

## 2021 - Rhine & Moselle Delights (Christmas)

### 10-NIGHT CRUISE

Dramatic rivers yielding to fairytale towns and iconic cities all come alive as you discover four countries along the storied Rhine and Moselle rivers at Europe's most festive time of year. Throughout your journey, wander through postcard-perfect towns such Riquewihr, Freiburg, Bernkastel and Cochem. Let your inner adventurer out as you hike through vineyards and bike along the rivers. Soar high above the Rhine with a gondola ride in Rudesheim and above the Moselle with a hike to Reichsburg Castle. Uncover the secrets of Trier's Porta Nigra—Germany's oldest city and often referred to as the second Rome. Grand Baroque palaces, whimsical gardens and a plethora of UNESCO World Heritage Sites, provide lovers of enchantment, artists and architectures, historians and connoisseurs of fine wine, beer and food with the best these regions offer – complete with visits to Christmas Markets.

#### OVERVIEW:

| <u>DAY</u> | <u>DESTINATION</u> | <u>ACTIVITIES</u>  |
|------------|--------------------|--|
| 1          | BASEL              | EMBARKATION  |
| 2          | BREISACH           | Riquewihr walking tour and Christmas Markets<br>OR Freiburg excursion and Christmas Markets<br>OR Black Forest hike<br>OR Breisach wine country bike tour  |
| 3          | STRASBOURG         | “The Gem of the Alsace” tour and Christmas Markets<br>OR Strasbourg bike tour  |
| 4          | LUDWIGSHAFEN       | Heidelberg excursion and Christmas Markets<br>OR Mannheim Baroque Palace<br>OR Schwetzingen Gardens<br>OR Heidelberg Philosopher's Path hike<br>Evening wine tasting in Rudesheim<br>OR Rudesheimer Coffee |
| 5          | RÜDESHEIM          | Gondola and Christmas Markets<br>OR Siegfried's Mechanical Musical Instrument Museum<br>OR Vineyard hike<br>OR Guided bike tour of the Rheingau<br>Castles along the Rhine scenic cruising                 |
| 6          | BERNKASTEL         | Walking tour and wine tasting<br>OR Moselle bike tour<br>OR Landshut Castle hike   |
| 7          | MOSELLE VALLEY     | Scenic Cruising<br>“Rome of the North” tour<br>OR “Ancient Tales of the Porta Nigra”<br>OR Petrisberg hike<br>OR Trier bike tour   |
| 8          | COCHEM             | Reichsburg Castle and walking tour<br>OR Cochem Mustard Mill   |

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|    |           | OR Reichsburg Castle hike   |
|    |           | OR Cochem bike tour   |
| 9  | COLOGNE   | “Holy City” walking tour, cathedral visit and Christmas Markets<br>OR Kölsch beer tasting<br>OR Bike tour |
| 10 | AMSTERDAM | Canal cruise<br>OR Tastes of Amsterdam  |
| 11 | AMSTERDAM | DISEMBARKATION  |

#### ITINERARY DETAILS:

Day 1, BASEL. Embark your ship in Basel, Switzerland and meet your fellow passengers on board. (D)

Day 2, BREISACH. Breisach is your gateway to several different excursions, depending on your interests. Step back in time with a visit to the enchanting Alsatian town of Riquewihr, which looks almost the same as it did in the 16th century. On your walking tour, admire historic architecture as well as famous sights, such as the Dolder Gate, plus enjoy free time to visit the Christmas Markets. Alternatively, you may wish to go to Freiburg, founded in 1120 and home to the Freiburg’s Münster, a Gothic cathedral said to have “the most beautiful spire on earth.” Your time in Freiburg also includes time to browse the Christmas Markets. Those wishing a more active excursion can cycle through the scenic countryside, or go on a hike to the Black Forest, a magical land full of cultural traditions, as well as home to elaborate cuckoo clocks. (B,L,D)

Day 3, STRASBOURG. Strasbourg, the capital city of Alsace, offers flavors of both France and Germany. Enjoy a panoramic tour past the stunning Parc de l’Orangerie, the European Parliament and the Place de la République. Then walk through its iconic UNESCO World Heritage “La Petite France” district, which appears to have been lifted straight from the pages of a fairytale. Wander through these charming streets and past the Cathédrale de Notre Dame with its famous astronomical clock. Following your tour, you’ll have free time to visit the Christmas markets. Alternatively, the active adventurer can take a guided bike ride through this captivating city and Parc de l’Orangerie. (B,L,D)

