Cruise Details

Name:	Christmas Markets on the Rhine (Smithsonian Journeys)
Reference:	AMAAJ261205AIXJ
Operator:	Ama Waterways
Cruise Type:	River
Cruise Rating:	Luxury
Ship:	AmaViola
Regions:	Rhine
Departs On:	05 Dec 26
Departs From:	Amsterdam
Arrives On:	12 Dec 26
Arrives At:	Basel
Cruise Nights:	7
Total Vacation Days:	7

Itinerary

Day 1: Amsterdam (Netherlands)

Amsterdam, the Netherlands. Arrive in Amsterdam and board your elegantly decorated river cruise ship. You'll have free time before and after dinner to take a stroll through the city, perhaps to see the Christmas tree in Dam Square or watch locals ice skate in front of the Rijksmuseum. Catch a glimpse of the radiant installations of the Amsterdam Light Festival, set up annually along the city's canals. (Meals: D)

Arrives On: 05 Dec 26

Day 2: Amsterdam (Netherlands)

Amsterdam/Utrecht. Step into centuries of history at Slot Zuylen, a castle first built around 1250 and shaped by generations that followed. A significant renovation in the mid-17th century transformed the castle. This, along with smaller changes over the centuries have created a rich tapestry of architectural styles, evident as you move through its rooms and corridors. Beyond the

walls, the gardens offer a more peaceful, quieter retreat. Together, the castle and its gardens make Slot Zuylen a place where history feels layered, lived in, and very much alive.

Arrives On: 06 Dec 26

Day 2: Utrecht (Netherlands)

Arrives On: 06 Dec 26

Day 3: Düsseldorf (Germany)

Düsseldorf or Cologne, Germany. Spend a relaxing morning cruising through scenic countryside to Düsseldorf. Stay in Düsseldorf for an afternoon bike ride or a walking tour of the historic center and its Christmas Market. Or head to Cologne, where the diverse architecture ranges from Romanesque churches to avant-garde buildings erected after the Allied bombings of World War II. Choose between a guided walk through the Old Town visiting the Fischmarkt and seeing Great St. Martin Church, or join an archaeological walking tour of its extensive Roman sites and the Belgian House where many Roman artifacts are on display. Venture into one of Europe’s largest and most renowned Christmas Markets, set against the soaring backdrop of the 13th-century Dom Cathedral, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. You’ll have free time to wander among the stalls, sipping a glühwein if you wish, or nibbling on lebkuchen (gingerbread). (Meals: B,L,D)

Arrives On: 07 Dec 26

Day 4: Rüdesheim am Rhein (Germany)

Rhine Gorge and Rüdesheim. Enter the spectacular Upper Middle Rhine Valley, a UNESCO World Heritage Site also known as the Rhine Gorge. Here, more than 40 medieval castles perch on bluffs high over the river and charming villages dot the riverbanks, twinkling with holiday spirit at this time of year. Hear the legend of Lorelei Rock as you glide toward Rüdesheim, a gateway to the Rheingau wine region. Choose from a range of excursions: visit a wine cellar for a tasting of Rheingau wines, go on a hike or a guided bike ride, or ride a gondola over the vineyards, taking in stunning views. Then experience holiday traditions from around the world at the town’s Christmas Market. Later, see whimsical self-playing instruments at Siegfried’s Mechanical Instrument Cabinet, or taste one of the town’s specialties: Rüdesheimer coffee. (Meals: B,L,D)

Arrives On: 08 Dec 26

Day 5: Ludwigshafen (Germany)

Heidelberg or Speyer. From the riverside town of Ludwigshafen, explore your choice of historic Rhineland cities and their festive Christmas Markets. Visit Heidelberg, a city that will capture your heart with its mighty castle and centuries-old university. Here, wander along one of Europe’s

longest pedestrian shopping streets, the Hauptstrasse, soaking up the yuletide celebrations at the town's Christmas Market. Or hike along the historic Philosopher's Path, enjoying views of Heidelberg's castle and the city below, then enjoy free time to browse the Christmas Markets. Alternatively, bike along the River Neckar to medieval Ladenburg and visit its Marktplatz, or explore one of Germany's oldest cities, Speyer, known for the largest Romanesque cathedral in Europe, a UNESCO World Heritage Site; and tour the Technik Museum to see a fascinating collection that includes vintage cars, a submarine and a space shuttle. You'll have time to visit its Christmas Market in front of the Old Mint (Alten Münze). (Meals: B,L,D)

Arrives On: 09 Dec 26

Day 6: Strasbourg (France)

Strasbourg, France. Strasbourg becomes even more enchanting during the season of Advent. Its Christkindelsmärik, dating back to 1570, is the oldest Christmas Market in France and one of the largest. Walk through the historic town center on the Grande Île, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and through the lovely Petite France district, where timeless, half-timbered houses line winding canals. See the Cathédrale de Nôtre Dame and its famous astronomical clock and then delve into the town's famous Christmas Market, perhaps sampling a vin chaud or one of the city's famous Christmas cookies. Alternatively, opt to visit the seat of the European Parliament on a guided tour (subject to availability). You may also choose to explore Strasbourg's different neighborhoods on a guided bike tour. Later this afternoon, opt to visit the historic spa town of Baden-Baden and its romantic Christmas Markets. (Meals: B,L,D)

Arrives On: 10 Dec 26

Day 7: Breisach (Germany)

Colmar or Breisach, Germany. Go ashore in the German town of Breisach, poised on the border between the Alsace region of France and Germany's Black Forest. In the fairytale Alsatian town of Colmar, experience a whimsical blend of French and German culture, and choose to tour the home of August Bartholdi, the sculptor of the Statue of Liberty, or explore the town's wonderful Christmas Markets. Alternatively, venture to the UNESCO-designated Neuf-Brisach Citadel, or ride a bicycle through the countryside around Breisach. (Meals: B,L,D)

Arrives On: 11 Dec 26

Day 8: Basel (Switzerland)

Basel. Disembark the ship and bid farewell to Basel as you prepare for your return flight home. (B)

Arrives On: 12 Dec 26

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