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## **20 DAY GRAND EUROPEAN RIVER CRUISE & RHINE CANAL HOTEL BARGE CRUISE**

**Trip Code:** TWTBUSSXO21

**Duration:** 21

**Destination:** Hungary, Austria, Germany & France

**Travel Dates:** 2022 / 2023

### **DAY 1                      BUDAPEST-MS Symphonie (D)**

On arrival in Budapest you will be met at the airport and transferred to the cruise ship. Passengers are welcome to board our ship at 6:00 p.m. After comfortably settling into your cabin, we will introduce our crew at a welcome cocktail. Dinner tonight will be followed by a traditional evening in Budapest. You will transfer by coach in the company of your guides to a theatre downtown for a traditional Hungarian show. This one-and-a-half-hour show will take you across all the regions of Hungary through its folklore and Gypsy dance and music. After this show, the traditions and folklore of this beautiful country will no longer hold any secrets! Return on board by coach.

### **DAY 2                      BUDAPEST -MS Symphonie (B,L,D)**

This morning after breakfast we depart for a panoramic tour of Budapest, the Pearl of the Danube. First, we will head for the hills of Buda by crossing the Elizabeth Bridge and we will go up to the Castle quarter, from where we'll enjoy a fantastic panoramic view of the city. We will walk round the castle quarter and on to the Fisherman's Bastion, built in neo-Roman style in 1902 for the simple pleasure of offering a panoramic view over the city and the Danube. Behind the Bastion, we will find Matthias Church which notably was the venue for the coronation of Emperor Franz Joseph and his wife "Sissi". Our coach will then take us down to the plains of Pest. There, we will visit Heroes' Square whose central monument depicting Prince Arpad and the chieftains of seven Magyar tribes was built for the millennium of Hungary. We will pass by the famous Szechenyi thermal baths, the zoo - a true piece of architecture - Vajdahunyad Castle and more. We will walk through the famous Andrássy Avenue and pass by St. Stephen's Basilica whose construction began in 1851 and was only completed in 1905. We will walk along the river and see the famous Parliament building overlooking the Danube with its white silhouette in the Byzantine and neo-Gothic styles. Return on board.

We will return on board in Esztergom. In the afternoon, enjoy some time on your own exploring the former capital of Hungary. The city is full of treasures such as the Neo-classical basilica and former Royal palace.

We will return on board and depart for Vienna. Enjoy an evening of entertainment.

### **DAY 3                      BUDAPEST – VIENNA- MS Symphonie (B,L,D)**

Today upon arriving in Vienna, we depart by coach with your local guide. You will discover the Hofburg, which is also known for having been for 600 years the "Winter Residency" of the Habsburgs. Over the course of their reign, they turned this small 13th century fortress into a colossal and beautiful palace. The different buildings today mostly house museums and the gardens, dotted with monuments, have become the Volksgarten and the Burggarten.

We will climb up the Emperor's Staircase to reach the Sisi Museum which extends over six rooms that have been equipped to solely centre on Elisabeth's private life. Here numerous personal items that once belonged to Elisabeth are used to help illustrate the true personality of the frequently misunderstood Empress. The sensitively designed exhibits are inspired by the monarch's poetry and illustrate how the once light-hearted young girl, Sisi, became a restless, unapproachable, and melancholic woman. The more than 300 items on display in the museum include parasols, boxes and gloves which once belonged to Elisabeth, along with a reconstruction of the evening dress worn by 16 year old Sisi in 1854 before she left her home in Munich, and a replica of a section of her imperial railway carriage.

We will then move on to Imperial Apartments and access the 19 official and private rooms that once belonged to Franz Joseph and Elisabeth. The Imperial Apartments reflect the monarchic splendour. You will get to see the Emperor's Audience Chamber, his Conference Room, and his bedroom before peering through Elizabeth's apartments with her salons, lavatory and bathroom and her dressing and exercise room where Elizabeth spent most of her time.

Return to the boat.

