

7 June 2017

\$3609 per person Lower level cabin

Port charges \$144

Upgrade: Category B \$985; A \$1028; P \$1113

Balkan Discovery – Eastbound

10 Day River Cruise from Budapest to Bucharest



Vacation Overview

See the best of Eastern Europe on this exhilarating Balkan adventure. Your cruise vacation begins with two overnights in the lively Hungarian capital of Budapest. Board your ship and head south, enjoying guided sightseeing in each city, including inside visits of Kalemegdan Fortress in Belgrade, the eclectic rock formations of Belogradchik, Tsarevet's Fortress in Veliko Târnovo, and Arbanassi's Ethnographical Museum and Church of the Nativity. Other highlights: an organ concert in Pécs, passage through the dramatic Iron Gates gorge, and visits to the Lepenski Vir archaeological site and Vidin's medieval fortress. Your journey ends with an overnight in Bucharest, Romania's vibrant capital and the "Paris of the East."



Similar Vacations

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Itinerary

Day 1 Arrive in Budapest, Hungary

Welcome to Budapest, Hungary's lively capital spanning the banks of the Danube. The remainder of the day is free to start exploring Eastern Europe's most cosmopolitan metropolis.

Day 2 Budapest

Whether you're seeing the sights, shopping for handcrafted embroidery or Herend porcelain, or basking in the coffee house culture over a rich cream cake in the renowned Gerbeaud Café, Budapest's unique energy is positively palatable. On your included GUIDED TOUR of the city, see Heroes' Square as well as the massive hilltop castle complex with its remarkable Fishermen's Bastion and 11th-century Matthias Church, the coronation spot of several Hungarian monarchs. Be sure to take note of the city's eight bridges—many famous sights in and of themselves—which connect ancient Buda on the right bank with Pest on the left. You may even want to walk across Chain Bridge, built in 1849 and a symbol of Budapest. This afternoon is free. Perhaps visit St. Stephen's Basilica for marvelous city views from its viewing platform, or stroll along Váci utca, the main shopping street.



Breakfast

Day 3 Budapest (Embarkation)

This morning you can explore this vibrant city at your own pace. Shop at the Great Market Hall and purchase paprika or embroidery at one of its 180 vendor stalls, or wander around the Royal Palace grounds. This afternoon, board your river cruise vessel and meet your crew at a welcome reception.



Breakfast



Dinner

Day 4 Mohács. Excursion to Pécs

This morning, enjoy some leisurely cruising before arriving in Mohács, the last stop in Hungary. After lunch, an included excursion takes you to Pécs. Established by the Romans in the 2nd century, this was a flourishing and important town for Christianity by the 4th century. These early Christians left behind many underground burial chambers with memorial chapels above ground. With a Local Guide, visit the UNDERGROUND TOMBS—now part of a UNESCO World Heritage Site—many of which have splendidly decorated murals with Christian themes. Later, enjoy an ORGAN CONCERT. Pécs is also a rich showcase of Turkish architecture and home to Turkish mosques, striking churches, and an enjoyable atmosphere around its restaurants and cafés.



Breakfast



Lunch



Dinner

Day 5 Belgrade, Serbia

One of the oldest cities in Europe, the capital of Serbia is situated at the confluence of the Danube and Sava Rivers. A LOCAL GUIDE will be proud to show you its main sights, including St. Sava, the world's largest orthodox church. Also visit the city's principal landmark, KALEMEGDAN FORTRESS, which showcases the history of Belgrade. Built in stages between the 1st and 18th centuries, the fortress witnessed many battles and observed the courage of those trying to defend the city from conquerors. The surrounding park is the most beautiful and largest park in Belgrade. In your free time, be sure to check out the city's lively pedestrian area and charming outdoor cafés.



Breakfast



Lunch



Dinner

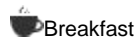
Day 6 **Excursion to Lepenski Vir–Iron Gates**

This morning, dock at Donji Milanovac, where a short drive takes you to the impressive LEPENSKI VIR EXHIBITION CENTER, which houses area archaeological artifacts and from where you have unique views of the Danube Gorge. Return to your ship before lunch, then cruise what must surely be the most spectacular scenery of the dramatic IRON GATES gorge, a narrow and formerly very dangerous passage dividing Europe's Alps in the northwest from the Carpathians in the southeast and forming a natural border between Serbia and Romania.



Day 7 **Cetate, Romania–Vidin, Bulgaria. Excursion to Belogradchik**

This morning, stop in Cetate, an old Danubian grain shipping port that is now a cultural center. The owner will explain the concept of this fascinating venture before you have a chance to see for yourself and to TASTE some of the locally made products. Then, on to Vidin, an important Danube port in northwestern Bulgaria. Its medieval FORTRESS, Baba Vidin, is the town's primary landmark. It served as Vidin's main defensive installation during the Middle Ages and is the only entirely preserved medieval fortress in the country. It is now a fortress museum and has been restored to its former appearance. In nearby Belogradchik, view the eclectic group of ROCK FORMATIONS on the western slopes of the Balkan Mountains. Sculpted by natural elements for more than 200 million years and with a variety of sizes and shapes, the Belogradchik Rocks are spectacular!



