



**First Class 12 Day Package**

# Danube River Cruise & Germany

## **Day 1: Depart USA**

Overnight flight to Europe.

## **Day 2: Arrival Munich**

Arrival into the Munich airport. Enjoy a tour of the city. Our sight-seeing begins with a driving tour of Munich including outside views of the Olympic Stadium, Pinakotheken art museums, Royal Palace (Residenz), National Theater, and the world famous Hofbräuhaus. Take a walking tour of the Marienplatz which lies at the heart of the Altstadt in the city center. This lively, attractive square houses the Gothic New Town hall (Neue Rathaus) with its famous Glockenspiel and the Old Town Hall. We transfer to the Munich hotel for check in and a welcome dinner.

## **Day 3: Munich, Neuschwanstein**

We have some free time this morning to explore Munich on our own. Late this morning transfer from the hotel to the fairy-tale castle, Neuschwanstein Castle. We take a guided tour of Ludwig II's most luxurious former residence where the interior styles range from Byzantine to Romanesque to Gothic. This castle, built between 1869 and 1886, has a most impressive view with the Alpsee Lake below and the Alps towering above. We continue to the Pilgrimage Church of Wies to visit this oval Rococo style church which is a UNESCO World Heritage site. From here we continue to Oberammergau or surrounding area for dinner and overnight stay.



#### **Day 4: Passion Play Performance**

This morning we will have some free time to enjoy the delightful village of Oberammergau with outstanding opportunities for photos and shopping. This afternoon and evening we enjoy the Passion Play production. The play depicts the story of Christ's Passion, beginning with the entry into Jerusalem and ending with the resurrection and transfiguration, a moving and spectacular experience. Each performance starts at 2:30 PM (1:30 PM start time after August 17th) and ends approximately 10:30 PM (9:30 PM after August 17th), with a three-hour included dinner break/intermission from 5:00 to 8:00 PM (4:00 to 7:00 PM after August 17th). We stay overnight in Oberammergau or surrounding area.

#### **Day 5: Arrive in Passau and Begin Cruising**

We transfer from Oberammergau to Passau. We board the river cruise ship which will be our home for the next 7 nights. This river cruiser is nothing other than a floating luxury hotel, impressing its passengers from the moment they step on board. We will meet our cruise director, enjoy a welcome cocktail and then get settled into our cabins. This evening we have a special welcome dinner and folklore program.

#### **Day 6: Regensburg**

This morning enjoy an optional city walk of Regensburg. Regensburg is one of the best-preserved medieval cities in Germany, and its historic buildings (about 1,400) are most impressive. The castle-like residences of the wealthy, patrician families with their high towers dominated the townscape of the Middle Ages and still testify the same status today. Among these architectural treasures are churches, monasteries, the town hall, and one of Europe's oldest bridges that has spanned the Danube since the 12th century. During this walk you will recognize the former power and wealth of this city, which once controlled the trade route to the Orient. During a short visit of the Regensburg Cathedral, dedicated to St. Peter, you can admire the emblem of Gothic architecture in southern Germany (depends on the opening hours of the Cathedral and / or if a mass is celebrated etc.). This afternoon is free or you can take an optional excursion to Weltenburg Abbey. A coach brings you towards Weltenburg, with a brief detour to the "Hall of Liberation". It is a historical classical monument upon Mount Michels-

berg above the city of Kelheim. It is an impressive marble building fashioned after the Parthenon in Athens. It towers high above the Danube and can be seen from far across the plains. Afterwards you board an excursion boat, which takes you past the former city of the Wittelsbacher through the nature reserve "Weltenburger Enge" to the Benedictine abbey of Weltenburg. The monastery, founded by Irish or Scottish monks in about 620 AD, is the oldest monastery in Bavaria. After a short tour of the abbey church you can taste the famous dark beer of Weltenburg, which is brewed here in the oldest monastery brewery in the world. We enjoy a Bavarian themed evening on board.

