



photo: Oesterreich Werbung / G Popp

New Year's in Vienna Budapest and Central Europe by Private Train 2020



New Year's in Vienna

Budapest and Central Europe

Aboard the Golden Eagle Danube Express private train

One departure in 2020 – Private Rail Journey – 9 Days

December 28, 2020-January 5, 2021

Enjoy the pleasures of Old World rail travel, as you glide in style on a circular route from Budapest, Hungary, where layer upon layer of civilizations have flowered and faded, and on to a date with a brilliant New Year's celebration in magnificent Vienna, Austria. Continue through green and friendly Slovakia, stopping in the medieval city of Kosice, declared a European Capital of Culture in 2013, and ultimately arriving back where you started, in beautiful Budapest. Encounter five UNESCO World Heritage Sites along the rails as you roll from one fascinating city to the next.



Daily Itinerary

Day 1, Monday, December 28, 2020

Day 2, Tuesday, December 29

Day 3, Wednesday, December 30

Day 4, Thursday, December 31

Day 5, Friday, January 1, 2021

Day 6, Saturday, January 2

Day 7, Sunday, January 3

Day 8, Monday, January 4

Day 9, Tuesday, January 5

Arrive Budapest, Hungary

Budapest

Budapest • board the *Danube Express* • Keszthely, Hungary

Graz, Austria • Vienna *New Year's Eve*

Vienna

Cesky Krumlov, Czech Republic • Prague

Prague

Kosice, Slovakia • Budapest, Hungary

Depart Budapest



Tour Features

- Enjoy the comfort and efficiency of your own private cabin on the *Golden Eagle Danube Express* luxury train.
- Survey a series of fascinating cities along the rail line.
- Join travelers from around the world to enjoy the casual and relaxed atmosphere aboard the private train, dining in luxury and chatting over drinks in the lounge.
- Relax deeply as you are carried into other lands, a world away from home.

Trip Highlights

Budapest	(UNESCO World Heritage Site), Royal Palace, Matthias Church, panoramic city views, exterior views of the Citadel, Opera House, St. Stephen's Cathedral, Heroes Square, City Park
Keszthely	Lake Balaton, Festetics Palace
Graz	(UNESCO World Heritage Site), Old Town walking tour
Vienna	(UNESCO World Heritage Site), horse-drawn carriage ride, champagne reception, special New Year's dinner, fireworks, brunch at elegant Palais Coburg
Cesky Krumlov	(UNESCO World Heritage Site), introductory tour, free time
Prague	(UNESCO World Heritage Site), Old Town Square, Charles Bridge, Prague Castle, Jewish Quarter, free time
Kosice	European Capital of Culture 2013, medieval central square

Itinerary

Day One, Monday, December 28, 2020

Arrive Budapest, Hungary

Arriving in Budapest, you are transferred to a five star hotel with time to rest and refresh. Later this evening, gather for a **welcome reception and dinner** to meet fellow travelers.

Meals: D – *Four Seasons Hotel Gresham Palace, or similar*



Day Two, Tuesday, December 29

Budapest

Enjoy a half-day tour of Budapest before an afternoon left free for independent exploration. **UNESCO-listed Budapest**, built in the grand style of the Hapsburgs, has a legacy of fine baroque, neoclassical and art nouveau buildings and broad avenues. Three different cities united in 1873 to form Budapest, the Hungarian capital on the Danube River. Obuda ("Old Buda"), the oldest and smallest of the three, had been settled since the Stone Age. The Romans built a town here

named Aquincum, in honor of the many hot mineral springs in the area. Hungarian, or Magyar, people conquered Obuda around 900, and after the Mongol invasion of 1241 moved the town south to the high ground above the river. They called their new capital Buda, and the nobles built their homes and palaces here.



Pest was a trade city on the low side of the Danube. Originally a Celtic settlement, it went through a period as a Roman town like Obuda, but grew in importance after 1222. This was when King Andras decreed that the annual assembly of nobles should be held on the plain.

Visit the **Royal Palace**, the largest baroque palace in Hungary, used by Franz Josef of Austria as their opulent summer home in the 19th century. Though it was allowed to deteriorate through much of the 20th century, painstaking restorations led to its reopening as a museum in 1996, its main wing furnished to period standards. The grounds are extensive and include a pavilion which houses portraits of Hungarian kings from ancient times onward.

