

Lyon, Provence & The Rhineland Viking River Cruises

By

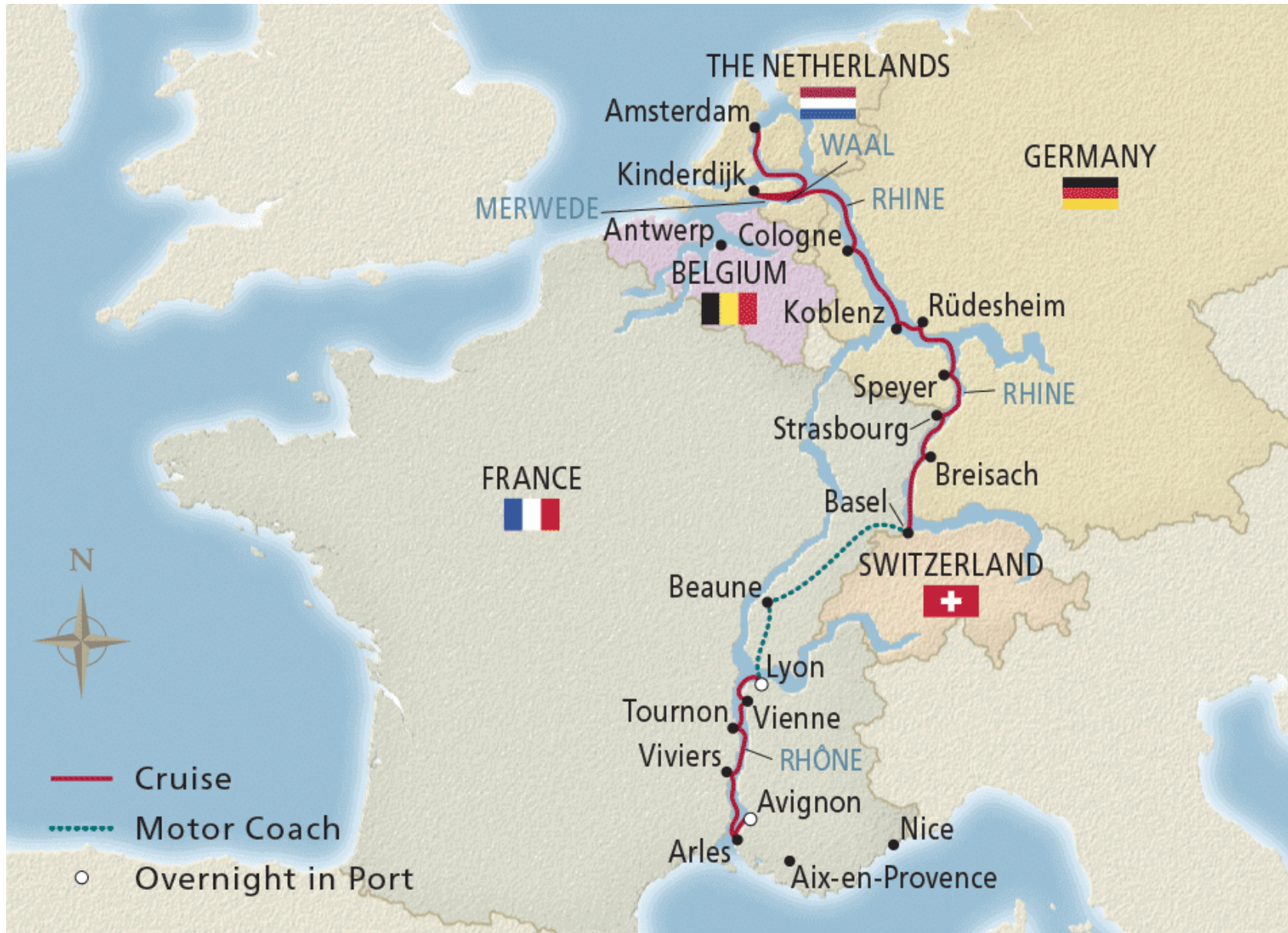
Hank Schrader

Europe River Cruise Expert

Overview

- Journey along the Rhône and the Rhine, through landscapes shaped by centuries of history, viticulture and art.
- Taste complex red wines and crisp whites grown on terraced vineyards rooted in the Roman Empire.
- Explore Avignon's grand Palace of the Popes and Cologne's majestic cathedral, both UNESCO sites.
- Savor Lyon's rich culinary traditions and the Rhineland's hearty flavors and admire the landscapes that inspired van Gogh in the Netherlands and Provence.

Map From Viking River Cruises



Avignon to Amsterdam

- Your Viking Cruise includes one shore excursion in each port of call (excluding embarkation and disembarkation ports), and there are many optional excursions in most ports that will allow you to customize your journey.
- A full list of available shore excursions is provided to each guest well in advance of each cruise.

