Cruise Details

Name:	Christmas Markets
Reference:	SCENICCHMA071227-2
Operator:	Scenic River Cruises
Cruise Type:	River
Cruise Rating:	Luxury
Ship:	Scenic Pearl
Regions:	Rhine, Danube and Main
Departs On:	07 Dec 27
Departs From:	Budapest
Arrives On:	21 Dec 27
Arrives At:	Amsterdam
Cruise Nights:	14
Total Vacation Days:	15

Itinerary

Day 1: Budapest (Hungary)

Fly from the UK for the start of your cruise.

Your journey begins in Budapest, the capital of Hungary and one of Europe’s most diverse and vibrant cities. Divided by the Danube, with Buda on one side and Pest on the other, this city became united in 1873 when a newly built bridge connected the two.

This afternoon, board your all-inclusive luxury Scenic Space-Ship and settle into your suite. Many have a window that converts into a Scenic Sun Lounge, allowing you uninterrupted views of ever-changing landscapes and life along the riverbanks. Relax and raise your glass to the days ahead at this evening’s welcome reception. Please book your flight to arrive into Budapest prior to 05:00 PM.

Arrives On: 07 Dec 27

Day 2: Budapest (Hungary)

Budapest is an architectural treasure trove comprising styles from Gothic to Art Nouveau and everything in between. It is also well known for its hot springs and thermal baths, and has a vibrant nightlife scene. The city comes alive during the festive season, with elaborate decorations, charming Christmas markets, ice skating rinks, traditional foods and trams covered in twinkling lights. Scenic Freechoice:
Choose from a range of Scenic Freechoice activities on offer this morning:

Budapest in depth: Explore this magical city by coach. Starting in Buda, see the Várkert Bazár before crossing the Margaret Bridge to the Pest side to see Széchenyi Square and Elizabeth Square.

Hospital in the Rock: Go underground to explore the labyrinths of the Hospital in the Rock, set underneath the city's castle district. The complex was built as a secret hospital during WWII and was later converted to a nuclear bunker.

Guided hike of Buda: Strap on your walking shoes for a beautiful hike through the Buda district of the city. On your walk, see Várkert Bazár and beautifully landscaped gardens, all while enjoying great views over the Danube River and the city architecture.

Arrives On: 08 Dec 27

Day 3: Vienna (Austria)

Relax on board this morning as you cruise towards Vienna. You may like to ask your butler to bring coffee to your suite so you can savour it as the beautiful scenery rolls by your window.

Arrive in the Austrian capital this afternoon. A centre of art, music and culture, the city fostered the musical geniuses Mozart and Beethoven, and oozes charm with magnificent Baroque buildings, ample green spaces, a vibrant coffee-house scene, and masterpiece-filled galleries and museums. See the world's most beautiful boulevard, The Ringstrasse, all lit up with dazzling displays of Christmas lights and decorations. You'll also enjoy the city's musical heritage in full display with the sounds of famous festive tunes and classical pieces around every corner.

Your Scenic Space-Ship will be docked overnight, so this afternoon you are free to wander the city. Scenic Enrich
Classical Concert at Palais Liechtenstein: Breathe in the opulence and luxury of Palais Liechtenstein this evening as you relish an exclusive private classical concert. Enjoy a glass of fine Austrian Sekt and listen to the timeless music of Strauss and Mozart performed by a renowned orchestra. An experience only shared with your fellow Scenic guests, you'll be seated in Vienna's largest secular Baroque hall, an ornate space where royals and nobles have sat for centuries. Accompanied by ballet dancers and vocalists and surrounded by world-famous art, this will be a concert that you'll remember for a lifetime.

Arrives On: 09 Dec 27

Day 4: Vienna (Austria)

Wake this morning with Vienna on your doorstep. Slow down and spend a full day exploring or venture further afield. In the afternoon, shuttles will be available to take you from the ship to the Christmas markets in the city centre. Scenic Freechoice:
This morning, choose from one of these Scenic Freechoice excursions:

Kunsthistorisches Museum: Visit this superb museum that houses pieces from ancient Egypt through to the 18th century. The magnificent exhibits include the works of some of painting’s great masters, such as the largest collection of pieces from Pieter Bruegel the Elder.

