

Danube Kingdoms: Bavaria, Austria and Hungary Tauck River Cruises

By

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Map From Tauck



Overview

- Explore Habsburg castles, medieval wine-towns, alpine peaks and lakes, Baroque monasteries, and enchanting cities on a 12-day journey through Germany, Austria, Slovakia, and Hungary, discovering hidden treasures on and off the beaten paths, including a 7-night cruise on the Danube, the river of kings.
- Spend 12 unforgettable days in the heart of Europe, exploring Germany, Austria, Slovakia, and Hungary on a Danube odyssey of cosmopolitan cities, medieval villages, castles, cathedrals, wineries, ruins, and abbeys. Immerse in the opulence of the royal Residenz at Munich,
- or make a pilgrimage to BMW's ultramodern car museum.
- Take a train-ride to the clouds and the Top of Germany for breathtaking views of alpine peaks and glaciers.
- Discover the soul of Bavarian beer at Weltenberg Abbey, marvel at Oberammergau's parade of medieval painted houses, and lose yourself in the Romanticism of Mad King Ludwig's fairytale castles.
- Sail through the Wachau Valley, the heart of Austrian wine country, with tastings along the way. Enjoy a gala evening of dinner, music, and pageantry at a palace in Vienna, for Tauck guests only.
- Drink in the eccentric spirit of Bratislava, its colorful history, and eclectic architecture on a walking tour with local guides, and enjoy an evening of Slovakian cuisine, music, and dance.
- In Budapest, find a feast for the senses around every corner, bursting with medieval castles and monuments, romantic Parisian-style architecture and elegance, and a vibrant, cosmopolitan spirit. Best of all, a river runs through it.

Day 1 Arrive Munich

- **Tour begins 5:30 PM.** Transfers are included from Munich International Airport or the train station to Hotel Bayerischer Hof.
- Join us for a brief orientation walk this afternoon followed by a welcome reception and dinner at the hotel.

Day 2 Royal or Contemporary Munich

- You have a choice of excursions.
- Take a guided tour of city sights that tell the story of the royal Wittelsbach family, who ruled Bavaria from 1180 to 1918; included is a visit to the Munich Residenz, reminiscent of Versailles; once the royal residence and seat of power, it is now a museum of opulently decorated rooms.
- Alternatively, explore contemporary history with a visit to the BMW modern, state of the art museum and a look at World War II sites in and around the city.
- The afternoon is spent as you please or join us for a poignant visit to Dachau.
- Your evening is free in this cosmopolitan city boasting celebrated cuisine.

Munich Residenz Palace



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Munich Residenz Palace Interior



