EUROPE
Escorted Small Group Tours by Rail

All stops 3 or 4 nights • 4 and 5 star hotels • First class rail travel
• Full luggage handling • Australian Tour Director

MANY TOURS
NOW WITH
NO SOLO TRAVELLER SUPPLEMENT

BOOK EARLY
OBERAMMERGAU PASSION PLAY 2020

www.greattrainsofeurope.com.au
WELCOME

We are a boutique Australian-based tour company specialising in historical and cultural tours of Europe, travelling on Europe’s great trains. We offer only a limited number of tours each year, all personally led by the company principal, Mr Stan Klan, a published historian and former history teacher, who has been introducing people to his beloved Europe since 1977.

TRAVEL ON EUROPE’S GREAT TRAINS

Europe’s trains are the finest in the world – from the High Speed French TGV streaking across the continent at 320kph to quaint Swiss mountain trains. A rail journey permits you to meet the locals, to stroll down to the restaurant car and bar, or simply to take in the ever changing scenery – vineyards, alps and lakes. All rail travel is in First Class reserved seats, except on some local trains where seats are not reservable or where only standard class is offered.

3 NIGHTS MINIMUM STOPS

Travellers quickly tire of whistlestop coach tours which move on to a new hotel every night. On the Great Trains of Europe Tours, every stop is at least 3 nights, giving you time to unpack and start feeling like a local.

QUALITY CENTRAL HOTELS

Were you ever on a tour where your “hotel” was a motorway chain motel an hour outside Venice or Paris? On the Great Trains of Europe Tours we use centrally located hotels – on the Grand Canal in Venice, in the heart of Paris’ Montparnasse on the Left Bank, next to the KuDamm in Berlin. In cities we use 4 star boutique or 5 star hotels and the highest category historic village inns available in the countryside.

LUGGAGE TRANSPORTED ON AHEAD

Have you tried a rail journey but found loading your luggage a pain? No problems on the Great Trains of Europe Tours: your luggage is collected from your hotel on departure morning and is transferred on ahead to await your arrival in your new city.

LIMITED GROUP SIZE

The maximum number of participants on each tour is limited to 25 paying guests. This makes the groups small enough to avoid the “herd mentality” yet big enough to offer a variety of new friends.

FULL SIGHTSEEING PROGRAMME

How much to include? How to provide for first timers who want to see everything and also for those experienced travellers who want to have a more leisurely time? The eternally popular “must see” sights are included in an orientation sightseeing tour on arrival in each new city.

On some tours, clearly explained and optional excursions are offered. We’ll need to know your choices before departure. Freedom to do your own thing, or a full sightseeing and activity programme. On the Great Trains of Europe Tours, the choice is yours.

MEALS

Nothing on a group tour causes more angst than the question of meals: pit-stops for re-fuelling before dashing out to a concert or to do some more exploring? Or a gourmet experience every night? Should expensive wines be costed in, the non-drinkers subsiding the drinkers?

On the Great Trains of Europe Tours we include in the tour cost the first evening meal in each new city or village, at a local trattoria or bistro. Drinks are at your own expense. On the other nights your Tour Director either recommends restaurants at different price levels or accompanies you to dinner.

QUALITY ASSURANCE – A PERSONAL TOUCH

All tours are personally escorted by an Australian historian who has more than 35 years experience in introducing people to Europe: he is not only the Tour Director; he is also the Company owner, guaranteeing a level of quality control few companies can match.

WHO TRAVELS ON THE GREAT TRAINS OF EUROPE TOURS?

While all are welcome, the tour member profile is usually in the 40+ age bracket, but families are most welcome on all tours. Selected tours are identified as Family-Friendly: the programme and pace are especially suitable for families with children, and children under 12 sharing a room with adults stay free. In this brochure the Winter Wonderland Tour with White Christmas is especially designated as family friendly.

Advice of any mobility or dietary issues will be appreciated at the time of booking. If you cannot walk 500 metres and climb 25 stairs without assistance, your booking will be accepted only along with a booking from a designated carer.

Our tour members (some up to their 8th tour with us) have an interest in history and art but don’t want in-depth lectures from professors; they love food and wine but don’t take too kindly to “pompous git” experts; they enjoy new experiences and have a sense of humour.

While the majority of our tour members are Australians and New Zealanders we have also welcomed (and become friends with) Americans, Canadians, South Africans, Malaysians and Brits. All are welcome. All tours are conducted in English.
How did the Great Trains of Europe Tours begin?

In 1977 I was a beginning teacher of History at a grammar school on the Gold Coast. One day half the class were missing: they were on a Geography excursion. “Why can’t we have a History excursion, sir?” one student asked. “OK,” I replied, “let’s go to Europe”.

We were studying the Causes of the First World War at the time. At the end of the lesson, two boys asked, “Did you mean that, Sir, about an excursion to Europe?” I had travelled Europe as a student and undertaken some post graduate study there, so why not?

For the next thirty years in five schools as History teacher and School Principal, the European (magical) History Tour was a feature of our lives. I retired early and licensed my own travel agency and tour operator business “Great Trains of Europe Tours” and so continue my lifelong passion for Europe, her history and culture, and her great trains.

Great Trains of Europe Tours (ABN 75 325 010 987) is an accredited travel agent (ATAS #12982). We are members of IATA (Licence #96836610) and the Concorde Independent Agents’ Network.

Stan Klan

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<th>WHAT’S SO SPECIAL ABOUT GREAT TRAINS OF EUROPE TOURS?</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Leisurely pace – all stops 3 or 4 nights</td>
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<td>• Quality, centrally located 4 &amp; 5 star hotels and historic village inns.</td>
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<td>• First class rail travel in reserved seats</td>
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<td>• Full luggage handling between stops</td>
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<td>• All tours personally escorted by an Australian historian, who is the company owner (35 yrs experience as a tour director)</td>
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<td>• 98% departure record</td>
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<td>• Small groups</td>
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<td>• Many repeat customers (up to 8th tour) happy to give personal recommendations</td>
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<td>• Consider the environment – diesel bus or electric train?</td>
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Testimonials

“The tour was a great success: a big “thank you” for being such a good and enthusiastic Tour Leader, going to the limit and beyond the call of duty. Dealing with the luggage was a masterstroke…the memories of the tour will be replayed in our minds many times” Brian and Brenda Bowers, SA.

“Excellent hotels in the middle of it all, good value for money, sympathetic and knowledgable Tour Leader. Stan, your 5 minute thumbnail sketch of Jewish history at the Ghetto in Venice was a tour de force.” Anne and Michael Ford, Minlaton, SA.

“I have taken 5 Great Trains of Europe tours in the past 3 years. Stan’s tours are the group tours for those who don’t like group tours – well organised but not regimented, flexible with plenty of free time; no rush, no bustle.” Jackie Wood, Melbourne, VIC.

“Thanks a lot Stan, your humour and personality truly made it a great holiday. No fuss, and we didn’t have to worry about a thing.” Wendy Ryan, Oakey, Qld.

“Thanks, Stan, for a most enjoyable tour. You have tempted me to return to study some more history (after 50 years)” Scott Walker, Brisbane, QLD.
SWISS MOUNTAIN RAILS
OUR MOST POPULAR "DEPART ANY DAY" TOUR
PERFECT FOR A PRE OR POST CRUISE TOUR.
Offered only as an unescorted, self-guided tour.

Day 1: To SWITZERLAND You may join the tour either in London, at Zurich Airport or in Switzerland’s oldest town, Chur.

Day 2: CHUR Every day on the Great Trains of Europe Tours begins with a full buffet breakfast. Commence your love affair with the great trains of Europe today on a rail journey to Switzerland’s highest town Davos, famous from the nineteenth century as a “Wellness” centre, and now a very trendy ski resort in Winter. [B]

Day 3: CHUR – Bernina Express One of the world’s great rail journeys today on the Bernina Express across the Alps to Tirano in Italy. So stunning is the scenery that one section of the route has been classed a UNESCO World Heritage site. Retrace your steps home to Chur. [B]

Day 4: Glacier Express to INTERLAKEN Join the world’s favourite little red Swiss mountain train, the Glacier Express. Enjoy breathtaking views from your panorama car as you cross the Alps to your lakefront hotel in the village of Interlaken, your home for 3 nights. [B]

Day 5: INTERLAKEN – Golden Pass Panorama Today the GoldenPass Panorama train takes you from the Bernese Oberland to Lake Geneva. You have time in Montreux for lunch on the lakefront esplanade or on a steamer on the lake. Home to interlaken. [B]

Day 6: INTERLAKEN A quiet day to take a steamer across the lake and into Thun, or a train into Zurich, Switzerland’s largest city and financial capital, nestled on Lake Zurich. [B]

Day 7: To LUCERNE Skirt the lake to Brienz where you ascend the Brienzer Rothorn (steam train on summer departures) for magnificent views to the Eiger. Arrive in lakeside Lucerne for some shopping time before dinner. [B]

Day 8: LUCERNE – Pilatus Trains boats and cable car – to the top of Pilatus for unsurpassed views to Lake Lucerne below. [B]

Day 9: LUCERNE – Rigi Kulm Your final day and one of the best saved till last. Using Europe’s first ever cog-wheel railway, climb to the top of the “Queen of the Mountains” for 360 degree Alpine views. [B]

Day 10: Auf Wiedersehen The tour ends after breakfast. Transfer to the airport or take the TGV and Eurostar back to London. A Paris stopover can be arranged.

