

Imperial Castles Tour + Passion Play

Castles of Germany, Austria & the Czech Republic
and the Oberammergau Passion Play

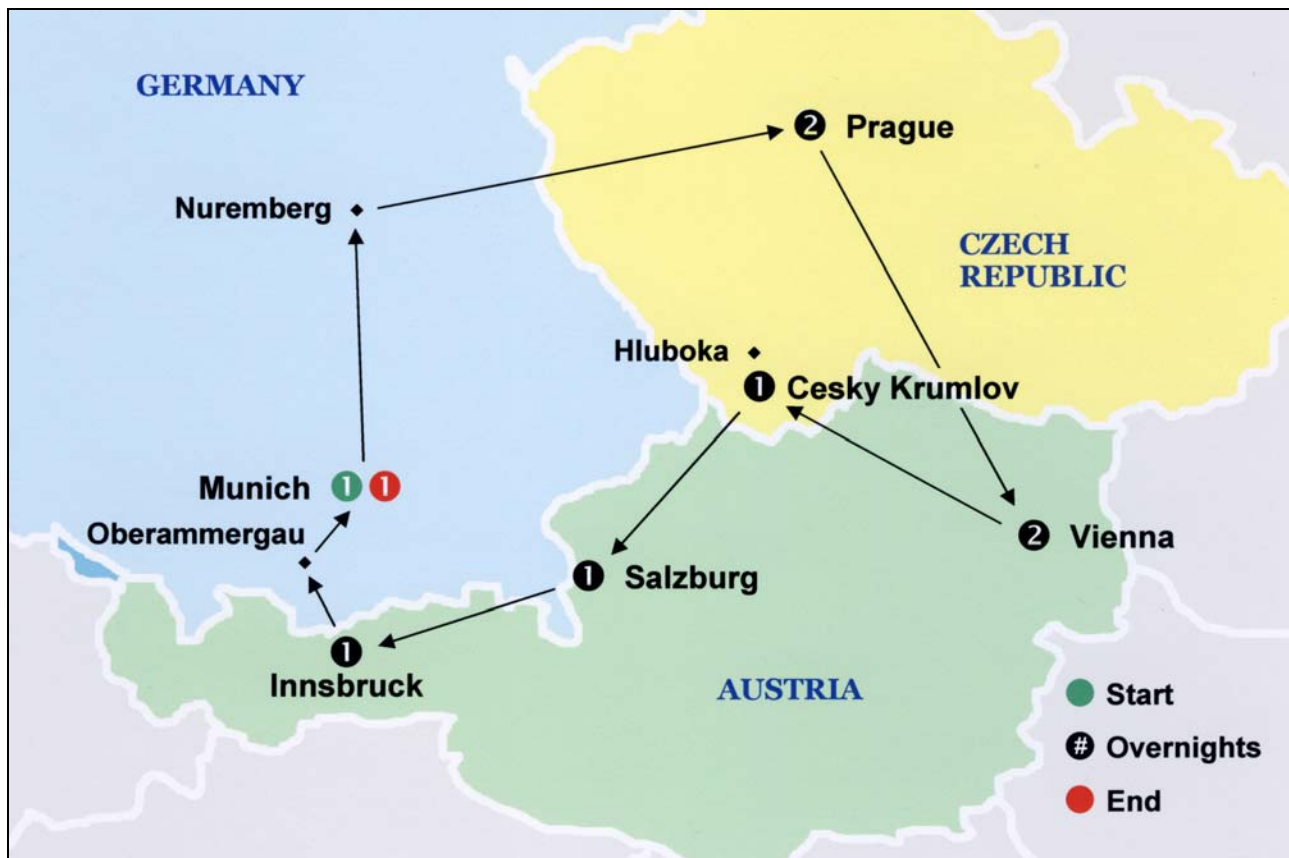


Tour the legacies of the centuries when European imperial emperors and countries competed to build the largest, most ornate, and most expensive castles and palaces.

Castle, palace and regional highlights include the Hofbraeuhaus in Munich, Hluboka, Prague Castle and Cesky Krumlov Castle in the Czech Republic, Schoenbrunn in Vienna, Fortress Hohensalzburg, Castle Hellbrunn and Mirabell Gardens in Salzburg, the Golden Roof in Innsbruck, and King Ludwig's Linderhof Castle in Bavaria.

And of course enjoy your day in Oberammergau, visiting the Passion Play with Category 1 seats!

Map



Itinerary - 2010 Tour

Day 1 - Thursday, June 17

Board your flight from home to Munich, Germany. This itinerary assumes this to be an overnight flight. Air fare independently arranged.



