



trips for 18 to 30 somethings

TRIP ITINERARY

WINTER RHAPSODY 2010 - 2011

18 days, 10 countries Highlights of Eastern Europe!

This magnificent continent has some of the world's greatest locations – however since the demise of Communism in Eastern Europe, a whole host of new destinations have opened up to travellers from around the world! Budapest, Prague and Krakow are cities steeped in history, dripping in romanticism, and with sights to rival any of the traditional European giants! With the services of our experienced Topdeck crew, travelling on a modern, European coach, and with a host of like-minded travelling companions, we're only sure of one thing – that you'll have great fun whilst experiencing the best of Eastern Europe!

DAY 1 ROME

We meet our fellow travellers and Topdeck Crew this afternoon in the 'Eternal City'. Put on your comfortable shoes before embarking on a walking tour of Rome taking in over 2000 years worth of history and a stunning array of sights. These range from the relatively recent, like the opulent Trevi Fountain and the towering Victor Emmanuel II Monument; to the truly ancient, such as the wondrous Pantheon and the awe-inspiring Colosseum. It is a city where the ancient and modern intermingle, and undoubtedly one the world's great destinations!
(B, D)

DAY 2 ROME

As if the sights of the previous days weren't enough, this morning there is an option to take a guided tour of Vatican City, the world's smallest state and home of the Catholic religion. An experienced guide can show us the treasures of the Vatican Museums, the world famous Sistine Chapel with its ceiling frescoes by Michelangelo, and inside the world's largest church, the incredible St Peter's Basilica.

The day is then ours to explore the splendour of Rome! You could take a tour of the Colosseum or ancient Roman Forums, tread the Spanish Steps, shop 'til you drop on the exclusive Via Condotti...or enjoy a steaming cappuccino or espresso in one of the many typical Italian coffee houses! (B)

DAY 3 ROME TO VENICE

From one unique city to another! En route we make a stop at Verona, a Roman city famous for being the setting of Romeo and Juliet and where their most tragic love affair was played

out. During the afternoon we travel on our stunning destination, Venice, a dizzying array of islands, interconnected by countless bridges, and serviced by a beautiful network of canals – there really is no other city like it on earth! (B, D)

DAY 4 VENICE

This morning we head in to the centre of Venice – a walking tour with our Topdeck Trip Leader winds through alleyways and across piazzas, finishing in St Mark’s Square with its magnificent basilica. We then pay a visit to a local lace school to see how these delicate masterpieces are created by the talented Venetians, before an optional ride on a gondola, the traditional (and most romantic) way to navigate the waterways that link this great city. The rest of the day is ours to spend how we wish! (B)

DAY 5 VENICE TO SALZBURG, AUSTRIA

This morning we leave Italy and head upwards – literally - as we make our way in to the Austrian city Salzburg with a view out the window to rival Switzerland. The city known for ‘The Sound of Music’ and home to composer Wolfgang Mozart, offers us an alpine setting for our overnight stay in Austria. (B, D)

DAY 6 SALZBURG

Our walking tour unveils magnificent baroque architecture all around and medieval Hohensalzburg Castle sits on a hill above the Old Town with spectacular views across the city. Depending on the snow, there is the opportunity here to go skiing nearby! (B)

DAY 7 SALZBURG TO VIENNA

From Salzburg to the capital of Austria, Vienna, a gorgeous city dripping in culture, with impressive sights such as the Hofburg Palace, St Stephen’s Cathedral and the majestic Vienna Opera House to be seen. Taste the world-renowned apple strudel followed by an excellent Viennese coffee – very sophisticated! (B, D)

DAY 8 VIENNA TO BUDAPEST, HUNGARY

This morning we make our way east, our destination is Hungary, and the twin cities of Buda and Pest, which sit either side of the mighty River Danube, and together are better known as the romantic capital, Budapest! Upon arrival, a driving tour takes in some magnificent sights, such as Heroes Square, the National Palace, Parliament House and Fisherman’s Bastion. (B, D)

DAY 9 BUDAPEST

Today is a free day for us to explore this most amazing city! You could explore the Castle District, full of cobbled streets and underground catacombs, perhaps unwind in one of the famous thermal baths with a massage and beauty treatment, or learn about the darker side of Hungary’s Communist past in the House of Terror museum. After a long day, why not unwind with a nice goulash at a local restaurant and a drink at one of the city’s legendary ‘dive’ bars! (B)

