

# ENCHANTING WATERWAYS AMSTERDAM TO BUDAPEST HOSTED RIVER CRUISE

27 May 2026





Embark on an extraordinary 20-day journey through the heart of Europe, sailing along the legendary Rhine, Main, and Danube Rivers. From the charming canals of Amsterdam to the imperial grandeur of Vienna and the vibrant beauty of Budapest, this fully hosted river cruise immerses you in a world of timeless elegance, rich culture, and breathtaking scenery.

We explore four incredible countries - The Netherlands, Germany, Austria, Slovakia and Hungary. Our journey begins in Amsterdam, where we explore the iconic canals, historic landmarks, and vibrant Dutch countryside, visiting quaint villages and traditional windmills before setting sail. From there, discover the towering Gothic cathedral of Cologne, sip wine in Rüdesheim, wander through the medieval charm of Rothenburg ob der Tauber, and marvel at the baroque beauty of Melk Abbey. Cruise through the UNESCO-listed Rhine Gorge, dotted with storybook castles and the legendary Lorelei Rock, and sail through the Wachau Valley, one of Austria's most stunning wine regions.

With a choice of included excursions each day, tailor your experience to suit your interests, embark on an active biking or hiking adventure, take a classic guided city tour, or immerse yourself in cultural discoveries such as local tastings, performances, and hands-on experiences.

Sail in ultimate comfort aboard the luxurious Avalon Illumination, where gourmet dining, live entertainment, and first-class service create a truly effortless travel experience. With seamless accommodations, exclusive hosted experiences, and the perfect balance of adventure and relaxation, this is European river cruising at its finest.

Join us on this once-in-a-lifetime, fully hosted journey, experiencing the timeless beauty and history of Europe's most captivating destinations.



### **Enchanting Waterways: Amsterdam to Budapest**

27 May to 14 June 2026

#### WED 27 Depart Auckland to Amsterdam

Today, we meet our fellow travellers at the airport as we embark on our **exciting journey to Europe.** With **Amsterdam** as our first destination, we settle in for our onward flight, enjoying in-flight meals. As we soar across continents, we anticipate the extraordinary destinations that await us in the days ahead.

#### **THU 28** Welcome to Amsterdam

**Welkom in Amsterdam!** Upon an afternoon arrival in the vibrant Dutch capital, we complete immigration and customs formalities before transferring to our comfortable hotel for the next two nights. After check-in, the remainder of the day is yours to relax or explore at your leisure.

Whether you choose to unwind after your journey or venture out to soak in the city's charm, your Tour Host will be available to provide advice and assistance to help you make the most of your time.

#### FRI 29 Discovering Beauty Beyond Amsterdam

Today, we leave the bustling streets of Amsterdam behind and venture into the **Dutch countryside** on a **full-day sightseeing tour**. We explore **charming villages, historic windmills, and scenic waterways**, each offering a glimpse into traditional Dutch life. As we journey through the iconic landscapes of the Netherlands, we embrace the country's rich heritage and natural beauty.

A **welcome lunch** in a picturesque setting allows us to savour authentic Dutch flavours while enjoying the stunning countryside views. As we return to Amsterdam, we pass through lush meadows, quaint farmhouses, and winding canals, capturing the essence of this beautiful region.

Upon returning to the hotel, the evening is yours to relax or continue exploring the vibrant city at your own pace. Perhaps by unwinding at a cozy canal-side café, indulging in some boutique shopping, or taking a leisurely stroll along the enchanting waterways of this vibrant city, immersing yourself in the city's distinctive charm.

