

Day 1 Basel, Switzerland / Embark ship

You are responsible for making your own way to Basel, Switzerland, to meet your trip leaders and fellow travelers. Please note that you cannot embark before 12:30 p.m. as the ship is being prepared for you.

Your cabin may not be ready for you until 3:00 p.m., but you are welcome to enjoy lunch on board between 12:30 and 3:30 p.m., and to relax in the ship's common areas, stretch your legs, or explore Basel.

At 2:30 p.m., meet your trip leaders and fellow travelers on board for introductions and a safety and bike-fitting session, followed by a short test ride. Later, enjoy dinner on board as the ship sets sail for Breisach this evening.

What to Expect:

No biking today

Included Meals: Lunch, Dinner

Day 2 Breisach / Kaiserstuhl Cycling Path

Wake up in Breisach and start your day with a relaxing breakfast on board. Then, disembark to start your ride, departing and returning directly from the ship's dock. Today's ride features the Kaiserstuhl-Radweg, a loop through the vineyard terraces of the sunniest corner of Germany. Riding on well-developed cycling paths and agricultural roads, you'll pass through riverside forests, orchards, and vineyards. Stop at one of the villages to sample the local cheese with wine and meet some of VBT's local friends. The Kaiserstuhl sits between Germany's Black Forest and the Vosges in France, and it may be possible to catch glimpses of both during your ride.

Rejoin the ship in Breisach for a late lunch on board. In the afternoon there is time to explore this charming town and learn about its medieval past.

There will be time to relax on board before the Captain's Welcome Cocktail and Gala. Tonight, the boat will set sail for Kehl.

Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Breisach to Endingen — 30 km (19 miles)

Afternoon: Endingen to Breisach — 24 km (14 miles)

What to Expect:

Today's ride options are on the Kaiserstuhl Cycle Route, which is a combination of dedicated bike paths and quiet roads. There are no significant elevation gains. The short option ends with a visit at the local cheese museum, followed by a shuttle back to Breisach to meet the ship. The longer option is a scenic ride across the vineyards back to the ship, including some elevation gains.

Cumulative Distance Range: 30 – 53 km (19 – 33 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 3 Kehl / Strasbourg / La Route des Vins d'Alsace / Obernai

You'll arrive in Kehl in time for breakfast after which you'll cross the river and say "bonjour" to France. .

In the morning, you start pedaling from the outskirts of Strasbourg into wine country. The most famous wine route in France, La Route des Vins, is a series of roadways and bike paths connecting one charming village to another. The early part of your ride is alongside the picturesque Canal de la Bruche. The canal's towpath has been converted into a bike path, which forms part of the 2,400-mile (3,862-km) EuroVelo 5 route. Then you continue pedaling deep in wine country to finish your morning in charming, medieval city of Obernai, where you'll have lunch, and some free time to enjoy the town's cafés, wine houses, and shops. If you choose to skip the afternoon ride, a private shuttle returns you to your ship, which is waiting across the river in Kehl, Or you can be dropped off in the city center of Strasbourg for an optional walk and return to the ship on your own, with Emerald's shuttle bus.

There will be time to relax before dinner and the evening activities on board. The ship sails for Mannheim just as your small group is sitting down to dinner.

Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Strasbourg to Obernai — 34 km (21 miles)

Afternoon: Obernai to Kehl — 39 km (24 miles)

What to Expect:

Ride on bike paths, dedicated bike lanes, and country roads on your choice of routes through the charming wine villages lined with flower boxes south of Strasbourg. The short option includes a shuttle from Obernai back to the ship, with an optional stop in Strasbourg. The long option offers you a different route, all the way back to the ship.

Cumulative Distance Range: 34 – 73 km (21 – 45 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 4 Ludwigshafen / Heidelberg / Cycle along the Neckar River

You'll awaken on board your ship in Ludwigshafen. After breakfast, you'll take a 45-minute shuttle to Heidelberg. The town is famous for its university and its castle, perched on a hill overlooking the town and the Neckar River. A local guide will provide information on the town's highlights, followed by a guided walk in the city center.

Your bike will be waiting for you in Heidelberg. Grab a snack from your trip leaders, and then you're off on a scenic ride back to the ship in Ludwigshafen, partly paralleling the Neckar River. Enjoy a late lunch on board as your ship sets course for Rudesheim.

Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Heidelberg to Ludwigshafen — 28 km (18 miles)

What to Expect:

Today's ride options are on a mix of bike paths and town roads featuring slow-moving traffic. There are no significant elevation gains today.

Cumulative Distance Range: 28 km (18 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 5 The Rhine Gorge / Koblenz / The Mosel River

Your ship leaves its mooring this morning, just as breakfast is being served as you head toward Koblenz which is at the confluence of the Rhine and Mosel rivers. You'll want to make sure you're on deck for the Rhine Gorge which is one of the highlights of the river. This dramatic stretch of water passes the famed Lorelei – maybe you'll hear her call – and you will see castle after castle, interspersed with southern-facing vineyards.

After arriving in Koblenz in the late morning, hope on your bike for a spin on the Mosel Cycle Route along the river and below the steep valley walls, towards Müden. Most of your riding will be on a dedicated car-free bike path and will include a view of the impressive Deutsches Eck (German Corner), rebuilt in 1993 to mark the headland where the Mosel and Rhine meet. Enjoy a delicious picnic, prepared by your VBT trip leaders en route. Your final destination is the town of Müden (Mosel), nestled along the Mosel River. Here, you'll visit a family-owned winery and taste some of the well-known wines of the region, before taking a 30-minute shuttle back to the ship.

For those seeking a break from the saddle, join an optional excursion (at additional cost) to Cochem. This trip includes transportation from Koblenz to Cochem and back, a walking tour of Cochem, and a guided visit to Reichsburg Castle. Booking details will be provided with your final documents.

Your ship remains in town until after midnight, allowing for an after-dinner stroll along the wide, tree-lined promenade of Koblenz.

Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Koblenz to Müden (Mosel) — 37 km (23 miles)

What to Expect:

Today features a relaxing and easy ride on the car-free Mosel Cycle Route, with some stretches on roadways leaving Koblenz.

Cumulative Distance Range: 37 km (23 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 6 Cologne / City ride / Sailing the Rhine to Amsterdam

Arrive in Cologne in the morning and watch the city's famous spires from the boat as you're sitting down for breakfast. Disembark for an urban bike loop, exploring both the popular and little-known sites of this appealing metropolis. Return to the ship in the early afternoon for lunch and then it's time to say goodbye to Cologne as the ship sets off on the final and longest leg of the trip, to Amsterdam. This is a good time to catch up on your reading, record the week's events in your travel journal, or just relax as the ship heads to Amsterdam. Tonight, you'll be treated to a cocktail reception and the captain's gala dinner.

Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Cologne City Loop — 20 km (13 miles)

What to Expect:

Today's ride features a combination of bike paths and town streets, through parks, and along the waterfront.

Cumulative Distance Range: 20 km (13 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 7 Amsterdam / Monnickendam

This morning, see Amsterdam as earlier residents would have viewed it, through a guided boat excursion along the canals.

Midday, set off on the city's excellent bike path network, heading north to the small fishing village of Monnickendam. As you pedal out of the city, you'll get a glimpse of everyday life in the countryside, as well as some of The Netherlands' iconic views. Your route is via Broek in Waterland, a particularly charming village that seemingly cries out for you to stop and take pictures. We've found an idyllic location to enjoy lunch, prepared with local specialties. Your Dutch meal is followed by probably the most typical Dutch discovery: a clog making demonstration. You'll get a different perspective of this beautiful countryside during your leisurely return route to the ship.

Back on board, enjoy a full roster of entertainment and dining to celebrate your week on the Rhine with your fellow travelers and your trip leaders.

Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Ship to Monnickendam — 26 km (16 miles)

Afternoon: Monnickendam to Ship — 18 km (12 miles)

What to Expect:

Today's routes offer flat, easy cycling on well-maintained bike paths. The short option involves a shuttle back to the ship from Monnickendam.

Cumulative Distance Range: 26 – 44 km (16 – 28 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 8 Disembark / Travel to Den Haag

Disembark your ship at 9:00 am to conclude your Rhine cycling river cruise.

After breakfast, say goodbye to your ship crew and trip leaders as your tour ends. It is important that you disembark ship no later than 9:00 a.m. Taxis will be available for transportation to the train station or airport.

Included Meals: Breakfast