



## ITALY & MORE

# GOLDEN EAGLE DANUBE EXPRESS: BALKAN EXPLORER

(TOUR CODE: 14038)

### STARTS AND ENDS

Venice to  
Istanbul

### TRAVEL PERIODS

27 Aug 2025 - 02 Oct 2026

### EXPERIENCE

Luxury  
Rail

### TRAVEL STYLE

Rail Journeys

The iconic European Grand Tour journey between Venice and Istanbul visiting nine countries in twelve days by private train.

## Highlights

- Discover Sarajevo's poignant history on a guided tour of the city
- Enjoy a gondola ride through the iconic waterways of romantic Venice
- Explore the ethereal Postojna Cave network of limestone caverns and monuments
- Visit one of the world's best preserved Roman amphitheatres in ancient Plovdiv
- Tour Istanbul's magnificent Sultan Ahmet Mosque (the Blue Mosque)

This voyage of a lifetime transports you from the enchanting "City of Water" to the jewel of the Byzantium Empire. Evocative of the refinement and sumptuous elegance of a by-gone era, Golden Eagle trains capture the vintage charm of the golden era of travel. Begin your journey in Venice before meandering through the captivating Balkan Region. Experience exclusive excursions across this iconic route before arriving in the magical city of Istanbul.



## INCLUSIONS

- Overnight stay at the Hilton Pucic hotel, Dubrovnic (or similar)
- Private en-suite accommodation on the Golden Eagle Danube Express train
- Quality pre and post tour accommodation in Venice and Istanbul
- Freshly prepared meals on board, using the finest local ingredients
- Authentic dining experiences in local restaurants
- 11 Breakfasts, 10 Lunches, 11 Dinners
- Inclusive alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages from Standard Bar list
- Arrival and departure transfers
- Expertly guided off-train excursions
- Cabin attendant service including evening turndown
- Experienced Tour Management team
- Services of a UK-registered Doctor and medical facilities on board
- All gratuities
- Luggage portage throughout the journey

## ITINERARY

Day **11** Istanbul, Turkey



Also included in the Istanbul programme is a visit to the crown jewel of the Ottoman Empire, Topkapi. This stunning palace is the largest and oldest in the world and was the primary residence of the Ottoman Sultans from 1465 to 1853. With its treasury and exotic buildings overlooking the Golden Horn, your visit to Topkapi promises to be a truly fascinating experience.

Also visit the Grand Bazaar, which is one of the world’s largest covered markets, with 58 streets and over 4,000 shops. In operation since the 14th century the bazaar is especially known for its jewellery, leather, pottery, spices, and carpets.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



TOPKAPI PALACE

Intro Map

Intro





## Venice, Italy

Arrivals day in Venice where you will be met and transferred to your centrally located hotel for a two-night stay.

This evening you will enjoy a welcome reception and dinner, giving you the opportunity to meet your fellow travellers.

Dinner



## Venice, Italy

Venice is a truly captivating city of romance; its unrivalled beauty takes away the breath of first-time visitors and regulars alike. Today you will have the opportunity to take a walking tour around the highlights of this spectacular city. Walk through the winding lanes beside the Grand Canal to St Mark's Square, which for 1,000 years was the heart of Venetian life. You will also see St Mark's Basilica and stroll through the Rialto Market.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner





## Trieste, Italy

This morning transfer from the hotel, by boat, directly to Santa Lucia station on the Grand Canal. Here, the *Golden Eagle Danube Express*, is ready for boarding.

Mid-morning the train will thread its way-out of Santa Lucia station onto the 3-mile causeway over the Venice Lagoon and on to the first stop at the Italian port city of Trieste, for an afternoon tour where you visit Miramare Castle. You will also stop at the vast Piazza Unita d'Italia, the main town square.

There is the option to climb the hill to the famous Church of San Giusto built around a medieval complex that dates back to the 13th century. You may go inside the church for a close-up view of the splendid Byzantine-style architecture enriched with precious mosaics.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



## Postojna & Ljubljana, Slovenia

Today you will visit Postojna Cave and ride an underground train deep into the cave and tour the network of magnificent halls, a myriad of cave formations and mysterious animals.

After the visit to the caves, return to Ljubljana which is the delightful capital city of Slovenia offering a combination of ancient architecture and youthful culture. An afternoon walking tour of Ljubljana's Old Town includes a visit to Preseren Square, the Three Bridges, Dragon Bridge and Plecnik Market.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



## Day 5

### Sarajevo & Mostar, Bosnia, & Herzegovina

Early morning arrival into the Bosnian capital of Sarajevo which is an intriguing blend of Eastern and Western culture; it has mosques and minarets, an ancient bazaar, and an atmospheric old Turkish quarter. Discover the city's poignant history through a truly absorbing tour detailing the horrors of the Balkan War. Sarajevo suffered from the longest siege of a capital city in the history of modern warfare.

