



It's Not Too Late to Book a Christmas Market Cruise

CRUISE LINE & CRUISE SHIP | AMAWATERWAYS | MELINDA CROW | NOVEMBER 28, 2017



PHOTO: Nuremberg Christmas Market. (photo via Flickr/charley1965)

If you've always dreamed of visiting the top Christmas markets in Europe, you don't have to wait until 2018 if you do it the easy way—on a river cruise.

By booking a cruise on the great rivers of Europe, you can sail from one market to the next, often with evenings or overnights in port to enjoy the holiday lights.

For example, you can take in the cultural holiday treasures in a handful of ports in Germany, Austria, Hungary, France, the Netherlands, Switzerland or even Portugal—all without unpacking and the hassles of airport hopping.

Here's a rundown of what is still available on short notice. Your travel agent may have even more listings at their disposal.

AmaWaterways

[AmaWaterways](#) sails four ships on the Danube and three on the Rhine from now through the first of the year, stopping at the world's most famous Christmas markets, including Vienna, Strasbourg and Budapest. The line is an upscale option with onboard amenities that include twin-balconies in some cabins; beer, wine and soft drinks included with lunch and dinner; free Wi-Fi and tours suited for active travelers and families.

Even though many dates are full or heavily-booked, there are still select dates to choose from on both the [Rhine](#) and the [Danube](#).

Viking River Cruises

Many of Viking's popular Christmas market sailings for 2017 appear to be sold out on the company's website, but aggregators like [RiverCruise.com](#) (a division of Vacations to Go) may still have cabins available. Options that remain open include "[Paris and the Heart of Normandy](#)" sailings on December 3 and 10, and "[Portugal's River of Gold](#)" on December 5 and 12.

[Viking](#) sailings include beer and wine at lunch and dinner, free Wi-Fi and in-depth port explorations, both on board the ship and through excursions—many of which are included in the price of the cruise.

Uniworld River Cruise Collection

Known for its charming luxury hotel feel, [Uniworld](#) has availability on several pre-holiday cruises. The S.S. Antoinette sails between [Basel and Cologne](#) all month. As a bonus, solo travelers can enjoy this cruise with no single supplement. Among the other Christmas market cruises still available are sailings on the River Queen, between [Frankfurt and Nuremberg](#) in mid-December.

Uniworld offers top-level service and cuisine, in-suite butler service, an open bar, Wi-Fi and cultural experiences in every port.

CroisiEurope Cruises

Europe's largest river cruise company, [Croisi](#) remains largely unknown to many Americans, but if a shorter [Christmas market cruise](#) is your goal, this is where to look. With cruises as short as four days, prices begin at only \$551 per person.

Soft drinks, beer and wine are included with lunch and dinner. On some ships, even the bar drinks are part of the inclusive package.

Crystal

If an extended cruise to the markets in full-on luxury is your dream, look no further than [Crystal](#). The line, known mostly for extravagant ocean-going yacht cruises, also has a fleet of five river ships featuring butler service, all-inclusive beverages, Wi-Fi and cultural immersion.

[Christmas market cruises](#) are still available on both the Danube and the Rhine, in lengths from 7 to 16 days.

Avalon Waterways

[Avalon](#) has joined the pack of river lines waiving single supplements on select sailings in Europe, so solo travelers still have options for Christmas market cruises. Avalon has remaining availability on [Danube cruises](#), (but not much else, so you may need to hurry if you want to go this year).

As with most river cruises, Avalon includes beer and wine at meal times, as well as free Wi-Fi. At least one excursion per port is also included, but gratuities are not.