

Virginia Retired Teachers presents ...

Cruise in a group of 38-45 aboard our privately owned 140- to 162-passenger ships

Christmas Markets Along the Danube

Germany: Nuremberg, Regensburg, Passau • **Austria:** Linz, Melk, Vienna

9 days from **\$3195**

with international airfare
from Dulles

9 days from **\$2095**
Tour only



IT'S INCLUDED

International airfare, airport transfers, government taxes, fees, and airline fuel surcharges, unless you choose to make your own air arrangements

Accommodations for 7 nights aboard a private river ship with wireless Internet access in all common areas and cabins

20 meals: 7 breakfasts, 6 lunches, and 7 dinners—plus all onboard house beer & wine, as well as soft drinks

5 included tours with personal headsets, **up to 5 Christmas markets**, and **5 Exclusive Discovery Series events**—Main-Danube Canal discussion • German language lesson • Regensburg choral concert • *Stollen* cooking demonstration • *German Christmas Traditions* discussion

Local Program Directors, a Grand Circle Cruise Line exclusive: These dedicated experts are with you and your group of 38-45 travelers from beginning to end to provide insider's knowledge and the perspective that will enrich your experience

Gratuities for local guides and motorcoach drivers

All port charges

Baggage handling for 1 piece of luggage per person, including tips

5% Frequent Traveler Credit toward your next trip—an average of \$187

ITINERARY OVERVIEW

DECEMBER 4, 2019

Day 1 • Depart U.S.

Day 2 • Vienna, Austria

Embark ship

Day 3 • Melk • Wachau Valley

Included Tour Melk Abbey

Day 4 • Linz

Optional Tour Salzburg

Day 5 • Passau, Germany

Included Tour Passau

Day 6-7 • Regensburg

Included Tour Regensburg

Day 8 • Nuremberg

Included Tour Nuremberg

Day 9 • Nuremberg • Return to U.S.

Disembark ship

MAXIMIZE YOUR DISCOVERIES & VALUE

OPTIONAL EXTENSIONS

all with FREE Single Supplements

Vienna, Austria

3 nights pre-trip from \$745

Munich, Germany

3 nights post-trip from \$795



Reservations & Information **1-800-597-2452**

PLEASE MENTION THIS
CODE WHEN BOOKING

G9-28536

www.gct.com/xms2019

WHAT TO EXPECT

Group Size

- This trip has a maximum group size of 38-45 travelers with a local Program Director exclusive to Grand Circle

Pacing

- 9 days, with 7 nights aboard a private river ship
- Return flights to U.S. often require departing from ship in early morning hours

Physical Requirements

- 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
- 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 paths, hills, riverbanks, 25-50 stairs without handrails, and cobblestones
- Travel by 162-passenger river ship and 49-seat coach
- Changes in water-level depths may require adjustments to your itinerary

Climate

- Daytime temperatures range from 38-45°F during cruising season
- Rain, ice, snow, and wind are possible during the holiday season

YOUR ITINERARY

DAY 1 Depart U.S.

DAY 2 Vienna, Austria • Embark ship

Arrive at the airport this morning, where a Grand Circle representative meets you and helps you transfer to the pier to embark your river ship. Upon arrival, enjoy some free time to relax and settle in.

Gather this evening for a ship briefing, and meet your Program Director and fellow travelers during dinner. Afterward, settle in for your first night onboard.

D—River Ship

DAY 3 Melk • Wachau Valley

After setting sail this morning, enjoy hot chocolate and relax onboard as your ship cruises along one of the most beautiful parts of the Danube—the Wachau Valley. Your Program Director will provide enlightening commentary about this UNESCO World Heritage Site consisting of sculpted hills and medieval towns built along the river.

Then, after lunch, disembark in Melk for an excursion to the dramatic 900-year-old Baroque Melk Abbey.

This magnificently ornate structure has a long and storied history. Strategically situated on a steep, cliffside perch, Melk Abbey's earliest incarnation was as a Roman border post. Later, it served as a tenth-century Babenberg fortress. It became a Benedictine monastery in 1089 and earned a distinguished reputation for medieval scholarship. Its library includes more than 70,000 books and 2,000 manuscripts, chiefly from the ninth through the 15th centuries. The Abbey also houses a remarkable cherub-filled library of thousands of books and manuscripts, and 365 windows—one for every day of the year. The interior of the Abbey's church is a kaleidoscope of red, orange, and gold—with a magnificent carved pulpit and shimmering ceiling frescoes. You'll also enjoy free time to explore Melk at leisure before returning to your ship.

Tonight, join your fellow travelers for a Captain's Welcome Drink and Dinner onboard.

