

The Small Cruise Ship Collection

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ALASKA, NATURE ON A GRAND SCALE

The "great land" or the "mainland" in Aleut is very aptly named. An immense territory and a mythical region, land of trappers and the origin of the greatest adventures, Alaska welcomes you to discover its changing, yet always grandiose, landscapes. During an 12-day expedition cruise aboard Le Soleal, enter the kingdom of nature and explore incredible Alaska during a journey discovering all its mysteries. The largest State of the United States also has the most diverse landscapes. From temperate rainforests forests to the icy scenery of the Arctic, the relief fluctuates between majestic fjords and snow-covered mountains. The legendary Mount Saint Elias is stunning, standing 5,489 metres (18,000 feet) tall, near the head of the Icy Bay. Inside the bay, you will also travel through the Tsaa Fjord, surrounded by hanging glaciers and dizzying waterfalls. Among the jewels you will have the chance of exploring, Prince William Sound is a sight like no other. Imagine a painting: it features coniferous forests, which hide, in the background, mountains that are bleached by the eternal snow. The glaciers moving towards the sea, dressed in their finest colours, provide another opportunity to contemplate and learn more about this unique ecosystem. In the heart of this wild and majestic nature, you will set off to discover Alaskan life and customs, accompanied by our guides and naturalists, who are experts in the region. With local arts and crafts, the history of the emblematic totems and traditional shows, you are promised a real immersion into the local life of the communities. You cruise will also be an opportunity to go back in time to the 19th century and to the famous gold rush, so well told by Jack London in his novel The Call of the Wild. Here, humans must

share the vastness with the animal kingdom. At sea, have fun spotting the humpback whales as they blow on the horizon. On land, black bears and grizzly bears are the focus of most attention and observations, while the majestic bald eagle, the symbol of the Unites States, soars above in the sky. The crucial notions of this cruise involve searching and keeping an eye out; the unexpected and the uncertainty are what make these singular encounters even more



spectacular.

ITINERARY

Day 1 ANCHORAGE - Only 07/06/24 & 17/08/24 departures

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Meet at Anchorage international airport in the arrival hall. Look for PONANT sign. You will be greeted by our local representative off the flight selected by PONANT or any other flight (provided that you have previously communicated your flight schedule to your travel agent). You will then be transferred to the hotel. Check-in at arrival. Dinner and overnight at the hotel.

Day 2 SEWARD, ALASKA

Seward is located on the Kenai peninsula, south of Anchorage. This bustling port, built for the fishing and shipbuilding industries, will show you just how vibrant it is, with its shops and galleries. The entrance gate for the sublime Kenai Fjords National Park, Seward nestles in the heart of very beautiful scenery, between glaciers, mountains and very rich marine life (whales, sea otters, orcas, seals...).

Day 3 COLLEGE FJORD, ALASKA & SAILING IN THE PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND

A secret inlet in a hewn-out bay on the southern coast of Alaska, College Fjord features outstandingly rich glacier scenery. Come and admire the five tidewater glaciers and high-altitude glaciers. These glaciers were named after the prestigious US East Coast schools attended by the professors who first laid eyes on them at the end of the 19th century. The setting is awe-inspiring, but don't forget to listen out for the thunderous crack as great pillars of ice break off from the glaciers... On the eastern coast of Kenai Peninsula, Prince William Sound unfolds its majestic beauty. You will sail in this labyrinth of islets, icebergs, narrow fjords,

surrounded by the Sitka spruce and western hemlock that make up the incredible decor of the Chugach National Forest. If you are lucky, you may spot some of the otters, orcas, grizzlies, bald eagles, sea lions and humpback whales that live here. There are still traces of the 1964 earthquake, one of the most powerful episodes ever recorded on Earth, at a magnitude of 9.2 on the Richter scale. Sailing in Prince William Sound is also an opportunity to contemplate the imposing Harvard and Mawr glaciers as they form on the horizon.

Day 4 TSAA FJORD, ICY BAY, ALASKA

Formed by the retreat of the Guyot, Yahtse and Tyndall glaciers over the past 100 years, Icy Bay is one of those timeless places where silence reigns supreme. Let yourself be enthralled by landscapes of breathtaking beauty, enhanced by magnificent views over the Saint Elias Mountains, visible in the background. The bay, several kilometres wide, is often scattered with icebergs sliding on clear and deep waters. It will let you access several sounds, among which are the Tsaa fjord, very close to the Guyot glacier. Many marine mammals and sea birds have chosen to live on this territory with very few visitors in the south of Alaska.

