

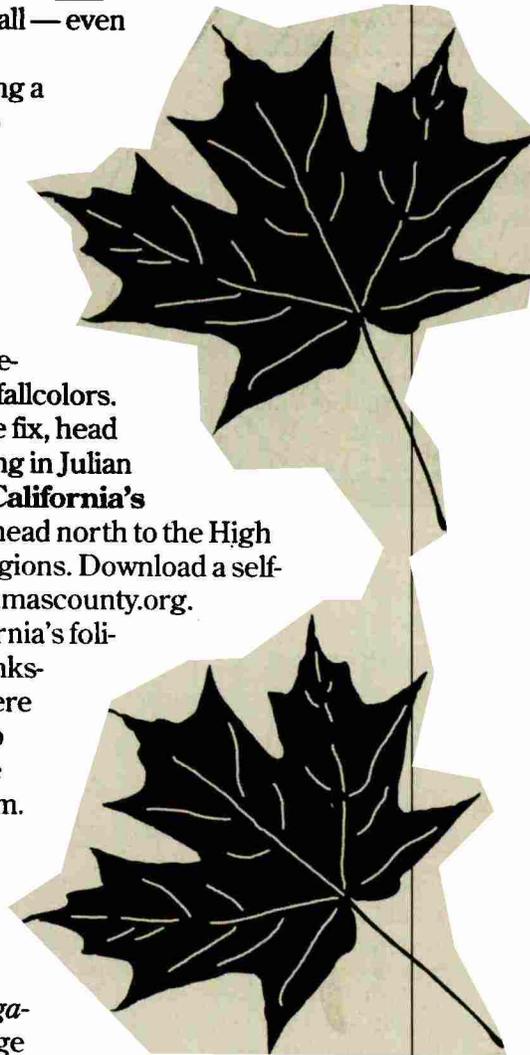
Latitudes and Attitude ALISON DAROSA

On the trail of fall foliage

Today is the first day of autumn. Reluctantly, we're packing away our Boogie Boards and beach chairs — and maybe even thinking about leaf peeping. It is the season, after all — even in California.

Foliage experts are predicting a colorful season. Here's how to monitor conditions at favorite foliage spots:

- **The U.S. Forest Service** has a foliage hotline, (800) 354-4595, pointing out prime viewing spots all across the country. Get online color reports at www.fs.fed.us/news/fallcolors.
- For a close-to-home foliage fix, head east to the Cuyamacas, stopping in Julian for a slice of apple pie. To see **California's** most spectacular color show, head north to the High Sierra and Shasta/Cascade regions. Download a self-guided foliage tour at www.plumascounty.org. Depending on weather, California's foliage season can stretch to Thanksgiving. Get an overview of where and when to go, plus the scoop on fall festivals throughout the state at www.visitcalifornia.com.
- For an overall look at what's most colorful in **New England**, check out the interactive map at www.yankeefoliage.com. The site, sponsored by *Yankee Magazine*, provides links to fall foliage sites for Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island.
- Leaves are turning in **Virginia**, and viewing will be good through early November. Check out photos and get the lowdown on foliage festivals at www.fallinvirginia.org. Call the state's foliage hot-



line at (800) 424-5683.

• Foliage peaks in **Pennsylvania** in October. If you can't go, visit virtually: This snazzy Web site has live Web cams set up at several scenic spots. Sign on at www.fallinpa.com, or call the foliage hotline at (800) 847-4872.

CRUISING FOR VALUE

One-way "repositioning" cruises – as companies move their fleets from the summer season in Europe, Alaska and Canada to winter seasons in the Caribbean, Mexico, Hawaii and elsewhere – are among the very best cruise deals travelers can find. Prices can be less than \$50 per person, per day. And it's not too late to indulge: The fall repositioning season runs into December.

This summer, an all-time high number of big-line cruise ships operated from European ports. Most of those ships are moving to warm-weather zones for the winter season – which means an all-time high number of trans-Atlantic repositioning cruises are being offered.

Such cruises are generally longer than direct trans-Atlantic sailings: Most take 12 to 15 days. And they're different from conventional cruises: Ships have extended periods of "days at sea," rather than the standard port-every-day formula. Ships do, however, stop at a few ports of call. Depending on the itinerary, they might include Barcelona, Lisbon, Madeira, the Canary Islands, the Azores, Bermuda, the Virgin Islands or the Bahamas.

Here are several examples of what's available:

Norwegian Cruise

Line's Norwegian Jewel:

Barcelona to Miami, 15 nights, departing Oct. 20. Fares start at \$899 per person, based on double occupancy.

Carnival's Freedom: Rome (Civitavecchia) to Miami, two weeks, departing Oct. 28. Fares start at \$1,099 per person, based on double occupancy.

Costa Cruises Fortuna: Savona, Italy, to Fort Lauderdale, 15 nights, departing Nov. 2. Fares start at \$599 per person, based on double occupancy.

Royal Caribbean's Navigator of the Seas: Southampton to Fort Lauderdale, 13 nights, departing Nov. 5. Fares start at \$699 per person, based on double occupancy.

Celebrity's Millennium: Barcelona to Fort Lauderdale,



14 nights, departing on Dec. 2. Fares start at \$949 per person, based on double occupancy.

Celebrity's Galaxy: Barcelona to San Juan, 14 nights, departing Dec. 8, with stops in North Africa, the Canary Islands, Barbados, Antigua, and St. Maarten. Fares start at \$749 per person, based on double occupancy.

"Starting" prices, are, of course, for inside cabins on a lower deck. "Outside" cabins start at \$200 to \$300 per person more, and "balcony" cabins run \$300 to \$500 per person above the low-end price. Taxes and port charges add more to the tab. And don't forget, you'll need to buy a one-way air ticket if you're doing a repositioning cruise. Cruise lines often offer reasonably priced one-way air as an add-on to the cruise price.

Ask your travel agent about cabin upgrades, shipboard credits, and other incentives being offered on certain cruises. If you don't have a travel agent who specializes in cruising, find one near you at www.cruising.org.

And finally, start thinking now about spring repositioning cruises.

READER'S TIP

Nova Levante, Italy: "My husband and I just returned from a wonderful week in the Dolomites of Northern Italy. We stayed at the Dolomiten Wellness Resort Engel in the small village of Nova Levante. Our bedroom was modern and spacious with a balcony and view of tree-covered hills. There was an elegant dining room, lounges, plenty of outside seating, a spa, gym and pool.

"Room and full board for two was 180 euros (\$246) a night, which included an extensive buffet breakfast and lunch, a four-course dinner and afternoon tea with an assortment of cakes. All meals were delicious and service impeccable. Every day after breakfast we took a gondola or chair lift up a different mountain, where we hiked for a few hours before walking down. (You can return by gondola.) After dinner it was fun to explore the village and participate in some of the activities."

Details: www.hotel-engel.com, 011-39-0471-61-3131.

— DIANA GRIGGS, POINT LOMA



Got a tip? A favorite inn or getaway? We'll share your scoop with readers. Send your tips to alison.darosa@uniontrib.com or mail to Latitudes and Attitude, P.O. Box 120191, San Diego, CA 92112. Please include prices, Web sites, addresses and phone numbers for the places you write about. And be sure to include your own daytime phone number. **Alison DaRosa** can be reached at (619) 293-2036.

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