



Lapland Experience & European Christmas Cruise

Finland-France-Switzerland-Germany-Main River

6th – 29th December 2026

Personally Escorted by Jacquie Turner



This is a chance to experience the amazing Northern Lights and wonderful traditions and celebrations of a European Christmas, all in one tour. We will be chasing the Northern Lights before visiting the historic Christmas markets where we can buy all kinds of traditional gifts and sample the local fare while enjoying a delicious, mulled wine with gingerbread. This tour includes a river cruise on which we will celebrate Christmas Day!

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Sunday 6 December	Melbourne - Finland	(Inflight meal)
Today we will be transferred from Warragul to Melbourne Airport for our flight to Helsinki, Finland. Departures are also available from other Australian cities.		
Monday 7 December	Helsinki, Finland	(D)
 On arrival into Helsinki, we will be met & transferred to the Hotel Haven, or similar , for a two-night stay. The remainder of the day will be at leisure. Dinner will be included tonight.		

Tuesday 8 December	Helsinki, Finland	(B D)
After breakfast we will embark on a private tour discovering the must-sees of charming Helsinki including the Rock Church and the Sibelius Monument .		
Discover the most important sights of Helsinki, starting from Senate Square and the historic centre and its imposing architecture from the 1800s, followed by a visit to the adjacent Kauppatori marketplace and the Old Market Hall , where you can taste some local delicacies. The tour continues through the elegant shopping areas of Esplanade to the main street Mannerheimintie , and past the Finnish Parliament , where we will stop at Kansalaistori . This part of Helsinki provides a glimpse of the modern Finnish capital and its flourishing architecture and design scene. Pop into Oodi building , chosen as the world's best public library and considered the latest jewel of Finnish architecture. You will also experience panoramic views of maritime Helsinki by the Baltic Sea as we drive along the south coast through Kaivopuisto's diplomatic areas and around the vast green area of Seurasaari in western Helsinki. On the way there you will stop at Sibelius Monument and learn about the importance of Jean Sibelius' music to the Finnish culture. Finally, our journey back to the city centre runs past the Olympic Stadium , the National Opera House , The Finlandia Hall and the National Museum . The tour will also include a visit and entry to the famous Rock Church . Dinner will be included tonight.		

Wednesday 9 December	Helsinki – Inari (Lapland) Finland	(B D)
After checking out of our hotel this morning we will be transferred to the airport to board our flight to Inari-Lapland.		
In the far north of Finnish Lapland, on the edge of beautiful Lake Inari, the Wilderness Hotel Inari is a remote retreat where snow-covered forests and frozen lakes provide the backdrop to the day's adventures. Far from civilisation, this is a fantastic place to search for the northern lights by car, snowmobile and even at an Aurora Camp. You'll also learn how to drive your own husky-sled through the Lappish wilderness, snowmobile through glittering forest trails and try snowshoeing in the magical landscape.		

As we arrive at the Ivalo Airport we will be met and transferred to the **Wilderness Hotel Inari, or similar**, where we will enjoy a leisurely stay of 4 nights.

This afternoon we will settle into our accommodation before gathering this evening where we will enjoy a welcome dinner.



Thursday 10 – Saturday 12 December

Inari (Lapland), Finland

(B L D X3)

During our stay at the Wilderness Hotel Inari, we will have the opportunity to embark on many different activities.

Snowmobile Adventure The guide will teach you how to cope with these powerful machines, and after a full safety and driving lesson, you will head out to the wilderness. Snowmobiling through white winter scenery is a breathtaking experience that will last for a lifetime. During the day, there will be lunch by the open fire.



Reindeer farm visit You will have a chance to meet an authentic reindeer herder and his herd. You will learn interesting facts about these semi-wild animals and the life up here in the north. There may also be a possibility for a short reindeer sledge ride during your visit to the farm.

Husky Safari A Husky safari is a 'must do' experience when visiting Lapland. You will be taught how to handle the sled before you head out for the husky safari, where the huskies will pull your sled through the beautiful winter scenery. Enjoy the excitement of the dogs before the start, and the serene silence once they get to do what they love – run in the snowy scenery. You will have lunch before or after the activity, and the musher will also show you around the husky farm.



