

## Danube Bike & River Cruise: Budapest to Nuremberg

### Bike Vacation Only

Enjoy a leisurely bike and boat on the Danube, when you embark a deluxe Emerald Waterways river ship. It's the ideal way to explore this legendary river, especially with VBT bikes and Trip Leaders at your beck and call. Unpack your gear just once, then enjoy enriching reels in four countries—Hungary, Slovakia, Austria and Germany. You'll follow the renowned Danube Bike Path into storybook villages. And marvel at the splendor and grace of baroque abbeys and hilltop castles. Join us!



### Cultural Highlights

- Admire magnificent riverside vistas by ship, then explore by bike for closer looks from the saddle
- Ride the car-free and scenic Danube Bike Path along the famed romantic river
- Enjoy the ultimate in convenience as you unpack once and cruise from one great ride to the next
- Ride in four countries and explore three capitals of culture, all on one trip

- Experience the Danube your way, choosing from an array of activities from biking to a walking tour
- Admire stunning architecture that spans the ages in old-world medieval cities
- Enjoy an all-inclusive river ship experience, perfectly paired with the pleasures of a VBT biking vacation

## 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 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 as well as opportunities to join other activities that are offered by the ship. VBT activities may overlap with those 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:** 8 Days

**Average Daily Mileage:** 7 - 29

**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: Budapest, Hungary / Embark ship / VBT Bicycle Vacation begins

You are responsible for making your own way to Budapest, Hungary, to meet your trip leaders and fellow guests at 11:00 am at the Mamaison Andrassy Hotel (note that for sailings on 17 May, 31 May, and 14 June we will meet instead at the K+K Hotel Opera). Please be dressed ready to walk.

Should you arrive late, please plan to go directly to the ship, which is in port overnight and until mid-day on the following day. Please note that you cannot embark before 12:30 p.m. as the ship is being prepared

for you.

The ship will be docked at Bethany Pier, on the Buda side of the river, directly across from the Parliament building. As the exact location of the ship may change, please call the ship on your arrival in Budapest for directions.

Cruise start date of: 5 July:

MS Emerald Destiny, tele. +49 (0)152 5671 3873, [reception.destiny@emeraldwaterways.com](mailto:reception.destiny@emeraldwaterways.com)

Cruise start dates of: 29 August:

MS Emerald Dawn, tele. +49 (0)173 518 1436, [reception.dawn@emeraldwaterways.com](mailto:reception.dawn@emeraldwaterways.com)

Cruise start date of: 10 August:

MS Emerald Sky, tele. +49 (0)173 518 1933, [reception.sky@emeraldwaterways.com](mailto:reception.sky@emeraldwaterways.com)

Cruise start dates of: 17 May, 31 May, 14, June and 18 October:

MS Emerald Star, tele. +49 (0)173 518 1937, [reception.star@emeraldwaterways.com](mailto:reception.star@emeraldwaterways.com)

Your cabin may not be ready for you until 3:00 p.m. However, you are welcome to enjoy a light buffet on board, served between 12:00 and 3:00 p.m., relax in the ship's common areas, or explore more of Budapest.

Later, meet your Trip Leaders and fellow travelers onboard for an introduction to the week, followed by bike safety briefing. After, join a warm-up ride on a river-side bike lane and get acquainted with your bike and with riding on bike paths and in bike lanes. A welcome dinner in the ship's Reflections Restaurant, traditional Hungarian folklore performances and an after-dark cruise along the Budapest waterfront are in store this evening.

Please note regarding WiFi on board the ship: Due to the nature of the ship 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: MS Emerald Sky/Emerald Destiny/Emerald Dawn/Emerald Star

Meals: Lunch, Dinner

Today's Ride Choice:

Cumulative Distance Range: 7 km (4 miles)

Afternoon

Warm-Up: 7 km (4 miles)

What to Expect: The ride from our ship is primarily in paved, dedicated bike lanes riding alongside vehicular traffic. We are on the banks of the Danube, with spectacular views of the city. Get acquainted with your route notes, Ride with GPS, your bicycle and the locals. Check your brakes and play with shifting your full range of gears.

## DAY 2: Budapest

After breakfast, disembark your ship and conclude your time in Budapest in fitting style: with a relaxed reel through this bike-friendly city. Well-paved, dedicated bike lanes provide lasting and up-close views of the Parliament Building and Margaret's Island. Rejoin the ship in time for lunch. Then, it's all-aboard as we set sail for Bratislava, arriving during breakfast tomorrow. 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 Hungarian theme!

Hotel: MS Emerald Sky/Emerald Destiny/Emerald Dawn/Emerald Star

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today's Ride Choice:

Cumulative Distance Range: 13 km (8 miles)

Morning

Budapest City Ride: 13 km (8 miles)

What to Expect: Ride through this bike-friendly city, in dedicated bike lanes and on bike paths. We take our time, and travel at a very relaxed pace, with an opportunity to stop and see sites along the way.

## DAY 3: Bratislava / Donau-Auen National Park / Hainburg

Awake in Bratislava this morning, the riverside capital of Slovakia and the only capital to border two other nations. After breakfast, disembark for an orientation to the city on foot 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 the 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 picnic lunch, 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, transfer back to Slovakia and to our awaiting ship.

