MUSEUM TRAVEL ALLIANCE®
BY ARRANGEMENTS ABROAD

Budapest, Vienna & Prague by Luxury Rail

New Year's Aboard the *Golden Eagle Danube Express*

December 27, 2026 – January 5, 2027



With Jennifer Dasal, *Lecturer*



Hungarian Parliament Building in Budapest, Hungary

Trip *Highlights*

Travel on a luxurious New Year's journey aboard the ***Golden Eagle Danube Express*** train, featuring en-suite cabins, sumptuous cuisine, and live entertainment.

Discover the Habsburg legacy of **Budapest**, **Vienna**, and **Prague** on guided tours, from coronation churches and imperial palaces to Gothic cathedrals and opera houses.

Join a **New Year's Eve Gala Dinner** at **Vienna's City Hall**, enjoying a performance by the world-renowned **Vienna Hofball Orchestra**.

Attend an exclusive reception in the **Royal Waiting Room** at Budapest's **Nyugati Station**, built for Emperor Franz Joseph and Empress Elisabeth and normally closed to the public.

See Europe's winter landscapes roll past as the train crosses the **Balaton Uplands** and climbs the UNESCO-listed **Semmering Pass**, the world's first standard-gauge mountain railway.

Admire Alphonse Mucha's 1931 Art Nouveau stained-glass window in Prague's **St. Vitus Cathedral**, set within a Gothic structure begun nearly 600 years earlier.

View the diamond-patterned Zsolnay roof tiles and painted interiors of Budapest's **St. Matthias Church**, the coronation site for the last two Hungarian Habsburg kings.

Hear resident monks practice Gregorian chant at **Heiligenkreuz Abbey**, the world's oldest continuously inhabited Cistercian monastery, continuing a 900-year tradition.

Savor authentic Central European experiences, from a **Viennese waltz lesson** to **a private classical concert** in Prague, and an optional tasting of the original **Budweiser Budvar beer in Český Krumlov**, Czech Republic.



Traveling With *You*

Jennifer Dasal is an art historian, lecturer, and tour director. She is the author of the book *ArtCurious: Stories of the Unexpected, Slightly Odd, and Strangely Wonderful in Art History* (Penguin). She is also beloved as the creator/host of the worldwide hit podcast *ArtCurious* (2016-23). Her second book, *The Club: Where American Women Artists Found Refuge in Belle Époque Paris*, was released by Bloomsbury in July 2025. She previously served as Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art at the North Carolina Museum of Art for 13 years. She earned a B.A. from the University of California, Davis, and an M.A. from the University of Notre Dame, both in art history. She also completed Ph.D. coursework in art history at Pennsylvania State University.

During a festive time of year in Central Europe, travel by luxury rail through former Habsburg imperial capitals, exploring how emperors built monuments to assert their identities. From **December 27, 2026, to January 5, 2027**, join art historian and *ArtCurious* host **Jennifer Dasal** on a winter journey through **Budapest**, **Vienna**, **Prague,** and beyond.

Discover Budapest with three nights of hotel accommodations, attending an exclusive reception in the **Royal Waiting Room at Nyugati Station**, built for Emperor Franz Joseph I and Empress Elisabeth, and normally closed to the public. Celebrate the New Year over a five-night stay aboard the luxurious ***Golden Eagle Danube Express***, settling into your wood-paneled, en-suite cabins, savoring sumptuous, locally sourced cuisine in its elegant restaurant car, and more.

To reserve your place, contact the Museum Travel Alliance at Arrangements Abroad: 212-324-1893 or trips@museumtravelalliance.com. We spoke with Jennifer about what this exclusive winter rail journey reveals.

The Habsburgs ruled this region for centuries. How will we encounter their legacy?

Jennifer Dasal: The program moves between imperial spaces and the monuments that challenged them. In Budapest, we'll visit **St. Matthias Church**, where Franz Joseph was crowned King of Hungary in 1867, its colorful Zsolnay roof tiles visible across the city. At the **Hungarian State Opera House**, architect Miklós Ybl created one of Europe's finest acoustic spaces within a constraint from the emperor himself, who insisted that Budapest's opera be smaller than Vienna's.

