

Germany & Austria: The Danube River

Bike Vacation Only

Discover the enchantment of the Danube River Valley and the splendor of the Alps on this unique self-guided cycling vacation. In the German city of Passau, you'll meet your VBT Local host, who brings a well-maintained bike, fitted just for you. Then, you're free to cycle and explore at leisure—with 24/7 support from your local VBT friend should you need it. Spin along the storied Danube River and discover the Eastern Alps as you pedal a gentle downhill trail from the shores of Lunzer See. Your detailed navigation app provides audio prompts to keep you on track—plus fantastic suggestions for lunch spots, photo ops, and medieval castles to explore along the way. If you've been dreaming about a Danube cycling vacation with independence and support, this is a perfect fit!

Cultural Highlights

- Discover the historic old town of Passau at the confluence of the Danube, Inn, and Ilz rivers.
- Stay at comfortable lodges with spectacular river views and hotels brimming with history.
- Ride along one of Austria's most famous bike paths, the Ybbs Valley Cycle Trail (Ybbstalradweg), formerly a railroad connecting the Alps with the Danube.
- Bike on one of Europe's most well-known bike paths, the EuroVelo 6, along the banks of the Danube combining easy terrain with fabulous views from both sides of the river.
- Taste the famous white wines of the UNESCO World Heritage Wachau Valley whose vineyards date back to the medieval Roman settlements.

What to Expect

This tour offers easy, riverside terrain. Riding is primarily on paved bike paths with some road riding through both urban and rural areas. For the Ybbs Valley Cycle Trail, you will be transported to Lunz am See for a splendid ride with a gradual descent. Please verify your bike selection for this tour as it is not always possible to change bikes once you arrive. Travel with your friends and family—we can accommodate multiple guests on this self-guided vacation. Our 24/7 support system is available as needed.

Tour Duration: 7 Days

Average Daily Mileage: 5-63 miles

Average Cycling Time: 1-6 hours

Climate Information

Average High/Low Temperature (°F)

April 59°/41°, May 68°/46°, June 73°/52°, July 77°/54°, August 75°/55°, September 77°/58°, October 73°/55°

Average Rainfall (in.)

April 2.75, May 3.30, June 3.8, July 3.95, August 3.6, September 1.2, October 3.37

DAY 1: VBT Self-Guided Bicycle Vacation begins / Passau warm-up ride

We suggest arriving in Germany at least one day prior to the tour start date as your tour begins at 1:00 p.m. Meet your VBT Local host and any other VBT guests arriving on the same day after lunch, at 1:00 p.m. in the lobby of the Altstadt Hotel in Passau (Bräugasse 23-29, tel. +49 851 3370).

Today's Ride Choices

Warm-up ride along the Inn River — 8.7 km (5.5 miles)

What to Expect:

Designed for you to get comfortable with your bike and let you move your legs after your flight, this easy short loop starts at your hotel and goes through the town of Passau, heading south on a bike path along the Inn River.

DAY 2: Passau to Schlögener Schlinge / Move on Day

After breakfast, follow the popular EuroVelo 6 bike trail, a flat, paved path along the Danube River. Upon entering Austria continue on the right bank of the river towards Engelhartzell. Once in town, plan a visit to the famous Engelszell Abbey, where you'll find Trappist beer (the only Trappist monastery in Austria!) and a stunning church dating back to the mid-1700s. You will arrive at Schlögener Schlinge in the afternoon, spending the night at a hotel overlooking a scenic bend in the river. For additional relaxation, you may want to book a massage at the hotel's wellness facility.

Today's Ride Choices

Passau to Schlögener Schlinge — 40.9 km (25.4 miles)

What to Expect:

Today's route starts directly from the hotel in Passau city center and follows the Danube. You will spend the day cycling on a dedicated bike path with minor elevation changes. Your hotel is located right in the middle of Austria's famous river bend, a natural wonder known as the Schlögener Schlinge.

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 3: Schlögener Schlinge to Ottensheim / Move on Day

Before getting on your bike, we suggest walking up to a viewpoint that provides a scenic vista of the 180-degree river bend for which the area is known. You'll cycle through a beautiful forest toward Aschach, where you may want to stop for coffee and cake or visit a museum devoted to shipwrights, shipping, and fishing on the Danube. The ride concludes in Ottensheim which is renowned for its hilltop castle. Enjoy a late lunch while waiting for your transport which will take you to your next hotel in Ybbs an der Donau.

Today's Ride Choices

Schlögener Schlinge to Ottensheim — 46.2 km (28.6 miles)

What to Expect:

The route departs from the hotel and follows the well-paved bike path on the right bank of the Danube. With only slight elevation changes, it hugs the coastline through scenic forests. After leaving Aschach, the bike path will be completely flat.

