



Travel with the World Affairs Council of Charlotte

Magical Journey Through Mittel Europe: Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic and Slovakia September 20th – October 2nd, 2015 (13-Days)

Please contact Ljubomir (L.J.) Stambuk, President & CEO of the World Affairs Council of Charlotte via [email](#) or call 704-687-7760 if you have questions or need more information about the trip.

Please contact our office at 704-687-7762 to confirm your interest in traveling with the World Affairs Council of Charlotte as soon as possible.

The deposit (\$500) is due immediately to secure your seat for the trip. Full payment is due 30-days before travel.

Day 1: Sunday, September 20th, 2015

Charlotte / Munich / Warsaw

Depart from Charlotte-Douglas International Airport via Lufthansa at 6:45 P.M. direct to Munich. Arrive in Munich the following morning at 9:50 A.M. Time appropriate meals and inflight entertainment provided.

Day 2: Monday, September 21st, 2015

Munich / Warsaw

Depart from Munich via Lufthansa flight to Warsaw, Poland at 11:00 A.M. Flight arrives in Warsaw at 12:30 P.M. local time.

Welcome to Poland.

Upon clearing customs, travelers will meet with the tour manager and be transported to the elegant [Hotel Bristol](#) for a two-day stay in the center of Warsaw. The hotel is situated next to the Presidential Palace, just a short stroll from the Old Town, the Royal Castle and the 200-year-old National Theater and Opera House.

“Situated in the heart of Warsaw, [Hotel Bristol \(5-Star\)](#) has served as the city’s most remarkable landmark and distinguished destination since 1901. The hotel enchants with majestic neo-renaissance facade and romantic interiors, filled with Art Deco elegance from the beginning of the 20th century and luxury



Photo: Hotel Bristol (exterior)

finishes.” [Read More](#)

Photo Gallery: [Hotel Bristol \(5-Star\)](#)

Travelers will have the opportunity to settle in and relax from the trans-Atlantic journey. In the latter part of the afternoon, the group will go on a walking orientation tour of the area near the hotel followed by a welcome dinner in a local restaurant.



Photo: Hotel Bristol (interior)



Photo: Presidential Palace (Source: [Wikipedia Commons](#))



Photo: Downtown Warsaw (Source: [Wikipedia Commons](#))

