

East Germany, the glorious Czech Republic *and* the Oberammergau Passion Play Experience



Relax on a peaceful boat ride down the River Vltava in Cesky Krumlov

21 Astonishing Days Berlin to Munich

See Berlin's Checkpoint Charlie, Potsdam's Palaces and 'Bridge of Spies', Prague's medieval Hradčany Castle and WWII Colditz. Stand on the Bastei Bridge and giant Königstein's ramparts. Relax in the magnificent Saxon Switzerland National Park and Spreewald's forest canals. Explore Cesky Krumlov, beautiful, baroque Salzburg, Innsbruck and the Austrian Tyrol. Visit Ludwig's Bavarian fairytale castle, the glorious 'Church in the Meadows' and experience the extraordinary Oberammergau Passion Play!

AVERAGE 93 KMS PER DAY

- Tour commences
- Overnight stays
- Included excursions

BERLIN

Days 1, 2 & 3

- Stay 3 nights in vibrant Berlin
- See the famous Brandenburg Gate, Unter den Linden and rebuilt Reichstag, Checkpoint Charlie and sections of 'The Wall'
- Savour a full free day exploring the museums
- Dine in a local restaurant - Berlin style!

DRESDEN

Days 6, 7 & 8

- Stay 3 nights in the very heart of wonderful Dresden
- Visit majestic Saxon Switzerland, walk over the Bastei Bridge and explore the ramparts of Königstein
- Wander through Pillnitz Palace gardens and cruise along the River Elbe
- Enjoy a walking tour of Dresden and visit the Royal Palace museums including the treasures of the New Green Vault
- Spend a day exploring the 'Bohemian Switzerland' National Park
- Dine in a local restaurant

PRAGUE

Days 9, 10 & 11

- Stay 3 nights in the heart of glorious medieval Prague
- Be guided through the infamous 'escape castle' of WWII - Colditz
- Enjoy authentic Czech cuisine in a hidden courtyard restaurant
- Explore the massive Hradcany - Prague Castle, St Vitus Cathedral the colourful houses of Zlatá Ulička
- Visit the historic silver city of Kutná Hora, the Sedlec Ossuary, Cathedral of Saint Barbara, and a torch lit guided tour through the 500 year old silver mine

BAVARIA

Days 17 & 18

- Drive over the stunning Fern Pass to stay 2 nights in the ancient medieval town of Füssen
- Explore the cobblestoned city of Innsbruck and see the famous Golden Roof
- Visit Hohenschwangau to explore Ludwig's 'fairytale' Neuschwanstein Castle
- Take the Tegelberg cable car high into the Bavarian Alps

OBERRAMMERGAU

Days 19 & 20

- Visit the most beautiful church in Europe, Wieskirche - the 'Church in the Meadows'
- Relax in the mountain resort town of Garmisch and visit the Abbey of Kloster Ettal
- Enjoy your 'grand finale' - stay 2 nights in selected 4 star hotel accommodation and enjoy Category 1 'best in house' seating for the marvellous Oberammergau Passion Play

SPREEWALD

Days 4 & 5

- Stay 2 nights in Lübbenau in the heart of Spreewald
- Spend a full day in Potsdam, stand on the infamous Bridge of Spies, visit historic Cecilienhof Palace, Sanssouci Gardens, and the incredible Neues Palais
- Glide through the waterways of the 'Spree Forest' - a unique UNESCO listed biosphere

CESKY KRUMLOV

Days 12 & 13

- Stay 2 nights in the heart of wonderful Cesky Krumlov
- Relax in an undiscovered gem, the 14th century renaissance town of Třeboň
- Enjoy a peaceful raft ride down the River Vltava and a guided tour of the Castle's Renaissance and Baroque state rooms

SALZBURG

Days 14, 15 & 16

- Stay 3 nights in the baroque city of Mozart - Salzburg and enjoy a walking tour
- Spend a day exploring the magnificent Lakes District visiting the beautiful lakeside villages of Hallstatt and St Wolfgang
- Savour a memorable dinner at the St Peter Stiftskeller, the oldest known restaurant in central Europe!





