Cruise Details

Name:	Christmas Markets of Europe & Paris
Reference:	EMERALDEPAX021226-2
Operator:	Emerald Cruises
Cruise Type:	River
Cruise Rating:	Luxury
Ship:	Emerald Astra
Regions:	Danube
Departs On:	02 Dec 26
Departs From:	Budapest
Arrives On:	19 Dec 26
Arrives At:	Paris
Cruise Nights:	17
Total Vacation Days:	18

Itinerary

Day 1: Budapest (Hungary)

Welcome to Budapest, one of the most cosmopolitan cities in Eastern Europe. Here, you'll be met at the airport and transferred to your luxurious Emerald Cruises Star-Ship, where your friendly captain and crew will be waiting to greet you. This evening, relax on board as you enjoy an authentic Hungarian folklore show. EmeraldPLUS
Traditional Hungarian folklore show Please book your flight to arrive into Budapest prior to 05:00 PM.

Arrives On: 02 Dec 26

Day 2: Budapest (Hungary)

Budapest is a place of striking contrasts, with Buda on one side housing a generous scattering of the city’s elegant landmarks, and Pest on the other encapsulating its fascinating past. Separated by the mighty Danube, you can explore them both by crossing the Chain Bridge, one of

the most symbolic structures in the capital. Today, you will have the opportunity to discover the city's history during a guided tour covering some of the highlights of Budapest and learn more about its stunning landscape and architecture. The history of the Hungarian capital shows a unique blend of cultures, cuisine and vibrant lifestyle. There is so much to take in while you pass through the bustling city, which is an attractive destination for visitors from all over the world. . Enjoy, some free to continue exploring some of beautiful Christmas Market in Budapest. Included Excursion
Guided coach tour of Budapest EmeraldPLUS
Christmas traditions in Europe (lecture on board)

Arrives On: 03 Dec 26

Day 3: Bratislava (Slovakia)

Bordering Austria and Hungary, the Slovakian capital is yours to discover today. Wander down cobblestone streets and witness the sheer majesty of ornate Baroque palaces as you explore with a local guide, passing the Renaissance courtyard of the Old Town Hall and the picturesque gardens of the Episcopal Summer Palace. Afterwards, enjoy free time to explore at leisure, perhaps perusing some of the quaint boutiques that line the streets. This afternoon, you will be welcomed into the home of a local family to learn about their culture over traditional sweet treats and coffee. Included Excursion
Walking tour of Bratislava EmeraldPLUS
Home-hosted coffee and cake with a Slovakian family DiscoverMORE
Carpathian wine route (extra expense)

Arrives On: 04 Dec 26

Day 4: Vienna (Austria)

A wave of culture paves the way for life in the Austrian capital, where some of history's most prestigious composers once walked the streets and found their inspiration. Today, by coach and on foot, you will have the opportunity to pass the iconic imperial palaces and noteworthy buildings adorning the Ringstrasse, including the Vienna State Opera. Included Excursion
Guided tour of Vienna DiscoverMORE
Visit to Schönbrunn Palace (extra expense) DiscoverMORE
Viennese evening concert (extra expense)

Arrives On: 05 Dec 26

Day 5: Dürnstein (Austria)

This morning, you will have the opportunity to hike to explore the picturesque town of Dürnstein on your own.
Afterwards, relax on the Sun Deck as you sail through the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Wachau Valley and on to Melk, nestled in the heart of the Wachau wine region. Your local guide will take you on a tour of the spectacular 900-year-old Benedictine abbey, including its ancient monastic library and medieval manuscripts saved from fires by the monks in the 13th century. Included Excursion
Tour of Melk Abbey

Arrives On: 06 Dec 26

Day 5: Melk (Austria)

Arrives On: 06 Dec 26

Day 6: Passau (Germany)

