

Christmas Markets



Tour Name: Christmas Markets

Tour Code: CHMA

Days: 15

Day 1

Budapest (D)

Your journey begins in the vibrant city of Budapest, the capital of Hungary and one of Europe's oldest and prettiest cities.

This afternoon, board your all-inclusive luxury Scenic Space-Ship and settle into your suite, many of which have a window that converts into a Scenic Sun Lounge, allowing you uninterrupted views of ever-changing landscapes and life along the riverbanks. Relax and raise your glass to the days ahead at this evening's welcome reception.

Day 2

Budapest (B,L,D)

Divided by the Danube, with Buda on one side and Pest on the other, this city became united in 1873, when a newly built bridge connected the two. The city is an architectural treasure trove comprising styles from Gothic to Art Nouveau and everything in between. At Christmas time, it comes alive with twinkling lights strewn around the city, wooden huts popping up in magnificent locations and seductive scents filling the air with festive spices.

Freechoice:

A range of Scenic Freechoice activities are on offer to choose from this morning:

Budapest in Depth: Explore this magical city by coach. Visit both Buda and Pest, the two districts that are separated by the Danube that make up the city. Starting on the Buda side see the Várkert Bazár before crossing the Margaret Bridge to the Pest side where you will see Széchenyi square and Elizabeth square.

City Tour and Hospital in the Rock: Start your tour at the Fisherman's Bastion and Matthias Church before visiting the Hospital in the Rock – a former top-secret nuclear bunker and emergency hospital. Afterwards, cross the Danube to the Pest side of the city, where you will have free time to wander this part of the city.

Thermal Baths: Budapest is known for its thermal waters and today you can relax in the natural hot springs at Gellert Baths. The baths are said to have medicinal properties and are warm year-round, allowing for a luxurious soak no matter what the season.

Guided hike to Buda Hill: Strap on your walking shoes for a beautiful hike up to the World Heritage-listed site of Buda Hill. On your walk, see Varket Bazar and beautifully landscaped gardens, all while enjoying great views over the Danube River and the city architecture.

Your Scenic Space-Ship departs for Vienna later this afternoon, so make the most of your free time exploring this magical city.

Day 3**Vienna (B,L,D)**

Today, perhaps wake to a coffee delivered to your suite by your personal butler. Take in the charming villages and sites you're passing by while sailing to Vienna. Austria's imperial capital oozes charm with magnificent Baroque buildings, ample green spaces from parks to vineyards, a vibrant coffee-house culture and masterpiece-filled galleries and museums.

Enrich

Tonight's Scenic Enrich:

Classical concert at Palais Liechtenstein: Breathe in the opulence and luxury of Palais Liechtenstein this evening as you relish an exclusive private classical concert. Enjoy a glass of fine Austrian Sekt and listen to the timeless music of Strauss and Mozart performed by a renowned Orchestra. An experience only shared with your fellow Scenic guests, you'll be seated in Vienna's largest secular baroque hall, an ornate space where royals and nobles have sat for centuries. Accompanied by ballet dancers and vocalists and surrounded by world-famous art, this will be a concert that you'll remember for a lifetime.

Day 4**Vienna (B,L,D)**

A city full of grandeur, Vienna comes alive during the festive season. A visit to the Austrian imperial capital during this time of the year will create some unique, magical moments.

See the world's most beautiful boulevard, The Ringstrasse, all lit up with dazzling displays of Christmas lights and decorations. You'll also enjoy the city's musical heritage in full display with the sounds of famous festive tunes and classical pieces around every corner. After all, you're in the City of Music, which fostered musical geniuses like Mozart and Beethoven.

Freechoice:

Explore your way with today's selection of Scenic Freechoice activities:

Schonbrunn Palace: Explore Schönbrunn Palace, the former summer residence of the Habsburg family, one of the most prominent dynasties in European history. As you wander its countless ornately designed rooms, hear tales about the royal family that lives here and see the impressive gardens.

Cycle to Danube Island: Explore a different side of Vienna on a guided e-bike tour to Danube Island, a recreational playground where locals come to enjoy bathing, boating, cycling and relaxing on its beaches and open spaces.

City tour of Vienna: The city centre of Vienna is overflowing with history, elegance and diverse architecture. During this tour, your expert local guide will delight you with stories from the city before allowing you extended free time to explore the city as you wish. Perhaps wander along the Ringstrasse, seeing the many galleries and Museums, visit St. Stephens Cathedral or simply enjoy your time visiting the numerous popular Christmas Markets that adorn the city.

