

2023 - Gems of Southeast Europe (Christmas)

7-NIGHT CRUISE

From Vienna to Bucharest, and countless treasures in between, the holiday season is a beautiful time of year along the lower Danube. Immerse yourself in the winter magic of Hungary, Croatia, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Romania. Celtic fortifications, medieval towns and grand cities await as they burst with traditional holiday cheer. You will relish the sight of beautiful landscapes, perhaps glistening with snow; discover Belogradchik, a fairytale stone world of fantastical shapes; and journey through the awe-inspiring Iron Gates. Wine and food lovers will have a chance to taste history from the centuries-old wine-growing hills dating back to the Romans in Ilok, and savor local seasonal sweets during Winterfest in Novi Sad, the first Christmas Market in Serbia. Be treated to the diverse culture and holiday joy on this unforgettable journey down the Danube.

OVERVIEW:

<u>DAY</u>	<u>DESTINATION</u>	<u>ACTIVITIES</u>
1	GIURGIU	EMBARKATION
2	ROUSSE	Veliko Tamovo Excursion with Christmas Markets OR Bucharest Excursion with Christmas Markets OR Rousse Walking Tour and Rock-Hewn Churches
3	VIDIN	Baba Vida Fortress and Vidin Walking Tour OR Banitsa pastry and yogurt tasting OR Vidin bike tour Belogradchik Hike OR Vidin Wine Tasting
4	IRON GATES	Scenic cruising Golubac Fortress tour
5	BELGRADE	“The City by Two Rivers” tour and Winter Markets OR Royal Palace & Tito’s Memorial tour OR Fortress hike Quburich Brandy tasting & Avala Mountain OR Belgrade bike tour
6	NOVI SAD	“The Athens of Serbia” walking tour with Winter Markets OR Serbian Specialties Tasting OR Petrovaradin Fortress hike OR Novi Sad bike tour Vukovar City Tour with Eltz Castle with Christmas Markets OR Croatian wine tasting
7	MOHACS	Pécs excursion with Christmas Markets OR Szekszárd wine tasting OR Guided bike ride along the Danube
8	BUDAPEST	DISEMBARKATION

ITINERARY DETAILS:

For more information: contact your preferred travel advisor, call 1.800.626.0126 or visit AmaWaterways.com.

Day 1, GIURGIU. Embark the ship in Giurgiu for your Gems of Southeast Europe Christmas Markets cruise.

Day 2, ROUSSE. Experience more of Bucharest where you'll have the opportunity to enjoy the Bucharest Christmas market, shining bright in festive holiday lights, in front of the Palace of the Parliament. Or visit Bulgaria's ancient capital, Veliko Tarnovo, with its medieval fortress and multiple orthodox temples, and enjoy the magic of the holidays when learning about the Bulgarian traditions and folklore during Christmastime. You can opt instead to explore Rousse, known for its 19th- and 20th-century Neo-Baroque and Neo-Rococo architecture, and then afterwards visit the UNESCO-designated Rock-Hewn Churches of Ivanovo with frescos revealing exceptional artistry of 14th-century paintings. (B,L,D)

Day 3, VIDIN. Explore Vidin, one of Bulgaria's oldest cities, and surrounding areas with a choice of excursions. Discover Baba Vida Fortress, the largest preserved medieval castle in Bulgaria, or visit a local home for a demonstration of traditional Bulgarian yogurt and Banitsa, a pastry you will also get to make. You also have the option to take an exhilarating bike tour through Vidin. Continue on to Belogradchik, one of Bulgaria's natural wonders, where you can hike around its most spectacular rock formations. Alternatively, you can bike through Vidin or enjoy a wine tasting. (B,L,D)

Day 4, IRON GATES. The Iron Gates are some of Europe's most awe-inspiring natural wonders. The Danube narrows as it winds through a series of magnificent gorges between the Carpathian and Balkan mountains, forming a natural border between Serbia and Romania. The ancient King Decebalus, the last king of Dacia, is proudly carved into the mountainside and always captivates travelers. After your scenic cruise, you will arrive at Golubac Fortress – one of the best preserved medieval fortresses in Europe – for a tour. (B,L,D)

Day 5, BELGRADE. Explore Serbia's capital, Belgrade, on a city tour, which includes the Kalemegdan Fortress and the Serbian Orthodox Temple of St. Sava. Or visit the Royal Palace, the official residence of the Serbian Royal Family; and then tour the House of Flowers, the mausoleum of Marshal Tito, who became the first President of Yugoslavia. Serbia celebrates the holidays with festive Winter Markets as they have an extended Christmas period, following the Orthodox calendar where Christmas falls on the 7th of January and the New Year on the 14th. You'll have time to explore Belgrade's Winter Fest where the main square brims with holiday delights with colorful Christmas Market stalls, an ice-skating rink, concerts and more. Alternatively, you can hike to Belgrade Fortress. Later in the day, enjoy a taste of the region by sampling Serbian plum brandy, Šljivovitz, and delicious local delights at the Quburich Distillery. For those wishing a more active adventure, join a guided bike tour. (B,L,D)

Day 6, NOVI SAD - ILOK. Discover Novi Sad, the "Serbian Athens," on a walking tour to Dunavski Park and through Stari Grad, the Old Town center. Experience firsthand unique Orthodox traditions at Serbia's first and oldest Winter Market where you'll see the grand Singing Christmas Tree where choirs from all over the region gather to perform every day. If you prefer a more active exploration, join a guided biking tour or hike to Petrovaradin Fortress, a mighty stronghold no enemy has ever breached. Later in the day, cruise to Vukovar, a Croatian symbol of resistance, which you'll better understand on your city tour showcasing the Ovčara Memorial and Eltz Castle. While there, experience the festive, warm atmosphere of the holidays when visiting a traditional Croatian Christmas Market. Embrace the holiday cheer and rich culture as you listen to Christmas melodies, taste sweet and savory delights and shop for traditional handcrafted goods. Alternatively, choose a wine tasting in Ilok, a center of wine production since Roman times, where you'll sample its famous Grasevina, Traminac and Frankovka wines. (B,L,D)

Day 7, MOHACS. Visit Pécs, founded more than 2,000 years ago by the Romans, and the UNESCO-designated Christian Necropolis; St. Peter's Basilica, the city's main Catholic cathedral along with its catacombs; and Széchenyi Square, the heart of Old Town Pécs. You will also see the Mosque of Pasha Qasim the Victorious, one of the symbols of the city. You'll also have the opportunity to visit the delightful Pécs Christmas market with its sparkling Christmas tree in front of Town Hall. Or for wine connoisseurs, you'll want to go to the Szekszárd wine region, one of the oldest red-wine-growing areas in Hungary, established more than 2,000 years ago. You may also take an exhilarating guided bike tour around Mohács. (B,L,D)

Day 8, BUDAPEST. Disembark the ship in Budapest and prepare for your flight home. (B)