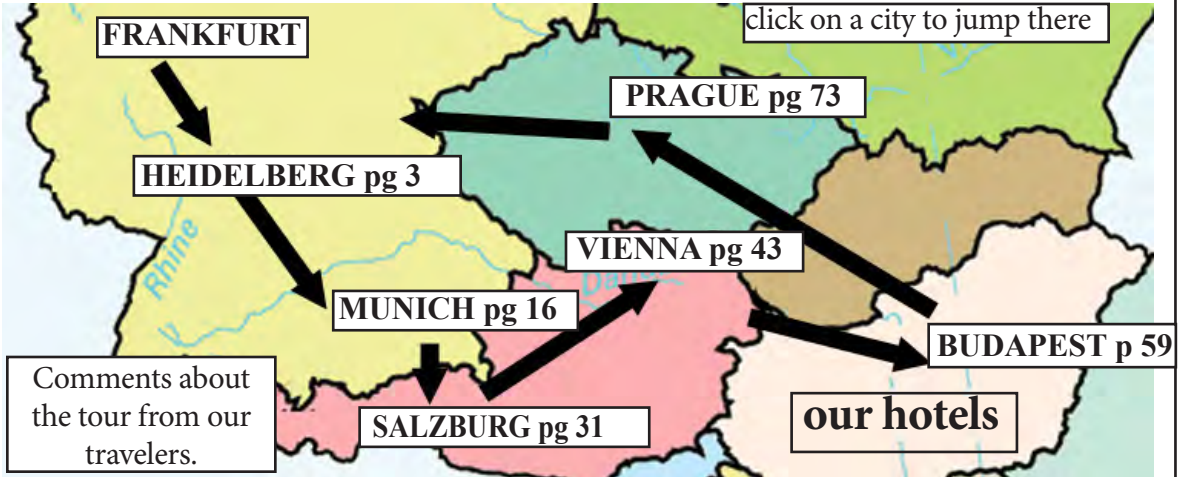


Central Europe by Train

**In-depth visit, with detailed walking tours
First-class European trains.**

**October 7-23, 2019
\$4,999 plus air fare**



Leisurely pace with 2-3 nights in each place.

This book presents a very detailed description of each day of the tour.

Our journey will take us to the most interesting cities in Germany, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Austria. Castles, palaces, cobblestone streets, and medieval markets abound in the historic Old Towns in each of our destinations, and we will take the time to see them properly. Traveling by first-class train and staying in centrally located hotels will give us the luxury to really experience the local culture and see it as it really is.

Included in the tour: first class Eurail transportation; centrally located hotels; breakfast; hotel transfers; city tour in each place. Not included: airfare; lunch; dinner; admission to paid attractions, local transportation.

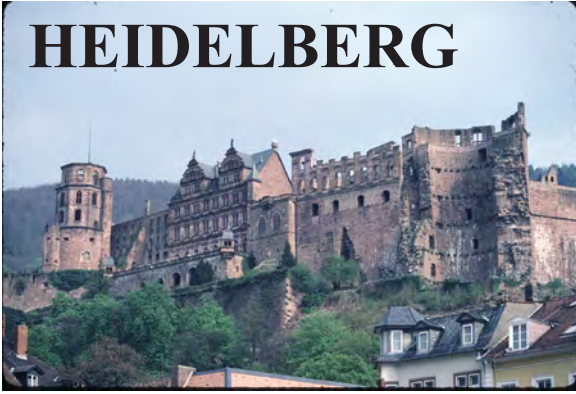


**For reservations please send a \$100 per person deposit to:
Callans' Tours, 1022 Prospect St., #1007, Honolulu, HI 96822
For more information call Dennis Callan at 528-4411**

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
CENTRAL EUROPE October 7-23, 2019	7 Departure from Honolulu Airport.	8 Flying to Frankfurt.	9 HEIDELBERG Morning arrival. Afternoon walking tour of the Old Town.	10 HEIDELBERG Morning visit inside the Castle. Afternoon optional boat ride on the	11 MUNICH train to Munich. Afternoon orientation walk, and	12 MUNICH morning visits to museums. afternoon option to
13 MUNICH optional full day excursion to Neuschwanstein and Oberammergau	14 SALZBURG Morning train ride to Salzburg, noon arrival. Afternoon walking tour and visit to the Castle. Evening option: Mozart dinner show.	15 SALZBURG Morning free. for museums or walking in the Old Town lanes. 1:30 p.m. "Lakes and Mountains Tour" bus and boat tour option in countryside.	16 VIENNA Morning train ride to Vienna, Afternoon walking tour of the Old Town and option to the Hofburg Palace. Evening optional	17 VIENNA 8:30am City tour by tram, metro and walking. Schonbrunn Palace option. Afternoon visit Fine Arts Museum and free time for exploring on	18 VIENNA A free day Museums, walking tours, shopping and tram rides are some good choices. Evening free for another concert.	19 BUDAPEST Morning train ride to Budapest, noon arrival. Afternoon: Walking tour along Vaci Utca to the Marketplace. Optional boat ride on
20 BUDAPEST morning City Tour on bus seeing the main highlights, including the Castle District. Afternoon free. Options: Art museum, shopping or exploring the Old Town. Evening folklore show	21 PRAGUE Morning train ride to Prague, noon arrival. Afternoon: Walking tour of the Old Town, and across the Charles Bridge to the Lower Town. Also Wenceslas Square and the shopping areas around it.	22 PRAGUE City Tour to Prague Castle, by tram up the hill to the Castle District and walk through the most ancient section of Prague. Then walk through Mala Strana and back across the Charles Bridge.	23 FLYING We fly home from Prague.			



HEIDELBERG



Upon landing in Frankfurt we transfer directly to nearby Heidelberg to begin our tour. Heidelberg is one of the prettiest and best-preserved towns in all of Germany, set in picture postcard perfection alongside the Neckar River, with a classic castle towering above. Filled with Old World charm, it's almost like a fantasy version of an ancient German town, or something dreamed up by Disney -- but this is the real thing. Heidelberg's historic center of picturesque early 18th century buildings, about one mile long and four blocks wide, is an ideal-sized pedestrian zone to explore on foot.



Our days here will be easily filled with walks through the Old Town streets and into the main squares, visiting shops, restaurants and bars, and of course, exploring the castle up on the hill. The visit will also leave time for a boat ride on the Neckar River.

Most people who come through Heidelberg on a bus tour of Europe unfortunately, only get a quick look at the castle, a snapshot glimpse of the town below, then reboard the bus to leave town. They don't experience the genuine Old World charm of the city itself, which is a crying shame, because this town is well worth visiting for several days.

Heidelberg has a pleasant, old-fashioned appearance, with charming four-story buildings that share a similar architecture of matching facades and harmonious, earth-tone color schemes, topped with clay-tile roofs. No two buildings are exactly alike and yet they all blend seamlessly in a simple Baroque style.



While the exteriors may be centuries old, they are maintained spotlessly with fresh paint and modern fixtures. The shop interiors are totally contemporary, if not futuristic, with all the latest goods on sale. Numerous restaurants will delight you with their gourmet fare and tasty beer.

Heidelberg is the most significant historic city in Germany not damaged during WWII. Allied commanders earmarked Heidelberg to become their post-war headquarters, so they deliberately avoided bombing this historic gem. Nearly all

other German cities suffered severely from the fighting, so most of the nation's historic-looking buildings are reconstructions. But in Heidelberg these are the originals, completely undamaged. Ironically, the well-preserved historic town center is a result of extensive war damage from much earlier times -- a fascinating tale that goes back a thousand years.

BRIEF HISTORY of HEIDELBERG

The foundations of Heidelberg's buildings are Gothic, built from the 12th through 16th centuries, along a regular grid street pattern. The roads may have been laid down even earlier, during the first century, since the Romans established a permanent camp here at that time and were noted for their engineering skills in laying out rectangular city plans. One can visit the local history museum and actually glimpse much further back in time, all the way to the Stone Age, for remains of the earliest known human culture in Europe were found here in 1907 -- a *Homo erectus* specimen dating about 550,000 years ago called the "Heidelberg Man," which suggests people have been continuously living in this region for eons.



It is believed the first settled village was started here in the 5th century. One of the more significant historic events was the construction of the huge castle on the hill, begun in the early 14th century. Two hundred years later the castle was greatly expanded in the Renaissance style, firmly

establishing Heidelberg as the center of government for a vast, surrounding area. When completed, the castle was considered one of the most beautiful in Europe, and today is the city's major visitor attraction.



Germany's first university opened here in 1386, and it is still an important part of Heidelberg. The town grew peacefully until the 17th century, when several major wars broke out between Catholics and Protestants, complicated by foreign invasions, including brief control by Sweden in 1633-34. Heidelberg survived it all until the massive invasion in 1688 by Louis XIV, who claimed control over this vast region in his ongoing campaign to expand the borders of France. The entire Old Town was flattened, and the castle was partly destroyed by French cannon bombardment.

Survivors rebuilt the city in the early 18th century, with all the homes constructed in a similar style -- a simple version of the German Baroque. Most of the buildings you see today are from that narrow time period, so you are looking at structures that are about 300 years old, built up simultaneously in a remarkably harmonious way. Miraculously, there has been no further damage from warfare, fire or natural calamity. Modern developments have been kept away from this old part of town,

thanks to enlightened planning and a strict zoning code which limits the kind of construction that can take place here.



Today, the Old Town is about twenty blocks long, stretched out in a picturesque way along the Neckar River, so there are ample nooks and crannies to keep you busy exploring for a few days. Most of this area is a pedestrian zone, the longest in Germany when it was established in 1978, so you can really enjoy relaxed strolling without any cars or trucks getting in the way. The main lane is the Hauptstrasse, which extends the entire length and is lined with shops, restaurants, bars and cafes. This is one of Europe's greatest streets for walking and will be your main focus of activity, along with the castle.

Walking tour in the Old Town

We'll begin with a walk in the "Marktplatz" and the little alleys around this main market square. It's nice and peaceful early in the day before all the other tourists arrive, so we can have the center of town to ourselves for a while. Besides, we are traveling in the off-season so things are not crowded. The shops are just opening at nine o'clock, so this is a fine time to be out strolling as you watch the day begin and the city come to life.



Standing in the middle of the Marktplatz gives you a fine perspective on the heart of town, with the Holy Ghost Church ("Heiliggeistkirche") on one side and the old City Hall on the other. This gothic church was built in the early 15th century with the pretty red sandstone so typical of Heidelberg construction. You can climb the church tower, for a small fee, and also listen to concerts here many evenings during the summer. Check the schedule posted outside the front door, and you might even run into a free rehearsal during the afternoon.



Typical of most European towns, the marketplace has always been the main square, hosting a variety of activities from food sales to public executions. People are still drawn here to the outdoor tables



set up for eating, drinking beer and watching other people. There are little shop stalls built into the wall of the church between the buttresses, in a tradition that has been carried on here since the Middle Ages. These stalls sell tourist items, so it is a good place to look for postcards, t-shirts and anything that says Heidelberg on it. On Wednesdays and Saturdays there is an outdoor farmers market until 2:00pm, with plenty of fresh fruits, vegetables and cheeses to buy for a picnic later in the day, or just to browse and watch the locals in action.



MAIN STREET

You will be drawn irresistibly down the alluring Hauptstrasse, the “high street,” with one shop after another in a lineup of historic buildings that continues for a mile. Old facades with modern interiors make for a winning combination, even if you are not a shopper. There are plenty of cafes

and snack bars along the way to keep you fueled. You are likely to come upon a street musician here, so do yourself a favor and listen for a few minutes, then give a nice tip. Keep going straight to the end of the pedestrian zone, and on your return, take your time and explore more little side alleys.

Those who are extremely keen on shopping could continue walking just beyond the end of the Hauptstrasse into the modern section of Heidelberg, where you will find the Galeria Kaufhof, a big mall on Bismarckplatz. However, this is where the magic ends, for you are now in the “Neuenheim” section of town, with typical contemporary buildings and streets filled with traffic. For most travelers, it’s best to stay within the Old Town.

BACK STREETS



Returning along the Hauptstrasse provides an opportunity to explore the numerous side alleys leading from it in this central part of town, which lead through some of the most interesting neighborhoods. It is amazing how peaceful this district becomes just one block away from the main drag. Plöck is a narrow automobile street parallel to Hauptstrasse with interesting little shops and pubs and quite a few students pedaling by, making

a nice alternative route for returning to the center. Turn left on Friedrichstrasse or any other attractive side alley to get back to Hauptstrasse.

Streets in the Old Town have a quiet atmosphere, since they are narrow and often restricted to only pedestrian, with a few cars allowed in by special permit. In the summer there could be a thousand people milling about in the main square and along Hauptstrasse, but at the same time there is hardly anybody one block away in the residential zone. A few shops and offices are located on the ground floor of these side alleys, with apartments upstairs, including many affordable units rented by students, judging from the number of bicycles outside.



This combination of low rise with medium density, in a comfortable mix of residential and commercial, creates what modern planners call a “human scale” where many people can live together in a neighborhood without crowding or congestion. Centuries ago, this comfortable mixing of homes and businesses within easy walking distance was the norm that many modern towns are struggling to recreate, in efforts to overcome our suburban sprawl, traffic congestion and inner city decay. We can learn valuable lessons about how to make a functioning urban community from these narrow cobblestone lanes.

MUSEUM

Along with the shops and eateries, there are some fine cultural institutions that could keep you busy. The most outstanding museum in town is the Kurpfälzisches City Museum, mid-way along the Hauptstrasse. It has a varied collection that includes archaeology, paintings, sculpture, urban history, graphics and decorative arts. You can easily be entertained and educated here for an hour or two in the beautiful setting of a Baroque palace. The masterpiece of their collection is a carved wooden altar made in 1509 by Germany’s most important Renaissance sculptor, Tilman Riemenschneider. The museum also has a nice restaurant and cute garden café with a tranquil little fountain.

Across the street is the most famous pastry shop in town, Schafheutle, with seating in front on Hauptstrasse, inside, or in the beautiful garden out back with a fountain and calm setting for your snack. This “Konditorei” also offers a full-service menu all day for a nice lunch or dinner.

UNIVERSITY

Walk another block along Hauptstrasse to the university district, centered around Universitätsplatz. While many classes now take place a few miles away in the new part of Heidelberg, the original campus in this middle section of the Old Town is still active, and extends from the river to the hillside with some historic buildings that are worth a look. The most famous site is the library, built in an elaborate Baroque style, with two million books. Another interesting structure is the student cafeteria, in a former arsenal along the river. Seven Nobel Prize winners have taught at this school, which



today has about 20,000 students and is still one of the top universities in Germany, with different colleges for philosophy, law, theology, chemistry, medicine and several other fields. Along with its historic charms, this is also a very modern college town of science and technology, heavily involved in research and development, where one in five residents is a student.



Just on the other side of campus you will see the elaborate Baroque façade of the Jesuit Church, which looks more Italian than German. The inside is rather plain, but has a light, airy feeling that is worth seeing. This was one of the first major new buildings constructed after the devastating wars of the late 17th century. From here, walk along the quiet back street of Ingramstrasse six blocks to the Kornmarkt, another peaceful part of town.

KORNMARKT



One block east of the Marktplatz you will come upon this small, important town square called Kornmarkt, where they sold corn in the old days. It is paved in sturdy old cobblestones that are built to last for another 500 years and surrounds a Baroque statue of the Madonna standing on a tall fountain pedestal. If you need to change money, there is a bank on the corner that takes travelers checks, and better yet, an ATM machine if you remembered to bring along your bank card -- always the best way to get money while on the road. There is also have a currency exchange machine which takes in dollars and gives back euros. Another block along Hauptstrasse will bring you to the next small square,



Karlsplatz, with a modern fountain in the middle



and another nice view looking up at the castle.

THE STUDENT PRINCE

Two famous student pubs are here, the Red Ox and Zum Sepp'l, both offering traditional bar meals, lots of beer, and occasional nighttime music. The Red Ox was featured in the classic operetta, *The Student Prince*, which helped make Heidelberg even more famous in the early 20th century, and again with the Hollywood film version made in 1954, featuring Ann Blyth and the dubbed-in singing of Mario Lanza -- in which the young prince is sent away to Heidelberg University for a final fling, falls in love with a commoner bartender, but must ultimately return to his proper station in life. This lyrical operetta enhanced Heidelberg's Romantic image, which had been established earlier by poets such as Goethe, who called it "an ideal landscape," and Brahms, who composed "Lullaby" whilst sitting on the riverbank. J. M. W. Turner painted fiery sunsets here, and Mark Twain praised the town so much in *A Tramp Abroad* that he began the modern era of tourism, with his faithful readers coming over in great numbers.

You might walk beyond those two bars, after comparing their brews, passing Karlsplatz to

visit the small anthropology museum at Palais Weimar, and then get to the far end of town three blocks away. Hauptstrasse ends at an impressive gateway called the Karlstor on the east edge of the Old Town. There are some quaint little alleys in this corner of town towards the river, so you might do a little meandering back and forth, observing the details of each unique building.

OLD BRIDGE and PHILOSOPHERS' WALK

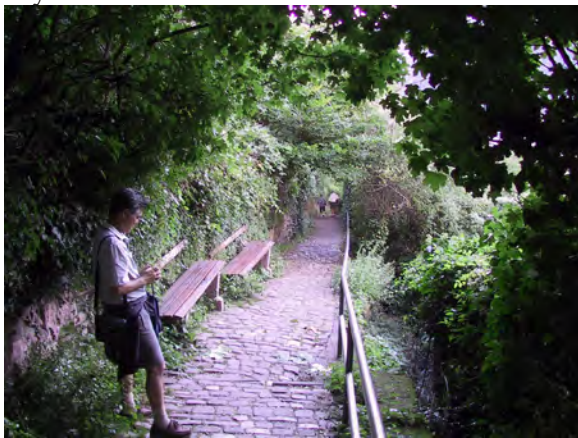
By now it is probably late in the afternoon, which is a perfect time for a stroll along the famous Philosophers' Walk. To get there, cross the river on the landmark Old Bridge ("Alte Brücke"), one of the signature sights of the city that dates back to 1786. Pass through the twin-towered gatehouse onto the rosy-colored bridge and admire the view looking back towards the castle.



There are some large statues along the bridge which are reminiscent of two other important European landmarks, the Charles Bridge in Prague and Ponte Sant'Angelo in Rome. When you reach the other side, walk to the left a few yards to get a postcard view looking back at the bridge with the town and castle behind. This is just a taste of the major panorama you are about to experience, once you climb the hill.

Cross the busy street at the light and follow the sign that points to "Philosophenweg," a narrow foot path that leads up the hill in a steep series of staircases. This climb takes about fifteen minutes

and is like walking up a thirty-story building, so it is not for the fainthearted, but is well worth the effort. It is a green and pleasant path that will bring you to an observation terrace with one of the world's most beautiful views: the fairy-tale village on a river with its brooding castle above, tinted in earthy hues, with clay tile roofs and rosy-colored stone walls, especially vivid late in the day.



You can walk along the upper path for a while and make like a poet or philosopher as you absorb the visual treat below, being sure to get your tourist snapshots. Intrepid walkers could continue about a mile to the path's end and cross back over the Neckar on the modern Theodor-Heuss Bridge, arriving at the west edge of the Old Town. However, most would be happy to just get to the first viewpoint, rest on a bench to soak it in, then return the way you came, back into the Old Town. It's much easier going down, so you will be fresh and ready for dinner.

Oh! There are some great places to eat here!! Walk straight through the bridge gateway to the block-long street, Steingasse, which has several very nice restaurants, including Hacktaufel, with traditional cuisine, indoor or outdoor seating, and excellent beer. My four favorite restaurant choices are all within a few blocks of the bridge: Zum Ritter,

Simplicissimus, Weisser Bock and Backmulde (see listings). They will knock you over with their rich flavors, fair prices and excellent service. Local specialties include lamb, venison, sausage, wild game, and spaetzel, the wonderful German potato noodle, which soaks up flavors better than pasta. Don't miss Untere Strasse, a serene alley parallel to the main street, with some lovely little boutiques and cafes.



If you would rather spend less you could eat at the university cafeteria in the former Marstall arsenal. There are many casual eating alternatives along Hauptstrasse, with Mexican, Thai, Chinese, Italian, Spanish, Greek, you name it, and some cozy little pubs and bars to finish off the night.

DAY TWO:

HEIDELBERG CASTLE

This morning we can visit the most important single sight in Heidelberg -- the magnificent castle on the hill. It is a romantic ruin, with enough buildings still standing to present a very good idea of how wonderful this complex was during its glory days in the 15th-17th centuries. The extreme mix of destruction and beauty conjures up the turbulent past of this strategic fortification,

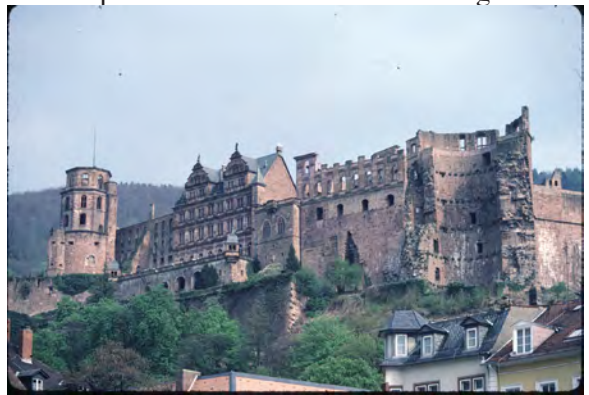


with crumbling walls and towers standing next to a complete palace containing a fully-restored interior. And while here, you get a fantastic view looking down on the Old Town -- more than just beautiful, this is one of the great vistas of Europe, and the castle itself ranks in a lofty league with those of Salzburg or Edinburgh.

You can easily catch the funicular up the hill to the castle by walking out the back of Karlsplatz to the lift station, found in the modern building just across the street. You could walk up the hill along the steep streets behind the lift, but that is too much time and effort for most travelers. The round-trip fare is not expensive and includes admission to the castle grounds so you might as well save your strength and take the five minute ride on this old-fashioned, efficient, inclined rail car. It opened in 1890, making this one of the oldest funiculars in Germany.



Get off at the “Schloss” castle station, go through the arched gateway and walk left for the grand vista looking down on the town below. You can see how the castle is built on steep cliffs to prevent invasion from the front, with high walls and a dry moat protecting the rear. Castles like this were powerful sanctuaries in the Middle Ages, but when attacked by the large cannons introduced in the 16th and 17th centuries, the mighty walls could be blasted to dust. The crumbling round tower on the corner is testament to this new age of destruction that came with the French invaders. Inside the castle, you will be delighted to see the beautiful state of preservation of the main buildings.



Your funicular ticket will also get you inside the walls of the castle and the courtyard and plus you get to go inside the great wine barrel room and the apothecary Museum, and if you want pay a little bit more you can walk through some of the restored private rooms of the castle. The castle was occupied by various members of the local royalty for three centuries, until its destruction in the late 17th century, when it was abandoned. Preservation and reconstruction continued from the 19th into the 20th centuries.

As you enter the castle through a dramatic sequence of fortified Gate House, bridge and Gate Tower, look up into the arch to see the massive portcullis, a pointed gate that would drop down to seal the

entrance. Two drawbridges and four more gates completed the original barriers that kept invaders out, but these are no longer there to stop you.



CENTRAL COURTYARD

As you stand in the courtyard surrounded by the castle, your eyes will be drawn to the impressive Renaissance façade of the Friedrich Building, dripping with sculptural and decorative architectural details. Built from 1601-07 as the living quarters for the Duke of Bavaria, it is embellished with 16 elegant statues depicting emperors and kings of the Wittelsbach dynasty, clad in stone armor befitting their noble warrior status. You can find pictures of this façade in many art history books, and on every postcard rack in town.

The various stages of the castle construction stand all around the courtyard: some wings are well-preserved, while others are extremely damaged. Adding insult to injury, after the castle was devastated by French artillery, it was struck decades later by a massive lighting storm in 1764 that burned down half of the surviving structures, finishing off the royal hopes of restoring the castle. The Ottheinrichsbau is one such stormy casualty, on the right side of the courtyard: considered to

be the finest example of German Renaissance architecture, but reduced to an empty façade by the fires. It is still pretty to look at, with dozens of impressive statues depicting heroes of the Bible and mythology, framed by elaborate neoclassical pilasters, cornices, molding and scrolls, but it is just a free-standing shell with no building behind. Every niche has a statue, every window has a beautiful pediment above it, but you can see right through to daylight on the other side.