Where 'old' is often newer than the 'new'

Berlin and Dresden were decimated in WWII. Now, risen from the ashes, they are two of the most exciting and rewarding cities in Europe. Here in the old 'East', they have vigorously rebuilt many of the old cathedrals and churches, grand buildings and stately palaces. Simply stunning, the glory days are back but with a conundrum. The newer, modern looking buildings (post war) are now often much older than the majestic old cathedrals and palaces, which are of course the new ones! Bursting with classic sights and major museums, these cities have so much to offer. One of my most cherished memories was enjoying a 'nourishing', cool beer in a Dresden café, with the late afternoon sun shining down on the glorious Frauenkirche. And in front of me was a busker, playing classical pieces on a white, grand piano. For that sort of experience you need time, and that is why we insist on staying 3 nights in Berlin, Dresden, Prague and Salzburg. I also planned special 2 night stops in amongst the idyllic waterways of Spreewald, historic Cesky Krumlov and ancient Füssen. Breaking up the journey like this allows us so much more time to relax and savour each destination plus enjoy boat rides, scenic walks and full days exploring places like Potsdam's Palaces, glorious Saxon Switzerland, Kutná Hora and Třeboň. Now complete the picture with time to explore baroque Salzburg, Innsbruck and Bavaria's 'fairytale' palaces and churches in the meadows. Packed with huge highlights, adventures, and bags of quality leisure time - you will not find another itinerary remotely like this one!

“Albatross truly stands out as exceptional in value, the choice of hotels, the informed local guides & the many extras that your company includes.” Jenny



Enjoy 3 nights in vibrant Berlin

DAY 1

Berlin welcome

Your tour commences this evening in vibrant Berlin – a city now united and rebuilt in even greater glory. Join us tonight for a welcome drink before dinner in your hotel. This is an ideal chance to meet, and get to know, your Tour Manager and fellow travellers. **Meals: D**

Your Berlin hotel – Maritim proArte or similar

This 4 star superior hotel is in a superb location near the city centre, one block from Unter den Linden Strasse, a 10 minute walk to the Brandenburg Gate and shopping areas.



DAY 2

Berlin sightseeing

This morning we are joined by an expert local guide on our panoramic tour taking in all the major sights from the famous Brandenburg Gate, Unter den Linden and rebuilt Reichstag to the Victory Column in the Tiergarten, Potsdamer Platz, Checkpoint Charlie and remaining sections of “The Wall”. Your afternoon and evening is entirely at leisure. The shopping is amazing and the city brims with world class sights and museums. This evening discover your own local restaurant for dinner. Maybe dine ‘al fresco’ in Gendarmenmarkt square, dramatically flanked by two beautiful cathedrals and the Berlin Concert Hall. **Meals: B**

DAY 3

Berlin ‘My Time’

Your day is at leisure in Berlin. There is so much to see and do and your Tour Manager is of course on hand to help and advise you. Perhaps visit one of the five world class museums on UNESCO Heritage listed Museumsinsel (Museum Island) or the riveting Checkpoint Charlie museum and moving Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe. Tonight we take you to a local restaurant for dinner – Berlin style! **Meals: B,D**

DAY 4

Potsdam Palaces and Gardens

A full day amongst the UNESCO Heritage listed glorious palaces and gardens of Potsdam! On our way to Potsdam we enjoy a photo stop on the famous Bridge of Unity – more famously known as the ‘Bridge of Spies’. Arriving in Potsdam we enjoy a guided visit to Cecilienhof Palace, the last palace built by the German Kaiser, and the site of the 1945 Potsdam Convention where Churchill, Truman and Stalin famously met. Inside is a fascinating museum! The furniture, private reception rooms and huge conference table remain exactly as they were when these great leaders met to carve up a ravaged, post war Europe. After lunchtime in Potsdam’s pretty Dutch Quarter, accompanied by our expert local guide, we stop to admire the elegant terraces in the gardens of Frederick the Great’s Sanssouci Summer Palace. We visit the astounding Neues Palais with its newly restored palatial rooms, including the Gottensaal (Grotto Hall) and Marmorgalerie (Marble Gallery). Later we drive south to Lübbenau in Spreewald, where we stay the next two nights. **Meals: B,D**

Your Spreewald hotel – Hotel Schloss Lübbenau or similar

Perfectly situated a short walk from the edge of town, this wonderful 4 star hotel offers first class amenities and an award winning restaurant.



