

Five Cruise Destinations You May Have Overlooked

People all over the world are finally discovering the advantages of taking a cruise vacation. For one, all of the planning is done for you. You get to travel to multiple destinations without having to worry about finding transportation or hotels. That is because the boat itself is your means of transportation AND it is your hotel!



Still, a lot of great cruise deals will oftentimes get lost in the shuffle. Many people will see a few of the old standby destinations at a great bargain and instantly jump at them. And there is nothing wrong with taking your umpteenth trip to the Bahamas. If you like it there then by all means go for it. If you've never been you should give it a shot.

But part of the appeal of a cruise is that it can take you to strange and exotic places without stressing you too much on the details. A cruise can be a fantastic adventure to places you never dreamed about visiting, and maybe some places you've never even heard of before! Here are a few suggestions for bargain deals on cruises to places that are a little bit off the beaten path.

1. Alaska

When most people think about a cruise they think about fun in the Caribbean sun. An Alaskan cruise is not usually at the top of the list. But touring Alaska by boat can be an unforgettable and gorgeous experience. The landscapes and wildlife that you encounter are like nothing else in the world.

Princess Cruises offers a five day cruise of Alaska's Inside Passage. That is the little area between the southernmost Alaskan islands and the mainland. The trip leaves from Vancouver, Canada and after a day at sea it docks for an afternoon in Juneau.

Juneau is the capital of Alaska and it is also the state's third largest city. Hiking trails through temperate rain forests are easily accessible from downtown. There are also many museums and other cultural hotspots in the city. The next destination on the way back is the small city of Ketchikan. It is a huge fishing area and a great place to see orca and humpback whales.

Although an Alaskan vacation might not facilitate too much sunbathing time, it has more than enough cultural and wildlife-viewing opportunities to make up for it.

2. European Rivers

Another oft-overlooked option for a cruise is to take a trip down a river instead of out to sea. Railways and rental cars aren't the only way to tour Europe. Now you can do it by boat!

Avalon Waterways runs a 10-day trip that begins in Paris and sails down the Seine River, down to Lyon and the Rhone River, and eventually out into the Mediterranean Sea and over to the city of Nice, France. This is an unbelievable tour that hits a total of 11 French cities in 11 days and 10 nights. Seeing all that countryside on a traditional trip would be nearly impossible in such a short span of time, but it is leisurely and enjoyable when taken in from the deck of your cruise ship.



3. Panama Canal

Seeing one ocean is enough for most people. But the more adventurous types might want a cruise vacation where they get to see large parts of the two biggest oceans on the planet in the same trip.

Celebrity Cruises runs a 14-day trip that leaves from San Juan, Puerto Rico, travels through the Panama Canal, and then all the way up the western coast of Mexico and back to San Diego. Along the way it ports at Puntarenas, Costa Rica. This is a huge fishing port and it is an unbelievable place for fresh seafood. From there it is up the coast with stops in Acapulco and Cabo San Lucas.

If you want to go on a tropical cruise vacation but you can't decide on which ocean to sail in, experience two of them by crossing through the Panama Canal!

4. The Canary Islands

If you like the idea of spending long days at sea then you might consider a cruise of the Canary Islands. Royal Caribbean International runs 13-day repositioning cruises out of San Juan, Puerto Rico that spend six whole days at sea before arriving for a three-day tour of the Canary Islands off the coast of Africa.

These repositioning trips are a great deal because many of the cruise lines are already taking their boats from the Caribbean where they tour in the winter to the Mediterranean for the summertime. There is no real point in sailing across an ocean without passengers so they offer really great bargains. This trip also travels to Cadiz before docking in Barcelona, Spain.



5. The Galapagos Islands

Charles Darwin was so inspired by what he saw on the Galapagos Islands that it partially inspired his landmark study of human evolution "The Origin of Species." Kurt Vonnegut was so inspired by Darwin's work that he wrote the science fiction novel "Galapagos," which explores the inherent sorrow that comes from being a member of a species with an abnormally large brain.

Clearly, these islands are a magical place. Animals have evolved there in dramatic and exciting ways because they have been cut off for millennia from contact with other landmasses. Celebrity Cruises runs a 10-day cruise out of Quito, Ecuador so that you can explore these one-of-a-kind islands for yourself. Who knows what they will inspire in you.

World travel is about different things for different people. Some people desire a vacation simply to get away from the office and to relax for a few weeks. There is nothing wrong with that.

But other individuals travel because they see it as a way to open their minds to new people, places and ideas. For them, vacation is both a physical and a spiritual journey. If you find yourself in this latter group then you might consider taking a cruise to one of these oft-overlooked locations. You never know what you might find there.

By Lindsay Rosival

Lindsay Rosival is a freelance writer who writes about a variety of travel topics including cruise vacations.

www.libertytravel.com

Date: 2012-01-05

Article link:

<http://www.tourism-review.com/travel-tourism-magazine-cruise-destinations-off-the-beaten-path-article1715>