



Is a river cruise right for me?

If you haven't yet had the opportunity to take a river cruise, how do you know if this is a vacation experience you would enjoy? Below are a few key points that may help you decide.

A floating hotel with a river view

There are no inside cabins on river cruises. Each cabin has a view of the river, which varies based on your cabin's deck. There are three passenger decks on almost all river cruise lines. The lower level provides a fixed window at water level. Cabins on the decks above feature windows that open, with "French balconies" and balconies widely available. A French balcony features sliding windows and a window rail, but not the outdoor space that a balcony offers. Some cruise lines, like Avalon, offer a floor-to-ceiling glass window where the top half lowers into the bottom glass. As you might imagine, all the public spaces on a river cruise take full advantage of the amazing views. In short, if you love light and air and gorgeous scenery, you'll find all these things on a European river cruise. Like an ocean cruise, river cruises allow guests to unpack once and settle in while the ship brings you to your next destination.

On-shore activities that blend leisure and learning:

If you love museums, tasty food, exploring galleries, admiring architecture, and having cultural experiences, chances are high you will love river cruising. If learning new things is fun for you, you'll be steps away from these kinds of adventures! River Cruise lines typically dock near the heart of the cities they visit, making it possible in many cases to walk off your ship and into the city.

Because they recognize that guests have different physical abilities and energy levels, river cruise lines tend to provide a range of activity options. Ama Waterways, for example, provides bicycles for guests and activities classed as regular, gentle, and active. Guests can choose what suits them best, from a peaceful stroll to hiking and bicycling.

On-board entertainment with a relaxing vibe:

On river cruises, “broadway-styled productions” give way to a more “chill” atmosphere. You’ll experience evening cocktail hours with hors d’oeuvres, enjoying sunsets over the water and landscape. Educational talks and previews of upcoming destinations are also common, along with wine tastings, trivial, and visiting local musicians. Some lines, like Ama Waterways, even have a resident pianist! You’ll also find an onboard library, a massage room, and a fitness space. Being able to unwind after a day of on-shore exploration is one of the hallmarks of river cruising.

No seasickness here!

Oceans have waves and rivers flow...which is fantastic for people who love the relaxation of being on the water but not the feeling of being queasy. Throughout your journey, you’ll also be within clear sight of land...and castles, and rolling green hills, and vineyards...

If a traveler has mobility issues

River cruise ships do have important limitations it is wise to know about in advance. Because they are not as large as ocean cruise ships, they are less able to accommodate mobility devices such as wheelchairs and scooters. Most, but not all, ships do not have elevators. Moreover, when the ships dock, they often tie up next to each other. If your ship is the furthest from the dock, you will find yourself crossing across other ships to the dock through the main lobbies or through the top sun deck.

Once you are ashore, you’ll often be walking before or after boarding a motor coach to your destination for the day. None of this information is meant to convey that river cruise ships are totally inaccessible. I recommend talking to your Travel Advisor about the most accessible options, and locating some river cruise ship tours online for the cruise lines you may be considering.