



# theconnectedtraveler

we connect you to the world.



SEPTEMBER

## **AUGUST & SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER**

August was a whirlwind month for The Connected Traveler, packed with experiences that perfectly blend business and adventure. We kicked things off at Virtuoso Travel Week in Las Vegas, where from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. each day we met with the very best in the travel world. From DMCs and attractions to luxury hotels, resorts, and far-flung destinations, we spent the week curating future adventures for our clients and building partnerships that will take your vacations to the next level.

The adventure didn't stop there—we jetted off to London right after Vegas to meet some of our Connected Traveler family. One highlight was boarding the legendary Belmond Murder Mystery Train. Picture this: Michelin-starred dining and champagne as the English countryside rolled by, glasses of wine and cocktails flowing, and everyone leaning into the challenge of solving the mystery. It was an unforgettable mix of luxury, laughter, and just a touch of intrigue. From London, we continued south to Portsmouth, where we embarked on a 13-day Virgin Voyages cruise, soaking up everything that makes these sailings so special.

To cap off August, we flew to Istanbul, where we had the joy of sharing this incredible city with more Connected Traveler family. From ancient history to bustling bazaars, Istanbul is one of those destinations that never stops impressing. And now September is already moving at full speed—we're diving into planning and preparations as conference season kicks off. Next month, we'll be on the move again with major events in the Bahamas, Denver, and Palm Springs. No slowing down here—just more opportunities to bring the world closer to you.

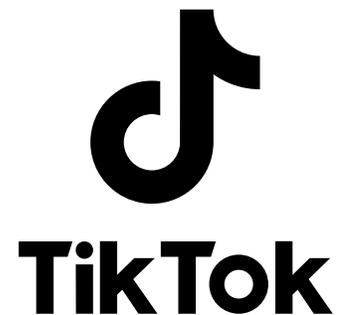


## VIRGIN VOYAGES UPDATE & SALE

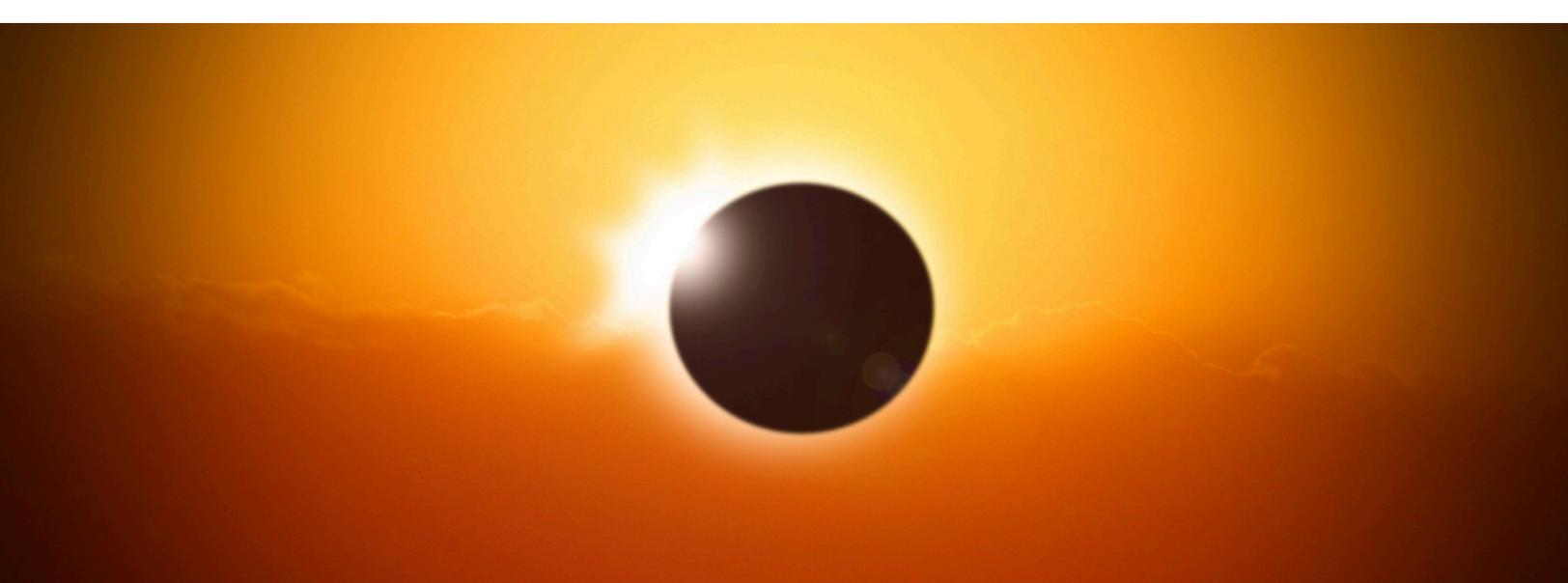
Book Virgin Voyages prior to October 7 to avoid the new three tiered pricing model! Learn more on our [blog](#).