Guided tour of Vienna: Join your local guide on a city tour by both coach and on foot. Drive to the famous Ringstrasse, a beautiful boulevard around the historic centre and lined with sights like the Urania, Stadtpark and the Strauss Monument, and the State Opera.

Schönbrunn Palace: Explore the former summer residence of the Habsburg family. Wander its ornately designed rooms, hear tales about the royal family that lived here and see the impressive gardens. The palace courtyard hosts Christmas markets, for you to enjoy after your visit.

Excursion to Bratislava: Travel to Bratislava, Slovakia’s capital since independence in 1993. This modern multicultural metropolis has an intriguing history. The glorious Old Town and well-preserved hilltop castle contrast with its brutalist socialist architecture. Your local guide will show you Bratislava Castle, the Hlavné Námestie, the main square and the Old Town Hall.

Arrives On: 10 Dec 27

Day 5: Krems (Austria)

Your Scenic Space-Ship will dock in the small and picturesque town of Krems, located in Austria’s beautiful Wachau Valley before cruising on to the city of Dürnstein. Scenic Freechoice:
This morning offers the following Scenic Freechoice excursions:

Göttweig Abbey: Founded in the sixth century, the abbey burned down during the 18th century and was rebuilt to be one of the most magnificent in the Wachau Valley. Your local guide will show you its spectacular frescoes as well as the staircase, the largest in Baroque style in Austria.

Wachau Valley wine tasting: The Wachau Valley is one of the most prominent regions for wine production in Austria. Today you'll visit a local winemaker and learn about the age-old traditions of winemaking while sampling the delicious drops produced on site.

UNESCO Wachau Valley e-bike experience: Join your guide on a bicycle tour along the Danube to the quaint village of Krems. Pass by charming villages and rolling vineyard landscapes. You will have time to stop along the way to enjoy the breathtaking views of the Danube.

Christmas magic in Krems: Immerse yourself in the UNESCO Wachau Valley's historic old town, Krems, where a 700m pedestrian zone glows with twinkling lights, artisan huts, and festive music from late November to just before Christmas. Join a short, guided tour through medieval alleys and Baroque landmarks before exploring on your own. Savour authentic Wachau mulled wine, roasted chestnuts, and regional specialties like apricot treats and browse handmade crafts amid live holiday tunes. Linger at illuminated photo spots for unforgettable memories in this very charming yet intimate

Christmas market experience. Later, dock at Dürnstein, a small and picturesque town in the Wachau Valley. Enjoy some free time to explore this World Heritage-listed town, perched on the edge of the Danube River and surrounded by ancient, terraced vineyards. The lights of the Christmas market in the courtyard of Dürnstein Castle will begin to glow in the afternoon.

Arrives On: 11 Dec 27

Day 5: Dürnstein (Austria)

Arrives On: 11 Dec 27

Day 6: Brandstatt (Austria)

After a short stop in Brandstatt arrive in Passau. Set at the meeting point of three rivers and close to the border with Austria, it was an important trading point for centuries. It was also a significant town in the Holy Roman Empire and the charming Old Town was mostly built by powerful prince-bishops in an Italianate style. Its grand buildings will be strung with decorations, and the charming Christmas market will fill the air with the scent of gingerbread and spices. Scenic Freechoice:
Take your pick from the following Scenic Freechoice excursions:

Full day excursion to Salzburg: Cross the border into Salzburg, Austria, a storybook city surrounded by alpine peaks and best known as the home of Mozart and the Sound of Music. On a guided tour, learn about its art and music scene, visit Mozart’s birthplace, and see the vast Hohensalzburg Fortress. Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant and some free time.

Full day excursion to Ceský Krumlov: Journey to the World Heritage-listed Czech town brimming with charm. Explore with your local guide, admire the well-preserved Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque architecture, and eat lunch in a local restaurant.

Highlights of Passau: Join your local guide on a walking tour, admiring the brightly coloured buildings that line the waterways, all decorated for Christmas. Visit St. Stephens Cathedral, originally built in the year 450 but destroyed by fire in 1662 and rebuilt in the Baroque style. The Christmas market will be in the square in front. Culinary delights are a feast for the senses, such as Sengzelten, a Bavarian delicacy similar to a tarte flambée.

