



Cruise Details

Name:	Lower Danube Discovery with Transylvania
Reference:	SCENICVBTR280924-2
Operator:	Scenic River Cruises
Cruise Type:	River
Cruise Rating:	Luxury
Ship:	Scenic Opal
Regions:	Danube
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Departs On:	28 Sep 24
Departs From:	Bucharest
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Arrives On:	17 Oct 24
Arrives At:	Vienna
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Cruise Nights:	19
Total Vacation Days:	20

Itinerary

Day 1: Bucharest (Romania)

Fly from the UK to Bucharest. Welcome to Bucharest, the capital of Romania. It has a complex – and sometimes confronting – past, having spent more than four decades under Communist rule. But today, it's a dynamic, modern and energetic city with a thriving café culture, excellent museums and pockets of glorious Belle Epoque architecture.

Check in to your hotel for an overnight stay.

Arrives On: 28 Sep 24

Day 2: Bucharest (Romania)

This morning, you'll begin your journey into Transylvania. This mountainous region of Central Romania is wrapped up in ancient myths, folklore and legendary literature. Its landscape has barely changed in more than 600 years, dotted with perfectly-preserved medieval villages and spectacular castles amid deep green forest.

Peles Castle is a Neo-Classical

masterpiece built in the 1870s by the first king of Romania as a summer residence for the royal family. Inside, the rooms are exquisitely decorated with paintings, carved wood and stained glass, and there's a fascinating collection of artwork and artifacts. Nearby, Sinaia Monastery is the oldest monastery in the region and is home to two churches, one from the 17th century and one built by the royal family in the 19th century.

Your final destination for today is Brasov, a colourful town that brings together Gothic spires, medieval watchtowers, sprawling squares and Soviet-era concrete. A local guide will take you on a tour of the sights before you check in to your hotel. Finish your day with a delicious dinner at one of the city's finest restaurants.

Arrives On: 29 Sep 24

Day 2: Brasov (Romania)

Arrives On: 29 Sep 24

Day 3: Brasov (Romania)

Dracula is Transylvania's most famous figure. Writer Bram Stoker based his famous novel on the real life prince Vlad III, also known as Vlad the Impaler. Though Stoker never visited Romania, he is said to have been inspired by the place you're visiting today – Bran Castle. Perched dramatically on a cliff top, this white stone fortress was built in the 14th century and is a maze of narrow passageways, hidden rooms and sunny courtyards.

Travel on to the village of Sighisoara, the birthplace of Vlad the Impaler himself. It's also one of the best-preserved medieval towns in Europe, with cobblestone lanes and colourful buildings that have remained largely unchanged since the 12th century.

Arrives On: 30 Sep 24

Day 3: Sighisoara (Romania)

Arrives On: 30 Sep 24

Day 4: Sighisoara (Romania)

You'll be woken by the sound of church bells this morning, ringing out across the town squares in the same way they have done for centuries. Or perhaps by the laughter of children as they make their way to school. One of the most wonderful aspects of Sighisoara is that it is still a living town, not just a tourist site, so you'll be immersed in the everyday lives of the people who are lucky enough to live here.

Freechoice:

Today's Scenic Freechoice to choose from:

Explore the walled city: The World Heritage-listed walled city at the centre of Sighisoara was built by the Saxons between the 12th and

17th centuries. Much of it still stands today, making it one of the best-preserved medieval cities in the world. A local guide will show you the highlights.

Hike the hill: If you're feeling more active, hike up the covered stairway to the 14th century Church on the Hill. It's the most spectacular examples of Gothic architecture in Transylvania and has been restored many times through history. The climb is difficult but you'll be rewarded with superb views over the city.

This afternoon, it's on to Sibiu, another medieval town with a rich Saxon history. As you admire the historic buildings during your guided tour, you might get the feeling that they are looking back at you – many of the buildings here have unique dormer windows in the roof that resemble human eyes.

Afterwards you have free time to take in the beauty of this city at your leisure. Perhaps join the locals for an al fresco coffee in the Big Square (Piata Mare) or Little Square (Piata Mica), both just metres apart in the centre of the old town or take a moment to duck inside the Holy Trinity Cathedral, a Romanian orthodox church that was built just over 100 years ago. The elaborate paintings and stained-glass windows across the ceiling will take your breath away.

