

SEE THE OLD WORLD IN A WHOLE NEW WAY

River cruises are gaining in popularity and it's no wonder why. Fewer passengers, more inclusions and unpacking once are just a few reasons why people are realizing that river cruising is the best way to explore Europe.



Goldberg

Everyone travels to see new things, but many travel to do new things as well. And now you can do new things on Avalon Waterways "Active Discovery Danube and Rhine river cruises." Avalon offers activities for travelers with varying interests and for all energy and fitness levels. From action-packed experiences and interactive discoveries to traditional sightseeing, a vacation can be tailored to suit one's interests and pace.

MOTION AND ACTION

For the traveler who thrives on motion and action, Avalon Active Discovery cruises are an exciting type of cruise that introduces people and places of Europe in the most active, engaged and fun ways imaginable. Stay active with a bike tour along the Rhine River, a running tour through Amsterdam, or a hike along a first-class hiking trail. Also, bike, hike, or canoe along the Danube.

One can immerse himself or herself in the history and culture at each port with excursions to historic castles, a culinary tour, a painting class and even a chance to dress up in real Roman attire at a Roman clothes workshop or re-enactment of the Roman Games.

Tour an extinct volcano and coal mine, and visit sites off the beaten path, such as a chocolate museum, a sure spot to entice a sweet tooth. Also offered are the chance to explore an ice cave, take an archery lesson or help a farmer in his apricot orchard. Descend into an underground salt mine or ascend a mountain during a guided climb. Conduct an orchestra, and compose your own waltz. Every port gives you a world of possibilities to interact with the locals and choose the dynamic, interactive activities that appeal to you most. It's the Old World in a whole new way.

THEME CRUISES

And if "Active Discovery" is not for you, Avalon offers other popular-themed

cruise itineraries, that include wine lovers, culinary experience, beer, jazz, music, art, World War II history and a Jewish heritage cruise.

PACKING TIPS

Although one of the greatest advantages of river cruising is the ability to unpack once and store your empty suitcase under your bed instead of towing it from hotel to hotel, it doesn't mean you should pack your entire closet. Most river cruises offer staterooms with limited space and you'll want to maximize that space for relaxation.

When packing (or shopping) for your river cruise, choose shirts, pants, shorts and skirts that can be worn for multiple outfit combinations. The easiest way is to search for clothes with a simple color scheme – white, neutrals, pastels. A rule of thumb is for each week you will be traveling, pack five to seven tops that complement three different bottoms. Also, keep in mind, comfort and wrinkle-resistant, easy-care clothing will help feel even more relaxed.

Don't expect to get all decked out for dinner on a river cruise, but some cruisers like to spruce up their attire for the evening. Using the color-coordinated wardrobe you've packed for daytime, sprinkle in some fun pieces – scarves, shawls, jewelry, stylish shoes. It will eliminate the need to pack separate evening wardrobe but still put an appropriate spin on your daytime attire.

Any time of the day or night, come rain or come shine. You will get to enjoy the view from your very own stateroom so pack a light sweatshirt in case it gets a bit chilly. Your new friends might ask you to enjoy a drink and games up on the sky deck, or the forecast for your daily shore excursions might be unpredictable depending on the time of year you're visiting. So don't forget to pack a hat and sunscreen for sunny days, a windbreaker for the occasional drizzle. Umbrellas are provided by the ship in case it rains while on ship or shore.

Now is the time to plan ahead to receive great values, as Avalon River Cruises always a sellout.

Arlene Goldberg is president and owner of Action Travel Center in Solon. You can watch her on Thursdays at noon on WKYC's "Lakeside Today" with the "Hot Travel Deal of the Week."



Exploring Europe in a whole new way. | Photo / Avalon Waterways

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