Gentle Snowshoeing (subject to snow conditions) If you prefer a nice gentle walk in a beautiful snowy setting, this is the tour for you. We will equip you with snowshoes (and poles if required) and enjoy a nice little walk in the surroundings of the hotel. Along the way, our guide will share interesting stories and information about the Finnish nature.

Aurora workshop Our expert guides will tell you everything you need to know about northern lights. Guides will give you a simple overview of the science behind this phenomenon. You can take your own camera with you and get the setting optimised for photographing northern lights.



Aurora Camp This trip takes you to one of our specifically chosen camp spots, where we will try to catch the northern lights. You will be comfortably seated in a sledge, pulled by a guide's snowmobile. We will have an open fire and warm drinks while waiting for the sky to show its magic.

Aurora Snowmobiling Nighttime snowmobiling is exhilarating experience. We will head out in search of a good location, trying to spot some Aurora Borealis. If the northern lights appear, we will stop and admire the show. We will also have warm drinks to keep us warm and comfortable during the activity.

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Sunday 13 December

Inari (Lapland) – Helsinki/Vantaa Finland

(B D)

This morning after breakfast we will be transferred to the airport for our flight to Helsinki.

On arrival back to Helsinki we will stay one night at the **Hilton Helsinki Airport Hotel, or similar.**

Just a three-minute walk from the main terminal of Helsinki-Vantaa Airport via a covered walkway, the Hilton Helsinki Airport hotel is the ideal retreat before an early flight. This contemporary hotel combines excellent service and a stylish interior with comfortable amenities.

Dinner will be at the hotel tonight.

Monday 14 December

Helsinki, Finland – Geneva - Chamonix

(B L D)

Today we will fly from Helsinki to Geneva. On arrival in Geneva, we will enjoy a light lunch followed by a walking tour through the old town with some chocolate tasting along the way. We will then travel by coach to Chamonix where we will stay at **Alpina Eclectic Hotel, or similar**, for the next 3 nights.

Dinner will be included at the hotel this evening.

Tuesday 15 December

Chamonix

(B L)

Say bonjour to Chamonix – the perennial ski-hub nestled at the foot of Mont Blanc.

We shall spend today exploring **Chamonix** and the surrounding mountains.

Weather permitting we shall travel up to **Panorama Mer de Glace** with lunch included at **Montenvers**.

There will also be time to explore the charming town of Chamonix.



Wednesday 16 December

Chamonix

(B L)

Journey to one of France's most picturesque cities, **Annecy** – often called the “Venice of the Alps” due to its storybook charm. Join a local guide on a walking tour through the old medieval town featuring canals, crisscrossing bridges, and pastel-coloured houses.

This evening you will have some free time to explore the town's vibrant Christmas market.



Thursday 17 December

Chamonix- Basel, Switzerland (Viking River Cruise)

(B D)



After breakfast we will be transferred to **Basel**, with time to explore **Bern** enroute. We will board the **Viking Skirnir** in Basel, ready for our European river cruise.

The meaning of the ship's name, Viking Skirnir, comes from the old god, Skirnir - Servant of Norse Gods.

Skirnir is a humble servant of the gods. When the lovesick Freyr, God of sunshine and

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prosperity, falls in love with the beautiful goddess Geror, he sends Skirnir to woo her. The coy goddess refuses Skirnir's advances until he threatens her with his mystical wand. But Skirnir is smart; for delivering Geror, he requires that Freyr give him his powerful sword as a reward.

The Viking Skirnir has 190 guests, 53 crew, and was built in 2015.

Once on board our cruise ship, settle into your stateroom before we begin the magical River Cruise journey.

Friday 18 December	Basel, Switzerland	(B L D)
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Today we will explore the delightful **Basel**. With its blend of old and new, Basel is Switzerland's best-kept secret. During the holiday season, the **medieval Old Town** is transformed into a magical yuletide affair. Cobblestone streets are lined with wooden chalet-style huts selling all manner of festive treats and gifts. Visitors to the Christmas market can enjoy a warming cup of aromatic *glühwein* in a decorated boot-shaped mug. Hand-carved tree decorations, cheerfully painted ceramics and delicious food are sold from stalls throughout the city.



