

Value World Tours

2017 - TIPS ON TRAVEL

TULIP & 4 COUNTRY RHINE CRUISES

M/S "BELLEJOUR" 4+*

With optional pre/post extensions in Amsterdam, Basel & Zurich

To Our "Valued" Guests!

Welcome to the fascinating world of cruising the romantic Rhine River!
We are excited to welcome you to this unique itinerary and the fascinating cultures and people of

4 European Countries in one leisurely tour & cruise program!

A FEW WORDS OF ADVICE TO REMEMBER PRIOR TO YOUR TRIP ☺

By booking this program please remember that you act as an "Ambassador" of the United States & Canada when visiting these foreign lands. The impression you leave will have an everlasting effect on future relations between these countries and your own.

It is therefore important that we advise and prepare you for some of the cultural and social differences you will encounter. These *Tour and Travel Tips* have been designed to provide useful information and helpful suggestions to ease your adjustment and help you get around any obstacles you may encounter. Your journey will be greatly enhanced **if you take the time to prepare for it**. Thoroughly acquaint yourself with the information provided herewith - but also talk to others who have been, study one of the many comprehensive guide books available – and **browse the Internet**. The effort you put into planning your trip before you go will make all the difference. *Thank you!*

A few courtesy reminders:

Make it your responsibility to be on time so as not to hold up the group. Be attentive and refrain from talking to your neighbor while the guide/s are speaking or providing information regarding the tour. Wait for all information to be given before asking questions. Any special requests regarding group activities should be directed to the Cruise Director who is responsible for representing the interests of the whole group. Your local guides will refer all requests back to the Cruise director. Your cooperation in these matters will not only be greatly appreciated but will increase both the groups and your personal enjoyment of the tour.

VALUE WORLD TOURS, INC.

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GENERAL TRAVEL INFORMATION

Vouchers: If traveling within a group or on any **set program** vouchers will **not be required** or issued. If traveling as an individual and/or deviating from the regular itinerary, we may issue vouchers for services paid for. **When included, vouchers will be listed on the check-off list sent with your final documents.**

Air Tickets: Whenever tickets are issued by our company, they will be **sent/emailed** with your final documents. **In some instances, when tickets are issued directly by the airlines involved, they may be sent to you under separate cover – or forwarded electronically.** Please see the check-off list.

Transfers: If you have purchased your airfare or have **prepaid your arrival transfers** through us, please look for local Guides ***after exiting*** the Customs Area of the airports!

If you have purchased **land/cruise only** and are arranging for your own arrival and departure transportation, the names and addresses of your hotel and the port locations will be listed on the **Contact Sheet enclosed and sent with your final documents.**

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS: Before leaving home, please ensure that you have a valid **US PASSPORT** and appropriate **VISAS**. Based on the countries visited, at the time of printing, US citizens **do not need** visas for this cruise itinerary. Please make sure your passport has a validity of at least 6 months beyond your scheduled travel dates and check for visa updates with the U.S. or the appropriate foreign consulates at least 90 days prior to your departure. If you are a foreign national – please check with each country's consulate as rules may be different. **Please remember: Obtaining any visas and proper travel documents are YOUR responsibility!**

BAGGAGE: Make a detailed list of everything you pack for the trip and then leave this list at home. We cannot be responsible for lost baggage, but most airlines will make every effort to recover baggage or make proper compensation if you are able to itemize the suitcase contents. It is also a good idea to tape a piece of paper **INSIDE** your luggage, which shows your full name, home address and telephone number. **The purchase of Travel Insurance is always strongly recommended!**

BAGGAGE WEIGHT: Please remember that weight allowances vary and are **lower** when flying domestic and intra-continental routes, utilizing smaller aircraft. Check with the respective airlines for instructions and pack accordingly – or you may face overweight surcharges!

