

Rhine River: Castles, Culture and Culinary Delights

Sail along the iconic Rhine River, a spectacularly scenic route lined with stirring history, stunning landscapes and exceptional cuisine. Pass through the dramatic Rhine Gorge with its rolling hills and lush vineyards before calling on a medley of charming towns, from Germany's Mainz, Frankfurt and Heidelberg to Strasbourg and Colmar in France's Alsace region. Along the way, explore ancient castles, stroll cobblestoned streets, and indulge in private wine tastings and traditional feasts. Experience Europe's timeless allure aboard the newly chartered 120-guest *Connect*, a luxurious vessel rooted in sustainable design—from thoughtfully sourced build materials and green technology that minimizes food waste to environmentally friendly bath and bedding products in every spacious stateroom.

From
$ 5,000 / per person
Does not include flights

DATES
May, Jun, Jul, Aug, Sep and Oct

DURATION
8 Days

SHIPS
Connect

STARTS AT
Cologne, Germany

→

ENDS AT
Basel, Switzerland

Minimum Age Requirement: Any children booked on *Connect* voyages must be at least 1 year old at time of embarkation.

Highlights

- Sail through the majestic Rhine Gorge, a UNESCO World Heritage site and home to the romantic Rheinstein Castle where you're invited to an exclusive champagne reception hosted by the castle's lord
- Enjoy exclusive, private tastings throughout your voyage: try Riesling served by the resident nuns at St. Hildegard Abbey and a variety of wines at the historic Cave Historique des Hospices de Strasbourg, home to one of the world's oldest wines
- In Frankfurt, tour the home of famed German writer Johann Wolfgang von Goethe on a private visit, then delve into the city's deep-rooted Jewish history that spans as far back as medieval times
- Dine at a local brewery with university students in Heidelburg, discovering what daily life is like at one of Germany's oldest academic institutions








GERMANY
Cologne
ELGIUM
Frankfurt
Bingen
Mainz
LUXEMBOURG
Mannheim
Heidelberg
Strasbourg
Ribeauvillé
Breisach
Basel
LIECHTENSTEIN
SWITZERLAND
mapbox
© Mapbox, © OpenStreetMap

Day by day

■ DAY 1

Cologne, Germany

Arrive in Cologne and embark *Connect*. Relax on board with a drink on the top deck, indulge in a rejuvenating spa treatment, enjoy a cappuccino while perusing local books in the library, and settle into your stateroom. Choose to arrive early for an optional two-day Cologne pre-voyage extension and explore one of Germany's oldest cities before embarkation.

Meals included: dinner

◇ DAY 2

Rhine Gorge / Rüdesheim

This morning, sail through the Rhine Gorge, one of the most breathtaking stretches of this famed river. Renowned for its dramatic cliffs, terraced vineyards and fairytale castles, this UNESCO-listed region offers a mesmerizing introduction to your journey. Your expedition staff will bring history to life with expert narration while you soak in the scenery and indulge in *Frühschoppen*, a traditional German mid-morning gathering filled with hearty food, local drinks and lively camaraderie.

This afternoon, embark on a walking tour of Rüdesheim, a charming town nestled in the heart of the Rhine Valley known for its picturesque vineyards, historic landmarks and lively atmosphere.

Start at the St. Hildegard Abbey, a stunning Benedictine monastery where history and spirituality intertwine. Enjoy an exclusive architectural exploration of this striking Romanesque structure followed by a private Riesling tasting led by the nuns themselves. Continue through Rüdesheim's enchanting streets, where you'll uncover its rich history and vibrant culture. Stroll along the Drosselgasse, a lively, half-timbered alley brimming with wine taverns and charming boutiques. Pause at the Market Square, the heart of the town, surrounded by historic buildings and inviting cafés.

Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

◇ DAY 3

Mainz / Bingen

This morning, set off to explore the charming city of Mainz. Wander through its Old Town, where narrow cobblestone streets, beautifully preserved half-timbered houses and picturesque squares create a storybook-like atmosphere. On a tour of the renowned Gutenberg Museum, which is dedicated to the revolutionary history of printing, you'll witness original copies of Gutenberg's Bible, along with demonstrations of centuries-old printing techniques.

After lunch on the ship, enjoy an exclusive, after-hours visit to the enchanting Rheinstein Castle, a quintessential medieval fortress with commanding views of the Rhine Valley. The castle's lord will personally welcome you with a champagne reception, followed by a classical music performance that enhances the elegant ambiance.

