



DANUBE DISCOVERY BIKE & BOAT TOUR - 6 COUNTRIES

15 DAYS – *Bike & Boat Cycling Tour through Germany, Austria, Hungary, Slovakia, Croatia, and Serbia*

Discover the breathtaking natural scenery of the Iron Gates, one of Europe's most spectacular gorges; the vast expanse of the Pannonian plains, the Danube Bend in Hungary and the breadbaskets of Croatia and Serbia, Travel through idyllic wine-growing regions and past commanding fortresses high above the river. Visit Belgrade, the "white city", fall in love with bewitching Budapest, the "Paris of the East", marvel at the baroque palaces in the picturesque old town of Bratislava and let yourself be carried away by the elegant charm of Vienna, the city of the waltz.

Day 1: Arrival in Passau

Meet Tour Director Stephanie in Passau to board the MS Swiss Crown, your home for the next 15 days. Embarkation begins at 4.00 p.m. for a 5:00 pm departure. Passau is known as the "City of Three Rivers" as it lies at the scenic confluence of the Danube, Inn and Ilz Rivers. The city is known for its well-preserved gothic and Baroque architecture so arrive in time to stroll the cobblestone alleys and take it all in. This evening you will enjoy a final glimpse as you sail serenely into the sunset, past dark green forests, before entering the lock at Jochenstein on the border of Germany and Austria.

Day 2: Great Loop/Engelhartszell-Aschach (42 km/26 mi)

Your first day's cycling begins with a ride through the classic scenery of the 'Great Loop' Donauschlinge - one of the most beautiful sections of the Danube. Along the way you will encounter tiny villages and cozy cider taverns. In Austria's only Trappist monastery at Engelhartszell you can taste their delicious liquors and cheese. The famous 'Schlögenger View' provides a wonderful panorama of the surrounding Austrian countryside. The ship's crew welcomes all cyclists back on board in the charming market town of Aschach.

Day 3: Devin - Bratislava, (15-43 km/9-27 mi)

A narrow cycle path runs along the Iron Curtain from the castle ruins in Devin to the splendid palace of Schloss Hof, which boasts one of the most magnificent baroque gardens in Europe. Follow a stretch of untouched countryside before arriving in the vibrant city of Bratislava. If you would like to shorten your ride and sightsee, you may want to take an *optional tour* on a miniature train in this Slovakian capital where Hungarian kings were once crowned. Enjoy a fantastic view from the fortress perched on a hill overlooking the city and later, stroll through the beautifully restored historic city center.





Day 4: Budapest | Excursion to Szentendre (27-54 km/17-33 mi or rest day)

You may choose to ride today or opt for a rest day and a choice of optional sightseeing. Savor the entrance to Budapest and the stunning views of the city's most famous buildings. Discover the city that straddles the Danube on a guided tour (optional) or take a detour to the delightful little town of Szentendre with many artists and galleries. Get a taste of the fiery Hungarian temperament at a Hungarian folklore show with traditional music and folk dance accompanied by wine and hearty local food (optional).

Day 5: Baja - Mohacs, (37 km/23 mi)

From the quiet Baroque town of Baja that is famous for its fish soup, you will cycle along the flood protection dike in the Gemenc floodplain, through sleepy river landscapes past fields of sunflowers. At the end of today's bike ride, you take the ferry to the little town of Mohacs, Hungary's southernmost town on the Danube and famously the site of two battles with the Turks.

Day 6: Belgrade (rest day)

Explore on foot the fun-loving Serbian capital at the confluence of the Sava and the Danube. Journey in time from the past to the present and learn about the rise and fall of former Yugoslavia (optional). In the evening, Belgrade is bathed in a sea of light. Visit the famous artists' quarter "Skadarlija", where in the countless taverns typical local specialties are served against a backdrop of lively folk music.

Day 7: Cataract Canyons / Iron Gates National Park (rest day)

Experience the stunning fjord-like landscape at up close from the comfort of the ship's deck. The Danube slices through the Romanian Carpathian Mountains and grand foothills of the Balkan Mountain range. The breathtaking natural beauty includes a spectacular landscape with steep gorges, dark forests with historic monuments and mighty fortresses on the shores, and stunning reflections in the river's blue waters!



Day 8: Novi Sad - Ilok, (48 km/30 mi)

The imposing Petrovaradin fortress perches high above the provincial capital of the Vojvodina. After cycling upstream along a flat bicycle path, you board a ferry to reach the foothills of the Fruška Gora, with its orchards, vineyards, and charming farming villages. Ilok, the easternmost town in Croatia is renowned for its wines, which are even enjoyed by the English royal family. A stroll train will take you to a centuries old wine cellar, where you will taste through several of the region's best wines. You may be treated to the lovely sound of Croatia's national instrument if there is a Tamburitza group to serenade us in the evening.

