

**TURKEY & MORE****THE GREAT EUROPEAN EXPRESS: ISTANBUL TO PARIS** (TOUR CODE: 14243)**STARTS AND ENDS**Istanbul to
Paris**TRAVEL PERIODS**

12 April, 2026

EXPERIENCECultural
Rail**TRAVEL STYLE**

Rail Journeys

Experience the new Great European Express, a train journey through seven countries, combining iconic metropolises, stunning landscapes, and exceptional service for an unforgettable adventure across Europe's historic railways.

Highlights

- Discover 7 UNESCO World Heritage Sites, including the banks of the Seine, the vineyards of Champagne, the old towns of Vienna, Budapest, Istanbul, the beech forests of the Carpathians and the Semmering Railroad
- Marvel at unobstructed views of Mont Blanc with an aerial cable car ride and panoramic gondola lift to Lucerne's Pilatus Mountain
- Experience a scenic train ride through the gorges of the Balkans and the wild Carpathian Mountains
- Explore Transylvania's historic old towns and the legacy of Count Dracula
- Visit Veliko Tarnovo, the former residence of Bulgarian Tsars
- Savour France's fine wines during a visit to a renowned winery
- Relax on boat trips along the Danube and Bosphorus rivers

Embark on the legendary Great European Express, a famous train journey that takes you from Istanbul to Paris through seven captivating countries. Experience the charm of iconic metropolises and breathtaking landscapes while indulging in comfortable & attentive service onboard. This extraordinary adventure across Europe's historic railways offers meticulously curated excursions and the comfort of a classic rail hotel, making it a once-in-a-lifetime experience for travellers seeking elegance and discovery in one remarkable journey.



INCLUSIONS

- Enjoy a 6-night stay aboard the Great European Express
- Enjoy luxurious comfort with 3 nights in Deluxe Hotels located in Istanbul, Budapest and Paris
- Benefit from seamless Airport transfers at the start and end of your itinerary
- Indulge in delicious meals throughout the journey, as specified within the itinerary.
- All excursions and sightseeing tours are included, with admission fees covered and transportation provided in air-conditioned buses
- Multi-lingual tour director accompanying the journey from Istanbul to Paris
- English-speaking tour guide for groups of up to 28 guests from Istanbul to Paris
- Luggage porter services available at train stations

ITINERARY

Day 1 Istanbul

Today, you'll fly to the world's only metropolis that spans two continents. Upon arrival, your tour guide will greet you warmly and accompany you to your centrally located hotel, where you'll spend the night. In the evening, kick off your journey with a grand welcome dinner, set against the backdrop of the shimmering lights of this timeless city, bridging the Orient and the Occident.

*Overnight stay: **Çırağan Palace Kempinski, Istanbul** (or similar).*

Dinner



Day **2**

Istanbul - At the Gate of 1001 Nights

The captivating beauty of the Bosphorus playfully enchants you with a blend of 1001 Nights and modern, trendy neighborhoods.

From Topkapi Palace, you can gaze at the boats swaying in the strait that separates Europe and Asia. The legendary treasury and the harem whisk you away to the enchanting world of the ancient Orient. The grand bazaar offers a similarly magical experience, where you can barter with welcoming merchants. A visit to the magnificent Sirkeçi train station, once the final stop of the legendary Orient Express and the departure point for Hercule Poirot in Agatha Christie's famous novel, is an absolute must. In contrast, the Hagia Sophia and the Blue Mosque offer a more reflective experience, symbols of the historical rivalry between Constantinople and Istanbul. After a scenic boat ride on the Bosphorus, you'll arrive at the train station, where your private luxury train awaits. At the reception, raise a glass of sparkling wine to toast the exciting journey ahead. Settle into your elegant compartment as the train departs, leaving the vibrant Turkish metropolis behind.

*Overnight stay aboard the **Great European Express**.*

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



In the gorges of the Balkans

In the morning you'll be treated to a delicious breakfast while passing through the southern Balkan mountains and crossing one of Bulgaria's highest passes, the dramatic Schipka Pass. Sit back, relax, and, as Karl May once wrote, savour the warm service and nostalgic charm of the train as it winds through the stunning Balkan gorges.

