



A SAMPLE ITINERARY

Created by
Friendship Ambassadors Foundation

Special Food, Wine and Culture Tour Hungary – Bulgaria

Day 1

Arrive at the airport three (3) hours prior to your international flight. Dinner and breakfast will be served en route. Try to get some rest!

Day 2

Welcome to Budapest, the Pearl of the Danube! At the airport you will be greeted by your local guide who will assist you with the transfer to your first class hotel (Kempinski, or similar) – portorage of 2 bags is included from arrival in Budapest to your departure.



After some time to freshen up with a welcome beverage and settling into your rooms, your guide will give you a short orientation walk in the heart of the city to familiarize you with the layout of the town. Tonight's dinner – your welcome banquet – will take place in a very special setting: on board of a paddlewheel boat by spectacularly illuminated Chain Bridge, with breathtaking views to Buda's Royal Palace.

After dinner those with enough energy might want to try their luck at one of Budapest's casinos or perhaps a Jazz club in this city of noted nightlife. To everyone else, Good Night!

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 3

After buffet breakfast at your hotel, board your motorcoach to discover the secrets of Buda and Pest on the two shores of the Danube, in a guided panoramic tour of Hungary's capital city. There will be only a small amount of walking, so everyone should feel free to come along. Your tour will start on the Buda side, and will take you to visit the city's medieval Castle, it's most Beautiful Gothic Church, the Matthias Church, the Baroque Royal Palace, and the early 20thcentury fortress of the Citadel.

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At lunchtime, we'll head for a lighthearted culinary experience at the Bagolyvár (Owl's Castle) Restaurant in the City Park. This restaurant, featuring the best of Hungary's traditional cuisine, is associated with Budapest's foremost restaurant Gundel, owned by George Lang (also the owner of Café des Artistes in New York). The furnishings of the restaurant evoke a middle-class dining room of the early twentieth century: the tables are covered by heavy damask tablecloths, and there are old engravings on the walls. To evoke the atmosphere of a good, traditional restaurant of the past, George Lang created a restaurant and a kitchen in which exclusively women are at work. These ladies are the 'pillars' of the Owl's Castle: they draw up the carte de jour, they buy the ingredients, they prepare and serve the dishes and the beverages. Their traditional Hungarian hospitality makes the guests feel at home.



If you like cooking, take this opportunity to prepare some typical Hungarian dishes with the expert guidance of the restaurant's cooks. Guests will receive a diploma and the recipes in English, not to mention a copy of George Lang's special Gundel cookbook!

After lunch the city tour will continue, and this time you will get to explore the treasures of the Pest side: the Heroes' Square – an open-air "exhibition" of Hungary's 1000-year history; the glittering Opera House; the impressive St. Stephen Basilica; and the large complex of the Parliament building on the bank of the Danube, just to name a few. When the tour is over we will take you back to the hotel so that you can refresh yourself. Tonight we will take a culinary journey in time, to the splendid Renaissance courts of King Matthias. Restaurant Anonymus by the pond in City Park is sure to please with its period meals, served in period dishes, accompanied by charming period music! Transfer back to the hotel after dinner.



Day 4
After buffet breakfast at your hotel, board your motorcoach to visit a very special place just north of Lake Balaton: Herend. If you like fine china, you are no doubt familiar with this name, a trademark in its own right. Today you will have a chance to get acquainted with the secrets of making these delicate dishes and figures, what is more: you can try yourself at the skills in the Factory's Mini-Manufactory! After the tour



Day 4

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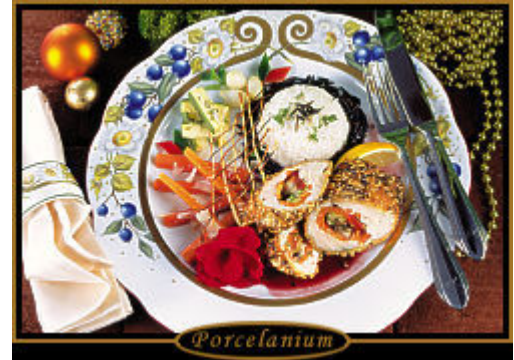
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and workshop, we'll dine in the Factory's exquisite restaurant, Apicius, where you get to pick the pattern for the dishes your lunch will be served in!

Herend is at the pinnacle of porcelain making in Hungary. The manufactory, now more than 175 years old, brought the production of porcelain to perfection. From 1851 onwards, its meticulous, hand-painted masterpieces of unrivalled beauty won countless gold medals at world exhibitions. Herend Porcelain soon gained the place it deserved on the tables of monarchs, princes, aristocrats, statesmen and Hollywood stars.



