



# GOLDEN EAGLE LUXURY TRAINS

VOYAGES OF A LIFETIME BY PRIVATE TRAIN™

## BALKAN EXPLORER

VENICE TO ISTANBUL

2024 DEPARTURES



GOLDEN EAGLE DANUBE EXPRESS

## BALKAN EXPLORER

VENICE TO ISTANBUL

ITALY - SLOVENIA - BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA  
SERBIA - MACEDONIA - BULGARIA - TURKEY



Encompassing seven countries over 12 days, our Balkan adventure samples a taste of the eclectic cultures and customs found in Southern Europe.

Absorb the unique blend of culture, ancient tales and architectural treasures on this iconic voyage aboard the Golden Eagle Danube Express. Meandering through ancient landscapes and along turquoise coastlines, this exclusive rail cruise delivers an enthralling exploration of the Balkan nations and their surrounding countries.

Combining Venetian vibrancy with Croatian coastlines and opulent Ottoman architecture, this Grand European tour provides the perfect blend to stimulate our senses. Venturing through the intriguing countries of former Yugoslavia, we look to unearth the rich past of the captivating region. Indelibly marked by the poignant conflicts of recent

and ancient history we discover the remarkable and inspiring resilience of Sarajevo and Mostar and explore the lasting influences on the surrounding cities of Belgrade, Dubrovnik and Skopje.

At either end of this incredible journey are two of the most magical cities in Southern Europe. Staying at the iconic five-star Pera Palace hotel, we spend time exploring Istanbul's unique blend of Asian and European culture, religion and style. Equally as enchanting, but completely contrasting, is the glorious city of Venice, where we embrace its rich heritage of music and the arts and capture the true essence of this romantic and cultured city.



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### TOUR SCHEDULES

1 May - 12 May, 2024  
12 September - 23 September, 2024  
11 October - 22 October, 2024

### TOUR ITINERARY

DAY 1 Venice	DAY 7 Belgrade
DAY 2 Venice	DAY 8 Skopje
DAY 3 Trieste	DAY 9 Sofia & Plovdiv
DAY 4 Postojna & Ljubljana	DAY 10 Istanbul
DAY 5 Sarajevo & Mostar	DAY 11 Istanbul
DAY 6 Dubrovnik	DAY 12 Istanbul

ITALY - SLOVENIA - BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA  
SERBIA - MACEDONIA - BULGARIA - TURKEY





## DAY 1 VENICE

ITALY

Venice is a truly captivating city of romance; its unrivalled beauty takes away the breath of first-time visitors and regulars alike.

Included in our time in Venice is two nights at the Monaco and Grand Canal Hotel (or similar). The hotel enjoys an enviable location with a stunning view of the Grand Canal and just a few steps from St Mark's Square, the Doge's Palace and the Bridge of Sighs. This evening we will enjoy a welcome reception dinner at a local restaurant.



## DAY 2 VENICE

ITALY

After breakfast in the hotel, this morning enjoy a walking tour around the highlights of this historic city. Walk through the winding lanes that sit beside the Grand Canal to St Mark's Square, which for 1,000 years was the heart of Venetian life. We also take an iconic gondola ride (30 minutes) and stroll through the Rialto Market.

After lunch, there is free time to wander at your own pace through the streets of Venice and discover for yourself many hidden gems lying in wait around every corner. This evening after dinner we have a private visit to St. Mark's Basilica.

## DAY 3 TRIESTE

ITALY

This morning we transfer from the hotel, by boat, directly to Santa Lucia station on the Grand Canal. Here our private train, the Golden Eagle Danube Express, is ready to receive us. Mid-morning our private train will thread its way out of Santa Lucia station onto the 3-mile causeway over the Venice Lagoon and on to our first stop at the Italian port city of Trieste, for an afternoon tour where we visit Miramare Castle. We then stop at the vast Piazza Unita d'Italia, the main town square.

