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www.travelbyvicki.com
explore@travelbyvicki.com
417.425.4018

Ports & Places

River Cruise - Spring Planning

Why booking early matters

Spring is one of the most beautiful times to sail Europe's rivers—think tulip fields in bloom, café-lined promenades waking up for the season, and mild days perfect for sightseeing. But here's the secret: the best cabins for those sailings are being booked now.

Booking early gives you:

- Choice: Midship or upper deck? French balcony or veranda? Early bookers get first pick.
- Value: Lock in early-bird offers and special promotions.
- Peace of Mind: Your itinerary and stateroom are secured before they sell out.

If you wait, you may be left with fewer options—or miss your preferred sailing entirely.

Travel Tip

Add a Pre- or Post-Cruise Stay

Arrive a day or two before your cruise (or stay afterward) to explore the city at your own pace. It's a relaxed way to adjust to the time change and enjoy bonus sightseeing.



Why River Cruising?

River cruising is one of the most relaxing and enriching ways to see Europe. Unlike ocean ships, river vessels:

- Dock in the heart of historic cities and charming villages
- Carry fewer guests for a more personal, intimate atmosphere
- Include cultural excursions, regional dining, and local wines

It's a way to immerse yourself in the destination, not just visit it.

Partner Spotlight

AmaWaterways

A Different Way to Cruise

Imagine stepping aboard a boutique ship where the focus is not on casinos or crowds, but on comfort, culture, and connection. That's what sets AmaWaterways apart. Their river cruises are designed for travelers who want to immerse themselves in the places they visit—not just sail past them.

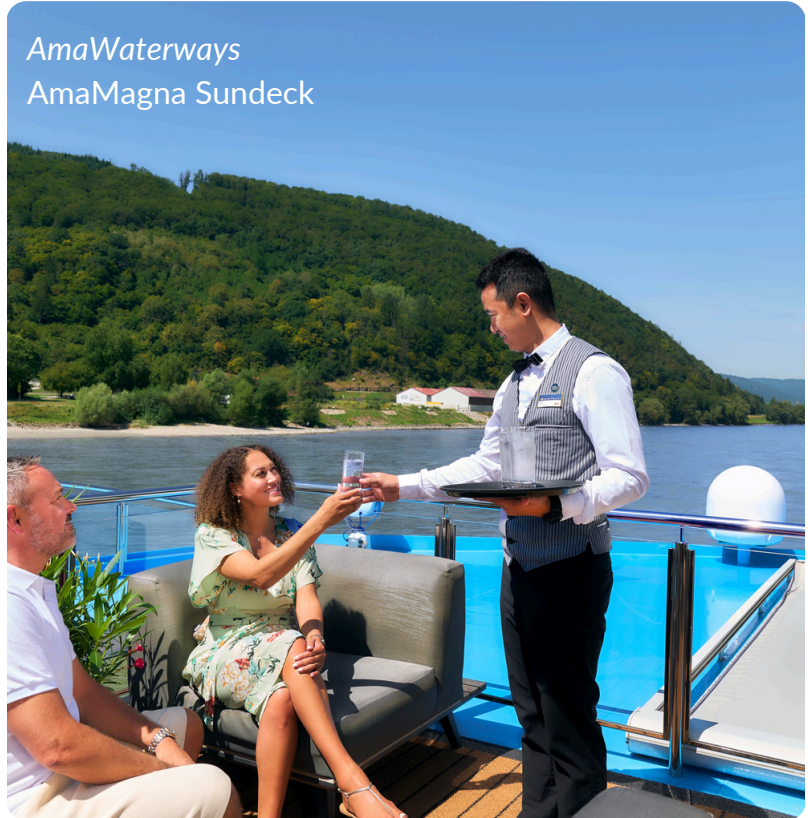
With fewer than 160 guests on most ships, you'll enjoy:

- Spacious staterooms — many with Ama's signature twin balconies
- Local flavors — menus inspired by each region, paired with complementary wine and beer
- Immersive excursions — guided walks, active bike tours, and tastings included in your fare
- Wellness programs — yoga, fitness classes, and hiking opportunities ashore
- Attentive service — one of the highest crew-to-guest ratios on Europe's rivers

As an AmaWaterways Certified Advisor, I've completed specialized training directly with the cruise line. I understand the nuances of their ships, itineraries, and staterooms—and I'll use that insight to help you choose the river cruise that perfectly matches your style of travel.



