

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Winter 2025-26 Small-ship Adventure Travel News & Trends

AdventureSmith Explorations is the global leader in small-ship, adventure cruise vacations. The company's adventure specialists closely track what's happening in the travel industry and in the destinations where its expedition trips operate.

As 2026 approaches, AdventureSmith is reporting the following interest and trends among travelers booking small ship cruises with the company:

- **Booking trends:** Booking windows have lengthened, indicating travelers are planning farther ahead and booking less last-minute travel.
- **Shift to (years in) advance reservations:** Higher demand is also evidenced by small ship fleets setting their departure dates farther into the future than ever. Many operators are boasting their earliest launch dates in history, listing 2027 and even 2028 dates before 2026 even begins, and select expedition cruises are experiencing multiple year sell-outs with waitlists.
- **Micro and small ship cruise growth:** In 2025, AdventureSmith has seen a 20% increase in bookings aboard ships that are 30 guests or less. They have also seen a 101% jump in organic traffic for new users to their [small ship cruises](#) webpage over the past two years to date vs. the previous two years.
- **Digital love/hate:** AdventureSmith reports noticing an interesting dual trend around digital connectivity. Some travelers are seeking out opportunities for a "digital detox," but many are asking AdventureSmith's travel specialists the opposite: to be connected in remote areas. Thanks to Starlink options coming to many [small ships](#), this request can often be accommodated. AdventureSmith can speak to examples from both ends of the spectrum.

LAST CALL

- Very limited inventory flash sales come and go around the Black Friday period, however they are sometimes not recommended by AdventureSmith's specialists as they're often "what's left" vs.

what travelers want/need for a once-in-a-lifetime expedition. But, AdventureSmith loves to help travelers sift through the deals to find the best overall value.

- New this year, some cruise operators are extending “winter” sales vs. offering a specific weeklong campaign. Consult AdventureSmith’s [Antarctica cruise deals](#), [Alaska cruise deals](#), [Galapagos cruise deals](#) and global [adventure travel deals](#) pages for all the hottest deals as they are released.
- Now is the time to book trips to Alaska for 2026 before coveted space starts to vanish at a rapid pace in January, historically AdventureSmith’s biggest booking month. Some great early-booking [Alaska small ship cruise deals](#) are available now that were not offered this same time last year.

NEW THEMED SMALL SHIP CRUISE OPTIONS

- Music gets time to shine on a series of luxury small ship cruises. Think jazz at the Lincoln Center, a symphony at sea through Portugal and Spain with Boston Pops conductor Keith Lockhart, or chamber music in the Aegean with Trio Wanderer and Trio Arnold. AdventureSmith’s experts can link travelers to all the available routes.
- Those who enjoy sampling the iconic libations of the destinations they visit won’t want to miss the [Spirited Shores: Ireland to Portugal Cruise](#) in June of 2027. Aboard the 154-guest Douglas Mawson (a brand-new expedition ship launching this winter), guests will explore the rich history of Europe’s spirited shores with a master storyteller host who is a professor, archaeologist or curator selected for their in-depth knowledge, expert storytelling abilities and unbridled passion.
- The Feb. 23, 2027 departure of the [Active & Wild Antarctica Air Cruise](#) is for women only and will be led by female expedition leaders—this is truly a first for [Antarctica cruises](#). The ship (132-guest Sylvia Earle) is also notable as it’s named after NOAA’s first female chief scientist, and all of the decks are named after other female leaders in science and conservation.
- AdventureSmith is reporting more interest from families and adults who are seeking to travel with their own demographic. From [Alaska small ship cruises](#) to [Galapagos cruises](#), there are more and more options to focus a journey with kid-friendly meals, activities and other families, or ensure you’re aboard just with other adults.



WHERE IN THE WORLD ARE ADVENTURESMITH'S SPECIALISTS?

AdventureSmith's travel specialists are frequently on the go, experiencing nearly every small ship and lodge on their website to offer travelers firsthand insights and recommendations. Here's where the team is headed next:

- **Nov. 2025:** A team member will experience early-season Antarctica aboard one of the top active expedition ships, while another will be in Australia for the christening of a brand-new expedition ship launching there.
- **Jan. 2026:** One of AdventureSmith's specialists heads to Baja California's Sea of Cortez for an 8-day cruise that includes a special cross-peninsula excursion to view gray whales and their calves in the Pacific's famed birthing lagoons.
- **Feb. 2026:** AdventureSmith's experts return to the Antarctic, this time flying over the Drake Passage with the pioneers of air cruises.
- **May 2026:** A team member will gather with the most creative hoteliers and operators in Latin America at an industry trade show in Panama.
- **June 2026:** An AdventureSmith specialist heads to the Galapagos Islands aboard a newer popular yacht.

The AdventureSmith Explorations team are experts in small-ship adventure cruise travel and are happy to provide perspective on a variety of topics. View the company's [spokesperson topics](#) and feel free to reach out with questions.

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