FACT BOX:
DURATION: 10 DAYS
DEPARTURE: ANY DAY (non escorted)
COST: $AUD 5,000 Join in Chur, leave in Lucerne. $AUD 5,250 Join and leave at Zurich Airport. $AUD 6,500 Join and leave in London.
Single supplement $800

INDEPENDENT TOURING – DEPART ANY DAY

Some tours offered by Great Trains of Europe Tours are also available as independent (unescorted) tours. There are a few differences between an escorted tour and an independent, “Depart Any Day” tour:
• You don’t have a Tour Director, rather you use local tour guides or the detailed self-guided touring notes provided;
• You do not have your luggage transported on ahead from hotel to hotel, rather you take care of it yourself; and…
• You do not have any evening meals included.

A Tailored Itinerary – just for you?
With more than 35 years experience in introducing people to Europe, we are uniquely placed to help you arrange an individual itinerary, providing rail travel and accommodations.

Your request might be as simple as “the first 12 days of the Off the Beaten Track Tour, but in April rather than in September” or as complex as “three weeks in February through the great opera houses of Europe with opera bookings in each city”.

Recent examples of individual itinerary requests include:
A family of three from London to Paris on Eurostar, 3 nights in a 4 star boutique Left Bank hotel in Paris, the high speed TGV to Grindelwald in Switzerland for a 4 day White Christmas, a Glacier Express day, Cisalpino train on to Venice for New Year in a Grand Canal-front hotel, then on to Rome.

A 3 week family visit to Italy and Switzerland by train, staying in small villages, but also must visit Pompeii, Florence and the Bordeaux vineyards.

All these customers are now friends and have requested assistance in planning their next European holidays.

DATES DON’T SUIT? LIKE A SHORTER TOUR? SOMETHING MISSING?

However, the Independent Touring advantages are:
• You save 25% on the advertised escorted tour cost;
• You can start your tour any day of the year; and…
• You may cut and paste. For example you may choose the last 6 days of the Swiss Mountain Rails Tour followed by the first 4 days of the Winter Wonderland Tour. Ask for a costing.

INDEPENDENT TOURING – DEPART ANY DAY

THROUGH THE GREAT TRAINS OF EUROPE TOURS
INDEPENDENT TOURING
SAVE 25%
## ESCORTED TOURS INDEX – 3 Week Tours

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## SHORTER TOURS

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<td>Avignon</td>
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Day 1: November 30th: MUNICH The tour commences today in our 4 star boutique hotel in the heart of Munich. Get to know your fellow travellers at Welcome Drinks and Dinner. [D]

Day 2: December 1st: MUNICH A sightseeing tour this morning of this thousand year old city. Munich is the capital of Bavaria with strong Wagner, Carl Orff and Richard Strauss associations. Munich is home to the Bavarian State Opera, the Bavarian State Ballet, and the Bavarian State Radio Orchestra. Details of our Classical Music performance will be provided closer to departure. The afternoon is free for the Christmas markets. [B]

Day 3: December 2nd: MUNICH - Visit Nuremberg markets Ask any German which city has the very best Christmas markets and the unequivocal answer will be “Nuremberg”. Following a morning in the shops or museums of Munich we have an early afternoon departure for the one hour train journey to Nuremberg, Bavaria’s second city. The markets come alive as the lights come on. Back to our Munich hotel this evening. [B]

Day 4: December 3rd: MUNICH - King Ludwig’s Castle Visit An excursion by local rail today into the foothills of the Bavarian Alps to visit the fairy tale Neuschwanstein Castle, built by “mad” King Ludwig. Back to our Munich hotel. Will this be the night for a classical concert or an opera? [B]

Day 5: December 4th: SALZBURG Our luggage is taken on ahead as we join Austria’s flagship train, the Railjet, to Salzburg the city of Mozart and Maria von Trapp. On arrival we enjoy a walking tour through the Old City, and a funicular ride to the Hohensalzburg Fortress for a panoramic view across the city. Then some of the major Mozart sights and Christmas markets before our included dinner. [B,D]

Day 6: December 5th: SALZBURG A day for Sound of Music fans, as we join a tour of the main locations used in the film. Another bash at the Christmas markets before our musical evening. [B]

Day 7: December 6th: SALZBURG How about a day in the Austrian Alps? We take the Railjet again to the Hapsburgs’ Winter Capital, Innsbruck where after a short walking tour, we take a cable car up the Alps for lunch with a view across the city from 7,000 feet. Back to Salzburg, her markets, and our hotel. [B]

Day 8: December 7th: VIENNA Again today we join Austrian Rail’s Railjet to Vienna, the Imperial Capital of the Hapsburgs and still – after more than two centuries – still the world capital of Classical music. It was home to Mozart, Beethoven, Haydn, Brahms, Schubert, Bruckner, Korngold, Gluck and Strauss. Not a bad roll call! We settle into our city-centre hotel, where our luggage awaits. Vienna’s fine buildings look magnificent by night, as do her Christmas markets. [B,D]

Day 9: December 8th: VIENNA Our morning city sightseeing programme introduces us to this stately city - the Ring, the Hofburg and St Stephen’s (setting of Mozart’s wedding and his funeral). Watch the fountains and listen to the music. [B]

Day 10: December 9th: VIENNA A free day in Vienna. Her Christkindlmarkt (Christmas markets) are world famous, as are her opera companies and orchestras. Will this be the night for our classical music performance? We will be advised as programmes are released. [B]

Day 11: December 10th: VIENNA After a short rail journey we arrive in the Hapsburgs’ second capital – and home to Franz Liszt, Dohnányi, Kodály and Béla Bartók - Budapest. Our city sightseeing includes the Chain Bridge, Buda Castle, the Gothic St Matthew’s Church, and the Fisherman’s Bastion. Visit one of the famous historic coffee houses and the Christmas markets before re-joining our train to our hotel in Vienna. [B]

Day 12: December 11th: PRAGUE Today’s rail journey brings us in the early afternoon to magical Prague. Our afternoon stroll includes the nearby Old Town Square which has buildings from the fourteenth to the twentieth centuries. Enjoy the view over coffee in an outdoor café. [B,D]

Day 13: December 12th: PRAGUE This morning we begin to discover this magnificent city. Prague was never bombed, and much of the Old City is untouched from the fourteenth century. The Castle, the Charles Bridge, Wenceslas Square, and the Jewish Quarter feature in our sightseeing. Classical music opportunities abound. Mozart loved Prague, and his love was reciprocated. [B]

Day 14: December 13th: PRAGUE Enjoy your free day in this beautiful city, shopping or enjoying the music and the markets. Prague is the centre for world famous Bohemian crystal. [B]

Day 15: December 14th: LEIPZIG Our luggage is taken on ahead as we join Deutsche Bahn (German Rail) for a panoramic rail journey down the gorges of the Vlatava River and on to the city of Bach, Mendelssohn and the Schumanns – Leipzig. Enjoy the markets before our included dinner. [B,D]

Day 16: December 15th: LEIPZIG This morning’s city sightseeing includes the Thomas Church where we pay homage at Bach’s grave, the University of Leipzig which counts both Bach and Goethe among its alumni, and the Nicholas Church – famous for its role in the end of Communism. The afternoon is free for the Christmas markets. [B]

Day 17: December 16th: LEIPZIG - Visit to Dresden While Leipzig was the cultural capital of the Kingdom of Saxony, its princes ruled from the palace in their capital Dresden. Today we visit this stately city which is still being rebuilt from its near-total destruction one night in February 1945. Sensational museums, the Semper Opera House and plenty of Christmas markets. Back to Leipzig tonight. [B]

Day 18: December 17th: BERLIN Our short rail journey today has us in Berlin before lunch time. Our afternoon’s sightseeing introduces us to the city which divided Europe for 45 years - the Brandenburg Gate, the Reichstag, Unter den Linden. Tonight’s classical music performance, if available, will be chosen from some of the world’s finest orchestras and opera companies. [B]

Day 19: December 18th: BERLIN More sightseeing today in the city with a greater concentration of museums than London, and one of the world’s great zoos. Will the Berlin Philharmonic be in town? [B]

Day 20: December 19th: BERLIN A final day for that last minute Christmas shopping. Couldn’t find it in the markets? Visit the greatest department store in the world [in your Tour Director’s humble opinion] – KaDeWe, a short walk from our hotel. Our farewell dinner tonight. [B,D]

Day 21: December 20th: AUF WIEDERSEHEN Our tour ends after breakfast. Thank you for your company on the Great Trains of Europe.
HIGHLIGHTS

Europe’s pre-Christmas buzz.

