

The Small Cruise Ship Collection

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CIRCUMNAVIGATING THE BALTIC SEA

Explore eight countries united by the Baltic Sea, discover their intertwined histories, and encounter fascinating cultures. Delve deeper through dramatic water approaches, foray into character-filled villages and island stops for quiet walks. Wander along the medieval walled city of Visby, explore dazzling St. Petersburg over two days, dine on local specialties and enjoy private musical performances—or have a deck party in the tranquil Swedish Archipelago. Enjoy ample choices and avenues for exploration in each of the cities. And explore from a privileged vantage point—going by ship allows us to sail routes of the old Hanseatic League, in the paths of early traders and nobles, and it lets us enter the cities as they were meant to be—by sea. Encounter a kaleidoscope of history and cultures. Though the countries we explore are linked by the Baltic Sea, each is distinctly unique. Fascinating Gdańsk in Poland, the mysterious Hill of Witches in Klaipėda, Lithuania, and the finest collection of art nouveau buildings in beautiful Latvia. Turbulent histories come alive and the painstaking restoration efforts after WWII become all the more meaningful. The musical and artistic heritage found here is astounding and you will encounter many examples for the memory books. It's your expedition, you choose how to explore. How you spend your expedition time is vital to us. We want to bring you the best of these Baltic nations in the most engaging ways possible. Every day you can join naturalist or historian-guided hikes; or experiment with camera settings on a leisurely photo-focused walk. Meet the lively characters who make up the contemporary scene in towns along the way. Or simply enjoy the open decks and glorious views from National Geographic Orion. Travel with some of the best and

brightest. The encyclopedic knowledge of our historians adds insight, depth, and clarity to each geography. Our naturalists will describe the geology of these rich coastlines, sharing their knowledge daily. If improving your travel photos is a passion, than we recommend you spend time with the National Geographic photographer and the National Geographic certified photo instructor aboard ship and on



walks ashore.

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DAY 1: Copenhagen, Denmark

Today we arrive in Denmark's capital. The fairytale feel of the city where Hans Christian Andersen wrote is the home of incredible stories and a long history. After lunch, have a water-level view of this old maritime city from a boat sailing on its charming canals, seeing the city's landmarks, palaces, and of course, The Little Mermaid statue. Back on board enjoy your first taste of Danish pastries as we prepare to set sail. (L,D)

DAY 2: Bornholm

Stop at the small fishing port of Gudhjem on Bornholm Island. Hike up to the cliff-top ruins of Hammershus fortress or explore the island's round churches and white sandy beaches. Then do as the locals do with a taste of some of the island's famous smoked herring accompanied by a cold local beer. (B,L,D)

DAY 3: Gdańsk, Poland

Arrive in Poland and take in Gdańsk's art and architectural highlights including the Gothic-Renaissance Town Hall and the National Museum, featuring the Last Judgment triptych by Hans Memling. Or, learn about the significance of ship building and trade at the Maritime Museum. Zodiacs take us through the shipyards of Gdańsk, an important area for the organized resistance against the communist regime in 1980. We take a guided tour of the European Solidarity Center, commemorating the trade union that made Lech Wałęsa a household name. History buffs may opt for a morning visit to the Westerplatte peninsula, where World War II began with the German invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939, and the Polish Post Office Museum, still marked by signs of the attack. In order to maximize your time in Gdańsk, we've arranged an authentic Polish style lunch in town with open seating so you can arrive at your convenience. (B,L,D)

DAY 4: Klaipėda, Lithuania

Explore the wild barrier peninsula called the Curonian Spit, a UNESCO World Heritage site shared by Lithuania and Russia. Choose one of two options: Take a cultural tour to a seaside resort town to learn of folk tales at the Hill of Witches and see some of Europe's tallest sand dunes. Or, spend the afternoon at the Cape Ornithological Station to explore the lighthouse and dunes while learning about migratory bird populations. We've set up a cycling option, too, along the sea, down the wild Curonian Spit with its sand dunes, harbors and seaside wildlife. (B,L,D)

DAY 5: Visby, Gotland, Sweden

Spend the day exploring Visby, one of the best-preserved medieval towns in Scandinavia. Founded as a Viking settlement, the town became a center of the Hanseatic trade in the 12th to 14th centuries. Stroll the cobblestone streets of the enchanting old town and walk along its nearly two-mile-long, 13th-century wall. Ride a bike through town or along the many bike paths across the island of Gotland. This evening join us for a special night on Gotland with a Swedish dinner and a private concert. Extremely picturesque, Visby is perfect for a guided photo walk through medieval neighborhoods capped off with a visit to the Gotland Museum. (B,L,D)

DAYS 6-7: Riga, Latvia

Explore the largest city in the Baltics on a walking tour through Riga's UNESCO-recognized center, passing wooden houses, art nouveau architecture, and funky cafés, and climbing to the top of St. Peter's Church tower for 360-degree views. Choose to bike across the Daugava River and explore the quiet island of Kipsala and its old fishermen's houses, or take a boat ride through the canals of Riga with free time before sailing to Lithuania. Explore



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with all your senses. Taste, see, and smell Latvian food specialties at the airy Central Market on an optional tour with your Orion chef and a local guide. (B,L,D)

DAY 8: Tallinn, Estonia

Cross the Gulf of Finland to Estonia arriving in Tallinn. Stroll the medieval streets of Town Hall Square on a guided walk through the walled, cobblestoned old town with its Kiek in de Kōk, a 15th-century defensive tower. Take in the view from Dome Hill of Tallinn's picturesque spires and gables, and visit the grand Kadriorg Palace and grounds built in the Baroque style for Catherine I of Russia by Peter the Great. Can music change history? Most people don't think about music when they think revolution. But song was the weapon of choice when Estonians sought to free themselves from Soviet rule. Visit the singing grounds in person. (B,L,D)

