



COMMONWEALTH
CLUB TRAVEL

With Distinguished Guest
Lecturer **Dr. Nigella Hillgarth**

SOUTH AMERICA ODYSSEY

Cultural & Natural Discoveries on a Voyage
from the Caribbean to the Amazon River

October 12 - 24, 2025



The spectacular Kaieteur Falls (five times
the height of Niagara Falls), Guyana

Aboard the 76-Stateroom Expedition Cruise Ship **VEGA**

DR. NIGELLA HILLGARTH



Dr. Nigella Hillgarth is a research scientist and Affiliate Professor at the Center for Ecosystem Sentinels in the Biology Department of the University of Washington. Dr. Hillgarth served as the Executive Director of the Birch Aquarium, the outreach arm of Scripps

Institution of Oceanography, from 2002 to 2014. Among other achievements, during her tenure, Nigella developed one of the first major exhibits on climate change in the US. Prior to her work at Birch Aquarium, she served as Executive Director of the Tracy Aviary in Salt Lake City, the largest bird sanctuary in the country, where she collaborated on conservation efforts for marine birds in the Galapagos islands, Peru and Argentina. From 2014 to 2017, Dr. Hillgarth served as President and Chief Executive Officer of the New England Aquarium, where she raised the profile of the Aquarium's global conservation and research work by founding the Anderson Cabot Center for Ocean Life, as well as developing a vision for the future of the Aquarium and the surrounding Boston waterfront. In 2019, Dr. Hillgarth was the Climate Art Fellow for the Climate Science Alliance, and worked on visualizations of ocean-atmosphere interactions and climate with the National Science Foundation Center for Aerosol Impacts on Chemistry of the Environment at Scripps Institution of Oceanography. An avid photographer of the natural world, Nigella received a Bachelor's degree in Zoology from Oxford University in the UK, as well as a PhD in Evolutionary Biology. She has conducted research on behavioral ecology and evolution of birds, including penguins, in many parts of the world, including Britain, India, Thailand, the Arctic, South America, and the United States.

Dear Club Traveler,

Join us for a unique cruise expedition that will explore parts of South America that are seldom offered to travelers. Yet the places we will visit present extraordinary natural and cultural attractions.

Aboard the *Vega*, one of the newest and finest expedition cruise ships in the world, which features just 76 staterooms and suites that accommodate a maximum of 152 guests, we will sail from Barbados in the Caribbean to Belém, the old city of Brazil that is situated at the mouth of the mighty Amazon River. We will call at tropical shores of beautiful scenery in Trinidad, Guyana, Suriname, French Guiana, and Brazil's lower Amazon River. What makes this cruise especially enticing is the perfect mix of natural and cultural wonders we will discover.

For example, in Guyana we will take an air excursion to the magnificent Kaieteur National Park, which, among other attractions, includes the very impressive Kaieteur Falls. Set in a tropical scenery, Kaieteur is the world's largest single-drop waterfall. In the riverine Paramaribo, the lovely capital of Suriname and a UNESCO World Heritage Site, we will discover the city's characteristic colonial architecture of the Dutch who controlled the country for more than 250 years and made it the largest Dutch territory in the Western world. Rising some 2,000 miles west in the Andes Mountains, the mighty Amazon empties into the Atlantic, and encompasses an amazing system of tributaries that harbor one of the world's richest biodiversity. We will spend three days exploring the lower Amazon River region, with its narrow channels, abundant species of wildlife, and isolated communities.

Joining us will be **Dr. Nigella Hillgarth** who will share her expertise and experience in a series of lectures and discussions throughout the voyage along with a team of resident expedition leaders.

South America Odyssey presents a rare opportunity to explore a remote corner of the Earth where the unspoiled riches of the places we will explore are sure to leave an indelible impression.

