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Cambodia & Vietnam*

THE
KITCHEN
TABLE

*Delicious recipes
from our first
cookbook*



VIKING



Welcome

to our *Explore More* magazine

Dear Traveler,

In all editions of *Explore More*, we hope to inspire and entertain you with interesting features, traveler insights and useful city guides.

In this edition, join us on a cruise along the scenic Rhine River and discover what makes one of Europe's most important waterways one of its most popular. Come face to face with ancient history and a class full of smiling schoolchildren eager to learn in the enchanting village of Sophy, Cambodia. Explore Moscow's underground mosaics in its metro and St. Petersburg's palaces and museum treasures, and read about the best ways to visit or extend your stay in some truly fascinating destinations—including Avignon, Bergen, Helsinki, San Juan, Shanghai and St. Petersburg.

We take a closer look at the authentic Nordic spa experience you can enjoy on our ocean ships, and journey into the heart of Scandinavia and the Baltic for a memorable voyage on our iconic 15-day *Viking Homelands*. I also share some of my favorite recipes from our first recipe book inspired by dishes served on board our ocean and river ships around the world, *The Kitchen Table*.

We hope to explore more of the world together with you, whether you choose to sail by river or ocean, or simply enjoy some virtual exploration from the comfort of your own home through our cultural insight videos I host on exploringmore.com.

Bon Voyage, or as we say in Norway, *God Tur!*



Karine Hagen
Sr. Vice President
Viking Cruises

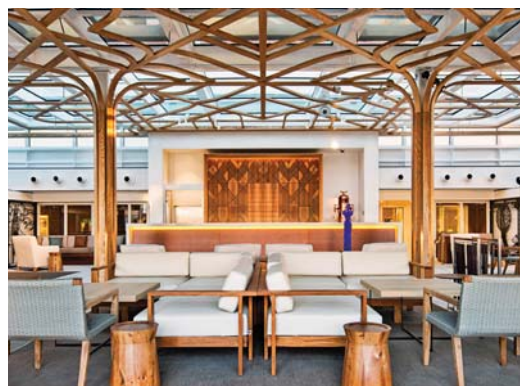
P.S. As you enjoy your travels, we invite you to share your photos and the stories behind them on MyVikingStory.com. These might include special moments from your cruise such as your favorite destination, meal or thinking spot. Also, while you're sharing your photos with fellow Instagram, Facebook and Twitter friends, please remember to add #MyVikingStory.

Karine in her Dale of Norway sweater;
a selection available in our onboard boutique



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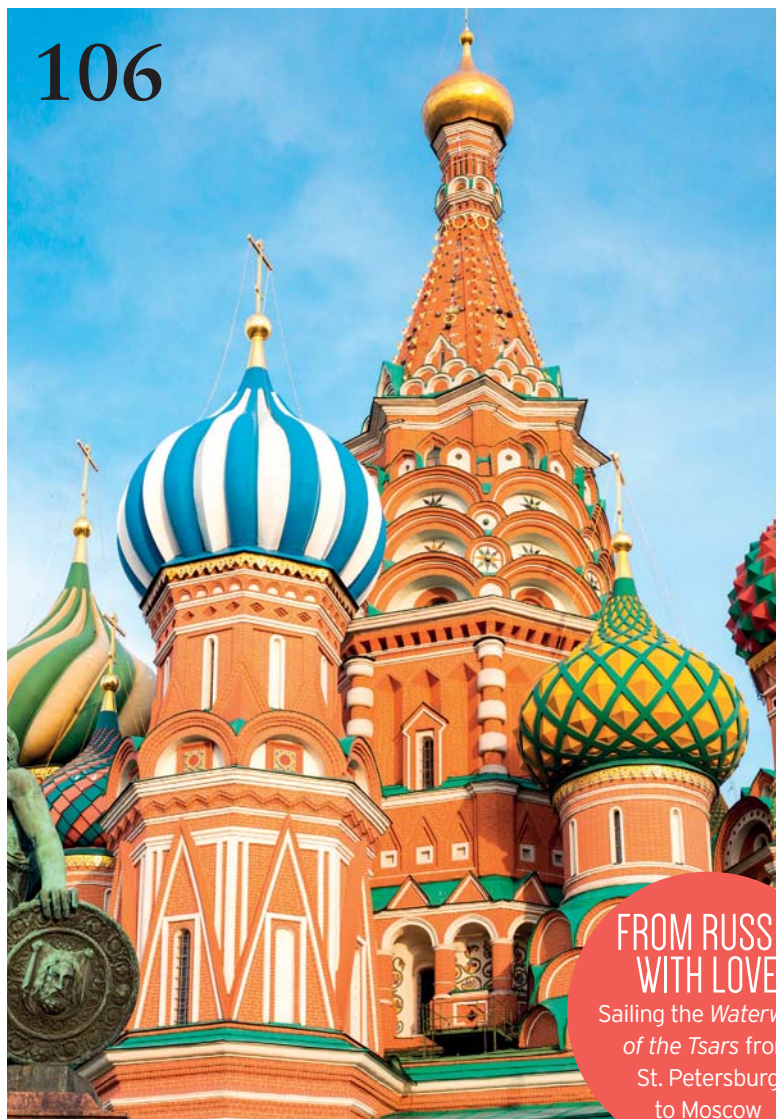
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The world beckons.

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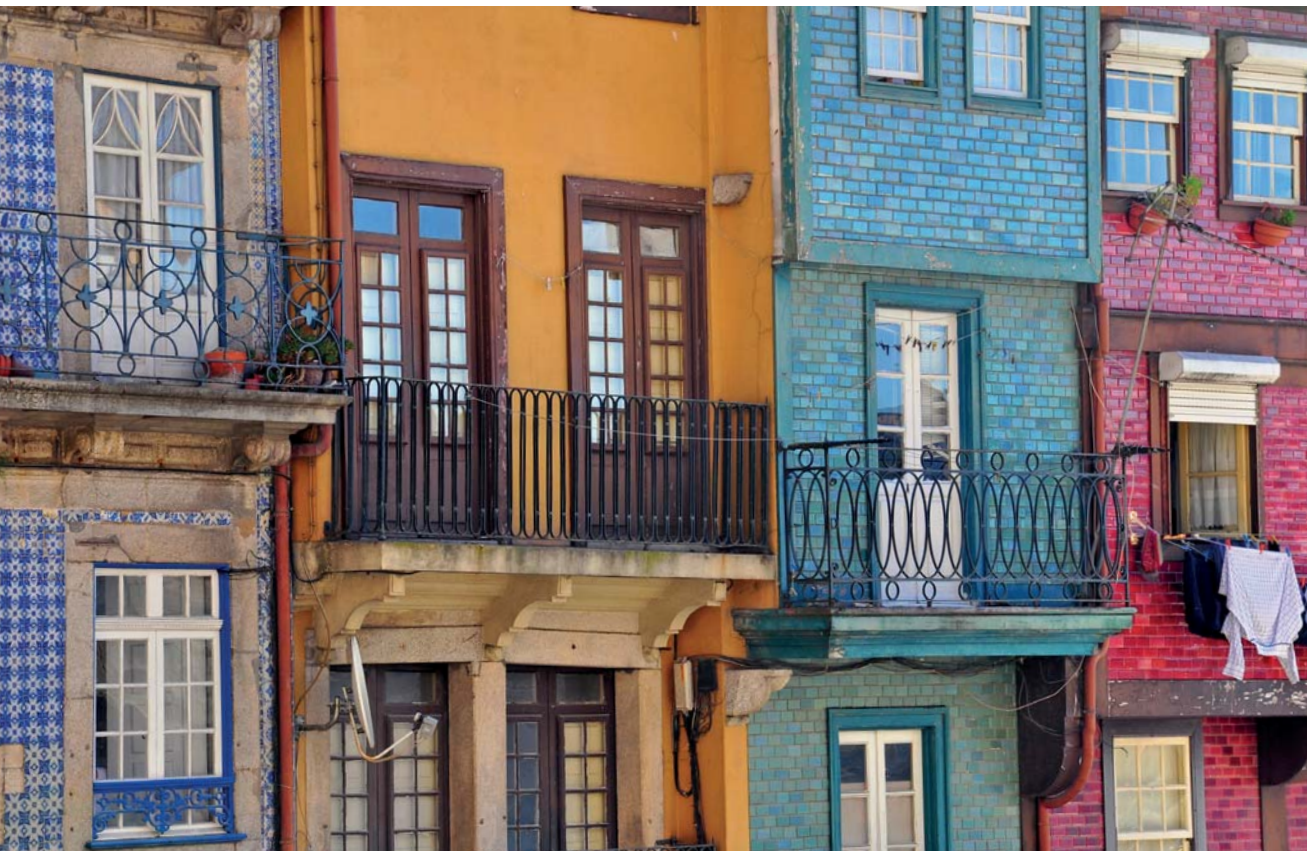
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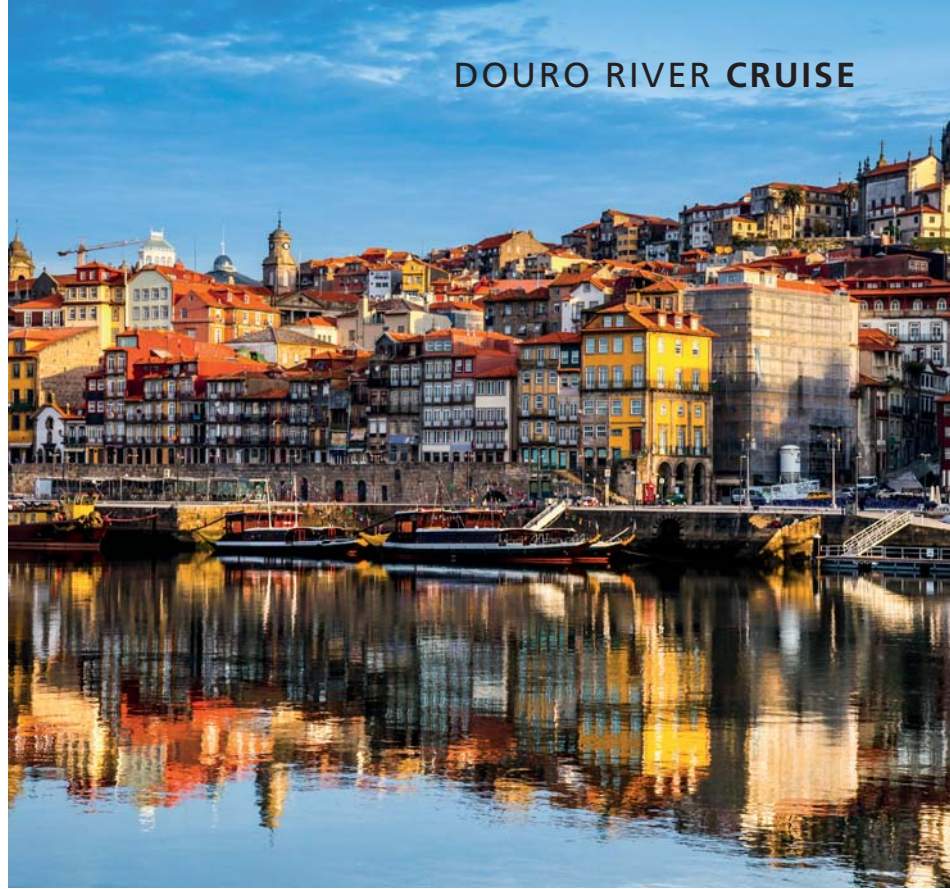
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PORTUGUESE



DOURO RIVER CRUISE



moments

Stunning scenery, *fado* music, custard tarts and good wine—Viking Cruises own Lisa Small sailed *Portugal's River of Gold* and shares with us what makes a river cruise along the Douro so enchanting

Clockwise, from top far left: Colorful houses in Porto; *pastéis de nata*; the attractive waterfront of Porto; white stone statues; the Bica Funicular (Elevador da Bica) in Lisbon; laundry hanging against a red house; ornate street lamps



A

Clockwise, from facing page:
Sunset in Lisbon;
famous Lisbon
bakery Pastéis
de Belém

sleepy warmth hangs in the early afternoon air as we arrive in Lisbon, and the Portuguese capital exudes a relaxed, faded charm. Laundry hangs from exquisitely fashioned wrought iron balconies in ancient quarters crammed with hilly, winding streets shaded from the midday

sun. The “White City,” as it is known, is used to welcoming strangers with open arms and carrying on with its daily business regardless.

Spending a few days in the city before embarking on our river cruise on the Douro gives us the chance to fully appreciate Lisbon’s golden, crumbling beauty. Strolling past smart designer shops and superb art deco buildings on one side of the road, and a dusty flea market full of curiosities on the other, we witness a city oozing radiant and eclectic charm.

Riding on one of the city’s famous yellow trams, we travel up to the Old Quarter (Bairro Alto) to discover a labyrinth of narrow alleyways populated with cozy haunts hosting live *fado* music, traditional restaurants, inviting tapas and wine bars, and disheveled limestone buildings with sweet hand-painted wall tiles.

The following day, our enthusiastic local guide takes us on a drive around the city, pointing out the iconic buildings and important figures that have shaped the country over the centuries. From the Romans to the Spanish and the Moors, the influences on this picturesque part of the Iberian Peninsula have made for a dramatic landscape of impressive architectural styles, all brought together under a very special light that has to be experienced to be appreciated. Lisbon boasts no fewer than 28 hills, so wherever you are in the city you’re guaranteed a brilliant vantage point.

Belém, in the city’s western district, is our next stop—the home of *Pastéis de Belém*—Portugal’s best-loved sweet treat. Only custard tarts hailing from the original bakery here (where they have been made to the secret recipe of the monks of Jerónimos Monastery for centuries) can call themselves *Pastéis de Belém*. Elsewhere, in every village, town and city throughout Portugal, they are referred to as *pastéis de nata*, or just *nata*. Making it a personal mission to taste as many as possible throughout our trip, I can tell you that they taste just as good, especially with a generous sprinkling of cinnamon and confectioners’ sugar.

The district benefits from a gorgeous location overlooking the Atlantic Ocean, as well as some of Lisbon’s most iconic structures built in honor of Portugal’s Age of Discovery. Nothing quite prepares you for the gigantic, gleaming white magnificence of the Monument to the Discoveries with its lineup of dazzling, sea-facing statues depicting the country’s most celebrated explorers.

Equally impressive is Jerónimos Monastery, where Portugal’s most famous explorer, Vasco da Gama, is laid to rest in a suitably ornate tomb. The historic attractions are brought to life with brilliant commentary from our guide, accessed via our supplied Quietvox® tour earphones. These genius pieces of gadgetry are not only super easy to use, but enable you to wander at your own pace—away from the main huddle of the group if you wish—without missing out on any of the facts or fascinating stories.

After two days exploring Lisbon, we make an early start for the most eagerly anticipated part of our trip: joining our ship. Settling in to what has got to be the most comfortable motor coach I have ever traveled on, we listen to our guide’s stories about the local landscape and people, and exchange tales of our Lisbon discoveries with our fellow travelers. People are already beginning to bond, finding much more in common than current circumstances, and as a result, the atmosphere on the coach is relaxed, convivial and familiar. We’re a mixed group: ages, nationalities, groups of friends, couples—even a grandfather traveling with his 20-something granddaughter. ➤





And they are a very lively bunch at that. It's hard to imagine that just 48 hours ago none of us had even seen each other before, let alone shared photographs and laughed together.

The historic city of Coimbra, the first stop on our journey to Porto, is a UNESCO Site and famed as the birthplace of Portugal's oldest university, boasting a huge student population committed to keeping the traditions of the institution alive. Our guide leaves us in the charming company of a becloaked alumnus who regales us with hilarious stories of student antics, from weeklong, booze-fueled ribbon burning ceremonies to spontaneous streakings through the ancient streets.

Rumor has it that J.K. Rowling, who spent time living in Portugal many years ago, based Hogwarts's school uniform on the one worn by the Coimbra students, and it's easy to spot the resemblance. *Harry Potter* aside, the most magical part of the whole Coimbra experience is the opportunity to visit the spectacular baroque library.

Built in the 18th century to glorify the magnanimity of King João V—also known as the “Portuguese Sun King”—this treasure chest of ornate gold carvings, fine marquetry and splendid hand-painted ceilings houses some of the oldest and rarest books in the world. We are all fascinated to learn that a colony of neutered

bats had been introduced to make their home behind the highest bookshelves and keep any paper-eating insects at bay—a charming anecdote that is as true today as it was in the 1700s.

Having worked up an appetite, our next stop is lunch and another opportunity to get to know each other better over some good food and wine. In a sun-drenched restaurant on the outskirts of Coimbra, we're welcomed by more



students who lay down their cloaks for us to walk over in another time-honored ritual. Over a typical

PRETTILY PAINTED HOUSES, A BEAUTIFUL CATHEDRAL AND BUSY PLAZAS DEFINE PORTO

Portuguese lunch, the wine keeps flowing and we're treated to a mesmerizing live performance of *fado* music. I wasn't expecting to enjoy Portugal's traditional melancholic folk music, but the beautiful, haunting melodies and heartfelt vocals are completely captivating. Our guide's description of *fado* as “the presence of absence” sums up the songs' style perfectly and it is difficult not to be moved.

Viking Hemming is stunning, inside and out. Smaller than the Viking Longships®, but built and furnished to the same high standards of comfort and



From far left:
The vineyards of the Douro Valley; bottles of port; murals inside São Bento Railway Station; the regal facade of Mateus Palace



quality, it's one of three ships designed specifically to navigate the valleys and locks of the Douro. The crew comes out in force to welcome us on board with warm smiles, hot towels and a delicious glass of local white port—a welcome that is repeated daily every time we return from our included excursion.

After a good night's sleep—and an even better breakfast on board our stylish ship—our first day on the Douro is spent exploring Porto, the epicenter of port wine production. Prettily painted houses, medieval relics, soaring bell towers, busy plazas and a beautiful baroque cathedral define Portugal's second-largest city, as do the dark, inviting port cellars and tempting shops.

And in the heart of the city is truly one of the most spectacular railway stations in the world, the São Bento Railway Station. Exquisitely tiled in hand-painted blue and white ceramics depicting the port wine industry, the interiors of the building are more akin to an art gallery. As I gaze in awe at the magnificent murals, I wonder how many locals actually stop and appreciate the beauty of this place as they make their daily commute to work.

Port country is like the wine itself: warm, comforting and distinctive. Once on the Douro, however, we enter another world altogether—one of gently sloping terraces, sheer rock faces and hilly rural villages steeped in history and charm.

One of my favorite places is Vila Real, home of the incredibly opulent Mateus Palace. It resembles a wedding confection, and the palace and its impressive

formal gardens were the inspiration for the famous Mateus Rose wine label. At the Sandeman port wine estate, Quinta do Seixo, we are shown around the cellars by our host, dressed in the long dark cape and wide-brimmed hat of the brand's mysterious hallmark figure, before being led out to a table facing the most spectacular views of the Douro Valley below. Here, we sample some of Sandeman's finest ports as we drink in the extraordinary beauty of our surroundings and raise a glass to a memorable trip.

I had expected to enjoy my river cruise—the service to be impressive, the ship beautiful, the food wonderful and the excursions excellent—after all, I was traveling with Viking®.

What I didn't expect, however, was just how much fun I would have. How many fascinating people I would meet. How lively the evenings would be and how strong a bond we would all form with our fabulous crew. Everything about my Viking cruise was special, but it was probably the intangible things, such as the laughter, friendship and shared experiences, that made it truly precious. ♥



GETTING THERE: Viking offers its 10-day *Portugal's River of Gold* itinerary in 2017 from Lisbon to Porto, which varies slightly from previous sailings.



Go online: You can find out more about the destinations visited on the *Portugal's River of Gold* cruise at vikingrivercruises.com/videos



7 OF THE BEST CRUISES FOR GARDEN LOVERS

We know how much you love visiting
spectacular gardens—here are some of our
favorites from around the world





MATEUS PALACE AND GARDENS, PORTUGAL

A cruise along the Douro River in Portugal will take you through gorges, next to vineyards and almond orchards, but also to Vila Real—a wealthy port town—where your included excursion takes you to the baroque Mateus Palace, pictured on the front of the famous Mateus rosé wine. The palace is decorated in classic 18th-century Portuguese style, reflecting the country's success in colonizing the New World, and its gardens are formally laid out with elegant parterres, topiary, sculptures and a 115-foot-long cedar tunnel. A large pond surrounded by greenery reflects the elaborate balustrades and turrets of the palace.



GETTING THERE: The 10-day *Portugal's River of Gold* cruise includes a two-night hotel stay in Lisbon before joining the ship at Porto. You will visit Régua and Pinhão, Barca d'Alva, Salamanca and Vega de Terrón, before returning to Porto.





THE GARDENS OF MENTON, FRENCH RIVIERA

The mild climate of this town in southeast France means that exotic plants thrive among the elegant buildings; join the optional excursion to Menton's gardens on a Viking ocean cruise and you'll be able to explore the lavish gardens of the former Carnolès Palace, now the Menton Museum of Fine Arts. The princes of Monaco owned Menton for six centuries, taxing lemons to fund the palace, and today the gardens still have an impressive 137 varieties of citrus trees—not only lemons, oranges and limes, but kumquats, pomelos and bergamots too.



GETTING THERE: The 8-day *Romantic Mediterranean* cruise itinerary from Barcelona to Rome has an overnight in Barcelona, also calls in Toulon in France, Monte Carlo in Monaco, Ajaccio in Corsica and Tuscany in Italy, and has an overnight stay in Rome.





KEUKENHOF GARDENS, THE NETHERLANDS

Tulip-time river cruises to The Netherlands and Belgium coincide with the annual opening of the Keukenhof Gardens from late March to the middle of May. Keukenhof is a showcase for Dutch bulb growers, who donate millions of tulips, daffodils, hyacinths, narcissi, grape hyacinths and more for the impressive borders—redesigned and replanted every year. But there is also so much to see in Amsterdam and the historic Belgian cities of Antwerp (visit Rubens's house) and Ghent (lovely canals and architecture).



GETTING THERE: The 10-day *Tulips & Windmills* roundtrip cruise from Amsterdam calls at Hoorn, Arnhem and Kinderdijk in The Netherlands plus Antwerp and Ghent in Belgium, before returning to Amsterdam via Rotterdam and the Keukenhof Gardens. The cruise is offered in March and April 2017.

SCHÖNBRUNN PALACE AND GARDENS

Danube cruises that call in Vienna offer an optional excursion to Schönbrunn Palace and Gardens, and you'll have plenty of time to stroll through one of Europe's loveliest garden parks. The wide Grand Parterre, an open space of neat gardens and fountains created between 1660 and 1664, opens up views of the Gloriette, which sits at the top of a lawned hill. Off to either side are some magical hidden places: avenues of trees with greenery clipped long and narrow, rose gardens, a maze, the world's oldest zoo (from 1752), the largest Palm House in Europe, an Art Nouveau Desert House and much more.



GETTING THERE: The 8-day *Romantic Danube* cruise, from Budapest to Nuremberg, calls at Vienna, Krems, Passau and Regensburg.



FAIRVIEW GREAT HOUSE & BOTANICAL GARDEN, ST. KITTS

Caribbean cruises are all about the palm-fringed white-sand beaches and saluting the sunset with a glass of rum punch, but some of the most colorful gardens in the world can be found in these fertile tropical islands. On an included excursion to historic Basseterre and Fairview Great House & Botanical Garden on the island of St. Kitts, you'll find a lush tropical oasis filled with palm and date trees dating back to the 1700s, plus glorious flowers and shrubs, including magnificent bougainvillea. Keep an eye out for the monkeys who venture throughout the property, filling their bellies with the abundant fruit.



GETTING THERE: The 11-day *West Indies Explorer* cruise, sailing from the Caribbean island of Puerto Rico roundtrip calls at the British Virgin Islands, Antigua, St. Lucia, Barbados, Guadeloupe, St. Kitts, St. Martin and the US Virgin Islands.





GIVERNY, FRANCE

One of the highlights of a cruise down the Seine River—from magnificent Paris—is Claude Monet's gardens in Giverny. The flower garden and Japanese garden were created by Monet in the late 19th century, and it was here that his famous water lily paintings were created. Visit in April and there are tulips and other flowering bulbs; in May and June you'll see the wisteria draped over the Japanese bridge. The water lilies are at their best in mid-summer, and in late August and September, jewel-like nasturtiums bring bursts of orange, red and yellow to the borders.



GETTING THERE: The 8-day *Paris & the Heart of Normandy* cruise starts with an overnight in Paris, then sails to Giverny, Vernon, Rouen and Les Andelys, with a trip to the Normandy beaches, and concludes with another overnight on board in Paris.

(Please note Monet's Garden is only available from April 1–October 31. Outside of these dates, a visit to the village of Auvers-sur-Oise will be substituted.)





PETERHOF GARDENS, RUSSIA

The centerpiece of this imperial garden is the Grand Cascade that runs into a narrow canal and flows all the way to the Gulf of Finland, just visible from the terraces. Fountains shoot up from golden dolphins, and beside golden statues, triumphant cascades flow at regular intervals. Almost as impressive are the names associated with this palace: Peter the Great, Empress Elizabeth and Catherine the Great. There are more water features throughout the grounds, including the much smaller Chess Cascade, Pyramid Fountain and Joke Fountain that sprays passersby. A series of formal gardens in the grand European style are also impressive.



GETTING THERE: The 13-day *Waterways of the Tsars* cruise starts with four days in St. Petersburg before sailing to Mandrogy, Kizhi, Kuzino, Yaroslavl and Uglich, and concludes with four days in Moscow. 📍



Go online: For more on any of these river or ocean itineraries, visit [vikingcruises.com](https://www.vikingcruises.com)



AVIGNON

Set on the Rhône River, the historic capital of Provence is known for its bridge but is also an intriguing medieval city with a wealth of history, culture and gastronomy to discover

One of the most historic communes in France, the earliest mentions of Avignon as a settlement come from the Greeks hundreds of years before the Roman invasion. The legacy of Avignon's origins lives on in the *Tarasque de Noves*, a statue believed to have been carved by the Gallic tribe that once ruled the lower Rhône Valley, the Cavares. Today, you can see this at the Musée Lapidaire.

Avignon is notable for having been home to seven successive popes in the 14th century, which led to Pope Clement VI purchasing the town itself in 1348. It would remain under papal control until 1791 when it became

part of France during the French Revolution.

The city center is one of the few in all of France (or Europe) to have preserved its medieval ramparts, and was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1995.



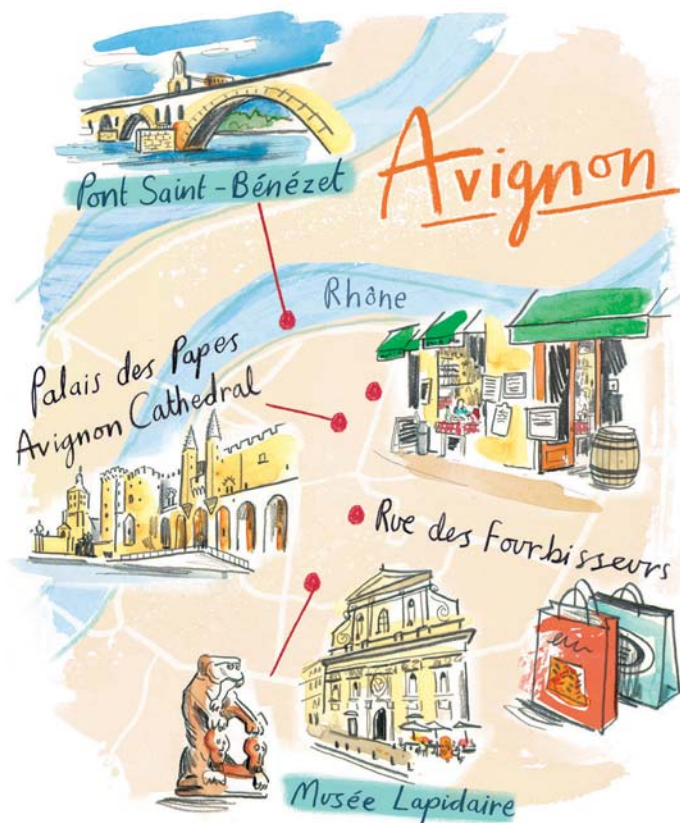
Must-sees

The Palais des Papes (Palace of the Popes) dominates Avignon's landscape and is one of the most impressive examples of the international Gothic style of architecture in existence. It is actually two structures—the first, the old 13th-century bishop's palace expanded by Pope Benedict XII (the Old Palace),

and then a new structure built by Pope Clement VI (the New Palace). Over the 14th and 15th centuries, it caused Avignon to become a hub for great artists. The facade has been beautifully preserved and much of the palace is open to

Clockwise, from top: Pont Saint-Bénézet, immortalized in a children's nursery rhyme; café culture; sugared fruit; Palais des Papes; a restaurant





the public. Other must-sees include Pont Saint-Bénézet, the bridge immortalized in the children's song "Sur le Pont d'Avignon," and Avignon Cathedral. History enthusiasts will enjoy walking along the city walls and ramparts and visiting the site of the battle between Charles Martel and the Moors in 737 AD.

Shopping


Avignon's city center is pedestrianized, making it perfect for browsing, and is home to many winding streets adorned with small stores perfect for unique presents and souvenirs as well as Provençal specialties. The main street is Rue de la République, which has all the standard branches one would expect in France as well as a department store, but the real treats are in the side streets. Rue Joseph Vernet is home to many chic boutiques as is Rue Saint-Agricol.

There are marketplaces too, which often have different stalls on different days. Visit the main food market

at the Halles d'Avignon or the Rempart Saint-Michel, a charming local outdoor market. Local delights include melon or fig jam, liqueur-flavored chocolates (papalines d'Avignon), sugared fruit and olive oil. Of course this is France, so there's a strong local wine tradition in the form of the popular Châteauneuf-du-Pape, which can be found on sale pretty much everywhere you go, and the Cave du Bouffart on Rue de la Monnaie is perhaps the best winery in town.

Eating

Christian Etienne's restaurant, located right by the Palais des Papes, has everything one would expect from a master chef of France. La Mirande offers local classics with a modern twist. And if you want a traditional French café, Ginette et Marcel spills out onto the square. 📍

 **Go online:** For more info about Avignon on our Lyon & Provence itinerary, visit vikingcruises.com





Welcome to THE KITCHEN TABLE

Our first cookbook, *The Kitchen Table*, sharing recipes from around the world served on our river and ocean ships, is available in our onboard boutique

Exploring destinations and discovering different cultures and traditions is at the heart of every Viking river and ocean journey. And of course food—not only the recipes prepared by our onboard chefs, but local cuisine in all the fascinating places our ships visit—is an essential part of the overall Viking experience.

We created *The Kitchen Table* recipe book in response to requests from you, our guests, who told us how much you enjoyed the food served on board our ships, and in the ports of call, and wanted to try making some of these fabulous dishes at home.