#### **Day 7: Passau and Salzburg**

Today you'll need to decide if you take part in an optional half day walking tour of Passau or an optional full day tour of Salzburg. During this walk round the old quarter of Passau your knowledgeable guide will point out many buildings that bear witness to its historical importance in the so called three river city. You can admire picturesque lanes, promenades and squares and find out some interesting facts about the Bishopric city. Above all, you will be especially impressed by the Baroque St. Stephen's cathedral, with the world's largest organ (17,974 pipes and 233 registers), the new Bishop's residence and the town hall. We return to the ship around noon and enjoy the remainder of our day at rest on the ship.

For those that take the full day Salzburg excursion, a two-hour coach ride will bring you to Salzburg, the city of music. The old town with its world famous baroque architecture is one of the best preserved city centers north of the Alps and was adopted by UNESCO in 1997 in the list of World Cultural Heritages. Salzburg is also the birthplace of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. During the guided tour through the old town you will see the birth house of the musician as well as other well-known attractions, such as the Getreidegasse. This long yet narrow shopping-street runs parallel to the river in the center of town. The street is famous for its old (or old-style) signs of profession outside each store. You continue to the Mirabell Palace, a beautiful castle with gardens, built by an archbishop for his beloved courtesan. Watch out for the "Garden of Dwarfs" and the Garden of Roses. After the included lunch, you

head to the picturesque village Mondsee which was a film location of the well known movie "The Sound of Music". Enjoy the beautiful scenery as we head back to the ship!

For those that did not take the Salzburg excursion you can choose to take the optional afternoon walking tour of Linz. Linz was founded by the Romans, who called it "Lentia", but there was already a Celtic settlement called "Lentos"; probably their word for the winding of a river. It was a provincial and local government city of the Holy Roman Empire, and an important trading point connecting several routes. Being the city where the Habsburg Emperor Friedrich III spent his last years, it was, for a short period of time, the most important city in the empire. It lost its status to Vienna and Prague after the death of the Emperor in 1493. There are many things to see in Linz. Take a stroll down the main street which leads to the main square. In addition to the medieval town square in the historic old town and the Mozarthaus see the Renaissance villas, the old cathedral with the Bruckner organ or the new cathedral. Visits depend on opening hours of the cathedral and/or if a mass is celebrated etc. If time allows, you can taste a piece of the famous Linzer Torte (Linzer Cake) in one of the local bakeries.

#### **Day 8: Durnstein and Melk Abbey**

We continue our cruising this morning. Take part in an optional walking tour of Durnstein, one of the best-known wine villages in the Wachau. Situated in the heart of the magnificent valley, on the banks of the mighty river Danube, the charming town offers the unique combination of breathtaking scenery, traditional architecture and places of historic interest. Your guide will show you the picturesque Old Town, the town walls and the Pranger Square with its lovely view of the castle ruins. You walk beside the Order of St Claire convent and past the baroque monastery to the town hall's inner courtyard. After a walk through the pedestrian area, the tour ends at the charming Hotel Schloss Dürnstein. The journey then continues to a Wachau winegrower where you will be able to sample a selection of the region's outstanding wines. This afternoon enjoy an optional tour of Melk Abbey. Melk Abbey is an Austrian Benedictine abbey, and one of the world's most famous monastic sites. Today's impressive Baroque abbey was built be-

tween 1702 and 1736. Particularly noteworthy is the abbey's church and the impressive library with countless medieval manuscripts and frescos. A guided tour takes you through the abbot's chambers, along the emperor's walk, through the marble hall, the balconies and the library. Then, depending on the time of day, there might be an opportunity to hear an organ recital in the abbey church. Travel to Vienna where the cruise ship will dock overnight.

