



## My Favorite River Cruises

The goal in listing my favorite river cruises is to help you with decisions about your river cruises. I'm fortunate to be able to experience so many river cruises (I've been on more than 50 since 2006), and I'm happy to share information about my experiences. For the past 25 years, my goal has been to provide resources to help you make informed cruise vacation decisions.

In the interest of full disclosure, all of my river cruises were hosted by the cruise companies that I write about. I hope you find the information I have provided useful for your planning purposes. If I can help you along the way, please click on [Get My Help](#).



## My Favorite River Cruises

# My Favorite River Cruises Of 2017

In 2017, I'll cruise Crystal, Avalon, AmaWaterways, Viking, Scenic, CroisiEurope and more. Even though it was only March when I wrote these words, my season was off to an exciting start, proving that no matter how many times you river cruise, there's always something new and different to experience.

## 1. Crystal Mozart, Vienna Roundtrip



Crystal Mozart, wide-bodied and leagues apart. © 2017 Ralph Grizzle

My 2017 river cruise season kicked off in March with a short cruise on Crystal Mozart. I had been on Mozart before, last summer during its christening in Vienna. But that was for only 48 hours. This time I got to experience Mozart and learned what makes this ship so special. Check out [Crystal River Cruises: In A Class Apart?](#).

## 2. Avalon Visionary, Active Discovery On The Rhine & Moselle



Next up in April was Avalon Waterways, a company that I had not experienced since cruising Avalon Creativity several years ago. Creativity had none of the bells and whistles of Avalon Visionary, a so-called "Suite Ship." On Avalon's Suite Ships, staterooms are large by industry standards. The top two decks have 200-square-foot and 300-square-foot suites with beds facing the sliding glass wall-to-wall and floor-to-ceiling windows. I also liked what is called Avalon Fresh, a healthy dining option, and Active Discovery, a program focused on engaging guests in immersive, local experiences. Check out [From Amsterdam To Paris On An Avalon Waterways' Active Discovery Cruise](#).

### 3. Viking River Cruises: Rhine Getaway



Gotta love all that outdoor space: Viking Longships all feature the Aquavit Terrace. © 2017 Ralph Grizzle

*Koblenz, Germany* – It had been awhile since I was on a Viking Longship, and although I had attended christening events and even did a couple of weeklong cruises on Viking a few years ago, too much time had passed since I'd stepped on a Longship. Last Sunday that changed when I boarded Viking Hlin in Basel for a seven-night "Rhine Getaway" voyage to Amsterdam. Midway through the voyage, as I sat in the Aquavit Lounge on a gorgeous day while Viking Hlin was docked alongside the *Deutsches Eck* in Koblenz, I realized something I had nearly forgotten – and that was just how good Viking is. Read more: [What I Learned About Viking River Cruises While Cruising The Rhine](#)

## My Favorite River Cruises Of 2016

From Bordeaux to the Seine to the Danube and Provence, I did eight river cruises in 2016. I'll be compiling them all in an ebook to be published by the end of the month. Below you'll find links to voyage reports from each of my river cruises in 2016. I hope that you find them useful in planning your river cruises.

My 2016 season kicked off in March with a cruise on AmaDolce in Bordeaux.

## 1. AmaWaterways' Taste Of Bordeaux



All throughout our week, we'd learn about the Bordeaux wines as we visit the many vineyards strung across the region. © 2016 Monica Frisk

When I think back to this past spring in Bordeaux, I think of bicycles and bountiful vineyards. Boarding in the beautiful UNESCO-designated city of Bordeaux, I spent seven nights on AmaDolce, operated by AmaWaterways. This itinerary basically offers Bordeaux wine tours via boat and bike. [Read more ...](#)

## 2. Eastern Europe On Emerald Sky



We visited a school in Alfatar, Bulgaria, supported in part by Emerald Waterways. © 2016 Ralph Grizzle

I felt like a true adventurer on Emerald Sky's **Enchantment of Eastern Europe** cruise in early April of 2016. That's in part because Emerald Sky took me to developing countries I had not been to before, namely Romania and Bulgaria. The 10-night voyage started in Bucharest and ended in Budapest, perfect bookends for exploring this beautiful and fascinating region of the world. [Read more ...](#)

### 3. A Visit To Vienna For Crystal Mozart's Christening



Entertainer Mark Ferris will be on many Crystal Mozart sailings. © 2016 Ralph Grizzle

I was on Crystal Mozart for fewer than 48 hours. Even so I quickly came to appreciate what Crystal Cruises, a leader in luxury blue-water cruising, was attempting to create on the Blue Danube. I should note that I had no choice but to make a quick study. Two nights on board, and I was to be booted off. I was part of a VIP group in Vienna for Crystal Mozart's christening. After the bottle had broken against the hull, we were expected to start packing to make room for paying guests on Crystal Mozart's inaugural voyage. [Read more ...](#)

## 4. Boats & Bikes With Backroads & AmaWaterways



Alex and me. © 2016 Ralph Grizzle

Do you enjoy bicycling and seeing new places? If so, you'd be hard-pressed to find a better mix than bicycling in Europe during your river cruise. In August, I did just that, traveling with my 19-year-old son on a "bikes and boats" trip with AmaWaterways and Backroads. As regular readers of River Cruise Advisor know, AmaWaterways is a multi-awarded river cruise company. Not as well known among RCA's readers, Backroads bills itself as the world's #1 active travel company. The combination of cycling and river cruising was a match made in heaven, and a perfect way to travel for this father and son duo. [Read more ...](#)



## 5. Amsterdam To Budapest, Two Weeks, Three Rivers, Five Countries



Early morning cruising on the Main River. © 2016 Ralph Grizzle

The duration of the cruise, spanning 14 nights/15 days, is perfect for those who have the time for a truly immersive European experience: three rivers, five countries and scenic cruising through the heartland of Europe. And time to absorb and reflect on it all. [Read more ...](#)

## 6. Sampling Bordeaux On CroisiEurope



Bacchus would be jealous.

CroisiEurope is the only company that I know of that offers Bordeaux cruises of four different durations. The company operates two ships in Bordeaux, Cyrano de Bergerac and Princesse d'Aquitaine, on 5-, 6-, 7- and 8-day cruises. My four-night/five-day sampler cruise provided only a taste of Bordeaux on Cyrano de Bergerac, and while four nights is too short of a cruise for those who endure a trip across the Atlantic, four nights is a good option for those who couple the cruise with an extended stay in France. [Read more ...](#)

## 7. On The Seine With AmaWaterways



At Monet's Gardens. © 2016 Ralph Grizzle

AmaWaterways operates in three regions of France: Bordeaux, Provence and Paris/Normandy. One of my favorites is along the romantic Seine. The seven-night voyage begins in the "City of Light," where the AmaLegro was docked within view of the Eiffel Tower. [Read more ...](#)

## 8. Provence, New Year's Eve On CroisiEurope



I spent the days after Christmas up until New Year's Day in France. Part of my time was spent in Paris, where I visited a friend before heading off to Lyon to cruise into the new year with CroisiEurope.

Traveling by TGV rail, I arrived in Lyon two hours after leaving Paris. It was a pleasant trip and definitely the way to get between the two cities. Once in Lyon, I paid about a euro to take the tram from Gare Part-Dieu Villette (the train station) to Université Lyon I, where CroisiEurope's Mistral was docked just a few steps away on the Rhone. [Read more ...](#)