# EASTERN EUROPE & BALKANS TOUR



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Great European Coach Tour with Flights Duration: 26 days Stay: 24 nights hotels, Overnight flight Travel style: Escorted tour with flights from Australia

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Booking code: EUGRT26M

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# 26 Days Great European Escorted Tour with Flights

#### About the holiday

Embark on an enchanting and immersive 26-day journey through the heart of Europe with our meticulously crafted Central & Eastern Europe & Balkans tour.

This captivating adventure invites you to delve into the rich cultural tapestry of some of the continent's most iconic cities, including Budapest, Vienna, Prague, Bucharest, Sibiu, Sarajevo, Dubrovnik, Ohrid, Skopje and Sofia. Explore the cultural hubs of Belgrade and Sarajevo, and bask in the coastal allure of Dubrovnik and Kotor.

Venturing into the Balkans, you'll be captivated by the cultural diversity of Tirana and Shkoder in Albania, the serene shores of Lake Ohrid, and the dynamic cityscape of Skopje.

Join us as we traverse the captivating landscapes, uncover hidden gems and immerse ourselves in the cultural tapestry that defines Central & Eastern Europe and the Balkans.

Why you'll love this tour...

- The price! It's great value for a worry-free holiday packed with inclusions
- Enjoy exploring Hungary, Slovakia, Austria, Germany, Czech Republic, Romania, Transylvania, Bulgaria, Serbia, Bosnia & Herzegovina and Croatia
- Must-do activities, many meals & flights from Australia are all included

# Travel dates:

Departs Australia in 2024 & 2025 - please see our website for details

Departures are subject to confirmation at time of booking. Price may vary depending on your travel date. Please contact us for current rates.

Call 1300 168 910 or email hello@mytravelxp.com for current rates & travel deals.



# **Escorted Tour Includes:**

#### Flights

- Return economy airfare Australia to Budapest & from Sofia
- One-way economy airfares from Prague to Bucharest

#### Accommodation

- 24 nights in twin share hotel rooms with private en-suite facilities
- Complimentary hotel WiFi access (where available)

#### Meals

• 24 breakfasts

#### Transport

• Air-conditioned coach or mini bus

#### **Escorted tour**

• Services of an experienced tour leader, licenced by the Ministry of Tourism

# Package excludes:

Airport transfers Meals & sightseeing not specified in the inclusions or itinerary Entrance fees to sights & museums Optional tours & activities Personal items, such as drinks, snacks, laundry etc. Gratuities for guides, representatives & drivers Travel insurance is essential Prices are based on twin share, please contact us for single rates

#### Subject to confirmation by airlines, hotels, tour company & local operators. Booking conditions & cancellation fees apply.

# **Itinerary:**

#### Day 1 : Depart Australia on flights to Hungary

#### Day 2 : Arrive Budapest

Greetings to Budapest, the capital city of Hungary! Nestled on both banks of the majestic Danube River, this enchanting city seamlessly blends a rich tapestry of history, culture, and natural splendour. As you arrive, make your way to the hotel and join the welcome meeting at the hotel lobby at 6pm. Later on, you can get to know your fellow travellers in the optional group dinner. Or, immerse yourself in the lively nocturnal atmosphere of Budapest at your own pace. Embark on an evening filled with exploration, delving into the city's vibrant nightlife, and savouring the delights of authentic Hungarian cuisine.

- Accommodation
   Hotel City Inn or Novotel Budapest City 4 Star
   Included Activities
- Included Activities
   Welcome Meeting
- Optional Activities
   Group Dinner

#### Day 3 : Budapest

After breakfast, embark on your morning exploration in Pest, where you'll have the opportunity to marvel at iconic landmarks such as the Parliament, Royal Palace, Heroes' Square, St Stephen's Basilica and the historic Great Market Hall. Ascend Castle Hill to witness the historic Matthias Coronation Church dating back to the 13th century. Take in the breathtaking panoramic views of the city from Fisherman's Bastion.

In the afternoon, partake in the Budapest Opera House & Great Dohany Synagogue experience. Great Dohany Synagogue is the largest synagogue in Europe. You can roam the grounds, observe the Holocaust Tree of Life Memorial, and gain insights into the Hungarian Holocaust. In the evening, you might consider selecting the optional Danube Cruise, which includes a delightful dinner experience.