Day 5**Dürnstein > Melk (B,L,D)**

Your Scenic Space-Ship will dock early this morning in the quaint town of Dürnstein. Surrounded by vineyards, the city has historical buildings that date back to the 12th century, including the hilltop ruins of Dürnstein Castle, where Richard the Lionheart was famously imprisoned between 1192 and 1193. Enjoy some free time exploring this captivating town before cruising towards Melk.

Freechoice:

Choose from a variety of Scenic Freechoice excursions today:

E-biking from Melk to Durnstein: Embark on a 32km guided e-bike ride to soak up the scenery along the Danube as you cycle to the quaint village of Melk, located in Austria's scenic Wachau Valley. You'll be impressed by the breathtaking UNESCO-listed Benedictine Abbey, built high over the city, the most spectacular building in the region. This tour will pass by many small villages and beautiful rolling vineyards, stopping along the way to enjoy the river views.

Glorious Melk Abbey: Your visit to Melk will only be complete with a guided tour to the magnificent 18th century Benedictine Abbey. Wander its 900-year-old hallowed halls, visit the decorated Marble Hall and the library, which is filled with more than 80,000 books, and be awed by the Abbey Church, which is adorned in frescoes and intricate statues.

Schnapps tasting: Transfer to the nearby town of Weissenkirchen where you will learn about how Schnapps is produced, including the distilling process in a local distillery. Discover the number of flavours available and get to sample some types of delicious schnapps during a tasting.

This afternoon while docked in the port of Melk, your Cruise Director will organise a special treat for you with a delicious tasting of local produce famous in this region, sample some Apricot dumplings and local schnapps among other regional delights.

Tonight, as you sit down to a delicious dinner, your Scenic Space-Ship will set sail towards your next destination.

Day 6**Salzburg or Cesky Krumlov (B,L,D)****Freechoice:**

Today, choose from two completely different, yet equally fascinating full day excursions. Both options require a coach journey but are well worth the drive.

Full day excursion to Salzburg: This morning you will disembark your Scenic Space-Ship in Brandstatt, from where you will journey via coach to Salzburg, Austria. Surrounded by alpine peaks and on the banks of the Salzach River, Salzburg is best known as the home of Mozart and The Sound of Music. This storybook city has a thriving art scene, music and concert halls filled with classical music, a Baroque old town where you'll find Mozart's birthplace, and Hohensalzburg, Central Europe's largest intact fortress, which sits high above the rooftops with panoramic views of the city. During a guided tour, explore this incredible city before enjoying lunch at a local restaurant. After some free time to explore the thriving Christmas markets that grace the city - some of the oldest advent markets in the world -, you will return to your Scenic Space-Ship in the German city of Passau.

Full day excursion to Cesky Krumlov: From Brandstatt, journey via coach to the Czech town of Cesky Krumlov. This delightful UNESCO World Heritage town is brimming with charm. Sitting on the banks of the Vltava River, Cesky Krumlov is considered one of the best-preserved medieval towns in Europe with its vast array of well-preserved Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque architecture. Wander this fairy-tale location with your local guide and explore the historic centre before delighting in a delicious lunch at a local restaurant. Your local guide will be on hand to offer expertise on the best way to spend your free time., such as at the Christmas Markets in the Old Town square.

Day 7**Regensburg (B,L,D)**

You will arrive in Regensburg after lunch today. Boasting a staggering 2,000-year history, Regensburg has one of Germany's best preserved medieval town centres, with more than 900 of its Romanesque and Gothic buildings listed as UNESCO World Heritage sites. Within its narrow laneways, the city lays claim to having the highest concentration of bars in the country. Regensburg is also fringed by the Bavarian Forest, home to hundreds of kilometres of hiking trails and deer, wild boar, fox and otter.

Set on the confluence of three rivers in Bavaria, Regensburg is a delight to explore on a walking tour. Your expert local guide will show you the old stone bridge, the Church of St James, and the Porta Praetoria all while sharing the customs and traditions of the region during the festive period. Your tour will end at the lively Christmas Markets, where you will have free time to delight in the festive atmosphere.

Day 8**Nuremberg (B,L,D)**

You will arrive in Nuremberg, Bavaria's second-largest city, after lunch. Boasting an Old Town protected by an ancient city wall, where the most enchanting Christmas Markets are held every year, this city is dominated by one of the most significant imperial forts of the Holy Roman Empire, the 12th century Imperial Castle, which was the preferred residence of German kings.

