

CRUISING IS BACK

IT'S TIME TO SET SAIL ON THE DEEP BLUE SEA ENJOYING
LUXURY CRUISES TO BAREFOOT EXCURSIONS

BY ANNITA STOKES THOMAS



The 2020 pandemic may have dampened the cruise industry, but sailing the deep blue sea is showing a big comeback. Getting away has never been better than now, with several options for curating a memorable experience for you and your travel buddies. From ultra-luxury to barefoot experiences, the cruise world has an ideal itinerary for couples, a girlfriend's getaway, a guy's trip, or going solo.



Kontiki Expeditions

Kontiki Expeditions is where Neo-luxury meets adventure aboard the M/Y Kontiki Wayra, a lavish boutique yacht providing the unique opportunity to explore Ecuador up close and personal. Sailing along the country's lesser-traveled coastline, Kontiki offers opulent accommodations, superior amenities, and immersive excursions that feature natural and cultural experiences. With an emphasis on sustainable travel, modern luxury, and authentic experiences, Kontiki Expeditions gives you a truly unforgettable vacation.

The boat is home to nine luxury staterooms and accommodates up to 18 guests. Each stateroom offers views of the ocean, walk-in showers, internet service, and lush, comfy bedding. With a mission to support local communities, many contemporary decor items onboard are from local artists. A sundeck up top with a jacuzzi and bar will be your spot after a day of cultural experiences. Or schedule a spa treatment or workout in the fitness area.

The dining area offers a view of your surroundings with large windows to watch the shore and passing wildlife. At the same time, you enjoy gourmet meals prepared by local chefs. A special treat onboard the Kontiki M/Y Wayra is the array of water toys, such as kayaks, paddleboards, and snorkeling gear. Kontiki Expeditions is the first luxury yacht listed with the Small Hotels of the World.

The itinerary includes stopping in several coastal towns and islands, including Isla de la Plata, Puerto López, Bahía de Caráquez, Valdivia, and San Mateo. From purification rituals to cultural demonstrations, cooking classes, and hat weaving, there are plenty of ways to experience traditional Ecuadorian culture.

Kontiki Expeditions is a unique and exciting way to see Ecuador. But more importantly, it's an inclusive travel opportunity that caters to various experiences - from adventure to cultural travel, black travel, luxury travel, and baby boomer travel; there truly is something for everyone.

www.kontikiexpeditions.com



Scenic Luxury Cruises

Scenic luxury cruises take splendor on the high seas to the next level with a journey through the waters of the Sea of Cortez. The biodiverse calm blue waters are sometimes called “The Aquarium of the world,” where lush mangrove forests brush the shores, and pristine beaches greet you along the coast.

Each day the crew takes you to one of the beautiful islands in the vibrant archipelago, where you can snorkel in the warm sea, kayak along the coastlines, or enjoy spotting wildlife in their natural habitat. There is also

plenty of unique cacti on the sandy islands where the desert meets the coastline. Scenic’s Discovery Yacht, The Eclipse, offers the best way to explore this UNESCO World Heritage site by helicopter, submarine, zodiac boat, or kayak. Bring along your binoculars because looking for the tell-tale spray of water from the ocean means the majestic Blue fin and Sperm whales are in the vicinity. After leaving Loreto, Mexico, you may visit: Isla San Marcos, Isla Tortuga, Isla Angel de la Guarda, Isla Coronados, and Isla Parida.

All verandah Suites give you an uninterrupted view of the water as you sail the Sea of Cortez. The spacious 228 guests yacht may encourage you to stay onboard to enjoy the long list of amenities. The ultra-luxury experience of Butler service for each stateroom means attention to your every need. There are ten dining experiences, from casual to fine dining, and complimentary beverages daily, every day.
www.scenicusa.com



Star Clippers

If you have wondered about barefoot cruises and if they exist with class, style, and loads of fun, the answer is yes. Star Clippers and their Tall Ships give you a nostalgic experience of traveling by sea along the coast of Costa Rica. The wooden ship has amenities of the golden days of journeys on the high seas. You’ll spend hours of fascination looking up to take in the massive sails and masts as the crew pull and tie the ropes. Take advantage of the opportunity to help raise the sails. The crew will welcome you to join in the fun and help.

What’s so special about sailing, you may ask. There is the exhilarating feel of the breeze on your face and the wind in your hair as the gentle sway of the ship sails along the coast. Costa Rica is the perfect destination for discovering the millions of species calling the tropical forest home. It is one of the most biodiverse countries in the world. You’ll enjoy exploring several ports as you head out from Puntarenas to Quepos, Golfito, Playa Panama - Bahia Culebra, Bahia Potrero, and Islas Tortugas.

The country’s infectious and passionate attention to conservation ensures you’ll have many unique opportunities to discover one of the leading wildlife attractions - troops of Howler Monkeys living in their natural habitat. Hike through a canopy forest or enjoy the sunshine on the beach; there is something unique each day to see and do, including staying onboard the fabulous Star Clipper ship.
www.starclippers.com

Emerald Cruising

River cruising is all about the ports. You may have heard this before; a leisurely journey along the rivers is exciting. Emerald Cruises Star-Ship, Emerald Liberté, is specifically commissioned to navigate the Rhône and Saône rivers in France, with stops in Avignon, Tournon, Lyon, and Aries, highlighting the very best of the area. You will visit small towns, villages, and historical sites that larger ships cannot maneuver and tour motor coaches do not include on their itineraries.

Enjoy the scenery and onboard entertainment during your seven-day excursion along the historic rivers of France. Beautiful staterooms with floor-to-ceiling windows give you a view of the world cruising along the rivers. Onboard the ship, first-class service is the name of the game.
www.emeraldcrucises.com

