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

Bike Vacation Only

Cycle three stunning countries on one unforgettable journey! If you want to bike Europe in the most rewarding way, you’ll love this popular Bike & Boat vacation! Embark a luxurious barge and follow the winding Mosel River into the heart of Riesling country, alighting each day for exhilarating reels through enchanting forests, past lush vineyards, and into charming half-timbered villages. Along the way, explore the Roman remains of Trier, the wine-producing village of Bernkastel-Kues, the low mountains of scenic Eifel, and the ducal city of Luxembourg. Join us!

Cultural Highlights

- Coast into charming villages, past lush vineyards, and along tranquil river banks
- Experience the low mountains of German Eifel by bike, blanketed with ancient volcanic
lanscapes and lakes

- Visit a bell foundry to learn the ancient and alchemical craft of bell forging. Uncover the scenic and cultural wonders of Germany, Luxembourg, and France on one trip.
- Follow the winding Mosel River to Trier, the former imperial city steeped in ancient art and architecture.
- Sip Germany's finest Rieslings and beers while relaxing on your barge deck.
- Explore Cochem's imposing hilltop Reichsburg Castle with a local guide.

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: 8 Days
Average Daily Mileage: 6 - 38
Average Cycling Time: 00:45 - 03:45
Group size: 24 max

Climate Information

Average High/Low Temperature (°F)
Jun 67°/51°, Jul 71°/55°, Aug 71°/55°, Sep 64°/50°, Oct 54°/43°

Average Rainfall (in.)
Jun 2.6, Jul 2.7, Aug 2.7, Sep 2.5, Oct 2.7

DAY 1: Cochem / Embark barge / VBT Bicycle Vacation begins

You are responsible for making your way to Cochem to meet your barge. Please arrive between 1:30 and 2:00 p.m. Please note that you cannot embark before this time, as the barge is being prepared for you. If you are late, you must contact the barge as soon as possible to make alternate arrangements because we sail shortly after this time.

The barge will be moored in Cochem at Uferstrasse, on the right bank just downstream from the bridge. Contact telephone number is +49 151 57 81 33 06 or +31 620 245 095.

Meet the crew and your VBT Trip Leaders, then freshen up in your cabin and change before a bike-safety
session and a short warm-up ride to Beilstein on quiet bike paths along the tranquil Mosel River. Reunite with your barge in Beilstein, where it will moor for the night. Gather with your travel mates for a welcome drink and dinner on board.

Please note regarding Ride with GPS: There is limited WiFi on board. If you wish to use Ride with GPS on your smartphone, VBT also recommends that you download your VBT Maps & Route Notes from a WiFi zone prior to arrival on the boat. During your vacation, you will be able to follow these route notes on your smartphone with turn-by-turn voice navigation as you ride. As always, VBT also provides our traditional printed maps and route notes during the tour.

Hotel: Barge Iris
Alternative: Barge Quo Vadis
Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Today's Ride Choice:
Cumulative Distance Range: 10 km (6 miles)
Afternoon
Beilstein Warm-Up: 10 km (6 miles)

What to Expect: The ride to Beilstein is easy along the river. Get acquainted with your route notes and bicycle. Check your brakes and play with shifting your full range of gears.

DAY 2: Bike to Zell / Traben-Trarbach / Cruise to Bernkastel-Kues

Today, cruise the Mosel upstream and disembark for a reel on an easy cycling path to Zell and Traben-Trarbach. Beautifully situated on the Mosel where the river twists and turns through the hills, Zell is one of the largest wine-producing communities on the river. The beloved wine Zeller Schwarze Katze (Black Cat) is produced here with grapes from 16 different locations. Be sure to notice the sculpture on the market-square fountain depicting a snarling cat atop a wine barrel.

