

Fall of the Iron Curtain

From £1,749 per person // 17 days



Travel through Warsaw, Berlin, Prague, Bratislava, Budapest and Bucharest on a rail journey through history, mapping the fall of the Iron Curtain that divided eastern and western Europe until 1989.

The Essentials

- Visit six key capital cities in the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989
- Discover the sights of Warsaw, Prague, Bratislava and Budapest
- Spend time in Berlin, literally split in half between 1961 and the fall of the Soviet Union
- End in Bucharest, scene of the uprising against Nicolae Ceau?escu
- Return to the UK via overnight sleeper and a night in Nuremberg

Tailor make your holiday

- Decide when you would like to travel
- Adapt the route to suit your plans
- Upgrade hotels and rail journeys
- Add extra nights, destinations and/or tours
- Travel out to Poland and back from Romania by train

What's included

- Standard class rail travel with seat reservations (where required)
- 15 nights hand-picked hotel accommodation with breakfast
- Private 2-berth sleeper accommodation between Budapest and Bucharest
- Private 2-berth sleeper accommodation between Bucharest and Vienna
- Comprehensive directions to your hotels
- Clearly-presented wallets for your rail tickets, hotel vouchers and other documentation
- All credit card surcharges and complimentary delivery of your travel documents

- Suggested Itinerary -



Day 1 - London To Berlin

Travel to Brussels by Eurostar, connect onto a German ICE train to the cathedral city of Cologne. Catch a glimpse of the mighty gothic cathedral before you connect with your evening ICE train to the capital, Berlin. Check into the centrally-situated Titanic Hotel Chaussee (or similar) for a 3-night stay, and then perhaps head out for dinner in one of the vibrant districts close to the hotel.



Days 2 & 3 - Berlin

Nowhere exemplifies the fall of the Iron Curtain more than Berlin. Divided by its notorious Wall from 1961 to 1989, on 9 November 1989, the Communist Party spokesman in East Germany broadcast a change in the city's relations with its western neighbour. Starting at midnight that day, East Germans were free to cross the country's borders. This paved the way for the end of the East German state, the fall of the Berlin Wall and German reunification in October of the following year.



Day 4 - Berlin To Warsaw

You have another free morning in Berlin today before your onward journey across the Polish border to Warsaw. Arrive into the Polish capital in the evening and make your way to the Polonia Palace (or similar) for a 2-night stay.



Day 5 - Warsaw

Poland's capital was a key focal point in the fall of Communism around the end of the 1980s, after the Solidarity Movement of Lech Wałęsa. Also on the historical theme, the excellent Warsaw Uprising Museum is well worth a visit and gives an unparalleled insight into life under Nazi occupation during World War II. The Old Town area, like much of the city, was destroyed during the war but was meticulously reconstructed in the 1960s.



Day 6 - Warsaw To Prague

Enjoy another morning at leisure in Warsaw, leaving your bags at the hotel for safe keeping. At lunchtime, return to the main station in the centre of town where you'll catch a direct train to Prague. On arrival, check in at the Clement Hotel (or similar) for a 2-night stay.



Day 7 - Prague

Known as the Velvet Revolution, the period between 17 November and 29 December 1989 was vital in ending 41 years of one-party rule in Czechoslovakia. The city also played a role in the fall of the Berlin Wall, as demonstrators from East Germany took refuge in the West German embassy in the Mala Strana district close to Prague's castle. Czechoslovak authorities eventually gave in, permitting all East Germans to travel directly to West Germany.



Day 8 - Prague To Bratislava

Your train today links the capital of modern-day Czech republic and modern-day Slovakia. During the Eastern Bloc years, the country was united as Czechoslovakia, but the two parted ways peacefully in 1993 following the fall of Communism. Thanks to the Schengen Zone, you will barely notice crossing the border once again as all formalities have been withdrawn. You move at a leisurely pace into Slovakia's capital, where your home is the Falkensteiner Hotel (or similar) for 2 nights.



Day 9 - Bratislava

During the March 1988, Slovak dissidents anticipated the mood of the subsequent year by holding the Candle demonstration of Bratislava, the first mass demonstration since 1969 against the communist regime in Czechoslovakia. 5000 protesters met Hviezdoslav Square with candles, along with 6000 others in nearby streets – it was the first important step towards removing the Czechoslovak communist regime of Ladislav Adamec.



Day 10 - Bratislava To Budapest Via The Danube Bend

Today's journey takes you out across the plains of southern Slovakia, and alongside the Danube at the town of Sturovo, where you can see Hungary across the river. The train then hugs the mighty Danube as it sweeps round from east to south, eventually reaching the impressive 19th-century Nyugati station in the heart of Budapest. Make your way to the excellent K+K Opera Hotel (or similar) where you will be spending the next two nights.



Day 11 - Budapest

The first visible cracks in the Iron Curtain appeared in May 1989 when Hungary started dismantling its 150-mile long border fence with Austria, the country's only border with a western power. Budapest's government adopted a "democracy package", taking Poland's lead as the second Warsaw Pact country to install a non-communist government.



Days 12 & 13 - Overnight To Romania

After a day exploring all that Budapest has to offer, you board the Ister Overnight Train in the evening shortly after 7pm, which makes its way at a sedate pace across the plains of eastern Hungary. Settle into your private compartment for a night's sleep, awaking the next morning to picturesque Transylvanian scenery as the train winds its way towards Bucharest. On arrival in Bucharest, check in at the Grand Hotel Continental (or similar) for a 2-night stay.



Day 14 - Bucharest

During December 1989, Bucharest was the centre of a revolution against the leadership of dictator Nicolae Ceaușescu, who had ruled with an iron fist for 22 years. Famously, Ceaușescu made his final speech at what is now Revolution Square on 21 December, before fleeing by helicopter and being captured and executed on Christmas Day. His face on the balcony while suffering heckling and booing from the once-fearful crowds was one of the most powerful images of the downfall of Communism in eastern Europe.



Days 15 & 16 - Bucharest Overnight To Vienna & Nuremberg

Spend another day enjoying the sights of Bucharest and then, in the evening, return to your hotel to collect your luggage and head back to the station for an overnight sleeper service to Vienna. Arrive the next morning into the Austrian capital and board a train to Nuremberg, arriving at lunchtime. Check in for an overnight stay at the NH Collection Nuremberg City (or similar). You may prefer to spend an extra night in Vienna to break your journey. Just let us know if you would like to add this to your package.



Day 17 - Nuremberg To London

Depart Nuremberg on a sleek German ICE train today and connect in Frankfurt to reach the Eurostar terminal at Brussels. Eurostar will then whisk you back to the UK at speeds of up to 186mph. **ALTERNATIVE ROUTE:** Take the slower, more scenic route by leaving Nuremberg earlier and taking in a spectacular journey along the Rhine Gorge, passing the Loreley Rock and hillside vineyards.

Pricing

From £1,749 per person

Low season (November-March) from £1,749pp

High season (April-October) from £1,949pp

These prices are based on two people sharing a twin or double room. Single supplements will apply for sole occupancy. It is based on Standard Class rail travel and includes seat reservations as necessary. If you travel at short notice, then supplements may apply.