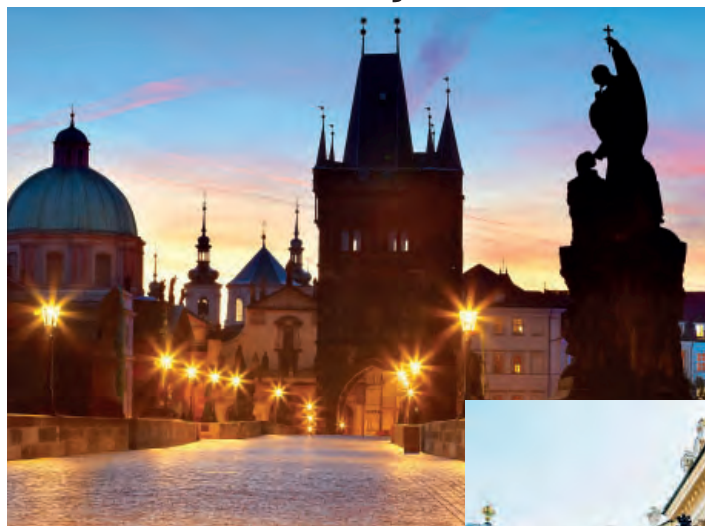


Rail holidays to Eastern Europe

Expressions



Vienna, Styrian Alps, Slovenia and Venice: a rail tour of southern Alps, lakes and waterways



Vienna, Styrian Alps, Slovenia and Venice: a rail tour of southern Alps, lakes and waterways

12 NIGHTS / 13 DAYS

Vienna

Graz

Ljubljana

Lake Bled

Venice



Lake Bled

This luxury rail touring holiday offers you Vienna and Venice, two magnificent cities at the start and end of this progression through the southern Alps of Styria, into the lakes and mountains landscape of Slovenia and picturesque Lake Bled, also visiting the charming cities of Graz and Ljubljana.

This rail holiday starts with your arrival in Vienna, either by train or by air. Vienna, on the banks of the River Danube and at the heart of central European history since the Roman times. Vienna never fails to impress and satisfy the visitor eager for historical and cultural references. 'Dream and reality' still resonate and your days in Vienna can be filled with a mixture of galleries, museums, opera, concerts or eating and drinking in a 'Heuriger' in the Vienna Woods. The history of Vienna can be witnessed in the Roman Museum, the Neidhart frescoes dating from the 1400s, the mediaeval Basilikenhaus, the Imperial Palace and the numerous Jugendstil buildings, and of course in the City of Vienna museum. Upon leaving Vienna, your train speeds south passing spa towns towards the jagged peaks of the Styrian Alps, travelling along the scenic Semmering route, which was the first mountain railway in Europe to be built with a standard gauge track, and the attractive Styrian capital, Graz. The history of Graz is very much bound to that of central Europe, the rule of the Habsburgs and the cultural identity of its both German and Slovene populations. Its charming old town is a harmonious blend of building of different epochs and styles and reflect the borderland that Graz occupies between things Germanic, Italian and Balkan.

Into picturesque Slovenia, a small, westerly Slav nation bordered by Austria, Croatia and Italy and known for its beautiful scenery of mountains, forests and lakes. Its capital Ljubljana has an elegant feel with its Baroque houses, painted in shades of pink, rose, yellow and cream lining the Ljubljanica River, crossed by characterful bridges with echoes of Venice. Squares, green spaces, tree-lined streets and outdoor restaurants give Ljubljana an air of gaiety and relaxation. From the capital, it's a short but scenic train journey to picturesque Lake Bled where you spend two nights before travelling to Venice, la Serenissima. Return home by overnight sleeper train or by air.

PRICES

From £2,280 per person

Based on double occupancy in 4 star hotels, with flights to and from, and rail travel from city to city in 2nd class.

1st class rail travel, additional five star hotels and rail travel from London back to London can be added for a supplement.

DATES

This rail holiday can be arranged throughout the year. Timings can vary depending on the month and day of the week.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Scheduled flights from the UK to Vienna and Venice to the UK OR rail travel from London to Vienna and back from Venice (first class can be booked as a supplement). Double deluxe sleeper compartment on sleeper trains (if travelling by rail from the UK).
- First or second-class travel on all trains
- Accommodation in a double or twin room based on two people sharing with
- 2 nights' bed and breakfast in Vienna
- 1 night's bed and breakfast in Graz
- 2 nights' bed and breakfast in Ljubljana
- 2 nights' bed and breakfast Lake Bled
- 3 nights' bed and breakfast in Venice
- Transfers in Venice by private boat

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- Transfers in any cities (except Venice). We recommend taking a taxi to your hotel for speed and cost.

