in 1873 and completed in 1883, it served as the royal family's summer residence until 1947. Its 160 rooms hold fine European art, Murano crystal chandeliers, German stained glass and Cordoba leather-covered walls.

Is there really a private dinner at Bran Castle?

Yes. A private dinner inside the walls of 14th-century Bran Castle near Brasov is one of the signature moments of this journey, and it is included in the tour price. Bran is inseparable from the history of Vlad the Impaler, the figure behind the Dracula legend, which the day's touring explores.

Why is Sighisoara worth visiting?

Sighisoara is a World Heritage site and one of the best-preserved fortified medieval towns in Europe, rumoured to be the birthplace of the figure behind the Dracula legend. A morning walking tour takes in its main highlights, with burgher houses and ornate churches lining the cobbled streets, before the train continues to Sibiu.

What is Veliko Tarnovo?

Veliko Tarnovo is Bulgaria's ancient capital and the first stop after the train climbs over the Shipka Pass. Its stone

What is Sibiu known for?

Sibiu is known for the Germanic architecture of its Old Town, a legacy of 12th-century Saxon settlers. Remains of the medieval walls and towers survive around the city, including the 13th-century Council Tower that links the two main squares. The visit comes after lunch on board, and the Farewell Dinner is served on the train that evening.

What is the Puszta horse show?

On the final touring day the train heads from Kecskemet, at the geographical centre of Hungary, to Lajosmizse for a traditional Puszta equestrian show. The Puszta is the Hungarian great plain, and the show displays the horsemanship of its herdsmen, including the famous feats of riders controlling several horses at once. It is included in the fare.

What cabin classes are available on the train?

Two classes are offered on the Danube Express: Deluxe Class and Superior Deluxe Class, both private and en-suite, with cabin attendant service including an evening turndown. Superior Deluxe is the more spacious option and tends to sell first. The exact fare for each class on each departure is shown on this page.

What is life on board the train like?

You unpack just once and settle into your cabin, with a cabin attendant on hand throughout. The social heart of the train is the first-class Bar Lounge Car, a relaxed place to watch the scenery and get to know fellow travellers, and meals are served in the Restaurant Cars. The pace on board is deliberately unhurried between excursions.

What is included in the tour price?

Included are five-star pre- and post-tour hotel accommodation, your private en-suite cabin, cabin attendant service with evening turndown, an experienced tour management team, the services of a UK-registered doctor with medical facilities on board, arrival and departure transfers, all gratuities on and off the train, luggage porterage, the listed meals with inclusive beverages from the standard bar list, and the guided off-train excursions.

How many meals are included?

Six breakfasts, five lunches and six dinners are included across the seven days. Meals on board are freshly prepared using the finest local ingredients, and the itinerary also includes authentic dining experiences in local restaurants, the private dinner at Bran Castle, a welcome reception dinner in Istanbul and a farewell reception dinner in Budapest.

Are gratuities and airport transfers included?

Yes. All gratuities on and off the train are included, so there is nothing to work out for train staff, hotel porters or local guides, and luggage porterage is covered throughout the journey. Arrival transfer in Istanbul and departure transfer in Budapest are included. International flights are not.

What is the Freedom of Choice touring programme?

Freedom of Choice means that on certain days you select between two included touring options instead of following one fixed programme, so the journey can suit different interests within the same group. Both options are covered by the fare; you simply tell the tour management team which you prefer, and they arrange the guides and transport accordingly.

What is the lead-in fare and what does it cover?

> The lead-in fare is from EUR 11,800 per person (2026 departure; EUR 13,300 in 2027) sharing a cabin. It covers the hotel nights at each end, your cabin on board, the listed meals, inclusive beverages from the standard bar list, all excursions, transfers and gratuities. The fare varies by cabin class and departure date, and the exact fare for each date is shown on this page.

Is there a single occupancy fare?

> Yes. A single-occupancy fare is available from EUR 17,600 (2026; EUR 19,900 in 2027) for the journey, depending on cabin class and departure date. Single cabins on a private train are limited, so they are best requested as early as possible. The exact single rate for your chosen date is confirmed in writing before you book.

What deposit is required and when is the balance due?

> A deposit of 30 percent of the tour price confirms your cabin and is non-refundable. The balance is due 125 days before departure, and bookings made within 125 days of departure are payable in full at the time of booking. Your written confirmation shows the exact amounts and the dates they fall due.

When do the departures for this journey run?

> Departures run from September 2026 through October 2027, with 10 dates currently loaded, concentrated in the spring and autumn shoulder seasons when Transylvania is at its best for touring. The full list of bookable dates, with the fare for each cabin class, is in the departures section of this page.

How do I ask a question or book Castles of Transylvania?

> Email travel@palacetours.com, call 786-408-0610 or message https://wa.me/17864080610, and a travel specialist or our AI assistant will help. Every departure listed on this page is bookable directly, and we will confirm your cabin class, the exact fare and what it covers in writing before any payment is taken.

Ready to Book Your Journey?

Contact Palace Tours for personalized rates and departure dates

travel@palacetours.com | 786-408-0610

www.palacetours.com

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