Cruise Details

Name:	The Rhine & Swiss Alps - Northbound
Reference:	TAUCKRGX202710052027
Operator:	Tauck
Cruise Type:	River
Cruise Rating:	Luxury
Ship:	MS Inspire
Regions:	Rhine
Departs On:	10 May 27
Departs From:	Basel
Arrives On:	19 May 27
Arrives At:	Amsterdam
Cruise Nights:	9
Total Vacation Days:	10

Itinerary

Day 1: Basel (Switzerland)

Tour begins: 6:30 PM. A transfer is included from Zurich Airport or the train station (Zürich Hauptbahnhof) to the Bellevue Palace Bern in Bern, the capital of Switzerland, which is surrounded by the Aare River and distant Alpine peaks. Your two-night stay is at an historic luxury hotel favored by celebrities and heads of state, and featured in master spy novelist John LeCarré's spy novels. Join us this evening for a welcome reception and dinner.

Arrives On: 10 May 27

Day 2: Basel (Switzerland)

You have a choice of sightseeing adventures today. Head for the snow-capped mountains on a full-day's excursion to Jungfraujoch, known as the "Top of Europe." Drive to the village of Lauterbrunnen for a train ride to Kleine Scheidegg, then board a cogwheel train for the scenic climb to Jungfraujoch, highest railway station in Europe; here you'll find a restaurant, observatory,

research station, a gallery of ice sculpture, and breathtaking views of the glacier-clad Bernese Alps. Alternatively, explore the eclectic charms of Bern on a walking tour – with a focus on chocolate! Bern played a key role in the commercial world of chocolate, with residents such as Lindt, Tobler and Bloch – and chocolate tasting is included. Sights on your walking tour include open-air markets and cozy underground bars, the Parliament Building, the Gothic cathedral, a bear park (in honor of the town's symbol and mascot), a house where Einstein lived and wrote his "Theory of Relativity," and the Zytglogge, a 16th-century astronomical clock featuring animated figures. Spend the evening as you please; the vibrant nightlife includes trendy clubs and restaurants, and a grand casino.

Arrives On: 11 May 27

Day 3: Basel (Switzerland)

The scenic mountain backdrop rises in stature and drama as you depart Bern and arrive in Lucerne, nestled beside a breathtaking blue lake in the alpine foothills. A cruise on the lake presents the city in a different way – and the mountain panorama is stunning. Afterwards, explore Lucerne's medieval old town (picturesque market squares, burghers' houses, spired churches, and restored ramparts) during an orientation walk which includes the 14th-century Chapel Bridge, the oldest wooden covered bridge in Europe. The start of your fabulous River Rhine cruise starts late this afternoon as your ship charts a course for Basel.

Arrives On: 12 May 27

Day 4: Colmar (France)

Dock in Breisach, then drive to the village of Colmar, France, in the Alsatian wine country. The principal industry in Colmar is food and wine, but its irresistible charm lies in its beautifully preserved medieval architecture that conjures an idyllic place out of time: colorful half-timbered houses and gardens, rambling cobbled streets, arches and alleys, sculpted fountains, and canals that wind through a corner of town called Little Venice. Aside from its winemaking heritage, Colmar is known as the hometown of Auguste Bartholdi, the sculptor who created the Statue of Liberty. Your time here is highlighted by either a walking tour that includes a visit to the Unterlinden Museum, housed in a Gothic convent, whose impressive collection includes Mathias Grünewald's famous Isenheim Altarpiece, paintings, engravings, and sculpture from medieval to modern (including works by Dürer and Holbein, Picasso and Léger), and a wealth of archaeological artifacts. Or, an e-bike ride though the Alsace vineyards. Starting in Breisach, this active bike ride (for experienced cyclists only) provides you with unrivaled views of the region's stunning vineyards before meeting up with your fellow travelers in Colmar. Sample the art of Alsatian cuisine at lunch on your own, then return to the riverboat for a sail through the Upper Rhine Plain. This evening, join us for a wine presentation followed by in the Compass Rose.

Arrives On: 13 May 27

Day 5: Baden-Baden (Germany)

Arrive in Karlsruhe this morning and depart by coach to the spa town of Baden-Baden where curative waters and an air of olde-world luxury have attracted royals, the rich and many celebrities over the years. The Black Forest town boasts grand colonnaded buildings and whimsically turreted art nouveau villas spread across the hillsides framed by forested mountains. You'll enjoy a choice of three excursions in this grand dame of a German spa town that includes a guided walking tour, an opportunity to visit Caracella Spa with indoor and outdoor thermal baths, a rock grotto with hot and cold water, Roman sauna, steam bath and more, or an active hike through the Black Forest region concluding with a sampling for the regional namesake, Black Forest cake, and schnapps! Return to the ship late afternoon for social hour in the lounge followed by dinner and musical entertainment onboard.

