

# Home Town Travels

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April 16th, 2025

5pm

Old World Sicily &  
Malta



Cultural Treasures of  
Japan



# Broccoli and Cheese Twice-Baked Potatoes

*A winning combo of broccoli and Cheddar stuffed into one of everyone's favorite things, a potato! These will satisfy even the pickiest of eaters and make a great side for a steakhouse feast.*

## Ingredients:

4 large russet potatoes, washed and dried  
1 tablespoon canola oil  
3 teaspoons kosher salt  
1 1/2 teaspoons freshly ground black pepper  
1 head broccoli, cut into small florets (1 1/2 cups total)  
4 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted  
3/4 cup sour cream  
1/2 cup heavy cream  
1/2 teaspoon garlic powder  
2 cups grated sharp Cheddar

## Directions:

Special equipment: a piping bag fitted with a large star tip

- 1 Heat the oven to 400 degrees F.
- 2 Coat the potatoes with the oil, 1 teaspoon salt and 1/2 teaspoon black pepper. Bake on a sheet tray until fork-tender, about 1 hour. Allow the potatoes to cool enough to handle.
- 3 Cut the potatoes in half and scoop the flesh out into a large bowl, leaving a thin layer of potato flesh attached to the skin. Arrange the empty halves on a parchment-lined sheet tray. Lightly mash the potato flesh, then add the broccoli, butter, sour cream, heavy cream, garlic powder, 1 cup Cheddar, the remaining 2 teaspoons salt and the remaining teaspoon pepper. Mix well and transfer the filling to a piping bag fitted with a large star tip, then pipe the filling into the potato skins. Top with the remaining cup Cheddar and bake until melted and lightly brown, 15 to 20 minutes.



# A Walk Across Prague



Known as the "Golden City of 100 Spires," Prague boasts a fairytale medieval Old Town, historic churches and synagogues, and perhaps Europe's largest castle. A good way to introduce yourself to the city, its layered past, and its resilient people is with a walk across town, starting on lively, urban Wenceslas Square, weaving through the atmospheric Old Town, and ending at the picturesque Charles Bridge.

Huge Wenceslas Square, lined with great buildings, has been center stage for much of modern Czech history. It's named for King Wenceslas, the "good king" of Christmas-carol fame, sitting astride the big equestrian statue at the top of the boulevard-like square. The statue is a popular meeting point among locals, who like to say, "I'll meet you under the

The creation of the Czechoslovak state was celebrated here in 1918. An inspiring memorial commemorates Jan Palach and Jan Zajíc, two college students who set themselves on fire in 1969 to protest the Soviet Union's invasion of the Czech Republic the year before. Twenty years later, giant crowds converged on the square, jingling their key chains and chanting, "It's time to go now!" in the lead-up to the peaceful overthrow of the communist government.

The Czech people have a rousing enthusiasm for blowing raspberries in the face of authority — once voting to name a fictional comedic character, Jára Cimrman, as their "Greatest Czech of All Time." From the 14th-century rebel Jan Hus (who challenged Church corruption roughly a century before Martin Luther) to the flashes of revolt that sparked the 1989 Velvet Revolution against communism, the Czechs have maintained a healthy disrespect for those who would tell them how to live their lives.

From the bottom of Wenceslas Square, it's a short walk down skinny Melantrichova street to Prague's quaint, compact Old Town. On the way you'll pass the wonderful open-air Havelská Market, a thriving display of traditional-thought-touristy Czech culture. Here you can browse for handcrafts, or snack on a vegetable or piece of fruit — merchants (often the farmers themselves) are happy to sell you just one.



A couple of blocks from the market is the Old Town Square, surrounded by gloriously colorful buildings in a diversity of architectural styles: Gothic, Renaissance, Baroque, Rococo, and Art Nouveau. Chief among them is the towering Gothic Týn Church, topped by fanciful spires.

At the center of the massive square, two monuments face off: the reformer Jan Hus and a Bernini-inspired Virgin Mary. The original statue of Mary, erected in 1652, honored the Virgin as the city's protector during the Thirty Years' War. But by the early 20th century, nationalist Czechs saw this Mary as a symbol of their oppressors, the militantly Catholic Habsburgs. Cue installation of the Jan Hus memorial, with Jan's eyes defiantly locked on Mary. After the declaration of independence in 1918, a rebellious mob tore down the "Habsburg" Virgin — to the dismay of many in this mainly Catholic country. It wasn't until 2020 that a replica was placed on her original spot, sparking controversy and conversation.