DAY 5

Spreewald punt ride and Lübbenau ‘My Time’

Spreewald, or ‘Spree Forest’, is an utterly entrancing UNESCO listed biosphere reserve. Boarding our punts we are ‘poled’ silently through a dreamy forest on a lacework of channels and canals, lined with wooden cottages, jetties and hamlets. In the heart, at the village of Lehde, we enjoy a lunchtime stop at a waterside restaurant and ‘biergarten’. Back in Lübbenau, your afternoon and evening is at leisure. Free time to relax or shop in this delightful inland harbour town. For the more active maybe take a walk or a bike ride along the forested pathways. And the local food speciality? Gherkins! **Meals: B**

DAY 6

Saxon Switzerland National Park sightseeing

We have an incredible day planned in Germany's 'Saxon Switzerland' National Park. First stop will be at the dramatic 75 metre long (easily accessible) stone Bastei Bridge which links the incredible rock formations, walkways and lookouts, 200 metres above the River Elbe. The panoramic views are stupendous! In the distance you will see the massive rock ramparts of Festung Königstein, which we visit next. Dating back to the 13th century, this is the largest fortress in Germany, and one of the very best castle visits in all Europe! The main entrance tunnel is so impressive, as is the 152 metre deep well, barracks and old wine cellars. The 1.5 kilometre long cliff top ramparts, often lined with restored cannon, are a thrill to walk along. Later, at Pirna, we stop to see the park and ornate gardens of Pillnitz Palace, before taking a cruise down the beautiful River Elbe. Journeying past palaces and mansions, and the UNESCO listed river farmlands, we arrive into Dresden at Brühl's Terrace, nicknamed 'the balcony of Europe'. We stay here three nights. **Meals: B,D**



Your Dresden hotel –

The Westin Bellevue or similar

Overlooking the Elbe River, this excellent period style first hotel is in a fantastic location just a short walk across the bridge from Dresden's Baroque old town.

DAY 7

Dresden sightseeing

Rebuilt after the massive bombing raids of WWII, Dresden has once again bloomed into one of the most beautiful and elegant cities in Europe, reflecting the grandeur of this capital of the Electors of Saxony, who once ruled a powerful empire. On our morning walking tour you will see the glorious Zwinger Palace, the Semper Opera House and the symbolic Frauenkirche dominating the massive, ancient market square. Following the Fürstenzug – a dramatic, 100 metre long painted porcelain mural depicting the procession of Princes - we visit the Dresden Royal Palace. We have included entrance to the museums including the Armoury, Turkish Chamber, Riesensaal (Giants' Hall) and the fabulous New Green Vault with over 1,000 beautiful gold and silver bejewelled objects. Simply stunning! The rest of your day is at leisure to explore this delightful city. **Meals: B**

DAY 8

Bohemian Switzerland or Dresden 'My Time'

A wonderful choice today! Stay and explore Dresden independently – shopping or simply relaxing in the old squares and cafés. Alternatively, we have included a special activity just over the Czech border, amongst the wild sandstone mountains, gorges and rugged peaks of the 'Bohemian Switzerland' National Park. Here you have a range of stupendous walks and activities to choose from, as easy going or energetic as you wish. Maybe a short easy, flat walk along the bottom section of the picturesque Kamenice River gorge, before time at leisure browsing amongst the street side souvenir shops of Hrensko. For the more active there are two stunning walks from nearby Mazni Louka. The first, again easy and flat, is all the way down the Kamenice gorge, where the verdant forest clings to often vertical walls between 50 and 150 metres high above the river. Sometimes the gorge is so narrow you will walk beneath rock ledges and tunnels. Two sections, the Edmund Gorge and Wild Gorge, are so narrow they are only passable using delightful ferry rides on punts. The second, more vigorous walk, is up through the woods to the massive 'Pravcicka Brana' natural arch. The views from the café underneath it are simply magnificent. This evening, back in Dresden, we have included dinner in a local restaurant. **Meals: B,D**

DAY 9

Colditz Castle and Prague

Travelling west we reach one of the most infamous castles of WWII – Colditz. Subject of numerous books and films, this enormous castle became the prison for all the greatest POW escapees of the war. Ironically the Nazis therefore created an incredible escape training school! The museum is full of the most amazing array of escape tools and memorabilia. Our local guide will also show us some of the most impossible tunnels and escape routes. Utterly fascinating! Later we arrive into Prague where we stay three nights in the very heart of the old city. Dinner this evening will be authentic Czech cuisine in the U Pinkasu restaurant – enjoyed in a hidden courtyard beside a church. **Meals: B,D**

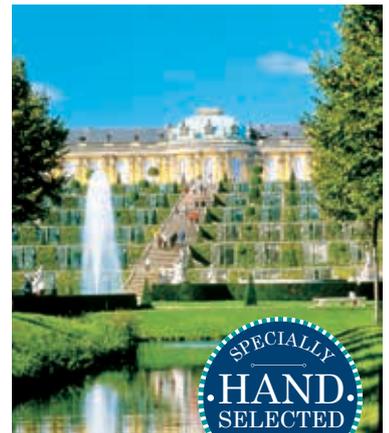


Your Prague hotel –

Hotel Adria

This modern 4 star hotel is perfectly located on Wenceslas Square in the heart of Prague's cultural, historic and commercial centre.

