

Czech Republic, Germany & Austria: Český Krumlov & Wachau Valley

Bike Vacation Only

The lively spirit of three distinct countries infuses this perennially popular exploration of Central Europe. Discover this fascinating variety as you spin from the castle towns and hushed forests of the Czech Republic to charming German villages and some of the most scenic landscapes of Austria. Medieval fortresses, abbeys, cathedrals, vineyards and serene national parks unfold before you as you choose the perfect balance of discovery by bicycle, boat and foot. And get acquainted with the locals in a Bavarian beer garden, at a private home and more.

Cultural Highlights

Discover Cesky Krumlov, a Bohemian town brimming with medieval authenticity.
Explore the village of Holašovice, a uniquely preserved UNESCO Site.
Sit down to lunch with a local family, for an authentic taste of everyday Czech life.
Cycle bucolic routes past farms, meadows and villages.
Cross into Germany via a unique border crossing for pedestrians and bicycles only.
Enter the spirit of Bavaria over lunch at a typical beer garden.
Picnic on the banks of the River Inn, with views of mighty Neuburg fortress overhead.
Marvel at the stunning views as you cruise through Austria's famous Schlägener Schlinge.
Spin through the Wachau Valley, a UNESCO-designated landscape of hillside orchards, vineyards, ruined castles, abbeys and churches.

What to Expect

This tour offers easy terrain throughout the trip and is ideal for beginning cyclists. Our VBT support shuttle is available every day at designated points for those who need assistance.

Tour Duration: 7 Days

Average Daily Mileage: 15 - 45

Average Cycling Time: 01:00 - 04:00

Climate Information

Average High/Low Temperature (°F)

May 64°/45°, Jun 69°/51°, Jul 72°/54°, Aug 73°/53°, Sep 65°/48°, Oct 54°/39°

Average Rainfall (in.)

May 1.0, Jun 2.7, Jul 2.6, Aug 2.5, Sep 1.6, Oct 1.2

DAY 1: VBT Bicycle Vacation begins / Cesky Krumlov

At 8:30 a.m., all guests meet the VBT representative at the hotel in Prague, the Mamaison Hotel Riverside Prague (address: Janáckovo nábřeží 15, Prague 5; tel: +420 225 994 611), and transfer to Cesky Krumlov in the south of the Czech Republic (approximately 3½ hours, including a stop on the way).

Cesky Krumlov is a unique town in Bohemia, built at a curve of the River Vltava and dripping with medieval authenticity. Its historic center has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1992. You'll arrive at approximately 12:00 p.m. Meet your Trip Leaders, who provide a quick introduction to the day's schedule and the town, providing recommendations for lunch on your own.

At 3:00 p.m., return to the hotel and join your Trip Leaders for a safety and bike-fitting session, followed by a warm-up ride through town and into the countryside. Later, gather with the group for a welcome cocktail reception and dinner at your hotel's restaurant.

Hotel: Hotel Bellevue

Meals: B (included for Air Package guests only), D

Daily Options: 9 miles (13.2 km)

DAY 2: Holašovice UNESCO Site / Home-hosted lunch / Cycle to Plav

After breakfast, meet our local guide, Standa, and follow him on a short walking tour and introduction to Czech life. Then, board the VBT shuttle for a short ride to Holašovice. This uniquely preserved village is a UNESCO World Heritage Site because of its typical Baroque farm houses. After exploring the village, begin cycling through a beautiful and protected landscape to Plav, a tranquil Czech village on the banks of a small river. If you like, ride the VBT shuttle to avoid pedaling the few small hills this morning. Lunch today is hosted by a local family, allowing you to get a real feel for Czech daily life.

Return to the hotel with the shuttle, allowing more time to explore the city center or enjoy additional bicycling on a longer optional ride this afternoon.

In addition to strolling Cesky Krumlov's narrow cobbled streets and enjoying its outdoor cafés, you may choose to visit the town's gem, the Rosenberg family chateau, dating to 1240.

In the evening, find a cozy restaurant where you may enjoy dinner on your own.

Hotel: Hotel Bellevue

Meals: B, L

Daily Options: 15.2 or 23 miles (24.6 or 37.2 km)

DAY 3: Sumava National Park / Cross the Czech-German border / Shuttle to Passau

In the morning, shuttle to the Sumava National Park, the largest national park in the Czech Republic. You'll start your ride in Cerná v Pošumaví, not far from the German border. An exhilarating bike ride takes you from lakeside scenery through a beautiful forest, far from traffic and villages. At Nove Udoli, you'll walk into Germany. This unique border crossing was closed in 1945 and reopened some time ago for pedestrians and bicycles only.

