

Press Information

Central Europe's Great Experiences at Great Value

For the equivalent of a \$10 New York Deli Lunch the six countries of Austria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia offer great experiences at great value.

Take in an enormous variety of cultural riches, discover heritage sites, stroll museums, feel like kings in a castle, rejuvenate in a beautiful spa, eat and drink, shop for unique souvenirs or enjoy stunning nature.

So, why not switch your burger for a spa experience or an opera ticket? Let us show you where and how.

For more information visit www.gotocentraleurope.com or email info@gotocentraleurope.com

Slovakia

Be active: go woodrafting

Rafting using wooden rafts is one of the greatest tourist attractions of northern Slovakia. One of the unforgettable experiences is certainly rafting down the river Dunajec in the splendid natural scenery of the Pieniny National Park.

Discover the rock dwellings of Brhlovce

Discover Brhlovce, the complex of rock dwellings squeezed in tuff rocks situated several kilometers east of the town Levice, in the village Brhlovce. The origin of rare rock dwellings in Slovakia is not altogether clear. Some authors associate it with possible hiding places in time of Turkish raids in the 16th century; others link it to the economic activities, particularly wine growing. Entry to the complex is approx. 0.50 USD.

www.muzeumlevice.sk

Relax in Sklené Teplice

The baths in Sklené Teplice, one of Slovakia's oldest baths, will let you warm your bones, relax your body and mind, and find a gorgeous landscape. A rarity in Sklené Teplice, its thermal springs of mineral waters, with temperatures of 38-52.3°C (100.4 – 126.14F), not only have significant healing effects, they also emanate the spirit of the old famous history of the baths, which have been used since as long ago as the 16th century. A unique product of nature is so-called Parenica – a thermal bath that enables visitors to bath in a cave where 42°C (107.6F) hot healing water springs. Entry to the cave Parenica is approx. 9.20 USD.

Visit the UNESCO town of Bardejov

The historical center of Bardejov is unique in the number of exceptionally well-preserved burgher houses encompassing the market square which has been the centre of activity in the region since the Middle Ages. Several sacral buildings have been preserved from the mediaeval times – most notably the Basilica of St. Egídius (St. Giles). Its 11 Gothic winged altars with board paintings are unique in Europe. Entry to the Basilica is approx. 2 USD.

www.bardejov.sk

Visit the Kremnica Town Castle

The dominant of the famous town Kremnica is the town castle with the Gothic church of St Catherine, built in the 15th century. The town castle is a compound of medieval buildings, which were gradually built between the 13th and 15th centuries. The oldest part of the castle and of the town in general is the ossuary of St Andrew from the 13th century. Church of St Katarína, the patron saint of the town, stands in the middle of the Castle area. The church tower was built in the 15th century and after fire in 1560 it acquired the Renaissance appearance. The tower is accessible to public and it offers a fine view of the town and its environs. The pride of the church is the old organ with wonderful sound appreciable above all during the traditional summer event Kremnický hradný organ (The Castle Organ of Kremnica). Entry to the Kremnica Town Castle is approx. 3 USD.

www.kremnica.sk

Explore history at Bojnice Castle

Or even one of the countries most romantic fairytale destinations doesn't cost much: at Bojnice Castle you'll feel like Queen or King. Bojnice castle is a national cultural monument and museum at the same time. It is one of the most beautiful monuments in Slovakia and also one of the oldest and most distinguished of Slovak fortresses, standing on a travertine hill above the town. The first written records of its existence come from 1113 in a document from the Zobor abbey.

www.bojnicecastle.sk

For more information visit www.slovakia.travel

Poland

Visit great UNESCO Sites in Poland

Poland has 10 UNESCO World Heritage sites. One of them is the Castle Museum at Malbork which represents one of the greatest historical attractions in Poland itself. Once the nexus of one of the most powerful states on the Baltic, this gargantuan edifice was founded by Grand Master of the Teutonic Knights Siegfried von Feuchtwangen in 1309. There's enough to get your teeth into here to justify a full day out - entrance fee is less than 10 USD.

Krakow was the Royal capital for half a millennium, and has traditionally been one of the cultural centers of Poland. So no wonder it's historic center has been declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Together with Wawel Castel, these are sites, not to be missed.

Discover Poland's stunning natural beauty

Poland's natural offerings are truly amazing. The Sudeten Mountains are fascinating thanks to their beautiful panoramic views, fantastic rock formations of the Karkonosze and the Table Ranges, splendid caves (Bear's Cave) and charming waterfalls (Szklarka, Kamienczyk, Wilczki) - here the borders of Poland, Germany and the Czech Republic meet.

