

European Christmas Markets

A Festive Winter Journey

December 11 - December 18, 2028

Women Travel Tribe

Small Group Adventures for Women 50+

womentraveltribe.com/tours/european-christmas-markets-dec-2028-c

Tour Overview

Duration:	8 days
Maximum Group Size:	12 women
Start Date:	December 11, 2028
End Date:	December 18, 2028
Arrival Airport:	Strasbourg Airport (SXB)
Departure Airport:	Brussels Airport (BRU)

Imagine stepping out into a European evening where the streets are **glowing with Christmas lights, the market stalls are packed with ornaments and handmade gifts, and the air smells of mulled wine, gingerbread, roasted chestnuts, and warm pastries.** That's the feeling at the heart of this trip. Over eight festive days, we'll travel by train through **France, Germany, and Belgium**, following some of **Europe's most beautiful Christmas** markets from one city to the next.

We'll begin in **Strasbourg**, where Christmas seems to take over the entire old town. Half-timbered houses are covered in decorations, medieval lanes lead from one market square to another, and the cathedral rises above it all. We'll explore the city with a local guide, **make our own Christmas ornament**, and head into the **Alsace countryside for local food and a tasting at a family-run winery.**

Next comes **Cologne**, where the cathedral towers over a city filled with **lights, wooden stalls, music, and the smell of roasted almonds and warm spiced drinks.** We'll wander through the Old Town and along the Rhine, with **Christmas markets tucked into different corners of the city** and plenty of time to enjoy them after dark. We'll also dive into **Cologne's fragrance tradition during a private cologne workshop**, creating our own perfume to take home, and sit down for dinner in a traditional brauhaus.

In **Brussels**, the trip ends surrounded by the lights and energy of **Winter Wonders**. We'll wander through Grand Place and the surrounding streets as the city comes alive in the evening, then spend a morning **learning how to make traditional Belgian chocolates, with plenty of tasting along the way.**

We'll travel between destinations by comfortable trains and luggage transfers will be taken care of, so that you can focus on the fun part: **three countries, incredible Christmas markets, great food, hands-on activities, and sharing this unique**

experience with a small group of women 50+.

Itinerary

Day 1: Strasbourg (Arrival Day)

Included meals: Dinner

Upon arrival in Strasbourg, you'll be picked up and transferred to our hotel, conveniently located near the city center and Christmas markets. After getting settled and having some time to rest, we'll meet for an orientation before heading out for our welcome dinner at a local restaurant. Tonight's meal will feature traditional Alsatian winter dishes, giving us our first taste of the regional flavors and festive traditions that make Strasbourg such a special place to begin the journey.

Day 2: Strasbourg

Included meals: Breakfast

Strasbourg truly comes alive at Christmas, and today we'll see why it's one of Europe's most atmospheric places to experience the season. We'll begin in Petite France, where timber-framed houses, narrow lanes, canals, and festive decorations line the old riverside quarter. From there, we'll cross the covered bridges and continue into the Grande Île, following centuries-old streets to Strasbourg Cathedral. After some free time for lunch and a rest, we'll meet for a private ornament-making workshop and create our own holiday decoration to take home. As evening falls, we'll head out for the first Christmas market visit of our trip, and Strasbourg is an amazing place to begin. The entire historic center becomes part of the celebration, with thousands of lights, elaborately decorated buildings, a towering Christmas tree, and rows of wooden chalets surrounding the cathedral and filling the nearby squares. We'll wander through the markets together, trying warm Alsatian specialties, browsing handmade gifts, and taking in the music, aromas, and energy of the city at Christmas. Your tour leader will remain with the group throughout the evening to offer recommendations and help everyone enjoy our first night at the markets.

Day 3: Strasbourg / Riquewihr / Colmar / Strasbourg

Included meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Today we'll head into the Alsace countryside for a full day of villages, vineyards, and some of the region's most beautiful scenery. After about 1 hour by road we'll arrive in Riquewihr, a beautifully preserved medieval village surrounded by vineyards and known for its old wine houses, stone gateways, narrow lanes, and colorful facades. We'll explore the village with our guide before visiting a nearby winery for a tasting of regional Alsatian wines and a closer look at the traditions behind this celebrated wine region. From there we'll continue to Colmar, where we'll stop for lunch and enjoy regional favorites such as tarte flambée, choucroute, and other classic Alsatian dishes. Afterwards we'll wander through the old town and Little Venice, where canals wind past pastel-colored houses and small bridges, giving this part of town its distinctive charm. The rest of

the afternoon will be yours to explore, browse local shops, stop for something sweet, or simply enjoy Colmar before we make our way back to Strasbourg.

Day 4: Strasbourg / Cologne

Included meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

We'll leave France behind today and cross into Germany, continuing by train to Cologne, one of the country's oldest cities and a fascinating stop along the Rhine. We'll make one train change along the way before arriving in Cologne, where we'll sit down for lunch and an introduction to German food. Afterward we'll begin a guided tour at the enormous Gothic Cologne Cathedral, which has dominated the city's skyline for centuries. From there we'll wander through the Old Town, passing historic squares, colorful houses, and narrow streets before reaching the Rhine waterfront. Along the way, we'll learn more about Cologne's Roman roots and medieval past. After checking into our hotel and having some time to rest, we'll head to a traditional Cologne brauhaus for hearty regional dishes, long communal tables, and a lively introduction to the city's food traditions.