There is the option to climb the hill to the famous Church of San Giusto built around a medieval complex that dates back to the 13th century. We will go inside the church for a close-up view of the splendid Byzantine-style architecture enriched with precious mosaics.



## DAY 5 SARAJEVO & MOSTAR

BOSNIA &amp; HERZEGOVINA

Early morning arrival into the Bosnian capital of Sarajevo which is an intriguing blend of Eastern and Western culture; it has mosques and minarets, an ancient bazaar and an atmospheric old Turkish quarter. Discover the city's poignant history through a truly absorbing tour detailing the horrors of the Balkan War. Sarajevo suffered from the longest siege of a capital city in the history of modern warfare. The scars of war are still evident as we travel past war-torn buildings and we make a special visit to the Tunnel Museum under Sarajevo Airport. Your guide, who lived through the 1992-1996 conflict, brings to life in touching fashion the struggles the citizens of Sarajevo faced during the siege of the city.

Following a lunch on board our private train, this afternoon we travel along a very scenic line to the historic city of Mostar, the crossroads of many civilizations, cultures and three religions. Mostar was one of the most important cities of the Ottoman Empire. The town's renowned stone arch bridge linking the Christian and Muslim areas was re-built in the summer of 2004. We also visit Turkish House and the mosque before walking through the narrow, bazaar streets, where you can shop for traditional souvenirs and handicrafts. From here, we travel onto Dubrovnik by coach where we stay for one night.



## DAY 4 POSTOJNA & LJUBLJANA

SLOVENIA

Today we visit Postojna Cave as we ride an underground train deep into the cave and tour the network of magnificent halls, a myriad of cave formations and mysterious animals.

After the visit to the caves we return to Ljubljana which is the delightful capital city of Slovenia offering a combination of ancient architecture and youthful culture.

Our afternoon walking tour of Ljubljana's Old Town includes a visit to Preseren Square, the Three Bridges, Dragon Bridge and Plecnik Market.







## DAY 6 DUBROVNIK CROATIA

Since its foundation in the 13th century Dubrovnik has been attacked many times but it is now restored as one of the great cities of the Mediterranean, essentially unchanged for 700 years. We will tour the city travelling through Ploce Gate to visit the Franciscan Monastery with one of the world's oldest pharmacies, the Old Harbour, St Laurence Fortress and the Rector's Palace. We have lunch overlooking the Adriatic and have free time to wander the narrow streets. Mid-afternoon we head back to the train positioned close to the Croatian border in Capljina, and enjoy dinner as we depart towards Serbia.



## DAY 7 BELGRADE SERBIA

Arrive this morning in the Serbian capital, Belgrade, the former Yugoslavian capital. Located at the strategic meeting point of the Danube and Sava Rivers, this truly

cosmopolitan city has fortifications from Celtic times, medieval tombs and Turkish baths. We spend a full day here and our city tour includes the 'House of Flowers' –the mausoleum of Josip Tito, the Town Hall, Republic Square and Knez Mihajlova Street, as well as 'Varos' Gate and a visit to the mighty Kalemegdan Fortress.



## DAY 8 SKOPJE NORTH MACEDONIA

Today we arrive in the little-visited Skopje and discover a city where the Ottoman influences are still strong.

Explore the narrow streets of the Old Town with tiny shops and mosques with ceramic-tiled interiors.

Meander through the Old Bazaar area, brimming with things to buy, and cross the 15th-century Stone Bridge which links the bazaar to the modern town.



## DAY 9 SOFIA & PLOVDIV BULGARIA

The site of Bulgaria's modern capital, at the foot of Mt Vitosha, Sofia was first occupied by the Thracian tribe of Serdi. On our morning tour we will visit sections of the Roman wall, admire the ancient church of St George, the golden domed Alexander Nevsky Cathedral and the Turkish Bashi Mosque.

We enjoy lunch on the train as we travel from Sofia to Plovdiv. The second largest city in Bulgaria after Sofia, 'The City of Seven Hills' is one of the oldest cities in Europe with more than 200 known archaeological sites.

