



FINAL ITINERARY

Created on May 7, 2009

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Friendship Ambassadors Foundation

WEST VIRGINIA WESLEYAN COLLEGE Concert Tour to Central Europe: Czech Republic, Slovakia, Austria & Hungary May 10-29, 2009

B = Breakfast; L = Lunch; D = Dinner

Day 1: May 10 (Sunday) – In Flight (all meals en route)

Please arrive early for your international flight for Prague (please double check with Friendship Ambassadors for check-in times and requirements). Try to get some rest on board. To minimize the effects of jet lag, we advise to avoid sugar, caffeine, salt and alcohol. Drink a lot of water to keep hydrated!



Day 2: May 11 (Monday) – Welcome to Prague (B on Board, D)

Arrive in Prague, the beautiful capital and cultural heart of the Czech Republic. Meet your **FAF representative Ms. Michala Posarova** with your bus standing opposite the airport arrival hall (a sign FAF group behind the front window) and board your private motor coach that takes you to your accommodations, the **Hotels Austria Suites**. After check-in and some time to freshen up, you will be given a bit of orientation and a chance to exchange money (the Czech Republic is not on the Euro yet; the local legal tender is called the Czech Crown – Koruna).

Built on seven hills and bisected by the pretty Vltava River, this capital city is unique among Eastern European capitals in that it survived World War II nearly intact - as a result, it contains beautiful architecture, ranging from Romanesque and Gothic to Renaissance and Baroque. It's often called "the city of 100 spires" because of its many churches, and it also features numerous parks and lots of trees.

11:00 walking orientation tour (2 hours): Lesser Town and the Charles Bridge

The Lesser Town was founded in 1257 on the slopes below the Prague castle and it is the part of Prague least affected by recent history. Charles Bridge is a stone Gothic bridge that connects the Prague banks of the Vltava River, Old Town and Malá Strana. Charles Bridge is on the top of every Prague visitor's must-see list. It is also popular with Czech artists, musicians and souvenir vendors whose stands line both sides of the bridge year-round.

After some time to stroll through the streets, at 18:00 a hearty welcome dinner with Czech specialties will be arranged at restaurant Austria. In the evening, allow some time to settle in and recuperate from the long flight and jet lag.



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Day 3: May 12 (Tuesday) – Sightseeing in Prague (B)

Have breakfast at your accommodations, and at 9:00 join your local tour guide who will lead you on some explorations of Old Town.

The Old Town area, nestled around Old Town Square, dominated by the Church of Our Lady of Týn and the Town Hall. Sights to see include the Powder Gate (Prašná brána), a 65m-tall Powder Tower that formed one of the 13 entrances to the city; the Municipal House (Obecní dům), built on the site of the royal court at the beginning of the 20th century, and Prague's most prominent Art Nouveau building (inside one finds the Smetana Hall – the largest concert hall in Prague); and the Estates Theatre (Stavovské divadlo), which is the oldest of the city and one of the finest examples of Neo-classicism – Mozart's opera the "Don Giovanni" had its premiere there on 29 October 1834! There is the Carolinum (Karolinum), founded by Emperor Charles, the oldest university north of the Alps; and of course the Old Town Square (Staroměstské náměstí) itself – Prague's heart since the 10th century and the scene of great events, both glorious and tragic.



12:30 Visit to the Municipal House of Prague. The rest of the afternoon is free.

19:00 Concert in the Chapel of the Mirrors In Klementinum: Beethoven Trio Praha works from Mozart, Schubert, Dvorak and Beethoven

Day 4: May 13 (Wednesday) – Prague (B)

Have breakfast at your accommodations. At 9:00, enjoy a presentation on the history of and present day life in the Czech Republic, including a questions and answers session (Jiri Holub).

13:30 Continue your guided explorations of Prague's many treasures; this time, your local guide will take you through the Jewish ghetto:

The Jewish Quarter, named after the emperor Josef II whose reforms helped to ease living conditions for the Jewish, contains the remains of Prague's former Jewish ghetto. As many of the Jewish died during the WWII and were forced by the communist regime to leave the country, the current Prague community numbers 5000 – 6000 people.