Day 5 SITKA, ALASKA

Formerly a Russian colony located on Baranof island, to the west of the Alexander archipelago, Sitka is brimming with history. The historical national park of Sitka shelters totems carved out of red cedar, a tree that is omnipresent in the region. These totems are testimonials of the former presence of Tlingit

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Indians. This place is full of natural wonders too. You just have to look up to admire the mountain range around the port. In the distance, the snow-peaked Edgecumbe volcano stands majestic. Numerous islands scattered around Sitka stretch out before you in a vision of preserved Alaska.

Day 6 ELFIN COVE, ALASKA & POINT ADOLPHUS, ALASKA

At the tip of an island in the Alexander Archipelago, not far from the Canadian border, peaceful Elfin Cove shelters a fishing community that's only linked to the rest of the world by the sea. There is just a dozen wooden houses, a long wooden pontoon and a tiny port surrounded by crystalline waters... It doesn't get any quainter than this. Choose from a network of hiking paths that weave through a pristine forest, to lead you to secret beaches where silence reigns. The wonders of the Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve, accessible by a short boat trip, are many. Adolphus Point is located opposite the magnificent Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve. This dreamlike site is world famous for watching humpback whales. In the summer season, these majestic mammals come to feed in the nutrient-rich waters. They sometimes even come a few dozen feet from the shoreline, close to the houses and marinas. Orcas, sea lions,... maybe you'll happen upon other marine species in these landscapes of fjords and ice fields. One thing is sure; here are the most beautiful Alaskan waters.

Day 7 HAINES, ALASKA

Hidden in the heart of this spectacular wilderness, between jagged peaks and a sapphire ocean, the legendary small port of

Haines lays out all the richness of its traditions. Founded by the Tlingit Indians, peopled by the pioneers of the famous gold rush, the village is now a rallying point for modern day adventurers. You can visit its streets trimmed with colourful houses, soak up local history at Fort Seward or visit the Indian art museums, before a possible excursion into the nearby wilderness. The very beautiful Chilkatriver is especially worth a visit and it is possible to see grizzly bears coming to feed.

Day 8 KAKE, ALASKA

Discover the small Tlingit village of Kake, around 60 kilometres west of Petersburg. Located on Kupreanof Island, it houses a community of over 500 inhabitants. Kake is paradise for salmon, which spawn in the Gunnuk River near the village. Bald eagles often make an appearance, as do black bears, which come to enjoy the fish. Another singularity of these parts: the presence, on a hill, of a totem pole standing over 60 metres tall, considered the highest in the world.

Day 9 PETERSBURG, ALASKA

Picture this: all around you, translucent waters. In the distance - snow-capped mountains. This is the vision that greets you on disembarking in Petersburg, one of Alaska's largest commercial fishing towns. The heart of the Tongass National forest is for people who yearn for a lungful of the great outdoors. There is some fauna here including no less than 240 species of birds, seals, sea lions, humpback whales. Another special feature of this very lively town is its penchant for art. On its pavements and facades you can admire several murals, totems and sculptures.

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Day 10 MISTY FJORDS, ALASKA

Rain forest, hypnotic blue lakes, snowy peaks, glacier valleys, waterfalls... You will behold a heavenly vision. This United States monument covering some 8,600 square kilometres is a designated Wilderness Area. This awesome countryside rolls out its majestic carpet of cedars, fir spruces and hemlocks. Here, you can feel Nature's throbbing heartbeat. You may be lucky enough to spot some of the many animal inhabitants, such as sea otters, sea lions and grizzlies.

Day 11 INSIDE PASSAGE

Sheltered from the ocean currents of the Gulf of Alaska, this maritime route that weaves a path around the islands and islets of Southeast Alaska will offer you wonderful sailing experience. Conifer forests stretch on forever, interspersed with numerous coves, bays, huge valleys and deep fjords formed by ancient glacial valleys. Accessible only by sea, the fishing villages are surrounded by snow-capped mountains and glaciers that plunge into the waters of this veritable wildlife sanctuary. From your ship's deck, you can try spotting humpback whales or the famous bald eagle, emblem of the region.

