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TRAVEL

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By ELAINE GLUSAC MARCH 14, 2016



A Celebrity Xpedition ship sailing the Galapagos Islands. Celebrity

CELEBRITY CRUISES EXPANDS IN THE GALÁPAGOS

Because of environmental restrictions, all boats operating in the Galápagos are small, but the biggest of the small — [Celebrity Cruises](#) — plans to add two boutique ships to its fleet by acquiring Ocean Adventures and its two ships, the 16-passenger M/C Athala II and the 48-passenger M/V Eclipse. The vessels will join the 100-passenger Celebrity Xpedition, which runs year-round trips in the Galápagos (fares start around \$3,500 a person for seven nights on the

Xpedition). The new small ships will enable Celebrity to visit destinations new to the line, including Puerto Villamil, Darwin Bay, Black Turtle Cove and Chinese Hat Islet, and offer more land-based hotel stays in the islands. Celebrity will begin operating the new ships late this spring, and will update both during a dry-dock renovation in January 2017. Prices for cruises on the small ships have yet to be determined. Existing bookings with Ocean Adventures will be honored and unchanged.

TRAINS ON SALE IN EUROPE

Spring train fare sales from [Rail Europe](#) aim to entice summer travelers to Switzerland, France and Germany and aboard the Chunnel-transiting Eurostar. The largest distributor of European rail passes in North America, Rail Europe is offering the Swiss Travel Pass at 30 percent off for first-class bookings, a saving of about \$105 for a three-day pass costing \$246 after the discount, through March 29 for travel before July 1 (use coupon code ESwissSpring). The France Rail Pass in first or second class is selling for 20 percent off through March 31 for unlimited travel on all domestic trains; prices start at \$165 in second class for three days with the sale. German Rail Pass deals sold by March 30 for travel before May 31 are 20 percent off, starting at \$262 for second class after the discount for a seven-day pass. The German pass covers travel to several destinations in Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic and Italy. Children under 12 travel free on the Swiss, France and German passes. Rail Europe is also offering 20 percent off fares on first-class seats aboard the Eurostar traveling between London, Paris and Brussels through Aug. 19 if booked before March 29. A similar discount will be applied to first-class Eurostar seats on service between London and Avignon, Marseille and Lyon in France through Sept. 30.

CHERRY BLOSSOMS AND THE DERBY BY RAIL

Combining transportation and accommodation, [Vacations by Rail](#) plans to run train trips to two popular spring events, the Kentucky Derby in Louisville and the Washington, D.C., Cherry Blossom Festival. Using private rail cars, its Kentucky Derby trip departs Union Station in Chicago on May 4 and includes tickets to the Derby as well as to the day-before Oaks races at Churchill Downs, as well as meals, beverages and accommodations in refurbished vintage rail cars with sleeper cabins and public lounges (prices from \$5,199 a person). The six-day Cherry Blossom Festival trip leaves Chicago April 12 and includes city sightseeing and the Cherry Blossom Parade (from \$2,300 a person).

A PARTNERSHIP FOR UNITED AND AIR ZEALAND

Following the American Airlines code-share expansion with Qantas, the competition for trans-Pacific fliers intensifies with the announcement that [United Airlines](#) and Air New Zealand are forming a joint venture. Pending government approval, the two carriers, both members of the Star Alliance, will coordinate schedules and sales when United begins nonstop service between San Francisco and Auckland on July 1. United plans to operate the service three times a week using Boeing 787-8 [Dreamliner](#) planes and expand to daily service in November with larger Boeing 787-9 models.

SEINE SAILINGS ON SALE...

Also encouraging early bookings, the European river cruise line CroisiEurope is offering 50 percent off companion fares on select cruises in the [Seine Valley](#) of France. Travelers booking by April 1 will get half off the second fare boarding in the same cabin. The first fare starts at \$1,602 for six-day itineraries round-trip from Paris traveling through Normandy, with the second passenger's fare starting at \$802. Fares include free beverages, Wi-Fi and shore excursions. Sale cruises leave April 4 and April 8.

...NAIROBI FLIGHTS, TOO

Through the end of today, [KLM Royal Dutch Airlines](#) is offering a flash sale on flights to Nairobi from Boston, Houston, Los Angeles, New York, Seattle and Washington. Fares start at \$743 from New York and \$1,042 from West Coast airports. They are good for flights until May 31 with a minimum stay of seven days.

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Travel news, deals and tips, written by the editors and reporters of the Travel section.

[Cruise and Resort News: Ganges Trip; Ansel Adams Exhibition](#)



What you need to know if you're planning a trip, including a Bhutan resort offer and meals guests can cook at Homewood Suites.

[Tour and Hotel News: Barbie in Montreal; Cooking in Chile](#)



What you need to know if you're planning a trip, including a safari with Alexander McCall Smith in Africa, and a new boutique hotel in India.

[Family Travel Unplugged: More Options for Teenagers](#)



Responding to parents' concerns, hotels and resorts are adding programs to encourage children to become involved in real-world interactions.