Danube Bike & River Cruise: Prague to Budapest

Bike Vacation + Air Package

While most river cruises limit themselves to the lower Danube region, VBT takes you one step further—exploring the entire length of this fabled river, including the shores of Germany and the medieval city of Regensburg, a UNESCO World Heritage site. By day, join your local VBT trip leaders on curated routes through choice segments of the Danube Cycle Path—pedaling past small medieval villages, colorful vineyards, and fairytale castles. You'll explore the majesty of the Habsburg Empire during VBT's guided tours of Schloss Hof, Passau, and Vienna. By night, relax on your luxurious Emerald cruise ship—including a sundeck with spectacular views, a heated pool, and 5-star luxury meals and included beverages. With a wealth of onboard activities and optional excursions, this is the perfect trip for travel partners with different interests and activity levels.

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.
- Join a private guided walk including a beer tasting in Regensburg.
- 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 vehicle is available every day at designated points for those who need assistance.

On Board Ship: Our group of up to 24 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 others. While in port, our ship may be docked adjacent to other ships. This means you might walk through other ships while boarding or disembarking, and some views may be obstructed

while in port.

Tour Duration: 11 Days
Average Daily Mileage: 12 - 35 miles
Average Cycling Time: 00:45 - 03:30
Group size: 24 max

Climate Information

Average High/Low Temperature (°F)
Apr 57º/39º, May 67º/49º, Jun 72º/55º, Jul 77º/59º, Aug 77º/59º, Sep 69º/53º, Oct 57º/43º
Average Rainfall (in.)
Apr 2.2, May 2.4, Jun 2.9, Jul 2.5, Aug 2.3, Sep 1.8, Oct 1.6

FLIGHT DAY: Depart from the United States or Canada

Your vacation is about to begin! Spend your first night aloft and arrive ready for an unforgettable trip.

ARRIVAL DAY: Arrive in Prague

A VBT representative will greet you at the airport to start your adventure off right. 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.

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 1: Travel to Regensburg / Embark ship

After an included breakfast, meet your VBT representative in the hotel lobby at 9:00 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 Cruises ship.

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 short test ride near your ship. Later, enjoy a welcome dinner on board. The

ship remains in Regensburg this evening.

What to Expect:

No biking today.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 2: Cycle from Kelheim to Regensburg / Private walking tour and beer tasting

After breakfast, and a private shuttle to the picturesque small town of Kelheim, cycle along the scenic Danube banks. Following the Danube Bike Path, your ride will be easy and mostly car-free.

Pause for lunch in a charming local, Bavarian restaurant, before you arrive back to your ship early afternoon. Upon arrival in Regensburg, join a private guided tour followed by a beer tasting in downtown. Regensburg is an imposing town 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.

Afterward, rejoin your ship for dinner with live music played by a traditional Bavarian band. The ship will moor in Regensburg, where you are welcome to enjoy an evening walk in town.

Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Kelheim to lunch — 25 km (15 miles)

Afternoon: Lunch to Regensburg — 14 km (9 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 downstream to Regensburg. The short option ends at the lunch place, with a shuttle to Regensburg. 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: 25 – 39 km (15 – 24 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 3: Passau / Cycle to Schlögener Schlinge / 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 Schlögener Schlinge, where the river winds through steep, forested mountains in a series of sharp and scenic bends.

Enjoy a light lunch in a local café, 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 Schlögener Schlinge. 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 approach. 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 Schlögen — 26 km (16 miles) | Schlögen to Engelhartszell — 15 km (9 miles)

What to Expect:

Trace the right 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 Schlögen to Engelhartszell for short-option guests.

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

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 4: Melk / Cycle through The Wachau Valley / Krems

Your ship is moored in Melk, Austria, when you awake. After breakfast, 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 for lunch and a short sailing to Krems. Here you may want to join an included guided tour to the picturesque Göttweig Abbey, or perhaps indulge in a scenic loop ride along the riverbank. Later, enjoy a private wine tasting, before your ship charts a course to Vienna.

Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Melk to Dürnstein — 36 km (22 miles)

Afternoon: Krems to Dürnstein out and back — 12 km (7 miles)

What to Expect:

From Melk, your route follows the Danube Bike Path. You may extend your daily mileage with a loop ride upon arrival in Krems. 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 opposite direction. The afternoon cycling is an out and back ride to Dürnstein.

Cumulative Distance Range: 36 – 48 km (22 – 29 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 5: 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, our small group will enjoy a private walking tour of Vienna with the help of an experienced local tour guide.

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 your own, pursuing 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)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 6: 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 offer 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)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 7: 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 the charming town of Szentendre, a delightful artists' community brimming with galleries and workshops.

Upon arrival in Szentendre, you'll have some free time to browse the galleries and shops. Then you will learn how to prepare goulash and strudel before lunch at a popular restaurant. Return to Budapest from Szentendre by a shuttle bus in order to have some rest, or go for a walk in town. 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 an up-close look at 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 a farewell cocktail on the Panorama Deck with your VBT trip leaders, enjoy a dinner and a traditional Hungarian folklore show on board your ship.

Today's Ride Choices

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

What to Expect:

Today's biking is on a flat, paved bike path along the Danube. First part of the ride is in a relatively quiet, urban environment, while the second part is on a designated bike path away from the traffic. You'll travel back to the ship by a private shuttle bus.

Cumulative Distance Range: 25 km (15 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 8: Disembarkation / Budapest city tour

After breakfast, disembark your ship and conclude your Danube odyssey with a private, guided tour through the city's highlights. You'll be treated to lasting and up-close views of the Parliament Building and the Castle complex. Your walk concludes late this morning at the hotel, where your tour comes to an end.

Afterward, 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.

Spend tonight at your well-located hotel.

Included Meals: Breakfast

DEPARTURE DAY: 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

Accommodations

May vary depending on departure date.

Mamaison Hotel Riverside Prague (Day: 1)

A fully renovated, upscale boutique hotel boasting an award-winning Art Nouveau design, the Mamaison Hotel Riverside Prague is ideally located on the west bank of the Vltava River, near the Charles Bridge and within easy reach of Prague's historic and tourist districts. The National Theatre, Dancing House, Prague Castle, and numerous other architectural and cultural treasures are within walking distance, and music lovers will appreciate the proximity to Mozart's Prague residence. Your air-conditioned room offers all the amenities you need for a comfortable and relaxing stay. VBT has also included a Prague Transportation Pass to allow you easy, unlimited public transportation to other areas of Prague.

Emerald Star-Ships (Days: 1,2,3,4,5,6,7)

Cruise Europe's rivers on one of Emerald Cruises' "Star-Ships," each designed for luxury river cruising. Five cabin categories on each ship offer the amenities and contemporary style of a boutique hotel room. Enjoy full-service hospitality, comfortable social spaces, a golf putting green, walking tracks on the sun deck, pool, and cinema. Watch the European landscape drift past over coffee or a drink in the Horizon Bar & Lounge. This favorite gathering spot, offers a well-stocked bar staffed by skilled bartenders, help-yourself hot drinks, and plush seating and sofas. At mealtime, savor an endless array of delicious cuisine. The Sun Deck boasts a retractable glass roof so you can swim in the pool, enjoy a movie, or have a drink in the Riverview Lounge no matter the weather. Each ship's 72 generously proportioned suites and 20 staterooms feature all the amenities you need. VBT offers two cabin types spread across five cabin categories: Emerald Stateroom (Categories D+E), or Emerald Panorama Balcony Suite (Categories A+B+C). VBT can also request additional cabin types, based on availability.

Prestige Hotel Budapest (Day: 8)

The centrally located Prestige Hotel Budapest is just a few steps from the Danube River and the Széchenyi Chain Bridge—the most well-known symbol of Budapest. This restored palace-turned-hotel offers a blend of Hungarian hospitality in an atmosphere of timeless elegance. The guest rooms are graceful, decorated in cream and gold with wood-laminate flooring, and include amenities like air conditioning and WiFi. And the stunning atrium lobby and common areas offer sophisticated design, as well as ultimate comfort, whether you opt to enjoy the Michelin restaurant, fitness center, Jacuzzi, or sauna.