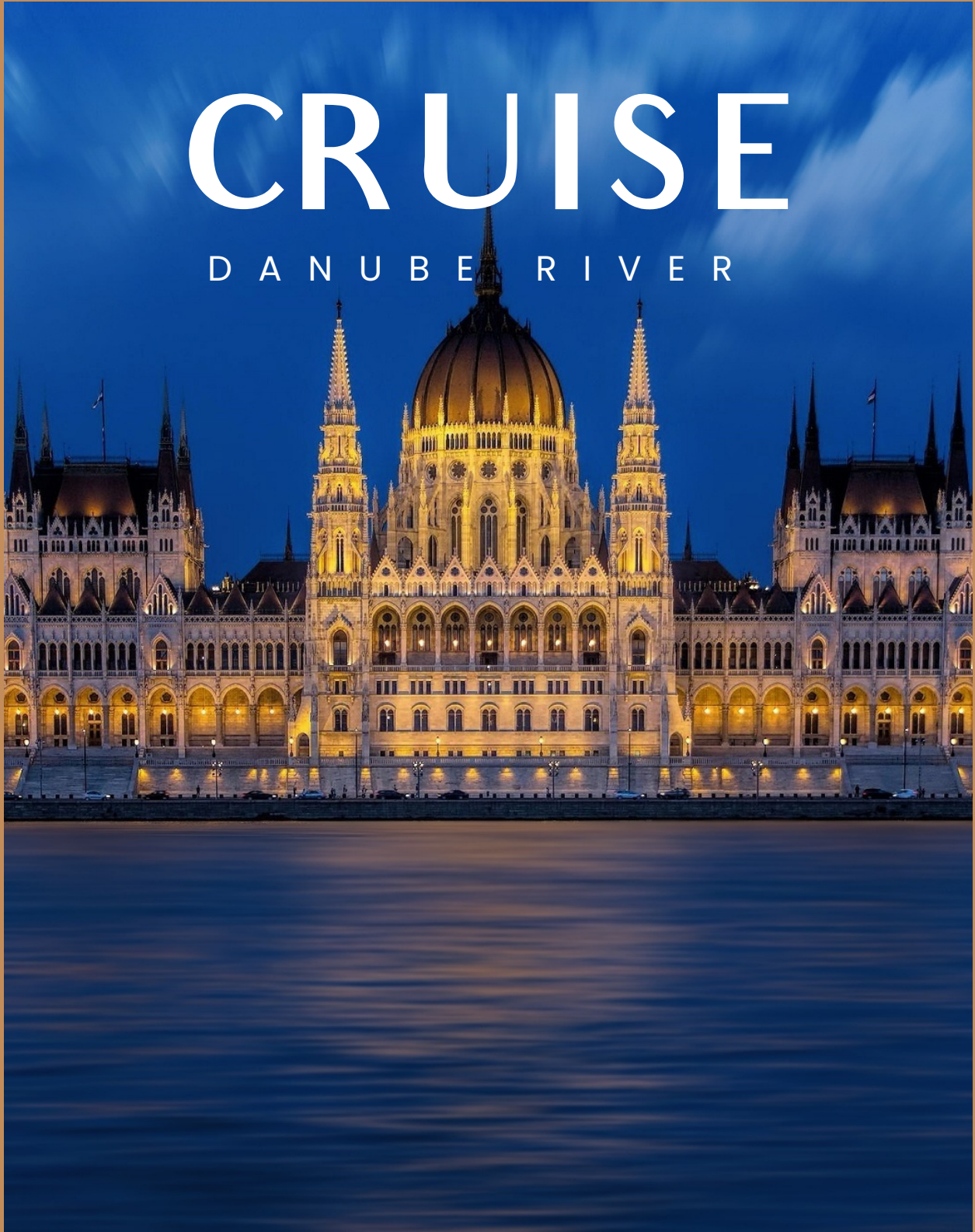


CRUISE

DANUBE RIVER



DESTINATIONS & EXPERIENCES ON THE
DANUBE RIVER

A CRUISE EXPERIENCE LIKE NO OTHER

Set sail on a journey down the Danube river and explore all it has to offer, from incredible destinations to unforgettable experiences!

Whether you're an experienced cruiser or just setting out for your first adventure, this guide will give you essential insight into life on the river. Discover information about ocean versus river cruising as well as what kind of activities and sights await along this majestic waterway.

From traditional dishes to award-winning wines and cultural festivals, there's something for everyone.

Our team of travel experts have built relationships directly with top river cruise lines around the globe, offering extensive knowledge from their own experiences to match you up with your dream trip, one that matches your own personal travel style.

It could be that special occasion or life event - either way it will be an unforgettable journey just waiting for your arrival!

Julie Schaffmann

ADVENTURE AND AWE TRAVEL

Outdoor Adventures for Foodies



Start your journey to a unique, exciting cruise experience today! Schedule an informational 15-minute chat about river cruising and what type of getaway you're looking for.

SCHEDULE A CHAT



» FEATURES

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OCEAN TO RIVER CRUISING

If you're an ocean cruiser, have not cruised yet or looking for something new, river cruising could be the perfect adventure. Discover 12 delightful differences between these two distinct experiences.

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8 FASCINATING FACTS ABOUT RIVER CRUISING

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Escape the ordinary and explore some of Europe's most captivating corners when you take a river cruise down the Danube. From quaint villages to bustling cities, here are 10 unforgettable destinations waiting for your discovery!

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If you love desserts, exploring the Danube River is a must! From rich cakes to creamy fudge and beyond – indulge your sweet tooth with nine unforgettable treats.

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12 differences

BETWEEN AN OCEAN CRUISE & A RIVER CRUISE

12 Differences Between an Ocean Cruise and a River Cruise

Ready to embark on your maiden river cruise voyage? Forget what you think you know about cruises - ocean and river cruising offer vastly different experiences. From ship size, variety of destinations, style of stateroom and so much more; find out why a river journey is an unforgettable adventure! Here are a few of the big differences.

► No Big Line-Ups

With river cruises you can forego the frustrating lines, forget about struggling to find a spot by over-crowded pools, and get your food or coffee in no time. Cruising with ease - now that's something worth experiencing!

► Highly Personalized Service

River cruises offer a unique level of personalization with their high passenger-to-staff ratio. You'll be welcomed aboard to an environment where the staff strive to create incredible experiences tailored just for you - they know your name and preferences, so nothing is out of reach!

► Get on and off the ship in seconds

Boarding day will leave you speechless. No more 15-step and 3 hour long check-ins. Both you and your luggage will be on the ship in a matter of minutes. On port days, you can breeze on and off the ship as many times as you want to with ease.



► Locally Sourced Foods

Indulge in the unique flavors of a region as you journey along its riverbanks! On a river cruise, chefs take your taste buds on an unforgettable cultural expedition through carefully crafted dishes that bring regional ingredients to life.

► Excursions Are Included

Experience the beauty of each destination with exciting shore excursions included in your cruise. Go on a walking or bike tour, indulge in local cuisine or take part in vibrant cultural performances – all designed to give you an unforgettable journey!

