

## CDC Lowers Cruise Ship Travel Warning Once Again

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is again lowering the advisory for cruise ship travel.

On Monday, the CDC dropped its cruise ship warning from Level 3: High to Level 2: Moderate, the second major change this year after last month's lowering from Level 4: Very High to Level 3.

According to the CDC, the change "represents the status of the COVID-19 pandemic at this time," an acknowledgment of just how far the health situation has come since the CDC effectively shut down the entire industry for most of 2020.

The new warning advises travelers to make sure they are up to date with vaccination before cruise ship travel and to still avoid cruise travel if they are at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19 and if they are not up to date with vaccines.

"The virus that causes COVID-19 spreads easily between people in close quarters onboard ships, and the chance of getting COVID-19 on cruise ship is moderate, even if you are up to date with your COVID-19 vaccines," the warning reads.

The CDC is still recommending passengers get a COVID-19 test as close to time of departure as possible and to wear a face mask when indoors or in crowded outdoor settings.

Even with the CDC lowering its warning, and allowing its Conditional Sail Order (CSO) to expire in January, cruise ships operating in the U.S. have all continued to voluntarily participate in the program, which tracks COVID-19 levels onboard.

A total of 112 cruise ships continue to operate under the CSO, and of those, 108 are considered "highly vaccinated ships," meaning they are sailing with at least 95% of travelers who are fully vaccinated. Most of those 112 ships (56) have no reported cases of COVID-19 onboard, and just 20 have reported enough cases to meet the threshold of CDC investigation. Zero ships have reported numbers at or above the threshold for CDC investigation, which is an infection in more than 0.3% of total passengers or crewmembers.

## Atlas Ocean Voyages Opens Two Ships for Summer/Fall 2023

Expanding its offering of "luxe-adventure" voyages, Atlas Ocean Voyages will offer a full season of summer and fall 2023 sailings around the world on two ships. Comprising 34 sailings onboard World Navigator and World Traveller, the itineraries range from seven- to 21-nights and touch on four continents.

World Navigator will sail Africa, as well in the Mediterranean and Adriatic Seas, while World Traveller will cruise Central and South America, the Caribbean, Western Africa, Western Mediterranean, Ireland and the British Isles, the Norwegian Fjords, Iceland, Greenland, and the Arctic.

Highlights include 60 destinations new for Atlas Ocean Voyages, as well as overnight stays in 46 ports.

"With World Navigator and World Traveller's new 2023 voyages, Atlas Ocean Voyages continues to offer travelers more choices of luxe-adventure experiences in some of the world's most fascinating places," said Alberto Aliberti, president of Atlas Ocean Voyages. "Nearly all ports-of-call are non-repeating and provide travelers the opportunity to combine consecutive voyages for extended and in-depth regional immersions..."

### World Navigator

After completing its second Antarctica season on March 31, World Navigator will sail from Ushuaia, Argentina to Cape Town, South Africa, via the South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands. The ship then heads north along Africa's coast to the Canary Islands and Morocco (with two days in Casablanca) before crossing the Strait of Gibraltar into the Alboran and Mediterranean Seas.

World Navigator will sail Mediterranean destinations throughout Spain, France and Italy with a special eight-night Grand Prix itinerary departing May 21, featuring two nights in Monaco to catch the race.

From the Mediterranean, the ship will turn to the Adriatic, Greek Isles and Turkey, before retracing its course westward in early autumn through the Mediterranean and onward to Brazil and Argentina to arrive back in Ushuaia in time for the next Antarctic season.

## United Introduces New Bag Drop "Shortcut"

The airline says the new process should allow travelers to check their bag "in a minute or less on average."

Have you ever wondered what the benefit actually is of "checking in" to your flight online 24 hours in advance, when after you arrive at the airport you still have to wait in a long line to basically re-enter your flight information at a check-in kiosk and then stand in another line to drop off your bags?

Well, United Airlines is attempting to address the issue with a new "bag drop shortcut" procedure that the airline claims will allow travelers to "skip the line [and] check their bag in a minute or less on average."

According to recent customer surveys, United found that the bag check process is actually one of the more stressful and time-consuming aspects of the air travel experience for fliers.