Included Classical music performances - ideally one in each city, but this will depend on offerings once programmes are published.

Plenty of free time for shopping in Europe’s legendary Christmas markets, department stores and boutiques.

INCLUDED FEATURES

• All stops 3 or 4 nights
• First Class rail travel in reserved seats
• 4 & 5 Star Hotels with buffet breakfasts
• 6 dinners, sightseeing and entrances as indicated
• Tips for local guides
• Full luggage handling between cities
• 1 Classical Music / Opera / Ballet performance in each of the cities where we stay. Details will be advised when programmes are finalised.

FACT BOX:

DURATION: 21 DAYS
DEPARTURES:
NOVEMBER 30th 2017
NOVEMBER 30th 2018
COST: $10,950 per person twin share, single supplement $1,500.

Land Content only. Please enquire about our very competitive airfares and travel insurance.

DEPOSIT

$2,500 with booking, final payment 3 months before travel.

POST TOUR ADD-ON TO THE PRE-CHRISTMAS MAGIC TOUR:

Why not extend your stay in Europe and enjoy a White Christmas in a beautiful Swiss Alpine village (with opportunities to visit Christmas markets).

Enjoy an extra night in Berlin, and on the morning of December 21st, join Germany’s flagship train the ICE the length of Germany, through the Black Forest and across the Rhine into Switzerland, arriving in the picturesque Swiss Alpine village of Grindelwald, nestled under the North Face of the Eiger. Our hotel is rated 3+ stars and oozes Swiss charm. There are breathtaking Alpine views and a roaring log fire. We have reserved superior standard rooms with private facilities for our tour members.

Every morning there is a buffet breakfast, and every evening a four course dinner is provided for our tour members. This includes the festivities of a special Christmas Dinner, as Swiss tradition dictates on the night of Christmas Eve. There is a beautiful church 50 metres away with a midnight service on Christmas Eve should you wish to attend.

Grindelwald is a snow sports fan’s heaven. But if you are not a snow bunny, there are a million other things to do. Grindelwald is a hub for the Swiss mountain train networks and there are many gondolas and cable cars to the Alpine peaks all around. It is an easy train ride to the cities of Berne, Basel and Zurich with their Christmas markets.

The village itself offers excellent shopping and a wide variety of restaurants and coffee shops for lingering lazy lunches, before returning to the hotel to read or snooze in front of the log fire.

✓ 7 nights accommodation in a superior standard room with private facilities in a 3 star hotel in the Swiss village of Grindelwald.
✓ 7 buffet breakfasts, 7 four course dinners (inc. Special Christmas Dinner on Christmas Eve).
✓ Rail travel from Berlin at the end of the Pre-Christmas Magic Tour, to Grindelwald on Dec 21st

NOTE: Your hosts are on hand to provide sightseeing suggestions and assistance, but there are no escorted activities during this relaxing week.
Day 1: December 28th: PARIS  Settle into our 4 star Left Bank Hotel. Meet your fellow tour members for Drinks and Dinner. [D]

Day 2: December 29th: PARIS  Every day on a Great Trains of Europe tour begins with a full buffet breakfast. Our morning sightseeing includes the Arc de Triomph, Champs Elysees and Notre Dame ending up at the Louvre to say hello to Mona Lisa. An afternoon optional excursion is available to the Versailles Palace of Louis XIV. [B]

Day 3: December 30th: PARIS  Department stores, fashion boutiques, a long lunch? There is an optional excursion offered today to the Somme Battlefields of WWI. Here we visit sites sacred in Australia & NZ’s national history. [B]

Day 4: December 31st: PARIS  A final free day in every true romantic’s favourite city. Join the crowds tonight on the Champs Elysees to celebrate the dawning of the New Year. [B]

Day 5: January 1st: INTERLAKEN  Farewell Paris this morning. We begin our love affair with the Great Trains of Europe on her fastest – the French TGV – reaching 320kph towards the Alps and Interlaken with stunning views of the Eiger and Jungfrau. This is our home for 3 nights. Interlaken hosts a huge street party on New Year’s Day culminating in spectacular fireworks. [B,D]

Day 6: January 2nd: INTERLAKEN  Enjoy a late and leisurely brunch before deciding whether to do nothing or to do very little. Your Tour Director will have suggestions for some mountain railway or cable car rides to the peaks of the surrounding Alps. [B]

Day 7: January 3rd: INTERLAKEN  Today we take one of the Great Rail Journeys of the World – the tiny red Glacier Express through the Alps as we enjoy breathtaking views from the panorama car. [B]

Day 8: January 4th: To VENICE  Another of Europe’s great rail journeys today. The Swiss-Italian Cisalpino takes us through the Alps past the Northern Italian lakes via Milan and on to the City of Canals, Venice, another of Europe’s truly romantic cities. Our 4 star hotel overlooks the Grand Canal. Settle in, watch the lights come on as the waterbuses chug past. [B,D]

Day 9: January 5th: VENICE  This morning we begin to explore the art and history of Venice. Byzantine St Mark’s is considered by many to be the most beautiful church in the world and the historic Doge’s Palace and its Bridge of Sighs are “must sees”. [B]

Day 10: January 6th: VENICE  There is time for a gondola ride and a visit to an outer island – Burano for exquisite lace, Murano for world famous Venetian glass. Art lovers will want to see the Tintoretto paintings in the Scuola di San Rocco, the Titian in the Friary Church and the collection of Venetian Renaissance art in the Accademia Gallery. [B]

Day 11: January 7th: VENICE or Day Trip to Florence  Either another quiet day today exploring the bridges and canals of Venice or join Italy’s flagship train the Eurostar Italia for a visit to Florence, the cradle of Western civilisation and birthplace of the Renaissance. [B]

Day 12: January 8th: To INNSBRUCK  Farewell Italy, as we head back towards the Alps. After lunch we join our Eurocity train for Innsbruck as our luggage is taken on ahead. We are not staying in downtown Innsbruck but in the beautiful Alpine Village of Igls perched 15 minutes above. Thaw out with a glass of gluhwein in front of the roaring log fire. This is our home for 4 nights. [B,D]

Day 13: January 9th: INNSBRUCK  Choices today: skiing or join your Tour Leader in an exploration of Innsbruck, the Imperial city of Hapsburgs. We commence by riding a tramcar through snow-decked forests, to Innsbruck below. Explore the mediaeval quarter and take a ride up the Hungerberg railway for a panorama of the Alps. [B]

Day 14: January 10th: INNSBRUCK or Day Trip to Salzburg  Today you may choose to ski, to potter about the village, to sit in front of the log fire or to take the tram back down into Innsbruck to the shops. There is an optional excursion by Austrian Railjet train to Mozart’s birthplace, Salzburg. [B]

Day 15: January 11th: INNSBRUCK  Another quiet day in our Alpine haven – a good book in front of the log fire? Alternatively, your Tour Leader will assist you if you wish to make a visit to nearby Munich or the fairy-tale castle of Neuschwanstein. [B]

Day 16: January 12th: To PRAGUE  Our luggage is collected and taken on ahead as we bid farewell to the Alps and join a EuroCity train for another of Europe’s great romantic cities – Prague. Our hotel is in the historic centre. [B]

Day 17: January 13th: PRAGUE  Today there is a visit to Prague Castle overlooking the city. Here is also the cathedral church of St Vitus, incorporating the chapel built to house the relics of Good King Wenceslas, murdered here a thousand years ago. A free afternoon for the shops or to enjoy the music. [B]

Day 18: January 14th: PRAGUE or Day Trip to DRESDEN  A free day – continue your exploration of this city or join an optional excursion to Dresden, one of Europe’s cultural wonders now emerging from the ashes of World War II bombing and 44 years of communism. [B]

Day 19: January 15th: PRAGUE  Enjoy a last free day in magical Prague. Understand why Mozart loved it. Crystal and garnet are popular with shoppers. Our Farewell Dinner tonight. [B,D]

Day 20: January 16th: HOMeward BOUND  The tour ends after breakfast this morning. [B]
KIDS STAY FREE – White Christmas & Winter Wonderland

Children under 12 sharing adults’ room travel free. Children aged 12 to 17 sharing adults’ room travel at 50%.