Arrives On: 14 May 27

Day 6: Rüdesheim (Germany)

Near the foot of the Neiderwald, surrounded by vineyards, the ruins of Ehrenfels Castle watch over the Rhine Gorge; just around the bend, you'll dock in the winemaking town of Rüdesheim, under the lofty gaze of the famous Neiderwald Monument. The 1000-year-old town charms with its cobblestone streets of storybook houses, cafes and wine taverns; among its must-see attractions is Siegfried's Mechanisches Musikkabinett, a museum dedicated to antique self-playing musical instruments. Siegfried's mesmerizing collection includes orchestrations, musical clocks, player pianos, fairground organs, self-playing violinas, and the world's largest automated doll orchestra. Stop in for refreshments at Rudesheimer Schloss, an historic hotel and restaurant. You also have the option to explore this charming, riverside wine town by e-bike, before returning to the riverboat for a cruise on the romantic Middle Rhine. Sentinel castles, steep sloping vineyards and towering precipices like the Lorelei Rock wind past with commentary by your Tauck Director.

Arrives On: 15 May 27

Day 7: Cologne (Germany)

Arrive this morning in Köln (Cologne). One of Germany's oldest cities (founded in the 1st Century AD), Köln was once a Roman provincial capital, and later a fabulously wealthy medieval trading port; the city was almost totally destroyed during World War II, but many of its architectural treasures have been restored, including the towering Kölner Dom (Cologne Cathedral) – a twin-spired masterpiece of High Gothic architecture – which you'll visit today, along with the nearby Roman Germanic Museum. Enjoy a choice of excursions during your adventures around the city; one highlights the historical architecture of the city by coach; the other brings you on a walking tour focusing on the city's Jewish heritage including a visit to the National Socialist Documentation

Center Museum. Return to the ship for lunch. Drive to Engelskirchen for a visit to its neighboring palace, Schloss Ehreshoven. Built in the 14th century and later expanded in the style of a grand Baroque manor house, the estate is surrounded by a moat, landscaped gardens, and a castle park. Schloss Ehreshoven is frequently used as a film location but this evening it's the elegant setting for a Tauck Exclusive cocktail reception and dinner with entertainment. Later this evening, cruise the lowlands of the Rhine en route to Dordrecht in the Netherlands.

Arrives On: 16 May 27

Day 8: Dordrecht (Netherlands)

After docking, your first excursion offers insights into windmills and their ubiquitous role in Dutch life... a visit to the village of Kinderdijk (Child's Dyke), where the flat landscape, crisscrossed with canals, presents the largest concentration of historic windmills in The Netherlands – which you can choose to explore on a walking tour and a boat ride, or on a two-hour bicycle excursion. The 19 windmills, most of them built in the 18th century, are national monuments; for centuries, their massive wind-driven mechanisms have been used to pump water out of the polder and into reservoirs and canals, reclaiming land from the river. Such ingenious methods of water management have enabled a country that is almost fifty percent below sea level to exist at all, lending weight to the local saying, "God created the Earth, but the Dutch created Holland." Return to the riverboat late afternoon and sail to Amsterdam.

Arrives On: 17 May 27

Day 9: Amsterdam (Netherlands)

Arrive this morning in Utrecht, the fourth-largest city in the Netherlands, as well as the most populous city in the province of Utrecht. Recognized as the religious center of the country since the 8th century, today Utrecht continues to hold that title and is also an important hub for road and rail transportation. Your introduction to Utrecht will be offered one of three ways; a boat ride through its canals followed by a guided walking tour; a visit to Kasteel de Haar - the largest castle in the Netherlands; or a bicycle ride to a waterline fortress.Tonight, join your fellow travelers for a frewell toast followed by dinner as your cruise comes to a close.

Arrives On: 18 May 27

Day 10: Amsterdam (Netherlands)

Tour ends: Amsterdam. Disembark ship by 9:00 AM. Fly home anytime; a transfer from your riverboat to Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport or Central Train Station is included. Allow a minimum of three hours for flight check-in at the airport. For additional nights in Amsterdam, ask at booking.

Arrives On: 19 May 27

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