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Munich Residenz Palace

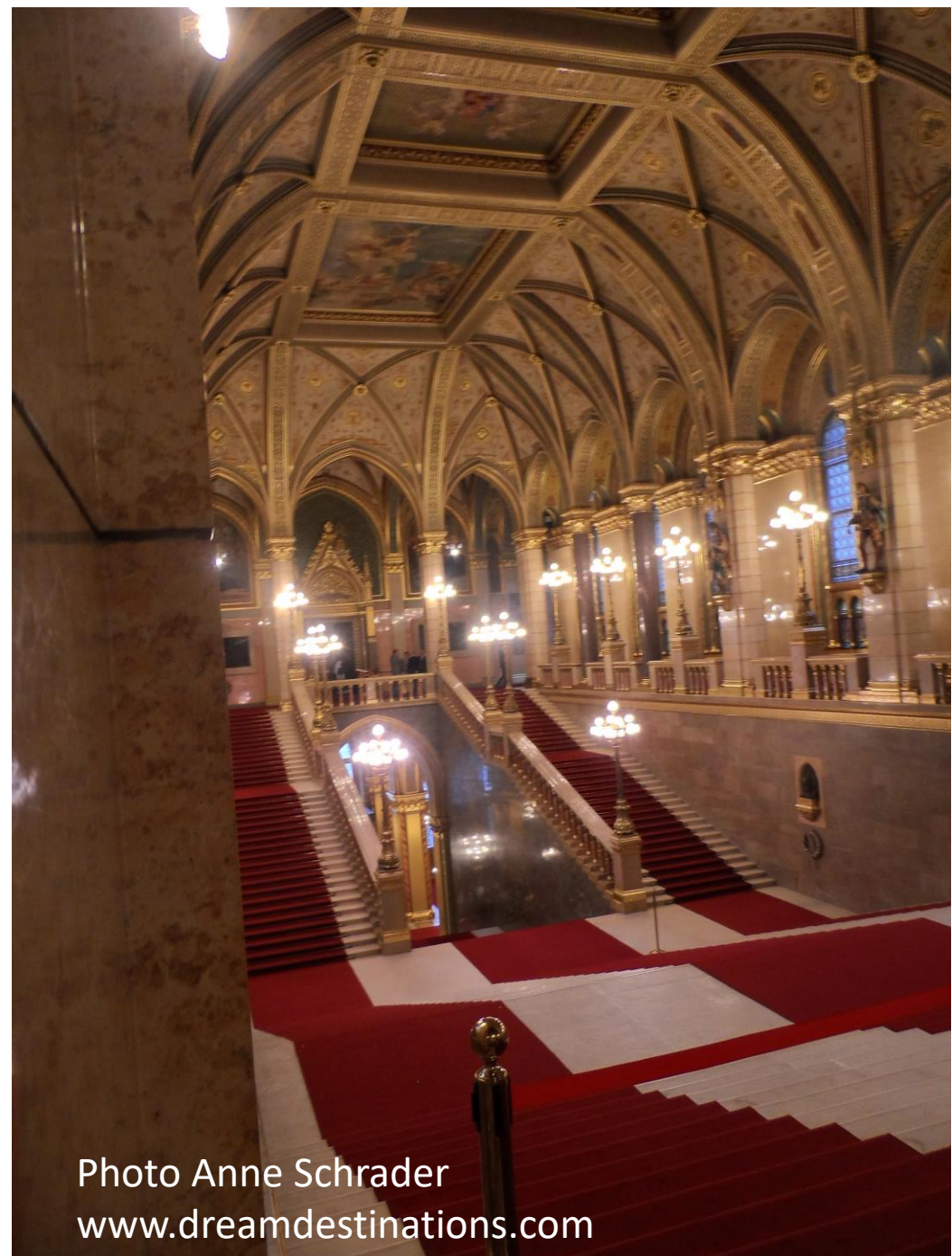


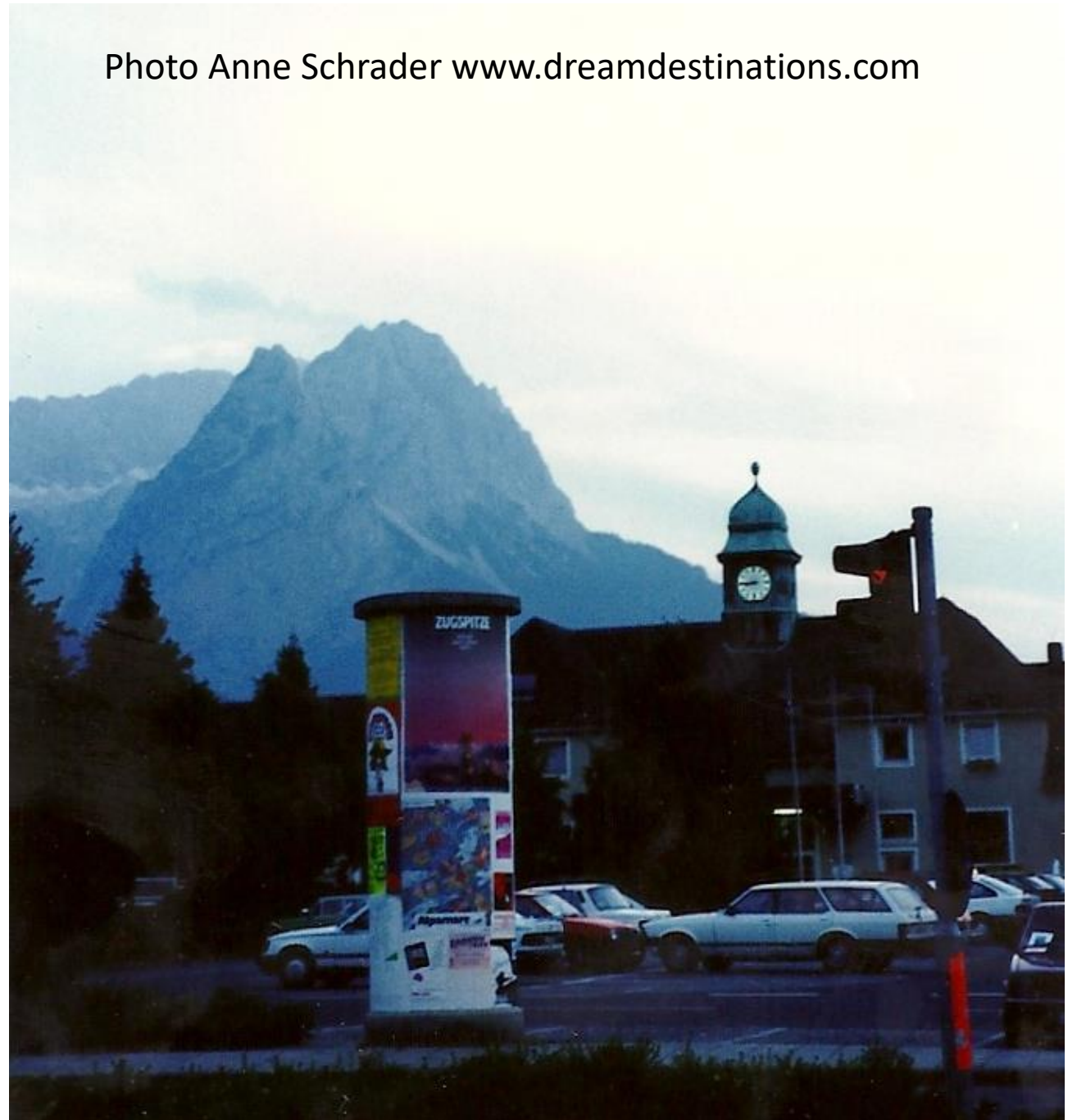
Photo Anne Schrader
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Day 3 Garmisch-Partenkirchen / Zugspitze

- Depart by coach to Garmisch-Partenkirchen, a popular ski area in the Wetterstein mountains, on the border between Germany and Austria.
- A cogwheel train takes you up 9,700 feet to the summit of Zugspitze, the top of Germany, for lunch and spectacular vistas that include glaciers, 400 mountain peaks, and views of four countries (Germany, Italy, Austria, and Switzerland, depending on the weather; incidentally, there's a weather station here too, and a climate research center).
- Return to Partenkirchen, a picturesque Bavarian town set in a striking landscape of forests and alpine mountains and dine tonight at the hotel.
- ***Please Note:*** *The cogwheel train will be closed for annual maintenance in early May 2024. During this time, access to the summit of Zugspitze will not be possible.*

