

Danube Bike & River Cruise: Budapest to Prague

Bike Vacation + Air Package

While most river cruises limit themselves to the lower Danube region, VBT takes you one step further—exploring the entire length of this fabled river, including the shores of Germany and the medieval city of Regensburg, a UNESCO World Heritage site. By day, join your local VBT trip leaders on curated routes through choice segments of the Danube Cycle Path—pedaling past small medieval villages, colorful vineyards, and fairytale castles. You'll explore the majesty of the Habsburg Empire during VBT's guided tours of Schloss Hof, Passau, and Vienna. By night, relax on your luxurious Emerald cruise ship—including a sundeck with spectacular views, a heated pool, and 5-star luxury meals and included beverages. With a wealth of onboard activities and optional excursions, this is the perfect trip for travel partners with different interests and activity levels.

Cultural Highlights

- Unpack once, then bike and boat along the Danube in four countries and three cultural capitals—all on one trip.
- Follow the car-free and scenic Danube and EuroVelo 6 bike paths in this bicycle-friendly region.
- Enjoy an exclusive Viennese concert with the music of Strauss and Mozart.
- Choose to be as active or relaxed as you wish from our menu of cycling routes and walking tours.
- Join a private guided walk and including a beer tasting in Regensburg.

What to Expect

On Shore: This tour offers easy riverside terrain, with a few climbs to reach riverside towns. Riding is primarily on bike paths of both pavement and packed gravel, with some road riding, through both urban and rural areas. Our VBT support vehicle is available every day at designated points for those who need assistance.

On Board Ship: Our group of up to 24 VBT guests will be part of a larger group on board our 182-passenger river cruise ship. Every day will include your choice of exclusive VBT activities and opportunities to join others. While in port, the ship may be docked adjacent to other ships. This means you might walk through other ships while boarding or disembarking, and some views may be obstructed while in port.

Tour Duration: 11 Days

Average Daily Mileage: 12-35 miles

Average Cycling Time: 2-5 hours

Group size: 14-24 max

Climate Information

Average High/Low Temperature (°F)

April 57°/39°, May 67°/49°, June 72°/55°, July 77°/59°, August 77°/59°, September 69°/59°, October 57°/43°

Average Rainfall (in.)

April 2.2, May 2.4, June 2.9, July 2.5, August 2.3, September 2.3, October 1.6

FLIGHT DAY: Depart from the United States or Canada

Your vacation is about to begin! Spend your first night aloft and arrive ready for an unforgettable trip.

ARRIVAL DAY: Arrive in Budapest

A VBT representative will greet you at the airport to start your adventure off right. A complimentary car service will whisk you to your hotel in Budapest. From your centrally located hotel, you are perfectly positioned to explore this charming city at your leisure.

DAY 1: VBT Bicycling tour begins / Budapest guided walk / Embark ship

At 9:30 a.m., meet your private VBT walking tour guide in the hotel lobby. Please be checked out of your room and dressed ready to walk. Join up with your local guide for a walking tour through the city's highlights. Enjoy your first lunch on board, after arriving at the dock in Budapest at approximately 1:00 p.m. to board your Emerald Cruises ship.

Your cabin may not be ready for you until 3:00 p.m. However, you are welcome to relax in the ship's common areas or explore more of Budapest.

Later, meet your trip leaders and fellow travelers on board for an introduction to the week, followed by a safety and bike-fitting session. After the introduction meeting, get acquainted with your bike on a short test ride near your ship. A welcome dinner in the ship's Reflections Restaurant and traditional Hungarian folklore performances are in store this evening.

Today's Ride Choices

Afternoon: Budapest Warm-up — 6 km (4 miles)

What to Expect:

Your warm-up ride follows paved, dedicated bike lanes alongside vehicular traffic on both banks of the Danube, with spectacular views of the city. Your ride ends at the ship. As you ride, get acquainted with your bicycle, route notes, Ride with GPS, and the locals. Check your brakes and play with shifting your full range of gears.