Day 2 - Friday, June 18 - WELCOME TO MUNICH

Arrival in MUNICH, Germany. **At 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. the complimentary transfers depart from the airport to your hotel in Munich.**

Tonight you'll meet your travelling companions and tour director, board your sparkling clean coach and enjoy an orientation drive of Munich followed by a welcome dinner at the Hofbraeuhaus, the world's most famous beer hall.

> *Your tour includes: Transfer from airport to Munich hotel, three-course dinner with menu choice, including one beverage and coffee or tea after dinner, overnight in Munich.*

Day 3 - Saturday, June 19 - NUREMBERG, PRAGUE

After breakfast we head north to NUREMBERG, the former free Imperial City dominated by a large fortress, the Burg. An orientation drive features the landmarks of the city and ends on the main square, the Hauptmarkt, where each year Germany's most famous Christmas Market takes place. Free time for early lunch in the city centre before we continue our journey.

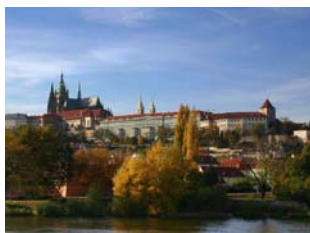
We head east to PRAGUE, the immortal capital of the Czech Republic, also called the Golden City or the Mother of Cities. Enjoy a leisurely evening stroll through the old town with your local guide. See the Jewish Prague, Old Town Square, and the Astronomical Clock, and enjoy a great Bohemian Dinner in Town tonight.



> *Buffet breakfast, door-to-door transportation, local guide in Prague, three-course dinner, Hotel Mövenpick in Prague*

Day 4 - Sunday, June 20 - PRAGUE

Today in PRAGUE you are going to spend all morning at one the largest castles in the world, Hradcany or Prague Castle. There was already a castle here in the 9th century. It was rebuilt in the 14th century in gothic style under Charles IV, and given its final style under Empress Maria Theresa. Today it is the historical and political centre of both city and state.



Day 4 - Sunday - Prague, continued

Enjoy a free afternoon and evening for shopping or to join the locals on Wenceslas square, visit one of the many museums, go for a stroll in the park or along the Vltava River, maybe get a ticket for an opera tonight.

Dinner on your own tonight.

> *Buffet breakfast, door-to-door transportation, entrance fee for Prague Castle, service of local guide, Hotel Moevenpick in Prague*

Day 5 - Monday, June 21 - VIENNA

We say goodbye to Prague this morning and head southeast to VIENNA, the capital of Austria and at one time capital of one of the largest empires in Europe.

We arrive in time for lunch in Vienna, after a drive along the Ring Road which offers Vienna's most famous sights: Opera, Hofburg, National Museum, Town hall, Burgtheater, University, Parliament and much more. Afterwards join your local guide for a walking tour of the heart of Vienna, including an inside visit at St. Stephen's Cathedral. Enjoy free time for shopping on Kaertnerstrasse or Graben or more sightseeing.



We have an unforgettable dinner in a typical Heurigen tonight.

> *Buffet breakfast, door-to-door transportation, guided sightseeing tour of Vienna, entrance to St. Stephen's Cathedral, three-course dinner, Hotel Ananas in Vienna*

Day 6 - Tuesday, June 22 - VIENNA, SCHOENBRUNN

This morning in VIENNA we bypass the long lines with pre-arranged access to see Schoenbrunn, Austria's answer to Louis XIV's Versailles. See Maria Theresa's summer palace and enjoy free time in the splendid baroque garden. Inside guided tour with local specialist. Afterwards you are shown how apple strudel is made in the Imperial Kitchen, and you may try it together with a cup of coffee.



Day 6 - Tuesday - Vienna, continued

Afternoon and evening at leisure. The to- do list is endless. Maybe ride the Giant Ferris Wheel in the Prater, known from the movie "The Third Man", visit the Opera or the Hofburg from the inside, relax in one of the beautiful parks, spend time in a typical "Kaffehaus", or sign up for a classical concert.

Dinner on your own tonight.

> *Buffet breakfast, door-to-door transportation, guided tour of Schoenbrunn Palace, apple strudel and coffee, Hotel Ananas in Vienna*

Day 7 - Wednesday, June 23 - HLUBOKA, CESKY KRUMLOV

After breakfast we leave Vienna and back into the Czech Republic to Chateau HLUBOKA nad Vltavou.

The town of Hluboka nad Vltavou (4,500 citizens) is famous, above all, for its stunning Hluboka Chateau, built in the Windsor Neo-Gothic style, with its splendid interiors. The castle is surrounded by beautiful gardens and is situated in the middle of a large English park. Adjacent to the castle is the Ales South Bohemian Gallery with a unique exposition of Bohemian medieval art (a well-known collection of Gothic Madonnas) and equally attractive twentieth-century art.

Inside guided tour of the Palace.