In Vienna, we'll experience four centuries of Habsburg ambition at **Schönbrunn Palace**, whose 1,441 rooms were reimagined by Empress Maria Theresa beginning in 1743. We'll also **celebrate New Year's in the City Hall's grand ballroom**, a Gothic structure that gave the city's rising middle class their own monument to rival the emperor's palaces along the Ringstrasse. A performance from the **Vienna Hofburg Orchestra** will make that night feel particularly special.

The itinerary includes some lesser-known stories. Which ones resonate with you?

Jennifer Dasal: At **Festetics Palace** in Keszthely, we'll see the **Helikon Library**, the only major aristocratic library to survive intact in Hungary. During World War II, the palace librarian walled off the entrance to hide it from advancing Soviet troops. In Prague, **St. Vitus Cathedral** contains Alphonse Mucha's 1931 Art Nouveau stained-glass window, a modern statement of Czech national identity inserted into a Gothic structure begun nearly 600 years earlier. During our excursion in **Slovakia**, the town of **Košice** will offer a counterpoint. Its Gothic cathedral and grand burgher houses were funded by trade profits, monuments built by merchants rather than monarchs.

MUSEUM TRAVEL ALLIANCE®
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Activity Level: Intermediate

Pace Level: Vivace

Visit Arrangements Abroad's website for more information about Activity and Pace Levels at www.arrangementsabroad.com/faqs.

Budapest, Vienna & Prague by Luxury Rail

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December 27, 2026 - January 5, 2027



Map of the region

Sunday, December 27:

Departure

Depart on an overnight flight to Budapest.

Monday, December 28:

Budapest, Hungary

Arrive in **Budapest**, a city forged in 1873 from the unification of ancient Buda, Óbuda, and commercial Pest. After a transfer to the **Four Seasons Hotel Gresham Palace**, your home for two nights before the train journey. After time at leisure, gather for a welcome reception. **R**

Tuesday, December 29:

Budapest

Begin in the **Buda Castle District**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site on a limestone plateau that provides a physical record of Hungarian history. Here, visit **St. Matthias Church**, the coronation site for the last two Hungarian Habsburg kings, whose roof is covered in colorful Zsolnay tiles.

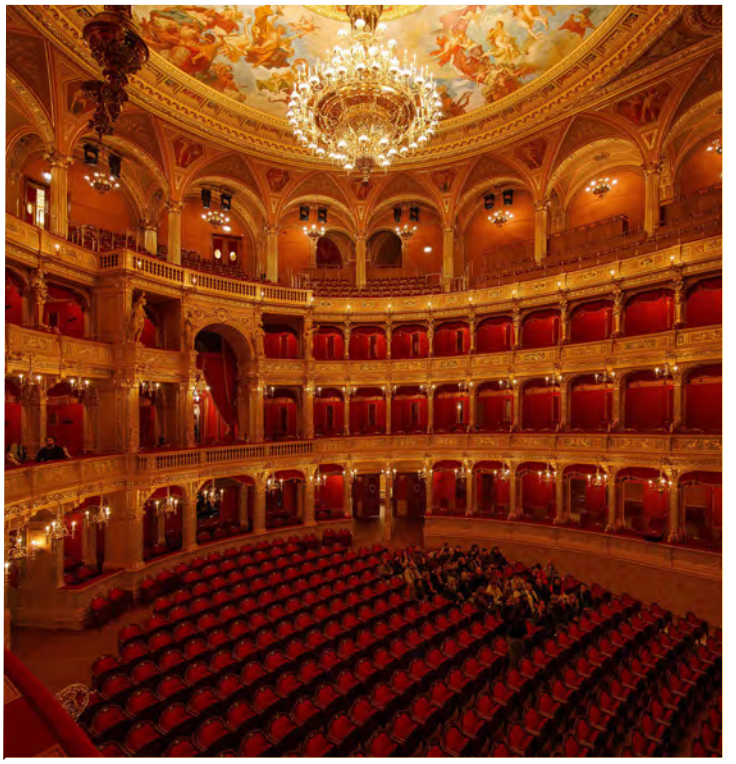
Nearby, you will see the **Fishermen's Bastion**, an architectural fantasy built for the 1896 Millennial Celebrations, whose seven turrets represent the seven Magyar chieftains who founded Hungary.

