

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

## Bike Vacation Only

Medieval fortresses, abbeys, and charming villages unfold before you during this perennially popular exploration of Central Europe. On some days during your multi-country tour, you'll ride through rippling rural scenery of farms and meadows, cruising past tiny hamlets and villages—on others, you'll pass tranquil towns hugged by riverbanks, stunning lakes, and lush forests. In the Czech Republic, explore uninhibited Bohemian culture oozing with medieval authenticity. Cross a pedestrian-only border into Germany and feast on delicious meals overlooking the Danube river. And in Austria, reel along orchards and vineyards dotted by castle ruins. From Baroque farmhouses to Bavarian beer gardens, immerse yourself in a once-in-a-lifetime journey by foot, bicycle, and boat.

## Cultural Highlights

Discover Cesky Krumlov, a Bohemian town brimming with medieval authenticity.

Cycle bucolic routes past farms, meadows, and villages.

Cross into Germany via a unique border crossing for pedestrians and bicycles only.

Indulge in 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. Your Prague bike tour officially begins with a small warm-up ride through town and into the countryside. Later, gather with the group for a welcome cocktail reception at your hotel and dinner.

Hotel: Hotel Bellevue

Meals: Dinner

Today's Ride Choice:

Warm-Up: 13 km (8 miles)

What to Expect: Follow gentle loop from your hotel out of the center of Cesky Krumlov into the surrounding countryside.

## DAY 2: Horní Planá / Cycle to Český Krumlov / Independent exploration of Český Krumlov

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 a village nearby. Begin cycling through a beautiful and protected landscape and tranquil Czech countryside. Lunch today is near your hotel in Český Krumlov.

This afternoon, explore the city center. In addition to strolling Český 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. Soak up the atmosphere of this impeccably preserved medieval gem. The gushing Vltava, popular with rafting enthusiasts, darts through the town.

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

Hotel: Hotel Bellevue

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Today's Ride Choice:

Cumulative Range: 20 km (12 miles)

Morning

Horní Planá to Český Krumlov: 20 km (12 miles)

What to Expect: A 30-minute shuttle bus brings you to Horní Planá, a nearby Czech village, the start of this morning's ride. As you ride, gaze at a typical Czech countryside of alternating farms, meadows and villages. The ride is paved, very limited traffic and mostly flat or downhill.

## **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: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today's Ride Choice:

Cumulative Range: 18 – 57 km (11 – 35 miles)

Morning

Cerná v Pošumaví to Altreichnau: 39 km (24 miles)

Afternoon

Altreichnau to Waldkirchen: 18 km (11 miles)

What to Expect: Take a private bus shuttle from Cesky Krumlov to the town of Cerná v Pošumaví this morning. From here, you cycle a dedicated bike path through Sumava National Park and cross the German border at Nove Udoli. The bike path follows a former railway bed to lunch at a typical Bavarian tavern, the Loipensstüberl.

After lunch, if you wish, you can continue your descent in Germany, meeting the shuttle at Waldkirchen for your transfer to the German city of Passau.

## 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: Breakfast, Lunch

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Range: 10 – 35 km (6 – 22 miles)

Morning

Passau to Lunch: 25 km (16 miles)

Afternoon

Lunch to Passau: 10 km (6 miles)

What to Expect: An easy rolling loop departs from your hotel this morning along a dedicated bike path (alternating pavement and gravel) that follows the River Inn in Germany to the Austrian town of Schärding.

After lunch, take the shuttle back to Passau, or continue riding along the riverside bike path back to the center of town.

## 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 vinegut (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: Breakfast

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Range: 10 – 36 km (6 – 22 miles)

Morning

Schlögen to Aschach: 26 km (16 miles)

Afternoon

Aschach to Ottensheim: 10 km (6 miles)

What to Expect: Today begins with an exciting boat trip along the Danube to the start of your ride in Schlögen. From here, you'll follow the Danube River Bike Path to Aschach. You may shuttle to Ottensheim

after lunch, or continue along the Danube, crossing a huge dam to Ottensheim to meet the bus to your hotel for the next two nights.

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

Today marks the final full day of your Prague bike tour. 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 ferry stop in Sankt Lorenz opposite Weissenkirchen.

Opt to continue cycling farther to Rossatz to catch a small ferry 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: Breakfast, Dinner

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Range: 26 – 60 km (16 – 37 miles)

Morning

Weissenkirchen to Melk: 26 km (16 miles)

Afternoon

Melk to Weissenkirchen: 34 km (21 miles)

What to Expect: Depart the hotel following an easily rolling bike route along the Danube to the town of Melk this morning.

From Melk, you can return by shuttle to Weissenkirchen after lunch on your own, or ride the Danube's opposite bank along a dedicated rolling bike path. You'll pass under the ruins of Aggstein castle en route to Dürnstein. Arriving on the opposite bank in St. Lorenz (24 km), you can either ferry across the Danube to your hotel in Weissenkirchen, or continue cycling to Arnsdorf, bicycle ferry crossing the river to Dürnstein, and return along the river back to Weissenkirchen.

## DAY 7: Transfer to Vienna / VBT Bicycle Vacation ends

Your Prague bike 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.

Meals: Breakfast

## Accommodations

May vary depending on departure date.

### 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.

### 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).

