



Citizen Diplomat Excursion

to Central Europe

September 25-October 7, 2021

Implementation of this tour is contingent on the public health situation in the included countries, and the itinerary may be adjusted to accommodate public health requirements and recommendations. The final decision on whether the trip will take place will be made no later than July 15th, and we will refund 100% of trip deposits if WorldDenver decides to cancel due to local health conditions or travel restrictions.



Join Karen de Bartolomé, WorldDenver's Founding Executive Director, in exploring the heart of Central Europe, with stops in Hungary, Slovakia, and Austria for thirteen days! After flying into Budapest, travelers will cruise on the Danube River, ride a train to Bratislava, explore Vienna, experience a Slovakian winery, traverse the Slovakian countryside, and visit the mountains of Tatra National Park (sister park to Rocky Mountain NP). Along the way, you will have the chance to meet officials, learn about a millennium of history, engage in citizen diplomacy, and experience the sights, sounds, and tastes of the exceptionally rich culture of this region with fellow WorldDenver members and citizen diplomats.

Itinerary at a Glance

Saturday, Sept. 25 (Day 1) – Arrival in Budapest
Sunday, Sept. 26 (Day 2) – Danube Bend tour
Monday, Sept. 27 (Day 3) – Full-day Budapest city tour
Tuesday, Sept. 28 (Day 4) – Transfer to Bratislava by train, free afternoon in Bratislava
Wednesday, Sept. 29 (Day 5) – Half-day tour of Bratislava
Thursday, Sept. 30 (Day 6) – Day-trip to Vienna
Friday, Oct. 1 (Day 7) – Half-day wine tour outside Bratislava
Saturday, Oct. 2 (Day 8) – Transfer to High Tatras, including a few stops in rural areas
Sunday, Oct. 3 (Day 9) – Tatra National Park
Monday, Oct. 4 (Day 10) – Return to Bratislava
Tuesday, Oct. 5 (Day 11) – Full day in Bratislava
Wednesday, Oct. 6 (Day 12) – Free day in Bratislava
Thursday, Oct. 7 (Day 13) – Departures

Note: In addition to the tours and other attractions listed below, WorldDenver is working to secure exclusive opportunities for our travelers, including a private tour of the Hungarian Parliament and meetings with legislators, a meeting with the Slovakian Foreign Minister, a social gathering with the Bratislava Rotary Club, a meeting with the US Ambassador to Slovakia, and connections with individuals who have participated in WorldDenver's exchange programs. These meetings will be added to the itinerary as they are confirmed.

Full Itinerary *(note: subject to change depending on public health requirements)*



Saturday, September 25

Arrival at Budapest Ferenc Liszt International Airport (BUD). Check in to the [Bo33 Hotel](#), located close to the bustling city center.

In a country less than 100,000 km² in size, Hungarians have lived in the center of Europe for more than 1100 years. Despite a history of fluctuating fortunes which at times devastated both its people and its cultural assets and treasures, Hungary retains a valuable cultural and environmental heritage which people come from all parts of the world to enjoy.

Sunday, September 26

Breakfast in the hotel

Full-day excursion to the Danube Bend.

The Danube Bend to the north of Budapest is one of the most beautiful regions of the river, which flows through eight countries. The most important feature of this region, as its name implies, is the huge bend the Danube takes when breaking through the Visegrád Mountains.



The first stop of the excursion is Esztergom, the birthplace of the First Hungarian King, Stephen I. The town was and remained the center of the Catholic Church in Hungary.

The Esztergom Cathedral is considered one of the finest churches in the country. The Bakócz Chapel and Treasury, one of the most beautiful renaissance monuments in the country, is also located here, preserving masterpieces of the ecclesiastical art.

The tour continues to Visegrád, location of the ruins of a royal residence, and then on to the picturesque and historic town of Szentendre, which lies 20 kilometres from Budapest on the banks of the Danube. A population of ethnic Serbs settled here in the 17th century, building



houses in the baroque and rococo styles, which offer a unique atmosphere even today. Szentendre has always been a popular place for artists, with many exhibitions open to the public.

Evening dinner at Domus Vinorum Restaurant. This wine house is situated in the city center, just a few steps away from the Saint Stephen Basilica. Domus includes a 550 m²

wine cellar in the basement of a 19th-century building. Their collection includes about 200 different wines and 50 spirits, each one of Hungarian origin. The cellar is decorated with museum pieces of winemaking equipment, and the sommelier will happily show you around the cave while you taste some of their liquid treasures, like the famous red Bikavér (“Bull’s Blood”) or the sweet Tokaji Aszú (“Wine of the Kings”).

Overnight at Bo33 Hotel.