The Church of Our Lady, commonly known as **Matthias Church**, was originally built in 1255, though few of its elements survive today. In the 15th century, King Matthias Corvinus expanded the church and had both of his royal weddings here. During Turkish rule from 1541 to 1686, the church was used as a mosque and many of its medieval furnishings and its frescoes were destroyed. In the late 19th century, Matthias Church was renovated and modified by Hungarian architect Frigyes Schulek, who also built the nearby Fisherman's Bastion.

Enjoy views of the city from **Gellert Hill**, and take in exteriors of the Citadel, St. Stephen's Cathedral, Heroes Square, the City Park and the Opera House. Designed and built at the turn of the century, Budapest's magnificent neo-Renaissance Opera House has hosted Franz Liszt and Gustav Mahler. Its lavish double staircase leads to a three-tiered 1,200-seat auditorium, which is gilded with over seven kilograms of gold. The façade is decorated with the statues of some of the world's greatest composers and carvings of the Muses watch visitors from between the exterior columns.

The rest of the day is at leisure; enjoy a stroll along the banks of the Danube, visit the Great Market Hall, or relax at the five star hotel.

Meals: B, L, D – *Four Seasons Hotel Gresham Palace or similar*



Day Three, Wednesday, December 30

Budapest • board the *Danube Express* • Keszthely, Hungary

Following breakfast, transfer to Budapest's Nyugati station for a morning **reception at the Royal Waiting Room** before boarding the *Golden Eagle Danube Express* private train. Settle into your comfortable cabin and have lunch on board as the train heads for **Keszthely on the shores of Lake Balaton**.



Lake Balaton is the largest freshwater lake in Central Europe. Warm and shallow, the lake is a favorite summer destination for Hungarians. The southern shore is only an hour and a half's drive from Budapest, and is bursting with towns and resorts. The north shore is more wild, with rolling forested hills and beautiful views.

The oldest and largest town in the region, **Keszthely**, lies on the northwestern shore of the lake. With over 750 years of history, the town boasts buildings from a wide range of architectural styles and lush greenery, and

perfectly lends itself to long evening strolls through the streets. It is home to the **Helikon Castle Museum**, the III-room main building of which was once home to the **Festetics** family – one of the wealthiest and most influential families in Hungary's long history.

Return to the train and enjoy a drink in the lounge car and dinner on board as the journey continues across the Great Hungarian Plain.

Meals: B, L, D – *Danube Express* private train

Day Four, Thursday, December 31

Graz, Austria • Vienna *New Year's Eve*

Arriving in Graz, Austria's second-largest city, take a **walking tour of the UNESCO-listed Old Town**. Graz was for a time one of the country's most important towns. Its hilltop castle was the residence of a scion of the Hapsburgs, and its architecture reflects the styles of succeeding eras, harmoniously integrated into a pleasing whole. Stroll the squares and streets of the medieval Old Town. Stately Renaissance and baroque buildings sport steep red roofs, and are interspersed with narrow alleyways, courtyards, food stalls, a marketplace and the winding River Mur. Along the river you may catch a glimpse of one of the city's newest buildings, an oblong contemporary art museum that locals call "the friendly alien."

If you choose, you can enjoy free time, or a **pumpkin-seed-oil tasting with bread and wine**, rather than join the walking tour. Return to the train for lunch on the way to the festivities in Vienna.

Capital and largest city of Austria, elegant **Vienna** spans both sides of the Danube River. The Viennese stopped the Ottoman Turks from entering the city in the 16th and 17th centuries, and the city was the capital of the Austro-Hungarian Empire from 1867 to 1918.



Vienna was indisputably the center of the musical world in the 18th and 19th centuries. It was either the birthplace or residence of such greats as Haydn, Mozart, Schubert, Beethoven, Brahms, Bruckner, Mahler, Schonberg and, of course the Strauss family. The lattermost were famous for popularizing the city's waltz, the Viennese, wildly successful dance music in its day. Vienna's historic center is a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**.



Take a walk in the heart of Old Town Vienna, the Innere Stadt, admiring its main religious edifice, St. Stephen's Cathedral. Construction on the cathedral began in 1147 and renovations have been ongoing up to the present day. Along the way enjoy many of Vienna's most renowned sights, such as the Rathaus (Town Hall), the Burgtheater, University and the fabulous Hofburg Palace.