Day 5: Cologne

Included meals: Breakfast, Lunch

This morning we'll visit the historic home of Eau de Cologne, where this famous fragrance tradition began more than two centuries ago. During a private workshop, we'll learn how different scents and notes are blended together, then each create our own personalized perfume to take home. After lunch, the rest of the day will be dedicated to Cologne's Christmas markets. We can begin beneath the cathedral, where a huge Christmas tree glows under a canopy of lights, then continue to the Old Town's Heinzels Winter Fairytale, with themed lanes, artisan stalls, and a large ice rink. Along the way, there will be plenty to try, including Reibekuchen potato pancakes, bratwurst, roasted almonds, gingerbread, and warm mulled wine. We can also browse handmade ornaments and gifts or head toward the Rhine for the waterfront market and Ferris wheel. Your tour leader will help keep the afternoon and evening easy to navigate so everyone can explore whichever markets interest them most.

Day 6: Cologne / Brussels

Included meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today we'll say goodbye to Germany and continue by train into Belgium, arriving in Brussels for the final stop of our journey. After arrival, we'll sit down for lunch and get our first taste of Belgian cuisine, with local favorites such as moules-frites, shrimp croquettes, or carbonnade flamande, a rich beef stew. We'll then check into our hotel and have some time to settle in before heading out for an orientation walk through the city center. We'll begin at Grand Place, Brussels' magnificent central square, surrounded by ornate guild houses and the grand Gothic Town Hall. From there we'll walk through the Royal Saint-Hubert Galleries, a beautiful 19th-century glass-roofed arcade

filled with chocolate shops, cafés, and boutiques. We'll continue past the Bourse, into Sainte-Catherine, an old market and waterfront district now known for restaurants and lively squares, and make a quick stop at Manneken Pis, the tiny bronze statue that has become one of Brussels' quirkiest symbols. As evening falls, we'll move into the heart of Winter Wonders, Brussels' huge Christmas celebration spread across several squares and streets in the historic center. The city fills with illuminated façades, wooden chalets, festive displays, seasonal sweets, Belgian chocolates, waffles, and food from across Europe. We'll have time to wander through the celebration and take it all in before finishing the evening with a Belgian dinner near Sainte-Catherine.

Day 7: Brussels

Included meals: Breakfast, Dinner

For our final full day in Brussels, we'll begin with one of Belgium's most famous traditions during a hands-on chocolate workshop. We'll learn how Belgian chocolates are made, work with different fillings and techniques, and of course taste plenty along the way before creating some of our own to take with us. Afterwards the afternoon will be completely free to enjoy Brussels one last time. You can return to Winter Wonders, shop for gifts and chocolates, relax at a café, or explore another part of the city at your own pace, with your tour leader available to help with ideas and recommendations. In the evening, we'll come back together for our farewell dinner, featuring Belgian Christmas and winter favorites such as game or roast meats, potato croquettes, seasonal vegetables, and a traditional bûche de Noël for dessert. It'll be a warm and festive final night together after our journey through France, Germany, and Belgium.

Day 8: Brussels (Departure Day)

Included meals: Breakfast

You will be picked up at the hotel by a private driver who will take you to the airport for your departing flight.

Tour Inclusions

Included

✓ Small group experience with a maximum of 12 women

✓ Professional tour leader throughout the trip

✓ 7 nights of accommodation in comfortable 4-star hotels

✓ Daily breakfast, 4 lunches and 4 dinners

✓ Train transportation between Strasbourg, Cologne and Brussels

✓ Separate luggage transfers on the Strasbourg/Cologne and Cologne/Brussels travel days

✓ Private transportation and local transportation as needed for included activities

✓ Local English-speaking guides throughout the trip

✓ All entrance fees and activities listed in the itinerary

✓ Airport transfers

Not Included

✗ Flights to Strasbourg / from Brussels

✗ Passport/visa fees (no visa needed for US, Canadian, Australian or EU citizens)

✗ Meals and activities not mentioned

✗ Personal purchases at the Christmas markets and during free time

✗ Travel insurance (mandatory)

✗ Gratuities

Pricing

Shared Room:	**$ 5,450**
Single Room:	**$ 6,550**
Deposit:	**$ 750**

Accommodations

On this tour, we'll stay in comfortable and convenient 4* hotels. All rooms have a private bathroom, and the hotels will be located within relatively easy walking distance of the main Christmas markets in each city. There are a maximum of 8 single rooms available.

Physical Demand

MODERATE

This trip includes city walking tours, train travel between cities, public transportation, Christmas markets, historic streets, and full days of exploration. Guests should be comfortable walking for up to 3 hours at a time, including on cobblestones, uneven streets, stairs, and station platforms. There may also be periods of standing while visiting markets, workshops, and other attractions.

Because this tour travels by train, guests should be comfortable moving through busy train stations and boarding trains with a small day bag. On the main travel days between Strasbourg, Cologne, and Brussels, your larger luggage will be transferred separately, so you will not need to carry it through the stations. This trip is best suited for women who enjoy active city travel and can comfortably handle walking, stairs, public transport, winter weather, and full days out exploring.

Ready to Book Your Adventure?

Women Travel Tribe

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Website: womentraveltribe.com
Tour Details: womentraveltribe.com/tours/european-christmas-markets-dec-2028-c

Small group adventures designed specifically for women 50+
Experience the world with like-minded travelers!