

Sunday, August 17th, 2014

Today's Weather: Mostly Sunny
11 – 22 °C / 52 – 72 °F

5:00 AM

Welcome to Bratislava: *Viking Atla* arrives in Bratislava, Slovakia.

6:00 - 11:00 AM

Café Breakfast: Coffee, juice and pastries are available at the coffee station in front of The Lounge.

6:30 - 9:30 AM

Continental Breakfast: A selection of beverages and breakfast items are available on The Aquavit Terrace.

7:00 - 9:30 AM

Breakfast: Enjoy a buffet breakfast and a choice of dishes cooked to order in The Restaurant.

7:30 – 8:30 AM

Concierge Desk Hours: Should you need any assistance during your stay onboard please visit the Concierge.

8:30 - 10:30 AM

Shore Excursion: Bratislava. Take a tour and guided walk of Bratislava, Slovakia's charming capital.

8:30 - 11:30 AM

Optional Excursion: Home Hosted Visit.

11:45 AM

Back On Board: Please be back on board the ship by this time. We will depart Bratislava for Budapest shortly thereafter.

12:00 PM

Lunch: Join us for lunch in The Restaurant.

12:00 PM

Café Lunch: If you prefer, enjoy a lighter, buffet-style lunch on The Aquavit Terrace.

2:00 PM

Wheelhouse Tour: Please sign up at the reception desk.

2:00 – 6:00 AM

Concierge Desk Hours: Should you need any assistance during your stay onboard please visit the Concierge.

3:00 PM

Disembarkation Briefing in the lounge.

3:30 - 4:15 PM

Live Demonstration: Apple Strudel. Learn how to make traditional Austrian apple strudel in The Lounge with a live demonstration.

5:30 - 7:00 PM

Cocktail Hour: Enjoy one of our cocktails and live music in The Lounge.

6:30 PM

Captain's Cocktail Party: Join Captain Vojtech for a farewell toast to celebrate your Viking journey, new friends and memories made.

6:45 PM

Daily Briefing Please meet Program Director Caspar in the Lounge to find out about tomorrow's excursions and events.

7:00 PM

Farewell Dinner: Join fellow travelers in The Restaurant for a farewell dinner.

7:00 PM

Bar Menu: Enjoy a casual meal on The Aquavit Terrace.

10:00 PM (Approximately)

Szia Budapest: *Viking Atla* approaches Budapest. Join us for music and a glass of champagne as we glide into Budapest tonight—it's a wonderful opportunity to see this beautiful city in all her starry glory.

BRATISLAVA



Zoom in: Bratislava

Set at the foot of the Little Carpathian Mountains, the charming historic center of Bratislava, the capital of Slovakia, is an old town of cobblestone streets, candy-colored 18th-century rococo buildings, sidewalk cafés and pedestrian plazas that make for a welcoming and relaxing visit.

Towering above the town is the impressive **Bratislava Castle**. In 1811, a fire destroyed the fortress and it was reconstructed in the 1950s. The striking **St. Martin's Cathedral** was once part of the city fortifications. Construction began in 1311 and for several hundred years, St. Martin's was the coronation church of Bratislava. Also worth a visit is **Michael's Gate**, which features a 15th-century tower.

In the **Main Square** of the Old Town, the **Roland Fountain** is one of the city's most important landmarks. Measuring a massive 30 feet wide, its construction was ordered by Emperor Maximilian II, the king of Royal Hungary, in 1572, to provide a public water supply. The fountain features a statue sculpted by Andras Luttringer of Maximilian, in full armor, as the legendary knight and town protector, Roland.

On the **Main Square**, you will also find aristocratic palaces and the baroque **Jesuit Church**. The people of Slovakia are deeply religious and the city is home to numerous churches. In what was once the Jewish quarter of the city, the Museum of Jewish Culture has thought-provoking exhibits about the Jewish community that was lost during WW II. Built in 1886, the historic building of the **Slovak National Theatre** can be found on **Hviezdoslav Square**.

Concierge tip

As you walk around, you may notice a few people who aren't people at all—some of Bratislava's most beloved citizens are cast in bronze! The most famous is *Cumil*, or "the Watcher," peeking out from a manhole in the street. Some of the others are a photographer, a French soldier wearing a Napoleon-style hat and a smiling gentleman tipping his top hat. See how many of the bronze statues you can spot!

IMPORTANT SHIP CONTACT INFORMATION

Your Viking Atla team wishes you a happy and memorable day!

Ship Contacts:

Reception: +49 152 225 38 048

Ship Location:

Bratislava, LOD P-47



Your room with a view: Views along the river

Kilometer 1,819

Gabčíkovo Lock and power station. It is thought that this town was originally named (in Hungarian) for the Patzinak tribe that settled here, a semi-nomadic people from the Central Asian steppes. Today, it is home to one of the Danube's deepest locks, with a lifting capacity of about 60 feet.

