Daily buffet breakfast is included with hotel stay.

Note: The itineraries presented are subject to modification due to closures because of public holidays or other uncontrollable factors. Every effort will be made to operate programs as planned, but changes may still be necessary throughout the itinerary.

Note: All extras, such as bottled water, drinks, telephone calls, laundry and items of a personal nature, are not included in the cost of the trip.
Celebrate the “Queen of the Danube” in all her grandeur

Bisected by the Danube, Budapest combines old and new, East and West with vibrant and inviting grace. Made up of two parts—Buda, on the east side of the river, and Pest, on the west—the city offers dazzling architecture, welcoming cafés and startling reminders of both recent and long-ago history.

**DAY 1** Budapest

**Featured Excursion:**
Walking discovery tour of national treasures

Hungary’s Parliament building is indeed a national treasure: The enormous neo-Gothic building soaring above the banks of the Danube is an extraordinary sight from the water—and an awe-inspiring one when you stand at its triple-arched entrance. Step inside it and see the great sweeping staircase, the main halls and the Hungarian crown jewels (which were stored in the United States’ Fort Knox for much of the Cold War). After touring it with a knowledgeable guide, hop on a tram and ride along the Danube promenade to the Central Market Hall. Inside and out, the city’s best-known market is a gem: Under the colorful Zsolnay-tile roof you’ll find three floors of Hungarian specialties—sausage, paprika, Unicum (an herbal liqueur), locally grown produce and Tokaj wine, as well as folk art. The neighborhood around the Central Market includes Váci Street, perhaps the city’s most famous pedestrian promenade. It parallels the Danube and is lined with sidewalk cafés and intriguing shops, with alluring little squares branching off it. Ramble with your guide down Váci and through Fashion Street and Elizabeth Square, perhaps pausing to listen to street musicians perform.

You have the rest of the day and evening to check out some of the highlights of the city on your own. Perhaps you’d like to take the funicular from the foot of Chain Bridge up to the top of Castle Hill and visit the castle that gives the district its name (long ago it was a royal residence, but these days it houses a museum) or stroll through the newly restored gardens at the foot of the hill. You’ll find a surprising collection of modern art at the Ludwig Museum.

*Note:* The Parliament building may be closed for official business without prior notice. If Parliament is closed, we will visit St. Stephen’s Basilica instead.

**DAY 2** Budapest

After breakfast at the hotel, you’ll have the day to explore the city. Budapest is a mecca for lovers of art nouveau architecture: Check out the Franz Liszt Academy of Music for a particularly noteworthy example of the style. For a reminder of the centuries when Hungary was ruled by the Ottoman Turks, take a look at the 16th-century tomb of Gül Baba (and enjoy a Turkish coffee at the adjoining coffeehouse). If you’d like to try something a little different, visit one of Budapest’s legendary mineral hot springs spas. The Gellért Baths are in a gorgeous art nouveau building that is well worth seeing in and of itself, but while you’re there, why not relax in the mineral-rich water. If you’re interested in the darker side of history, take a tour of the House of Terror, which reveals the grim 20th-century history of the city. The building first housed Nazis and then the Communist secret police; hundreds were tortured and executed here, and exhibits name both victims and perpetrators. If you’d prefer an active day, rent a bicycle and peddle around Margaret Island, or join a group exploring some of the fascinating caves under the city. Once darkness falls, have a drink at one of the “ruin” bars in the old Jewish quarter; these eclectic, funky establishments might perfectly embody Budapest’s gift for reconciling hard times with optimism and *joie de vivre*.

**DAY 3** Budapest

It’s time to check out of the hotel and head to the airport for your trip home. We hope you will enjoy the memories you’ve made for years to come.