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TAILOR MADE RAIL

London to Istanbul: Epic Rail Journey

From £1,199 per person // 11 days



Travel across the European continent via Cologne, Munich, Budapest, Bucharest and Sofia before taking in the sights, smells and sounds of Istanbul, the city where east meets west.

The Essentials

- Travel across Europe from London to the Bosphorus
- Stop off overnight in Munich, Budapest and Bucharest
- Travel through undiscovered countryside of Bulgaria
- Istanbul: bazaars, minarets, Turkish baths and hookah-pipes

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

What's included

- Standard Class rail travel with seat reservations
- Double compartment on the 'Ister' overnight sleeper from Budapest to Bucharest
- Private compartment on the Sofia to Istanbul sleeper
- 7 nights' handpicked hotel accommodation with breakfast
- Comprehensive directions to your hotels
- Easy-to-follow travel documentation
- Despatch of tickets by email, post or collection from our London office

- Suggested Itinerary -



Day 1 - London To Cologne

Leave from London this morning and travel with the Eurostar to Brussels Midi. Here, pick up the ICE service to Cologne, on the banks of the River Rhine. Check in for an overnight stay at the Cityclass Europa am Dom (or similar), located close to the station. Once you've settled in, enjoy an evening at leisure in Cologne, perhaps with dinner in the Old Town area or a stroll along the banks of the river.



Day 2 - Cologne To Munich

After breakfast in your hotel, check out and return to the station, located opposite the steps of the city's famous Cathedral. Catch a direct train from here south to Munich and make your way to the Courtyard by Marriott Munich City Centre (or similar), where you have an overnight stop. You'll arrive in the early afternoon, so there's plenty of time to stretch your legs and explore.



Day 3 - Munich To Budapest

You have a leisurely start this morning, so why not take some time after breakfast and have another look around the centre of Munich? This historic city is the regional capital of Bavaria with an easily walkable centre and some lovely green spaces. In the late morning, return to the station for a direct train to Budapest. Your journey takes you via Chiemsee (known as the Bavarian Sea) and Salzburg with rolling scenery and distant mountains to watch through your window as you perhaps enjoy lunch in the restaurant car. On arrival in Budapest, check in at the Hotel Rum (or similar) for an overnight stay.



Day 4 - Budapest And Overnight To Bucharest

Spend a free morning in majestic Hungarian capital Budapest. Perhaps take a stroll along the River Danube, take a guided tour of the famous Parliament Building or enjoy a morning dip in one of the city's beautiful Art Nouveau spa complexes. Around midday, it's time to return to the station and catch your sleeper train to Istanbul. TMR RECOMMENDS: If you have the time, it's well worth spending an extra night or two in Budapest so that you have time to explore this beautiful city.



Day 5 - Arrive Bucharest

Spend the morning onboard the sleeper train in your private cabin, continuing south through rural Romania to capital city Bucharest. On arrival, check in at the K + K Elisabeta (or similar) for an overnight stay. Enjoy an afternoon at leisure exploring this dynamic city where 19th century, communist-era and ultra-modern buildings all jostle for space along side one another. The most famous building in the city has to be the gigantic Parliament Building, the world's second largest administrative building after the Pentagon.



Day 6 - Bucharest To Sofia

After breakfast this morning, head back to the station and take a train across the Bulgarian border to Ruse. Here, change onto a service bound for capital city Sofia. These trains are fairly basic, with limited facilities. We would strongly recommend taking your own food onboard and some toiletries as well. You'll arrive in the evening and check in for an overnight stay at Les Fleurs Boutique Hotel (or similar).



Day 7 - Sofia And Overnight To Istanbul

You have a free day to explore Sofia before your onward rail journey this evening. The Bulgarian capital has a history dating back a thousand years and offers many museums and historic landmarks including the onion-domed Alexander Nevsky Cathedral. You might also like to browse the shops or enjoy a coffee along the bustling Vitosha Boulevard. We would also recommend having an early dinner in Sofia prior to boarding your sleeper train, bound for Istanbul, as there are limited catering facilities onboard.



Day 8 - Arrive Istanbul

Early this morning, you will pull into Istanbul Halkali station where you can take the modern metro or take a taxi into the centre of town. Your accommodation for the next 3 nights is the Yasmak Sultan Hotel (or similar).



Days 9 & 10 - Istanbul

Founded as Byzantium around 660 BC, Istanbul has been one of the most significant cities in the history of Western civilisation. Little wonder then that there is a huge wealth of historic monuments to see. For the perfect introduction to Istanbul's history, the best place to head for is the magnificent Hagia Sofia, built as a Greek Orthodox basilica, briefly a Roman Catholic Cathedral, for five-hundred years a mosque, and then from 1935, a secular museum. You can also grab a bargain in the colourful Grand Bazaar, but be prepared to haggle over a glass of apple tea!



Day 11 - Istanbul To London

Enjoy some further free time in Istanbul before making your way to the airport for a flight back to the UK (not included). TMR RECOMMENDS: Why not extend your holiday? For example, we can add our Turkey Explorer itinerary which includes a guided visit to Cappadocia with its visually arresting fairy chimneys (pictured). Or you can check out our Istanbul to Georgia extension. Please call for details.

Pricing

From £1,199 per person

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. It is based on the best fares on the trains. If you travel during a peak period, particularly at short notice, then supplements may apply.