GET SOCIAL: CENTRAL & EASTERN EUROPE HIGHLIGHTS

TOPDECKER, meet Europe (TD)

TRIP VIBE = fast-paced fun with tons of socialising, bucket-list sights and good times all round. Done with the standard Euro trip and now you want more? More pasta, pierogi, paprika and Pilsner? You're gonna find it here. From Vienna's baroque palaces to Amsterdam's cobblestone streets, Budapest's ruin bars to Berlin's beer halls – and the lesser-known gems of Bratislava and Kraków. This is Central and Eastern Europe: the highlights. Everyone's invited. Let's do this.

WHAT YOU **NEED TO KNOW**

Get Social

15
Nights

Download app

10
Meals

Thanks for choosing to holiday with Topdeck

Ready for the time of your LIFE?

The countdown's on…

ABOUT YOUR TRIP NOTES

These Trip Notes contain everything you need to know before your trip departs – from where to meet your Topdeck fam to what we suggest you bring.

Read them on the train, in the supermarket queue or on the loo – we don't mind, just look through them carefully so you know what to expect on your trip. We recommend you download this document so it's with you when you travel (and give a copy to your MVPs so they know what you're up to).

IMPORTANT: please refresh this doc as close to your departure as possible. This means you'll have the most up-to-date info available.

INCLUDED EXPERIENCES

- Walking tour of Rome with Trip Leader
- Walking tour of Venice with Trip Leader
- Vienna highlights drive
- Orientation walk of Bratislava with Trip Leader
- Budapest highlights drive
- Walking tour of Kraków with Trip Leader
- Walking tour of Prague with Trip Leader
- Orientation walk of Dresden with Trip Leader
- Berlin highlights drive

YOUR TRIP WILL START

PICK UP:

Rome
Italy

YOUR TRIP WILL FINISH

DROP OFF:

London
Europe

TRIP CURRENCIES

- Italy - EUR
- Austria - EUR
- Slovakia - EUR
- Hungary - HUF
- Poland - PLN
- Czech Republic - CZK
- Germany - EUR
- Netherlands - EUR
- England - GBP

YOUR ITINERARY

DAY 1 | ROME (ITALY)

Ready to sack off the mundane and uncover extraordinary? Meet us in bella Roma, then prepare for a walking tour to end all walking tours. Slip on your Birks, fill up your water bottle and pack your anti-chafing cream – you're gonna need it. We're talking a solid few hours of non-stop sights, off-the-tourist-trail hidden gems and a run-down of almost 3000 years of history. Pass by the Pantheon, throw our two cents in the Trevi Fountain, (don't) sit on the Spanish Steps and wind things up under the shadow of the mighty Colosseum. Epic doesn't even cut it. Then, you're in Disneyland for foodies so our included dinner tonight is guaranteed to be good. Buon appetito!

MEALS:

- Dinner

INCLUDED TODAY:

- Walking tour of Rome with Trip Leader

DAY 2 | ROME – VENICE

No lies – we have a long drive today. BUT name a better way to get to know your trip mates than handing round the AUX cord. Later, we'll park up in Venice – home to over 400 bridges and birthplace of Vivaldi. Acquaint yourself with the usual suspects on a walking tour – ticking off the likes of St Mark's Square, Doge's Palace and Accademia Bridge. Tonight: this beautifully romantic city is yours for the taking. Round up the gang, score a cheap(ish) meal at Osteria Al Portego, then enjoy a spritz (or two) overlooking one of Venice's fuchsia-pink sunsets.

MEALS:

- Breakfast

INCLUDED TODAY:

- Walking tour of Venice with Trip Leader

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

- Get a personalised trip T-shirt or hoodie: from €23

DAY 3 | VENICE

Centuries-old architecture. Inventive cuisine. And a bucket-load of culture. Venice is just begging to be explored. Do the obvious and hop aboard a gondola ride along the Grand Canal. Spend your time seeking out the epic Libreria Acqua Alta bookshop. Head off the tourist trail with a trip to Giudecca Island. Or forget all the above and embark on a day-long gelataria-crawl. Go wandering. Get lost in the maze of canals and piazzas. That's what makes the memories.

