

Cycling Safaris

DANUBE 2018 MS My Story – 4 Country Tour (Bike & Boat)

Self Guided Tour
Self Guided/Guided Group | 194-219km/120-136 mi | 7 nights / 8 days



What an amazing cycling holiday you will have aboard the MV Carissima! Reside and dine in luxury during the evenings and during the day get an up close and personal view of the enchanting Danube River while cycling. This bike and boat tour takes you through four of Europe's most enchanting countries - Austria, Germany, Hungary and Slovakia.

Highlights include the impressive natural landscape around the Schlägener Donauschlinge "Great Loop", the spectacular landscape of the Wachau with its vineyards, majestic castles and palaces, the untouched forests of the Danube National Park, the picturesque Hungarian Danube bend, plus, of course, the thriving metropolises of Bratislava, Budapest and Vienna. Take time to explore Budapest's imperial and art nouveau highlights, take a comprehensive tour through beautiful Bratislava with its baroque and gothic buildings and fountains and discover why Vienna is called the 'Waltz Capital'.

After a great day of cycling and exploring relax onboard while listening to live music, or you could even head out to do more discovering on foot.

We reserve the right to make changes to the itinerary, depending on wind and weather conditions or organizational requirements. In case of flood or low tide the shipping company reserves the right to bridge parts of passages with buses. In extreme case the shipping company reserves the right to cancel the journey on short notice. No legal right shall be constituted of both situations. (Water level is force majeure). The same applies for officially ordered – previously not announced – repair work on locks or bridges or in case of undeserved breakdown of engine and power unit. Please be aware that your ship, like all other ships on the Danube, is not only your hotel but also a machine, working with engine power also during night. Especially crossing locks and bridges – and the preparation work – might cause noises. If you are sensitive to noises please bring your own earplugs

TOUR ITINERARY

Day 1 (Sun) Passau

Boarding time at 5 p.m. Located at the meeting point of the Danube, Inn and Ilz Rivers, Passau has numerous interesting sites to visit. Use your free time and stroll through the cobblestoned old town centre, listen to the bells of Passau's Gothic Town Hall or have a look at the world's largest Catholic Church organ in the Passau Cathedral. At 6.30 p.m. we cast off!

2nd day (Mon) Great Loop/Engelhartszell – Aschach (approx. 42 km by bicycle)

Your first day's cycling begins with a ride through the classic scenery of the 'Great Loop' Donauschlinge - one of the most beautiful sections of the Danube. Along the way you will visit tiny villages and cosy cider taverns. In Austria's only Trappist monastery at Engelhartszell you can taste their delicious liquors and cheese. The famous 'Schlogener View' provides a wonderful panorama of the surrounding Austrian countryside. The boat welcomes all cyclists back on board in the charming market town of Aschach.

3rd day (Tues) Devin – Bratislava (approx. 18-43 km by bicycle)

You pedal along the former 'Iron Curtain', cross the green line and reach the imposing Imperial Palace of Hof with its beautifully terraced gardens. Follow the bike path through Austria's 'vegetable garden' to the coronation city of Bratislava and the slopes of the Little Carpathians and discover the hidden alleyways and sights of Bratislava on an optional city tour.

4th day (Wed) Budapest / Excursion to Szentendre (approx. 54 km by bicycle – or rest day)

The entrance to Budapest, Hungary's capital is stunning. Savour the beauty of Budapest during a coach tour or a guided bike tour (optional) to discover many of the highlights of this handsome city. You can also choose to cycle to the charming town of Szentendre with its Mediterranean atmosphere and lively art scene. You will get a very close experience of Hungarian culture at an evening show with traditional music and dance (optional).

5th day (Thurs) Danube Bend – Esztergom (approx. 43 km by bicycle)

The wooded hills of Pilis, Visegrád and Börzsöny together with the meandering Danube create a wonderful landscape that has become a nature lover's paradise. Situated in the middle of the Danube River the idyllic isle of Szentendre exudes silent Puszta romance. You cycle via the baroque village of Vác (influenced by the architects of Austria's empress Maria Theresa) to the bishop town of Esztergom with its gorgeous basilica – Hungary's largest Catholic Church.