Tonight, we discover Vienna by night with a panoramic coach tour. This two-thousand-year-old city is a true open-air museum. Vienna embodies Romanticism through its powerful architecture and numerous monuments. We will take the famous Ring which encircles historic Vienna, on the right bank of the Danube. Our coach will go past a multitude of buildings that were erected under the old Austro-Hungarian monarchy: The Opera, the City Hall, the Hofburg and many official buildings. We will stop at Schwarzenbergplatz with a monument in honour of Johann Strauss. Then, a walk around Albertina quarter will allow us to admire Hofburg Palace, the winter residence of the Habsburgs which today houses the Sisi Museum, as well as the Augustinian Church where Franz Joseph and Sisi's wedding was conducted. Return to the boat by coach

#### **DAY 4                      VIENNA- MS Symphonie (B,L,D)**

This morning, after breakfast we depart for a guided tour of the Schönbrunn Palace, the summer residence of the Imperial family, followed by a panoramic tour of Vienna.

You will begin the tour by taking the famous Ring to reach Schoenbrunn Palace. The "Ring" was one of the personal projects of Emperor Franz Joseph. In 1857, he decided to take down the ramparts that enclosed the city centre and had this boulevard built lined with fine buildings. Along the Ring you will admire this architectural showcase of the old Austro-Hungarian monarchy, including: The State Opera; the Hofburg Palace; the Natural History Museum; the City Hall; the Burgtheater and more.

When you arrive at Schoenbrunn Palace, you will be guided through the numerous rooms of the Hapsburgs' summer residence, which bear witness to the splendour of the Court at the time of Maria Theresa. You will also have some time to wander through the Palace gardens.

You will then return to the coach, which will take you to the city centre to enjoy some free time in the area around St Stephen's Cathedral. You will then return to the coach, which will take you back to the boat, via the Ring.

This afternoon travel by a horse-drawn carriage through the old town and the famous Ring road in Vienna. You will be transferred to the centre of the city to enjoy a horse-drawn carriage ride through the old town and the famous Ring Road. A trip with a Fiaker is a great (and romantic) way of seeing the city in comfort because of the narrow streets and cobblestones.

This evening, we will attend a concert of Viennese music. Departure by coach in the company of our host/hostess towards Vienna's Kursalon where the concert will take place. Famous waltz melodies will take you back to the era of Franz Joseph and Sisi. The first half of the concert will be devoted to Mozart compositions, and the second half to Strauss. The orchestra consists of eight to thirteen musicians, two singers and two dancers who will all make sure you have a good time. During intermission, a free drink will be served (orange juice or sparkling Austrian wine).

Return on board by coach. Our ship will depart at midnight.

## **DAY 5                      MELK – PASSAU- MS Symphonie (B,L,D)**

We will cruise along the most beautiful section of the Wachau Valley before arriving in Melk this morning. On arrival in Melk we depart for a tour of Dürnstein, the fortified village where Richard the Lionheart was once held prisoner.

In the afternoon, we visit the Melk Abbey. Departure by coach in company of your host/hostess towards Melk Abbey. We will meet up with our guides in the inner courtyard to start our visit. The Abbey overlooking the Danube was first built as the Babenberg's fortified castle. It was founded in the 11th century and the current buildings of the Benedictine abbey date from the Baroque era and were designed by architect Jakob Prandtauer.

Melk Abbey now houses a museum in which you will discover several rooms that have been enhanced thanks to architecture, sound, and light as well as the use of various types of media. Computer animations will tell you a story about the construction of the edifices. You will also visit the marble hall, the world-famous library, and the bedchambers where a number of illustrious visitors have slept.

We will return on board and cruise towards Passau. Enjoy an evening of entertainment

## **DAY 6                      PASSAU- MS Symphonie (B,L,D)**

Today we set out to explore Passau in the company of hostess, strolling the narrow romantic streets and admiring its Baroque-style buildings.

We return on board and then cruise to Regensburg through the night.

## **DAY 7                      REGENSBURG – HILPOSTEIN- MS Symphonie (B,L,D)**

Today we visit Regensburg. On the way our coach will take us to Walhalla, a huge Greek style marble temple

overhanging the Danube. Ludwig I of Bavaria mandated the construction of this temple between 1830 and 1842 as a memorial dedicated to Germany's most influential worthies. Inside, we will look at some 129 busts depicting German characters such as artists, military leaders and more.