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 4: Ybbs Valley Cycle Trail / Stay Put Day

Travel by shuttle to the shores of Lunzer See, one of the most beautiful lakes in the Eastern Alps, where you'll begin today's downhill ride. With the Ybbs River always nearby, you'll follow the old railroad bed once known as the Sheep's Cheese Express enjoying splendid views of arch bridges, crystal-clear waters, and a scenic gorge. Stop to take pictures and perhaps a dip into the water. We offer a shuttle about halfway through your ride, at Waidhofen an der Ybbs, or cycle the entire length and become a member of

the 100+ kilometer club.

Today's Ride Choices

Lunz am See to Waidhofen an der Ybbs — 55.0 km (34.1 miles) | Waidhofen an der Ybbs to Ybbs an der Donau — 48.9 km (30.3 miles)

What to Expect:

Descend gradually from the top of the mountain to the river valley. The major part of the ride is on a dedicated bike path, part of which is separated from the road and part of which takes a path almost completely away from motorized traffic.

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 5: Ybbs an der Donau to Weissenkirchen / Move on Day

Today's route will travel along the Danube toward the Wachau Valley. You may want to stop in Melk to visit the world-famous abbey which was founded in 1089 and have a delicious lunch in one of the traditional restaurants in the Old Town. After lunch, you'll cross the river and ride through scenic landscapes with vineyards and fertile farmland, through the town of Aggsbach where the small statue known as the Venus of Willendorf was discovered. You'll spend the next two nights in Weissenkirchen at Hotel Kirchenwirt.

Today's Ride Choices

Ybbs an der Donau to Weissenkirchen — 52.2 km (32.4 miles)

What to Expect:

Continue along EuroVelo 6, a long-distance bicycle route, on the right bank of the Danube River until the town of Melk. After an optional stop, cross the bridge and continue biking on the left bank through Aggsbach, Willendorf to Weissenkirchen.

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 6: Wachau Valley loop / Stay Put Day

Today you will get to explore both sides of the river. Start your day with crossing the Danube on the historic ferry to the right bank of the river (€4.50 per person with a bike; operates every day between 8:00 a.m. and 5.45 p.m.). Enjoy a breathtaking view of Dürnstein on the other side, as you pedal downstream. You may pause for a lunch and stroll in the historic old town of Krems. Afterward, you cycle towards the lovely town of Dürnstein. Take time to explore this charming village. You may want to visit the ruins of the 12th-century castle on the top of the hill or try the famous local white wine (Grün Veltliner) in one of the wine shops. From here, it's just a few more miles back to Weissenkirchen to finish your loop and end your biking adventure in Germany and Austria. You can close your Danube River bike tour with a nice dinner in one of Weissenkirchen's cozy restaurants.

You can also choose to take a shorter loop, allowing yourself more quality time in Krems and Dürnstein.

Today's Ride Choices

Wachau loop — 32.0 km (19.8 miles) | Wachau loop Long option — 47.6 km (29.5 miles)

What to Expect:

Flat, paved bike path along the river with some urban riding in Krems.

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 7: VBT Self-Guided Bicycle Vacation ends

The tour ends at your hotel in Weissenkirchen. From here you may continue with your independent travel. For details, refer to your VBT Vacation Preparation Handbook. Depending upon your destination, it may not be possible to depart for the U.S. on the last day of the tour. Please check airline schedules carefully. If you plan to schedule return flights immediately following the tour's conclusion, please call your airline directly for specific check-in requirements.

Included Meals: Breakfast

Accommodations

May vary depending on departure date.

Altstadt Hotel (Day 1)

The Altstadt Hotel is located in a quiet quarter of Passau, on the banks where the Danube, Inn and Ilz rivers meet. From its terrace, bar and restaurant, guests can enjoy a wonderful view of the river and castle overlooking the water. The hotel is located in an ancient German building, and it exudes a warm, family character in an intimate atmosphere. The rooms are quite spacious with a modern touch. An Internet connection is available in the hotel lobby and in your room. There is no air conditioning.

Hotel Donauschlinge (Day 2)

Overlooking the Schlägener Schlinge, described as one of the most beautiful natural wonders of Austria, the Hotel Donauschlinge sits directly over the Danube, providing wonderful views from every angle. The modern restaurant boasts an extensive buffet to go with its magnificent river views and guests can also enjoy the sunny terrace, gardens, cozy lounge, and wellness area. WiFi is available in both the rooms and lobby.

Donau Lodge (Days 3-4)

With views into the Waldviertel, the Donau Lodge is a great place to relax. This family-run hotel has an unobstructed view of the Danube from the cafe. A restaurant next door to the hotel features both Austrian and international cuisine. All rooms have WiFi and air conditioning.

Kirchenwirt Wachau (Days 5-6)

A cluster of three buildings—including two newly renovated 16th-century structures—the family-run Kirchenwirt Weissenkirchen offers modern comforts in a cozy atmosphere. Surrounded by the sunny vineyards and the blue Danube, each building features its own unique style and beautiful appointments, such as cross vaults, high wooden ceilings and solid wood furniture. Enjoy regional specialties prepared from fresh local ingredients in the restaurant. Some rooms also offer Danube views. There is no air conditioning but most of the rooms are naturally cooled by thick walls.