Zugspitze Garmish, Germany

Photo Anne Schrader www.dreamdestinations.com



Zugspitze at
night Garmish,
Germany

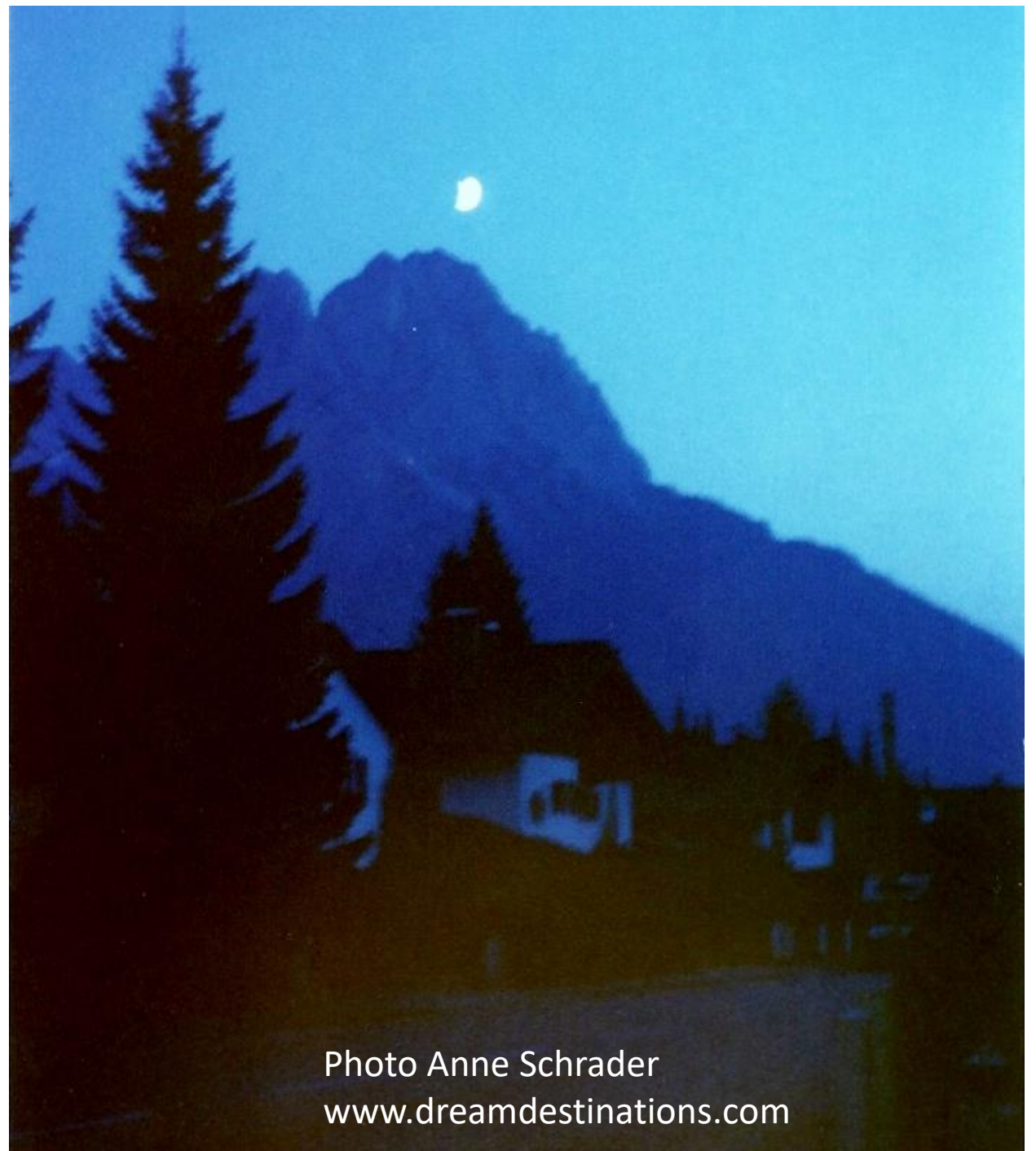


Photo Anne Schrader
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Day 4 Oberammergau / Bavarian Castle

- Visit the town of Oberammergau, home to the once-in-a-decade Passion Play, for a walking tour of its colorful medieval streets and a tour of the theatre.
- Or, drive to lakeside Füssen for a walking tour of its romantic Old Town, and a visit to Hohenschwangau Castle, childhood home of King Ludwig II, overlooking Lake Alpsee.
- Return to lovely Partenkirchen, where the rest of the day is free.

