



Zoom in: Passau pleasures

You would be forgiven for thinking you are in Italy. Passau's historic old center has a definite air of medieval Italy, with its jumble of winding, cobbled lanes, underpasses and archways leading off the main streets.

Veste Oberhaus, a 13th-century fortress built by the prince-bishops, towers over the city. Views are superb, both from the castle tower and from the Battalion Linde, a lookout that treats you to a bird's-eye view over the confluence of the Danube, Ilz and Inn Rivers. Inside the bastion is the **Oberhausmuseum**. (Open Mar-Nov, Mon-Fri, 9:00 AM-5:00 PM; Sat-Sun, 10:00 AM-6:00 PM.) Some of the best exhibits feature the mysteries of medieval castle-building and a knight's rites of passage.

In the flamboyant central square, the Residenzplatz, you will find the 18th-century **New Bishop's Residenz**. Melchior Hefele, a student of Balthasar Neumann, drafted the stucco-draped façade, as well as the rococo staircase, which winds toward a wonderfully over-the-top ceiling fresco, *The Gods of Olympus Protecting Immortal Passau*.

The other must-see in Passau is the 17th-century **St. Stephen's Cathedral** (Dom St. Stephan). Look out for the church's green onion domes floating serenely above the town. There has been a church here since the 5th century, but the current baroque look emerged after the Great Fire of 1662. The frescoes are fascinating, but the true masterpiece is the church organ, one of the world's largest, with 17,974 pipes.

The **Passauer Glasmuseum** is the largest museum of Bohemian glass and crystal in the world, with more than 30,000 pieces and 36 rooms filled with baroque, classical, Art Nouveau and Art Deco pieces. (Open daily, summer, 10:00 AM-4:00 PM; winter, 1:00-4:00 PM.)

Concierge tip

If you decide to visit Passau's Veste Oberhaus, consider taking the bus up, but walking down. Along its switchbacks, the road back to the city offers delightful views of the peninsula below. Remember to wear your walking shoes.

Word of mouth

"My favorite place to buy gifts along the Danube is Café Simon in Passau. The city is famous for its gingerbread, and the same family has been baking for four generations in this wonderful confectioners. The chocolates are also delicious and come in all sorts of different flavors; pink pepper, chili chocolate and gold leaf chocolate. They're wrapped very elegantly, are easy to pack and make great gifts."

—Karine Hagen

Today's Weather: Partly Sunny

10 – 18 °C / 50– 65 °F

Thursday, August 14th, 2014

6:00 - 11:00 AM

Café Breakfast: Coffee, juice and pastries are available at the coffee station in front of The Lounge.

6:30 - 9:00 AM

Continental Breakfast: A selection of beverages and breakfast items are available on The Aquavit Terrace.

7:00 - 9:30 AM

Breakfast: Enjoy a buffet breakfast and a choice of dishes cooked to order in The Restaurant.

8:30 AM – 9:30 PM

Concierge Desk Hours: Should you need any assistance during your stay onboard please visit the Concierge.

10:00 AM

Welcome to Passau: Viking Atla arrives in Passau, Germany.

10:00 AM - 11:30 AM

Walking Tour: Passau. Join us for a fascinating walk around this historic town.

You are also invited to attend the organ concert at 12:00 noon.

12:45 PM

Lunch: Join us for lunch in The Restaurant

12:45 PM

Café Lunch: Buffet-style lunch on The Aquavit Terrace.

5:15 PM

Back On Board: Please be back on board the ship by this time. We will depart Passau for Melk shortly thereafter.

5:00 AM – 7:00 PM

Concierge Desk Hours: Should you need any assistance during your stay onboard please visit the Concierge.

5:30 - 7:00 PM

Cocktail Hour: Enjoy one of our cocktails and live music in The Lounge.

6:45 PM

Daily Briefing: Program Director Caspar invites you to the Lounge to find out about tomorrow's excursions and events.

7:00 PM

Dinner: We invite you to join us for dinner in The Restaurant.

7:00 PM

Bar Menu: Enjoy a casual meal on The Aquavit Terrace.

9:00 AM – 10:00 PM

Concierge Desk Hours: Should you need any assistance during your stay onboard please visit the Concierge.

9:00 PM

Presentation: Vienna Coffeehouses & Mozart. Join Program Director Caspar for a presentation about Viennese Coffee House Culture and the famous composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

IMPORTANT SHIP CONTACT INFORMATION

Your Viking ATLA team

Ship Contacts:

Ship Location:



A brief history: Passau

Known as the "City of Three Rivers," Passau lies at the confluence of the Inn, the Danube and the Ilz Rivers—it is the last major German city on the Danube at the border of Austria. Originally a settlement of the Boii Celtic tribe and named "Boiodurum," it was later the site of the Roman fort, Castra Batava. In 739, an English Celtic monk named Boniface founded the diocese of Passau, the largest see of the Holy Roman Empire for many years.

