

Destination Details – Visiting Passau, Germany



Things to do, places to eat, trips to make when visiting Passau May 15, 2026

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Passau Destination Guide for River Cruise Travelers

“Three Rivers, Baroque Beauty & Bavarian Charm”

Passau is one of the most memorable river cruise towns in Europe, beautifully positioned where the Danube, Inn, and Ilz Rivers meet. Known as the “City of Three Rivers,” Passau is compact, scenic, and easy to explore on foot, with baroque churches, colorful lanes, riverfront promenades, a hilltop fortress, and a distinctly Bavarian-Austrian atmosphere. Passau Tourism highlights the city’s key sights, including St. Stephen’s Cathedral, Veste Oberhaus Fortress, and the Three Rivers Conjunction Point at the Dreiflüsseck.

Best Areas to Stay for Hotels & Airbnbs

PASSAU

BEST AREAS TO STAY

Hotels & Airbnbs Guide

- 1 OLD TOWN / ALTSTADT**
Best for First-Time Visitors

 - close to cathedral & riverfront
 - walkable historic core
 - restaurants & cafés
 - best overall sightseeing base
- 2 DANUBE RIVERFRONT**
Best for Cruise Convenience

 - near cruise docking areas
 - scenic river views
 - easy pre/post-cruise stay
 - relaxed waterfront walks
- 3 ILZSTADT / VESTE OBERHAUS AREA**
Best for Views & History

 - fortress views
 - photo-worthy setting
 - quieter atmosphere
 - hillside character
- 4 BAHNHOF / NEWER TOWN**
Best for Train Access & Value

 - convenient for rail arrivals
 - practical hotels
 - easy access to center
 - good value stays
- 5 INN RIVER SIDE**
Best for Quieter Local Feel

 - peaceful riverside atmosphere
 - pastel buildings & walks
 - local character
 - close to Old Town

MAP HIGHLIGHTS

- Three rivers meet here
- Baroque old town charm
- Walkable sightseeing core
- Fortress views & river scenery
- Ideal for river cruise stays

LEGEND

- Stay Area
- Top Attraction
- Cruise Terminal
- Train Station
- Landmark / Scenic Viewpoint

GETTING AROUND

- Walking**
Historic center is compact & walkable
- Taxi**
Convenient for luggage & hillier areas
- Train**
Easy regional connections
- River Cruise / Boat**
Scenic river views
- Bus**
Useful for outer areas

TRAVEL TIPS

- Best for first-time visitors: **1 2**
- Best for cruise guests: **1 2**
- Best for views: **3**
- Best for train travelers: **4**
- Best for quiet stays: **5**

CRUISE GUEST NOTE

Passau is one of Europe's best river cruise gateways. Staying near the Old Town or Danube riverfront makes pre- and post-cruise sightseeing easy.

Three Rivers Views

St. Stephen's Cathedral

Old Town Charm

Veste Oberhaus

Cruise Convenience

Three rivers. Baroque beauty. Bavarian charm. Welcome to Passau!

★ Old Town / Altstadt — Best for First-Time Visitors

Activity level: Easy to Moderate

Old Town is the best area for most river cruise guests because it places you close to St. Stephen's Cathedral, the riverfront, cafés, shops, restaurants, and walking streets. This is the most convenient base if you want to explore Passau without relying on taxis or transit.

Best for: first-time visitors, short stays, sightseeing, river cruise convenience.

Watch for: cobblestones, limited vehicle access, and some uneven walking surfaces.

🚢 Danube Riverfront — Best for River Cruise Convenience

Activity level: Easy

Staying along or near the Danube gives guests easy access to river views, cruise docking areas, walking paths, and the Old Town. This is especially helpful for pre- or post-cruise stays when luggage and convenience matter.

Best for: cruise guests, river views, easy transfers, relaxed walks.

Watch for: hotel availability can be limited during peak river cruise season.

🏰 Near Veste Oberhaus / Ilzstadt — Best for Views

Activity level: Moderate to Strenuous

Across the river from Old Town, this area offers access to the fortress side of Passau and beautiful views back toward the city. It is atmospheric and scenic, but guests should expect hills, stairs, and more walking effort.

