

Full Itinerary

ROLL INTO CHRISTMAS ON THE RHINE



TALK TO OUR WELL
TRAVELLED TEAM OF
EXPERTS

0844 3350 197

Monday - Thursday 9:00am -
8:00pm, Friday 9:00am - 5:30pm
(London time)



JOURNEY SNAPSHOT

ACTIVITY LEVEL:

Level 2

DESTINATION:

Roll into Christmas on the Rhine

DURATION:

10 days / 9 nights

FLIGHT INFORMATION:

Please arrange your flights into Cologne International Airport [CGN] on Day 1 and to depart from there on Day 10

PICKUP LOCATION:

Cologne International Airport [CGN]

OVERVIEW

02 - 11 Dec, 2025

Get into the Christmas spirit and stock up on your festive shopping on a fantastic river cruise along one of Europe's mightiest rivers, the Rhine, an area famous for its excellent Christmas Markets!

When you think of Christmas Markets, you instinctively think of Germany! This Advent, join us as we visit some of the best, oldest and largest Christmas Markets that Europe has to offer on our festive adventure down the Rhine.

Starting in Cologne, we discover the historic city and its famous market, the largest in Germany. We'll also explore Bonn, home of Beethoven before we board our floating hotel for our river cruise down the Rhine, stops at numerous towns and cities along the way. Discover Strasbourg and Mainz's markets, plus Rudesheim in full festive glory, and much more.

With the chance to do your Christmas shopping whilst you sightsee, enjoy a gluhwein, or taste a real gingerbread at the markets, you'll be enticed by this fantastic festive vacation.

ITINERARY SUMMARY

DAY 1 - Welcome to Cologne

DAY 2 - Cultural Cologne

DAY 3 - Beethoven's Bonn

DAY 4 - Rhine Cruise Embarkation

DAY 5 - Romantic Rudesheim

DAY 6 - Exploring the Upper Rhine

DAY 7 - Strasbourg, France's Oldest Christmas Market

DAY 8 - Magical Mainz & Koblenz

DAY 9 - Christmassy Cologne

DAY 10 - Auf Wiedersehen, Germany

FULL ITINERARY

DAY 1 - WELCOME TO COLOGNE

Welcome to Cologne! You will be met at Cologne-Bonn Airport and transferred to your hotel.

Relax into your surroundings before meeting with your fellow travellers and tour director as you join together for dinner

Included meals: Dinner

Accommodation: Maritim Cologne

DAY 2 - CULTURAL COLOGNE

After breakfast, we head out to discover the city of Cologne. One of Germany's most important and populous cities, it lies on the banks of the mighty River Rhine.

The medieval Cologne Cathedral (Kölner Dom) was for many years the world's tallest building and is today still the third-tallest church and tallest cathedral in the world! Whilst its history dates back mainly to the Roman times, when it was the capital city of the region, the city was one of the most bombed in WW2 sadly losing over 80% of its millennia old historic centre.

On our city tour this morning we will learn of Cologne's past, before heading to museum to learn of one of its most famous exports – perfume. Eau de Cologne gets its name from the city – the water of Cologne – and has been produced since around 1709. At the museum, you will learn how scent production came to be synonymous with the city.

This afternoon, we'll visit some of the archaeological excavations to delve further into the city's past, before enjoying the rest of the afternoon and evening at leisure.

Included meals: Breakfast

Accommodation: Maritim Cologne

DAY 3 - BEETHOVEN'S BONN

We head out of Cologne after breakfast as we drive to the nearby city of Bonn. The capital of West Germany from 1949 – 1990, then the seat of government of the reunited Germany from 1990 – 1999, Bonn is a famous university city founded by the Romans some two centuries before Cologne. It was also the birthplace of the famous composer, Ludwig van Beethoven

This morning, a guided tour will lead us round the city "In the Footsteps of Beethoven" before we enjoy time at leisure for lunch.

This afternoon, we'll discover more of the many sides to the city and Germany's past as we visit the Museum of German History.

We return to Cologne where we re-join for dinner this evening.

Included meals: Breakfast & Dinner

Accommodation: Maritim Cologne

DAY 4 - RHINE CRUISE EMBARKATION

After a morning at leisure in Cologne, this afternoon we make our way to the river and board our vessel, our floating hotel for the next few days. River cruising's bonus is your room always has a constantly changing view.

The A-ROSA SILVA is a small vessel, offering many modern amenities such as sauna, fitness area, pool, and spa.

The dress code aboard is casual, even when dining. The whole atmosphere on board is relaxed and above all, festive!

Throughout the day, hot and cold drinks, as well as soft drinks, beers, and a wide selection of excellent German wines are included, and the on-board Chefs create dishes that reflect the area through which you are sailing.

In the evenings, enjoy nightly entertainment in the onboard lounge.

Included meals: Breakfast & Dinner

Accommodation: A-ROSA Silva

DAY 5 - ROMANTIC RÜDESHEIM

Our cruise has sailed south along the mighty River Rhine to the quaint town of Rudesheim. The bustling riverside town is well-known for its vineyards, which produce the famous Riesling wines, as well as its “Christmas Market of the Nations”.

Rudesheim is also the centre of Rhine Romanticism, and inspired many poets and musicians, such as Brahms who composed his 3rd Symphony there. A UNESCO World Heritage Site, the town of Rudesheim marks the end of several old merchants’ routes and was protected by four castles.

Enjoy time to explore the town and its markets at leisure or join one of the optional organised excursions. Make sure you take a walk through the charming little streets of the old town. Drosselgasse, an alleyway with half-timbered facades, is known as “The World’s Longest Wine Bar” and is reputed to be the most-visited tourist attraction in Germany after Cologne Cathedral!