Arrives On: 12 Dec 27

Day 6: Passau (Germany)

Arrives On: 12 Dec 27

Day 7: Regensburg (Germany)

You will arrive in Regensburg just before lunch today. Boasting a staggering 2,000-year history, Regensburg has one of Germany’s best preserved medieval town centres, with more than 900 of its Romanesque and Gothic buildings listed as World Heritage sites. Within its narrow laneways, the city lays claim to having the highest concentration of bars in the country. It also hosts five separate Christmas markets during the festive season in the city’s picturesque squares and at Thurn und Taxis Castle.

Regensburg Christmas Market on Neupfarrplatz is renowned as one of the most beautiful advent markets in Germany. Regional specialties such as blueberry mulled wine from the Bavarian Forest or apple mulled wine from Upper Palatinate orchards are just as popular as the "Original Regensburger Bratwürste" or the "Regensburger" from the grill. Cosy up to warm open fireplaces at the romantic Christmas market at Thurn and Taxis Palace, where local delicacies are both unique and satiating, with Old Bavarian potato soup served in a loaf of bread, whilst the scent of roasted almonds create a cosy ambience. Scenic Freechoice:
Today, Regensburg offers two Scenic Freechoice activities to choose from:

Walking tour of Regensburg: On the confluence of three rivers in Bavaria, Regensburg is known as the best-preserved medieval city in Germany. Guests will join a walking tour with a local guide to see the Old Stone Bridge, the Church of St James, and the Porta Praetoria.

Thurn und Taxis Tour: Visit Thurn und Taxis Castle for a guided tour followed by free time to explore the magical Christmas markets. Thurn und Taxis is a German noble family who can trace their history back to the 12th century.

Arrives On: 13 Dec 27

Day 8: Nuremberg (Germany)

Arrive in Nuremberg, Bavaria’s second-largest city, early this afternoon. The Old Town is protected by an ancient city wall and hosts an enchanting Christmas market, one of the oldest and most famous in the world. The city is dominated by one of the most significant imperial forts of the Holy Roman Empire, the 12th century Imperial Castle, which was the preferred residence of German kings.

The wooden booths of ‘the little city of wood and cloth’ looks like they were picked straight out of a fairytale, as twinkling lights, holly and handmade charms adorn the fringes. Spekulatius almond cookies, gingerbread and original Nuremberg Bratwurst have made this market world famous. In a time honoured European tradition, each town has its own unique festive mug, with custom designs considered a collector's item. Scenic Freechoice:
Choose from the following Scenic Freechoice activities this afternoon:

Walking tour of the Old Town: Drive into Nuremberg’s city centre, passing by the ancient city walls, then join your local guide for a walking tour of the Old Town to see the Imperial Castle, St. Egidien’s Church and the market square.

World War II tour: Your local guide will highlight the main events that occurred in Nuremberg during the Nazi regime. Learn about this dark time in Germany's history and visit some of the most important sites.

Arrives On: 14 Dec 27

Day 9: Bamberg (Germany)

Dock in picturesque Bamberg early this morning. Built on seven hills, this World Heritage-listed town has surprises at every turn. Intersected by rivers and canals, join a guided tour to discover Bamberg's Old Town, resplendent with cobblestoned streets and well-preserved medieval buildings. Admire the charming town hall which occupies an island on its own, a Gothic and Romanesque-style cathedral, and the old and new Residences – comprising an episcopal palace, a quaint 'Little Venice' and a 12th century castle that teeters on the highest of the seven hills.

Don't forget to visit its Christmas market in Mazimiliansplatz and sample traditional German treats including gingerbread, bratwurst and mulled wine set among twinkling lights.

Arrives On: 15 Dec 27

Day 10: Würzburg (Germany)

With its lavish Baroque and Rococo architecture, you'll be captivated by glamorous Wüzburg. This city straddles the Main River in the heart of Franconian wine country. Surrounded by undulating vineyards, Würzburg is home to a World Heritage-listed palace, a dominating hilltop fortress, the 15th century Old Main Bridge, and three universities, including Bavaria's oldest. Scenic Freechoice:
Choose from this afternoon's Scenic Freechoice activities:

Guided city tour and Würzburg Residence: Visit the Würzburg Residence, a Baroque palace surrounded by manicured gardens, for a guided tour to see its many valuable paintings, tapestries and period furniture. Then, take a short stroll into the city for some free time.

