Christmas market river cruises: Rhine low-water days fall from 13 in 100 in November to under 3 in 100 in December, 26 years of gauge records show

Wednesday 25 November, 2026

On the Danube near Passau it falls from 13 to 6 in 100, after 2026 set new lows on both in records back to 2000

Key facts

- **Finding:** 2000 to 2025, the Rhine at Kaub was below its low-water mark on 13 in 100 November days and 2.6 in 100 December days; the Danube at Hofkirchen on 13 and 6.0
- **2026:** both gauges hit their lowest daily average in records back to 2000: Kaub -5 cm, Hofkirchen 129 cm (to 18 October)
- **Contact:** River Cruise Escapes, Lower Ground Floor, 82A Poole Road, Westbourne, Bournemouth BH4 9DZ · 0333 049 9393 · press@rivercruiseescapes.co.uk

BOURNEMOUTH, 25 November 2026

As Christmas market cruises sail the Rhine and Danube from late November into December, 26 years of official gauge readings show December has had fewer low-water days than November on both rivers. On the Rhine it has had about a fifth as many.

From 2000 to 2025, the Rhine gauge at Kaub had a daily average under 77 cm, the low-water mark set by Germany's Waterways and Shipping Administration (WSV), on 13 in 100 November days. In December it was 2.6 in 100. On the Danube at Hofkirchen, near Passau, days under the WSV's 207 cm mark fell from 13 in 100 in November to 6.0 in December.

The count follows a year of new lows in this data. To 18 October, Kaub's lowest daily average in 2026 was -5 cm. The lowest before that, in records that start in 2000, was 25 cm in 2018. Hofkirchen fell to 129 cm, below 155 cm in 2022, and had already spent 163 days under its mark, more than in any full year of the records (the previous most was 126, in 2018).

River Cruise Escapes counted the raw 15-minute readings the WSV publishes through PEGELONLINE. A gauge reading is not water depth, no official reading stops a cruise, and past days are not a forecast.

"This year took both rivers lower than anything in our records, so it's fair to ask about December," said Dan Jaques, Editor of River Cruise Escapes. "Over 26 years, December has had fewer low-water days than November on both rivers. That's a record, not a promise, so if you're booked, ask your cruise line in writing what happens if the river is low that week."

Notes to editors

- Method, tables, charts and CSVs: https://rivercruiseescapes.co.uk/press/ (German gauges only; raw data unchecked by the operator).
- Credit: "Source: River Cruise Escapes own data 2026, rivercruiseescapes.co.uk/press/". Data: WSV, PEGELONLINE, dl-de/zero-2-0.

About River Cruise Escapes
River Cruise Escapes is an independent guide to river cruising on the Nile, Rhine and Danube, built on its own analysis of public weather, river and eclipse records. Enquiries are handled by a UK travel agency that holds an ATOL licence.

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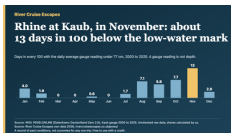
Media contact
Dan Jaques, Editor

Media:





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River Cruise Escapes
Lower Ground Floor, 82A Poole Road, Westbourne, Bournemouth BH4 9DZ
0333 049 9393
press@rivercruiseescapes.co.uk
https://rivercruiseescapes.co.uk/press/

Company Contact:

River Cruise Escapes

T. 0333 049 9393
E. press@rivercruiseescapes.co.uk
W. https://www.rivercruiseescapes.co.uk/

Additional Contact(s):
Dan Jaques, Editor, press@rivercruiseescapes.co.uk
Lower Ground Floor, 82A Poole Road, Westbourne, Bournemouth BH4 9DZ

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