A short detour up the uniquely tree-lined Parizska ("Paris") street leads to the poignant Jewish Quarter, with museums, synagogues, and cemeteries. For me, this is one of the most powerful collection of Jewish sights in Europe.

Parizka ends at a bluff that once sported a 50-foot-tall stone statue of Stalin. Torn down in 1962, it was replaced in 1991 by a giant ticking metronome, its concrete base now favored by skateboarders who love to film themselves "skating at the Stalin."

One of my favorite places for a stroll, the Charles Bridge in Prague is a celebration of color and life. (Photo by Cameron Hewitt)

Back at the Old Town Square, Karlova street zigzags down to the river to one of my favorite places for a stroll — the Charles Bridge. Under the communists, this pedestrian-only bridge crossing the Vltava River was empty, its big Gothic towers and statues of saints coated in black soot. Today it's a celebration of life, with a festival of gleaming statues, artists, and musicians all along its length.

Across the bridge is the charming Little Quarter, and beyond that, the Castle Quarter, topped by the massive, must-see Prague Castle. A visit to the castle complex, with its quarter-mile stretch of churches, courtyards, and palaces spanning a thousand years of Czech history, can fill the better part of a day.

The mythical founder of Prague — the beautiful princess Libuse — named her city "Praha" ("threshold"). The Czechs have always been at a crossroads of Europe — between the Slavic and Germanic worlds, between Catholicism and Protestantism, and between Cold War East and West. Despite these strong external influences, the Czechs have retained their distinct culture...and their enviable ability to find humor in life's challenges.

## JetBlue Vacations to Offer Rain Protection for Travelers

JetBlue Vacations has announced a new partnership with WeatherPromise to help travelers safeguard their trips against excessive rain, one of the most common vacation concerns. This "first-of-its-kind" coverage allows customers booking through JetBlue Vacations to be reimbursed if their getaway experiences significant rainfall, relieving worries that bad weather will cost them their trip.

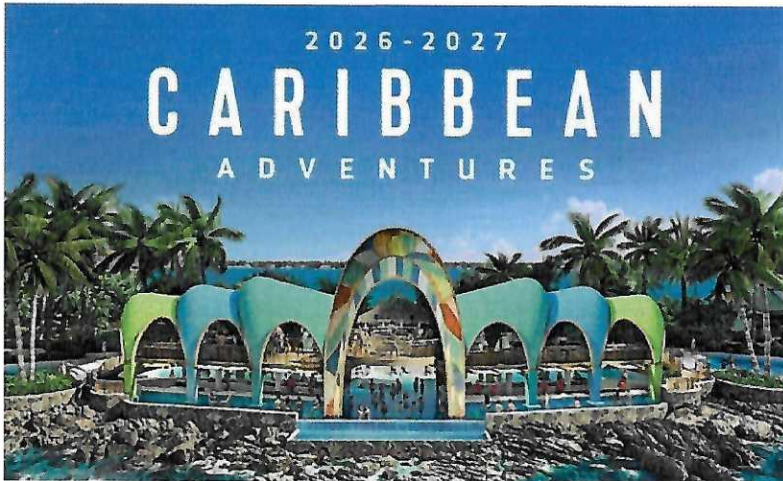
JetBlue customers booking eligible Flight + Hotel vacation packages can receive protection for all trip components, including car rentals and activities, when reserved through JetBlue Vacations at the time of purchase. WeatherPromise determines "excessive rain" based on destination, trip length and historical weather data. If rainfall meets the qualifying threshold, customers are automatically reimbursed—no paperwork needed—ensuring an easy way to protect their vacation investment. And, JetBlue Vacations says, they still get to take the trip.

WeatherPromise uses advanced weather-tracking system to protect a trip. It assesses millions of data points for each trip, and continually monitors weather conditions using satellite imagery, weather stations and radar to ensure an accurate, real-time evaluation at the travel destination.

