

CHRISTMAS TIME ON THE RHINE & MOSELLE December 6 – 18, 2024



Revel in yuletide cheer as you discover beloved European holiday traditions during this scenic 12-day cruise tour. Admire festive seasonal displays in Paris, the vibrantly lit facade of the cathedral in Reims and Alsatian bonhomie in Strasbourg. Browse stalls full of local delicacies and handicrafts at the charming Christmas markets of Trier, Koblenz and Mannheim, and enjoy a warm mug of glühwein while in the shadow of the Alps in Zürich.



Itinerary:

December 6 Departure from the U.S. today for your overnight flight to Paris.

December 7 Paris, France

Arrive and check in to your hotel. Long a hub of French culture and cuisine, Paris is one of the most romantic destinations in the world. Over the centuries, Parisian culture has been built on the wings of inspiration. Music, film, architecture, literature, dance and the visual arts all have their brilliant place in the museums, theaters, bookstores and remarkably preserved buildings of this magnificent city. At the center of it all is the Champs-Élysées. With its inviting riverside promenade, graceful bridges and splendid views of all things Parisian, from the Eiffel Tower to the Louvre Museum.

December 8 Paris, France

Paris's landmarks come alive during the Christmas season as twinkling lights adorn the city's streets. Shop windows are a grand affair, depicting scenes from fairy tales, Santa Claus and his workshop, or a snowy winter wonderland. While it rarely snows in Paris, there is always the chance of a dusting, adding to the magical atmosphere. From November on, leading department stores, including Galeries Lafayette and Printemps, present their seasonal displays, often featuring clever animation; their grand openings are hotly anticipated each year.

December 9 Reims, France & Trier, Germany

After breakfast, check out of your hotel and begin your journey to your embarkation city. Reims, nestled in the heart of the renowned Champagne region, is home to one of France's largest Christmas markets. More than 140 stalls grace the square in front of the famous Reims Cathedral, itself decorated in a colorful light display that showcases the magnificent architectural details of this 13th-century Gothic masterpiece and UNESCO Site. Craftsmen display their wares at the market in the courtyard of the Palace of Tau and sweeping views of the city can be enjoyed while sipping a glass of champagne from atop the 150-foot-tall Ferris wheel at Erlon Square.

Treasured for its rich history, Trier was once the regional capital of the Holy Roman Empire. After Emperor Constantine the Great had a vision of Christ, he and his mother Helena built great churches and cathedrals here. A few still stand, the magnificent Romanesque Cathedral of Trier among them. The 20,000-seat amphitheater, the Roman Bridge and the massive Porta Nigra, the ancient city gate, are further relics of that time. Today, Trier is a picturesque town surrounded by forests and vineyards, known also as the birthplace of Karl Marx and as a vibrant university town. Embark your ship and settle into your stateroom.

December 10 Trier & Bernkastel, Germany

Set in the historic heart of Trier, the bustling and colorful Hauptmarkt is the city's main gathering place and the center of holiday festivities. Its rich repository of Romanesque, Gothic and baroque-style architecture provide a romantic backdrop to its cozy Christmas market, where vendors display handcrafted decorations and serve regional specialties, such as vintner hot mulled wine from the Moselle. The nearby Domfreihof adds to the yuletide atmosphere that abounds throughout the Old City, its market set in the shadow of the impressive 13th-century Trier Cathedral.

The medieval Old Town of Bernkastel transforms itself during the holidays, its cobblestone streets decked out in lights and the aroma of mulled wine, gingerbread and almonds filling the air. Picturesque half-timbered houses form the backdrop for about 40 stalls, where vendors showcase seasonal wares such as traditional handicrafts and jewelry. The market square is also home to the region's largest Advent calendar, festively displayed in the window of a local pharmacy. The market's highlight is the arrival by boat of Santa Claus, accompanied by swimmers carrying torches.

