

CRUISES – UK – 2024

With consumers' prioritising value for money, cruises can benefit from their ability to combine different experiences and multiple destinations into one holiday.



Marloes De Vries, Travel Analyst



Cruises - UK - 2024

This report looks at the following areas:

- Participation and future interest in cruise holidays
- Interest in cruise holiday types
- Interest in onboard leisure and dining experiences
- Ethical priorities when booking
- Barriers to cruising

Overview

2024 is expected to be a record year for the UK cruise market, with wage growth and increased consumer confidence having a positive impact on holiday bookings. Demand for cruises is also driven by strong interest in multi-centre holidays and new experiences, capacity growth, modernisation of ships, strong advertising spend and the increasing ease of booking a cruise online.

However, as the sector grows, concerns about the segment's contribution to over-tourism are likely to grow as well. Cruise lines need to closely collaborate with destinations to build support and increase focus on destinations that have the infrastructure and space to handle passenger numbers. Meanwhile, destinations coping with over-tourism should be visited during quieter times or with smaller ships, while guests should be inspired or given more time to explore beyond the main landmarks.

Potential cruise passengers want to take more different types of holidays in the coming years than other travellers. Amid increased holiday prices, promoting the value of combining



With consumers' prioritising value for money, cruises can benefit from their ability to combine different experiences and multiple destinations into one holiday.

BUY THIS REPORT NOW


€2600.00 | £2195.00 | \$2995.00*

store.mintel.com | store@mintel.com

Americas: +1 (312) 932 0400
China: +86 (21) 6032 7300
Germany: +49 (0) 211 3399 7411
India: +91 22 4445 1045
Singapore: +65 6653 3600
Thailand: +66 2 821 5122
UK: +44 (0) 20 7606 4533

*These prices are correct at time of publication, but are subject to change due to currency fluctuations.

MINTEL



different experiences and visiting multiple destinations on one holiday will appeal. Meanwhile, integrating wellness elements into cruise itineraries will make them more attractive to an increasingly health-conscious population.

BUY THIS REPORT NOW

€2600.00 | £2195.00 | \$2995.00*

store.mintel.com | store@mintel.com

Americas: +1 (312) 932 0400
China: +86 (21) 6032 7300
Germany: +49 (0) 211 3399 7411
India: +91 22 4445 1045
Singapore: +65 6653 3600
Thailand: +66 2 821 5122
UK: +44 (0) 20 7606 4533

*These prices are correct at time of publication, but are subject to change due to currency fluctuations.

MINTEL

Report Content

Key issues covered in this Report

- Overview

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Opportunities for the UK cruise market

- Three big opportunities for the UK cruise market

Market dynamics and outlook

- The five-year outlook for the UK cruise market
- The UK and Irish sea cruise passenger volume has recovered quickly
- Value of UK & Irish sea cruise market has recovered even faster than volume
- Financial confidence continues to increase
 - Graph 1: the financial confidence index, 2016-24

What consumers want and why

- Growth potential for the cruise market looks promising
 - Graph 2: participation and interest in sea and river cruises, 2023
- Adults-only cruises are the most desired
 - Graph 3: interest in cruise holiday types, 2023
- Integrating wellness elements will help cruises to increase their appeal
 - Graph 4: most desired onboard leisure activities or facilities, 2023*
- Younger passengers are keen on street food and food markets
 - Graph 5: most desired onboard dining experiences, by age, 2023*
- Consumers are eager to see support for a range of ethical projects
 - Graph 6: ethical priorities when booking a cruise, 2023
- Biggest barriers to cruises are cost, lack of flexibility and crowdedness

Innovation and marketing

- Royal Caribbean welcomed record number of passengers in 2023
- On the path to net zero
- Cruise lines spent heavily on advertising to stimulate demand
 - Graph 7: total above-the line, online display and direct mail advertising expenditure on cruises, 2019-23

MARKET DYNAMICS

Market size

- Rapid recovery of UK and Irish sea cruise passenger volume
 - Graph 8: UK & Ireland sea cruise market passenger volume, 2016-23
- The cruise market is outperforming the wider travel industry
- Value significantly exceeds 2019 levels
 - Graph 9: UK & Ireland sea cruise market passenger value, 2016-23
- Strong interest in river cruises

Market forecast

- Passenger volume forecast for the UK & Irish sea cruise market, 2018-28
- Passenger value forecast for the UK & Irish sea cruise market, 2018-28
- Cruise lines report record booking levels

Macro-economic factors

- Inflation rate stood at 4% in December 2023
 - Graph 10: CPI inflation rate, 2021-23
- Financial confidence continues to increase
 - Graph 11: the financial confidence index, 2016-24
- More consumers are experiencing higher prices for holidays
- Higher prices increase the importance of proving value for money

Social, environmental and legal factors

- A growing group of elderly people will benefit the cruise market
 - Graph 12: population by life stage, mid-2020, mid-2030 and mid-2045
- Environmental pressures are impacting the cruise industry

Holiday bookings and booking intentions

- Holiday bookings remain well above pre-pandemic levels
 - Graph 13: holiday bookings in the last three months, 2018, 2019, 2023 and 2024
- Booking intentions reach a new record high
 - Graph 14: plans to book a holiday in the next three months, 2018, 2019, 2023 and 2024

WHAT CONSUMERS WANT AND WHY

Participation and interest in cruising

- Growth potential for the cruise market looks promising
- River cruises show the highest growth potential

- Pull factors of cruises
- Interest in sea cruises has not yet recovered to pre-pandemic levels
 - Graph 15: interest in cruise holiday types, 2019-23
- Cruises can appeal with their ability to combine multiple experiences
 - Graph 16: interest in other holiday types among cruise passengers, 2023

