

## Danube Bike & River Cruise: Prague to Budapest

### Bike Vacation + Air Package

A Danube cycling and river cruise doesn't get any better than this! In just a week, you'll explore four different countries— Germany, Austria, Slovakia, and Hungary—as well as a world-class cultural capital, Vienna. Cycle the renowned Danube Bike Path, admiring vistas of storybook villages and castles, lush vineyards, and carpeted hills unfurling along the river banks. Pause to explore medieval cities and the spectacular Melk Abbey, and enjoy a private wine tasting. And at the end of the day, return to a deluxe Emerald Waterways river ship, where attentive service, fine dining, and a welcoming ambiance invite you to relax after an invigorating day. There's no better or more convenient way to experience the heart of Europe!



### Cultural Highlights

- Unpack once, then bike and boat along the Danube in four countries and three cultural

capitals—all on one trip

- Follow the car-free and scenic Danube and EuroVelo 6 bike paths in this bicycle-friendly region
- Visit one of the oldest breweries in the world in Weltenburg
- Choose to be as active or relaxed as you wish from our menu of cycling routes and walking tours
- Enjoy an exclusive Viennese concert with the music of Strauss and Mozart

## What to Expect

**On Shore:** This tour offers easy riverside terrain, with a few climbs to reach riverside towns. Riding is primarily on bike paths of both pavement and packed gravel, with some road riding through both urban and rural areas. Our VBT support shuttle is available every day at designated points for those who would like assistance.

**Onboard Ship:** Our group of VBT guests will be part of a larger group on board our 182-passenger river cruise ship. Every day will include your choice of exclusive VBT activities and opportunities to join other activities that are offered by the ship. While in port our ship may be docked adjacent to other ships. This means we may walk through other ships while boarding or disembarking, and some views may be obstructed while in port.

**Tour Duration:** 11 Days

**Average Daily Mileage:** 10 - 34

**Average Cycling Time:** 01:15 - 04:00

**Group size:** 24 max

## Climate Information

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

May 67°/49°, Jun 72°/55°, Jul 77°/59°, Aug 77°/59°, Sep 69°/53°, Oct 57°/43°

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

May 2.4, Jun 2.9, Jul 2.5, Aug 2.3, Sep 1.8, Oct 1.6

## DAY 1: Depart from the United States or Canada

All you have to do is get to the airport. On our Air packages, we'll take care of the rest, handling all the logistics, so you can travel with peace of mind. Spend your first night aloft and arrive refreshed for an unforgettable trip.

## DAY 2: Arrive in Prague

Start off your first day in Prague right by having a VBT representative greet you at the airport. A complimentary car service will whisk you to your centrally located hotel. From here, you are perfectly positioned to explore this charming city at your leisure.

Accommodation: Mamaison Riverside Hotel Prague

## DAY 3: Travel to Regensburg / Embark ship

After an included breakfast, meet your VBT representative in the hotel lobby at 10:00 a.m. to travel to Regensburg, Germany (approximately 3.5 hours). You will stop just before the German border to stretch your legs and perhaps purchase a coffee or water. Arrive at the dock in Regensburg at approximately noon and board your Emerald Waterways ship. Your cabin may not be ready for you until 3:00 p.m. However, you are welcome to enjoy a light lunch on board, served between 12:00 and 3:00 p.m., relax in the ship's common areas, take a walk, or head into town to explore or enjoy a traditional German lunch of bratwurst and beer.

Your cabin may not be ready for you until 3:00 p.m. However, you are welcome to enjoy lunch on board, served between 12:00 and 3:00 p.m., relax in the ship's common areas, take a walk, or head into town to explore or enjoy a traditional German lunch of bratwurst and beer.

At 2:30 p.m., meet your trip leaders and fellow travelers on board for introductions and a safety and bike-fitting session, followed by a warm-up ride on a local bike path along the Danube. Later, enjoy a welcome dinner on board. The ship remains in Regensburg this evening.

