Travel with Scott and Curtis

Eastern Europe to the Black Sea

October 18 - 31, 2027

🏰 From Castles to Cathedrals: The Soul of the Danube

Picture yourself gliding past medieval fortresses, sun-drenched vineyards, and tiny river towns where time slows and history lingers. The Danube carries more than water—it carries the stories of kings and empires, of revolutions and resilience, of people rebuilding and redefining their place in Europe.

It all happens aboard your intimate, comfortable river ship—where every stateroom has a window to the past, and every meal offers a taste of the future. This is not just a cruise. It's a curated journey across centuries and cultures along one of Europe's most captivating waterways.



👀Check Out the Latest Trip Itinerary Preview Video

📌 Trip Overview

Dates: October 18-31, 2027

Route: Budapest to Bucharest

Duration: 14 days, with 11-night river cruise

Round-Trip Airfare from DTW*: $1,550 per person*

Trip Pricing (Per Person, Double Occupancy)

Cabin Category	*Price*
Serenade A	*$6,599*
Serenade B	*$6,399*
Sonata C	*$6,099*
Sonata D	*$5,949*
Cantata E	*$5,849*
Cantata F	*$5,749*
Prelude G	*$5,549*
Prelude H	*$5,199*
Single Supplement	*$1,199 (Added to Cabin Category)*

!!Please note: *Flight class (Coach, Premium, Business), seat preference (Aisle or Window), and any special requests* ***must be stated at the time of deposit.*** *Prices are subject to change.*

🗓️ Trip Itinerary (Day-by-Day)

Direction: Budapest** to **Bucharest

Day 1 Depart U.S.

Depart the U.S. on your flight to Budapest, Hungary.

Day 2 Arrive in Budapest, Hungary • Embark ship

Destination: Budapest

Meals included: Dinner

Accommodations: M/S *River Aria* or M/S *River Adagio*

Activity Note: The ship may be docked outside of the city center; if so, it will take around 30 minutes to reach the city by bus.

Morning/Afternoon: Arrive today in Budapest, where you'll be met at the airport and assisted to your private Grand Circle river ship, which will be your home throughout your Black Sea cruise. If you began your European discoveries early with our optional pre-trip extension in *Prague, Czech Republic*, you will join the main group today.

Dinner: Tonight, meet your fellow travelers over dinner in the ship's dining room.

Evening: Enjoy the company with your fellow travelers in the lounge or retire to your room for tomorrow's discoveries.

Day 3 Explore Budapest • Captain's Welcome Dinner

Destination: Budapest

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Accommodations: M/S *River Aria* or M/S *River Adagio*

Activity Note: The ship may be docked outside of the city center; if so, it will take around 30 minutes to reach the city by bus. This morning's combined bus and walking tour will be approximately 3.5 hours long.

Breakfast: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Morning: After breakfast, join us for a briefing by your Program Director. Then set out to explore Budapest on an included city tour. You'll see Heroes' Square with its Millennial Column, set off by equestrian statues of the ninth-century Magyar leaders who conquered this region in the ninth century. The adjoining colonnade displays more statues of kings, dukes of Transylvania, and liberty fighters who influenced the history of Hungary.

Lunch: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Afternoon: You'll have the balance of the afternoon to relax on the ship or explore Budapest on your own. If you'd like, you have the option to join your Program Director on a discovery walk of the city.

Known as the "City of Baths," Budapest has a number of thermal baths worth visiting for a soothing dip if you choose. Fed by natural hot springs, each bathhouse is unique; some even date back to the 16th century. Or, you may wish to stroll the city's famous Castle District, home to famous sites such as the Royal Palace and the Hungarian National Gallery.

When you return to your ship, your Program Director will describe tomorrow's discoveries during your first Port Talk. These nightly events, held throughout your cruise, will give you the opportunity to prepare for the next day.

Dinner: Tonight, gather with your fellow travelers for a Welcome Drink, followed by the Captain's Welcome Dinner.

Evening: The evening is yours to do as you choose. Perhaps you'll have a drink in the lounge with fellow travelers or relax in your room.

Day 4 Budapest • Optional *Hungarian Jewish Heritage* tour

Destination: Budapest

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Accommodations: M/S *River Aria* or M/S *River Adagio*

Activity Note: The *Hungarian Jewish Heritage* optional tour is not available Saturdays and on regional holidays. The Hungarian Jewish Association also reserves the right of changing the opening hours. The ship may be docked outside of the city center; if so, it will take around 30 minutes to reach the city by bus.

