

# Major Cruise Lines Continue to Drop Mask Mandates

As the vast majority of cruise lines met Friday's deadline to opt into the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) COVID-19 Cruise Ship Program, several major companies announced they would ease mask mandates onboard.

Carnival Cruise Line announced last week that facial coverings would no longer be mandatory on voyages starting March 1, but the masks would still be recommended overall and required at specific venues and events.

Carnival officials also said they would offer more flexibility in pre-cruise testing requirements and permit children under five to sail without any need for vaccine or exemption.

Royal Caribbean International lifted onboard mask protocols for areas of the ship that only permit vaccinated passengers, saying that "venues for vaccinated guests only, such as select bars, lounges, restaurants, shows and Casino Royale" would no longer require masks.

Norwegian Cruise Line also revealed it would loosen a number of COVID protocols on March 1, with guests no longer required to wear a mask on board cruises departing from U.S. ports. The company said it would allow kids younger than five to board without proof of vaccination. In addition to the changes made by Norwegian, its sister brands Oceania Cruises and Regent Seven Seas Cruises brands are also scheduled to lift all mask mandates for fully vaccinated passengers on March 1.

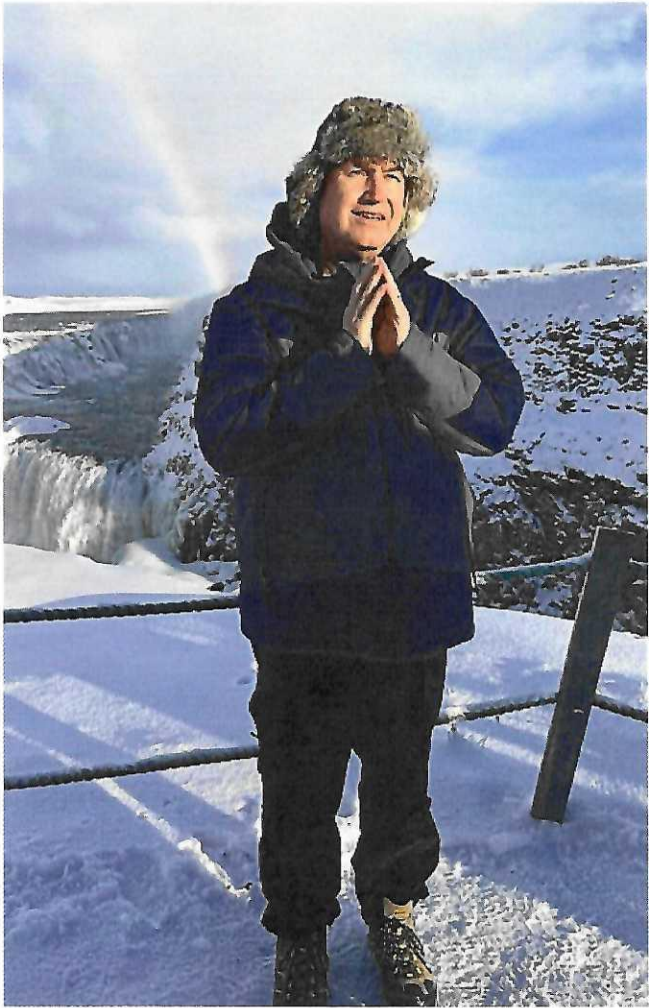
As for how other major cruise lines are handling mask mandates, Celebrity Cruises already did away with facial-covering requirements, Virgin Voyages drops the ban on February 28 and Princess Cruises joins on March 1.



