

EASTERN EUROPE: History, Castles & Music

(Note: This is only a sample tour)

Day 1: Depart today for Frankfurt.

Day 2: Today you will arrive in **Frankfurt**. Meet assistant to your coach for your transfer to **Marburg**.

Day 3: Enjoy half day city sightseeing tour. Marburg is picture park gorgeous and is one of the best preserved medieval cities in Germany and survived WWII with little damage. While everyone else was pulling down old medieval structures, Marburg was intent on preserving its medieval quarters. One of its architectural gems is Germany's oldest Gothic church the Elisabethkirche. Visit the church. The Grimm brothers spun their fairy tales in and about the hills of Marburg. **Rapunzel's Tower** stands in Marburg. The city is also the seat of the oldest Protestant University in the world, the University of Marburg founded in 1527. It is one of five classical university villages in Germany. Today also visit Marburg Castle.



Day 4: **Eisenach** is best known as the site of **Wartburg Castle most famous for sheltering Martin Luther** in the 16th Century while he translated the New Testament into German. The castle is reached by a vigorous climb up a 180m hill. It is one of the best preserved castles in Germany and is a UNESCO heritage site. Today visit the castle. The town is also famous as birthplace of Johann Sebastian Bach as well as Luther House where Martin Luther lived as a schoolboy from 1498-1501. The half-timbered house preserves the 2 rooms used by Luther. Today also visit Bachhaus. Today's activities also include a visit to **Creuzburg** one of the oldest cities in Thuringia.

Day 5: Depart for Coburg and your half day guided city tour. One of Germany's largest and most beautiful castles, the mighty **Veste Coburg** begun in 1225 dominates the town from its hilltop. In the old town at the base of the castle sits the Ehrenburg Palace a former Franciscan Monastery built in 1220. See both today. Continue to **Schmalkalden** and its half-timbered houses dating back to 874.



Day 6: Today your visits include **Weimar, Buchenwald Concentration Camp and Erfurt**. Weimar is one of the great cultural sites of Europe, having been home to such luminaries as Bach, Goethe, Schiller, and Herder. Buchenwald Concentration Camp, together with its many satellite camps, was one of the largest concentration camps established by the Nazis. Most of the early inmates at Buchenwald were political prisoners. However, in 1938, in the aftermath of Kristallnacht, German SS and police sent almost 10,000 Jews to Buchenwald. Today visit Buchenwald with your audio guides. Erfurt has a perfectly preserved medieval city center. Today spend some time in this bustling town of 200,000.

Day 7: Depart for **Leipzig**, well known for its music, and its Trade Fairs which began in the middle ages. Highlights in Leipzig include Old City Hall and New City Hall, the Passages, Bach Museum and Thomaskirche, where **Johann Sebastian Bach** worked as a cantor, Old St Nicholas Church, the Stasi Museum and Schiller House. Today you can enjoy the city on your own visiting sites of your choice. **Tonight enjoy a concert**. Music is in the air everywhere in Leipzig.



Day 8: Depart today for **Prague, Czech Republic** with a stop enroute in **Dresden**. Dresden was virtually levelled during WWII and the reminders of the destruction was ever present until reunification. Since then the city has been rebuilt to its original splendor. Stop in Dresden for a few hours to explore the exquisite city center on your own. Later continue to Prague.

Day 9: Guided walking tour of Old Town Prague and the Jewish Town. Beginning in 1338 Old Town Hall served as the center of administration for Old town. The impressive 200 foot Town Hall Tower where the Astronomical Clock is mounted was first built in the 14th century. The beautiful St Nicholas Church was completed in 1735 and is both a church and a magnificent venue for classical concerts.