Breakfast: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Morning: Spend the day enjoying the wonders of Budapest on your own. Or, join an optional tour exploring *Hungarian Jewish Heritage*. You'll visit the Great Synagogue, the largest in Europe,

designed in a Moorish style but with Byzantine, Romantic, and Gothic elements. Then you'll see the Rumbach Synagogue; and the Emanuel Memorial Tree, a memorial to Hungarian victims of the Holocaust.

Once you return to the ship, you'll hear from a local Hungarian who will come aboard to talk to us about daily life in Budapest.

Lunch: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Afternoon: The remainder of the afternoon is at leisure to make further discoveries on your own in Budapest. Feel free to join your Program Director on an elective Discovery Walk of the surrounding area.

Then this evening, begin cruising along the Danube from Hungary to Croatia.

Dinner: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish. Perhaps you'll enjoy a nightcap at the bar or relax in the lounge.

Day 5 Vukovar, Croatia • Home-Hosted Lunch • Explore Vukovar

Destination: Vukovar

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Accommodations: M/S *River Aria* or M/S *River Adagio*

Activity Note: Due to water levels and sailing conditions, the ship may dock in Batina or Vukovar instead of Aljmas on some departures.

Breakfast: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Morning: Enjoy a leisurely morning onboard as you sail. You may wish to bring a cup of coffee to the Sun Deck and enjoy the passing scenery.

Late this morning, you'll dock in the small village of Aljmas, you'll board a private motorcoach and transfer by motorcoach to the home of a local Croatian family.

Lunch: Enhance your appreciation for everyday Croatian life as you join a local family for a Home-Hosted Lunch, an **Exclusive Discovery Series** event.

Afternoon: After lunch, transfer by motorcoach to the city of Vukovar—Croatia's largest river port. You'll set off on a tour with your Program Director followed by time for independent exploration.

Dinner: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish. Perhaps you'll relax in the lounge with your fellow travelers or enjoy a drink at the bar.

Day 6 Explore Novi Sad, Serbia • *Serbia and the European Union* discussion

Destination: Novi Sad

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Accommodations: M/S *River Aria* or M/S *River Adagio*

Breakfast: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Morning: After breakfast this morning, a local expert will come aboard to discuss some of the setbacks that Serbia has faced on its journey to join the European Union.

Then, enjoy an included tour of Novi Sad, Serbia's cultural hub, and second-largest city. The beauty of the city is in its name—Novi Sad in English translates to "new garden." Nestled along a bend in the Danube River, Novi Sad is peppered with myriad historical and cultural monuments, verdant parks, bustling squares, a thriving pedestrian zone, and a history-rich fortress standing tall on the right bank of the river.

Lunch: Included at a local restaurant.

Afternoon: The remainder of the afternoon is at leisure to further discover Novi Sad on your own. Your Program Director will offer an optional Discovery Walk of the area if you choose to partake.

Dinner: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish. Perhaps you'll enjoy a nightcap at the bar or relax in the lounge.

Day 7 Explore Belgrade

Destination: Belgrade

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Accommodations: M/S *River Aria* or M/S *River Adagio*

Activity Note: This morning's combined bus and walking tour will be approximately 3.5 hours long; our visit to the Tito Memorial includes an uphill walk and stairs. The Tito Memorial is closed on Mondays.

Breakfast: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Morning: Cruise into Belgrade, the capital of Serbia (and former capital of Yugoslavia), one of Europe's oldest cities, and the center of political and cultural life in the country. Belgrade and the rest of Serbia are just now emerging from many years of repressive rule, with a welcoming spirit for visitors.

Enjoy a full morning in Belgrade, beginning with an included tour around this grand old city, which was built centuries ago along important east-west trade routes and used as a gateway to Western Europe from the Balkans. You'll explore the Tito Memorial, erected to honor Josip Broz Tito, who held Yugoslavia together as an independent country in the turmoil that followed World War II and the subsequent Cold War. Then, stroll through Old Belgrade's pedestrian area. After your tour, enjoy lunch onboard.

Lunch: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Afternoon: Explore the city on your own—you'll have a shuttle bus to and from the city available for your use. Your Program Director will have suggestions for various local sights and activities for learning and discovery.

