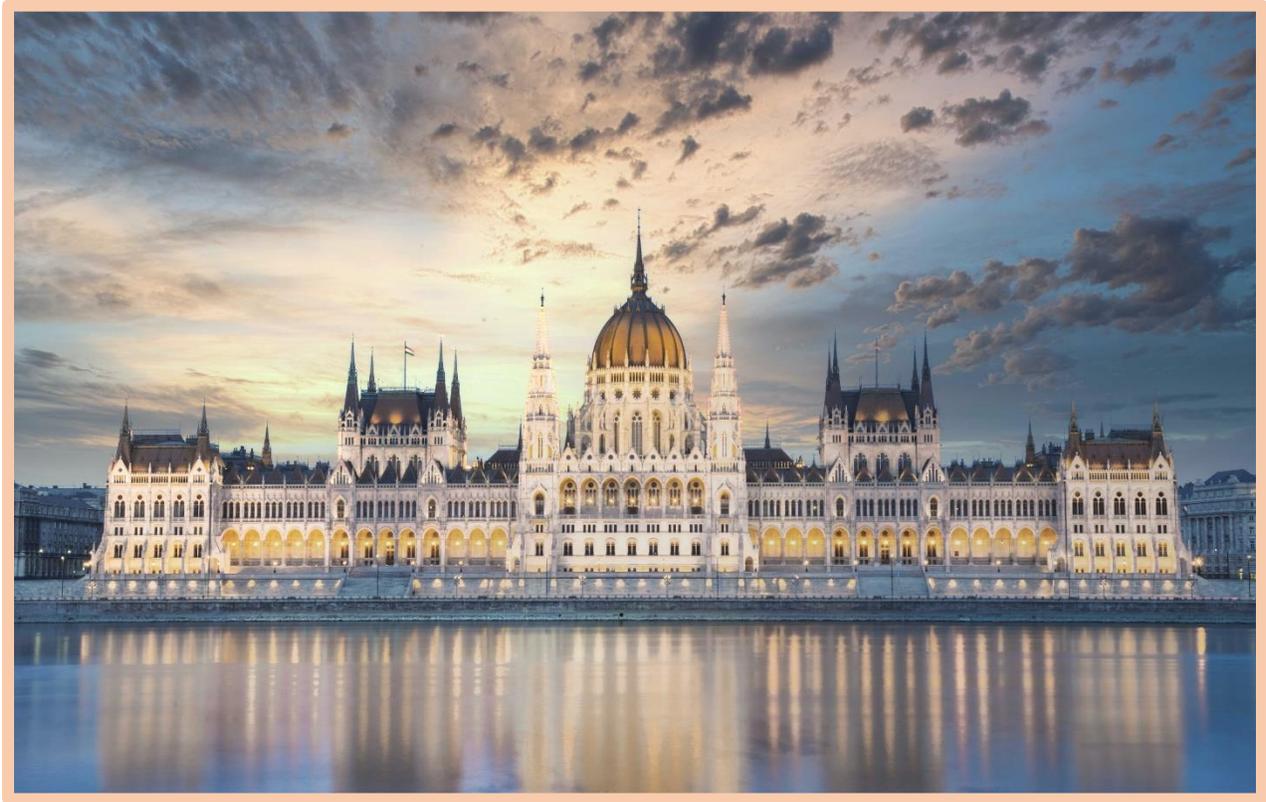


Explore
Up Close



Exploring Vienna and Budapest

May 11 – 24, 2022

Join professors and students from Western Carolina on a travel-study adventure to two of the world's most storied capitals – Vienna and Budapest. We'll spend approximately half our time immersed in each rich and heady hub – including time in the surrounding countryside, whose traditions made their ways into the capitals. We'll explore the Habsburg power structure that survived until the end of World War I – barely over 100 years ago, and the arts scene that has found patrons among the Royals, the industrial elite, and even the Communist state. It's about design, spanning centuries; architecture – from the baroque, to Mediterranean and Turkish, to avant-garde, to the empire's unique take on Art Nouveau; to the culture of these two cities today.



