

EASTERN EUROPEAN CAPITALS

2019 marks the 30th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall and the tearing down of the Iron Curtain.
Our tour – 5 star hotels and First Class rail – visits 7 of the Eastern Europe's historic capitals, with the option of a pre-tour to Russia's two capitals, St Petersburg and Moscow.

August 21st 2019: BUCHAREST Our tour commences with check-in at our 5 star hotel in the Romanian capital. Those joining the tour from the "Russia's Capitals" pre-tour arrive in the afternoon. Our Welcome Dinner, tonight. **[D]**

August 22nd: BUCHAREST Our Bucharest city sightseeing commences at the magnificent Palace of the Parliament is renowned for being the largest administrative building in the world by weight and size, coming in ahead of the United States Pentagon. The Romanian communist dictator, Nicolae Ceauşescu, in an act of supreme irony called it "The People's Palace". **[B]**

August 23rd: BUCHAREST A visit out of Bucharest today, to Bran Castle, one time home of Vlad the Impaler, universally recognised (perhaps erroneously) as Dracula. Back to Bucharest this evening. Garlic for dinner? **[B]**

August 24th: SOFIA We cannot travel by train from Bucharest to our next capital, Sofia, so today we transfer to the airport for the one hour flight, arriving early afternoon. On arrival we check in at our 5 star hotel in the Bulgarian capital, which Bill Bryson called "the most European of all cities". **[B,D]**

August 25th: SOFIA Our sightseeing this morning is on foot, as the old city heart is very compact. Highlights will include the National Archaeological Museum, the National Theatre, the Russian Church of St. Nikola, the Parliament Square, and Alexander Nevski Memorial Cathedral with the most valuable collection of Bulgarian icons. Bulgars have Slavic origins, they use the Cyrillic script, and Eastern Orthodox Christianity is strong here. **[B]**

August 26th: SOFIA A visit today to a UNESCO listed cultural treasure — the Rila Monastery — the most famous and fascinating monastery in Bulgaria, given its architecture, wall paintings and ancient history, and its location at 1,147 meters above sea level. The monastery offers great views. Back to Sofia this evening. **[B]**

August 27th: BELGRADE We commence our love affair with the great trains of Europe today. A EuroCity train has us across the Bulgarian – Serbian frontier and into the Serbian (and former Yugoslavian) capital of Belgrade by early evening. Today's rail journey (and the next one in 3 days) follows the route of the historic Orient Express. Move over Agatha. **[B,D]**

August 28th: BELGRADE Belgrade was a target of conquerors for centuries. It was ruined and rebuilt almost 40 times. Today we have a unique opportunity to compare variations in culture and architecture in different parts of Belgrade under Austro-Hungarian Empire, with those under the rule of Turkish Ottoman Empire. **[B]**

August 29th: BELGRADE Belgrade is one of four European capitals on the Danube River, and today we take a river cruise to the municipality of Zemun, situated along the right bank of the Danube. It has Hapsburg architecture and a feel identifiably different from Belgrade's. **[B]**

August 30th: BUDAPEST As our luggage is taken on ahead, we join our Our EuroCity train to Budapest, the second Hapsburg capital for much of the 19th and the early 20th centuries. Like Prague in 1968, Budapest rose in revolution against the Communists in 1956, but were crushed mercilessly. **[B,D]**

August 31st: BUDAPEST Budapest is made up of two cities: hilly Buda with its castle on the Western Bank of the Danube, overlooking the stately buildings and broad boulevards of Pest on the Eastern Bank. Our 5 star hotel is situated on the Pest side in a pedestrian shopping area. This morning's sightseeing takes us to the

Buda side, to the Fisherman's Bastion and St Matthias Church, then back to Heroes' Square and St Stephen's. **[B]**

September 1st: BUDAPEST St Sebastian's and the Gothic Parliament Building (the largest in Europe) are both close by our hotel. The Budapest Opera House is, in my humble opinion, one of the grandest in the world. Then the day is yours for a leisurely lunch and the galleries or the shops. Budapest has many fine coffee houses, testament to more than a century of Turkish occupation. Another quirky Turkish touch continues – the thermal spa baths! **[B]**

September 2nd: KRAKOW Our Eurocity train today passes through Slovakia and into Poland to our base for the next 3 days, the old city of Krakow. Okay, Krakow wasn't the capital of Communist Poland, but it is Poland's cultural cradle and was its historical capital from 1038 until 1791. It still stands substantially intact from the 13th century, and is a UNESCO World Heritage site. **[B,D]**