Day 1 Avignon, France

- Embark your ship and settle into your stateroom.
- Avignon's narrow streets are lined with churches and remarkable medieval buildings.
- This "City of Popes" was the papal seat for 70 years during the 14th century after the sitting pope abandoned Rome and fled here.
- The massive church-fortress Palais des Papes, or Palace of the Popes, was the center of the Christian world during that controversial period. It remains a work of Gothic splendor.
- Another of Avignon's notable structures reaches into the Rhône, the ruins of the Pont d'Avignon. The 12th-century bridge, immortalized in folk song and dance, once spanned the river.

Day 2 Arles, France

- In the last days of the Roman Empire, Arles was the capital of Roman Gaul and boasts many Gallo-Roman ruins including Les Arènes; this ancient amphitheater seats 20,000 and is still used today for bullfights and plays.
- The town has an energetic feel, attracting farmers from the countryside to the frequent and famous Provençal market.
- It also enjoys a rich artistic heritage; the Mediterranean sunlight here inspired legendary Impressionist Vincent van Gogh to paint a number of works. Many of Arles's sights are immortalized in his paintings.

Day 2 Shore Excursions

- Arles Walking Tour—included
- Unspoiled Camargue & Architectural Gems—see the wetlands and farms of France's protected Rhone Delta region and visit 2 celebrated towns.
- Les Baux & Carrieres de Lumieres—see a remarkable multimedia art installation in a former quarry, then ascend to the rock-hewn hamlet of Les Baux.
- Delights of Provence—discover one family's passion for olive oil during a visit to a countryside mill in the heart of Provence.

Arles



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Arles—Roman Amphitheater



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Inside the Roman Amphitheater Arles