After lunch we head back to Budapest. After some time to refresh yourself at the hotel, we will return to the Buda Castle, and indulge on a trip through Hungary's 22 wine regions, savoring excellent wines at the prestigious House of Hungarian Wines. Later on tonight, be entertained by some of Hungary's leading folk dancers and musicians while enjoying your dinner!

Day 5

Your final day in Budapest. Spend the morning free to discover the city for yourself: visit some of the museums, spend some relaxing time in one of the city's spas, go shopping for some great gifts, or just stroll down the streets bordered with beautiful buildings. Your guide will be happy to advise you and help you make any arrangements. Travelers will be provided with a 'Budapest' card that provides free use of public transit, admission to most museums and discounts at select restaurants and shops. Lunch on your own.



In the evening we will return to the City Park for a farewell banquet at the Restaurant Gundel (smart dress required). This festive dinner will begin in our Lorantffy Wine Cellar, where you can taste wines made out of traditional Hungarian grapes: Egri Leanyka, Badacsonyi Keknyelu, Szekszardi Kadarka, Villanyi Kekoporto.

Following the wine tasting you will be given a guided tour of the Restaurant to introduce you to its longstanding traditions and fine interiors.

Then, the highlight of your tour in Budapest:

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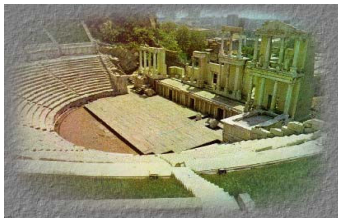
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A Five Crown Imperial Menu!

- Home-smoked Breast and Liver of Duck served with a Brioche Crown wine:
Tokay Szamorodni 1990, Disznoko Vineyard
This dish was created for and served at the Banquet in honor of Otto von Habsburg, May 10, 1997
- Main course choices: Fillets of Pike Perch on a bed of Spinach, and vegetable pearls with a Crown of Zala Crabs and Eger Chardonnay Sauce wine:
Gundel's Egri Chardonnay 1997
Offered to H.H. Pope John Paul II on September 6, 1996
- Bouillon of Squab with Crown of Derelye Noodles
Served to H.M. Elizabeth 11, on May 3, 1993
- Tower of Veal and Sirloin of Beef on a Bastion of Potatoes with Forest Mushrooms Hungarian Style wine:
Gundel Bull's Blood of Eger 1994, Magnum
Main course of a dinner in honor of H.M. Juan Carlos, King of Spain, September 12, 1996
- Royal Orb stuffed with Chestnuts, accompanied by a praline-sceptre wine:
Torley Sec Champagne
A dessert created for H.M. Beatrix, Queen of the Netherlands, on May 23, 1996
- Coffee & Tea

Day 6

After breakfast, check out of your hotel and transfer by private motorcoach to Budapest Ferihegy Airport for your flight to Sofia, capital of Bulgaria. Your flight time will be two and a half hours. Your guide will meet you at the airport and assist you with the transfer to Plovdiv – Bulgaria's "cultural capital". En route, you will be provided with brief background information about Bulgaria's history and your successive tour. Check in your four-star hotel and enjoy some time to refresh yourselves. Welcoming dinner will follow.



Remains of ancient, mediaeval, revival and modern culture coexist and are interwoven into the unobtrusive, irresistible and eternal beauty of Plovdiv. The city is very, very old: the Eternal City, as Rome is conventionally called, is much younger. Athens, Carthage and Constantinople came into being later. A contemporary of Troy and having survived Mycenae,

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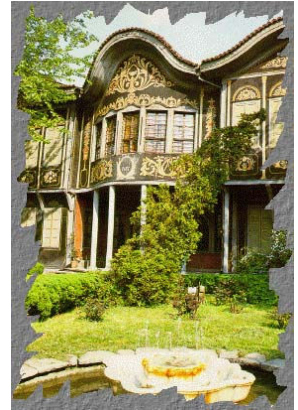
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Plovdiv is a city upon layers of cities and an epoch upon layers of epochs. Plovdiv is all in one: a Thracian and classical Greek polis, the pride of Philip of Macedon, the capital of Thrace under the Roman Empire, a center of Byzantinism, a stronghold of the Bulgarians, a dream of the crusaders - a magnificent wealth and most important city.

Day 7

After breakfast, your guide will take you on a tour of the Old Town of Plovdiv – the beautiful National Revival complex renowned by UNESCO for its unique atmosphere and traditional architecture. Visit some of the ethnographic museums and originally furnished old mansions, the old churches, the Roman sites and the famous Amphitheater. You will have the afternoon to discover on your own your favorite spot in the centuries of history and tradition.



