



Fiber Garden
LLC

December 8-15, 2022

2022 Christmas Markets on the Rhine River Cruise Frequently Asked Questions

You are about to embark on a wonderful travel experience along the Rhine River where you will experience all the magic of Christmas as you enjoy the Christmas Markets and more in Switzerland, Germany, France, and the Netherlands. These FAQs have been assembled in hopes of making planning for your cruise easier. Several weeks prior to your cruise, you will receive an extensive set of information to help you make your final preparations. If you have questions at any time, e-mail me at deb@fibergarden.com, or phone 715.284.4590. (Email is my preferred method of communication, when possible.) I look forward to traveling with you!

Pre-trip:

- **What do I need to include when planning my budget for the trip?** Trip cost is of interest to most of us. I am providing some guidelines here of some known and optional costs to assist you in developing a realistic budget for the trip.
 - Let's start with the basic trip costs. You have lots of stateroom options when you cruise which are offered at a range of fares. Review the [fare list](#) and the compare the prices with your [stateroom options](#) on the AmaLucia. Make sure and review the list of everything your cruise fare includes. Once you board the ship, most of your major expenses are covered including your meals and local shore excursions, etc.
 - Travel insurance. Insurance premiums typically average 10-12% of the trip cost, more if you are over the age of 70, less if you are under 60. Insurance is non-refundable.
 - Airfare (and airport parking, if needed). As of this document, it is difficult to know what air prices will do since travel is just beginning following the pandemic. By 2022, airfares will hopefully stabilize. Typical air prices the past few years have been in the \$1,000 - \$1,200 range for main cabin fares on trips to Europe.
 - Pre-cruise lodging. Due to the potential for weather-related air delays in the winter, it is highly recommended that you plan to arrive one or more days prior to our embarkation date of 12/8/22. The Fiber Garden will secure lodging through AmaWaterways and will communicate the location and pricing when it is available.
 - Gratuities. You can pre-pay your gratuities for on-board ship staff that you will be well-served by. They will be paid with your final cruise payment and are \$144 per person. You may also choose to wait and pay gratuities once you are on-board. (Personally, I like to pay in advance to reduce my on-board account total. But this it totally up to you.)
 - Optional pre-cruise land package. If you want to enjoy a longer vacation and add four additional nights prior to your cruise, the cost is \$1,600 pp for double occupancy and \$2,400 for a single room. Two nights in Lucerne and two nights in Zurich.
 - This list is not all-inclusive but should provide the major expenses you need to consider when planning the budget for your trip.
 - A suggestion is to make your reservation early and make payments on your cruise over the coming months. Any balance due remaining will be paid at the final payment date of September 1, 2022.

- **What forms of payment can I use?** All payments for tour costs must be paid by credit card. (MasterCard, VISA, AMEX.) All travelers will have a credit card on file that will be used for payments. All payments will be made on your behalf by the Fiber Garden and paid directly to the tour companies. The Fiber Garden cannot accept any direct payments.
- **What is the refund policy if I need to cancel my trip?** [Cancellation policies](#) can be found on the cruise website. Air cancellation penalties will apply based on the policies of AmaWaterways as stated in their cancellation policy above, or the airline your flight is booked with if you do not book air through AmaWaterways. Reservations may NOT be transferred to another individual if you need to cancel. If you purchased travel insurance, check your policy for trip cancellation coverage.
- **Can you tell me more about travel insurance?** Travel insurance is highly recommended, but not required for you to participate. You should consider how it may help protect your investment and provide peace of mind should an unfortunate situation occur. In addition, should you become ill or injured on your trip, travel insurance provides medical coverage. The Fiber Garden works with two highly reputable insurance companies. We will provide you with a quote if you request one when you submit your registration. After receiving your quote, if you have specific questions regarding the policy and its coverage, you will be provided with a phone number to contact the company directly.
- **Do I need a passport?** Yes, you must have a passport to book this cruise! Your passport must be valid for at least six months past the date of your trip. If you need to apply for a passport or renew your passport, you can do so through the [U.S. Department of the State](#).
- **What if I have a criminal conviction?** You may be denied entry into your chosen destination as a result of any prior criminal convictions. It is your responsibility to check with the appropriate embassy to assess your situation.
- **I have some limited mobility and difficulty walking. Will this be a problem for me?** Please be advised that travel in Europe can sometimes involve uneven terrain, rough walking surfaces, short to medium walking distances during tours, and some stairs which can be challenging for those with mobility issues. Although our ship will have an elevator that will access the lower three floors of ship. It does not go to the top deck, the sundeck. The ship is not fully handicapped accessible. Wheelchair access is very limited, and staterooms would not allow for movement in a wheelchair. Getting on and off the ship needs to be done on foot. Please contact the Fiber Garden prior to registering for the cruise to discuss any concerns.
- **What should I pack?** Several weeks prior to the trip, you will receive more information to help you prepare for your cruise. The information here is just to get you started.

