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Athens	\$979	Jakarta	\$190	Rome	\$958
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Bangkok	\$229	Los Angeles	\$1,082	Shanghai	\$539
Beijing	\$539	Melbourne	\$778	Sydney	\$847
Brisbane	\$808	Mumbai	\$495	Taipei	\$459
Frankfurt	\$983	Paris	\$1,011	Tokyo	\$559
Hong Kong	\$364	Perth	\$648	Zurich	\$979

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3D Italy Pass	fr \$252
4D Swiss Pass	fr \$286
One way Eurostar	fr \$110

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6D Italy	fr \$1,948

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5D Gold Coast	fr \$1,148

Land Tour	10% OFF
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9D Best of Morocco	fr \$2,128
Contiki	Additional 5% OFF
8D Aegean Cruise	fr \$938
10D European Horizon	fr \$1,468

Club Med	2 nd Person Stays FREE	
1 st Adult	2 nd Adult	
5D Bali	fr \$1,605	fr \$565
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2D Bintan	fr \$128
3D Hong Kong	\$20 OFF per couple fr \$428
3D Angkor Wat	\$20 OFF per couple fr \$388
3D Bali	\$20 OFF per couple fr \$358
3D Taipei	\$40 OFF per couple fr \$548
3D Tokyo	\$60 OFF per couple fr \$728
5D Maldives	\$80 OFF per couple fr \$1,498

Malaysia

3D Langkawi	fr \$278
3D Redang	fr \$358

India

6D Golden Triangle	fr \$1,178
8D Colourful Kerala	fr \$1,398

Thailand

3D Bangkok	fr \$218
3D Phuket	fr \$288
3D Chiangmai	fr \$498
3D Koh Samui	3 rd Night FREE fr \$468

Cruises

Princess Cruises	Onboard credit up to \$250 per cabin
7D Mexico Riviera	fr \$748
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Cunard	
12D Jewel of the Mediterranean	fr \$3,682
9D Canada & New England	fr \$3,588

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TOUR DE DRESDEN

Experience the city as its people do — on a bicycle BY NELLIE HUANG



Special effect: Dresden's baroque edifices look even more stunning when draped in snow.

Photos: Nellie Huang

WIND whips through my hair as I leisurely pedal along Dresden's main drag, the River Elbe promenade. It's winter and the entire city is draped in white from last night's snowfall.

As I pause to take in the sights, my bicycle skids on the icy pathway.

"Let's hope it doesn't snow today," says my guide Heiko. "It might be too slippery to cycle then."

I secretly hope otherwise. The German city's baroque buildings are even more stunning capped in white. Some of them contain Europe's most valuable treasures and artworks, earning Dresden the name "Florence of the Elbe".

Criss-cross the city on two wheels

The city is no static museum, however. Last year, a four-lane bridge was built over the river, stripping the Elbe Valley of its Unesco World Heritage Site status. The rationale was to ease traffic congestion but the bridge remains controversial nevertheless.

We pedal along Dresden's main cycle route, the Elbe Cycle Path, which winds through the city's traffic-free river banks, and past photo-worthy edifices and green Elbe meadows. From the river's edge, I snap a few shots of Dresden's striking silhouette — an artful phalanx of gothic gargoyles and black domes poking into the sky.

"This is the best spot to view the city," Heiko says, before leading me across the Augustusbrücke Bridge to the Old Town in the southern bank.

UrBike Project

Riding past strollers and street artists, I begin to understand the rationale behind Dresden's UrBike efforts. Thanks to this urban project, cycling has been integrated into Dresden's culture, creating a growing

biking scene in the city. Detailed cycling maps are easily available and cycle lanes are common along the city's thoroughfare. It's no surprise that even in the chilly weather, there are many other red-cheeked cyclists like me.

Rolling into the Old Town

We pass snow-laden greenery and rusty sculptures that sit on the embankment before leaving the cycle path to brave Dresden's traffic. Our first stop: Altstadt (Old Town). The historic district houses the city's most important buildings and museums, congregating Dresden's attractions in one area.

Circling around Neumarkt, the heart of the Old Town, I struggle to keep my bicycle from wobbling on the cobbled stone path. The bustling city square hides its tragic past behind Renaissance towers and vibrant outdoor cafes.

It's a bit of a miracle that the square and surrounding monuments look like this because Dresden was bombed to a heap of rubble during WWII.

The buildings in the Old Town have since been restored to their former glory, including the nearby Frauenkirche (Church of Our Lady). The church was pieced to-



Photo op: Larger-than-life sculptures adorn buildings.

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gether like a jigsaw puzzle using as many of the original stones as possible. Visitors can still see the lighter-coloured slabs among the dark original ones, a reminder of the city's wounded past.

We circle around the square before swerving out onto Augustusstrasse Street. It is flanked by the Furstenzug wall, which, with its depiction of German royalty on their horses, is the largest porcelain mosaic mural in the world.

At the next street corner is the Saxony region's biggest Catholic church, the baroque Hofkirche. Larger-than-life gargoyles perch on its dark facade, guarding the city from above.

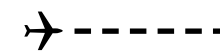
Across the street stands the Residenzschloss Palace, the former residence of the royal family. We lock our bikes in the alleyway and head into the palace's main draw — Grunes Gewolbe (Green Vault) — where we can get a glimpse of artworks from the royal collection.

Riding into the sunset

By now, the sun is fading. As I zigzag through traffic back to the riverfront, snowflakes fall and swirl around me.

I look back at the city, from the same spot where we set off, and see a sea of white covering the skyline. As we head through the snow into the last strand of sunlight, I realise that rain or shine, there's really no better way to see the city than on two wheels.

[traveller@mediacorp.com.sg]



Cycling has been integrated into Dresden's culture, creating a growing biking scene in the city ... even in the chilly weather, there are many other red-cheeked cyclists like me.



Augustusstrasse Street

Rent-a-bike

• Agentur Engel Reissen (www.engel-fahradreisen.de) organises guided bike tours around the city and beyond. Tours cost around €12 (\$23) for 2 to 3 hours. Bike rental rates: €8/half-day and €12/full day.

• NextBike (www.nextbike.de) lets you pick up or drop off bicycles at various points around the city. Rates: €1/hour or €8/24 hours.

• Radsport Paeperer (www.radsport-paeperer.de) arranges guided bike tours in the city and long-distance tours nearby. Bike rental rates: €6.5/half-day, €8.5/full day and €51/week.

• Deutsch Bahn (www.callabike.de), the German train company, allows you to pick up bikes from major train stations and return them using the "Call A Bike" system. Rates: €0.08/min or €9/24 hours.

• Adventure Bike Holidays (www.bikeholidays.eu) arranges five-day country biking tours from Dresden to Prague, Czech Republic. Prices (€530 to €770) include accommodation and food.



Trip Notes

Go: Singapore Airlines flies from Singapore to Dresden with one stop-over. A return airfare costs about \$1,500. The best time to visit Dresden is in late spring (May/June) and early autumn (October) when temperatures are pleasant.

Beyond the city: Explore the villages in the outskirts of Dresden by bike or train. Don't miss Stolpen's famed hilltop castle and Saxon Switzerland National Park. The latter can be reached via Elbe Cycle Path. The biking distance is around 55km.

Visit: Read about Dresden's latest happenings on www.dresden.de. UrBike Project details can be found on www.urbike.net. For more on Dresden's cycling network, visit www.vvo-online.de.

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