Danube Bike & River Cruise: Prague to Budapest

Bike Vacation + Air Package

VBT has partnered with Emerald Waterways, among the finest river cruise providers, for a European bicycle vacation on a grand scale. From Nuremberg to Budapest, you'll sail the fabled Danube, disembarking to ride the continent's longest riverside bike path and other car-free byways. Traverse gentle scenic hills, sylvan forests, stunning wine country, and bike-friendly cultural capitals. Tour medieval hamlets and elegant Baroque treasures. Enjoy full days in Vienna and Budapest. Sample Austria's crisp wines and Bavaria's best beers. And return after each invigorating day to the comfort of your deluxe river ship.

Cultural Highlights

Marvel at dramatic riverside vistas by bicycle and by river ship as you ride and cruise from Bavaria to the hills of Buda
Cycle Europe's famed EuroVelo 6 bike path and other car-free byways
Unpack once for seven nights of indulgent comfort and convenience onboard our deluxe floating accommodation
Explore three iconic European capitals and four fascinating countries
Enjoy your choice of activities everyday, from a guided walk to an evening performance, should you like a break from the saddle
Be enchanted by Baroque architecture and old-world medieval cities
Sample the flavors of your destination, from Wachau Valley wines to beers brewed at local abbeys
Relax with a fully-inclusive experience as VBT handles all the logistics

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 shuttle is available every day at designated points for those who would like assistance.

Onboard Ship: Our group of 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 other activities that are offered by the ship. While in port our ship may be docked adjacent to other ships. This means we may walk through other ships while boarding or disembarking, and some views may be

obstructed while in port.

Tour Duration: 11 Days
Average Daily Mileage: 5 - 35
Average Cycling Time: 00:45 - 03:30

Climate Information

Average High/Low Temperature (°F)
Apr 57º/39º, May 67º/49º, Jun 72º/55º, Jul 77º/59º, Aug 77º/59º, Sep 69º/53º, Oct 57º/43º
Average Rainfall (in.)
Apr 2.2, May 2.4, Jun 2.9, Jul 2.5, Aug 2.3, Sep 1.8, Oct 1.6

DAY 1: Depart from home / Fly overnight to Prague, Czech Republic

Depart from home for Prague, Czech Republic. The particulars of your arrival overseas are detailed with your flight itinerary.

DAY 2: Arrive in Prague

Upon arrival at the Prague airport, claim your luggage and clear customs. If your luggage is lost, you must fill out a PIR form before leaving the customs area. VBT representatives are not allowed into the customs area. Also, make sure that your VBT luggage tags are attached to your bags so that your representative can identify you.

Upon leaving customs, enter the arrival hall and look for your VBT representative, who will be holding a VBT sign. Your representative welcomes you to Prague and helps you transfer via taxi or van (approximately 30 minutes, depending upon traffic) to your Prague hotel. If your VBT representative is not immediately in sight, there is a “Meeting Point Column” just outside of the Arrivals gate. Please wait there, as the VBT representative may be transferring with an earlier arrival. They should arrive within 30 minutes of your scheduled arrival.

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 explore the city with your included 1-day Prague Transportation Pass.

VBT provides you with City Information that includes information and recommendations on what to see

and do during your stay in Prague.

Hotel: Mamaison Hotel Riverside Prague

DAY 3: Nuremberg, Germany / Embark ship / VBT Bicycle Vacation begins

At 9:00 a.m., meet your VBT representative in the hotel lobby to transfer to Nuremberg, Germany (approximately 3.5 hours). You will stop just before the German border to stretch your legs and perhaps purchase a coffee or water. Arrive at the dock in Nuremberg at approximately 12:30 p.m. and board your Emerald Waterways ship. Your cabin may not be ready for you until 3:00 p.m. However, you are welcome to enjoy a light lunch on board, served between 12:30 and 3:30 p.m., relax in the ship's common areas, take a walk, or enjoy the nearby beer garden. Unusually, Nuremberg's cruise dock is located four miles from the city's train station and downtown. Taxis and buses are available for those who would like to head into town for a Bratwurst.

At 1:45 p.m., meet your Trip Leaders and fellow travelers on board for introductions and a safety and bike-fitting session, followed by a warm-up ride on a local bike path along the Main-Danube Canal. Later, enjoy a welcome dinner on board. The ship sails for Regensburg this evening.

Please note regarding WiFi on board the ship: Due to the nature of the ship movements, internet access is not always available. If stable internet access is critical to you, VBT recommends that you purchase your own bundle before traveling overseas.

Please note regarding Ride with GPS: Due to the limited WiFi on board, VBT also recommends that you download your VBT Maps & Route Notes from a WiFi zone prior to arrival on the ship if you wish to use Ride with GPS on your smartphone. During your vacation, you will be able to follow these route notes on your smartphone with turn-by-turn voice navigation as you ride. This option is in addition to VBT's traditional printed maps and route notes available on tour.

