

Blue Danube Tauck River Cruises

By

Hank Schrader

Europe River Cruise Expert

Day 1 Arrive Prague & Lobkowitz Palace Evening

- **Tour begins: 5:30 PM, Prague Marriott Hotel.** A transfer is included from Václav Havel Airport Prague or the Praha Hlavni Nadrazi train station to the Prague Marriott Hotel in the heart of the city.
- Those arriving early may join your Tauck Director for a walk to this historic city's Old Town Square.
- Begin your amazing Blue Danube river cruise adventure early this evening with a Tauck Exclusive – a royal welcoming reception, tour and dinner at 16th-century Lobkowitz Palace at Prague Castle. Immerse in an evening of classical cultural treasures – music and art played an important role in the aristocratic world of the Lobkowitz family.
- Dinner

Day 2 The legacy of Many Centuries in Prague

- Start today's exploration of Prague this morning with a choice of walking tours through Prague's ethereal Old Town, choosing between a one-hour introductory tour; a "walk through the centuries" (note: this excursion has two versions, with one being shorter and less requiring less walking);
- or the city's poignant Jewish sites in Josefov, the historic Jewish Quarter (ask at booking about dates that cannot visit inside the Jewish Heritage sites as they are closed Saturdays and on Jewish holidays; in those cases, alternate sightseeing will be offered).
- This afternoon, your choices in the ancient Hradcany (Castle) district include the 1,000-year-old Prague Castle's complex of palaces, courtyards and gardens; the magnificent Gothic Cathedral of St. Vitus; and the grand Baroque libraries of Strahov Monastery, where a private tour is a Tauck Exclusive.
- Sample the culinary pleasures of Prague on a free night to spend as you wish; the city's many fine restaurants and cafés feature a wide range of cuisines... and some of the best schnitzels, goulashes, strudels, dumplings and beer the region has to offer. Tomorrow – your Danube river cruise begins.
- Breakfast

Town Hall

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Old Town Hall Prague

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Astronomical Clock



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Old Town



Old Town Square

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Ceremonial Hall Jewish Quarter Building of the Prague Burial Society

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Jewish Synagogue



Jewish Town Hall & High Synagogue

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Prague Castle

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Gothic Cathedral of St. Vitus

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Day 3 Explore Regensburg & Embark

- A choice this morning precedes the start of your cruise along the Danube.
- If you wish, you may stay in Prague for the morning to explore the city as you wish,
- or, venture off to the quintessential Bavarian town of Regensburg, whose roots stretch back to Roman days.
- This afternoon, drive to Vilshofen, where you'll board your riverboat and launch your 7-night Danube cruise.
- Join your shipmates and crew at a welcome reception followed by dinner aboard the riverboat tonight.
- Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Regensburg Germany

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Day 4 Engelhartszell & Cycling along the Danube

- Take in the views from your riverboat's sun deck, lounge, or the windows of your outside cabin as your ship glides along the mighty Danube this morning.
- Your first port of call on your cruise is Engelhartszell, a pretty town on the Danube in Upper Austria. After a visit to a local private home (and a taste of local cake, sweets and coffee), you'll have a choice of a walking tour of town including 18th-century Engelhartszell Abbey and Danube World,
- or a guided tour of the Jochenstein Lock on the Danube, through which ships navigate through the Wachau Valley.
- Following lunch aboard the riverboat, you may, if you wish, join us for an optional bicycle excursion along the Danube to Aschach (a fairly rigorous bike ride, for experienced cyclists only) before continuing your cruise this afternoon, bound for Linz.
- Enjoy the Chef's signature dinner this evening; after the riverboat's arrival in Linz, the musical trio Donau3Klang entertains onboard tonight.
- Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 5 Salzburg, Cesky Krumlov or Linz

- Your boat stays docked in Linz today, with a choice of how you spend your day – full-day excursions to Salzburg (Austria), or Cesky Krumlov in the Czech Republic, or remaining in Linz.
- A setting for *The Sound of Music*, Salzburg is enticing with Baroque architecture, painted wrought-iron signage, ornate church towers, and grand palaces. Our walking tour explores Old Town, Mirabell Gardens, and Mozart's birthplace with time on your own to have lunch and experience the sights as you wish.
- Alternatively, travel with us through beautiful landscapes to Cesky Krumlov, which has been called a living gallery of elegant Renaissance-era buildings with a well-preserved medieval heritage and charming ambiance. A walking tour takes you to part of Krumlov Castle; it's worth climbing the many steps to see firsthand the medieval, Renaissance and Rococo design found inside, along with the stunning views of the town below.
- Return to the riverboat for dinner followed by an evening performance by the classical trio, Donau 3Klang.
- Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Salzburg Austria

