



# EGYPT 2023

TOUR FEATURES (October 11-19, 2023)

- Round trip air on Egyptair from JFK (also including domestic air CAI-LXR and ASW-CAI)
- All transfer in Cairo (CAI), Luxor (LXR) and Aswan (ASW)
- 2nts accommodation at Conrad Cairo hotel 5\* or similar based on bed & breakfast basis
- 4nts accommodation on board of the H/S Nebu or similar on full board basis starting with lunch & ending with breakfast
- 1nt accommodation at Intercontinental City Stars or similar on bed & breakfast basis
- Full Day tour including the Pyramids, Sphinx, Museum, Old Cairo including lunch in a local restaurant while touring
- Camel ride and balloon ride over the Nile
- Visits on board of the boat : Karnak & Luxor Temple West Bank : Valley of Kings, Hatshepsut & the colossi of Memnon
- Edfu, Kom Ombo
- Aswan : Philae temple, the High Dam & Obelisk
- Felucca around Kitchener islands
- Farewell traditional dinner at El Azhar Park
- English speaking guide throughout

NOT INCLUDED: Visa (approx. \$25 USD on arrival) and gratuities

PRICE: \$4,935.00 per person (based on a minimum of 15 passengers).

A passport with a six month validity is required. A deposit of \$500 per person is required for deposit along with insurance.

Single surcharge of \$985.

Get your reservation booked as soon as possible. Call Nancy

## OCTOBER 4-15, 2023—11 NIGHT NEW ENGLAND AND CANADA CRUISE ABOARD MSC'S MERAVIGLIA

Sail from New York (Brooklyn) and visit Newport, Rhode Island, Boston, Massachusetts, St. John, New Brunswick, Halifax and Sydney, Nova Scotia, Charlottetown, PEI, returning to New York by way of Portland, Maine. The Meraviglia is packed with extraordinary features for the perfect experience at sea. Enjoy gourmet dining, out of this world entertainment with new panoramic areas, an innovative ocean lounge, a two-deck high inside promenade with an LED dome and a spectacular amusement area connected to an outdoor water park. Rates include cabin accommodations selected, all current port and government taxes, beverage package for drinks up to \$9, wi-fi for two devices and gratuities. Ocean view \$1,277.00, Premium Balcony \$1,487.00 and Aurea Balcony \$1,877.00 (additional amenities including the solarium, spa discounts, 24 hour room service and more).

## NOVEMBER 2-12, 2023—10 NIGHT ULTIMATE SOUTHERN CARIBBEAN ABOARD THE CELEBRITY REFLECTION

Cruise round trip from Ft. Lauderdale in a balcony cabin visiting Antigua, Barbados, Grenada, Martinique, St. Kitts & Nevis. Our special, always included package incorporates accommodations, all currents taxes, all meals (except specialty restaurants), beverage package, wi-fi, gratuities, spectacular entertainment and a \$300 on board credit. The special rate of \$1,850.00 per person,



# Chocolate Martini

## Ingredients

- 2 tbsp.
- chocolate syrup, plus more for drizzling
- 4 oz.
- Baileys
- 4 oz.
- chocolate liqueur (Makes 2 servings)
- 4 oz.
- Smirnoff vodka
- Ice
- shaved chocolate (optional)

## Directions

Pour chocolate syrup onto a shallow plate. Dip rim of martini glasses into chocolate syrup to coat rims. Drizzle the inside of each glass with chocolate syrup. Combine Baileys, chocolate liqueur, and vodka in a large cocktail shaker. Fill with ice and shake until thoroughly chilled, about 20 seconds. Divide evenly between

# MSC Cruises to Expand U.S.-Based Fleet with New and Existing Ships

By the winter 2023-2024 season, MSC Cruises will tout its largest presence in the U.S. market yet, with a total of five ships — including some of its newest vessels — homeporting on the U.S. East Coast.



MSC Divina, MSC Magnifica, MSC Meraviglia, MSC Seascope and MSC Seashore will sail from Miami and Port Canaveral, Fla; as well as Brooklyn, New York, on itineraries to the Caribbean, the Northeast U.S., Canada and Central and South America. And in 2025, the line and local market will welcome the new MSC World America.

## Cruises From Brooklyn

Repositioning up north to New York, for year-round service will be MSC Meraviglia, which will leave from Brooklyn and head to Bermuda and The Bahamas

# CRUISE NEWS

## THE RISE IN ROOM SERVICE FEES ...and more



Effective Dec. 30, 2022, Celebrity Cruises instituted a charge of \$9.95 per order (plus an 18% automatic gratuity) for all room service orders at any time of day on select ships. The new fee will be rolled out across the entire fleet by mid-January.

Previously, Celebrity charged only for late-night orders between 11 p.m. and 6 a.m., and the cost was \$4.95 — about half of the new round-the-clock price.

