

# Christmas Markets Along the Rhine

November 23 - December 4, 2018



*Maybe it's the sight of medieval landscapes glittering with colorful lights, or the familiar, heartwarming melodies of "Silent Night" and "O Christmas Tree" sung in their original German. Or maybe it's the excitement of the traditional Christkindlmarkt (Christmas market), brimming with handmade toys and ornaments, and filled with the delicious aromas of freshly baked cookies and warm mulled wine.*

*For many, visiting the Christmas markets along the Rhine River is simply the most satisfying way to experience the holidays. This festive and enhanced Grand Circle River Cruise is a wonderful gift to yourself that will remain a treasured holiday memory for years to come. Best of all, you'll travel in style with your friends from Southern Exposure and Grand Circle Travel!*

**REMINDER:** Space for this special journey is available on a first-come, first-serve basis and is truly limited. To reserve your place today, please call the Southern Exposure office at (269) 962-1255. If you haven't experienced a Southern Exposure travel adventure before, feel free to ask questions or meet with our staff.



## **Snapshot Itinerary: Christmas Markets Along the Rhine 2018**

*Travel Dates: November 23 - December 4, 2018*

**Day 1 – Depart U.S. and Fly to Amsterdam**

**Day 2 – Amsterdam, the Netherlands**

**Day 3 – Nijmegen / Operation Market Garden  
Discussion / German Language Lesson**

**Day 4 – Cologne, Germany / Stollen Baking Demo**

**Day 5 – Koblenz / German Christmas Traditions  
Discussion / Mainz**

**Day 6 – Mainz / Optional Rudesheim Dinner**

**Day 7 – Speyer / Extended German Christmas  
Traditions Discussion / Home-Hosted Kaffeeklatsch**

**Day 8 – Speyer / Optional Heidelberg tour**

**Day 9 – Plittersdorf / Baden-Baden / Strasbourg,  
France**

**Day 10 – Strasbourg**

**Day 11 – Breisach, Germany / Kaysersberg  
& Riquewihr, France**

**Day 12 – Basel, Switzerland / Return to U.S.**





## **Detailed Itinerary: Christmas Markets Along the Rhine 2018**

### **Day 1 – Depart U.S.**

You depart the U.S. today on your flight to Amsterdam.

### **Day 2 – Amsterdam, the Netherlands**

This morning, you arrive at the Amsterdam airport, where you are met and transferred to the pier to embark your river ship. From Amsterdam, ships can navigate the Rhine through Holland and Germany (where the river forms part of the border with France) all the way to Basel, Switzerland.

A light lunch will be served onboard this afternoon. Otherwise, the balance of the day is at leisure. Gather this evening to meet your Program Director for a briefing on your upcoming cruise, which begins with overnight cruising to Nijmegen.

### **Day 3 – Nijmegen / Operation Market Garden Discussion / German Language Lesson**

This morning, arrive in Nijmegen, a Dutch city built on seven hills overlooking the Waal River, just west of its confluence with the Rhine. You'll see the arching bridge that spans the Waal, which was the site of an important battle during World War II that caused devastating damage to the city. As a result, Nijmegen, one of the oldest towns in Holland, was almost completely rebuilt. The town center, however, was remarkably unscathed by shelling, and provides a striking contrast to the newer architecture that surrounds it. Enjoy a guided walk throughout the city.

Enjoy an afternoon of sailing, taking in the passing landscapes. You can also join in on two exclusive Discovery Series events. First an Operation Market Garden discussion, and later, brush up on your German during language lesson conducted by your Program Director.

Join your traveling companions this evening for a Captain's Welcome Drink and Dinner.

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#### **Day 4 – Cologne, Germany / Stollen Baking Demonstration**

After breakfast, enjoy an exclusive Discovery Series baking demonstration where you'll learn how to make Stollen, a traditional German bread made with fruit and nuts and topped with powdered sugar.