Day 5 Weltenberg Abbey / Embark Vilshofen

- Depart for Weltenberg and its monastery, which nestles on a peninsula in the Danube Gorge where the Danube River makes a dramatic u-turn.
- For its setting and elegant Baroque design, the Benedictine monastery is considered one of the most beautiful in Germany, and its monastic brewery, founded in 1050, is thought to be the oldest in the world.
- In warm seasons, the courtyard becomes a beer garden that serves its award-winning brew, *Weltenburger Kloster*, with traditional Bavarian fare; enjoy lunch here, followed by a boat ride to Kelheim prior to boarding your riverboat.

Day 6 Timeless Charm of Passau

- Three rivers run through medieval Passau –the Danube, the Ilz, and the Inn – a convergence of waterways that adds drama and charm to the enchanting cityscape.
- Passau is famous for swords and glassmaking, and the largest bishopric in Germany; a hilltop castle, formerly the Prince-Bishop's Residence, presides over the Old Town of medieval and Baroque treasures and cobbled streets.
- Explore the city on a walking tour with local guides;
- or take a guided bicycle tour along the Inn River.
- Return to the riverboat for lunch and enjoy onboard entertainment this evening as you sail the Danube to Linz, Austria.

The Veste Oberhaus Passau

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Passau

Photo Anne Schrader www.dreamdestinations.com



St. Stephen's Cathedral Passau

Photo Anne Schrader
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St. Stephen's
Cathedral. Its organ
has 17,947 pipes.
Passau, Germany

Photo Anne Schrader
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Passau Old Town



Photo Anne Schrader www.dreamdestinations.com

New Bishop's Residence



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Tower of the Town Hall



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Town Hall at night



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Passau, where three rivers meet—the Inn, the Ilz, and the Danube



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Day 7 Linz / Salzkammergut / Cesky Krumlov

- Salzkammergut was made for Cinemascope and Technicolor; scenes from *The Sound of Music* were shot there.
- Its landscape of dramatic alpine peaks, deep valleys, blue lakes, and picture-perfect Austrian villages was the favorite summer retreat of Emperor Franz Josef I who called it "heaven on earth."
- Drive from Linz to Salzkammergut to visit the lakeside town of St. Wolfgang, named for the patron saint of carpenters and woodcarvers, and drop in at The Pilgrimage Church to see the Winged Altar, a Renaissance triptych of astonishing woodcarvings that tell stories of the Coronation of the Virgin, and the life of St. Wolfgang.

Day 7 Cesky Krumlov

- Alternatively, take a day-trip to the Czech Republic to visit Cesky Krumlov, a riverside gem which UNESCO calls "an outstanding example of a small European medieval town," whose architectural heritage has remained intact for centuries.
- Explore Cesky Krumlov's wonderfully preserved Gothic, Renaissance, and Baroque streets and alleys on a guided walking tour, visit the Baroque Theatre, or climb the castle tower for sweeping views.
- If you wish, you can remain in stay in Linz and explore the city at leisure.

Cesky Krumlov

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Cesky Krumlov



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Cesky Krumlov

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The 13th –century Hauptplatz is the largest medieval square in Austria 2019



Photo Anne Schrader www.dreamdestinations.com

Illustration of the Trinity Column on a protective cover. Often key landmarks need to be protected or are under repair as the column was during our 2019 visit to Linz



