

# What to take with you!

## **Packing:**

Just one large (soft) holdall or case (there is some room for storage under your bed but the more flexible the better it will store)

One zippered or cross the body day bag suitable for excursions or for simple wandering around the boat when sailing with space for your book/sunglasses/water bottle/snack/camera/mobile phone. *Pickpockets can be an issue in some major European cities.*

## **Clothing:**

Think relaxed and informal casual when packing for both day and night on a typical European cruise. Since much of your time is spent touring or relaxing on board during the day, you'll want comfortable clothing that can be layered and keep in mind that temperatures in Europe can fluctuate greatly.

River cruising isn't like the ocean cruising where the evening attire is very dressy, leave your formalwear and flashy jewellery at home, although you may want one nice dress or blazer for the gala evening.

More often than not you will find a fitness centre on board which will offer an exercise agenda for the mornings, this usually takes place on the top deck with an aerobics class or yoga session. Remember to pack your fitness clothes for these activities should the mood take you!

It's becoming more common for river cruise ships to have a swimming pool or hot tub. Bring a swimsuit just in case (*besides, if you're stopping in Budapest, you can use it at the thermal baths*).

## **Footwear:**

Comfortable walking shoes are the most essential item of footwear, choose a padded foot bed and sturdy insole. Bearing in mind that many cities in Europe still have cobblestones. I found my walking shoes perfect for daytime and my flat ballet pumps for an evening. Leaving me with a pair of deck shoes for daytime on board and my Birkenstocks for the cabin. Heels and fancy dress shoes are not necessary nor are they practical!

If you are taking cruise outside the summer months then remember that Europe can be chilly and rainy so choose warm, weatherproof footwear during this period. I recommend a pair of knee-high flat walking boots that can be worn during the day with jeans and at night with a dress and tights.

## **Accessories:**

As I have already mentioned forget the fussy jewellery but do pack a few scarves to dress up an outfit at night or to protect from the wind during the day. During cooler weather cruises, we also recommend a hat, gloves and a woolly hat. A summer peaked hat is perfect for summer cruising.

Some people like to use passport holders or money belts. We prefer to keep our passports in the cabin safe and only bring enough money onshore for necessities.

Umbrellas are usually provided by the cruise line, but you might want to throw in a small compact one into your day pack or a raincoat this applies to all seasons. We were cruising in June and had a day of rainfall so be prepared for the change in weather!

Hair dryers are provided on board, along with basic toiletries. So bring along a supply of your regular toiletries as although the cabins are replenished daily with sundries it does not include deodorants, face creams etc.

I put together a small first aid kit with plasters (for blisters), pain killers and anti-repellent spray/cream as you will be by the riverbanks most days! And don't forget your sun cream with a high SPF for your face, you may not feel the sun burning when you have the cool breeze blowing through your hair but if you are cruising during the daytime (which sometimes is the case) then the sun could be at its peak. Sunglasses are a must!

We packed a pair of binoculars for checking out the wildlife by the riverbanks and for general use whilst cruising the river.

### **Electronics**

The one thing to add is an adaptor for European plugs.

**Things to Note:** Before you leave, make sure you figure out your communication back home. Many river cruise ships have free Wi-Fi, but it's often not powerful enough for streaming or FaceTime. Several cell phone services will let you add international data for a monthly set fee.