

# CLIA DESTINATION FACTSHEET

## EXOTICS RIVER CRUISING (AMERICAS AND AFRICA)



Chobe National Park in Botswana, Africa

### BEST TIME TO GO/WEATHER

**Amazon** sailings operate year-round, though there are two distinct seasons: the low (or dry) season from June to November (it is hotter, though as this is a rainforest climate, there will still be showers), and the high (rainy) season from December to May.

On the **Mississippi**, the lower section of the river (New Orleans-Memphis section) has a longer season from February to June and October to December (missing the height of summer, which is hot and humid). Sailings on the **Upper Mississippi** (St Louis-Minneapolis and Chicago) run from July to October. Spring and autumn weather is regarded as ideal to cruise, especially in Louisiana and Mississippi.

Summer is the best time to sail on the **Columbia and Snake** rivers with cruises running from April to November.

On the **Chobe** River, cruises run year-round though the high season runs from April to November, whereas on the **Nile** cruises operate during the winter months from October to April as the summer is considered too hot.



Ecuador Amazon Rainforest

### 10 REASONS TO CRUISE HERE

**Authentic experiences** – fish for piranhas in the Amazon and watch wallowing hippos in Lake Kariba or trace the Civil Rights Movement in America's Deep South and marvel at the ancient wonders of Tutankhamun's tomb.

**Antiquities and traditions** – roll back thousands of years to explore temples and pharaonic tombs dotted along the Nile, delve into the culture of Native American tribes along America's Columbia and Snake rivers or indigenous communities on the banks of the Amazon and Chobe rivers.

**In the footsteps of adventurers** – trace the route of American explorers Lewis and Clark who sailed the Columbia River in search of the Pacific Ocean, and Howard Carter's famous discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb in Egypt's Valley of the Kings.

**All that jazz** – along with rock 'n' roll, blues, country and gospel, there's a rich tapestry of genres and musical heritage, particularly around New Orleans and Memphis, that lends Mississippi cruising its own distinctive harmony.

**Key landmarks** – Luxor's Karnak Temple on the banks of the Nile, Elvis Presley's legendary home Graceland in Memphis and the city's renowned Sun Studio, and the National Military Park at Vicksburg, Mississippi, which played a pivotal role during the American Civil War.

**Culinary flavours** – sailings to savour along the Mississippi thanks to the distinctive Creole and Cajun cuisine of Louisiana, particularly New Orleans and Baton Rouge; plus Arabian flatbreads, dips and fish specialities of the Nile, and the wineries of the Snake and Colombia rivers.

**Into the wild** – from the tropical rainforest of the Amazon to the stark desert beauty of Egypt and the striking scenery of the Colombia and Snake rivers, which includes dramatic Hells Canyon, America's deepest gorge.

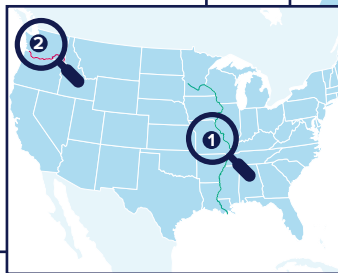
**Final frontiers** – Fort Clatsop park in Oregon containing a replica of the fort where Lewis and Clark spent the winter of 1805 during their expedition to discover the Pacific Ocean, and the path of the Nile from where the Sahara Desert stretches eastwards to Libya.

**Natural spectacles** – look out for flocks of brightly-coloured macaws swooping through the jungle on the Ecuadorian arm of the Amazon; prides of hunting lions on the banks of the Chobe River; and predatory American alligators in the swampy marshes of the Mississippi River.

**Bucket list wonders** – hot-air ballooning over the Valley of the Kings at dawn, exhilarating heli-flip rides over Victoria Falls, climbing to the top of Cape Town's Table Mountain, and gazing at the incredible Inca ruins of Machu Picchu.

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### Mississippi

**New Orleans** – this Louisiana gem, its atmospheric French Quarter of narrow streets lined with classical buildings laced with distinctive cast-iron balconies, sways to its own unique rhythm of music and gastronomy underpinned by a distinctive Cajun and Creole culture.

**Memphis** – inextricably linked to the King of Rock and Roll, thanks to Elvis’s legendary home Graceland, but also Martin Luther King who led the birth of America’s Civil Rights Movement, documented in the museum opened on the site where he was assassinated in 1968.

**Civil War sites** – the battlefields from this bitter conflict are scattered throughout this region, with Vicksburg sitting at its heart, and sites at Baton Rouge and Port Hudson.