A panoramic tour of Pest includes views of the **Hungarian Parliament Building** and **St. Stephen's Basilica**, whose domes were both built to a height of exactly 315 feet to symbolize the balance between church and state. After lunch, a special guided tour takes you inside the **Hungarian State Opera House**. A Neo-Renaissance jewel by architect Miklós Ybl, this venue features some of Europe's best acoustics. Dinner is at leisure. **B,L**

Wednesday, December 30:

Budapest / Board Golden Eagle Danube Express / Keszthely

This morning, you are invited to a drinks reception in the **Royal Waiting Room** at Budapest's **Nyugati Station**, a space built for the exclusive use of Emperor Franz Joseph I and Empress Elisabeth ("Sisi") and normally closed to the public.



Hungarian State Opera House, Budapest, Hungary

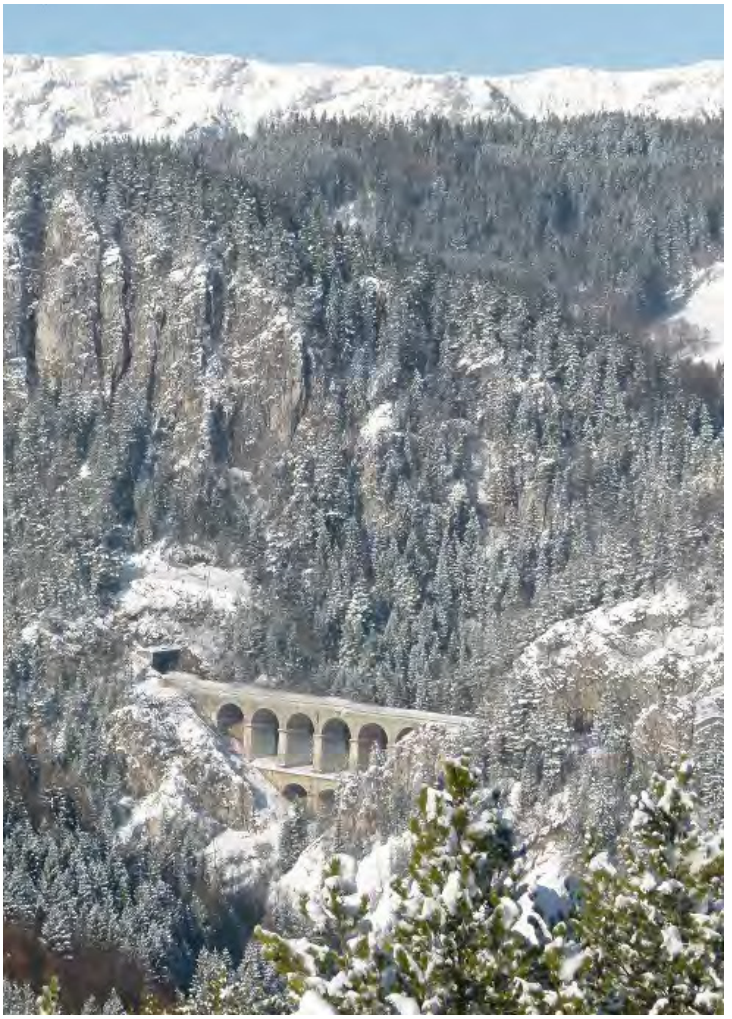
Then, board the ***Golden Eagle Danube Express***, settling into your cabin as the train travels through the winter scenery of **Balaton Uplands National Park**, a UNESCO Global Geopark of eroded volcanic buttes.