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Arles Narrow Lanes

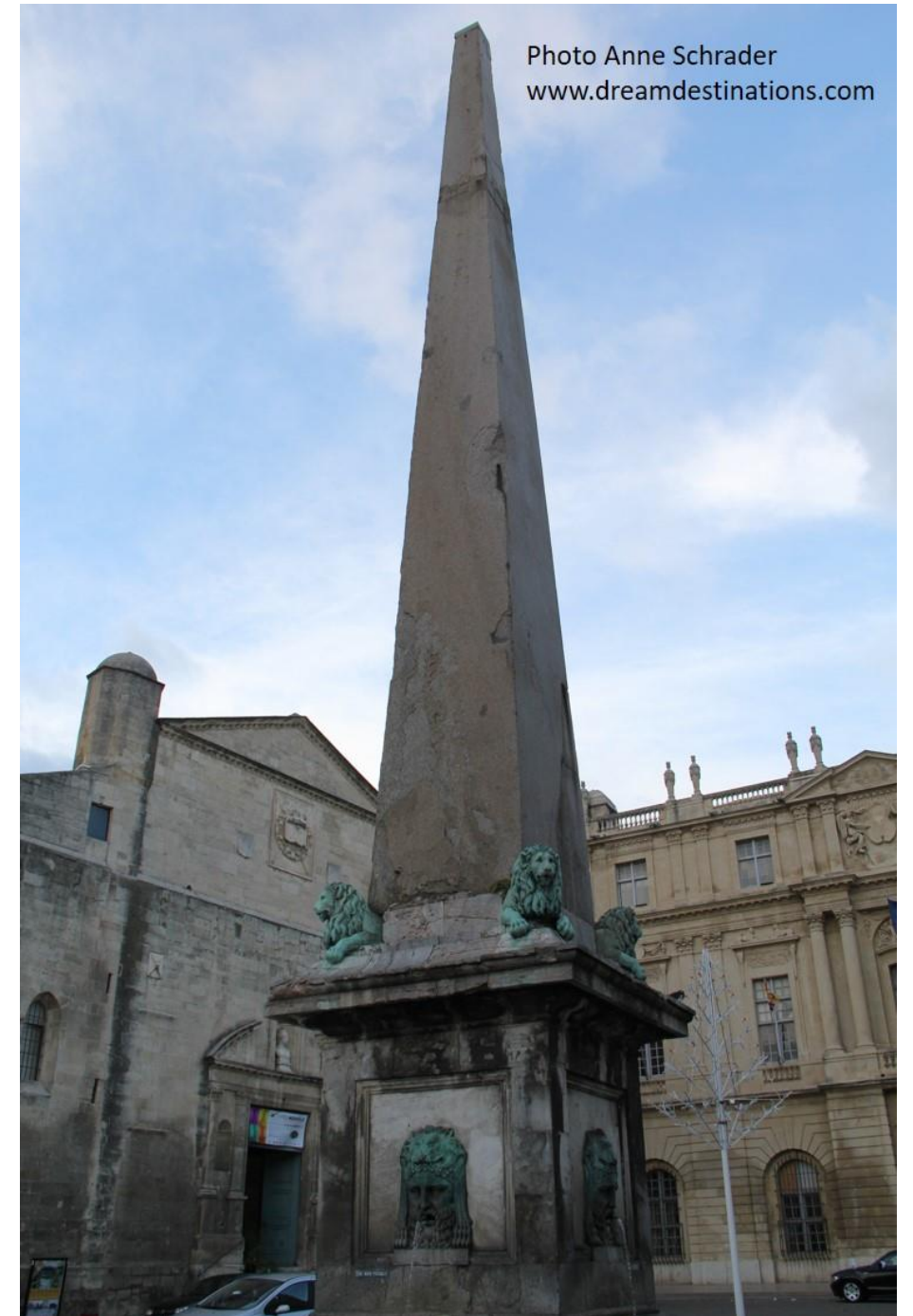
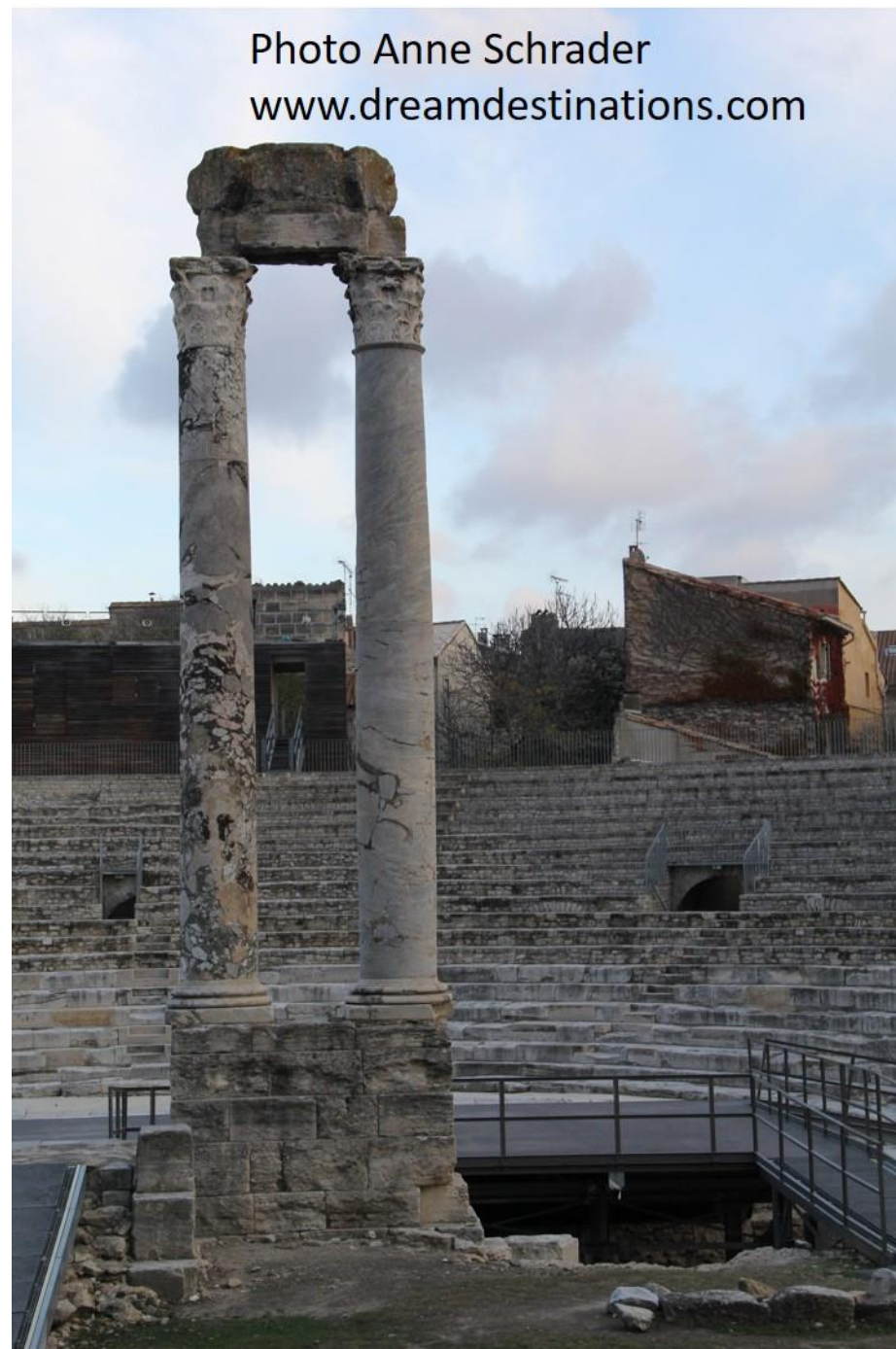


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Arles
Roman
Ruins
(Left)
Roman
Obelisk
(right)



Arles
Town Hall
(left)
Church of
Saint-
Trôphime
(right)



Day 3 Avignon, France

- When the Catholic Church acquired Avignon during the 1300s, it quickly transformed the quiet riverside village into a major religious and cultural center.
- Evidence of the makeover is everywhere. In addition to the enormous palace, the church constructed a wall around Avignon and provided mansion-like residences to its cardinals.
- Avignon Cathedral was dwarfed by its neighbor, the Palace of the Popes. Centuries after the papacy returned to Rome, the Vatican called for a gilded statue of Mary to be placed atop the cathedral; her golden gaze still welcomes visitors today.

