

2024 - Iconic Christmas Markets

7-NIGHT CRUISE

Travel back through centuries as you walk along cobblestone streets through grand cities and historic towns bedecked with twinkling Christmas trees and lined with wooden huts gleaming with handcrafted treasures. Iconic Christmas markets are plentiful and are on full display for your pleasure. Nuremberg's festive Christkindlesmarkt, the largest and oldest Christmas market in Germany; Regensburg's Christmas market at Thum and Taxis Castle, considered one of Bavaria's most beautiful and romantic; Vienna with its impressive Christmas markets that seem to majestically appear around every corner; and Budapest's Vörösmarty Square, where products sold in the market are traditionally handmade are yours to explore. Sparkling lights; the festive sounds of children dressed as angels singing carols; enticing smells of hot-mulled wine, roasted chestnuts, sausages and sweet treats of every kind; and timeless wonders are a feast for all your senses.

OVERVIEW:

<u>DAY</u>	<u>DESTINATION</u>	<u>ACTIVITIES</u>
1	NUREMBERG	EMBARKATION
2	NUREMBERG	City Tour with Christmas Markets OR Franconian Specialties Tasting Nuremberg Christmas market Cruise Main-Danube Canal
3	REGENSBURG	UNESCO City tour and Christmas Market OR Tastes of Bavaria OR Walhalla bike tour Thum & Taxis Christmas markets
4	PASSAU	"City of Three Rivers" walking tour and Christmas Market OR River Inn Bike Tour OR Full-day Salzburg excursion with Christmas Markets, including Hellbrunn Palace
5	MELK	Benedictine Abbey tour OR Danube bike tour UNESCO scenic cruising Town Hall Christmas Markets
6	VIENNA	"Imperial Vienna" tour with Maria-Theresien-Platz Christmas Markets OR Vienna City Tour by Bike Schönbrunn illuminated Christmas markets
7	BUDAPEST	"Queen of the Danube" tour and Vörösmarty Square Christmas market OR Castle hike
8	BUDAPEST	DISEMBARKATION

ITINERARY DETAILS:

Day 1, NUREMBERG. Board the ship for your Iconic Christmas Markets cruise. (D)

Day 2, NUREMBERG. Join a city tour of WWII highlights and then walk through Nuremberg's cobblestone streets to the Imperial Castle and 900-year-old city ramparts, followed by a visit to some of the local Christmas markets. Later, you can visit Nuremberg's Christkindlesmarkt, one of the world's largest and most famous Christmas markets. You will also cross the Continental Divide via the Main-Danube Canal as the day ends. (B,L,D)

Day 3, REGENSBURG. Regensburg is one of Germany's best preserved medieval cities, as well as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Join a guided walking tour showcasing the city's architectural highlights, including the Old Town Hall and the Porta Praetoria, before visiting the Old Town Christmas market. As an alternate option, sample some of Bavaria's specialties—beer, sausage and pretzels. Or bike to the base of Walhalla where there is a neoclassical white marble temple inspired by the Parthenon in Athens. Later in the day, you'll be treated to one of Bavaria's most beautiful and romantic Christmas markets at Thurn and Taxis, where you can watch artisans make their unique arts and crafts. (B,L,D)

Day 4, PASSAU. Join a walking tour of this 2,000-year-old city, noted for its Gothic and Italian Baroque architecture and St. Stephen's. Go in search of Bavarian-style crafts at the Christmas Market. Or, for the active adventurer, join a guided bike tour along the Danube. Alternatively, you can travel through the serene Austrian Alps to Salzburg, birthplace of Mozart. Your full-day excursion in Salzburg includes a walking tour of the UNESCO-designated Old Town, its magnificent cathedral and its Christmas Markets, including the Hellbrunn Palace, where its inner courtyard is turned into a romantic backdrop for one of the most beautiful Christmas Markets in Austria. (B,L,D)

Day 5, MELK - WACHAU VALLEY - VIENNA. High on a rocky outcrop lies the Melk Abbey, one of Europe's most revered Baroque monasteries. Visit this magnificent Benedictine Abbey, which now houses a museum chronicling its history and a famous library with countless medieval manuscripts. Alternatively, go on a guided bike ride around Melk. Afterward, enjoy a scenic cruise of the UNESCO-designated Wachau Valley before arriving in Vienna and exploring the local Christmas markets. (B,L,D)

Day 6, VIENNA. The "City of Waltzes" offers a treasure trove of gems just waiting to be discovered. Join a tour showcasing its regal splendors, such as the majestic Opera House and the former Imperial Palace of the Habsburgs before concluding in Vienna's historic city center. Afterwards, you'll visit the Christmas Markets. If you prefer a more active adventure, then join a guided bike along the Danube River. During the afternoon, visit the Schönbrunn Palace with a giant sparkling Christmas tree. This market presents a glittering and stellar Christmas experience. (B,L,D)

Day 7, BUDAPEST. Budapest is one of Europe's most regal and storied cities—and many of its most iconic sights can be seen right off the banks of the Danube. Your tour through this sprawling World Heritage city offers splendid views from historic Buda Castle of the twin cities on both banks of the river. You'll also visit Fisherman's Bastion and see the marvelous Royal Palace, St. Stephen's Basilica, Heroes' Square and much more. Later, explore this beautiful city's Christmas Markets. As an alternative, you can hike to Castle Hill, walking along Fishermen's Bastion and take in all the iconic sites of Budapest with an active exploration. (B, L, D)

Day 8, BUDAPEST. Disembark the ship in Budapest and bid farewell to the city before preparing for your return flight home. (B)