Monday, September 27

Full day city tour in Budapest

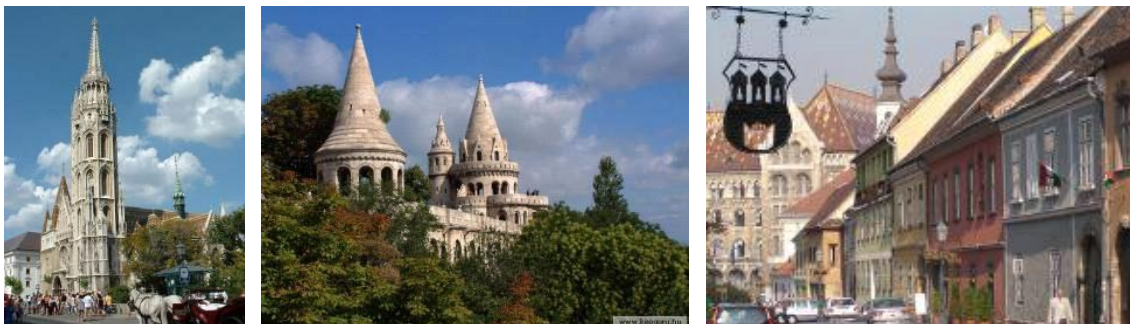
A full day coach tour of the capital will take the guests to the most famous and picturesque monuments and sights of Budapest, including Heroes Square with Millennium Monument, Vajdahunyad Castle, the Opera House (currently under renovation), the Basilica, the Synagogue, and the Parliament.



During the tour, there will be a lunch break at the **First Strudel House of Pest**, where guests can taste the care put into preparing the layers of delightful strudels. Strudel preparation is a centuries-old tradition and art, with great masters drawing out the buttery layers of ethereal dough and baking in history, passion, and care. These splendid delicacies are hand-made in Strudel House based on an original recipe, using the finest ingredients in an authentic environment, giving guests a unique and special experience as they watch the strudel preparation.

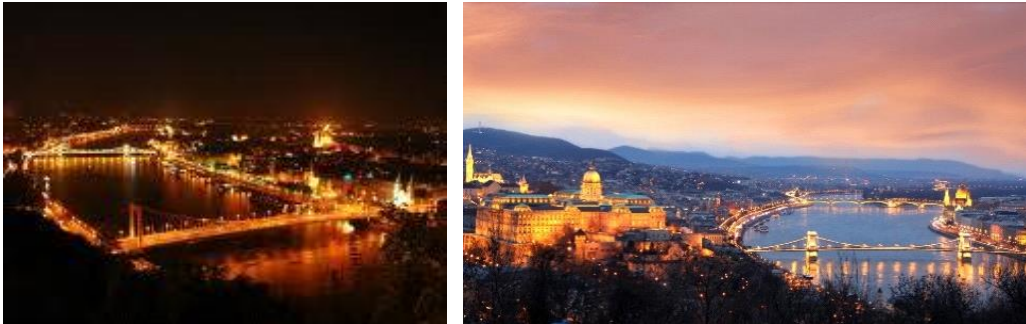


After lunch, the group will visit the Buda side of the city, including the castle district, Matthias Church, and Fishermen’s Bastion.



Evening Danube Cruise

This one-hour cruise will showcase the sights of Budapest at night: Parliament, Fishermen's Bastion, Matthias Church, and the Royal Palace.



Overnight at Bo33 Hotel.

Tuesday, September 28

After breakfast at the hotel, transfer to the railroad station for the 2½-hour trip to Bratislava, departing at 11:40am. Upon arrival in Bratislava, a representative from the Martin Sloboda Tour Agency will meet you to provide private transportation to the Radisson Blu Carlton Hotel. After check-in, the remainder of the day will be at your leisure.

Slovakia is a small central European nation the size of Switzerland with much ethnic diversity and mountainous terrain. The capital, Bratislava, was a jewel of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and today it is the world's only capital that borders two other countries. The city is Slovakia's economic, political, and cultural center and has seen massive development thanks to its location and the country's EU and Eurozone membership. It is called *Pressburg* by Germans, *Pozsony* by Hungarians and *Bratislava* by Slovaks. Each nation's influence enriched the history and culture of this remarkable city. Bratislava and Vienna are Europe's closest capitals and have strong economic and cultural ties.



Wednesday, September 29

Half-day tour of Bratislava

In the morning, your expert local guide will meet you at your hotel. Formerly the capital of the Hungarian Kingdom and venue of coronations of the Habsburgs, this historic city, unscathed by wars, has preserved its old-world charm. Today, the thriving capital of Slovakia has blossomed into the quintessential central European city. Considered a hidden gem by many, here you really can enjoy an authentic European lifestyle. The atmospheric cafés in the lively Old Town combined with charming architectural delights and the city's youthful ambiance makes for a great blend. The highlights of your visit include the Primate's Palace with a splendid collection of 17th-century English royal tapestries, St. Martin's Cathedral, which saw 19 Habsburg coronations and the unique Old Town Hall - a complex of buildings dating from the 14th century. You will also enjoy the panoramic drive passing the Presidential Palace to the mighty Bratislava Castle and views of the city from villa quarters in the hills. Finally, you will enjoy a walk along the Danube lined with cafés and restaurants in Bratislava's booming new center.