Enjoy some free time for shopping and exploring the charming galleries, craftsman shops and coffee retreats. Find out for yourself the secrets of local craftsmen by having a try at pottery making, embroidery, etc. In the evening, prepare for an exquisite dinner at a traditional restaurant in the Old Town, dining virtually amongst Roman ruins from the beginning of our era, with a wonderful wine selection and authentic Bulgarian cuisine. Plovdiv casinos, bars and clubs are at the disposal of late night stayers.

Day 8

After breakfast your guide will escort you to the Bachkovo Monastery – the second largest in Bulgaria and a prominent educational center on the Balkans during 17th and 18th centuries. There will be a guided tour of the visitor's and residential parts. After that enjoy an exceptional barbecue by the river with selected local wines from the Assenovgrad region where the rare vines of Mavrud are cultivated. You can take home and select as a present for friends varieties of local spices and jams sold in the picturesque bazaar by the monastery.



After a refreshing break in the afternoon, prepare for a wine tasting at the Boutique Todoroff Winery (near Plovdiv), which won a second prize for one of their wines in the wine exhibition in Paris this year. Enjoy the special dinner prepared in your honor by the winery hosts. You can buy a bottle or two of your favorites from the winery's selection. Return to Plovdiv for the night.



Day 9

After breakfast you will be escorted to visit a recently found Thracian cult complex (still in excavations). Learn about the mysterious Thracians and their amazing cultural heritage and historic significance during that exclusive

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tour. In the afternoon, indulge in tasting wine at a white wine producing winery in the famous Bulgarian Rose Valley. (Alternatively, visit the Aenoteque of Plovdiv Fair and taste some of the prize-winning wines in the decades of the traditional Vinaria annual wine exhibition, held each February there). Dinner at an exclusive wine and barbecue restaurant in Plovdiv.

Day 10

After breakfast, pack and transfer to the capital of Bulgaria - Sofia. Check in at hotel your five-star hotel (Sheraton, Hilton or similar). Take some time to settle in and continue your day with a walking tour of the center of the Capital. Your guide will take you to the main shopping area and show you the Parliament, the Presidency, the National Art Gallery (former Tsar's Palace) as well as give you essential background information on Bulgaria's political history and present. Enjoy some free time on your own for shopping and sightseeing. In the evening have a farewell dinner at a wine restaurant in the capital. Return to your hotel and prepare yourselves for the flight back home the next day.

Note: Depending on the date of the tour, an evening in Plovdiv or Sofia will be dedicated to an opera performance with our world famous opera singers, some of which you may have already heard in New York, Rome, Milan or London.

Day 11

After breakfast enjoy some free time for relaxing or last visits to the shopping areas or busy coffee shops in the capital. Around noon, depart from the Sofia Airport on time for your flight.



Enjoy a meal on board and have a safe flight!

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Alternative Program with one day and one night extension

Day 10

After breakfast, pack and transfer to the capital of Bulgaria - Sofia. Take a walking tour of the center of the Capital. Your guide will take you to the main shopping area and show you the Parliament, the Presidency, the National Art Gallery (former Palace) as well as give you essential background information on Bulgaria's political history and present. Enjoy some free time on your own for shopping and sightseeing. In the afternoon, transfer to Sandanski, one of Bulgaria's most beautiful towns, a spa resort in south-east Bulgaria and amidst an exclusive wine region and sandy rocks landscape. Check in at your four-star spa hotel, relax in the spa tubs, pools or with a massage and enjoy a hearty dinner will local wines afterwards.



Blessed by sacred, most ancient healers, this town of health is situated on both sides of Banska Bistritza river. It is faced to the South-East and has a thousand years¹ history. Thracians abode it, as well as Romans and Slavs. So it was given different names: Medius, Dizudava, Holy Healers. Since 1949 it took the name of a Bulgarian revolutionary, a fighter for the liberation of Macedonia from the Turkish yoke - Janne Sandanski. The remarkable combination of balmy, health-giving weather and curative mineral waters makes Sandanski the perfect place for modern science-based climatotherapy, spa treatment, rehabilitation, primary and secondary prophylactics and recreation.



Day 11



After breakfast prepare to visit the wine town of Melnik. Melnik is Bulgaria's smallest town and one surrounded by the most spectacular views. It is huddled among frozen sandstone pyramids immobile for millennia, and situated 190 km south of Sofia. Thracians, Romans and Byzantines have written its history. The evidence of its multicultural layers of history is preserved in unique monuments of old architecture, some of which are of national significance. On your way, visit the Rhoden Monastery, the only monastery restored during the first centuries of Ottoman rule which has survived to this day. The day of sightseeing will be brought to an end with a wine tasting at Damianitsa Winery. Farewell dinner with local folk music and transfer back to your hotel. Prepare yourselves for the flight back home the next day.

Day 12

After breakfast, transfer to Thessalonica Airport (Greece). Enjoy a meal on board and have a safe flight!

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