## **Trip Highlights**

- Explore Amsterdam's Iconic Canals Discover the city's Golden
  Age charm on a guided canal cruise or a walking tour through
  hidden courtyards and cobblestone streets.
- Sail the Spectacular Rhine Gorge Cruise through a UNESCO World Heritage Site, where ancient hilltop castles and the legendary Lorelei Rock create a breathtaking backdrop.
- Cologne & its Majestic Cathedral Choose from a guided city walk, a bike tour along the Rhine, or an in-depth Jewish heritage tour
- Step into a Fairytale in Rothenburg ob der Tauber Explore one of Germany's most enchanting medieval towns, filled with half-timbered houses and charming squares.
- Discover Historic Wurzburg Visit the Bishop's Residenz, a UNESCO-listed baroque palace, and explore this vibrant winegrowing region.
- Bamberg & Regensburg Walk through UNESCO-listed Old Towns, where centuries-old cathedrals, medieval bridges, and traditional breweries bring Bavarian history to life.
- Vienna's Imperial Grandeur Experience the opulence of the Habsburg Empire, from the Imperial Palace and St. Stephen's Cathedral to the option of a Royal Waltz Concert.
- Melk Abbey & the Wachau Valley Visit one of Austria's most magnificent baroque monasteries, then sail through the vineyarddraped landscapes of the Wachau Valley.
- Budapest The Pearl of the Danube Enjoy a guided tour of Hungary's captivating capital, marvel at Heroes' Square, or take an optional scenic hike for stunning views.

(B) Breakfast

(L) Lunch

(D) Dinner



# Embarkation Day – Welcome Aboard Avalon SAT 30 Illumination

BLD

After breakfast, we **transfer to the Avalon Illumination**, our luxurious floating home for the next 15 days. Once onboard, take time to settle in, explore the ship, and enjoy a light lunch.

This afternoon, we set out to **discover Amsterdam's iconic canals, historic landmarks,** and **vibrant culture**. Whether wandering the city's **picturesque streets** or admiring its **Golden Age architecture**, every moment offers a new perspective.

Throughout our journey, you'll have the opportunity to **personalise your experience** with a variety of **included excursions**, ensuring there's something for every interest and activity level:

- Active Excursions Designed for those who enjoy a more adventurous pace, these experiences may include guided hikes, scenic bike rides, or invigorating walks that showcase each destination from a unique perspective.
- Classic Excursions Perfect for history and culture lovers, these guided tours provide in-depth insights into the iconic landmarks, historic sites, and architectural wonders of each city and town we visit.
- Discovery Excursions Immerse yourself in hands-on and interactive experiences, from local tastings and cultural performances to visits to unique museums and artistic showcases.

As evening falls, we gather for dinner onboard, sharing our excitement for the journey ahead.

Overnight Docking in Amsterdam

#### **SUN 31** The Journey Through Europe

B(L)D

This morning, we wake up to the enchanting charm of Amsterdam, a city where history, culture, and scenic waterways intertwine. Begin the day with a choice of immersive experiences - explore the city's hidden courtyards, cobblestone streets, and historic neighbourhoods on a guided walking tour, uncovering the lesser-known gems of this vibrant capital, or opt for a classic canal cruise, gliding past stately mansions and merchant houses that reflect the grandeur of Amsterdam's Golden Age.

This afternoon, we set sail toward **Cologne, Germany**, cruising along the picturesque Rhine River. As evening falls, we gather for a delicious dinner onboard, sharing stories of the day's adventures and enjoying the camaraderie of our small-group journey. With every passing mile, the breathtaking landscapes of Europe unfold, setting the stage for the incredible experiences still to come.

## Cologne, Germany – Prost! Celebrate in the MON 1 Rhineland

Welcome to **Cologne**, a city where history, culture, and modern vibrancy come together along the banks of the Rhine River. Known for its charming Old Town and impressive cathedral, Cologne invites us to explore its rich past and lively atmosphere.

Today, choose how you'd like to experience this fascinating city. For those seeking an **Active Excursion**, cycle along the Rhine River and through Cologne's lively streets, discovering the city like a local. If you prefer a cultural deep dive, embark on a **Discovery Excursion**, taking a walking tour of **Cologne's Jewish heritage sites**, uncovering centuries of history. Alternatively, opt for a **Classic Excursion**, strolling through **Cologne's Old Town** with a Guided City Walk. Wander through charming squares, admire historic architecture, and visit the city's crown jewel – the magnificent twin-spired **Gothic cathedral**, a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** and one of the most breathtaking churches in Europe.

After your excursion, take time to explore Cologne at your own pace. Visit a **traditional biergarten** and enjoy a glass of Kölsch pale lager, brewed exclusively in Cologne for over a century, or browse the lively shopping streets filled with local charm. Later, we return to the ship for live entertainment and dinner together, celebrating another wonderful day on the Rhine.

