

Heart of the Danube: Budapest to Bavaria Tauck River Cruises

By

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Map From Tauck



Overview

- When your road is the Danube, it's enchanting... Hungary, Austria, Slovakia, and Germany are linked by peaceful river landscapes dotted with storybook castles and romantic villages surrounded by stone terraced vineyards, where making world-class wines – and tasting them! – is an art.
- A wonderfully preserved medieval castle and town in the Czech Carpathian mountains are as awe-inspiring as the palaces and museums of Imperial Vienna.
- As you cruise from port to port, explore the cobblestone streets and market squares in the Old Towns of Budapest, Bratislava, Cesky Krumlov, Grein, and Passau, each offering unexpected cultural treasures and culinary pleasures around every bend.
- And the pièce de résistance – a Tauck Exclusive gala evening with music and dancing at a private palace conjures up elegant Old World Europe just for Tauck guests!

Day 1 Arrive Munich & Embark Ship

- **Tour begins: 5:30 PM.**
- A transfer is included from Munich International Airport directly to your riverboat, where embarkation begins at 4:00 PM.
- Settle in aboard ship and then meet your fellow river cruisers this evening at a welcome cocktail reception followed by dinner.
- Your riverboat sets off along the Danube this evening.

Day 2 Exploring Passau or Cesky Krumlov

- Awaken in Passau today for a choice of sightseeing in this riverside town in Germany,
- or an excursion to Cesky Krumlov in the Czech Republic.
- Once a Roman outpost at the confluence of three rivers, Passau is over 2,500 years old, a quintessential Bavarian town of pastel patrician houses, cafés, romantic cobblestone lanes and riverfront promenades, made for walking (many streets are closed to traffic).
- If you choose to stay in Passau, your walking tour immerses you in its storybook mix of Roman, Italian Baroque and German Gothic architecture. See St. Stephen's Cathedral; view the hilltop fortress where Passau's prince-bishops once resided; and peruse the 14th-century Rathaus (Town Hall).
- Later, if you wish, join your Tauck Director for a brisk walk to a hilltop fortress,
- or attend a public concert on the famous organ of St. Stephen's Cathedral, when available
- or take a 12-mile bike ride along the Danube, meeting up with your riverboat in the town of Enghelhartzell.

The Veste Oberhaus Passau

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Passau

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St. Stephen's Cathedral Passau

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St. Stephen's
Cathedral. Its organ
has 17,947 pipes.
Passau, Germany

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Passau, where three rivers meet—the Inn, the Ilz, and the Danube



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Day 2 Cesky Krumlov

- Alternatively, travel to Cesky Krumlov, an incredibly well-preserved medieval town in a landscape of exceptional beauty.
- Your walking tour includes Krumlov Castle, one of the largest castle complexes in Central Europe, embracing 40 buildings and palaces of medieval, Renaissance and Rococo designs, plus numerous courtyards and gardens.
- Return to the riverboat and enjoy the chef's signature dinner tonight as you cruise to Grein.

Cesky Krumlov

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Cesky Krumlov



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Cesky Krumlov

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Day 3 Grein or the Mauthausen Memorial

- Arrive in the typically picturesque riverside village of Grein, Austria, for a choice of sightseeing in Grein
- or a visit to the Mauthausen Memorial.
- Your visit begins with a guided walking tour of the village, which includes views of the Grein Theatre – since 1791 the oldest operating theatre in Austria – and the historic town square with the adjacent Gothic St. Giles Church, known for its fine altar and stained glass.
- If you wish, visit Schloss Greinburg, the privately owned castle of the Ducal House of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, showcasing the history and lifestyle of one of the most significant ruling families in Europe (including Queen Victoria of England).
- Alternatively, pay a poignant guided visit to the museum and memorial on the site of the infamous World War II-era Mauthausen–Gusen concentration camp, approximately 20 kilometers east of Grein.
- You'll tour the camp's main complex, preserved as a museum and memorial to the victims of the last major concentration camp liberated by the Allies.
- Back aboard the riverboat, enjoy dinner and local entertainment tonight.

Day 4 Dürnstein, Cycling & on to Vienna

- This morning, your riverboat docks in Dürnstein, in Austria's Wachau Valley, which offers you a choice of unforgettable sightseeing excursions.
- You may choose to explore the picture-perfect Austrian village of Dürnstein on a guided walking tour, with free time on your own – maybe a climb up to the brooding ruins of Kuenringerburg Castle high above the town.
- Or, a challenging bicycling excursion (not suitable for beginners) through the Wachau Valley, starting and ending in Dürnstein.
- Rejoin the boat for lunch, and set off on a leisurely, breathtakingly scenic river cruise to Austria's capital, Vienna.

