

A New Cruise Line is Setting Sail for Cuba

by Melanie Lieberman April 10, 2016



Courtesy of Ponant/Guillaume Plisson

Here's what you should know.

PONANT, the world's only French-flagged line, is the second cruise company—and the first luxury line—to offer [trips to Cuba](#) for Americans.

Starting in 2017 (from January through early April) PONANT will bring its

unique brand of upscale, small-ship cruising to the island nation. Like [Carnival Corporation](#), which is docking in [Cuba](#) for the first time next month, PONANT's Cuba itineraries will fall into the U.S.-government authorized category of people-to-people travel.

In a press release, PONANT's Chief Executive Officer of the Americas, Navin Sawhney, said the "cultural exchange" program would encourage "meaningful encounters with Cuban citizens, artists, professionals, and civic leaders." We know that Havana and Santiago de Cuba are on the agenda, which probably means travelers can expect trips to Casa Fuster, salsa dancing lessons, and a visits to Ernest Hemingway's favorite haunts (for [mojitos](#) and [daiquiris](#), of course).

A highlight of the 7 to 8-night itinerary is the ship itself, *Le Ponant*: a yacht that hosts an intimate group of no more than 64 cruisers in its 32 cabins: all with ocean views.

Specific activities and prices have not yet been released.