



Castles and Charms On Three German Rivers

A Bike & Barge Tour along the Rivers Main, Rhine, and Mosel

8 days/7 nights

Dates: June 9-16, 2018

Itinerary: Aschaffenburg – Frankfurt am Main – Mainz – Rudesheim - St. Goar - Koblenz – Cochem

Included: 7 nights lodging on Comfort-Plus class hotel barge, daily breakfasts and packed lunches, 6 dinners (3 course), one drink with dinner, bed linens, service of tour director and tour guide, bike and helmet rental, welcome drink, entrance fees and guided tours at Burg Eltz and Johannsburg, on-board tasting events

Cycling and cruising by bike and barge along rivers, past vineyards, orchards and meadows

During this tour we will journey along three magnificent rivers in Germany, stopping along the way to enjoy the surroundings and experience the specialties of the region: quaint villages of half-timbered houses, ancient castles, hillside vineyards. You will only have to unpack your bags once. We will cycle mainly on dedicated bike paths and bike lanes on flat or gently rolling terrain. While you bike during the day, the barge, your floating hotel, accompanies you along the river and her crew will eagerly welcome you back on board at the end of each day's ride. If you decide on any day that you don't want to ride a bike, you can admire the passing scenery from the comfort of a deck chair.

We begin on the Main River that winds through the countryside of Bavaria in several wide loops, passing old cities and towns of historic charm. Cycling through sloping vineyards, bountiful orchards and serene meadows along the bank of the Main River is a great way to begin our journey. From Mainz, we follow the Rhine downstream, past countless fortresses and, with a little imagination, you might hear the siren songs of the legendary mermaids. Apart from the beautiful landscape, you will see UNESCO World Heritage sites and art treasures, and you can enjoy the region's culinary specialties. During the last part of the tour, we follow the Mosel River. Cycling through more vineyards, orchards, and meadows, along the scenic banks of the Mosel, is a grand way to conclude your tour.

Day 1 (Sat): Aschaffenburg - Bike tour 10 km (5-6 mi)

After you board the *Iris* and unpack, you will be introduced to the crew. Our guide will lead us on a walk to the Johannsburg, a large four-winged complex, built between 1605 and 1614 under the direction of Archbishop-Elector Johann Schweikard von Kronberg. It is considered one of the most important examples of palace architecture from the German Renaissance era. After we tour the complex, we will return to the barge for a welcome drink followed by dinner. After dinner we will have a bike fitting session and head out on a short test ride.

Day 2 (Sun): Aschaffenburg – Frankfurt-am-Main - Bike tour 45 km (27 mi)

Today and every day, you will begin breakfast at 8 and pack your lunch to take with you on the ride. After breakfast, we will start cycling in the direction of Kleinostheim toward Dettingen. After crossing the River Main on a small ferry, the tour continues to the romantic city of Seligenstadt with its winding alleys, wood framed houses and basilica. We ride further along the river to Hanau, the town where the Grimm Brothers were born. You will return to the barge in Frankfurt-am-Main, where you will have some free time to explore its modern buildings, museums and shopping center. After dinner, our guide will take us on a walk in town to several points of interest.

Day 3 (Mon): Frankfurt-am-Main – Mainz - Bike tour 45 km (27 mi)

Today we bike from Frankfurt to Mainz, along the Main River. In the afternoon, there will be time to explore Mainz, whose inner city is its pride and joy. You will find it filled with spacious plazas, lovingly restored half-timbered houses and magnificent Baroque style churches. After dinner, our guide will take us on a walk through the charming Old Town.

Day 4 (Tues): Mainz – Rudesheim

Bike tour 35/50 km (21/30 mi)

Today's ride initially leads us through rolling vineyards and renowned wine villages. The Rhine is flowing quite unhurriedly, forming little islands and broadening to a width of 800 m. Before we reach Rudesheim, we will visit the half-timbered town of Eltville and the monastery Eberbach. We stay overnight in Rudesheim, a historic city of winegrowers. The winegrowing here dates back to the Roman occupation. The old town, dating back to the Middle Ages, and parts of the city's fortifications like the Adlerturm (eagle tower), still remain. You may want to linger in one of the cozy wine taverns inside historic half-timbered houses. We will taste the local specialty, Asbach brandy, a fortified wine distilled here since 1892. We'll stroll down the famous Drosselgasse, an alley only 144 yards long by 2 yards wide, where you will experience quintessential Bavarian "Lebensfreude" - the joy of life!

Day 5 (Wed): Rudesheim – St. Goar

Bike tour 35 km (21 mi)

Today we bike along the lovely banks of the Middle Rhine to St. Goar. Grand castles will distract us along the way. At the narrowest part of the romantic Rhine Valley, we come upon the Lorelei, a slate cliff, 433 ft. high. The first traces of human settlement date back 600,000 years, to a time when the Lorelei Plateau was level with the Rhine. The Rhine is still quite deep and narrow here making this one of the most challenging areas for ships to navigate. Ages ago, many mariners in their wooden dinghies met tragic fates here. According to local legend, a maiden lived on the rock and lured fishermen to an untimely demise with her song. Directly opposite the Lorelei, is St. Goar, which was settled long ago to assist ship wrecked mariners. Today it is home to the largest castle on the Rhine, Rheinfels, where one can explore the fortifications, halls, and steep towers. It is here that the ship and her crew will be waiting to greet us for dinner.

