

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

## Bike Vacation Only

Cruise and pedal through Germany, Luxembourg and France on this beloved floating adventure. Your deluxe barge moors beneath hilltop castles and alongside half-timbered villages brimming with blossoms and cozy taverns. The gentle Mosel River snakes through dramatic slate mountains and sloping vineyards glistening in golden droplets of Riesling. Bike along Roman routes on easy paths, through ancient Teutonic forests where legends of buried treasure, dragons and red-headed giants lurk in the mists. Picnic in Lorraine's rich countryside, taste rare Luxembourg wines, ride around volcanic lakes, over valley viaducts and bikes-only train tunnels. We've got one word for this tour: Exciting!

## 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
- 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
- See original Roman artwork and ruins along the Mosel River
- Relax onboard the barge deck with a glass of the finest Riesling or German beer
- 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. Our VBT support shuttle is available every day at designated points for those who would like assistance.

**Tour Duration:** 8 Days

**Average Daily Mileage:** 15 - 35

**Average Cycling Time:** 01:00 - 03:30

## 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: Transfer to Metz, France / Embark barge / VBT Bicycle Vacation begins

VBT-Bicycle-Vacation-only guests: You are responsible for making your own way to Metz, France 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 the canal between the Pont du Canal and the locks of Metz, near the rue de Paris and the rue George Aimé. Contact telephone number is ++49 151 57 81 33 06 or ++31 620 245 095.

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. After lunch on your own, rejoin your local city guide and walk to your barge's mooring point.

At 2:00 p.m., we board your barge. After meeting the crew and your VBT Trip Leaders, settle in before participating in a bike safety session whilst cruising to Richemont. Here, you will disembark for a bike-fitting and a short warm-up ride. Later, return to the barge at its new mooring point and have time to change before gathering for a welcome drink and dinner on board. Tonight, the barge moors in the quiet countryside, just outside Thionville city.

Please note regarding Wi-Fi onboard the barge: Due to the nature of the barge movements, internet access is not always available. Therefore, 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 arriving 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: 5 or 8 miles (8 or 12 km)

## DAY 2: Bike to Rodemack / Picnic lunch / Remich, Luxembourg

After breakfast on board, cycle along the Moselle River on a quiet bike path. Then turn inland and cycle along 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, and there's a labyrinth of back streets and cobbled alleys to explore, as well as an impressive fortress.

After a picnic lunch at the fountain, you have free time to explore on your own.

You may ride or cruise this afternoon. Dinner tonight is on the barge. Afterward, the captain speaks about navigation and our planned route. The barge moors in Remich, Luxembourg.

Hotel: Barge Iris

Alternative: Barge Quo Vadis

Meals: B, L, D

Daily Options: 21, 25 or 33 miles (34, 41 or 53 km)

## DAY 3: Cycle Remich / Nennig / Wasserbillig / Saarburg

Pedal this morning to Nennig and its local museum, where you can admire Europe's largest Roman mosaic; remarkably, 90% of it is original and perfectly restored. Continue riding along the Mosel on an easy bike path. The river forms a natural border between Germany and Luxembourg. Our route, on the German side, has the best views of vineyards sloping down hillsides. This is the Route du Vin, or wine road, famous here for its outstanding Riesling and Cremant wines.

Stop for lunch onboard the barge in Nittel for a cruising lunch to Wasserbillig, Luxembourg. You may cruise or continue cycling from this point. If you choose our longer option, you will ride past Konz, a small city at the confluence of the Mosel and Saar rivers, then continue into the Saarland along the more intimate Saar River. Wooded mountains, wide meadows and farmsteads and villages mark your progress

as you ride. Later this afternoon, arrive in Saarburg, a medieval riverside jewel at the foot of a castle. The town center boasts a roaring 65-foot-high waterfall. Spend the rest of the day exploring this lovely town or continue cycling a loop south of Saarburg along the Saar River.

The barge moors in Saarburg this evening with dinner included onboard.

Hotel: Barge Iris

Alternative: Barge Quo Vadis

Meals: B, L, D

Daily Options: 13, 25 or 35 miles (21, 41 or 56 km)

## DAY 4: Bike and cruise from Saarburg to Trier

This morning, walk to the nearby former bell foundry and museum, Mabilon, which produced bells until 2002. After your tour, start pedaling again along the Saar River to the confluence of the Mosel River to meet the barge in Trier for lunch. After lunch you are free to explore this wonderful town.

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”), the city’s 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 Throne Hall; the rococo Electoral Palace; the ruins of the Imperial Baths and its extensive subterranean passages. It is an astounding repository of history and leaves little doubt why the whole of Trier’s monuments have been designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Tonight, your barge moors here; find dinner in one of the local restaurants.

Hotel: Barge Iris

Alternative: Barge Quo Vadis

Meals: B, L

Daily Options: 18 miles (28 km)

## DAY 5: Piesport / Trittenheim / Bernkastel-Kues

This morning you will cruise out of Trier during breakfast. Arriving in Schweich, you have the option to

continue cruising to Neumagen or start your day cycling towards Bernkastel-Kues. Your route winds along scenic hairpin turns along the Mosel, passing the wine-making villages of Trittenheim and Piesport. See a reconstructed Roman winepress in Piesport, along with other examples of a rich Roman past. Stop for lunch on your own in Neumagen, where there are more signs of ancient Rome. From here, shuttle to Bernkastel-Kues, or continue biking among vineyards and orchards, watching for swans and other birds.

Meet the barge in Bernkastel-Kues, then rest or explore before dinner on board. Bernkastel and Kues, united in 1905, were once two small cities divided by the Mosel. 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.

After dinner, stroll to the fascinating cellar of Josef Zimmermann via an elegant district of fine Jugendstil villas, many of which display WEINGUT, or winery signs. The simple, fourth-generation Zimmermann operation contains a century-old cellar, wine barrels and a candle-lit tasting room upstairs where you can sample four different wines.

Hotel: Barge Iris

Alternative: Barge Quo Vadis

Meals: B, D

Daily Options: 18 or 34 miles (28, or 55 km)

## DAY 6: Daun / The Eifel Region / Bernkastel-Kues

This morning, ride the shuttle (approximately 45 minutes) through the Eifel Valley to the city of Daun. Climb on our bicycles 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 try one of the local restaurants for dinner on your own.

Hotel: Barge Iris

Alternative: Barge Quo Vadis

Meals: B, L

Daily Options: 19, 26 or 40 miles (31, 43, 64 km)

## DAY 7: Traben-Trarbach / Zell / Bullay / Cochem

Today, cruise out of Bernkastel and follow the Mosel downstream. After breakfast, arrive in 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.

After, follow the river's bike path to Zell. 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 waterway. 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 Bullay, another big name in wine. You can linger here a while and pause to enjoy lunch along the route. You'll find many picnic areas along the path. Rejoin the barge in Beilstein and cruise to Cochem later this afternoon, giving you ample time to relax and freshen up for a festive farewell dinner on board.

Hotel: Barge Iris

Alternative: Barge Quo Vadis

Meals: B, D

Daily Options: 16 or 30 miles (26 km or 48 km)

## DAY 8: Cochem / Koblenz / VBT Bicycle Vacation ends

VBT-Bicycle-Vacation-only guests: After breakfast, your tour ends. It is important that you leave the barge no later than 9:00 a.m. so our crew can prepare for their next guests.

Meals: B