Today's Ride Choice

Afternoon: Warm-up – 16 km (10 miles)

What to Expect: The ride from your ship is on a paved bike path alongside the Danube River. Get acquainted with your bicycle, route notes, Ride with GPS, and the locals. Check your brakes and play with shifting your full range of gears.

Cumulative Distance Range: 16 km (10 miles)

Accommodation: *MS Emerald Sun/Emerald Sky/Emerald Destiny/Emerald Dawn*

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## DAY 4: Regensburg / Cycle to Kelheim / Danube Gorge and Weltenburg

This morning join a local guide for a walking tour, gaining insight into the town's medieval history. Regensburg is an imposing city of red-roof houses at the convergence of the Danube and Regen rivers. Its 12th-century stone bridge features 16 arches spanning the Danube and reaching into the Old Town.

Then, from Regensburg, cycle along the scenic Danube banks to Kelheim. Following the Danube Bike Path, your scenic ride continues to be easy and mostly car-free.

Board a small ship in Kelheim for a scenic 45-minute sail through the Danube Gorge (Donaudurchbruch). Upon arrival in Weltenburg, your presence is requested at a world famous brewery for a private visit, followed by a beer-tasting. Afterwards, a private shuttle will take you back to your ship. There'll be time to relax a while before the Captain's Welcome Cocktail and Gala. With its regional specialties, tonight's dinner completes the day's immersion into all things Bavaria! Sail for Passau tonight.

#### Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Regensburg to Kapfelberg with Shuttle to Kelheim — 26 km (16 miles) | Regensburg to Kelheim — 39 km (24 miles)

What to Expect: Today's ride options are on the famous EuroVelo 6 bike path. The Danube is your constant companion on this scenic and easy ride upstream to Kelheim. The short option ends at Kapfelberg, with a shuttle on to Kelheim to board the small ship to Weltenburg. The long option is a ship-to-ship ride. Today is the only day with significant sections of packed gravel (about 60%). Almost the entire ride is on vehicle-free bike paths...

Cumulative Distance Range: 26 - 39 km (16 - 24 miles)

Accommodation: MS *Emerald Sun*/*Emerald Sky*/*Emerald Destiny*/*Emerald Dawn*

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## **DAY 5: Passau / Travel to Aschach / Cycle to Schlögen / Engelhartszell**

Arrive in Passau during breakfast. There'll be free time to explore its splendid Gothic and Baroque charms on your own. If you wish, you may stretch your legs with a hike to the hilltop pilgrimage church of Pauliner Kloster Mariahilf. You may access it directly from the Innstadt district via the "heavenly ladder" of 321 canopied steps. From the monastery grounds, enjoy sweeping views of Passau.

In the late morning, enjoy an informative walking tour with a local guide through this scenic "City of Three Rivers" at the confluence of the Danube, Inn, and Ilz. From here, you'll take a scenic motorcoach ride

along the Danube to Austria's famous Schlägener Schlinge, where the river winds through steep, forested mountains in a series of sharp and scenic bends.

Enjoy a typical Austrian lunch in a local restaurant, while your bicycle is set up and ready for this afternoon's leisurely ride on the Danube Bike Path. The bike path leads through a beautiful forest toward the famous Schlägener Schlinge, where the river winds through steep, forested mountains in a series of sharp and scenic bends. The shorter route ends here; you can join a short shuttle, or continue pedaling on the Danube Bike Path toward Engelhartszell. You may want to sample a taste of the famous liquor of the Engelhartszell Abbey, before rejoining your ship, and sailing toward Melk.

Your river ship arrives in Engelhartszell late this afternoon, just as you are arriving. There'll be time to relax in your cabin before dinner and evening activities on board, while the ship sails for Melk.

#### Today's Ride Choices

Afternoon: Aschach an der Donau to Schlägen – 26 km (16 miles) | Schlägen to Engelhartszell – 15 km (9 miles)

What to Expect: Trace the left bank of the river, on a section of the Danube Bike Path that is mainly flat and entirely paved. A shuttle will be offered from Schlägen to Engelhartszell as for short option guests.