This afternoon you may participate in Viennese Waltz lessons, an appropriate skill to have in this City of Music.

Enjoy a **special New Year's gala dinner** inside the beautiful **Rathaus (City Hall.)** One of Vienna's most recognizable symbols, the imposing Rathaus on the Ringstrasse was built in 1883 to replace the old baroque city hall, which by the mid-19th century had become too small to hold the city council offices. Your special New Year's dinner will be accompanied by the renowned Wiener Hofball Orchestra. Enjoy a night of music and waltzing along with incredible views of the fireworks from the city hall's balcony.
Meals: B, L, D – *Danube Express private train*

Day Five, Friday, January 1, 2021

Vienna

Start your day by taking a romantic **horse-drawn carriage ride** over the cobblestones to **Palais Coburg**, where you will be treated to **celebratory brunch**. The magnificent Palais Coburg was built along the town's 16th century fortress walls between 1840 and 1845, before Emperor Franz Josef ordered the wall's demolition and the construction of the Ringstrasse. It was so well-regarded that two of Johann Strauss's works were premiered here. The lavish palace was damaged in WWII, and neglected until 1997, when planning and renovations began. In 2003, the Palais Coburg opened once again in a new incarnation as a five star hotel with gracious banquet halls.

At the Palais, guests may take in the live transmission of the Vienna Philharmonic's New Year's concert.

If you'd prefer to get out into Austria's countryside, you can join a tour to Schönbrunn Palace to wander the holiday market. The palace and garden at **UNESCO-listed Schönbrunn Palace** represent



centuries of Austrian history. Its royal use began in 1569 when Emperor Maximilian II acquired the land for a hunting preserve. Until the time of Maria-Theresa, the small palace on the site was used mainly for hunting parties and as the residence of several Dowager Empresses. In the mid-18th century, Empress Maria Theresa made Schönbrunn the summer home of the Imperial family, and the former hunting lodge became the glittering location of court events.

Maria Theresa's consort, Emperor Franz I Stephan of Lorraine, designed the formal baroque-style gardens with a star-shaped system of avenues and paths. The gardens were meant to impress, and to continue the theme of the opulent interiors.

Another option is to drive about a half hour out of Vienna to **Heiligenkreuz Abbey**. Originally founded in 1133, Heiligenkreuz (Holy Cross) Abbey is the oldest continuously inhabited Cistercian monastery in the world. The abbey church retains its earliest Romanesque core, while the courtyard walls are from the 17th century. The Gregorian chants of the Heiligenkreuz monks have become world famous.

Sit quietly in the abbey church and listen to the chanting of the monks at prayer. Gregorian chants, which arose some time around the 9th century, are haunting liturgical prayers taken from the Bible and sung in unison. The tech-savvy monks of Heiligenkreuz Abbey have produced several CDs of their hypnotizing chants since 2008.

Return to the train for dinner and overnight.
Meals: B, L, D – *Danube Express Private Train*

Day Six, Saturday, January 2 **Cesky Krumlov, Czech Republic • Prague**

On a horseshoe bend of the Vltava River south of Prague, **Cesky Krumlov** is a small, beautifully-preserved medieval town that has been a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** since 1992. Most of its structures were built from the 14th to the 17th centuries, in a mixture of Gothic, Renaissance and baroque styles.

Typical of Central European medieval towns, its cobbled streets radiate out from a central square surrounded by burghers' houses. The 13th century pastel-towered castle across the river is the second largest castle in the Czech Republic.

Take a short introductory tour, and then enjoy some free time to explore on your own before lunch back on board the train.

Arrive in **Prague, capital of Czech Republic**. Called the "Hundred-Spired City," Prague's beautifully-preserved Gothic, baroque and neoclassical churches and palaces make it one of the great cities of Europe. Czech king Charles IV, crowned Holy Roman Emperor in 1355, began work on many of the most renowned monuments, including St. Vitus Cathedral on the castle grounds, the Charles Bridge, the New Town (Nove Mesto) and Charles University, the first in Central Europe. Prague's old section is included on the **UNESCO World Heritage List** for its rich architectural and cultural history.

Enjoy an introduction to Prague's wonderful Old Town, where the settlement first began, radiating out from a large marketplace on the Vltava. Originally the town had a moat and a wall with 13 gates. Admire the Town Hall, established in 1338 as the seat of the Old Town authorities. The 15th century astronomical



clock at the bottom of the clock tower is complete with astrological signs and two of the 12 apostles appearing on the hour.