Along the shore of Lake Balaton, arrive in **Keszthely** and tour **Festetics Palace**, a lavish Baroque home. Its **Helikon Library** is the only substantial aristocratic private library to have survived intact in Hungary, saved during World War II when the palace librarian walled off its entrance to hide it from advancing Soviet troops. This evening, enjoy dinner on the train. **B,R,L,D**

Thursday, December 31:
Graz, Austria / Vienna

Arrive in **Graz**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, whose city center reflects its history as a Habsburg residence and a cultural crossroads with the Italian Renaissance.

A walking tour takes you through Graz's Renaissance courtyards and Baroque palaces. Enjoy an optional tasting of Styrian pumpkin seed oil, a prized regional specialty known as "black gold."



Semmerling Pass, Austria



New Year's Eve Gala Dinner, Vienna City Hall, Austria

Reboard the train for lunch and travel over the **Semmering Pass**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and the world's first standard-gauge mountain railway. This monumental feat of 19th-century engineering created a new relationship between technology and nature, with 16 viaducts and 15 tunnels, making the Alps accessible for the first time.

Upon arrival in **Vienna**, Austria's capital, you can join a Viennese waltz lesson, an engagement with a dance that evolved from a scandalous folk custom to a symbol of Habsburg imperial culture.

This evening, attend a special **New Year's Eve Gala Dinner** in the grand ballroom of the **Vienna City Hall**, with a performance by the **Vienna Hofburg Orchestra** to ring in the new year. **B,L,D**

Friday, January 1:
Vienna

After brunch on board, you will have a choice of excursions, with lunch at leisure.

Option 1: A guided tour takes you through **Schönbrunn Palace**, the 1,441-room Rococo summer residence of the Habsburg emperors. You will also have time to visit the **Christmas Market**, held in the palace's grand forecourt.

Option 2: Visit **Heiligenkreuz Abbey**, the world's oldest continuously inhabited Cistercian monastery, founded in 1133 and nestled in the Vienna Woods. A guided tour of this Romanesque and Gothic structure offers the chance to hear the resident monks practice Gregorian chant.

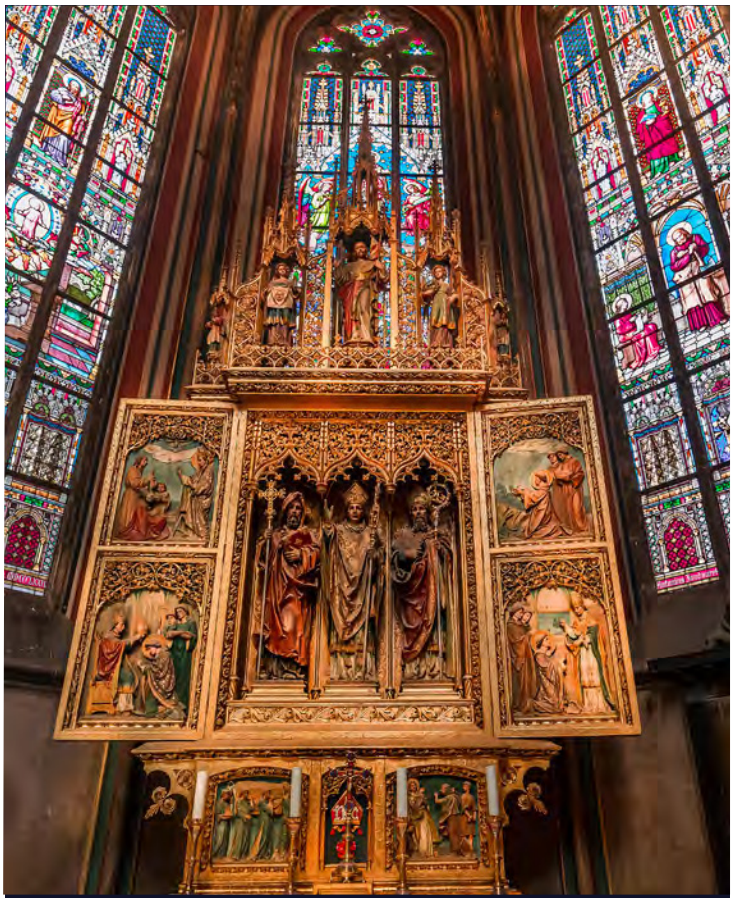
All guests will come together for **a horse-drawn *Fiaker* carriage ride** through Vienna's cobbled streets, followed by a special private concert featuring the **Vienna Supreme Orchestra**. Enjoy dinner on the train. **BR,D**

