
14 DAY ELEGANT ELBE AND CAPITALS OF THE DANUBE RIVERS

Trip Code: TWBPGVBV21

Duration: 15

Destination: Germany- Czech Republic- Austria- Hungary- Slovakia

Travel Dates: 2022 / 2023

DAY 1 **BERLIN- MS Elbe Princesse II (D)**

On arrival in Berlin you will be welcomed at the airport and transferred to the cruise ship. Passengers are welcome to board our ship in Berlin starting at 6:00 p.m. After comfortably settling into your cabins, we will introduce our crew at a welcome cocktail.

We will enjoy dinner on board and remain in port overnight.

DAY 2 **BERLIN - NEDLITZ – WUSTERWITZ- MS Elbe Princesse II (B,L,D)**

This morning we depart for a tour of Berlin.

We will leave by coach from Berlin-Spandau with a local guide who will help us discover the history, monuments, and fascinating facets of this particularly historic city. We will travel up the 17th of June Street to see the famous Victory Column, the Bismarck Memorial, the Brandenburg Gate and the Reichstag building with its steel and glass cupola. We will then arrive at the renowned Unter den Linden and head to Museum Island—a complex of five internationally significant museums that occupy the island's northern part—including the Pergamon Museum, and the Alte Nationalgalerie. Beyond Museum Island are the modern Alexanderplatz and its famous Fernsehturm (Berlin TV Tower). You will be able to go through Checkpoint Charlie, the symbol of the Cold War and passage between the American and Soviet zones during this time. This might seem like just a glance, but you will be able to discover the monuments that make Berlin one of the most cultural cities in Europe.

After our tour, we will return on board and start cruising towards Nedlitz, and you will discover the idyllic charm of the lakes formed by the Havel River.

In the afternoon, we will depart for a visit to the gardens at the Sanssouci Palace. We will leave by coach with local guides who will help you discover the history of Former Prussia and its illustrious monarchs. In Potsdam, the visit will begin with a walk through the gardens at the Sanssouci Palace. You will walk the flower-lined pathways and staircases leading through the terraced garden to the residence of Frederick the Great, built between 1745 and 1747. The personal tastes of the king had such an influence on the design and the decoration of the palace that its style is often referred to as "Frederician Rococo".

We will get back on the coach and drive around the Sanssouci Park to admire its fabulous structures before

heading to Cecilienhof Palace. Cecilienhof Palace was built from 1914 to 1917 for Crown Prince William and his wife, Cecilie von Mecklenburg-Schwerin, as a gift from Emperor Wilhelm II. After the end of the war in Europe, the Potsdam Conference - attended by Stalin, Churchill and Truman - was held in the palace from July 17 - August 2, 1945. Here, Churchill and Truman also defined the terms of surrender together for Japan.

After our visit, we will head back to downtown Potsdam for some free time in the Dutch district before returning to the ship by coach and begin cruising to Wusterwitz.

Enjoy an evening of entertainment.

DAY 3 WUSTERWITZ – MAGDEBURG- MS Elbe Princesse II (B,L,D)

This morning will be spent cruising towards Magdeburg.

This afternoon, we depart for a guided tour of Magdeburg with local guides. We will begin our tour with the Magdeburg Cathedral, home to the tomb of Emperor Otto I the Great. Magdeburg is a Hanseatic city located midway on the Elbe River and the Roman Roads—in the heart of Germany rich with a multi-faceted history. Its other sacred monuments include the Magdalenenkapelle, St. Petrikerche, Wallonerkerche, Monastery of Our Lady and St. John's Church. We will continue our panoramic tour by seeing the city's main monuments, including the citadel. Once located in East Germany, the city has retained its grey, square, Soviet-style buildings which are embellished today with molding and decorations. We will visit the marketplace to see the magnificent replica of the Magdeburger Reiter, as well as the town hall and its bronze door. You will finish up the tour with some free time on your own.

Afterwards, we will return on board and continue our cruise. Enjoy an evening of dancing.

DAY 4 WITTENBERG- MS Elbe Princesse II (B,L,D)

Once we arrive in Wittenberg, we will depart for a guided tour of Lutherstadt Wittenberg. Lutherstadt Wittenberg is the hometown of Dr. Martin Luther, the Great Reformer, and the city is affectionately known as the "Cradle of the Reformation". You will discover the city centre and its noble Renaissance-style houses. Everywhere you turn, there is a spot associated with Martin Luther's life, and various sites throughout the city were added to the UNESCO world heritage list in 1996. A stream runs along the main street, partially underground. Halfway along, the street opens out into an attractive square, or Markt, with a statue of Luther and Philip Melancthon, his collaborator.

