

The Rhine, Swiss Alps and Amsterdam Tauck River Cruises

By

Hank Schrader

Europe River Cruise Expert

Route Map From Tauck River Cruises



Overview

- Follow the romantic Rhine River on its winding journey through Central Europe, taking in the sights, history and culture of Germany, Switzerland, The Netherlands and France, as your riverboat glides along the river.
- Experience medieval winetowns, cathedrals, castles, museums, and river landscapes of the kind that inspired JMW Turner and Richard Wagner.
- Enjoy a two-night stay at a luxury hotel in Bern, with a choice of a city tour or a trip up to the Jungfrauoch in the Alps, and an idyll in Lucerne; sail from Basel with visits to Colmar, Baden-Baden, Rudesheim and Cologne... a Tauck Exclusive evening of dinner and music at Schloss Ehreshoven... a visit to the windmills of Kinderdijk, and exploration of Amsterdam including a canal boat tour along the city's historic waterways.

Day 1 Arrive Zurich & journey to Bern

- **Tour begins: 6:30 PM.**
- A transfer is included from Zurich Airport or the train station (Zürich Hauptbahnhof) to the Bellevue Palace Bern in Bern, the capital of Switzerland, which is surrounded by the Aare River and distant Alpine peaks.
- Your two-night stay is at an historic luxury hotel favored by celebrities and heads of state and featured in master spy novelist John LeCarré's spy novels.
- Join us this evening for a welcome reception and dinner.

Day 2

Travel to the Jungfrauoch or explore Bern

- You have a choice of sightseeing adventures today.
- Head for the snow-capped mountains on a full-day's excursion to Jungfrauoch, known as the "Top of Europe."
- Drive to the village of Lauterbrunnen for a train ride to Kleine Scheidegg, then board a cogwheel train for the scenic climb to Jungfrauoch, highest railway station in Europe; here you'll find a restaurant, observatory, research station, a gallery of ice sculpture, and breathtaking views of the glacier-clad Bernese Alps.
- Alternatively, explore the eclectic charms of Bern on a walking tour – with a focus on chocolate!
- Bern played a key role in the commercial world of chocolate, with residents such as Lindt, Tobler and Bloch – and chocolate tasting is included.
- Sights on your walking tour include open-air markets and cozy underground bars, the Parliament Building, the Gothic cathedral, a bear park (in honor of the town's symbol and mascot), a house where Einstein lived and wrote his "Theory of Relativity," and the Zytglogge, a 16th-century astronomical clock featuring animated figures.
- Spend the evening as you please; the vibrant nightlife includes trendy clubs and restaurants, and a grand casino.

Hotel Bellevue Palace Bern



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Aare River Untertor Bridge Bern In background is the Rose Garden Park on the hill.

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A model of the Federal Palace (Bundeshaus or Parliament Building)



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The **Clock Tower** (or Zytglogge)

This 75-foot structure displays a large astronomical clock was made between 1527 and 1530



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Astronomical clock
has a troupe of
**mechanical
figures**—including a
rooster, fool, knight
and piper—put on a
show at three
minutes to the hour



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Kramgasse



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Einstein House
No 49
He wrote his
“Theory of
Relativity” here.
It is now a small
museum to the
great physicist.



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Switzerland Flag (left) Bern City Flag (right)



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Samson Fountain Simsonbrunnen (depicting Samson killing a lion)



Zahringerbrunnen (a bear in full armor)



Photo Anne Schrader
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Fountain of Justice Bern



Photo Anne Schrader
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Bern's Bear Park (Bärenpark)

The bear pit has 6,000 square meters of interconnected enclosures that house four brown bears.



Day 3 Explore Lucerne, then your river cruise begins in Basel

- The scenic mountain backdrop rises in stature and drama as you depart Bern and arrive in Lucerne, nestled beside a breathtaking blue lake in the alpine foothills.
- Explore Lucerne's medieval old town (picturesque market squares, burghers' houses, spired churches, and restored ramparts) during an orientation walk which includes the 14th-century Chapel Bridge, the oldest wooden covered bridge in Europe, and a lake cruise on shimmering Lake Lucerne.
- Late morning, a cruise on the lake presents the city in a different way – and the mountain panorama is stunning.
- Travel to Basel in the afternoon and embark your riverboat for the start of your fabulous River Rhine cruise.

