

# Germany, Luxembourg & France Bike & Boat: Mosel River Valley

## Bike Vacation + Air Package

Bike and barge through this ancient Roman crossroads where modern Germany, France, and Luxembourg share overlapping cultures, delicious cuisine and of course, first-class wines. It's an unforgettable journey that combines easy-yet-exhilarating rides with a laissez-faire attitude and the leisurely delights of barging. Trace the path of the Mosel River as it meanders through half-timbered villages, Roman ruins, through enchanted forests, amber fields of wheat and the world's most celebrated Riesling vineyards. Explore Roman Trier, the grand ducal city of Luxembourg and Charlemagne's medieval Metz. Join us for good times and classic VBT joie de vivre!

## Cultural Highlights

- Cycle through charming villages, vineyards, and dramatic riverside scenes
- Explore the ancient volcanic landscape and lakes of the Eifel Region
- Taste the Mosel Valley's famous wines like Riesling
- Tour the former Roman Imperial City of Trier
- See original Roman artwork and ruins along the Mosel River
- Learn the ancient and alchemical art of bell forging at a bell foundry
- Journey through the heart of Europe: Germany, Luxembourg and France in one trip
- Relax with a glass of wine or good German beer aboard your private barge
- Tour the castle in Cochem with a local guide
- Enjoy a walking tour of Metz, France with a local guide
- Savor a VBT picnic at the spring-fed fountain in a medieval French village
- Sample rare Luxembourg's wines

## What to Expect

This tour offers easy terrain on bike paths and roads through both urban and rural areas. There will be a quarter mile section on packed dirt as well as a quarter mile section on cobblestone. Our VBT support shuttle is available every day at designated points for those who would like assistance.

**Tour Duration:** 11 Days

**Average Daily Mileage:** 15 - 35

## Climate Information

### Average High/Low Temperature (°F)

Jun 67°/52°, Jul 72°/56°, Aug 69°/54°, Sep 63°/49°, Oct 54°/43°

### Average Rainfall (in.)

Jun 3.17, Jul 4.87, Aug 4.37, Sep 2.23, Oct 1.85

## DAY 1: Depart from home / Fly overnight to Frankfurt

Depart from home for Frankfurt, Germany. The particulars of your arrival overseas are detailed with your flight itinerary.

## DAY 2: Arrive in Frankfurt and transfer to Koblenz

Upon arrival at the Frankfurt airport, claim your luggage and clear customs. If your luggage is lost, fill out a PIR form before leaving the customs area—VBT representatives are not allowed into the customs area. Make certain your VBT luggage tags are affixed to your bag so that your VBT representative can identify you. After exiting customs, enter the arrival hall and look for your VBT representative, who will be holding a VBT sign. The representative helps you transfer via taxi or minibus (approximately 90 minutes) to your hotel in Koblenz. If you cannot find the VBT representative, or have been delayed in customs because of lost luggage or another reason, please go to the airport Meeting Point and wait there for a few minutes. If nobody arrives, you may wish to telephone our transportation company, Garske Touristik, at 0261 92 24 727.

Your hotel room may not be available until 2:00 p.m. You may store your luggage with the front desk if you arrive before that time. At 4:00 p.m., meet our local guide in the hotel lobby for a 1½-hour walking tour around the historic Old Town of Koblenz. You will walk for 15 minutes to the starting point of the tour, so we recommend you leave the hotel with everything you'll need to have dinner on your own in the Old Town at the tour's end.

Hotel: Hotel Brenner

## DAY 3: Cochem / Embark barge / VBT Bicycle Vacation begins

VBT Air Package and Pre-Trip Extension guests: At 9:00 a.m., meet a VBT representative in the hotel lobby for your transfer by coach (approximately 1 hour 40 minutes) to the city of Cochem. Please ensure that all luggage you will not need during the day today is loaded onto the luggage minibus. It will be taken

directly to the barge and delivered to your cabin.

On arrival, meet one of your VBT Trip Leaders, who will help acquaint you with this characteristic Mosel town, beloved for its wooded hills, medieval buildings and a picturesque center with beautiful, timber-framed houses. Hike or shuttle to Reichsburg Castle with your local guide, where you'll enjoy a tour and spectacular views of the Mosel Valley and its vineyards. The fairy-tale castle includes seven rooms of fine furniture and objects from different periods and styles.

After your visit, walk back into town, where you may shop and eat lunch on your own before boarding the barge at 2:00 p.m. Meet the crew and your second VBT Trip Leader, then settle in before a bike-safety session and a short warm-up ride on quiet bike paths along the Moselle to Beilstein. Here, reunite with your barge and, after time to change, gather with your travel mates for a welcome drink and dinner on board. The barge moors in Beilstein tonight.