In the afternoon, you'll arrive at Bulgaria's ancient capital, Veliko Tarnovo. Along the wild, winding Jantra River, rustic stone houses rise above one another, transporting you back to the Middle Ages. Overlooking it all is the castle hill of Zarevets, with its imposing walls and towers. Just a short distance away lies the village of Arbanassi, a 17th-century open-air museum featuring beautifully restored merchant houses and Orthodox churches adorned with frescoes. As the sun sets, you'll cross the Danube at Ruse, where the river forms the border between Romania and Bulgaria.

*Overnight stay aboard the **Great European Express**.*

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Transylvania

Early in the morning, you'll arrive at the vast green plains of Wallachia and soon reach Romania's capital, Bucharest. The city tour offers a hint of Paris, taking you past the Arc de Triomphe and through elegant Art Nouveau arcades. The monumental House of the People, now the seat of parliament, stands as a symbol of dictator Ceaușescu's grandiose ambitions. At Revolution Square, you'll hear the story of how the specter of socialism was overthrown in 1989.

After enjoying lunch in the onboard restaurant, you'll leave this city of stark contrasts and head north. In the afternoon, your train will traverse the rugged southern Carpathians, where dramatic mountains soar over 2,000 metres high. These steep gorges are home to brown bears, wolves, and lynxes.

Welcome to Transylvania, settled by Saxons since the 12th century. Here, you'll discover an architectural gem: Kronstadt (Brașov), with its stunning town hall square, colourful Baroque façades, charming cafés, Europe's narrowest street, and the iconic Black Church. Following the eerie trail of Count Dracula, you'll visit Törzburg (Bran Castle), perched atop dark hills like a pointed crown. Legend has it that the most famous vampire in literary history once lived here. What is myth, and what is fact? You'll find out today. By dinner, you'll be back aboard the train, heading northwest.

*Overnight stay aboard the **Great European Express**.*

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Day 5

Puszta Budapest, Hungary

No trip to Hungary would be complete without a visit to the Puszta. From the train station in the charming town of Kecskemét, you'll journey across the vast plain, dotted with decorative fountains, to a historic equestrian centre. After a traditional welcome with apricot brandy and salted pastries, you'll witness an awe-inspiring horse show. The acrobatic horsemanship of the Magyars is legendary – even the massive grey cattle are left in wonder! With the lively sounds of Csárdás music filling the air, you'll depart the estate and reboard your train.

By early afternoon, you'll arrive in Budapest, where you'll leave your travelling home behind for the night and check into a hotel in the old town. Budapest, made up of two cities divided by the Danube, is best admired from its most scenic viewpoint – on a boat trip along the river. On one side, you'll see the Citadel, Fishermen's Bastion, and Gellért Hill; on the other, the grand market hall, the Old Town Palace, and the world's largest parliament building. Of course, you'll also pass by the famous Chain Bridge and Margaret Island, the green oasis of Budapest in the heart of the Danube. Hungary's capital is steeped in history and stories – a symphony for all the senses!

*Overnight stay: **Kempinski Hotel Corvinus, Budapest** (or similar).*

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Budapest Vienna

After breakfast at the hotel, you'll return to the train station, where your nostalgic special train awaits. Soon, you'll leave Budapest behind, travelling through the Hungarian lowlands towards the Austro-Hungarian border.

In the afternoon, you will be greeted by the world's capital of music—Vienna. This city offers a delightful blend of imperial charm and modernity, Art Nouveau and Hundertwasser, traditional coffee house culture, and trendy bars. From Westbahnhof, you can easily explore Vienna at your own pace using public transport, with sights such as the Hofburg, St. Stephen's Cathedral, Naschmarkt and Prater all within reach.

To end your day on a sweet note, indulge in a melange, pastries, or a Viennese speciality in one of the city's renowned coffee houses. As evening falls, you'll reboard the train and soon be gliding westward along the tracks of the Semmeringbahn, Europe's first mountain railway, a technical marvel that has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1998.

*Overnight stay aboard the **Great European Express**.*

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Top of Europe: The Majestic Alps

Early risers are in for a treat, as a literal highlight awaits: the journey across the Alps from east to west. From the train, you'll enjoy stunning views of the towering Alpine peaks. Relax in the elegant salon carriage as majestic mountains and brightly painted alpine huts glide by. You'll travel through the Inn Valley in Tyrol, cross the tiny Principality of Liechtenstein and arrive in the Swiss canton of St. Gallen.