On the following pages, you will get a small taste of the delicious recipes found in *The Kitchen Table*, inspired by our travels

and yours. It is a food odyssey, and a celebration of all the wonderful flavors you can savor while traveling the world.

My grandmother and best friend, Ragnhild “Mamsen” Hagen, inspired my own love of life’s basics and nature as well as home-cooked food. Sincere and honest, Mamsen was hardworking and liked to keep things simple. I learned the most basic cooking skills from her, and I infuse these—and their simplicity—in every dish I cook.

All of the recipes in the book are easy to follow, simple and delicious. I hope you enjoy making them at home and bringing bits of the world home from our kitchen tables to yours.

Velkommen til bords!

Karin







My father and Viking Chairman, Torstein Hagen, does not like spending time on making unimportant decisions—which includes his choice of wardrobe: one style of shirt, and one style of suit. And his choice of favorite food: poached salmon, cucumber salad and boiled potatoes. If he could only eat this for the rest of his life he would be a happy man. Here he is showing our corporate chef how to properly marinate the cucumber slices to prevent them from becoming soggy!

CHAIRMAN'S CHOICE: POACHED SALMON & CUCUMBER SALAD

Serves 4

4 salmon fillets (around 6 oz)

FOR THE PICKLED CUCUMBER:

1 cucumber

Salt

2 tbsp sugar

3½ fl oz water

8½ fl oz rice wine vinegar

FOR THE CHIVE SAUCE:

1 pint heavy (double) cream

2¾ oz butter

Salt and pepper

1 tbsp fresh chives

1 Peel the cucumber and slice into discs. Sprinkle the discs with salt and allow to marinate for 5 minutes. Squeeze out the liquid. Mix the sugar, water and vinegar, pour over the sliced cucumber, and place in the fridge for half an hour. Drain and reserve.

2 Bring a pan of salted water to a boil, then turn down the heat and add the salmon fillets. Allow to poach for about 8 minutes until just tender.

3 Meanwhile, prepare the chive sauce. Bring the cream to a boil in a saucepan, then reduce the heat and allow to simmer until reduced by half. Whisk in the butter, then add the fresh chives and season to taste. ➤



Paella recipes vary hugely, but this Catalan-style paella contains monkfish, which holds together well during the cooking process, as well as tender squid, and peas, which add sweetness. Spanish paella is always made in a paellera, a large, flat pan with two handles. Native paella eaters all know: the best bit is the crusty bit at the bottom, and is known as the “socarrat,” as I learned at my favorite tapas place in Barcelona, just off Las Ramblas.

PAELLA CATALUNYA

Serves 4

- 1 pinch saffron threads
- 2 pints fish stock
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 7 oz monkfish, cut into bite-size pieces
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1 large Spanish onion, chopped
- 1 tsp paprika
- 2 red bell peppers, chopped and deseeded
- 9 oz paella rice
- 4 large fresh tomatoes, deseeded and chopped
- 5 oz frozen peas
- 1 lb squid, cleaned and sliced
- 9 oz mussels, scrubbed, beards removed
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp pepper

TO GARNISH:

- 4 tbsp fresh parsley, chopped

1 Place the saffron threads into a large, wide, heavy-based pan over a medium heat and stir constantly until they just begin to give off their aroma. Add the stock and bring to a boil. Transfer to a saucepan, cover and set aside to infuse.

2 Return the pan to the heat and add one tablespoon of oil. Add the monkfish pieces and quickly fry on all sides until lightly browned. Remove the fish and set aside.

3 Add another tablespoon of oil to the pan. Add the garlic, onion and paprika, and cook over a moderate heat for two minutes, stirring occasionally. Stir in the red peppers and continue cooking until all the vegetables are soft but not brown.

4 Add the rice and stir well, ensuring all the grains are well coated. Bring the saffron-infused stock to simmering point and add half of it to the rice. Stir, and then bring to a boil. Lower the heat and simmer for five minutes or until almost all the liquid is absorbed.

5 Add the remaining stock, then stir in the tomatoes, peas and reserved monkfish pieces. Add the squid and simmer for five minutes. Arrange the mussels around the dish, pushing them into the rice. Simmer for a further 15 minutes or until the rice is tender and all the liquid has been absorbed. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Remove the pan from the heat, cover with foil and leave to stand for five minutes. Discard any mussels that have not opened. Garnish generously with the fresh parsley before serving. ➤





Originally created by chef Franz Sacher in 1832, this most famous of Viennese desserts should be served with a decadent pile of whipped cream. Visit Hotel Sacher in Vienna to sample the original Sachertorte.

SACHERTORTE

Serves 8–10

5 oz butter, softened
 3½ oz confectioners' sugar, sieved
 8 eggs, separated
 5 oz bittersweet (dark) chocolate
 2¾ oz all purpose (plain) flour
 3½ oz sugar
 2 tbsp apricot jam

FOR THE GLAZE:

8 oz bittersweet (dark) chocolate
 2 tbsp butter

1 Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C), and grease and line a 9-inch (23 cm) cake tin. Cream together the butter and confectioners' sugar, then mix in the egg yolks, one at a time, until very creamy.

2 Melt the chocolate in a heatproof bowl placed over a saucepan of simmering water. Do not allow the bowl to touch the water. Gradually add the melted chocolate into the creamed mixture, then fold in the flour.

3 In a separate bowl, beat the egg whites until they form soft peaks, then gradually fold in the sugar. Combine this mixture with the chocolate mixture.

4 Pour the cake mixture into the prepared tin and bake for about 50 minutes to an hour until springy to the touch. Remove from the pan and cool on a wire rack. Heat the apricot jam and smooth over the entire torte, including the sides.

5 For the glaze, melt the chocolate and butter together in a bain-marie until smooth and glossy. Pour over the cake, making sure it's completely covered, and allow to cool before serving. **V**



The Kitchen Table (Viking Cruises, hardback) is available on board our cruise ships



Go online: You can find out more about some of the amazing culinary destinations Viking Cruises visits at vikingrivercruises.com/videos

world food with KARINE

Our recipe book, *The Kitchen Table*, features recipes from around the globe—and you can also watch Karine Hagen learn how to make many of them on our website. Here she shares some of her favorites

WATCH KARINE'S LATEST TRAVEL VIDEOS: exploringmore.com



DUBROVNIK OYSTERS

Mali Ston Bay, north of Dubrovnik, is famous for producing incredible oysters. Fresh from the sea, they are delicious eaten with nothing more than a squeeze of lemon, but locally you'll also find them grilled with a simple, seasoned butter. vikingcruises.com/oceans/simpleseafood



AUSTRIA'S CLASSIC DISH

Wiener schnitzel, those thin, crisp, breaded veal steaks, are the national dish of Austria. I learned from Michelin-starred chef Toni Mörwald how simple this dish named in honor of Vienna is to make. Serve with potatoes and a lemon wedge. vikingcruises.com/rivers/austriasclassicroast



BACALHAU À BRÁS

One of Portugal's most famous dishes. It is said there are as many recipes for bacalhau as there are days in the year. All the variants are made with Norwegian stockfish, which has bonded the countries and cultures of Portugal and Norway for centuries. vikingcruises.com/rivers/bacalhau



HANDMADE PASTA

This pasta with clam sauce was originally considered peasant food, but has become an Italian classic. It is my favorite spaghetti dish, and so simple to make—if you can boil spaghetti, you can make it *alle vongole*. Use fresh or frozen clams, just don't forget the white wine. vikingcruises.com/oceans/perfectpasta



VENETIAN RISI E BISI

Contessa Passi taught me how to cook this dish in her beautiful Palazzo Tiepolo on the Grand Canal in Venice. Literally “rice and peas,” this classic Italian dish is much easier and less time consuming to make than a risotto. If you can't find fresh peas, use frozen ones instead. vikingcruises.com/oceans/cookingwithcontessa



PERFECT PEKING DUCK

China is one of the most remarkable countries in the world, and its cuisine is equally extraordinary. This crisp, aromatic roast duck is originally from Beijing and simple to make. Serve with pancakes, vegetable strips and plum sauce. More Chinese food here: vikingcruises.com/rivers/pekingduck



RUSSIAN BORSCHT

Russian *babushkas* pride themselves on passing down home-cooking skills to the next generations, and my adopted *babushka* Nadya makes the world's best soups. This vibrant beet soup is topped with sour cream and dill. More soups here: vikingcruises.com/rivers/russiansoup



SPANISH TAPAS

Spanish gastronomy is influenced by the culture, geography and climate of its different regions, and these rich meatballs, served in a spicy tomato sauce, are often featured on traditional Spanish tapas menus. See a selection of more here: vikingcruises.com/oceans/tapas



PORTUGUESE “CRÈME BRÛLÉE”

This creamy baked custard tart can be cooked individually or as one large flan, and this recipe is so simple. To see me cooking with Francesco in Porto, watch our video of me making the Portuguese version of crème brûlée. vikingcruises.com/rivers/cremebrulee 



BERGEN

Named as one of the secret capitals of Europe by *Time* magazine, the spirit of the Vikings lives on in this ancient Norwegian city known as the “Gateway to the Fjords”

Nestling between mountains and spectacular fjords, the Vikings settled Bergen hundreds of years before its official founding in 1070 AD. Originally the capital of Norway until 1300, it flourished as a city of commerce and trade. For four centuries, merchants of the Hanseatic League worked on the Bryggen wharf, trading cod and herring, and today the timber buildings that remain from the 18th century are a designated UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Protected from the North Sea’s winds by a collection of islands, the climate is never overwhelmingly cold and the views from Mt. Fløyen nearby are breathtaking.



Must-sees

With its 62 original timber-clad cottages painted in ocher, oxblood, mushroom and white, Bryggen is one of Bergen’s major attractions, and the Hanseatic Museum provides a fascinating glimpse of medieval life in the days of the Hanseatic League. The museum is located in a building owned by a local merchant in the late 19th century and features a recreation of a trading room, with the merchant’s office and sleeping quarters for sailors and guests.

Opposite Bryggen is Bergen Fortress, once the royal residence and one of the oldest and best preserved castles in Norway. Many of

its buildings date back to the 1240s, and one excavation has revealed structures from 1100, remnants of the Viking Age. The spectacular 13th-century Håkon’s Hall is the largest surviving medieval secular building in Norway. It was once the palace of King Håkon IV, one of the most important kings in Norway’s history, and is now a museum.

Near the pretty Festplassen is the Grieg Hall, a remarkable feat of architecture dedicated to the composer, and centerpiece of Bergen’s cultural district. Just north of the Festplassen are two of Bergen’s old churches, built in a style unlike anything elsewhere in Europe—Domkirken, Bergen Cathedral, and Korskirken.

Clockwise, from top: Bergen has many colorful wooden houses; Hardangerfjord; the facade of a merchant house in Bryggen; some local seafood



It's well worth exploring the surrounding countryside, too. You can trek over to the city's southern suburbs and see Gamlehaugen, the residence of the Norwegian royal family in Bergen. More of a castle than a palace, the seclusion of the building and the untouched nature around it makes for a quite spellbinding journey; you really feel as though you have stepped back in time to the Middle Ages.

The majestic Hardangerfjord, located near Bergen, is known for the stunning Vøringsfossen waterfall and the 78-square mile Folgefonna glacier, the third largest on Norway's mainland. Also, just outside Bergen, you can visit Troidhaugen, the garden house where Grieg lived for 22 years and composed many of his most renowned works.


For the best vista of Bergen, take the funicular railway (Fløibanen) up Mt. Fløyen to almost 1,000 feet above sea level. From here, you can see Bryggen, the harbor and the 9-mile-long Byfjorden.

Shopping

There are a lot of stores in Bergen, including four stylish department stores, but for distinctly Norwegian souvenirs, including trolls, ceramics, knitted sweaters and silver, head for Bryggen. Norway is known for its innovative design, and at Røst (Bryggen 15) you'll find collectable design pieces and gifts for the home.

Eating

From freshly made fish dishes to the cinnamon buns, Bergen is a feast for the taste buds. A glass of Aquavit (Scandinavian vodka flavored with herbs) is, of course, a must. Another delicacy worth trying is *kjøttboller*—meatballs flavored with ginger and nutmeg, served with mashed or boiled potatoes and drizzled with a cream sauce or gravy. 🍴

 **Go online:** You can watch a video of Bergen at vikingcruises.com/videos

The Norwegian
fjords offer
outstanding
scenery

LANDS OF *the Vikings*

Viking river cruise enthusiasts Bernard and Sheila Moss share their experiences of a Viking ocean cruise on a fairy-tale voyage through Scandinavia and the Baltic



**Clockwise, from
this image:**

Bryggen wharf
in Bergen,
Norway; a
cobble street in
Tallinn, Estonia;
Copenhagen's
*The Little
Mermaid* statue;
Kamppi Chapel in
Helsinki, Finland





It was fitting that we began our incredible *Viking Homelands* voyage in Bergen, the Norwegian city dubbed the “Gateway to the Fjords.” Surrounded by verdant mountains, it set the scene perfectly for our journey into Scandinavia and Russia.

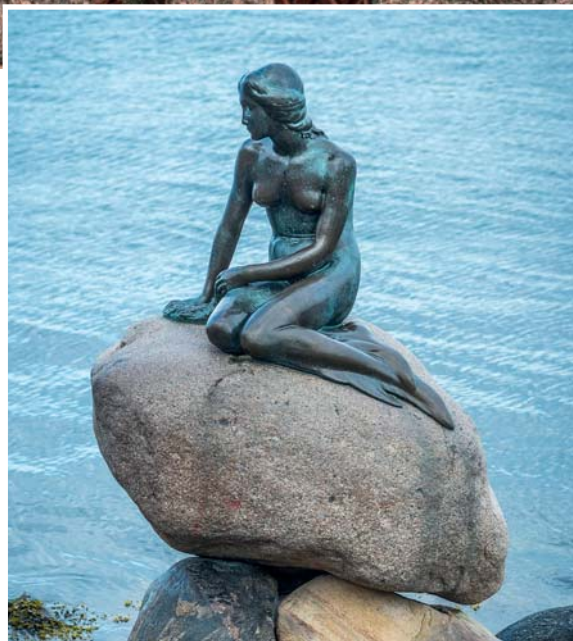
Rows of enchanting timber-clad buildings in hues of reds and browns greeted us as we sailed in to dock at Bryggen, the city’s UNESCO-listed wharf. The quayside plays an important role in the history of Bergen, which survived numerous fires during the 1300s and formed part of the Hanseatic League’s trading empire between the 14th and 16th century.

We were fascinated as we wove in and out of the labyrinth of cobbled streets and visited the Bryggens Museum to learn about Bergen’s fascinating history. Then it was down to the waterfront to wander around the amazing fish market, where we quickly got used to being gazed at by rows and rows of fish eyes. There is such a rich variety of marine life in this part of the world. The next day we visited the Hanseatic Museum, one of the oldest wooden buildings in the city, on a Viking included tour.

On board *Viking Star*®, we reveled in the quiet beauty of the fjord taking us to Flåm, which has a quiet, timeless, unspoiled beauty all its own. We were treated to some stunning views, and couldn’t take enough pictures of the peaceful lake surrounded by magnificent mountains. We were soon dragged away, however, to sample a typical Norwegian snack at Østerbø Mountain Farm.

And then on to Stavanger, where we enjoyed a walking tour around the beautifully preserved Old Town, whose wooden houses date from the 17th and 18th centuries. The ship had docked very close to the town, which meant that we were then able to “do our own thing” in a relaxed way. This was an excellent example of the way in which Viking organizes its onshore programs: there is often time to do whatever catches your fancy while others may choose to enjoy an optional tour to a nearby center of interest.

Viking travelers will be familiar with the joys of aquavit and all that the onboard tastings can provide. In Ålborg, a seafaring city in Denmark on the Limfjord, we visited the home of aquavit as well as admiring the half-timbered mansions. The aquavit samples certainly put a spring in





our step, even if we ran the risk of seeing blurry “three-quarters timbered” houses afterward.

We had been looking forward to Copenhagen immensely, and it was certainly wonderful. We visited on a beautiful sunny Sunday, and we were pleased that Viking had arranged a panoramic tour of the city by coach as well as some organized walking tours to see impressive buildings such as Christiansborg Palace, home to the Danish Parliament. The statue of the Little Mermaid seemed characteristically unfazed by the attention she received from visitors. Inevitably, we left Copenhagen wishing we had more time there, but we consoled ourselves by buying a large bag of fresh cherries to see us on our way back to the ship.

The lively, colorful city of Gdańsk in Poland has been brought back to life after the extensive devastation of war. It was amazing to see so much careful restoration alongside the attractively painted old guild houses. But we were jolted by the realization that in our lifetime the story of Solidarity had been played out in this very place. At Gate 2 in the Gdańsk Shipyard, protesters were shot and killed by the Communist regime; a simple but profoundly moving monument now stands to commemorate their sacrifice. On our way to Gdańsk we visited a cathedral that boasts one of the largest organs in the world, and to our delight we caught the final five minutes of an impressive recital.

In Estonia's Tallinn, again the coach was on hand to take us up to the Upper Town, with its breathtaking vistas and the impressive Alexander Nevsky Cathedral with its onion-shaped domes. Our guide then led us gently down the cobbled streets to the Lower Town and historic buildings. After a quick visit to a shop where we were all given a bag of almonds to enjoy, we were free to wander, meander, browse, eat ice cream or have a tippie. We found the handicraft stores with an abundance of linen and woolen products well worth a leisurely visit.

With so much to see and do in the eight countries we visited, you might think we would be reluctant to return to *Viking Star* each day. Far from it. Apart from anything else, there was the daily dilemma not only of what to eat but where to eat it. *Viking Star* has an impressive range of restaurants with no cover charges, including the incomparable Manfredi's, which offers exquisite Italian cuisine; the World Café and The Restaurant, where a wide variety of beautifully prepared food was available; and the lovely Mamsen's, which offers a more intimate setting



Clockwise, from top left:
The Sibelius Monument in Helsinki, Finland; Tallinn's medieval skyline; a pretty café in Gdańsk, Poland



WE FOUND THE HANDICRAFT STORES
WITH AN ABUNDANCE OF LINEN AND
WOOLEN PRODUCTS WELL WORTH A VISIT



for a relaxed snack or meal. Reservations could also be made for The Chef's Table, which offered special menus to reflect the countries we were visiting. Oh, and just in case we felt undernourished, there was always an elegant afternoon tea available poolside, together with what seemed like a never-ending supply of waffles.

Our next port of call—after a full day at sea when we were treated to some spectacular sunsets over the Baltic—was St. Petersburg, with its incomparably impressive buildings that truly take your breath away. Part of the organized tour was a private concert of Russian Orthodox singers arranged for Viking travelers in the ornate Peter and Paul Cathedral. We were immensely amused by the two ancient Russian tramcars in the courtyard outside this church that have been converted into restrooms, each one with a resident guardian demanding kopecks upon entry.

Even with all the optional tours available, there still wasn't time enough to do justice to this amazing city, but with the prospect of Helsinki as our next port of call, we took a deep breath and said goodbye to this gem of a city that's so full of history and culture.

Helsinki delights, with its famous Rock Church where a pianist was playing when we visited and its stunning monument to Sibelius. We were treated to a "craft fest" because all along the quayside as well as in countless nearby shops, there were masses of beautiful artifacts, jewelry ➤



Clockwise, from this image:
Peter and Paul Cathedral, St. Petersburg, Russia; Finnish *korvapuusti* pastries; *Viking Star* at sea; the Old Town in Stockholm, Sweden; Alexander Nevsky Cathedral in Tallinn, Estonia



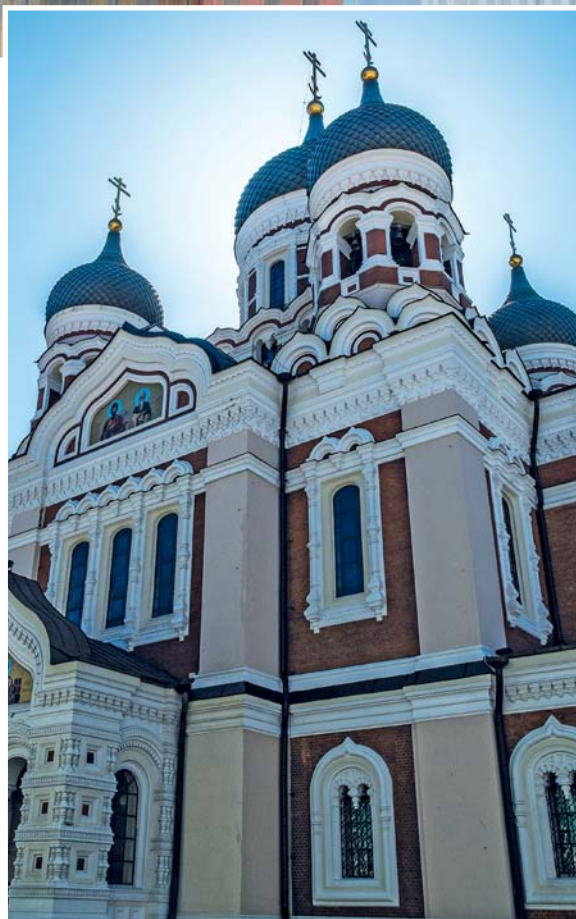
and clothing to tempt the buyer. There was something about the quiet dignity and peacefulness of this city which made us want to go back and see a whole lot more.

As we sailed in at the end of our voyage, the skyline of Stockholm was breathtaking. We really enjoyed the panoramic city tour and opportunity to explore the huge food market which was only a short walk from where our ship was moored. Somehow it seemed a fitting end to what had been a memorable cruise.

We felt overall that we had been introduced to a rich and varied tapestry of Baltic beauty to which we already feel drawn to return. And throughout our cruise we felt welcomed whenever we landed: there was a genuine sense of hospitality with a recognition not only that tourism was an important contributor to local economies, but that those we met had much to share with us and of which to be immensely proud.

On our final night we were almost sorry to be tucking into a delicious smörgåsbord, a local meal of traditional smoked salmon and cold cuts, our last dinner in port.

Although we covered 11 destinations across eight countries in just 15 days, it felt as if we really got to know the heart and soul of each destination—so much so that Scandinavia and the Baltic now feel like our second home. 📍



GETTING THERE: A 15-day *Viking Homelands* voyage travels from Bergen to Stockholm or in reverse from April to September. As you enjoy your travels, we invite you to share your photos and the stories behind them on [MyVikingStory.com](https://www.myvikingstory.com).



HELSINKI

Dynamic, stylish and cosmopolitan, with impressive architecture and a charming harbor, the Finnish capital is an absolute delight and one of the highlights of a Baltic cruise

Originally founded when Finland was under the rule of Sweden in the 16th century, Helsinki did not begin to flourish until the 19th century under Russian rule, after it became the capital of the then autonomous Grand Duchy of Finland in 1812; it did not truly emerge as an independent republic until 1917.

Despite nominally being an ally of Nazi Germany until 1945, Finland was not occupied by the Soviet Union after the war and consequently avoided the fate of a Communist dictatorship.

It rapidly industrialized during the 1950s and developed into a social democracy in much the same

manner as Sweden, Denmark and Norway. In 2011, Helsinki was named the best city to live in in the world by *Monocle* magazine, and in 2015, the Economist Intelligence Unit placed it in the top 10 most liveable cities.



Must-sees

Helsinki is home to a number of excellent art museums and the Finnish Museum of Natural History, which presents the history of Finland from the Stone Age to the present day.

The majority of Finland is Lutheran, but one of Helsinki's most notable cathedrals is the Uspenski, a Russian Orthodox cathedral, and the largest

Orthodox church in Western Europe. It is open and free to visit except on Mondays. The Helsinki Cathedral has five beautiful domes in the neoclassical style. The most unique church, however, is

Clockwise, from top: the harbor, Helsinki is renowned for its architecture and design; Temppeliaukio; fresh fish





DESIGN DISTRICT HELSINKI



Temppeliaukio, a Lutheran church built in the 1960s directly into solid rock. It's also worth simply walking around and enjoying the breathtaking Art Nouveau architecture and the neoclassical buildings.

Shopping

Check out the Design District for innovative Finnish design, and the high-end stores along the Esplanadi (which is also home to a lovely park, ideal for relaxing in summer, when it can get hot, and listening to the live music played on the bandstand).

Helsinki's best shopping is to be found in its markets. The Old Market Hall has stalls for just about everything, while the Hakaniemi Market Hall offers a huge selection of food, including seafood, as well as souvenirs.

Kauppatori is a fresh food market with fishermen selling their catches straight off their boats, making it quite the unique experience. And a visit to fabric store Marimekko is a must.

Eating

No visit to Helsinki would be complete without trying some delicious freshly baked *korvapuusti* (cinnamon rolls). The Finns have a strong pub culture, and relaxed food and drink with the family is preferred over haute cuisine. For an authentic Finnish pub experience, try Cella on Fleminginkatu or Sävel on Hämeentie. Ragu and Passio are probably considered the best fine dining restaurants in Helsinki, but for proper Finnish food (a lot of fish) try Juuri, which has a reputation for its creativity and uniqueness, or Ravintola Kuu.

Finns love sparkling wines and vodka, but they are also fond of *sima*, essentially mead, though the recipe nowadays substitutes honey with fruit sugars (producing different flavors) and the alcohol percentage is very low. 🍷

🔗 **Go online:** For details of the Viking Homelands itinerary, visit vikingcruises.com

TOP 10 PLACES

...to drink a cup of coffee



I / PARIS

In a country where “people watching” is a national sport, you want the coffee to be just as good. And in Paris, you won’t be disappointed. Sitting and sipping in a Parisian café is one of the many simple pleasures in this glorious city. To call the waiter, simply say “*Monsieur*” (not “*Garçon*”). *Pain au chocolat?*

Just say oui on the Paris & the Heart of Normandy river cruise

Left to right:
A cup of coffee with a pretty foam design; a row of outdoor Parisian coffee tables



2 / LISBON

Lisbon's picture-postcard cobblestone streets, charming pastel-colored houses and white-domed cathedrals are reason enough to pause for refreshments and take in the views. Then there's the *pastéis de nata*, the sweet and scrumptious Portuguese custard tart that's the perfect accompaniment to a cup of rich coffee. Thanks to its Brazilian connections, Portugal has long enjoyed the best coffee beans—and the best baristas. Try stopping at just one cup of coffee.

Drink in the views on Portugal's River of Gold

Clockwise, from this image: A Chinese kung fu tea ceremony; terrace cafés in Lisbon; Budapest's popular Central Market Hall



3 / CHINA

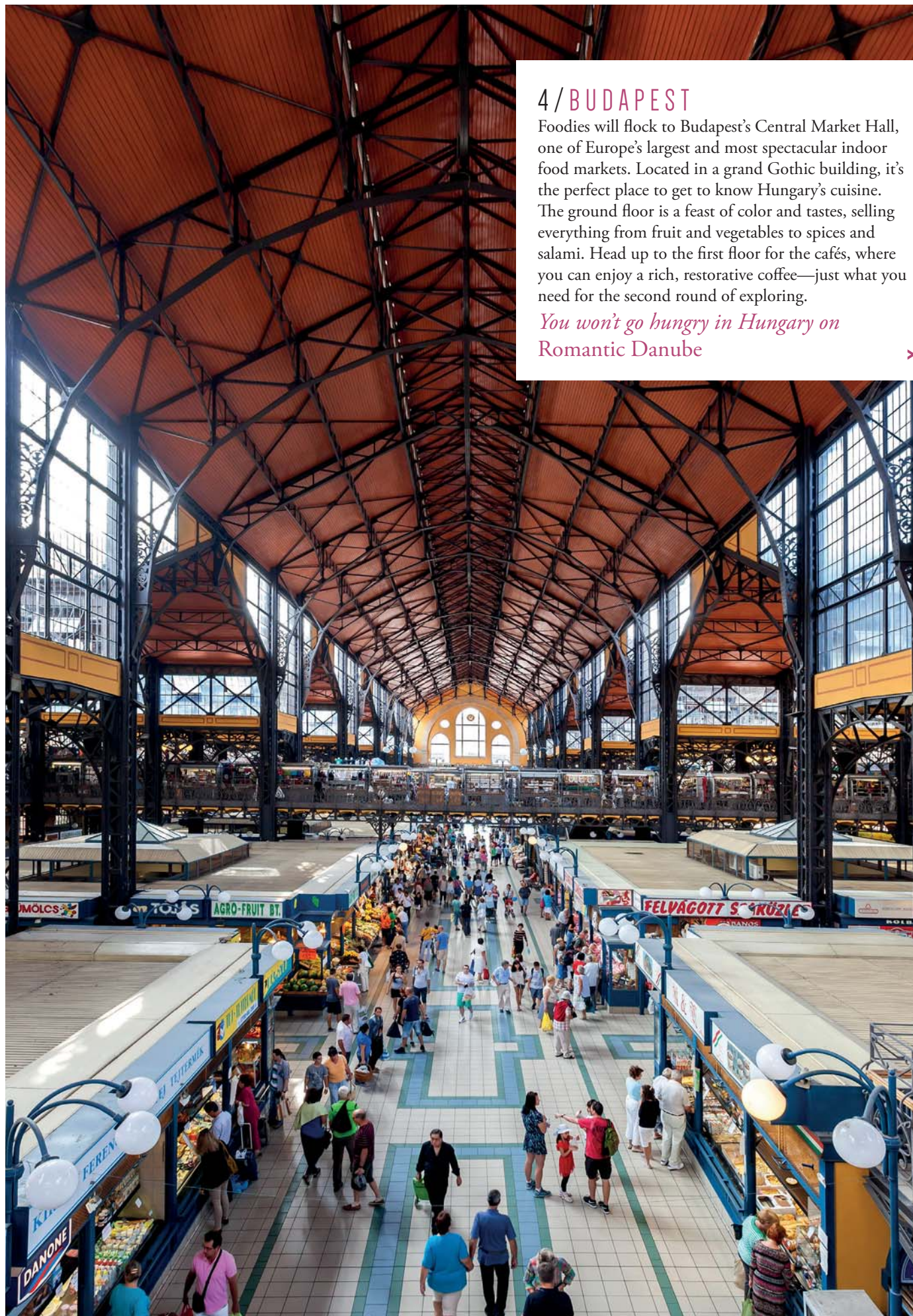
If coffee really isn't your cup of tea, you'll feel right at home in China. Sailing the Yangtze through soaring gorges and mist-shrouded mountains, join a traditional Chinese tea ceremony on board your ship. Tea is at the very heart of Chinese culture, and the delightful tea ceremony represents an important ritual of healing and spirituality that has been handed down for centuries. Inspiring.

Time for tea on Imperial Jewels of China

4/BUDAPEST

Foodies will flock to Budapest's Central Market Hall, one of Europe's largest and most spectacular indoor food markets. Located in a grand Gothic building, it's the perfect place to get to know Hungary's cuisine. The ground floor is a feast of color and tastes, selling everything from fruit and vegetables to spices and salami. Head up to the first floor for the cafés, where you can enjoy a rich, restorative coffee—just what you need for the second round of exploring.