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

Hotel: MS Emerald Sky/Emerald Destiny/Emerald Dawn/Emerald Star

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Distance Range: 34 km (21 miles)

Afternoon

Bratislava to Schloss Hof: 34 km (21 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.

## **DAY 4: 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 will make use of its abundant bike paths and bike lanes. From your ship, the morning 'extra' ride is an out and back along the Danube to the village of Klosterneuburg, known for its imposing Monastery.

After lunch on board, you ride through the edge of the city and along the Donauinsel, or Danube Island, a 13-mile-long 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 the city's most 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, join an optional excursion to a special Viennese Evening Concert, featuring music of Strauss and Mozart. The private event is available only to those on our ship, and transportation is included in the price. Booking details will be provided with your final documents.

Hotel: MS Emerald Sky/Emerald Destiny/Emerald Dawn/Emerald Star

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today's Ride Choices:

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

Morning

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

Afternoon

Vienna and Danube Island: 20 km (12 miles)

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

## **DAY 5: Dürnstein / Cycle through The Wachau Valley / Melk**

Your ship is moored in Dürnstein, Austria, when you awake. The town is 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, and you may choose to take the short hike up for the views, after breakfast.

Later this morning, 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.

Celebrate the ride over a lunch of Austrian specialties amidst the charming hospitality of our fourth-generation hosts.

Then rejoin the ship in Melk, and later board a short 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. Enjoy time to relax prior to dinner. This evening, you set a course for Brandstatt and Passau.

Hotel: MS Emerald Sky/Emerald Destiny/Emerald Dawn/Emerald Star

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Distance Range: 20-33 km (13-21 miles)

Morning

Dürnstein to Aggsbach Markt: 20 km (13 miles)

Or

Dürnstein to Melk: 33km (21 miles)

What to Expect: Begin biking from Dürnstein, again following the Danube Bike Path. The short option finishes in the tiny village of Aggsbach Markt, where you can join a shuttle to Melk. You may extend your ride to Melk, our lunch location. Both options are mostly on paved bike paths. The path offers some short ascents. In some sections, the bike path is directly adjacent to the roadway.

## **DAY 6: Brandstatt / Cycle to Schlogen / Passau**

Your bicycles are waiting for you in Brandstatt, where we disembark after breakfast to start our ride. This morning's reel toward Schlogen passes through a beautiful forest. You follow the Danube Bike Path on a leisurely ride before entering Austria's famous Schlögenger Schlinge, where the river winds through steep, forested mountains in a series of sharp and scenic bends.

A short shuttle brings us to Passau, to join an informative walking tour with a local guide through this scenic “City of Three Rivers” at the confluence of the Danube, Inn, and Ilz. Our river ship arrives in Passau mid-afternoon, just as our walk concludes at the docks. As we set sail for Regensburg, there’ll be time to relax in your cabin before dinner and evening activities on board.

Hotel: MS Emerald Sky/Emerald Destiny/Emerald Dawn/Emerald Star

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today’s Ride Choices:

Cumulative Distance Range: 30 km (19 miles)

Afternoon

Brandstatt to Schlogen with a Shuttle to ship: 30 km (19 miles)

What to Expect: Bike on the left bank, on a section of the Danube Bike Path that is mainly flat and entirely paved.

## **DAY 7: Regensburg / Danube Bike Path / Cycle to Kelheim**

As you’ll see when you awake, 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. Join a local guide for a walking tour, gaining insight into the town’s medieval history.

Then, from Regensburg, cycle along the scenic Danube banks. Following the Danube Bike Path, our scenic ride continues to be easy and mostly car-free. This is the famous EuroVelo 6, or EV6, which traverses 10 countries and 2,270 miles from the Atlantic Ocean in France to the Black Sea at Constanta. The EV6 makes a bike and boat on the Danube of this caliber possible as it includes the Danube Bike Path, the most popular cycling holiday destination in Europe. Stop to enjoy a Bavarian lunch. Take in the view from tables in the garden weather-permitting.

Rejoin the ship in Kelheim, a small Bavarian town near the picturesque Danube Gorge, a narrow stretch lined with cliff walls. Lunch is onboard, as the ship sails for Nuremberg.

Hotel: MS Emerald Sky/Emerald Destiny/Emerald Dawn/Emerald Star

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Today's Ride Choices:

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

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 our constant companion on this scenic and easy ride upstream to Kelheim. The short option ends at Kapfelberg, with a shuttle on to Kelheim to meet the ship. 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.

## **DAY 8: Disembark / Transfer to Prague / VBT Bicycle Vacation ends**

After breakfast, disembark your ship and conclude your Danube odyssey with a transfer to Prague, Capital of the Czech Republic.

Your trip ends at the docks in Nuremberg, Germany on the morning of disembarkation. The ship is scheduled to arrive in port at 6:00 a.m. You may transfer from here on your own by taxi to the train station, a distance of 8 km, which should take about 15 minutes by taxi or to the Nuremberg airport, a distance of 15 km, which should take about 25 minutes by taxi. The ship's staff will be happy to arrange a taxi for you. It's recommended that you allow for the possible late arrival of the ship when planning departing flights or train travel.

Meals: Breakfast