The rest of the day is yours to devote to your own pursuits.

Day 5: May 14 (Thursday) – Sightseeing and museum visit in Prague (B)

Today enjoy a visit to the Fine Art Museum of Prague (admission included).

Residing in a medieval house at the crossroads of ancient routes in the Prague municipal reserve, the Czech Museum of Fine Arts' offers a unique opportunity to



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see contemporary art shows in an environment which absorbed the history of almost nine centuries. Apart from decoding various messages of the displayed objects, it is very likely you may get some time travel experience as well. The house was adapted to a gallery in 1971 in a very sensitive way, allowing the past to step out of the layer of present time structures. For instance, emerging out of the wall there is a genuine gothic arch, dominating one of the gallery's interior. (To enjoy the total impact of the house's ancient soul it is also possible to enter the cellar. Back in the 12th century, this used to be a fortified residence regularly flooded by the then untamed Vltava river; it has only been six years since the river paid its visit again during the flood in 2002.)

20:00 Laterna Magika (performance Graffiti)

Day 6: May 15 (Friday) – Sightseeing in Prague castle (B)

After breakfast at your accommodations, at 9:00 continue your sightseeing in the Prague Castle:



Prague Castle is the largest ancient castle in the world, constructed in the 9th century by Prince Bořivoj. Over the centuries, the castle transformed itself from a wooden fortress surrounded by earthen bulwarks to the imposing form it has today. Rulers made their own additions so there is a mixture of styles. Its most important sights are: the St Vitus Cathedral, founded in the 14th century, and housing the crown jewels. Inside you will find many superb examples of 20th century Czech stained glass and

marvelous pieces of art. And: the Old Royal Palace, dating from 1135 and so one of the oldest parts of the castle – it was the seat of Bohemian princes and kings. Of course there are many other places of interest in the castle, including some fine museums as well.

This afternoon you will have free time and a chance to meet local students while having your buffet dinner in Hotel Petr at 18:30.



Day 7: May 16 (Saturday) – Travel from Prague to Bratislava via Brno (B, D)

It is time to say goodbye to Prague and the Czech Republic and board your bus for an all-day ride to Bratislava in Slovakia. There will be an opportunity to stretch, have lunch, and do a bit of exploring in the town of Brno:

Brno, known as Brünn (in German) is the second largest city in Czech Republic. It was founded in 1243 although the area had been settled since the 5th century. The city is a political and cultural hub of the South Moravian Region. At the same time, it represents the centre of the province of Moravia, one of the historic lands of the Czech Crown. It is situated at the crossroads of ancient trade routes which have joined northern and southern European civilizations for centuries.

Continue your way to Bratislava. Upon arrival, meet your **FAF representative Ms. Dagmar Balounova**, and check-in at your accommodations at the **Botel Marina**. Have an orientation and a

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chance to exchange money will be followed by a welcome dinner at a local restaurant. (As of January 1, 2009, Slovakia converted to the Euro.)

Bratislava, located in the south west of Slovakia, lies on both banks of the Danube, and it is the only national capital in the world that borders two other countries - Austria and Hungary. Bratislava is the political, cultural and economic centre of Slovakia. It is the seat of the Slovak presidency, the parliament and government, as well as home to several universities, museums, theatres, galleries and other important economic, cultural and educational institutions. The city's history has been strongly influenced by various peoples, including Austrians, Czechs, Germans, Hungarians, Jews, and Slovaks. The city, called Pressburg until 1919, was a key economic and administrative centre of the Habsburg (Austrian) monarchy.

