



The 20-Ghost Club Limited

THE GLORIES OF THE AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN EMPIRE

Friday 10th June to Sunday 26th June 2022: 16 nights

**Patron of the Tour: His Imperial and Royal Highness Karl von Habsburg-Lothringen,
Archduke of Austria, Royal Prince of Hungary**

The tour of 16 nights (through Bavaria in southern Germany, Austria, Moravia in southern Slovakia and Hungary) will bring to life the last century of the Habsburg Monarchy with all its pomp and glory but also with all the ups and downs of Imperial family life. We will tour through wonderful countryside and visit the capitals of three countries: Vienna, Bratislava and Budapest. It will be based around the lives of the Imperial couple, Emperor Franz Joseph I and his wife Empress Elizabeth (known as Sisi). Franz Joseph was both the Emperor of Austria and the King of Hungary.



Emperor Franz Joseph



Empress Elizabeth (Sisi)



Possenhofen Castle, where Sisi grew up

The tour will begin just south of Munich, near Possenhofen, the childhood home of Sisi, on Lake Starnberg in Bavaria. From our first hotel, Kaiserin Elisabeth, where Sisi was a regular guest, we will drive to Schloss Neuschwanstein, the 19th century Palace commissioned by Ludwig II of Bavaria, also known as the “Mad King”. He was Sisi’s cousin and also her confidant. The drama of Ludwig’s mysterious death on 13th June 1886 - he drowned in Lake Starnberg - while Sisi was vacationing in “our” Hotel on the opposite bank.



Neuschwanstein Castle



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Our short visit to the former “Kingdom of Bavaria” will be followed by a scenic drive into the Tyrolian Alps, via the Achen Pass, where we reach the former Habsburg territories. At Tratzberg Castle, once a hunting lodge of the Great Emperor Maximilian (1495-1519) we will be welcomed with an “Introduction to The Habsburg Dynasty”. From there it is a short drive to our overnight stop at the skiing resort of Kitzbühel. There you will get a taste of what Austria is famous for nowadays. From “Kitz” we will travel to the Salzkammergut where, besides the beautiful scenery and typical architecture, we will have afternoon coffee and cake at the Kaiservilla, Franz Joseph’s summer retreat in Bad Ischl, where he and Sisi became engaged in 1853. The current owner, Markus von Habsburg-Lothringen will be there to greet us and “The Matured Empress” will return and perform for you in her “refugium”.



Lake Achensee



Kaiservilla, Bad Ischl

In the Salzkammergut participants will enjoy touring around the lakes such as Hallstättersee, Alt-Ausseerese, Grundlsee or Töplitzsee and hill climbing in the Sölker Tauern National Park with a visit to Stift Admont, the Benedictine Monastery and the world’s largest abbey library – or just relax in Schloss Pichlarn, a former retreat of the Admont Abbots, now a well-regarded castle hotel.

The approach to Vienna is via the Gesäuse and the Lower Alps with a stop at Mariazell, the major pilgrimage site of the Habsburgs. Shortly before Vienna you will get an insight into Imperial and human tragedy at the former Hunting Lodge of Mayerling, where Kronprinz Rudolf and his lover Baroness Mary Vetsera tragically committed suicide in 1889.

Your stay in Vienna will be an “experience” of the “best”. You will stay at the historic Palais Hansen Kempinski Hotel directly on Vienna’s famous “The Ring”, Franz Joseph’s greatest architectural achievement. You will dine in historic Ring Buildings, now housing restaurants. Above all, you will attend a special “Audience” in the Imperial Apartments at Hofburg. On the free Saturday evening the music aficionados might wish to go to The Opera and listen to Monteverdi’s “L’Orfeo” while the gourmets might explore Vienna’s restaurants. During these days you will enjoy strolling in the city with all the world famous sights easy to each by foot. If you wish, you can relive a variety of Imperial experiences by visiting Augustiner



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Kirche, where Sisi and Franz Joseph were married in 1854 and Kapuzinergruft, where they are buried along with 12 Emperors and many members of the dynasty. On Sunday you will take your cars for a “Tale of the Vienna Woods Tour” with superb views of Vienna and the Danube, a stop at a “Heurigen” in its vineyard and/or at the Monastery of Klosterneuburg.



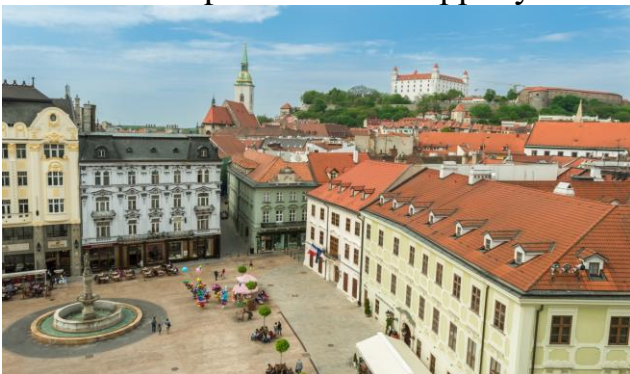
Schönbrunn Palace, Vienna



Mayerling

Our last night in Vienna will be another Imperial highlight, including a private guided evening tour of Schönbrunn Castle and a black tie dinner in the castle’s Weissgold Rooms.