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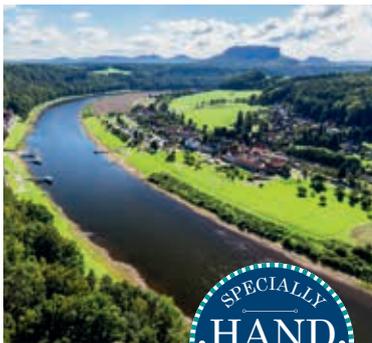


Step back in time in Potsdam

Often called the 'Prussian Versailles', Frederick the Great's iconic Sanssouci Palace is certainly magnificent. But there is so much more to Potsdam! Between 1730 and 1916, 500 acres of parks, lakes and gardens were lavishly developed along with 150 palaces and ornate buildings. There is even a giant windmill! UNESCO designated the entire area as World Heritage listed, and that is why we spend a whole day exploring it! Sanssouci Palace was Frederick's smaller and more intimate home, and naturally we visit his spectacular terraced gardens. We also visit inside the enormous 'New Palace', which was sumptuously built to impress the world! Incredibly, it is 16 times bigger than Sanssouci! We enjoy lunchtime in Potsdam's rejuvenated Dutch Quarter; we send you back in time as you stand on the infamous Bridge of Spies, and in the Kaiser's Cecilienhof Palace, beside the table where a Dictator, a President and a Prime Minister changed the world forever! What a day! **See Day 4.**



See breathtaking views from the Bastei Bridge



4 Additions to your bucket list

Many people do not realise that Germany and the Czech Republic boast some truly extraordinary scenery, much of it so easily accessible. Take Spreewald, for instance. By staying 2 nights here, right in the delightful inland harbour town of Lübbenau, we can enjoy an incredible day exploring the amazing labyrinth of pretty waterways. So beautiful, so rewarding, and the hardest thing you have to do is just sit and relax on a punt! Then, there are the two stunning National Parks of Saxon and Bohemian Switzerland. The Bastei Bridge and Königstein Castle are simply dramatic. And, for those that want a true adventure we take you deep into the Bohemian National Park, unless of course that day you choose to stay and relax and shop in glorious Dresden. The Bastei, Königstein, Saxon Switzerland, Bohemian Switzerland? Never heard of them? 'Google' images of them and you will be simply amazed how quickly they rise up your 'bucket list'. See Days 5, 6 and 8.



The amazing Passion Play
Oberammergau Passion Play 2020



Enjoy time to explore the beautiful city of Prague

DAY 10 Prague sightseeing

This morning we are joined by our expert local guide for a tour through this fascinating city to the Hradcany – Prague Castle. Covering 7 hectares it is the largest ancient castle in the world. We also visit St Vitus Cathedral and the colourful houses of Zlatá Ulička, or Golden Lane, named after the goldsmiths who lived here in the 17th century. The afternoon and evening are at leisure to explore the laneways, churches and bridges of this beautiful, UNESCO Heritage listed city. **Meals: B**

DAY 11 Prague 'My Time' or Kutná Hora sightseeing

Perhaps enjoy a day at leisure exploring Prague, or alternatively join us on a full day included excursion to the nearby UNESCO World Heritage listed city of Kutná Hora. Fortune-hunters flocked to Kutná Hora in the 13th century to dig out the silver-rich ore discovered here. Once bigger than medieval London, the city minted coins used all across Europe, and its wealth underpinned the power of the Bohemian kings. Here we will visit the Sedlec Ossuary (Church of Bones), with macabre décor of bone art, and the wonderful Cathedral of Saint Barbara, a masterpiece of late Gothic fantasy. You will also have free time to relax and explore the lovely old town. For those at ease within narrow, dark spaces we have also included an incredible torch lit guided tour through the 500 year old silver mine labyrinth, deep under the city. **Meals: B**

