



Cruise Details

Name:	Rhine Christmas Markets with Switzerland
Reference:	SCENICXAMW071224-1
Operator:	Scenic River Cruises
Cruise Type:	River
Cruise Rating:	Luxury
Ship:	Scenic Opal
Regions:	Rhine
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Departs On:	07 Dec 24
Departs From:	Amsterdam
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Arrives On:	18 Dec 24
Arrives At:	Zurich
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Cruise Nights:	11
Total Vacation Days:	12

Itinerary

Day 1: Amsterdam (Netherlands)

Fly from the UK to Amsterdam. Your journey begins in the picturesque city of Amsterdam. A labyrinth of narrow laneways adorned with twinkling lights, canals lined with beautifully preserved 17th century buildings and Christmas trees decorating historic squares. Amsterdam is not only pretty to wander, it's also steeped in history, art and an undeniable festive atmosphere.

This afternoon, board your all-inclusive luxury Scenic Space-Ship and settle into your suite, many of which 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.

Arrives On: 07 Dec 24

Day 2: Amsterdam (Netherlands)

Amsterdam is a treasure trove of architectural beauty, masterpiece-filled galleries, tranquil scenes of boats putting along 16th century canals, narrow cobbled laneways filled with boutiques and cafes, and streets busy with cyclists criss-crossing their way about town. Often referred to as the Venice of the North, much of the UNESCO-listed canal system exists today as it did hundreds of years ago, lined with well-preserved canal houses and intersected by charming bridges.

Freechoice: This morning, choose one of the following Scenic Freechoice experiences:

Canal cruise: Amsterdam has more than 100 kilometres of canals and today you will see some of the prettiest sights of the city from these historical waterways. This one-hour cruise takes you along the Gentleman's Canal, where you will see The Skinny Bridge and The Prince's Canal, which was known for its warehouses. You will go past the Old Lord Mayor's House, The Seven Bridges, Anne Frank's House and head to the Brewer's Canal. As the historic centre glides past, you can admire the elegant merchant's residences, churches and warehouses dating from the Golden Age.

Flavours of Holland walking tour: Explore the Dutch capital on foot and see the city highlights while tasting delicious local treats that are typically served at this time of the year. Warm up with a delicious tasting of traditional Pea Soup, taste mouth-watering Christmas Bread and delight in Oliebollen (small donuts, often dusted with powdered sugar).

Cycling tour: Take a small ferry to the outskirts of town for a biking tour. Amsterdam is known as the bicycle capital of the world, with more bikes than cars and over 35,000 kilometres of cycle paths. Your local guide will be on hand to offer information about everyday life of the Dutch people, many of whom you will see getting around on two wheels. Hop on one of Scenic's eco-friendly e-bikes (electronically assisted bicycles) and let it do the hard work for you while you take in the sights.

This afternoon we set sail towards the cosmopolitan metropolis of Cologne, Germany.

Arrives On: 08 Dec 24

Day 3: Cologne (Germany)

Perhaps enjoy a leisurely morning starting with coffee in your suite, delivered by your personal butler upon request, followed by breakfast in Crystal Dining. You will arrive in Cologne, Germany, after lunch.

Cologne is a city known for its liberal and laidback lifestyle, its unique beer culture, thriving auto industry and the jaw-dropping cathedral that dominates its skyline. Settled by the Romans, this major cultural centre for the Rhineland was built during the Middle Ages but was largely destroyed during WWII. The magnificent Gothic cathedral, an enormous World Heritage site that dates to 1248, was badly damaged but remained standing tall above the ruins of the city.

Take the time to discover Cologne on a walking tour. Wander the laneways of the historic Old Town, which is home to many breweries serving up draft Kolsch beer. Enjoy some free time to visit the city's centrepiece and icon, Cologne Cathedral. The Kolner Dom, as it is known locally, is also the location for magnificent Christmas Markets and after your guided tour there is plenty of time to wander the wooden stalls where local vendors sell delicious treats and decorations. Don't forget to look out for the largest Christmas tree

in the Rhineland. </p><p>Your Scenic Space-Ship will depart during dinner, allowing you plenty of time to be immersed in the tastes and scents of Christmas, like hot chestnuts, freshly baked gingerbread and mulled wine, all on offer in this lovely town.</p>

Arrives On: 09 Dec 24

Day 4: Koblenz (Germany)

<p>You will arrive in Koblenz this morning. Located where the Rhine and Moselle rivers meet, Koblenz is a melange of French and German cultures and one of Germany's oldest cities with a history spanning 2,000 years. Koblenz is surrounded by vineyards, forest and mountain ranges and is also known as the gateway to the Upper Middle Rhine Valley. During the festive season, the city sparkles with thousands of lights strung along the streets and many buildings illuminated with colourful projections.

 </p><p>Freechoice:
This morning, explore the way you want with Scenic Freechoice:

Guided walking tour of Koblenz: Join your guide through one of the oldest cities in Germany. Explore the Florinsmarkt, the former political and economic centre of the city. On your way through the winding streets of the old town you will see impressive townhouses, each with its own unique history, charming squares and historic churches.

