

# Belfast Harbour celebrates 1500th cruise call with Princess Cruises' Regal Princess

Belfast Harbour welcomed the 1,500<sup>th</sup> cruise ship to call in the city, as Princess Cruises' Regal Princess arrived in Northern Ireland on 18th June.

The landmark was announced by Cruise Belfast, the partnership between Belfast Harbour and Visit Belfast which markets the city as a leading cruise ship destination.

Since the first cruise ship arrived in Belfast in 1996, the industry has grown exponentially and now contributes approximately £25m a year to the local economy.

To date almost 2.5 million cruise passengers have come to Northern Ireland on cruise ships and in 2025 there will be 148 cruise calls by 58 ships from 31 different cruise lines calling at Belfast Harbour during the seven-month cruise season – including first time calls from 10 cruise ships.

Regal Princess is Belfast's most frequent cruise caller, with this latest visit the 32<sup>nd</sup> time it has called in Belfast since 2015, and the fifth time it has stopped in Northern Ireland this year. Princess Cruises has brought almost a third of the total number of people who have visited Northern Ireland on a cruise.

**Michael Robinson, Port Director of Belfast Harbour said:** "It is a fantastic achievement to have reached this milestone of welcoming 1,500 cruise calls to Belfast Harbour. The cruise sector brings significant numbers of people to the city, directly supporting local tourism businesses in the economy while also boosting the profile of Northern Ireland as an international destination.

"Belfast Harbour has committed to our largest ever port investment in order to facilitate further growth of the cruise sector. Feedback from our cruise line partners and visitors about the quality of the local offering and service is always positive, and we are excited about what more can be achieved."

**Regal Princess' Captain Aldo Traverso said:** "It's an honour for Regal Princess to be a part of this significant milestone at Belfast Harbour today. Visiting this vibrant city has been met with warmth and hospitality, making it a favourite stop for our guests on their British Isles voyage. We look forward to many more calls to come."

**Mary Jo McCanny, Director of Visitor Experience and Destination Initiatives at Visit Belfast said:** "We are proud to mark the arrival of Belfast's 1500th cruise ship, a major milestone that reflects just how far the city has come as a world-class cruise destination. Over nearly three decades, Cruise Belfast has helped establish Belfast as a welcoming, exciting, and high-quality port of call, with strong partnerships, exceptional visitor experiences and a growing global reputation.

"Cruise tourism is an important part of our visitor economy, supporting local businesses and connecting millions of visitors with the culture, heritage and warm welcome that Belfast City Region is known for. As we continue to build for the future this milestone is both a celebration and a launchpad for the next chapter of growth for the city."

Among the ships calling at Belfast for the first time this year are Viking's newest vessel, the Viking Vela and Virgin Voyages first ship, Scarlet Lady. The largest vessel visiting Belfast this year will once again be the 333 metre-long MSC Preziosa.

In a further indication of the city's growing status in the cruise industry, this year will see Belfast Harbour facilitate eight 'turnarounds' – which means passengers beginning and ending their trip in Belfast boosting overnight stays in city hotels.

The 2025 cruise season will come to an end on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2025.