- Accommodation
   Hotel City Inn or Novotel Budapest City 4 Star
- Meals Included Breakfast
- Included Activities
   Budapest City Tour
- Optional Activities
   Danube River Cruise at Night €25
   St. Andrea City Visit €30

#### Day 4 : Budapest, Bratislava, Vienna

Embark on a multifaceted journey today as you traverse through three cities: Budapest, Bratislava, and Vienna. Begin your adventure by immersing yourself in the quaint streets of Bratislava, the capital of Slovakia, discovering its charm and distinctive character. Your exploration continues as you make your way to Vienna, the capital of Austria, a city steeped in imperial grandeur and artistic richness. At your own leisure, marvel at the architectural splendour and historical significance of Vienna's sites. If you are travelling in December, experience the magical ambiance of the Christmas markets at night. Or, indulge your senses with local delicacies, immerse yourself in the festive atmosphere, and peruse through a plethora of unique gifts.

- Accommodation
  - Eventhotel Pyramide or Austria Trend Hotel Ananas 4 Star
- Meals Included
   Breakfast
- Included Activities Vienna City Tour

#### Day 5 : Vienna

Embark on a captivating sightseeing odyssey today, beginning with a scenic drive along the renowned Ringstrasse, where landmarks such as the Empress Maria Theresia Monument, Votive Church, City Hall, and Parliament grace your path. Stroll through the Hofburg courtyards, tracing the footsteps of history, until you reach the State Opera House. Marvel at the architectural magnificence that punctuates this iconic cityscape.

Take a tour that unveils the grandeur of Schonbrunn Palace, once the opulent summer abode of the Habsburg emperors. Immerse yourself in the rich historical tapestry as you traverse through the ornate halls and lush gardens of this imperial residence. You can also join our optional guided tour to Danube Tower and Salzbergwerk Berchtesgaden Salt Mine, an underground marvel nestled in the heart of the Bavarian Alps. Uncover the secrets of this centuries-old salt mine as you traverse its subterranean chambers.

# Accommodation Eventhotel Pyramide or Austria Trend Hotel Ananas - 4 Star

- Meals Included
   Breakfast
- Optional Activities
   Danube Tower €30
   Salzbergwerk Berchtesgaden Salt Mine €40

# Day 6 : Vienna, Salzburg, Munich

Embark on a scenic journey from Vienna to Salzburg, a captivating city cradled amidst the breathtaking Austrian Alps.

Take a guided tour through the highlights of Salzburg and acquaint yourself with the city's myriad attractions. Visit Mirabell Palace and Gardens, where classical beauty converges with manicured landscapes. Venture to the iconic Hohensalzburg Fortress, a medieval stronghold perched majestically on a hill, offering panoramic views of the surrounding Alpine panorama. Visit the awe-inspiring Salzburg Cathedral, a masterpiece of baroque architecture. Delve into the Mozart Residence, the former home of the renowned composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, to gain insight into his life and musical genius. Later, we proceed towards the capital of Bavaria, Munich.

- Accommodation
   Holiday Inn Munchen Sud or Tulip Inn Munchen Messe 4 Star
   Mools Included
- Meals Included
   Breakfast
- Included Activities
   Salzburg City Tour

# Day 7 : Munich

We begin the day with an introductory stroll led by your group leader to discover key attractions like Marienplatz, Frauenkirche, and Viktualienmarkt. Marvel at the iconic Marienplatz, the city's vibrant central square, adorned with historical landmarks and surrounded by picturesque architecture. Explore the awe-inspiring Frauenkirche, a symbol of Munich's rich history and a testament to its resilience. For the rest of the day, enjoy free time at your own pace, or choose to engage in the optional excursion to the enchanting Linderhof Palace, a fairytale creation commissioned by the eccentric King Ludwig II, and Oberammergau, renowned for its celebrated passion play. At night, don't miss the opportunity to savor traditional Bavarian beer in one of Munich's beer halls.

- Accommodation Holiday Inn Munchen Sud or Tulip Inn Munchecn Messe - 4 Star
- Meals Included
   Breakfast
- Optional Activities Linderhof & Oberammergau Tour
- Included Activities Munich City Tour

# Day 8 : Munich, Regensburg, Prague

Embark on a picturesque morning journey from Munich to the charming city of Regensburg in Germany. Take your time to leisurely explore the enchanting delights of Regensburg, situated along the scenic Danube River. Renowned as one of Germany's largest and impeccably preserved medieval cities, Regensburg holds the prestigious designation of a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Allow yourself to be captivated by the architectural marvels, including stunning churches and the one-of-a-kind medieval stone bridge that gracefully spans the majestic River Danube. Later on, ride to Prague and take a moment's rest to fuel up for a full day in Prague packed with popular sights.

