

RHINE HOLIDAY MARKETS

8 Days | *Basel to Cologne*

★★★★★ 4.4/5 134 reviews



8 days



3 countries



UNESCO

Switzerland, France and Germany provide the perfect backdrop for this true connoisseur's Christmas market cruise.

Discover the roots of our Christmas traditions as you explore some of Europe's most charming towns. Browse for unique ornaments in Basel's Christmas Market. Sip *vin chaud* as you stroll to Place Kléber to behold the enormous, brilliantly lighted tree of Strasbourg. See how the baroque town hall of Koblenz is transformed into an Advent calendar and find unexpected treasures in the stalls clustered around Cologne's magnificent cathedral.

Savor tantalizing once-a-year treats with Uniworld's "Taste of Christmas" program, including gingerbread and warm spiced wine. Revel in brightly painted carousels and handmade ornaments, medieval squares illuminated by twinkling lights, life-sized Nativity figures, and joyful brass choirs. Sail through castle-strewn hillsides and visit charming towns decked in festive finery for a holiday season you will never forget.

Please note that most Christmas Markets in Europe end their season on the 23rd of December and will not be available after that date.

[BASEL TO COLOGNE](#)

Note: The itineraries presented are subject to modification due to water levels, closures because of public holidays or other uncontrollable factors. Every effort will be made to operate programs as planned, but changes may still be necessary throughout the cruise. This day-to-day schedule

is subject to change. Your final day-to-day schedule will be provided onboard on the first day of your cruise.

DAY 1 BASEL (EMBARK)

Arrive at EuroAirport Basel-Mulhouse-Freiburg. If your cruise package includes a group arrival transfer, or if you have purchased a private arrival transfer, you will be greeted by a Uniworld representative and transferred to the ship.

Important Note: Uniworld's airport services and transfers to the ship will take place on the Switzerland side of the Basel-Mulhouse Airport. Be sure to enter Customs on the Switzerland side, as guests cannot return to the Switzerland side after they have exited the airport from the France side.

Note: For Arrival, Departure and Transfer details, please visit [Uniworld.com/transfers](https://www.uniworld.com/transfers). For Port Location details, please visit [Uniworld.com/ports](https://www.uniworld.com/ports).



DAY 2 BASEL

Basel is a cultural and artistic powerhouse, with all sorts of galleries, theaters, and museums. And at this time of year, the city's Christmas Market draws visitors from all over Europe, as does its Christmas Street, lined with more than 100 beautifully decorated and illuminated Christmas trees. Do you have a special wish for Christmas? Write it in the Wish Book, which lies open in Basel's 17th-century Town Hall during Advent, waiting for residents and visitors to express their hopes and dreams for the holiday—or for the world.

A special Captain's Welcome Reception and Dinner will be prepared for you this evening.

Please note that most Christmas Markets in Europe end their season on the 23rd of December and will not be available after that date.



Featured Excursion

BASEL WALKING TOUR WITH CHRISTMAS MARKET

Do you have a special wish for Christmas? Write it in the Wish Book, which lies open in Basel's 17th-century Town Hall during Advent, waiting for residents and visitors to express their hopes and dreams for the holiday—or for the world. Your local expert will take you past the Town Hall, whose red-brick walls feature paintings by Hans Bock, so you'll know right where to go after your tour. The 800-year-old Münster, with its red sandstone walls, multi-colored roof tiles, and twin towers, is equally spectacular; spread out before it you'll find the wondrous Christmas Market. With more than 150 stands, it offers many locally made craft items, unique ornaments, and delicious seasonal baked goods. Warm your hands on a mug of hot mulled wine as you browse.

After exploring this Swiss treat, you'll want to visit the town's illuminated Christmas Street, which is beautifully decorated with more than 100 Christmas trees. If you're looking for truly unique gifts, stop by Johann Wanner's shop, with its array of elegant angel ornaments, blown-glass figurines, and pewter Victorian miniatures. You'll also find museums and art galleries, specialty shops, and cozy wainscoted restaurants near Market Square.

Please note that on or after Christmas Eve, the Christmas Market will likely have ended its season and not be part of this tour.

