Old World Prague & the Blue Danube

RIVER CRUISE TOUR

Plus optional extensions in

Budapest; Krakow and Warsaw; Berlin and Dresden

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Old World Prague & the Blue Danube
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INTRODUCTION

ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK
We've gathered some introductory information that may prove helpful for this Grand Circle Cruise Line itinerary. For detailed and timely information, it's wise to visit appropriate websites and confirm luggage regulations, weather conditions and other variable elements of your trip. If you expect to embark on personal exploration, or wish to discover more about the countries you visit, we suggest that you consult your choice of the many in-depth travel guidebooks devoted to your destinations. Refer to our additional resources section (at the end of the handbook) for other sources of insight.

ABOUT GRAND CIRCLE TRAVEL
Grand Circle Travel, founded in 1958 to serve the American Association for Retired Persons (AARP), is the leader in international travel, adventure and discovery for Americans aged 50 and over. Grand Circle vacations have been recommended by *The New York Times*, *Condé Nast Traveler*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *Travel+Leisure*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Arthur Frommer's Budget Travel*, among other publications. But our most impressive reviews come from the more than one million people who have traveled with us and from readers of *Condé Nast Traveler* who placed Grand Circle Cruise Lines, the cruise branch of Grand Circle, in the Top 10 of the World's Best Cruise Lines for eight years — in 2012 ranking Grand Circle Cruise Lines the #1 World's Best River Cruise Line. Grand Circle has earned a spot on the prestigious *Condé Nast Traveler* Gold List for seven consecutive years as well. For 2011 *Condé Nast Traveler* named seven Grand Circle Cruise Line river ships among the 20 best river ships in the world; for 2012 the Grand Circle Cruise Lines was named to their Platinum Circle of top cruise lines.

YOUR GCCL PROGRAM DIRECTORS
During your exclusive Grand Circle Cruise Line Cruise Tour, you'll have reliable assistance available at all times from up to four onsite Grand Circle Cruise Line Program Directors. Your Program Directors are fluent in English and can give you an inside perspective on your destinations. They are supported along the way by local tour guides, who guide you expertly through particular sites and cities.

Many Grand Circle Cruise Line Program Directors are graduates of professional education programs for travel guides. In addition, they receive specialized training directly from Grand Circle Cruise Line, training that is based on what we've learned from thousands of past travelers about how to make the trip most enjoyable.

Your Program Directors will provide sightseeing trips, handle all travel details, reserve optional tours you choose to take, oversee your Discovery Series events, and provide any other assistance you may need. You will be in the company of a Program Director throughout your cruise (and during the optional Budapest, Warsaw & Krakow, or Berlin & Dresden land extensions if you take them).

WEATHER CONDITIONS AND RIVER DEPTHS
Throughout the river cruise season, weather conditions affect river depths, and water levels may require adjustments to your itinerary. When river depths rise or fall during your Cruise Tour, Grand Circle Cruise Line will be required to adjust your itinerary for your safety and to adhere to the current governmental and nautical requirements. Though we strive to adhere to our planned itinerary, we may not always be able to follow it exactly as planned. The sequence of ports visited and the days on which included features and optional tours occur may vary.

1. PASSPORT, VISAS AND TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

Passport Required

You need a passport for this itinerary.

Note

Recommended number of blank pages:
Since the consequence of having too few pages can be severe—you could be denied entry into a country—we opt for *a better safe than sorry* policy. We recommend these guidelines.

- **Main trip and extensions**: Under the terms of the Schengen Treaty, the countries on this tour no longer require border guards to stamp your passport when traveling from one country to another. The entry stamp you receive at the airport when you first land serves for all the countries on this itinerary. However, because the U.S. authorities may stamp your passport when you re-enter the United States, and because they may refuse to do so on a page that already has a stamp on it, you should have at least 2 blank passport pages available.

Please take moment to check if your passport meets all of these requirements. If it you are refused entry, you may be required by that country to return to the U.S. immediately, **which would be at your own expense**.

To renew your passport by mail, or get extra pages, you can get a form at your local post office. For information on obtaining your first passport, contact the National Passport Information Center (NPIC) at **1-877-487-2778**. Allow several weeks for processing.

Visas Not Required

U.S. citizens do not need a visa for entry into any of the countries on your itinerary.

No U.S. Passport?

Non-U.S. citizens or non-U.S. passport holders: If you are **not** a U.S. citizen or if you possess a passport from a country other than the U.S., it is your responsibility to check with your local consulate or embassy about possible visa requirements. Or you can contact PVS International, who can also assist non-U.S. citizens.

PVS International
Passport & Visa Services
1700 N Moore Street
Rosslyn Center, suite 310
Arlington, VA 22209
Telephone: 1-800-556-9990

Requirements for travel to the Czech Republic

You will need to bring along very specific documentation, so please read carefully.
The Czech Republic requires that all travelers be able to provide proof of medical coverage, *if asked*. Not all travelers will be asked—in fact, the practice is becoming less common. If you are asked, however, you must be able to show proof of coverage that meets these requirements:

- Be for a minimum of 30,000 Euros (about $40,000 US dollars).
- Cover possible medical expenses and hospitalization charges as a result of accidents or unexpected illness while traveling.
- Be valid while traveling in Schengen countries like the Czech Republic. Schengen countries are the European Union countries that have signed the Schengen Agreement—for example, Austria, France, Germany, Hungary, Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, etc.
- Include repatriation to the country of your legal residence or the country that issued your passport. In other words, it must cover the cost of getting you back home if you need to return for medical reasons.

I**f you purchased Grand Circle Travel's comprehensive Travel Protection Plan,** all you'll need to **bring is a copy of the plan's *Terms and Conditions* and your *paid Grand Circle invoice***. To make this as convenient as possible, we will enclose a copy of the plan's *Terms and Conditions* with your Final Documents. If you are asked to provide proof of medical coverage—which may only happen if you enter the Czech Republic by air, or if you become ill—these are the documents you need to present.

If you did ***not*** purchase Travel Protection with Grand Circle you will need to bring some other form of proof of coverage. If your own health insurance meets the requirements above, contact your insurer for a letter stating that you are covered. A certificate of coverage and proof of purchase from a private insurer or another Travel Protection Plan will also suffice, as long as the requirements listed above are met. *Please note that **Medicare cards are not acceptable**, since Medicare does not cover medical expenses abroad.*

Please disregard this notice if your itinerary does not travel to the Czech Republic.

Backup Photocopies

The smartest security precaution you can take is to make photocopies of your passport's personal information pages, your air tickets, your traveler's check serial numbers (if you're using them), and your credit cards. Also, bring extra passport-sized photos. Make a list of the phone and fax numbers for reporting lost credit cards, your travel protection plan company (if you have an optional travel protection plan) and medical emergency network. Keep these documents separate from the originals, and they can save you immeasurable time, money, and trouble if your originals are lost or stolen as you travel. In addition, scan these photocopies and email them to your email address; you can then print out replacement copies if necessary.

2. YOUR HEALTH

Keep Your Abilities In Mind

You can encounter unaccustomed challenges on even the shortest journey — river cruises, for instance, mean adapting to life aboard ship, with the potential for rocky moments, awkward docking sites and wet, slippery terrain. At some docks you may have to step from ship to ship before reaching shore. In addition, terrain onshore can be uneven, rocky or precarious; both included and optional tours can require extended walking to guarantee a truly rewarding experience. Some of the places you'll visit have not been improved with elevators, escalators, ramps, railings or other aids. If you have difficulty walking in terms of balance or stamina, or are generally inactive in your daily life consider an exercise program to tone up for your cruise. If in doubt, consult your physician describing the length and type of rigors you'll encounter. *Please note that this trip is not wheelchair, walker, or rollator accessible; nor can Grand Circle Cruise Line accommodate motorized scooters of any kind.*

Health Check and Inoculations

Feeling healthy and confident of your mobility is essential if you want to fully enjoy your trip abroad. Please be aware that this program features a fair amount of walking up and down inclines in towns with uneven or cobblestone streets and at river ports with old-style wooden piers lacking modern ramps. For your comfort and safety, we recommend this program only to individuals in good physical condition. If you have any doubts, please discuss them with your doctor, and follow his or her advice. If you have difficulty walking or are wheelchair-bound, please consider a different Grand Circle Cruise Line vacation. A loose filling or developing cavity would be difficult to remedy while you are traveling. You may want to have a dental exam before your trip.

If you have a condition that requires special equipment or treatment, you must bring and be responsible for all necessary items related to your condition. If you take medications regularly, be sure to pack an ample supply that will last your entire trip, as obtaining refills of your medication can be difficult during your cruise. Pack these medications in your carry-on bag, and keep them in their original, labeled containers. To be prepared for any unforeseen loss of your medications, you should also bring copies of the prescriptions, written using the generic drug name rather than a brand name.

Basic Illness Prevention

It's common for people traveling in contained spaces to be more susceptible to easily transmitted viral and bacterial illnesses such as flu, stomach and respiratory bugs, and colds. The single most effective way to prevent this is frequent hand-washing. We ask all travelers to be extra diligent in their normal hand-washing hygiene, and to drink plenty of fluids for proper hydration. Simple steps like these will help ensure that everyone enjoys the comfortable, carefree vacation they looked forward to.

Vaccinations

Check with the CDC: To ensure you receive any needed vaccinations we suggest that you check the current recommendations of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for your destination. You can contact them at:

Online — if you have access to the Internet, we suggest you visit the CDC's website at **www.cdc.gov/travel**, where you will find comprehensive information about preventing illness while traveling.

By phone—at the CDC's Hotline toll-free at **1-800-232-4636** 24 hours a day. Please note that automated information may be arranged topically by disease, rather than by country or region.

Consult your doctor: After checking the CDC's recommendations we strongly suggest that you consult your family physician concerning any vaccinations or medications that you may need on this trip. At the time of print there were no specific vaccinations required for entry into any of the countries on your itinerary.

Jet Lag Relief

You will feel better on the first days of your trip if, shortly before you leave home, you start to adjust to the different time zone of your destination. Since you will cross several time zones to reach your destination, you may lose many hours of regular sleep. On arrival, your body then will have to suddenly adjust to new sleeping and eating patterns. The result is jet lag. Its symptoms are fatigue—often compounded by insomnia and general restlessness—irritability, and vague disorientation. You cannot totally avoid jet lag; but you can minimize it. Here's how:

- Start your trip well rested. Try to begin a gradual transition to your new time zone before you leave.
- Switch to your destination time zone when you get on the plane. Attempt to sleep and eat according to the new schedule.
- Try to sleep on overnight flights.
- Avoid heavy eating and drinking caffeine or alcoholic beverages right before—and during—your flight.
- Drink plenty of water and/or fruit juice while flying.
- Stretch your legs, neck, and back periodically while seated on the plane, and make an effort to get up and walk about the cabin a few times to keep your blood circulation normal.
- After arrival, avoid the temptation to nap.
- Don't push yourself to see a lot on your first day.
- Try to stay awake your first day until after dinner.

3. LUGGAGE REGULATIONS

Size, Number and Weight Restrictions

It may seem early to discuss luggage and packing, but if you know current industry standards for international flights you can start to plan what type of luggage you'll use, how much clothing to bring, etc. The following information can help you in your trip preparations. We'll remind you to confirm your U.S./international luggage limits (and update regional limits, if applicable) in your final documents (arriving about two weeks before your departure).

MAIN TRIP LIMITS	
Pieces per person	One checked bag and one carry-on bag per person
Weight restrictions	Varies by airline. The current **standard** is **50lbs for checked bags** and **15 lbs for carry-on bags**.
Size restrictions	Varies by airline. Measured in linear inches (*length+width+depth*). Generally, **62 linear inches is the checked bag limit**; **carry-on limit is 45 linear inches**.
Luggage Type	A sturdy, fabric-sided suitcase with built-in wheels and lockable zippers is recommended.
TRIP EXTENSION(S) LIMITS	
Both extensions have the same luggage restrictions as the main trip.	
REMARKS / SUGGESTIONS	
One suitcase and one carry-on bag per person: Due to the space limitations on bus transfers, you'll be restricted to one suitcase and one carry-on bag per person. This is to ensure that we have room for everyone's luggage. We ask that you abide by this limit to avoid inconveniencing your fellow travelers and prevent additional airlines luggage fees (which are your responsibility). Most airlines now charge to check more than one suitcase per person for flights to Europe and other international flights. **Note**: Enforcement of published restrictions by countries and airlines is a matter of governmental and corporate policy. Enforcement may include spot checks and may be inconsistently applied. Expect penalties and fines to be imposed immediately, however, when and if enforced. Before you choose to ignore the published restrictions you should ask: *Do I feel lucky?* And, even if you answer yes, you should make sure that you have the ability to pay the fine.	

Should I confirm luggage restrictions with my U.S./international airline(s) before departure?
Absolutely, confirm current restrictions about a week or so before your departure. You should take this step no matter if your vacation has a lower limit then the average international flight or not, because there may be recent changes, such as new security regulations, or an update to the standard weight/size allowances. For your convenience, we maintain a list of the toll-free numbers for the most common airlines on our webpage in the *FAQ* section.

You should also check with the airlines on luggage fees—many airlines charge to check luggage, even on international flights. Others may charge a fee if you bring a second carry-on item, like a purse or a laptop. **These fees are not included in your trip price**; they are payable directly to the airlines. If you are making a connecting flight, you should also confirm if your luggage can be checked through to your

final destination. For more information about air travel, see the “Air Travel” section of your *Important Information* booklet.

Airport Security/TSA

Restrictions on what can be included in your carry-on luggage may change. To avoid inadvertently packing restricted items in your carry-on, we suggest that you consult the Transportation Security Administration website at www.tsa.gov/public.

