

RIVER CRUISING

THE DANUBE RIVER

Cultures of Central Europe



→ *Classic*
JOURNEYS



“Classic Journeys provides unbeatable access to experiences around the globe.”

— *Travel + Leisure*

River Cruising, Reimagined

Classic Journeys takes river cruising to a whole new level when you join us for a Danube-inspired adventure like no other. Aboard your Swiss-built 5-star cruise ship, you unpack just once—and embark on a daily collection of cultural and walking experiences handcrafted exclusively for our guests only. A full-time local guide—dedicated to your small group only—is a super well-connected companion who introduces you to experiences and people that other passengers can only envy. Your bespoke cultural experiences include a remarkable foray into the Czech Republic to visit Cesky Krumlov and to walk on quiet farmland paths. You also enjoy privately guided tours in Budapest, Vienna, Bratislava as well as exclusive on-shore activities while your shipmates are required to be onboard. Of course, you have unlimited use of all of the ship's amenities from observation lounge to wellness center and rooftop deck. Your luxuriously appointed stateroom has a wall of floor-to-ceiling windows, and the ship's crew is hospitable to the Nth degree. To take your cruise another step beyond the usual, Classic Journeys treats you to a delicious variety of on-shore dining experiences from a classic café lunch in Vienna to private dinners in Budapest's finest restaurants.

DAY 1

BUDAPEST

- Settle in aboard your 5-star ship
- Join your Classic Journeys guide for an exclusive culinary dinner in Budapest

Embarkation is an exciting moment on any cruise – and especially when you step aboard a 5-star craft as wonderful as this one. You're greeted by your Classic Journeys guide – a local expert who is with you all week to lead you on immersive small-group explorations handcrafted exclusively for you. While your cultural and walking activities are far above and beyond those available to the other passengers, you all share the personal attention of the ship's hospitable crew. After you settle into your stateroom, go for a stroll to scout out all of the fine amenities including multiple restaurants, the expansive topside deck and wellness center. (You have plenty of time to explore the city when your ship returns here for the final days of the cruise.)

To kick off the week, your guide arranges a lovely welcome dinner at a classic restaurant in the heart of Budapest.

OVERNIGHT: CRUISE TO ESZTERGOM
MEALS: D

DAY 2

ESZTERGOM

- Discover historic Esztergom on a guided walk
- Enjoy the views on a relaxing afternoon cruise

You are forgiven if you first mistake the massive Basilica of Esztergom for an optical illusion. The massive green dome supported by a tight circle of columns seems completely out of place where it rises above the trees. But it certainly is real...and only the first of a remarkable series of sights that fill the days ahead. Separate from the other passengers, you're off to explore this city, the seat of Roman Catholicism in Hungary. Your dedicated Classic Journeys guide fills you in on local history and the other charms of the town of Esztergom.

This afternoon, you get your first extended taste of life on the Danube as your ship glides up the river. It's a great chance to relax in a lounge chair on the Sun Deck and sip a glass or two of one of the region's great wines.

OVERNIGHT: CRUISE TO BRATISLAVA
MEALS: B, L, D

DAY 3

BRATISLAVA

- Explore Bratislava on a guided walk
- Stroll across the Bridge of Freedom to Austria
- Enjoy lunch at Schloss Hof, an 18th-century castle

When you wake this morning, the view out your stateroom's floor-to-ceiling windows is Bratislava, the capital of Slovakia. Beautifully restored since the end of the Cold War, the city is a blend of 1,000-year-old history and the dynamism of one of the most rapidly changing cities in Europe. With your group's dedicated guide, you go for a walking tour of Bratislava's Old Town, and see some of the finest medieval, Renaissance and 19th-century architecture in central Europe, including the stunning Mirbach Palace. At the city's highest point, you get a reminder of more recent

history in bunkers that date back to the Cold War. And as you walk across the Bridge of Freedom back into Austria, the vista is splendid.

While all other passengers re-board the ship for a long afternoon cruise, you have the opportunity available only to Classic Journeys guests to stay ashore with your guide to explore more of the countryside. Your destination is Schloss Hof, the massive "hunting cottage" built by Prince Eugen of Savoy starting in 1725. Renowned for its sculpted gardens, the estate was a favorite getaway of Habsburg emperors. In addition to a tour, you also have the pleasure of taking lunch here with a menu that proudly features regional delicacies.

