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Viking Returns to the Great Lakes for Third Season

New Voyages Announced for 2026 Will Bring a Viking Ship to Chicago for the First Time

LOS ANGELES--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- Viking® (www.viking.com) (NYSE: VIK) today is celebrating the start of its third season in the Great Lakes, with both of its identical expedition ships, the [Viking Octantis](#)® and the [Viking Polaris](#)®, now deployed in the region. Voted #1 for Expeditions by *Condé Nast Traveler* in the most recent Readers' Choice Awards, Viking offers a variety of itineraries that operate between Toronto and Duluth and explore all five Great Lakes. The 378-guest expeditions vessels, which were designed specifically to transit the historic Welland Canal, will remain in the lakes until early October before returning to Antarctica for the austral summer.

This press release features multimedia. View the full release here:
<https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20240530046540/en/>



Viking today is celebrating the start of its third season in the Great Lakes with both of its identical expedition ships, the Viking Octantis and the Viking Polaris, now deployed in the region. Pictured here is a Viking expedition ship in Thunder Bay, Ontario. For more information, visit www.viking.com. (Photo:

Viking has also announced that two new itineraries in the Great Lakes for 2026 are now open for booking. The 10-day [Great Lakes Treasures](#) voyage will sail roundtrip from Milwaukee and will allow guests to explore new ports of call for Viking, including Chicago, as well as Canada's Fathom Five National Marine Park and Benjamin Islands. The longer, 17-day [Niagara & Great Lakes Treasures](#) voyage sails between Toronto and

Falls, Canada's Point Pelee National Park and a transit of the Welland Canal.

"The Great Lakes region is a phenomenal place that is close to home for many of our guests, but one that few have yet to fully discover. With more than 10,000 miles of coastline, world-class cities and remote wilderness areas, it is truly a destination that is best explored by ship," said Torstein Hagen, Chairman and CEO of Viking. "We would like to thank our local partners for the warm welcome once again, and we look forward to introducing more curious travelers to the Great Lakes this season and in future years."

The return of Viking's expedition ships to the Great Lakes coincides with the recent announcement of the company's latest scientific advancement—for the first time ever, phytoplankton is being genetically sequenced at sea. With scientific support from UC San Diego's Scripps Institution of Oceanography and J. Craig Venter Institute (JCVI), real-time environmental DNA (eDNA) sequencing of phytoplankton is being conducted in the PCR lab on board the *Viking Octantis*. Visiting scientists contributing to the Genomics at Sea Program (GASP) are able to monitor the environmental impact on phytoplankton without the need to transport samples to a distant shoreside facility. Viking will regularly host Scripps scientists on board the ship this season in the Great Lakes.

Viking has also partnered with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory (GLERL), which conducts innovative research on the dynamic environments and ecosystems of the Great Lakes and coastal regions to provide information for resource use and management decisions that lead to safe and sustainable ecosystems, ecosystem services, and human communities. Additionally, Viking's expedition ships have been designated official NOAA / U.S. National Weather Service weather balloon stations, from which regular launches are undertaken.

Highlighted 2024-2026 Great Lakes Voyages:

- **[NEW Great Lakes Treasures](#) (10 days; roundtrip Milwaukee)** – Visit the "Windy City" of Chicago and its wealth of world-class museums, including the Art Institute. Explore the picturesque islands of the Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve and admire their bucolic landscapes. Venture out to Flowerpot Island in the Fathom Five National Marine Park and marvel at the stunning pink granite isles of the Benjamin Islands. Participate in lab studies as you explore coastal wetlands and delve into the Native cultures of the Great Lakes.
- **[NEW Niagara & Great Lakes Treasures](#) (17 days; between Toronto – Milwaukee)** – Discover the mighty waterfalls of Niagara and immerse yourself in nature amid the freshwater marshes of Point Pelee's peninsula. Witness the creativity of Detroit's urban development as you admire the city's postmodern and art deco skyscrapers. Behold the stunning isles of Georgian Bay from the water and marvel at their verdant landscapes during this extended voyage.
- **[Great Lakes Collection](#) (15 days; between Toronto – Duluth)** – Join Viking for a unique voyage across the historic waterways of all five of the majestic Great Lakes. Experience culture-rich urban centers and admire the awesome power of thundering Niagara Falls. Explore the granite islands and sheltered inlets of Georgian Bay and traverse the famous Soo Locks. Study the aquatic ecosystems of the lakes as you journey and venture into the dense boreal forests that line the shores of Lake Superior

and Lake Michigan.