Day 12 ALERT BAY & SAILING IN THE JOHNSTONE STRAIT

Right near the north coast of Vancouver Island, in British Columbia, hides the small wooded island of Cormorant. Surrounded by pebble beaches, it offers wonderful opportunities for hikes and for whale watching. The surrounding waters are

also home to harbour seals, orcas, Steller sea lions, dolphins, and a multitude of seabirds. When your ship calls at Alert Bay, a small sheltered fishing port located in the island's south, set off to discover the indigenous culture and its traditions. The 'Namgis community, which is part of the Kwakwaka'wakw First Nations, lives here in harmony with the other village inhabitants. Along the north-east coast of Vancouver Island, Johnstone Strait is a 100 km-long channel formed by an old glacier bed, dotted with a string of lush islands. Sailing amid this wilderness offers fantastic opportunities to observe the wildlife. Humpback whales and resident orcas can be found in the cool and sheltered waters of the strait, and you can try to spot some from your ship's deck.

Day 13 VANCOUVER

Verdant and cosmopolitan, Vancouver is one of Canada's most multi-cultural cities. Located in British Columbia on Canada's west coast, it's surrounded by mountains and outdoor activities are popular. In the city, you can immerse yourself in the Asian atmosphere of bustling Chinatown, shop for pashminas and silk saris at the Punjabi Market Indian district and explore the historic area of Gastown. Vancouver Art Gallery is known for works by regional artists, while the Museum of Anthropology houses important First Nations collections. Granville Island Jetty is a fascinating revitalised industrial area that hosts galleries, restaurants and a huge produce market.

Please Note:

Itineraries are subject to change.

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YOUR SHIP: LE SOLEAL

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VESSEL TYPE:

LENGTH:

PASSENGER CAPACITY:

BUILT/REFURBISHED:

Luxury Small Ship A sleek silhouette, a welcoming intimate atmosphere, and the same philosophy that has made her sister ships, L'Austral, Lyrial and Le Boreal, such a success. This magnificent yacht of only 132 staterooms and suites, all with balconies, has contemporary decor inspired by the luxury yachting world, with fluid lines and a modern colour scheme combining natural wood with shades of grey and white. White Corian counters in the lobby contrast with the warmth of leather to recall a boat's hull, while the central sculpture of enamelled pieces takes its inspiration from the sea. In the lounge bar, the carpet picks up a tennis stripe theme symbolising a certain idea of cruising, one synonymous with French elegance and a chic seaside spirit. Wheelchairs 3 specially adapted wheelchair cabins (Deck 3 = Superior cabin no. 307, no balcony, Deck 4 = Prestige Cabin no. 407 - with balcony and Deck 5 = Prestige Cabin no 509, with balcony) and lifts to all decks/areas. Read about our recent Ponant cruise to Antarctica Please click the following links to read more about Ponant and the other Ponant cruise ships.



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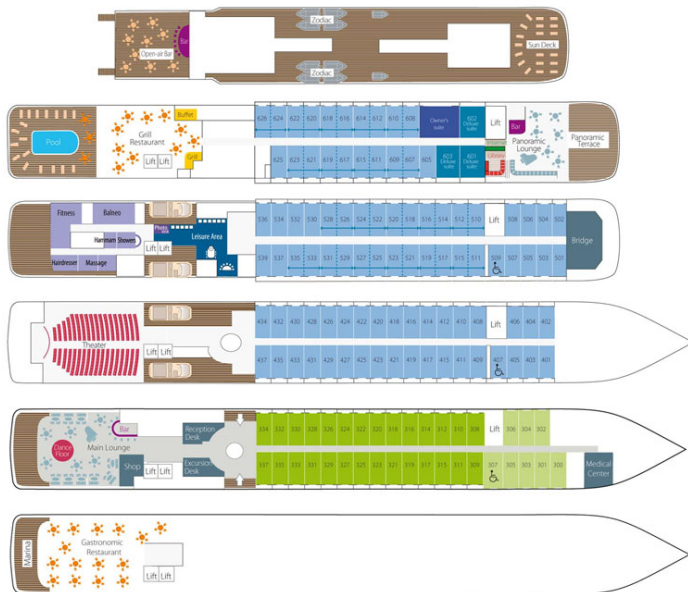
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INSIDE YOUR SHIP



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