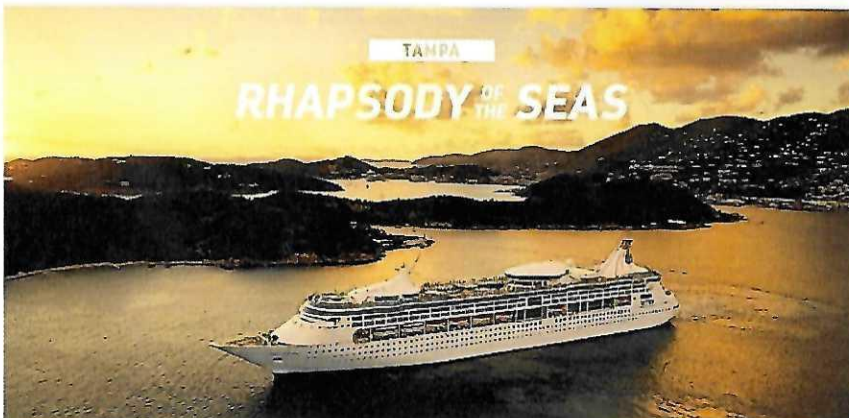
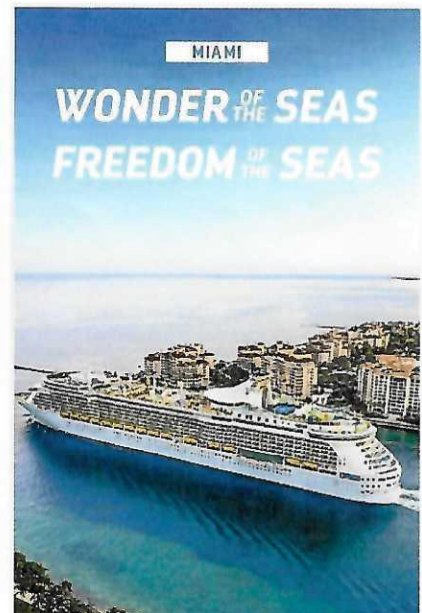
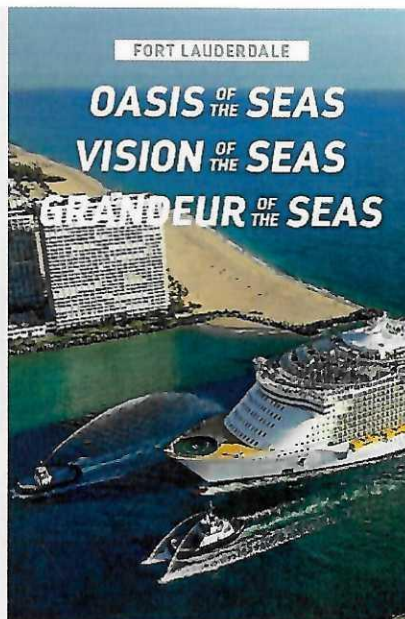
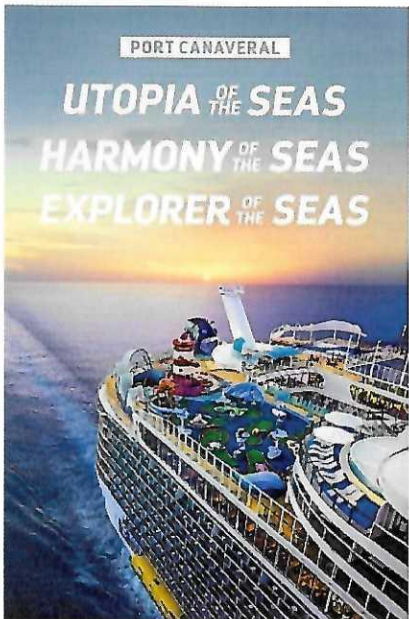




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# GROUPS FOR 2025-2026

**UTAH'S MIGHTY FIVE AND THE ROCKIES, SEPTEMBER 9-17, 2025**, with Collette Vacations, Highlights include Rocky Mountaineer, Glenwood Springs, Moab, Arches National Park, Canyonlands National Park, Dead Horse Point State Park, Capitol Reef National Park, Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, Bryce Canyon National Park, Zion National Park ending our tour at Paris Hotel Las Vegas. The tour includes round trip transfers to/from Newark, airfare, air taxes, fees and surcharges. Insurance is available at \$429.00. Book now and save \$200 per person. Rates \$6,549.00 (double), \$7,749.00 (single) and \$6,449.00 (triple) and must be booked by January 20, 2025.

