

Europe River Cruise Company Comparisons 2016

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Overview

- All river cruises are very good values & special trips.
- There is no official rankings of river cruise lines & many have won awards from various travel organizations.
- These are my personal ratings & should be considered as such.
- My ratings are based on sailing 13 river cruises, selling river cruises to clients, personal research & attending numerous webinars by these individual companies, earning specialist designations from individual river cruise companies and ratings from The Berlitz River Cruising in Europe Guide 2016-2017.

Disclaimer

- The river cruise scene is constantly changing.
- I have tried to provide accurate information but changes happen rapidly.
- Also, companies change policies.
- Every effort has been made to communicate correct information. We apologize for any errors, omissions, but assume no liability should they occur.

8 Main River Cruise Companies for the US Market

- **AMAWaterways**—“Leading the Way in River Cruising”
- **Avalon**-- “Comfortably upscale... more-spacious-than-average-cabins.”
- **Crystal**—” All the hallmarks of the legendary Crystal experience “
- **Emerald**—sometimes refers to itself as the next generation of river cruising

8 Main River Cruise Companies for the US Market (cont.)

- **Scenic** “5-star, all-inclusive luxury river cruises throughout Europe and Asia”
- **Tauck**—“ Never Settle for Ordinary”
- **Uniworld**-- “The world's only authentic boutique cruise line”
- **Viking**– “Exploring the world in comfort”



AMAWATERWAYS™

LEADING THE WAY IN RIVER CRUISING

AMAWATERWAYS Overview

AMAWATERWAY'S dream is to provide the most exceptional river cruise experience possible. They believe they achieve this by:

- Providing custom-designed ships
- Providing the Premium Experience
- Being the only River Cruise Line inducted into the Chaînes Des Rôtisseurs, the oldest & largest food & wine society in the world—most observers feel they have the best food & wine in Europe River Cruising
- Small group Excursions led by expert local guides
- Providing Complimentary Limited Edition Tours.
- Complimentary Bicycles & guided bicycle excursions

AVALON

WATERWAYS®

Legendary river cruises. Inspired design.™

Avalon Overview

Avalon has two goals in their approach to river cruising.

- First, they believe their clients deserve more choices and they follow through with a long list of options that can be added for an extra fee.
- Second, they want to be known as the “floating room with a view” —most cabins have floor to ceiling windows that open up.



CRYSTAL
RIVER CRUISES™

Crystal Overview

- All the hallmarks of the legendary Crystal experience to include:
- Six star service
- Superior dining
- The largest suites in river cruising aboard an exquisite new class of river vessels
- Delightful shore adventures amid expertly curated-itineraries, taking you to the heart of world-renowned European cities in world-class luxury.



EMERALD

WATERWAYS

Emerald Waterways

- Emerald Waterways features include:
- complimentary wine, beer & soft drinks at lunch and dinner
- all on board meals
- balcony cabins on the upper 2 decks
- bikes (without electronic assisted feature); and complimentary Wi-Fi.
- As with most river cruise lines, there are included tours in every sailing.
- They also have an EmeraldPLUS no addition cost tours to enhance the standard offerings. There are also Discover More tour options that cost extra and require a minimum number of passengers.
- Gratuities are included in the basic cruise fare.
- The long ships (135 meters or 443 feet) carry 182 passengers.

SCENIC  **CRUISES**
The Ultimate River Cruising Experience

Scenic Overview

- Scenic cruise line features:
- your own butler (services vary by stateroom category)
- complimentary beverages all day, every day; six dining options
- the Tailormade GPS device
- balcony suites on the 2 upper decks
- electronically assisted bikes
- complimentary Wi-Fi; laundry and airport transfers.
- There are no extra charges for tours or gratuities but massages and the hairdresser are extra charges.
- The long ships (135 meters or 443 feet) carry 167 passengers.