Arrives On: 01 Oct 24

Day 4: Sibiu (Romania)

Arrives On: 01 Oct 24

Day 5: Sibiu (Romania)

Leaving Sibiu this morning, you'll cross back over the Southern Carpathian Mountains to reach the Cozia Monastery. Built between 1386 and 1388, it's one of the most architecturally and culturally important monasteries in Romania and many other religious complexes have been modelled after it. Sitting on the edge of the Olt River and with mountain peaks behind, it's a breathtaking site that has long been inspiring spiritual connections.

With the villages and vistas of Transylvania behind you, you'll make your way back to the capital Bucharest this evening.

Arrives On: 02 Oct 24

Day 5: Bucharest (Romania)

Arrives On: 02 Oct 24

Day 6: Bucharest (Romania)

Today transfer from Bucharest to Constanta where our friendly crew await your arrival and welcome you on board your luxurious Scenic Space-Ship.

Arrives On: 03 Oct 24

Day 6: Constanta (Romania)

Arrives On: 03 Oct 24

Day 7: Constanta (Romania)

This morning your local guide will take you on an exploration of the sea side city of Constanta. Sitting on the Black Sea Coast, Constanta is a historic city with a long and fascinating history and you have the chance to learn about its historical monuments and ancient ruins.
After lunch, your Scenic Space-Ship will set sail towards the Bulgarian town of Silistra.

Arrives On: 04 Oct 24

Day 8: Silistra (Bulgaria)

Arrive in Silistra after lunch, a Bulgarian town that played a significant role in the Russian-Turkish wars. **Freechoice:** This afternoon's Scenic Freechoice:
Active walk to Silistra Fort: Transfer to Silistra Fort by coach. Upon arrival take a guided walking tour of the fort and learn about its history. It is the best preserved of the six points of the Turkish fortification system, which played an important role in the Russian-Turkish wars.
Visit Alfatar Village: Take an excursion to the small village of Alfatar, located just outside of Silistra. Visit the ethnographic museum featuring a typical country house, where visitors will see how the residents of this region have lived over the centuries and have kept their traditions alive. Also see the beautifully restored Holy Trinity temple, a treasured symbol of the Bulgarian Orthodox religion, and visit the Alfatar school to meet local children and learn about daily life for young Bulgarians.
Return to your Scenic Space-Ship this afternoon and enjoy time at leisure. You may wish to stretch your legs on the walking track up on the Sun Deck.

Arrives On: 05 Oct 24

Day 10: Vidin (Bulgaria)

This morning you will dock in Vidin, Bulgaria, an historic town with a medieval fortress between the borders of Bulgaria and Romania. This region boasts a fertile landscape where wine is grown. **Freechoice:** This morning's Scenic Freechoice:
Hiking to Belogradchik Castle Ruins: Take an active hiking tour to the Belogradchik Fortress. Admire the unique rock formations and the ruins of the ancient stronghold constructed when the region was part of the Roman Empire.
Visit to a local winery: Venture to Negovanovtsi village and the Dos Alamos Winery for a tour and tasting. Established in 2013, this boutique vineyard grows Bulgarian Rubin grapes (used for high-quality reds) as well as sauvignon blanc and semillon.
Ancestry of the Kitchen: Banica making class: Traditions

and recipes have long been passed down through generations and often kept as a long-held family secret. Today you'll meet with a local who will speak all about life in this region as well as divulge a family recipe of traditional banica, a delicious cheese-filled pie made with filo pastry.

Triangle of Tolerance walking tour: Take part in a walking tour of Vidin and learn its history and the extreme tolerance among its residents. You will see the Metropolis Orthodox church of St. Nicholas, the 17th-century church of St. Panteleimon, the Orthodox Cathedral of St. Dimitar, the Osman mosque, and the Synagogue.

Arrives On: 07 Oct 24

Day 11: Iron Gates (Romania)

This morning you will cruise through the spectacular scenery of the Iron Gates. This stretch of the Danube is the natural border between Serbia and Romania and features four narrow gorges, soaring cliffs and the might rock carving of Decebalus, the former Romanian king.

Freechoice: This afternoon's Scenic Freechoice:

Golubac Fortress: Take a guided tour of Golubac Fortress, which was built in the 14th century on a steep embankment of the Danube. Located in the Djerdap National Park, the fortress comprises nine towers connected by ramparts and has been an imposing figure above the river for centuries.

Lepenski Vir Archaeological Site: One of the most significant archaeological sites in the region, it was first inhabited some 12,000 years ago. Archaeologists found 136 building ruins, a central square, and fireplaces in each building, as well as stone idols. Learn how it was discovered, tour the excavation site and gain a fascinating insight into Europe's early stone age.