DAY 3 KEHL (STRASBOURG)

Strasbourg is invariably described as quaint, a rather overused word that in this case is perfectly apropos. It's also been known as the "Crossroads of Europe" for its strategic location halfway between Paris and Prague. With a friendly local expert, see this historic town with its cobbled lanes, half-timbered homes, giant stork nests, and impossible-to-resist pastry shops that will win your heart. You won't want to miss the holiday treats like *bûche de Noël*, the delicious Christmas cake made to look like a yule log.

Please note that most Christmas Markets in Europe end their season on the 23rd of December and will not be available after that date.



Choose between...

STRASBOURG WALKING TOUR WITH CHRISTMAS MARKET

Catch the highlights of multinational Strasbourg from the warmth of a comfortable motorcoach: it's a city with deep connections to both France and Germany. The European Quarter—Strasbourg is home to many EU institutions—is stunningly modern, but you'll find a beautifully preserved old town to explore on foot. Enchanting half-timbered houses line the canals of Petite France, one of the oldest districts, and the medieval cathedral—a religious institution has stood in its spot for 3,000 years—is extraordinary. Step inside with your guide to see the 15th-century astronomical clock and the gorgeous rose window (the craftsmen who built Chartres Cathedral created it). Since Strasbourg calls itself the Capital of Christmas, you won't be surprised to find that this town really goes all out for the holidays. The Christmas tree on Place Kléber towers over hundreds of stalls—but it's only one part of the market, which spreads through 10 neighboring locations, all of them both historic and wonderfully decorated. Browse on your own among chalets stocked with finely crafted toys, ceramics, jewelry, and handmade Nativity figurines, not to mention the giant toy storks in Santa hats that are a playful tribute to Strasbourg's beloved storks, and keep warm with mulled wine and holiday treats like *bûche de Noël*.

Please note that on or after Christmas Eve, the Christmas Market will likely have ended its season and not be part of this tour.



"TASTE OF CHRISTMAS" STRASBOURG WALKING TOUR

Alsace is famous for its excellent cuisine, which combines French and German elements in delectable and unique ways. Roam through Petite France with your local expert, where the little shops are all charmingly decked out for Christmas, and explore the Christmas Market set up in Broglie Square. Stroll from chalet to chalet, as the stalls are known here, which brim with ornaments, pretzels, steaming vats of mulled wine, and Alsace's best-known Christmas cookies, called *bredele*. There are many kinds—*hirschkörnle*, *anise*, *makrenle*, *rochers*, *speculatius*—each with a distinctive shape, history, and flavoring, all of which your guide can tell you about as you sample them.

During the afternoon, you will have some free time to wander through the beautiful Old Town. You might want to spend more time at the Christmas Market, which takes on an especially festive look as darkness falls and the lights illuminate the entire area; visit the magnificent cathedral; or simply stroll along the lanes of Petite France. You could learn about Alsatian wines in the medieval wine cellars of the old city hospital, spend some time among the treasures of the Rohan Palace's museums, or shop along the Grand Arcades. Stop for a warm drink at a café on Place Gutenberg, named for the man who invented moveable type here in Strasbourg some 560 years ago.

Shuttles will be available to take you to and from the ship, in case you want to drop off your finds and return for more.

DAY 4 MANNHEIM (BADEN-BADEN)

Your ship left France behind and sailed into Germany during the wee hours of the morning. If you speak no German, here's one phrase you might want to learn now: "Fröhliche Weihnachten," or "Merry Christmas!" Today you'll have two choices: Venture into the storied city of Baden-Baden, whose contemporary flair meshes with hot springs, spas, and unspoiled nature, or visit the Doktorenhof vinegar estate for a special vinegar tasting. The atmospheric cellar is like no other you'll ever experience, and the candlelit tasting room is decked for the holidays.

Please note that most Christmas Markets in Europe end their season on the 23rd of December and will not be available after that date.

Choose between...