B,L,D—River Ship

DAY 4 Linz • Optional Salzburg tour

This morning the ship calls at the port of Linz. You have the day free to explore this Old-World city.

Linz, one of the largest ports on the Danube and the second-most populous city in Austria, was first settled by Romans in the first century AD, and today is one of the country's cultural centers. It offers a wealth of discoveries—from its Hauptplatz, one of the loveliest squares in Europe, to the 17th-century Abbey of St. Florian, where Linz's native son, Anton Bruckner, was the organist and composed many of his famed masterpieces of church music. His burial site is at the abbey.

You could also consider a visit to Linz's historic *Landhaus*, a complex of structures currently used as government headquarters. These buildings served as the city's university in the 17th century, and it was here that the well-known mathematician and astronomer Johann Kepler formulated his theory of planetary motion. A short walk takes you to the *Linzer Schloss* (Linz Castle), where you can browse its Provincial Museum of Upper Austria, containing artwork from medieval to modern times. Linz is also a

center for trade in antiques, so you might wish to stop in at a few of its shops to see what treasures you can find.

Return to the ship for lunch where you can spend the rest of your day relaxing or continue exploring Linz's charming Christmas market and abundance of museums on your own.

Or, journey into the heart of the Alps with an optional full-day Salzburg excursion including lunch. This beautiful city—birthplace of Mozart—will seem familiar those individuals who are forever enchanted by *The Sound of Music*, and you'll visit the grounds where much of the film was shot.

Your tour includes a visit to the Getreidegasse, the renowned center for Austrian shopping. Note the intricate architectural details of this lane of shops and galleries, nestled under their skillfully crafted wrought-iron signs and offering jewelry, antiques, leather goods, and regional foods. The vaulted passageways offer delightful pathways to artisans' workshops and arcaded courtyards.

You'll get another taste of Alpine Christmas traditions as you visit the fabulous Salzburg Christmas market. Handmade seasonal crafts of all sorts are available, and the aromas of traditional holiday foods add magic to the colorful setting.

Have lunch in this beautiful city and free time to explore on your own before boarding your ship again in the late afternoon in Linz.

Please note: *Christmas markets typically open one week before, or at the start of Advent observances in mid- to late-November. Hours of operation for the holiday markets vary depending on region, and may be limited or closed between December 22 and December 26, as well as on New Year's Day. When possible, your trip itinerary may be adjusted as a result.*

B,L,D—River Ship

DAY 5 **Passau, Germany • German language lesson • German Christmas Traditions discussion**

This morning, we set out on the river again. Along the way, you'll be invited to join an **Exclusive Discovery Series** German language lesson, where you can learn some German phrases—such



as, *Schöne Feiertage* (Happy Holidays)—commonly used during the Christmas season. In mid-morning, you disembark for a tour of the lovely medieval town of Passau, our first stop in Germany.

Situated at the confluence of the Danube, Ilz, and Inn rivers, Passau has been called the Dreiflussestadt (City on Three Rivers) because of its location. The city was significantly developed by the prince bishops of Passau, who made it their royal residence and capital of the largest Danube diocese.

You'll enjoy a short walking tour of this elegant town that has served as a German cultural and intellectual hub for centuries. See the impressive Bishop's Residenz, the 13th-century Town Hall, and the town's magnificent St. Stephen's Cathedral, which boasts the world's largest church organ, with 17,774 pipes and 231 resounding stops. The Cathedral's original Gothic plan is still evident through the 17th-century reconstruction it received in the grand Baroque style. One of its most striking features is the gorgeous octagonal dome that hovers over the intersection of the nave, where the congregation sits, and the transept, which runs perpendicular to it.

Passau's colorful Christmas market is located in front of the Cathedral. You have some free time to do some shopping or simply browse the wide assortment of handcrafts and Christmas creations.

Return to your ship for lunch onboard before free time to discover more of the town on your own.

The ship sets sail again this evening, en route to Regensburg, with dinner aboard.

B,L,D—River Ship

DAY 6 **Regensburg • Choral concert**

You arrive and dock around mid-morning in Regensburg, Germany's largest medieval city. Then, enjoy a walking tour of this hidden treasure. Since the city suffered no damage during World War II, it remains beautifully preserved.

Your tour features the Old Town Hall and the famous Stone Bridge, Germany's oldest, which was constructed during the twelfth century. You also visit the Regensberg *Christkindlmarkt* (Christmas market) in Neupfarrplatz, which lights up in December with seasonal cheer. You have time here to explore on your own, strolling among the stalls and shopping for unique handmade Christmas gifts.

You'll have lunch onboard ship and an afternoon at leisure.