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Salzburg Austria



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Cesky Krumlov

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Cesky Krumlov



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Day 6 Wachau Valley cruise to Dürnstein

- Continue cruising through the Wachau Valley, declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site for its well-preserved medieval landscapes.
- Dock in Dürnstein for a closer look at its 16th-century Baroque houses and 13th-century Romanesque church on a walking tour along cobblestone streets; or join us for a bicycle ride in the Wachau Valley. If you wish, visit the Augustinian Monastery.
- Enjoy some free time in this charming riverside town – perhaps taking an invigorating climb up the steps to the ruins of Kuenringerburg, a hilltop castle above the town where Richard the Lionhearted was held for ransom during the Crusades, from which the views of the river and valley are glorious – and sample the fruits of the Wachau Valley vineyards during a wine tasting at an authentic Austrian tavern.
- The riverboat departs early evening for Vienna.
- Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Schonbuhl Castle

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Hinterhaus Castle Ruins

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Aggstein Castle Ruins

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Wachau Valley

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Wachau Valley

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Weisskirchen Wachau Valley 2012

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Spitz Wachau Valley

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Durnstein, Austria



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Durnstein from the Danube. The Blue Tower is part of Durnstein Abby

Ruins of Durnstein Castle where Richard the Lionhearted was held for ransom in 1192



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Krems

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Day 7 Choices in Vienna

- Our riverboat arrives overnight in Vienna, Austria, where an introductory tour of this former capital of the old Habsburg Empire – and its grand boulevard, the Ringstrasse – precedes a walking tour focusing on medieval Vienna.
- Alternatively, enjoy a bike ride in the city concluding in the city's Old District.
- The afternoon is yours to explore this famous city as you please.
- Later, nothing compares to the royal treatment and pageantry you'll experience tonight at our private Imperial Evening in the Palais Pallavicini, an opulent, private Viennese palace that played a role in the 1940s film noir classic *The Third Man*. Welcome cocktails and dinner precede an unforgettable spectacle of beautiful ball gowns and a musical performance celebrating the legacy of Mozart.
- Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 8 Vienna Sightseeing & on to Slovakia

- A choice of sightseeing this morning features either a tour of the Habsburgs' Schönbrunn Palace, an architectural masterpiece and Austrian cultural treasure,
- or the Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, one of the world's most acclaimed art museums located in a palatial building on the historic Ringstrasse.
- Then, shuttles are at the ready to bring you back to the riverboat before an afternoon of cruising to neighboring Slovakia.
- Dinner tonight introduces you to a glimpse of daily life in Slovakia with a taste of regional cuisine and an onboard performance by a talented troupe of Slovak dancers.
- Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Schönbrunn Palace

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Schönbrunn Palace

Photo Anne Schrader www.dreamdestinations.com



Day 9 Baroque in Bratislava

- Begin the day with a Tauck Exclusive – a presentation by our local guide that takes you inside contemporary Slovakia and Bratislava for a look at politics, the economy, religion, the social order, preservation and emergence of the arts, and more.
- Then, it's your choice of a walking tour of this cobblestoned, vehicle-free city, where you'll see 17 centuries of history eloquently chronicled in sites including its 13th-century Old Town Hall, Baroque Habsburg-era palaces, the Opera House, Slovak Philharmonic Hall and St. Martin's Cathedral
- or a guided bicycle excursion through the "Iron Curtain Area" of Bratislava.
- Back aboard ship, get ready to celebrate tomorrow's arrival in Budapest.
- Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Bratislava Castle

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Old Town Hall

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Michael's Gate

This gate is the only remaining gate from the walled city of Bratislava



St Martin's Cathedral



Primacial Palace Bratislava



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Slovak National Theater

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Day 10 Budapest, Explore Pest & Special Farewell Evening

- Arrive this morning in Budapest, Hungary, which is split into "Buda" and "Pest" by the Danube River.
- This morning, you have a choice in sightseeing. Explore the Pest side of the city on a themed walking tour that focuses on the Hungarian Revolution and includes the Parliament building, the Embassy and St. Stephen's Basilica;
- or, join us for a guided bicycle tour.
- Spend the afternoon as you please.
- Budapest has acquired quite an excellent reputation for cuisine; tonight's special farewell cocktail reception and dinner is at the grand Akadémia Club in the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, including music by a Hungarian band.
- Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Budapest Parliament at Night

