

# The Best Cruise Every Month of 2026

LINES: ●AmaWaterways●Viking●Tauck

## 01 January DRY SEASON · SOUTHEAST ASIA · WINTER WARMTH

### AMAWATERWAYS

#### Mekong River Discovery — Vietnam & Cambodia

14 Nights Dry Season Peak

##### WHY JANUARY

January is the apex of Southeast Asia's dry season — the air crystalline, the Mekong calm and navigable, the rice paddies a luminous green after the rains. Imagine gliding at dawn through the Mekong Delta on a traditional sampan, passing floating villages where families begin their day on the water, the mist lifting slowly off the river as the sun rises over Cambodia's jungle canopy. AmaWaterways' multiple included excursions let you cycle through rice paddies, visit local markets with a chef who selects your dinner ingredients, and stand three feet from the ancient temples of Angkor at sunrise — when the stones are cool and the crowds haven't arrived. The Chef's Table dinner, featuring freshly sourced Vietnamese and Cambodian dishes paired with local wines, is simply unlike anything you'll experience anywhere else.

### VIKING

#### Vietnam, Cambodia & the Mekong

15 Nights Cool & Clear

##### WHY JANUARY

Viking's Mekong program is widely considered one of the finest itineraries the line operates anywhere in the world — and January is the month it reaches its peak. The cool, dry air of the northeast monsoon makes every outdoor excursion a pleasure: cycling through the countryside outside Hoi An at dawn, walking the ancient streets of Kampong Cham without the oppressive humidity of summer, or simply standing on the sun deck at dusk as the river turns copper and the pagodas of Phnom Penh glow in the last light. The onboard enrichment lectures on Khmer history and Vietnamese culture give you a depth of understanding that transforms every shore visit from sightseeing into genuine immersion.

### TAUCK

#### Mekong River Cruise — Vietnam & Cambodia

15 Nights Exclusive Access

##### WHY JANUARY

Tauck's Mekong experience in January is extraordinary for one defining reason: the private access that Tauck has curated over decades of operating in this region. Imagine entering the Angkor Wat temple complex at first light, before any other group arrives, with just your 28 fellow guests and a Cambodian archaeologist whose life's work has been studying these stones. The silence. The mist. The magnitude of what surrounds you. Tauck's Mekong program also includes an exclusive evening at a private Khmer cultural performance arranged specifically for their guests — a show of classical dance in an ancient pavilion that no general-public ticket can secure. In January's perfect weather, every moment ashore is exactly as it should be.

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## AMAWATERWAYS

## Romantic Rhine — Valentine's Departure

7 Nights

Valentine's Sailing

## WHY FEBRUARY

AmaWaterways' Valentine's Rhine departures are among the most romantic sailings in river cruising — and for good reason. Imagine a private Chef's Table dinner for two in a candlelit dining room as the ship moves silently through the Rhine Gorge at dusk, a sommelier pouring an Alsatian Gewürztraminer that is somehow exactly right for the moment, while castle ruins glow on the clifftops outside your window. February's quiet season means fewer guests aboard, a more intimate atmosphere, and the particular magic of arriving in Strasbourg's Petite France district when the half-timbered houses are still wrapped in the soft, low light of a European winter morning. The twin balcony in your stateroom turns every sunrise into a private ceremony.

## VIKING

## Caribbean Islands Voyage

8-15 Nights

Viking Ocean

## WHY FEBRUARY

February is peak Caribbean season — trade winds reliable, humidity low, the water the exact impossible shade of blue you've been imagining all winter. Viking Ocean's Caribbean program in February places you on a beautifully designed ship with 930 like-minded travelers, sailing between islands at a pace that lets each destination breathe. Imagine waking up to Gustavia Harbor in St. Barths, stepping off directly into the chicest island town in the Caribbean, browsing boutiques and beachside cafés before returning to the ship for a dinner where the World Café has rotated to a menu celebrating the French Creole culinary traditions of the very island visible through the porthole. No mass-tourism crush. Just Viking's quiet elegance in the most beautiful waters on earth.