**Antebellum mansions** – these grand, gracious estates hark back to an era of great wealth that flowed from vast cotton plantations built on slavery. Notable mansions include Rosedown Plantation, Oak Alley and Nottoway, while the working Frogmore Plantation is open for tours.



### Columbia & Snake

**Oregon Trail** – this 2,000-mile former wagon trail from Missouri to Oregon, followed by early American pioneers, cuts through the US Northwest, along the Columbia and Snake rivers bringing with it a wealth of history.

**Astoria** – as America’s oldest settlement west of the Rockies, this city is big on heritage and history with its mix of fishing village and Victoriana vibes, thanks to characterful architecture and rustic roots.

**Native American culture** – trace the Native American tribes that originally inhabited this region, as portrayed in interpretive centres at the Port of Kalama and Columbia River Gorge and Sacajawea Centre near Pendleton in Oregon.

**Portland** – Oregon’s largest city is blessed with a glorious scenic setting, crowned by snow-capped Mount Hood on the horizon, and brims with quirky communities full of culture and character where micro-breweries and coffee houses add to the homely appeal.



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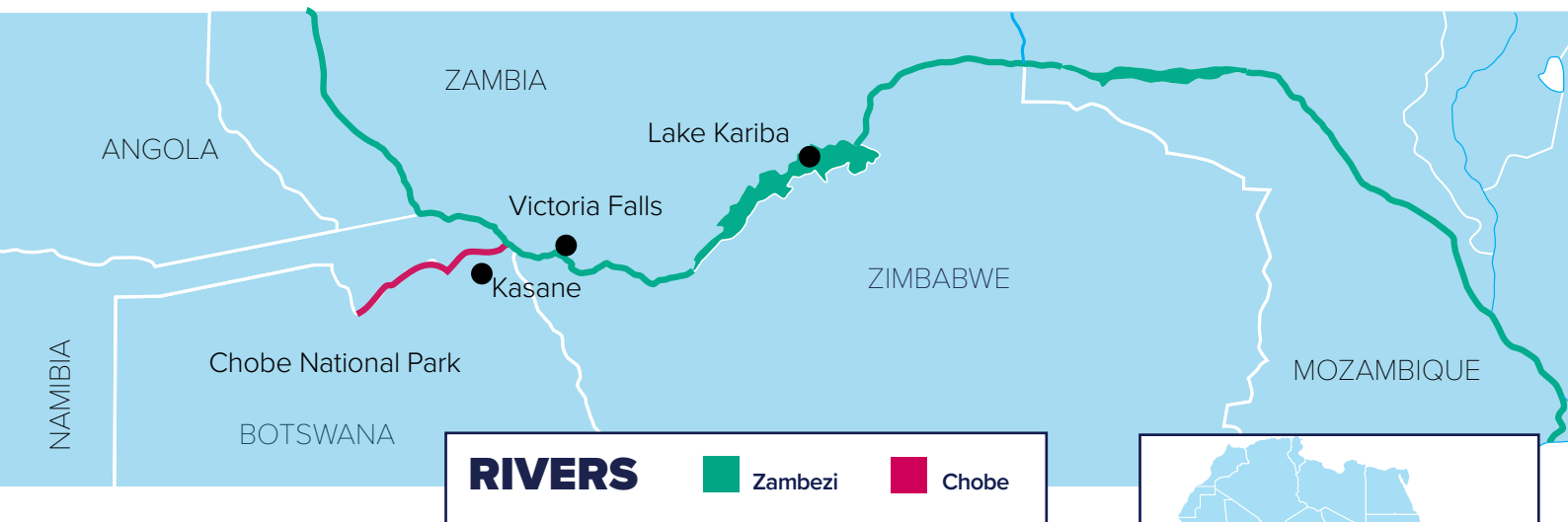
### Amazon

**Rainforest draws** – delve into the jungle on walks and hikes to spy sloths, chattering monkeys and colourful toucans or ride the backwaters on small skiffs to spot pink dolphins, turtles and fearsome caiman.

**Peru & Ecuador** – river sailings concentrate on the smaller, quieter stretches of the Amazon in these two countries, with most sailings in Peru and the Pacaya Samiria National Reserve, while in Ecuador they tend to concentrate on the Yasuni National Park

**Macchu Picchu** – the spectacular location of this ancient Inca citadel, perched high up in the Andes Mountains, is Peru's most celebrated sight and a natural add-on to Amazon cruises.

