

New Celebrity ship is a culinary wonder

Flavors, experiences and more to be unveiled on *Ascent*

Celebrity Cruises® ranks high among a competitive list of ocean cruise lines. It laps its guests in luxury and style and makes every voyage unforgettable.

Its vessels rise from the seas, making every trip as relaxing as it is comforting. It's about to get better. The cruise line soon will unleash its newest ship, *Celebrity Ascent*, the fourth vessel in the line's revolutionary *Edge Series*.

Ascent will delight travelers with redesigned restaurants, a new immersive dinner experience, expanded food and cocktail menus, a new whiskey-tasting experience and plant-based multi-course dinners.

World-renowned chef Daniel Boulud, Celebrity's Global Culinary Ambassador, will bring his highly acclaimed restaurant concept at sea to *Ascent*. *Le Voyage* will feature a design that creates a stunning scene, featuring a new chandelier, captivating neutrals, plush banquet seating and gold tones.

Guests will experience a global menu that offers dishes from around the world. For the ultimate culinary experience, groups can reserve the Chef's Table – a private, six-seat dining room that treats guests to a multicourse tasting dinner with wine pairings.

Eden is a window of the world, featuring three levels of sensory experiences. The venue offers a casual lunch café, a cocktail bar, entertainment space, an outdoor terrace and a signature



SHAKEN NOT STIRRED – The Martini Bar will boast an expanded menu of cocktails on *Celebrity Ascent*. Image: Celebrity.

restaurant – a culinary journey rooted in untouched, fresh and seasonal ingredients. The seven-course, plant-based tasting menu is a coup for vegans. Menu highlights include Golden Beet-Tomato Ceviche, Ajoblanco Panna Cotta, Roasted and Glazed Celeriac Steak and Dry Rose Petals Masala Curry.

Edge Series ships also present a new dining-room concept, expanding offerings from one main dining room to four main dining restaurants – each offering a unique style of cuisine and signature dishes. Travelers will continue to enjoy

the option for new American cuisine and Cosmopolitan; Mediterranean at Cyprus; French contemporary at Normandie; and Italian at Tuscan. Combined, the four main dining eateries offer more than 84 dishes from which to choose.

Specialty dining has become a staple among cruise lines for more than two decades. *Ascent* will feature the immersive and high-tech *Le Petit Chef* dinner experience. Each dinner features a multicourse menu that is brought to life by animations of a tiny chef who tells a

story behind each dish.

Fine Cut Steakhouse is a favorite among Celebrity guests. Recognized for its impressive selection of prime meats, from dry-aged filets to Tomahawk steaks, it will offer a new dish: Lemon Poached Lobster Tail with melted leeks, shiitake mushrooms, lobster ravioli and house-made beurre Blanc sauce.

Aqua Class guests will enjoy the opportunity to dine al fresco for breakfast or dinner in *Blu's* new outdoor-terrace space.

Celebrity also is popular for its spirit-tasting program, which includes partnerships with Jack Daniel's and Macallan. For *Ascent*, the brand will delight the most experienced beverage connoisseur through its partnership with WhistlePig Whiskey. A pair of hand-selected barrels made exclusively for Celebrity Cruises will be featured. Available at Craft Social, guests can enjoy a Special Bespoke Barrel Aged 12 Years and Special Single Barrel Aged 10 Years, either as a-la-carte options or as part of a tasting flight that also features WhistlePig Piggyback 100-proof bourbon.

The Grand Plaza will feature its signature wrap-around *Martini Bar* that will boast an expanded new menu, offering classic martinis, fruit-infused creations and tantalizing dessert martinis.

Ascent will make its debut this November. It should be a tasty experience.

Study: Raising speed limits not worth risk

AAA research finds it has minimal effect on saving time

Motorists who desire quicker commutes might consider higher speed limits to be a boon. But is it the safest choice? Does it put pedestrians, cyclists and others at greater risk?

A new study by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety found higher speed limits to be a danger. They have minimal effect on saving time and increasing traffic flow but could lead to more crashes, injuries and deaths.

The AAA Foundation's research results varied across all 12 roadway sites examined. All had new posted speed limits – six raised and six lowered – and included various road types. Raising posted speed limits increased crashes on two interstate highways. But lowering the posted speed limits resulted in fewer crashes.

