

# Grand Alpine Express: Budapest to Venice

<https://www.irtsociety.com/journey/grand-alpine-express-budapest-to-venice/>



## Overview

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### The Highlights

- Travel through Hungary, Austria, Switzerland, Slovenia, and Italy, with six nights onboard the comfortable *Golden Eagle Danube Express*;
- Two nights at the Four Seasons Hotel Gresham Palace, Budapest and two nights at the five-star Kempinski San Clemente Palace;
- City tours of Budapest, Vienna, Innsbruck, Zürich, Trieste, Ljubljana and Venice;
- Lunch on beautiful Lake Como;
- Visit stunning Lake Bled in Slovenia;
- Scenic rail climbs at Semmering & St. Gotthard Pass;
- Ride on the Achenseebahn, Europe's oldest steam-powered cog railway;
- Private concert in Vienna, featuring the [Vienna Supreme Orchestra](#);
- Fully inclusive of meals, drinks, gratuities, touring, & transfers.

# The Tour

The Grand Alpine Express is a scenic feast for the eyes. From the classic capital cities of Budapest and Vienna, venture deep into the Austrian Tyrol before heading across the valleys of the Swiss Alps and onward through the Italian Lake District as you visit Como and Garda before heading into the lesser-known but equally beautiful country of Slovenia and its crown jewel, Lake Bled.

Traverse some of the most scenic railway lines in the world as the [Golden Eagle Danube Express](#) weaves its way through tunnels, across viaducts, and over mountain passes. Journey's end will be in the stunning maritime city of Venice, an outstanding mixture of Gothic and Renaissance palaces perched on the edge of the Italian coast. A perfect end to a memorable journey of alpine discovery.

[Click here for a beautiful brochure with information about the Grand Alpine & Danube Express.](#)

## Itinerary

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### Day 1: Budapest, Hungary

On arrival in Budapest, you will be met at the airport and transferred to the Four Seasons Hotel Gresham Palace for a two-night stay. Enjoy a welcome reception dinner in the elegant surrounds of this art nouveau landmark, with its panoramic views across the River Danube, where you can meet your fellow travelers on this highly-anticipated journey.

### Day 2: Budapest, Hungary

Budapest is actually two cities separated by the Danube. The old city of Buda and the imposing Royal Palace dominates the city with stunning views across the River to the commercial heart of Pest. Our city tour includes the Royal Palace, St. Mathias Church and a panoramic city view from Gellert Hill. We will also see the Citadel, the Opera House, St Stephen's Cathedral, Heroes Square and the City Park.

The rest of the day is at leisure. Stroll along the banks of the Danube, visit the historic Great Market Hall with its endless variety of delicious foods and wines, or head to one of the city's famous thermal baths for a rejuvenating dip. Alternatively, you can relax at the hotel and indulge in the luxurious spa with infinity-edge pool or make use of the state-of-the-art fitness center.

### Day 3: Vienna, Austria

Enjoy a morning drinks reception in the impressive Royal Waiting Room at Budapest Nyugati station before boarding the Golden Eagle Danube Express for our morning departure. Settle into your cabin and later enjoy lunch as the train heads to Vienna.

The stunning capital city of Austria enthralls visitors with its rich heritage; it is a seductive

metropolis of elaborate palaces, renowned coffee houses, classical music and enchanting opera. Today's program will allow you to sample the lively Naschmarkt, home to over 100 food and antique stalls, the famous Schönbrunn Palace, or free time to explore on your own.

This evening, enjoy a private concert featuring the Vienna Supreme Orchestra.

## Day 4: Semmering Pass, Lake Achen & Innsbruck, Austria

Today will be one of the real highlights of the journey as we depart from Vienna in the morning and travel across central Austria and into the Alps. Climb over the Semmering Pass with its 16 viaducts and 15 tunnels, through the famous skiing village of Kitzbuhel to Jenbach, where after lunch we take a scenic drive to the picturesque Lake Achen (Achensee) for a cruise on the water.

From here we will visit the Swarovski Museum and Gardens before traveling the short distance by bus to Innsbruck, capital of Austria's western state of Tyrol, a city in the Alps that has long been a destination for winter sports. Innsbruck is also known for its Imperial and modern architecture. The Nordkette funicular, with its futuristic stations designed by architect Zaha Hadid, climbs up to 2,256m from the city center for stunning bird eye views of the surrounding Alpine terrain.

## Day 5: Zürich, Switzerland

Another fantastic morning on board our private train to simply sit back, relax, and watch the scenery of western Austria unfold as we pass through St. Anton, then on to Liechtenstein and into Switzerland, where we run along the whole of the Lake of Zürich before arriving in the city itself.

The city of Zürich, a global center for banking and finance, lies at the north end of Lake Zürich in northern Switzerland. The picturesque lanes of the central Altstadt (Old Town), on either side of the Limmat River, reflect its pre-medieval history. Waterfront promenades like the Limmatquai follow the river toward the 17th-century Rathaus (Town Hall). While in the city, we will enjoy a traditional Swiss fondue tasting.