Trip highlights:

Vienna / Austria highlights will include:

- great hostel accommodations, convenient to the Naschmarkt and restaurants; easy walking access to sites, and easy U-bahn (metro) access
- exploration of many of Vienna's unique "grand buildings": St. Stephen's Dom (cathedral); the Kunsthistorisches Museum (art museum); the Sisi Museum in the Hofburg Palace
- special art and architectural tours and visits: Secession building / museum; the Upper Belvedere palace / museum – featuring masterpieces of Gustav Klimt and other Secession artists; Jugendstil / Art Nouveau masterpieces, dotting the city
- countryside excursion to Melk / Melk Abbey, and the Wiener Alps

Budapest / Hungary highlights will include:

- Buda's Castle Hill / Royal Palace; the Great Synagogue (Moorish design); Memento Park – 40 statues (*socialist realism*)
- special art / Art Nouveau collections and buildings
- other unique visits: the National Gallery; the Liberty Monument; the House of Terror; Parliament (Pest, along the Danube); the Danube's bridges; thermal spas; ruin pubs / garden clubs

- a 3-days / 2-nights trip to the city of Pecs and the Lake Balaton area: featuring two porcelain factories, stunning natural places; and the "southern European" atmosphere and architecture of Pecs



Itinerary:

Day 1

We'll shuttle to Atlanta and begin our adventure to Vienna and Budapest; overnight in the skies.

Day 2

Arrive in Vienna; shuttle to our hotel, where we'll store our luggage (until check-in, in the mid-afternoon). We'll enjoy a short orientation walking tour of our digs for much of the next week. We're located next to the Naschmarkt – a permanent island of Austrian and international specialty foods (sort of like a big food court). Nearby are a number of turn-of-the-century, decorative apartment houses (Wohnungen) designed by Otto Wagner, and other *Jugendstil* designers. So it's a colorful neighborhood!

Maybe the best way to fight off jet lag, will be to ride the stylish “U-Bahn” (think subway, metro, or “city train”) to the main Habsburg summer palace – Schönbrunn. Tour the lavish rooms; then walk to the hilltop café overlooking the palace grounds. Nothing like a whip-creamed coffee and a tasty *apfel-strudel* to help soak in the atmosphere.

Hostel check-in; early dinner; much-needed sleep. Zzzzzzzzz.

Day 3

Enjoy breakfast in the breakfast room, in the hostel.

Afterward, we’ll make our way to Stephansplatz into the center of the old city, where we’ll meet our guide for a walking tour of some of Vienna’s stories and most-storied sites.

In the late-morning, we’ll visit the Sisi Museum – inside the imposing Hofburg Palace, and dedicated to Empress Elisabeth, wife of Austria’s last emperor, Franz Josef. Lunch will be on your own, in nearby Josefsplatz.

In the afternoon, let’s walk to the boat dock at Schwedenplatz, on the Danube Canal. We’ll enjoy a cruise that showcases some of Vienna’s most notable architecture, including the Uniqa Tower, the Urania observatory, Badeschiff – a unique restaurant on a boat, a Jean Nouvel-designed hotel, Otto Wagner’s Schützenhaus, and more.

Enjoy free time in the afternoon – maybe a visit to the Prater (a huge ferris wheel, in an amusement park) or the *Hunnertwasserhaus*.

Dinner on your own this evening; overnight Vienna.





Day 4

Breakfast in the hostel breakfast room.

Then let's make a morning visit to the Secession exhibition hall – designed by Joseph Maria Olbrich in 1898 for Vienna's "rebel artists" who were seceding from the mores and values of the fine arts establishment. Their avant-garde movement was called *Jugendstil* – the "youth style."

Afterwards we'll meet our guide for a Jugendstil walking tour. Our walk will stop at a famous Vienna coffee house, where we'll enjoy a specialty coffee and a light lunch (included).

In the afternoon, we'll visit the Upper Belvedere Palace Museum: home of Gustav Klimt's most famous works of art.

Enjoy free time and dinner, on your own. Overnight, Vienna.

Day 5

Today, we'll embark on an overnight trek to see some of Austria's prettiest sights and landscapes, not far from Vienna. We'll first drive to Melk, upstream the Danube – home of the lovely baroque Melk Abbey. We'll enjoy a guided tour and lunch on site. Then we'll enjoy a driving tour of the surrounding Wachau region – known for its vineyards, stately castles, and quaint towns strewn along the Danube. We'll drive into the Wiener Alps for the overnight. Dinner will be included tonight.



