



Galápagos to Double Entry Fee Starting August 1

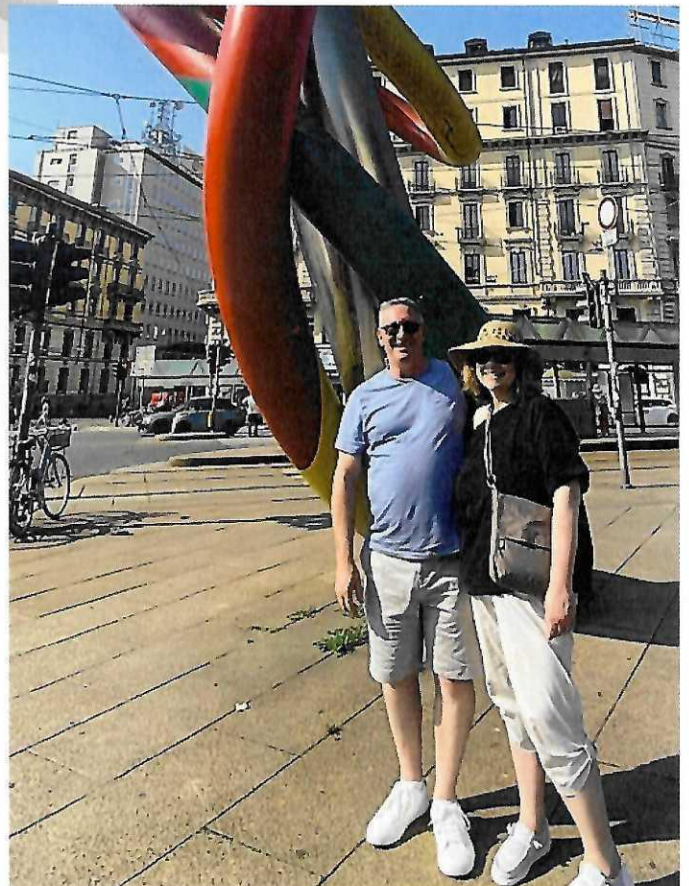
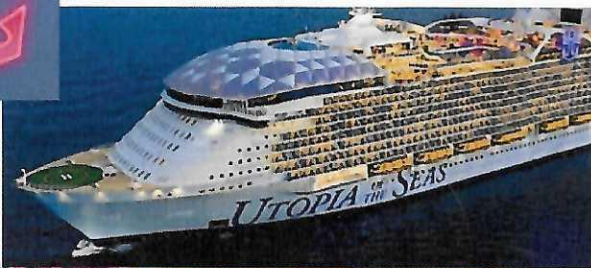
Foreign travelers will have to pay \$200 (adults and seniors) or \$100 (children) to gain entry to the Galápagos Islands, starting later this summer.



Nancy,

Thank you so much for arranging our recent trip to Italy. The tours and accommodations were fantastic!

Michael & Lori Pepenella



GROUP DEPARTURES 2024, 2025 AND 2026

DECEMBER 7, 2024-ROYAL CLIPPER (round trip Barbados)

Would you like to climb the mast to the crow's nest 75 feet above the deck or visit the open bridge where you can help sail the vessel? If so, this tall ship adventure is your ticket. Casual and relaxes with top notch dining and less than 250 passengers. Have a tropical drink while you relax in the bowsprit netting while listening to a steel drum band on deck. Visit Grenada, St. Vincent, Bequia, Martinique and St. Lucia. Rate per person for an outside cabin, including current taxes, is \$2,475.00. Our special pricing also includes pre-paid gratuities and an on-board credit of \$200.00 per person.

FEBRUARY 26 to MARCH 4, 2025-ICELAND

Our annual Iceland adventure begins with flights on Icelandair round trip from Newark Liberty Airport to Keflavik. We will begin with a stop at the Viking World Museum for a heavy continental breakfast before heading to the Blue Lagoon for a sunrise cocktail. Our package includes four nights at Midgardur Center Hotel with a buffet breakfast daily, full day Golden Circle tour with a tomato soup lunch at Fridheimar Greenhouse, shared Northern Lights tour, optional tours will be available to the glacier and South shore black sand beaches and Sky Lagoon. Price per person double \$1,998.00 included all current air and government taxes. A few singles are available at a surcharge of \$650.00. Insurance is recommended and a valid passport is required.

