

Cruising the Rhine: From Basel to Amsterdam



TRIP OVERVIEW

Journey through Switzerland, France, Germany and the Netherlands, as you follow the winding course of the mighty Rhine. Travel between vastly different riverside settlements, exploring the tulipgrowing town of Haarlem, Cologne's atmospheric old town and the roaring cascade of the Rhine Falls.

ITINERARY & DETAILS

This document aims to give you all the information that you require for a smooth and comfortable river cruise. Please take the time to read this dossier to familiarise yourself with all the aspects of our river cruise. It includes important information such as visa requirements and travel insurance.

Your included meal guide:

B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner.

DAY 1: UK to Basel D

Depart London on your scheduled flight to Basel. Upon arrival, you will be met and transferred to your ship, the 5* MS Douce France. Take a moment to settle into your cabin and enjoy a welcome cocktail with the crew before dinner.

DAY 2: Basel to Breisach B/L/D

Spend a morning at leisure in Breisach, giving you the chance to visit the Romanesque St Stephansmunster Cathedral which overlooks the town. An afternoon tour carries you to Colmar where you'll soak in the pastel-coloured houses and winding canals of the neighbourhood of 'Little Venice'. Travel onward to the Unterlinden Museum for a tour of its vast collection of local and international artwork.

DAY 3: Breisach to Strasbourg B/L/D

After a morning of cruising, you will arrive in Strasbourg to explore the medieval remnants of this French city. Walk through diverse districts, including the 'German Quarter' and European District which house the Palace of Europe and the European parliament building, providing a fascinating juxtaposition to the city's more historic sights. Take a guided tour of the cathedral before continuing on through the UNESCO-listed Petite France district, a romantic quarter of the city characterised by canals and timber-framed buildings. Later this evening, enjoy an evening of entertainment on board.

DAY 4: Mainz to Koblenz B/L/D

Today you will meander down the most scenic stretch of the Rhine. Spend your day absorbing the gorgeous natural scenery carved by the river and viewing the settlements on its banks. On arrival into Mainz, take a guided tour of the city and uncover its colourful history which dates back to Roman times. Be captivated by the Romanesque Cathedral as you explore its grand interior, brimming with historic tombs and funerary monuments. Wander through the vibrant streets of the Old Town, stopping at the Gutenberg Museum which houses an extensive collection of printing equipment, materials and books, including the oldest printed book in the world.

DAY 5: Koblenz to Dusseldorf B/L/D

Journey onward to Cologne where you'll set out on a walking tour of this bustling commercial and industrial city. Travel into the heart of the city and marvel at the grand facade of the towering Cologne Cathedral. Although its construction began in 1247, this iconic building took five centuries to complete and the area also boasts 12 additional Romanesque-style churches which circle the cathedral. Continue your tour into the old town with time at leisure to wander this network of historic streets. Later this evening, enjoy a gala dinner on board.

DAY 6: Dusseldorf to Amsterdam B/L/D

Disembark in Emmerich-am-Rhein to visit the open-air museum in nearby Arnhem. Located in a picturesque wooded park, the area is home to 80 historic farms, windmills and public buildings which provide fascinating insight into everyday Dutch life, customs and traditions. Immerse yourself in this wonderful experience and appreciate the quaint architecture on show, which ranges from charming, green painted houses to traditional Gelderland farms. Return to your ship for an evening of entertainment.

DAY 7: Amsterdam B/L/D

This morning, take a coach journey to Haarlem, the 'City of Flowers' which is renowned as the country's vibrant tulip-growing centre. Discover the city's artistic heritage and its unique character and colourful landscape which have inspired generations of painters. Explore the architectural delights of the city gate of Amsterdamse Poort, the main square of Gote Markt and the immense Gothic structure of the Cathedral of St Bavo, with time at leisure to take in more of the city sights before returning to your vessel.

DAY 8: Amsterdam to the UK B

Disembark after breakfast for your airport transfer and return flight to the UK.

Meals

Breakfast, lunch and dinner daily are taken on-board the ship. Tables seat 4 and 6 people, so you'll be able to converse and socialise with new friends, whilst never feeling crowded together. Tea and coffee are available on-board ship as well as unlimited soft drinks and alcoholic drinks, including a variety of wines and beer, both during meals and at the bar. (Premium brands are available at an extra cost). Any dietary requirements and dislikes should be made known to our reservations staff at the time of booking. On embarking the ship, you will be greeted by the captain, crew and staff and treated to welcome cocktails.