We spend the afternoon here exploring the Roman Forum and Amphitheatre. We'll visit the charming Old Town including its medieval walls and Ottoman baths.





DAY  
10

## ISTANBUL

TURKEY

This morning we arrive into Istanbul where we stay for two nights at a five-star hotel.

This fabled city that spans Asia and Europe is our final stop on our tour so there is time to see how old meets new, east meets west when we visit Istanbul's must-see historic sites.

One of the most famous monuments in both the Turkish and Islamic worlds, the Sultan Ahmet Mosque (the Blue Mosque) is a superb creation in the classical Ottoman style and features six towering minarets and 260 windows illuminating its vast main chamber, which is decorated with more than 20,000 Iznik tiles.



Hagia Sophia was built in the 6th century by the Emperor Justinian, and was one of the largest basilicas in the Christian world. After the Ottoman conquest, it was converted to a mosque and is today one of the most magnificent Grand Mosques in the world. Take a few moments to linger here to admire the fine Byzantine mosaics.

DAY  
11

## ISTANBUL

TURKEY

Also included in our Istanbul programme is a visit to the crown jewel of the Ottoman Empire, Topkapi. This stunning palace is the largest and oldest in the world and was the primary residence of the Ottoman Sultans from 1465 to 1853. With its treasury and exotic buildings overlooking the Golden Horn, your visit to Topkapi promises to be a truly fascinating experience.

We also visit the Grand Bazaar which is one of the world's largest covered markets, with 58 streets and over 4,000 shops. In operation since the 14th century the bazaar is especially known for its jewellery, leather, pottery, spices and carpets.

DAY  
12

## ISTANBUL

TURKEY

Following breakfast you will be transferred to the airport for onward departures. There is also an option to extend your stay in Istanbul for additional nights to explore more of this fascinating city.



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## WHAT'S INCLUDED IN THE TOUR PRICE



### EXPERIENCED TOUR MANAGERS

Our experienced Tour Managers are selected for their travel knowledge and their organisational abilities allowing you to relax and enjoy your rail cruise. We receive exceptional passenger comments about our Tour Managers and their aim is to ensure you enjoy every minute of your holiday.

### ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE AIRPORT TRANSFERS

Arrival transfers from the international airport to our tour hotel, and departure transfers from our tour hotel to the airport are included.

### HOTEL AND ON BOARD ACCOMMODATION

Although you will spend much of your time sightseeing or relaxing in the train's public areas, you will find your hotel room or cabin a welcome retreat at the end of a rewarding day. All hotels are of five-star standard, or the best available.

### BREAKFAST, LUNCH AND DINNER DAILY

All meals are included, starting with dinner on the first day and ending with breakfast on the last day, unless otherwise stated. All departures feature one or two Restaurant Cars where you can enjoy the excellent waiter-served food and wine. Several times during the tour we will also sample authentic



local cuisine with wine and a selection of drinks off the train, which is also included in the tour price.

### DRINKS WITH MEALS

A generous drinks allowance, both alcoholic and non-alcoholic, is included with lunch and dinner on and off the train.

### ON BOARD SERVICE

You can expect service which is attentive, friendly and unintrusive. Your car attendants provide housekeeping and bedding turndown services to assist you and to ensure you are comfortable in your cabin. Complimentary tea, coffee and bottled drinking water are served to you in your cabin.

### GUIDED OFF-TRAIN EXCURSIONS

The history and culture of the places we visit on our rail cruises will come alive through our expert local guides. All our tours include a wide-ranging sightseeing schedule to make the most of the time you have off the train and bring you closer to the culture, people and history of your destinations. We believe it is the special little touches that help create magical memories.

### PERSONAL HEADSETS

On all the off-train excursions, to enhance your enjoyment and insights into the places you visit, you will be



provided with a lightweight personal headset on which to listen to your tour guide as you take in the sights. The range of the headset means that you do not need to worry about missing any of the guide's commentary on your excursion, even if you prefer to wander away from the group.