Late this afternoon, you rendezvous with the ship, which pulls briefly to shore just to allow your group to re-board. After a unique and active day, a leisurely evening on the river is just right.

OVERNIGHT: CRUISE TO DÜRNSTEIN
MEALS: B, L, D

DAY 4

DÜRNSTEIN / MELK

- Explore Dürnstein and terraced vineyards
- Learn about the marvels of Melk's 11th-century abbey

In the morning you have a short discovery walk through Dürnstein, an utterly photogenic little town famous for the Baroque sky-blue church steeple. And that castle on the hill high above? It's where Duke Leopold VI held Richard the Lionheart prisoner after the Crusades.

Throughout the week, you marvel at how terraced vineyards cling to the steep slopes of the Wachau Valley. This afternoon, your Classic Journeys guide shows you the way along a path through some of the lower terraces. You get a close-up look at the vineyards and wonderful vistas of the river.

You also make an easy pilgrimage to Melk for a chance to visit the town's impressive Benedictine abbey. Founded by an Irish monk and dating from 1089, it serves as a repository for 100,000 medieval volumes and valuable relics. Under its golden domes, you can also spot magnificent artwork by 16th-century "Danube School" masters including Albrecht Durer and Lucas Cranach.

Enjoy dinner and a fun evening on the ship tonight.

OVERNIGHT: CRUISE TO LINZ
MEALS: B, L, D

DAY 5

CESKY KRUMLOV / ROZMBERK CASTLE

- Wander in one of the Czech Republic's finest villages
- Stretch your legs on a quiet walk in beautiful countryside

While the other passengers spend another day in Austria, this morning you cross the border into the Czech Republic to see one of the country's great cultural treasures. The rolling countryside is dotted with farmsteads, pastures and thick swathes of forest. Nestled there on the oxbow twists of the Vltava River is the village of Cesky Krumlov (pronounced "CHESS-key KROOM-loff"). It's as if you've traveled centuries back in time as you walk the narrow streets with your local guide. Every balcony is draped in

flowers. Cafés hang out over the banks of the river. Over it all floats a magnificent castle that was the family seat of the Rozmberk family for over 300 years, and you see the views they commanded when you tour the grounds.

After lunch, you have a chance to get a feel for the countryside on a lovely walk. On pasture and woodland trails, you pass close enough to barnyards to engage with the farmers at work. You experience an hour or two of uncanny solitude when the only sounds are the breeze in the grass or the distant ringing of a steeple bell. Altogether, it's the kind of authentic, immersive day that makes you the envy of your fellow passengers when you tell them about it this evening.

OVERNIGHT: CRUISE TO VIENNA
MEALS: B, L, D

DAY 6

VIENNA

- Enjoy a private exploration of Vienna with your Classic Journeys guide
- Go for an easy bike ride on Danube Island

Vienna is one of Europe's most splendid cities with its ornate palaces, regal boulevards and, of course, pastries like no other! No sooner do you dock this morning than your Classic Journeys guide leads your small group off for a one-of-a-kind exploration. You get an impressive sense of the Habsburg Empire as you walk on the Ring, the famed circular boulevard lined with monumental buildings. You also stroll the medieval lanes of the Inner City to Saint Stephen's Cathedral, Austria's pinnacle of Gothic architecture. On the Graben, one of Vienna's most famous streets, beautiful shops invite you to browse.

For the quintessential Viennese experience, you claim a table at a coffee house for lunch and linger like the locals do. Ask any of them how they'd most like to spend the rest of their afternoon, and they would point you to the Danube Island – exactly where you're headed next. This 21-mile long ribbon of green is the favorite local getaway, and you have a chance to take it in on an easy-going walk or bike ride.

This evening, you're on the ship for dinner and a recital.