## TAUCK

## Costa Rica &amp; the Panama Canal

11 Nights

Land &amp; Sea

## WHY FEBRUARY

February is the dry season in Costa Rica — the cloud forests at their most accessible, the wildlife active and visible in the crystalline air. Tauck's Central America program combines a guided land journey through Costa Rica's most extraordinary ecosystems with a Panama Canal transit that remains one of the engineering wonders of the world. Imagine standing at the bow of a ship as it rises in the Gatún locks — forty-four million gallons of water lifting you twenty-six meters in thirty minutes, surrounded by jungle on both sides. Tauck's private naturalist guides lead you through Manuel Antonio, the Osa Peninsula, and Cloud Forest reserves with an intimacy and depth that simply isn't available through any other operator. All-inclusive, every detail handled, no moment wasted.

## AMAWATERWAYS

## Romantic Danube — Budapest to Nuremberg

7 Nights Spring Bloom

## WHY MARCH

March on the Danube is a hidden gem — the river awakening from winter, the Wachau Valley's apricot orchards bursting into white blossom before the tourist season begins. You have Vienna's museums largely to yourself, the Kunsthistorisches and Belvedere unhurried and quiet in a way they never are from May onward. Imagine cycling along the Danube towpath in the crisp March air as the first wildflowers appear along the riverbank, stopping at a family-run Heuriger wine tavern for the first Grüner Veltliner of the new season — the vintner genuinely excited to share what the winter has given the vines. AmaWaterways' multiple included excursion options mean you can be as active or as contemplative as the day calls for, and Budapest at the sailing's end has a freshness in March that the summer crowds will later extinguish.

## VIKING

## Grand European Tour — Amsterdam to Budapest

15 Nights Two Rivers

## WHY MARCH

March is when savvy travelers undertake Viking's Grand European Tour — the 15-night two-river journey from Amsterdam to Budapest — and discover that pre-season Europe is Europe at its most genuine. The Rhine's waters are running high and fast with Alpine snowmelt, the medieval cities along the route are refreshingly uncrowded, and Vienna's famous Prater chestnut trees are just beginning to bud when you arrive for three full days in one of Europe's great capitals. Imagine stepping off the Longship directly onto the Ringstraße on a bright March morning and having the Kunsthistorisches Museum essentially to yourself — the Vermeer and Caravaggio galleries silent and luminous in the way they can only be on a quiet weekday before the summer crowds arrive. March river cruising is not a compromise. It is a privilege.

## TAUCK

## Jewels of Europe — Basel to Amsterdam

13 Nights Private Estate Access

## WHY MARCH

March on the Rhine with Tauck delivers a rare combination: the line's exclusive private-access experiences in the quietest, most uncrowded conditions of the year. Imagine a private cellar tasting at an Alsatian wine estate in Breisach where the vines outside are just breaking their first spring buds — the vintner walking you through barrels of the newest vintage, explaining what this winter has given the Riesling, in a tasting room that has no waiting list and no rush. Tauck's exclusive evening experiences — the private Strasbourg dinner, the Cologne cathedral at dawn before any other visitors arrive — feel even more intimate in March's quieter season. For travelers who want Tauck's extraordinary access without the summer prices and crowds, a March Rhine sailing is one of the most intelligent bookings I make all year.

**AMAWATERWAYS****Tulips & Windmills — Holland & Belgium**

7 Nights

Mid-April Peak Bloom

**WHY APRIL**

Mid-April is the precise window when the Keukenhof Gardens near Amsterdam reach their absolute peak — seven million tulips in simultaneous bloom across 32 hectares, every bed at its fullest and most vivid. AmaWaterways times its tulip sailings precisely to this mid-April window, and the result is one of the most visually extraordinary experiences in all of European river cruising. Imagine cycling through the Dutch bulb fields on an AmaWaterways-guided bike excursion — the entire landscape striped in red, yellow, and deep purple as far as you can see, windmills turning slowly against a pale April sky, the scent of a million flowers carried on the breeze. No photograph has ever captured it. The Keukenhof in mid-April is something you must stand inside to understand — and AmaWaterways puts you there at the only moment that truly counts.

