

# France, Luxembourg & Germany Bike & Boat: Mosel River Valley, Aboard the Princesse Royal

## Bike Vacation Only

Cycle along Europe's most scenic river and experience three very different cultures—Luxembourg, France, and Germany—on one exhilarating journey. You won't just bike Europe. You'll also drift along the waterway aboard a luxurious barge, admiring shifting landscapes from the comfort of a deck chair and enjoying sumptuous meals and a spirit of camaraderie all along the way. On our carefully curated routes, you'll pedal past vineyards and forests, castles, and half-timbered villages ... explore cosmopolitan Paris, the picturesque French village of Rodemack, the Roman ruins of Trier, the dual city of Bernkastel-Kues, and the beautiful Eifel Valley ... and enjoy exclusive events like a private wine tasting at a family-owned estate. Don't miss this chance to explore this charming pocket of Europe!

## Cultural Highlights

- Experience three countries—Luxembourg, France, and Germany—up close, by bike
- View quaint villages, lush vineyards and forests, and fairytale castles as you roll along a scenic river
- Explore the ancient Roman and medieval treasures of Trier
- Enjoy a private wine tasting
- Relax on your barge and sip Germany's finest Rieslings and beers

## What to Expect

This tour offers easy terrain on bike paths and roads through both urban and rural areas. Our VBT support vehicle is available every day at designated points for those who would like assistance.

**Tour Duration:** 8 Days

**Average Daily Mileage:** 8 - 40 miles

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

**Group size:** 30 max

## Climate Information

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

Jun 67°/52°, Jul 72°/56°, Aug 69°/54°, Sep 63°/49°, Oct 54°/43°

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

Jun 3.17, Jul 4.87, Aug 4.37, Sep 2.23, Oct 1.85

## **DAY 1: Travel to Metz / Embark barge**

You are responsible for making your way to Metz to meet your barge. Please arrive between 1:30 and 2:00 p.m. Please note that you cannot embark before this time, as the barge is being prepared for you. If you are late, you must contact the barge as soon as possible to make alternate arrangements because we sail shortly after this time.

The barge will be moored in the canal between the Pont du Canal and the locks of Metz, near the rue de Paris and the rue George Aimé.

After meeting the crew and your VBT trip leaders, settle in before participating in a bike safety session while cruising to Richemont. Here, you disembark for a bike-fitting and a short warm-up ride. Reunite with the barge at its new mooring point and have time to change before gathering for a welcome drink and dinner on board. Tonight, the barge moors in the quiet countryside, just outside the city of Thionville.

### Today's Ride Choices

Afternoon: Richemont to Thionville Warm-up — 13 km (8 miles)

### What to Expect:

The warm-up ride from Richemont locks to the Bar "La Marina" is easy. Ride along the Mosel River through the French countryside and rejoin your barge. For a few more miles, continue from "La Marina" to Thionville and return along the river.

Cumulative Distance Range: 13 km (8 miles)

Included Meals: Dinner

## **DAY 2: Bike to Rodemack / Picnic lunch / Remich, Luxembourg**

After breakfast, cycle along the Mosel River on a quiet bike path. Then turn inland and cycle along a pleasant rolling route through small villages. Pause to explore Rodemack, known as "Little Carcassonne"

Lorraine” and ranked one of the most beautiful villages in France. In this charming hamlet, admire marvels of construction that span the ages, including fortifications erected over many centuries. Impressive ramparts and walls encircle the village, and cobbled alleys lead to a labyrinth of back streets and an impressive fortress.

After a picnic lunch at the fountain, there’ll be free time to explore on your own.

You may ride or cruise this afternoon. Dinner tonight is on the barge, which moors on the opposite side of Remich.

Today’s Ride Choices

Morning – Afternoon: Thionville to Remich with two Shuttles – 20 OR Thionville to Remich with one Shuttle – 26 OR Thionville to Remich – 32

What to Expect:

Enjoy easy biking along the scenic Mosel River from Thionville to the Bar Le Bar Bac near Cattenom. Cycle from here to Rodemack, or join the shuttle if you wish to avoid the long hill into the village. After lunch, continue cycling through French farmlands, on a mix of quiet country roads and bike lanes and along the Mosel through very pretty wetlands and villages, crossing the international border into Germany to meet your barge. The support vehicle will be available to assist you, or you can ride the entire day.

Cumulative Distance Range: 34 - 53 km (20 - 32 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

### **DAY 3: Cycle Remich / Nennig / Wasserbillig / Saarburg**

Pedal this morning to Nennig and its local museum, where you can admire Europe’s largest Roman mosaic; remarkably, 90% of it is original and perfectly restored. Continue riding along the Mosel on an easy bike path. The river forms a natural border between Germany and Luxembourg. On the German side, you will follow the renowned Route du Vin, famous for its outstanding Riesling and Cremant. Sweeping views of vineyards’ sloping hillsides accompany your ride.

Meet the barge in Nittel for a cruising lunch to Wasserbillig, Luxembourg. From here, you may cruise or continue cycling. If you choose our longer option, you ride past Konz, a small city at the confluence of the

Mosel and Saar rivers, then continue into the Saarland along the more intimate Saar River. Wooded mountains, wide meadows, farmsteads, and villages mark your progress as you ride. Later this afternoon, arrive in Saarburg, a medieval riverside jewel at the foot of a castle. The town center boasts a roaring 65-foot (19.8-meter) waterfall. Spend the rest of the day exploring this lovely town, or continue cycling a loop south of Saarburg along the Saar River.

Enjoy a private wine tasting in one of the historical wineries in the afternoon. The barge moors in Saarburg this evening with dinner included onboard.

#### Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Remich to Nittel — 13

Afternoon: Wasserbillig to Saarburg — 13 OR Saarburg Loop — 22

#### What To Expect:

Directions to enjoy free time in Saarburg: — 13

Cross the bridge over the waterfall and turn right toward “Galerie am Wasserfall.” Take a left and follow the street to the castle, passing a church on your left. The castle keep offers a great view. This shorter but steeper walk starts at the stairs behind the white building. Look for the sign that reads “Schörghenhammer.” At the top of the stairs, you can join the path to the castle.

Cumulative Distance Range: 21 – 56 km (13 – 35 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## **DAY 4: Bike and cruise from Saarburg to Trier**

This morning, walk to the nearby former bell foundry and museum, Mabilon, which produced bells until 2002. After your tour, cycle along the Saar River to the confluence of the Mosel River, then continue riding to Trier, where you meet the barge. After lunch on board, you are free to explore this historic and fascinating town.

The people of Trier might tell you that it is possible to see “2,000 years of history in 2,000 paces” in their city. The Romans established their local capital here. In the Middle Ages, Frankish kings and the archbishops of Trier reigned. Here you can learn about the Porta Nigra (“Black Gate”), the city’s landmark

and the largest city gate of the ancient world; the amphitheater; the medieval Market Square; the High Cathedral of St. Peter, Germany's oldest Cathedral; and Constantine's Throne Hall. Then, there's the rococo Electoral Palace and the ruins of the Imperial Baths with their extensive subterranean passages. It is an astounding repository of history and leaves little doubt why all of Trier's monuments have been designated a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Tonight, your barge moors here, so you can try one of the local restaurants for dinner on your own.

Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Saarburg to Trier – 17

What to Expect:

Today you follow the Saar River downstream through a nature preserve along the banks of this once free-flowing and wild river. Follow a flat bike path all the way into Trier to meet the barge. The ride is easy with a few bumps over tree roots. Please watch for these and gently lift off your seat to soften the impact.

Cumulative Distance Range: 29 km (17 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

## **DAY 5: Piesport / Trittenheim / Bernkastel-Kues**

This morning you cruise out of Trier during breakfast. Arriving in Schweich, you have the option to continue cruising to Neumagen or to start your day cycling toward Bernkastel-Kues. Your route winds along scenic hairpin turns along the Mosel, passing the wine-making villages of Trittenheim and Piesport. In Piesport, see a reconstructed Roman winepress and other evidence of a rich Roman past. Stop for lunch on your own in Neumagen, where you witness more signs of ancient Rome. From here, shuttle to Bernkastel-Kues, or continue biking among vineyards and orchards, watching for swans and other birds.

Meet the barge in Bernkastel-Kues, then rest or explore before dinner on board. Bernkastel and Kues, united in 1905, were once two small cities divided by the Mosel. The pride of today's dual city is the market square, with its picturesque timber-framed houses and decorative sculpted fountains, some dating to the 17th century.

Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Schweich to Neumagen – 18

Afternoon: Neumagen to Bernkastel-Kues – 17

What to Expect:

Cruise or cycle this morning to Neumagen. From here, ride through the Middle Mosel, a stunning tapestry of breathtaking scenery, lush vineyards, and quaint wine villages. Today's ride is mainly on flat bike paths, with a few short hills. The route follows an old Roman road and passes replicas of Roman sculptures. You will find many good lunch spots along the way in some of the Mosel's famous wine villages. At ride's end, you arrive in Bernkastel-Kues.

Cumulative Distance Range: 29 – 56 km (18 – 35 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

## **DAY 6: Daun / The Eifel Region / Bernkastel-Kues**

This morning, shuttle (approximately 45 minutes) through the scenic Eifel Valley to the town of Daun, a spa town fed by mineral springs. Return to your bicycle here and enjoy an exhilarating spin, climbing a slight incline at first and then coasting downhill along a former railway converted into a cycling path. This exciting ride includes stretches through tunnels, over bridges, and past small lakes formed from volcanic craters known as *maars*. Pass stately castles, lush vineyards, green forests, and quiet villages that invite you to pause and explore.

