

OUR ULTIMATE 25 SMALL SHIP & EXPEDITION CRUISE EXPERIENCES

Not all travel experiences are equal, and some are just downright special. If you are looking for a unique destination (or a unique way to see a destination), this is the list for you...

1 THE KIMBERLEY

It's hard to understate the grand scale of the Kimberley region of North Western Australia. From the phenomenal red/pink/gold layered rock formations, to the abundance of wildlife both in and out of the water, this vast land will capture your heart.

WHEN CAN I GO: Early season April/May for the best waterfalls, mid-season June/July/August for more moderate temperatures and late season September for whales and marine life.

WHO WITH: Kimberley Quest, True North, Silversea Expeditions, Aurora Expeditions & PONANT



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2 HAWAIIAN ISLANDS

The volcanic islands in this chain are a beautiful masterpiece in scenery, wildlife and culture. Giant pacific manta ray and friendly sea turtles make this their home along with a local culture of song and friendship. Explore the Islands on a small ship where you can paddle, kayak, hike and snorkel your way around. There is amazing animal, plant and marine life above and below the water's surface.

WHEN CAN I GO: Year round

WHO WITH: UnCruise Adventures



3 AMAZON RIVER

The thought of hacking your way through the Amazon jungle with a machete isn't far from the truth in this remote and yet accessible destination. Stretching from Brazil in the east and spreading across South America all the way to Peru and Ecuador, there are many ways to experience this extraordinary ecosystem that feeds about 20% of the world's oxygen. Search for creatures like the scarlet macaw, the pink amazon dolphin and squirrel monkeys on the banks of Amazonia.

WHEN CAN I GO: High Water (December to May- a little cooler - more water) or Low Water (June to November - warmer, but access to jungle trails as less water)

WHO WITH: Lindblad Expedition-National Geographic (from Iquitos, Peru), PONANT (from Manaus, Brazil), Amazon Nature Tours (from Manaus, Brazil) & Aqua Expeditions (Iquitos, Peru)





4 MELANESIA & POLYNESIA

I bet you think you have been there and done that right? You may have swung past a couple of islands in your time, but there is a whole host of white sandy shores inhabited by ancient peoples to discover in the remote reaches of the South Pacific. What about an encounter with happy Cook Islanders? Or snorkelling coral reefs in Kiribati?

WHEN CAN I GO: Year-round but preferred season is April to September for more comfortable temperatures.

WHO WITH: PONANT, Lindblad Expeditions-National Geographic, Silversea Expeditions, Regent Seven Seas & Hapag-Lloyd Cruises

5 THE MEKONG RIVER

With the second highest level of biodiversity on the planet, the mighty Mekong River is your close-to-home 'Garden of Eden'. For thousands of years people have harvested the bounty of this region making a visit to the Mekong River a cultural and ecological must for any traveller. River cruises travel between Vietnam and Cambodia ensuring delicious food and terrific shopping along the way.

WHEN CAN I GO: Low water: Mid January to September. High water Mid-September to December. (Note that most ships do not operate in May)

WHO WITH: Pandaw, Aqua Expeditions and Jayavarman & Jahan (Heritage Line)



6 REMOTE INDONESIA

Far more than Bali and Jakarta and home to some of the world's most spectacular marine national parks, Indonesia is as diverse as it is beautiful. Snorkelling in the waters of Raja Ampat cannot be under-estimated, nor the ancient traditional crafts and skills of the friendly locals - many of whom rarely ever see westerners. Indonesia is also home to the dragons of komodo, colourful exotic birds and learning to snorkel at Pink Beach will change your life...

WHEN CAN I GO: Year-round, however most expeditions operate in January-April

WHO WITH: Hapag-Lloyd Cruises, Silversea Expeditions, PONANT & Star Clippers

7 RUSSIAN FAR EAST

The Russian Far East is an incredibly remote and amazing place. See tufted and horned puffins, parakeet, whiskered and rhinoceros auklets, as well as spectacled and pigeon guillemots. You can also expect to see fin, sperm and humpback whales as well as orca (killer whale), baird's beaked-whale and dall's porpoise, walrus, and kamchatka brown bear. Expedition cruising is also the perfect style of travel for the Russian Far East, where there are virtually no roads and very little infrastructure. Venture with expert naturalists, historians and ornithologists where few have gone before.

WHEN CAN I GO: May to September

WHO WITH: PONANT, Silversea Expeditions & Heritage Expeditions



8 GALAPAGOS

These are the islands that changed Charles Darwin's thinking about natural history and set about a chain of events that would alter scientific thought for generations to come. Unique in bird, wildlife and marine species - a visit to the Galapagos is a must for all nature lovers.