**OLD WORLD SICILY AND MALTA, NOVEMBER 5-16, 2025**, 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 op  
**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. **ONE CABIN LEFT.**

**MARCH 8, 2026 to APRIL 8, 2026—31 DAY PANAMA CANAL, INCA & SOUTH AMERICAN DISCOVERY ABOARD HOLLAND AMERICA'S OOSTERDAM.**

Holland America's first Vista-class ship, the Oosterdam recently emerged from dry dock with exciting updates including completely refurbished suites and new lounge, dining and entertainment venues, such as Music Walk with Lincoln Center Stage, B.B. King's Blues Club and Billboard on board. Guests can choose from delectable specialty restaurants, hone culinary Skills with America's Test Kitchen and thrill to BBC Earth experiences. Embark in cosmopolitan Buenos Aires where pre-cruise packages will be available soon. Visit the penguins in Patagonia as you get ready to sail past Cape Horn and the Straits of Magellan. We then sail from Ushuaia and cruise the dramatic coast of Chile with stops in Puerto Montt and Punta Arenas. Sail through Glacier Alley enroute to a full transit of the Panama Canal. Inside cabins start at \$4,999.00 per person double. Available additions include Holland America's "Have It All" package which includes beverage package, three specialty dining venues, \$300 per person shore excursion credit, wi-fi and \$250 per person on board credit. This package is available for \$55 per person/per day. Prepaid gratuities are available at \$17/day. Other categories are available. Call for other rates and more information.

**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.

### **Cultural Treasures of Japan with Collette Vacations April 2026**

Welcome to Japan, the "Land of the Rising Sun." Explore ancient and modern Japanese culture firsthand. Discover peaceful temples and technological marvels set against unimaginable natural beauty. This amazing 14-day tour will include airfare from Newark, transfer to and from Newark airport from Home Town Travel, 18 meals, all accommodations, sightseeing with entrance fees, transportation within Japan and a professional tour escort thorough the trip. Some of the highlights of this tour will include: Tokyo, Asakusa, Sensoji Shrine, Tea Ceremony, Ginza, Lake Ashi Cruise, Matsumoto Castle, Takayama, Sake Tasting and Hida beef dinner, Kyoto, bullet train and Hiroshima. Exact dates and rates will be out shortly. For more information, please call the office.

### **Netherlands, Belgium & France with Collette Vacations September 2026**

From iconic Dutch windmills and cozy Belgian streets to the world-renowned Champagne region and the "City of Light," experience the essence of three European countries. This 12-day tour will include airfare from Newark, transfers to and from Newark airport from Home Town Travel, 16 meals, all accommodations, transportation through out your journey, sightseeing with entrance fees and a professional escort. Some of the highlights of this tour will include: Amsterdam, Canal Cruise, Kinderdijk, Bruges, Reims, Route du Champagne, Paris Parisian Bakery Workshop, Parfum Workshop, Le Marais, Ile de la Cite, Seine River Cruise and Eiffel Tower dinner. Exact dates and rates will be out shortly.

We will be having an informative Wine and Cheese with Collette tours in April with all the information on promoted tours. Please make sure to RSVP early, date will be confirmed and will be in our news blast.

## **Princess Cruises Goes Country with New Music Partnership**

Princess Cruises, in partnership with the Academy of Country Music (ACM), is bringing country music to the high seas with the ACM Live from the Red Barrel Lounge concert series. On Caribbean voyages departing Galveston, Texas, between Feb. 9 and March 17, guests aboard Regal Princess will enjoy live performances from some of country music's most exciting emerging artists, including chart-topping singer and ACM Award nominee Kameron Marlowe, reigning ACM New Vocal Duo or Group of the Year Tigirlily Gold, and America's Got Talent breakout stars Chapel Hart, along with other rising acts across several cruises sailing out of Galveston in early 2025 voyages. (Pictured above: Maddie & Tae being interviewed live from the Princess Stage at the 59th ACM Awards Show.)

As part of the series, six ascending country music acts will perform two, 45-minute concerts in the Princess Theater and interact with guests during Meet & Greet sessions.