

## SMITHSONIAN JOURNEYS AND PONANT ANNOUNCE 2025 SMALL SHIP EXPLORATIONS

***New itineraries will whisk guests to Tunisia, the Canary Islands and Mallorca while spotlighting the expertise of Smithsonian Journeys experts, including , scholars, and museum curators***

Feb. 20, 2024—Smithsonian Journeys, the travel program of the Smithsonian Institution, in collaboration with PONANT, a designer of inspiring voyages onboard small exploration ships, announces its 2025 sailings. Drawing on Smithsonian's rich history as the world's largest museum, education, and research complex, the 30 itineraries—the most ever offered in one year, due to growing interest and demand—will feature notable experts and experiences that embrace local cultures and dive deeper into a destination's history, cuisine, language, environment, and wildlife. [Smithsonian Journeys](#) and PONANT are rooted in common values, with the goal of further inspiring guests to become global citizens through travel. This is the fourth year Smithsonian Journeys and PONANT will offer co-branded sailings.

Several new itineraries include a two-week voyage from Lisbon to the Canary Islands (*Oct. 26-Nov. 8, 2025*); and a Mediterranean sailing encompassing Sicily, Sardinia, and Mallorca (*Oct. 3-10, 2025*); while a newly enhanced itinerary features a circumnavigation of Sicily with a new stop in Tunisia for the archaeological site of Carthage (*June 2-10; Aug. 29-Sept. 6, 2025*). All will provide opportunities to engage with a variety of Smithsonian Journeys Experts, ranging from geologists to museum curators and archaeologists, bringing guests even closer to the spirit of these alluring destinations.

Smithsonian Journeys and PONANT will also bring back voyage-favorites from 2024 including a seven-night itinerary from Panama to Costa Rica, with an exclusive visit to the open-air Punta Culebra Nature Center of the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute (*Jan. 6-13, 2025*); an eight-day exploration of the Greek Islands in the Southern Aegean, with ports of call at a different island each day (*July 6-13; Oct. 12-19, 2025*); and a Mediterranean Island Voyage spanning Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica, and Elba (*May 26-June 2, 2025*).

Highlights of the 2025 voyages include the following:

### **[New: Lisbon to the Canary Islands by Sea: Spain, Morocco, and Atlantic Isles, \*Le Bellot\*](#)**

On this voyage along the southern shores of Iberia to the isles of the eastern Atlantic, guests will encounter a fascinating range of cultures, histories, and landscapes—from the ochre cliffs of Portugal's Algarve Coast to the lush valleys of Madeira and the volcanic craters of the Canary Islands (guests will visit La Palma, Tenerife, Lanzarote, and the lesser-visited La Gomera). Cultural riches will come into view during tours of the World Heritage sites of Seville, Spain and Rabat, Morocco. Other highlights include medina visits, a tour of Madeira's Botanical Gardens, and the insights of onboard Smithsonian Journey Expert Allen Fromherz, a professor of Mediterranean and Middle Eastern history.

*Departure on Oct. 26-Nov. 8, 2025 // 14 days*

*Starting from \$9,020 per person*

### [Newly Enhanced: A Circumnavigation of Sicily, \*Le Bougainville\*](#)

This epic voyage begins as *Le Bougainville* pulls out of Valletta, Malta—one of the world’s most photogenic harbors—then docks on Sicily’s southern coast for a visit to the World Heritage site of Agrigento. But hold your breath for what’s next: on day three, guests will sail to Tunis, the vibrant, colorful capital of Tunisia, to discover the ancient ruins of Carthage, a city founded by the Phoenicians in the 9<sup>th</sup> century; meander along the blue-and-white lanes of Sidi Bou Said, a coastal town perched on a promontory overlooking the Mediterranean; and gaze upon stunning Roman mosaics at the Bardo Museum. Next up is Trapani, where guests can choose from three excursions, one of which involves viewing the iconic high-altitude castles in the medieval city of Erice. From there, it’s off to Palermo, Taormina, Syracuse, and the Aeolian Islands of Lipari and Stromboli, where volcano vistas, winery visits, and slopeside lunches are among the offerings.

