

## 2025 - Swiss Alps & Rhine Castles

### 7-NIGHT CRUISE WITH 3 NIGHTS LAKE COMO PRE-CRUISE

Discover fairytale castles, historic vineyards and the stunning remnant of a world frozen over with glaciers, Italy's Lake Como, as part of this Rhine River cruise fantasy. Embark your ship in Italy's haven for the rich and famous, Lake Como. Continue on to Basel before crossing the border into France's Alsace region in enchanting Strasbourg. Then it's off to Germany, where you'll discover not only the grand city of Cologne but charming villages like the winemaking hamlet of Rudesheim and the university town of Heidelberg. You'll also enjoy cruising through the UNESCO-designated Rhine Gorge, where 40 castles are strung like pearls along the river banks. Conclude your cruise by exploring the canal-laden city of Amsterdam, with its neat rows of buildings and rich history. Encompassing the Netherlands, Germany, France, Switzerland and Italy, as well as iconic landmarks and majestic mountain landscapes, this distinctive itinerary is truly a dream come true.

#### OVERVIEW:

<u>DAY</u>	<u>DESTINATION</u>	<u>ACTIVITIES</u>
1	LAKE COMO	Hotel check-in
2	LAKE COMO	Walking tour
3	LAKE COMO	Lake Como boat excursion to the "Pearl of Lake Como," Bellagio
4	BASEL	Transfer to Basel with Bellinzona visit
EMBARKATION		
5	BASEL	"City of Art" tour OR Three countries bike tour OR Full-Day Lake Lucerne Excursion Lake Lucerne Half-Day Tour
6	STRASBOURG	"The Gem of Alsace" tour OR Strasbourg bike tour
7	LUDWIGSHAFEN	"Romantic Heidelberg" excursion OR "Secrets of Speyer" tour OR Heidelberg Philosopher's Path hike OR Ladenburg bike tour Siegfried's Mechanical Instrument Cabinet OR Rudesheimer Coffee
8	RÜDESHEIM	Rudesheim Gondola Ride and Wine Tasting OR Vineyard hike OR Guided bike tour of the Rheingau Castles along the Rhine scenic cruising Burg Lahneck tour
9	COLOGNE	Cologne walking tour & Kölsch beer tasting OR Cologne Cathedral Architecture tour OR Cologne bike tour
10	AMSTERDAM	Canal cruise tour A Taste of Amsterdam*
11	AMSTERDAM	DISEMBARKATION

#### ITINERARY DETAILS:

Day 1, LAKE COMO. Arrive in Lake Como and check into your hotel.

Day 2, LAKE COMO. Be treated to a walking tour of Lake Como, a former glacial lake and popular resort area for the rich and famous since Roman times. Gaze at the azure waters and impressive villas that line the lakeside from the hills above and perhaps recognize the scenery from such Hollywood blockbusters as Ocean's Twelve and Casino Royale. (B)

Day 3, LAKE COMO. Let the wind tousle your hair as you board your boat for a scenic ride along Lake Como to its stunning pearl, Bellagio. This intimate village offers postcard-perfect views whether you choose to stroll along the lakeside or venture up hill to its cobbled streets. Browse the shops or sample the local fare at Bellagio's restaurants before returning to the boat. (B)

Day 4, BASEL - LAKE COMO - EMBARKATION. Check out of your Lake Como hotel and, en route to Basel, be treated to a Bellinzona orientation tour. Once you arrive in Basel, embark your ship for your Rhine Castles & Swiss Alps cruise. (B,D)