DAY 4 | VENICE – VIENNA (AUSTRIA)

Order one last coffee in poor Italian (hey, you tried!), this morning we'll weave our way through the Alps to Austria. Ten points if you can guess what Vienna is famous for. Musicians. Grand coffee houses. And strudel (duh!). Enjoy a quick stop at the opulent Schönbrunn Palace (home of the Princess Sisi), before driving by the likes of the Opera House, Hofburg Palace, Museum Quarter and Ringstrasse. The rest of the afternoon is 100% up to you. For dinner, head to the Naschmarkt and try some knödel (Austrian dumplings) or go for the obvious choice – schnitzel. Later: gather the fam and make a beeline for the city's microbreweries or cool cocktail bars.

MEALS:

- Breakfast

INCLUDED TODAY:

- Vienna highlights drive

DAY 5 | VIENNA

A whole day in Vienna – prepare to have your heart well and truly stolen. Head to the Museum Quarter and explore. All about the aesthetic? MUMOK's modern art is a must. Wander around the pretty-extra Hofburg Palace. Grab a table at Cafe Central for the most boujee afternoon tea you've ever had (be prepared to queue). Or experience Vienna's hipster hub in Neubau. Tonight, enjoy the sweet sounds of Mozart and Bach played by a Viennese orchestra at an optional concert. Even if classical music isn't your usual go-to, this is something special.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

- Viennese orchestra experience: from €45

DAY 6 | VIENNA – BRATISLAVA (SLOVAKIA) – BUDAPEST (HUNGARY)

Our Vienna love affair was short but oh-so-sweet. Up next? The twin cities of Buda and Pest. But first: a quick whip around Slovakia's fascinating capital. Three countries in one day? Only with us. In the City of Bridges, we'll be chauffeured past the Chain Bridge, Castle District, Gellert Hotel, Heroes' Square and House of Terror on a driving tour. SD cards full and tummies grumbling, it's time to sample some of the local fare. Goulash. Chicken paprikash. Langos. Dobos cake. Hopefully you like paprika, they're kinda obsessed with it here. Later, hang with the hipsters and drink local pálinka (fruit brandy) at one of the original ruin bars.

MEALS:

- Breakfast

INCLUDED TODAY:

- Orientation walk of Bratislava with Trip Leader
- Budapest highlights drive

DAY 7 | BUDAPEST

You wanted freedom to explore – here it is. Check out the Central Market Hall. Explore the Jewish Quarter. Play pinball at the Flippermúzeum. Get a harrowing education at the House of Terror. Hunt down the Anonymous Statue. Soak in the therapeutic waters of the Széchenyi Thermal Baths. Head to Buda Castle and check out all the views from Fisherman's Bastion. And tonight? Opt for a dinner cruise down the Danube (Buda Castle and House of Parliament look extra spesh lit up like Christmas). Or swing by a few of the city's rooftop bars for sophisticated vibes and UN-real views.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

- Danube River cruise: prices available locally

DAY 8 | BUDAPEST – KRAKÓW (POLAND)

Legend has it a dragon had to be defeated in order for Kraków to be built (eat your heart out, Game of Thrones). Get acquainted with this gem of a city on a walking tour – complete with an introduction to its resident dragon. Then? Take Fleetwood's advice and go your own way. Top up your history knowledge at Wawel Castle, explore the hip cafes and boutiques in the Jewish Quarter, head to Schindler's Museum or find a local haunt and tuck into a piled-high plate of pierogi.