► Approachable & Accessible Management

With the hotel manager easily accessible to guests, you can trust that whatever help or questions you need are easily accessible. The high crew to guest ratio means that you'll be taken care of before you know you need anything. Don't be surprised to find your favorite drinks and food in front of you before you ask for them.

► Always Steps from the Action

River cruising offers travelers an unparalleled opportunity to experience culture and history up close! With the ability to dock in the heart of a city, you'll be able to explore some of Europe's most beautiful destinations from your very own doorstep.

► Affordable Laundry Services

Travelers know the headache of expensive laundry services and long waiting periods for their clothes to be returned as they explore the globe. However, on a river cruise you can pack skinny without worry; any laundering needs can quickly be taken care of along your journey!



► Stay Connected for Free

Time to log on and stay connected - with complimentary Wi-Fi, you can easily keep in touch with family back home or share your amazing experiences along the journey!

► A Perfect Pace of Travel

Take a break, shift your perspective and explore Europe's incredible beauty at a leisurely pace with a river cruise. With longer days in port you can fully immerse yourself in all the wonders around you - savor local culinary delights, create deeper connections to culture...all while feeling relaxed!

► Luxuriously Cozy Cabins

Enjoy chic but cozy interiors that you'll never want to leave - momentary distraction provided by stunning views outside big windows or balconies and pampering amenities! Not only will your mornings be indulgent from start to finish with comfort like home, they're made even sweeter with delicious breakfast awaiting you every day.

► Cruise Managers Make it Personal

Get ready to be welcomed onboard your river cruise vacation! Cruise Managers guarantee nothing short of excellence in hospitality and service. With their extraordinary attention to detail and multilingual skill-set, you can be sure that all aspects of your cruise will run smoothly.



The differences between ocean cruising and river cruising are vast.

If you're an avid ocean cruiser, river cruising is the perfect complement to your vacation style.

If you're after a culturally immersive, slower-paced, more intimate cruising experience, a river cruise should be your next vacation option.



8

FASCINATING FACTS
YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT
river cruising

8 FASCINATING FACTS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT RIVER CRUISING

THINK YOU KNOW EVERYTHING ABOUT RIVER CRUISING? TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE WITH THESE FUN FACTS, AND SOON ENOUGH, YOU'LL BE READY TO REIGN SUPREME IN A ROUND OF JEOPARDY OR LOCAL TRIVIA COMPETITION!

1 *Calm Waters*

Are you curious to explore the world by ship, but feel held back by seasickness? Then a river cruise could be just what you need! With no waves and only gentle wakes, your journey has been designed for maximum stability. So go get out there and seize adventure without worrying about sea-sickness!

2 *There is no such thing as too much and not enough water*

River cruise ships offer a unique way to explore the world - think of them as smaller vessels that provide big adventures! From navigating tight curves in rivers, passing through locks, docking alongside bustling ports and taking you right into the heart of medieval towns; river cruises are able to give access to places large ocean liners just can't.

3 *Water levels are everything*

Locks are man-made structures that serve as elevators for ships and boats to travel between different heights of water levels so they can traverse downstream or upstream with ease. Passing through the locks is an incredible moment of engineering genius and a highlight to experience from any vantage point onboard.

4 *Explore Old Trade Routes*

Experience two worlds in one memorable journey as you take a river cruise through the beautiful, unchanged landscapes of antiquity. While cruising down rivers that were once traversed by renowned figures from Ancient Greek and Roman times, soak up their ancient cultures and histories still evident today!

5 *Greener than the other cruise lines*

River cruises have set a new standard for eco-friendly travel - ushering in an era of sustainability with room amenities like glass water bottles, washable towels and digital documents instead of paper. They are at the cutting edge when it comes to protecting our rivers while cruising them.

6 *Fewer guests & a better crew to guest ratio*

Treat yourself to luxurious personalized services instead of the overwhelming hustle-and-bustle common on large ocean ships. River cruises typically host 50 - 150 guests - providing just enough room for an intimate journey while still enjoying all that modern amenities have to offer!



7 Rooftop Gangways

In smaller destinations, river cruise lines will sometimes share the same pier. They line up side by side (imagine shoulder to shoulder), and passengers from each ship walk across rooftop gangways to get ashore. It's a fun and fascinating thing to see.

8 Start here, finish there

Unlike an ocean cruise that usually starts and ends in the same place, with river cruising, you will start in one city, sail along the beautiful riverside while taking twisty turns downstream. Then arrive to your destination - an entirely new city with fresh sights awaiting you. End your journey by going on a post-cruise land tour for that added touch of adventure.





DISCOVER THESE 10 UNIQUE
DESTINATIONS
on the Danube

Rousse, Bulgaria

With its historic beauty and relaxed atmosphere, Rousse is an ideal destination to explore the wonders of Bulgaria. Nicknamed 'Little Vienna', stroll through the city streets lined with impressive 19th century architecture, lush gardens and tranquil parks - before continuing your journey inland!

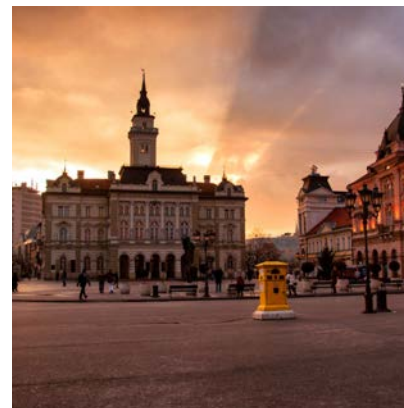
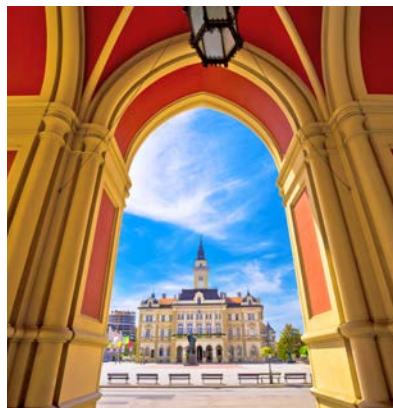
Visitors can get a glimpse into Bulgarian culture by visiting nearby Veliko Tarnovo as well as marvel at stunning medieval Rock-Hewn Churches scattered throughout the region. A day trip to Bucharest in Romania is also easily achieved from Rousse.



Novi Sad, Serbia

Novi Sad offers a vibrant cultural experience with its topnotch Serbian cuisine, exquisite architecture, and urban art. Home to bustling markets by the Danube River, it is fondly known as 'The Athens of Serbia'.

Explore this city's diverse history on foot or bike tours then head out for some fresh air in Fruska Gora National Park – an outdoor paradise complete with rolling hills perfect for hiking!



Ilok, Croatia

If you're a wine enthusiast, Ilok is an absolute must-visit. Sitting at the easternmost tip of Croatia and bordered by the majestic Danube on one side, Ilok also has lush vineyards adorning its hillsides in every direction!

This ideal climate makes room for gewürztraminer grapes to grow in abundance - providing us with the Traminac variety that carries centuries' worth of winemaking tradition since Roman times.



