

The Golden Explorer

26 July - 09 August

Alitalia

15 days from €209 (Lm 90) per day Prices quoted are per person in Euro and may vary without notice. Conditions apply

Tour Pace - Not too fast and not too slow. This tour features a well balanced itinerary with two nights in Vienna at the beginning, a relaxing two nights in Dubrovnik in the middle and two in Sofia and Istanbul at the end. The other one-night stays are comfortably reached in a day's drive.

Hotels - The predominantly modern hotels on this tour include the refurbished Vienna Hilton; the centrally located elegant Sheraton hotel in the capital city of Zagreb; the Jezero in the magnificent Plitvice National Park and the Flamenco Donco in Ohrid.

Fellow Passengers - A newly designed tour for Insight passengers who are looking for something a little different. Guests with a sense of adventure are attracted by the chance to retrace the ancient trade routes to Asia. This tour can also link up with Insight's Turkish tours (pages 150-155).

Highlights - There are many contrasting highlights, including the stately elegance of Vienna, epitomised by Schonbrunn Palace, the scenic wonderland of the Plitvice National Park, the past isolation of Albania, and the discovery of lesser known cities like Skopje, Ohrid and Sofia.

Visit the Blue Mosque, one of the most prominent landmarks in Istanbul



Day 1 – Malta - Vienna.

Meet your tour leader at Malta International Airport for our flight to Vienna. On arrival at Vienna Airport transfer to hotel. **Hotel: Hilton.**

Day 2 – Vienna sightseeing.

A sightseeing highlight this morning is a guided visit to the magnificent Schönbrunn Palace and gardens. Sightseeing continues past St Charles' Church and tours the 'ring', seeing the Opera House, the Hofburg Imperial Residence and Parliament Building. Your tour concludes with an informative look at Viennese café culture. Consider spending time in Prater Park and riding its famous ferris wheel. **(BB)**

Day 3 – Vienna – Zagreb.

Head south through Styria's forested mountains, past Graz and over the Slovenian border to the 700-year-old university town of Maribor. Follow the Drava River to Croatia and its capital, Zagreb. On your guided tour see Roosevelt Square, the attractive facades of Ban Josip Jelacic Square, the Cathedral, and, in the medieval Upper Town, the Presidential Palace, Stone Gate, St Marks Church and Pope's Tower. **Hotel: Sheraton. (BB)**

Day 4 – Zagreb – Plitvice Region.

Time is at leisure this morning. Maybe take an optional excursion to the home of the late Marshall Tito in Kumrovec, before departing for one of Europe's natural wonders, Plitvice National Park. **Hotel: Jezero. (BB,D)**

Day 5 – Plitvice Region – Zagreb.

Tour the Plitvice Lakes, a wonderland of 16 lakes flanked by thundering waterfalls and primeval forest. Visit Korana Canyon's 230 foot high falls and Tomicevo Pogledalo for views over the park. A delightful drive brings you to the Dalmatian coast's sparkling deep blue seas and rocky islands. **Hotel: Kolovare. (BB)**

Day 6 – Zadar – Zplit.

Head down the coast to visit Trogir. Founded by the Greeks in 400BC but now renowned for its fine cathedral and Renaissance Cipiko Palace. Continue to the ancient port of Salona to admire the Roman Baths, Necropolis and Amphitheatre. Stay tonight in Split where, 1700 years ago, the Roman Emperor Diocletian built his palace. Explore the labyrinth of streets and historic buildings within that same palace. **Hotel: Dalmina. (BB)**

Day 7 – Split – Dubrovnik.

Travel through charming fishing villages to Dubrovnik. A guided sightseeing tour in the Old Town explores the stone-paved streets inside the 16th century bastions. See Onofrio's fountain and the Rector's Palace, the city walls, as well as the Franciscan and Dominican monasteries. Your hotel is beautifully situated overlooking Lapad Bay. **Hotel: Ariston. (BB,D)**

Day 8 – Dubrovnik at leisure.

Today is at leisure. Perhaps relax in one of Dubrovnik's cafés or take a lovely walk around the Lapad peninsula. Why not join a sunset cruise tonight? **(BB)**

Day 9 – Dubrovnik – Tirana.

Over the border in Montenegro, visit the Old Town of Kotor, perched beside the only European fjord outside Norway. Continue to Albania and stop in the town of Shkodra before continuing to the Albanian capital, Tirana. **Hotel: Sheraton Hotel & Towers. (BB,D)**

Day 10 – Tirana – Ohrid.

