



## **New Asia Cruise Tours Explore Some of the World's Oldest Civilizations and Most Modern Metropolises**



### ***Windstar Expands Small Ship Cruise Offerings in Asia with Inspired and In-Depth Land & Cruise Adventures on Seven New Cruise Tours in 2018-19***

**Seattle, WA, May 22, 2018** — The capitals, villages and ports of Asia are among both the oldest and the newest of the world, and [Windstar Cruises](#) will offer culturally curious travelers seven different cruise tour options to explore the region aboard the 212-guest *Star Legend* in 2018-19. The award-winning cruise line has announced that the new season of [Asia Cruise Tours](#) is open for booking, presenting guests multiple choices to experience the region from the culturally-rich combination of China, Japan and South Korea, to thoughtful exploration of Southeast Asia's customs and temples. Asia Cruise Tours start at \$5,099 per person, double occupancy and range from 12 to 17 days.

The itineraries, which combine land and sea exploration, make it possible for guests to take in a unique mix of Asia's icons, less-often-discovered gems, culinary heritage and coastal beauty. Guests can spend up to 17 days pursuing their path of choice from walking China's Great Wall to staking out the sunrise over Cambodia's Angkor Wat. While inland sites like Xian and the Terracotta Warriors inspire many to visit China, the massive region of Asia has so much coastline and so many ports of interest to explore. Windstar's *Star Legend* is the perfect way to truly gain a sense of place by allowing guests to linger along the coast in all-suite luxury.

"Launching our Asia Cruise Tours is an exciting next step in our pursuit to be the leading cruise line when it comes to destination delivery," said Windstar President John Delaney. "The way we research, scout and design our cruises – and now land tours – means we're giving guests the freedom to do and discover more, knowing that we are the go-to local destination experts in Asia and around the world."

The itineraries are a rich mix of ancient sites and modern cities that have studied the region with monuments to commerce and progress as Asia takes on a new role in the world economy. The cultures of China, Japan, Korea, Cambodia, Vietnam and Thailand are also represented by visits to fish markets, food markets, tea houses and restaurants that provide guests an intimate perspective into culinary heritage, cultural treasures and creative expression.

The following Cruise Tours are now open for booking:

#### ***The Great Wall, Japan & South Korea Cruise Tour (14 days)***

This itinerary brings together three of the region's powerhouses with a tour that begins in Beijing with four days of land explorations. Guests start their tour with some of the world's most expansive architectural creations including the Forbidden City, the 9,999-room compound that 14 emperors called home and the Temple of Heaven, a tranquil park that gives travelers perspective on the local life of the city. Tiananmen Square may be familiar to many but this public plaza, one of the largest in the world, holds much that guests have not imagined, including Chairman Mao's mausoleum. Next is a visit to the Great Wall, the longest man-made structure in the world. Guests will also visit the Terracotta Warriors, the vast army sculpted to accompany China's first emperor into the afterlife, before embarking on the 11-day voyage to Tokyo. Setting out from Beijing (Tianjin) there are two days at sea allowing time to relax, enjoy the spa, visit the Bridge and participate in informative lectures and briefings. Karatsu, Japan is the first port. Karatsu is known for its pottery which is produced across 60 local studios. From here the tour proceeds to an overnight call in Busan, South Korea. Take in the 7<sup>th</sup> century Beomeosa Temple on Geumjeongsan Mountain for its history and for the breathtaking view out onto the sea. Busan is a bustling city to rival Seoul, with a beach and creative food scene. The itinerary heads back to Japan with opportunities to visit what remains of a period building known now as the Atomic Bomb Dome at Hiroshima; take in a sweeping 360-degree view of Kyoto from the Umeda Sky Building; and dive into the bustle of the fish market in Shimizu (the gateway to Mount Fuji). The tour concludes in Tokyo where everything – food, fashion, tea, art, culture – is the epitome of Asia's modernity.

#### ***China's Great Walls & Warriors Cruise Tour (14 days)***

This itinerary is a fascinating combination of China from the Middle Kingdom to now with a four-day land tour of key sites and an 11-day voyage from Beijing (Tianjin) to Hong Kong with stops in Japan and Taiwan. It all begins with a tour of key sites including Beijing, the Great Wall, the Forbidden City, Tiananmen Square, the Temple of Heaven and the Terracotta Warriors of Xian. A day at sea gives guests a chance to recharge and prepare for a stop in Qingdao. As the 19<sup>th</sup> century gave way to the 20<sup>th</sup>, this seaside town was colonized by Germany which brought the beer making tradition that sparked the creation of Tsingtao Beer, a perfect complement to local spicy noodle and duck dishes. The Tao religion also came into being here. Another day at sea allows time for pampering or a workout before an overnight stop in Shanghai. Shanghai is a bustling city with towers along the Bund that rival any world capital, shopping for every taste and a culinary tradition with modern flourish. It is on to Ishigaki Island in Japan where swimming is not allowed, but glass bottom boats provide a window onto the colorful fish and distinctive blue reefs. Taipei, the capital of Taiwan, is the next stop where old and new is definitely the order of the day. Participate in a Chinese Kong Fu tea ceremony, visit the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial, The Confucius Temple or Taipei 101 which is not a class on world affairs but a 1,671-foot tall skyscraper. The tour concludes in Hong Kong packed with things to do and dim sum to sample, but the tram to Victoria Peak is a must for the expansive view.