Anyone who books a cabin from now until Oct 31, 2025, on our website, [www.tinyurl.com/virginwithsean](http://www.tinyurl.com/virginwithsean) will receive an additional **\$100** of credit per cabin for a sea terrace or above or **\$50** of credit per cabin for lock it in rate sea terrace or below.

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## **FEATURED CRUISE OF THE MONTH: SOLAR ECLIPSE 2026**

**Total Eclipse of the Cruise – August 12, 2026**

Get ready, stargazers! On **August 12, 2026**, the moon's putting on a show — and the best seats are at sea. Imagine standing on the deck with a drink in hand as day turns to night and the sky dances overhead. Total solar eclipse visible from spots like Iceland, Greenland, northern Spain, and Portugal — and yes, we've got cruises headed straight into the path of totality! Some sailings even feature astronomers on board, themed events, and eclipse swag so you can celebrate in style while learning something cosmic.

### **Eclipse + Cruise = Magic**

Want in? We've got options. Like... a lot of them. Expedition cruises near Iceland. Luxury sailings in the Med. Balcony cabins with ocean views just waiting for that eclipse selfie. Whether you're a space nerd, a thrill seeker, or just love an excuse to cruise — we've got a ship for you. Call us, message us, or beam us up. Let's get you booked on the most unforgettable cruise of 2026. Because this kind of magic doesn't happen every day.

**Call us at 865-973-9744 or visit us at  
[www.theconnectedtraveler.com](http://www.theconnectedtraveler.com)**



# SmokyMtnBears Take London on the Belmond Murder Mystery Train, Sail 13 Nights on Virgin Voyages from Portsmouth, and Add a Grand Finale in Istanbul!

The **SmokyMtnBears** kicked off another unforgettable adventure by gathering our Connected Traveler family in London—Along the way, we reconnected with more of our Connected Traveler family—Rob and Marie, Hayden and Katrina, and Lance, where we checked into the historic **Clermont London at Victoria Train Station**. From here, the excitement truly began as we boarded the **Belmond Murder Mystery Train** for a five-hour journey through the London countryside. The train itself is a work of art, filled with vintage décor and timeless elegance that immediately transports you back to the golden age of travel. As the countryside rolled by, we were treated to a Michelin-starred meal paired with endless champagne while we all played detective, piecing together clues and trying to solve the mysterious crime onboard. The combination of fine dining, flowing cocktails, and immersive theater made this train ride a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

From London, we enjoyed a private car service to Portsmouth, where we spent the night before boarding our **13-day Virgin Voyages cruise**. This sailing was nothing short of spectacular, with ports in Amsterdam, Belgium, Ireland, and Scotland.. We met up with **Brandon and Thomas** once onboard. The cruise itself? All we can say is wow. Virgin Voyages elevated the journey with unforgettable onboard entertainment (we loveyou-Meg), incredible dining, and that signature adults-only energy that made every moment exciting and fresh.



Our first highlight ashore came in **Amsterdam**, where Sean secured a five-star hotel right at the city's main intersection. The property graciously upgraded everyone to sprawling suites called apartments there—and the reactions said it all: "WOW," "Huge," and "I am not leaving!" Check out the room tour [here](#). After settling in, we set out on a private canal cruise, watching the city come alive with its historic houses, vibrant culture, and lively canals. From there, Belgium awaited, where we spent the day in the medieval town of **Bruges**. Between touring the cobblestone streets, admiring the centuries-old architecture, and indulging in world-famous Belgian chocolate and waffles, Bruges was an absolute crowd favorite.

In **Scotland**, our Connected Traveler family spread out across different excursions, each discovering a new piece of the region's charm. Some explored quaint towns, while others ventured to the impressive Stirling Castle, immersing themselves in the stories of Scottish royalty and battlefields and then came **Dublin**, and what a day it was. Thanks to **Meg from Virgin Voyages**, and the ship's fiddle player and Sean, we had a bespoke itinerary crafted just for us. We began at **Trinity College**, marveling at the **Book of Kells**, a 9th-century illuminated manuscript that continues to inspire awe. Next, we wandered through the Long Room Library, where treasures like original works from Shakespeare and Bram Stoker are still preserved. Afterward, we strolled along **Grafton Street**, stopping at the historic **Swan Bar** for an Irish whiskey tasting in a venue steeped in local history. A hearty traditional Irish lunch followed, and as we continued down Grafton Street, Meg picked up her fiddle and joined friends in a lively street performance—a moment of pure joy. The day wrapped up at the iconic **Temple Bar**, where pints were raised, laughter was shared, and memories were made.