GIANT WINE BARREL

Be sure to visit the cellar on the left side, containing the world's largest wine barrel, made from 120 large oak trees, with a capacity of 275,000 bottles of wine. How big is it? It is so big, there is a wooden staircase you can climb to reach a viewing platform on the top, and then descend steeply down the other side. There was a network of pipes running from here throughout the castle to deliver the wine in a fantastic indoor plumbing system that kept the party going non-stop. Three times as much wine was stored elsewhere in the cellar, for a grand total of one million bottles! This fueled a steady stream of guzzling, which reportedly averaged 2,000 liters every day. Appropriately, there is a nice wine-tasting bar available for you to sample various German red and white varieties at a

reasonable price. There is also a decent restaurant at the castle with an excellent wine collection. This country is famous for beer, but modern Germans are more likely to drink wine. Their vineyards no longer produce only sweet white wines, but have broadened production to focus on the dry reds that are so popular now.

As you emerge from the cellar, an archway on your left leads from the courtyard to the Great Terrace, offering another spectacular vista of the town below, similar to your first view but from a slightly different angle with a broader panoramic sweep. Notice the hill you conquered yesterday on the other side of the Neckar, looking back at the castle and town.



MEDICAL MUSEUM

Your basic ticket also includes a visit into the German Pharmacy Museum, which has several basement galleries covering the history of medicine and pharmaceuticals. It presents a fascinating collection of original laboratory instruments from the 16th though 19th centuries, which look so primitive they really show you how far we have come with modern medicine. One room is a faithful reproduction of an old apothecary shop, with original cabinets, scales, and jars of

traditional remedies. Some of the prescribed medicines look pretty ghastly. The displays have large informative explanations, written in English, that will grab your attention. The museum setting is dramatic, because you are walking inside the castle's lower level, through rooms that almost feel like caverns carved out of the bedrock, underneath a building that vanished in the lighting storm back in 1764.

For the complete castle experience you can visit the private residential rooms of the royal families who lived here during its three centuries of glory. What looks like a rugged fortification is a splendid palace inside, with a beautiful mix of décor ranging from the Renaissance through the Baroque. You will be reminded of the other great palaces of Europe as you walk through the elaborately decorated rooms, with intricate ceiling murals, stucco reliefs, period furnishings, ceramic stoves, marble statues, wooden mosaic floors and a large reception hall still used for special events. It is worth the extra charge of three dollars, and there are several guided tours offered during the day, so check the schedule when you first arrive.

THE GARDENS

As you emerge into the castle courtyard, have a last look around to admire the facades, the pretty little fountain, and notice especially the variety of trees and flowers growing, because the next stop is the Castle Garden. Don't leave without a good stroll through these vast green terraces, which have quite a history of their own. After enjoying the outside of the castle, look at the view from the belvedere terrace, explore the gardens, then walk back down to town.



The Castle Garden was originally a rocky chasm that provided a natural barrier defending the castle's flank, but in the early 17th century, King Friedrich V decided to fill it in and create an elaborate garden, complete with statues, fountains, colorful flowerbeds, greenhouses, baths, fish ponds and other sensual delights. It quickly developed a miraculous reputation as the eighth wonder of the world, but the king's pompous, cavalier disregard for the castle's natural defenses



backfired within a decade, during the Thirty Years War, when invading armies used the level gardens as a convenient avenue for attack. Subsequent wars completed the total destruction of the charming landscape, which was abandoned, then

redesigned in the early 19th century in the simple English style you see today.

It is worth walking to the far end of the Castle Garden to get another excellent view of the town, from a different angle than you have seen previously. Several lovely fountains, are scattered through the gardens, especially at the back edge where a voluptuous river god lounges in a grotto.

When finished with the gardens, you can take the five-minute funicular ride down to continue your explorations and shopping adventures in the Old Town. Or, if you still feel adventurous, take a longer funicular ride to the top of the mountain at 1,600, feet where there is a small amusement park, snack bar for lunch, and an observation tower that offers a view over the surrounding countryside. You could then ride down on the funicular, or walk an easy path downhill a couple of miles through the woods back to town.

The complete castle and mountain excursion will take up most of the morning, so by the time you get back down to the Old Town it's getting close to lunch. You probably could use a little rest back in your room before picking from the high-quality restaurants or simple taverns for a nice meal.



Most of Heidelberg's main sights have been covered, so this afternoon could be used for



who extorted tolls from passing ships, so they needed a good view to spot their prey.



a short boat ride on the river. For those more interested, take a longer boat trip out of town to Neckarsteinach, a small village further along the Neckar River. It takes 90 minutes to cruise there, then you could spend a few hours having lunch and exploring several small castle ruins, and return to Heidelberg in the afternoon. This is a very nice ride on a medium-sized river ship that holds several hundred people, with comfortable chairs, both indoors and on the deck, plus a decent snack bar.

Back in the village center you will find several nice restaurants serving typical local foods, that will taste extra-fine after working up an appetite on your hike to the castles. Sometimes a small brass band performs at outdoor pubs here, so listen for the tunes as you walk around. Keep in mind your return boat schedule, as departures are about once every hour until the last one at 5:00pm.



Neckarsteinach is known as the Town of Four Castles, so the main event here is walking along the footpath which brings you to these old ruins. It is worthwhile to continue about a mile, all the way to the final castle, which is the best of the lot. You can clamber over the abandoned walls, and walk the crumbled stairs to get a nice view looking down on the river valley. Like many castles along Europe's waterways, these were homes to barons

This easy half-day trip will get you back to Heidelberg in time for evening to explore any areas you may have missed, and have another great dinner.

Next morning we transfer by taxi to the train station for our ride to Munich, enjoying first-class Eurail service on a scenic route into Bavaria in southern Germany.



Beer, sausages, oompah music, high-tech, more beer, and lots of culture. Where else in the world could you be but Munich? This is probably Germany's most interesting city, with its mix of old and new, north and south, efficiency and soul, museums and shops, fine dining and casual cafes. Did we mention beer?



The natives drink an average of 300 quarts of beer per capita, which is twice as much suds as the rest of Germany, and makes them brew-champions of the world, as you will see in the numerous outdoor beer gardens filled at all hours with enthusiastic imbibers; but if you prefer wine or -- gulp -- soft drinks, there are many excellent local choices to pick from.

Munich is a spectacular town to visit, with a great history that goes back nine hundred years. This unique city occupies a special cultural niche in the middle of Europe, mid-way in spirit between Germany and Italy, with elements of both nations joining together in a unique mix of order and passion. This capital of Bavaria offers the best of both worlds -- the efficiency of Germany with the easy-going lifestyle of southern Europe, served up in a medium-sized city that knows how to have a good time. Italy is just two hours south, and its influence can be seen everywhere in Munich, from the numerous pasta trattoria to the miles of monumental buildings that are faithful copies of Florence landmarks.



In the early 19th century, King Ludwig I was so enamored with Italian and Greek culture that he commissioned vast building projects in the Classical and Renaissance styles that grace the broad boulevards of Munich today, making wonderful sights to discover and admire in your walks through town. He spent a lot of time in Florence and Rome absorbing Classical and Renaissance culture, then brought many ideas home to rebuild Munich in the Italian style. Ludwig also developed the university and several museums into major academic institutions that have contributed to the strong intellectual quality of the region. Numerous high-tech, media and advanced industrial firms such as BMW and Siemens have

major facilities here, generating a high standard of living for Germany's third biggest city, which boasts among its economic accomplishments 80,000 companies, 900,000 jobs for 1.25 million residents, a low 4% unemployment rate -- half the national average -- and 80,000 students in 10 universities. Munich is proud of its many cultural events and institutions, with 45 theaters, 2 opera houses, 3 major orchestras and 25 large museums.



The result is a beautiful, well-kept city in which people work hard but still take time to relax and maybe have a couple of beers with lunch, followed by more pleasures of the night. And perhaps start the day with a typical Munich breakfast of white sausage washed down by a glass of beer. But the good life here is not limited to chugging buckets of brew, for this is a sophisticated cultural center with many entertaining attractions -- opera, art, symphony, smart shops, and museums -- essential elements in the Munich scene. The total package presents an alluring opportunity to the smart traveler.

The historic center of the city is ideally laid out in a compact scenic way that makes it very easy to get around on foot and cover most of the important sights in a couple of days. Throw in a few museums and you have another perfect three-

day destination to include in your essential list of Europe's great cities.

After hotel check-in we begin our visit in the center of the town just two blocks from our hotel at Marienplatz, in front of the Neues Rathaus (City Hall), the city's most famous building and the very symbol of Munich.



The Rathaus looks like an ancient medieval structure, with its gothic spires, statues and arches, but actually it was built in the neo-Gothic style during the late 19th century, then rebuilt after being totally destroyed by American bombers during WWII. Many of the original bricks were used in the reconstruction job that was completed so perfectly you would never know this is a "modern" building.



In a way the Rathaus symbolizes the post-war

story of Germany, devastated and then reborn as a great nation with a noble history. About 70% of Munich was likewise destroyed by our ace flyers but you would never know it today, for the city has been reborn in a pleasing mix of old and new architectural styles that blend wonderfully.

There are many reasons you will want to come back to the Marienplatz:

- At 11:00am, noon and 5:00pm the famous Glockenspiel puts on the most elaborate show you have ever seen a clock perform, with knights on horseback jousting each other and merry dancers spinning around as they parade by.



- This plaza is the crossroads of town, so your path will naturally cross this way again; some kind of free entertainment is usually happening here, perhaps a juggler, unicyclist, pantomime clown making fun of passersby, or a string quartet in the sheltered arcade of the adjacent Old City Hall.
- The largest metro station is here for convenient connections.
- And there are excellent eating spots all around, including the Ratskeller in the

Rathaus basement, a huge restaurant with 120 employees ready to serve you. The Ratskeller is not a beer cellar, however, for it specializes in wines and hearty food, and also offers table service outdoors in a lovely courtyard surrounded by the neo-gothic walls of the Rathaus, creating a medieval atmosphere for your meal. Have a look at this culinary institution even if you're not eating. It's a feast for the eyes as well as the stomach.



PEDESTRIAN ZONE:

The main pedestrian mall of town extends about one-half mile from Marienplatz to Karlsplatz, lined with shops and cafes all the way, with intriguing side alleys leading off in all directions. First called Kaufingerstrasse then changing name to Neuhauser Strasse, this is probably Germany's finest pedestrian area, with a wonderful atmosphere and many interesting sights to see.

As you walk two blocks west on the mall, the first historic landmark you will encounter is the Frauenkirche, or Dom, the cathedral of Munich, one of the signature sights of the city with its



onion domes towering 325 feet over the historic center. Built as a medieval gothic church back in the 15th century, it grew with Renaissance additions in the following years, then was bombed out in WWII and rebuilt to its original appearance. One of the few outstanding items inside the rather stark, whitewashed interior is the dramatic bronze tomb of Kaiser Wilhelm IV, built in the 17th century, some 300 years after his death.



For a slight fee, you can ride an elevator to the top of the church tower, which provides a dramatic view over the town. Another nice viewpoint from a steeple can be found near the Rathaus at Munich's oldest church, St. Peter's, but there is no elevator alternative to the 294 steps.

Two blocks further on the mall we will come

to St. Michael's Church, another major historic landmark and the largest Renaissance church north of the Alps. It is especially noted for the barrel-vaulted ceiling, second-largest of any church after St. Peter's in Rome, and the Baroque stucco reliefs that were added during the Counter-Reformation. A photo display in the nave shows how the church was nearly completely destroyed by WWII bombing, then rebuilt in the old style.



Old churches always present some of the most fascinating, rewarding sights as we travel through Europe, since they were among the most important and beautiful buildings constructed by a society much more devout and willing to pour a great deal of effort and artistic attention into their creations.

Another interesting church worth a slight detour, five blocks south from the mall on Sendlinger Strasse, is the Asamkirche. You would not believe how intricate the interior of this little church is. One could easily miss it since the façade is quite small, but when you enter, your eyes will simply pop from the elaborate Baroque sculpture and ornamentation. Throughout Bavaria there are many small village churches that are decorated in an elaborate Baroque and Rococo style, but perhaps nothing as ornate as the Asamkirche, which is in a class by itself. Every square inch

is decorated in some way -- there is nothing plain about it, nothing unfinished, nothing flat or undecorated on the entire surface of the church. It is a small space but the Asam brothers who designed it made the most of the limited area.



Continuing west along the mall, you will pass by dozens of attractive shops of all kinds. Only recently have the stores along these main pedestrian areas remained open until 8:00pm, but most other stores in town close by 6:30. Shopkeepers grumble about the new procedures that make them work longer hours, claiming it has not helped their business. Instead of making more money they are just working longer hours.



It is good for the visitor though, because time is always at a premium for the typical traveler, who can never get tired of spending money. In

America we are so used to stores staying open late all the time, it comes as a bit of a shock to find locked shops all over Europe in the evening. Not only do Europeans take longer vacations than Americans, they also work fewer hours in the week. It definitely provides them a richer life to enjoy.

You will know when we have reached the end of the main pedestrian mall because we pass through a large medieval gateway, the Karlstor,



one of just three still surviving from the ancient wall that once surrounded the city. An impressive circular fountain overlooks a busy wide street, Sonnenstrasse, including double tracks for the extensive trolley system that runs throughout town. The main cluster of hotels is across this busy boulevard near the Hauptbahnhof train station, but it is more convenient to stay at one of the few hotels closer to Marienplatz as we are doing with the Platzl. Should you find a need to get across, just take the escalator underground into the modern shopping mall tucked away underneath the Karlsplatz, then exit on the other side without getting run over. Clever, these Germans.

Now head back towards the old town center, to Max Josephplatz by way of Promenadeplatz, by walking two blocks along the busy Sonnenstrasse to Pacellistrasse and turning right towards

Promenadeplatz. The main attraction of this little Promenadeplatz garden square is the ultra-deluxe hotel, Bayerische Hof Hotel, set on one side of this well-proportioned square. A couple of restaurants underneath this hotel are worth considering: Trader Vics, with its pseudo-Polynesian kitsch décor, including some Hawaiian tikis; and the Palais Keller, a hidden gem with affordable traditional cuisine in a quiet beer cellar atmosphere. They even serve fresh horseradish to go with your goulash or sausage.



As we continue walking east past Promenadeplatz, through an archway, the road becomes a mall for pedestrians and trams, and is suddenly transformed into one of the most wonderful blocks in town as it winds in an elegant S-curve past graceful 19th century buildings.

This short stretch has recently been renovated with new paving, potted plants and shop fronts to create a warm peaceful atmosphere. It has a very special feeling, so don't just walk quickly by without pausing to appreciate it. Another pretty mall, Theatinerstrasse, crosses here, but we will circle around and get back to that later in the afternoon.

MAX JOSEPH SQUARE:

The next block is one of Munich's major squares, Max Josephplatz, surrounded by the Opera, Residenz Palace, cafes and neoclassical arcades. This dramatic scene is as good as it gets in Europe, so stand for another moment and soak it all in. Too often we travelers are in such a determined rush to get along with our route, nose buried in a map or guidebook, looking for our next turn, that we zoom right past the very things we have come all this way to see. This square is a good place to pause, take some deep breaths, and look around. In the center sits a grand statue of Max Joseph, crowned the first King of Bavaria in 1806, and around him are some of the most impressive buildings in Germany.



On one side, the National Theater opera house resembles a majestic Greek temple, with a majestic row of Corinthian columns supporting a triangular pediment containing classical statues, and a second pediment with a golden mosaic depicting ancient spirits of music. The opera is famous for its ideal acoustics and for presenting nearly 300 different performances each year, one of the world's most ambitious repertoire schedules. Renowned conductor Zubin Mehta became Music Director of the Bavarian State Opera in 1998 and has been leading the opera company to renewed fame and accomplishments.



ROYAL PALACE:

Adjacent to the opera is the Residenz, the grand palace of the Wittelsbach dynasty who had ruled the area continuously from 1255, when they built their first Residenz, right up through 1918 and the end of the Great War that swept away Europe's ancient regimes. The palace façade facing the square is almost an exact copy of the Pitti Palace in Florence -- another example of the Munich rulers' fascination with Italian culture. With seven courtyards and hundreds of rooms, this is a sprawling complex that contains three separate museums and various architectural styles.



The palace is an attractive option for you to consider

for tomorrow in our second day in town. Of the three entrance tickets, your first choice should be the Residenz Museum, which brings you into room after room of fabulous furniture, chandeliers, murals and family portraits, but it is so large they only keep half the rooms open in the morning and the rest in the afternoon, so you need visit twice to see everything. However, the courtyards and main rooms are open all day, so you will not miss out on the beautiful Ancestral Gallery and the largest and oldest of surviving rooms, the Antiquarium,



a magnificent barrel-vaulted chamber encrusted with stucco reliefs, frescos and many classical statues. The time periods represented in the Residenz are the Renaissance, when much of it was built, and later when Baroque, Rococo and Neo-Classical embellishments were added. Something like Versailles, it is a major attraction for those interested in history and art. The other two museums are less important, but if you wish to see a magnificent masterpiece of Rococo art, it would be worth your while to visit the Cuvillies Theater; or if you like jewelry, crowns and small works in gold, gems and silver, the Treasury would be worth another thirty minutes.

Two other attractions will catch your eye on Max Joseph Platz: a beautiful Post Office on the square's south side, with a grand row of columns and arcades that were part of an earlier private palace

on this site; and a large terrace restaurant across from the opera, Spatenhaus, one of the legendary eating establishments of Munich that makes a great place to experience the local cuisine and famous house beer. Depending on the morning's progress, we might be ready to stop here for lunch by now.



If you order the Bavarian Sampler plate, you will get a huge platter with duck, two sausages, veal and pork, along with some potatoes and vegetables, for about \$20 in a feast that is intended for one but could feed an army. Or, come back at twilight to dine at one of the many tables on the terrace, surrounded by the wonderful atmosphere of this grand square and the constant parade of bicycles and skaters passing by.

Big spenders would enjoy a stroll along the most expensive retail street in town, Maximilianstrasse, which begins at Max Joseph Platz and continues for five blocks with glamorous shops -- mostly fancy boutiques and jewelers for the ladies. Walk up one side and back down the other, passing the noted shops with their famous designer labels and elegant patrons browsing inside. Or if you don't have the time, interest or money for lavish consumption, a quick look up the street will suffice.

ODEONSPLATZ:

Returning to the Residenz, walk around the palace's left side and continue a block along Residenzstrasse to another of the town's most charming squares, Odeonsplatz, where we will find more Italian architecture and the beginning of a long, straight boulevard that stretches for two miles. On one side of the plaza is the large arcade of the Feldherrnhalle, copied from a loggia in Florence, and next to it is the beautiful golden façade of Theatinerkirche, the first Baroque church in Bavaria, built in the Italian style in the late 1600s.



If you step inside, the big reward is an elaborate display of stucco decorations, especially the many Corinthian columns wrapped with garlands and little angels. At first the local population did not care for this design, but later the Baroque became the Bavarian's favorite style that was spread throughout the area.

Facing the Theatinerkirche is a very long wall of the Residenz palace, interesting for its painted decorations that look like columns, medallions and stone blocks -- a trompe-l'oeil motif that "tricks the eye" and extends over all the walls on the large interior courtyards. There are occasional evening concerts in these courtyards, so check



As we stand in front of the Theatinerkirche, look to the left and we will see another attractive pedestrian mall, along Theatinerstrasse. It continues for six blocks, lined with more shops and cafes, and would take you right back to where the walk began, in front of the Neues Rathaus at Marienplatz. There you will find Donisl, yet another restaurant serving traditional cuisine, with live music, and tables inside or on the busy square. They must be doing something right to stay in business for 250 years.



the schedules posted in the archways to see if anything good is coming up. Behind the Residenz, through another arch, we will find the Hofgarten (“palace garden”), which is a lovely place to stroll and to have a snack or meal outdoors at Annast Haus restaurant, another nice option for lunch. The food is tasty and inexpensive, with excellent service -- nothing to complain about here in this peaceful atmosphere. Try the classic sausages, sauerkraut, potatoes and beer for a typical Munich lunch. Walking through the park we are likely to see mothers strolling with their baby buggies, skaters gliding by, packs of bicycle tourists, and locals playing lawn bowling. In the middle is a gazebo called the Hofgarten Temple, built in 1615 when much of the gardens were laid out.



The town center is compact so we can see all of these sights easily with some time left over for resting and shopping. Most of the features of the heart of town have been covered with this schedule, so tomorrow will give you an opportunity to explore the many treasures of the city’s amazing museums, see a few more city sights, or perhaps take a day-trip to the nearby mountains.

BEER HALL:

Before the day is done there is just one more place you should visit to complete your first day in Munich, the Hofbrauhaus, one of the most famous bars in the world. They serve their own fresh draught beer in giant liter mugs, accompanied by oompah music from a live brass band, with plenty

of sausages and other basic foods to satisfy you, including a delicious pigs knuckle, one of the staples of Munich. You don't have to drink beer here, but it is the cheapest beverage in the house, and sausage is just one item on a surprisingly large menu.



The music continues every day from 11:30am until 11:00pm, with up to 1,000 customers enjoying every bit of it. You can also sit outside in the garden on pleasant days, or upstairs in the banqueting hall, but the most popular spot is in the big room on the ground floor with the long wooden communal tables. It's a great place to meet some locals, who get friendlier and friendlier as the evening unfolds and the beer flows. You cannot miss a visit to the Hofbräuhaus, located a few blocks from Marienplatz on the Platzl.



MUNICH DAY TWO:

We suggest an optional bus tour in the morning driving through the central part of town to visit Nymphenburg Palace with an audio guide. Then you are free in the afternoon to visit a couple of Munich's top museums.

It just takes an hour to walk through Nymphenburg Palace and absorb the dazzling visual treats while you learn some interesting history. Originally built as a small royal lodge to celebrate the birth of Max Emanuel, it was expanded over the years into a small version of Versailles.



Most of the decoration was added in the middle of the 18th century, which means it is very elaborate Baroque and Rococo, with lots of gold-trimmed stucco reliefs covering the walls and frescoes on the ceilings. Along with visits to several bedrooms and sitting rooms, containing period furniture, there are two rooms in particular that will command most of your attention: the grand Stone Hall, the final masterpiece by the master Johann Baptist Zimmermann who was regarded as the most famous Baroque artist of Bavaria; and the main attraction, the Gallery of Beauties, paintings of pretty ladies who caught the eye of King Ludwig I, including the notorious Lola Montez, whose scandalous affair with the king led

to his removal from office and gave birth to the phrase, “whatever Lola want, Lola gets.”



It helps to be on a tour in the palace to discover these little historical nuggets, but you could get here on your own on the number 17 tram, or by subway to the Shiedplatz station and then take tram number 12. This would give you a little more time in your visit to walk through the gardens and have a look inside another gem, the Amalienburg, a hunting lodge with a spectacular Hall of Mirrors decorated in yellow and blue Rococo designs in the early 18th century, also created by Zimmermann.

The bus tour generally brings us back to the hotel in the center of town and you are free for the afternoon. We will offer an excursion to the best museums, or could roam through town on your own for a little shopping and sightseeing.

MUSEUM QUARTER

Munich has more museums than any other German city, and most of them are clustered in a four-block neighborhood a short distance north of the Old Town. You could walk the eight blocks from Karlsplatz, or take tram 27, or just take a taxi if you want to conserve your energy for the galleries.

The most important art museum is the Alte

Pinakothek (“Old Picture Gallery”), famous for its grand display of Old Masters built up over the centuries by the continuous purchasing by various branches of the Wittelsbach royal family -- especially Ludwig I who brought the different collections together under one roof in the early 19th century. It is especially noted for paintings by Durer and there are many other famous artists to enjoy, including: Cranach, Titian, Tiepolo, Fragonard, Holbein, and much more.