Liquids and your carry on: Follow the **TSA’s 3-1-1 rule**: Liquids must be in a 3.4 ounce or less (100ml) bottle (by volume); all bottles must be in a 1 quart-sized, clear, plastic, zip-top bag; 1 bag per passenger placed in screening bin. One-quart bag per person limits the total liquid volume each traveler can bring. The 3.4 ounce (100ml) container size is a security measure. Note that this rule is used increasingly throughout the world.

For flights that originate in the U.S:
To reduce the risk of damage to your luggage, do not lock your bags when checking in for flights originating in the U.S. The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) is responsible for screening all checked luggage at commercial airports throughout the U.S. TSA baggage-handling agents may need access to your luggage and will break locks if required. TSA “accepted and recognized” locks are widely available: screeners can open and re-lock bags using these locks if a physical inspection is required.

For flights originating outside the U.S.:
On all flights outside of the U.S., we strongly recommend you lock your luggage. This is not a legal requirement but merely a precaution against theft. Have the keys handy, as you may need to open your luggage for a security screening or for customs in the U.S. or Europe.

4. WHEN YOU ARRIVE

GCT Air Travelers

U.S. Departure: If you are among a group of ten or more GCT travelers who depart the U.S. from your international gateway city, a GCT Airport Representative will assist you at the U.S. airport with the check-in of your flight. The Representative will be at the check-in counter three hours before your departure time and at the gate one hour before your departure time (security permitting).

Please note: If you are arriving at your international gateway city via a connecting domestic flight, the Grand Circle Cruise Line Representative will be stationed at the check-in counter for your departing international flight, not at the domestic arrival gate.

Arrival: A GCT Representative will meet you at the airport after you exit Customs and escort you to a private motorcoach for your transfer to the pier or hotel.

Important note: *Airport porters are NOT allowed in the customs hall area. On arrival, you must take your luggage off the baggage carousel and load it onto a complimentary cart, which you then will move through customs. When you exit the airport building, your motorcoach driver will load your luggage onto your motorcoach.*

U.S. Return: At the end of your cruise or post-cruise extension, you'll be transferred to the airport for your return flight to the U.S. If you are among a group of ten or more GCT travelers who return to the same U.S. gateway city, a GCT Airport Representative will meet you as you exit Customs and help you find taxis, buses, hotel accommodations, or connecting flights.

Important Note: *Please remember to wear your Grand Circle Cruise Line name tag when you exit Customs, upon arrival and when you return to the U.S., so that you are readily identifiable as a GCT traveler.*

Flying with a Travel Companion

If you're traveling with a companion from a different household, and both of you are beginning and ending your trip at the same airport on the same dates, let us know you'd like to travel together and we'll make every effort to arrange this (please note, however, that this is not always possible). If you request any changes to your flights, please be sure that both you and your companion tell us that you still want to fly together.

5. MONEY MATTERS

How to Carry Your Money

We offer these general guidelines that are pertinent throughout your Cruise Tour when you are away from your ship. Information specific to a particular city on the main itinerary or to a destination on an optional extension is in the section that directly follows these general travel tips.

Traveler's checks—not recommended: We urge you not to rely on traveler's checks for your personal expenses. They can be difficult to exchange and the commission fee for cashing them is quite high. It's most practical to view any traveler's checks you might bring as a last "cash" resort in the event of a special situation.

U.S. dollars have an advantage. Cash is more readily exchanged and accepted than traveler's checks, and sometimes commands a better exchange rate. You might also consider using a debit card, another reliable payment method.

There is no need to obtain local currency before your trip. You can change money at banks, most hotels, and money exchange offices (to exchange cash you may be asked to show your passport). Be aware, however, that torn, dirty, or taped U.S. bills will ***not*** be accepted for exchange. **New** large bills ($100) will *usually* be accepted by banks and onboard ships; **old** $100 bills will ***not*** be accepted. Money in smaller denominations is much more universally accepted, particularly if new.

Currency exchange rates fluctuate daily. Your Program Director will advise you of the exchange rate upon your arrival. For current exchange rates, please refer to the our website, or the financial section of your newspaper. On our website select the region and then click on the country you'll be visiting. A link to the currency converter is included in the menu on the page of each individual country.

Credit Cards

Though major American credit cards (American Express, Visa, and MasterCard) are accepted abroad, always inquire if your type of credit card is accepted before deciding on your purchase. It is also wise to notify the credit card company that you will be using your cards abroad so that they may remove any security block. When using a major credit card you may receive a different exchange rate than if you pay with cash; inquire about the rate first. Please be aware that credit cards might not be accepted for small purchases or in the markets. Note that the Discover credit card is not widely accepted outside the U.S. Keep your receipts in case you have questions about the conversion or exchange rate. Also, keep your receipts as proof of purchase for items to be shipped home.

In many parts of Europe a new credit card called a chip-and-PIN (a personal identification number) card has been introduced. This new card is more secure than the standard swipe-and-sign card, but it needs a PIN to work. In *some* cases you may find that a shop has already switched to the new system and, if so, they will ask you for a PIN to complete your transaction. For this reason we suggest checking if your credit card already has a PIN on file for it. Don't be surprised if it doesn't—this new technology is not used in the U.S. yet, so many U.S. credit cards won't have a PIN.

Debit cards: Debit cards are very popular in Europe, and are widely accepted, but will *almost always* require a PIN. Many U.S. banks offer a combined ATM and debit card. Check your ATM card, and if it has a Visa or a MasterCard logo, ask your bank if can used as a debit card in Europe. (If there's no logo, then you probably can't use it as a debit card, but your bank will know for certain). If it can be used as a debit card, all you'll need is the same PIN you use at the ATM.

PIN Numbers
When you are *off ship* a PIN will be required for most debit card transactions and *some* credit card transactions, some on-board purchases may also require a PIN. However, a PIN number will **not** be required for the payment of optional tours.

If your credit card doesn't have a PIN: Many shops in Europe will still take the swipe-and-sign cards. And if the shop absolutely requires a PIN, you can simply use another form of payment.

ATMs
When traveling, typically PLUS, Cirrus, and other bank networks are available throughout large cities and small towns. Always notify your bank before you leave home that you are going abroad so that they may remove any blocks on your account and also ask them about the number of withdrawals you may make abroad. For cash withdrawals, don't forget to memorize the actual digits of your card's 4-digit PIN (Personal Identification Number), as many keypads at foreign ATMs do not include letters on their numeric keys, they only display digits.

Note on ATM use: *Many banks have begun imposing a fee ranging from $1 to $5 every time you use an ATM in a foreign city. You may want to limit the number of withdrawals that you make. Your Program Director/Hospitality Desk Representative can advise you on locations, but when to exchange money is left to your discretion.*

Onboard Ship

Two separate bills will be issued:

1) **Shipboard account:** This bill is for onboard purchases (drinks at the bar, gift shop purchases, laundry, etc) and is calculated in Euros.

Payment Options:
Cash: Euros or U.S. dollars are accepted
Credit card: American Express, MasterCard, or Visa are accepted
Debit card: Cards with Visa or MasterCard logos are accepted
If you pay with a credit or debit card: You will need to sign a receipt and/or supply a PIN number, depending on the card account requirements (onboard sales terminals accept both.)
NOT accepted: *Personal checks, Discover card.*

2) **Optional tour account:** This bill is for optional tours taken during the trip; it is calculated in U.S. dollars.

Payment Options:
Credit card: American Express, MasterCard, or Visa cards are accepted
Debit card: Cards with Visa or MasterCard logos are accepted. The card must allow you to ***sign*** for purchases — you will ***not*** be able to enter a PIN. You will need to sign an optional tour form as proof of payment.
NOT accepted: *Personal checks, cash, Discover card, or PIN-only debit cards.*

Please note: Shipboard and optional tour account payments made by credit card may take up to 3 months to process. We ask that you use a credit card that will not expire until three months after your trip ends. Because our headquarters are in Boston, charges may appear to be from Boston or might be labeled as "**OPT Boston**" (depending on your credit card company).

Exchange services: Onboard ship we will break down or change larger U.S. bills into smaller ones (for example, one U.S. $50 bill into U.S. $20, $10, $5, and $1 bills), and change U.S. currency into Euros (for example U.S. $20 into Euro €*XX* — depending on exchange rate). This service is available only for the Euro & U.S. dollar currencies. The daily exchange is **limited to a maximum of U.S. $50 per person**. You can exchange larger amounts at local banks in port towns.

By Destination

Budapest

The official currency of Hungary is the forint (ft), made up of 100 fillers. Banknote and coin denominations are as follows:

- Banknotes: 500, 1000, 5000, 10,000, and 20,000 forints
- Coins: 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, and 200 forints

Note*: Banknotes of all denominations are printed in the same size and they are sometimes similar in color. It's very easy, therefore, to mistake one bill for another. Please pay attention to the numerical value of each bill in your hand every time you make a cash transaction.*

Also note that the 1 and 2 forint coins ceased to be legal tender in 2008. The 200 Forint bill is not accepted except at banks for exchange.

Banking Hours: Banking hours may vary between seasons, but generally banks are open 8 am – 4 pm, Monday through Friday. It is more economical to change your money at a bank rather than at your hotel, as the bank's exchange rate is better.

Prague

Czech legal tender is the Czech crown or koruna (CZK.), divided into 100 hellers or haler. Banknote and coin denominations are as follows:

- Banknotes: 50, 100, 200, 500, 1000, 2000, and 5000 CZK.
- Coins: 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, and 50 CZK.

Note that coinage below the crown (i.e. hellers) as well as the 50 CZK note are no longer in circulation. The Czech Republic is preparing to merge into the Eurozone (in 2020) and you'll find many places in the larger cities accept Euros with no problem. Prices given in CZK and hellers – i.e. Kr. 36.70 – will be rounded to the nearest crown.

Banking Hours: In the Czech Republic, banks are typically open 9 am – 4 pm, Monday through Friday. It is more economical to change your money at a bank rather than at your hotel, as the bank's exchange rate is better.

Austria

The Euro is the official currency of Austria. Euro-banknotes and coin denominations are as follows:

- Banknotes: €5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200 and 500
- Coins: 1, 2, 5, 10, 20 and 50 cents; €1 and 2

Banking hours: Generally banks are open 8 am – 12 noon and 2:30 pm - 5:30 pm, Monday through Friday.

Slovakia

The Euro is the official currency of Slovakia. Euro-banknotes and coin denominations are as follows:

- Banknotes: €5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200 and 500
- Coins: 1, 2, 5, 10, 20 and 50 cents; €1 and 2

Banking hours: Banks are generally open from Monday through Friday, approximately from 8 am until 3-5 pm. Banks are usually closed on Saturday and Sunday.

Berlin

Currency: Germany's official currency is the euro. Euro banknote and coin denominations are as follows:

- Banknotes**:** 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200, and 500
- Coins**:** 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, and 50 cents; 1 and 2 euro

Because currency exchange rates fluctuate daily, your Program Director will advise you of the exchange rate upon your arrival. Or, on our website select the region and then click on the country you'll be visiting. A link to the currency converter is included in the menu on the page of each individual country.

ATMs: ATMs are very prevalent in Berlin, just as in major U.S. cities.
Banking hours: 8 am–4 or 5 pm, Monday—Friday
Credit cards: Major credit cards are widely accepted in Berlin.

Dresden

ATMs: ATMs are very prevalent in Dresden, just as in major U.S. cities.
Banking hours: 8 am–4 or 5 pm, Monday through Friday
Credit cards: Major credit cards are widely accepted in Dresden.

Poland

The Polish monetary unit is the zloty, which is divided into 100 groszy. Banknote and coin denominations are as follows:

- Banknotes: 10, 20, 50, 100, and 200 zloty
- Coins: 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, and 50 groszy; 1, 2, and 5 zloty

The best way to exchange money: You'll get a better exchange rate in Poland at one of the privately run Kantors, open 9 am to 6 pm. Kantors will also change your leftover zlotys back into U.S. dollars.

Banking Hours: Banking hours may vary between seasons, but generally they are open from 8 or 9 am to 5 or 6 pm, Monday through Friday.

Shopping

It is Grand Circle Cruise Line's goal to identify and provide you with shopping opportunities that highlight unique, locally produced products with good value from reliable vendors. For this reason you may have scheduled visits to local shops during your cruise. There is no requirement to make purchases during these stops, and any purchase made is a direct transaction with the shop in question, subject to the vendor's terms of purchase. **Grand Circle Cruise Line cannot be responsible for purchases you make on your trip or for the shipment of your purchases.**

In General

If you plan a major purchase, we strongly recommend that you research the prices and quality available at home before your trip. Just one visit to an import shop or gold dealer will put you way ahead when you go shopping. This is the only way to know if you are getting a good price.

By Destination

Budapest

Budapest's main shopping area is Vaci Utca (in Pest's Inner City) and its side streets. Here you will find Hungary's exquisite Herend porcelain, cut glass, fine peasant embroidery and needlework, homespun cloth, carpets, charming carved wood objects and, of course, dolls in national dress. Other excellent buys are recordings of classical and folk music. Prices are fixed (no bargaining).

If you want to see how the locals shop, visit either the Central Market (Vasarcsarnok) on Vamhaz Korut, or one of the large department stores, like the Corvin Nagyaruhaz in Rakoczi Ut (on Blaha Lujza Square), the Skala-Metro (on Nyugati Square opposite the Nyugati Railway Station) and West End City Center (behind the station). Most stores open between 9 – 10 am and close at 6 pm. On Saturdays they close at 1 pm.

Prague

Antiques are a lure, and the small shops in Prague delight the collector and window-shopper alike. Basically all antiquities are available for sale except for religious items and items protected by the state (legally listed as cultural monuments). The shop should provide you with accurate information concerning those specific items.

