

Dubai's 2022-2023 cruise season to kick off on 29 October

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Underscoring Dubai's status as the region's leading cruise hub, the emirate is set to welcome 900,000 cruise tourists during the 2022-2023 season, which kicks off with the arrival of the cruise liner TUI Cruises (Mein Schiff 6) at the Hamdan bin Mohammed Cruise Terminal, Mina Rashid, on 29 October. The 2022-2023 season is scheduled to see 166 ship calls between Mina Rashid and Dubai Harbour, bringing in an estimated 900,000 cruise passengers and crew.

Commenting on the occasion, His Highness Sheikh Mansoor bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Chairman of the Dubai Border Security Council, said: "The strong outlook for Dubai's 2022-2023 cruise season will help accelerate its drive to realise the vision of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, to make Dubai the world's most visited destination and the best city to live and work in."

His Highness Sheikh Mansoor bin Mohammed added: "The cruise industry is an integral part of Dubai's tourism sector and plays an important role in reinforcing the emirate's status as a global tourism hub. Dubai's robust port infrastructure and state-of-the-art terminal facilities can handle some of the world's largest cruise ships, underpinning the city's reputation as one of the world's most advanced cruise destinations and a key gateway for regional and international cruise itineraries."

His Highness said: "The scheduled increase in cruise liners and passengers visiting the city's shores this season is driven by Dubai's exceptional maritime infrastructure and the availability of some of the world's most outstanding tourist attractions. Dubai's position at the forefront of the rebound in international tourism underscores its emergence as a hub for cruise tourism."

Some major cruise liners scheduled to visit Dubai this season include MSC Cruises & TUI Cruises and Ponant (MSC World Europa, Opera, Mein Schiff 6 & Le Bougainville), which will make the award-winning Mina Rashid Cruise Terminal their home port for the season. In addition, C.S. Aida Cosma (arriving on 17 November) and C.S. Costa Toscana, the two new LNG-powered cruise ships, will arrive at the Dubai Harbour Cruise Terminal.

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Several cruise liners arriving in Dubai have outlined their commitment to sustainability and decarbonisation. Coupled with the energy-efficient infrastructure and facilities in Dubai's ports, this will help achieve the ambitious sustainability goals outlined in the UAE's commitment to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the UAE Net Zero 2050 initiative.

The cruise industry continues to significantly contribute to the city's tourism sector and is set to build on the remarkable rebound of Dubai's wider tourism sector. Dubai received 98 ship calls and more than 338,697 passengers and crew during the 2021-2022 cruise season.

Sultan Ahmed bin Sulayem, Group Chairman and CEO, DP World, said: "Cruise Tourism has become an increasingly key contributor to Dubai's economy. The emirate's central location, midway between Europe and Asia, is vital to its success as a primary homeport for cruise ships in the Arabian Gulf and the wider Middle East and its popularity as one of the top destinations. Owing to Dubai's strengths, including decades of investments in the tourism industry and the expansion of cruise terminals, we are predicting another robust winter for the 2022-2023 season. At our cruise terminals, we expect 123 calls from some of the largest cruise operators, which is a 100 per cent increase over the last season. Additionally, passenger and crew inflows are forecast to rise to around 600,000, more than double the previous season."

His Excellency Helal Saeed Al Marri, Director General of Dubai's Department of Economy and Tourism, said: "Dubai continues to chart a steady course to enhance its position as the region's leading cruise destination, in line with the leadership's vision to make the city the world's most sought-after travel destination. We are grateful to our valued network of stakeholders and partners for their continued cooperation and support, which has led to a growing number of international cruise operators looking to anchor in the emirate. With the world's top luxury liners heading to Dubai during the new cruise season, we will work with our partners to encourage cruise travellers to enjoy the destination's diverse offerings, especially our unique winter sun proposition. Dubai remains a blueprint for global tourism recovery. We look forward to another successful cruise season as the launching pad to generate further momentum across the regional cruise industry and maintain Dubai's position as a global tourism hub."

Abdulla Binhabtoor, Chief Portfolio Management Officer, Shamal Holding, said: "Following the successful debut of the largest standalone dedicated twin cruise terminal in the eastern hemisphere, we have a positive outlook for the forthcoming cruise season. With the C.S. Aida Cosma and C.S. Costa Toscana homeporting at Dubai Harbour Cruise Terminals along with the arrival of other visiting world-class cruise liners, we will be welcoming thousands of passengers, acting as a natural gateway to the attractions that Dubai has to offer. We look forward to building on last year's efforts and providing the world-class infrastructure, facilities, and seamless experience necessary to support the region's maritime tourism, contributing to Dubai's ambition to become the most visited city in the world."

Dubai has taken important steps to facilitate cruise travel through the strong ongoing development of ports and cruise terminal infrastructure, hassle-free entry procedures and visa facilities, and strengthening collaborations with leading industry players and stakeholders to further drive cruise visitation. Its popularity as a cruise destination has expanded significantly over the past decade, resulting in the world's biggest cruise liners consistently including Dubai as a port of call in their cruise itineraries.

Notable facilities include the award-winning Hamdan bin Mohammed Cruise Terminal at Mina Rashid, capable of simultaneously handling seven mega-cruise vessels and 14,000 cruise passengers. In addition, the Dubai Harbour Cruise Terminal features the most advanced facilities, including bespoke Seaport Passenger Boarding Bridges. Strategically located in the heart of new Dubai, close to international airports and iconic tourist attractions, it can process 3,250 passengers per hour per terminal.