Day 9: Batina – Mohacs, (42 km/26 mi)

Today you will find yourself in the border triangle, cycling through the endless expanse of the Batschka (the territory of the Danube Swabians). Small, dreamy farming villages, bright yellow rapeseed fields and endless agricultural areas line your route from Croatia via Serbia to Hungary. Farmers cheerfully wave from their fields, and every now and then a horse-drawn wagon crosses the road. The alternative route leads through the untouched nature of the Dunav-Drava-Nemzeti Nations Park. On the roofs of the farmhouses nest numerous white storks, for which even a separate museum has been established. On your way to Mohacs, Hungary, you will pass the National Memorial commemorating the great battle of 1526.

Day 10: Kalocsa - Solt, (50 km/31 mi)

Kalocsa is the "Paprika Capital" of Hungary and the character of the town is strongly influenced by colourful houses with hand-painted, bright floral patterns. The cathedral towers are visible from a distance as they rise into the sky from the flat Hungarian plain. Visit the Paprika Museum and learn all about Hungary's favorite spice. Continue your journey on the well-

built cycle path along the flood protection dike through the vast expanse of the Puszta. On your way to Solt, the birthplace of the famous conductor Sir George Solti, white sandbanks along the Danube bank invite you to jump into the cool water.

Day 11: Danube Bend - Esztergom, (43 km/27 mi)

The Danube is framed by steep wooded hills as it flows through the picturesque, hilly landscape of the "Hungarian Wachau". Set in the middle of the Danube, the delightful island of Szentendre radiates real puszta romance. As you continue your journey on idyllic cycle paths through picturesque villages, you will be able to experience the Hungarian zest for life at first hand. The dome of the imposing basilica in Esztergom that sits high over the Danube can be seen from everywhere. Hungary's largest church, with its Tuscan style high altar and a side chapel with red marble walls is especially worth seeing.

Day 12: Vienna (Bike excursion to Klosterneuburg, Danube Island)

After so many vigorous days of cycling, you deserve some relaxation. Enjoy the breathtaking view of the idyllic floodplain forest of the Donau-Auen National Park and the impressive skyline as you sail into Vienna. Go for a ride on the Danube Island – Vienna's favorite recreational area, cycle out to the nearby Klosterneuburg Abbey or wander through the idyllic vineyards of the Kahlenberg (with magnificent views over the city and the Danube). You may want to end your day with a concert of traditional waltz and operetta music in a historic Viennese palace (optional).

Day 13: Vienna (rest day)

Discover Vienna: from the saddle on a guided bike tour, on your own, or with an optional HOP ON HOP OFF Bus tour. Ride through the historic city center at a leisurely pace and see the sights. The magnificent Ringstraße will remind you of times long past and inviting coffee houses will tempt you with delicious Viennese cakes and pastries. Afterwards, there is enough time to stroll through the quaint lanes or visit the Naschmarkt, a feast for the senses. You may want to end your day in Vienna in traditional style at a rustic wine tavern.



Day 14: Wachau | Krems - Melk, (37 km/23 mi)

This final stage of your cycling tour can best be described as magical! The gentle hilly countryside of the Wachau with their picturesque villages, historic castles and palaces surrounded by apricot trees and terraced vineyards, is one of the loveliest stretches of the river. In Weißenkirchen the cycle path is lined with cozy vintner's taverns, and you will have time to treat yourself to a break here for a wine tasting!

Day 15: Passau

Enjoy the first rays of sun and the early morning tranquility of the Danube valley one last time. Catch a final view of the Danube Bend at Schlögen – before you reach Passau, your heart and mind full of memories and impressions. Disembarkation at approx. 10.30 a.m. We recommend that you not make any arrangements for travel connections that depart before noon.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Included in the cost of the tour

- 14 nights in outside cabins with ensuite bath, air conditioning, television, safe and hair dryer
- Full board: Breakfast buffet, lunch on board (non- cyclists) or packed lunch (cyclists), afternoon coffee break, dinner (choice of entrée), late night snack
- Gala dinner with farewell cocktail
- Captains greeting and welcome cocktail
- Daily live-music
- Tour Director, Cycling Tour Guide
- Daily information meeting
- Route sheets for those who want to ride on their own

- Ferry rides along the bike route
- CITY TOURS: Budapest by bus, Vienna by bike
- Entrance fees for sites listed as included in the itinerary
- Use of 21 or 24 speed touring bike, helmet, pannier bag
 - Unisex step through frame in various sizes
 - Weight: 16 kg / 35 lbs.
 - Max. rider and gear weight: 130 kg (286 lbs.)



On request

- E-bike surcharge - €125 per bike
- Special diets, please inquire

SHIP: MS Swiss Crown Premium passenger hotel ship that sleeps 150 guests. Our group will be 20 guests, tour director and bike guide. *The MS Swiss Crown* is stylish, elegant, and timelessly beautiful –you will feel at home on board as soon as you enter her spectacular foyer. Designed in warm wood tones, the ship radiates a comfort and simple elegance. You are sure to enjoy the serene, relaxed atmosphere and the fantastic views of breathtakingly beautiful natural landscapes, sometimes from the bicycle seat, sometimes from the inviting, partially covered sun deck. Let yourself be pampered by the friendly, accommodating crew and indulge in some self-care in the ship’s sauna, steam bath and whirlpool.



