



Explore Eastern Europe 2026

A land of ancient cities, time-honoured culinary customs and ever-changing landscapes, Eastern Europe rewards those ready to explore. Picture pastel-hued Old Towns frozen in time and hearty local cuisine crafted with love and tradition. Add soaring mountains that graze the sky like fragments of giant crystals, and you'll soon find yourself drawn to this beautifully diverse region. Ready to dive in?





About your tour notes

These tour notes contain everything you need to know before your tour departs – from where to meet your fellow guests and local guide to what essentials to pack for your journey. We recommend you print this document out and bring it with you on your tour. Give a copy to loved ones at home so they can follow your adventure, too.

Important: please refresh this document as close to your departure as possible to ensure you're equipped with the latest information available.

Danubis Astoria Hotel @ 18:00

Budapest

Miss Sophies Downtown @ 14:00

Prague



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Tour highlights

- ✓ Master the art of crafting authentic Polish *pierogi* dumplings at a hands-on, traditional cookery class in Kraków
- ✓ Let your tastebuds sing at a local wine tasting in Hungary's world-famous Tokaj wine region
- ✓ Uncover the postcard-perfect landmarks of UNESCO World Heritage-listed Český Krumlov, including its majestic, hilltop castle

More inclusions

- ✓ 9 breakfasts, 2 lunches, 3 dinners
- ✓ 9 nights in thoughtfully selected accommodation
- ✓ Luxury minicoach

Currencies you'll use

- Hungary - HUF
- Slovakia - EUR
- Poland - PLN
- Czech Republic - CZK



Included meals

Breakfast (B) is included daily.

Some of your lunches and dinners are also included, either in hotels or local restaurants. These are indicated by (L) and (D) in the itinerary.

Please note that drinks will not always be included.

We will do our best to accommodate any specific dietary requirements you may have. Please ensure to make these clear to us before your tour begins so we can communicate them to our hotels, restaurants and suppliers.

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Your itinerary

Day 1 | Budapest (Hungary)

A city filled with energy and culture – we'll begin our Eastern European story in grand Budapest. You could spend a couple of days getting acquainted with this bustling city, before meeting our small group of fellow explorers for a welcome dinner at our hotel.

So, how will your Budapest chapter take shape? Perhaps you'll discover one of the city's historic thermal baths and unwind in their famous, mineral-rich waters. (Don't miss the Gellért Bath's beautiful Art Nouveau architecture, or the sunny yellow Neo-Baroque facade of Széchenyi Thermal Bath). Then, a relaxing cruise along the mighty Danube River is the perfect way to soak in the city's iconic sights – Parliament Building, Buda Castle, Széchenyi Chain Bridge, we're looking at you!

Or, for a slice of adventure, you could pack a picnic and hike up leafy Gellért Hill for panoramic views of the city below. As another option, why not weave your way to the buzzing Jewish Quarter for a dose of *pálinka* (fruit brandy) at a quirky, character-filled 'ruin bar'? There are twisting mazes of neon-lit, graffiti-filled rooms just waiting to be explored here... Decisions, decisions!

Included today



Accommodation

Danubius Hotel Astoria (or similar)



Meals

+ Dinner

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Day 2 | Budapest – Hollóko – Eger

Get ready to step back in time at the UNESCO World Heritage site of Hollókő – a village that's been lovingly preserved to showcase traditional rural life in Hungary from centuries past. We'll get to know the friendly locals as we enjoy a guided tour: marvel at the residents' vibrant, hand-embroidered folk costumes, uncover the centuries-old secrets of blacksmithing, and even learn a traditional dance step or two! To wrap up this morning steeped in culture, we'll tuck into a hearty homemade lunch, where classic *Palóc* soup (crafted with pork, vegetables and fragrant spices) is on the menu. Be sure to save room for dessert – there's a golden apple strudel with your name on it.

Then, it's on to enchanting Eger – where you'll have the rest of the afternoon free to meander through its cobblestone streets. So, how will your adventures shape up? You might soak up the cosy hum of conversation and enjoy a spot of people-watching from one of the many cafés spilling out onto historic Dobó István Square – *Presszókávé* (espresso) in hand, of course. Gaze up at the gilded, frescoed ceiling of the Minorite Church, a real Baroque beauty. Or, feel the cool, timeworn stone under your fingertips as you trace the walls of the 13th-century Eger Castle.

As night envelops the city's terracotta rooftops, rest and recharge – our Eastern Europe adventure continues tomorrow.

Included today



Accommodation

Hotel Korona (or similar)



Meals

+ Breakfast

+ Lunch

Expertly crafted small-group tours



Day 3 | Eger – Tokaj and Košice (Slovakia) – High Tatras

Lush vineyards line the landscape like rows of green thread, neatly stitched into the sun-drenched earth – we're stepping into our luxury minicoach and travelling on to World Heritage-listed Tokaj, a wine region in north-eastern Hungary.