Thursday, September 30

Full-day tour of Vienna

Today you will enjoy the elegant Austrian capital. After driving along the Ringstraße, Vienna's luxurious boulevard, your private guide will take you on a tour exploring the delights of imperial Vienna on foot. You begin with a visit to the splendid Hofburg Palace complex, the famous winter residence of the Habsburg family who ruled the Austro-Hungarian Empire until 1918. Afterwards, wander through the charming streets and hidden alleyways of the old town until you reach the St. Stephen's Cathedral, a symbol of Vienna and the world's second-highest Gothic church. You may enjoy a coffee and cake at one of the city's historic cafés, followed by a visit to either the Museum of Fine Arts to admire the great masters of the 1500s-1600s or the Albertina Collection with works of famous impressionists. In the afternoon you will enjoy the magnificent grounds and architecture of the Schönbrunn Palace, a vast summer residence built by the Habsburgs to rival Versailles. Walk through the elegant gardens to the Gloriette to enjoy a stunning panoramic view of Vienna, followed by your return to Bratislava.



Friday, October 1

Half-day wine tour outside Bratislava

This morning you will explore the wine country at Bratislava's doorstep. Bratislava lies at the edge of an historic wine-growing region, known for its sparkling and white wines. You will take a scenic route through wine-making towns and villages along the Small Carpathians. First you visit the massive Red Stone Castle built in the 1530s and housing the largest wine cellars in central Europe. Afterwards, you will stop at the 13th-century Pezinok Castle to admire a private glass collection with outstanding artwork and taste delicious white wines in their ancient cellars before returning to Bratislava.



Saturday, October 2

Transfer to High Tatras

Today you set off for a scenic journey across Slovakia through the green, mountainous countryside of central Slovakia to reach the High Tatras National Park – sister park to Rocky Mountain National Park. You will pass two other national parks on the way and have lunch in a typical chalet set in a mountain pass.

You will stay at the oldest hotel in the National Park, built for the aristocracy of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1893. Upon arrival and check-in, you can either peruse the hotel's extensive art collection or join your guide on a walk in the mountain air through a neighborhood of historic villas.

Overnight at the Hotel Lomnica High Tatras.



Sunday, October 3

Touring the High Tatras

Enjoy a panoramic drive to a neighboring small resort from the 1800s with vistas of the Tatra peaks as you drive along the narrow-gauge railway that connects several resorts. In Stry Smokovec, you will take a cog railway to get closer to the mountains and walk to the park's largest waterfalls. Afterwards, you will continue to Štrbské Pleso to enjoy a scenic walk by a beautiful moraine lake in the fresh mountain air, passing by the historic Grand Hotel Kempinski, built for the Austro-Hungarian aristocracy in 1904.



Overnight at the Hotel Lomnica High Tatras

Monday, October 4

Transfer to Bratislava

Returning to Bratislava, you will take a different route across the mountains to see other parts of Slovakia. You will drive along the Vah River Valley, which has numerous castles perched on rocky outcrops.

Overnight at the Radisson Blu Carlton Hotel

Tuesday, October 5

Full day in Bratislava



In the morning you will drive to a western suburb of Bratislava known for its massive Devin Castle. It is perched on an 80m-high rocky outcrop overlooking the Danube River and the Slovak-Austrian border. From the Upper Castle, there are views of both Bratislava and Vienna, as well as the pristine surrounding countryside. It was destroyed by Napoleon in 1811 and has been a romantic ruin ever since. Just below the rock, the Iron Curtain ran for 40 years and many people died trying to swim across the river. The Gate to Freedom Memorial unveiled by Queen Elizabeth II commemorates this tragic period. Afterwards, you will drive along the river to the

southern edge of the city to visit the famous Danubiana Meulesteen Art Museum, built on a thin artificial peninsula in the Danube, featuring the best of central European and Dutch contemporary art in a striking natural environment.



Wednesday, October 6

Free day in Bratislava

Today has been left un-programmed to allow you to rest before your departure flight, shop, and enjoy any other sights in town that you wish. Those interested in art and culture may enjoy the Slovak National Gallery, the Bratislava City Gallery, or Nedbalka Gallery, all located within a short walk from your hotel. Shopping enthusiasts can explore the large Eurovea Shopping Gallery, a 15-minute walk down the river, or the equally large Aupark Shopping Gallery, located a 20 minutes away by foot, across the river. Your guide will be happy to provide suggestions for several beautiful nature walks within easy reach for nature and outdoors lovers.

On this final evening, you will enjoy a delicious, hosted farewell dinner at the highly rated [Carnevalle Restaurant](#) near your hotel.

Thursday, October 7

Departures

Travelers will be transported by private vehicle to Bratislava's train station, bus station, or airport for their departures. Note: For travelers departing from Vienna, the airport is approximately an hour away by non-stop bus or train from Bratislava's stations.

Thank you for traveling with WorldDenver's Citizen Diplomat Excursions – we hope you enjoyed your visit to Central Europe! Please send any feedback you may have to Travel@WorldDenver.org.

Photos were provided by [Aktiv Tours](#) (Hungary) and [Martin Sloboda Agency](#) (Slovakia).