Lithographie von
Johann Haidinger
ca. 1830

Photo Anne Schrader www.dreamdestinations.com

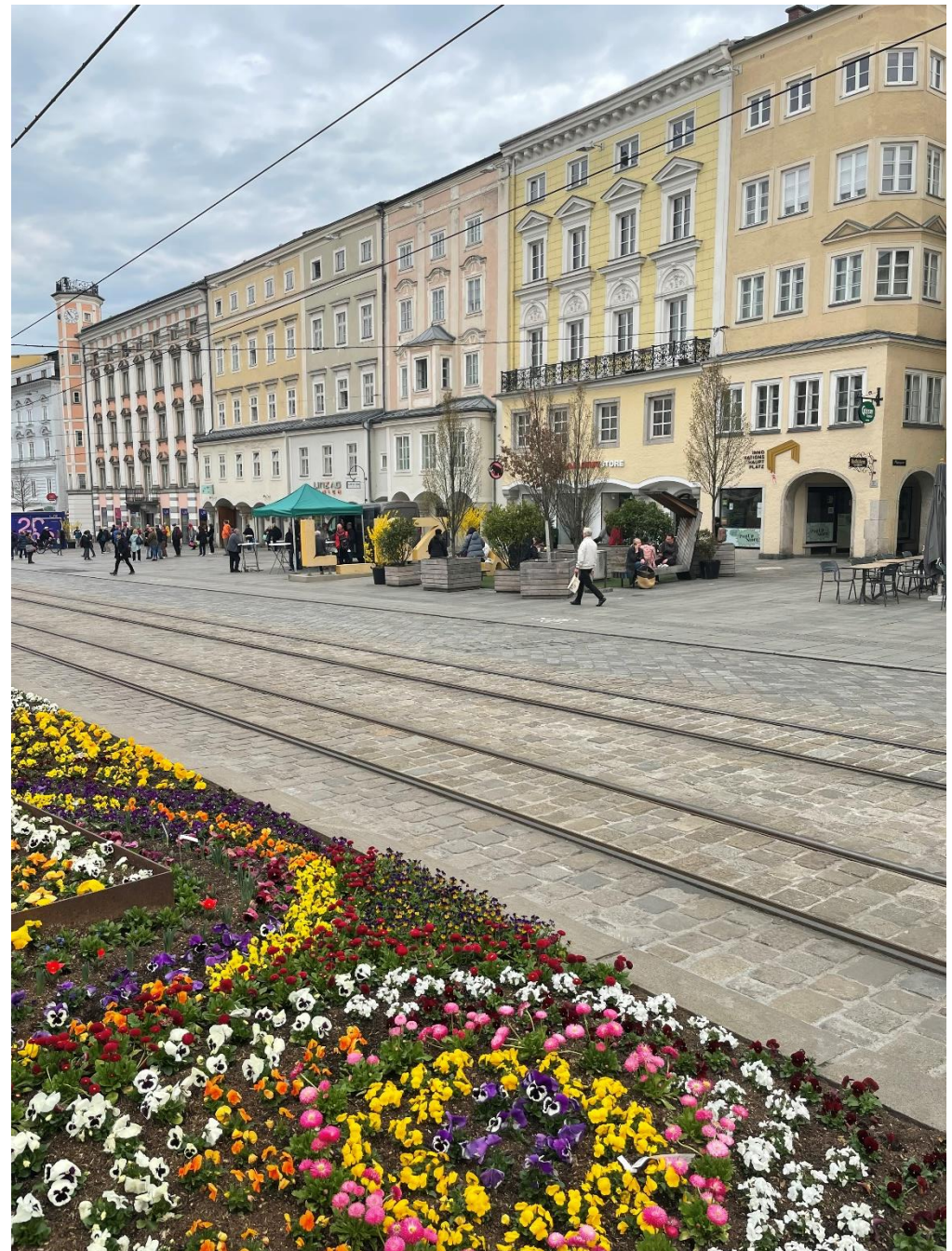
The 20-meter Trinity Column 2023



A tourist train in
Linz Hauptplatz
2023. In the
background is the
Old Cathedral
(the green church
with 2 towers)



A tram runs through the large square. The pink tower in the background is part of the old town hall.



