

## European Expedition 'Cycle The Danube' 2019

### Belgrade to Vienna to Prague

Monday 01 July, 2019 to Sunday 28 July, 2019

A tour immersed in the lifestyles and cultures that flourish along the famous Danube River.

Location	Distance	Date	B	L	D	A
Belgrade, Serbia (pre-tour)	NA	Mon 1 Jul 2019	--	--	Y	Y
Belgrade to Novi Sad	97km	Tue 2 Jul 2019	Y	--	Y	Y
Novi Sad to Vukovar, Croatia	83km	Wed 3 Jul 2019	Y	--	Y	Y
Vukovar to Osijek	44km	Thu 4 Jul 2019	Y	--	--	Y
Osijek to Mohacs, Hungary	84km	Fri 5 Jul 2019	Y	--	Y	Y
Mohacs to Kalocsa	92km	Sat 6 Jul 2019	Y	--	Y	Y
Kalocsa to Rackeve	91km	Sun 7 Jul 2019	Y	--	Y	Y
Rackeve to Budapest	53km	Mon 8 Jul 2019	Y	--	Y	Y
Budapest REST DAY	NA	Tue 9 Jul 2019	Y	--	--	Y
Budapest to Esztergom	82km	Wed 10 Jul 2019	Y	--	Y	Y
Esztergom to Gyor	97km	Thu 11 Jul 2019	Y	--	Y	Y
Gyor to Bratislava, Slovakia	80km	Fri 12 Jul 2019	Y	--	--	Y
Bratislava to Vienna, Austria	75km	Sat 13 Jul 2019	Y	--	Y	Y
Vienna REST DAY 1	NA	Sun 14 Jul 2019	Y	--	--	Y
Vienna REST DAY 2	NA	Mon 15 Jul 2019	Y	--	Y	Y
Vienna to Durnstein	95km	Tue 16 Jul 2019	Y	--	Y	Y
Durnstein to Bad Kreuzen	90km	Wed 17 Jul 2019	Y	--	Y	Y
Bad Kreuzen to Linz	67km	Thu 18 Jul 2019	Y	--	--	Y
Linz to Passau, Germany	100km	Fri 19 Jul 2019	Y	--	Y	Y
Passau to Regensburg	137km	Sat 20 Jul 2019	Y	--	Y	Y
Regensburg REST DAY	NA	Sun 21 Jul 2019	Y	--	--	Y
Regensburg to Furth im Wald	87km	Mon 22 Jul 2019	Y	--	Y	Y
Furth im Wald to Strakonice, Czech Republic	103km	Tue 23 Jul 2019	Y	--	Y	Y
Strakonice to Cesky Budejovice	65km	Wed 24 Jul 2019	Y	--	Y	Y
Cesky Budejovice loop ride to Cesky Krumlov	58km	Thu 25 Jul 2019	Y	--	--	Y
Cesky Budejovice to Tabor	69km	Fri 26 Jul 2019	Y	--	Y	Y
Tabor to Prague	102km	Sat 27 Jul 2019	Y	--	Y	Y
Prague departure day	NA	Sun 28 Jul 2019	Y	--	--	--
<b>Total distance cycled</b>	<b>1851km</b>		<b>27</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Average daily distance</b>	<b>84km</b>					

Meal and accom inclusions noted as B, L, D, A (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner, Accom)

### **Belgrade, Serbia (pre-tour) — NA — Mon 1 Jul 2019 — - - D A**

Day 1. Welcome to Belgrade. A very busy, exuberant and lively capital city. The old and the new is evident here in many forms from the ancient architecture of Ottoman relics to the socialist blocks of the chaotic recent past, to art nouveau masterpieces and new-world nightlife that are all squeezed together in a hectic harmony. While Belgrade is known for its nightlife, with floating clubs on the river and a Bohemian entertainment district where live music is heard until dawn, it also is home to many great museums and archaeological sites. Our hotel is an oasis from the action where you can settle in and relax in preparation for our wonderful journey ahead or use as a base to explore the activity past the front door. This afternoon we will gather at the hotel for a bike-fitting session, welcome briefing and group dinner - a great opportunity to meet your fellow cyclists and tour leaders, pick up a few tips and advice on the local culture, and get prepared for your first day on the bike tomorrow.