#### **TUE 2** Rhine Gorge – Rüdesheim – Wine Country



This morning, we sail through the spectacular **Rhine Gorge**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, where ancient castles rise dramatically from the cliffs, creating a breathtaking backdrop along the Rhine River. As we glide past the **legendary Lorelei Rock**, where the myth speaks of a siren whose enchanting song lured sailors to their fate.

Arriving in **Rüdesheim**, a charming wine-making town renowned for its rolling vineyards and old-world charm, we have two fantastic excursions to choose from. For those seeking an **Active Excursion**, lace up your walking shoes and embark on a scenic hike through **Rüdesheim's picturesque vineyards**, where unfold at every turn.

Alternatively, for a **Discovery Excursion**, step into the whimsical world of the **Mechanical Music Museum**, home to an extraordinary collection of self-playing instruments, from delicate music boxes to grand orchestrions. Afterward, indulge in a tasting of authentic Rüdesheimer coffee, a delightful local specialty infused with Asbach brandy and topped with whipped cream.

After a day of exploration, we return to the ship and unwind as local musicians bring the region's rich musical traditions to life.

Over dinner together, we toast to another memorable day on the Rhine.



#### WED 3 Miltenberg – Beauty on the Main River

This morning, we arrive in **Miltenberg**, a charming Bavarian town nestled along the banks of the **Main River**. With its **storybook charm, medieval half-timbered houses**, and rich history, Miltenberg offers a glimpse into Germany's past, where centuries-old traditions and warm hospitality remain at the heart of daily life.

Stepping off the ship, we embark on a Guided Walking Tour, strolling through the town's cobblestone streets, lined with beautifully preserved half-timbered houses each telling a story of the town's heritage. Along the way, we uncover Miltenberg's fascinating history, including a visit to **Germany's oldest inn**, a true symbol of its enduring heritage.

After a delightful day of exploration, we return to the ship and set sail toward Würzburg. As evening falls, we gather for dinner onboard, enjoying the tranquil beauty of the river while our expert chefs and attentive waitstaff continue to make life effortlessly enjoyable.

# Würzburg – Baroque Beauty & Bavarian Charm

Today, we arrive in **Würzburg**, renowned for its stunning baroque architecture, historic landmarks, and rich winemaking heritage. As we step into this cultural gem, we embark on a Guided Sightseeing Tour, strolling across the **Old Main Bridge**, where breathtaking views of the **Marienberg Fortress** unfold before us. A highlight of our visit is the **Bishop's Residenz**, a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** and a masterpiece of baroque design, home to the largest known ceiling fresco in the world, an awe-inspiring testament to the grandeur of the era.

THU 4

Following the tour, the afternoon is yours to explore at leisure. Wander through charming market squares, browse boutique shops, or unwind in a local café, soaking in Würzburg's relaxed Bavarian atmosphere with a glass of local Franconian wine.

This evening, during happy hour, we gather for a relaxing drink before dinner and receive a briefing for tomorrow's highly anticipated visit to Rothenburg, preparing for another day of unforgettable exploration.



#### FRI 5 Volkach – Excursion to Rothenburg

Today, we step into a storybook setting as we journey to the enchanting Bavarian town of **Rothenburg ob der Tauber**, one of Germany's most beloved medieval gems. Known as "The Jewel of the Middle Ages," this perfectly preserved town along the **famed Romantic Road** is a vision of half-timbered houses, cobblestone streets, and centuries-old charm, creating an atmosphere straight from a fairytale.

Wandering through picturesque town squares, we admire centuries-old buildings and medieval fortifications, soaking in the timeless magic that has inspired artists and storytellers for generations. Whether browsing charming boutiques, walking along the historic town walls, or exploring the **world-famous Käthe Wohlfahrt Christmas Village**, every corner of Rothenburg transports us to another time.

For lunch, we highly recommend stopping by the **famous Erich Trump sausage shop** - a must-visit for food lovers. Enjoy authentic German bratwurst, expertly prepared and packed with rich, traditional flavours. You won't be disappointed!

After our enchanting visit, we return to the ship and gather for dinner, reminiscing about the day's unforgettable sights and experiences as we continue our extraordinary journey through Bavaria.

