

[Home](#) » [Destinations International](#) » [Is a European River Cruise Right for Your Family?](#)

## Is A European River Cruise Right For Your Family?

Posted by Sarah Ricks, World TravelingMom | Jul 20, 2017 | 8 🗨️ | ★★★★★

**A European river cruise might be a good fit if your family enjoys exploring palaces, churches, medieval history – and skipping logistics. Philadelphia Traveling Mom Sarah Ricks and her family have taken two European river cruises. With her teenagers, she cruised the Seine to visit places in Normandy, France. Without kids, she and her husband cruised the Danube to visit Austria, Hungary, and Slovakia. They loved exploring different places across a region – without the hassle of logistics.**



On our Danube European river cruise, the view from Melk monastery, Austria (Photo Sarah Ricks)

My husband, teens, and I [cruised the Seine River to visit villages and cities in Normandy, France](#). Without kids, my husband and I cruised the Danube River, making both city and rural stops in Austria, Hungary, and Slovakia. On both European river cruises, we enjoyed exploring while leaving the headaches of planning to others.

## **European River Cruise Lets Us Explore – And Skip Logistics**

A European river cruise is good to explore many places in a region, without the hassle of logistics. For example, every day we got off the ship to explore a different place, usually with a guide. Every night we cruised to a new location.

On our Danube cruise, we visited European capital cities – Vienna, Budapest, Bratislava. But we also visited rural villages in Austria and Hungary that we never would have scouted out on our own. Always, the cruise handled logistics. CroisiEurope River Cruises planned itineraries, scheduled guides, hired buses, and arranged walking tours.



CroisiEurope timed our cruise arrival in Budapest to see the city lit up (Photo Sarah Ricks)

Similarly, on our [river cruise in Normandy, France](#), every day we took excursions to places along the Seine. We visited grand cathedrals, a fishing village, a rural chateau. It was fun to get a taste of the whole Normandy region. And it was fun to skip the hassle of packing and unpacking, navigating, and finding the next hotel.

## Daily Excursions With Excellent Guides

My husband and I enjoyed the excellent English-speaking guides on our recent Danube cruise with [CroisiEurope River Cruises](#). For example, a Vienna native told us stories of Austrian history during a nighttime bus and walking tour of Vienna, as the city dramatically lit its gorgeous buildings.

During our bus tour of Bratislava, a native guide sprinkled medieval and Hapsburg history with funny stories of life under the former Communist regime. Even though I'd visited Budapest before, I learned a ton from our knowledgeable guide. To simplify logistics, CroisiEurope distributed wireless guides as we boarded the ship, and we kept them the entire cruise.



We loved the excursion on the Danube River cruise to a Vienna palace (Photo Sarah Ricks)

Also, we enjoyed cultural excursions that pushed the envelope of what we'd sign up for on our own. In rural Hungary, we got covered in dust watching Hungarian cowboys riding bareback – while standing up! By contrast, in Vienna, we drank champagne while listening to an orchestra play Mozart. In Budapest, we thoroughly enjoyed watching traditional Hungarian folk dancing to a gypsy band.

And even though we were on the second excursion of the day, I'm glad we rallied to tour the palace rooms of Austrian Empress Sisi. She was the Princess Diana of her time. Married at 16 and quickly dissatisfied with royal restrictions, she was beautiful and restless. After she was assassinated, her celebrity grew. Today her image is a constant in Austria and Hungary.



On our European river cruise, we hiked up the hill for to see where an Austrian Duke kept Richard the Lionhearted prisoner in Durnstein, Austria (Photo Sarah Ricks)

On some excursions, we left the group to explore on our own. For example, in Budapest, my husband and I enjoyed the 2-hour bus tour in the morning. Then we peeled off to spend 5 hours exploring the city on our own. Since river cruises often dock right downtown, close to tourist attractions, it's easy to explore independently.

## View Of The River Bank

An advantage of a river cruise is we were always close to the riverbank. Along the Danube, river cruising from Vienna to Budapest, we saw Baroque Austrian towns, vineyards and farmland, cities, some industry, and other boats. Surprising to me, we mostly saw woods. In our room, we kept the curtains open to enjoy the constantly changing view.



Yes, that Hungarian cowboy is standing up while riding 2 horses (Photo Sarah Ricks)

## European River Cruise For Multigenerational Family Groups

A European river cruise is a good fit for a vacation with grandparents. Or with family or friends with different physical abilities. Different ages can share the adventure of exploring a new city or rural area each day.

Yet different passengers can experience excursions in their own ways. For example, on our river cruise on the Danube, my husband and I hiked up a rocky hillside to the ruins of a stone castle where an Austrian Duke imprisoned Richard the Lionhearted. While we climbed the hill, other cruise passengers stayed at the foot of the hill. Instead, they chose to explore the beautiful medieval village, Durnstein.

Similarly, each time our Danube river cruise visited a church, my husband and I tried to climb up the bell tower, if there was time. We did it for the view – and the cardio – and it felt great.

However, for my athletic teenaged son, fitting in enough daily physical activity was a challenge on our Normandy cruise, so he squeezed in runs while our ship was docked. If my athletic son is with us next time, we might look into CroisiEurope's river cruises with biking options.



We kept the curtains open in our room to enjoy the riverbank view (Photo Sarah Ricks)

## European River Cruise Means No Seasickness

One benefit of a river cruise is it let me be out on the water without the barfy feeling I get on sailboats. Even on big ocean cruises, I sometimes get seasick. But on a river, there are no big waves, no barfiness. Plus, no days at sea.

## European River Cruise Works For Gourmand Kids

The main event on a European river cruise is the daily excursion. On the ship, while there were not many kids and no special activities for kids, kids are welcome. In fact, [kids cruise for free on some CroisiEurope trips](#). My teenagers and I enjoyed unplugging with books or using the free wifi. My husband and I enjoyed relaxing on the roof deck, sipping the unlimited wine, and watching the passing scenery.

While the breakfast buffet and lunch are come as you are, passengers dressed better at dinner. CroisiEurope is a French cruise line. We enjoyed that it has mostly European passengers who are not grab-n-go eaters. Both lunch and dinner are 3-course meals, with wine.





A European river cruise might be a good fit if your family enjoys palaces, medieval villages, history, cultural excursions like a horse show and folk dancing, and especially if you're traveling with multiple generations. (Photo Sarah Ricks)

## Pampering On A European River Cruise

Pampering is good. Tailored pampering is even better. My husband liked that when he arrived for breakfast each morning, the waiter already had put a full pot of coffee on our table. The charming English couple we shared our table with enjoyed that the waiter always had their beer/lemonade mix ready at lunch.

And here's a different European river cruise experience. During winter, my husband and I toured [Christmas markets in France](#), and used a parked river cruise ship like a hotel, with all day excursions.

**Does A European River Cruise Appeal To You? Tell Us About It In The Comments.**