OVERNIGHT: CRUISE TO BUDAPEST
MEALS: B, L, D

DAY 7

BUDAPEST

- Experience Budapest on a guided walk
- Feast on a farewell dinner in one of the city's fine restaurants

Upon docking in Budapest, your Classic Journeys guide whisks you off for a special visit of Budapest. The colorful hills of Buda lie on one side of the Danube; the cosmopolitan streets of Pest crowd up against the other bank. Together, they create the cultural and commercial heart of Hungary. Along with our local friend, Zsofi (isn't it great to be able to say you saw Budapest with your local friend?), you start on the Pest side, visiting Europe's largest synagogue. You also take in Hero's Square and the Parliament building, which is graced by two-dozen slender towers and a vast dome.

After lunch along cosmopolitan Váci utca, you explore the fortifications on the Buda side. A stroll through the cobblestone streets reveals a few centuries worth of architectural treasures. But the grand delight is Castle Hill leading up to the Royal Palace. This entire district was in ruins by the end of 1944. As the city dug out, archaeologists discovered medieval buildings and restored the castle walls to their former glory.

Tonight, Classic Journeys invites you to a festive farewell dinner that offers you a taste of local cuisine. Then, if you're up for a lively last night, make a foray to Vorosmarty ter, the impressive square where street musicians rule and you can relax with an after-dinner coffee at a sidewalk cafe.

OVERNIGHT: BUDAPEST
MEALS: B, L, D

DAY 8

BUDAPEST

- Bid a fond farewell to the ship and your guide
- Continue your travels or begin your homeward journey

After breakfast, you disembark for your flight home or to continue your travels.

MEALS: B



Tour Hotels



MS Thomas Hardy

On your Swiss-built 5-star vessel, a crew of 44 serves a maximum of just 169 guests. Your stateroom offers a French balcony and floor-to-ceiling windows. Amenities include fine dining, panoramic observation lounge, spa, fitness room, plunge pool and wifi.

OVERNIGHT: FAIRFIELD | NIGHTS: 7

Tour Dates & Prices

Tour Dates	Price per Person	Price per Person
	Double Occupancy	Single Occupancy
June 20-27, 2020	\$5,995	\$8,490
July 24-31, 2020	\$5,995	\$8,490
October 12-19, 2020	\$5,995	\$8,490
June 22-29, 2021	\$6,095	\$8,590
July 23-30, 2021	\$6,095	\$8,590
October 11-18, 2021	\$6,095	\$8,590

Want a different date? Or your own date? Visit CLASSICJOURNEYS.COM/PRIVATE to learn more about private journeys.

Trip Essentials

TRIP LENGTH: 8 Days, 7 Nights

START: 4:30 PM Port of Budapest on board the Thomas Hardy, Budapest, Hungary

END: 9:00 AM Port of Budapest, Budapest, Hungary

TERRAIN: Easy to moderate on good trails, with van support.

What's Included

- Memorable accommodations for 7 nights
- All meals are included
- Full-time experienced guide
- Admissions to scheduled events as noted in the detailed daily itinerary
- Gratuities for cruise, meals, and baggage
- All land transportation during the trip

Above & Beyond Benefits

- Invisible Check-In
- Wine on Us
- Perfect Pairings Dinners
- Privileged Access Events

READY TO BOOK?
CLICK TO MAKE A RESERVATION

Or give us a call

1-833-387-1210

Mon-Fri 8:00AM – 5:00PM PST

moreinfo@classicjourneys.com



TRAVEL WORRY-FREE!

It's easy with insurance from Travel Guard. Your policy can cover trip cancellation, travel delays, lost luggage, medical emergencies, and more. If you are traveling with kids, add them to your policy at no extra cost. [Click here](#) or call 800-826-4919 for details.

AMBASSADOR CLUB

As a Classic Journeys guest, you are invited to join the Ambassador Club after your first Classic Journeys tour. As a member, you'll have access to a [whole suite of Ambassador benefits](#) you can use immediately and as often as you like.

ENJOY THE UNEXPECTED

When you travel with Classic Journeys, you can expect handcrafted surprises built into every trip, but some things just can't be anticipated. Unusual weather, a once-a-year festival or an unscheduled site closing will inspire us and your local guide to improvise and modify this itinerary. Likewise, the hotels named here are used on the majority of our trips, but occasionally one of them can't accommodate us. If that happens, you can count on us to let you know before departure and make sure you're in a hotel of equal or better quality. It's our goal to make your trip exceptional!