Best for: views, photography, history lovers.

Watch for: steep paths and less convenience for luggage.

🚆 Newer Town / Bahnhof Area — Best for Train Access & Value

Activity level: Easy

The area around Passau's train station can be practical for guests arriving by rail before or after a river cruise. It may not have the same storybook atmosphere as Old Town, but it offers easier access to transportation and sometimes better hotel value.

Best for: train travelers, value, practical overnight stays.

Watch for: less charm than the historic center.

Inn River Side — Best for Quieter Stays

Activity level: Easy to Moderate

The Inn River side offers calmer walks, pastel buildings, and pretty riverside scenery. It is a good choice for travelers who want to be close to the center but prefer a slightly quieter atmosphere.

Best for: peaceful walks, photography, relaxed stays.

Watch for: fewer hotel options than Old Town.

Top-Rated Hotels

Hotel Residenz Passau — Old Town / Danube

A strong choice for river cruise guests who want a central location near the Danube, Old Town sights, and riverfront walks.

Hotel Passauer Wolf — Old Town / Riverfront

A convenient hotel near the river and historic core, good for travelers who want walkability and a traditional Passau setting.

Hotel König — Danube Riverfront

A popular riverfront option with easy access to Old Town and the Danube promenade. Good for guests who want scenic convenience.

Hotel Atrium — Near Old Town

A comfortable option within walking distance of the historic center, often a practical fit for guests who want good access without being directly in the busiest lanes.

Premier Inn / Train Station Area Options — Bahnhof Area

Practical for guests arriving or departing by rail. Best for convenience rather than old-world atmosphere.

Hidden Gem Hotels

Boutique Hotel Morgentau — Danube / Old Town Edge

A smaller, characterful option with a boutique feel and good access to the riverfront.

Passau Suites — Old Town

A stylish apartment-style option that works well for guests wanting more space, a longer stay, or a more residential feel.

Schloss Ort — Riverfront / Historic Setting

A distinctive stay for travelers who like historic atmosphere and scenic river surroundings.

Hotel Spitzberg — Near Train Station

A practical and comfortable choice for rail travelers who still want access to the Old Town.

Altstadt Guesthouses & Apartments

Passau has several small guesthouses and apartments in the historic center that work well for independent travelers who want charm and walkability.

Best Restaurants

Passau's dining scene blends Bavarian, Austrian, and river-town influences, with hearty dishes, beer halls, cafés, pastries, and relaxed restaurants. Expect schnitzel, roast pork, dumplings, sausages, seasonal river fish, cakes, and local beer.

Wirtshaus Bayerischer Löwe

Activity level: Easy

A classic Bavarian-style restaurant good for beer, hearty regional food, and a traditional atmosphere. A strong choice for a first dinner in Passau.

Wirtshaus Zum Grünen Baum

Activity level: Easy

A traditional restaurant in the Old Town area, good for travelers looking for Bavarian comfort food in a historic setting.

Heilig-Geist-Stiftschenke

Activity level: Easy

A charming traditional dining option near the center, often appreciated for local dishes and a relaxed old-world feel.

Café Simon

Activity level: Easy

A well-known café and pastry stop in Passau, ideal for coffee, cake, chocolates, and an afternoon break.

ScharfrichterHaus

Activity level: Easy to Moderate

A historic restaurant and cultural venue with cabaret, music, and Bavarian-Austrian cuisine. Bavaria Tourism highlights ScharfrichterHaus as one of Passau's notable experiences.

Hidden Gem Restaurants & Food Experiences

Konditorei & Café Stops

Activity level: Easy

Passau is a wonderful city for cake, coffee, and pastry breaks. Look for local cafés serving tortes, strudel, pralines, and seasonal sweets.

Traditional Beer Hall Meal

Activity level: Easy

For a simple, authentic evening, choose a beer hall or tavern and order roast pork, dumplings, schnitzel, sausages, or a seasonal special.

Local Market & Specialty Food Shops

Activity level: Easy

Small delis, bakeries, butchers, and specialty shops around Old Town are ideal for quick snacks or picnic-style bites before returning to the ship.