Warm regards,



Kristina Nemeth
Travel Director



Ver-o-Peso market, Belém, Brazil

THE **NEW** 152-GUEST EXPEDITION CRUISE SHIP **VEGA**



Oceanview Stateroom



Balcony Suite



Swan Restaurant



Swimming Pool



Observation Lounge

Built in Finland and launched in July 2022, Swan Hellenic's *Vega* is a new-generation expedition cruise ship. Although at 10,250 tons the ship is large enough to accommodate more than 250 passengers, *Vega* will accommodate a maximum of 152 guests in 76 spacious staterooms and balcony suites. The low guest density results in one of the most generous indoor and outdoor space-to-guest ratios among cruise ships.

Featuring the latest advances in technology and engineering, *Vega* is among the world's first environmentally responsible ships. Equipped with hybrid engines and a unique water filtration system, *Vega* leaves a minimal footprint. For cruising in Polar regions, the ship meets the stringent requirements of the new Polar Code with its high PC5 Category A ice-strengthened hull and other advanced features. A computer-controlled Dynamic Positioning System allows the ship to maintain position without anchoring. Operated by a complement of 120 experienced European officers and international crew members, *Vega* will

carry a fleet of Zodiacs, versatile landing boats, and kayaks. Powerful stabilizers provide a smooth ride.

Vega's interior spaces exude sophisticated elegance, with most rooms opening to panoramic views of the sea. All staterooms and suites face outside and are equipped with private facilities, climate control, TV, Wi-Fi and USB connections, and other amenities. Of the ship's 76 staterooms, 60 have balconies. Public areas include a spacious observation lounge equipped with state-of-the-art facilities for lectures and presentations; a club lounge; a restaurant that accommodates all guests at one seating; an outdoor café/bar that surrounds the heated swimming pool; a wellness area with gym, spa, and sauna with an adjoining outdoor jacuzzi; library; beauty salon; and an infirmary that is attended by a full-time doctor and nurse. The ship also features expansive open-deck areas. Two elevators connect all decks. Attentive service is provided on a 24-hour basis. The outstanding cuisine is complemented by fine wines at lunch and dinner.

For further information and reservations, please call **Commonwealth Club Travel** at (415) 597-6720 or e-mail travel@commonwealthclub.org

ITINERARY



Sunday, October 12, 2025

USA/BARBADOS

Depart the United States for Barbados, in the Caribbean's Lesser Antilles. Upon arrival, transfer to the port to embark on the *Vega*. Sail in the early evening. (D)

Monday, October 13

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad

After a morning at sea, arrive in Port of Spain, Trinidad's cosmopolitan capital. Because of its close proximity to the mainland of South America, Trinidad has an interesting diversity of wildlife. After lunch aboard, drive to the Caroni Nature Reserve, where we will board boats to better observe the rich variety of birds and the beautiful landscape while sailing the peaceful lagoons. Among the bird species we will observe is the colorful Scarlet Ibis, which nests here. (B,L,D)

Tuesday, October 14

AT SEA

Enjoy the ship's excellent facilities and attend lectures as the *Vega* cruises along the northeast coast of South America. (B,L,D)



Blue and yellow macaw in Brazil's Amazon Rainforest.



Squirrel monkey, Amazon Rainforest, Brazil

Wednesday, October 15

GEORGETOWN & KAIETEUR FALLS, Guyana

South America's only English-speaking country is densely forested Amazon River and offers natural wonders. The ship will dock in Georgetown, the country's capital, which is located at the point where the Demerara River flows into the Atlantic. Georgetown's architecture reflects the country's colonial history, especially the Dutch, who arrived in the 16th century, and the British, who followed them at the end of the 18th century. During our stay, we will take an air excursion to the Kaieteur National Park to visit the stunning Kaieteur Falls, which plunges 822 feet to the bottom of a gorge. The height of the Kaieteur is five times the height of Niagara Falls. Located in the pristine rainforest, the park is also known for its rich biodiversity. (B,L,D)

Thursday, October 16

AT SEA

Enjoy the ship's excellent facilities and attend lectures as the *Vega* cruises along the northeast coast of South America. (B,L,D)



