Rhine, Strasbourg and Heidelberg River Cruise

8 days



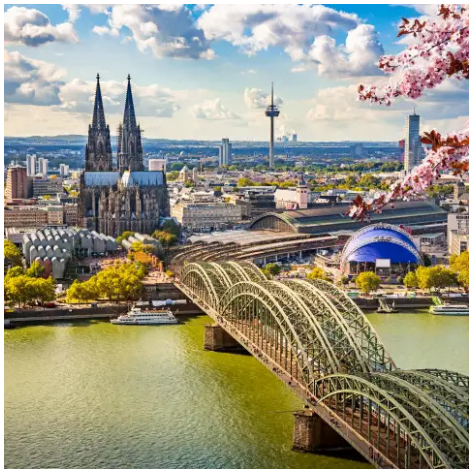
View vacation

Overview

- Explore Koblenz through its patchwork of cobbled streets, wander the promenade of Boppard and visit the lively wine town of Rüdesheim.
- Cruise through the spectacular Rhine Gorge to reach Mainz, the home of the printing press inventor Johannes Gutenberg.
- Visit Heidelberg, the German jewel sat on the River Neckar on our guided tour.
- Discover charming Strasbourg, the capital of the French Alsace region, with a choice to take the picturesque wine route to Colmar.
- Enjoy a fascinating tour of Cologne, taking in the outside of the magnificent twin-spired cathedral and the beautifully restored old town, or choose to explore the inside of the cathedral.

Rhine, Strasbourg and Heidelberg River Cruise





Day 1 - Arrival in Cologne

Arrive in Cologne and board your ship in the late afternoon. If you're here before then, enjoy free time in Cologne.

The dedicated English-speaking crew welcomes you on board and helps you to your cabin. After settling into your spacious and tastefully furnished accommodation, there’s time to familiarise yourself with this splendid ship.



Day 2 - Koblenz & Boppard

- Guided tour of Koblenz
- Visit to Boppard
- A live folk music performance on board

Koblenz

When you peek out from your cabin this morning, you’ll realise the ship has slipped quietly away from Cologne; the view that greets you is of vine-covered valleys sides aglow in the morning light, bidding you a warm welcome to the charms of the Rhine.

There’s nothing quite like that feeling of anticipation when gliding alongside the promenade of a river port, snatching tantalising glimpses of what lies ashore, and Koblenz – beautifully located at the confluence of the Rhine and Moselle Rivers – doesn’t disappoint.

The city is immersed in two millennia of history: founded by the Romans, it was successively occupied by the Franks, chosen as a residence of the German prince electors, conquered by the French and fortified by the Prussians! All have left their marks in the city’s rich array of castles, churches and historic buildings.

Koblenz is a romantic’s dream – forest-covered hillsides dominate the skyline, while the lower slopes are strewn with pretty, half-timbered buildings so typical of the Rhineland. After a satisfying breakfast, we disembark to enjoy an insightful guided tour through ‘Old Koblenz’, a patchwork of narrow streets and squares, many lined with exquisitely restored traditional houses and cosy cafés.

There’s time to explore on your own, maybe taking in a little shopping, before ambling back to the cruise ship.

We continue upstream as we enjoy our first relaxing lunch on board and before long we arrive in Boppard, a gorgeous town on a dramatic, almost U-shaped river bend.

Boppard

Known as the ‘Pearl of the Rhine’, Boppard is renowned for its storybook medieval atmosphere of cobbled streets and ancient houses. Here we’ll enjoy free time to explore highlights including the beautiful white stone St. Severus and Carmelite churches, the marketplace with the ruins of the fortress and the old town with its charming winding alleys and half-timbered houses.

The early evening is an ideal time to wander along the town’s attractive riverside Rheinallee promenade before thoughts turn to tonight’s menu. After dinner, delight in the upbeat sounds of Rhenish folk music with a live performance on traditional instruments.