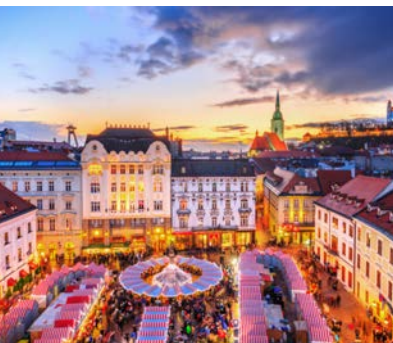
Bratislava, Slovakia

Bratislava sits at the corner of Slovakia, Austria, and Hungary, resulting in a melting pot of Eastern European cultures.

A walking tour of "Coronation City" is a highlight where you will learn about the many coronations held within the double fortified walls.

When you look around town, it is difficult to miss the imposing Bratislava Castle sitting atop the city. With stark white walls and an orange roof sticking out above the streets below, it is clear that this was a castle built as an impressive fortification.

After all the sightseeing, refuel with a Taste of Slovakia tour, where you can sample an array of traditional and modern Slovakian delicacies.



Krems, Austria

Marking one end of the Wachau Valley on the Danube, Krems is a charming town with shops, cafes, and galleries along cobblestoned streets.

Take a bike ride starting in Krems, through the towns of Dürnstein, then onto Spitz on a path winding along the river. This is an excellent way to see the towns, take in the views, and breathe fresh Austrian air.

You can also tour Dürnstein and hike to the Dürnstein Fortress, a castle perched on a rock above the town. Finally, don't forget about apricot and sweets tastings! The Wachau Valley is renowned for its Austrian apricots and rolling hills.



Weissenkirchen, Austria

Weissenkirchen is a picturesque wine-growing village in the Wachau Valley. In contrast with its neighboring towns, Weissenkirchen is quiet and quaint, offering a peaceful respite from the nearby buzzy cities.

On a bike ride through the Wachau Valley, you will see various monasteries, castles, ruins, vineyards, and preserved landscapes.

Named a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the valley offers a time capsule of the area's evolution since prehistoric times. In the evening, enjoy a wine tasting at one of the world-renowned local vineyards.



Melk, Austria

No voyage down the Danube is complete without a stop at Melk Abbey.

This still-active Benedictine abbey spans over 1,000ft in length (about three football fields) over the town of Melk.

It is referred to as one of the most beautiful examples of baroque architecture in Europe, which you will find difficult to argue with as you tour the Imperial Staircase, Marble Hall, library, church, and surrounding gardens.



Grein, Austria

Just when you thought you had seen all the castles along the Danube, you arrive in Grein.

Greinburg is one of the oldest residential castles in Austria, wrapped in traditional pale yellow with an impressive courtyard and a turret on each corner.

Take an exclusive tour complete with a private reception and taste the centuries-old royal heritage wine.



Linz, Austria

Linz is an exciting city with a modern edge.

Take a walking tour of the UNESCO City of Media Arts or a Cultural Mile bike tour. If you are visiting over the holidays, make sure to visit the Christmas Market, where the scent of gingerbread and Linzer tort linger.

You can also travel to Český Krumlov with its cobblestone streets and baroque architecture.



Passau, Germany

Cruising into Passau will fill you with awe and excitement with the city on either side of you and bridges overhead.

Lying at the intersection of the Danube, Inn, and Ilz rivers, Passau is aptly named the City of Three Rivers.

Take a walking tour to learn about the storied past and see the beautiful churches throughout the city. The best view of the converging rivers is from Passau Castle, 300ft above the city.

Hike to the castle or spend your time at water level with a bike ride along the Inn River.



9

SWEET TOOTH
SENSATIONS TO TRY ON

The Danube



Explore these nine must-try sweet tooth sensations while cruising down the Danube River.

Linzer Torte

The Linzer Torte is a traditional Austrian pastry named after the city Linz, a UNESCO City of Media Arts. It's made from a shortcrust pastry, filled with jam or preserves, and topped with a lattice design. The oldest recipe found dates back over 300 years, so enjoy a slice of cake and a slice of history at the same time.

Danube Waves Cake

A Danube Waves Cake, or Donauwellen Kuchen, is a German marble cake made with chocolate, vanilla, and cherries. Grab a slice of cake for your adventures if you're visiting Germany for Oktoberfest or the Christmas Markets.

Vargabeles

Vargabeles is a Hungarian sweet noodle cheese pie, and before you say "pass" give it a shot. There are a few variations of ingredients, but it's traditionally made with egg noodles soaked in milk, mixed with whipped egg and cheese, and layered in phyllo dough. Some people add raisins, vanilla, or cinnamon for an extra flavor before baking.

Pralines

When passing through Passau, Germany, stop for gold-capped pralines; it's a specialty. These chocolates are topped with 23-carat gold leaves. They are a rich treat and a wonderful gift from your travels.

Apricots

In Austria, the apricots are called Marille and have a "protected designation of origin" similar to the wines of Italy and France.

It is believed that apricots were first brought to the Danube region around the 1st century and have been a large source of income for the area since the early 1900s. In the village of Dürnstein, you will find many shops to sample apricots in various ways, like jams, liquors, and even dumplings, called Marillenknoedel.

Sacher Torte

Deemed the World's Most Famous Cake, the Sacher-Torte originated in 1832 in the Sacher Hotel in Vienna. The cake is simple and has several ingredients, including eggs, chocolate, and apricot jam. Visit the Sacher Hotel's cafe and enjoy the iconic treat. Bring a few home to share with friends and family if you're looking for a souvenir.

Doboška

When in Bratislava, plan a trip to Konditorei Kormuth patisserie. Not only will you be blown away by the assortment of cakes, but the decor is also quite literally otherworldly. Sip on Italian coffees and munch on Doboška, a blueberry cake, or Esterhazy made with Hazelnut creme; all served on antique porcelain china.

Trdelník

You've probably seen many images of Trdelník when looking at Prague Christmas Markets but never knew what they were - or how to say them. These thin pastries are sliced into strips and rolled around a stick. Then they get topped with sugar and spices, hello cinnamon, and then cooked over a flame. Yum!

Palačinky

Palačinky is essentially a crêpe that can be found in Prague and other cities along the Danube. The fillings are sweet cheese covered in vanilla sauce or a fruity jam with sugar. If you're feeling frisky, top it off with liquor!

Pro Tip: make sure to pack comfortable clothes. You're going to need them after eating all of these sweets!





5 CELEBRATIONS TO HAVE ON A
river cruise

5 CELEBRATIONS TO HAVE ON A RIVER CRUISE

Do you have a big milestone that you're looking to celebrate? Why not celebrate on a river cruise?

River cruises are a great way to see multiple cities in one trip without the stress of hotel hopping and hauling your luggage everywhere.

From the plains of Africa to the vineyards and Christmas markets of Europe, the Nile in Egypt to the lush jungles of the Amazon. There are first-class river cruise options across the world to commemorate your big moments.

For the newlywed who just can't wait to see what's out there, why not embark on a river cruise for your honeymoon?

Spend 7-14 days sightseeing and taking in some of the world's most iconic places with an exciting voyage along one of Earth's rivers.

Appreciate ancient cultures while still having plenty of time to take it easy - you decide how active or laid back each day will be!