You will notice special strengths in the Italian Renaissance with Giotto, Leonardo da Vinci, Lippi, Raphael, Botticelli, del Sarto and Ghirlandaio. Paintings of the Netherlands are also here in great numbers, reflecting the “Golden Age” of Holland with works by Rembrandt, Van Dyck, Frans Hals and the world’s largest Reubens collection, with 72 paintings. The Spanish collection is the finest in Germany, with all the major artists represented, such as Murillo, El Greco, and Velazquez. Have a close look at Altdorfers large “Battle of Alexander the Great” to see if you can count the thousands of soldiers -- no, it would take all day, but do admire this miniaturist masterpiece. A personal favorite is the satiric masterpiece by Pieter Brueghel playfully mocking gluttons and idlers.

The building was heavily damaged during WWII,

and fell into further disrepair in the following decades. Conditions were so bad that the entire museum was shut down for several years in the late 1990s for a comprehensive reconstruction, which was completed in 1998. Now everything is beautifully displayed in a state-of-the-art presentation.



Several other art museums within a few blocks, including a brand new museum for modern art, have turned this neighborhood into one of Europe's most significant cultural districts. You could easily spend most of your second afternoon right here.

The Neue Pinakothek is a smaller museum with paintings primarily from the 19th century, so you could breeze through here in an hour or two and it would be time well-spent. The visit is worthwhile just to see one room with a very good selection of Impressionists, and another with important pieces by Cezanne, van Gogh and Gaughin, and a few early 20th century works by Max Klinger, Edvard Munch and Gustav Klimt. Plus, there are earlier paintings by the likes of Goya, Gainsborough, David, Gericault, Corot, Courbet and Delacroix. You might skip through half a dozen rooms of works by minor German romantic artists, but all in all this will be a very satisfying visit.



Across the street is the State Gallery of Modern Art -- worth seeing just to explore its brand new building. Hitler did not approve of modern art, so he got rid of most of the collection, but some interesting works have been added since for a total of 400 paintings and sculptures. Important artists you can enjoy include Picasso, Braque, Leger, Chagall, Kandinsky, Klee, Miro and Magritte. There are strong works of German Expressionism by Max Beckmann and Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, and some works in cubism and surrealism. Contemporary works in New Media are displayed on a rotating basis, along with recent Americans including Warhol, Stella, Segal, Lichtenstein and Rauschenberg.



For those who are interested in ancient Greek and Roman art, you might want to visit the

Glyptothek, two blocks away at Königsplatz, with its collection of 160 ancient statues in marble and bronze. The most important selections are the sculptures from the pediment of a Greek temple at Aegina, dating back to the Classical period of 450 B.C. Watch out for the seductive naked satyr, sprawling across the floor in a provocative pose. There are also Roman mosaics, pretty pictures in colored chips of stone taken from ancient palaces.



One more museum will complete your tour of this artistic neighborhood, the Lenbachhaus Municipal Museum, which is worth visiting only if you are interested in the birth of modern abstract art. They have the world's largest collection of Kandinsky, the first painter to create purely abstract images. The Russian-born genius did his most important work in Munich early in the 20th century, evolving from a figurative landscape painter to one who blew open the door of modern art with his abstract geometric images. Until Kandinsky, artists like Cezanne, Matisse and Picasso and were getting very loose with their visual interpretations of reality but still clung to some connection with representing real objects in their work. It was Kandinsky who took the big leap and discarded all notions of pictures of reality, entering the new world of total abstraction with the rest of the art world following right behind him.

If you would rather skip the art museums, one of the major sites left to consider in town is the world's biggest museum of science and technology (it is more interesting than it sounds).



DEUTSCHES MUSEUM

This is an amazing collection of “stuff” similar to the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, but on a larger scale, with machines, instruments and devices of every imaginable type, including airplanes, chemical laboratories, bicycles, automobiles, bridges, mines, printing presses, boats, textiles, computers, maps, rockets, violins -- 18,000 objects in a six-level building that sprawls over an entire city block, so you need to be selective. You could easily spend four hours here, with a break for lunch in one of their cafeterias, and see most of the major exhibit rooms, choosing what to focus on. Successful navigation in a museum requires many decisions, stopping here, skipping there, which is part of the fun of making your way through such an enormous historical labyrinth. Most of the displays have information in English, so it is easy to move along and take in a lot of information.

The museum presents objects in their historical

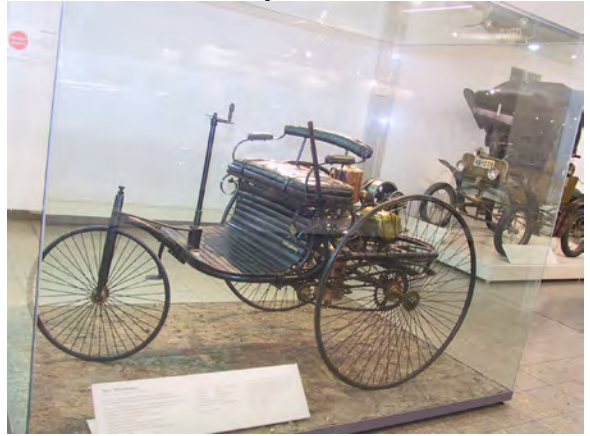
perspective, dramatically showing how technology has evolved. For example, they have the actual first automobile ever built, a three-wheel masterpiece by Carl Benz, accompanied by 55 more cars ranging from Henry Ford's Model T to modern racing machines. They have a harpsichord made in Venice in 1561, along with an array of more recent pianos, plus hundreds of other musical instruments of all shapes and periods.



One of the most popular areas is the Department of Aeronautics, starting with the early balloons that lifted man off the ground 200 years ago, ending with satellites, including dozens of full-sized aircraft and rockets in between. They have a replica of the first glider, built in 1891 by a German, Otto Lilienthal, who made over 2,000 flights before dying in a crash in 1896, seven years before the Wright Brothers flew. An early Wright flyer is also on display, which was based in part on Lilienthal's designs.

Many of the exhibits are interactive, and there are usually 40 different demonstrations and films scheduled throughout the day in various areas, including glass blowing, paper making, metal casting, model railways and marine navigation. A huge display of boats dominates the ground

floor as you enter, with scale models showing the evolution from the ancient Egyptians to modern cruise liners, and many actual sailboats.



Perhaps the most dramatic display is the underground descent into a full-sized mine, which requires you to walk through nearly a mile of tunnels displaying different periods of mining technology that have developed over the past hundred years, with lots of original equipment in a realistic setting. This is not for claustrophobics, because it appears there is no exit as you walk from one period into another, passing an amazing variety of mining systems in dark tunnels and caverns -- carefully twisting and turning, stooping, ducking and finally emerging back into the museum lobby. You will not soon forget this feeling of total immersion or the rest of the many scientific and historical displays in one of the world's great museums.

MUNICH SECOND EVENING:

When the museums close and your stomach tells you it's time for food, you could simply head back into the center of town for a wide variety of restaurants, just a 15-minute walk from here. A fun alternative to the restaurant scene is to have a bite at the sprawling outdoor food market, the

Viktualienmarkt, just two blocks southeast of Marienplatz in the heart of town. The prime attraction is the huge beer garden in the middle,



surrounded by dozens of food stands, which is a good combination because the German custom is that you bring your own food into the beer garden, and walk up to the self-service bar for refills. The food stalls start closing around 7:00pm but the beer keeps flowing.



Later, you could spend the evening in Schwabing, about two miles north along Leopoldstrasse. The easiest way to get there is by subway. Schwabing is like the Latin Quarter or student center of Munich, with many cafes, art galleries and clubs for young people. The community is 200 years older than Munich, so it was a proper

village when Munich was just a few farmhouses. Schwabing became famous because the Academy of Fine Arts was transferred here from Munich, bringing the students along with it. This area is a big center for entertainment today, with enough bars, cafes and restaurants that you could visit a different one every day of the year. Leopoldstrasse is the main street, with many shops and sidewalk cafes along it. This is one of the most desirable neighborhoods in town, so the price of housing is among the highest in the city.



Schwabing is so popular that the sidewalks get very crowded with young bodies on a warm weekend evening along Leopoldstrasse, and you can hardly move.

MUNICH day 3: optional full day excursion to **Neuschwanstein and Oberammergau**, or stay in town for more museums, shopping and explorations. With all of these great activities to pick from you can be sure of having a wonderful time in Munich, a civilized city with much to discover. It has the exciting atmosphere of a big city mellowed by rustic charm, nestled at the edge of the Alps with great sights all around. The vast pedestrian zone in the historic center makes this one of Europe's nicer cities to stroll through, with its stimulating mix of major museums, unique shops, delicious regional cuisine, and plenty of beer.



We travel by train through the German Alps to Salzburg, a town of castles, church towers, horse-drawn carriages and pedestrian alleys lined with cute shops. Its sound is the divine music of favorite son Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, and yes, the hills are still filled with *The Sound of Music*. Nestled in the Alpine foothills of north-central Austria, this cozy town and surrounding scenic areas have so much to offer that we can easily spend two enjoyable days here, and we shall venture into the lake and mountain district for a day-trip. Salzburg's Old Town, where our hotel is located, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, recently ranked among the world's top 20 cities by *Conde Naste* and *Travel & Leisure* magazines.



To summarize the essence of Salzburg in a nutshell: At the center of town is the Getreidegasse, a narrow pedestrian street lined with medieval-

facades that shelter modern shops and which leads past Mozart's house towards the great Cathedral, a masterpiece of the Italian Baroque. Towering above it all on a hilltop is the castle that looms large over the history of this city -- and on the other side of the river you will find the ravishing flower gardens of Mirabell Palace and more sights to keep you happily occupied.

This is such a special town that you would be shortchanging yourself to take a quick look and leave, the way so many travelers on tour buses do. It gets right to the heart of the reason for our leisurely tour approach: your visit is not a snapshot, but a rich portrait filled with details and memories. The rewards you get out of any visit depend on what you can put into it, and that's why studying up like this ahead of time and allocating enough days will contribute greatly to your satisfaction.



The center of town is given over to the pedestrians, so we will have a good look around by simply walking. Wear comfortable shoes! There is certainly a lot of interesting history you may absorb here, with visits to museums, castles and palaces, but it is the ambience of the town itself that is most attractive -- the lanes, courtyards, shops, gardens and little squares are the most rewarding part of the Salzburg experience.

SALZBURG SQUARES AND CATHEDRAL:

We shall check in to the hotel, have lunch, and then start our walking tour at the largest square in the city, the Residenzplatz flanked by the majestic Salzburg Cathedral and the Residenz Palace, a museum that used to be seat of the bishops. In the center of this large square is the huge baroque



Residenz Fountain with four marble horses hissing streams of water through their teeth, topped by three levels of marble musclemen spouting more water. Built between 1659 and 1661, it is one of the largest baroque fountains in the world, and you can capture it in a great camera angle if you get in close with the Cathedral towers framed behind it. Hint: The secret of many good photos is to get close and fill the frame, not necessarily with the whole subject, but with a compelling part of it. Try not to get your camera wet, but get in there.



More than most European towns, Salzburg was founded and nurtured by the Catholic Church, and was ruled by bishops rather than secular nobility, so it figures the Cathedral should be magnificent -- and it does not disappoint. Considered to be the finest early Baroque church north of the Alps, it was built in the early 1600s after a fire destroyed the previous Cathedral that was built in 774. Much of the interior art works were added in the following century, resulting in a rich display of ceiling murals, statues, and stucco design elements. It was designed by Italian architects based on the plan of Il Gesu in Rome.



There are real horses in Residenzplatz also, as this is the main station for the traditional Austrian horse carriages, the fiaker, so return later if you want a ride. Just a block away on the southeast edge of the Old Town is Mozartplatz, with a statue of its namesake in the center standing on an impressive pedestal, looking at Café Glockenspiel where he



spent many hours. You might come back to this restaurant later for a meal or snack outdoor in the square, or wood-paneled indoor dining, or best of all, eat on the second floor balcony with a view over Mozartplatz. American Express also has

its office on the square if you need to cash your travelers checks.



Mozartplatz leads into Salzburg's most interesting pedestrian lane that runs through the heart of the Old Town. One of Europe's best promenades, this charming medieval road is lined with ancient buildings containing appealing modern shops inside, with antique wrought iron signs jutting out from the old facades. Just 600 yards long, it makes a very easy, rewarding walk that can be stretched into a mile if you probe the alluring side alleys. Starting out as the Judengasse and then changing names to the Getreidegasse, it is famous as the road Mozart was born on and is The Shopping Street of town. Try to avoid this attraction at mid-day, from 11:00am-4:00pm, for it is crowded with day-trippers on bus tours, whose hectic 10-country itineraries only give them three hours in Salzburg.



SALZBURG PEDESTRIAN LANES:

We begin our stroll along the main pedestrian shopping street at the Judengasse end, which 500 years ago was the Jewish neighborhood. The lane starts at a small square called Waagplatz, which was the main square in the Middle Ages. Our lane then narrows and curves around the bend out of sight, heading into the old town center. Along the way there are many side streets and covered arcades leading off from the main route, making this an adventurous walking experience, meandering through these enticing detours. A few hundred feet along Judengasse on your left, you will see the broad square called Altermarkt, the "Old Market" square which today is still a market place, selling mostly postcards, candy, toys and t-shirts. There is yet another fountain in the center, and among the pastel-colored, baroque stucco facades you will find Café Tomaselli, enjoying its 300th anniversary. Bear left at the end of the square and swing back around through Goldgasse and Brodgasse, returning to the main lane, which now changes name to Getreidegasse.



GETREIDEGASSE:

The maze of alleys and courtyards all along here grew up over many centuries in an organic process that has resulted in one of the most pleasing pedestrian experiences you can find.



It began in the Middle Ages as a row of shops with homes upstairs and little yards in the rear. Later, another strip of buildings was constructed behind the yards, and gradually these front and rear structures grew into each other and formed small enclosed courtyards and covered walkways, called “Durchhauser” (through the houses) that have become today’s shopping arcades. Every part of town was hand-made, so each building is unique, with very few straight lines or plain boring surfaces. It’s too bad we don’t make cities like this anymore, but when you discover such a place, take advantage and have a close look.



The beauty of staying in Salzburg for two days is that we can really enjoy walking back and

forth through these same streets several times, so we don’t have to worry about seeing everything at once. They take on a completely different charm in the early evening with the warm glow of twilight and very few people, so come back for more then.



Mid-way down the road you will see the Old Town Hall on the right side, with a little square that has another outdoor café, and frequent entertainment on the portable stage. The small size of this city hall, compared to the massive castle on the hill, shows where the real power was in previous centuries.

Another block down you will come upon a major attraction, the Mozarts Geburtshaus, birthplace



and childhood home of the great composer. It is a slightly disappointing museum because it contains none of the original furniture, but it

does offer a glimpse into the structure of an old house, and the Mozart lover will enjoy seeing his childhood violin, his concert violin, his clavichord, pianoforte, some portraits and correspondence of the Mozart family. A more interesting Mozart site is his dwelling house from later years, across the river.

Continuing towards the end of Getreidegasse we will find once again our deluxe five-star hotel in an ancient building, the Goldener Hirsch which, like the Altstadt, has an excellent restaurant you could enjoy for lunch or dinner.

There are more things to see beyond the end of our magical lane, but they are best saved for tomorrow. After some browsing and a snack break we shall visit the castle, the town's most important attraction.



HOHENSALZBURG FORTRESS:

This afternoon we can visit the citadel, which is claimed to be the largest and best-preserved medieval castle in Europe. It is not enough to just simply look at it from down below -- you need to go up and walk through the grounds, and visit several of the interior rooms.

It is easy to get up the hill because they had the courtesy, a hundred years ago, to build a funicular, an inclined rail car that carries you to the top in a few minutes. Called "Festungsbahn," the lift is

just one block from the Cathedral, along the right side of Kapitelplatz, another wide-open space with a fountain of Neptune on a seahorse and a pool for horses to quench their thirst. The funicular goes every few minutes, so it is very convenient -- definitely the way to get up to the castle, which sits atop a 400-foot high cliff. The steep hilltop is such a natural place for a fort, it was first used by the Romans nearly two thousand years ago.



Your trip up the hill would be worthwhile just for the spectacular view looking down on the Old Town, which makes the rest of your visit into this medieval world a rewarding bonus. Two choice viewpoints are the Reck watchtower with a splendid panorama of the Alps to the south, looking at peaks that reach 6,000 feet, and the Kuenburg bastion with a grand view looking down on the bell towers and domes of the Old Town. As you gaze out across Salzburg you can get your bearings, see where you have been already and consider the rest of your explorations.



Called the Hohensalzburg Fortress, the existing castle was begun in the 11th century and still retains this feeling of the ages. It was originally built as a refuge for the archbishops who sided with the Pope in church battles against the princes of South Germany. These archbishops ruled Salzburg for 1,000 years, using the tremendous wealth they mined from the salt deposits to build a city unlike any other, full of churches, palaces and mansions by the best designers and builders of each era.

The castle was frequently enlarged and remodeled, becoming a comfortable residence for the bishops and their court. Construction finally was finished by the end of the 17th century, with the addition of towers, staterooms, bastions for cannons and barbicans, and the construction of magazines and arms depots. All together, the complex we see today took six hundred years to build.



Hohensalzburg is so big that it feels like you are walking through a medieval village -- one of those spectacular old walled towns, with courtyards, neighborhoods and different types of buildings scattered about. One of the interesting perspectives is along the inner castle moat, which never held water and looks like an ancient cobbled lane, with crenellated towers rising above the solid stone walls. This dry moat leads to a salt

depot where the precious cargo they called white gold was stored. Salzburg literally means “salt city” for a good reason -- the large salt deposits in a nearby mountain were mined for nearly two thousand years and formed the basis of wealth and trade for this entire region. Before the days of electricity and refrigerators, salt was the primary method of preserving food for storage. Salt is the main reason why Salzburg exists, and although the mines closed down a hundred years ago, you can still visit them a few miles outside of town.



With the dramatic vertical cliffs all around it and massive fortified walls lined with cannons, the castle was impregnable, and with its large food warehouse and water well the occupants could withstand any siege -- so the castle was never conquered. It functioned not only to prevent attack by foreign aggressors, but also to keep the townspeople at bay in that old familiar scenario -- rich rulers up on the hill lording over the peasants down below. However, the bishops who governed from here were often at each other's throats, with internal intrigue bringing down more than one. Even Archbishop Wolf Dietrich, who initiated the lower town's three grandest buildings, the Cathedral, the Residenz and Mirabell Palace, was deposed and imprisoned in the castle for his final five years over a dispute with his nephew about salt mining revenues.

You can see exhibits about the various archbishops and the history of the region on an optional visit

inside the castle museum, which also has plans and prints showing the growth of Salzburg, and a military museum with suits of armor and ancient weapons. Inside you will also see the intricate Gothic wood-carvings and ornamental paintings that decorate the Golden Hall and the Golden Chamber. Many evenings there are chamber music concerts here that take advantage of the excellent acoustics and small size of the Princess Room.



There is a lovely outdoor terrace café at the castle with a panoramic view looking south across the Salzburg plain to the mountains, which makes a perfect place for delicious local draft beer, or coffee and desert. Of course you can always get a sausage meal here and everywhere in town, but save your real appetite for one of the many nice restaurants in town.

When finished, town is just a two-minute ride back down on the funicular using the same ticket that brought you up.



The castle visit takes one or two hours, depending on your level of interest and whether you went inside the museums. If you are still thirsty there is another pleasant beer garden, Stieglkeller, just to the right as you get off the funicular, with another choice view of the Cathedral and Old Town.

By now it is early evening and the day's itinerary can finish up with another stroll along the Getreidegasse and side alleys, enjoying a more tranquil atmosphere now that most of the harried bus groups have left town for their next destination. Twilight is the magic hour for photographers that is often missed by most travelers, who are back in their hotel rooms resting up from a busy day and getting ready to go out for dinner. That is a shame because you do not have to be a serious photographer to enjoy the interesting mix of lighting as the sun goes down and the lights come on, with the added benefits of less crowded streets and cooler air. So come back to Getreidegasse just before sunset to soak up this mellow atmosphere.



In the evening Salzburg offers a selection of different concert experiences that are definitely worthwhile. One optional show that we enjoy on every visit is the Mozart Dinner Concert, in the Stiftskeller at St. Peter, a restaurant founded at the beginning of the 9th century. Salzburg musicians in historic costumes perform soothing Mozart

pieces, while dinner is served by candlelight: sets of music alternate with traditional courses during this relaxing evening in a beautifully decorated baroque dining hall.



SALZBURG DAY TWO: Historic churches, Mirabell Gardens, viewpoints, and a bus tour of the countryside.

We shall start the morning with a very quick look at three nearby churches and a stop at the beautiful cemetery of St. Peter, one of the oldest active burial grounds in Europe. This cloistered garden, nestled up against the side of the Monchsberg cliff, has beautifully maintained colorful flowers and well-tended plots, with a convenient path that leads through to the church entrance.



Inside St. Peter's Church you will find one of

the most elaborately decorated interiors in town, presenting the Baroque in full-flower. There is a mix of architectural styles in this church that started out as a Romanesque basilica back in the 13th century and has evolved since with addition of many statues, murals, decorations and architectural details that reflect the High Baroque. Mozart played the large organ occasionally, and premiered his Mass in C Minor here.



One block over, the Franciscan ("Franziskaner") Church is one of the oldest buildings in town with parts of it dating back to 1221. Three hundred years later a very tall gothic choir was added, joined 200 years later by some Baroque elements, including the main altar by Fisher von Erlach. This church is fascinating because it illustrates the entire history of architecture from the early Middle Ages with the Romanesque, through the Gothic, into the Renaissance and finally right up through the Baroque, so we see here a 600-year span of art history, all in one beautiful building.

Just one block away at Universitätsplatz, the last church on your tour is the Collegiate Church, important because it was designed by that great architect we have run into before, Fisher von Erlach. It is his most important work in Salzburg, and influenced later churches throughout Austria and Germany. If you are churched-out by now

you could skip the interior, which is mostly notable because of its great size, and look around this lively University Square, usually bustling with an outdoor food market, especially busy on Saturdays.



This morning's activities continue on the "Right Bank" of the River Salzach, starting with a spectacular lookout that offers another postcard view of the Old Town and castle. This terrace is just a short walk from Platzl Square along Linzergasse to a steep driveway at number 14, then up a few steps and around the bend through a wooded path to the Kapuziner Berg.

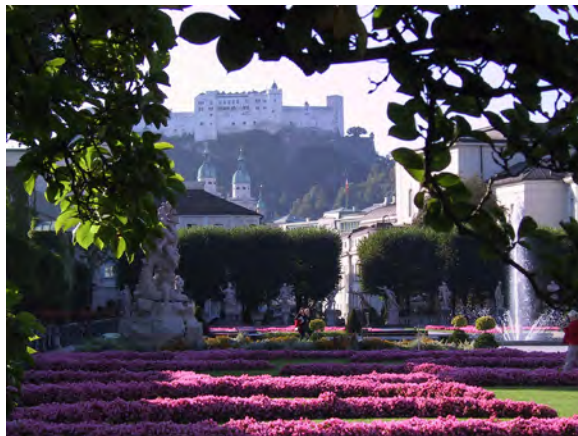


It only takes ten minutes to get up the hill and is certainly worth the walk -- you will see the Cathedral and other domes of the town across

the river, and the castle towering above it all on a rocky peak. The view is best in the morning, but go anytime that suits your schedule. You can descend the same way, or walk down Imberstiege staircase on the river side to a hidden little medieval neighborhood along the Steingasse, a narrow cobblestone alley of great charm.



After you take a look, return to Linzergasse, an ancient street similar to those you have explored in the Old Town, and notice the different restaurants serving traditional food because you might want to come back over here for lunch. Your next goal is three blocks away, the Mirabell Gardens.



MIRABELL GARDENS:

The lovely grounds surrounding the Mirabell Palace were originally laid out by the great

Austrian architect, Fisher von Erlach in 1689, but the gardens and palace were redesigned thirty years later by Lukas von Hildebrandt and have remained the same ever since. The beautifully manicured flowerbeds are ablaze with bright red and yellow colors that contrast sharply with the expansive green lawns, interspersed with many statues and large fountains. Take a stroll, sit on a bench, listen to the fountains and look at the palace beyond for the complete experience.



