

River Cruise Guide

Chapter 9: River Cruise vs. Ocean Cruise

One of the most common questions I receive is whether a river cruise or an ocean cruise is the better choice. The truth is that they're very different experiences, and many travelers eventually enjoy both. The key is choosing the style of vacation that best matches your interests, travel pace, and expectations.

Feature	River Cruise	Ocean Cruise
Guests	100–200	2,000–7,000+
Ports	City centers	Large cruise ports
Sea Days	Rare	Often several
Atmosphere	Relaxed & intimate	Resort-style & lively
Excursions	Often included	Usually extra
Entertainment	Local performers, lectures, live music	Broadway shows, casinos, water parks
Ideal For	Culture, history, scenery	Variety, families, onboard activities

Aimee's Tip: If you love immersive destinations, historic cities, and unpacking only once while traveling through the heart of Europe, a river cruise may be the perfect fit. If you're looking for larger ships with endless entertainment and family-friendly activities, an ocean cruise may be the better choice.

Coming Up: In our final chapter, we'll bring everything together with a planning timeline and the next steps for booking your perfect river cruise.