Day 5, BASEL. Enjoy getting to know Basel, Switzerland's third largest city. Long an important university, banking and trade center, Basel's glorious past is still evident in its medieval town hall, richly decorated market square and exquisite 18th-century patrician homes. Tour the city by foot or on a guided bike tour that takes you through three countries: Switzerland, France and Germany. Alternatively, go on a full-day excursion to Lake Lucerne, or opt for one of the morning excursions and visit Lake Lucerne in the afternoon. With either Lake Lucerne excursion, you'll have the opportunity to see its Lion Monument – the figure of a dying lion carved into a hillside in memory of the Swiss Guards massacred during the French Revolution in 1792 – which Mark Twain described as “the most mournful and moving piece of stone in the world.” You'll also see Lake Lucerne's spectacular medieval walls and towers, dating back to the 13th century. (B,L,D)

Day 6, STRASBOURG. Strasbourg offers flavors of both France and Germany because of its borderline location. Enjoy a panoramic tour past the stunning Parc de l'Orangerie, the European Parliament and the Place de la République before walking through its iconic “La Petite France” district, lifted straight from the pages of a fairytale. Wander through charming streets past the Cathédrale de Nôtre Dame with its famous astronomical clock. Alternatively, take a guided bike ride through the city and Parc de l'Orangerie. (B,L,D)

Day 7, LUDWIGSHAFEN - RÜDESHEIM. Ludwigshafen is your gateway to a choice of four excursions. Visit Heidelberg, the perfectly preserved medieval city nestled in the Neckar River Valley along Germany's Castle Road. Discover the iconic red sandstone Heidelberg Castle and Great Vat, an 18th-century, 49,000-gallon wine cask. For a more active adventure while in Heidelberg, join a guided hike up the Philosopher's Path, aptly named during the Romantic Period, and enjoy panoramic views of the city. Alternatively, you can visit one of Germany's oldest cities, Speyer, known for the largest Romanesque cathedral in Europe—a UNESCO World Heritage Site—and the medieval Old Gate, Altpörtel. Or pedal along the river Neckar to the picturesque medieval city center of Ladenburg and enjoy some free time to explore the shops. Later in the day, cruise to the charming village of Rüdesheim and let Siegfried's Mechanical Instrument Cabinet charm you with its remarkable collection of self-playing musical instruments; or taste one of the town's special delights, Rüdeshheimer coffee, ceremoniously made with brandy, coffee and whipped cream. (B,L,D)

Day 8, RÜDESHEIM - RHINE GORGE - LAHNSTEIN. Join a wine tasting to discover the flavors of the town's iconic vineyards and drink up the stunning views by soaring high above the vineyards with a gondola ride to the Niederwalddenkmal. For a more active adventure, hike through the town's beautiful vineyards or join a guided bike tour along the scenic Rhine River. Later in the day, cruise through the captivating UNESCO-designated Rhine Gorge, the most stunningly beautiful stretch of the river before reaching Lahnstein, where you will enjoy a unique evening visit at Lahneck Castle. (B,L,D)

Day 9, COLOGNE. Enjoy cruising to Cologne, then join a guided tour through the enchanting Old Town, where you will see sites such as the Cologne Rathaus, Germany's oldest town hall; the Fishmarkt, which dates back to the 12th century and the Great St. Martin Church. End your city tour with a visit to a local tavern to taste its famous Kölsch beer. As an alternative, examine the historic architectural styles on display throughout the Cologne Cathedral during a guided tour. This 13th-century Gothic marvel and UNESCO World Heritage Site was the tallest building in the world at the time of its completion, and the church withstood 14 hits from aerial bombs during World War II. Active guests will want to join a guided bike ride along the Rhine and through the historic Stadtpark. (B,L,D)

Day 10, AMSTERDAM. There are 165 canals in Amsterdam, and you'll get to enjoy some of them on your canal cruise. Alternatively, get a taste of local flavor, passing iconic canals, gabled houses, narrow bridges and house boats while tasting Dutch specialties at one of Amsterdam's grand cafes. (B,L,D)

*\*Depending on docking location, A Taste of Amsterdam may not operate; therefore, an alternative tour will operate instead.*

Day 11, AMSTERDAM. Bid Farewell to Amsterdam and prepare for your homeward flight. (B)