



This Cruise Line Lets You Explore the Beautiful Destinations Along the Chesapeake Bay

With two local cruise options, American Cruise Lines passengers can explore up to nine different cities along the Bay.

By [Judy Colbert](#) October 3, 2022

As we decide it's time to vacation again, many of us are faced with taking a cruise or exploring nearby attractions. [American Cruise Lines](#) offers a delightful compromise, cruising the Chesapeake Bay on eight- and 11-day voyages, sailing out of Baltimore. You may see their gleaming white riverboat-looking ship cruising up the Potomac and mooring at The Wharf during the spring and again between late October and the end of December or beginning of January. Cruising close to home means avoiding ports of call where thousands and thousands of other cruisers are crowding the shops, beaches, restaurants, and attractions. Plus, locals are thrilled to see you and make sure your vacation is special.

Whether you choose between the 11-day American Revolution cruise or eight-day Chesapeake Bay cruise, voyagers have the option of staying the night prior to the cruise at Baltimore's Four Seasons Hotel, followed by a breakfast and a bus tour of Charm City. Depending on the itinerary, ports of call can include Norfolk, Yorktown, Washington, DC, Cambridge/Oxford, Crisfield/Tangier, St. Michaels, and Annapolis. Shore excursion options include the Wright Brothers

National Memorial, Chrysler Museum of Art, Williamsburg, Jamestown, Arlington National Cemetery, and a sail on an authentic skipjack. While in Washington, passengers may visit the regular sightseeing spots or take the water taxi to Georgetown, Alexandria, or National Harbor. About half the excursions are included in the cruise fare.

ACL has been doing small boat cruising for 25 years, so it's clear the company knows how to do it right. They pay attention to the essentials: good food, interesting itineraries, talented entertainment, excellent accommodations, and attentive service. While the itineraries are particularly geared toward history buffs, the ports of call are fascinating enough for those who like culture, arts and crafts, architecture, sports, and many other areas of interest.

Given the seasonality of these cruises, you're likely to catch plenty of flowers and blooming trees in the spring and tree foliage turning colors in the fall (and maybe some pumpkins, goblins, turkeys, or Santas along the way).



Photo courtesy American Cruise Lines

The vessels that ply the Bay and its tributaries are small and intimate, carrying a maximum of 175 passengers. These boats are small enough to make forever friends, but large enough to enjoy some alone time if you choose. The large cabins are all exteriors with most having a balcony, making these rooms the perfect location to take in the nearby scenery or afternoon sunset.

Entertainment on the ships include captivating lectures about the history and development of the areas visited, with the occasional insights by Nathan Richardson, a Frederick Douglass historian, and other important historical figures. In the fall, crab specialist Lori Gross shines as she talks about the industry and brings a bushel of steamed crabs for an afternoon treat. Robert R. Yonskie, who presents many of the lectures on the Bay itineraries, has a knowledge that will compete with any college history professor. He, and his wife Stephanie (who occasionally performs with Robert) are delightful singers, and are hosts for special Thanksgiving and Christmas voyages.

When it comes to meal time, most dishes feature local produce and specialties. Passengers with special dietary needs are invited to talk with the chef when boarding the ship to make sure your allergies and preferences are noted. Want something that you don't see? Just ask and, if possible, someone will be shopping for it the next day.



Photo by Judy Colbert

Dress requirements are casual for the daytime and slightly dressier for the evening cocktail hour and dinner. No formal attire required.

ACL's fleet has 15 ships deployed on 35 itineraries through 30 states. Another 12 ships, with a hybrid catamaran design, have been ordered from the Chesapeake Shipbuilding of Salisbury, Maryland. The first two ships, *American Eagle* and *American Glory*, will debut along East Coast itineraries in the spring

of 2023. Called “Project Blue,” the ships will be stable for rivers and bays and small enough for near-shore operating versatility.

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