

2025 Christmas Markets Prepare to Cruise Zoom Agenda

Thursday, November 13, 7:00 p.m. Central

CHECK YOUR EMAIL DAILY!!!!

Welcome!! Some of the following information has been provided in your guest information booklet and your other cruise documents and I have provided expanded explanations. These documents can always be accessed on <https://www.amawaterways.com/my-trip/cruise-check-in> and also on you My AmaCruise app.

Communications During Travel

- Check with your cellular provider as to the settings to use on your phone so you don't get charged international roaming fees if you don't have an international calling plan
- Deb will have cell service during the trip. But most of you will not unless you have an international calling plan. Therefore, communications will need to be done via WiFi connections.
- WhatsApp. Use WhatsApp to text me at 715.220.9279. (Only use this number for texting prior to our trip!) Be sure and tell me your name when you message me through WhatsApp! 
- You can use this to reach me if you have flight delays, etc. Also to send a message to your travel companions.

Passports/ETA/EES

- **Passports.** Make a copy and bring it with you/keep a photo on your phone!! Keep in carry-on...do not pack! I recommend keeping it with you at all times during your travel.
- **ETA (Electronic Travel Authorization).** This is a new digital system beginning in 2025 for visa-exempt visitors to the UK. You do NOT need this if you are not visiting the UK during this trip. They are not required if you are connecting through a UK airport. However, I suggest being on the safe side and getting an ETA even if you are only making a connection. Should your air travel get delayed when you connect in the UK, you will need the ETA. Better to get it in advance rather than at the last minute when you need it.
 - The ETA is easiest to get through their app, but you can also apply on line. The webpage for applying is below, along with the app icon so you know you've found the correct app. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-an-electronic-travel-authorisation-eta>
 -  **UK ETA**
- **EES (European Entry/Exit System).** U.S. citizens will need to go through the EU's new Entry and Exit System when traveling to 29 European countries. (Formerly passport control.) This applies to any visits lasting up to 90 days within a 180-day period. Your fingerprints, facial image,

passport details, and entry and exit dates will be collected and stored digitally. The new system will be introduced gradually over 6 months.

Travel/Flights to Budapest

- Air can be a challenge these days due to flight delays, cancellations, etc. Be patient and don't panic...no matter what happens! **Important!** If you are notified of a flight change prior to your departure, please notify Deb!! I will need to notify the cruise line if you are doing the pre-cruise extension. This is especially important if your arrival flight into Budapest changes!
- **For those doing the pre-cruise extension:** If you have a flight change/cancellation once you have left home and begun your trip, please call the AmaWaterways number provided in your cruise documents and notify them of the change and update your transfer time.
- Keep ALL WRITTEN records of your flight booking history, including original flights, updated flight itineraries, new flight itineraries in the case of cancellations. If you have flight information on your phone that you don't have a paper copy of, take a screen shot.
- E-tickets bring a printed copy, even if you are using an airline app!
- Get a PAPER boarding pass in case you need to file an insurance claim.
- Do not delete anything related to air travel until you return home and are confident that you will not need to file an insurance claim! Getting insurance documentation from airlines is not easy and having paper documentation available will save you a lot of hassle.
- Check your flights!!! You will work directly with the airline or to manage your flights in the case of a cancellation.
- Passport control/EES. If you need to go through passport control at your connecting airport, the lines usually move quickly. But to be safe, once you get off your flight arriving in your connecting airport, start heading to your next gate. You will be routed through passport control. Once you're through passport control, feel free to relax, grab coffee or something to eat, etc. before heading to your gate.
- Recommend you have the airline app on your phone for receiving up-to-date alerts about your flights.
- **Those doing the pre-cruise extension have all purchased transfers from AmaWaterways to your hotel.** Look for the AmaWaterways representative or the hospitality desk for your transfer.
- **Those NOT doing the pre-cruise, arriving into Budapest on Dec 12,** you are on your own to get to the hotel. I suggest getting a taxi from the airport. It's about ten miles and the cost is expected to be about \$30-40. After your arrival at the hotel, you are on your own until you board the AmaMora the next afternoon.

Currency/Gratuities

- Currency in Hungary is the Forint. All the other countries use the Euro. Options to obtain foreign currency:
 - Check with your bank.

- ATM at airport or currency exchange at airport. This will probably be the highest exchange rate
- Local bank ATMs in the cities we visit. Local ATMs will be the best exchange rates after you arrive.
- Large amounts of currency can be ordered online to be delivered to you via FedEx. I have used [Currency Exchange International](#) and (one other place I can't remember/find!)
- You will use credit card for most everything. MC and VISA most commonly accepted. AMEX not as much. Discover not at all. Have at least two credit cards with you, so you have a back-up if needed.
 - Most of the Christmas market booths will take credit cards, but not all, so you will need a small amount of cash.
- Contact your credit card company to notify them that you are traveling internationally.
- Check with your credit card company to see if they charge international transaction fees. These can add up! You still have time to get a new credit card before the trip that does not charge these fees.
- Gratuities. Most of you prepaid the main gratuities that include the ship crew and Cruise Manager.
 - Additional gratuities may be paid to local tour guides and drivers. The recommended amounts are in your Guest Travel Booklet
 - Those doing the pre-cruise Budapest extension. Cruise Manager - \$5 Euros/person/day.
 - Any additional you want to give to crew members who provided you extra service. (e.g. Stateroom attendant, waiter.) Envelopes will be provided at the end of the cruise and this will be discussed on board the ship. Pay in Euros.

