Tour Code
CZ2

ADVENTURESABROAD

CZECHIA & SLOVAKIA

13 days

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Day 1 Arrive in Prague

Today we arrive in Prague and transfer to our hotel.

Today we arrive in Prague, a city that rises like a medieval dream from seven hills flanking the banks of the Vltava River. Sometimes called Prague the Golden, sometimes Prague the City of 100 Spires, this enchanting capital has earned comparisons to Florence and Rome for its breathtaking beauty. Thomas Mann declared it one of the world's most magical cities; Goethe called it the prettiest gem in the stone crown of the world.

Virtually untouched by war, Prague's architecture spans nearly every European style – Romanesque, Gothic, Renaissance, Baroque, Rococo, Neoclassical, Empire and Art Nouveau – creating a living museum where centuries of history unfold along cobblestoned streets. This evening, we gather with our fellow travellers for our first dinner together, beginning our extraordinary journey through Eastern Europe's most captivating capitals and countryside.

Overnight in Prague.

Included Meal(s): Dinner

Day 2 Prague: Old Jewish Quarter & Wenceslas Square

The cobblestones echo with centuries of stories as we embark on our walking tour through Prague's Old Jewish Quarter and the magnificent Old Town Square, where the famous astronomical clock has been marking time for over 600 years.

We begin at the Old Jewish Cemetery, an incredible sight that leaves visitors speechless. Established in the 15th century as the second oldest Jewish cemetery in Europe, this sacred ground witnessed burials from 1439 to 1787. Today, 12,000 tombstones crowd together, leaning one against another at different angles and sizes, creating a graphic and surreal image that speaks to generations of Prague's Jewish community. We visit the Klaus Synagogue with its permanent exhibition called "Jewish Customs and Traditions," which illuminates the significance of synagogue life and Jewish festivals throughout the centuries.

We then proceed to the Old Town Square, where the astronomical clock tells one of Prague's most haunting legends. Master clockmaker Hanus of Ruze designed this 15th-century marvel, but according to legend, Prague's town councillors blinded him for fear he would create another like it for a rival city. One day near the end of his life, he asked a friend to lead him to his great creation. As the figure of Death tolled the hour, Hanus thrust his hand into the clock's apparatus; it stopped, and centuries passed before a craftsman could be found skilled enough to make it work again.

We finish our walking tour at Wenceslas Square in time for lunch (your own account), with the afternoon free to explore this cultural treasure. Prague's concert halls beckon – The Municipal House, Rudolfinium, Mozart Theatre, National Theatre, and State Theatre all host performances almost every night.

Overnight in Prague.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 3 Prague: Prague Castle & Old Town

Morning light illuminates the ancient stones as we travel through Prague's city centre to the magnificent Prague Castle complex. We begin our walking tour near Pohorelec Square, passing the imposing Cernin Palace as we make our way toward the castle grounds.

Our path leads us past architectural treasures that span centuries: the Strahov Monastery with its famous library, the baroque Loreta with its carillon of 27 bells, the Capuchin Monastery, and the Archbishop's Palace. Before entering the castle, we pause by the ancient walls for a city panorama that reveals Prague spread below us like a living map of European history.

We then embark on our two-hour exploration of the castle complex, entering the first courtyard with its famous fountain before proceeding to the Chapel of the Holy Cross. The magnificent St. Vitus Cathedral awaits, where we visit the choir and crypt before continuing to the third courtyard. Here we enter the Old Palace from St. George Square, then proceed toward the enchanting Golden Lane, where Franz Kafka once lived and worked.

We descend via the Old Castle Steps, with photo opportunities revealing spectacular views, before stopping at St. Nicholas Church. Then comes the highlight – crossing the ancient Charles Bridge (Karluv Most), an artistic masterpiece built by King Charles IV in 1357. For over four hundred years, this bridge was the only link between Prague's two halves, and we admire the many baroque sculptures as we walk across this living gallery of art.

Overnight in Prague.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 4 Prague - Konopiste - Karlstejn - Karlovy Vary

The Bohemian countryside unfolds before us as we depart Prague for the Renaissance chateau of Konopiste, set dramatically in a hilly wooded park. This castle, built as a stronghold at the end of the 13th century, gained its present appearance from alterations made by its last owner, Archduke Franz Ferdinand d'Este, whose assassination in Sarajevo would trigger World War I.

After exploring Konopiste's priceless interiors and learning about this tragic figure of European history, we continue to Karlstejn Castle, a Gothic fortress that once housed the imperial crown jewels. This magnificent stronghold, perched on a rocky outcrop, served as the secure treasury for the Holy Roman Empire's most precious regalia.