MEALS:

- Breakfast

INCLUDED TODAY:

- Walking tour of Kraków with Trip Leader

DAY 9 | KRAKÓW

Here's a free day we prepared earlier. Need some suggestions? Head to Hamsa in the heart of the Jewish Quarter for some 'Hummus and Happiness', shop for the 'Gold of the Baltic' in the UNESCO-listed Cloth Hall. Or do as the locals do and head to Okraglak for some drool-worthy street food – Zapiekanki is a must! Then: it's time to refine your vodka palette on an optional tasting tour. Learn the history behind Polish vodka and sample a few uniquely flavoured varieties as you go. Refuse to drink it without Red Bull? There are plenty of bars to pull into for a tasting of the local beer instead.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

- Vodka tasting: from 218 PLN

DAY 10 | KRAKÓW – PRAGUE (CZECH REPUBLIC)

Onwards to the spire-filled skyline and mysterious streets of Prague! Our Trip Leader will get us acquainted with this picture-perfect city – complete with quirky clock tower – and point out all the must-dos for our free day tomorrow. After hunting down some sma~ený sýr (fried cheese of dreams) for dinner, hit the town to try some local Czech beer or sample a cocktail at The Alchemist – an old-school venue with a 1950s' vibe. Hint: if you want the full experience, ask for the 'choose your fate'. We'll see you in the morning.

MEALS:

- Breakfast

INCLUDED TODAY:

- Walking tour of Prague with Trip Leader

DAY 11 | PRAGUE

Another day, completely your way. Trust us, there's plenty to Czech out (ha!). Seek out the John Lennon wall. Soak up some history at the Communist Museum. Take the funicular up Petrin Hill for allll the views. Check out what the Dancing House is all about. Or grab a delish roast pork roll at one of the street vendors lining Old Town Square. Fancy yourself as a bit of a beer connoisseur? Don't miss the beer tasting optional this afternoon. 11 different Czech beers + tapas = good times all around.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

- Local beer tasting in Prague: from €40

DAY 12 | PRAGUE – DRESDEN (GERMANY) – BERLIN

From one beer capital to the next. Get acquainted with 800 year-old Dresden – a city virtually destroyed in WWII and then rebuilt – before we make tracks to Berlin. Prep yourself for currywurst and more hipsters per capita than anywhere else. We'll drive you around to see the main sights including (what's left of) the Berlin Wall, the Holocaust Memorial, Museum Island and Alexanderplatz. Tonight: get the group together to see whether this city's nightlife really lives up to the hype.

MEALS:

- Breakfast

INCLUDED TODAY:

- Orientation walk of Dresden with Trip Leader
- Berlin highlights drive

DAY 13 | BERLIN

A city exploding with culture, history and bloody good food – you've got 24 hrs to make the most of it. Our advice? Opt in for a historic walking tour that's actually interesting. You'll get a local insight into what the city was like under Nazi rule and tick off the likes of the Reichstag, Checkpoint Charlie and Brandenburg Gate. Plus, all the insider tips on how to spend the rest of your free day. Or put those elastic waistbands to the ultimate test on a locally-led food tour. We're talking kebabs, pastries, more currywurst, pierogi and local Pilsner beer. Tonight, seek out Burgermeister for dinner. This place used to be a public toilet (ew) but now serves up the best burgers in Berlin (yum). Or see if Mustafa's kebabs meets expectations.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

- Third Reich walking tour: from €20
- Berlin food tour: from €45

DAY 14 | BERLIN – AMSTERDAM (NETHERLANDS)

Ok, nobody panic – the adventure is coming to a close. But we're not done yet! The GPS is set for Amsterdam today. Once we arrive, hit the cobblestones and explore the likes of Dam Square, the Royal Palace and the National Monument. This place is a foodie's haven so you'll have no issues finding somewhere to settle in for dinner. Give into temptation and grab a cone of hot chips with mayo. Mmm. Later, head to a canalside wine bar or brewery to keep the good times rolling.