### ON BOARD DOCTOR AND MEDICAL FACILITIES

To give you peace of mind our tours are accompanied by a Doctor who travels with us for the entire journey, so you can rest assured that medical assistance is always available. On call 24 hours a day, the doctor is on hand to give primary care as required. In almost every case, the Doctor will be English-speaking and be registered with the General Medical Council in the UK.

### PORTERAGE

As you only have to unpack once, your luggage and belongings will stay with you on the train throughout the journey but, wherever necessary, porterage is included between the hotels and stations.

### ALL GRATUITIES

You will not have to worry about tipping on or off the train on your rail journey with *Golden Eagle Luxury Trains* as all gratuities are included in the tour price.





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## IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT OUR TOURS

### WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THE PRICE?

All accommodation as per the itinerary - both on board the train and in hotels; all meals starting with dinner on the first day; a generous allowance of wine, beer, soft drinks and tea and coffee with all lunches and dinners both on and off the train; all arrival and departure transfers; guided off-train sightseeing excursions; the services of experienced Tour Leaders; all gratuities; and a Doctor travelling with the group.



### WHAT IS NOT INCLUDED IN THE PRICE?

International and domestic airfares (unless part of the itinerary); visa and excess baggage charges; insurance. Personal expenses such as premium wines or laundry. On some tours there may also be an occasional optional activity that needs to be paid for locally.

### ACCESS TO WI-FI

Wi-Fi is available on board for guest use whilst travelling in Europe. The Wi-Fi connection is dependent on cellular signal and there will be times when we will be travelling through areas with limited or zero coverage. Therefore, please do not expect a reliable service when the train is moving through remote areas.

### PASSPORT AND VISA INFORMATION

It is your responsibility to be in possession of a valid passport and visa for your trip. A passport with a minimum of 6 months validity is required for all our rail tours. Many of the remote and exotic countries we visit require visas. Visa costs are not included in the price of the tour and these must be purchased independently. This can often be an involved and time consuming process and, as this is such an important aspect of your holiday, we can assist you with advice and any supporting documentation.

We do not take any responsibility for any passengers in possession of incorrect or invalid visas. Please contact our Customer Services department for help and information. For customers in the United Kingdom we can put you in contact with our recommended visa support agency.

### INSURANCE

It is a booking condition that you must be fully insured for any medical expenses that may be incurred whilst travelling. You will be asked to provide us with the name of your insurer and your policy number together with the 24-hour medical emergency assistance contact number. We will require this information at least six weeks prior to travelling with us.

### VACCINATIONS

We will continue to look for the most up-to-date health and safety recommendations from both the World Health Organization (WHO) and international governments, including vaccination requirements for Covid-19, and will continue to update our policies accordingly for your added peace of mind.

### ON BOARD DOCTOR

We provide a Doctor on board all our tours who is available 24-hours a day. They carry a fully stocked medical kit but it is your responsibility to ensure that you obtain any vaccinations, prescribed and precautionary medicine for the countries you are visiting before travelling with us.

### INTERNATIONAL & DOMESTIC FLIGHTS

Flights are not included (unless part of the itinerary) but we can advise fares and book them for you if the flights originate in the UK. Please note that we do not advise that you book flights more than 60 days in advance of the tour departure date (see Booking Conditions).

### HOTEL ACCOMMODATION

Hotel accommodation as described in the tour itinerary is included in the price of the tour. Room upgrades are available on request, subject to availability and at an additional cost.

### ITINERARIES

Accommodation and tour itineraries are subject to change at any time due to circumstances beyond our control. Every effort will be made to operate tours as advertised and as per the rail timings received.



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### SPECIAL REQUESTS

We pride ourselves on offering you a personalised and knowledgeable service and will make every effort to meet any of your special dietary, room or travel requests. Also we are very happy to cater for any special occasion or anniversary that you are celebrating whilst you are with us. Please advise us at the time of booking.

