

## **River Cruises Provide a Unique Perspective for Travellers**

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For centuries, the most important mode of transportation around the world was by boat. Much of the world's history is still best seen from local waterways and with the increased popularity of river cruising, travellers can enjoy this unique perspective of popular destinations in luxurious comfort.

River cruises are offered at a variety of destinations, itineraries and prices. It is a relaxed, intimate way to tour new places or even enjoy a favourite destination from a different point of view.

And many travellers already understand the appeal; according to Travel & Leisure magazine, European bookings alone for river cruises quadrupled between 1998 and 2008.

River cruise boats feature many of the amenities of traditional cruising including: gourmet dining, entertainment, fitness centres and sometimes a pool and shore excursions. Like larger cruise ship travel, your 'hotel' travels with you, so you can visit many places without having to pack and unpack.

But there are several things that set river cruises apart from their larger counterparts and these are the qualities that make river cruising so attractive. River cruise boats are smaller, with no more than 300 passengers and often fewer than 200. As such, river cruises tend to be more intimate with better opportunity to get to know fellow cruisers and share experiences. Accommodations are lush with well-appointed staterooms, most with balconies or large, outside windows. There is also a better ratio of staff to guests, which allows the cruise line to better accommodate individual needs and provide local knowledge of the area. The boats travel more slowly and, with smoother waters, there is less likelihood for seasickness.

And while shore excursions offer the opportunity to visit key attractions, river cruising takes travellers to historically and culturally significant sights without the crush of crowds found at traditional tourist spots.

River cruises run in many destinations but European river cruises expose the traveller to charm and culture that aren't found in other regions. The most popular itineraries are

from Budapest to Prague (the Blue Danube area,) Budapest to the Black Sea along the beautiful Danube River—sometimes described as the most romantic river in the world—and Prague to the Black Sea.

Other itineraries offered throughout Europe include Iceland, France, Scandinavia, the Mediterranean, Britain and Ireland. Further afield, destinations such as Egypt, China, Africa, Australia and New Zealand, the Middle East and even the Galapagos Islands offer fascinating history and breath-taking scenery.

The majority of river cruises are offered by Tauck and Globus. These two companies present a range of itineraries on modern, well-equipped boats with all the popular services. Tauck boasts the most spacious boats in Europe with a club-like atmosphere without the crowds. Globus claims the newest fleet of ships and state-of-the-art amenities. Both offer sightseeing tours run by knowledgeable cruise directors, entertainment and gourmet dining.

Cruises are available at different price points and a travel agent can work with you to find one that fits your interest and budget.

A travel agent can also be helpful by providing complete service, including advising whether visas are needed, securing pre- or post-cruise reservations for accommodations and transportation and providing insight on the various regions and what they have to offer.

Most river cruises are geared towards adults with limited children's activities, so check with your travel agent before booking a trip with young ones.

*To book a river cruise for your next vacation, call Meyer-Franklin Travel on 295-4176. We are proud to be named Top Travel Agency by Bermudian Business in recognition of our dedication to excellent customer service. [www.meyer-franklintravel.bm](http://www.meyer-franklintravel.bm)*