

The Beautiful Blue Danube River Cruise (written by Lesley Vickers)



Seven members of the travel group recently spent a delightful week on a river cruise on the River Danube. The outward journey went like clockwork with the seven of us being met by a 48 seater coach at Vienna airport to transport us to the boat.

During the holiday we visited Bratislava, Budapest, Melk, Durnstein, Esztergom, and of course Vienna. Various optional excursions were available, of which we all took advantage, four members of the group participating in all the tours. The excursions included city tours, part walking and part coach, in Bratislava, Budapest and Vienna. The first evening we went on a tour of Vienna by night. We also visited Melk Abbey and the Basilica at Esztergom where we climbed 300 plus stairs to reach the dome. The view from the top was well worth the effort. Another trip was to a wonderful horse show at the Putza and there were two musical evenings, one in Budapest and one in Vienna. With the exception of the city of Budapest tour where we had a poor guide, these trips were all very informative and enjoyable.

When we were not off the boat we were able to relax and enjoy the sights from the sun deck. We cruised through Budapest late one evening on our way to Esztergom which was delightful, all the main buildings and bridges in Budapest being floodlit. It was a glorious sight. The men in the group were very interested in the huge locks that we passed through.

The cabins on board were first class with good air conditioning which was very welcome due to the above average temperatures in this part of Europe the week we were there. The food served in the restaurant was good and plentiful with 3 or 4 course meals served at both lunch and dinner. We were a rather noisy table with Wilfred proposing a toast of “bon appétit” before we ate each course! The meals were mainly French cuisine but some meals served were the local national dishes, such as Hungarian Goulash in Budapest and Wiener Schnitzel and Apple Strudel in Vienna. The free drinks on board throughout the holiday were a real bonus.



The journey back to Vienna airport was again in a 48 seater coach and it was heavy hearts that we all said goodbye to each other at Gatwick airport after a wonderful holiday.

The group wish to thank Philip Heady for organising such a memorable trip and it was so sad that he and Valerie were unable to share it with us.

The Delights of Tuscany and Umbria (24th to 30th September 2015)

Thirty-two of us will shortly be heading off on the Travel Group's second trip to Italy. Earlier this month ITV's programmes included Gino's Italian Escape (a cookery based travel programme), which featured two places that we shall be visiting - Siena and Monte Olivieto Maggiore (a Benedictine monastery). There is an enticing cake shop in Siena called Nannini's, whose speciality is a chocolate and nut based cake called Panforte, while the monks produce their own wine, which apparently is excellent. Both will definitely have to be sampled!

Twenty-four of us going to Italy will be attending a pre-trip lunch on Wednesday 2nd September 2015 (midday) at The Hare, Roxwell Road.

Travellers are reminded that Ryanair only allows 15 kgs of hold luggage (although a further 10 kgs can be taken as cabin luggage). Some careful packing will therefore be required and not too many pairs of shoes!