We then proceed eastward to the famous spa town of Karlovy Vary (once known as Karlsbad), beautifully nestled in the valley of the Tepla River. This elegant resort has been one of Europe's oldest and largest health spas for centuries, its hot medicinal spring water drawing visitors from across the continent. The thermal springs, reaching temperatures of up to 73°C (164°F), have been renowned for their healing properties since the 14th century.

Overnight in Karlovy Vary.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 5 Karlovy Vary

Elegant colonnades and graceful facades create a fairytale atmosphere as we explore Karlovy Vary on our half-day walking tour. This sophisticated spa town has long been the favourite retreat of crowned heads and international celebrities, earning its reputation as the "Salon of Europe."

As the old saying goes, "When the disorder becomes a disease, doctors prescribe the hot waters of Carlsbad." Our walking tour reveals the secrets of this healing paradise, taking us to the many springs and the graceful Mill Colonnade, where visitors have been "taking the cure" for centuries. The tradition involves sipping the mineral-rich waters from special porcelain cups while strolling the elegant promenades. A ride on the nearby funicular provides spectacular views of the surrounding landscape of beech and oak forests, where hiking trails wind through the Slavkov Forest.

The afternoon offers leisure time in this charming town, perhaps to sample the famous Karlovy Vary wafers or browse the shops selling the distinctive Bohemian crystal and local Becherovka herbal liqueur.

Overnight in Karlovy Vary.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 6 Karlovy Vary - Marianske Lanze - Cesky Krumlov

We begin our day in Marianske Lazne, where the historic centre stretches along the spa colonnade with its unique singing fountain and main avenue lined with pastel-coloured Art Deco facades. Most of the elegant state spa buildings date from the second half of the 19th century and nestle amidst thickly forested hills, creating an atmosphere of refined tranquillity.

From here, we venture into Southern Bohemia, where many towns retain their Bavarian or Austrian flavour from centuries of shared history. In the late afternoon, we arrive in the extraordinary town of Cesky Krumlov, one of Europe's most perfectly preserved medieval settlements.

Medieval arcades and etched Renaissance facades in apricot, beige, and pea-green shades surround the cobblestoned square, where rust-red, pink, and golden Baroque buildings create a painter's palette of colours. A Plague Monument (Morovy sloup) stands in the centre, while the winding River Vltava separates the Old Town from the towering castle complex. This UNESCO World Heritage site represents one of the most exquisite examples of medieval European town planning, virtually unchanged since the Renaissance.

Overnight in Cesky Krumlov.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 7 Cesky Krumlov: Castle Tour

The mighty Renaissance castle of Cesky Krumlov dominates our morning, its towers and ramparts telling the story of the powerful Lords of the Rozmberks and later the Schwarzenbergs. This vast complex, one of the largest in Central Europe, houses a rich collection of period furniture, tapestries and historical weapons, earning its place on the UNESCO World Heritage list in 1992.

We explore the castle's remarkable painted tower, baroque theatre, and magnificent halls where nobility once held court. The complex tells the story of Czech aristocracy through five centuries, from Gothic foundations to Renaissance renovations to baroque additions. From the castle gardens, panoramic views reveal the red-tiled roofs of the old town spread along the horseshoe bend of the Vltava River.

The afternoon belongs to independent exploration of the historical city centre below the castle. We wander through winding alleys lined with venerable Gothic and Renaissance houses, discover small shops and atmospheric cafes, and follow pathways along the river where artists set up their easels to capture the town's timeless beauty.

Overnight in Cesky Krumlov.

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 8 Cesky Krumlov - Telc, Czechia - Bratislava, Slovakia

The spectacular countryside of Southern Bohemia unfolds as we travel through a landscape of shimmering carp ponds to the medieval town of Trebon. The houses lining the narrow main square embody romantic architecture at its finest, while three gateways of the town wall have survived from the 16th century, when Trebon was an important centre of fish farming.

We then continue to the historic town of Telc, a Renaissance jewel dating from the 16th century. The historic houses surrounding the central square connect through continuous arcades, creating one of Europe's most harmonious urban spaces. UNESCO added Telc's historic centre to the World Heritage List in 1992, recognising its exceptional preservation of Renaissance town planning.

Our journey continues through the rolling hills of Southern Moravia, a region famous for its orchards and vineyards where picturesque villages, towns and chateaux punctuate the landscape. After crossing the border into Slovakia, we travel through the Small Carpathians, a thin strip of limestone hills altogether different from the soft, pine-clad hills of the Czech lands.