Lucerne Switzerland

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Lucerne, Switzerland

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Decorated Building Lucerne, Switzerland



Outer City Walls

Photo Hank Schrader www.dreamdestinations.com



Old City Gate and watch tower



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Decorated Building Lucerne, Switzerland



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Lucerne, Switzerland



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Day 4 Colmar in the Alsatian wine country

- Dock in Breisach, then drive to the village of Colmar, France, in Alsatian wine country.
- The principal industry in Colmar is food and wine, but its irresistible charm lies in its beautifully preserved medieval architecture that conjures an idyllic place out of time: colorful half-timbered houses and gardens, rambling cobbled streets, arches and alleys, sculpted fountains, and canals that wind through a corner of town called Little Venice.
- Aside from its winemaking heritage, Colmar is known as the hometown of Auguste Bartholdi, the sculptor who created the Statue of Liberty.
- A walking tour includes a visit to the Unterlinden Museum, housed in a Gothic convent, whose impressive collection includes Mathias Grünewald's famous Isenheim Altarpiece, paintings, engravings and sculpture from medieval to modern (including works by Dürer and Holbein, Picasso and Léger), and a wealth of archaeological artifacts; join us for a private reception in the museum, a Tauck Exclusive!
- Sample the art of Alsatian cuisine at lunch on your own, then return to the riverboat for a sail through the Upper Rhine Plain.
- This evening, join us for the captain's welcome reception in the lounge, followed by the chef's Signature Dinner in the Compass Rose.

Day 5 Baden-Baden Exploration

- Arrive in Karlsruhe this morning and depart by coach to the spa town of Baden-Baden where curative waters and an air of olde-world luxury have attracted royals, the rich and many celebrities over the years.
- The Black Forest town boasts grand colonnaded buildings and whimsically turreted art nouveau villas spread across the hillsides framed by forested mountains.
- You'll enjoy a choice of three excursions in this grand dame of a German spa town that includes a guided walking tour,
 - an opportunity to visit Caracella Spa with indoor and outdoor thermal baths, a rock grotto with hot and cold water, Roman sauna, steam bath and more,
 - or a biking excursion to Karlsruhe, where you'll explore the surrounding areas of interest riding past lush woodlands that stretch out along the flat Rhine valley, highlighted by views of the baroque palace and its spectacular gardens.
- Return to the ship late afternoon for social hour in the lounge followed by dinner and musical entertainment onboard.

Baden-Baden



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Day 6 Rüdesheim and Picturesque Cruising

- Near the foot of the Neiderwald, surrounded by vineyards, the ruins of Ehrenfels Castle watch over the Rhine Gorge; just around the bend, you'll dock in the winemaking town of Rüdesheim, under the lofty gaze of the famous Neiderwald Monument.
- The 1000-year-old town charms with its cobblestone streets of storybook houses, cafes and wine taverns; among its must-see attractions is Siegfried's *Mechanisches Musikkabinett*, a museum dedicated to antique self-playing musical instruments.
- Siegfried's mesmerizing collection includes orchestrations, musical clocks, player pianos, fairground organs, self-playing violins, and the world's largest automated doll orchestra.
- Stop in for refreshments at Rudesheimer Schloss, an historic hotel and restaurant.
- You also have the option to explore this charming, riverside wine town by e-bike, before returning to the riverboat for a cruise on the romantic Middle Rhine. Sentinel castles, steep sloping vineyards and towering precipices like the Lorelei Rock wind past with commentary by your Tauck Director.
- Tonight, sail for Bonn, where you'll dock overnight.