Many stores sell a wide range of crafts and tourist goods, such as Bohemian glass, porcelain, fine quality records, crystal, peasant pottery, wooden toys, and folk carvings; as well as imported goods from the West, including liquor, cigarettes, and everything from tools to transistor radios. Modern arts and crafts are sold at private art galleries.

Store Hours: Long store hours facilitate shopping. Shops are open Monday through Friday, from 8 or 9 am to 6 pm; Saturdays from 9 am to 1 pm. Shopping malls, shopping centers, and galleries are open Monday through Sunday from 9 am to 8 pm. The majority of supermarkets are also open seven days a week, from 7 am to 7 pm. TESCO stores are open seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

Vienna

Best buys: Popular buys include glassware, crystal, porcelain, petit point, musical instruments and scores, fur hats, ski wear, and, of course, lederhosen (leather pants), loden-cloth coats, and Sachertorte (chocolate cake). But be forewarned: the quality of Austrian wares is exceptionally high, and so are the prices! The main shopping area in Vienna is around Kaernter Strasse, Graben, and Kohlmarkt; most department stores are on Mariahilferstrasse.

Store hours: Major department stores do business from 8 am to 6 pm, Monday through Saturday. Small shops and boutiques often close on Saturday afternoon.

VAT: In Austria, a Value Added Tax is levied on most articles, services, and meals, and ranges from 10%-30%. Depending on how much you spend on certain goods in specially marked *Tax Free Shopping* stores, you may be eligible for a partial refund of this tax. Ask the shopkeeper, salesperson, or your Program Director for details. Be sure to save all receipts and the special *Global Tax Refund* Forms for Customs, as receipts alone are not enough.

Slovakia

Handicraft shops in Slovakia feature pictures painted on glass or wood, puppets in elaborate costumes, and shepherd axes. Travelers who enjoy musical instruments from other countries should keep their an eye out for a *fujara*, a type of flute that is played upright like an oboe. At 3 feet long, it might not fit in your carry-on, but it is typically Slovakian. Slovakia is also known for its wines and for *slivovica*, a potent plum brandy.

Berlin

Berlin is a cosmopolitan city filled with a wide variety of alluring shops, specialty boutiques, elegant malls, and major department stores, including the KaDeWe at Wittenbergplatz, the biggest department store in continental Europe. Whatever you wish to buy, you can find it here. In addition to the Ku'damm and the streets surrounding it, you'll find a plethora of stores on Freidrichstrasse, Wilmersdorferstrasse, Hackescher Markt, and the Alexanderplatz. For a more eclectic range of boutiques and independent designers, stroll down the alleys of Nikolaivirtel or the historic center of Spandau.
Special to Berlin are handmade porcelain items, ranging from exquisite Staaliche Porzellan Manufactur china to kitsch souvenir pieces like freedom bells fashioned after the Freedom Bell hanging in Schoneberg Rathaus. Other popular German buys are high-quality cutlery, cameras, binoculars, and watches; goose-down comforters; glassware; and all kinds of delicious chocolates.

Store hours: *Standard hours for department stores and stores in the major shopping areas are Monday through Friday 9:30 am to 8 pm, and Saturday 9:30 am to 4 pm. Smaller neighborhood shops may close at 6 pm.*

VAT: Inquire locally about rebates on Germany's 16% VAT sales tax. Depending on how much you spend on certain goods, you may be eligible for a partial refund of this tax. Ask the shopkeeper, salesperson, or your Program Director for details, and be sure to save all receipts for Customs.

Dresden

The best shopping in Dresden can be found near the historic *Altstadt* (old town). A stroll down Pragerstrasse toward the Elbe will take you through the *Altmarkt* (old market), which marks the intersection of Pragerstrasse and Wilsdrufferstrasse, where you can find high-quality retail outlets. Crossing the Elbe on the Augustusbrucke, Pragerstrasse becomes Hauptstrasse, a tree-lined boulevard that has hosted Dresden's oldest covered market for centuries. Hauptstrasse terminates at Albertplatz, a center for commerce and fashion. From Albertplatz, you can sortie back toward the Elbe along Konigstrasse for more high-end designer boutiques or venture further north to the cutting-edge stores of Outer Neustadt.

Warsaw/Krakow

Polish folk objects make good mementos and are an excellent value. Some interesting possibilities include embroidery, lace, dolls in folk costumes, prints and engravings, amber, pottery, and woodcarvings. The wide range of chain stores specializing in different local wares makes shopping in Poland relatively easy. *Desa* stores carry tapestries, painting, sculptures, and porcelain. Most stores accept local currency and major credit cards.

Store hours: Department stores are open from 10 or 11 am until 6, 7, or 8 pm. On Saturday and Sunday, stores are normally open as well.

VAT: There is a 22% VAT (Value Added Tax) build into the price of most items. Depending on how much you spend on certain goods, you may be eligible for a partial refund of this tax. Ask the shopkeeper or salesperson about the VAT at time of purchase, or talk to your Program Director about it before you shop. Be sure to save all receipts and VAT forms for Customs.

U.S. Customs Regulations and Shipping Charges

Exemption Amounts

Articles totaling $800, at fair retail value where they were acquired, may be imported free of charge if you bring them with you. A flat rate of duty—usually a percentage—will be applied to the next $1,000 worth (fair retail value) of merchandise. The U.S. Customs Inspector determines the value of your items when you enter, and is not bound by your bill of sale. In almost every case, however, a genuine bill of sale will be honored.

Fees on Items Shipped Home

Items shipped home are *always* subject to duty when received in the U.S. There will also be charges for shipping. Although some shops abroad may offer to include shipping and duties in the price, this typically means shipping to the customs facility closest to you and payment of the *export* duties (the fee to remove an item from its country of origin) not door-to-door shipping or *import* duties (the fee the U.S. government charges to bring an item into the U.S.). All additional duties or shipping charges would be the responsibility of the purchaser—you. Remember to keep your receipts as proof of purchase for items to be shipped home.

Therefore unless the item is small enough to mail or to be sent by a global parcel service (like FedEx) you should be prepared to pay customs duties and for shipping or pick-up from the nearest customs facility. This is why the U.S. Customs & Border Protection service states: “The most cost-effective thing to do is to take your purchases with you if at all possible.”

Illegal Items

It is illegal to import products made from endangered animal species. U.S. Customs & Border Protection will seize these items, as well as most furs, coral, tortoise shell, reptile skins, feathers, plants, and items made from animal skins. For more information on what you may or may not bring back into the United States, you can obtain the publication “Know Before You Go” from the U.S. Bureau of Customs & Border Protection by phone, mail or from their website:

U.S. Bureau of Customs & Border Protection
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20229
Tel. **1-877-227-5511**
www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/

Problem with a Purchase?

The best way to address a problem with a purchase is to not have one in the first place! So don't forget to examine merchandise before paying for it, check contracts or agreements before signing, and review your receipt before leaving the shop. For major purchases, don't hesitate to ask in advance about the return policy—local practice may vary from U.S. standards, so don't assume that you have a certain number of days after the purchase to speak up.

But what if you do discover an issue with an item later on? In that case, your best recourse is to contact the vendor directly. For this reason we recommend that you keep a copy of all your receipts, invoices, or contracts, along with the shop's contact information. Expect that any resolution will take longer than it would in the U.S. due to delays in communication, the complexities of international shipping/customs duties, and even cultural differences in how business is conducted.

To Tip or Not to Tip

Sometimes *that* is the question. The good news is twofold: we're fresh out of Shakespearean soliloquies, so no thesauri will get hurt here; and the answer the question "**to tip or not to tip** (and how much to tip if you so choose)" is ***always*** a personal decision. Tipping is a common practice both at home and abroad and we offer these guidelines to answer requests for appropriate tipping amounts. It can be useful to have this information on site – when the question *must* be answered – and ahead of time for travel budgeting purposes. Tips below are quoted in U.S. dollars; tips can be converted and paid in local currency (usually preferred) or in U.S. dollars (personal/traveler's checks should ***never*** be used for tips).are quoted in U.S. dollars; tips can be converted and paid in local currency (usually preferred) or in U.S. dollars (personal/traveler's checks should ***never*** be used for tips).

Shipboard: Shipboard gratuities to the cruise personnel are not included in the cost of your Cruise Tour. The ships' tipping guidelines recommend a flat tip of $10-$12 U.S. per person, per day, which will be pooled among all cruise staff. For your convenience, tips for the crew can be paid with a credit card.

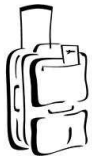
GCT Program Director: It is customary at the end of your trip to express a personal "thank you" to the Grand Circle Cruise Line Program Director assigned to your group, especially if he/she has provided you with individual assistance. We recommend $4-$6 per person, per day. Please note that tips for our Program Directors can only be in the form of cash, and local currency is appreciated.

Port Stops & Land Stays—Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia, & Poland: During your port stops and land stays, you may dine in a local restaurant, take a taxi, or avail yourself of some other service where tipping is customary. Unless service charges are included in your bill, we suggest you leave bartenders and waiters about 10% of the check. In these countries, it is acceptable (and welcomed) to tip in U.S. dollars. You might want to bring a supply of U.S. $1 bills for tipping purposes.

Port Stops & Land Stays—Austria: It is appropriate to tip those who perform services for you: waiters (10-15% of the food bill); taxi drivers (5-10% of the fare); and barbers/hairdressers (5-10 % of the bill). In Austria, tips in local currency are preferred.

Restrooms: It is very common to be charged a small fee (not a tip) to use the restroom. Typical amounts are about 2 Zlotys in Poland, 30 Crowns in the Czech Republic, or 50 Euro cents elsewhere. The restroom attendants are prepared to give you change if you don't have exact amount. US dollars are not usually accepted for this fee, so **bring small change in the local currency with you to the restroom just in case.**

6. PACKING FOR YOUR TRIP



In General

Travel light. A good rule of thumb is to gather together everything you want to bring; then take half of that. Eliminate all but the essentials and start packing a few days before you leave. That way, you'll have time to think—not fret—about what you might be forgetting. To have a varied travel wardrobe—yet keep your luggage light—we recommend you select a color scheme and pack color-coordinated pants and shirts, skirts and blouses, or pantsuits that can be mixed to create different outfits.

Pack casual clothes. Comfortable, low-key apparel is acceptable at each of your destinations and aboard ship. Basic pants, shirts, walking shorts, sportswear, everyday dresses and skirts, supportive shoes, and functional outdoor clothes are recommended. At dinner, you will not need to don dressy clothing; men do not need a tie or jacket. You may want one or two "smart casual" outfits for the Welcome Reception or Farewell Dinner, but it's completely up to you.

Plan to dress in layers on shore excursions. Be prepared for a variety of weather conditions: warm days with sun, chilly temperatures with showers, and evenings that could dip into the 40s or 50s, depending on your travel season. In March or November, evenings may even fall into the 30s. For warmer conditions, a mixture of cotton sweaters, sweatshirts, long-sleeved shirts, summery tops, pants, skirts, and walking shorts is recommended. Evenings call for a warm outfit and a heavy sweater or jacket. A sturdy windproof shell over a heavy sweatshirt, sweater, or fleece top is ideal for being out on deck at night. On land excursions, dress in layers. You can then easily adjust to any temperature shifts by removing or adding a layer. For possible showers, take a folding travel umbrella and/or rain hat. A waterproof jacket with a hood is ideal.

Good walking shoes are critical. This program features many included tours that follow steep, unpaved, or cobbled routes; and even an average day of light sightseeing or shopping can put great demands on your feet. Supportive, waterproof sports shoes are ideal for daytime shore excursions. If you prefer more ankle support, take light hiking boots. Bring five to seven pairs of socks. In case you get caught in the rain, we suggest you bring an extra pair of walking shoes, and rain boots or galoshes. **Aboard ship, you'll want flat, non-slip shoes with rubber soles.**

Day excursions: On days that include full or half-day bus excursions, please remember to bring drinking water and any needed medications with you.

Luggage Suggestions

Consider a duffel bag or soft-sided suitcase for your checked luggage. Due to space limitations on our motor coaches, you are allowed one piece of checked luggage per person. Porterage at airports and hotels is provided for **one** bag per person. All bags should have luggage tags.

Consider a daypack or small backpack as your carry-on bag. It will do double duty during excursions and walking trips. A daypack leaves your hands free and distributes its weight onto your back. Packed with daily travel needs (sweater, camera, rain/wind jacket, water bottle, etc.), it will compress to fit the

storage space of foreign motorcoaches, and yet still have room for an impulse buy at a local street market.

Inner bags: Packing is easier if you use inner bags to help organize your gear. Use plastic bags, nylon stuff sacks, or packing cubes to organize inside your suitcase. Isolate liquids, store camera gear and important papers in heavy-duty Ziploc style bags.

Tip**:** *a second, empty lockable bag folded into your main suitcase, with a luggage tag and small lock. Use this to carry souvenirs home – but remember that you may incur extra luggage fees. If you're traveling with a companion we recommend "cross-packing," i.e., pack 2 outfits of your clothing in your companion's luggage and vice-versa, in case one bag is delayed.*

Packing Your Carry-On

Using a daypack as a carry-on bag for your flights is a smart solution. We **strongly urge** you to pack your carry-on with at least one full change of clothes, your camera gear, medications, changes of socks and underwear, your important travel documents, and other irreplaceable items, in case your checked bags go astray. Store camera gear and important papers in plastic bags to protect them from dirt and moisture. With a daypack you can then remove these items on arrival and load your bag with the gear you'll need on walking tours and excursions.

NOTE: Restrictions on what can be included in your carry-on luggage change frequently. To avoid inadvertently packing any restricted items in your carry-on luggage, we strongly suggest that you consult the Transportation Security Administration website, at **www.tsa.gov** which keeps a current list of restricted items. From the main website click on *Our Travelers*, then *Air Travel*, and then you will see a link for *Prohibited Items*.