Comfortable “Country Club Casual” is the recommended attire for daytime, and something a little dressier for the Captain’s night/Farewell Dinner – similar to how one would dress to dine at a 5-star restaurant. Comfortable shoes are a “must” for excursions and workout clothing if you plan to take part in any wellness activities, active tours or use the onboard gym. You will want to pack clothing that can be layered to stay comfortable in changing weather conditions, and a rain jacket. Don't overpack!! Plan your wardrobe so you can wear a few shirts and pants in multiple outfits. (After all, you need to have room left in your luggage to stash all those treasures you'll be bringing home!!!) Items that you might want to tuck in your suitcase include a travel alarm, converter/adaptor plugs for your electronics. Leave expensive jewelry or other valuables at home!

- **What is the weather?** Daytime temperatures average in the mid-40’s in December and nighttime lows in the mid-30’s. Frequent rainfall is possible.
- **How will air be booked?** For this December cruise, it is highly recommended that your air be booked through AmaWaterways. The Fiber Garden will work directly with the cruise line to communicate your air preferences. Should you be delayed on your arrival, AmaWaterways will assist you to make sure you are well taken care of. You may also choose to book air on your own. If you are planning to use reward points to “pay” for your airfare, you will need to do your own air reservation.

- **How do I get from the airport to the pre-cruise hotel or cruise embarkation point?** If you have purchased air through the cruise line, they will provide your transportation from the airport at no additional charge. If you book your air elsewhere, you can pay a fee to the cruise line for a transfer. The Fiber Garden can do this for you.
- **What else do I need to know to prepare for the trip?** There is a lot of information that could be shared here, but these are the very basics. The Fiber Garden will work with you every step of the way guiding you through the pre-trip preparations, tour documents, etc. Once you make your reservation for the tour, please be sure to thoroughly read any information e-mailed or sent to you by Deb/the Fiber Garden or AmaWaterways.

During the cruise:

- **Can I use my cell phone?** It depends. You will want to check with your cell phone provider to see if your phone can be used when traveling internationally, and what the rates are. Personally, I purchased an unlocked smart phone and a T-Mobile account. It is very cost-effective and has provided reliable service while traveling in Europe. It will be far more economical to rely most heavily on Wi-Fi for communications as it is more available and less expensive. [Some good information](#) for traveling in Europe with your cell phone can be found in the linked article.
- **Is there internet access?** Yes! Your cruise fare includes internet access in your stateroom and Wi-Fi throughout the ship. It might not always be super high-speed, but for the most part, you should be able to stay in touch with people and get those cruise photos posted!
- **Currency.** Shipboard purchases are charged in Euros. You can pay your on-board account at the end of your cruise in cash with Euros or with a credit card. The Euro is also used in France, Germany, and the Netherlands. Switzerland still uses the Swiss Franc, although some places may accept Euros. You will want some local currency in cash, but you will likely use your credit card for most of your purchases when in ports. You can exchange currency at your U.S. airport or at the airport on arrival in Europe. ATMs will also dispense cash in the local currency and are readily available on shore during our port stops. It is best to carry smaller denominations of U.S. dollars and local currency as many places will not accept large bills. It is highly recommended that you have more than one credit card with you in case of issues with one of them. Follow your credit card companies procedures for notifying them prior to your trip that you will be traveling outside of the U.S.

Post-tour:

- **How do I get from the ship to the airport?** As with your arrival, if you booked your air through AmaWaterways, your transportation to the airport is included after your cruise. If you booked air independently, you can purchase a transfer from the cruise line.

Please contact me if there are other questions that you need answered. I'm here to help you have the best of travel experiences! I will continue to update this document and will remain in communication as the date of the river cruise approaches.

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