#### **SAT 6** Bamberg – The City of Seven Hills

 $\mathbb{B} \mathbb{L} \mathbb{D}$ 

Today, we arrive in **Bamberg**, a breathtaking **UNESCO World Heritage Site** often referred to as the "Rome of Franconia" for its seven hills, each crowned with a historic church. This beautifully preserved medieval city is known for its charming Old Town, impressive architecture, and rich brewing traditions, offering a true taste of Bavaria's heritage.

Choose how you would like to explore this gem: For an Active Adventure, hop on a bike and ride along Bamberg's scenic canals, soaking in the stunning blend of nature and history. Alternatively, step back in time on a Guided Walking Tour, where we will visit the majestic **Romanesque cathedral**, admire the iconic Old Town Hall dramatically perched in the middle of the **Regnitz River**, and marvel at the city's unique blend of medieval and baroque architecture. For those who prefer a more leisurely experience, stay onboard for a Discovery Excursion, featuring an insightful lecture on European history and culture, offering a deeper understanding of the places we explore.

As evening falls, we return to the ship for a delightful night onboard, featuring live entertainment and a sumptuous dinner, as we continue our journey along the Main River toward Roth.

(B) (D)

#### Roth – Excursion to Nuremberg – Legends and

**SUN 7** History Lessons



Today, we delve into the rich history and captivating legends of Bavaria, with a choice of enriching excursions, each offering a unique perspective on this fascinating region.

For those seeking an **Active Adventure**, venture into the natural beauty of **Roth's Lauter Valley**, where a scenic outdoor experience showcases the area's lush landscapes. Alternatively, step back in time on a Guided Sightseeing Tour of Roth, a charming Bavarian town known for its half-timbered houses, lively market square, and the **historic Schloss Ratibor**, a hunting lodge dating back to 1535, steeped in centuries of history.

For a deeper dive into medieval Germany, journey to **Nuremberg** on a Guided Tour, where the city's past comes to life. Explore ornate medieval architecture, admire the gilded fountain, visit the grand gothic cathedral, and walk through the imposing **Kaiserburg Castle**, once an imperial stronghold of the Holy Roman Empire.

Alternatively, stay onboard for a **Discovery Excursion**, where an insightful lecture on the Main-Danube Canal reveals the ingenious engineering that connects the North Sea to the Black Sea, revolutionizing European trade and travel.

As the day winds down, we return to the ship for a relaxing evening onboard. Over a delightful dinner, we gather to share insights and stories from our journey, reflecting on the historic.

MON 8 Regensburg – Bavaria's Medieval Miracle (B) (1) (D) Step into the past as we arrive in Regensburg, one of Germany's best-preserved medieval cities and a true architectural masterpiece along the Danube River. With its cobblestone streets, century-old landmarks, and vibrant Bavarian charm, Regensburg invites us to explore its rich history and timeless beauty.

Today, choose how you would like to experience this captivating city. For those seeking an **Active Excursion**, embark on a scenic bike ride to Walhalla, a striking neoclassical monument perched high above the Danube. Built to honour Germany's most influential historical figures, this grand structure offers breathtaking views over the river and surrounding countryside. Alternatively, join a **Classic Excursion** with a Guided City Walk through Regensburg's medieval heart. Discover the historic **Altes Rathaus (Old Town Hall)**, admire the city's beautifully preserved architecture, and stand before the **Porta Praetoria**, an ancient Roman gate dating back to 179 AD, once marking the entrance to the Castra Regina fortress.

After your excursion, enjoy free time to explore Regensburg at your own pace. Stroll through its charming streets, uncover hidden corners filled with local history, try the local beers or relax in one of the city's cozy cafés.

As the day comes to a close, we return to the ship for a relaxing evening onboard. Enjoying being spoilt again at dinner together and sharing stories from the day's adventures as we set sail toward Passau.

#### **TUE 9** Passau – Linz, Austria

 $\mathbb{B} \mathbb{L} \mathbb{D}$ 

Today, we arrive in **Passau**, the enchanting "**City of Three Rivers**," where the Danube, Inn, and Ilz Rivers converge, creating a strikingly beautiful riverscape. With its baroque architecture, charming Old Town, and rich history shaped by centuries of trade and culture, Passau offers a fascinating glimpse into Bavaria's past. We step off the boat on a Guided City Walk, exploring the city's historic streets, uncover its cultural heritage, and visit the impressive **St. Stephen's Cathedral**, home to the largest pipe organ in Europe.