Passau was an important medieval center for the salt trade. During the Renaissance, it became famous for making high-quality knife and sword blades. Local smiths stamped their blades with the Passau wolf, and superstitious warriors believed that the wolf granted them invulnerability. The practice of placing magical, protective charms on blades became known as "Passau art."

When fires ravaged the city in the 17th century, it was rebuilt to reflect the baroque character that survives today. Old Town, with its baroque churches and patrician houses, is crowded onto the narrow tongue of land separating the Inn and the Danube. St. Stephen's Cathedral is one of the town's foremost landmarks and boasts the largest pipe organ outside the United States. Northward on the far bank of the Danube, the Veste Oberhaus rises atop a wooded bluff.

Today, Passau is home to 50,000 people and has grown to become the economic, cultural and communications center of southeastern Bavaria.

St. Stephen's Cathedral: An acoustical delight

Passau's magnificent baroque St. Stephen's Cathedral is located on the highest point of Old Town. Nearly destroyed in the 1662 fire that swept through the town, it was rebuilt by architect Carloa Lurago, with magnificent stucco works by G.B. Carolone and frescoes by Carpofoorus Teencalls.

St. Stephen's is home to the largest cathedral organ in the world, with 17,974 organ pipes, 233 stops and four carillons. All five parts of the organ can be played from the main keyboard, one at a time or all together, offering the visitor an unforgettable acoustical delight. You may be lucky enough to hear an organ concert on this magnificent instrument if you are visiting Passau between April and October, Monday through Saturday.



Your room with a view: Views along the river

Kilometer 2,290 on your left

Metten was built around the 8th-century Metten Abbey, one of the oldest in Bavaria. Today, it is a house of the Benedictine Order. Its towers are topped with striking onion domes.

Kilometer 2,286 on your left

Deggendorf. Though evidence points to settlements as far back as eight millennia, more organized cultures emerged here around 750 AD, about the same time as the neighboring monasteries of Niederalteich and Metten. Roman emperor Heinrich II declared his rule over Deggendorf in 1002, when the town center was likely on the river's banks. Under Duke Otto II's rule in the 13th century, town walls, a gate and a moat were built. All that remains of the wall is a 100-foot segment.

Deggendorf set up displacement camps for Jewish refugees after World War II. The settlement formed a subculture within the city, creating two newspapers, a theater group, synagogue and a kosher kitchen. The camp even established its own currency, called the Deggendorf dollar.

Today, it is a mid-sized town with an efficient infrastructure and many facilities, including a free port and a technical university.

Kilometer 2,282 on your right

Mouth of the Isar. After the Danube, Inn and Main, the Isar is the fourth-largest river in Bavaria. It runs for 177 miles from the Karwendel range in the Austrian Alps.

Kilometer 2,277 on your left

Niederalteich. The town's Benedictine monastery was founded in 731 and its first abbot compiled Lex Baiuvariorum, the Bavarian people's first code of law. The code helped found 120 settlements in the region.

Kilometer 2,257 on your left

Hofkirchen. Every year on Pentecost Sunday, the parish of Hofkirchen organizes a candle pilgrimage to fulfill a 500-year-old vow. During the pilgrimage, parishioners carry a candle measuring 40 feet and weighing about 110 pounds up the mountain. If the candle bearers drop their charge, it is said that bad luck will follow. Town legend says that it has fallen only twice—once before the outbreak of World War I and again before the outbreak of World War II.

Kilometer 2,253 on your left

Ruins of Hilgartsberg Castle. This castle was the center of many battles in the 12th century. It was destroyed during the Austrian War of Succession in the 1740s when Maria Theresa faced opposition to her inheritance of the Habsburg Empire. The castle's chapel of St. George is still well-preserved.

Kilometer 2,250 on your right

Vilshofen. This pretty Bavarian town at the confluence of the Vils and the Danube Rivers frequently suffered devastating floods until a protective dam was built. The 1643 municipal tower with its flat dome is the emblem of Vilshofen. The medieval parish church was restored in late-baroque style in 1803. Some of the older houses that line these quaint streets are typical of Inn Valley architecture.

Kilometer 2,231

Kachlet Lock. The Kachlet was opened in 1927 and features a 15-mile stony riverbed over which ships were once towed up the mountain by hook. On the left bank, a fish ladder climbs the slope in ascending pools, allowing fish to bypass the lock.