Kilometer 1,767 on your left

Komárno is Slovakia's main port on the Danube. It was once united with the city of Komárom across the river (now joined by the Elizabeth Bridge). But at the end of World War I, the Danube became the border of the newly established Czechoslovakia and Hungary, thus splitting the town in two.

Kilometer 1,767 on your right

Komárom. The smaller part of this formerly united town lies in Hungary. It is home to old fortifications and a palace with Roman monuments.

Kilometer 1,719 on your right

Esztergom. Esztergom's cityscape is dominated by a 19th-century neoclassical cathedral located next to a red-brick castle. The huge dome, one of the largest in the world and certainly the largest in Hungary, can be seen from very far away—little wonder, as it was modeled after St. Peter's Basilica in Vatican City. It served as the seat of Hungary's government for 300 years. The Cathedral's treasury holds untold riches from rulers past—jewels, gold and robes.

Kilometer 1,695 on your right

Visegrád. Visegrád Castle was built in the 13th century as a defense from Mongols. The kings of the Anjou Dynasty (1308–1382) added a royal palace to the fortification and it was soon known as the most luxurious palace in the country. Both buildings were destroyed by the Ottoman encroachment in the 16th and 17th centuries. Locals took stones from the castle to build their houses and Emperor Leopold I had most of the castle demolished for fear of Hungarian rebels. It wasn't until 1934 that an architect began to excavate the former royal residence. Today, it houses exhibits about Visegrád's history and the town's former royalty. Riverside, the toll-keeper at the old Solomon Tower collected levies from river-goers.

Danube Bend or Dunakanyar ("Knee of the Danube"). This is considered the most beautiful stretch of the Danube in Hungary. As the river turns southward, farms, villages and ruined castles dot the landscape as the river is forced by steep, green hills into a dramatic gorge.

Kilometer 1,694 on your left

Nagyvaros is a former artists' colony that drew Hungary's creative set for decades. Today, it is a popular holiday resort.

Kilometer 1692 on your right

Szentendre Duna Branch. As we round the Danube Bend, it might appear that another river forks off to the south. But in fact, this is the westernmost point of Szentendrej-sziget ("Andrew Island"). The 24-mile-long stretch of land follows the southward curve of the Danube, home to colorful lanes of baroque houses and hilltop churches. Szentendrej-sziget is also a popular fishing and beach spot for residents of Budapest.

Kilometer 1,680 on your left

Vác was a Roman fortress in the 9th century and was often destroyed and rebuilt because of its strategic position. In 1241, the Mongols captured the small town and in 1544 it was occupied by the Turks during the Ottoman Hungarian campaigns. In the 18th century, Vác began to flourish with the construction of baroque houses and a remarkable neoclassical cathedral.

Kilometer 1,651

Margit-sziget ("Margaret Island"). This recreational island is named for the daughter of King Bela IV, who spent her life in the Dominican convent here. The island lies between the old towns of Buda and Pest and its thermal springs and spa facilities are internationally known.



Fast facts: Slovakia

WHERE: Located in Central Europe, landlocked Slovakia is bordered by the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Ukraine and Austria

SIZE: Slovakia is almost 19,000 square miles, nearly twice the size of Wales and slightly smaller than Massachusetts

POPULATION: About 5 million

GEOGRAPHY: Most of the country is rugged and mountainous—the Tatra Mountains in the north are interspersed with many scenic lakes and valleys. Slovakia has a temperate climate, with warm summers and moderate winters. Increasingly, winter sports are popular in the Slovakian mountains, notably at Donovaly and Chopok. The capital, Bratislava, sits on the Danube River and is the political and economic heart of the country.

CURRENCY: Euro

LANGUAGE: Slovak, with around 10% of the population speaking Hungarian

GOVERNMENT: Parliamentary democracy led by a president and a prime minister

RELIGION: Roman Catholic 68.9%, Protestant 10.8%, Greek Catholic 4.1%,

At a glance: The history of Slovakia

The people of Slovakia are descended from the Slavic peoples, who settled in the Danube River basin in the 6th and 7th centuries. Throughout history, the Slovak people have been subjected to rule and domination by invading tribes or armies, notably the Magyars (Hungarians).

Between 1939 and 1944, Slovakia was a German-controlled state. It was then conquered by the Soviets, who wanted to create a new, pro-Soviet and Communist Czechoslovakia. This lasted until the fall of Communist rule in Czechoslovakia, during the Velvet Revolution of 1989. In 1993, the Slovaks and the Czechs agreed to separate peacefully. Slovakia joined both NATO and the European Union in 2004.

Bratislava was the capital (1536–1784), the coronation city (1563–1830) and the seat of the Diet of the Kingdom of Hungary (1536–1848) for many years. From 1960 to 1993, it was the capital of the federal state of Slovakia within Czechoslovakia. It has been the capital of Slovakia since its independence.

Word of mouth

"My perfect moment on Viking river cruise was... watching the reflections in the inky blue Danube as we sailed slowly under the Chain Bridge and past the majestic floodlit Parliament buildings in Budapest."

—Caroline Newberry, Liverpool, U.K.