

What's New in River Cruising for 2018



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River cruising continues to evolve in 2018, with lines adding active excursions and doing more to differentiate themselves from each other, while still expanding their fleet. U by Uniworld debuts in spring 2018, becoming the first line to cater exclusively to millennials (and those slightly older; programming on the line's ships, The A and the B, are designed for passengers ages 21 to 45). Next year also marks the year that American Cruise Lines brings modern riverboats -- as opposed to the more traditional paddlewheel -- to American rivers. New river cruise ships for 2018 also include Viking's foray onto the Nile River with its own ship (as opposed to a charter) and expansion on Asia's rivers, particularly the Mekong (both upper and lower).

Just about every river cruise line is improving shore excursion choices in 2018, focusing on activities that either keep passengers active with biking, hiking or canoeing or in-depth experiences, like culinary tours. Theme programming remains popular, with wellness and gardening cruises joining wine, art, Jewish heritage and more.

CroisiEurope		
Renoir	Spring 2018; Seine	110
Van Gogh	2018; Rhone and Saone	158
Elbe Princesse II	2018; Elbe River	90
African Dream II	2018; Chobe and Zambezi	16

CroisiEurope

The French line CroisiEurope continues investing in its fleet, with two existing ships -- Van Gogh and Renoir -- getting bow-to-stern renovations that bring them from "four anchor" vessels to "five anchors." In addition, the line is expanding on its success on the notoriously difficult Elbe River by building a second shallow-draft paddlewheel, Elbe Princesse II, to debut in the spring. The line is also adding a second ship on the Chobe and Zambezi in Africa; trips offered by the company will include cruises on African Dream II in conjunction with Croisi's new land accommodations. Finally, the company is building a river cruise ship for the St. Lawrence Seaway; that Quebec-based itinerary, however, will likely be geared toward French speakers.