**Any discount offered cannot be combined with other offers, and only applies to published (regularly scheduled public) departure dates in our catalogs or on our website.

THE Classic Journeys Difference



HANDCRAFTING TRIPS OF A LIFETIME.

At the end of the day, we fundamentally believe that every guest on every departure of every trip should have a trip of a lifetime. We're fortunate to play the role of well-connected friend, linking our guests with amazing guides, artisans, winemakers, hoteliers, restaurateurs, naturalists, and too many others to list here.

That's what motivates me and our team — in our La Jolla HQ and around the world — every day. Join Us!

President & Founder



You can expect the highest standards:



Luxurious Lodgings:

Ours include coveted properties that appear in "World's Best" and "Gold List" rankings.



Included Activities:

You'll never be surprised with add-on fees on your activities that include snorkeling to cooking lessons.



Local Guides:

Your guides are locals who are always at your side like well-connected friends.



Small Group Travel:

With an average of just 10-12 guests, it's a small footprint that guarantees you access that's off-limits to larger groups.



Amazing Cuisine:

From Michelin-starred restaurants to lunch in a farmhouse kitchen, you'll have a seat for the region's signature dishes.



Unmatched Value:

"Excellent value" and "unbeatable access" are two of the reasons that Travel + Leisure has consistently voted us a World's Best Tour Operator.

You'll enjoy these handcrafted travel experiences in Czechia, Hungary, and Austria...

- Unpacking once on your 5-star river cruise boat
- Privately guided small-group tours of Budapest and Vienna
- Visiting the perfect medieval streets of Cesky Krumlov in the Czech Republic
- A walk in a hillside Austrian vineyard overlooking the Wachau Valley
- Dining extravagantly at onshore dinners for Classic Journeys guests only

"The group was great, the trip was fun. The whole idea of not having to worry about anything was awesome. Our guide told us what to do and we did it, happily!"

—Mary K., Merrick, NY

Let's Go!

TO RESERVE: 833.493.5038 | [CLASSICJOURNEYS.COM/RESERVATIONS](https://www.classicjourneys.com/reservations)

You might also enjoy...



The Douro River

Porto to Salamanca

River Cruising

PICTURE YOURSELF...

- Wandering in white-washed rural villages
- Tasting the sparkling wines in a vineyard's blue granite cave
- Going for privately guided walks in Porto and Salamanca

For more information, visit <https://www.classicjourneys.com/douro-luxury-river-cruise/>.



Provence & Burgundy

The Rhône River

River Cruising

PICTURE YOURSELF...

- Tasting remarkable wines of Burgundy and Provence
- Cooking in the kitchen of a Michelin-starred chef
- Walking in villages and countryside that inspired Cezanne and van Gogh

For more information, visit <https://www.classicjourneys.com/rhone-river-cruise/>.

