

ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS BY SEA: ISRAEL, EGYPT, CYPRUS, GREECE, & TURKEY – WITH SMITHSONIAN JOURNEYS

In alliance with Smithsonian Journeys. This cruise is part of a collection of PONANT voyages that are specially-tailored for English-speaking travelers who want to engage with the world. In addition to the usual elements of the PONANT experience, the listed price for these voyages includes transfers to and from the ship, talks and discussions aboard ship by world class experts, and a shore excursion or activity in each port of call that encourages guests to embrace the sights, sounds, tastes, and smells of the local environment and culture. From the Red Sea, through the Suez Canal, and into the central Mediterranean, this voyage aboard Le Champlain devotes 13 days to exploring the iconic sites of this exceptionally culturally rich corner of the world, encompassing Israel, Egypt, Cyprus, the Turkish coast, and the Greek Islands of Rhodes and Crete. Embark in Aqaba, Jordan, the gateway to Petra and the Wadi Rum Protected Area. Beginning in the Israeli port of Eilat on the Gulf of Aqaba, your first day of discovery offers a choice between a visit to Masada, where a group of Jewish Zealots held out against the Roman army for three years before committing mass suicide rather than surrender, or an exploration of the fabled Mines of King Solomon. After a day at sea, an excursion to Cairo focuses on the legacy of Pharaonic Egypt, beginning with the Great Pyramids of Giza and the Sphinx, the only one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World still in existence, and ending with a visit to the newly opened (October 2022) Grand Egyptian Museum. During the fifth day of the voyage, Le Champlain transits the Suez Canal, which was built between 1859 and 1869 to shorten the sea route from the Indian Ocean to Western Europe by over 5,000 miles. Arriving in the Mediterranean Sea,



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travel from the port of Ashdod to Jerusalem, the ancient city that is holy to Jews, Christians, and Muslim alike, and discover the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, the Western Wall, and the Temple Mount. During two days on the island of Cyprus, you may explore the UNESCO sites of Tombs of the Kings and the ancient town of Paphos, famous for its mosaics, or you may enjoy a culinary tour providing samples of Cypriot wines, cheeses, breads, and other mezze. The Greek island of Rhodes, known in antiquity for its schools of philosophy, rhetoric, and sculpture, today boasts one of Europe's largest medieval towns, built by the Knights of St. John during the Crusades, and a wonderful city to explore on foot. Kusadasi on Turkey's Aegean coast is your gateway to Ephesus, one of the world's greatest archaeological sites, spanning the period from the Hellenistic world through the early Christian era. The immense excavation here includes temples of several Roman emperors, the iconic Library of Celsus, and the terraced hill houses, with their splendid mosaics and frescoes, overlooking the city below. The largest of the Greek islands, Crete was home to the Minoans, Europe's earliest advanced civilization. From Heraklion, travel to Knossos to explore its fabled Minoan Palace, showing life as it was some 4,000 years ago. The palace is a maze of frescoed passageways and chambers that may well have inspired the myth of the labyrinth of the Minotaur. Also choose to visit the Heraklion Museum, with exhibits of Minoan finds from around the island. The final day of this extraordinary voyage is at sea, providing an opportunity to reflect on all that you have seen and done and to prepare for

disembarkation in Malta.

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Day 1 AQABA

Located in the Red Sea within the eponymous gulf, Aqaba offers Jordan its only access to the sea. At the crossroads of the land and sea routes that linked Asia, Africa and Europe, the town is rich with more than 5,000 years of history. The warm waters of the Red Sea attract holidaymakers and divers to this seaside destination; the underwater sites home to coral and fishes are some of the most beautiful in the world. Aqaba is also the gateway to the magnificent desert of Wadi Rum and the marvellous site of Petra.

Day 2 EILAT

Situated in the far south of the State of Israel, on the banks of the Gulf of Eilat, on the edge of the Negev Desert between Egypt and Jordan, Eilat is internationally renowned as a high-end seaside resort and spa town, as well as for its magnificent natural sites. The first references to this place date back to the time of King Solomon. His legendary mines are said to be located not far from the now-modern city. It is the departure point for visiting the Masada fortress and for the incredible experience of swimming in the Dead Sea.

Day 3 AT SEA

During your day at sea, make the most of the many services and activities on board. Treat yourself to a moment of relaxation in the spa or stay in shape in the fitness centre. Depending on the season, let yourself be tempted by the swimming pool or a spot of sunbathing. This day without a port of call will also be an opportunity to enjoy the conferences or shows proposed on board, to do some shopping in the boutique or to meet the PONANT photographers in their dedicated space. As for lovers of the open sea, they will be able to visit the ship's upper deck to admire the spectacle of the waves and perhaps be lucky enough to observe marine species. A truly enchanted interlude,



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combining comfort, rest and entertainment.

