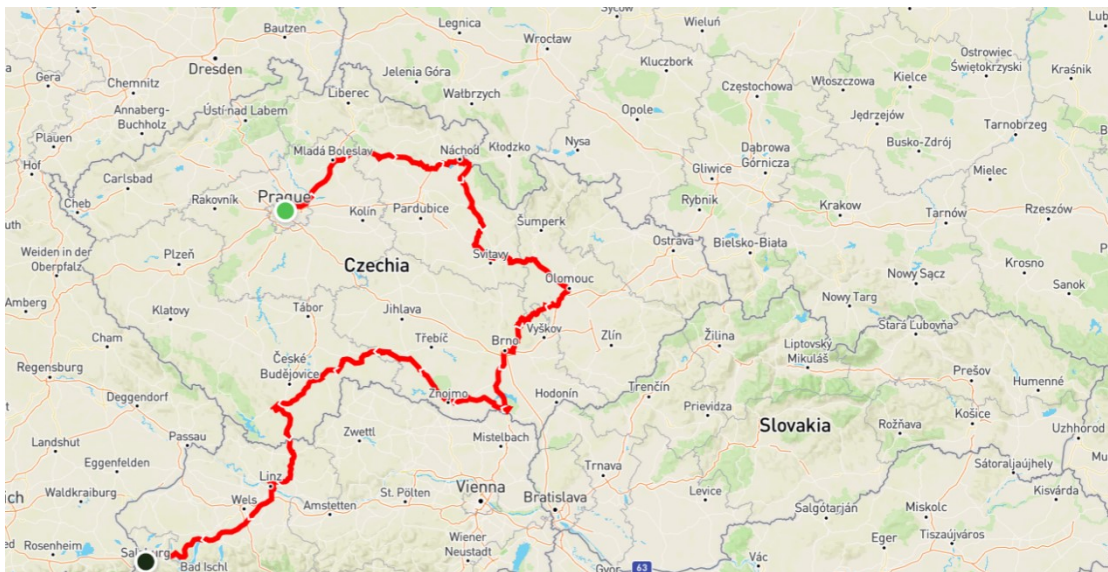


Prague to Salzburg, Seven World Heritage Sites

Highlights

- Resplendent beauty of Prague, a historical and architectural gem of Europe
- Seven prominent UNESCO World Heritage sites!!!
- Exquisite craftsmanship and artistic detail of Baroque statues in Kuks
- Towering rock formations and of the Bohemian Paradise
- Czechoslovak Wall, a masterpiece of military fortification art
- Monumental Holy Trinity Column and Baroque fountains in Olomouc
- Glamour of the romantic follies in the Valtice-Lednice Cultural Landscape
- Elegantly formed dripstones and structures of the Punkva Caves
- Rows of picturesque Renaissance and Baroque houses in Telc;
- Architectural charm of Renaissance and Baroque houses in Cesky Krumlov
- Experience the enchanting beauty of Salzburg, a stunning blend of baroque architecture and the majestic Alps.



DAY 1 Meeting in Prague, Orientation Briefing

Convene at the hotel in the late afternoon for an orientation briefing, followed by a delightful dinner to set the stage for an enjoyable and informative gathering.

Overnight: Prague

DAY 2 Guided Tour of Prague, a city of a hundred spires



Prague Castle



The Moldau River in Prague

After breakfast, we embark on a journey through Prague, the captivating capital of the Czech Republic. Our exploration commences at the iconic Prague Castle, an expansive complex boasting the monumental St. Vitus Cathedral, the intricate stone vaulting system of Vladislav Hall, and the charming Golden Lane with its picturesque little houses, all set against a backdrop of awe-inspiring panoramic views of the city. As we descend towards the Lesser Quarter, discover imposing aristocratic palaces, enchanting gardens, and the whimsical Baroque architecture of St. Nicholas Cathedral. Following a delightful lunch, we traverse the Moldau River via the Charles Bridge, a medieval masterpiece adorned with statues, leading us to the winding cobbled streets of the Old Town. Here, the Gothic-style Old Town Hall and its astronomical clock, a marvel of medieval engineering, command attention in the fabulous square. Our journey culminates in the Josefov district, Prague's Jewish Quarter, where historic synagogues and the Old Jewish Cemetery invite exploration. After the city tour, we transfer to our hotel in the Bohemian Paradise. Overnight: Jicin

