

Alsace – The Canal de la Marne au Rhin & Canal du Rhône au Rhin



A delightful cruise through the heart of Alsace-Lorraine where French and German culture entwine creating one of France's most popular cruise regions. Visit the famous towns of Colmar and Strasbourg and see traditional picturesque villages with half-timbered houses and ancient squares. We include interesting shore excursions by coach, on foot or by bicycle - including crystal glassmaking and beer or wine tasting – and free time for shopping or to explore. The region is renowned for its exquisite cuisine and fine wines and our onboard chef will make every meal a regional delight.

Cruise highlights include:

- **Sarrebourg:** Chapel of the Cordeliers with Chegall's stained-glass window.
- The Arzwiller barge lift: raising boats 52-metres.
- **Saverne:** splendid red sandstone palace and typical houses.
- **Strasbourg:** the stupendous cathedral and the picturesque "Petite France" district.
- **Colmar:** a fairy-tale town with its Little "Venice" quarter



Departs: Every Saturday from 18th July to 16th October 27th 2009
Value season 18th July to 21st August, Normal season 22nd August to 16th October 2009
Cost: \$3395 per person twin share (low season)
\$3795 per person twin share (normal season other dates)
Single Supplement: \$900

The *Lorraine* cruises in Burgundy from 11th April to 3rd July, then on La Petite Saone on 4th July and through the Vosges Mountains on 11th July before settling on to its weekly Alsace itinerary from 18th July 18. On 17th October the boat returns to the Vosges Mountains route followed by La Petite Saone on 24th October 2009.

CALL OUTDOOR TRAVEL FOR BOOKINGS ON 1800 331 582

Suggested itinerary – from Krafft to Sarrebourg or return:

Saturday: Our meeting place is the Strasbourg train station from where you will be transferred to *The Lorraine*, moored in the village of Krafft. After a welcome drink we welcome introduce you to the crew and you can relax in preparation for a gourmet Welcome Dinner on board.

Sunday: After breakfast we cruise the peaceful Canal du Rhône au Rhin, a beautiful waterway that has seen little use since the building of the Grand Canal d'Alsace in the 1950's. Our air-conditioned coach will then transfer you to Colmar, a town renowned for its magnificent medieval and Renaissance buildings, its 13th-century collegiate church, and the waterside 'Little Venice' district. There is a guided tour and free time to explore. Perhaps visit the Unterlinden Museum, famous for its Renaissance art and home to the "Issenheim Altarpiece." We return to the barge via the famous "Route Des Vins" a small road running at the base of the foothills of the Vosges Mountains, parallel to the Rhine and through the famous vineyards of Alsace. We may pause in picturesque Riquewihr for a wine tasting before returning to *Lorraine*, moored in Strasbourg.

Monday: We cast off early and cruise during breakfast and through the morning toward Strasbourg. At lunchtime we enter the heart of Strasbourg and pass the ultra modern buildings of the European Parliament. We disembark for an afternoon guided walking tour of Strasbourg including the picturesque "petite France" riverside district, the remarkable cathedral of Notre Dame which took over five centuries to build from the Romanesque choir to the flamboyant gothic spire. There is also free time to explore this capital of Alsace, perhaps to visit one of the museums, to go shopping or just to stroll through the cobbled streets of half-timbered houses before returning to the *Lorraine* at her mooring close by in the village of Hochfelden.

Tuesday: We begin cruising after breakfast passing several typical Alsatian villages (where ancient documents prove there were breweries as early as 870 A.D). We visit a small local brewery as arguably all the best French beers are brewed in Alsace. There is also an opportunity today for walking and cycling (perhaps diverting to a *bierstube* to sample some more local beer). Later, a delightful afternoon cruise brings us to the picturesque small town of Lutzelbourg nestled in the Vosges Mountains.

Wednesday: After breakfast we take a short drive to visit a unique glass crystal factory. Beautiful pieces of fine crystal are still individually blown and fashioned by hand. Back on board we cruise into Lorraine, where the canal follows the steep-sided valley of the River Zorn to the famous inclined plane (lift) of Arzwiller. Here, a counterbalanced barge lift hauls us up over 50metres to the Marne to Rhine Canal. We then cruise through a cutting and two tunnels under the peak of the Vosges Mountains before mooring near the village of Hess.

Thursday: We begin the morning along the summit pound, the highest section, of the Marne to Rhine canal. This section comprises some 30km without locks through the regional park of Lorraine, a nature reserve with numerous lakes and vast woodlands. The canal then begins its descent towards the plain of Lorraine through a series of locks, the first of which was built to replace a flight of seven of the original early 19th century locks and has a drop of nearly 15metres. In the afternoon we take the coach to Sarrebourg and visit the chapel of the Cordeliers to see the stained glass window created by Marc Chagall. We return to Lorraine for our gala farewell dinner onboard.

Friday: The cruise ends after breakfast with a coach transfer to the train station in Strasbourg.

Note: The above itinerary is for westbound cruises. On alternate weeks the eastbound itinerary also meets at Strasbourg Railway Station by the exit at 1.00pm. The return will be from Strasbourg station on Friday. This is a sample itinerary; it is subject to modification in the case of unforeseen circumstances such as canal closures and navigation problems.

Ask for details of our many other hotel barge cruises or self-skipped motor cruisers available in France, Germany, Italy, Holland, Ireland, Scotland and England

Contact Outdoor Travel or your travel agent for more details, travel brochures and reservations

Call Toll free 1800 331 582 or (03) 57551743 or Fax (03) 57501020

Email: info@outdoortravel.com.au

Web: <http://www.outdoortravel.com.au>

Mail: Outdoor Travel Pty Ltd, PO Box 286, Bright 3741

Travel Agent Licence No: 31102