

Steal OF A DEAL



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We're offering our most unbeatable deals ever, like **up to 83% off** at the all-inclusive **Royalton Splash Punta Cana Resort & Spa**. Valid for booking through 3/18/21 with travel through 12/23/21.

Did you know every ship has a godmother?

This nautical tradition includes choosing a prominent woman – or in the case of Majestic Princess® professional basketball player Yao Ming as godparent – to officially name the vessel at the launch ceremony and smash a bottle of Champagne against the bow. Famous godmothers include Diana Princess of Wales, Audrey Hepburn, Margaret Thatcher, Sophia Loren and Her Royal Highness The Duchess of Cambridge.

HISTORY QUIZ

1. Who was *Time* magazine's first man of the year?
2. Who was the first American to orbit the earth?
3. What was the first state to ratify the Constitution?
4. What Ivey League University administers the Pulitzer Prize?
5. Alaska and Hawaii were the last two states admitted to the Union. Which was #48?
- 6A. Famous quotes: "I regret that I have only but one life to give for my country."
B. "I have not yet begun to fight."
7. Which state is the only one that borders only one other state?
8. Where is the oldest medical school in the United States?

(Answers next week)

The logo for the Garden State Film Festival is circular with a film camera in the center. The text "GARDEN STATE FILM FESTIVAL" is written around the perimeter, and the website "www.gsff.org" is at the bottom.

NEW JERSEY'S PREMIER INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL®
GARDEN STATE FILM FESTIVAL
LIVE STREAM • MARCH 23-28, 2021
TICKETS AT GSFF.ORG

A scenic view of a desert landscape in Arizona, featuring layered red rock formations under a blue sky with light clouds. A small white structure is visible in the distance.

Rediscover
open spaces
ARIZONA
Rediscover AZ

WHICH WAY SHOULD I GO?

I believe this road sign was a perfect example of how I felt my life was going the past few months. You?



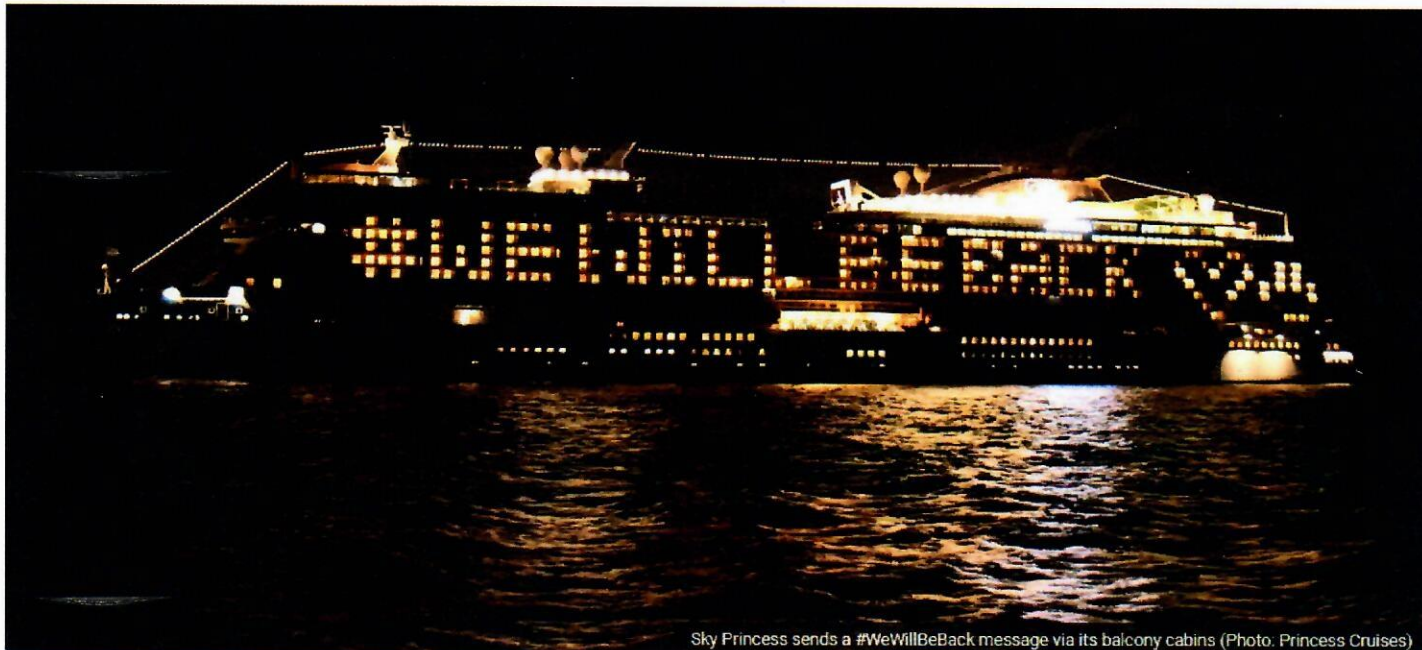
Private Rooms on Amtrak's Auto Train Are Just \$109 Right Now