River Fish & Seasonal Specials

Activity level: Easy

Depending on the restaurant and season, look for freshwater fish, asparagus in spring, mushrooms in fall, and hearty Bavarian soups.

Austrian Influence

Activity level: Easy

Because Passau sits close to Austria, menus often reflect both Bavarian and Austrian traditions. Expect dishes like schnitzel, dumplings, strudel, and regional wines.

Food Tours in Passau — Best 3–4 Hour Experiences

PASSAU

CLASSIC BAVARIAN & AUSTRIAN FOOD WALK

*A 3–4 Hour River Cruise Guest Favorite
Old Town, Riverfront & Historic Lanes*

TOUR AT A GLANCE

- Duration: ~3–4 hours
- Distance: ~1.5–2 miles (2.5–3.2 km)
- Difficulty: Easy to Moderate
- Best Time: Late Morning to Early Evening

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

- ★ Perfect for first-time Passau visitors
- ★ Great for river cruise guests staying overnight
- ★ Classic Bavarian & Austrian dishes, beer halls & pastries
- ★ Easy to pair with Old Town sightseeing
- ★ Historic streets, river views & local flavor

TIPS FOR YOUR TOUR

- Come hungry — tastings add up
- Wear comfortable walking shoes
- Expect some cobblestones
- Reserve popular taverns when possible
- Bring a light jacket for riverside walking

LEGEND

- Walking Route (Recommended)
- Food Stop
- Photo Spot
- Train / Bus Connection
- Restroom

AT A GLANCE

- 1 Old Town / St. Stephen's Start
Historic city heart
- 2 Café Simon
Coffeehouse & pastry stop
- 3 Wirtshaus Bayerischer Löwe
Bavarian tavern lunch
- 4 Heilig-Geist-Stiftschenke
Traditional regional meal
- 5 Local Bakery / Pretzel Stop
Fresh pretzel & baked goods
- 6 Regional Butcher & Deli
Sausage / cheese tasting
- 7 Beer Hall Stop
Local lager or wheat beer
- 8 Austrian Dessert Café
Strudel or cake break
- 9 Residenzplatz / Old Town Stroll
Scenic walking interlude
- 10 Dreiflüsseck Finish
River-view finale

NEARBY ADD-ONS

- St. Stephen's Cathedral — iconic Passau landmark
- Veste Oberhaus — scenic viewpoint add-on
- Glass Museum — easy cultural stop
- Inn Promenade — peaceful riverside walk
- River cruise extension — scenic after-tour option

THREE RIVERS VIEWS

PRETZELS & PASTRIES

BEER HALL FLAVORS

OLD TOWN CHARM

RIVER CRUISE ATMOSPHERE

Taste slowly. Wander happily. Savor Passau. Welcome to Passau!

Activity level: Easy to Moderate

A Passau food tour is a wonderful way for river cruise guests to experience the city's history, architecture, and regional flavors in one relaxed outing. Official Passau Tourism lists culinary tours through the Old Town, including a 2-hour Culinary Tour with five treats and a 3-hour organic vegetarian culinary experience with five regional delicacies.

Because many formal Passau food tours are shorter than 3–4 hours, the best cruise-friendly approach is to book a guided culinary walk and extend it with a café, beer hall, or riverside stop.

Classic Bavarian & Austrian Food Walk

Best for: first-time visitors

Suggested length: 3–4 hours with add-ons

Activity level: Easy to Moderate

Start with a guided Old Town culinary walk, then add a traditional beer hall lunch or dinner. This gives guests a fuller experience of Passau's food culture while still keeping the walking manageable.

What you may taste: pretzels, sausages, local cheese, bread, regional spreads, beer, schnitzel, roast pork, dumplings, pastries, or chocolate.

Best time: late morning through lunch or late afternoon into early dinner.

Cruise traveler tip: this works especially well after a morning walking tour or before an evening departure.

Beer Hall & Old Town Tasting Route

Best for: guests who enjoy beer and traditional taverns

Suggested length: 3–4 hours

Activity level: Easy

Combine Old Town sightseeing with a stop at a traditional tavern or beer hall. This is less formal than a structured food tour but can feel very authentic.

Suggested route: St. Stephen's Cathedral → Old Town lanes → riverfront → traditional beer hall → café or pastry stop.