Day 8 Melk Abbey / Wachau Valley / Dürnstein

- Melk Abbey stands in splendor on a promontory above the Danube.
- Established in 1089, the Benedictine monastery achieved its glory in the 1700s; the monastery of 500 rooms, not to mention the views from the balcony and the terrace, will leave you awestruck on your visit.
- Spend the afternoon aboard the riverboat winding through the Wachau Valley, the heart of Austrian wine country; the river landscape is a parade of monasteries, castles, and medieval villages tucked among lush mountains, vineyards and orchards;
- if you wish, take a bicycle tour along the river.
- Arrive in Dürnstein and explore the charming medieval town on a guided walking tour; visit the Augustinian monastery; or climb the steps to the clifftop ruins of Kuenringerburg Castle.

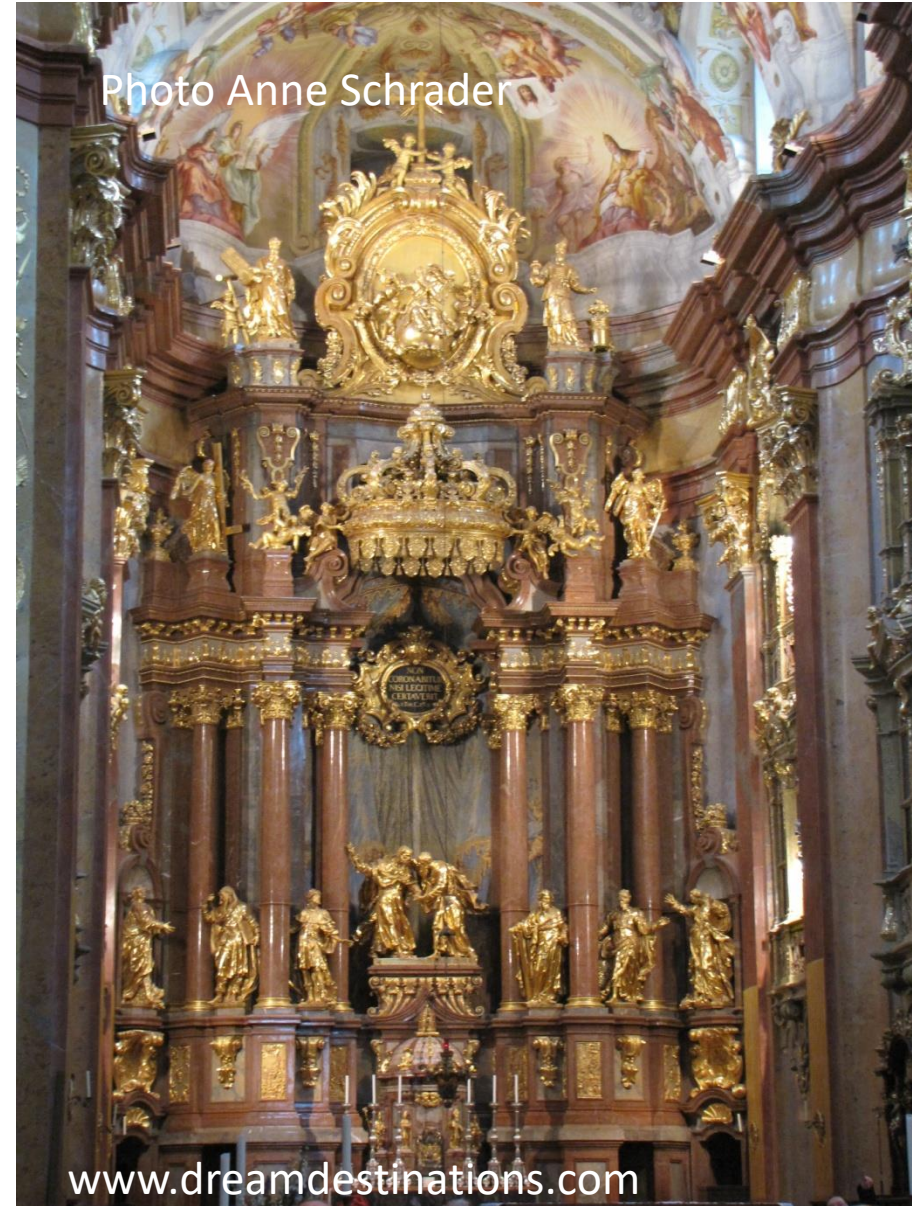
Melk Abbey, Austria

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Melk Abby Melk, Austria

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Schonbuhl Castle

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Spitz Wachau Valley

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Wachau Valley

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Weisskirchen Wachau Valley 2012