Behind its charming façade, Nuremberg also has a turbulent history. During WWII, the city was favoured by the Nazis for party rallies. The boycotts of Jewish businesses began here, as did the laws that denied Jewish people German citizenship – known as the 'Nuremberg Laws'. By 1945, the city was reduced to rubble, including large sections of the Imperial Castle and Old Town. Allied powers – the US, Great Britain, France and the Soviet Union – held the Nuremberg Trials here between 1945 and 1946, where Nazi Germany leaders were tried for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Freechoice:

Make your choice from this afternoon's Scenic Freechoice excursions:

Walking tour of the Old Town: You will drive into Nuremberg's city centre, passing by the city walls and courthouse before arriving at Augustinerstrasse. From here your local guide will take you on a walking tour of Nuremberg to see the Imperial Castle which overlooks the city, St. Egidien's Church and market square.

The trials and tribulations of WWII Tour: Join your expert local guide and learn about the horrific events that occurred in Nuremberg during Germany's Nazi regime. Start by taking a drive to the Rally Grounds and explore Memorium Nürnberger Prozesse where subsequent trials of Nazi party members took place.

Traditional Gingerbread cooking class: Nürnberger Lebkuchen was invented by medieval monks in Germany during the 13th century. Today join an experienced local chef and learn how to bake this soft, moist and nutty traditional German gingerbread yourself. Enjoy tasting this regional delight whilst learning about the region and its history. You may be surprised how different this is to today's modern-day gingerbread.

Day 9**Bamberg (B,L,D)**

Built on seven hills, this UNESCO-listed town has surprises at every turn. Intersected by rivers and canals, enchanting Bamberg has an Old Town resplendent with cobblestoned streets and well-preserved medieval buildings. A charming Old Town Hall which occupies an island on its own, a Gothic and Romanesque-style cathedral and the Old and New Residences – an episcopal palace, a pretty 'Little Venice' and a 12th century castle that teeters on the highest of the seven hills – are some of the incredible places you'll see during your guided city tour.

This morning, you will tour the Old Town, one of Europe's largest intact city centres, featuring a range of stunning Medieval and Baroque buildings. After lunch, your Space-Ship sets sail towards Würzburg, the perfect opportunity to enjoy your time in the wellness centre with a soothing massage^.

Day 10**Würzburg (B,L,D)**

After a leisurely morning on board your Space-Ship, you will arrive in Würzburg. This Baroque city straddles the Main River in the heart of Franconian wine country. Surrounded by undulating vineyards, Würzburg is home to a UNESCO World Heritage palace, a dominating hilltop fortress, the 15th century Old Main Bridge, and three universities, including Bavaria's oldest.

Freechoice:

Decide how you will spend your day choosing from the following Scenic Freechoice options:

Guided city tour: A short transfer via coach is needed to get to the Würzburg Residence, a Baroque palace surrounded by manicured gardens. Upon arrival, guests will be taken on a guided tour to see the palace's most beautiful rooms, many of which feature valuable paintings, tapestries and period furniture. Afterwards, take a short stroll to the historic market square where you will have time to wander through the fabulous Christmas markets. Explore over 100 wooden stalls offering up traditional gifts, glass blown ornaments and delicious treats. Why not warm your body and spirit with a glass of traditional Gluhwein or some local Franconian wine.

Romantic Road to Rothenburg: From Würzburg, arrive by coach in Rothenburg through the so-called Romantic Road, an important trading route during the Middle Ages. Your guide will regale you with the history and legends of some of the towns and villages you pass, some more than 1,000 years old. Take a guided tour of Rothenburg, famous for its well-preserved medieval old town, to see the Gothic and Renaissance City Hall and the famous City Councillors' Tavern. While exploring the town, you will notice the scent of festive spices filling the air, and after your walking tour, you can follow your nose to the picturesque markets that dot this walled city. Local musicians will delight you with holiday tunes, and resident cooks showcase their traditional delights, such as cookies and cakes. Make the most of your free time and discover the city on your own.

Day 11**Wertheim > Miltenberg (B,L,D)**

After lunch, you will arrive in the historic town of Wertheim, sitting on the picturesque banks of the Main and Tauber Rivers.

Explore this beautiful town before transferring to Miltenberg, where your local guide will give you an orientation through the beautiful cobblestone streets lined with historic half-timbered houses. Afterwards, feel the buzz in the air as locals and visitors alike visit the Christmas Markets adorned with traditional trinkets and gifts.