Saturday 19 December	Breisach, Germany	(B L D)
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We will be waking up in the breathtaking **Breisach old town** today. With a backdrop of the **Romanesque-Gothic St. Stephen's cathedral**, the **Weinachtsmarkt** is a highlight of the season. Steaming aromatic *glühwein* served in decorated mugs, alongside tasty yuletide treats, is sold from festive wooden huts and taverns, keeping visitors warm as they browse market stalls for gifts and handicrafts. The nearby **Black Forest** provides a fairy-tale atmosphere; its towering, snow-covered spruce trees resemble a winter wonderland.



Sunday 20 December

Strasbourg, France

(B L D)

Our next stop on this magical journey is **Strasbourg**, said to be the capital of Christmas in France, with the city's cathedral square taking centre stage as it is transformed into a winter wonderland. The city's **Christkindelsmärik** is the oldest in France, dating back to 1570. Hundreds of stalls are brimming with colourful wares, fine food and mulled wine, bringing festive cheer in abundance. Alsatian specialties feature an array of hearty classics, from *bretzels* (soft, bread-like pretzels) to *bredele* (star-shaped spiced cookies), and *knacks* (sausages) to *pain d'épices* (gingerbread).



Monday 21 December

Baden-Baden, Germany

(B L D)

Set in southern Germany, Baden-Baden lies between the verdant Black Forest and the sun-soaked vineyards of the Rebland. With origins dating back to the Roman times—when it was known as Aquae, or “the waters”—this town has long been prized for its abundant hot springs, which rise from depths around 6,500 feet. Today, it holds UNESCO World Heritage status as a part of the Great Spa Towns of Europe. Beyond its mineral-rich waters, Baden-Baden boasts historic architecture, including Roman bath ruins, and a scenic arboretum that winds through its heart.



Tuesday 22 December

Frankfurt, Germany

(B L D)

Today we will get to chance to visit the **Frankfurt** Christmas Market. This market is one of the oldest and largest holiday markets in Germany, dating back to 1391. Extending across several squares around the historic city centre, its stalls offer a variety of goods, such as wooden toys, handicrafts, candles, ornaments and more. The sounds of Christmas carols and church bells fill the air, as does the delicious aroma of *glühwein* (mulled wine), roasted chestnuts, grilled sausages and gingerbread. The market also features a giant Christmas tree, illuminated by thousands of lights, ribbons and bells.



Wednesday 23 December

Marktheidenfeld, Germany- Main River, Spessart

(B L D)

After breakfast this morning we will spend some time in **Marktheidenfeld** before travelling on the **Main River** past the **Spessart forests**.



In Marktheidenfeld, the Christmas season centers around the **Marktplatz**, or market square. Located in the heart of the old town and set against a picturesque backdrop of half-timbered homes and a medieval bridge over the Main River, it exudes charm and tradition. Live music and performances entertain visitors as they stroll past wooden stalls packed with handcrafted nutcrackers, elaborate music boxes, *glühwein* (mulled wine) and other traditional German delicacies. The highlight of the market is the arrival of the Christ Child, who greets the children and hands out presents.

We will journey along one of Germany's most important waterways today, passing landscapes that embody the country's scenic beauty and storybook charm. We will sail by quaint riverside villages, undulating farm country and the **svyan forests** of the Spessart woodlands. Along the way, just may lose yourself in the dreamy canvases of half-timbered houses, historic castles and splendid palaces. This is the Germany once ruled by dukes and brought to magical life by the imagination of the Brothers Grimm, who grew up in the town of Hanau and wove fantastic tales from these banks.

Thursday 24 December

Würzburg, Germany

(B L D)

On this special Christmas Eve there will be some time to wander around the beautiful city of **Würzburg**.

Würzburg on Christmas Eve is calm and atmospheric, with festive lights still glowing as the city slows down for Christmas. The baroque streets, riverfront, and historic landmarks like the Würzburg Residence take on a peaceful charm, and the soft winter quiet makes the city's architecture and vineyards feel especially picturesque. Many places close early, but the warm holiday mood and gentle bustle around the churches give the city a cozy, welcoming feel.