WHEN CAN I GO: Year-round with cooler temperatures from June-November

WHO WITH: Royal Galapagos, Silversea Expeditions, G Adventures & Lindblad Expeditions-National Geographic



9 RIVERS OF CENTRAL EUROPE

A river cruise in Europe is hugely popular with Australians for several good reasons. One - it makes everything easily accessible, Two - all your sightseeing is prepared in advance and Three - this is one of the world's most beautiful backdrops, rich with history and significance. From Parliament House on the banks of Budapest to the medieval architecture of Germany, scattered with seasonal flowers and meandering walks to the Danube is just pure romance.

WHEN CAN I GO: May to September

WHO WITH: Crystal River Cruises & Riviera Travel River Cruises

10 JAPAN

For many centuries Japan closed its borders to foreigners (Sakoku) from 1633 to 1853 and this long period of isolation has created some of the most unique traditions, architectural styles and cultural influences of anywhere in Asia. Whilst being a place of uncommon beauty, the Japanese love for nature and the taming of it, has left a lasting legacy that is pure joy to discover.

WHEN CAN I GO: March to October

WHO WITH: Windstar Cruises, Seabourn, Silversea Expeditions, Hapag-Lloyd Cruises & PONANT



11 ADRIATIC & AEGEAN SEAS

The Mediterranean conjures up images of pebbled beaches with scarf-wearing Grace Kelly types swanning about on a luxury yachts. And while that's true for many of the glitterati cities dotted on its coastline, the Mediterranean is so much more. History buffs can lose days in the pursuit of lost treasures, while foodies sample local delicacies. For walkers there are cobblestone alleys to get lost in and the whole area is a photographers dream...

WHEN CAN I GO: Year round however more cruises operate between May to September

WHO WITH: Windstar Cruises, Seabourn, Star Clippers, Silversea, Peregrine Adventures, PONANT, Katarina Line and Crystal Cruises

12 CROATIA & DALMATION COAST

Croatia declared its independence from Yugoslavia in 1991 and struggled through a terrible war until 1995 where it took many years for the country to regain its footing as the tourist destination it deserves. This spectacular country hugs the famous 'Dalmatian Coast' and is dotted with islets and channels of deep blue water. There are lakes, Roman ruins and culinary treats awaiting you in the Land of 1000 Islands...

WHEN CAN I GO: May to September

WHO WITH: Regent Seven Seas, Crystal Cruises, Seabourn, Silversea, Hapag-Lloyd Cruises, Variety Cruises, Star Clippers, Katarina Line, Peregrine Adventures & PONANT



©Andrew Stewart

13 CANADIAN ARCTIC & GREENLAND

Narwhal, whale, polar bears and arctic fox make the Canadian Arctic and Greenland their homes. The Inuit people's traditions, folklore and legacy of conservation will inspire you to preserve this magnificent vast land for the next generation. Sail past an iceberg while sipping your hot chocolate and marvel at how blessed we are to live on this planet.

WHEN CAN I GO: May to September

WHO WITH: Silversea Expeditions, Hapag-Lloyd Cruises, PONANT & Adventure Canada



14 ALASKA

Alaska is on most people's bucket list, and for good reason. It's a breathtaking part of the world where the wildlife is prolific, allowing you to get up close and personal to whales, brown bears (from a safe distance!), seals, orcas, bald eagles and so much more. Kayak, hike, cruise past the many glaciers and soak in a hot tub under the stars. Choose from an adventure cruise or ultimate luxury, the choice is yours.

WHEN CAN I GO: April to September each year

WHO WITH: Windstar Cruises, Silversea, Seabourn, PONANT, American Cruise Lines & UnCruise Adventures