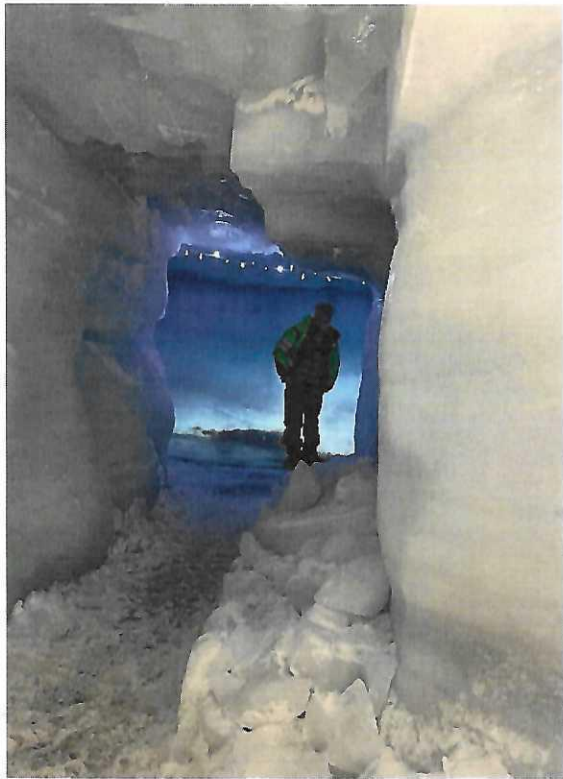
## EUROPEAN UNION TO LIFT NON-ESSENTIAL TRAVEL BAN ON MARCH 1

The Council of the European Union adopted a new recommendation as it relates to travel into the E.U. Starting March 1, the Council, in response to the evolution of the pandemic, the increasing vaccination uptake and administration of booster doses says member states should open their borders to non-essential travelers vaccinated with an E.U. or World Health Organization (WHO)-approved vaccine, recovered persons and all persons traveling from a country on the E.U. list.

Restrictions should take into account both the situation in the traveler's country and the individual status of the person; additional safety measures such as PCR testing prior to arrival could still apply.



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# Celebrity Cruises Announces 2023-24 Caribbean Season

**Celebrity Cruises** has added its newest ship, ***Celebrity Ascent***, to its 2023-24 Caribbean season. With eight ships navigating the island region, including three from the **EdgeSeries**, and itineraries ranging from four to 12 nights, guests will have more options to choose from when planning their vacation.

*Celebrity Ascent*, the fourth ship in the Edge Series, which made its way from concept to construction on November 22, 2021, will sail on its maiden voyage on December 3, 2023. After departing from **Ft. Lauderdale**, the ship will explore the waters of the **Eastern Caribbean**. Guests can sail to several destinations in the region, including **Philipsburg, St. Maarten; Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas; and Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic**.

Following the inaugural voyage, *Celebrity Ascent* will make round-trip sailings from the cruise line's Terminal 25 at **Port Everglades** every Sunday, journeying through the islands on seven-night **Western** and Eastern Caribbean itineraries. Eastern Caribbean sailings will visit several locales, including **San Juan, Puerto Rico; Tortola in the British Virgin Islands; and Basseterre, St. Kitts and Nevis**. Western Caribbean voyages will take guests to the ports of **Nassau, Bahamas; Cozumel, Mexico; and George Town in the Cayman Islands**.

*Celebrity Ascent* will be joined by its island-hopping Edge Series sister ships, ***Celebrity Apex*** and ***Celebrity Beyond***. Beginning November 2023, *Celebrity Apex* will embark on rotating seven-night Eastern and Western Caribbean itineraries. Departing from Ft. Lauderdale, guests will visit the islands of the Eastern Caribbean, including San Juan, St. Maarten, St. Thomas and Puerto Plata. For a different kind of escape, *Celebrity Apex* will take guests to the Western Caribbean, visiting **Key West, Florida; Grand Cayman; and Belize**.



**Celebrity Silhouette**, recently modernized as part of the "Celebrity Revolution," is returning to the Bahamas and the Southern Caribbean with itineraries ranging from four to 11 nights. And, for the first time since 2011, the ship will visit **Scarborough**, the main city on the island of **Tobago**.

For revelers looking to celebrate Mardi Gras in style, **Celebrity Constellation** is offering a 12-night cruise departing from **Tampa** that starts with a double overnight stay in **New Orleans** for Fat Tuesday, before taking guests to a relaxing recovery journey in **Honduras**, **Belize**, and **Cozumel**.

Guests looking for a short getaway will find it aboard **Celebrity Summit**, as the ship sails from **Miami** on alternating four- and five-night Western Caribbean itineraries.

**Celebrity Reflection** and **Celebrity Equinox** round out the offerings with eight-night Eastern Caribbean and six-night Western Caribbean sailings, which includes stops at the Dutch island **Kralendijk**, **Bonaire**, where the island's official bird, the flamingo, can be spotted on many of its white sand beaches.

For those wanting to explore more, **Celebrity Beyond** is hosting nine-, 10- and 11-night voyages to the **Southern Caribbean**, including overnight stops in **Oranjestad**, **Aruba**, where guests can stroll among the brightly hued Dutch colonial buildings, beaches and volcanic formations. A shorter sailing on **Beyond** will take guests on a six-night cruise to **Bimini**, **Bahamas**, the retreat of choice for author **Ernest Hemingway**, known for its big game fishing, beaches and nightlife.