Then you'll disembark for a guided walking tour of Cologne's Old City. A Roman settlement called Colonia Agrippina after AD 50, Cologne came under Frankish control in the fifth century. You can still see the ruins of Roman temples scattered through the city, and the Roman Tower near the cathedral was once part of the medieval town walls. During the 15th century, the city flourished as a member of the Hanseatic League.

Your tour ends in front of the city's magnificent Gothic Cathedral (Dom), which you may explore further on your own. A UNESCO World Heritage Site, the cathedral largely escaped the World War II damage that ravaged the

city and the rest of Germany. (There's evidence that Allied forces worked deliberately to avoid damaging this beautiful structure.) It's the largest Gothic cathedral in northern Europe, boasting beautiful stained-glass windows, an ornate gold shrine on its elaborate altar, and the intricate detail common to 14th-century Gothic churches.

After your tour, enjoy some time on your own in Cologne. Perhaps you'll spend time at the Romano-Germanic Museum, with its beautifully restored Roman mosaics and reconstructed tomb. The museum is the home of the largest collection of Roman glass vessels in the world and also holds a significant collection of Roman and early medieval jewelry. You could also visit Cologne's Christmas market, and browse its wide assortment of Christmas creations.

#### **Important Travel Notes:**

- For your comfort and safety, we recommend this tour for individuals in good physical condition. If you have difficulty walking, this may be a difficult trip for you.
- We reserve the right to cancel this tour due to insufficient registration. Full refund will be given if tour is canceled due to insufficient registration.
- If traveling alone, we will match you up with a roommate (this tour is double occupancy only).
- Please read the "What to Expect" box on the next page carefully. If you have further questions, please contact the Southern Exposure staff at (269) 962-1255 during business hours.



## Day 5 – Koblenz / German Christmas Traditions Discussion / Mainz

After breakfast, embark on a walking tour of Koblenz, the 2,000-year-old city that stands at the confluence of the Rhine and Mosel rivers. Sitting amidst hills populated with castles and fortresses, this strategic location has made the city vital to European trade—and explains why it was heavily bombed during World War II. Many of its historic buildings have since been restored and the Altstadt (Old Town) features distinct architecture like the Liebfrauenkirche (Church of Our Lady), a 13th-century Gothic basilica with twin towers capped by onion-shaped spires, and the Basilica St. Kastor, or Kastorkirche, dedicated to Castor of Karden, with four towers. Across the Rhine you'll find the Ehrenbreitstein Fortress, central to a ring of fortifications built to protect the town and the region. Following the tour, the remainder of the morning is yours to explore Koblenz on your own.

Later this afternoon, cruise along some of the most beautiful and inspiring parts of the Rhine as you sail toward Mainz. You'll pass the Lorelei, a large rock rising 440 feet above the river. Since the times of ancient Greek mythology, there have been legends of sirens, women-creatures who lure sailors to their death with sweet songs. Ancient Germanic legend places one such siren (Lorelei) here, and it is said she enticed sailors to destruction on the reef below the rock.

Tonight, gather with your fellow travelers for an exclusive Discovery Series discussion about German Christmas traditions, focusing on the origins of the Tannenbaum (Christmas tree), the Advent calendar, and more. Dinner will follow, and your ship will dock in Mainz.

## Day 6 – Mainz / Optional Rudesheim Dinner

Enjoy a walking tour of Mainz this morning. The city is best known for its most famous son, Johannes Gutenberg, the inventor of movable type, who was born here in 1397. Gutenberg began his career by creating and selling

## What to Expect: Christmas Markets Along the Rhine 2018

We will make every effort to accommodate your travel needs and make sure you have a pleasant, memorable experience. At the same time, it is important to note the following advisories:

■ **Physical Requirements:** 11 days, with 10 nights aboard a river ship. Return flights often require departing in early morning hours. Walk 1-3 miles unassisted and participate in 2-3 hours of physical activities each day, including stairs. Not accessible for travelers using wheelchairs or scooters. Travelers using walkers, crutches, or other mobility aids must travel with a companion who can assist them throughout the trip. We reserve the right for Program Directors to restrict participation, or in some circumstances send travelers home, if their limitations impact the group's experience

■ **Terrain & Transportation:** Diverse terrain and uneven walking surfaces, including steep and unpaved paths, hills, riverbanks, 25-50 stairs without handrails, and cobblestones. Travel by 140-passenger river ship and 49-seat coach. Changes in water-level depths may require adjustments to your itinerary, including your Strasbourg canal cruise.

