



Eastern Europe for Solo Travelers: Budapest to Prague

10 days | 13 days with Poland extension

The baroque and the brutalist. The medieval and the modern. Eastern Europe's contrasts complement one another, making it a destination unlike any other. With your fellow solo travelers by your side and a Tour Director leading the way, you'll experience the region like a local. Top-tier cities like Budapest and Prague await you, as do under-the-radar gems like Bratislava. Wrocław, Kraków, and the solemn remains of Auschwitz are just some of the powerful places you'll visit on the extension to Poland. And the only decision you'll have to make on tour will be determining which stop was your favorite.



Your tour package includes

- 8 nights in a private room at handpicked hotels
- 8 breakfasts
- 3 dinners with beer or wine
- 2 food tastings
- 3 sightseeing tours
- Expert Tour Director & local guides
- Private deluxe motor coach

Included highlights

- Hungarian State Opera House
- Budapest's Matthias Church
- Primate's Palace in Bratislava
- Prague Castle
- Charles Bridge walk
- Vltava river cruise

Tour pace

On this guided tour, you'll walk for at least 2.5 hours daily across mostly flat terrain, including paved roads and cobblestone streets, with few hills or stairs.

Group size

15-28

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Overnight Flight → 1 night

Day 1: Travel day

Board your overnight flight to Budapest.

Budapest → 3 nights

Day 2: Arrival in Budapest

Included meals: welcome dinner

Welcome to Hungary! Touch down and transfer to your hotel. Then, meet your Tour Director and fellow travelers at a mixer before sitting down for a welcome dinner, served with beer or wine.

Day 3: Sightseeing tour of Budapest

Included meals: breakfast

Divided by the River Danube, the once-separate towns of Buda and Pest merged in 1873 to form one of Eastern Europe's most exciting and lively capitals. Today, you'll have a chance to explore the city of Budapest, diving into its beautiful architecture, distinct culture, and intriguing history alongside a local guide.

- Trace this nation's stormy past at Heroes' Square, a sprawling plaza adorned with statues of national leaders and the legendary seven chieftains of the Magyars.
- Tour the lavish interior of the Hungarian State Opera House. If you're wondering how to best define "opulence," you'll find it in the auditorium: Rich golds and crimsons carry the eye to statues symbolizing operatic voices and the virtues, all watched over by delicately painted murals.
- Cross the Danube and ascend Castle Hill. Topped by the UNESCO-listed Buda Castle, this outcrop was the historic home of the Hungarian Kings for more than 800 years until the title was dissolved after World War I.
- Bask in breathtaking views of the city from the neo-Romanesque Fisherman's Bastion, so named for the band of fisherfolk who guarded this part of an old castle's walls.
- Visit the medieval Matthias Church, once the site of Hungarian and Habsburg coronations. You'll know you've arrived once you see it: Its colorful, scale-like roof and gothic facade are things of beauty.

If you want to spend a few hours delving into

Budapest's history under fascist and communist regimes, tack today's excursion onto your itinerary. Alternatively, use your free day to soak away your stresses in one of the city's popular thermal baths.

+ Budapest: A Walk Behind the Iron Curtain

Day 4: Free day in Budapest

Included meals: breakfast

Hungarian wine country, and all its curiously complex varietals, lies beyond Budapest. Use your free day to roam the restful northern shores of Lake Balaton—one of the nation's principal growing regions—with your group on an optional excursion, or stay in town and visit the Hungarian Parliament Building on your own. With its symmetrical structure, several spires, and finely detailed facade, the Országház—as it's called in the Magyar language—is the country's most famous landmark. (It's also Hungary's biggest building!)

+ Lake Balaton Wine Tasting & Lunch

Bratislava → 2 nights

Day 5: Transfer to Bratislava & sightseeing tour

Included meals: breakfast, tasting

Today, you'll head northwest, leaving Hungary and tracing the Danube all the way to Bratislava, Slovakia. Fringed by vineyards and filled with buildings from different eras, this compact capital makes for great exploration. Leave your bus, meet your local guide, and hit the streets for an in-depth walking tour.

