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VIENNA TO PRAGUE HIKING ADVENTURE

OCTOBER 08 – OCTOBER 16, 2019

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VIENNA TO PRAGUE ADVENTURE

Dotted with magnificent estates and castles, laced with fragrant vineyards, and steeped in centuries of tradition, the sun-dappled countryside of the Czech Republic is a hiker's paradise. Set off on foot in the heart of Moravian wine country, sampling famed vintages and exploring Renaissance-era villages frozen in time. Walk through sculpted parklands from Valtice to Lednice; delve into the archaeological treasures of Dolní Věstonice; and go hiking in Podyjí National Park, where remnants of the Iron Curtain still stand. Then venture into the wild landscapes of southern Bohemia, exploring splendidly preserved medieval towns en route to the soaring spires of Prague.

- *Hike the limestone hills of Pálava, part of a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, and explore the richly designed landscapes of the Lednice-Valtice area.*
- *Sample Moravia's renowned wines and discover its enchanting villages, estates, and castles on foot.*
- *Stroll amid ponds and pine forests in southern Bohemia.*
- *Encounter an array of UNESCO World Heritage sites, from Renaissance Telč to fairytale-like Český Krumlov.*

ITINERARY

Day 1 (October 08)

Vienna, Austria/Valtice, Czech Republic

Arrive in Vienna this morning and drive across the border into the vineyard-laced hills of southern Moravia, Czechia. Near the border town of Valtice enjoy a welcome picnic, then venture into the UNESCO-listed Lednice-Valtice Cultural Landscape: a vast architectural park developed by the princes of Liechtenstein beginning in the 17th century, linked by two monumental châteaux. Explore the baroque-style Château Valtice followed by a wine tasting in the château's cellars. Later, check into your hotel and gather for a welcome orientation and dinner for a warm-up hike through the surrounding vineyards. (1 mile walking, 45 minutes)
(Lunch and Dinner)

Day 2 (October 09)

Valtice/Mikulov

Set out on foot from Valtice to Lednice, winding through the bucolic parklands and landscaped countryside designed during the Enlightenment. Arriving at Château Lednice, visit the castle and its stately grounds, adorned with decorative buildings, or "follies," including a Roman aqueduct and a Moorish minaret. Later, transfer to picturesque Mikulov, exploring the town's baroque and Renaissance houses and hilltop château. (8 miles hiking, 4 hours)
(All meals)

Day 3 (October 10)

Pálava Hills

Part of a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, the hills of Pálava unfurl with limestone outcrops, dense forests, and meadows. Discover the archaeological riches of Dolní Věstonice, home to a Paleolithic hunting settlement where fragments of some of the world's earliest known ceramic figurines have been discovered. Later, transfer to the winemaking village of Pavlov, and set off on a hike along the sunny slopes of Pálava. Take in views of golden vineyards and castle ruins on our way back to Mikulov. (8 miles hiking, 4 hours)
(All meals)

Day 4 (October 11)

Čížov/Vranov/Telč

Our day begins in Čížov, a hamlet situated within Podyjí National Park. Part of a militarized zone during the Cold War, this pristine river valley was inaccessible until 1991. Follow a forest trail down to the Dyje River, and cross a foot bridge to the Austrian village of Hardegg, sampling strudel at a local café. After hiking back up from the river, tour the stunning cliff-top castle at Vranov nad Dyjí before driving to Telč. (6 miles hiking, 3–4 hours)
(All meals)

Day 5 (October 12)**Telč/Slavonice/Jindřichův Hradec**

Explore the historic center of Telč, named a World Heritage site for its beautifully preserved Renaissance architecture. Then head south to Slavonice, viewing the delicate sgraffito etched into its Renaissance façades. Hike into the countryside, encountering remnants of World War II fortifications. Our trail ends at Landštejn Castle, one of Central Europe's most important Romanesque monuments. (7 miles hiking, 3–4 hours)

(All meals)

Day 6 (October 13)**Jindřichův Hradec/Třeboň/ Český Krumlov**

Explore Jindřichův Hradec's lakeside chateau and a museum showcasing the largest mechanical nativity scene in the world. Our next destination is the medieval city of Třeboň, surrounded by a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve of canals and fishponds dating from the 15th and 16th centuries. Visit the neo-Gothic tomb chapel of the Schwarzenberg family, and enjoy a pint at the historic Regent Brewery. Then hike to the village of Kojákovice, winding through an evocative Bohemian landscape. (9 miles hiking, 4 hours)

(All meals)

Day 7 (October 14)**Český Krumlov**

Step back in time along the stone-paved streets of Český Krumlov, one of the best preserved medieval towns in the world. Explore the town's massive castle, which houses a baroque theater and lavish palaces and courts. Transfer to Zlatá Koruna, where we embark on a hike to the highest peak in the Blanský Forest Nature Reserve. As an alternative, ride a cable car to the summit and hike back down. (10 miles hiking, 4–5 hours)

(All meals)

Days 8 & 9 (October 15 & 16)**Český Krumlov/Prague**

Drive to Prague, stopping along the way to visit the traditional village of Holašovice or medieval Tábor (time permitting). Celebrate our adventures at a farewell dinner. The next morning, enjoy a walking tour of Prague's charming Old Town and sprawling hilltop castle complex. In the afternoon, transfer to the airport for your return flight.

(Day 8: All meals. Day 9: Breakfast and lunch)

What's Included

- Expert leadership
- Accommodations in hotels and inns
- Transfer to and from airports on days 1 and 9
- Meals as noted
- Sightseeing as noted in the itinerary
- Ground transportation as needed, including luggage transfers
- Basic medical and evacuation insurance

What's Not

International airfare; extra transfers to and from airports; meals not noted in itinerary; insurance other than basic medical and evacuation insurance as noted above (we strongly recommend you purchase the supplementary trip insurance offered by Travel Insurance Services, which includes trip cancellation insurance); optional tipping to local guides and staff; excess baggage charges; airport taxes; and items of a personal nature (sodas, alcoholic beverages, laundry, etc.).

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