From Vienna a short drive will take us eastwards along the Danube with a chance to visit the three castles of the Marchfeld: Schloss Eckartsau, where the last Habsburg Emperor Karl took refuge after signing his abdication in 1918, thus ending 650 years of Habsburg rule, Schloss Niederweiden and the grandest of all: Schloss Hof, where Prince Eugen (1663-1736) once celebrated Habsburg’s victories over the Turks, thus ending the threat of Islam to European Christianity. From there the border to Slovakia and its picturesque capital Bratislava are within sight. We will spend one night in Bratislava, also the one-time capital of Hungary and a Habsburg Coronation site. Thence we will travel north into the southern Moravian Hills, a wine growing area where there are some delightful villages. Two nights at the restored Chateau Appony will give us a feeling of former aristocratic country life. We will also have a special tour of Appony’s amazing library.



Bratislava



The Moravian countryside

After this, we will journey south to Esztergom, capital of Hungary (before the rule of the Habsburgs) in the 10th to 13th centuries and the site, on the Danube Bend, of the massive Esztergom Basilica and a stunning museum of Christian paintings.



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It is then a short journey via Visegrad and the picturesque town of Szentendre to Budapest, for the final three nights. There we will get a taste of Royal coronations, Hungarian history and temperament, Gypsy music and fine dining. You can eat well in Budapest.



Esztergom



Budapest



Coronation in the capital, Buda, 8th June 1867



Gypsy music in Budapest

On the final evening (Saturday 25th June) there will be a private tour and black tie gala dinner at the Royal Palace of Gödöllő, 20 miles from Budapest. This will round off the story of Sisi's life. It will add a final romantic touch to the tour. Gödöllő was Hungary's "Coronation Gift" to her (and Emperor Franz Joseph) in 1867 - a thank you present, for Sisi's advocacy and supportive political influence. Sisi was a great lover of Hungary and freedom. Gödöllő was also the birthplace of her youngest daughter, Marie Valerie.



The Royal Palace of Gödöllő, formerly Grassalkovich Castle



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Distance: approximately 1,050 miles

June

Fri	10	Arrival and unloading of cars	Kaiserin Elisabeth, Feldafing, Starnberg
Sat	11	Tour of Ammergau & Neuschwanstein (120 miles)	Kaiserin Elisabeth, Feldafing, Starnberg
Sun	12	Across the Achenpass–Tratzberg Castle-Kitzbühel (120 miles)	Hotel Kitzhof, Kitzbühel
Mon	13	Across Loferer & Leoganger Berge to Irnding (120 miles)	Schlosshotel Pichlarn, Aigen im Ennstal
Tue	14	Tour of Ausseerland, Kaiservilla & Ischl (80 miles) Kaiservilla Tour, Coffee & “Matured Empress” Performance	Schlosshotel Pichlarn, Aigen im Ennstal
Wed	15	Tour of Sölker Tauern National Park (75 miles)	Schlosshotel Pichlarn, Aigen im Ennstal
Thurs	16	Via Gesäuse & Voralpen to Vienna (160 miles) Dinner at “DasMezzanin”	Palais Hansen Kempinski
Fri	17	Day in Vienna – Evening “Audience” at Imperial Apartments Hofburg followed by Dinner at Plachutta’s “Gasthaus bei der Oper”	Palais Hansen Kempinski
Sat	18	Day in Vienna “ Free evening ” (Restaurant/State Opera recommendations)	Palais Hansen Kempinski
Sun	19	Tales of the Vienna Woods Tour (50 miles) Gala Evening at Schönbrunn Castle – guided tour followed by black tie dinner (coach transfers)	Palais Hansen Kempinski
Mon	20	The Marchfeld Castle Tour to Bratislava (50 miles) “ Free evening ”	Grand River Park Hotel/Bratislava
Tues	21	Bratislava through the Moravian countryside (70 miles)	Chateau Appony, Oponice, Slovakia
Wed	22	Tour of Moravia (80 miles)	Chateau Appony, Oponice, Slovakia
Thurs	23	From Moravia via Esztergom to Budapest (120 miles) very short coach journey in the evening to a restaurant in the Buda Hills	Kempinski Hotel Corvinus, Pest, Budapest
Fri	24	Day in Budapest “ Free evening ” – suggested restaurants to be advised	Kempinski Hotel Corvinus, Pest, Budapest
Sat	25	Day in Budapest coach journey in the evening for tour of, and gala dinner at the Royal Palace of Gödöllő (black tie)	Kempinski Hotel Corvinus, Pest, Budapest
Sun	26	Departure & loading of cars in the morning	

The Tour has been organised by Angelika Elliott and Sir John Stuttard