

ICELAND HOLIDAY WEEKEND FEBRUARY 16-21, 2023



Explore the land of Fire and Ice over President's weekend 2023. See spectacular waterfalls, boiling geysers and enjoy a few hours relaxing in the thermal waters of the Blue Lagoon. A visit to Thingvillar National Park is not to be missed; called the Grand Canyon of Iceland because this is where the tectonic plates of North America and Europe come together creating this awesome sight. We have the opportunity of seeing the Aurora Borealis* or Northern Lights one night and a re-do if no lights are spotted the first evening. The weather in February is usually +32 degrees (warmer than NYC because of the jet stream) and daylight hours are from 9:30am to 4:30pm. Experience sunrise with a cocktail at the Blue Lagoon.

Our customized trip includes:

Round trip airfare from Newark Liberty to Reykjavik on Icelandair

Four nights at the 4* Fosshotel Reykjavik

Four full buffet breakfasts (plus one continental breakfast the morning of arrival)

Transfers in Iceland

Admission to the Blue Lagoon, Golden Circle full day tour with tomato soup lunch with greenhouse tour

Northern Lights evening tour and admission and breakfast at the Viking World Museum.

All current air, city, hotel taxes and government fees

Optional tours will be available on our free day

A passport is required and must be valid for six months after return travel. Up to date COVID-19 requirements will be advised closer to departure as will be info on US return requirements. The tour price is \$1,889.00 per person double and limited singles will be available at a surcharge if \$400. Insurance is recommended and price is based on age and must be taken out with deposit of \$300 per person. Deposit and insurance must be paid by check. Any additional payments by credit card will have a 2.5% surcharge. The price is based on a minimum of 20 passengers and limited to 40 passengers. Deposits are non-refundable without insurance and final payment is due by November 4, 2022.

*Aurora sightings are never guaranteed. For more information and reservations, contact:

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The Euro Is at \$1.05—the Lowest It's Been in Years

The strong dollar trend doesn't appear to be reversing anytime soon, making travel to Europe from the U.S. that much more affordable right now.

If the euro actually reaches parity against the dollar, it will be the first time in two decades that one U.S. dollar will be the equivalent value of one euro. The U.S. Dollar Index, which tracks the value of the dollar against other currencies, is at its highest level in 20 years. Currency forecasting is challenging given all the complex (and often rather volatile) global economic factors that are in play, but Bloomberg [reported](#) on May 10 that financial planners and economists are currently confident that the U.S. dollar will continue to rally.

Whether or not the currencies hit parity, the fact that they are already this close should serve as welcome relief for Americans heading to Europe in the coming days and weeks, helping to offset the costs of [skyrocketing airfares](#) (which have been pushed up by a rise in oil prices and staffing shortages as airlines race to keep up with the [rapid rise in demand for travel](#)).

The strong dollar news comes as international travel is experiencing a robust rebound after two years of being stunted by the global coronavirus pandemic. U.S. travelers have indicated that they are more than ready to return to Europe regardless of the airfares and the exchange rate. Luxury travel consultancy [Zicasso](#) reported that compared to the first quarter of 2021, summer travel bookings for 2022 are currently up 500 percent, with Europe trips constituting 80 percent of those bookings.

But for some travelers who have been considering crossing the pond this year and have not yet committed, the strong dollar could present just the push they need go ahead to take the leap.

European Union Will Drop Its Mask Mandate for Travel Next Week

The EU Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) and European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) made the announcement on Tuesday, dropping the recommendation of mandatory mask-wearing in airports and on board flights starting on May 16, 2022.

While the agencies said that wearing a mask "is still one of the best protections against the transmission of COVID-19," it will no longer push for the practice to be a requirement during travel.

Rules for masks, in particular, will continue to vary by airline beyond that date because of other entry rules, including flights to a destination outside of the EU where mask-wearing is still required.

