Cruise Details

Name:	Early Season Splendours of Europe
Reference:	EMERALDEWCR170228-1W
Operator:	Emerald Cruises
Cruise Type:	River
Cruise Rating:	Luxury
Ship:	Emerald Astra
Regions:	Rhine, Danube and Main
Departs On:	17 Feb 28
Departs From:	Amsterdam
Arrives On:	02 Mar 28
Arrives At:	Budapest
Cruise Nights:	14
Total Vacation Days:	15

Itinerary

Day 1: Amsterdam (Netherlands)

Welcome to Amsterdam, a postcard-worthy destination of picturesque canals, cafés, and art galleries. Here, you'll be met at the airport and transferred to the comfortable surrounds of your Emerald Star-Ship. This evening, join your fellow guests for dinner on board.

Arrives On: 17 Feb 28

Day 2: Amsterdam (Netherlands)

Beyond Amsterdam’s storied canals, a gentler rhythm unfolds as you venture into the Dutch countryside, where emerald-green pastures, mirror-like waterways and centuries-old windmills paint an impossibly picturesque scene. From charming towns like Alkmaar, famed for its historic cheese-making traditions, to Waterland, where pretty, stilted villages, glassy lakes and narrow canals offer a glimpse into traditional Dutch life, discover how the Dutch have shaped their landscape for generations. Included Excursion
Timeless

Dutch countryside
Step beyond the city and discover the authentic rhythm of the Dutch countryside. Wander through charming villages, see working windmills and meet locals keeping age-old traditions alive. Watch daily life unfold as you experience the simple pleasures of life surrounded by Holland’s heritage, hospitality and heart. DiscoverMORE
Hidden gems of Amsterdam (extra expense)
Explore a quieter, more authentic side of Amsterdam on this relaxed and personal tour. Travel to the historic Jordaan area to walk with your local guide to a charming chocolate shop. Continue through some of the city’s most beautiful streets to Our Lord in the Attic, a unique 17th-century house that hides a secret: a fully preserved Catholic church in its attic. Enjoy a local beer and some traditional Dutch snacks at a cosy brewery before you return to the ship.
Activity level: Moderate, Duration: 2.5 hours

Arrives On: 18 Feb 28

Day 3: Cologne (Germany)

Founded by the Romans in 50 AD, the cathedral city of Cologne is one of the oldest cities in Germany and the largest on the Rhine. The historic capital of the Rhineland, this illustrious city is generously peppered with ancient architecture, from Roman ruins to medieval structures and the striking twin towers of the cathedral. Though much of the inner city was destroyed during World War II, it has been meticulously rebuilt. Included Excursion
Quest for Cologne's treasures
Join your local guide and explore the city on a walking tour, followed by a unique adventure that will take you hunting for some of Cologne’s most typical treasures. You’ll be given a map with locations to find the ‘treasures’, which are unique to the city. DiscoverMORE
German beer experience (extra expense)
Discover the spirited beer culture of Cologne on this lively and flavourful guided tour through the city's legendary brewhouses. Cologne is the proud home of Kölsch - a crisp, golden beer brewed only in this region - and no visit is complete without experiencing this drink as a local.
Activity level: Easy, Duration: 2 hours

Arrives On: 19 Feb 28

Day 4: Rüdesheim (Germany)

Today will be a highlight of your trip, as you meander through the fairy tale-like surrounds of the World Heritage-listed Rhine Gorge. Hilltop castles and fortresses that have stood for more than 1,000 years will be yours to admire as we traverse this legendary stretch of river. Pass the infamous Lorelai Rock, where sailors are said to have been lured onto treacherous rocks by an enchanting siren, and the impressive Pfalzgrafenstein Castle, a former stronghold.

This afternoon, arrive in Rüdesheim, a town with a vibrant wine-growing heritage. At the heart of the Rhine Valley, it’s surrounded by terraced vineyards and filled with striking half-timbered buildings.

Wander the streets to feel as though you have stepped back more than 500 years. Included Excursion
 Visit to Siegfried’s Mechanical Music Cabinet Museum
Catch the local mini train through the narrow city streets to Siegfried's Mechanical Music Cabinet Museum. Inside, discover a vast selection of more than 350 automatic mechanical music instruments ranging from the tiniest music box to the giant Concert-Piano-Orchestrion.

