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# What's New in Cruise Travel for 2026

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Travel Advisor

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Explora III. Image courtesy of Explora Journeys

2026 is shaping up to be a big year at sea. Between new small-ship yachts, Asia's expanding cruise scene, and a wave of fresh transatlantic and expedition routes, there's plenty to watch.

Below are the launches and itineraries worth having on your radar.

# Ships to know for 2026



Explora III. Image courtesy of Explora Journeys

## *Norwegian Luna*, Norwegian Cruise Line (April 2026)

*Norwegian Luna* arrives in spring as the most versatile of the Prima-class ships, mixing next-gen tech with all-ages fun. Standouts include the Aqua Slidecoaster, a three-story magnetic-lift slidecoaster, and Glow Court, a digital sports-and-nightlife space that shifts from games by day to immersive LED energy by night. Despite carrying just over 3,500 guests, the layout feels open and easy to navigate, with plenty of options for families, couples, groups, and solo travelers. With VR arcades, luxe spa spaces, and signature hull art by ELLE, *Luna* keeps the tone modern and high-design. Its inaugural season focuses on Caribbean and Bermuda sailings.

## *Disney Adventure*, Disney Cruise Line (March 2026)

*Disney Adventure* marks Disney's biggest international move yet—a 6,700-passenger ship homeporting in Singapore and built for longer Asia itineraries. The ship features seven themed zones, including spaces like Imagination Garden, an open-air hub for live shows; Marvel Landing, packed with superhero-themed experiences; and Toy Story Place, a colorful water-play area perfect for younger families. Each zone blends immersive storytelling with plenty of room for families, multigenerational groups, and Disney loyalists to spread out. Designed for guests looking beyond the classic Alaska or Caribbean routes.

### *Four Seasons I, Four Seasons Yachts (March 2026)*

*Four Seasons I* makes its debut next spring, introducing the brand's first yacht and a new level of ultra-luxury at sea. With space for just 190 guests, the ship feels more like a floating boutique hotel than a cruise ship—think oversized suites, elegant lounges, and a crew-to-guest ratio that leans fully into personalized service. The inaugural season spans the Mediterranean and Greek Isles, with itineraries designed around small harbors, tucked-away beaches, and ports that large ships can't access.

### *Emerald Kaia, Emerald Cruises (April 2026)*

*Emerald Kaia* arrives next spring as Emerald Cruises' most intimate oceangoing ship yet, carrying just 128 guests. It's designed for travelers who want a modern, boutique feel without veering into full expedition territory. Suites are contemporary and airy, public spaces are sleek, and the vibe is relaxed rather than formal. Its inaugural season covers the Mediterranean, Greek Isles, and the Adriatic, offering easy island-hopping, coastal villages, and ports that favor culture and scenery over crowds.

### *Orient Express Corinthian, Orient Express Sailing Yachts (June 2026)*

*Orient Express Corinthian* brings one of travel's most storied luxury brands to the sea for the first time. With just 110 guests, this sailing yacht channels the same design-forward glamour found in the brand's iconic trains—polished cabins, elegant lounges, and a distinctly European sense of style. Its first year focuses on the French Riviera and wider Mediterranean, with itineraries built around leisurely sailing, chic coastal towns, and long afternoons anchored in calm bays.

### *Explora III, Explora Journeys (Summer 2026)*

*Explora III* expands Explora Journeys' fleet with a ship that balances elevated design and a strong wellness mindset. Carrying just under 1,000 passengers, it offers spacious suites, a

serene spa, standout dining, and plenty of room to spread out. The ship launches in the Mediterranean before charting a course through Northern Europe, Iceland, and Greenland, giving guests a wide-ranging mix of warm coastline, fjords, waterfalls, and Arctic landscapes.

## Other notable launches

A handful of other ships join the 2026 lineup as well, including Royal Caribbean's next Icon-class ship, *Legend of the Seas*; MSC's Asia-focused *MSC World Asia*; and Viking's new longship, *Viking Mira*.

# Destination trends in 2026



## Caribbean & Atlantic crossings

The Caribbean sees a fresh wave of interest in 2026. Royal Caribbean debuts *Legend of the Seas* from Fort Lauderdale, while Virgin Voyages adds new routes to Ocho Rios and a brand-new port call in St. Thomas. Several Regent and Virgin transatlantic crossings also wrap in Miami, some routing through Iceland and Greenland for travelers who want a more scenic, slow-travel version of crossing the Atlantic.

## Asia

Asia is one of next year's biggest growth stories. *Disney Adventure* will operate year-round from Singapore, marking the brand's most significant international expansion to date. Royal Caribbean positions *Navigator of the Seas* in Singapore for the first time, and MSC strengthens its Asia lineup with the launch of *MSC World Asia*. Expect more long-haul itineraries, more homeports, and more family-focused options throughout the region.