Cumulative Distance Range: 26 – 41 km (16 - 25 miles)

Accommodation: MS *Emerald Sun*/*Emerald Sky*/*Emerald Destiny*/*Emerald Dawn*

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

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

Your ship is moored in Melk, Austria, when you awake. After breakfast, shuttle to the spectacular Benedictine Abbey of Melk, perched on a scenic bluff. Here, a local guide introduces you to one of Europe's largest Baroque monasteries. After touring its magnificent rooms, you may stroll the gardens before returning to the ship for lunch. If you want to pick up some extra mileage, you can go for a short loop along the scenic Donauradweg before lunch.

Later, cycle through what is perhaps the most beautiful stretch on the Danube, the Wachau Valley, Austria's celebrated wine-growing region. The "Wachau Cultural Landscape" was recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2000. As for its *physical* landscape, it is blessed with lush vineyards and hillside orchards set among castle ruins, churches, and abbeys. Few places match the Wachau for its

striking beauty and rich viniculture. Ride through the scenic hamlets of Spitz and Wiessenkirchen, nestled between the Danube and its rising banks, and pedal into Dürnstein, a center of Wachau wine production. Admire its stunning powder-blue bell tower soaring above red roofs. A cliffside castle, which once held Richard the Lionheart captive, watches over the scenic town.

Rejoin your ship here late this afternoon, after tasting some local wines with the famous Wachauer Laberl cake. Later, enjoy time to relax before dinner, or perhaps join a guided hike to Dürnstein Castle. This evening, your ship charts a course for Vienna.

#### Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Optional loop before lunch – 18 km (11 miles)

Afternoon: Melk to Dürnstein – 33 km (21 miles)

What to Expect: From Melk, your route follows the Danube Bike Path. You may extend your daily mileage with a loop ride before lunch. Both rides are mostly on paved, flat bike paths with a couple of short ascents. In some sections, the bike path is directly adjacent to the roadway, with traffic traveling from the opposing direction.

Cumulative Distance Range: 26 – 41 km (16 - 25 miles)

Accommodation: MS *Emerald Sun*/*Emerald Sky*/*Emerald Destiny*/*Emerald Dawn*

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## DAY 7: Ride along the Donauinsel / Explore Vienna

Our ship is in Vienna from very early this morning until very late tonight, so you will have a convenient base from which to explore Austria's glorious capital.

Vienna is renowned as one of Europe's most cycle-friendly cities, so you can make use of its abundant bike paths and bike lanes. This morning, you might opt for an out-and-back ride along the Danube to the village of Klosterneuburg, known for its imposing monastery.

After lunch on board, your bike ride will lead you to the edge of the city and along the Donauinsel, or Danube Island, a 13-mile (21 km) strip where scenic vistas and quiet riding add to your Vienna discoveries.

Or explore Vienna on a guided walking tour, and later on your own, pursue your own whims and interests

in the city of Strauss, Beethoven, and Mahler. The gracious boulevards of Vienna are awash in culture and elegance. Head to the Ringstrasse, the circular avenue that replaced the city's demolished medieval wall, to marvel at breathtaking architecture, from the gleaming Imperial Palace and St. Stephen's Cathedral to the famed Vienna State Opera. And be sure to take a break in one of the city's famed coffee houses to experience Viennese café culture firsthand.

This evening, you are invited to join the Viennese Evening Concert excursion, featuring the music of Strauss and Mozart. This private event is available only to those on our ship.

#### Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Vienna to Klosterneuburg and return — 26 km (16 miles)

Afternoon: Vienna and Danube Island — 20 km (12 miles)

What to Expect: The morning offers a "Cyclist's Extra" option: an out-and-back ride along the Danube to the village of Klosterneuburg, primarily on bike paths. The afternoon ride is a relaxing and easy loop ride through the edge of the city and on Danube Island, a car-free recreational paradise.

Cumulative Distance Range: 20 - 46 km (12 - 28 miles)

Accommodation:MS *Emerald Sun*/*Emerald Sky*/*Emerald Destiny*/*Emerald Dawn*

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## **DAY 8: Bratislava / Donau-Auen National Park / Hainburg**

Awake this morning in Bratislava, the riverside capital of Slovakia and the only capital to border two other nations. After breakfast, disembark for an orientation walking tour with your trip leader. You'll find an unusual mix of 20th-century Communist-era architecture, Baroque palaces, medieval spires, and the narrowest house in Europe—all overlooked from a hillside by the rectangular white castle and watchtowers of the Bratislava Castle.