Day 8: May 17 (Sunday) – Sightseeing in Bratislava (B)

Starting at 10:00, this morning, enjoy a guided sightseeing tour in Bratislava (mostly by foot) including: Bratislava Castle (today the House of the Parliament), Grassalkovich Palace (Seat of the Slovakian President), as well as the downtown area with its palaces and castles. Have lunch on your own at a local restaurant, and then you can enjoy a free afternoon and evening; we recommend a visit to some of the city's nice museums.



Bratislava Castle, looking over the historic core of the capital of the Slovak Republic is a landmark of this town and a National Cultural Monument that attracts the looks not only of the inhabitants of Bratislava, but also a large amount of visitors from all parts of Slovakia, Europe and the whole World.

The Grassalkovich Palace or the Presidential Palace in Bratislava is the seat of the President of Slovakia. It is situated next to the Summer Archbishop's Palace. The building is a Rococo/late Baroque summer palace with a French garden. It was built in 1760 for Count Anton Grassalkovich, a Croatian noble serving as the head of the Hungarian Chamber (a sort of ministry of economy and finance for the Kingdom of Hungary), by architect A. Mayerhofer. It features many beautiful rooms and an impressive staircase. The building became a center of Baroque musical life in Bratislava.

Day 9: May 18 (Monday) – Bratislava; presentation (B)

Have breakfast at your accommodations. This morning at 10:00, enjoy a presentation on the history of and present day life in Slovakia, including a questions and answers session (Dagmar Balounová).

Starting at 15:00 in the hotel terrace, we will arrange an opportunity to meet a local, English-speaking writer (Mr. Anton Hykisch).

The rest of the day is yours to devote to your own pursuits.

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Day 10: May 19 (Tuesday) – Day trip to Vienna (B)

Board your motor coach after breakfast and head for Vienna, capital of Austria, sister city of Bratislava for a day full of fun, education and arts at their highest level.



Upon arrival to Vienna, embark on a sightseeing tour of this amazing cultural capital with your local guide:

Vienna is divided into 23 districts (Bezirke), each with its own name reminiscent of the days when the districts were actually small towns or villages on the outskirts of the capital, gradually engulfed by the growing metropolis. The most important district, where the majority of Vienna's attractions and historic monuments are located, is the 1st District, the Innere Stadt. Much of it is closed to traffic and has been turned into a pedestrian zone. The "Inner City" is bounded by the Ringstrasse, a circular boulevard created to replace the ancient city walls in the late 19th century and, lined with magnificent buildings in widely divergent styles. Farther out are the former village districts, now suburban communities and some industrial parks, as well as Schönbrunn Palace. The "beautiful blue Danube" so associated with Vienna does not actually flow through the city; it was blocked off in the 19th century to the city's east and a canal that borders the eastern side of the Ringstrasse is its nearest replacement.

Enjoy a few free hours to experience this imperial city on your own before you head back to Bratislava for the night.

Day 11: May 20 (Wednesday) – Free day in Bratislava (B)

Have breakfast at your accommodations, and then enjoy an entirely free day in Bratislava.

Day 12: May 21 (Thursday) – Day trip to Vienna (B)

Enjoy a second day trip to the Austrian capital today. This will be a day for private (unstructured) explorations – Vienna has a lot to offer when it comes to the cultural scene, with its host of museums, galleries and exhibitions! Return to Bratislava for the night.

Day 13: May 22 (Friday) – Free day in Bratislava and meeting with locals (B)

Today's another day to spend at your leisure and pursue your own studies.

This evening you will enjoy a Balet on music by Glazunov, Tshajkovskij, Johnny Chang, George Balanchine

Day 14: May 23 (Saturday) – Travel to Budapest via Győr (B)

Check out of your hotel after breakfast this morning and start your journey to Budapest, capital of Hungary. Make a stop along the way at Győr, a picturesque Baroque town.



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Győr forms part of the European past and culture. The town is abundant in monuments, legends and art treasures. It comes third in the country in terms of the number of monuments and protected buildings, and its cathedral is home to the masterpiece of Medieval Hungarian goldsmith's work, the gilded silver Saint László Herm. The "capital" of West Hungary, it is known as "the town of corner balconies", and takes pride in a historic downtown abounding in beautiful baroque buildings. It has a world-famous ballet company; the performances of the local theatre attract crowds of spectators and the town's music life is delightfully diverse.



