

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

## Bike Vacation + Air Package

The Mosel River Valley is truly a sight to behold—and so is our premium barge, the *Magnifique I*. As your charming ship cruises the storied Mosel River, you'll cycle mostly flat paths through the picturesque medieval villages of Germany, Luxembourg, and France—discovering incredible vineyards, half-timbered wine villages, and ancient castle ruins along the way. On board, cabins are tastefully furnished and include private bathrooms and individually controlled air conditioning units for maximum comfort—plus a lounge and dining area with full bar, and a partially-shaded sundeck. Best of all, you choose the pace of your vacation—with longer cycling options available, and the freedom to relax on deck and enjoy this delightful river cruise to its fullest.

## Cultural Highlights

- Experience three countries—Germany, Luxembourg, and France—up close, by bike.
- View quaint villages, lush vineyards and forests, and fairytale castles as you roll along a scenic river.
- Discover the region's rich historical heritage—from its ancient Roman roots to its medieval legacy.
- Enjoy a private wine tasting.
- Relax on your barge and sip Germany's finest Rieslings and beers.

## What to Expect

This tour offers easy terrain on bike paths and roads through both urban and rural areas. Our VBT support shuttle is available every day at designated points for those who would like assistance.

**Tour Duration:** 11 Days

**Average Daily Mileage:** 6-38 miles

**Average Cycling Time:** 1-4 hours

**Group size:** 14-30 max

## Climate Information

### Average High/Low Temperature (°F)

June 67°/52°, July 72°/56°, August 69°/54°, September 63°/49°, October 54°/43°

### Average Rainfall (in.)

June 3.17, July 4.87, August 4.37, September 2.23, October 1.85

## **FLIGHT DAY: Depart from the United States or Canada**

Your vacation is about to begin! Spend your first night aloft and arrive ready for an unforgettable trip.

## **ARRIVAL DAY: Arrive in Frankfurt / Travel to Koblenz**

A VBT representative will greet you at the Frankfurt airport to start your adventure off right. A complimentary car service will whisk you to your hotel in Koblenz. From your centrally located hotel, you are perfectly positioned to explore this charming city at your leisure.

## **DAY 1: Cochem / Embark Barge**

After an included breakfast at your hotel, meet a VBT representative in the lobby at 9:00 a.m. with your luggage for a coach ride—approximately one hour and 45 minutes—to the city of Cochem.

Upon arrival, connect with one of your VBT trip leaders, who will introduce you to this charming Mosel town, celebrated for its wooded hills, medieval architecture, and a picturesque center adorned with beautiful timber-framed houses. Then, either hike or take a shuttle with a local guide to Reichsburg Castle, where you'll enjoy a tour and spectacular views of the Mosel Valley and its vineyards. This fairy-tale castle features seven rooms filled with fine furniture and artifacts from various periods and styles.

After your visit, stroll back into town, where you can shop and enjoy lunch on your own before boarding the barge at 2:00 p.m. There, you'll meet the crew and your second VBT trip leader, settle in, and participate in a bike safety session followed by a short warm-up ride to Beilstein along quiet paths by the Mosel River. Reunite with your barge in Beilstein, where it will moor for the night. Finally, gather with your travel mates for a welcome drink and toast to this Mosel bike tour before enjoying dinner on board.

Today's Ride Choices

Afternoon: Beilstein Warm-Up — 10 km (6 miles)

What to Expect:

Embark on a gentle warm-up ride along the river to Beilstein. Use this easy journey to review your route notes and get acquainted with your bicycle. Take a moment to check your brakes and experiment with your full range of gears, setting the stage for the week ahead.

Cumulative Distance Range: 10 km (6 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

## **DAY 2: Cycle to Zell / Traben-Trarbach / Cruise to Bernkastel-Kues**

Today, cruise upstream along the Mosel and disembark for an easy ride along a cycling path to Zell and Traben-Trarbach. Nestled along the winding river through rolling hills, Zell stands as one of the largest wine-producing communities on the Mosel. Here, the beloved wine Zeller Schwarze Katze (Black Cat) is crafted from grapes sourced from 16 different locations. Be sure to admire the sculpture on the market-square fountain, which depicts a snarling cat perched atop a wine barrel.

Next, cycle to the village of Traben-Trarbach, an architectural gem of the German Art Nouveau movement, known as *Jugendstil*. The surrounding woodlands and extensive vineyards enhance its irresistible charm. Once the world's second-largest wine-trading center, Traben-Trarbach saw its wine merchants construct a number of elegant Art Nouveau buildings at the turn of the 20th century—many of which are carefully preserved and still operate as wineries. You'll have ample opportunity to soak in a wide range of Belle Époque splendor during your visit, and you'll quickly understand why the city is a favorite destination for lovers of Baroque and classical architecture.