#### ***Southeast Asia Coastlines & Angkor Wat Cruise Tour (15 days)***

This 15-day itinerary immerses guests in a thoughtful journey from Cambodia to Thailand to Vietnam to survey Southeast Asia's best ports, dramatic coastal sights and ancient temples. The tour begins in Cambodia with a boat tour of the floating village of Chong Khneas, both Vietnamese and Khmer, before receiving a traditional water blessing from the monks at Wat Atvea. Sunrise over Angkor Wat is a universally inspirational experience and the guided walking tour that follows illuminates the stories of the temples and provides context for the Hindu and Buddhist gods. At Ta Prohm (of 'Tomb Raider' fame) visitors will see the haunting art as nature has taken back the temple. Throughout this day guests will see the best of Khmer art and culture through sculptures and bas reliefs mingling visions of Vishnu and Buddha. A quick flight to Bangkok allows guests to take in highlights including Wat Pho and the reclining Golden Buddha, five and a half tons of 83 percent pure gold. The tour departs Bangkok on a 12-day cruise to Vietnam before ending in Hong Kong. The first call is an overnight at Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon) where, because of its small size, the ship docks near the city center. Choose between exploring the Mekong Delta and village life in the countryside or visit Vietnam War landmarks. Nha Trang, a lovely seaside city brushed by crystalline water, draws visitors into its open-air markets. The next overnight call is at Da Nang (Hoi

An/Hue) where three UNESCO sites are must-sees. The Cham people were the ancient rulers of Vietnam and My Son Sanctuary is its most important Champa ruin, Hue is the country's spiritual heart and Hoi An, a tranquil 16<sup>th</sup> century trading town, together these provide real insight into the country's history. A day at sea allows time for a spa break, time in the library or learning more on board about the customs and cuisine of the region before arriving for an overnight in Hanoi (Halong Bay) where guests can explore its surreal beauty aboard a traditional junk. *Star Legend* docks in the center of Hong Kong's harbor to conclude and guests are free to ascend Victoria Peak or take the fast ferry to Macau as they wish.

#### ***Angkor Wat & Java Sea Splendor Cruise Tour (14 days)***

This 14-day tour combines the ancient spires of Angkor Wat with the glittering towers of Singapore and the authentic culture of many communities throughout Indonesia. For guests who prefer to dive into culture and still have plenty of beach and snorkeling time, this is an unforgettable voyage on a ship that can navigate "off the beaten path." Begin in Cambodia with a floating village tour and take in the Angkor Wat UNESCO World Heritage Site before flying to Singapore for a tour of highlights including the National Orchid Garden, China Town, Orchard Road and City Center. *Star Legend* departs Singapore for an 11-day cruise through Indonesian gems. Spicy fried bananas, duck egg omelets and other street foods are a highlight of Jakarta, but if the sleek rollercoaster of Ancol Dreamland amusement park is a must, plan accordingly. At Pulau Menyawakan snorkeling the biodiverse reef system is also a must. The Borobudur Buddhist Temple near Semarang is the largest Buddhist temple in the world and another UNESCO site. Some have called it the "mountain of a thousand statues" because of its monumental and multi-tiered construction. The next stop at Pulau Bawean is all about diving, snorkeling and sunbathing before the ship moves on to Probolinggo where the most famous feature is the Mount Bromo volcano. At Loh Liang the Komodo dragons of Komodo National Park are the stars; Lembar and Lombok are prime #nofilter beaching and sunbathing stops before the tour concludes at Benoa, Bali. The navigability of Windstar's small ship makes it possible to pursue the essential Java Sea adventure – relaxed sunny days, rustic villages, local markets and remote beaches.

#### ***Angkor Wat & the Allure of Thailand & Malaysia Cruise Tour (14 days)***

Experience the splendor of Angkor Wat and contrast the ancient temple complex with modern cities throughout Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore. The itinerary begins with the four-day land expedition to Cambodia's Angkor Wat and the highlights of Bangkok including the Golden Buddha. From Bangkok sail out to Ko Kut for an idyllic day on the beach. Two days at sea give guests plenty of time for lectures, briefings, pool time or pampering at the spa. The next stop, Malacca, is a city known for antique shops, markets and historic temples and mosques; it's quite a contrast with Kuala Lumpur where guests can shoot to the observation deck of the iconic KL Tower via a state-of-the-art elevator. At Langkawi's UNESCO Global Geopark the world's longest curved, free-span suspension bridge continues the marveling at man-made attractions. An overnight call at Phuket allows plenty of time to decompress on its legendary beach before moving on to Penang, Malaysia. Established by the East India Trade Company as George Town, Penang's architecture has also been recognized as a UNESCO site. Guests can explore ethnic street foods from Chinese stir-fry to Indian- and Thai-influenced dishes before the tour concludes in Singapore with its many, many culinary and cultural attractions.