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Wachau Valley

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Hinterhaus Castle Ruins

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Aggstein Castle Ruins

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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



Photo Anne Schrader
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Krems

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Day 9 Spend a Gala Day in Vienna

- Wake up in Vienna and begin the day with a choice of excursions.
- Take a guided walking tour along the Ringstrasse and its parade of Habsburg palaces, monuments, and museums;
- or set out on a tour exploring the life and legend of Empress Elizabeth, known as Sisi, the tragic and eccentric, wife of Franz Josef I;
- or visit World War II landmarks around the city.
- Spend the afternoon at leisure,
- then join us this evening at Palais Pallavicini for a gala event with dinner, wine, music, and pageantry, exclusively for Tauck guests.

Hofburg Palace



Day 10 History's Stories in Bratislava

- Arrive in Bratislava, capital of Slovakia, for a choice of either a city walking tour or a visit to the ruins of Devin Castle, with unforgettable views high above the Danube and Morava rivers and WWII sites.
- Bratislava is famous for its eclectic cityscape of medieval cobbled streets; along the streets of Old Town you will also meet quirky life-size bronze statues that allude to local history and personalities.
- This evening, dine at leisure aboard ship as you sail to Budapest, accompanied by Slovak music and entertainment.

Slovak National Theater Bratislava

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Bratislava Castle

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Old Town Hall Bratislava

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Michael's Gate

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



St Martin's Cathedral Bratislava



Primacial Palace Bratislava



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Day 11 A Day in Buda and Pest

- The Danube runs through the center of Budapest, dividing Buda and Pest; the districts were independent cities before being joined in 1873, and each still retains a distinct vibe and identity.
- Rising on hills above the river, Buda is the older and more tranquil of the two, with its medieval castle, old town, churches, and monumental landmarks like Fisherman's Bastion;
- Pest is the busy metropolitan side, occupied by the glorious Neo-Gothic Parliament building, palaces, museums, shops, and cafes.
- Spend the morning on a tour accompanied by a local guide, then explore as you please for the remainder of the day.
- Join us this evening for a farewell reception and dinner aboard the riverboat.

Day 7 Explore Budapest

- Your cruise ends this morning in Budapest, Hungary, which is split into the sections of Buda and Pest by the Danube River.
- A guided tour of the city begins with the Pest side and a drive along Andrassy Avenue to Heroe's Square and a drive by Parliament and other sites.
- Explore the Buda side with a drive up Castle Hill, a UNESCO World Heritage Site; see Fishermen's Bastion with its Neo-Romanesque design, and admire the stained glass windows and centuries of history in Matthias Church (may be closed on some days due to services).
- After lunch, spend the rest of the day and evening pursuing what interests you most in this historic, and artistic, city.
- Join us this evening for a farewell toast followed by dinner as your Danube cruise comes to a close.

Budapest Parliament at Night

Photo Anne Schrader www.dreamdestinations.com



St. Stephen's Basilica Budapest



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Great Market Budapest

Photo Anne Schrader www.dreamdestinations.com



Inside the Great Market Budapest



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Inside the Great Market Budapest



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Chain Bridge with Buda Castle in the Background Budapest, Hungary

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Buda Castle Budapest

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Fisherman's Bastion Budapest

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Gothic Matthias Church Budapest



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Gothic Matthias Church Budapest



Day 12 Journey Home

- **Tour ends: Budapest.**
- Disembark by 9:00 AM. Fly home anytime.
- A transfer is included from the riverboat to Budapest Ferenc Liszt Airport or the Keleti train station; allow three hours for check-in at the airport.

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