In the morning, you'll reach Lucerne, with its iconic covered chapel bridge, narrow streets, and colourful medieval guild houses around the wine market. From there, you'll continue to Kriens, where an exhilarating aerial cable car and panoramic gondola ride will take you through dramatic rock walls up to Mount Pilatus, Lucerne's local mountain. In front of you, 72 alpine peaks stretch across the horizon, and if you're lucky, you might even catch a glimpse of the mighty Mont Blanc.

After descending, your special train will be back in motion by the afternoon. After a short journey, you'll arrive in France and stop at Colmar, home to the most beautiful old town in Alsace. A detour to a world-famous winery awaits, where green vineyards and golden nectar offer a feast for the senses. Feeling elated, you'll return to the train.

*Overnight stay aboard the **Great European Express**.*

Breakfast Lunch Dinner



Day **8** Paris

In the morning, the train will pull into Gare de L'Est in Paris. After breakfast, it's time to bid farewell to your hotel on wheels and its welcoming crew. But the parting sadness is short-lived, as the City of Love quickly enchants you. The artistic neighbourhood of Montmartre still retains the bohemian charm of the Belle Époque. From the steps of the snow-white Sacré-Coeur, you'll have a breathtaking view of all of Paris. A city tour will take you to iconic landmarks like the Eiffel Tower, the Opera, Place Vendôme, and a stroll down the Champs-Élysées from the Arc de Triomphe. With the melodies of street musicians lingering in your mind, you'll head to a memorable farewell dinner, where you and your fellow travellers can reminisce about the extraordinary journey across Europe.

Overnight stay: Renaissance Paris Arc de Triomphe Hotel (or similar).

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Day **9** Paris

But even the most wonderful journey must come to an end eventually. Today, you'll head to Paris airport to begin your journey home.

Note: There is an option to extend your stay in Paris for additional nights to explore more of this fascinating city.

Breakfast



ACCOMMODATION

The Great European Express

UPGRADE AVAILABLE

Category one: Classic

The air-conditioned sleeping cars offer a plush, nostalgic atmosphere. The classic sleeper compartments, measuring 3.5 m², are fitted with two bunk beds, each approximately 66 × 190 cm. Each compartment includes a sink, reading lamp, luggage rack and a small table. For the shared use of up to 18 guests per car, a shower and toilet are available at the end of the carriage.



Room Upgrades

Comfort

The comfort category compartments, measuring approximately 7.74 m², provide a private bathroom complete with a toilet, shower and sink. Each compartment features two comfortable lower beds, measuring 185 × 80 cm, which are prepared daily by the staff. Two cosy armchairs offer daytime seating and a free-standing chair adds extra flexibility. The train consists of four cars, each with five comfort category compartments. All compartments are equipped with individually adjustable air conditioning, electrical sockets, a small safe, hairdryer and toiletries.



Prices are dynamic based on travel dates. Please proceed to [Book Now](#) or [Contact Us](#) for details.

Superior

In the Superior category, the compartments provide even more space, measuring 8.6 m², compared to those in the Comfort category. Each night, your compartment transforms into a cosy bedroom featuring a king-size bed (190 × 152 cm), with the beds made daily by the staff. In addition to the amenities of the Comfort category, the Superior compartments also offer a small seating area. Each compartment has its own private bathroom, complete with a toilet, sink, and a separate shower cubicle. All compartments are fitted with individually adjustable air conditioning, electrical sockets, a small safe, hairdryer and toiletries. Each carriage in this category, designed for maximum comfort, contains only 4 compartments, accommodating up to 8 guests per carriage.



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

2026 Departure date:

- 12 Apr 2026 - 20 Apr 2026

Excluded

1. **Visa Fees (if required):** The cost associated with obtaining a visa is not covered in the package. This includes any fees charged by the relevant authorities for processing and issuing the visa necessary for your travels. Travellers are advised to plan accordingly so your Agent can initiate visa processes well in advance of your intended travel dates.
2. **Gratuities:** Gratuity or tips for services rendered, such as those provided by tour guides, drivers, or hotel staff, are not included. Travellers may choose to express their appreciation through gratuities at their discretion.
3. **International Flights:** The package does not cover the cost of international flights to and from the destination. Travellers are responsible for booking and securing their own international flights for the specified travel period.
4. **Personal Expenses:** Any personal expenses incurred during the trip, such as meals not included in the package, additional excursions, shopping, or other personal activities, are not covered. Travelers should budget accordingly for these discretionary expenses.
5. **Travel Insurance:** Travel insurance is not included and is recommended.