

Rhine Bike & River Cruise: Basel to Amsterdam

Bike Vacation + Air Package

Travel in style along the storied Rhine River on this indulgent Bike & Boat vacation. During your cruise, you'll wrap yourself in luxury—enjoying the five-star amenities of your Emerald cruise ship. Discover a different country each day as you pedal a well-maintained, fitted VBT bike—joining your VBT trip leaders on carefully curated routes through the Rhine's picturesque villages. You'll find ample time for relaxation on board as you splash in the ship's pool, lounge on the sundeck, and enjoy your comfortable stateroom—or upgrade to a luxurious balcony suite and watch the scenic banks of the Rhine drift by from the privacy of your own cabin. Along the way, you'll stop to taste exquisite vintages, explore local wineries, and tour charming medieval cities. In the evening, enjoy a full menu of locally-inspired cuisine prepared by your ship's onboard chef.

Cultural Highlights

- Enjoy the best of both worlds: an all-inclusive river cruise and VBT Bicycling Vacation.
- Touch the shores of four countries—Switzerland, France, Germany, and the Netherlands—but unpack your bags only once.
- Delve into the wine culture of Alsace as you cycle France's famous Route des Vins.
- Explore the historic cities of Strasbourg, Heidelberg, Koblenz, and Cologne.
- Cruise the charming canals of Amsterdam.

What to Expect

On Shore: This tour offers easy, rolling terrain along rivers, with a few climbs to reach riverside towns. Riding is primarily on paved or packed gravel bike paths, 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 assembly on board our 182-passenger river cruise ship. Every day will include your choice of exclusive VBT activities and opportunities to join others. Our boat may be docked adjacent to other ships, which might lead to some views being obstructed while in port.

Tour Duration: 11 Days

Average Daily Mileage: 13-45 miles

Average Cycling Time: 1-5 hours

Group size: 14-24 max

Climate Information

Average High/Low Temperature (°F)

April 58°/42°, May 67°/51°, June 72°/57°, July 77°/60°, August 76°/59°, September 69°/53°, October 58°/46°

Average Rainfall (in.)

April 1.5, May 2.9, June 2.6, July 2.4, August 2.0, September 1.8, October 1.5

FLIGHT DAY: Depart from the United States or Canada

All you have to do is get to the airport. On our Air Packages, we'll take care of the rest, handling all the logistics, so you can travel with peace of mind. Spend your first night aloft and arrive refreshed for an unforgettable trip.

ARRIVAL DAY: Arrive in Zürich

Start off your first day in Zürich right by having a VBT representative greet you at the airport. A complimentary car service will whisk you to your hotel. From your centrally located hotel, you are perfectly positioned to explore this charming city at your leisure.

DAY 1: Basel, Switzerland / Embark ship

After an included breakfast, meet your VBT representative in the hotel lobby at 11:15 a.m. to travel to Basel, Switzerland (approximately 1.5 hours). Arrive at the dock in Basel at approximately 1:00 p.m. and board your Emerald Cruises ship.

Your cabin may not be ready for you until 3:00 p.m., but you are welcome to enjoy lunch on board between 12:30 and 3:30 p.m., and to relax in the ship's common areas, stretch your legs, or explore Basel.

At 2:30 p.m., meet your trip leaders and fellow travelers on board for introductions and a safety and bike-fitting session, followed by a short test ride. Later, enjoy dinner on board as the ship sets sail for Breisach this evening.

Today's Ride Choices

What to Expect:

Non-biking day

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 2: Breisach / Kaiserstuhl Cycling Path

Wake up in Breisach and start your day with a relaxing breakfast on board. Then, disembark to start your ride, departing and returning directly from the ship's dock. Today's ride features the Kaiserstuhl-Radweg, a loop through the vineyard terraces of the sunniest corner of Germany. Riding on well-developed cycling paths and agricultural roads, you'll pass through riverside forests, orchards, and vineyards. Stop at one of the villages to sample the local cheese with wine and meet some of VBT's local friends. The Kaiserstuhl sits between Germany's Black Forest and the Vosges in France, and it may be possible to catch glimpses of both during your ride.

Rejoin the ship in Breisach for a late lunch on board. In the afternoon there is time to explore this charming town and learn about its medieval past.

There will be time to relax on board before the Captain's Welcome Cocktail and Gala. Tonight, the boat will set sail for Kehl.

Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Breisach to Endingen — 30 km (19 miles)

Afternoon: Endingen to Breisach — 24 km (14 miles)

What to Expect:

Today's ride options are on the Kaiserstuhl Cycle Route, which is a combination of dedicated bike paths and quiet roads. There are no significant elevation gains. The short option ends with a winery visit, followed by a shuttle back to Breisach to meet the ship. The longer option is a scenic ride across the vineyards back to the ship, including some minor elevation gains.

Cumulative Distance Range: 30 – 53 km (19 – 33 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 3: Kehl / Strasbourg / La Route des Vins d'Alsace / Obernai

You'll arrive in Kehl in time for breakfast after which you'll cross the river and say "bonjour" to France.

In the morning, you start pedaling from the outskirts of Strasbourg into wine country. The most famous wine route in France, La Route des Vins, is a series of roadways and bike paths connecting one charming village to another. The early part of your ride is alongside the picturesque Canal de la Bruche. The canal's towpath has been converted into a bike path, which forms part of the 2,400-mile (3,862-km) EuroVelo 5 route. Then you continue pedaling deep in wine country to finish your morning in charming, medieval city of Obernai, where you'll have lunch, and some free time to enjoy the town's cafés, wine houses, and shops. If you choose to skip the afternoon ride, a private shuttle returns you to your ship, which is waiting across the river in Kehl. Or you can be dropped off in the city center of Strasbourg for an optional walk and return to the ship on your own, with Emerald's shuttle bus.

There will be time to relax before dinner and the evening activities on board. The ship sails for Mannheim just as your small group is sitting down to dinner.

Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Strasbourg to Obernai – 34 km (21 miles)

Afternoon: Obernai to Kehl – 39 km (24 miles)

What to Expect:

Ride on bike paths, dedicated bike lanes, and country roads on your choice of routes through the charming wine villages lined with flower boxes south of Strasbourg. The short option includes a shuttle from Obernai back to the ship.

Cumulative Distance Range: 34 – 73 km (21 – 45 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 4: Mannheim / Heidelberg / Cycle along the Neckar River

You'll awaken on board your ship in Mannheim. After breakfast, you'll take a 45-minute shuttle to Heidelberg. The town is famous for its university and its castle, perched on a hill overlooking the town and the Neckar River. A local guide will provide information on the town's highlights, followed by a guided walk in the city center.

Your bike will be waiting for you in Heidelberg. Grab a snack from your trip leaders, and then you're off on a scenic ride back to the ship in Mannheim, partly paralleling the Neckar River. Enjoy a late lunch on board as your ship sets course for Rüdesheim.

Today's Ride Choices

Afternoon: Heidelberg to Mannheim — 28 km (18 miles)

What to Expect:

Today's ride options are on a mix of bike paths and town roads featuring slow-moving traffic. There are no significant elevation gains today.

Cumulative Distance Range: 28 km (18 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 5: The Rhine Gorge / Koblenz / The Mosel River

Your ship leaves its mooring this morning, just as breakfast is being served as you head toward Koblenz which is at the confluence of the Rhine and Mosel rivers. You'll want to make sure you're on deck for the Rhine Gorge which is one of the highlights of the river. This dramatic stretch of water passes the famed Lorelei – maybe you'll hear her call – and you will see castle after castle, interspersed with southern-facing vineyards.

After arriving in Koblenz in the late morning, hope on your bike for a spin on the Mosel Cycle Route along the river and below the steep valley walls, towards Müden. Most of your riding will be on a dedicated car-

free bike path and will include a view of the impressive Deutsches Eck (German Corner), rebuilt in 1993 to mark the headland where the Mosel and Rhine meet. Enjoy a delicious lunch en route to your final destination, the town of Müden (Mosel), nestled along the Mosel River. Here, you'll visit a family-owned winery and taste some of the well-known wines of the region, before taking a 30-minute shuttle back to the ship.

For those seeking a break from the saddle, join an optional excursion (at additional cost) to Cochem. This trip includes transportation from Koblenz to Cochem and back, a walking tour of Cochem, and a guided visit to Reichsburg Castle. You can book this tour directly on the ship, upon embarkation.

Your ship remains in town until after midnight, allowing for an after-dinner stroll along the wide, tree-lined promenade.

Today's Ride Choices

Afternoon: Koblenz to Müden (Mosel) — 37 km (23 miles)

What to Expect:

Today features a relaxing and easy ride on the car-free Mosel Cycle Route, with some stretches on roadways leaving Koblenz.

