



Hello Friends! Another edition for Armchair Traveling for us to get into the spirit of exploring our wonderful & beautiful world that is waiting out there for us to return. Our topic today is the intriguing Danube River!

The Danube River

On its 1,770 mile journey, the Danube, which is Europe's second longest river after the Volga River, passes through 8 countries, Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, Moldova, and Ukraine, between its source in the Black Forest to its estuary into the Black Sea. On river cruise itineraries, you'll see stunning capital cities like Vienna, Budapest, Bratislava, Belgrade and Bucharest along with even more picturesque villages and towns.

The Danube River & its Rich History –



The Danube springs from two wells in the Black Forest, known as the Brigach and the Breg. The Black Forest got its name from the Romans who felt it was nearly impenetrable and unsurprisingly, very dark.

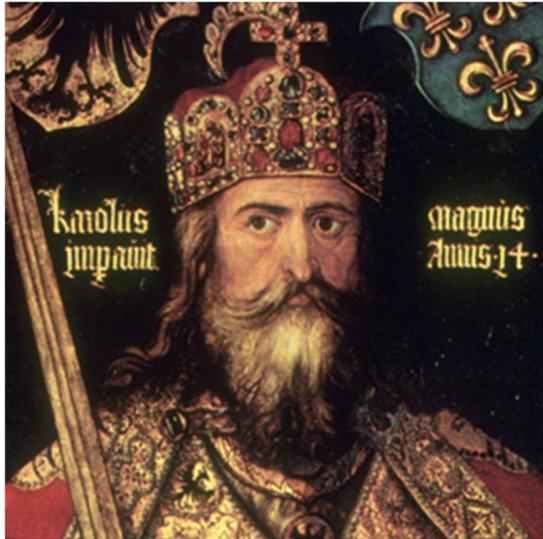


Some of the earliest human cultures on Earth were sited in the Danube basin, including such Neolithic peoples as the Linear Pottery and Vinca cultures.

The Danube wears many different faces. In Roman culture, the Danube was distinctly male, represented by the wise, bearded river god, Danubius. Elsewhere, the Danube is female, graceful, and beautiful.



The Danube Delta is one of the most prominent wetlands reserve in Europe. It is the largest reedbed habitat in the world, with more than 600,000 acres. You can visit the beauty of the Danube Delta on river cruises that include the Black Sea.



The Route of the Emperors and Kings runs 500 miles along the Danube from Regensburg to Budapest, retracing footsteps of men like Emperor Charlemagne who united most of Europe by power of the sword.

Melk Abbey, a UNESCO World Heritage Site known for its impressive library with medieval manuscripts and frescos, has overlooked the river for more than 900 years!



The tallest rock relief in Europe, the rock sculpture of Decebalus, depicts the face of the last king of Dacia who fought against the Roman emperors to preserve the independence of his country. Completed in 2004, it took 10 years for 12 sculptors to carve it!

The Danube played a key role in the settlement and political evolution of central and southeastern Europe. Its banks, lined with imposing yet beautiful castles and fortresses, some of which can still be seen today like the Aggstein Castle in the Wachau region, formed boundaries that would become essential for some of the greatest empires and its waters served as a necessary commercial throughline between nations.



Then in the early 1900's the river was harnessed for hydroelectric power, particularly along the upper courses; the cities along its banks have depended upon it for their economic growth. The largest hydropower dam and reservoir system along the Danube is located at the 117-km-long Djerdap Gorge (Iron Gate Dam I and II). This peak operation system consists of two dams, operated jointly by Serbia and Romania, producing about 37% of the total energy used in Serbia and 27% in Romania.



The river's majesty has long been celebrated in music and is cemented in Europe's history. The famous waltz *An Der Schoenen Blauen Donau* ((1867; *The Blue Danube*), by Johann Strauss the Younger, became the symbolic tune of Imperial Vienna.

Today, the river maintains its roles as an important trade artery, as a source of continuing energy and, of course, as the stunning multicultural link connecting millions of people across eight countries.



There are many wonderful river cruises on the Danube, from Bucharest all the way to Amsterdam! This is definitely a must-see destination visiting some of the most beautiful parts of Europe.