

Danube Bike & River Cruise: Budapest to Prague

Bike Vacation + Air Package

A bike and boat tour on the Danube doesn't get any better than this! In just a week, you'll explore four different countries—Hungary, Slovakia, Austria, and Germany—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

Choose to be as active or relaxed as you wish from our menu of cycling routes and walking tours

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: 11 Days

Average Cycling Time: 00:30 - 02:45

Climate Information

Average High/Low Temperature (°F)

Apr 57°/39°, May 67°/49°, Jun 72°/55°, Jul 77°/59°, Aug 77°/59°, Sep 69°/59°, Oct 57°/43°

Average Rainfall (in.)

Apr 2.2, May 2.4, Jun 2.9, Jul 2.5, Aug 2.3, Sep 2.3, Oct 1.6

DAY 1: Depart home / Fly overnight to Budapest

Depart home for Hungary. The particulars of your arrival overseas are detailed with your flight itinerary.

DAY 2: Arrive in Budapest

Upon arrival at the Budapest 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 van (approximately 30 minutes, depending on traffic) to your centrally located Budapest hotel. If your VBT representative is not immediately in sight, please wait, as the VBT representative may be transferring with an earlier arrival. He or she should arrive within 30 minutes.

Your hotel room may not be available until after 2:00 p.m. If you arrive early, you may store your luggage with the reception desk. The rest of the day is free to relax or begin your exploration of the city with your included Budapest Transportation Pass. VBT provides you with city information that includes information and recommendations on what to see and do during your stay in Budapest.

Accommodation: Mamaison Andrassy Hotel

DAY 3: Budapest guided walk / Embark ship / Warm-up ride

At 9:30 a.m., meet your private VBT walking tour guide in the hotel lobby. Please be checked out of your room and dressed ready to walk. Join up with your local guide for a walking tour through the city's highlights. Enjoy your first lunch on board, after arriving at the dock in Budapest at approximately 1:00 p.m. to board your Emerald Waterways ship.

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 Batthyany 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 dates of: September 6, and October 18:

MS *Emerald Destiny*, tele. +49 (0)152 5671 3873, reception.destiny@emeraldwaterways.com

Your cabin may not be ready for you until 3:00 p.m. However, you are welcome to relax in the ship's common areas, or explore more of Budapest.

Later, meet your trip leaders and fellow travelers on board for an introduction to the week, followed by a safety and bike-fitting session. After a very short motor coach transfer, get acquainted with your bike and with riding on bike paths and in bike lanes on a warm-up ride along the Danube. A welcome dinner in the ship's Reflections Restaurant and traditional Hungarian folklore performances 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 recommends that you download your VBT Maps & Route Notes from a WiFi zone prior to arrival on the ship. 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.

Please note regarding "Discover More" tours: Emerald Waterways offers two optional tours during your cruise, at an additional cost. Your VBT trip leaders will be able to answer questions about scheduling and can connect you with Emerald staff on board to make reservations. We recommend that you book as soon as practical once on board, as the tours are capacity restricted.

Tastes of Vienna

When: Day 4 (Vienna), 2:00 – 5:45 p.m.

Includes: Coach transfer, sausage tasting, coffee and cake

Note: Passengers joining this tour will not be able to participate in the VBT afternoon ride.

Price: EUR 49.00 per person

Excursion to the Bavarian Forest

When: Day 6 (Passau), 8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Includes: Coach transfer, local guide

Note: Passengers joining this tour will not be able to participate in the VBT ride.

Price: EUR 59.00 per person

Accommodation: MS *Emerald Destiny*

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Distance Range: 12 km (8 miles)

Afternoon

Budapest Warm-up: 12 km (8 miles)

What to Expect: A short motor coach ride will take you to the outskirts, where you begin your warm-up ride along the Danube, away from urban traffic. Your ride follows paved, dedicated bike lanes alongside vehicular traffic on both banks of the Danube, with spectacular views of the city. Your warm-up ride ends at the ship. As you ride, 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.