DAY 3 Towering rocks of Bohemian Paradise (6mi/10km)



Prachov Rocks



Trosky Castle

Following breakfast, we immerse ourselves in a full day of hiking in the serene Bohemian Paradise, a region aptly named for its enchanting landscapes featuring rolling hills, imposing rock formations, and formidable castles. Embark on the Golden Trail, weaving through the most noteworthy natural and cultural monuments. Traverse the Prachov Rocks, marveling at the unique shapes of towering sandstone spires and majestic gorges. Sneak beneath the ruins of Parez Castle, a once-feared stronghold of

merciless highwaymen, stroll by a picturesque lake before reaching the pinnacle of Trosky Castle, perched high on two impressive basalt rocks, offering an unparalleled panoramic view. In the afternoon, we transfer back to Jicin, a town that once served as the opulent showcase for Albrecht of Wallenstein, a fabulously wealthy aristocrat from the 17th century who spared no expense in transforming it into a testament to his power and glory.

Overnight: Jicin

DAY 4 Czechoslovak Wall, a masterpiece of fortification art (6mi/10km)



Czechoslovak Wall in Dobrosov



Castle gardens in Nove Mesto

Embark on a morning hike through the Eagle Mountains, exploring the formidable military structures of the Czechoslovak fortification system. In the prelude to World War II, Czechoslovakia constructed an intricate defensive system along its borders, rivaling the more renowned Maginot Line in allied France. The Czechoslovak Wall, though less celebrated, boasted state-of-the-art fortifications surpassing its French counterpart in various aspects. Our trek takes us past infantry bunkers, artillery blockhouses, and into the intricate underground tunnels of the Dobrosov Stronghold. Discover the local people's enthusiasm and readiness to defend their homeland as we delve into the labyrinth. Enjoy a panoramic view of the hilly landscape from Jirasek's lookout tower before a gradual descent to the Metuje River valley. Culminate the day at the charming main square of Nove Mesto, surrounded by gabled Renaissance houses and dominated by a lavishly furnished aristocratic palace with a stunning Italian-style garden. Conclude with a transfer to our hotel in Rychnov.

Overnight: Rychnov nad Kneznou

DAY 5 Litomysl and Olomouc World Heritage Sites



Renaissance Chateau in Litomysl



Holy Trinity Column in Olomouc

Commence the day with a morning transfer to Litomysl, a UNESCO World Heritage site and the birthplace of the renowned Czech composer Bedrich Smetana. A guided tour of the Renaissance chateau will unveil charming sgraffito decorations, stately halls adorned with stylish furnishings, an impressive dining room, and a unique Baroque theatre. Enjoy a leisurely stroll through the gardens of the Piarist Monastery and along the main square, where historical buildings boast elaborate facades. After a delightful lunch, we proceed to Olomouc, another UNESCO site with immense historical significance and vibrant atmosphere. Wander the patterned cobblestone streets, passing Baroque and Gothic churches, imposing palaces, and iconic public fountains featuring ancient Roman gods and heroes. The main square, a picturesque scene, is dominated by the celebrated Holy Trinity Column, the most monumental of its kind in Central Europe. Conclude the day with dinner at a fancy restaurant.