Sailing into Rudesheim

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Siegfried's Mechanical Musical Instrument Museum Rudesheim

Photo Hank Schrader
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Siegfried's Mechanical Music Museum Rüdesheim



Crowded Drosselgasse Lane Rudesheim



Rüdesheim Schloss



Marksburg Castle



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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

Photo Anne Schrader www.dreamdestinations.com



Pfalzgrafenstein Castle (foreground) & Gutenfels Castle on the Hill

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Reichenstein Castle



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Day 7 Explore Köln & Spend an Evening at Schloss Ehreshoven

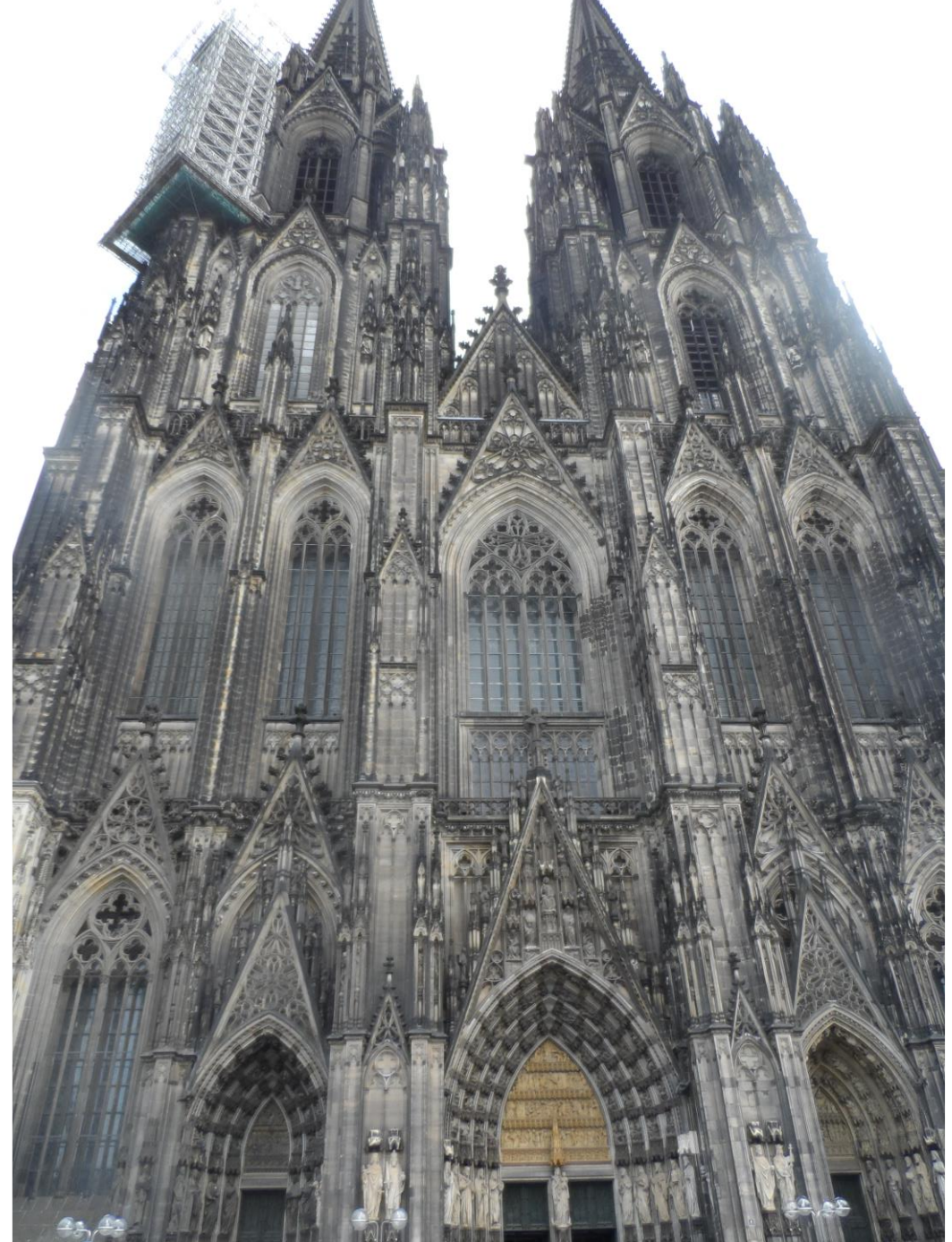
- Depart Bonn this morning for a short cruise to Köln (Cologne).
- One of Germany's oldest cities (founded in the 1st Century AD), Köln was once a Roman provincial capital, and later a fabulously wealthy medieval trading port; the city was almost totally destroyed during World War II, but many of its architectural treasures have been restored, including the towering Kölner Dom (Cologne Cathedral) – a twin-spired masterpiece of High Gothic architecture – which you'll visit today, along with the nearby Roman Germanic Museum.
- Enjoy a choice of excursions during your adventures around the city; one highlights the historical architecture of the city by coach; the other brings you on a walking tour focusing on the city's Jewish heritage including a visit to the National Socialist Documentation Center Museum.
- Return to the ship for lunch.
- Drive to Engelskirchen for a visit to its neighboring castle, Schloss Ehreshoven. Built in the 14th century and later expanded in the style of a grand Baroque manor house, the estate is surrounded by a moat, landscaped gardens, and a castle park. Schloss Ehreshoven is frequently used as a film location but this evening it's the elegant setting for a Tauck Exclusive cocktail reception and dinner with entertainment.
- Later this evening, cruise the lowlands of the Rhine en route to Dordrecht in the Netherlands.