Here, it's time to channel your inner sommelier, as we'll be sampling not one, but five distinctive white wines at a family-run winery – from crisp and dry to sumptuously sweet varieties. The jewel in the crown? *Tokaji Aszú*, the region's renowned golden dessert wine. You'll soon see why it's a firm favourite, and we won't blame you for stocking up on a bottle (or two) to take home...

Fairytale castles, soaring mountain peaks, time-honoured folk traditions – it's all waiting for us as we cross the border into Slovakia. After a spot of lunch and an orientation tour of Košice, we're venture into mountain territory – the magnificent High Tatras region beckons! Keep your eyes peeled for a glimpse of the majestic Spiš Castle ruins, perched high on a hilltop like a stone crown, as we follow the scenic route to our thoughtfully selected mountain retreat. We're free to relax and unwind tonight, and will surely be dreaming of sweeping views...

Included today



Accommodation

Hotel Hviezdoslav (or similar)



Meals

+ Breakfast



Day 4 | High Tatras

Thrill seekers, rejoice! This morning, we're stepping into a cable car and soaring high into the sky to the top of *Lomnický štít* – the second tallest peak in the High Tatras. At the summit, take a moment to pause... Inhale the crisp, mountain air as the bracing wind rushes past, and drink in the cinematic panorama of jagged peaks that graze the sky like giant shards of glass. What a view!

Tear yourself away and snap those final postcard-perfect pictures on the descent. Then, once on terra firma, we'll weave along the scenic back roads to a local farm where a delicious cheese tasting and light, rustic lunch awaits. Savour the rich, smoky flavours of *Oscypek* – the region's beloved signature cheese, that's expertly crafted on-site and infused with garlic, paprika and herbs. So, who remembers the steps we learnt earlier in the week? Now's your chance to shine!

Then, it's back to the hotel for an evening spent at our leisure.

Included today



Accommodation

Hotel Hviezdoslav (or similar)



Meals

+ Breakfast

+ Lunch



Day 5 | High Tatras – Wieliczka (Poland) – Kraków

Time to dig a little deeper – 135 metres to be exact. The otherworldly Wieliczka Salt Mine is ours to discover this morning. We'll descend around 800 steps and unearth a subterranean labyrinth, where vast, chandelier-lit chambers, ornate chapels and larger-than-life sculptures await at every turn. Extraordinarily, all these elements are carved from salt – yes, really! Dating back to the 13th century, this intricate maze of galleries, passageways and even a lake will transport you to another world.

After emerging back into the daylight, we'll journey on to Poland and the country's former capital, Kraków. The afternoon's all yours to dive into this charming city... Imagine yourself at a royal audience in Wawel Castle's State Rooms, where chessboard-patterned floors stretch before you. Uncover your new favourite independent boutique among the cobblestones of the hip and artsy Jewish Quarter. Or, perhaps you'll seek out one of the dimly lit cellar bars for a tipple of Polish vodka.

Then, settle down for the night in our characterful hotel. Nestled in the heart of the Old Town, you'll be feeling like a local here in no time.

Included today



Accommodation

Hotel Polski pod Białym
Orłem (or similar)



Meals

+ Breakfast



Day 6 | Kraków

From the buzz of the historic Cloth Hall to the gilded grandeur of St Mary's Basilica, this morning, our expert local tour guide will help bring the spirit of Kraków's Old Town to life. And, after working up an appetite, you'll have free time for lunch. So, why not opt for *Placki ziemniaczane* for a taste of quintessential, local flavours? Expect crisp potato pancakes, pan-fried to perfection and flavoured with fragrant garlic or onion. Sign us up!

Later this evening, there are more culinary delights on the agenda with a hands-on *pierogi*-making class. The classic Polish dumplings are a firm favourite with locals, and you'll soon see why. Roll up your sleeves, prepare the pastry and fill each circle with typical savoury fillings. The best part? You'll get to sample your unique, freshly baked creations for tonight's dinner. Be sure to jot down the recipe for when you're hosting back home. *Smacznego!*

Included today



Accommodation

Hotel Polski pod Białym
Orłem (or similar)



Meals

+ Breakfast
+ Dinner

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Day 7 | Kraków – Auschwitz-Birkenau – Olomouc (Czech Republic)

Today, we'll embark on a solemn visit to Auschwitz-Birkenau, the largest of the former Nazi concentration camps, where some of history's darkest chapters unfolded. On a guided tour, you'll gain a profound understanding of its harrowing role in World War II, while quietly reflecting on the lives lost and the stories that echo through its somber grounds.