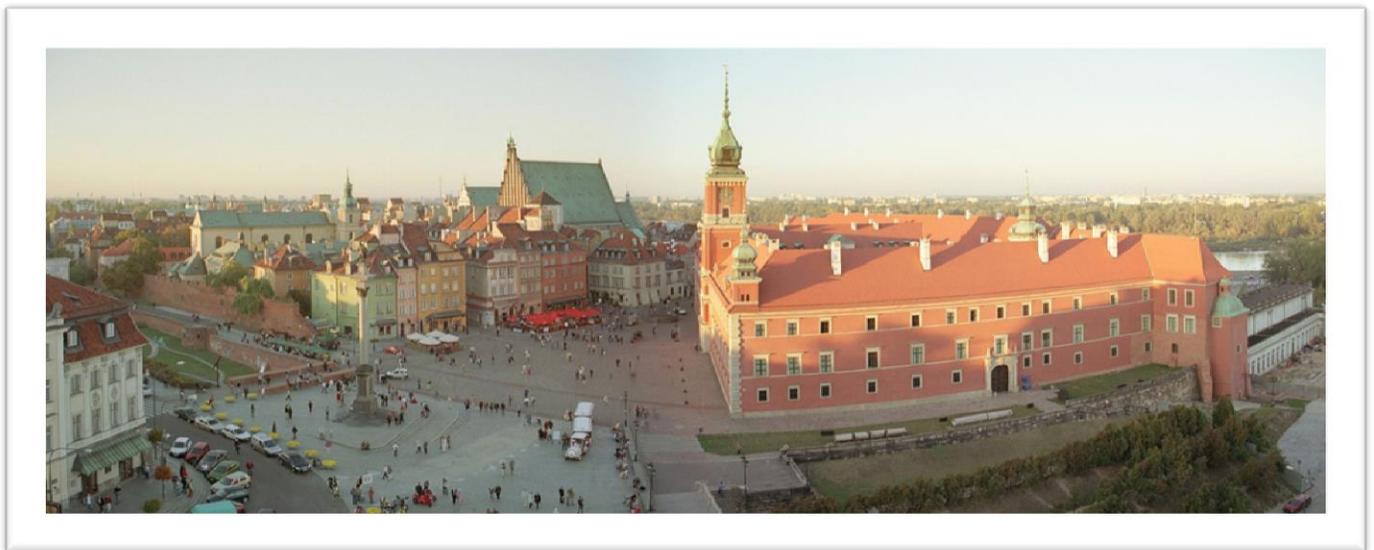


Photo: Warsaw Castle Square (Source: [Wikipedia Commons](#))

Complimentary breakfast included.

Although the beginnings of Warsaw go as far back as the 12th and 13th century Warsaw was forced to completely rebuild after the near-total destruction of the city during World War II. The symbol of the capital's rebirth was an unprecedented post-war re-creation of the Old Town, which in 1980 was put on the UNESCO list of World Heritage Sites, as an example of a nearly complete reconstruction of the original settlement using original town plans and architecture.

[Read More](#)

Warsaw is the capital and largest city in Poland. Located on the Vistula River, in east-central Poland, it has a somewhat proximity to the Baltic Sea (160 miles) and the Carpathian Mountains (190 miles). In 2012, Warsaw was ranked as the [32nd most livable city](#) in the world by the [Economist Intelligence Unit](#). Today, Warsaw is considered a global city, a major international tourist destination and a significant cultural, political and economic hub.

The full day tour today will include the [Palace of Culture and Science](#), [Radziwill Palace](#), [Tomb of the Unknown Soldier](#) and Constitution Square.

INDEPENDENT LUNCH

In the afternoon, continue with a walking tour of the 13th and 14th century [Old Town \(Stare Miasto\)](#) and a visit to the Jewish Quarter including the [Nozyk Synagogue](#), which is the only remaining pre-war synagogue in Poland and the [Jewish Cemetery](#), one of the largest cemeteries in Europe.

The great composer and pianist [Fryderyk Chopin](#) lived most of his early life in **Warsaw**. Later this afternoon, the group will enjoy a private piano recital comprised of his musical compositions in one of the Warsaw palaces.

Please note that we are also working to host a special briefing and meeting with officials at the U.S. Embassy in Warsaw for the afternoon of September 22nd. We will advise travelers once these meetings are confirmed.



Photo: Palace of Culture and Science (Source: [Wikipedia Commons](#))



Photo: Tomb of the Unknown Soldier (Source: [Wikipedia Commons](#))



Photo: Old Town (Source: [Wikipedia Commons](#))



Photo: Jewish Cemetery (Source: [Wikipedia Commons](#))

Return to the hotel and enjoy the evening at leisure.

INDEPENDENT DINNER

Overnight at [Hotel Bristol \(5-Star\) in Warsaw.](#)

Day 4: Wednesday, September 23rd, 2015

Warsaw / Auschwitz / Kraków

Complimentary breakfast included.

After breakfast, the group will leave **Warsaw** this morning to continue on their journey to **Kraków** through the Polish countryside with a stop at the poignant and historical memorial and museum at [Auschwitz](#).

“Auschwitz-Birkenau was the principal and most notorious of the six concentration and extermination camps established by Nazi Germany to implement its Final Solution policy which had as its aim the mass murder of the Jewish people in Europe. Built in Poland under Nazi German occupation initially as a concentration camp for Poles and later for Soviet prisoners of war, it soon became a prison for a number of other nationalities. Between the years 1942-1944 it became the main mass extermination camp where Jews were tortured and killed for their so-called racial origins.” [Read More](#)

Tour [Auschwitz](#) and the concentration camp at [Birkenau](#) before continuing on to **Kraków**.

Travelers will spend two nights in the [Hotel Puro](#), an elegantly modern yet sophisticated hotel, located in the heart of **Kraków**, believed to be one of the finest medieval cities in Europe.

The group will have some time to settle in and freshen-up before heading out to a local restaurant for dinner.

