

The Northern Illinois University Alumni Association &
The Office of Alumni Relations

Present

Enchanting Danube River Cruise

May 12 – 22, 2012

\$3,699 per person, double occupancy from Chicago for Main Deck cabins

\$3,799 per person, double occupancy from Chicago for Upper Deck cabins



This is an exclusive travel program presented by the Northern Illinois University Alumni Association and the Office of Alumni Relations.

Day by Day Itinerary

Sat., May 12 – CHICAGO/EN ROUTE (I)

We will depart Chicago's O'Hare International Airport in the late afternoon by scheduled service of United Airlines on the overnight transatlantic flight to Munich, Germany.

Sun., May 13 – MUNICH/SALZBURG (I,D)

As the sun begins to rise on the German heartland we arrive in Munich and meet our Tour Guide who will accompany us on the land portion of our vacation. Leaving the airport, we'll travel across the Bavarian countryside to historic Salzburg, Austria, an enchanting city built on the banks of the Salzach River. Salzburg was largely built by three bishop-princes in the late 16th and 17th centuries, which is what gives the city its Italian flavor and its skyline punctuated by countless medieval spires, domes, belfries and turrets.

Mon., May 14 – SALZBURG (B)

The city's charm is apparent in its picturesque streets full of wrought-iron signs, noble architecture and highly decorated fountains and this is where we'll begin our day. An introductory tour will start on the right bank of the Salzach River where we'll see the grounds of Mirabell Palace and the Mozart Conservatoire before crossing over into the Old Town. Here we'll see the 15th century Altes Rathaus and take in the sites along the romantic Getreidgasse. Next, we'll see both the Collegiate Church and the Franciscan Church as we make our way to the Residence Square, home to the medieval bishops' residence. Our tour will come to an end following a visit to Salzburg Cathedral and 12th century Benedictine St. Peter's Abbey, seen frequently in the "Sound of Music".

Following our tour, the afternoon is at leisure to explore Salzburg on your own. The Old Town, on the south bank of the river, is where you'll find the city's most interesting sights. Be sure to explore the fascinating shops on the quaint Getreidgasse, visit Mozart's birthplace and the 11th century Hohensalzburg stronghold that looms high above the city.

Tues., May 15 – SALZBURG/CRUISING (B,D)

Today we depart Salzburg and travel to the city of Passau, known as the "Town of the Three Rivers" as it is set at the confluence of the Inn, Ilz and Danube Rivers. A tour of the Old Town will introduce us to its charming cobblestone streets, elegantly colored building facades, and graceful arcades. We'll see the Altes Rathaus and visit St. Stephan's Cathedral, a true masterpiece of Italian Baroque, which houses the world's largest church organ with more than 17,000 pipes. Following our tour, we'll embark aboard CroisiEurope's *MS Symphonie* for our Danube River cruise. Get set for a fascinating journey that will take us past the carefully cultivated vineyards of Austria's Wachau district, and the gently undulating countryside that eventually merges

into the incredible wide-open spaces of the great plains of Hungary.

Wed., May 16 – CRUISING (Melk & Durnstein) (B,L,D)

Today we explore the Wachau Valley's charming old villages and steep vineyards. We'll begin our day by traveling to Melk to visit the imposing 900-year-old Benedictine Abbey, a breathtaking example of baroque architecture, which overlooks the town from its dramatic hilltop location. This architectural treasure has 365 windows, one for each day of the year. Following our visit to Melk, we'll return to the ship for lunch before an afternoon visit to the village of Durnstein, the best-known village in the Wachau thanks to the legend of King Richard the Lionheart. We'll see the ruins of Kuenringer Castle where Richard the Lionheart was reputedly held prisoner, and stroll through the medieval cobblestone streets that reveal a wealth of old burgher houses, wine taverns and quaint 16th and 18th century townhouses.