After a moving visit, we'll continue on to the third and final country on our Eastern European journey, the Czech Republic, where the majestic city of Olomouc greets us with its grandeur. What treasures will you uncover here? Come face to face with mythological figures that adorn the Old Town's six, impressive Baroque fountains. Marvel at the Town Hall's Astronomical Clock, with its intricate celestial dials and animated figurines. Hear the gentle chime of the organ as you enter the hushed nave of the neo-Gothic Saint Wenceslas Cathedral. There's magic around every corner...

Tonight, the city's all yours to explore. Track down a local haunt for dinner, and your knowledgeable Tour Leader is sure to have plenty of recommendations ready to share. *Goulash*, anyone?

Included today



Accommodation

Hotel Arigone (or similar)



Meals

+ Breakfast

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Day 8 | Olomouc – Brno and Trebon – Český Krumlov

Sit back and relax in the minicoach, this morning we're following our journey westwards to Brno, the Czech Republic's second largest city. With a thriving cultural scene and countless trendy eateries, it's easy to see why students and locals alike have fallen in love with this effortlessly cool urban hub. Get swept up in the city's spirit on a walking tour led by our in-the-know Tour Leader; where market stalls overflow with sun-kissed vegetables like bountiful treasure chests, and legends of a notorious dragon hang in the air like an ancient secret.

Charming Třeboň is up next, with its pastel-hued buildings and terracotta rooftops that would feel right at home in a Wes Anderson film. Drink it all in on an orientation tour as we admire the 17th-century Château, trace the town's medieval walls and learn about the local fishponds.

We'll wrap up another perfect day in the enchanting Český Krumlov – where you'll have the evening to wander its maze of picturesque streets at your own pace or simply unwind at the hotel. Tomorrow, we'll delve deeper into this picture-perfect medieval town...

Included today



Accommodation

Hotel Latrán (or similar)



Meals

+ Breakfast



Day 9 | Český Krumlov

Wake up to the rich aroma of freshly brewed coffee and fuel up for the day – we're setting off on a walking tour with our friendly local guide. Just as the Vltava River threads through town like a shimmering ribbon, we'll weave our own path up through cobblestone streets to Český Krumlov's mighty castle. Say hello to the locals as you pass by cosy cafes, eclectic craft shops and family-run pubs on the way. Dating back to the 13th century, the castle boasts a stunning blend of Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque architecture, as well as panoramic views over the Old Town and river below. What iconic landmarks can you spot from all the way up here?

Following our in-depth visit, you'll have the afternoon to take on the town as you wish. Why not meander through the castle's manicured gardens and inhale the kaleidoscope of flowers in full bloom? Or, simply settle in at one of the sun-soaked riverside cafes, listening to the gentle melody of the flowing water, and watch the world go by...

A final feast awaits at a local restaurant, where we'll gather for dinner – it's the perfect chance to reminisce on the soul-stirring experiences we've shared together.

Included today



Accommodation

Hotel Latrán (or similar)



Meals

+ Breakfast

+ Dinner

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Day 10 | Český Krumlov – Obratán – Prague

Settle into the minicoach for one final journey together as we venture to Obrataň, home to the humble Sudkuv Dul Fortress and the unique, UTOPIA Cellar. With a warm welcome from the owners, we'll descend into the cellar for a glimpse into the craft behind their refreshing local ciders and delicate vinegars – all made with 100% natural, fresh ingredients and a long-established fermenting processes. Afterwards, we'll even have the opportunity to sample some of their exceptional produce ourselves. You may want to make space in your bags for a few bottles!

As we part ways in timeless Prague, we may be saying goodbye to Eastern Europe but the memories of its charm and rich history will undoubtedly last a lifetime. Before you leave, immerse yourself in Prague's magical streets, where you'll discover why it's nicknamed the 'City of a Hundred Spires' and how the iconic Charles Bridge has captured the hearts and imaginations of so many.

Included today



Meals

+ Breakfast



Travel advice

Finances

Changing money

Cash: Foreign money can be changed at banks, airports, some railway and tube stations, and at major hotels (though at a less favourable rate).

Credit cards: Visa and MasterCard are widely accepted. American Express is only accepted in some larger establishments.

Cash machines: ATMS are widely available.

Tipping

Tipping is entirely at your discretion. If you feel you have received exceptional service, it is recommended that you tip £1-2/€ per day for Drivers and £4- 5/€ per day for Tour Leaders.

Insurance

Before travelling with Back-Roads Touring, it is compulsory for all guests to take out comprehensive travel insurance. Please ensure your insurance covers medical expenses (including repatriation), cancellation cover, loss or damage to baggage and personal effects, money and personal liability.

We recommend you carry your insurance details with you at all times. You may be asked to provide details of your medical insurance or a payment guarantee in some countries before medical assistance can be provided.

For more information, please see our [FAQ page](#).

If you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to contact our friendly Customer Service team [here](#).