Next, cycle to the village of Traben-Trarbach, an architectural jewel of the German Art Nouveau movement known as Jugendstil. The surrounding woodlands and extensive vineyards add to its irresistible charm. Traben-Trarbach was once the world’s second-largest wine-trading center. At the height of its 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 Époch splendor during your visit; you’ll quickly see why the city is a favorite destination for lovers of baroque and classical architecture, too.
Rejoin your barge in Traben-Trarbach, then cruise into Bernkastel-Kues, once two small wine-making towns on either side of the Mosel before they were united in 1905. 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: Breakfast, Dinner

Today’s Ride Choice:
Cumulative Distance Range: 28 - 48 km (17 - 30 miles)
Morning
Beilstein to Zell: 28 km (17 miles)

Afternoon
Zell to Traben-Trabach: 20 km (13 miles)

What to Expect: The Mosel meanders in scenic hairpin turns through the steepest vineyards in Europe. The scenery is breathtaking, and many interesting sights can be explored along the way. We cross the river a few times, but continue to follow it upstream to the mooring point in Traben-Trarbach. You will find great places for lunch in charming villages. Short option riders join the barge here. Enjoy beautiful riding through quaint half-timbered wine villages and vineyards along the river to the Art Nouveau town of Traben-Trarbach where we meet the barge and cruise to Bernkastel-Kues.

DAY 3: Shuttle to Daun / Eifel Region / Bernkastel-Kues

This morning, shuttle (approximately 45 minutes) through the scenic Eifel Valley to the town of Daun, a spa town fed by mineral springs. Return to your bicycle here and enjoy an exhilarating ride, climbing a slight incline at first and then coasting downhill along a former railway converted into a cycling path. This exciting reel includes stretches through tunnels, over bridges, and past small lakes formed from volcanic craters known as maars. Pass stately castles, lush vineyards, green forests, and quiet villages that invite you to pause and explore.

Along the way, stop in Gillenfeld to enjoy a simple lunch hosted by Sigrid and Leo Lenerz. At their simple
cozy café idyllically located in an old barn, 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 wine cellar of Josef Zimmermann via an elegant district of fine Art Nouveau villas, many of which display signs proclaiming their status as a weingut, or winery estate. The simple, fourth-generation Zimmermann operation boasts a century-old cellar full of wine barrels and an inviting tasting hall. Your welcoming host will guide you through a tasting of four different wines during your visit.

Hotel: Barge Iris  
Alternative: Barge Quo Vadis  
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today’s Ride Choice:  
Cumulative Distance Range: 16 – 64 km (18 – 40 miles)  
Morning  
Daun to Gillenfeld: 16 km (10 miles)

Afternoon  
Gillenfeld to Laufeld: 12 km (8 miles)  
Laufeld to Wittlich: 15 km (9 miles)  
Wittlich to Bernkastel-Kues: 21 km (13 miles)

What to Expect: Bike an invigorating rails-to-trails route known locally as the MMR, a mainly flat or downhill bike path with a few gradual climbs at the beginning. Meet up at a cozy café in Gillenfeld for lunch. Take our shuttle after lunch if you wish to avoid hills, then continue on the MMR bike path coasting through illuminated tunnels and a viaduct before a thrilling, gradual descent into Wittlich town. From Wittlich you may shuttle back to the barge or ride flat and easy bike paths along a small river through gorgeous forest and farmlands to the Mosel River, where your barge awaits.

**DAY 4: Ride to Piesport / Trittenheim / Trier**

After breakfast, you 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 Mosel. 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 you witness more signs of ancient Rome. Rejoin the barge in Schweich for a leisurely cruise to Trier.
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 and the ruins of the Imperial Baths with their extensive subterranean passages. It is an astounding repository of history that leaves little doubt why all of Trier’s monuments have been designated a UNESCO World Heritage site.

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

Hotel: Barge Iris
Alternative: Barge Quo Vadis
Meals: Breakfast

Today's Ride Choices:
Cumulative Distance Range: 27 – 56 km (16 – 34 miles)
Morning
Bernkastel-Kues to Neumagen: 27 km (16 miles)

Afternoon
Neumagen to Schweich: 29 km (18 miles)

What to Expect: Ride to Neumagen, where you can rejoin the barge. Or spend the morning on board and start biking from Neumagen. There are a few short ascents and descents along the river and through the vineyards; as you ride, you might witness the barge passing through the locks in Detzem. Then it’s all aboard in Schweich as we all barge into Trier, the former Imperial city of Rome’s late Classical period.