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Friday 25 December

Bamberg, Germany

(B L D)

Waking up on Christmas Morning this year will not be like any other, as we will be spending Christmas Day in **Bamberg**, Germany. This charming city will feel especially peaceful and enchanting, with its medieval streets and half-timbered houses softened by winter quiet.



The UNESCO-listed **Old Town**, usually lively, will seem calm as most shops close and families gather indoors, leaving the bridges and canals of “**Little Venice**” beautifully still. The grand Bamberg Cathedral will take centre stage. It’s a perfect day for slow wandering and taking in the city’s historic charm at its most tranquil. On board we will take part in some festive activities.

Saturday 26 December

Nuremberg, Germany

(B L D)

Today we will discover the medieval city of **Nuremberg**. While the famous Christmas market will have ended, cafés and some shops begin to reopen, bringing gentle life back to the squares. The post-holiday atmosphere, with the city still wrapped in festive decorations but moving at a calmer pace, will be a lovely sight to see.

The **medieval Old Town**, framed by stone towers and the towering **Kaisersburg Castle**, feels inviting as locals and visitors stroll through the quiet streets. The blend of winter chill, historic architecture, and lingering holiday charm makes the city especially pleasant for unhurried exploring.

The second-largest city in Bavaria, Nuremberg is filled with traditional half-timbered houses and Gothic churches with intricate spires. Although nearly destroyed during World War II, the remaining medieval city walls stretch some three miles and feature original gateways and 80 original watchtowers. Nuremberg is well known historically for its metal and toy craftsmanship. It is infamous for its role in World War II, first as the site of Zeppelin Field’s Nazi rallies and later as the site of the war crimes trials at the Palace of Justice that captured the attention of a generation.



Sunday 27 December

Nuremberg, Germany- Munich, Germany - Dubai

(B)

As the tour has come to an end, we will be transferred to Munich airport for the flight to Melbourne, via Dubai with accommodation at the Dubai Airport Transit Hotel.

Monday 28 December

Dubai- Melbourne

(Inflight meals)

We will have a morning departure for the flight to Melbourne.

Tuesday 29 December

Melbourne

(Inflight meals)

We shall arrive back in Melbourne and will be met and transferred by coach back to Warragul.

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YOUR TOUR ESCORT: **Jacquey Turner** has more than 40 years' experience as a highly successful travel agent and tour escort.

On this magical itinerary, Jacquey will guide you through unique destinations filled with unforgettable experiences. Enjoy the true spirit of Christmas as we explore charming villages and soak up the festive atmosphere from the comfort of our river cruise.

"I'm really looking forward to this tour—Christmas in Europe is truly magical, and I can't wait to spend the holiday with all of you."

— Jacquey Turner

INCLUSIONS

- Melbourne to Helsinki and Munich to Melbourne economy airfares and taxes
- All internal flights - economy airfares and taxes
- Viking River cruise cost French Balcony Cabin- Category (D). Cabins will be allocated in order of receipt of confirmed registrations and full deposit. Additional cost will apply if only higher categories are available.
- All transfers including travel between Warragul and Melbourne Airport
- Fully escorted throughout the entire tour by Jacquey Turner
In the unlikely event that Jacquey is not available to escort all or part of the tour, she will be replaced with a well-trained tour escort.
- Hotel accommodation in twin-bedded/double rooms with private facilities – ranging from 4 to 5-star hotels. Cost based on Aurora Cabin/Arctic Chalet in Inari (Lapland). Due to limited availability cabins will be allocated in order of receipt of confirmed registrations and full deposit.
- Experienced drivers, and local guides
- Private, air-conditioned coach travel except on days when a minibus is required for easier access in local areas
- Complimentary bottled water is provided in all vehicles throughout the tour
- 53 meals as per itinerary - 20 Breakfasts (B), 15 Lunches (L), 18 Dinners (D)
- Extensive sightseeing and entry fees as per itinerary
- Gippsland Travel hat, cap or beanie; luggage strap, luggage tags; hand gel
- End of tour Journal and USB with photos showcasing your time on the tour
- All local taxes, hotel service charges and portage of one suitcase per person
- All **Tipping** of local guides, coach drivers, hotel and restaurant staff at included meals
- Minimum 16 tour participants, maximum of 22 tour participants

EXCLUSIONS

- Travel insurance (a surcharge may apply for passengers with any pre-existing medical conditions)
- Expenses of a personal nature like laundry, telephone calls, medical expenses
- Any meals & beverages not included.