Clothing Options

We've included information below on the weather you can expect for the regions you'll be visiting on your travels. Taking into account the climate you'll encounter and the general suggestions we offer above will enable you to create a flexible wardrobe that's light enough for sophisticated travel and will guarantee comfort in all the conditions you can expect to encounter. The luggage weight and size restrictions imposed by travel realities today have made traveling light an absolute necessity. With modern fabrics – Gore-Tex, Polarfleece, polypropylene, etc. – lightweight packing for comfort and protection through a wide range of weather is easy. A visit to any on-line or local sporting goods/outdoor stores (L.L. Bean, REI, EMS, etc.) will yield a treasure trove of lightweight, specialized, and fashionable clothing and gear that is readily adaptable to your itinerary.

Travel Gear Suggestions

Though it's often fun to do things as the locals do, it can be frustrating when daily necessities or conveniences from home aren't available. To travel wisely these days you must juggle your personal needs and preferences against the physical constraints of your transportation—whether it's an international airplane, a transfer motorcoach, a small ship or a day-long trek on a camel. You'll have to distinguish between what you **must** have, what you'd *like* to have, whether you can zip your suitcase closed, and what you can reasonably expect to wrestle through airport hallways and security checkpoints. Consult the following items to create your personal checklist – ignoring what you don't need and making the tough decisions over borderline cases. Remember that many airlines today will charge you extra for added luggage.

Do not pack aerosol cans, as they tend to leak during air travel. Also avoid packing glass bottles; use plastic containers instead. Leave at home checkbooks and any credit cards not essential for your trip, valuable jewelry, and anything that you would hate to lose. For more packing and luggage tips, you might want to visit **www.travelite.org**.

Cabin amenities include: shampoo, conditioner, hair dryer, liquid soap, body lotion, shower cap, washcloth, and towels. We have still mentioned some of these items in the checklists below, in case you have preferred brands you want to bring with you on your cruise.

Consider …

- ❑ Daily essentials: toothbrush, toothpaste, floss, hairbrush or comb, shaving items, deodorant, shampoo/conditioner, shower cap, body soap, etc.
- ❑ Spare eyeglasses/contact lenses and your prescription
- ❑ Sunglasses with a neck strap
- ❑ Sunscreen, SPF 15 or stronger
- ❑ Insect repellent with DEET
- ❑ Travel money bag or money belt
- ❑ Moisturizer, lip balm
- ❑ Wide-brim sun hat or visor
- ❑ Pocket-size tissues
- ❑ Moist towelettes (packets) and/or anti-bacterial hand lotion
- ❑ Flashlight, extra batteries/bulb
- ❑ Light folding umbrella
- ❑ Photocopies of passport, air ticket, credit cards
- ❑ Extra passport-sized photos

Medicines

- ❑ Your own prescription medicines
- ❑ Vitamins
- ❑ Cold remedies: Sudafed/Dristan
- ❑ Pain relievers: Ibuprofen/naproxen/aspirin
- ❑ Laxatives: Senokot/Ex-Lax
- ❑ Stomach upset: Pepto-Bismol/Mylanta
- ❑ Anti-diarrheal: Imodium
- ❑ Band-Aids, Moleskin foot pads
- ❑ Antibiotics: Neosporin/Bacitracin

Other Gear

- ❑ Travel alarm (or rely on wake up calls)
- ❑ Compact binoculars
- ❑ Hanging toiletry bag with pockets
- ❑ Hair dryer (see “Regional Electricity)
- ❑ Washcloth
- ❑ Handkerchiefs
- ❑ Basic sewing kit
- ❑ Hand-wash laundry soap (Woolite), clothespins/travel clothesline/stopper
- ❑ Electrical transformer & plug adapter—see “Regional Electricity” below
- ❑ Reading materials
- ❑ Travel journal/note pad
- ❑ Swimsuit, if your ship/hotel has a pool/whirlpool
- ❑ Home address book
- ❑ Photos, small gift for home-hosted visit
- ❑ Phrase book
- ❑ Water bottle
- ❑ Collapsible walking staff
- ❑ Pocket calculator for exchange rates

7. REGIONAL CLIMATE INFORMATION

We can't predict the weather you'll have on your travels – our local weathermen are lucky to get tomorrow right! So, as your departure nears, it's a great idea to visit the *My Account* feature of **www.gct.com** for a current 10-day forecast of temperatures and conditions at your destinations. Or check Internet weather sites (www.wunderground.com is very comprehensive) for those forecasts and tweak your wardrobe accordingly. You'll find historical averages and general information on local climates below – but, given recent weather extremes, it's even more important to consult up-to-the-minute resources.

Hungary & Slovakia: The countries of Hungary and Slovakia are completely landlocked, and their inland positions cut them off from the moderating influence of the Atlantic Ocean. Consequently, seasonal weather is more prone to extremes. Summers can be very hot and winters absolutely frigid. If you're traveling during the peak of summer, be prepared for some high temperatures, though it could also be comfortable and pleasant. As fall approaches, some days may be on the cool side, but stints of warm weather still occur. By late October, the air is usually brisk and evenings are chilly.

Czech Republic: In spring, variable weather reigns: some years it's warm, in others it's cool. Summer days can still be brisk, though there are spells of very warm weather. Temperatures start to fall in early autumn, and winter weather begins settling in by early November. In general, the climate is similar to that of Austria, but with temperatures a bit cooler in all seasons.

Austria: Austria has a central European climate: variable weather reigns, and rain and drizzle are common occurrences year-round. Spring weather is moderate, with intermittent sun and showers; afternoons in early spring average about 60° F and about 70° later in the season. Summers are typically sunny and warm, though you should be prepared for a few cloudy and wet days. Evenings, too, can get quite chilly. Autumn weather with some drizzle comes early to this region of the world, so by November it can be on the brisk side, with daytime temperatures in the mid to high 40s, and evenings that dip into the 30s.

Germany: This country also has a central European climate: Variable weather is common, and rain and drizzle are normal occurrences year-round. The character of individual winters may also be very different from year to year, depending on whether oceanic or continental influences dominate. Come prepared for daily temperatures in the 30s, though you might be lucky and instead get a stint of warmer weather, especially in November or early December. Rain showers are certainly possible, and there may even be dustings of snow. And of course, higher altitudes have an effect on temperatures and weather.

Berlin: Summer in Berlin, between May and August, is pleasantly warm with lots of sunshine July and August, the hottest months, are also unpredictable – with the possibility of going from sunny to rainy very quickly. Winters can be quite cold and damp although extreme weather is rare. Snow, however, is common and days can be cold, clear, and frosty.

Poland: Poland has a long border with the Czech and Slovak Republics in the south and a coastline on the Baltic Sea in the north. Most of Poland has a very similar climate and the same sequence of weather throughout the year. Winter cold increases towards the east and in the southern mountains, while the coastlands of the Baltic Sea have slightly milder winters and cooler summers. Precipitation is well distributed around the year with a summer maximum of rain, often heavy and accompanied by thunder. Much of the winter precipitation is snow. Summer temperatures do not differ very much over the country. It rarely gets excessively hot but fine, sunny spells of weather and occasional droughts occur. Winters are distinctly cold and the length of really cold spells varies considerably from year to year.

Here is the data from the weather observation stations closest to our destinations.

WHAT'S THE TEMPERATURE? *Average* highs (taken at 2 pm) and lows (taken just before sunrise) in °F.	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV
Bratislava, Slovakia									
High	51	60	69	75	79	79	71	59	45
Low	35	40	47	53	56	55	47	44	37
Budapest, Hungary									
High	51	60	70	75	79	79	71	59	45
Low	35	41	51	56	59	59	52	*43*	34
Prague, Czech Republic									
High	46	54	64	69	72	73	65	54	41
Low	32	36	45	51	54	53	47	39	32
Vienna, Austria									
High	49	57	67	72	77	77	69	57	44
Low	35	41	49	55	59	59	53	43	35
Berlin, Germany									
High	47	54	65	70	73	73	66	56	45
Low	33	37	45	53	56	55	50	42	30
Dresden, Germany									
High	45	54	64	70	73	72	66	56	43
Low	32	39	49	53	57	56	50	44	36
Krakow, Poland—Optional Extension									
High	45	54	64	69	71	71	64	55	42
Low	31	38	46	52	55	54	48	40	32
Warsaw, Poland—Optional Extension									
High	44	54	65	70	73	73	64	54	42
Low	31	37	47	52	55	54	47	40	33

Please note: The data cited here reflect *climate* as opposed to *weather* conditions, and serve only as general indicators of what can reasonably be expected. A 60 degree ***average*** high temperature means that days may be as warm as 80 or as cool as 40 – but it's most likely you'll encounter temperatures in the 50 to 70 degree range.

8. TRAVEL AND TECHNOLOGY

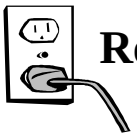
In General

Smartphone, tablet, digital camera/camcorder, MP3 player: travel today can involve technology that didn't exist even five years ago. The usefulness of digital devices is enormous: smartphones can keep you connected and offer up-to-the-minute information via your cell plan or a local Wi-Fi connection. With a tablet (or smartphone) you can store multiple country guidebooks, access maps and connect to the internet in a small, lightweight device. (***Tip****: you can download* ***this*** *document from the Grand Circle Travel website and import it into your tablet or e-reader, many of which can display PDF files.)*

Compact and lightweight, digital camcorders and cameras take high definition movies and still images of the people you meet and places you visit. For robust use a laptop may be effective; for occasional use it's wiser to rely on Internet cafes or a tablet and hotel Internet access rather than shoulder the heft and size of a laptop.

To use these devices you should first consider the services available at your destinations. You'll encounter a range of electrical standards, varied plug configurations to access the local current, erratic availability (electricity and internet access), and differing technological standards.

You'll need to assess your power and data storage needs, and the accessories required to recharge/connect/use these devices. Finally, it's smart to read the owner's manual *before* you depart. Pay particular attention to electrical, power and storage requirements to ensure that you understand exactly what you need. Thorough preparation is the best guarantee that your devices will work up to their potential.



Regional Electricity

The standard U.S. electrical system — 110V 60Hz current and flat two- or three-pronged polarized plug system — is rare elsewhere. The rest of the world overwhelmingly uses 220-240V and 50/60Hz current with a variety of plug shapes, sizes, and configurations. Some plugs will work with multiple receptacles, while others won't. Europe is largely standardized to the Type C "Europlug."

Plugging a 110V U.S. appliance into 220/240V 50/60Hz service will ruin the motor. We suggest that you choose *dual* voltage appliances (widely available) that work on both 110 and 220/240 voltage. Dual voltage appliances need only plug adapters.

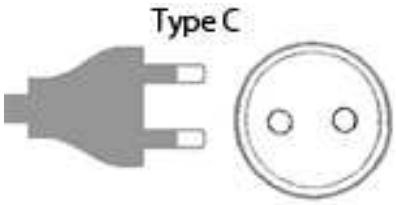
If you bring 110V appliances, such as a hair dryer (note that hotels often supply hairdryers and coffee makers) or a shaver, you'll need a transformer (to halve the 220/240V current) as well as plug adapters. Regional transformer/adapter kits can be found at hardware or online stores. However, transformers can be unreliable and a broken one will leave you lugging a useless 110V appliance. Battery-operated alternatives are an option, but will need a supply of batteries.

The electric current in the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Slovakia, and Poland operate on 220V AC/50 Hz, and all use the Type C "Europlug" and receptacles that accommodate it.

Electricity Onboard

River Adagio and Aria
Cabin bathrooms are equipped with a 110V outlet for electric shavers. The rest of the cabin has 220V, with Europlug outlets. You will need a transformer to operate 110V appliances as well as plug adapters.

Please note: On all ships, a limited number of transformers and adapter plugs are available at the ship's reception desk for occasional use. If you need these items for the duration of the cruise, we recommend you bring your own.



If you use multiple digital devices—cell phone, digital camera, MP3 player, etc. – it's handy to have a travel power strip, perhaps with a surge suppressors and USB port for charging cell phones, MP3 players or e-readers without carrying device-specific plugs.

Smartphones

It will require some effort to get the most out of your smartphone when you travel. Even with an international roaming plan, costs can add up quickly – those handy apps often pile up download fees. The simplest solution is to shut down all cell phone functions, automatic data feeds and roaming options, and take advantage of your phone via any available Wi-Fi. With an Internet VOIP app (like Skype) you can make inexpensive calls. If necessary, turn international roaming back on and your phone will work as usual – albeit at added cost. If your phone doesn't support international roaming (most smartphones do), some carriers offer loaners.

App quality, availability and costs vary – as do platforms (iPhone, Android, Blackberry …), so again you'll need to do some legwork. Apps come in all forms: packing lists, currency converters, language translators, maps, journals, Wi-Fi hotspot finders … one problem is going to be searching through the vast array of available apps to uncover what works best and what you're likely to use most. Smartphones have a lot to offer, but their small size can be a drawback for some uses (maps, extended reading, etc.)

Cell Phones

If you want to use a standard cell phone while traveling overseas, be sure to check with your service provider (www.verizon.com, www.t-mobile.com etc.) to see if your phone will work outside the U.S. or whether you're better off renting an international phone. The websites www.travelcell.com and www.globalcellularrental.com have good information on rentals. Or, consider buying an inexpensive local phone for your stay.

Phone Calling Cards

If you don't carry a phone, you can use a prepaid calling card to call the U.S. with minimal additional charges. Besides the prepaid long distance charges, you might have a local fee of a few cents and possibly a connection fee if you are using your card at a hotel. Check with the reception desk prior to using it to avoid unexpected charges.