In the company of our guide, we will set off on a visit of Regensburg on foot. We will discover the imposing stone-built "Porta Praetoria" - the northern gate to the Roman fortress - the Old Town Hall containing the rooms occupied by the Imperial diet from 1663 to 1806, the Gothic Cathedral and the Italian influenced homes of wealthy merchants from the Middle-Ages.

We will return on board in Kelheim and cruise the Rhine-Main-Danube Canal to Hilpostein.

## **DAY 8                      HILPOSTEIN - NUREMBERG – BAMBERG- MS Symphonie (B,L,D)**

We arrive in Nuremberg in the morning where we depart for a guided tour of Nuremberg by coach. We will enjoy a panoramic visit of the monuments found outside of the city's medieval walls, including the Nuremberg Palace of Justice, the Nazi Documentation Centre and Party Rally Grounds, the castle area, etc. You will discover the charming side streets and beautiful half-timbered houses before arriving in the Marktplatz. On foot, you will see the gorgeous Schöner Brunnen (beautiful fountain) and the Frauenkirche. During our tour, we will stop and taste one of the local specialties, Lebkuchen, the city's famous gingerbread.

We will return on board in Erlangen and start sailing towards Bamberg. Our ship will cruise through the night.

## **DAY 9                      BAMBERG – ROTHENBURG- MS Symphonie (B,L,D)**

We will spend this morning cruising to Schweinfurt. On arrival in Rothenburg, we depart by coach in the company of your hostess for a tour of this charming town. Located along the "Romantic Road", this town has kept its Renaissance layout virtually intact as it has not undergone any changes since the Thirty Years' War, making it one of the most authentic towns in Germany. A local guide will lead you to the 15th century ramparts, the Spital Bastion, the Market Square and Town Hall as well as the renowned St James's church (exteriors only). After your guided walking tour, you will have some free time to stroll through the romantic streets, visit some of the museums such as the Criminal Museum exhibiting instruments of torture, the Christmas Museum or the Doll and Toy Museum - entrance fees to be paid on location - or have a taste of some of the local specialties.

We will return on board in Kitzingen. Our ship will cruise through the night.

## **DAY 10                    WÜRZBURG – WERTHEIM- MS Symphonie (B,L,D)**

Today we depart for a guided tour of Würzburg and the former Residence of the Prince-Bishops of Würzburg. Departure by coach in the company of your hostess to the center of Würzburg. Our tour will start with a visit to the Würzburg Residence (or Residenz), former palace of the Prince-Bishops of Würzburg. Construction was commissioned by Prince-Bishop Friedrich Carl von Schönborn as a replacement for the old Marienberg Fortress and lasted between 1720 and 1780. You will discover 40 rooms richly decorated with furniture, paintings, and tapestries by 18th century master artists and climb up the monumental Main Staircase designed by Balthasar Neumann. Among others, you will visit the Baroque Imperial Hall whose frescoes were the works of Italian

painter Giovanni Battista Tiepolo, and the Imperial Apartments richly decorated in Rococo style.

Our tour will continue downtown where you will have some free time before returning on board by coach.

We will return on board in Karlstadt. Our ship will cruise through the night.

**DAY 11                      WERTHEIM - MILTENBERG – ASCHAFFENBURG- MS Symphonie  
(B,L,D)**

Today we explore Miltenberg in the company of our hostess and discover this charming, very typical German village. Its marketplace surrounded by half-timbered houses, its Grande Rue and former Town Hall make Miltenberg a unique town and the "pearl of the Main".

We return on board and cruise to Aschaffenburg.

