Your River Cruise Guide

Presented by

ELITE EXPLORERS

WHERE ADVENTURES BECOME REALITY

GATEWAY TRAVEL

PARTNER

A checklist from booking to coming home



Start planning your cruise

Your river cruise brings you closer to the places you visit. This guide will help you prepare—from travel documents, insurance and transportation to choosing excursions and understanding what your fare includes. Elite Explorers can help you confirm the details for your sailing.

Use this checklist alongside your cruise line's booking confirmation and travel documents. Reservation windows, payment dates and arrival instructions vary by cruise line and itinerary. Follow the deadlines provided for your booking.

As soon as you book

☐ **Check your confirmation.** Verify traveler names against their travel documents, sailing dates, ship, stateroom, itinerary, and pre-cruise and post-cruise arrangements. Save your booking number.

☐ **Record important deadlines.** Note deposit, final-payment and cancellation dates. These vary by booking.

☐ **Verify travel documents.** Check passport validity, visas and entry or transit authorizations for every traveler and every country on your route. Start applications or renewals promptly.

☐ **Set up your account.** Link your reservation and download the cruise line's app, if available. Add calendar reminders for registration and reservations.



Protect your trip

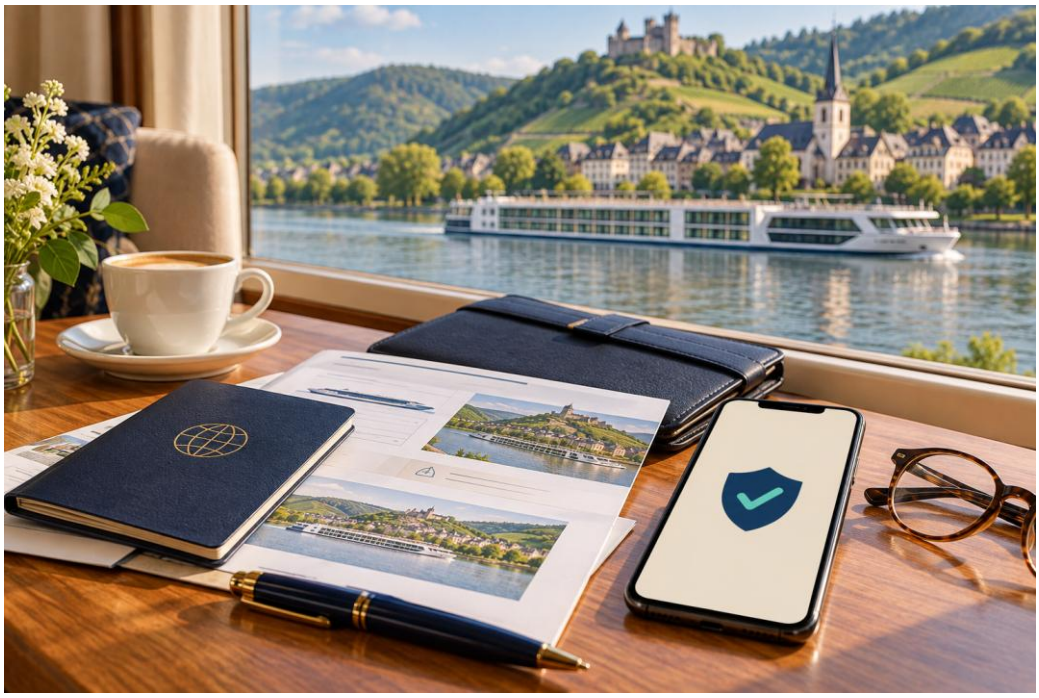
Travel insurance belongs at the beginning

☐ **Review insurance with your first trip payment.** Ask immediately about time-sensitive benefits such as a pre-existing condition exclusion waiver or optional Cancel For Any Reason coverage. Eligibility and purchase windows vary by policy and state; do not wait until final payment.

☐ **Compare the coverage.** Review covered cancellation and interruption reasons, travel delay and missed connections, baggage protection, emergency medical care and medical evacuation. Check limits, exclusions and activity restrictions. Confirm what your existing health insurance covers outside the country.

☐ **Cover your full journey.** Include pre-cruise and post-cruise stays and the trip costs required by your policy. Ask how and when to add later purchases.