Calling cards purchased locally are usually less expensive than those purchased in the U.S. and are more likely to work with the local system. Note that dialing a U.S. 1-800 number outside the continental United States will incur costly long distance fees, since 1-800 does not work outside the U.S.

Photo Gear

For many people, capturing the highlights of their travel experiences in photographs or movies and sharing them is one of the most enjoyable aspects of the journey. Remember, however: some individuals and cultures and are less tolerant of photography than others. It's always best to respect local customs. And in some countries you might be charged for photography at specific sites, or banned from taking any photographs at all.

Digital cameras and camcorders are excellent travel companions—and many do dual duty by recording movies *and* still images. Fist sized camcorders can capture HD movies and high quality still photos; cameras the size of a deck of cards are great for snapshots and casual movie clips. With an ample supply of high-capacity memory cards you can record your whole trip with a small, lightweight package.

But you must remember the batteries. Recharging batteries is sometimes impossible, cameras can drain batteries *very* quickly, and replacements may be unavailable. Whether you need standard or proprietary batteries, it's wise to have spares. Be sure your charger will work with the local electrical system, and bring more than enough memory cards—they may be hard or impossible to find. Memory cards are small, thin and light: you can never have too much storage.

Compact cameras are impractical for distant subjects and are often weak in dim light. Some models have a zoom lens of up to 120mm, which is good for middle distances. For distant subjects a *megazoom* (with a zoom lens of at least 300mm) or a single lens reflex (DSLR) camera with up to a 300mm telephoto lens are good choices. With a DSLR you can use multiple lenses, though your gear can quickly get complex, weighty and cumbersome. Cameras or lenses that need a tripod are impractical for travel photography. A single mid-range telephoto lens (18-200mm) coupled with a small, fast prime lens (for low light/no flash situations) is an effective, flexible and compact kit. Consider mirrorless interchangeable lens cameras (MILC), which combine small bodies and multiple, small lenses with high quality for both still and HD movie images.

If you use a DSLR or MILC camera, protect the lenses with a UV filter and bring lens caps, covers, cleaning paper and a waterproof bag (a heavy duty Ziploc-style bag is good) to protect your gear. Be sure your camera has a flash that you can turn off, and if it's detachable, remember to pack it. (At many sites and museums, flashes are ***not*** permitted.)

Consider disposable cameras, as well. They are inexpensive and capable of acceptable photos as long as the light is not too dim or bright. X-rays do not damage the data of digital cameras (in any media format), and so pose no problems for travelers using digital cameras.

9. GRAND CIRCLE CRUISE LINE'S EUROPEAN RIVER SHIPS

M/S *River Adagio and* M/S *River Aria*

Our private fleet of custom-built river ships—with designs incorporating suggestions from Grand Circle Cruise Line travelers—offers a host of amenities to make you feel right at home. Each ship is designed to carry a moderate number of passengers, ensuring an intimate shipboard atmosphere, plus the ease of maneuverability that's so important when entering small river ports. Amenities on each ship include a restaurant with panoramic windows and wraparound promenade, sun deck with lounge chairs, a whirlpool, library, sauna, bar, lounge, dance floor, and small souvenir shop.

By owning our ships, we can assure that you'll be sharing this unique travel experience with only like-minded Grand Circle Cruise Line travelers. You'll find your ship to be an intimate haven that's especially conducive to camaraderie. We'll all be together for the joint celebrations, such as the Welcome Cocktail Party, where you'll experience the gala ambiance of a larger group. At other times, such as when we venture ashore, we'll break into smaller groups with individual Program Directors to allow for more intimate and personal discoveries.

Included features of all Grand Circle Cruise Line European river ship cabins:

- A layout of at least 150 square feet
- All outside cabins
- Individual climate control (heat and air conditioning)
- Twin beds that ship staff convert into a daytime couch
- Storage space under beds of 57 inches x 22.8 inches x 11.8 inches (length x width x height)
- Sufficient closet and dresser space
- Color TV, including CNN programming and a bow camera for ship-front views
- Direct-dial international telephone
- Hair dryer
- Desk
- Private bath with shower

Cabins on the Serenade deck have small balconies with sliding doors; those on the Sonata deck have large picture windows; cabins on the Cantata deck have two picture windows, and Prelude Deck cabins have a square window, placed high in the cabin. For safety reasons, cabin windows do not open.

An important word: While our fleet features larger-than-usual riverboat cabins, please keep in mind that these ships are river vessels, not large ocean cruise ships. Riverboat cabins, in comparison, are relatively small, and ship amenities, in general, are comfortable but not lavish.

Onboard Activities

During your cruise you'll enjoy exclusive Discovery Series events, theme dinners, group activities that relate to the region (may include a language lesson), and talks on upcoming ports of call.

Dining

You'll enjoy fine cuisine and excellent views in your ship's dining room, featuring a warm decor of dark woods, rich carpeting, floor-to-ceiling windows, and white-linen and china table settings. Your ship's daily service includes a breakfast buffet, lunch, and a more formal dinner. Our professional chefs will create unique menus for you that feature regional specialties. Included with dinner are two complimentary drinks (choose from house wine, draft beer, or soft drink) per guest, per meal. In addition, a selection of other fine wines and beer is available for purchase. Passengers may also bring a bottle of their own favorite wine to dinner to enjoy at their table. Should you care to avail yourself of this service, there will be a corkage fee of approximately €10 (Euro) per bottle, charged to your passenger account.

Please note that if you bring your own alcohol aboard, it can only be consumed in the dining room as described above, or in your cabin. Consumption of alcohol purchased outside the ship is not permitted in the lounge or public areas. We also offer complimentary coffee and tea throughout the day, available at meals and from the machine in the reception area.

Open-table, single-seating for all meals: Each meal is open seating—reservations of any kind are not accepted. Dinner has only one designated time for its open seating, announced each day aboard ship.

Dining times: Dining times for all meals may vary depending on the day's sightseeing and sailing schedule, but in general, meal times are as follows:

Early riser breakfast: 6:00-7:00 am
Breakfast: 7:00-9:00 am
Lunch: 1:00-2:00 pm
Dinner: 7:00-9:00 pm

Special diets & celebrations: Special diets, such as low-cholesterol or vegetarian, can be accommodated, as well as the recognition of an anniversary or birthday. Please call Grand Circle Cruise Line to submit your request no later than 45 days prior to departure. Religious dietary regimens, such as kosher or halal meals, cannot be prepared aboard ship.

Dress code: The dining-room dress code is casual, though most travelers dress nicely for the Captain's Welcome Reception and Farewell Dinner.

Non-smoking policy: The entire dining room is non-smoking at all times.

Embarkation/Disembarkation

On the day you board ship, your cabin will be available at around 1:00 pm. The first meal available on board will be dinner. On the day of disembarkation, your cabin will no longer be available after breakfast. You may sit in the ship's lounge or on the sun deck until disembarkation.

Dock and Landing Etiquette

River waterways are simply not big enough to support large landing docks such as those built on ocean shorelines. It is common for river ships to tie up alongside each other at some piers—particularly in ports where docking area is restricted. While we try to arrange the most convenient mooring available in each port of call, outboard boats may occasionally obstruct views, and you may have to step across other ships when you want to go ashore.

Shore Excursions

Many sightseeing tours are included on your cruise. Other optional tours are available for purchase. Your Program Director will provide information on these optional excursions on your arrival. Please note that most optional tours can only be purchased with a credit card.

Onboard Facilities

Elevator/Chairlift

Each ship has an elevator and chairlift service to the Sun Deck from the deck below (or you can use the staircase to the sun deck, which has one flight of ten to twelve steps). The elevator does not provide service to or from the Prelude deck. The staircase to/from the Prelude deck features about six stairs, with a banister to hold on to. The chairlift is a single-seat transport that slides up the staircase banister.

Wi-Fi Access

Limited Wi-Fi service is available for free in the lounge, library, reception and bar areas on board these Grand Circle Cruise Line ships: *Concerto, Harmony, Melody, Rhapsody, Adagio, Aria,* and the *Bizet*. Wi-Fi service is not available in individual cabins, restaurants or other common areas. If you want to use the Wi-Fi connection you'll need to bring your own device (laptop/tablet/netbook) — ships do **not** rent or loan these devices. To use the Wi-Fi service, please visit Reception after you board for access information. Shipboard access is subject to the challenges of travel: ship location, signal availability, and usage volume on board will affect connectivity and speed. The ship's Internet connection demands a strong 3G cell phone signal, which is unavailable in many of the areas we visit. You can expect disruptions of both long and short duration.

Fitness Center

A fitness center with an exercise bike and walking/running treadmill is available on each ship.

Laundry Service

Laundry service is available for a fee. Please note that neither self-service laundry facilities nor dry cleaning services are available.

Linen Service

Bed linens are changed once a week (twice during the 14-night cruise); towels are changed daily.

Lounge/Bar

The bar is open from 9:30 am to 1 am, with soft drinks, beer, wine, and liquors for sale. Prices are in Euros.

Medical Care

Our entire fleet adheres to stringent European safety standards. In addition to an emergency call button in all cabins, ships also feature fully staffed reception desks, 24 hours a day.

Recreational Facilities

These include a sun deck with lounge, library, and lounge with bar and dance floor.

Drinking Water

Tap water aboard ship is safe for drinking. Bottled water is also available. There are two ice machines onboard

Smoking/Non-Smoking Policy

Smoking is not allowed anywhere inside our Grand Circle Cruise Line European River Ships, including in individual cabins. The only area on the ship where smoking is permitted is outside on the sun deck.

Ship Specifications

	Entered service	*Length*	*Width*	*Passenger capacity*	*Crew members*	*Decks*	*Cabins*	*Elevator*	*Chairlift to sun deck*
M/S *River Adagio*	2003	410	38	164	38	4	82	yes	yes
M/S *River Aria*	2001	410	38	164	40	4	82	yes	yes

10. ABOUT YOUR DESTINATIONS

We're including some handy practical details and a brief introduction to the places you'll visit on your Cruise Tour. If you expect to explore in depth on your own, we recommend that you consult one of the many available book-length guides to your destinations. If you have one or two specific sites, museums or features that you're interested in, an internet search is the ideal way to get-up-to-date information and details. And of course your Grand Circle Cruise Line Program Director or Hospitality Desk Representative will be able to assist you with suggestions and arrangements of activities you wish to participate in during your stay.

Internet Access and Email

Internet cafés are available in many of the cities you visit on your Cruise Tour; however it prices for use may vary. While sailing Internet access may be unavailable, depending on locks, bridges, and regional remoteness. Internet access will be most consistently available when the ship is docked in larger cities.

Drinking Water

Tap water in the countries you visit is perfectly safe for drinking, although the water in Hungary and the Czech Republic may not always be tasty. Bottled water is usually for sale in hotels, food shops, and restaurants.

Budapest in Brief

City Layout and Details

Budapest is divided by the Duna (Danube River) into a right and left bank. Of the city's three main districts, two—Buda and Obuda—are found on the west bank; Pest is on the east bank. Most of the major shopping venues, the House Parliament, the National Museum, Museum of Applied Arts, and Museum of Fine Arts are located in Pest. Buda, on the west bank, is the site of Castle Hill, Fishermen's Bastion, Matthias Church, and the National Gallery. In essence, Pest is the hub for dining, shopping, banking, and nightlife; and Buda contains the historical and cultural part of the city. The main shopping street in Pest is Vaci Utca, now a pedestrian zone, which runs parallel to the Danube and is every bit as elegant as the Merceria in Venice or the Faubourg-St.-Honore in Paris.

Cuisine

Hungary has a tasty national cuisine all its own. Many dishes are seasoned with paprika, which appears on restaurant tables beside the salt and pepper. Although paprika originated in Central America, the peasants of Szeged have been growing it since the early 18th century and it's now as important to Hungarian cuisine as the tomato is to Italian cuisine.

Hungarian goulash (*gulyas*) is a thick beef soup cooked with onions and potatoes. What we think of as goulash is here called *porkolt*, meat stewed with onions and paprika. If sour cream is added to *porkolt* it becomes *paprikas*. Pork is the most common meat dish. Cabbage is an important vegetable in Hungary, either stuffed in the Turkish fashion (*toltott kaposzta*) or made into a thick cabbage soup (*kaposzta leves*).

Other delicacies include goose-liver sandwiches and paprika chicken (*paprikas csirke*) served with tiny dumplings. Fisherman's soup (*halaszle*) is a rich mixture of several kinds of boiled fish, tomatoes, green peppers, and paprika. It's a full meal in itself. Balaton Lake pike (*sullo*) is generally served breaded and grilled. Noodles with cottage cheese and tiny cubes of crisp fried bacon (*turos csusza*) go well with fish dishes. Hungarian cream cheese (*korozott*) is a mixture of sheep cheese, paprika, and caraway seeds. Strudel (*retes*) is a typical layered pastry filled with apple, cherry, cabbage, curd, or cheese.
Some dishes for vegetarians to request are *rantott sajt* (fried cheese), *rantott gomba* (fried mushrooms), *gomba leves* (mushroom soup), *gyumolcs leves* (fruit soup), *sajtos kenyer* (sliced bread with melted cheese), and *turos czusza* (cottage cheese).

Local Transportation

The public transportation system in Budapest—a metro (subway), buses, streetcars, and trolleybuses—is economical, efficient, and simple to use, but closes down around 11:00 pm. Certain trams and buses run on a limited schedule all night. A day ticket (*napijegy*) allows unlimited travel on all services within the city limits. You can also buy tickets for single rides from metro stations or tobacco shops. You can travel on all trams, buses, and on the subway with this ticket, but you can't change lines. Bus, streetcar, and trolleybus tickets must be canceled onboard. Don't get caught without a ticket: spot checks are frequent, and you can be fined if you don't possess one.