Enter: the shortcut.

This new service is currently available for United departures out of Chicago, Newark (New Jersey), Washington, D.C., Houston, Denver, Los Angeles, and San Francisco.

In order to take advantage of the new, (ideally) quicker bag drop option, United travelers need to check in on the United app and then select and pay for the number of bags they will be checking. At the airport, they will then proceed to the "bag drop shortcut" location, which is labeled as such, where customers place their bag on the scale and scan their boarding pass. United staff will then check the customer's identification and apply the bag tag.



### World Traveller

The newly-launched World Traveller will head north from Ushuaia on March 26 to explore the Chilean and Peruvian coasts and up into Panama, Costa Rica and Nicaragua. The ship will transit the Panama Canal and cruise the Southern Caribbean before crossing the Atlantic to the Canary Islands.

From the Canary Islands, World Traveller will offer two 10-night voyages that combine the archipelago with Morocco. Both departures include overnight calls in Casablanca, but the June 6 sailing includes a call at Safi for easy access to Marrakesh, while the June 16 sailing includes calls at Cadiz, Spain and Portimao, Portugal.

The ship then continues north to the British Isles, Ireland, Norwegian Fjords and Greenland for July.



## UK Drops All Remaining Travel Restrictions, Despite Increase in COVID Infections

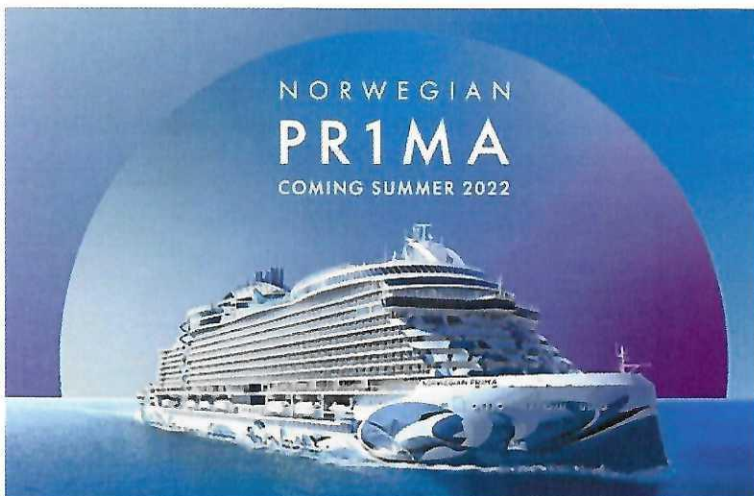
The British government is set to drop all remaining travel restrictions in the [United Kingdom \(U.K.\)](#), despite an increase in case counts as people have begun socializing more following the [discontinuation](#) of nationwide COVID-19 surveillance programs.

According to [The Guardian](#), government ministers approved the removal of pre- and post-travel testing requirements for unvaccinated international arrivals, as well as the need for foreigners to complete a U.K. Passenger Locator Form, from 4:00 a.m. on March 18. [Fully vaccinated travelers](#) are already welcome to visit the country without having to fulfill any testing requirements.

British Airways and Virgin Atlantic said onboard mask requirements would continue, at this point, on many international routes—including flights to the U.S. through at least April 18. But, flights to most Caribbean destinations from both Heathrow and Manchester would see mask-wearing become optional.

Mirroring numerous nations' new pandemic approach of dealing with the virus as an almost-endemic disease, the British government indicated that it's prepared to handle a tractable-level surge in infections in the wake of relaxing COVID-19 countermeasures.

Last month, U.K. Prime Minister Boris Johnson substantially cut down on the country's remaining COVID-19 restrictions, including eliminating the need for isolation, mask mandates and vaccine passes at public venues. He also announced the end of publicly funded contact-tracing programs and free mass testing for citizens.



## Universal Orlando opens quiet room for guests with autism



A new quiet room for guests who could use a break from the bustling theme parks opened Monday at Universal Orlando Resort.

A resort spokesperson confirmed the room, located near the front of Universal Studios Florida to the right of the Studio Audience Center and Lost and Found, will be open when the park is.

Guests don't need to reserve the room, but will need to wait until it is vacant to use. A 30-minute time limit is encouraged.