Mirabell Palace has a fascinating history, built by Wolf Dietrich, the same archbishop who initiated the Cathedral construction, for his mistress with whom he had fifteen children. The Catholic Church in those days was more tolerant of fatherhood among the clergy than today. Even some popes were known to have mistresses and children. The palace was rebuilt and expanded over the years, and suffered heavy bombing damage during World War II from the U. S. Air Force, but it is now looking better than new.

Today the Palace is a municipal building most famous for weddings in the grand Marble Hall upstairs. If you are here on a weekend you will see lots of bridal couples and their parties in the gardens, sipping champagne, taking pictures, and having a ball. It is a lovely romantic scene. Be sure to take a walk up the Cherub Staircase, designed in 1723 in an engaging whimsical baroque style,



with marble cherubs lounging along the most attractive banister you have ever seen.

Another excellent attraction on this side of town is the Mozart Dwelling House, one block from the gardens, which the young Wolfgang and his family moved into when he was 17. Here he wrote countless symphonies, serenades, divertimenti, and five concerts for violin and piano. Some of these original manuscripts are on display, along with his pianos and original furnishings. It is on Markatplatz, which is also the location of another great creation by Fisher von Erlach, the Church of the Holy Trinity that foreshadows his masterpiece built later in Vienna, the Karlskirche. The small pedestrian lanes in this district are also enjoyable for a stroll that will lead you to a choice of casual places for lunch.



SALZBURG LAKES & MOUNTAIN TOUR:



After lunch we take an optional excursion out of town. There are a variety of choices offered by the two leading tour companies, but our favorite is the Lakes and Mountain Tour. This tour brings us into the beautiful countryside of Salzkammergut, the mountain and lake district that begins a few miles from town.



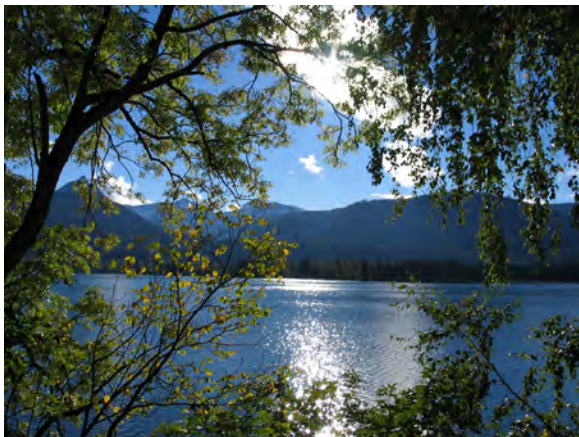
After a one-hour drive through splendid scenery we arrive at the little village of St. Wolfgang on the shores of Lake Wolfgang, a very pretty place, where we have an hour free to browse around, have snacks at a terrace café overlooking the water, and visit the Gothic church to see an important wooden altar carved by Michael Pacher, a leading woodcarver from the Tyrol working in the early Renaissance. People have been flocking here ever since the 12th century when it was a pilgrimage town dedicated to St. Wolfgang.



The tour continues with a half-hour boat ride across Lake Wolfgang, a very pleasant diversion that passes some small village clusters along the way. You can ride outdoors on the upper deck or down below in the bar and restaurant lounge. The boat soon arrives at the quaint little village of St. Gilgen, famous as the home of Mozart's mother and sister. From here it is just a half-hour ride back to town.



Another day is done, but there is time now for more explorations on your own in the Old Town, poking around in those little alleys and lanes, looking for a great dinner. This evening you might consider a concert in the castle, offered 300 nights per year, or in the Residenz, with performances by the Mozart Chamber Orchestra of Salzburg. For



ticket information check with your hotel desk or visit one of the kiosks in the main squares.

CAFÉ WINKLER:

To get up to this famous terrace, walk along in front of the university to Sigmundsplatz, where you will see another Baroque fountain, called the Horse Trough, a fancy drinking pool for the horses. Keep going two more blocks along Gstattengasse until you see the Monchsberg Lift sign.



The Café Winkler is so high on the cliff that you have to pay \$1.50 for an elevator ride to get up there, but it beats walking, and the stunning view of the town with the castle rising in the background makes it worthwhile. Winkler's

outdoor restaurant serves fine meals, so this would be a perfect place for lunch. Everything is high up here, including the prices, but for this view you can pay a little more.



Or, of course you could just have a good look from the terrace, take your pictures, and go back down. The only Casino in town is also up here, filled with slot machine and table games for those Vegas fans who love to gamble. If you are feeling adventurous and ready for a nature hike, you could skip the elevator down and walk from Café Winkler back to town for shopping, dinner and more strolling in the Old Town.

The next morning we enjoy another scenic train ride, on our way to Vienna.





We travel by first-class train across the scenic heart of Austria to Vienna -- a historic yet modern city. Vienna is a living museum of monuments and memories connected to a long rich history, but also a sophisticated place with glamorous shops and cutting-edge design. It is a romantic place alive with the music of Mozart, Haydn, Strauss and Beethoven, enriched by the legacy of the immensely wealthy Hapsburg dynasty who created some of the world's finest palaces, opera houses, museums, parks, fountains, public architecture and grand promenades. The Hapsburgs ruled over much of the Western world during several centuries from their huge palace, which today is one of Vienna's main visitor attractions with its many museums and several concert halls.



As always in our tour approach, we bring you to

the major tourist sights that you should not miss, then point you to the little back alleys and minor attractions where you can get away from the tourist mobs and discover the real heart and soul of the city. Wandering in the little quiet lanes can be a profoundly moving experience -- if you pick the right places and don't just randomly get lost in some boring streets, so come along with us as we show you the best routes for making the most of your time.

The vast ensemble of visitor attractions in Vienna is quite compact, covering about one square mile, so you can easily see it all in three well-planned days. This Austrian city is a fantasy in stone built in a mix of styles including Gothic, Renaissance, 19th-century Imperial, Art Nouveau, and Postmodern, blending influences from Italy, Germany and France into a harmonic Viennese mélange.



The layout of Vienna is very organized and easy to navigate, with the central part of town surrounded by the Ringstrasse, or Ring Road, following the same route as the medieval city walls that once surrounded and protected the city. The fortification walls played two important roles for many centuries during the Middle Ages: keeping various enemies away and containing the town in

a small area. Most of the neighborhoods within this central area still have a very ancient feeling to them.



By the middle of the nineteenth century the walls were no longer needed for defense but rather were considered a problem that was limiting the growth of the city, so they were pulled down to make room for expansion. The grand boulevard that took their place forms a semi-circle about one mile across, containing a large central pedestrian zone filled with wonderful old buildings and monuments. Behind the historic facades are the latest in up-to-date shopping and dining pleasures, with music, art and culture all around you.



Music will accompany your visit to Vienna,

especially in the many performance halls where there are concerts nearly every night. The town glides along in three-quarter time. Johann Strauss the Younger composed “The Blue Danube,” which has become the signature tune of Vienna, and you will probably hear it during your visit. Just look for costumed young people on the main malls who look like they just stepped out of an old movie, with little posters in their hands and tickets for sale, or check with the concierge at your hotel. A favorite venue for the waltz is the Kursalon in the City Park, which often has afternoon tea dances as well as elegant evening performances. On the cutting-edge, Vienna is also alive with music performed in the streets, from rock to Mozart, jazz to Peruvian, soul to bluegrass.



Our plan for your three days in Vienna will keep you busy having fun and give some structure to your visit, but this is a loose schedule that allows free time for you to pursue your own interests. Our list begins with the most important to make sure you cover the basics, and during your free time many museums, shops and pedestrian areas will keep you busy.

Day 1: Walk the main pedestrian mall of the city along the Kartnerstrasse, take a tram ride around the Ring Road, and spend the afternoon immersed in splendid art at the Kunsthistorisches Museum.



VIENNA DAY ONE:

The historic center of Vienna was recently added to the UNESCO World Heritage list due to its historic importance, and today you will discover why this prized area is so interesting and important. We are staying at a convenient hotel in the center of town so we can easily walk to the main square at Stephansplatz to begin our adventure. Several pedestrian streets meet together at this focal point, flanked by the great cathedral, many shops, a metro stop and a stark post-modern structure, the Haas House, containing a small shopping mall, and upstairs, a too-trendy restaurant that offers a fine view over the heart of town.



STEPHANDOM:

St. Stephen's Cathedral, the symbol of Vienna, was first constructed early in the 12th century. It is so ancient that the façade is older than the Gothic and dates all the way back in style to the Romanesque. After a great fire destroyed most of the original structure, reconstruction began in mid-13th century and the church continued to evolve during the next four centuries as different styles gained favor, culminating in the elaborate Baroque altar finished in 1640. Unlike many purely Gothic churches, the interior is quite bright, with light shining through large, clear windows revealing the many artistic treasures



within. For those interested in the best views of town, stairs will bring you to a viewing platform half-way up the 449-foot south tower, or you can take an elevator about 200 feet up the north tower for a panoramic look across the inner town and a chance to admire the cathedral's multicolored, zigzag pattern of glazed roof tiles.



KARTNERSTRASSE:

Kartnerstrasse is the major pedestrian shopping mall in town. Heading towards the Opera on the Ring Road you will find many shops in the mid-price range and outdoor cafes for nearly the entire length. Detour one block to Neuer Markt to visit the Kapuzinerkirche only if you must see the final resting place of the Hapsburgs, with 138 members including 12 emperors and their families, minus their hearts which are held elsewhere. Otherwise, the Neuer Markt square is not much more than a parking lot with a few nice old buildings and a fountain.



One of the decent eateries in this neighborhood

is Rosenberger Markt, just around the corner on Meysedergasse. This large and inexpensive self-service basement buffet is open 11:00 am – 11:00 pm, offering a tremendously wide assortment of tasty fresh foods. So convenient you will be tempted to come back several times, but save some dining experiences for the more authentic taverns and gourmet restaurants abounding in this culture capital. Consider returning to Kartnerstrasse after 5:00 p.m. when the street musicians show up to entertain the crowds.

From Kartnerstrasse, turn right on Philharmonikerstrasse, the street just behind the Opera, to reach the famous Hotel Sacher -- a five-star deluxe property in the center of town that is



one of the truly expensive places to stay. For most visitors the appealing part of the hotel is the Café Sacher, where you can get Original Sachertorte, the world's most famous chocolate cake, served



with a big dab of whipped cream. They also

have apple strudel and other pastry treats, but the reason to come here is the chocolate cake, and to enjoy the grand opulence of the lobby and public facilities.

When Kartnerstrasse meets the Ring Road you will have arrived at the Vienna State Opera House, one



of the top five opera venues in the world. A grand building constructed between 1861 and 1869, it is the only opera house to present a different performance every night of the year, except July and August. It is an extremely busy place, with 2,000 people constantly moving scenery and putting on top-quality performances. Tickets can be very expensive and hard to get, but you can usually obtain standing room space for just a few dollars right before the performance begins. You can always check with the box office to see about a ticket while you are here, or call ahead of time (51 444/29592418) to book in advance.

KARLSPLATZ:

There is a convenient shopping gallery beneath the 200-foot wide Ringstrasse at this intersection, offering fast food, tourist information, quick sundries, and an express route underground for two blocks directly to Karlsplatz where you can gaze upon one of the town's most wonderful

creations, Karlskirche. Fisher von Ehrlich built



this Baroque fantasy from 1716-1740 in a rich mix of styles based on several important buildings in Rome. The columns flanking the façade are interpretations of Trajan's Column updated to tell the story of the patron saint, Charles Borromeo. The church is similar to St. Agnese in Rome's Piazza Navona (Von Ehrlich was inspired by Borromini), including elements of the Pantheon and St. Peter's thrown in to further dazzle the visitor. The Naschmarkt, the town's largest



outdoor food market, is a few blocks behind the Karlskirche, with 150 stalls displaying all sorts of gourmet and take-out items.

Another important building across from Karlsplatz is the famous concert hall, Musikverein -- reputedly with the finest acoustics in this sophisticated musical town -- so this would be an excellent

choice for a night out, especially to attend one of the regular Mozart concerts with performers in historic costumes. A block away on the other side of the square you can see the golden dome of the “Jugendstil” Secession Building in the unique Viennese “youth style,” which appeared in 1898 as a statement of artistic rebellion by a group of Art Nouveau modernists, including Gustav Klimt, who has a huge mural inside.



Karlsplatz is the main focal point of Vienna’s transit system where many subway and surface lines come together. The two old metro stations originally built by famed architect Otto Wagner have recently been converted into stylish tea salons. This would be an excellent place to take a break or catch a train, but your next stops are just a few blocks away on the Ring, so keep on walking. At this point you are quite close to the Imperial Hotel, at 16 Kärtner Ring, the grandest of Vienna’s top hotels, so if you are a fan of elegant lobbies, or dare to pay the price at the Imperial Café, step on inside for a breather.

Walking west now for six blocks along the Ring, you are heading for an artistic apotheosis, but first cross the big street to have a look at the golden statue of Mozart in the Burggarten, a very pleasant park in the Hofburg’s back yard. Wolfgang spent the last ten years of his life in Vienna, producing most of his famous works while moving house

at least every year. This brilliant, turbulent personality is now patiently standing in the park, waiting for you and your camera.



PICTURE GALLERY:

Cross back over the Ring to the Kunsthistorisches Museum for the main event of this afternoon. This grand museum has one of the finest art collections in the world, with particular strength in paintings of the Old Masters. Entering the front door you are immediately knocked out by the extremely elaborate lobby and staircase leading up to the main galleries. Stand for a minute at the foot of the stairs to take in the spectacle of multicolored marble walls leading up to a very high ceiling covered with a fresco mural depicting some of the great figures of art history. At the stairway mid-point you will come across a huge marble statue by Canova -- just a taste of things to come.

Entering this building and walking through the galleries is such a visceral experience that it is difficult to capture in words, so we can only offer a small hint of what is there. You will see important works by Caravaggio, Rembrandt, Mantegna, the largest Velasquez collection outside of Spain, Vermeer’s greatest masterpiece, “The Allegory of Painting,” Van Eyck, Titian, Raphael, Giorgione, El Greco, Durer, Cranach, Rubens, Bernini,

Cellini, Bellini, 12 Bruegels (a high point of the museum) and much, much more.



This amazing collection was built up over a 500-year period, especially during the 17th century when the Hapsburg dynasty had many important connections throughout Europe. The Hapsburgs were married into the royal family of Spain, ruled the Netherlands and controlled most of Germany and northern Italy, so they were in position to acquire the great masters of that time. It was a private collection until 1781, when it was opened to the public for the first time, making this the oldest art museum in the world. Not just the first, but among the very finest, and the setting in this grand marble temple of the arts further enhances the pleasures of your visit. Noted art connoisseur Thomas Hoving, former director of New York's Metropolitan Museum, has called this "the world's best collection of Western paintings."

If you need a little break from so much stimulation, have a seat in the gorgeous café in the central rotunda, surrounded by a vast multicolored marble floor, walls, columns and ceiling. The building is just one hundred years old but the complex design seems more ancient, with paintings hung as they were in the original collections. When you've had enough paintings, return to the ground floor and have a brief look through the decorative

arts, ancient sculpture and Egyptian collections. You could easily spend a full day exploring this museum, so if you are a major art lover, feel free to spend a large chunk of your three days here, preferably divided over two half-day visits. After too many hours in a row, no one can properly appreciate an overdose of so much beauty.

Coming out of the museum you will be facing a pleasant square with a bigger-than-life statue of Maria-Theresa at its center. Across the square is another museum building that looks identical to the Kunsthistorisches, holding the Natural History Museum, but this is only for hard-core fans of the genre. Its displays are quite antiquated, looking much as they did a century ago, which does lend a certain old-fashioned charm.

RING ROAD:

Now you will find yourself on the Ring Road, which you could explore with an easy round-trip tram ride along its entire length. Vienna has a very good public transportation system, with an extensive network of subway, surface trams and buses. All you really need to get around this compact town is comfortable shoes, but for some added fun this is a fine time to hop on the tram.



This trolley runs on steel rails along the Ring Road, so you get a smooth ride with an excellent view. It is one of the great public transportation

routes in the world, bringing you past a visual smorgasbord of the architectural history of the Empire, including the State Opera House, the Parliament, the City Hall, the Hofburg, the two main museums and the University. The price for the tram ticket is quite reasonable and includes free transfers and round-trips during a one-hour period.

By now you should be ready to wind down with a nice dinner, perhaps followed by a concert, then bed.

VIENNA DAY TWO: Morning City Tour, Afternoon Old Town Walking Tour



SCHONBRUNN PALACE:

This morning we take a ride on the metro for a visit to Schonbrunn Palace, the glorious residence of the Hapsburgs. Similar to Versailles, which was an inspiration for royal homes all over Europe, Schonbrunn is a must for any visit to Vienna. Later in the afternoon after lunch we can continue to the Belvedere Palace, a very worthwhile excursion.

Schonbrunn was the principal summer residence of the Hapsburgs, built in a grand style by the noted architect Fischer von Erlach, and gradually took shape between 1669 and 1730. It was then redesigned as the primary residence for Empress

Maria Theresa, who had sixteen children here including Marie Antoinette -- so apparently she needed the space. The last great emperor, Franz Joseph, was born here, reigned for 68 years and died here. He was succeeded by a grand-nephew, Charles I, who signed his abdication in this palace at the end of WWI in 1918.



The centerpiece of Schonbrunn is the Grand Gallery, like Versailles' Hall of Mirrors. The palace has 1,500 rooms, most of which are closed now, but the public tour does visit several dozen rooms containing original furnishings and decoration, which is enough to give you a feeling for life in the old days. The gardens are particularly impressive, built for Maria's eldest son, Joseph II, who reigned 1780-90 and was an enthusiastic gardener interested in the classical style.

The Emperor Joseph II was not very supportive of the pomp and ceremony attached to court functions. Joseph was really modern -- too much so for his time -- he was the first European monarch to give freedom to the farmers, loosen up on religious constraints, and proclaim that everyone is equal. The Pope and other leaders objected to this attitude, so Joseph gave in but maintained that people would finally be equal at death. He objected to the vast money wasted on lavish lifestyles, including massive graves,

so declared that everyone must be buried in the same style, like a pauper. For two years during his reign, everyone, including the nobility, was buried in this simple style.



The most famous burial during Joseph's time was that of Mozart, who performed for Maria Theresa at Schonbrunn as a child. Following Joseph's egalitarian burial system, Mozart was interred in an unmarked grave, and ever since we've had a false impression that the world's greatest composer was a pauper and forgotten at the time of his death. However this was not the way the Viennese wanted to say goodbye to him, so the real observance for Mozart was two days before burial, with 5,000 people assembled at a church to listen to the grand premier of his Requiem in a major ceremony. When Mozart died he was absolutely not poor -- he had so much money that his wife Costanza needed ten years to spend it all, and she really knew how to spend.

On our way back to the center we can visit the Belvedere Palace and gardens, so this is a worthwhile excursion. This is one of the showplaces of Vienna, with a beautiful setting in formal gardens that offer a sweeping view downhill to the Lower Belvedere and the town beyond. Originally, the Upper Belvedere was

built as a residence for Prince Eugene of Savoy, who is a great hero of the Austrians because under his leadership the Turks were defeated in 1687, saving Europe from an Ottoman invasion. It was primarily used as a big party house for special functions, and today it is an art museum of minor interest, with some Klimt paintings upstairs.



There is a small art museum in the Upper Belvedere with Vienna's collection of Impressionists, including Renoir, Monet, Manet, Pissaro, Degas and Van Gogh, along with a large number of Austrian works of the 19th and 20th century -- especially noteworthy for the dozen masterpieces by Gustav Klimt, all set in a very impressive Baroque palace. If you skip the museum, by all means visit the gardens and the nicely decorated lobby with its huge Atlas statues holding up the ceiling.

There are more of these giants holding up buildings in Vienna than anywhere else in Europe. Robust, muscular, larger than life marble figures with the Baroque buildings propped up on their shoulders, called "Atlas" after the mythological giant, they are one of the beloved themes of Austrian architecture.



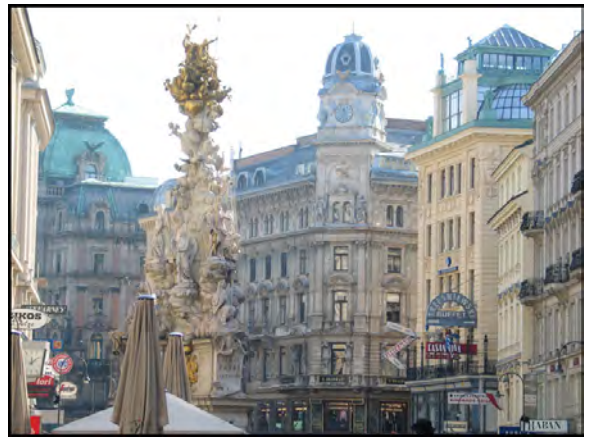
VIENNA OLD TOWN CENTER:

Return to the center of town for a stroll in the old neighborhoods, starting in the cluster of lanes and alleys behind the cathedral. The character of this special zone is saturated with the past, giving you more of a feeling for Old Vienna than any other part of town. It is easy to completely overlook this simple district, but then you would miss out on a very charming experience. This little hidden neighborhood extends in a four-block radius on both sides and behind the cathedral.

We will get you started with an organized walk, then you can continue to wander through that zone on your own if you wish. Facing the cathedral, we walk left two blocks to Lugeck, a small square with a statue of Gutenberg in the middle. When you notice something like that very popular gelato café on the corner you should check it out -- which means, have a cone! You will find this neighborhood is permeated with quiet charm, cobbled lanes, colorful buildings, typical taverns, ivy-covered walls, random statues, and the most wonderful tiny pedestrian passages that go through buildings to the next block. Use your radar to find the little courtyards and alleys which give it that special character.

Some of the specific things we will see here are:

- The Jesuit Church, with its super-Baroque interior filled with optical tricks from the Counter-Reformation by the Italian master Andrea Pozzo.
- Figlmuller, a traditional wine tavern famous for Wiener Schnitzel, in a cute alley.
- Many notable homes and palaces, including Figarohaus (Mozart), and Prince Eugene's Winter Palace.
- Three little alleys around the Franciscan Church -- Ballgasse, Blumenstock and Weihburgasse -- with pleasant sidewalk restaurants.



GRABEN to the FREYUNG

Emerge from this quaint, peaceful village atmosphere and walk back into the large elegant pedestrian zone that extends through the middle of town along the Graben, lined with the most glamorous shops, restaurants and cafes, and framed by elaborate building facades. The Graben looks like a street that was converted into a pedestrian mall, but it is actually a long, narrow town square that was in Roman times the site of a fortified moat. In the middle is an impressive monument to the survivors of the plague, built in

an elaborate Baroque style with many animated statues representing angels, the plague, God and the king. There were several waves of bubonic plague that swept across Europe, killing as much as half the population (100,000 Viennese died in 1679), so the survivors felt most fortunate and often built monuments to thank God for their blessings.



Conclude your afternoon explorations with more walking on the Kohlmarkt, Naglergasse and the Freyung, another complex of pedestrian lanes and little public squares filled with charm. Only two blocks long, Kohlmarkt connects the Graben with the Hofburg. Here you will find the most famous pastry shop, Demels, which has been sadly overrun with tourists but is still a cake-filled shrine that demands a visit -- at least walk in and have a look.



Return to Naglergasse, a charming two-block pedestrian lane that curves from the Graben to Freyung, with more fine shops and three restaurants to consider: Meinl am Graben; Stadtbeisl; and on a side alley, Esterhazykeller (see our listings). The lane ends at the largest central square, Am Hof, surrounded by more palaces and churches. If you like such squares, keep walking towards the Judenplatz and the Hoher Markt, but this is a five-block detour, so return quickly to the Freyung to visit the fancy shopping mall in the Palais Ferstel, culminating in the Café Central at the far end, one of the most important coffee houses in town.



Coffee as we know it today was first brewed in Vienna from beans that had been brought in by the Turks, who in turn got them from Africa where



goat herders noticed their goats liked to chew the beans. This long chain of events reached a caffeine climax in Vienna with the discovery that brewing the beverage brought out the full richness of flavor without the bitterness. When you visit a Vienna coffee house, you cannot just order “coffee” because there can be seventy different types. You have to specify exactly which kind. One favorite order is a “mélange,” a cappuccino-like mixture of coffee with warm milk and some steamed milk at the top. The traditional coffee house is a place where time and the waiter move slowly. You sit down and read the newspaper, you play chess, you chat a little bit, you relax.