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



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Day 8 The Kinderdijk Windmills

- Your riverboat arrives this morning in Dordrecht, a wealthy trading port in the Middle Ages, for an excursion that offers insights into windmills and their ubiquitous role in Dutch life... a visit to the village of Kinderdijk (Child's Dyke), where the flat landscape, crisscrossed with canals, presents the largest concentration of historic windmills in The Netherlands – which you can choose to explore on a walking tour and a boat ride, or on a two-hour bicycle excursion.
- The 19 windmills, most of them built in the 18th century, are national monuments; for centuries, their massive wind-driven mechanisms have been used to pump water out of the polder and into reservoirs and canals, reclaiming land from the river.
- Such ingenious methods of water management have enabled a country that is almost fifty percent below sea level to exist at all, lending weight to the local saying, "God created the Earth, but the Dutch created Holland."
- Return to the riverboat late afternoon and sail to Amsterdam.

Kinderdijk

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Kinderdijk

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Day 9 Amsterdam... Art, Canals & More

- Arrive in Amsterdam this morning and embark on a city orientation tour that includes a visit to the world-famous Rijksmuseum, home to many art masterpieces of the Dutch Golden Age, including Rembrandt's *The Night Watch*.
- Amsterdam is often called the "Venice of the North" for its elaborate network of canals that wind through a romantic historic center of cobbled streets and stunningly well-preserved Dutch Renaissance architecture.
- Following your Rijksmuseum visit, board a canal boat for a cruise of the city from the inside, along 17th-century waterways lined with trees, gabled merchant houses and vibrant urban life (a great way to see it – including a slice of Dutch apple pie).
- Later, you'll have time to explore the city on your own; Amsterdam's compact urban landscape is made for exploring, brimming with art museums, coffeehouses, and eclectic architecture.
- Aboard ship this evening, enjoy a delightful choral performance before joining the crew for a farewell reception and dinner.

Guided visit to the famed Rijksmuseum



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Canal Boat Tour



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Gabled Roofs Amsterdam



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Mint Tower, a gate in the city wall (circa 1400) that marks the intersection of two canals, tram paths, a pedestrian-only shopping street,



City flower market

Photo Anne Schrader
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De Waag (Weigh House), once a fortified gate that today houses a popular outdoor café



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Day 10 Journey home

- **Tour ends: Amsterdam.**
- Fly home anytime; a transfer from your riverboat to Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport or Central Train Station is included.
- Allow a minimum of three hours for flight check-in at the airport. For additional nights in Amsterdam, ask at booking.

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