




Imperial Tour

-  Austria
-  Czech Republic
-  Slovakia
-  Hungary



Imperial Tour

Contents

Introduction	3
Destinations Map	4
 <i>Austria</i>	
Innsbruck	5
Salzburg	12
Vienna	24
Schönbrunn Palace	32
 <i>Czech Republic</i>	
Cesky Krumlov	44
Hluboka	52
Prague	55
Prague Castle	60
 <i>Slovakia</i>	
Bratislava	69
 <i>Hungary</i>	
Budapest	75
Danube Evening	88

Imperial Tour

Austria, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary

Introduction

I was along as Astrid Baur's European Castles Tours conducted a trial run of a new multi-country tour – *Imperial Castles Tour: Castles of Germany, Austria, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary*.

I was told to expect "the legacies of the centuries when European imperial emperors and countries competed to build the largest, most ornate, and most expensive castles and palaces." But I was still amazed.

North Americans think of castles as big buildings. Prague Castle is a small city all by itself. Schönbrunn Palace in Vienna is 400 acres of magic. Beautiful towns and exquisite castles appeared throughout this tour.

International travel for this tour was via Munich. The Munich sights, including the Residenz, are included in the Southern Germany section of *Travel-Pix*.

Slovakia and Hungary, included here, were dropped from the Imperial Castles Tour after 2008 to reduce costs. Bratislava and Budapest were interesting, but for me the best parts were in Austria and the Czech Republic anyway.

– Bruce McKay



Imperial Tour

Photos are presented in country sequence:
Austria, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary.



Innsbruck

Approaching Innsbruck, Austria



Innsbruck

The Austrian Alps hover over Innsbruck's famous "Golden Roof" of fire-gilded copper tiles.



Innsbruck

The Golden Roof was built in 1500 to cover a balcony built as a royal box for an archduke.



Innsbruck

St. Jakob's Cathedral was rebuilt in Baroque style between 1717 and 1724.



Innsbruck

St. Jakob's Cathedral



Innsbruck

Empress Maria Theresa had the Innsbruck Hofburg transformed into a Baroque palace in 1754-73.



Innsbruck

The day ends with an entertaining traditional Tyrolean folklore show for tourists.



Salzburg

Salzburg straddles the Salzach River, and has one of the best preserved city centres north of the Alps.



Salzburg

Fortress Hohensalzburg on Festungsberg hill can be reached by funicular.



Salzburg

Fortress Hohensalzburg was never successfully attacked.



Salzburg

Fortress Hohensalzburg was begun in 1077 and is one of the largest medieval castles in Europe.



Salzburg

Mirabell Palace and its gardens,
seen from Fortress Hohensalzburg



Salzburg

Mirabell Palace was built by a Prince Bishop for his mistress in 1606.



Salzburg

Mozart was born in this home on
Getreidegasse and raised in Salzburg.



Salzburg

Mozart is Salzburg's most famous son.



Salzburg

**17th century Baroque Salzburg Cathedral
was the site of Mozart's baptism.**



Salzburg

Hellbrunn Palace was built in 1613-19
by the Prince-Archbishop of Salzburg.



Salzburg

Hellbrunn Palace features a
water-powered musical theatre ...



Salzburg

... and practical jokes for the
Prince-Archbishop's guests.



Vienna

Vienna's Hofburg Imperial Palace was the home of the Habsburg dynasty which reined in Austria for over six centuries until 1780.