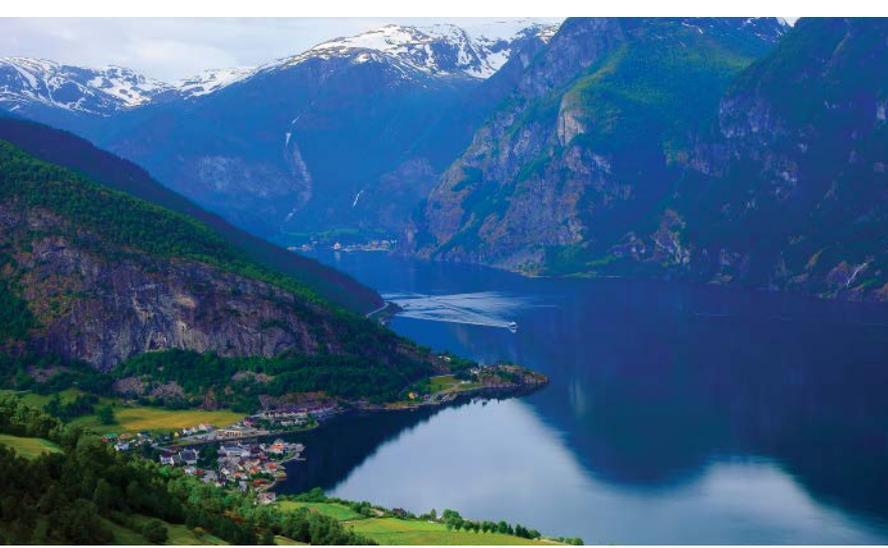


15 AMERICA'S SOUTH & THE MIGHTY MISSISSIPPI

Jazz, Rhythm & Blues or just plain Honky Tonk - America's South is a melting pot of musical styles and unique livin'. The Mississippi River, home to the tales of Huck Finn, has a huge meandering trail of towns and cities along its banks to explore. If you can do it by paddlewheeler - all the better! Discover the vibrant music scene, history, and culture and explore historic towns and beautiful gardens.

WHEN CAN I GO: Year round

WHO WITH: American Queen Steamboat Company & American Cruise Lines



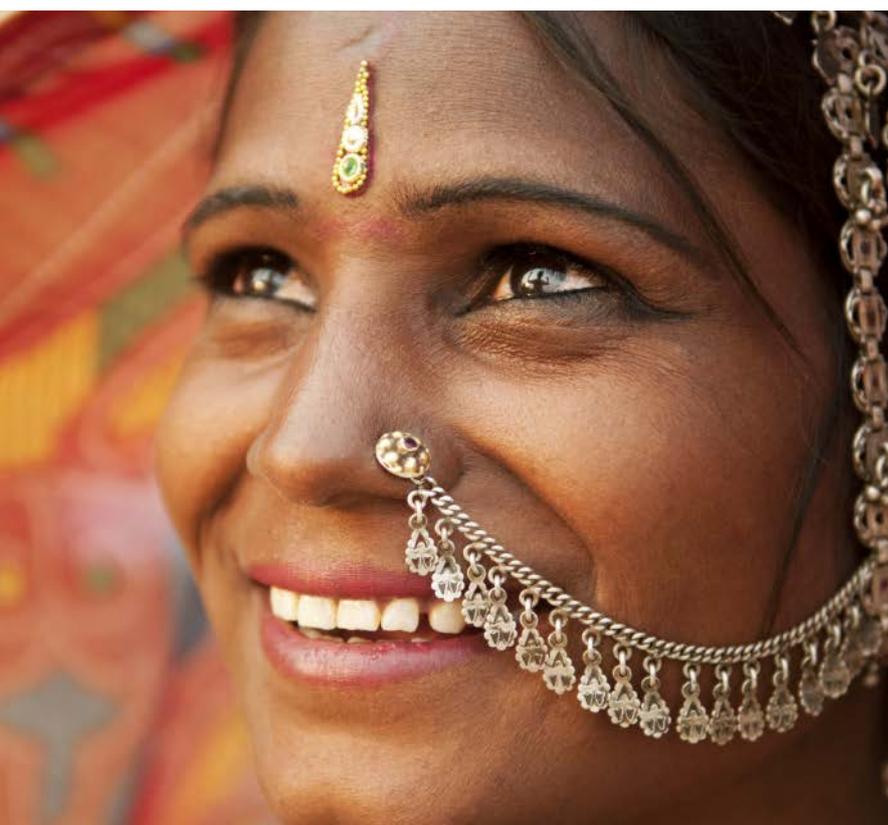
16 NORWEGIAN FJORDS

This Scandinavian country has always been about drama.

Dramatic deep fjords, picturesque waterfalls and colourful towns dot this rugged land. Now a long way removed from its Viking heritage, Norwegians have one of Europe's most peaceful ways of modern life.

WHEN CAN I GO: May to September for optimum access

WHO WITH: Silversea, Seabourn, Crystal Cruises, PONANT, G Adventures & Lindblad Expeditions - National Geographic



17 RIVERS OF INDIA: THE GANGES & THE BRAHMAPUTRA

The Ganges flows through the nations of India and Bangladesh. This sacred river gives you the opportunity to visit remote villages, temples, forts and monuments in this fascinating, colourful, and culturally rich part of India. Cruise up to Varanasi (August & September), known as the City of Light, one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities of the world, dating back to 3000 years and an important religious site for Hindus. The Brahmaputra River, located in North-East of India, is one of the world's undiscovered safari destinations. Difficult to traverse by road and with limited facilities, the natural choice is a river cruise. Where else in the world can you enjoy a barbeque on the banks of the river with rhino to the right, elephants to the left and Bengal tigers hidden nearby?

