

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

## Bike Vacation Only

Cycle along Europe's most scenic river and experience three very different cultures—Germany, France, and Luxembourg—on one exhilarating journey. On this Mosel bike tour, you'll also drift along the waterway aboard a luxurious barge, admiring shifting landscapes from the comfort of a deck chair and enjoying sumptuous meals and a spirit of camaraderie all along the way. On our carefully curated routes, you'll pedal past vineyards and forests, castles and half-timbered villages ... explore the beautiful Eifel Valley, the dual city of Berncastel-Kues, the Roman ruins of Trier, and cosmopolitan Luxembourg City ... and enjoy exclusive events like a private wine tasting at a family-owned estate. Don't miss this chance to explore this charming pocket of Europe!

## Cultural Highlights

- Experience three countries—Germany, France, and Luxembourg—up close, by bike
- View quaint villages, lush vineyards and forests, and fairytale castles as you roll along a scenic river
- Explore the ancient Roman and medieval treasures of Trier
- Enjoy a private wine tasting in a century-old cellar
- 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 vehicle is available every day at designated points for those who would like assistance.

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

## 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: Cochem / Embark barge

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.

On arrival, meet one of your VBT trip leaders, who will 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 with a local guide to Reichsburg Castle, where you 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 to Beilstein on quiet bike paths along the 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 toast this most rewarding way to bike Europe! Enjoy dinner on board.

### Today's Ride Choices

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.

Cumulative Distance Range: 10km (6 miles)

Included Meals: Dinner

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

Today, cruise 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 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 Époque 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.

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 the steepest vineyards in Europe. The scenery is breathtaking, and many interesting sights can be explored along the way. You 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.

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

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

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

This morning, travel (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 spin, climbing a slight incline at first and then coasting downhill along a former railway converted into a cycling path. This exciting ride 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.

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:

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 support vehicle 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.

Cumulative Distance Range: 16 – 64 km (18 – 40 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## **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; the High Cathedral of St. Peter, Germany’s oldest Cathedral; 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.

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. 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 for a cruise into Trier, the former Imperial city of Rome's late Classical period.

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

Included Meals: Breakfast

## **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 spin 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-meter) waterfall. Choose between a scenic ride 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 viefz, an apple cider typical of this region. The barge moors in Saarburg.

Today's Ride Choices

Afternoon: Konz to Saarburg – 19 km (11 miles) | Saarburg Loop – 34 km (20 miles)

What to Expect:

After lunch on board, your afternoon ride 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.

Cumulative Distance Range: 19 – 34 km (11 – 20 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

## **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.

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. Ride along the Luxembourg side to meet the barge in Wasserbillig for a cruising lunch to Nittel, Germany. An easy spin along the Mosel River through vineyards and small villages ends at the Roman mosaic for a film and tour of the ruins.

Cumulative Distance Range: 21 – 44 km (14 – 27 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner, Lunch

## **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.

#### Today's Ride Choices

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 of the Lorraine region into Thionville, where the barge waits. Vehicle support is 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 an included 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.

Then, walk to the Saturday morning local market, to the lively Place St. Louis, and to Place Saint-Jacques,

where there'll be time to shop or explore. Lunch is on your own.

After, take private transportation to Luxembourg City. En route, there will be a short 15-minute stop at the Luxembourg American Cemetery 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 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 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.

Included Meals: Breakfast

## Accommodations

May vary depending on departure date.

### Barge Iris (Days: 1,2,3,4,5,6,7)

A luxurious and spacious, two-deck, 24-passenger barge with a homelike atmosphere, the Iris was put into service in April 2005. Its 12 comfortable cabins have private bathrooms with showers, and the barge has central heating and air conditioning throughout. Common areas include a dining area, a lounge with a bar and a sun deck at the bow. The barge moors each night. Drinks of all types are available for purchase at the bar on board the Iris. It is not customary for guests to bring their own wine and liquor on board; your understanding is appreciated. Onboard meal menus are set, though the chef is happy to accommodate vegetarians and those on restricted diets for health reasons. Please note regarding WiFi on board the barge: Please be advised that the WiFi connection varies and is not guaranteed. If Internet access is critical during your travel, we recommend purchasing your own bundle before traveling overseas. Available on limited departures.