PRIVATE DOKTORENHOF VINEGAR ESTATE VISIT AND TASTING

For a different spin on the Palatinate wine region, visit the Weinessiggut Doktorenhof estate for a special vinegar tasting. Yes, you read that right—a vinegar tasting. Founded by Georg Wiedemann some 30 years ago, Doktorenhof produces vinegars from premium wines, rather than inexpensive ones. Gewürztraminer, Sylvaner, Riesling, and Pinot Noir are aged with a century-old vinegar "mother," as the bacteria that makes vinegar is known, and flavored with a variety of herbs and fruits. Most importantly, Wiedemann and his family run their farm and vineyards with the utmost care, tending to them with natural materials only.

The results make complex and elegant aperitifs, intended to be sipped from a specially designed long-stemmed glass between courses or after a meal. The atmospheric tasting room (think candles, cloaks, and choir music) is like no other you'll ever experience, and the candlelit tasting room is decked for the holidays. You'll have plenty of time to explore their enticing gift shop, too.

This MAKE TRAVEL MATTER® Experience supports Global Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production.

Our MAKE TRAVEL MATTER® Experiences support sustainable tourism, offering our guests opportunities to directly impact the communities we explore in a positive way.

 MAKE TRAVEL MATTER® Experiences

or

BADEN-BADEN WALKING TOUR WITH CHRISTMAS MARKET

Join a local guide for a walking tour of enchanting Baden-Baden, which will bring you past two thermal baths and the city's famous Casino. Gain further appreciation for the Romans and

their love of natural spa facilities as you pass by the Fettquelle, a public thermal fountain where it is believed that the water is health-promoting. After learning about the curative powers of Baden-Baden's water sources, visit the local Christmas Market for a festive end to your tour.

DAY 5 MAINZ, RÜDESHEIM

Mainz's Old Town brims with specialty shops tucked into lovingly restored buildings. You'll find jewelry, leather goods, books, toys—something special for every special person on your list. Or opt to explore neighboring Wiesbaden's Christmas Market. However you choose to spend your time in Mainz, you'll head back to the ship for a short cruise to Rüdesheim, which, like many cities along the Rhine, dates back to Roman times, when the Rhine was the northern border of the empire. Today, Rüdesheim is famous for its beauty and its entertaining alley of shops and wine bars called the Drosselgasse.

Please note that most Christmas Markets in Europe end their season on the 23rd of December and will not be available after that date.



Choose between...

MAINZ CHRISTMAS MARKET STROLL

Take a walk with your Cruise Manager through the charming town of Mainz in all its wintertime charm. You'll head straight towards the local Christmas Market, where you'll find hundreds of stalls laid out in front of the town cathedral. The market features a beautiful handmade Christmas pyramid—a traditional German holiday decoration comprised of a wooden tower and several figurines. This version is enormous compared to its typical household counterparts, with life-sized figurines standing at each level of the pyramid.



RHEINWEINWELTEN VISIT - THE BEST RHINE RIESLINGS

Enjoy a wine tasting at your leisure with a visit to Rheinweinwelten in Rüdesheim. This local treasure trove of wines is sure to impress, with 14 different wine caves to explore. This experience can be enjoyed at your own pace and is not guided. There is, however, ample literature and information in each room about every one of the 160 distinct wines. You'll receive 10 tokens at the start, with which you can choose to sample whichever vintages appeal to you most. Prost!



RÜDESHEIM WALK WITH LOCAL TREATS AND CHRISTMAS MARKET

Follow your guide through the cobbled lanes of Rüdesheim while you hear about the vibrant life of this old and fascinating town. Walk down the famously quaint Drosselgasse alley and taste Rüdesheim's hallmark treat—coffee splashed with brandy and topped with whipped cream.

Please note that on or after Christmas Eve, the Christmas Market will likely have ended its season and not be part of this tour.

DAY 6 CRUISING THE ROMANTIC RHINE RIVER, KOBLENZ

Spend a spectacular morning onboard your luxurious boutique ship as you sail the Upper Middle Rhine Valley. A UNESCO World Heritage Site, this stretch of the Rhine is extraordinarily picturesque: Castles perch atop steep cliffs above the water and each quaint village is marked by the spire of its historic church. After sailing past 40 miles (65 kilometers) of gorgeous scenery, you'll reach the famous intersection of the Rhine and the Moselle. Here, where the two rivers meet, you'll find the enchanting town of Koblenz. Watch the waters of the Moselle gush into the Rhine as you stand on the spit of land called German Corner before embarking on a walking tour of Koblenz's historical treasures.

