

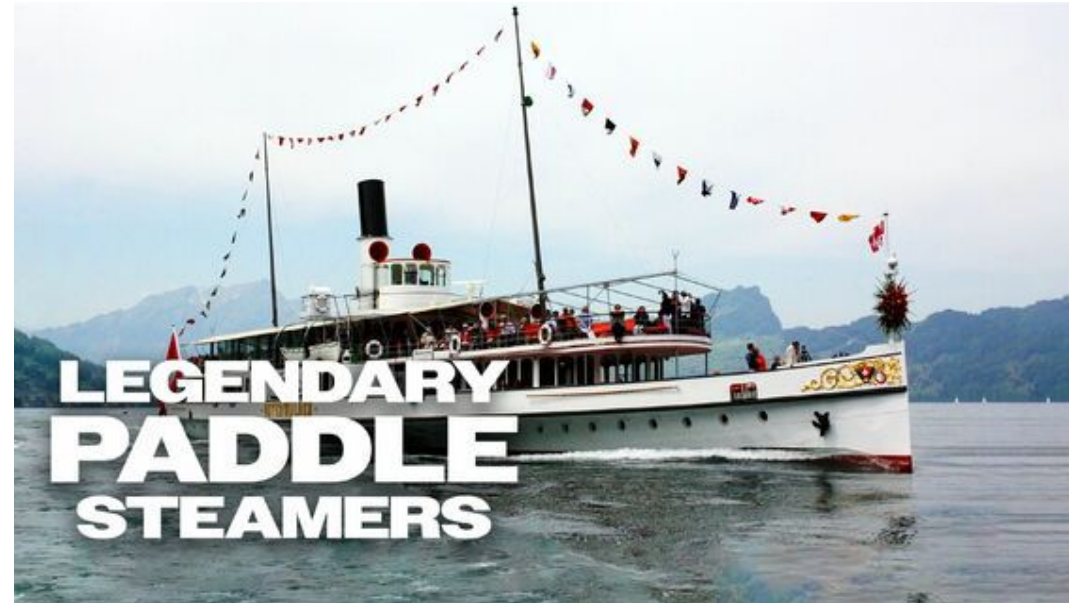
PEOPLE . PLACES

LEGENDARY PADDLE STEAMERS

5 × 52' (ENG), 5 × 45 (GER)

Documentary series about five of the most beautiful and oldest paddle steamers of the world.

Stories, traditions and biographies can be found on the banks of the most beautiful rivers and lakes. The series accompanies steamers en route to harbours. On board, we meet people, look over the railing and together with the ships, draw to a halt. The voyage on board one of the most beautiful and oldest paddle steamers of the world is one of great beauty: ancient picturesque rivers and lakes compete with the nostalgic technical miracles created by man.



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1. Following the Scottish West Coast with Waverley

Rugged coasts, untouched nature and the rough climate of the Atlantic characterize the landscape on the west coast of Scotland. In the sounds and lochs of the Scottish West, Waverley, the last seaworthy passenger steamship in the world, appears once a year. The side-wheel steamer was built in 1947 to carry out short ferry passages on the Clyde River. Today, Waverley circumnavigates almost all of Great Britain. The impressive ship was sold to the Paddle Steamer Preservation Society in 1974 for the symbolic price of one English pound. Since then, she starts her season off the Western Isles in Scotland every year in May.

2. Crossing Lake Mjøsa in the “Skibladner”

The paddle steamer Skibladner is the oldest passenger paddle steamer in the world in regular service. It has been plying Norway's largest inland lake, the Mjøsa, since 1856. The white swan has a melodious name, borrowed from Norse mythology. The ship Skíðblaðnir of the god Freyr, built by dwarves, could always have a tail wind, could be stowed in a small bag when folded and all gods in armor had room on it. The traditional ship of AS Oplandandske Dampskibsselskap does not have such fairy-tale powers, but atmospherically the Skibladner also transports guests to a world long gone.

3. On the Ohio River with the “Belle of Louisville”

Idlewild - Avalon - Belle of Louisville - these three names stand for the last still roadworthy, historic sternwheeler in the USA. In 1914, the ship was built as Idlewild for the West Memphis Packet Company as a passenger ferry. With a draft of only 1.50 m and a robust steel hull, the boat is suitable for almost all navigable rivers of the Mississippi River system. Today, the Belle is the most traveled steamboat in American history. In the course of her eventful life, she has called at 130 places in 19 states.

4. On the Elbe with “Diesbar”

With a length of more than 1000 kilometers, the Elbe is one of the largest rivers in Europe. The river has shaped landscapes since time immemorial: geologically, economically and culturally. One of the most beautiful sections of the river - in Saxony in southeastern Germany - has been navigated by the Saxon Steamship Company since 1836. One of its most beautiful ships is the Diesbar. Its engine is considered the oldest paddle steamer engine still in use in the world, the ship is the only steamer in the fleet still powered by coal.

5. Across the lake Vierwaldstättersee with the “Unterwalden”

Lake Lucerne in the heart of Switzerland stretches from the foothills of the Alps to the first three-thousand-meter peaks of the high mountains. Home waters of the paddle steamer Unterwalden. For two and a half years she was not on the water. Now, after the biggest renovation in her history, the life of the 110-year-old paddle steamer is starting all over again. Her first voyages, with all the imponderables and challenges for the crew, take her into a diverse, wild landscape, right into the mystical heart of Switzerland. In their territory, scenic contrasts collide: barren high moorland and gently rolling alpine meadows, modern tourist resorts and quiet mountain villages, caves hidden deep in the earth and snow-covered two-thousand-meter peaks. The Unterwalden is part of the oldest and largest fleet of paddle steamers so high above the sea. Here on Lake Lucerne, according to national legend, the three original cantons swore eternal allegiance to each other over seven hundred years ago. A land around which countless myths entwine and whose lifeline since the opening of the Gotthard Pass in the thirteenth century was the shipping traffic on the lake.