

# Czech Republic, Germany & Austria: Český Krumlov & Wachau Valley

## Bike Vacation Only

Trace riverbanks through forests, villages, and countryside during this perennially popular exploration of Central Europe. Your Prague bike tour begins with a scenic journey into the charming medieval village of Český Krumlov, considered the pearl of Bohemia. Journey to the Sumava National Park for an exhilarating ride through lush, lakeside scenery. Cycle into Germany via a pedestrian-only crossing, where beer gardens, Baroque town squares, and scenic river crossings await you. Trace the Danube as it snakes through steep, forested mountains in a series of sharp and scenic bends. And in Austria's magnificent Wachau Valley wine region, ride along panoramic routes blanketed with hillside vineyards, historical castle ruins, and picturesque villages. Immerse yourself in this once-in-a-lifetime voyage from the unique vantage point of your bike.



## Cultural Highlights

- Discover Český Krumlov, a Bohemian town brimming with medieval authenticity.
- Cycle bucolic routes past farms, meadows, and villages.
- Cross into Germany via a unique border crossing for pedestrians and bicycles only.
- Indulge in the spirit of Bavaria over lunch at a typical beer garden.
- Picnic on the banks of the River Inn, with views of mighty Neuburg fortress overhead.
- Spin through the Wachau Valley, a UNESCO-designated landscape of hillside orchards, vineyards, ruined castles, abbeys, and churches.

## What to Expect

This tour offers easy terrain throughout the trip and is ideal for beginning cyclists. Our VBT support shuttle is available every day at designated points for those who need assistance.

**Tour Duration:** 7 Days

**Average Daily Mileage:** 15 - 45

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

**Group size:** 20 max

## Climate Information

### **Average High/Low Temperature (°F)**

May 64°/45°, Jun 69°/51°, Jul 72°/54°, Aug 73°/53°, Sep 65°/48°, Oct 54°/39°

### **Average Rainfall (in.)**

May 1.0, Jun 2.7, Jul 2.6, Aug 2.5, Sep 1.6, Oct 1.2

## DAY 1: VBT Bicycle Vacation begins / Český Krumlov

At 8:30 a.m., all guests meet the VBT representative at the hotel in Prague, the K+K Hotel Central (Hybernska 10, Prague 110 00; tel: +420 225 022 607), and transfer to Cesky Krumlov in the south of the Czech Republic (approximately 3½ hours, including a stop on the way).

Ceský Krumlov is a unique town in Bohemia, built at a curve of the River Vltava and dripping with medieval authenticity. Its historic center has been a UNESCO World Heritage site since 1992. You'll arrive at approximately 12:00 p.m. Meet your trip leaders, who provide a quick introduction to the day's schedule and the town, providing recommendations for lunch on your own.

At 3:00 p.m., return to the hotel and join your trip leaders for a safety and bike-fitting session. Your Prague

bike tour officially begins with a small warm-up ride through town and into the countryside. Later, gather with the group for a welcome cocktail reception at your hotel and dinner.

Accommodation: Garni Hotel Castle Bridge, Český Krumlov

Included Meals: Dinner

Today's Ride Choice:

Cumulative Distance Range: 9 km (5 miles)

Warm-up: 9 km (5 miles)

What to Expect: Follow gentle loop from your hotel out of the center of Český Krumlov into the surrounding countryside.

## **DAY 2: Lipno Lake / Guided visit of Resenberg castle / Independent exploration of Český Krumlov**

After breakfast, meet our local guide, Standa, and follow him on an informative walking tour and introduction to Czech life. Then, board the VBT shuttle for a short ride to Lipno Lake. Begin cycling through a beautiful landscape and tranquil Czech countryside around the lake. Enjoy lunch after your ride concludes at the lake before shuttling back to Český Krumlov.

This afternoon, explore the city center. In addition to strolling Český Krumlov's narrow cobbled streets and enjoying its outdoor cafés, you may choose to visit the town's gem, the Rosemberg family chateau, dating to 1240 with our local guide, Standa. Soak up the atmosphere of this impeccably preserved medieval gem. The gushing Vltava, popular with rafting enthusiasts, darts through the town.

