Cruise Details

Name:	Christmas Markets on the Rhine
Reference:	EMERALDEWXB161226-1
Operator:	Emerald Cruises
Cruise Type:	River
Cruise Rating:	Luxury
Ship:	Emerald Astra
Regions:	Rhine
Departs On:	16 Dec 26
Departs From:	Amsterdam
Arrives On:	23 Dec 26
Arrives At:	Basel
Cruise Nights:	7
Total Vacation Days:	8

Itinerary

Day 1: Amsterdam (Netherlands)

Welcome to The Netherlands, a postcard-worthy destination of picturesque canals, quintessential cafés and narrow cobblestone streets that sparkle with fairy lights and Christmas cheer during the festive season.

You'll be met at the airport by a member of the friendly greetings team and transferred to your contemporary Emerald Star-Ship. After boarding, you'll have some free time to explore and soak up the festive atmosphere.

Arrives On: 16 Dec 26

Day 2: Amsterdam (Netherlands)

Spend the day exploring the wintery surrounds. If snow dusts the narrow-cobbled streets, you'll find the Dutch warming up with oliebollen and appelbeignets – traditional deep-fried treats sold from chalet-style stalls that pop up across Amsterdam's many Christmas markets.

This evening, join your fellow guests for a welcome dinner on

board. Included Excursion
Canal cruise
Board a glass-top canal boat for a tour down the Dutch capital’s UNESCO World Heritage-listed canal system, passing historic merchant houses that reflect the bygone era of the Dutch Golden Age, a time when the Dutch empire was considered one of the most influential in the world. Throughout the city, you’ll explore the delightful Christmas stalls, each surrounded by people in their finest knitwear drinking hot mugs of mulled wine and enjoying traditional festive foods. DiscoverMORE
Dutch Delights (extra expense)
Rug up and explore the Dutch capital on foot. Admire the highlights of this ancient city while savouring delicious Dutch treats, such as pickled herring – a favourite street food – tasty cheeses and mouth-watering poffertjes, bite-sized fluffy pancakes.
Activity level: Easy, Duration: 3 hours DiscoverMORE
Hidden Gems tour of Amsterdam (extra expense)
Explore a quieter, more authentic side of Amsterdam on this relaxed and personal tour through the city’s hidden treasures.

Arrives On: 17 Dec 26

Day 3: Düsseldorf (Germany)

Cross the German border and arrive in the vibrant city of Düsseldorf this morning. With its innovative architecture, high-end art scene and passion for fashion, it’s one of the country’s most intoxicating cities. It also has a proud tradition of elaborate Christmas decorations, festive celebrations and various themed Christmas markets.

Later, cruise to the 2,000-year-old city of Cologne, where the largest Christmas tree in the Rhineland can be found during the holiday season. The city is home to many Christmas markets, and the most spectacular one sits in front of the twin spires of the Neo-Gothic Cologne Cathedral. Look for stalls selling traditional lebkuchen, a beloved round or heart-shaped type of gingerbread that usually includes honey, cardamom or candied fruit. Included Excursion
Walking tour of Duesseldorf
Join your local guide on a walking tour of Düsseldorf and discover the Old Town filled with Christmas cheer. Learn about the customs and traditions of the festive season before free time to explore the wonderful Christmas markets scattered throughout the city. Included Excursion
Cologne City tour with Christmas Markets
History and architecture intertwine in Cologne, where ancient Roman fortifications and medieval structures sit beside buildings that rose following World War II. Your guided tour of Cologne will unveil its illustrious history. Later, enjoy a mug of traditional glühwein in the Roncalliplatz Christmas market in front of the cathedral, the largest in the city. DiscoverMORE
German Beer Experience (extra expense)
Spend some time exploring the Christmas markets before setting out to discover the spirited beer culture of Cologne. This lively and flavourful guided tour will take you through the city's legendary brewhouses where you can savour its signature Kölsch, a crisp, golden beer brewed only in this region.
Activity level: Easy, Duration: 2 hours

Arrives On: 18 Dec 26

Day 3: Cologne (Germany)

Arrives On: 18 Dec 26

Day 4: Koblenz (Germany)

Today, arrive in the heart of Koblenz, an ancient city that seems pulled from the pages of a German fairytale. Once a Roman stronghold, Koblenz was established around 8 BC for its strategic value. It’s now a modern park- and flower-filled city with a unique blend of historic and contemporary architecture.