TAUCK



RIVER CRUISING

Tauk River Cruise Overview

4 Cornerstones of Tauk River Cruising

- Uncommon Access to included shore excursions
- All-inclusive Value
- Personalized Cruising from 4 on-board Tauk tour staff
- Intimate Club-like atmosphere



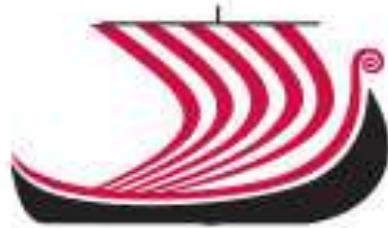
UNI**W**ORLD®

BOUTIQUE RIVER CRUISE COLLECTION®

Uniworld Overview

Uniworld is the world's only authentic boutique river cruise line

- All-inclusive
- one-of-a-kind ships—operates 14 in Europe-- each is different
- stylish décor
- thoughtful personal touches
- welcoming ambiance
- superb cuisine
- gracious service



VIKING
CRUISES

Exploring the World in Comfort®

Viking Overview #1

Viking provides good itineraries—a great value.

A Viking journey includes:

- Exceptional Accommodations
- Attentive Service
- Enriching Daily Shore Excursions
- Engaging Cultural Enrichment
- All Onboard Meals
- Complimentary wine, beer & soft drinks with lunch & dinner
- Free onboard internet service

Viking Overview # 2

- Has 54 ships deployed in Europe (they have introduced 14 to 18 new ships a year in the last 2 years & but seems to have slowed down this pace). 50 are longships (135 m or 443 ft) & carry 190 passengers.
- Has over 25 % of all river cruises ships in Europe.
- Heavy advertising campaign—brand is most well known river cruise company

What to Consider When Comparing River Cruise Companies

- Number of on board passengers
- Quality of the vessels
- Accommodations
- Cuisine
- Service
- Shore excursions
- Extras
- Cost—are you getting the value for your money?

How Many River Ships in Europe?

| COMPANY | TOTAL BOATS |
|--------------|-------------|
| AMAWATERWAYS | 16 |
| AVALON | 15 |
| CRYSTAL | 1 |
| EMERALD | 4 |
| SCENIC | 13 |
| TAUCK | 9 |
| UNIWORLD | 14 |
| VIKING | 54 |

How Many Passengers?

| COMPANY | Longships 135 m | 110 m Class |
|--------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| AMAWATERWAYS | 158-164 | 146-148 |
| AVALON | 166 | 138-128 |
| CRYSTAL | 160 | n/a |
| EMERALD | 182 | 138 |
| SCENIC | 167-169 | 128 |
| TAUCK | 130 | 118 |
| UNIWORLD | 159-154 | 130 |
| VIKING | 198-188 | 150 (FOR 375 FT SHIP) |

Quality of Vessels

- Designing & putting new river cruise ships on Europe's rivers is a constant source of competition between companies.
- There are many different approaches.

3 Typical Europe River Ships in Port



Photo Anne Schrader www.dreamdestinations.com

Overall Ratings by Douglas Ward

River Cruising in Europe 2016-2017

| COMPANY | Best Rated Ship | Score |
|--------------|------------------|-----------|
| AMAWATERWAYS | AmaPrima | 423/500 |
| AVALON | Illumination | 393/500 |
| CRYSTAL | Mozart | Not Rated |
| EMERALD | Sun | 398/500 |
| SCENIC | Opal | 413/500 |
| TAUCK | Savor | 384/500 |
| UNIWORLD | SS Maria Theresa | 388/500 |
| VIKING | Rolf | 397/500 |

River Ship Size

- There are basically 2 sizes of river cruise ships. River cruise ships have some limitations in width & height. To fit under bridges, they generally have only 3 decks (not counting the sun deck which is basically a roof). All are generally 38 ft wide.
- The big difference is their length. The two types are:
- **Longships** are 443 ft (135 m) & 360 ft ships, known as **110 m Class Ships**.
- How the limited space is used on the vessel is an important factor in your choice of which company to use.

Why is river ship length important?

- One of the real subtle differences in river cruising is what the cruise line has on board their ships. For accommodations, this includes # of passenger cabins, what is in the cabin & views from the cabin.
- Unlike Ocean Cruising, there are no inside cabins, but there is a significant difference in window size & balconies.
- On board facilities & equipment is another factor that should be considered.

