

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

Bike Vacation + Air Package

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 landscapes and lakes

Visit a bell foundry to learn the ancient and alchemical craft of bell forging Uncover the scenic and cultural wonders of France, Luxembourg, and Germany 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. Our VBT support shuttle is available every day at designated points for those who would like assistance.

Tour Duration: 11 Days

Average Daily Mileage: 8 - 40

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: Depart from home / Fly overnight to Luxembourg

Depart home for Luxembourg City, Luxembourg. The particulars of your arrival overseas are detailed with your flight itinerary.

DAY 2: Arrive in Luxembourg City and transfer to hotel

Upon arrival at the Luxembourg City airport, claim your luggage and clear customs. If your luggage is lost, fill out a PIR form before leaving the customs area – VBT representatives are not allowed in the customs area. Make certain your VBT luggage tags are affixed to your bag so your VBT representative can identify you as you enter the arrival hall. Your VBT representative will be holding a VBT sign and will help you transfer via taxi or minibus (approximately 20 minutes) to your hotel in Luxembourg City.

If you arrive early, your hotel room may not be available until 3:00 p.m. You may store your luggage at the front desk. The rest of the day is free for you 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 the city's nightlife and menus.

Hotel: Hotel Le Royal

DAY 3: Transfer to Metz, France / Embark barge / VBT Bicycle Vacation begins

Please be ready and waiting in the hotel lobby at 9:00 a.m. for our transfer by coach (approximately 1 hour) to the French city of Metz, nestled at the confluence of the Mosel and Seille rivers. En route, there will be a short 15-minute stop at the Luxembourg American Cemetery so you can honor those who fell here during World War II. Upon arrival in Metz, meet your local city guide and enjoy a pleasant walk into the charming city center, a quaint tapestry of bridges and romantic corners. Pass the elegant 18th-century city theater and the Palais de la Prefecture in the Place de la Comedie. Visit the imposing Cathedral of St. Etienne, one of the most beautiful Gothic cathedrals of France, built around 1250. Here, admire the fine stained-glass windows, including a modern work by Marc Chagall.

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

After meeting the crew and your VBT trip leaders, settle in before participating in a bike safety session while cruising to Richemont. Here, you disembark for a bike-fitting and a short warm-up ride. Reunite with the barge at its new mooring point and have time to change before gathering for a welcome drink, the perfect opportunity to raise a glass to the most rewarding way to bike Europe! Enjoy dinner on board. Tonight, the barge moors in the quiet countryside, just outside the city of Thionville.

Please note regarding WiFi onboard the barge: Due to the nature of the barge movements, internet access is not always available. 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: 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: 13 km (8 miles)

Afternoon

Richemont to Thionville Warm-Up: 13 km (8 miles)

What to Expect: The warm-up ride from Richemont locks to the Bar "La Marina" is easy. Ride along the Mosel River through the French countryside and rejoin your barge. For a few more miles, continue from "La Marina" to Thionville and return along the river.

DAY 4: Bike to Rodemack / Picnic lunch / Remich, Luxembourg

After breakfast, cycle along the Mosel River on a quiet bike path. Then turn inland and cycle along a

pleasant rolling route through small villages. Pause to explore 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.

After a picnic lunch at the fountain, there'll be 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: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today's Ride Choice:

Cumulative Distance Range: 34 - 53 km (20 - 32 miles)

Morning - Afternoon

Thionville to Remich with two Shuttles: 34 km (20 miles)

OR

Thionville to Remich with one Shuttle: 42 km (26 miles)

OR

Thionville to Remich: 53 km (32 miles)

What to Expect: Enjoy easy biking along the scenic Mosel River from Thionville to the Bar Le Bar Bac near Cattenom. Cycle from here to Rodemack, or join the shuttle if you wish to avoid the long hill into the village. After lunch, continue cycling through French farmlands, on a mix of quiet country roads and bike lanes and along the Mosel through very pretty wetlands and villages, crossing the international border into Germany and meeting the barge in Remich, Luxembourg. The support vehicle will be available to assist you, or you can ride the entire day.

DAY 5: 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. On the German side,

you will follow the renowned Route du Vin, famous for its outstanding Riesling and Cremant. Sweeping views of vineyards sloping hillsides accompany your ride.

Meet the barge in Nittel for a cruising lunch to Wasserbillig, Luxembourg. From here, you may cruise or continue cycling. If you choose our longer option, you 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, 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 (19.8 meters) 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: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today's Ride Choice:

Cumulative Distance Range: 21 - 56 km (13 - 35 miles)

Morning

Remich to Nittel: 21 km (13 miles)

Afternoon

Wasserbillig to Saarburg: 20 km (13 miles)

OR

Include Saarburg Loop: 35 km (22 miles)

What to Expect: Today's easy ride along the Mosel's right bank passes lovely vineyards. You meet the barge in Nittel and enjoy lunch as you cruise to Wasserbillig, Luxembourg. Then ride on the Luxembourg side of the Mosel to the confluence of the Saar River. Continue cycling up the Saar to medieval Saarburg. Your barge will be moored beneath the castle ruins. Today's easy riverside route passes fruit orchards and vineyards and includes some fun bridge crossings.