- Accommodation
   TBC
- Meals Included Breakfast
- Included Activities
   Regensburg City Tour

# Day 9 : Prague

Embark on a captivating day in Prague with a guided walking tour leading you through the picturesque Lesser Town (Malá Strana), also known as the charming Little Quarter. Immerse yourself in the ambiance of this historic area, characterized by ancient burgher houses and winding quaint side streets. As you traverse the iconic Charles Bridge, Europe's venerable stone bridge, marvel at the breathtaking views that unfold before you, leading you to the heart of Prague's medieval centre, the Old Town. Delve into the medieval charm of Old Town as you explore its cobbled streets and immerse yourself in the vibrant atmosphere of Old Town Square. Continue your journey into the Jewish Quarter, once the largest Jewish ghetto in Europe, where you'll encounter the elegant white stucco St. Nicholas Church, the renowned Astronomical Clock, and the historic Town Hall.

In the afternoon, embark on a guided tour to the hilltop Prague Castle complex, the former regal residence of Bohemian kings. Discover the magnificence of St. Vitus Cathedral, the hallowed space where kings were crowned, and be treated to spectacular vistas offering panoramic views of the entire city below. This comprehensive exploration promises to unveil the rich tapestry of Prague's history, architecture, and cultural heritage.

- Accommodation
   To be confirmed
- Meals Included Breakfast
- Included Activities
- Prague City Tour
   Prague Castle and St. Vitus Cathedral Visit

# Day 10 : Prague - Bucharest (By Flight)

It's time to say goodbye to Hungary and fly to Bucharest, Romania's capital city. Upon arrival enjoy some free time to explore the city's famous landmarks at your own leisure.

• Accommodation Hotel Mercure Unirii - 4 Star Meals Included
 Breakfast

#### Day 11 : Bucharest City Tour

After a hefty breakfast at the hotel, it's time to launch our discovery of the fascinating Romanian capital, Bucharest. Follow your guide as we visit unmissable landmarks of the city starting with the Revolution Square, Arc of Triumph and Romania Athenaem. Learn about the unique culture and vast history of the city as we continue to the famous Opera House, National Military Club, Dimitrie Gusti National Village and the Palace of Parliament, each building presents a different perspective to the Romanian culture and an artwork in itself. After some personal leisure time for you to explore this gorgeous city on your own terms, return to the hotel following a long day of discovery.

- Accommodation Hotel Mercure Unirii - 4 Star
- Meals Included
   Breakfast
- Included Activities
   Bucharest City Tour
- Entrance Fees National Village Museum - EUR 6

#### Day 12 : Bucharest - Sinaia - Bran - Brasov

Today's the day we set course for the fascinating region of Transylvania. Drive through misty forests of lush green towards our first stop at Peles Castle in Sinaia, a beautiful neo-renaissance castle in the Carpathian mountains (Please note that it is not possible to visit inside of the castle). Just as we start to warm up to this unique atmosphere, goosebumps creep in... Prepare for the legendary Bran Castle, also known as the Castle of Count Dracula! This iconic sight is where legend and reality blend together to create the timeless stories of the vampires. Continue deep into Transylvania to Brasov, a fascinating town surrounded by medieval Saxon walls and embellished with gothic & baroque architecture. Starting with the cobble-stone Piața Sfatului (Council Square), visit famous landmarks as the Black Church and Muresenilor House Museum before checking into our hotel.

- Accommodation Hotel Ambient - 4 Star
- Meals Included
   Breakfast
- Included Activities
   Visit to Peles Castle
   Visit to Count Dracula Castle
   Brasov Sightseeing
- Entrance Fees Dracula Castle Bran - EUR 8.5

# Day 13 : Brasov - Sighisoara - Targu Mures - Cluj Napoca

Ready to follow the footsteps of Count Dracula? Our journey continues to Sighisoara after making a stop at the Clock Tower. Soak in marvellous views of Sighisoara Citadel, the Dominican Monastery, The Church on the Hill (Biserica din Deal), and Dracula's House while listening to your guide about the colourful background of the town. Our next stop will be the unofficial capital of the Transylvania region, Cluj-Napoca! Tag along your tour leader for a sightseeing tour of the colourful town, visiting the Union Square, St. Mihail Church and Matthias Corvinus Monument. Then make way to our 4-star hotel following a long day of discovery with spare time to scroll through your photo reel.