Celebrity Cruises Selects Simone Biles as Godmother of Celebrity Beyond



Simone Biles, 19-time World Champion and seven-time Olympic medalist will serve as godmother for Celebrity Beyond when the ship is named in Fort Lauderdale in November.

“Simone is truly the G.O.A.T. inside and outside of the gym, and I’m humbled and thrilled to welcome her as godmother of our newest ships Celebrity Beyond,” said Lisa Luttoff-Perlo, president and CEO of Celebrity Cruises. “While I’ve marveled at her abilities and historic accomplishments as a gymnast, it’s Simone’s courage to speak out and her ability to help others be better in sport and in life that has impressed me most. She has risen to the occasion and overcome challenges time and time again. She is an inspiration.”

Biles is not a stranger to cruising. “I have a lot of great memories of cruising with my parents while growing up, so I am beyond excited to serve as godmother of Celebrity Beyond,” she said. “I am honored to join such a distinguished group of game-changing women and appreciate the important message this designation holds in recognizing our accomplishments, and hopefully inspiring the next generation of women.”

As a general rule, Celebrity chooses women it considers change makers in the world to serve as ship godmothers. Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Malala Yousafzai serves as Celebrity Edge’s godmother, while Girls Who Code founder Reshma Saujani is godmother for Celebrity Apex.

Biles will officially name Celebrity Beyond at a celebration in Fort Lauderdale on November 4, 2022. The ship, which debuted on April 27, is currently sailing in the Mediterranean.



Directions:

Combine gin, limoncello, lemon juice and mint leaves in a cocktail shaker. Fill 2/3 with ice and shake for 30 seconds. Strain and garnish with a lemon peel and mint.



The Amalfi Coast in southern Italy is renowned for its unmistakably delicious lemons. Limoncello is a classic Italian liqueur with a bold lemon flavor. In Italy, limoncello is usually served very cold after a rich hearty meal.

Since limoncello has a bold flavor, only a few complimentary ingredients are needed for the perfect cocktail. Shake this up and enjoy the flavors of the Mediterranean.



Individual Strawberry Trifles

Directions:

1 For the marinated strawberries: In a small, shallow casserole dish, toss the strawberries with the vinegar and let stand at room temperature for 15 to 20 minutes. After the strawberries have marinated, check for sweetness, adding sugar if desired.

2 For the whipped cream: In a large bowl, using an electric mixer, whisk the cream to soft peaks. Add the vanilla and confectioners' sugar. Whip to stiff peaks. Set aside.

3 For the trifle: Using a serrated knife, slice the pound cake lengthwise into 1/2-inch-thick slices. You will only need four slices. Using a 2-inch cookie cutter, cut out circles from each cake slice. Line up two highball glasses and place one cake circle in the bottom of each. Brush the cakes with amaretto liqueur. Add 2 tablespoons of marinated strawberries and spread evenly. Using a different tablespoon, add a large dollop of whipped cream and spread evenly.

Add a second layer of cake, pressing down lightly. Brush with amaretto liqueur. Add 2 tablespoons of marinated strawberries and spread evenly. Top with a large dollop of whipped cream, spreading evenly. Use the remaining cake, cream and strawberries to create a more humble trifle dish.

4 Cover the trifles with plastic wrap and refrigerate for impromptu indulgence, keeping in mind that it will store for up to 2 days.

5 To serve, remove and discard the plastic wrap. Grate some amaretto cookie on top of the trifles and sprinkle with Demerara sugar.

Ingredients:

Marinated strawberries:

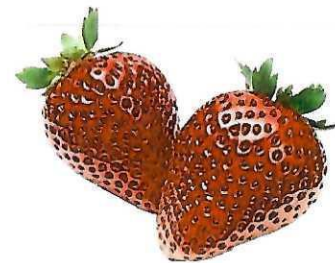
- 1 quart fresh strawberries, halved
- 1/3 cup aged balsamic vinegar

Whipped cream:

- 3 cups heavy cream
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1/4 cup confectioners' sugar

Trifle:

- 1 (1 pound) fresh pound cake
- 1/3 cup amaretto liqueur
- 2 amaretto cookies, for garnish
- Demerara sugar, for garnish



New High-Speed Train Routes Are Coming to Europe

It's about to get easier and faster to move across western Europe and the United Kingdom by train, thanks to the merger of two major railway operators, Eurostar and Thalys.

