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A WORLD AFFAIRS CRUISE IN THE BALTIC JOINED BY LECH WAŁSA

The Baltic Sea has been a thoroughfare of trade since the days of the Vikings. And for nearly as long, it has been a crucial arena of struggles for dominance in Europe--an important element in the strategic thinking of great powers from the Reformation and the Thirty Years War to World War II and the Cold War. Today, it is once again at the center of current events as Sweden and Finland join NATO after decades of neutrality and as the Baltic States are newly anxious about their independence. As we visit the great cities that ring the shores of the Baltic, we will explore this history in a series of lectures and discussions with a decorated career foreign service officer and an award-winning journalist, and we will have the privilege of a specially arranged, exclusive presentation and discussion with former President of Poland and Nobel Peace Prize-laureate Lech Wałsa while in Gdansk. But these historic cities of the Baltic, of course, offer so much more. They are great cosmopolitan centers with vibrant cultures and a legacy of art and architecture that reflects a history rich in tradition. Sailing from Stockholm, whose lively old town showcases cobblestone streets lined with 17th- and 18th-century buildings, Le Laperouse calls first in Helsinki. Internationally recognized for its striking Art Nouveau architecture, Finland's capital is also home to the UNESCO Heritage Site of Suomenlinna, a massive military installation that protected the city during the 18th and 19th centuries. During the next two days of the voyage, you encounter two more UNESCO designated sites. Tallinn's Old Town, a prominent trading center in the 13th century, retains remarkably well-preserved ramparts, public buildings, merchant houses, and warehouses. And on Gotland--the largest island in the

Baltic Sea and the site of Viking treasure--the beautifully preserved medieval town of Visby, also once a stronghold for the Hanseatic League, invites exploration of both of these legacies. Gdansk, whose shipyard served as the birthplace of the Solidarity Trade Union in 1980, is where we meet with former President Lech Wałsa and hear the story of the wave of dissent that arose from the Solidarity movement and led to Polish independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. The Old Town, lovingly restored after the ravages of WWII, is a reminder of the town's proud 1000-year-old history of ship-building. The Danish Island of Bornholm is known throughout the Baltic region for its lush farmland and rich herring fisheries and for the ruins of the medieval fortress of Hammershus and four well-preserved Nordic round churches. And the Danish capital of Copenhagen, a thoroughly modern and sophisticated city, is also proud to display its 800 years of royal history in Christiansborg Palace, which houses the Danish Parliament, and Amalienborg Palace, the winter residence of the Queen. Le Laperouse's last port of call is the lively Swedish harbor town of Gothenburg, whose stunning Museum of Fine Arts includes works by Carl Larsson, Edvard Munch, Anders Zorn, Van Gogh, Picasso, Chagall, and Monet. Your voyage comes to an end in Fredrikstad, a port city near the mouth of Oslo's

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ride in SkyView, a glass-encased sphere gondola that takes you to the top of the world's largest building, the Ericsson Globe, a Stockholm landmark.

Day 3: Helsinki

Seated in the southern peninsula of Finland, Helsinki offers the buzz of a cosmopolitan city that has opted for both elegance and beauty. Explore its historical centre where the soft hues of neoclassical buildings are juxtaposed with spectacular modern constructions. The bustling Kallio district is teeming with boutiques and restaurants where you can taste some local specialities like graavilohi - a sweet, marinated, aromatic salmon dish. Keskuspuisto park, a stone's throw from the centre, is a good place to sit and unwind.

Day 4: Tallinn

Opening onto the Baltic sea, to the far north of Estonia, the town of Tallin will win you over with the picturesque charm of its architecture. You can meander through its little streets in the heart of the medieval centre where its gothic town hall has been standing since 1404. The Kiek in de Kok tower, the Orthodox Alexander Nevski cathedral, or Toompea castle give visitors a taste of this town's rich past. The city was particularly active during the medieval period, as is demonstrated by the very beautiful monuments from this period that are still visible. Don't hesitate to lose yourself in the heart of Tallinn, listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Day 5: Visby

Oslofjord.

ITINERARY

Days 1-2: Stockholm

The capital of Sweden occupies an archipelago in the east of the country at the junction of Malar Lake and the Baltic sea. In Gamla stan, meaning "old town" in Swedish, you can stroll at your leisure in picturesque medieval streets until you reach the majestic Royal Palace. On the green island of Djurgarden, you can visit several very different kinds of cultural centres: the Vasa museum is dedicated to a 17th century three-mast, the ecomuseum of Skansen presents traditional customs, and the ABBA museum is dedicated to the legendary pop group. For a fantastic, all-encompassing view of Stockholm, you can take a



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This old Hanseatic city lies to the west coast of Gotland, a Swedish island in the Baltic sea. Pass through the spectacular Visby fortifications and visit the old town, a UNESCO World Heritage site. You'll discover the grand Visby homes of rich merchants as well as the lovely low wooden houses in the little cobbled streets. Don't miss Saint Mary's cathedral with its octagonal steeples, as well as Powder tower along the fortifications. Make sure you stop over in one of the rose-adorned cafes; indeed roses abound in this town where you can taste one of the island's specialities, namely saffron pancakes with red fruit.