Or you could go horse riding in the Masurian Lake. Located in the northern part of Poland, lies the Masurian Lakes Plateau, known as the "Land of a Thousand Lakes" has the biggest concentration of lakes in Poland, with 15% of area covered by water. These lakes are remnants of the ice age, when all of northeastern Poland and parts of Europe were covered by ice. There are over 4,000 lakes in the whole area, linked by rivers and canals to form an intricate system of waterways. The Masurian Lakes area is also home to some of Central Europe's largest forested areas, and thus a haven of scenic beauty.

Visit Gdansk during festival time

Poland also has many atmospheric small towns, Gdansk is just one of them. The city is also the venue of the St Dominic Fair, the largest open-air trade and cultural event organized in Poland and one of the biggest in Europe. For three weeks of August Neptune, Hermes and Apollean Muses will rule the city. The streets are full of merchant stalls and street actors troops. The old chants, Gypsy romance, old Gdańsk music and charming sounds of hurdy-gurdy can be heard. The scent of oversea delicacies is combined with a scent of sweet oilcakes and home-made bread. The scale of Gdańsk fair stands in close comparison to such acclaimed European events like Munich's Oktoberfest.

For more information visit www.polandtour.org

Hungary

Feel like a King at Festetics Palace

If you want to know how the former kings and queens of this country lived, visit Festetics Palace in Keszthely. This is the fourth largest - with a stunning 101 rooms - and also the most beautifully refurbished and furnished palace in Hungary. Today the entire structure is listed as a world heritage site and operates as a museum. Its park is designated as a protected area.

www.festeticspalota.hu

See Wildlife at Hortobágy National Park

Hortobágy National Park is the largest continuous natural grassland in Europe. The cultural landscape of the Hortobágy Puszta consists of a vast area of plains and wetlands in eastern Hungary. Traditional forms of land use, such as the grazing of domestic animals, have been present in this pastoral society for more than two millennia.

The Hortobágy National Park has been inscribed on the World Heritage List by UNESCO since 1999 in the category of cultural landscapes. A large number of local breeds can be found here: the Hungarian Grey Cattle, Water Buffalo, Raczka Sheep. The sweep-pole wells found at the Puszta have become symbols of the Hungarian grasslands.

www.hnp.hu

Relax at the Spirit Hotel Thermal Spa in Sarvar

The brand new, five star hotel is located on the picturesque seven lakes of Sarvar in northwestern Hungary, surrounded by forests and built around an ancient spring. The healing waters well up beneath the Spirit Hotel Thermal Spa, promising health and relaxation, away from the stresses of everyday life. Activities offered by the hotel include angling, horseback riding, tennis, golf and forest walks.

The world-famous Sarvar healing water wells up from the hotel's own 250 million years old spring, from a depth of 1056 meters (about 3,100 feet) at 46°C (114.8F).

www.spirithotel.hu

Be the Empress of Godollo castle

The Palace is one of the most important, largest monuments of Hungarian palace architecture. Its builder, Count Antal Grassalkovich I (1694-1771) was a typical figure of the regrouping Hungarian aristocracy of the 18th century. It was Empress Elisabeth (1837-1898), or Sissi as she was lovingly called by the locals, wife of the Hapsburg emperor and Hungarian King Franz Joseph I, who specially loved staying in Gödöllő, where the Hungarian personnel and neighborhood of the Palace always warmly welcomed her.

www.kiralykastely.hu

Take home some delicious Hungarian Marzipan

One may not leave Hungary without tasting what the Hungarians are best at – their cakes, pastry or marzipan. Numerous patisseries and confectionary shops offer a great variety of cakes from chocolate through coffee to fruit as well as gift wrapped marzipan-filled chocolates to bring home as gifts or to eat on the spot. The most famous marzipan called Szamos and their delicious creations are widely available throughout the city ranging from 4 USD (for four pieces) to 30USD for a large box.

www.szamosmarcipan.hu

Enjoy the Balaton Sound of Music Festival

Held on the shores of Lake Balaton, central Europe's largest fresh water lake, in the small town of Zamardi, Hungary the Balaton Sound Music Festival draws large crowds each year. The festival returns in 2009 for its third successful year. Organized by the same people who started the Sziget Festival in Budapest, this event will bring a host of international stars to the lake's shores again. Camping is available, as well many other amenities.