December 11 Cochem & Winningen, Germany

The holiday season transforms the squares and narrow cobblestone alleyways of Cochem's Old Town into a wintery fairy tale. Festive lights line the streets and the promenade along the Moselle River, giving the city a cozy, yuletide atmosphere, and vendors display local handicrafts from the shelves of their wooden stalls. Visitors can savor a Riesling stollen, a traditional German Christmas bread, as well as yeast dumplings, pastries, white mulled wine—a Moselle specialty—or regional delicacies made from the renowned red vineyard peach.



Hugging a gentle curve in the Moselle River, Winningen enjoys stunning vistas of forested hills and limestone cliff faces on the river's opposite banks. The small city's Weingüter, or wine taverns, showcase the valley's famed Riesling, Müller-Thurgau and Elbling that are nurtured in steeply terraced vineyards draping nearby slopes. In a region with plentiful renowned wine towns, Winningen is less well-known, and therein lies its charm. Its typical German streets are lined with half-timbered buildings and are a pleasure to explore.

December 12 Koblenz, Germany & Scenic Sailing: Middle Rhine

Koblenz is a traditional German country town with a wine heritage that spans centuries; a key ingredient for the warming glühwein that is served from taverns and market stalls during the holiday season. The scent of cinnamon, cloves and spices waft from steaming mugs as the sounds of festivities fill the air from one of the many musical performances, creating a toe-tapping atmosphere. Centered around the Schängel fountain, the Koblenz Christmas market offers all the flavors of the yuletide season from its famous Christmas bakery.

The Rhine River flows through one of Germany's most scenic regions. As you sail its most picturesque stretch, the UNESCO World Heritage Site of the Middle Rhine, you will pass vineyard-blanketed hills whose steep slopes require vintners to pick grapes by hand, keeping a centuries-old tradition alive. Splendid castles line the banks, all of which have stories to share, and the Lorelei Rock presides at a dramatic curve in the river. This infamous river maiden mesmerized sailors with her song and lured them to their demise at her feet.

December 13 Mainz, Germany

Located in the heart of the Rhine wine region, Mainz has been an important cultural center for thousands of years. Every winter, the city transforms itself into a cozy winter wonderland with one of Germany's prettiest Christmas markets. The 10th-century Cathedral of St. Martin becomes a dramatic backdrop for vendors selling handmade crafts, as well as candied almonds, chestnuts and mulled wine. Smaller WinterZeit markets dot the city, and concerts and traditional stage productions of fairy tales play regularly during the yuletide season.

December 14 Mannheim & Speyer, Germany

Mannheim's Christmas market is a holiday season shopping extravaganza, centered around the city's iconic water tower. One of Germany's oldest and largest markets, more than 160 booths host vendors from around the world, offering handicrafts and handmade items. Beautiful glassware, and carved wooden toys and games, sit alongside Christmas lanterns, colorful baubles and ornaments, all of which are presented in quaint wooden houses. Luxurious cashmere scarves, sheepskin mittens and felt hats are the ideal purchase to take home as gifts for friends and family.

Speyer's Old Town transforms into a winter wonderland during the holiday season. With the historic Old Gate as a stunning backdrop, market stalls are brimming with yuletide treats, serving Christmas cookies and steaming mugs of aromatic glühwein. Skaters don their woolen hats and gloves, and take to the ice for some festive fun, while visitors browse for unique handmade gifts. The holiday atmosphere continues into January, bringing the opportunity for New Year merrymakers to enjoy the festivities and sample regional specialties, such as potato soup and yeast dumplings.



December 15 Strasbourg, France

Strasbourg is said to be the capital of Christmas in France, with the city's cathedral square taking center stage as it is transformed into a winter wonderland. The city's Christkindelsmärik is the oldest in France, dating back to 1570. Hundreds of stalls are brimming with colorful wares, fine food and mulled wine, bringing festive cheer in abundance. Alsatian specialties feature an array

of hearty classics, from bretzels (soft, bread-like pretzels) to bredele (star-shaped spiced cookies), and knacks (sausages) to pain d'epices (gingerbread).

