

# 8 of the BEST

## CELEBRITY GUESTS AT SEA

Which famous speakers and special guests will be on board in 2020? **Jane Archer** finds out

**W**hether clients want to samba as if they're in *Strictly*, sniff and swirl with a wine guru, or uncover their inner chef, they can on a cruise.

Every year, experts in everything from cooking to climbing join cruise ships big and small to educate, enlighten and entertain passengers, adding an extra dimension to their holiday and an extra element for you to sell.

Talks and activities are mostly complimentary, and often there are related excursions to bring the lecture to life. We've picked eight of the most interesting names hitting the seas next year, to give you some inspiration.



1

### RANULPH FIENNES, EXPLORER

Climbing Mount Everest, walking to the South Pole or scaling the north face of the Eiger – name almost any gruelling test of endurance and Sir Ranulph Fiennes, who is listed as the world's greatest living explorer in the *Guinness World Records* book, has done it. But not without some grisly experiences along the way. Fiennes will be revealing all during talks about his adventures to passengers on a Cunard cruise in Alaska next June. With details of his exploits ringing in their ears, passengers can have their own mini-adventures with kayaking, trekking and whale watching on calls into Juneau, Skagway and Sitka while cruising up close to the icy landscape in Glacier Bay.

**Book it:** The 10-night Alaska and Glacier Bay cruise costs from £1,499 cruise-only for a round trip from Vancouver departing June 2, 2020. [cunard.co.uk](http://cunard.co.uk)



2

### DARCEY BUSSELL, BALLERINA AND FORMER STRICTLY COME DANCING JUDGE

Strap on your ballet shoes because we're going dancing down the Danube with Scenic's special guest, Dame Darcey Bussell. The ballerina and former *Strictly Come Dancing* judge will be talking all things dance and answering questions about her life, as well as compering an evening of Mozart, Strauss, ballet and waltz at Vienna's Palais Liechtenstein. She'll also be joining passengers for a cocktail sundowner on the sun deck in Budapest. There will be more music on an excursion to Salzburg, birthplace of Mozart and setting for *The Sound of Music*.

**Book it:** The eight-day Gems of the Danube cruise from Nuremberg to Budapest starts at £3,140, including flights, drinks, gratuities and Wi-Fi, departing April 10, 2020. [scenic.co.uk](http://scenic.co.uk)

3

### GILL BENNETT, ESPIONAGE EXPERT

Mystery and intrigue await as surveillance expert Gill Bennett – author of several books uncovering the history of espionage in the Second World War and beyond – sets sail with Saga Cruises, promising to lift the lid on the life of a secret agent. Passengers will be sailing through the waters off Denmark and Germany that inspired the 1903 spy novel *The Riddle of the Sands*, by Erskine Childers, which tells the tale of Charles Carruthers and Arthur Davies, who discover a German plot to invade Britain while sailing in the Frisian Islands. There'll also be a screening of the film of the novel, starring Michael York and Jenny Agutter, as well as the opportunity to spy the seals and birds that call the Frisian Islands home.

**Book it:** The seven-night round-trip from Dover starts at £2,030, including drinks, gratuities and Wi-Fi, departing August 23, 2020. [travel.saga.co.uk](http://travel.saga.co.uk)



4

### NOBU MATSUHISA, CELEBRITY CHEF

Clients on Crystal Cruises' expedition yacht *Crystal Endeavor* in Indonesia next October won't only get the chance to discover the archipelago's remote islands, they'll also get to explore new tastes in the company of special guest, chef Nobu Matsuhisa, the culinary whizz behind the ship's Umi Uma restaurant. He'll be hosting two dinners, each for up to 30 passengers (\$200 per person), and a multi-course extravaganza for just nine people in the intimate Vintage Room (\$1,000 per person), as well as sharing tips of the trade during a cooking demonstration and book signing.