Hotel: MS *Emerald Sky/Emerald Destiny/Emerald Dawn*
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Daily Options: 7 miles (11 km)

DAY 4: Kelheim / Danube Bike Path / Cycle to Regensburg

Enjoy a relaxing breakfast this morning as we sail downstream towards Regensburg. En route, you

disembark in Kelheim, a small Bavarian town near the picturesque Danube Gorge, a narrow stretch lined with cliff walls.

We depart Kelheim, cycling along the scenic Danube banks. Following the Danube Bike Path, our ride is easy, mostly car-free, and scenic. This is the famous EuroVelo 6, which traverses 10 countries while traveling 2,270 miles from the Atlantic Ocean in France to the Black Sea at Constanta. The EV6 includes the Danube Bike Path, the most popular cycling holiday destination in Europe. Stop to enjoy a Bavarian lunch. Weather-permitting, take in the view from tables in the garden.

Rejoin your ship in Regensburg in the early afternoon. As you'll see on approach, 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. Join a local guide for a walking tour, gaining insight into the town's medieval history.

A traditional local band performance on deck greets you back on board. There'll be time to relax a while before the Captain's Welcome Cocktail and Gala. With its regional specialties, tonight's dinner completes the day's immersion into all things Bavaria! Sail for Passau tonight.

Hotel: MS *Emerald Sky/Emerald Destiny/Emerald Dawn*
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Daily Options: 25 or 39 km (15 or 24 miles)

DAY 5: Passau / Ferry to Schlögen / Cycle to Aschach / Linz

Arrive in Passau during breakfast. There'll be free time to explore its splendid Gothic and Baroque charms on your own. If you wish, you may stretch your legs with a hike to the hilltop pilgrimage church of Pauliner Kloster Mariahilf. You may access it directly from the Innstadt district via the "heavenly ladder" of 321 canopied steps. From the monastery grounds, enjoy sweeping views of Passau.

In the late morning, enjoy an informative walking tour with a local guide through this scenic "City of Three Rivers" at the confluence of the Danube, Inn, and Ilz. Our walk concludes back at the docks. From here, set off along the Danube onboard a local touring boat, entering Austria's famous Schlögener Schlinge, where the river winds through steep, forested mountains in a series of sharp and scenic bends. After a couple of hours of scenic cruising, arrive in Schlögen. (Note: On October departures, cruising is not available on this stretch of the river and our mode of transport will be a motor coach.)

Your bicycles are waiting for you here, ready for your afternoon reel toward Aschach through a beautiful forest. You follow the Danube bike route on a leisurely ride before shuttling the short distance to Linz, Austria, home of the Linzer torte, the oldest cake in the world, and an impressive repository of well-preserved medieval, neoclassical, neo-Baroque, and neo-Renaissance buildings.

Our river ship arrives in Linz late this afternoon, just as we are arriving. There'll be time to relax in your cabin before dinner and evening activities on board.

Hotel: MS *Emerald Sky/Emerald Destiny/Emerald Dawn*
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Daily Options: 26 km (16 miles)

DAY 6: Melk / Cycle through The Wachau Valley / Weissenkirchen / Dürnstein

Our ship is moored in Melk, Austria, when you wake. After breakfast, join a shuttle to the spectacular Benedictine Abbey of Melk, perched on a scenic bluff, where a local guide introduces us to one of Europe's largest Baroque monasteries. After touring its magnificent rooms, you may stroll the gardens before returning to the ship for lunch.

Later, cycle through what is perhaps the most beautiful stretch on 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 ruined castles, churches and abbeys. There are few places that match the Wachau for its striking beauty and rich viniculture. You will ride through the scenic hamlets of Spitz and Wiessenkirchen, nestled between the Danube and its rising banks, reeling into Dürnstein, a center of Wachau wine production. 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.

Rejoin your ship here late this afternoon and perhaps join a guided hike to Dürnstein Castle. Later, enjoy time to relax prior to dinner. This evening, you set a course for Vienna.

Hotel: MS *Emerald Sky/Emerald Destiny/Emerald Dawn*
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Daily Options: 26 or 33 km (16 or 21 miles)

DAY 7: Ride along the Donauinsel / Explore Vienna

Our ship is in Vienna from very early this morning until very late tonight, making it a convenient base for exploring Austria's glorious capital.

Vienna is renowned as one of Europe's most cycle-friendly cities, so you will make use of its abundant bike paths and bike lanes. From your ship, the morning 'extra' ride is an out and back along the Danube to the village of Klosterneuburg, known for its imposing Monastery.

After lunch on board, you ride through the edge of the city and along the Donauinsel, or Danube Island, a 13-mile-long strip where scenic vistas and quiet riding add to your Vienna discoveries. Or, explore Vienna on your own, pursuing your own whims and interests. Home to Strauss, Beethoven, and Mahler, the gracious boulevards of Vienna are awash in culture and elegance. Head to the Ringstrasse, the circular avenue that replaced its demolished medieval wall, to marvel at the city's most 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.

In the late afternoon, you are invited to join an optional excursion to the Belvedere, an elegant series of Baroque buildings built in the early 18th century as the summer residences of Prince Eugene of Savoy. The complex includes two palaces; the upper one holds Austria's single greatest collection of art, including the largest collection by Gustav Klimt. The private event is available only to those on our ship, and transportation is included in the price. Booking details will be provided with your final documents.