MEALS:

- Breakfast

DAY 15 | AMSTERDAM

This is our last full day together. So, don't hang about – get on your bike! Check out Amsterdam's iconic canals, bridges and parks on an optional bike tour. History buffs should pay a visit to the Anne Frank House (don't forget to book in advance!). If you *did* forget to book, there's the chance to join a virtual reality tour of the Secret Annex instead. Culture fiends should make a beeline for the Van Gogh Musuem and Rijksmuseum. Or if you're wanting a more chill vibe, head to Hannekes Boom for waterfront views, good food and all-round good times. Whatever you get up to, make sure you're back in time to toast the final night of our European adventure at tonight's group dinner.

MEALS:

- Dinner

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

- Bike tour of Amsterdam: from €28
- Anne Frank's last walk and VR experience: from €37

DAY 16 | AMSTERDAM – LONDON (ENGLAND)

Seriously? It's over? After breakfast, we'll make tracks to LDN. Blast the Trip Song one last time – who's up for a reunion trip next year?

MEALS:

- Breakfast

OTHER INFORMATION

TOPDECK APP

Feeling appy? Download the Topdeck app and get PUMPED for the adventure ahead. Best bit is: from 45 days before departure you'll be able to chat with your soon-to-be tripmates.

Plus, get your itinerary at your fingertips – so you know where you'll be going and what you'll be doing on each day of your trip. Nice!

Links:

Apple **https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/topdeck/id994727866**

Android **https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.FlexiTechSolutions.TopDeck&hl=en**

YOUR SAFETY

NIGHTS OUT

We love a good night out – experiencing the nightlife and entertainment places have to offer is a big part of travelling. But alongside the fun it's important to be aware of your surroundings and personal safety.

When you're out late, remember to avoid walking alone – particularly through deserted areas like beaches and back streets. Always stick together, take a registered taxi where possible, and keep a note of your accommodation so you can find your way back to your fellow Topdeckers if you become separated. Make sure you have your trip mates' mobile numbers in case you need to get hold of them while out and about.

In some countries, alcoholic measures can be considerably larger than what you may be used to. Try to keep track of what you're drinking – and if you see one of your trip mates looking a little worse for wear, take them back to your accommodation. Never leave your drink unattended.

It's also important to be aware that what you might consider harmless flirting may be interpreted differently in some countries. Be yourself and have fun, but stay savvy – you don't want to find yourself in an uncomfortable situation.

DRUG USE

Topdeck has a strict zero-tolerance drug policy. Customers should not bring any illegal substances onto the Topdeck coach or into any of the accommodation we stay in on our trips. This includes marijuana – even if it is legal in some of the states your trip passes through. If you are found in possession of drugs, you will be removed from the trip immediately. All instances of drug possession will be reported to Topdeck Head Office, who may consider alerting the relevant authorities.

REMEMBER: if you are found in possession of drugs, not only do you risk getting in trouble with the local police, but our Driver will also be held responsible if they are found on the Topdeck coach. Trust us, you don't want that to happen to any of our Drivers – they're awesome.

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Culture shock, homesickness, random periods of feeling down – these things happen and are totally normal. You can rest assured that if you're feeling low, your Topdeck crew will do their utmost to cheer you up.

Measures you can take to look after your mental health and wellbeing while on the road with us are:

- Call home. Sometimes it's nice to hear a familiar voice and have a good old-fashioned catch up with your loved ones
- Eat well. Never underestimate the power of a good, wholesome meal. Nobody feels at their best when they're hungry!

- Drink responsibly. Not only will you swerve the dreaded hangover, but by keeping an eye on what you drink you could also avoid getting into any potentially uncomfortable situations
- Talk to your Trip Leader. Don't forget, they're probably far from home too – so they're sure to know some tried- and-tested ways to beat the blues
- Integrate with your fellow Topdeckers. This one is key! The more fun you're having on your trip, the less likely you are to feel homesick (fact!)

TRAVEL SINCE COVID-19

Travel looks a bit different since COVID-19. That's why we've put some new procedures in place to help keep you safe on the road.