DAY 10 BUDAPEST TO KRAKOW, POLAND

This morning we make our way north, driving through the country of Slovakia to Poland! The country was decimated in World War II but is now one of the most exciting and affordable destinations in Europe. The ancient town of Krakow miraculously escaped the worst of the War, and remains as the cultural heart of the country. The Old Town is a delightful step back in time to the glory days of the Middle Ages, whilst the great souvenir shopping shows just how well this charming city has blended the old and new so delicately. (B, D)

DAY 11 KRAKOW

A free day to wander through the intriguing, mysterious streets of Krakow! The Wawel Castle, Market Square and Cloth Hall are all eye-catching landmarks, and the latter has some of the best markets in the city nearby. We could perhaps head to the nearby Wieliczka Salt Mine, a 13th Century mine which now houses some incredible sculptures cut straight from the rock salt! This evening, we get the opportunity to find some delicious local cuisine, before perhaps enjoying a drink in one of the many cellar bars tucked away in the corners of this town! (B)

DAY 12 KRAKOW TO PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC

A sombre, but very important, start to the day as we visit Auschwitz concentration camp, where we will learn about the horrors of World War II and the Holocaust, and get the chance to pay our respects to those who lost their lives at the hands of the Nazi regime.

We then make our way to Prague, capital of the Czech Republic. A walking tour with our Topdeck Trip Leader takes in Gothic masterpieces such as the Hradcany Castle District, Charles Bridge, and the stunning Tyn Church. Tonight, why not take the opportunity to sample some of the best nightlife in Europe! (B, D)

DAY 13 PRAGUE

A free day to explore this beautiful city, hidden for decades behind the 'Iron Curtain' that divided East and West Europe, but now a hugely popular destination and a true gem of Eastern Europe. The Czech Republic also produces arguably the world's finest beer, giving us even more reason to celebrate the Prague nightlife! (B)

DAY 14 PRAGUE TO BERLIN, GERMANY

Our first stop in Germany is the city of Dresden, virtually destroyed in World War II, but rejuvenated once again. Its restored Renaissance buildings symbolise the desire of this great country to rebuild following World War II and the division of East and West Germany which followed.

Nowhere is that division more clearly illustrated than in Berlin, Germany's glorious capital city, which for over 25 years was physically separated by the Berlin Wall. Remaining stretches of the wall can be seen on our driving tour taken by our Topdeck crew, which also takes in famous sights such as the Reichstag, the Victory Monument and the Brandenburg Gate. After checking in to our fantastic hostel, dinner at a local restaurant is included! (B, D)

DAY 15 BERLIN

A free day to explore this incredibly vibrant city, bursting with life and offering no end of things to see and do – amazing museums, fantastic shopping and great eateries. This evening, enjoy a night out in Berlin which has a reputation as one of the party capitals of Europe! (B)

DAY 16 BERLIN TO AMSTERDAM, NETHERLANDS

Our trip moves on to the Netherlands, famous for many things - cheese, clogs, windmills and bikes may spring to mind! On arrival cosmopolitan Amsterdam beckons so our walking tour takes us into the heart of the city, Dam Square, as well as the famous Red Light district! (B)

DAY 17 AMSTERDAM

This morning we have a Topdeck exclusive; an included bike ride of Amsterdam, giving us the chance to cycle around the canals and parks of this gorgeous city, just as the locals do. We have plenty of free time to take in the abundant culture of Amsterdam, perhaps paying a visit to the Rijksmuseum, Anne Frank House, the Van Gogh Museum.... This evening, we have a farewell dinner in a local restaurant, followed by an optional canal cruise, giving us a different perspective on this great metropolis, and perhaps a final night out to toast the memories of the past weeks! (B, D)

DAY 18 AMSTERDAM TO LONDON, ENGLAND

Today we say our sad farewells to the Netherlands, heading to Belgium and the incredibly well preserved medieval city of Brugges. A short walking tour is followed by free time to explore and sample some delicious Belgian specialities; chocolate, waffles, and for the more sturdy souls- beer! We then head to Calais and catch our ferry back to England, where the trip finishes this evening. (B)

IMPORTANT NOTES

- To be fully prepared, download the following documentation from www.topdecktravel.co.uk and go to the relevant Itinerary Page of your trip:
 - * Pre-departure information
 - * Optional Activities
- Luggage Allowance - 1 Backpack plus a day pack. Maximum weight of backpack must not exceed 20kgs. Size must not exceed 70cmx45cmx25cm. Due to the strict weight regulations for coaches in Europe, passengers whose luggage exceeds 20kgs will be asked to offload the excess on departure morning.
- This is a suggested itinerary and should be used as a guide only. The day to day itinerary may vary depending on the availability of sights and products. Admission fees are not included in the trip cost.
- Please check your visa requirements.
- This itinerary is only valid if you are travelling before 16 April 2011.