



USA TODAY LIFETM SUNDAY



You can be sporty
AND stylish, 3U

JCPENNEY



Travel for 2014
is free-flowing, 4U

KENNETH KEIFER, ISTOCKPHOTO, VIA GETTY IMAGES

CALENDAR

Plan your entertainment for the week with these highlights and pop-culture milestones.

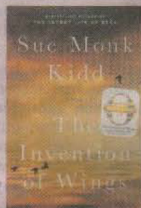
MONDAY

WATCH: January is officially here with the second half of the premiere of **'The Bachelor'** (ABC, 8 p.m. ET/PT). The 18th season follows Juan Pablo Galavis.



CRAIG SJODIN, ABC

TUESDAY



READ: Sue Monk Kidd's **'The Secret Life of Bees'** comes out today. See more about the latest

release from the author of **'The Secret Life of Bees'** on **7U**.

WEDNESDAY



WATCH:

Awards season is in full swing, so get ready for a barrage of statuettes.

AP



JOHAN PERSSON

Jude Law is starring now in a West End production of Shakespeare's **Henry V**. Live theater "is what made me want to become an actor," he says.

THEATER

Law also explores new territory in the film **Dom Hemingway**.



Cruise through the Amazon's dazzling diversity

Fran Golden

Special for USA TODAY

Cruising the legendary Amazon River and its tributaries brings you into one of the most unusual and biodiverse places on the planet: a tropical rainforest region where 1 in 10 known species on Earth reside.

Vying with the Nile as the longest river in the world, the Amazon flows more than 4,000 miles, from high in the Andes to the Atlantic.

You can't cruise the whole river, however.

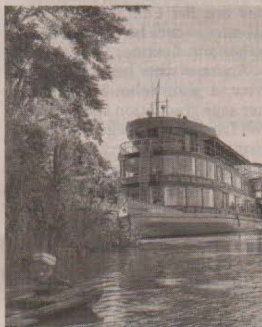
Big ships, including select vessels from the fleets of Princess, Holland America, Silversea, Oceania and Crystal, usually sail from January to March from the Atlantic to Manaus, capital of Brazil's Amazonas state. These large ships tend to stay on the main river because of their size, but shore excursions, some of them overnight, go deeper into the rainforest.

Small expedition ships — such as those operated by Lindblad Expeditions, in partnership with National Geographic, and Aqua Expeditions — cruise year-round from Iquitos or Nauta in Peru's Upper Amazon, about 2,400 miles from the Atlantic. Passengers on these small-ship cruises head by skiff into the Pacaya-Samiria Reserve, a flooded forest covering millions of acres at the headwaters of the Amazon basin.

Here are our 10 favorite things about an Amazon River cruise:



Flocks of egrets are a common sight for travelers who choose to explore the Amazon from the deck of a small cruiser.



Passengers can hop off the Delfin II and on to a skiff.

PINK DOLPHINS. Dolphins are easy to spot in the Amazon, especially where creeks or lakes and rivers meet. These playful, freshwater mammals show off various shades of gray and pink and can grow to up to 8 feet long.

MONKEYS. They swing on vines, follow one another across tree limbs and screech from treetops. These creatures are visible or audible in an incredible variety, including squirrel, capuchin, howler and tamarin monkeys.

BIRDS. It will come as no surprise that the Amazon is nirvana for bird watchers, but it's still a shock to see entire flocks of kingfishers,



PHOTOS BY FRAN GOLDEN

It may be a jungle out there, but in here — the cabins onboard the Delfin II — it's spacious, comfortable and well-appointed.

egrets, parrots, macaws, vultures and hawks. Look for such species as the plum-throated catinga, whose vivid blue color makes it look plastic.

VILLAGES. In tiny communities along the Amazon, villagers fish (sometimes from dugout canoes), farm and sometimes live without electricity. Locals greet visitors with smiles, and you may find yourself followed by children. Some villagers produce souvenirs such as colorful baskets and rustic blowguns.

CREEPY-CRAWLERS. From anacondas that tread shallow waters and caimans whose red eyes are visi-

ble by night to tarantulas and toads the size of rabbits, the jungle is full of creepy surprises.

SLOTHS. Maybe it's their cute, white faces, but among the 600 or so species of mammals in the Amazon, the sight of a three-toed sloth lounging on a tree incites more than the usual giddiness.

EXOTIC FRUITS AND FLORA. Guides share wisdom from jungle doctors while you taste exotic fruits. Try vitamin C-rich camu camu, the tomato-like cocona and spiky melon-like annona. Watch for astonishing plant life, including strangling figs, stilt-like walking trees and giant water lilies.