In the commitment to deliver best-in-class service, and due to the high demand of our room service offering, a \$9.95 fee per ... order was instituted ... to reduce wait times, provide a high-quality product and decrease food waste,

The charge is per order, rather than per item, so it's the same price whether you order one snack or several. It will also have an 18% gratuity added, bringing the total to \$11.74 per order. Continental breakfast will remain free each morning between 6 and 11, and room service will still be free all day for Zenith-level members of the line's Captain's Club loyalty program and anyone booked in a suite.

Norwegian Cruise Line, also charges \$9.95 per order, and Royal Caribbean, charges about \$9.70 after an 18% gratuity is added. In comparison, Virgin Voyages charges just \$5 for each order, while lines like Carnival and Princess price some items a la carte. MSC Cruises employs a combination of the two systems, levying per-item pricing and delivery charges, depending on the fare type booked.

Charging for room service on cruise ships is nothing new, and most non-luxury lines began doing it years ago, eliminating one of the last complimentary luxuries at sea.

Norwegian Cruise Line raised its daily service fee charges by to \$20 per person (\$25 in suites) and said it would cut back on twice-a-day room cleaning and, as a result, decrease pay for some room stewards.

Carnival, which recently raised pricing for some of its alternative restaurants, made similar adjustments, increasing its daily automatic gratuities to \$16 per passenger (\$18 in suites) and also raising its Wi-Fi prices as much as 25% for a single device. Princess also upped its gratuities to a daily fee of \$16 per person (\$18 in suites) and increased Wi-Fi rates by 50% for a single device. Holland America Line also has plans to raise daily gratuities for passengers.

## U.S. Passport Wait Time Is Now 8 to 11 Weeks for 'Routine Service'

Getting a U.S. passport renewed still takes longer than it did pre-COVID, but wait times have improved since the worst of the pandemic, according to a U.S. State Department spokesperson.

According to that spokesperson, passports are now being issued within 8 to 11 weeks for routine service and as little as 5 to 7 weeks for expedited service, time periods that cover “when an application arrives at a passport agency until we issue a passport

Those who are traveling with less time to spare are able to schedule an in-person appointment at a regional passport agency in order to expedite the process. Those appointments can be scheduled only via a phone call and only within 2 weeks of the travel date. Applicants will be required to provide proof of travel when making the appointment.

# Walt Disney World's Newest Ride, TRON Lightcycle Run, Will Open in April

The TRON Lightcycle, the newest attraction at Florida's Walt Disney World Resort, will open at the Magic Kingdom Park on April 4.

The ride has been under construction for a while now. It was first expected to open for the resort's 50th anniversary but was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Disney has had one version of the ride open at its Shanghai Disneyland park and the new one, located next to Space Mountain at the Orlando theme park, will be the next.

Disney says the attraction will follow a storyline after "TRON: Legacy," where Sam Flynn opens a second gateway into a digital realm called the Grid (the first one is found at that Shanghai Disneyland location). Guests will ride their own Lightcycle, leaning forward and gripping the vehicle's handlebars before racing through eight Energy Gates to secure victory.

Disney promises the attraction will be one of the fastest coasters at any Disney theme park worldwide.



## Royal Caribbean Introduces Caribbean Cruises for 2024-25

Royal Caribbean International has launched its 2024-25 year-round and summer Caribbean cruises, which are now open for reservations. Travelers can choose from over 20 destinations and eight ships, and enjoy vacations spanning the best of the Caribbean and beyond. Here are highlights of the year-round Caribbean cruises for 2024-25:

**Wonder of the Seas** will continue to call **Port Canaveral, FL**, home year-round for seven-night Western and Eastern Caribbean cruises. The ship has eight signature neighborhoods, including the **Ultimate Family Suite** and the first **Suite Neighborhood** on an **Oasis**-class ship, besides the line's first Southern restaurant, **The Mason Jar**. Ports of call include **Cozumel, Roatan, Philipsburg, Charlotte Amalie** and **Perfect Day at CocoCay**.

**Harmony of the Seas** will head back to **Galveston, TX**, to sail six- to eight-night Western Caribbean and Perfect Day at CocoCay cruises. It will also mark the first time travelers can visit the private island destination from the state. From top to bottom and across seven neighborhoods, passengers can enjoy favorites such as **The Perfect Storm**, a trio of multi-story water slides, the nine-story zip line and twin **FlowRider** surf simulators. Sailing from Texas' newest terminal and the line's first net-zero facility of its kind, the ship will take travelers to such tropicalAs for the summer 2024 Caribbean cruises, **Symphony of the Seas** will offer seven-night cruises to the Bahamas from Bayonne, NJ. **Freedom of the Seas** will sail from Fort Lauderdale on a series of seven- to eight-night cruises to a combination of destinations in the Western and Eastern Caribbean, **Perfect Day at CocoCay** and the Southern Caribbean.