Overnight at [Hotel Puro \(4-Star\) in Kraków.](#)

Photo Gallery: [Hotel Puro](#)



Photo: Auschwitz-Birkenau
(Source: [Wikipedia Commons](#))



Photo: Hotel Puro (Interior)

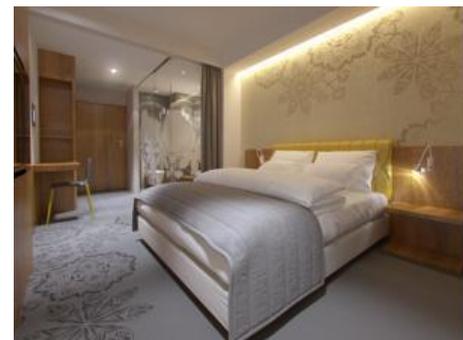


Photo: Hotel Puro (Interior)

Complimentary breakfast included.



After breakfast, enjoy a full-day of touring **Kraków**, the former capital of Poland.

"If you believe the legends, Kraków was founded upon the defeat of a dragon, and it's true a mythical atmosphere permeates its attractive streets and squares.

Wawel Castle is a major drawcard, while the Old Town contains soaring churches, impressive museums and the vast Rynek Główny, Europe's largest market square. In the former Jewish quarter, Kazimierz, remnant synagogues reflect the tragedy of the 20th century, just as its lively western quarter symbolizes the renewal of the 21st." [Read More](#)

Photo: Kraków (Source: [Wikipedia Commons](#))



The group will walk through Old Town **Kraków**, the historic center of the city, which is situated at the foot of the Royal Wawel Castle. This 13th century merchants' town is renowned for having the largest market square in Europe.

Travelers will continue on to [Jagiellonian University](#), a research university founded in 1364 by [Casimir III the Great in Kazimierz](#). It is the oldest university in Poland, the second oldest university in Central Europe and one of the oldest universities in the world.



Visit the [Franciscan Church](#) which was founded in the first half of the 13th century and also one of the first brick constructions in **Kraków**.

Photo: Pope John Paull II at the Archbishop's Palace (Source: [Wikipedia Commons](#))

"The original, early Gothic church designed for the Franciscan Order was most probably designed in the form of a Greek (isosceles) cross. It was built in the latter half of the 13th century, mostly thanks to the support of Prince Boleslaus the Modest (Bolesław Wstydlivy), who at that time might have wanted to be buried in the church. His wish was fulfilled after his death in 1279. In the

mid-15th century, the church was expanded by extending the nave and the chancel, the latter now ending in a three sided apse. The Chapel of the Passion of Christ was added; it is closely connected with the Archbrotherhood of the Passion of Christ instituted in 1595 and functioning to this day.” [Read More](#)

Don't miss the [Archbishop's Palace](#) which is part of the monastery complex of the [Franciscan Religious Order](#) and residence of [Kraków](#) bishops. It is also the second largest palace in the city after the [Royal Wawel Castle](#). The Bishop's Palace is best known for being the residence of Pope John Paul II during his stays in the city. He used to give his blessings and talk to his followers from a window above the main entrance at night.

INDEPENDENT LUNCH



After lunch, tour the [Royal Wawel Castle](#), which used to be the political and cultural heart of Poland through the 16th century. It's now a museum with five separate sections: Crown Treasury & Armoury; State Rooms; Royal Private Apartments; Lost Wawel; and Exhibition of Oriental Art. We'll end the afternoon with a visit to the [Wawel Cathedral](#), the spiritual center of the Polish state, located inside the Wawel Castle,

Photo: Wawel Castle (Source: [Wikipedia Commons](#))

Return to the hotel and enjoy the evening at leisure.

INDEPENDENT DINNER

Overnight at [Hotel Puro \(4-Star\) in Kraków](#).

Day 6: Friday, September 25th, 2015

Kraków / Slovakia / Budapest

Complimentary breakfast included.

After breakfast, the group will enjoy scenic travel through dense forests and idyllic farmland as the tour continues to [Hungary](#) via [Slovakia](#). Stop in [Zakopane](#), a picturesque town surrounded by the beautiful Tatra Mountains. [Zakopane](#) is Poland's most fashionable mountain resort and serves as an excellent base for hiking in summer and skiing in winter.