The scars of war are still evident as you travel past war-torn buildings, and make a special visit to the Tunnel Museum under Sarajevo Airport. Your guide, who lived through the 1992-1996 conflict, brings to life in touching fashion the struggles the citizens of Sarajevo faced during the siege of the city.

Following Sarajevo, this afternoon travel onto the historic city of Mostar by coach, the crossroads of many civilizations, cultures and three religions. Mostar was one of the most important cities of the Ottoman Empire. The town's renowned stone arch bridge linking the Christian and Muslim areas was re-built in the summer of 2004. You will also visit Turkish House and the mosque before walking through the narrow, bazaar streets, where you can shop for traditional souvenirs and handicrafts.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner





## Belgrade, Serbia

Nestled at the confluence of the Sava and Danube rivers, Belgrade, capital of Serbia, is one of oldest and most fascinating cities in Europe. With its turbulent past it became also a city of contrasts from Communist-era buildings to Orthodox churches, from old Celtic fortresses to the ruins as a result of the Balkans wars.

Guests will spend a full day here and a comprehensive city tour includes the 'House of Flowers' – the mausoleum of Josip Tito, the President of the former Yugoslavia. Also featured on the touring programme in Belgrade is the Town Hall Building, Republic Square and Knez Mihajlova Street and a visit to the Belgrade 'Kalemegdan' Fortress.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



## Bar, Montenegro

Today, cross the border into Montenegro, still one of Europe's largely undiscovered locations. Blessed with glorious beaches and spectacular landscapes of rugged mountains, gentle lakes and medieval towns, Montenegro has a combination of incredible natural beauty and captivating history that makes it a fascinating place to visit.

This morning, arrive in the picturesque coastal town of Bar, where an exclusive olive oil degustation awaits at a local olive grove. Immerse yourself in the centuries-old tradition of olive cultivation, tracing its origins back to Roman times. As you wander through the beautiful groves, discover the meticulous harvesting techniques that have been perfected over generations. Savour the exquisite extra virgin olive oil crafted from the revered *barska žutica* – celebrated as the 'queen of olives' – for its harmonious fusion of fruity and zesty notes. Each drop of the 'liquid gold' reflects the artistry and dedication of Montenegro's master producers, preserving a legacy of unparalleled quality. Each guest will receive a complimentary bottle of Montenegro's finest olive oil.

Later, you will embark on a short sightseeing tour of Old Bar, a historic gem steeped in centuries of tradition. Here, you'll be welcomed with an enchanting folklore performance at the majestic Citadela, where the echoes of Montenegro's rich cultural heritage come to life through music and dance. Afterwards, pause for a refreshment at a local beachside bar, where you can unwind with a drink while taking in the serene coastal views before returning to the Golden Eagle Danube Express for a leisurely afternoon, watching the breathtaking landscapes of the Balkan Peninsula unfold before your eyes.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner





Day **8**

## Skopje, Macedonia

Today, arrive in the little-visited Skopje and discover a city where the Ottoman influences are still strong. Explore the narrow streets of the Old Town with tiny shops and mosques with ceramic-tiled interiors. Meander through the Old Bazaar area, brimming with things to buy, and cross the 15th-century Stone Bridge which links the bazaar to the modern town.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Day **9**

## Sofia & Plovdiv, Bulgaria

The site of Bulgaria's modern capital, at the foot of Mt Vitosha, Sofia was first occupied by the Thracian tribe of Serdi. On the morning tour visit sections of the Roman wall, admire the ancient church of St George, the golden domed Alexander Nevsky Cathedral, and the Turkish Bashi Mosque.

Enjoy lunch on the train as you travel from Sofia to Plovdiv. The second largest city in Bulgaria after Sofia, 'The City of Seven Hills' is one of the oldest cities in Europe with more than 200 known archaeological sites. Spend the afternoon here exploring the Roman Forum and Amphitheatre. You will visit the charming Old Town including its medieval walls and Ottoman baths.





Day **10 & 11** Istanbul, Turkey

This morning you will arrive in Istanbul where you will stay for two nights at a five-star hotel.

This fabled city that spans Asia and Europe is the final stop on the tour so there is time to see how old meets new, east meets west when we visit Istanbul's must-see historic sites.

Included in your two night stay is a visit to the crown jewel of the Ottoman Empire, Topkapi Palace. This stunning palace is the largest and oldest in the world and was the primary residence of the Ottoman Sultans from 1465 to 1853. With its treasury and exotic buildings overlooking the Golden Horn, your visit to Topkapi promises to be a truly fascinating experience.

Hagia Sophia was built in the 6th century by the Emperor Justinian and was one of the largest basilicas in the Christian world. After the Ottoman conquest, it was converted to a mosque and is today one of the most magnificent Grand Mosques in the world.