Stateroom Size/Views Longships

Slide 1 of 2

| Company | Large Suite >200 sq ft | Veranda <200 sq ft | French Balcony | Window | Small Window |
|----------------|---|-----------------------|--|------------------|--|
| AMA | 4 (350-300 sq ft) 45 (290-210 sq ft) | | 16 (170 sq ft) | | 17 (160 sq ft) |
| AVALON | | | 64 (200 sq ft) 2 (300 sq ft) | | 17 (172 sq ft) |
| CRYSTAL | | | 2 (883 sq ft) 12 (330 sq ft) 22 (219 sq ft) 1 (204 sq ft) | 41 (219 sq feet) | |
| EMERALD | 4 (315 sq ft) 8 (210 sq ft) | 60 (180 sq ft) | | | 18 (162 sq ft) 2 single (117 sq ft) |

Stateroom Size/Views Longships

Slide 2 of 2

| Company | Large Suite >200 sq ft | Veranda <200 sq ft | French Balcony | Window | Small Window |
|-----------------|--|-----------------------|--|--------|--|
| SCENIC | 45 (205 sq ft) 17 (225 sq ft) 2 (240 sq ft) 2 (360 sq ft) 2 (475 sq ft) | | | | 13 (160 sq ft) |
| TAUCK | | | 3 (150 sq ft) 2 (190 sq ft) 28 (190-225 sq ft) 22 (300 sq ft) | | 4 (150 sq ft) 8 (225 sq ft) |
| UNIWORLD | 9 (391-294 sq ft) | 20 (196 sq ft) | 33 (196 sq ft) | | 15 (163 sq ft) |
| VIKING | 8 (445-275 sq ft) | 39 (200 sq ft) | 22 (135 sq ft) | | 25 (150 sq ft) |

Stateroom Size/Views 110 m Class

Slide 1 of 2

| Company | Large Suite >200 sq ft | Veranda <200 sq ft | French Balcony | Window | Small Window |
|----------------|---|-----------------------|--|--------|--|
| AMA | 3 Ships 3 (255 sq ft) 1 (225 sq ft) 3 Ships 4 (255 sq ft) | | 56 (170 sq ft) 2 (140 sq ft- Single cabins) | | 12 (170 sq ft) |
| AVALON | 2 (300 sq ft) | 50 (200 sq ft) | | | 12 (172 sq ft) |
| CRYSTAL | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| EMERALD | 2 (315 sq ft) 4 (207 sq ft) | | 48 (170 sq ft) | | 14 (162 sq ft) 2 single (105 sq ft) |

Stateroom Size/Views 110 m class

Slide 2 of 2

| Company | Large Suite >200 sq ft | Veranda <200 sq ft | French Balcony | Window | Small Window |
|-----------------|---|-----------------------|---|-----------------------|--|
| SCENIC | 43 (205 sq ft) 9 (225 sq ft) 2 (305 sq ft) 2 (455 sq ft) | | | | 7 (160 sq ft) |
| TAUCK | 14 (300 sq ft) | | 6 (183 sq ft) 30 (150 sq ft) | | 1 (183 sq ft) 8 (150 sq ft) |
| UNIWORLD | 4 (215 sq ft) window | | | 60 (151 sq ft) | |
| VIKING | | | | 63 (170 sq ft) | 12 (120 sq ft) |

Longship Onboard Features

| Company | Bikes | Dining Rooms | Gym | Guest Laundry | Lounge | Pool / Hot Tub | Spa/ Hair Salon | Free WIFI |
|-----------------|---------------|--------------|-----|---------------|--------|----------------------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| AMA | Yes | 2 | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | Both | Yes |
| AVALON | No | 2 | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | Hair | Yes |
| CRYSTAL | Yes + jet ski | 3 | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Both + Sauna | 60 min daily |
| EMERALD | Yes | 1 | Yes | No | Yes | Yes Converts to movie theater | Both | Yes |
| SCENIC | Yes | 2 | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | Both | Yes |
| TAUCK | Yes | 2 | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | Both | Yes |
| UNIWORLD | Yes | 1 | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Spa | Yes |
| VIKING | No | 2 | No | No | Yes | No | No | Yes |