### SINGLE TRAVELLERS

Many of our guests are single travellers and of course passengers travelling as small groups, families, couples or singles are all equally welcome.

### GRATUITIES

All gratuities are included in the tour price and we strongly encourage passengers to refrain from offering gratuities to crew/hoteliers/drivers etc. We would prefer passengers to inform our management of any exceptional service received, and we will reward accordingly.

### LANGUAGE

The primary tour language will be English. French, German and Spanish speaking guides are available on request at an additional cost. Please contact us for more information. Other languages may be available on request.

### MEETING POINTS

Details of hotel/airport meeting points will be printed on the departure packs that will be sent to you one month prior to departure.

### MINIMUM PASSENGER REQUIREMENTS

All our rail tours require a minimum number of passengers to operate. Should this not be reached, we will offer an alternative tour. If no alternative is suitable a full refund will be offered.

### TRAVELLER HEALTH CONDITIONS

To get the most out of our tours, passengers must be able to walk at least a mile per day at normal walking speed. The traveller represents that neither he/she has any physical or mental condition or disability that could create a hazard to him/herself or other members of the tour.

We reserve the right to refuse travel to anyone who, in the opinion of the Tour Doctor or Tour Manager would be incapable of completing the tour or would cause unacceptable delays to the rest of the group. In these circumstances there would be no refund for any unused part of the tour. If in doubt, please call us for advice.

### BOOKING CONDITIONS

Our full booking conditions can be found at [www.gettrains.com](http://www.gettrains.com)



Golden Eagle Danube Express





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## DINING ON BOARD



Restaurant Car



On board cuisine



On board cuisine

A world of culinary delights.

The *Golden Eagle Danube Express* Restaurant Cars are a delightful venue in which to enjoy meals skillfully prepared by our Executive Chef and his on board restaurant team using the very best in ingredients, locally sourced wherever possible. Depending on the number of guests on board, one or two of our Restaurant Cars will be on every departure.

Enjoy the delights of an on-train breakfast each morning - a wide selection of fruit, cereals, orange juice and cold plates are available from our bountiful buffet. Alternatively enjoy a cooked breakfast brought to your table by our waiting staff, all complemented by steaming hot tea and coffee.

For lunch and dinner, you will enjoy fine food, great wines and attentive service in the welcoming atmosphere of the Restaurant Car.

We offer a culinary experience that reflects the very essence of the countries we travel through, as well as international cuisine. Vegetarian and other dietary options are also available.

All our meals at lunch and dinner are complemented by an excellent choice of wines from around the world, personally selected by our Company Founder, Tim Littler, along with bottled water, beer and soft drinks.

Meals on board are a relaxed affair as the Restaurant Cars can accommodate all our guests in a single sitting. Throughout the journey there is an informal dress code, so you can enjoy our culinary experiences in convivial and relaxed surroundings and with our open-seating policy you can dine wherever, and with whomever, you please.



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## RELAX IN OUR BAR LOUNGE CAR



Bar Lounge Car

The social heart of the *Golden Eagle Danube Express* is the Bar Lounge Car, a great place to relax and settle into the unhurried pace of life on board.

Unwind in comfortable surroundings and watch the world go by as you get to know your fellow passengers and begin long-lasting friendships. Perhaps read a novel to while away the time or challenge your friends to a game of cards.

It is here that our Tour Manager will also organise a programme of activities. Passengers will receive printed daily itineraries throughout the tour detailing train arrival and departure timings, latest weather forecasts for the next destination and information on

the following day's excursions and activities.

The Bar Lounge Car and Restaurant Cars will host an entertaining and enlightening range of activities such as engaging talks by expert lecturers on local history and culture.

In the evening enjoy the sounds of the resident pianist playing in the Bar Lounge Car. Every night the bar stays open until the last person leaves.





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## SUPERIOR DELUXE CABINS



Our Superior Deluxe cabins, with private en-suite facilities, offer the ultimate in European rail accommodation in terms of space, facilities and comfort.