Newspapers

Budapest Week and *The Budapest Sun* are two English-language newspapers that mix politics and culture, and carry listings of concerts, culture events, and foreign-language films.

Prague in Brief

City Layout and Details

Prague, an ancient and historic city, is the capital of the Czech Republic (made up of Bohemia, Moravia, and part of Silesia). The city, located at the crossroads of Europe, is both ancient and modern and possesses a palpable energy. Getting around Prague can be a bit tricky—many of the streets are small, narrow cobblestone paths that seem to wind about endlessly. But the "City of 1,000 spires" is one of the most beautiful you will ever see.

Prague is really a series of five historic towns welded together to form one great city. The River Vltava slices through Prague, giving the city its distinctive bridges. Hradcany, the castle district, is on the river's west bank, with Prague Castle and St. Vitus cathedral nearby. Below this section lies Mala Strana (the Lesser Quarter), with buildings dating back to the 13th century. Petrin Hill to the south offers wonderful views out over the city. On the east bank of the river is Stare Mesto (the Old Town), with its large central square. Nearby is Josefov, the former Jewish ghetto. Nove Mesto (New Town, though parts of it go back to the 14th century) stretches around parts of Stare Mesto and historic Wenceslas Square. The Charles Bridge, a city landmark, stretches over the Vltava and links much of the city.

Ruzyne Airport is in the western suburbs of the city. The Prague Information Service offers good information about Prague and is located in Old Town Square. The Tourist Office (Cedok) at Na Prikope is also a good place for information and maps.

Prague is a lovely city for walking, so be sure to stroll the Royal Way, which takes you by some of the city's architectural treasures, including Prague Castle and St. Vitus Cathedral. In Hradcany stop to see

the Strahov Monastery and the Summer Palace. If you are a fan of classical music you'll want to stop in at the Smetana Hall in Obecni Dum. The Museum of the City of Prague in northern Nove Mesto is an impressive and interesting stop. Wenceslas Square in Old Town and Josefov in Stare Mesto both offer excellent walking and sightseeing opportunities.

Cuisine

The foods of the Czech Republic are hearty and rich, their flavors influenced by German cooking, and they tend toward meaty dishes accompanied by sauces and gravies. The three items that are nationwide favorites are pork, dumplings, and cabbage.

Thick soups offer some of the strongest flavors on a typical menu, with garlic, onion, and fish soup being among the tastiest. Pork as a main course is often a seasoned brisket that is breaded and fried. Another mainstay is *svickova*, slices of oven-braised beef served with a rich sauce of sour cream and cranberries. Restaurants also may offer baked chicken, smoked hams, and wild game, such as rabbit, duck, or venison. As the country is landlocked, fish usually comes from freshwater fish farms and includes perch, trout, and carp. Seafood such as shellfish or shark is sometimes offered at restaurants, but is usually fairly expensive.

Accompanying almost every meal is the ubiquitous dumpling, or *knedlik*. The lighter dumplings are made from wheat flour, while the hearty and denser version is created using potato flour. The rolled dough is boiled and served in slices with a gravy or sauce. The vegetable that graces most dinners is the *zeli*, or cabbage. The cabbage is often cooked in a lightly sweetened sauce. Condiments include fruit chutney, horseradish, mustard, and tartar sauce. Vegetarian main courses may be quite difficult to find, but dishes of root crops such as carrots, turnips, beets, and of course potatoes are plentiful. For cheese lovers, there's *smazeny syr*, a delectable breaded cheese, fried until its center is creamy.

You can top off your meal with sweet delights. Desserts offered are thin pancakes with fillings of chocolate, fruit, or marmalade. And in case you didn't have your fill of dumplings with the main course, you can savor one for dessert. The chefs fill them with apricots, cherries, or strawberries and sprinkle them festively with powdered sugar.

While in Prague, don't miss the opportunity to sample some of the delightful beers born of the region's fields of cultivated hops. Pubs are in integral part of the Czech neighborhood life, and the nation brews some of the best beer in the world. In the town of Plzen, the brewing of beer dates as far back as the founding of the town, in 1295. Plzen is internationally known for its award-winning Pilsener Urquell, and there are numerous other local beers that perfectly accompany the region's hearty dining. To conclude your culinary explorations, you might consider capping the night with a taste of *Becherovka*, a unique herbal liqueur from the Karlovy Vary area.

Local Transportation

Subway: Prague's modern subway system—the Metro—is easy to use and spotlessly clean. It provides the simplest and fastest means of transportation, and most new maps of Prague mark the routes. Subways run daily from 5 am to midnight, with trains every two minutes during peak hours, slowing down to every ten to fifteen minutes by late in the evening. There are several lines, each a different color, which intersect at various points in the city center, and the route plans are easy to follow. Once inside the Metro, acquaint yourself with these words: *vystup* means exit, and *prestup* means connection.

Tram/Bus: You'll probably stick to the Metro, but a bus ride can be a good way to see some of the city, especially if you want to venture farther out. You need to buy a new ticket every time you change vehicles.
Taxi: These are not recommended, as some drivers try to take advantage of tourists and inflate the price, possibly by driving miles out of the way. If you must take a taxi, it is best to use the hotel's taxi service—it is a little more expensive than taxis found at taxi stands but it is more reliable. Another choice is to ask the hotel to contact AAA Taxi for you (or call them at **233 113 311**)—AAA Taxi is also dependable and they speak English. If you choose instead to use a taxi at a taxi stand or one you hail on the street, *definitely agree on a price beforehand!*

Punch your ticket on the Metro, trams, and buses: For the Metro, punch the ticket in the station before getting on the escalators; for buses and trams, punch the ticket inside the vehicle.

Newspapers

The *Prague Post*, an English-language newspaper, offers information on concerts, museums, theaters, restaurants, and other events.

Vienna in Brief

City Layout and Details

Vienna's "Ring," once the location of the city walls and today a broad boulevard in the inner zone (the oldest part of the city), encircles most main sights. In the center is Stephansplatz, site of the city's famous St. Stephen's Cathedral. Just a short walk away is the Hofburg (the Habsburgs' official residence), the Kunsthistorisches Museum (Art History Museum), and the Staatsoper. The pedestrian thoroughfare, Kaernter Strasse, is the city's major shopping venue; it runs from Stephansplatz past the Staatsoper to Karlsplatz. The "Ring" itself is two and one half miles long and 187 feet wide. Constructed in the mid 19th century to protect Vienna from outside threats, the Ring encircles the Old City. All sites inside the Ring are part of the First *Bezirk* (or 1st precinct, designated by the #1010 in addresses). The remainder of the city is also sectioned into precincts.

Cuisine

Viennese cuisine is the culmination of various ethnic influences, including Bohemian, Hungarian, Croatian, Slovenian, German, and Italian. Wild game, fish, poultry, and beef dishes are also popular. The following are some local specialties.

Soups: *Griessnockerlsuppe* (clear soup with semolina dumplings), *Rindsuppe* (beef broth), and *Gulaschsuppe* (Hungarian goulash soup).

Main courses: Familiar dishes are *Bauernschmaus* (a combination of many varied sausage~~s~~ and pork items with sauerkraut and dumplings), *Tafelspitz* (boiled beef with vegetables), *Wiener Schnitzel* (breaded veal or pork cutlet), *Schweinebraten* (roast pork), *Backhendl* (fried and breaded chicken), and *Gulasch* (stew). *Nockerl* are little dumplings, usually served with sauce.

Desserts: Vienna's *Apfelstrudel* (apple strudel) is probably the best in the world. *Palatschinken* are light, sugared pancakes; *Kaiserschmarren* is a diced omelet, served with jam and sprinkled with sugar.

Coffee: Austrian coffee, of which there are at least 20 varieties, is delicious and not to be missed. Introduced 300 years ago by the Turks during their unsuccessful attempt to conquer Vienna, coffee has become an art form, served in veritable institutions known as the Viennese coffeehouses. Among the many kinds of coffee are *kleiner Schwarzer*, a small cup without milk; the *Melange*, large cup with foamy milk; *Mokka*, strong black Viennese coffee; *Kapuziner*, same as *Melange* but topped with whipped cream; and *Tuerkischer*, Turkish coffee boiled in a small copper pot and served in tiny cups.

Drinking Water

Vienna's ice-cold water comes from a natural underground reservoir in the mountains and is famous for its clean taste and purity. It is very safe to drink. Bottled water is also sold in most restaurants and grocery shops.

Local Transportation

Vienna is divided into 23 numbered districts. Most sights are concentrated in the city center, the 1st District, which is largely a pedestrian zone and easily reached by public transportation. Many 1st District attractions are within walking distance of one another. You can walk from one end of the Old City to the other in about 30 minutes. Even the walk from the Ring to either train station is only a half hour or so. Beyond this central hub, districts proceed from the 2nd on up to the 23rd.

Vienna's transit network consists of five U-Bahn (subway) lines, trams, buses, and several rapid transit and commuter trains. A single ticket (good for the tram, bus, S-Bahn, or the U-Bahn) permits as many transfers as you need to reach your destination as long as you keep moving in the same direction. It can be purchased from machines found in U-Bahn stations, ticket booths, or from conductors. Instead of single tickets, you may prefer to purchase the *Vierfahrtenstreifenkarte*, a strip ticket that allows four rides. These must be purchased in advance, either from ticket booths at the Karlsplatz or Stephansplatz U-Bahn station, or from automatic machines at all U-Bahn and train stations. There's also a 24-hour ticket available. Lastly, the Vienna Card, which is valid for 72 hours, allows you to travel on all modes of public transportation and gives you a discount in a great many museums.

Note on Ticket Validation: You must validate all tickets yourself by inserting them into machines at the entryway of S-Bahn and U-Bahn platforms or on buses and trams. When entering streetcars, look for a blue box with a white "E," which is for validating tickets.

Newspapers & Magazines

The Vienna Tourist Board puts out a monthly program of what's going on in opera, concerts, jazz, theater, and galleries, which is available at hotels and tourist offices. Similar information is posted on billboards and newspaper advertising columns around the city.

Berlin in Brief

City Layout and Details

Berlin is a sprawling city comprised of several smaller towns that joined together over time. The city was largely destroyed in World War II before being occupied and reconstructed by the victorious Four Powers. Berlin served as a powerful symbol of the Cold War, and the Soviets built and maintained an 87-mile-long wall that physically divided the city. Today, only the placid waters of the River Spree separate east from west. In the two decades since the fall of communism, Berlin has reintegrated and remade itself as a unified city, a beacon for the future of Germany. For the most part, Berlin's wide, well-maintained boulevards form a sensible grid pattern, which makes the city easy to navigate.

Major thoroughfares on the western side of the city include Potsdamerstrasse, Kantstrasse, and most importantly, Kurfurstendamm. The "Ku'damm," as its known to locals, is Berlin's answer to the Champs-Elysees: a long, leafy avenue lined with upscale shops, art galleries, department stores, hotels, restaurants, bars, and clubs. The enormous Europa Center, a modern shopping and business complex, forms the easternmost terminus of the Ku'damm and abuts the Tiergarten, a verdant urban park. The Europa Center sits at the extreme southwestern edge of the park; at the extreme northeastern edge, you can find the seat of the German government, including the venerable Brandenburg Gate and the glass-domed Reichstag.

A short walk east from the Brandenburg Gate along Unter den Linden (central Berlin's answer to the Ku'damm) will take you past the University of Humboldt to the banks of the River Spree. If you follow Unter den Linden over the river, it becomes Karl-Liebknicht Strasse, and a few short blocks later, your path intersects with Alexanderplatz. Here, you'll find Kaufhof den Westens, an enormous department store rivaled in size and splendor only by Harrod's in London.

The KaDeWe (Berliners' name for the Kaufhof) resides in the shadow of the Femsehturm, an iconic television tower built by the Soviets that has become a defining feature of Berlin's skyline. Just a few blocks to the southwest, you can find the Berlin city hall, Marienkirche, Nikolaikirche, and the magnificent Neptunbrunen fountain. If you cross back over the Spree from Nikolaikirche, you'll find yourself amid the medieval architecture of the Nikolaivirtel and Fischerinsel neighborhoods, both of which survived the destruction of World War II to preserve a taste of old Berlin.

Cuisine

German cuisine is at once local and global. You'll find examples of what might be considered traditional German fare—*currywurst, sauerkraut, Apfelstrudel*— alongside dishes imported by Turkish, Italian, and east Asian immigrants. Italian workers arriving to rebuild the city after World War II brought spaghetti and pizza with them, while Chinese and Thai immigrants have popularized their home countries' cooking in recent decades. But Turkish food holds greater sway over Berliners' bellies than any other, and the *doner kebab* is far and away the most popular food in the city. Recently, Austrian cuisine has experienced a renaissance in Berlin, making *wiener schnitzel* a common sight on the city's menus. The

sixth floor of the KaDeWe features gourmet foods from around the world and is a must-see for anyone seeking to satisfy his gastronomic curiosity. Of course, no visit to Berlin would be complete without a few sips from a *molle* (glass of beer). Berlin's bars do not have an official closing time, so patrons while away the hours by nibbling on *rollmops* (marinated herring filets) and *buletten* (hamburgers without buns, served with spicy mustard) to wash down some of the best beer in the world. Pilsners are common in Berlin, and if you find yourself in one of the picturesque beer gardens near the River Spree, be sure to try Berliner Weisse, a refreshing, extra light, slightly bitter beer that you won't find anywhere else.

Drinking Water

Tap water is clean and safe to drink throughout Germany.