Arrives On: 20 Feb 28

Day 5: Miltenberg (Germany)

Welcome to Miltenberg, a picturesque village on the Main River, boasting an authentic atmosphere of medieval Bavaria with its 15th-century half-timbered buildings. Set on the banks of the Main River, it was a major trade hub for centuries, but today has a relaxed ambience and hidden charms waiting around every crooked corner. Included Excursion
Guided tour of Miltenberg
Join your local guide to stroll down the cobblestone streets lined with colourful houses and view the Gothic Merchant Hall, an impressive symbol of past affluence. You’ll see the oldest inn in Germany, dating back to at least 1411, Miltenberg Castle, and the unique red sandstone church and bridge. EmeraldPLUS
Visit to Bronnbach Abbey
Experience the rich history and serene beauty of Bronnbach Abbey in nearby Wertheim. This well-preserved Cistercian monastery is known for its stunning Romanesque and Gothic architecture, peaceful cloisters, and impressive Baroque interiors.

Arrives On: 21 Feb 28

Day 5: Wertheim (Germany)

Arrives On: 21 Feb 28

Day 6: Würzburg (Germany)

Known as the ‘Pearl of the Romantic Road’, Würzburg is the centre wine capital of Franconia, a position it has held since the Middle Ages. Situated on the Main River, this Franconian city is celebrated for its stunning architecture, vibrant culture and historical significance. Included Excursion
Walking tour of Würzburg and a visit to the Bishop’s Residence
The architects behind the World Heritage-listed Würzburg Residence drew inspiration from a spectrum of different styles, including Viennese Baroque and secular features from Italy, but it was heavily damaged during World War II. Enjoy learning about how this impressive building was restored to its former glory on a guided tour. DiscoverMORE
Excursion to Rothenburg (extra expense)
Explore the best-preserved medieval town in Germany. Walk its medieval walls and

climb to the top of the Town Hall Tower for a panoramic view of the town and countryside. Rothenburg offers a selection of Gothic churches, museums, art exhibitions and historic restaurants where you will enjoy a special tasting of local sausages. Please note, this operates at the same time as your included tour.
Activity level: Moderate, Duration: 6.5 hours

Arrives On: 22 Feb 28

Day 7: Bamberg (Germany)

This morning, relax on board and witness the beauty of Europe’s waterways from the elegant surrounds of your cabin as you cruise to Bamberg. The World Heritage-listed town boasts one of the largest medieval centres in Europe, with around 2,400 listed buildings gracing its streets. Learn more about this fascinating town on a guided tour. Included Excursion
Guided tour of Bamberg
Feel the magic of the past as you explore the city with your local guide, marvelling at the opulence of the New Residence, once inhabited by the prince bishops and now home to a plethora of old German and Baroque paintings from the Bavarian State collection. Enjoy a tranquil stroll around the Rose Garden to round your day off peacefully.

Arrives On: 23 Feb 28

Day 8: Nuremberg (Germany)

Welcome to Nuremberg. The second-largest city in Bavaria, it has a fascinating and complex history, from its position of power in the Middle Ages to the artistic flourishes of the Renaissance. Included Excursion
Guided tour of Nuremberg
Embark on a sightseeing tour of the historic city of Nuremberg, including the architectural wonders that have inspired famous artists for centuries and see the effects that the war years had. After your tour, enjoy time to explore Nuremberg at leisure, passing half-timbered houses that were beautifully reconstructed following the war. DiscoverMORE
World War II tour (extra expense)
Nuremberg offers fascinating insights into the events of WWII with mementos of the war found around every corner. This insightful tour highlights some of the main events that took place during Germany's Nazi regime, with a visit to the Nazi Rally grounds, a panoramic drive through the city and a tour of the famous Courtroom 600, where the War Crimes trials were held.
Activity level: Easy, Duration: 4 hours

Arrives On: 24 Feb 28

Day 9: Regensburg (Germany)

This morning, you’ll cruise the final stretch of the fascinating Main-Danube Canal to Regensburg. As you continue cruising down the Danube, one of Germany’s best-preserved

medieval cities welcomes you with two millennia of history. Despite its ancient past, modern-day Regensburg has a relaxed atmosphere with its streets made lively by the high population of university students. Included Excursion
Guided tour of Regensburg
Set out on foot to discover the highlights of Regensburg. Wander the streets with your guide, as the romantic narrow alleys of the World Heritage-listed Old Town and 13th-century Town Hall invite you to live through the city's history. The highlight of your tour will be the 12th-century Stone Bridge, a medieval structure crossing the Danube. Enjoy time to explore Regensburg at leisure. EmeraldPLUS
Bavarian band performance on board
Make your way to the Horizon Bar & Lounge for a special performance from a Bavarian band, who will play traditional music and wear their authentic Lederhose DiscoverMORE
Sausage-making workshop (extra expense)
The white breakfast sausage is a beloved tradition in Regensburg. Together with an expert from the family butchery DEUTSCH, you learn how to produce fresh sausages, from the recipe to weighing and cutting, as well as filling the meat in natural casings.
Activity level: Easy, Duration: 2 hours