This afternoon, you will dock in the charming town of Golubac, which is home to one of Europe's best preserved medieval fortresses. It was strategically built at the section of the Danube River that narrows to form the 'Iron Gate' gorge.

Arrives On: 08 Oct 24

Day 11: Golubac (Serbia)

Arrives On: 08 Oct 24

Day 12: Belgrade (Serbia)

The capital of Serbia, Belgrade is known as the 'Door to Central Europe' and lies at the confluence of the Sava and Danube rivers. This eclectic city is steeped in history, with Neolithic ruins found nearby, a fortress built by the Romans, Brutalist buildings that sit beside Art Nouveau buildings and a bohemian vibe. One of the oldest capitals in Europe, Belgrade has been rebuilt almost 40 times.

Freechoice: This morning's Scenic Freechoice:

Guided city tour with extended free time: By coach and foot, you'll tour the major sites of the city with a guide. You will explore the city's highlights such as cobbled

streets of the Bohemian Quarter and Kalemegdan Fortress, an imposing structure that has been the site of more than 100 battles and offers panoramic views of the rivers below. Afterwards, enjoy free time to explore on your own.

Guided city tour including Tito's Memorial: Join a more in-depth tour of Belgrade with a local guide. See and learn about the major sites of the city including the Ottoman heritage of the old town, the imposing fortress and Republic Square following by some free time in the city centre. During this tour you will also visit the memorial dedicated to Tito, the former ruler of Yugoslavia.

Cycling tour along the Danube: Trace the banks of the Danube on two wheels during this guided cycling tour.

Educating the Roma community : The Bread of Life project helps to reduce the prejudices against Roma people, which prevail among the non-Roma population in schools, local authorities, and institutions. It highlights the need for positive action to improve living conditions in Roma communities. The project is designed to help Roma children to finish primary school and integrate better into society. On this engaging tour, you will visit the tutoring space to see how the project is benefiting the community, and even have the chance to meet some of the children and learn about the challenges they face.

Enrich

Tonight, we have a special treat in store for you with our Scenic Enrich event:

Classical concert at St. Sava Temple: Visit St. Sava, the largest orthodox temple in the Balkans. Have a chance to explore the frescos-lined walls of the cathedral's crypt where the church choir will perform some of the most beautiful hymns just for you. Because of the acoustics in the crypt, this is a once of a lifetime opportunity.

Arrives On: 09 Oct 24

Day 13: Novi Sad (Serbia)

Your Scenic Space-Ship will arrive in Novi Sad, Serbia, early this morning. The country's second largest city is a youthful city of music, art and liberal freedoms. It's an ethnically diverse city, has a thriving arts scene with several large-scale public murals, hosts vibrant festivals, all while nurturing its 500-year history.

Freechoice:

This morning's Scenic Freechoice:

Guided tour of Novi Sad: Novi Sad is a modern, vibrant city with a fascinating past. Join your local guide as you discover all that makes the city a true highlight of this region, from the Petrovaradin Fortress, completed in the 18th century with 10 gates and 400 cannon sites, to charming Dunavska Street, one of the oldest and most beautiful streets in the city, a promenade lined with colourful buildings, popular for walking, gathering and dining.

Excursion to Sremski Karlovci: Journey by coach to the nearby town of Sremski Karlovci. Upon arrival enjoy a guided tour of this charming Baroque town, which was once a hub of the cultural and political life of the Serbs. Enjoy some free time to explore on your own, followed by a visit to a local winery and honey museum for a delicious tasting.

Hike to Petrovaradin Fortress: The Petrovaradin Fortress is the symbol of the city and is often referred to 'the Gibraltar on the Danube'. Its history dates from the Middle Ages. Learn about its strong history as you hike to the fortress where you will be rewarded with magnificent views over the Danube River and the city below.

Fruska Gora National Park with monastery and winery visit: Serbia's oldest

national park, Fruska Gora National Park was once an island but when the seas dried up it became a solitary mountain. Its landscape is blanketed with oak and beech wood forests, and some 60-plus family vineyards. There are also 16 monasteries scattered throughout the park's hidden valleys, the oldest dating to the 16th century. Visit this monastery and stop by a winery for a sample of their best drops.

Return to your Scenic Space-Ship for a restful afternoon on board. You may wish to spend the morning in the exclusive Salt Therapy Lounge, which provides natural anti-viral, anti-inflammatory, and anti-bacterial properties.

Arrives On: 10 Oct 24

Day 14: Osijek (Croatia)

You will wake this morning in the Croatian town of Osijek, a small city with a turbulent history; it was at the epicentre of the 1990s war of which scars are still evident on its building today.