Day 3 Shore Excursions

- Avignon Walk & Pope's Palace--included
- Lavender Fields of Provence—learn about legendary lavender that graces the field of Provence each summer on this enlightening and fragrant full-day tour.
- Chateauneuf-du-Pape Wine Tasting—explore the town named for its “Pope’s New Castle”, its centuries old vineyard and its superb wines.
- Pont du Gard Aqueduct—see the magnificent three-tiered structure built without mortar by the Romans 2,000 years ago.
- Canoe the Rhone River—admire the beauty of Avignon and learn about the ecosystem of the Rhone River during a scenic canoe ride.

Avignon City Walls



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Avignon Palace of the Popes

Photo Hank Schrader www.dreamdestinations.com



Pont d'Avignon—the famous bridge of the nursery -rhyme

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Day 4 Viviers, France

- The sleepy town of Viviers was founded during the 5th century. This former Roman settlement became a bishop's seat, and conflicts during ensuing centuries required the town to be fortified.
- With the Renaissance came a more stable period of wealth that allowed many new houses to be built, including a fine example of the era that still stands, the Maison des Chevaliers.
- Some buildings date back to the Middle Ages, and time seems to stand still along the cobblestone streets of its Old Town, dominated by the 12th-century St. Vincent Cathedral with its beautiful windows.

Day 4 Shore Excursions

- Viviers Walking Tour—included
- Charming Ardeche—take in the natural beauty and endless charms of Franc's picturesque region shaped by the Ardeche River

Day 5 Tournon, France

- Tournon lies secluded between the river and the vineyard-blanketed granite slopes that nurture fine vintages.
- An ancient castle, built snugly into a rock, overlooks the riverside setting. A settlement has perched on this hill since Celtic times, but the stunning views from its overlook have never changed.
- The name of its neighboring wine-producing region, Tain-l'Hermitage, comes from the hermit who planted vines here after returning from the Crusades. Today, his vines are awash in sunshine and produce a port-like wine and some stellar whites.

Day 5 Shore Excursions

- Tournon Steam Train—included—traverse one of France's most picturesque corners during a train excursion into the wilds of the Doux Valley.
- Rhone Valley Vineyard Hike—explore the landscap history and culture of the northern Rhone valley wine country.

Tournon



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Day 5 Scenic Sailing

- The lure of fine cuisine, charming villages and breathtaking vistas is never-ending along the Rhône River.
- Journey along this graceful waterway, meandering past vine-clad banks, and incredibly preserved echoes of medieval times and the days of the Roman Empire.
- The several locks through which the ship passes have helped to tame its waters, once unnavigable because of rapids, shallows and whirlpools. Today, a voyage along this stretch is a pleasant, gentle experience, surrounded by the hills and soaring mountains of the Rhône Valley.

Day 5 Vienne

- Situated between France's Burgundy and Beaujolais regions, Vienne is the gateway to Lyon's countryside.
- It is one of the oldest towns in France, with a history that can be traced through its architecture.
- Among its Roman remains and artifacts, the Roman Temple of Augustus & Livia dates back to the 1st century AD. Its Roman amphitheater, nestled in the hills of Mont Pipet, is one of the best preserved in the nation.
- Vienne also boasts remarkably preserved medieval buildings and market ruins. Other landmarks include the Abbey of Saint Pierre and the Church of Saint-André-le-Bas.

Roman Amphitheatre Vienne



Photo Hank Schrader www.dreamdestinations.com

Roman Temple of Augustus & Livia



Roman Relics Vienne

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Day 6 Lyon, France

- Lyon straddles the Rhône and Saône Rivers.
- After Paris, it is considered the country's most significant cultural center.
- Amid a cityscape of red-roofed buildings, tree-lined boulevards and riverside promenades, the cobblestone streets of Old Lyon host a rich collection of Renaissance architecture and intimate *traboules*, unique passageways through buildings that connect adjacent streets, all of it overlooked by the grand basilica atop Fourvière Hill.
- The city also boasts a wealth of outstanding museums, cultural treasures and excellent Lyonnaise eateries.

Day 6 Excursions

- Panoramic Lyon—included
- Timeless Town of Perouges—step back in time to the medieval stone village of Perouges.
- Trek Vieux Lyon—discover the rich history that lies throughout Lyon's charming Old Town known as Vieux Lyon.

