



SMALL SHIPS

BIG ADVENTURES



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Northwest Passage

The treacherous Arctic passage across the top of North America is an unknown quantity; getting through it depends entirely on the ice. The discovery this year of HMS Erebus, one of the explorer John Franklin's two ships, which sank there 170 years ago, has fuelled a new passion for exploration in this desolate place. One Ocean Expeditions, crewed by members of the team that found the wreck, is making a 13-day Northwest Passage attempt on August 12, from Kangerlussuaq, Greenland, to Cambridge Bay, Canada, on Akademik Ioffe. You may see polar bears and storms. You'll certainly have the adventure of a lifetime. *From £5,167; 00 351 962 721836, oneoceanexpeditions.com. Fly into Ottawa and out of Edmonton with Air Canada; from about £1,400. One Ocean Expeditions can arrange all the necessary air transfers for £1,250*

Falklands and Antarctica

The ships of the French line Ponant — Le Boréal, L'Austral and the brand-new Le Lyrial — embody expedition chic and a trend for seeing Antarctica in style, with spas, gorgeous interiors, fine dining and a fleet of Zodiac landing craft. Le Boréal's 14-night Great Austral Loon sails on

the Sea of Cortez, you can expect multiple whale and dolphin sightings every day, as well as turtles, manta rays and a dazzling array of tropical fish. On a week-long voyage on the expedition ship Safari Endeavour, you can also kayak into sea caves, try paddleboarding and swim with sea lions. *From £3,579 for departures between November and March, including a night in Los Angeles, two in Los Cabos and seven on the ship; 020 7399 7630, mundyadventures.co.uk*

Bali to Bangkok

Voyages to Antiquity's 24-day Bali, Borobudur & Bangkok cruise, departing February 1, packs in the big-hitting ports and temples. You'll start with three nights in Bali before boarding the classic, 378-passenger Aegean Odyssey and sailing to Semarang — gateway to Borobudur, Indonesia's answer to the Parthenon. After overnight stays in Singapore and Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon), fly to Siem Reap in Cambodia, for the incredible Angkor Wat temple complex, finishing with three nights in Bangkok. *From £4,550, including excursions, tips and wine with meals; 0845 437 9737, voyagestoantiquity.com*

Unless stated, prices are per person, including flights and all meals on board

Greece and Turkey

In 1955, Swans Travel Bureau chartered its first vessel, carrying 268 passengers between classical Greek and Turkish sites. Sixty years later, Swan Hellenic returns to its roots — Minerva will meander around the Aegean on a 15-day odyssey from Thessaloniki in the north to Agios Nikolaos, in Crete, calling at Kas, Kusadasi and Dikili on the Turkish coast and some of the less touristy Greek islands, among them Skyros and Milos. The ship leaves Athens on September 16, and a lecture programme is included. *From £2,935, including tips and all tours; 0844 417 1939, swanhellenic.com*

St Helena

The airport on the South Atlantic island is due to open in February 2016, so this remote British Overseas Territory will become a bit less isolated. Make the most of the peace next year on the 156-passenger RMS St Helena — the

Intimate sailing
Above, the elegant Star Flyer and Ponant's L'Austral in Antarctica. Below, the Buddha of Borobudur, in Indonesia. Bottom, see Symi, left, with Swan Hellenic, or Havana with Star Clippers

venerable workhorse that has been the island's only regular contact with the outside world. On May 4, there's an 18-night stargazing voyage from Cape Town: hosted by Steve Owens, the author of *Stargazing for Dummies*, it takes full advantage of the clear night skies, miles from any light pollution. *From £2,695, excluding flights; 020 7575 6480, rms-st-helena.com. Fly to Cape Town with Qatar Airways or Etihad; from about £600*

Alaska

Noble Caledonia's 10-night Wild Alaska cruise dodges the busier ports and focuses on total immersion in nature. Departing on August 22, you'll be sailing on the 86-passenger expedition ship Safari Endeavour, with forays ashore in inflatable landing craft, or by sea kayak or paddleboard. A highlight is a night in the Glacier Bay National Park & Preserve, a deep fjord into which tidewater glaciers calve vast chunks of ice. (Gaze at them from the hot tub, cocktail in hand.) Park rangers will point out bears foraging on remote beaches, sea eagles, puffins, moose and whales. *From £5,295, all-inclusive, with two nights' B&B in Seattle; 020 7752 0000, noble-caledonia.co.uk*

