

AUSTRIA GERMANY HUNGARY SERBIA - DANUBE & THE BALKANS

From Passau – Vienna – Bratislava – Budapest – Belgrade – Iron Gates National Park – Passau
15-days / 14-nights river cruising with easy to moderate **GUIDED** or **SELF-GUIDED** cycling



The **River Danube** is a highlight of any tour to Europe and this is a self-guided cycling and cruising program for those who want to be more active while exploring this mighty river. We offer cabins on a floating hotel on a route that visits six countries and four capital cities. Beginning in Germany at Passau, the 'city of three rivers' where the Inn and Ilz Rivers flow into the Danube, cruise and cycle your way to **Bratislava**, the former city of Hungarian kings, **Budapest**, the 'Paris of the East', the bustling capital of Serbia, **Belgrade**, and **Vienna** with its Cathedral, beautiful town hall and Riesenrad (ferris wheel). Cycle through the rural landscapes of Croatia and Serbia, through idyllic wine regions and past commanding fortresses perched high above the river. Cruise all the way to the Iron Gates, where Serbia meets Romania and the Danube cuts dramatically through the foothills of the Balkans and the Romanian Carpathian Mountains. The cycling is generally flat and easy, along well-marked cycle paths and quiet country roads, with one day of more challenging riding over undulating terrain.

On the majestic River Danube, spacious, traditionally built cruise ships carry up to 150 passengers, with an attentive crew and a relaxed atmosphere. Regional cuisine is served to reflect the countries visited. Onboard there is a restaurant and bar and a sun deck with comfortable deck chairs. There are 75 comfortably furnished cabins on three decks: Main, Middle and Upper. Middle and Upper deck cabins have windows that can open.

Departs Passau: 25th April, 23rd May, 20th June, 18th July, 8th, 29th August, 26th September, 2020

Cost from: **Self-guided:** \$2865 per person, twin-share – low season, Main Deck Bunk Cabin
\$4130 per person, twin-share – low season, Superior Upper Deck Twin (Lower Beds) Cabin

Guided: \$3545 per person, twin-share – low season, Main Deck Bunk Cabin
\$4815 per person, twin-share – low season, Superior Upper Deck Twin (Lower Beds) Cabin

High season supplement from \$175 per person applies on some departure dates – ask for details

Single cabins are available with a single supplement dependent on cabin type – ask for details

Self-guided tour Includes: 14 nights' accommodation in twin-share outside cabins with ensuite and air-conditioning; full board (breakfast, packed lunch and dinner); welcome cocktail; onboard entertainment and Gala Dinner with farewell cocktail; hire of 21-speed hybrid bike with saddlebag; detailed route map and cycling information (one set per cabin); port fees & charges.

Guided tour includes the items above, plus services of a Bike Tour Guide on the daily cycling route, ferry rides, Budapest, Belgrade & Vienna city bus tours, Bike Helmet.

Not Included: Arrival/departure transfers, entrance fees, excursion and sightseeing fees, gratuities or personal expenses. For clients on self-guided tours, bike helmets are available for purchase on-board (cost approx. €25).

E-Bikes: a limited number of E-bikes are available for hire at extra cost – please ask for details.

Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on 1800 331 582 for details or reservations



Suggested route: Passau – Vienna – Bratislava – Budapest – Belgrade – Iron Gates – Passau

Daily city or sightseeing excursions with guide are available for extra cost and can be booked onboard.

Day 1: Arrive in Passau

Passau, in Germany close to the Bavarian/Austrian border, is also known as the *City of Three Rivers*. Boarding time is at 4.00pm. If time allows, Passau is worth a look, with its charming Old Town and features such as the world's largest church organ at Stephansdom. Begin your cycle cruising holiday with a welcome cocktail and dinner with live music as the boat departs at 5pm and moves through the romantic Danube valley.

Day 2: Schlögen Danube Bend | Oberzell – Obermühl

cycling @ 35km

Enjoy a day's cycling from Oberzell through the ruggedly romantic Danube Bend at Schlögen, one of the most beautiful sections of the river, lined with sleepy farming villages. Along the way, take a break at Austria's only Trappist monastery in Engelhartzell, or perhaps drop in at one of the many inviting cider taverns. Re-join the ship in the charming village of Obermühl, before sailing into the night.

Day 3: Devin – Bratislava

cycling @ 43km

A narrow cycle path runs along the Iron Curtain from the castle ruins in Devin to the palace of Schloss Hof, which boasts one of the most magnificent baroque gardens in Europe. Follow a stretch of untouched countryside and a short time later, the vibrant city of Bratislava. There is an optional tour of the Slovakian capital (where Hungarian kings were once crowned) by foot and miniature train, beginning with a glorious view from the fortress perched on a hill overlooking the city and ending with a walk through the beautifully restored city centre.

Day 4: Budapest | Excursion to Szentendre

cycling @ 54km (or rest day)

We have wonderful views of Budapest's most famous buildings from the water this morning. You can either discover the city that straddles the Danube on a guided tour (optional), or cycle to the delightful little town of Szentendre with its many artists and galleries. And this evening there is an optional Hungarian folklore show with traditional music and folk dance accompanied by wine and hearty local food.

Day 5: Baja – Mohacs

cycling @ 37km

From the quiet baroque town of Baja, noted for its fish soup, cycle along the flood protection dykes in the Gemenc floodplain, through sleepy river landscapes and past fields of sunflowers. Finish by taking the ferry to the little town of Mohacs on the Danube, the site of two battles with the Ottoman Turks.