DAY-BY-DAY ITINERARY

Vienna – Graz – Ljubljana – Lake Bled - Venice

Expressions

DAY ONE: Travel from London to Cologne

Your holiday begins by departing from London after lunch on a Eurostar service to Brussels. Change trains here and continue to Cologne where you will arrive 2 hours later. Once in Cologne, time for something to eat near the Dom, before you continue your journey to Vienna on an overnight sleeper train. .

DAY TWO: Arrival in Vienna

You arrive in Vienna in the early morning and will spend two nights here. Drop your bags off at your hotel and begin exploring the city.

DAY THREE: Vienna

Vienna, on the banks of the River Danube, has been at the heart of central European history since the Roman times. Vienna never fails to impress and satisfy the visitor eager for historical and cultural references. 'Dream and reality' still resonate and your days in Vienna can be filled with a mixture of galleries, museums, opera, concerts or eating and drinking in a 'Heuriger' in the Vienna Woods. The history of Vienna can be witnessed in the Roman Museum, the Neidhart frescoes dating from the 1400s, the mediaeval Basilikenhaus, the Imperial Palace and the numerous Jugendstil buildings, and of course in the City of Vienna museum. The Hofburg contains numerous national collections from the Crown Jewels to the Imperial armoury. Take time to listen to the Mozart Orchestra playing in the Musikverein, and to enjoy coffee and cake at Demel's. A fun way to see the sights of the city is to take a tram around the Ringstrasse, hopping off and on as you want.

DAY FOUR: Vienna to Graz

Depart your hotel mid-morning and board a direct train to Graz. This will take approximately 2 hours 30 minutes and you can enjoy the scenery along the way. Upon leaving Vienna, your train speeds south passing spa towns towards the jagged peaks of the Styrian Alps, along the famous Semmering route, a UNESCO world heritage site and conceived as a feat of 'landscape gardening', attempting a harmonious blend of nature and technology, and the attractive Styrian capital, Graz. The history of Graz is very much bound to that of central Europe, the rule of the Habsburgs and the cultural identity of its both German and Slovene populations. Its charming old town is a harmonious blend of building of different epochs and styles and reflect the borderland that Graz occupies between things Germanic, Italian and Balkan. Highlights of the city are the 473m-high Schlossberg that overlooks the city (and reached by a funicular), the 300-year-old clock tower and the 16th century bell tower. Other notable sites to visit are the Town Hall, the Cathedral, the Gemaltes Haus, the Armoury



Hofburg, Vienna

and the Kunsthaus, built in 2003, an example of 'blob architecture' and known as the 'friendly alien'.

DAY FIVE: Graz to Ljubljana by rail

Check out of your hotel after breakfast and board a direct service from Graz to Slovenia's capital, Ljubljana. The landscape is pleasant with its rolling fields and forested hills and particularly scenic between Grobelno and Ljubljana when the route follows the Sava river, a tributary of the Danube. This journey will take approximately 3 and a half hours. Check-in to

your hotel in Ljubljana for two nights.

DAY SIX: Ljubljana

You have a full day to explore Ljubljana. Ljubljana, the Slovenian capital, has as its symbol the Ljubljana dragon, and is visible in the city's coat of arms, the bridge over the river Ljubljanica and on the top of the castle tower. Castle Hill is a good place to start your tour and it can be reached by funicular or a 20-minute uphill hike. Once at the top, visit Ljubljana Castle and enjoy the views over the city from the castle watchtower. Afterwards,



Graz

DAY-BY-DAY ITINERARY CONTINUED

Expressions

Vienna – Graz – Ljubljana – Lake Bled - Venice

come back down and explore the area around the main square in the city, Preseren Square and the Central Market area. Discover the Old Town or take a stroll along the River Ljubljanica crossing notable bridges such as Dragon Bridge, Butchers' Bridge, the Triple Bridge, the Fish Footbridge and the Cobbler's Bridge. Many of the buildings are Baroque in the Italian style. There are also lots of museums of interest, which include the City Museum focusing on Ljubljana's history, culture and politics as well as the National Museum of Slovenia and the Museum of Modern Art. The botanical garden covers almost six acres and is the oldest cultural, scientific and educational organisation in the country.