You won't go hungry in Hungary on Romantic Danube





5/SIEM REAP

Gateway to Angkor Wat with its ancient, UNESCO Site temples, Siem Reap has grown into a resort center of hip hotels and world-class food and drink, and that includes world-class coffee. The town boasts more than one chic café where you can savor a coffee just the way you like it. Here, in the heart of the Cambodian jungle, you can enjoy the best of both worlds.

Enjoy coffee Cambodia style on Magnificent Mekong



6/ARLES

You don't need to be a van Gogh fan for this place to make an impression. Café van Gogh on the Place du Forum is the place to channel your inner artist. Van Gogh famously painted this quintessential French café in 1888 during his stay in Arles. The perfect spot to soak up the atmosphere.

Be inspired on Lyon & Provence

7//VIENNA

Serving what is arguably the best coffee—and cake—in the world, a visit to a Viennese coffeehouse (*Kaffehaus*) is more than a caffeine fix, it's a complete sensory experience. The cafés of Vienna are an elegant affair, an integral part of society where you can read a newspaper, chat, play a game of chess, listen to music and really relax. Many famous Viennese institutions—including the opulent Café Sacher, which serves its irresistible Sachertorte, and the gorgeous, Art Nouveau Café Sperl—have been welcoming visitors for more than a hundred years. Enjoy!

Treat yourself on Romantic Danube



Clockwise, from top left: Angkor Wat temples in Siem Reap; an elegant setting in a Viennese coffeehouse; Café van Gogh in Arles

**Clockwise, from
this image:**

St. Basil's
Cathedral in
Moscow, Russia;
a café in Berlin,
Germany; the
Aquavit Terrace
on the Viking
Longships

8 / MOSCOW

Russia is famous for many things, but great coffee isn't one of them. However, there are a few cafés and restaurants in Moscow's ornate GUM Department Store that serve very passable *kofe*. It tastes even better if you find a seat outside on Red Square. In front of you is the Kremlin, St. Basil's Cathedral is to your left and the State Historical Museum to your right. And the echo of centuries past right at your feet. Incredible.

*Savor the moment along the
Waterways of the Tsars*

9 / THE AQUAVIT TERRACE®

For a brew with a view, you can't beat the Aquavit Terrace on the Viking Longships. This fabulous al fresco space gives you a front row seat to Europe's stunning riverside towns, cities and scenery. Best of all, you can help yourself to a cup of coffee (and other hot drinks) anytime—with our compliments. Fancy another?

Take in the views on the Aquavit Terrace



10/BERLIN

The capital of cool, you would expect Berlin to be bursting with great cafés and great coffee, and it certainly delivers. Berlin's coffee scene is thriving, with names such as The Barn and Double Eye ranking among the favorite haunts. Near the Berlin Wall Memorial is Bonanza Coffee Roasters, one of the first and best. 📍

Take two days to explore on Elegant Elbe

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SAN JUAN

The capital of the Caribbean island of Puerto Rico offers an intriguing mix of colonial treasures, stunning scenery, and fascinating culture and history combined with a laid-back tempo

Although Christopher Columbus arrived in Puerto Rico in 1493, San Juan wasn't officially founded until 1521 by its first governor, Juan Ponce de León, who named it the City of Puerto Rico (Rich Port). The city quickly became Spain's most important military outpost in the Caribbean.

San Juan is the second oldest European-established capital city in the Americas. Following a period of rapid industrial development after World War II, San Juan emerged as a leading economic, cultural and tourism hub in Central America.

Today, the historic area within the city wall, or La Muralla, is known as El Viejo

San Juan (Old San Juan). The entire present-day city has a population of about 350,000, but within the greater metropolitan area, more than 2 million people live or work, making it a vibrant and bustling community.



MUST-SEES

Old San Juan is a beautiful part of the city with famous *adoquín* (a blue stone) paved streets. History lovers are sure to enjoy this area.

Particularly of note are the old City Wall and forts, including the spectacular Fort San Felipe del Morro, an engineering masterwork standing watch at the entrance

to San Juan Bay since the 16th century. It is well known for its distinctive *garitas*, overhanging turrets that have become a symbol of San Juan.

Also worth seeing is Fort San Cristóbal. Both are open to the public and offer museums and the option for private

Clockwise, from top: Vibrant houses on San Justo Street; plantains at different stages of ripeness; a waterfall in El Yunque national rainforest; a stunning Puerto Rican beach



exploration. Much of Old San Juan is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. You can also see the second oldest cathedral in the Americas, the graceful and beautiful Cathedral of San Juan Bautista.

Head to Isla Verde for a hub of bustling nightlife and a busy, active beach that is full of street performers and activities.

Or check out the Condado district for a gorgeous tree-lined oceanfront. Right between Condado and Isla Verde is Ocean Park, a small, quiet beach, great for relaxing.

San Juan is home to a wide range of fantastic museums. The Museum of Contemporary Art is a neoclassical building with a large selection of art focused on Latin American and Caribbean artists.

The Puerto Rico art museum houses a huge collection of Latin American art and tells the history of the area. Elsewhere there are museums dedicated to everything from books to Pablo Casals to Bacardi rum.



SHOPPING

The modern area known as New San Juan is where you'll find the majority of the city's shopping and restaurant districts, paired with traditional stores and cafés, mostly serving Hispanic food with a Caribbean twist.

Many stores sell handmade ceramic *coquí*—a local frog that has become an emblem of sorts of Puerto Rico.

Bacardi is, of course, everywhere, but do try some of the other locally produced rums—Don Q and Palo Viejo are both excellent choices. And then head to the Cigar House to purchase some fine cigars.

The Plaza Las Américas is the largest shopping mall in the Caribbean, with every imaginable US chain store, including (allegedly) the world's largest JCPenney and Sears outlets.

It's not all standard, though, with shops unique to Puerto Rico selling watches and other jewelry, plus bamboo clothing, great for keeping cool in the heat.



EATING

Stop off during the day for a coffee and churro in one of the city's many cafés. Try Alto Grande coffee, cultivated in the mountains since 1839.

A lot of restaurants have Spanish words even on their English menus, as they are idiomatic: "*comida criolla*" indicates dishes are house specialties, often from age-old recipes.

Plátanos are plantains, part of the banana family, and are used widely in both sweet and savory dishes. 🍌



Go online: For details of our West Indies Explorer cruise, visit vikingcruises.com







ALASTAIR *Miller*

Award-winning British photographer **Alastair Miller** works closely with Viking Cruises, and now some of his incredible images have been published in a new book, *Norway: Colors and Textures*. Here he tells us about his inspiration and shares some top tips

Q What do you believe makes a photograph interesting or distinctive?

A. A photograph is literally “drawing with light,” so my first instinct would always be to go where the light is most interesting. This is usually, but not always, at the beginning or end of the day when the sun is low in the sky, or I’ll use reflected light for a portrait. And unusual angles or composition can also make a photo “pop.”

Q What’s your favorite photograph in the book and why?

A. My favorite image would probably be the one of modern-day Viking Geir Rovik (see page 57). It was taken while we were sailing on his reconstruction of an original Viking longship and his determined yet watchful expression seemed to embody what those early Viking explorers were all about.



Q Which photograph was the most difficult to capture?

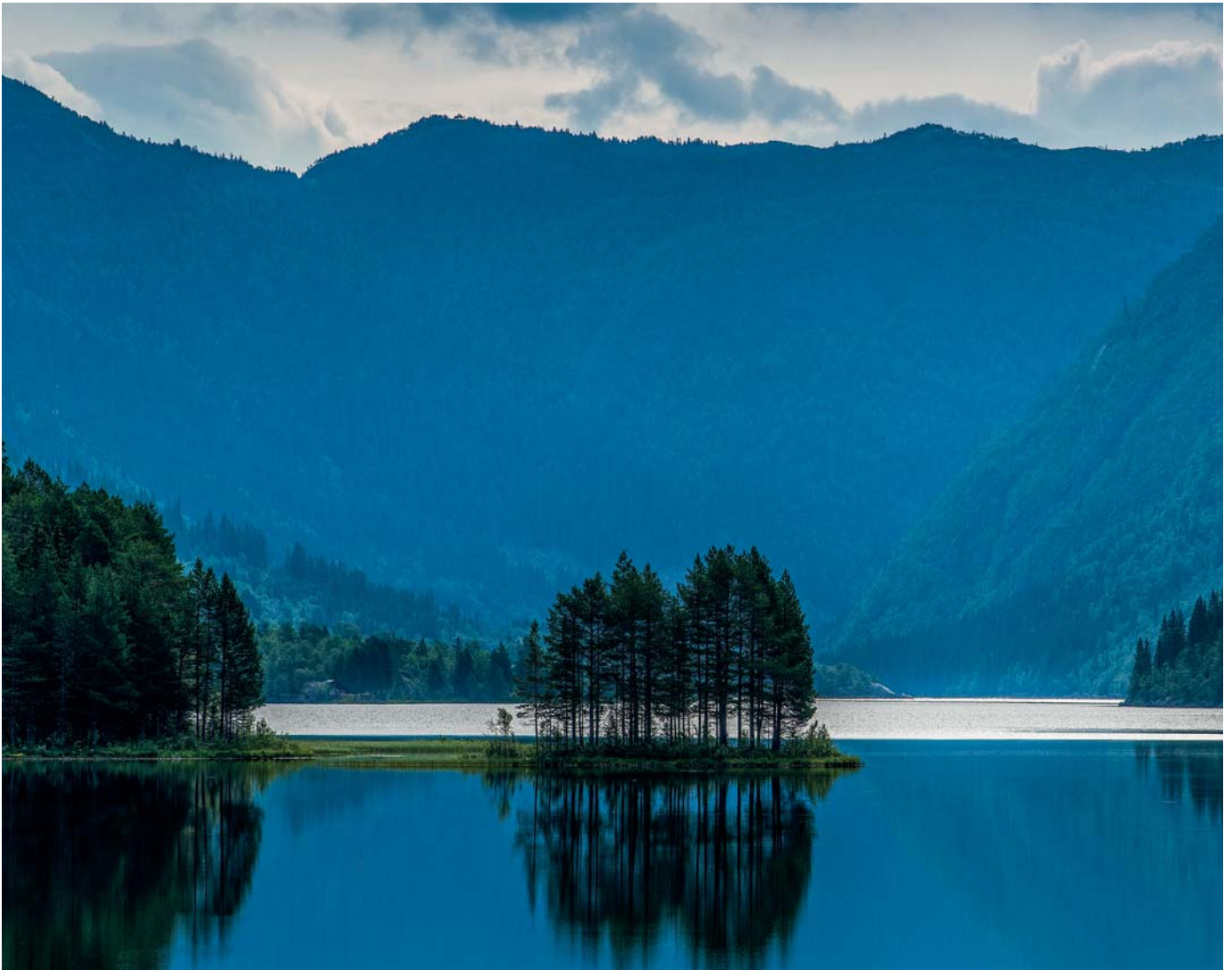
A. Without a doubt, the ram (left), who though looking magnificent, never stood still for more than a second or two.

Q What makes Norway in particular such a fascinating place to photograph?

A. Big nature, dramatic landscapes, constantly changing light, incredible fjords.

Q The book makes the country and lifestyle seem idyllic. What can other countries learn about the Norwegian way of life?

A. In a word, *Allemannsretten*, which translates as All Man’s Right, a 1957 Norwegian law which basically gives the people the right to access land regardless of ownership and to camp on any uncultivated countryside. ➤



Q The book talks about the legacy left by the Vikings to modern-day Norwegians. What will be the legacy left by modern-day Norwegians to future generations?

A. Working with nature and respect for the environment.

Q What tips would you offer to amateur photographers?

A. Travel light, be patient and understand the difference between looking and seeing.

Q What's your favorite Norwegian dish?

A. *Bacalao*, which is a spicy salt cod stew cooked in a tomato, wine and olive sauce and is one of the most popular dishes in Norway.

Q What do you hope people will take away from the book?

A. That they will be inspired to take their own pictures.



Q What are the challenges of taking photographs in the Norwegian climate?

A. It can rain a lot, particularly on the west coast.

Q How would you sum up what a first-time visitor to Norway can expect from their experience?

A. Well, Norwegians are reserved but friendly people, rightly proud of their heritage and the beauty of their country. The best food comes from the sea, and coffee and waffles are a must.



Turn the page to see more of Alastair Miller's Norway images. >>



Images of NORWAY

Here is a selection of some of Alastair Miller's beautiful Norway images, which can be seen on our ocean ships



On Norway's Finse plateau, petal-soft lichen in rich jewel tones of garnet and peridot cover slate-gray boulders. Sensitive to pollution, lichen thrives in clean air and so serves as a reliable environmental indicator.



Plump Norwegian strawberries are the sweetest in the world. Bathed in near-constant sunlight during summer's midnight sun, the *jordbær*, or "earth berry," is beautifully fragrant and bursting with flavor.



Emerald-hued moss blankets Norway's mountains, thriving on less sunny, north-facing slopes. Vikings used the dense vegetation to keep warm, stuffing it into their boots or laying it atop their roofs or beds.



The traditional Norwegian costume, the cherished *bunad* is proudly worn by women, men and children. Designs and patterns signify what region the wearer is from; a belt or jewelry may indicate marital status or other social rankings. ♡

Become a WINE EXPERT



A cruise is a fantastic opportunity to expand your palate and learn more about wine. Here are some top tips from expert **Helen McGinn**

Wine can be a confusing subject. For a start, there's so much choice. Can you imagine going into a grocery store and having to choose between 1,000 different types of cereal that all look similar apart from the label? Then there's the subject of food and wine matching. There seems to be a lot of "unofficial rules," like white wine with fish, red wine with meat. But I don't think that's strictly true. In fact, getting it right is pretty simple.

First, think how you might match the colors of your clothes. Some combinations are safe, some a little more daring. The same goes for matching food and wine. There are some tried and tested combinations, but every now and again it's worth experimenting a little, mixing it up and maybe discovering something that tantalizes the taste buds. If there's one rule to remember, it's this: think about the weight of flavor of the food and try to match it with a wine of similar weight. By weight, I mean the body and fullness of the wine. Is it light, medium or full-bodied? You know how you can detect the difference between nonfat or regular milk? Wine's the same. And it needs to be able to cope with the dominant flavor of the food. How it's cooked—steamed, fried or roasted—will call for different weights. The idea is that you will be able to taste both the flavors in the food and flavors in the wine.

Crisp wines with lots of acidity help cut through oily, salty or creamy foods. A touch of sweetness in wine is great when it matches the sweetness in a dish, especially desserts. A crisp white is going to be lost on a big beef casserole. And a rich, oaky red will all but destroy the flavors of a light fish dish.



Fish:

Generally, a dry white works best. Chablis is a classic match given its crisp acidity, but sauvignon blanc works well too. If you have smoked salmon on your plate, then something with lots of acidity is going to help cut through it. The answer? Champagne, darling. And for fuller flavored fish like tuna, then not-too-tannic reds like pinot noir are brilliant, especially from Burgundy.

Chicken:

Depending on how it's been cooked and what it's served with, the possible combinations are endless. For a simple roast chicken, chardonnay works well, as does Sémillon and Viognier. But if you've got all the trimmings on your plate, it's much better to go for a light to medium-bodied red, like gamay from Beaujolais.



Red Meat:

More weight and flavor called for here but beware that very tannic reds, like amarone, can clash with fat. With pork belly, something from the Rhône valley or southern France will work well. Cabernet sauvignon, Merlot and Shiraz are red meat-friendly, but try going local; that is, match the wine with the style of the dish—Italian to Italian, French to French and so on.

Vegetables and herbs:

Think fresh flavors. Tomatoes with sauvignon blanc. Asparagus with a dry German Riesling, especially one from the Moselle-Saar-Ruwer region. Pinot grigio with a simple salad. And don't forget about rosé wines—they make brilliant food wines thanks to their often slightly more robust but still fresh flavors. Rosemary loves red, basil prefers white, mint likes a Muscat, and for thyme save some of that rosé, especially if it's from Provence.

Spicy food:

Reach for a slightly off dry German Riesling (although decoding a German wine label isn't always easy). Another good one is Gewürztraminer, especially those from the Alsace area in northeast France. Another great dry white option is Grüner Veltliner, which is a peachy Austrian dry white. If there are lots of different spices, go for a fruity red, but nothing too oaky. Spice and oak fight on your palate.



Puddings:

Generally, sweet food needs sweet wine. Sweet Muscat wines are a dream with chocolate desserts, and citrus desserts are better off with anything that is *botrytised* (otherwise known as noble rot: think Tokaji or Sauternes). My all time favorite match for a slab of dark chocolate is a fortified wine from the South of France, from Maury or Banyuls. If there's any Prosecco left from before dinner and you've gone for a lighter fruit dessert, grab the leftovers.

Cheese:

Again, there are so many possibilities, but blue cheese tends to work best with sweetness (think port, especially tawny or Sauternes) and hard cheeses with firm reds. Bordeaux reds are a dream with strong, hard cheese. And if you love goat cheese, try it with sauvignon blanc, especially Sancerre or Pouilly-Fumé. It's that local rule again, and it always works.

ABOUT HELEN MCGINN: Helen is the author of the blog and book *The Knackered Mother's Wine Club* (Amazon.com). She spent almost a decade as a wine buyer for a big grocery store and has a weekly newspaper column. **V**

Go online: You can find out more about wines from around the world at vikingcruises.com

QUIZ

How well do you know your wine?

1. WHAT GIVES RED WINE COLOR?

- A** The red varieties of the grape
- B** The skins of the grapes
- C** The fruit flavors

2. SAUTERNES WINES ARE TRADITIONALLY...

- A** Sweet
- B** Dry
- C** Sharp

3. WHO INTRODUCED VINES TO ENGLAND?

- A** The French

- B** The Spanish
- C** The Romans

4. WHICH WINE REGION PRODUCES THE MOST WINE ANNUALLY?

- A** France
- B** Italy
- C** South Africa

5. HOW MUCH WINE WOULD YOU FIND IN AN IMPÉRIALE BOTTLE?

- A** Four liters
- B** Six liters
- C** Eight liters

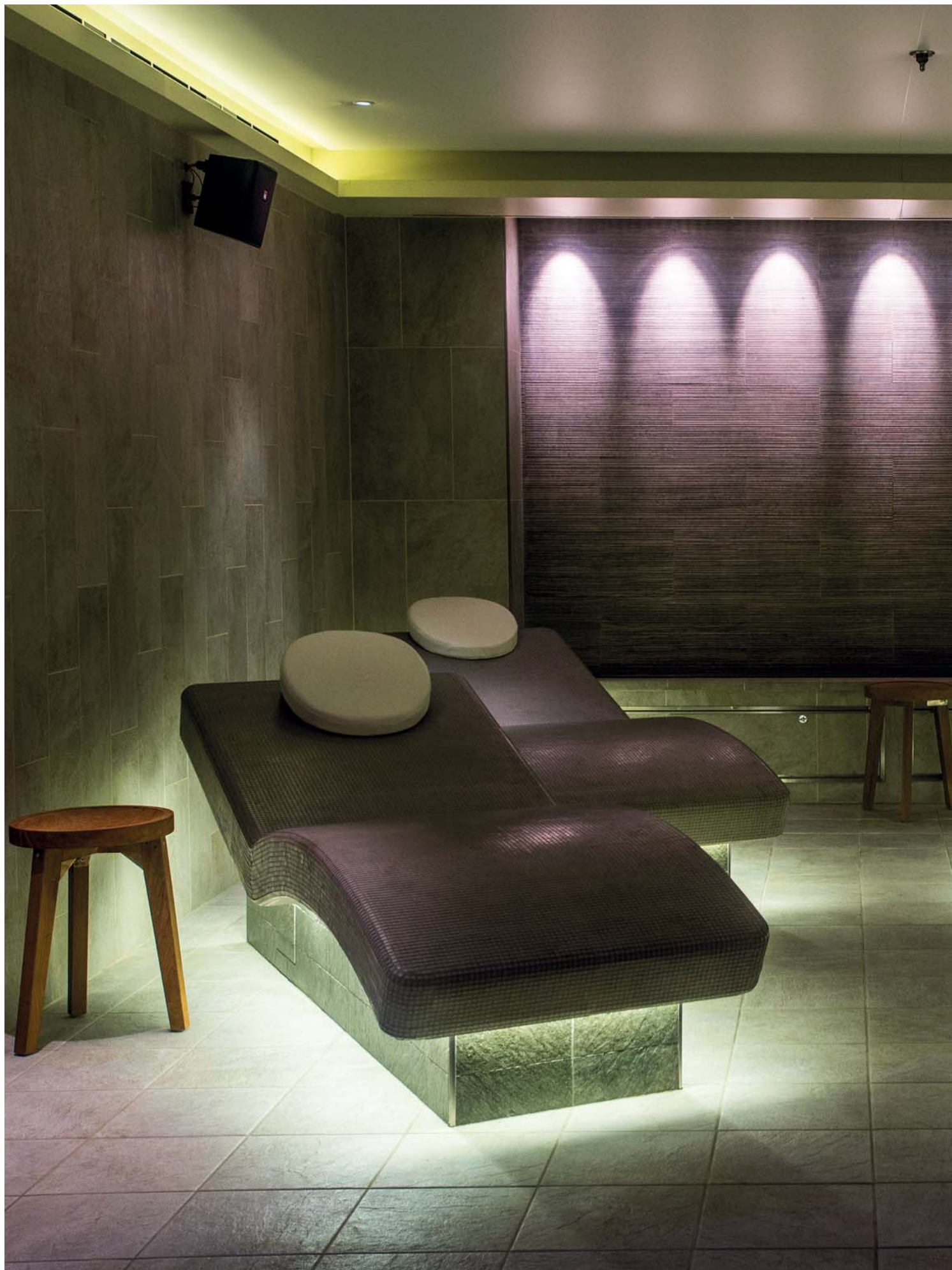
6. IN WHICH COUNTRIES ARE THE FOLLOWING SPARKLING WINES PRODUCED?

- A** Champagne
- B** Cava
- C** Prosecco

7. WHAT IS THE OFFICIAL WORD FOR A CONNOISSEUR OF WINE?

- A** Oenophile
- B** Winophile
- C** Grapophile

Answers: 1. b), 2. a), 3. c), 4. a), 5. c), 6. a) France, b) Spain, c) Italy, 7. a)



A PLACE *to spa*

The Spa on board Viking ocean ships boasts an invigorating Snow Grotto plus restorative saunas and plunge pools. Well-being expert Jo Foley is impressed



A blue-tinted photograph of a snow grotto. The scene is filled with snow-covered rocks and icicles hanging from the ceiling. In the center, there is a stone bench or platform. The floor is covered in a thick layer of snow with some footprints. The lighting is soft and blue, creating a serene and cold atmosphere.

THIS SNOW GROTTTO COMMANDS
PRIDE OF PLACE IN THE THERMAL SUITE
ON OUR FIRST NORDIC SPA AT SEA



Clockwise, from left: The Spa offers organic products such as Rahua; facials are on the menu; the interiors exude tranquility; LivNordic Spa



The Vikings were travelers, taking their ironwork, silver crafts and lifestyle with them wherever they trawled and traded. However, no one ever thought, come the 21st century, that they would be able to deliver snow encased in a large blue-glass room to sunnier climes. Yet this is exactly what has been achieved on board *Viking Star* in The Spa. This Snow Grotto commands pride of place in the thermal suite on our first Nordic spa at sea. Created by Swedish spa company Raison d'Être, LivNordic (which translates as “Nordic life”) is a celebration of healthy living in northern latitudes using age-old traditions of hot and cold to bring recuperation and relaxation to body and mind.

First there is heat, which relaxes and soothes tense and taut muscles and joints. Then there's a quick burst of cold. This brings blood rushing to the skin's surface along with oxygen, which in turn boosts circulation as well as revitalizes skin and tired muscles. Up in the frozen north, many people have saunas at home and, after enjoying some time relaxing in them, think nothing of either rushing out into the snow or plunging into an icy cold pool. Invigoration and a great sense of well-being follow. But on board *Viking Star*, no rushing outside is needed for all is within possibly the most elegant spa at sea. The sauna, which heats to approximately 117 °F, is two or three feet from the Snow Grotto, which boasts an arctic temperature of 21 °F. Spend 10 to 15 minutes in each.

If the idea of stepping into a room of snow in your bathing suit is a little daunting, you could opt for the alternative and step from the sauna straight under an ice-cold bucket of water. This is the Nordic version of a specialty shower. Each offers the same therapeutic effectiveness. In fact, the whole hot-and-cold concept is evident throughout The Spa. Each changing room—one male and one female—has its own sauna and plunge pool, while the main thermal suite has a hot tub and a heated pool complete with underwater jets to massage backs, legs and shoulders.

So while The Spa is fun and therapeutic, it also offers all the elements that a true luxury and pampering service provides. There are massages, scrubs, facials, manicures, pedicures, a hairdresser and barber. There is also a fitness area with state-of-the-art facilities, plus Kinesis and TRX equipment and a studio for yoga, Pilates and Zumba. But it is the





Nordic bathing experience that is at the heart of The Spa, especially popular on sea days, or even late afternoon when guests return from excursions, as the area remains open until 8 PM. And while most guests are familiar with saunas, hot tubs, Jacuzzis and plunge pools, The Spa team has introduced special sauna evenings to reveal the benefits of the process.

These sessions are normally offered on two or three evenings during a cruise and are limited to 10 people, so booking is advisable. Each visit is accompanied by a staff member and begins in the sauna for about 10 minutes, after which the group is moved to the Snow Grotto. Some just pop their head inside while the braver stay for a few minutes ... and it is seeing how easily fellow guests take to the experience that encourages others to return after a second sauna. During the second sauna, birch twigs and leaves are introduced. Traditionally, these are used to massage the body to heighten the sensation of the heat—dry brushing has the same effect. Next, it is time for a return to the Snow Grotto, a visit which can, for some, last up to four or five minutes, and snow balls are often brought in to play to end the session with fun. Herbal teas are then served before guests head for the Main Pool, enjoy a massage or get ready for dinner. Not only are the sauna evenings becoming increasingly popular, they are a clever way to introduce the Snow Grotto.

And while the bathing area is the heart of The Spa, the treatment area is the serene spirit of it. Decorated in shades of silver, taupe and gray with images of birch forests, it is a super-calming area with eight treatment rooms, each with its own shower room (including one dedicated to couples). The body treatments, which may last for 50 or 80 minutes, concentrate on Stille (calm and relaxing), Ren (cleansing and detoxing) or Dybde (the traditional deep-tissue focus). Meanwhile, the beauty treatments offer Form (shaping with low-impact light technology), Fin (bespoke antiaging elements) and Vakker (also using light technology to help hydrate). All of the treatments are offered to both men and women, while a separate men's section includes a classic shave and beard trim.

To underline the clean Nordic philosophy of The Spa, all the products used are organic—Organic Pharmacy for body and beauty and Rahua (a natural cleansing product based on coconut oil) for hair. Even the specially selected yoga clothes on sale from Swedish company KW Collection use environmentally conscious materials. There is also the classic Nordic touch to bring home as a memento—hand-knit woolen



Clockwise, from top left: Guests can opt for pampering treatments; the main thermal suite; the sauna





hats complete with pom-pom. These are the work of the Spa Director's grandmother who at 95 is still producing peerless winter warmers.

All of this Nordic delight is overseen by Spa Manager Michael Simoes. A trained kinesiologist who worked in an injury rehabilitation clinic for 12 years, Michael knows the benefits that mixing heat and cold can have on the body, its injuries and its movement better than most. So he particularly loves the Snow Grotto and the delight it brings to guests. "They are not sure what to expect and think it cannot possibly be real, so there is a lot of laughter when they first see it and even more when they first try it," says the Canadian. And while this is his first venture at sea, Michael has already taken to it like the proverbial duck. "I've always loved being by the water," he says. "I now live near the sea in Lisbon and have worked in Portuguese spas close to the Atlantic, so now actually floating on the water is great."

His last assignment before joining the ship was in Jordan at a spa on the Dead Sea—quite different from the Mediterranean or the Baltic where *Viking Star* heads during the summer. "I love waking up in a different city every day and I am especially fond of Copenhagen," he says, "but most of all I love the movement of the waves and the sound of the sea." ♾

Go online: For more on our ocean ships, visit vikingcruises.com

ARCHITECTURE

Many of the cruises Viking offers provide you with the opportunity to discover a wide range of Western architectural styles. Here's a brief synopsis of some of the major styles:

ROMANESQUE

(+/- 1050–1200 AD)

Constructions in the Romanesque style began during the reign of Charlemagne (800–814 AD), who sought to re-establish the glory of the Roman Empire. This symmetrical and relatively simple style combining elements of ancient Roman and Byzantine architecture spread throughout Europe, characterized by round arches, small windows and massive, thick walls. Arches were often arrayed in a decorative series, supported by sturdy piers or columns. Long, curved ceilings are typical, created by a simple barrel arch or two barrel arches intersecting to form a groin arch. Examples of the Romanesque style can be seen in Cologne, Germany. These include St. Mary's in the Capitol (St. Maria im Kapitol), the largest of Cologne's 12 Romanesque churches, with its carved wooden doors, and Great St. Martin's (Gross St. Martin), whose three apses and soaring tower crossing above them have characterized Cologne's skyline since the Middle Ages.

GOTHIC

(+/- 1150–1450 AD)

Gothic architecture evolved from the Romanesque and broke the rounded arch tradition with the use of pointed arches and building elements that stressed verticality and a reach toward the heavens, a manifestation of Europe's focus during this period on religion over the mundane. The pointed arch was extensively used in doorways, windows, arcades and galleries, and enabled expansive vaulted ceilings—higher than in the Romanesque style—by transferring the building's weight onto supporting columns. Flying buttresses on Gothic exteriors further supported the weight and allowed for many tall, vertical windows as well as rows of clerestory windows near the ceiling that flooded the structures with ethereal light. Many of Europe's greatest cathedrals, castles and universities were built in this style; the best-known example of Gothic architecture is Paris's Notre Dame Cathedral, which was one of the first buildings to use the flying buttress, a style that spread throughout Europe. ➤

Clockwise, from facing page:

Romanesque St. Gereon Church in Cologne with its decagonal nave, topped with an impressive dome, painted in red; Gothic Notre Dame, Paris, constructed from 1163–1345; St. Joseph's Cathedral in Hanoi, built in the neo-Gothic style in 1886





RENAISSANCE

(+ / - 1450-1600 AD)

In the 15th century, Florence gave birth to the Renaissance as well as Renaissance architecture—a new, clean-lined and simpler style. This architectural direction resulted from a renewed interest in ancient Greece and Rome, surviving Roman ruins, and a desire to return to classicism. Architect/engineer Filippo Brunelleschi was one of its early pioneers, supported by the patronage and wealth of the Medici family. Buildings possessed an elegance created by symmetry and geometric plans. Columns and pilasters—rectangular piers semi-embedded in the walls—were used generously, often to support triangular pediments that reflected the classic architecture of ancient Greece and Rome. Domes, arches and sculpture-filled niches were also characteristic. Italy contains some of the best examples of this style, including Florence Cathedral, for which Brunelleschi engineered a groundbreaking dome, and the Palazzo Medici.