Dinner: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Evening: Enjoy a traditional folk dance performance by a local eastern European group.

Day 8 Iron Gates • *Life Under Communism* discussion

Destination: Iron Gates

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Accommodations: M/S *River Aria* or M/S *River Adagio*

Breakfast: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Morning: Today you'll cruise along one of the Danube's most scenic stretches—where once the river pounded and raged through deep gorges. This stretch of the Danube boasts the massive rock sculpture of the face of Decebalus, the last king of Dacia, as well as tranquil rocky riverbeds and

a scattering of small villages. Before lunch, join us for an **Exclusive Discovery Series** discussion about *Life Under Communism* with your Program Director.

Lunch: Linger over lunch in the ship's dining room as you navigate the Danube.

Afternoon: In mid-afternoon, join the chef in the galley (the ship's kitchen) for a special tour. Later you'll pass through Iron Gate I. In the 1960s, Yugoslavia and Romania cooperated on a joint venture that raised the level of the Danube with a series of hydroelectric dams called the Iron Gates. The Danube is now placid between the Iron Gates, the craggy two-mile-long gorge now underwater.

Dinner: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Evening: Relax onboard the ship this evening as you continue sailing through Iron Gate II.

Day 9 Explore Vidin, Bulgaria

Destination: Vidin

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Accommodations: M/S *River Aria* or M/S *River Adagio*

Activity Note: If you choose to visit Baba Vida during your free time, some walkways have rough and uneven surfaces, cobblestones, stairs with no handrails, and dark passageways.

Breakfast: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Morning: Early this morning, your ship passes through customs at Vidin, Bulgaria's main port on the Danube yet one of the least-developed of the post-Communist cities with a small population, where you'll embark on an included walking tour this morning. As you make your way through the city, you'll see the intersection of religions with views of an orthodox Catholic church, a synagogue, and a mosque over the course of your walk. Then you'll have some free time to explore; perhaps you'll visit Baba Vida, a medieval fortress of two walls and four towers that served as the city's main defense in the Middle Ages, as well as the most important fortress of northwestern Bulgaria.

Lunch: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Afternoon: After lunch, we'll walk from the ship to the Vidin Symphonic Orchestra, a **Grand Circle Foundation** supported site. We'll first learn how the orchestra is a leading cultural institution in Vidin and was officially registered as a state organization in 1949. Afterwards, we'll be treated to a concert.

Dinner: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish. Perhaps you'll enjoy a nightcap at the bar or relax in the lounge.

Day 10 Ruse • Optional Veliko Tarnovo & Arbanassi tour

Destination: Ruse

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Accommodations: M/S *River Aria* or M/S *River Adagio*

Breakfast: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Morning/Afternoon: Early this morning, arrive in Ruse, which is situated where the Danube forms a natural border between Romania and Bulgaria.

You may spend your day at leisure exploring Ruse independently, or you could join us for an optional excursion to discover two key Bulgarian historic sites: Veliko Tarnovo, the capital of Bulgaria from 1186 until 1394, and Arbanassi, a historical village of Bulgarian heritage. You'll enjoy time on your own in both locations to make your own discoveries.

Lunch: Onboard in the ship's dining room. Or, for those who choose the optional tour, enjoy an included traditional lunch in a local restaurant in Arbanassi.

Dinner: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish. Perhaps you'll enjoy a nightcap at the bar or relax in the lounge.

Day 11 Danube-Black Sea Canal transit • Explore Constanta, Romania • Captain's Farewell Dinner

Destination: Constanta

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Accommodations: M/S *River Aria* or M/S *River Adagio*

Breakfast: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Morning: Early this morning, your Danube and Black Sea River Cruise begins sailing into the Danube-Black Sea Canal, a 40-mile engineering marvel begun in 1949, but not fully completed

until 1987. You'll pass through the canal's lock system and cruise by the inland port towns of Murfatlar and Medgidia.

Lunch: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Afternoon: Following lunch, enjoy a guided tour of Constanta, a Romanian Black Sea port that is the country's oldest continually inhabited city. Dating back more than 2,500 years, Constanta boasts a wealth of fascinating architecture and history, as well as areas that still bear the marks of its former Communist occupation. Myth holds that Jason and the Argonauts stopped here after recovering the legendary Golden Fleece. Explore the beguiling city center, the Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul, and other highlights of this beloved city.

