

2024 - Celebration of Classical Music: The Danube

7-NIGHT CRUISE

From Strauss's The Blue Danube to Mozart's Linz Symphony, the Danube River has inspired countless musicians throughout the centuries. Their famous melodies are carried on the river's current, which you'll follow through some of the most spectacular capitals – Budapest, Hungary; Bratislava, Slovakia; and Vienna, Austria – where they lived, composed and performed, as well as to cities such as Salzburg, Austria, where Mozart was born. Along the way, you will be treated to a variety of live performances by renowned musicians that are sure to fill your heart with love for the Danube throughout the ages. Whether you are a musician yourself, a classical music connoisseur or simply a discerning traveler seeking a nuanced and immersive experience, let the Danube River be your melodious muse on this incredible classical music themed journey.

OVERVIEW:

<u>DAY</u>	<u>DESTINATION</u>	<u>ACTIVITIES</u>
1	BUDAPEST	EMBARKATION
2	BUDAPEST	"Queen of the Danube" tour OR "Hidden Budapest" tour OR Castle Hill hike Budapest Opera House with recital and Liszt House with museum
3	BRATISLAVA	Scenic cruising "Coronation City" walking tour with musical performance OR Tastes of Slovakia OR Bratislava Castle hike OR Bike tour
4	LINZ	Full-day Salzburg excursion with Mozart Birth House and residence OR "UNESCO City of Media Arts" walking tour with Mozart House OR "Cultural Mile" bike tour Český Krumlov excursion*
5	LINZ	Scenic cruising Melk Abbey with choir performance OR Melk Abbey hike Bike tour
6	MELK	Scenic cruising "Imperial Vienna" tour OR Sacher & Coffee OR Vienna city tour by bike Evening concert
7	VIENNA	Schönbrunn Palace OR Klosterneuburg bike tour Composers walking tour OR Free time
8	VIENNA	DISEMBARKATION

ITINERARY DETAILS:

Day 1, BUDAPEST. Arrive in Budapest and board your luxurious river cruise ship. (D)

Day 2, BUDAPEST. Budapest offers an unmatched combination of culture and tradition. Your city tour begins with going to both the Buda (hilly) and the Pest (flat) sides of the river. You'll see Heroes' Square and Castle Hill, home to the Fisherman's Bastion and Matthias Church. If you prefer venturing off the beaten path or are returning to the city for a repeat visit, join our "Hidden Budapest" tour to discover some fascinating sites lesser-known to the average traveler. Whether heading to an underground church or exploring Roman ruins, this excursion is sure to surprise and delight you. If you prefer an active excursion, you can hike up to Castle Hill for breathtaking views of the city below. Later in the day, celebrate the joy of music when visiting the Opera House, followed by a reception and small performance. You will then visit the Liszt House and museum, previously home to one of Hungary's greatest composers and virtuoso pianists. Immerse yourself into the history of music as you will see a collection of pianos, portraits and personal objects of an influential pianist of the 19th century. (B,L,D)

Day 3, BRATISLAVA. Take in the breathtaking scenery along the Danube River from your balcony or while up on the Sun Deck and even catch a glimpse of the gleaming Bratislava Castle on your way into the city. Host to the crowning ceremonies of 11 Hungarian kings and queens between 1536 and 1830, Bratislava certainly has earned the title "Coronation City of Kings," as you'll discover during your walking tour. Plus, enjoy a surprise musical performance as part of this included excursion. Or join a special "Tastes of Slovakia" tour. For a more active adventure, hike up to Bratislava Castle, offering magnificent views of the city or enjoy a guided bike tour, pausing to take photos with some of the celebrated statues in Old Town. (B,L,D)

Day 4, LINZ. Revel in a morning scenic cruise before your ship arrives in Linz, where you'll have several choices of excursions. Opt for a full-day excursion to Salzburg where you'll tour the historic center, lovely Mirabell Gardens, Residenz Square and the Old Market. You will also visit the museum at the famed yellow building known as Mozart Birth House and residence where the legendary composer was born in 1756 and lived until 1773. En route to Salzburg, stop at Mondsee, home of the Basilica St. Michael where the wedding scene from The Sound of Music was filmed. Or join a morning walking tour through the old city center of Linz and by the Mozarthaus where Mozart composed his Linz Symphony and Linz Sonata in only three days in 1783; or go on a bike tour of the city's famed "Cultural Mile," passing the contemporary Ars Electronica Center and the New Cathedral. In the afternoon, for those not taking the full-day tour to Salzburg, you can also choose to visit charming Český Krumlov, located just over the Czech-Austrian border. (B,L,D)

*Note: Not available with full-day Salzburg excursion

Day 5, LINZ - MELK. Enjoy a morning cruise through Austria's beautiful Wachau Valley before sailing into Melk. Explore the city known for its magnificent Benedictine Abbey, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of Europe's largest and most revered monasteries. Within these walls you will find frescoes painted by Johann Michael Rottmayr and Paul Troger, as well as a famed collection of musical manuscripts. You will also enjoy the incredible acoustics of the abbey during a beautiful live choral performance. Later in the day, if you prefer a more active adventure, hike up to the Melk Abbey and then visit this magnificent Baroque monastery or join a guided bike tour to Melk. (B,L,D)

Day 6, MELK - VIENNA. Sail from Melk to the grand capital of Vienna on a morning scenic cruise. Once there, the "City of Waltzes" offers a wealth of gems and your city tour showcases its regal splendors, including the majestic Opera House and the former Imperial Palace of the Habsburgs. Conclude your tour in Vienna's historic city center and visit St. Stephen's Cathedral, or discover Vienna by bike. Alternatively, visit a traditional café to experience a true Vienna specialty with its very own national holiday and a unique history to match: the rich chocolate sachertorte – and savor this treat with a piping hot Viennese coffee. In the evening, join us for a very special live classical performance at a renowned local concert hall. (B,L,D)

Day 7, VIENNA. Visit the UNESCO-designated Schönbrunn Palace and Gardens, the main summer residence of the Habsburg rulers, on your included tour. Built in the 18th century as an imperial summer residence, this magnificent 1,441-room Baroque palace is one of the most important architectural, cultural and historical monuments in Austria. Alternatively, pedal along the scenic Danube River and through charming neighborhoods to the nearby town of Klosterneuberg and its majestic 12th-century Augustinian monastery overlooking the Danube River. During the afternoon, explore the city of music while following in the footsteps of world-renowned composers, such as Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert, from their past residences to museums to grand monuments. Or enjoy leisure time to further explore this iconic city. (B,L,D)

Day 8, VIENNA. Bid farewell to Vienna and prepare for your flight home. (B)