SHIP INFORMATION

Ship information - 5★ MS Symphonie

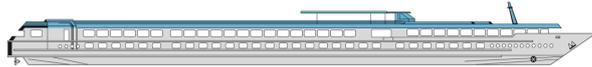
Renovated in 2017, this premium ship offers 55 comfortable cabins spread over two decks, a lounge with dance floor and spacious sun deck. All cabins are equipped with en suite facilities, independent air-conditioning, Wi-Fi, TV, hairdryer and safe.

Length: 110m long
Width 10m wide

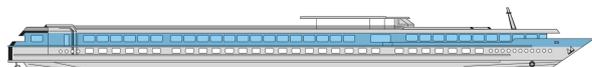
Capacity: 106 passengers
Cabins: 55

Facilities

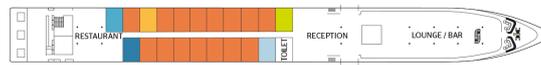
- Lounge-bar with a dance floor
- Restaurant
- Large sundeck with sun loungers and shaded area



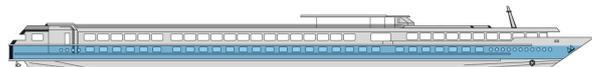
Sun Deck



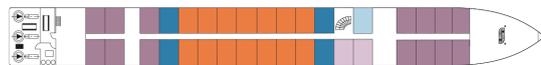
Upper Deck



- Double cabin Cat. A
- Single cabin Cat. A
- Double cabin Cat. B
- Single cabin Cat. B
- Suite Cat. B
- PRM cabin Cat. B



Main Deck



- Double cabin Cat. A
- Suite Cat. B
- Double cabin Cat. B
- Double cabin Cat. C
- Single cabin Cat. C

The Cabins

All cabins are equipped with shower and toilet, hairdryer, towels, TV, independent air-conditioning, Wi-Fi and safe.

Upper deck: 20 cabins with French balcony and sliding panoramic windows

Category A: 15 double cabins, 1 single cabin

Category B: 1 double cabin, 1 suite, 1 single cabin, 1 cabin suited for guests with reduced mobility.

Main deck: 35 cabins with picture windows with sliding top section

Category A: 14 double cabins

Category B: 4 double cabins, 1 suite

Category C: 14 double cabins, 2 single cabins

Final confirmation of your deck and cabin will be confirmed at booking. If the ship detailed is not available, an alternative will be used of a similar standard.

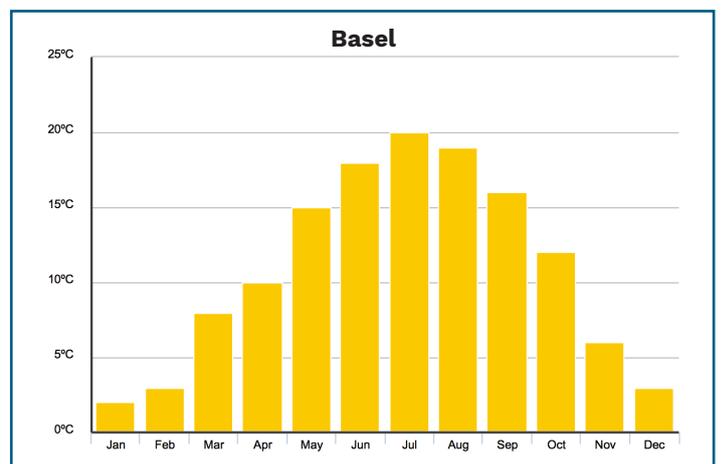
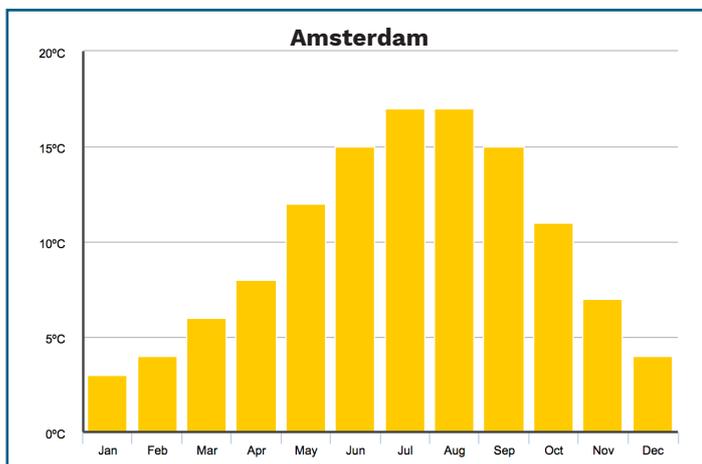


3D plan of a Standard Cabin



WEATHER AND CLIMATE

Weather can vary quite considerably throughout the year, so please familiarise yourself with the climate charts below.



