



## Windstar Cruises' New *Star Explorer* Debuts in the Mediterranean for Winter 2026/27



*Fresh itineraries, local flavor, and yacht-style cruising—Windstar's newest yacht invites guests to see Europe in a whole new light*

MIAMI, FL, June 30, 2025 – Next winter, [Windstar Cruises](#) is making the Mediterranean sparkle with the debut of its newest yacht, *Star Explorer*, and the return of its beloved winter sailings to Europe. Launching December 28, 2026, the 224-guest vessel marks the latest addition to Windstar's Star Class fleet and brings a stylish new chapter to Windstar's year-round European offerings—this time, with more immersive cultural experiences, off-season perks, and hidden harbors waiting to be discovered without the summer crowds.

Crafted for discovery, [Star Explorer](#) is perfectly built for exploring small ports and big stories. Her inaugural Local Season includes longer stays and local festivals that shine brighter in the off-season—from twinkling winter markets to colorful Venetian Carnevale celebrations. And with Windstar's signature yacht-style warmth and comfort, it's like having the Med all to yourself (with a chilled glass of wine in hand). Guests will enjoy overnight stays in Florence (Livorno), Barcelona, and Nice — plus lesser-traveled ports like Genoa, Catania, and Malaga. Seasonal highlights include Carnevale in Venice, Epiphany in Greece, and cozy winter markets lit by Mediterranean sunshine.

"Winter is when the Mediterranean slows down — and that's when Windstar steps in," says Jess Peterson, director of destination experience & itinerary planning. "With *Star Explorer*, we're

offering guests a chance to see these legendary places with fresh eyes and fewer crowds, all in the comfort of our newest yacht.”

## Early Booking Offer

Windstar Cruises invites guests to take advantage of a generous [Early Booking Offer](#) available through July 31, 2025. Travelers who book now will receive a complimentary All-Inclusive package, featuring Wi-Fi, unlimited select wine, beer and cocktails, and gratuities — a value of more than \$1,300 per stateroom on a 7-day cruise. Guests will also enjoy up to \$200 in onboard credit per stateroom, redeemable for curated shore excursions, rejuvenating treatments at World Spa by Windstar, and other onboard amenities.

For added value, Windstar has introduced its new **Pay Now, Save More** promotion. Those who pay in full at the time of booking will receive an additional 5% discount on cruise fare (including non-discountable fares). This promotion is only available with cruises booked using the Early Booking Offer.

## Itineraries include:

- ***Star Explorer’s Inaugural Voyage: [Southern Spain Winter Escapes](#)*** (9 nights) – Wander through Gaudí’s whimsical architecture in Barcelona and master the art of paella in a cozy home kitchen in sun-drenched Málaga. Soak up the warmth of Europe’s mildest winter city, explore Picasso’s legacy, and gaze across the sea to North Africa from the historic rock of Gibraltar. Guests have the option to extend the experience inland with the Madrid & Southern Spain Cruise Tour for the best of both worlds.
- ***[Europe’s Winter Riviera](#)*** (7 nights) – Indulge in the Riviera’s off-season charm with overnight stays in Florence (Livorno) and Barcelona. Enjoy unobstructed views of Renaissance masterpieces in Tuscany, discover Genoa’s golden-age grandeur, and sip sangria in Barcelona’s Gothic Quarter. With fewer tourists and more locals, this is “la dolce vita” at its finest.
- ***[Winter Italy & the Dalmatian Coast](#)*** (8 nights) – Step behind the scenes of Europe’s most iconic sites—think Michelangelo’s frescoes, Venice’s serene canals, and the ancient ruins of Pompeii—minus the crowds. From learning to make pizza in Sicily to watching winter lights shimmer in Dubrovnik, this journey blends history, hospitality, and holiday magic.
- ***Star Collector Voyages + optional Madrid Cruise Tours*** (13+ nights) – Dive deeper into Europe with extended itineraries that combine multiple voyages into one seamless adventure. Spend more time in more places with fewer repeated ports and rare perks like free daily laundry.

On board, *Star Explorer* offers 112 spacious suites, including two Horizon Owner’s Suites with expansive wraparound balconies ideal for catching winter sunrises. Guests will enjoy Windstar favorites like the Yacht Club Café, the signature Marina deck, and the line’s famously friendly crew delivering personalized service that feels like home—only better.

This season marks Windstar's fourth winter season sailing the Mediterranean—yet with the addition of *Star Explorer*, the experience is reimagined and elevated for returning guests and first-timers alike.

To plan a small ship cruise with Windstar, [book online here](#), contact a travel advisor, reach out to Windstar Cruises by phone at 866-258-7245, or request a call by a Windstar vacation planner. For more information on *Star Explorer*'s development, visit [here](#).

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Photos: Press [images here](#).

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***About Windstar Cruises:***

For four decades, Windstar Cruises has been reimagining small-ship cruising with a distinctive blend of relaxed luxury and genuine connection to the world's most captivating destinations. From its origins with motor sailing yachts tailored for upscale yet casual travel, Windstar has grown into a diverse fleet of three Star Class all-suite yachts and three Wind Class sailing yachts, offering voyages that are both intimate and inspiring. Two highly anticipated new yachts, *Star Seeker* and *Star Explorer*, set to debut in December 2025 and 2026, expand the fleet to eight yachts accommodating 150-350 guests. Windstar's legendary Wind Class sailing yachts are also undergoing a meticulous two-phase redesign to be completed by 2027. Windstar yachts sail to more than 330 ports across Europe, the Caribbean, Costa Rica and the Panama Canal, Alaska, Canada and New England, Japan, the South Pacific, and Asia. Unlike most cruise lines, Windstar sails year-round in the Mediterranean and Tahiti, offering different destination experiences seasonally. Each Windstar voyage is designed to immerse guests in authentic cultural experiences, all while delivering the comfort, service, and style that define the Windstar difference.

Windstar Cruises is proud to be part of the Xanterra Travel Collection®, a distinguished group of global hospitality and travel companies with a legacy spanning over a hundred years. Xanterra operates iconic national parks, including Grand Canyon, Yellowstone, Glacier, and Death Valley. The Xanterra Travel Collection® is owned by The Anschutz Corporation, the ultimate owner of the Broadmoor, Sea Island, and entertainment giant AEG, Anschutz Entertainment.