Old Town Lyon

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Old Town Lyon



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Notre-Dame Basilica

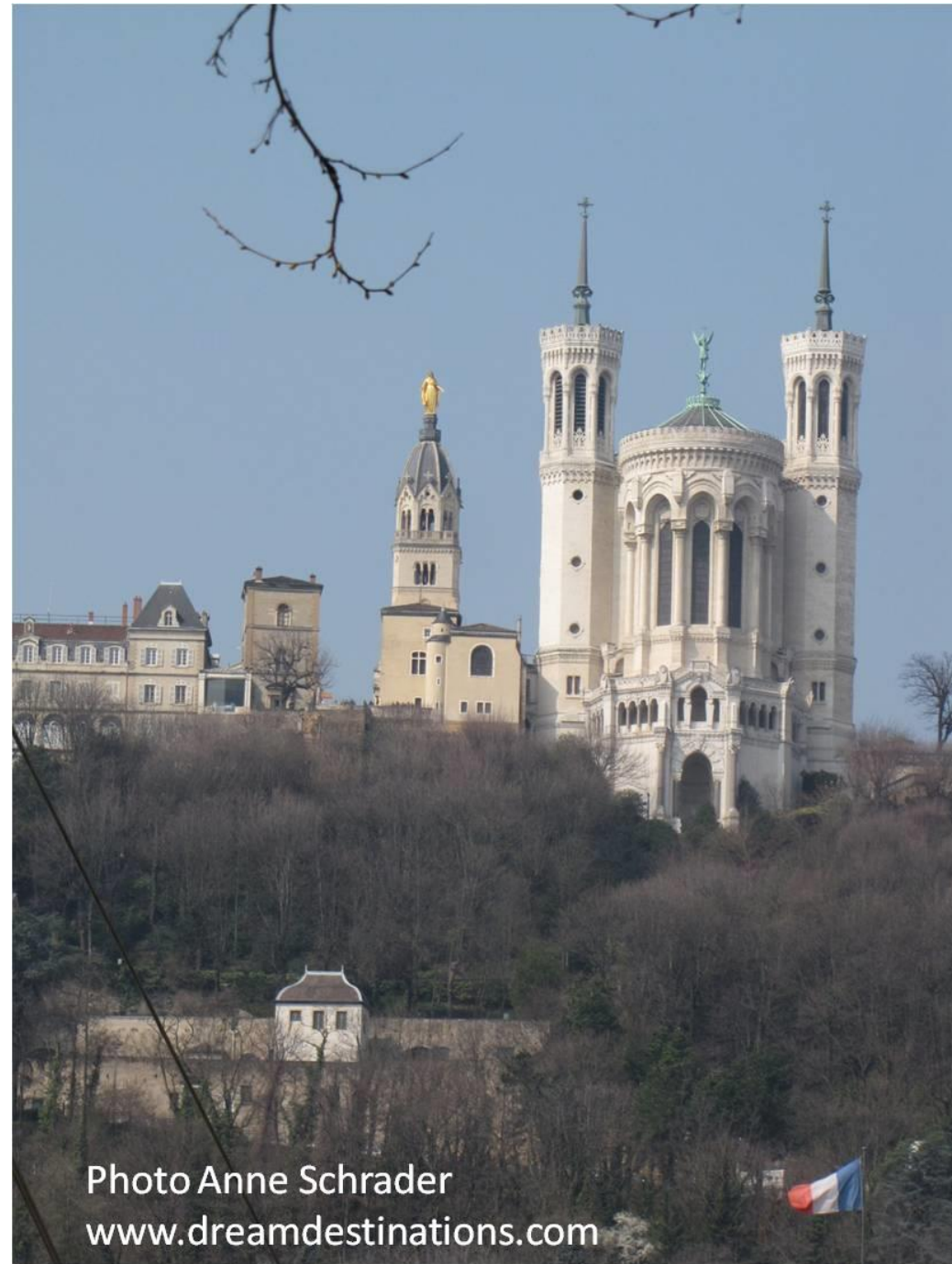


Photo Anne Schrader
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St. Jean Cathedral



Photo Anne Schrader
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Inside St. Jean Cathedral



Narrow Streets of Old Town Lyon



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Lyon



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Traboules



Day 7 Lyon, France

- Lyon is known as the food capital of France. It is not uncommon for well-heeled Parisians to travel to Lyon for dinner.
- The city is surrounded by towns and villages that produce excellent fresh produce, and gastronomic outlets are plentiful here.
- The great chefs of Lyon enjoy celebrity status, whether they prepare classic recipes the traditional way or elevate them with their own signature touches.
- Their delicious meals may be paired with a glass of light, fruity Beaujolais from the north or a bold Rhône red from the south.

Day 7 Shore Excursions

- Beaujolais Wine Country (included)
- Beaujolais & Truffles—sample Beaujolais during a visit to a wine chateau and two working farms
- Flavors of Lyon—treat your taste buds to the culinary delights of Lyon, once hailed as “world capital of gastronomy”

A typical bouchon. These are small bistros often identified by their red and white checkered table cloths



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A Street Side crepe cart Old Town Lyon



Day 8 Burgundy, France

- For oenophiles, all roads lead to Burgundy, and one road in particular—the Route des Grands Crus—is the address of eight of the ten most expensive wines in the world.
- Sublime as it is, its wine tells only part of Burgundy’s story. This serene region is French culture personified, where farmers and vintners are as respected as the harvests they produce.
- While the region’s rolling hills are known for their superior wines and amazing cuisine, Burgundy’s villages are celebrated for their tranquil beauty and historical heritage.

