



Northern Nevada REAL ESTATE

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Christmas 2023 cruising the Blue Danube

Just thinking about taking a river cruise on the fabled blue Danube River in the winter may make you shudder, especially after the winter we've been experiencing this year.

My first experience on a European river cruise was in 2012 when Europe was experiencing one of the coldest winters on record and the fast-flowing Danube tried to ice over. Yes, that is how cold it was. And, there was plenty of snow to add to the ambiance of the Christmas markets. But, did that deter us from having one of the best cruises ever? You bet it didn't.

Our beautiful Amadeus long ship was warm and toasty, the food was amazing, the cabins snug and comfortable, and the lounge was a great gathering place to hear music and enjoy the holiday entertainers that came on board after dinner. The ship holds up to 150 passengers, all of which became friends.

We mostly cruised at night arriving at a new port-of-call each morning and after a hearty breakfast, we donned our boots and bundled up to explore the small village or city before ending at the Christmas market in each of the locations. We wandered through the booths, ate the famed bratwursts or other sausage offerings and after drinking the Gluhwein (spiced hot mulled wine), we suddenly became warm



Marilyn Foster
Travels with Marilyn

wishing Frohe Weinachten (Merry Christmas) to all. Each market has a porcelain Gluhwein cup for sale with the name of the market and the year. A grand keepsake that can be used for many years.

Each year, the Chamber Travel Club enjoys a pre-Christmas trip to see how other parts of our country or foreign destinations celebrate the holiday. In 2022, our group enjoyed Santa Fe, New Mexico. I am told the weather was similar to ours and all had a great time.

This year, we've decided it's again time to visit the Christmas markets along the Danube River beginning in Vienna, one of Europe's most beautiful cities with finest Christmas Market in Europe.

Departing on Dec. 9, we arrive in Vienna the next day and immediately board the MS Amadeus Brilliant, unpacking once. The Christmas adventure begins the first night with a welcome dinner followed by a holiday concert. There will be time in Vienna to see all that makes this walkable city so beloved. After a morning orientation tour, the afternoon is yours to sip coffee

and enjoy a Viennese Sacher torte in one of the fine Sacher cafes across from the cathedral before strolling to the market. That's what I did, and I can still taste that torte today!

The next day we are on our way. First stop is to visit the 900-year-old famous Melk Abbey and then contemplate what we saw at a Gluhwein party. We'll sleep great that night!

Next stop is Passau, the 2,000-year-old "fairy tale city" situated where three rivers meet. Here you can explore one of the largest preserved castle complexes in Europe or just wander through the town. Then on to Regensburg, one of Germany's best-preserved medieval cities.

The cruise portion of our tour ends in Nurnberg hosting Germany's oldest market. You'll be led on a guided tour of this famous city with plenty of time left to explore on your own. There will be an overnight here and on Saturday morning all packed, we board a motorcoach to Rothenberg, the village made famous by Disney in Pinocchio.

We disembark our ship in ancient Wurzburg known for its wine, fortress, and the Bishop Bridge. Here we will spend the last day of our holiday adventure. Of course, there's a Christmas market in the center square - and Gluhwein! We'll dine in a local restaurant for our farewell dinner before



VIENNA TOURIST BUREAU

The Vienna Christmas Market is one of the finest in Europe.

transferring to Frankfurt for our return journey.

If you don't think seven nights is long enough for a European adventure, think about adding two nights prior to the tour and flying into Prague instead of Vienna. Prague is another one of those picturesque "must see" cities worth an extra two days.

Is it too early to think about booking a Christmas holiday? Absolutely not when considering most tours are booked fully a year or more in advance. The cost of \$3,298 per person includes air from Reno, free parking at the Chamber office, all transfers, seven nights cruise, one night hotel, 19 meals, guided tours, entrance fees and more. Booking after March 31 may result in a



RONNI HANNAMAN

Marilyn Foster enjoying coffee and a Sacher torte in Vienna in 2012.

higher rate.

I still sip from my Gluhwein cups and will always hold fond memories of my first European cruise, and I hardly remember the cold. But, who knows, this December could be tropical! Call my friends at the

Chamber at 775-882-1565 or go on the travel club page at www.carsoncitychamber.com. You'll love every minute of this trip.

Marilyn Foster was 94 the end of January and still has a passion for travel.



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