### **Belgrade to Novi Sad — 97km — Tue 2 Jul 2019 — B - D A**

Day 2. Leaving Belgrade you will feel yourself settling into your rhythm as your first day on the bike unfolds. Moving from the busy streets and suburbs of the capital city into the rural atmosphere of the towns and villages that hug the banks of the Danube, the scenery changes and adds colour to your day as your eyes try to take in all the new sights and intriguing contrasts of Serbian life. Our destination of Novi Sad is a laid-back town with nice parks and outdoor cafes and a vibe that's generally more liberal than that of other Serbian cities. If you have time this afternoon, head down to the 'Strand' (meaning beach), said to be the most beautiful sand beach on the Danube. There is a small charge for entry during the summer.

### **Novi Sad to Vukovar, Croatia — 83km — Wed 3 Jul 2019 — B - D A**

Day 3. Today we travel on the south side of the river and it's about the half-way point where we cross over into Croatia at Ilok. The fortress overlooking the Danube is an architectural melange that reflects the mix of cultures that reigned here: a prince and royal court, a church belfry rising high, a church and monastery with a tower, scattered Islamic buildings of the mausoleum and hamam, and a deeply buried Italian old wine cellar. Our overnight town tonight of Vukovar has a long cultural history, however it is most recently noted for its fate during the war in the early 1990's in the former Yugoslavia and often called "The Hero Town". It is the only town in Europe since WWII that has been completely devastated. The Siege of Vukovar is famous as 2000 self-organized Croatian civilians defended the town for 3 months against 40,000 heavily armed Serbian soldiers and 110 tanks, ending in a hollow and costly Serbian victory. Since the return of Vukovar to Croatia in 1998, there has been much progress in repairing the damage including 2 great museums but there are still plenty of remnants that lie as a testament to the destruction.

#### **Vukovar to Osijek — 44km — Thu 4 Jul 2019 — B - - A**

Day 4. It's a shorter ride today following a Danube off-shoot, the Drava River, about 20km west to the leafy University town of Osijek. The Drava river spring is in Italy in the Dolomite Mountains, and it is the only water from Italy that doesn't flow into the Mediterranean Sea. Like Vukovar, Osijek has a long history dating back centuries and also suffered hugely during the war of the 1990's. It has been able to bounce back in dramatic style though with most of its grand buildings restored and a happening buzz around the streets of this regional capital. It is certainly an interesting place and you'll enjoy your long afternoon here exploring its story.

#### **Osijek to Mohacs, Hungary — 84km — Fri 5 Jul 2019 — B - D A**

Day 5. Even though we sit on a river here in Osijek, it is not our usual companion, the Danube. Yesterday we followed an off-shoot, the Drava River, about 20km west and today we turn north to cut back towards the Danube, through quiet country back-roads over the pasturelands of rural Croatia. During the last part of the day we will pass over the border into Hungary where we overnight in the sleepy port town of Mohacs. Another town with a rich history but also known for being the gateway to the nearby Mohács-Bóly White Wine Route, so keep an eye out for an opportunity to sample some of the great whites of the region along with accompanying local culinary delights.

#### **Mohacs to Kalocsa — 92km — Sat 6 Jul 2019 — B - D A**

Day 6. In Hungary you are rewarded with pristine, simple villages that will make you feel as though you have travelled back in time. We will pass through a number of them today as well as some beautiful countryside, in particular as we veer away from the river for a short time, climbing into the hills and around Lake Halasto before coming down again to the flatlands and crossing the Danube to reach Kaolocsa.

#### **Kalocsa to Rackeve — 91km — Sun 7 Jul 2019 — B - D A**

Day 7. We are nearly at Budapest and you'll notice the towns and villages becoming more frequent as the day goes on. Today we are on the east side of the river and just before Rackeve the river splits into two and won't meet again for around 60km near the centre of Budapest. We are following the smaller of the two arms, Rackevei Soroksari-Duna, which are the banks upon which our overnight town tonight sits.