In the evening, find a cozy restaurant where you may enjoy dinner on your own.

Accommodation: Garni Hotel Castle Bridge, Český Krumlov

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Today's Ride Choice:

Cumulative Distance Range: 21 km (13 miles)

*Morning*

Horní Planá to Český Krumlov: 21 km (13 miles)

What to Expect: A 30-minute shuttle bus brings you to Lipno Lake. This charming and relaxing ride around the lake follows a paved designated bike path with great views of the largest Czech lake called the

"Czech sea." The terrain is flat as the bike path follows the lake the entire way. Start with an enjoyable short ferry ride and indulge in the scenery while learning the history of Lipno Lake. At the end of the ride enjoy your lunch and short shuttle (30 minutes) back to the hotel.

## **DAY 3: Sumava National Park / Cross the Czech-German border / Shuttle to Passau**

In the morning, shuttle to the Sumava National Park, the largest national park in the Czech Republic. You'll start your ride in Cerná v Pošumaví, not far from the German border. An exhilarating bike ride takes you from lakeside scenery through a beautiful forest, far from traffic and villages. At Nove Udoli, you'll walk into Germany. This unique border crossing was closed in 1945 and reopened some time ago for pedestrians and bicycles only.

Your first Bavarian ride follows a downhill stretch of a former railway track. Bavaria is among Europe's most beautiful and serene cycling areas. On your way, stop at a beer garden for a typical lunch, prepared by the owner-family. Continue cycling to Waldkirchen, where you then shuttle to the historic Baroque city of Passau, situated at the confluence of three rivers: the Danube, the Inn and the Ilz. Tonight, enjoy dinner at the hotel restaurant, overlooking the romantic Danube River.

Accommodation: Altstadt Hotel Name, Passau

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Distance Range: 18 – 57 km (11 – 35 miles)

*Morning*

Cerná v Pošumaví to Altreichnau: 39 km (24 miles)

*Afternoon*

Altreichnau to Waldkirchen: 18 km (11 miles)

What to Expect: Take a private bus shuttle from Český Krumlov to the town of Cerná v Pošumaví this morning. From here, you cycle a dedicated bike path through Sumava National Park and cross the German border at Nove Udoli. The bike path follows a former railway bed to lunch at a typical Bavarian tavern, the Loipensstüberl.

After lunch, if you wish, you can continue your descent in Germany, meeting the shuttle at Waldkirchen for your transfer to the German city of Passau.

## **DAY 4: Ride along the River Inn / Explore Passau**

Enjoy a leisurely cycle along the River Inn, the frontier between Germany and Austria. Start by following the German bike route. At Neuhaus, cross the river to the Austrian town of Schärding with its colorful, Baroque-style burgher houses on two town squares. After exploring Schärding, return to Passau. En route, stop for a delicious picnic lunch on the river's opposite bank, where the Neuburg fortress looms. This afternoon a 45-minute boat tour is included. Cruise the three-river estuary, the Danube, Inn, and Ilz rivers with their different colors, and see Passau from another perspective. Use the rest of the afternoon to explore Passau. Shop the flea market and antique shops, or choose to visit magnificent St. Stephen's Cathedral. Dinner is on your own tonight; you'll find that Passau offers many dining choices.

Accommodation: Altstadt Hotel Name, Passau

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Distance Range: 10 – 35 km (6 – 22 miles)

*Morning*

Passau to Lunch: 25 km (16 miles)

*Afternoon*

Lunch to Passau: 10 km (6 miles)

What to Expect: An easy rolling loop departs from your hotel this morning along a dedicated bike path (alternating pavement and gravel) that follows the River Inn in Germany to the Austrian town of Schärding.

After lunch, take the shuttle back to Passau, or continue riding along the riverside bike path back to the center of town.

