

# 6 of the best active river cruisers

Repeaters can get up and go on an active river cruise that provides plenty of reasons to explore anew, writes [Jeannine Williamson](#)



## TRY ROWING ALONG ON THE RHINE

Avalon Waterways led the charge for energetic river cruises when it launched Active & Discovery sailings in 2017. The active options are included in the fare and run alongside easy-paced shore tours so passengers can decide how much – or little – they want to do or can mix and match on different days. On this Rhine cruise from Amsterdam to Basel, guests can explore the Venice of the North on a kayak tour through Amsterdam’s famous canals. In Dusseldorf there’s a bike trip to discover the sights of the city, while in Koblenz guests can head off on an e-bike tour through vineyards.

**Book it:** A seven-night Active & Discovery on the Rhine (Southbound) cruise on Avalon Vista is priced from £2,449, departing July 26, including flights. [avalonwaterways.co.uk](http://avalonwaterways.co.uk)





## HIKE WITH HISTORY IN FRANCE

Clients can stretch their legs in a beautiful southwestern region of France on CroisiEurope's hiking cruise along the Gironde River. The round-trip sailing from Bordeaux features daily guided walks ranging from three to eight miles. Highlights include a hike to the 17th-century Unesco-listed Vauban citadel in Blaye, providing panoramic views of the Gironde estuary, and a day in the hills surrounding the medieval town of Saint-Emilion, with a picnic lunch and an urban hike through Bordeaux. Non-walking passengers are catered for with leisurely tours taking in some of the region's famous vineyards, food and wine tastings plus strolls around medieval towns. Back on the ship, there's an open bar and free-flowing wine with meals.

**Book it:** *The four-night Nature, Harmony and Hiking on a Cruise in the Garonne Region on Cyrano de Bergerac* costs from £1,453, departing on October 17, excluding flights. [croisieurope.co.uk](http://croisieurope.co.uk)

PICTURES: Shutterstock/Alan Gardine, Joe Hancock

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### TEE OFF ASHORE, PLAY PICKLEBALL ON BOARD

Play at up to five of Europe's top golf courses on AmaWaterways' themed golf sailings on the Danube between Budapest and Vilshofen. They include the Golf Club Adamstal in Austria and the Golf Resort Bad Griesbach. Golfers are transferred to and from the ship and after the game, there's lunch in the local clubhouse. All the arrangements, including tee times and a golf cart, are prepared in advance and, on return, clubs are cleaned. Back on board, the double-width AmaMagna is the only river vessel with a full-sized pickleball court (pictured). Keep-fit enthusiasts can also work out in the large gym and take part in daily classes.

**Book it:** *A seven-night Magna on the Danube Concierge Golf Programme* cruise costs from £3,562, departing on August 10, including flights. [amawaterways.co.uk](http://amawaterways.co.uk)

## REPEAT RIVER CRUISERS

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### BIKE THROUGH BEAUJOLAIS

Geared to nature and culture enthusiasts, this tour sails round-trip from Lyon along the Rhône River to the Camargue and France's world-famous Beaujolais wine region. Each day there are guided rides winding through picturesque villages, lush vineyards and historic towns, with time to sample local cuisine along the way. The trip takes in the sweeping salt marshes of the Camargue nature reserve, which is home to wild white horses and flamingos. Bikes, including e-bikes, are available to hire and the ship has an infinity pool to ease any aching muscles. Regular excursions are available for non-cyclists.

**Book it:** *Seven-night Treasures of Burgundy and Provence: Rhône & Saône sailing on Amadeus Provence* starts from £2,777, departing on July 30, excluding flights and bike hire. [amadeus-rivercruises.co.uk](http://amadeus-rivercruises.co.uk)





## REPEAT RIVER CRUISERS



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## PADDLE DOWN THE DOURO

Emerald Cruises' EmeraldActive excursions are for guests who like to move at a slightly faster pace and see destinations from a different perspective. Included in the fare, the line's round-trip Douro cruise starts with a walk through vineyards and the opportunity to kayak along the river at Pinhão. At the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Remedies, a hilltop pilgrimage church, there's an optional hike down the 686 steps to the town. Also on offer is a guided walk through Porto and, at extra cost, a bike tour to the mouth of the Atlantic Ocean. All sailings include a programme of more leisurely excursions too.

**Book it:** A seven-night *Secrets of the Douro* cruise on *Emerald Radiance* costs £2,910, departing on August 16, including flights. [emeraldcruiises.co.uk](http://emeraldcruiises.co.uk)



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## EXPLORE INDIA ON FOOT

For an exotic active cruise, Pandaw's all-new expedition sailing on the Hooghly River, which connects Kolkata with the Ganges, starts this autumn. Sailing from Kolkata to Baranagar, there are daily walking tours and activities that capture the essence of India in artisanal villages and riverside communities. Clients can join an early morning walk to Kolkata's vibrant flower market, one of Asia's largest, where locals buy marigolds and jasmine for temple offerings and prayers. In Baranagar, there's a hike through serene countryside flanked by mustard fields and mango orchards. The ship carries mountain bikes for all passengers and crew members can advise on the best routes to follow or accompany guests if required.

**Book it:** An 11-night *The Hooghly* itinerary on *Katha Pandaw* costs from £3,499, departing October 24, including drinks package and flights. [fredholidays.co.uk](http://fredholidays.co.uk)



PICTURE: David Lumsden