Personalise Your Holiday

Boppard wine tasting

Duration: 1.5hrs

Price: £14pp (2026) & £15pp (2027)

Sample a selection of the delightful wines produced in this section of the Rhine Valley, famous for its Riesling production. Visit a local winery and learn all about the different wines grown in this area during the tasting.

Optional excursion can be done during free time.

Please contact us at least three weeks before your departure to add this experience to your booking. Minimum and maximum numbers apply. If not enough guests opt for this extra, the experience may not run.

Personalise Your Holiday

Cable car ride to Ehrenbreitstein fortress and visit

Duration: At leisure

Price: £21pp (2026) and £23pp (2027}

Take a scenic cable car over the Rhine River to the impressive Ehrenbreitstein fortress, which stands 118 meters tall on its riverbanks. Built by the Prussians to fend off the French, it's the

second-largest preserved fortress in Europe, with an unparalleled view of Koblenz and the confluence of the Rhine and Moselle rivers. Here, you can explore the castle's 1000-year history at leisure before returning to Koblenz by cable car.

Optional excursion can be done during free time or instead of the walking tour of Koblenz.

Please contact us at least three weeks before your departure to add this experience to your booking. Minimum and maximum numbers apply. If not enough guests opt for this extra, the experience may not run.



Day 3 - Rhine Gorge & Mainz

- Scenic morning cruise through the Rhine Gorge
- Guided tour of Mainz

Rhine Gorge

Slipping our moorings in Boppard we cruise through the Rhine Gorge, where the waters narrow to one-fifth their normal width and flow more swiftly. Sheer valley walls soar and magnificent birds of prey glide on the thermals above.

Teutonic knights built the numerous redoubtable castles as symbols of their power and to extract tolls from ships, but the fortresses now stand as silent ruins on forested hillsides as reminders of how fortunes change with the passage of history. This really is the magical Rhine of our imagination, so find a comfortable spot on the Sun Deck or in the forward observation lounge and enjoy the experience of cruising this famous stretch of water.

Mainz

We leave the ship and embark on a guided tour of Mainz’s historic old town, a fascinating journey through its charming cobblestone streets. Our guide will share intriguing stories and insights about the town's rich history and architectural highlights along the way. The tour will end at the exquisite St. Stephan’s Church, renowned for its captivating Chagall windows, which we'll have the opportunity to admire up close.

After exploring the church, we'll have some free time to wander the vibrant market square, where local vendors showcase a variety of goods. You can also visit the magnificent St. Martin’s Cathedral, an architectural gem that is a prominent feature in Mainz's cityscape and is over a thousand years old.

Personalise Your Holiday

Guided tour of the Gutenberg Museum

Duration: 1.5hrs

Price: £11pp (2026) and £12pp (2027)

With your guide, walk to the Gutenberg museum, dedicated to Johannes Gutenberg, a native of Mainz, who invented printing with movable metal type over 500 years ago! It houses a reconstruction of his workshop and, outstandingly, two original 1455 Gutenberg Bibles.

Founded in 1900 by Mainz citizens, the museum highlights the history of letterpress printing through technical tools, typesetting machines, and printing presses. As a "World Museum for the Art of Printing," it features sections on the origins of printing in East Asia, scripts from the Islamic world, and the development of manuscripts. Other displays cover the history of printing presses, bookbinding, fine press techniques, and the production of paper and colours.

Optional excursion can be done instead of the walking tour of Mainz.

Please contact us at least three weeks before your departure to add this experience to your booking. Minimum and maximum numbers apply. If not enough guests opt for this extra, the experience may not run.



Day 4 - Heidelberg

🏛 Option 1: Morning visit to Heidelberg with guided tour and some free time

🏛 Option 2: Extended visit to Heidelberg with guided tour and free time to explore, with lunch at leisure

Overnight we cruise further downstream, and, after breakfast, we take a short drive to Heidelberg, undoubtedly one of Germany’s most perfect architectural treasures and all the more remarkable because it escaped bombing during the Second World War.