There are 17 beautiful arched stone bridges over the Vltava River running through Prague. The 14th century **Charles (Karel) Bridge**, designed by King Karel's architect Peter Parler in the Gothic style, was used for almost five and a half centuries before becoming a pedestrian-only bridge after WWII. The bridge is graced with 30 baroque statues added in the 18th century, including a bronze of St. John of Nepomuk, who was thrown over the bridge to his death for refusing to tell the king what the queen said in confession.



Explore Prague's old **Jewish Quarter** Seven synagogues are the remnants of the old Jewish settlement. With monuments commemorating the life and work of the Jewish community of Prague through the centuries, historic Josefov, the Jewish Quarter, is no less famous than the Prague Castle. The most impressive sights are the Old Jewish Cemetery, with 12 layers of graves and over 12,000 gravestones, and the so-called Old-New Synagogue, built around 1270, and the oldest working synagogue in Europe. Today the Jewish community consists of about 6,000 people, compared with 50,000 before WWII.

This evening, attend an operatic performance at the **Prague Karlin Theater**.

Return to the train for overnight.

Meals: B, L, D – *Danube Express private train*



Day Seven, Sunday, January 3

Prague

Today, wind your way through the Old and New towns on an historic **tram car**. Take a seat in the beautiful old tram as the conductor in his old fashioned uniform rings the bell for the stops on the way to Prague Castle.

Prague Castle is the largest ancient castle in the world, built on the steeply sloping hill above the river. It began in the 9th century as a walled hill-fort, and grew as each successive ruler added to it in a different architectural style. A place of coronation and residence of kings and emperors, the castle is the symbol of Prague.

The huge complex includes **St. Vitus**

Cathedral, its St. Wenceslaus Chapel decorated in precious stones, the baroque Matthias Gate and the Renaissance Garden, planted in the 16th century. Enjoy the rest of the day free for strolling or shopping.



Return to the train for dinner and overnight.
Meals: B, L, D – *Danube Express private train*

Day Eight, Monday, January 4 **Kosice, Slovakia • Budapest, Hungary**

This morning, explore the beautiful city of **Kosice**, in Slovakia. Founded in the 13th century, Kosice is today the second largest city in Slovakia. Headquarters of the Hungarians during the war for independence from the Hapsburgs from 1703-1711, the city still shows signs of its pre-WWI Hungarian influence.



Kosice was taken in turns by Czechoslovakia and Hungary, becoming the capital of a newly independent Czechoslovakia for a brief few months in 1945. Today it is a major steel-making city, but its medieval Old Town holds much of interest to visitors.

The city was declared a **Capital of Culture** in 2013, along with Marseille-Provence. The Capital of Culture program was launched in 1985 to help introduce and bring together the different cultures of Europe. The chosen cities show off their finest features, hosting musical performances, parades, artistic events and cultural exhibitions all year long.

Discover the highlights of Kosice, including the **Central Square**. The main attraction of Old Town Kosice is the Cathedral of St. Elizabeth, a

15th century gothic building that is the largest church in Slovakia. Next door is the 14th century St. Urban Tower, and on the opposite side stands St. Michael's Chapel. Along Hlavna street is the ornate State Theater behind its musical fountain, and the rococo old Town Hall.

Reboard the train in time for your last lunch onboard, and return to Budapest for a festive farewell dinner.

Meals: B, L, D – *Four Seasons Hotel Gresham Palace, or similar*

Day Nine, Tuesday, January 5 **Depart Budapest**

The tour ends this morning after breakfast at the hotel, with departure transfers to the airport.

Meals: B



About The Golden Eagle Danube Express Train

Train accommodations

Two styles of accommodation are available on board the *Golden Eagle Danube Express*: Superior Deluxe Class (en suite, with UK king bed) and Deluxe Class (en suite).

Superior Deluxe Class

The Superior Deluxe Class on the *Golden Eagle Danube Express* is the ultimate in luxury European rail accommodation, featuring only four modern en suite cabins per car, complete with WiFi access. Designed and built for 2017, Superior Deluxe cabins include a full-length sofa and two chairs, a double wardrobe, individually controlled air conditioning, USB ports, power sockets, personal safe, and a newly designed en suite bathroom with its own shower cubicle. At night, your attendant transforms the sofa into a king-sized bed. The two picture windows, one of which opens, bring light and air into your private retreat.