Whilst in Rudesheim, you should also try a Rudesheimer Kaffee, a coffee which also contains Asbach Uralt brandy and sugar cubes. First made in 1957 by the German television chef, Hans Karl Adam, it is still popular today and will definitely warm you up!

Later it is time to re-board your cruise as it sails to the next destination.

Included meals: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Accommodation: A-ROSA Silva

DAY 6 - EXPLORING THE UPPER RHINE

Today, your cruise will be sailing along the Upper Rhine. Depending on the port availability, we will discover Germersheim or nearby Speyer.

The German king Rudolph von Habsburg gave the historic town of Germersheim its city rights back in 1276. According to legend, the King, when he was sick, rode from Germersheim to Speyer, just 20km away to die there instead.

Nearby Speyer is Germany’s oldest planned medieval town - over 2,000 years old! Speyer’s most prominent monument is its cathedral. As one of the country’s most important High Romanesque cathedrals, it is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Here, the natural surrounds are some of the most picture-perfect you’ll see on your river cruise, with terraced vineyards, expansive forests, high peaks, and nature trails just waiting to be explored.

Included meals: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Accommodation: A-ROSA Silva

DAY 7 - STRASBOURG, FRANCE'S OLDEST CHRISTMAS MARKET

Today’s port, Kehl, lies on the border with France and the historic town of Strasbourg, in France’s Alsace region. The border here has passed many times between the two countries, hence a grand affinity between both sides.

Since 1949, Strasbourg has been the official seat of many European institutions, such as the European Parliament or the European Court of Human Rights. It also played an important part in the Protestant Reformation, and it was one of the first centres of the printing industry.

A visit to Strasbourg is not to be missed during the Christmas season - it is home to France’s oldest Christmas Market. Strolling through the Old Town, with its interesting Franco-German architecture, you will pass timber-framed houses, and of course, the world-famous Strasbourg Cathedral. Started in 1015 and finally finished in 1439, it was the world’s tallest building for many years and as of today it’s still the sixth tallest church in the world!

Included meals: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Accommodation: A-ROSA Silva

DAY 8 - MAGICAL MAINZ & KOBLENZ

Today we visit Mainz, one of the oldest cities in Germany. Located on the left-bank of the Rhine, it lies opposite another great river, the Main, from which it gets its name. Founded by the Romans in the 1st century BC, Mainz is full of history and the birthplace of Johannes Gutenberg, the inventor of the movable printing press.

Due to its waterfront location, the climate in Mainz is fairly mild, creating an ideal location to cultivate wine. It is surrounded by Germany’s

largest wine-growing region 'Rheinhessen'. On an optional excursion, discover the heart of Mainz's old town, the historic Christmas Market on the Domplatz, towered over by the illuminated and imposing Mainz Cathedral, and have the chance to try regional wines during a wine tasting session.

Our next place to visit is Koblenz. The city dates back over 2,000 years, making it one of Germany's oldest. It is also one of its most picturesque, with a wealth of sights and cultural attractions. Marvel at Koblenz's palaces, stately homes, grand townhouses, narrow lanes, and romantic corners.

Tonight, it is sadly our final evening aboard the river cruise, as we dine together and enjoy the onboard festivities.

Included meals: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Accommodation: A-ROSA Silva

DAY 9 - CHRISTMASSY COLOGNE

Sadly, this morning it is time to disembark our river cruise after breakfast and you will be transferred back to land and to our hotel in Cologne.

Upon arrival at the hotel, after check-in, the rest of the day is at leisure for a final trip to the city's famous Christmas Markets. If you are still looking for souvenirs, next to the cathedral you can find over a hundred Christmas stalls!

We round off our festive adventure along the Rhine with a final farewell meal this evening.

Included meals: Breakfast & Dinner

Accommodation: Maritim Cologne

DAY 10 - AUF WIEDERSEHEN, GERMANY

Laden with souvenirs and memories, it's time to say Auf Wiedersehen to Germany.

You will be transferred to Cologne International Airport [CGN] in time to for your departure flights.

Included meals: Breakfast

Accommodation: none

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Meet & Greet at Cologne-Bonn Airport on arrival
- Accommodation as detailed in the itinerary
- Meals as detailed in the itinerary
- Transportation as detailed
- All activities, visits and excursions as detailed in the itinerary
- English speaking tour guides where applicable
- Services of a Big Journey Company Tour Director throughout (subject to minimum numbers)

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- ATOL Protection
- Flights to/from Cologne International Airport [CGN] - please contact us for a flight quotation
- Transfers on arrival or departure, to/from the airport(s), outside of the tour dates
- Cruise shore excursions
- Additional food/beverage unless otherwise included in the programme
- Personal expenses
- Personal Travel & Medical Insurance
- Visas (if required)
- Optional excursions
- Gratuities
- Any COVID tests or related entry & exit requirements

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- Please let The Big Journey Company know prior to travelling if you have any medical needs or take any medication that we need to be made aware of to ensure that you have a safe and pleasant tour.
- Check in is after 2-3pm and check out is before 10am unless otherwise specified in the itinerary.
- Cancellation 90 – 0 days prior to departure cancellation fee is 100%. It is your responsibility to ensure the correct travel insurance in place to protect you against the need to cancel your holiday. Deposits are non-refundable and final payments are due 14 weeks prior to departure.
- Further terms and conditions apply and will be provided upon request or at the time of booking. The Big Journey Company reserves the right to withdraw any offer prior to accepting a reservation request. This does not affect your statutory rights. This offer is subject to availability and space is limited.

BOOK YOUR JOURNEY

Choose from the list of dates below

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