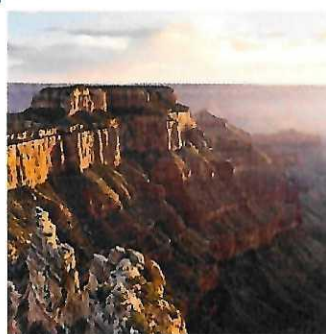


TAKE TO THE  
NATIONAL PARKS

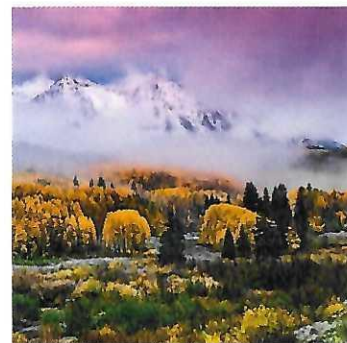
## Top National Parks trips!



10 Day Glacier Park Express



13 Day Grand National Parks



5 Day Colorado Rockies Adventure

# ORANGE CHICKEN



## Ingredients:

### Sauce:

- 1/2 cup (118 ml) oyster sauce
- 1/2 cup (95 g) sugar
- 3 ounces (90 ml) orange juice
- 3 ounces (90 ml) rice wine vinegar (unseasoned)
- 1 tablespoon (7 g) cornstarch, mixed into the rice wine vinegar as a slurry

- 2 tablespoons (30 ml) soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon (15 ml) hoisin sauce
- 1 1/2 teaspoons sweet paprika
- 1 drop red food coloring, optional

### Broccoli:

- 3 cups broccoli florets
- Kosher salt

### Assembly:

- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil, such as canola or grapeseed
- 1 1/2 teaspoons chopped garlic
- 1 1/2 teaspoons minced, peeled fresh ginger
- Fried chicken pieces, from above
- 2 to 3 scallions, cut on the bias into 2-inch lengths
- 1/2 yellow onion, cut into large dice
- Orange Chicken Sauce, from above
- Fried Rice, recipe follows, or steamed rice, for serving

### Chicken:

- 1 1/2 quarts (1.8 L) vegetable oil, for deep frying
- 2 pounds (900 g) boneless, skinless chicken thighs, cut into 1 1/2-inch cubes
- 2 1/2 cups (335 g) tempura flour

## Directions:

**1** For the sauce: Add the oyster sauce, sugar, orange juice, vinegar-cornstarch slurry, soy sauce, hoisin sauce, paprika and food coloring into a 1-quart saucepan, bring the heat up to medium. Whisk gently as it comes to a simmer. Allow to simmer, keep whisking for about 5 minutes until the sauce thickens. Remove from heat and reserve.

**2** For the broccoli: Place the broccoli florets in a microwave-safe bowl with 1/4 cup water. Season with kosher salt and cover with plastic wrap. Microwave on high for 3 minutes. Hold for assembly.

**3** For the chicken: Heat the oil in a 4-quart Dutch oven to 375 degrees F using a deep-fry thermometer. Rinse the chicken in cold water and pat dry. Sprinkle 1 cup tempura flour over the chicken cubes and toss to lightly dredge, shake off the excess. Mix the remaining 1 1/2 cups of tempura flour with 1 cup cold water to make a thin batter, it should look like pancake batter. Fry in batches until golden brown and crispy, 6 to 8 minutes. Drain on paper towels or a rack.

### Fried Rice:

- 3 tablespoons vegetable oil, such as canola or grapeseed
- 3 large eggs, lightly beaten
- 4 cups day-old long-grain or jasmine rice
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- 1 1/2 teaspoons sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon powdered chicken bouillon
- 2 to 3 scallions, chopped
- 1/2 teaspoons white pepper, optional

**4** To assemble: Heat a large skillet to high and add the vegetable oil. When you see the first wisps of white smoke, stir in the garlic, ginger and fried chicken pieces and cook, stirring, for about 30 seconds. Add the scallions, onion and Orange Chicken Sauce and allow to coat and simmer. Cook, folding all the ingredients until they are well coated, about 2 minutes. Serve over fried rice or steamed rice, with the steamed broccoli.

**5** For the fried rice, heat the oil until a whisp of smoke appears. Pour in the egg and add the rice immediately. Using a wide silicone spatula, work the rice into the egg in circular motions, making sure not to break the grains. After about 30 seconds, the egg will start to coagulate and surround the rice as it dries. Keep scraping the pan and folding the rice back into the middle.

**6** Add soy sauce, sugar and chicken bullion. continue to fold for about a minute. Don't be afraid to scrape up the rice stuck to the bottom of the pan. Cook until the rice absorbs the liquid and egg but is still fluffy. Fold in the scallions and the white pepper and cook for an additional minute. Serve immediately.