

Cruise ship



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A cruise ship or cruise liner is a (usually very large) passenger ship used for pleasure voyages, where the voyage itself and the ship's amenities are part of the experience, as well as the different destinations along the way. Transportation is not the prime purpose, as cruise ships operate mostly on routes that return passengers to their originating port, so the ports of call are usually in a specified region of a continent.

In contrast, dedicated transport oriented ocean liners do "line voyages" and typically transport passengers from one point to another, rather than on round trips. Traditionally, an ocean liner for the transoceanic trade will be built to a higher standard than a typical cruise ship, including high freeboard and stronger plating to withstand rough seas and adverse conditions encountered in the open ocean, such as the North Atlantic. Ocean liners also usually have larger capacities for fuel, victuals, and other stores for consumption on long voyages, compared to dedicated cruise ships.

Although often luxurious, ocean liners had characteristics that made them unsuitable for cruising, such as high fuel consumption, deep draught that prevented them from entering shallow ports, enclosed weatherproof decks that were not appropriate for tropical weather, and cabins designed to maximize passenger numbers rather than comfort (few if any private verandas, a high proportion of windowless suites). The modern cruise ships, while sacrificing qualities of seaworthiness, have added amenities to cater to tourists, and recent vessels have been described as "balcony-laden floating condominiums".

The lines between ocean liners and cruise ships have blurred, particularly with respect to deployment. Larger cruise ships have also engaged in longer

trips such as transocean voyages which may not lead back to the same port for months (longer round trips). Some former ocean liners operate as cruise ships, such as MS Marco Polo and MS Mona Lisa, however this number is ever decreasing. The only dedicated transatlantic ocean liner in operation as a liner, as of February 2010, is the Queen Mary 2 of the Cunard fleet, however she also has the amenities of contemporary cruise ships and sees significant service on cruises.

Cruising has become a major part of the tourism industry, accounting for U. S. \$27 billion with over 18 million passengers carried worldwide in 2010. The world's largest cruise liner is Royal Caribbean International's Oasis of the Seas. The industry's rapid growth has seen nine or more newly built ships catering to a North American clientele added every year since 2001, as well as others servicing European clientele. Smaller markets, such as the Asia-Pacific region, are generally serviced by older ships. These are displaced by new ships in the high growth areas.