



## Switzerland & the Rhine

11 days - Limited to 24 guests

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### Itinerary

#### **DAY 1 ARRIVE AMSTERDAM, HOLLAND**

Arrive in Amsterdam, where you are met and transferred to your boutique hotel. The balance of the day is at leisure. This evening, join your Resident Tour Director — exclusive to Connections guests — for a welcome dinner.

***Kimpton De Witt Hotel | Meals: Dinner***

#### **DAY 2 AMSTERDAM | CANAL CRUISE & RIJKSMUSEUM**

Stop at the Douwes Fine Art gallery, seven generations in the same family, to learn how old paintings are restored for exhibition. Next, visit the famous Rijksmuseum to see some of the highlights of its extensive collection of Dutch masters, including Rembrandt, Vermeer, Brueghel and Rubens. After lunch at leisure, take a private canal cruise in Amsterdam, the best way to see this city famously linked by 165 canals, spanning more than 30 miles. End at the Anne Frank House, where the young writer and her family hid from the Nazis for two years before being discovered. Finally, enjoy priority boarding onto your riverboat. After settling into your premium cabin or suite, gather for a welcome cocktail and dinner aboard.

***'Amadeus Silver II' or 'Amadeus Silver III' | Meals: Breakfast, Dinner Accommodations vary by departure date. See Dates & Prices for details.***

**DAY 3 AALSMEER | FLOWER AUCTION**

Rise early and meet your small group for a Connections-exclusive visit to the flower auction at Aalsmeer. More than 20 million flowers change hands here daily, in a building that occupies a greater footprint than any other in the world; the logistics that go into making such a vast operation run smoothly are amazing to witness in person. Later, visit a clog maker and sample traditional Dutch cheeses. This evening, enjoy a private Connections cocktail party.

*'Amadeus Silver II' or 'Amadeus Silver III' | Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

**DAY 4 COLOGNE, GERMANY | GOTHIC CATHEDRAL**

Spend the morning cruising the Rhine en route to Cologne. On arrival, explore the major sites on a walking tour, including the Gothic cathedral, an edifice so massive its construction spanned centuries; it was only officially completed in 1880. Follow your visit with a beer tasting at a 100-year-old brewery, only for Connections guests.

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**DAY 5 COCHEM | HILLTOP FORTRESS**

Arrive in Cochem on the Moselle River, a tributary of the Rhine, this afternoon. Disembark to visit the neo-Gothic castle, including its famous Witches Tower, the only part of the original Gothic structure still standing. Tonight, sit down to a private Chef's Highlights dinner aboard.

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**DAY 6 KOBLENZ & RÜDESHEIM | SCENIC GORGE**

Cruise to Koblenz, where you rejoin the Rhine River. Koblenz's history dates back to Roman times, when Julius Caesar built the first bridge to span the Rhine near here. Take a guided walking tour of the city this morning. Then, cruise the lovely Rhine Gorge, one of the most scenic stretches in all of Europe. Its magical mix of rocky, winding riverbanks, quaint riverside towns and castles perched high on the cliffside helped to earn it a spot on UNESCO's list of World Heritage Sites. Arrive later in Rüdesheim, known throughout the region for its excellent wines. Join your Resident Tour Director for a Connections-exclusive wine tasting and dinner ashore at a local restaurant.

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**DAY 7 HEIDELBERG | CHARMING UNIVERSITY TOWN**

Set out on a full-day excursion to Heidelberg, seeing the ruins of Heidelberg Castle. Abandoned in the 18th century, the crumbling fortress nevertheless remained a source of inspiration for later Romantic painters and poets, who seized on it as a symbol of faded glory. After lunch, proceed to the altstadt (old town) for time at leisure; the Market Square is an excellent place to soak up local life. Tonight, attend a captain's gala dinner aboard your vessel.

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**DAY 8 STRASBOURG, FRANCE | ALSATIAN CAPITAL**

The capital of France's Alsace region, Strasbourg has been a focal point of French-German conflict for centuries, and bears the combined stamp of both nations as a result. Experience this for yourself on a small-group walking tour of the old town, with a Connections-exclusive wine tasting at the Cave des Hospices, the city's oldest wine cellar. Cruise to Basel, Switzerland's third-largest city.

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**DAY 9 LUCERNE, SWITZERLAND | LAKESIDE PANORAMAS**

Disembark and drive to Mount Pilatus, journeying to the top via cog railway for lunch, accompanied by amazing, postcard-worthy mountaintop views. After a cable car descent, take a walking tour of Lucerne. Since the mid-19th century, this beautiful city has been the most visited in Switzerland and today it strikes an ideal balance between timeless historic beauty and modern development. The city's most famous landmark is the Chapel Bridge, the oldest covered wooden bridge in Europe. Its interior is decorated with vivid paintings, many of which date back to the 17th century and depict events from the city's history. You also visit Corn Market Square and the nearby Old Town Hall, built in 1602. Continue to Zurich for time to explore on your own.

*Hotel Storchen | Meals: Breakfast, Lunch*

**DAY 10 ZURICH | CHOCOLATIER EXPERIENCE**

Switzerland is synonymous with chocolate, and no visit to Zurich is complete without a stop at the Lindt chocolate workshop, where you enjoy some delectable samples. After time at leisure for lunch, gather for a guided walking tour of the city, taking in its alluring mix of modern and Old World architecture while strolling its wide, pedestrian-friendly avenues. Zurich is known for its churches, and your walk incorporates visits to several noteworthy ones, including the Fraumünster, with its Marc Chagall-designed stained glass windows, and the Grossmünster, supposedly founded by Charlemagne and later to play a key part in establishing the Reformation in Switzerland. Your tour also includes a visit to the city's Watch and Clock Museum, which features over 300 exhibits chronicling the history of timekeeping, dating as far back as 1400 BC. Tonight, attend a farewell dinner to celebrate your journey.

*Hotel Storchen | Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

**DAY 11 DEPART ZURICH**

Transfer to the airport and board your homebound flight.