DAY SEVEN: Ljubljana to Lake Bled

Today you travel to Lake Bled by train which takes just under one hour to cover the 55 kms. Your hotel is located about a 15-minute taxi journey from the rail station. Spend two nights on Lake Bled.

DAY EIGHT: Lake Bled

Lake Bled is a popular Slovenian resort thanks to its emerald-green water, picture-postcard church and mediaeval castle. The tiny Bled island, tear-shaped towards the western side of the lake, adds a fairy-tale quality to the already picturesque surroundings. Lake Bled is fairly small in size measuring 2km by 1380m. Enjoy a walk along the shore taking in the breath-taking scenery as you go, hire a boat or swim in the lake, whose waters are warmed by thermal springs. There are bathing areas on the northern and western shores. Sights to visit include Bled Castle, which is perched 100m above the lake on a steep cliff. The castle dates back to the 11th century and houses a museum collection which details the lake's history. Travel by gondola to the tiny Bled island which boasts the lovely Church of the Assumption with a gold baroque altar and fragments of 15th Century frescos, and a small museum. Around 4kms from Bled is the Vintgar Gorge with a 1,600m wooden walkway that crosses over rapids and waterfalls before reaching the 13m high Sum Waterfall. Whilst on Lake Bled, be sure to sample the famous vanilla cream pastry, a speciality of the region.

DAY NINE: Lake Bled to Venice

An early morning train will take you from Lake Bled to Venice with an easy change of trains in Villach (Austria). You will arrive in just under 6 hours. On arrival to Venice, we include a private water transfer from the train station to your hotel.

DAYS TEN AND ELEVEN: Venice

Spend three nights exploring Venice, the "floating city". Take the time to discover the alleyways, canals and piazzas as well as the lively wine bars and restaurants on offer.



Ljubljana

Cultural highlights include St Mark's Square where you can ascend the Campanile by lift for a panorama over Venice and the Lido. Also to be visited is the Doge's Palace, reflecting powerful and affluent periods of the Venetian democracy as well as the Basilica di San Marco. Take a gondola ride along the Grand Canal and walk across the Bridge of Sighs. Perhaps catch one of the local water taxis to explore the islands of the lagoon. Burano, island of lace-making and fishermen, is impressively picturesque whilst on Murano master craftsmen offer demonstrations of glass-making before you enter their shops. A visit to both these islands is thoroughly recommended to provide an alternative view of Venice. The Accademia, the Museo Correr and the Guggenheim all provide a wealth of art for viewing. The Renaissance and Baroque churches that have somehow been squeezed into all corners of this city are architectural masterpieces and include the Church of the

Redentore, the Church of Santa Maria della Salute and San Giorgio Maggiore. Take time to savour Venetian delicacies such as clams, sardines and cuttlefish and enjoy a coffee at Florian's in St Mark's Square.

DAY TWELVE: Travel to Paris by sleeper train

You have most of this day to continue your exploration of Venice before being taken by private water taxi back to Santa Lucia station. Here, you catch the overnight sleeper train to Paris, leaving at around 8.00pm. The sleeper train offers a simple but time effective means of covering a large distance. We include a private twin cabin for your comfort.

DAY THIRTEEN: Paris to London

You arrive into Paris Gare de Nord just after 09:30. With a change of stations in Paris, catch a lunchtime Eurostar back to London.



Venice

HOTELS

In Vienna, Graz, Ljubljana, Lake Bled and Venice you can choose between a range of different luxury hotels, details of which can be found below.

Expressions

VIENNA

Hotel Bristol 5-star

Hotel Bristol occupies a fantastic location opposite the State Opera House. Guests can enjoy traditional Austrian grandeur in features such as velvet furnishings and intricate chandeliers and experience the highest standard of luxury in every guest room.

Hotel Kaiserhof 4-star

Hotel Kaiserhof Vienna is situated a few steps away from Naschmarkt and the State Opera House. The hotel is family-owned and enjoys 74 comfortable rooms and suites.

GRAZ

Palais Hotel Erzherzog Johann 4-star

The Palais-Hotel Erzherzog Johann is in a central location within easy reach of the sights such as Schlossberg mountain and old quarter. The hotel is a converted 18th century palace with a traditional feel on the inside.

LJUBLJANA

Antiq Palace Hotel and Spa 4-star

Antiq Palace Hotel and Spa is situated on a quiet side street in the old town of Ljubljana. The 16th century building is home to 18 rooms and suites. Rooms have chandeliers, parquet flooring and remnants of original frescoes from 16th century.