For those eager to explore beyond Passau, consider an Optional Full-Day Excursion (own cost) to **Salzburg**, the birthplace of Mozart, where you can wander through the charming Old Town, admire the baroque architecture, and immerse yourself in the city's rich musical and cultural heritage. Alternatively, embark on a Full-Day Optional Excursion (own cost) to Český Krumlov, a UNESCO-listed Bohemian town filled with fairytale-like charm, medieval streets, and a stunning hilltop castle overlooking the Vltava River.

This afternoon, we relax onboard and enjoy the scenic cruise to **Linz, Austria,** a city where history and innovation meet. Upon our evening arrival, take time to explore Linz at your own leisure, wander through the Old Town's charming squares, admire the harmonious blend of baroque and modern architecture, or unwind at a riverside café, taking in the shimmering reflection of city lights on the Danube River.

As night falls, we gather onboard for dinner, reminiscing about the day's discoveries and looking forward to the adventures ahead.

#### WED 10 Melk – Wachau Valley – Vienna



This morning, we arrive in **Melk**, home to the **magnificent Melk Abbey**, one of Austria's finest baroque landmarks. Perched high above the Danube River, this architectural masterpiece offers breathtaking views of the **Wachau Valley**, a region of rolling vineyards, medieval castles, and charming riverside villages.

Explore Melk with a choice of excursions - join a scenic walk along the Danube and through the town of Melk, uncovering its hidden gems, or step inside the legendary Melk Abbey on a Guided Tour, where frescoed ceilings, elaborate statues, an ornate pipe organ, and an incredible library transport you through centuries of history.

This afternoon, relax on the Sky Deck with a coffee or cocktail as we sail through the breathtaking Wachau Valley, admiring vineyard-draped hills, charming villages, and castle ruins lining this picturesque stretch of the river.

As evening falls, we arrive in **Vienna**, the capital of classical music, imperial grandeur, and timeless charm. For a truly unforgettable experience, consider an Optional Guided Excursion to a Royal Waltz Concert (own cost) in an elegant Viennese hall, where the music of Strauss and Mozart fills the air, offering a magical introduction to the city. Overnight Docking in Vienna





**THU 11 Vienna – Imperial Grandeur & Timeless Charm** (B) (L) (D) Welcome to **Vienna**, a city where imperial elegance meets vibrant culture. From the grandeur of the Habsburg Empire to its world-famous music and café culture, Vienna offers an unforgettable blend of history, artistry, and modern energy.

Today, choose your ideal way to explore this magnificent city. Opt for an **Active Adventure**, cycling through Vienna's Danube Island, discovering its lush green spaces and scenic waterfront. Alternatively, step into the opulence of the **Habsburg Empire** with a Guided City Tour, visiting Vienna's most iconic landmarks, including the **Imperial Palace complex**, the **Vienna Opera House**, and the **awe-inspiring St. Stephen's Cathedral**.

For those looking to delve deeper into Vienna's royal heritage, consider an Optional Guided Excursion (own cost) to the majestic **Schönbrunn Palace**, the former summer residence of the Habsburg royal family, or venture beyond Austria to Bratislava, Slovakia's charming capital. No matter how you choose to explore, Vienna's imperial beauty and rich cultural heritage promise an unforgettable day.

As evening falls, we return to the ship for live onboard entertainment, celebrating another remarkable day as we gather for dinner and sail toward Budapest.



#### FRI 12 Budapest, Hungary

 $\mathbb{B}\mathbb{L}\mathbb{D}$ 

Wake up to the breathtaking beauty of **Budapest**, a city where grand architecture, rich history, and vibrant culture come together along the **Danube River** often called the "*Pearl of the Danube*." As we sail into Hungary's enchanting capital, enjoy panoramic views from the Sky Deck, taking in the iconic bridges, majestic landmarks, and elegant riverbanks that define this extraordinary city. Tailor your day in Budapest to your own interests. Choose an **Active Excursion**, hiking to a spectacular viewpoint for sweeping vistas of the city and the river, or opt for a **Classic Excursion**, enjoying a Guided City Tour, including a visit to **Heroes' Square**, where magnificent statues honour Hungary's most influential historical figures.