Thurs., May 17 – CRUISING (Vienna) (B,L,D)

Our port of call today is Vienna, the "City of Waltzes". An introductory tour of Vienna will take us along the stately Ringstrasse and showcase the opulent façade of the Neues Rathaus, Parlament, the Burgtheater, and University of Vienna, as well as the grandeur of the Hofburg Complex, a permanent reminder of the glory of the Habsburg Empire. Before our tour comes to an end, we'll visit the magnificent Gothic Cathedral of St. Stephen's. Largely destroyed during World War II, the cathedral has been restored to its former glory by the efforts of the entire nation and is today the very soul of the city. Following our tour, the afternoon is free to explore Vienna at your leisure. Vienna is a compact city and most of its sights are contained within a small area. Stroll along the pedestrian zone surrounding the Gothic Cathedral of St. Stephen, or enjoy a horse-drawn carriage ride through the traffic-free zone around the Hofburg and Spanish Horse Riding School.

Fri., May 18 – CRUISING (Esztergom) (B,L,D)

This morning's port of call is the city of Esztergom, the former capital of Hungary under the reign of the Arpad kings. To this day, Esztergom remains a prominent town, as it is the seat of the Hungarian archbishops, and full of treasures waiting to be discovered. Dominating the skyline is the huge Catholic cathedral and the remains of the 10th century castle. The picturesque Old Town is also well worth exploring. At its heart is the town square, which is home to several cafes. Early this afternoon, we set sail for Budapest. The Hungarian capital, which lies along the banks of the Danube, is also known as the "Pearl of the Danube" and one of the most attractive cities in Europe, often described as the "Paris of Eastern Europe" for its beautiful evening illumination.

Sat., May 19 – CRUISING (Hungarian Plain) (B,L,D)

Today we will experience the beauty of the Great Hungarian Plain which covers nearly half of modern day Hungary. Our first destination is the market town of Kecskemet, which flourished as part of the Sultan's personal possessions during the Turkish occupation. Today, Kecskemet is well known for its secessionist architecture and as the birthplace of composer Zoltan Kodály. Kecskemet's main sites are clustered around three central squares and a walking tour will introduce us to the massive Town Hall and flamboyant Cifra Palace. Next, we're headed to the town Lajosmizse where we'll enjoy an exciting performance by the famous horsemen of the region, followed by a carriage ride through the Pusztas, the typical steppe landscape of the Great Plain. Afterward, we'll enjoy a traditional Hungarian feast, including goulash soup accompanied by Hungarian gypsy csardas. Our return to Budapest will take us across a landscape of sand dunes, grasslands and reed-lined waterways where tiny white farms tend the well-kept pastures and rolling fields of wheat.

Sun., May 20 – CRUISING/BUDAPEST (B)

After breakfast this morning we disembark the *MS Symphonie* for an introductory tour of Budapest beginning in "Buda's" Castle District where we'll see the Royal Palace, one of the symbols of Hungary that has been the scene of battles and wars since the 13th century. We'll also see the seven-hundred year-old Matthias Church, the coronation church of Hungarian Kings, and Fishermen's Bastion occupying a site along Buda's old defensive walls and a medieval square where fish was once sold. Then we'll visit Gellert Hill from where there is a beautiful view of the city. From here, we'll make our way across the Chain Bridge, the city's first permanent bridge to span the Danube, to modern day "Pest".

We'll see the neo-Gothic Parliament, St. Stephen's Basilica, where the Holy Right Hand of the founder of Hungary, King Saint Stephen is on display, and Heroes' Square, a World Heritage Site that pays tribute to Hungary's National Identity.

At the end of our tour, we will arrive at our downtown hotel where the afternoon is free to begin exploring the legendary Hungarian capital on your own. Stroll in the parks of Margaret Island, explore the hidden medieval courtyards of the castle district or visit one of many outstanding museums.

Mon., May 21 – BUDAPEST (B,D)

Today is free to explore the enchanting and exotic capital city of Budapest on our own. As you'll soon find out, Budapest's ornate turn-of-the-century architecture, elaborate bathhouses and wide, leafy boulevards make for an intriguing and unique city experience. If you're in search of any last-minute shopping ideas, visit the pedestrian Vaci Street for unique folk art and Zsolnay porcelain, not too mention colorful cafes and pubs. Museum goers will enjoy a visit to the Hungarian National Museum, the country's richest source of art and artifacts relating to its own turbulent history. Looking for a unique experience? Budapest is known as one of the great spa cities of Europe with over 30 spa-water pools and thermal baths. Whatever you choose to do, Budapest has something for everyone.

Tues., May 22 – BUDAPEST/CHICAGO (B,I)

Early this morning we travel to Budapest Airport in preparation for our return journey home. No better time to celebrate a beginning of new friendships and reflect on memories to last a lifetime!