Day 12**Rhine Gorge > Rudesheim (B,L,D)**

After lunch you will disembark in Rudesheim, a pretty town surrounded by steep vineyards that have been cultivating wine for a staggering two millennia. The charming town centre is filled with half-timbered houses lining cobbled streets, quaint shops selling trinkets such as traditional Christmas ornaments and cuckoo clocks, as well as a smattering of wine taverns and open-air beer gardens.

Take a mini train from the pier to Siegfried's Mechanical Musical Instrument Museum, where some 350 musical instruments from the 18th and 19th century play themselves for your enjoyment. Then spend the rest of the afternoon wandering the charming streets lined with thriving bars, cafes and, of course, Christmas markets. Your Scenic Space-Ship departs late this evening, so you can take the time to explore this lively city at your pace. Perhaps indulge in a traditional Rudesheimer Coffee, a strong coffee mixed with flambéed Brandy and covered with a delicious thick whipped cream. The perfect way to stay warm during the chilly winter months.

Day 13**Cologne (B,L,D)**

After a leisurely morning of sailing, you will arrive in Cologne, a city known for its liberal and laidback lifestyle, unique beer culture, auto industry and the jaw-dropping cathedral that dominates its skyline. Settled by the Romans, this major cultural centre for the Rhineland was built during the Middle Ages but was largely destroyed during WWII. The magnificent Gothic cathedral, an enormous World Heritage site that dates to 1248, was badly damaged but stood tall above the ruins of the city.

Take the time to discover Cologne on a walking tour. Wander the laneways of the historical Old Town, which is home to breweries serving up draft Kolsch beer and enjoy free time to visit the city's centrepiece and icon, Cologne Cathedral. The Kolner Dom, as it is known locally is also the location for magnificent Christmas Markets and after your guided tour there is plenty of time to wander the wooden stalls where local vendors sell delicious treats and decorations. Don't forget to look out for the largest Christmas tree in the Rhineland.

Your Scenic Space-Ship will depart just before dinner, allowing you plenty of time to be immersed in the tastes and scents of Christmas, hot chestnuts, freshly baked gingerbread and mulled wine on offer in this lovely town.

Day 14**Amsterdam (B,L,D)**

Amsterdam is a treasure trove of architectural beauty, masterpiece-filled galleries, tranquil scenes of boats putting along 16th century canals, narrow cobbled laneways filled with boutiques and cafes, and streets busy with cyclists criss-crossing their way about town. Often referred to as the Venice of the North, much of the UNESCO-listed canal system exists today as it did hundreds of years ago, lined with well-preserved canal houses and intersected by charming bridges.

Freechoice:

This afternoon, choose one of the following Scenic Freechoice experiences:

Canal cruise : Amsterdam has more than 100 kilometres of canals and today you will see some of the prettiest sights of the city from these historical waterways. This one-hour cruise takes you along the Gentleman's Canal, where you will see The Skinny Bridge and The Prince's Canal, which was known for its warehouses and common people. You will go past the Old Lord Mayor's House, The Seven Bridges, Anne Frank's House and head to the Brewer's Canal. As the historic centre glides past, you can admire the elegant merchant's residences, churches and warehouses dating from the Golden Age.

City walking tour: Explore the Dutch capital on foot and see the city highlights while tasting some delicious local treats. Pickled herring, a favourite street food, tasty cheeses and mouth-watering Poffertjes (traditional fluffy bite-sized pancakes) are some delicacies you'll savour.

Cycling tour: Take a small ferry to the outskirts of town for a biking tour. Amsterdam is known as the bicycle capital of the world, with more bikes than cars and over 35,000 kilometres of cycle paths. Your local guide will be at hand to offer information about everyday life of the Dutch people, many of whom you will see getting around on two wheels. Hop on one of Scenic's eco-friendly e-bikes (electronically assisted bicycles) and let it do the hard work for you while you take in the sights of the city.

Excursion to Schermerhorn & Alkmaar: Step outside of Amsterdam to visit the village of Schermerhorn, home to authentic windmills dating back to the 16th century. Take in the idyllic views of the sweeping Dutch countryside and learn about the importance of the windmills. You will also head to Alkmaar, a charming town with historic buildings and picturesque canals, also known as 'the city of cheese'.

Day 15**Amsterdam (B)**

Disembark in Amsterdam this morning after a farewell breakfast, taking with you a lifetime of memories.

This itinerary is a guide only and may be amended for operational reasons such as high and low water. As such, the cruise may operate altered from that stated above. Please refer to our terms and conditions.

^Massage/spa treatments at additional cost.