Walk back towards the Hofburg along Herrengasse, another grand street lined with more Baroque palaces that are now mostly government offices. An interesting old church worth a quick look here is the Franciscan Minoritenkirche, built in Gothic style during the 14th century. It took several hundred years to finish as different architectural touches from the Renaissance and the Baroque periods were added and later removed. The most spectacular single element in this church is a copy of Leonardo’s Last Supper that looks like a painting but is actually a mosaic made from small colored marbles and cut stones. This piece was created for Napoleon, who was planning to swap it

for Leonardo’s masterpiece in Milan, but instead, the mosaic copy ended up here in Vienna.

If you have any strength left tonight, go out to a Heurige in the suburbs where they serve fresh white wine in outdoor taverns, often accompanied by live music. Vienna is the only major city in the world with extensive vineyards -- you can take your pick from a number of wine villages, but the most popular is the Grinzing.



You can get there either on your own by tram 38, or in a package evening tour that we can arrange.

VIENNA DAY THREE: free day to explore, with the following suggested activities:

HOFBURG PALACE

The old Imperial Palace of the Hapsburgs has grown over the last 600 years into the largest structure in town, with nearly 2,500 rooms spread out over 18 buildings, containing 16 different museums! Originally a fortress that grew into a



self-contained town, it would take a week to see it all, but we can help you choose some highlights for a morning visit. Walk around the exterior through its many courtyards and passages to get a feeling for the amazing grandeur of the varied architecture and the dynasty that created it. In Den Burg is the largest courtyard, Schweizerhof is the oldest, and Josefplatz the grandest. There is a delightful late-Gothic Hofburgkapelle to appreciate, especially if you should be so lucky to catch the Boys Choir here in one of their Sunday morning concerts.



Ironically, the curved façade of Neueburg is the newest and most dramatic part of the building, constructed at the end of the nineteenth century and completed about 1913 in the last gasp of the Hapsburgs -- but it was never used due to the

coming of World War I and subsequent abdication of the royal family. It is built in a mix of styles, with some Italian Renaissance forms and influences from Paris, and contains two museums, the Ephesos, with ancient Greek and Roman statues, and the Volkerkunde ethnographic museum, with a strong Aztec collection and Polynesian artifacts gathered by Capt. Cook, including some Hawaiian treasures.



The two most worthwhile exhibits are the National Library, the most brilliant Baroque library ever built, looking more like a dazzling church than a research room, and the Treasury -- fourteen rooms filled with jewels, crowns, gowns, thrones, and relics in the Schatzkammer wing of the building. The Royal Apartments is one of the major attractions, but it is not highly decorated like some of the other royal palaces of Europe, so skip it and move on.

MUSEUM QUARTER and

MARIAHILFER STRASSE:

For your final afternoon, we suggest you drop in on another major museum complex and then finish the day on the main shopping street for local residents, the Mariahilfer Strasse. The former Imperial Stables one block from the Hofburg have been converted into a massive contemporary art complex which is the largest in Central Europe.



The Museum of Modern Art has relatively new premises in the MuseumsQuartier Wien in which it displays a cross-section of Austrian and international art on five floors. Its exhibitions usually feature items from its own collection, including 400 masterpieces of classical modernism by Pablo Picasso, René Magritte, Joan Miró, Wassily Kandinsky and Paul Klee, as well as works by prominent post-1945 artists. The Austrians represented include Oskar Kokoschka, Arnulf Rainer, Hermann Nitsch, Valie Export, Franz West and Heimo Zobernig.



Also part of this innovative Museums Quarter development are four more new museums: The Leopold Museum, with important Austrian artists

such as Klimt; ZOOM Kindermuseum, the nation's only children's museum, with multimedia lab, hands-on attractions, and adventure playground; Architekturzentrum Wien, a contemporary museum of architecture; and Tanzquartier Wien, a space for contemporary dance and performance, also offering workshops and study center.

Work your way through this complex and come out the back side to a historic neighborhood called Spittelberg, renowned for the careful preservation of its 18th-century Baroque and Biedermeier buildings. There are four little car-free cobbled lanes with art galleries, craft shops, cafes and gentrified homes in what has been rediscovered as one of the trendiest parts of town.



From here it is only a stone's throw over to the busy commercial street of Mariahilfer Strasse, Vienna's most popular shopping district for local residents. It is about one mile long and you can really enjoy a stroll up one side and down the other.

This is where we shall leave you, strolling along through retail heaven -- but if you would rather skip the shopping, there are plenty of other things that could keep you busy in Vienna, for this grand capital has so much to offer.



History of Vienna

The Vienna we see today is the result of a long series of events that have brought us to this incredible splendor. It was the capital of the Hapsburg Empire that ruled over much of Western Europe for 650 years, right up until WW I. There are many wonderful remnants of this long period in the form of vast palaces, noble architecture, collectible antiques, and an attitude of confidence and pride among the local population.



First occupied before 6,000 B.C. by primitive hunter-gatherers, the earliest permanent settlement was founded here by the Celts around 800 B.C. In the first century the Romans established a military camp, which became the real origins of Vienna.

Germanic Goth tribes conquered them around 400 A.D. then over the next few centuries the town slowly became an important center of trade routes, strategically located between north and south, east and west, on the frontier with Asia.

From the end of the 10th century to the middle of the 13th century when Vienna started to play an important role in history, a seldom-heard-of dynasty called the Babenbergs reigned in this little province on the border with Hungary. The Crusades gave Vienna a big boost, first with the capture and imprisonment of England's Richard the Lionheart -- who was released for a king's ransom that financed much construction. With successive Crusaders passing through, a system of trade and supplies developed, further enriching the town.



The all-important Hapsburgs came from Switzerland in 1278 and commenced their rule over Austria. It began with Rudolph I, who was selected as king of Germany and gave this land to his sons, whose descendents eventually made out of this little country a big empire that stretched to Hungary, Spain, Belgium, Holland and parts of Italy, Germany, Yugoslavia, Poland, Russia, Rumania, and South America.

A major threat developed from the Ottoman

Empire in Turkey, which besieged Vienna twice as part of their efforts to conquer Europe -- for the first time in 1529 and again in 1683. In the final battle with the Turks there were only 5,000 Austrian soldiers within the city walls, while the Turks had an attacking army of 100,000, but with superior tactics and help from the Pope and his supporting European armies, the Austrians prevailed. Their main strategy was defensive -- to hold off the attackers till they ran out of food and supplies, forcing them to retreat. This was a crucial turning point in history because the Ottoman Empire had already occupied eastern Europe, gaining full control over Belgrade and Budapest, and fully intended to seize the entire continent. Only after the defeat of the Turks were Vienna's noble families able to begin constructing their large palaces in the Baroque style, which found its inspiration in Italy but has been transformed into the special Austrian version we find here today.



The Hapsburg family reigned until the end of WWI when it had to renounce the throne and go into exile. The Hapsburgs actually started WWI, when Emperor Franz Josef avenged the death of his grandnephew, Crown Prince Archduke Ferdinand, who was assassinated in Sarajevo in 1914. The roots of the problem stretch back into the 19th

century: the Hapsburg's multinational Empire had many different languages and mentalities that never fully meshed in a peaceful way. The Hungarians and Bohemians always wanted more rights and to be independent from the Hapsburgs, who were suppressing them, and external forces in Germany and France were also trying to break them up. Today the Hapsburgs survive with about 600 descendants spread all over the world.

During the 1930s a dark cloud formed as the most evil Austrian ever, Adolph Hitler, developed a power base and took over the nation. He first declared his "Third Reich" from the balcony of the Hofburg Palace, and proceeded to exterminate most of Austria's Jews, who had always played an important role in the intellectual and economic life of the country.

Vienna remained an occupied city for ten years after the war, divided into zones controlled by the US, Great Britain, France and Russia, until 1955 when the Austrian State Treaty finally liberated the nation from foreign domination. Since then Austria has developed into a modern society with a very high standard of living.

At the beginning of the 20th century, Austria ruled over 60 million people. Today, the nation has only about 8 million inhabitants, with 1.8 million of them in Vienna. So this little nation became a big empire and then went back to its origins as a small country.

You will be very happy with this leisurely visit that covers most of its major highlights. Then it is time to move along by train to our next outstanding city, Budapest.

BUDAPEST



Have you heard of the Magyar people, or their nation of Magyarország? It's Hungary, the exotic Central European nation whose beautiful capital of Budapest will surprise you with its beauty, affordable luxury and unique history. Gypsy music fills the air; scenic vistas are everywhere; old and new mix in a cultural blend that makes Budapest an excellent destination to put high on your travel list.

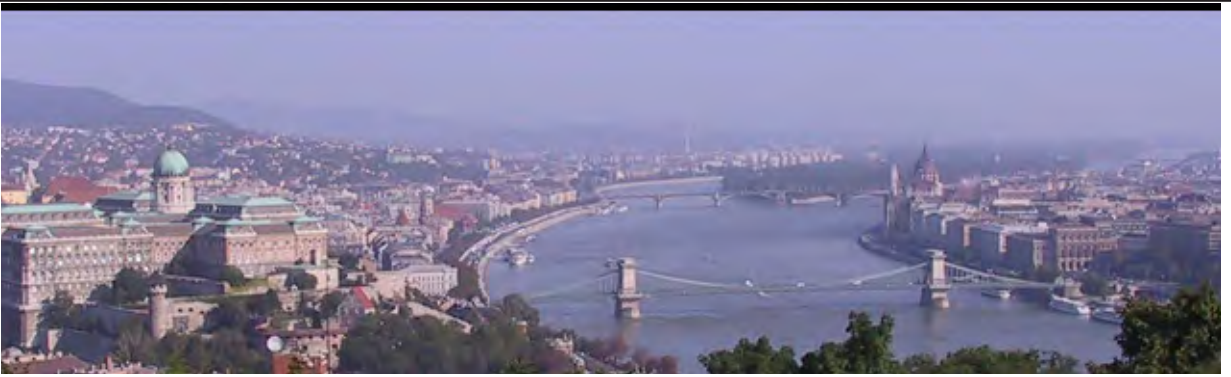


This city on the Danube is different from the other great capitals of Europe in a pleasant old-fashioned way that fills it with authentic charms. Two thousand years of invasion, liberation, re-occupation, devastation and rebirth, played out over and over again in a cycle of history, have

somehow produced this unique culture. Lack of money has prevented that squeaky-clean modernization machine to roll through town, the way it has recently glitzed up so many other cities on the continent. As a result, some buildings are run-down, plaster is peeling and roads are bumpy, but the beautiful reward for the intrepid traveler is a genuine city filled with real character. A wide variety of architectural styles are on display, sometimes combined in the unique Hungarian Eclectic that blends elements of Classical, Gothic, Renaissance, Baroque and Art Nouveau in a single building.



Ancient invasion by Huns in the 5th century, then Magyars from the Urals, followed by Mongols 800 years ago, then Muslims, five hundred years back, have all left their stamps on the culture. The somewhat mysterious origins of today's population is reflected in their language, which is more closely related to distant Finnish, Estonian and Siberian than to its immediate Slavic and Germanic neighbors. Somehow, movements of people took place in the fog of history, replacing Celtic locals with a more Asiatic breed that has long since blended into the European mix to create the modern, exotic Hungarian.



Budapest consists of the formerly separate communities of Buda on the western bank of the Danube and Pest on the east. Built on a hill, Buda contains the former Royal Palace and the old Castle District. Pest stands on a level plain and is the site of the main shopping areas, the Museum of Fine Arts, the Palace of Justice, Parliament, and the National Museum. No other city along Europe's longest river embraces it as much as Budapest, with nine bridges linking the two sides, and a major promenade along the river offering sweeping views.

As usual in our tour, we will explain in detail how to get the most out of your time in a carefully-planned itinerary with some free time left over for your own pursuits. It takes two days to fully explore the many sights on offer in this great city.

Our schedule:

Day One: Walking tour of Pest;

Day Two: City tour including the Castle District; Museum of Fine Arts; Danube cruise.

DAY ONE: Inner city walking tour

VOROSMARTY SQUARE

We begin our visit in the heart of the Inner City at Vorosmarty Square, surrounded by cafes, shops and lovely pedestrian lanes extending in every direction.

The large statue in the center of this pleasant tree-lined plaza depicts the poet, Mihaly Vorosmarty, who became a national hero with his patriotic writings in mid-19th century, when Hungary unsuccessfully attempted to gain independence from Austria. It says something positive about the nation's character that it has a heroic poet sitting in the capital's center, surrounded by two levels of marble benches that draw people to him for comfort and relaxation.



He symbolizes that universal human spirit, yearning to be free. This makes a nice people-watching perch you might come back to later, for you will certainly pass through this central square several times in your visit.

Hungary's most famous café, Gerbeaud, is on the north side of the square, so this would be a fine place for coffee and a snack perhaps later in the day. Maybe indulge your sweet tooth with an



elaborate pastry, such as Dobos Torta, a rich, chocolate layer cake, with chocolate cream filling, covered with crunchy caramel. In business since 1858,

Gerbeaud has tables on the terrace, dining rooms inside for a complete meal, and a theater offering musical productions at night.

Music is everywhere in Budapest: players on the street corner, gypsy orchestras in fine restaurants, formal productions in several concert halls and opera in a grand theater. One convenient place to find out the



music performance schedules is the ticket office in the large, modern building that dominates square, where you could also arrange day-trips, rent a car, or find a room. Another helpful place for information, tickets, maps and free brochures is the city's official information office, two blocks away at Deak Square, open daily from 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.

EMBANKMENT VIEWS AND ACTIVITIES

The most beautiful vista in town is the view from the banks of the Danube River along the Belgrad Rampart, just two short blocks from Vorosmarty Square, so we head west to the embankment. Across the river you will see the postcard-perfect vision of the Royal Palace sitting atop the hill in Buda, the older half of town we will discover tomorrow. To your right is the other icon of the city, the Chain Bridge, which opened in 1849 as the first permanent crossing of the Danube,



providing the link that joined Buda and Pest into one city. In pleasant weather one gets a downright Mediterranean feeling here at the water's edge, with sunshine streaming through the trees and sidewalk cafes all around, accompanied by a vibrant street-life of performers, vendors, artists, locals and tourists mingling together in a big show.



The river embankment is perfect for a stroll in the evening as well, when the Palace and Chain Bridge are brightly illuminated, and several nice restaurants serve traditional cuisine at terrace tables with live gypsy music, including Dunacorso on the corner and Vigado on the side of the Vigado Concert Hall. Music-lovers should

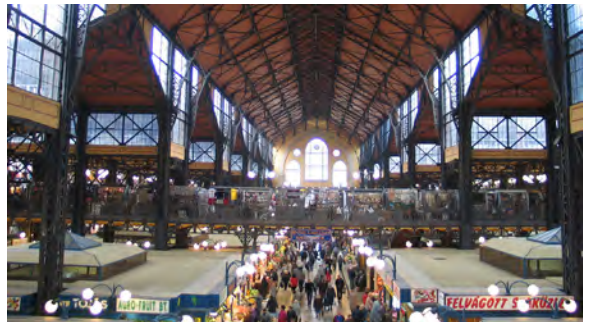
check the schedule at Vigado, as there are some outstanding classical music revues most nights, usually featuring opera excerpts. There are usually young vendors on the embankment, and elsewhere on the pedestrian lanes, selling tickets for the traditional folk-dance show presented by the Hungarian State Folk Ensemble, which is really worth seeing. Check the schedule to see which night the performance is offered at the convenient Duna Palace, just six blocks away, and purchase seats from the first vendor you see. While it is not a flashy Vegas-style production, there is a string quartet accompanying twenty singing dancers in colorful folk-costumes, putting on a wonderful show.

Souvenir kiosks on the embankment also have good values in postcards, t-shirts and dresses, or you can purchase directly from strolling ladies who offer their hand-made tablecloths, clothing, dolls and doilies. You will likely come back here several times, perhaps for a tram ride or river cruise, but for now, have a good look, then return to Vorosmarty Square to continue your walk.



VACI UTCA

Undoubtedly, the main pedestrian street in the heart of town is the Vaci utca, which leads out from Vorosmarty Square's south end. This lively promenade is lined with shops and cafes and filled with people all day. It extends about one mile to the Central Market Hall, a huge, indoor food emporium. We walk along Vaci utca enjoying this busy strip of shops and continue to the food market.



CENTRAL MARKET HALL

The Central Market is one of those special places you really will enjoy, even if you don't buy anything, because it is full of history, color and life. The hall is huge, covering an area of two football fields, and very old, first opened in 1896, built in the early-modern style of steel and glass, with a very high ceiling enclosing the vast space.



On the outside it looks like a classic train station, but inside it is filled with food stalls of all kinds. You will notice lots of chili peppers hanging everywhere -- an essential ingredient in Hungarian cuisine, which is generally used in a mild form of paprika that doesn't burn your mouth, but adds rich flavors. The real delight here is watching the locals shopping for their fresh produce, and you might pick up some fruits for healthy snacking later. There are a couple of food counters upstairs, and Fakanal Restaurant, where you could have an inexpensive meal, and you'll find a few souvenir shops scattered amidst the food stalls. It was thoroughly refurbished ten years ago so it is in very good condition.

20th centuries, so this neighborhood is not a classic Old Town with narrow cobbled streets and ancient buildings, which you will find tomorrow up on the Buda hill next to the castle. Instead, this is a



When finished with the food market, we come out through the elaborate front doors, which resemble the portal of a major church, and turn right to walk along the busy ring road

typical downtown with some fascinating buildings scattered here and there.

AFTERNOON WALK

We walk north along the busy boulevard in front of the food market. This small neighborhood of the Inner City goes for about one half-mile in each direction, making it easy to see by just strolling along the nice streets we suggest for you here. The buildings date mostly from the late 19th and

In a few blocks we arrive at our hotel where we can



stop to freshen up. For those wishing to continue on our walk, come along, or you can peel off at this point and have the remaining afternoon free.

Our walking tour continues a couple blocks along Kossuth Lajos, the busiest street of the city, to the Franciscan Church, built in the mid-18th century Hungarian Baroque style, with Italian influences. The elaborate, curved architectural details are quite interesting to examine, and the quiet interior is welcome relief. The noisy street widens here to form Ferenciek Terre, the action center of the Inner City, with a major metro station below and a convenient pedestrian underpass. We shall continue for another hour's walk through this south side of the Inner City.

As we exit the church, turn left on Karolyi, passing the University Library, with its small, brightly-colored dome, and we come to one of the nicest restaurants in town, Karpatia, offering gourmet Hungarian specialties at reasonable prices. Drop in and have a look at the wonderful interior, with rich, wood paneling, medieval arches, and hand-painted golden details. Consider making reservations to come back for dinner in the main room when the gypsy orchestra performs, for the complete, magical experience.



At the end of the block you will see another Baroque gem, the University Church, finished in 1748 with a style strongly influenced by the Italian genius, Borromini, borrowing his use of convex and concave surfaces on the façade. If you seek greenery, have a look at the cute little park behind the Museum of Literature, across from the church.



It makes sense to continue the afternoon with a return to Vaci utca, just two blocks over, and spend some time browsing in the shops and galleries along this lively street, filled with interesting people. The main pedestrian zone extends out



from Vaci utca on several cross streets that have more shops and interesting buildings to glance



as at you stroll along. Especially noteworthy are the Parisi Udvar arcade; the huge Municipal Council Offices, 200 yards long in the Baroque style; and the adjacent Pest County Hall, in grand neo-Classical style. While passing through this neighborhood you might consider two more excellent restaurants, Rezkakas and Szazeves Etterem, both with outstanding Hungarian cuisine and live gypsy music.



BOAT RIDE

Depending on your timing, you probably have a few hours free before dinner for a boat ride on the Danube, leaving from the pier along the embankment. The standard cruise takes just one hour and includes narration over individual headsets, providing some history and description of the buildings you pass. From the boat you will have a good view of Parliament, a truly spectacular

building that was the world's largest parliament structure when completed in 1902. This close-up view from the river makes the entire boat ride a worthwhile trip.



The architecture is based somewhat on London's neo-Gothic Palace of Westminster, but pushed to a Bohemian extreme, with hundreds of statues and gothic spires adorning the exterior. Nearly 300 yards long, containing 700 rooms, with an elaborately decorated neo-Gothic interior, it is still the largest parliament building in Europe. During the communist era it was a meaningless structure but now with full democracy, Hungary has an active parliament that rules the country. The boat goes around Margaret Island, and you have an option to get off there for an hour and walk around the green park, catching the next boat back to the dock.

BUDAPEST DAY TWO:

City Tour and Castle District

We visit highlights of the Buda and Pest sides of





ST. STEPHEN'S BASILICA

We begin at the nation's largest church, St. Stephen's Basilica, finished in 1905 in the neo-Renaissance style with a huge dome towering 300 feet over a vast interior that can hold 8,000 people. You can see many fine mosaics, frescoes, statues and grand, religious architecture embellished with golden trim throughout.

The prize relic of the Hungarian Catholic Church is the clenched right hand of St. Stephen, which can be inspected in its jeweled casket in a special chapel.



The best view of the large façade is from the far end of the square in front, which also has an excellent souvenir shop on the south side.

CASTLE DISTRICT

We walk across the Chain Bridge which will lead us up to the Castle District on top of the hill in the Buda side of town. Curiously, there is no castle in the Castle District, but instead, you will find a huge palace and charming Old Town to explore on foot.



The Castle District is only one mile long and four blocks wide, with half taken up by the Royal Palace, and the other half consisting of narrow, cobbled streets lined with old homes and a few shops. A good strategy is to simply walk through the town without worrying about too many historical details regarding each structure you see, or trying to figure out who lived where and when. Mostly you are here to absorb the historic ambience of this charming neighborhood, and pick up a few historic tidbits along the way. However, several important structures are worthy of a close look, especially the star attraction, the Matthias Church in the town center.



MATTHIAS CHURCH and FISHERMAN'S BASTION

Matthias Church looks like a Gothic structure from the Middle Ages, but most of what you see today was actually built in the late 19th century, with a few of the earlier elements incorporated, especially the main doorway and interior pillars.



For 800 years this has been the location of the city's main church, which has been built and destroyed several times, and even turned into a mosque during the Turkish occupation. The result today is an amazing combination of many styles with a dazzling interior that you should not miss. The walls, ceiling and columns are completely covered in wildly-colorful geometric patterns, based loosely on the Gothic style with more recent elements thrown in, resulting in a nearly psychedelic combination. It is fun to stroll around and observe the various frescoed murals, colorful banners, carved pews, ribbed vaulting, stone pulpits, side chapels, noble tombs, baptismal fonts, coats of arms, little statues, various altarpieces and holy objects. Large, bright stained-glass windows throw a lot of light into the space so you can clearly see all the details.



Behind the church is the famous Fisherman's Bastion lookout point that provides a dramatic view across the river to the Pest side of town. This Bastion is another building that looks five times older, with its hodge-podge of Byzantine, Gothic and Romanesque kitsch, thrown together in such an entertaining way that it was copied by Disney. There is a small charge to walk on the upper level, but you can get just as good a view by standing for free at the window on the left side, or walking a few feet further along the left wall. Note especially the huge Parliament Building across the river, with its large dome and many neogothic spikes.



In the small open square stands a heroic equestrian statue of St. Stephen, Hungary's first king, who is also honored at St. Stephen's Basilica.

BUDAPEST OLD TOWN

The rest of the district can be easily walked in a brief visit that gives a feeling for this only bit of atmospheric Old Town in the entire city.