What to try: local beer, schnitzel, roast pork, dumplings, sausages, potato salad, and strudel.

Café, Pastry & Chocolate Walk

Best for: lighter eaters and afternoon touring

Suggested length: 3 hours

Activity level: Easy

This is a gentler option for travelers who prefer sweets, coffee, and relaxed stops rather than a heavy Bavarian meal.

Suggested route: Old Town cafés → pastry shop → riverfront walk → final coffee or dessert stop.

What to try: cake, strudel, pralines, coffee, hot chocolate, and seasonal pastries.

Vegetarian & Local Flavors Tour

Best for: guests wanting a lighter, modern food experience

Typical length: about 3 hours

Activity level: Easy to Moderate

Passau Tourism's "Culinary Delights Bio-ve-nal" tour focuses on organic vegetarian delicacies from Lower Bavaria and combines tradition with more modern food culture.

What you may taste: regional vegetarian dishes, organic ingredients, local snacks, and modern Passau restaurant specialties.

Food Tour Booking Tips

For cruise travelers, confirm the meeting point, duration, number of tastings, dietary accommodations, walking distance, stairs, and whether the tour returns close to the ship or Old Town. Many Passau food experiences are short enough to pair with St. Stephen's Cathedral, the riverfront, or Veste Oberhaus on the same day.

Top Sights to See

St. Stephen's Cathedral & Organ

Activity level: Easy

Passau's signature landmark is a stunning baroque cathedral with white towers, blue-green domes, and one of the world's most famous cathedral organs. Bavaria Tourism describes St. Stephen's as the largest baroque church interior north of the Alps and highlights its major cathedral organ.

Veste Oberhaus Fortress

Activity level: Moderate to Strenuous

This hilltop fortress is one of Passau's most dramatic sights, offering history, museums, and panoramic views over the three rivers. The climb can be steep, so some guests may prefer a taxi or shuttle if available.

Three Rivers Conjunction Point / Dreiflüsseeck

Activity level: Easy to Moderate

This is where the Danube, Inn, and Ilz meet, creating one of Passau's defining views. It is a beautiful walk from Old Town and especially meaningful for river cruise guests.

Old Town / Altstadt

Activity level: Easy to Moderate

Passau's Old Town is compact, colorful, and rewarding to explore slowly. Expect baroque façades, narrow lanes, river views, cafés, churches, shops, and historic squares.

Passau Glass Museum

Activity level: Easy

A unique museum featuring a major collection of European glass. Bavaria Tourism notes that the Glass Museum displays around 15,000 glasses and gives visitors an overview of European glass history.

New Episcopal Residence

Activity level: Easy

A beautiful historic residence near the cathedral, known for elegant architecture and refined interiors.

Roman Museum Kastell Boiotro

Activity level: Easy

A good choice for guests interested in Passau's Roman history. Bavaria Tourism describes the museum as sitting on the foundations of a late Roman castle and presenting hundreds of exhibits on Roman rule in the region.

Hidden Gem Sights Most Visitors Miss

Höllgasse Artists' Alley

Activity level: Easy to Moderate

A colorful, atmospheric lane lined with galleries and small creative spaces. Great for photos and browsing.

Inn Promenade

Activity level: Easy

A quieter riverside walk along the Inn River, with pastel buildings and peaceful views.

Mariahilf Monastery

Activity level: Strenuous

A pilgrimage church above the city with sweeping views. The climb is steep, so this is best for active travelers.

Ilz River Walk

Activity level: Moderate

A more natural riverside walk away from the busiest Old Town streets. Good for guests who want a quieter outdoor experience.

St. Paul's Church

Activity level: Easy

A pretty church near the Old Town entrance, often overlooked by visitors rushing toward the cathedral.

Small Side Streets Around Residenzplatz

Activity level: Easy

Some of Passau's best charm is found in the narrow side streets around the cathedral and residence area. Slow wandering is part of the experience.

Best Ways to Get Tickets

For most river cruise guests, Passau is easy to enjoy independently, especially if your ship docks near the historic center. For deeper context, book a guided walking tour, cathedral organ concert, culinary tour, or fortress visit.