*Departures from June 2-10, and Aug. 29-Sept. 6, 2025 // 9 days*

*Starting from \$7,420 per person*

### [New: Cruising the Mediterranean: Sicily, Sardinia, and Mallorca, \*L’Austral\*](#)

Starting in Valletta, Malta and ending in Tarragona,, this eight-day voyage whisks around the Mediterranean, sailing from Sicily and Sardinia to the Balearic Islands of Menorca and Mallorca. Among the highlights are delving into Palermo’s centuries-old markets and encountering the city’s World Heritage-listed Arab-Norman architecture; discovering the cultural riches of Cagliari, Sardinia, which is known for its baroque palazzi, hilltop fortress, and archaeological ruins; and stepping back into history as you discover the Bronze Age ruins of Menorca and tour the magnificent Palma de Mallorca Cathedral, built on the site of a former mosque and rebuilt by Antoni Gaudí in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

*Departure from Oct. 3-10, 2025 // 8 days*

*Starting from \$5,340 per person*

### [Panama and Costa Rica by Sea, \*Le Bellot\*](#)

Calling all environmentalists, intrepid outdoor explorers, and aspiring marine scientists: this eight -day itinerary from Panama to Costa Rica promises to immerse guests in some of the world’s most spectacular ecosystems—from mangrove forests and white-sand beaches to flora- and fauna-rich national parks—while offering rare insight into the critical work of nature conservation (expect an exclusive tour of the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute’s Punta Culebra Nature Center). The voyage will also bring travelers close to local Indigenous communities on the San Blas Islands and in the World Heritage Site of Darién National Park and Playa Muerto, a small coastal village inhabited by the Emberá people. The onboard Expert is Hugh Neighbour, a former diplomat and U.S. Navy Officer with expertise in history, culture, and current affairs.

*Departure from Jan. 6-13, 2025 // 8 days*

*Starting from \$6,054 per person*

### [Cruising the Greek Islands of the Southern Aegean, \*Le Dumont-d’Urville\*](#)

Looking to cross off a half-a-dozen Greek islands in one go? This 8-day itinerary, which begins and ends in Athens, is your ticket to discovering the gem-like isles of the Dodecanese and Cyclades archipelagos, plus the lesser-visited Peloponnese peninsula. Explore the jewels of Patmos, Amorgos, and Delos, where

activities include touring World Heritage Sites, meeting monks at an 11-th century monastery, and visiting a typical Cycladic home to learn the age-old practice of distilling essential oils. Sanjaya Thakur— an expert in Greek and Roman history — will help guests better understand the islands’ overlapping cultures and archeological riches on the July departure

*Departures from July 6-13 and Oct. 12-19, 2025 // 8 days*

*Starting from \$5,940 per person*

For more information, visit <https://www.smithsonianjourneys.org/ponant/>.

### **About the Smithsonian**

Since its founding in 1846, the Smithsonian Institution has been committed to inspiring generations through knowledge and discovery. It is the world’s largest museum, education and research complex, consisting of 21 museums, the National Zoological Park, education centers, research facilities, cultural centers, and libraries. Two of the 21 museums – the National Museum of the American Latino and the Smithsonian American Women’s History Museum – are in the early planning stages. The total number of objects, works of art, and specimens at the Smithsonian is estimated at nearly 155 million, of which nearly 146 million are scientific specimens at the National Museum of Natural History.

### **About Smithsonian Journeys**

Smithsonian Journeys is part of Smithsonian Enterprises, a division of the Smithsonian which oversees the institution’s commercial activities, including the Smithsonian Channel, which is available in over 55 million households globally; the retail operation, which includes 35 museum and airport stores, food concessions; an E-commerce business, [Smithsonianstore.com](http://Smithsonianstore.com), and *Smithsonian* magazine, which reaches more than 8 million monthly readers, consumer and education licensing, and books.

Smithsonian Journeys is a global leader in cultural travel for diverse audiences, offering unique, expert-led trips on all seven continents. In addition to ocean cruises with PONANT, Smithsonian Journeys offers small-group land journeys, river cruises, active journeys, cultural stays, private jet trips, tailor-made journeys for the independent traveler, and student travel programs. For information, visit [smithsonianjourneys.org](http://smithsonianjourneys.org) or call 1. 855.330.1542.

### **ABOUT PONANT**

PONANT’s “Explore to Inspire” mission is centered around exploration to better understand, learn, share and protect. For 35 years, PONANT has been committed to more responsible tourism and voyages of exploration which have meaning. The French-flagged fleet comprises 13 small capacity ships equipped with state of the art environmentally friendly equipment. With PONANT, exploration is refined, authentic and a source of inspiration. The company sails to the Arctic and the Antarctic as well as in the Atlantic and North Europe, Mediterranean, Middle East, Red Sea and the Indian Ocean, Asia, Oceania and South Pacific, the Caribbean, North, Central and South America.

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