Back aboard the ship, end the day with "A Royal Affair"—an opulent welcome dinner inspired by the lavish banquets of the 19th century once held in the castles that line the Rhine.

Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

◇ DAY 4

Frankfurt

This morning, immerse yourself in Frankfurt's

rich cultural heritage on a walking tour that takes you through the historic Old Town, where Römerberg Square and the 16th-century Fountain of Justice transport you back in time. Experience a private tour of the Goethe House, the birthplace of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. Gain insight into the life and legacy of Germany's most celebrated writer and enjoy a reading of some of his best work. Continue to Kleinmarkthalle, one of Frankfurt's oldest markets, where you'll sample local specialties.

This afternoon, delve into Frankfurt's Jewish heritage, spanning from its medieval roots to its cultural renaissance in the 19th and early-20th centuries to the devastating impact of the Holocaust. Begin at the Jewish Museum Frankfurt, housed in a former Jewish community center, followed by a visit to the New Jewish Community Center, a hub for cultural and religious life today. Stand before the Westend Synagogue, one of the few to survive the era of Nazi rule and a powerful symbol of the resilience of the city's Jewish community.

Back on board the ship, join the Captain in the two-story Forum for an insightful presentation about the ship's navigation, maritime history and life at sea before a "German Delight Dinner" featuring regional specialties that highlight the country's culinary traditions. Cap off the evening with a glassblowing demonstration showcasing the artistry and craftsmanship behind this centuries-old tradition.

Note: **Note:** *September departures will experience days 3 and 4 in the reverse order.*

Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

◇ DAY 5

Mannheim / Heidelberg

This morning, arrive in Mannheim and from there embark on a journey to Heidelberg. Home to Germany's oldest university, founded in the 14th century, Heidelberg exudes an intellectual and artistic charm that has inspired scholars and poets for centuries. Begin your exploration at Heidelberg Castle, a stunning example of Renaissance architecture and a testament to the city's enduring spirit. Perched above the Neckar River, the castle offers panoramic views of the Old Town and surrounding landscapes. Continue into the heart of the city, where cobbled streets and charming squares reflect Heidelberg's timeless elegance. Conclude your tour with lunch at a local brewery, where you'll have the unique opportunity to dine alongside students from Heidelberg University, gaining firsthand insights into academic life.

Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

◇ DAY 6

Strasbourg, France

Begin your day with a tour of Strasbourg, offering a glimpse into the city's blend of historic grandeur and modern European influence including the political prowess of the European Parliament. Continue on foot to La Petite France, Strasbourg's most picturesque district. Stroll along the Ill River and its quaint streets, including the white-washed houses and buildings of Rue du Bain-aux-Plantes. Stop for a tasting of Tarte Flambée, Alsace's beloved thin-crust delicacy, before visiting Strasbourg Cathedral—a French Gothic masterpiece considered the symbol of the city.

This afternoon, step into the Cave Historique des Hospices de Strasbourg, one of the area's most prestigious wine cellars, housed within the historic Hôtel-Dieu hospital complex. On this exclusive private tour and tasting, you'll uncover over 600 years of winemaking traditions. Marvel at 40+ ancient barrels, including one that holds wine dating back to 1472, one of the oldest drinkable wines in the world only served three times in its

existence.

Return to the ship this evening for French apéritifs and an epicurean dinner, featuring regional specialties and exquisite flavors. If in session, enjoy a rare opportunity to meet with at least one member of Parliament in the Forum after dinner, and gain insights into the workings of this influential institution. In the lounge, immerse yourself in the sounds of *chanson réaliste*, an evocative French cabaret style known for its poetic lyrics alongside the lively rhythms of *bal-musette*, the accordion-driven dance music that captured the hearts of Paris in the late 19th century.

Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

◇ DAY 7

Breisach, Germany / Black Forest / Ribeauvillé, France / Riquewihr / Colmar

Arrive in Breisach where you'll choose from two options for the day:

Embark on a journey through the heart of Alsace, a former French province famed for its rolling vineyards, idyllic villages and world-class wines. Discover the medieval charm of Ribeauvillé and Riquewihr, where cobblestone streets and half-timbered houses transport you back in time. In Colmar, often called the "Little Venice" of France, enjoy a guided wine tasting and savor a traditional Alsatian lunch.

Alternatively, experience Germany's legendary Black Forest, a region of dense woodlands, picturesque villages and enchanting folklore. Travel through the scenic countryside to the shores of Lake Titisee, where you'll indulge in a delicious lunch featuring local specialties and take a leisurely boat tour on this serene alpine lake. Then, visit a traditional workshop for a demonstration of the art of cuckoo clock making—an iconic craft of the Black Forest.