- Begin in the Old Town, the medieval core of the city. Stroll between pastel-colored homes and past Bratislava's eponymous castle. Distinguished by its rectangular walls and four corner towers, it has loomed over the Danube from its rocky perch since the ninth century.
- Enter the neoclassical Primate's Palace, a stately structure with pale pink walls that serves as the mayor's seat. Pass through the four columns framing its entrance and make

your way to the historic Hall of Mirrors. Over the centuries, the room has witnessed the signing of peace treaties and the meeting of parliaments; today, the Bratislava City Council convenes there.

- End your afternoon at a local cafe, tasting traditional Slovak pastries. (Don't miss the kolache, sweet dough rolled with spiced walnuts and baked to perfection.)

For an out-of-this-world dinner, beam up to Bratislava's famous UFO with your groupmates during this evening's excursion. Alternatively, make your own plans—and maybe try to squeeze in a show at the Slovak Philharmonic. The state orchestra plays at a baroque, 18th-century concert hall, in surroundings as elegant as the strains its musicians send floating through the air.

+ Bratislava UFO Tower Dinner

Day 6: Free day in Bratislava

Included meals: breakfast

Catching the cozy smells of Vienna's coffeehouses on the wind? Follow your nose further up the Danube on today's excursion to spend some time in Austria's famous capital. Or, stay behind for a restful day in Bratislava. You can explore at your leisure—but if you have the chance, pay a visit to St. Martin's Cathedral. Formerly part of the city's fortifications, this understated Gothic church hosted Hungarian coronation ceremonies for more than 260 years.

+ A Day in Vienna

Prague → 3 nights

Day 7: Transfer to Prague & evening cruise

Included meals: breakfast, dinner

Drive through the pastoral landscapes of the Czech Republic's Central Bohemian Region en route to Prague, one of Europe's most beautiful cities.

After settling into your hotel and freshening up, reconvene for an evening cruise along the Vltava. As the country's longest river, it traces a line from the Bohemian Forest up through Prague to the great River Elbe. Take to its serene waters aboard a cruise ship and marvel at the City of a

Hundred Spires from its decks. You'll sail past Prague's famous bridges, dining on authentic Czech dishes as you go. After having your fill of food and live music, dock once more and draw your day to a close.

Please note: The dinner cruise depends on the water levels of the Vltava. In the event of cancellation, it'll be replaced by an included dinner on land.

Day 8: Sightseeing tour of Prague

Included meals: breakfast, tasting

Today, develop a deeper understanding of Prague's history on a guided sightseeing tour, led by a local guide.

- Begin with a visit to Prague Castle. Considered the largest ancient castle on the planet, this 1,150-year-old structure utilizes Gothic, Romanesque, and other architectural styles over its grounds. It isn't just a relic, either: Once the seat of Bohemian kings, it currently serves as the presidential residence.
- Admire the vaults of St. Vitus Cathedral, the final resting place of Rudolf II, Charles IV, and other Holy Roman emperors.
- Walk down to the red shingles and baroque buildings of the Malá Strana district. Originally founded by royal decree in 1257, the "Little Quarter" stands opposite the Old Town, just across the Vltava. Pop into a local cafe for a cup of coffee before continuing down to the riverbank.
- Cross Karlův Most—the elegant Charles Bridge. Hewn from Bohemian sandstone and lined by statues of Catholic saints, it has connected Malá Strana to Prague's Old Town since the 15th century.
- Stroll through the Old Town Square to the Old Town Hall. There, on its southern wall, you'll find Prague Orloj—the city's famous astronomical clock. First hung in 1410, it's the oldest timepiece of its kind still in use, marking each passing hour with a mechanized "Walk of the Apostles."

