

Reformation in Europe

Day 1

After arrival in Prague, you start your exploration of the city. Begin with Jewish Prague to include the Jewish city hall (view from outside), Altneschul - oldest existing synagogue in Europe, Maisel Synagogue (Jewish museum), and the old Jewish cemetery. Dinner cruise on the Vltava River. Two overnights.

Day 2

In the morning, tour the famous and largest ancient castle in the world, "Hradschin," "The Child of Prague," situated in the baroque Maria de Victoria Church, Loreto Monastery, St. Vitus Cathedral, the Jan Hues Memorial, and Wenzel Square.

Day 3

Time at leisure in the morning followed by an afternoon train ride to Berlin. Check in to the hotel for four overnights.

Day 4

Today you visit and tour Berlin, the re-unified capital of Germany with the three centers of Berlin: the West around Charlottenburg Palace, the 210-foot Victory Column in the vast Tiergarten Park, Kurfuerstendamm Boulevard, and a visit into the Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church., the new center around Potsdamer Square and finally the eastern section around Unter Den Linden, the restored Reichstag, monumental Brandenburg Gate and Alexanderplatz.

Day 5

Today tour the nearby Potsdam: Meander through the quaint streets of the "Holländisches Viertel" (Dutch Quarter) or the Russian colony "Alexandrowka" and experience a time long past. We then continue on to Sanssouci Palace, the summer residence of the Prussian Kings often referred to as the Prussian "Versailles." Spend time walking through the magnificent gardens or visit the palace. Return to Berlin.

Day 6

Explore the Jewish Berlin of the past and present: Visit the New Synagogue: Built in 1866 as the largest Jewish place of worship in Germany, the Neue Synagogue was literally a symbol of the thriving Jewish community. Continue to the Holocaust Memorial, dedicated to the Jewish victims of the Nazi genocide of WWII. In the afternoon you visit the Jewish Museum: A timeless monument to Jewish history and life in Germany.

Day 7

This morning, transfer by coach to the "Museuminsel" (Museum island). Meet a local guide for a tour of the Pergamon Museum to view the outstanding antiquity collections of Grecian and Babylonian art and architecture. Time at leisure. In the afternoon, you board the coach for driving south through the lovely German countryside into the "Lands of Luther" to Wittenberg. Overnight.

Day 8

From 1508, Wittenberg was the main workplace of Martin Luther. You visit Luther Hall, the Augustinian monastery where Luther lived as a monk and later, in 1525, as owner with his wife and family (Luther Hall is the largest museum of Reformation history in the world), the Market Square and Town Hall; tour All Saints Church “Schlosskirche”, famous site where Luther posted his 95 Theses on the Castle Church door sparking the beginning of the Reformation (it is here that Luther is buried along side his fellow reformer, Philipp Melanchthon); tour St. Mary’s Church, where Luther did the majority of his preaching. We then head for Dresden. Overnight.

Day 9

Dresden: Its exceptional artistic and architectural heritage makes the city one of the most prestigious cultural centers of Europe. Dresden’s magnificent Baroque buildings, museums featuring world-class art and its lovely setting on the Elbe, combine to make it a stunning and beautiful city. Explore on a city tour the Old City, including the Semper Opera, the Court Church, the Zwinger Gallery and the Frauenkirche - the most important Protestant Church in prewar Germany. It was destroyed in 1945. Reconstruction of the Frauenkirche began in 1994 and after many years of rebuilding was rededicated in 2006. Board the coach for Leipzig. Overnight.

Day 10

Today you explore the city of Leipzig, where Luther preached and Bach served as cantor. Visit the magnificent St. Thomas Kirche, St. Nicolai Kirche and the Market Square with its fine Renaissance buildings. Afterward, you continue on to Eisleben and tour the houses where Luther was born in 1483 and where he died in 1546. You then continue to St. Peter’s Church where Luther was baptized, St. Andrews Church where Luther preached his last four sermons and where his body was laid in state. Continue on to Erfurt for overnight.

Day 11

Following breakfast you tour Erfurt, the spiritual home of Martin Luther. It was here that Luther obtained a degree in 1502 and a doctorate in philosophy in 1505 and where he took the decisive step to turn to theology and the monastic life. Your walking tour begins in the historical section of the city including St. Mary’s Cathedral, where Luther was ordained as a priest, the Augustinian Monastery with a permanent exhibit depicting Luther’s life as a monk in Erfurt and to the church of St. Severus, where Luther preached his sermons. This evening is at leisure where you may stroll through the lovely restored market place to enjoy dinner at one of the local cafes or restaurants.

Day 12

Following breakfast, drive to Eisenach to visit St. George’s Church where St. Elisabeth was married and J.S. Bach baptized. Tour the Luther House where Luther lived as a student with the Cotta family from 1498-1501 and the Luther exhibition documenting his life and theologies. The next stop takes you to the magnificent Wartburg Castle for a tour of the Palas (Great Hall), Art exhibition, the Elisabeth Hallway and the Luther Room where “Junker Jörg” (the Knight George) translated the New Testament into German. In the afternoon, board the coach for Coburg. Overnight.

