

Cruises - UK - April 2012

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“Potential new cruisers are already very receptive to the idea that these holidays are a great way of visiting and exploring places. Mintel’s research shows that where the ‘potentials’ differ from experienced cruisers is in their much lower level of awareness of the quality of onboard facilities. Rising fuel costs and environmental regulations are likely to lead to lower speeds, more time at sea and shorter itineraries. The focus on the onboard experience is likely to increase further and needs greater promotion to build consumer awareness but a balance between destination and ship needs to be struck.”

– John Worthington, Senior Analyst

In this report we answer the key questions:

- Short-haul and domestic holidays are currently growing while long-haul is struggling. How will this affect cruise?
- How important is the onboard experience, compared to the itinerary?
- What is the best way to market to non-cruisers?
- What is the relationship between sea cruises and river cruises?
- What is the scope for a ‘green cruise’ brand?

The sea cruise market grew 41% in volume and 57% in value between 2006 and 2011. In the context of a 20% decline in the overseas holiday market, cruise holidays have proved decisively recession-proof. The market has benefited from its core constituency of older ABC1 consumers, a growing demographic that has cut down the least on holidays during and since the recession.

Despite this impressive performance, there are some concerns for the industry. Fly-cruise holidays fell in 2011 for the first time since 2005, operating costs are rising, global supply growth is slowing and the Costa Concordia tragedy has raised fresh (and revived previously existing) questions about safety and environmental impacts.

This report analyses market trends, consumer preferences and attitudes towards cruise holidays, investigating the core market factors, key players, products and innovations in the industry.

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