



P. 1300 739 652 (Inside Australia)
P. +61 8 7226 1898 (Outside Australia)
F. +61 8 8336 1007
E. contact@tweetworldcruises.com.au

HIKING CRUISES IN THE FORMER AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN EMPIRE (PORT-TO-PORT CRUISE)

Trip Code: WBB_RANPP

Duration: 8

Destination: VIENNA - MELK - BRATISLAVA - KALOCSA - BUDAPEST

Travel Dates: 2022/2023

DAY 1 VIENNA

Board at around 6.00pm in Vienna. Welcome cocktail, presentation of the crew. Dinner on board. Cruise departure during the evening towards Melk.

DAY 2 MELK - DURNSTEIN

Buffet breakfast on board. Arrive at daybreak and set off on the visit to Melk Abbey. Here you can admire the baroque-style marble hall, library and church. Return on board for lunch and set sail for Dürnstein, cruising through the beautiful Wachau Valley. Hiking programme: set off by coach for the village of Aggstein. Hike through the heart of the Wachau region, visit the ruins of Aggstein Castle. Its exceptional location and its impressive dimensions make this castle one of the most well-known in Austria. Erected around 1100, it is thought to have been the haunt of pillaging knights during the Middle Ages. There are superb views over the Wachau. After the visit, hike through unspoilt scenery to Maria Longegg then transfer by coach to rejoin the boat in Dürnstein. (4 hours hiking, with a climb of around 400m) Programme for the non-hikers: arrive in the early afternoon in Dürnstein and have a discovery tour in the company of your on board hostess. The village, known for the legend of Richard the Lionheart, has a remarkable abbey, radiant in pale blue and white, with one of the finest baroque bell towers in Austria. Return on board and continue the cruise to Bratislava. Dinner on board.

DAY 3 BRATISLAVA

Arrival of the boat during the night. Buffet breakfast on board. Hiking programme: set off by coach for Devinska Nova Ves, hike in the Little Carpathian mountain range, through Sandberg and the Devinska Kobyla National Nature Reserve to the ruins of Devin Castle (outside), from where there are beautiful views of Bratislava. Transfer by coach back to the ship. (1½ hours hiking, with a climb of around 250m) Programme for the non-hikers: set off on a visit of the Slovak capital. The baroque palace and pleasant shady squares are part of the charm of the town that was held so dear by Princess Maria Theresa of Austria. Return on board for lunch and set sail for Kalocsa, in Hungary. The afternoon is spent entirely afloat, with dinner and an evening of entertainment on board.

DAY 4 KALOCSA

Buffet breakfast on board. The boat arrives early in the morning and you will set off for the visit to the Puzsta, Also known as the "Great Hungarian Plain", this enormous flat prairie was the Hungarian Wild West during the 19th century. You can immerse yourselves in the tradition and folklore as you watch a traditional horse show. Return on board for lunch and the cruise departs for Budapest, the "Pearl of the Danube", where we arrive during the night. Dinner on board.

DAY 5 BUDAPEST

Buffet breakfast on board. Hiking programme: from the mooring point, a city walk to discover Buda. You will pass the famous Gellert Baths and walk along the paved streets by the castle, which is one of the few remaining examples of medieval Budapest. Return on board via public transport (not included) for lunch. (2½ hours hiking, with a climb of around 100m) Programme for the non-hikers: Guided visit of Budapest (panoramic tour by coach with stops) to discover Buda, the upper part of the city, with its narrow winding streets, baroque buildings and Royal Palace. Pest, is more bustling and busy, and proudly displays its rich mix of architectural styles. Lunch on board, afternoon at leisure for the non-hikers. Hiking programme: a walk in Pest, to discover the Art Deco and Hungarian Art Nouveau buildings. Set off from the mooring point to the covered market place. Pass Budapest synagogue - evidence of the importance of the Jewish community long ago. Walk along the pedestrianized street Vaci Utca and look up. You are sure to be surprised to see the great diversity of ornamentation on the buildings' facades. Visit St Stephen's Basilica and continue to Freedom Square lined with Hungarian Art Nouveau and Art Deco buildings. Return on board by public transport (not included) or on foot. (2 hours level walking, no climbing involved). Dinner on board then a free evening, or a Folklore Evening in Budapest. Departure of the boat around midnight.

DAY 6 BUDAPEST - ESZTERGOM

Arrival early on the morning in Esztergom. Buffet breakfast on board. Free time in Esztergom, birth and coronation place of the first Hungarian king, St Stephen. The Basilica of Esztergom is a masterpiece of classicism and with its large dome, it owers over the town. It is the largest religious building in Hungary. Hiking programme: set off by coach for Visegrad then walk to Visegrad Fortress (exteriors only) from where you can see the Danube Bend. Return to the coach on foot and then transfer to the ship. (2 hours hiking, with a climb of around 250m) Lunch on board and an afternoon of cruising. Gala dinner and evening.

DAY 7 VIENNA

Arrival of the ship at daybreak. After buffet breakfast on board, there is a guided visit of Vienna and Schönbrunn Castle. Return on board for lunch. Hiking programme: the afternoon is spent on a walking discovery tour of Vienna. After lunch on board, transfer by coach to Nussdorfer Platz. The walk up Leopoldsberg will take you to one of the finest vantage points over the city. From here you can admire the Danube and the Vienna Woods as you walk between the vines and forest. The distinctive feature of this circuit is the Nasenweg path, with its unique flora and fauna. (Around 3 to 4 hours hiking, with a climb of around 340m). Programme for the non-hikers: free time to visit Vienna at your own pace, or a guided visit of the Hofburg: the Palace of the Habsburg contains magnificent imperial apartments. Return on board for dinner. In the evening, you will have the option to attend a concert of Viennese music (optional and subject to availability). We moor for the night.

DAY 8 VIENNA

We have buffet breakfast on board and disembark. End of our journey.

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