Your first Bavarian reel follows a downhill stretch of a former railway track. Bavaria is among Europe's most beautiful and serene cycling areas. On your way, stop at a beer garden for a typical lunch, prepared by the owner-family. Continue cycling to Waldkirchen, where you then shuttle to the historic Baroque city of Passau, situated at the confluence of three rivers: the Danube, the Inn and the Ilz. Tonight, enjoy dinner at the hotel restaurant, overlooking the romantic Danube River.

Hotel: Altstadt Hotel

Meals: B, L, D

Daily Options: 23 or 34 miles (44.8 or 62.9 km)

DAY 4: Ride along the River Inn / Explore Passau

Enjoy a leisurely cycle along the River Inn, the frontier between Germany and Austria. Start by following the German bike route. At Neuhaus, cross the river to the Austrian town of Schärding with its colorful, Baroque-style burgher houses on two town squares. After exploring Schärding, return to Passau. En route, stop for a delicious picnic lunch on the river's opposite bank, where the Neuburg fortress looms. Use the rest of the afternoon to explore Passau and shop the flea market and antique shops. You might choose to visit magnificent St. Stephen's Cathedral. Dinner is on your own tonight; you'll find that Passau offers many dining choices.

Hotel: Altstadt Hotel

Meals: B, L

Daily Options: 15.6 or 22 miles (25.2 or 35 km)

DAY 5: Danube impressions by bike and boat / Schlögener Schlinge

Start your day with a boating adventure on the most popular river route in Europe. Cruise through the famous Schlögener Schlinge in Austria, where the Danube snakes through steep, forested mountains in a series of sharp and scenic bends. Silence surrounds you, except for the occasional hum of passing barges. (Note: For any tours departing after October 1, cruising is not available and is replaced by a coach transfer.)

Begin cycling at Schlögen and head toward Aschach through a beautiful forest, where you stop for lunch on your own. Follow the Danube bike route to Ottensheim, renowned for its hilltop castle, where you conclude your ride. Here, you'll transfer by private coach to your hotel at Weissenkirchen, in Austria's Wachau Valley wine region.

This charming village is dominated by St. Michael's Church, which dates to 987. There are also many Renaissance buildings with romantic inner courtyards. One of them houses your inviting family-run hotel. Many of Weissenkirchen's vinegrowers (winemakers) and wine cellars are located in beautiful, ancient manor houses. Perhaps you'll savor a famous young heuriger wine in one of these taverns during dinner at your leisure tonight.

Hotel: Hotel Raffelsberger Hof

Alternate Hotel: Kirchenwirt Weissenkirchen

Meals: B

Daily Options: 16.2 or 29 miles (26.2 or 46.7 km)

DAY 6: Cycle through Wachau Valley / Melk / Spitz / Dürnstein

In the morning, cycle through the Wachau Valley, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, to Melk. The Wachau is one of Austria's most striking landscapes, featuring a mix of hillside orchards and vineyards among ruined castles, abbeys and churches. In Melk, you may want to visit the spectacular Benedictine Abbey, one of Europe's largest Baroque monasteries. Eat lunch on your own here, before cycling along the Danube to the lovely village of Spitz.

From Spitz, cycle back to Weissenkirchen and maybe opt to continue farther to Dürnstein, where Richard

the Lionhearted was kept prisoner in 1193. Tonight's farewell dinner is in a local restaurant within a private, ancient winepress room.

Hotel: Hotel Raffelsberger Hof

Alternate Hotel: Kirchenwirt Weissenkirchen

Meals: B, D

Daily Options: 15.8 or 37 miles (25.5 or 59.7 km)

DAY 7: Transfer to Vienna / VBT Bicycle Vacation ends

After breakfast, transfer to Vienna, arriving at approximately 10:30 a.m.

VBT-Bicycle-Vacation-only guests: Your tour ends at the Hotel Stefanie in Vienna. Important: Train departures from Vienna prior to 11:00 a.m. are not recommended. If you depart earlier, you are responsible for your own transfer arrangements from the hotel in Weissenkirchen. A taxi ride from the Hotel Stefanie to the Vienna train station costs approximately €15/\$25 USD and takes approximately 20 minutes. A taxi ride to the Vienna airport costs approximately €30/\$50 USD and takes approximately 40 minutes.

Accommodations

May vary depending on departure date.

Altstadt Hotel (Days: 3,4)

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 Bellevue (Days: 1,2)

Situated in the pedestrian center of the UNESCO World Heritage-protected town of Český Krumlov, the 4-star Hotel Bellevue occupies a meticulously renovated 16th-century building. The hotel features an outdoor terrace, a restaurant with French-inspired cuisine, wine cellar, inviting public spaces and guest rooms decorated with light colors and classic furnishings. An onsite sauna is available, as well as

massage services (which you may reserve and purchase locally).