Romantic Road to Rothenburg: Travel by coach to Rothenburg along the famed Romantic Road, an important trading route during the Middle Ages. Take a guided tour of the well-preserved medieval old town to see the Gothic and Renaissance city hall as well as the famous City Councillors' Tavern. Then let yourself absorb the magical atmosphere of the 500-year-old Christmas markets.

Arrives On: 16 Dec 27

Day 11: Wertheim (Germany)

Relax on board this morning as you cruise towards Wertheim. You may like to book a massageˆ or relax in the therapeutic Salt Therapy Lounge, which has natural anti-viral, anti-inflammatory and anti-bacterial properties.

This afternoon, dock in Wertheim, on the banks of the Main and Tauber rivers. The colourful Christmas markets will have taken over the centre of the town. Enjoy a guided tour, then transfer by coach to Miltenberg. This historic town is one of the best preserved in Germany, home to hundreds of pastel-coloured half-timbered houses and one of the country's oldest inns, Zum Riesen. Take another tour before reboarding

your Scenic Space-Ship.

Arrives On: 17 Dec 27

Day 11: Miltenberg (Germany)

Arrives On: 17 Dec 27

Day 12: Rüdesheim (Germany)

After lunch you will disembark in Rüdesheim, a picturesque town surrounded by steep vineyards. In the historic centre you'll find half-timbered houses lining cobbled streets, a smattering of wine taverns, and open-air beer gardens. During the festive season, glowing Christmas markets take over the main square, and the buildings are strung with trinkling lights.

Later, visit Siegfried's Musikkabinett Museum. A mini train is the ideal way to arrive at this quirky museum, where a local guide will introduce you to its weird and wonderful mechanical musical instruments. Afterwards, explore the surrounding streets on your own. You'll also have time to visit the local Christmas markets.

Arrives On: 18 Dec 27

Day 13: Cologne (Germany)

Relax on board this morning as you cruise through the picturesque Rhine Gorge, where the landscapes could have been pulled from the pages of a fairytale. This 65-kilometre stretch of the river is dotted with some 40 hilltop castles and fortresses that span a period of 1,000 years.

Arrive in the 2,000-year-old city of Cologne early this afternoon. Cologne suffered extensive damage during World War II but was painstakingly restored over the following decades. Set out on a walking tour of the Old Town, admiring its historic buildings, beautiful squares and the World Heritage-listed Cologne Cathedral. The city is also home to one of the most spectacular Christmas trees in the Rhineland, which is the centrepiece of the Christmas Markets in front of the gothic masterpiece that is Kölner Dom. Locals and visitors flock to its famous wooden stalls where vendors sell delicious treats and decorations.

Arrives On: 19 Dec 27

Day 14: Amsterdam (Netherlands)

This afternoon, arrive in picturesque Amsterdam. Getting lost in its labyrinth of narrow laneways and canals lined with beautifully preserved 17th century buildings and charming cafes is one of the great ways to spend a day. You'll be able to and marvel at the festive Christmas trees decorating historic squares.

The Netherlands' capital is a treasure trove of architectural beauty, galleries filled with masterpieces, 16th century canals, narrow cobbled

laneways, and streets busy with cyclists. Much of the city's World Heritage-listed canal system exists today as it did hundreds of years ago, lined with well-preserved houses and intersected by charming bridges. Scenic Freechoice:
Choose from the following Scenic Freechoice activities:

Canal cruise: Amsterdam has more than 100 kilometres of canals. See some of the most charming sights of the city on a one hour cruise along these historic waterways. Admire Golden Age mansions, grand warehouses and narrow bridges. Stay warm inside your canal boat as you take in the city from a different perspective.

City walking tour: Explore Amsterdam on foot, discovering the maze of canals and bridges in the city centre. Your guide will be covering history, modern lifestyle and Dutch culture. You also get to taste herring, a local delicacy not to be missed.

Excursion to Schermerhorn & Alkmaar: Windmills are an iconic feature of Dutch culture, so get out of town, enjoy the sweeping countryside landscape and explore the nearby villages of Schermerhorn, home to a number of World Heritage-listed windmills dating back to the 16th century, and Alkmaar.

Arrives On: 20 Dec 27

Day 15: Amsterdam (Netherlands)

Your journey concludes this morning. Farewell your fellow guests and Scenic crew, taking with you a lifetime of memories and Christmas cheer.Transfer to the airport for your return flight to the UK. 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, Scenic 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.

Arrives On: 21 Dec 27

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

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