The Josefov neighbourhood was once the largest Jewish Ghetto in Europe. Today it is home to thought provoking museums, synagogues and cemeteries. Visit the Old Jewish Cemetery six synagogues, and the Old Jewish Town Hall which is now all part of the Jewish Museum. Despite Hitler's master plan to wipe out all traces of Jews during the Holocaust, the area was preserved as Hitler had planned to create a chilling museum here - an "exotic museum of an extinct race". Tonight cross Charles Bridge for a spellbinding evening city view and Prague Castle at night

Day 10: Meet your guide to discover the other side of the city. Visit **Prague Castle** and Lesser Town. Tour the Old Royal Palace, St Georges Basilica and St Vitrus Cathedral. Visit Golden Lane, an ancient street that dates back from the 15th century with 11 beautiful old wooden houses. Today they display medieval armory and textiles. Descend into picturesque Lesser Town. The Lesser town started life in the 8th century as a market settlement. In 1257, it was granted town status and was home to the merchants and craftsmen who served the Royal Court. Descend down the Royal Way or Nerudova Street to the Charles Bridge. The bridge is decorated with Baroque statues but to preserve the value of the 75 statues most of the originals were removed and replaced with copies. Retrace the steps of Prague's "Velvet Revolution", the non-violent transition of power in what was then Czechoslovakia to the end of 41 years of Communist rule, to Wenceslas Square. This is the heart of New Town. Tonight enjoy a concert.

Day 11: Depart for **Cesky Krumlov**. Enroute stop in **Kutna Hora**. In 1995 it was named a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Today visit the Church of St Barbara and the Sedlec Ossuary (**Bone Church**), a small Roman Catholic chapel that contains the skeletons of between 40,000 – 70,000 people whose bones have been artistically arranged to form decorations and furnishings for the chapel. Continue to Cesky Krumlov. The town has retained its entire medieval layout and most of its historic buildings relatively undisturbed.

Day 12: Meet your guide for a guided walking tour of the town, the elegant buildings and courtyards of the Castle and the Baroque Theatre inside the castle. Cesky Krumlov State Castle is among the most important historic sites in the central European region. It towers over the gorgeous town below and contains elements from the Gothic, High Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque styles. Continue to Salzburg.

Day 13: Meet guide for walking tour of historic **Salzburg**. Commence at Mozartplatz with the statue of **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart** unveiled in 1842. Walk towards The Residenzplatz. See the famous Glockenspiel. The 35 bells play classical tunes usually by Hayden or Mozart at 7am, 11am and 6pm. Stop at Cathedral Square or Domplatz. courtyard. Walk towards Franziskanergasse until it becomes Hofstallgasse and finally intersects with Getreidegasse the main shopping street in the Old City.

Day 14: Ride the funicular to **Hohensalzburg**, the largest preserved medieval fortress in central Europe. The exterior may look rather grim but inside it there are lavish state rooms, a collection of medieval art the Burgmuseum and the Rainers Museum with its arms and armor. Visit the Castle courtyard which was the main square of the castle residents. Head back down from the fortress to the Old City. Enjoy an evening concert.

Day 15: Transfer to **Munich**. See some of Munich's most important historical sites including Residenz, the former residence of Bavarian kings dates back to the 14th century, the onion domed Frauenkirche, originally a small church built in the 13th century, Marienplatz square, and the Stadtmuseum to name but a few.

Day 16: Flight home.

TOUR INCLUSIONS

- Return airfare to Frankfurt return Munich
- Coach and driver throughout tour
- Assistance upon arrival in Frankfurt
- 14 nights hotel acc with private facilities
- 14 Breakfasts
- 7 dinners
- Guided orientation tours
 - o Marburg
 - o Coburg
 - o 2 in Prague
 - o Chesky Krumlov
 - o Salzburg

• Entrances/visits:

- o Hohensalzburg in Salzburg + Funicular Ride
- o Elisabethkirche in Marburg
- o Marburg Castel
- o Wartburg Castle
- o Buchenwald Concentration Camp + audio guide
- o Bachhaus
- o Josefov in Prague
- o Prague Castle
- o Church of St Barbara in Kutna Hora
- o Sedlec Ossuary in Kutna Hora
- o Castle Cesky Krumlov and Baroque Theatre
- o 3 Concerts - Leipzig, Prague & Salzburg