Arrives On: 25 Feb 28

Day 10: Passau (Germany)

Passau is a picturesque city that has been shaped by the surrounding rivers over the years, sitting at the confluence of the Danube, Inn and Ilz. This memorable destination is dominated by large squares, magical promenades and romantic lanes. Cobblestone streets and graceful arcades welcome you in the beautiful city of Passau.

Return for lunch on board and an afternoon peacefully cruising along the Danube on your way to Linz. Later tonight, enjoy a waltz dance show on board. Included Excursion
Guided tour of Passau
On this morning's walking tour, stroll through streets lined by Baroque buildings dating back to the 17th century and look at the Gothic Town Hall, Bishop's Residence and St. Stephen's Cathedral, a wonderful example of Baroque architecture and home to the largest church organ in Europe. DiscoverMORE
Excursion to Salzburg (extra expense)
The birthplace of Mozart and the picturesque setting for the theatrical masterpiece, The Sound of Music, Salzburg has a unique charm and is surrounded by the breathtaking Alps. Spend a full day exploring this Austrian city, wandering its historic downtown district, exploring the Linzer Gasse shopping street and visiting the home of Mozart.
Activity level: Easy, Duration: 10 hours DiscoverMORE
Excursion to Ceský Krumlov (extra expense)
Tucked away in the Czech region of South Bohemia is the World Heritage-listed medieval town of Ceský Krumlov, renowned for its Renaissance and Baroque architecture. Your expert local guide will take you along the cobblestone streets of Ceský Krumlov's fairytale-like Old Town, which wind their way past old townhouses, hideaway bars, and buildings dating back hundreds of years.
Activity level: Difficult/Active, Duration: 8.5 hours

Arrives On: 26 Feb 28

Day 10: Linz (Austria)

Arrives On: 26 Feb 28

Day 11: Melk (Austria)

Situated within Austria’s famed Wachau Valley, the county’s premier wine-growing region, Melk is home to a 900-year-old World Heritage-listed Benedictine abbey. A charming and compact port, it is filled with flower-lined laneways, colourful buildings and sprawling green spaces.

Later, your Emerald Star-Ship cruises through the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Wachau Valley and on to Dürnstein, one of the most enchanting villages in the Wachau wine region. Included Excursion
Tour of Melk Abbey
Explore this ancient abbey today on an included tour. Your guide will take you through a series of opulent rooms, each adorned with the finest Italian Baroque architecture and ornate gold leaf walls, including the ancient monastic library, renowned for its extensive collection of medieval manuscripts.

Arrives On: 27 Feb 28

Day 11: Dürnstein (Austria)

Arrives On: 27 Feb 28

Day 12: Vienna (Austria)

Austria’s breathtaking capital is recognised for its cultural legacy. As the former residence of Mozart and Beethoven, a multitude of imperial palaces represent a rich history, and the museum district boasts contemporary buildings, housing the work of some of the world’s most prolific artists. Included Excursion
Guided tour of Vienna
Explore the famous sights of the Ringstrasse and Vienna’s city centre by coach and on foot. Marvel at the Renaissance-style arches that adorn the façades of the Opera House, the Baroque Burgtheater and the Flemish Gothic Parliament before enjoying time to explore Vienna at leisure. DiscoverMORE
Visit to Schönbrunn Palace (extra expense)
Schönbrunn Palace, the former summer residence of the Habsburg Empire, is considered one of the most beautiful Baroque palaces in Europe. Today, it is a recognised World Heritage site for its historic importance, unique grounds and splendid furnishings. Follow a local expert to hear the fascinating tales of the intriguing former residents.
Activity level: Easy, Duration: 5 hours DiscoverMORE
Viennese evening concert (extra expense)
With Mozart, Beethoven, Strauss and Schubert among its historical repertoire, Vienna is the world capital of opera and classical music. Enjoy an exclusive evening

concert at one of Vienna's most beautiful concert halls, with favourites such as the 'Blue Danube Waltz' and the Radetzky March. A complimentary glass of sparkling wine on arrival adds to the unforgettable occasion.
Activity level: Easy, Duration: 2.5 hours

