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Danube Express Luxury Train: Grand Alpine Express

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Overview

BUDAPEST – VIENNA – SEMMERING PASS – LAKE ACHEN – INNSBRUCK – ZURICH – ST GOTTHARD PASS – LAKE COMO – MILAN – VERONA – TRIESTE – LAKE BLEED – LJUBLJANA – POSTOJNA – VENICE

From the classic capital cities of Budapest and Vienna, we venture deep into the Austrian Tyrol before heading across the valleys of the Swiss Alps and onwards through the Italian Lake District before heading into the lesser-known but equally beautiful country of Slovenia and its jewel in the crown, Lake Bled.

Traverse some of the most scenic railway lines in the world as the *Golden Eagle* Danube Express weaves its way through tunnels, across viaducts and over mountain passes. Journeys end will be in the stunning maritime city of Venice, an outstanding mix of Gothic and Renaissance palaces perched on the edge of the Italian coast. A perfect end to a memorable journey of alpine discovery.

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

- Private concert at Vienna's Mozarthaus featuring the Vienna Supreme Orchestra
- Travel over the spectacular Semmering Pass with its 16 viaducts and 15 tunnels
- Take in the breathtaking beauty of Lake Bled on a special boat experience
- Dine beside stunning Lake Como and tour the medieval village of Bellagio
- Explore the ethereal Postojna Cave network of limestone caverns and monuments
- Enjoy a gondola ride through the iconic waterways of romantic Venice

Your Itinerary



DAY 1

BUDAPEST

On arrivals day in **Budapest**, you will be met at the airport, train station or river ship landing stage and transferred to the Four Seasons Hotel Gresham Palace for a two-night stay.

Enjoy a welcome reception dinner in the elegant surrounds of this art nouveau landmark, with its panoramic views across the River Danube, where you can meet your fellow travellers on this highly-anticipated journey.

DAY 2

BUDAPEST

Budapest is an alliance of two cities separated by the River Danube. The old city of Buda and the imposing Royal Palace, dominates the city with stunning views across the Danube to the commercial heart of Pest. Our city tour includes the Castle District, St. Mathias Church and a panoramic view of the city from Gellert Hill. We will also see the Citadel, the Opera House, St Stephen's Cathedral, Heroes Square and the City Park.

The rest of the day is at leisure where you can stroll along the banks of the Danube, visit the historic Great Market Hall with its endless variety of delicious foods and wines or head to one of the city's famous thermal baths for a rejuvenating dip. Alternatively, you can relax at the hotel and indulge in the hotel's luxurious spa with infinity-edge pool or make use of the state-of-the-art fitness centre.





DAY 3

VIENNA

We enjoy a drinks reception at Budapest Nyugati station before boarding the *Golden Eagle* Danube Express for our morning departure. Settle into your en-suite cabin and later enjoy lunch as the train heads to **Vienna**.

The stunning capital city of Austria enthralls visitors with its rich heritage. A seductive metropolis of elaborate palaces, renowned coffee houses, classical music and enchanting opera. Today's programme will allow you to sample the lively Naschmarkt, home to over 100 food and antique stalls, the famous Schönbrunn Palace, or free time to explore yourself.

This evening, we will enjoy a private concert featuring the Vienna Supreme Orchestra.

DAY 4

INNSBRUCK / VIENNA

Today will be one of the real highlights of the journey as we depart from Vienna in the morning and travel across central Austria and into the Alps on an incredibly scenic morning.

Cameras at the ready as we climb over the **Semmering Pass** with its 16 viaducts and 15 tunnels, through the famous skiing village of Kitzbuhel to Jenbach, where after lunch we take a scenic drive to the picturesque **Lake Achen** (Achensee) for a cruise on the water.

From here we will travel by bus the short distance to **Innsbruck**, capital of Austria's western state of Tyrol, a city in the Alps that's long been a destination for winter sports. Innsbruck is also known for its Imperial and modern architecture. The Nordkette funicular, with its futuristic stations designed by architect Zaha Hadid, climbs up to 2,256m from the city centre for stunning bird eye views of the surrounding Alpine terrain.





DAY 5

ZÜRICH

Another fantastic morning on board the *Golden Eagle* Danube Express to simply sit back, relax and watch the scenery of the Vorarlberg unfold in front of your eyes as we pass through St. Anton before crossing through Liechtenstein and then into Switzerland where we run along the whole of the Lake of Zürich before arriving in the city itself.

The city of **Zürich**, a global centre for banking and finance, lies at the north end of Lake Zürich in northern Switzerland. The picturesque lanes of the central Altstadt (Old Town), on either side of the Limmat River, reflect its pre-medieval history. Waterfront promenades like the Limmatquai follow the river toward the 17th-century Rathaus (Town Hall). Whilst in the city we will enjoy a traditional Swiss fondue tasting.