Best ticket priorities:

St. Stephen's Cathedral organ concert: book or confirm times in advance

Veste Oberhaus Museum: allow extra time for the uphill access

Guided Old Town walk: best for first-time visitors

Culinary tour: best for guests who want local food plus history

River cruise or boat ride: good if you are staying overnight or want additional river views



Best Ways to Get Around Passau



Walking

Best for: Old Town, cathedral, cafés, riverfront

Passau is very walkable, and most major sights are close together. The main challenge is cobblestones and some hills.



Taxi

Best for: luggage, mobility needs, Veste Oberhaus access

Taxis are useful for guests with limited mobility or those wanting to reach hilltop viewpoints without a strenuous climb.



River Cruise / Boat Ride

Best for: scenic views of the three rivers

Short boat rides can be a relaxing way to appreciate Passau's setting from the water.



Train

Best for: arrivals, departures, and regional day trips

Passau's train station is useful for independent travelers continuing to Munich, Salzburg, Linz, Vienna, or other regional destinations.

Local Bus

Best for: reaching outer neighborhoods or hillier areas

Most short-stay cruise guests will not need the bus, but it can be useful for specific locations.

Best Day Trips from Passau

Salzburg, Austria

Activity level: Moderate

Best by: train, guided tour, or private transfer

A beautiful full-day trip for music, architecture, gardens, and Austrian culture. Best for guests with an extra day before or after a cruise.

Český Krumlov, Czech Republic

Activity level: Moderate

Best by: guided tour or private transfer

A fairytale town with a castle, winding lanes, and river views. It is a long but memorable day trip.

Linz, Austria

Activity level: Easy to Moderate

Best by: train

A practical and interesting Austrian city on the Danube, with museums, cafés, and a pleasant old town.

Bavarian Forest National Park

Activity level: Moderate to Strenuous

Best by: rental car or guided tour

Best for travelers who want nature, scenic drives, and outdoor experiences.

Regensburg, Germany

Activity level: Moderate

Best by: train

A beautiful UNESCO-listed city with medieval lanes, a stone bridge, and strong river-cruise appeal.

 Munich

Activity level: Moderate to Strenuous

Best by: train

Possible as a longer day trip, though better as a pre- or post-cruise extension. Good for beer halls, museums, shopping, and Bavarian culture.

Suggested 3-Day Passau Itinerary for River Cruise

Guests

Day 1 — Classic Passau

Start with St. Stephen's Cathedral, the Old Town lanes, Residenzplatz, and the riverfront. Walk to the Three Rivers Conjunction Point, then enjoy dinner at a traditional Bavarian restaurant.

Day 2 — Fortress, Views & Food

Visit Veste Oberhaus in the morning for history and panoramic views. In the afternoon, take a culinary walk or build a 3–4 hour food experience with a café stop, beer hall meal, and pastry break.

Day 3 — Slow Passau or Regional Day Trip

Choose a relaxed Passau day with Höllgasse, the Glass Museum, Inn Promenade, and cafés, or take a day trip to Salzburg, Linz, Český Krumlov, or Regensburg.

Recommended Passau Experiences by Length of Stay

If You Have 1 Day in Passau

Best for: river cruise guests in port for several hours

Pace: Easy to Moderate

Focus on the compact historic center. Visit St. Stephen's Cathedral, wander the Old Town, walk to the Three Rivers Conjunction Point, and enjoy a café or beer hall stop before returning to the ship.

Recommended 1-Day Plan:

Morning: St. Stephen's Cathedral and Old Town

Midday: Traditional Bavarian lunch or café stop

Afternoon: Dreiflüsseck / Three Rivers Point and riverfront walk

Optional add-on: Veste Oberhaus viewpoint if you are comfortable with hills or take a taxi

If You Have 2 Days in Passau

Best for: guests staying before or after a river cruise

Pace: Moderate

Use the first day for Old Town and riverside highlights, then the second day for the fortress, museums, and food.