Day 4 AIN SUKHNA

Ain Sukhna, which means “hot spring,” is located in the Gulf of Suez, facing the Red Sea. Around fifty kilometres from the entrance to the Suez Canal, and less than two hours from the Egyptian capital, it is an elegant seaside town that is popular with wealthy families from Cairo. Ain Soukhna is an ideal base for discovering the marvels of Ancient Egypt.

Day 5 CROSSING THE SUEZ CANAL

Without the waterway linking the Red Sea to the Mediterranean this part of the world would be an arid sandy desert inhabited by a few nomads. The Suez Canal slices through 162 km of desert and was inaugurated in 1869 in the presence of Empress Eugenie, then nationalised by Nasser in 1956.

Day 6 ASHDOD

On the eastern shore of the Mediterranean, discover Ashdod, the largest port in Israel. An former Philistine city, the town is today home to the only museum in the world dedicated to the culture of this ancient people. Ashdod is also famous for being one of the gateways to Jerusalem. This city is one of the most sacred in the world and is fascinating due to its millennia-old history, its spirituality, and its incredibly rich religious heritage. Within its defensive walls, the Old City holds over 200 historic monuments including the Western Wall (or Wailing Wall), the Dome of the Rock, and the Holy Sepulchre. Visiting Jerusalem makes for a fascinating and moving experience as you immerse yourself in a mystical and magical place.

Day 7 LIMASSOL

Bathed by the azure waters of the Western Mediterranean, the city of Limassol enjoys a privileged natural position in southern Cyprus. Fall under its spell: nestled between lush mountains and idyllic fine sandy beaches, its history dates back to Ancient times. No wonder then that the charming city shelters many archaeological sites. Discover this rich cultural and architectural heritage, such as the emblematic 12th-century Byzantine castle where Richard the Lionheart married Berengaria of Navarre.

Day 8 PAPHOS

In southwest Cyprus lies Paphos, a modern town and sought-after seaside resort of this island situated in the eastern Mediterranean. The impressive Byzantine fort can be discovered during a walk around the port and provides a glimpse into the past of the Cypriot city. Occupied since the Neolithic period, the site of Paphos saw the rise of New Paphos during ancient times, which became the island’s capital until the 4th century BC, when there was a devastating earthquake. Important ruins bear witness to the cult of pre-Hellenic fertility deities and then the goddess Aphrodite, who, legend has it, was born in Paphos. By the sea in the lower town, the Kato Paphos archeological park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, reveals many ruins of villas, fortresses, theatres and tombs that date back to the Hellenic, Roman and Byzantine periods. On this site with its undeniable architectural and historic value, the floors of the villas are decorated with rare mosaics, among the finest in the world.

Day 9 RHODES

With its particularly agreeable climate, the island of Rhodes invites you to walk its pathways and discover its immaculate villages and sumptuous medieval city, a UNESCO World Heritage site. At the centre of the island the mountains are covered in forest and on the western slopes we find vineyards

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and crops. Rhodes also owes much of its charm and its character to the Knights of St John who reigned over the island from 1310 to 1522 and built impressive defensive walls punctuated with majestic gateways. Do not miss this delightful island with its peaceful beaches and its large walkways, perpetuating the myth of the famous Colossus, the legendary statue that is one of the Seven Wonders of the World.

Day 10 KUSADASI

The attractive seaside resort of Kusadasi is located in a gulf on the western coast of Turkey. You can bathe there in clear waters or stroll along the coastal walk, in the shade of palms. In the historical district, you can take a mosey down the narrow streets and explore the colourful shops in the bazaar. Close by, the Ephesus archaeological site in the hillsides provides an opportunity to discover the ruins of one of the most famous cities of Antiquity.

Day 11 HERAKLION, CRETE

Heraklion, the capital of Crete, is the island's most populous city. The hustle and bustle of this seaport is an integral part of its charm. It is built on a hillside overlooking the port and is encircled by impressive Venetian walls. From the top of these, you will be able to enjoy one of the most beautiful views of the city. The old town is teeming with small shops, squares, cafés and vibrant architectural evidence of the city's long history. The Palace of Knossos illustrates the wealth and power of its legendary sovereign, King Minos. The archaeological museum houses one of the largest collections of Minoan artefacts and is worth a visit.