Excursion to Cochem: Journey to the town of Cochem, a medieval gem resting on the banks of the Moselle River. Cochem will make you feel as if you are stepping directly into a medieval romance; the traditional town is nestled on the riverbanks, with pastel-coloured buildings, half-timbered houses, cobbled laneways and an enchanting hilltop castle surrounded by sloped vineyards. You will transfer via minibus to Reichsburg Castle, which dates to the Middle Ages. Enjoy a guided tour of the castle, which features a knight's hall, trophy room and cellars (on selected dates only), before wandering down to the Old Town seeing many historic buildings along the way.</p><p>This afternoon you will cruise along the spectacular UNESCO World Heritage-listed Rhine Gorge in the Upper Middle Rhine Valley. This 65-kilometre stretch of the river is dotted with some 40 hilltop castles and fortresses that span a period of 1,000 years. Sailing down this section of the river is like being transported through the pages of a fairytale. </p><p>The Rhine abounds in myths, legends and folklore that have been passed on for generations, including the story of Lorelei. This enchanting woman was betrayed by her sweetheart and spent her days bewitching men. As her punishment, she was sent to a nunnery, however on her way she jumped to her death in the river. Legend has her spirit casting spells on sailors who passed the rock, where a bronze statue sits today.</p>

Arrives On: 10 Dec 24

Day 4: Port information not found

Arrives On: 10 Dec 24

Day 5: Mannheim (Germany)

You will arrive in Mannheim early this morning. Known as a 'chessboard city' for its streets that were methodically laid out like a grid in the 17th century, it is also famous as the home of some of the world's most brilliant engineering minds, including Carl Benz, founder of Mercedes-Benz, who set up his workshop in the city. Nearby, the city of Heidelberg is a truly romantic setting, with an 18th-century arch bridge that straddles the Neckar River and a 16th-century ruined castle on the hillside looming above town.

Freechoice: Today we have a selection of Scenic Freechoice on offer:

Orientation Tour of Heidelberg with free time: From Mannheim, you will transfer by coach to Heidelberg. Enjoy a brief walking tour of Heidelberg, including the old town, and then enjoy ample free time to explore on your own. The walking tour is not too strenuous but there are some stairs and uneven ground.

Historical tour of Heidelberg: As well as a guided tour of Heidelberg, this option includes a visit to Heidelberg Castle, one of the most important Renaissance structures north of the Alps. Explore the courtyard, the balcony that offers an incredible view over the Old Town and view the great Heidelberg Tun, the world's largest Wine Barrel located in the castle's Cellar. Enjoy a short amount of free time before returning to your Scenic Space-Ship via coach. The walking tour is not too strenuous but there are some stairs and uneven ground.

Excursion to Bad Durkheim: From Mannheim, it's a short drive through stunning vine-covered landscapes to Bad Durkheim. On arrival, visit Fitz Ritter, a 9th generation family-owned vineyard that offers exceptional quality wine. You will have the opportunity to taste some during your guided tour.

Enrich: This afternoon your Scenic Space-Ship will cruise towards Rastatt, home to an elegant, perfectly proportioned Baroque palace, which will be the setting for tonight's Scenic Enrich.

Private classical concert at the Baroque Palace of Rastatt: One of the most magnificent historic venues in the region, this will be an evening of grandeur unlike any other. Travel to the palace by coach, where you will receive a drink upon arrival and have time to explore the opulent palace and gardens, which was modelled on Versailles and took almost a decade to complete. The performance will take place on the second floor, and will feature accomplished musicians and a soloist.

Arrives On: 11 Dec 24

Day 6: Rastatt (Germany)

This morning enjoy a delicious, hearty breakfast in Crystal Dining before your excursion to Baden Baden, famous for its Roman baths. Located on the fringes of the Black Forest, this luxurious town was a favoured summer escape during the Belle Epoque and is World Heritage listed as part of the Great Spa Towns of Europe. It oozes relaxation, has tranquil green spaces, many pretty public gardens, and grand historical architecture.

Freechoice: Choose to spend this morning the way you want with Scenic Freechoice:

Walking tour of Baden Baden: Walk in the steps of the upper class, who enjoyed this spa town as a summer retreat in the 19th century. See the elegant Kurhaus, a plush spa resort built in the 1820s with a casino and luxury shopping in its

colonnade and explore the remains of Roman baths. You'll find the charming Christmas Markets and a huge Christmas tree in the market square directly in front of the Kurhaus. Spa visit: What better way to enjoy the splendours of the town than relaxing and rejuvenating in the thermal baths Caracalla Spa, permanently and naturally heated by thermal waters some 2,000 metres under the Earth's surface. Comprising numerous baths, guests can soak in these waters said to possess healing properties, at your leisure. This afternoon, choose to stay in Baden Baden and enjoy the Christmas Markets, with around 100 beautifully decorated huts and stalls set up in front of the Kurhaus. Pick up handmade gifts, sample local festive treats or take a turn around the ice rink. You can also choose to return to your Scenic Space-Ship for lunch and take the time to relax on board. Soak up the opulence of your suite, many of which have a window that converts into a Scenic Sun Lounge, allowing you uninterrupted views of the Rhine. If you feel like something more active after your morning in the spa town, head to the state-of-the-art gym for an invigorating workout.