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OUR FINAL DOCUMENTS – TRAVEL PORTFOLIOS

FREE ELECTRONIC DELIVERY: *Once final payment is received all paper documents including: day by day itinerary, travel tips, airline tickets, contacts and other related information will be sent to you electronically via email. **This service is free, provided we have your email address.***

PHYSICAL DELIVERY OF OUR PORTFOLIO OF GIFTS & PAPER DOCUMENTS:

*If you do not have email OR would prefer to receive paper documents along with our set of useful, travel related items as outlined below, **YOU MUST NOTIFY US AT THE TIME OF BOOKING and prior to the FINAL PAYMENT** deadline so that these items can be sent to you approximately 2 weeks prior to your departure via registered or overnight mail. The items are complimentary, you will only be billed the cost of delivery which is usually around \$20 per address.
The cost of this service will be added to your invoice.*

1. LUGGAGE TAGS: Will be provided. *If you would like your luggage to take the same vacation you do – please use them! **Please note:** The tags have been designed to allow you to list up to 6 points of travel (hotel to ship, ship to hotel, etc.). **DO NOT DISCARD THEM!** Simply cross out your previous location and write in your next destination (and room or cabin number if you know it). This will help our staff and porters deliver your luggage to you in the shortest possible time!*

2. SQUARE LUGGAGE STICKERS: **If provided,** please stick them visibly on your suitcases when possible - the stickers will allow you, our guides and porters to recognize them quicker and get them to their destination faster!

3. BADGES: **If provided,** please wear the badges at all airports, transfer points, hotels, and at any time you are embarking/disembarking the ship. Not only does your badge assist us in providing adequate security on the vessel by identifying you as a group member to our guides, staff and security personnel, it also allows you to get to know your fellow passengers sooner!

NOTE: Since people go by nicknames, our badges come *blank*. Please print your name the way you would like to be addressed and wear them at least for the first few days.

4. PENS & TRAVEL BAGS: Our unique pens and practical travel bags are not only “*good looking*” but superbly designed to hold everything from your documents to cameras to water bottles! People love them- and you will too!

5. SURPRISE GIFT: Depending on your travel destination and time of year, we **may** include a surprise gift, which may be a hat, an umbrella or “cool shades”...who knows, maybe even a winning lotto ticket! (*but you must promise to give us a fair share if you win ☺*)

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CLOTHING SUGGESTIONS: The dress code on our cruises is INFORMAL!

So please - **PACK LIGHTLY!** *Combine a few tee shirts, several shirts, a turtle neck with 2 wrinkle free slacks, one skirt, one sweater, a pair of shorts, a wind-breaker and a sports jacket - and you are done!* Leave your formal evening clothes at home; ***tuxedos and evening gowns are not needed!*** The only time you may wish to "**dress up**" is for the Farewell Dinner aboard the ship or when taking an evening cultural performance (***theater or similar***); on these occasions, a jacket and tie for gentlemen, and a cocktail dress for the ladies will be fine. But generally, the dress code is informal (***and that goes for excessive jewelry too!***) **Remember - you are traveling to see - not to be seen!** Keep it simple and you'll thank yourself later! **DO pay particular attention to footwear** - you should have a good pair of comfortable walking shoes with thick rubber soles and firm arch supports. If you buy new shoes, "**break them in**" before the trip. Suitable footwear would be sneakers, deck shoes, and rubber-soled shoes. **Our cruises involve extensive walking during visits ashore, so you need to be comfortable!**

PHYSICAL DISABILITIES: Please note that the majority of the passenger vessels sailing the various rivers of the world **have limited services for the physically impaired. Steep staircases are the norm.** In addition, due to the small size and shallow draft, the ship may sometime anchor at underdeveloped ports and stops. While this ability enhances the itineraries **it also means that many of the shore excursions are done on foot.** Therefore, severe walking disabilities may limit the passengers overall enjoyment on this programs.

Regretfully, we do not recommend these cruises to severely disabled or wheelchair bound passengers!