Cap off the day and the end of your journey at a celebratory farewell dinner. Relive the highlights of the past week through a special showcase of images and videos as you enjoy an evening of fine dining, camaraderie and entertainment.

Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

■ DAY 8

Basel, Switzerland

Following breakfast, disembark in Basel. Opt to spend more time in Switzerland on an optional two-day post-voyage extension exploring Lucerne, Interlaken and Grindelwald.

Meals included: breakfast

Upstream

Cologne, Germany → Basel, Switzerland

2027 DEPARTURE DATES

Aboard *Connect*

06 Jun				
04 Jul	25 Jul			
08 Aug				

2028 DEPARTURE DATES

Aboard *Connect*

14 May	28 May			
11 Jun	25 Jun			
09 Jul	23 Jul			
24 Sep				
08 Oct				

Alternative Routes

Visit Expeditions.com for more information.

2027 Departure Dates

13 Jun, 27 Jun, 01 Aug, 12 Sep

2028 Departure Dates

21 May, 04 Jun, 18 Jun, 02 Jul, 16 Jul, 30 Jul, 01 Oct



Connect

GUESTS	CABINS
126	60

Discover Europe aboard an expertly crafted river ship rooted in sustainable design

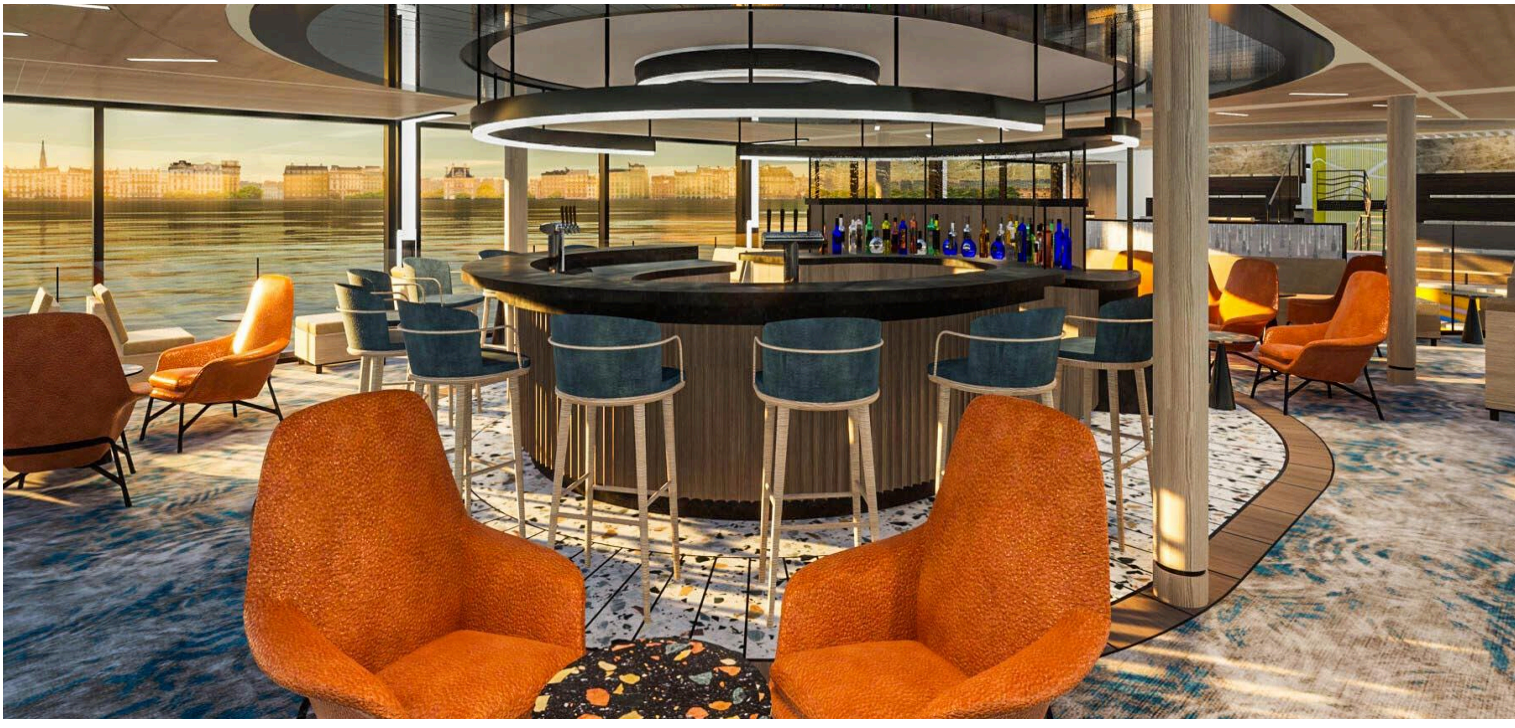
Constructed in 2025, *Connect* is a brand-new, state-of-the-art European river ship joining our growing collection of bespoke charter vessels next year. With cutting-edge technology, luxurious amenities and wrap-around picture windows, this sleek 120-guest ship is uniquely designed to sail through the heart of storied destinations in Germany, France, The Netherlands and beyond. Sustainability and regional connection are at her core, creating a refined and meaningful experience that elevates every journey.