**VIKING****Tulips of Holland — Amsterdam & Bruges**

8 Nights

Keukenhof at Peak

**WHY APRIL**

Viking's tulip sailing is one of the fastest-filling itineraries the line operates — because mid-April is the only time the Dutch bulb fields are in full, simultaneous, overwhelming bloom, and Viking's included Keukenhof excursion delivers you there at precisely that moment. Seven million flowers. Thirty-two hectares. The air so dense with fragrance that guests describe it as something between a garden and a dream. Imagine walking the Keukenhof's garden paths in mid-April light — the tulip beds in full color in every direction, the wisteria cascading from the pergolas overhead, the Japanese bridge reflected in the lily pond — and understanding for the first time why the Dutch have made this their annual gift to the world. Viking also includes a Bruges excursion where the medieval city's canal reflections and chocolate-scented streets are at their spring finest.

**TAUCK****Holland in Bloom — Amsterdam & Antwerp**

8 Nights

Private After-Hours Keukenhof

**WHY APRIL**

Tauck's mid-April tulip program offers the single most extraordinary version of the Keukenhof experience available to any traveler at any price: private after-hours access to the gardens, after the 50,000 daily visitors have gone home, when your group of 28 has seven million tulips in peak mid-April bloom entirely to yourselves. Imagine walking the lit garden paths in the quiet April evening — the flowers glowing in the golden light, the silence broken only by your own footsteps and the distant sound of Amsterdam — with a Tauck Director explaining 400 years of Dutch horticultural obsession that turned a simple flower into the currency of a golden age. The Keukenhof at peak bloom, after hours, in Tauck's hands, is one of the most memorable experiences I send travelers to. Mid-April is the only time it is possible. And space is extremely limited.

**AMAWATERWAYS****Bordeaux & the Dordogne**

7 Nights Château Country

**WHY MAY**

May in Bordeaux's wine country is one of the most sensory experiences in European travel. The vines have just pushed their first bright green leaves, the château estates are in full spring beauty, and the Garonne and Dordogne rivers flow with the freshness of late spring through landscapes that look exactly like an Impressionist painting come to life. AmaWaterways' private château excursions in May mean visiting Saint-Émilion's great estates — Châteaux Ausone, Angelus, Pavie — when the cellar masters are actively working the new vintage, tasting barrel samples of what will become legendary wine, walking between the vines with someone whose family has tended this land for generations. The included cycling option through the Médoc's grand cru estates is simply one of the finest mornings available anywhere in European river cruising.

**VIKING****Portugal's River of Gold — Douro Valley**

8 Nights Douro in Bloom

**WHY MAY**

May is the finest month to sail Portugal's Douro Valley — the terraced Port wine vineyards at their most vigorously green, the schist hillsides softened by wildflowers, and the river itself at a level that allows full navigation of the most beautiful and remote sections of this UNESCO heritage landscape. Imagine standing on the sun deck of a Viking Longship as the ship enters the Cachão de Valeira gorge — sheer quartzite cliffs dropping straight to the water on both sides, the river narrowing to a corridor of stone so dramatic it was considered impassable until 1789. Viking's included Porto excursion lets you explore the city's famous azulejo tile facades, its port wine lodges along the Cais da Ribeira, and its extraordinary riverside energy before boarding for the journey inland.