Day 13

Following breakfast you visit the famous Veste Coburg, the fortress where Luther took refuge and lived during the Augsburg Confession. While visiting the castle we'll see the Luther Room, the art treasures in the various collections and the royal building with the Luther Chapel. Then onward to Nuremberg: Walking tour along the "Historischen Meile", which highlights the major architectural and artistic landmarks of an historic city which enjoyed its Golden Age in the late Middle Ages. As a result of its political influence as the foremost imperial city of the Middle Ages and home of the imperial regalia, combined with its economic prosperity as a strategically-located commercial centre, Nuremberg came to be one of the largest and greatest cities in Europe. Names such as Albrecht Durer and Hans Sachs reflect the city's artistic and intellectual prowess at that time. In 1525 Nuremberg became "protestant" and was one of the first cities to make this change without an iconoclasm. You arrive Rothenburg o.d. Tauber late in the evening.

Day 14

Rothenburg o.d. Tauber: Take a glimpse into the Middle Ages in perhaps the most famous town on the "Romantik Road" - a nearly intact medieval walled city without a single modern building within. Tour the city to view the Rathaus, the Glockenspiel and St. Jakob's church with its famous altar carving by Tilman Riemenschneider and the Castle Gardens. Leisure time to stroll the cobblestone lanes with their wonderful variety of shops. Käthe Wolfahrt's year-round Christmas Village is a must! Walk along the medieval walls that encircle the town or just relax and enjoy this quaint town. In the afternoon you continue to Mainz area for two overnights.

Day 15

Mainz: visit the birthplace of printing, the Gutenberg Museum: the evolution of printing is documented, and Gutenberg's first Bible is on display, also the world's tiniest Bible. Jon Gooseflesh, better known as Johannes Gutenberg is considered to be the most important individual-contributor of the Second Millennium. Then tour St. Martin's Cathedral, built in the 8th century and towering in all its might and grandeur the city. Seven king's coronations took place in the course of the centuries in the Mainz cathedral. If time is still available visit St. Stephen's Church, famous for its marvelous Chagall windows. In the afternoon you travel to the quaint and charming village of Rudesheim, which dates back to before the Roman era. Enjoy an orientation tour of the city. Then a relaxing sight-seeing cruise along the Rhine River, one of the most picturesque stretches of this majestic waterway and sail past magnificent castles and the famous Loreley rock. You return to the hotel.

Day 16

This morning you drive south to Worms where Luther was summoned in 1521 to appear before an Imperial Diet to justify his conduct. Visit the world's largest Memorial to the Reformation, the Church of the Holy Trinity, Europe's oldest Jewish cemetery - the Holy Sands, the former Jewish quarter and St. Peter's Cathedral which is one of the most exquisite examples of Romanesque architecture. Then onward to Speyer: you visit the Cathedral, the biggest historic architectural monument. It is supposed to be the masterpiece of Romanesque architecture in Germany. Continue to the ruins of the Speyer synagogue which are the oldest visible remains of a synagogue in Central Europe and the Mikwe, established in 1104. You next stop in Heidelberg, the gorgeous town on the Neckar River, where romanticism is both past and present. the walking tour includes the Old Town, the famous Stone Bridge over the Neckar River, the Heidelberg Castle (where the Heidelberg Confession was written in 1653), the Castle Church, German Apothecary Museum, and the Church of the Holy Ghost. Overnight in Heidelberg area.

Day 17

This morning you travel to the German-Swiss border. On the way you visit Strasbourg, home of the European Parliament, the “City of Hope,” or “Refuge of the Righteous” as the Anabaptists refer to it. This is where John Calvin wrote his famous books on systematic theology. Martin Bucher, another Reformation leader was from Strasbourg and is buried in St. Thomas's Church, the principle Protestant Church since 1549. Due to growing persecution in Paris, Calvin settled in Strasbourg to live the life of a quiet Christian scholar and author. His first draft of the Institutes in 1536 was instantly popular as it presented Reformed doctrine in an easy to read, systematic manner. You tour the Cathedral of Strasbourg, St. Thomas's Church, and also see the Statue of the Reformers in the University, the Astronomical clock and the historic “La Petite Strasbourg” quarter. In the afternoon you board the coach for Zurich for two overnights.

Day 18

Zurich: city tour with Grossmunster Cathedral - It was here that Huldrych Zwingli began the Swiss Reformation; Fraumuenster Abbey with its stunning stained glass windows by Marc Chagall; St. Peter's Church boasting the largest clock face in Europe. In the afternoon, leisure time to shop or explore.

Day 19

Following breakfast you head for Berne, the capital of Switzerland, where Calvin at the time was involved in many a conflict. You walk through the medieval streets of the Old Town making your way to the impressive Münster. Dating back to the 15th Century, it is the tallest cathedral in Switzerland and most important example of Late Gothic architecture in the country. You also visit the Heiliggeist-Kirche (Holy Spirit Church) constructed between 1726 and 1729, it is considered one of the most beautiful Baroque Reform Protestant Churches in Switzerland. Afterward, you continue on to Lake Geneva where you check in for three nights. (Hotel located in Geneva or surrounding area).

Day 20

After breakfast you explore the city on a full-day sightseeing tour emphasizing the stronghold of the Swiss Reformation, associated most closely with John Calvin and Huldrych Zwingli. You visit St. Pierre Cathedral, Temple de l'Auditoire, Collège Calvin, Reformation Monument, University, International Museum of the Reformation, town hall and several medieval “Bürgerhäuser.” We will end our day at Calvin’s grave and remember the saints that taught Grace to us. Tonight you celebrate your European farewell with a typical Swiss dinner.

Day 21

Following breakfast you transfer to Geneva International airport for your flight home.