The Castle Church is the famous church where he nailed his 95 Theses to the door. Luther gave some of his sermons in this church and now is buried just under the pulpit. The church was severely damaged twice during wars in the centuries following the Reformation, but it was rebuilt each time. We will also visit Luther's house. Part of the Augustinian monastery in which Luther lived, first as a monk and later as owner with his wife and family, is preserved and considered to be the world's premier museum dedicated to Luther, including a permanent exhibition about the time of the Reformation

Afterwards, we will return on board and spend the afternoon cruising.

Tonight, will be CroisiEurope Quiz Night. Our ship will cruise through the night.

DAY 5 MEISSEN – DRESDEN- MS Elbe Princesse II (B,L,D)

On arrival in Meissen, we will leave from our ship for a guided tour of Meissen. The city is famous for its porcelain, based on extensive local deposits of both china and potter's clay. Meissen is sometimes known as the "cradle of Saxony". Its historical district is located mostly around the market at the foot of the castle hill and contains many Renaissance-style buildings, as well as two Late-Gothic buildings: the town hall and the Frauenkirche. The Frauenkirche tower hosts the world's first porcelain carillon, manufactured in 1929 on the town's 1000-year jubilee.

After touring the city, we will visit the porcelain factory. The intricacy of the figures and sculptures and the perfection of the hand-painted patterns are the things that underscore this magnificent form of art. In the museum, you will take an enticing journey through more than 300 years of porcelain history. After some free time on your own, we will return to the ship in Dresden.

After lunch, we visit of the city known as the "Florence of the Elbe." Dresden offers a wide variety of attractions, including magnificent promenades on the bank of the Elbe, fascinating museums, monuments, and charming details. Our visit will begin with a panoramic tour, where you will get an overview of the most important must-see sights: the Altmarkt Square, German Hygiene Museum (exteriors only), Baroque Quarter, Transparent Factory (VW) and soccer stadium.

We will then visit the historical old city on foot, passing in front of the Zwinger, Semper Opera House, cathedral, Royal Palace, Brühl Terrace, and Neumarkt Square.

After some free time on your own, we will return to the ship.

Evening of dancing.

DAY 6 DRESDEN – USTI- MS Elbe Princesse II (B,L,D)

Today we leave by coach for a visit to the Elbe Sandstone Mountains, a range straddling the border between the state of Saxony in South eastern Germany and the North Bohemian region of the Czech Republic. The most striking characteristic of this deeply dissected rocky mountain range is the extraordinary variety of terrain within the small area. The river Elbe runs through the mountain range in a steep and narrow valley, and the hills are dotted with châteaux such as the Königstein Fortress and Hohnstein Castle. We will visit the Königstein Fortress, dating back beyond the 13th century. Because the fortress was regarded as unconquerable, the Saxon monarchs retreated to it during times of crisis and deposited many works of art from the famous Zwinger here. In the 20th century, it was used as a prison, a prisoner of war camp, and after the wars, a re-education camp for delinquent youths who did not fit the image of a socialist society. The location offers magnificent views of the Elbe River and the surrounding mountain ranges.

After our tour, we will return on board our ship. The afternoon will be spent cruising.

Enjoy an evening of entertainment.

DAY 7 USTI - ROUDNICE – KRALUPY- MS Elbe Princesse II (B,L,D)

This morning we leave from our ship for a guided tour of Litomerice. This royal city on the confluence of the Elbe and Ohre is one of the most beautiful in the Czech Republic. The extensive historical centre has dozens of

streets and squares. The colourful Gothic, Baroque and Renaissance buildings bordered to a great extent by well-preserved Gothic fortifications will delight you. Karel Hynek Mácha, the greatest Czech romantic poet, also succumbed to the charm of Litomerice. A delightful glass at the nearby Velké Zernoseky winery will certainly make your walk through the city all the more pleasant.

