



## CHATTING WITH JACQUES PÉPIN

By Ruksana Hussain, Oceania Cruises Blog ~ November 2022

It's with gratitude that we sat down with legendary chef Jacques Pépin, delving into his love for culture, cuisine, and of course, travel.

Jacques Pépin is a hospitality legend whose name is synonymous with food, wine, and travel. A former columnist for the *New York Times* and Julia Child's co-star on PBS, he's earned global accolades throughout his esteemed career. He's also taken his culinary endeavors from land to sea as Oceania Cruises' Executive Culinary Director, where passengers can indulge in an award-winning culinary experience, aptly named The Finest Cuisine at Sea®. Visitors can also dine at his specialty restaurant *Jacques* aboard the cruise line's *Marina* and *Riviera* ships – from duck *foie gras* and baked *escargots* to *bouillabaisse*, he brings an elevated culinary experience to cruising that we're certainly thankful for.

### **Q: What are your favorite places to visit and what make them special?**

In Malaga, on the coast of Spain, there is a restaurant called *Intero* where they bring piles and piles of fresh fish. They have enormous grills where they cook the fish and shellfish and bring them to the dining room saying, '*Mira, mira!*' (Look, look!). You pick what looks good to you and you pile up your plate. It's extremely fresh, inexpensive and there's good wine to go with it. It's an ideal spot for me. I love all the warm spots of the Mediterranean – Provence, Spain, Italy and Portugal.

**Q: Why is travel an integral part of your life?**

I got my first taste of travel by immigrating to the United States in 1959 and I really haven't stopped since. I've been back to Europe many, many times, but I've also traveled everywhere from West Africa to Russia to Spain, as well as all the different states. When I travel, I always learn and expand my mind. It's good to see how other people live, what other people think, and it's always good to learn about people and appreciate them.

**Q: What do you love about cruising?**

My favourite parts of cruising are relaxing, the diversity of the cuisine and all the activities. The quality and care that we get on Oceania is unmatched.

**Q: How might the onboard culinary offerings for Oceania change based on current trends?**

The trends are important, but if you buy the best possible ingredients of the highest quality possible, and so long as you have talented chefs on board, and you present everything with care and love, then that is what's important.

**Q: How do you pick restaurants when you go on vacation?**

To start, I ask friends if they have any recommendations. Then I always ask local people I happen to meet along my way. It's really the best option to live an authentic experience and immerse yourself in the culture of the destination.

**Q: Is there a dish you've tried in your travels that you crave?**

I will always go back to the food of small bistros in the French countryside, serving food that I had as a child such as snails, frog legs and amazing bread and butter.

**Q: What makes a memorable food experience for you when you travel?**

The memorable part is to share it with loved ones. There is no good food that you eat by yourself.



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