

EASTERN EUROPE: HISTORICAL CITIES, CULTURES AND LANDSCAPE POLAND, HUNGARY, SLOVAKIA, AUSTRIA & CZECH REPUBLIC



DATE: JULY 15 - 28, 2005

Friday, July 15th

Chicago / Warsaw, Poland

We depart from Chicago O'Hare for our overnight flight to Warsaw, Poland. (Meals en route)

Saturday, July 16th

Warsaw

We arrive in historical Warsaw, Poland. This is the capital city of Poland. We will be here for a relaxing three-night stay, allowing for enough time to take in all the culture and history this fascinating city has to offer. Tonight enjoy a Welcome Dinner with your fellow travelers. (D)

Sunday, July 17th

Warsaw

Today, our sightseeing includes Old and New Warsaw, particularly the Old Town, meticulously reconstructed from Canaletto's painting following the wartime destruction. Our local guide explains the often tragic history of this city as we tour the notorious Warsaw Ghetto. A special visit is made to the Historical Museum to see a film depicting Warsaw before and after World War II. The tour concludes at the Royal Castle. The afternoon is at leisure to browse through treasures in the National Museum or stroll among the half timbered buildings in the Old Quarter. This evening why not attend a Chopin recital? (B)

Monday, July 18th

Warsaw

A full day at leisure. Please try to visit the statue of Chopin, perhaps the best known statue of this great composer worldwide. Another great stop is at the Warsaw's Culture and Science Palace where a wide panoramic view of Warsaw can be seen from the 30th story. Take time to admire the fairy-tale architecture of this city that was once the medieval seat of the Holy Roman Empire. (B)

Tuesday, July 19th

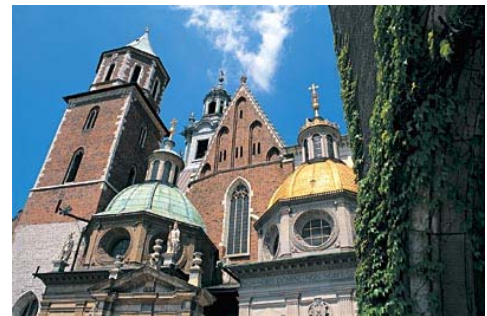
Warsaw / Czestochowa / Auschwitz / Krakow

We travel south this morning to Czestochowa, site of the magnificent 14th century Paulite Monastery at Jasna Gora, which twice withstood the onslaught of formidable Swedish forces during the religious wars of the 17th-century. Since that time, its Black Madonna is revered as the "Queen of Poland" and has become the country's national symbol. In the afternoon, we visit the Auschwitz Concentration Camp, a chilling reminder of the Holocaust. Then, it's on to a relaxing 2-night stay in Krakow, former capital of Poland. (B, D)

Wednesday, July 20th

Krakow

Our morning sightseeing begins with a trip to the Old Jewish District of Krakow – Kazimierz (known from "Schindler's List" by Spielberg). We will then visit Wawel Hill, with entrance to the Royal Chambers and the Wawel Cathedral. We will continue with an enjoyable stroll along the Royal Route to Main Market Square and a visit St. Mary's Basilica (the 14th century Mariacki Church), and the Cloth Hall. We will end the tour at the Barbicane. This afternoon is at leisure to explore this beautiful city or perhaps join an optional tour to the nearby salt mines. Tonight after dinner, why not enjoy a Polish Polka Party? (B, D)



Thursday, July 21st

Krakow / Budapest, Hungary

Leaving Krakow, we cross into the heart of the mountainous and densely wooded eastern region of Slovakia. Budapest is a 2,000 years old settlement bisected by the majestic Danube River. Enjoy a leisurely 2-night stay in Budapest where we feast on a Hungarian goulash dinner with traditional Gypsy music! (B, D)

Friday, July 22nd

Budapest



After breakfast, enjoy a morning sightseeing tour. Budapest is an incredible city with glorious bridges, Baroque architecture, dozens of baths and curative spas.. The main sights of the twin cities of Buda and Pest included in our morning sightseeing tour are views of Gellert Hill, the Royal Palace. A walk around Fishermen's Bastion, a visit to Heroes' Square, and the 13th century church of St. Matthias.

The rest of the day is free for shopping or a cruise on the beautiful "Blue Danube". This evening, discover Eastern Europe's city full of thriving cultural life accented by a love of music, great food and exciting nightlife! (B)

Saturday, July 23rd

Budapest / Bratislava, Slovakia / Vienna, Austria

Today we journey northwest toward Vienna. On our way we will stop for a tour of scenic Bratislava with history inextricably linked with the Celtic and Romans periods. After seeing this medieval old town we make the short drive across the Danube heading to Vienna, Austria. (B, D)

Sunday, July 24th

Vienna

Our sightseeing today reveals reflections of both imperial and contemporary Vienna. We'll view Prince Eugene's Belvedere Palace, Emperor Franz Josef's Hofburg Palace, the Cathedral of St. Stephen and the State Opera. Then, a special included visit to Schoenbrunn Palace with its magnificently preserved staterooms and exquisite gardens. This evening, why not enjoy dinner at a characteristic "heurige" inn! (B)

Monday, July 25th

Vienna

A full day of leisure to explore this cultural city. Vienna is considered by many to be *the* city in Europe, where hallowed traditions are not on exhibit in museums but a pulsing part of everyday life. The Habsburg Empire, which became history less than 80 years ago, is alive and sets the tone and style of its magnificent capital to this day. The day is yours to enjoy some relaxation, shopping, and the culture of Vienna at your own pace. An optional trip might include a journey to Melk, one of the most beautiful monasteries in the world, and/or to Durnstein to view Richard the Lionheart's castle. (B)



Tuesday, July 26th

Vienna / Prague, Czech Republic

Across the Czech border, we travel into Moravia to the medieval city of Brno, Napoleon's headquarters during the "battle of the three emperors" at Austerlitz. Later, we continue on through the rich and historic countryside of Bohemia to the golden city of Prague for a pleasant 2-night stay. Prague, the Golden City, has undergone major restoration, paid for in large part by the international community in recognition of its importance as a World Heritage site. (B, D)

Wednesday, July 27th

Prague

Our sightseeing tour of this beautiful golden University City features Hradcany Castle, the former residence of Bohemian Kings, the Cathedral of St. Vitus the Astronomical clock, Royal Palace, Golden Lane, St. Charles Bridge and the Old Town Square. A stroll over the Charles Bridge to Old Town Square allows for lunch, shopping and sightseeing during your afternoon at leisure. Tonight enjoy a memorable farewell dinner. (B, D)

Thursday, July 28th

Prague / Chicago

Transfer to airport for return flight to Chicago O'Hare. (B, Meals en route)

Meals included indicated by: B=breakfast L=lunch D=dinner

Itinerary is subject to change due to circumstances beyond our control or for the convenience of our travelers.