



trips for 18 to 30 somethings

TRIP ITINERARY

WINTER SPIRIT 2010 - 2011

24 days, 12 countries Highlights of Western and Eastern Europe!

This magnificent continent has some of the world's greatest locations – no trip to Europe would be complete without taking in the splendour of Paris, the ancient majesty of Rome, or the party atmosphere of Amsterdam! But 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 enjoying the best of both worlds!

DAY 1 LONDON TO PARIS, FRANCE

Depart with us early this morning from London and wave goodbye to the white cliffs of Dover as we cross the English Channel by ferry, giving us a chance to change currency and grab any final supplies. Alternatively, meet us at our destination- Paris! The capital of France is a city of lights and love, fashion and food, creativity and culture – in short, one of the greatest cities in the world! After dinner, take it all in on our City Lights tour, where our expert Topdeck road crew will share with you the sights and sounds of the world's favourite urban destination. (D)

DAY 2 PARIS

At Topdeck we believe in giving you as much free time as possible to explore the places we take you to - starting today! A free day to take in this magnificent city, from the breathtaking collections of the Louvre, the glorious Notre Dame cathedral, the stunning Arc de Triomphe or the boutiques of the Champs d'Elysees- just keep those credit cards on a leash!

Round off a memorable day with a delicious included dinner, followed by the opportunity to take in a quintessentially Parisian cabaret show, or hop a boat cruise down the famous waters of the River Seine! (B, D)

DAY 3 PARIS TO SWISS ALPS, SWITZERLAND

Today we make our way in to Switzerland, a country so scenic it makes picture postcards spring to life. Our base in the village of Lauterbrunnen is set in a deep valley, flanked by towering cliffs from which waterfalls tumble, framed by the snowy peaks of Europe's great

mountain range, the Alps! After a delicious dinner we can always head to the bar for a nightcap! (B, D)

DAY 4 SWISS ALPS

Today there is an option to ride the historic Jungfrau railway to the highest station in the continent, and visit the summit of the Jungfrau Mountain. At over 12000ft high, this truly deserves its nickname, the 'Roof of Europe'! Not to mention... mountains of snow! The rest of the day is yours to explore this most picturesque corner of the world. (B, D)

DAY 5 SWISS ALPS TO FLORENCE, ITALY

We depart Switzerland heading southwards in to Italy, where we have ample time to take in the countryside, culture, and cuisine of this fantastic country! First stop is the city of Pisa, Middle Ages powerhouse and home to the instantly recognisable 'Leaning Tower'. After taking some time to get our obligatory photographs, we head to fabulous Florence. An included dinner tonight gives us our first chance to taste the dishes that have made Italian cookery so famous! (B, D)

DAY 6 FLORENCE

This glorious city is arguably one of the most important in the world, as it was from here that the great Renaissance movement flowered and spread to the rest of Europe. Learn about this and so much more on our fantastic city tour this morning, taken by a local Florentine guide. We can see the magnificent Duomo, or cathedral, cross the beautiful Ponte Vecchio bridge, and immerse ourselves in the legacy of legends such as Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci, in a city that is home to around one third of the world's great art treasures. If this proves a bit overwhelming, then we can always shop 'til we drop at a local leatherworks, or unwind with a nice glass of Chianti and delicious Florentine steak! (B)

DAY 7 FLORENCE TO ROME

We take time out of our short drive day to visit the unique hilltop city of Orvieto, before heading to the capital city of Italy, Rome. Nicknamed the 'Eternal City', this is the historic centre of the great Roman Empire, and our walking tour this afternoon with our Topdeck Trip Leader takes 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 8 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 9 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 10 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 11 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 12 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 13 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 14 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 15 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 16 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 17 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 18 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 19 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 20 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 21 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 22 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 23 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 24 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. Storage facilities are available at the departure point in London.
- 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.
- Check in time on departure day is between 6 – 6.30am
- This itinerary is only valid if you are travelling before 16 April 2011.