#### **Rackeve to Budapest — 53km — Mon 8 Jul 2019 — B - D A**

Day 8. It's not too far to the capital city today and its urban sprawl will greet us early in the ride. The new urban terrain offers many interesting insights into life here in Budapest and we wind our way through streets, parks and bike path to our hotel, situated at the foot of the Buda Castle Hill, one of the must-see destinations in the city and a great central location where you'll be close to most of the sights on your rest day tomorrow.

### **Budapest REST DAY — NA — Tue 9 Jul 2019 — B - - A**

Day 9. Budapest is paradise for the curious traveller with interesting people, buildings, culture and vibrance waiting around every corner. The city has a youthful vibe to it, with colourful nightlife and a busy social landscape, mixing effortlessly with the world-class classical music scene, museums, history, architecture and famous natural thermal baths. Budapest is one of Europe's most delightful and enjoyable cities and a wonderful place to spend a day off the bike recharging the batteries and exploring new things.

### **Budapest to Esztergom — 82km — Wed 10 Jul 2019 — B - D A**

Day 10. Today we head out of the hustle and bustle of Budapest and it's not long until we join the river again and wind our way between the hills and along the valleys carved out by the flow of the Danube. We cross the river a couple of times today before reaching Esztergom which was the capital of Hungary from the 11th to the mid-13th century, occupied by the Ottoman Turks for 150 years, and enjoyed a rebirth of baroque architecture after 1700.

### **Esztergom to Gyor — 97km — Thu 11 Jul 2019 — B - D A**

Day 11. It's a beautiful landscape that leads you out of Esztergom as you ride just south of the Danube through the Transdanubian hills, sometimes referred to as the Hungarian Tuscany, where Hungary's finest riding horses are bred. It's a beautiful ride that you won't want to end when you hit the industrial outskirts of Gyor. A border town early in its history under the Romans, Gyor was an imperial city under the Austro-Hungarian Empire. It was directly in the path of barbarian invasions through the centuries, and much of the present-day city was built by Italian architects after the retreat of the Ottoman Empire in the 17th century.

### **Gyor to Bratislava, Slovakia — 80km — Fri 12 Jul 2019 — B - - A**

Day 12. Today we cross from Hungary to Slovakia. Czechoslovakia was formed from parts of the historic Austro-Hungarian empire in 1918 and came under Soviet domination in 1948. It wasn't until 1989, with the fall of the Berlin Wall, that the country was freed from Soviet control. Bratislava became capital of Slovakia when it separated from the Czech Republic during the "velvet divorce" in 1993. Tourists are catered for well here, attracted by the cosiness of the comparatively small city that still possesses the historic charms of the past and modern amenities of today. The admirable arts of the Slovak cooks and brewers, friendly people, various cultural and sport events, plus the fact that the area forms the most economically prosperous region in Central and Eastern Europe, give this city an increasing presence on the European landscape.

### **Bratislava to Vienna, Austria — 75km — Sat 13 Jul 2019 — B - D A**

Day 13. This morning you will ride the popular cycle route between Bratislava and Vienna, through the former "Iron Curtain", which would have been prohibited just a few decades ago. Vienna is the largest city in Austria and one of Europe's leading musical centres. It was first a Roman and Celtic settlement, but as the Austro-Hungarian Empire rose to prominence, magnificent Medieval and Baroque architecture became especially prevalent.

### **Vienna REST DAY 1 — NA — Sun 14 Jul 2019 — B - - A**

Day 14. We have decided this year to have two rest days at our mid-point stop. This is to give cyclists time to do some washing, catch up on emails and things from home, rest, recuperate and recharge, still allowing plenty of time to look around the city and enjoy the sights. It is also the end of Stage One and the start of Stage Two so we may have a few people coming and going today as they end or begin their tour with us.

### **Vienna REST DAY 2 — NA — Mon 15 Jul 2019 — B - D A**

Day 15. We'll start the morning with a guided walk of Vienna taking in the Baroque streetscapes, magnificent imperial palaces and coffeehouse cultures. If you can, take in a concert or show at a local church, concert hall or theatre. Music, theatre and performance are at the centre of this city and you'll feel it exuding from its beating heart as you are enveloped by one of the great imperial cities of Europe.

