

Frank Fristensky's
EuroAm Travel Club
970-749-3012

*URL: www.euroamtravelclub.com
Email: fristenskytravel@gmail.com*

Heart of Europe 2009

Experience the Difference!

Departure: Sunday, September 13, 2009

Returning: Tuesday, September 29, 2009 (from Budapest)

Your Small Group Tour Highlights:

Tour of elegant Prague,Roznov Frank's former home town....Historic royal town of Krakow....Wieliczka underground salt mines, a UNESCO cultural site....spectacular raft trip on the Dunajec River....Gypsy music entertainment....Dramatic High Tatra Mountains and the Slovak Paradise National Park...Danube Bend....Comprehensive Budapest touring....Outstanding Hungarian "cowboys" at work in the Hungarian Pusztas - Varga Tanya.

DAY 1: AM/PM

(Monday)

Sept. 14

After arriving in **Prague (Praha** in Czech) (1,100,000 pop.), we check into our hotel. Depending on our arrival, there might be time to explore this beautiful city on your own. It is amazing what 17 years of freedom can do. Praha, known for its endless red roofs and spires, has always been historic. Now it is fun too. No place in Europe has become so popular so quickly. And for good reasons, Praha, the only Eastern European capital to escape the bombs of the last century's wars, is one of Europe's bestpreserved cities. It is filled with Art Nouveau facades, offers great musical entertainment, galleries, amazing museums and restaurants, and brews the best beer in Europe (perhaps in the world). We overnight in Praha.

(D)

DAY 2: AM

(Tuesday)

Sept. 15

This morning we tour Praha with a local guide. We explore the Hradcany (the Praha Castle) district, home of the distinctive castle towering above the Vltava River. The castle today is the seat of the president of the Czech Republic. We cross the famous Charles Bridge into the Old Town Square with its Astronomical Clock Tower. We also walk along the Vltava River, passing by the National Theater and visit the Jewish Quarter. There are many other very interesting sites to see as we walk with our guide.

PM

The remainder of the day is free to continue exploring this enchanting city on your own. A welcome dinner and orientation is scheduled for this evening. We spend a second night in Praha.

(B-L-D)

DAY 3: AM

(Wednesday)

Sept. 16

We spend the morning traveling to and exploring the small mountain range of **Luzicke Hory** (Lusatian Mountains) located north of Praha near the German border. Geologically, these mountains consist mostly of Upper Cretaceous sandstone with tertiary magmatic rocks and basalt intrusions. We also visit a famous local Czech glass manufacturing factory in **Turnov** specializing in decorative garnets and fire polished glass beads.

PM

Later this afternoon we return to Praha. The remainder of the afternoon/evening is free time to enjoy the town on your own. We stay the night in Praha.

(B-L-D)

DAY 4: AM

(Thursday)

Sept. 17

This morning we journey east from Praha to a special historic place called **Porta Coeli** by Tisnov. Here we visit the twelfth century converted church with early Gothic vaulting, its capitals, figurative and decorative carvings and the chapter house, built between 1260 and 1270. Next we travel to **Pernstejn** a wellpreserved 13 th century medieval castle that is considered to be one of the most beautiful in Moravia.

PM

Following lunch we continue to the historic town of Kromeriz. Kromeriz was proclaimed the most beautiful historic town of the Czech Republic in 1997. In December 1998, the two historic gardens and the Archbishopric Chateau were listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. We overnight in Kromeriz.

(B-L-D)

DAY 5: AM

(Friday)
Sept. 18 This morning we visit the gorgeous gardens (**Pleasure Park**) and the **Archbishopric Chateau**, where some scenes from *Amadeus* and *Immortal Beloved* were filmed.

PM

After lunch we continue to the Walachian Region and the town of **Roznov pod Radhostem** (17,000 pop.). Frank lived in this town for 15 years. Situated at the foot of the Moravian Beskids Mountains, this town has many significant cultural memorials and all season recreation activities. It is known for its **Walachian OpenAir Museum**. The museum provides treasures of the popular architecture, trades and life of the Walachian countryside in the 19 th century. We will overnight in Roznov.