Limited to just 12 cabins per departure, each cabin offers comfortable daytime seating with a full length sofa and two additional chairs. The large cabin also benefits from two full-size picture windows, one of which is openable to add to the bright and airy feel of the interior.

Each evening the cabin is transformed into a luxurious bedroom with a UK-standard King Size double bed. All cabins have, as standard, a large double wardrobe with excellent storage space, individually controlled air-conditioning, lighting with dimmer switches, individual reading lights, in cabin Wi-Fi and USB ports, power sockets and a safe.

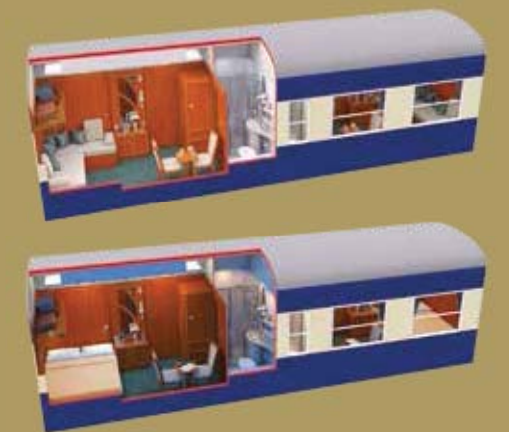


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## SUPERIOR DELUXE CABINS

- Cabins per car: 4
- Cabin length (inc. en-suite): 454cm (14'9")
- Cabin width: 190cm (6'2")
- Cabin area (inc. en-suite): 8.6 m<sup>2</sup> (93 ft<sup>2</sup>)
- Bed size: 190cm x 152cm (6'2" x 5'0")
- King Size bed (UK standard)
- Additional daytime seating with table
- Individually controlled air-conditioning and heating
- Two large picture windows
- Adjustable lighting
- Double wardrobe and Personal safe
- Wi-Fi & two USB ports
- Private en-suite bathroom with cubicle shower and WC



All images and plans shown are artist's impressions – please visit [www.gettrains.com](http://www.gettrains.com) for latest updates.





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## DELUXE CABINS



Deluxe Cabin - Day

Travel in some of the finest rail accommodation available in Europe.

Each Deluxe sleeper carriage has just five spacious yet intimate en-suite cabins offering every convenience and comfort so you may sit back, relax and enjoy the scenery as it rolls by.

Private bathrooms feature a shower with constant hot water, washbasin and toilet. There is a heated towel rail, shaver socket and hairdryer. A range of toiletries and a dressing gown are provided. Cabins have individually controlled air-conditioning, lighting with dimmer switches, individual reading lights, power sockets and a safe. Co-ordinated fabrics complement wood-paneled

walls and brass fittings. Two comfortable armchairs provide daytime seating and a free-standing chair adds flexibility. Cupboards and a full length wardrobe provide ample storage whilst the large picture window and full length mirror enhances the spacious feel. A second window will open for fresh air and for that perfect photo opportunity.

During dinner each evening the living room is converted into two comfortable lower beds by your attendant who is also on hand to bring you early morning tea or coffee.



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Deluxe Cabin - En-suite

### DELUXE CABINS SPECIFICATION

- 5 x 2-bed cabins per carriage
- Cabin size (inc. en-suite): 397cm x 195cm (13'0" x 6'4")
- Cabin area (inc. en-suite): 7.74m<sup>2</sup> (83 ft<sup>2</sup>)
- Bed size (each): 185cm x 80cm (6'1" x 2'7<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub>")
- Private en-suite bathroom with cubicle shower and WC 77cm x 195cm 1.5m<sup>2</sup> (16 ft<sup>2</sup>)
- Remote controlled air-conditioning
- Two armchairs and a free-standing chair for daytime seating
- Large picture window – opens partially, perfect for photograph opportunities
- Full length wardrobe and power sockets







## GOLDEN EAGLE LUXURY TRAINS LIMITED

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