Cumulative Distance Range: 37 km (23 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 6: Cologne / City ride / Sailing the Rhine to Amsterdam

Arrive in Cologne in the morning and watch the city's famous spires from the boat as you're sitting down for breakfast. Disembark for an urban bike loop, exploring both the popular and little-known sites of this appealing metropolis. Return to the ship in the early afternoon for lunch and then it's time to say goodbye to Cologne as the ship sets off on the final and longest leg of the trip, to Amsterdam. This is a good time to catch up on your reading, record the week's events in your travel journal, or just relax as the ship heads to Amsterdam. Tonight, you'll be treated to a cocktail reception and the captain's gala dinner.

Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Cologne City Loop — 20 km (13 miles)

What to Expect:

Today's ride features a combination of bike paths and town streets, through parks, and along the waterfront.

Cumulative Distance Range: 20 km (13 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 7: Amsterdam / Monnickendam

This morning, see Amsterdam as earlier residents would have viewed it, through a guided boat excursion along the canals.

Midday, set off on the city's excellent bike path network, heading north to the small fishing village of Monnickendam. As you pedal out of the city, you'll get a glimpse of everyday life in the countryside, as well as some of The Netherlands' iconic views. Your route is via Broek in Waterland, a particularly charming village that seemingly cries out for you to stop and take pictures. We've found an idyllic location to enjoy lunch, prepared with local specialties. Your Dutch meal is followed by probably the most typical Dutch discovery: a clog making demonstration. You'll get a different perspective of this beautiful countryside during your leisurely return route to the ship.

Back on board, enjoy a full roster of entertainment and dining to celebrate your week on the Rhine with your fellow travelers and your trip leaders.

Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Ship to Monnickendam — 26 km (16 miles)

Afternoon: Monnickendam to Ship — 18 km (12 miles)

What to Expect:

Today's routes offer flat, easy cycling on well-maintained bike paths. The short option involves a shuttle

back to the ship from Monnickendam.

Cumulative Distance Range: 26 – 44 km (16 – 28 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 8: Disembark / Travel to Den Haag

After an included breakfast, say goodbye to your ship crew and trip leaders. At 9:00 a.m. hop aboard our private coach, along with your fellow travelers, for the journey to your hotel in Den Haag (approximately 60 minutes). After check in, enjoy a short guided walking tour and some free time for independent exploration. Please note that your room may not be ready upon your arrival, in which case the hotel will store your luggage. Enjoy dinner on your own tonight in one of the city's many fine restaurants. VBT provides you with city information that includes recommendations about what to see and do in Den Haag.

Note: Should you wish to spend time seeing more of Amsterdam, your luggage may be sent to the hotel in Den Haag with the group transportation, and you will then be responsible to travel to Den Haag at your leisure by train.

Included Meals: Breakfast

DEPARTURE DAY: Departure

After an included breakfast this morning, complimentary transportation to the Amsterdam Schiphol 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.

Hotel Opera (Arrival Day)

This private boutique hotel has been exquisitely decorated by the well-known Swiss interior designer Roland Schön. It is ideally situated in Zurich's city center next to the famous Opera House. The nearby lakeside promenade makes for a lovely morning jog or a leisurely stroll. Just a five-minute walk away, the glamour of the world-renowned Bahnhofstrasse unfolds, the most attractive and exclusive shopping mile in Zurich. The Old Town is also nearby, with its pastel-hued guild houses and historic buildings. For an unforgettable meal, indulge in the gourmet Restaurant Opera, awarded the "golden fish" for its exquisite seafood specialties. Elegant paintings from the young Baroque artist Tatjana Tiziana adorn its walls, inviting you into Zurich's opera world. Free WiFi is available throughout this air-conditioned hotel.

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.

Boutique Hotel Corona (Day 8)

The Boutique Hotel Corona is a fine boutique property and the oldest 4-star hotel of the International City of Peace and Justice. Its elegant common rooms and guest rooms occupy three historic 17th-century buildings. High ceilings and grand chandeliers give the lobby an airy feel. Located in the center of Den Haag in a former forecourt of the Buitenhof (Dutch Parliament), it boasts an illustrious past. The Boutique Hotel Corona is only 650 feet (198 meters) from the Centrum tram stop. Free WiFi and air conditioning are available throughout the hotel.