Cumulative Distance Range: 6 km (4 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 2: Szentendre / Vác

Spin through the lush outskirts of Buda to Szentendre, a delightful artists' community. Upon arrival in Szentendre, you'll have some free time to browse the galleries and shops and to discover its narrow Baroque streets. Afterward, you will learn how to prepare goulash and strudel before lunch at a popular restaurant. Then continue to Vác, the capital of the Danube Bend.

Admire views of the Baroque town center and the river during the ferry crossing. In Vác, we invite you first to a short walk in the city center. Afterward, you have some time at leisure before your small group rejoins the ship in Vác.

On your return to the ship, enjoy the captain's welcome cocktail and dinner. With its regional specialties, tonight's meal completes the day's Hungarian theme!

Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Budapest to Szentendre — 20 km (12 miles)

Afternoon: Szentendre to Vác ferry — 15 km (9 miles)

What to Expect:

Today's biking is on a flat, paved bike path along the Danube. The first part of the morning ride is in a relatively quiet, urban environment, while the second part is on a designated bike path away from the traffic. After lunch, an optional ride continues on country roads with some traffic to the Vác ferry. VBT offers a support vehicle from Szentendre.

Cumulative Distance Range: 20 – 35 km (12 – 21 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 3: Bratislava / Donau-Auen National Park / Hainburg

Awake this morning in Bratislava, the riverside capital of Slovakia and the only capital to border two other nations. After breakfast, disembark for an orientation walking tour with your trip leader. You'll find an unusual mix of 20th-century Communist-era architecture, Baroque palaces, medieval spires, and the narrowest house in Europe—all overlooked from a hillside by the rectangular white castle and watchtowers of Bratislava Castle.

Mid-morning, you pedal out of town, crossing the Danube by way of the "UFO" bridge, and traverse the forests and meadows of Danube-Auen National Park, one of the largest remaining floodplains of the Danube. Arrive in Hainburg, a small town on the Austrian bank, where Joseph Haydn studied music as a young boy. After a delicious lunch in a local restaurant, arrive at Schloss Hof, the "hunting lodge" of Prince Eugene of Savoy. A guided visit introduces the lodge and the estate. You're invited to roam the splendid gardens and castle.

Mid-afternoon, travel back to Slovakia and to your waiting ship. Alternatively, you can choose to cycle back along the other side of the river, though the small village of Devin, famous for its castle.

Back in Bratislava, enjoy some leisure time before dinner and a late departure for Vienna.

Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Bratislava to Schloss Hof — 34 km (21 miles)

Afternoon: Schloss Hof to Bratislava — 20 km (13 miles)

What to Expect:

Today's ride features a combination of bike paths and town streets. While both Slovakia and Austria offer bike paths, we would like to make you aware that the paths in Slovakia are slightly less well-maintained. The afternoon option is partly along a busy country road.

Cumulative Distance Range: 34 – 54 km (21 – 34 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 4: Ride along the Donauinsel / Explore Vienna

Your ship is in Vienna from very early this morning until very late tonight, so you will have a convenient base from which to explore Austria's glorious capital.

Vienna is renowned as one of Europe's most cycle-friendly cities, so you can make use of its abundant bike paths and bike lanes. This morning, our small group will enjoy a private walking tour of Vienna with the help of an experienced local tour guide.

After lunch on board, your bike ride leads to the edge of the city and along the Donauinsel, or Danube Island, a 13-mile (21 km) strip where scenic vistas and quiet riding add to your Vienna discoveries.

Or explore Vienna on your own, pursuing your own whims and interests in the city of Strauss, Beethoven, and Mahler. The gracious boulevards of Vienna are awash in culture and elegance. Head to the Ringstrasse, the circular avenue that replaced the city's demolished medieval wall, to marvel at the breathtaking architecture from the gleaming Imperial Palace and St. Stephen's Cathedral to the famed Vienna State Opera. And be sure to take a break in one of the city's famed coffee houses to experience Viennese café culture firsthand.