**DAY 5: 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, scenically situated where the Saar River flows into the Mosel. Here, you meet the barge for lunch, then set off on 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 reach Saarburg, a medieval riverside jewel at the foot of a castle. The town center boasts a roaring 65-foot (19.8 meters) waterfall. Choose between a scenic reel along the Saar River or free time in
Saarburg.

This evening, you may dine on your own in a restaurant on the Leuk River. Savor the hearty food and sip a crisp Saar River Riesling, or try viez, an apple cider typical of this region. The barge moors in Saarburg.

Hotel: Barge Iris
Alternative: Barge Quo Vadis
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Today's Ride Choices:
Cumulative Distance Range: 19 – 34 km (11 – 20 miles)
Afternoon
Konz to Saarburg: 19 km (11 miles) OR
Include Saarburg Loop: 34 km (20 miles)

What to Expect: After lunch on board, your afternoon reel begins by crossing over a bridge at the confluence of the Mosel and Saar rivers. The riverside ride to lovely medieval Saarburg is easy, passing fruit orchards and vineyard-clad slopes. While you wait for the barge to arrive, take the opportunity to explore the town, perhaps climbing the steps to the castle ruins. For more miles along the Saar bike path, ride up the right bank, navigate a narrow unpaved path through the forest, and cross over the big locks and bridge down the other side back to Saarburg.

DAY 6: Konz / Wasserbillig / Nittel / Remich

This morning, walk to the nearby former bell foundry and museum, Mabilon, which produced bells until 2002. Later, cycle along the banks of the Saar River to Konz, at the confluence of the Mosel and Saar rivers. Then follow the Mosel 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.

In Nittel, Germany, rejoin the barge for lunch. This afternoon, you can opt to continue cycling with our longer option or cruise into Remich, Luxembourg.

Our longer option follows the renowned 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: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today’s Ride Choices:
Cumulative Distance Range: 21 – 44 km (14 – 27 miles)
Morning
Saarburg to Wasserbillig: 23 km (14 miles)

Afternoon
Nittel to Remich: 21 km (13 miles)

What to Expect: Ride along the Saar River back to its confluence with the Mosel, crossing a few bridges. Ride along the Luxembourg side to meet the barge in Wasserbillig for a cruising lunch to Nittel, Germany. An easy reel along the Mosel River through vineyards and small villages ends at the Roman mosaic for a film and tour of the ruins.

**DAY 7: Picnic at Rodemack, France**

Ride a tranquil bike path along the Mosel River this morning, crossing from Luxembourg into Germany and 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. In this charming hamlet, admire marvels of construction that span the ages, including fortifications erected over many centuries. Impressive ramparts and walls encircle the village and cobbled alleys lead to a labyrinth of back streets and an impressive fortress.

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

Today’s longer option leads to Thionville, where you board your barge and cruise into Metz, France. This evening, enjoy your final onboard dinner.

Hotel: Barge Iris
Alternative: Barge Quo Vadis
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today’s Ride Choices:
Cumulative Distance Range: 30 – 53 km (18 – 40 miles)
Morning
Remich to Rodemack: 30 km (18 miles)

Afternoon
Rodemack to Thionville with shuttles: 11 km (7 miles)
Rodemack to Thionville: 23 km (15 miles)

What to Expect: Enjoy flat, easy cycling along the Mosel River to the three-country border zone, crossing from Luxembourg into Germany and France. Cycle through French farmlands, on a mix of quiet country roads and bike lanes. Finish the day biking through France along the Mosel, riding through breathtaking French countryside through the Lorraine region into Thionville, where the barge waits. Shuttles are available to assist you if required during the day.

DAY 8: Metz / Luxembourg City / VBT Bicycle Vacation ends
After breakfast, your tour ends in Metz, France. It is important that you leave the barge no later than 9:00 a.m. so that the crew can prepare for their next guests.