**Liberty of the Seas** will also sail from Bayonne, but with a varied combination of four-, five- and nine-night cruises to the Eastern Caribbean, Bermuda, Canada and New England. **Adventure of the Seas** will continue cruising from Port Canaveral year-round. The lineup includes six- and eight-night itineraries that explore the Southern, Eastern or Western Caribbean and the Bahamas, including **Perfect Day at CocoCay, Labadee, Charlotte Amalie** and **Oranjestad**.

**Vision of the Seas** will continue to cruise from Baltimore and during the summer, travelers can head to Bermuda, **Perfect Day at CocoCay** in the Bahamas or Canada and New England on five- and nine-night itineraries. In winter, they can enjoy a new set of adventures, such as eight-night voyages to the Bahamas and 12 nights in the Southern Caribbean with visits to **St. Croix, Castries** and **Basseterre**. destinations as **Cozumel, Costa Maya** and **Roatan**.

**Enchantment of the Seas** will sail from Tampa on a series of seven-night Western Caribbean cruises and three, seven-night Bahamas and **Perfect Day at CocoCay** adventures

# Everything You Need to Know About 2023 Mardi Gras in New Orleans

During Mardi Gras, at least 1 million visitors take to the streets of New Orleans to participate in the city's iconic Fat Tuesday parades and festivities. The annual celebration of excess and indulgence is observed everywhere from Rio de Janeiro to Venice, but New Orleans's unique Mardi Gras customs (more on those below) make the city's celebration particularly renowned.

In 2021, New Orleans officially canceled all Mardi Gras parades due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2022, the crowds, parades, and parties returned. Mardi Gras 2023 falls on Tuesday, February 21—a little earlier than in 2022.

Whether you're daydreaming of joining the Mardi Gras festivities, either in 2023 or later, or simply want to better understand this iconic holiday, read on for an extensive explainer that includes everything you need to know about Mardi Gras.

## What is Mardi Gras?

Mardi Gras—also known as Fat Tuesday, Shrove Tuesday, or Carnival—is a debauchorous prelude to Lent, a six-week-long religious fast observed before Easter. The legacy of Mardi Gras can be traced to European Carnival celebrations during the 17th and 18th centuries.

The holiday's connection to New Orleans dates back to 1699, when explorer Pierre Le Moyne d'Iberville arrived in Louisiana and declared a plot of land "Pointe du Mardi Gras" upon realizing it was the eve of the holiday.

In 1718, the city of New Orleans was established near the area known as "Pointe du Mardi Gras," and by the 1730s, Mardi Gras parades and masquerade balls became an annual tradition in the southern city. While Mardi Gras officially takes place on Fat Tuesday—the day before Ash Wednesday, which marks the start of Lent—in New Orleans, annual Mardi Gras festivities start weeks beforehand.

**Mardi Gras day falls on February 21, 2023.** However, Carnival celebrations always begin on January 6, a date referred to in the Christian calendar as the Twelfth Night because it marks the end of the Twelve Days of Christmas (and hence the holiday season). Every year, Carnival season kicks off on this date at sundown and is followed by a weeks-long schedule of lively parades and street parties.

Celebrations ramp up especially in the two weeks before Fat Tuesday. Unsurprisingly, this tends to be busiest time to go to New Orleans for Mardi Gras. If you prefer a slightly quieter trip—and less competition for hotel rooms—aim for earlier weekends.

## Mardi Gras parades in New Orleans will still be shorter in 2023

In 2022, the Mardi Gras parade routes had to be shortened due to COVID-related staffing shortages with fewer police officers, medics, and other first responders to handle the crowds. Those shorter routes are remaining in effect for 2023, according to local reports.

With dozens of parades scheduled, it may be hard to pick which ones to attend. Melissa Comardelle, chief concierge at the new Four Seasons Hotel New Orleans and New Orleans native, recommends the all-female Krewe of Muses parade.

"The prized catch is a decorated shoe," Comardelle said. "I haven't caught one yet, but I'm working on it."

At the time of writing, 2023 Mardi Gras parades were scheduled from January 6 all the way through to February 26, according to [mardigrasneworleans.com](https://mardigrasneworleans.com), which lists the full schedule.

The Rex Organization, one of the oldest Mardi Gras krewes in New Orleans, established purple, gold, and green as the official Mardi Gras colors as far back as 1892. The three shades are said to symbolize justice, faith, and power, respectively.

In New Orleans, it's legal to walk the streets with alcoholic drinks in plastic cups—and not just during Mardi Gras. Go cups are exactly what they sound like: "to-go" cups that allow you to take your drink with you from bar to bar (or parade to parade).