



RIVER CRUISING

*Your guide to choosing
the right one.*

RIVER CRUISE COMPANIES

Your guide to River Cruising

COMPARISON OF MAJOR RIVER CRUISE BRANDS



WHAT RIVER CRUISES OFFER

River cruising offers a completely different way to explore the world combining the comfort of a boutique hotel with ever-changing scenery, immersive cultural experiences and the ease of unpacking only once. Unlike ocean cruising, river cruises travel directly through the heart of cities, towns and landscapes, allowing guests to experience destinations up close and at a slower, more relaxed pace.



From the fairy-tale castles of the Rhine to the grand capitals along the Danube, river cruising in Europe is one of the most enriching and effortless ways to travel. Each river offers its own unique character and atmosphere. The Rhine is known for dramatic scenery, vineyards and medieval villages, while the Danube combines iconic cities such as Vienna, Budapest and Bratislava with rich history and culture. The Main and Moselle rivers offer a quieter, more intimate experience through Germany's wine regions, charming towns and rolling countryside.





Beyond Europe, river cruising opens the door to extraordinary journeys around the world. The Nile offers an unforgettable voyage through ancient Egypt, sailing past temples, tombs and timeless desert landscapes. The Mekong provides a deeply cultural and authentic experience through Vietnam and Cambodia, where floating markets, local villages and ancient traditions bring Southeast Asia to life. In North America, cruises along the Columbia and Snake Rivers showcase dramatic landscapes, wildlife, wineries and the history of the Pacific Northwest.

River cruises are ideal for travellers who enjoy culture, scenery, cuisine and relaxed exploration. Most itineraries include guided excursions, regional dining and enriching experiences, while ships are typically smaller, more intimate and highly service-focused. Whether you are looking for luxury, adventure, wellness, history or simply a more relaxed way to travel, there is a river cruise experience to suit every style of traveller.



OVERALL MARKET POSITIONING

1. UNIWORLD / SCENIC – ULTRA LUXURY
2. TAUCK – LUXURY TOURING FOCUS
3. AMAWATERWAYS – PREMIUM LUXURY
4. VIKING / AVALON – PREMIUM MAINSTREAM
5. EMERALD CRUISES – AFFORDABLE LUXURY
6. RIVIERA – UPPER MID-MARKET VALUE
7. VIVA CRUISES – AFFORDABLE PREMIUM
8. A-ROSA – CASUAL FLEXIBLE RIVER CRUISING



UNIWORLD BOUTIQUE RIVER CRUISES

Market Position: Ultra Luxury



- USP: MOST ALL-INCLUSIVE LUXURY RIVER CRUISE LINE WITH BOUTIQUE-HOTEL STYLE SHIPS.
- BEST FOR: LUXURY CLIENTS WANTING HIGH-END SERVICE, PREMIUM DRINKS,
- GOURMET DINING AND UNIQUE SHIP DÉCOR

KEY DIFFERENTIATORS:

- INDIVIDUALLY DESIGNED SHIPS INSPIRED BY BOUTIQUE HOTELS
- HIGHEST LEVEL OF INCLUSIONS INCLUDING GRATUITIES AND PREMIUM SPIRITS
- STRONG CULINARY AND WELLNESS FOCUS
- SMALLER INTIMATE SHIPS WITH EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE

SCENIC LUXURY CRUISES

Market Position: Ultra Luxury

SCENIC[®]
LUXURY CRUISES & TOURS

USP: TRULY ALL-INCLUSIVE LUXURY WITH BUTLER SERVICE AND PREMIUM EXCURSIONS.

BEST FOR: CLIENTS WANTING LUXURY WITH IMMERSIVE TOURING.

KEY DIFFERENTIATORS:

- PRIVATE BUTLER SERVICE ON MOST CABINS
- SCENIC ENRICH EXCLUSIVE EXPERIENCES
- PREMIUM DRINKS AND GRATUITIES INCLUDED
- HIGH-TECH E-BIKES AND MODERN SHIPS

TAUCK RIVER CRUISES

Market Position: Luxury



USP: LAND-TOUR EXPERTISE COMBINED WITH PREMIUM RIVER CRUISING.

BEST FOR: EXPERIENCED TRAVELLERS WANTING SEAMLESS TOURING AND EXCLUSIVITY.

KEY DIFFERENTIATORS:

- EXCELLENT GUIDES AND LAND EXPERIENCES
- SMALLER GROUPS AND PREMIUM EXCURSIONS
- STRONG SOLO TRAVELLER REPUTATION
- FOCUS ON ENRICHMENT AND CULTURAL DEPTH

AMAWATERWAYS

Market Position: Premium Luxury



USP: WELLNESS, ACTIVE EXCURSIONS AND EXCEPTIONAL DINING.

BEST FOR: FOODIES, ACTIVE TRAVELLERS AND REPEAT CRUISERS.

KEY DIFFERENTIATORS:

- MULTIPLE DINING VENUES ON MANY SHIPS
- STRONG WELLNESS PROGRAMME WITH FITNESS HOSTS
- CHOICE OF ACTIVE EXCURSIONS
- WARM SERVICE AND HIGH REPEAT CUSTOMER BASE

VIKING RIVER CRUISES

Market Position: Premium



- USP: BEST-KNOWN RIVER CRUISE BRAND WITH DESTINATION-FOCUSED CRUISING.
- BEST FOR: FIRST-TIME RIVER CRUISERS AND CULTURALLY CURIOUS TRAVELLERS.