BAROQUE

(+ / - 1550-1775 AD)

The baroque built on the Renaissance architectural elements, but emphasized movement and theatrical embellishment. This excess was embraced by painters as well as architects in reaction to the austerity of the Protestant Reformation. Baroque works sought to move the emotions through dramatic lighting, opulent color and heavy ornamentation in plaster, stucco and marble, often with faux finishes. Scrolls, twisted columns, grand stairways and plaster ribbons emphasized visual movement. Interior rooms were ornamented with paintings, sculptures and elaborate stucco details. Most baroque structures were royal palaces or churches; striking examples include Germany's Würzburg Residence and Louis XIV's Palace of Versailles.



COLUMNS

Columns may be functional—carrying the weight of a building's structure—or purely decorative. All civilizations since the Iron Age have used these. There are three main classical Greek foundational styles and two Roman; here is how to tell the different styles apart.



DORIC: The oldest, simplest classical style, originating in Greece. The columns of the Lincoln Memorial are in this style.



IONIC: Also of Greek origin, these columns on a base of stacked disks can be seen at Rome's Colosseum.



Clockwise, from above: the ornate decoration in the Catherine Palace in Russia is typical of the rococo movement; neoclassical Brandenburg Gate in Berlin; Baroque Karlskirche in Vienna; the splendid Renaissance facade of Antwerp City Hall



ROCOCO

(+/- 1725-1775 AD)

The rococo movement kept the ornateness of the baroque style but with a lighter, more graceful and asymmetrical approach. Playful and witty secular themes were now displayed with lighter, pastel colors and lavish use of gold. The name was derived from the French words *rocaille* and *coquille* (rock and shell), referring to the rocks and shell-shaped ornaments used on fountains and ornamentation. The grand, public focus of the baroque shifted to an emphasis on private rooms. This style was applied mainly to interiors and expressed through elaborately decorated plasterwork, murals, tapestries, furniture, mirrors, porcelain, and silks. St. Petersburg's Catherine Palace in Russia is an example: derided as "whipped cream" architecture by Catherine the Great, the building glittered with over 200 pounds of gold used to gild stucco ornamentation and statues, many of which still survive today.

NEOCLASSICISM

(+/- 1775-1875 AD)

The ornate, visual complexity of baroque and rococo prompted a return to the simpler lines of classic and ancient Greek architecture. In England, the movement was inspired by excavations at Pompeii; the Grand Tour, which was de rigueur for Britain's upper class at the time; and the work of architects William Chambers and Robert Adam. The style made use of columns, symmetry, triangular pediments, and domed roofs. The three-dimensional, exuberant decoration of the baroque and rococo was abandoned for a focus on flat, exterior planes. Neoclassicism in architecture was adopted internationally, and examples can be seen as far away as Washington, DC, where many of the government buildings follow this style, and in Germany with Berlin's Brandenburg Gate. 📌



CORINTHIAN: Greek columns with elaborate scroll and flower decoration. The Pantheon in Rome has these columns.



TUSCAN: Plain Roman column without carvings on a simple base. Found in Barcelona's Palau Reial de Pedralbes.



COMPOSITE: Roman, with Ionic volutes and Corinthian leaves. See it at the Würzburg Residence, Germany.



SOLOMONIC: Popular with baroque/rococo architects and found at St. John Lateran's Archbasilica in Rome.



The glittering
skyline of Shanghai

JEWELS OF CHINA

IMPERIAL *jewels*

A Viking journey combining a river cruise along the Yangtze with hotel stays in Shanghai, Xian and Beijing is the best way to experience China, says travel writer Bridget McGrouther





A kaleidoscope of color, shimmering reflections, eclectic architecture and flashing neon billboards make the Bund instantly recognizable. We arrived after dark, the best time to see Shanghai's famous waterfront skyline in all its glitzy glory. Spending two nights in this colorful city was a vibrant and enticing welcome to our 14-day *Imperial Jewels of China* journey.

We didn't even need to leave the overwhelming comfort of our hotel room to gaze in awe at the pulsating light show. From our freestanding bathtub and super-king-size bed, we enjoyed bird's-eye views of the famous Oriental Pearl Tower.

We met our friendly and efficient Viking tour guide to explore Old Shanghai the next morning. He steered us effortlessly through intriguing alleyways and bamboo-shaded parks, providing an inspirational insider's view of unfolding traditions and culture.

I happily followed local superstition, sprinting around a circle of stones in the feng shui Yuyuan Garden. The purpose was to add extra years to my life—until my husband pointed out I was running the wrong way. Perhaps it's a better idea to gather as many do each morning for tai chi or line dancing. Birdcages are hung under trees to let feathered pets sing and socialize, and people-watching here is never dull.

After a short flight to Wuhan, we were soon meandering down the Yangtze River on board the impressive *Viking Emerald*, with its grand atrium, bars and boutiques—including a resident tailor.

Despite each of the staterooms boasting a private veranda and enjoying river views, during our seven-day cruise most guests soaked in the spectacular scenery from the Sun Deck. After all, without Program



Clockwise, from this image:
Sampans on the Yangtze River; the Terra Cotta Army in Xian; inside the Forbidden City, Beijing; a Shanghai skyscraper; north entrance to the Imperial City



WESTERN-STYLE FOOD WAS **SERVED ALONG WITH** MOUTHWATERING DELICACIES

Clockwise, from right: A red pagoda in the Shibaozhai area of Chongqing; see a giant panda at Chongqing Zoo; try dim sum, a selection of Chinese delicacies

Director Ben's illuminating commentary, we might have missed the ancient coffins of the Ba people suspended impossibly high on the rock face; or failed to spot the wild monkeys; or might not have realized that the view of towering peaks and cascading waterfalls was the same as the one on the back of a 10-yuan note.

Almost daily, an included excursion provided once-in-a-lifetime experiences. A closer inspection of the very high-tech, high-cost and highly controversial Three Gorges Dam was fascinating. Our local guide was surprisingly upbeat about being one of the 1.3 million compulsorily displaced. Ironically, homes were submerged to protect others from flooding.

It took four hours for our ship to navigate the locks—a sight we were thrilled to experience from the Observation Lounge. Still, it took 17 years and \$28 billion to build this magnificent feat of engineering.

Waking up to a steamy dawn, villagers were washing their clothes in the river when we disembarked to cross the rickety “Drunken Bridge” and climb the stairs of the enchanting Shibaozhai Temple. Built in 1650, legend has it that the higher you ascend the steep steps of this 12-story pagoda, the more your prayers will be answered. Huffing and puffing as I went along, I prayed I could reach the top.

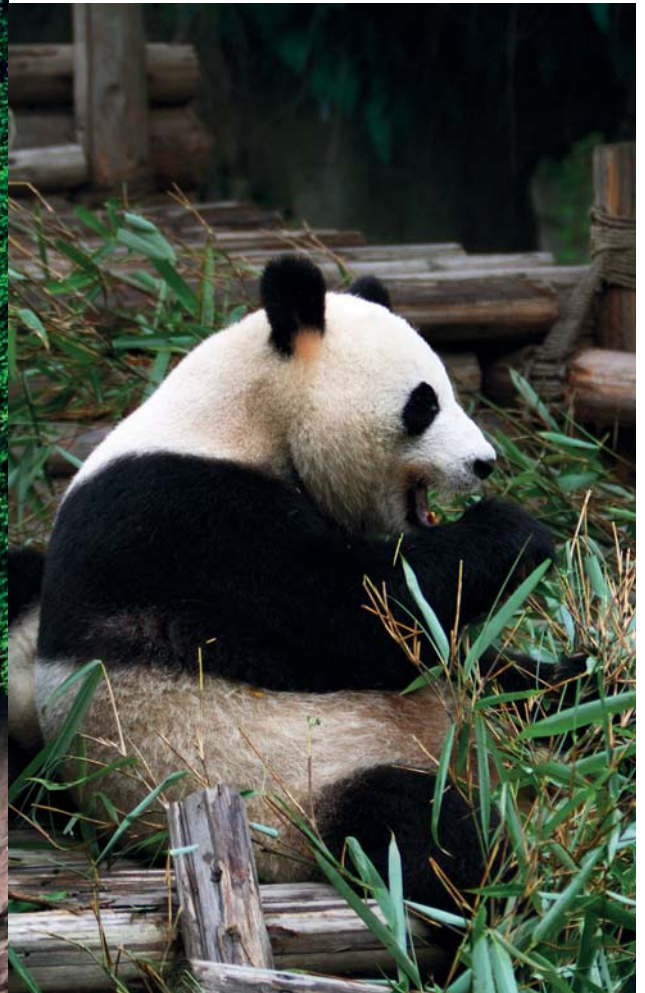
Life on board was incredibly relaxing. Western-style food was served along with mouthwatering Chinese delicacies. Glasses at mealtimes were quickly replenished with all-inclusive (and excellent) wine, beer and soft drinks. We were sad to leave the charming crew at the end of our river cruise. But we cheered up watching the antics of giant panda cub Tintin at Chongqing Zoo, where we were very lucky to see four giant pandas, as well as rare Siberian tigers.

Our now close-knit group of travelers could hardly wait for our next adventure—two nights in Xian. Nothing can quite prepare you for the first time you set eyes on the army of Terra Cotta Warriors. Thousands of life-size soldiers—all with individual faces—were buried 2,200 years ago along with ceramic chariots and warhorses to guard the tomb and afterlife of the first emperor of China, Qin Shi Huang.

Unearthed accidentally by farmers, while the remains of 8,000 figures have now been recovered, archaeologists have only scratched the surface of this incredible excavation. We stood and stared in awe.

The evening's entertainment, an optional Tang Dynasty show of dance, music and acrobatics, matched







Clockwise, from left: The iconic Great Wall; a row of Chinese lanterns; stunning ancient Chinese architecture

the great excitement of the day. David, our tour guide, kept us up to speed with our dynasties: the Shang, the Zhou, the Xin and the Tang—now it was the turn of the Ming and the Qing.

A third regional flight took us to Beijing, China's capital. During our three-night stay, we were privileged to meet the residents of a humble, single-story courtyard family home in the Hutong district and enjoy a traditional tea ceremony and a rickshaw ride through the narrow lanes.

Another enormous thrill was climbing the Great Wall, with its astounding panoramic views. We were astonished when we left others behind and reached the Mongolian border in less than an hour.

This UNESCO World Heritage Site is also a treasured tourist destination of the Chinese. Shy requests for photos made us feel like film stars and we laughed when we discovered that their nickname for Westerners is "Big Noses." Later, in Tiananmen Square, we whispered questions about the still very

ANOTHER THRILL WAS CLIMBING THE GREAT WALL OF CHINA WITH ITS ASTOUNDING VIEWS

delicate subject of the terrible events of 1989. Security is tight here—bags are searched and soldiers guard Mao's mausoleum.

It seemed everyone had arrived in the Forbidden City at once. Yet not even this could detract from the sheer majesty and grandeur of the gilded roofs, imperial gardens, pavilions and courtyards of the world's largest surviving palace complex, once home to a long line of emperors.

On a trip packed with so many incredible highlights, it's hard to pick a favorite. Yet for me, cruising along the Yangtze River, dwarfed by the sheer-sided Three Gorges, was the most awe-inspiring part of our journey.

Taking to a smaller river boat through the narrow Goddess Stream revealed a secret corner of China that has only recently been opened to visitors. Our local guide, who lived in a rural village that takes two hours to reach over a near-vertical mountain path, charmed us with her folklore tales and singing.

The sweetness of her voice carried across the water, echoing around the limestone cliffs of that remote and pristine beauty spot, is one of the many special memories that we will now treasure forever. ♥



GETTING THERE: Viking offers a 13-day *Imperial Jewels of China* cruise, from Shanghai to Beijing, or in reverse.



Go online: You can find out more about *Viking Emerald* and watch videos by visiting vikingcruises.com/videos



SHANGHAI

China's megacity is an icon of 21st-century brilliance that embraces its cosmopolitan, artistic identity and welcomes visitors into the hustle and bustle of its beating heart

One of the world's most iconic cities, Shanghai stands on the estuary of the Yangtze River, its skyline an elegant marriage of traditional and modern.

For centuries the city has been seen as an important port, but a turning point came in 1554 when a wall was constructed to protect Shanghai from Japanese pirates, demonstrating its imperial importance. Shanghai was also the site of the 15th-century City God Temple, and the city's global reputation was ensured in the 19th century when Europeans recognized the potential for trade at the Yangtze River delta.

Only given city status in 1927, the city's 25 million population today makes it

the most heavily populated in China. From the 268 mph magnetic levitation (Maglev) train that takes you to and from the airport to the cutting edge trendsetters who strut along the Bund promenade, Shanghai embraces modernity.

Colorful food stalls and markets pepper the city, and history is all around, from the Ming Dynasty People's Square to the French Concession with its art deco residences; there is a real unification of the modern and classical that sets it apart from the rest of China.



Must-sees

On the west embankment of the Huangpu River, the Bund is the focal point of the

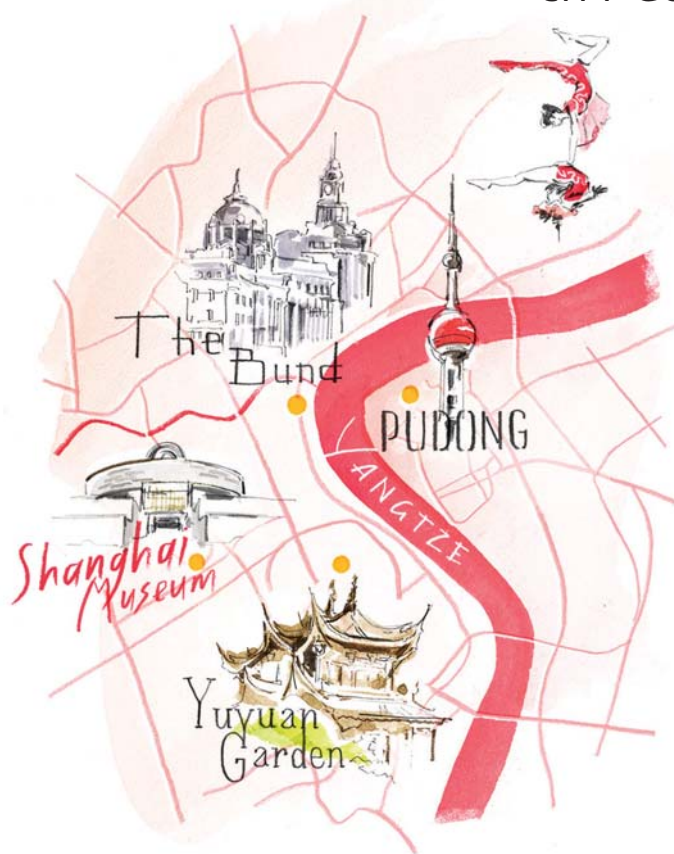
Clockwise, from top left: Shanghai's shimmering skyline; Chinese Garden in Yuyuan; Chinese dumplings; City God Temple; tea drinking is a favorite pastime in Shanghai.

distinctive skyline. Its elevated riverside boardwalk features Gothic, baroque, Romanesque and neoclassical buildings. Nearby Yuyuan Garden is a 400-year-old classical garden in Old Town, dotted with pagoda-style pavilions and





CITY GUIDE



carp pools. Pan Yunduan, a Ming-era governor of China, spent 20 years building this for his parents to enjoy.

The leafiest district in Shanghai is the old French Concession, with its shady sycamore trees and stuccoed villas in Fuxing Park. Huaihai Road is the busy commercial thoroughfare, but a walk along Fuxing Xi (West) Road takes you to pretty shops and cafés.

The People's Park and Square is home to the Shanghai Museum, featuring calligraphy, bronze statues and ceramics. One of the city's oldest and respected galleries is at 50 Moganshan Road, a collection of former warehouses that is now the hub of Chinese contemporary art.

Don't miss the Shanghai Acrobatic Troupe. Established in 1951, they're considered the best in China. Meanwhile, a more participatory Chinese pursuit is acupuncture, a centuries-old healing practice.

commercial street in Shanghai—over a million people shop here every day.

Another of Shanghai's four famous shopping streets is North Sichuan Road where bargain hunters pounce on locally produced souvenirs.

Food is the order of the day on Middle Tibet Road, while Maison Mode on Huaihai Middle Road features brands such as Gucci, Hugo Boss and Kenzo.

Eating


Filled with juicy pork, the soup dumpling, or *xiaolong bao*, is a Shanghai staple. Also try a Yunnan ham stir-fry at Jishi (41 Tianping Road).

Tianshan Tea City (Zhongshan West Road) is a multilevel labyrinth completely devoted to Chinese *cha* (tea).

Or enjoy a drink beside Shanghai's cool elite at the Vue Bar (199 Huangpu Road) on the Bund, and take in the vista of Pudong's futuristic skyline. 

Shopping

The bustling and prosperous Nanjing Road is the premier

 **Go online:** You can watch a video about the Viking Imperial Jewels of China cruise at vikingcruises.com

CHINESE *Astrology*



Celebrate the year of
the rooster in 2017

Believed to be the oldest horoscope system in the world, the ancient Eastern system of Chinese astrology is based on a lunar cycle that is completed every 12 years



The 12 animal signs found in the Chinese horoscope are similar to Western astrological signs. However, instead of monthly symbols, your animal sign is determined by the year you were born—the year starts with the Chinese New Year, which fluctuates somewhere between mid-January and mid-February, depending on the lunar cycle. These annual signs are then modified by the five elements of metal, water, wood, fire and earth, which correspond to the specific year of your birth, to bring more subtlety to the archetypes that are represented by the animals.

There are many myths surrounding the naming and order of the animals. One myth comes from a story of Buddha. Before leaving this world, Buddha decided to have a grand feast and invited all the animal kingdom, but only 12 animals showed up for the occasion. The first to arrive was the rat, followed by the ox and so forth, determining the order that is now the Chinese zodiac: the rat, the ox, the tiger, the rabbit, the dragon, the snake, the horse, the goat, the monkey, the rooster, the dog and finally the pig.

Chinese astrology has its roots in the philosophies of Lao Tzu and Confucius. This wisdom was passed down orally until it was distilled into written form in the *I Ching*, also known as the *Book of Changes*. The system is grounded in these ancient philosophies and the concept of yin and yang balance in the universe

THE ROOSTER

1933, 1945, 1957, 1969,
1981, 1993, 2005, 2017



INTELLIGENT
BRAVE AND
CONFIDENT

PERSONALITY Intelligent, brave and confident, the rooster is a discriminating individual. Determined and able to stay focused, roosters are discerning and often brilliant. They work hard toward their goals and are not prone to excessive speculation, but prefer a more conservative approach to taking action.

Roosters are known for their well-dressed appearance. Often elegant and proud, a pure-minded rooster hates hypocrisy and false airs, and is difficult to fool. Some say roosters have eyes in the back of their heads because they notice everything. They have a fine attention to detail and excel in any field where strong analysis and intellect are required. Roosters work well helming financial institutions or heading up military divisions, or in any position that requires endurance. Many roosters are also outstanding performers and do exceptionally well when placed as the center of attention.

BEST TRAITS If you are ever in need of an honest opinion, turn to your rooster friend. He will aid you with his intellect and insight, guiding you to make better and more supportive decisions for your well-being.

THE DOG

1934, 1946, 1958, 1970,
1982, 1994, 2006, 2018



FAITHFUL
TRUE AND
THOUGHTFUL

PERSONALITY The loyal and true dog lives by a firm set of ethics. Protective of those they love and a formidable foe to their loved-one's enemies, dogs are faithfulness personified. They are quick to assess any unfair treatment and will champion those who have been wronged by others. Dogs will never turn their back on a friend.

As humanitarians with a strong sense of right and wrong, dogs do well championing the underdog and in careers that require good listening and a strong moral core. Many dogs excel as reformers, teachers, religious leaders, lawyers and social workers. Possessed with penetrating thought, dogs also do well as philosophers, critics, writers or in any profession that requires profound thinking and expression. Dogs benefit from time spent in peaceful places that give their spirits room to relax.

BEST TRAITS If you are in need of moral support and a faithful friend, someone who will have your back if the tides turn unfairly against you, seek out your dog friend.

THE PIG

1935, 1947, 1959, 1971,
1983, 1995, 2007, 2019



HONORABLE
KIND AND
GENEROUS

PERSONALITY Genuinely kind and full of good taste, the pig is said to be the most generous sign of the Chinese zodiac. These honorable souls tend to accept others as they are, often believing in a higher power. Sweet and loving, pigs are extremely magnanimous and do well having someone to care for and dote on.

Intelligent and able to set and reach even the most difficult goals, the pig is said to be one of the luckiest signs in business. Pigs also excel in the arts. Whatever field a pig enters, he will generally be successful at making money and building something of lasting value. And he will accomplish his goals with integrity and no underhanded tricks. Pigs appreciate quality and enjoy the finer things in life. Good food, clothing, cars and sensual delights uplift a pig's spirit and bring pleasure to those around him.

BEST TRAITS Consider yourself lucky if you are a partner or family member to a pig—these individuals have hearts of gold and will always stand by you. They value friendship highly and are very affectionate with those they love. They also enjoy great fortune in their careers.

THE RAT

1924, 1936, 1948, 1960,
1972, 1984, 1996, 2008



**CHARISMATIC
ARTISTIC AND
TALKATIVE**

PERSONALITY Being born under the first sign of the Chinese zodiac is a symbol of good luck and wealth.

The charismatic rat is socially adept and resourceful. Rats like to use their intelligence rather than their brawn to problem solve and make great business owners, managers and entrepreneurs. The talkative rat can certainly charm with his wit, but he is ever alert and ready to dodge any intrusion into places he would rather not expose. Rats can be thrifty, but have excellent taste, and they know how to accrue and hold on to items of value. If you have proven yourself to be loyal and have been embraced into the rat's pack, he can be very generous and protective of his friends and family.

BEST TRAITS The rat's strong survival instinct and ability to problem solve give him the gift of longevity, and even the gift of prophecy in older age. Smart, affable, magnetic, the rat makes an excellent leader and is a perfect animal to head up the Chinese zodiac.

THE OX

1925, 1937, 1949, 1961, 1973,
1985, 1997, 2009



**RESPONSIBLE
SMART AND
STABLE**

PERSONALITY The powerful ox is a natural-born leader who likes to be in charge. Steady and able to persevere through the toughest of conditions, the ox has the ability to run a home, a corporation or even a country. They often have a serious and focused attitude toward work with a keen eye for detail and a desire to get the job done. Many ox individuals will find success through public speaking, politics or some kind of entertainment.

Smart, responsible and stable, the ox takes a more conservative approach than many of the other signs, and earns respect by his powerful dedication to the task at hand as well as his often eloquent speech. It is not easy to sway an ox in either opinion or path. If perhaps you are finding an ox to be intractable, quietly suggest an afternoon in the garden or a visit to a park.

BEST TRAITS If you are in need of some honest, unbiased advice, call an ox. His patience and pragmatism can prove helpful in times of duress. As a partner, the ox will remain tender, loyal and true. And if you are lucky to be a close friend, he will be your friend for life.

THE TIGER

1926, 1938, 1950, 1962,
1974, 1986, 1998, 2010



**CAPTIVATING
RESTLESS AND
REBELLIOUS**

PERSONALITY The rebellious, restless and captivating tiger is a natural hero. Those born under this sign are known for their incredible courage and self-possession, which leads most other signs to nod their heads to the tiger's effortless sense of authority.

Tigers are magnetic, dramatic and shine brightly through life. Enthusiastic seekers of pleasure, tigers love to socialize and make fine hosts or guests. They do not sit well with boredom. As the risk takers of the zodiac, tigers excel at dangerous occupations like stunt person or explorer. With their seductive charm, tigers also make fine performers. If not gracing a stage or jumping out of a flaming airplane, a tiger's natural kingliness is also well suited as a head of state. As long as a tiger is in charge, all should fare well.

BEST TRAITS The courageous and optimistic tiger is a champion for humanitarian causes and will protect his friends and family like no other sign in the zodiac. It is often said that having a tiger in the home is the best protection against calamities. ➤

THE RABBIT

1927, 1939, 1951, 1963,
1975, 1987, 1999, 2011



SENSITIVE
REFINED AND
POPULAR

PERSONALITY Possessed with good manners and diplomacy, the rabbit is a sensitive, refined soul. Known for grace and attractiveness, rabbits pick up information that other signs miss. Not one to confront, rabbits prefer a peaceful environment and do best keeping their own counsel.

Rabbits understand beauty and nuance, and when coupled with their legendary good taste, create memorable works of art. Many rabbits are gifted painters, musicians, poets and filmmakers. Rabbits also excel in any kind of mediation or counseling, thanks to their nurturing personas. They make excellent healers and succeed with ease in any arena requiring diplomacy and tact. If you are in need of advice from a quiet, sensitive person, go talk to your rabbit friend. You will find a kind, compassionate counsel. And in spite of being a bit of an introvert, the rabbit has a wide circle of friends and family. They are popular within their circles and need the support of the people in their lives to thrive.

BEST TRAITS Rabbits give much to their friends and are protective of those they love. These sensitive souls make the world a more beautiful place with their refined sensitivity.

THE DRAGON

1928, 1940, 1952, 1964,
1976, 1988, 2000, 2012



INTELLIGENT
WISE AND
TENACIOUS

PERSONALITY Many consider the dragon to be the most powerful and fortunate sign of the Chinese zodiac. Possessed with great vitality and influence, the dragon knows what he wants and is determined to go after it. A bundle of energy, the dragon is intelligent, tenacious and wise—and usually the center of attention.

Colorful, flamboyant, if a bit dramatic, dragons have big ideas, big ambitions and the confidence that their visions can be realized. They keep the people around them motivated and enthused with their extroverted personalities. Dragons are natural leaders and motivate the troops like no other sign with their free-spirited, dynamic energy. All of that natural enthusiasm channels into the breath of fire dragons are known for. They never forget an insult.

BEST TRAITS The lucky and gifted dragon is extremely intuitive. He does best in professions where he can shine. Actor, artist, lawyer—whatever the dragon chooses, we will be inspired by this enterprising leader.

THE SNAKE

1929, 1941, 1953, 1965,
1977, 1989, 2001, 2013



DIPLOMATIC
WISE AND
SEDUCTIVE

PERSONALITY Diplomatic and refined, the snake is the philosopher of the Chinese zodiac. Snakes possess a quiet strength and are temperate and wise. They sense and feel their way through life, preferring to analyze a situation before jumping in. When the time comes to make a move, the snake knows, having learned the art of perfect timing.

Seductive and mysterious, snakes are known for their often flawless skin and beauty. There is something a bit dangerous yet charming about snakes. Snakes are known to be lucky with money, generally having more than enough to live on, even if seeming a bit stingy to others. They prefer to give their time rather than open up their wallets. The snake's intuition makes them great in a business venture.

At once private and popular, gregarious and introverted, the deep-thinking snake is a study in contradictions. Snakes make fine philosophy teachers, psychiatrists, diplomats and astrologers, and also do well as models of physical beauty.

BEST TRAITS Beautiful inside and out, the patient snake makes an understanding parent, compassionate partner and insightful friend.

THE HORSE

1930, 1942, 1954, 1966,
1978, 1990, 2002, 2014



TALKATIVE
LUCKY AND
CHARMING

PERSONALITY Born to roam, the cheerful, charming horse is lively, talkative and artistic. Often the life of the party, horses tend to be the most loquacious in a group and love to make speeches. If a horse is using his strong communication skills, he is often engaged in some kind of physical activity or competition.

Natural and idealistic leaders, horses do well in politics, public speaking or any kind of sales that requires engaging others through discourse. The friendly and humanitarian horse inspires others with his optimism and energy, and tends to be one of the most generous and hospitable signs of the Chinese zodiac. As much as a horse yearns to be free to roam, he will work long and hard to provide for his family. In return, a horse expects loyalty and freedom from those in his domain.

BEST TRAITS Look no further than your horse friend if you are in need of some positive and uplifting motivation. He will inspire you with his words and poise.

THE GOAT

1931, 1943, 1955, 1967,
1979, 1991, 2003, 2015



ARTISTIC
KIND AND
IMAGINATIVE

PERSONALITY Artistic in spirit and skill, the goat is a gentle soul known for his connection to the muse. Tending to be more immersed in his mind than in materialism, the goat does best in peaceful environments where beauty and goodwill flourish.

Rich in imagination, goats make fine musicians, artists, actors, artisans or poets. They also excel as educators, medical professionals and scientists, or in any occupation that does not require a highly competitive spirit. Whatever profession a goat does choose, it is important for him to have contact with some form of aesthetics or artistry. Not one to do well under pressure or on a tight schedule, the goat needs plenty of alone time to connect with the wide expanses of his mind. Often referred to as the “good Samaritans” of the zodiac, these sympathetic souls have soft hearts for those less fortunate and rarely turn down a friend in need. People born under the sign of the goat tend to be serene and calm, with the result that they often have fewer health issues than other signs.

BEST TRAITS If you are in need of a fine artisan or fanciful, kindhearted soul, turn to your goat friend and feel the inspiration of the muse.

THE MONKEY

1932, 1944, 1956, 1968,
1980, 1992, 2004, 2016



RESTLESS
SMART AND
INVENTIVE

PERSONALITY The clever, ever-youthful monkey is an energetic individual. Whip smart, quick and restless, monkeys are often the life and soul of the party. Possessed with a great sense of humor, they entertain their friends with their witty conversation, but are also surprisingly good listeners.

Curious and resourceful, monkeys are able to tackle problems with ease and find ingenious solutions when others have given up. Versatile, they can accomplish almost any task and find a way to do it more efficiently. Monkeys catch on to things quickly and need constant movement, discussion and ideas. Because of this, the monkey can seem fickle and difficult to define. With their unique and inventive minds, multitalented monkeys make great advisors, innovators or anything that has to do with the art of sales and persuasion.

BEST TRAITS Consider yourself fortunate to have the charming and upbeat monkey in your group of friends or as a partner. ♡

Varieties of Chinese tea



GREEN

Made from *Camellia sinensis* leaves, it's unfermented with an earthy, grassy taste.

BLACK

A long fermentation turns the leaves black. Has a full-bodied bold and brisk flavor.



WULONG

Also known as oolong, the leaves are bruised by shaking. Taste can be sweet or woody.

WHITE

Lightly oxidized leaves form a high-antioxidant yellowy tea with a mild and sweet flavor.



YELLOW

Leaves are panfried and roasted to bring out their color. Has a fresh and slightly sweet flavor.

MIXED

Leaves from any of the above tea types are mixed with spices, flowers or flavorings.



Tea drinking customs



In Chinese society, the younger generation shows respect to elders by offering them a cup of tea.



The Chinese make apologies to others by pouring them tea.



Folding the napkin in tea ceremonies is a traditional action to keep away bad chi energy.