Dutch colonial architecture, Paramaribo, Suriname



Caroni Nature Sanctuary, Trinidad

Friday, October 17

PARAMARIBO, Suriname

Originally populated by Arawaks and other ethnic groups more than 2,000 years ago, Europeans arrived in Suriname in 1499, when Amerigo Vespucci sailed along the country's coast. In 1651, British planters founded a permanent settlement, which they exchanged with the Dutch for their village of New Amsterdam, which became Manhattan. Suriname remained a Dutch colony until 1954, when it became a self-governing state, gaining full independence in 1975. The long Dutch presence is evident in the architecture of Paramaribo, the capital, which is located on the banks of the Suriname River, declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Beautiful buildings from the Dutch colonial era line squares and many streets. Explore the city, including Palm Garden, a leafy park created in 1682 and home to more than 1,000 palms; Fort Zeelandia, built in the 17th century, now housing the Stichting Surinaams Museum, which exhibits colonial-era artifacts; and the fascinating Central Market. We will also drive to the nearby Commewijne District, an attractive area crisscrossed with creeks and rivers, known for its former plantations and rich wildlife. (B,L,D)

Saturday, October 18

ÎLES DE SALUT, French Guiana

Vega will anchor off the three-island archipelago of Îles de Salut, the site of the notorious French penal colony, which was brought to the world's attention by Henri Charrière in his autobiography "Papillon." One of the prisoners himself, he described the inhumane treatment of the prisoners along with his attempt to escape. Using the ship's Zodiacs, we will land at one of the islands to visit the old prison buildings that are still standing. (B,L,D)

Sunday, October 19

AT SEA

Relax aboard, enjoy the ship's facilities and attend lectures as *Vega* cruises toward the Amazon River. (B,L,D)

Monday, October 20 - Wednesday, October 22

AMAZON RIVER, Brazil

Early Monday morning, the ship will enter the storied Amazon,

where for three days we will explore this exotic world and its rich wildlife. The ship will venture close to shore, allowing us to experience details of river life and the surrounding rainforest. Guided by naturalists aboard the ship's Zodiac boats, we will venture into a labyrinth of tributaries for treks through the jungle and visits to isolated villages. One of the highlights is the ship's navigation through the narrow Breves Strait. Sailing close to the jungle-lined banks, we will penetrate the "green wall" of the forest and look in the canopy overhead for Macaws, howler monkeys, and other captivating wildlife and plants. (B,L,D)

Thursday, October 23

BELÉM, Brazil

Disembark in the morning in Belém, the lovely tropical city that is situated at the mouth of the Amazon, 80 miles inland from the sea. Founded by Portuguese explorers in 1616, Belém prospered for the next 200 years as a center for the spice trade, sending vanilla, cinnamon, cassia, and cacao to Europe. It was also a major center of the rubber trade, and many colonial mansions, chapels, and convents from its golden age still grace the Old Town. Our morning exploration of Belém will include the outdoor market of Ver-o-Peso; Forte do Castelo, a fortress built in the 17th century by the Portuguese; and the Emílio Goeldi Park, where the gardens feature more than 1,500 species of plants. Spend the afternoon at leisure for independent activities. In the evening, enjoy a farewell dinner. Overnight will be at the *Hilton Hotel*. (B,L,D)