☐ **Keep assistance details handy.** Save your policy number and the insurer's emergency assistance contact. Coverage is governed by the policy; Cancel For Any Reason is not automatically included and may reimburse only part of the cost.



Plan your arrival and transfers

When you book your flights and pre-cruise stay through the cruise line, coordinated airport pickup and hotel transfers can make your arrival easier. Confirm the transfers included in your package, then follow the arrival instructions provided.

☐ **Plan to arrive early.** We recommend arriving at least one day before embarkation, with additional time for international flights or complicated connections. A pre-cruise stay gives you time to rest and explore. Arriving early reduces delay risk but cannot guarantee boarding.

☐ **If booked through the cruise line,** review the airport pickup and transfer instructions for your included pre-cruise hotel. Confirm where to meet the representative and whom to contact if your flight is delayed.

☐ **If traveling independently,** confirm whether cruise-line transfers are available or arrange transportation from the airport to your hotel and from your hotel to the ship.

☐ **Verify the docking location.** Use the cruise line's latest instructions rather than relying only on the city name. Save the ship's contact number and check for berth changes.

☐ **Check return-flight timing.** Follow the cruise line's recommended departure times and allow for transfers and airport procedures.

☐ **Discuss special requirements early.** Tell us about mobility assistance, dietary needs or medical equipment. Confirm deadlines, required approvals, stairs, gangways and access through other ships.



Explore more along the way

Shore excursions are an important part of your river cruise. Review the tours included with your sailing, the choices available in each port, and any optional experiences offered at an additional cost.

☐ **Review your included excursions.** Check your itinerary to see what is covered and whether you need to select or reserve a tour.

☐ **Choose experiences that interest you.** Where choices are available, consider guided walks, cultural visits, food and wine experiences, or active outings. Check schedules before selecting multiple activities.

☐ **Match the tour to your comfort level.** Review walking distances, stairs, cobblestones, hills, standing time and transportation. Ask about gentler-paced options and accessibility before reserving.

☐ **Consider optional excursions.** Confirm the additional price, what is included, cancellation terms, and whether an optional tour overlaps with an included experience.

☐ **Confirm meeting points and return times.** Follow the ship's daily instructions, carry its contact information, and allow time to return when exploring independently.

Leave some free time to enjoy a café, browse local shops, or explore at your own pace.



Know what your fare includes

Before purchasing extras, review your booking confirmation so you know what is included and what may cost more. Inclusions vary by cruise line, ship, itinerary and package.

☐ **Beverages.** Confirm which drinks are included, when they are served, and whether an optional upgrade would be useful.

☐ **Dining.** Review included meals and any dining experiences that carry an additional charge.

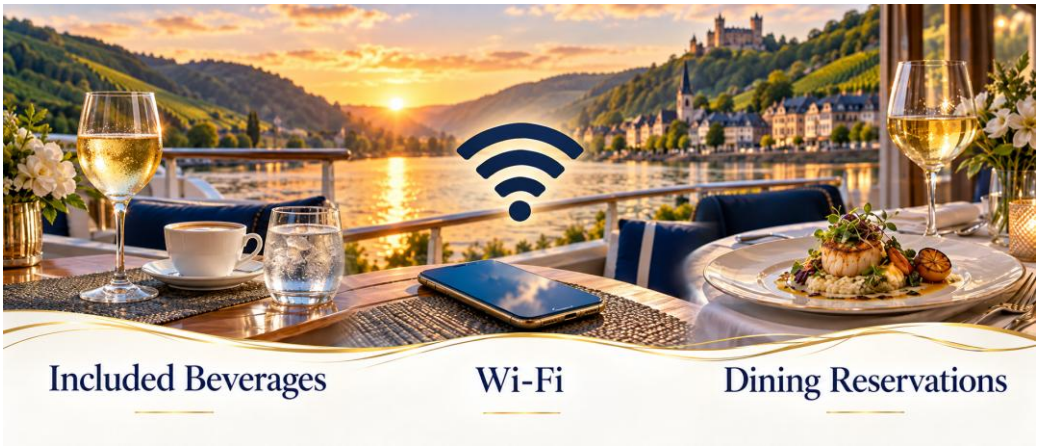
☐ **Reserve included specialty dining early.** Some dining experiences are included but still require reservations. Ask when reservations open and book promptly for your preferred evening.

