



## SMITHSONIAN JOURNEYS AND PONANT ANNOUNCE 36 SMALL SHIP EXPLORATIONS FOR 2026

**New itineraries feature Mallorca, South Africa, Indonesia, and Vietnam  
Joined by Renowned Smithsonian Journeys Experts**



**Washington, D.C. – November 21, 2024** Smithsonian Journeys, the travel program of the Smithsonian Institution has announced 36 co-branded sailings for 2026 in alliance with PONANT, a leader in small-ship exploration voyages. Marking the most departures ever offered in a single year, this expanded lineup represents a fifth year of collaboration between PONANT and Smithsonian Journeys highlighting a continued shared commitment to fostering global citizenship through immersive travel experiences. These extraordinary voyages blend PONANT’s seafaring expertise and esteemed hospitality with Smithsonian’s unparalleled legacy as the world’s largest museum, education, and research complex, offering guests unparalleled opportunities to explore the world with depth and purpose.

A selection of returning favorites complement seven exciting new itineraries for 2026. Among the highlights of these popular voyages are the seven-night **“Panama and Costa Rica by Sea”** (Feb. 19–26 and Feb. 26–March 5), with a specially-arranged tour to the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute’s open-air Punta Culebra Nature Center, the eight-night **“Voyage Along the Great Lakes”** (Aug. 11–19 and Aug. 19–27), the seven-night **“Cruising the Greek Islands of the Southern Aegean”** (June 16–23 and Oct. 8–15), and the 11-night **“Antarctica: The White Continent”** (Jan. 8-19), showcasing three remarkable Smithsonian Journeys Experts – world-renowned polar explorer Ann Bancroft, astrophysicist Michelle Thaller, and photographer Jim Preston.

Aside from the Antarctica departure with three experts, each voyage features two Smithsonian Journeys Experts who provide onboard lectures and discussions that go deeper into a destination’s history, language, environment, and wildlife.

### **New voyages for 2026 include:**

#### **New: Madagascar and Seychelles: Natural Treasures of the Indian Ocean, Jan. 7–17, 2026, *Le Bougainville***

This 10-night voyage from northern Madagascar through more than 1,000 miles of the Seychelles Archipelago offers an exploration of the rich endemic flora and fauna including lemurs, chameleons, red-tailed tropicbirds, radiated tortoises,

multi-colored fish, green turtles, and more. A full day in Diego Suarez in the Emerald Sea Lagoon brings extensive snorkeling and birding opportunities before heading onto the Seychelles. Ports of call include the iconic beach at Anse Source d'Argent, surrounded by large blocks of granite and edged with coconut palms, and the Aride nature reserve, with some 73 hectares of colorful vegetation and more than 1 million birds. *Fares begin at \$11,110 per guest based on double occupancy. Full details are [available on the website](#).*

**New: Coastal Vietnam by Sea: Singapore to Hong Kong, Feb. 8–22, 2026, *Le Jacques-Cartier***

This two-week itinerary explores the many sides of Vietnam, from the ancient civilizations of Cham and Khmer, through Chinese influence and French colonialism, to the present day. Highlights include visits to four World Heritage sites in Vietnam: The Ancient City of Hô An, the My Son temples, the Imperial City of Hue, and Hả Long Bay, with opportunities to experience local cuisine in each port of call. Also featured are a performance of Vietnamese dance and song in Ho Chi Minh City, visits to handicraft markets in Nha Trang and Da Nang, and a day in Vietnam's capital, Hanoi. *Fares begin at \$12,500 per guest based on double occupancy. Full details are [available on the website](#).*

**New: South Africa and Namibia by Sea: Around the Cape of Good Hope, March 19–29, 2026, *Le Bougainville***

This 10-night voyage along the southern coast of South Africa highlights the best of South Africa with three days devoted to a 'safari by sea' exploring the great game parks of the Eastern Cape followed by two days focused on Cape Town and its surroundings, as well as an exploration of the wild coastlines of Namibia from Lüderitz. The itinerary will showcase the world-famous conservation efforts of Addo Elephant Park, multiple opportunities for safaris through game parks in search of the "big five," panoramic tours of the stunning beauty of the Cape Peninsula, the wine country surrounding Stellenbosch, the World Heritage site of Robben Island, and Cape Town's iconic Table Mountain. *Fares begin at \$7,660 per guest based on double occupancy. Full details [available on the website](#).*

**New: Voyage to Indonesia: Dragons, Reefs, and the Spice Islands, May 1–13, 2026, *Le Jacques-Cartier***

Highlights of this 12-night voyage include discovering the lush and idyllic islands of Indonesia and sailing through the heart of the Coral Triangle before arriving to the northern shores of Australia. It will combine a deep dive into the region's extraordinary biodiversity in the air, on land, and under the sea with visits to Komodo National Park, a World Heritage site, and extensive possibilities for swimming and snorkeling in crystal clear waters with pristine coral reefs, as well as a rich immersion with the local people of Sumbawa and their age-old customs and traditions. *Fares begin at \$10,330 per guest based on double occupancy. Full details [available on the website](#).*

**New: A Solar Eclipse at Sea: Voyage Across the Western Mediterranean, Aug. 11–19, 2026, *Le Dumont-d'Urville***

This voyage offers the chance to witness the extraordinarily rare setting of the sun just moments after totality, followed by an exploration of the natural beauty and cultural history of the islands of the western Mediterranean. On Aug. 12, 2026, after an afternoon exploring the landmarks of Palma de Mallorca, guests will reboard *Le Dumont-d'Urville* and head out to sea to view the total solar eclipse. The eight-night itinerary will continue to four additional Mediterranean islands including Menorca; Sardinia, with the opportunity to see prehistoric edifices called *nuraghi*; Corsica; and Napoleon's summer residence on Elba. *Fares begin at \$10,270 per guest based on double occupancy. Full details [available on the website](#).*

Prices are per guest in U.S. dollars, based on double occupancy.

## **About Smithsonian Journeys**

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. Smithsonian Journeys is part of Smithsonian Enterprises, a division of the Smithsonian that oversees the Institution's commercial activities, including the Smithsonian Channel; the retail operation, which includes 35 museum and airport stores and food concessions; an E-commerce business, [Smithsonianstore.com](http://Smithsonianstore.com); *Smithsonian* magazine, which reaches more than 8 million monthly readers; consumer and education licensing; and books. For more information, visit [www.SmithsonianJourneys.org](http://www.SmithsonianJourneys.org) or call 855-330-1542.

## **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 Smithsonian Campaign for Our Share Future, which began in 2018 in a quiet phase, was publicly launched in September 2024 with a goal of \$2.5 billion. There are more than 6,200 Smithsonian employees and 3,800 volunteers. The total number of objects, works of art, and specimens at the Smithsonian is estimated at nearly 157 million, of which nearly 148 million are scientific specimens at the National Museum of Natural History. [www.si.edu](http://www.si.edu).

## **About PONANT**

PONANT's "Explore to Inspire" mission is centered around exploration to better understand, learn, share and protect. PONANT has been committed to more responsible tourism, and purposeful voyages of exploration for more than 35 years. Aboard a fleet of 14 French-flagged small ships, fitted with the latest environmental technologies, the journey of exploration is always elegant, authentic, and inspiring. The company sails to the Arctic and the Antarctic, as well as in the Atlantic and North Europe, Mediterranean, Middle East, the Indian Ocean, Asia, Oceania and South Pacific, the Caribbean, and North, Central, and South America.

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