**Book it:** The 16-night Indonesian Immersive and The Great Barrier Reef cruise from Bali to Cairns costs from £13,442 cruise-only, including drinks and gratuities, departing October 15. [crystalcruises.co.uk](http://crystalcruises.co.uk)



HOW TO  
SELL  
celebs

- ◆ Pique customers' interest with a poster of the speaker in the shop window or on your website
- ◆ Find out about any special or exclusive onboard meet-the-celeb events that clients might want to buy into
- ◆ Make it clear to customers how long the 'name' will be on board the ship. Guest speakers typically only do a portion of a cruise
- ◆ Remember celebrity status is in the eye of the beholder – you might not be interested in going into space or growing tomatoes, but plenty of people love the idea of meeting an astronaut or a TV gardener



5

**CAROL KLEIN AND JOE SWIFT, GARDENERS' WORLD PRESENTERS**

A blooming lovely time is promised as Emerald Waterways sets sail through the Low Countries next spring with BBC *Gardeners' World* presenters Carol Klein and Joe Swift. The duo will be solving passengers' gardening problems, offering tips for budding horticulturists and hosting an excursion to Holland's Keukenhof Gardens, where seven million tulips, daffodils and hyacinths are planted each year. Exclusive to this cruise is a tour of Antwerp's botanical gardens, where trees, shrubs and herbs were planted 200 years ago to grow medicinal plants for the local hospital.

**Book it:** The eight-day Holland and Belgium in Bloom cruise starts at £2,695, departing April 10, 2020, round-trip from Amsterdam and including flights, drinks with lunch and dinner, and selected excursions. [emeraldwaterways.co.uk](http://emeraldwaterways.co.uk)



6

**DR JOHN MASON, NORTHERN LIGHTS EXPERT**

You don't have to be a stargazer to get a buzz from Hurtigruten's astronomy-themed cruise next March with northern lights junkie Dr John Mason. There are deep fjords, gushing waterfalls and fun activities aplenty to enjoy on this cruise along the Norwegian coast, but the big attraction is the aurora borealis, which will (hopefully) light up the night sky in a blaze of colours. Dr Mason will be giving lectures about the phenomenon and joining the hunt for the lights on the top deck. Set the button to 'disturb' and be ready to run at 2am if the bridge announces a sighting.

**Book it:** The 12-day voyage from Bergen to Kirkenes and back costs from £2,156 cruise-only, departing March 14, 2020. [hurtigruten.co.uk](http://hurtigruten.co.uk)

## DESTINATIONS

### CRUISE | CELEBRITY SPEAKERS



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#### CHARLIE DIMMOCK, *GARDEN RESCUE* PRESENTER, AND COLONEL PIERS STORIE-PUGH, FIRST WORLD WAR EXPERT

History and gardening come together on Great Rail Journeys' cruise around Holland and Belgium next spring. First World War expert Colonel Piers Storie-Pugh will be treating military buffs to a lecture about the war, complementing excursions to the battlefields and cemeteries of Ypres in Belgium and the Airborne Museum in Oosterbeek. *Garden Rescue* presenter Charlie Dimmock's talk will be altogether more rosy. She'll be answering passengers' gardening questions before they set off to see the Keukenhof Gardens.

**Book it:** The eight-day Springtime Tulips and Keukenhof Gardens round-trip cruise costs from £1,495, including flights and departing from Amsterdam on April 15, 2020.

[greatrail.com](http://greatrail.com)

#### BEST OF THE REST

**P&O Cruises** is going *Strictly* crazy on four cruises in 2020, with dance displays, one-to-one lessons and a hosted dinner with professionals from the TV show. *Strictly* departures are from Southampton to the Canary Islands (April 4), the Mediterranean (June 6), Spain and Portugal (June 20) and the Baltic (July 12).

World affairs will be on the agenda when Admiral James Stavridis, former Supreme Allied Commander of Nato, takes to the podium on a Baltic cruise on **Ponant's** *Le Dumont d'Urville*. The eight-night Stockholm-Copenhagen voyage departs August 5.

Astronomer Pete Lawrence will be giving talks on the sky at night on a 14-night voyage to northern Norway with **Fred Olsen Cruise Lines**. The cruise is round-trip from Southampton, departing January 31.

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[www.sthildaseaadventures.co.uk](http://www.sthildaseaadventures.co.uk)

**8** **KRISTOFER RUSCON, CHAMPAGNE EXPERT**

Wine lovers sailing with SeaDream Yacht Club are in for a double treat next October as Kristofer Ruscon, house director of champagne estate Hatt et Söner, and a wine host from Agrapart, one of the best champagne houses in the world, join *SeaDream I*. They'll be hosting talks and tastings, as well as welcoming a select few to two degustation dinners which pair the fizz with special menus created by the ship's executive chef (extra cost). On shore, top up with vineyard visits and tastings in Ibiza and Ronda.

**Book it:** The seven-night cruise from Barcelona to Malaga starts at £3,712 cruise-only, departing October 10, 2020. [seadream.com](http://seadream.com)



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