After an early dinner on the ship, join us for an **Exclusive Discovery Series** event as we walk to a local church to hear a choral concert featuring festive holiday music. You return to the ship, which

remains in Regensburg overnight, later in the evening.

B,L,D—River Ship

DAY 7 Regensburg • Canal lecture • Stollen baking demonstration • Captain's Farewell Dinner

Enjoy a leisurely morning onboard today, as the ship prepares to set off for its next destination. Your cruise toward Nuremberg begins shortly before lunch.

If the weather obliges, you might go on deck and take in the scenes of life along the banks of this noble river, or spend some time with fellow travelers over coffee or cards.

This afternoon, you'll enjoy two exclusive Discovery Events: a lecture outlining how the Main-Danube Canal's innovative system of locks has made Europe's rivers navigable, and a Stollen baking demonstration, where you'll learn how to prepare this traditional German bread made with fruit and nuts, and topped with powdered sugar.

Later in the evening, as you cruise the river, celebrate your discoveries and new Christmas memories at the

Captain's Farewell Dinner onboard. We cruise through the night on our way to Nuremberg.

B,L,D—River Ship

DAY 8 Nuremberg

Your ship docks at Nuremberg quite early this morning. After breakfast, you disembark for a tour of Nuremberg, one of the most important cities of the Franconia region.

This medieval city surrounded by 13th-century walls is the second-largest city in Bavaria. Today the city's name evokes the notorious post-World War II war trials. But throughout its history, Nuremberg has been known for its wonderful creativity and handcrafts—its toys and fancy metalwork are particularly famous.

Return to the ship for lunch before an afternoon visit to Nuremberg's famous *Christkindlmarkt* (Christmas market), where you have free time to browse on your own. This is Germany's most famous traditional Christmas market, and it is open throughout the holiday season, with a myriad of colorful stalls offering

handmade Christmas decorations, toys, ceramics, glasswork, and candles. Food stalls tempt you with *Bratwurst*, mulled wines, sweets, and pastries—including the famous Nuremberg gingerbread. Various programs regale visitors with chorale offerings, concerts, and a live Nativity scene.

Tonight, linger over your final dinner aboard, and spend your evening as you wish. The ship remains in Nuremberg tonight.

B,L,D—River Ship

DAY 9 Disembark ship • Return to U.S.

After breakfast, disembark and transfer to the airport for your flight home.

B



3 nights from **\$745**
FREE Single Supplement

IT'S INCLUDED

Accommodations for 3 nights
Daily breakfasts
Included tour with personal headsets: Vienna
Dedicated services of a local Program Director
Gratuities for local guides and motorcoach drivers
All transfers

MAXIMIZE YOUR DISCOVERIES & VALUE WITH THIS **PRE-TRIP EXTENSION**

Vienna, Austria



Watch our extension video at www.gct.com/xms-vienna

This extension may not be available on all departures. Additional taxes and fees apply. Ask your Travel Counselor for details. Vienna, Austria is a pre-trip extension on the reverse Vienna to Nuremberg itinerary.

3 nights from **\$795**
FREE Single Supplement

IT'S INCLUDED

Accommodations for 3 nights
Daily breakfasts
Included tours with personal headsets: Munich • Rothenberg
Dedicated services of a local Program Director
Gratuities for local guides and motorcoach drivers
All transfers