Here's what an Auto Train ride looks like today: For **just \$9 one-way** (nonrefundable sale price: March 2–12), coach passengers get a reclining seat, free Wi-Fi, and complimentary continental breakfast; gone are the complimentary dinners, but there's a café where you can buy hot and fresh meals, snacks, and beverages while mingling with fellow passengers six feet apart. You're only allowed a carry-on bag in coach; the rest of your luggage will be "stowed" in your car.

Roomettes (on sale, from \$109 or \$159 for two passengers) seat and sleep two adults comfortably; breakfast, lunch, and dinner are included, as well as access to a private bathroom and shower in that car. Seats turn into one bed while another bed drops down, all with pillows and linens. If you feel clueless, a dedicated sleeper car attendant will take care of everything: meal reservations, carrying your bags, turndown service.

Upgrade to a **bedroom (on sale, from \$249 or \$299 for two passengers)** and you get double the space in a roomette, plus an in-room shower and bathroom. It still sleeps up to two adults, though a toddler would fit comfortably. You could also opt for a **family bedroom (from \$549)**, which sleeps two adults and two kids in a traincar-wide room.



Sky Princess sends a #WeWillBeBack message via its balcony cabins (Photo: Princess Cruises)

Fully Vaccinated People Can Gather Without Masks, CDC Says

Fully vaccinated Americans can gather with other vaccinated people indoors without wearing a mask or social distancing, according to long-awaited guidance from federal health officials. The recommendations also say that vaccinated people can come together in the same way—in a single household—with people considered at low-risk for severe disease, such as in the case of vaccinated grandparents visiting healthy children and grandchildren.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced the guidance Monday, March 8. The guidance is designed to address a growing demand, as more adults have been getting vaccinated and wondering if it gives them greater freedom to visit family members, travel, or do other things like they did before the COVID-19 pandemic swept the world last year.

The CDC is continuing to recommend that fully vaccinated people still wear [well-fitted masks](#), avoid large gatherings, and physically distance themselves from others when out in public. The CDC also advised vaccinated people to get tested if they develop symptoms that could be related to COVID-19.

Officials say a person is considered fully vaccinated two weeks after receiving the last required dose of vaccine. About 31 million Americans—or only about 9 percent of the U.S. population—have been fully vaccinated with a federally authorized COVID-19 vaccine so far, according to the CDC.

Authorized vaccine doses first became available in December, and they were products that required two doses spaced weeks apart. But since January, a small but growing number of Americans have been fully vaccinated, and have been asking questions like: Do I still have to wear a mask? Can I go to a bar now? Can I finally see my grandchildren?

The guidance was “welcome news to a nation that is understandably tired of the pandemic and longs to safely resume normal activities,” said Dr. Richard Besser, president and CEO of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and a former acting director of the CDC.

“I hope that this new guidance provides the momentum for everyone to get vaccinated when they can and gives states the patience to follow the public health roadmap needed to reopen their economies and communities safely,” said Besser, in a statement.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY NONNI!



Speaking of grandchildren, of whom I am known as Nonni, I am so looking forward to be able to finally experience Christmas with them.

I received this spectacular drawing from my granddaughter Claire wishing me a happy birthday; along with her little sister Nora and my cat Siren.

These years go so quickly and I hope everyone is able to see their families as things start to become more ‘normal’.

XOXO Thank you Claire. I love you and your sister, Nora and can’t wait to see you soon!

ICELAND UPDATE

Iceland has begun the process of reopening its society, making it one of the first in **Europe** to do so. Earlier this week, this island-country reopened bars and gyms for individuals and it plans to soon allow people to attend concerts, theater performances and religious services.

Iceland is the only country in Europe that is rated fully “green.” This means Iceland has a **COVID-19** positivity rate under 4 percent. Iceland’s ability to retain the low positivity rate, according to experts, can be attributed to its “relative isolation,” as well as its “widespread testing and data analysis to track the spread of the virus” and its testing and quarantining of all arrivals.

Iceland’s chief epidemiologist said that the low rate does not mean the country has fully eliminated the virus in the community, meaning “we need to proceed carefully”.