Recommended 2-Day Plan:

Day 1: Cathedral, Old Town, Residenzplatz, riverfront, Three Rivers Point

Day 2: Veste Oberhaus, Glass Museum or Roman Museum, Höllgasse, and a culinary tour or beer hall dinner

Best food option: Classic Bavarian & Austrian Food Walk

Best scenic option: Veste Oberhaus viewpoint

Best relaxed option: Inn Promenade and café stops

If You Have 3 Days in Passau

Best for: travelers wanting a slower stay or day trip

Pace: Moderate, with optional active elements

Three days gives you time to enjoy Passau at a relaxed pace and add either a regional day trip or deeper local exploring.

Recommended 3-Day Plan:

Day 1: Classic Passau Old Town and riverfront

Day 2: Veste Oberhaus, museums, Höllgasse, food tour

Day 3: Salzburg, Linz, Český Krumlov, Regensburg, or a slow local café-and-river day

Best day trip: Salzburg or Český Krumlov

Best local day: Glass Museum, Inn Promenade, and cafés

Best active option: Mariahilf Monastery or Ilz River walk

River Cruise Traveler Tips

Passau is especially appealing because many river cruise guests can walk directly from the docking area into the historic center. The city is compact, but the cobblestones, hills, and fortress climb can be challenging, so comfortable shoes are essential.

Allow one full day for the core sights, two days for a more relaxed pre- or post-cruise stay, and three days if you want to include a regional day trip. Guests with mobility concerns should stay in or near Old Town, use taxis for Veste Oberhaus, and focus on the flatter riverfront and cathedral areas.

Best Overall Recommendations

Best area for first-timers: Old Town / Altstadt

Best area for cruise convenience: Danube Riverfront

Best scenic viewpoint: Veste Oberhaus

Best must-see sight: St. Stephen's Cathedral

Best easy walk: Old Town to Three Rivers Point

Best hidden gem: Höllgasse Artists' Alley

Best museum: Passau Glass Museum

Best food experience: Classic Bavarian & Austrian Food Walk

Best café stop: Café Simon or an Old Town konditorei

Best day trip: Salzburg or Český Krumlov

Best stay length: 2 nights for a relaxed river cruise extension

Map of Area Attractions

PASSAU

ATTRACTIONS MAP

— TOP SIGHTS, HIDDEN GEMS & DAY TRIPS —

MUST-SEE ATTRACTIONS

- 1 St. Stephen's Cathedral
- 2 Veste Oberhaus Fortress
- 3 Dreiflüsseeck (Three Rivers Confluence)
- 4 Old Town / Residenzplatz
- 5 Passau Glass Museum
- 6 Roman Museum Kastell Bolitoro
- 7 Mariahilf Monastery
- 8 Inn Promenade
- 9 Höllgasse Artists' Alley
- 10 New Episcopal Residence

HIDDEN GEMS

- 11 Ilz River Walk
- 12 St. Paul's Church
- 13 Schaling Tower / Riverfront View
- 14 Severinstor / quiet old lanes near Old Town
- 15 Café culture & pastry stop near Old Town
- 16 Scenic viewpoint over the confluence

LOCAL EXPERIENCES & DAY TRIPS

- 17 Salzburg
- 18 Český Krumlov
- 19 Linz
- 20 Regensburg
- 21 Bavarian Forest
- 22 Schäftlring

LEGEND

- Train Station
- River Cruise / Boat Stop
- Landmark
- Scenic Viewpoint
- Day Trip Callout

HELPFUL TIPS & DISTANCES

- Old Town is compact and very walkable
- Veste Oberhaus involves hills or taxi access
- The confluence is an easy scenic walk
- Day trips are easiest by train or guided transfer

Three Rivers Views

St. Stephen's Cathedral

Old Town Charm

Veste Oberhaus

Day Trip Options

FOR CRUISE GUESTS

Passau is one of Europe's classic river-cruise gateway cities, where three rivers meet in spectacular style.

Staying near Old Town makes pre- and post-cruise sightseeing easy and enjoyable.

17 Salzburg

Great full-day trip

18 Český Krumlov

Fairy-tale town in Bohemia

19 Linz

Easy cultural excursion

20 Regensburg

UNESCO World Heritage City

21 Bavarian Forest

Nature, hikes & villages

22 Schäftlring

Charming Inn riverside town

Three rivers. Baroque beauty. Bavarian charm. Welcome to Passau!