Passports and visas

Please ensure your passport is valid for at least six months after the last day of your tour. 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 tour'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.

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.

We advise you to either carry a photocopy of your passport (and visa, if applicable) with you while abroad, or to ensure that you leave a copy with relatives back at home. This will enable the local embassy or high commission to arrange a replacement if the original should be lost or stolen. If you do take copies with you on your tour, please ensure that you keep these separate from your original documents.

Medication and mobility

Whilst on your tour, we want you to have the smoothest journey possible which requires x mobility conditions:

- You must be fit enough to get on and off the vehicle on a regular basis, and to walk around towns and villages or to attractions.
- You must be able to walk up and down stairs and use a shower over the bath.

Please note that, unfortunately, we are unable to accommodate mobility scooter or wheelchair users as we frequently stay in traditional-style hotels and the majority do not have lifts or ground-floor rooms.

If you take medicine for certain conditions, such as diabetes or heart problems, please carry it with you at all times.

Please declare any medical conditions you may have in advance of your tour. If you are in any doubt as to whether our tours are suitable for you, please contact our friendly Customer Service team [here](#).



Mental health and wellbeing

Culture shock, homesickness and periods of feeling down happen regardless of age. Be rest assured that if you're feeling low, your Tour Leader and Driver will do their utmost to make you smile.

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

- Call loved ones. Hearing a familiar voice whilst in an unfamiliar destination can help ground you and remind you you're not alone.
- Eat well. Nobody feels their best when they're hungry. There are plenty of nutritious culinary delights to be savoured along the road!
- Integrate with your fellow guests. The more you socialise with the group, the less likely you'll feel homesick.

Transport

We travel in premium mini-coaches equipped with comfortable seats, air conditioning and large windows for enjoying the view.

With far more flexibility than a standard-size coach, we're able to take the scenic route – winding through beautiful countryside to the heart of tiny villages and coastal towns.

Will I have regular access to Wi-Fi?

Most accommodation we stay in will offer free Wi-Fi as well as many restaurants and cafes you may visit. If you would like more regular internet access without large roaming fees, you can purchase a Back-Roads Touring eSIM [here](#).



What to Pack

Based on our experience, the following items are essential.

Please note, this is a general packing list for Back-Roads Touring tours. What you pack will depend on the countries you're visiting as well as the time of year you plan to travel.

Clothing

- | | | |
|---------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ✓ Sun hat | ✓ Long-sleeved tops | ✓ Light jacket |
| ✓ Sunglasses | ✓ Short-sleeved tops | ✓ Waterproof jacket |
| ✓ Sleepwear | ✓ Shorts/skirts | ✓ Trousers |
| ✓ Warm jacket | ✓ Socks | ✓ Swimwear |
| ✓ Underwear | ✓ Smart casual evening wear | ✓ Walking/comfortable shoes |

Other essentials

- | | | |
|---------------------------|--|--------------------|
| ✓ Multi-use adapter plug | ✓ Toiletries | ✓ Camera |
| ✓ Batteries | ✓ Sunscreen | ✓ Towel |
| ✓ Umbrella | ✓ Reusable water bottle | ✓ Insect repellent |
| ✓ Any personal medication | ✓ Basic medical kit (paracetamol, aspirin, plasters etc) | |

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How much luggage can I bring

As we travel in mini-coaches, luggage space is limited. Here's what you can take with you on tour:



1 x suitcase



1 x small carry-on bag
(backpack or handbag)

If you have more luggage, please make arrangements to store it prior to joining the tour. **We are unable to carry extra luggage on the mini-coach.**

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FAQs

Which type of hotels will we stay in?

Our thoughtfully selected accommodation is full of charm and historic details – expect elegant country inns, grand town centre hotels and even the odd castle! For this reason, rooms vary in size, and most hotels don't have lifts – meaning you'll likely need to access your room via stairs. Porterage will be included wherever possible.

Although air conditioning is mostly unavailable in historic buildings, fans will be provided during hot spells. Most hotels have bathtubs with overhead showers (rather than walk-in showers), so you'll be able to enjoy a soak at the end of the day.

What's the food like in Eastern Europe?

Traditional meals in Eastern Europe are typically hearty and comforting, often crafted with meats, vegetables and potatoes. You can expect to see dishes such as rich, paprika-infused soups, stews and savoury dumplings on the menu, as well as local cheeses. Sweet and savoury pastries are also popular – enjoyed throughout the day or as dessert. If you have any dietary requirements, we'll ask about these before you begin your tour and accommodate them whenever we can.

Is there an option to do this tour in reverse?

Currently, this tour is available in one direction. We'll start our journey in bustling Budapest and trace our way north, then west, before finishing our travels in charming Prague.

That's everything!

We can't wait to welcome you on tour.

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