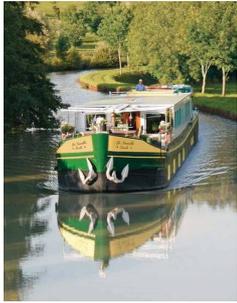


RIVER CRUISES - AN ALTERNATIVE TO TRADITION



When thinking about cruises most people think of huge, floating hotels carrying up to 3,000 passengers who lie in the sun the whole day, or at least the time they do not spend eating at one of numerous on board restaurants. However, not all cruises are the same and not on every journey on a cruise ship cocktails, shuffle board or entertainment are the essentials that should not be missed. There are alternatives like river cruising, expedition cruises, Windjammers or even freight voyages.

Whereas expedition cruises or freight voyages are more focused on the real life at sea or travelling to far away and undisturbed places in this world and cruising on a Windjammer is to feel the sea, river cruises go more smoothly. **A river cruise ship travels much slower than a traditional cruise ship** and by going on a river cruise you have the opportunity to wake up in a new city every morning but also see more than just the crowded tourist hot spots within the respective countries.

River cruises are mainly offered throughout Europe, China or on the Mississippi in warm weather climates. In northern climates the rivers freeze over the winter and the ships are not able to make their way up or down the river. River cruise ships generally accommodate 100-200 people and **this type of cruising is much more casual than traditional cruising vacation.**

It also is a good starter holiday for people who might get seasick as these ships and boats are extremely stable and you might not even notice the boat moving. If you like nostalgia you may want to go on an American style river cruise. You can travel on a romantic sternwheeler that takes you back in history to a point when the country was young and traveling was an adventure. You can also decide to sail out of Portland on the Columbia river to enjoy the beauty of the country from a totally new perspective.

However, **river cruises may not offer the full entertainment program known from traditional cruises.** Normally there is no big kids animation club or club dancing although there is always something prepared to amuse the guests. As the size of ships is smaller compared to big cruise ships, places should be booked well in advance to secure you place in this new adventure to come.

By Wiebke Wohlfahrt

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