Later, cruise through the World Heritage-listed Rhine Gorge, exemplifying the extraordinary beauty of an area that left the philosophers and artists of the German Romanticism movement entranced. Look out for the iconic Lorelei Rock, where a beautiful siren is said to have lured sailors to their death with her song. Included Excursion
Orientation walk of Koblenz
Join your local guide for an insightful walking tour of Koblenz, passing the twin-towered façade of the Church of Our Lady, the point at which two of Europe’s great rivers meet at the German Corner, and Ehrenbreitstein Fortress, one of the largest preserved fortresses in Europe. Afterwards, explore the town’s beautiful Christmas markets. DiscoverMORE
Moselle Valley & Cochem Castle visit (extra expense)
Perched on a spectacular hill 91 metres (300 ft) above the Moselle Valley is the medieval town of Cochem. Take a walking tour, including a guided visit to the magnificent Cochem Castle, boasting impressive views of the Moselle Valley. The original 12th-century Romanesque style was replaced by King Louis XIV, who ordered his troops to destroy it in 1689. Rebuilt in 1868, he chose the neo-Gothic architecture that we know today, as the family's summer residence.
Activity level: Difficult/Active, Duration: 5 hours

Arrives On: 19 Dec 26

Day 5: Mannheim (Germany)

Take in the beauty of the heart of the Rhineland, where red-roofed villages line the river and historic castles dot the hills. Included Excursion
Guided tour of Heidelberg & Christmas market visit
Travel to nearby Heidelberg. The idyllic UNESCO City of Literature has inspired the likes of Mark Twain and famed British artist William Turner. A guided tour of the town will unveil its rich history, starting at the Renaissance ruins of Heidelberg Castle. Afterwards, explore the city’s romantic Christmas markets that are spread throughout its historic squares.

Arrives On: 20 Dec 26

Day 6: Strasbourg (France)

Arrive in Strasbourg, a city that promises much in the way of beautiful architecture. The World Heritage-listed Neustadt district is an iconic example of 19th-century German Imperial architecture. Strasbourg is also at the heart of the Alsace wine region. Included Excursion
Guided tour of Strasbourg with Christmas market visit
Your guided walking tour will include the Grand Île, Strasbourg's UNESCO World Heritage-listed historical city centre, known for its medieval timber-framed buildings. See the Maison Kammerzell, one of the most famous buildings in Strasbourg, and Petite France, the postcard-worthy historic district with a charming canal system and half-timbered houses. Afterwards, visit one of its most charming Christmas markets to enjoy traditional Alsatian treats and shop for presents. DiscoverMORE
Baden Baden Spa Experience (extra expense)
Escape to the heart of Germany’s Black Forest for a rejuvenating day at the world-renowned Baden-Baden spa town. Famous for its healing thermal waters and elegant ambience, Baden-Baden offers the perfect blend of wellness, history and indulgence.

Arrives On: 21 Dec 26

Day 7: Breisach (Germany)

Set high above the Rhine at the point where the Black Forest joins Alsace, Breisach is a charming blend of German and French cultures. The Romanesque-Gothic St Stephen’s church is perched on a volcanic hill and visible from a great distance. Included Excursion
Guided tour of Breisach & Christmas Market Visit
Join your local guide for a walking tour of Breisach. See the Stephanmünster cathedral, the Radbrunnen sculpture, the Franciscan Monastery, and walk the pretty streets around Marktplatz. Afterwards, visit the Christmas market. EmeraldPLUS
Guided visit to Christmas Market in Freiburg
Experience the magic of the Freiburg Christmas Market on a festive walking tour through the city's charming old town. Stroll among beautifully decorated stalls, discover local holiday traditions, and warm up with a cup of aromatic mulled wine. Along the way, enjoy delicious homemade Christmas cookies, adding an authentic taste of the season to this cozy and memorable holiday experience. DiscoverMORE
Guided tour of Colmar (extra expense)
Commence your magical morning with a tour of Colmar. As you walk down the cobblestone lanes, it's easy to imagine the characters from the Grimm's Fairy Tales here. In the historic centre, you will be able to see the confluence of French and German architecture, lifestyle, and culture.
Activity level: Easy, Duration: 5 hours

Arrives On: 22 Dec 26

Day 8: Basel (Switzerland)

After breakfast, bid farewell to your fellow guests and your Star-Ship as you are transferred to the airport, taking memories of quintessential German villages and the magic of Christmas with you. 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 book your flight to depart out of Basel after 10:00 AM.

Arrives On: 23 Dec 26

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

© 2026 Deluxe Cruises. This cruise itinerary was printed from https://deluxecruises.co.uk