#### ***Angkor Wat at Dawn, Midnight in Manila Cruise Tour (17 days)***

This 17-day voyage begins with a three-day immersion in the wonders of Cambodia's Angkor Wat before a 14-day cruise from Singapore to Hong Kong. After a day at sea, search for the perfect cat sculpture in the busy markets of Kuching, Malaysia. Bandar Seri Begawan in Brunei is next offering a choice of exploring the waterfront food scene or venturing to 600-year-old Kampong Ayer on the Brunei River where life takes place on stilted boardwalks and in stilted shacks. At Kota Kinabalu guests can learn about Borneo's rarest birds, mammals and amphibians at Kinabalu Park. Moving onto the Philippines the Puerto Princesa Subterranean River fascinates, Coron offers snorkeling over coral reefs and wartime wreckage, and Boracay is a classic beach getaway. An overnight call at Manila allows plenty of time to explore, reflect at the grand Manila Cathedral, before dancing the night away. Bask on the beach at one of the exclusive resorts of the Hundred Islands on the way to the tour's conclusion in Hong Kong. *Star Legend* docks directly in the harbor making access to the Victoria Peak tram and any number of local historic, culinary, cultural or shopping attractions easy.

#### ***Kyoto & the Zen of Japan Cruise Tour (12 days)***

Delve deep into Japan, its seascapes, landscapes, heritage and humming present. The two-day land exploration leads guests through Osaka Castle, the largest in Japan, built during the golden age of the samurai, the Kasuga Taisha Shrine with its 3,000 lanterns guiding the way to enlightenment, and the Todaiji Temple where the world's largest wooden building houses the world's largest bronze Buddha. In Kyoto, guests will see the Kinkakuji (the Golden Pavilion) with its gold leaf exterior, and nearby Nijo Castle used to house the visiting shogun. All four of

these landmarks are UNESCO World Heritage Sites. The 10-day cruise portion includes Tokyo, the ultimate choose-your-own-adventure city. Culinary travelers: Tokyo has more Michelin stars than any other city. Culture vultures: Kabuki theater and sumo wrestling are just starters. The shopping of course is legendary. At Shimizu, snap the perfect portrait of Mount Fuji; at Shingu travelers can climb to the Kumanonachi Taisha UNESCO site, a fiery orange pagoda next to Nachi Falls, the tallest waterfall in Japan. A day at sea provides time to recharge or relax at the spa before reaching Kagoshima, site of the Sakurajima volcano and picturesque samurai district. Reflect on World War II's legacy at Nagasaki's Atomic Bomb Museum and Peace Memorial Park. There is a stop at Busan, South Korea, where the terraced homes of Gamcheon Culture Village pour over the slopes like a rainbow waterfall. Karatsu, Japan is known for its art pottery but the Karatsu Castle is also a main attraction. In Hiroshima, guests can visit one of the atomic bomb related sites or head to Miyajima, for a look at the vermilion Itsukushima Shrine floating in the sea. The cruise concludes at Takamatsu where the Ritsurin Garden charms with cherry blossoms in spring or the blaze of fall foliage.

Windstar's Asia Cruise Tours are the second region where Windstar has rolled out comprehensive land and sea tour options. The company recently added nine [Cruise Tour dates in Alaska](#). It also currently offers three [Land Tours in Costa Rica](#).

To learn more about authentic small ship cruising with Windstar, contact a travel professional or Windstar Cruises by phone at 800-258-7245, or visit [www.windstarcruises.com](http://www.windstarcruises.com).

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### **About Windstar Cruises**

*Windstar Cruises operates a six-ship fleet of small sailing and all-suite ships visiting approximately 270 ports annually sailing throughout Europe, the Caribbean, Costa Rica and the Panama Canal, Asia, Alaska and British Columbia, Canada and New England, and cruising year-round in Tahiti. Windstar's fleet is the market leader in small ship cruising with a total of 1,242 passenger berths calling on off-the-beaten-path and popular ports in more than 60 countries. The boutique cruise line carries 148 to 310 passengers on six small ships and takes travelers on cruises that are 180 degrees from ordinary. Windstar is known for immersive experiences and destination authenticity, port-intensive itineraries, exceptional award-winning service, and an innovative culinary program with culinary-themed cruise as the Official Cruise Line of the James Beard Foundation. Windstar Cruises is a part of Xanterra Travel Collection, an award-winning, globally diversified travel company offering once in a lifetime experiences in some of the most beautiful and iconic places on earth.*

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