Day 12 AT SEA

During your day at sea, make the most of the many services and activities on board. Treat yourself to a moment of relaxation in the spa or stay in shape in the fitness centre. Depending on the season, let yourself be tempted by the swimming pool or a spot of sunbathing. This day without a port of call will also be an opportunity to enjoy the conferences or shows proposed on board, to do some shopping in the boutique or to meet the PONANT photographers in their dedicated space. As for lovers of the open sea, they will be able to visit the ship's upper deck to admire the spectacle of the waves and perhaps be lucky enough to observe marine species. A truly enchanted interlude, combining comfort, rest and entertainment.

Day 13 VALLETTA

The whole of the Maltese capital Valletta is UNESCO World Heritage listed and occupies a peninsula in the north-east of the island. From the fountain of Tritons to Saint-Elme fort, there are as many majestic streets as there are narrow staircase vennels to explore. The painted loggia and carved corbels on the tall houses will accompany you in your explorations, and you'll rarely be bothered by traffic. You can visit the Grandmasters palace decorated with coats of arms and frescoes. Saint-John's cathedral and the ramparts which have guarded the city since the 16th century are also among the most emblematic sites of the city. Arranged in terraces, the Barrakka Gardens will punctuate your promenade with a green and floral experience.

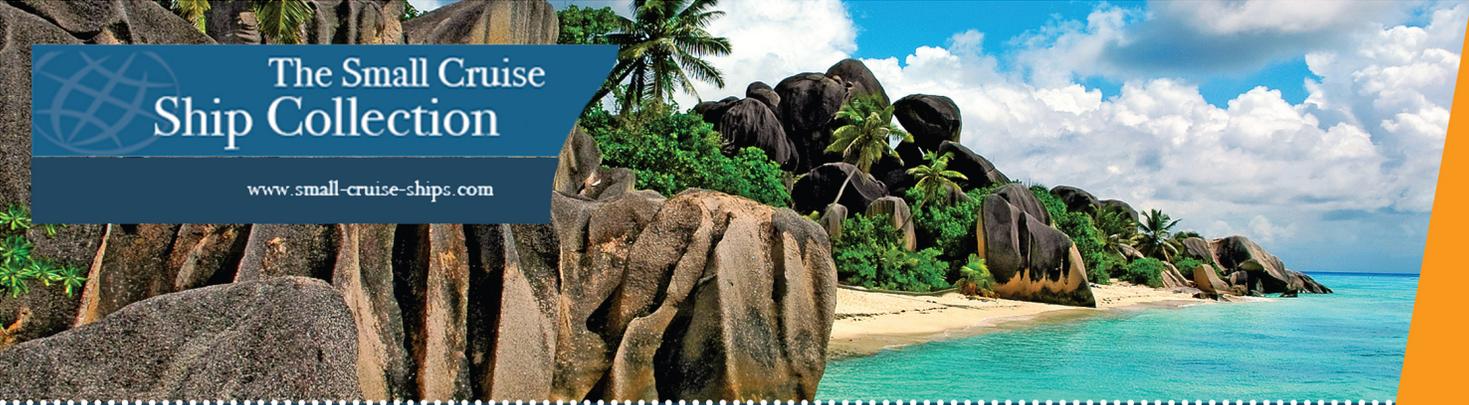
Please Note:

Itineraries are subject to change.

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YOUR SHIP: LE CHAMPLAIN

YOUR SHIP: Le Champlain

VESSEL TYPE:

LENGTH:

PASSENGER CAPACITY:

BUILT/REFURBISHED:

Featuring innovative and environmentally-friendly equipment, elegantly designed cabins, spacious suites with large windows, and lounge areas that open onto the outside, this new limited-capacity yacht boasting just 92 cabins and suites will offer you a truly unique cruising experience. As the first ship in a new series, Le Champlain will embody the unique atmosphere that is the cruise line's hallmark: a subtle blend of refinement, intimacy and comfort. Aboard this ship that flies the French flag, you will experience the incomparable pleasure of an intimate cruise, with the possibility of exploring an ever-increasing range of destinations in an ethnic-chic ambiance with luxury service. Experience a luxurious setting where the accent is on authenticity and passion for travel. **RESTAURANTS** As it is an essential part of French culture, gastronomy will naturally have pride of place aboard this new ship. Through its two restaurants, Le Champlain will invite you on a journey to elegance and epicureanism. In a relaxed atmosphere, a first dining area located on Deck 3 and able to seat 70 will serve grilled meats daily, along with a variety of salads and desserts. To the back of Deck 4, you will find a 260 m² panoramic restaurant which can accommodate all of our passengers in a single sitting. Designed