Day 4, LUDWIGSHAFEN - RÜDESHEIM. You have a choice of several excursions, depending on your interest. Visit Heidelberg, a perfectly preserved medieval city nestled in the Neckar River Valley along Germany’s Castle Road. Here you can also enjoy visiting some of the festive Christmas markets. Alternatively, relive a bygone era on a tour of the glorious Schwetzingen Baroque Palace. Or, you may decide to visit Schwetzingen Palace Gardens with more than 100 sculptures and an assortment of whimsical buildings. The Apollotempel houses a statue of the ancient Greek god of light and the arts, playing the lyre; and the most spectacular, the Türkischer Garten with a mosque, are a few of the many highlights you will see. For a more active adventure while in Heidelberg, join a guided hike up the Philosopher’s Path, aptly named during the Romantic Period, and be rewarded with panoramic views of the city. Later in the day, sail to Rudesheim where you can or taste one of the town’s special delights, Riesling wine or Rudesheimer coffee, ceremoniously made with brandy. (B,L,D)

Day 5, RÜDESHEIM - RHINE GORGE. Your exploration of Rudesheim continues with your choice of four excursions. Take a gondola ride to the Niederwalddenkmal Statue followed by a visit to the Christmas Markets. Or, enjoy a whimsical visit to Siegfried’s Mechanical Musical Instrument Museum, treating your senses to the delight of historic instruments. Alternatively, you can join a guided bike ride through the town and along the Rhine River to Schloss Johannisberg or hike through the town’s beautiful vineyards. You’ll also have plenty of time to enjoy Christmas traditions from all over the world at Rudesheim Christmas Market. During the afternoon, set sail along the scenic Rhine River Gorge with its fabled legends and many castles. (B,L,D)

Day 6, BERNKASTEL. Sail to Bernkastel, located in the middle of the Moselle Valley’s wine-producing region. Walk through its colorful Old Town center and past many medieval and Renaissance buildings on a guided tour, and afterwards, be treated to a wine tasting. Cycling enthusiasts can choose to join a bike tour along the shores of the Moselle River, and hikers can opt to trek up to the ruins of Landshut Castle. (B,L,D)

Day 7, MOSELLE VALLEY - TRIER. Enjoy a scenic morning cruise along the Moselle River to Trier, Germany’s oldest city, where you can discover on a city tour why it has been called the “Rome of the North” or “Second Rome” as it has impressive Roman relics and nine UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Alternatively, go in search of the secrets of the Porta Nigra Gate on a tour that takes you back to a time when Rome ruled the world from the Emperor’s seat in Trier. You also have the choice of a bike tour through the historic city center and along the Moselle River; or hike high above Trier to Petrisberg. (B,L,D)

Day 8, COCHEM. Discover how the castle has been an integral part of the town’s history, and afterwards, go on a walking tour along Cochem’s narrow cobblestone streets lined with medieval houses. For a more active excursion, hike to the castle or go on a biking tour along the Moselle River. As an alternative excursion, you can visit one of Europe’s oldest working mustard mills where you will sample Cochem’s famous mustard. (B,L,D)

Day 9, COLOGNE. Join a guided tour through the Old Town. Explore the UNESCO-designated cathedral and then visit one of Europe’s largest most renowned Christmas Markets located in front of the cathedral. Continue on to the Cologne Rathaus, Germany’s oldest town hall, and see other local sights. For a different view of the city, visit a local tavern to taste its famous Kölsch beer, only made in Cologne, and reibekuchen mit apfelmus, potato pancakes typically served with applesauce. Active adventurers will want to join a guided bike ride along the Rhine. (B,L,D)

Day 10, AMSTERDAM. View Amsterdam on a scenic canal cruise followed by a walk to Begijnhof, known for its Middle Age buildings. Or taste the local flavor on a guided walk past the city's iconic canals, gabled houses, narrow bridges and house boats, tasting Dutch specialties at a grand Amsterdam café. (B,L,D)

Day 11, AMSTERDAM. Bid Farewell to Amsterdam and prepare for your flight home. (B)