MARCH 24-30, 2025, SOUTHERN CHARM (with Collette Vacations)

Explore warm southern hospitality in America's southeast. Come to know its rich history and deep traditions on this tour highlighted by stays in Charleston, Savannah and Jekyll Island. Included are round trip transfers from Home Town Travel to Newark airport, six breakfasts and three dinners, professional escort for the duration of the trip, all accommodations and entrance fees. The rate per person, based on double occupancy is \$3,799.00. Cancel for any reason insurance is optional at the rate of \$429.00

MAY 18 to 25, 2025, BERMUDA CRUISE ABOARD THE CELEBRITY SILHOUETTE

Start next summer off right; especially if you missed this year's Bermuda group. Enjoy all that Bermuda has to offer while enjoying your beverage package and wi-fi relaxing on your balcony as you sail from Cape Liberty (Bayonne, NJ) passing the Statue of Liberty enroute to the beautiful pink sand beaches this beautiful island has to offer. Your special group rate includes your balcony accommodation, all current port and government taxes, beverage package and wi-fi for \$1,859.00 per person double. BOOK BY JULY 15th and RECEIVE A \$100. PER PERSON ON BOARD CREDIT.

NOVEMBER 5-16, 2025, OLD WORLD SICILY AND MALTA (with Collette Vacations). This is a small group departure for Home Town Travel with a maximum of 24 passengers on this adventure. These legendary isles are nestled amongst the deep blue water of the Mediterranean. Discover how ancient traditions blend into modern society as you travel along timeless Italian Maltese and Sicilian towns. This eleven-night tour begins with a four-night stay in Malta with a ferry to Sicily where you will stay three nights in Ragusa and three nights in Taormina. This package includes round trip transportation to Newark airport from our office, round trip air from Newark airport with an overnight flight to Malta, 10 breakfasts, 1 lunch and 4 dinners, professional escort throughout the trip and all accommodations and entrance fees. The rate per person based on double occupancy is \$5,399.00. Cancel for any reason insurance is optional and at a rate of \$549.00. Please call for more information.

NOVEMBER 25, 2025-ICONIC CHRISTMAS MARKETS ABOARD AMA REINA (Nuremburg to Budapest)

Travel back through centuries as you walk along cobblestone streets through grand cities and historic towns bedecked with twinkling Christmas trees and lined with wooden huts gleaming with handcrafted treasures. Nuremberg's festive Christkindlemarkt, the largest and oldest Christmas market in Germany, Regensburg's Artisan Christmas Market, one of Bavaria's most beautiful and romantic, Vienna with its impressive Christmas Market and Budapest where most products are handmade. Revel in a feast for the senses: sparkling lights, festive sounds of children dressed as angels singing carols and the enticing smells of hot-mulled wine, roasted chestnuts, sausages, and sweet treats of every kind. Rates start at \$3,699.00 per person double occupancy. Air fare and pre and post stays are optional and will be available in January 2025.

MARCH 13-26, 2026—TWELVE NIGHT VIETNAM & THAILAND CRUISE ABOARD THE CELEBRITY SOLSTICE

This bucket list trip starts in Hong Kong and visits Hanoi (Halong Bay), Hue/Danang, Ho Chi Minh (Phu My), Bangkok/Laemchabang and Ko Samui Thailand, and disembarking in Singapore. Pre and post land packages will be available. Cruise includes balcony accommodations (V1), all current port and government taxes, beverage package, gratuities, and Wi-Fi. SAVE OVER \$1,500 PER CABIN. Rate per person based on double \$3,350.00. A deposit of \$900/cabin is required to reserve your cabin. Final payment is not due until December 1, 2025.