Superior Deluxe Class Cabin information:

- 93 sq. ft. cabin area,
- Sleeps 2 in UK standard king-sized bed (6 ft. 2 in. by 5 ft.)
- Armchair, full-length sofa
- Sitting area with free standing chairs and table
- Individually controlled air-conditioning
- 2 large picture windows – 1 opens partially
- Adjustable lighting
- Double wardrobe
- Personal safe
- WiFi
- 2 USB ports
- Electrical outlets
- Private en suite bathroom with shower cubicle
- Slippers and toiletries
- Towels and linens changed every three days
- Complimentary tea, coffee and mineral water available morning to night
- Beer, wine and soft drinks from the Bar Car included (excluding Premium Wine List)
- 4 cabins per carriage



Deluxe Class

The Deluxe Class on the *Golden Eagle Danube Express* features newly designed air-conditioned cabins which pair luxury with utility, offering superior accommodations that feature two lower berths and fully en suite facilities. Cabins are furnished with two sofas, an armchair, table and a wardrobe with a safe. Your attendant will convert the two sofas into comfortable twin beds for nighttime use. The en suite bathroom features a shower, hair dryer and heated towel rack.

Deluxe Class Cabin information:

- 83 sq. ft. cabin area
- Sleeps 2 in two twin size beds (6 ft. 3 in. by 2 ft. 7.5 in.)
- Two armchairs, and sitting area with free standing chair
- Individually controlled air-conditioning
- Large picture window – opens partially
- Full length wardrobe
- Personal safe
- Electrical outlets
- Private en suite bathroom with shower and heated towel bar
- Slippers and toiletries
- Towels and linens changed every three days
- Complimentary tea, coffee and mineral water available morning to night
- Beer, wine and soft drinks drinks from the Bar Car included (excluding Premium Wine List)
- 5 cabins per carriage

Note: cabin configurations and decor may vary from samples depicted



Dates for 2020 – Private Rail Journey

The land itinerary is scheduled to operate on the following dates. Please note that you need to depart the U.S. at least one day prior to the tour start date, due to airline flight schedules.

December 28, 2020-January 5, 2021

2020 Package Prices

Land Tour Cost – Per Person:

Deluxe Class, twin share	\$10,695
Deluxe Class, single	\$17,995

Superior Deluxe Class, twin share	\$12,895
Superior Deluxe Class, single	\$21,495

Private Train Tour Deposits – Per person

Deluxe Class deposit	\$2,500
Superior Deluxe Class deposit	\$5,500

A non-refundable deposit and completed reservation form/signed release are required to hold space.

Land Tour Includes

- Accommodation aboard the *Golden Eagle Danube Express* private train.
- Hotel accommodation per the itinerary (3 total nights in Budapest).
- All meals starting with dinner on Day 1 until breakfast on final tour day.
- A generous allowance of wine or local beer, soft drinks and water with all lunches and dinners.
- Complimentary tea, coffee and mineral water round the clock from your car attendant while on board the train.
- Complimentary draft beer in the Bar Car for all passengers.
- Arrival/departure transfers, provided you arrive and depart on the tour start/end dates and in the tour start/end cities.
- All guided off-train tours per itinerary.
- The services of an experienced Train Tour Manager, with local guides for scheduled off-train touring.
- All gratuities.
- Baggage handling.

Not Included

- International airfare or surface transport to the point of joining/leaving the tour. MIR is able to arrange your air itinerary in economy or business class. If you wish to obtain an air quote, please contact us for details.
- Items of a purely personal nature (laundry, telephone, bar account, photography at museums, etc.)
- Optional pre- or post-tour extensions.
- Drinks, beyond draft beer in the Bar Car, and beer and wine at set meals
- Visa fees, any excess baggage charges, airport departure taxes, vaccination or medical costs.
- Travel and trip cancellation insurance.



Interested in travel insurance?

To learn more about all the benefits of purchasing a Travel Guard travel insurance plan, please visit www.travelguard.com/mircorp or contact Travel Guard at 1.877.709.5596.

Start Planning Next Year Now

Dates for 2021 – Rail Journey by Private Train

At the time of writing, the land itinerary for this program next year is projected to be generally as depicted for this year. Next year's dates are shown below – please call if you're ready to book now.