DAY 12 Třeboň and Cesky Krumlov

Driving south we spend lunchtime in the spa town of Třeboň, an undiscovered gem that sits in the heart of this UNESCO listed biosphere. Since the 14th century, man has transformed the surrounding land into an idyllic countryside filled with over 6,000 lakes and islands and it is famous for its ... fishponds! The town centre, Schloss and Masaryk Square are a delightful mixture of colourful renaissance buildings and 'al fresco' cafés serving fish, and there are so few tourists! Later we continue to the perfectly preserved 13th century city of Cesky Krumlov. Originally built as a hamlet around the impressive castle, the wealth from the silver and gold mining, plus Catholic aristocrats seeking refuge during the Reformation, made Cesky Krumlov the most important city in southern Bohemia. We stay the next two nights in the very heart of this extraordinary, UNESCO World Heritage listed time capsule. On arrival we board large wooden rafts to enjoy a leisurely float slowly down the placid River Vltava. From your seats you will get the very best views up onto the castle walls and into the old town. What better way to introduce you to the city? **Meals: B,D**

Your Cesky Krumlov hotel – Hotel Ruze or similar

This 16th century monastery has been extensively reconstructed to preserve the beautiful Renaissance architecture and create a 70 room first class hotel, located in the centre of town, with wonderful views of the Vltava River from the hotel's terrace.



DAY 13 Cesky Krumlov tour and 'My Time'

This morning we have included the services of an expert local guide to bring to life the history and background of this extraordinary town. You will also enjoy a guided tour of the Castle's Renaissance and Baroque state rooms. Your afternoon and evening is at leisure in UNESCO Heritage listed Cesky Krumlov to relax and enjoy free time amongst the cobblestoned streets, cafés, restaurants, shops and ancient winding alleys. **Meals: B**

DAY 14 Salzburg and dinner in St Peter Stiftskeller

Heading into Austria we soon reach Salzburg – the baroque city of Mozart, where we spend the next 3 nights. On arrival a local guide will accompany us on a walking tour of this enchanting UNESCO Heritage listed city, from the Mirabelle Palace Gardens to the magnificent city squares, including several locations used in the film 'The Sound of Music'. This evening we have included a memorable dinner at the St Peter Stiftskeller. First mentioned as an Inn as far back as the year 803, this is the oldest known restaurant in central Europe! **Meals: B,D**

Your Salzburg hotel – Radisson Blu Hotel Altstadt or similar

This 4 star hotel could not be more central! Set in the cobblestoned streets barely 100 metres from Mozart Platz, it dates back to 1377, and features elegant rooms, wooden ceilings, intricate stucco and antique artwork.



DAY 15 A full day at leisure exploring baroque Salzburg

Your day is completely at leisure. 'My Time' exploring the myriad of narrow, cobblestoned streets, ornate squares and churches, fascinating shops and traditional coffee houses. The views from the enormous Festung (Fortress), sitting high above the city, are magnificent. Dinner tonight is included. **Meals: B, D**



See the most beautiful church in Europe – Wieskirche

DAY 16
The Austrian Lakes District, Hallstatt and St Wolfgang

Driving deep into the Lakes District we stop in the picturesque town of Hallstatt, considered the oldest inhabited village in Europe and perhaps the most beautiful in Austria. Later we follow the shores of Wolfgangsee (lake) to enjoy lunchtime in the flower bedecked town of St Wolfgang. The remainder of your afternoon and evening is at leisure in Salzburg – arguably one of the most interesting and beautiful cities in the world. **Meals: B**

DAY 17
Innsbruck in the Tyrol and over the Fern Pass into Bavaria

Following the dramatic Inn Valley through the rolling Tyrolean hills we visit the nearby winter resort city of Innsbruck. There will be time at leisure to explore the sights of the Altstadt (old town) such as the Hofburg Imperial Palace, cobblestoned streets and the renowned Golden Roof. Passing pretty Alpine villages we drive over the Fern Pass into the Bavarian Alps and the ancient historic town of Füssen, where we stay the next 2 nights. **Meals: B,D**



Your hotel in Bavaria – Hotel Hirsch in Füssen or similar
 Superbly located in the picturesque town of Füssen, Hotel Hirsch, built in the 'Art Nouveau' style, has been owned by the same family for four generations. The hotel combines elegantly modern comfort and Bavarian ambience.