Profile of cruise travellers

- Cruises have become more reliant on affluent travellers
 - Graph 17: annual household income profile of the adult population versus cruise guests, 2023
- Profile of sea cruise passengers is set to become younger
 - Graph 18: participation and interest in sea cruises, 2023
- Interest in sea cruises among over-55s is yet to recover
 - Graph 19: interest in taking a sea cruise in the next five years, 2019-23
- Over-45s show strongest interest in river cruises
 - Graph 20: participation and interest in river cruises, 2023

Interest in cruise holiday types

- Adults-only cruises and cruise & stay holidays are the most desired
 - Graph 21: interest in cruise holiday types, 2023
- Cruise lines develop experiences to appeal to both adults and families
- Cruise and rail packages appeal more to an older demographic
 - Graph 22: interest in cruise holiday types, by age, 2023
- Cruise and rail can offer more immersive experiences
- There are opportunities to promote upgrades among all kinds of target groups
 - Graph 23: interest in luxury cruise holidays, by annual household income, 2023
- A fifth of potential cruise passengers are interested in solo itineraries

Interest in onboard leisure and dining experiences

- Strong interest in onboard performances and wellness facilities
- Over-65s prefer passive entertainment options, but could benefit from support in healthy ageing
 - Graph 24: most desired onboard leisure activities or facilities, by age, 2023
- Integrating wellness elements will help cruises to increase their appeal
- Buffets remain in demand
 - Graph 25: most desired onboard dining experiences, 2023
- Younger passengers are keen on street food and food markets
 - Graph 26: most desired onboard dining experiences, by age, 2023
- Greener food concepts will become more popular

Cruise booking behaviour

- Half of passengers booked their most recent cruise 1-6 months before travelling

- Graph 27: time between cruise booking and departure, 2023
- Sea cruises have a longer booking lead time
 - Graph 28: time between cruise booking and departure, by cruise experience, 2023
- Younger passengers are comfortable booking last-minute cruises
- If the cruise industry succeeds in attracting more younger passengers, booking lead times will shorten

Ethical priorities when booking

- Consumers are eager to see support for a range of ethical projects
 - Graph 29: ethical priorities when booking a cruise, 2023
- Trust is important when making sustainability claims
- Brands must invest in innovations that go beyond standard eco-friendly efforts
- Brands should make the shift to giving back
- Families with younger children more likely to need mobility support

Barriers to cruising

- Biggest barriers to cruises are cost, lack of flexibility and crowdedness
 - Graph 30: barriers to cruising, 2023
- Ships with a higher space ratio will appeal more to older travellers
 - Graph 31: barriers to cruising, by age, 2023
- Cruise lines are challenged to combat over-crowding in destinations
 - Graph 32: barriers to cruising, by cruise experience, 2023

INNOVATION AND MARKETING TRENDS

Leading cruise companies

- Carnival Corporation prioritises fleet optimisation
- Royal Caribbean welcomed record number of passengers in 2023
- The largest cruise line companies report record bookings for 2024

Launch activity and innovation

- World's largest cruise ship to debut in January 2024
- On the path to net zero
- World's largest sailing ship will enter service in 2026
- Cruise lines introduce new wellbeing experiences
- Technology is a key driver of innovation in the cruise sector
- More cruise lines are encouraging existing customers to become ambassadors
- Desire to cruise again is strong

Advertising and marketing activity

- Cruise lines spent heavily on advertising to stimulate demand

- Graph 33: total above-the line, online display and direct mail advertising expenditure on cruises, 2019-23
- MSC Cruises launched new global brand campaign in January 2024
- P&O Cruises launches 'Holiday Like Never Before' campaign ahead of 2024 peak booking period
- Ambassador Cruise Line launched its first TV ad in April 2023
- Royal Caribbean International wants to achieve brand exposure through the Eurovision Song Contest

APPENDIX

Supplementary data

- Cruise motivators
 - Graph 34: reasons for being interested in taking a cruise holiday, by age, 2019
- Attitudes towards cruising – environmental impact
 - Graph 35: attitudes towards the environmental impact of cruise holidays versus flying, by interest in cruise holiday type, 2019
- Attitudes towards cruising – authentic local experiences & over-tourism
 - Graph 36: attitudes towards cruising, by interest in cruise holiday type, 2021
- Consumer preferences when taking a cruise holiday

Market forecast data and methodology

- Market size
- Market forecast and prediction intervals (volume)
- Market forecast and prediction intervals (value)
- Value forecast and prediction intervals at constant prices
- Forecast methodology

Report scope and definitions

- Market definition
- Abbreviations and terms

Methodology

- Consumer research methodology
- Nielsen Ad Intel coverage

Disclaimer

This is marketing intelligence published by Mintel.
The consumer research exclusively commissioned by Mintel was conducted by a UK licensed market survey agent ([see Research Methodology Europe for more information](#)).

Terms and Conditions of use

Any use and/or copying of this document is subject to Mintel's standard terms and conditions, which are available at <http://www.mintel.com/terms>

If you have any questions regarding usage of this document please contact your account manager or call your local helpdesk.

Published by Mintel Group Ltd

www.mintel.com
email: store@mintel.com

Help desk

UK	+44 (0)20 7778 7155
US	+1 (312) 932 0600
Australia	+61 (0)2 8284 8100
China	+86 (21) 6386 6609
India	+91 22 4090 7217
Japan	+81 (3) 6228 6595
Singapore	+65 (0)6 818 9850