Cuisine & Beverages (Ratings from Berlitz River Cruising In Europe 2016-17)

| COMPANY | Cuisine | Beverages |
|--------------|---|--|
| AMAWATERWAYS | 86/100; impressive food They spend more than competition on food | Good wines & beers Free wine & beer dinner & lunch |
| AVALON | 64/100 Dinners disappointing | Free wine & beer dinner & lunch starting 2017 |
| CRYSTAL | Not rated | Free wine & beer & spirits |
| EMERALD | 76/100 | Free wine & beer dinner & lunch |
| SCENIC | 83/100 | Free wine & beer & spirits |
| TAUCK | 68/100 Cuisine above average | Free wine & beer & spirits |
| UNIWORLD | 68/100; good food | Young wines, beer & spirits all included |
| VIKING | 76/100; small portions main dinner courses | Tend to use the same 2 wines for whole cruise; wine & beer with lunch & dinner meals |

Service (Ratings from Berlitz River Cruising In Europe Guide 2016-2017)

| COMPANY | Service | Comments |
|--------------|-----------|----------------------|
| AMAWATERWAYS | 82/100 | Service is very good |
| AVALON | 66/100 | |
| CRYSTAL | Not rated | |
| EMERALD | 78/100 | |
| SCENIC | 81/100 | |
| TAUCK | 68/100 | |
| UNIWORLD | 71/100 | |
| VIKING | 76/100 | |

Shore Excursions Slide 1 of 2

| Company | Daily Excursions | Comments |
|---------------------|--|--|
| AMAWATERWAYS | Often 2 tours at each stop Fast/normal/slow groups local guides, maps | 2-3 Optional tours per cruise may cost extra. Free limited bike tours Have limited free culinary/wine tours |
| AVALON | Use local guides 3 different paced tours | Optional tours extra |
| CRYSTAL | 2 tours at each stop | Optional Crystal Adventures included. Crystal Adventure Boutique and Private Adventures extra |
| EMERALD | Tour in each port | EmeraldPLUS no addition cost tours to enhance the standard offerings. Discover More tour options extra |

Shore Excursions Slide 2 of 2

| Company | Daily Excursions | Comments |
|----------|---|---|
| SCENIC | All tours included at each stop. Includes all listed in comments on each cruise | Has Freechoice tours & Scenic Enrich & Sundowner & GPS Tailormade go on your own on each cruise |
| TAUCK | 4 Tauck staff on ship Best Rated tours | Exclusive tours free |
| UNIWORLD | Tours & Options every stop | Exclusive tours free At least one culinary tour Each cruise |
| VIKING | One tour per day free May have to pay for 2nd | Most optional tours cost extra |

Ownership

Slide 1 of 2

| Company | Type | Comments |
|--------------|-------------------|--|
| AMAWATERWAYS | Family-Owned | Owners Rudi Schreiner (former Uniworld & Viking), & Kristin Karst (AM Express) & Gary Murphy. |
| AVALON | Globus | Linked with Globus (tours) enhances tours |
| CRYSTAL | Genting Hong Kong | Has ordered 4 new ships |
| EMERALD | Family Owned | Emerald is division of Scenic. Only river cruise company that operates 2 different cruise lines. |

Ownership

2 of 2

| Company | Type | Comments |
|-----------------|--|---|
| SCENIC | Family-Owned | Glen Moroney started company in 2008. This brand emphasizes all inclusive including gratuities & all onboard drinks. |
| TAUCK | Family-Owned | Tour company pays close attention to every detail of guest experience. |
| UNIWORLD | Travel Corporation | 30 itineraries in Europe |
| VIKING | Scandinavian and Dutch consortium | Fastest growing river cruise company; have 50 innovative longships |

