



The 5 Best River Cruises for Families

Book your 2018 trip now.

BY ELISSA GARAY 9.15.2017



River cruise lines, once content to serve the senior set, have recently turned an eye toward multigenerational families, offering itineraries that appeal to grown-ups and kids alike. With engaging excursions that bring destinations to life, onboard activities aplenty, and staff who know how to keep the young ones entertained, these five river cruises are a great way to get your kids *on* board while avoiding cries of “I’m bored.”

The Rhine with Adventures by Disney/AmaWaterways

Adventures by Disney, in partnership with river cruise line AmaWaterways, rolled out its seven-night Rhine River itinerary this year. Two family-friendly, 156-passenger riverboats, the *AmaKristina* and *AmaStella*, sail between Basel, Switzerland, and Amsterdam, stopping in France and Germany along the way. Families can ride a zip-line through the Black Forest, visit Heidelberg Castle, and bike through the countryside. Fans of *Beauty and the Beast* can tour Riquewihr, one of the French villages that inspired the tale, dig into a *Beauty and the Beast*-themed feast, and watch the Disney movies on board. Expect plenty of kid-focused activities (including cooking classes and karaoke nights) and food options (and an ice cream party), along with connecting and triple-occupancy staterooms. Plus, there's a heated swimming pool on deck.

Trips depart in June, July, and August 2018. Children must be at least 4 years old, though the cruises are recommended for ages 8 and up. From \$4,789 for travelers 12 and over; from \$4,429 for travelers under 12.

adventuresbydisney.com

Classic German Christmas Markets with Uniworld

The Christmas season is the perfect time to bring the kids along on a European river cruise. Upscale Uniworld sails its 128-guest *River Queen* along Germany's Main River from Nuremberg to Frankfurt on a family-focused, seven-night "Classic Christmas Markets" itinerary each December. In addition to shopping at regional Christmas markets, families can visit the "Christmas with Dinosaurs" exhibit at Frankfurt's natural history museum, sample gingerbread in Nuremberg, or take a pretzel-twisting class in Wertheim. On board, kids can take advantage of a lounge just for them and at mealtimes peruse children's menus, consult a "soda sommelier," and sit at Young Travelers' Tables, no grown-ups allowed.

Trips depart on December 15, 2017, and December 15, 2018. Children must be at least 4 years old, though the cruises are recommended for ages 8 and up. From \$2,899 for travelers over 17; younger travelers are half price.

uniworld.com

Portugal and Spain with CroisiEurope

The French river cruise company CroisiEurope has started promoting its “Family Club” trips—which allow children 16 and under to travel at a discount, and in some cases, for free—to U.S. travelers. One five-night itinerary runs on the Douro River from Porto, Portugal, to Salamanca, [Spain](#), aboard the new, 132-passenger *Miguel Torga* or the 138-passenger *Fernao de Magalhaes*. Families can tour Porto via tram and visit the city’s tram museum and ride bikes through Salamanca’s historic center. Onboard, kids are invited to participate in the cruise’s closing show. Children either share the parents’ cabin or stay in the room right next door.

Trips depart July 11 and August 2, 2018. Children of all ages are welcome. From \$1,624 for travelers over 16. croisieurope.com

The Danube with Tauck Bridges

Tauck Bridges runs a series of “Blue Danube” summer cruises designed specifically for families. The 130-passenger MS *Joy* and MS *Savor* sail for seven nights on the Danube River between [Budapest](#), Hungary, and Vilshofen or Deggendorf in Germany, making stops in Slovakia and [Austria](#) along the way. Outings include an evening visit to Vienna’s Prater amusement park, a medieval joust at Slovakia’s Devin Castle, riverside cycling tours, and stops at *The Sound of Music* movie locations in [Salzburg](#), Austria. Back on board, families stay in spacious suites and enjoy cooking classes, folkloric performances, and an on-deck barbecue.

Trips depart on June 30 and July 7, 14, 21, and 28, 2018. Children must be at least 4 years old, though the cruises are recommended for ages 8 and up. From \$4,190 for travelers over 12; younger travelers get a \$500 discount. tauck.com

The Yangtze with Abercrombie & Kent

For families looking beyond Europe, Abercrombie & Kent offers an 11-night "Family China & the Yangtze" tour that includes a three-night cruise on the Yangtze River. The 124-passenger *Sanctuary Yangzi Explorer* (operated by Sanctuary Retreats) passes through the scenic Three Gorges region between Chongqing and Yichang. Excursions include a meet-and-greet with a local family, a stop at an area kindergarten, and a boat ride on a traditional sampan. On the land-based portion of the trip, families visit the Great Wall of China, the terra-cotta warriors in Xi'an, and pandas at a research facility in Chengdu. On board, they can paint Chinese opera masks and take calligraphy lessons. The tour is limited to 24 travelers.

Trips depart in June, July, and August 2018. Children must be at least 6 years old. From \$6,295 for travelers over 17; younger travelers get a \$500 discount.

abercrombiekent.com