**TAUCK****Best of Burgundy — Rhône & Saône**

8 Nights Private Estate Dinners

**WHY MAY**

In May, the Rhône and Saône valleys are at their most intoxicating — Burgundy's vineyards freshly green, the Beaujolais hills softened with wildflowers, and Lyon humming with the energy of spring markets and terrace restaurants thrown open for the first warm evenings of the year. Tauck's Rhône program includes a private dinner at a Burgundy grand cru estate — a winemaker's manor house where you dine in a centuries-old vaulted cave, surrounded by barrels of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, as the estate owner pours library vintages from the cellar beside your table. Imagine tasting a 2015 Gevrey-Chambertin Premier Cru with its maker explaining what that extraordinary summer gave to that particular slope. Then dinner in Lyon, France's culinary capital, where Tauck has reserved a table at a restaurant that cannot be booked independently.

AMAWATERWAYS

### Legendary Danube — Nuremberg to Budapest

7 Nights Golden Light

WHY JUNE

June's extraordinarily long days — the sun doesn't fully set until nearly 10pm in Central Europe — transform the Wachau Valley into something that defies photography. Imagine cycling along the Danube towpath in the long June evening, the terraced Grüner Veltliner vines catching the golden hour light on both sides of the river, Melk Abbey glowing on its rock promontory above you, and the twin-balcony of your AmaWaterways stateroom waiting with a bottle of chilled Wachau Riesling when you return to the ship. Vienna in June has all the cultural richness of any time of year — but the outdoor cafés of the Naschmarkt are in full swing, the Prater's gardens are lush, and the city's energy is unmistakably alive. June is the Danube at its most luminous.

VIKING

### Rhine Getaway — Amsterdam to Basel

8 Nights Summer Evenings

WHY JUNE

June is when Viking's Aquavit Terrace — the heated outdoor lounge at the bow of every Longship — becomes the most coveted spot in river cruising. Imagine sitting forward on the ship in the long summer evening as the Rhine Gorge unfolds around you: 65 kilometers of UNESCO-protected river, cliff-face castles appearing one after another in the dying light, the Lorelei rock rising from the left bank as the river makes its dramatic bend, and a glass of Rheingau Riesling in your hand sourced from the very vineyards you're sailing past. Viking's crew serves dinner late on summer evenings so guests can watch the gorge in daylight — a small detail that reveals how deeply this line has thought about what actually matters in this moment.

TAUCK

### Danube Waltz — Bavaria to Budapest

11 Nights Summer Exclusives

WHY JUNE

Tauk's Danube program in June benefits from extended summer light that makes the line's outdoor exclusive experiences even more extraordinary. The private evening at Dürnstein Castle — the 12th-century ruin above the Danube where Richard the Lionheart was once imprisoned — is at its most spectacular in June, when the summer sun is still warm at 8pm, the Wachau Valley spread below in full green splendor, and a local musician plays Austrian folk songs in the castle courtyard while Tauk's Director pours Wachau Riesling from a nearby estate. Vienna's Schönbrunn Palace gardens, open late in summer, host a Tauk exclusive evening concert in the orangery that is available only to this line's guests. These moments don't happen by accident. They happen because Tauk has built relationships over decades that no other operator can replicate.

Is one of these months calling to you? Let's make sure you're on the right ship for it.

I know which AmaWaterways, Viking, and Tauk sailings have the best availability in each month — and which cabin categories are worth securing before they fill. One conversation, no obligation, no extra cost to you.

✉ Email Danny · [Danny.Stahl@AvoyaNetwork.com](mailto:Danny.Stahl@AvoyaNetwork.com)

📄 Fill Out the Free Consultation Form

## AMAWATERWAYS

## Paris &amp; Normandy — Seine River Journey

8 Nights Giverny in Bloom

## WHY JULY

July is when Monet's garden at Giverny reaches its absolute peak — the water lily pond a canvas of pink and white, the Japanese bridge draped in wisteria, the Grande Allée a tunnel of nasturtiums. AmaWaterways' Seine program visits Giverny in the morning, before the midday heat and the tour buses fully arrive, allowing your small group to walk the garden in something approaching the contemplative silence for which Monet designed it. Imagine standing on the Japanese bridge in July light, looking at the lily pond that inspired perhaps the most famous series of paintings in the history of art, and understanding for the first time why Monet spent the last 26 years of his life painting it. Normandy's D-Day beaches, visited the following day in the long summer evening light, complete a journey that moves between beauty and gravity in the way only the Seine can manage.