Saturday, January 2:
Český Krumlov, Czech Republic / Prague

Your day begins in **Český Krumlov**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The town's remarkable state of preservation is a direct result of being bypassed by 19th-century industrialization, leaving its medieval street plan and architectural ensembles undisturbed.



Český Krumlov, Czech Republic



St. Vitus Cathedral, Prague, Czech Republic

After an introductory guided walking tour, explore Český Krumlov on your own or join an optional visit to **a local brewery** for a tasting of the original Budweiser Budvar beer, a product born from a 19th-century struggle for Czech national identity against the region's dominant German establishment. After lunch on board, continue to **Prague**, where you will enjoy dinner, followed by a private classical music concert. **B,L,D**

Sunday, January 3:
Prague

Start your day with **a vintage tram ride**, a journey that traces the paths of Prague's transformation into a modern metropolis at the turn of the 20th century. The ride concludes at **Prague Castle**, the world's largest coherent castle complex, which has served as a seat of power for a millennium.

Here, visit the Gothic **St. Vitus Cathedral**. Its nearly 600-year construction makes it a living document of Czech art, combining 14th-century design with 20th-century additions, such as Alphonse Mucha's magnificent Art Nouveau stained-glass window.

After lunch in the city and an afternoon at leisure, gather for **an evening cruise on the Vltava River**, which offers a clear view of how the river's course dictated Prague's layout. **B,L,D**

Monday, January 4:
Košice, Slovakia / Budapest, Hungary / Deboard

You will arrive in **Košice**, which holds Slovakia's largest historical center. Unlike imperial capitals, Košice was shaped by merchants and artisans, its grandeur funded by the profits of trade.

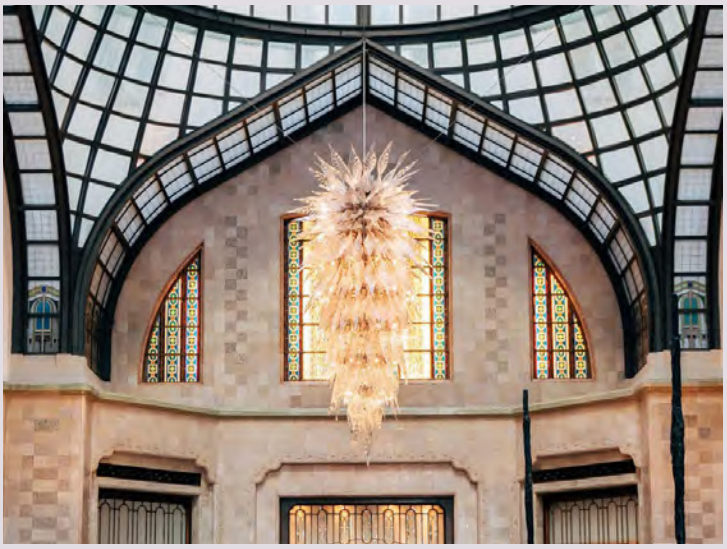
A highlights tour includes its vast, spindle-shaped central square, which is lined with 15th- and 16th-century burgher houses and dominated by the grandiose, medieval **St. Elisabeth's Cathedral**.