CUSTOMS & ENTRY FORMALITIES

When entering or exiting **Holland or Switzerland**, you will have a choice of exiting through the **Green Line** (*nothing to declare*) or the **Red Line** (*yes you have something to declare*). Allowances for cigarettes (1 carton) and liquor (1 liter) are standard. For additional details contact the appropriate consulate of each country. **CASH: Up to 10,000 EUROS can now be brought in and taken out of all European countries without declarations.**

DOCKING LOCATIONS

For those passengers arriving directly to our ship on the day of embarkation, please note the docking locations;

AMSTERDAM, the NETHERLANDS:

- The ship is most often located at De Ruijterkade, 10 minute walk from the Central Train Station
- Alternate locations are the PTA Terminal or Javakade.

BASEL, SWITZERLAND:

- The ship is most often docked at: St. Johannspark (Sankt Johann, 4056, Basel).
- Alternate locations are Dreilandereck or Klybeckquai along the Uferstrasse.

***Due to the fact that there are several docking locations, they may be subject to change. Please consult your final documents which will show the correct location for your sailing date.**

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VARIOUS

ART / ANTIQUES: High end works of art such as original paintings, sculpture, icons, should not be taken out of the countries without permission. Antiques such as old coins, weapons, furniture, and musical instruments can be taken out only if you have a permit from the Ministry of Culture from each country.

YES Items such as coats, souvenirs, carpets, jewelry and crystal, in reasonable quantities and purchased at legitimate shops can be taken out of the country and NO custom fees are applicable.

SUGGESTED SOUVENIRS: Any types of handicrafts are usually of the highest quality. Also excellent cheese, watches and the famous **Swiss chocolates** are on everyone's favorite list!

PHOTOGRAPHY: Please do not photograph people without first asking **for** their permission to do so. Do not take photographs of airports or other military bases or installations. Remember to bring all the film or memory cards that you will need, because outside of major cities, they may be hard to find!

VIDEO CAMERAS: Please remember that Europe utilizes a different standard (*PAL/SECAM*) than the United States (*NTSC*). **THEY ARE NOT COMPATIBLE!** Remember to bring enough blank tapes and **if purchasing videotapes locally**, make sure they are marked *NTSC!* **DVDs** also need to be coded to the appropriate system, unless used in computers or multi-system TV's and DVD players. **FINAL NOTE: Most museums and galleries now either charge a fee for photos or videos (anywhere from 3 to 7 Euros, depending on institution) or may NOT allow photography at all.**

HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS

HOTELS: In this cruise package, in order to conform to airline schedules, we have added optional pre/post stays in **Amsterdam and Zurich**. (*check your itinerary*). We always use **First Class properties**, or best available, and breakfast is included (*for further information consult your vouchers or itinerary*). Other meals are provided as specified in your tour itinerary. In all cases, hotels are carefully selected to provide **the best combination of location, comfort and value**. For actual hotels used on your particular departure, please check the "**Contact List**" included with your final documents.

CRUISE RULES

Your enjoyment of the trip will depend in large part on your positive attitude. Here are a few pointers that will help you prepare for your journey regardless of the country you are visiting.

1. **Maritime Law** - As with a pilot on a plane, the Captain of a ship is the **ultimate law**. He/She is responsible for the ultimate safety and comfort of the vessel and its passengers. It is within the Captain's jurisdiction to change the sequence of stops, ports if necessary due to inclement weather conditions, high or low water levels, dock and lock schedules, technical reasons etc. The Captain has the right to remove unruly passengers, quarantine the ship in case of disease and similar. Therefore, although unlikely, **certain changes in schedules may happen**. Though we expect to provide sightseeing of all of the major attractions listed in our cruise programs, there is always a possibility that the sequence of touring may be altered to take into account the operating hours at museums, galleries and monuments. Shore excursions may be changed in response to sailing conditions and other factors. **Your understanding and cooperation in such instances is greatly appreciated!**

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2. **Cultural Differences** - Remember that you may be traveling through countries whose political, social and cultural backgrounds may be different from your own. Do not let political differences govern your perspective. Instead, travel with an open mind, and you will satisfy your curiosity about the people, their lands, their history and their culture.
3. **Service** - If you receive poor service at any point, try to take it in good humor and solve it directly. If you have any serious complaints, take them to your guide and/or Cruise Director.
4. **Bureaucracy** - Expect a little bit of red tape, and try not to be bothered by bureaucratic rituals, which may be different from country to country.
5. **Do not compare things you see by North American standards.** The diverse river vessels were all specifically built for cruising the narrow rivers, low laying bridges and tight locks that dot the various sailing routes. Therefore, although clean and **very comfortable**, they are small and practical and should not be compared with huge ocean faring vessels. Above all, keep your sense of humor and enjoy the cultural legacies, physical geography and rich variety of the people as you sail through these unique and different lands!