## Day 6: St. Gotthard Pass, Switzerland & Lake Como

After leaving Zürich, pass along Lakes Zug and Lucerne (in German, "Vierwäldstättersee", meaning "Lake of the Four Forested Settlements"), before starting the very scenic climb to the St. Gotthard Pass. Once through the old St. Gotthard tunnel, descend through Lugano to Lake Como in Italy, where we stop for lunch on the Lake.

Lake Como is surrounded by high mountains and dramatic cliffs, so it's quite different from the other Italian lakes. A narrow road runs up its western coast towards Switzerland and sits up high above the water, with the towns dropping down beneath it. Renowned for its beautifully kept public gardens and historic villas, it's easy to see why so many celebrities love Lake Como. We will enjoy a boat cruise on Lake Como and visit the beautiful lakeside town of Bellagio.

## Day 7: Lake Garda, Verona & Trieste, Italy

This morning after running along the south shore of Lake Garda we arrive in Verona. Famous for

being the setting of Shakespeare's 'Romeo and Juliet', we enjoy an informative walking tour of Verona's famous sites, including the first century Roman Amphitheatre in Piazza Bra.

After lunch on board we arrive into Trieste, the Italian port, for a short tour. Stop at the vast Piazza Unita d'Italia, the main town square, and climb the hill to the famous Church of San Giusto, built around a medieval complex that dates back to the 13th century. You will have the opportunity to go inside the church for a close-up view of the splendid Byzantine-style architecture enriched with precious mosaics.

## Day 8: Lake Bled & Ljubljana, Slovenia

This morning, rise a bit early to see the beautiful scenery unfolding. The train moves away from Trieste, heads over the border into Slovenia, and continues climbing through the Julian Alps to Lake Bled which, with its island, church, and castle, is an incredibly picturesque alpine lake situated at the foothills of the Alps in north-western Slovenia.

Return to the train for lunch on board as it travels on to Ljubljana, where we discover a delightful combination of ancient architecture and a youthful culture. Our afternoon tour includes visits to Preseren Square, Three Bridges and Dragon Bridge.

## Day 9: Postojna, Slovenia & Venice, Italy

In the morning, enjoy a private visit to Postojna Caves. After, the train heads south onto the 3-mile causeway across the Venice Lagoon and into Venice Santa Lucia station located on the Grand Canal, arriving after lunch.

Say farewell to the train crew and transfer to the five-star Kempinski San Clemente Palace for a two-night stay. Located on its own private island and just minutes away from the iconic Piazza San Marco by private boat, the Kempinski offers a secluded, luxurious oasis with breathtaking views and world-class service.

## Day 10: Venice, Italy

Venice is a truly captivating and romantic place; its unrivaled beauty takes away the breath of first time visitors and regulars alike. We have the opportunity to take a walking tour around the highlights of this spectacular city. Walk through the winding lanes beside the Grand Canal to St. Mark's Square, which for 1,000 years was the heart of Venetian life. We also see St. Mark's Basilica and stroll through the Rialto Market. A trip to Venice would not be complete without a gondola ride along Venice's famous canals (we include a 30-minute gondola in the program).

Alternatively, enjoy the city at your own pace today. Perhaps stroll through the artists' district of Dorsoduro, stopping to take in the city's most breath-taking views from the Accademia Bridge. Simply enjoy the city at your leisure. In the evening we will enjoy a farewell dinner, giving you the opportunity to reflect on your journey with new friends.

## Day 11: Venice, Italy



Following breakfast in the hotel, transfer to the airport for onward departures, or opt to extend your Venice stay.

For a particularly elegant grand finale, consider a Venice-Paris onward journey on the [Venice Simplon-Orient-Express](#).

## Dates & Prices

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### 2025 Dates

May 2 - May 12

Accommodation	Double	Single	Deposit
Deluxe Class	\$17,995	\$26,895	\$2,000
Superior Deluxe Class	\$23,095	\$38,595	\$2,500

All prices are per person.

### 2026 Dates

May 1 - May 11

June 5 - June 15

Accommodation	Double	Single	Deposit
Deluxe Class	\$21,300	\$31,700	\$2,000
Superior Deluxe Class	\$27,200	\$45,400	\$2,500

All prices are per person.  
2026 dates are preliminary and are subject to change.

## More

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Included in the tour price:

- Arrival and departure transfers;
- A generous drinks allowance, including wine, with lunch and dinner;
- All gratuities;

- All off-train touring and entrance fees, with personal headsets to make it easy to hear your guide;
- Complimentary tea, coffee, and bottled drinking water are available in your cabin 24 hours a day;
- An on-board doctor, with medical facilities, is available should the need arise;
- Porterage of bags; your bags will be transferred between the hotels and the train.