

Scenic Europe River Cruise

“Wow” is the best way to describe this amazing experience. I have been so fortunate to experience the *Gems of the Danube* Scenic River Cruise with my husband in May 2018 and I can't rave enough about it all.

Flying into Budapest a few days earlier to try and get my body on Europe time was a great decision and it allowed us to explore one of Europe's most amazing cities. I can see why a lot of the river cruises either start or end in this amazing city. Situated right on the Danube and having two sides of the river to explore both with different history - Buda being the older traditional side and Pest the newer trendy cafe and bar district, but both with their own charm.

Boarding our river cruise on the *Scenic Ruby* docked directly opposite Parliament House was an effortless experience. Welcomed by our butler Miro on arrival, we settled in and explored the ship. Part of the Scenic all-inclusive experience means the only time you might need to put your hand in your pocket for cash is if you want to buy souvenirs on one of the tours you are offered.

You have the option of several 'Freedom of Choice' tours every day, and you are asked to choose which you'd like to do during one of the information sessions on day two. That means Scenic can arrange the coaches for the days ahead. You don't even have to leave the ship if you don't want to - the choice is completely yours!

Szentendre in Hungary, Bratislava in Austria and Cesky Krumlov in Czech Republic were some of our choices to explore - each of these beautiful cities is easy to walk around (albeit on cobblestone streets). We even decided to use the e-bikes available onboard to explore Vienna, and ride between Durnstein and Melk.

Like I said, you can do lots or nothing depending on your style of cruising. Everyone was lucky enough to enjoy a wonderful 'Signature Experience' in Vienna. We went to the Liechtenstein Palais and enjoyed a private Viennese concert - my husband even danced with a ballerina!

As I mentioned, Scenic cruising is all-inclusive so all your drinks all day long, alcoholic or non-alcoholic are included plus buffet breakfast, lunch and a five-course dinner each night. Amazing experiences with fabulous food you just can't say no to.

Remember I mentioned we also had a butler? Well he was there to help with anything we needed. Laundry (one bag is included in your pricing as well as two pieces pressed each day - handy when you have travelled so far), excursions, changes and he even got drinks for us in our room. Like most staff onboard, we saw Miro around all the time, either serving drinks in the lounge or our dinner in the dining room. A great experience that we really enjoyed.

If Europe river cruising has always been something you would like to experience, whether it is just one week or two then I can definitely recommend it! Amazing adventures, no stress about transfers or changing cities and you get to meet some wonderful people from all over the world.