DAY 18
Neuschwanstein Castle and Tegelberg

We start the day in Hohenschwangau. On one hill overlooking the little village you have the neo-gothic castle of Hohenschwangau and on the other side above the village is a wooded mountain spur and Neuschwanstein – the fairytale castle of 'mad' King Ludwig. We take a leisurely stroll up the wooded road to enjoy a guided tour through Neuschwanstein Castle's state rooms, king's apartments, halls and throne room; all reminiscent of a Wagner operatic saga. Later this afternoon we will take a cable car ride up to Tegelberg to take in the excellent views down onto the fairytale castles far below. Your evening is at leisure in Füssen. **Meals: B**

Please note: The guided tour through Neuschwanstein Castle incorporates climbing up and down a number of staircases and, as there are no elevators, the inside visit to the castle this morning may not be suitable for those with walking difficulties or limitations.

DAY 19
The Church in the Meadows, Garmisch and the Abbey of Kloster Ettal

Driving through Bavarian farmlands and forests we will stop at arguably the most beautiful church in Europe – Wieskirche (the 'Church in the Meadows'). Surrounded by green fields, the interior of this World Heritage Listed church is an astounding Rococo creation. Later we enjoy 'My Time' in Garmisch-Partenkirchen to relax in one of the traditional beer gardens or restaurants, or shop in the broad pedestrian mall. We will also visit the 14th century baroque Abbey of Kloster Ettal which houses a white marble Madonna. Later we continue to your 4 star hotel, where we stay the next 2 nights, in preparation for an incredible Oberammergau Passion Play experience. **Meals: B,D**

Your hotel in the Oberammergau area

As an appointed Tour Operator for the 2020 Oberammergau Passion Play, and handling such a large number of Oberammergau packages, we have been fortunate to be allocated stays in a variety of excellent, 4 star hotels in Oberammergau itself, as well as in the nearby towns of Murnau and Garmisch-Partenkirchen.



DAY 20
An incredible Oberammergau Passion Play Experience

An easy start to the day before we enjoy time exploring the colourful village of Oberammergau with its beautiful houses and buildings adorned with "Lüftlmalerei" – ornately painted murals depicting assorted religious scenes. Throughout the afternoon and evening we enjoy the huge spectacle that is the Passion Play from our Category 1 seats. The famous Passion Play has been performed every ten years since 1633, a time when the Thirty Year's War and Bubonic Plague were ravaging Europe causing so much suffering and death. With a backdrop of Kofel Peak and surrounded by the Ammergau Mountains, the massive open-air stage erupts with colour, music, song and up to 2,000 local inhabitants enacting the story of the Passion of Christ. **Meals: B,D**

DAY 21
To Munich

This morning we drive to nearby Munich where your tour ends on arrival. Drop off points will be in the city centre and Munich airport. We recommend you book flights or trains that depart Munich after 2pm. **Meals: B**

2020 Dates & Prices

Note: 2020 prices subject to final confirmation in August 2019. See page 9.

21 days from \$10,327

per person twin share

Single supplement \$2,187

Land only prices in AU dollars

Starts Berlin	Ends Munich	Per person twin share
14 May	3 Jun	\$10,667
28 May	17 Jun	\$10,667
11 Jun	1 Jul	\$10,327
2 Jul	22 Jul	\$10,327
16 Jul	5 Aug	\$10,327
30 Jul	19 Aug	\$10,327
13 Aug	2 Sep	\$10,327
27 Aug	16 Sep	\$10,327
10 Sep	30 Sep	\$10,667

Book early and SAVE!
 See page 9.

Over \$2,100 value of extras already included

- Category 1 seating for the Oberammergau Passion Play
- ALL excursions, scenic drives, sightseeing and entrances as described
- Fully escorted by our experienced Tour Manager
- Travel in a first class air-conditioned touring coach
- 20 nights specially selected hotel accommodation
- Hotel portorage (1 bag per person)
- 32 Meals – including breakfast daily (B) and 12 dinners (D)
- Welcome drink in Berlin
- Hand Selected Albatross Experiences – Spreewald punt ride, Elbe River cruise, Vltava raft ride, Kutná Hora silver mine visit, 'Bohemian Switzerland' adventure day, fairytale castle visit
- Local guides as described in the itinerary
- ALL tips for your Tour Manager, Driver and local guides
- Personal audio system whilst on tour
- Free WiFi on most coaches and at hotels

No additional costs!