Sat on the confluence of the Danube, Inn and Ilz rivers, Passau is a postcard-worthy destination that has been shaped by the surrounding waterways. Maze-like romantic lanes weave through the city, opening up into large squares and magical promenades adorned with classical boutiques. This afternoon, join your local guide for a tour of Passau and discover a peppering of delightful Baroque buildings, some of which date back to the 17th century. Stop to admire the silhouette of the hilltop Oberhaus Fortress and witness St. Stephen’s Cathedral, home of the largest church organ in Europe.
Later, return for an afternoon spent peacefully cruising through the heart of Europe. Included Excursion
Guided tour of Passau DiscoverMORE
Excursion to Salzburg (extra expense) DiscoverMORE
Excursion to Ceský Krumlov (extra expense)

Arrives On: 07 Dec 26

Day 7: Regensburg (Germany)

After breakfast, set out on an exploration of one of the best-preserved medieval cities in Germany, where more than two millennia of history is yours to discover. Your local guide will lead you through the heart of Regensburg’s UNESCO World Heritage-listed Old Town, once home to the seat of parliament. Delightful historic patrician houses line the streets, a visible testament to the area’s importance as a trading centre hundreds of years ago. As part of one of your EmeraldPLUS features, you will also have a chance to visit the wonderful Christmas Market inside the Thurn & Taxis Palace grounds. Later, return to your Star-Ship to sail through the picturesque surrounds of the Main-Danube Canal, passing Kelheim as you make your way to Nuremberg. Included Excursion
Guided tour of Regensburg EmeraldPLUS
Visit to the Christmas

market in the Thurn und Taxis Palace grounds EmeraldPLUS
Bavarian band performance on board

Arrives On: 08 Dec 26

Day 7: Kelheim (Germany)

Arrives On: 08 Dec 26

Day 8: Nuremberg (Germany)

Today, the historic city of Nuremberg is yours to explore during an included sightseeing tour, touching on the architectural wonders that have acted as an inspiration for famous artists from around the world for generations. After your guided tour, enjoy time to explore the city at leisure, passing idyllic houses that were lovingly reconstructed following the destruction of the war years. Included Excursion
Guided tour of Nuremberg

Arrives On: 09 Dec 26

Day 9: Bamberg (Germany)

This morning, the UNESCO World Heritage-listed town of Bamberg awaits. Thousands of listed buildings can be found in the medieval town centre, an area bursting with character, charm and one of the best-preserved old quarters in Europe. Admire hundreds of ornamental façades as you explore the town with your local guide, passing the New Residence, a building that truly captures the opulence that was enjoyed by the prince bishops. Relax in the Rose Garden before witnessing the opulence of medieval Altenburg Castle overlooking the town. Included Excursion
Guided tour of Bamberg

Arrives On: 10 Dec 26

Day 10: Würzburg (Germany)

Set alongside the Main River, Würzburg offers a perfect introduction to the Romantic Road, one of Bavaria’s most popular tourism routes that links stunning medieval locations throughout the country. Your own charming journey of discovery will touch on the sloping vineyard-laden hills of one of the biggest wine-producing areas in Germany. Today, you will have the opportunity to visit the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Würzburg Residence, perhaps stopping to admire the Viennese Baroque architecture and secular features from Italy. Your local guide will teach you about how the architects behind the Würzburg Residence drew inspiration from a spectrum of different popular styles. After the tour, enjoy a guided walking tour of Würzburg, including the

Gothic Marienkapelle and Town Hall. Included Excursion
Walking tour of Würzburg and a visit to the Bishops Residence DiscoverMORE
Excursion to Rothenburg (extra expense)

Arrives On: 11 Dec 26

Day 11: Wertheim (Germany)

This morning, discover the tranquil beauty of your EmeraldPLUS programme, Bronnbach Abbey, a former Cistercian monastery nestled in the picturesque Tauber Valley. Then, travel by coach to the picturesque village of Miltenberg, a place that perfectly encapsulates traditional Bavarian life. Enjoy a guided tour of the village, as your local guide leads you down an intricate network of cobblestone streets, each adorned with colourful houses. Centuries ago, this area benefited from trade that was brought by river traffic, and this past affluence can still be seen today. Included Excursion
Guided tour of Miltenberg EmeraldPLUS
Visit to Bronnbach Abbey