This evening, join an optional excursion to a special Viennese Evening Concert, featuring music of Strauss and Mozart. The private event is available only to those on our ship, and transportation is included in the price. Booking details will be provided with your final documents.

Hotel: MS *Emerald Sky/Emerald Destiny/Emerald Dawn*
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Daily Options: 20 or 46 km (12 or 28 miles)

DAY 8: Bratislava / Donau-Auen National Park / Hainburg

Awake in Bratislava this morning, the riverside capital of Slovakia and the only capital to border two other nations. After breakfast, disembark for an orientation to the city on foot with your Trip Leaders. 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 the 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 the 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 picnic lunch, 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, transfer back to Slovakia and to our awaiting ship.

Back on board, join a cocktail reception and Gala Dinner this evening as the ship starts its voyage to Budapest.

Hotel: MS *Emerald Sky/Emerald Destiny/Emerald Dawn*
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Daily Options: 34 km (21 miles)

DAY 9: Budapest / Szentendre

You will be docked in Budapest all day today and will stay overnight until disembarkation tomorrow morning, giving you ample time to explore this jewel on the Danube. After breakfast, shuttle up river (50 minutes) to start today’s ride in Danube-Ipoly National Park. Our destination is the charming town of Szentendre, a delightful artists’ community brimming with galleries and workshops. But first, stop to explore the Hungarian Open Air Museum, dedicated to the folk architecture, culture and lifestyle of Hungary in eight regional units on 150 acres. Continue riding at your leisure into Szentendre, where you’ll have some free time to browse the galleries and shops. Your Trip Leaders will introduce you to their favorite Hungarian specialties during lunch at a popular restaurant. Return to Budapest from Szentendre much faster than you got here: by way of a high-speed water taxi.

If you seek time away from your bike today, you may begin your guided explorations with your choice of tours: Explore Budapest as a whole, taking in the major sites of the Buda and Pest sides of the Danube, or walk up the slopes of the right bank for up-close views of Castle Hill and the Old Town, where Fisherman’s Bastion provides magnificent views of the city and the elegant Chain Bridge that spans the river.

Back on board, enjoy a full roster of entertainment and dining to celebrate your week on the Danube with

your fellow travelers. As a special treat, our ship lets loose its moorings once more so that you may witness the panorama of this beautiful city illuminated at night.

Hotel: MS *Emerald Sky/Emerald Destiny/Emerald Dawn*
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Daily Options: 16 km (10 miles)

DAY 10: Budapest City Ride / VBT Bicycle Vacation ends

After breakfast, disembark your ship and conclude your Danube odyssey in fitting style: with a relaxed reel through this bike-friendly city. Well-paved, dedicated bike lanes provide lasting and up-close views of the Parliament Building and the Castle Complex. Arrive by bike by about 11:00 a.m. at the Andrássy Mamaison, where your tour comes to an end.

Spend tonight at the Mamaison Andrássy Hotel, one of the Leading Small Hotels of the World. VBT provides you with City Information containing recommendations on what to do during your stay in Budapest. Your included day pass for Budapest's renowned public transportation system makes it easy to explore.

Hotel: Mamaison Andrássy Hotel
Meals: Breakfast
Daily Options: 8 miles (13 km)

DAY 11: Depart for home

After breakfast*, transfer to the Budapest airport (approximately 30 minutes) for your departing flight**. Please ensure that you are ready in the hotel reception area at the designated time.

Please note*: For guests with early-morning departures, breakfast at the hotel may not be available. Please check with the front desk to verify the times that breakfast is served.

Please note**: VBT recommends that you check your transfer time in your “Transfer Reminder” or with the hotel's reception desk the night before your flight. VBT transfer times and departure points are finalized in advance and cannot be modified for individual guests. If you extend your stay beyond the scheduled program dates, return transportation to the airport will be at your own expense.

Meals: Breakfast

Accommodations

May vary depending on departure date.

Mamaison Hotel Riverside Prague (Day: 2)

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.

Mamaison Andrassy Hotel (Day: 10)

Located in Budapest's exclusive Embassy neighborhood on the Pest side of the city, the Mamaison Andrássy Hotel was designed and built in a Bauhaus style by Alfred Hajos in 1937. It was renovated in 2007 with a sleek contemporary interior design. Admire the stunning Art Deco style of the hotel's Baraka Restaurant, which features creative cuisine that blends East and West flavors and sensibilities. Its sunny terrace overlooks the chic and trendy Andrássy Avenue. Your spacious air-conditioned room, with its warm and cozy décor, includes a satellite TV, direct-dial telephone, and minibar. Free WiFi is available throughout the hotel. Available on limited departures.

Emerald Star-Ships (Days: 3,4,5,6,7,8,9)

Cruise Europe's rivers on one of Emerald Cruises' "Star-Ships," each designed for luxury river cruising. Five cabin categories on each ship offer the amenities and contemporary style of a boutique hotel room. 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. This favorite gathering spot, offers a well-stocked bar staffed by skilled bartenders, help-yourself hot drinks, and plush seating and sofas. 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.