

# HEADWATERS OF THE MISSISSIPPI

## POST CRUISE NORTHBOUND CITY STAY PACKAGE

DATES: SEPTEMBER 26, 2016 – SEPTEMBER 28, 2016

### CITY STAY PACKAGE SUMMARY:

A once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to walk across the Mississippi River headwaters at Lake Itasca for the perfect finale to your Mighty Mississippi voyage! Embark on an unforgettable journey that spans the entire length of the mighty Mississippi River! This distinctively inclusive Post-Cruise City Stay Package brings guests to the birthplace of the Mississippi River, Lake Itasca. Glacier-created and spring-replenished, Lake Itasca is a breathtaking body of water that feeds our nation's largest river. Enjoy a full-day adventure on shore and on the water of the lake, local cuisine and expert guides to lead the way. This inclusive package includes a two-night hotel stay, transportation, local meals and knowledgeable guides.

### CITY STAY PACKAGE INCLUSIONS:

- *American Queen* Premium Post-Cruise Tour of Minneapolis and St. Paul
- Transfer from the *American Queen*
- Two Night Stay at the Courtyard Marriott in St. Cloud, Minnesota
- Breakfast (2), Lunch (1), Dinner (1)
- Local Dinner at Jack and Jim's Restaurant
- Luxury Motorcoach tour from St. Cloud to Itasca State Park (Headwaters of the Mississippi River)
- Guided Boat Tour of Lake Itasca onboard the Chester Charles II
- Tour of Itasca State Park Narrated by Park Ranger
- Lunch at the Historic Douglas Lodge
- Narrated St. Cloud City Tour
- Airport to Hotel Transfer

### THREE DAY CITY STAY PACKAGE ITINERARY:

#### DAY ONE:

6:30 AM – 7:15 AM – Enjoy breakfast onboard the *American Queen*  
7:30 AM – Begin a guided St. Paul, Minnesota City Tour. Time for lunch on your own will be included in this tour.  
4:00 PM – Arrive at the Courtyard by Marriott, St. Cloud, Minnesota  
5:30 PM – Depart for a delicious dinner of local cuisine at Jack and Jim's Restaurant (A local favorite!)

#### DAY TWO:

6:30 AM – 7:30 AM – Full American Breakfast in hotel  
7:30 AM – Motorcoach departs for Itasca State Park and the Mississippi Headwaters  
10:00 AM – Arrive at Itasca State Park  
10:30 AM – Guided tour on the waters of Lake Itasca onboard the *Chester Charles II* Paddleboat  
12:30 AM – Lunch at the historic Douglas Lodge's *Headwaters Café*  
1:30 PM – Motorcoach tour of Itasca State park with expert narration by an Itasca Park Ranger including several stops for picturesque photo stops at Preachers Grove, Peace Pipe Vista and the Mississippi Headwaters  
3:00 PM – Once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to walk across the Mississippi River!  
4:30 PM – Depart Itasca State Park  
6:30 PM – Arrive back at the Courtyard Marriott Hotel to enjoy dinner and St. Cloud at your leisure

#### DAY THREE:

6:30 AM – 8:00 AM – Full American Breakfast in hotel  
8:30 AM – Depart for a guided City Tour of St. Cloud, Minnesota (2 Hour Tour)  
12:00 PM – Arrive at the Minneapolis/St. Paul International Airport

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#### DAY 1

Welcome to the beautiful city of St. Paul, Minnesota! Here, we will conclude our two-week journey up the entire length of the Mississippi River with an unforgettable trip to its origin, Lake Itasca! After enjoying breakfast onboard the American Queen, embark on a tour of Minneapolis and St. Paul, led by a knowledgeable local historian. Discover what makes these twin cities so unique, including a stop to enjoy free time for lunch on your own. As the tour comes to an end, we'll continue north to the Courtyard by Marriott in St. Cloud, Minnesota. Upon arrival, unpack and stretch your legs before departing for Jack and Jim's Restaurant – a local staple! Sit back and enjoy a true Minnesota experience not to be missed. Try a "fish fry" (a Minnesota tradition) or enjoy steak, fresh seafood, ribs, and salad bar as the perfect way to kick off this final leg of your Mississippi river adventure!

#### DAY 2

Today, we head north to the headwaters of the Mighty Mississippi River! Fuel up for a day of exploration with an included full American breakfast at the hotel, beginning at 6:30 AM. Then, meet at 7:30 as our luxury motorcoach begins the journey to Lake Itasca.

Sit back and soak in the beautiful scenery on this two-and-a-half hour ride through northern Minnesota. Watch as farmlands stretch far into the distance, disappearing into the horizon, giving way to massive old-growth pine tree forests that are native to this region.

As we arrive at Itasca State Park, we'll make a stop at the Jacob V. Brower Visitor Center, Museum and Giftshop. This is the perfect opportunity to stretch your legs, use the restroom, and get a sampling of what the rest of the day holds.

The adventure continues on the *Chester Charles II*, a 141-passenger vessel that will transport our group across the waters of Lake Itasca. Listen as our expert guide explains the importance of this freshwater lake that feeds into one of America's most historic and powerful rivers, the Mighty Mississippi.

Along the way, our knowledgeable captain will make certain to bring our attention to native wildlife, including ospreys, whitetail deer, blue herons, beavers, and otters. The most impressive sight, though, is seeing the bald eagle (US national emblem) and the common loon (Minnesota state bird) as both can be seen swooping through the sky.

As we return to dry land, our journey continues at the Douglas Lodge. This rustic lodge, built of tall timbers and natural materials, is home to the Headwaters Café, where we will enjoy a delicious lunch. Savor the flavors of northern Minnesota cuisine, as selections of trout, walleye, fresh berries, and grains overflow the menu.

After our meal, an Itasca State Park ranger will join us aboard the motorcoach for an informative driving tour of the park. Enjoy the ride as we explore Lake Itasca, discovering the historical significance and changes within the park through the years. Brief stops at Preachers Grove and Peace Pipe Vista afford picturesque views of the lake through the 100-year-old-pines and hardwood trees, including Minnesota's largest white pine tree, measuring a staggering 55 feet in diameter!

As the informative tour of Itasca State Park comes to an end, a final stop brings us to the Mississippi Headwaters—the beginning of this vital river that winds through 2,552 miles of the United States, completing its journey at the Gulf of Mexico. Visit the Mary Gibbs Mississippi Headwaters Center to discover more about this area. Browse the gift shop to choose a souvenir to remember our adventure and enjoy some ice cream at the café!

For those who would like to, we invite you to walk the short path to see where the Mississippi begins its journey. (*The walk to the headwaters is about 600 feet along a level, stone road.*) Dip your toes in the water, soak in the sun and walk across the Mississippi River, America's largest and most influential river! Before leaving, make sure to check out the massive Mississippi River map outlining all the connected river towns, as a reminder of its sheer size.

On our trek back to St. Cloud, we will travel through the Brainerd Lakes region, teeming with views of beautiful freshwater lakes and wildlife. Sit back and relax until we arrive back at the Courtyard by Marriott hotel in St. Cloud where you can enjoy the rest of the evening on your own in St. Cloud for a relaxing conclusion to our truly adventurous day!

#### DAY 3

Today, enjoy an included full American breakfast before departing for the day. Our journey continues as we tour the historic town of St. Cloud, Minnesota with a knowledgeable local historian guiding the way. This two-hour tour will weave through the history, customs and architecture of the town before heading back down south towards the Minneapolis/St. Paul International Airport.

(Estimated arrival at the airport is 12:00 PM. Please book flights after 2:00 PM)