■ **Climate:** Daytime temperatures range from 38-51°F during cruising season. Rain, ice, snow, and wind are possible during the holiday season.

## Passport & Visa Information

U.S. citizens do not need a visa for this trip. Your passport should meet these requirements for this itinerary. It should be valid for at least 6 months after your scheduled return to the U.S. It should have the recommended number of blank pages (refer to the U.S. State Department handbook for details). The blank pages must be labeled "Visas" at the top. Pages labeled "Amendments and Endorsements" are not acceptable.

## Vaccinations Information

Generally speaking, vaccinations are not needed for this trip. However, for the latest list of vaccinations that **may** be recommended for this trip, please visit the CDC's "Traveler's Health" website at [www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel). We strongly recommend that you have an annual physical checkup and any dental work done well in advance of your departure.



indulgences—papers that could be purchased and used as “coupons” by the faithful to absolve them of some of the time they had earned in Purgatory. Gutenberg realized he could absolve himself of some of his own monetary debts if he could mass-produce the indulgences. To do this, he created uniformly sized metal molds for letters that allowed him to create error-free, repeatable text. This was the beginning of the movable type that transformed the world.

You’ll see the Gutenberg Bible and the printing press, which are housed in the town’s Gutenberg Museum, which opened in 2000. The museum exhibits one of the 47 extant copies of the Latin Gutenberg Bible—a 42-page volume with elaborate Gothic lettering dating from the 1450s.

After lunch, enjoy free time to further explore Mainz or to visit the Christkindlmarkt and its craft stalls. Dinner is onboard this evening.

Or, choose to spend a memorable evening at Rudesheim’s renowned Drosselgasse wine alley, a narrow street lined with charming taverns serving the area’s famed wines. This optional tour includes dinner, locally produced wine, and live entertainment.

#### **Day 7 – Speyer / Extended German Christmas Traditions Discussion / Home-Hosted Kaffeeklatsch**

Enjoy a leisurely morning onboard as you cruise toward Speyer, a city whose charms—including portions of its medieval wall and gates—date back more than 2,000 years. En route, you’ll learn a little more about Europe’s holiday customs with a continuation of our earlier exclusive Discover Series German Christmas traditions discussion.

After arriving in Speyer this afternoon, you’ll join a local family for a traditional Kaffeeklatsch. You’ll share coffee, cake, and conversation during this exclusive Discover Series Home-Hosted Visit. Afterward, consider strolling through the Christmas market and browsing its festive stalls. We return to the ship for dinner..



### Day 8 – Speyer / Optional Heidelberg Tour

You have the day free in Speyer. On your own, you might take in the Historical Museum of the Palatinate, which has large collections of pre-Roman and Roman materials and includes a wine museum. Or consider visiting Speyer's four-towered Imperial Cathedral. Dating from the eleventh century, it's one of the greatest Romanesque buildings in Germany and contains the tombs of eight emperors. This was also an early center of printing as the home of the 15th-century printers John of Speyer and his brother Wendelin.

Or, join our all-day optional tour to discover romantic Heidelberg, a historic university town nestled between wooded hills at the edge of the Odenwald Forest. This morning, enjoy the ruins of Heidelberg Castle. Begun in the Gothic style of the 14th century and built up gradually over the next 400 years, the castle demonstrates the evolution of architectural style, finally completed in the Baroque period. After an included lunch at a local restaurant, tour Heidelberg's turreted 600-year-old university, Germany's oldest. In keeping with the spirit of the holidays, you'll also stop at Heidelberg's lively Christmas market. After the tour, you'll ride back to Speyer to re-board the ship before dinner.