What remains the same? Your Topdeck trip will be run hygienically, responsibly, and with your safety at the forefront of everything we do. End of.

Here's the info: **https://www.topdeck.travel/resources/travel-safely**

RESPECT ON THE ROAD

RESPECTING FELLOW TRAVELLERS

Our trips are for everyone. We're a family – and we want every Topdecker to have an incredible time.

What we're not about is excluding people or making them feel like they don't belong. That's why we always encourage Topdeckers to be kind and courteous to their fellow tripmates . The golden rules? Respect each other's space, be mindful of causing excessive noise in shared accommodation, and treat others how you'd wish to be treated. Easy!

HOW TO BE A RESPONSIBLE TRAVELLER

Responsible travel isn't difficult to achieve. With a little conscious thought and preparation, you can have an awesome adventure AND a positive impact on the places you visit. Sweet!

Here are five things you can do to ensure you're travelling responsibly:

- Conserve water. You know the drill – reuse your room towels, take short showers and remember to turn off the tap when you're brushing your teeth
- Reduce your waste. Ditch the plastic bag, refuse unnecessary packaging, dispose of your waste responsibly and recycle as much as possible
- Go local. Hunt down locally owned and operated restaurants and bars, shop in local markets, and book tours and activities run by local guides
- Consider the wildlife. Avoid any attractions that involve closely engaging with wild animals
- Respect local people and culture. Obeying local laws is a given – but also remember to dress and behave in a manner appropriate to the community. Be polite and keep an open mind!

INSURANCE

Before your trip departs, it's compulsory for all passengers to take out comprehensive travel insurance covering cancellation, medical expenses (including repatriation), loss or damage to baggage and personal belongings, money and personal liability.

Head to our FAQ for more info: **https://www.topdeck.travel/resources/faqs-0**

Got more Qs? Chat with our Customer Service team: **https://www.topdeck.travel/about-us/contact**

PASSPORTS AND VISAS

Please make sure your passport is valid for at least six months after the last day of your trip. Some countries will refuse entry if you do not have at least six months validity remaining on your passport after your departure date. Depending on your nationality, you may require a visa to enter certain countries.

It is your responsibility to obtain visas prior to your trip's departure. To determine which visas you'll need, you can consult either your own government's website or the government websites of the countries in which you will be travelling. Check out our handy interactive map showing global visa requirements:
https://www.topdeck.travel/resources/latest-border-restrictions

PLEASE NOTE: some visas can take up to six weeks to acquire, so don't leave it until the last minute. Also, bear in mind that the validity of a visa often runs from its date of issue rather than the date of entry into the country. Please check with the appropriate embassy/embassies prior to departure, as requirements do change periodically.

TIPPING

Basically: it's not necessary.

Your Trip Leader and Driver don't expect tips, and they won't ask for any either. Meaning? More dollar to spend on optional activities (and a souvenir for your nan).

WHAT TO BRING

Based on our experience, these items are key. Everyone's different though – so if you want to bring more or less, go for it (as long as you don't exceed your 20kg allowance, that is!).

Off to Japan? Your luggage must be no bigger than 160cm in total (height x width x length). So maybe leave the hairdryer at home.

Psst: this is a packing list for Topdeck trips in general. Obv you'd look silly splashing around the Greek islands in a snowsuit.

- 1 pair of comfortable walking shoes + 1 pair of smart casual shoes
- 1 pair of thongs/jandals/flip-flops
- 2 pairs of jeans/trousers
- 2 pairs of shorts/skirts
- 4 shirts/T-shirts
- 2 sweaters/jumpers
- Smart casual evening wear
- 1 warm jacket + 1 rainproof jacket

- Underwear and socks + swimwear
- Towel
- Toiletries
- Hat and sunscreen
- Basic medical kit (including plasters, aspirin etc)
- Adaptor plug
- Reusable water bottle
- Snow gear

THAT'S IT!