This evening, you are invited to join the Viennese Evening Concert excursion, featuring the music of Strauss and Mozart. This private event is available only to those on our ship.

Today's Ride Choices

Afternoon: Vienna and Danube Island — 20 km (12 miles)

What to Expect:

The afternoon ride is a relaxing and easy loop ride through the edge of the city and on Danube Island, a car-free recreational paradise.

Cumulative Distance Range: 20 km (12 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 5: Dürnstein / Cycle through the Wachau Valley / Melk

Your ship is moored in Krems, Austria, when you awake. The town and its surroundings are a center of Wachau wine production. From here, you begin to cycle toward Dürnstein. Admire its stunning powder-blue bell tower soaring above red roofs. A cliffside castle, which once held Richard the Lionheart captive, watches over the scenic town.

Later this morning, cycle through what is perhaps the most beautiful stretch of the Danube, the Wachau Valley, Austria's celebrated wine-growing region. The "Wachau Cultural Landscape" was recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2000. As for its *physical* landscape, it is blessed with lush vineyards and hillside orchards set among castle ruins, churches, and abbeys. Few places match the Wachau for its striking beauty and rich viniculture. Ride through the scenic hamlets of Spitz and Wiessenkirchen, nestled between the Danube and its rising banks.

On arrival in Melk, celebrate the ride over a lunch of Austrian specialties. Afterward, you can continue cycling along the river on a loop ride, or go for a short walk, maybe exploring the city's spectacular Benedictine Abbey, one of Europe's largest Baroque monasteries. In the afternoon, you are invited to join a private wine tasting in the city center of Melk.

Upon returning to the ship, you'll have time to relax before dinner on board. This afternoon, the ship charts a course for Engelhartzell and Passau.

Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Krems to Melk — 40 km (24 miles)

Afternoon: Optional loop outside Melk — 18 km (11 miles)

What to Expect:

Begin biking from Krems, again following the Danube Bike Path. You can extend your ride after lunch in Melk. Both options are mostly on paved bike paths with some short ascents. In some sections, the bike path is directly adjacent to the roadway.

Cumulative Distance Range: 40 – 58 km (24 – 35 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 6: Engelhartszell / Cycle to Aschach / Walking tour in Passau

Your bicycle is waiting for you in Engelhartszell, where you disembark after breakfast to start your ride. This morning's scenic route to Aschach follows the Danube Bike Path on a leisurely ride. The bike path leads through a beautiful forest as you leave Schlögener Schlinge, one of the most scenic bends of the Danube River.

Enjoy a light lunch in a local café, before taking a private shuttle to Passau, the scenic "City of Three Rivers" at the confluence of the Danube, Inn, and Ilz. Join an informative walking tour with a local guide, followed by free time to explore.

Afterward, you may join an optional hike to Veste Oberhaus, Passau's famous castle on the other side of the river. Reboard the ship late afternoon and set sail for Regensburg. Enjoy a Captain's Gala Dinner and evening activities on board.

Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Engelhartszell to Schlögen — 15 km (9 miles) | Schlögen to Aschach an der Donau — 26 km (16 miles)

What to Expect:

Bike along the right bank, on a section of the Danube Bike Path that is mainly flat and entirely paved. A shuttle will be offered from Engelhartzell to Schlögen for short-option guests.

Cumulative Distance Range: 15-41 km (9-25 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 7: Cycle from Kelheim to Regensburg / Private walking tour and beer tasting

As you'll see when you awake, Regensburg is an imposing town of red-roof houses at the convergence of the Danube and Regen rivers. Its 12th-century stone bridge features 16 arches spanning the Danube and reaching into the Old Town.

After breakfast, and a private shuttle to the picturesque small town of Kelheim, cycle along the scenic Danube banks. Following the Danube Bike Path, your ride will be easy and mostly car-free.

