



Walking the Danube

Concerts and country walks

28 July–3 August 2024 (MK 372)

7 days • £3,740

Lecturer: Richard Wigmore

Mozart along the Danube with five country walks and five concerts in appropriate historic buildings.

Stays in hotels in Vienna and Dürnstein rather than on the ship.

Led by lecturer, critic and musicologist Richard Wigmore.

This variant on the festival package includes five concerts and five country walks. The Austrian stretch of the Danube valley is, for much of its length, of considerable beauty, with much variety of landscape – cultivated lowlands, forested peaks, open alluvial plains, vine-clad hillsides, upland pastures, and, of course, the mighty river meandering towards the Black Sea. There are pine and fir and larch, but broadleaves predominate – beech, birch, oak, poplar.

Though hardly classifiable as strenuous, this tour should only be considered by those who are used to regular country walking with some uphill content. There are hills, and a few fairly steep climbs for short stretches, but no mountains, and most of the routes are along gently undulating paths. The durations are between one and three hours.

Itinerary

Day 1. Fly at c. 9.00am from London Heathrow to Vienna (Austrian Airlines). Drive to Dürnstein, perhaps the loveliest little town on the river, where two nights are spent. Walk up to the ruins of a castle where Richard the Lionheart was once imprisoned, and which cling to a steep hill behind the town.

Day 2: Grein, Melk. Drive along a picturesque road beside the Danube to the little riverside town of Auhmühle. Walk on moderately gentle woodland paths and quiet roads, from Auhmühle to Grein, the few steep sections being fairly short. Continue in woods of pine, beech and birch to the sound of tumbling streams before descending through upland pastures and farmland. Catch glimpses of the Danube. Lunch here. Drive onwards to Melk, a delightful little town on the Danube nestling under the abbey. Visit the abbey state apartments and church, which are among the



Dürnstein, 1820s aquatint by Jacob Alt (1789–1872).

most brilliant creations of the Age of Baroque. Followed by a *late-afternoon concert in the Abbey's Kolomanisaal with Wolfgang Redik (violin) and the Vienna Chamber Orchestra: Mozart, Rondo for violin and orchestra in C, K.373; Symphony No.40 in G minor, K.550; Adagio for violin and orchestra in E, K.261; Symphony No.41 in C, K.551 'Jupiter'*. Return to Dürnstein for the second of two nights.

Day 3: Leopoldsberg, Klosterneuburg. Drive up the Leopoldsberg, a high hill with fine views over the capital and the Danube valley. Walk down through beech woods, vineyards and salubrious ivy-clad suburbs on a 5.5km walk on footpaths, country roads and quiet streets. Lunch is included, before a short drive to Klosterneuburg Abbey for a guided tour and *late-afternoon concert in the Augustinus Saal with Duo Pleyel (piano for 'four hands'): Mozart's Real Father – Sonatas and Variations by Mozart and J.C. Bach*. First of two nights in Vienna.

Day 4: Schloss Hof, Kitsee. Drive to Schloss Hof in Marchfeld. *Morning concert with the Van Kuijk Quartet: Mozart, String Quartet, K.80 'Lodi'; Haydn, String Quartet, Op.74 No.3 'Rider'; Mozart, String Quartet, K.465 'Dissonance'*. Lunch here. Continue to the small town of Berg for a moderate circular walk on the Königswarte which finishes at Schloss Kittsee (6.5 km). The walk offers views towards

Bratislava and over the Pannonian Basin. Return to Vienna for the second of two nights.

Day 5: Vienna. Free morning in Vienna for independent exploration. Participate in an optional walking tour of the city in the afternoon. *Early-evening concert in the Rittersaal of the Hofburg with the Mozartists and Ian Page (piano): The A-Z of Mozart Opera (includes a number from every Mozart opera)*. Return to Dürnstein for the first of two further nights here.

Day 6: Dürnstein, Maria Taferl. A morning walk of c. 6.5 km starts with a climb of 15 minutes on a small road into the vine-clad hills overlooking the Danube and dips periodically into shaded gullies with butterflies, abundant wildflowers and red-roofed villages in the valley below. The terrain is easy underfoot as the walk is predominantly on quiet, shaded roads. Return to the hotel for some time to refresh. Drive to Maria Taferl in time for an *early-evening concert in the Pilgrimage Church with the Vienna Chamber Choir: Sacred Mozart – Solemn Vespers K.339, 'Te Deum' K.141, 'Venite populi' K.260, Church Sonata No.6, K.212*. Final night in Dürnstein.

Day 7. Travel by coach to Vienna Airport. Return to Heathrow at c. 2.15pm.

Walking the Danube
continued

Lecturer

Richard Wigmore. Music writer, lecturer and broadcaster for BBC Radio 3. He writes for *BBC Music Magazine* and *Gramophone* and has taught classes in Lieder history and interpretation at the Guildhall, Trinity College of Music and Birkbeck College. He read French and German at Cambridge and later studied Music at the Guildhall. His publications include *Schubert: the complete song texts* and *Pocket Guide to Haydn*.

Practicalities

Price, per person. Two sharing: £3,740 or £3,480 without flights. **Single occupancy:** £4,220 or £3,960 without flights.

Included: flights (economy class) on scheduled Austrian Airlines flights; travel by coach for transfers and excursions; 5 private concerts; accommodation as described below; breakfasts, 3 lunches and 5 dinners with wine, water and coffee; all admission charges; all tips for restaurant staff and drivers; all airport and state taxes; the services of the lecturer and tour manager.

Accommodation. Richard Löwenherz, Dürnstein (richardloewenherz.at): a lovely old-fashioned hotel occupying a historic building with garden and outdoor pool. **Hotel Bristol, Vienna** (bristolvienna.com): a 5-star hotel in a superb location on the Ringstrasse, traditionally furnished and decorated.

How strenuous? This is a walking tour, graded 'moderate'. It is essential for participants to have appropriate walking footwear, be in good physical condition and to be used to country walking with uphill and downhill content. There are a few moderately steep climbs, but no walk is more than 6 miles or 3 hours. There is not always the opportunity to return to the hotel to freshen up before every concert or dinner. (Please see www.martinrandall.com/about-us for our walking tour grading system).

Group size: between 12 and 22 participants.