COMPLIMENTARY LUNCH

Continue across [Slovakia](#) before arriving in [Budapest](#) later in



Artistic Rendition: Zakopane

the afternoon. The group will spend the next three nights in the [Boscolo Budapest \(5-Star\)](#), known for its exquisite blending of historical architectural design together with 21st century luxury.

Enjoy the evening at leisure.

INDEPENDENT DINNER

Overnight at the [Boscolo Budapest \(5-Star\) Hotel](#) in Budapest.



Photo: Boscolo Budapest Hotel

Day 7: Saturday, September 26th, 2015

Budapest (Pest)

Complimentary breakfast included.

The Danube divides **Budapest** into two areas – [Buda and Pest](#).

“Buda and Pest were joined together with nearby Óbuda to create a city fit to be the dual capital of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1873. The width of the not-so-blue Danube separates hilly, residential Buda from its flatter, industrial counterpart opposite.” [Read More](#)

Buda vs. Pest: One City, Two Personalities [Read More](#)

Today’s tour on the **Pest** side, which is the eastern side of the Danube River in [Budapest, Hungary](#), will include the embassy district with over 15+ embassies in the vicinity, [City Park](#) (man-made park behinds Heroe’s Square) and Adrassy Avenue, which was built to connect the city center with [City Park](#).

Don’t miss the opportunity to go inside the [Hungarian State Opera House](#), one of the most beautiful Neo-Renaissance buildings in Europe and the [St. Stephen’s Basilica](#), which is Budapest’s largest church and is dedicated to [St. Stephen, the first Christian king of Hungary](#). Continue on to visit the [Dohány Street Synagogue](#), the largest synagogue in Europe and one of the largest in the world. It seats 3,000 people and is a center of Neolog Judaism.

Enjoy the afternoon in **Pest** at leisure.



Photo: Pest (Source: [Wikipedia Commons](#))



Photo: Buda and Pest (Source: [TastingTravels.com](#))



Photo: Hungarian State Operate House (Source: [A Thousand Wonders](#))

Later in the evening, the group will go on a *private cruise on the Danube River, the second longest river in Europe.

Complimentary Dinner (*during private cruise)

Overnight at the [Boscolo Budapest \(5-Star\) Hotel](#) in Budapest.



Photo: Cruise on the Danube River (Source: [Wikipedia Commons](#))



Photo: St. Stephen's Basilica (Source: [Wikipedia Commons](#))



Photo: Dohany Street Synagogue (Source: [Wikipedia Commons](#))

Day 8: Sunday, September 27th, 2015

Budapest (Buda)

Complimentary breakfast included.

Explore **Buda**, which is located on the west side of the river, somewhat hilly and semi-suburban, with winding, narrow streets winding their way up into the hills.

Today's tour will include a visit to the [Gothic Matthias Church](#). The Matthias Church is one of Budapest's most important churches. Many of Hungary's kings were coronated here and the church is home to important tombs and ecclesiastical treasures.

Don't miss checking out the imposing [Fisherman's Bastion](#) looming over the Danube.



Photo: Gothic Matthias Church (Source: [Wikipedia Commons](#))

“Fisherman’s Bastion in Budapest is one of the top Budapest attractions without a doubt. The present day lovely lookout towers / decorative fortification of Fisherman’s Bastion were built in the 19th century to serve as a lookout tower for the best panoramic views in Budapest, Hungary. Needless to say, there used to be real castle walls where now you can take fantastic photos from, but the present day structure has never served as an actual fortification in Buda.” [Read More](#)

Experience **Buda** by strolling through [Castle Hill](#), which is recognized as a World Heritage Site with many must-see attractions, Gothic arches, eighteenth-century Baroque houses and cobblestone streets.

“Castle Hill, a 1km-long limestone plateau towering 170m above the Danube, contains Budapest's most important medieval monuments and museums and is a Unesco World Heritage Site. It is the premier sight in the capital, and with its grand views and so many things to see, you should start here.

