

Bike & Barge: Germany, Luxembourg, France

Day 1: Cochem, Germany

You will make your own way to the barge. Embarkation and check-in is at 2 p.m. in Cochem. After a welcome meeting with the crew, the tour leader will take you for a walk through this cozy and characteristic Moselle town, with steep wine-clad mountains, wooded hills, an impressive castle and a picturesque square with beautiful timber-framed houses and cafes. A visit to Cochem's majestic Reichsburg Castle is on the program.

Closest Airport: Frankfurt (FRA). Cochem is 25 KM away from FRA Airport.

Day 2: Cochem - Zell (39 KM / 24 MI)

Following breakfast, you'll cycle to Beilstein, one of the best-preserved historical villages on the Moselle. The ruins of Castle Metternich sit towering above the village, and you'll have the opportunity to explore them. After leaving Beilstein you'll pass Europe's steepest vineyard – with slopes inclining up to 60 degrees – at Bremmer Calmont. Today's tour ends in the wine village of Zell on the Moselle, well known in the industry for the wine Zeller Schwarze Katz. In Zell we recommend taking the opportunity to get to know the good wines of the Moselle valley.

Day 3: Zell on the Moselle - Bernkastel - Kues (45 KM / 27 MI)

Today you'll cycle from Zell to the romantic village of Traben-Trarbach, located on the Moselle's left bank and famous for its Jugendstil (Art Nouveau) architecture. From there you pass through the wine city of Kröv – well-known for its popular Kröver wine – to Bernkastel-Kues, your destination for the night. The grand half-timbered houses that surround Bernkastel-Kues's marketplace date back to the Middle Ages, and are a photographer's delight. You'll reach the barge in Kues after a tour through town.

Day 4: Bernkastel - Kues - Neumagen - Schweich (28 KM / 18 MI or 54 KM / 34 MI) Schweich - Trier

From Bernkastel, the valley opens up and vineyards expand as far as the eye can see. Today we cruise past the heavy-hitters in the wine world: Brauneberg, Piesport, Trittenheim. Piesport is beloved by the Brits for the "little golden droplets." Trittenheim lies in a sharp hairpin turn on the river surrounded by mountains coated with grapes. Around lunchtime you will arrive in Neumagen, already in Roman times an important center of wine production. You can decide to join the barge from here or continue by bicycle to Schweich, where again the barge will be waiting for you. Once on board you will cruise to Trier, the oldest city in Germany. Trier was founded around 15 before Christ by Caesar Augustus under the name of Augusta Treverorum. As a trading town and administrative center, Trier flourished during the late imperial age. This Roman golden age has left us with a respectable number of monuments. Most authentic is the city gate Porta Nigra, which was built around 18 after Christ.

Day 5: Trier - Saarburg (28 KM / 18 MI)

In the morning your tour leader will take you into Trier and walk you around in Roman history. There is also time to discover and enjoy Trier on your own.

After lunch you will hop on your bicycles and follow the Mosel and Saar river to our next destination, Saarburg. Saarburg is an interesting old town situated in the most beautiful part of the Saar valley. Here the banks of the river are densely forested. The castle of Saarburg was built here in the middle of the 10th century. In the middle of town you come across a waterfall of 20 meters high. At the foot of this waterfall there is an old mill, which is driven by the small river. In this part of town most of the old houses from the 17th and 18th century, which give Saarburg such a picturesque look, are still intact. Today there is no dinner on board. You can select one of the local restaurants of Saarburg.

Day 6: Saarburg – Remich (45 km/27 mi. or 53 km/32 mi.)

Today there are 2 cycling options. One is easy, but a bit longer along the rivers. The shorter option is a bit more challenging, through the hills. Whatever your choice is, the cycling will lead you into the Grand Duchy Luxembourg. Here the Moselle forms the border between Germany and Luxembourg. Luxembourg is a small country, but her capital (also called Luxembourg) is an important finance center and EU administrative city. On the way, at the Luxembourg side, we visit a wine cooperative, specialized in the so called “Cremant”, say the Champagne of the Moselle. Close to Remich you can admire a Roman mosaic floor. The tile floor which lies in its original place, was once the centerpiece in a palatial Roman villa. The scene (in 3 million individual tile pieces) reveals scenes from gladiator games in the amphitheater.

Day 7: Remich – Schengen | Schengen – Thionville (30 km/18 mi.) | Thionville – Metz

While having breakfast you will cruise to Schengen, where your cycling tour will start. The “Schengen agreement” is something everybody in Europe has heard of, whereas almost nobody knows that it is named after this little town in Luxembourg at the 3-country border. Soon we will cross the Luxembourg- French border and experience the outcome of this agreement: no border controls. We pass the fortress of Sierck-les-Bains, one of the palaces inhabited by the powerful Dukes of Lorraine. The route is lovely through French countryside, and friendly villages. Around lunchtime you will arrive in Thionville, the center of the steel industry until the 1980s. That might sound modern and industrial, but the city is ancient. The historic center shows us the medieval ramparts, lovely gardens, old streets and St. Maximin basilica. Here the ship is waiting to pick you up to cruise to Metz, another ancient city strategically situated on a Roman trading route. St. Etienne Cathedral is the 3rd largest gothic church in France with flying buttresses and Marc Chagall stained glass windows. Metz is full of stunning architecture, flowers and great cafes.

Day 8: Metz, France

End of tour. Disembarkation after breakfast, till 9:30 a.m.

Closest Airport: Metz/Nancy (ETZ)