

MAGAZINE OF THE YEAR

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THE NEW CRUISE GASTRONOMIC JOURNEYS

**BEST FOR FOOD LOVERS
AND SINGLES**

Clinking glasses of fizz on the terrace of Marco Pierre White's The White Room restaurant as a fiery sun drops into an empty seascape is a highlight of an Adriatic cruise on Ventura.

Cleverly, P&O's Brit-friendly, sociable ships have raced ahead of the demand for speciality restaurants by inviting "food heroes" such as Marco to front their own eateries and host masterclasses, demos and Q&As on board. Wine buff Olly Smith does tasting sessions at The Glass House, and Michelin-starred chef Atul Kochhar holds masterclasses at East, his slick, pan-Asian restaurant.

There's a real buzz as Atul smiles a hello to the dozen foodies perched on stools at his open kitchen, and begins marinating sea bass fillets, ready to be steamed with pickled plums. Lightest-ever tempura is fried and sampled.

Tips for perfect Vietnamese salad



Dine on P&O's East restaurant, and take a masterclass with top chef Atul Kochhar



dressings are given (use palm sugar). Then, much to the delight of hopefully loitering partners, they're invited to join a sociable lunch that includes all the dishes demonstrated and is served with Indian wine (a revelation!).

It's a great way to strike up friendships with like-minded passengers, particularly if you're travelling solo. And next year, when a James Martin cookery school launches on P&O's Britannia (see opposite page),

events will become even more interactive.

A seven-night fly/Mediterranean cruise on Ventura costs from £599pp including an inside cabin, all meals and entertainment. Call 0843-3730111, see pocruises.co.uk or visit your local travel agent. The cookery masterclass by Atul Kochhar is from an additional £75.



THE BEST ASIAN RIVER CRUISES

THIS MONTH (October)

Aqua Mekong's floor-to-ceiling windows frame stunning Vietnamese and Cambodian panoramas, while authentic Asian style flows through its 20 suites, spa treatments and gourmet meals. From £4,500pp for an eight-night Vietnam tour, including a four-night full-board cruise with excursions and flights, scottdunn.com

FROM DECEMBER

Explore the rivers of Myanmar on the Sanctuary Ananda, a sleek 20-suite ship. You'll visit Buddhist temples, remote jungles and ancient towns almost to the Indian border. Ten days from £2,680pp full-board, including a two-night B&B stay in Yangon and flights, ampersandtravel.com

FROM JANUARY

Travel India's Ganges River from Kolkata to Jaipur on the sumptuous Ganges Voyager I (above). Designed in boutique hotel style, it has 28 suites with balconies. Hotel stays let you visit iconic sights such as The Taj Mahal too. From £3,626pp full-board with activities and flights, Travel Indochina, travelindochina.co.uk >>