



## Windstar Immerses Guests in the Waters of the World with Complimentary Watersports Program

*Watersports, Wet Landings, Snorkel & Dive Tours Ramp Up the Small Ship Experience in the Mediterranean, Greek Isles, Caribbean, Costa Rica, Mexico, Tahiti and South Pacific*

*Plus, Active Adventures on Award-winning Signature Expeditions in Alaska*



**Seattle, WA, February 25, 2019** — [Windstar Cruises](#) always sets out to take travelers deeper into a destination's culture and further off the familiar path, but what surprises some is that guests of the small ship cruise line have the opportunity to splash ashore when "wet landings" are the mode of entry to tiny ports without a dock. Another surprise? Guests can (and are encouraged to) jump into and swim in the actual ocean from the Watersports Platform found on every ship. The boutique line delivers the ability to navigate waterways where larger ships simply cannot. The company's authentic approach to cruising means that water remains an essential and prominent part of the overall cruise experience.

On some cruises the water just becomes that thing ships glide across, a distant horizon line for a placid selfie backdrop. But life on board Windstar is different. The award-winning small ships sail close to the water offering a comprehensive and complimentary Watersports Program operated from the back of each Windstar ship; "wet" landings right on the beach by inflatable boat to hidden tropical shores; active excursion options on and in the water including *Signature Expeditions* in Alaska that launch kayaks and Zodiacs right from the ship. Windstar ships are equipped to make the most of the water experience everywhere they sail.

"We believe cruising is about connecting with the sea. Our guests are active and they appreciate being closer to the water with ocean views from every suite, expansive open decks, an Open Bridge to drop in and chat with the Captain, and a complimentary Watersports Program that operates from the marina at the back of each ship. These are the types of unexpected experiences that set Windstar apart from the rest and draws travelers to our highly awarded small ships," said Windstar President John Delaney.

## **“Wet Landings” add an Element of Adventure in Costa Rica & Panama**

What is a wet landing? It's the chance to get sand between your toes in a hidden harbor as you transfer ashore for Windstar's Signature Beach Party by inflatable boat that pulls right up on the beach to deliver guests to a tropical paradise complete with a local band, beach loungers and a delicious beach barbecue. Where do wet landings land? Places not everyone has been but anyone would be awed to see such as [Costa Rica](#), home to some of the most singular and diverse ecosystems on the planet. Cruise guests visit rainforests alive with howler monkeys, unpopulated beaches, and coral reefs thriving with marine life at ports like Bahia Drake and Golfo Dulce, places *only* accessible by a wet landing.

The towns are so small that bigger cruise ships would overwhelm them, so they don't have big ports or constructed docks to welcome ships. Instead, they welcome small ships like Windstar's with only 310? guests (or less), and that means rugged inflatable boats deliver guests directly from the Windstar ship to shore, where they disembark in the shallow water/onto the beach. It's easy to board and splash ashore, but guests are reminded to bring some water shoes or sandals and appropriate (quick dry) clothing. The landings add a bit of sparkle to any travel tale told at happy hour or home.

Wet landing ports are featured on multiple Costa Rica and Central America itineraries including the popular 7-day *Costa Rica & Panama Canal* cruise with more than a dozen departure dates available through March 2020, and prices starting at \$1,999 per guest, double occupancy. Wet landings are also featured on the following cruises in 2019 and 2020: *Costa Rica & Panama Canal*; *Adventures in Panama & Costa Rica*; *The Spanish Main: Rise of the New World*; *Southern Mexico: Fish Tales & Mayan Trails*; *Star Collector: 3 Americas*; *Tropical Escape Through the Panama Canal*; *Star Collector: Caribbean & Panamanian Paradise*; *Star Collector: A Double Crossing: Atlantic & Panama Canal*.