CHINESE TEA

Tea or *cha* is China's gift to the world. Here's our homage to this restorative drink...



This page: copper kettles on a stove in an old Chinese teahouse

According to legend, Chinese emperor Shennong first discovered tea in 2737 BC. One day on a trip to a distant region, he and his army stopped to rest. A servant was boiling water for him to drink, when a dead leaf from the wild tea bush fell into the liquid. The emperor drank it and found it refreshing, and so *cha* (tea) came into being.

While the Chinese have enjoyed tea drinking for more than 4,000 years, it wasn't until the Tang Dynasty (618–907 AD) that it spread throughout Chinese culture, reaching every level of society. Tea shops became widely popular and tea drinking evolved into a respected art form with its various methods of fermenting and serving.

Tea arrived in England during the 17th century when King Charles II married a Portuguese princess, Catherine of Braganza. The queen pronounced tea to be the drink of royalty, while aristocrats also enjoyed the tradition. Soon the beverage became a popular import via the East India Company. The taxes on imported tea were so high that smugglers would sell it illegally. So to maximize profits during the tea smuggling period, the East India Company began exporting to America. American tea was also taxed heavily, which contributed to the Boston Tea Party uprising. ♡



Brewing methods for Chinese tea



POWDERED TEA

During the Tang Dynasty, tea leaves were steamed and made into tea bricks for storage and trade. The tea was prepared by roasting and pulverizing, then decocting the tea powder in hot water, adding salt. The drink was then served in tea bowls.

WHIPPED TEA

The most popular way to prepare a tea decoction during the Song Dynasty (960–1279) was known as the "whipped tea" method. Tea leaves were first ground into fine powder. Tea powder was placed inside a tea bowl and hot water added. The mixture was whipped with a bamboo whisk until a froth appeared on the tea surface. This process was thought to calm the mind.

STEEPED TEA

In the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644), tea was prepared by steeping loose tea leaves in a teapot. This was called the "steeping method." For this method, it is important to control the amount of tea leaves used and the water temperature. At the beginning of the Ming Dynasty, people

used large teapots to brew tea, so that they could drink many cups from one pot. They later discovered that the tea became bitter when the leaves were steeped for too long, and the last cups would not be as good as the first. Hence, teapots became smaller.

GONGFU TEA

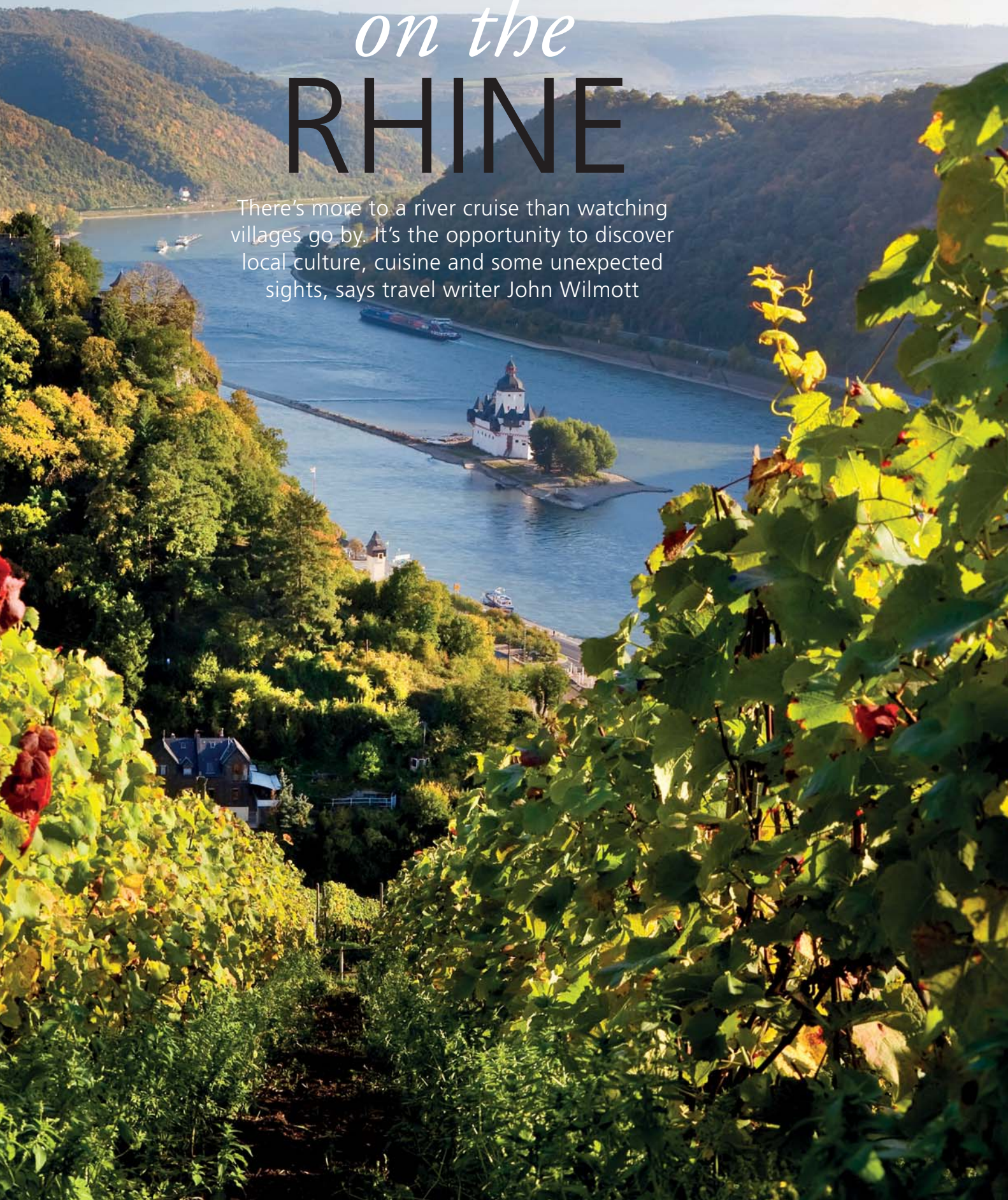
Gongfu involves a ritualized presentation based on bringing out the aroma, flavor and color of the tea. The term *gongfu cha* literally means "making tea with effort," because it requires much practice and uses more tea leaves and a shorter infusion duration, allowing for multiple infusions. Once steeped, the tea is poured from the teapot into a vessel to stop the infusion process. Each person at the table is given an aroma cup and a drinking cup. The tea is poured from the serving vessel into the tall aroma cup, left for a few minutes and then poured into each person's drinking cup. The empty aroma cup captures the fragrance of the tea and is enjoyed by putting it under one's nose. This is followed by drinking the tea from the cup.

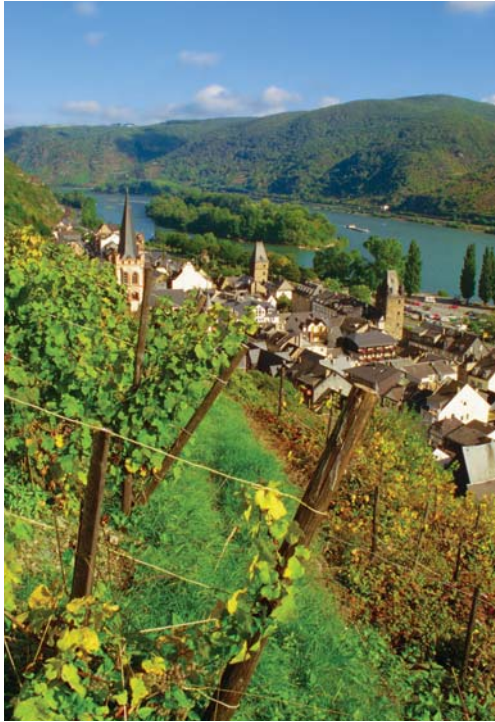


Pfalzgrafenstein
Castle and the
Rhine River

MAGIC *on the* RHINE

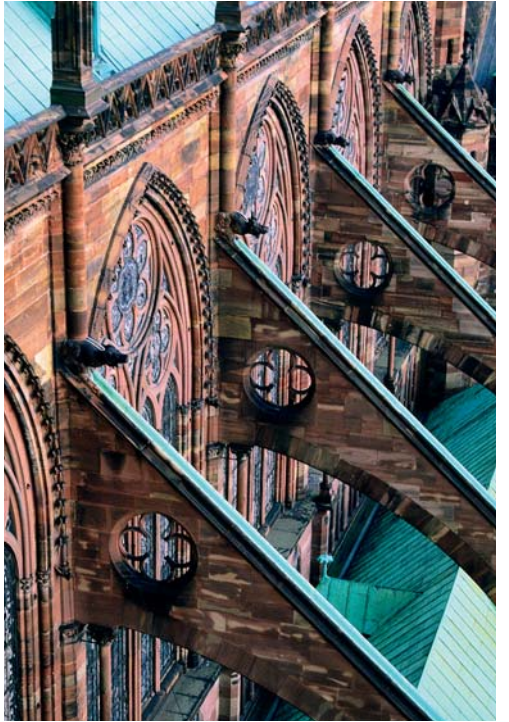
There's more to a river cruise than watching villages go by. It's the opportunity to discover local culture, cuisine and some unexpected sights, says travel writer John Wilmott





Clockwise, from top left:
 16th-century Merchants' Hall in Freiburg, Germany; colorful houses in Cologne, Germany; pink flowers decorate a window; the flying buttresses of Strasbourg Cathedral; Marksburg Castle in Koblenz, Germany; the world's largest cuckoo clock in the Black Forest; enjoy wine tasting as part of Viking shore excursions; vineyards make up part of the beautiful French landscape

Facing page: Half-timbered houses by the Ill River in Strasbourg, France





“Look, there’s an ancient castle, high up on the riverbank ... Did you see that huge flock of swans? That cathedral looks magnificent from here on the water. I wonder what those windmills were used for? Those must be Riesling grapes in that vineyard. Wow, what an impressive bridge we’re sailing under. There’s an interesting medieval village ahead; I hope we’re stopping there ... yes, we are!”

This, perhaps, is what you imagine a river cruise to be like—a gentle journey along a beautiful waterway with enchanting, ever-changing views.

And indeed it is. Above are just a few examples of what we heard on our meander on the Rhine with Viking River Cruises®. You will find a similarly delightful tapestry unfolding on the other great rivers of Europe—and a healthy dash of the exotic too if you choose to cruise in Russia or Asia.

But I’m going to give you another list—one I did not expect to encounter. In the comfortable Lounge of my Viking Longship, there was a music quiz going on. Up on the top deck, it was 10:30 PM and two couples were still playing shuffleboard in the long midsummer twilight. They laughed when I pointed out that those with the bright yellow discs had a distinct advantage. One evening, a guest joined the ship’s resident pianist-singer for a duet, then both were persuaded to move aside by another guest so he could knock out a few of his own favorites. A river cruise with Viking does not just present a variety of scenic and cultural encounters, it is also enormous fun.

If you’ll permit, here is a third list, which again may be unexpected. Shore excursions. Wine, beer and soft drinks with lunch and dinner every day. Flights. Transfers. Wi-Fi. Tea and coffee

24 hours a day. The significance? They are all included in the price of your cruise.

At the end of our trip, my wallet was diminished only by a few cocktails on board, a couple of enlightening optional excursions and the odd souvenir picked up when exploring the lovely towns and cities along the Rhine.

These really are comprehensive, cohesive cruises. Just as the design of the ship brings the outside in, the onboard experience does, too.

When traveling through The Netherlands, we were treated to Dutch coffee with whipped cream and a splash of eggnog. That evening, I chose a Dutch cheese soufflé. After a day in Strasbourg, local musicians joined us on board the Longship to play French tunes; an hour earlier, I had accepted a third glass of Gallic wine with dinner.

Over the course of a week and hundreds of miles of river, I came ➤





to deeply appreciate the design and style of my Viking Longship, but it was the ambience that left the greatest impression. The Lounge, Restaurant and Aquavit Terrace were a hubbub of chatter, laughter and chinking glasses.

Yet there were always quiet corners to be found—the alcoves of the Library; the huge, peaceful Sun Deck and the sanctuary of our delightful stateroom with its own private veranda.

Viking River Cruises is the leader in European river cruising. It provides a small ship experience and takes you into the heart of great cities and quaint villages.

The itinerary excelled in its diversity of longer and shorter stops, with an excursion included in each port of call. The local guides were full of all sorts of stories and nuggets of quirky information.

We learned how thrifty Dutch millers reused the same wooden component four times when building their windmills so it only needed replacing every 28 years.

In Cologne, we heard how a public outcry stopped the authorities from removing thousands of padlocks—symbols of love—from Hohenzollern Bridge.

We found out how the expression “going to the dogs” came about at the fairy-tale Marksburg Castle above the river.

Strasbourg was where our motor



coach driver took us along a street to see some of the 500 pairs of storks that had built their giant nests precariously in treetops and on church roofs.

At the huge Heidelberg Castle, my fellow guests and I chuckled at the tale of the court jester who guarded what is still the world’s largest wine barrel, so massive it has a dance floor on top.

We also discovered why the pretty medieval village of Colmar has New York’s Statue of Liberty in the middle of a traffic circle, and how the open mouths of the gargoyles on a church here formed part of a drainage system.

Viking Longships have an excellent concierge service that can not only arrange a special meal or a private visit, for example, but

also provide a mine of very useful firsthand information.

With free time in Speyer, we visited the Technik Museum which houses Europe’s greatest transport collection—everything from airplanes to space shuttles.

Viking also offers a selection of optional immersive excursions alongside the wonderful range of complimentary trips—from gourmet tours and wine tastings to a visit to the Mercedes-Benz car factory.

We chose to join a local character on an evening tour of Cologne. Popping in and out of historic taverns, and soaking up the fresh *Kölsch* beer with hearty German food, proved to be a really great night out.

On our return, our Program Director suggested we catch the finale of a performance by the city’s Academy of Music and Dance, then we were to set sail at midnight past the mighty Dom, Cologne’s cathedral.

Cameras in hand, on the top deck, we admired the great Gothic masterpiece, eerily floodlit like something out of *Harry Potter*.

“It’s magical,” said a few wide-eyed guests. Rather like the cruise itself, I thought. 🍷

Clockwise, from facing page: The covered bridges in Strasbourg; stunning river views from the Aquavit Terrace; Strasbourg as seen from the cathedral

📺 **Go online:** Watch a video of the *Rhine Getaway* cruise at vikingcruises.com

Music of the MARIINSKY

We are delighted to welcome the exquisite vocal talents of our Mariinsky musicians on board our cruises through Russia. Here we take a look at the history, composers, styles and lyrics of traditional Russian vocal music





Russian Folk Music

The roots of Russian folk music can be traced back to Slavic tribes who settled in the European part of the country. The songs, dances and music that defined these tribes were well-documented, appearing in manuscripts from as early as 591 AD. That was just the beginning of a rich and varied tradition of great Russian folk music born out of a myriad of regions, cultures and religions.

Described as an “expression of the Russian soul,” the country’s traditional folk music tends to fall into two distinct categories: ritual songs (incantations, laments, festival, wedding and work songs) and non-ritual songs (folk epics, love songs, lullabies and instrumental music).

Many of the songs originate from pre-Christian Russia and continue to play an important role in the pagan festivals that are still celebrated in some rural areas today. Centuries ago, however, it is believed that hardworking country folk found some light relief in singing these songs while they labored.

Throughout Russian history, there has always been a great divide between the haves and have-nots. And the folk songs of the common people formed a part of that distinction. In 1648, Tsar Alexei I banned the use of musical instruments in the name of the Orthodox Church, effectively causing the extinction of many forms of native instrumental music of the era.

For the next 200 years, traditional folk music continued to be dismissed as common and vulgar by the Russian court, who preferred to hire musicians and composers from Europe. Even in Tchaikovsky’s opera *Pique Dame*, Queen of Spades Lisa and her friends are reprimanded for singing and dancing to a cheerful peasant maiden song.

It was only during the late 18th and 19th centuries that noble Russians became interested in discovering the true “Russian soul” for themselves. As interest in traditional “peasant” and artisan cultures spread throughout Europe, going back to a country’s roots became all the rage. After centuries of ignoring the lyrics and melodies of traditional Russian folk music, Russians now took pride in the songs sung by “happy,” working peasants bearing their daily struggles with cheer—a myth perpetuated and supported wholeheartedly by Catherine the Great.

The pieces you will hear on board our river cruises through Russia are classical arrangements of folk songs that were collected and arranged by famous Russian composers during the 19th century. They would once have been accompanied by a choir, a *bayan* (a type of accordion), folk violin or *balalaika*, but are now accompanied by piano. So although they are interpretations rather than authentic reproductions of the originals, the songs still create a haunting evocation of the melodies, rhythms and soul of true Russian folk music.



Songs of the MARIINSKY

Here are the lyrics to three of the enchanting
traditional Russian folk songs played by the
Mariinsky musicians

Kalinka

LITTLE SNOWBERRY *B. Alexandrov*

This is one of the most popular Russian songs the world over; everyone seems to know the refrain. The melody itself is very catchy and as the song progresses it speeds up. The piece is traditionally accompanied by a *balalaika*, a three-stringed strummed instrument.

*Little snowberry, snowberry of mine!
Little raspberry in the garden, my little!*

*Ah, under the pine, the green one,
Lay me down to sleep,
A-oo, ljuli, ljuli
Lay me down to sleep.*

*Little snowberry, snowberry of mine!
Little raspberry in the garden, my little!*

*Ah, little pine, little green one,
Don't rustle above me,*

*A-oo, ljuli, ljuli
Don't rustle above me.
Little snowberry, snowberry of mine!
Little raspberry in the garden, my little!*

*Ah, you beauty, pretty maiden,
Fall in love with me,
A-oo, ljuli, ljuli
Fall in love with me.*

*Little snowberry, snowberry of mine!
Little raspberry in the garden, my little!*



Matushka, shto vo pole pylno

MOTHER, WHAT IS THE DUST IN THE FIELD *M. Matveev*

Women in rural Russia leave their families when they get married. In this song the betrothed girl asks her mother what is happening. The two different voices have different music written for them; the daughter's vocal line is higher and with more movement while the mother has lower vocal line.

*Mother, mother,
what is the dust in the field
Over there mother,
what is the dust in the field?
My sweet child, horses are piling.*

*Mother, mother, into the yard come guests,
There mother, in the yard come guests!
My sweet child, I won't give you to them!*

*Mother, mother,
onto the porch they come,
There mother, onto the porch they come!
My sweet child, don't be frightened,
don't be scared!*

*Mother, mother, into the new chamber they come,
There mother, into the new chamber they come!
My sweet child, I won't give you to them!*

*Mother, mother, they are sitting at the table
There mother, they are sitting at the table
My sweet child, don't be frightened,
don't be afraid!*

*Mother, mother,
they are taking me away
Over here, mother! Bless me...
My sweet child, God be with you!*

Solovei

THE NIGHTINGALE POET *A. Delvig*

This lovely little song is in a lyrical style. The melody itself is simple but every time it is repeated it becomes more and more decorated as the singer tries to imitate the song of the nightingale. This piece is actually known as an urban folk song, sung in the salons of the early 19th century.

*My nightingale, nightingale
Sweet-voiced nightingale!
To where are you flying?
Where will you sing all night?
My nightingale, nightingale
Sweet-voiced nightingale!*





Russian Classical Music

Classical Russian vocal music didn't truly find its voice until the start of the 19th century when Mikhail Glinka wrote the first opera based on a Russian historic event. Like most Russian composers of the time, Glinka had been sent abroad to study the more respected European style of writing music. So although his *A Life for the Tsar* was groundbreaking in terms of subject matter, its composition and songs owe much to the structures of Bellini and Schubert.

Following in the footsteps of Glinka—and declaring him the father of Russian classical music—came a lively group of Russian musicians called, collectively, the “Mighty Handful.” Formed in 1860, the group comprised Mily Balakirev, Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakov, Modest Mussorgsky, Aleksandr Borodin and César Cui.

None of the Mighty Handful had formal training and most supported their passion for composing with a career in the military. However, this didn't stop them from becoming a major influential force in creating a distinctive national musical identity. Proud of their Russian folk heritage, they broke all the rules of classical European composition and created music based on authentic Russian themes.

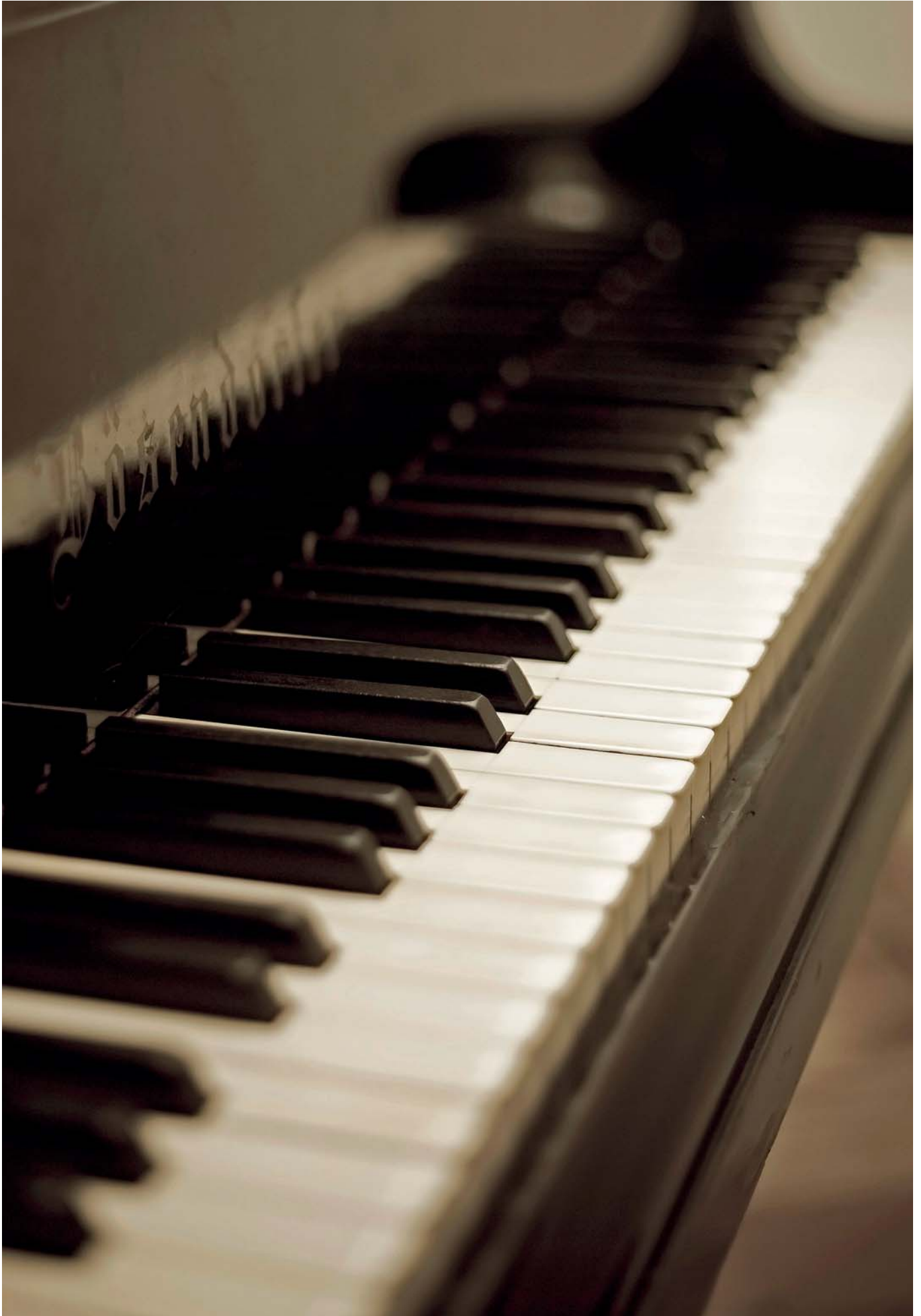
The second half of the 19th century saw a change in Russian music when Anton Rubinstein, a respected pianist, composer and educator, opened the St. Petersburg Conservatory, a music school devoted to classical training.

It is here that Tchaikovsky was tutored and went on to become recognized as the country's first real professional composer, having both a full-time career in music and a wealthy patron.

The last of the great Russian Romantic composers of the pre-Soviet era was Rachmaninov, who was classically trained under Tchaikovsky. He left Russia in 1917 during the Russian Revolution that saw the imperial autocracy deposed by the Bolsheviks. It was effectively the end of any further Western influences. The government censored all performances and folk music was institutionalized, with *balalaika* being taught at the St. Petersburg Conservatory—a step that took traditional Russian folk music yet further away from its origins.

The classical vocal romantic pieces you will hear during the performance of the Mariinsky musicians span the whole spectrum of composers, from Glinka to Rachmaninov. It's a brief, but enlightening glimpse into the heart and soul of a country and its people. ➤





Classical SONGS

Here are the lyrics to three classical pieces which
are played by the Mariinsky musicians

Gruzinskaya Pesnya

GEORGIAN SONG *Alexander Pushkin*

This Pushkin poem is often set to music. In this song the melodies are less Russian and more Armenian, with Turkish and Persian influences. The music has a seductive quality often associated with Eastern music. It's as if the woman appears as the piano introduction mimics the sound of the drums.

*Do not sing, my beauty, to me
your sad songs of Georgia;
they remind me
of that other life and distant shore.
Alas, They remind me,
your cruel melodies,
of the steppe, the night and moonlit
features of a poor, distant maiden!
That sweet and fateful apparition
I forget when you appear;
but you sing, and before me
I picture that image anew.
Do not sing, my beauty, to me
your sad songs of Georgia;
they remind me
of that other life and distant shore*

Son Op. 8, No. 5

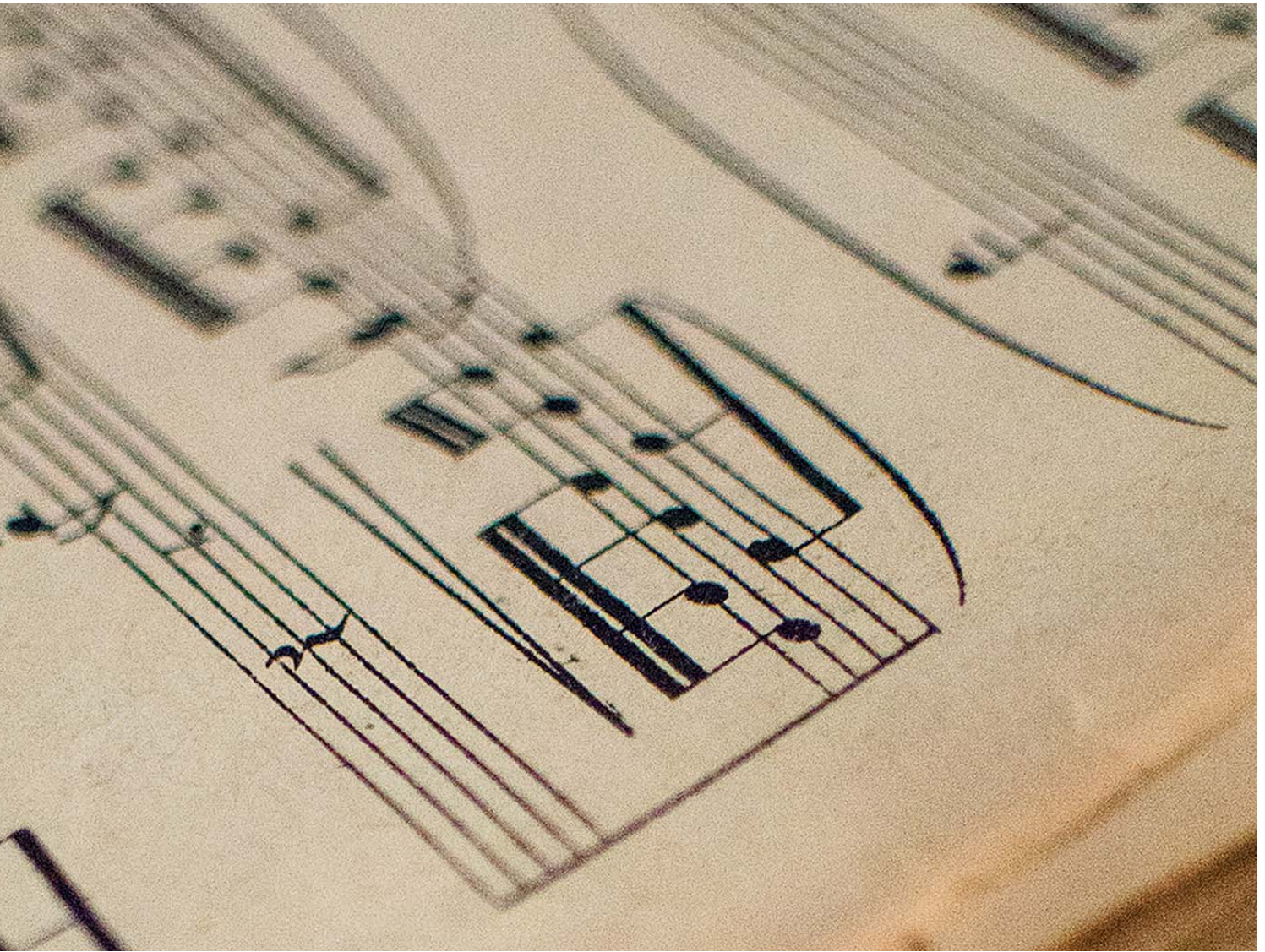
A DREAM *Sergei Rachmaninov*

This is a miniature musical. It creates a complete picture in just a few moments of music. The poem has a psychological theme, its dramatic moments are reflected in an abrupt change of mood in the music.

*I, too, had a home,
A beautiful one!
There a fir tree swayed...
But it was only a dream!*

*A family of friends
Surrounded me
With words of love...
But it was a dream!*





Ne Ver Mne Drug Op. 14, No. 7

DON'T BELIEVE ME, FRIEND *Alexei Tolstoy*

This song is full of passion and energy. The contrasting voices and piano create a driving energy and excitement. The piece culminates in a magnificent piano postlude, confirming that love will always return, just as the sea returns to the shore.

*Don't believe me, friend, when
overwhelmed by grief
I say I do not love you anymore!
Do not in the ebb tide find the
sea capricious:
It will return to the shore, with love*

*And even now—impatient, with
passion filled,
My freedom I will give to you again—
As waves rush back with a returning
murmur
From far away to their beloved shore. ♫*





FROM RUSSIA *with love*

David Short has traveled with Viking several times and his most recent journey took him to Russia to discover how this magnificent country has changed since his last visit in 1969

Just outside Leningrad on a hot day in May 1969, during the cold war, my friend and I found ourselves being berated by an armed and very angry security official. He had stopped us for driving our car on the wrong, unauthorized road. After a lot of gesticulating and shouting, we were made to clean our car with a dry cloth and ordered to keep to our authorized route.

