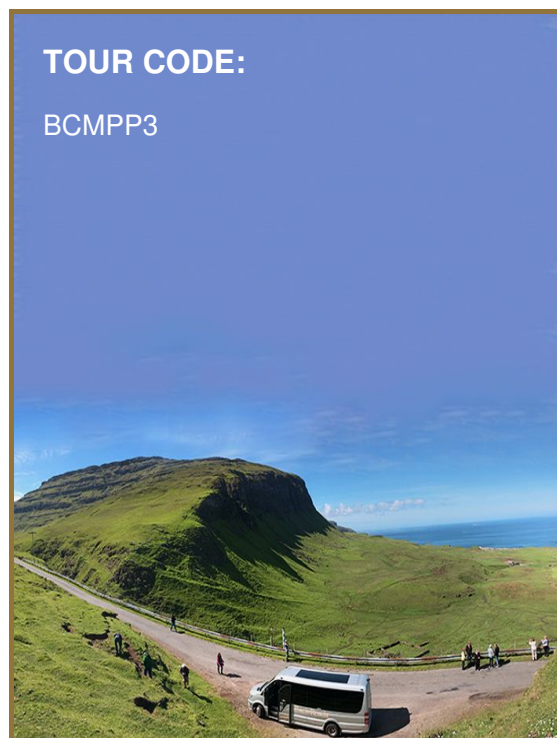




Back-Roads | Europe (BRT)

From the fairytale spires of Prague to the bustling markets of Dresden and the twinkling Christmas lights of Karlovy Vary, this is a tour that explores the festive traditions, history and Yuletide beauty of Germany and the Czech Republic. And with the chance to discover magnificent castles, delicious local produce and scenic railways along the way, it's sure to be a trip to remember.



Thank you for choosing **Back-Roads**

Your extraordinary adventure awaits!

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.

THE BACK-ROADS DIFFERENCE

- ✓ Explore the Striezelmarkt in Dresden – Germany's oldest Christmas market
- ✓ Discover traditional Ore Mountain Christmas decorations with a handicraft manufacturer
- ✓ Enjoy the famous spa and thermal springs of Karlovy Vary

TOUR CURRENCIES

- Czech Republic - CZK
- Germany - EUR

Your itinerary

DAY 1 | PRAGUE (CZECH REPUBLIC)

Our enchanting Christmas journey through Saxony and Bohemia will begin amidst the cobblestone streets of medieval Prague. After settling into our hotel, we'll get to know one another better over a delicious welcome meal. Here's to the incredible adventure ahead! Accommodation: Miss Sophie's Downtown (or similar)

MEALS:

☑ Dinner

DAY 2 | PRAGUE – MELNÍK – DRESDEN (GERMANY)

After a hearty breakfast, we'll begin with a locally guided walking tour of the city – complete with a visit to the festive Christmas market, of course. After taking lunch at our leisure, we'll move on to Melník. Here, we'll dive straight into proceedings with a tour of the hilltop castle – with plenty of time to stroll the grand rooms and browse the 17th-century map collection. The afternoon will see us arriving in historic Dresden, where we'll enjoy a free evening to explore the city's gastronomic delights or relax at our hand-picked hotel. Accommodation: INNSIDE Dresden (or similar)

MEALS:

☑ Breakfast

DAY 3 | DRESDEN – WACKERBARTH CASTLE – DRESDEN

This morning we'll learn more about a Dresden Christmas tradition with a visit to a local Stollen bakery. The delicious seasonal treat is said to date back to 1329 – when the region's bakers entered it into a competition organised by the Bishop of Nauruburg. Later, we'll board a steam engine for a scenic ride along the Löbnitzgrundbahn railway. Our next stop? Wackerbarth Castle, where we'll gain an insight into the winemaking process on a tour of the vineyards and wine cellar – sampling a tippie or two as we go, of course. We'll round off the day back in Dresden, where we'll savour some free time to explore the Striezelmarkt: Germany's oldest Christmas market. With twinkling lights, bustling stalls and the scent of mulled wine in the air, there's no better place to soak up the Christmas spirit. Accommodation: INNSIDE Dresden (or similar)

MEALS:

☑ Breakfast

DAY 4 | DRESDEN – FREIBERG AND SEIFFEN – NEUHAUSEN

After breakfast, we'll bid farewell to Dresden and move on to Freiberg – where we'll explore the Cathedral of St Mary on a guided tour. Then: our journey will continue as we make tracks to Seiffen, where there's a visit to a handicraft manufacturer in store. Here, we'll discover the stories and craft techniques behind traditional Ore Mountain folk art figurines – including delightful nutcrackers, Christmas pyramids and candle arches. Tonight, we'll dine together at our hotel in Neuhausen. Accommodation: Schlosshotel Purschenstein (or similar)

MEALS:

- ✓ Breakfast
- ✓ Dinner

DAY 5 | NEUHAUSEN – ANNABERG-BUCHHOLZ – KARLOVY VARY (CZECH REPUBLIC)

At Annaberg-Buchholz, we'll spend the morning delving into the area's history at the Ore Mountain Museum – with exhibitions dedicated to mining, early modern art and local crafts. In the museum's courtyard we'll find the entrance to the silver mine – where we'll have the opportunity to gain a unique insight into its fascinating history. After topping up our energy levels with a 'Bergmannsschmaus' (a traditional miner's snack), we'll move on Karlovy Vary: our home for the next two nights. This evening, we'll be free to seek out a local restaurant for dinner or relax back at the hotel. Accommodation: EA Hotel Atlantic Palace (or similar)

MEALS:

- ✓ Breakfast

DAY 6 | KARLOVY VARY

Today we'll step out onto the streets of Karlovy Vary on a guided tour before setting our sights on the Hot Spring Colonnade. Home of the gushing Vřídlo geyser, here we'll go underground to see how the thermal water is drawn, distributed and regulated. Then: onwards to the Jan Becher Museum where we'll learn the history behind Becherovka, a famous Czech herbal liqueur. After a tasting session, the rest of the day will be yours to spend as you please (with the chance to use the spa and thermal springs) before we come together for tonight's farewell dinner. Accommodation: EA Hotel Atlantic Palace (or similar)

MEALS:

- ✓ Breakfast
- ✓ Dinner

DAY 7 | KARLOVY VARY – PILSEN – PRAGUE

After leaving Karlovy Vary behind us, our first stop of the day will be Pilsen. Here we'll be lucky enough to visit the Pilsen brewery: where Pilsner Urquell beer was born 175 years ago. After touring the bottling facility and exploring the three brewhouses, we'll round off our tour in the historic cellars – where we'll have the chance to taste the beer for ourselves. Back in the capital later this afternoon, we'll say our goodbyes.

MEALS:

- ✓ Breakfast



Tour information

Meals

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.

Other information

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:
www.backroadstouring.com/faqs

If you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to contact our friendly Customer Service team: www.backroadstouring.com/contact-us

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

Medication and mobility

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

www.backroadstouring.com/contact-us

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.

What to bring

Based on our experience, the following items are essential.

Please note, this is a general packing list for Back-Roads 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 shoes/comfortable shoes |

OTHER THINGS TO PACK:

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

That's it!

We look forward to seeing you on tour.