After a final lunch on board, the train returns to Budapest. You will check back into the Four Seasons Hotel Gresham Palace for an overnight stay before gathering for a celebratory farewell dinner. **B,L,D**

Tuesday, January 5:
Budapest / Return

After breakfast, transfer to the airport for your flight home. **B**

Accommodations



Four Seasons Hotel Gresham Palace, Budapest

Four Seasons Hotel Gresham Palace, Budapest
Originally built in 1906, this Art Nouveau landmark stands proudly on the banks of the Danube River, directly facing the iconic Chain Bridge. Guests can enjoy elegantly appointed rooms and suites, many of which offer wide views of the city or the river. The hotel has exceptional dining options, a serene spa with an infinity pool, and impeccable service.

Program Rates

Cabin Class	Double Rate	Single Rate
Deluxe Class Twin	**$18,999**	**$28,499**

Cabin area 83 sq. ft., twin beds, two armchairs and a free-standing chair for daytime seating, large picture window, full-length wardrobe and power sockets, private en-suite bathroom with cubicle shower.

Superior Deluxe Class	**$24,999**	**Inquire**

Cabin area 93 sq. ft., king-size bed, additional daytime seating with table, two large picture windows, double wardrobe, personal safe, Wi-Fi & two USB ports, private en-suite bathroom with cubicle shower.

Rates Include

- Three nights hotel accommodations in Budapest; five nights cabin accommodations aboard *Golden Eagle Danube Express* as per itinerary
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary (B=Breakfast, BR=Brunch, L=Lunch, R=Reception, D=Dinner). Bottled water, soft drinks, juices, and coffee/tea with all meals; house wine and beer at all included lunches and dinners
- Enrichment program of lectures and talks
- Escorted sightseeing, transportation, and entrance fees for all included visits
- Airport/hotel/airport transfers for participants on arrival and departure days
- Taxes, service, and porterage charges; gratuities to local guides and drivers; customary train gratuities

NOT INCLUDED IN RATES: International airfare; passport and visa fees; airport transfers other than on arrival and departure days; meals not specified; alcoholic beverages other than those noted in inclusions; personal items and expenses; excess baggage; trip insurance; any other items not specifically mentioned as included.

DISCLAIMER: This itinerary is subject to change at the discretion of Museum Travel Alliance. For complete details, please carefully read the terms and conditions at https://www.arrangementsabroad.com/terms-conditions/.

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Front cover: Rooftops of Prague.

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Golden Eagle Danube Express



Golden Eagle Danube Express

Golden Eagle Danube Express

The *Golden Eagle Danube Express* combines the comfort and attentive service of a luxury hotel with the romance of classic rail travel. Settle into a spacious en-suite cabin, complete with large picture windows, adjustable lighting, air conditioning, Wi-Fi, and ample storage.

Meals are served in elegant restaurant cars, with menus designed by the onboard chef using fresh, locally sourced ingredients, paired with international wines hand-selected by the company's founder. The Bar Lounge Car is the train's social hub, with live piano music in the evenings.



Bar Lounge Car, *Golden Eagle Danube Express*

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RESERVATION FORM

To reserve a place, please call Museum Travel Alliance at 212-324-1893 or 855-533-0033; email: trips@museumtravelalliance.com; or complete and return this form with your deposit of $2,000 per person (of which $1,000 is non-refundable for administrative fees) to *Museum Travel Alliance*. Mail to: Museum Travel Alliance, 260 West 39th Street, 17th Floor, New York, NY 10018-4424.

Name(s) in full as on passport(s). Please print.

Address

City State Zip

Telephone (mobile) (home)

E-mail

ACCOMMODATIONS

Hotel room preference ❒one bed ❒two beds

Golden Eagle Danube Express cabin preference

▫ Superior Deluxe ❒Deluxe Class Twin

I wish to share a room/cabin with

FORM OF PAYMENT

▫ Enclosed is my check (payable to *Museum Travel Alliance)*

▫ Debit card ❒Credit card

Name on debit/credit card

Debit/credit card number

3- or 4-digit security code Expiration date

I/We confirm that I/we have carefully read and agree to the Terms & Conditions of this Program (see https://www.arrangementsabroad.com/terms-conditions/ to review or call for a copy). I/We agree to full payment by check, wire transfer, or credit card 120 days prior to departure. Each participant must sign below.

Signature (required) Date