Setting sail in 2026, *Connect* features sixty 210 square-foot elegant and spacious staterooms (convertible to 420 square-foot suites), each one well-appointed with two large wardrobe closets, smart glass spa shower and full-width floor-to-ceiling windows to take in the charming riverside towns and pastoral landscapes.

With an array of dynamic public venues, there is plenty of space to relax, dine, mingle with your fellow travelers, and connect more deeply with your destination through expert presentations and onboard experiences like wine tastings and musical performances. This contemporary river ship includes an expansive wellness area, the Forum (which is a two-story amphitheater), a restaurant and bistro, as well as a lively lounge with a well-stocked bar.

Every detail is thoughtfully designed—from carefully sourced build materials and green technology that minimizes food waste to environmentally friendly bath and bedding products.





Cabin Categories

Category C1

MAIN DECK **#C201-C212, C214-C229, C231, C233**

These spacious 210-square-foot staterooms feature a sash balcony and floor-to-ceiling windows; two single beds that convert to a king; bedside table; writing desk with chair; mini fridge; two closets; and an ensuite bathroom with a glass-walled shower.



Category C2

UPPER DECK **#C301-C312, C314-C329, C331, C333**

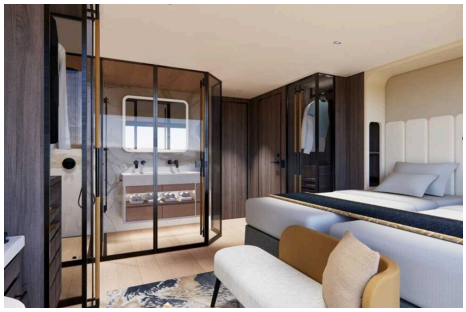
These spacious 210-square-foot staterooms feature a sash balcony and floor-to-ceiling windows; two single beds that convert to a king; bedside table; writing desk with chair; mini fridge; two closets; and an ensuite bathroom with a glass-walled shower.



Category S1

MAIN DECK **#S201-S212, S214, S215, S217**

Spacious 420-square-foot S1 suites are created by combining two staterooms, offering an expansive accommodation with generous living space. Suites feature a sash window balcony and floor-to-ceiling windows; two single beds that convert to a king; bedside table; writing desk with chair; mini fridge; four closets; and an ensuite bathroom with a glass-walled shower.



Category S2

UPPER DECK **#S301-S312, S314, S315, S317**

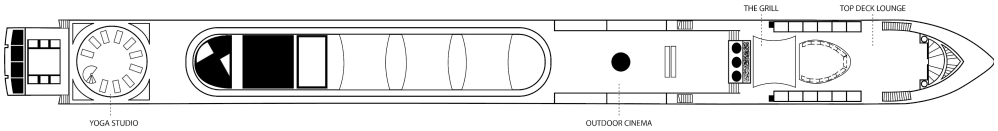
Spacious 420-square-foot S2 suites are created by combining two staterooms, offering an expansive accommodation with generous living space. Suites feature a sash window balcony and floor-to-ceiling windows; two single beds that convert to a king; bedside table; writing desk with chair; mini fridge; four closets; and an ensuite bathroom with a glass-walled shower.



Deck Plans

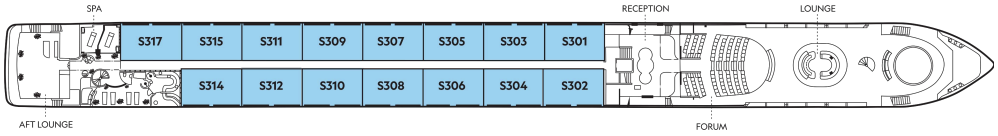
Stateroom and suite plans show different configurations of the same Main and Upper Decks. Select staterooms can be combined to create larger suites, and accommodations may include a combination of both configurations.