From there a very short ride to CESKY KRUMLOV, which is one of the best preserved medieval towns in the world. On the UNESCO World Heritage list it ranks Number Two, only after Venice.

After free time for lunch, join your local guide for a tour of the Castle of Cesky Krumlov, founded by the Lords of Krumlov in the thirteenth century. It is the second largest castle in the Czech Republic, after Prague Castle.

Chateau Cesky Krumlov

The tall rock cliffs jutting out over the Vltava river were populated long before the oldest parts of today's castle and church were founded. The first settlement of the castle promontory dates back to the Bronze Age.

The original Gothic castle was founded by the Lords of Krumlov some time before 1250. They represented a branch of the powerful family of the Witigonen, with the five-petalled rose in their coat-of-arms.

> *Buffet breakfast, door-to-door transportation, guided tours of Cesky Krumlov and Hluboka Castles, dinner at hotel Hotel Ruze in Cesky Krumlov*

Day 8 - Thursday, June 24 - SALZBURG

After breakfast we go south the scenic way – along the Vltava River to SALZBURG, this world famous city where upon arrival you are met by your local specialist for a guided walking tour. See the Mirabell Gardens, Getreidegasse with Mozart's Birthplace, the Cathedral and take the funicular up to Fortress Hohensalzburg for an inside guided tour.



In the evening a surprise: dinner in Castle Hellbrunn, one of the settings for the Sound of Music. Enjoy a fantastic Castle Dinner and see the Trick Fountains in the famous Garden of Hellbrunn.

> *Buffet breakfast, door-to-door transportation, entrances to Hohensalzburg, funicular, and Hellbrunn Gardens, service of local guide, three-course dinner in Hellbrunn, Hotel Austrotel in Salzburg*

Day 9 - Friday, June 25 - INNSBRUCK

Today we depart for INNSBRUCK on the scenic Alpine road via St. Johann.

Upon arrival in the capital of the Tyrol enjoy a nice stroll to see the famous little Golden Roof below the impressive Austrian Alps, the fine baroque church, the Hofburg, built by Empress Maria Theresia, and maybe shop for Swarovski Crystal, which is made in Innsbruck.



In the evening, we have a nice Tyrolean dinner and a traditional folklore show with yodelling, alphorn blowing, Schuhplattling and dancing.

> *Buffet breakfast, door-to-door transportation, entrance to Tyrolean dinner show, including three-course dinner, overnight in Innsbruck*

Day 10 - Saturday, June 26 - LINDERHOF, OBERAMMERGAU, PASSION PLAY

Today we say goodbye to Austria and the Inn Valley and soon after leaving Innsbruck cross the border back into Germany.

Morning break in LINDERHOF, Bavarian King Ludwig II's beautiful castle hidden deep in the forest, not far from Oberammergau. Ludwig spent more time at Linderhof than his other castles, and it served as a background for the romantic fancies of the young king.

Day 10 - Saturday, continued

We visit the Castle from the inside with a castle guide. Afterwards we take a look into the Grotto and the Kiosk. Time to explore the beautiful gardens on your own.

Afterwards a short ride to Ettal and its famous monastery, where you also have time for lunch.

Then on to Oberammergau for another highlight of your tour: The Oberammergau Passion Play.

The Oberammergau Passion Play was first performed in 1634 to honour the village's vow that it would perform a passion play depicting the life and death of Jesus every ten years if it were spared the effects of the bubonic plague then sweeping the region. Oberammergau was spared the worst effects of the plague and has continued to honour its commitment throughout the centuries.



In the year 2000 Oberammergau presented its Passion Play for the 40th time.

The play is now performed repeatedly over the course of five months during the last year of each decade, and involves over 2,000 performers, musicians, and stage technicians, all residents of Oberammergau. The Passion Play Theatre, with renovations completed in 1999, now accommodates an audience of 4,720 in covered seats.



The first part of the performance runs from 2:30 to 5:00 p.m., the second from 8:00 to 10:30 p.m. Your ticket category is "1".

During the break enjoy a nice dinner in town. After the performance we take a short ride back to Munich for overnight.

> *Buffet breakfast, door-to-door transportation, entrance and guided tour of Linderhof, Category 1 ticket to Oberammergau Passion Play, three-course dinner with choice, overnight in Munich.*

Day 11 - Sunday, June 27 - HOME FROM MUNICH

Time to say "Auf wiedersehen". One final breakfast and then transfer to **MUNICH Airport** for your return flight home.

> *Buffet breakfast, transfer to Airport*



Cost and Date Information

This 2010-only tour has been completed.

Other tours are available. Please see www.europeancastlestours.com .

Contact Information

Would you like to talk to passengers from previous tours? Let me know.

I will be pleased to answer questions you may have, and very pleased to take your reservation.

Astrid Baur, Tour Director

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