

MY VIKING STORY

One highlight that warmed my heart, was overhearing conversations between other guests time and time again raving about their Viking Journey. Isn't it a bummer when you hear people complaining? Even more so when you're on vacation! Even if you're having a great time, it can put a damper on your mood and experience. It felt great and made us so happy to know all the other guests were having these memory-making lifetime experiences just like us.



Upon arrival into Basel, we were one of the first to arrive and our room was already ready. We were personally taken to our room by the Ship Manager and he showed us all the features of the room and gave us a genuine overview of what to expect next and we truly felt right at home immediately.

Now, let's talk about food. We had a joke amongst ourselves with our first experience. Even though we heard the food would be delicious, we decided to go into Basel prior to embarkation and get lunch because we'd be "stuck" with ship food mostly for the next 8 days. After journeying around Basel we had trouble finding anything and went back to the ship to have lunch. The only thing beneficial about our trip into Basel was all the extra walking steps we got because, quoting my husband "Wow, if this lunch represents even a fraction of what's to come, it is going to be incredible!" It only got better from there. I was grateful there wasn't a scale anywhere onboard!



Everyone looked forward to the evenings where we all cozied in for a relaxed multi-course fine dining experience where the open seating allowed you to meet many new people. We even had the privilege of dining with the Captain and Ship Manager one evening – and that was phenomenal! The Chef was out on the dining floor every meal engaging with guests. It was apparent he was passionate and committed to providing all guests with an unforgettable culinary experience. I have dietary restrictions so sometimes I ordered green beans for dessert (I swear they're delicious) and the staff never batted an eyelash and delivered my dessert green beans like it was on their dessert menu every single night!

One evening we enjoyed an extra festive night onboard. Every local dish you could imagine was served and the ship's staff were dressed in traditional German attire and there was a lot of energy and excitement. I felt like we were at a Carnival of Food! Performers came aboard the ship and played live music while we had dinner. It was a fun and entertaining

evening and we all spilled onto the deck afterwards with our bellies filled to the brim (and some over the brim!) to continue enjoying the company of the guests and soaking up those sunset views.

There is one complimentary shore Excursion in every port of call. We loved every single one, and wow - we saw 4 different UNESCO World Heritage Sites in 4 straight days! While we didn't add any Optional Excursions, the other guests that did, couldn't wait to tell us all about their experience. We highly recommend joining every Included Excursion and add some Optional as well. Every guide we had was enthusiastic and knowledgeable and before breaking for our free time, they gave great tips if you were going to explore on your own – such as the best local eats and places to see we would otherwise never know about. Most importantly where to find the best CHOCOLATE! Every port we got an authentic rich cultural immersion and I loved the free time we had in each destination to explore the city on our own.

Every evening prior to dinner, you could join a presentation that covered the culture, history, tips and must-see locations at the next day's port. I found these very helpful and it got everyone enthusiastic at dinner chatting about the day to come. Viking does an incredible job of educating you and helping to connect you to the culture, destinations and other guests.



One night I think our ship could have made a World Guinness Record for the most people holding their breaths the longest amount of time. We got to witness the ship procedure of passing through some interesting river locks. Our Captain carefully guided the Longship into the narrow lock with only a few inches to spare on each side. It was quite a show! I felt like we were all joining together to watch fireworks – thankfully there were none and we safely made it through each time!

For us, July was the picture-perfect time to Cruise. We had wonderful weather in the mid 70's and were stunned and appreciated that the sun didn't set until around 10pm. The ship carried roughly 190 guests and was the perfect amount of intimacy, luxury and elegance that made us feel comfortable and relaxed without all the stuffy extravagance. Most of the guests were couples but there were two families with well-traveled older teens. Every couple we met appreciated the history and were eager to see and learn more. We met a State Senator, Teachers on summer break, Cardiologist, Ophthalmologist, and many retired Teachers and retired Military. There were at least 10 couples celebrating anniversaries and a couple of honeymooners. Oooh la la, hello Romance! There were a lot of Champagne bottles popping! For most it was their first River Cruise and

every single guest we talked to or overheard said they highly recommend and can't wait to see other destinations with Viking.

I look forward to and daydream about (sorry Boss!) discovering new destinations with Viking - who knows, maybe all of them! A girl can dream right?! Their service and attention to detail is top notch and they created a journey I will forever be grateful for.

We did a 2-night Post-Stay in Amsterdam and I can't think of a better way to have ended our Viking River Cruise. If the trip had to come to an end, this was the best way. Amsterdam was a Mind-Blowing experience and I fell in love with the city within minutes. Do you want to hear about our 3 days in Amsterdam? Maybe I will tell you about that next time!