DAILY ITINERARY

The Danube River | Cultures of Central Europe | River Cruising

MS THOMAS HARDY

RATING: 5 stars

GUESTS: 169

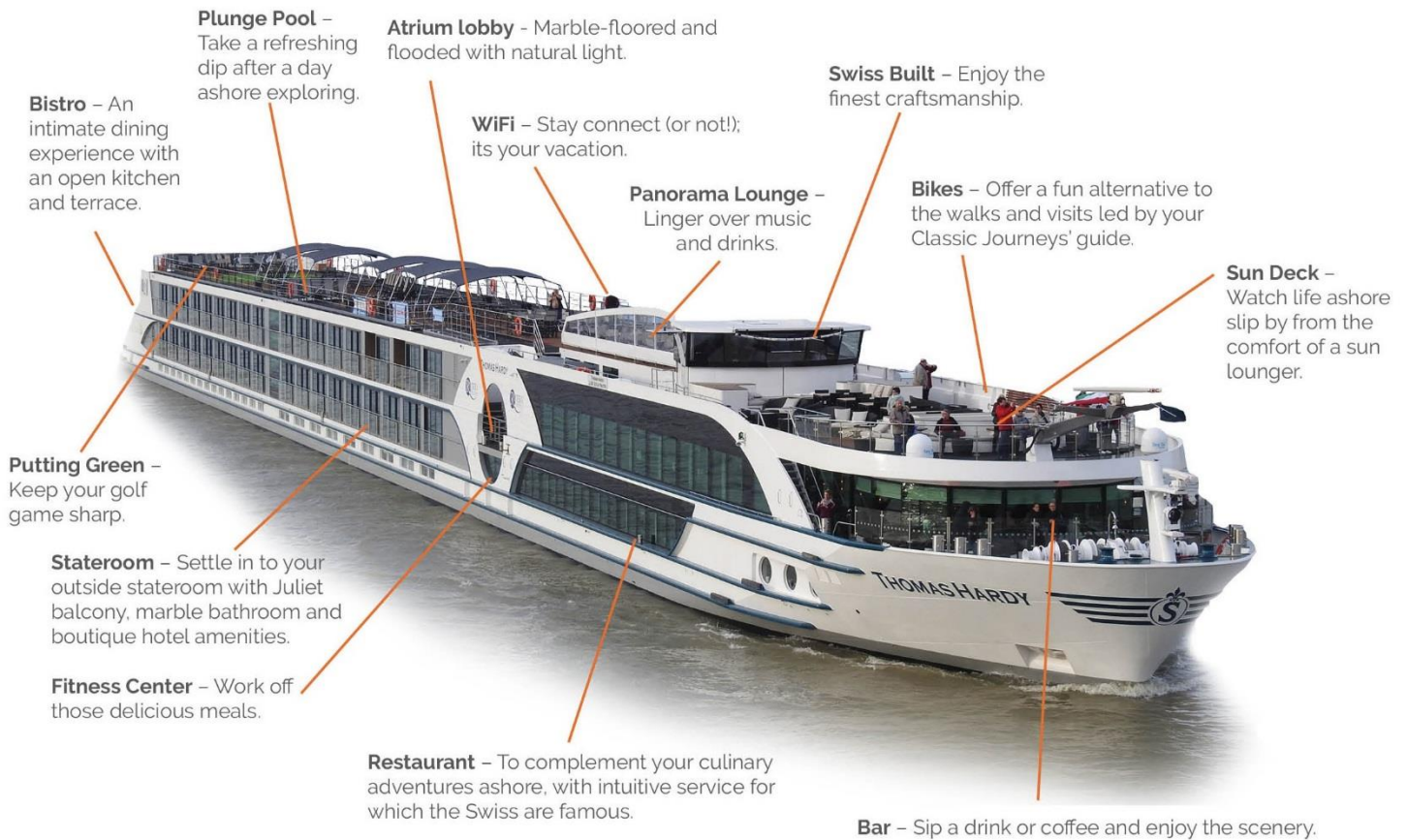
LENGTH: 443 feet

DECKS: 4

STATEROOMS: 85

STATEROOM SIZE: 183 square feet

When you plan a river cruising vacation, one easy way to compare your options is to look at the amenities, facilities and layouts of the ships. With Classic Journeys, you win that contest time and again. Your ship will be equal or superior to the vessels on other tour operators' cruise-based trips, but at a cost that's as much as 20-40% less.



STATEROOM FEATURES

- Outside stateroom with riverview
- Juliet balcony
- Floor to ceiling sliding glass doors
- Hotel style bed with optional twin bed configuration
- Private marble bathroom with rain shower
- Bath products by 'Crabtree and Evelyn'
- Free Wi-Fi throughout ship
- Flat screen TV
- Voltage 220V, UK + European outlets + USB ports
- Telephone, safe, refrigerator, hair dryer, individual climate control
- Bottled water replenished daily

“Enthusiasm is Contagious”

AS TRAVEL + LEISURE NAMES CLASSIC JOURNEYS THE WORLD'S BEST TOUR OPERATOR FOR 2019, FOUNDER EDWARD PIEGZA REVEALS HOW IT FEELS. ENTHUSIASTICALLY.



EDITOR'S NOTE: Just before publication of this issue, Travel + Leisure magazine announced that its readers have voted Classic Journeys the World's Best Tour Operator for 2019. It's the second time Classic Journeys has won that recognition and the 14th consecutive year the company has been in the Top 10.