Interested in lofty views and lovely brews? Join your Tour Director on the afternoon's optional excursion for a survey of Prague's baroque highlights and brewing heritage. For self-guided sights, head to the edge of the Malá Strana and scale Petřín Hill by foot or funicular. Your goal: the Lookout Tower. Its 299 steps provide a challenge, but unfettered views of Prague from 208 feet in the air provide ample payoff. + Baroque Prague & Beer Tasting

Day 9: Free day in Prague

Included meals: breakfast, farewell dinner

How would you like to spend your final full day on tour? To see more of the Czech countryside—as well as UNESCO-listed churches, chapels, and landmarks—pick up today's optional excursion to the town of Kutná Hora. If you'd rather stay in Prague, make a point of walking the Jozesof quarter. A living testament to the tribulations endured by Prague's Jewish community, this former ghetto contains a number of centuries-old synagogues and the oldest surviving Jewish cemetery in all of Europe.

Whatever you choose, you'll meet up with your group in the evening for one final meal. Toast your trip during a farewell dinner, served with beer or wine, before turning in for the night. + Kutná Hora

Flight Home

Day 10: Departure

Included meals: breakfast (excluding early morning departures)

Gear up for a big travel day: Either transfer to the airport for your flight home or hop on your bus to continue your journey in Poland.

+ Poland extension

Poland has enough medieval monuments and Gothic cathedrals to rival any European destination, but its recent history deserves attention, too. This enriching extension incorporates all of it, highlights and hidden gems alike. In just a few days, you'll venture from the halls of Książ Castle—the Neuschwanstein of Poland—to the charming squares of Wrocław, and from the dark confines of Auschwitz to the lively markets of Kraków.

Wrocław → 1 night

Day 10: Wrocław via Książ Castle

Included meals: breakfast, lunch

Bid Prague farewell and make your way to Poland. After an included lunch at a local restaurant, detour to regal Książ Castle. Incorporating Gothic, Baroque, and rococo elements, this cliff-top castle is known as the Pearl of Lower Silesia. After your audio-guided tour of its grounds, you'll understand why.

- Learn about the rise and fall of the noble families who once called Książ home as you explore some of its 400 rooms.

- After walking through its luxurious interior, join a guide and descend beneath the castle. There, you'll encounter the underground remnants of a Nazi construction project that used concentration camp inmates as forced laborers. Uncover this piece of subterranean history as you walk through its tunnels, learning about the castle's German occupation and its role in Project Riese.

From there, continue to the day's final stop. Pronounced "VROTS-wahf," the Silesian capital of Wrocław is considered one of the prettiest cities in all of Eastern Europe. Before turning in, set off on a short walk with your Tour Director and breathe in some of its charm.

- Begin in the heart of the city and amble through the medieval Market Square—one of the biggest in Europe. Surrounded by colorful houses, the Rynek (as it's known locally) also boasts the two largest city halls in the country.
- Pass by the Hansel and Gretel Houses, two tenements on the corner of the Market Square. Connected by a stone gate, they've stood "holding hands" since the 15th century, prompting locals to give them their fairytale name.
- Speaking of fairytales, keep an eye out for gnomes! Sculpted from bronze and scattered throughout the city, these little statues symbolize Poland's resistance against communist oppression. Rumor has it that more than 300 have popped up around Wrocław; try to find as many as you can before calling it a night.

Kraków → 2 nights

Day 11: Kraków via Auschwitz-Birkenau

Included meals: breakfast

En route to Kraków, pay a visit to one of the most chilling sites in Europe: Auschwitz-Birkenau. Before the arrival of the Soviet Red Army in 1945, Nazi soldiers at this concentration camp systematically murdered more than 1.1 million people, mainly individuals of Jewish descent. Rather than tearing it down, the Polish government preserved the camp, converting it into a poignant memorial to those who were killed in the Holocaust.

Upon arrival, you'll take a guided tour of the grounds, passing its barracks, fences, and gas chambers—all reminders of the tragedies that

unfolded there less than 100 years ago. Afterward, drive to neighboring Birkenau, part of the larger camp complex, to continue your tour and reflect on what you've seen before continuing to Kraków.

