

The Northern Illinois University Alumni Association
Presents



From Budapest to Bucharest – Eastern European River Cruise

April 13 – 24, 2018

Jewel Deck \$5,599 Per Person, Double Occupancy from Chicago

Sapphire Deck Balcony Suite \$6,349 Per Person, Double Occupancy from Chicago

Diamond Deck Balcony Suite \$6,449 Per Person, Double Occupancy from Chicago



This is an exclusive travel program presented by the Northern Illinois University Alumni Association

Day by Day Itinerary

Friday, April 13 – CHICAGO / EN ROUTE (I)

We depart Chicago's O'Hare International Airport this afternoon by scheduled airline service on the overnight transatlantic flight to mainland Europe.

Saturday, April 14 – BUDAPEST (I,HD)

As the sun begins to rise on the European continent we arrive in our gateway city and change planes for the connecting flight to Budapest, Hungary. On arrival we'll meet our local Tour Guide who will introduce us to the enchanting and exotic capital city of Budapest. As we'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.

Sunday, April 15 – BUDAPEST (B,HD)

Today we will enjoy 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 view 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." Here 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 completion of our tour, we'll return to our downtown hotel where the remainder of the day is at leisure.

Monday, April 16 – BUDAPEST / CRUISING (B,D)

The morning hours are free to explore Budapest at your leisure. Stroll in the parks of Margaret Island, explore the hidden medieval courtyards of the castle district or visit one of many colorful cafes. This afternoon we set sail from Budapest and begin our journey. With an overall length of over 1,800 miles, the Danube River flows from its source in the Black Forest of Germany through eight countries to the Black Sea. Our home for the next seven nights is the *Scenic Jade*, a sumptuous four-deck ship that boasts a laidback elegance and lavish amenities that are paramount features of Scenic's state-of-the-art 5-star luxury.

Tuesday, April 17 – CRUISING (Kalocsa) (B,L,D)

Our first port of call is Kalocsa, Hungary. Set on the left bank of the Danube River, Kalocsa is one of Hungary's oldest towns and dates back to the early 11th century. As the town evolved it became known for its paprika production and intricate handcrafted embroidery, traditions that still thrive today. This afternoon we'll experience the beauty of the Great Hungarian Plain as we visit the large ranch of a local Puszta horse farm. Here we'll enjoy an exciting performance showcasing the exceptional riding skills of the Magyar horsemen. We'll watch an exciting performance by the famous csikós, dressed in

flowing blue and black outfits, as they perform traditional moves such as laying horses, sitting horses, and carriage driving.

Wednesday, April 18 – CRUISING (Osijek, Croatia) (B,L,D)

Today's port of call is Osijek, located in Croatia's Slavonia region. With the Freechoice shore excursion program you can select your daily activities and sightseeing according to Relaxed, Moderate and Active adventures. Enjoy a tour of Osijek's romantic Old Town featuring the Cathedral of St. Peter and St. Paul, the tallest church in Croatia that contains stunning stained glass windows; as well as the beautiful Croatian National Theatre. You'll also visit Tvrda, the self-contained 18th-century Hapsburg defensive fortress. For those in search of Moderate or Active adventures, you can try your hand at fishing in a local village stream or opt for a blissful guided bike ride through Osijek's countryside. As a *Scenic Jade* guest, we'll also be invited into the home of a local family for a traditional home-cooked meal and the chance to discover what everyday life is really like in Croatia.

Thursday, April 19 – CRUISING (Belgrade, Serbia) (B,L,D)

Our port of call for the day is Belgrade, the former capital of Yugoslavia and current capital of Serbia. Known as the White City, Belgrade's architecture tells its history, with ornate buildings dating back more than 400 years standing alongside purposeful constructions from the communist period. Enjoy a guided city tour where we'll see St. Sava's Church, the largest working Orthodox church in the world, and the Museum of Yugoslav History, the centerpiece of which is the House of Flowers, the former president Josip Broz Tito's tomb. You'll also visit the impressive Kalemegdan Fortress overlooking the confluence of the Danube and Sava rivers, once one of the most fought over strategic points in South Eastern Europe. Alternatively, you can choose from a guided bicycle ride along the Danube River, taste your way around the local market through the cruise lines Shop with a Chef offering, or for some true insight into local life, take a walk through the city with a local.

Friday, April 20 – CRUISING (Iron Gates) (B,L,D)

A day at leisure will allow us to sit back and admire the scenery as we cruise the spectacular Iron Gates, a narrow gorge that the Danube River has carved out between the Carpathian and Balkan Mountains. Not only is it a spectacular setting for a cruise, it's also the natural border between Serbia and Romania. This 83-mile-long gorge is highlighted by a breathtaking backdrop of mountains and forests.