MAXIMIZE YOUR DISCOVERIES & VALUE WITH THIS **POST-TRIP EXTENSION**

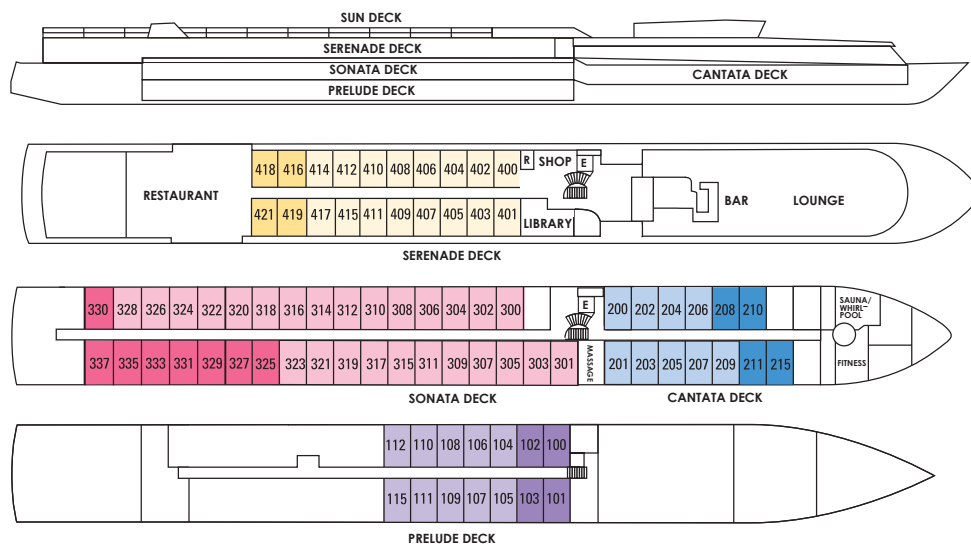
Munich, Germany



Watch our extension video at www.gct.com/xms-munich

This extension may not be available on all departures. Additional taxes and fees apply. Ask your Travel Counselor for details. Munich, Germany is a post-trip extension on the reverse Vienna to Nuremberg itinerary.

M/S RIVER ARIA



Registry: Malta
Width: 38 ft.

Length: 418 ft.
Passenger capacity: 162

Crew/Nationality: 38/
International
Decks: 4

Number of cabins: 82—all
outside
Elevator: Yes



Shipboard Features

- **Dining room with single, open seating:** Enjoy regionally-inspired cuisine in your ship's dining room.
- **Bar & lounge:** Relax with friends old and new.
- **Complimentary beverages:** Enjoy house beer and house wine—as well as soft drinks—at any time of day while onboard.
- **Complimentary wireless Internet access:** Connect online in cabins and common areas. *Please note: Wireless Internet access may be limited at certain points throughout your River Cruise.*
- **Sun Deck:** Sit outside and enjoy the view as your ship glides past the European countryside.
- **English-speaking crew:** Our staff is dedicated to your comfort, and all shipboard announcements are made in English.
- **Smoking/non-smoking:** Smoking is not permitted indoors, but is permitted on the Sun Deck.
- **Shipboard security:** State-of-the-art shipboard radar ensures safe navigation at night and in low visibility; safe docking space; onboard security staff; state-of-the-art fire safety system; and secured entryway doors.

WATCH VIDEOS & FILMS ONLINE

Learn more about *Christmas Markets Along the Danube*



Watch travelers immerse themselves in Germany's and Austria's holiday traditions as they explore enchanting Christmas markets.



Get more information about your detailed itinerary, like optional tours, exclusive Discovery Series events, and more.



Hear how Janneke Bogaert's home country made it easy for her to explore much of Europe.

Christmas Markets Along the Danube

Good Buy Plan The earlier you pay, the more you save

Here's how you'll save with our exclusive Good Buy Plan:

DECK

A	Serenade Deck (Top Deck w/balcony)	\$2445
B		\$2445
C	Sonata Deck (Middle Deck w/picture window)	\$2345
D		\$2345
E	Cantata Deck (Middle Deck w/picture window)	\$2295
F		\$2295
G	Prelude Deck (Lower Deck w/small window)	\$2195
H		\$2095

Depart from: DECEMBER 4, 2019

Dulles	\$1100
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Additional departure cities are available. Call for details.

Deposit: \$500 per person.

Single Supplement: SOLD OUT. Single accommodations are limited. To avoid the single supplement, ask about our Roommate Matching Service.

Months That You Pay in Full Prior to Your Final Payment Due Date (90 days prior to your departure date)	Guarantee Your Price and Receive:	Good Buy Plan Savings:
9 months	7.5%	\$375
8 months	6%	\$300
7 months	5%	\$250
6 months	4%	\$200
5 months	3%	\$150
4 months through final payment due date	\$50 off	\$50

Good Buy Plan savings is calculated based on total reservation cost

For more information, visit www.gct.com/gbd

GOVERNMENT TAXES AND FEES The following government taxes and fees are now included in your airfare price. **Government and other authority taxes and fees:** September 11th Security Fee of up to \$2.50 USD applies per passenger, per flight segment (maximum charge per trip—\$5.00 USD one-way, \$10.00 USD round trip). A flight segment is defined as one takeoff and one landing. **Passenger Facility Charge (PFC)** of up to \$18 per passenger. **Federal Domestic Flight Segment Fee** of up to \$3.70 USD applies per passenger, per flight segment (defined as a takeoff and a landing). **U.S. or International Departure and Arrival Charges** of up to \$200 USD may apply depending on itinerary. On select itineraries that include the purchase of a pre- and/or post-trip extension, U.S. or international departure and arrival charges of up to \$300 USD may apply. Call for details. Standard Terms & Conditions can be found on the web at www.gct.com/tc.

Reservations & Information:
Call Toll-Free: 1-800-597-2452



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CODE WHEN BOOKING

G9-28536