differently to that on our other ships, this dining area, which opens onto the outside, will have a buffet of salads, desserts and cheeses at your disposal. Our discreet and attentive crew will provide table service for hot meals. **PUBLIC AREAS** Like Le Boreal and its sisterships, Le Champlain has many common areas that are designed and equipped to meet all of your needs while preserving the intimacy of each passenger. A 140 m² reception area includes: A reception/concierge desk, An excursions desk, The ship's administrative services, The sales office, manned by our Guest Relations Officer, Our 50 m² boutique which sells clothing, jewellery, beauty products, postcards and various accessories, Toilets accessible to passengers with reduced mobility. A new hydraulic platform with adjustable height provides: Easier boarding than on any other cruise ship, Easier Zodiac embarkation and disembarkation for expeditions, Easier access to the sea for swimming and practising various water sports such as kayaking or paddle-boarding. A pool deck offering: A pool with a panoramic view, equipped with a counter-current swimming system, A pleasant solarium, An outdoor bar and lounge with armchairs and sofas. A 200 m² main lounge which can accommodate all of our passengers to share convivial moments and to host activities organised during the day or evening. Lastly, a theatre that seats 188, equipped with: The latest sound and lighting technology, A LED wall as the stage backdrop, for the projection of high-resolution images and videos. Please click the following links to read more about Ponant and the other Ponant

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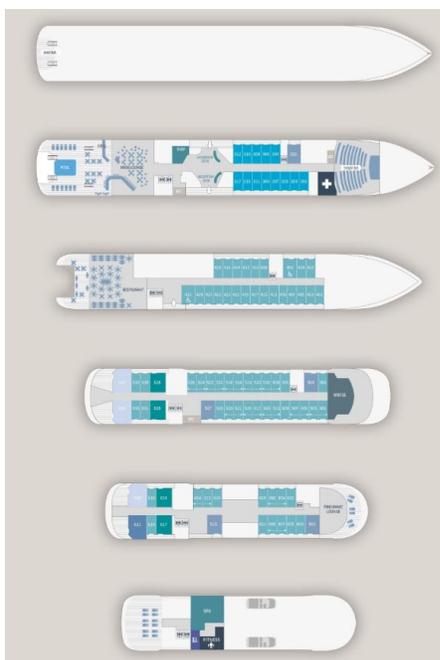
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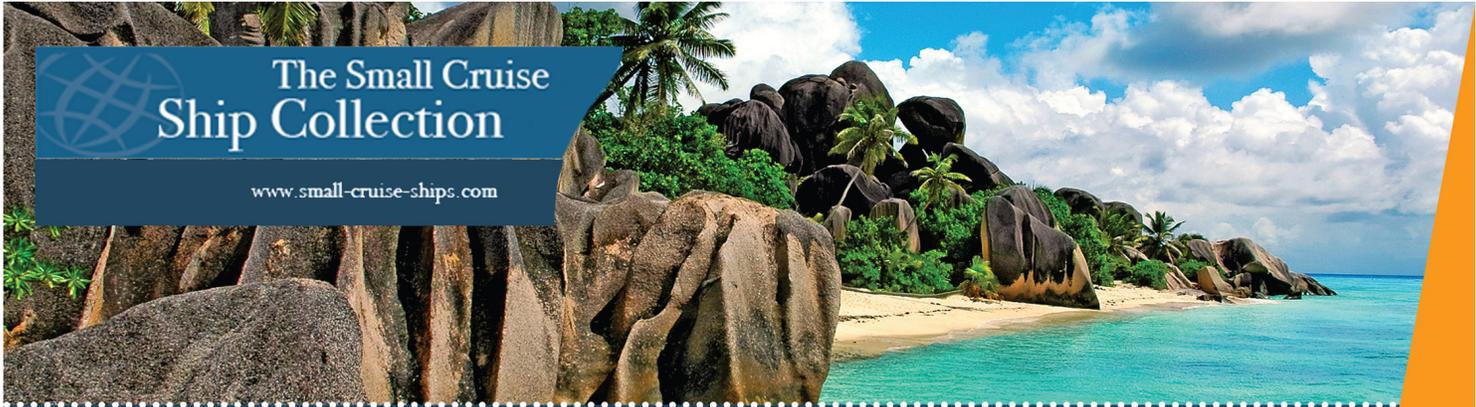
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