Day 12: Sightseeing tour of Kraków

Included meals: breakfast

Straddling the Vistula River at the base of the Carpathian Mountains, the former royal capital of Kraków still influences Polish life as a cultural hub. Get to know it with help from a local guide.

- Visit the city's WWII-era Jewish Ghetto and the neighboring site of Oskar Schindler's Enamel Factory, which employed Jewish workers who would've been sent to extermination camps during the Nazi occupation of 1939-45.
- Visit Wawel ("VA-vel") Cathedral, the final resting place of Casimir III the Great, a 14th-century king fondly remembered for his prolific building projects and astute diplomacy. This active Catholic church, built in the Gothic style, stands on its namesake hill—home to the Wawel Royal Castle, which contains over 1,000 artworks.
- Stroll through Główny Square, Europe's largest market. On weekends, it floods with vendors, offering a great chance to sample local specialties. If you're feeling ambitious, buy a ticket and climb the Town Hall's tower for an incredible view of the square and its surroundings.
- Pass the beautiful Sukiennice, or the Kraków Cloth Hall—often regarded as the world's oldest shopping mall. Then, round out your sightseeing tour at Jagiellonian University, the oldest institute of higher learning in Poland.

Enjoy a free afternoon in Kraków to explore on your own. Later on, reconvene for a farewell drink in the evening. Celebrate your trip with your groupmates, then head back out into the city for some more wandering. Alternatively, tuck on the night's excursion to learn how to prepare pierogies and file the recipe away for use back home.

+ Polish Cooking Demonstration & Dinner

Flight Home

Day 13: Departure

Included meals: breakfast (excluding early morning departures)

Transfer to the airport for your flight home.

Customize your experience

Customize your tour by adding excursion options. Excursions offered on the same day will occur at different times, so there's no need to choose. Save \$10 when you book your excursion up to three days before your tour departs.* Excursions requiring advance reservation only list this discounted price. Call or go online to customize your tour: goaheadtours.com/EE6 | 1-800-597-0350

Day 3: Budapest: A Walk Behind the Iron Curtain

\$99/\$109* (4 hours, departs in the morning)

Discover the turbulent, tragic, and heroic history of the Communist period in Budapest on today's excursion. Your guided sightseeing tour passes the Parliament building, which was the starting place of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution and still shows signs of damage from the Soviet invasion. Visit Liberty Square, home to the U.S. Embassy, a statue of Ronald Reagan, and the only remaining monument to Communist troops. From St. Stephen's Basilica, take the historic Metro Line 1 up the iconic Andrassy Avenue. Stop for an included coffee and piece of cake amidst the Neo-Renaissance splendor of a historic cafe. End the day at the House of Terror, where you will take a guided tour through this chilling museum and view the moving monument to the victims of Communism and Fascism in Hungary.

Day 4: Lake Balaton Wine Tasting & Lunch

\$165/\$175* (10 hours, departs in the morning, includes lunch)

Did you know that Hungary's home to Central Europe's largest lake? Today, leave Budapest for the northern shores of Lake Balaton. This fertile wine region—also known as the Hungarian Riviera—doubles as a popular holiday destination, and you'll spend the first part of your day in the resort village of Tihany. Start at its hilltop Benedictine monastery, stepping inside and letting nearly 1,000 years of history wash over you. After exploring the abbey, head to the spa town of Balatonfüred. Enjoy some free time to explore, then wrap up with a tasting of five vintages at a local winery.

Day 5: Bratislava UFO Tower Dinner

\$139/\$149* (2 hours, departs in the evening, includes dinner)

Bratislava's skyline features a massive castle, church spires—and a UFO. The Most SNP, or Bridge of the National Slovak Uprising, sports a unique structure atop its main pylon. Shaped like a flying saucer, it houses a restaurant (dubbed "UFO") and an observation deck. This evening, you'll take an elevator up more than 275 feet above the Danube for a delectable dinner. Chow down, basking in 360-degree views of Bratislava, then return to your hotel.