Dinner: Tonight, celebrate your Danube River and Black Sea cruise at the Captain's Farewell Dinner.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish. Perhaps you'll enjoy one last nightcap at the bar.

Day 12 Constanta • Disembark ship • Explore Bucharest

Destination: Bucharest

Meals included: Breakfast and Lunch

Accommodations: Sheraton Bucharest or similar

Activity Note: Today is a long transfer day. We will break up our ride with lunch along the way, followed by a motorcoach tour of Bucharest before checking into your hotel.

Breakfast: Onboard in the ship's dining room.

Morning: After breakfast, disembark your ship and begin your transfer by motorcoach to Bucharest, Romania.

Lunch: Upon arrival, enjoy lunch at a local restaurant.

Afternoon: Explore Bucharest by motorcoach. This is an old city that has served as the capital of Wallachia, and later Romania, since 1659. Today, it is noted for its broad, tree-lined boulevards, well-kept parks, and mix of architectural styles that combine Neoclassical 19th-century structures with monumental 20th-century edifices (the latter built for the most part to satisfy the late dictator Nicolae Ceausescu). You'll drive along Victory Avenue to Revolution Square, where recent events in history are inscribed. Upon arrival at the square, you'll get a unique glimpse into the 1989 revolution when a local boards the bus to relay their personal experience of the events that ended Communist rule in Romania.

Later, you have some time in the late afternoon to relax.

Dinner: On your own—ask your Program Director for local restaurant recommendations.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish—ask your Program Director for recommendations.

Day 13 Bucharest • Optional Palace of the Parliament tour

Destination: Bucharest

Meals included: Breakfast and Dinner

Accommodations: Sheraton Bucharest or similar

Activity Note: If you have chosen the optional post-trip extension to *Transylvania, Romania*, you'll break off from the main group in Bucharest after lunch and continue by motorcoach to the Transylvanian mountain resort of Sinaia—about a 3.5-hour trip. Then, after your three-night extension in Brasov, you will enjoy the last day of your main itinerary in Bucharest.

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning/Afternoon: Enjoy an additional day in Bucharest to make your own discoveries.

Or, join us for an optional tour of Romania's Palace of the Parliament, the seat of Romania's national government. You'll start by walking to Revolution Square, where you'll meet your motorcoach driver for a taste of traditional Romanian chocolate, and a brief discussion about the history of this imposing building.

The Palace of the Parliament is the second largest administrative building in the world—and at a weight of around nine billion pounds, the world's heaviest building. Dive into the controversial history of how the massive palace came to be under the Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceausescu. After an earthquake devastated the city in 1977, Ceausescu took advantage of the land and recruited 700 architects and around 1.5 million factory workers to complete the project.

Ceausescu passed away before the massive undertaking was finally finished in 1994, but you'll have the opportunity to see the completed building when you drive to the palace for a guided tour of its storied halls. You'll stroll past lavishly decorated hallways, offices, galleries, and conference rooms—originally meant for Communist Party officials, now used by the elected government—and get a sweeping view of Bucharest's main square from the grand balcony. You'll drive back to the hotel after your tour.

Lunch: On your own—ask your Program Director for local restaurant recommendations.

Dinner: This evening, gather with your fellow travelers for a Farewell Drink, followed by dinner at the hotel.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish—ask your Program Director for recommendations.

Day 14 Bucharest • Return to U.S.

Meals included: Breakfast

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: After breakfast, transfer to the airport for your flight home.

✅ What's Included

- 11-night river cruise on a comfortable 4-deck ship
- 1 hotel night in Bucharest or Budapest (depending on direction)
- Daily guided cultural excursions
- All onboard meals with regional wines and beer
- Complimentary wireless headset on tours
- Flight assistance and transfers with Grand Circle Travel
- Luggage handling and gratuities for ship staff

ℹ️ Additional Notes

- **Activity Level**: Moderate – must walk 2–3 miles/day over uneven surfaces
- **Group Size**: Small group model (~38 per tour group) onboard larger river vessel

- **Port order and times may vary slightly** depending on sailing direction and river conditions

- **Optional Pre- and Post-Trip Extensions** available in **Transylvania, Vienna, or Prague**



Online Reservations: www.TravelwithScottandCurtis.com
Phone Reservations: (269) 209-5889