STAYCATIONS

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WorldDenver Presents:

BASKING IN BRATISLAVA

“Bratislava, the capital city of Slovakia, rests beside the Danube River among lush vineyards, skirted by the Little Carpathian Mountains. This city breeds a fusion where new meets old, east meets west, and green spaces meet urban locales. And no, the river was not named after the Johann Strauss waltz. It was the other way around! Locals claim that Strauss composed the first melodies of his famous waltz in Bratislava in 1852. The Danube river has long been of the utmost importance to Bratislava as it served as a border of the Limer Romanus in the first century, protecting the Roman Empire from Germanic tribes, and later, the Danube helped protect the city from invasion by the Turks. Nowadays the Danube serves as a national boundary between Slovakia and Hungary and Austria.

When WorldDenver’s travel program resumes, our next Citizen Diplomat Excursion will be to Central Europe where you can explore Bratislava for yourself! The waitlist will open on June 1st.

CULTURE

Outside the city boundaries, the crowning glory of Slovakia is a designated UNESCO Biosphere Reserve known as the Tatras mountain range, which forms a natural border between Slovakia and Poland. Imagine majestic peaks touching the sky, dark turquoise mountain lakes of glacier origin, waterfalls, unique plants and animals like chamois (mountain goat) or marmot, exceptionally clean air, and an environment great for healing respiratory conditions. Sounds a bit like Colorado! As the highest mountain range in the Carpathians, visitors can explore more than 100 high-altitude lakes and waterfalls, or go underground to enjoy the more than 6,000 caves that have been discovered in Slovakia so far. Travelers on WorldDenver’s Citizen Diplomat Excursion will drive a scenic journey across Slovakia through the mountainous green countryside to reach the High Tatras National Park. Along the way, travelers will enjoy lunch in a historic mountain chalet, before ending up at Hotel Lomnica, an historic refuge built for the aristocracy of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1893. The current owners are art collectors, so upon check-in, travelers can either enjoy the gallery in the hotel or stretch their legs during a walk in the sap-perfumed mountain air of the parklike neighborhood amongst historic villas. Enjoy this scenic view of the Tatras!
CUISINE

Typical Slovak dishes are filling, comforting, and homey—stirring memories of family meals based on recipes that grandmothers had made the way their own grandmothers made them before. The national dish is bryndzové halušky, a hearty combination of potato dumplings—similar to gnocchi—and salty, soft cheese, topped with smoked bacon bits. With Slovakia’s territory located in the heart of Europe and the lands historically ruled by outside powers, traditional Slovak cuisine was heavily influenced by Hungarian, Austrian, and Czech cuisines, with some Turkish influences. From the mountains in the north to the plains in the south, Slovak cooks traditionally used efficient produce from their gardens and fields and products from animals they raised or tended. Goose is popular in western Slovakia, Hungarian dishes along the southern border, and sheep milk specialties are from the mountainous northeast. Please note that it is difficult to access traditional bryndza in the States due to it being an unpasteurized milk product. This recipe also includes an egg, which some Slovaks say is untraditional. Try making this version of the dish it at home!

COCKTAIL

Bratislava lies at the edge of an historic wine-growing region, known for its sparkling and white wines. The history of growing vines in the region dates back 3,000 years, and travelers on WorldDenver’s Citizen Diplomat Excursion will take a scenic route to visit the winemaking towns of Modra and Pezinok to enjoy local vineyards and culture. Along the route, there will also be opportunities to visit the massive Červený kameň, known as the Red Stone Castle, which was built in the 1530s by the Thurzo family as a large and defensible home with built-in storage area for valuable goods. Travelers will also visit the 13th century Pezinok Castle to admire a private glass collection with outstanding artwork and taste delicious white wines in the ancient cellars before returning to Bratislava. For those of us at home, check out Tatratea, the national drink of Slovakia. The story goes that people in the mountains used to drink herbal tea mixed with concentrated alcohol to keep themselves warm. Today, one way to enjoy this liquor is with a cooler, light sourish combination of Tatratea with rose hip and cranberry. Try the recipe here!