## **DAY 5: Danube impressions by bike / Schlögen**

Start your day with a shuttle (one hour) to Schlögen.. (Note: For 2021, the boat cruise from Passau to Schlögen is not operating due to Covid-19 operational decisions by the cruise company.)

Begin cycling and head toward Aschach through a beautiful forest, where you stop for lunch on your own. Follow the Danube bike route to Ottensheim, renowned for its hilltop castle, where you conclude your ride. Here, you'll transfer by private coach to your hotel at Weissenkirchen in Austria's Wachau Valley wine region.

This charming village is dominated by St. Michael's Church, which dates to 987. There are also many

Renaissance buildings with romantic inner courtyards. One of them houses your inviting family-run hotel. Many of Weissenkirchen's *vinegut* (winemakers) and wine cellars are located in beautiful, ancient manor houses. Perhaps you'll savor a famous young *heuriger* wine in one of these taverns during dinner at your leisure tonight.

Accommodation: Hotel Raffelsberger Hof, Weissenkirchen

Alternate Accommodation: Kirchenwirt Weissenkirchen, Weissenkirchen

Included Meals: Breakfast

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Distance Range: 10 – 36 km (6 – 22 miles)

*Morning*

Schlögen to Aschach: 26 km (16 miles)

*Afternoon*

Aschach to Ottensheim: 10 km (6 miles)

What to Expect: Today begins with an exciting boat trip along the Danube to the start of your ride in Schlögen. From here, you'll follow the Danube River Bike Path to Aschach. You may shuttle to Ottensheim after lunch, or continue along the Danube, crossing a huge dam to Ottensheim to meet the bus to your hotel for the next two nights.

## **DAY 6: Cycle through Wachau Valley / Melk / Spitz / Dürnstein**

Today marks the final full day of your Prague bike tour. In the morning, cycle through the Wachau Valley, a UNESCO World Heritage site, to Melk. The Wachau is one of Austria's most striking landscapes, featuring a mix of hillside orchards and vineyards among ruined castles, abbeys and churches. In Melk, you may want to visit the spectacular Benedictine Abbey, one of Europe's largest Baroque monasteries. Eat lunch on your own here, before cycling along the Danube to the ferry stop in Sankt Lorenz opposite Weissenkirchen.

Opt to continue cycling farther to Rossatz to catch a small ferry to Dürnstein, where Richard the Lionhearted was kept prisoner in 1193. Tonight's farewell dinner is in a local restaurant within a private, ancient winepress room.

Accommodation: Hotel Raffelsberger Hof, Weissenkirchen

Alternate Accommodation: Kirchenwirt Weissenkirchen, Weissenkirchen

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Distance Range: 26 – 60 km (16 – 37 miles)

*Morning*

Weissenkirchen to Melk: 26 km (16 miles)

*Afternoon*

Melk to Weissenkirchen: 34 km (21 miles)

What to Expect: Depart the hotel following an easily rolling bike route along the Danube to the town of Melk this morning.

From Melk, you can return by shuttle to Weissenkirchen after lunch on your own, or ride the Danube's opposite bank along a dedicated rolling bike path. You'll pass under the ruins of Aggstein castle en route to Dürnstein. Arriving on the opposite bank in St. Lorenz (at 24 km), you can either ferry across the Danube to your hotel in Weissenkirchen, or continue cycling to Arnsdorf, bicycle ferry crossing the river to Dürnstein, and return along the river back to Weissenkirchen.

## **DAY 7: Transfer to Vienna / VBT Bicycle Vacation ends**

Your Prague bike tour ends at the Hotel Stefanie in Vienna. Important: Train departures from Vienna prior to 11:00 a.m. are not recommended. If you depart earlier, you are responsible for your own transfer arrangements from the hotel in Weissenkirchen. A taxi ride from the Hotel Stefanie to the Vienna train station costs approximately €15/\$25 USD and takes approximately 20 minutes. A taxi ride to the Vienna airport costs approximately €30/\$50 USD and takes approximately 40 minutes.

Included Meals: Breakfast