



WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A EUROPEAN RIVER CRUISE OR TOUR

A European river cruise or tour is a very special event – often the trip of a lifetime. We encourage anyone considering a European holiday to plan ahead, and compare the alternatives carefully to avoid any pitfalls.

At first glance many brochures seem to offer the same things but you need to look more closely. This check-list provides a guide to what you should look out for.

What is included in the price

We encourage you to consider what the holiday is likely to cost you at the end – not the beginning. People usually get what they pay for so, if one product is significantly less than another, try to understand why. It's unlikely to be generosity but rather things like the quality and location of hotels (hence their cost) plus the number and quality of inclusions such as meals, sightseeing, special events, entrance fees, local guides and tipping. Check which, and how many of these are *actually included* in the price. All the "little extras" that you have to pay for can add up to a sizeable amount by the end of the holiday.

Remember, "It's not so much what you pay that's important, it's what you get for your money that counts!"

Cabins and suites

A river cruise is like holidaying in a floating hotel. Your cabin will be your home for a week or two so you need to be sure of what you're getting. There are many river cruisers and not all have the space and amenities that people have come to expect.

Check the size of your cabin to make sure that you're going to be comfortable. And check the services, facilities and amenities that are being provided.

Private Balconies

Many claim to offer balconies, check that they are true balconies. Some offer an internal area alongside the sliding doors/windows. When the doors are opened you find yourself against the railing of the ship. You can't actually step outside.

Dining

Apart from satisfying yourself that the meals will be suitable, ask whether dinner is served at one or two sittings. Are you restricted to group tables or can you make up your own tables of two or four? Some vessels have less dining space and that places restrictions on the flexibility with dining.

Lounges & Bars

The same space restrictions need to be considered for public areas such as lounges and bars. Look for public areas that are spacious and light-filled with excellent views.

Viewing areas

Your vessel is the viewing platform from which you will see a great deal of Europe. Make sure there are ample spacious viewing areas with comfortable seating.

Meals on tour

Be clear which meals are actually included and which are not. If you believe the brochure is unclear, ask for clarification.

Complimentary Services

Check to see what's included – refreshments, tea/coffee, beer and wine with meals, laundry/pressing services, room service, cabin amenities and facilities etc.

Sightseeing

A brochure will often talk about "included sightseeing" – ask what that means. Do they simply take you to the venue then leave you to queue and pay your own entrance fees, or do they include the entry fees and escort you in ahead of the queue?

Shopping

Take care! It is conventional in Europe that certain shopping venues will pay a commission to either the tour director or the tour operator. In fact some Tour Directors receive only a basic salary and earn the greater part of their income from shopping commissions.

At Scenic Tours we do not take guests on shopping excursions. If required we will make suggestions, but there is no link back to the company or our Tour Directors. Moreover we pay our Tour Directors appropriately so that they don't have to rely on third party commissions to earn a reasonable income.

City visits

When a brochure lists the cities visited, does that mean a drive-through in your tour coach leaving just a blurred memory of what might have been a European jewel? Or does it mean a proper guided tour, with a professional English speaking guide, and Whisper Headsets so you don't miss a word? Check this for each city on your tour.

Beware of "optional" tours

Often these are portrayed as a means of providing flexibility for guests but what do they cost? Has the price been inflated so that the tour operator or Tour Director can be paid a commission? At Scenic Tours we negotiate the best price and pass savings back to you. That is, you pay less even if it is not included in the tour.

Airport Transfers

Will your tour representative meet you at the airport and take you to your ship/hotel or do you have to make your own way – with or without some sort of voucher? What about at the end of the journey?

AGENT RESERVATIONS

Call 1300 136 001

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