LAKE BLEED

Vila Bled 4-star

Vila Bled is in a superb setting perched above the lake offering fantastic views. The hotel is reminiscent of the 1950s and enjoys period furniture and grand hallways. The hotel offers a private boathouse where you can rent a complimentary rowing boat, tennis court and small spa.

VENICE

Ca'Sagredo Hotel 5-star

Ca'Sagredo Hotel is situated on the banks of the Grand Canal, close to the Rialto market. This elegant hotel enjoys a restaurant with panoramic terrace, cosy bar and just 42 rooms and suites.



Vila Bled, Lake Bled

Hotel Bisanzio 4-star

Hotel Bisanzio is well-located around 300 metres from St Mark's Square. This 16th century palazzo offers comfortable rooms with parquet flooring and Murano glass lamps.



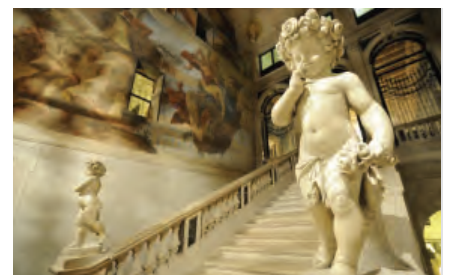
Cas' Sagredo, Venice



Hotel Bristol, Vienna



Antiq Palace Hotel and Spa, Ljubljana



Inside the Ca'Sagredo, Venice

GENERAL INFORMATION

This rail holiday is one of several suggested rail holidays we can offer you exactly as it is but also with any alterations you might want including extra nights in one or more places or adding in extra places. All our tours can be extended so that you can include a longer stay in one mountain or lake resort too, perhaps at the end of the itinerary. Do call to discuss the options with our travel consultants.



OUR TOURS

Our rail tours are for individuals travelling on their own or in their own family group. You do not join a group and you are not escorted.

TRAIN TIMES

We have planned our itineraries based on train times that work day by day at the time of planning which can be up to a year before you travel. Usually train times stay more or less the same every day, season by season. The times we have planned will be discussed with you at the time you enquire about the holiday and they are detailed to you in your written holiday quotation. It may be that the timetable changes between the planning of the itinerary and when you come to book but we can always adjust the itinerary to suit the actual train times and any requirements you have for particular times of travel.

FIRST OR SECOND CLASS

We will automatically include travel in second class but lots of our clients do upgrade to first class service. On Eurostar this is called Premier Standard for leisure travellers as it gives you an upgraded on-board service and more spacious seating but without paying for the fully-flexible business tickets.

RAIL SERVICES TO EASTERN EUROPE

A rail holiday to Eastern Europe starts with the **Eurostar** from London St. Pancras, Ebbsfleet or Ashford stations probably to Brussels if you are heading for Germany or Paris if you are taking a route through Switzerland. Eurostar offers almost hourly departures every day, allowing you to travel, non-stop, from the centre of London to the centre of Brussels in just under 2 hours and Paris in just over 2 hours. Some trains stop at the Ebbsfleet and Ashford stations in Kent, and parking is plentiful at both stations and it allows you to avoid London. Check-in is 30 to 45 minutes prior to departure, customs formalities are completed before boarding and there is no limit to the amount of baggage that can be taken on board. The Eurostar trains have 8 coaches which are split into Standard Class, Standard Premier and Business Premier as well as 2 cafeterias. Standard Premier customers are served a light cold meal and enjoy a more spacious environment than Standard Class, while Business Premier

customers receive a hot meal and unlimited beverages as well as lounge access.

You may wish to stay for a night or two in Paris or Brussels – we can arrange overnight accommodation for you in characterful, good quality, central hotels on request.

Nightjet trains are owned by the OBB Austrian Railways and operate overnight sleeper services from various European cities to Austria and on to Budapest. There is a choice of single, double and triple compartments, offering a standard (small wash basin) and a deluxe (with own shower and WC, wash basin, shower gel and towels). The compartment can be locked by the passenger, and an intercom system allows direct contact with the train team. There is a food service on board that provides hot and cold food and beverages. The Nightjet runs to Vienna (and on to Budapest) from Berlin, Cologne, Hamburg, Munich, Venice, Rome, Florence, Verona, Milan and Zurich.

