

Cruising the Historic Cities of the Baltic Sea – with Smithsonian Journeys

From **24/07/2023**
to **02/08/2023**

Ship: **LE CHAMPLAIN**

From **Helsinki**
to **Copenhagen**



In alliance with Smithsonian Journeys.



Shore excursion in each port of call + transfers
included

This cruise is part of a collection of PONANT voyages that are specially-tailored for English-speaking travelers who want to engage with the world. In addition to the usual elements of the PONANT experience, the listed price for these voyages includes transfers to and from the ship, talks and discussions aboard ship by world class experts, and a shore excursion or activity in each port of call that encourages guests to embrace the sights, sounds, tastes, and smells of the local environment and culture.

Join PONANT and Smithsonian Journeys for an extraordinary 10-day voyage through the **Baltic Sea** featuring specially arranged, **exclusive presentations and discussions aboard** with former President of Poland and Nobel Peace Prize-laureate **Lech Wałęsa** while in Gdansk, Poland, and with former mayor of Copenhagen **Bo Asmus Kjeldgaard** while in Copenhagen, Denmark.

The **Baltic Sea** has been a thoroughfare of trade since the days of the Vikings. We will visit the great cities that ring its shores and experience a comingling of cosmopolitan life with centuries of rich history.

From Finland's vibrant capital of **Helsinki**, *Le Champlain* sails first to **Tallinn**, an important hub for the Hanseatic League in the Baltic Sea around the 13th century. Its Old Town is a UNESCO Heritage site and retains remarkably well-preserved ramparts, public buildings, merchant houses, and warehouses.

Spend a full day in cosmopolitan **Stockholm**, whose lively Gamla Stan (old town) located on a compact island beckons you to explore its narrow cobblestone streets lined with 17th- and 18th-century buildings, including the Royal Palace.

On Gotland—the largest island in the Baltic Sea—you stop at the beautifully preserved medieval town of **Visby**, once a stronghold of the Hanseatic League.

Continue on to Latvia's capital, **Riga**, also a UNESCO World Heritage site, which combines the charms of its Old Town with an impressive array of Art Nouveau architecture.

Klaipeda is your gateway to the UNESCO World Heritage Curonian Peninsula and an opportunity to learn the traditional art of beekeeping or to immerse yourself in the local food and folklore of Lithuania.

You sail next to **Gdansk**, a city with a 1000 year history whose shipyard served as the birthplace of the Solidarity Trade Union in 1980. The wave of dissent arising from the Solidarity movement helped lead to Polish independence from the Soviet Union in 1991.

Call at the small Danish island of **Bornholm**, whose lush farmland and rich herring fisheries share the land with the ruins of a medieval fortress and four of the ancient round churches for which Denmark is noted.

End with an overnight and full day to explore **Copenhagen**, which offers a chance to relive 800 years of royal history at the stunning Christiansborg Palace, once home to kings and queens and now home to the Danish Parliament. Here you will also have the opportunity to learn about the city's commitment to sustainability and its goal to become the world's first carbon neutral capital city by the year 2025.



The information in this document is valid as of 06/07/2022

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YOUR STOPOVERS :

HELSINKI

Embarkation 24/07/2023 from 18:00 to 19:00

Departure 24/07/2023 at 22:00

Seated in the southern peninsula of Finland, **Helsinki** offers the buzz of a cosmopolitan city that has opted for both elegance and beauty. Explore its historical centre where the soft hues of neoclassical buildings are juxtaposed with spectacular modern constructions. The bustling **Kallio** district is teeming with boutiques and restaurants where you can taste some local specialities like graavilohi - a sweet, marinated, aromatic salmon dish. **Keskuspuisto** park, a stone's throw from the centre, is a good place to sit and unwind.

TALLINN

Arrival 25/07/2023 early morning

Departure 25/07/2023 midday

Opening onto the Baltic sea, to the far north of Estonia, the town of **Tallin** will win you over with the picturesque charm of its architecture. You can meander through its little streets in the heart of the medieval centre where its gothic **town hall** has been standing since 1404. The **Kiek in de Kōk tower**, the **Orthodox Alexander Nevski cathedral**, or **Toompea castle** give visitors a taste of this town's rich past. The city was particularly active during the medieval period, as is demonstrated by the very beautiful monuments from this period that are still visible. Don't hesitate to lose yourself in the heart of Tallinn, listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