HIGHLIGHTS

- 4 nights in each of Europe’s Most Romantic Cities: Paris, Venice & Prague
- New Year’s Eve in Paris
- 3 nights in the Swiss Alps
- 4 nights in the Austrian Alps
- Ride the Glacier Express

INCLUDED FEATURES:

- First Class rail travel in reserved seats
- 4 & 5 star city centre hotels
- 6 dinners
- Full luggage handling
- Full time Australian Historian Tour Director who is the Company Principal

DEPART ANY DAY – INDEPENDENT TOURING

The Winter Wonderland Tour is available as an unescorted tour, departing any day of the year at a SAVING of 25% of the group tour cost. We provide hotel accommodation, rail travel and detailed sightseeing notes.

FACT BOX:

DURATION: 20 DAYS
DEPARTURES: DECEMBER 28th 2017, DECEMBER 28th 2019
COST: Land Only Content (Join in Paris, leave in Prague)

Ask about KIDS STAY FREE

$AU 10,950 per person twin share
Enquire about competitive airfares
Single room supplement $1,500
NO SINGLE ROOM SUPPLEMENT FOR EARLYBIRD BOOKINGS

PRE-TOUR ADD-ON TO THE WINTER WONDERLAND TOUR:

Why not enjoy a White Christmas in a beautiful Swiss Alpine village (with opportunities to visit Christmas markets) before embarking on the Winter Wonderland Tour?

On arrival on December 21st there is an airport transfer to the picturesque Swiss Alpine village of Grindelwald, nestled under the North Face of the Eiger. Our hotel is rated 3+ stars and oozes Swiss charm. There are breathtaking Alpine views and a roaring log fire. We have reserved superior-standard rooms with private facilities for our tour members.

Every morning there is a buffet breakfast, and every evening a four course dinner is provided for our tour members. This includes the festivities of a special Christmas Dinner, as Swiss tradition dictates on the night of Christmas Eve. There is a beautiful church 50 metres away with a midnight service on Christmas Eve should you wish to attend.

Grindelwald is a snow sports fan’s heaven. But if you are not a snow bunny, there are a million other things to do. Grindelwald is a hub for the Swiss mountain train networks and there are many gondolas and cable cars to the Alpine peaks all around. It is an easy train ride to the cities of Berne, Basel and Zurich with their Christmas markets.

The village itself offers excellent shopping and a wide variety of restaurants and coffee shops for lingering lazy lunches, before returning to the hotel to read or snooze in front of the log fire. On December 28th (is it all over so soon?) you are escorted on the rail journey to Paris to commence the Winter Wonderland Tour.

7 nights accommodation in a superior standard room with private facilities in a 3 star hotel in the Swiss village of Grindelwald.

7 buffet breakfasts, 7 four course dinners (inc. Special Christmas Dinner on Christmas Eve).

Transfer from Zurich or Geneva Airport to Grindelwald on Dec 21st; escorted rail transfer from Grindelwald to Paris on Dec 28th to join Winter Wonderland Tour.

NOTE: Your hosts are on hand to provide sightseeing suggestions and assistance, but there are no escorted activities during this relaxing week.
The lands on either side of the Straits of Gibraltar have blossomed and been scarred by centuries of conflict between Berber, Moorish, Jewish and Christian civilisations. Today they are an example of tolerance and peace.

Day 1: April 10th: MARRAKECH Our tour commences today on arrival at Marrakech International Airport. Transfer to our hotel inside the Casbah for Welcome Drinks & Dinner. [D]

Day 2: April 11th: MARRAKECH This morning we commence our exploration of this fascinating city, one of the four former Imperial capitals of Morocco. Outside the red or ochre walls which give the city its nickname ‘the ochre city’, there is a modern Western city with boulevards echoing the period of French control of Morocco. Then we explore the old city where the 12th century Koutoubia mosque’s 77 metre minaret dominates the city skyline. We end at the Djemaa El Fna – the vast square in the heart of the old city. Hawkers, snake charmers, buskers... enjoy. [B]

Day 3: April 12th: MARRAKECH A lazy morning for further exploring or to enjoy this oasis, with the snow-capped Atlas Mountains as a backdrop. This afternoon our sightseeing tour takes us through the labyrinthine souks and medinas. Bargain for fabric and jewellery. [B]

Day 4: April 13th: FES Moroccan Rail is certainly the best in North Africa, and today we take our first class seats in an air-conditioned carriage for a journey from the desert landscape of Marrakech through the fertile coastal farmland, the vineyards and orchards of Meknes to another of Morocco’s former imperial capitals, Fes. [B,D]

Day 5: April 14th: FES Fes was founded around 900AD and its medina – old city – is UNESCO heritage listed. Our sightseeing begins at the historic and beautiful Blue Gate this morning, and takes us to the very heart. Fes is considered the spiritual capital of Morocco: it has madressas – universities – that are 1,000 years old and a synagogue dating from the 17th century. [B]

Day 6: April 15th: FES A day to visit the souks and bargain for local leather goods and jewellery. The Medina al Bali, with many kilometres of winding pathways and thousands of shops, is one of the largest pedestrian-only urban areas on Earth. Be sure you have the hotel name written in Arabic to show to any teenager when you get lost. For a 20 dirham coin ($2) he will take you home to the hotel. [B]

Day 7: April 16th: TANGIER On Moroccan Rail again today, back through the vineyards of Meknes to the most northerly point of Morocco – Tangier, on the Straits of Gibraltar, located at the mouth of the Mediterranean. Its colourful history since its foundation by Carthage (5th century BC), makes Tangier a truly cosmopolitan port city. [B,D]

Day 8: April 17th: TANGIER For the first half of the 20th century Tangier was an international zone partitioned between France, Spain and Britain. It is said to have been a hangout for spies, drug runners and international intrigue, and also the original setting for Rick, Ilsa and Sam in “Casablanca”. The Hollywood moguls felt that the word Casablanca was more mellifluous (would you go to a movie called “Tangier?”). Our city sightseeing takes in the medina and the harbour. [B]

Day 9: April 18th: TANGIER A day in the souk for shopping and to visit the area where mosques, synagogues and churches rub shoulders happily. In the afternoon take a stroll along the sandy beach or the harbour-front or pay an art pilgrim’s visit to the ruins of the Grand Hotel Vila de France, loved and painted by Delacroix and Henri Matisse. [B]

Day 10: April 19th: GRANADA Our intercontinental journey takes 35 minutes today on our ferry across the Straits of Gibraltar to Spain. Spain’s rail system is amongst the best in Europe. We take our first journey – Algeciras to Granada, the jewel of Andalusia. [B,D]

Day 11: April 20th: GRANADA Andalusia was under Moorish (Muslim) control from the 8th century until the expulsion of both Moors and Jews by the Christian monarchs, Ferdinand and Isabella in 1492. Perhaps the greatest gift to the world from this period is the UNESCO listed Alhambra, with its inspiring Moorish architecture, beautiful squares, gardens & fountains. It is the focus of our city sightseeing today. [B]

Day 12: April 21st: GRANADA Today, we enjoy the magnificent Generalife Gardens. Then in the afternoon, wander the timeless streets to absorb the unique history of Granada. The Gothic Catholic cathedral containing the tombs of Ferdinand and Isabella, the Grand Via and the Hospital Real should be included in your strolling. [B]

Day 13: April 22nd: SEVILLE We take the high speed ATR train today and stop for a visit of Cordoba on the way. Our city sightseeing tour to Cordoba includes the UNESCO listed historic centre of Cordoba, shaped successively by the Romans, Arabs, Jews and Christians. The Moorish Catholic cathedral was formerly and obviously, a mosque until the expulsion of the Moors in 1492. Later, our ATR delivers us to Seville. [B,D]