It has rubber floor tiles, an activity wall panel and two hiding tunnels.





**ICONIC  
CHRISTMAS MARKETS  
CRUISE  
NOV. 23-DEC. 3, 2023  
PRAGUE TO BUDAPEST  
AMALEA**

## GOUDA TO THE LAST DROP

### Dutch Cheese Soup Recipe

#### Ingredients

- 1 onion
- 2 carrots
- 2 celery stalks
- 3 cloves garlic
- 6 cups cauliflower florets
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- Salt and ground white pepper to taste
- 1 bay leaf
- 6 cups chicken broth
- 2 cups grated gouda
- 1 teaspoon mustard (Dijon-style or English)
- ¼ C half-and-half
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 sprig fresh rosemary, chopped coarsely
- 2 to 3 thin slices of prosciutto, julienned

#### Preparation

Roughly chop the onion, carrots, celery and garlic and combine with the cauliflower, 1 tablespoon of the olive oil and salt and pepper in a large soup pot. Cook over medium heat until vegetables soften, and onions become translucent, about 20-25 minutes.

Add the bay leaf and chicken broth and bring to a simmer. Cover and cook for 15 to 20 minutes.

Remove the bay leaf and purée soup until smooth.

Just prior to serving the soup, stir in the gouda, mustard, half-and-half and butter. Taste and season with salt and pepper if needed. Continue cooking until cheese has melted and soup is smooth, 1 to 2 minutes.

In a small pan, heat remaining tablespoon of olive oil over medium-high heat and quickly fry the rosemary and prosciutto until crispy and aromatic.

Divide soup into bowls and garnish with the rosemary and prosciutto.

Makes 8-10 servings.

Recipe compliments of AMAWaterways

Depart USA on Nov. 23, flying to Prague where we will spend two nights. Transfer to Nuremburg where you will board the AmaLea for your seven night Christmas markets cruise. The intimate AmaLea was built in 2018 and sails with a maximum of 156 passengers. Sail the Continental Divide and visit Passau, Melk and Vienna enroute to Budapest.

Cruise only rates start at \$3,799.00 per person double (inc. port)

Single cabins have a surcharge starting at 125% (for categories E and D-fixed window) and 150% for balcony cabins.

If you cruised with AMA at least three times in the past, you may be eligible for an additional discount and cabin upgrade.

Final pricing should be available by the end of 2022.

A deposit of \$400 per person is required to book, 50% is non-refundable. Call Nancy for more information and reservations.



**A private pilgrimage of Assisi and Rome escorted by Father Steve Kluge of St. Francis of Long Beach Island.**

**October 26<sup>th</sup>-November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2022**

Many of you have traveled to Italy before but you now have the opportunity to follow the footsteps of St. Francis. Your journey will begin with a relaxing drive into the Italian countryside to the walled town of Assisi. It was within the walls of Assisi that St. Francis was born to a wealthy family. You will explore St. Francis Basilica set in the walls of Assisi that houses his tomb. Also, St. Clare's Church. St. Clare was one of the first followers of St. Francis and devoted her life in serving the poor.

**Our private tour includes:**

Round trip airfare non-stop on United from Newark (including all current government taxes and fees), private motor coach with professional driver/guide, seven nights first class hotels as indicated: (4-Giotto Hotel Assisi and 3-Hotel Palatino Rome), full breakfast daily and six dinners (two at local restaurants). Highlights include: Basilica of St. Mary of Angels, Casa del Ciocolato Perugia, St. Domenico Church, Sienna Cathedral, Catacomb of St. Sebastian, St. Peter's in Chains, Colosseum and Forum, Vatican Museum and Sistine Chapel, Scala Santa and St. Paul Outside the Walls Basilica.