**REMEMBER-IF YOU FIND SOMETHING THAT INTERESTS YOU, BOOK EARLY SO YOU WILL NOT TO BE DISAPPOINTED.
OUR SPECIAL RATES TEND TO SELL OUT.**

Travel + Leisure Names Best Cruise Lines for 2024

Along with the best hotels, airlines, cities, and rental companies, Travel + Leisure readers also voted for the favorite cruise lines. Readers rated ships – in several categories – based on cabins, food, service, itineraries, excursions, value, and more.

The results were mostly unsurprising, but there were some new entries this year, including Explora Journeys, Riverside Luxury Cruises, HX, and the newly relaunched Crystal. Additionally, in some categories niche cruise lines, such as Quasar Expeditions and Oberoi Cruises, took top five spots despite not being well-known among many cruisers.

Here are the best cruise lines and ships, as voted by Travel & Leisure readers.

Top 10 Intimate Ocean Cruise Lines (<150 cabins)

1. Quasar Expeditions (97.81)
2. Overseas Adventure Travel (97.55)
3. Aqua Expeditions (94.81)
4. Lindblad Expeditions (94.40)
5. Seabourn (94.35)
6. Celebrity Cruises – Galapagos (93.94)
7. The Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection (92.86)
8. Variety Cruises (92.35)
9. Ponant (91.73)
10. Silversea (91.33)

Top 10 Mid-Size Ocean Cruise Lines (300 to 799 cabins)

1. Viking (94.09)
2. Explora Journeys (92.81)
3. Crystal (90.16)
4. Regent Seven Seas Cruises (89.68)
5. Seabourn (88.90)
6. Silversea (87.96)
7. Oceania Cruises (87.31)
8. Holland America Line (86.27)
9. Azamara (86.13)
10. Celestyal Cruises (82.63)

Top 5 Small-Ship Ocean Cruise Lines (150 to 299 cabins)

1. Viking (96.69)
2. HX (96.08)
3. Windstar Cruises (92.99)
4. Paul Gauguin Cruises (91.26)
5. Silversea (88.49)

Top 5 Mega-Ship Ocean Cruise Lines (> 1,500 cabins)

1. Virgin Voyages (89.71)
2. Celebrity Cruises (85.85)
3. Princess Cruises (82.58)
4. Norwegian Cruise Line (80.90)
5. Royal Caribbean International (80.81)



Top 10 River Cruise Lines

1. Aqua Expeditions (98.85)
2. Avalon Waterways (95.91)
3. The Oberoi Cruises (95.75)
4. Tauck (95.71)
5. Grand Circle Cruise Line (95.61)
6. Uniworld Boutique River Cruises (94.83)
7. Viking (94.73)
8. Riverside Luxury Cruises (94.62)
9. Scenic (91.00)
10. AmaWaterways (90.09)

Risotto with Mushrooms and Peas

Level: Easy

Total: 1 hr

Active: 1 hr

Yield: 4 servings

Ingredients:

6 cups chicken broth
1 stick (8 tablespoons) unsalted butter
1/4 cup olive oil
1 cup finely diced yellow onion
8 ounces baby bella mushrooms, sliced
5 cloves garlic, minced
2 cups Arborio rice
1/2 cup dry white wine
1 1/2 cups grated Parmesan cheese
1 cup frozen peas
Kosher salt and freshly cracked multicolor pepper

Directions:

- 1 Heat the chicken broth in a medium saucepan, then cover and keep warm on low heat.
- 2 Melt the butter in a large saucepan over medium heat and add the olive oil. Add the onions and saute, stirring occasionally, until tender and translucent, 8 to 10 minutes. Add the mushrooms and garlic and saute, stirring occasionally, until the mushrooms are tender and the juices have evaporated, 10 to 12 minutes.
- 3 Next, add the rice and stir to incorporate with the vegetables, then immediately add the white wine. Cook, stirring often, until the liquid is absorbed, about 2 minutes. Add 1 cup of the broth to the pan and simmer over medium-low heat, stirring often, until the liquid is absorbed, 3 to 4 minutes. Continue to cook, adding broth by the cupful and stirring often, until the rice is tender and creamy, 28 to 32 minutes. Stir in the Parmesan and peas. Add salt and pepper to taste.