Photo Anne Schrader www.dreamdestinations.com



St. Stephen's Basilica

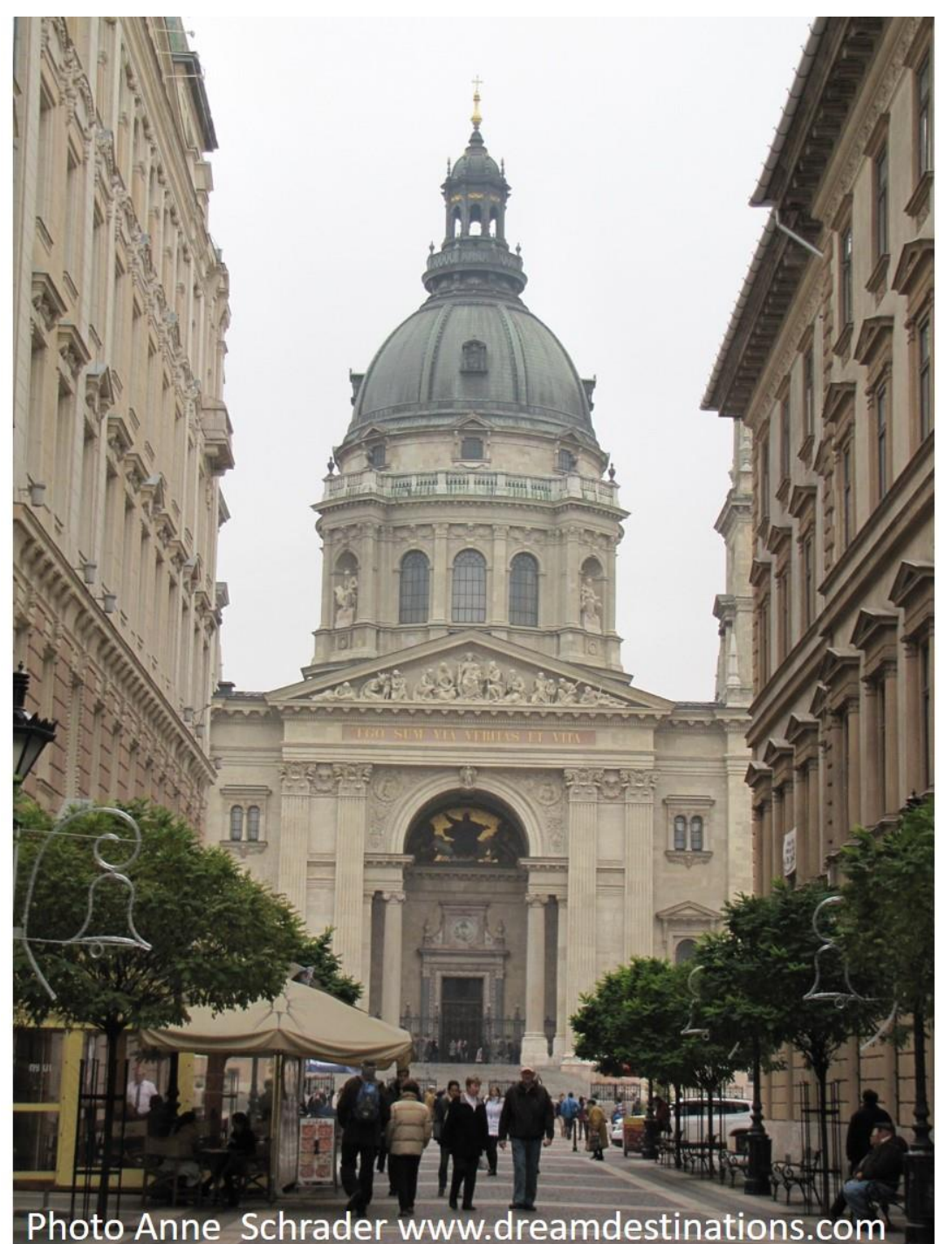


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Great Market

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Inside the Great Market



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Inside the Great Market



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Day 11 Explore Buda

- Begin the day by exploring Buda. Head up to Castle Hill, a UNESCO World Heritage Site overlooking the Danube on the Buda side of the city, for a choice of sightseeing. A guided tour includes Fisherman's Bastion, with its Neo-Romanesque design, the stained-glass windows and centuries of history in the 14th-century, late-Gothic Matthias Church (may be closed on some days due to services) and more.
- Alternatively, learn about the city's historic thermal water springs on a visit to the famed Szechenyi Bath Spa.
- Following a free afternoon with time to explore as you please, join us for a final night aboard the riverboat, beginning with a farewell toast and dinner.
- Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Chain Bridge with Buda Castle in the Background Budapest, Hungary

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Buda Castle

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Fisherman's Bastion

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Gothic Matthias Church



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Gothic Matthias Church

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Day 12 Homeward Bound

- **Tour ends: Budapest, Hungary.** Fly home anytime.
- A transfer is included from the riverboat to Budapest Ferenc Liszt Airport or the Keleti train station; allow a minimum of three hours for check-in at the airport
- Breakfast

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