Below is a 28km network of caves formed by thermal springs that were supposedly used by the Turks for military purposes, as air-raid shelters during WWII, and as a secret military installation during the Cold War.

The walled area consists of two distinct parts: the Old Town to the north, where commoners lived in the Middle Ages (the current owners of the coveted burgher houses here are anything but 'common'); and the Royal Palace, the original site of the castle built in the 13th century, now housing two important museums.” [Read more](#)

Enjoy the afternoon and evening exploring Budapest at leisure. Recommended sites to visit include the [Great Market Hall](#), which is the largest and oldest indoor market in Budapest. Located at the **Pest** end of Szabadság Bridge, the Great Market Hall combines shopping with sightseeing. A great place to stroll even in cold and rainy weather.

INDEPENDENT DINNER

Overnight at the [Boscolo Budapest \(5-Star\) Hotel](#) in Budapest.



Photo: Fisherman’s Bastian (Source: [Wikipedia Commons](#))



Photos: Items sold at the Great Market Hall (Source: [Wikipedia Commons](#))

Complimentary breakfast included.

After three days in **Budapest**, the group will travel from **Hungary** to **Slovakia's** ancient capital city of **Bratislava**.

“Proximity to nature gives Slovakia's capital its strongest flavouring. The Danube winds through town and cycle paths through its verdant flood plain beginning just outside the centre. Meanwhile, erupting a 30-minute walk from the train station are the densely forested Small Carpathians; the trailer to a mountainous extent that runs countrywide, virtually unimpeded by civilisation. Then there's ski runs and vineyards to amble among. The charming – if tiny – old town (starý mesto) is the place to start appreciating Bratislava. Stroll narrow pedestrian streets of pastel 18th-century buildings or sample the myriad sidewalk cafes under the watchful gaze of the city castle, harking back to medieval times. Done with the old? In with the new(er): the city boasts intriguing socialist-era architecture worth checking out and one of Eastern Europe's most spectacular modern art spaces. Contrasts like this are all part of Bratislava's allure.” [Read More](#)

Discover 17 centuries worth of history along the cobblestoned, vehicle-free streets of the **Bratislava's Old Town** with a local guide. During the tour, visit the **Old Town Hall**, which consisted of a unified complex of buildings from various periods forming the core of the Old Town Hall, an unmissable attraction of the historic district. Its history dates back to the beginnings of the medieval town in the 13th century. The building remains the oldest city hall in the country and one of the oldest stone buildings still standing in Bratislava, with the tower built approximately in 1370.

Don't miss the **St. Martin's Cathedral**, which has seen the crowning of nearly twenty kings and queens. It is the most sacred and significant Gothic building in **Slovakia's** capital. Today, the cathedral houses a large Hungarian crown from the 19th century, wonderful sacral Baroque and Gothic artworks, altar of St. John's chapel and several crypts and catacombs.



Photo: Bratislava's Old Town (Source: [Wikipedia Commons](#))



Photo: St. Martin's Cathedral (Source: [Bratislava.Info](#))



Photo: Old Town Hall (Source: [Wikipedia Commons](#))

INDEPENDENT LUNCH

After lunch, travelers will be transported to the one of the most beautiful and charming towns in the Czech Republic – the spa town of [Karlový Vary](#). It is named after King of Bohemia and Holy Roman Emperor Charles IV, who founded the city in 1370 and is historically famous for its hot springs.

Spend the night at the [Grand Hotel Pupp \(5-Star\)](#), one of the oldest traditional hotels in Central Europe. The tradition of the Grand Hotel Pupp dates back to 1701. Over three centuries of proud history, exceptional guests and first-class services make the Grand Hotel Pupp unique on a global scale.

COMPLIMENTARY DINNER AND WINE Local restaurant in Karlový Vary

Overnight at the [Grand Hotel Pupp \(5-Star\)](#) in Karlový Vary.

Click [Here](#) for Virtual Tour of Grand Hotel Pupp.



Photo: Karlový Vary (Source: [Wikipedia Commons](#))



Photo: Grand Hotel Pupp (Source: [ThinkHotels.com](#))

Day 10: Tuesday, September 29th, 2015

Karlový Vary / Prague



Photo: Karlový Vary (Source: [Wikipedia Commons](#))

Complimentary breakfast included.