6th day (Fri) Vienna (Rest day)

Discover Vienna's most beautiful attractions. During a city tour by bike or bus (optional) you will experience Vienna's most famous examples of architecture: the imperial Hofburg, St. Stephens Cathedral, the gorgeous 'Ring'-boulevard and the State Opera House, the Burgtheater and town hall and, of course, the colorful "Hundertwasserhaus". Take time to relax in one or more of Vienna's famous cafés, while the evening ends impressively at a classical concert (optional) in one of Vienna's most famous palaces.

7th day (Sat) Wachau / Krems – Melk (approx. 37 km by bicycle)

Your last biking day is a special highlight! A powerful ruin looms above the small Baroque town of Durnstein, while the blue spire of the monastery church is a landmark of the renowned Wachau. Amidst dreamy towns, apricot trees, vineyards and castles, this hilly landscape enchants everybody who visits ... you will be biking on cloud nine! In Weißenkirchen (possibility to do a wine-tasting – optional) you will find comfortable wine taverns along the bike path.

8th day (Sun) Passau (Disembarkation)

Enjoy the first sunbeams and the peaceful silence of the Danube Valley on deck. Take a last look at the Schlogener Schlinge ('Great Loop') before you arrive relaxed in Passau. Disembarkation is at approx. 10.00 a.m. We recommend arranging connecting trips from 11.00 a.m. onwards.

2018 TOUR DATES & COSTS

MS MV Carissima (Sundays)

May 6, 20

June 3, 24

July 15

August 12

September 2, 16, 30

SEASON 1: April & Oct

SEASON 2: May & Aug

SEASON 3: June, July & Sept

There are 3 decks to choose from – **main / mid / upper**

ECO cabins are also available and are located in the front/rear part of the ship (engine noise possible).

Upper, & Middle deck (full-size picture windows which do open)

Main deck (half-height windows which cannot be opened)

€1050 per person sharing standard cabin main deck – Season 1

€1210 per person sharing standard cabin mid deck – Season 1

€1310 per person sharing standard cabin upper deck – Season 1

€980 per person sharing eco cabin main deck – Season 1

€1110 per person sharing eco cabin mid deck – Season 1

€1150 per person sharing standard cabin main deck – Season 2

€1310 per person sharing standard cabin mid deck – Season 2

€1380 per person sharing standard cabin upper deck – Season 2

€1080 per person sharing eco cabin main deck – Season 2

€1210 per person sharing eco cabin mid deck – Season 2

€1200 per person sharing standard cabin main deck – Season 3

€1360 per person sharing standard cabin mid deck – Season 3

€1430 per person sharing standard cabin upper deck – Season 3

€1130 per person sharing eco cabin main deck – Season 3

€1260 per person sharing eco cabin mid deck – Season 3

There is a 50% supplement for those who want a single cabin

Reduction of 100% for a child from 0-2 years and reduction of 20 % for a child between 3-12 years old in a cabin with at least 1 full paying adult

If you wish to bring your own bike there is a reduction of €70

GROUP AND BACK UP SERVICE

You cycle in a small group guided by a local tour guide. Taste some Austrian delicacies; you'll try sweet cider in a wine tavern. In the world famous Wachau region you will also get to savour a small variety of regional wine specialties. A guided bike tour of Vienna and along with a bus tour of Budapest are included when you will get a great opportunity to pass numerous famous sights.

WHAT THE TOUR PRICE INCLUDES

- 7 nights in outside cabins with private facilities and air conditioning
- Captain's greeting and welcome cocktail
- Bike rental (21 speed – ladies frame)
- Daily cabin cleaning, towels and bed linen
- Full board: rich breakfast, lunch onboard (non-cyclists) or packed lunch (cyclists), afternoon coffee break, dinner (2/3 dishes to choose), late night snack
- Gala dinner with farewell cocktail. Daily live music
- Detailed road book per cabin
- Tour guide on board (does not cycle with the group)
- Daily information meeting

Not included in the tour price:

- Drinks onboard (Tally sheet to be paid at the end of the week)
- Meals ashore
- Entrance fee to excursions/attractions (individual visits)
- Tips for crew and guides
- You need to take 2-3 local ferries during the tour - depending on which side you want to cycle on the Danube. Ferries cost €1 - €3 per ride and can be paid directly in Euro.