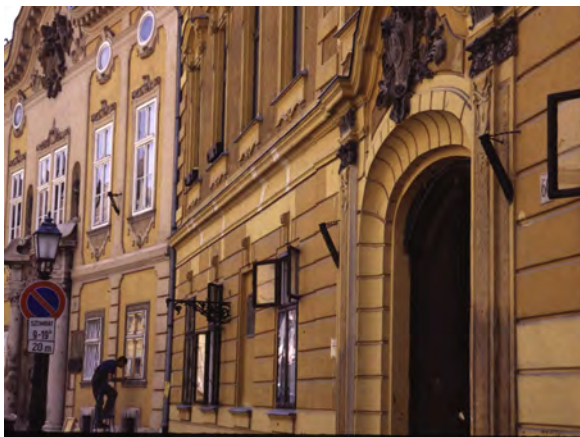
One slightly incongruous, modern structure here is the Hilton Hotel, which actually does a good job of blending in on the street side, behind an 18th century Jesuit façade. As we walk north along the road in front of the Hilton, we'll peek into some alleys that lead to internal courtyards, surrounded by the charming old residences. The largest courtyard is at the Music History Museum, a Baroque mansion where Beethoven stayed in his visit here. The Castle District has several other little museums devoted to military history, pharmaceuticals, telephones, food and a wax museum in the underground tunnels, recreating Hungarian legends. Small art galleries and antique shops are also found along these narrow lanes.



ROYAL PALACE

After exploring this charming little district, we walk a few blocks south into the impressive grounds of the Royal Palace. This mammoth structure seems to cover half the hill, looking arrogantly down onto the flat, Pest side of town, rising above the entire city. As the royal residence, it was meant to be a dominating presence and

provide a large home for the ruling nobility. Some kind of palace has been on this site for 700 years, but due to frequent warfare it has been leveled and rebuilt many times. During World War II the palace was burned to a hollow shell, with all the furnishings stolen or destroyed. It has been rebuilt, with the work only completed in the late 1980s. Archaeological excavations continue in the surrounding gardens in search of earlier palace remains on the site.



BRIEF HISTORY OF BUDAPEST

Streets in the Castle District are the oldest in Budapest and date back to the Middle Ages when this community was established as a hilltop refuge for protection from the invading Mongols. Numerous wars and fires have resulted in the familiar pattern of destruction and rebirth, most recently after World War II, when horrific street battles raged for a year between the occupying Nazi and liberating Russians. The 1944-45 siege of Budapest was one of the most violent struggles in the world's worst war, and inflicted extensive damage throughout the city. It is said that only 2 out of 200 buildings here were still habitable after the war. Although strapped for cash, the communist government did invest huge sums in reconstructing this district in the

original style, so what you see today looks once again like an 18th-century town. The entire hill and river embankments have been designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

There are two major museums inside the palace for you to consider, covering art and history. The National Gallery occupies four floors in the main wing, filled exclusively with paintings and sculpture by Hungarian artists, which presents a small dilemma for the visitor: there are no famous artists here, but there is a vast collection of paintings and statues that represent all the main movements of Western art history, ranging from Gothic through the 20th century. Looking at paintings by people you have never heard of is an act of discovery and love. It's your choice.



History fans will enjoy a visit to the Castle Museum in the south end of the palace. It offers a fascinating trip through time back to the Middle Ages when the foundations of this structure were originally dug into the bedrock. By incorporating some original building fragments with faithful reconstructions, the museum designers have produced the feeling of being in a medieval castle. You move through a series of basement rooms with Gothic-style pointed arches and cross-vaulted ceilings, passing a tiny dungeon, a 14th Century

chapel, into galleries filled with period furniture and display cases containing artifacts from those ancient times. Fragments from the Renaissance and later periods transport you, finishing with an exhibit of Budapest in Modern Times, covering the last 200 years. While it does seem like half the display cases are filled with old pottery of minor interest, there is enough fascinating stuff here to keep you very entertained.



The exterior of the Royal Palace is wonderful to admire, built in the grand style of the Hapsburgs, some of whom are buried in the lower crypt. It is reminiscent of the majestic Hofburg Palace in Vienna, from which the Hapsburgs actually ruled Budapest. Elaborate architectural motifs keep your eyes busy looking up columns, across lintels, down pilasters, through triumphal gateways, over to various monumental statues in several courtyards.



Notice the heroic equestrian piece out front glorifying Prince Eugene of Savoy, who led the successful battles against the Ottoman Turks that saved Europe from Muslim conquest. The entire ensemble is held together by the magnificent Renaissance-style dome that towers over the center of the huge building.

FREE AFTERNOON

This completes our city tour and you now have the afternoon free. There are many options to consider, including museums, thermal baths, more walking and shopping.



BUDAPEST MUSEUM of FINE ARTS

We can return to the town center and ride the

metro, the continent's very first subway train, built in 1896 when Budapest was in its glory days, and still running as a quaint old-fashioned system with small cars, just below street level. You will arrive at Heroes Square, gateway to the museum and the City Park.

Or, if you have time and energy, you could skip the metro and walk that last leg along the grand Andrássy Street, sometimes compared to a beautiful Parisian boulevard, with its pretty trees and Art Nouveau buildings.



In the middle of the large, spectacular Heroes Square stands a monumental column celebrating the nation's millennium, topped by the Archangel Gabriel holding the Hungarian crown, which symbolizes the nation's conversion to Christianity under St. Stephen a thousand years ago. The 100-foot column is embraced by a huge semi-circular colonnade, bedecked with oversized statues representing the most heroic kings and princes of Hungary. The square is flanked on two sides by majestic museums.



The Museum of Fine Arts has an excellent collection of Old Masters, especially Spanish and Italian, a handful of Impressionists, and a large room of Egyptian pieces, along with several galleries of Greek and Roman marble statues. The building is quite impressive, in the grand neo-Classical style of a temple to the arts, with a big row of columns out front holding up the triangular pediment; and inside there are vast spaces for the art displays. It should be ranked among Europe's top museums, so the art fan would definitely enjoy a visit.

Perhaps the most interesting single piece is a bronze sculpture by Leonardo da Vinci, his only known statue to survive. About one foot long, it is a spectacular equestrian study of a bucking horse up on its hind legs, with a small, muscular, helmeted rider hanging on. There are other beautiful Italian works by Raphael, Correggio, Veronese and Tiepolo, and important Spanish paintings by Velasquez, El Greco, Goya, Zurbaran and Murillo. On the Flemish side you will find Rembrandt, Hals, Rubens, Bruegel, Steen and Van Dyke.



However, before you go upstairs to see this Old Masters' Gallery, turn left from the lobby and begin with the Impressionists while you are still fresh, because this is the most appealing part of the museum, offering beautiful canvases by Pissarro, Renoir, Monet, Cezanne, Gauguin and Manet. Sounds great, doesn't it? You will not be disappointed.



Gundel Restaurant is just around the corner for an excellent meal. There could be no better way to enhance your visit to Budapest than with a meal at Gundel, widely recognized as the best in town. This grand, traditional restaurant has been revitalized in recent years by the new ownership of cosmetics heir, Ronald Lauder, and famed restaurateur, George Lang, who also operates Café

des Artistes in New York. Reasonably-priced gourmet dining, with gypsy music, in sumptuous surroundings, either indoors or out, would make a great experience.

or if you are not yet ready to eat you could take a walk in City Park, across the square. It has a zoo, many rolling lawns, little ponds, a fantasy castle, skating rink, restful benches, a chapel, museums of agriculture and transportation, baths with thermal springs, a circus and a fun fair. This popular recreation spot could keep you busy all evening, but you will probably be hungry soon.

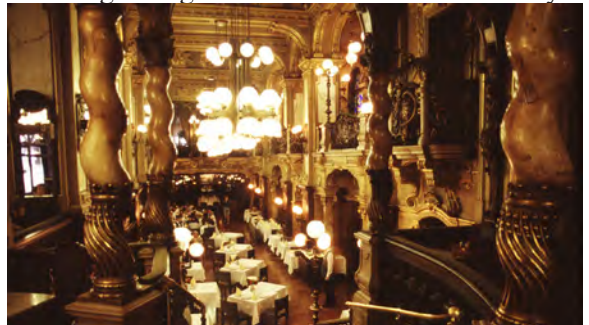


TRAM RIDE

Make your way to the big busy street that changes names a few times but is generally referred to as Nagykorut, the Great Ring Boulevard, and hop on a tram for a delightful, local experience. Remember the Hapsburg connections with the Austrians? Well, inspired by Vienna, Budapest also built a ring road that circles the main downtown area, and this is it. Of course, it is not lined with monumental architecture as found in Vienna, but it is worth the three-mile ride, because this takes you through the non-tourist heart of the city, plus there are two worthwhile stops along the way.

Riding along on smooth steel rails, the old-fashioned tram is very comfortable and has lots of windows, so you can see the sights very clearly. You'll be looking at rows of commercial buildings with typical local shops and occasional architectural pizzazz in this little excursion into the real world. In a few blocks, notice the large steel and glass train station on the left side, a landmark designed by the firm of Gustav Eiffel, called the West Station.

Hop back on the tram in the opposite direction, returning along the Great Boulevard until you



reach the New York Café, just past the busy intersection with Rakoczi utca. You have never seen such an elaborate coffee shop interior as you will find at the New York Café, the only such authentic space left from the 19th century, when there were 500 cafes at the center of cultural life here. The New York was always the most popular and most extravagantly decorated. It so pretty there is an admission fee just to see it, but don't hesitate to go in and admire: astonishing spiral columns, magical lighting, golden trim, statues and murals on the ceiling, potted palms, iron balconies, lush velvets, multilevel rooms and food service too. Well, the food is expensive, but you can just have a drink and your admission charge is credited to your tab.



FRANZ LISZT SQUARE

You can relax knowing that you have now seen most of Budapest. If you have any steam left you might cap off the evening at one of the most popular gathering places for the locals, Franz Liszt Square. This happening hub is at the intersection of Andrassy ut and Nagymezo utca, which forms Franz Liszt Square, one of the town's new hot spots rimmed with cafes and a trendy ambience – a fine place to conclude the visit.

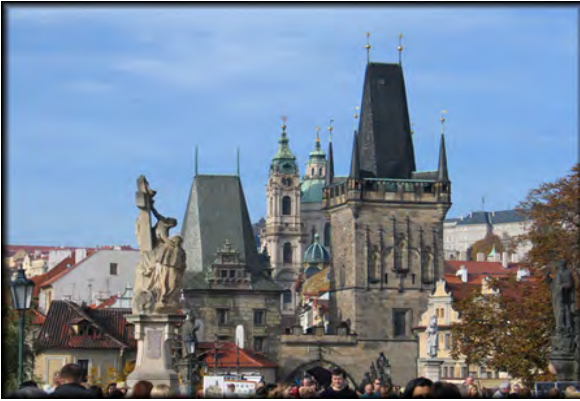


Next morning we take the train to Prague.

Imagine a beautiful, ancient European city that looks like the 18th century never ended, with cobbled lanes and majestic old Baroque palaces, statues everywhere, fountains, gardens, a brooding castle on the hill, a river crossed by historic foot-bridge, and with no automobiles in the center to shatter the time-warp illusion. This must be Prague!

Capital of the Czech Republic, Prague is one of the most picturesque and interesting cities in Europe. It is one of the few major historic places on the Continent that was not damaged by either World Wars, so the well-preserved buildings you see are the real thing, not a reconstruction or some tourist bureau fantasy.

Prague prospered as capital of the powerful province of Bohemia. During the 14th century it became the Continent's largest city after Paris, with the first university in central Europe (1348) and a thriving economy that supported cultural developments of great style and quality.



Religious wars in the 15th and 17th centuries created great turmoil, yet Prague continued to grow in wealth and power. For three centuries it was an integral part of the Hapsburg Empire, second only to Vienna in importance. Austrian nobility, with their elaborate Baroque tastes, built up Prague and left behind many wonderful treasures. Today the palaces that line the main square and side alleys of the Old Town display this entire historic span, with their Baroque facades, Gothic interiors, and ancient Romanesque cellars.



Not much has changed during the past 200 years, resulting in one of the largest collections of well-preserved old buildings in Europe. “Modernization” was thankfully limited to the graceful innovations of art nouveau at the beginning of the 20th century, found in dozens of elegant buildings around the center. Economic

stagnation under the Communists following the Second World War was unfortunate for Czech society, but fortuitously it preserved the old buildings by default, since there was no money to knock them down and build anything new. The city is a jewel intact, a time capsule glistening with castles, palaces, medieval old-town neighborhoods, and many fascinating sights that offer a glimpse of the past.



The “city of a hundred spires” will impress you with its soaring churches and lavish baroque palaces. Its lively squares and avenues give the city a festive atmosphere which few can rival, and its concert halls, ballet and opera performances are world-class.

The Old Town, dating from the 13th century, is on the eastern side of the Vltava River, while the Lesser Quarter (“Mala Strana”), is across the river with many more baroque palaces and quiet cobbled lanes. Above it all, dominating the entire city, is Hradcany Castle -- formerly the residence of the kings of Bohemia and now headquarters for the president of the Czech Republic.



The country changed radically in November 1989, immediately after the Berlin Wall fell, with the student-led Velvet Revolution that created a democratic, free economy overnight. When Vaclav Havel was elected president the political situation changed for the better, and the country has prospered ever since.

Only in the last two decades have travelers been able to freely explore Prague and enjoy the comforts of convenient hotels, restaurants and shops that have sprung up to accommodate the growing numbers of visitors. This city of 1.2 million has preserved its past, yet has eagerly joined the modern world as it throws off centuries of suppression. Prague has emerged from behind the Iron Curtain into a tourist destination equaling the great capitals of Europe.

Prague is rapidly becoming a center of the arts for the entire region, with some similarities to Paris in the 1920s. A new kind of Left Bank Bohemian attitude is developing in many of its creative souls, and this presents many interesting facets to the visitor, from new galleries, to street performers, to expanded museums.

Prague is now welcoming visitors as never before. The economic revolution has led to great improvements in the physical condition of the city, for most of the monuments and historic buildings have been renovated and cleaned up to perfection. And yet, Central Europe has not



yet been fully discovered by tourists, so while it can get a bit crowded during the peak season, there are ways to avoid being caught in the crush -- such as exploring some of the out-of-the-way neighborhoods described here and traveling during May or September rather than the peak of mid-summer. A golden moment in time has opened up for the enlightened traveler. About two miles across, central Prague can be thoroughly explored on foot in our two-day visit, featuring guided walking tours and the occasional journey by tram to speed things along. This detailed itinerary will make you quite familiar with one of Europe's most fascinating cities.

PRAGUE DAY ONE: Orientation walk: Old Town Square, Charles Bridge, Wenceslas Square, New Town.



OLD TOWN SQUARE:

At the center of Prague is the Old Town Square, surrounded by beautiful 18th century palaces, with the glowering twin Gothic towers of the Tyn Church looming over the scene on one side and the high Clock Tower of the Old Town Hall on the other. Day and night, this square is always busy with people passing through or just hanging out. Many of the old palaces have been converted into restaurants, bars and cafes, with outdoor tables spilling onto the square. It's nice for a drink and people-watching, but there are much better places for a meal, off the beaten track. Some of these cafes have barrel-vaulted cellars that were built a thousand years ago, so ask to have a look if you are curious about stepping back in time to the Romanesque.

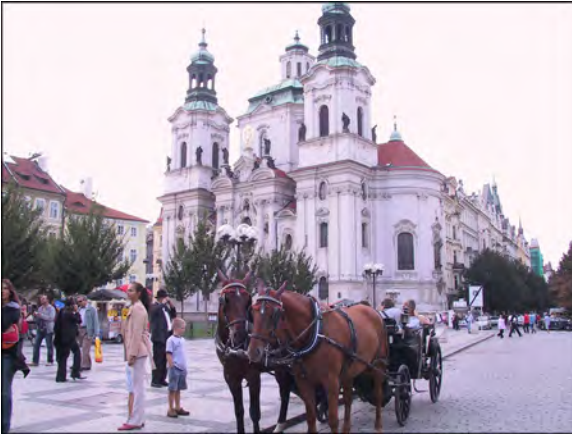


The Old Town Hall's Astronomical Clock has been putting on its show every hour for the past 350 years, with a dramatic display by the 12 Apostles who come marching past two windows on either side of the elaborate large clock. Watch for the golden rooster on top who finishes off the show with a big squawk. This two-faced clock not only tells time, but displays the phases of the moon, equinoxes, Babylonian time, painted seasons, the sun's rotation around the earth, various saint's feasts, zodiac signs, days and months.



On the left side of the clock is the entrance to the 650 year-old Town Hall Tower, which you might visit later today on your free afternoon, when you can climb the spiraling ramp that leads up about 200 feet to the viewing gallery for the best panorama of the Old Town, with its wonderful pattern of red clay tile roofs spreading out for a mile in all directions. There are other rooms inside the Town Hall you can pay to visit if you are curious about seeing interiors typical of the buildings around the square. One of the offices of

the Tourist Information service is also in the Old Town Hall.



Another sight to admire on the Old Town Square is St. Nicholas Church, a large white Baroque structure that generally hosts chamber music concerts in the evening -- so rather than pay admission to enter during the day, you might as well buy a concert ticket at the door and come back for the evening show. It is always a delight to attend a classical concert in a Baroque church, for you get excellent acoustics and many artistic details for your eyes to dwell on. They say architecture is music frozen in stone, and there is no better place to appreciate that harmony than a church concert. There is a tiny green park with a snack bar, a few trees and some benches between St. Nicholas and the Clock Tower, if you would like a brief rest with a nice view of the square.

Wall-to-wall palaces around the square show off a range of architectural styles in a creamy blend of color harmony that displays the historical variations perfectly. See if you can tell the difference between the pointed Gothic, elaborate Baroque, even busier Rococo, rounded Romanesque, and more modern Art Nouveau. It is all there in front of you in a spectacular display that invites close examination, where you can

discover hundreds of statues on the facades and appreciate 500 years of fine architecture with a sweeping glance.

The real star of the square is the old Gothic visage of the Church of Our Lady before Tyn, a symbol of the city with two pointed black towers sprouting with little turrets that make it look like slightly scary. There is a typical mix of different styles in this church, started in 1365 but continually renovated over the years with some Renaissance and Baroque altars, pulpits, stained glass, paintings and statues.

The big statue in the center of the Old Town Square is the impressive Monument to Jan Huss, an important religious reformer who was burned at the stake in 1415 for warning the Catholic Church that it had strayed too far from the Bible and for criticizing the opulent decadence of church officials. Anticipating Martin Luther by a hundred years, Huss was a hero and martyr for the Czech people, who created an independence movement that has reverberated right into modern times.

Every direction leading out from the square will lead you to interesting neighborhoods, so you will find yourself coming back to this busy center often during your visit as you venture this way and that. Evenings are also lively on the main square, with all the cafes open, hundreds of people streaming along, several concerts happening nearby, and various street performers putting on a show. It is well lit and very safe, so be sure to come back at night to catch the fun.



CHARLES BRIDGE:

The next most entertaining sight in Prague is the famous Charles Bridge, spanning the Vltava River (also called the Moldau). To get to the bridge from the main square we just follow the crowd, heading west past the Clock Tower into the narrow, twisting Karlova (“Charles”) Street, which is the busiest and most congested pedestrian street in town. It is only four short blocks, with some confusing left and right turns, but join the flow of bodies and we will easily arrive at the bridge. Along the way many souvenir shops will tempt you to come back this afternoon, with t-shirts, crystal, beer steins, little building models, puppets, wooden toys, jewelry and lots of other items, as you may prefer since this is the most touristy stretch in town.



The bridge is very special, for it joins the two main

historic sections of town, the Old Town and the Mala Strana across the Vltava River, with a graceful design that includes 30 bigger-than-life statues of saints. Construction began in 1357 during the reign of Charles IV, Prague’s most important king, and was finished 50 years later. The Baroque statues were added in the early 18th century, based on the work of Bernini at Rome’s Ponte Sant Angelo.



The bridge is not only the best way to get across town, it is a destination in itself for the splendid views, the street musicians, and shopping from outdoor kiosks stretching across the 500 yard length. Rather than crossing now, save the Mala Strana for tomorrow after your visit to Prague Castle. Do walk up the Bridge Tower on the Old Town side for a spectacular view over the rooftops and across the river.



OLD TOWN, SOUTH

Prague is a walker's city that invites detours and digressions, so this next section will bring you to an area of quaint back streets that are perfect for exploring, just south of Charles Bridge and the Old Town Square. Within this area you will be deep in the old city, but away from the tourists, so it makes a perfect place to meander. The whole neighborhood is ideal for the aimless stroll, offering the perceptive traveler an opportunity for immersion in 18th century architecture and town planning. Shoppers will find small stores with local crafts, clothing and antiques.



We now enter a fascinating labyrinth of quiet narrow alleys, little squares, charming old buildings, unique shops, inexpensive restaurants and less tourists. There are numerous tunnels and mid-block passages through buildings and courtyards that will lead us to quiet glimpses of behind-the-scenes life in the city.

Starting from Charles Bridge, notice the Clementinum, a large group of buildings on the left side, with courtyards, towers, chapels, and unfortunately, many locked doors. Built in the mid-16th century, this was headquarters for the

Jesuits, who were leading the opposition against the Reformation, which had already converted 90 percent of town to the Protestant faith. For the next 200 years the Jesuits expanded their influence, and this building complex kept growing into the second largest structure in town, after the castle.



There is no easy public access, but you can walk around through some of the courtyards and barrel-vaulted corridors. There are frequent concerts in the small Chapel of Mirrors, so you could check the schedule and buy your tickets while here. From the Clementinum, cross Karlova street and head south into a maze of streets including Aneska, Retezova, Liliova, Jalovcova, Naprstkova, Karoliny, Betlemska, Skorepka and Zlata.

There are simple little restaurants in this neighborhood with amazing bargains, because you are out of the tourist section and more into local territory. The cost of living for a Prague native is much less than European averages, but prices in the tourist restaurants and nice hotels are as high as you would pay at home -- so try a quiet local place for lunch. Czech cuisine is based on meat, potatoes and dumplings, but if you would like a lighter meal, look for Country Life, a vegetarian cafeteria on Melantrichova, a block south of the Old Town Square. One of the most interesting

blocks near here is the large open market along Havelka, with many stalls selling souvenirs and produce stands for the locals.



OLD TOWN, EAST:

We continue our walk in the neighborhood just east of the Old Town Square, which is best entered through a little alley to the left of Tyn Church. This will bring us to the Tynska neighborhood with two streets of that name and the large Ungelt courtyard, another peaceful inner space connected to the streets by pedestrian arcades. These are some delightful places, with cobblestones underfoot and quiet old buildings around you. Continue to the church of St. Jakob (St. James), a large Gothic church with an amazing Baroque interior, covered with elaborate statues of saints and angels. It is the second longest church in Prague, after the main cathedral you will see tomorrow at the castle.



Continue walking the back streets three more

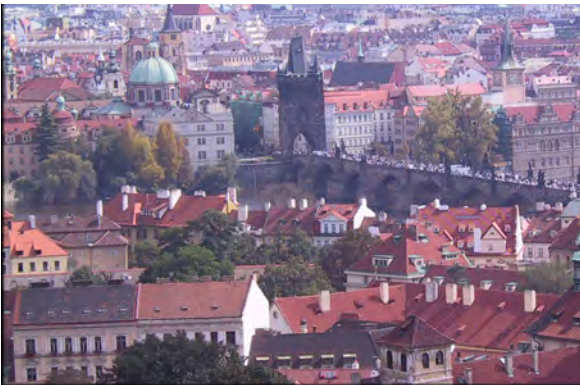
blocks to Namesti Republiky, a large square with several notable institutions and a metro station. Prague's largest department store, Kotva, is here in an ultramodern building four stories high and filled with nearly anything you could want -- but it's more fun to shop in the little stores and sidewalk stands all over town. Across the street you cannot miss the huge Municipal House, one of the cultural centers of Prague, featuring a major concert hall and an excellent restaurant, all set in the most dazzling Art Nouveau building in town, with a golden mirrored prismatic exterior, topped by several incongruous domes.



Standing next to the Municipal House is the Powder Tower, another ominous Gothic fortification. Two fascinating streets leading out from this tower and worthy of a detailed exploration are Celetna and Na Prikope. They are both for pedestrians and lined with shops, bars and restaurants, so you could



spend the remaining hours of your afternoon right here strolling up and down. Celetna has some of the oldest buildings in town, its Gothic structures embellished with elaborate Baroque faces, while Na Prikope has some contemporary architecture mixed with the old, and a very helpful Tourist Information office that can provide a complete list of all the concerts happening.