December 16 Basel & Zürich, Switzerland

After breakfast, disembark your ship and transfer to your destination. A delightful blend of old and new, Basel is Switzerland's best-kept secret. During the holiday season, the medieval Old Town is transformed into a magical yuletide affair. Cobblestone streets are lined with wooden chalet-style huts selling all manner of festive treats and gifts. Visitors to the Christmas market can enjoy a warming cup of aromatic glühwein in a decorated boot-shaped mug. Hand-carved tree decorations, cheerfully painted ceramics and delicious food are sold from stalls throughout the city.



Arrive and check in to your hotel. Zürich's oldest Christmas market is set along the medieval streets of the lively Niederdorf neighborhood. Centrally located next to the main train station, more than 140 stalls comprise the Christkindlimarkt, where the air is heavy with the aroma of mulled wine and spices. The scene is dominated by a looming Christmas tree decorated with thousands of Swarovski crystals. Nestled between the elegant Zürich Opera House and the shores of Lake Zürich, the Wienachtsdorf creates an enchanting Christmas village where a mug of glühwein can be enjoyed while browsing for seasonal mementos.

December 17 Zürich, Switzerland

Overlooking Lake Zürich and spanning the banks of the Limmat River, Switzerland's largest city is often cited as one of Europe's most livable. It is the country's financial heart, but its residents also embrace their natural surroundings, from soaring alpine peaks to the lake's shimmering waters. Zürich is home to an impressive arts culture; Dadaism was born here in 1916 and two of the city's most important churches boast stained glass windows by Marc Chagall and Augusto Giacometti. More masterworks reside in the renowned Kunsthhaus, including a large water lily painting by Monet.



Zürich offers much more than its reputation as a city of banking institutions. The Grossmünster is one of Zürich's most important landmarks and the center of the Swiss Reformation in the 16th century. Exclusive designer boutiques line the streets of Storchengasse alongside world-renowned chocolatiers and quaint, cozy cafés. The scent of delicious sweet treats and freshly baked gipfeli waft through the air on every street corner.

December 18 After breakfast, check out of your hotel and transfer to the airport for your journey home. Arrive back in the U.S. late today.

Price: Prices listed are per person based on two people sharing a room.

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|------------------------------|-------------|-----------|
| Category F – Window | 150 sq. ft. | \$3674.00 |
| Category E – Window | 150 sq. ft. | \$3774.00 |
| Category D – French Balcony | 135 sq. ft. | \$4374.00 |
| Category C – French Balcony | 135 sq. ft. | \$4574.00 |
| Category B – Balcony | 205 sq. ft. | \$4874.00 |
| Category A – Balcony | 205 sq. ft. | \$5074.00 |
| Category AA – Veranda Suite | 275 sq. ft. | \$5874.00 |
| Category ES – Explorer Suite | 445 sp. Ft. | \$6874.00 |

Attention Viking Past Passengers:

Past passenger discounts may be available on this cruise. Please ask for details.

Special Viking air offer: From \$799.00

Ask for details on special air offer

DEPOSIT: A deposit of \$500 per person is required to confirm your reservation.

COMPREHENSIVE TRAVEL INSURANCE will be available for this cruise and is highly recommended. Insurance premiums must be paid with deposit.

INCLUDED FEATURES & SERVICES:

One complimentary shore excursion in every port of call

Free Wi-Fi (connection speed may vary)

Visits to UNESCO Sites

Enrichment lectures & Destination Performances

Beer, wine & soft drinks with onboard lunch & dinner

24-hour specialty coffees, teas & bottled water

Port taxes & fees

Ground transfers with Viking Air purchase

YOUR STATEROOM INCLUDES:

River-view stateroom

Hotel-style bed with optional twin-bed configuration; luxury linens & pillows

40" flat-screen LCD TV with complimentary Movies on Demand

110/220 volt outlets & USB ports

Refrigerator; security safe; hair dryer

Spacious glass-enclosed shower

Heated bathroom floor & anti-fog mirror

Premium Freyja® toiletries; plush robes & slippers

Stateroom steward & twice-daily housekeeping

For Reservations Contact:

Steve Briggs

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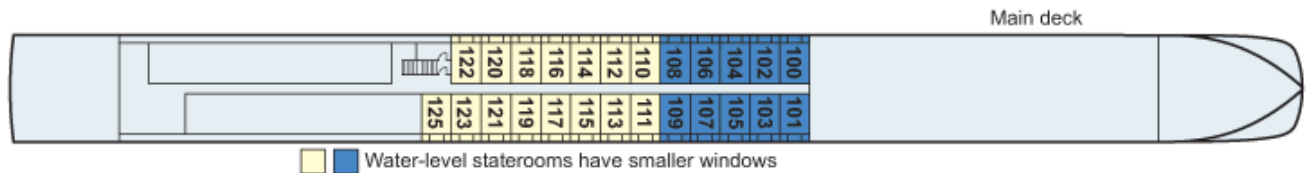
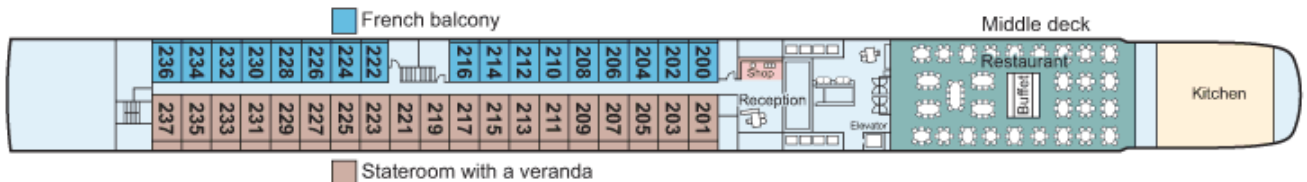
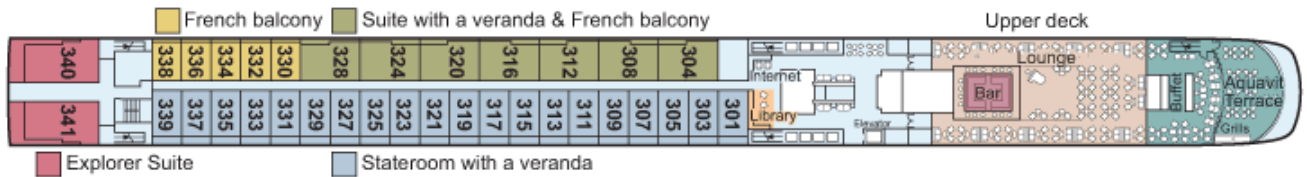
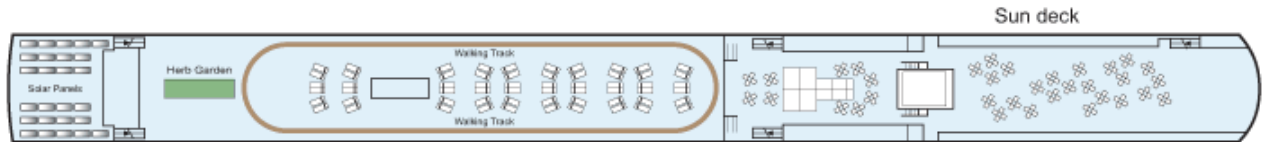
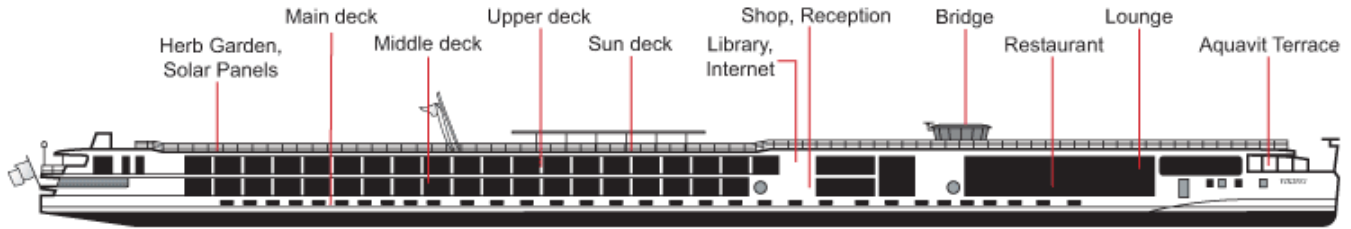
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- Standard (F)



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