Friday, October 24

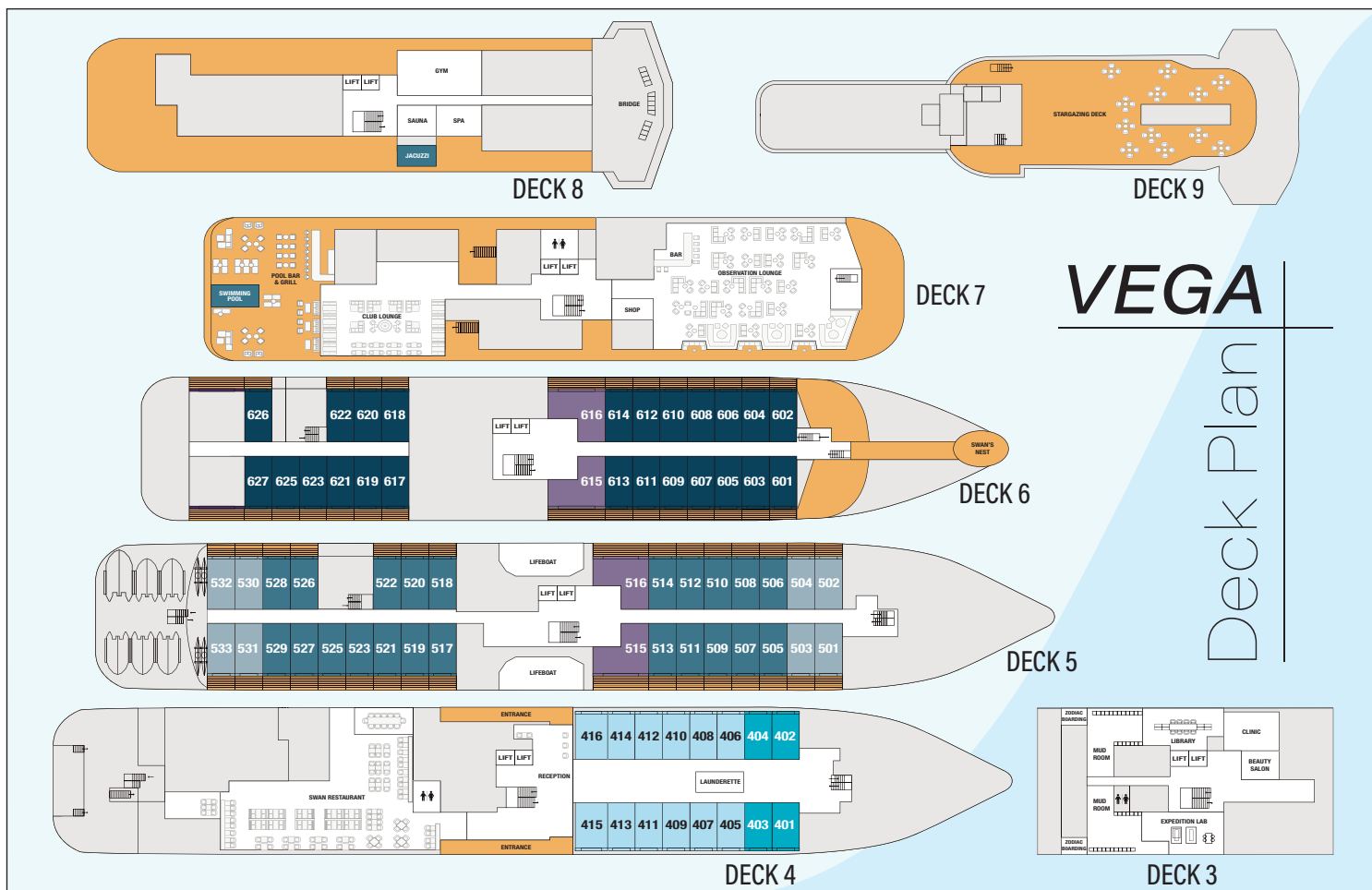
BELÉM/USA

Transfer to the airport for the return flight home. (B)

OPTIONAL CRUISE EXTENSION TO SALVADOR

Extend the cruise from Belém to Salvador, Brazil's historic city.

Sailing from Belém on October 23, the extension will end in Salvador on October 31. Calls include São Luís, Fortaleza, and Recife. The rates for the 8-night extension start at \$ 4,390 per person. Please inquire for details.



All accommodations aboard *Vega* are spacious staterooms and balcony suites. They are elegantly decorated, face outside, affording sea views, and include a queen-size bed that can be arranged as two twin beds, a spacious bathroom, mini-refrigerator, safe, ample closet space, climate control, telephone, TV, Wi-Fi, and USB connections, as well as other amenities.