Day 14: April 23rd: SEVILLE A Moorish city, Seville was conquered by the Christian king Ferdinand III in 1248. The Moorish architecture still dominates the city. The two centuries following Columbus’ voyages were the Golden Age of Seville as all trade from the Americas passed through Seville. Buildings from this era – the cathedral and the Plaza de Espana – feature in today’s city sightseeing. [B]

Day 15: April 24th: SEVILLE We visit the Islamic Alcazar Palace this morning and the remainder of the day is free for shopping. [B]

Day 16: April 25th: MADRID The high speed AVE train takes us to Spain’s new (since 1561) capital, Madrid. Located in the borderlands between the
OF SPAIN

historic enemies Aragon and Castille – joined with the marriage of Ferdinand and Isabella – Madrid was favoured by Philip II who moved his court here. [B,D]

Day 17: April 26th: MADRID Our city sightseeing tour introduces us to historic palaces and glass skyscrapers, Real Madrid’s soccer stadium and an active bullfighting ring. It is a sprawling city of almost 7 million, a modern European capital. [B]

Day 18: April 27th: MADRID One of the world’s great art galleries is the Prado in Madrid. Spain controlled Italy and the Netherlands long enough to gather a magnificent collection of Flemish and Italian Renaissance art. [B]

Day 19: April 28th: BARCELONA Our high speed AVE train delivers us quickly to Spain’s second largest city Barcelona, the capital of Catalonia. It was founded by the Romans, and has a proud spirit of independence from the rest of Spain. Catalan is the first language; Spanish the second. [B]

Day 20: April 29th: BARCELONA This morning’s sightseeing begins with visits to the Mirador de Colon and the Placa Reial and winds up at Antoni Gaudí’s unfinished masterpiece, La Sagrada Familia cathedral. [B]

Day 21: April 30th: BARCELONA Barcelona lends itself to aimless wandering and people watching, and La Rambla ranks with Paris’ Champs Elysees as the best place in Europe to do it. Later, take the funicular to the top of Montjuïc for a fine view of Barcelona and its harbour. Farewell Dinner tonight. [B,D]

Day 22: May 1st: FAREWELL Our tour ends after breakfast this morning. [B]
Day 1: AMSTERDAM  The tour commences at check-in to our city centre hotel, our home for four nights. We rest from the flight, or take an afternoon canal cruise to get our bearings, before meeting our fellow travellers for a Welcome Drink and Dinner. [D]

Day 2: AMSTERDAM  Every day on the Great Trains of Europe Tours begins with a full buffet breakfast. We spend a full day in one of the world’s finest bulbfields, the Keukenhof Garden, with 80 acres of tulips, daffodils, hyacinths and other flowering bulbs, shrubs, ancient trees, exhibitions, gurgling streams, flower parades, and seven themed gardens. Little wonder we need all day to visit the Keukenhof! There are restaurants and tea shops. [B]

Day 3: AMSTERDAM  We head into the countryside today (who will be first to see a windmill?) to the Gardens of the Dutch Baroque Palace Het Loo, the Royal Palace from the 1680s until 1982. Established by LeNôtre, the gardens feature perfect symmetry, axial layout with radiating gravel walks, parterres, fountains, basins and statues. [B]

Day 4: AMSTERDAM  For early risers an optional excursion this morning to the world’s largest flower markets at Aarlsmeer, where more than 19 million blooms are sold every day. In the afternoon we visit the historic and beautiful Dutch city of Delft, home of Vermeer, and imagine what Amsterdam might have looked like centuries ago. [B]

Day 5: PARIS  A great rail journey today. Our luggage is taken on ahead as we take our reserved First Class seats in the sleek Thalys train, for Paris at 300kph. On arrival we settle in to our 4 star hotel on the Left Bank. On our city sightseeing tour we begin our acquaintance with the City of Lights. [B, D]

Day 6: PARIS  A quiet morning to stroll in the nearby Luxembourg Gardens or to visit a museum. Monet’s water lilies are on view in their original context at l’Orangerie. See them in real life this afternoon on our visit to Giverny and Monet’s Garden. We enjoy the flower garden called Clos Normand and the water garden with its famous Japanese Bridge covered with wisteria, the weeping willows, and the famous nymphaeas (water lilies) [B]

Day 7: PARIS  A high speed French TGV train today into the Loire Valley and the Garden of Villandry, created by Dr Joachim Carvallo, from 1906, in complete harmony with the Renaissance architecture of the chateau. Great horticultural skill was deployed, especially in the use of vegetables. An arbour of grape vines leads to a great parterre, conceived as a Garden of Music. On the other side of the canal is a Garden of Love. [B]

Day 8: NORTH YORK MOORS  Another of the great rail journeys of the world as we farewell Paris and join the 300 kph Eurostar through the Channel Tunnel. Customs requires that we travel with our luggage today. In London we join British Rail in the tracks of the Flying Scotsman to the mediaeval city of York. We see the Minster and visit the Shambles, then transfer to our inn in the North York Moors village of Pickering. A pub dinner tonight. [B, D]

Day 9: NORTH YORK MOORS  This morning we visit the gardens of Castle Howard, laid out by Sir John Vanburgh in the early 18th century. Castle Howard is the palace of the Flyte family in “Brideshead Revisited”. We lunch (with Claude Jeremiah Greengrass?) in the village of Goathland, “Aidensfield” in the TV series “Heartbeat”. Here we join the historic North York Steam Railway home to Pickering. [B]

Day 10: NORTH YORK MOORS  This morning we visit historic Harewood House. Its garden is classic Capability Brown – forming an idyllic rural setting. We move on to the spa and garden town of Harrogate for a cream tea or a stroll around its famous gardens. Can you spot Agatha Christie? She “disappeared” here in 1926. [B]

Day 11: LAKE DISTRICT  We journey this morning through the Yorkshire Dales, immortalised in James Heriot’s “All Creatures Great and Small” novels and television series. A village pub lunch stop, then on to the Lake District where we settle into our Lakeside hotel. [B, D]

Day 12: LAKE DISTRICT  This morning we visit a very special Lakeland garden, Holehird, which specialises in Lakeland flora and offers sweeping views of Lake Windermere. A bit of whimsy on the way home: we drop in on Beatrix Potter’s garden, Hill Top – watch out for the fierce bad rabbit. [B]

Day 13: LAKE DISTRICT  We take a magical rail journey today through some of the Dales’ and England’s finest scenery on the historic Settle to Carlisle Railway. A pub lunch, an afternoon cream tea and visits to some more of the Yorkshire Dales’ picturesque villages. [B]

Day 14: COTSWOLDS  Our British Rail journey south today brings us to the Peak District of Derbyshire, to visit the gardens of historic Chatsworth House. Its garden is classic Capability Brown – forming an idyllic rural setting. We move on in the late afternoon to the Cotswolds where we stay in a village inn in the pretty riverside village of Bourton-on-the-Water. [B, D]

Day 15: COTSWOLDS  This morning’s sightseeing takes us to picturesque Cotswold villages of honey-golden stone: Lower Slaughter, Stow-on-the-Wold, Chipping Campden. After a village pub lunch we visit one of England’s favourite gardens – Hidcote Manor, designed and developed by Major Lawrence Johnston, who scoured the world to secure rare and exotic species for this extremely pretty garden, a series of “outdoor rooms”. [B]
Day 16: COTSWOLDS Today we visit Stowe Landscape Gardens, covering 750 acres and including 40 listed historic monuments and temples. It is considered one of England’s most important landscape gardens and the greatest names in English garden design were involved in its creation from Bridgeman in the 1710s to Vanbrugh, Kent, Gibbs and “Capability” Brown. Afternoon tea in the Cotswold village of Burford, serious about antiques. [B]

Day 17: LONDON Back on British Rail today we journey through more of the Cotswolds’ rolling hills, as our luggage is taken on ahead to await our arrival in our London hotel. We enjoy London’s sights this afternoon. The Oxford Street shops are only a bus ride away from the hotel. A West End Show tonight? [B]

Day 18: LONDON The Oxford Street shops or Harrods this morning before an afternoon excursion to the Royal Horticultural Society’s Wisley Garden, where keen English gardeners have gone to be inspired for over 100 years. Spread out over 240 acres, Wisley is a lovely, peaceful place for a stroll as well as a demonstration garden full of practical garden design ideas and cultivation techniques. [B]

Day 19: LONDON A full day today at the Chelsea Flower Show, arguably, the world’s greatest and best known. Our Farewell Dinner tonight. [B,D]