WHAT YOU NEED FOR YOUR TOUR

Visas

A visa is not required for British nationals travelling to Holland, Germany, France or Switzerland. Further advice should be sought from the applicable tourist authority for other nationalities and for general queries. We strongly advise you check your destinations' Tourist Board or Embassy for the most up-to-date guidelines regarding passport validity.

Tour Guides

Optional excursions are escorted by an experienced, English-speaking guide.

Shared cruise

Please note: your cruise is shared with international clients from other companies.

Tipping

Tipping is at your discretion. There is an envelope in your cabin for this purpose that can be handed to reception at the end of your cruise.

Currency Exchange

The currency in Holland, Germany and France is the Euro. The currency in Switzerland is the Swiss Franc (CHF) We recommend that you exchange your currency before you leave the UK. It is important that you budget carefully and ensure you have the right form of currency before you arrive in the country. Cash machines will also be available throughout the tour in order to withdraw money in your local currency.

Personal Expenses

This cruise is All-Inclusive, so you will only need to take a little extra money with you to cover any premium drinks on board and souvenirs, drinks and snacks purchased when off the ship, as well as any optional excursions you wish to book.

Credit Card Information

Credit cards are accepted on board the ship and throughout Holland, Germany, France and Switzerland.

Electricity Supply

The electricity supply is 220V – 240V. You will need a special 2 pin plug adapter in Holland.

Itinerary Changes

The Captain and CroisiEurope reserve the right to alter/modify an itinerary at any time, should safety or external circumstances make this necessary, changes are also subject to tides. Some of the highlights may only be seen on optional excursions at an additional cost, or by exploring independently.

Health and Vaccinations

It is your responsibility to check any health and vaccination requirements applicable to your booked arrangements. We can only provide general information about this. Health and hygiene facilities and disease risks vary from country to country. You should take health advice about your own needs as early as possible and in good time before your departure. Sources of information include; www.fco.gov.uk, www.travelhealthpro.org.uk, www.hpa.org.uk, your General Practitioner or a specialist clinic.

Physical Accessibility

This river cruise is accessible to most people with an average level of fitness and normal mobility. It involves moderate days of walking on cobbled streets & getting on/off the ship. This cruise is not suitable for anyone with walking difficulties.

Insurance

We strongly recommend that you and all members of your party are suitably insured as soon as you book your holiday. It is a condition of booking that you must have suitable travel insurance. It is important that you purchase travel insurance that suitably covers your participation in whatever activities you may undertake at the time that you make your booking. To assist you with this, we have arranged travel insurance in partnership with Holiday Extras. To arrange your travel insurance with Holiday Extras, please call **0800 781 4237** and quote **'WK830'** for preferential rates. Please ensure you provide us with the name of your insurer, policy number and their 24 hour emergency contact number as soon as possible. Mercury Holidays will not be liable for any costs incurred by you due to your failure to take out suitable travel insurance from the date of booking.

DRESS CODE & WHAT TO PACK

Dress Code

There is no official dress code on board, however you'll be most comfortable during the day in smart casual clothing. You may wish to bring items that do not wrinkle easily as there is no iron provided on board ship. There is an ironing room and a laundry service on board both ships. Bring a variety of clothing for the weather expected on your cruise, including light clothing and bathing suits for hot weather, a jumper or jacket for cooler weather and of course a raincoat and/or small umbrella.

What to Pack

- Comfortable walking shoes such as trainers for sightseeing excursions
- Sun cream and a hat with a big brim for sunny days
- Sunglasses
- Ruck sack or light bag per person
- Personal toiletries
- Insect repellent
- Personal first aid kit containing travel pills, rehydration powder, plasters, stomach settlers, antiseptic creams, aspirin etc.

FLIGHT INFORMATION

IMPORTANT: Please note that final flight details, including terminal, airline and baggage allowance, will be confirmed on your final documentation which will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure. A printed E-ticket is no longer required at check-in, all you need to do is present your passport to the staff at the desk and your boarding pass will be given to you.

Airport Extras

If you wish to arrange Airport car parking or accommodation at preferential rates, we recommend you book this in advance with Holiday Extras on 0871 360 2000, quoting HX313.

ON YOUR ARRIVAL

On your arrival in Basel you will be met by a representative from our local agent, CroisiEurope, holding a sign displaying: "Mercury Holidays". The Mercury Holidays/CroisiEurope representative will show you to your transfer vehicle. If you need to contact your representative during your stay the details will be given on your arrival.

EMBARKING & DISEMBARKING

Embarkation Time: 6pm
Disembarkation Time: 9am

If your arrival is before this time, you will be transferred to the docking area where you will be able to leave your luggage. You are then free to explore the city at your own pace until it is time to board your ship. Please note that details of the boarding quay will be confirmed when you receive your final holiday confirmation.