Day 8 **Rousse–Excursion to Veliko Târnovo & Arbanassi**

A comfortable ride from the river port of Rousse is the ancient Bulgarian capital of Veliko Târnovo. Situated on three hills surrounding the Yantra River, the city was a natural fortress with ancient stone houses clinging to the steep slopes. One of the oldest towns in Bulgaria (dating back to 4300 BC), the oldest part is Tsarevets Hill, home of the ROYAL FORTRESS, and the Patriarch's Church. With your LOCAL GUIDE, discover this town that played an important role in Bulgaria's history. Next, journey to Arbanassi, founded in the 15th century, and best known for its Bulgarian Revival architecture and ETHNOGRAPHICAL MUSEUM, a 400-year-old house preserved as a museum. Visit the CHURCH OF THE NATIVITY, one of the town's oldest churches, and see its outstanding collection of frescoes. Return to your ship in Rousse, Bulgaria's largest inland port. If you don't wish to participate in the full-day excursion, stay on board and relax or join a GUIDED TOUR of Rousse.



Day 9 **Oltenita, Romania (Disembarkation)–Bucharest**

After breakfast say goodbye to your crew. Bucharest, Romania's lively capital, is only a short drive from Oltenita. Its wide, tree-lined boulevards and Arc de Triomphe—built in 1922 to honor the bravery of Romanian soldiers who fought in WWI—have gained it the name “Paris of the East.” Much recent history has taken place in the city. During the INCLUDED TOUR this afternoon, see the main sights including Royal Palace Square, the scene of riots in 1989, which led to the collapse of the communist dictatorship. In your free time, discover this interesting city even further. Stroll down Calea Victoriei, “Victory Avenue,” Bucharest's most historic and alluring street. Initially built in 1692, today it is lined with shops, museums, churches, restaurants, cafés, and fine houses.



Day 10 **Bucharest**

Your vacation ends with breakfast this morning.



Vacation Highlights

Cruise: deluxe 6-night cruise in an outside stateroom with Avalon's exclusive Comfort Collection BedsSM

Days 1 & 2 Budapest: welcome to Hungary; guided sightseeing on Day 2, see Fishermen's Bastion and Heroes' Square

Day 3 Budapest (Embarkation): onboard welcome reception

Day 4 Mohács. Excursion to Pécs: guided sightseeing in Pécs, visit the underground tombs; organ concert

Day 5 Belgrade: guided sightseeing in Belgrade, visit Kalemegdan Fortress

Day 6 Iron Gates: visit Lepenski Vir archaeological site; cruise through the dramatic Iron Gates gorge

Day 7 Cetate–Vidin–Belogradchik: visit the cultural port in Cetate; special tasting; guided sightseeing to Vidin's fortress; excursion to Belogradchik to see the rock formations

Day 8 Rousse. Excursion to Veliko Târnovo & Arbanassi: guided sightseeing, visit Tsarevet's Fortress in Veliko Târnovo and the Ethnographical Museum and Church of the Nativity in Arbanassi; or guided sightseeing of Rousse

Day 9 Oltenita (Disembarkation)–Bucharest: guided sightseeing in Bucharest

Day 10 Bucharest: your vacation ends this morning

Special onboard and onshore experiences presented by local chefs, entertainers, artisans, and experts, designed to enrich your cruise.

Visit the captivating Lepenski Vir Archaeological site.

NOTES:

- In the event of water level problems or any problems of a technical nature, it may be necessary to operate the itinerary by motorcoach or to alter the program.
- Included visits and special features are subject to change. If a change is necessary, a substitute will be offered.
- Please check visa requirements with your local consulate(s); responsibility for obtaining visas rests with the traveler.
- Cruise-Only Available: This vacation can also be taken as a Cruise-Only option starting at the embarkation city and ending at the disembarkation city, and does not include overnight land stays. If you are interested in this option, please contact a Travel Consultant for more information.

Hotels

Budapest



InterContinental Budapest

Hotel as shown or similar

Deluxe

Few would argue the InterContinental Budapest is in the city's best location: right on the Danube across from Castle Hill and the Royal Palace. With the Chain Bridge and the Parliament just steps away, there's no shortage of superb sightseeing opportunities. The Váci Utca shopping street, Central Market Hall and the Gellért Baths are also nearby.

Bucharest



Athenee Palace Hilton

Hotel as shown or similar

Superior First-Class

Explore Bucharest from the glorious Athenee Palace Hilton Bucharest hotel, one of the city's most sophisticated and prestigious landmarks. The hotel is conveniently located in the heart of the city and enjoys views of Revolution Square and is close to Bucharest's many local attractions.