Day 20: HEADING HOME Our tour ends this morning after breakfast. [B]

FACT BOX:
DURATION: 20 DAYS
DEPARTURES:
MAY 6th, 2018
MAY 5th 2019
COST: Land Only Content
(Join in Amsterdam, leave in London)
$AU 12,950 per person
Enquire about competitive airfares
NO SINGLE ROOM SUPPLEMENT

HIGHLIGHTS
A full day at
CHELSEA FLOWER SHOW

RAIL JOURNEYS
• High Speed Thalys
• English Channel Eurostar
• Tracks of the Flying Scotsman
• North York Moors Steam Railway
• Settle to Carlisle Historic Rail

GARDENS
• Keukenhof Gardens
• Het Loo
• Monet’s Garden
• Villandry
• Castle Howard
• Hanwood
• Holehird
• Chatsworth
• Stowe
• Hidcote
• Wisley

SIGHTS
• “Heartbeat Country”
• Heriot’s Yorkshire Dales
• Lake District
• Cotswold Villages

INCLUDED FEATURES:
• First Class rail travel in reserved seats
• 4 star city centre hotels
• 3 or 4 star historic village inns
• 6 dinners
• Full luggage handling (not on Eurostar)
• Local expert garden guides (where permitted)
• Full time Australian Historian Tour Director who is the Company Principal
Day 1: September 1st: ROME The tour commences today in our 4 star boutique hotel. Get to know your fellow travellers at Welcome Drinks and Dinner. [D]

Day 2: September 2nd: ROME Every day on the Great Trains of Europe Tours, we begin with a full buffet breakfast. Today’s sightseeing focuses on Classical Rome and includes entrances to the Pantheon & the Colosseum. “Roma – non basta una vita!” (Rome - one life is not enough). [B]

Day 3: September 3rd: ROME Catholic Rome today, including entrances and a guided tour of St Peter’s Basilica, the Vatican Museums and the Sistine Chapel. The fashion shops on the Via Condotti are open this afternoon. Dinner in the Piazza Navona as we watch the water play in Bernini’s fountains? [B,D]

Day 4: September 4th: To SAN GIMIGNANO Tuscany Our luggage is transported on ahead as we commence our love affair with the Great Trains of Europe, taking our reserved First Class seats on Italy’s flagship train, the High Speed Eurostar Italia. Then a slower pace through archetypal Tuscan countryside – vineyards, olive groves and cypresses – down the Vale of Chianti and up the hill to San Gimignano, the walled hilltop village with its 13 towers, almost unchanged since the 13th century, our home for 4 nights. [B,D]

Each day a short excursion from San Gimignano is provided (and included in your tour cost). You may choose to join the excursion or simply stay in San Gimignano and relax.

Day 5: September 5th: SAN GIMIGNANO Tuscany A drive off the beaten track today through Southern Tuscan vineyards and olive groves to visit two beautiful hilltop villages and wine centres – Montalcino and Montepulciano. [B]

Day 6: September 6th: SAN GIMIGNANO Tuscany Today is Market day in our ‘home’ village, San Gimignano. Enjoy. [B]

Day 7: September 7th: SAN GIMIGNANO Tuscany This morning we explore the artistic gem of Siena, which stands today much as it did in the twelfth century. You know it from “My House in Umbria” and “Under the Tuscan Sun”. Lunch at one of the open air trattoria on the Campo? On the way home to San Gimignano we visit the walled village of Monteriggioni. [B]

Day 8: September 8th: To CINQUE TERRE A local train along the North West Coast of Italy brings us to the Cinque Terre. We arrive in our seafront hotel in Santa Margerita Ligure. [B,D]

Day 9: September 9th: CINQUE TERRE Today we ramble in the beautiful Cinque Terre, with an opportunity for the sprightly to walk the 5 villages, while others may choose a dip in the Mediterranean or a ridiculously long lunch in a seafront restaurant. [B]

Day 10: September 10th: CINQUE TERRE Nearby Genoa was Christopher Columbus’ birthplace and you have the opportunity to visit it today or, alternatively, a leisurely day in your seafront hotel, or a visit to uber-touristy Portofino. [B]

Day 11: September 11th: To VILLENEUVE Provence Along the Mediterranean today and across the French border to join the high speed French TGV train to Provence and the historic village of Villeneuve-les-Avignon. Excursions from Villeneuve are offered each day and included in the tour cost. [B,D]

Day 12: September 12th: VILLENEUVE Provence A visit this morning to the Pont du Gard, a Roman aqueduct dating from Classical times. Then we move on to van Gogh country and the village of St. Remy, ending the day in the walled city of Avignon, seat of the Popes from 1309 to 1377. [B]

Day 13: September 13th: VILLENEUVE Provence The nearby village of L’Isle-Sur-la-Sourge prides itself on being France’s second largest antiques centre. Visa cards with chronic fatigue syndrome have been known here. L’Isle-Sur-la-Sourge is a very attractive town with streams and water wheels, nicknamed the “Venice of Provence”. We move on to Fontaine de Vaucluse for lunch beside the waterfall. We stop in hilltop Gordes for sweeping views of the Luberon.

Day 14: September 14th: VILLENEUVE Provence Off the beaten track again today as we drive through some of Provence’s favourite villages – Lourmarin (market day), hilltop Bonnieux, rainbow-coloured Roussillon, Goult – with stops for coffee, lunch & shopping. [B]

Day 15: September 15th: To SARLAT Dordogne An early start from Provence, across Southern France to the Dordogne and the walled mediaeval market town of Sarlat. This is market day and we arrive in time to enjoy the afternoon in the markets. As our luggage arrives we settle in for 3 nights. As before, excursions from Sarlat are offered each day and included in the tour cost, but you are free to choose those that appeal to you or simply potter about our “home” village. [B,D]

Day 16: September 16th: SARLAT Dordogne Winding along the banks of the Dordogne River today we make our way to the mediaeval cliff-face village of Rocamadour – very much ON the beaten track. Pilgrims have come to visit the Black Madonna since the 12th century. Later we visit the walled “bastide” town of Domme, with excellent shopping and a fine view of a vast sweep of the Dordogne River Valley. [B]
Day 17: September 17th: SARLAT, Dordogne This morning is free in our village of Sarlat. This is a “foodie’s” paradise. In the afternoon we visit one of France’s most beautiful gardens, the nearby Jardin d’Eyrignac. [B]

Day 18: September 18th: To PARIS We farewell Sarlat and enjoy a change of pace – a leisurely journey, trundling down the Dordogne Valley and through Bordeaux vineyards before a transfer to a High Speed TGV to Paris. Settle in to our Left Bank Hotel where our luggage awaits. [B]

Day 19: September 19th: PARIS This morning’s sightseeing includes the Arc de Triomphe, Champs Elysees and Notre Dame Cathedral. There is time to visit Mona Lisa in the Louvre. We are spoilt for choice of restaurant this evening. [B]

Day 20: September 20th: PARIS The museums and the boutiques beckon today. There is an afternoon excursion to Monet’s Garden at Giverney. Here we see the waterlilies and the Japanese bridge. Our Farewell Dinner is tonight. [B,D]

Day 21: September 21st: HOMEWARD BOUND Our tour ends after breakfast. [B]
LITERARY BRITAIN

We invite you to join us on this Literary Britain Tour following in the footsteps of some of the greatest literary figures in our language.