AmaWaterways
AmaMagna Sundeck



AmaWaterways
Durnstein, Austria

AmaWaterways
Douro River, Portugal



What Sets AmaWaterways Apart?

More Space & Comfort: AmaWaterways ships are designed with enhanced personal space. Their signature twin-balcony staterooms let you enjoy both fresh air and panoramic views—something no other line offers in quite the same way.

All-Inclusive Value: Excursions, wine and beer with meals, and multiple dining venues are built into your fare. From guided walks and bike rides to fine dining with regional menus, Ama includes more so you can focus on the journey itself.

Authentic Immersion: Every sailing connects you with the destination—whether it's a complimentary Sip & Savor tasting, a locally inspired dish, or a themed cruise like wine, music, or heritage. These touches turn a trip into a cultural journey.

Trusted Reputation: AmaWaterways holds the highest repeat guest rate in river cruising. Add in their Green Award for safety, quality, and environmental performance, and you'll see why so many travelers return to sail again and again.

Beyond Europe: Ama doesn't just sail Europe's great rivers—they also explore the mystical Nile, the vibrant Mekong, and even South America's Columbia and Snake Rivers. Wherever you go, you'll find the same thoughtful service and immersive style.

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ICONIC AmaWaterways River Cruises

- **Tulip Time** - Celebrate spring in the Netherlands & Belgium when the Keukenhof Gardens and Floralia come alive.
- **Secrets of Egypt & the Nile** - Embark on the adventure of a lifetime through Egypt and along the Nile on this 11-night river cruise.
- **Iconic Christmas Markets** - Walk along cobblestone streets bedecked with twinkling Christmas trees & wooden huts with handcrafted treasures! A special trip to experience.
- **Europe's Rivers & Castles** - Enjoy Europe at its most picturesque. Let the storybook villages captivate you!
- **Flavors of Portugal & Spain** - Taste wines from the vineyards & discover the timeless traditions of Portuguese winemaking.

✦ **Click here to explore AmaWaterways
with Travel by Vicki**



Vicki Kramer

Look for the next issue in November, when I'll share the Mini Passport answer, plus inspiration for holiday travel and winter cruises.

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Why Choose Travel by Vicki?

- **Clear Communication, Every Step of the Way** — You'll never wonder what comes next. I provide reminders, tips, and helpful links so you always feel clear and confident about your next step.
- **Personal Touches** — With my customized onboarding guide and thoughtful reminders, you don't have to manage the details—I take care of them so you can simply look forward to your trip.
- **Boutique Service** — Everyone deserves the best level of service—whether it's one night in a city hotel or the journey of a lifetime.

Mini Passport Warm-Up 🌐

Each issue, I'll include a quick travel trivia question — just for fun, and to spark a little wanderlust. Take your best guess and watch for the answer in the next newsletter!

Which of these cities is world-famous for its Christmas Markets?

- ☐ Vienna
- ☐ Budapest
- ☐ Rome

👉 [Click here to cast your vote!](#)



Certified Travel Associate

Cruise Line Categories Explained

Not all cruises are the same. Here's a quick guide:

- **Mainstream Lines** — Large ships with entertainment and activities for all ages. (Royal Caribbean, Carnival, Norwegian)
- **Premium Lines** — Mid-size ships with more refined service and destination focus. (Holland America, Princess, Celebrity, Virgin Voyages)
- **Premium-plus with Luxury Touches** — Cunard (formal service, heritage sailings, transatlantic tradition)
- **Luxury Lines** — Smaller ships, all-inclusive service, boutique itineraries. (Regent, Seabourn, Silversea)

What is your favorite? Which line would you like to try?

Certifications & Ongoing Training

I'm a Certified Travel Associate through The Travel Institute and certified with several cruise lines, rail, and all-inclusives. I also complete ongoing training with leading cruise lines and suppliers to stay current on promotions, destinations, and trends—so every trip I plan is backed by expertise you can trust.