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Finland-France-Switzerland-Germany-Main River 6th – 29th December 2026

Personally Escorted by Jacquie Turner

Tour Cost: \$25,499 per person twin share*
\$ 9,575 single supplement*

***Cost based on Aurora Cabin/Arctic Chalet in Inari (Lapland) & French Balcony Cabin -Category D on River Cruise**

Costs based on exchange rates prevailing on 27 November 2025

Payment Schedule:

Full Deposit:	Due by 10 December 2025	\$ 3,500 per person
First Progress Payment:	Due by 23 January 2026	\$ 3,000 per person
Final payment:	Due by 5 August 2026	

★ ADDITIONAL COST for Veranda Category A

\$1200 per person additional cost (based on twin share)

★ ADDITIONAL COST for Veranda Suite Category AA

\$4320 per person additional cost (based on twin share)

Single supplement for Cruise Cabin upgrades is available – cost on application

Note: Due to limited availability river cruise cabins & Inari (Lapland) accommodation will be allocated in order of receipt of confirmed registrations and full deposit.

★ Upgrade to Business Class or Premium Economy on some flights – cost on application

*Should you wish to extend your travel arrangements after the tour, please contact me to discuss further options.

★Should you select to travel on flights other than the included group flights, or upgrade to business class or premium economy, payment for the air fares will be required at the time of booking the flights.

★Please note that a surcharge due to currency fluctuations may arise. If applicable, this will be confirmed prior to the balance of deposit being due.

★ The tour will only operate subject to a minimum of 16 participants. In the unlikely event that minimum numbers are not reached, a full refund of the deposit is applicable.

CANCELLATION FEES.

Cancellation is required in writing to Gippsland Travel Centre.

Deposit non-refundable	\$ 3,500 per person
Cancellation between 23 January and 5 August 2026	\$ 6,500 per person
Cancellation from 6 August 2026	100% of tour cost

GIPPSLAND TRAVEL ESCORTED TOURS - TERMS & CONDITIONS

INTRODUCTION:

This contract is governed by Gippsland Travel Centre Pty Ltd and all members of the travelling parties as listed on your itinerary.

Gippsland Travel Centre acts as the agent selling and coordinating products on behalf of a third-party travel supplier/s. A separate contract with the supplier/s will apply and will be governed by the supplier's Terms and Conditions. Gippsland Travel cannot guarantee the performance of any third-party supplier/s. Gippsland Travel may receive fees, commissions, gifts or financial incentives from third party supplier/s under this contract.

LATE BOOKINGS

Higher deposit payments are required for late bookings. A guarantee of full payment is required at the time of booking for all bookings received within 8 weeks of departure.

PASSPORT and VISA

A valid passport is required for all international travel.

If you do not hold an Australian passport, you may require a resident return visa. Some countries require a visa to be issued before you depart Australia. Gippsland Travel will advise you of all passport and visa requirements for this tour.

The Australian Government through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade regularly updates travel advice on various destinations. We recommend that you refer to www.smartraveller.gov.au for the latest updates before choosing to travel and prior to departure.

HEALTH & FITNESS

A minimum level of fitness is required to be able to participate on a Gippsland Travel Tour, you are required to at least:

- Walk at least 1 hour on uneven surfaces without the use of any walking aid (walking stick for stability is acceptable)
- Walk up flights of stairs and short, steep hills
- Stand for 20 minutes without needing to sit down, often in hot/humid climates
- Carry your own hand luggage / handle your own suitcase when portage is not supplied eg. at airports.
- Get on and off various modes of transport without assistance, including small boats. Assistance will be offered where necessary.

Passengers must inform us of any medical conditions which may affect their ability to participate in the tour.

