

# Romantic Rhine – Southbound

8 Day River Cruise from Amsterdam to Basel



## Vacation Overview

One of Europe's most legendary rivers awaits on this mesmerizing journey along the Rhine. Enjoy a canal cruise in splendid Amsterdam as well as guided sightseeing in Cologne, Koblenz, and Strasbourg. Delight in excursions to Germany's Black Forest and to Heidelberg, Germany's oldest university town with its imposing castle. Also sail through the dramatic Rhine Gorge, see the legendary Lorelei rock, and visit the Gutenberg Museum in Mainz.



- 1 = Overnights
- = Start City
- = End City

## Itinerary

### Day 1 Arrive in Amsterdam, Holland (Embarkation)

Welcome to Amsterdam! Holland's sophisticated, modern capital has a rich and fascinating history. This delightful 700-year-old city with its elegant and classic architecture, cafés, and restaurants has a distinct ambiance. The streets, squares, and canals—not to mention the bike paths throughout the city—make for a vibrant atmosphere, and with over 60 museums, Amsterdam has the highest museum density in the world. Perhaps you would like to take an optional excursion to Zaanse Schans with its traditional houses and Dutch craft workshops. This afternoon, board your river cruise vessel and meet your crew at an evening welcome reception.

(D)

#### NOTES:

*Guests must be on board ship by 5:00pm.*

### Day 2 Amsterdam

There is no better way to see Amsterdam than by CANAL BOAT, cruising through the elegant grachten lined with stately homes dating back to Amsterdam's "Golden Age." There's free time in the city this afternoon—you might like to join an optional biking tour (weather permitting). Later, bid tot ziens (farewell) to Holland and set sail for Germany. (B,L,D)

### Day 3 Cologne, Germany

Today, enjoy a peaceful morning of cruising before reaching Cologne in the afternoon. One of Germany's largest cities and capital of the Rhineland, Cologne straddles both sides of the Rhine, and is known for its soaring, twin-steepled gothic cathedral. Choose between an included GUIDED CITY WALK or JEWISH HERITAGE WALK. The Old Town abounds with cafés, shops, and taverns. Be sure to try a Kölsch pale lager, locally brewed in Cologne for over a hundred years! (B,L,D)

### Day 4 Koblenz–Rhine Gorge–Rüdesheim

Situated at the confluence of the Rhine and Moselle Rivers, 2,000-year-old Koblenz is the cultural and business center of the Middle Rhine region. Here, join a Local Guide for a WALKING TOUR of the city that reveals an eventful past through its castles, fortress walls, towers, squares, and monuments. The dramatic RHINE GORGE is the most beautiful stretch of river. Here, ancient castles stand sentry on lofty cliffs rising 400 feet above the waters. Cruise past the legendary rock of the Lorelei, where echoes of enchanted siren song lured unwitting sailors to their doom. In Rüdesheim, the quintessential Rhine Valley wine town, visit SIEGFRIED'S MECHANICAL MUSICAL INSTRUMENT MUSEUM, where you'll see and hear a large collection of self-playing calliopes and music boxes from the 18th to the early 20th centuries. Enjoy a SPECIAL TREAT before returning to your ship for dinner. (B,L,D)

### Day 5 Mainz. Excursion to Heidelberg

Strategically located at the confluence of the Rhine and Main Rivers is Mainz, with "civilized" origins dating back to around 38 BC. Today, this is Germany's largest and most important wine market. Join your Local Guide for a GUIDED WALK through the Altstadt (Old Town) with its many intriguing shops and the whimsical Fastnachtsbrunnen (Carnival Fountain) on the Schillerplatz, a tribute to the jesters at the city's annual Carnival celebration. Gutenberg, father of modern printing, was born here, and you'll visit the captivating GUTENBERG MUSEUM. After lunch, travel to Heidelberg, home to the oldest university in Germany. With a Local Guide, visit the imposing ruins of HEIDELBERG CASTLE, towering magnificently over the city and among the most important Renaissance structures north of the Alps. You'll also see the famed GREAT VAT, the "World's Largest Wine Barrel." At nearly 23 feet high and 28 feet wide, the cask holds over 58,000 gallons of wine and has a dance floor built on top of it! (B,L,D)