STOCKHOLM

Arrival 26/07/2023 early morning

Departure 26/07/2023 late afternoon

The capital of Sweden occupies an archipelago in the east of the country at the junction of Mälär Lake and the Baltic sea. In **Gamla stan**, meaning "old town" in Swedish, you can stroll at your leisure in picturesque medieval streets until you reach the majestic Royal Palace. On the green island of **Djurgården**, you can visit several very different kinds of cultural centres: the Vasa museum is dedicated to a 17th century three-mast, the ecomuseum of Skansen presents traditional customs, and the ABBA museum is dedicated to the legendary pop group. For a fantastic, all-encompassing view of Stockholm, you can take a ride in **SkyView**, a glass-encased sphere gondola that takes you to the top of the world's largest building, the Ericsson Globe, a Stockholm landmark.

VISBY, GOTLAND

Arrival 27/07/2023 early morning
Departure 27/07/2023 midday

This old Hanseatic city lies to the west coast of Gotland, a Swedish island in the Baltic sea. Pass through the spectacular Visby fortifications and visit the **old town**, a UNESCO World Heritage site. You'll discover the grand Visby homes of rich merchants as well as the lovely low wooden houses in the little cobbled streets. Don't miss **Saint Mary's cathedral** with its octagonal steeples, as well as Powder tower along the fortifications. Make sure you stop over in one of the rose-adorned cafés; indeed roses abound in this town where you can taste one of the island's specialities, namely saffron pancakes with red fruit.

RIGA

Arrival 28/07/2023 early morning
Departure 28/07/2023 early afternoon

At the place where East meets West on the edge of the Baltic Sea, **Riga**, the capital of Latvia, will charm you with its contrasts. Although it is one of the oldest cities in the **Baltic states**, with a unique atmosphere that is imbued with the memory of its medieval past, Riga is also tangibly dynamic and modern. As you stroll through its **old town**, you will enjoy its exceptional architecture, its cathedrals, the remains of old walls and the typical narrow streets. Nicknamed "the Paris of the North" in the 1930s, this cosmopolitan city boasts a rich heritage.

KLAIPEDA

Arrival 29/07/2023 midday
Departure 29/07/2023 early evening

Klaipeda was founded in the 13th century by Christian crusaders from the German Order of Teutonic Knights. Its strategic location on the edge of the Baltic Sea has made it a source of conflict between Germans, Poles, Lithuanians and even the French since its creation. Today, the legacy of Klaipeda's rich history is a great multiculturalism. This is the main port of Lithuania and the country's third largest city. The beautiful landscapes of the surrounding Baltic coast make it a popular tourist destination. The city centre is very pleasant to visit due to its architecture blending German and Scandinavian influences.

GDANSK

Arrival 30/07/2023 early morning
Departure 30/07/2023 early evening

This ravishing city on the Baltic sea is nicknamed "the golden door of Poland", and you'll understand why when you see its beautiful Hanseatic architecture. You'll be charmed by the mouldings and gables that enhance the colourful façades of the houses. Along the **Vistula Quays**, you can take a pleasant stroll among the crafts shops. In elegant Mariacka street, the **amber jewellers** will most certainly tempt you into their boutiques. You can visit the church of Saint-Mary and its astronomic clock. Not far, the majestic Long Market square offers the famous Artus Court and the rich Gdansk History Museum.

RONNE

Arrival 31/07/2023 midday

Departure 31/07/2023 early evening

To the south-west of the Baltic Sea, the small Danish island of Bornholm is a magnificent and light-filled setting for the charming town of Ronne, its capital. Close to Sweden, Poland and Germany and coveted many times for its strategic position, the island has managed to preserve its identity. Strolling its cobbled streets, fall under the spell of the colourful half-timbered houses and discover Denmark's oldest theatre. The museum located in a former market hall retraces the traditional life of the island and its history. In the midst of landscapes alternating rocky coastlines and fine sandy beaches, maybe you will come across the medieval fortress of **Hammerhus**, or one of the remarkable **round churches** scattered over the island.

COPENHAGEN

Arrival 01/08/2023 early morning

Disembarkation 02/08/2023 at 07:00

Connected to the far eastern side of Sealand island, a few kilometres away from the Swedish coasts, **Copenhagen** offers you the high colour of Scandinavian capitals. You can discover the city's riches that weaves through the canal networks through the historical districts of **Christiansborg** and **Nyhavn**. Many palaces provide an apercu of Danish history. For eating, you can try out the smorrebrod, traditional danish sandwiches made with ham, cheese or smoked fish.