*** * * Welcome Home * * ***

Visit myniu.com to make your reservation.

The Tour Price Includes:

- Pre-trip assistance.
- Informational packet.
- Alumni staff assistance for a worry-free travel experience.
- Economy-class air transportation by scheduled service of United Airlines (or other scheduled airlines). Meals and light beverages served in-flight according to airline schedules.
- Transportation by deluxe private motor coach with accompanying professional local tour guide(s) on pre and post cruise days and step-on guides for Melk Abbey and Vienna.
- Accommodations in first-class hotels and Main Deck or Upper Deck cabins aboard CroisiEurope's *MS Symphonie*.
- Meals as detailed in the Day by Day Itinerary.
- Sightseeing as detailed in the Day by Day Itinerary including applicable entrance fees.
- Luggage handling and portorage charges for one suitcase per person at the hotels and piers.
- Taxes for included ground services, **and airline taxes, fees, and fuel surcharges \$520 per person.**

The Tour Price Does Not Include: Items of a personal nature such as passport fees; gratuities to the motor coach drivers, Tour Escort, local Tour Guides and shipboard personnel; meals other than those stated above; luggage handling at airports; and personal and baggage insurance.

TOUR CONDITIONS

Tour Deposit and Payment: Reservations may be made by check or credit card (Visa, MC, or Discover). Tour prices do increase every year and it is possible that increases could occur after the printing of this brochure in advance of your tour's departure.

Tour Pricing: This is a package tour in which land tour costs and special group airfares have been combined in the most advantageous way. Should you wish to make any deviation from the package tour by changing your departure and/or return dates, the advantages of the package tour price may be eliminated and additional charges will be assessed.

Travel Insurance: Please review the enclosed USI Travel Insurance Services brochure and letter. This insurance is designed to protect you from trip cancellation/interruption penalties and provide medical expense, medical evacuation, baggage and accidental death coverage, as well as emergency assistance. There is an advantage to early enrollment in this travel insurance program. Purchasing coverage within 15 days (Plus Option) or 21 days (Elite Option) of your initial trip deposit can make you eligible for 1) Waiver of the Pre-Existing Condition Exclusion, to cover certain injuries and illnesses that would not otherwise be covered by the policy 2) Protection for Certain Terrorist Acts if you cancel your trip due to a terrorist incident occurring in any city on your trip itinerary, within 30 days before or after our scheduled departure date, 3) Cancel for Any Reason Coverage, if the Elite Option is purchased, and 4) Protection for Financial Default of an airline, cruise line, or tour operator. If you wish to take advantage of the special above provision, you must enroll within 15 days (21 days for the Elite Option) of the date your initial trip deposit is received.

Please Note: Although purchasing the Travel Insurance is not mandatory for you to travel with our group, if you purchase insurance, it **must** be through USI Travel Insurance Services.

RESPONSIBILITY

THE NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION and/or any travel agency and/or supplier of services pursuant to or in connection with this itinerary shall not be responsible or become liable for any delay incurred by any person in connection with any means of transportation; nor for any loss, damage or injury to person or property by reason of any event beyond the control of any agency or supplier, or occurring without the fault or negligence of such agency or supplier. The right is reserved to substitute the airline to be used; the type of aircraft; and to alter the dates of the tour; the tour routing; or to cancel the trip if a minimum number of bookings is not reached for either the air or land portion of this itinerary. The right is also reserved to substitute hotels for other hotels in available categories. Further, the right is reserved to decline to accept or to retain at any time any person as a participant on any tour or to cancel any tour. No refund will be made for voluntary absence from the tour unless arrangements are made at the time of booking. The schedules contained herein are subject to change without notice. All rates are based on current Tariff and Exchange rates in effect at the time of the printing of this itinerary and are subject to adjustment without prior notification in the event of changes therein or in changes in the number of participants on which the rates are based. The carriers concerned are not to be held responsible for any act, omission or event during the time passengers are not on board their plane or conveyance. The passage contract in use by carrier concerned, when issued, shall constitute the sole contract between the carrier and the purchaser of this tour.

For more information contact the NIU Alumni Association at 815/753-1512.

To make your reservation visit myniu.com and click on travel.

\$100 of the trip cost is tax-deductible as a charitable donation.

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