## VIKING

## Paris &amp; Normandy — Seine Cruise

8 Nights Paris Moored

## WHY JULY

Viking's Seine sailing in July offers something that seems almost too good to be real: the ship moors in central Paris for multiple nights, meaning you can walk off the gangway at 8pm after dinner and find yourself standing on the banks of the Seine with the Eiffel Tower visible downstream and the bouquinistes — the riverside booksellers — still open in the long summer evening. The included Versailles excursion in July visits the palace and gardens when the great fountains are running in their summer program, sending water arcing from Neptune's Basin to the Grand Canal in a display that Louis XIV designed specifically to awe the world. July's Normandy, visited on long summer days, allows unhurried time at the American Cemetery above Omaha Beach — a site that deserves more than a hurried hour.

## TAUCK

## Paris &amp; Normandy — Tauck Seine Journey

8 Nights After-Hours Versailles

## WHY JULY

Tauck's Seine program includes the single most extraordinary exclusive experience available on any river cruise in France: a private after-hours evening at the Palace of Versailles, after the 20,000 daily visitors have gone home, with just your 28 fellow guests and a Versailles curator as your guide. In July, this means entering the Hall of Mirrors — 73 meters of gilded arches, 357 mirrors, and the last warm light of a long summer evening pouring through the western windows — in complete silence. No crowd noise. No shuffling. Just the scale and beauty of what Louis XIV built, and the footsteps of your small group echoing on the parquet. Tauck arranged this access through relationships built over decades. It is not bookable through any other channel, at any price, at any time of year.

## AMAWATERWAYS

## Danube Waltz — Nuremberg to Budapest

7 Nights

Harvest Preview

## WHY AUGUST

August on the Danube is the month the harvest is just beginning — the Wachau's Grüner Veltliner grapes heavy on the vine and starting to show sugar, the Austrian wine estates beginning their preparations with a quiet intensity that is fascinating to observe up close. AmaWaterways' wine estate excursions in August are particularly special because you're visiting at the moment of anticipation — the vintner walking you through the vines, pinching a grape, talking about what the summer's heat has given this vintage. In Nuremberg, the famous Christkindlesmarkt square is already being tested for autumn events, and the city's extraordinarily preserved medieval old town — virtually untouched since the 15th century — glows in the August sun with a warmth that the Christmas market season, beautiful as it is, cannot quite replicate.

## VIKING

## Romantic Danube — Passau to Budapest

7 Nights

Vienna Extended

## WHY AUGUST

Viking's Passau-to-Budapest itinerary in August gives guests something that longer itineraries sometimes sacrifice: extended, unhurried time in Vienna. Three full days docked in one of the world's great cities in high summer means the Schönbrunn Palace gardens are open late, the outdoor café terraces along the Ringstraße are humming with Viennese society, and the evening concert at the Musikverein — where Brahms conducted and Beethoven himself once played — can be attended after dinner from the ship. Imagine a Brahms piano concerto in that storied hall on a warm August night, then walking back along the lamplit Ringstraße to the ship, the city still alive with summer energy. Viking's included Vienna excursion gives you the architecture and history; the long August evenings give you the soul of the city.

## TAUCK

## Jewels of the Danube — Passau to Budapest

11 Nights

Book 12 Months Ahead

## WHY AUGUST

August is one of Tauck's most sought-after Danube sailing months — and consistently the hardest to book. The combination of peak-summer weather, extended outdoor exclusive experiences, and Vienna in full cultural season creates a journey that previous Tauck guests describe as the finest travel experience of their lives. The private Melk Abbey after-hours visit in August takes place in warm summer light that turns the baroque interior's gold leaf into something incandescent. The private embankment reception in Budapest — your 28 guests on a private terrace overlooking the Parliament building as Budapest's evening illumination switches on across the water — is at its most extraordinary in August's warm, still evenings. If August on the Danube with Tauck is on your list, this is not a sailing where you wait and see. This is one you book now.