Celebrate Your Anniversary

Celebrate your anniversary in style by hopping on a romantic river cruise. Unpack only once and explore different destinations each day while you toast to the years of wedded bliss ahead!

Don't let the busyness of life rob you from experiencing this special milestone - make it memorable with an unforgettable journey downriver - like we did for our anniversary in Bordeaux.



5 CELEBRATIONS TO HAVE ON A RIVER CRUISE

Discover your ancestral homeland

Are you curious about your ancestry?

Thanks to the ever-growing DNA-testing phenomenon, it's easier than ever to learn more about where we come from. What better way to explore this unique part of every individual's history than by a family reunion on an international river cruise? From Germany and Eastern Europe along the Rhine River, Budapest or Prague down Danube - there are so many incredible itineraries available for those searching their European roots.

But if looking beyond the European continent – what Africa, Asia or South America have in store based upon one's genetic make up can provide another kind of amazing experience! So no matter which corner of our globe carries personal heritage marks within us – now is the perfect time to go out and explore them like never before!



Celebrate a Graduation

Celebrate your newly graduated friends and family by treating them to an unforgettable river cruise!

Whether it be a trip down the Mekong River in Asia, or sailing along Egypt's Nile just like ancient Pharaohs did centuries ago—you can open their eyes up to new cultures, history & adventure. Gather all of the graduates in your family for one grand journey that they'll never forget!

5 CELEBRATIONS TO HAVE ON A RIVER CRUISE



Celebrate a Milestone Birthday

Planning and coordinating a birthday party can be stressful, and if you're the official party planner, you're unlikely to relax long enough to enjoy a party.

Why not call your friends and say, "Hey, I'm turning 40, 50, 60, or 70, and we're taking a cruise through the Douro Valley in Portugal. I'd love for you to come."

Voila! Once onboard, you and your friends can sit back and relax while you enjoy first-class service, 5-star meals, great wine, and the award-winning river cruise itineraries.

Whether you're a thrill-seeker hiking to a castle, or you prefer sitting on the deck sipping wine and enjoying the view, there is a river cruise for you.

All that's left to decide is which birthday celebration is next on the calendar and whom would you like to travel with?

2 STUNNING CITIES TO EXTEND YOUR *river cruise experience*



For a truly unforgettable holiday, why not extend your stay with an extra 3 days! Explore picture-perfect cobbled streets filled with centuries of rich culture waiting at every turn - all without taking another flight!

With Prague and Istanbul calling out to you from far-flung lands, choose one of these two cities for a voyage back in time. There are dozens of cities to choose from for your pre/post-cruise extension.

Prague, Czech Republic

Experience the captivating culture of Prague, a city bursting with history and charm. From its enchanting architecture to renowned cuisine, there is something for everyone in one of Europe's most beautiful cities!



EXPERIENCES TO HAVE IN PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC

Take a beer bath

If you are looking for a truly unique travel experience, Bernard's acclaimed beer is the answer. Take a break from your usual sightseeing and go soothe your mind and senses with a luxurious indulgence. Your journey will begin with an unlimited tap of Bernard's signature Czech specialty, allowing you to relax while quenching your thirst. Then you can dip into a private bubbling tub adorned with heated beds, ensuring that you fully enjoy this special treat. And if that isn't enough, there is still the option to book a massage for extra pampering. With all these choices, Bernard's beer is sure to provide an unforgettable travel experience!

Enjoy a medieval dinner & entertainment

A three or five-course medieval meal, coupled with unlimited drinks, provides an unforgettable evening for every travel enthusiast. Adding to it is an extravagant entertainment show that includes talented swordsmen, jugglers, belly dancers and acoustic music making the evening one to remember forever. What makes this experience truly special is that it grants travel adventurers a chance to step back in time when knights and princesses ruled the world. It totally redefines travel experiences and is an offer no travel enthusiast should refuse!



EXPERIENCES TO HAVE IN PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC

Old Town Gastronomy Tour

Pilsen (located just an hour from Prague) is the perfect travel destination if you're looking for a mix of culture and cuisine. As you explore the city, you'll get to see first-hand how it serves as a regional hub of gastronomy, industry, religion, education, sport, and culture. On your tour, you'll have the chance to indulge in some delicious local food while getting a real sense of what Pilsen is all about. Get ready for an unforgettable travel experience and discover why this Czech city has been such an important historic site for centuries!



Koneprusy Caves & Karlštejn Castle

Are you an adventurous and curious traveler looking to explore the best of Bohemian Nature and Culture? Join a small-group tour that includes a visit to the Koněprusy Caves, Karlštejn Castle, and Big Amerika flooded quarry.

The Koněprusy Caves are among the oldest caves in Central Europe where you will be able to admire its amazing rock formations and crystal clear underground lakes.

Take a short trek up to the 15th century Karlštejn Castle, one of the most impressive palaces in Czech Republic built by King Charles IV.

And lastly, take your breath away with stunning views at Big Amerika flooded quarry.

EXPERIENCES TO HAVE IN PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC

Prague: Classical Concert in the Spanish Synagogue

If travel and the performing arts thrill you, then experiencing a classical, modern, and Jewish music concert at the beautiful Spanish Synagogue in Prague ought to be on your bucket list!

This incredible synagogue was built in 1868, offering stunning architecture and intricate designs that lend an unforgettable atmosphere. Going to one of its concerts is like stepping into history with chamber ensembles or solo performers playing pieces from some of the most renowned composers of all time.