This time, on a Viking river cruise, we found that Russia was a lot more agreeable. From the moment we arrived in what is now

St. Petersburg, we were superbly attended to by the most engaging guides and staff right up until we were dropped off at the airport in Moscow 13 days later.

It turned out that we had embarked on not just a sightseeing cruise but a journey of discovery into the heart, mind and soul of Russia. We were free to explore St. Petersburg and Moscow, plus several small towns and villages in between them, and even to meet Russians at home. There was also an opportunity to visit a *kommunalka*—a communal

Opposite: A typically ornate statue at Peterhof Palace

Below: Canal in St. Petersburg with the Church of Our Saviour on Spilled Blood in the distance

apartment for several families. We travelers were a mixed and international bunch. We were keen to ask our hosts all manner of questions. Some of us were very well informed and eagerly explored various topics, including political issues. And our Russian hosts didn't avoid any questions.

The ship was a very comfortable base for the duration of our journey as well as our gentle transportation along idyllic rivers, lakes and canals between St. Petersburg and Moscow. Our first day in St. Petersburg began ➤







after an extensive breakfast and consisted of a full-day tour of the best of the three million artworks in the Hermitage Museum. These include works by Titian, Matisse, van Gogh, Cézanne, Gauguin, da Vinci, Picasso, Monet and Rubens.

The visit was followed by dinner and a performance of the ballet *Swan Lake*. It was after

After four eye-popping days in St. Petersburg, it felt as if we'd been guided around just about every well-known church, monument and museum there is—including the Peter and Paul Fortress. This is the original epicenter of the city, and many former tsars are now laid to rest in the Peter and Paul Cathedral including the relatively

Clockwise from facing page: The Amber Room at the Catherine Palace; the Winter Palace, home to the Hermitage Museum; Church of St. Elijah the Prophet, Yaroslavl; Fabergé eggs; the Peter and Paul Cathedral in St. Petersburg; soldiers in Red Square, Moscow

visited. Before dinner each evening there was a full briefing about what to expect the following day, which was very informative. Plus, the ship's newsletter, the *Viking Daily*, was delivered to our room.

By contrast, the next few days were a tranquil meander along the Neva River, across the 136-mile-long Lake Ladoga (Europe's largest), with its 700 islands, and along the 139-mile Svir River toward Lake Onega.

Before we reached this lake we stopped briefly at Mandrogy, a small, restored 18th-century settlement that's home to artisans creating all manner of crafts using ancient methods and horse-drawn transport. Here you can buy genuine handcrafted souvenirs or even create your own by painting *matryoshka* nesting dolls. If that's not for you, there are 2,800 vodkas to try followed by a visit to a *banya*, a traditional Russian sauna.

Back on board we headed to Kizhi, one of Lake Onega's 1,650 islands, a mere speck measuring four miles by just over half a mile.

Several generations of families lived and worked on the island in wooden two-story homes. Their

WE ENJOYED A LIVELY COSSACK FOLK SONG AND DANCE PERFORMANCE WITH VODKA

11 PM when we arrived back on board, but Viking was ready with a substantial late-night snack, including wine and beer, just as they offer with all normal lunches and dinners.

Throughout our stay in St. Petersburg we were dazzled by the opulence of Russia's rulers and the sheer extravagance of the palaces: the Winter Palace; the Amber Room in the Catherine Palace; the "Royal Village" at Pushkin; and the extraordinary UNESCO World Heritage Site of the Peterhof Palace.


recently reinterred remains of assassinated and last tsar Nicholas II and his family. Another highlight was the private viewing of the Peter Carl Fabergé collection, among which are the nine exquisite Imperial Easter Eggs.

To cap off our final day in this remarkable city, we enjoyed a loud and lively Cossack folk song and dance performance with a drop of vodka. Naturally.

We were continually informed about every aspect of Russian life, the country's complex history and detailed facts about all the places we



Above: An
enchanted sunset
on Lake Onega



lives were tough in summer and even tougher in winter. Today Kizhi is essentially a museum dedicated to its stunning wooden churches, and dozens of 15th- to 20th-century wooden structures. The most remarkable is the 22-dome Transfiguration Church

tree-lined shores life continued on board with entertainment, Russian language lessons and lectures.

There was a brief pause at Kuzino to visit the fascinating 1397 Kirillo-Belozersky Monastery and the Resurrection Convent. Next stop was Yaroslavl, an old

architecture they are regarded as open air museums.

Next morning as we sailed serenely by all the identifying landmarks of any large modern city, I had a light breakfast in the Panorama Lounge at the front of the ship with its uninterrupted views. I was most struck by the huge and numerous modern high-rise apartment buildings.

We arrived in Moscow after lunch, and over the next few days we explored the stunning, efficient metro system and its famous decorated stations, took in an evening folk music concert, picnicked in a park, cruised the Moscow River and we couldn't miss Red Square and a tour inside the walls of the Kremlin on our last day.

Viking includes virtually every "must see" aspect of Moscow, with additional opportunities to ➤

WE CRUISED IN SUNSHINE OVER CALM BLUE LAKE WATERS WITH FIR TREE-LINED SHORES

and the nine-dome Church of the Intercession, which are UNESCO World Heritage Sites. After Kizhi our ship began its southerly journey toward Red Square and the Kremlin via the Volga-Baltic Waterway and the Moscow Canal.

As we cruised in sunshine over calm blue lake waters with fir

city of about 600,000 inhabitants which sits 170 miles from Moscow at the confluence of the Volga and Kotorosl Rivers. Containing a UNESCO World Heritage Site, it is one of the eight Golden Ring cities which were important in establishing the Orthodox Church and are so rich in historic

The Church of Our Saviour on Spilled Blood, St. Petersburg

visit the fascinating Cosmonaut Museum, the Jewish Museum, the Moscow State Circus and the Tretyakov Gallery. What's more, our guide, Sasha, came with us on our two-hour journey past more huge apartment blocks to the modern privately owned airport and smoothed our way through what seemed like utter chaos.

Overall, our Russian river cruise was a relaxing and hugely stimulating experience. One of our most striking memories might seem odd: the cleanliness we saw everywhere. No empty packaging, cigarette butts or chewing gum

littered the streets, and our guides found it hard to comprehend that people in other countries will casually drop their trash. Now when we see uncollected street trash at home we say, "It definitely wouldn't be like that in Moscow." Oh, and it's still illegal to have a dirty car in Russia. ♣



GETTING THERE: Viking offers its 13-day *Waterways of the Tsars* itinerary in 2017.



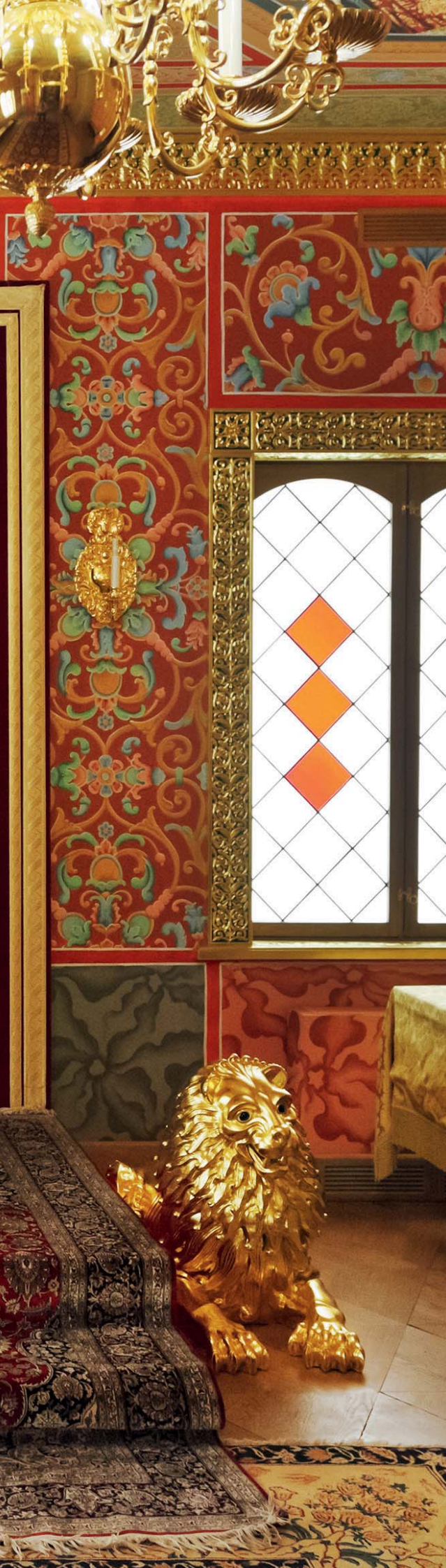
Go online: Watch a video of *Waterways of the Tsars* at vikingcruises.com





From Peter the Great to
Tsar Nicholas II, the Russian
imperial dynasty has a
fascinating and dramatic history

The House of ROMANOV



The Romanov Dynasty was the last imperial dynasty to rule over Russia, from 1613 until they were overthrown in the brutal events of the Russian Revolution of 1917. Over the course of their period in power, Russia underwent radical change and saw extremely contrasting administrations, from that of the exalted Peter the Great to the weak and ineffectual Tsar Nicholas II.

After the death of Fyodor I in 1598 (the last ruler of the Rurik Dynasty), Russia endured 15 chaotic years known as the “Time of Troubles” (1598–1613), culminating in the election of Michael I of Russia (Mikhail Feodorovich Romanov) as first tsar of the House of Romanov.

For some time, the Romanovs were content to maintain the status quo in Russia. Power continued to be centralized, but little was done to keep Russia up to speed with the rapid economic and political change in the rest of Europe.

Then came Peter the Great. An exemplary statesman with unwavering willpower and extraordinary energy, Peter was also a skillful diplomat who abolished archaic elements of Russian government during his reign from 1682 to 1725. Not only called “the Great” for his impressive height (he towered at almost 7 ft), Peter also turned Russia into one of the most influential European powers, modernizing the country significantly. To do this, he studied other foreign powers. He traveled like an ordinary man under an assumed name for some time, including a spell working as a carpenter on a ship.

By 1721, Peter had gained unlimited power in his country and was proclaimed emperor. Perhaps the greatest part of his legacy was commissioning and building the grand city of St. Petersburg. Though undoubtedly a powerful leader, Peter remains a controversial figure, with many arguing that he was a man before his time. Nevertheless, the years following his death were of marked instability, with the Russian throne occupied by six different successors until Catherine the Great. ➤



Clockwise, from facing page:

The tsar's throne in the Summer Wooden Palace in Kolomenskoye, rebuilt in 2010; Tsar Nicholas II with his family in 1914; illustration from a 1673 book representing a crowd at the Ipatiev Monastery imploring Mikhail Romanov's mother to let him become tsar; painting of Peter the Great by Paul Delaroche, 1838



As well as pushing her passion for French Enlightenment thinkers, Catherine's administration conducted several successful military campaigns that expanded the Russian Empire by annexing territories, including parts of the Crimea, Belarus, Lithuania and Ukraine.

Following the despotic blip of the reign of Catherine's son Paul I, Alexander I, an accomplished and intelligent leader, came to power. His reign was marked by a glamorous victory over Napoleon's troops in 1812.

His successor, Nicholas I, is mostly remembered for the absolutist nature of his regime, punctuated by a series of repressions, while Alexander II, who followed him, granted the long-awaited freedom to serfs. Though a popular reform, it was perhaps too little too late because the revolutionary group the Narodniki assassinated him in 1881.

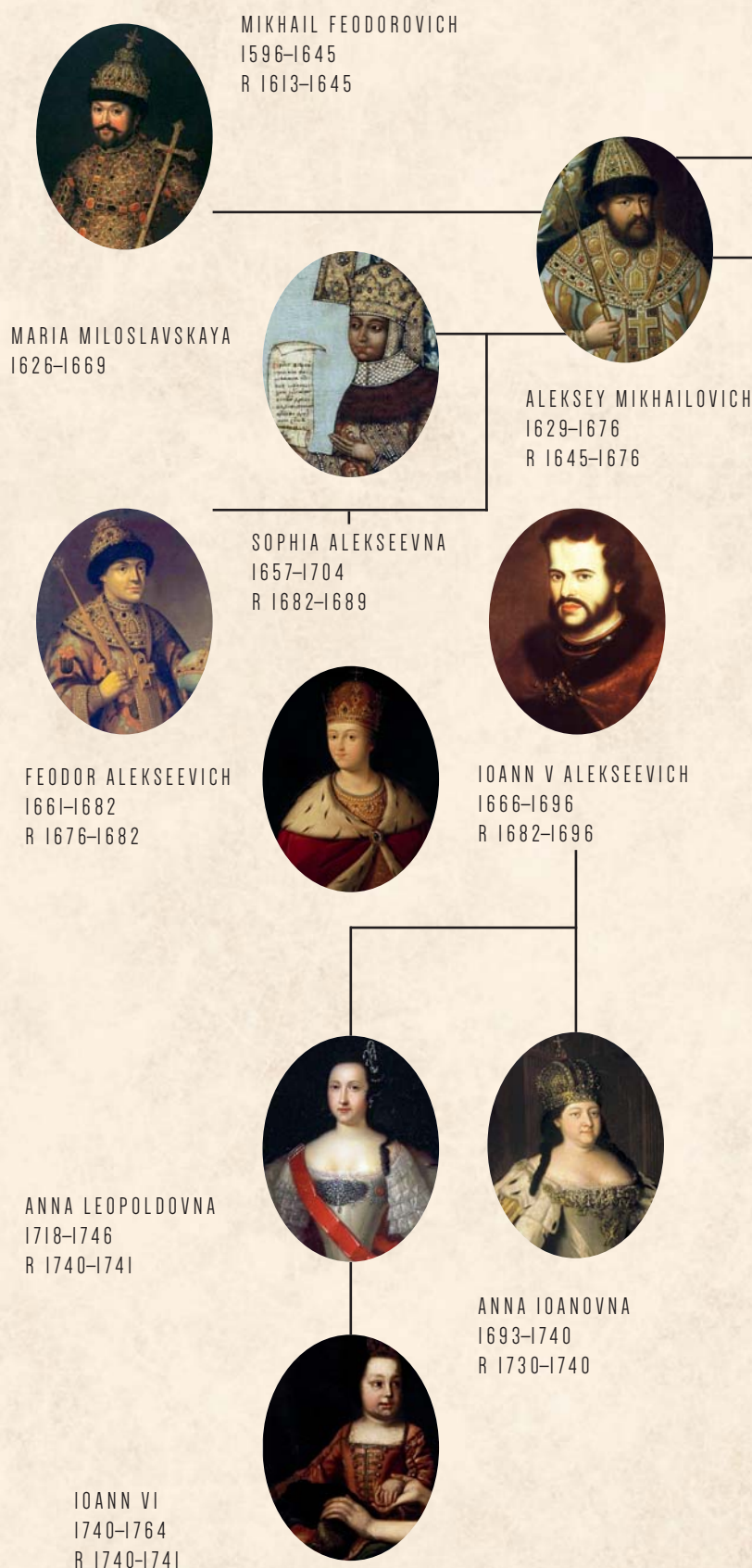
Unsurprisingly, Alexander III began his reign with the implementation of a strict policy banning any potentially threatening intellectual activities. Reversing the liberal reforms of his predecessor, the tsar sought to consolidate a strong monarchy, but sadly all of this would be in vain given that the next in line to the throne was his son Nicholas II.

Nicholas certainly faced great difficulties on his accession—popular discontent was rising and defeat in the Russo-Japanese War in 1905 aggravated the situation. But it was his ill-advised decisions that generated such anger toward the Romanov Dynasty and his family was kidnapped and murdered by the Bolsheviks in July 1918.

Perhaps the worst of these decisions was his approval

NICHOLAS'S BIGGEST ERROR WAS APPROVING GRIGORI RASPUTIN

of faith healer Grigori Rasputin. Nicholas II's son, Alexei, was a frail child born with hemophilia, which his family kept secret for fear of exposing the weakness of the imperial family; it was his mother's reliance on Rasputin's power to treat the disease that brought the dynasty to its knees. His influence upon the tsar and the tsarina, and the rumors of sexual scandal and occult happenings at the royal palace, were the fatal embrace that suffocated the monarchy. ❶



THE ROMANOV *Family Tree*



NATALYA NARYSHKINA
1651-1694



EVDOKIA LOPUKHINA
1669-1731



PETER I
(THE GREAT)
1672-1725
R 1682-1725



EKATERINA I
1684-1727
R 1725-1727



ALEKSEY
PETROVICH
1690-1718



ANNA PETROVNA
1708-1728



ELIZAVETA
1709-1761
R 1741-1761



PETER II
1715-1730
R 1727-1730



PETER III
1728-1762
R 1761-1762



CATHERINE II
1729-1796
R 1762-1796



ALEXANDER I
1777-1825
R 1801-1825



NICHOLAS I
1796-1855
R 1825-1855



ALEXANDER II
1818-1881
R 1855-1881



ALEXANDER III
1845-1894
R 1881-1894



NICHOLAS II
1868-1918
R 1894-1917



PAUL I
1754-1801
R 1796-1801



ST. PETERSBURG

Peter the Great's city is a living, breathing museum of incredible architecture and imperial majesty, where tales of revolution and mystery can be found around every corner.

Founded in 1703 by Tsar Peter the Great, St. Petersburg is a young city in comparison to its European and even Russian counterparts. Despite this, it has built up a thrilling story as a center of intrigue, revolution and mystery.

The first of Russia's many revolutions was the Decembrist Revolt of 1825, following the sudden death of Tsar Alexander I. From 1825 onward, St. Petersburg experienced a flourishing of the arts known as the Golden Age of Russian culture, inspiring such writers as Pushkin and Dostoyevsky. Rapid industrialization ensued in the second half of the 19th century as peasants poured into the city in search of

work after Tsar Alexander II abolished serfdom.

Following more revolution in 1905, another wave of cultural successes began, until Russia entered World War I in 1914 and St. Petersburg was renamed Petrograd.

In 1917 Tsar Nicholas II and his family were murdered by the Bolsheviks. Civil war raged across the country until Stalin crushed the rebels and took control. A harsh Soviet period followed; the revival of the city began only in 1991, when voters elected to restore the original name of St. Petersburg.



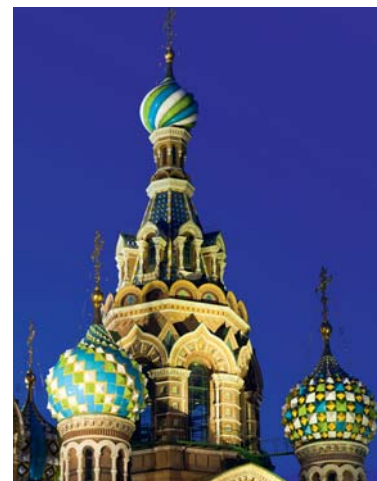
Must-sees

Whether you choose to visit in the midst of a romantic

Top-bottom:
St. Nicholas Cathedral, Gribodova Canal, St. Petersburg; the swirling onion domes of the Church of Our Saviour on Spilled Blood.

and snowy Russian winter or during the long and summer months, you will be spellbound by its beauty and culture.

St. Petersburg is known as the "City of 300 Bridges." Peter the Great invited architects





Left-right, from above: the Peter and Paul Fortress; the Hermitage Museum.

and engineers from all over Europe to build him a new, incredible Western capital. First to be built was the Peter and Paul Fortress on Zayachy Island; see its gold-spined cathedral with the world's tallest Orthodox bell tower.

Next up is glittering Peterhof Palace, created on the Gulf of Finland to rival the Palace of Versailles and a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

In the middle of the 18th century, Peter's daughter Elizabeth commissioned the baroque Winter Palace, situated on the Neva River that flows through the heart of the capital. She was also responsible for Catherine Palace at Tsarskoe Selo. She was followed by Catherine the Great, who founded the Hermitage in 1764.

Make sure you visit St. Isaac's Cathedral to gaze up at its colossal dome.

Along the Neva sits the Russian museum-warship *Aurora*, which signaled the start of the October Revolution

in 1917 with a shot fired from its guns. And possibly the sight most synonymous with St. Petersburg is the Church of Our Saviour on Spilled Blood, with its colorful and swirling decorative onion domes.

Shopping

Head to the Kuznechy Market, where at the main entrance old ladies in Russian shawls sell woolen socks. Inside, Russian specialties such as caviar and cheeses are arranged in neat aisles waiting to be snapped up.




For high-quality caviar, Yeliseev's Food Hall is the go-to for Russian gourmands.

Eating

Discard dated stereotypes of flavorless but filling Soviet dishes, and look forward to a range of luxurious establishments fit for a tsar, as well as delightful cafés serving tasty traditional food.

Quite possibly the best in Russia, the restaurant at the Grand Hotel Europe offers diners a distinct atmosphere, as well as an amazing Art Nouveau interior, a marvelous menu and classical music performances.

A chain of pie cafés known as Stolle exemplify the city's new and relaxed approach to authentic Russian cooking. Don't leave without indulging in a good beef stroganoff. 🍴

 **Go online:** Watch a video of the *Waterways of the Tsars* cruise at vikingcruises.com



DELTA *dawn*

A cruise along the Mekong River through Cambodia and Vietnam is the chance to immerse yourself in the history and diversity of this intriguing region, discovers travel journalist Liz Jarvis

The stone temples of Angkor Wat, Cambodia, represent the five peaks of Mount Meru, the sacred mountains of Buddhism and Hinduism.



Children are running along the river banks of the Mekong, shouting excitedly as our sampan is tied to the mooring. They grab our hands to lead us into their village, chattering the whole time, asking our names and telling us theirs. We're welcomed into brightly painted wooden houses on stilts, with cattle grazing in the same space as mothers and babies resting in hammocks, greeting us with big smiles. It's an extraordinary, privileged insight into a culture completely different from our own, and one of the many highlights of our Viking River Cruises' journey into the heart of Vietnam and Cambodia.

We begin our trip in Hanoi, the former North Vietnamese capital, a never-ending feast of sights, sounds (and smells) for the senses; everyone seems to ride motorbikes or scooters, which makes crossing the road interesting. On our first night we dine al fresco in a typically Vietnamese restaurant, lit by lanterns, before returning to our hotel, the luxurious colonial-style Sofitel, which played host to luminaries such as Jane Fonda and Joan Baez during the Vietnam War. Graham Greene also stayed here, and his eponymous

cocktail, a delicious concoction of raspberry sorbet and liqueur, is highly recommended.

The next day we visit Ho Chi Minh's mausoleum, an enormous stone building where, in a room backlit with red and dominated by flags depicting the hammer and sickle and Vietnamese star, we find the man himself resting, which is, frankly, a bit of a shock. Apparently Ho Chi Minh wanted his ashes scattered in the four corners of his country, but his people ignored his wishes and preserved him for everyone to pay their respects instead. That afternoon we're treated to a stunning outdoor puppet show at the Temple of Literature, and the next morning, a green electric-car tour of the street markets in the bustling, atmospheric Old Quarter.

From Hanoi, it's a short flight to Siem Reap in Cambodia, where we stay in another superb Sofitel hotel; at dinner that night we're treated to a traditional Aspara dance performance. The following day we rise early to beat the heat on a tour of the ancient temples. Built in the 12th century, Angkor Wat is utterly spectacular, with its intricate stone carvings and vistas. The challenge here is to climb as high as you can, although it's worth noting that the steps get progressively more treacherous with each level; you're rewarded, though, with extraordinary >



views of the temple and jungle. In the afternoon, we visit Angkor Thom, and the remarkable Bayon Temple, with its giant, carved stone faces and impressive tree roots.

We first glimpse our home for the next seven nights, *Viking Mekong*, in Kampong Thom, and it's exactly what we were hoping it would be, with authentic polished teak decks and rattan chairs, plus friendly staff members who, impressively, greet us all by name as we board.

Our stateroom has the same teak flooring and wooden furniture, and the beds are very comfortable, with luxurious Oriental-style burgundy silk bedspreads that give the room an elegant feel.

While there's no TV, there are all the essentials (plus the occasional gecko in the shower), including patio doors with chairs outside so you can sit and watch the ever-changing scenery along the Mekong. On the Upper Deck, which is also where you congregate for evening cocktails and the day's briefing from the ship's fantastic hotel manager, Jan, there are comfortable loungers and a small but perfectly stocked bar where you can help yourself to coffee and cookies.

It's the little touches that make a difference on a cruise, and it's a pleasant surprise to find complimentary bottles of water on offer every time we leave for an excursion and cold towels and cookies when we return.

The onboard food is a revelation; it's of a consistently high standard and there are opportunities to try both local delicacies and Western dishes, although I'm far too much of a wimp to try the deep-fried insects on offer as a traditional appetizer one evening. Everyone sits at tables of eight so you get to know each other quickly, and we discover that some of the American and Australian guests on board are revisiting the places where they were stationed during active service in Vietnam and Cambodia. There are lectures and films on board, which complement the itinerary, and there's usually quite a crowd on the Upper Deck late into the night if you want to talk some more.

The Mekong is a fascinating river, wider than you might expect. We're here during the rainy season, and when there's a thunderstorm, the sky turns black, accentuating the mocha-colored water and

IN PHNOM PENH WE TAKE A CYCLO TOUR TO THE ROYAL PALACE AND SEE ITS GLITTERING PAGODAS

jade green of the jungle; we also see vermillion and tangerine sunsets.

For me, the highlights of our itinerary include our visit to the Udon Monastery. Inside, the ceilings are decorated with vivid, exquisite frescos, and two monks are sitting on the floor next to each other. We're invited to sit down in front of them, and close our eyes while they chant a protective prayer and then shower us with lotus petals, before tying a red wool amulet on our wrists—it's an extraordinary, once-in-a-lifetime kind of experience. We're also given an insight into the daily lives of the monks and nuns who live at the monastery.

In Phnom Penh, we take a thrilling cyclo tour to the city's Royal Palace, and see the glittering pagodas. At Kampong Cham, by the Twin Holy Mountains of Phnom Pros and Phnom Srei, we explore the exquisite temples, and are greeted by macaque monkeys.

Most poignantly of all, we visit the Killing Fields of Choeung Ek and the Tuol Sleng Genocide >

Clockwise, from top left: Wat Ounalom, Phnom Penh, Cambodia; boats on the Mekong Delta; Buddhist monks at the Udon Monastery, Cambodia; statues at Angkor Wat, Cambodia; Quán Thánh Temple, Hanoi, Vietnam.



EVERYONE ON BOARD
IS COMPLETELY IMMERSED
IN LIFE ALONG THE MEKONG



Clockwise, from this image: monks in Angkor Wat; Buddhist offerings of coconuts with incense and lotus flowers; fruit seller in Phnom Penh; on board the *Viking Mekong*.



Museum. A third of the Cambodian people lost their lives under Pol Pot's brutal regime, and it seems inconceivable that this happened 40 years ago, in our lifetime. Everyone on our tour is deeply moved by everything we see and hear on our cruise. It's important, I think, that the *Magnificent Mekong* itinerary doesn't ignore what happened in Cambodia or Vietnam.

But there is also much that is positive during our tour, including a superb performance by the Phare Cambodian Circus, a group of children from deprived backgrounds who perform the most astonishing acrobatics. And we also visit a local village where Viking Cruises supports the school and has installed a well, transforming the lives of everyone who lives there. All the children we meet on our visit to the school are bright and happy and full of hope for the future, and it's a tremendously humbling experience.

We're also completely immersed in life along the Mekong Delta; it's noisy, chaotic and colorful, but that all adds to the feeling that we're really living this previously alien culture. At Cái Bè we visit floating markets, and in Tân Châu and Vinh Hoa, we're given even more insight into the Vietnamese rural way of life.

Our journey through Southeast Asia ends in Ho Chi Minh City, formerly Saigon, with its wide boulevards and French architecture, and landmarks including the Reunification Palace and Notre Dame Cathedral, where you can see countless brides in rented Western-style wedding dresses having their photos taken—pictures that will be presented in albums as gifts on their big day.

Also worth seeing in Ho Chi Minh City are the splendid Opera House, an example of French colonial architecture, and the Post Office, with its mosaic-tiled floor and paintings of maps.

For everyone on our tour there is also a feeling of a shared experience, that this is something we have been through together, and when we say our good-byes in Ho Chi Minh City there are hugs. We also leave with a genuine affection for Vietnam and Cambodia, and a longing to return. 📍



GETTING THERE: Viking River Cruises offers a 15-day *Magnificent Mekong* cruise and tour to Vietnam and Cambodia, including all meals on board; wine, beer and soft drinks with lunch and dinner; and 14 guided tours.



Go online: To see a video of the *Magnificent Mekong* cruise to Vietnam and Cambodia visit vikingcruises.com

A woman with dark hair, wearing a light blue button-down shirt over a yellow t-shirt and dark patterned trousers, stands in the doorway of a rustic wooden building. The building has horizontal wooden planks for walls. To the left, there is lush green foliage, including large banana leaves and heart-shaped leaves. The ground is dry and dusty. In the background, more greenery and a corrugated metal roof are visible. The overall scene is set in a rural, tropical environment.

MAKING A *Difference*

Viking is proud to support communities in Southeast Asia. In Kontreang, Cambodia, Viking sponsors a school and provides vital new water pumps



Among the children we met was 14-year-old Souk, who loves geography and can't wait to go off and explore the world.

The people of Cambodia look forward to the rainy season; it ensures their rice paddies get enough water to produce a harvest. But it also brings its own problems: lack of proper sanitation and clean water means that waterborne diseases are often widespread. In fact, in rural areas, 60% of the population do not have any access to safe water for drinking or cooking.

Surrounded by a lush green jungle and rice fields, the tiny village of Sophy in Kontreang, Cambodia, is home to many families with young children. Until the installation of the well provided by Viking Cruises, the children had to walk several hours a day to get clean

water for their families, which meant they were unable to go to school.

The Homestay Volunteer Teachers Organization (HVTO) is a nonprofit nongovernmental organization that aims to ensure as many Cambodian children as possible go to school, where they can benefit from the free English and computer education program.

"We believe that the greatest help we can give to young people in Cambodian communities is education," explains founder Sim Peseth. "It empowers people and creates conditions for sustainable development."

The new Viking Cruises funded HVTO school building has been completed with



As well as sponsoring two Cambodian schools, Viking Cruises has installed 10 water pumps, transforming the lives of the people living in villages such as Sophy.



... and these children are all learning English, which will improve their chances of supporting their families.



the help of village men and older male students, saving an impressive 40% on labor costs. In the second quarter of 2015, we added 18 new student sponsorships, bringing the number of active sponsorships to 114.

You can visit the school and meet the teachers, children and their parents on an excursion as part of Viking Cruises *Magnificent Mekong* itinerary to Cambodia and Vietnam. On our visit, the children

were excited to talk to us and show us their schoolwork. We chatted with some of the older children, including 14-year-old Souk. "I want to go to college, and then come back and help my village," she said.