September 3rd: KRAKOW Our city sightseeing tour includes the historic Market Square and Wawel Hill with its palace and tiny cathedral, and the graves of Polish kings. This is where Pope John Paul II served as archbishop. Lunch in one of the many restaurants on Market Square? *It is possible to visit nearby Auschwitz – not fun, but possibly we owe it to humanity to visit.* **[B]**

September 4th: KRAKOW There is an excursion today to Warsaw. Our sightseeing includes the reconstructed ancient centre, the Market Square, the monument to the Warsaw Uprising and the remains of the Warsaw Ghetto. Home to Krakow tonight. **[B]**

September 5th: PRAGUE After a short EuroCity rail journey today we arrive in the early afternoon in magical Prague. Our luggage awaits our arrival in our luxury hotel, located in the historic heart, which is "pedestrians only" and traffic-free. An afternoon stroll includes the nearby Old Town Square which has a building from each century from the 14th to the 20th. Enjoy the view over afternoon coffee in an outdoor café. **[B,D]**

September 6th: PRAGUE This morning we begin to discover this magnificent city: the Castle, the Charles Bridge, Wenceslas Square and the Jewish Quarter feature in our sightseeing. **[B]**

September 7th: PRAGUE There is no planned sightseeing today, but your Tour Leader is on hand to advise. Enjoy your free day in this beautiful city, shopping or enjoying the music. Prague is rich in Mozart associations and is the centre for world famous Bohemian crystal. There may be an opera performance. **[B]**

September 8th: BERLIN En route to Berlin today we break our journey in the historic Saxon capital of Dresden, to explore this stately city which is still being rebuilt from its near-total destruction one night in February 1945. We arrive in Berlin in the late afternoon and cross to our 5 star hotel on the Ku'Damm the main shopping street of old West Berlin. **[B]**

September 9th: BERLIN Today's sightseeing introduces us to the city which divided Europe for 45 years — the Brandenburg Gate, the Reichstag, Unter den Linden. Will the Berlin Philharmonic be in town? **[B]**

September 10th: BERLIN A free day for more sightseeing today in the city with a greater concentration of museums than London, and one of the world's great zoos. Visit the greatest department store in the world (in your Tour Director's humble opinion), KaDeWe, a short walk from our hotel. Our farewell dinner tonight. **[B,D]**

September 11th: FAREWELL Our tour ends after breakfast this morning. **[B]**

CAPITALS

HIGHLIGHTS:

Explore Eastern Europe's Capitals with 3 nights in:

- Bucharest
- Sofia
- Belgrade
- Budapest
- Krakow
- Prague
- Berlin

Day Visits to:

- Warsaw
- Dresden
- Dracula's Castle

INCLUDED FEATURES:

- First Class rail travel in reserved seats
- Economy Class flight Bucharest to Sofia
- 21 nights in 5 star luxury city-centre hotels with buffet breakfasts
- 7 dinners
- Full luggage handling
- Full time Australian Tour Director who is the tour Company Principal

FACT BOX:
DURATION: 22 DAYS
DEPARTURES:
 August 21st 2019
COST: Land Only Content
 (Join in Bucharest, leave in Berlin).
\$AU 15,950 per person twin share
 Enquire about competitive airfares
 Single room supplement \$2,000.
EARLYBIRD SPECIAL:
 Single room without supplement for bookings before
 October 31st 2018

RUSSIA'S CAPITALS

PRE-TOUR ADD-ON TO THE EASTERN EUROPEAN CAPITALS TOUR:

AUG 14th ST PETERSBURG Our tour commences on arrival in St Petersburg, the Imperial capital of the Czars. You are transferred to our luxury 5 star hotel. Meet your fellow explorers over welcome drinks and dinner. **[D]**

AUG 15th ST PETERSBURG This morning's city sightseeing includes the Winter Palace, St Isaac's, the Admiralty and the Peter and Paul Fortress. In the afternoon we visit the fabled Amber Room in the Catherine Palace just outside St Petersburg. **[B]**

AUG 16th ST PETERSBURG Today we visit one of the world's greatest art galleries, the Hermitage. Its collection, from Old Masters to the Impressionists and Moderns, is widely considered to be among the world's best. **[B]**

AUG 17th ST PETERSBURG The Hofburg Palace and its fabulous gardens are half an hour by hydrofoil down the Gulf of Finland. We visit it today. **[B]**