Day 1: September 22nd: EDINBURGH Our tour commences this evening as we gather for pre-dinner drinks and a Welcome Dinner in our Edinburgh hotel. If you would prefer to commence your journey this morning in London, and take the modern reincarnation of the classic Flying Scotsman train to Scotland, this is possible. [D]

Day 2: September 23rd: EDINBURGH Our orientation tour of Edinburgh takes in the sights – the Castle, the Royal Mile, St Giles’ and the New Town. [B]


Day 4: September 25th: THE LAKE DISTRICT Our luggage is taken on ahead as we take our First Class seats on British Rail across the border into England, and the Lake District. We settle in to our lakefront hotel at Bowness on Windermere. There is time this afternoon for a paddle boat ride on the lake. [B,D]

Day 5: September 26th: THE LAKE DISTRICT Today we drive through the beautiful Lake District for a visit to Beatrix Potter’s cottage. Her genius found its fullest expression in this scenic Lakeland countryside, to which she was so committed that she bought up farms to gift to the people of Britain as a National Park. [B]

Day 6: September 27th: THE LAKE DISTRICT The Lakes are forever linked with the Romantic poets, who saw the countryside as an antidote for the barrenness of the Enlightenment and the revolutions it spawned. Today we “escape to Nature” following in the footsteps of the greatest of them all, William Wordsworth. Dove Cottage in Grasmere has become a sacred site for lovers of the English tongue. [B]

Day 7: September 28th: THE LAKE DISTRICT This morning we ride the historic Settle to Carlisle Railway, across the Ribblehead Viaduct, to Haworth, the home of the Bronte sisters. Our pilgrimage begins at the Parsonage, as we ponder how such protected single ladies, daughters of the parsonage, could gaze into the human condition like few before them or since. Back to the Lakes this evening. [B]

Day 8: September 29th: THE COTSWOLDS Our luggage is taken on ahead and we join British Rail south to the beautiful Cotswolds. We settle into our hotel in one of the prettiest villages of England, Bourton-on-the-Water, our home for 4 nights. [B,D]

Day 9: September 30th: THE COTSWOLDS A local slow train today as we wind through the Heart of England to the Regency spa city of Bath, rich in its Jane Austen associations. Back to our Cotswold village this evening. [B]

If adventures will not befall a young lady in her own village, she must seek them abroad. – Jane Austen

Day 10: October 1st: THE COTSWOLDS Today, the dreaming spires of Oxford, the ancient university city, which gave us Alice in Wonderland, Brideshead Revisited, C.S Lewis, J R R Tolkien, and Inspector Morse, to name a few. Back to the Cotswolds tonight. [B]

Day 11: October 2nd: THE COTSWOLDS The Holy of Holies today: William Shakespeare’s Stratford upon Avon. We walk the streets he walked and visit his house, his school and his grave. We hope to be able to incorporate a Shakespearean play performance into our visit, but schedules are not yet available. [B]

Day 12: October 3rd: THE SOUTH-WEST On our way to the South-West today, we visit Thomas Hardy’s imaginary Wessex, centred on the market town of Dorchester, mythical Casterbridge, whose mayor was one of the darkest characters in his literary output. [B,D]

Day 13: October 4th: THE SOUTH-WEST From our base village on the Devon – Cornwall border, we visit the desolate landscape of both Exmoor (Lorna Doone) and Dartmoor (Hound of the Baskervilles). [B]

Day 14: October 5th: THE SOUTH-WEST Into Cornwall to search for Daphne du Maurier today – Frenchman’s Creek, Jamaica Inn. Was Manderley, of Rebecca fame, really here? [B]

Day 15: October 6th: LONDON Through seasons of mist and mellow fruitfulness, we make our way on British Rail to London the “belly-button of the world”. We arrive at Paddington Station, as Paddington Bear did, and enjoy our London orientation tour en route to our hotel. [B]

Day 16: October 7th: LONDON Morning worship at Wesley’s Chapel? Evensong at Westminster Abbey? There is an afternoon visit to the Abbey and its Poets’ Corner. Here we do homage to the literary giants – Chaucer, Tennyson, the Brownings, Dickens, Dryden, Hardy, Blake, Kipling, A E Housman, Gerard Manley Hopkins, and an Australian poet, Adam Lindsay Gordon. [B]

Day 17: October 8th: LONDON We start the day visiting the British Museum and its Manuscript Room. From the exercise book in which Charlotte Bronte wrote Jane Eyre, to the Beatles’ doodle pads: they are all here. Nearby for afternoon visits are Bloomsbury (Virginia Wolfe), Russell Square (T.S. Eliot) and the British Library (Karl Marx.) Every night London offers dozens of plays, musicals, ballets and opera. Up to date listings will be provided several months before the tour. [B]

Day 18: October 9th: LONDON A day trip into Kent today to the cathedral city of Canterbury, and the shrine of St Thomas a’Beckett (Murder in the Cathedral - T.S. Eliot), and the destination for Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales pilgrims. [B]

Day 19: October 10th: LONDON Today we explore London’s dark literary past, following in the footsteps of William Blake and Charles Dickens. [B]

The most important thing in life is to stop saying ‘I wish’ and to start saying ‘I will’. - Charles Dickens

Day 20: October 11th: LONDON We have barely scratched the surface of London’s rich literary heritage, but you will certainly want a day of shopping and sightseeing – Changing of the Guard? The Tower of London? Our Farewell Dinner is tonight. [B,D]

Day 21: October 12th: FAREWELL Your tour ends this morning after breakfast. Thank you for your company on this Great Trains of Europe Tour. Why not join us today for our Literary Ireland Tour? [B]
The rich heritage of English literature is inextricably linked with the landscapes in which it is set. Could Wordsworth have written such sublime lines anywhere but in the Lake District? Could Emily Bronte have created Heathcliffe anywhere other than on the wild and desolate moors where Yorkshire meets Lancashire?

HIGHLIGHTS
- Wordsworth’s Lake District
- The Brontes’ Haworth
- Jane Austen’s Bath
- Thomas Hardy’s Wessex
- Charles Dickens’ London
- Shakespeare’s Stratford-upon-Avon

INCLUDED FEATURES:
- First Class rail travel in reserved seats
- 4 star city centre hotels and historic village inns
- 5 dinners
- Full luggage handling
- Full time Australian Historian Tour Director who is the Company Principal

FACT BOX:
DURATION: 21 DAYS
DEPARTURES: September 22nd 2018
COST: Land Only Content (Join in Edinburgh or London, leave in London).
$AU 12,950 per person twin share.
Enquire about competitive airfares
Single room supplement: $1,500
No single room supplement for bookings before November 30th 2017

OCT 12th DUBLIN Depart London in the early afternoon for the short flight (included in tour cost) to Dublin, and transfer to our city centre hotel. [D]

OCT 13th DUBLIN This morning’s city sightseeing tour will wind up at Trinity College, and the Book of Kells, Ireland’s greatest literary treasure. One of the world’s most beautiful illuminated manuscripts. Dating from around 800AD, it contains the Four Gospels in Latin. In the afternoon we embark upon a James Joyce Bloomdays Walk. [B]

OCT 14th DUBLIN Yes, Ireland produced George Bernard Shaw, J M Synge and Oscar Wilde, but the two literary names that particularly stand out in Dublin are James Joyce and William Butler Yeates. Today we visit the Yeates Collection in the National Library, then the James Joyce Centre and the Dublin Writers’ Museum. A literary pub crawl tonight for the brave, visiting a number of watering holes frequented in centuries past by Ireland’s literary greats. [B]

OCT 15th SLIGO An Irish Rail journey today to Sligo where we visit the William Butler Yeats Memorial Building which has a photographic exhibition detailing the famous writer’s life, the churchyard at Drumcliffe where Yeats is buried – under a photographic exhibition detailing the famous writer’s life, the Dublin Writers’ Museum. A literary pub crawl tonight for the brave, visiting a number of watering holes frequented in centuries past by Ireland’s literary greats. [B]

OCT 16th LIMERICK By coach today through Western Ireland, paying a visit to Galway en route to Limerick for a 2 night stop. [B]

OCT 17th LIMERICK Limerick is a centre of Irish cultural life, and home to modern Irish novelist Frank McCourt, of Angela’s Ashes fame. We visit his school room, now a museum, and take a walking tour of the locations mentioned in his novel. [B]

OCT 18th LIMERICK Let’s be tourists today as we drive around the famed Ring of Kerry, and visit Killarney, before returning to our Limerick hotel and our Farewell Dinner. [B,D]

OCT 19th FARWELL Our tour ends after breakfast this morning. You can either take the train back to Dublin to join your flight home, or fly from the nearby Shannon Airport to London for your homeward journey. Your transfer to either is included in the tour cost. [B]
Seeking God’s protection from the Plague which was decimating the population of Europe in the 1640s, the citizens of the tiny village of Oberammergau in the Bavarian Alps in Germany made a solemn vow to perform a Passion Play every decade. Passion Plays – depicting the passion (suffering), death and resurrection of Jesus Christ – were common features of mediaeval Christian piety, and were often performed by travelling troupes of players and evangelists.

The villagers have kept their promise for almost four centuries, with performances every decade year. In 2020 people will travel from all over the world to witness more than 2000 villagers keeping the ancient vow, in four performances a week across five months of Spring and Summer.

Great Trains of Europe Tours have been accompanying pilgrims to the Passion Play since 1990, and we are delighted – again in 2020 – to offer three European tours which include the Passion Play.