**DAY 12                      ASCHAFFENBURG - FRANKFURT – MAINZ- MS Symphonie (B,L,D)**

Today the ship will depart for Frankfurt. On arrival in Frankfurt we will depart for a panoramic tour of the city by coach. Frankfurt am Main is a dynamic and international city with Germany's most imposing skyline. Under the skyscrapers, you will find cozy pubs; and at the heart of the bustling city centre, you will find sites full of history. Frankfurt also has an unrivaled museum scene featuring masterpieces spanning nine centuries of European art. We will leave the coach behind to visit the city on foot. After passing in front of the dominant Frankfurt Cathedral, we will discover the old city and the Römerberg, the seat of the city's government since the 15th century. Formerly called the Samstagsberg, it has been the site of markets and fairs, tournaments and festivals, executions, imperial elections, and coronations. Here you will also find a plaque commemorating the book burning by the National Socialists in 1933. After our tour, enjoy some free time before returning to the ship on foot.

We will return on board and cruise to Mainz. Gutenberg's hometown, Mainz lies at the confluence of the Rhine and the Main and is a perfect blend of past and present. Its age-old cathedral is not to be missed. You will be able to explore the city in the company of our hostess.

Tonight, is our gala dinner and evening.

**DAY 13                      MAINZ – STRASBOURG (B,L)**

Enjoy buffet breakfast on board as we cruise towards Strasbourg, passing through two impressive locks on the Rhine, Iffezheim and Gamsheim.

We reach Strasbourg at 2:00 p.m. where you will disembark and we will transfer you to your hotel in Strasbourg.

The rest of the day is free at your own leisure.

**DAY 14                      STRASBOURG- MS Raymonde (B,D)**

After breakfast, the day is free for you to explore Strasbourg or simply relax.

Passengers are welcome to board our barge ship at 6:00 p.m. After comfortably settling into your cabins, we will introduce our crew at a welcome cocktail.

Tonight, we will enjoy dinner followed by a panoramic boat tour of Strasbourg. Set off for the pier in downtown Strasbourg where you will board a panoramic boat which will take you to the famous district of the Petite France. Its canals, charming houses with coloured, half-timbered walls and narrow alleyways will enchant you. You will glide past the Tanners Quarter, the Covered Bridges (Ponts Couverts) and the Panoramic Terrace on the Vauban Dam. Our cruise will continue through the German Quarter. Following the French defeat in 1870, Germany planned to make Strasbourg the capital of the Reichsland or Imperial Territory of Alsace-Lorraine. This district, referred to as the "new town", represented a new form of urban planning, featuring wide roads, monumental administrative and cultural buildings, and luxurious private homes. Landscaping also played a key role in this impressive urban planning scheme. Then you will get the chance to see the European Parliament Building, completed in 1999, which was designed to host monthly sessions of the European Parliament. The architecture of the building is based on a combination of circles and ellipses, with the building laid out and organized into several clearly identified areas. Finally, you will discover the Human Rights Building where the European Court of Human Rights is located. Return on board.

#### **DAY 15                      STRASBOURG – WALTENHEIM- MS Raymonde (B,L,D)**

We will spend the morning cruising. In the afternoon, join us for an excursion to the lush region of Kochersberg and a visit to the Maison du Kochersberg museum and the Villa Meteor.

In the evening, we will enjoy tarte flambée, a local specialty, at a restaurant in Waltenheim.

#### **DAY 16                      WALTENHEIM – SAVERNE- MS Raymonde (B,L,D)**

This morning will be spent cruising towards Saverne. Enjoy this bucolic journey passing the towns of Schwindratzheim, nestled on a hillside, and Hochfelden, a typical local village. During the morning, feel free to stroll or bike on the paved trails alongside the canal.

In the afternoon, join us on a tour of the Château du Haut-Barr, nicknamed "The Eye of Alsace", where you will discover a splendid view over the Alsatian plains. Enjoy unrivalled views over the Alsace plain from the Haut-Barr Castle, often called "the Eye of Alsace". Constructed in 1170, it was transformed and restored during the 14th century. It was built at an altitude of 470 metres on 3 wide rocks linked by a footbridge called the "Devil's Bridge" and a series of staircases, which enabled the Bishops of Strasbourg to watch over the Zorn Valley and the Alsace Plain. With your guide, you will have the opportunity to discover this wonderful castle which has been listed as a historic monument since 1874. On your return journey to the boat, you will stop off at the Chappe Tower, an ancient telegraph, where you'll see an interactive display on the ancestry of all means of telecommunication. Since 1794, France was the first country to have a telecommunications network thanks to Claude Chappe who invented the aerial telegraph. From 1798 to 1852, the station at Saverne helped link Strasbourg to Paris. Return on board.