DAY 6: 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, cycle along the Saar River to the confluence of the Mosel River, then continue riding

to Trier, where you meet the barge. After lunch on board, you are free to explore this historic and fascinating 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. 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 and 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, Lunch

Today’s Ride Choice:

Cumulative Distance Range: 29 km (17 miles)

Morning

Saarburg to Trier: 29 km (17 miles)

What to Expect: Today you follow the Saar River downstream through a nature preserve along the banks of this once free-flowing and wild river. Follow a flat bike path all the way into Trier to meet the barge. The ride is easy with a few bumps over tree roots. Please watch for these and gently lift off your seat to soften the impact.

DAY 7: Piesport / Trittenheim / Bernkastel-Kues

This morning you cruise out of Trier during breakfast. Arriving in Schweich, you have the option to continue cruising to Neumagen or to 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. In Piesport, see a reconstructed Roman winepress and other evidence of a rich Roman past. Stop for lunch on your own in Neumagen, where you witness 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 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, Dinner

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Distance Range: 29 – 56 km (18 – 35 miles)

Morning

Schweich to Neumagen: 29 km (18 miles)

Afternoon

Neumagen to Bernkastel-Kues: 27 km (17 miles)

What to Expect: Cruise or cycle this morning to Neumagen. From here, ride through the Middle Mosel, a stunning tapestry of, breathtaking scenery, lush vineyards, and quaint wine villages. Today's ride is mainly on flat bike paths, with a few short hills. The route follows an old Roman road and passes replicas of Roman sculptures. You will find many good lunch spots along the way in some of the Mosel's famous wine villages. At ride's end, you arrive in Bernkastel-Kues.

DAY 8: Daun / The 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 try one of the local restaurants for dinner on your own.

Hotel: Barge *Iris*

Alternative: Barge *Quo Vadis*

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Today's Ride Choices:

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 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.

DAY 9: 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 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.

After, follow the river's bike path to Zell. 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. Continue to Bullay, another big name in wine. You can linger here a while and pause to enjoy lunch along the way. There are 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: Breakfast, Dinner

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Distance Range: 26 – 48 km (16 – 30 miles)

Morning

Traben-Trarbach to Bullay: 26 km (16 miles)

Afternoon

Bullay to Beilstein: 22 km (14 miles)

What to Expect: Start riding from the Art Nouveau town of Traben-Trarbach, following the hairpins of the Mosel as it flows through the steepest vineyards in Europe. The scenery is breathtaking, and many interesting sights can be explored along the way. Board the barge in Bullay and cruise to Beilstein. If you instead cycle from Bullay, you ride a quiet road with a bit of traffic before returning to a river-hugging bike path past the steepest vineyards in Bremm and through campgrounds, passing families of swans and charming villages. Once you see the castle ruins, you have arrived in Beilstein, where you meet the barge and cruise onto Cochem.

DAY 10: Cochem / Koblenz / VBT Bicycle Vacation ends

After breakfast, say farewell to the crew and one VBT trip leader, then walk into Cochem with the other. This characteristic Mosel town is beloved for its steep vineyards, 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, you may shop and eat lunch on your own before saying goodbye to your VBT trip leader.

Then shuttle to Koblenz and settle in to your centrally located hotel. At 4:00 p.m., meet your local guide in the hotel lobby for a 1.5-hour walking tour around the historic Old Town. It's a 15-minute walk to the starting point of the tour, so we recommend you leave the hotel with everything you'll need to have dinner on your own in the Old Town at tour's end.

Hotel: Hotel Brenner

Meals: Breakfast

DAY 11: Depart for home

After breakfast,* meet in the hotel lobby to transfer to the Frankfurt airport for your flight back home** Please be sure that you are waiting at the designated transfer time and location.

*Please note: For guests with early-morning departures, breakfast at the hotel may not be available.

Please check with the front desk to verify the times that breakfast is served.

**VBT recommends that you check your transfer time in your "Transfer Reminder." The transfer is prearranged by VBT and is prepaid. VBT transfer times and departure points are finalized in advance and cannot be modified for individual guests. If you extend your stay beyond the scheduled program dates, return transportation to the airport will be at your own expense.

Meals: Breakfast

Accommodations

May vary depending on departure date.

Hotel Brenner (Day: 10)

Located in the Koblenz city center, the family-run Hotel Brenner welcomes you with warm hospitality and understated elegance. Set in a traditional house, the property has been painstakingly restored with the skill of local craftspeople, artists, and interior designers. Admire the hand-painted flowers on the ceilings and walls and the many period furnishings. The air-conditioned rooms are comfortably sized and offer free WiFi. Most overlook a small, well-maintained garden where you may start your day with a delicious, generous breakfast.

Hotel Le Royal Luxembourg (Day: 2)

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.

Quo Vadis Barge (Days: 3,4,5,6,7,8,9)

Sail in comfort aboard the intimate, 24-passenger Barge Quo Vadis, in service since April 2006 and ideally suited for cruising Europe's intimate waterways. Enjoy the attentive service of four bilingual crew members, including a chef, who will create delicious meals using fresh, local ingredients. Regional wines and cheeses are served at dinner. Admire the view from the sun deck, or mingle with new friends in the salon and bar. Explore at leisure from your barge's mooring. Retire in the evening to your air-conditioned cabin with a safe, twin beds, and a private bath with shower and hair dryer. 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.