One of the most famous monuments in both the Turkish and Islamic worlds, the Sultan Ahmet Mosque (the Blue Mosque) is a superb creation in the classical Ottoman style and features six towering minarets and 260 windows illuminating its vast main chamber, which is decorated with more than 20,000 Iznik tiles. Also included in the Istanbul touring programme will be an afternoon's cruise on the legendary Bosphorus and a visit to the Grand Bazaar.

On the final evening, we enjoy a Farewell Dinner in a local restaurant.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



## Day 12 Istanbul, Turkey

Following breakfast, you will be transferred to the airport for onward departures. There is also an option to extend your stay in Istanbul for additional nights to explore more of this fascinating city.

Breakfast

## ACCOMMODATION

### Golden Eagle Danube Express

UPGRADE AVAILABLE

#### LIFE ABOARD THE GOLDEN EAGLE DANUBE EXPRESS

The Golden Eagle Danube Express is your luxurious hotel-on-wheels. Unpack just the once and settle into your well-appointed and comfortable cabin as you begin this voyage of a lifetime. Your cabin attendant will be on hand to look after all your needs.

In addition to our luxury sleeping cabins, we offer a first class Bar Lounge Car and Restaurant Cars.

#### DELUXE CABIN

Travel in some of the finest rail accommodation available in Europe.

Private bathrooms feature a shower with constant hot water, washbasin and toilet. There is a heated towel rail, shaver socket and hairdryer. A range of toiletries and a dressing gown are provided. Cabins have individually controlled air-conditioning, lighting with dimmer switches, individual reading lights, power sockets and a safe.

Co-ordinated fabrics complement wood-panelled walls and brass fittings. Two comfortable armchairs provide daytime seating, and a free-standing chair adds flexibility. Cupboards and a full-length wardrobe provide ample storage whilst the large picture window and full-length mirror enhance the spacious feel. A second window will open for fresh air and for that perfect photo opportunity.

During dinner each evening the living room is converted into two comfortable lower beds by your attendant who is also on hand to bring you early morning tea or coffee.



## Room Upgrades

### Superior Deluxe Cabin

Superior Deluxe cabins, with private en-suite facilities, offer the ultimate in European rail accommodation in terms of space, facilities, and comfort.

With 12 cabins per departure, each cabin offers comfortable daytime seating with a full-length sofa and two additional chairs. The large cabin also benefits from two full-size picture windows, one of which is openable to add to the bright and airy feel of the interior.

Each evening the cabin is transformed into a luxurious bedroom with a UK-standard King Size bed. All cabins have, as standard, a large double wardrobe with excellent storage space, individually controlled air-conditioning, lighting with dimmer switches, individual reading lights, in cabin Wi-Fi and USB ports, power sockets and a safe.



Prices are dynamic based on travel dates. Please proceed to [Book Now](#) or [Contact Us](#) for details.

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## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- The bar lounge: Unwind in comfortable surroundings and watch the world go by as you get to know your fellow passengers and begin long-lasting friendships. It is here that your Tour Manager will also organise a programme of activities. Passengers will receive printed daily itineraries throughout the tour detailing train arrival and departure timings, latest weather forecasts for the next destination and information on the following day's excursions and activities.
- The Bar Lounge Car and Restaurant Cars will host an entertaining and enlightening range of activities such as language lessons and engaging talks by expert lecturers on local history and culture. In the evening enjoy the sounds of the resident pianist playing in the Bar Lounge Car. Every night the bar stays open until the last person leaves.
- The restaurant car: Enjoy the delights of an on-train breakfast each morning - a wide selection of fruit, cereals, orange juice and cold plates are available from the bountiful buffet.
- For lunch and dinner, you will enjoy fine food, great wines and attentive service in the welcoming atmosphere of the restaurant car. On offer are culinary experiences that reflect the very essence of the countries the train travels through, as well as international cuisine. Vegetarian and other dietary options are also available.
- Meals onboard are a relaxed affair as the restaurant cars can accommodate all guests in a single sitting. Throughout the journey there is an informal dress code, so you can enjoy your culinary experiences in convivial and relaxed surroundings and with an open-seating policy you can dine wherever, and with whomever, you please.

### Departure dates:

- 09 May - 20 May 2025
- 27 Aug - 07 Sep 2025
- 24 Oct - 04 Nov 2025
- 08 May - 19 May 2026
- 28 Aug - 08 Sep 2026
- 02 Oct - 13 Oct 2026

### Excluded

- International airfares and taxes
- Domestic airfares and taxes, unless otherwise specified in our holiday package
- Visa expenses, processing, and issuance fees
- Meals other than as specified in our holiday package
- Travel Insurance or expenses of a personal nature (mini-bar, phone call, laundry, etc.)
- Or any other travel expense that has not been included in our holiday package