Rejoin your barge in Traben-Trarbach, then continue cruising to Bernkastel-Kues—formerly two small wine-making towns on opposite sides of the Mosel before they were united in 1905. The pride of today's dual city is its market square, adorned with picturesque timber-framed houses and decorative sculpted fountains, some dating back to the 17th century.

Dinner is on board tonight.

Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Beilstein to Zell — 28 km (17 miles)

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

What to Expect:

The Mosel meanders in scenic hairpin turns through some of the steepest vineyards in Europe. The breathtaking scenery is matched by many interesting sights along the way. You'll cross the river a few times, but continue following it upstream to the mooring point in Traben-Trarbach, with charming villages offer excellent spots for lunch. Riders taking the shorter option join the barge here. If you choose the longer route, you'll enjoy a scenic ride through quaint half-timbered wine villages and lush vineyards, eventually arriving at the Art Nouveau town of Traben-Trarbach to reunite with the barge and cruise on to Bernkastel-Kues.

Cumulative Distance Range: 28 – 48 km (17 – 30 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

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

This morning, take a shuttle ride (approximately 45 minutes) through the scenic Eifel Valley to the town of Daun, a spa destination renowned for its mineral springs. Once there, retrieve your bicycle and enjoy an exhilarating spin—climbing a slight incline at first, then coasting downhill along a former railway now converted into a cycling path. This exciting ride takes you through tunnels, over bridges, and past small lakes formed from volcanic craters known as *maars*, all while passing 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 delicious lunch hosted by Sigrid and Leo Lenerz. Their simple, cozy café—idyllically located in an old barn—specializes in regional products from local producers. Later, ride back to Bernkastel to join a private wine tasting and enjoy dinner on your own.

Today's Ride Choices

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:

Cycle along an invigorating rails-to-trails route known locally as the MMR—a path that is mainly flat or downhill, with just a few gentle climbs at the start. Meet up at a cozy café in Gillenfeld for lunch. Afterward, if you'd prefer to avoid the hills, take our support vehicle and then continue on the MMR bike path, coasting through illuminated tunnels and over a viaduct before enjoying a thrilling, gradual descent into the town of Wittlich. From Wittlich, you may either take a shuttle back to the barge or ride along flat, easy bike paths beside a small river through gorgeous forests and farmlands to the Mosel River, where your barge awaits.

Cumulative Distance Range: 16 – 64 km (10 – 40 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

## **DAY 4: Cycle to Piesport / Trittenheim / Trier**

After breakfast, cycle toward Trier, the oldest town in Germany, passing through Piesport along the way. This winemaking village is set on scenic hairpin turns along the Mosel, where you'll see a reconstructed Roman winepress. Stop for lunch in one of the small villages along your route—such as Neumagen-Dhron, where echoes of ancient Rome remain visible.

Rejoin the barge in Schweich for a leisurely cruise to Trier. Trier, a city rich in Roman and medieval history, boasts notable sights such as the Porta Nigra and the High Cathedral of St. Peter, Germany's oldest cathedral. Tonight, your barge moors near Trier's center, offering an opportunity for an after-dinner stroll.

### **Today's Ride Choices**

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. Alternatively, spend the morning on board and begin biking from Neumagen. Enjoy a route with a few short ascents and descents along the river and through the vineyards before boarding again in Schweich to cruise into Trier, the former Imperial city from Rome's late Classical period.

Cumulative Distance Range: 27 – 56 km (16 – 34 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

## DAY 5: Cycle to Konz / Saarburg

This morning, cycle along the Mosel from Trier to Konz, where the Saar River meets the Mosel. Continue into Saarland along the more intimate Saar River, riding through wooded mountains, wide meadows, farmsteads, and charming villages. You'll eventually reach Saarburg—a medieval riverside jewel at the foot of a castle—where you board the barge in time for lunch.

This afternoon, choose between a scenic loop ride along the Saar River or some free time in Saarburg, whose town center boasts a roaring 65-foot (19.8-meter) waterfall.

In the evening, dine on your own at a restaurant along the Leuk River. Savor hearty local fare paired with a crisp Saar River Riesling, or try *viez*, an apple cider typical of the region. The barge will be moored in Saarburg.

### Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Trier to Saarburg — 29 km (18 miles)

Afternoon: Saarburg Loop — 34 km (20 miles)

### What to Expect:

This morning, cycle along the Mosel from Trier to Konz, where the Saar meets the Mosel. After crossing a bridge at the confluence, enjoy a gentle ride past fruit orchards and vineyard slopes on your way to medieval Saarburg, where you rejoin the barge for lunch. This afternoon, choose an optional loop ride along the Saar bike path—ascending the right bank, navigating a narrow forest trail, and crossing locks and a bridge back to Saarburg—or take the opportunity to explore the town, perhaps climbing the steps to the castle ruins.