GUEST CABINS are all outward-facing cabins and a spacious 14 m² with an elegant, comfortable interior.

Each cabin has a double bed which can be separated to 2 single beds, shower/WC, hairdryer, SAT TV, safe, coffee maker and individually adjustable air conditioning.



Cabins pictured above, left to right, subject to availability:

STANDARD CABIN: €3850, VAT Inclusive, per person, DOUBLE occupancy, €5075, VAT Inclusive, per person, SINGLE occupancy
located on main deck, raised windows cannot be opened

COMFORT CABIN: €4250, VAT Inclusive, per person, DOUBLE occupancy
located on middle deck, panoramic window can be opened

SUPERIOR: €4595, VAT inclusive, per person, DOUBLE occupancy
located on upper deck, sliding glass doors open to a private balcony

Stephanie Ventures Group size: 20 guests + Tour Director (Stephanie) + regional English-speaking bicycle guide

Arrival in Passau: The closest airport to the tour start is Munich (MUC). There is train service from the airport to Passau. We

recommend overseas guests arrive the day before departure and spend a night in a hotel in Passau. Directions to the ship's mooring location will be provided as departure date approaches.

Internet: There is free WIFI on the ship.

Bicycles: Included in your tour price is a 21 or 24 Speed touring Bike, ideal for the terrain you will cycle on. E-bikes are available for a surcharge. Keep in mind that e-bikes are heavier than touring bikes and require good bike handling skills. We do not recommend them for novice cyclists.

Bicycle Helmet: We require all guests to always wear a proper fitting helmet while riding on the tour. Helmets are included in the cost of the tour, but you are also welcome to bring your own.

Bicycle Locks: All bicycles are outfitted 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. Bicycle insurance is available at check in for a nominal fee.

Itinerary Program: The above itinerary is subject to change. Alterations are sometimes necessary due to circumstances beyond the operator's control.

Physical Fitness and Bike Handling: To participate in and enjoy the biking part of the tour, it is important that you are in good physical condition and that you have the necessary bike handling skills. Group riding experience is encouraged but not a requirement. This tour is rated difficulty level 1-2 so novice cyclists may occasionally find it challenging. All guests are expected to keep pace with the group which travels at 10-12 mph. Guests who cannot maintain that pace will be asked to ride on their own, with maps and route sheets provided. Electric bikes are also an option (for a surcharge) but will need to be requested prior to the start of the tour. On this tour, we will occasionally need to share the road with car traffic, and we will have to cross busy intersections. The weather is variable, 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. If for any reason, a guest cannot complete the day's ride, the guest can return to the ship at their own expense.

PLEASE NOTE: *In the event of extremely high or low water, the shipping company reserves the right to bridge stages by bus or even to cancel the trip at short notice without any legal claim arising therefrom (water levels are force majeure). The same applies for officially decreed repairs to locks or bridges, not announced in advance, or in the event of motor or propulsion damage to the ship without attributed fault.*

On the one hand, a riverboat is a "holiday hotel," while on the other, it is also a means of transport that moves with motor power and must always be operated, even at night (partially with lock and bridge passages and the retractions and extensions of the structures caused as a result). Mistakes can happen with lock passages. This is the case for all Danube journeys and cannot be avoided.

About Stephanie Ventures

Our expertise is active, affordable, small group travel and we pride ourselves on putting a unique spin on our itineraries to ensure you will not find another tour experience out there quite like ours. Founder Stephanie Scott started the company in the US, with 35 years of experience in specialty food and wine, during which she designed plenty of fun, memorable events, and travel adventures. She managed the title sponsorship of one of the most popular men's pro-cycling teams in the US for 15 years, but is content to ride her bike, at home and on tour, at a more leisurely pace. She believes that one of the best ways to see the world and meet its people is by traveling around it on two wheels. She logged many kilometers on the bike paths of Germany, Switzerland, and Austria before launching her tour company in 2015.

Certified as a Tour Director by the International Tour Management Institute, Stephanie worked as a tour guide in San Francisco before founding Stephanie Ventures. She went on to host amazing bike & barge tours in the Netherlands, France, Luxembourg, Belgium, Germany, and Italy. Fast-forward a few years and a pandemic, and in the dead of winter 2022, Stephanie sold everything she owned and ran away to Europe to realize her long-time dream of living and working there. From this new home base in Alphen aan den Rijn in South Holland, she can be closer to the destinations she offers, and design new tours including land-based tours. Join her as she searches for panoramic views, history, local culture, regional cuisine, and much more! Be sure to bring your spirit of adventure, hearty appetite, and a good sense of humor!



Stephanie Ventures • Hoofstraat 5a • Alphen aan den Rijn, Netherlands

Website: <https://stephanieventures.com/>

E-mail: StephanieVentures@Gmail.com • Phone: +31 6 2510 7863

VAT: NL004167539B