Arrives On: 12 Dec 26

Day 11: Miltenberg (Germany)

Arrives On: 12 Dec 26

Day 12: Rüdesheim (Germany)

Relax on your Star-Ship this morning until we reach Rüdesheim, a town with a rich history of viticulture. When you arrive, ride the Winzerexpress to Siegfried’s Mechanical Music Cabinet Museum to see spectacular rare music boxes that have stood the test of time, showcased in a postcard-worthy building with a half-timbered façade. After lunch, sail through the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Rhine Gorge, perhaps standing on the Sun Deck and watching for the castles and fortresses that pepper the surrounding hilltops. Included Excursion
Visit to Siegfried’s Mechanical Music Cabinet Museum

Arrives On: 13 Dec 26

Day 12: Koblenz (Germany)

Arrives On: 13 Dec 26

Day 13: Cologne (Germany)

Cruise along the Rhine from Koblenz to Cologne this morning, where an illustrious 2,000-year-long history awaits. One of the oldest cities in the country, the Romans founded Cologne in 50AD and you'll find a number of ancient ruins, monuments and medieval structures as reminders. Enjoy a walking tour of the city today, as your local guide takes you through the Old Town, passing ancient bridges that survived the air raids of WWII, including the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Cologne Cathedral and its filigree twin towers, an iconic part of the city’s skyline. This evening, your crew will be delighted to welcome you to your farewell dinner. Included Excursion
Quest for Cologne’s treasures

Arrives On: 14 Dec 26

Day 14: Amsterdam (Netherlands)

This morning, board a glass top canal boat for a cruise down the UNESCO World Heritage-listed canal system that weaves across Amsterdam, passing elegant merchant’s residences that reflect the prosperity of the Dutch Golden Age, a time when Amsterdam was an important trading centre. Afterwards, enjoy free time to explore at leisure. Included Excursion
Canal cruise DiscoverMORE
Private hidden Gems Tour of Amsterdam (extra expense)

Arrives On: 15 Dec 26

Day 15: Amsterdam (Netherlands)

After breakfast, you will be transferred from your Star-Ship to the centre of Paris, the world-famous “City of Light”. There is something for everyone to enjoy in Paris, from its romantic ambience to its sought-after gastronomy. Your journey through the heart of Europe includes a three-night stay in centrally located accommodation.

Arrives On: 16 Dec 26

Day 15: Paris (France)

Arrives On: 16 Dec 26

Day 16: Paris (France)

Today, the wide and leafy boulevards of Paris are yours to discover with a local guide, as you witness the sheer majesty of the Notre Dame Cathedral and the Arc de Triomphe. After your walking tour, board a river cruise along the Seine to see the city from a different angle, finishing at the iconic Eiffel Tower. Included Excursion
A guided tour of Paris and a Seine river cruise

Arrives On: 17 Dec 26

Day 17: Paris (France)

The storied beauty of Paris is yours to discover independently today, perhaps choosing to visit the mighty Louvre and witness the legendary Mona Lisa, or venturing along the streets decorated for the holiday season, stopping at some charming Christmas markets. You can also choose to have a stroll down the Champs-Elysées illuminated with twinkle lights or be enchanted by the Galleries Lafayette's windows displaying magical animated scenes. Your tour director will be available to help you plan your day of independent exploration. DiscoverMORE
Tastes of Paris (extra expense)

Arrives On: 18 Dec 26

Day 18: Paris (France)

After breakfast, it’s time to bid farewell to your fellow guests and prepare for your transfer to the airport, taking memories of the city of lights with you.

Arrives On: 19 Dec 26

For more information on this cruise, please call +44 (0)1202 767926.

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