

Aberdeen sets sail for a historic year in tourism

CruiseAberdeenshire, a partnership between Port of Aberdeen and VisitAberdeenshire, is preparing for a landmark year with nearly a 30% surge in cruise calls and the return of world-famous Tall Ships Races to the city for the first time in 28 years.

Port of Aberdeen is set to host 63 cruise calls during the 2025 season, running from April to September, welcoming up to 40,000 guests.

Major cruise line Viking will kick off the season with the arrival of Viking Vela on the 3 April, and is set to make multiple visits throughout the season, highlighting Aberdeen's rising status as a must-visit destination for travellers.

Wendy Atkin-Smith, Managing Director of Viking UK said: "We're delighted to have added Aberdeen as a new port of call on some of our British Isles and Scandinavian itineraries and we are looking forward to our first ever visit in April this year. The Viking Vela, our newest ocean ship which launched in early December 2024, will be the first ship in our fleet to visit Aberdeen and we know she will receive a very warm welcome."

Costa Cruises and AIDA will return to Port of Aberdeen, including maiden calls from sister vessels, AIDAbella and AIDAluna, both 252-metres bringing in over 4,000 guests and crew between them. The magnificent Costa Favolosa, the largest vessel to ever visit Aberdeen, will also return to the port's South Harbour.

The Fred. Olsen Borealis cruise ship will sail into the port for the first time, marking the cruise line's inaugural visit to Aberdeen. At 238-meters long, the remarkable ship can carry over 1,300 passengers.

Bob Sanguinetti, CEO, Port of Aberdeen, said: "Another record-breaking year of bookings and a diverse lineup of visiting vessels set the stage for continued growth in the years ahead. With impressive vessels scheduled to make multiple calls, including maiden visits from Viking and Fred.Olsen, Aberdeen is further solidifying its reputation as a premier destination in the global cruise market."

At the height of the cruise season, The Tall Ships Races is expected to attract 400,000 visits as it returns to the city after nearly 30 years. Both the cruise season and the world-class event are expected to provide a significant economic boost for local businesses and the hospitality industry.

Adding to the city's vibrant lineup, Spectra, Scotland's Festival of Light, will once again dazzle visitors with cutting-edge light installations, large-scale projections, and interactive artworks, creating an unforgettable experience in north-east Scotland. Meanwhile, the globally acclaimed Beyond Van Gogh will make its Aberdeen debut at the renowned P&J Live.

To help local businesses capitalise on the surge in visitors, CruiseAberdeenshire will host community Q&A sessions, ensuring they are well-equipped to offer an informed and warm welcome to guests. Additionally, VisitAberdeenshire's volunteers will be stationed at key arrival points, guiding cruise passengers to the city's many attractions.

Chris Foy, CEO, VisitAberdeenshire said: "Authentic, people-led experiences across Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire are attracting the attention of cruise lines, and as a result, are placing the region on their itineraries in 2025/26. Once again, our volunteers will be back on the quayside, providing the all-important warm North-east welcome, enhancing the experience for arriving visitors."