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Spring 2026 Small-ship Adventure Travel News & Trends

AdventureSmith Explorations is the global leader in small-ship, adventure cruise vacations. The company's adventure specialists closely track what's happening in the travel industry and in the destinations where its expedition trips operate.

Here are AdventureSmith's expert insights heading into the Spring:

- **Alaska holds strong** as AdventureSmith's top destination—both for the total number of travelers in 2025 and for 2026 sales. January is historically AdventureSmith's busiest sales month of the year, and Alaska not only topped the charts for the month but comprised nearly 50% of the company's bookings. With this increased demand, remaining space on [Alaska small ship cruises](#) is becoming limited. With the season starting in April, now is the time to book remaining cabins for [Alaska 2026](#).
- **Is December the new January in Antarctica?** During this [Antarctica cruise](#) season at least, it's the case. AdventureSmith's experts who went this year reported consistent penguin hatching in December instead of January. Expedition ship Ortelius's world record of reaching the southernmost position ever recorded by a non-icebreaker in the Weddell Sea on February 5, 2026 could be another climate-related angle, or simply a shift in traveler interest toward farther-flung routes like its 28-day [Remote Weddell Sea Explorer Cruise](#).
- **Talk with us before flying over the Drake Passage.** Two of AdventureSmith's experts just returned from the White Continent in February, fresh with insight on [Antarctica air cruises](#). There are now more options than ever to fly over the Drake Passage. Learn why an operator's flight priority matters when booking an air cruise.
- **Helicopter access changes in the Arctic.** Ship-based helicopter operations come to [Iceland cruises](#) in 2026 with [Iceland Circumnavigation: Helicopters, Glaciers & Volcanoes](#) launching on July 27, 2026. Plus, 2026 is the last summer to access remote terrain on [Greenland cruises](#) via onboard helicopters due to new regulations (see [our expert's take on the experience](#), only available this final year on 199-guest [Ultramarine](#)).



- **Eclipse interest is peaking.** With more than 10 expedition ships positioning for the August 12, 2026 solar eclipse and another along a similar path in 2027, AdventureSmith has seen a 215% jump in interest in the topic over the past 90 days. More than 13 routes in both the Arctic or Mediterranean best showcase this experience. Learn more about each [solar eclipse cruise](#) route.
- **More multi-country [Mediterranean small ship cruise](#) options than ever.** AdventureSmith had 12 distinct small ship routes in 2024, with most focused on a single country; in 2026, options tally more than 40 thanks to even more expedition ships coming to the region. The new 154-guest [Douglas Mawson](#) is the latest, bringing 11 new itineraries to the region starting this April, many of them multi-country and some even including overland tours in Morocco. AdventureSmith's Director of Operations was on the ship's inaugural sailing in Australia this past November ([read his insights](#)).

The AdventureSmith Explorations team are experts in small-ship adventure cruise travel and are happy to provide perspective on a variety of topics. View the company's [spokesperson topics](#) and feel free to reach out with questions.

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