Entrance tickets for the Passion Play are available only in conjunction with one night’s accommodation in Oberammergau and surrounding villages, so we are forced on these tours to depart from our usual practice of 3 nights at every stop.

All tours will be led by Great Trains of Europe Tours principal, Christian historian Mr Stan Klan of Toowoomba, Queensland.

Advance bookings are now open.

BOOKING DETAILS:
It is still almost 3 years until these tours depart, but Passion Play tickets are scarce and numbers strictly limited. More than 60% of the tickets have already been allocated by the Play organisers.

Payments are in 3 stages:
1. $1,000 per person initial deposit is required immediately to confirm your seat.
2. A further $2,500 per person deposit is required 12 months before your chosen tour departs.
3. The balance will be payable 4 months before departure.

Travel insurance is available 18 months before departure and airfares 11 months before departure.

EARLYBIRD SPECIAL FOR SOLO TRAVELLERS:
Solo travellers booking and paying the $1,000 initial deposit before November 1st 2017 will be guaranteed a single room without the single supplement.
BLOSSOMS, BULBS, THE CHELSEA FLOWER SHOW & THE OBERAMMERGAU PASSION PLAY.
Commences Amsterdam May 5th, ends in Munich May 25th, 2020.

Enjoy 4 days in the bulbfields of Holland, then take the Eurostar to England and spend 9 days visiting gardens in the English countryside - 3 days each on the North York Moors, the Lake District and the Cotswolds. 3 days in London includes the Chelsea Flower show before flying to the Austrian Alps for a 3 day stop which includes the Oberammergau Passion Play.

COST: $13,950 per person twin share - single supplement $2,000 - includes 21 days in four star city centre hotels and historic village inns with buffet breakfasts, one dinner at each stop, First Class rail travel throughout, an economy class flight from London to Innsbruck, all sightseeing and garden entrances with local guides, full day entry to Chelsea Flower Show, and entrance to a performance of the Oberammergau Passion Play.


Enjoy 3 days in the City of Romance, Paris, then take the high speed TGV train to the South of France for 4 days in a beautiful village in the Dordogne, followed by 4 days in the beautiful Provence region. A change of pace, then, with 3 days in a lakeside village in the Swiss Alps, and 4 days in an Austrian Alpine village, including the Oberammergau Passion Play, and finally a visit to Munich where the tour ends.

COST: $13,950 per person twin share – single supplement $2,000 - includes 21 days in four star city centre hotels and historic village inns with buffet breakfasts, one dinner at each stop, First Class rail travel throughout, all sightseeing and entrances with local guides, and a performance of the Oberammergau Passion Play.

ITALY’S CULTURAL CAPITALS, SWISS MOUNTAIN TRAINS AND THE OBERAMMERGAU PASSION PLAY.
Commences Zurich September 26th, ends Rome October 16th 2020.

Enjoy a week of breathtaking Alpine scenery on Switzerland’s legendary mountain trains, then 3 days in the Austrian Alps including the Oberammergau Passion Play, before heading south of the Alps to Italy’s 3 cultural capitals – Venice, Florence and Rome.

COST: $13,950 per person twin share – single supplement $2,000 - includes 21 days in four star city centre hotels and historic village inns with buffet breakfasts, one dinner at each stop, First Class rail travel throughout, all sightseeing and entrances with local guides, and a performance of the Oberammergau Passion Play.

A fully detailed itinerary of each tour is available from Tour Leader Stan on 0488 423 848 or online at www.greattrainsofeurope.com.au
**BOOKING CONDITIONS**

Great Trains of Europe Tours (ABN 75 325 010 987) is an accredited travel agent (ATAS #12982). We are members of IATA (Licence #968366100 and the Concorde Independent Agents’ Network.

**Costs:** All costs in this brochure are expressed in Australian dollars and are based on airfares, and land transport and accommodation costs, and Australian dollar exchange rates effective as at July 27th, 2017. Exchange rate fluctuations in the price of any service provided, beyond the control of Great Trains of Europe Tours, may be passed on to travellers, right up to the date of departure. Please note that some city taxes or bed taxes cannot be pre-paid by agents, and must be paid by the tour member at check-out.

A deposit of $2,500 per person will guarantee a place on your chosen tour (unless already filled, in which case you will be advised of your place on the waiting list. With a maximum tour size of 25 travellers, tours often fill early).

Full final payment is due 90 days before commencement of the tour. Please make payment by cheque to “Great Trains of Europe Tours” or by bank transfer as follows: Heritage Bank, Toowoomba, Queensland, Australia. BSB 636-066 Account Number 111 097 34. Great Trains of Europe Tours currently does not accept payment by credit card.

**Cancellation Policy:** Cancellation at any time after the deposit is paid will result in the forfeiture of the deposit. Any booking cancelled between 90 days and 45 days before departure will incur a 50% cancellation charge on land content and up to 100% on airfares, depending on the airfare used. Bookings cancelled within 45 days of departure will incur a 100% cancellation charge. Travel insurance will cover cancellation because of illness, death in the family etc. Travel insurance is therefore considered mandatory.

**Travel Insurance:** A condition of joining a Great Trains of Europe tour is either the purchase of travel insurance through Great Trains of Europe Tours, or documentary evidence of a sufficient level of travel insurance purchased elsewhere.

**European Rail Travel:** The standard of rail travel in Europe ranges from small and basic local trains to luxury High Speed International trains. On rare occasions European rail companies may change timetables, classes of travel available or rolling stock within the period of validity of a travel brochure. Descriptions of trains & routes provided in this brochure are accurate at the time of printing and provided in good faith. It is not possible to request rail seating either facing or back to the direction of travel. Many European trains change direction during a journey.

**Baggage allowance:** Portage of one suitcase per person is included in tour cost.

**Coaches:** When itineraries take us away from rail routes and coaches must be used, a seating rotation system applies.

**Hotels:** European hotel rooms – even in 4 or 5 star hotels – are often smaller than in Australian hotels. Single rooms, particularly, can be very small. Should a traveller who has requested a single room wish to have a quote for the cost of single occupancy of a double room, please ask. Tea and coffee making facilities are rare in European hotels, as are in-room security safes. In some European countries, government environmental agencies restrict the use of air-conditioning in hotels to the summer months. Travellers sharing a room on a twin share basis will be asked their preferences re a double bed or twin beds, but no guarantee can be given that your request will be met. Hotel star ratings, where provided, are those of the country in which the hotel is situated, and vary from country to country.

**Other Important Advice:** All tours will proceed if a minimum of 12 travellers have paid deposits by 90 days before scheduled departure. In the highly unlikely (unprecedented) event that there are insufficient travellers for a tour, you will be offered either (i) a full refund of all monies paid, (ii) a modified cost structure for a smaller group, or (iii) a place on an alternative Great Trains of Europe Tour. Each tour is sold as a package and there can be no refund for any element of the tour (eg. a meal or an excursion) not utilised by the traveller by her / his own choice. Tour costs have built into them the costs associated with researching tours, communicating with overseas suppliers, brochure preparation and marketing. Great Trains of Europe Tours does not claim or imply that some of the inclusions in our tours may or may not be available at a lower price direct from the overseas supplier. Travellers are reminded, however, that purchases made direct with overseas suppliers are generally not covered by Australian Travel Agents licensing protections or the Australian Travel Compensation Fund. Most photographs used in this brochure were taken by the Tour Leader on past tours, but some have been provided by hotels, rail companies or Tourism Boards. Photographs are indicative only and we cannot guarantee that a traveller on a Great Trains of Europe tour will personally see all of the places depicted in them.

Great Trains of Europe Tours reserves the right to decline any reservation or booking request, and may at the Tour Directors discretion terminate any person’s involvement in the tour due to disruptive or anti-social behaviour.

Great Trains of Europe Tours does not accept responsibility for any injury, damage, loss, delay, change of schedule or other events which are beyond our direct control such as, but not limited to war, terrorism, civil disturbance, industrial action, acts of government or of God, or mechanical failure such as aircraft, trains or coaches.

Great Trains of Europe Tours cannot be held responsible for changes to provision of services by local European suppliers, but we will do all in our power to provide an alternative service of equal standard to that advertised, or make a cash refund of the difference on the spot.

**Contract:** The contract between the traveller and Great Trains of Europe Tours, entered into by your signing the Booking form, shall be construed in accordance with the laws of the State of Queensland.

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**"Life is a collection of experiences. Let Stan be your guide"**

Noel and Alwynne Towler, Brisbane

(8 time tour members on the Great Trains of Europe Tours)