#### **DAY 17                      SAVERNE – LUTZELBOURG- MS Raymonde (B,L,D)**



We will set out on a guided tour of Saverne. Virtually unknown by the usual tourist routes, the city offers a wide range of places to discover. The town has preserved many relics from its past. Founded in Roman times, Saverne was the former residence of the Bishops of Strasbourg. This town has always been a major crossing point and a place of cultural exchange, thus considered to be the gateway to Alsace. You will visit the Main Street, with its unicorn fountain (the unicorn is the town's guardian and emblem), the Katz House, decorated with wonderful sculpted half-timbered walls, the Church of Notre Dame with its porch tower from the 12th century and the former convent of the Récollets founded in the 14th century. Return on board.

We will return on board and cruise towards Lutzelbourg. The canal winds through the Vosges Mountains before joining the Lorraine region. Late in the afternoon, we suggest you set off on foot to marvel at Lutzelbourg Castle.

## **DAY 18                    LUTZELBOURG - ARZVILLER INCLINED PLANE – XOUXANGE- MS Raymonde (B,L,D)**

We will set off for an excursion to the Arzviller inclined plane. Along the way, we will stop at the crystal glassworks near the inclined plane. Within a short walking distance of the Saint-Louis-Arzviller inclined plane, you will visit the Lehrer Crystal Glassworks. Located next to the inclined plane for over 25 years, the crystal glassworks will allow you to discover the secrets of glassblowing through a guided tour. During your visit, you will be able to watch and marvel at the craftspeople blowing and cutting fine crystal. Your guide will reveal all the secrets of glassblowing, which was invented during the 1st century BC in Syria. Nowadays these crystal glassworks have made the Moselle area famous. Afterward, you will have some free time to browse through the gift store, before heading back to the ship.

The boat will cruise through the Artzviller inclined plane - an incredible experience. A fabulous structure, this transverse system boat "elevator" is one-of-a-kind in Europe. The inclined plane replaces 17 successive locks over 2.5 miles that once needed a full day to navigate

## **DAY 19                    XOUXANGE – LAGARDE- MS Raymonde (B,L,D)**

This morning will be spent cruising towards Lagarde, passing through the Réchicourt lock, one of the largest in France, before continuing our journey through the lakes.

In the afternoon, join us on a visit of Sarrebourg that will take us on the Chagall trail. Sarrebourg, is located at the gates of the Vosges and Alsace, and is a town with a rich diversity of attractions. Its historic and cultural heritage holds many unexpected treasures. The town began to develop during the 1st century A.D. and over time, has seen remarkable growth. Its nickname "Sarrebourg la Marchande" (or Trader) is due to its many shops and businesses. During the guided visit of the town, you will be able to admire monuments like the cinema, built in 1912 during the Art Nouveau movement, the library, and the Custine Hotel. You will also get to admire the square and the Chapel of the Cordeliers with its quite unique stained-glass window by Marc Chagall. This true hymn to peace was created over a period of 18 months and installed in 1979. The chapel was built in 1265 but was demolished as it looked likely to fall into ruin. A decision was made to preserve only its choir. Marc Chagall was then contacted and asked to design and create a stained-glass window to close off the choir. It is the largest stained-glass window ever made by the artist - 12 metres high by 7.5 metres wide. Other stained-glass

windows were also created by the artist to act as the side windows. Afterwards, take a stroll along the Grand'rue and admire the beautiful facades from the 18th century. End of the guided visit of Sarrebourg. Return on board.

Tonight, is our gala evening and dinner.

## **DAY 20                      LAGARDE – STRASBOURG 01/11/2021 (B)**

Enjoy one last buffet breakfast on board before disembarking at 9:00 a.m. Transfer by coach back to Strasbourg, arriving late in the morning. We transfer you to the airport for your onward flight. End of our services.

## **DAY**

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