The likelihood of speed-limit violations increased after lowering posted speed limits, suggesting the need for better public-awareness education tied to these changes. AAA urges transportation officials to apply a "holistic" approach when setting or changing posted speed limits and prioritizing safety over speed and capacity.

"Our study analyzed before-and-after data on a dozen roadways that raised or lowered posted speed limits and found no one-size-fits-all answer regarding the impact of these changes," said Dr. David Yang, president and executive director of



SLOW DOWN – High speed limits doesn't necessarily equal quicker travel times. Image: Condor 36. Adobe Stock.

the AAA Foundation. "However, it is critical to consider the safety implications when local transportation authorities contemplate making changes with posted speed limits."

Speeding is a critical factor in vehicle crashes nationwide. National Highway Safety Administration reports there were more than 42,000 traffic deaths in 2021 and again in 2022 – the highest levels in

16 years. It also reported that speeding played a factor in nearly 29% of the fatalities in 2021 and 27% in 2022.

Key findings in the Foundation's study:

- Raising posted speed limits was associated with increased crash frequencies and rates for two of the three interstate highways examined.
- Lowering posted speed limits was

associated with decreased crash frequencies and rates for one of the two principal arterials examined.

- Changes in travel times were small in response to raised and lowered speed limits.

AAA recommends that changes in posted speed limits should consider range factors, including but not limited to the type of road, surrounding land use and historical-crash data. AAA supports automated-speed enforcement, but programs must be carefully implemented to maintain community support, prioritize equity and consistently drive improved safety.

"The movement in statehouses to raise speed limits is happening across the country in at least eight states this year," said Jennifer Ryan, director of state relations for AAA. "But the benefits are overrated, and the risks are understated. Increasing speed limits does not always yield the positive results envisioned by traffic planners."

The study is the third phase of the AAA Foundation research examining the effect of posted speed-limit changes on safety. In the first study, traffic engineers were asked how posted speed limits are set and what factors they should consider in changing them. In the second phase, crash testing revealed that small speed increases have a severe and potentially deadly effect on crash outcomes.

Wiper blades should look sharp

Don't cut the importance of maintaining them

Windshield wiper blades should be sharp, crisp and well maintained. They're too important to ignore.

Streaking and failure to clear debris from the windshield could become hazardous. It's difficult to drive if you can't see where you are going. That's why drivers shouldn't ignore their importance and follow steps to keep them properly working.

A primary step is to refrain from running them over dry windshields. Wipers weren't made to work on dry surfaces. Always use windshield fluid or make sure the glass is wet, and don't turn off the vehicle before turning off the wipers. They could finish their swipes over dry glass once the car is restarted.

Heavy snow and ice make wipers stick. Remove the snow and scrape and/or defrost the ice completely before using the wipers. Frozen wipers could break or the motor from which they are powered could ruin and prove costly.

It's wise to consistently clean the blades. Caked dirt and debris could limit their effectiveness. The wipers likely will leave streaks and reduce the driver's vision. Clean the windshield and the wipers during stops to refuel. Run a finger along the blades to clear the debris and use a cloth to remove stuck fragments.

A forgotten step might be cleaning the bottom of the windshield. Wipers push dirt each time they cross the windshield. Dirt could



WIPE OUT – Have your vehicle's windshield wipers changed if they are showing signs of wear. *Image: malkovkosta. Adobe Stock.*

accumulate where the wipers rest. Drivers should take time to clear dirt or snow from the bottom of the windshield. It avoids streaking and scratching.

Replace the blades regularly. It's recommended to have them changed twice a year. This can be a costly task that many drivers might ignore but have them replaced immediately if it's becoming more difficult to see the road. It's a task car owners can do by themselves.

And purchase the proper wiper blades. Check both blades; they

might be different lengths that work congruently to clean the whole windshield. Read the owner's manual to see which blades the manufacturer recommends. There is an assortment from which to choose. Some are designed for winter weather, with sturdier rubber composites. They're more expensive but might be a wise choice for drivers who live in areas that receive significant snowfall.

AAA members can visit AAA.com/AutoRepair to find a nearby AAA Approved Auto Repair facility.

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