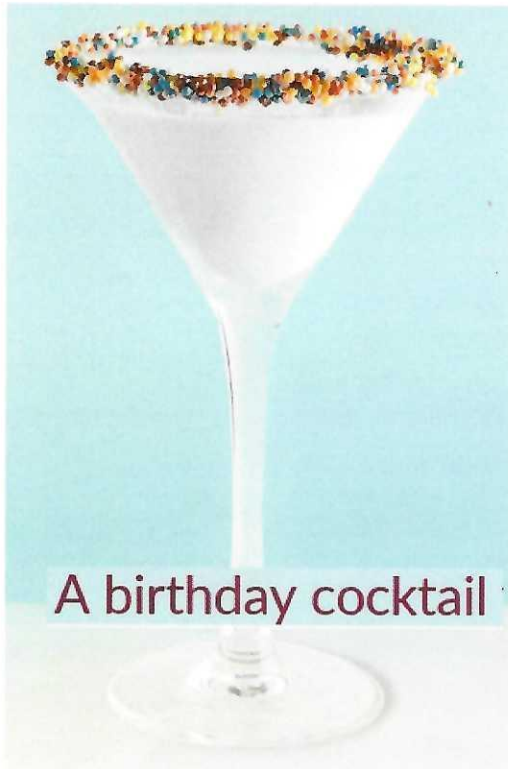
The rate per person based on double occupancy is \$3698.00 (based on a minimum of 20 passengers) plus insurance. Insurance is based on age and the amount of trip and will be quoted once deposit is made. A limited amount of singles are available for a supplement of \$550.00. A deposit of \$500.00 is required to sign up and is non-refundable. Insurance is highly recommended and would have to be taken within 14 days initial deposit. Deposit must be done by check no later than April 22, 2022 to secure a spot on this Pilgrimage.

Passports are required and must be fully vaccinated to travel.

For more information or to secure your reservation, please contact:

Tara at Home Town Travel, 128 Bartlett Avenue, West Creek, NJ 08092

Email Tara at [t.l.gaffney@comcast.net](mailto:t.l.gaffney@comcast.net) or call (609) 597-5100.



A birthday cocktail

# Happy Birthday

## Birthday Cake Martini

### LET'S GET MAKIN'

- 2 oz. Vodka
- 3 oz. Coconut Cream
- 1 oz. White Chocolate liqueur
- 1 oz. Amaretto
- Ice
- GLASS RIM:
  - 2 tbsp. honey
  - Sprinkles

### LET'S GET SHAKIN'

Place the honey and sprinkles on two separate shallow dishes. Dip your martini glass in the honey first and then into the sprinkles to coat the rim. Set aside.

In a cocktail shaker, combine all the ingredients with ice and shake very well. Pour cocktail into prepared glass. Enjoy!

Prefer a mocktail? Replace vodka, white chocolate liqueur and amaretto with 3 tbsp. of vanilla cream soda and 2 tbsp. almond milk. Yum!

## Kennedy Space Center Is Giving Behind-the-scenes Tours of These Restricted Areas for the First Time Ever

History buffs can get up close and personal with the space program thanks to the addition of two new tours at Florida's Kennedy Space Center

The first tour, the [Cape Canaveral Early Space tour](#), takes travelers from the Air Force Space & Missile Museum to the site of the Mercury and Gemini launches as well as to the memorial site for the Apollo 1 crew. The tour costs \$25 for adults and \$19 for children 3 to 11.

The second tour, the [Cape Canaveral Rise to Space tour](#), is led by a space expert and brings visitors to historic launch sites as well as Hangar C, the first permanent and oldest surviving structure at the complex. On the tour, visitors will be able to see artifacts like America's first intercontinental ballistic missile and Gemini and Apollo "boiler plates," used during simulations for training. The tour is open to people at least 14 years old and costs \$75. It does not include admission to the Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex.

The complex also offers several other unique experiences, including an [Astronaut Encounter](#), which is included with daily admission.



## CELEBRITY BEYOND—JUNE 16-26, 2023

10 NIGHT EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

Embark in Rome and visit the ports of Corfu, Katakolon, Dubrovnik, Kotor, Sicily, Naples, Florence and return to Rome.

Includes cruise in E2 Balcony, transfers in Rome, drinks, wi-fi and gratuities.

\$3,469.00 per person double



Dear Nancy and Tara,  
We had a wonderful time on the Apex. The Apex is a beautiful ship with vibrant musical and acrobatic shows and excellent dining venues We are looking to book the Celebrity Beyond for next year with Don and Mary.

Thanks for everything you do,  
Beth and Joe Kelly