## **Watersports Platform – Complimentary Water Toys & Sports Coordinators**

Not every landing on Windstar is a wet one, but there are loads of opportunities to get wet on many warm water itineraries in the Caribbean, Tahiti, South Pacific, Greek Isles, Mediterranean and more. Each of the six Windstar ships has a Watersports Platform offering guests easy access to warm tropical waters when anchored in port. The platforms are staffed by trained Sports Coordinators and outfitted with stand-up paddleboards, kayaks, and equipment for snorkeling, sailing, swimming, water skiing, and windsurfing. For a low-key water experience the ships also carry a large foam flotation pad, perfect for lounging in the sun and taking in the views.

The Sports Coordinators oversee a program of water-oriented activities in addition to ensuring guest safety, the coordinators assist with tips and information on using the complimentary water toys - equipment like a water trampoline, snorkel gear, sail boats, kayaks, flotation pads, and stand-up paddle boards. Want to try water-skiing or water tubing? The Watersports team is there to tow guests to glory. (Equipment may vary by sailing region and vessel.)

During days when the ship is at anchor, guests can swim or use any of the water toys at no charge (weather and port rules permitting). Guests are made aware of days when the Watersports Platform is operational during their cruise, eliminating sudden conflicts with scheduled shore excursions. If there is a private island day on the itinerary (as on most Windstar Caribbean/Central America and Tahiti sailings), the water sports activities are provided on shore, rather than from the platform, which is always a welcome (and complimentary) addition to the festive beach day.

## Snorkel & Dive in Ports around the World on Undersea Shore Excursions

Windstar's robust shore excursion program offers dozens of opportunities for cruise guests to explore the underwater world around them in exotic ports of call. Tropical seas reveal an underwater snorkeler's and diver's paradise, with plenty of variety on water-based excursions in Tahiti and other warm-water destinations around the world including the hidden Caribbean, both coasts of Mexico, Costa Rica and Panama, and smaller Mediterranean ports. Guests can book an excursion or simply take advantage of the complimentary snorkeling gear to really plunge into the local destination.

In [French Polynesia](#), for example, Fakarava is a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve known for some of the best diving in the South Pacific. In addition to planning their own water adventures right from the local beaches, Windstar guests can choose among numerous snorkeling or diving excursions including an ocean dive at Tapu, one of the most famous dive sites of Bora Bora where divers experience the coral drop-off to meet lemon sharks, black tip reef sharks, humphead Maori wrasses, moray eels, and turtles.

On the other side of the world numerous snorkel excursions are offered that let cruisers discover the historic waters of the storied Adriatic and Mediterranean Seas such as snorkeling or swimming at the Modra Spilja Cave in Croatia or viewing the walls of the Secca delle Formiche in Lipari, Italy that host a wide variety of flora, fauna, fish and shell fish as well as lobsters, groupers, prawns, and moray fish.

Tropical ports in the Caribbean and Central America also provide boundless feasts for the eyes below sea level featuring virgin reefs and extensive soft corals, fans, and sponges. Following is a sampling of the numerous snorkel and dive excursions:

**Mediterranean:** Dubrovnik Adriatic Sea Adventure; Concierge Collection: Sailing Hvar Archipelago; Kayaking Kotor Bay; Lipari Snorkeling Tour; Concierge Collection: Camogli Highlights & Punta Chiappa; Sailing Zadar Archipelago; Ibiza Snorkel & Kayaking Tour

**Caribbean:** Snorkel at Anse Dufour and the Bat Cave in Martinique; Snorkel Safari in St. Kitts; Bequia 2-Tank Dive; Shipwreck Snorkeling Adventure in Bimini; 2-Tank Dive & Snorkel Delight in St. Lucia; Swim & Snorkel with the Stingrays in Antigua; St. Bart's Sailing Catamaran & Snorkeling Adventure; Jost Van Dyke Sail, Snorkel & Bubbly Pools Hike; Champagne Reef Snorkeling Adventure in Dominica

**Central America:** La Paz Snorkeling & Birdwatching at Gaviota Island; Cabo San Lucas Luxury Sail & Snorkel, in Mexico; Snorkeling Cano Island Biological Reserve in Bahia Drake; Catamaran Adventure & Snorkel in Playa Flamingo, in Costa Rica.