This afternoon, explore Budapest at your own pace or enhance your experience with an Optional Guided Excursion (own cost). Travel into the beautiful Hungarian countryside on a wine-tasting tour in the renowned Etyek wine region, visiting two charming cellars to sample the region's finest vintages. Alternatively, join the Bites & Highlights of Budapest Tour, a perfect blend of sightseeing and indulging in local flavours, where you'll discover the city's landmarks while sampling some of Hungary's most delectable traditional dishes. For a more leisurely afternoon, perhaps enjoy a slice of traditional Hungarian cream cake at a historic café, wander along **Váci Street's** elegant boutiques, or take another scenic hike above the Danube for a different perspective of the city. As evening falls, we return to the ship for a memorable final night onboard, docked in the heart of Budapest.

#### Budapest (Disembarkation) – Farewell Budapest, The Journey's End

As our unforgettable river cruise comes to an end in **Budapest**, we take a moment to reflect on the extraordinary journey we've shared. From the charming canals of **Amsterdam**, through the imperial grandeur of **Vienna**, to the vibrant beauty of **Budapest**, we've explored centuries of history, breathtaking landscapes, and cultural treasures along the legendary **Rhine**, **Main**, **and Danube** 

After a final breakfast onboard, we bid a fond farewell to the wonderful crew of the **Avalon Illumination** and our newfound friends, cherishing the memories of this remarkable adventure. We then disembark and transfer to the airport for our flight to **Dubai**, where we will enjoy an **overnight stay** before continuing our journey home – carrying with us the sights, sounds, and stories of Europe's most enchanting destinations. Meals: In-flight.

#### SUN 14 Dubai – New Zealand

**SAT 13** 

This morning, we depart **Dubai**, arriving back in **New Zealand on 15 June**. As we return home, we carry with us unforgettable memories and the stories of an extraordinary European journey. Meals: In-flight

## **ENCHANTING WATERWAYS: AMSTERDAM TO BUDAPEST**





You are invited to join us on our fully hosted small group tour, with a maximum number of guests is 18.

Based on the beautiful Kapiti Coast with our guests joining us from all corners of New Zealand, we believe you will be pleasantly surprised by just how much we include in our tour price.

You can be reassured that your tour host will always be one of our friendly well-experienced YOURTours Hosts, ensuring everything is taken care of from start to finish, allowing you to relax and enjoy your holiday.



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#### **20 DAYS • FULLY HOSTED SMALL GROUP TOUR**

**COUNTRIES** Netherlands, Germany, Austria, & Hungry **DEPARTS** 27 May to 15 June 2026

- Fully Hosted from New Zealand with a YOURTours Host
- International Economy Class flights ex Auckland
   Flight upgrades available upon request & Home Pick-up/drop-off T&C's apply
- Premium Hotels: Quality accommodation during the land-based segments of the tour.
- 14 nights cruise on board 'Avalon Illumination' in a Panorama Suite on (top) Royal Deck
- On-board enriching activities wine tastings talks by experts • local artisan demonstrations • performances by local entertainers
- All meals, afternoon teas and night fare onboard
   Complimentary wine, beer and soft drinks at dinner on board
- Included selected guided shore excursions
- Most entrance fees as specified in itinerary
- Meals as specified in itinerary
- English speaking guides throughout
- All gratuities to local guides and ship staff
- Departs 27 May 2026
- Price from \$24,995 pp twin share or double room
- Single Price from \$29,995 pp

#### **Avalon Illumination**

The Avalon Illumination is a 135-meter Avalon Waterways Suite Ship® designed for an intimate and luxurious river cruising experience. Accommodating 166 guests with a dedicated crew of 47, the ship features 80% Panorama Suites, boasting wall-to-wall, floor-to-ceiling windows for breathtaking views, along with elegant Deluxe Staterooms. Guests can indulge in regionally inspired gourmet cuisine, complemented by complimentary wine, beer, and soft drinks at lunch and dinner. A variety of Classic, Active, and Discovery guided excursions provide immersive cultural experiences at every stop. Onboard, travelers can relax on the Sky Deck, complete with a whirlpool and lounge chairs, socialize in the Panorama Lounge & Bar, stay active in the Fitness Center, and enjoy complimentary Wi-Fi throughout the ship.