DAY 4: Transfer to Vac / Danube Bend / Visegrad

Shuttle to the Baroque city of Vac to begin today's ride on the famous EuroVelo 6, or EV6, which traverses 10 countries and 2,270 miles (3,653 km) 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 vacation destination in Europe.

You'll trace the famous Danube Bike Path along the left bank of the river and admire views of the Danube Bend, where the river curves around forested hills dotted with picturesque villages. It is considered one of the most scenic stretches of the river. Pause for a picnic lunch, then ferry to Szob, where you are welcome to shuttle or cycle along country roads to Visegrad, the former medieval capital of Hungary.

Admire views of ancient ramparts, castles, and the river, as well as time at leisure to explore. Afterwards you are invited to participate in a Knights' Tournament organized by the Saint George Knightly Order. During the performance, you will have the opportunity to familiarize yourself with medieval weapons, while the more adventurous among you may try to shoot with arrows, throw stars, or a *kelevéz* (a Hungarian lance). You're sure to enjoy this historic reenactment in the old fortress.

On your return to the ship, enjoy the Captain's Welcome Cocktail and dinner. With its regional specialties, tonight's meal completes the day's Hungarian theme!

Accommodation: MS *Emerald Destiny*

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Distance Range: 45 km (28 miles)

Morning

Vac to Szob Ferry: 31 km (19 miles)

Afternoon

Szob Ferry to Visegrad: 14 km (9 miles)

What to Expect: Ride on paved bike paths along the Danube Bike Path to Szob. After picnic lunch, an optional ride continues on country roads with some traffic to Visegrad. VBT offers a support vehicle shuttle from the ferry.

DAY 5: 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 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, transfer back to Slovakia and to your waiting ship. Alternatively, you can choose to cycle back along the other side of the river, though the small village of Devin, famous for its castle.

Back in Bratislava, enjoy some leisure time before dinner and the late departure for Vienna.

Accommodation: *MS Emerald Destiny*

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today's Ride Choices:

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

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.

DAY 6: Ride along the Donauinsel / Explore Vienna

Your 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 leads to the edge of the city and along the Donauinsel, or Danube Island, a 13-mile (21km) 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 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.

Accommodation: MS *Emerald Destiny*

Included 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 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.

DAY 7: 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 of 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.

On arrival in Melk, celebrate the ride over a lunch of Austrian specialties. Afterward, you can continue cycling along the river on a loop ride, or go for a short walk.

After rejoining the ship in Melk, you'll board a short shuttle to the city's spectacular Benedictine Abbey, perched on a scenic bluff. Here, a local guide introduces you to one of Europe's largest Baroque monasteries. Enjoy a tour of its magnificent rooms and gardens, before getting back onboard.

Upon returning to the ship, you'll have time to relax before dinner on board. This afternoon, the ship

charts a course for Engelhartszell and Passau.

Accommodation: MS *Emerald Destiny*

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Distance Range: 33 – 51 km (21 – 32 miles)

Morning

Dürnstein to Melk: 33 km (21 miles)

Afternoon

Optional loop outside Melk: 18 km (11 miles)

What to Expect: Begin biking from Dürnstein, again following the Danube Bike Path. You can extend your ride after lunch in Melk. Both options are mostly on paved bike paths with some short ascents. In some sections, the bike path is directly adjacent to the roadway.

DAY 8: Engelhartszell / Cycle to Aschach an der Donau / Passau

Your bicycle is waiting for you in Engelhartszell, where you disembark after your breakfast to start your ride. This morning's route to Aschach an der Donau passes through a beautiful forest. Follow the Danube bike path on a leisurely ride after leaving Austria's famous Schlägener Schlinge, where the river winds through steep, forested mountains in a series of sharp and scenic bends.

Upon arrival in Aschach and lunch in a local café and bakery, a short shuttle takes you to Passau, the scenic "City of Three Rivers" at the confluence of the Danube, Inn, and Ilz. Here, you'll join an informative walking tour with a local guide, followed by free time to explore.