Day 6: Gdansk

This ravishing city on the Baltic sea is nicknamed "the golden door of Poland", and you'll understand why when you see its beautiful Hanseatic architecture. You'll be charmed by the mouldings and gables that enhance the colourful façades of the houses. Along the Vistula Quays, you can take a pleasant stroll among the crafts shops. In elegant Mariacka street, the amber jewellers will most certainly tempt you into their boutiques. You can visit the church of Saint-Mary and its astronomic clock. Not far, the majestic Long Market square offers the famous Artus Court and the rich Gdansk History Museum.

Day 7: Gudhjem & Bornholm

Lying in the south-west of the Baltic Sea, the medieval village of Gudhjem, on the island of Bornholm, is one of the most visited

and most popular villages in Denmark. As you stroll along its picturesque streets, you will fall under the spell of its varied landscapes, its easy way of life, and the authenticity of this charming town with half-timbered houses topped with red roofs, in the Danish tradition. It is here, along these charming streets, that the first herring smokehouses were built in the mid-19th century, attracting all the region's fishermen. Tucked away in a gorgeous natural setting composed of rocky cliffs, dense forests and beaches of white sand, Gudhjem will provide an unforgettable interlude where time will seem to stand still.

Day 8: Copenhagen

Connected to the far eastern side of Sealand island, a few kilometres away from the Swedish coasts, Copenhagen offers you the high colour of Scandinavian capitals. You can discover the city's riches that weaves through the canal networks through the historical districts of Christiansborg and Nyhavn. Many palaces provide an aperçu of Danish history. For eating, you can try out the smørrebrød, traditional danish sandwiches made with ham, cheese or smoked fish.

Day 9: Goteburg (Gothenburg)

Nestling on the western coast of Sweden, at the junction of the Gota River and the Kattegat sea area, Gothenburg enchants and surprises. Authentic and welcoming, this city of canals, edged with many green spaces, has a rich maritime history, making it Sweden's most important port. Going beyond its commercial influence, "the cultural capital of Scandinavia" is a perfect blend of historic monuments, neo-classical architecture and



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eco-districts featuring modern urban spaces. In the old Haga district, you can peruse hippy-chic fashion boutiques and bohemian cafes in the ground floors of traditional wood houses. On the hills of the city, fall under the spell of the Lutheran Masthugget Church, a sumptuous 18th-century building.

Day 10: Fredrikstad

Nestling on the shores of the Glomma estuary, Fredrikstad captivates with its rich historical heritage, picturesque canals and warm atmosphere. Founded in 1567, the fortified old town still has traces of its rich past. Fall under the spell of its cobbled narrow streets, edged with traditional old wooden buildings, boutiques and lively cafes, and also discover the extremely well-preserved ramparts, built almost 5 centuries ago. Nature enthusiasts will also appreciate the magnificent hiking paths along the Oslo fjord and surrounding islands, such as Hankø, with its idyllic beaches and lush plains.

Please note:

Itineraries are subject to change.



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YOUR SHIP: LE LAPEROUSE

YOUR SHIP: Le Laperouse

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. 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 Laperouse 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** Le Laperouse 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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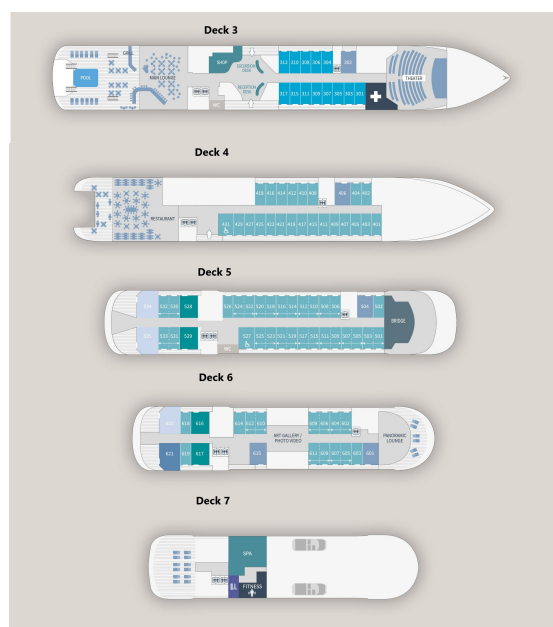
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