As we're leaving the village, a group of young mothers talk to us. "The well and the school have changed everything for us," one says. "Now the children have something to look forward to." 📌

A MOVING VISIT

Illustrator Suzy-Jane Tanner on her involvement with the Viking-sponsored schools in Cambodia

"I traveled to Cambodia in preparation for illustrating Karine Hagen's book *Finse Explores Indochina*, which will be published next year, and we visited a village school near Chong Koh and the HVTO school in Siem Reap, where the children, who are all learning English, had a very modest library.

I was very moved by these visits and have started collecting books from friends and colleagues to send to Cambodia.

I've received generous donations from my friends at South West Illustrators, over 250 books from David Bennett of Boxer Books and will be collecting donations from the Children's Writers and Illustrators Group at the Society of Authors.

All the books cover a wide range of subjects for different age groups. I will also be sending several of my own books and Karine and I will be including the *Finse* series. Viking has generously agreed to arrange the shipping of the books to Cambodia."

🔗 **Go online:** Follow Viking Cruises community projects at vikingcruises.com or facebook.com/vikingcruises. For a video of the *Magnificent Mekong* itinerary that features a visit to a school, visit vikingcruises.com/videos



exploringmore.com ON LOCATION WITH KARINE



With my father, Viking Cruises Founder and Chairman, Torstein Hagen, and my goddaughter Maya at the christening



My dog Finse and I waving the Norwegian flag on the Thames River

Karine Hagen, Sr. Vice President of Viking Cruises, shares her latest adventures and learnings from her travels around the world

The past year was particularly meaningful to me, as my “goddaughter” *Viking Sea*®, our second ocean ship, touched water for the first time. Here are some of my personal highlights and recommendations for your next cruise...

PROUD GODMOTHER

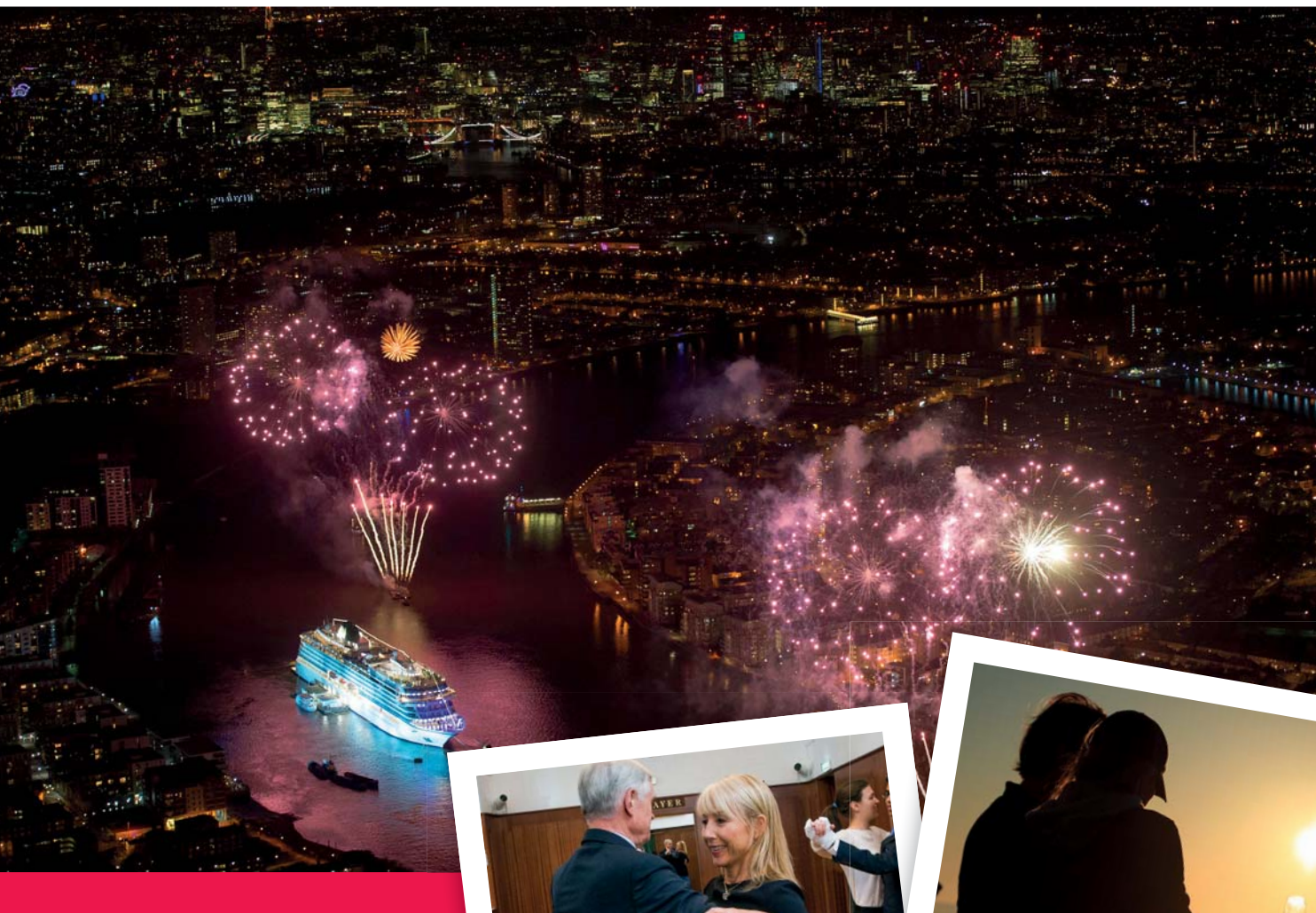
Viking Sea made history in London on May 5 for being the largest ship ever to be christened on the Thames River—and what a party it was! After passing through the Thames Barrier, she was given a warm welcome by 28 sailors who manned the yardarms of the famous 19th-century British clipper, *Cutty Sark*. We had replicated a Viking axe found in the Thames in the early 1900s, and my goddaughter Maya and I used it to cut the ribbon that released my grandmother’s favorite aquavit, Gammel Opland, in place of the traditional champagne. It was a very special Viking evening for all of us—you can see more at exploringmore.com.



DIVINE GÖTTWEIG ABBEY

Privileged Access around the world is something we work hard to provide our guests with. A new addition to our *Romantic Danube* itinerary is Göttweig Abbey in the picturesque Wachau Valley.

These Benedictine monks serve an important role in their communities, and



proudly share their home and work with Viking guests. If you are lucky, you might even get to waltz in the Wachau Valley with a real Benedictine father!

STEP BACK IN TIME

Nothing gives me more pleasure than introducing you to experiences that are unique to Viking Cruises. In Vienna, one such experience is learning how to waltz with the enigmatic Dr. Elmayer. His iconic dance school has graduated generations of Austrians to participate in the annual Opera Debutante Ball. Dr. Elmayer promised he could teach me how to waltz with confidence. And he was right! In less than an hour I was comfortable swirling around the converted stables, feeling I could dance all night long. Viking guests can now experience the same feeling on an optional tour in Vienna, on the *Romantic Danube* cruise.

BUON APPETITO!

Good food is at the heart of every Viking journey, so the decision to launch our very first Viking recipe book, *The Kitchen Table*, was an easy one to take. Of course trying to pick your favorite dish is a lot harder. All the recipes in the book are inspired by the destinations



Learning to waltz with confidence in Vienna with the wonderful Dr. Elmayer



Enjoying a magical sunrise moment in Santorini on the inaugural sailing of our beautiful new ocean ship Viking Sea



we visit and the meals that are served on board. Of all the recipes, I think my favorite is spaghetti alle vongole. This delicious pasta with clam sauce was originally considered peasant food, but has become an Italian classic. Use fresh or frozen clams, just don't forget the white wine! Turn to page 22 to read more about *The Kitchen Table* and see recipes from the book. 



Go online: You can see videos of Karine's latest travels at exploringmore.com



ONLY THE VIKING WAY

Brings you Local Life, Working World & Privileged Access

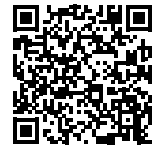
WITH MORE ITINERARIES IN MORE DESTINATIONS WORLDWIDE, we offer behind-the-scenes insights and opportunities that set us apart from other travel companies. While we deliver the expected and iconic—such as visits to museums and landmarks—we also go beyond. Our itineraries often offer **LOCAL LIFE** experiences and **WORKING WORLD** experiences, as well as optional **PRIVILEGED ACCESS** experiences opening doors to places otherwise difficult to visit.

Karine Hagen has traveled the globe to develop these Viking Way experiences, and has captured some of them in a series of inspiring videos. Whether you meet local people and get to know how they live and work, visit composer Edvard Grieg's home and experience the surroundings that so inspired him, or enter the state-of-the-art storage vaults of the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg, these videos are designed to deepen your understanding—and enjoyment—of the time ahead.

So, before you go anywhere, go online and join Karine at vikingoceancruises.com/videos.

SEE MORE AT [VIKINGCRUISES.COM/OCEANS](https://vikingcruises.com/oceans)

WATCH ALL OF OUR VIDEOS: vikingoceancruises.com/videos



LOCAL LIFE



Love and Drama at the Acropolis

Every culture has its tale of star-crossed lovers. In Greece, it's Mimikos and Mary, whose storybook romance took an unexpected turn in the shadow of the majestic Acropolis, a story that shook Greek society.

WORKING WORLD



The Original Longships

Delve into the past for a look into the art of Viking longship building. Meet a master boatbuilder and learn about the role these vessels played in advancing Viking society centuries ago.

PRIVILEGED ACCESS



Learn the Viennese Waltz

Ask any Austrian to name the person who most exemplifies elegance and style and their reply is likely to be Professor Thomas Schäfer-Elmayer. Meet the man who has introduced generations to the finer points of culture, including the iconic waltz.



Italy's Slumbering Giant

Explore the history of this notorious volcano with Karine, from its myths and folklore to the part Mt. Vesuvius played in the destruction of Pompeii and Herculaneum.



Amalfi Coast's Tasty Treasure

Limoncello has long been one of Italy's favorite after-dinner drinks. Join Karine to discover how simple it is to make this refreshing and iconic Sorrento digestif at home.



Brettos: Where Locals Go for Ouzo

What happens when you take colorful bottles of spirits, add oak casks brimming with brandy, then mix in a colorful owner? You get the magical setting that is Brettos, a "locals bar" like no other. Learn more about this Athenian treasure with Karine.

Karine Hagen is Sr. Vice President of Viking. At home in Norway, Russia, America and England, Karine loves sharing her worlds and insights with Viking guests. She is responsible for infusing our itineraries with The Viking Way across the globe, giving us all the opportunity to have these extraordinary experiences.





Odin

NORSE GOD OF WISDOM

Father of the Norse gods, Odin is the god of wisdom and associated with magic and prophecy. He also brings victory in battle. Odin is often pictured with long gray hair and beard, cloak and floppy hat to disguise himself as he travels among ordinary people. He seeks his knowledge far and wide, even trading an eye for a drink at the giant Mimir's well of wisdom. He once hung himself for nine nights from the World Tree, Yggdrasil, to gain knowledge of the power of the runes. He carries with him a powerful spear, Gungnir, which never misses its target, and the magic ring, Draupnir. Another version of his name is Woden, from which the day Wednesday originates.



THE NORSE GODS

The Vikings were the greatest explorers of their age. They ventured across Europe and beyond to create new settlements and forge new trading routes. The success of their explorations was built upon a rich Scandinavian culture wedded to the sea.

Yet the Vikings were also dependent upon the land. Bound by a sense of family and clan, they populated the lands we know as Norway, Sweden and Denmark, where they lived as farmers and merchants. Life brought many challenges and dangers, too. Both at home and at sea, their world was ruled by their gods and their tales of bravery, strength and wisdom.

At Viking Cruises, we are proud of our Norse heritage. That is why we have honored our Viking Longships—and our Russian fleet—with the names of celebrated Viking gods and heroes. The following pages detail some of our ship names and describe the Norse gods, goddesses and mythical characters that inspired them.

Here you'll also find paintings of the gods by the artist Roy Christian Lauritsen. The original artworks take pride of place in the Atrium on each Viking Longship.

We hope that you enjoy discovering the mythological Norse stories that inspired the Vikings—many of which live on today. Tales of gods, giants and horses that evoke the magnificent heritage of a magical land. ➤

ALSVIN

MYTHOLOGICAL NORSE HORSE

According to Norse legend, Alsvin is one of the two horses that pulls the sun across the sky in a chariot driven by Sol. The name Alsvin means “very swift.” The other horse is called Arvakr, whose name means “early riser.” To prevent the horses from expiring in the heat of the sun, the gods attached cool iron bellows to them. The glistening manes of these two steeds are said to generate daylight, while it is Sol who radiates heat.

ATLA

NORSE GODDESS OF WATER

The beautiful giantess Atla is the Norse goddess of water. She is the daughter of Aegir and Ran, god and goddess of the sea, and one of nine wave maidens who live at the bottom of the sea, watching over the World Mill that turns with the seasons bringing fertility and harmony. Odin, god of wisdom, finds Atla and her sisters asleep on a beach. Overcome by their beauty, he marries all of them, and together they give birth to Heimdal.

BALDUR

NORSE GOD OF LIGHT AND JOY

The son of Odin and Frigg, the bright and shining Baldur was everyone’s favorite, loved by both gods and mortals. Baldur was believed to be indestructible. At banquets, guests would amuse themselves by hurling objects at him. Nothing, it seemed, could harm him. Yet the malicious trickster, Loki, discovered that Baldur could be killed by mistletoe. He tricked Hod into throwing a sprig of mistletoe at Baldur, fatally wounding him.

BESTLA

NORSE FROST GIANTESS

Bestla is known to be a giantess, both literally and metaphorically speaking. In Norse mythology she is the daughter of the giant Bolthorn and is married to Bor. They have three sons together, the gods Vili, Ve and Odin. The latter was the father of the Norse gods as well as being the god of wisdom. Bestla is often referred to as the mother of all the gods and her name translates as “wife.”

BRAGI

NORSE GOD OF POETRY

Bragi is the Norse god of poetry and music. With his harp, he charms all creatures. His tongue is carved with Norse runes, and through his poetry, he keeps the stories of the gods alive. Son of Odin and Frigg, Bragi is often found in Valhalla, Odin’s palace, where he welcomes newly departed heroes. He is married to Idun, whose golden apples ensure the gods’ immortality. In Bragi’s honor, Vikings called their poets “bragamen” and “bragawomen.”

Aegir

NORSE GOD OF THE SEA

In Norse mythology, Aegir is the giant god of the sea, and he personifies the ocean’s power. The Vikings were skilled sailors; they understood the beauty and danger of the sea, and they both worshipped and feared Aegir. Aegir is also known for hosting lavish parties for the gods—his party guests marvel at his magical cups that refill themselves with drink. In his home below the sea, Aegir brews ale in a large cauldron, the froth of which is the ocean spray. Married to Ran, goddess of the Sea, Aegir has nine daughters who are the Norse wave maidens. He can be likened to the ancient Greek and Roman gods, Poseidon and Neptune.



DELLING

THE BRINGER OF THE DAWN

His name means “day spring” or “shining one” and in Norse mythology the god Delling is the father of the day. According to legend, Delling is married to Nott, the goddess of the night, and together they have a son, Dagr, who personified the day. Odin, father of the gods and god of wisdom, placed Delling, Nott and Dagr in the sky, so that they may ride across it with their horses and chariots every 24 hours.

EISTLA

NORSE WAVE MAIDEN

Eistla is one of the nine wave maidens who gave birth to Heimdal, the guardian of the gods. Sometimes referred to as billow maidens, Eistla and her sisters live at the bottom of the sea, watching over the World Mill that continually turns with the seasons, bringing fertility and harmony to Earth and her people. Their themes are providence, water and protection from water, charity, fertility, peace and cycles.

EMBLA

THE FIRST WOMAN

Embla was the first woman to be created the mother of the human race. The god Odin and his brothers made Embla, along with Ask, the first man, from two tree trunks found on the seashore. Odin gave Embla and Ask the breath of life. Hoenir gave them the ability to speak and think, and Lothur gave them warmth and movement. Embla and Ask were then given Midgard—world of humans—as a place to call home.

BURI

THE FIRST NORSE GOD

Buri is the first god in Norse mythology. He was created not by a mother or father, but by a giant frosty cow named Audumbla. As she licked the salty blocks of ice in Ginnagagap, the shape of a man—Buri—was formed, and she nourished him with her milk. Buri had a son named Bor who in turn had three sons, the gods Vili, Ve and Odin—from whom came the beginnings of Norse mythology. His name means, aptly, “producer.”

FORSETI

NORSE GOD OF JUSTICE

The god of justice, Forseti, radiates the light of truth and is a fair and wise mediator. Forseti presides over all disputes of gods and men, giving all a proper hearing—none dare break his decision. Forseti rules on his exalted throne in the radiant palace, Glitnir, whose silver roof and pillars of gold shine. He is the son of Balder, god of light, and Nanna, goddess of purity. Forseti means “presiding one” in Old Norse and “president” in Icelandic. ➤

FREYA

NORSE GODDESS OF LOVE

Freya, daughter of Njord, is the goddess of love, beauty and fertility. She is sister to Freyr, the god of harvest, and together they ensure good crops and large families. Famous for her beauty, Freya has a passion for fine jewelry. In exchange for the golden necklace, Brisinga, made by four dwarves, she agrees to spend a day and a night with each. Freya presides over the afterlife realm Folkvang caring for fallen heroes. Her name means "lady."

GULLVEIG

POWERFUL NORSE SEER

Her name means "gold branch" and this beautiful and beguiling Norse sorceress and seer loves gold. She leaves the realm of the Vanir gods and travels to Asgard, home of the Aesir gods. Worried by her gold lust and the passions it arouses in them, the Aesir cast her thrice into the fire. Each time she rises from the flame brighter and more beautiful. On her return to the Vanir, they vow to avenge her, and so begins the fabled war of the worlds.

HEIMDAL

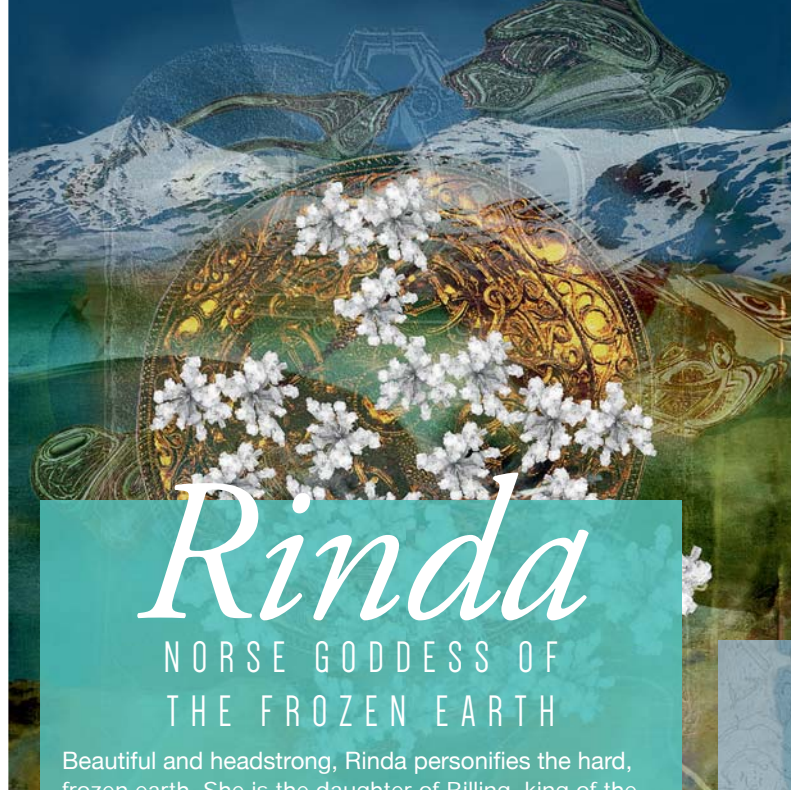
NORSE GUARDIAN OF THE GODS

Tall and handsome and known for his purity of heart and mind, Heimdall is the guardian of the gods. In many stories he is the son of Odin and nine mothers, believed to be the wave maidens. Heimdall is blessed with extraordinary sight and hearing. He can see for 100 leagues and his horn, Gjallarhorn, can be heard throughout heaven, earth and the lower world to summon the gods when the giants draw near.

HERMOD

NORSE MESSENGER OF THE GODS

Son of Odin and Frigg, Hermod is the nimble messenger of the gods, famous for his bravery. He is the brother of Baldur. When he dies, Hermod volunteers to face Hel, the goddess of the underworld, and plead for Baldur's return. After riding nine nights through dark valleys, he reaches Niflheim, the underworld. Hel agrees to release Baldur if everything in the universe weeps for Baldur. Sadly Thokk refuses so Baldur remains in the underworld.



Rinda

NORSE GODDESS OF THE FROZEN EARTH

Beautiful and headstrong, Rinda personifies the hard, frozen earth. She is the daughter of Billing, king of the Ruthenians, and wife of Odin, father of the gods. With Odin, Rinda has a son, Vali, whose destiny is to avenge the death of Odin's older son, Baldur, who was killed with mistletoe by his blind brother, Hodur. Odin learns of a prophecy that Vali, son of Rinda, would avenge Baldur's death by slaying Hodur. And so Odin sets out to marry Rinda to fulfill the prophecy. Nine months later, Vali is born. As foretold, Vali grows into a man in one day, and travels to Asgard, where he slays Hodur.

HLIN

NORSE GODDESS OF PROTECTION

The task of the Norse goddess Hlin (pronounced Lean) is to protect and shelter humankind. She is also the goddess of consolation and brings comfort and solace to those who grieve. Hlin is compassionate and a wise teacher. Thanks to her guidance, we learn how to honor our dead, and integrate their love and wisdom into our lives. Hlin is a handmaiden of the goddess Frigg, and some consider her to be a manifestation of Frigg herself.

IDI

NORSE FROST GIANT

Idi, the frost giant, is the brother of Thjazzi and Gangr, and the son of Olvadi who was rich in gold. When Olvadi died, he left so much gold that no scale could measure it. To divide it, Idi and his brothers each take as much gold as their giant mouths will hold. While Idi and Gangr are satisfied, Thjazzi wants more. But his efforts are thwarted and Thjazzi is defeated. Scholars believe the Norse metaphor "Idi's shining talk" comes from this story.

IDUN

NORSE GODDESS OF SPRING

Idun is the Norse goddess of spring, rejuvenation and eternal youth. She is the custodian of the golden apples of immortality, which the gods eat to preserve their youth. Idun is tricked by Loki, god of mischief, and she and her apples are seized by the giant Thiassi and locked in his tower. The gods begin to grow old, and force Loki to rescue Idun. He disguises himself as a bird and flies into the tower before carrying her back to the gods.

INGVI

NORSE GOD OF KINGSHIP

Ingvi is the son of Odin, father of the gods. Ingvi is a divine ancestor of the legendary Scandinavian Dynasty, from whom the earliest historical Norwegian kings claimed to be descended. Many scholars believe that Ingvi and Freyr are the same god. Both are associated with kingship, virility and prosperity. Freyr is frequently linked to Sweden, where he is seen as an ancestor of the Swedish royal house.

JARL

NOBLE NORSE WARRIOR

Jarl is a noble Norse warrior renowned for his strength and intelligence. He is the son of Heimdal. According to Norse legend, Heimdal leaves his post in disguise at the gateway to Asgard, where he is guarding the gods, to travel the Earth where he fathered three children: Thrall, Karl and Jarl. Jarl enhanced his status by marrying Erna, the beautiful daughter of nobleman Hersis. As an earl with his own hall, Jarl gathered a loyal following.

KARA

VALKYRIE & SWAN MAIDEN

Kara is one of the Valkyries or swan maidens. Legend says that if you can capture one, you can extract a wish from them. The Valkyries are warlike women, often depicted on horseback, armed with spears and led by Freya. They hover over the battlefield choosing who will be slain, before taking them to Valhalla. The Valkyries are messengers of the Norse god Odin, and when they ride, their armor causes the flickering light of aurora borealis.

KVASIR

NORSE KEEPER OF KNOWLEDGE

When the warring factions of the Aesir and the Vanir agree to a truce, each god spits into a bowl and stirs the saliva. From this, Kvasir, god of knowledge, is created. When two dwarves, Fjalar and Galar, invite him to feast with them, Kvasir accepts their invitation but is murdered. The dwarves drain his blood and mix it with honey to make a potent mead. This is known as "Kvas, the Mead of Poetry," which imparts wisdom and inspiration.



Skadi

NORSE GODDESS OF WINTER

The giantess Skadi is the Norse goddess of winter. She is also associated with hunting and skiing. When her father is slain by the gods, Skadi straps on her armor and weapons and heads to Asgard, home of the gods, to avenge his death. To appease her rage, the gods offer Skadi gold, which she refuses. Instead, she demands a god for a husband. The gods agree, but on the condition that she makes her choice by gazing at their feet. Skadi chooses the most graceful feet, believing them to belong to the young and beautiful Baldur. But she has chosen Njord. After they are married, Njord and Skadi want to live in their respective homelands, and so agree to separate.

LIF

BRINGER OF LIFE TO A NEW WORLD

Her name means simply “Life.” In Norse mythology, Lif and the male Lifthrasir are two mortals who are foretold that by hiding in the forest of Hodmimir, they will survive Ragnarok—the end of the world as it is known, when Heimdal and his enemy Loki, god of mischief, will slay each other. After the flames of the world’s end have abated, Lif and Lifthrasir emerge to discover that everything has been destroyed, and it is up to them to begin anew, and repopulate a fertile new world.

MAGNI

NORSE GOD OF STRENGTH

Son of the mighty Norse god Thor, Magni is believed to be the one god stronger than his father. He is so strong that he is the only one besides Thor to be able to lift Mjolnir, Thor’s mighty hammer. When Thor lies trapped under the colossal leg of the giant Jotun, whom he has just slain, the god sends for his three-year-old son, Magni, to say his farewell. Seeing his father barely alive, Magni effortlessly lifts the giant’s leg, and saves his father. Magni’s brother Modi inherited Thor’s battle wrath. So, while warriors prayed to Magni to give them strength in battle, they also prayed to Modi to enhance their rage, and quell their fear.



VIKINGS IN RUSSIA

In the 9th century the legendary Viking leader Rurik led a group of Vikings east from Scandinavia up the Neva and Svir rivers, along the Volga, then overland to the Dnieper to what is today Kiev. Here, according to legend, the local tribes asked Rurik to become their ruler.

Rurik unified the tribes of Kievan Rus, or ancient Russia, into a medieval kingdom that stretched from the Baltic Sea to the Ural Mountains. After Rurik’s death in 879, a relative named Helgi ruled over the empire. Helgi was succeeded by Rurik’s son Ingvar. The family dynasty remained in power in Russia for more than 700 years.

Viking River Cruises was founded in Russia and to honor our heritage, we have named our Russian ships after these intrepid Vikings—or Varangians, as Russian historians call them. Our *Waterways of the Tsars* itinerary crosses historic paths with the explorations of these Vikings, who became the founding fathers of today’s Russia.

AKUN

The Viking Akun was one of two sons of Djilki who was an older brother of the Viking leader, Rurik. In the 9th century, they traveled from Scandinavia to settle in the area we know today as Kiev in Ukraine. Akun and his brother Igor are named in the Russian *Primary Chronicle* as signatories of the 944 Byzantine Treaty. They are believed to have been prominent members of the Vikings who fought against Byzantium. The name Akun is thought to be an older version of Haakon, a very popular name for Norwegian rulers.

HELGI

A prince and a prophet immortalized in Russian literature, Helgi was a Viking of adventure. In the early 10th century, Helgi inherited the ancient Russian empire Rus founded by Rurik. Helgi was warned by pagan priests that he would die by his horse so he released the animal. Years later when he visited the horse’s remains, a snake slithered out from the skull, mortally wounding him, and fulfilling the prophecy. During his 30-year reign, Helgi not only retained control of Rus, but enhanced its status for centuries more.



Tor

NORSE GOD OF THUNDER

Tor, a version of the name Thor, is a son of Odin and god of the sky and thunder. Strong and powerful, he is the protector of gods and people, and is usually depicted wielding his mighty hammer, Mjolnir. Famous for his red hair, blazing eyes, quick temper and feats of strength, Tor's appetite for life is as huge as his reputation. This is the god who drank from a horn and emptied the ocean. But as much as he is feared, Tor is also revered by the gods and worshipped by mortals. The Norse people wore protective, hammer-shaped amulets, a symbol of Tor, for centuries and well into the advent of Christianity. Tor lives on today on Thursday, or Tor's day.

NJORD

NORSE GOD OF WIND & SEA

Njord is the god of the wind as well as the sea, and was worshipped by Viking fishermen and traders who invoked his name to calm the waters and protect their ships. First married to his sister Nerthus, Njord fathers two children: Freyr, god of the harvest, and Freya, goddess of love. His second wife is Skadi. She marries Njord after her father is slain by the gods, and she is allowed to marry a god by gazing at their feet only. She picks Njord by mistake, believing the feet to be those of Baldur.

VAR

NORSE GODDESS OF OATHS

The Norse goddess of oaths, Var is a truth seeker. She oversees all agreements and contracts, particularly marriage vows made between men and women, which were known as *várar* in Old Norse. Hence, she is the goddess of betrothal. From the goddess Var, nothing can be hidden. She is wise but severe, and will not hesitate to punish those who break their vows. Through Var, the word is the will. Var is one of eleven handmaidens that attend Frigg, goddess of marriage and motherhood, and favorite wife of Odin, god of wisdom. Through fidelity and close attention, Var serves her mistress well. Her symbols are the oath ring and hearth fire. ♀

INGVAR

Son of Rurik, Ingvar was born around 875 AD and was a child when his father died. Rule of the vast lands of Rus fell to Helgi, Ingvar's uncle who had raised the boy. Thirty years later, Ingvar succeeded Helgi as grand prince of Kiev and took control of the empire. He carried the conquests of Kievan Rus farther east, undertaking campaigns against Persia, Constantinople and Bulgaria. Ingvar died around 945 AD, when the Vikings were at the height of their power.

RURIK

In the 9th century, Viking leader Rurik led his men east to present-day Kiev, where he established the birth of the Rurik Dynasty which ruled Kievan Rus, the precursor to Russia. The name "Rus" comes from *Ruotsi*, the Finnish word for the Varangians, and means "people that row." Eventually, Rurik moved his capital to Novogorod which, after Moscow, became Russia's greatest city. There is a 9th-century funerary barrow in Novogorod Oblast that locals call Rurik's Grave.

SINEUS




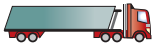








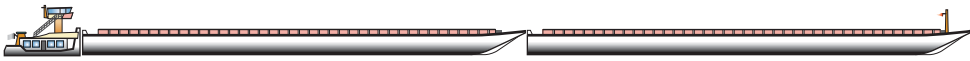





Sineus was brother of Rurik and sailed with him from Scandinavia to Kiev in Ukraine. According to the 12th-century *Primary Chronicle*, Sineus settled in Beloozero, now called Belozersk, on the shores of Lake Beloye, where he secured these lands for the growing Kievan Rus empire. One of Russia's oldest towns, Beloozero is mentioned in the Russian *Primary Chronicle* as early as 826 AD and has been called the "portal to Russia's northern waterways."

