

INTERNET

Celebrity Cruises uses culinary-themed voyages to increase 2012 bookings

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By RACHEL LAMB

Celebrity Cruises will kick off its Excite the Senses Culinary Themed Cruises initiative that consists of eight food-themed voyages based on the company's new lifestyle book, "Excite the Senses."

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Luxury Daily

Eight different cruises March-September next year will each allow consumers to become more acquainted with Celebrity's culinary team through private tastings, demonstrations and events. The first themed cruise is a seven-night Caribbean cruise setting sail March 24.

"Celebrity is all about a modern luxury experience," said Scott Steenrod, associate vice president of food and beverage operations for Celebrity Cruises, Miami. "Our 'Excite the Senses' lifestyle book exemplifies modern luxury.

"It tells the story of how food and drink play an integral role in the enjoyment of life and in the simple act of celebrating," he said. "Food and beverage, as well as the celebration of precious time, of moments of relaxation and exploration of new tastes are integral parts of the Celebrity modern luxury vacation experience.

"We wanted to take the same approach to our 2012 culinary theme cruises, and what better way to do so than by bringing the book - and the talent behind it - to our guests in the form

of interactive onboard experiences.”

Celebrity targets affluent individuals ages 35-55 with an annual household income of \$100,000.

The company's vessels sail to Alaska, Australia, New Zealand, Bermuda, California, Canada, the Caribbean, New England, Hawaii, Europe, the Pacific Coast, Panama Canal, South America and the Galapagos Islands year-round.

Culinary cabaret

Celebrity’s Excite the Senses Culinary Theme Cruises are the brainchild of Jacques Van Staden, Celebrity’s master chef and vice president of culinary operations.

Either Mr. Von Staden or members of his team will lead the events on each cruise. Each cruise will also host an expert in the wine or spirits industry.

Each of the cruises will feature the culinary disciplines showcased in “Excite the Senses.”

The three disciplines are “captivate,” which is the dining portion, “accentuate,” which is the wine, spirits, coffee and tea portion and “illuminate,” which is the entertaining portion.

Activities will include dinners in specialty restaurants, cooking demonstrations using locally-sourced ingredients, wine tastings, home entertainment and tips for creative settings, according to Celebrity.

The screenshot displays the Celebrity Cruises website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links like 'Explore', 'Onboard Celebrity', 'Plan & Book', 'Specials', 'Captain's Club', and 'My Celebrity'. The main content area features a map of the Eastern Caribbean with a dashed line indicating the cruise route. Below the map, the text '12 Eastern Caribbean Cruise' is prominently displayed. A table lists the cruise ports: Cape Liberty, Bayonne, N.J.; Labadee, Haiti; San Juan, Puerto Rico; Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas; Philipsburg, St. Maarten; St. John's, Antigua; St. Croix, U.S.V.I.; Cape Liberty, Bayonne, N.J. Below the ports, there's a section for 'Departures and Staterooms' with a table showing prices for different stateroom categories: Inside (1,249.00 USD), Ocean View (1,609.00 USD), Veranda (1,709.00 USD), Concierge Class (2,009.00 USD), Aqua Class (2,209.00 USD), and Suite (3,699.00 USD). A 'Book Now' button is visible. At the bottom, there's a 'Cruise Details' section with tabs for 'Overview', 'The Ship', 'Shore & Land Excursions', and 'Add-ons'. The 'Cruise Details' section includes a 'What's included' list: Shipboard accommodations, Ocean transportation, Most meals, and Some beverages. There's also a 'Explore Itinerary' section with a table showing the cruise dates, ports, and activities.

Category	Price (USD)
Inside	1,249.00
Ocean View	1,609.00
Veranda	1,709.00
Concierge Class	2,009.00
Aqua Class	2,209.00
Suite	3,699.00

Cruise itinerary

The inaugural cruise is March 24, a roundtrip 7-night cruise from Miami, FL. The activities will focus on food, wine, mixology and home entertaining.