#### **Day 9: Vienna**

Our entire day is filled with sites of Vienna. Enjoy a morning optional city of Vienna with a guided tour of one of the world's busiest opera houses, the Vienna State Opera, where over 200 performances are staged every year. Originally constructed in 1869, the structure was completely remodeled following its destruction during the Second World War. Today, this premier opera house is home to the world's best opera orchestra, from which the esteemed Vienna Philharmonic recruits its members. See the grand entrance foyer and main staircase, the elegant tea salon and Marble Room, and the Gustav Mahler Room. Then, see the highlight of the tour, the magnificent Auditorium, with a view of the stage where notable personalities such as Gustav Mahler, Richard Strauss, Felix Weingartner, Clemens Krauss, Karl Böhm, and Claudio Abbado have helped forge the opera's prestigious reputation. This afternoon take part in an optional tour of Schoenbrunn Castle. One of Vienna's most beautiful buildings, Schoenbrunn Castle was built on the template of Versailles, the residence of the Sun King Louis XIV. At the long-time summer residence of the Habsburgs visit the ceremonial rooms and then have the opportunity to take a walk in the beautifully designed gardens of the palace. We return to the ship, have free time exploring on your own in Vienna or take part in an optional Vienna at night excursion. This evening we have the opportunity to enjoy an optional Sounds of Vienna classical concert. What better way to dive into the heart of Viennese culture than to enjoy a delightful evening in the City of Music, the center of the Western musical world since Renaissance times. Attend a fantastic concert performance in the city and enjoy the ambiance of a world class concert hall, the epitome of the refined life, as you appreciate the classical masterpieces of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Johann



Strauss, two of Vienna's most famous citizens. Listen in awe as the musicians bring to life the passionate strains of Mozart, a child prodigy who blossomed into one of history's greatest composers and Strauss, the Waltz King, who composed the Blue Danube, arguably the world's most famous waltz. The orchestral arrangement is accompanied by a professional dance performance, recalling the golden age of the 19th-century Viennese ballrooms. At intermission, sip a glass of sparkling wine and mingle with the audience before returning for the conclusion of the concert.

**Day 10: Bratislava**

In the morning the ship moors in the city of Bratislava, which was founded over 2,000 years ago. Now capital of Slovakia, it was also capital of Hungary for a while during the late Middle Ages, which is a good illustration of how the checkered histories of these central European countries are interrelated. Enjoy an optional morning tour revealing the city's major sights. From 13th-century Bratislava Castle, you'll enjoy breathtaking views overlooking three countries- Slovakia, Austria and Hungary. This afternoon there is an optional guided tour of the Imperial Schlosshof Palace. This evening we celebrate with a Captains Gala Dinner!

**Day 11: Budapest, Szentendre and Esztergom**

In the morning we enjoy an optional sightseeing tour to Szentendre and Esztergom. First we visit the small artist's village of Szentendre. After enjoying a walking tour we continue to the imposing ruins of Visegrad, from where you enjoy a marvelous view of the Danube. Next stop is Esztergom, the highlight of this tour. The city is dominated by the 1820 built and largest neo-classical basilica of the country, one of the largest churches in Europe. Following the visit of the Basilica, we enjoy some time of wine tasting before we reboard the cruise ship in Budapest. Budapest is a city made up of two parts: Buda and Pest, built on opposite banks of the Danube. Buda is the older and more graceful part, with its cobble streets and medieval architecture, while Pest is the administrative and commercial center, with wide avenues and impressive 19th-century public buildings. East meets West in this fascinating city, and this can be seen in the variety of shops and restaurants. This afternoon is free to explore Budapest on your own or you may choose to take an optional sightseeing trip to see the city. Tonight we enjoy a folklore show.

**Day 12: Home**

Disembark the cruise ship this morning and transfer to the Budapest airport for the flight home.

**PRICE PER PERSON:**  
BASED ON DOUBLE OCCUPANCY

**Please contact us at**

**800.322.0788**

**OR**

**mail@pilgrimtours.com**



Danube River



Munich



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