You're Not Tipping Your Hotel Housekeeper Enough

New data shows that the majority of us aren't tipping our hotel housekeepers properly. According to a recent study from The Vacationer, only 39% of people tip their housekeeping staff—meaning that 61% of people are not leaving tips. That's downright atrocious. And listen, maybe you didn't know that you were supposed to, or were unsure of the etiquette around it.

Let's clear that up, because tipping isn't a kindness or a favor—especially in a country like ours, where most of the hospitality industry relies on tips. In recent years, thanks to extensive organizing, the average wage for hotel workers has gone up. But the average April 2024 salary for hotel housekeepers, according to employment marketplace ZipRecruiter, is still just \$16 per hour, which comes out to be \$33,933 per year.

Tipping is, unfortunately, the difference between a living wage and poverty wages. While housekeepers across the country are demanding better pay from their employers, that battle is far from won. Until everyone in the country is guaranteed living wages, tipping is not only the right thing to do, it is a necessary part of the service industry and our economy.

Anytime you check out of a hotel, motel, resort, or any type of facility that A) provided you lodging, and B) employs cleaning staff, remember to leave a separate tip for housekeepers in your room—and not just give one lump sum to the front desk (that tip will go to various other hotel employees, but probably not the housekeepers). If you disagree with this, go argue with someone else.

So, now that we've established that you should be tipping your housekeeper, here are the details to make sure you are doing it right.

According to the American Hotel and Lodging Association, housekeepers should be tipped between \$1 and \$5 per day.



HERE'S HOW MUCH VENICE MADE WITH ITS DAY-TRIPPER TAX

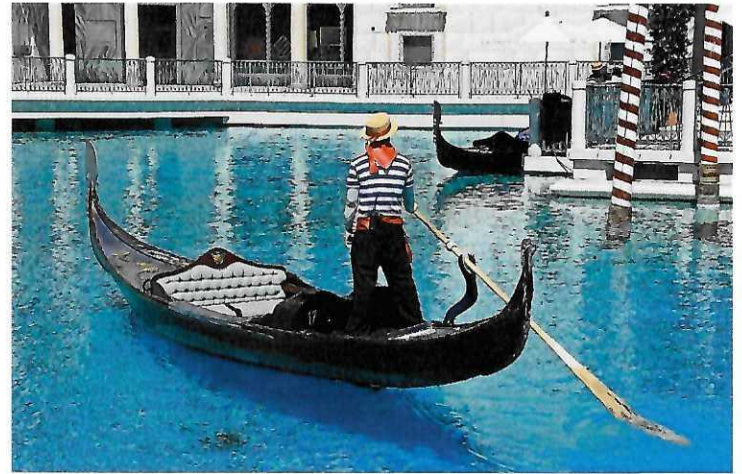
Earlier this month, Venice concluded a pilot program that netted the city 2.2 million euros (\$2.4 million) by charging day-trippers an entrance fee.

The 5-euro (\$5.45) tax was paid by nearly 450,000 tourists visiting on the 29 days (mostly weekends and holidays). It was in place between April and July.

Venice implemented the day-tripper tax to curb overtourism. However, critics do not believe that it tamed the crowds. Officials say the tax will continue and have proposed doubling it to 10 euros next year. Still, opponents claim it will not be enough, one city councilman commenting that it only "makes Venice a museum."

Though the city had promised steep fines for those who dodged the tax, AP reported that none were issued.

Opponents to the tax are instead seeking policies that encourage the repopulation of the city, such as limits on short-term rentals. Venice has been losing residents and is also under pressure from UNESCO to lose its world heritage status due to the impact of overtourism and extreme weather.



PLAYA

HOTELS & RESORTS®

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Travel by: March 31, 2025

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