- **[Niagara & the Great Lakes](#) (8 days; between Toronto – Milwaukee)**– From urban skylines to uninhabited islands, discover North America’s wilderness alongside renowned cultural attractions while cruising the striking waterways of the Great Lakes. Immerse yourself in the lakes’ compelling shipping history, experience the power of the thundering Niagara Falls and keep watch for scores of migratory birds at Point Pelee. Led by a team of experts, explore sheltered bays and woodlands to uncover complex ecosystems and hidden treasures.
- **[Undiscovered Great Lakes](#) (8 days; Thunder Bay – Milwaukee)**– Cross the width of Lake Superior between Duluth and the Soo Locks, exploring the lake’s North Shore Inside Passage as you sail. Hike along cliff-top trails for sweeping views of the lake. Gain insight into the unique features and ecosystems of remote wilderness islands, and admire Kakabeka Falls, the “Niagara of the North.” Follow in the footsteps of fur traders in Duluth and step back in time as you stroll the quaint, car-free streets of Mackinac Island.
- **[Canada & East Coast Explorer](#) (15 days; between Toronto – Fort Lauderdale)**– Sail the US’s Atlantic coastline and visit storied cities. Enjoy Charleston’s southern charm and colonial homes. Visit Norfolk, home to the world’s largest naval base. Trace Nova Scotia’s shores to explore its rugged landscapes and visit Quebec’s national parks. Traverse one of North America’s scenic waterways, the St. Lawrence River, and marvel at the locks and canals that comprise the St. Lawrence Seaway on an enriching journey to historic ports.

Viking is also offering a variety of [Longitudinal World Cruises](#) between the Great Lakes and Antarctica, offering guests the opportunity of a lifetime to sail from the world’s largest freshwater system to “the end of the world” or the reverse. Additionally, all of Viking’s Great Lakes voyages feature Mackinac Island, which was recently rated the #1 summer travel destination in the U.S. by *USA Today 10Best*.

Viking Expedition Ships

The Polar Class, *Viking Octantis* and *Viking Polaris* host 378 guests in 189 staterooms. These vessels are built for expeditions, at an ideal size for safety and comfort in remote destinations. With more indoor and outdoor viewing areas than other expedition vessels, guests are as close as possible to the most magnificent scenery on earth. Highlights include:

- **The Aula:** A stunning panoramic auditorium inspired by the University of Oslo’s famed ceremonial hall, the former venue for the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony. Used for lectures, daily briefings, documentaries and films, this spectacular venue features a 4k laser-projected screen that retracts to expose floor-to-ceiling windows and 270° views.
- **Finse Terrace:** An outdoor lounge area just above sea level with recessed seating, the Finse Terrace was designed to allow guests the comforts of the ship at fresco while enjoying the dramatic scenery. Named after the Finse Plateau in Norway, where some of the greatest polar explorers, including Nansen and Amundsen, did their expedition training in preparation for their North and South Pole expeditions.
- **The Hangar:** A state-of-the-art, industry-first in-ship marina providing ease of embarkation and disembarkation of Special Operations Boats and other equipment while sheltered from the elements.
- **The Bow:** An important forward-viewing platform. And in the case of inclement

weather, **The Shelter** is a comfortable, partially enclosed space for guests to warm up with a hot drink before going back out into the elements.