Vienna

**Austrian Parliament Building,
built between 1874 and 1883**



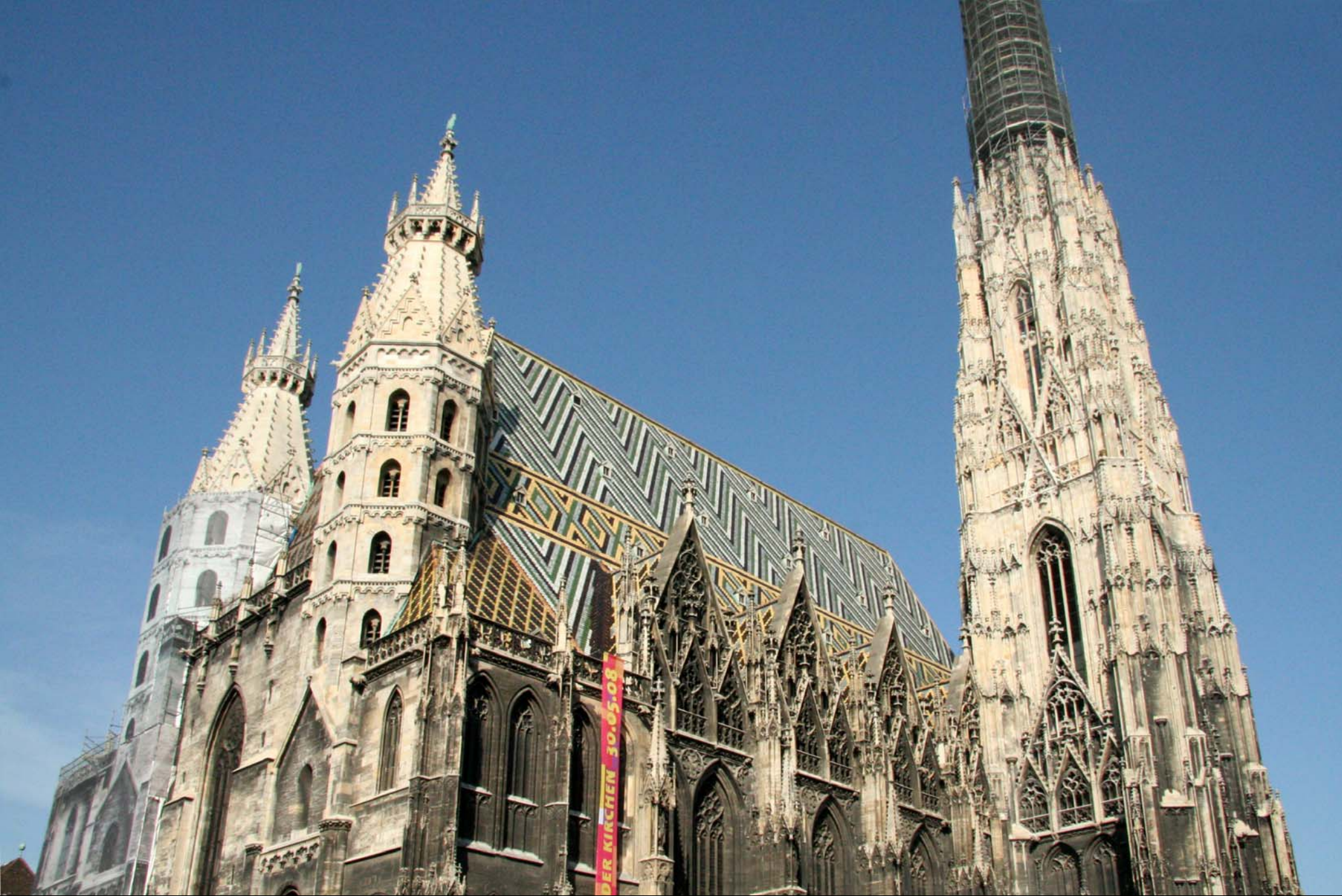
Vienna

**Vienna State Opera House, home of the
world famous State opera company**



Vienna

**Celebrations in front of Vienna's Rathaus
(City Hall), built in 1872 - 83**



Vienna

St. Stephen's Cathedral in central Vienna stands on the site of an 1147 parish church.



Vienna

Pavilion at Karlsplatz (Charles' Square),
one of the busiest town squares in Vienna



Vienna

Karlskirche (St. Charles' Church), on the south side of Karlsplatz, was built between 1716 and 1737.



Vienna

Vienna has some modern buildings too.
The Haas Haus is a 1990 shopping mall



**Schönbrunn
Palace**

The Schönbrunn Palace complex is Vienna's most impressive cultural monument, and one of the grandest palaces in Europe.



**Schönbrunn
Palace**

Parts of the palace date from 1696, but Empress Maria Theresa had the palace and garden reshaped in Rococo style to be a summer residence.



**Schönbrunn
Palace**

The sculpted garden space is called the Great Parterre (Great Ground Floor).
Schönbrunn occupies a total area of 4.5 square kilometres / 1.7 square miles.



**Schönbrunn
Palace**

The sheltered Privy Garden lies
to the east side of the Palace.



**Schönbrunn
Palace**

The Palm House pavilions with temperate and tropical sections were added in 1881-82.



**Schönbrunn
Palace**

The Neptune Fountain, commissioned by Maria Theresa in 1776, features Neptune in a shell-shaped chariot, trident in hand.



**Schönbrunn
Palace**

The Roman Ruin is an artificial garden feature created by sculptors in 1778.



**Schönbrunn
Palace**

A crowning touch. The Gloriette sits atop a 60 metre / 200 foot hill overlooking the gardens, the palace, and the city of Vienna.



**Schönbrunn
Palace**

The Gloriette was built on Empress
Maria Theresa's instructions in 1775.



**Schönbrunn
Palace**

The Gloriette was dedicated as a "Monument to Just War", meaning that which leads to peace. It was rebuilt after being bombed in WW II.



**Schönbrunn
Palace**

Today the Gloriette houses a café, and provides a spectacular view of Schönbrunn and Vienna.



**Schönbrunn
Palace**

Oh, and over in another corner of the palace grounds, the Tiergarten Schönbrunn, the world's oldest zoo, with over 4,000 animals.



**Cesky
Krumlov**

The town and castle at Cesky Krumlov in the southern part of the Czech Republic date from the late 13th century.