Arrives On: 28 Feb 28

Day 13: Bratislava (Slovakia)

Set at the crossroads of ancient trade routes in the heart of Europe, the Slovakian capital of Bratislava is a place where Baroque palaces, boutiques and cafés adorn medieval cobblestone streets. At the same time, the complex history of Communism can be found in its Brutalist landmarks and military monuments. Included Excursion
Walking tour of Bratislava
Enjoy a sightseeing tour including the enchanting Old City. Your local guide will take you through the heart of the city. Pass by the botanical gardens of the Episcopal Summer Palace, the Old Town Hall and its delightful Renaissance courtyard and the Slovak National Theatre, where busts of famous composers adorn the façade. After your tour, enjoy free time to explore at leisure. EmeraldPLUS
Home-hosted coffee and cake with a Slovakian family
Be invited into the home of a local Slovakian family to learn about their culture over coffee and cake. Get an insight into their history, culture and traditions as they show you how they live every day. DiscoverMORE
Skoda tour of post-Communist Bratislava (extra expense)
On this truly insightful tour of Bratislava in a Skoda car, you'll learn about life during the Communist era through real personal stories from your guide and enjoy some local, authentic refreshments from this time. This off-the-beaten-track tour brings the story of Bratislava in the turbulent 20th century alive.
Activity level: Easy, Duration: 2 hours DiscoverMORE
Carpathian wine route (extra expense)
Explore the viticultural towns of the Small Carpathian Wine Route, including the vineyards of Vinosady and a family-run winery in Senkvice. You'll learn about the proud heritage of winemaking and sample some local wines in a historic wine cellar.
Activity level: Moderate, Duration 4hr 40min

Arrives On: 29 Feb 28

Day 14: Budapest (Hungary)

Budapest is Eastern Europe's liveliest and most cosmopolitan city. The Hungarian capital is divided by the iconic Danube River, with Buda and Pest on either side. They can be reached via the Chain Bridge, one of the city's most symbolic structures. Included Excursion
Guided coach tour of Budapest
Enjoy a guided tour of the city with your local guide this morning. Explore the World Heritage-listed centre, travelling through the chapters of architecture through the ages from Romanesque to Baroque and classical façades. See the Liberty Statue and Heroes' Square, before a walking tour showcases Matthias Church and

the Fisherman’s Bastion. EmeraldPLUS
Traditional Hungarian folklore show on board
Enjoy a Hungarian folk dancing and music performance on board. DiscoverMORE
Excursion to Szentendre (extra expense)
Visit the picturesque village of Szentendre, where cobblestone streets evoke a Mediterranean atmosphere that has inspired many artists. Take a walking tour through the pedestrian city centre to admire the Baroque architecture, churches, colourful houses and narrow, cobbled streets. The main square, Fo Tér, and the alleyways around it are lined with art galleries, museums and shops.
Activity level: Moderate; Duration 4 hours DiscoverMORE
Jewish heritage tour (extra expense)
During this thoughtful tour, your local guide will introduce you to some of the most significant Jewish events that have shaped Budapest's culture. See the buildings that once played important roles in the flourishing Jewish trade that existed prior to World War II. In Pest, the 'Shoes on the Danube' memorial stands as a striking reminder of what happened to the Jewish communities in Budapest during wartime.
Activity level: Moderate; Duration 4 hours

Arrives On: 01 Mar 28

Day 15: Budapest (Hungary)

After breakfast, it's time to say farewell to your fellow guests and disembark your Emerald Star-Ship for your transfer to the airport, taking memories of the delightful Danube with you. Due to new restrictions on cruise ships at Amsterdam’s city docks, your cruise is now likely to embark and/or disembark at a port outside central Amsterdam. If your ship does not have a central Amsterdam docking, Emerald Cruises will provide a central Amsterdam meeting point and transfers to your ship as required. These changes are required by local authorities and are in line with our booking terms which allow changes to berthing or dock locations and ports where operationally necessary. You will be advised of the confirmed docking location prior to departure. This itinerary is a guide only and may be amended for operational reasons such as high and low water. As such, the cruise may operate altered from that stated above. Please refer to our terms and conditions for further information. Please note: Preview itinerary subject to change.

Arrives On: 02 Mar 28

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