

Britain's 2021 cruise restart laid foundations for 2022 season

Britain's 2022 cruise season is fully under way with a number of ports expecting record calls and maiden visits. Britain's ports, destinations and service providers are looking forward to welcoming back significant numbers of cruise lines and guests who were not able to come to the UK in 2021.

Figures just released for 2021 show a strong restart last year against a backdrop of continuing global restrictions and the complete closure of some cruising regions. As expected, numbers were down compared to 2019, particularly for port of call or transit passengers.

'We are proud of Britain's 2021 domestic season' said Kate O'Hara, Chair, Cruise Britain. 'Collectively, the industry worked tirelessly to enable the UK to successfully reopen to cruise in May. Cruise Britain and its members collaborated with operators, government, port and public health, CLIA and the UK Chamber of Shipping to support the successful resumption of cruise. Experience of the 2021 season has laid a strong foundation for 2022.'

Over 400,000 passengers embarked on a cruise from Britain in 2021, the vast majority of them British residents during the summer domestic season. Almost the same number stepped ashore at transit ports with increasing numbers of operators making transit calls as the season continued. For some ports, it proved a record season as they accommodated vessels, often at short notice; for other ports, it was a disappointing season with some of their regular operators unable to come to the UK. Despite this, 80 UK ports welcomed cruise ship calls in 2021, more than in any year to date. As cruise operators looked to deploy ships into the UK and give their passengers the best-possible experience, so it became an opportunity for less well-known ports to welcome a call.

After a cautious start in May 2021, the final number of lines visiting the UK came in at 27 with 40 individual vessels making over 1100 calls between them.

"These figures were beyond our expectations in early 2021", commented O'Hara. "And now we are looking forward to 2022's season with a spirit of cautious optimism. Many ports are expecting record numbers but all are retaining the flexibility and responsive attitude that has brought us this far. 2022's operating landscape is much more of a normal environment for cruise lines, ports and service providers and we are really building on last year's experiences to deliver the best possible product."

Every port in the UK is now open to cruise, plus there is the welcome return of Guernsey and Jersey in the Channel Islands, and the Isle of Man. From Orkney in the far north, to the south coast via all points, the UK is open and ready to welcome cruise ships, guests and crew.

Cruise Britain and attending members can be found at stand 1815 at Seatrade Cruise Global 26th -28th April 2022.