Mid-morning, you pedal out of town, crossing the Danube by way of the "UFO" bridge, and traverse the forests and meadows of Danube-Auen National Park, one of the largest remaining floodplains of the Danube. Arrive in Hainburg, a small town on the Austrian bank, where Joseph Haydn studied music as a young boy. After a delicious lunch in a local restaurant, arrive at Schloss Hof, the "hunting lodge" of Prince Eugene of Savoy. A guided visit introduces the lodge and the estate. You're invited to roam the splendid gardens and castle.

Mid-afternoon, travel back to Slovakia and to your waiting ship. Alternatively, you can cycle back along the other side of the river, though the small village of Devin, famous for its castle.

Back on board, join a cocktail reception and Gala Dinner this evening as the ship starts its voyage to Budapest.

#### Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Bratislava to Schloss Hof – 34 km (21 miles)

Afternoon: Schloss Hof to Bratislava – 20 km (13 miles)

What to Expect: Today's ride features a combination of bike paths and town streets. While both Slovakia and Austria feature bike paths, we would like to make you aware that the paths in Slovakia are slightly less well-maintained. The afternoon option is partly along a busy country road.

Cumulative Distance Range: 34 - 54 km (21 - 34 miles)

Accommodation: MS *Emerald Sun*/*Emerald Sky*/*Emerald Destiny*/*Emerald Dawn*

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## DAY 9: Budapest / Szentendre

You will be docked in Budapest all day today and will stay overnight until disembarkation tomorrow morning, giving you ample time to explore this jewel on the Danube. After breakfast, pedal along the river to start today's discoveries on the Margaret Island. After a short photo stop at the 13th-century monastery, time to continue on the most popular bike path northbound. Your destination is the charming town of Szentendre, a delightful artists' community brimming with galleries and workshops.

Upon arrival in to Szentendre you'll have some free time to browse the galleries and shops. Your trip leaders will introduce you to their favorite Hungarian specialties during lunch at a popular restaurant. Return to Budapest from Szentendre much faster than you got here: by way of a high-speed water taxi. If you seek time away from your bike today, you may begin your guided explorations with your choice of tours: Explore Budapest as a whole, taking in the major sites of the Buda and Pest sides of the Danube, or walk up the slopes of the right bank for up-close views of Castle Hill and the Old Town, where Fisherman's Bastion provides magnificent views of the city and the elegant Chain Bridge that spans the river.

Back on board, enjoy a full roster of entertainment and dining to celebrate your week on the Danube with



your fellow travelers. After having a farewell cocktail on the Panorama Deck, your VBT trip leaders will walk you to a small, local restaurant at the foot of Castle Hill, for a memorable farewell dinner.

#### Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Budapest to Szentendre – 25 km (15 miles)

What to Expect: Today's ride features a combination of bike paths and town streets. While both Slovakia and Austria feature bike paths, we would like to make you aware that the paths in Slovakia are slightly less well-maintained. The afternoon option is partly along a busy country road.

Cumulative Distance Range: 25 km (15 miles)

Accommodation: MS *Emerald Sun/Emerald Sky/Emerald Destiny/Emerald Dawn*

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

### **DAY 10: Disembarkation / Budapest city walk**

After an included breakfast you are free to explore Budapest on your own. VBT provides you with city information containing recommendations on what to do during your stay in Budapest. Your included day pass for Budapest's renowned public transportation system makes it easy to explore.

Spend tonight at your well-located hotel.

Accommodation: Mamaison Andrassy Hotel, Budapest

Included Meals: Breakfast

### **DAY 11: Departure**

After an included breakfast this morning, complimentary transportation to the Budapest airport will be provided (an approximately 30 to 40 minute drive, depending on traffic) for your departing flight.

Included Meals: Breakfast