Day 6: Belgrade (rest day)

Explore the boisterous and bustling Serbian capital at the confluence of the Sava and the Danube Rivers by bike, or take an optional bus tour and learn about the rise and fall of Yugoslavia. In the evening, visit a colourful folklore show with traditional dances from all parts of the country, followed by typical regional specialities in the Bohemian district of Skadarlija with lively folk music from a Serbian band (optional).

Day 7: Cataract Canyons / Iron Gates National Park (rest day)

See the stunning fjord-like landscape from the ship's deck. The river cuts through the Romanian Carpathian mountains and the foothills of the Balkan mountain range. A spectacular landscape with steep gorges, dark forests with historic monuments and impregnable fortresses on the shores that reflect in the rivers blue water.

Day 8: Novi Sad – Ilok

cycling @ 48km

The imposing Petrovaradin fortress perches high above the provincial capital of the Vojvodina. Cycle upstream along a flat cycle path then take a ferry to reach the gentle foothills of the Fruska Gora, with its orchards, vineyards and farming villages. Everything in the medieval town of Ilok revolves around wine. During an evening tour of the town, there is the opportunity to sample Serbian wines at a wine cellar (optional).

Day 9: Batina – Mohacs**cycling @ 42km**

Today we cycle through the area known as the 'Backa', weaving through the border triangle where Croatia, Serbia and Hungary meet. This fertile agricultural area is dotted with canola fields, flowering bright yellow in season, and you may feel like you have gone back in time as farmers stop to greet you and now and then you see a horse-drawn carriage. You cycle through the pristine natural environment of Nemzeti National Park, and then take the ferry to Mohacs. If time permits, visit the White Stork Museum or the Battle of Mohacs memorial.

Day 10: Kalocsa – Solt**cycling @ 50km**

Kalocsa is the "Paprika Capital" of Hungary. The town's colourful houses are decorated with hand-painted, bright floral patterns and the cathedral's towers can be seen from afar as they rise into the skies from the flat Hungarian plain. Visiting the Paprika Museum you learn all there is to know about Hungary's favourite spice. Continue your journey on cycle path alongside a flood protection dyke through the vast expanse of the *puszta* (grassland), past corn fields and orchards that stretch as far as the eye can see until you reach Solt, birthplace of the famous conductor Sir George Solti. Vecsey Castle and the library with some 34,000 books are worth a visit.

Day 11: Danube Bend – Esztergom**cycling @ 43km**

The Danube is framed by steep wooded hills as it flows through the picturesque, hilly landscape of the "Hungarian Wachau". Szentendre Island, in the middle of the Danube, has a charming rural atmosphere thanks to its orchards, vineyards and pastures. Continue your journey on idyllic cycle paths through picturesque villages. The dome of the imposing basilica in Esztergom sits high over the Danube and can be seen from afar. Hungary's largest church, its famed red marble chapel is decorated with Tuscan Renaissance motifs.

Day 12: Vienna**free day to explore & optional excursions**

After so many action-packed days of cycling, take a rest day. Enjoy the breathtaking view of the floodplain forest of the Donauauen National Park and the impressive skyline as you sail into Vienna. Go for a ride on Danube Island, Vienna's favourite recreational area, cycle out to the nearby Klosterneuburg Abbey or wander through the tranquil vineyards on Kahlenberg, offering magnificent views over the city and the Danube. The day ends traditionally with a concert of classic waltz and operetta music in a historic Viennese palace (optional).

Day 13: Vienna (rest day)

Discover Vienna: from the saddle on a guided bike tour or on your own with the hop on, hop off bus (optional). Ride through the historic city centre at a leisurely pace and see the sights from close up. The magnificent Ringstraße is a reminder of times long past. Be tempted by delicious Viennese cakes and pastries in inviting coffee houses. Perhaps take some time to stroll through the quaint lanes or visit the Naschmarkt, Vienna's famous food market, a feast for the senses. End your day in Vienna in traditional fashion at a rustic wine tavern.

Day 14: Wachau | Krems – Melk**cycling @ 37km**

This last cycling day can be described as magical! The gentle hilly countryside of the Wachau with its picturesque villages, historic castles and palaces surrounded by apricot trees and terraced vineyards, is one of the loveliest stretches of the river. In Weißenkirchen the cycle path is lined with cosy vintner's taverns and you should definitely treat yourself to a break here (optional wine tasting)!

Day 15: Tour ends in Passau. This morning you have a last chance to enjoy the sunrise from the deck. You arrive at around 10.00am with disembarkation half an hour later (*don't plan onward travel until after 11.00am*).



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General Information: the suggested itinerary is indicative only and is subject to change without notice. These cruises are subject to water levels and navigation of locks and bridges, etc. All distances shown are approximate. The tour is subject to minimum numbers – status will be confirmed 4 weeks before departure – ask for further details. The ship cruises and has engine power at night, so if you are sensitive to noise, we recommend you bring earplugs, and choose a cabin on an upper deck. The ship has three decks: Main, Middle and Upper. On the Main Deck, portholes are fixed shut, and engine noise is more noticeable than on the other decks.

Outdoor Travel offers Bike & Barge or Bike & Boat cruises to many areas of Europe including the the popular Amsterdam to Bruges or Burges to Paris routes, in the Loire Valley, Bordeaux, Champagne and Burgundy or Provence in **France**, several routes in **Holland, Germany** – along the Rivers Saar, Moselle and Rhine, in **Italy** on the Po near Venice or along the Amalfi coast or in Sicily, island hopping on the spectacular Dalmatian coast of **Croatia** or **Montenegro** or to the islands of **Greece** and **Turkey**.

Contact Outdoor Travel for more details and reservations:

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