**Photo:** Roman artifacts at Baden-Baden, the famous spa town in Germany that drew visitors for eons.

**Day 9 – Plittersdorf / Baden-Baden / Strasbourg**

This morning, the ship docks at the German town of Plittersdorf and you depart for a journey by motorcoach to the spa town of Baden-Baden, nestled in the tranquil Black Forest. Since Roman times, Baden-Baden has been renowned for its thermal baths, with mineral waters thought to have restorative powers. Afterwards, return to the river, where you re-board the ship in time for lunch.

The ship arrives in Strasbourg in the late afternoon and you have dinner on board.

**Day 10 – Strasbourg**

After breakfast, discover Strasbourg, a unique confluence of French and German culture and traditions. Strategically important since ancient times, Strasbourg became a free imperial city in 1262, and then was occupied by France in 1681 and Germany in 1871. France recovered the city in 1919 after World War I. From the comfort of your glass-covered tour boat, you’ll see the major sights (including the Palais de L’Europe, where the European Parliament meets) and admire the city’s remarkable Renaissance architecture. In mid-morning, your guided tour concludes at the Palais Rohan in the town center which you will travel to via an included day pass for the city’s tram. If you like, you may walk on your own from the Palais to visit the city’s magnificent cathedral, one of the finest of Europe’s great Gothic cathedrals. Its lofty single spire dominates the city.

After lunch aboard ship, you have the afternoon free to visit Strasbourg’s Christmas market or explore more of the city on your own. There is an excellent collection

of Renaissance art in the Museum of Fine Arts, and the Alsatian Museum offers folk art, including reconstructed interiors of Rhine farm and vineyard houses. You may want to visit the picturesque Petite-France area (the former Tanners’ District) and see the old Customs House and the charming covered bridges with their defensive towers. Return to the ship and gather with your Program Director and fellow travelers for a Captain’s Farewell Reception and Dinner.

**Day 11 – Breisach, Germany / Kaisersberg & Riquewihr, France**

Cruise between French Alsace (on the west bank of the Rhine) and the German state of Baden-Württemberg (on the east bank) this morning.

This afternoon, you’ll head into Alsace to visit Kaisersberg. This was the birthplace of Albert Schweitzer, the great humanitarian and recipient of the 1952 Nobel Peace Prize, who is famous for his philosophy of “reverence for life” and his work in Africa.

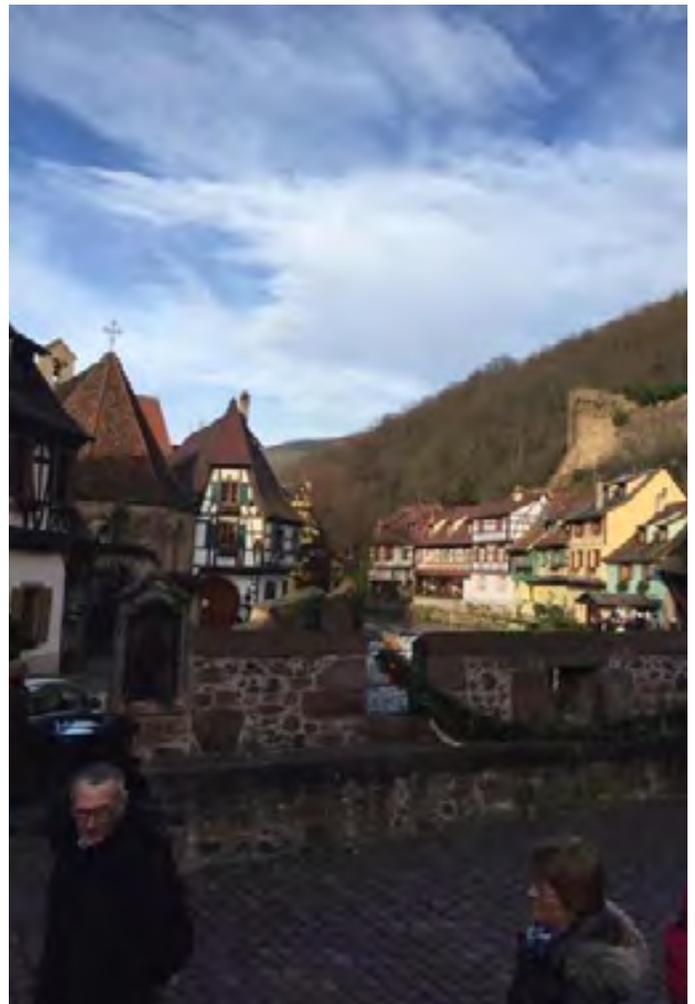
Your tour includes a visit to Dr. Schweitzer’s former home, now a museum, where his study is preserved exactly as it was in 1959. You’ll also see the city center, and have time to discover more of Kaisersberg on your own. You’ll also visit the nearby commune of Riquewihr, a renowned “wine village” known for its Rieslings. After an informative stroll, you’ll have free time to explore on your own.

