

# *River cruising demystified:*

## *An insider's guide to the most luxurious cruise lines*



So you'd like to go on a river cruise vacation but don't know where to begin? River cruising is *hugely* popular, and a unique way to see Europe and the world, while enjoying the local culture and cuisine. Where there's a river... there's a ship.

A river cruise vacation is like no other experience; it's safe and provides an exceptional value. It generally tends to be an inclusive product when compared with other forms of travel.



European river cruising runs from mid- to late March, through new years' day. The most popular river ports in Europe are Budapest, Vienna and Amsterdam.

There are themed cruises including wine, beer, art, classical music, jazz, tulip time, Christmas markets and Jewish heritage to name a few.

### **Here's A Quick Story About My Experience**

Growing up as an ambassador's daughter in the diplomatic corps, living overseas and traveling the world at an early age gave me a deep appreciation and love for travel; getting off the beaten path in an up close and personal way. This is the lens through which I view travel and river cruising allows you to do just that and more!

The river cruise lines in this report are my personal favorites, and the ones we highly recommend. They are going after the all- or mostly inclusive high-end market and doing it with elegance and style.

Let's take a look at the top three most luxurious.



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# AmaWaterways



## About

AmaWaterways operates 17 vessels in Europe, two in Vietnam & Cambodia, one in Myanmar (Burma) and one in South Africa (which can also be combined with a safari and visit to the Cape Winelands).

Their service and cuisine are very good but sometimes differ from one ship to the next. Their tours and guides are also very good, along with their exceptional onboard

entertainment. You cannot go wrong with AmaWaterways.

## Pros

- They have a newer fleet of ships compared to other cruise lines, and a larger selection of suites and twin balconies (French and walk-out balcony in one).
- Free-flowing beer, wine and soft drinks are included with lunch and dinner **only**; mimosas and sparkling wine available with breakfast.



## Con

- Gratuities are not included although I think they should be.

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## AmaWaterways Insider Tips

- The chef's table restaurant is complimentary and offers exceptional dining in an upscale atmosphere. If you're sailing on the Danube from Budapest, **consider dining in the chef's table your first night** because you will get to enjoy a *magnificent* view of the beautiful Chain Bridge – and the restaurant will be less crowded.
- **Many travelers** think it's logical to wait until later in the cruise. But this is a perfect example of why it's important to work with a travel professional who knows “insider tips” and things that can help you have an unforgettable experience. Many travelers miss out on that gorgeous view simply because they weren't “in the know” of the route, and the views along that route, at certain times of the cruise.



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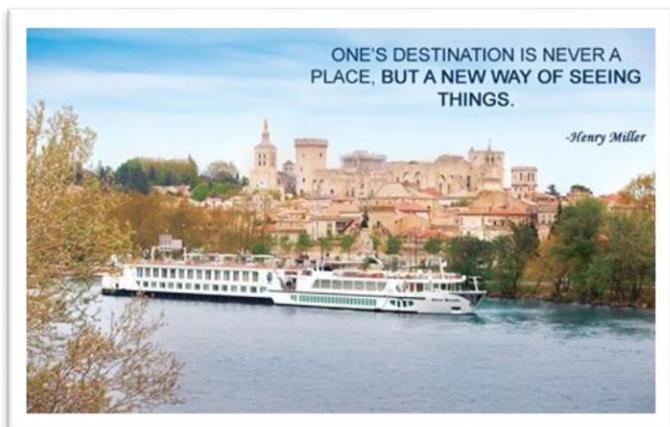
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# Uniworld Boutique River Cruise Collection



## About

Uniworld has 13 ships in Europe in 2015 with the launch of the new S.S. Maria Theresa. **New in 2015: Egypt. New in 2016: India;** an epic journey and sophisticated adventure. Uniworld is my personal favorite in river cruising.

## Pros

- Uniworld offers premium cocktails, beer, wine and soft drinks throughout the entire cruise.
- Within 24 hours onboard the ship the staff calls you by name personally every time, and knows your preferences for food and beverages.
- North American gadgets will work in the staterooms without an adapter.

## Con

- The line is mostly inclusive although you may get a small bill at the end of your trip.

## Uniworld Insider Tips

- The minimum number for a group on Uniworld is nine travelers. The tenth guest can either **travel complimentary or use as a discount** which is spread among all passengers.



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## Uniworld Insider Tips

- This is another example of why working with a travel professional is a must. **We can assist in maximizing all available group benefits** that a lot of travelers miss out on because they weren't "in the know."
- As a luxury travel advisor who specializes in river cruising, my industry relationships, affiliations and buying power allows us to extend **extras such as complimentary optional tours and value added amenities.**



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# Tauck River Cruising



## About

Tauck river cruising is an industry leader offering four times the number of suites as other European lines. Their spacious, custom-designed riverboats for 2016 include five Jewel Class ships accommodating no more than 118 passengers, and four Inspiration Class vessels with a maximum of 130 guests. Tauck also offers lower-deck cabins with soaring ceilings, a raised seating area to create a loft effect (how cool!) and windows that open.

## Pros

- Absolutely everything is included. No optional tours are ever sold on Tauck.
- Tauck is the two time winner by the readers of *Travel & Leisure* magazine as the top river cruise line for families and multi-generational travel.

## Con

- There aren't any... It's Tauck!

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## Tauck Insider Tip

- The minimum number for a group on Tauck River Cruising is ten travelers. The 11<sup>th</sup> guest can either **travel complimentary** or use as a **discount** which is spread among all passengers. We assist you in maximizing all available group benefits and amenities.

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## *Let's Chat!*



So there you have it. In my 13 years helping upscale travelers plan luxurious vacations, I have determined that Tauck, Uniworld Boutique River Cruise Collection and AmaWaterways are the top three choices for river cruising.

So that's it, right? Heavens no!

There are so many moving parts to a river cruise vacation - and not knowing all the ins and outs means that you could miss out on experiences that were

right under your nose. You could also miss out on special discounts, amenities or things may not go according to plan.

**Having the comfort and peace of mind knowing that you've hired a professional travel advisor goes a very long way.**

### **Some things to consider:**

- Is it customary to tip the tour guides? If so, how much?
- Are there any hidden fees you should know about?
- What is the best direction to travel on a river cruise? (**Hint:** the direction you travel determines your time in ports, views from your cabin and the overall quality of your river cruise vacation.)
- Will I need adaptors onboard the ships? If so what kinds?
- Do the electrical outlets vary from ship to ship and will my electronics work?
- Will the cruise line accommodate dietary needs such as gluten free and food allergies?
- Are river cruise ships wheelchair accessible?
- Are there additional discounts that you could be taking advantage of?
- What happens if you miss your flight?
- Which cruise line offers the best guest to crew ratio and the most public spaces?



All river cruise lines are not created equal.

You need expert travel advice to ensure a fabulous experience.

**Are you ready to cut through all the clutter, demystify river cruising, and rest easy knowing you're going to get the absolute best experience?**

Then let's chat so I can learn more about your goals, and see if we're a good fit, to help plan an amazing travel experience - and support you every step of the way. Call us today. *You haven't lived until you've river cruised!*

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