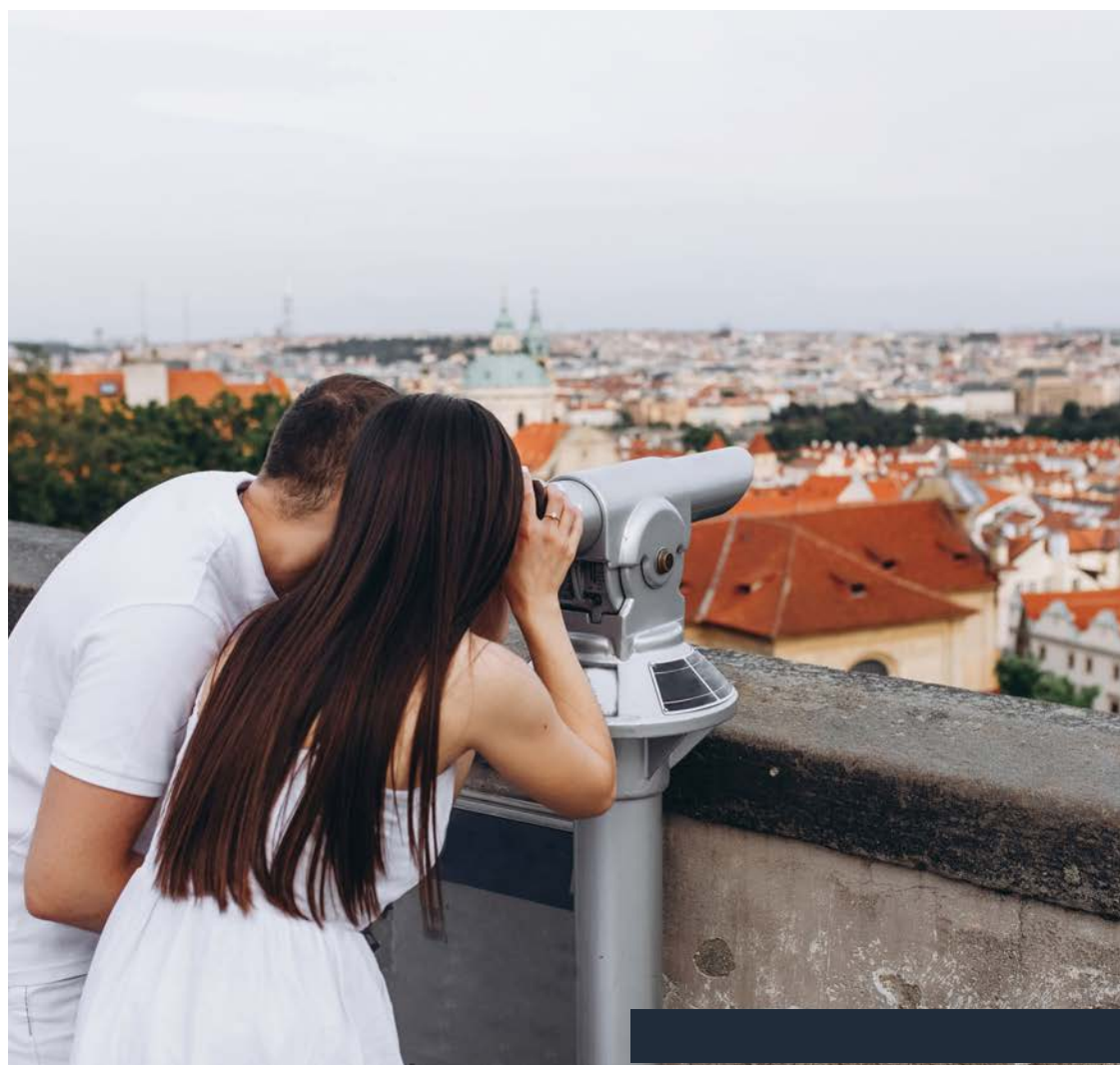
What's more, a ticket to the Spanish Synagogue gives you access to all other concerts occurring throughout this Prague landmark for 3 days. If you have an appreciation for fine arts, do not miss out on visiting this historic gem.

Prague Castle: Tour with Local Guide

Prague Castle is a must-see historical site that provides stunning views of the city. With a guided tour, travelers will be able to appreciate Prague's centuries of history and culture as their expert guide leads them through the castle grounds, taking advantage of security line and ticket line benefits exclusive to their tour.

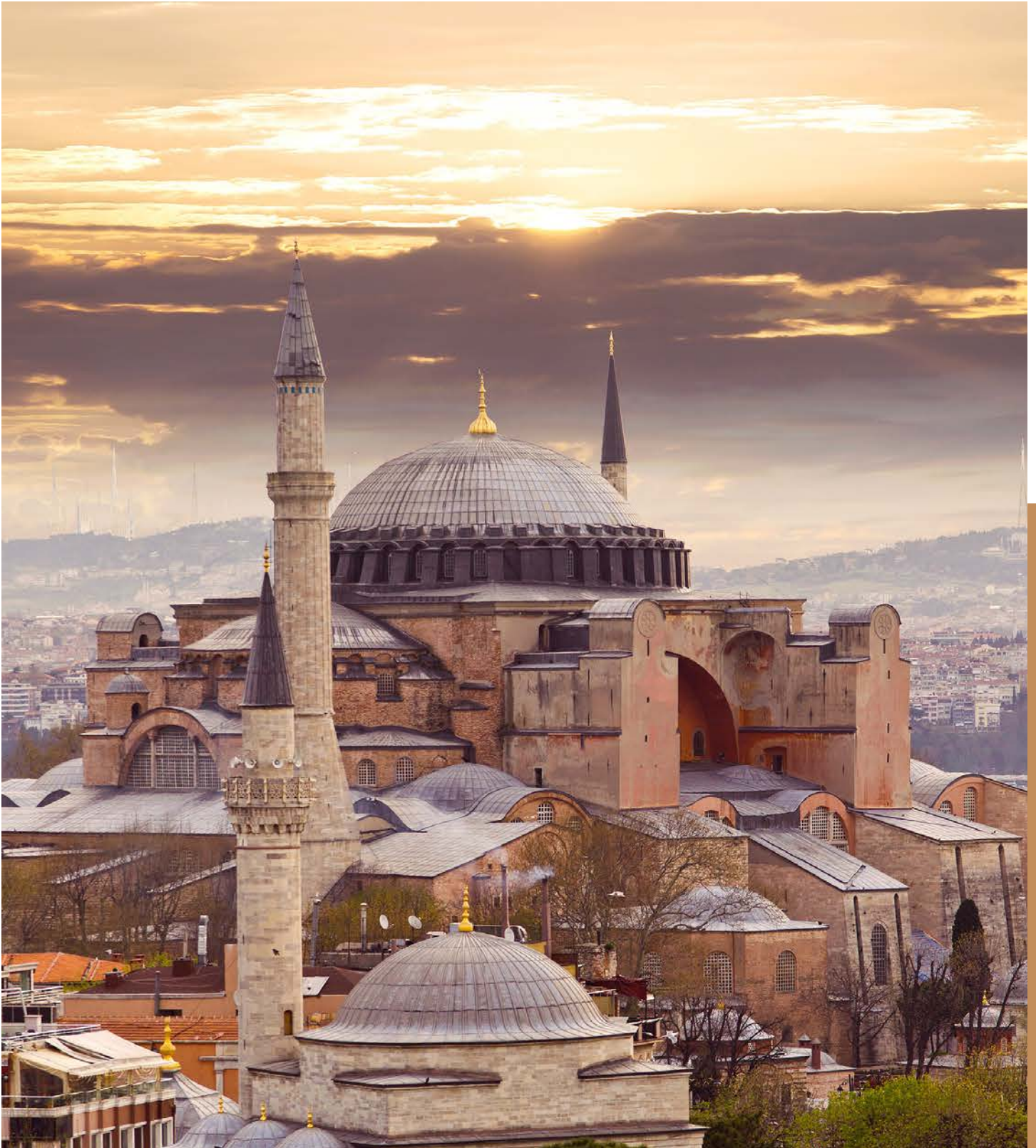
As they explore the grand architecture and walk in the footsteps of past kings and emperors, visitors can marvel at the intricate detail and fine craftsmanship featured within some of its most celebrated areas including St. Vitus Cathedral, Golden Lane, and Daliborka Tower — all in the company of knowledgeable guides to explain and tell captivating stories about the monuments along their route.

With such a perfect combination of conveniently quick access points and a wealth of fascinating information that only a well-versed tour guide can provide, it's easy to see why so many people find themselves wanting more out of every trip when visiting Prague Castle.