Cumulative Distance Range: 29 – 63 km (18 – 38 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

## DAY 6: Konz / Wasserbillig / Nittel / Remich

This morning, cycle to the nearby former bell foundry and museum, Mabilon, which produced bells until 2002. Next, ride along the banks of the Saar River to Konz, where the Mosel and Saar meet. Then follow the Mosel to rejoin the barge for a cruising lunch to Nittel. This afternoon, opt to resume cycling with our longer route or continue cruising into Remich, Luxembourg.

Our longer route follows the renowned Route du Vin, celebrated for its vineyards and outstanding wines—including Riesling and Crémant. Approaching Remich, take a short detour to Nennig to admire Europe's largest Roman mosaic north of the Alps—remarkably, 90% of it is original and perfectly restored. Dinner tonight is on the barge, moored on the opposite side of Remich.

### Today's Ride Choices

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 to meet the barge in Wasserbillig, Luxembourg, for a cruising lunch en route to Nittel, Germany. Then, enjoy an easy ride along the Mosel River through vineyards and small villages, ending at the Roman mosaic.

Cumulative Distance Range: 21 – 44 km (13 – 27 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## DAY 7: Picnic at Rodemack, France

Ride a tranquil bike path along the Mosel River this morning, crossing from Germany 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. 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.

### Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Remich to Rodemack — 30 km (18 miles)

Afternoon: Rodemack to Thionville with Shuttles — 11 km (7miles) | 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 the rural French countryside of the Lorraine region into Thionville, where the barge waits. Shuttles are available to assist you if required during the day.

Cumulative Distance Range: 30 – 53 km (18 – 40 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## DAY 8: Metz / Luxembourg City

After a final breakfast on our barge, bid farewell to the crew and VBT trip leaders, and greet your local guide as you disembark in Metz, France, nestled at the confluence of the Mosel and Seille rivers. Enjoy a leisurely walk into this charming city—a quaint tapestry of bridges and romantic corners. Admire the elegant 18th-century city theater and the Palais de la Préfecture in the Place de la Comédie. Visit the imposing Cathedral of St. Étienne, one of the most beautiful Gothic cathedrals in France, built around 1250, and marvel at its fine stained-glass windows, including a modern work by Marc Chagall.



Then, stroll to the local market, the lively Place St. Louis, and Place Saint-Jacques, where you'll have time to shop or explore. Lunch is on your own.

Afterward, take private transportation to Luxembourg City. En route, there will be a short 15-minute stop at the Luxembourg American Cemetery, where you can honor those who fell during World War II.

Check into Hotel Le Royal, just a stroll away from the main square and the Old City. The rest of your day is free to explore this fascinating capital of one of Europe's smallest countries. Wander through cobblestone-arched narrow streets and visit elegant palaces such as the Palais Grand-Ducal and the Chambre des Députés. The graceful Chemin de la Corniche is said to be Europe's most beautiful terrace, offering a pleasant promenade past restored ancient homes. You'll also enjoy the charm of the city's two major squares: the regal Place de la Constitution and the cozy Place du Marché, 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 and offers a lively atmosphere in its many cafés, pubs, and pizzerias. The largest ethnic community here is from Portugal, adding a Latin flair to its nightlife and menus.

Included Meals: Breakfast

## **DEPARTURE DAY: Departure**

After an included breakfast this morning, complimentary transportation to Luxembourg City Airport will be provided—a drive of approximately 15 minutes, depending on traffic—for your departing flight.

Included Meals: Breakfast

## **Accommodations**

May vary depending on departure date.

### **Mercure Hotel Koblenz (Arrival Day)**

With its 168 rooms, bar, and on-site restaurant, the Mercure Hotel Koblenz overlooks the UNESCO World Heritage site of the Upper Middle Rhine Valley. Ideally located on the banks of the Rhine River the hotel is

close to the Deutsches Eck, the Koblenz Cable Car, the Ehrenbreitstein Fortress, and the city's main train station. Each guest room features modern décor, air conditioning, and free WiFi throughout.

### **Barge Magnifique I (Days 1-7)**

New to the fleet in 2024, the *Barge Magnifique I*, is a restyle of an existing passenger barge. A section of nearly 40 ft. was added to the ship, making it 187 ft. long and nearly 22 ft. wide. With a capacity of 30 guests, this new size allows the barge to navigate smaller waterways and overnight in popular towns and cities. Its upper deck includes a restaurant, bar, sundeck, and lounge area with large panoramic windows. The new premium barge offers 11 well-appointed guest cabins (approximately 118 square feet or 11 square meters), and four premium cabins (approximately 161 square feet or 15 square meters) including en-suite bathrooms, air-conditioning, a mini-safe, and a hairdryer.

### **Hotel Le Royal Luxembourg (Day 8)**

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.