Pause for lunch in a charming local, Bavarian restaurant, before you arrive back to your ship early afternoon. Upon arrival in Regensburg, join a private guided tour followed by a beer tasting in downtown. Afterward, rejoin your ship for dinner with live music played by a traditional Bavarian band. The ship will moor in Regensburg, where you are welcome to enjoy an evening walk in town.

Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Kelheim to lunch — 25 km (15 miles)

Afternoon: Lunch to Regensburg — 14 km (9 miles)

What to Expect:

Today's ride options are on the famous EuroVelo 6 bike path. The Danube is your constant companion on this scenic and easy ride downstream to Regensburg. The short option ends at the lunch place, with a shuttle to Regensburg. Today is the only day with significant sections of packed gravel (about 60%). Almost the entire ride is on vehicle-free bike paths.

Cumulative Distance Range: 26 – 39 km (16 – 24 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 8: Disembark / Travel to Prague / VBT Bicycling Vacation ends

Disembark after breakfast and travel by coach to Prague, the capital of the Czech Republic, arriving in the early afternoon. Travel time is about 3.5 hours, including a mandatory driver's break of 30 minutes.

Your hotel room may not be available until after 2:00 p.m. If you arrive early, you may store your luggage with the reception desk. The rest of the day is free to relax or begin your exploration of the city.

At the hotel, your VBT representative will be available at 3:00 p.m. to provide tips to help you get around, point you to restaurants and sites that suit your interests, and help you purchase tickets for some of Prague's many high-quality classical music venues. This meet-and-greet will be followed by a short walking tour of Prague. In addition, VBT provides you with city information that includes information and recommendations on what to see and do during your stay.

Included Meals: Breakfast

DEPARTURE DAY: Departure

After an included breakfast this morning, complimentary transportation to the Prague airport will be provided (an approximately 30- to 40-minute drive, depending on traffic) for your departing flight.

Included Meals: Breakfast

Accommodations

May vary depending on departure date.

Prestige Hotel Budapest (Arrival Day)

The centrally located Prestige Hotel Budapest is just a few steps from the Danube River and the Széchenyi Chain Bridge—the most well-known symbol of Budapest. This restored palace-turned-hotel offers a blend of Hungarian hospitality in an atmosphere of timeless elegance. The guest rooms are

graceful, decorated in cream and gold with wood-laminate flooring, and include amenities like air conditioning and WiFi. And the stunning atrium lobby and common areas offer sophisticated design, as well as ultimate comfort, whether you opt to enjoy the Michelin restaurant, fitness center, Jacuzzi, or sauna.

Emerald Star-Ships (Days 1-7)

Cruise Europe's rivers on one of Emerald Cruises' "Star-Ships," each designed for luxury river cruising. Enjoy full-service hospitality, comfortable social spaces, a golf putting green, walking tracks on the sun deck, pool, and cinema. Watch the European landscape drift past over coffee or a drink in the Horizon Bar & Lounge. At mealtime, savor an endless array of delicious cuisine. The Sun Deck boasts a retractable glass roof so you can swim in the pool, enjoy a movie, or have a drink in the Riverview Lounge no matter the weather. Each ship's 72 generously proportioned suites and 20 staterooms feature all the amenities you need. VBT offers two cabin types spread across five cabin categories: Emerald Stateroom (Categories D+E), or Emerald Panorama Balcony Suite (Categories A+B+C). VBT can also request additional cabin types, based on availability.

Mamaison Hotel Riverside Prague (Day 8)

A fully renovated, upscale boutique hotel boasting an award-winning Art Nouveau design, the Mamaison Hotel Riverside Prague is ideally located on the west bank of the Vltava River, near the Charles Bridge and within easy reach of Prague's historic and tourist districts. The National Theatre, Dancing House, Prague Castle, and numerous other architectural and cultural treasures are within walking distance, and music lovers will appreciate the proximity to Mozart's Prague residence. Your air-conditioned room offers all the amenities you need for a comfortable and relaxing stay. VBT has also included a Prague Transportation Pass to allow you easy, unlimited public transportation to other areas of Prague.