- Accommodation Hotel River Park - 4 Star
- Meals Included
   Breakfast
- Included Activities
   Sighisoara Sightseeing
   Cluj-Napoca Sightseeing

#### Day 14 : Cluj Napoca - Salina Turda - Hunedeoara - Sibiu

After breakfast at the hotel, we depart for the salt mines of Turda. This fascinating geologic wonder first produced salt for the region in antique times and has been active since the 11th century! Continuing to Hunedeoara Castle, also known as the Corvin Castle, learn all about the vibrant history of the Transylvanian citadel from your guide. Our next stop will be the fairytale-like town of Sibiu. Relax at our comfortable 4-star hotel following a day filled with cultural adventure or start exploring Sibiu as you wish.

- Accommodation Hotel Golden Tulip Ana Tower - 4 Star
- Meals Included
   Breakfast
- Included Activities
   Visit to Salina Turda (Salt Mine)
   Hunedeoara Sightseeing
- Entrance Fees Salina Turda - EUR 10 Corvin Castle - EUR 8

#### Day 15 : Sibiu - Bucharest

We start our day with a walking tour of charming Sibiu. Presenting marvellous samples of Germanic architecture, Sibiu's legacy dates back to Saxxon settlers from the 12th century. Tag along your tour leader to view landmarks such as Brukenthal Palace, Piata Mare (city square), Lutheran Cathedral, Holy Trinity Cathedral and the Church of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul. In the afternoon, we will be heading back to Bucharest for our overnight stay.

- Accommodation Hotel Mercure Unirii - 4 Star
- Meals Included
   Breakfast
- Included Activities Sibiu Sightseeing
- Optional Activities Group Dinner

#### Day 16 : Bucharest - Plovdiv

It's time to bid farewell to Romania as we embark our ride for Veliko Tarnavo, the City of the Tsars. The historic capital of the Second Bulgarian Empire displays the unique Bulgarian architecture from the medieval age. Uncover the vast history and gems including Tsareverts Fortress and the Holy Forty Martyrs Church before moving on to Plovdiv.

- Accommodation
   Best Western Premier Plovdiv Hills 4 Star
- Meals Included
   Breakfast
- Included Activities
   Veliko Tarnavo Sightseeing
- Entrance Fees
   Tsarevets Fortress EUR 5

# Day 17 : Plovdiv - Sofia

Fill up at breakfast at the hotel as we prepare for a city tour of beautiful Plovdiv. Launching our tour at Old Plovdiv in Nebet Hill, visit the Balabanov and Georgi Mavridi House, witness the impressive St. Konstantin Church and Elena Church, and proceed to Roman Amphitheatre of Philippopolis and Stadium - some of the bestpreserved samples of Roman architecture in the world. Then we continue to visit the Citadel Door, Castle Streets and St. Nedelya Church. Having explored the marvels of Plovdiv, we embark for Sofia! Upon arrival, discover the Bulgarian capital on a panoramic city tour covering all the unmissable sights of the city and learn about its rooted history.

- Accommodation Novotel Sofia - 4 Star or similar
- Meals Included Breakfast
- Included Activities
   Plovdiv City Tour
   Sofia Panoramic Tour

#### Day 18 : Sofia, Belgrade

After a substantial breakfast, hop on the bus and make your way to the Serbian capital, Belgrade. With stunning views over the Danube and Sava rivers by the mighty medieval Belgrade Fortress, head to the heart of the capitol. Starting off at the vibrant pretty shopping street, Knez Mihailova, filled with cafes, shops and charming sites, kick off the walking tour to discover the incredible landmarks Belgrade has in store and their marvellous histories.

- Accommodation Abba Hotel - 4 Star
- Meals Included
   Breakfast
- Included Activities
   Belgrade City Tour

# Day 19 : Belgrade-Sarajevo

Next stop Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina's capital, the city that has been through it all! It is where the Western and Eastern Roman Empire split and where people of many nations and religions met, lived and warred. You can still see many reminders of the Yugoslav War in bullet holes and cannon marks all around town. Though, still an oriental beauty with a unique twist, and a delight to discover on your walking tour in the old town. The city offers endless delicacies to taste, but the specialty is lamb.

- Accommodation Hotel Ibis Styles - 4 Star
- Meals Included
   Breakfast
- Included Activities
   Sarajevo City Tour
- Entrance Fees Catholic Church - EUR 1

# Day 20 : Sarajevo-Mostar-Trebinje

Today, we drive for the amazing Adriatic shore, but first a stop at Mostar! As you arrive in this dreamland, walk through the Old Town of this Herzegovina pearl, see the iconic highlights Old Bridge - Stari Most, and the old čaršija (market). Enjoy your lunch with an amazing view at one of the local venues, discover the old town and make sure to try the delicious Turkish coffee. In the afternoon, we ride to Trebinje\_for our overnight stay.