Railjet trains are owned and operated by the OBB Austrian Railways and connect numerous European cities with all of Austria, with a top speed of 230 kms per hour. Two Railjets run between Vienna and Salzburg every hour. Every two hours there is a Railjet from Prague to Graz via Vienna. Twice a day Railjet travels from Vienna to Venice. Railjet also offers a service from Zurich via Innsbruck, Salzburg and Linz to Vienna in about 8 hours. From December 2018 Bratislava is also included in the network. These trains are modern, efficient, comfortable, with first and second class, and have an excellent restaurant on board.

ICE are German high-speed trains covering long distance journeys, for example from Berlin to Munich (a journey time of just under 4 hours). ICE offers comfortable seating with good legroom, free wifi, quiet zones, socket at your seat and on-board catering with meals, drinks and snacks. Other long distance trains might be the IC (Intercity) and the EC (EuroCity) connecting German cities to ones in neighbouring countries. **The EuroCity** might be operated by more than one nationality of the route, so a journey from Berlin to Prague might be operated by a Czech EuroCity although a service continuing to Budapest might be operated by the Hungarian EuroCity.

Venice Simplon-Orient-Express travels into Eastern Europe as follows:

15 May 2019 Venice to Prague to London
1 May 2019 Venice to Budapest, Vienna, Paris and to London
6 June 2019 London to Paris and Berlin
8 June 2019 Berlin to Paris and London
23 August 2019 Paris to Budapest, Bucharest and Istanbul
30 August 2019 Istanbul to Bucharest, Budapest and Paris
Contact us for prices combined with additional travel and hotel requirements.

TRANSFERS

Transfers between stations and city hotels are not automatically included in our prices as Transfers in Paris between stations and from the station to each hotel are not automatically included in the price of the holiday. In Paris most clients choose to take a taxi between the stations rather than go on the Metro but we can arrange a private car with driver to take you in between.

OUR PRICES

The sample prices mentioned in this leaflet are generally a 'from' price based on the cheapest season of travel. However, train fares and hotel rates can change (up and down depending on offers), so we give you an accurate price for your holiday when we provide you with a quotation. Our sample prices should be used as an indication of how much a particular combination will cost and to show the differences on average between the hotel categories on offer.

PRICE INFORMATION IN MORE DETAIL

Out by rail, return by rail

Rail from London and throughout back to London

Standard class on Eurostar, double deluxe cabin on sleeper train from Cologne to Vienna and from Venice to Paris, and second class on all other trains

Stay at 4-star hotels (Hotel Kaiserhof Vienna, Palais-Hotel Erzherzog Johann Graz, Antiq Palace Hotel and Spa Ljubljana, Villa Bled, Lake Bled and Hotel Bisanzio Venice)

Prices from £2,600 per person

Supplement: Standard premier on Eurostar, double cabin on sleeper trains and first class on all other trains £270 per person.

Please note Ljubljana to Lesce-Bled is only offers a standard class carriage.

Out and back by air, rail in between

Scheduled flight to Vienna and returning from Venice and second-class rail travel between places

Stay at 4-star hotels (Hotel Kaiserhof Vienna, Palais-Hotel Erzherzog Johann Graz, Antiq Palace Hotel and Spa Ljubljana, Villa Bled, Lake Bled and Hotel Bisanzio Venice)

Prices from £2,280 per person

Supplement: First class rail £90 per person.

Please note: The train from Ljubljana to Lesce-Bled only offers a standard class carriage.

Hotel supplements

Stay at the 5* Hotel Bristol Vienna rather than the 4* Hotel Kaiserhof.

Supplement: £90 per person for 2 nights

Stay at the 5* Ca'Sagredo Hotel Venice rather than 4* Hotel Bisanzio.

Supplement: £230 per person for 3 nights

BOOKING CONDITIONS

Our booking conditions apply to all holidays. A copy can be found on our website and a copy is also sent to you with a written quotation and when you make a booking.

FINANCIAL PROTECTION

Expressions Holidays offers full financial protection for all holidays you book with us. If your holiday includes a flight, the ATOL (3076) covers the costs of the holiday. If the holiday does not include a flight, it is the ABTOT bond that protects the cost of the holiday. We are also members of AITO (the Association of Independent Tour Operators) and ABTA.



Expressions Holidays

Lynx House, Pynes Hill, Exeter EX2 5JL

HOW TO BOOK

To make a booking, just phone us on

01392 441217

and we can take you through the details we need and start the booking process. A deposit is required to confirm the arrangements and this can be paid by debit or credit card over the phone. The level of the deposit will be confirmed at the point of booking and will depend on the ticketing deadlines of the rail tickets involved in your booking.