Day 8 Excursion Beaune & Burgundy Included



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Day 8 Basel, Switzerland

- Located where Switzerland, Germany and France meet, Basel reflects a fascinating blend of traditions.
- The city straddles the Rhine at the river's farthest navigable point, and an alluring cluster of old-town buildings huddles along the riverbank.
- Around Market Square, guild houses recall Gothic, Renaissance and baroque splendor; the red-sandstone Rathaus, or Town Hall, is the centerpiece.
- More than 40 museums of art and culture lend modern polish to its history-rich streets.
- And there is no more refined way to sample it all than over cheese fondue or croissants.
- Embark your ship and settle into your stateroom

The Rhine River at Basel

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Basel Town Hall in the Market Square



Day 9 Breisach, Germany

- Breisach is a gateway to the fabled Black Forest region, built on a basalt rock outcropping in the Rhine plain.
- It is located in one of the warmest parts of Germany, across the river from French Alsace, famous for its wine growing.
- But Breisach, too, can boast about its wine: it is home to Europe's largest cellars, with a storage capacity of more than 160 million liters.
- The most prominent landmark of Breisach is the Romanesque-Gothic St. Stephen's Cathedral, built between the 12th and 13th centuries. Its two towers are visible from throughout the city and from the Rhine.

Day 9 Shore Excursions

- The Black Forest—included
- Medieval Village of Colmar—stroll the charming medieval lanes and squares of Colmar and explore its “Little Venice” quarter.
- The Colmar Pocket in World War II: Museum & Memorial—visit the Colmar Pocket where Allied forces pushed back the Nazi troops during the brutal winter of 1944-1945.
- Into the Black Forest by E-Bike—venture through villages, through rolling fields and along the woodland trails of the Black Forest on a cycle tour.

Day 10 Strasbourg, France

- The largest port on the Upper Rhine, Strasbourg is the cultural center of France's Alsace region.
- Thanks to its location at the border of France and Germany, it boasts a convivial mix of cultural influences.
- The well-preserved Old Town is enclosed on all sides by the little Ill River, with sites so compact that it is easy to explore the "island" on foot.
- And there is plenty to explore: cobblestone streets lined with wooden houses and intersected by picturesque canals.
- Indulging in Alsatian café culture is central to any visit here; enjoy coffee and cake amid lovely half-timbered houses.

Day 10 Shore Excursions

- Strasbourg Highlights—included
- Alsatian Wine Tasting—explore the treasures of Alsace from its Renaissance beauty and distinct culture to its crisp, clean white wines.
- Flavors of Alsace—sample Alsatian and French flavors and pleasures as you meet food merchants, a French sommelier and a local chef.
- Mercedes-Benz Factory—witness the precision that goes into every Mercedes on this fascinating tour.
- Strasbourg from the Top—view Strasbourg from the top of its cathedral and explore its historic culture rich center.

Strasbourg



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Strasbourg

Photos Hank Schrader



There are plenty of
small places to eat
in Strasbourg



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Colorful Shop in Strasbourg



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A narrow lane in Old Town Strasbourg

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Medieval Watch Towers Strasbourg, France

Strasbourg



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Palais Rohan Strasbourg

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Take a Canal Boat Ride in Strasbourg.
In the background is Vauban Dam which could flood the Ill River. It worked in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870.



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Day 11 Speyer, Germany

- The quiet German town of Speyer lies on the west bank of the Rhine.
- The city features a Romanesque imperial cathedral, burial place of eight emperors including some of the most famous Holy Roman Emperors.
- Speyer was once a major Celtic center that traded hands several times between the Romans and the Huns.
- The term Protestant originated here at the Diet of Speyer in 1529, when 14 free cities of Germany and six Lutheran princes protested the Edict of Worms that had banned the writings of Martin Luther and labeled him a heretic and enemy of the state.

Day 11 Shore Excursions

- Speyer Walking Tour—included
- Panoramic Heidelberg & Lunch with University Students—see the castle and old medieval town so steeped in romance that they stood at the center of the German Romantic movement.
- Dine Rudesheim am Rhein—raise your glass and give a hearty “Prost” to a delicious and fun evening
- Wine Tasting & Dinner at Eberach Monastery—enjoy dinner in a former Cistercian monastery whose lush vineyards have produced wines for centuries.
- Wine Tasting & Dinner at Schloss Johannisberg Estate—enjoy a delicious dinner of German specialties at the site of one of the Rheingau regions’s most celebrated vineyards.