Please note regarding Wi-Fi on board the barge: Due to the nature of the barge 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 Wi-Fi onboard, VBT also recommend that you download your VBT Maps & Routes Notes from a WI-FI zone prior to arrival on the boat. 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: Barge Iris

Alternative: Barge Quo Vadis

Meals: B, D

Daily Options: 6 miles (9.5 km)

## **DAY 4: Bike to Zell / Traben-Trarbach / Cruise to Bernkastel-Kues**

Today, you will follow the Mosel upstream and disembark for a ride on an easy cycling path to Zell and Traben-Trarbach. Beautifully situated on the Mosel, where the river meanders in many bends through the hills, Zell is one of the largest wine-producing communities on the river. One of the best wines made here, Zeller Schwarze Katze (Black Cat), is produced with grapes from 16 different locations. Be sure to notice the sculpture on the market-square fountain depicting a snarling cat on top of a wine barrel.

Continue to the village of Traben-Trarbach, an architectural jewel of Jugendstil surrounded by woodland and extensive vineyards. Traben-Trarbach was once the world's second-largest wine-trading center. At the height of their prosperity at the turn of the 20th century, the city's wine merchants built a number of fine Art Nouveau buildings, many of which are carefully preserved and continue to operate as wineries. There'll be time to admire a wide range of Belle Époque splendor, and you'll quickly see why the city is a favorite destination for lovers of baroque and classical architecture.

Rejoin your barge in Traben-Trarbach, then cruise into Bernkastel-Kues. Bernkastel and Kues, united in 1905, were once two small cities divided by the Moselle. The pride of today's dual city is the market square, with its picturesque timber-framed houses and decorative sculpted fountains, some dating to the 17th century.

Dinner is on board tonight. Afterward, the captain speaks about navigation and your planned route.

Hotel: Barge Iris

Alternative: Barge Quo Vadis

Meals: B, D

Daily Options: 17 or 30 miles (27.6 or 47.7 km)

## DAY 5: Shuttle to Daun / Eifel Region / Bernkastel-Kues

This morning, ride the shuttle (approximately 45 minutes) through the Eifel Valley to the town of Daun. Climb on your bicycle there and take an exhilarating ride, climbing a slight incline at first and then coasting downhill along a former railway track that is now a cycling path. This exciting reel includes stretches through tunnels, over bridges and past small lakes formed from volcano craters, known as maars. By ride's end, you will have passed castles, vineyards, green forests and plenty of quiet villages.

Along the way, stop in Gillenfeld and enjoy a simple lunch hosted by Sigrid and Leo Lenerz. Their café is idyllically located in an old barn, and they specialize in regional products from local producers. Later, ride back to Bernkastel, where you can relax before dinner on board. After dinner, stroll to the fascinating cellar of Josef Zimmermann via an elegant district of fine art nouveau villas, many of which display WEINGUT, or winery signs. The simple, fourth-generation Zimmermann operation contains a century-old cellar, wine barrels and an inviting tasting hall, where you can sample four different wines.

Hotel: Barge Iris

Alternative: Barge Quo Vadis

Meals: B, L, D

Daily Options: 19, 26.5 or 39 miles (31, 42.4 or 62.2 km)

## DAY 6: Ride to Piesport / Trittenheim / Trier

After breakfast, you will cycle toward Trier, the oldest town in Germany, passing Piesport and Trittenheim along the way. Both of these winemaking villages lie on scenic hairpin turns of the Moselle. In Piesport, you will see a reconstructed Roman winepress. Stop for lunch in one of the small villages along your route, such as Neumagen-Dhron, where there are more signs of ancient Rome.

The people of Trier might tell you that it is possible to see “2,000 years of history in 2,000 paces” in their city. The Romans established their local capital here. In the Middle Ages, Frankish kings and the archbishops of Trier reigned. Here you can learn about the Porta Nigra (“Black Gate”), a city landmark and the largest city gate of the ancient world; the amphitheater; the medieval Market Square, Germany’s oldest cathedral next to the Church of Our Lady and Constantine’s Imperial Throne Hall. Then there’s the rococo Electoral Palace; the ruins of the Imperial Baths and its extensive subterranean passages. It is an astounding repository of history that leaves little doubt why the whole of Trier’s monuments has been designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Tonight, your barge moors here, where you can try one of the local restaurants for dinner on your own.

Hotel: Barge Iris

Alternative: Barge Quo Vadis

Meals: B

Daily Options: 17 or 34.5 miles (27 or 55.4 km)

## DAY 7: Short train ride and cycle to Saarburg

This morning, you have time to explore Trier, with its shops and Roman history, before taking a local train to Konz. Here, you will meet the barge for lunch before an afternoon reel into the Saarland along the more intimate Saar River. Wooded mountains, wide meadows, farmsteads and villages mark your progress as you ride. Later this afternoon, you’ll reach Saarburg, a medieval riverside jewel at the foot of a castle. The town center boasts a roaring 65-foot-high (19.8-meter-high) waterfall. From here, choose between a scenic reel along the Saar River or free time in Saarburg.

This evening is free, so you may dine on your own in a restaurant on the Leuk River. Savor the hearty food

and Saar River rieslings, or viez an apple cider typical of this region. The barge moors in Saarburg.