## Mediterranean & Europe

It's a strong year for Mediterranean sailing, anchored by new boutique ships like *Four Seasons I*, *Orient Express Corinthian*, *Emerald Kaia*, and *Explora III*—all starting their inaugural seasons in the region. As summer approaches, *Explora III* pushes further north into Iceland, Greenland, and the fjords, offering a mix of warm-coastline cruising and cooler-weather scenery for travelers wanting more contrast in one trip..

## South America & Antarctica

Celebrity makes a notable return to South America in 2026, including itineraries that reach into the Antarctic Circle. Both Celebrity and *The World, Residences at Sea* also explore the Chilean fjords and round Cape Horn—ideal for travelers wanting bucket-list landscapes with a softer version of expedition cruising.

## World cruises & grand voyages

Longer sailings are trending. MSC launches a 131-night world cruise, available as a full journey or in shorter segments, while Celebrity introduces an 110-day Grand Voyage traveling from Alaska across the Pacific and into Asia. These multi-month itineraries cater to guests looking for a once-in-a-lifetime, global adventure.

## South Pacific

For 2026, Norwegian unveils a new South Pacific itinerary featuring French Polynesia and neighboring islands—a strong pick for honeymooners, divers, and anyone drawn to quiet lagoons, slow days, and postcard-perfect water.

# Key takeaways for 2026 cruising

- **Asia leads the way:** more year-round sailings, more homeports, and Disney's largest international launch.
  - **Boutique is booming:** small-ship and yacht-style cruising continues to rise, bringing access to quieter ports.
  - **Soft-expedition demand grows:** for those who want active, educational exploration, but with the ease and comfort of a cruise ship, especially itineraries dipping into the Antarctic Circle.
  - **Transatlantic goes scenic:** expect more crossings with Iceland and Greenland in the mix.
  - **Epic voyages trend upward:** world cruises and grand journeys appeal to travelers craving an all-in, bucket-list itinerary.
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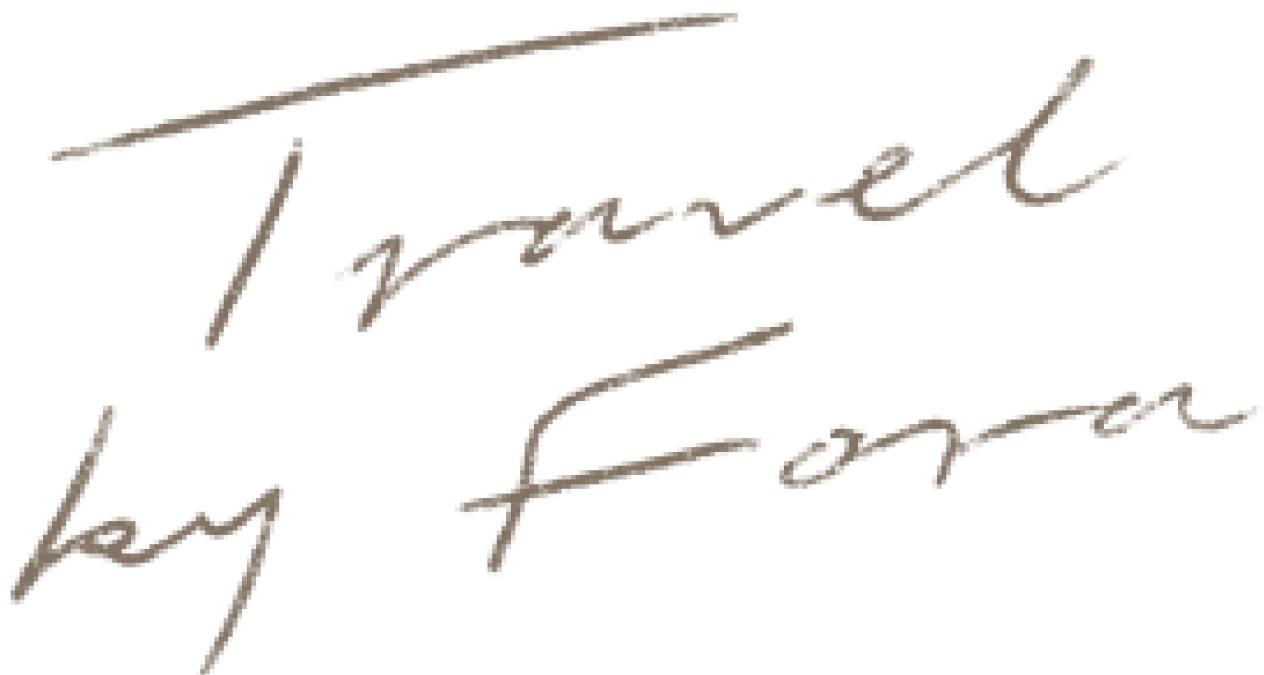
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