## AMAWATERWAYS

## Wine Harvest on the Rhine &amp; Moselle

7 Nights

Harvest in Progress

## WHY SEPTEMBER

September is, by almost any measure, the finest month to sail the Rhine — and AmaWaterways' harvest itinerary is the most immersive way to experience it. Imagine cycling through the Moselle Valley in mid-September, the slopes on both sides turning gold as the harvest begins, picking Riesling grapes alongside workers from a family estate that has been harvesting the same hillside since the 12th century. AmaWaterways' regional wine program reaches its peak in September: at dinner, your sommelier pours from the estate you visited that morning — the same vintage, the same terroir, the same story — and the connection between landscape, labor, and glass is complete. The harvest festivals filling the riverside villages in September — lights strung between half-timbered houses, brass bands, new-vintage Federweißer wine being poured from barrels in the market square — are a European experience unlike any other.

## VIKING

## Moselle &amp; Rhine Harvest Cruise

8 Nights

New Vintage Tastings

## WHY SEPTEMBER

Viking's harvest sailing in September captures the Moselle and Rhine at their most cinematically beautiful — the slate-soil vineyards turning amber and gold, the harvest baskets moving up the steep slopes, and the air carrying the particular sweetness of fermenting grapes that you can smell from the sun deck as the ship moves through the wine villages. The included Rudesheim excursion in September visits during the height of the Rheingau harvest — the vineyards alive with pickers, the press houses working through the night, and the town's famous Drosselgasse running Federweißer (new-vintage wine, only days old) from barrels on the street. Viking's onboard dinner on a September harvest evening — the menu rotated to feature the regional specialties of the harvest season — is one of the finest meals the line serves all year.

## TAUCK

## Rhine Harvest Journey — Exclusive Edition

11 Nights

Private Estate Harvest Dinner

## WHY SEPTEMBER

Tauck's harvest Rhine program offers the most exclusive wine experience available in European river cruising. The private harvest dinner at a premier Rheingau estate — typically arranged at one of the Riesling first-growth estates where the harvest is underway the very day you arrive — means sitting at a long table in the estate's historic pressing house, surrounded by the sounds and smells of active harvest, while the winemaker pours four vintages of their grand cru Riesling and explains how each year's weather wrote itself into the wine. This is not a visit. This is participation in something 800 years old. Tauck is the only river cruise line in the world with the relationships to arrange this. September is the only time of year it is possible. And the available spaces are few.

## AMAWATERWAYS

## Autumn in Provence — Rhône &amp; Saône

8 Nights Truffle Season

## WHY OCTOBER

October in Provence is truffle season — the black diamonds of French cuisine beginning to emerge from the oak and hazelnut roots beneath the forest floors of the Périgord and Vaucluse. AmaWaterways' Rhône program in October builds its excursions around this extraordinary seasonal ingredient: a truffle market in Avignon where local farmers arrive with baskets of freshly harvested *Tuber melanosporum*, a cooking demonstration aboard the ship where the chef incorporates the morning's market purchase into that evening's dinner, and a visit to a truffle farm in the hills above the Rhône where a truffle dog named something improbably charming leads you to exactly the right spot. The Côtes du Rhône harvest is also underway in October — the regional wine poured at dinner sourced from estates whose harvests you may have watched that very morning.

## VIKING

## Romantic Danube — Autumn Voyage

7 Nights Golden Wachau

## WHY OCTOBER

October delivers the Wachau Valley at its most photographically extraordinary — the post-harvest vines turning deep amber and burgundy, the terraces layered in color from riverbank to the ridge above, and the afternoon light at a low golden angle that makes every medieval village, every riverside abbey, every castle ruin look as if it has been placed specifically for effect. Viking's Aquavit Terrace in October becomes the most coveted spot aboard as the ship sails the Wachau in daylight, guests lining the rails with cameras and the particular quiet that comes when everyone simultaneously recognizes that what they're looking at is genuinely extraordinary. The Wachau's Riesling — now fully in the bottle from the October harvest — is poured at dinner as the ship continues east toward Vienna and Budapest in the cool, clear October evening.