(B-L-D)

DAY 6: AM/PM

(Saturday)
Sept. 19 From Roznov we travel northeast towards Poland. We will make one more stop in the Czech Republic in the picturesque town of Stramberk. This town has been declared a municipal reserve and nicknamed Moravian Bethlehem.

In the afternoon we continue to **Krakow** (758,000 pop.). The royal City of Krakow, the former capital of Poland, is the proudest and the most beautiful Polish city. Krakow has traditionally been one of the leading scientific, cultural and artistic centers of the country, the former residence of the Polish kings, and is considered by many to be the spiritual heart of Poland due to its history of more than a thousand years.

The remainder of the day is free to continue to explore Krakow on your own. In the evening we meet for a dinner in the old town of Krakow. We spend the night in Krakow.

(B-L-D)

DAY 7: AM

(Sunday)
Sept. 20 We spend this morning with our guide and tour some of the most attractive and historic sites of Krakow that survived World War II intact. Our tour includes the historic area: the renaissance Royal Castle at Wawel, the gothic St. Mary's Basilica, the trade pavilions of the Cloth Hall, the authentic Old Town (a UNESCO World Heritage Site), and many more beautiful places.

PM

This afternoon we tour the **Wieliczka Salt Mines**, another UNESCO World Heritage Site. Have you ever sent greetings from an underground post office? Have you ever seen underground chapels carved in living salt rock? There are many other unbelievable attractions awaiting you. During seven centuries of salt exploitation, the mine developed into an extensive underground city, mysterious and unique. Upon our return to Krakow the evening is free to further explore the city and to spend the night.

(B-D)

DAY 8:**(Monday) AM****Sept. 21**

We leave this morning and head south for the Polish/Slovak border. After we cross the border we will head to the small town of **Cerveny Klaster** (The Red Monastery village). Cerveny Klaster is located on the **Dunajec River** near the border with Poland. This village also borders **Pieniny National Park** and is an entry gate to the national reserve **Prielom Dunajca**.

PM

We have lunch in a rustic local restaurant named **Goralsky Dvor** after which we take a raft trip (approx. 2 hours) on the Dunajec River through spectacular country. After the raft trip we have an option to hike or bike along the Dunajec River (or ride in the van with Mike) back to Goralsky Dvor chalet. We dine together at a local restaurant with musical entertainment and overnight in nearby village of Spisska Stara Ves.

(B-L-D)**DAY 9:****(Tuesday) AM/PM****Sept. 22**

This morning we travel to the **High Tatra Mountain** region. These mountains are a magnet for freshair enthusiasts from all over the world and are one of Slovakia's main tourist attractions. Before reaching the Tatra region we first stop at the **Spis Castle**, one of the largest castles in Central Europe and a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1993. Built in the 12 th century, it underwent several modifications before it burned in 1780. The photogenic ruins and spectacular 360degree views of the surrounding countryside may be the highlight of the day.

In the afternoon we visit the **Dobsinska ladova jeskyna** (Dobsinska Ice Caves). This unusual World Heritage Site has an ice capacity estimated at approximately 110,000 cubic meters and an ambient temperature of only a few degrees above freezing. We then continue to our day's final destination of Strbske Pleso. Strbske Pleso is a part of the Tatra National Park and is the Tatra's main skiresort. Its finest feature is a beautiful, 20hectare, alpine lake (pleso), the second largest in the park. Upon getting situated in our hotel there is free time to explore Strbske Pleso. We will overnight in Strbske Pleso.

(B-L-D)**DAY 10:****(Wednesday) AM/PM****Sept. 23**

This morning we head into the eastern part of Slovakia to hike in the **Slovak Paradise National Park**. Spectacular gorges and canyons created in limestone and dolomite typify this park. The rivers and creeks cascading over these cliffs form beautiful waterfalls and 90% of the land is densely covered with pine and deciduous forest. We hike the **Hornad Canyon** along and above the river Hornad. We spent the night in Strbske Pleso.