KEY DIFFERENTIATORS:

- SCANDINAVIAN DESIGN AND CONSISTENT FLEET
- INCLUDED EXCURSION IN EVERY PORT
- STRONG EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL FOCUS
- LARGE FLEET AND BROAD ITINERARY CHOICE

AVALON WATERWAYS

Market Position: Premium



USP: LARGEST STATEROOM WINDOWS AND RELAXED MODERN ATMOSPHERE.

BEST FOR: CLIENTS WANTING SPACIOUS CABINS AND FLEXIBILITY.

KEY DIFFERENTIATORS:

- PANORAMA SUITES WITH WALL-TO-WALL WINDOWS
- BED FACES THE SCENERY
- FLEXIBLE EXCURSION CHOICES
- RELAXED AND LESS FORMAL ATMOSPHERE

EMERALD CRUISES

Market Position: Affordable Luxury

Premium



•**USP:** STYLISH CONTEMPORARY SHIPS OFFERING LUXURY-INSPIRED CRUISING AT A MORE ACCESSIBLE PRICE POINT.

•**BEST FOR:** CLIENTS WANTING A MODERN PREMIUM EXPERIENCE WITHOUT ULTRA-LUXURY PRICING.

KEY DIFFERENTIATORS:

- MODERN MINIMALIST SHIP DESIGN
- EXCELLENT VALUE FOR PREMIUM INCLUSIONS
- EMERALDACTIVE EXCURSIONS INCLUDED
- INDOOR HEATED POOL CONVERTING INTO CINEMA SPACE ON SOME SHIPS
- STRONG OPTION FOR CLIENTS TRADING UP FROM OCEAN CRUISING

RIVIERA TRAVEL

Market Position: Upper Mid-Market



- USP: EXCELLENT VALUE WITH HIGH-QUALITY INCLUSIONS.
- BEST FOR: VALUE-CONSCIOUS CLIENTS WANTING A PREMIUM FEEL.

KEY DIFFERENTIATORS:

- COMPETITIVE PRICING
- STRONG ESCORTED TOURING HERITAGE
- GOOD QUALITY DINING AND EXCURSIONS
- POPULAR WITH UK AND IRISH MARKET

VIVA CRUISES

Market Position: Mid-Market Premium



USP: MODERN SHIPS WITH STRONG VALUE AND DRINKS INCLUDED.

BEST FOR: YOUNGER CLIENTS AND AFFORDABLE PREMIUM CRUISING.

KEY DIFFERENTIATORS:

- CONTEMPORARY SHIPS
- GOOD ALL-INCLUSIVE DRINKS PACKAGES
- COMPETITIVE PRICING
- GROWING EUROPEAN PRESENCE

A-ROSA

Market Position: Casual Premium



- USP: RELAXED GERMAN-STYLE RIVER CRUISING WITH FLEXIBILITY.
- BEST FOR: FAMILIES AND CASUAL TRAVELLERS.

KEY DIFFERENTIATORS:

- MORE RELAXED ATMOSPHERE
- FAMILY-FRIENDLY SAILINGS
- FLEXIBLE DINING TIMES
- SPA AND WELLNESS EMPHASIS

HOW TO MATCH THE RIGHT RIVER CRUISE

LUXURY → UNIWORLD OR SCENIC

TOURING-FOCUSED MATURE → TAUCK

FOODIES AND ACTIVE TRAVELLERS → AMA WATERWAYS

FIRST-TIME RIVER CRUISERS → VIKING

MODERN CABIN LOVERS → AVALON

VALUE-FOCUSED PREMIUM → RIVIERA

BUDGET-CONSCIOUS PREMIUM → VIVA CRUISES

RELAXED CASUAL STYLE → A-ROSA



Uniworld → Ultra luxury boutique river cruising. Best for high-end clients wanting the most inclusive experience, exceptional food, premium drinks, luxury décor and very personalised service.

Scenic → Ultra luxury all-inclusive cruising with butler service and exclusive experiences. Appeals to luxury travellers who want premium touring and modern ships.

Tauck → Luxury river cruising with a heavy touring and cultural focus. Excellent for mature, well-travelled clients who value guided experiences and enrichment.

AmaWaterways → Premium luxury with a strong focus on food, wellness and active excursions. Ideal for foodies, active travellers and repeat cruisers.

Viking → Premium mainstream river cruising and one of the most recognised brands. Strong for first-time river cruisers and culturally curious travellers.

Avalon Waterways → Premium relaxed cruising with very spacious cabins and panoramic windows. Appeals to clients who prioritise comfort and scenery.

Emerald Cruises → Affordable luxury with stylish modern ships and strong inclusions. Fits between premium and mid-market, ideal for clients wanting a luxury feel without top-tier pricing.

Riviera Travel → Upper mid-market value-focused cruising with a premium feel. Very popular with UK and Irish travellers looking for quality at a good price.

Viva Cruises → Mid-market premium cruising with contemporary ships and competitive pricing. Good for younger clients and value-conscious travellers.

A-ROSA → Casual flexible river cruising with a relaxed atmosphere. Best for families and clients who dislike formal cruising styles.

THANK YOU

for taking the time to look at our River Cruise Guide
We would love your feedback on other destinations and product you would like to see us feature.