EXTRAS

| Company | Dining Rooms | Optional Tours | Bikes/ Bike Tours | Ashore Dining | Gratuity | Transfers | Port Charges |
|-----------------|--------------|----------------|----------------------|---------------|----------|-----------|--------------|
| AMA | 2 | EXTRA | YES/ YES | SOME | EXTRA | EXTRA | EXTRA |
| AVALON | 1 | EXTRA | EXTRA NOT ON SHIP | NO | EXTRA | EXTRA | EXTRA |
| CRYSTAL | 3 | EXTRA | YES/YES E-BIKES | YES | INCLUDED | INCLUDED | INCLUDED |
| EMERALD | 1 | EXTRA | YES/YES | NO | INCLUDED | EXTRA | INCLUDED |
| SCENIC | 2 | INCLUDED | YES/ YES E-BIKES | YES | INCLUDED | INCLUDED | INCLUDED |
| TAUCK | 2 | INCLUDED | YES/ YES | SOME | INCLUDED | INCLUDED | INCLUDED |
| UNIWORLD | 1 | EXTRA | YES | NO | INCLUDED | INCLUDED | EXTRA |
| VIKING | 2 | EXTRA | NO | NO | EXTRA | EXTRA | EXTRA |

Comparing Prices

- Comparing prices is difficult at best. On the following slide, I compare the prices a 7 day cruise on the upper Danube.
- While most go from Nuremberg, Germany to Budapest, Hungary, not all do. Crystal does a round trip from Vienna to Passau to Budapest. Some start in Passau.
- The idea of this price comparison, is to compare the least expensive French Balcony on each line by cabin size and most expensive price for that category cabin during the sailing season. I chose this category, as most guests desire a least a French Balcony on the upper 2 decks when selecting a river cruise cabin.

Cost of High Season 7 day Cruise on the Danube—No Discounts (2016)

| COMPANY | COST PER PERSON | COMMENTS—ALL SHIPS 135 M WITH LEAST EXPENSIVE BALCONY CABIN |
|--------------|-----------------|---|
| AMAWATWEWAYS | \$4498 | CAT C FRENCH BALCONY 170 SQ FT |
| AVALON | \$4348 | CAT B FRENCH BALCONY 200 SQ FT |
| CRYSTAL | \$5910 | CAT S2 FRENCH BALCONY 204 SQ FT |
| EMERALD | \$3240 | CAT C BALCONY 180 SQ FT ½ WINDOW LOWERS |
| SCENIC | \$4290 | CAT BA BALCONY 205 SQ FT ½ WINDOW LOWERS |
| TAUCK | \$6340 | CAT 4 FRENCH BALCONY 190 SQ FT |
| UNIWORLD | \$5074 | CAT 3 FRENCH BALCONY 150 SQ FT |
| VIKING | \$4165 | CAT D FRENCH BALCONY 135 SQ FT |

AMAWATERWAYS

What is included in the fare?

- Fine dining—all meals are first class
- Chef's Table—an intimate dining alternative that features delicious dishes
- Complimentary, high-quality unlimited red & white wine with lunch & dinner, or beer, or soft drinks.
- City tours at all stops, limited edition tours & bicycle trips, all led by qualified, local guides. All excursions tailored to guest's walking pace.
- Impeccable service—guests are treated like family
- Great onboard entertainment
- Free Wi-Fi
- Fleet of onboard bikes

Avalon

What is included in the fare?

- Choice of spacious outside staterooms with plenty of room to relax (price varies).
- Special touches, like regional wines and beer at every onboard dinner.
- Complimentary Wi-Fi access
- Good shore excursions, led by Certified Local Guides
- VIP entrance into the must-see sites.
- Unique Local lectures designed to bring your destination to life.
- Expansive panoramic views throughout the ship – included—bed faces window.

Crystal

What's Included in the Fare

- All meals included, featuring Crystal's innovative & acclaimed six-star cuisine, highlighted by regional specialties.
- Each cabin has a butler.
- Choice of Crystal Adventures Shore Excursions.
- Unlimited soft drinks and premium beverages including champagne, fine wine and spirits. All soft drinks, beer and bottled water in-suite.
- 24-hour self-service pantry featuring specialty coffees, teas, wines and non-alcoholic beverages.
- 24-hour room service.
- Free Wi-Fi/Internet usage of 60 minutes per person, per day.
- Gratuities included for all shipboard staff .