Istanbul, Turkey

Istanbul is a captivating city that offers an unforgettable mix of ancient history and modern amenities. Discover some of the world's most iconic sights, from the Blue Mosque to Hagia Sofia, or explore vibrant neighborhoods with unique architecture for stunning photo opportunities. With its delicious cuisine and dynamic culture, Istanbul will be sure to leave you wanting more!



EXPERIENCES TO HAVE IN ISTANBUL, TURKEY

Marvel at The Hagia Sophia

If there's one thing to see while visiting Istanbul, it should be the Hagia Sophia. This marvel of engineering is almost 1,500 years old and was initially built as a cathedral in 537 AD. As the single greatest architectural achievement of the Byzantine Empire, it served as the seat of the Orthodox Patriarch of Constantinople for nine centuries before its conversion into a mosque by Ottoman rulers in 1453. After functioning as a museum for over 500 years, the building regained its religious identity and welcomed worshippers once more in July 2020 as a mosque. It stands today as a symbol of two empires united under one roof — a can't miss destination for anyone exploring Istanbul's rich history.

Discover The Blue Mosque

The Blue Mosque is a must-see for anyone visiting Istanbul. It is one of the most iconic landmarks in the world and houses a vast collection of Islamic artifacts, including beautiful hand-painted tiles and over 20,000 handmade Iznik ceramics. Located in the heart of Sultanahmet, the mosque has earned its nickname from the striking blue tiles that adorn its exterior walls. The mosque was constructed nearly 400 years ago by Sultan Ahmed I and remains an important symbol of religious tolerance in Turkey and around the world. Visitors to Blue Mosque must remember that it is still an active place of worship and to be sure to dress appropriately and maintain quiet respect while exploring its grandeur.

Explore The Grand Bazaar

The Grand Bazaar in Istanbul, Turkey is a traveler's paradise. With its colorful displays of vibrant fabrics, exquisite jewelry, intricately painted ceramics and iconic Turkish delights amongst other treasures, the visit will leave you enthralled for hours. As the oldest continuously running marketplace in world history - dating back to 1455 - a visit to the Bazaar can feel like taking a step back in time. Visitors enjoy keeping their eyes peeled for exciting unexpected gems that can be discovered around almost every corner. From bargaining with shop-keepers for the best price for your next treasure to being taken aback by intricate architecture as you journey through passageways and alleys - The Grand Bazaar is an unforgettable experience not to be missed.



Visit the Basilica Cistern

Travelers to Istanbul should definitely plan a trip to visit the incredible Basilica Cistern! Built over 1,500 years ago, it is one of the most awe-inspiring features that the city has to offer. Descend into its depths and marvel in the extraordinary feat of engineering. Take in all its fascinating features, such as its two Medusa heads and 336 marble columns, some of which are said to be from the former Temple of Apollo. The hauntingly meditative atmosphere is sure to captivate visitors, especially lovers of ancient history!

Adore the beauty of Topkapi Palace

Built for over 400 years, Istanbul's Topkapi Palace is the cradle of the Ottoman Empire.

This beautiful and majestic palace is made up of many gardens, terraces and pavilions, with four large courtyards containing fountains, flowers, timber lion statues and mosques. As each Sultan took power, they added to the grandeur of the palace by adding walled-in gardens filled with orchards and fields of tulips.

The distinct architecture is breathtakingly unique due to its combination of Eastern Islamic elements mixed in with Byzantine styles of art. From its Harem located below ground level to its Pearl Kiosk at the center courtyard, it is no wonder why this marvelous palace has been crowned a UNESCO world heritage site. Your visit to Istanbul is simply not complete without exploring Topkapi Palace!

Learn to cook Turkish food

Taking a cooking class in Istanbul is an authentic, immersive experience like no other.

By learning from the locals and soaking up their culinary wisdom and culture, you could come away from Istanbul having truly discovered its delicious secrets and with tangible skills that you can take home and continue to use for years to come.

Relax at a Turkish Bath

A Turkish bath is a truly authentic and unique experience that has to be seen to be believed. This bathing ritual, with origins in the Ottoman Empire, is not just about taking a dip but about experiencing total body cleansing and relaxation. It includes a variety of activities, such as intense steam baths infused with essential oils, exfoliating scrubs and therapeutic massages. In some authentic Turkish baths, you can also enjoy an authentic Eastern-style tea ceremony with herbal tea blended to ancient recipes for maximum health benefits. Whatever you choose, you'll leave feeling completely refreshed and rejuvenated!





TEASE THE TASTEBUDS ON THE DANUBE
with these 10 dishes



10 Great Foods to Try on the Danube

How often have you been asked about a favorite destination, and the first thing that comes to mind is an incredible meal you had? Food is a central theme of river cruise holidays, and there is no shortage of iconic culinary specialties up and down the Danube. So bring your appetite, never say no to dessert, and don't leave the Danube without trying these fantastic foods.

Zemiakové Placky - Bratislava

If there were one vegetable that encapsulated the city of Bratislava, it would be potatoes. If you spend time in the Slovakian capital, try zemiakové placky, potato pancakes with garlic oil. Another favorite is bryndzové halušky, potato dumplings with sheep cheese and delicious roasted bacon.



Wiener Würstels - Vienna

When you think of Vienna and fine foods, there are so many options to try, but for something authentic, look for a Würstelstand, a traditional Austrian 'wiener stand.' These stalls were created during the Austro-Hungarian empire to help war veterans earn a living.



Traditional Gulyás – Budapest

You've probably had Hungarian goulash, but have you had it mere steps from Buda Castle after you've spent the day exploring this beautiful European capital? This hearty stew is often made with root vegetables, beef, pork, and various spices, including paprika.



Mekitsi – Vidin

Dating back to the 1st century, Vidin packs a small punch in culinary specialties. You can't leave this little town without trying mekitsi's from a local bakery. These little donuts are stuffed with cheese and often eaten with local cheese and a bit of jam or honey.



Ćevap – Belgrade

Belgrade is one of Europe's most underrated culinary capitals, and you'll likely want to try everything. One of the most popular dishes to try is Ćevapi, a serving of 10 fingerlings of minced meat with chopped onions, seasoned with garlic, paprika, and pepper.



Wachauer marillenknödel – Dürnstein

Perched upon the banks of the Danube sits the picturesque Wachau Valley and the beautiful town of Dürnstein, home to the world's best apricots. Wachauer marillenknödel is a decadent apricot-filled dumpling rolled in butter-fried breadcrumbs and topped with a sprinkle of powdered cinnamon.

Cambozola – Passau

You can't possibly leave the Danube without having tried as many kinds of cheese along the way as possible. Cambozola is a beloved local favorite in Passau – It's cow-based triple cream cheese. If the name sounds a little familiar, it's because it's a cross between Gorgonzola and Camembert cheese.

River Fish – Novi Sad

As one of the most ethnic and culturally diverse towns in the region, Novi Sad offers up the enthusiastic foodie a plethora of fusion foods to sate the appetite. But river fish is something you'll find in just about every restaurant. Make sure to try perch, carp, sturgeon, or grilled catfish.