This morning, enjoy a half-day guided sightseeing tour of **Karlový Vary** which will include a visit to the house of [Jan Becher](#) and a tasting of [Becherovka](#). This unique liqueur comes from a secret combination of anise, cinnamon, and a veritable pastiche of herbs, distinguishing it from other bitters.

INDEPENDENT LUNCH

Travelers will continue on to the beautiful city of Prague; arriving later in the afternoon. Check into the [Hilton Hotel Old Town](#) for three nights.

Top 10 Things to do in Prague:

Rich in architecture, history and culture, the City of a Thousand Spires has drawn visitors for centuries with its fairytale castle, bridges and churches. But it also delights with hidden art deco and cubist gems, and the beer halls are a perennial favorite. [Read More](#)

Enjoy the evening exploring Prague at leisure.

INDEPENDENT DINNER

Overnight at [Hilton Hotel Old Town \(5-Star\) Hotel](#) in Prague.

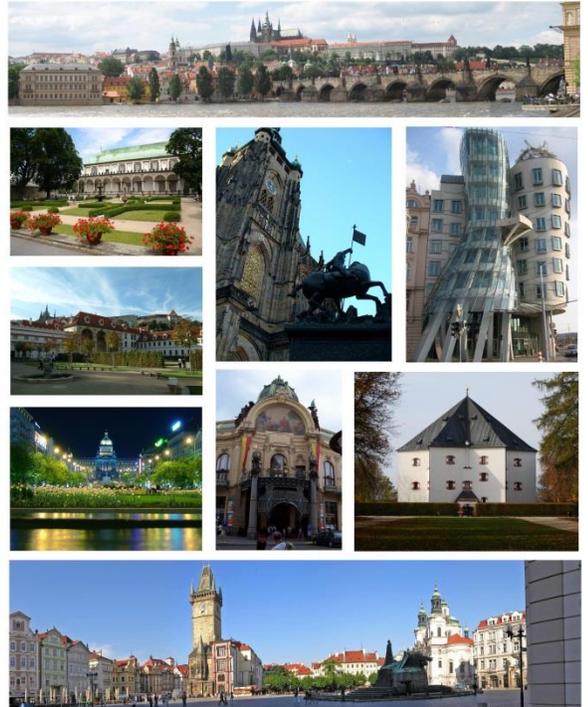


Photo: Prague (Source: [Wikipedia Commons](#))

Day 11: Wednesday, September 30th, 2015

Prague

Complimentary breakfast included.

Enjoy a full-day of sightseeing in Prague, the capital of the Czech Republic and a city with a uniquely preserved historical center that is part of the UNESCO World Heritage List. The tour today will include the [Power Tower](#), the gateway to the medieval Royal Route and the [Municipal House](#), an impressive Art Nouveau house that was built as a center of Czech cultural and social life at the turn of the 20th century.



“This monumental entrance by which the coronation processions of Czech kings entered the Old Town is one of the most significant monuments of Late Gothic Prague. Completed in 1475, the Powder Tower, which formerly served as a gunpowder store, is still the starting point for the Coronation or Royal Route to Prague Castle.” [Read More](#)

“The Municipal House stands on the site of the Royal Court, seat of Bohemia’s kings from 1383 to 1483 (when Vladislav II moved to Prague Castle), which was demolished at the end of the 19th century. Between 1906 and 1912 this magnificent art nouveau palace was built in its place – a lavish joint effort by around

30 leading artists of the day, creating a cultural center that was the architectural climax of the Czech National Revival.” [Read More](#)

Continue into [Old Town](#), the oldest and most important square of the historical Prague, to view the [Astronomical Clock](#) and iconic [Charles Bridge](#), a stone Gothic Bridge that connects the Old Town and Lesser Town (Malá Strana).



