

Aberdeen celebrates another record-breaking cruise season

Aberdeen's rise as one of the UK's leading cruise destinations gathered pace in 2025, with 43,000 guests welcomed – an impressive 79% increase on 2024.

The growth was driven by a record 65 cruise calls, up more than 50% year on year, alongside a trend of larger vessels berthing at the port's new £420 million Aberdeen South Harbour.

The 2025 cruise season was brought to a close on Saturday 20 September with the arrival of Viking Vela at South Harbour. Highlights included maiden calls from Viking Cruises, the arrival of The Ritz-Carlton's Ilma, the return of the magnificent 292m-long Costa Favolosa, and hosting Cruise Britain's prestigious Annual Summer Event in June.

Guests were greeted throughout the season by Alba Bagpipes on the quayside who joined VisitAberdeenshire's 'Welcome to Aberdeenshire' volunteers to give a warm, world-class welcome.

The volunteers play a significant role in welcoming and assisting guests in discovering what Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire has to offer, everything from exploring the city by open-top bus to excursions out to Deeside, Dunnottar and the Garioch.

The CruiseAberdeenshire partnership continued its efforts to attract new cruise lines and promote the region on the global stage, exhibiting at Seatrade Cruise Global in Miami and Seatrade Europe in Hamburg.

Bob Sanguinetti DL, CEO, Port of Aberdeen, said: "Our investment in Aberdeen South Harbour has been a game-changer, unlocking substantial new opportunities for the cruise sector. This expansion is one of the key reasons behind the significant increase in cruise calls we're seeing.

"We're proud to provide cruise operators with a seamless, high-quality experience backed by first-class infrastructure and exceptional customer service. We're excited to welcome even more visitors to discover everything Aberdeen and the wider region has to offer."

Chris Foy, CEO, VisitAberdeenshire, said: "The growth in cruise numbers 2025 has been celebrated by tourism, hospitality and retail businesses across the city and shire. The first impression of our destination remains as important as ever, so with the support of Peterson Energy Logistics, we expanded the quayside volunteer programme this year to offer even more warm welcomes and visitor information to passengers from all over the world.

"Looking ahead, the VisitAberdeenshire team are advising more businesses on how to get 'cruise-ready' with an ambition to spread the benefits further into Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire."