

CJN_SE001_Viking Danube Christmas Delights 26 27



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Danube River**Danube Christmas Delights: >>Budapest to Passau****8 Days | 6 Guided Tours | 4 Countries****DANUBE CHRISTMAS DELIGHTS MAP****Itinerary****Day 1 Budapest, Hungary**

Embark your ship and settle into your stateroom. Riverside beauty and a vibrant cultural scene blend together in Budapest to form one of Europe's most rewarding cities. Hungary's enchanting capital straddles the banks of the Danube, with traditional hillside Buda on one side and modern Pest on the other. By day, stunning art nouveau buildings, stalwart castles and grand palaces set the stage for inspiring strolls and long soaks in thermal spas. By night, the shimmering lights of the Parliament building dance across the waters of the Danube, the Chain Bridge uniting it all as a dramatic centerpiece.

Day 2 Budapest, Hungary

The Christmas season adds another layer of beauty to the already romantic charms of Budapest. Nestled in the heart of Pest lies Vörösmarty Square, home to the city's largest yuletide market. The enticing aroma of national specialties permeates the air as vendors display traditional and contemporary handicrafts. At the cozy St. Stephen's Basilica market, mulled wine keeps revelers warm as nightly light shows illuminate the church's facade. Across the Danube in Buda, Old-World allure mingles with festivities in Fő Square, where seasonal events and an outdoor ice rink entertain.

Day 3 Bratislava, Slovakia

The aroma of mulled wine and Slovakian delicacies mixes with the sound of Christmas carols to turn Bratislava's historic Old Town into a winter wonderland during the holiday season. The medieval Bratislava Castle overlooks light-festooned streets that give the city a fairytale glow. Vendors in Hlavné Námestie Square display authentic artisanal handicrafts, and a specially decorated Christmas tram adds to the holiday atmosphere as it transports visitors to the different fairs spread out around the city.

Day 4 Vienna, Austria

The yuletide season transforms Vienna's beautiful squares into delightful Christmas markets. Festive lights illuminate the Old Town. The Schönbrunn market, set in front of the baroque Hapsburg summer palace, and Freyung market, nestled in the city center, are the perfect destinations for unique handmade decorations. Seasonal music and choral singing provide a merry ambience to holiday festivities in Am Hof Square, while the market at Belvedere Square mixes excellent shopping opportunities with views of the stately palace and adjacent lake to create a fairytale atmosphere.

Day 5 Krems, Austria

A small university town at the eastern end of the Danube's Wachau Valley, Krems is surrounded by terraced vineyards. In its heyday, during the 12th century, Krems held even more importance than Vienna for its iron, grain, salt and wine trade. As to the latter, the city has played a long and celebrated part in the popularity of the Wachau's wine culture; the valley's south slopes in Krems are bathed in sunlight all day and create some of the best Riesling and Veltliner wines in the world. The city's cobblestone streets, taverns, wine bars and coffeehouses have a timeless appeal.

Scenic Sailing: Wachau Valley

Sail through a scenic tapestry of hillside vineyards, charming towns and castle ruins in Austria's Wachau Valley, celebrated as perhaps the most scenic stretch of the Danube. Journey 18 miles through this vast UNESCO World Heritage Site, where the river courses through idyllic countryside hamlets. Gaze upon the hibernating, wine-producing villages—the legacy of vintners that stretch as far back as Celtic and Roman times and an echo of the more than 30 monasteries that served as vineyards in Renaissance days.

Day 6 Linz, Austria

Linz is today's provincial capital of Upper Austria. The city's famous Linzer Torte, the jam-filled cake topped with almonds, hails from here and can be found in any number of cafés and the stalls of the city's Christmas markets. In the Old Town, the baroque architecture of the main square provides a stunning backdrop for its Christmas market as the scent of gingerbread fills the air. At the Volksgarten, a nativity scene provides an atmospheric feature with the sounds of classical music and moving figurines that tell the story of the birth of Jesus Christ.

Day 7 Passau, Germany

Centered around the beautiful St. Stephen's Cathedral, home to Europe's largest pipe organ, the romantic market stalls of the Christkindlmarkt are a delight to explore. An array of handmade goods, from tasty treats to ornaments, offer a wealth of opportunity to take home a unique artisan gifts created by local craftsmen. Periodically throughout the festive season, the cathedral hosts yuletide concerts; the sound of choirs singing can be heard as their voices echo through the courtyard and the town's narrow streets.

Day 8 Passau, Germany

Bid farewell to your fellow guests and journey home. Or spend more time exploring, perhaps joining one of our extensions.

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