Along the way, stop in Gillenfeld to enjoy a simple lunch hosted by Sigrid and Leo Lenerz. At their simple cozy café, idyllically located in an old barn, they specialize in regional products from local producers. Later, ride back to Bernkastel, where you can try one of the local restaurants for dinner on your own.

Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Daun to Gillenfeld – 10

Afternoon: Gillenfeld to Laufeld – 8 OR Laufeld to Wittlich – 9 OR Wittlich to Bernkastel-Kues – 13

What to Expect:

Bike an invigorating rails-to-trails route known locally as the MMR, a mainly flat or downhill bike path with a few gradual climbs at the beginning. Meet up at a cozy café in Gillenfeld for lunch. Take our support vehicle after lunch if you wish to avoid hills, then continue on the MMR bike path coasting through illuminated tunnels and a viaduct before a thrilling, gradual descent into Wittlich town. From Wittlich you may shuttle back to the barge or ride flat and easy bike paths along a small river through gorgeous forest and farmlands to the Mosel River, where your barge awaits.

Cumulative Distance Range: 16 – 64 km (18 – 40 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

## **DAY 7: Traben-Trarbach / Zell / Bullay / Cochem**

Today, cruise out of Bernkastel and follow the Mosel downstream. After breakfast, arrive in Traben-Trarbach, an architectural jewel of the German Art Nouveau movement known as *Jugendstil*. The surrounding woodlands and extensive vineyards add to its irresistible charm. Traben-Trarbach was once the world's second-largest wine-trading center. At the height of the city's prosperity at the turn of the 20th century, local wine merchants built a number of fine Art Nouveau buildings, many of which are carefully preserved and continue to operate as wineries. There'll be time to admire a wide range of Belle Époque splendor during your visit; you'll quickly see why the city is a favorite destination for lovers of baroque and classical architecture, too.

After, follow the river's bike path to Zell. Beautifully situated on the Mosel, where the river twists and turns through the hills, Zell is one of the largest wine-producing communities on the river. The beloved wine Zeller Schwarze Katze (Black Cat) is produced here with grapes from 16 different locations. Be sure to notice the sculpture on the market-square fountain depicting a snarling cat atop a wine barrel. Continue to Bullay, another big name in wine. You can linger here a while and pause to enjoy lunch along the way. There are many picnic areas along the path. Rejoin the barge in Beilstein, and cruise to Cochem later this afternoon, giving you ample time to relax and freshen up for a festive farewell dinner on board.

Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Traben-Trarbach to Bullay – 16

Afternoon: Bullay to Beilstein – 14

What to Expect:

Start riding from the Art Nouveau town of Traben-Trarbach, following the hairpins of the Mosel as it flows through the steepest vineyards in Europe. The scenery is breathtaking, and many interesting sights can be explored along the way. Board the barge in Bullay and cruise to Beilstein. If you instead cycle from Bullay, you ride a quiet road with a bit of traffic before returning to a river-hugging bike path past the steepest vineyards in Bremm and through campgrounds, passing families of swans and charming villages. Once you see the castle ruins, you have arrived in Beilstein, where you meet the barge and cruise on to Cochem.

Cumulative Distance Range: 26 – 48 km (16 – 30 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

## **DAY 8: Cochem / Koblenz**

After an included breakfast, your tour ends. It is important that you leave the barge no later than 9:00 a.m. so our crew can prepare for their next guests.

Included Meals: Breakfast

## **Accommodations**

May vary depending on departure date.

### **Princesse Royal (Days: 1,2,3,4,5,6,7)**

The premium barge *Princesse Royal* is 207 feet (63 meters) long, accommodates 30 guests, sails under the Dutch flag and management, and was completely modernized in 2010 and extended by 46 feet (14 meters) during the winter of 2012/13. The lower deck has 16 cabins: 11 twin cabins (approx. 118 square feet [11 square meters], 2 single beds next to each other), 4 premium twins (approx. 151 square feet [14 square meters], 2 single beds next to each other, small sitting area) and 1 single cabin used for a trip leader (approx. 97 square feet [9 square meters]). All cabins have portholes (portholes are fixed for safety reasons), en-suite bathroom with shower and toilet, individually regulated air conditioning, flat-screen satellite TV, a small safe, and a hair dryer. On the upper deck, there is a tastefully furnished salon with restaurant, bar, lounge area with wide-screen TV, large windows, and WiFi with unlimited data use. The aft deck features two partly covered teak wooden sun decks with chairs and tables, a whirlpool/Jacuzzi, and a barbecue.

[Click here to view deck plans](https://www.vbt.com/content/uploads/2019/02/princesse-royal.jpg)