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	RATES PER PERSON / DOUBLE OCCUPANCY
E	Oceanview staterooms with two large oval windows. 206 sq. ft. Deck 4. Staterooms 401–404.	\$ 9,990
D	Oceanview staterooms with two large oval windows. 206 sq. ft. Deck 4. Staterooms 405–416.	\$ 10,290
C	Suites with balcony & living room area. 300 sq. ft. Deck 5. Suites 501–504, 530–533.	\$ 11,690
B	Suites with balcony & living room area. 300 sq. ft. Deck 5. Suites 505–514, 517–529.	\$ 12,090
A	Suites with balcony and living room area. 300 sq. ft. Deck 6. Suites 601–614, 617–627.	\$ 12,690
AA	Suites with large balcony, separate bedroom & living room. 440 sq. ft. Decks 5 & 6. Suites 515, 516, 615 & 616.	\$ 17,490
FOR SOLO TRAVELER A limited number of cabins are available for single occupants in Category D at 120% of the per-person, double occupancy rate, and in Categories C, B, and A at 150% of the per-person, double occupancy rate.		

LOYALTY REWARD PROGRAM

Travel on this cruise program and enjoy savings of **\$400 to \$900** per person on your next voyage with **COMMONWEALTH CLUB TRAVEL** and **THALASSA JOURNEYS** aboard a Swan Hellenic ship. Savings are determined by the stateroom category booked and is applicable when you reserve your trip within 30 days of the completion date of **SOUTH AMERICA ODYSSEY**

This saving cannot be combined with other offers and is subject to change.

PROGRAM INCLUSIONS

The rates are all-inclusive. There are no hidden costs and no additional charges such as shore excursions or embarkation and port charges. Other than the international airfare and expenses of a personal nature, all else is included. Specifically, the rates include:

- One night at the *Hilton Hotel* (or similar) in Belém.
- Cruise aboard the *Vega*, as described in the itinerary.
- Group airport/hotel/pier transfers at designated times, and handling of luggage on arrival and departure dates.
- Lectures and discussions with Dr. Nigella Hillgarth and the onboard team of experts.
- Complete program of tours and excursions as mentioned in the itinerary with professional English-speaking guides.
- All meals aboard the ship, with a selection of wines, beer and soft drinks during lunch and dinner.
- Welcome and farewell cocktail receptions aboard the ship hosted by the captain.
- Open bar with select alcoholic beverages.
- Coffee, including espresso and cappuccino, tea and soft drinks throughout the day and night.
- 24-hour room service.
- Gratuities to the ship's crew, guides, porters and drivers.
- Basic Wi-Fi aboard the ship.
- The services of an experienced Thalassa Journeys Trip Director.
- All local taxes and service charges, including port and embarkation taxes.
- Complete pre-departure material.

NOT INCLUDED: International airfare; travel insurance; expenses of a personal nature; any items not mentioned in the itinerary or the above inclusions.



Stabroek Market, Georgetown,
Guyana

REGISTRATION

CCWA 25V-1012

I (we) wish to reserve _____ place(s) on ***SOUTH AMERICA ODYSSEY***, October 12 - 24, 2025 with Commonwealth Club World Affairs. I/We understand that a deposit is \$1,500.00 per person is required. Enclosed is my check for \$_____ (\$1,500 per person) made payable to Thalassa Journeys LLC. Alternatively, indicate below if you prefer to make your deposit via credit card.

☐ I/We wish to pay the deposit by credit card and authorize Thalassa Journeys to contact us for credit card details. I understand that final payment is due ninety (90) days prior to departure and is payable by check or credit card.

To reserve your place on tour, please call **Commonwealth Club World Affairs at (415) 597-6720** or e-mail **travel@commonwealthclub.org**, or fill out the following form and send to:

**Commonwealth Club World Affairs
110 The Embarcadero
San Francisco, CA 94105**

We require membership in the Commonwealth Club World Affairs to travel with us.

Please check one of the following options:

☐ I am a current member of the Commonwealth Club World Affairs.

☐ I will visit commonwealthclub.org/membership to sign up for a membership.

PLEASE SELECT STATEROOM CATEGORY IN ORDER OF PREFERENCE

1st choice ☐ _____ 2nd choice ☐ _____ 3rd choice ☐ _____

☐ Double Occupancy

☐ Single Occupancy (Inquire for rates)

PREFERRED BED CONFIGURATION Double ☐ _____ Twin ☐ _____

DR./MR./MRS./MS.