M/S "BELLEJOUR" 4+*

Built in 2004 and renovated in 2013 the lovely "*Bellejour*" features 90 outside facing cabins spread over 3 decks. The low deck C category cabins have portholes that cannot open while the Middle B and Upper A category cabins have full floor to ceiling **French balconies** allowing for magnificent views of the passing vista's! All cabins are approximately 160 sq feet with all modern amenities including beds that can be separated, satellite TV, safety deposit box, phone, hairdryer, mini bar, individual heating and cooling system, and separate bathroom with individual shower and toilet. Public areas include a Lobby/Reception, 1 seat Restaurant, Boutique, Library, Lounge, Bar and Café, Gym with Sauna and whirlpool and an oversized covered Sun Deck with lounge chairs. A maximum of 180 passengers are looked after by a young and vivacious crew of 40 plus English speaking Cruise/Hotel and Restaurant Managers! Welcome aboard! **Non-smoking interiors – on board currency – Euro.**

LINEN/TOWELS: While cabins are cleaned every day, due to limited storage and cleaning facilities on board **and in order to conserve water**, bed linen is washed and changed every 3 days. For ecological purposes, **towels are exchanged when you put them in the washbasin.** If you don't, they will be automatically replaced every other day.

LAUNDRY: Basic washing and pressing can be provided through your cabin maid for an additional fee. Dry cleaning, however, is not available, so **please pack accordingly.**

COMMUNICATIONS: There are no telephone lines for outgoing calls on our vessels. Communication from ship to shore can only be done through the Captains radio. Although our Cruise Manager and Cruise Directors may have cell phones, these are used for business and emergency services **ONLY.** If bringing your own US cell phones – BE SURE THEY ARE "**UNLOCKED**" by your US service provider **so they will operate abroad!**

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KEYS: Turn style keys. It is recommended to always leave keys at the reception when exiting the ship so that the crew can know who is on board or off shore – especially important when sailing off!

INTERNET & WIFI:

Is available for a nominal fee. The level of signal may vary depending on sailing itinerary and location of ports. Free wi-fi is readily accessible in most major ports and stops or in local café's.

RESTAURANT, TABLE AND SEATING ASSIGNMENTS: There is one single seat restaurant onboard. For buffet breakfasts and lunches, open style seating is available. For sit down dinners, **you may be assigned a table**, which will be yours for the duration of the cruise. For those passengers wishing to share their table with friends and companions, it is important to make these arrangements during your first meal. Also, if you have **special dietary requirements**, you must advise our Guides and Maitre D' of any such requirements at this time - requests will be honored as much as possible. Although our staff will attempt to honor all passenger requests for specific seating, we must reserve the right to assign meal seating based on the availability, passenger profile and capacity of the restaurant.

MEALS: Our European Chefs provide superb and varying daily menu's using locally sourced ingredients! Breakfasts are buffet, featuring an arrangement of cereals, bread, eggs, cold cuts, jam, fruits and yogurts etc. Lunches are either buffets with a choice of hot and cold meals and carving stations or depending on port calls are **sit down** with three course menus featuring at least 3 main courses to choose from. Dinners are sit down, 4 course elegant affairs. Water, tea, and coffee are included as are **FREE** wine/beer/soft drinks during both lunch and dinner while on board the vessel! **Bon Appétit!**

WATER: Water is purified and fine for use for washing but for those with “*touchy tummies*” we suggest purchasing bottled water.

ELEVATOR: No Elevator – stairs are the norm.

VALUABLES: There is a safety deposit box **in each cabin** on board. However, we recommend that you do not bring valuables on your trip, including excessive jewelry (you won't need it!)