Set in an almost idealised German landscape, this jewel sits on the banks of the River Neckar, surrounded by forests and with an imposing castle dominating the church spires and terracotta gabled roofs of the compact Aldstadt – the romantic Old Town. Its 14th-century university, one of the most prestigious in Europe, lends Heidelberg a genteel atmosphere rather similar to its ‘twin’ town – Cambridge. During the 19th century it was the centre of Germany’s Romantic Movement, on the route of the ‘Grand Tour’ and visited by many artists including JMW Turner, who captured its splendours for eternity.

There are few more delightful places to explore, as you'll discover on our guided walking tour, which reveals its principal attractions – including the magical stone bridge with its twin white towers, its imposing castle that stands guard over its romantic old town – and local secrets. Afterwards, you'll have time to explore on your own before returning to the ship for lunch.

The afternoon is free for you to relax on board or explore Mannheim.

Alternatively, you can choose to extend your stay to explore more of Heidelberg. Enjoy the local cuisine for lunch at your leisure and then return to Mannheim in the mid-afternoon for some free time.



Day 5 - Strasbourg & Colmar

- Option 1: Morning guided tour of Strasbourg
- Option 2: Full day excursion with guided tours of Colmar and Strasbourg with lunch at leisure
- A live music performance on board

By breakfast we've arrived in France and the charming city of Strasbourg, capital of the Alsace region. The city is a complete delight – its centre a mosaic of winding alleys and lanes lined with quirkily crooked, half-timbered houses largely unchanged since the 14th century. During its history Strasbourg has been both German and French, and you see influences of both in its language, cuisine and appearance, creating a truly individual ambience.

This morning, you have a couple of exciting choices.

Strasbourg

Explore this delightful city on a walking tour with a local guide leading us to its enchanting centre – a UNESCO World Heritage Site – taking in the Petite France quarter of pretty canals lined with classic pastel-coloured houses crisscrossed with timbers and with flower-filled window boxes, the famous multi-towered Ponts Couverts, or covered bridges, and, of course, the stunning Gothic Notre-Dame Cathedral, which Victor Hugo memorably described as a 'veritable tiara of stone'.

We return to the ship for lunch and this afternoon you are free to explore Strasbourg further.

Alternatively, join our full day excursion, starting with a drive along the legendary Alsace wine route to Colmar, passing through a string of picturesque villages, wine-producing towns and exceptional landscapes. We enjoy all this on a splendidly scenic drive, soon arriving in the medieval town of Colmar, the best-preserved in Alsace.

Colmar

Little known outside the area, it’s a magical concoction of canals, former merchants’ houses, ancient religious buildings and antique shops.

The cathedral quarter is surrounded by pastel-coloured half-timbered houses displaying the intricate wrought-iron hanging signs so typical of this area of Europe. We’ve plenty of time here to sit, enjoy a coffee and a lunch at leisure, watch the world go by or just wander.

We return to Strasbourg for a guided tour of the Petit France quarter, after which you are free to explore at leisure.

We return to the ship for dinner, and afterwards unwind to a medley of live music and songs performed on board by a professional duo.

Personalise your holiday

Land train tour of Strasbourg

Price: from €9pp

Duration: 30-40 mins

Hop on the Little Train and discover the charming narrow streets of Strasbourg's old town, the romantic 'Petite France', the many quays and covered bridges and the famous Cathedral Square.

Optional excursions can be done after or instead of the guided walking tour.

This excursion can be arranged on board and is payable locally.

Personalise your holiday

Take a cruise tour of Strasbourg

Price: from €15.70pp

Duration: 1hr 10mins

Discover Strasbourg from a unique perspective - the water! As it flows through the centre of the city, you'll explore three of Strasbourg's 15 districts. Along the way, you'll spot the UNESCO-protect Grande Île, the imperial district of Neustadt, the European Parliament and more.

Optional excursions can be done after or instead of the guided walking tour.

This excursion can be arranged on board and is payable locally.