Freechoice:

Walking tour of Osijek: Take a guided walking tour of Osijek to see the highlights of the town including the well-preserved Baroque Old Town and fortress. You'll also have the opportunity to hear some traditional and classical music popular in the region.

Boat cruise at Kopacki Rit: Kopacki Rit is one of the largest natural wetlands in Europe, covering 238 hectares, and you will have the opportunity to explore it by boat. Learn more about this beautiful untouched nature in the easternmost part of Croatia through a presentation by one of the park's rangers. During a 50-minute boat ride, you will cruise among lush greenery, hundred-year-old willow woods, meadows and spot the variety of flora and fauna including deer, wild boar, white tailed eagle and black stork.

Cycling tour of Osijek: Explore the Kopacki Rit nature park on two wheels during a guided biking tour. This marshland area is a natural habitat for 293 different kinds of birds, 46 species of freshwater fish, several amphibians and reptiles, as well as wild boars and red deer. The ponds and lakes, which are teeming with common reed and whose surface is covered with White Water lilies, are mostly surrounded by white willow trees and untouched nature. If you are lucky, you might even see the most famous inhabitant of Kopacki Rit, the white-tailed eagle.

After your touring this morning, all guests will visit the home of a typical Croatian family and have lunch with the family members. Immerse yourself in this cultural and culinary experience, and enjoy an authentic meal prepared with fresh vegetables from the host's garden. North-eastern Croatia is the 'bread basket' of the country so it is only natural that the villagers take great pride in their gardens, from which ingredients are used to make a feast for both the palate and the eyes.

Arrives On: 11 Oct 24

Day 15: Mohács (Hungary)

Straddling the Danube, this small Hungarian town was the site of the 16th century Battle of Mohacs, which led to the destruction of the Hungarian monarchy and the rise of Ottoman and Habsburg rule. From here, you will explore the surrounding

regions.

Freechoice: Today's Scenic Freechoice
Pecs city tour: First settled by the Romans and then later the Turks, this richly historic and fascinating city located close by the Croatian border is a melange of cultures. It's filled with Roman and Turkish architecture and ruins, elegant Baroque buildings, and is famous for its decorative arts and crafts, in particular porcelain. On a guided tour, you will see the building of the city's first telephone exchange, which opened in 1885, the Turkish Bath of Pasha Memi, which was demolished in the late 19th century but unearthed in the 1970s, the county library and more.

Villany wine village: The region of Villany is known for its big, bold red wines, which account for most of the local wine production thanks to its sub-Mediterranean climate. The village is a charming place to visit, with rows of historic white wine cellars where you can sample some of the local reds. You will also visit an old mill.

Zsolnay Ceramics Museum: Founded in 1853 and still in operation today, Zsolnay Porcelain has a proud history of creating hand-painted decorative, ornamental, and architectural porcelains, and is known for its signature eosin glaze technique. View a splendid historic collection at the museum in Pecs, which is housed in the company's former factory.

Arrives On: 12 Oct 24

Day 16: Kalocsa (Hungary)

The historic Hungarian town of Kalocsa has some of the richest folk art in the world and was an important agricultural centre in the 19th century.

Freechoice: Today's Scenic Freechoice:
Hungarian Traditions: The region of Kalocsa is teeming with culture and traditions. It is famous for its traditional handicrafts such as needlework and embroidery. Learn about the origins of these beautiful designs as well as other crafts.

Hungarian Horse Show: Kalocsa is located on the Great Hungarian Plain, with an agricultural history dating back more than 2000 years. Witness a traditional horse show, meet the local horsemen who will demonstrate impressive equestrian skills and enjoy a tasting of local delicacies.

This afternoon your Scenic Space-Ship will sail to Budapest.

Arrives On: 13 Oct 24

Day 17: Budapest (Hungary)

You will arrive early this morning in Budapest, in Hungary, one of Europe's most diverse and vibrant destinations. Divided by the Danube, with Buda on one side and Pest on the other, this city became united in 1873 when a newly built bridge connected the two. An architectural treasure trove comprising styles from Gothic to Art Nouveau and everything in between, the city is also well known for its hot springs and thermal baths and has a vibrant nightlife scene.

Freechoice: This morning's Scenic Freechoice:
Budapest in Depth: Explore this magical city by coach. Visit both Buda and

Pest, the two districts that are separated by the Danube that make up the city. Starting on the Buda side, see the Várkert Bazár before crossing the Margaret Bridge to the Pest side where you will see Széchenyi square and Elizabeth square. Afterwards, you will visit the Parliament Building, which sits proudly along the Danube and is the third largest Parliament building the world.

