

9 Day Alpine Christmas Markets

December 3-11, 2018

\$2,100.00 pp. dbl. occ.

Escorted Package Includes

- Flights St. Louis-Munich, Frankfurt-St. Louis
- Airline taxes & fuel surcharges
- 7 nights First Class accommodations
 - 2 nights Munich
 - 1 night Innsbruck
 - 2 nights Black Forest
 - 2 nights Mainz
- Hotel taxes, fees & service charges
- Hotel portorage
- All transfers
- 10 meals: 7 breakfasts, 3 dinners
- Sightseeing per itinerary in modern air-conditioned motor coach
- Services of English-speaking tour manager throughout
- Entrance fees per itinerary
- Comfortable wireless earphones for enhanced touring

DAY 1, Monday - Depart for Germany

Depart for Munich, Germany

DAY 2, Tuesday - Arrive in Munich

Arrive in the Bavarian capital of Munich and transfer to your hotel. The remainder of the day is yours to rest, relax or explore the decorated streets. Tonight, an orientation meeting and welcome drink with your tour manager highlights the festive experience that lies ahead

Overnight: Munich

DAY 3, Wednesday - Munich City Tour and Christmas Market

Today's tour highlights the landmarks of this energetic city. View the Olympic Stadium in the heart of Olympia Park, the main venue for the 1972 Summer Olympics. Continue to the magnificent Nymphenburg Palace for a photo stop. This palace, summer residence

of the rulers of Bavaria, is best known for its gorgeous Baroque facade. Driving through the city, pass countless museums, galleries, palaces and historic monuments. Arrive at Marienplatz Square, cultural center of the city, dominated by the impressive Town Hall and its ornate Glockenspiel, with its life-size figures dancing to music several times a day. Spend the rest of the day enjoying the festive spirit at the Christmas Market with its stalls filled with treasures waiting to be explored or, join the *optional* Tour of Salzburg, birthplace of Mozart and setting for the Sound of Music. The walking tour will include some of Salzburg's most historic sites including Mirabell Palace, the house where Mozart lived, Nonnberg Abbey, Salzburg Cathedral and St. Peter's Cemetery

Optional: Half Day Tour of Salzburg

Overnight: Munich

Meals: Breakfast

DAY 4, Thursday - Linderhof Castle and Innsbruck City

On the drive south, stop to admire the fairytale Linderhof Palace, a triumph of splendor and extravagance in the secluded Graswang valley, built by "Mad" King Ludwig. On to Oberammergau, where the world-famous Passion play is performed every ten years. Cross into Austria and journey to Innsbruck, the Tyrolean capital of the Austrian Alps, steeped in centuries of colorful history, with its fine examples of Imperial splendor and architectural gems from the Gothic, Renaissance, Baroque and Neoclassical period. Stand before the 15th century Golden Roof, iconic symbol of the city, the Triumphbogen, a triumphal arch overlooking the bustling square and the Wilten Basilica, one of the most splendid churches in Tyrol with its stunning Rococo decorations

Overnight: Innsbruck

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 5, Friday - Liechtenstein, Rhine Falls and the Black Forest

From Innsbruck travel to the tiny storybook Principality of Liechtenstein and its capital Vaduz, a proud remnant of feudal Europe, sandwiched between Switzerland and Austria. Continue on a drive to Schaffhausen, Switzerland. Here, you'll view the thunderous Rhine Waterfall, one of Europe's largest and most powerful. Head north on a scenic drive through the Black Forest region, an area of unrivaled natural beauty, with dense forests of thick pine trees and charming traditional homes with their long sloping roofs

Overnight: Black Forest

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 6, Saturday - Excursion to Strasbourg, France

A lovely day awaits you on the excursion to Strasbourg, the capital of Alsace, nestled on the border of France and Germany. Upon arrival, stop at the stunning Gothic Cathedral

of Notre Dame, an exquisite example of late Gothic architecture housing one of the finest astronomical clocks in existence. The walking tour takes you to the magical La Petite France district, home to quaint shops and charming bistros and to Place Kleber, a large historic square. The city's center, designated a UNESCO World Heritage site, is the heart of France's largest and oldest Christmas market, the marchés de Noël. Taste the tiny traditional cakes of Alsace called *bredeles* and stroll the stalls that stretch as far as the eye can see with artisans showing off their handcrafted wares. Indulge in mulled wine and gingerbread delights at the dozen themed markets that fan out from the center, along with a towering Christmas tree and streets aglow with lights and decorations. Return to your Black Forest hotel for an evening on your own

Overnight: Black Forest

Meals: Breakfast

DAY 7, Sunday - Heidelberg Christmas Market

This morning, head for charming Heidelberg, in a picturesque setting nestled between the Neckar river and the foothills of the Odenwald forest. Here, see the imposing red sandstone ruins of mighty Heidelberg Castle perched on the slopes of Mount Königstuhl, originally built in the 12th century. This hilltop masterpiece has encountered turbulent times but still stands as a dominant symbol of the city. Wander the castle terrace with its sweeping views and then explore the Old Town below. The rest of the day is at leisure in Heidelberg to discover the enchanting alleyways, Renaissance and Baroque façades and cozy squares in the Old Quarter. In the elegant market square visit the delightful holiday market with its seasonal cheer. Try some mulled wine and *lebkuchen* before continuing to historic Mainz on the fabled Rhine River

Overnight: Mainz

Meals: Breakfast

DAY 8, Monday - Cruise on the Rhine River, Mainz Christmas Market

Begin the day with a cruise on the scenic Rhine River. See stunning vistas of hilltop castles, terraced vineyards and villages of timber-framed houses along the course of the river. Pass the mighty Lorelei rock rising vertically from the waters named for the siren "Lorelei" who bewitched sailors passing by. Stop along the route for a wine tasting before returning to Mainz. Walk through the restored historic center, site of the market square and the renowned Christmas market. The air is scented with a Christmas aroma of toasted almonds, gingerbread and roasted chestnuts. Against the imposing backdrop of the over thousand-year-old Cathedral of St. Martin, the festively decorated stands offer Christmas specialties of homemade garlands and straw stars, tree decorations, wooden toys, carvings, ceramics, candles and much more. Enjoy a farewell dinner with your Tour Manager and fellow travelers on your last evening

Overnight: Mainz

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 9, Tuesday - Depart Germany

This morning transfer to the airport in Frankfurt for your departure flight

Meals: Breakfast



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