www.sziget.hu/balatonsound

For more information visit www.gotohungary.com

Germany

Experience the story of Martin Luther at Wartburg, a UNESCO Castle near Eisenach

Wartburg Castle is the most renowned stronghold of the Ludovingian dynasty and one of the best-preserved medieval forts in Germany. First built in 1067, it was developed over the course of the centuries into an extensive fortress complex. Romanesque, Gothic and 19th century architectural features are all represented, and visiting the castle is like opening a book containing 900 years of history. Stunning courtly art from the Middle Ages, St. Elisabeth's life and work, Martin Luther's translation of the New Testament, the minnesingers' contest, the German student fraternities' festival, 300 years on from the Reformation, and Wagner's romantic opera "Tannhäuser" all combine to make a visit to Wartburg Castle a fascinating and memorable experience. It was also a popular retreat with Goethe and other well-known poets.

www.wartburg-eisenach.de

Inspect the baroque Gottorf Palace on an island in the river Schlei

Schloss Gottorf is a Schloss and estate in the city of Schleswig, Germany. It is situated on an island in the Schlei, not far from the Baltic Sea. It was first settled as an estate in 1161 and later became the possession of Christian I of Denmark, the first Danish monarch from the House of Oldenburg, in 1459. The palace is now owned by a foundation of the State of Schleswig-Holstein and houses the State Art and Cultural History Museum and the State Archeological Museum. Entrance is 10 USD.

www.schloss-gottorf.de

Let the day fade away at one of the countless Wine Festivals

Germany has around 1,250 wine festivals each year. Village squares, vineyards, ancient castles or city streets are the setting for these lively events where locals and visitors alike come together to celebrate the harvest of the grapes. Find love of life, wine, good old-fashioned 'Gemütlichkeit' and award-winning cuisine, all in celebration of the grape.

Taste local wines and other culinary delights at reasonable prices - for example along the German Wine Route.

www.deutsche-weine.de

Relax at Germany's chic Spa resort Baden-Baden

Baden-Baden has a well-established reputation as Germany's chic spa resort at the foot of the Black Forest. It is also a much-loved holiday destination and host to international congresses and festivals. Its cosmopolitan flair and degree of sophistication are rare for a town of this size. With its glorious parks and beautiful gardens, Baden-Baden is a paradise for people who appreciate the finer things in life and are looking for a relaxing break. Sport, culture, food, drink or wellness – whatever Baden-Baden does, it is never less than first-class. State Spas such as the Caracalla Thermal bath are very affordable – and with 17 USD still not much more than a light lunch.

www.baden-baden.de

Be active: Bike along the romantic River Rhine

For 200 miles, the Rhine Cycle Route runs through Rhineland-Palatinate, past magnificent scenery and cultural treasures. The most famous stretch along the route is the section between Bingen and Koblenz, known as the romantic Upper Middle Rhine (a UNESCO World heritage region). Around 40 castles and palaces line the gorge that the river has carved into the Rhenish Slate Mountains.

www.romantic-germany.info

Shopping: Take home a German Beer Stein

Take home one of these as a great souvenir to enjoy your beer the German way when your vacation is over. Beer Steins are available all over Germany – depending on where you are, they may vary in style, though – and we are sure you get one for less than a Deli lunch costs in NY.

For more information visit www.cometogermany.com

The Czech Republic

Stroll through the UNESCO town of Telc

Outside Prague, don't miss the picturesque town of Telc located in the Southwest Moravia. The historical center is a UNESCO World Heritage site. The town square is created by the historical houses in the Renaissance and Baroque styles. Arcade-fronted townhouses are painted pastel colors – which looks really beautiful as you can see on the right. Telc also has several great annual music events and festival.

Be a (Shanghai) Knight at Hluboka Nad Vltavou chateau

We suggest a Knight experience at one of the most romantic Czech chateaus at HLUBOKA NAD VLTAVOU– some of you may know it as it was used in a scene of Jackie Chan and Owen Wilson's Shanghai Knights movie. Entrance is way less than a movie ticket or lunch in New York (6.5 USD).

www.zamek-hluboka.eu

Relax at Karlovy Vary Spa town

As you know, the Czech Republic is know for its great spas – and that million \$\$ experience isn't expensive here. Karlovy Vary is not only unique for its 100 mineral springs (that you can drink free of charge!) but also for its beautiful architecture and surrounding scenery. For just 39 USD you can spend a relaxing weekend in the spa town of Karlovy Vary. The charming bed & breakfast Europension offers affordable accommodation in the Czech Republic's most famous spa.

www.pension-euro.cz

Hike the Moravian Karst

One of the most fascinating karst regions in Central Europe with over 1100 caves, four of which are accessible to the public – it is situated in Moravia, north of the city of Brno.

www.cavemk.cz

Enjoy the International Music Festival in Cesky Krumlov

This year is the 18th year of the festival and a rich program of concerts and performances has been prepared. The festival continues in the successful projects of previous years, be it collaboration with the Revolving Amphitheater, or continuing with the thematically conceived concerts. This year the festival increased the number of concert spaces where classical music, as well as other musical genres, will be performed.

www.festivalkrumlov.cz

Take home some wooden toys

If you do have kids at home, or with you, they will have fun with the colorful wooden toys that can be bought here.