Take a guided sightseeing tour of Tirana before heading to the Albanian border and crossing into Macedonia. Reach Lake Ohrid to stay in the pretty resort town of the same name. **Hotel: Flamenco Donco. (BB,D)**

Day 11 – Ohrid – Sofia.

First stop is in the Macedonian capital city of Skopje to see the main square, the mosques and old Turkish buildings. Cross the north of the country to reach the Bulgarian border, and make your way to the capital, Sofia, for dinner at your hotel. **Hotel: Hilton. (BB,D)**

Day 12 – Sofia Sightseeing.

Sightseeing takes in the St Sofia Church across the square from the golden domed St Alexander Nevsky Cathedral and the archeological complex, dominated by St George's Church. Explore on your own or perhaps take an optional excursion to the magnificent Rila Monastery, the largest and most important symbol of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church. **(BB)**

Day 13 – Sofia – Istanbul.

Head east, joining the road to Turkey taken by the Romans, the Crusaders and others over the centuries. Once over the border, continue to Istanbul, uniquely located on two continents. **Hotel: Barcelo Topkapi Eresin. (BB)**

Day 14 – Istanbul sightseeing.

Tour the highlights of Istanbul, including St Sophia and a visit to the famous Blue Mosque. Visit Topkapi Palace, former seat of the Ottoman Emperors, to admire the treasures of the Sultans, before finishing the tour at the 4,000 shops, tea houses and cafés of the Grand Bazaar. But first enjoy an informative lesson from your guide on how to haggle! Celebrate your amazing journey with a Highlight Dinner, complete with traditional entertainment. **(BB,HD)**

Day 15 – Istanbul - Malta.

The tour ends with a transfer to the airport for our homeward flight.



Enjoy Your Included Tour Features

Premium Highlights

A guided visit to the magnificent Schönbrunn Palace and gardens

Tour the Plitvice Lakes, a wonderland of 16 lakes flanked by thundering waterfalls and primeval forest

Visit Istanbul's Blue Mosque, then admire the treasure of the Sultans at Topkapi Palace

Personal Insights

A complete guide, from a local, on how to haggle in the Grand Bazaar; the technique, the pitfalls and how much to pay! Beat the shop keepers at their own game!

An entrée to the history and significance of Viennese café culture

Additional Excursions & Sights

Tour the ring road of Vienna past the Imperial Palace, Parliament and Opera House

Visit the Slovenian town of Maribor - reflecting its

medieval, baroque and Soviet past!

See Zagreb's Ban Josip Jelacic Square and Cathedral and tour the Upper Town

See the Cipiko Palace and Romanesque Cathedral in Trogir

Explore Split's historical buildings built within the walls of Diocletian's Palace

See the Amphitheatre, Roman Baths and Necropolis in Salona

See Onofrio's Fountain, Rector's Palace and the awesome city walls of Dubrovnik

Admire the Franciscan and Dominican monasteries in Dubrovnik Old Town

Visit the old town of Kotor situated on its fjord

Visit the cobbled streets, small shops and cafés of the pretty lakeside resort of Ohrid

See the churches, mosques and old Turkish buildings in Skopje

See the golden dome cathedral, centuries old churches, and Soviet-era buildings of Sofia

See all the sights of Istanbul including the Blue Mosque, St Sophia, Topkapi Palace - and haggle in the Grand Bazaar!

Scenic drives - Plitvice region and Dalmatian coast

First Class Services

Escorted by a professional Tour Director
Luxury air-conditioned coach with onboard toilet
Hotels include all service charges, taxes and portage
Airline Taxes, Fuel Surcharge and Service Charge
Traveller document wallet, map book journal and information pack
Airport arrival and departure transfers

Quality Dining

Highlight Dinner with traditional entertainment in Istanbul (HD)
13 Buffet Breakfasts (BB) and 5 three-course table d'hôte Dinners, or Buffets, plus tea or coffee (D)

Triple	€ 3139	Lm 1348
Twin	€ 3239	Lm 1391
Single	€ 4019	Lm 1725
Child 5- 11	€ 2849	Lm 1223
Youth 12-17	€ 2969	Lm 1275

TRAVEL NOW
... PAY LATER!
FROM **€48**
PER PERSON PER MONTH

Visa Required

All group departures are accompanied by a tour director, groups of 15 or more passengers will be also accompanied by a Maltese tour manager.

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