



Europe Rivers, Europe, River Cruises &
48° 8' N 17° 6' E

Christmas Markets on the Danube

Sail the Danube aboard the elegant *Evolve* and experience the heart of Europe at its most enchanting—when Christmas markets glow in town squares and centuries-old holiday traditions come to life. From Budapest's grand boulevards to Bratislava's intimate lanes and Vienna's imperial courtyards, discover the region's unique expressions of the season. Wander among artisans and carolers, savor local delicacies, and explore historical abbeys and castles in rare tranquility. Aboard *Evolve*, festive dining and music create the perfect complement to the magic ashore—a celebration of the season as it has been cherished for generations along the storied Danube.

From

\$ 7,110 / per person
Does not include flights



DATES

Dec



DURATION

8 Days



SHIPS

Evolve



STARTS AT

Budapest,
Hungary



ENDS AT

Passau,
Germany

Highlights

- ★ **Celebrate the most magical season along the Danube, exploring the festive Christmas markets of Budapest, Bratislava, Vienna and beyond**
- ★ **Enjoy exclusive access, from a private orchestral performance in Bratislava to an after-hours tour of Melk Abbey and a private visit to the medieval Clam Castle**
- ★ **Savor the flavors of the holidays with specially curated seasonal menus on board and festive meals ashore that reflect each region's culinary traditions**
- ★ **Taste the terroir of the Wachau Valley during a guided visit to Domäne Wachau, where hundreds of small vineyards unite to produce Austria's most distinctive wines**





Day by day

■ DAY 1

Budapest, Hungary / Embark Ship

Arrive in Budapest and embark *Evolve*. Enjoy lunch on board, then take some time to get acquainted with this stunning ship, relaxing with a drink on the top deck, indulging in a soothing spa treatment or savoring a cappuccino as you browse the library. Settle into your stateroom later this afternoon, then enjoy dinner on board.

Meals included: lunch, dinner

◊ DAY 2

Budapest

Begin your day with a guided tour of Budapest's beloved Christmas markets. Wander the vibrant stalls of Vörösmarty Square, St. Stephen's Basilica and Andrassy Avenue, each brimming with handcrafted gifts, seasonal treats and holiday cheer. Conclude your stroll at the Budapest Central Market Hall, the largest and oldest indoor market in the city, followed by an authentic Hungarian lunch. This evening, gather with your fellow travelers to trim the ship tree, sing carols and celebrate the beginning of your journey with a welcome reception and dinner.

Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

◊ DAY 3

Bratislava, Slovak Republic

The Christmas markets of Bratislava are a hidden gem—intimate, authentic and delightfully off the beaten path compared to their more well-known counterparts. Steeped in local tradition, these markets showcase the best of Slovak craftsmanship, cuisine and culture. Browse stalls brimming with handmade gifts and folk art, and savor seasonal specialties such as *lokše*, or potato pancakes, and *medovina*, honey wine—all amid the warm, festive

spirit of this charming riverside capital.

This afternoon, enjoy an unforgettable private chamber concert in one of Bratislava's most historical venues—either the elegant Reduta Hall or the opulent Golden Salon of Grassalkovich Palace. The renowned Cappella Istropolitana orchestra will perform classical masterpieces by Mozart and Haydn in one of these intimate, atmospheric settings. Return to *Evolve* for an elegant Slovak dinner.

Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

◊ DAY 4

Vienna, Austria

Vienna transforms into a glittering city of lights during the holidays. The Christmas markets here are among the most enchanting in Europe, offering a magical blend of imperial charm, festive spirit and cultural richness. The city hosts over 20 markets, each with its own character—from grand palace courtyards to cozy neighborhood squares. Rathausplatz, or Christkindlmarkt, is the largest and most iconic, set in front of the city hall.

This afternoon, enjoy a guided tour of Schönbrunn Palace or the Albertina Museum. One of the largest palaces in Europe, Schönbrunn was the main summer residence of the powerful Habsburg dynasty for over 300 years and a hub of courtly life. At the Albertina Museum, discover a unique blend of imperial history and world-class art from masters like Raphael, da Vinci, Picasso and Monet.

Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

◊ DAY 5

Dürnstein / Melk Abby

Domäne Wachau is one of Austria's most esteemed and forward-thinking wine estates, nestled in the heart of the picturesque Wachau Valley. From

the charming town of Dürnstein, enjoy a guided visit to the winery and discover how it thrives as a modern cooperative, bringing together hundreds of small-scale growers under a unified commitment to excellence and sustainability. Each vigneron meticulously tends to tiny vineyard parcels, yielding organic vintages celebrated for their exceptional quality and character.

Later, experience the grandeur of Melk Abbey, a UNESCO World Heritage site, during an after-hours visit. Wander through the Baroque Library, Marble Hall, Imperial Staircase and the awe-inspiring Abbey Church, all without the usual crowds. Weather permitting, stroll through the Abbey Park, home to 250-year-old linden trees and a Baroque garden pavilion adorned with frescoes by Johann Baptist Wenzel Bergl.

Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

◊ DAY 6

Grein / Linz

Take a private tour of Clam Castle, a majestic medieval fortress rich in Austrian history that overlooks the Danube Valley. Gain rare access to private areas, including the Renaissance arcaded courtyard, the Gothic chapel with Baroque flourishes, the armory and select residential apartments that have been lived in since 1454. Hear captivating stories of the castle's role in Austrian history, including how it was defended during the Thirty Years' War.

Spend the late afternoon exploring Linz and its Christmas markets, located in the city's historic main square, Hauptplatz—one of the largest enclosed squares in Europe. The market features over 150 beautifully decorated stalls, each crowned with a glittering pyramid or tree that adds to the fairytale atmosphere.

Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

◊ DAY 7

Linz / Salzburg / Český Krumlov, Czech Republic

Today, choose between exploring two of Europe's most fascinating cities: Salzburg and Český Krumlov. In Salzburg, you'll discover the city's holiday spirit amid the artisan booths of its renowned Christmas market, surrounded by the majestic Alps. Enjoy lunch at a traditional Austrian restaurant, savoring regional specialties in a cozy setting.

Alternatively, venture to Český Krumlov, a UNESCO-listed town known for its medieval architecture and storybook charm. During the holiday season, its cobbled streets are adorned with festive lights and market stalls, creating a magical atmosphere. Explore the town and savor a traditional lunch at a local restaurant.

As the day winds down, raise a glass at a farewell cocktail reception, then enjoy a festive dinner—a final celebration of your journey through the heart of Europe.

Meals included: breakfast, lunch, dinner

■ DAY 8

Passau, Germany / Disembark Ship

After breakfast on board, disembark in Passau.

Meals included: breakfast

Westbound

Budapest, Hungary → Passau, Germany

2027 Departure Dates

Aboard *Evolve*

09 Dec

Alternative Routes

Visit Expeditions.com for more information.

2027 Departure Dates

02 Dec, 16 Dec

Special Offers

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.

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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.

BRINGING THE KIDS

We believe sharing an expedition with children is a life-enhancing experience. Save \$500 for each child under the age of 18 on any departure. Not applicable on extensions or airfare. Call for details.

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.

SAVE 5% TRAVELING AS A GROUP

Save 5% when traveling as a group of eight or more people. Valid on voyage fares only and not applicable on extensions or airfare. Deposit, final payments, and cancellation policies for group travel vary from our regular policies. Valid for new bookings only, subject

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/>