At our discretion we can exclude you from a tour or any activity if we consider that you are unable to safely participate in that tour or activity or we consider your participation may place the safety of other guests at risk.

You will be requested to supply a letter from your doctor indicating your prescription medication and your reason for taking it, which shall be carried in the event of an emergency. This information will remain confidential and can be supplied in a sealed envelope.

BOOKINGS SOLD ON A SHARE BASIS

At their request, solo travellers may be matched to share a twin room with another traveller of the same gender. While every effort is made, we cannot guarantee a share will be possible. In the event that a share is not available at the time of final payment the single supplement will apply. If a share is not available and you choose to cancel, cancellation fees will apply.

UNUSED COMPONENTS OF THIS TOUR

We regret refunds will not be given for any unused component of this tour, such as meals, entry fees, accommodation or transfers.

GOVERNING LAW

These booking conditions are governed by the law in force in Victoria, Australia.

ITINERARY CHANGES and ITINERARY VARIATIONS

Gippsland Travel reserves the right to amend the hotels, itinerary and excursions if deemed advisable or necessary due to adverse weather conditions, road conditions or other unforeseen circumstances. Any necessary alternative arrangements will be made to a similar standard. Occasionally circumstances beyond the control of Gippsland Travel make it necessary to change airlines, hotels or amendments to daily activities. We will inform you of any changes as soon as they occur.

FLIGHT SCHEDULES

Airline schedules are subject to change without notice. Voluntary date changes will incur fees. Gippsland Travel is not liable for delays or disruption of air travel.

FORCE MAJEURE:

Force Majeure means the occurrence of an event that is beyond Gippsland Travel's reasonable control and which could not have been reasonably prevented by Gippsland Travel. Force majeure includes, but is not limited to: acts of God, accident, riots, war, terrorist act, epidemic, pandemic, quarantine, outbreaks of infectious disease or any other public health crisis, civil commotion, breakdown of communication facilities, natural catastrophes and natural disasters (including but not limited to flooding, fire, earthquake, landslide), adverse weather conditions, high or low water levels; government directed travel restrictions or omissions, changes in laws or regulations, national strikes, explosion, generalised lack of availability of raw materials or energy, nuclear or other industrial accident causing environmental pollution or contamination; change in law, meaning, enactment, amendment (including repeal) in the law or administration of any law in Australia or any jurisdiction or territory relevant to the booking contract, which includes changes in statute, regulation, determination, by-law, declaration, licence and the common law as applicable from time to time. For the avoidance of doubt, Force Majeure shall not include (a) financial distress nor inability of either party to make a profit or avoid a financial loss, (b) changes in market prices or conditions, or (c) a party's financial inability to perform its obligations hereunder. In the event that a Force Majeure is declared, the customer will be bound by the third-party supplier/s Terms and Conditions, if applicable.

TERMINATION OF BOOKING CONTRACT OR CHANGE OF TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS DUE TO FORCE MAJEURE

If Gippsland Travel, in its reasonable opinion, considers that any Force Majeure event prevents Gippsland Travel (whether directly or through its employees, contractors, subcontractors and agents) from lawfully or safely providing any products or services subject of the booking contract with you, Gippsland Travel may immediately by written notice; (a) terminate the booking contract (in whole or part of); or (b) change your travel arrangements as reasonably practicable to ensure your safety and invoice for any additional costs.

If you are eligible for a refund once a booking has been cancelled, the balance less any non-refundable amounts will be forwarded to you once received by Gippsland Travel from the third-party supplier/s.

Gippsland Travel is not responsible for any delays of refunds from the third-party supplier/s. Refunds from third party supplier/s can take in excess of 6 weeks. Refunds will be processed as per original form of payment.

Travel insurance policies may provide cover for cancellation fees subject to their terms and conditions.

LIMITATION OF LIABILITY:

Subject to Australian Consumer Law, Gippsland Travel does not accept any liability in contract, tort or otherwise for any injury, damage, loss, delay, additional expense or inconvenience caused by a third-party supplier/s over who we have no direct control. Gippsland Travel is not liable for Force Majeure or any other event which is beyond our control or which is not preventable by us.

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