(B-L brown bag)

DAY 11:**(Thursday) AM/PM****Sept. 24**

This morning we depart for **Banska Stiavnica** (11,000 pop.). This completely preserved medieval town and its surroundings were proclaimed by UNESCO to be a World Heritage Site in 1993. We spent a few hours for a leisurely walk to explore this unique town. Later this afternoon we cross the Slovak/Hungarian border at Sturovo.

We enter the historic town of **Esztergom** (30,000 pop.), a town full of ecclesiastic wonders. It has been the seat of Roman Catholicism in Hungary since the 19th century. The soaring monumental Esztergom Basilika is home to the Primate of Hungary. We will continue to the next town on the Danube Bend, **Visegrad (High Castle)** where we stay for the night.

(B-L-D)**DAY 12:****(Friday) AM****Sept. 25**

This morning we will visit one of the remains of the major league castles: a hilltop fortress. This former strategic site overlooks the Danube River and its surroundings.

Following this exciting castle tour we continue to **Szentendre**, one of the most picturesque (touristy as well) towns on the Danube. It rises gently from the Danube, a postcardpretty village with twisty Mediterranean street plan filled with Austrian Baroque houses.

PM

Later this afternoon we will arrive in **Budapest** (1.8 million pop.). The remainder of the afternoon is free to begin discovering one of the most enchanting cities in Europe. We dine together tonight at a local restaurant and spend the night in Budapest.

(B-L-D)**DAY 13:****(Saturday) AM****Sept. 26**

This morning we have a halfday guided tour of the Hungarian capital. Budapest is a study in contrasts – of new and old, West and East. Strictly speaking, the story of Budapest begins only in 1873 with the administrative union of the three cities that grew together: Buda, west of the Danube; Obuda (the oldest part of Buda) to the north; and Pest on the eastern side of the river. But the area has been occupied for thousands of years before Budapest, as we know it, existed. We will visit the Castle Hill that contains most of the medieval buildings, from where there is a spectacular view of the city including the imposing Parliament that fronts the Danube. The Pest site is a nice mix of history and narrow streets with elegant shops and cafes, which invite you to spend some leisure time.

PM

Following an afternoon of free time, we enjoy a typical Hungarian dinner at a local restaurant and spend a second night in Budapest.

(B-L-D)

DAY 14: AM/PM
(Sunday)
Sept. 27 Today we venture to a traditional Hungarian working horse farm/ranch and participate in a puszta program at **Varga Tanya**. It is located about 50 miles south of Budapest. We are welcomed with a drink (apricot brandy) and cakes. We drive through the countryside in a carriage as a prelude to a local feast. We experience a 3course lunch in a rustic openair “music hall” featuring typical Hungarian cuisine with wine and are entertained with Gypsy music. Upon returning to Budapest there is free time on your own.

(B-L-D)

DAY 15: AM/PM
(Monday)
Sept. 28 This day is reserved for your leisure in Budapest. Tonight we celebrate our adventure over a farewell dinner.

(B-D)

Day 16: AM
(Tuesday)
Sept. 29 This morning we transfer to the airport for our return flight to the U.S.

(B)

GOODBYE! NASHLEDANOU! – DO WIDZENIA! DOVIDENIA!– SZIA!

TOUR SPECIFICATIONS:

We will be traveling in a modern airconditioned passenger van and staying in nice country setting places with the usual comfort. The tour price includes all accommodations with all breakfasts, 11 lunches, 13 dinners, all land transportation, transfer from/to the airport, tickets for all planned events, guided tours and special events, and services of the EuroAm Travel Club's tour directors.

- All land arrangement as described above:
 - o Double room occupancy: \$4,475.00
 - o Single room occupancy: \$4,675.00

- Some slight adjustments to the above schedule may occur.

- There may be some optional activities offered for a surcharge.

- The tour size is limited to 14 travelers.

- A deposit of \$500.00 per traveler is due with sign up.

- We suggest arranging your own round trip air travel from your hometown to Prague.

Please contact us prior to making your reservation. If you are not able to make your own travel plans we will assist you.

- In order to get the full benefit of this trip an adequate degree of physical conditioning is recommended due to a good amount of walking and hiking.