Pork Knuckle – Würzburg

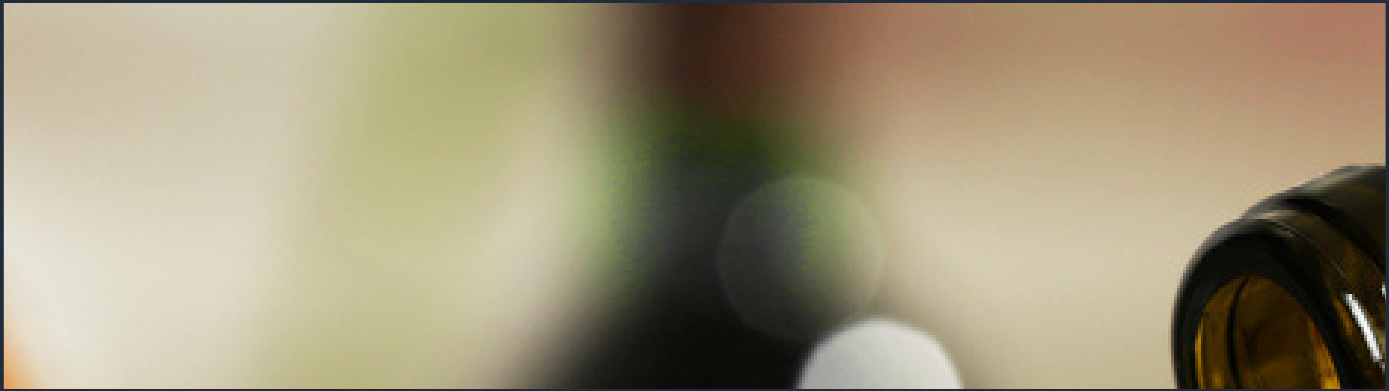
Würzburg is another multicultural city with myriad options, including many French restaurants. However, if you're after something authentic, pork knuckle is a local favorite – Cooked in beer and spices.

Topfentascherl (Curd Pastry) – Melk

If you're trying to satisfy a sweet tooth craving, there is no better place than Europe – It's just one big open bakery, and Topfentascherl will address that craving. Topfentascherl is a delicious pastry filled with curd and fruits like banana or apricot and is the perfect accompaniment to an aromatic cup of coffee.



Rich coffee culture, delectable desserts, buttery pastries, and savory treasures are waiting for you in every port. Food is likely going to be a reoccurring theme of your river cruise. Bring an empty stomach, an open mind, and some stretchy pants because river cruising along the Danube should always be a 'no carb left behind' type of experience you'll remember for years to come.



savor these **8** regional wines



Cruising the Danube River delights with its spectacular landscapes of mountains, valleys and towns that look as if time has stood still for centuries.

Vienna and Budapest beckon against a backdrop of fertile vineyards ripe with varietals like Merlot's chocolatey-vanilla profile or Riesling's honeyed green apple offerings.

But don't miss out on local gems unknown to most - experience the region up close by tasting some lesser known wines from along this beautiful riverbank!

Wiener Gemischter Satz

Experience the complexity of a Wiener Gemischter Satz - an Austrian white wine made with mixed grapes that blend together in harmony to create something truly special. This white blend takes on the flavor characteristics of each component and ends up with hints of pear, citrus zest, and pepper. Its delicious combination will surely tantalize your taste buds!

Blaufränkisch

Blaufränkisch is an Austrian varietal renowned for its piercing aromas of cherries and spices, as well as a distinctly full body that brings depth to the glass. With layers of complexity that evolve with every sip, this bold yet balanced red will truly tantalize your taste buds!

Weißburgunder/Weissburgunder

Weissburgunder is a luscious white wine that offers an exquisite blend of crisp flavors. This fruity and floral delight pairs nicely with any meal, making it the perfect companion for your next dinner gathering!

Müller-Thurgau

Müller-Thurgau is grown and produced in several wine regions in Germany, including the Baden Wine Region, between the Danube and the Rhine Rivers, bordering France. This full-bodied white wine is considered an everyday drinking wine and is most commonly compared to Riesling, although with much less fanfare.

Grüner Veltliner

Grüner Veltliner is a celebrated wine in Austria but is also produced outside of Budapest in Etyek-Buda. This white wine is excellent for aging, often up to 10 years or more, and contains a very high acidity, making it great to pair with delicate fish and other seafood.

Zweigelt

Zweigelt is comparable to Pinot Noir in both body and flavor profiles. The Zweigelt grape is fruity and light; thus, its used in making rosé wine.

Zweigelt is often served chilled and enjoyed during the summer months in Germany. Its light body with hints of dark cherry, herbs, and ripe fruit makes it easy to pair with most cuisine, including hearty meats or light salads.

Silvaner

Silvaner is a unique grape variety that produces fresh, vibrant wines with aromas of ripe green apples and white flowers. Its signature sharp acidity gives it an unmistakable zing on the palate - perfect for food pairing!

Olaszrizling

Olaszrizling may sound like Riesling, but the two grapes are not related.

Olaszrizling is often considered a table wine, but this Hungarian varietal offers both depths of flavor and structure. This white wine contains a high acidity level with mild sweetness and, when made correctly, has well-rounded tannins.

Often blended with Chardonnay in other countries such as Austria, Olaszrizling pairs nicely with delicate fish and light chicken dishes.



6 special events

ON THE DANUBE TO ADD BEFORE, DURING OR AFTER YOUR RIVER CRUISE





6 FESTIVALS ON THE DANUBE

The Danube River twists and turns its way through some of the most beautiful landscapes in the world while running through some of the most culturally beautiful cities in all of Europe. To take in the cultural landscape of the Danube, here are six festivals that celebrate the cities and regions that line the banks of the river. You might even catch one or two on your river cruise!

Christmas Markets

First and foremost, the Christmas Markets that line the Danube are scenes out of fairytales and can be found from Austria to Germany and Hungary.

In Vienna, enjoy the Baroque architecture and how it mixes with the beautiful lights and decorations of the market.

In Nuremberg, order a warm mug of mulled wine for the adults and traditional hot chocolate for the kids.

In Budapest, shop for locally made gifts from vendors as you stroll under the building-sized Christmas Trees.

No matter which of the gorgeous towns or cities you are in, take the time to slow down, smell the trees as they mix with the smell of fresh gingerbread cookies, enjoy the warming cuisine from local purveyors, and remember the twinkle of the decorations and the joy on the faces of everyone around you.

Oktoberfest

No trip down the Danube would be complete without stopping in Vilshofen for a traditional Oktoberfest experience. If you're not going in late October or November, you'll still love it.

Delight in walking through the picturesque town while embracing one of Germany's most time-honored traditions, enjoying a German Lager!





The Wiener Festwochen

Vienna's Festival is a celebration that draws thousands of people each year!

Visitors are mesmerized by the city's energy, and it doesn't take long to see why: from captivating art exhibitions to invigorating theater performances and thrilling concerts - this festival has something for everyone.

The Old Town Festival

Nuremberg, Germany, knows how to throw a party!

The Old Town Festival has been an annual event in Nuremberg since 1970 and is an absolute favorite of the locals, although all are welcomed as locals to this festival.

