

Our Themed Voyages

Vineyards, Vintages and Varietals

Inspire your palate with extraordinary wines of the Washington and Oregon regions on our “Vineyards, Vintages and Varietals” themed cruises. Our thoughtfully prepared wine cruises along the Columbia River bring the flavors of the vineyard to you in more ways than one. While cruising amidst the natural beauty of the region, you will have the opportunity to meet with local wine makers for exclusive tastings and pairings of their celebrated, hand-selected wines and get acquainted with the nuances of traditional wine-making. In addition to these special onboard tastings, pairings and lectures from partnering wineries, our award-winning chefs will incorporate local wines of the region into a variety of culinary creations throughout each voyage. Enjoy a wealth of onboard enrichment activities that will expose you to the history, culture, and landscapes that have contributed to each mouthwatering aroma, bite and sip. If you have ever dreamed of experiencing America’s Pacific Northwest wine country, there is no better venue than on the river aboard the exquisite American Empress.

Big Band Swing

Get “in the mood” for our sensational Big Band Voyages and embark on a musical journey unlike any other. Special onboard guests Lynn Roberts, along with the 13-piece orchestra “The Great American Swing Band,” will play the tunes you know so well all in the original arrangements that made them legendary. As a big band singer with the Dorsey Brothers, Harry James and Doc Severinson, Lynn has performed all over the world and is one of the last of her era. Each evening offers the opportunity to dance and swing to your heart’s content with our dance hosts. If you are a fan of the big bands, this is a sentimental journey you won’t want to miss.

Mark Twain

Visit Mark Twain’s hometown of Hannibal, Missouri from where much of his inspiration for his stories of Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn is derived. Witness his words and wit brought to life by expert tribute artist Lewis Hankins. Delve deep into the life and work of Samuel Clemens through special daily presentations from special guest speakers Cindy Lovell and Henry Sweets, executive directors of Mark Twain Boyhood Home & Museum in Hannibal, Missouri and Mark Twain House & Museum in Hartford, Connecticut respectively. You won’t want to miss this opportunity to share the Mississippi River with Mark Twain.



Bourbon

Our Bourbon themed cruise offers you a rare opportunity to experience an extraordinary journey through America's Heartland and into the roots of Kentucky's bourbon region. This special themed voyage will take you behind the scenes and into the history books to show you where bourbon comes from, how it is made and the ways to distinguish the unique characteristics of different distilleries. This dynamic blend of historic discovery, toe-tapping entertainment and complimentary tours of the finest bourbon distilleries creates a uniquely American river cruise that you simply cannot afford to miss!

Complimentary Distillery Tour Options Include:

Maker's Mark, Buffalo Trace, Heaven Hill Bourbon Heritage Center, Jim Beam, Wild Turkey and Willett Small Batch

Civil War

Our Civil War themed cruises not only take you on an amazing journey through the Antebellum South, but also they expose you to "the havoc of war and the battle's confusion" where historic skirmishes pitted brother against brother in a nation once divided. As you experience authentic Southern culture on your voyage through the Deep South, you will have the opportunity to delve into the tactics, both military and political, that shaped the events of the American Civil War. Learn of the Mississippi River's strategic value as both a transportation and communication route and explore the state of the country as it was in 1866 and how it still affects us today. Watch tribute artists bring key figures to life and listen to distinguished Civil War historians offer enlightening lectures on a multitude of Civil War topics. Each Civil War voyage includes a comprehensive tour of Vicksburg National Military Park where the silent battlefields and hallowed cemeteries of the fallen soldiers serve to remind us of a war that changed a nation.

Elvis

Elvis Presley is known around the world as the King of Rock 'n' Roll. Enjoy luxurious and fabulous Southern cuisine on this leisurely cruise through the charming and historic ports of America's Deep South from Elvis' hometown of Memphis, Tennessee to New Orleans, Louisiana. Both onboard and ashore, you will be treated to a wealth of enrichment and entertainment experiences. Highlights of this theme include exceptional musical performances by renowned tribute artists to cover the full spectrum of Elvis' career: Terry Mike Jeffery, veteran singer/songwriter and multi-instrumentalist; and Andy Childs, acclaimed singer/songwriter and Elvis enthusiast. Throughout the voyage, you can indulge in all things Elvis with movies shown in the Grand Saloon, fun trivia contests with prizes awarded, and fabulous performances featuring our acclaimed onboard entertainers.



Antebellum South

Experience authentic Southern culture as you journey through living history along the lower Mississippi River where it is easy to imagine that time has stood still. From the early 1800's until the Civil War, the country's economy began shifting and a cotton boom made plantations the center of southern commerce. In the late 1800's Mark Twain noted on his adventures down the mighty Mississippi that there were so many plantations and dwellings along the river that it looked like a spacious street. Towering homes lay nestled in large patches of moss-draped oak trees and still today, you can catch a glimpse of what Mark Twain once saw on as you cruise along the Mississippi River and visit these historic locations.

Music of America

Discover the sights and sounds of America's rivers and the roots from which sprung a variety of musical genres. Enjoy special onboard entertainment and focused lectures highlighting the music of the regions through which you are traveling. Whether it's the sounds of New Orleans Jazz, the strains of the uniquely American musical art form the Delta Blues, the Rock and Soul of Memphis, or the homegrown Country Music melodies from Nashville, it all harmonizes with the rhythms of the river.

Autumn Colors

Each Autumn, nature takes out her paintbrush and splashes vibrant colors across the land. White church steeples poke up amidst the colorful splendor, but look deeper and you will find more than just fall foliage in all its glory; towns come alive with the bounty of the harvest and a generosity of spirit that is reflected in the unabashed smiles of the local residents who greet you in each port.

New Year's Celebration

Resolve to have more fun and greet the New Year on the American Queen. The celebration carries throughout the week, but a special New Year's Eve gala in the majestic Grand Saloon will enchant you with festive decor, confetti, champagne, newfound friends and the uplifting refrains of "Auld Lang Syne." Be one of the select few who can claim to have celebrated New Year's Eve aboard the world's largest and most elegant riverboat.