AUG 18th MOSCOW Today we take one of Europe's great rail journeys on the new 200kph Sapsan train (lunch on board) to Moscow, the Russian capital, until the time of Peter the Great and again since 1918. We move to our 5 star hotel near the Kremlin. **[B,D]**

AUG 19th MOSCOW Our city sightseeing tour this morning focuses on Red Square, once the site of executions and Soviet military parades, but still the focal point of Moscow life. We visit both Lenin's tomb and St Basil's cathedral. The afternoon is free to explore, to shop, or to ride the world famous Moscow Metro. **[B]**

AUG 20th MOSCOW Today's sightseeing is dedicated entirely to the Kremlin, Moscow's fortress dating from the fifteenth century and containing cathedrals, palaces, museums (Faberge eggs) and the 200 ton Tsar bell. **[B]**

AUG 21st To BUCHAREST We join our flight today to Bucharest to commence the Eastern European Capitals Tour. **[B]**

INCLUDED FEATURES:

- First class rail travel in reserved seats
- 7 nights in 5 star luxury city centre hotels with buffet breakfasts
- 2 dinners
- Full luggage handling
- Full time Australian Tour Director who is the tour Company Principal



FACT BOX:
DURATION: 8 DAYS
DEPARTURE:
 AUGUST 14th 2019
COST:
\$AU 5,950 per person twin share.
 Land content only. (Join tour in St.Petersburg.)
 Single room supplement \$700.
EARLYBIRD SPECIAL:
 Single room without supplement for
 bookings before September 1st 2018



BOOKING CONDITIONS

Great Trains of Europe Tours (ABN 75 325 010 987) is an accredited travel agent (ATAS #12982). We are members of IATA (Licence #968366100) and the Concorde Independent Agents' Network.

Costs: All costs in this brochure are expressed in Australian dollars and are based on airfares, and land transport and accommodation costs, and Australian dollar exchange rates effective as at June 1st, 2018. Exchange rate fluctuations in the price of any service provided, beyond the control of Great Trains of Europe Tours, may be passed on to travellers, right up to the date of departure. Please note that some city taxes or bed taxes cannot be pre-paid by agents, and must be paid by the tour member at check-out.

A deposit of \$2,500 per person will guarantee a place on your chosen tour (unless already filled, in which case you will be advised of your place on the waiting list. With a maximum tour size of 25 travellers, tours often fill early).

Full final payment is due 90 days before commencement of the tour. Please make payment by cheque to "Great Trains of Europe Tours" or by bank transfer as follows: Heritage Bank, Toowoomba, Queensland, Australia. BSB 638-060 Account Number 111 097 34. Great Trains of Europe Tours currently does not accept payment by credit card.

Cancellation Policy: Cancellation at any time after the deposit is paid will result in the forfeiture of the deposit. Any booking cancelled between 90 days and 45 days before departure will incur a 50% cancellation charge on land content and up to 100% on airfares, depending on the airfare used. Bookings cancelled within 45 days of departure will incur a 100% cancellation charge. Travel insurance will cover cancellation because of illness, death in the family etc. Travel insurance is therefore considered mandatory.

Travel Insurance: A condition of joining a Great Trains of Europe tour is either the purchase of travel insurance through Great Trains of Europe Tours, or documentary evidence of a sufficient level of travel insurance purchased elsewhere.

European Rail Travel: The standard of rail travel in Europe ranges from small and basic local trains to luxury high-speed international trains. On rare occasions European rail companies may change timetables, classes of travel available or rolling stock within the period of validity of a travel brochure. Descriptions of trains & routes provided in this brochure are accurate at the time of printing and provided in good faith. It is not possible to request rail seating either facing or with back to the direction of travel. Many European trains change direction during a journey.

Baggage allowance: Porterage of one suitcase per person is included in tour cost.

Coaches: When itineraries take us away from rail routes and coaches must be used, a seating rotation system applies.

Hotels: European hotel rooms – even in 4 or 5 star hotels – are often smaller than in Australian hotels. Single rooms, particularly, can be very small. Should a traveller who has requested a single room wish to have a quote for the cost of single occupancy of a double room, please ask. Tea and coffee making facilities are rare in European hotels, as are in-room security safes. In some European countries, government environmental agencies restrict the use of air-conditioning in hotels to the summer months.