Schonbuhl Castle

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Spitz Wachau Valley

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Wachau Valley

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Weisskirchen Wachau Valley 2012

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Wachau Valley

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Hinterhaus Castle Ruins

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Aggstein Castle Ruins

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Durnstein, Austria



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Durnstein from the Danube. The Blue Tower is part of Durnstein Abby

Ruins of Durnstein Castle where Richard the Lionhearted was held for ransom in 1192



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Krems

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Day 5 Imperial Vienna & a Night at the Palace

- You have a choice of sightseeing today, both preceded by a tour of Vienna's landmark sights: visit the Imperial Treasury (the Schatzkammer) in the Hofburg, displaying priceless treasures from the House of Habsburg, including the Austrian Crown Jewels and the Imperial Crown of the Holy Roman Empire;
- or alternatively, the Belvedere, the opulent 18th-century palace and former residence of Prince Eugene of Savoy, which today houses masterpieces from periods ranging from medieval to modern.
- After lunch aboard the riverboat or in town, your afternoon is free to explore more of this amazing city – once the capital of the Habsburgs' Austro-Hungarian Empire – on your own.
- Later, join us this evening at Palais Pallavicini for a Tauck Exclusive – a gala evening of dining and musical performances in elegant Viennese style.
- The sumptuous surroundings of Palais Pallavicini (built in 1784), with its ornate decor and magnificent state rooms, will transport you to another time – in fact, the palace facade is famous in another cultural reference... as the location of Harry Lime's (Orson Welles) apartment in the classic film *The Third Man*.

Day 6 Choices in & Around Bratislava

- A choice of activities await this morning in or near Bratislava, Slovakia's visually intriguing capital city.
- One is a walking tour of the cobblestoned, vehicle-free historic center of Bratislava; medieval, Baroque and modern architecture mix as you visit sites that include the 13th-century Old Town Hall, Baroque Habsburg-era palaces, the Opera House, Slovak Philharmonic Hall, St. Michael's Gate, St. Martin's Cathedral, and the Primate's Palace, where you'll view rare 17th-century British tapestries.
- Another is an excursion to the countryside, lush with vineyards, for a wine-tasting and a visit to Pezinok Castle. Dating back to the 13th century, "Water Castle" is one of the best-preserved castles in Slovakia, boasting historical furnishings, artwork and an impressive collection of glass; during your visit, enjoy a falconry demonstration.
- Prior to departure this afternoon, our local expert offers inside information and anecdotes on Bratislava.
- Back aboard ship, have lunch and settle in for an afternoon at leisure.
- Join us this evening for dinner as your riverboat heads to Budapest.

Slovak National Theater Bratislava

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Bratislava Castle

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Old Town Hall Bratislava

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Michael's Gate

This gate is the only remaining gate from the walled city of Bratislava

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St Martin's Cathedral Bratislava



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Primacial Palace Bratislava



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Day 7 Explore Budapest

- Your cruise ends this morning in Budapest, Hungary, which is split into the sections of Buda and Pest by the Danube River.
- A guided tour of the city begins with the Pest side and a drive along Andrassy Avenue to Heroe's Square and a drive by Parliament and other sites.
- Explore the Buda side with a drive up Castle Hill, a UNESCO World Heritage Site; see Fishermen's Bastion with its Neo-Romanesque design, and admire the stained glass windows and centuries of history in Matthias Church (may be closed on some days due to services).
- After lunch, spend the rest of the day and evening pursuing what interests you most in this historic, and artistic, city.
- Join us this evening for a farewell toast followed by dinner as your Danube cruise comes to a close.

Budapest Parliament at Night

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St. Stephen's Basilica Budapest



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Great Market Budapest

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Inside the Great Market Budapest



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Inside the Great Market Budapest



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Chain Bridge with Buda Castle in the Background Budapest, Hungary

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Buda Castle Budapest

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Fisherman's Bastion Budapest

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Gothic Matthias Church Budapest



Photo Anne Schrader
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Gothic Matthias Church Budapest



Day 8 Journey Home

- **Tour ends: Budapest, Hungary.**
- Fly home anytime.
- A transfer is included from the riverboat to Budapest Ferenc Liszt International Airport; you should allow a minimum of three hours for flight check-in at the airport.

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