Time and Weather

- 7 hours ahead of Central Standard Time
- Temps averaging lower 40's during the day down to about 30 at night. (But weather is unpredictable.) Dress in layers. Bring a scarf, hat, mittens.

Travel Insurance

Bring a copy of your coverage with the insurance company contact info and/or the wallet cards. If you can't find the confirmation of your insurance purchase, [email Deb](#) and she will send it to you.

- If you did not purchase a policy through Deb, you will be receiving a task through the portal asking you to sign that you were offered insurance but have chosen to decline it.

Packing and luggage

- In your carry-on, be sure and pack an extra change of clothes and any toiletries, pajamas, medications, etc. you would need should your checked luggage be delayed.
- Put your identification info inside your luggage in case your luggage tag is lost.

- Good walking/hiking shoes/boots that are comfortable for walking on uneven surfaces (e.g. cobblestone, brick). An extra pair in case one is wet.
- Electric adapter. 220, two-prong. This is an outlet adapter, NOT a currency converter! Don't bring anything that is not dual voltage. Do NOT bring hairdryers or curling irons. A hairdryer will be in your stateroom and if you need a curling iron, some will be available at reception.
- Don't overpack!! You'll probably wear the same clothes most every day. (This is considered VERY acceptable! 😊)
- Casual dress during day. Casual is OK at dinner also, although you might want to add an accessory to dress up your outfit for dinner. Some people will dress up for the captain's dinner, but it's not necessary. A nice top and pants is fine. You will NOT need to pack a dress, skirt, suitcoat unless you want to.

Medications and health issues

- Pack enough medication (in your carry on) so you have enough if you get detained for 7-14 extra days!
- Come prepared with whatever you need to keep yourself comfortable should you become ill during the trip!!
- Any dietary or health issues you did not indicate when you registered...let me know **ASAP. Also, be sure and let the wait staff on the ship know!!**

During the Cruise

- **Boarding the AmaMora. For those arriving on 12/12**, one day early, I suggest you check out of our hotel in the morning and ask them to store your luggage. Then enjoy your day in Budapest. We will meet back at the hotel at 2:45 p.m., collect our luggage, and I will ask the hotel to call a taxi for us to take us to the cruise docking location. Taxi cost is your expense.
- Those doing the pre-cruise extension will get instructions for your included transfer from your hotel to the cruise docking location.
- Every evening there is a Sip & Sail hour from 6:00 – 7:00, followed by dinner. The Cruise Manager will typically talk to us during the Sip & Sail about the following day shore excursions, etc.
- Monday evening will be in Vienna. If you are not attending the concert, I recommend the evening Christmas Market. This is the only opportunity you will have on this itinerary to visit the Christmas markets at night.
- You'll receive full instructions about where to meet, time, etc for your excursions. Listen for announcements. You'll have a Quietvox hearing device for tours. Many tours will have gentle, regular, and active options. All tours are included in your cruise fare with the exception of the concert in Vienna.
- **Reservations have been made for us at the Chef's Table restaurant on Sunday evening.** You do NOT need to make your own reservations.

- If you need anything...ask!! Reception is open 24 hours.
- The crew will announce any schedule changes so you will have a seamless experience.
- Relax and enjoy the experience! There will be several traditional European Christmas traditions.

Getting home

- Everyone with the exception of those extending their stay for independent travel purchased a transfer from the ship to the Nuremberg airport. You will receive instructions on board regarding transfer departure times. Large luggage will need to be placed outside your stateroom door the evening prior to disembarkation at the time announced by the ship crew.
- Mobile Passport for entry into U.S. App has been updated and is now Mobile Passport Control. Icon MPE. U.S. Customs and Border Patrol app. This will expedite entry into the United States on our return for those who don't have Global Entry.

Links to items Deb uses

Note that I'm not promoting Amazon via these links. It's just the easiest way to show you the products. I am not an Amazon affiliate.

- [Compression bags](#) are great for creating extra room in your suitcase and bring extra compression bags to pack your purchases in to bring home! (Note that the link is not to the bags I purchased years ago. But it will help you get your search started. I like the sets that come with multiple sizes of bags.)
- Another good packing tool is packing cubes or compression packing cubes. [These are the ones I've tried and like.](#)
- [Phone lanyard](#). I never worry about losing my phone and my hands can remain free for other things. Highly recommended if you use your phone to take photos. This is not the one I have, but looks very similar.
- [KN95 mask that I wear](#). These are the masks I travel with and always use. Comfortable, FDA approved high filtration efficiency, and they were one of the few masks given EUA for use in medical settings during the pandemic before the U.S. could produce adequate N95 masks.
- [Electric outlet adapter](#). This is the adapter I provide to our groups traveling to Shetland. It can be used in many different countries and has lots of slots for charging various items. Please understand that this ONLY adapts the European plug to accept a U.S. shaped plug. It is NOT a currency converter.

Remember to keep an eye on your email!!