TRUVOR

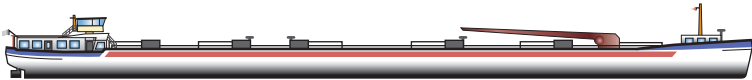





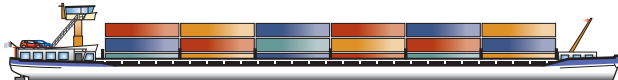

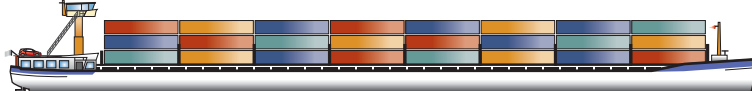



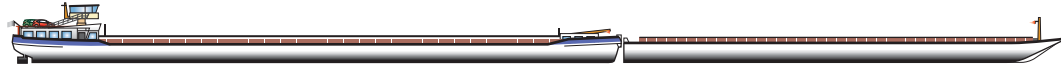

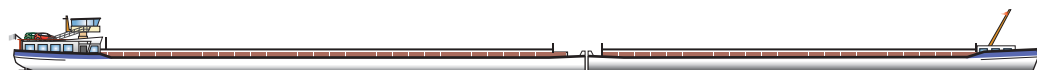

Like Sineus, Truvor was a brother of Rurik, and was also among the first group of Vikings to travel to ancient Rus where the intrepid group settled. Truvor, whose name means "our faithful," took charge of Izborsk, an area near what is now Russia's border with Estonia, controlling these lands for Kievan Rus, but soon after Truvor died. Rurik consolidated his brother's lands into his own, increasing the size and the strength of the Rurikid Dynasty and the Russian Empire.

SHIPS ALONG THE RIVER

Types of ships along the European waterways

Class*	Ship Type	Semi-Truck Equivalent**
I	 SPITS Length: 126 ft. / Width: 17 ft. / Draught: 7 ft. / Capacity: 350 tons	 14 x
II	 KEMPENAAR Length: 180 ft. / Width: 22 ft. / Draught: 8 ft. / Capacity: 655 tons	 22 x
III	 DORTMUND - EMS CANAL SHIP (DORTMUNDER) Length: 220 ft. / Width: 27 ft. / Draught: 8 ft. / Capacity: 1,000 tons	 40 x
IV	 RHINE - HERNE CANAL SHIP (EUROPASHIP) Length: 279 ft. / Width: 31 ft. / Draught: 8 ft. / Capacity: 1,350 tons	 54 x
Va	 LARGE RHINE SHIP Length: 361 ft. / Width: 37 ft. / Draught: 10 ft. / Capacity: 2,750 tons	 120 x
Vb	 LARGE RHINE SHIP Length: 443 ft. / Width: 37 ft. / Draught: 10 ft. / Capacity: 4,000 tons	 160 x
Vla	 TWO-BARGE TOW COMBINATION Length: 564 ft. / Width: 37 ft. / Draught: 13 ft. / Capacity: 5,500 tons	 220 x
Vlb Vlc	 FOUR- OR SIX-BARGE TOW COMBINATION Length: 633 ft. / Width: 75 ft. or 112 ft. / Draught: 13 ft. / Capacity: 11,000 tons or 16,500 tons	 440 / 660 x
Va	 STANDARD TANKER Length: 360 ft. / Width: 37 ft. / Draught: 11 ft. / Capacity: 3,000 tons	 120 x

You will see many different types of ships along your journey because the waterways of Europe are a significant means of transporting goods. Below are some of the different types of ships you may encounter along the way. Note that each ship can transport a significant amount of tonnage. Indeed, these ships are the workhorses of European commerce, and each carries far more than a semi-truck can

Class*	Ship Type	Semi-Truck Equivalent**
Vb	 LARGE TANKER Length: 443 ft. / Width: 72 ft. / Draught: 14 ft. / Capacity: 3,000 tons	 380 x
Va	 AUTOMOBILE SHIP Length: 361 ft. / Width: 37 ft. / Draught: 7 ft. / Capacity: 530 automobiles	 60 x
III	 CONTAINERSHIP KEMPENAAR CLASS Length: 207 ft. / Width: 23 ft. / Draught: 8 ft. / Capacity: 32 TEU	 16 x
Va	 STANDARD CONTAINERSHIP Length: 361 ft. / Width: 37 ft. / Draught: 10 ft. / Capacity: 200 TEU	 100 x
Vb	 LARGE CONTAINERSHIP Length: 443 ft. / Width: 56 ft. / Draught: 11 ft. / Capacity: 500 TEU	 250 x
Va	 ROLL ON-ROLL OFF SHIP Length: 361 ft. / Width: 37 ft. / Draught: 8 ft. / Capacity: N/A	 72 x
VIb	 SHIP-BARGE COMBINATION Length: 607 ft. / Width: 37 ft. / Draught: 11 ft. / Capacity: 6,000 tons	 240 x
VIb	 SHIP-SHIP COMBINATION Length: 607 ft. / Width: 37 ft. / Draught: 11 ft. / Capacity: 6,000 tons	 240 x

* In the mid-1970s, the European Conference of Ministers of Transport categorized all European waterway ships in a system of seven classes. The system is based on the length and width of certain ship types.

**Indicates the number of trucks required to carry the equivalent amount of cargo.

NAUTICAL SIGNS

PROHIBITORY SIGNS

Two lights or two flags shown one above the other means a long-term prohibition of passage.



Passage is prohibited
(boards)



Passage is prohibited
(lights)



Passage is prohibited
(flags)



Waterskiing
is prohibited



Avoidance of waves
or breakers

SIGNS GIVING ORDERS



Order not to exceed the
speed limit (Ex: 12 Knots)



Order to use the
voice radio



Order to use the voice
radio on the indicated
channel (Ex: Ch 11)

SIGNS INDICATING RESTRICTIONS

These signs indicate that the depth of the water is restricted.



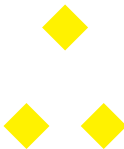
The clearance height over
the water level
is restricted.



The width of the passage
opening or the fairway
is restricted.

As we journey along the riverbanks, you will notice that we pass various signs to the left and right of our ship. These signs notify the captain of each vessel of the rules and regulations of the waterways. Below is a brief explanation of each

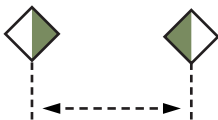
SIGNS GIVING RECOMMENDATIONS



Recommended passage opening for traffic in both directions

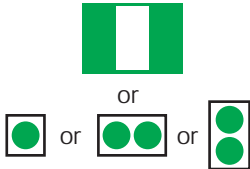


Recommended passage opening for traffic in only one direction, specifically where signs are not visible



Recommendation to stay inside the area marked by signs

SIGNS OF INDICATION



Admission to pass (general signs)



Crossing a high-voltage line



Admission to anchor on the side of the waterway where the sign is placed



Admission to moor on the side of the bank where sign is placed



Waterways that flow in are regarded as side roads



Right waterway flowing in is regarded as a side road



Left waterway flowing in is regarded as a side road



Nautical information radio channel (Ex: Ch 11)



High water level sign 1



High water level sign 2

LOCKS

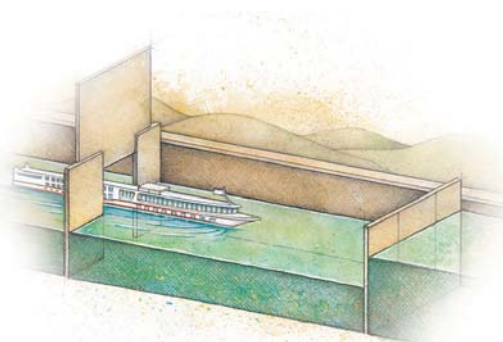
Understand the science behind your river cruise with our handy guide

HOW DOES A LOCK WORK?

A lock works by raising and lowering boats in a device between stretches of water of different levels on rivers and canal waterways. Locks are used to make a river more easily navigable, or to allow a canal to take a reasonably direct line across a country that is not level.

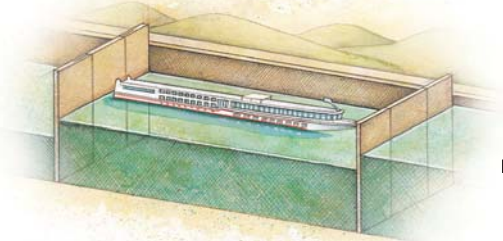
DID YOU KNOW?

At 1,777 miles, the Danube is Europe's second longest river after the Volga in Russia. It crosses through 10 countries including Serbia, Slovakia and Moldova.



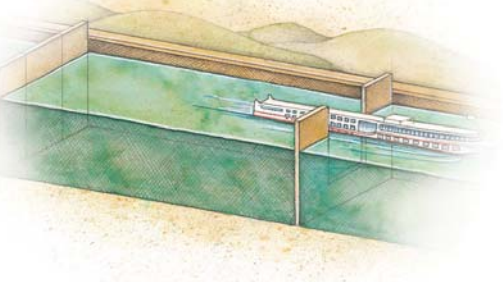
1 THE SHIP APPROACHES A LOCK

The first door opens and the ship enters the lock compartment.



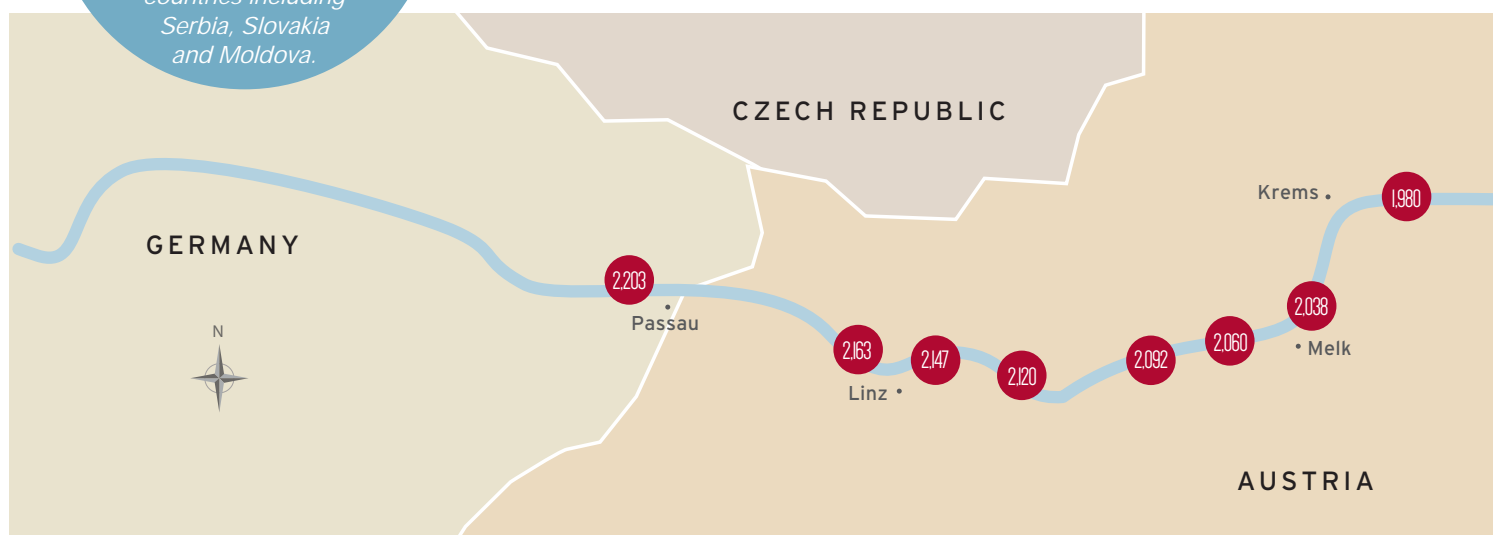
2 THE DOOR CLOSES BEHIND THE SHIP

The lock compartment is filled with water, raising the ship.



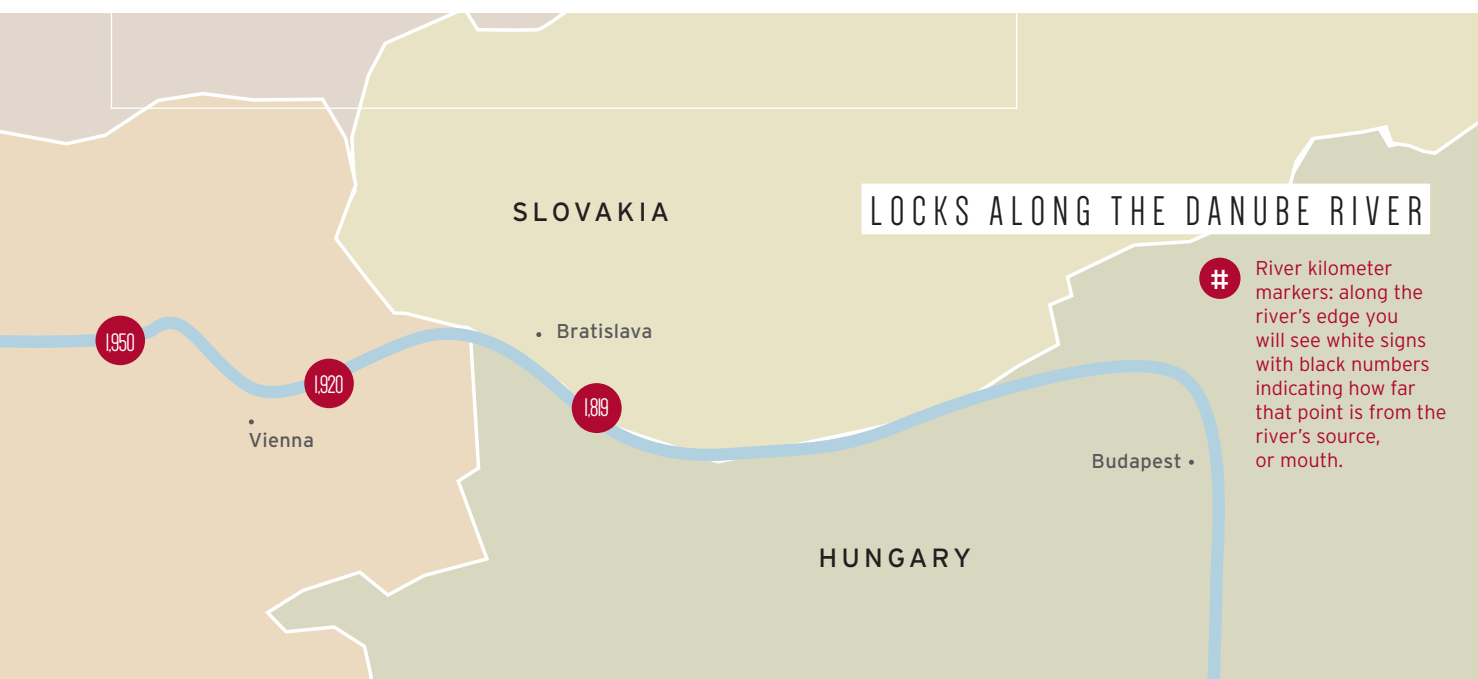
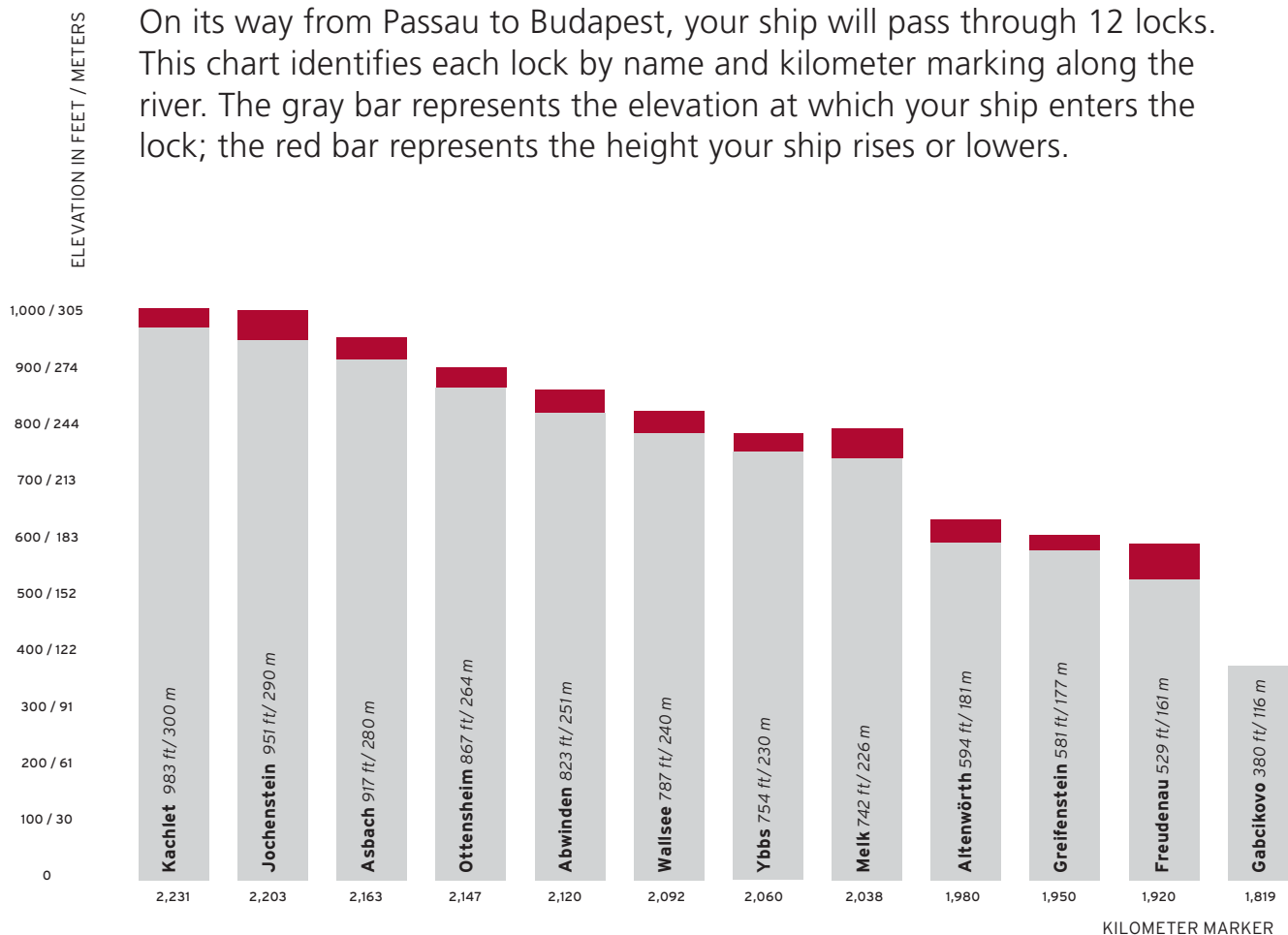
3 THE FAR DOOR OPENS

Then the ship departs at the new, higher (or lower) level of the river. Alternate lock sections can be drained for incoming ships from higher levels.



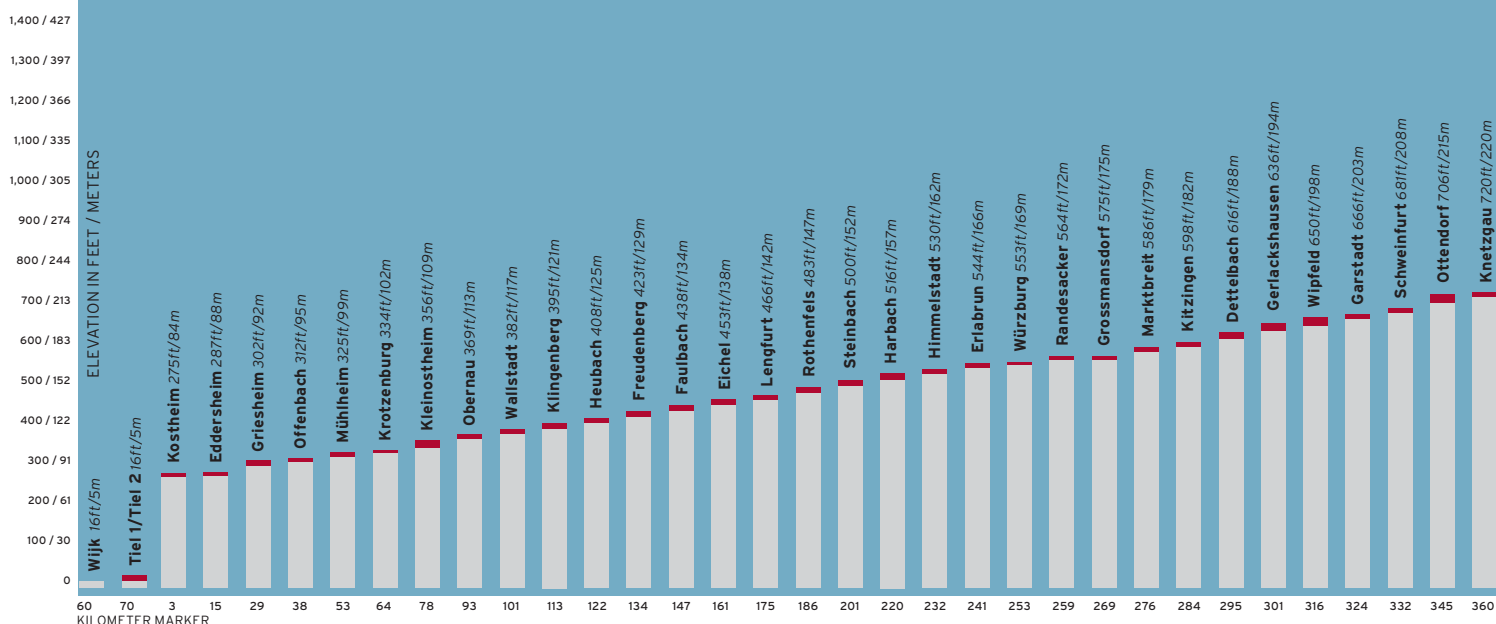
LOCK ELEVATION BETWEEN PASSAU & BUDAPEST

On its way from Passau to Budapest, your ship will pass through 12 locks. This chart identifies each lock by name and kilometer marking along the river. The gray bar represents the elevation at which your ship enters the lock; the red bar represents the height your ship rises or lowers.



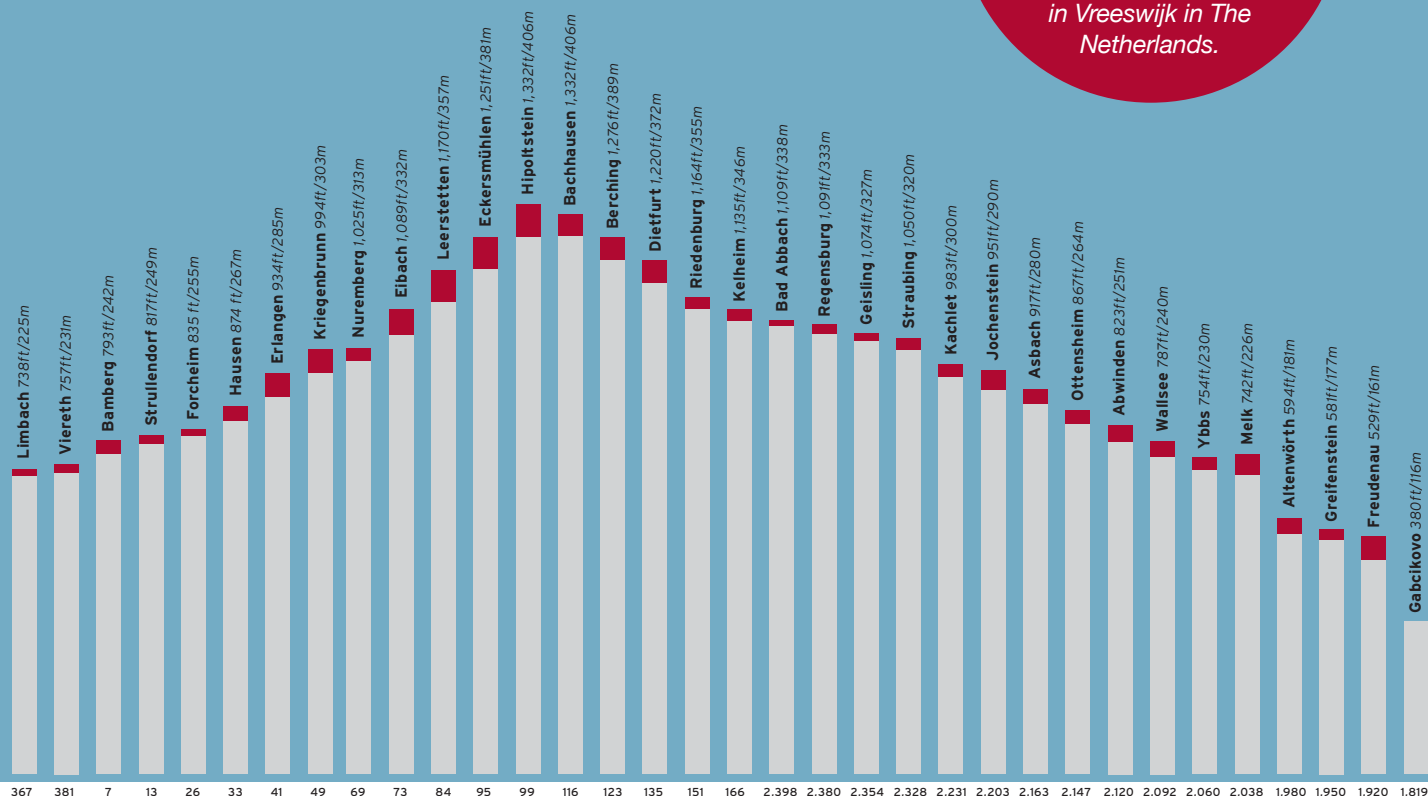
LOCK ELEVATION BETWEEN AMSTERDAM & BUDAPEST

On its way from Amsterdam to Budapest, your ship will pass through 68 locks. This chart identifies each lock by name and kilometer marker along the river. The gray bar represents the elevation at which your ship enters the lock; the red bar represents the height your ship rises or lowers while in the lock. The total height of the bar is the total elevation at the highest point of this process.



DID YOU KNOW?

The first lock was invented in China in the 9th century. In Europe, the first lock is said to have been built in 1373 in Vreeswijk in The Netherlands.



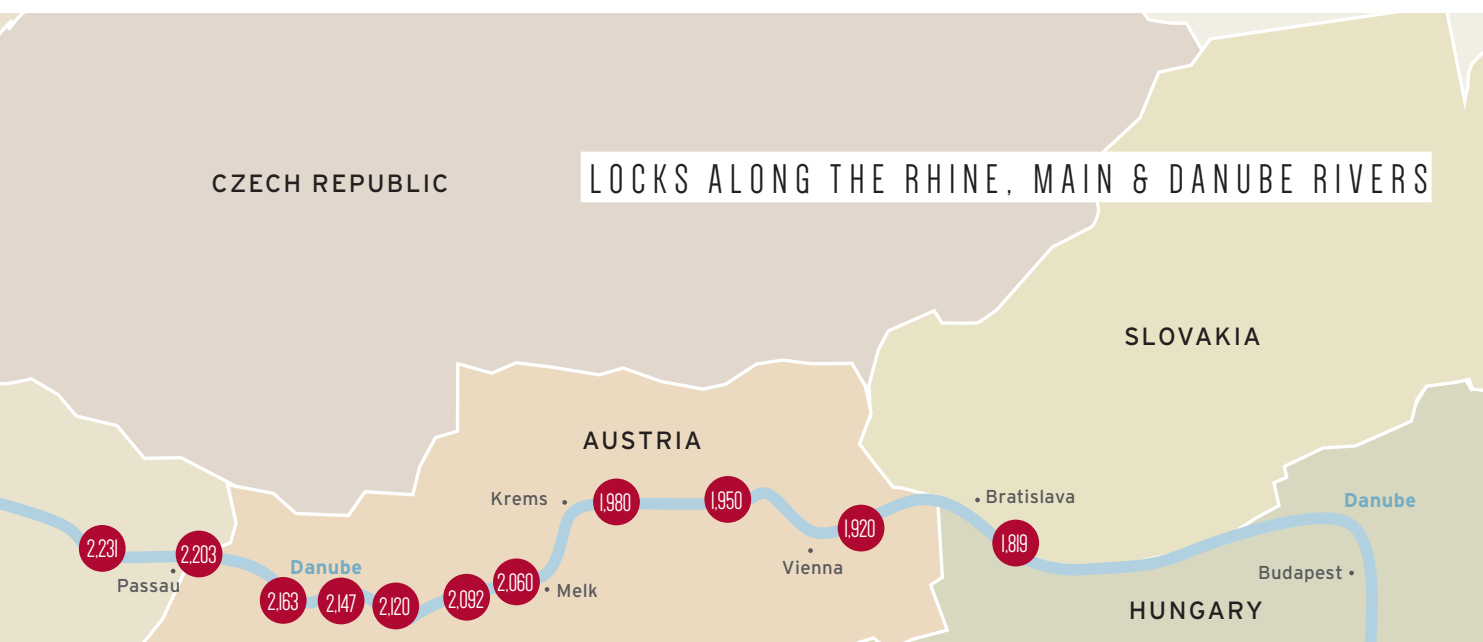
CZECH REPUBLIC

LOCKS ALONG THE RHINE, MAIN & DANUBE RIVERS

SLOVAKIA

AUSTRIA

HUNGARY



Discover the
PERFECT MEMENTO



Be sure to visit our onboard boutique featuring signature Viking keepsakes, including books, clothing and jewelry. You'll find Helly Hansen gear perfect for any weather, Dale of Norway sweaters, high-quality Viking replica pieces and assorted sundries—all perfect as souvenirs or gifts.

Visit the onboard shop.



SHARE YOUR STORY

ON *MYVIKINGSTORY.COM*

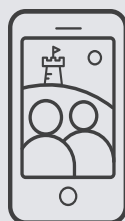
#MyVikingStory

We invite you to share your photos and the stories behind them on *MyVikingStory.com*.
Please be sure to tag your photos #MyVikingStory. Share your favorite moments from your cruise.
Tell your friends and share.

It's easy—just follow these steps:

1

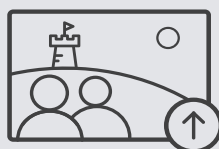
TAKE A PHOTO



Take photos of your favorite travel moments, and include yourself or fellow travelers.

2

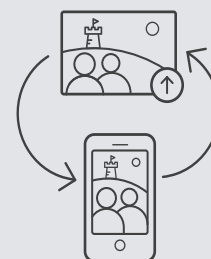
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3

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