

Welcome to a remarkable journey through the heart of Central Europe – where the cultural crossroads of East and North meet the legacy of empires, trade routes, and shifting borders. On this immersive journey through Slovakia, Poland, and the Czech Republic, we invite you to look beyond the familiar and delve into the deeper stories that have shaped these countries. Though they share some common threads, each offers its own unique character, rhythm, and perspective – something we'll experience with open eyes and curious minds.

Together, we'll explore how industrialization, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and decades of communism have left lasting imprints on cities, communities, and daily life. Along the way, you'll encounter authentic traditions, warm hospitality, and diverse landscapes – from alpine peaks to forested hills and fertile plains – that have long influenced the lives of local people. We look forward to sharing this rich and rewarding adventure with you.

Please note that the itinerary is still being fine-tuned, and we reserve the right to make minor adjustments as we finalize the trip details - always with the goal of creating the best possible experience for our travelers.

For more information and registration, visit us at
www.uaf.edu/summer/travel
or call (907)474-7021

Important notes:

Travel insurance is always recommended for any travel out of the United States. There are several ways to purchase coverage. Some credit card companies insure trips that are purchased with their card. Another option is to check with a local travel agency.

Tour Dates:

**April 21-May 7,
2026**

Tour Cost:

\$7,900.00

Single Supplement
\$1,400

Extra room night 4/20/26
\$170

Extra room night 5/7/26
\$170

Inclusions

- 24/7 Tour Director/Guide
- Accommodations
- In country transportation
- Entry fees
- Educational programs
- Three meals per day
- Gratuities

Transportation costs to and from Vienna are NOT included in this tour price. All travelers must arrange their own transportation to and from the starting and ending cities.

Day 1, April 21: Vienna

- Arrive at Vienna International Airport and walk across the street to the airport hotel, where the group will gather in the afternoon.
- We'll kick off the trip with a welcome dinner, introductions, and an overview of the journey ahead.
- Overnight at the airport hotel, making for a smooth start tomorrow as we cross into Slovakia and begin our Central European adventure.



Day 2, April 22: Bratislava

- Morning flight to Bratislava, the capital of Slovakia.
- We begin with a guided tour of the charming Old Town and then head to Devín Castle, dramatically perched at the confluence of the Danube and Morava rivers.
- In the afternoon, we'll meet with a local NGO representative or community guide to gain insight into the role and challenges of minority groups in Slovakia and across Europe.
- Dinner is a traditional Slovak meal in a cozy local pub.



Day 3, April 23: Bratislava

- Morning tour with a local guide, exploring former bunkers and remnants of the Iron Curtain that once marked the border between East and West.
- Next, we head into the Petržalka district, one of the largest communist-era housing developments in Central Europe, to observe Soviet-influenced urban planning and architecture.
- We travel to the Little Carpathians wine region in the afternoon, where winemaking traditions date back over 2,000 years to Celtic and Roman times. We'll explore a majolica pottery workshop, preserving traditional Slovak ceramic artistry, stroll through scenic vineyards, and enjoy a wine tasting hosted by a local winemaker.



Day 4, April 24: Banská Bystrica

- Morning drive to Banská Štiavnica, a UNESCO World Heritage town once at the heart of Europe's silver mining industry. On a guided walking tour of the historic center and the 18th-century Mining Academy, we'll learn about the town's remarkable scientific and industrial legacy.
- In the late afternoon, we continue to Banská Bystrica, a culturally significant city known for its architecture, museums, and role in Slovakia's resistance movements during World War II and the communist era, where we will stay for two nights.





Day 5, April 25: Banská Bystrica

- Today we explore the Donovaly area, starting with a morning visit to Vlkolínec, a UNESCO World Heritage site and one of the best-preserved folk villages in Slovakia.
- In the afternoon, there is an optional visit to Bojnice Castle, one of the most romantic and iconic castles in Central Europe. Set against a dramatic landscape, the castle captivates with its fairy-tale architecture and fascinating history, reflecting the region's aristocratic past.



Day 6, April 26: Banská Bystrica to Zakopane

- Journey through some of the most stunning landscapes in Central Europe. We begin with a scenic drive through the Low Tatras National Park, passing through the Štrbské Pleso and Poprad areas.
- After crossing the border into Poland, we arrive in Zakopane, often referred to as the "Winter Capital of Poland", charming visitors with its distinctive wooden architecture, vibrant highlander (Góral) traditions, artisan markets, and warm hospitality.



Day 7, April 27: Zakopane

- We explore Krzeptówki, a traditional highlander village known for its iconic wooden architecture and strong community spirit, in the morning.
- Next, we visit the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Fatima, a peaceful and spiritually significant site built in gratitude for the survival of Pope John Paul II after the 1981 assassination attempt.
- In the afternoon, we enjoy an easy and scenic lakeside walk, surrounded by forested slopes and framed by the dramatic peaks of the Tatras—a perfect way to take in the serene mountain atmosphere.