GIFT SHOP: Small with basic items, such as postcards, stamps etc can be obtained from the reception desk. But do not fear! Plenty of shops are available during the excursions in various cities!

PUBLIC AREAS: There are three public rooms on the ship: the **Dining Room, Reading Room,** and the **Bar/Panorama Lounge** all located on Upper deck. On the large **Sun deck**, you will also find covered as well as open sitting areas from where you can observe the lovely passing vistas!

PASSENGER MIX: *English speaking Americans or Canadians* and an international mix of people from all over the world ! It's great way to meet the people of the world and make new and long lasting friends! Whatever the mix, however, **English is always the primary language used.**

Smoking:

Our ship is NON-SMOKING. Smoking is allowed in a designated area on the Sun deck. Smoking inside the vessel and on busses is not allowed at any time.

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ELECTRICITY: Electrical current in hotels and on board ships is the European 220 volts/50MHZ. With European rounded plugs... Therefore it is a good idea to **bring 2 things:**

- 1) **UNIVERSAL TRANSFORMER** to convert from the US 110 Volts to the 220.(Note that some more recent electronics will automatically convert. Please check your item in question.)
- 2) **UNIVERSAL ADAPTER PLUGS** for sockets, which are different than at home. Since there are no supplies of converters/ adapters on board we highly recommend you purchase a transformer/ adapter plug set at a travel or appliance store before you leave.

HEALTH CONSIDERATIONS: Due to limited services for the disabled on board and because of extensive walking on our excursions, **we do not recommend these cruises to people with severe disabilities.** Those passengers with *lighter physical disabilities* must report them to us at the time of booking. Most cabin doorways and public restrooms are **not wide enough to allow access by standard wheelchairs.** **Staircases connect all the decks.** Passengers with severe walking or other disabilities may find certain areas of the ship inaccessible. **Passengers with any physical impairment must be self-sufficient since the vessel's crew or staff cannot provide services of a personal nature.**

DOCTOR: While there is **no doctor on board**, our staff is trained in first aid, and in case of any emergency, our ship is always close to land and nearby medical facilities. However, our staff cannot offer care for conditions requiring specialized expertise or equipment. Passengers with such conditions, or in the event of an emergency, may be evacuated to a medical care facility ashore at the passenger's own expense. Existing medical problems, which may require treatment by a physician, must be brought to our attention at the time of booking. **If you require special medicines, it is essential that you bring them with you from home, as only a limited range of general type medication is available!**

CURRENCIES: While most of Western Europe has adopted the **EURO**, Switzerland uses the **Swiss Franc**. For the rate of exchange to the **US dollar**, please check online a few days prior to your departure as some of these currencies fluctuate daily. Updated advice on the currency situations will be provided to you by our Cruise Directors upon arrival. **Due to varying foreign currency laws, our ships do NOT have exchange offices on board. Therefore, we highly recommend that you **BRING A SUFFICIENT QUANTITY OF EUROS in CASH** prior to your departure.** This will save you both time and hassle in searching for banks to exchange your dollars or Traveler Checks. Also, Credit Cards are now widely accepted in most of the major cities along your route – **BUT PLEASE NOTE – EUROPEANS NOW REQUIRE CREDIT CARDS WITH CHIPS OR DEBIT CARDS WITH PIN NUMBERS –CALL YOUR BANK TO GET A CREDIT CARD WITH A CHIP!**

The official currency used aboard our ship is the **Euro!***

Credit Cards: Visa & Mastercard Only!* or DEBIT CARDS**

Traveler and Personal Checks are not accepted. There is no exchange office on board. Please be sure to obtain a Credit Card with a chip.

Credit Card Payments: On board expenses are signed to your cabin and may be paid by Visa or Mastercard at the end of the cruise.

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How much **cash** to bring with you? Although everyone is different, we suggest that you set aside at least **700 Euros/\$1000 USD per person** – to cover your optional tours and shopping expenses. If you are planning on purchasing more expensive items you may want to bring more....