Day 6 (Thurs): St. Goar – Koblenz

Bike tour 45 km (27 mi)

Today's bike ride takes us first to the ancient city of Boppard where the Rhine makes a nearly 180° turn. Known as the "pearl on the Rhine", Boppard is home to the most famous observation spot on the river which can be reached by chairlift. Boppard has always been a magnet for travelers, with her precipitous vineyards, a stunning river bank promenade and the oldest preserved Roman fort walls north of the Alps. Later we will continue to the beautiful city of Koblenz, and see the Deutsches Eck, where the Rhine and the Mosel rivers meet.

Tonight you are free to dine on your own at one of the many fine restaurants in Koblenz.

Day 7 (Fri): Koblenz – Cochem

Bike tour 40 km (24 mi)

Our bike tour today starts in Winningen and our first stop is Moselkern, the home of the famous Burg Eltz. This fortress is one of the most impressive medieval buildings in all of Western Europe! It will be worth the effort to get there, we'll park our bikes and take a nice hour long hike through the woods. After we visit Burg Eltz, we continue our bike tour to Cochem, one of the most popular wine towns on the Mosel. Cochem is a cozy town with wine cellars and half-timbered houses. We will enjoy a final farewell dinner together on the barge.

Day 8 (Sat): Cochem

After breakfast we will disembark at 10.





About our Barge...

The IRIS sleeps 22-24 guests in 12 cabins with twin beds. Cabins all feature private bath and in-room thermostats to control air-conditioning. Cabin windows can be opened.

INDOOR and OUTDOOR DECKS provide comfortable space for guests to gather for daily bike route briefings or to relax after the day's ride.

The IRIS has a fleet of comfortable **hybrid touring bikes**, ideal for the terrain featured on this tour. Bikes come with platform pedals and we recommend guests ride in running shoes or comfortable walking shoes. If you prefer to ride clipped in, you may bring your own pedals and riding shoes but, keep in mind that throughout the day, we will make sightseeing stops during which we will do some walking. The bikes are equipped with rear panniers for storing your lunch, clothing, extra shoes, or souvenirs.



VACATION PACKAGE INCLUDES:

- 7 nights aboard a canal barge, in an air-conditioned twin cabin with private bathroom
- 19 Meals include daily buffet breakfast, pack-your-own box lunch, six dinners on board
- One glass of wine or beer with all onboard dinners
- On board wine tastings
- Service of a bilingual bicycle tour guide and a tour director
- Sightseeing and cultural activities
- FREE use of hybrid touring bicycle, equipped with panniers, and helmet

NOT INCLUDED: Airfare and airport transfers are NOT included but, we are happy to assist you in arranging your transfer to Aschaffenburg from the airport or Frankfurt.

PRICING

- **List price: \$1995** per person, double occupancy
- **Refer-A-Friend Plan** – Help us fill another cabin (double occupancy) and receive **\$100 off your tour**
- Register with a **\$500 deposit** – payable by check or credit card

Important Information

Arrival in Aschaffenburg: From Frankfurt Airport there is a direct train that takes 47 min, currently costs \$28.

Departure from Cochem: Train service to Frankfurt airport (connect in Koblenz) will be a 2:15 hour journey, currently \$36.

Internet

There is WIFI onboard the barge. A limited amount of data is free.

Bicycles

The barge carries a fleet of well-maintained touring bikes, ideal for the terrain featured in this itinerary. Due to the limited storage space on the ship, guests will not be able to bring their own bikes.

Bicycle Helmet

We require all guests to wear a proper helmet at all times while riding on the tour. If you do not want to bring your own, there are helmets available on the barge for guests to borrow.

Bicycle Locks

All bicycles are fitted with locks. Please use them whenever you plan to leave your bicycle unattended for any length of time. You will be liable for damage or theft of the bicycle if it is stolen during an excursion because it was not locked properly.

Itinerary Program

The above itinerary is subject to change. Alterations are sometimes necessary due to nautical or technical conditions. This tour will cover daily bike rides between 40 and 60 km. It is often possible to do only part of the day's tour. And, of course, you can always opt out of riding and stay on board for the day. The guides will join you for the daily rides and point out interesting sights along the route. Guides can make repairs to your bike as necessary. While you are biking, the barge will cruise to the town where we will spend the night.

Physical Fitness

To participate in and enjoy the biking part of the tour, it is important that you are in good physical condition and that you are in control of your bike. On most parts of the route, there are dedicated bike paths but sometimes we will have to share the road with car traffic and we will have to cross busy intersections. The weather is variable in Germany, it may not always be sunny, and the winds may not always be calm. Even under poor weather conditions, you should feel safe and able to cover the day's distance on your bike as it may not always be possible to join the ship in mid-ride.

CONTACT US @ StephanieVentures@gmail.com, 707-580-0428. Visit our website:www.StephanieVentures.com



About Stephanie Ventures, LLC...

I'm Stephanie Scott and **Stephanie Ventures, LLC** is my tour company based in Fairfield, CA, specializing in active, affordable, and fun, small group travel. During my 30 year career in specialty food and wine, I've designed lots of fun, memorable events and travel adventures. I'm a certified Tour Director by the *International Tour Management Institute* and have worked as a tour guide in San Francisco. I've visited all 50 US States and a dozen or so countries on five continents.

While I've also worked with one of the most popular men's pro-cycling teams in the United States for the past 12 years, I'm content to ride my bicycle at a more leisurely pace. I do believe that one of the best ways to see the world and meet its people is by traveling around it on two wheels. I've logged many kilometers on the bike paths of Germany, Switzerland, Austria and France. Since then, I've planned and led amazing bike & barge tours in the Netherlands and Belgium. I'm currently working on itineraries in France, Italy and Germany.

I hope you'll join me in Germany for some cycling, castle hopping, wine tasting and more. Be sure to bring your spirit of adventure and I'll help you re-discover your *Lebensfreude!*