FIRST

LAST

DR./MR./MRS./MS.

FIRST

LAST

ADDRESS

CITY/STATE/ZIP

TELEPHONE (DAY)

(EVENING)

EMAIL

Each participant must sign below: I/We have read the "General Information" section and agree to its terms.

SIGNATURE

DATE

SIGNATURE

DATE

GENERAL INFORMATION

PAYMENT SCHEDULE: A deposit of \$1,500 per person is required to reserve your space on the tour. Final payment is due 90 days prior to departure. Payment can be made by personal check or charged to a credit card.

CANCELLATIONS & REFUNDS: All cancellations are subject to a \$300 per person administrative fee. Cancellations received 71-90 days prior to departure will be assessed a penalty equal to 50% of the total program cost per person. Cancellations received within 70 days of departure are subject to 100% cancellation penalties. Requests for cancellations must be made in writing. No refunds will be made for any part of this program in which you choose not to participate.

INSURANCE: We strongly recommend the purchase of trip cancellation insurance, which is available for coverage of expenses in conjunction with cancellation due to illness or accident. Baggage insurance is also recommended. In the event that you must cancel your participation in a travel program, trip cancellation insurance may be the only source of reimbursement.

ITINERARY: The itinerary, accommodations and arrangements are subject to change at the discretion of Thalassa Journeys.

RESPONSIBILITY: Please read carefully the following terms and conditions, which constitute the sole, legally enforceable agreements between the traveler and Thalassa Journeys. Thalassa Journeys acts solely as agents for the traveler with respect to all transportation, hotel and other tour arrangements. In that capacity, we exercise all reasonable care possible to ensure the traveler's safety and satisfaction, but, we neither assume nor bear any responsibility or liability for any injury, death, damage, loss, accident, delay or irregularity arising in connection with the services of any ship, airplane, train, automobile, motor coach, carriage or other conveyance, or the actions of any third-party, involved in carrying the traveler or in affecting these tours. We are not responsible for damages, additional expenses, or any other losses due to cancellation, delay or other changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, civil disturbances, acts or threats of terrorism, travel warnings or bans, termination or suspension of war risks or other carrier insurance, quarantine, acts of God or other causes beyond our control. All such losses must be borne by the traveler, and tour rates provide for arrangements only for the time stated. In the event of cancellation, delay or rescheduling mandated by any of the aforesaid causes beyond our control, the traveler shall have the option of accepting in lieu of the original tour such rescheduled tour or other substituted tour(s) as may be offered by us, or else, receiving a refund of as much of such advance tour expenditures as we are able to recover on the traveler's behalf from carriers, third-party tour vendors, etc., but, we shall not have any obligation or liability to the traveler beyond the foregoing. We reserve the right to make alterations to the tour's itinerary and to substitute hotels, transportation methods, or lecturers if this is required. We reserve the right to cancel, delay, or reschedule any tour prior to departure, and, so long as this is not due to any of the aforesaid causes beyond our control, the traveler shall be entitled to a full refund of all monies paid to that point if he/she so desires. No refund shall be made for any unused portion of any tour. By forwarding their deposit(s), the traveler certifies that he/she and/or their dependents, minors or others covered thereby do not have any mental, physical or other condition of disability that could create a hazard for them or other travelers. We reserve the right to decline to accept or to decline to retain any person as a member of any tour should such person's health, condition or actions adversely affect or threaten the welfare or safety of other travelers or impede the tour. Baggage or valuables brought on the tour shall be transported, handled or stored at the traveler's risk entirely, and, we shall bear no liability or responsibility for any damage or other loss thereto. Resolution of any disputes arising hereunder shall be affected exclusively in the state or federal courts presiding in Florida, pursuant to applicable Florida law.

RATES: Tour costs are based upon current airfares, tariffs, and currency values. While we do everything possible to maintain the listed prices, they are subject to change.

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Join Dr. Nigella Hillgarth on **SOUTH AMERICA ODYSSEY**



Suriname River, Suriname