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A Guide to Oberammergau 2020 River Cruises

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Now is the time to book Oberammergau 2020 travel

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Europe



Oberammergau Passion Play takes place every 10 years, and shows are in high demand. // © 2018 Oberammergau Passion

For nearly 400 years, the villagers of Oberammergau on the edge of the Bavarian Alps have performed their world-famous Passion Play every 10 years. More than 2,000 actors, instrumentalists, singers and supporters take part, all hailing from the village, which is known for its skilled wood carvers and for its NATO School.

The production was the result of a vow taken in 1633 by the villagers, who resolved to enact the passion of Christ every decade if they were spared the plague.

Oberammergau casts the play a year before each performance.

Play 2020

Feature image (above): River cruise lines will offer numerous sailings that include a viewing of the Oberammergau Passion Play. // © 2018 Oberammergau Passion Play 2020

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For 2020, the event will encompass 100-plus performances given between May and October. A committee from the village decides on revisions and changes in the script, so the play's length can vary, but the 2010 performances were five hours long, with a substantial dinner break halfway through.

About half a million people attend the Passion Play during its annual showings, and it is a huge driver of tourism for the region. Because it happens only once in 10 years, the river cruise itineraries that include seats for a performance typically sell out very early, and cruise line executives say 2020 is showing even higher demand than 2010.

Oberammergau 2020 River Cruise Options

From May to September in 2020, Avalon Waterways will offer nine 12-day cruises that include the Oberammergau Passion Play, with an overnight in Budapest followed by visits to Bratislava, Slovakia; Vienna, Durnstein, Melk and Linz, Austria; and Passau,

Germany. They will also include two nights on land in Innsbruck, Austria, and a final day in Munich, Germany. As of press time, September sailings are sold out.

CroisiEurope has announced details of a Danube itinerary that includes two nights in Oberammergau, plus seats for the play. The eight-day journey includes a six-day Danube cruise from Budapest to Passau, visiting Bratislava, Vienna and Melk, followed by two days in Oberammergau. (The reverse itinerary is also available.) Tickets are orchestra seating and include a meal during the interval.

There are three departures for this itinerary on June 17, July 17 and Aug. 26, 2020. The reverse itinerary — two nights in Oberammergau followed by a six-day cruise from Passau to Budapest — has two departures on July 20 and Aug. 19.

Scenic will be running river cruise departures between May 20 and Sept. 9 with the eight-day Alpine Highlights and Oberammergau sailing from Vienna to Zurich, Switzerland, and the nine-day Bavarian Highlights and Oberammergau cruise from Munich to Vienna. These itineraries can also be linked to the following for an extended cruise: 15-day Jewels of Europe; 15-day Romantic Rhine and Moselle; eight-day Rhine Highlights; and eight-day Gems of the Danube.

And for some time, Tauck has had a landing page on its website where guests interested in Oberammergau could provide their email addresses. Registering interest meant they would get updates, but it didn't guarantee a reservation. This past fall, the company announced the 28 dates and itineraries that will feature the Passion Play, emailing all those who had registered and, later, the general public.

At that point, Tauck began taking reservations with a deposit. Final information on hotels and pricing have not yet been announced by the play's organizing committee; when that arrives, Tauck will share it with guests who reserved a place, giving them a chance to cancel and receive a full refund of their deposit.

Only 40 guests per departure can attend the performance, due to ticket availability, and there are two Tauck itineraries that include Passion Play performances: The Blue Danube and The Romantic Rhine.

Blue Danube cruises out of Munich depart May 17 and 31; June 14 and 28; Aug. 9; and Sept. 6, 13 and 27. Those originating in Budapest depart May 25; June 1, 8 and 22; July 6, 20 and 27; Aug. 3, 17 and 31; and Sept. 14 and 21.

The Romantic Rhine departs from Amsterdam May 20, June 17, July 15 and Aug. 26; cruises from Munich depart May 24, June 21, July 5 and Aug. 30.

Emerald Waterways is offering departures that include the Oberammergau Passion Play in conjunction with three eight-day itineraries — Danube Explorer; Legends of the Moselle, Rhine and Main; and Danube Delights. Departures are May 23; June 20; and Sept. 4 and 12. Cruises include a night in a four-star Munich hotel, a night in Oberammergau and a ticket to the Passion Play.

Uniworld Boutique River Cruise Collection is accommodating group requests for the Oberammergau Passion Play, and will be working together with sister company Insight Vacations on further announcements.

Other cruise lines, including AmaWaterways, Crystal River Cruises and Viking River Cruises, also plan to release itineraries that include Oberammergau 2020.