Guided hike to Buda Hill: Strap on your walking shoes for a beautiful hike up to the World Heritage-listed site of Buda Hill. On your walk, see Varket Bazar and beautifully landscaped gardens, all while enjoying great views over the Danube River and the city architecture.

Jewish Heritage Tour: Discover Jewish history on a guided tour with an expert local guide, during this tour you will learn about the significant Jewish events from history that have shaped the culture of today. Tour includes Synagogue, cemetery, memorial park and guided tour of the Jewish Museum. (Please note: The Jewish Museum is closed on a Saturday)

This afternoon you will have free time as your luxury Space-Ship docks in Budapest until late evening. Perhaps, pack your swimsuit and make your way to one of Budapest's thermal baths for a relaxing soak in the therapeutic waters. Szechenyi Baths are the largest, boasting 15 indoor baths and three vast outdoor pools. Or check out the Jewish Quarter's famous ruin bars, which are housed in old and abandoned buildings that were left in decay after WWII.

Enrich Tonight we have a special treat with a fabulous Scenic Enrich event.

Immerse yourself in Budapest's Imperial past by attending an exclusive private classical music concert at the majestic Gödöllő Royal Palace, one of the favourite residences of Queen Elisabeth of Hungary.

Arrives On: 14 Oct 24

Day 18: Bratislava (Slovakia)

Slovakia's capital since independence in 1993, Bratislava is a modern multicultural metropolis with an intriguing history. Its Old Town is glorious in medieval and Gothic architecture and its well-preserved hilltop castle, which has history dating back to the 9th century, still dominates the town.

These charming historic sites contrast with its brutalist socialist architecture, which is evident around the city.

Freechoice:

Bratislava City Tour: Your Scenic Space-Ship will dock in the heart of the city and it is just a short walk to the Old Town. A city of contrasts, Bratislava features a mixture of medieval, Gothic and Baroque architecture. With your local guide, you will see the highlights of this beautiful city such as Bratislava Castle, the Hlavné Námestie, the main square and the Old Town Hall.

Coffee & Cake with a local family: Immerse yourself in Slovak life and enjoy coffee and cake with friendly locals. Gain understanding of life in Slovakia during modern times.

Communism walking tour: Explore Bratislava with a knowledgeable local guide to learn about the Iron Curtain era, the political boundary that divided Europe after WWII. Discover what the city was like during the communist regime and how this impacted directly on the Slovaks.

Arrives On: 15 Oct 24

Day 19: Vienna (Austria)

This city oozes charm with magnificent Baroque buildings, ample green spaces from parks to vineyards, a vibrant coffee-house culture and masterpiece-filled galleries and museums. Also known as the City of Music, Vienna fostered the musical geniuses Mozart and Beethoven, among others.

Freechoice: Today's Scenic Freechoice: Schonbrunn Palace: Join your local guide on an exploration of Schönbrunn Palace, the former summer residence of the Habsburg family. Journey through centuries of history as you explore the imperial apartments, countless rooms of great beauty created by famous artists and craftsmen from many different epochs, and learn the history and tales of the royal family that lived within these walls. Wander the impressive gardens before returning to the ship.

Guided city tour: Take a coach to the city centre for a guided walking tour. You'll see the Opera House, St Stephen's Cathedral and Belvedere Palace. Afterwards, you have free time to discover the beauty of the city for yourself. Vienna is a city where history, art and architecture combine to make a truly breath-taking city

Cycle to Danube Island: Explore a different side of Vienna on a guided e-bike tour to Danube Island, a recreational playground where locals come to enjoy bathing, boating, cycling and relaxing on its beaches and open spaces.

Sisi Museum: Empress Elisabeth, commonly referred to as Sisi, was the Empress of Austria and Queen of Vienna after marrying Emperor Franz Joseph I. Learn about her life during a guided tour of the Sisi Museum located in a former imperial palace of the Habsburg dynasty.

Arrives On: 16 Oct 24

Day 20: Vienna (Austria)

After breakfast, transfer to Vienna airport for your onward journey, taking away a lifetime of wonderful memories with you.

This itinerary is a guide only and may be amended for operational reasons such as high and low water. As such, the cruise may operate altered from that stated above. Please refer to our terms and conditions.

Arrives On: 17 Oct 24

For more information on this cruise, please call +44 (0)1202 767926.

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