20 top cruises for 2015



Sara Macefield Published at 12:01AM, January 17 2015

1. Best of British

1. Best of British P&O Cruises (0843 3730111, pocruises.com) is set to unweilBritannia in March. At 3,600 passengers, she is the largest ship yet built for the UK market, and will be a haven for foodies, with a cookery school developed by chef James Martin and culinary stars including Marco Pierre White and Atul Kochhar. Details: A 14-night round-trip Mediterranean voyage from Southampton on August 15 costs from £1,959pp. Port calls include Barcelona, Monte Carlo, Civitavecchia (for Rome) and Cartagena

2. Anthem from Southampton
Seas, with her skydive simulator and bumper cars, her identical sister, Anthem of the Seas, which launches in April. This 4,180-passenger vessel from Royal Caribbean International (0844, 4934005, royalcaribbean.co.uk) will be based in Southampton this summer. Expect high-tech treats such as North Star, a viewing capsule similar to the pods on the London Eye, which rises gooff above the waves, robotic bartenders and inside cabins boasting virtual balconies with veal-time seas views. real-time sea views

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Details: A ten-night round-trip cruise from Southampton to the Canary Islands, calling at islands including Tenerife, Gran Canaria and Lanzarote, costs from £1,699pp. It departs on May 22

3. Viking's ocean debut
Viking Cruises (0800 2989700, vikingcruises.co.uk) is better known
for river sailings, but this April it crosses the divide with the hody
anticipated launch of the first of three ocean cruise ships. Many 2015
departures have already sold out. The 300-passenger Viking Star is
expected to bring Scandinavian contemporary design to the open
seas in a not to its Norwegian heritage, with one of the most striking
features being a glass-backed infinity pool on the ship's stern.
Passengers can expect lowers extant in yord and destinations selected

reatures being a glass-backed infinity pool on the ship's stern. Passengers can expect longer stays in port and destinations selected for historical and cultural appeal. Details: A 4-night round-trip Mediterranean Explorer voyage from Barcelona departs on December 8 and costs from £3,199pp, including flights. Port calls include Toulon, Monte Carlo and Trapani, Sicily

4. Rocking the boat to Denmark Calling all Elvis fans. If you're looking

4. Rocking the boat to Denmark
Calling all Elvis fans. If you're looking for a hip-shaking way to
celebrate the king of rock h'roll's 8 oth birthday this year, then join
this five-night Elvis Party Cruise with Fred Olsen Cruise Lines (0800
0355242, fredolsencruises.com). The sole port of call is the Danish
city of Aarhus, home to Graceland Randers – a replica of Presley's
famous Memphis home Graceland, and the only one outside
America, complete with assorted memorabilia. The Elvis theme
continues at sea with film shows, discos, two tribute acts and a party
devoted to the legendary star.

Details: A five-night round-trip cruise from Harwich costs from
£467pp,departing on April 13

5. World Heritage sailings
Get under the skin of some of the planet's most fascinating natural and man-made attractions with Seabourn (0843 3732000, seabourn.com), which has linked with Unesco to offer excursions to more than 160 World Heritage Sites. From destinations as far affield as Halong Bay, Mumbai or Reykjawik to the Great Barrier Reef and the Taj Mahal, Seabourn has created collections of World Heritage Tours and Discovery Tours offering a deeper insight and more rindepth information.

Details: A 14-might sailing to Thailand and Vietnam, departing Singapore for Hong Kong on December 20, costs from £5,519pp. Flights cost extra

6. South Pacific any time

6. South Pacific any time Ask well-travelled cruise experts what their favourite destination is and many will say the South Pacific because of its overwhelming beauty. Such enthusiasm among passengers for this far-flung archipelago is behind a decision by tall-ship line Windstar Cruises (020 73997687, windstarcruises.com) to offer year-round voyages to Tahiti from May, with sailings through the Society and Tuamotu islands. A highlight of the 7, 10 and 11-night sailings is a traditional Tahitian dinner on a private island.
Details: An 11-night package that includes a one-week round-trip sailing from Papeete and an overnight pre-cruise stay in Tahiti, costs

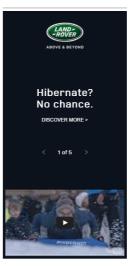
sailing from Papeete and an overnight pre-cruise stay in Tahiti, or from £3,398pp, departing on July 8. Flights are included

7. Paddle up the Loire
Float past the evocative châteaux and castles of the Loire Valley on a
French river cruise. CroisiEurope (020 8328 1281, croisieurope.co.uk) is introducing sailings in April aboard the specially built Loire
Princesse. The 96-passenger craft has a paddle wheel amidships to
enable it to cope with the Loire's shallow waters on sailings that stop
at the historic city of Angers.
Details: A seven-night round-trip sailing from Nantes on August 22
costs from £1,43upp. Flights are from £15upp

8. St Helena's final farewell

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The davning of 2015 marks the last full year of service for one of the
few remaining Royal Mail ships, which serves St Helena. The south
Atlantic island's only regular link with the outside world has been via
RMS St Helena (020 7575 6450, mm.s+t-helena.com), but this service
will cease two months after the island's airport opens in February
2016. The British Overseas Territory is where Napoleon was famously
exided after his defeat at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815, and with
2015 marking the bicentenary of his reluctant arrival, a programme
of events will be held around the anniversary in October.

Details: A 23-night package through Haleyon Collections (020 7193
2363, haleyon-collections.com) comprising the ten-night return
sailing from Cape Town, an eight-night B&B stay on St Helena, three
nights in Cape Town, cost from £9,959p. It departs the UK on
September 30 and includes flights, accommodation and island tours



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