December 28, 2021-January 5, 2022

Package Prices – 2021

Land Tour Cost – Per Person:

Deluxe Class, twin share \$12,895

Deluxe Class, single \$19,395

Superior Deluxe Class, twin share \$15,995

Superior Deluxe Class, single \$26,795

Private Train Tour Deposits – Per person

Deluxe Class deposit \$2,500

Superior Deluxe Class deposit \$5,500

Rail Journey by Private Train

Private Train tours are in a class of their own, offering the opportunity to experience remote destinations in unparalleled style. These all-inclusive, overview tours aboard the fully-chartered *Danube Express* private train bring together passengers from around the world. Group sizes are flexible and on the *Danube Express* private train can be up to 90 passengers.

Important Notes: Is This Trip Right For You?

- This trip is moderately active, and rated **moderate to rigorous** touring due to the daily walking involved and the overall shortcomings of the tourism infrastructure. To reap the full rewards of this adventure, travelers must be able to walk at least a mile a day, keeping up with fellow travelers. Flexibility, a sense of humor and a willingness to accept local standards of amenities and services are essential components to the enjoyment of this trip.
- This itinerary features a significant amount of touring on foot. Many streets and sidewalks are uneven, and some attractions are only accessible via steep staircases. Museums generally do not have elevators.



- On the train, restaurant and bar cars may be some distance from your sleeping car. Although portage is provided where possible, you may have to carry your baggage for short distances.
- Passengers may encounter problems getting on and off trains; there may be low platforms, steep steps and/or gaps between the platform and the train.
- In true expedition style, some delays or changes in the itinerary are likely.

We recommend that you read the U.S. State Department's Consular Information Sheet and travel warning regarding travel to Turkey. Check <http://travel.state.gov/> for up-to-date travel information.

Are You Prepared?

A Travel Guard travel insurance plan can help cover your vacation investment, offset expenses from travel mishaps and provide you with emergency travel assistance. To learn more about all of the benefits of purchasing a Travel Guard travel insurance plan, please visit www.travelguard.com/mircorp

If you are not already enrolled in STEP, Smart Traveler Enrollment Program, a free service to enroll your trip with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate, please consider enrolling. For more information: <https://step.state.gov/step/>

Please read the U.S. State Department's Travel Advisory regarding travel to Hungary at: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/hungary-travel-advisory.html>

Please read the U.S. State Department's Travel Advisory regarding travel to Austria at: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/austria-travel-advisory.html>

Please read the U.S. State Department's Travel Advisory regarding travel to the Czech Republic at: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/czech-republic-travel-advisory.html>

Please read the U.S. State Department's Travel Advisory regarding travel to Slovakia at: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/slovakia-travel-advisory.html>

Weather

The climate of **Eastern Europe** is a rather severe continental climate, cold in winter and hot in summer. As with traveling anywhere, it is best to bring layers of different weights and thickness to keep you comfortable.

Please remember, weather at all times of year has an element of the unpredictable. This information comes from weatherbase.com and is based on data from previous temperatures on record. It is always advisable to check with weatherbase.com closer to your departure date for current conditions and forecasts for the specific region you will be visiting.

International Airfare

MIR's in-house, full-service air department is available to assist with your air travel needs. Check with MIR before booking air on your own, as we are happy to research and compare the best published fares available. Airfare varies depending on a wide variety of factors, such as dates of travel, seat availability, special airline promotions, how restrictive ticket changes are, how long the fares can be held without purchase, routing considerations such as stopovers, and more. Tour dates are based on the land tour only.



Please call us at 1-800-424-7289 for further details and for assistance with custom air reservations from your preferred departure city.

Visas

U.S. passport holders do not require visas for any of the countries visited on this itinerary. You may need a visa for any country you fly through prior to joining the tour, or for a country in which you plan to do a pre- or post-tour extension. Non-U.S. passport holder may need a visa for one or more of the countries on the main tour routing. Please call with any questions about processing visas for this program.

Pre- and Post-Tour Extensions

MIR can arrange for an extended program in Russia or Eastern Europe, the South Caucasus or the 'Stans. Contact us for more information.

Also Nearby...

For more tours to this region, you may want to check out:

Flexible Essential Trips – Classic Private Journeys

Essential St. Petersburg, 7 days. St. Petersburg, home of the czars and their courts, is a rich repository of extravagant palaces, brilliant museums and renowned theaters overflowing with music and dance. Its fashionable boulevards and serene canals glisten in the “White Nights” of summer and dazzle on sunny winter days.