Saturday, April 21 – CRUISING (Svistov & Russe, Bulgaria) (B,L,D)

Today you can discover the Byzantine gem of Veliko Tarnovo and the World Heritage-listed village of Arbanassi, or stay on board as we cruise towards the town of Russe, where you'll be treated to an afternoon guided city tour. Svistov is the jumping off point for a visit to the picturesque hillside setting of Veliko Tarnovo, one of Bulgaria's most beautiful cities. Here you'll visit the hilltop fortress of Tsarevets that served as the capital of the Second Bulgarian Kingdom from 1185 to 1393, when it fell to the Ottomans. You'll also find the city is famous for its

impressive churches and monasteries. Of particular note, you'll see the Church of the Forty Martyrs, which at one time was the final resting place of St. Sava, and later the proclamation site for Bulgaria's independence on September 22, 1908. Afterward, you'll travel to the village of Arbanassi for a visit of the Nativity Church with its intricate floor-to-ceiling murals and icons. For travelers who opted for a leisurely morning on board ship, this afternoon you'll enjoy a guided sightseeing tour of Russe. Because of its stunning Neo-Baroque and Neo-Rococo architecture, the city has earned the designation as a "Little Vienna."

Sunday, April 22 – CRUISING (Silistra, Bulgaria) (B,L,D)

Our last full day on board the *Scenic Jade* begins in the city of Silistra, located on the southern bank of the lower Danube River at the country's border with Romania. From here you'll have an opportunity to travel to the tranquil coastal resort of Varna, the "Pearl of the Bulgarian Black Sea Riviera." Varna is home to the Archeological Museum which houses gold treasures from the Chalcolithic Period, widely believed to be the oldest gold ever discovered. You'll also see the Orthodox Cathedral built shortly after the Liberation of the Ottoman rule, as well as the Roman Baths, built in the 2nd century AD, which are the fourth-largest preserved Roman Baths in all of Europe. Alternatively, you can choose to tour Silistra Fort, or visit a local village and a primary school, to learn about daily life in Bulgaria.

Monday, April 23 – CRUISING / BUCHAREST (B,L,HD)

This morning our river cruise comes to an end in Giurgiu as we disembark from the *Scenic Jade* and travel to Bucharest, where regeneration has breathed new life into the Romanian capital's Old Town. This afternoon we'll enjoy a tour of Bucharest's wide boulevards that have a distinctly French feel, while taking in the period buildings and historical sites with your choice to visit

either Europe's largest building, the enormous Palace of the Parliament constructed by former dictator Nicolae Ceausescu, or the Village Open Air Museum where you'll discover ethnography exhibits depicting Romanian heritage and culture.

Tuesday, April 24 – BUCHAREST / CHICAGO (B,I)

Early this morning we travel to Bucharest's Băneasa-Aurel Vlaicu International Airport in preparation for the return journey home. No better time to reflect on memories of our Eastern European River Cruise to last a lifetime and new friendships made along the way!

*** * * 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 airline service.
- Transportation by deluxe motor coach with accompanying Tour Guides on pre and post cruise days.
- Accommodations in first-class hotels.
- Accommodations based on choice of stateroom aboard the *Scenic Jade*, including personal butler service for every one of our guests.
- All meals as shown in the Day by Day Itinerary, including complimentary unlimited drinks on board the *Scenic Jade*.
- Sightseeing as detailed in the Day by Day Itinerary, including Freechoice shore excursions with applicable entrance fees.
- Luggage handling and portage charges for one suitcase per person at the hotels and piers.
- All gratuities to the motor coach drivers, Tour Guides, shipboard personnel, and local guides.
- Airline taxes and fuel surcharge, and cruise line port charges totaling \$690 per person.

The Tour Price Does Not Include: Items of a personal nature such as passport fees; 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: Travel insurance is very important and can be purchased through USI Travel Insurance Services. This insurance is designed to cover you and your trip investment from trip cancellation/interruption penalties and provide medical expense, medical evacuation, baggage and personal effects loss, and accidental death coverage, as well as emergency assistance. There is an advantage to early enrollment in this travel insurance program. Purchasing coverage within 21 days (Plus and Elite Options) of your initial trip deposit can make you eligible for 1) Pre-existing Medical Condition Exclusion Waiver, and 2) Optional Cancel for Any Reason Coverage (Elite Option). If you wish to take advantage of the special above provisions, you must enroll within 21 days of the date your initial trip deposit is received. Contact Travel Insurance Services at 1-800-937-1387.

RESPONSIBILITY

THE NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION 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 or visit the Travel section at myniu.com to make your reservation.

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

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