### **Day 6 Strasbourg, France**

Situated on the border of France and Germany, Strasbourg blends the cultures of both countries in a delightful way. As capital of the Alsace region and seat of the Council of Europe and European Parliament, it is without a doubt an important city that manages to retain its historic charm. On your GUIDED SIGHTSEEING TOUR, visit the monumental red-sandstone GOTHIC CATHEDRAL with its ancient murals, stained-glass windows, and fascinating astronomical clock, as well as the magical LA PETITE FRANCE district, home to half-timber houses, quaint shops, inviting bistros, and a waterfront promenade. Also spend time exploring Place Kléber, a large historic square in the heart of the city, and Place Gutenberg in the heart of medieval Strasbourg, which features a statue of the inventor of the printing press. An optional excursion into the Alsace wine country is available today. After dinner tonight, enjoy an onboard WOODCARVING demonstration. (B,L,D)

### **Day 7 Breisach, Germany. Excursion to the Black Forest**

Located at the foot of Kaiserstuhl Mountain on the French-German border, Breisach is the gateway to Germany's BLACK FOREST region, an area of unrivaled natural beauty with its forests of thick pine trees. The area got its name because the forests are so dense that local residents described them as black. Surely the most well-known products from this region are Black Forest ham, Black Forest cherry cake, and cuckoo clocks. You may opt for a visit to the workshop of a local woodcarver who produces clocks and other carvings, or to the open-air Museum of Vogtsbauernhof to see how life was lived in this area centuries ago. (B,L,D)

### **Day 8 Basel, Switzerland (Disembarkation)**

Your vacation ends with breakfast this morning. (B)

#### **NOTE:**

*Departure flights should not leave Zürich Airport before 10:00am.*

## Vacation Highlights

**Cruise:** deluxe 7-night cruise in an outside stateroom with Avalon's exclusive Comfort Collection BedSSM

**Day 1 Amsterdam (Embarkation):** welcome reception

**Day 2 Amsterdam:** canal cruise

**Day 3 Cologne:** choice of guided city walk or Jewish Heritage walk

**Day 4 Koblenz–Rhine Gorge–Rüdesheim:** guided sightseeing in Koblenz; cruise through the Rhine Gorge; visit Siegfried's Mechanical Musical Instrument Museum in Rüdesheim; special treat

**Day 5 Mainz. Excursion to Heidelberg:** guided walk, visit the Gutenberg Museum in Mainz; excursion to Heidelberg; guided visit of the castle, see the Great Vat

**Day 6 Strasbourg:** guided sightseeing, visit the La Petite France district and the gothic cathedral; onboard woodcarving demonstration

**Day 7 Breisach. Excursion to the Black Forest:** visit a local woodcarver's workshop or visit a Black Forest open-air museum

**Day 8 Basel (Disembarkation):** your vacation ends this morning

Special onboard and onshore experiences presented by entertainers, artisans, and experts, designed to enrich your cruise.

### NOTES:

- Departure flights should not leave Zürich Airport before 10 am.
- **Departures November 26 and December 10 are offered as exclusive Festive Time Cruises, including special features and visits to Christmas markets at no additional cost. Experience the holiday season the European way! Enjoy the jolly atmosphere on your festively decorated ship as you delight in the sights, smells, and tastes of local customs and traditions.**
- In the event of water level problems or any problems of a technical nature, it may be necessary to operate the itinerary by motorcoach or to alter the program.
- Included visits and special features are subject to change. If a change becomes necessary, a substitute will be offered.

## Optional Excursions

The following list of optional excursions and on-board packages are **examples only** for this vacation. These optional excursions might or might not be offered. Whether it's a special dinner, a local show or a special behind-the-scenes glimpse into an historical site, optional excursions are a wonderful way to enrich your vacation even further. Plus, they give you flexibility. We include the must-see sites and experiences, and we also understand that people take interest in different activities and may want to craft a more personal vacation by hand-picking optional excursions that appeal to them.

We know that many times travelers celebrate special occasions on vacation and you can now pre-purchase celebration packages before your cruise departure. We offer special birthday, anniversary and wedding vow packages. These packages include all the elements you need to celebrate with family & friends.

Availability of optional excursions is subject to sufficient participation, weather conditions, seasonal suitability, days of operation, group interests, and general feasibility for your vacation. The approximate value listed gives you a good, general idea of what you can expect to pay but may vary once you are on your vacation. Some information provided might be in a foreign currency; you can use our online [currency converter](#) for exchange rate information.

Once you have booked your vacation, Avalon Waterways provides the ability to pre-purchase excursions and packages, register for your cruise and provide emergency contact information online.

- Currently excursions are not available for this vacation. If you have questions about the types of excursions that are available please contact Avalon Waterways.

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