- Accommodation
   Hotel Central Park 4 Star
- Meals Included
   Breakfast
- Included Activities
   Mostar City Tour

• Optional Activities Kravice Waterfalls - EUR 30

# Day 21 : Trebinje-Dubrovnik-Trebinje

Get ready for a long day at Dubrovnik, the "Pearl of the Adriatic"! With its wellpreserved majestic walls encircling the whole town and its sea of terra-cotta roof tiles, giving life to the "King's Landing", the whole town is an amazing UNESCO World Heritage Site. Even the drive down to town from the mountain-side is a breathtaking highlight in itself! We start off with a guided walking tour of the Old Town and marvel at the millennial history of this fairy-like town. Walk atop the mighty walls, discover cute narrow streets, taste delicious seafood or jump off into the crystal-blue waters. In the evening, we return to Trebinje for a good night's rest.

- Accommodation Hotel Central Park - 4 Star
- Meals Included
   Breakfast
- Included Activities
   Dubrovnik City Tour
- Optional Activities
   Dubrovnik Boat Trip EUR 40
- Entrance Fees Dubronvnik City Walls - EUR 15

# Day 22 : Trebinje-Kotor-Shkodra

Next stop Montenegro! Arrive in Kotor after a scenic drive and meet its calming natural beauty and characteristic architecture, a less-crowded version of Dubrovnik with its impressive medieval citadel. Following a walking tour of the old town with your expert local guide and some free time. Departure to Albania, which is our final destination for the day. Shkoder is one of the most authentic cities in Albania. Walking tour through the centre. Overnight in Shkoder.

- Accommodation Grand Hotel Europa - 5 Star
- Meals Included Breakfast
- Included Activities Kotor City Tour Shkoder Walking Tour

# Day 23 : Shkodra-Tirana-Ohrid

Hit the road after breakfast! A panoramic city tour of Tirana will introduce the best preserved and most beautiful samples of Albanian architecture, and drop us off at the town centre for some free time to discover the bustling Skenderbeg square.

In the afternoon, continue towards <u>Ohrid</u>, Macedonia and check-in to your comfy hotel. You can rest up after a long day, or join the optional Balkan night with dinner.

- Accommodation Hotel Aqualina - 4 Star
- Meals Included Breakfast
- Included Activities Panoramic Tour of Tirana Ohrid Walking Tour
- Optional Activities Balkan Night with Dinner - EUR 35

# Day 24 : Ohrid-St.Naum-Skopje

Start off the day with a guided city tour of Old Ohrid hosting hundreds of chapels and churches scattered all around. In the afternoon travel to Skopje, the capital of Macedonia, for the night.

- Accommodation
   Hotel Next Door 4 Star
- Meals Included
   Breakfast
- Included Activities Ohrid City Tour
- Optional Activities St. Naum Tour - EUR 20

# Day 25 : Skopje-Sofia

Prepare to discover the beautiful Skopje with a guided sightseeing tour filled with stunning architecture, grand monuments and unique history. Pose with the famous statue of Alexander the Great or walk through the Macedonian Arc de Triumph. The city has countless landmarks and a vibrant street life with many cafes and bars around.

In the afternoon, leave for Sofia, where you can explore the shopping streets and the nightlife as you wish.

- Accommodation Novotel Sofia - 4 Star
- Meals Included
   Breakfast
- Included Activities
   Skopje City Tour

#### Day 26 : Sofia

Today, after a delicious breakfast at the hotel, your unforgettable Central, Eastern Europe & Balkans tour comes to an end. Bid farewell to your fellow travellers and the magnificent Europe until next time. Make your way to the airport for your departure flights back to Australia!

- Meals Included
  - Breakfast

Please note: The day-by-day descriptions are intended as an indicative guide only. Travel by nature is unpredictable. Weather patterns, road conditions, public holidays, travel restrictions and many other factors may necessitate itinerary changes that are ultimately for the client's benefit. It is essential that clients are flexible in this regard.

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# **BOOKING CONDITIONS**

Please read the following information prior to making your reservation

Our full set of terms and conditions can be <u>viewed and downloaded on our website</u>, or supplied on request from our office. We highly recommend you read My Travel Experience booking conditions prior to making your holiday reservations. This is the contract under which both parties enter, therefore we request that you only make a booking if you agree with these conditions.

#### This is a summary in brief for our customers:

- 1. Upon making a reservation with My Travel Experience you will receive a booking form, which needs to be filled out and signed to confirm that you agree to the terms and conditions.
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- 5. 10 days prior to departure you will be sent your travel documents electronically via email.
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