For more information visit www.czechtourism.com

Austria

Participate in the free Innsbruck Hiking Program

Austria is, as you all know also famous for its Alps, and the smaller towns in amazingly picturesque settings. Innsbruck offers a great Hiking Program between June and October – for 0 USD guests staying in Innsbruck and owning a Club Innsbruck Card (Issued automatically with an overnight stay in Innsbruck or its surrounding Holiday vilages) you get: free transportation on the hiking bus, mountain tours with certified mountain guides of Innsbruck Alpine School (ASI), a tour book and can rent mountain equipment (such as hiking boots and a rucksack).

Visit several museums for the price of one ticket in Graz

Just two hours to the South of Vienna, this new architectural landmark is not to be missed: the designers of the Kunsthaus Graz, the London architects Peter Cook and Colin Fournier, created an impressive synthesis of old and new, uniting their innovative design with the historic setting of this urban district along the Mur – there are changing exhibitions in this place.

Be part of the Klangwolke Linz, a fascinating open air spectacle

It is considered a highpoint of the cultural year in Linz and attracts an audience of up to 100,000. In 2009 the Klangwolke, or cloud of sound, is weaving the city into the fabric of one of humanity's oldest narratives. Floods of water, floods of information, floods of humanity culminate in a spectacular evening event in front of the Brucknerhaus.

Experience Hohenwerfen Fortress in SalzburgerLand

At the impressive Hohenwerfen Fortress in the Saalach Valley, the location of the famous movie "Where Eagles Dare", a family of four can experience the fortress itself and the fortress grounds, a visit to the Salzburg Falconry Center with flight demonstration, the first Austrian Falconry Museum and special exhibitions for just 30 USD combined.

Take some healthy Sonnentor Tea home with you

Austria also has great spa and wellness experience – and this one you can take home with you: a pack of award-winnig Sonnentor Teas - these delicious Herbal Tea Blends are available at local Pharmacies and health stores. Sonnentor is a traditional and innovative organic Austrian company. From their base in the Waldviertel (Lower Austria), they produce their valuable trademark products and distribute them worldwide. (starting at 4.70 USD)

Buy a Sacher Cube: the Sacher Torte in travel size

Another, less healthy, but even more delicious souvenir to take home is a Original Sacher Cube, a delicious piece of Original Sacher Torte in cube shape for 3.40 USD – this can be bought at the Café Sacher in Vienna, Graz and Salzburg

For more information visit www.austria.info

Transportation Deals

Getting There & Around

Central Europe is easy to get to – it is a non-stop flight to almost any capital in the region and and it is inexpensive too. Off-season deals on Travelocity start as low as 577 USD for a return ticket to Vienna.

www.travelocity.com

And since you may not only want to visit one country, here is more good news:
All six countries are really close together and it is easy to visit many cities in only one week.

You should take advantage of one of the great rails passes on offer for the region such as the European East Pass, when you can travel five days within one month – for only 209 USD. For those traveling to the Czech Republic, we have more great news: Since January this year, the Czech Republic is included in the Eurail Global Pass and is a Eurail Select Pass member. The Eurail Group offers a wide range of passes from single country options to the classic Eurail Global Pass in 21 countries.

www.EurailGroup.com

Or one can snatch a deal for your regional travel with the ‘Bavaria Ticket’ in Germany, which can be used to travel from Northern Bavaria up to the Austrian Border – in a few hours for only 36.40 USD.

www.bahn.de

If you prefer the boat you could start off on a hydrofoil in Vienna in the morning and be in Budapest early afternoon – distances are short, the views are amazing and connections are very frequent – and all that sets you back only 115 USD.

Also, Europe has an abundance of low-cost air-carriers: Sky Europe, Wizzair, Ryanair, Easyjet, Air Berlin and more...again, we checked and in February of 2009, one could fly with from Budapest to Berlin with Easyjet for less than 26 USD one way – including tax. For those booking early and off-season, these deals really exist!

For more information visit www.gotocentraleurope.com