The journey didn't end with the cruise. Several of us extended the adventure to **Istanbul**, where we stayed at the legendary **Pera Palace Hotel**. This historic property, once the chosen lodging for passengers of the Orient Express and literary greats like **Agatha Christie**, is as much a museum as it is a hotel. Its opulent interiors and rich past set the perfect stage for our time in Istanbul. Together, we explored the city's most celebrated landmarks—the breathtaking **Hagia Sophia**, the majestic **Blue Mosque**, the ancient **Hippodrome**, and the bustling **Spice Bazaar and Grand Bazaar**. Each stop revealed layers of history, culture, and vibrancy unique to Istanbul.



# Cape Town to Mombasa

## Virtuoso Cruise

Available



### Cape Town to Mombasa -December 23, 2025 to January 5, 2026

Set sail on a once-in-a-lifetime journey aboard the ultra-luxury Crystal Symphony as it cruises from Cape Town, South Africa to Mombasa, Kenya. This all-inclusive voyage explores the breathtaking eastern coast of Africa from November 2025, delivering a seamless blend of culture, nature, and refined comfort. With Crystal Cruises, you'll enjoy exceptional service, Michelin-inspired dining, enrichment programs, shore excursions, premium spirits, gratuities, and Wi-Fi—all included. Begin your adventure in Cape Town, where iconic Table Mountain towers over vineyards, penguin-filled beaches, and the storied Robben Island. Then travel onward to coastal gems like Mossel Bay, Port Elizabeth, East London, and Durban, where you can spot whales, go on safari, and dive into South Africa's rich cultural tapestry. **Pricing starts at \$5000 per person, plus there is no Single Supplement.**

As the Symphony glides further north, discover the wild beauty of Richards Bay and Zululand, the colonial-meets-modern vibrancy of Maputo, Mozambique, and the spice-scented shores of Zanzibar and Dar Es Salaam in Tanzania. End in the colorful port city of Mombasa, Kenya, where history, beaches, and the option of a post-cruise safari await. This sailing is more than a cruise—it's a curated cultural immersion through the heart of East Africa, made even more extraordinary with Crystal's signature elegance and immersive experiences.





# Mombasa to Mumbai Virtuoso Cruise



## Mombasa to Mumbai-January 5-18, 2026

Embark on an unforgettable voyage aboard the luxurious Crystal Symphony as you sail from Mombasa, Kenya to Mumbai, India—an itinerary rich in culture, natural beauty, and exotic charm. Begin in Mombasa, where the echoes of Swahili history come to life in the narrow alleys of Old Town and the storied walls of Fort Jesus. From there, cross the Indian Ocean to Mahé in the Seychelles, a paradise of granite peaks, turquoise waters, and lush rainforest. Lounge on the powdery sands of Beau Vallon Beach, explore local markets in Victoria, or hike through Morne Seychellois National Park. Then it's on to Malé, the bustling capital of the Maldives, where coral reefs, seaplane tours, and cultural landmarks await. **Pricing starts at \$5,000 per person, plus there is no Single Supplement.**

As your journey continues, discover the vibrant rhythms of Colombo, Sri Lanka, where colonial architecture and Buddhist temples offer a fascinating contrast to the city's modern energy. Visit temples, markets, or take a day trip to Kandy or Pinnawala. In Goa, India, immerse yourself in a laid-back coastal lifestyle with Portuguese-influenced churches, colorful spice markets, and stunning beaches. Your voyage concludes in the dynamic city of Mumbai, a kaleidoscope of history, culture, and urban excitement. With Crystal's signature all-inclusive luxury—gourmet dining, curated excursions, fine wines, gratuities, and exceptional service—this journey offers an extraordinary way to explore the Indian Ocean in comfort and style.





# Riveria Maya Scott's Birthday Cruise



**BOOK  
NOW**

**March 22-27, 2026**

Get ready to trade winter blues for ocean views as the SmokyMtnBears take over Virgin Voyages' Scarlet Lady for a 5-night birthday celebration like no other! Sailing roundtrip from Miami, we'll stop in Cozumel, Mexico for vibrant culture and coastal fun, and spend a full day soaking up the sun at Virgin's exclusive Beach Club at Bimini — where powdery sand and poolside beats set the tone for a perfect getaway.

But that's just the beginning — we'll also be celebrating Scott's birthday at sea, so expect themed events, group fun, and plenty of chances to toast to our favorite bear! With cabins starting at just **\$1,690**, this is your invitation to cruise with your chosen family in true SmokyMtnBears style. And with Virgin Voyages, here's what's always included:

- ✓ Over 20+ eateries — no buffets, no main dining rooms, just incredible cuisine
- ✓ All tips covered — no surprise charges
- ✓ Free Wi-Fi and unlimited group fitness classes
- ✓ Award-winning entertainment and nightlife
- ✓ Adults-only ship (18+) for a truly elevated experience

Space is limited and this birthday bash is bound to sell out fast. Join us for the ultimate celebration at sea — because you deserve to cruise differently!