Afterward, you may join an optional hike to Veste Oberhaus, Passau's famous castle on the other side of the river. Reboard the ship late afternoon and set sail for Regensburg. Enjoy a Captain's Gala Dinner and evening activities on board.

Accommodation: MS *Emerald Destiny*

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Distance Range: 15 – 41 km (9 - 25 miles)

Morning

Engelhartszell to Schlögen: 15 km (9 miles)

Schlögen to Aschach an der Donau: 26 km (16 miles)

What to Expect: Bike along the left bank, on a section of the Danube Bike Path that is mainly flat and entirely paved. You can enjoy a van shuttle from Engelhartszell to Schlögen in the morning, if you prefer to ride only the second part before lunch.

DAY 9: 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, your scenic ride continues to be easy and mostly car-free. Enjoy a lunch stop at a historic local restaurant along the way.

Rejoin the ship in Kelheim, a small Bavarian town with medieval city gates and whimsical renaissance façades. Enjoy the music of a traditional Bavarian band on board, as the ship sails for Nuremberg.

Accommodation: MS *Emerald Destiny*

Included 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 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 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 10: Disembark / Transfer to Prague

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

Disembark after breakfast and travel by coach to Prague, the capital of the Czech Republic, arriving in the early afternoon. Travel time is about four hours including a mandatory driver's break of 30 minutes.

Your hotel room may not be available until after 2:00 p.m. If you arrive early, you may store your luggage with the reception desk. The rest of the day is free to relax or begin your exploration of the city with your included 1-day Prague Transportation Pass.

At the hotel, your VBT representative Barbra Zukalová will be available to provide tips to help you get around, point you to restaurants and sites that suit your interests, and help you purchase tickets for some of Prague's many high-quality classical music venues. You may also book a walking tour of the city (at an additional cost of approximately €22-28 per person). Barbra's schedule varies and is dependent on group members' arrivals. Her actual schedule will be relayed to you upon your arrival at the hotel. If you wish, you may reach Barbra in advance by email at b.zukalova@gmail.com to make guided tour reservations in Prague. In addition, VBT provides you with city information that includes information and recommendations on what to see and do during your stay in Prague.

Accommodation: K+K Hotel Central, Prague

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 11: Depart for home

After breakfast*, transfer to the Prague airport (approximately 30 minutes) for your departing flight**. Please ensure that you are ready in the hotel reception area at the designated time.

*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 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.

Included Meals: Breakfast

Accommodations

May vary depending on departure date.

K+K Hotel Central (Day: 10)

Ideally located next to the Old Town's Powder Gate, the K+K Central Hotel lays all of Prague at your feet. Its Art Nouveau style, elegant interiors, and superior service provide a welcome touch after a day of exploring the city's medieval treasures. Adorned with gold tones, lush decorative accents, and the intricately forged gilded ironwork for which the Art Deco movement is renowned, this air-conditioned hotel feels special and unique. During your stay, enjoy a massage or sauna in the wellness center. Begin each day with a generous buffet breakfast and savor seasonal Czech cuisine and famed Czech pilsner in the stylish Bar & Bistro. Rooms are simple, comfortable, and splashed with vivid, colorful fabrics and artwork.

Danubis Hotel Astoria Budapest (Day: 2)

One of the most elegant hotels in Budapest since opening its doors more than a century ago, the 4-star Danubius Hotel Astoria Center embraces its heritage with *fin de siècle* décor, a historic ambiance, and a tradition of warm hospitality. In the café, enjoy classic Hungarian cuisine with a creative twist in a beautiful setting amid rose columns. Your air-conditioned room has all the amenities you'll require after an exhilarating day of cycling, and free WiFi is available throughout the hotel. When it's time to explore, you'll find that the hotel is ideally located, close to Váci Street, the Danube promenade, and other attractions, and just a short walk to the metro station and tram line. VBT has also included a Budapest Transportation Pass, to allow you easy, unlimited public transportation to other areas of Budapest. Available on limited departures.

Emerald Star-Ships (Days: 3,4,5,6,7,8,9)

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.