Sun Deck



Upper Deck - Suites

Category S2



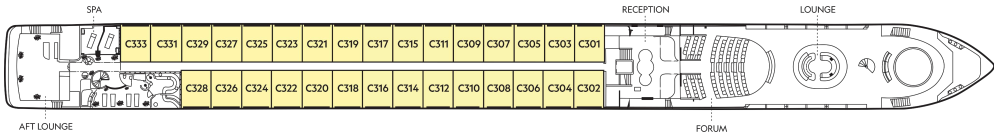
Main Deck - Suites

Category S1



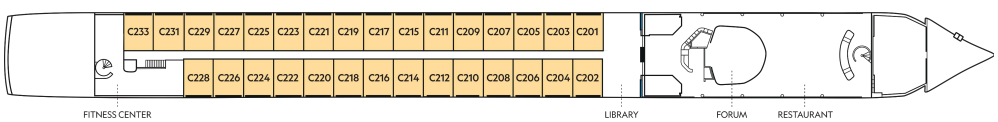
Upper Deck - Staterooms

Category C2



Main Deck - Staterooms

Category C1



Ship Amenities

Tools for Exploration

A fleet of bikes is available for those who want to enjoy some independent exploration, riding along the canals of Amsterdam or through the French countryside.

Public Spaces

An expansive top deck houses fitness zones, a lounge area and a grill and bar. From dinners to cocktail hours to movie nights, memorable al fresco events will cap off busy days spent exploring ashore.

In Good Company

Explore in the company of veteran Lindblad Expeditions-National Geographic expedition staff, a veteran Expedition Leader, Certified Photo Instructor, as well as Historian, Cultural, Photo and Destination Experts.



Special Offers

SAVE 5% TRAVELING AS A GROUP

Save 5% when traveling as a group of 8 or more people. Valid for new bookings only on select departures, subject to availability, not applicable on extensions, and may not be combined with other offers. Call for details.

COMBINING OFFERS

Certain offers may be combinable, up to two savings opportunities, except where noted otherwise. For example, travel with a group of 8 or more on back-to-back expeditions, and take advantage of both savings.

CELEBRATE LIFE'S MILESTONES

Celebrate a milestone with a group of eight or more and enjoy a special amenity package including: 5% savings on voyage fares, custom group photo, US$150 shipboard credit for the group, and other special gifts. Milestone celebration to be communicated at time of booking.

10% OFF BACK-TO-BACK VOYAGES

Save 10% on consecutive departures, applicable on voyage fares only and not valid on extensions or airfare. Valid for new bookings only, subject to availability, and may not be combined with other offers. Call for details.

INCLUDED IN PRICE

All accommodations aboard ship per itinerary; all meals as indicated in the itinerary, both aboard and onshore; beer and wine aboard the ship; hors d'oeuvres, 24-hour access to snacks, premium coffees and teas, non-alcoholic beverages, drinking water; excursions as indicated in the itinerary; crew gratuities; bicycles and e-bikes; guidance and company of our leading expedition staff; assistance of the Lindblad Expeditions-National Geographic certified photo instructor; presentations by expedition staff and expert guest speakers; Wi-Fi; complimentary reusable water bottle; 24-hour access to lounges, observation decks, library, and other shared spaces; park and site entrance fees, special access permits, and port taxes. Unused services or items included in our programs are non-refundable.

NOT INCLUDED IN PRICE

Airfare (except flights when indicated as included); pre- and post-expedition extensions; additional hotel nights (except when indicated as included); services of an onboard physician; transfers; laundry, spa and phone services (except when indicated as included); travel protection plans; and passport, visa, and immigration fees.

TRAVEL PROTECTION PLAN

We strongly recommend our guests to take advantage of our Travel Protection Plan. This plan offers comprehensive coverage to protect you from cancellation fees, costs incurred due to trip delays/interruption, damage or loss of baggage, medical assistance, and evacuation during your travels. Our Travel Protection Plan is available for U.S. residents only, and may be purchased any time prior to final payment due date, Travel Protection premiums are non- refundable once plan is purchased. Learn more about our Travel Protection "Plus" Plan: https://www.expeditions.com/terms-conditions/travel-protection-plan/

CANCELLATION POLICY

Review our cancellation policy: https://www.expeditions.com/cancellation-policy/