

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
FROM AMERICAN CRUISE LINES**



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## **May is a Monumental Month of “Firsts” for American Cruise Lines**



**Guilford, CT—April 27, 2026—**May will be a monumental month for American Cruise Lines, ushering in many exciting “firsts” for U.S. river cruising around the country. Next month, *American Encore* launches on the Columbia and Snake Rivers and becomes the first ship ever to be christened in the state of Idaho. May will also mark the first 2026 departures for two of the longest domestic cruises ever, the 52-Day *Great United States Cruise* and the 36-Day *Civil War Battlefields Cruise*. Each was specifically designed to celebrate the country’s 250<sup>th</sup> birthday while exploring up to 18 states in a single journey. Finally, the month of May will introduce American’s first season on the Great Lakes, featuring the only domestic cruises on the Great Lakes, all operated by *American Patriot*, the newest small ship in the region.

“What, where, when, and how you can cruise throughout The United States today is a tremendous accomplishment that has been decades in the making,” said Alexa Paoella, spokeswoman for American Cruise Lines. “Our U.S.-flagged fleet and array of small ship itineraries honor American ingenuity, grit, and perseverance. This year, we are cruising more domestic waterways than at any other time in our company’s history, and we are looking forward to celebrating the country’s 250<sup>th</sup> birthday on board with our guests cruising from Alaska to the Florida Keys.”



Click the links below for more details and information on each of American’s May 2026 “firsts,” happening on U.S. waterways around the country:

[Best new riverboat in the world, \*American Encore\*, launches May 5th](#) on the Columbia and Snake Rivers, becoming the first ship ever to be christened in Idaho on May 12<sup>th</sup> (festivities to take place at American’s new dock in Lewiston).

[First 250<sup>th</sup> Civil War Battlefields Cruise begins on May 5th](#) in New Orleans, Louisiana. This 36-Day U.S. River cruise was created to honor the complex history and battles of the Civil War, and the 250<sup>th</sup> birthday of The United States (cruise concludes June 9<sup>th</sup> in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania).

[American Cruise Lines’ Inaugural Great Lakes season opens May 22<sup>nd</sup>](#) with *American Patriot* departing from Oswego, New York along the company’s 9-Day *Great Lakes & Thousand Islands Cruise* (cruise includes hotel stay in Syracuse, NY, and concludes in Buffalo, NY).

[First 250<sup>th</sup> Great United States Cruise begins on May 29<sup>th</sup>](#) in Portland, Oregon. This 52-Day bucket list cruise was specially designed to highlight the country’s diverse geography, unique cultures, storied history, and the 250<sup>th</sup> birthday of The United States (cruise concludes July 19<sup>th</sup> in Boston, Massachusetts).



American’s line-up of May “firsts” highlights the ongoing development of the domestic cruise market led by the company for over 50 years. More importantly, these advancements also illuminate the growing demand for world-class U.S.-built ships and exceptional itineraries that can be cruised a little closer to home.

[Virtual Ship Tours](#) of all the company’s small ships are available on American Cruise Lines’ website.

**About American Cruise Lines:**

American Cruise Lines is the largest river cruise line in the U.S.A. with 28 small ships sailing the [Mississippi River](#), the [Columbia and Snake Rivers](#), and protected waterways all over the country. American’s award-winning fleet exemplifies the company’s 50-year history of offering domestic small ship cruises that explore exclusively in the United States. Today, it is the only 100% U.S.-flagged fleet of riverboats and small ships in the world. American now offers 50+ domestic cruise itineraries in 35+ states operating year-round, including new [Extended Cruises](#) honoring the country’s 250<sup>th</sup> in 2026.

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