

# LOWER DANUBE 5-COUNTRY POTPOURRI

BUCHAREST TO BUDAPEST – 9 DAYS / 8 NIGHTS



IRON GATES

Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia, Croatia, Hungary – this special cruise along the Lower Danube spotlights five amazing Eastern European countries! Arrive in Bucharest, capital of Romania, and transfer to Giurgiu to board your luxury ship. From here, the “Friendship Bridge” crosses the river to Rousse, Bulgaria’s colorful Little Venice. Also in Bulgaria, stop in Svistov, the river’s southernmost port, and Vidin with its excellent wine-making tradition. Next, have your camera ready as you pass through the rugged Iron Gates, a series of gorges showing nature at its best. Pause in Serbia in the capital of Belgrade, and in Croatia’s Vukovar to learn about the devastation from its War of Independence in the 1990s. Finally, enter Hungary for stops in Kalocsa, Paprika Capital of the World, and the capital of Budapest with its gorgeous Castle District, Parliament Building, and other highlights.

## ITINERARY

Day 1 – Bucharest/ Giurgiu	Day 5 – Belgrade
Day 2 – Rousse/ Svistov	Day 6 – Vukovar
Day 3 – Vidin	Day 7 – Kalocsa
Day 4 – Turnu Severin/ Iron Gates	Day 8 – Budapest
	Day 9 – Budapest



## DATES IN 2025

7 Oct



## RIVERSIDE SIGNATURE EVENT

Further enhance your cruise with unforgettable experiences – like an amazing outing into the legendary Hungarian Puszta (Great Plain) for an entertaining show featuring expert horsemanship and traditional folk dancing, as well as a taste of authentic “cowboy” cuisine.

## DAY 1 – BUCHAREST / GIURGIU

Welcome to Bucharest, Romania's capital and epicenter of culture. Transfer to Giurgiu to embark the luxurious Riverside Debussy. Relax as you settle in, then tonight, meet your crew and fellow traveling companions during your first on-board dinner.

## DAY 2 – ROUSSE / SVISTOV

Your day begins right across the river from Giurgiu in Rousse, Bulgaria. Here, an exciting RIVERSIDE CHOICE selection of excursions features a visit to an ancient cave monastery and tasting of authentic Bulgarian foods. After your tour, meet back up with the ship in Svistov, a cultural center that was severely damaged during the Russo-Turkish War, sacked by the Russians in 1878, and nearly destroyed by an earthquake in 1977. Since then, it has recovered as an agricultural and fishing center and an esteemed university town. Enjoy lunch on board, followed by a relaxed afternoon of scenic cruising.

## DAY 3 – VIDIN

Early arrival this morning in the Bulgarian port city of Vidin. This fertile hinterland is known for its tradition of wine production, which dates back to the time of the Thracians in 3500 BC. RIVERSIDE CHOICE offers a great menu of excursions, like wine tasting, a visit to a traditional Bulgarian home, and a guided tour of Vidin and the medieval Belogradchik Fortress on the northern slopes of the Balkan Mountains. Your ship departs before dinner and cruises throughout the night.

## DAY 4 – TURNU SEVERIN / IRON GATES SCENIC CRUISING

Bună dimineața (good morning) – welcome back to Romania! Turnu Severin dates back to around 105 AD as an ancient Roman fort that grew to include temples, a theater, baths, a forum, port, and craftsmen guilds. The Bridge of Apollodorus (known as Trajan's Bridge today) was built over the Danube to allow Roman troops to cross the river, and was one of the Romans' greatest architectural achievements. During guided sightseeing, see the bridge and other Roman ruins, as well as Severin Medieval Fortress, built in 1230; the Neoclassical Water Castle, built in 1914; and the Iron Gates Museum. The area is also renowned for its quality white wines, so finding a traditional pub to try a glass might be worth your while. Re-board your ship around mid-day for an exquisite UNIQUELY RIVERSIDE barbeque lunch up on the Vista Deck as you cruise through the stunning Iron Gates gorges.

## DAY 5 – BELGRADE

Your ship arrives this morning in the "White Fortress" of Belgrade, capital of Serbia. RIVERSIDE CHOICE offers a morning tour focusing on Josip Tito, president of Serbia when it was the former communist nation of Yugoslavia. Then, this afternoon, a memorable exploration of Serbian wines is available during a tasting at a family-run cellar.

## DAY 6 – VUKOVAR

Today, discover the unbreakable spirit of Vukovar, which was almost completely destroyed during the Croatian War of Independence in the 1990s. With RIVERSIDE CHOICE, join a guided walk through the carefully restored town, followed by a piano concert at lavish Eltz Manor; view the city's murals during a refreshing bike tour; or spend time at the 5,000-year-old Vučedol archaeological site and a unique wine experience. Other options: a fun beer experience or a special wine tasting that quickly reveals why this region has been known since Roman times for its wine culture!

## DAY 7 – KALOCSA

Around mid-day, step ashore in ancient Kalocsa, Paprika Capital of the World! Here, a RIVERSIDE SIGNATURE excursion visits the Paprika House to learn about the country's favorite spice. Then, travel out into the rugged Hungarian Puszta (Great Plain) for a remarkable display of expert horsemanship, lively folk dancing, and delicious local food, including authentic Hungarian goulash!

## DAY 8 – BUDAPEST

Right after breakfast, your ship makes its grand arrival into Budapest, Hungary's elegant capital. Disembark and explore the city with RIVERSIDE CHOICE: see the highlights by comfortable coach; visit the Hungarian Parliament, the country's largest building since its completion in 1902; or visit Gödöllő Castle, one of the most important examples of Hungarian palace architecture. Another option explores Szentendre, a historic town that was reduced to a single family and their service staff during the Ottomans' rule in the 17th century. Today, its lovely cobblestone streets are lined with Baroque-style homes and a Mediterranean atmosphere.

## DAY 9 – BUDAPEST

After breakfast, disembark the Riverside Debussy and enjoy complimentary transfers to the airport, train station, or central hotel.