☐ **Wi-Fi.** Check availability, included access and any limitations. Allow for slower speeds or interruptions. Confirm roaming charges with your mobile carrier before using cellular service abroad.

☐ **Gratuities.** Confirm whether tips are included, prepaid or payable separately.

☐ **Transfers and hotel stays.** Review exactly which transportation and accommodations are covered by your package.

Keep a small budget for personal purchases, meals ashore and optional experiences.



Be prepared for itinerary changes

River conditions and docking arrangements are part of planning for this type of journey. Understanding the possibilities helps you prepare comfortably.

High or low river levels

High or low river levels can affect your journey. If the ship cannot safely navigate a section of the river, you may need to leave the ship and travel by motorcoach (bus) for part of the itinerary. Changes may also include different docking locations, revised sightseeing schedules, or a transfer to another ship. Follow the cruise line's updates and keep essential items accessible during transfers.

When ships dock side by side

At some ports, river ships dock alongside one another, often called "rafting." You may need to cross through or over another ship to reach the dock, and passengers from neighboring ships may cross yours. This can temporarily affect your view and privacy while docked. Follow the crew's designated route, which may involve stairs, gangways or sun decks. Let us know before booking if these arrangements could present a mobility concern.

Watch for updates

Water levels, lock operations and other conditions can change the schedule. Follow the cruise line's latest instructions and check with the crew before making independent plans.



Complete your guest registration

Review your travel documents

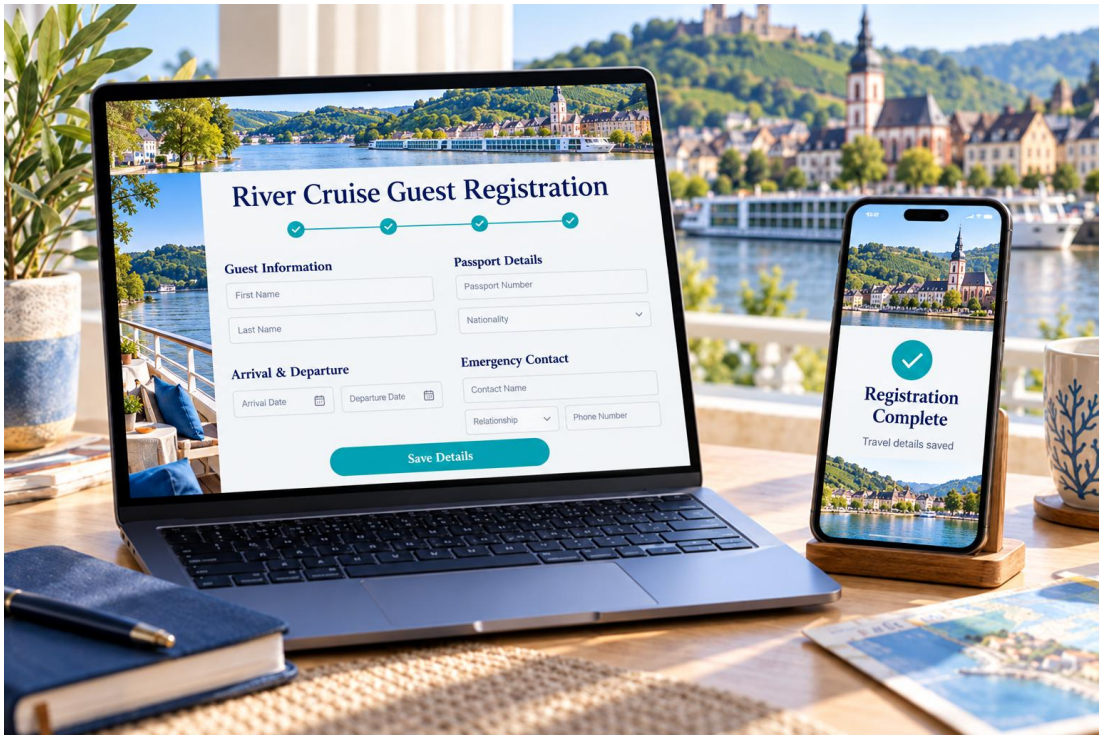
☐ **Complete your guest registration.** Submit passport details, emergency contacts, arrival and departure information, and anything else requested by your cruise line. Follow the deadline shown for your booking.

☐ **Review your final travel documents.** Confirm your ship, embarkation city, boarding instructions, hotel arrangements and transfer details. Save arrival-assistance and ship contact numbers.

☐ **Check arrival instructions carefully.** If you booked flights and a pre-cruise stay through the cruise line, review where to meet its representative. If traveling independently, confirm how you will reach your hotel or ship.

☐ **Keep documents accessible.** Save copies offline and carry printed copies of essential information. Keep your passport and other required original documents in your carry-on.

☐ **Recheck before leaving home.** Watch for updates to docking locations, transfers or your itinerary. Use the latest instructions supplied for your sailing.



Pack for comfort and exploration

☐ **Choose comfortable walking shoes.** Pack shoes with good traction for cobblestones, uneven paths, stairs and potentially wet surfaces. Break them in before your trip.

☐ **Dress in layers.** Check the forecast for each destination. Bring a light rain jacket and layers for cool mornings, outdoor touring and time on the sun deck.

☐ **Review dining attire.** Follow your cruise line's guidance, and bring an outfit suitable for special dinners or evenings ashore.

☐ **Keep luggage manageable.** Check airline and cruise-line luggage guidance. Consider what you can comfortably handle during hotel stays, transfers or a possible ship change.

☐ **Prepare a small day bag.** Include your phone, ship contact details, required identification, weather protection and essentials for the day.

☐ **Carry medications and documents with you.** Keep medications in original labeled containers, bring prescription copies, and check destination restrictions. Pack enough for your trip plus possible delays, where permitted.

☐ **Check electrical needs.** Confirm the ship's outlets and voltage before packing adapters or electrical devices. Bring chargers and follow the cruise line's rules for power accessories.



Board and settle in

☐ **Follow your arrival instructions.** Confirm the ship's current docking location and boarding time. Keep its contact number handy if you are making your own way there.

☐ **Keep essentials with you.** Have your passport, travel documents, medications and valuables accessible during transfers and boarding.

☐ **Attend welcome and safety briefings.** Learn the ship's layout, emergency procedures and how daily schedules and announcements are shared.

☐ **Review your plans with the crew.** Confirm excursion selections, meeting points and special arrangements. Reserve included specialty dining promptly when reservations become available.

☐ **Check before going ashore.** Know the return time and where to rejoin the ship—it may move while you are on an excursion. Carry its contact details and follow the crew's latest instructions.



Returning home

Look back on your journey

☐ **Review your departure arrangements.** Confirm your disembarkation time, transfer arrangements and any post-cruise hotel reservations.

☐ **Check your flight details.** Allow sufficient time for transfers, airport check-in, security and any customs or immigration procedures.

☐ **Keep important documents accessible.** Have passports, identification, airline tickets and travel confirmations ready.

☐ **Check your belongings.** Make sure you have all luggage, medications, valuables and personal items before leaving the ship. Check the safe, drawers and charging outlets.

☐ **Review your final onboard account.** Settle any remaining charges and keep a copy of your statement.

☐ **Share your experience.** We would love to hear about your journey, see your photographs and learn what you enjoyed most.



Your journey details

Your sailing

Traveler names

_____

Cruise line and ship

_____

Itinerary and sailing dates

_____

Booking number

_____

Final-payment date

_____

Guest-registration deadline

_____

Your arrival and departure

Pre-cruise hotel

_____

Airport pickup and meeting point

_____

Embarkation location and time

_____

Return transfer and flight

_____

Post-cruise hotel

_____

People who can help

Ship and arrival-assistance phone

_____

Insurance policy and assistance phone

_____

Travel advisor and phone

_____

We are here to help

Thank you for allowing Elite Explorers to be part of your journey. If you have questions before you leave or need assistance while traveling, please give us a call.

Your Next Adventure Starts with One Conversation.

Elite Explorers is here to help
Picayune, MS (769) 242-1527 • Covington, LA (504) 390-2934
Slidell, LA (504) 495-5810 • Boston, MA (203) 641-6447
www.elite-explorers.com • info@elite-explorers.com

Helpful resources

Travel documents and destination guidance: travel.state.gov
U.S. return guidance: cbp.gov/travel
Sailing details: your cruise line's official website and travel documents
Insurance benefits and assistance: your policy and insurer

Requirements, inclusions and arrangements vary by cruise line, ship, destination and booking. Confirm the details for your journey. In an emergency, contact local emergency services or the ship's crew first.

Where Adventures Become Reality

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