Emerald

What's Included in the Fare?

- All meals
- Carefully selected wine, beer & soft drinks at lunch & dinner
- An included shore excursion in each port using local guides
- Bikes on board for daily use
- Complimentary Wi-Fi onboard
- Airport transfers to & from ship
- All gratuities
- Port charges

Scenic

What's Included in the Fare?

- Most guest will never buy anything extra—it's all included except massage & hairdresser
- Your own butler (services vary)
- Complimentary beverages all day, every day. Mini bar in room.
- Six dining options (some are limited to higher paying guests)
- Exclusive Tailormade GPS for self guided tours
- Electronically assisted bikes
- Free Wi-Fi
- Airport transfers
- All tours

Tauck

What is included in the fare?

- Virtually every river cruise expense is included in one upfront price
- All shore excursions
- Unlimited complimentary beverages onboard (including all liquor—even stocked mini bar in stateroom)
- All meals
- Crew Gratuities
- Pre/Post stays depending upon itinerary
- There are no little extras to pay for, no hidden expenses, no options sold.

Uniworld

What is included in the fare?

- All gratuities onboard and onshore
- All meals onboard
- Unlimited beverages onboard, including extensive selection of distinctive wines, craft beers, spirits, soft drinks, specialty teas and coffees
- Carefully crafted shore excursions—many exclusive to Uniworld—hosted by English-speaking local experts with options to personalize
- All scheduled airport transfers
- All entertainment & cultural enrichment programs onboard
- Internet and Wi-Fi access onboard

Viking

What is included in the fare? # 1

- Choice of staterooms, including Suites, Junior Suites and Staterooms with verandas and French balconies & window cabins (price varies).
- Complimentary internet service
- In-room Infotainment system
- Complimentary beer, wine & soft drinks served at lunch & dinner

Viking

What is included in the fare? #2

- Daily shore excursion - led by friendly, knowledgeable local guides utilizing a high-tech audio headset system.
- Cultural enrichment - itinerary includes informative talks, performances, hands-on cooking and craft demonstrations.
- All onboard meals - the exquisite cuisine created by Swiss-trained chefs, features fresh ingredients and regional specialty options.

My Personal River Cruise Line Ratings

| Company | Comments |
|------------------|--|
| # 1 AmaWaterways | Best food/wine; best overall; great partners with Backroads (bikes) & Disney; sometimes pricey; all guests get same perks |
| # 2 Scenic | Best All-inclusive; tours very good; sometimes inconsistent—generally very good value; higher price cabins get more perks |
| # 3 Emerald | Best lower priced river cruise line but delivers good value for your money; 182 guests capacity is a negative |
| # 4 Uniworld | All-inclusive a plus; elegant cabins; generally pricey |
| # 5 Tauck | All-inclusive a plus; use 4 on board tour directors instead of local guides; higher price than others |
| # 6 Crystal | All-inclusive a plus; old refurbished ship so large can not visit some ports; only 1 ship at present—hard to rate it is so new |
| # 7 Viking | Most green ships; may have grown too quickly; no frills approach OK but does not always live up to advertising |
| # 8 Avalon | Ships have low scores by Douglas Ward for food & service; extras drive price up |

AMAWATERWAYS Advantages

- Best food & fine regional wines that change daily
- Good tours—usually 3 groups & at least 2 options—sometimes more
- Crew becomes your friends—service is excellent & consistently high standards
- Slow, steady growth—new ships have high staff standards
- Owners hands on—they read every critique—always improving
- Great Cruise Managers go the extra mile for your trip
- Great Partners with Backroads (bike touring) & Disney

AMAWATERWAYS Disadvantages

- No gratuities included in price
- If food & wine are not of high importance, price may be considered too high by some.

