

2027 - 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 Artisan Christmas Market at Thurn 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, where products sold in the market are traditionally handmade. Revel in a feast for the senses: sparkling lights; festive sounds of children dressed as angels singing carols; and enticing smells of hot-mulled wine, roasted chestnuts, sausages and sweet treats of every kind.

OVERVIEW:

<u>DAY</u>	<u>DESTINATION</u>	<u>ACTIVITIES</u>
1	BUDAPEST	EMBARKATION
2	BUDAPEST	Buda city tour and Christmas Markets OR Castle Hill Hike
3	VIENNA	"Imperial Vienna" tour with Christmas Market OR Vienna City Tour by Bike Schönbrunn and illuminated Christmas Markets Rathaus Christmas Markets by Night
4	MELK	Melk Abbey visit OR Melk bike tour Cruising the Strudengau
5	PASSAU	Full-day Salzburg excursion and Christmas Market* OR "City of Three Rivers" walking tour and Christmas market OR River Inn Bike Tour
6	REGENSBURG	UNESCO City tour with Thurn & Taxis Artisan Christmas Markets OR Tastes of Bavaria with Thurn & Taxis Artisan Christmas Markets OR Walhalla bike tour OR Free Time at Thurn & Taxis Artisan Christmas Markets
7	NUREMBERG	Main-Danube Canal Nuremberg city tour and Christmas Markets OR Tastes of Franconia
8	NUREMBERG	DISEMBARKATION

ITINERARY DETAILS:

Day 1, BUDAPEST. Board the ship in Budapest for your *Iconic Christmas Markets* cruise. (D)

Day 2, BUDAPEST. Home to several UNESCO World Heritage Sites, including the Buda Castle quarter in Castle Hill and Heroes' Square, Budapest offers an unmatched combination of culture and tradition. Today you have the opportunity to visit the Buda (hilly) side of the Danube River. On your tour, follow your guide through the city's Castle District, where you will marvel at the fairytale turrets of Fisherman's Bastion, gaze upon the breathtaking panorama below and see Matthias Church, renowned for its striking tower and colorful mosaic roof. You will also visit the city's famed Christmas Markets. For a more active tour, hike to Budapest's Castle Hill. (B,L,D)

Day 3, 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. Afterwards, you’ll visit a local Christmas Market where you can purchase delightful delicacies and hand-made gifts. If you prefer a more active adventure, then join a guided bike along the Danube River. In the afternoon, visit Schönbrunn Palace Christmas Market and its spectacular festive atmosphere. Cap the day off at the beautifully decorated Town Hall (Rathaus), Vienna’s largest Christmas Market. (B,L,D)

Day 4, MELK - SCENIC CRUISING. High on a rocky outcrop lies the Melk Abbey, one of Europe’s most revered Baroque monasteries. Visit this magnificent and storied 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. During the evening, enjoy a scenic cruise through the Strudengau Valley. (B,L,D)

Day 5, 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. (B,L,D)

**Not combinable with other tours on this day.*

Day 6, 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 Thurn & Taxis Christmas Market, Bavaria’s most beautiful and romantic Christmas Market. As an alternative option, sample some of Bavaria’s specialties—beer, sausage and pretzels and visit the Christmas Market. Or bike to the base of Walhalla where there is a neoclassical white marble temple inspired by the Parthenon in Athens. For those in a more festive mood, spend the afternoon at your leisure wandering the Christmas Markets, where you can watch artisans make their unique arts and crafts. (B,L,D)

Day 7, NUREMBERG. Enjoy a scenic morning cruise as the ship crosses the Continental Divide via the Main-Danube Canal to 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. Alternatively, you can taste your way through the city with a Franconian specialties tour, which introduces you to bratwurst, rotbier (red beer) and lebkuchen (gingerbread). Later, you can visit Nuremberg’s Christkindlesmarkt, one of the world’s largest and most famous Christmas markets. (B,L,D)

Day 8, NUREMBERG. Disembark the ship and bid farewell to Nuremberg and prepare for your flight home. (B)