Please note that most Christmas Markets in Europe end their season on the 23rd of December and will not be available after that date.



Featured Excursion

KOBLENZ WALKING TOUR WITH CHRISTMAS MARKET

Watch the waters of the Moselle gush into the Rhine as you stand on the spit of land called German Corner. It's an appropriate spot for a symbol of German unity: an equestrian statue of Kaiser Wilhelm I, erected in honor of German unification in 1871. Behind it is Koblenz's oldest church, St. Castor's Basilica, originally built in the ninth century and the first of the charming churches and squares you'll encounter as you wander through Old Town. Like many Rhineland towns, Koblenz suffered at the hands of French forces under Louis XIV—that's why you'll see so many baroque features in the buildings you pass, since so many needed to be rebuilt after the French left. That's also why the Church of Our Lady has twin onion domes. Originally built in the Middle Ages on the highest point in Koblenz, the lovely church that stands in this spot now mostly dates to the early 1700s. Following your tour, delve into the Koblenz Christmas Market, which spills from square to square, with stalls full of unique Rhine Valley handicrafts, baked goods, and wines. Be sure to check out the Advent calendar in the baroque town hall's windows.

Please note that on or after Christmas Eve, the Christmas Market will likely have ended its season and not be part of this tour.

DAY 7 COLOGNE

Your local expert will show you favorite haunts around the Old Town and share some of the cathedral's most intriguing and magical secrets with you.

A special Captain's Farewell Reception and Dinner will be prepared for you this evening.

Please note that most Christmas Markets in Europe end their season on the 23rd of December and will not be available after that date.



Featured Excursion

COLOGNE WALKING TOUR WITH OLD TOWN VISIT AND CHRISTMAS MARKETS

Follow your guide around some of the most popular sites of Cologne, the largest city on the Rhine. You'll pass the old fish market, City Hall with its Renaissance façade, and the old Jewish mikvah (a bath used for ritual cleansing).

Meander through the narrow, cobbled lanes of Old Town, lined with traditional houses in every color and a plethora of restaurants and pubs. One of the city's 12 Romanesque churches provides a castle-like backdrop to this quaint, riverside quarter of Cologne.

Your local expert will take you all the way to the Domplatte, the square where you'll find the Cologne Cathedral. Should you wish, you can head inside this Gothic building on your own to see the Shrine of the Magi and the beautiful stained-glass windows. The famous Cologne Christmas Market is held in the square just outside the cathedral. Enjoy the festivities during your free time after the tour.

DAY 8 COLOGNE (DISEMBARK)

Disembark the ship. If your cruise package includes a group departure transfer, or if you have purchased a private departure transfer, you will be transferred to Cologne Bonn Airport for your flight home.



WHAT'S INCLUDED



DINING

All meals onboard, prepared using the finest and freshest ingredients

7 breakfasts, 6 lunches, 7 dinners

Captain's Welcome and Farewell Receptions

Welcome and Farewell Gala Dinners

Unlimited beverages onboard, including fine wine, beer, spirits, specialty coffee and tea, soft drinks, and mineral water



EXCURSIONS

6 days of excursions, all fully hosted by English-speaking local experts

Guided "Taste of Christmas" program

State-of-the-art Quietvox portable audio-headset system on all excursions

Use of Nordic walking sticks



ACCOMMODATIONS

7-night cruise in a riverview stateroom on the exquisite *S.S. Antoinette* or the elegant *S.S. Elisabeth*

Lavishly appointed riverview staterooms and suites have handcrafted Savoir® Beds of England, high thread count 100% Egyptian cotton sheets and European duvets, and a menu of pillow options

Free Wi-Fi



EXPERIENCES

3 countries: France, Germany, Switzerland

3 UNESCO World Heritage sites

Services of an experienced Uniworld Cruise Manager

Group Transfers are included on arrival and departure days (please see terms and conditions for transfer guidelines)

Gratuities for onboard personnel (ship staff, crew, Cruise/Tour Manager) are included during the cruise/tour

Cultural enrichment, including captivating onboard local entertainment