In the late afternoon, we arrive in Bratislava, Slovakia's capital, situated dramatically on both banks of the Danube at a promontory of the Little Carpathians. During the second half of the 20th century, an ambitious rebuilding and restoration program transformed this ancient city into a modern European capital while preserving its historical heart.

Overnight in Bratislava

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 9 Bratislava - Trencin: Castle Tour

Three different countries meet in Bratislava, where languages, traditions, and cultures create a unique microcosm of central Europe. This youthful, dynamic capital pulses with energy while remaining proud of its rich past, where tradition, nostalgia and music weave through cobblestoned streets.
Our morning city tour reveals Bratislava's main treasures: the historic Old Town with its medieval gates and towers, the Gothic Cathedral of St Martin where Hungarian kings were once crowned, and the 14th-century Tower of St Michael standing guard in the ancient city walls.

After lunch, we travel to Trencin in western Slovakia, one of the oldest Slovak cities, chronicled as early as the 11th century. Its strategic location near three Carpathian Mountain passes on the crossroads of ancient commercial routes determined the character of this significant landmark. The famous Amber Road, used by Etruscan, Greek, and later Roman merchants to transport precious amber from the Baltic region, passed directly through Trencin.

The city is dominated by Trencin Castle, Slovakia's third-largest castle complex. With extensive fortifications and several palace buildings surrounding the central medieval tower, it remains the highest point of the city. Below the castle, winding side streets and historic covered stairs lead to a charming small square, while the old town spreads around a large main square anchored by a baroque church.

Overnight in Trencin

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 10 Trencin - Bojnice - Ruzomberok - Horny Smokovec

Our journey leads us through Slovakia's heartland via Bojnice, a charming town at the upper Nitra River that ranks among Slovakia's oldest spa destinations. Here stands the famous Bojnice Castle, a romantic fairy-tale structure that has served as the backdrop for countless films. We explore both the castle's opulent interiors and the picturesque town nestled just below its walls.

We continue through Ruzomberok, situated in the scenic Vah River Valley. Founded by German colonists in 1223, this town became renowned for its guilds, industrial production, and skilled craftsmen who travelled throughout Europe plying their trades.

Our destination is Horny Smokovec, gateway to the High Tatras National Park, founded in 1948 and forming the northernmost section of the Carpathian Mountains. This geographic region shelters numerous glacial lakes and displays a distinctly alpine character, with jagged peaks rising dramatically above pristine forests. The crisp mountain air and stunning vistas create an atmosphere worlds away from the valley towns below.

Overnight in Horny Smokovec

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 11 Pieniny National Park

We venture into Pieniny National Park, the crown jewel among central Europe's most impressive areas of natural beauty. Our exploration begins at the medieval Cerveny Klastor, once a Carthusian monastery whose red-brick walls have witnessed centuries of spiritual contemplation alongside the rushing Dunajec River, which forms a natural border between Slovakia and Poland.

The open-air museum of folk architecture in Stara Lubovna offers a fascinating glimpse into traditional mountain life. Here we walk among a precious collection of wooden houses dating from the late 19th to early 20th century, each structure relocated and carefully preserved to show how mountain families lived and worked in harmony with their challenging environment.

After lunch, we continue to Kezmarok, where we visit the remarkable German-built wooden Lutheran Church, a unique masterpiece of carpentry and artistry. This extraordinary structure, built entirely without metal nails, demonstrates the incredible skill of 17th-century craftsmen who created one of Europe's most unusual religious buildings. The church's interior, carved entirely from wood, creates an atmosphere of warm spirituality unlike any traditional stone church.

Overnight in Horny Smokovec

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 12 Horny Smokovec - Bratislava

A scenic mountain route leads us back to Bratislava, winding through the spectacular ranges of the High Tatras to the Low Tatras. Mountain peaks and hiking trails frame our journey, while still-green forests, bubbling streams, and traditional haystacks shaped like miniature peak-roofed houses dot the landscape. The contrast between Slovakia's alpine heartland and its Danube valley capital creates a perfect showcase of this young nation's geographic diversity.

We arrive in Bratislava by mid-afternoon, with time to rest and reflect on our mountain adventures before dinner. The journey from Slovakia's highest peaks to its historic capital reveals the remarkable variety contained within this compact Central European nation.

Overnight in Bratislava

Included Meal(s): Breakfast and Dinner

Day 13 Departure

Departure from Bratislava.

BON VOYAGE!!

Included Meal(s): Breakfast