- **The Science Lab:** Developed in partnership with the University of Cambridge and Akvaplan-Niva, The Science Lab, at 380 sq. ft., is designed to support a broad range of research activities and is equipped with wet and dry laboratory facilities. Guests have supervised access to The Science Lab to learn from and participate with scientists in undertaking meaningful research.
- **Expedition Central:** The hub for the expedition team to consult with guests on their expedition activities and share knowledge about the destinations on a one-on-one basis, with the aid of 3D printed maps, digital screens, and a state-of-the-art spatial data visualization chart table.
- **Dining Choices:** The Restaurant offers fine dining featuring regional cuisine and always-available classics; the casual World Café offers an open kitchen, bakery, grill and premium seafood and sushi choices, as well as a wide range of international flavors; Mamsen's, named for the Hagen family matriarch, serves Scandinavian-inspired fare; and Manfredi's offers the best of Italian cuisine.
- **The Nordic Spa:** Following a day of exploration, The Nordic Spa offers guests opportunities to experience the ultimate healthy Nordic traditions, with an indoor heated pool set against expansive windows and a *badestamp* (wood-sided hot tub) that is open to the outside.
- **Explorers' Lounge:** Located high on the ship with floor-to-ceiling windows, the Explorers' Lounge provides guests an ideal space to take in the magnificent scenery, share discoveries with fellow travelers or to enjoy a drink.
- **The Living Room:** On the *Viking Octantis* and the *Viking Polaris*, The Living Room is located to maximize views of the surroundings through floor-to-ceiling windows and a library that informs even the best-read explorers. The Library is curated by acclaimed London bookshop Heywood Hill, as on all Viking vessels, as well as Cambridge University's Scott Polar Research Institute.
- **Nordic Balcony:** A first for polar expedition vessels, all staterooms on board Viking's expedition ships feature a Nordic Balcony, a sunroom that converts into an al fresco viewing platform with an observation shelf at elbow level to stabilize binoculars or a camera. Guests can choose from six stateroom categories that range from 222 sq. ft. to 1,223 sq. ft.—all with a Nordic Balcony, as well as a king-size bed and large bathroom with spacious glass-enclosed shower, heated bathroom floor and anti-fog mirror. Every stateroom is also equipped with a unique floor-to-ceiling drying closet that circulates warm air to dry and store clothing and expedition gear.
- **Expedition Ship Suites:** Nordic Junior Suites (322 sq. ft.) and Explorer Suites (580 sq. ft.) on the *Viking Octantis* and the *Viking Polaris* are similar to those on Viking's fleet of ocean ships, with wood detailing and amenities that include additional storage and seating, an expanded bathroom with extended shower and double sinks, welcome champagne, a fully-stocked mini-bar replenished daily, complimentary laundry, priority restaurant reservations and more. Explorer Suites feature two separate rooms, a Nordic Balcony and a full outdoor veranda. Additionally, each ship features one Owner's Suite (1,223 sq. ft.) that has three rooms—a living room, a board/dining room and a bedroom—as well as a 792 sq. ft. private deck with a traditional Norwegian *badestamp* open to the invigorating outdoors.
- **Enrichment On Board and On Shore:** Viking has created the world's leading scientific enrichment environment in an expedition setting. Exclusive partnerships with the Scott Polar Research Institute at Cambridge University, The Cornell Lab of

Ornithology and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)—as well as other prestigious scientific institutions match leading researchers and educators with each expedition. Thirty-six experts accompany each journey as part of the Viking Expedition Team, including an Expedition Leader and support staff, photographer, field research scientists, general naturalists, mountain guides, kayak guides, submarine pilots and specialists (ornithology, geology, higher predator biology and history). On board, guests enjoy daily briefings and world-class lectures about their destination. On shore, they can assist in fieldwork or interact through experiential activities during landings—such as monitoring birds to help identify migratory patterns; accompanying scientists to collect samples; or taking their cameras ashore alongside a professional photographer to learn how best to capture scenic landscapes.

- **Environmentally Considerate:** Viking believes that its responsibility extends beyond providing exceptional travel experiences. From the outset, the company has been deliberately concerned about the environment, making decisions that it believes are scientifically correct, rather than what is deemed as politically correct. Viking's fleet boasts many environmentally friendly features, such as diesel-electric river ships and energy-efficient ocean vessels equipped with closed-loop exhaust scrubbers. Viking's expedition ships have set a new standard for responsible travel by exceeding the current International Maritime Organization (IMO) Energy Efficiency Design Index (EEDI) requirements by nearly 38%. Additionally, Viking is working to make its next generation of ocean ships even more environmentally friendly, with a project for a partial hybrid propulsion system of liquid hydrogen and fuel cells, which could allow for operation with zero emissions while in port and while traveling at low speeds.

With a clear focus on creating experiences for The Thinking Person, Viking does not try to be all things to all people. This approach has resonated with guests, and in 2023, Viking was rated #1 for Expeditions, as well as #1 for Rivers and #1 for Oceans by *Condé Nast Traveler* in the most recent Readers' Choice Awards.

Media Assets

For more information about Viking, or for images and b-roll, please contact vikingpr@edelman.com.

About Viking

Viking (NYSE: VIK) was founded in 1997 and provides destination-focused journeys on rivers, oceans and lakes around the world. Designed for curious travelers with interests in science, history, culture and cuisine, Chairman Torstein Hagen often says Viking offers experiences for The Thinking Person™. Viking has more than 450 awards to its name, including being rated #1 for Rivers, #1 for Oceans and #1 for Expeditions by *Condé Nast Traveler* in the 2023 Readers' Choice Awards. Viking is also rated at the top of its categories for rivers, oceans and expeditions by *Travel + Leisure*. No other travel company has simultaneously received the same honors by both publications. For additional information, contact Viking at 1-800-2-VIKING (1-800-284-5464) or visit www.viking.com. For Viking's award-winning enrichment channel, visit www.viking.tv.

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