Overnight: Olomouc

DAY 6 Dripstones of Punkva Caves and yawning Macocha Abyss (5mi/8km)



Dripstones in Punkva Caves



Boatride in Punkva Caves

Embark on a morning transfer to Moravian Karst for a scenic hike in the canyon, shaped by the Sloup Brook's waters, a tributary of the subterranean Punkva River, forming an extensive cave system with underground passageways, domes, and abysses spanning around 5 miles. Enjoy a woodland stroll towards the renowned Macocha Abyss, Central Europe's deepest sinkhole, offering a daring view from the highest edge to the abyss's bottom. Descend into the Punkva Caves to witness the natural wonders

of dripstone formations – artistic stalactites, stalagmites, draperies, flowstones, and columns, quietly growing for 25-30 million years, unseen until the late 19th century. The guided tour along the longest accessible route (3 km) concludes with a romantic water cruise on the subterranean Punkva River. Afterward, transfer to our hotel in Mikulov, the heart of a renowned winegrowing region.

Overnight: Mikulov

DAY 7 Romantic follies of the Lednice-Valtice Cultural Landscape



Classicist Colonnade in Valtice-Lednice



Three Graces in Valtice-Lednice Park

Embark on a full-day exploration through a picturesque landscape park, adorned with 19th-century follies commissioned by the influential Lords of Liechtenstein. This area, nestled between the charming towns of Valtice and Lednice, was meticulously transformed by the lords into the "Garden of Europe," a testament to their opulence and splendor. Begin at a classical colonnade atop the Rajsna hill, offering breathtaking views of rolling hills and vineyards, before descending to Valtice. Admire the grand Liechtenstein Chateau, then continue through pine woods to Diana's Temple, a classical arch-shaped hunting lodge. Pass by St. Hubert Chapel, dedicated to the patron saint of hunters, and the Temple of the Three Graces with allegorical statues of Sciences and Muses. Reach the majestic Lednice Chateau, formerly Liechtenstein's summer residence, and wander through its gardens and artificial lakes with clusters of native and exotic tree species. Explore the Moorish Revival Minaret, an observation tower. Conclude the day with an evening of wine tasting accompanied by live traditional dulcimer music.

Overnight: Mikulov

DAY 8 Meandering River in Podyji National Park and Exquisite Square in Telc



Meandering Dyje River



Renaissance houses in Telc

Embark on a transfer to Podyji National Park, where we will hike through a near-natural forest along the Dyje River, surrounded by communities of deciduous trees. The park's unique location on the boundaries of Southern and Central European habitats results in a rich diversity of plant and animal species concentrated in a relatively small area. Explore the natural features of the park, including a captivating stretch of the Dyje River with intriguing meanders. During a guided tour of the medieval border castle ruins, marvel at the spectacular views of the river snaking through the gorge below. Arrive close to the Austrian border to witness remnants of the infamous Iron Curtain, gaining insights into the country's communist past. Conclude the day with a short transfer to our hotel in Telc, a charming town with a unique large square featuring well-preserved Renaissance and Baroque houses, evoking the ambiance of a film set.

Overnight: Telc

DAY 9 Trebon Lake District, harmony between man and nature



Trebon Lake District



Rozmberk Lake

Commence the day with an exhilarating tour of the Renaissance chateau, which commands the square, delving into its richly decorated chambers showcasing valuable collections of furniture, chinaware, pewter, armors, and hunting trophies. Afterward, transfer to the tranquil Trebon Lake District for a leisurely walk around Rozmberk, the largest of over 500 artificial lakes in the region. Originally marshland, it has evolved into a biosphere reserve with integrated management of land, water, and biodiversity, a transformation initiated in the 15th century with the creation of the first

lakes and a sophisticated water-management system. Today, it stands as a harmonious example of the relationship between mankind and nature. Continue the walk to the historical town of Trebon, synonymous with the fishing industry. Conclude the day with a refreshing glass of unfiltered beer in the local brewery, established in 1379, before transferring to Cesky Krumlov.