## TAUCK

## Burgundy &amp; Provence — Tauck Rhône

11 Nights Michelin Table Access

## WHY OCTOBER

Tauck's autumn Rhône program in October is one of the most celebrated itineraries the line operates in France — because October combines the harvest energy of Burgundy and the Côtes du Rhône with the private access that only Tauck can arrange. The private wine cellar access in Beaune — a 15th-century vaulted cave beneath the Hospices de Beaune where the greatest Burgundies in the world are auctioned each November — is arranged for Tauck guests weeks before the famous auction, when the cellar is stocked with the new vintage and the cellarmaster is willing to pour from barrels that will sell for thousands of dollars a bottle. Then dinner at a Michelin-starred restaurant in Lyon that Tauck has reserved exclusively for your group — a table that cannot be booked by the general public on the same evening. October's Tauck Rhône is not just a cruise. It is a private education in the finest food and wine culture on earth.

AMAWATERWAYS

### Christmastime on the Danube

7 Nights Books 12 Months Ahead

WHY NOVEMBER

The Nuremberg Christkindlesmarkt — open from late November, running on the same square since 1628 — is one of the world's great Christmas experiences, and AmaWaterways is docked there. Imagine stepping off the ship's gangway on a cold November evening and walking directly into the market: the scent of roasting almonds and cinnamon in the air, wooden stalls selling hand-carved ornaments and Lebkuchen under a canopy of lights, a brass band playing carols in a carved wooden pavilion built in 1639. AmaWaterways' onboard holiday programming reflects the season with precision — seasonal Stollen baked fresh each morning, glühwein tasting events featuring the specialties of each market town, and the regional wine program pivoting to the warming Austrian reds and Hungarian Tokajis that belong to this time of year. Vienna's famous Christkindlmarkt at the Rathaus, visited on this itinerary, is simply magical.

VIKING

### Rhine Christmas Market Cruise

8 Nights Cologne · Strasbourg

WHY NOVEMBER

Viking's Christmas market Rhine sailings are the fastest-selling itineraries the line operates — and the reason is simply that they deliver, without question, one of the most magical travel experiences in the world. Imagine the ship docking in Cologne and you stepping off the gangway to find yourself standing before the greatest Gothic cathedral in Germany, its twin spires soaring 157 meters into the winter night sky, and five simultaneous Christmas markets filling every square and churchyard around it. Glühwein in a ceramic mug. The smell of roasting chestnuts. A child's choir singing Stille Nacht from a wooden stage. Then Strasbourg's Grand Christmas Market two days later — operating on the same site since 1570, filling the Place Kléber with six thousand ornament-hung lights and the most sophisticated market on the Rhine. Viking parks the ship in the center of all of it.

TAUCK

### Christmastime in Europe — Tauck

8 Nights Private Evening Markets

WHY NOVEMBER

Tauck's Christmas market program offers what no other river cruise line can arrange: exclusive private evening access to markets after the public hours end. Imagine entering the Rothenburg ob der Tauber Christmas market — the most perfectly preserved medieval Christmas market in Germany, in the most perfectly preserved medieval town in Germany — when the last public visitor has left, the market lights still glowing across the cobblestones, and your 28 guests have the entire square to yourselves with a local historian explaining 500 years of German Christmas tradition. Tauck has also arranged a private concert inside a Romanesque church in Regensburg — a local choir performing Advent music by candlelight in an 11th-century nave, for an audience of 28. The premium open bar all day means the glühwein on the sun deck as the ship sails between markets in the cold November air is always exactly the right temperature.