**South Pacific:** Bora Bora Snorkel Safari & Stingray Encounter; Bora Bora Certified 2-Tank Dive to Tapu, Toopua, & Anua; Concierge Collection: Bora Bora Lagoon and Cultural Tour; Bora Bora AquaSafari; Snorkeling at Pufuna, Fakarava; Moorea Snorkel Safari; Huahine Motu Picnic & Snorkel

*Note: Dive Tours are offered for Certified Divers only who bring PADI - CMAS Cards or other proof of certification, (including a log book) and sign waiver release forms and medical disclosures.*

## Signature Expeditions Explore Alaskan Waterways by Kayak & Zodiac with Expert Guides

Not all water experiences are of the tropical variety. The award-winning [Windstar Signature Expeditions](#) program provides Alaska voyagers with adventure and insight into some of the most remote wonders this destination has to offer. Guests don't just see the glaciers from the deck; they actively experience Alaska from the vantage of a kayak skimming the waters of a picturesque coastal inlet. Windstar guests

paddle alongside pedigreed Expedition Leaders via field excursions on the water, pointing out the nuances of the changing biospheres, while offering tips on wildlife viewing, photography, and more.

Windstar's *Signature Expeditions* team of onboard naturalists, historians, glaciologists, and photographers deliver a once-in-a-lifetime experience providing insights and presentations throughout the cruise; giving guests an up close perspective on the Great Land that is unique to the Windstar way of cruising in Alaska. Zodiac tours led by the Expedition staff are also an option for guests to explore glaciers and coastal waterways while getting a close look at wildlife along the shore.

### **Star Collector Voyages - Longer Cruises Offer More Time for Active Water Adventures**

[Star Collector Voyages](#) combine popular itineraries to create longer cruises with more in-depth exploration of destinations. Itineraries are 14 days or longer and designed to ensure few repeated ports and maximum culture collecting and more time for kayaking, snorkeling, diving, paddle boarding, beachcombing and more. *Star Collector Voyages* include free daily laundry service so guests can pack light even for the longest cruises, dive into water activities worldwide, and still stay sand-free.

There are all kinds of cruises for all kinds of cruisers, but for travelers who want water adventures and activities authentically woven into the overall itinerary, no one does it better than Windstar. The 180° From Ordinary experience brings together onboard amenities, a James Beard Foundation culinary program, cultural enrichment programs, and the benefits of small ship cruising, like being right on the water, for travelers who really want a deeper dive into culture around the world.

With Windstar's [Beyond Ordinary Savings Event](#) on now, guests looking to immerse themselves in the waters of the world have access to the best fares of the season right now. Book by March 18 to pick your *Star Perk* choosing from up to \$1,000 Shipboard Credit, Free Gratuities, or Free Wi-Fi. Prices begin at \$1,499 per guest. To learn more about rates, dates and authentic small ship cruising with Windstar, contact a travel advisor, phone 1-800-258-7245, or visit [www.windstarcruises.com](http://www.windstarcruises.com).

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**For professional images of Windstar's Watersports Platform and other water-based experiences:**

<https://windstarcruises.webdamdb.com/bp/#/downloadqueue/UEcL7R5t3X8Oxzgy/source/0>

### **About Windstar Cruises**

*Windstar Cruises operates a six-ship fleet of masted sailing ships and all-suite motor ships cruising throughout Europe, the Caribbean, Costa Rica and the Panama Canal, Asia, Alaska and British Columbia, Canada and New England, Tahiti and the South Pacific, and new for 2019, Mexico and U.S. West Coast. 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 nearly 80 countries. The boutique line carries less than 310 guests on each sailing 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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