Towers of the Speyer Cathedral

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Side view of Speyer Cathedral



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Front Entrance of the Speyer Dom



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Jakob Spilger
Pilgrim Statue.
Speyer is part of the
historic pilgrimage r
route of Santiago de
Compostela



The Watch Tower—at 188 feet, was one of the 68 towers that used to guard the city of Speyer, Germany



Christmas Markets. In the background is the Old Mint Building



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Day 11 Rudesheim, Germany

- Located in the heart of Germany's Rheingau region, Rudesheim is the area's center of winemaking.
- The famed Drosselgasse, a cobblestone street lined with taverns that pour local vintages and spill music into alleyways, attracts locals and visitors alike.
- Half-timbered houses, narrow warrens and old inns lend the town a medieval flavor.
- Castles once provided security for the region, including the 9th-century Brömserburg Castle, the oldest on the Rhine.
- The Siegfried's Mechanical Music Cabinet museum also houses an impressive collection of self-playing instruments.

Sailing into Rudesheim

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Siegfried's Mechanical Musical Instrument Museum

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Siegfried's Mechanical Music Museum



Crowded Drosselgasse Lane



Day 12 Scenic Sailing The Middle Rhine

- 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.

Day 12 Shore Excursions

- Historic Koblenz—included
- The Fortress of Ehrenbreitstein—included
- Medieval Marksburg Castle—visit Marksburg Castle, the only medieval-era stronghold in the Rhine Valley to have never been destroyed.
- Moselle Wine Tasting—explore the small villages and steep hillsides that produce some of the finest Rieslings in the world.

Marksburg Castle



Photo Anne Schrader
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Maus (Mouse) Castle

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Katz (Cat) Castle

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Lorelei—this tree-covered cliff inspired the legend of a love forsaken siren who lures sailors to their death by her enchanting song in this swift flowing, narrow part of the Rhine.



Schönburg Castle on the rock massif above Oberwesel

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Pfalzgrafenstein Castle (foreground) & Gutenfels Castle on the Hill

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Reichenstein Castle



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Day 12, Koblenz, Germany

- Koblenz is a traditional German city, founded more than 2,000 years ago.
- This former trading settlement rests on a massif of the Middle Rhine Highlands. Its cobblestone streets, wood-beamed houses adorned with flowers, ancient market square and medieval churches recall the fairy-tale Germany of old.
- At the “German Corner,” a massive equestrian statue of Prince William I observes the lovely riverside scene.
- The famed Teutonic Knights set up their first base here in 1216.
- The Romanesque Basilica of St. Castor, Koblenz’s oldest building, dates to 836.

Koblenz, Germany



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Deutsches Eck (German Corner) Koblenz



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Deutsches Eck (German Corner) Koblenz



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St Castor's Basilica Koblenz



Goerresplatz Square Koblenz



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Day 13 Cologne, Germany

- Cologne reveals its Roman heritage in its city layout and the ancient ruins that lie scattered through the town.
- Cologne's modern plazas and Hohe Strasse host welcoming shops, enticing restaurants and cologne boutiques.
- Of particular note is the city's 14th-century cathedral, a stunning example of Gothic artistry and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Spared Allied bombs during World War II, the cathedral's imposing twin spires are visible for miles and its stained-glass windows fill the interior with brilliant colored light. Its steps lead to a platform with astounding views.