Arrives On: 12 Dec 24

Day 6: Baden-Baden (Germany)

Arrives On: 12 Dec 24

Day 7: Kehl (Germany)

Arrive in the city of Kehl, the gateway to Strasbourg, this morning. It's the capital city of the Alsace region, where sherbet-coloured, half-timbered houses heave together on the banks of a complex network of canals. On its central island, the UNESCO-listed Grand Ile, is the Petite France district, so named for the 15th century hospital that was built here for patients suffering from syphilis, 'the French disease'. It is also known as the Tanners' Quarters, thanks to its medieval industries. Its meandering cobbled laneways are lined with a medley of buildings with shuttered windows and bright flowerboxes. Enjoy a guided walking tour of this charming town, taking in many of its most important sights including the Cathedral, Petit France, the Grand Ile and its beautiful canals. Strasbourg is located on the border of France and Germany and ownership of the town has changed hands many times between the two countries. Due to this, Strasbourg is a unique mixture of both French and German architecture and culture. You will be driven to Strasbourg, passing many notable sites, including the European Parliament on your way. After your guided tour you have free time to explore the magical markets. Strasbourg has some of the largest and most popular Christmas markets in Europe with the town squares and pedestrian zone coming alive with festive cheer. Make the most of your time at the Christmas markets before your Scenic Space-Ship sets sail after lunch bound for Basel.

Arrives On: 13 Dec 24

Day 7: Strasbourg (France)

Arrives On: 13 Dec 24

Day 8: Basel (Switzerland)

Disembark and transfer to Vevey. Learn about one of the 20th century's most celebrated artists during a visit to the Chaplin World Museum. Stay two nights in Montreux.

Arrives On: 14 Dec 24

Day 8: Montreux (Switzerland)

Arrives On: 14 Dec 24

Day 9: Montreux (Switzerland)

Why not take the opportunity to wake early and walk along a section of the path that runs around the shore of Lake Geneva. There are beautiful views over the calm water, with boats bobbing at anchor and mountains in the distance. You can join the path right out the front of the hotel.

You'll be thankful you made time for some exercise, because today you're going to dive into the gooey cheese culture of Montreux.

Enrich

Today's Scenic Enrich:
All aboard the cheese train: Delight in a panoramic train journey to Château-d'Oex. Upon arrival you'll view traditional cheese-making at the Restaurant Le Chalet. The restaurant makes its own cheese, and in your private demonstration, the cheesemaker will transform milk into hard cheese right in front of your eyes.

Arrives On: 15 Dec 24

Day 10: Montreux (Switzerland)

It's back on the road this morning for your first taste of the Swiss Alps in the village of Gstaad. A favourite with the international jet set, Gstaad is renowned as a ski resort in winter and an outdoor adventure playground in summer. The first thing you'll see is the magnificent Gstaad Palace hotel, which looks like a fairytale castle perched above the tiny village. Stroll through the chic shopping district and admire the jaw-dropping views.

Arriving in Bern, the capital of Switzerland, check in to your luxurious hotel for some well-deserved rest.

Arrives On: 16 Dec 24

Day 10: Gstaad (Switzerland)

Arrives On: 16 Dec 24

Day 10: Bern (Switzerland)

Arrives On: 16 Dec 24

Day 11: Bern (Switzerland)

From Bern, travel through the impossibly pretty town of Lucerne. Perched on the edge of the spectacular Lake Lucerne, you'll find exquisite medieval architecture, a 685-year-old wooden footbridge (the oldest in Europe), and glimpses of the majestic Alps in the distance.

This afternoon we arrive in the city of Zurich, the largest in the country and one of the most liveable in the world. Here, residents cycle along wide streets, relax in leafy parks and dine under the stars in open-air restaurants. It's known as a global financial centre, but there's also one of Europe's most eclectic cultural scenes, world-class contemporary art and a fascinating history.

Set off on foot this afternoon for a walking tour with a local guide. Zurich is one of the world's great walking cities, with a flat centre, many pedestrian-only streets and historic bridges. Wander along the Bahnhofstrasse, the city's main street that's lined with glamorous boutiques and international flagship stores. Straddling both sides of the Limmat River, Zurich's Old Town is a pleasant jumble of tiny laneways, cobbled squares and medieval buildings. Don't miss St Peter's Church, where the original 9th century foundations are still visible beneath the chancel and the iconic twin towers of the Grossmünster church.

Check into your grand hotel in Zurich for an overnight stay.

Arrives On: 17 Dec 24

Day 11: Lucerne (Switzerland)

Arrives On: 17 Dec 24

Day 11: Zurich (Switzerland)

Arrives On: 17 Dec 24

Day 12: Zurich (Switzerland)

After one final sumptuous breakfast – and a last cup of delectable Swiss hot chocolate – it's time to say farewell to Switzerland.

Transfer to the airport for your flight to the UK.

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: 18 Dec 24

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

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