### **Vienna to Durnstein — 95km — Tue 16 Jul 2019 — B - D A**

Day 16. We start today by navigating ourselves out of Vienna via a complex system of bike paths leading from the hotel to the river to the outskirts of the city. Much of the day is spent cruising next to the Danube, broken up regularly by towns and villages, with a few bridges back and forth over the river as we ride both north-side and south-side over the course of the route. Durnstein itself is a picture-perfect town that will charm the cycling-knicks off you. A beautiful overnight stop after a long day in the saddle.

### **Durnstein to Bad Kreuzen — 90km — Wed 17 Jul 2019 — B - D A**

Day 17. Durnstein is photographed often in promotion of the Wachau region, famous for its wineries and beautiful scenery and it is that region that we push into today. It's the heartland of Austrian wine country and it is stunning, so stop, photograph, and lap it all up. You'll have time to visit the spectacular baroque Abbey of Melk as you enjoy a beautiful ride that leads you through the medieval villages of the Wachau (UNESCO World Heritage site). You'll visit the cellar and vineyards of one of the area's best producers, and taste some of the traditional white wines they produce. At the end of the day we land in the modern lodge castle Kreuzen with a beautiful view and Kneipp spa. Those who wish can take time to visit the Mauthausen Concentration Camp. The experience is powerful and sobering as you walk up and down the 186 "death stairs." Over 130,000 people were killed here including Jews, Italians, Russian POWs, criminals, and political prisoners.

### **Bad Kreuzen to Linz — 67km — Thu 18 Jul 2019 — B - - A**

Day 18. At the end of yesterday's ride we left the river valley and climbed up and away from the Danube, giving a short and sharp hill to take on to complete the day's route. What goes up must come down as they say, and this morning you get to enjoy the downhill run and a few more undulations as we head back to the river. The Danube River and the valley it has formed shape the central transportation artery of Austria. Today and tomorrow you'll ride

through the heartland of Austria where castles perch above the river along this, one of the most popular routes in Europe. When you reach Linz you'll find a cutting-edge cyber city of technology, modern art, galleries and public art installations. Take time to explore the Ars Electronica Museum, also known as the museum of the future as it tries to bridge the gap between art, science and technology.

#### **Linz to Passau, Germany — 100km — Fri 19 Jul 2019 — B - D A**

Day 19. Leaving Linz we travel on the northern side of the river for a short time before crossing to the south until about the mid-way point. Here we cross again to the north which puts us on the 'border' side of the river, meaning that we will pass into Germany for the last 25km of the ride into Passau, while it will be Austria over on the other side. In Passau the Danube nearly doubles in size, as it is joined by the Inn River from the south. Take time this afternoon to visit Passau's Saint Stephan's Cathedral which houses the largest organ outside of the United States.

#### **Passau to Regensburg — 137km — Sat 20 Jul 2019 — B - D A**

Day 20. Today's journey takes us through Roman settlements and into the Bavarian countryside lifestyle. In most of the cities you can still recognize the old Roman planning of the streets. We'll cycle along the Danube all the way to Deggendorf where you can rest a little in the Old Town main square before continuing on to Regensburg. This is the longest day of the entire tour, but a rest day is close.

#### **Regensburg REST DAY — NA — Sun 21 Jul 2019 — B - - A**

Day 21. Regensburg was the first capital of Bavaria and shows off some of the finest architectural heritage and UNESCO-worthy sites. A Roman outpost under Marcus Aurelius in 179 AD, the town marks both the northernmost point of the Roman Empire in Germany and the northernmost extent of the Danube. Its Medieval centre is wonderfully preserved. Despite the impressive historic importance of the town, its essence is a laid-back student town with lovely old streets and a pleasant unpretentiousness.

#### **Regensburg to Furth im Wald — 87km — Mon 22 Jul 2019 — B - D A**

Day 22. It's here that we must say our final farewells to our constant companion over the last few weeks as we pull away for one last time from the banks of the Danube River. Leaving the river means hitting the hills and we enjoy some wonderful cycling through the Bavarian country-side with some nice ups and downs to get the heart rate up, but nothing too mountainous. Furth im Wald is a small town famously mostly for its Dragon-Slaying Festival in August each year which we will miss by just a few weeks. Some may be disappointed about that...some may not.