Day 13 Shore Excursions

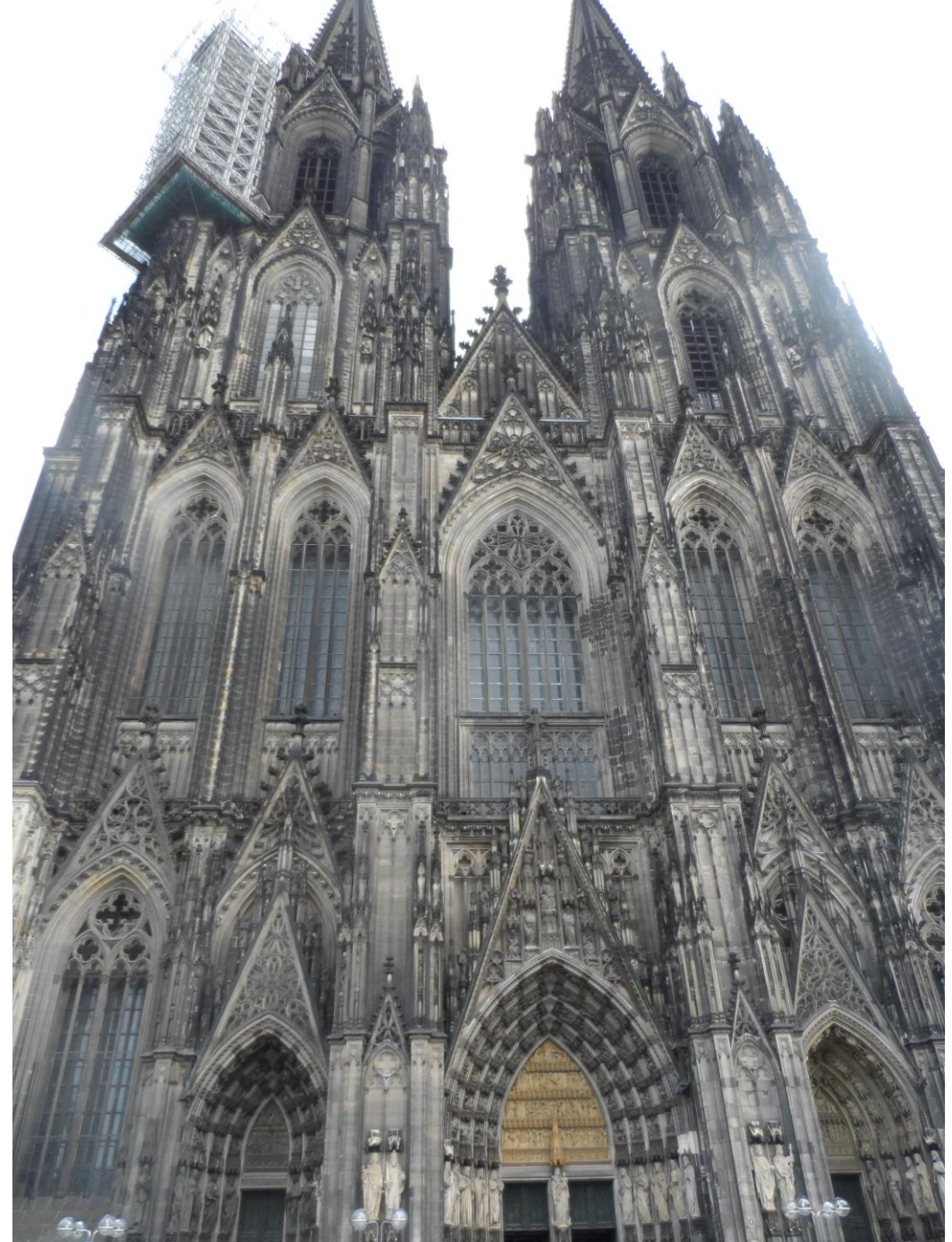
- Cologne Walking Tour—included
- Top of Cologne—privileged access—head up to the roof of Cologne's astonishing cathedral and learn about ongoing excavation and restoration efforts.
- Cologne's Beer Culture & Dinner—immerse yourself in Cologne's lively brauhaus culture and sample the pride of the city.
- Cologne by Bicycle--venture through the historic city of Cologne and see its sights on a bicycle tour.
- Bruhl UNESCO Palaces—peer into the life of royalty at an estate built for the prince-archbishops of Cologne, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Cologne Cathedral

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Cologne Cathedral



German-Roman Museum Cologne

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Hohenzollern Bridge Cologne



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Christmas Markets in Old Market Square Cologne



Photo Anne Schrader
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Day 14 Scenic Sailing

- Sail the bucolic waters of the Rhine, deep into the Rhine–Meuse–Scheldt Delta, as classic Dutch landscapes unfurl all around.
- Flat farmland, charming windmills and svelte poplar trees line the shores, and vast tracts of land stretch in all directions, growing all manner of bounty, from tomatoes to tulips.
- Gaze upon Friesian cows and tidy villages with their neatly laid farmhouses and marvel at how much of this land was reclaimed from the sea, with the aid of traditional windmills and the construction of dikes.

Day 14 Kinderdijk

- Kinderdijk is a village community in the Alblasserwaard province.
- This corner of South Holland, part of the scenic Waal and Merwede regions, has long been shaped by Rhine Delta waters.
- Kinderdijk is most known for its 19 remarkably preserved 18th-century windmills. The charming hamlet is located amid low-lying polders, tracts of land reclaimed from the sea by the power of the windmills and enclosed by embankments, or dikes.
- This legendary place calls to mind the 1865 novel Hans Brinker, in which a heroic boy plugs his finger into a ruptured dike.

Day 14 Shore Excursions

- Kinderdijk Windmills—included
- Kinderdijk Windmills by Bicycle—cycle through the grassland of the Kinderdijk and see the 19 historic windmills, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- Kinderdijk by Vintage Barge—go beyond the usual visitor experience on a Viking exclusive boat tour and visit the oldest Kinderdijk windmill.
- Kinderdijk Windmills & Dutch Cheese Making—see the picturesque Dutch countryside as you explore the Netherlands world famous cheese and windmills.

Kinderdijk

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Day 15 Amsterdam

- A city of charming canals, elegant gabled houses, splendid museums and many bicycles, the Dutch capital of Amsterdam is a delight to explore.
- Its patchwork of waterways forms about 90 islands connected by 1,500 bridges.
- The legacy of the Dutch Golden Age lives on in gilded manses and in the paintings of Rembrandt and other Dutch Masters that adorn the Rijksmuseum, The Netherlands' grand repository of art and cultural history.
- Discovering Amsterdam is a pleasure best pursued on foot; visitors line the canals and linger over Dutch pancakes or take a *stroomwafel* to go.
- After breakfast, disembark your ship and journey home.

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