

Danube Bike & River Cruise: Prague to Budapest

Bike Vacation Only

While most river cruises limit themselves to the lower Danube region, VBT takes you one step further—exploring the entire length of this fabled river, including the shores of Germany and the medieval city of Regensburg, a UNESCO World Heritage site. By day, join your local VBT trip leaders on curated routes through choice segments of the Danube Cycle Path—pedaling past small medieval villages, colorful vineyards, and fairytale castles. You'll explore the majesty of the Habsburg Empire during VBT's guided tours of Schloss Hof, Passau, and Vienna. By night, relax on your luxurious Emerald cruise ship—including a sundeck with spectacular views, a heated pool, and 5-star luxury meals and included beverages. With a wealth of onboard activities and optional excursions, this is the perfect trip for travel partners with different interests and activity levels.

Cultural Highlights

- Unpack once, then bike and boat along the Danube in four countries and three cultural capitals—all on one trip.
- Follow the car-free and scenic Danube and EuroVelo 6 bike paths in this bicycle-friendly region.
- Join a private guided walk including a beer tasting in Regensburg.
- Choose to be as active or relaxed as you wish from our menu of cycling routes and walking tours.
- Enjoy an exclusive Viennese concert with the music of Strauss and Mozart.

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 vehicle is available every day at designated points for those who need assistance.

On Board Ship: Our group of up to 24 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 others. While in port, our ship may be docked adjacent to other ships. This means you might walk through other ships while boarding or disembarking, and some views may be obstructed while in port.

Tour Duration: 8 Days

Average Daily Mileage: 12-41 miles

Average Cycling Time: 2-5 hours

Group size: 14-24 max

Climate Information

Average High/Low Temperature (°F)

April 57°/39°, May 67°/49°, June 72°/55°, July 77°/59°, August 77°/59°, September 69°/53°, October 57°/43°

Average Rainfall (in.)

April 2.2, May 2.4, June 2.9, July 2.5, August 2.3, September 1.8, October 1.6

DAY 1: Your VBT Vacation Begins / Embark Ship

You are responsible for making your own way to Regensburg, Germany, to meet your Emerald Cruises ship. Please arrive between 12:30 and 2:30 p.m. Please note that you cannot embark before 12:00 p.m., as the ship is being prepared for you. If you are late, you must contact the ship as soon as possible to make arrangements to meet the ship.

Your cabin may not be ready for you until 3:00 p.m. However, you are welcome to enjoy lunch on board, served between 12:00 and 3:00 p.m., or relax in the ship's common areas.

At 2:30 p.m., meet your trip leaders and fellow travelers on board for introductions and a safety and bike-fitting session, followed by a short test ride near your ship. Later, enjoy a welcome dinner on board. The ship remains in Regensburg this evening.

Today's Ride Choices

What to Expect:

No biking today, except for a short test ride.

Included Meals: Lunch, Dinner

DAY 2: Cycle from Kelheim to Regensburg / Private Walking Tour and Beer Tasting

After breakfast, take a private shuttle to the picturesque town of Kelheim, where you'll begin your cycling journey along the scenic Danube banks. Following the Danube Bike Path, your ride will be easy and mostly car-free.

Pause for lunch at a charming Bavarian restaurant before continuing your ride. You'll arrive back at your ship in the early afternoon. Upon arrival in Regensburg, join a private guided walking tour, followed by a beer tasting in the city center.

Regensburg, an imposing town of red-roofed houses at the convergence of the Danube and Regen rivers, boasts remarkable medieval architecture. Its 12th-century stone bridge, with 16 arches spanning the Danube, connects to the Old Town.

Afterward, rejoin your ship for dinner with live music performed by a traditional Bavarian band. The ship will remain moored in Regensburg, allowing you the opportunity for an evening stroll through town.

Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Kelheim to Lunch — 25 km (15 miles)

Afternoon: Lunch to Regensburg — 14 km (9 miles)

What to Expect:

Today's ride follows the famous EuroVelo 6 bike path, with the Danube as your constant companion on this scenic and easy downstream route to Regensburg. The shorter option ends at the lunch stop, where a shuttle will take you to Regensburg. This is the only day featuring significant sections of packed gravel, covering approximately 60% of the route. However, almost the entire ride takes place on vehicle-free bike paths, ensuring a smooth and enjoyable experience.