Excursions

The following optional excursions (not included in the tour price) can be booked separately or as a package directly and only onboard.

Bratislava: City tour by city express (scenic train) + walking tour

Budapest: City tour by bike or HOP ON HOP OFF bus Traditional Hungarian folklore show at a Csarda

Vienna: City tour by bike or HOP ON HOP OFF bus Classical waltz & operetta concert in one of Vienna's famous palaces

Wachau: Krems City tour by excursion train Wine tasting with a local wine grower

Optional extra's

- E-bikes available for a supplement of +€95
- Insurance against theft and damage of the rental 21-speed hybrid bike €10 / per week or rental E-bike €20 / week (not insured deliberate damages)
- Additional nights in Passau 4* Hotel: €75 per person sharing / €99 single occupancy
- Additional nights in Passau 3* Hotel: €65 per person sharing / €90 single occupancy

WHAT TO BRING

We would recommend that you bring padded cycling shorts and / or a gel saddle cover which will make your days cycling more comfortable. Cycling gloves are also a good investment, as are hard-sole shoes which will help protect your feet. **Please bring your own helmet as these are not provided.** And don't forget raingear including a rain jacket, rain pants and slip-on boots. A hat and sunglasses will protect you from getting all much sun and, in the evening, mosquito repellent should ensure a good night's sleep. Finally, please make an effort to pack lightly. This will make your travels easier and will be much appreciated with the luggage transfers.

THE BOAT

Cruise Ship MV Carissima **** (all cabins with shower/toilet)

On board our comfortable cruise ship you enjoy an exclusive atmosphere – in the spacious, convenient cabins as well as in the stylish outdoor area. Experience the fantastic view to breathtaking landscapes – on the bike, from the pool on the sun deck, in the comfy seats of the lounge, and even during your amazing meals in the first class restaurant.

This exciting bike trip will make your holiday unforgettable. A warm and charming crew is waiting for you to make your stay on board as comfortable as possible.

Ship information

Capacity	150 passengers	Crew	approx. 35
Length	110 m / Breadth 11.4 m /	Speed	21 km/h / Electricity 220 Volt

Cabin information

Standard, Comfort or Luxury ? On the MV Carissima you have the choice

All 75 de-luxe staterooms are 14 m² and feature a hotel-style double bed, which may be converted to two single beds. The half-height windows on the Main deck cannot be opened, the staterooms on the Upper and Middle deck provide full-size picture windows which do open.

All cabins are equipped with a private bathroom with a shower, hair dryer, TV, safe and full air-conditioning. For those who would like a bit more luxury: Some cabins on the promenade deck have a connecting door and can be rearranged to a spacious DELUXE-suite with living room and bedroom (prices on request). ECO cabins are located in the front/rear part of the ship (engine noise possible).

Passenger - decks

The first thing you'll experience when boarding is the coziness of this river ship. In the restaurant there is a fantastic view of the beautiful scenery which will sweeten the diversity of flavours you are tasting! In the Panorama-Lounge, where the bar is located, you can enjoy a glass of wine with your travel mates while the gorgeous landscape is passing by. There are comfortable lounge chairs to relax in after a day on the bike.

After an exciting day of cycling you can relax in the spa with sauna and whirlpool. For pleasant refreshment, jump into the pool (open from June-August) on the sun deck, from where you can enjoy a magnificent view. And if you are in the mood for reading, just borrow a book in the library! The comfortable ship will make your journey unforgettable. Wifi is available on board (payable on spot, connection can vary).

Restaurant / Kitchen

The full board consists of: breakfast, packed lunch for bikers (resp. light meal for guests on board), dinner. On four evenings you have the choice between 2-3 menus. Not claimed meals cannot be refunded. Your table number will be provided during boarding. Special meals have to be ordered latest by 3 weeks prior departure.

Board- und Excursion program

A musician will provide evening entertainment. On the last evening the crew invites you to an evening of entertainment, good mood and fun! Excursions can only be booked on board with our cruise director.

Internet / Mobile phone

If you want to be reachable on board in urgent cases, please leave our office number at your family. We will forward you the message as soon as possible. The ship also offers Wi-Fi (chargeable). We only have very limited internet connections on board. If possible we send urgent E-Mails for you.