DAYS 9-10: St. Petersburg, Russia

Peter the Great established his city in 1703 as Russia's "window to the west." With grand palaces and residences and its planned streets, canals and parks, St. Petersburg is surely one of the most dazzling cities in Europe. Our days are spent exploring St. Petersburg's imperial luxuries and artistic treasures: The Hermitage with its world-renowned art collections, the grandiose Peter and Paul Fortress, St. Isaac's Cathedral, Peter the Great's summer palace at Petrodvorets, known as the Russian Versailles, and the opulent royal palace and parks of Catherine the Great at Pushkin. (B,L,D)

DAY 11: Helsinki Region, Finland

It's fitting that the waterfront of Helsinki, capital of a country tied to the sea, blends so graciously into the Baltic. The intricate coastline with numerous bays, inlets, and islands sprinkled off it

make certain there's no shortage of natural presence, which will make for fitting exploration. (B,L,D)

DAY 12: Stockholm Archipelago, Sweden

Anchor near the small island of Utö and explore its quiet coves by kayak. Or, take a Zodiac to the island to walk through Utö's nature preserve. Keep your camera handy as we maneuver through the scenic Stockholm Archipelago to dock in the heart of Stockholm, the city built on 14 islands. You'll arrive in Stockholm like no one else: via Zodiac through the lush greenery of the Djurgården Canal. (B,L,D)

DAY 13: Stockholm

The great Scandinavian maritime capital of Stockholm provides some favorite experiences: view the royal Vasa warship (which capsized in Stockholm harbor in 1628 and was salvaged and restored 350 years later). Take a walking tour of Old Town Gamla Stan, or learn about Sweden's living history at the Skansen open-air museum. This afternoon enjoy time on your own or take a tasting tour of Swedish sweets in the Gamla Stan. We stay docked overnight so you can enjoy this magical Scandinavian city. Take a rooftop walk across the Old Town. Yes, opt to buckle up in your safety harness and step along the narrow rooftop path that only we will follow. You'll be stunned by the fantastic views and the fascinating stories that your guide will narrate. (B,L,D)

DAY 14: Stockholm

(B)

Please Note:

All day-by-day breakdowns are a sampling of the places we intend to visit, conditions permitting.

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YOUR SHIP: NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC ORION

YOUR SHIP:	National Geographic Orion
VESSEL TYPE:	Luxury Expedition
LENGTH:	103 metres
PASSENGER CAPACITY:	102 (in 53 cabins)
BUILT/REFURBISHED:	2003 / Refurbished 2014

Engineered for maximum comfort and safety, *Orion* is equipped with the latest technology including large retractable stabilizers, sonar, radar, and an ice-strengthened hull. A shallow draft plus bow and stern thrusters provide the convenience of being able to maneuver close to shore. 14 Zodiacs ensure quick disembarkation and offer the ideal transport for up-close exploration. *National Geographic Orion* meets strict specifications for environmental protection and the on board waste management systems meet the stringent Antarctic operational standards enabling us to travel to the most pristine environments. A host of advanced design features and technology ensures sustainable marine environmental practices. *National Geographic Orion* accommodates 102 guests in 53 cabins, including several with balconies. She is spacious and modern, with a variety of public rooms that offer panoramic views of the passing landscape. Friendly and informal, *Orion* fosters a welcoming atmosphere where like-minded guests share in exceptional experiences and enrichment. Her public rooms include a dramatic window-lined main lounge, as well as an observation lounge and library perched at the very top of the ship, with plentiful observation decks. The spacious lounge is

the heart of our expedition community, and is suited for spirited cocktail hours, informative presentations and our nightly tradition of Recap. In addition, a dedicated theater provides a unique setting for specialist presentations or films and slideshows. Both the main dining room and outside buffet easily accommodate all guests at once for open seating dining. On selected nights, weather permitting, our dining room menu is also available on the outside deck. While *Orion* interiors are elegant, life aboard is always casual, with no need for formal clothing. And you'll find shipboard services like laundry, in-room cabled internet, and public-area wifi make packing and traveling more



convenient.



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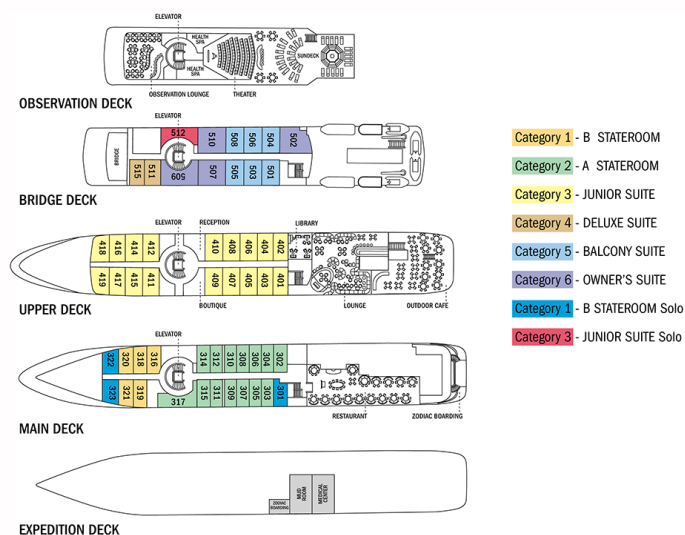
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