**Day 12 – Basel, Switzerland / Return to U.S.**



## What's Included in the Package

- International round-trip airfare from Detroit Metro Airport to and from Europe.
- Accommodations for 10 nights aboard a private river ship with wireless Internet access now in all common areas and cabins.
- ALL meals: Daily breakfasts, 9 lunches, and 10 dinners—plus all onboard house beer & wine, as well as soft drinks.
- 17 included tours with personal headsets, up to 7 Christmas markets, and 4 exclusive Discovery Series events—Home-Hosted Kaffeeklatsch / German Christmas Traditions / Stollen baking / Operation Market Garden discussion.
- Exclusive services of local Grand Circle Program Directors.
- Private motorcoach travel on your main trip.
- Gratuities on your main trip for local and motorcoach drivers.
- Baggage handling for 1 piece of luggage per person, including tips guides and motorcoach drivers.
- All port charges—a value of \$145 per person.





## Pricing Summary & Trip Dates

**Trip Name:** Christmas Markets Along the Rhine 2018

**Trip Dates:** November 23 - December 4, 2018

**Base Price:**

A/B Level Cabins - \$1,845

C/D Level Cabins - \$1,795

E/F Level Cabins - \$1,745

G Level Cabins - \$1,645

F Level Cabins - \$1,595

**Rd. Trip Airfare:** \$1,100 (DTW)

**Trip Insurance:** \$399 (highly recommended)

**Trip Cancellation Coverage** – Trip cancellation insurance for “Christmas Markets Along the Rhine 2018” is not required but is highly recommended. For details and coverage information, please contact Southern Exposure at (269) 962-1255 during regular business hours.

**Reservation Deposit:** The deposit to reserve your space on this trip is \$500 per person, fully refundable until 65 days prior to departure.

**Need Help?** For personal assistance or more information about this trip in the meantime, please call the Southern Exposure office during normal business hours at (269) 962-1255, Monday - Friday.

## TOUR RESERVATION POLICY:

Reservations can be made by calling Southern Exposure Farm at (269) 962-1255. A \$500 deposit is required to guarantee your place (check, cash or credit card accepted), fully refundable until 65 days prior to departure. Remaining balance due 90 days before departure.

**Note:** The information, dates and prices provided in this document are estimates only based on currently available information. Pricing and itinerary are subject to change.

**Pricing Disclaimer:** Every effort will be made to provide accurate pricing information. Operator reserves the right to correct promotional or pricing errors at any time, or to increase the trip price in the event of cost increases due to changes in airfares, cruise fares, currency fluctuations, venue fee increases, taxes, or fuel surcharges, or other reasons, unless you pre-paid according to the terms of the Good Buy Plan prior to the cost increase going into effect. For more information, please contact Southern Exposure at (269) 962-1255.