Photo: Astronomical Clock (Source: [Wikipedia Commons](#))



Photo: Charles Bridge (Source: [Wikipedia Commons](#))



Photo: Golden Lane (Source: [Pinterest](#))

“The medieval astronomical clock adorns the southern wall of the Old Town City Hall in the Old Town Square. It announces every hour with 12 apostles passing by the window above the astronomical dial and with symbolic sculptures moving aside. That makes it a popular tourist attraction.” [Read More](#)

Continue exploring Prague by visiting the [Old Prague Castle](#). Founded around 880, the Prague Castle is the largest coherent castle complex in the world, with an area of almost 70,000 m². Visit the [St. Vitus Cathedral](#), one of the best examples of Gothic architecture in Prague and the [Golden Lane](#), a street lined with small picturesque houses that look rather like doll’s houses than people’s homes.



Last but not least, don’t miss the [St. George's Basilica](#), Prague’s second older church and the oldest surviving church building within Prague Castle. Considered to be one of the city’s most beautiful Romanesque remains, it was founded by Prince Vratislav (915-921) in 920. The basilica was then enlarged in 973 with the construction of St. George's Benedictine Convent.

Photo: St. George’s Basilica (Source: [Wikipedia Commons](#))



Toward the end of the tour, enjoy a one-hour historic tram ride in Prague with music and a glass of the traditional drink.

Photo: Tram Ride (Source: [Wikipedia Commons](#))

Enjoy the evening at leisure.

INDEPENDENT DINNER

Overnight at [Hilton Hotel Old Town \(5-Star\) Hotel](#) in Prague.

Complimentary breakfast included.

Start your day with a 5-hour excursion to [Karlštejn Castle](#). Built between 1348 and 1355 by Charles IV, the castle became a place for safekeeping of the Czech coronation jewels at the outbreak of the Hussite wars.

“Karlštejn was reconstructed in the Late Gothic style after 1480 and in Renaissance style in the last quarter of the 16th century. Its present appearance is the result of the last reconstruction, which was carried out in the purist Neo-Gothic style by architect Josef Mocker at the end of the 19th century. The original step-like order of building is very impressive - you walk up from the well tower and the Burgrave's palace located as the lowest up to the majestic five-floored Imperial palace and further up toward the Marian tower. The monumental 60 m high and separately fortified Great tower stands at the top of the headland.” [Read More](#)

Don't miss the horse carriage ride from the parking lot to the castle!

INDEPENDENT LUNCH

As the trip draws to a close, spend the evening at a gala farewell dinner. Enjoy delicious Czech cuisine and exquisite wine and live music at a local restaurant.

Overnight at [Hilton Hotel Old Town \(5-Star\) Hotel](#) in Prague.



Photo: Karlštejn Castle (Source: [Wikipedia Commons](#))



Photo: Imperial Crown of the Holy Roman Empire (Source: [Wikipedia Commons](#))

Depart from Prague to Munich via Lufthansa Airlines. Travelers will take a connecting flight in Munich and arrive in Charlotte about 4:25 P.M.

WELCOME HOME

PRICE PER PERSON BASED ON DOUBLE OCCUPANCY

*Single occupancy rate at \$1465

*International airfare from Charlotte (and back) included

10 Travelers

\$5235

15 Travelers

\$4620

20 Travelers

\$4150

Travelers must be members of good standing with the World Affairs Council of Charlotte. If you are not a member, please contact Danielle Cobos, Program and Membership Manager via e-mail at dcobos@worldaffairscharlotte.org or call 704-687-7757 or go to our [website](#) and sign-up online. Individual membership begins at \$50.

******In addition, air/government taxes and fuel surcharges will be billed at the prevailing rate at the time of billing.**

- **Single occupancy is available upon request (*Single occupancy rate: \$1465). If you are traveling alone, but would like a roommate, please let us know and we will work on matching you up with another traveler**
- **Travel insurance is available through Knight Travel, Inc.**
- **Upgrade to Business or First Class air travel is available. Please let us know as soon as possible if you are interested in an upgrade.**
- **Air/government taxes and fuel surcharges will be billed at prevailing rate at the time of billing. Current total of taxes and fuel surcharge is \$638**
- **Deposit of \$500 is due immediately to secure your seat on the trip**
- **Final payment will be due no later than Thursday, August 20th, 2015**
- **Please note that a 3% bank charge will be added to your payment if you choose to pay by credit card**