Day 6

Highlights of today's adventure will include the pretty town of Mariazell and its pilgrimage church; the Ybbs valley (a classic alpine valley); and Semmering. The alpine town and mountain pass of Semmering is quite famous as the site of the world's first "mountain railway." Members of the royal Habsburg family pushed for its construction in the 1850's – to provide a mountain retreat, easily reached from Vienna by rail. Semmering's architecture reflects its upscale history.

In the afternoon we'll return to Vienna. Dinner and overnight, Vienna.

Day 7



Have breakfast at the hostel, when you wish. Today is a free day in Vienna!

Day 8

Have breakfast in our breakfast room at the hostel; then we're off to Budapest! We'll shuttle to the train station, where we'll board the train to Hungary, and its

lovely capital spanning the Danube.

After arriving in Budapest, we'll drop our bags at our hotel, freshen up, and have lunch



nearby. We'll meet a local guide who will take us on an orientation walk, featuring some of *Pest's* most iconic sites. We'll conclude our first day's touring with a visit to the House of Terror – which showcases life under the Communist regime, post-WW II, and the failed Hungarian Uprising of 1956.

Hotel check-in, and time to relax. Tonight we'll enjoy a dinner together in beautiful Budapest. Overnight, Budapest.

Day 9

Enjoy breakfast in our hotel. Then look forward to several must-do experiences. We'll begin with a guided tour of Castle Hill (on the Buda side of the Danube). In the afternoon, we'll take in some of Budapest's best Art Nouveau / Jugendstil buildings . . . and then we'll visit a thermal bath.

Afterwards enjoy free time, then dinner on your own. Overnight, Budapest.

Day 10

After breakfast in our hotel, we'll take local transportation to Memento Park – a collection of massive Soviet-era public statues, preserved outside of town, instead of destroyed. They are a fascinating study in *socialist realism* art. We'll then take our local transportation to . . . our very own Hungarian cooking class. Goulasch, anyone?

Enjoy free time from the mid-afternoon, through dinner (on your own). Tonight we'll meet up for a performance at one of Budapest's classic venues. Overnight, Budapest.



Day 11

We'll enjoy breakfast in our hotel, then load up for a tour of the Hungarian countryside. We'll drive to the Herend Porcelain factory (just north of Lake Balaton). Afterward, we'll visit Tihany – a village of thatch-roofed houses and a lovely church, perched on Lake Balaton. We'll spend the night at a Lake Balaton resort. Overnight, Lake Balaton.

Day 12

Today we'll drive to Pecs – on the southern plains. It's a beautiful city, that shows some Turkish and Mediterranean influences in its architecture. We'll visit the Mosque Church, the main baroque square, and we'll learn about the legacy of the local Zsolnay Porcelain factory.

Enjoy afternoon free time. This evening, we'll take in a folkloric show, that tells the story of Hungary's plains, horse tradition, and Pecs-region food and drink traditions. Group dinner; overnight Pecs.

Day 13

Enjoy breakfast in our hotel in Pecs. By late-morning, we'll drive back into Budapest. Check into our hotel for one last night; then enjoy free time in the capital. Dinner will be on your own. Overnight, Budapest.

Day 14

This morning, we'll shuttle to the Budapest airport to begin our journey home.



Pricing information:

Estimated price, \$4,200. Price includes all the following: shuttles from WCU to the Atlanta Airport (and return); bus driver tip; international airfare (Atlanta - Vienna; Budapest - Atlanta); 12 nights accommodation (twin, triple, quad, and family room) with breakfast in good hotels / hostels that are well-located in regards to neighborhoods, metro, and walking to visit sites; 4 group meals; all activities, guided touring, admissions per the itinerary; all group ground transportation: "shuttle" (from and to airports), metro, bus, train, and boat; trip insurance. Price does not include other meals and optional individual expenses.

Payment schedule:

Deposit of \$1,000, paid at the time of trip registration to reserve your spot.

\$1,200 – due September 17, 2021, or upon registration if registering after September 17th.

\$1,000 – due November 12, 2021, or upon registration if registering after November 12th.

Remaining balance – due March 1, 2022

Your deposit is fully refundable until March 1, 2022. Trip insurance, which will be purchased by March 1, 2022, will protect your trip investment in the case of a documented family or medical emergency after the payment deadline.

Trip sign up:

Sign up for this Western Carolina University student trip directly through Explore Up Close. It's simple and easy to register online!

Visit www.exploreupclose.com/western-carolina, complete the online registration, and pay your deposit with a credit card via our secure online payment portal.



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