Day 6: A Day in Vienna

\$109/\$119* (8 hours, departs in the morning)

Want to cross another cultural capital off your travel list? Today, make the short journey to the City of Music and discover its delights with a local guide. You'll start at the 13th-century Hofburg, entering the former palace of the Habsburg emperors for a glimpse into court life in Imperial Austria. Then, travel down the tree-canopied paths of the Ringstrasse. The gorgeous Ring Road encircles Vienna's Old Town, and you'll pass the Austrian Parliament Building, Vienna State Opera, and Kunsthistorisches Museum as you go. End the day with free time to stroll the city's beautiful boulevards before returning to Slovakia.

Day 8: Baroque Prague & Beer Tasting

\$99/\$109* (3.5 hours, departs in the afternoon)

Interested in seeing some of Prague's lesser-known highlights? Today, you'll get introduced to the city's beautiful Baroque side with help from a local guide. Begin in the Klementinum—home to the National Library of the Czech Republic. Admire the stunning woodwork and ornate ceilings of one of the world's most beautiful libraries before beginning your ascent up the Klementinum's Astronomical Tower. Stop at the Meridian Hall, where Jesuit astronomers used simple tools to pinpoint high noon, before continuing your climb. Reach the top, soak in the panorama below, then return to street level. From there, you'll cross the Charles Bridge for a leisurely stroll through the manicured terraces and hedges of Vrtba Garden, an 18th-century Eden laid out in the French formal style. Finish up at a tankovna, or beer hall, and cap the day's adventures by sipping a delicious local brew. Please note: To reach the top of the Astronomical Tower, you should feel comfortable scaling 172 steep steps. Additionally, the National Library doesn't allow visitors inside. It can only be viewed from a doorway.

Day 9: Kutná Hora

\$105/\$115* (8 hours, departs in the morning)

Head into the countryside beyond Prague and spend a day in the UNESCO-listed town of Kutná Hora—an old silver mining settlement whose size belies its immense cultural value. Meet up with a local guide for a tour, beginning in St. Barbara's Church, the part-Gothic, part-Baroque symbol of the town. From there, make your way down cobbled streets to Kutná Hora's historic center and take in the landmarks that earned it its UNESCO World Heritage Site status—the Gothic Stone House, Plague Column, Italian Court, and more. Use your free time to grab something to eat and do some extra exploring, then enter the Sedlec Ossuary. Have a look around the small chapel—decorated with the bones of some 55,000 people—before driving back to Prague.

Extension excursion options

Day 12: Polish Cooking Demonstration & Dinner

\$109 (3.5 hours, departs in the evening, dinner included)

Pierogies are synonymous with Polish culture, and on this excursion, you'll learn the history of the country's signature food—and how to make it. Reminiscent of dumplings or ravioli, pierogies are traditionally stuffed with potato, cheese, cabbage, or sauerkraut, but can also be filled with cherries, apples, or strawberries and served for dessert. See how to cut, stuff, and fold the dough and practice by making both savory and sweet pierogies. Then, sample homemade cherry liqueur as you enjoy your dinner. This excursion requires advance reservation and must be booked at least 20 days prior to departure.

*Optional excursions may be purchased up to three days prior to departure or while on tour. Pre-purchased optional excursions cannot be canceled within three days prior to departure or while on tour. Select optional excursions require advance booking and cannot be purchased or canceled after the advanced reservation deadline. GAT accepts payment by cash, Visa or MasterCard for optional excursions purchased on tour. Additional fees may apply for optional excursions purchased on tour. Excursions require a minimum number of participants to operate. Details and prices are subject to change. Due to seasonal hours of operation and availability, some excursions may not operate. If this occurs, you will be refunded any payments made for that excursion post-tour. Learn more at goaheadtours.com/terms