The second cruise is a 12-night Caribbean cruise roundtrip from Cape Liberty, NJ, setting sail April 10. The theme of the voyage is baking, pastries and sweets.

The following trip is May 5 from San Diego, CA to Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

The eight-night trip is usually a wine cruise, but this voyage will emphasize food, as well.

The next cruise is May 27, a seven-night cruise from Bermuda. Activities will be themed around culinary exploration and Bermuda culinary traditions.

The only June trip is on the 29 and is a seven-night Alaskan cruise that sets sail from Seattle, WA. Featured activities include local ingredients and food and wine pairing.

The next voyage is Aug. 12 from Amsterdam. Activities on the 12-night Baltic cruise will focus on modern and easy entertaining tips.

The last cruise leaves port Sept. 14 from Vancouver to San Diego. The eight-night wine cruise will focus on specialty wines from around the world, tea service, table settings and entertainment trips.

Depending on the vessel, duration and location of the cruise, prices for these trips range from \$669–\$5,549 per person, per night.

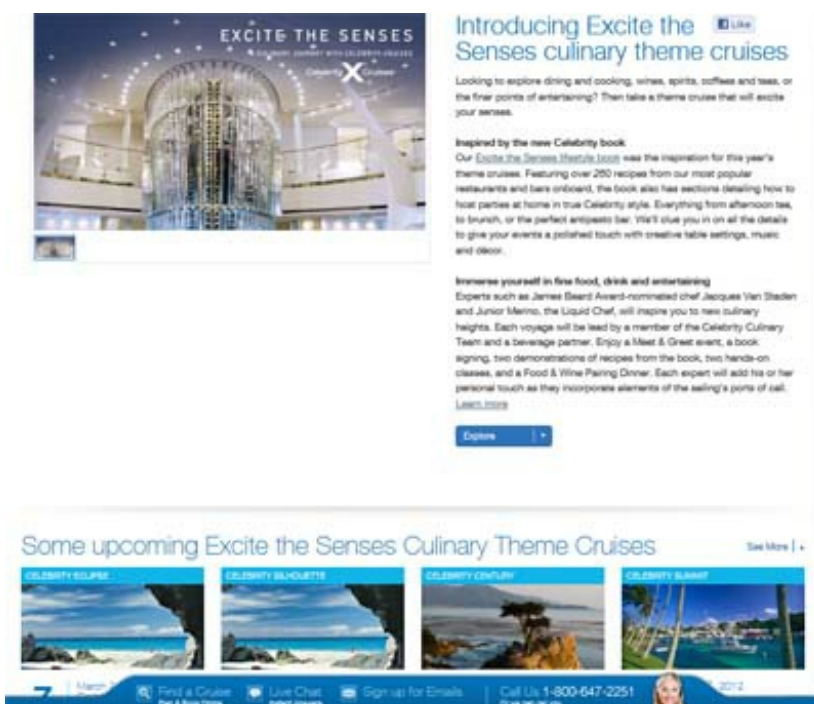
Setting sale

The Excite the Senses Culinary Theme Cruises is just one example of how the marketer is trying to attract guests.

For example, Celebrity's Silhouette vessel targeted affluent consumers by adding the cruise line's first Bulgari boutique on its maiden journey in July ([see story](#)).

Celebrity is marketing this new endeavor on its Web site found at

<http://www.celebritycruises.com/excitethesenses>.



Web site marketing

On the site, consumers can book reservations, learn about the inspiration behind the themes and buy the book.

“Celebrity's award-winning onboard culinary program continues to surprise vacationers

who are delighted by the innovative, fresh cuisine created by [Mr.] Van Staden and team,” Mr. Steenrod said.

“The new line-up of culinary theme cruises will offer a rare, behind-the-scenes-style opportunity for foodies to engage with the very minds behind our program,” he said.

“Through specially-offered activities and experiences, they will illuminate the culinary program overall, making more people aware of the quality and creativity of our offerings and disrupting misconceptions about cruise line cuisine in the process.”

Final Take

Rachel Lamb, associate reporter on Luxury Daily, New York

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