Overnight: Cesky Krumlov

DAY 10 Cesky Krumlov, a gem among medieval cities



Baroque Library in Vyssi Brod



Renaissance houses in Cesky Krumlov

Embark on a guided tour of Cesky Krumlov's extensive castle, the second largest in the country, showcasing diverse architectural styles spanning five centuries. Explore the oldest surviving Baroque court theater, complete with original stage machinery, scenery, and props. In the castle grounds, cross an arched bridge over a deep ravine to discover a large Rococo garden featuring neat pathways, geometric flowerbeds, branching trees, and a fancy cascade fountain adorned with water deities. Enjoy the remainder of the day at your leisure, strolling through the winding, cobbled streets adorned with well-preserved Renaissance and Baroque buildings. Explore the charm of quaint shops and cozy taverns, immersing yourself in the unparalleled ambiance of the city. Allow the authentic atmosphere, reminiscent of four centuries past, to captivate you as you explore Cesky Krumlov, uncovering hidden gems and historical treasures that contribute to the city's unique charm.

Overnight: Cesky Krumlov

DAY 11 Sumava National Park, Vyssi Brod Monastery (6km/4mi)



Cistercian Monastery in Vyssi Brod

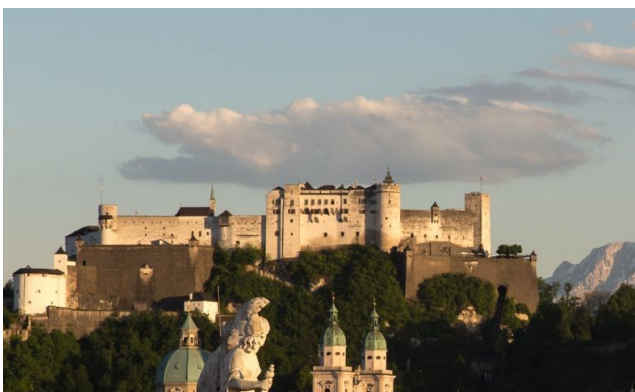


Intricate frescoes in Baroque library

Embark on a delightful short drive to delve into the natural wonders of Sumava National Park. Ascend a hill adorned with Stations of the Cross, offering not only a scenic journey but a spiritual experience. Upon descending alongside the tranquil Wolfgang waterfalls, you will find yourself at the doorstep of the Cistercian Monastery in Vyssi Brod. A guided tour of this venerable institution, founded in 1259, unveils its Gothic architecture, and the visit extends to a stunning Baroque library with an impressive collection of books. The picture gallery, adorned with religious art, adds another layer to the rich cultural tapestry of the monastery. Nestled along the picturesque Vltava River, this monastery stands as a cultural and historical gem, resonating with centuries of spiritual significance. Following this immersive experience, we transfer to our hotel in Salzburg, anticipating further exploration of the city's charm and history.

Overnight: Salzburg

DAY 12 Salzburg: The Enchanting Symphony of Mozart's Birthplace



Majestic Fortress Hohensalzburg



Divine elegance of Salzburg Cathedral's vault

Embark on a captivating city tour featuring Mirabell Palace and Gardens, a Baroque masterpiece renowned for its stunning floral arrangements and the iconic Pegasus Fountain. Navigate the medieval streets of the Old Town, where the grandeur of Salzburg Cathedral with its impressive dome dominates the cityscape. Venture to Hohensalzburg Fortress to enjoy breathtaking views of Salzburg's panoramic

landscapes. Cross the Salzach River to explore the historic ambiance of Getreidegasse, pausing at Mozart's birthplace to immerse yourself in the city's musical heritage. Continue the journey to St. Peter's Abbey, where the intricacies of St. Peter's Church and its serene cemetery showcase Salzburg's rich cultural history. Conclude the city tour atop Kapuzinerberg, providing a panoramic vantage point to appreciate the beauty and charm that define Salzburg. The remainder of the day is yours to explore at leisure, with the evening reserved for a farewell dinner at a sophisticated restaurant.

Overnight: Salzburg