**Iquitos** – this gateway to the northern Amazon is famed as the world's largest city that can only be reached by plane or boat and is a jumping-off point for cruises on the Peruvian Amazon. Don't miss the floating market of Belen.



### Chobe & Zambezi

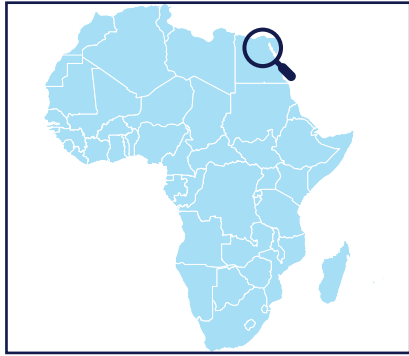
**Chobe National Park** – cruises resemble floating safaris along the Chobe River in Botswana where guests can take tender boats to get closer to wildlife. Other options include bird-watching and fishing or going ashore for game drives and visiting nearby villages.

**Lake Kariba** – sitting between Zambia and Zimbabwe, this is the world's largest artificial lake and another wildlife-spotting haven where you can cruise through its unique landscape of drowned trees.

**Victoria Falls** – in a region awash with natural marvels, these iconic waterfalls on the border of Zimbabwe and Zambia, known as “the smoke that thunders”, add an iconic twist to Chobe cruises.

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### Nile

**Luxor** – this is where Ancient Egypt comes to life, its breath-taking temples of Karnak and Luxor a constant reminder of the rule of the pharaohs. It is also the starting and finishing point for most Nile cruises.

**Valley of the Kings** – the dusty valley surrounded by craggy sandstone cliffs, a short drive from Luxor, is famously the burial place of the Boy King Tutankhamun, one of 63 tombs unearthed here so far.

**Aswan** – usually the most southerly point on Nile cruises, the city is where the vast Aswan Dam is located and the colonial Old Cataract Hotel, where the so-called Queen of Crime Agatha Christie wrote her famous thriller *Death on the Nile*.

**Cairo** – the frenetic Egyptian capital is often paired with Nile cruises, with passengers flown between here and Luxor. Visit the pyramids, the city's giant Khan el-Khalili Bazaar and new Grand Egyptian Museum holding more than 100,000 artifacts including Tutankhamun's priceless death mask.



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Zambezi River: Victoria Falls, Zambia

### 10 THINGS TO KNOW BEFORE YOU GO:

- 1. Mix & match** – add on stays in nearby landmark cities, including Cairo for Nile cruises, New Orleans on Mississippi itineraries, Cape Town for Chobe sailings and Vancouver on Snake and Colombia itineraries.
- 2. Float your boat** – take your pick from sleek modern river ships or traditional-style paddle-steamers on the Mississippi, Columbia and Snake rivers, intimate rustic craft on the Amazon and historic riverboats on the Nile.
- 3. Get river savvy** – weigh up the appeal of the Ecuadorian or Peruvian Amazon; examine different options for the Lower, Middle or Upper Mississippi River along with tributaries: the Ohio River into Kentucky, Illinois River to Chicago and Tennessee River to Chattanooga.
- 4. Take a history lesson** – gen up on the Native Indian Culture of America's North West and the story of Lewis and Clark's expedition; check out the cultural back story of New Orleans and Memphis; and read up on America's bitter Civil War.
- 5. Remember binoculars** – these are a must for wildlife watching on the Amazon and Chobe rivers, but also for spotting bald eagles on the Mississippi River, and wandering camels and birdlife along the Nile.
- 6. Jabs and repellent** – vital for sailings though the African Bush, the Amazon jungle and Egypt. It's worth taking insect repellent on Mississippi cruises as the hot, humid conditions can bring out mosquitoes.
- 7. Differing durations** – most options are one-week, but longer cruises on the upper and lower sections of the Mississippi can take two weeks, while Chobe sailings tend to be only three or four nights as are some Amazon cruises.
- 8. Get packing** – take layers for the changeable climate along the Columbia and Snake rivers which varies from rainy to desert-like; waterproofs for the steamy rainforest conditions of the Amazon; cool clothes for the sultry climate of the Mississippi; and conservative dress for Egypt with its predominant Muslim culture.
- 9. Dial up the wow factor** – by adding Machu Picchu or the Galapagos Islands to Amazon sailings, and Victoria Falls or Kruger National Park stays to Chobe sailings.
- 10. Wilderness warning** – if you're travelling into the African Bush or Amazon jungle on light aircraft, remember to check luggage limits as these could be lower than international flights. Don't bank on being able to stock up on forgotten items as supplies will be limited.