**Cesky
Krumlov**

**The entire well-preserved town of Cesky
Krumlov is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.**



**Cesky
Krumlov**

**Cesky Krumlov was built at a ford in the
Vltava River, an important trade route.**



Cesky
Krumlov

An outdoor café on the Vltava River



**Cesky
Krumlov**

**Krumlov Castle, towering over the Vltava,
is one of the largest in Europe.**



**Cesky
Krumlov**

**Krumlov Castle consists of 40 buildings
and palaces around 5 courtyards.**



Cesky
Krumlov

The tower rises from the Little Castle,
the oldest part of Krumlov Castle.



**Cesky
Krumlov**

**St. Vitus is a Gothic church in the castle
that dates back to the 15th century.**



Hluboka

Hluboka Castle, 35 km / 22 miles north of Cesky Krumlov, was rebuilt in the 19th century in a Romantic Tudor-Gothic style.



Hluboka

An early Gothic castle had been built on the site around 1250. The 19th century re-construction included the addition of a large, formal English garden.



Hluboka

**A café, adjacent to the Bohemian
art gallery at Hluboka Castle**



Prague

The Charles Bridge across the Vltava River in central Prague was built over the 50-year period from 1357.



Prague

Prague's Old Town Square is dominated by the Church of Our lady Before Tyn.



Prague

Interior of Tyn Church, begun in the mid
14th century and completed in 1511



Prague

The oldest part of the Prague Astronomical Clock dates from 1410. It includes an animated clock, a calendar, and an astronomical dial showing the position of the sun and moon.



Prague

The Powder Gate guards the gateway to Old Town.
This magnificent structure dates from 1475.



Prague Castle

Prague Castle stretches for over a third of a mile above the Vltava River. It is the dominant feature of Prague, and the political and spiritual centre of the whole country.



Prague Castle

Prague Castle's main gates, with the 1614 Baroque Matthias gate inside. The Castle is the seat of the President of the Czech Republic, and houses the Office of the President.



Prague Castle

The castle provides a commanding view of the river and the city.



**Prague
Castle**

**St. Vitus Cathedral in Prague Castle is the most
important place of worship in the Czech Republic.**



**Prague
Castle**

This Gothic cathedral contains the tombs of many Czech kings and Holy Roman Emperors.



**Prague
Castle**

St. George's Basilica was founded in 920. It was rebuilt after a fire in 1142, and the Baroque façade dates from the late 17th century.



**Prague
Castle**

**Prague Castle is not all big buildings.
There are formal gardens and open park spaces.**



Prague Castle

The Hradcany castle district offers a mix of history and culture, businesses and residences.



Prague

Prague is not all history. It is a big city with modern amenities and an impressive subway and public transit system.



Bratislava

Bratislava, the capital of Slovakia,
straddles the Danube.



Bratislava

**Bratislava Castle stands on a plateau
85 m / 280 ft above the Danube.**



Bratislava

The castle hill has been inhabited since the Bronze age. A stone castle was built in the 10th century, and rebuilt in 1430 and 1562.



Bratislava

The castle was converted to Baroque by Queen Maria Theresa in 1649, destroyed by fire in 1811, and rebuilt in the 1950s.



Bratislava

The old Slovak National Theatre in Old Town was built in 1885-86. A new theatre was completed in 2007.



Bratislava

The New Bridge, completed in 1972,
features a restaurant on its tower.



Budapest

Budapest, capital of Hungary, straddles the Danube.
Buda on the left, Pest on the right.



Budapest

**Heroes' Square at City Park is one of the major squares of Budapest.
A statue of Archangel Gabriel stands atop the central column.**



Budapest

The main statues depict the leaders of the seven tribes that founded Hungary in the 9th century.



Budapest

The Museum of Fine Arts
looks onto Heroes' Square.



Budapest

**Vajdahunyad Castle on City
Park Pond dates from 1896.**



Budapest

The castle now houses the Museum of Hungarian Agriculture.



Budapest

**The Széchenyi Thermal Bath at City Park
is the largest medicinal bath in Europe.**



Budapest

**The Hungarian National Museum was founded in 1802.
Its current building was constructed between 1837 and 1848.**



Budapest

The Chain Bridge across the Danube was opened in 1849. The bridge was rebuilt after being damaged in WW II.



Budapest

The Hungarian Parliament Building is the largest parliament in Europe, and is considered by many to be the most attractive.



Budapest

**Parliament seen from Fisherman's Bastion
on the Buda side of the Danube.**



Budapest

Fisherman's Bastion honours the guild of fishermen responsible for defending this stretch of the city walls in the Middle Ages.



Budapest

This statue in Trinity Square in Old Town Buda commemorates the victims of the 1691 plague epidemic.



**Danube
Evening**

**Our visit to Budapest ends with an
evening cruise on the Danube.**



Danube
Evening

Parliament



Danube
Evening

Good night.

< End >

Imperial Tour