Day 6 - Rüdesheim

- Free morning sailing towards Rüdesheim
- Afternoon option 1: Rüdesheim with visit to Siegfried’s Mechanical Music Cabinet
- Afternoon option 2: Rüdesheim with cable car to Niederwald Monument
- Chef's Dinner

Cruise towards Rüdesheim

As we started our journey back downstream, after a leisurely breakfast head up to the sun deck and take in the views from the comfort of a sun lounger or retire to the lounge to chat over a coffee with newly made friends. Watch the idyllic scenery slipping past through the panoramic windows: rolling hills and fertile vineyards, home to the Liebfraumilch wines of the region, oxbow lakes, long deserted by the river flow and now havens for bird and wildlife.

Rüdesheim

After a relaxing morning cruise, we arrive in Rüdesheim after lunch for free time to explore – if you imagine a typical Rhine town, then this would be it. Narrow crooked streets lead down to the sweeping river with a backdrop of wooded and vine-covered slopes. Riesling is the speciality grape here and Rüdesheim has many atmospheric Weinstuben where you can sample local wines produced from the surrounding vineyards.

Alternatively, you can choose from one of our included experiences:

Consider exploring Siegfried’s Mechanical Music Cabinet, where you delve into the fascinating realm of automatic musical devices. You'll encounter an incredible assortment of instruments that operate like machines, from intricate, delicate music boxes to a grand orchestrion.

If you’d rather embrace nature, you could take a scenic ride in a two-person cable car above the renowned vineyards of Rüdesheim, soaking in the exquisite views of the Rhine River and the idyllic countryside. Once you reach the summit, the scenery becomes even more spectacular, and you can enjoy a leisurely walk around the Niederwald monument, which commemorates the unification of Germany by the Prussians in the 1870s, providing a tranquil spot to gaze upon the town below.

On board tonight, we enjoy a culinary spectacular – the ‘Chef’s Dinner’, when the chef prepares his superb ‘signature’ dishes for you to enjoy in the splendid surroundings of the ship’s restaurant - a truly memorable experience.



Day 7 - Cologne

- Free morning sailing towards Cologne
- Afternoon option 1: guided tour of Cologne’s Old Town
- Afternoon option 2: guided tour of Cologne Cathedral

Cruise towards Cologne

This morning, early risers can enjoy phenomenal views as once again we pass through the Rhine Gorge where, in Wagner’s Ring Cycle, the Rhine Maidens guard lost treasure, the ‘Rheingold’. What better way to spend the morning than relaxing on the Sun Deck beneath dramatic rocky, vineyard-topped valley sides dotted with romantic ruined castles. The valley sides dissolve and hills give way to plains as we progress majestically to Cologne.

Cologne

This afternoon you will have a choice of guided tours.

You may opt for a guided tour of Cologne’s historic old town, where a knowledgeable local guide will share captivating tales from the city’s past. Wander through the lively old town, characterised by its winding cobblestone lanes, beautifully restored architecture, fantastic shopping venues, and charming pubs, some of which still craft their own beer. The Great St. Martin Church has towered over the old town since medieval times, while the ancient City Hall proudly holds the title of Germany’s oldest town hall.

Alternatively, consider a specialised tour of the cathedral led by an expert. This majestic Gothic church, the largest in Northern Europe, remarkably withstood the bombings of the Second World War and is recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. After six centuries of construction, this iconic structure boasts numerous treasures, including fetching stained-glass windows and a golden sarcophagus believed to hold the remains of the three kings from the Nativity story. Please be aware that space for this tour is limited, and it will not be held on religious holidays.

As night falls, a sumptuous dinner provides the perfect finale to this memorable cruise through the romantic River Rhine.

Day 8 - Return home

Flight time permitting, enjoy free time in Cologne before your journey home.

Next steps

To book your vacation, or to enquire further, please call Riviera Travel on **754-296-5335**

Or email us at **info@rivieratravel.com**

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