DAY 6

COMO / MILAN / ST. GOTTHARD PASS

Today is another day for the cameras! Upon leaving Zürich we pass along the shorelines of Lakes Zug and Lucerne before starting the very scenic climb to the **St Gotthard Pass**. Once through the old St Gotthard tunnel we descend through Lugano towards **Lake Como** in Italy, where we stop for lunch on the Lake.

Lake Como is surrounded by high mountains and dramatic cliffs, so it is quite different from the other Italian lakes. A narrow road runs up its western coast towards Switzerland and sits up high above the water, with the towns dropping down beneath it. Renowned for its beautifully kept public gardens and historic villas, it is easy to see why so many celebrities love Lake Como. We enjoy boat cruise on Lake Como and visit the beautiful lakeside town of Bellagio.

From Como, we travel to nearby **Milan**, Italy's business capital, for a short visit of this city famous for fashion and football but also its magnificently restored Gothic Duomo and the Teatro La Scala, followed by a delicious pizza tasting.





DAY 7

TRIESTE / VERONA

This morning after running along the south shore of Lake Garda we arrive in Verona. Famous for being the setting of Shakespeare's 'Romeo and Juliet', we enjoy an informative walking tour of Verona's famous sites, including the first century Roman Amphitheatre in Piazza Bra.

We lunch on board and later in the afternoon we arrive into Trieste, the Italian port for a short tour. We stop at the vast Piazza Unita d'Italia, the main town square, and can climb the hill to the famous Church of San Giusto built around a medieval complex that dates back to the 13th century. We will go inside the church for a close-up view of the splendid Byzantine-style architecture enriched with precious mosaics.

DAY 8

BLED / LJUBLJANA

This morning be awake early as our train climbs away from Trieste and heads over the border into Slovenia and continue climbing through the Julian Alps to Lake Bled which, with its island, church and castle is an incredibly picturesque alpine lake situated at the foothills of the Alps in north-western Slovenia.

From here we travel onto Ljubljana as we have lunch on board and discover a delightful combination of ancient architecture and a youthful culture. Our afternoon tour includes visits to Preseren Square, Three Bridges and Dragon Bridge.



DAY 9

POSTOJNA / VENICE

As the train stays overnight in **Postojna**, we include a private visit to Postojna Caves in the morning. We then head south towards Mestre where our train curves to the left onto the 3-mile causeway across the Venice Lagoon and into Venice Santa Lucia station located on the Grand Canal, arriving after lunch.

We say farewell to our train crew and transfer to a centrally located hotel in **Venice** for a two-night stay.

VENICE

Venice is a truly captivating and romantic city; its unrivalled beauty takes away the breath of first-time visitors and regulars alike. Today enjoy a walking tour around the highlights of this spectacular city. Walk through the winding lanes beside the Grand Canal to St. Mark's Square, which for 1,000 years was the heart of Venetian life. We also see St. Mark's Basilica and stroll through the Rialto Market. A trip to Venice would not be complete without a gondola ride along Venice's famous canals (we include a 30 minute gondola in the programme).

Alternatively enjoy the city at your own pace today. Perhaps stroll through the artists' district of Dorsoduro, stopping to take in the city's most breathtaking views from the Accademia Bridge.

In the evening we will enjoy a farewell reception dinner, giving you the opportunity to reflect on your journey through this beautifully scenic part of Europe.



VENICE

On the final morning following breakfast in the hotel you will be transferred to the airport for onward departures.

There is also an option to extend your stay in Venice for additional nights to explore more of this fascinating city.

Terms & Conditions

PAYMENT TERMS:

- 25% of the total tour cost due at booking
- 75% or the balance due no later than 95 days prior to departure
- For bookings made within 90 days of departure, full payment is required at the time of booking.

CANCELLATION FEES:

- 96 days before departure: 25% cancellation fee
- 95 - 65 days before departure: 50% cancellation fee
- less than 65 days before departure: 100% cancellation fee

Cancellations should be intimated by FAX to the corporate office in Miami FL.

The above times are based on European time. In order to provide enough time for processing cancellation, guests need to add 3 business days to the above timeframes. An administration fees of 15% on any monies paid by the client will be charged prior to refund.

We strongly recommend purchasing travel insurance to cover the losses incurred in case of cancellation. For information on available plans or to purchase travel insurance, please visit www.palacetours.com/insurance.

Ready to Book Your Journey?

Contact Palace Tours for personalized rates and departure dates

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