Currently, the London-based [Eurostar](#) shuttles passengers from London's St. Pancras station across the Channel Tunnel to several French cities (including Paris, Calais, Lille, and Lyon), as well as Brussels, Belgium, and Rotterdam and Amsterdam in the Netherlands. Meanwhile, Belgian rail network [Thalys](#) serves destinations in France, the Netherlands, Germany, and Belgium.

While the two companies do overlap, with each already operating some routes in France, the Netherlands, and Belgium, they largely serve different cities within those countries. Additionally, Thalys doesn't currently operate in the U.K., and Eurostar doesn't have any trains in Germany.

While it is not yet clear when the merger will go into full effect, when it does, it will mean travelers can move throughout the five countries—the U.K., France, the Netherlands, Germany, and Belgium—on a single ticket. Other benefits include more departure times and a shared loyalty program.

Here Are the Cruise Ships Debuting in 2024 & 2025 (and Beyond)

Between January 2024 and December 2027, more than 30 ocean-going cruise ships are on order across the global cruise industry. With so many ships coming, it's hard to keep track. Travel Market Report has compiled a list of all the new ocean cruise ships coming out in 2024 and 2025 (and beyond), along with their capacity, number of cabin categories, and maiden season itineraries (when available), to help you keep it all straight.



2024

Queen Anne, January 2024

Guest capacity: approximately 3,000
Inaugural sailing: January 4, 2024: RT Southampton to Lisbon (7 nights)
Maiden season: Not yet revealed
of cabin categories: Not yet revealed

Utopia of the Seas, Spring 2024

Guest capacity (double occupancy): Not yet revealed
Inaugural sailing: Not yet revealed
Maiden season: Not yet revealed
of cabin categories: Not yet revealed

Fifth Celebrity Edge-Class Ship, Fall 2024

Guest capacity (double occupancy): 3,260
Inaugural sailing: Not yet revealed
Maiden season: Not yet revealed
of cabin categories: 27

Third Norwegian Prima-Class Ship, Q3 2024

Guest capacity (double occupancy): 3,550
Inaugural sailing: Not yet revealed
Maiden season: Not yet revealed
of cabin categories: 35

Second MSC Cruises World Class Ship, 2024

Guest capacity (total): 6,774
Inaugural sailing: Not yet revealed
Maiden season: Not yet revealed
of cabin categories: 19

2025

Second Royal Caribbean Icon-Class Ship, Q2 2025

Guest capacity (double occupancy): Approximately 5,600
Inaugural sailing: Not yet revealed
Maiden season: Not yet revealed
of cabin categories: Not yet revealed

Fourth Norwegian Prima-Class Ship, Q3 2025

Guest capacity (double occupancy): 3,550
Inaugural sailing: Not yet revealed
Maiden season: Not yet revealed
of cabin categories: 35

Third MSC Cruises World Class Ship, 2025

Guest capacity (total): 6,774
Inaugural sailing: Not yet revealed
Maiden season: Not yet revealed
of cabin categories: 19

2026 & 2027

Fifth & Sixth Norwegian Prima-Class Ship, 2026 & 2027

Guest capacity (double occupancy): 3,550
Inaugural sailing: Not yet revealed
Maiden season: Not yet revealed
of cabin categories: 35

Third Royal Caribbean Icon-Class Ship, 2026

Guest capacity (double occupancy): Approximately 5,600
Inaugural sailing: Not yet revealed
Maiden season: Not yet revealed
of cabin categories: Not yet revealed

Fourth MSC Cruises World Class Ship, 2027

Guest capacity (total): 6,774
Inaugural sailing: Not yet revealed
Maiden season: Not yet revealed
of cabin categories: 19