WHEN CAN I GO: The Ganges: March to September. The Brahmaputra: September to April

WHO WITH: Pandaw, G Adventures, Assam Bengal Navigation & Mahabaahu

18 MEXICO'S SEA OF CORTEZ

The UNESCO World

Heritage Site of the Sea of Cortez (aka The Gulf of California) has the widest variety of whales and dolphins on the planet, and is home to 900 species of fish. There are seabirds, whale sharks and many rare and endangered species that call this special place home. Getting your sea legs is easy too—relax with toes in the sand, on a hike, or atop a mule through the canyons of Baja. Land and sea are a step, or kayak, away. Come and see Jacques Cousteau's 'Aquarium of the World'.

WHEN CAN I GO: November to March

WHO WITH: Lindblad Expeditions-National Geographic, PONANT & UnCruise Adventures





19 PATAGONIA

Explore the "end of the world" - cruising pristine waterways of Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego at the bottom end of South America. Encounter magnificent glaciers, the fantastic Patagonian scenery, elephant seals, dolphins and whales. Birdlife is rich and varied, from iconic species like the mighty albatross, kelp goose and caracara falcon to the cute little magellanic and majestic king penguins.

WHEN CAN I GO: September to April
WHO WITH: Seabourn, PONANT, Lindblad Expeditions-National Geographic & Australis.

©SPatton



20 NOVA SCOTIA & NEW ENGLAND

The east and west of Canada couldn't really be more different. Surprisingly, the shores on Canada's East Coast have relatively warm water and combined with a strong Celtic heritage and colour-changing forestation, this region is as warm and inviting as Clam chowder...

WHEN CAN I GO: May to October (end season for Autumn colours)
WHO WITH: Windstar Cruises, Victory Cruise Lines, Oceania Cruises, Seabourn, Silversea, Crystal Cruises, Regent Seven Seas, Pearl Seas Cruises & American Cruise Lines



21 ICELAND

Probably the hottest cool climate destination. Iceland's breathtaking landscapes, wide open spaces and quirky troll loving people are a winning combination for travellers each year. While place names can be a challenging mouthful, remember that a picture is worth 1000 words.

WHEN CAN I GO: June to September
WHO WITH: Regent Seven Seas, Seabourn, Silversea Expeditions, Variety Cruises, G Adventures, Lindblad Expeditions-National Geographic, PONANT & Adventure Canada

22 FRENCH RIVERS & CANALS

No trip to Europe is complete without a smooth ride down one of France's beautiful rivers and canals. Like everything in France, they are the epitome of style. Dotted with cobblestone villages and lined with Napoleonic tree-lined avenues, rural France is a world away from the hustle and bustle of Paris. Once you embark on your first river adventure, it will be hard to stop...

WHEN CAN I GO: April to October
WHO WITH: European Waterways (skipped barge cruises), Locaboat Holidays (self-drive), Le Boat (self-drive) & Riviera Travel River Cruises (European River cruising)





©Michelle Valberg

23 THE NORTHWEST PASSAGE

One of the world's last frontiers, the Northwest Passage is only accessible for a very short time each year and it takes a specialist expedition ship to handle the unique conditions. Home to polar bear, arctic fox and many more rare and endangered species, the Canadian Arctic and Greenland draws you in and here begins the love affair of a lifetime. See quaint villages, dramatic fjords, and calving glaciers you can only experience on an expedition ship. To sail the Northwest Passage is to sail living history.

WHEN CAN I GO: August and September

WHO WITH: Silversea Expeditions, Hapag-Lloyd Cruises, PONANT & Adventure Canada

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NEW ZEALAND & THE SUBANTARCTICS

Home to as many king penguins as Antarctica's South Georgia and boasting the claim of being the world's least visited destination, those privileged few who do wander the islands below New Zealand are in for a real treat. Ten species of southern albatross nest here, 4.5 ton southern elephant seals live here and the entire area is a combination of National Parks and UNESCO sites.

WHEN CAN I GO: December to February

WHO WITH: Heritage Expeditions, PONANT & Silversea Expeditions



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25 ANTARCTICA

Ice, water and wildlife make up the frozen land we know as Antarctica. The notable absence of human interference is perhaps the most wonderful thing about this far southern polar region. Its ever changing landscape attracts thousands of visitors each year - let it change your life too. See snow-covered mountains and icebergs. Plus gentoo, adelie, macaroni and chinstrap penguins plus elephant seals and magnificent whales. There is also 46 species of birds in Antarctica!

WHEN CAN I GO: November to March

WHO WITH: Silversea Expeditions, Hapag-Lloyd Cruises, PONANT, Polar Latitudes, G Adventures & Lindblad Expeditions-National Geographic & Aurora Expeditions



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