Viking call marks the launch of Aberdeen's historic 2025 cruise season

• Port of Aberdeen set to host 64 cruise calls including 16 cruise calls from Viking
• Ritz Carlton's luxurious superyacht 'Ilma' to make grand debut
• Aberdeen named host city for prestigious Cruise Britain event

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CruiseAberdeenshire today (3 April 2025) officially launched what is set to be a spectacular cruise season for both Port of Aberdeen and the wider region. Aberdeen is set to welcome 16 calls from Viking as part of a total of 64* cruise calls between April and September, bringing up to 40,000 visitors to Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire.

The Viking Vela, a Norwegian-flagged liner spanning 238 metres with a gross tonnage of 47,800, made its inaugural visit to Port of Aberdeen's South Harbour, marking Viking's first-ever call to the city. CruiseAberdeenshire, established in 2024, is a collaboration between VisitAberdeenshire and Port of Aberdeen, aimed at promoting the region to the global cruise market and attracting business for the years ahead..

As nearly 1,000 guests disembarked onto the quayside, they were met with the Scottish sounds of Alba Bagpipes and performances by Highland dancers, while VisitAberdeenshire's 'Welcome to Aberdeen' volunteers extended a warm welcome.

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 today.

"As Scotland's third-largest city, it has so much to offer, especially with its strong coastal culture and rich history. Our culturally curious guests will enjoy learning about the city's maritime heritage and its interesting architecture – as well as experiencing the local art scene and exploring many of the historic sites nearby when they visit."

Adding to the excitement, The Ritz-Carlton Ilma, a luxurious superyacht measuring 207 meters in length with a gross tonnage of 46,750, will make her way into South Harbour less than a year after her debut in September 2024, marking Ritz-Carlton's maiden voyage to the city.

As the newest addition to the Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection, Ilma features 224 elegant suites, each with a private terrace, and introduces two new upper suite categories, each spanning over 1,000 square feet, ensuring an unparalleled luxury experience at sea.

Bob Sanguinetti, CEO of Port of Aberdeen said: "The expansion of Port of Aberdeen, coupled with CruiseAberdeenshire's incredible efforts to market the city and Shire, is delivering outstanding results as we welcome 64 cruise calls in 2025.

"This landmark season demonstrates Aberdeen is growing as a premier destination for international cruise lines, which brings tremendous economic benefits to the region. We look forward to welcoming tens of thousands of guests to the port this year."

Chris Foy, CEO, VisitAberdeenshire said: The North-east's visitor proposition is strong, as the region's

tourism and hospitality businesses offer memorable, authentic experiences that leave a lasting impression on visitors.

"The initial welcome is equally important, and VisitAberdeenshire's volunteers will be quayside to greet arriving passengers, getting their visit off to the best possible start. We look forward to a successful cruise season ahead."

At the height of the cruise season, Aberdeen will also host Cruise Britain's annual summer event, bringing around 60 cruise executives and industry experts to the city. Selected as part of a competitive process, Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire's growing reputation as a must-visit location played a key role in securing the event.

The two-day event, set for June, will showcase the finest offerings of Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire, including a conference aboard one of Viking's cruise ships.

Ian McQuade, Chair of Cruise Britain said : "Cruise Britain is delighted to be holding the association's summer meeting in Aberdeen. In a series of firsts, it will be our first meeting in Scotland and first visit to a Viking Cruises' ship; we are excited to bring our members and guests to the city and would like to thank the Port most sincerely for hosting.

"Cruise tourism touches all parts of the UK and is an increasing part of the economy of coastal communities. The growth of Aberdeen as an important call in regional cruise itineraries is a testament to the work in developing both the port and the destination offer."