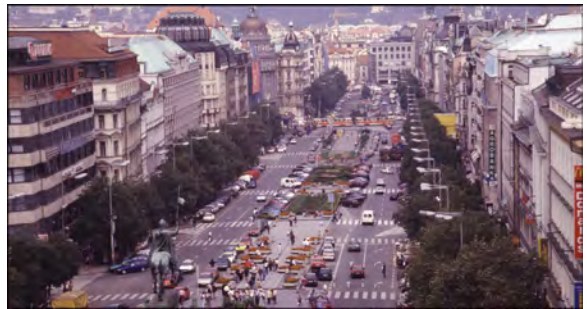


NEW TOWN

At this point we have covered the main goals for the day and you are free to wander, shop, and get ready for dinner, but for those still interested in walking, there is more to explore in this historic city, especially in a large section founded in 1348, but still called the “New Town.” When Charles IV, the greatest of all Bohemian kings, expanded

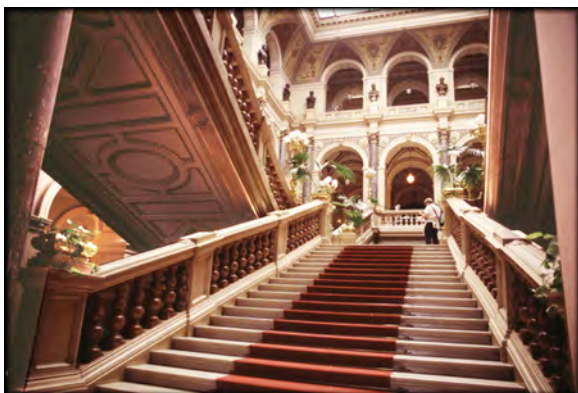
the defensive walls to encompass this new section, Prague instantly became the second biggest city in Europe after Paris.

The main sights in the New Town are Wenceslas Square, the National Museum, Charles Square, and some interesting little side streets. This section has a mix of new and old buildings, so the illusion of living in the past is not as strong here, but there are still many wonderful places of interest.



Wenceslas Square is a major landmark in the shape of a wide boulevard stretching one half mile, lined with shops, restaurants and hotels. It has always been an important gathering place, such as during the peaceful democratic revolution in 1989, when it filled up with nearly the entire million population of Prague. It is always busy, from the Old Town end filled with outdoor shopping stands, upslope to the National Museum, proudly anchoring the other end.

Browse around for a while at this lower end of the square, and then, if you have any interest in Art Nouveau, walk one block over to the Museum of Alfons Mucha, Panska 7, open from 10-6 daily. He was the master of early 20th century poster art, typically featuring beautiful faces surrounded by swirls of dreamy flowers. There is also an interesting video display about his life, and an excellent gift shop in the lobby.



It is well worth a walk to the top of Wenceslas Square, where you will find the National Museum, built in the late 19th century in a heroic neo-Renaissance style. Its collections are quite antiquated, so you don't really need to visit it. However, it is definitely worth entering the lobby area to appreciate the spectacular staircase and rotunda, which you can see without paying the \$2 admission -- and there is a perfect view looking down along Wenceslas Square from here, with a decent café on the terrace offering light snacks. You can also appreciate the majestic statue of Wenceslas on his horse at this end of the square.



From here it is only a six-block downhill walk to Charles Square, a large green park in the midst of the New Town. This is not the most exciting

walk in town, but it does give a view of typical residential neighborhoods, and for the beer-drinkers, there is a big reward. Of course, you find excellent beer all over town, but there are certain beer halls that are historic institutions, such as U Fleku, one block beyond Charles Square, at 11 Kremencova. They have been brewing their own dark beer here since 1459, in a delightful setting with several rambling indoor rooms and a shady outdoor garden with large communal tables, accompanied by a couple of oompa bands to help things flow.

Music is one of the great delights of a visit to Prague, with probably more concerts every night than any other city in Europe. You will see the vendors in costume all over town passing out leaflets promoting various performances, and tables set up by church doors promoting their high-quality shows.



One of the best concert halls is the famous Estates Theater, where Mozart conducted the premier of Don Giovanni. Drop by and see if seats are available for the evening performance, which would be a perfect way to end your first day in Prague. Finally, you might be interested in seeing the old Jewish section of town, called Josefov.



PRAGUE DAY TWO:

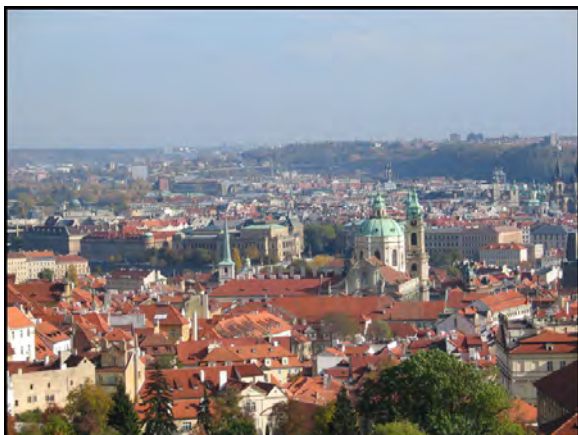
The Castle and Mala Strana. Free afternoon.

We will spend the morning on the other side of the Vltava River, exploring the huge castle and the old sections of town all around it. It is a mile uphill from the Old Town, so rather than walk there, we take the tram and get off one stop beyond the castle entrance, where we reach the Strahov Monastery, marked by a statue of astronomer Johannes Kepler.

STRAHOV MONASTERY

Here you could enjoy an optional visit to two of the most beautiful library rooms you have ever seen, richly decorated with paintings and statues from ceiling to floor, their shelves lined with precious books. Founded back in the 12th century, the complex has grown over the years to include a church, cloister, monastery, research institute, museum, disco, restaurant, and most of all, the library. The two rooms that will delight your eyes are the Theological Hall, and especially, the Philosophical Hall, with an amazing Baroque ensemble of carvings, ceiling murals, gilded frames and inlaid wooden architecture that meld into a most stimulating experience.





Leave the libraries and walk right around to a terrace with a spectacular view over the vineyards to the city down below. Return to the open yard next to the monastery and walk through some gates



to a small staircase tunnel that will lead you down to Pohorelec, near where you got off the tram. This street is the heart of Hradcany, formerly an independent town associated with the castle, now one of the most historic areas of Prague. You will enjoy walking along through the open arcade past the cute little shops and restaurants, ending up at Cernin Palace, a huge building that is home to the Foreign Ministry. Across the way, for the truly devout, is a pilgrimage church called Loreto, with a reproduction of the Virgin's house from Nazareth.

Walking downhill towards the castle, you will come upon several more wonderful old palaces, some of which are open as museums.



The Schwarzenberg Palace is covered with illusionist “sgraffito” geometric painted designs, in an Italian style that has been adapted into a special Prague motif found elsewhere in town. The palace contains a museum of military history with coverage through World War I. Across the square is the Archbishop's Palace, and in the middle, an impressive Plague Column, from 1726.

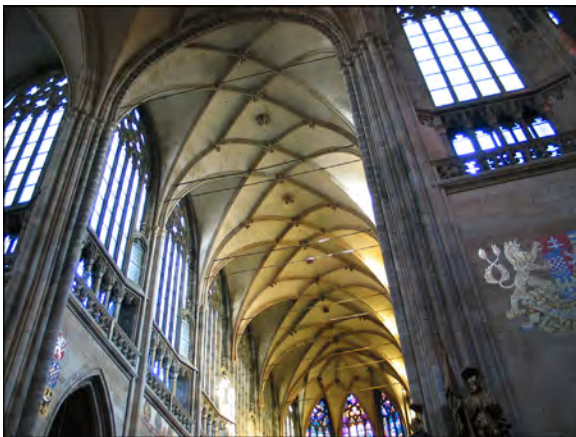


PRAGUE CASTLE:

This is where the city began, with foundations that reach back to the ninth century. Primary sights we can visit in our tour of the castle are St. Vitus Cathedral and the Royal Palace.

St. Vitus Cathedral takes its place as one of the great Gothic churches of Europe, with vast pinnacles soaring high above the huge nave, 400 feet long and 200 feet wide, the largest church in town. Built over a 600-year period and not completed until early in the 20th century, this church has accumulated a variety of beautiful art treasures, including Renaissance and Baroque tombs, paintings and statues.

A special chapel encrusted with jewels contains the crypt of St. Wenceslas, the patron saint of Prague. Remember “Good King Wenceslas” from the Christmas tune? Well, he was a prince, not a king, and ruled for just 16 years until 935, when he was assassinated on the way to mass by his brother, Boleslav the Cruel, who then exterminated most of his other rivals.



The cathedral’s stained glass collection features some original golden Gothic windows around the altar, and 20th century windows in the nave, including an Art Nouveau section by Alfons Mucha, whose museum you could visit tomorrow, and a large Rose Window on the façade. Don’t miss the 2-ton silver tomb of St. John Nepomuk, covered with angels carrying his soul heavenward, designed by Fisher von Erlach of Vienna.

Emerging from the front doors, take a left and walk to the far corner of the courtyard for the best view looking back at the cathedral. It is so huge and surrounded by so many buildings, there is no perfect view -- but this is your best shot. Notice the pointed arches of three large doors on the side, called the Golden Portal, which had been the main entrance until the nave was extended in the 19th century. Behind the cathedral is an older church, the Basilica of St. George, built in the heavy Romanesque style a thousand years ago. To the right is the Royal Palace entrance.



There is one spectacular room inside the Royal Palace that makes the price of admission worthwhile, Vladislav Hall, built in late Gothic style 500 years ago, with an amazing rib vaulted ceiling that spans the 200-foot length of this huge chamber. It is a most important space, where kings have been crowned and other great ceremonies held. It was used for indoor jousting tournaments that featured knights on horseback battling with each other, and functioned as an indoor market and gathering place for the public.



The final attraction at the Castle is Golden Lane, a row of cute little houses in a quaint back alley of the grounds that were once occupied by royal alchemists, who kept trying to turn lead into gold. They never succeeded, but did make progress towards the development of modern chemistry.



MALA STRANA

After we finish the castle we exit from the back gate and walk downhill to Mala Strana (“Lesser Quarter”) a most historic neighborhood that feels like a peaceful little village from times gone by. We take the easy route straight down the Old Castle Steps and will reach the edge of Mala Strana in ten minutes.

The heart of Mala Strana is quite small so we can see much of it in an hour. Like the Old Town across the river, many of the buildings here go back to the Gothic period, with most of the exterior designs completed during the Baroque era, so they are beautiful to look at. It has remained pretty much the same for the last 400 years, making this an intact jewel, a time capsule of what cities looked like so long ago.



We start out with the Wallenstein Garden, a block from the foot of the Old Castle Steps, after turning right on Pod Bruskou and Valdstejska. The garden is a green oasis with fountains, statues, a Rococo pavilion, and benches to rest upon, all arranged with the formal symmetry of the Renaissance.



Follow the tram tracks along several bends in the Letenska road to arrive at the back of St. Nicholas,

then walk around and enter this amazing, early 18th century church -- but prepare yourself for a dazzling, dizzying display of architectural pyrotechnics! It is the most Baroque display in a very Baroque city, so the Dientzenhofer clan of artists really had to ratchet up the effects to impress their jaded townsfolk. Lavish adornment covers the pulpit and side chapels, wonderful columns soar upward, painted arches blend with real corners so you don't know what is real.



Everything seems to move in this enormous display of curves that mesmerize, murals that trick, statues that seem to be marble but are not, with a smooth flow of architecture that holds it all together, surmounted by the highest dome in town, 230 feet overhead. This is the Jesuits at their Counter-Reformation best, with Italian style converted into a Bohemian rhapsody.

Emerging back into the daylight, have a look straight up at the façade to appreciate the convex and concave lines, based on the work of Borromini in Rome. Walk across the square to the far corner for the best overview of this huge church.



FREE AFTERNOON

This completes our morning tour and you are now free to explore for the rest of the day. As always, we have suggestions to help make the most of your time. If you wish, there are more adventures awaiting in Mala Strana. For an extended look at the old section, take a half-mile loop walk up Nerudova Street, then down a staircase to a narrow downhill lane that leads past several embassies, including our own, and delivers you back to St. Nicholas. Or skip that diversion if you are tiring. Hunger pangs? There are a couple of inexpensive sandwich shops along Karmelitska.



Walk towards Charles Bridge on Mosteká, a busy shopping street, but take a quick left into a very

quiet section along Misenska Street, a pleasant old curved lane. Turn right at the end and pass under the bridge through a magical arch that leads you to Kampa Island, a most peaceful place. The small Na Kampe square has a garden in the middle with benches and trees, surrounded by old palaces, with some tourists passing through, but mostly locals hanging out.



Keep walking straight through to the lush green park of Kampa Island, sometimes called “Little Venice” because of the canal that runs alongside, with cute waterfront houses. It is refreshing to be out of the city for a moment as you stroll through the lawns, under a canopy of trees, listening to birds chirping. An old water wheel still turns on the side of an abandoned mill, which is your signal to cross the little bridge over Devil’s Creek and return to the mainland.

If you are hungry for a gourmet meal you can find a nice restaurant in this part of town. One of the best in town is nearby on Nebovidska Street, The Blue Duck (U Modre Kachnicky), which Frommer’s calls their “favorite restaurant in Prague,” although it is relatively expensive. An excellent alternative for outdoor dining is Kampa Park restaurant on the water’s edge with a postcard river view of Charles Bridge and Old Town.



After dining take a stroll across the Charles Bridge and continue on to the Old Town Square, which will be booming with activity until the wee hours. Hopefully you have already lined up tickets for a concert, so you can cap off this stimulating day with some marvelous music. Along with the numerous classical venues, you can often find traditional Czech folk music and dance performances, especially in the Theater of the Municipal Library on Marianske nam, one block west of the Old Town Square. You can now see why UNESCO protects this amazing collection of wonderful old historic buildings as a World Heritage Site.



Comments from our travelers:

“Better than I had hoped for. The cities we visited were wonderful. Hotels were very nice. Thanks for including so many xtras – your walking tours and the other tour guides were excellent. The people in the group were very compatible. Size of 20 in group was great. Best experiences: all the castles, museums, crown jewels, Schonbrunn Palace! Especially liked Heidelberg, Salzburg and Prague – so picturesque and easy to walk around, quaint sights and shops. Very worthwhile.” Pat Ho



“Albert and I want to thank you for another great trip! We enjoyed ourselves so much. We appreciate all the time you spent in showing us all the sights! All the get-togethers you set up and

sharing of

experiences, plus your good company – that makes each trip special for us. We both look forward to another trip with you. We have so many good memories!”

Albert and Anne Chang



“Tour focused on visiting historical as well as interesting cities, picturesque rural countryside, rivers (e.g. Danube). The daily walking and orientation tours plus the motor coach tours covered a great many interesting sites in depth. We fully experienced memories that will last a long time. Your narrations were very educational

– we learned a lot from them. We are very fortunate to have traveled with a very pleasant and considerate group of people and everyone was so prompt. Best experiences: Nymphenburg Palace, the surrounding pavilions and garden. In general, the walking tours thru



the old town squares, plazas which often led to magnificent palaces and churches either in baroque or renaissance style were true highlights. Learning of the Hapsburg empire and of kings Ludwig I and II was very interesting. Overall tour

including cities we visited, length of stay in each city, the hotels, was excellent. The walking/orientation tour at the start is great, especially to get our bearings and to venture on our own.” Harry and Irene Toyomura

“For me, a good overall view of several European areas, makes for simpler decisions pertaining to return trips.” Sam Moss



“Special, outstanding & awesome are words that come to mind. A truly great experience to share with Kanoe. You did a marvelous job of allowing me to see, learn and know a great deal about the various countries’ history and outstanding sights.” Richard Hansen

“There were many best experiences to be sure, but generally the memories created of the wonders of nature, beauty and value of things created by



man many years ago that are still talked about today. Having met and talked to other members of our tour -- their memories and experiences of other tours -- comparing memories and learning from them how to plan my future travels to possibly see and experience what they have done.” Minoru Asato

the whole city; Munich, lunch in the park; Heidelberg, the whole city!”
Bud and Claudine Schoen

“Excellent selection of cities, at best time of year for weather and relatively uncrowded conditions. Very congenial fellow travelers.” Bob Schmitt

“Super!! We’ve been on a bus tour that gives us a basis of comparison. We found your tour to be superior in the following ways: We had more time to get to know the city. Walking tours gave us a better sense of orientation as opposed to feeling lost when you’re driven around. It was an education in moving around from city to city and within the city itself. The tour developed confidence that you could do it yourself if you decided to revisit any of the places on the tour. Best experiences: Heidelberg, the boat ride and hike to Philosopher’s Walk; Munich: Hofbrauhaus and walks thru the city – horn and organ concert in church. Salzburg: local band festival and lake tour; Budapest: dining to live gypsy music – night boat ride on Danube, seeing Leonardo’s sculpture; Prague: Old Town Square and Charles Street; orchestra concert at night. Mahalo for a great experience.”
Karene Miyamoto

“Super. I had a great time. Excellent itinerary, very educational. Handouts were helpful. Good to travel with a small group with congenial tour members. Best experiences: walking tours led by Dennis; Romeo and Juliet ballet; Mozart concert in Vienna; eating the delicious Sachertorte at the hotel Sacher and the wonderful dinner at Zumritter; train rides between cities; Art Museum in Vienna. Thank you for the good service.”
Millie Fukumoto



“Great. You are the talk of the town. No one does it better. Thank you for your patience, I’m glad we went.” Sylvia Mitchell

“Thank you very much for your unique and fun photos. We really enjoyed the trip with friendly people. Especially, the 1st class train ride was very pleasant. It was interesting to see the different countries’ scenery through the train windows. The location of the hotels that we stayed at made travel to and from points of interest easy. Best experiences: Concert at castle in Salzburg; Museum of Fine Arts in Munich, Vienna, Budapest. Old Town in Prague. Thank you very much for your help.” Hideko Patton



“Great way to see the Central Europe countryside and the main, interesting cities for the



first time. The orientation walks were a good idea. It was a great sampler of the cities we visited. Best experiences: Vienna, tour of Schonrun Palace, lunch in the Rosenburger cafeteria, viewing the crown jewels, Strauss-Mozart concert; Salzburg,

“Highly recommend. Informative walking tours and train transport. There was time to revisit points of interest after each city tour, enjoy the local culture and socialize with our group. I will be reading about the Hapsburgs! Loved the gorgeous lighted landscapes on the Danube in the evening boat ride, and walking all the cities.”
Norma Miyamoto

“It was great! All your preparation – the pictures before we left – the photo pages after we came home, added to the ‘Central Europe’ experience very much! Thank you!”
Norma Jean Ferguson



“It was great! Seeing all those old beautiful buildings – it was like being in a history and art class. I really liked the hunting lodge palace. All the churches were beautiful. We’re so glad to have made 16 new friends – everyone was so mellow.” Fort and Nieva Elizaga



“It was wonderful. The hotels and breakfasts were great, in a perfect location. The restaurants recommended were good. We appreciated the loan of handouts to read on the train, as well as the photos of the trip when it was all

over. Best experiences: discovering new and different experiences like the beer fest in Austria along with all the bands, the science museum, art museums, castle visits. Everything included in the



itinerary was great. You are most thoughtful as well as interesting to know. We are looking forward to different trips with you and want to thank you for everything.”

Robert and Evelyn Main



“I enjoyed the tour very much and plan to go back sometime. Great people on the tour. You did a great job Dennis!”
George Lee

“Great – just being in Europe, seeing castles, original art of great artists and architecture of buildings we studies in history classes was a great satisfaction. Very nice group of people; couldn’t ask for a nicer group. Best experiences: Heidelberg, just being there in the Old Town. Munich, enjoyed walking the pedestrian mall at night & the Hofbrau Restaurant. Salzburg: concert in Mirabell Palace – just being there, and the beer fest. Vienna: outdoor cafes and just watching people. Budapest: food, goulash. Prague: city walk, shopping & hotel.” Meryle Lee



“Mother of all Trips. It consisted of beautiful people – I was not one of them but still came out smelling like a rose. It was a walking experience which turned into treats and boosts. Dennis thinks of everything. I was proud of the mental and physical abilities of people who lived centuries ago, creating masterpieces of art, financed by the Hapsburgs, ruling family of Austria 1276-1918.”
Ingeborg Rudiger

“Overall the trip was very educational, sort of a review of things learned in college days

on architectural terms – gothic, classic, etc. Enjoyable and most of all the participants were all very friendly, helpful like a family group. Train trips were enjoyable. Best experiences: Concerts, dinner concert at the castle which was unusual in setting. Salt mine tour. Being back to re-experience the famous Hofbrauhaus and eating bratwurst, salad (was so delicious I went there every day); Heidelberg's Philosopheweg, Pinakotek Museum (always enjoy art work); and the folk dancing show in Budapest was fun and enjoyable." Frances Kiyabu



view in Heidelberg. I also liked seeing Austria, especially the scenery and the palaces and art museums. I liked the views in Prague and the shopping in Munich." Virginia Padayhag



"I was very happy with the tour as visits to museums were available....My favorite city was Prague with its many domes and spires. It had a great atmosphere about it. The best experiences for me were the great breakfasts

at each of the hotels, seeing Heidelberg and Hohensalzburg Castles, Vienna's Belvedere Palace, the Lakes and Mountains Tour and most of all visiting the great museums in Munich, Vienna and Budapest. As always, thank you very much for a great trip." Marian Tomoeda

"The trip was totally exhilarating. Best experiences: for me, the visits to the fine art museums. The highlights of the whole trip were the visits to the Pinakotheks, Kunsthistorisches, Upper Belvedere, Museum of Fine Art in Budapest and the Mucha Museum." Seisho Tomoeda



"I really enjoyed the trip. I liked the balance of history, architecture, art, music and shopping. The other travelers were very pleasant and nice to be with. I liked seeing the castle with the wonderful

"Was a wonderful trip – better than Rome to London! Hotel quality and especially location was excellent. Hard to top. All were very clean, comfortable and right where the action was! Orientation walks and city tours were very good. Weather was almost perfect. Best experiences: first view of the old square in Prague – the domes, spires, sidewalk cafes and mass of people! Shopping in Prague. The panoramic view of Buda and Pest separated by the Danube River. The Mozart House in Salzburg. Each new city seemed to top the last, but nevertheless each had its own unique beauty & outstanding memories. Itinerary with no major problems showed that proper planning & homework was done. Good job Dennis! Amount of free time was just about right. Appreciated the chance to nap when we got a little tired." Clarence and Betty Kawahigashi

"Super! Our group was small and compatible. There were so many highlights it's very hard to separate them out. Dennis was great. His energy and keen interest/excitement (although he had seen it all many times before) was infectious. Always helpful/patient. Sorry to be so non-critical but we thoroughly enjoyed the trip." Cuyler Shaw



This brochure was created by Dennis Callan. He will be leading the tour of Central Europe again this year. Call him at 528-4411 to reserve your space now.

More Comments:

An excellent trip – an impressive beginning at Aina Haina Library with the leader's 108 pre-trip tips and advice – I thought valuable, needed information for myself. As promised, the hotels were conveniently located and saved us time – we were “there” before the crowds arrived. Leader was always available and never failed to give us info on restaurants, “must see” places with accompanying history of area and much needed advice on places you should skip. We never had to waste time. Our leader took care of everything so I did not worry.

Best experiences: Seeing & experiencing art & architecture of cities we visited – loved the interior of Munich Symphony Hall (lucky to have caught Lorin Mazel conducting Munich Symphony Orchestra), listening to choral music by Joseph Hayden's brother at St. Peters Church, Vienna.