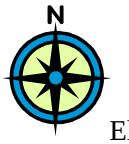
Newspapers & Magazines

Detailed information about what's going on in Berlin can be found in Berlin Programm, a monthly guide to Berlin arts, and the magazines *Tip* and *Zitty*, which appear every two weeks and provide full arts listings. International press can be found at nearly every major newsstand while *Der Spiegel*, *Die Welt*, and *Die Tageszeitung* provide excellent German-language news. *Time Out Berlin* and *ExBerliner* can provide valuable resources for tourists trying to decide how to spend their time in this enormous city.

Public Transportation

Berlin has one of the most efficient public transportation systems in Europe, a smoothly integrated network of subway (U-bahn) and elevated (S-bahn) train lines, buses, trams (in East Berlin only), and even a ferry (across the Wannsee Lake), making every part of the city accessible. There's also an all-night bus service, indicated by the letter "N" next to route numbers. In summer, there are excursion buses linking the downtown area with the most popular recreational areas. For visitors who plan to travel extensively around the city, there is a "Berlin Ticket," valid for 24 hours and good for all trains and buses.

Dresden in Brief



City Layout and Details

Situated near the Polish and Czech borders, Dresden sits on a wide-open floodplain. The River Elbe flows through the center of town, and unlike most major European cities, civic planners have made the riverbanks accessible to the public, creating broad green spaces in the heart of Dresden. The Dresdner Heide is the largest of several nature reserves within the city, and the Elbe meadows provide a provincial retreat within a major metropolitan area. Dresden was nearly completely razed by Allied bombers in February 1945; the firestorm caused by the raids reached temperatures of 2700 degrees Fahreinheit and incinerated over 90% of the city. Since then, Dresden has risen from the ashes, a city marked by enlightened urban planning, spacious green areas, and an eclectic blend of neighborhoods.

The Dresden Frauenkirche is perhaps the most vivid example of the city's reconstruction after World War II. The church was gutted by the Allied firebombing, leaving only one corner of the original structure intact. As recently as 1991, the ruins were overrun with grass, but with the help of sophisticated computer modeling, the Frauenkirche was rebuilt in its original splendor, with the charred bricks of the old church intermingled with the new. The soaring cupola of the Lutheran Frauenkirche, the stately nave

of the Catholic Hofkirche, and the regal mixture of baroque and Renaissance stylings of the reconstructed Semperoper and the nearby Zwinger Palance evoke the glory of Dresden's architectural past. Alongside these reconstructed masterpieces, you'll find newer Stalinist apartment blocks built during the Cold War, the post-modern New Synagogue, and the sleek glass walls of the Transparent Factory and the UFA Palast. The Botanical and Zoological Gardens in the Grosser Garten park provide a beautiful sanctuary for locals and travelers looking to escape the hustle and bustle of this modern city.

Cuisine

Typical German cuisine is common in Dresden, but you can find some local Saxon specialities here too. *Sauerbraten* (marinated braised beef) is the most recognizable Saxon dish, and quark, a soft cheese common in this part of Europe, finds its way into a number of iconic dishes, including *quarkkeulchen* (sweetened potato pancakes) and *eierschecke* (similar to cheesecake). Potato stew, sour roast, and *lebkeuchen* (a soft gingerbread) are considered traditional Saxon fare, but no gastronomic tour of Dresden is complete without a tall glass of Radeberger, an outstanding Pilsner brewed just outside the city.

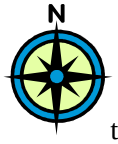
Local Transportation

Dresden has long been a world-renowned center of traffic engineering, and its well-maintained *autobahnen* make the city easy to navigate by car. Public transportation is equally user-friendly, with over 125 miles of tramways providing efficient transportation for Dresdeners and tourists alike. Unlike many cities of similar size, none of Dresden's trams operate underground, making them a great way to see the city's center. Germans have a reputation for punctuality, so you can rest assured that your tram will arrive and depart according to the published schedule. Dresden also features two large rail hubs providing commuter service to the city's suburbs, along with inter-city service to Leipzig, Prague, and Berlin.

Newspapers

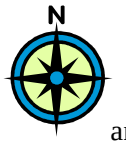
Dresden features two major daily newspapers, the *Dresdener Neueste Nachrichten* and the *Sachsiche Zeitung*.

Krakow & Warsaw in Brief



City Layout: Krakow

Krakow, for centuries the capital of royal Poland, is today recognized as a valid competitor to the historic charms you'll discover in Vienna, Budapest and Prague. Having escaped serious damage in World War II, and come through the Communist years with minimal impact. The beautifully restored Old Town, now a UNESCO World Heritage Site, retains its original Medieval form, and serves as a lovely setting for Wawel Castle. Surrounded by charming streets, a plethora of Catholic churches, and classic examples of historic architecture the formal Rynek Glowny is the huge central square. The Old Town bustles constantly, vibrant with visitors and locals admiring the square, picking up flowers at one of the many florists, stopping for a snack at the bagel cart or perhaps sitting in one of the restaurants.



City Layout: Warsaw

Bisected by the Vistula River Warsaw – the modern capital of Poland – is a very different animal from Krakow. World War II dealt Warsaw a particularly devastating hand – only 15% of the city emerged still standing after being razed by the German occupiers and nearly 60% of the population was either dead of missing. The Postwar years saw Soviet-style city planners, with a blank slate, design and build to their Socialist-Realist palette

Cuisine

As with many European counties, Polish cuisine feels the influence of many cultures: Lithuanian, Ukrainian, Jewish, Hungarian, German, etc., as well as a pinch of Russian, Italian, and Turkish. The focus is on meat, especially chicken and pork, and winter vegetables (cabbage in the dish *bigos*), and spices, as well as different kinds of noodles – particularly the *pierogi*. Traditionally, Poles take their festive meals seriously, and feast days — like Christmas Eve or Easter Breakfast — can involve days of preparation.

Normally the main meal is eaten in mid-afternoon or later, and involves three courses, starting with a soup, such as bouillon or tomato or more festive *barszcz* (beet) followed sometimes by an appetizer. The main course is usually meaty — a roast or breaded pork cutlet. Vegetables, though now replaced by leaf salad, were traditionally served as *'surówka'* - shredded root vegetables with lemon and sugar (carrot, celeriac, beetroot) or fermented cabbage. Popular side dishes are now boiled potatoes, and, less commonly the traditional **kasha** (cereals). Meals often conclude with a dessert such as *makowiec*, a poppy seed pastry, or *drożdżówka*, a type of yeast cake.

Local Transportation

The public transportation systems in both Krakow and Warsaw offer similar convenience and value, despite the differences in the cities. Trams are most convenient for distance travel, and they run from early morning to around 11:00 pm, though it's best to avoid the trams at rush hour. Buses and taxis are economical, efficient, and simple to use and tough more expensive than the trams, are relatively economical. Krakow's center is mostly closed to traffic, and is quite compact: with many attractions centrally located, walking in Krakow is both easy and a pleasure. Warsaw, on the other hand, is quite large, so you can expect to become more familiar with the transportation system. It's complex, and you should probably seek destination specifics before you set out.

Newspapers

Local newspapers in English are scarce in Poland. The *Gazeta Wyborcza*, with regional editions, is the most popular non-tabloid newspaper—and select articles are available in English on its website. The *Krakow Post* is a monthly English-language newspaper that mixes national and international stories with listings of concerts and cultural events.

11. DEMOGRAPHICS & GEOGRAPHY

The Danube River

The Danube River is the second-longest river in Europe and the only major European river to flow from west to east. It rises in the Black Forest region of Germany and flows in a generally easterly direction for a distance of 1,766 miles before emptying, on the Romanian coast, into the Black Sea. This legendary river not only shaped the destinies of all the countries that line its banks, but influenced the whole continent as no other European river ever could.

The Danube river basin is more than 300,000 square miles and includes parts of Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Romania, Moldavia, and Ukraine. The river is ancient and full of history, passing through the cities of Ulm, Regensburg, and Passau in Germany; Linz and Vienna in Austria; Bratislava in Slovakia; Budapest in Hungary; Belgrade in Serbia; and Galatzi and Brãila in Romania. Canals link the Danube to the Main and Rhine, providing a commercial route between the Black and North Seas.

The strategic location of this great river was recognized centuries ago by Roman Emperors who sought to control it. Ruins from that period now perch on banks above the river, reminding you of the Danube's multi-faceted past. Even today, the Danube continues to be one of Europe's greatest assets, in part because it provides a water link between the four national capitals on its banks: Vienna, Bratislava, Budapest, and Belgrade. Back in the heyday of river transport, other great cities grew up along the Danube's banks too, serving as ports for the various cargo being carried on the river, namely salt, wood, and ores. These same products now are transferred on the railroad and highways, which run alongside the Danube's course.

There is no question that few river voyages can match the romantic appeal of a journey down the Danube. Here is the heart of the lilting Strauss waltzes, of myth-laden castles, Old World villages, and rolling vineyards. As you sail along this twisting river, stopping at fascinating ports, you'll gain an understanding of the art, music, and culture of a fabled region with a history that stretches back more than 3,000 years.

Austria

Area: 32,375 square miles
Capital: Vienna
Language: German is the official language, spoken by virtually all Austrians. English is the second most common language, however, and is spoken in all tourist areas and major cities.
Location: Austria is bordered by Germany, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Italy, Switzerland, and Liechtenstein. It combines rich agricultural plains along the Danube with Alpine peaks, lakes, vineyards, and castles that evoke the Middle Ages.
Population (2007 estimate): 8,199,783
Religion: Roman Catholic 74%, Protestant 5%, Muslim 4%, none 12%, other 5%
Time zone: Austria is on Central European Time, which is six hours ahead of U.S. EST: when it's 6 am in New York, it's noon in Vienna.

Holidays (nationally recognized; does not include religious, local or culturally based events)**:**

01/01	New Year's Day
01/06	Epiphany
04/01	Easter Monday
05/01	Labor Day / May Day
05/09	Ascension Day
05/20	Whit Monday
05/30	Corpus Christi
08/15	Assumption of Mary
10/26	National day
11/01	All Saints
12/08	Immaculate Conception
12/25	Christmas Day
12/26	St. Stephen's Day

Czech Republic

Area: 30,464 square miles
Capital: Prague
Language: Czech is the official language.
Location: Landlocked in eastern Europe, the Czech Republic comprises the ancient provinces of Bohemia and Moravia, with a mountainous rim on the German border to the west. Other countries that share borders with the Czech Republic are Austria and Slovakia to the south and Poland to the northeast.
Population (2007 estimate): 10,228,744
Religion: atheist 39.8%, Roman Catholic 39.2%, Protestant 4.6%, Orthodox 3%, other 13.4%
Time zone: The Czech Republic is six hours ahead of Eastern Time in North America: when it is noon in New York, it is 6 pm in Prague.

Holidays (nationally recognized; does not include religious, local or culturally based events)**:**

01/01	New Year's Day
04/01	Easter Monday
05/01	Labor Day / May Day
05/08	Victory in Europe Day
07/05	Saints Cyril and Methodius
07/06	Jan Hus Day
09/28	St. Wenceslas Day
10/28	Independent Czechoslovak State Day
11/17	Struggle for Freedom and Democracy Day
12/24	Christmas Eve
12/25	Christmas Day
12/26	St. Stephen's Day

Hungary

Area: 35,919 square miles
Capital: Budapest
Language: Hungarian (Magyar) is the official language. It is one of the more exotic languages of Europe and at first sight looks forbidding. A knowledge of German is most useful. English is spoken and understood by those who regularly come into contact with tourists.
Location: Hungary is a landlocked country in central Europe that has borders with seven countries: Austria, Slovenia, and Croatia to the east; Serbia-Montenegro and Romania to the south; Ukraine to the northeast; and Slovakia directly to the north. Most of Hungary is a fertile, rolling plain lying east of the Danube River, and drained by the Danube and Tisza Rivers.
Population (2007 estimate): 9,956,108
Religion: Roman Catholic 52%, Calvinist 16%, Lutheran 3%, other 14%, unaffiliated 15%
Time zone: Hungary is on Central European Time, which is six hours ahead of Eastern Time in North America: when it is noon in New York, it is 6 pm in Budapest. Daylight Saving Time is in effect from the last Sunday of March until the last Sunday of October.

Holidays (nationally recognized; does not include religious, local or culturally based events)**:**

01/01	New Year's Day
03/15	1848 Revolution Memorial Day
04/01	Easter Monday
05/01	Labor Day
05/20	Whit Monday
08/20	Hungary National Day
10/23	1956 Revolution Memorial Day
11/01	All Saints
12/25	Christmas Day
12/26	Boxing Day

Slovakia

Area: 18,917 square miles
Capital: Bratislava
Language: Slovak (official), Hungarian
Location: Situated in central Europe, Slovakia has a strategic position as a "bridge" between the countries of Austria (on its west) and Ukraine (on its east), and Hungary (to the south) and Poland (to the north); it's also bordered by the Czech Republic (to the northwest). The land has rugged mountains, rich in mineral resources, and vast forests and pastures. The Carpathian Mountains dominate the topography of Slovakia, with lowland areas in the southern region.
Population (2007 estimate): 5,447,502
Religion: Roman Catholic 60%, atheist 9.7%, Protestant 8.4%
Time zone: Slovakia is six hours ahead of U.S. Standard Time. when it is noon in New York, it is 6 pm in Slovakia.