Avalon Advantages

- They deliver a good product at a fair price.
- Since they are owned by Globus Corporation (tour company), they have good tours.
- They claim to have the newest fleet in Europe market—oldest ship built in 2008 but with Scenic & Emerald no longer true.
- Cabin bed faces window—has larger windows & French balconies compared to others

Avalon Disadvantages

- They only serve wine & beer with dinner not lunch but will add wine & beer to lunch in 2017.
- A lot of extra services for a fee
- Food is described as “bland” by some observers & wines “are low quality”.

Crystal Advantages

- Ship has many features others do not due to larger size. Trying to replicate Crystal Ocean going ships with facilities on a smaller scale.
- All-inclusive
- Butlers & room service (24 hour)
- There will be one dining experience at Michelin Star Restaurant onshore
- Included e-bikes, kayaks & jet ski—even has a high speed boat (extra for boat)

Crystal Disadvantages

- Ship is so large, it limits itineraries—can not go through some locks
- Only one ship at present—limited access.
- Only 220v on Crystal Mozart (only river ship at present)—most other lines have 110v.
- While most normal items covered, exclusive liquors, meal in exclusive 12 person dining room & exotic high speed boat & helicopter extra.
- Some tours extra.

Emerald Advantages

- Very good quality cruise at a good price.
- Gratuities included.
- 2 upper decks on most ships have ½ window balcony that opens with touch of a button.
- Pool has retractable roof & converts into evening cinema—it is awesome!
- Even with higher guest capacity (182) has bikes, spa & fitness area—Viking (190) does not.

Emerald Disadvantages

- 182 passengers—only Viking carries more
- Only 4 boats at present, limits access

Scenic Advantages

- All inclusive—all is included—most guests will not pay anything more unless they get a massage or use the hairdresser.
- Onshore tours are awesome—includes Scenic enrich (exclusive experiences) & sundowner (hosted cocktails in Europe's most beautiful locations).
- Seafood buffet is excellent!
- Offers 6 reds & 6 whites wines at dinner for free.

Scenic Disadvantages

- More expensive cabins get more services, especially diamond deck guests
- Service & meals inconsistent on our cruise with them

Tauck Advantages

- All-inclusive
- Fewest passengers on Tauck ships as compared to other river cruise companies
- Many feel they offer the best tours & on-shore experiences—mostly due to 4 onboard staff members who lead all tours—others disagree, like local guides
- Generally has more large sized staterooms than others but only French Balconies. Crystal has larger sized staterooms but fewer available.
- Has best window first deck staterooms
- Has a good family program called Tauck Bridges

Tauk Disadvantages

- Usually the most costly cruise line
- 9 ships provide limited availability to take a Tauk River Cruise—they often sell out very early.

Uniworld Advantages

- All-inclusive
- Only cruise line on the Po River (Italy) & has a Burgundy region cruise
- Rate very high on most comparison lists—a lot to like about their product & service.

Uniworld Disadvantages

- Some find interiors just “too much”
- Higher price point
- 110 m ships have no French Balconies—only windows

Viking Advantages

- Sometimes best pricing but often requires full payment at booking while other river cruise companies allow deposit + 90 day prior to departure final payment.
- Only company that cruises Elbe (special shallow water design)
- Herb garden; solar panels (most green ships)
- Since long ships are identical; in low water situations; Viking has been able to switch ships to avoid extended bus tours—generally successful but does not always work
- Has best port docking locations

Viking Disadvantages

- Carries 190 passengers on long ships—all others carry around 165-170 or less on longships except Emerald at 182.
- No extras—no bikes, no exercise room, no pool
- Dinner meals sometimes only have 2 choices & they use same 2 wines for all 7 days of a cruise
- Some cruisers feel they are crowded--not enough room in lounges & main dining room
- Only major river cruise line that caters to US market that is not CLIA member (more protections for cruise clients)
- On most cruises only 6 tours provided for free; if more than 2 tours per day it may require an extra fee.

How Best to Use This Comparison Guide

- First, realize that all river cruises are a good value!
- The most important info is to first select the itinerary and make sure it visits the sights you desire to see, then pick the line.
- To select the line, match the items you consider most important from the river cruise line—this guide is a good place to start.
- Use price last—look for value!
- This is very complicated—why not seek our advice to get the best possible trip?

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