So, here’s what locals and travelers can expect: Under the new regulations, bars are now allowed to open until 10 p.m. each night. Cafés and restaurants have already been opened. The limits for indoor arts performances and religious services were increased from 100 to 150 people.

Tuscan Chicken Skillet

Ingredients:

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
12 ounces fettuccine
4 slices bacon, chopped
1 pound chicken tenders, cut into 1-inch pieces
2 cloves garlic, minced
4 plum tomatoes, chopped
1 cup heavy cream
5 ounces baby spinach
3/4 cup grated Parmesan
3 tablespoons chopped fresh basil

Directions:

- 1 Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Cook the fettuccine according to package directions; drain.
- 2 Meanwhile, put the bacon in a large, cold skillet, then cook over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally, until crispy, about 8 minutes; transfer to a plate with a slotted spoon.
- 3 Sprinkle the chicken lightly with salt and pepper and add to the skillet in a single layer. Let cook, undisturbed, until golden brown on the underside, 2 to 3 minutes. Continue to cook, stirring occasionally, until cooked through, about 4 minutes more. Transfer to the plate with the bacon.
- 4 Reduce the heat to medium and add the garlic, stirring, until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add the tomatoes and cream and bring to a simmer, then add the spinach and stir until just wilted. Add the bacon, chicken, fettuccine and Parmesan and toss with tongs until well coated; season to taste with salt and pepper. Sprinkle with basil and serve.



WHEN WILL
RIVER
CRUISE
LINES
RESUME
SERVICE?

Keep in mind that this information is ever changing but this is the current and expected dates of return to service:

Ama Waterways-April 1, 2021, American Cruise Lines-March 2021, American Queen Steamboat Company-March 2021, Avalon Waterways-May 1, 2021, ~~CrosiEurope~~-March 2021., Emerald Waterways-June 1, 2021, Gate 1 Travel-July 1, 2021., Scenic-June 1, 2021, ~~Tauck~~-April 1, 2021, ~~Uniwold~~-Early May 2021, and Viking River Cruises-June 1, 2021. This is just a sampling of some of the river cruises currently scheduled to sail. Spectacular deals becoming more and more limited so book soon.

Despite uncertainty for the brand in Alaska this year, Victory Cruise Lines (VCL) is already gearing up for 2022 and 2023 in the region with news that it will launch a second expedition ship in two years. Set to join the new Ocean Victory is a sister ship, Ocean Discoverer, in 2023.



Victory Cruise Lines Announces a New Expedition Ship for Alaska

The 202-guest Discoverer will make its maiden voyage on May 12, 2023, departing from Puerto Caldera, Costa Rica, and first re-positioning to San Diego, Calif., on its way to Alaska. Once in the northwestern state, the ship will embark on 11- and 12-day adventures between Sitka, Alaska, and Vancouver, B.C., or Sitka and Seattle. Also in 2023, Ocean Victory will make similar trips between Vancouver and Sitka.

The release of 2023 itineraries comes earlier than ever before as advisors and clients signal a pent-up demand for cruises closer to home, according to the Hornblower family companies AQSC and VCL. What's more, both brands are offering savings of up to \$1,200 per cabin on 2023 itineraries when booked by April 30, 2021.

Once they begin sailing again, guests will find that each line has upgraded their onboard amenities for 2021 including complimentary beer, wine, spirits and specialty coffees from bars and lounges, as well as morning smoothies from a juice bar. Cuisine has been further enhanced with USDA prime meats and fresh lobster, Rounding out the inclusions are one-night, pre-cruise hotel stays and hop-on-hop-off tours by Shore Excursions of America, which was recently acquired by Hornblower Group.



Irish Soda Bread

Ingredients

- 2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 1/4 cups whole wheat flour
- 3/4 cup rolled oats
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 3/4 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 3/4 cups to 2 cups buttermilk
- 6 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted and cooled

Directions

Step 1

Preheat the oven to 350°. In a medium bowl, whisk the all-purpose flour with the whole wheat flour, rolled oats, baking powder, sugar, salt and baking soda. Add 1 3/4 cups buttermilk and cooled butter and stir with a wooden spoon until the dough is well combined. If the dough is still dry and crumbly, gradually add up to another 1/4 cup of buttermilk until it comes together into a shaggy dough.

Step 2

Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured surface and knead it 10 times. Shape the dough into a 9-inch round loaf and transfer to a baking sheet. Slash an X about 1/4 inch deep in the top of the bread. Bake for about 1 hour, or until the bread is golden and the bottom sounds hollow when lightly tapped. Transfer the soda bread to a wire rack and let cool completely.

Make Ahead

The bread can be made up to 1 day ahead.