Hotel: Barge Iris

Alternative: Barge Quo Vadis Meals: B, L

Daily Options: 12 or 21 miles (19 or 33.5 km)

## DAY 8: Konz / Wasserbillig / Nittel / Remich

This morning, walk to the nearby former bell foundry and museum, Mabilon, which produced bells until 2002. After, you'll cycle along the banks of the Saar River to Konz, at the confluence of the Moselle and Saar rivers. Then follow the Moselle River, the natural border between Luxembourg and Germany, along an easy biking path. Soon you'll arrive in Wasserbillig and cross the border into Luxembourg.

Rejoin the barge for lunch in Nittel. This afternoon, you can opt to continue cycling with our longer option or cruise into Remich.

If you cycle, you'll follow the Route du Vin, famous for its vineyards and outstanding wines, including Riesling and Cremant. Approaching Remich, take a short detour to Nennig and admire Europe's largest Roman mosaic; remarkably, 90% of it is original and perfectly restored. Dinner tonight is on the barge, moored in Remich.

Hotel: Barge Iris

Alternative: Barge Quo Vadis

Meals: B, L, D

Daily Options: 14 or 27 miles (22.6 or 43.6 km)

## DAY 9: Picnic at Rodemack, France

Cycle a tranquil bike path along the Moselle River this morning, crossing from Luxembourg into Germany and on into France. Then, turn inland and follow a pleasant rolling route through small villages to Rodemack, known as "Little Carcassonne Lorraine" and ranked one of the most beautiful villages in France. Here in this charming village, you'll admire marvels of construction that span the ages, including fortifications erected over many centuries. Impressive ramparts and walls encircle the village, with a labyrinth of back streets and cobbled alleys to explore, as well as an impressive fortress.

Enjoy a picnic lunch with free time to explore on your own.

Today's longer ride takes you to Thionville, where you will board your barge and cruise into Metz. This evening, enjoy your final onboard dinner.

Hotel: Barge Iris

Alternative: Barge Quo Vadis

Meals: B, L, D

Daily Options: 19, 25 or 33 miles (30, 41 or 53 km)

## DAY 10: Metz / Luxembourg City / VBT Bicycle Vacation ends

VBT Air Package and Post-Trip Extension guests: After a final breakfast on our barge, bid farewell to the crew and VBT Trip Leaders and say hello to your local guide as you disembark in Metz, France, nestled at the confluence of the Moselle and Seille rivers. Then, take a pleasant walk into this charming city, a quaint tapestry of bridges and romantic corners. Pass the elegant 18th-century city theater and the Palais de la Prefecture in the Place de la Comedie. Admire the imposing Cathedral of St. Etienne, one of the most beautiful Gothic cathedrals of France, built around 1250. Admire the fine stained-glass windows, including a modern one by Marc Chagall.

Then, walk to the Saturday morning local market and to the lively Place St. Louis and Place Saint-Jacques, where there'll be time to shop or explore. Lunch is on your own.

After, take a private shuttle to Luxembourg City. There will be a short 15-minute stop at the Luxembourg American Cemetery en route so you may honor those who fell here during World War II.

Check into the Hotel Le Royal, a stroll away from the main square and the Old City. The rest of your day is free to discover this fascinating city, capital of one of Europe's smallest countries. Explore cobblestone-arched narrow streets and small elegant palaces such as the Palais Grand-Ducal and the Chambre des Deputes. The beautiful Chemin de la Corniche is said to be Europe's most beautiful terrace, with a pleasant promenade that passes restored ancient homes. You'll also bask in the beauty of the city's two major squares: the regal Place de la Constitution and the cozy Place du Marche, still used for weekly flower and vegetable markets.

Tonight, dine on your own. The city boasts more Michelin stars per square mile than any other city in the world and has a lively atmosphere in its many cafés, pubs and pizzerias. The biggest ethnic community here is from Portugal, adding a Latin flair to its nightlife and menus.

Hotel: Hotel Le Royal

Meals: B

## DAY 11: Depart for home

After breakfast,\* meet in the hotel lobby and transfer to the Luxembourg City airport for your flight back home.\*\* Please be sure that you are waiting at the designated transfer time and location.

\*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.

\*\*VBT recommends that you check your transfer time in your "Transfer Reminder." The transfer is prearranged by VBT and is prepaid. 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: B

## Accommodations

May vary depending on departure date.

### Hotel Brenner (Day: 2)

Located in the Koblenz city center, the family-run Hotel Brenner welcomes you with warm hospitality and understated elegance. Set in a traditional house, the property has been painstakingly restored with the skill of local craftspeople, artists, and interior designers. Admire the hand-painted flowers on the ceilings and walls and the many period furnishings. The air-conditioned rooms are comfortably sized and offer free WiFi. Most overlook a small, well-maintained garden where you may start your day with a delicious, generous breakfast.

### Hotel Le Royal Luxembourg (Day: 10)

This luxury property, one of the Leading Hotels of the World, is centrally located in Luxembourg City. Sophisticated European hospitality and impeccable service are its calling cards. It boasts a beautiful garden and is only a few steps from the Old Town and shops. Close each day with a drink in the piano bar and a taste of French gastronomy at one of its two onsite restaurants. All rooms are spacious, elegant,



and fully air conditioned. The hotel is part of Luxembourg's "Hot City," a citywide network of free WiFi.