Cumulative Distance Range: 25 – 39 km (15 – 24 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 3: Passau / Cycle to Schlögener Schlinge / Engelhartszell

Arrive in Passau during breakfast. Afterward, enjoy an informative walking tour with a local guide through

this scenic “City of Three Rivers”, located at the confluence of the Danube, Inn, and Ilz rivers. From here, begin your cycling journey along the Danube, crossing the border into Austria and entering the Schlögener Schlinge, where the river winds through steep, forested mountains in a series of sharp and scenic bends.

Pause for a delicious lunch before a leisurely afternoon ride on the Danube Bike Path. This beautiful route leads through a forested landscape toward the Schlögener Schlinge. Your ride ends in the Baroque town of Aschach, where you will board a private shuttle to Engelhartszell. Here, you may want to sample the famous liqueur of Engelhartszell Abbey.

Your river ship arrives in Engelhartszell late this afternoon to pick up our VBT group. There will be time to relax in your cabin before dinner and evening activities on board as the ship sails toward Melk.

Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Passau to Schlögen — 40 km (25 miles)

Afternoon: Schlögen to Aschach — 26 km (16 miles)

What to Expect:

Follow the right bank of the Danube along a flat, fully paved section of the Danube Bike Path. On this longer cycling day, the VBT support van will be available for guests who prefer to ride fewer miles.

Cumulative Distance Range: 40 – 66 km (25 – 41 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 4: Melk / Cycle Through the Wachau Valley / Dürnstein

Your ship is moored in Melk, Austria, when you wake. After breakfast, cycle through what is perhaps the most beautiful stretch of the Danube—the Wachau Valley, Austria’s renowned wine-growing region. The Wachau Cultural Landscape was designated a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2000. This breathtaking region is dotted with lush vineyards, hillside orchards, castle ruins, churches, and abbeys, making it one of the most picturesque cycling routes in Europe.

Ride through the scenic hamlets of Spitz and Wiessenkirchen, nestled between the Danube and its rising

banks, before pedaling into Dürnstein, a hub of Wachau wine production. Admire its stunning powder-blue bell tower, rising above red-roofed houses, while a cliffside castle, once the prison of Richard the Lionheart, watches over the town.

Rejoin your ship in Dürnstein for a delicious BBQ lunch onboard (weather permitting). The afternoon is yours to enjoy at leisure, with several options. You may choose to explore Dürnstein and hike to its hilltop castle for stunning views of the Danube and the Wachau Valley. Alternatively, join an included guided tour of the picturesque Göttweig Abbey, or take a scenic loop ride along the riverbank. Later, enjoy a private wine tasting in Dürnstein before your ship sets sail for Vienna.

Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Melk to Dürnstein — 36 km (22 miles)

Afternoon: Wachau Independent Loop Ride — 22 km (14 miles)

What to Expect:

From Melk, your route follows the Danube Bike Path. You may extend your ride with an optional loop after lunch. Both routes are mostly flat and paved, with a few short ascents. In some sections, the bike path runs adjacent to the roadway, with traffic traveling in the opposite direction. The afternoon ride is an independent loop, starting and finishing in Dürnstein, incorporating one of the ferry crossings.

Cumulative Distance Range: 36 – 58 km (22 – 36 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 5: Ride Along the Donauinsel / Explore Vienna

Our ship remains in Vienna from early this morning until late tonight, providing a convenient base for exploring Austria's magnificent capital.

Vienna is renowned as one of Europe's most cycle-friendly cities, offering an extensive network of bike paths and lanes. This morning, our small group will enjoy a private walking tour led by an experienced local guide.

After lunch on board, you can embark on a scenic bike ride to the edge of the city, following the Donauinsel (Danube Island), a 13-mile (21-km) strip where peaceful paths and stunning river views enhance your Vienna experience.

Alternatively, you may choose to explore Vienna on your own, following your own interests in the city of Strauss, Beethoven, and Mahler. Vienna's grand boulevards exude culture and elegance. Stroll along the Ringstrasse, the circular avenue that replaced the city's medieval walls, and admire its breathtaking architecture—from the Imperial Palace and St. Stephen's Cathedral to the iconic Vienna State Opera. Be sure to take a break at one of the city's famous coffee houses to experience Viennese café culture firsthand.

This evening, you are invited to join the Viennese Evening Concert excursion, featuring the music of Strauss and Mozart. This private event is exclusive to guests on our ship.

Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Vienna to Klosterneuburg and Return — 26 km (16 miles)

Afternoon: Vienna and Danube Island — 20 km (12 miles)

What to Expect:

This morning, enjoy a "Cyclist's Extra" option—an out-and-back ride along the Danube to the village of Klosterneuburg, primarily on bike paths. In the afternoon, take a relaxing and easy loop ride along the city's edge and onto Danube Island, a car-free recreational paradise.

Cumulative Distance Range: 20 – 46 km (12 – 28 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 6: Bratislava / Donau-Auen National Park / Hainburg

Awake this morning in Bratislava, the riverside capital of Slovakia and the only capital city to border two other nations. After breakfast, disembark for an orientation walking tour with your trip leader. Discover an intriguing blend of 20th-century Communist-era architecture, Baroque palaces, medieval spires, and the narrowest house in Europe—all watched over from a hillside by the rectangular white castle and

watchtowers of Bratislava Castle.

Mid-morning, pedal out of town, crossing the Danube via the “UFO” bridge, then ride through the forests and meadows of Danube-Auen National Park, one of the largest remaining floodplains along the river. Arrive in Hainburg, a charming Austrian town where Joseph Haydn studied music as a young boy. After a delicious lunch at a local restaurant, continue to Schloss Hof, the former “hunting lodge” of Prince Eugene of Savoy. A guided tour introduces you to the grand estate, followed by time to explore its splendid gardens and castle.

Mid-afternoon, return to Slovakia and rejoin your ship. Alternatively, cycle back along the opposite side of the river, passing through the small village of Devin, known for its historic castle.

Back on board, join a cocktail reception and gala dinner this evening as the ship sets sail for Budapest.

Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Bratislava to Schloss Hof — 34 km (21 miles)

Afternoon: Schloss Hof to Bratislava — 20 km (13 miles)

What to Expect:

Today's ride includes a mix of bike paths and town streets. While both Slovakia and Austria offer bike paths, please note that those in Slovakia are slightly less well-maintained. The afternoon route partially follows a busy country road.

Cumulative Distance Range: 34 – 54 km (21 – 34 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 7: Budapest / Szentendre

You will be docked in Budapest all day and will remain overnight until disembarkation tomorrow morning, giving you ample time to explore this jewel on the Danube. After breakfast, pedal along the river to the charming town of Szentendre, a delightful artists' community brimming with galleries and workshops.

Upon arrival in Szentendre, you'll have free time to browse the galleries and shops before learning how to prepare goulash and strudel at a popular restaurant, followed by lunch. Return to Budapest by shuttle bus to rest or take a walk through town.

If you prefer to forgo cycling today, you can begin your guided explorations with one of two tours: explore Budapest's major sites on both the Buda and Pest sides of the Danube, or take a scenic walk up Castle Hill for an in-depth look at Old Town. At Fisherman's Bastion, enjoy magnificent city views and a stunning perspective of the elegant Chain Bridge spanning the river.

Back on board, enjoy a full evening of entertainment and dining to celebrate your week on the Danube with your fellow travelers. After a farewell cocktail on the Panorama Deck with your VBT trip leaders, savor dinner and a traditional Hungarian folklore show on board your ship.

Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Budapest to Szentendre — 25 km (15 miles)

What to Expect:

Today's ride follows a flat, paved bike path along the Danube. The first part of the route passes through a relatively quiet urban environment, while the second part follows a designated bike path away from traffic. You'll return to the ship by private shuttle bus.

Cumulative Distance Range: 25 km (15 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 8: Disembark Ship / Budapest City Walk / Your VBT Vacation Ends

After an included breakfast, disembark your ship and conclude your Danube odyssey with a guided walk through the city's highlights. Enjoy lasting, up-close views of the Parliament Building and the Castle complex before your walk concludes late this morning at the post-tour hotel, where your tour officially ends. The hotel staff can assist you in booking a taxi at your own expense for travel to the airport or onward destinations.

Please note: You are responsible for your luggage at the end of the tour. Luggage storage is not available at hotels where you do not have a reservation.

Important: Train or air departures from Budapest before 1:00 p.m. are not recommended. If you choose to depart earlier, you are responsible for arranging your own transportation from the ship.

Included Meals: Breakfast

Accommodations

May vary depending on departure date.

Emerald Star-Ships (Days 1-7)

Cruise Europe's rivers on one of Emerald Cruises' "Star-Ships," each designed for luxury river cruising. 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. 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.