Day 8, April 28: Kraków

- En route to Kraków, we stop to explore the Wieliczka Salt Mine, a UNESCO World Heritage site and a true underground marvel.
- In the afternoon, we arrive in Kraków and begin our discovery of the Old Town, a UNESCO-listed treasure filled with Gothic, Renaissance, and Baroque architecture.

Day 9, April 29: Kraków

- Morning visit to Zalipie, an enchanting village known for its charming tradition of painting homes with vibrant floral motifs.
- Returning to Kraków, we head to the Jagiellonian University, one of Europe's oldest universities and alma mater of Nicolaus Copernicus, who studied here from 1491 to 1495.
- In the evening, we meet with a local NGO representative or women's rights activist for a candid and thought-provoking discussion on gender equality, abortion politics, and civil society in today's Poland.



Day 10, April 30: Kraków

- There are two tour options to choose from today: You can visit the powerful and sobering historical site of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial, a former Nazi concentration and extermination camp that offers a deeply moving and reflective experience. We encourage you to consider this visit thoughtfully, as it can be emotionally intense. The site is solemn and demands quiet reflection and respect.

- Or, if you prefer a less emotionally overwhelming experience, we offer a meaningful alternative in Kraków with a local guide. You can explore the Galicia Jewish Museum and the historic Jewish Quarter of Kazimierz, including the Old Synagogue Museum (Stara Synagoga)—one of Poland's oldest Gothic synagogues.



Day 11, May 1: Moravian Village

- This morning, we make our last stop in Poland: Wadowice, the birthplace of Pope John Paul II, exploring the profound role of Catholicism in Polish identity.

- We will cross the border into the Czech Republic and delve into the rise of industrialization in Central Europe and how it shaped cities, communities, and everyday life.



Day 12, May 2: Moravian Village

- Today we explore South Moravia, starting with a visit to one of the region's most captivating fairy-tale castles, where romantic architecture and aristocratic history come to life.

- Next, we venture into the Moravian Karst to see the breathtaking Macocha Sinkhole, one of Central Europe's most remarkable natural wonders.

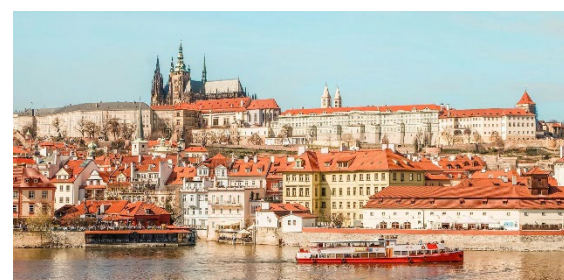
- In the evening, we celebrate Moravian traditions with an authentic cultural experience. Enjoy a festive dinner of regional specialties accompanied by live folk music and traditional dance, offering a warm and lively insight into local heritage and hospitality.



Day 13, May 3: Prague

- This morning, we journey to Kutná Hora, a UNESCO World Heritage site and once the second most important city in the Kingdom of Bohemia. Renowned for its silver mining heritage dating back to the 13th century, the town flourished as a royal economic hub.

- In the afternoon, we continue to Prague, the capital of the Czech Republic. Upon arrival, we begin exploring the Old Town, tracing its architectural evolution from Romanesque roots through Gothic, Baroque, and Art Nouveau styles—a perfect introduction to the city's layered cultural heritage.



Day 14, May 4: Prague

- Morning tour of the Franz Kafka Museum, dedicated to one of the most influential writers of the 20th century.
- Next, we meet another iconic figure in Czech culture: Krtek, or The Little Mole. This beloved animated character, created in the 1950s, represents Czech creativity, humor, and the enduring power of simple storytelling.
- In the afternoon, we turn our focus to Prague's contemporary architecture, exploring how modern urban design reflects shifting political ideologies and cultural aspirations—from post-communist transformations to EU integration.

Day 15, May 5: Český Krumlov

- Spend the morning soaking up a bit more of Prague's charm—whether it's a quiet walk along the Vltava River, a coffee in a hidden courtyard, or one last peek into the city's vibrant history.
- Late morning, we begin our journey south through the beautiful countryside of South Bohemia, making our way to the storybook town of Český Krumlov.
- Along the way, we'll stop at Holašovice, a perfectly preserved UNESCO-listed village known for its 18th-century folk baroque architecture, and visit the magnificent Hluboká Castle, often dubbed the most beautiful castle in the Czech Republic. To complete the cultural experience, we'll also visit a local brewery for a tour and tasting of some world-renowned Czech beer before continuing on to Český Krumlov for the evening.

Day 16, May 6: Český Krumlov to Vienna

- This morning, we explore Český Krumlov—a UNESCO World Heritage site with winding cobbled streets, a fairytale castle, and a magical riverside setting. Enjoy a relaxed morning and a farewell lunch in one of the town's charming restaurants.
- In the afternoon, we drive back to Vienna (approx. 3.5–4 hours) and check in at a comfortable airport hotel for our final night together. We'll gather one last time for a celebratory farewell dinner, sharing stories and memories of the tour.

Day 17, May 7: Vienna

- After breakfast, walk across the street to Vienna International Airport for your flight home. Safe travels!