Travellers sharing a room on a twin share basis will be asked their preferences re a double bed or twin beds, but no guarantee can be given that your request will be met. Hotel star ratings, where provided, are those of the country in which the hotel is situated, and vary from country to country.

Other Important Advice: All tours will proceed if a minimum of 12 travellers have paid deposits by 90 days before scheduled departure. In the highly unlikely (unprecedented) event that there are insufficient travellers for a tour, you will be offered either (i) a full refund of all monies paid, (ii) a modified cost structure for a smaller group, or

(iii) a place on an alternative Great Trains of Europe Tour. Each tour is sold as a package and there can be no refund for any element of the tour (e.g. a meal or an excursion) not utilised by the traveller by her / his own choice. Tour costs have built into them the costs associated with researching tours, communicating with overseas suppliers, brochure preparation and marketing. Great Trains of Europe Tours does not claim or imply that some of the inclusions in our tours may or may not be available at a lower price direct from the overseas supplier. Travellers are reminded, however, that purchases made direct with overseas suppliers are generally not covered by Australian Travel Agents licensing protections or the Australian Travel Compensation Fund. Most photographs used in this brochure were taken by the Tour Leader on past tours, but some have been provided by hotels, rail companies or Tourism Boards. Photographs are indicative only and we cannot guarantee that a traveller on a Great Trains of Europe tour will personally see all of the places depicted in them.

Great Trains of Europe Tours reserves the right to decline any reservation or booking request, and may at the Tour Directors discretion terminate any person's involvement in the tour due to disruptive or anti-social behaviour.

Great Trains of Europe Tours does not accept responsibility for any injury, damage, loss, delay, change of schedule or other events which are beyond our direct control such as, but not limited to war, terrorism, civil disturbance, industrial action, acts of government or of God, or mechanical failure such as aircraft, trains or coaches.

Great Trains of Europe Tours cannot be held responsible for changes to provision of services by local European suppliers, but we will do all in our power to provide an alternative service of equal standard to that advertised, or make a cash refund of the difference on the spot.

Contract: The contract between the traveller and Great Trains of Europe Tours, entered into by your signing the Booking form, shall be construed in accordance with the laws of the State of Queensland.

"Life is a collection of experiences. Let Stan be your guide"

Noel and Alwynne Towler, Brisbane

(8 time tour members on the Great Trains of Europe Tours)



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Great Trains of Europe Tours **BOOKING FORM**

One form per person, please.

Tour Name: _____ Departure Date: _____

PASSPORT DETAILS

Full name (as in passport): _____

Address: _____

Passport No: _____ Date of Issue: _____ Expiry Date: _____

Nationality: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Ph. Home: () _____ Ph. Work: () _____

Mobile: _____ Email: _____

MEDICAL / DIET

Do you have any medical conditions or dietary requirements that we should be alerted to?

YES NO If you answered YES, please outline briefly: _____

Are you able to walk 500 metres and climb 25 stairs without assistance? YES NO

NEXT OF KIN {to be contacted in event of an emergency}

Name: _____

Ph. Home: () _____ Ph. Work: () _____ Mobile: _____

TRAVEL INSURANCE

Please provide me with travel insurance. I have a pre-existing medical condition.

(NOTE: Passengers over 75 years of age at end of a tour will need a medical clearance)

I decline your offer of travel insurance and attach documentary evidence that I have sufficient travel insurance cover.

Insurance Company _____ Policy Number _____

ACCOMMODATION

Double Twin, sharing with _____

Twin, please find someone to share with me. If no suitable room-mate can be found, the single supplement is payable.

Single Room Single occupancy of double sized room {surcharge} Non-smoking Smoking

EXTRA ACCOMMODATION

Pre-Tour in _____ {city} Date IN __/__/__ Date OUT __/__/__

Post-Tour in _____ {city} Date IN __/__/__ Date OUT __/__/__

FLIGHTS

I seek your assistance with an airfare. Please contact me. or I will make my own flight arrangements.

PAYMENT METHOD

I enclose a cheque, payable to "Great Trains of Europe Tours" for \$ _____ or

I have deposited \$ _____ in the "Great Trains of Europe Tours" account at Heritage Bank, 400 Ruthven St, Toowoomba, Qld., 4350, Australia as follows.

BSB 638 – 060 Account Number 11109734 Swiftcode HBSLAU4T, and I attach a pay-in slip as evidence.

By signing this form I declare that I have read the Tour Terms and Conditions, understand them, and agree to abide by them.

Signature _____ Date _____



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