Continue your way to Budapest. Meet your **FAF representative Ms. Sarolta Tereh** and check-in at your accommodation at the **Hotel City Inn** upon arrival, and then have a bit of orientation and a chance to exchange money once again. (Hungary's national currency is called the Forint.)

The capital city of Budapest is really two cities, Buda and Pest, connected by the beautiful Chain Bridge. Known as the Pearl of the Danube, this 1,000-year-old city is truly one of the world's most beautiful. It combines Modern, Neoclassical, Baroque, Art Nouveau and other architectural styles with the grandeur of the flowing Duna (or

Danube), which meanders through the city for 17 mi.

Day 15: May 24 (Sunday) – Sightseeing in Budapest (B)

Have breakfast in your accommodations, followed by a sightseeing tour (starting at 10:00) mostly by bus but with some short walks around the Heroes' Square and the Castle District. During your bus ride, your local guide will get you acquainted with the structure of the city; the Grand Boulevard, the main avenues, the large parks, and end with a picturesque view from the top of the Gellért Hill. After the tour, the remainder of the day is free to spend at your leisure; feel free to ask your guide for suggestions depending on your particular interests!



Day 16: May 25 (Monday) – Budapest (B)

Have breakfast at your accommodations. This morning, enjoy a presentation on the history of and present day life in Hungary, including a questions and answers session (Attila Melegh). The rest of the day is yours to devote to your own pursuits.



Day 17: May 26 (Tuesday) – Day trip to the Danube bend (B, L)

Today we'll take a full-day excursion north of Budapest, to the Danube bend. The trip will include stops in Esztergom (capital of the Medieval Hungarian State and the Roman Catholic Church for centuries), Visegrád (formal royal seat although a small village today) and Szentendre (a small, picturesque baroque-rococo town,

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famous for its many museums and art galleries).

Esztergom is the birthplace of Hungary's beloved first King, and later Saint, Stephen. The country's first capital in the 11th century, Esztergom was – and still is – the nation's ecclesiastical center. Dominating Castle Hill is the Basilica, Hungary's largest church with one of the world's largest altar paintings. An unparalleled collection of medieval and Renaissance ecclesiastical art fills the Christian Museum. Climb the dome of the Basilica for a unique view of the majestic Danube.



Visegrád: travel back to the 13th century as you climb high atop a hill to Solomon's Tower, one of Central Europe's largest and best preserved Romanesque castle keeps. With a commanding view of the Danube as it turns 90°, this spot was of strategic importance to the Romans, who also built fortifications here. Visegrád was the home of Hungary's kings in the 14th and 15th century. The nation's great Renaissance King Matthias Corvinus made Visegrád the capital and constructed a magnificent palace, now the Mátyás Király Museum, on the riverbank.

Lunch in a hunting lodge in Visegrád



Szentendre is an enchanting, small Mediterranean-style town of arts and museums, the southern gate of the Danube Bend. Due to its excellent geographical endowments, it has been populated since the new Stone Age. Its present name derives from a church ordained in St. Andrew's honor in the medieval ages. During the Turkish occupation and wars, the town's population dwindled until it was resettled again after the fall of Belgrade to the Turks in 1690, by Serbs fleeing the Ottoman hosts. In hope of being able to return home, each settling group erected temporary wooden churches named after the town they came from: Blagovestenska, Pozharevacka, Chiprovachka, and so on. When these hopes were finally shattered, the wooden churches were replaced by beautiful Baroque style

stone churches in the 18th century. Even in its secular architecture the town holds evidence of the heritage of its settlers with its narrow, winding streets, and small, colorful houses. On the streets you find an array of little shops offering products of Hungarian folk art and handicrafts.