Visiting fascinating market in Budapest with various paprikas, produce & dry goods. The view from Charles Bridge in Prague was unexpectedly beautiful – the landscape seen in the morning light from there is etched in my brain. Doris Aragaki

Overall, for me as a first time visitor to Central Europe it was a very good overview. Trip highlights would have to be the walking part –



through the castles, churches and old parts of the cities. Also the music was a great treat – La Traviata at the Prague Opera House and others. Evelyn Aragaki

Great! I enjoyed the walking very much – kept me in shape. I got to see more places – educational lectures – the beautiful cathedrals and castles. You were easy to be with and talk to, so it made the trip comfortable and enjoyable. I remember the two hikes you took us, to the mountainside to view the towns in Heidelberg and Salzburg. It was awesome. What a good feeling. It's an experience I'll always talk about, thank you. Restaurants you recommended to us were very good. Agnes Fujimoto



I thought the trip was very good. I enjoyed the walking and the people in our group. The guys were great handling the luggage. You did a wonderful job taking care of our needs – finding us good restaurants, w.c. and patience, patience, patience. The weather was really kind to us. Two nights at a hotel is an excellent idea. No need to pack and unpack each night, which is a chore. I enjoyed the train ride to each different country. It was very relaxing and being in first class made it more enjoyable.

I really don't think there were any bad experiences. Thank you very much for the DVD. I look forward to your videos on TV. Sharon Tani



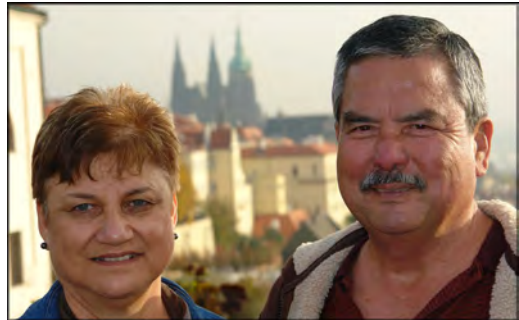


Very nice. Especially the train transportation aspect. The transfers went smoothly. Best experiences were the evening events (music, etc.) Thanks very much for the DVD. It is fabulous – I will make copies for friends and family.
Sue Hubbard

It was an amazing and enjoyable trip! The hotels were located in the old cities, giving us easy access to the important historic sites, shops and cultural events/activities. The city tours gave me an orientation to each city and a little insight to each. Having a map in our hands helped greatly with navigating around each city! The recommended eating places was a good guide to sampling the local food as well as the atmosphere! I have no complaints. Thank you very much for sharing your expertise and knowledge with us. Your train tour certainly out-ranks the typical bus tour! I was happy that we could do some things on our own also.
Verna Rabacal



Everything went well. Again made great new friends, saw wonderful sights. We enjoy traveling “Callan” style no matter what. I never tire of walking the streets of these cities – that is the best part. Seeing the people who live there going about their daily lives, stumbling upon shops, like the Chinese basement store in Prague – all so enjoyable. Really can’t think of any problems. Genny Wong



The trip went very well. We had a good group, made new friend. Hotels, trains, bus rides very good also. Best experiences were seeing and being a part of history in all the cities we went to. Looking forward to our next trip. Tommy Wong



Let's compare our travel style with the typical bus tour:

■ We travel by train

The train is comfortable, smooth, quiet, relaxing, and so fast it gets you there in half the time. On the train you are free to walk around, have a meal in the dining car or enjoy a picnic lunch, and talk with some of the other travelers on board. First class trains are air-conditioned, so they are cool and quiet. The spacious seats are like sofas, and can recline to make you very comfortable -- you might even take a nap. You can use the clean, convenient bathrooms anytime you want. The rail routing is through scenic countryside, and you can move around to enjoy the views on both sides through picture windows.

■ Centrally located hotels

We have made a great effort to select fine hotels in the historic centers of the places we visit. This is extremely important, for it enables you to experience much more by just stepping out your front door. In such an advantageous location there are many nearby restaurants, monuments, shops, historic sights, important buildings, landmarks, and other features that you have come on vacation to see. Most European cities have a historic central district dedicated to the pedestrian, filled with these attractions, and this is where we like to stay. Our central hotel locations enable you to walk freely and safely through interesting neighborhoods, which is the best way to get to know a place. We want you to get the most out of your precious time, and really get a feeling for each destination. Nothing enhances that better than a good hotel in a central location. This is probably our biggest difference in approach.

■ Shopping like a local

With us you always have time for shopping in local stores, or, if you are not a shopper, use your precious time for other activities, instead of being led by the nose into tourist traps. The historic centers of town are filled with fascinating and unique little shops that are fun to browse through, and we will point you to those neighborhoods and set you loose. If you are looking for any particular items, your Hawaii escort can take some time to help you find them.

■ They travel by bus

Sitting on a crowded bus for up to eight hours on a long journey can be very tiring. You are confined to a small space, and cannot move around at all. There is no dining car, and often when you pull into a roadside cafeteria, long lines are waiting ahead of you. Restroom stops also slow down the journey and waste your precious time, and they might not stop when you need it the most. The "scenic view" is dominated by the highway filled with trucks and cars. Buses often get stuck in heavy traffic jams on crowded streets, with many other vehicles competing for your road space, which can produce a lot of stress.

■ Hotels on the edge, or beyond...

You finally arrive at your hotel after an all-day bus ride, and find that you are still far away from the main attractions of town. Your tour operator is saving money by putting you in a nondescript hotel on the fringe of the city. There will be very little to see in your immediate vicinity, so you have to spend money and time on a taxi ride into town, or you just don't bother, and miss out. You are practically held hostage in these remote locations, so your tour guide can sell you optional tours. These hidden expenses quickly increase the price you pay for the trip. Sometimes these big operators even put you in a hotel that is not in town at all, so you are really out of the picture. All you are going to see is what the tour operator shows you on a brief bus tour, and that is usually a quick view of highlights through the window, and then off to the next city for more of the same treatment.

■ Shopping in tourist traps

With the bus tour, during the brief time you have in a place, you are often herded into tourist-trap "factories" and "showrooms" for "bargain" shopping. You are stuck on the bus, so you are at their mercy. If the tour bus stops at a souvenir mill, you stop too, and there is usually no other shop nearby except the one they have chosen for you. Your guide and driver are getting a commission for taking you there, so that's the place they want you to shop.

■ In-depth city tours

We include several tours in each city, to give you a well-rounded look at the place. Our panoramic city tours are on a private motorcoach with a professional local guide, and we provide walking tours with your Hawaii escort. Our guided walks really make you familiar with a place, and prepare you for some exploring on your own. Because we are staying for two or three days, you have enough time for this, with time left over for your independent activities. We put a special emphasis on history and fine arts. The trips are educational, cultural experiences, and they are also a lot of fun. Our walking tours will take you through historic neighborhoods filled with architectural treasures, and you have time for museums and other cultural attractions.

■ Leisurely pace -- quality time

We stay for two or three nights in each place. This gives us enough time to show you around with our tours, and then you actually have free time so you can do some exploring on your own. This approach gives you the “best of both worlds” for the guidance we provide on our included tours helps you get the most out of your free time as well. With a proper orientation to a city, you can make the best choices for your independent activities, and we are always there to help. You will have some time to relax and enjoy the sights instead of being constantly on the go. This is how you really get a sense of place, and gain a feeling for the character of each of the cultures on the itinerary.

■ Small groups, from Hawaii

We limit our group size to 20 or 25 people, which we have found is quite important, for when you get above that size the group becomes very impersonal. Nearly every one of us is from Hawaii, so we become a friendly ohana on the road, looking out for each other, and showing a lot of courtesy. For example, it is very unusual for anyone to be late, so we do not waste time waiting. New friendships are made that last well beyond the length of the tour, and after returning home we have a reunion party to celebrate the trip!

■ Quick city tour

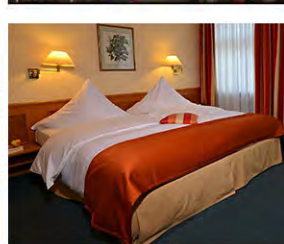
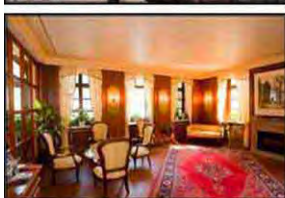
At best they might give you a three-hour bus tour, and that's all. You are usually in town for only one night, and then leave the next morning, so there is little time for anything else. If there is any extra time, you will find the tour guide wants to sell you options that take you away from town, and if you don't buy the option, they set you loose with very little preparation, so you are on your own. Without proper guidance you might end up wasting time and being unable to find the important sights on your own. But usually, there is no extra time, since you are already heading for the next city. If you get lucky you might have a quick look in one museum, and the little bit of history that you hear is probably delivered in dry lectures on the long bus rides that just might...lull...you...to...sleep.

■ One-night stands

Most bus tours keep you moving all the time. You arrive in a city late in the day, after driving for many hours, and then you leave in the morning for your next destination. The standard bus tour operators have devised exhausting itineraries that appear to show you all of Europe in 17 days, but when you analyze them, you are sitting on the bus most of that time! Unpacking every night, and repacking every morning, you don't have much time left for sightseeing. With a bus tour you have precious little free time for you are on the go all the time. If it's Tuesday, where are we now? All too often the quick stream of cities becomes a fuzzy forgettable blur.

■ Big groups, from everywhere

You really don't know whom you are going to be traveling with, or how full the bus is going to be. The bus has up to 55 seats, and they are usually full, with everyone jockeying for position, so you are part of a very big group, with most of the people from every place but Hawaii. A big anonymous group like that creates a less friendly environment. In this case you are just a face lost in the crowd -- and you probably will not get to know many people in the group by name, or ever see them again.



Heidelberg:

Hollander Hoff Hotel

Neckarstaden 66,

Phone 49-6221-60500; fax 49 6221 605060

www.hollaender-hof.de

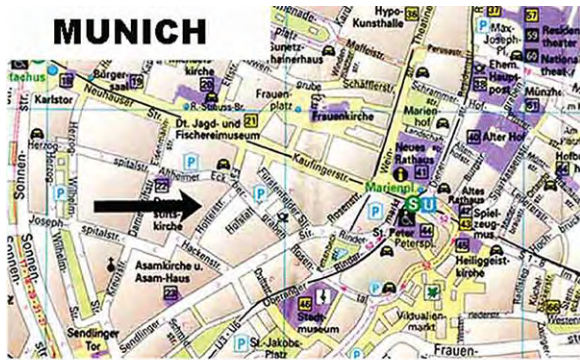
Hollander Hof Hotel finds itself in a unique location in Heidelberg's historic Old Town directly at the Old Bridge, and offers a spectacular view to the Neckar River and the famous Philosopher's Walk.

The Market Square with the Church of the Holy Spirit is only a few minutes away, as well as the University, the Theatre and the Cable-car station, which brings you up to the world-famous Heidelberg castle.

In the romantic atmosphere of our hotel with its 39 comfortable rooms – equipped with direct dial telephone, wireless Internet access, TV-set and radio, safety boxes (for depositing your laptop as well), hairdryer, minibar and shower/bathroom, W-Lan Internet access, you will enjoy our traditional style combined with the modern spirit of the age.

Our courteous service and the unique atmosphere of Heidelberg will surely aim to make a memorable experience of your stay.

A lift and rooms for the disabled are part of the hotel's offer. Some of our rooms have air-conditioning. The in-house restaurant offers regional specialties as well as international dishes. We offer a substantial breakfast buffet and a smaller business breakfast. You can use the business corner with wireless LAN access to the Internet in the lobby.



Munich

Mercure München Altstadt

Hotterstraße 4

Tel.: +49 89-23259 0

<http://www.mercure-muenchen-altstadt.de>

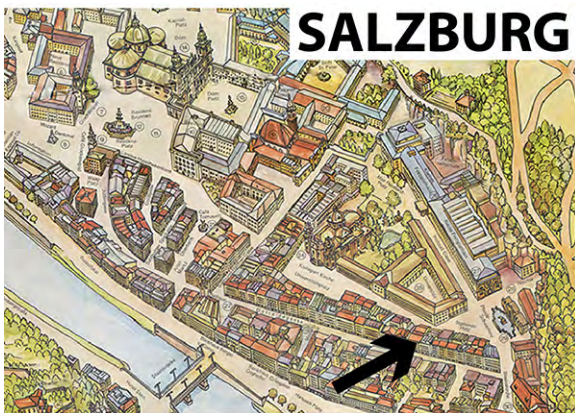
The Mercure München Altstadt is a fully air-conditioned facility in the heart of the Bavarian capital, just two minute's walk to the famous Marienplatz. All 75 of our suites and rooms have modern furnishings.

Our lobby offers a beverage/coffee bar, an Internet terminal and a shoeshine machine for a polished appearance. Our fax and copy service is of course free of charge.

The rooms are all equipped with new flat screen TVs and the suites are given a second flat screen for the bedroom area. Coffee and tea are also made available to you.

Our breakfast buffet is not only popular among guests because of the high-quality food and beverages but also because of the variety of healthy, refreshing and delicious selections available. In addition to the various cold cuts and cheese types, we also offer a range of rolls, bread and sweet pastries. Marmalade and honey will help keep you sweet. A range of cereals, yoghurts, fresh fruit salad and fresh fruits will ensure you get a healthy start to the day. . One of the most popular features is our orange juice machine, where you can make as much fresh juice as you want. Of course there are also loads of tidbits to discover as well. Comes spoil yourself at our breakfast buffet.





SALZBURG

Salzburg

Hotel Goldener Hirsch

Getreidegasse 37, Salzburg, Austria

phone +43 662 80840

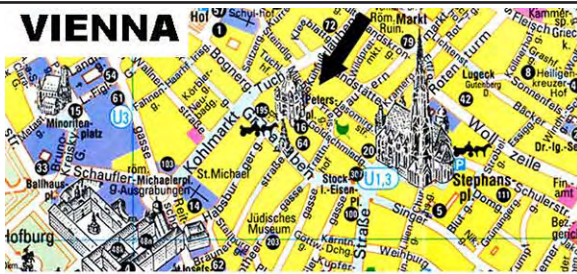
[hotel website](#)

The Goldener Hirsch is a five-star traditional hotel located on Salzburg's famous pedestrian lane, the Getreidegasse, in the old city center. This house enchants its guests with characteristic charm and exceptional family-like atmosphere. The "Goldene Hirsch" in Mozart's city is the epitome of hospitality with tradition within the luxury segment, located in the historic section of town which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Hotel Goldener Hirsch is managed with a personal touch and a family-like character. The 70 rooms Luxury Collection hotel reflects the atmosphere of past days enriched by today's elegant luxury. Furnished in the typical Salzburg design with a lot of wooden elements, fabrics from traditional costumes and hunting trophies, the hotel delicately combines tradition with contemporary influences. The comfortable guest rooms are individually furnished with century-old rustic furniture in an elegant Salzburg country house style and have all modern amenities. The hotel meets the needs of its international guests in every aspect.

The current renovation of the hotel Goldener Hirsch will be completed by June, 2019. The Luxury Collection Hotel is being carefully renovated from the roof to the cellar using targeted modernization measures with a lot of sensitivity and feeling for the building, finding the right amount of modernization without changing the history, legacy and heritage as well as the unique ambience of the hotel. The Hotel Goldener Hirsch is now brought to state-of-the-art hotel technology.





Vienna

Hotel Wandl

Petersplatz 9

phone 43-1-534 55-0

<http://www.hotel-wandl.com>

The hotel is located in the center of Vienna 200 meters from St. Stephens Square, and 50 meters from The Graben, Vienna's main pedestrian street. You will find this central location makes the main sights and shops easily reached on foot. For example, the Hofburg Palace is only four blocks away, reached in five minutes, and the great art museum, Kunsthistorisches Museum, is another block further.

This entire downtown of Vienna all around the hotel is filled with restaurants, bars and cafes and shops that will make it very easy for you to enjoy excellent meals and drinks in a variety of prices. The pedestrian lanes throughout this central zone will enthral you with their historic character and traditional architecture. There is no need to ride the metro or bus to reach most of Vienna's sights of interest when you stay at the Wandl.

Hotel Wandl is surely part of Viennese tradition. Situated in the heart of Vienna, the hotel dates back to 1700, when Court Chamber Counsellor and Laxenburg Palace Governor, Jakob Metz, built this house, which was then called "To the Four Seasons".

In 1854, Johann Wandl whose name it carries to this day, bought the hotel. The guest is confronted with the history of this house - still owned by the same family - with its flair, its warmth and conviction which Hotel Wandl endearment to keep against all fashions and short-lived currents. The Wandl is a traditional family-run hotel.



Budapest

Sofitel Chain Bridge

Széchenyi István tér 2

Tel. (+36)1/2351234

[hotel website](#)

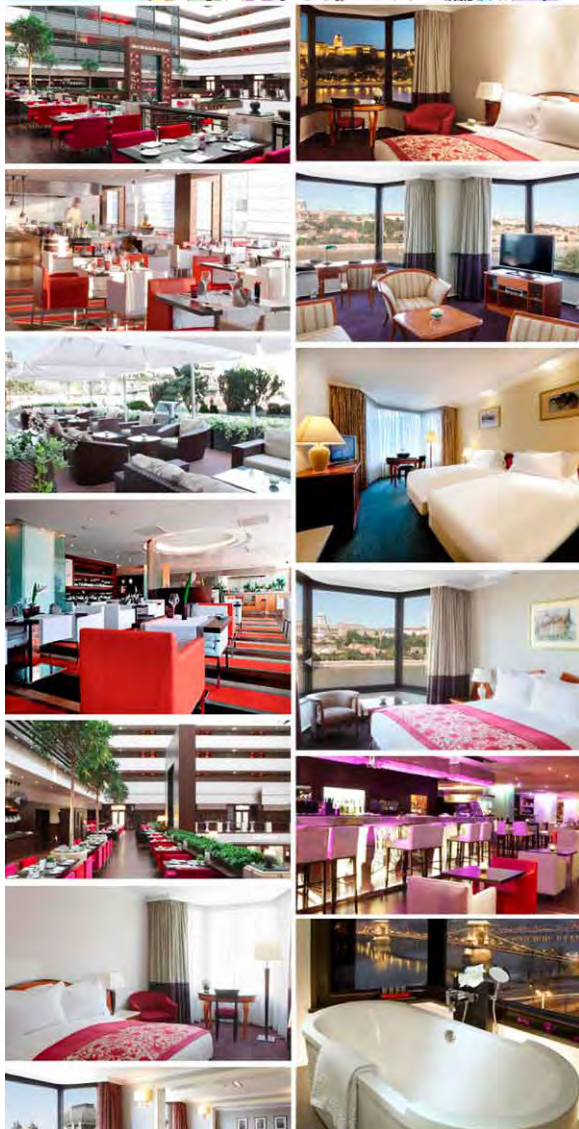
The Sofitel Budapest Chain Bridge boasts spectacular views of the famous Chain Bridge and a prime location on the River Danube, near the Hungarian Parliament, Budapest Opera, Castle District and downtown.

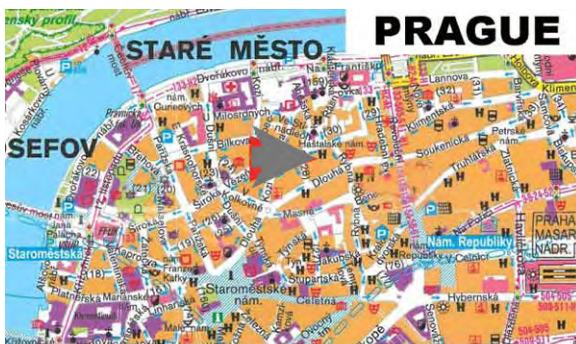
This five-star deluxe hotel is conveniently located just a few blocks from Vaci Utca, the main pedestrian lane of Budapest. Such a central position makes it quite easy to reach many of the important sites on foot from the hotel, such as the Castle District located just across the bridge.

Hotel facilities include a luxury spa with a pool and saunas, a gourmet Hungarian restaurant with show kitchen and a stylish bar. They even have their own Casino! State-of-the-art function rooms host memorable events. Many of this luxury Budapest hotel's 357 spacious rooms and suites have Danube views and Sofitel Club privileges.

Extras of this hotel include: Sophisticated French design - a Swarovski chandelier, original art, an airplane suspended from soaring ceilings - merges with high technology and personal service to create one of the best hotels in Budapest for the business or leisure traveler.

The lobby's spectacular atrium extends into Terrasse Restaurant, Budapest's finest spot for breakfast buffets and Sunday brunches with all the family. Modern wood furnishings, pink-toned chairs and bright mirrors lend an energizing atmosphere.





Prague

Maximilian Hotel

14 Haštalská,

<http://www.maximilianhotel.com/>

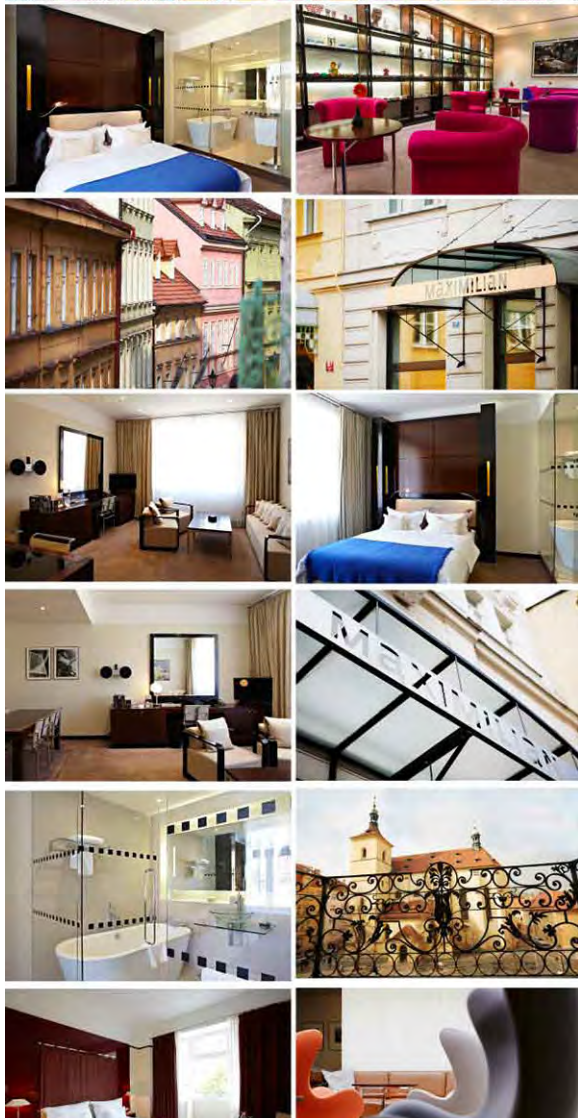
phone 420 2 2530-3111

Composed of 2 buildings ("Black House and Red House"), Maximilian Hotel offers 70 Deluxe and Superior Deluxe Rooms, 1 Suite equipped with a glass partition-bathroom with a Philippe Starck-bathtub and shower. Whichever room is chosen, guests will enjoy professional service, friendly staff, and a high standard of quality. All rooms are equipped with 18 cm diameter rainfall showerheads, telephone and with high speed internet connection free of charge, LCD TV, DVD and CD Player, fully stocked mini-bar. Bathrobes and slippers, hairdryer, bathroom amenities, air-conditioning with individual temperature control and safe that can hold also a laptop. All our rooms are sound proof and mostly situated facing the courtyard.

The Maximilian's location is one of the best in Prague: even though you are only 10 minutes walking from Prague's main attractions such as Old Town square, Charles Bridge, Wenceslas Square, and the Concert Halls, it is located on the quiet and peaceful Haštalské náměstí, facing the magnificent St. Hastal church.

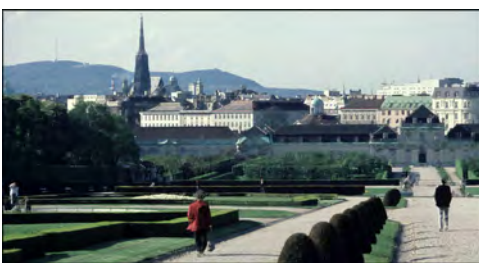
The Maximilian's generous buffet and à la carte breakfast is justifiably known as one of the best in the city. Almost anything you could wish for will be offered to you by our friendly staff, in a bright and airy restaurant.

The hotel has fused art deco, early modern, and contemporary design to craft a space that is warm, confident, and unpretentious.



**For reservations on this tour, please send a \$100 deposit to:
Callans' Tours, 1022 Prospect St., #1007, Honolulu, HI 96822.**
(refundable until 110 days before departure)

For additional information, please call Dennis Callan at 528-4411



Look at our our web site for videos about this trip.

www.toursbytrain.com