#### **Furth im Wald to Strakonice, Czech Republic — 103km — Tue 23 Jul 2019 — B - D A**

Day 23. Today is a great day's ride through forest sections and rolling farmlands as we pass from Germany into the Czech Republic. Even though we have left Germany's famous Bavaria region, famous for its beer and

lederhosen, don't think that the beer tasting is over as The Czech's can brew with the best of them. Our overnight stop at Strakonice is well known for the DUDAK Brewery located nearby the castle. The Strakonice Burghers' Brewery is the last brewery in the Czech Republic to still be owned by a town.

### **Strakonice to Cesky Budejovice — 65km — Wed 24 Jul 2019 — B - D A**

Day 24. Continuing through the patchwork of farms and paddocks with contrasting shades of green on either side of the road and off into the distance you'll really begin to love the cycling here, winding your way on the back-roads through stunning countryside on the way to Cesky Budejovice, the capital city of the South Bohemia region. Here you get a real taste of the Czech Republic without the crowds of Prague, and also Cesky Krumlov where we visit tomorrow. And speaking of taste, this afternoon we will arrive at our destination early after a reasonably short day so we will take a brewery tour to the original Budweiser Budvar Brewery from which the Anheuser-Busch American Budweiser beer was brewed to imitate.

### **Cesky Budejovice loop ride to Cesky Krumlov — 58km — Thu 25 Jul 2019 — B - - A**

Day 25. Today we will cycle south, partially on a picturesque bike path, for a day trip to Cesky Krumlov, one of the Czech Republic's most beautiful cities situated in a meander of the longest river in the Czech Republic, the Vltava River. The old town is a UNESCO World Heritage site with the stunning Cesky castle overlooking the river. Originally built in the 1200's, by the main branch of the Bohemian noble Rosenberg family, a hugely influential family Czech medieval history from the 13th century until 1611, the castle and the town itself is a tourist mecca for good reason. There will be plenty of lively cafes and riverside picnic spots for lunch before heading back through the surrounding woods and fields away from the crowds and back to our accommodation in Cesky Budejovice.

### **Cesky Budejovice to Tabor — 69km — Fri 26 Jul 2019 — B - D A**

Day 26. We will follow the bike path along the Vltava River out of Ceske Budejovice today and then pedal through lush green forests and small villages on our way to Tabor, which earned its notoriety as home to the most radical wing of the Hussite movement in the 15th century. Perched on a steep hillside surrounded by dense forest, the streets are beautiful and vibrant. Visit Hluboka Castle, take a stroll through the stunning main square and climb the Tower at the church in Zizka Square for a breathtaking birds eye view of town. Pay a visit to the Town Hall where you can access underground tunnels once used to connect all the cellars of the Old Town Buildings.

### **Tabor to Prague — 102km — Sat 27 Jul 2019 — B - D A**

Day 27. From Tabor the peaceful pastureland you will enjoy for most of the day gives no indication of the noise and activity that will greet you at the end of the day. For now you can breathe in the fresh air and follow the relaxed Vltava River's twists and turns north towards the beating heart of the country. Indeed, the river takes us right into the city of Prague, the capital of the Czech Republic and the final destination for the tour. Sometimes called 'the City of a Hundred Spires', Prague is most known for its Old Town Square in the heart of its historic centre and the continuously photographed Charles Bridge. Take a stroll around the city and enjoy its colourful baroque buildings, Gothic churches and the medieval Astronomical Clock, which gives an animated show hourly. Tonight we will join together for our final dinner together to celebrate a wonderful journey and many special memories.

**Prague departure day — NA — Sun 28 Jul 2019 — B - - -**

Day 28. Today the tour officially disbands after breakfast. Needless to say, we encourage you to stick around for a day or two to explore Prague. They say that it is the equal of Paris in terms of beauty, its history goes back a millennium...and the beer - the best in Europe. Even the crowds won't take away the majestic atmosphere of the 14th-century stone bridge, hilltop castle, stunning architecture, and the lazy Vltava River running through it all. In fact you only need to explore a few streets away from the Old Town Square to find remarkable chapels, gardens, cafes and a rich art history away from the crowds, so do some exploring if you have time - see what you can uncover.