Allow yourself to be enchanted by the rare architecture of the houses on the squares: the Saxon Renaissance town hall, the "Kalich" House with a roof terrace where the rich townsfolk used to meet over a glass of wine, and the "Cerný orel" House, which has preserved its original appearance with wonderful sgraffito work. There are also countless important churches such as the Gothic Church of All Saints with its Renaissance broach roofs, the Church of the Annunciation of the Lady Mary representing the pinnacle of work by the Italian architect Antonio Octavio Broggio and the Baroque Cathedral of St. Stephen, which was built by Domenico Orsi. Our visit will be followed by a beer tasting.

After our tour, we will return to the ship. We will spend the afternoon cruising. Enjoy an evening of onboard entertainment.

DAY 8 KRALUPY - ROZTOKY – PRAGUE- MS Elbe Princesse II (B,L,D)

This morning we depart for a tour of Prague's Old Town. Prague is the capital and largest city of the Czech Republic as well as the fourteenth largest city in the European Union. It is located in the north-west of the country on the Vltava River, and is home to about 1.26 million people.

Located at the very heart of Central Europe, Prague was once the capital of the Kingdom of Bohemia, the Holy Roman Empire and Czechoslovakia. The "City of a Hundred Spires" was miraculously spared during World War II and its architecture, mixing Pre-Romanesque, Romanesque, Gothic, Baroque, Rococo, Art Nouveau and Cubist styles, gives Prague its unique flavour. The city was deeply marked by the 1968 Prague Spring—the short-lived season of the "socialism with a human face" aiming at the renovation of institutions in a democratic way—which strongly inspired Czechoslovak culture from the 60s to the 80s. Prague's historic city centre was added to the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1992.

We will have a guided walk in the old city starting with the Old Town Square—the busiest area in Prague—and its beautiful archways. We'll see Jan Hus Memorial, built in honour of this church reformer who was burned at the stake for heresy in 1415, as well as the Old Town Hall and its fascinating astronomical clock featuring the hourly show of figures of the Apostles striking the time, the Gothic Church of Our Lady before Týn (exteriors only), the Ungelt and the merchants' yard. We will also get to admire the Municipal House, the city's foremost Art Nouveau building, and one of the finest in Europe, as well as the Powder Gate, one of the original 13 entrances to Prague's Old Town.

We will return on board in Prague. This afternoon, we depart for a guided tour of the Hradcany, or Castle District, in Prague. The city centre is divided into five areas, spanning both banks of the Vltava River, and Prague Castle is the most prominent tourist attraction. Set on a hill, it affords visitors fine views over the whole city.

Founded in 880 AD, it is the largest medieval castle in Europe and was once the seat of the Kings of Bohemia. Today, the President of the Czech Republic rules from here. The Prague Castle complex covers over 7 hectares (18 acres) and has three large courtyards. Destructive wars and fires (and the subsequent renovations), along with differing political forces, have resulted in an intriguing mix of palaces, churches, great halls, state apartments, a monastery, viewing towers, fortifications, museums, and art galleries. You will get to discover,

among other sights, St. Vitus Cathedral, the Old Royal Palace with its Vladislav Hall, St. George's Basilica and the famous Golden Lane. We will return on board after our visit.

Tonight, will be our gala evening and dinner.

DAY 9 PRAGUE-VIENNA (B)

Enjoy one last buffet breakfast on board before disembarking at 9:00 a.m. We transfer you to the Prague airport for your flight to Vienna. On arrival you will be welcomed at the airport and transferred to your hotel in Vienna.

The rest of the day is free at your own leisure.

DAY 10 VIENNA- MS Vivaldi (B,D)

Today is a free day in Vienna at your own leisure.

We will transfer you from your hotel to the cruise ship when passengers are welcome to board the ship at 6:00 p.m. After comfortably settling into your cabins, we will introduce our crew at a welcome cocktail.

Tonight's dinner will have an Austrian flair.

DAY 11 VIENNA- MS Vivaldi (B,L,D)

This morning, we depart for a tour of Vienna. You will begin the tour by taking the famous Ring, one of the personal projects of Emperor Franz Joseph. In 1857, he decided to take down the ramparts that enclosed the city centre and had this boulevard built lined with fine buildings. Along the Ring you will admire this architectural showcase of the old Austro-Hungarian monarchy, including the State Opera, the Hofburg Palace, the Natural History Museum, the City Hall, the Burgtheater and more.