TIPPING SUGGESTIONS: Tips should be divided in 2 separate segments:

- 1) ***Individual tips***: To staff/personnel on **land portions** who have earned your gratitude (Our Cruise & Tour Directors, Local Guides leading local tours, drivers of busses, specific waiters at hotels or other ground personnel that have gone beyond the call of duty to help you). **These should be provided directly to each individual service provider.**
- 2) ***Pooled tips***: For a group of individuals working as a team to service you on a specific portion of a trip (*such as the ship's crew*).

1) INDIVIDUAL TIPPING: While you are in cities or on shore excursions, local guides and drivers will escort the local tours. The so called **standard tip should be 3 EURO per person** for the **guide and 2 EU for the driver**. A 1 EU tip will also be appreciated by porters and a 1 EU per person/per day should be left at hotels for your maids. For taxi-cabs or at restaurants add 10% to 15% to your final bill.

CRUISE DIRECTORS are the Travel Experts we employ who pick you up and stay with you from the **moment you arrive to the moment you depart**. They will be your guiding angels throughout the trip. They will lead you, educate you, entertain you and if need be, scold you - **but we are certain you will find their assistance indispensable** in providing you with the utmost travel experience possible!

Since they are essentially at your disposal 24 hours a day, **we recommend an amount of**

€ 5 EURO per person/per day or € 40 EURO per person for an 8 day cruise.

2) POOLED TIPPING (*ship's crew*): For ship crews we implement a *share system* whereby all the crew members, from the Captain to the "lowly" deck hand ***share in the gratuities*** collected from all passengers. The reason for doing this is that during the course of your cruise, you will actually see and meet some members of the crew - mainly the entertainers, the restaurant and bar staff and maybe your cabin maid. However, there are more crew members you will not see whose good work is equally important to the smooth operation of the cruise - from the **engine crew who keep us afloat**, to the many staff and crew members who arrange for our buses & excursions, to the catering people who travel to our ports in advance of the ship in order to obtain and provide us with the best available food and beverage supplies. Therefore, to ensure **equality for all**, we ask that ***one day before your Captain's Farewell Dinner***, you place your total gratuities for the cruise portion in an envelope and drop it in our "CREW Gratuities" box. The gratuity box will then be delivered on behalf of all passengers, to the Captain during the Farewell Dinner Toasts. Suggested amount: **€ 10 per person/per day = €80 Euro per/person for a 8 day cruise (*which will then be divided among ALL the crew members*)**.

IMPORTANT FINAL NOTE ON TIPS: The above suggestions are given as guidelines. You may leave as little or as much as you feel comfortable with. If you endear yourself to any particular crewmember and wish to award them directly - please feel free to do so!

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Summary on Tipping: If all of this is confusing, in simple terms, we recommend that each person sets aside approximately **200 EURO** to cover all your tipping needs for the duration of the program.

DAILY SCHEDULES AND INFORMATION

Information regarding sightseeing, meal hours and updated on-board activities for the next day, are printed and **distributed to each cabin or during dinner the previous evening**. In addition, updated information may be displayed on notice boards, found near the reception area. Please remember to check these boards from time to time in case of any last minute changes. Although the ship is equipped with a PA system, **it is a good idea to check our information boards regularly!**

We hope we have been able to provide you with the general information that covers the most frequently asked questions. If there is something we missed, please feel free to give us a call or send us a note. Otherwise – have a **WONDERFUL TRIP & BON VOYAGE!**

FOR MORE INFORMATION, SHIP PHOTOS AND VIDEOS PLEASE SEE LOG ON TO OUR WEB SITE: www.RiverCruises.net and/or check out our YouTube Channel under the name of: [ValueRiverCruises](#)

Emergency Contacts:

US CONSULATE GENERAL – AMSTERDAM, NETHERLANDS

The Consulate General is located at **Museumplein 19, 1071 DJ AMSTERDAM**. This is on the corner of the Museumplein, opposite of the Stedelijk Museum and across from the Van Gogh Museum. **DAY PHONE: +31(0)20 575 5309**
EMERGENCY OFF HOURS: +31(0)70-310 2209

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