Essential Russia, 7 days. A compact and compelling survey of Russia’s political capital, Moscow, and its cultural capital, St. Petersburg, this tour communicates the character of Western Russia in a succinct and meaningful series of experiences.

Essential Balkans, 14 days. Visit seven Balkan countries in 14 days on this compact overland journey through history. A remarkably complex region, the mountainous Balkan Peninsula is fascinating, diverse and incredibly beautiful.

Essential Caucasus, 10 days. Armenia’s intricate stone *khachkar* crosses, the bounteous wines of Georgia and the ancient petroglyphs of Azerbaijan are icons of these three intertwined Caucasus countries, where you can experience five UNESCO masterpieces in ten days.

Essential Central Asia, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, 13 days. Explore the markets, mosques and minarets of oasis towns on the fringes of the Kyzyl Kum and Kara Kum deserts. Here spiritual beliefs were the greatest commodities to flow along trade routes, and civilizations blossomed amidst austere natural beauty.

Essential Uzbekistan, 10 days. Roam the great Silk Road oases of Bukhara, Samarkand and Khiva, along with modern Tashkent, the Uzbek capital. Admire their mosques, *madrassahs* and minarets built of mudbricks and clad in ceramic tiles the color of the desert sky.

Essential Turkmenistan, 12 days. From the golden monuments of Ashgabat and the ruins of Parthian Nisa, head into the mountains to overnight in a village home. Visit the Caspian seaport, Turkmenbashi,



explore UNESCO-listed Merv and learn about traditional crafts. Camp at the “Door to Hell” and survey Kunya-Urgench, ancient capital of Khorezm.

Conditions of Participation

Your participation on a MIR Corporation trip is subject to the conditions contained in the 2020 Tour Reservation Form and Release of Liability and Assumption of Risk Agreement. Please read this document carefully and contact us with any questions.

Cancellation and Refund Policy

Please note that no partial refunds are available for any missed days of a tour or any whole or part of a tour, accommodation, meal or any other service not utilized by the participant during the tour. The quoted price represents a package price for the services offered and an itemization of individual component costs will not be provided. Please understand there will be no exceptions to our cancellation policies regardless of your situation. Should you need to cancel your travel plans, please notify us in writing immediately. At the time we receive written notification of cancellation, the following charges apply:

Scheduled Rail Journeys by Private Train:

121 or more days prior to departure-----deposit due or paid in full of \$2,000, \$2,500 or \$5,500

65-120 days prior to departure-----50% of the land tour cost

64 days prior to departure or after trip departure----no refund

References

We encourage you to speak directly with satisfied past travelers. Please request a list of references.

Why MIR?

Regional knowledge is crucial to the success of any trip to our corner of the world. MIR combines detailed information about geography and infrastructure, history and art, language and culture, with the depth of knowledge that comes only from decades of regional experience. You may wonder how we differ from other tour operators...

Destination Specialization

MIR focuses exclusively on the exceptional region at the crossroads of Europe and Asia. This area has been our overriding passion since 1986; we don't do the rest of the world. Our hard-earned expertise gained over the last three decades can take you from end to end of the largest country in the world – Russia – and to all of its neighbors. We specialize in travel to Siberia, the Silk Route, St. Petersburg & Beyond. Our destinations include: Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, the Baltics (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania), the Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Slovenia), Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan), the South Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia), Turkey, Mongolia, China, Tibet, and Central/East Europe (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia).

30 Years of Experience



A travel company doesn't last more than 30 years in the business without a solid track record. MIR has helped thousands of individuals achieve their travel goals. Our dedication and experience have earned us their trust and the trust of many well-respected institutions. Today MIR is the preferred tour operator for museum, alumni and special interest organizations across the country.



Recommended & Respected

MIR has twice been rated one of the "Best Adventure Travel Companies on Earth" by *National Geographic Adventure*. Several of our tours have won awards in top travel publications, such as *Outside* magazine and *National Geographic Traveler*. Our trips have been featured in books like *Riding the Hula Hula to the Arctic Ocean* and *1,000 Places to See Before You Die*.

More Questions?


Please feel free to call us with questions at 1-800-424-7289, 8:30am-5:30pm Pacific Time.

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