## AMAWATERWAYS

## Christmastime on the Rhine

7 Nights Peak Market Season

## WHY DECEMBER

The first two weeks of December are when Strasbourg's Grand Christmas Market — one of the oldest in the world, operating since 1570 — reaches its fullest and most extraordinary expression. AmaWaterways times December Rhine departures to arrive in Strasbourg on the December weekend when the cathedral's astronomical clock, built in 1574, performs its famous noon procession of the apostles in a church packed with candlelight and the scent of beeswax. The market outside transforms the Grande Île into something from a fairy tale: 300 wooden chalets, 10 million lights, and the particular warmth that comes when an entire city decides to celebrate darkness with beauty. AmaWaterways' seasonal menus in December feature the finest holiday dishes of each country — German Gänsekeule, Austrian Tafelspitz, French bûche de Noël — all paired with the regional wines that make this stretch of the Rhine unique.

## VIKING

## Festive Rhine &amp; Christmas Markets

8 Nights 5 Markets · Direct Access

## WHY DECEMBER

Viking's December Rhine sailing delivers something that is, on reflection, almost absurdly wonderful: you wake up in a different Christmas market every morning. Cologne's five simultaneous markets surrounding the cathedral on day one. Rudesheim's Drosselgasse transformed into a lantern-lit Christmas alley on day two. Heidelberg's market filling the castle courtyard beneath the illuminated ruins on day three. Strasbourg's Grand Marché de Noël on day four. Each one is distinct, each one remarkable, and for every single one, you step directly off the Viking Longship into the market itself — no bus, no transfer, no waiting in the cold for a connection. Just the gangway, and then Christmas. Viking's ship is decorated with Nordic precision, the onboard holiday menu is exceptional, and the Aquavit Terrace serves glühwein on the cold December mornings as the next market town comes into view.

## TAUCK

## European Christmas Markets — Tauck

8 Nights All-Inclusive · Sells Out First

## WHY DECEMBER

Tauck's December Christmas market sailings are the single fastest-selling product I handle — and I say that without hesitation or exaggeration. The combination of the most magical season in European travel, the most exclusive access available in river cruising, and a fully all-inclusive fare that means you never reach for your wallet once you've boarded creates a demand that exhausts available space 12 to 18 months in advance. The private evening concert inside the Cologne cathedral — your 28 guests seated in the nave of one of the world's great Gothic masterpieces while a local orchestra performs Handel's Messiah in December acoustics that make every note feel physical — is an experience that simply is not available through any other channel. If December Christmas markets on Tauck is your dream, reach out to me today. Not next month. Today.

Every month has a best sailing. Every sailing has a best cabin. Every cabin has a best price — that isn't always the one on the website.

I'm Danny Stahl, and I've spent years helping travelers find exactly the right journey at exactly the right time. Working with me costs you nothing extra — cruise lines pay advisor commissions from their own revenue, not from your fare. What you receive is expert guidance, the right cabin, access to promotions not on the public website, and a personal advocate before, during, and after every trip.

Your perfect sailing is somewhere  
*in these twelve months.*

Tell me which month is calling to you, what you're celebrating, and which line resonates — and I'll tell you exactly which sailing was made for you, what it actually costs, and what you need to do to get on it. One conversation. No obligation. No extra cost. Just expertise.

*Christmas market sailings sell out 12-18 months ahead. September harvest and summer sailings fill fast. The best time to reach out is always now.*

EMAIL DANNY DIRECTLY

[Danny.Stahl@AvoyaNetwork.com](mailto:Danny.Stahl@AvoyaNetwork.com)

FREE CONSULTATION FORM

[www.dannysadventures.com](http://www.dannysadventures.com)

Danny's **Adventures**

[www.dannysadventures.com](http://www.dannysadventures.com) [Danny.Stahl@AvoyaNetwork.com](mailto:Danny.Stahl@AvoyaNetwork.com) AmaWaterways · Viking · Tauck Specialist