Congratulations! How did you get the news?

I received a top-secret email and phone call from the editor of *Travel + Leisure* a few weeks ago with orders not to tell ANYONE. Friends and neighbors must have wondered why my smile has been so extra big lately. Now they know.

And how does it feel to be the World's Best Tour Operator again?

Awesome. Humbling. So, so satisfying. Deeply gratifying to learn that we have achieved what we set out to do which is to handcraft trips of a lifetime for every guest who travels with us. I'm known as long-winded, so I could probably come up with 10 or 15 more ways to describe it if you want me to keep going.

Why do you think *Travel + Leisure* gave you this recognition?

Actually, it isn't the *T+L* editors who make the decision. That's the best part. Their readers cast the votes. So the people who do the traveling, the guests who explore the world with us and our competitors — they are the ones who raised their hands to tell *T+L* that Classic Journeys is the World's Best Tour Operator based on their own experiences. Let me say it right here: "To all of you who voted for us, you are the World's Best Guests!"

What do you think makes your guests the World's Best Guests?

That's easy. They are curious. They care about connecting with people of different cultures and immersing themselves in the world. They treasure experiences more than things. Like the old ad slogan went, they go for the gusto and crave the chance to have one-of-a-kind moments. They are incredibly interesting and interested people, and all of us at Classic Journeys count it as a real privilege to share in their passion for travel. And we feel that way on the

other 364 days of the year when we're not celebrating recognition like this.

I guess this is what you meant when you told me that "Enthusiasm is contagious."

Absolutely. That's not our official motto, but it could be. We love what we do. We enjoy helping guests figure out how to invest their precious time and budget. I can honestly say that all of us feel that way — the Guest Services folks who interact with you while you're planning your trip, the Tour Operations team members who plan all of the logistics, the local guides who lead each one of our trips full time. There's just a huge amount of positive energy in what we do, and I think it truly is hard to resist. We'd climb into every one of our guest's suitcases and go along with them if we could. Because we can't, we call each guest while they're on tour just to be sure they are having a trip of a lifetime.

Has anyone ever called Classic Journeys obsessive?

I hope so, because we are. Everything is in the details. For instance, we've created a special tour for the total eclipse of the sun which is going to pass over parts of South America in 2020. We've already analyzed likely traffic patterns in the most remote areas and figured out how to structure our itinerary so that our guests will be in place in the path of totality while the people who don't plan ahead will be stuck in jams on remote dirt roads. We enjoy obsessing about details like that so that our guests never have to.



How can you top this?

Oh, we never let ourselves think of it that way. We just continue to approach every single guest on each and every departure like the most important guest we've ever had. It seems to be working! Of course, we keep looking for new ways to win more converts. For 2019, we've launched a new series of Classic Journeys that are based from

"I voted for you!"

We've heard that expression so many times lately from guests who registered their votes with *Travel + Leisure*. Given the results, we know it's true ... and you know that your votes really count!

STAFF AND GUIDES

"I always feel like I'm traveling with a best friend. I prefer your local guides to the ones that other companies fly in."

ITINERARIES AND DESTINATIONS

"If it's on my bucket list, you always seem to go there. Of course, with so many options you always seem to make my list longer and longer!"

ACTIVITIES

"On your trips, I've cooked with Michelin chefs, sung songs with Quechua schoolchildren, and walked on glaciers with the descendants of Vikings. Fun doesn't begin to describe it."

ACCOMMODATIONS

"How you manage so many 5-star properties on these trips shocks me. But please, please, please keep it up!"

FOOD

"I have never eaten so well so often so happily. When you people claim that you are foodies, you aren't kidding."

OVERALL VALUE

"We have never had a better vacation at any price."

river cruise boats. On a different note, seeing how many travelers can't always find as much vacation time as they really want, we have developed a series of 6-day or shorter quick trips that go as far afield as Iceland, the Galápagos and Morocco.

Final thoughts?

It's always an honor to win recognition. But, for all of us at Classic Journeys, the biggest privilege is to share the dreams of our guests and make those dreams come true. That connection is the best feeling of all.