Day 18: May 27 (Wednesday) – National Library visit in Budapest (B)

10:00 Visit the Hungarian National Library today, and enjoy a theater performance (in English) in the evening.

The National Library was founded in 1802 by highly patriotic Hungarian aristocrat Count Ferenc Széchenyi, who had traveled the world buying Hungarian books, which he then assembled and donated to the nation. His example resulted in a nation-wide movement of book donations to the library and in the following year, the public library was opened in Pest. In 1808, the National Assembly ("Diet") created the Hungarian National Museum to collect the historical, archaeological and natural relics of Hungary; this Museum was merged into the Library and for the last 200 years, this is how it has existed: a national depository for written, printed and objective relics of the Hungarian past.



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The rest of the day is free for shopping or for other museum visits

Day 19: May 28 (Thursday) – Budapest (B, D)

Enjoy your last day at the Hungarian capital at your leisure. At 9:00, we will arrange an opportunity to meet a local, English-speaking writer (László Bitó) Tonight, celebrate a successful tour to Central Europe with a festive farewell dinner with folk dance and music at the Hotel Corvin. Don't forget to pack tonight!

Day 20: May 29 (Friday) – Departure (B, D)

After breakfast, bid a fond farewell to Hungary, and transfer to the airport in ample time to catch your return flight home. Have a safe flight, and...

Welcome home!

Flight Information

Outbound:

		From	To	Depart	Arrive
AIR FRANCE AF 39	10MAY SUNDAY	WASHINGTON DC DULLES INTL	PARIS CHARLES DE GAU	440P	610A 11MAY
AIR FRANCE AF 1382	11MAY MONDAY	PARIS CHARLES DE GAU	PRAGUE RUZYNE	715A	850A

Return:

AIR FRANCE AF 1695	29MAY FRIDAY	BUDAPEST FERIHEGY	PARIS CHARLES DE GAU	1250P	310P
AIR FRANCE AF 26	29MAY FRIDAY	PARIS CHARLES DE GAU	WASHINGTON DC DULLES INTL	440P	655P

Accommodations Information

PRAGUE	BRATISLAVA	BUDAPEST
Hotels Austria Suites Štefánikova 18/25 150 00 Praha 5 Czech Republic Phone: +420-226518002 Fax: +420-226518001	Botel Marina Nábřežie arm. gen. L. Svobodu 811 02 Bratislava Slovak Republic Phone: +421 (2) 5464 1804	Hotel City Inn 1082 Budapest, Futó utca 55 Phone: +36-1-323-1330 Fax: +36-1- 323 13 69

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Dagmar Balounová (Bratislava representative): +421-903388716
Sarolta Tereh (Budapest representative): +36-30-9486823

This program includes:

- Round-trip airfare: Washington, DC – Prague / Budapest- Washington, DC
- 18 nights at B&B type accommodations based on double/triple rooms
- Daily continental breakfast
- 3 evening meals and 1 lunch (welcome dinner in Prague, local specialties meal in Bratislava, lunch at the Danube Bend, farewell dinner in Budapest)
- Airport transfers in Prague upon arrival and in Budapest upon departure
- Transfers in 1 private, chartered coach, according to the itinerary
- 4 guided sightseeing tours (Prague, Bratislava, Vienna and Budapest)
- Admission to: National Library in Budapest and Fine Art Museum in Prague
- * *The following are also included for the Danube Bend trip: the Christian Museum in Esztergom and the Open Air Village Museum in Szentendre. Admission to the Esztergom Basilica is free of charge; visiting the Kovacs Margit Museum in Szentendre is optional.*
- Chances to explore places of interest during transfers between cities
- 3 presentations on local history, at each country visited, in English
- 3 meeting opportunities with English-speaking, local writers / poets / historians
- 3 theater visits
- Gratuities to guides
- \$100 tax deduction upon completion of the tour

This program does NOT include:

- Full-time tour manager
- Drinks with dinners (aside from water on the table)
- Gratuities to bus drivers
- Personal expenses and incidentals

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