This afternoon we set off to discover authentic and unique Vienna, and the high art of Viennese living. We will stroll through the city and visit backstage in the Konzerthaus concert hall, which has the Vienna Symphony, Vienna Chamber Orchestra, Wiener Singakademie and Klangforum Wien in residence. We will tour the prominent institution that features about 750 events per year with our guide who will explain the hall's history. We will head backstage where we might be able to catch a glimpse of a performer or two!

After our tour, relax in one of the local cafés and enjoy a steaming cup of Vienna Coffee and a delicious pastry. After our tour, we will return to the ship and start sailing towards Budapest.

Tonight, enjoy an evening of dancing.

DAY 12 BUDAPEST- MS Vivaldi (B,L,D)

This morning, in the company of our guides, we will leave for a panoramic tour of Budapest, the Pearl of the Danube. First, we will head for the hills of Buda by crossing the Elizabeth Bridge and we will go up to the Castle quarter, from where we'll enjoy a fantastic panoramic view of the city. We will walk round the castle quarter and on to the Fisherman's Bastion, built in neo-Roman style in 1902 for the simple pleasure of offering a

panoramic view over the city and the Danube. Behind the Bastion, we will find Matthias Church which notably was the venue for the coronation of Emperor Franz Joseph and his wife "Sissi". Our coach will then take us down to the plains of Pest. There, we will visit Heroes' Square whose central monument depicting Prince Arpad and the chieftains of seven Magyar tribes was built for the millennium of Hungary. We will pass by the famous Szechenyi thermal baths, the zoo - a true piece of architecture - Vajdahunyad Castle and more. We will walk through the famous Andrássy Avenue and pass by St. Stephen's Basilica whose construction began in 1851 and was only completed in 1905. We will walk along the river and see the famous Parliament building overlooking the Danube with its white silhouette in the Byzantine and neo-Gothic styles. Return on board.

This afternoon set out with your guide to visit the famous Gellert Baths and Spa. Now part of the famous Hotel Gellert in Buda, references to the spa's healing waters have been found from as early as the 13th century. The current spa was founded in 1918, and a visit to the Art Nouveau thermal baths is a beautiful and historical experience. The special attractions are its indoor and outdoor swimming pools, wave bath, sunbathing terrace, and thermal spa. After our tour, take some time to relax and enjoy the saunas, the terrace looking at Gellert Hill, or the geothermal pools with some beer, wine, or champagne in hand. This is an exceptional tour in one of the most historical places in the city. (Don't forget to bring your swimsuit!)

Afterwards, we will return to the ship.

We will enjoy a Hungarian feast tonight, followed by an evening of traditional folk entertainment. Our ship will begin to cruise towards Bratislava during the night.

DAY 13 BRATISLAVA- MS Vivaldi (B,L,D)

This morning will be spent sailing towards Bratislava.

This afternoon we depart for a guided tour of the Slovakian capital whose charm lies in its old town, home to splendid Baroque palaces, churches, and pleasant squares.

Bratislava, before becoming the capital of independent Slovakia in 1993 was first the capital of Hungary from 1536 to 1784 under the name of Presburg. It then belonged to Czechoslovakia before becoming the capital of the "Slovak Socialist Republic" as part of Czechoslovakia between 1969 and 1992.

Along with your guides, you will begin the visit with a panoramic tour of the city which will take you to Bratislava Castle (outsides), which dates from 1811, after the previous castle burned down, and from where you will enjoy a breathtaking view over the Danube and the city. The main historical monuments are in the Old Town and the coach will drop you off at its entrance to continue the visit on foot. You will enter through Michael's Gate, which is the only gate still surviving from the Middle-Ages. Then you will head for the central square surrounded by elegant buildings, some in Art Nouveau style, and dominated by the old Bratislava Town Hall. The tour continues with the Primate's Palace (outsides) completed in 1781 for Archbishop Jozef Bathányi.

As you stroll through the streets, you may come across some of the amusing statues that are dotted around the capital. After the guided tour, you will have some free time and will return to the boat on foot or by coach depending on sailing times

Tonight, is our gala dinner and evening. We will cruise through the night to Vienna.

DAY 14 VIENNA (B)

We will arrive in Vienna early this morning. Enjoy one last buffet breakfast on board before disembarking at 9:00 a.m. We then transfer you to the airport in Vienna. End of our services.

DAY

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