Life on board

There is no special dress code on board. Casual clothing is sufficient. We suggest appropriate clothing for the bike-tours as e.g. cycling pants, bike-gloves, sportive shoes, etc...sun- and rain protection – please don't forget! warm sweater for rather cool evenings on deck. Swim wear for using the opportunity on hot days along your bike-leg.

Medical care

For emergency cases doctors are also shortly available ashore.

Smoking on board

Please note that the whole ship (incl. cabins, restaurant, café) is absolutely a non smoking area. Smoking is allowed only on the open sundeck.

Tipping

On cruise ships gratuities will be collected at the end of the cruise in a box at the reception. This form of giving a tip is useful to credit all crew-members. A noncommittal directive would be approx. € 5,- to 6,- per person and day. The cruise director is not included in this system. If you have been satisfied with his work during the week – there will be a tip box available directly at the cruise director's desk.

BIKE AND FITNESS

21-gear ladies bikes come as standard bikes with 28" wheels in frame sizes 46 / 51 / 56 cm .

For men taller than 186 cm we offer men frames.

Our bicycles are equipped with:

- 1 good sized waterproofed pannier bag,
- 1 handle bar bag, repair kit, air pump, lock



Electric bikes, children's bikes, specialized equipment for children upon request
Helmet purchase possible on request

The Route

Flat or slightly downhill the Danube; well-built cycling path almost all the way without motor vehicles. Minor roads make up only very short sections of this route – the Danube cycle path is a perfect example of a cycle route

TRAVEL INFORMATION

It is possible to book a transfer from Munich to Passau: 70€ one way / 120€ return transfer

Flying to Passau

Munich Airport (MUC)

The closest airport to Passau is Munich Airport (München Flughafen / MUC) with its huge number of cheap flights to mostly German and European destinations.

Passau is around 160 km (100 miles) from Munich Airport. Driving time is around 90 minutes. From the airport, take Autobahn A92 towards Deggendorf and turn southeast onto Autobahn A3 when reaching the Danube.

Public transportation is slightly more complicated. From the airport, take bus 635 to Freising (18 minutes). Direct trains run from Freising to Passau every two hours. Alternatives require transfers in either Plattling or Regensburg. Total journey time varies from 2h20 to three hours.

Frankfurt International Airport (FRA)

Many international, and especially intercontinental, passengers will enter Germany at Frankfurt International Airport (FRA). It will often be both faster and cheaper to take the ICE train from Frankfurt to Passau rather than taking a connection flight to Munich. Many direct trains are available with more options requiring an easy transfer at Frankfurt Hauptbahnhof. Total journey time is just over four hours.

The following websites will help you with train connections between Vienna and Passau.

www.bahn.de or www.oebb.at

For route planner: <http://reiseauskunft.bahn.de/bin/query.exe/en?newrequest=yes&protocol=http:&>

High-Speed Inter-City-Express Trains to Passau

Passau is on the high-speed railway line that links Frankfurt am Main and Vienna. Luxury, high-speed Inter-City Express (ICE) trains run on this route roughly every two hours.

The ICE trains to Frankfurt am Main Hauptbahnhof (Main Station) take around four hours and stop en route in Plattling (30 minutes), Regensburg (1h), Nürnberg / Nuremberg (2h), and Würzburg (3h). Many trains continue to Frankfurt International Airport and on to Cologne (Köln) and further destinations.

From Passau to Vienna on the ICE train is three hours with a stop en route in Linz (1h10).

- Passau station (Bahnhof) is at the edge of the old town in Donaustadt. From the station to the heart of the old town is an easy fifteen-minute walk through pleasant shopping streets.

Regional Trains to Passau

Many regional trains also pass through Passau. Although slower than the ICE, regional trains can be significantly cheaper and on short distances, the time differences can be negligible. In addition, discount tickets such as the Bayern Ticket and Schönes-Wochenende-Ticket may be used on regional trains only.

The regional trains are available amongst others to Plattling (36 min) and Regensburg (1h40). Only regional trains are available to München / Munich (2h15) and run mostly every two hours – more frequent connections require transfers at either Plattling or Regensburg.

German discount tickets are not valid on regional trains into Austria but the slower trains are cheaper than the ICE. Regional trains run to Linz (90 min to 2h) and Vienna (5h).