Holidays (nationally recognized; does not include religious, local or culturally based events)**:**

01/01	Republic Day
01/06	Epiphany
03/29	Good Friday
04/01	Easter Monday
05/01	Labor Day
05/08	End of World War II
07/05	St. Cyril & St. Methodius Day
08/29	National Uprising Day
09/01	Constitution Day
09/15	The Day of the Virgin Mary
11/01	All Saints
11/17	Day of the Fight for Freedom and Democracy
12/24	Christmas Eve
12/25	Christmas Day
12/26	Second Day of Christmas

Germany—optional extension

Area: 137,846 square miles
Capital: Berlin
Language: German is the official language. In Berlin, Turkish is also in use, as many immigrates from Turkey have settled here.
Location: Located in central Europe, Germany is bordered on the west by the Benelux countries and France, and on the east by Poland and the Czech Republic. Switzerland and Austria are to the south. Germany's northern coastline is met by the North Sea and the Baltic.
Population (2002 est.): 83,251,851
Religions: Protestant 38%, Roman Catholic 34%, unaffiliated or other 26.3 %
Time zone: Germany is on Central European Time, which is six hours ahead of U.S. EST: when it's 6 am in New York, it's noon in Berlin.

Holidays (nationally recognized; does not include religious, local or culturally based events)**:**

01/01 New Year's Day
03/29 Good Friday
04/01 Easter Monday
05/01 Labor Day
05/09 Ascension Day
05/20 Whit Monday
10/03 Day of German Unity
12/25 Christmas Day
12/26 Second day of Christmas

Poland—Optional Extension

Area: 120,728 square miles
Capital: Warsaw
Government: Republic
Language: Polish is the official language. It is a Slavonic language. Unlike Russian, it uses the familiar Roman alphabet, but with many additional accents. German, Russian, English, and French are spoken by most members of the travel industry and in hotels.
Location: Situated in the heart of Europe, Poland's low-lying plains extend from the Baltic shore in the north to the Tatra Mountains on its southern border with the Czech Republic and Slovakia. To the east of the Polish border are Lithuania, Belarus, and the Ukraine; to the west is Germany.
Population (2005 estimate): 38,635,144
Religion: Roman Catholic 90%, Eastern Orthodox 1.3%, Protestant 0.3%, other 8.4%
Time zone: The time in Poland is six hours ahead of Eastern Time in North America: when it is 12 noon in New York, it is 6 pm in Warsaw and Krakow.

Holidays (nationally recognized; does not include religious, local or culturally based events)**:**

01/01	New Year's Day
03/29	Good Friday
03/31	Easter Day
04/25	Liberty Day
05/01	Labor Day
05/30	Corpus Christi
06/10	Portugal Day
08/15	Assumption of Mary
10/05	Republic Implantation
11/01	All Saints
12/01	Restoration of Independence
12/08	Feast of the Immaculate Conception
12/25	Christmas Day

12. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Books, Maps, and Movies

If your local store or library doesn't stock the books or movies below, the Internet offers a wide variety of options for finding older or rare stock – try AbeBooks (abebooks.com), Alibris (albris.com), Amazon (amazon.com) or Barnes & Noble (bn.com) — or any of the smaller websites. Of course, this selection is not meant to be comprehensive, and is offered as a starting point for your research.

The Improbable Voyage by Tristan Jones (Travel Account)
In 1985, former Royal Navy skipper Tristan Jones embarked on a 2,307-mile voyage across Europe, traveling from the North Sea to the Black Sea via the Rhine and Danube rivers. Battling ice and cold, life-threatening rapids and narrow gorges, German bureaucrats and Romanian frontier police, Jones made his way through eight countries and emerged triumphant, albeit penniless, at the Black Sea. His spirited account of his adventures gives readers a vivid glimpse of the quality of life along Europe's oldest water routes—and of life on the Danube toward the end of the Cold War era.

Danube by Claudio Magris (Travel Account)
This widely regarded descriptive travel book follows the river as it flows from its source in Germany to its mouth in the Black Sea, with wonderful descriptions of the scenery en route.

Central Europe: Enemies, Neighbors, Friends by Lonnie R. Johnson (History)
A panoramic history of Central Europe that provides a comparative analysis of the key events that have shaped Germany, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Austria, Hungary, Slovenia, and Croatia. The author abandons the Cold War convention of defining Central Europe in the bipolar terms of East and West, and emphasizes the underlying continuities in the region's history.

Budapest 1900: A Historical Portrait of a City and Its Culture by John Lukacs (History)
In 1900, Budapest was culturally and physically the fastest growing city in Europe. The author mixes scholarship and an impressionistic writing style to bring alive the intellectual, artistic, and social exuberance of the city during this era.

Hastening Toward Prague by Lisa Wolverton (History)
Published in September, 2001, this book examines the power and society in the medieval Czech Lands, where kings and rulers set the stage for conflicts that would still raise issues centuries later.

A History of Slovakia: The Struggle for Survival by Stanislav J. Kirschbaum (History)
A ground-breaking work, this is the first comprehensive study to describe the resilience of the Slovaks—from the Avar invasions in the 7th century to their break with the Czech Republic in 1993.

The Austrians: A Thousand-Year Odyssey by Gordon Brook-Shepard (History)
The author, a noted historian, draws upon his long-standing associations with Austrian leaders and his special access to the private Habsburg family archives to trace the identity of Austria as it developed over a millennium.

A Nervous Splendor—Vienna 1888/9 by Frederic Morton (History)
Morton's popular history brings to life Freud, Mahler, Archduke Rudolph, and other famous Viennese.

The Power of the Powerless by Vaclav Havel (Political Science)
In this 1978 essay, Vaclav Havel (elected the first president of the Czech Republic in 1993) analyzes totalitarian oppression and the mechanisms used by the powerful to subdue the spirit and morality of the powerless citizenry. He speaks in searing terms of the meaning of citizenship, resistance, and the power of the moral and truthful individual.

Before the Deluge: A Portrait of Berlin in the 1920s by Otto Friedrich (History)
A noted historian describes this interesting and intriguing chapter in Berlin's history, a time when such well-known people as Marlene Dietrich, Albert Einstein, Greta Garbo, Bertolt Brecht, Walter Gropius, Kandinsky, and Klee all made their homes here.

Berlin *by* Giles MacDonogh (History)
A 1998 study of the history, sociology, architecture, food, crime, and theater of one of Europe's most intriguing cities—on the eve of its return as the capital of the Unified Germany.

Another Beauty by Adam Zagajewski (Memoir)
A quirky, lyrical memoir of coming of age in Poland in the 1960s and 1970s by the influential poet of the Polish New Wave. Zagajewski looks back on his life and particularly time in Krakow as a philosophy student, dissident and young writer. Susan Sontag, who provides the introduction, calls *Another Beauty* a wise and iridescent book, which dips in and out of many genres. It's many things: a coming-of-age-memoir, commonplace book, collection of vignettes and portraits, and a defense of poetry.

Guidebooks:
Your Program Director will be happy to provide recommendations and suggestions during the trip, so a guidebook is not a necessity. But a good one can be invaluable as a one-stop reference, so for those travelers who have asked for suggestions, we offer these guidelines. Since different guidebook series each have their own target audience and structure, it is well worth your time to browse your local library or bookstore to find the one(s) you like best. To get you started, here is some general information on the most popular series:

Culture Smart! – Focuses on local customs and etiquette instead of sights, dining, etc.
DK Eyewitness – Innovative visuals make these books easy to use and a nice souvenir once the trip is over. The focus is primarily on the sights and activities.
Fodor's – A classic guidebook with strong information on activities, shopping, and dining. Good mix of upscale recommendations and budget suggestions.
Frommer's – A comprehensive guide series that is known for its restaurant recommendations.
Insight – Offers more information on history and culture than usual, nice visuals, good maps.
Lonely Planet – Practical guides geared towards a more adventurous traveler on a budget.
National Geographic – From the same company that publishes the magazine. Excellent photographs, good information on history, nature, and culture.
Rough Guides –For the independent traveler on a budget. Particularly known for their maps.

Maps:
Most hotels will provide maps free of charge at the reception desk or in your room. These maps are usually sufficient for our travelers, but if you plan on any independent exploration, you may wish to consider purchasing a map before your departure. This can be especially useful in a country that doesn't use the Roman alphabet as the hotel maps may only be printed in the local language.

Some recommended map series include: Rand McNally international maps (especially the StreetWise series), Insight's FlexiMaps, and Rough Guide's destination maps. We suggest that you visit your local bookstore or library to get a better sense of which type of map is best for your needs before making a purchase.

Suggested Movies
Here are few of our favorite movies that are about, or set in, or from the region you'll be traveling. Most are available at movie rental stores and websites—or even your public library. Sometimes films produced outside of the US may be hard to find, but they are usually available online. Lists are highly subjective – if your favorites are missing, start a chat with fellow travelers and you'll likely find even more treasured movies to share.

Germany

Goodbye Lenin!
In this 2003 comedy drama from director Wolfgang Becker, a young German boy named Alex pulls off an elaborate scheme to prevent his fragile mother from experiencing fatal shock after waking from a long coma. Alex strives to keep the fall of the German Democratic Republic a secret from his socialist mother for as long as possible. This sophisticated satire offers a glimpse into a turbulent time of European history while revealing the great lengths one will go to when it comes to matters of the family.

Das Boot
One of the most authentic war films ever made *Das Boot* is a raw and compelling portrayal of a German Atlantic U-boat crew and captain as they struggle to survive during World War II. This 1981 gem from director Wolfgang Petersen revolves around the U-boat crew as battles break out, the submarine's claustrophobic interior comes to life, and the soldiers' ideals and professionalism are put to the test.

The Lives of Others
A 2006 drama that marked the feature film debut of German filmmaker Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck. Set in East Berlin in 1984, an agent of the secret police conducts surveillance on a writer and his lover. As the story unfolds, he finds himself becoming increasingly absorbed by their lives. As intoxicating as it is chilling, this film quietly depicts the secret world of German espionage.

Austria

The Sound of Music
Rodgers and Hammerstein's *The Sound of Music* is one of the most popular movie musicals of all time. Based on the true story of the Trapp Family Singers, this 1965 classic tells the heartwarming story of a woman who leaves an Austrian convent to become a governess to the children of a naval officer widower. Filmed in the picturesque rolling hills of Salzburg, Austria, this melodic masterpiece has it all—spectacular scenery, old-fashioned family values, romance, comedy, and adventure.

Czech Republic

Divided We Fall
In this 2000 comedy drama from director Jan Hrebejk, a couple from Nazi-occupied Czechoslovakia agrees to hide a Jewish teenager in their home. During this time, Josef and Marie Cizek's marriage begins to show signs of strain as a result of the political tension and Marie's inability to become pregnant. The situation worsens when an acquaintance of theirs becomes a Nazi collaborator and asks them to house a Nazi clerk. *Divided We Fall* is a reminder of the kinds of choices made by millions of people during times of devastation.
Closely Watched Trains
Another entry is the 1966 film *Closely Watched Trains*, about a boy working at a train station in German-occupied Czechoslovakia during World War II. Oblivious to the war around him, the young boy embarks on a journey of sexual awakening and self-discovery—revealing just how the film's subtle comedic flair complements its dramatic underpinnings. Perhaps the pinnacle of all Czech New Wave films, this film offers great insights into the country's unique cultural identity.

Slovakia

The Shop on Main Street
The 1965 Oscar winner for Best Foreign Film, The Shop on Main Street, reveals a wealth of cinematic offerings centered on Slovakia during World War II. The film revolves around a Slovakian carpenter, Tono, who takes a job working in an elderly Jewish woman's rundown button shop. Tono and the old woman form a friendship, and Tono finds himself in a gut-wrenching situation when the order goes out for all Jews to leave the city. Will the shopkeeper elude capture and be freed from all danger and fear—or will Tono panic and prepare to turn her over to the Nazis?

Grand Circle Community & Useful Websites

If you have access to the Internet, the following sites offer good travel information:

Visit the Grand Circle Community website for a world of travel news and information:
www.gct.com/community

Government websites:
International health information: CDC (Centers for Disease Control)
www.cdc.gov/travel
U.S. Customs & Border Protection: traveler information
www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel
Transportation Security Administration (TSA): agency responsible for screening luggage in U.S.
www.tsa.gov/public
National Passport Information Center (NPIC): for passport information
www.travel.state.gov

General travel information websites:
Travel books
www.amazon.com
www.barnesandnoble.com
World weather
www.intellicast.com
www.weather.com
Foreign languages for travelers: basic terms in more than 80 languages
www.travlang.com/languages
Travel tips: packing light, choosing luggage, etc.
www.travelite.org
Net café guide: 100s of locations around the globe
www.cybercafes.com
Electric current and plug types
www.kropla.com/electric2.htm
Foreign exchange rates
www.oanda.com/converter/classic
ATM locators
www.mastercard.com/atm for **Cirrus ATMs**
www.visa.com/pd/atm **for PLUS ATMs**

Country information:
www.czechtourism.com **Czech Republic**
www.hungarytourism.hu **Hungary**
www.sacr.sk **Slovakia**
www.welcome-vienna.com **Vienna**
visiteurope.com/ **Links to countries**
www.danube-river.org **Danube River**
www.berlin.de **Berlin**
www.dresden.de/dmg/en/index.php **Dresden**
www.inyourpocket.com/free-instant-city-guides.html
http://www.poland.travel/en-us

Tourist Board Addresses

For further information, contact:

Austrian Tourist Information Office
P.O. Box 1142
New York, NY 10108-1142
Telephone: 1-212-944-6880

Czech Tourism
1109 Madison Avenue
New York, NY 10028
Telephone: 1-212-288-0830

Hungarian National Tourist Office
350 Fifth Avenue
Floor 71
New York, NY 10118
Telephone: 1-212-355-0240

Slovak Tourist Board
Namestie L.Stura 1
P.O. Box 35
974 05 Banska Bystrica
Slovak Republic
Telephone: 011-421-48-413-61-46
Fax: 011-421-48-413-61-49

German National Tourist Office
122 East 42nd Street, Suite 2000
New York, NY 10168-0072
Tel: (212) 661-7200
Fax: (212) 661-7174

Embassy of the Republic of Poland
2640 16th Street NW
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