Celebrated the second half of September, each year the festivities are kicked off by the mayor tapping the ceremonial first keg, and a brass band takes it from there. If you're still not sold by the beer, there is music, dancing, traditional food, and even rides for the kids.



Schmankerlfest

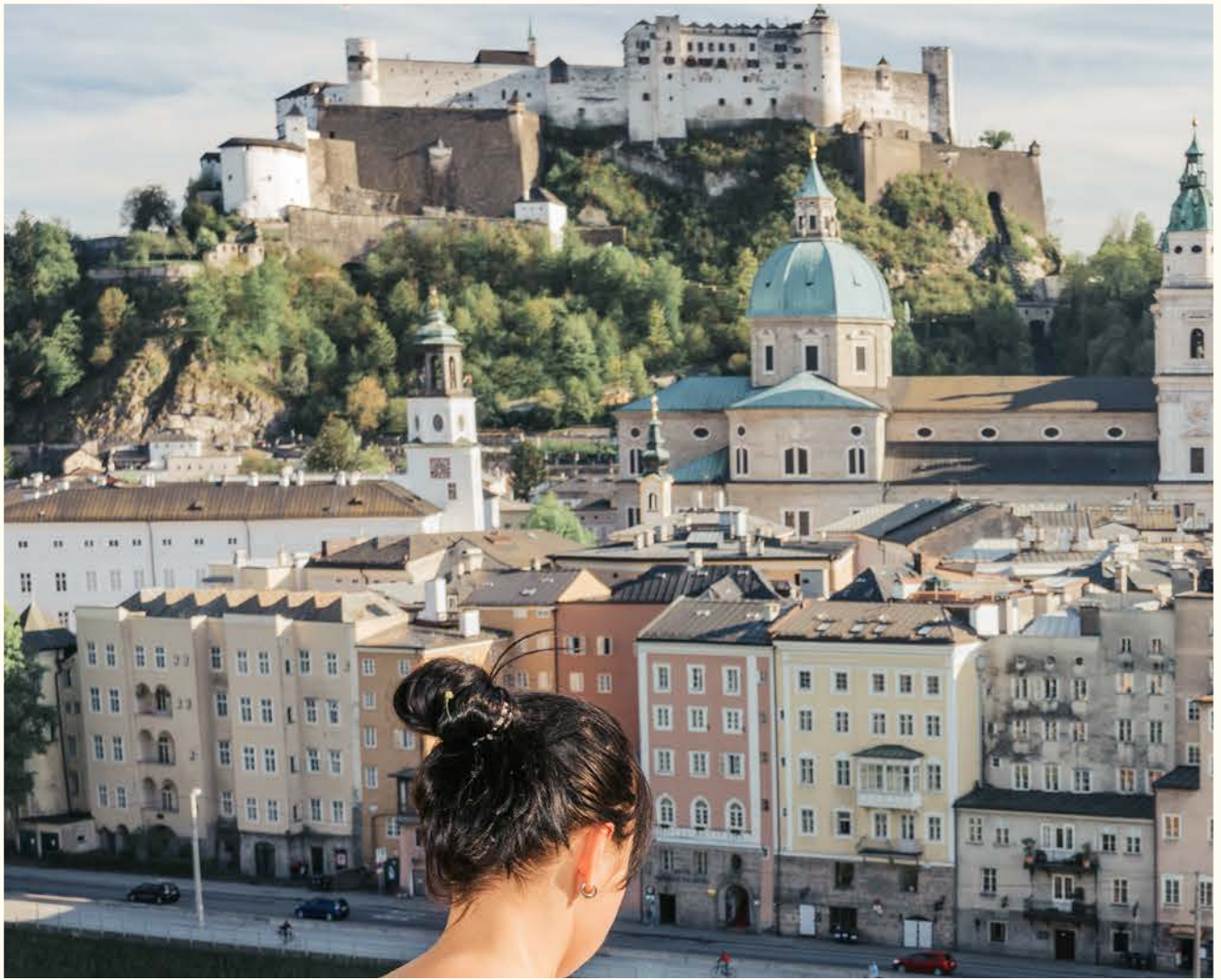
Held each year in different cities in Austria in summer and early fall, this festival is a treat for both the ears and stomach. Schmankerl is a German word that translates to "tasty morsel," so you can expect lots of delicious food at this festival. The food is provided by local restaurants, food vendors, and farmers.

These culinary delights include a wide variety of dishes, including schnitzel, sausages, dumplings, and strudel. Most of the food stalls will also serve local beers and wines to wash it all down. After your fill, sit back and watch the local musical and dance performers.

Budapest Wine Festival

For 30 years, Budapest has been hosting an annual wine festival considered the most beautiful in Europe.

This four-day event is held in the Castle District of Buda and emphasizes Hungarian wines like Tokaji but welcomes winemakers from around the world (September 7-10, 2023).



A TYPICAL DAY ON YOUR
river cruise experience



SUNRISE TO BEDTIME - WHAT A TYPICAL DAY RIVER CRUISING LOOKS LIKE

A river cruise is designed from sunrise to sunset for your ultimate enjoyment. Each day offers something different without ever-changing hotels, sitting in traffic between destinations, or re-packing your bag.

There are plenty of onboard amenities to complement the array of activities ashore, delicious meals, and the award-winning service you'll receive from the crew onboard.

So what does a typical day of river cruising look like?

Morning

Wake up at your leisure, and don't be surprised when you look out the window and see you are in a brand-new country!

Early risers will enjoy a light breakfast with coffee or tea while they check their email using the ship's free wifi or take a walk on deck. If you're looking for some morning exercise, take a stretch class on the Skydeck or a spin class at the back of the ship.

Round out the morning with a hearty, healthy breakfast from the extensive menu in the dining room or a simple coffee and pastry for the late risers.



Throughout the day

Enjoy the freedom of making decisions as you go! There's no need to plan ahead, let your curiosity be your guide. Explore ashore with excursions leaving throughout the day, explore on a bicycle tour, or venture off on a unique experience and discover things at your own pace.

Of course feel free to breeze on and off the ship as you please, with no lines and a friendly crew waiting, your home away from home will be waiting for you.

Evening

Stretch your legs with an evening walk ashore or a swim on the Skydeck.

On your way back to your room to freshen up before dinner, grab a free postcard from reception to send to a loved one. Pen a "Wish you were here" note to the folks back home, and the ship will mail it on your behalf for free!

Enjoy dinner in the dining room with complimentary wine hand-selected by European sommeliers.

Every day offers something new on the menu that will surely surprise and delight. For something even more special, enjoy a meal at the award-winning Chef's Table.

Whether you were ashore all day sightseeing and exploring or onboard enjoying some R&R, have a nightcap in the bar to toast to a day well spent.

Alternatively, return to your beautifully appointed cabin to finish the day with a cup of tea or a nightcap on your balcony before turning in with a movie before bed.

Finally, as you lay down to sleep, rest easy knowing you can do it all again tomorrow in a brand new destination.

River cruising can be as active or restful as you like, as social or independent as you like, it's all up to you!



OCEAN CRUISING TAKES YOU
TO DESTINATIONS.

RIVER CRUISING TAKES YOU
Through them



You are only one click away from
learning about your river cruise vacation

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