

Cape Town achieves record high 2022/23 cruise tourism season

Cape Town and the Western Cape have experienced an unprecedented cruise tourism season, with a significant proportion of visitors coming from high-spending markets like the USA, Germany, and the UK. The season commenced in October 2022 and concluded in May 2023, attracting a total of 145,000 cruise passengers and 42,000 crew members to the region's shores.



Source: stokpic via [Pixabay](#)

In total, the 2022/2023 season welcomed 75 ships with 41 turnaround visits - this is double the number of ship calls when compared to the last complete season in 2019/2020, which saw 39 ship visits with an estimated 42,000 arriving passengers.

With the Cruise Cape Town initiative, which is powered by Wesgro, dedicated to developing itinerary offerings to entice more international cruise partners, the Cape Town Cruise Terminal enjoyed the arrival of five new ships to the port this season. Adding to the many firsts celebrated by the local industry, the port also saw three ships conduct a turnaround visit on the same day for the very first time, and did so successfully on five separate occasions this season.



Cape Town cruise economy gets boost with newly launched initiative

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Turnaround visits are particularly attractive to the destination, as they arrive at a port at the end of one cruise and prepare for the start of another. During the turnaround, the ship undergoes a complete cleaning and restocking process – creating an opportunity for local products to be onboarded onto the ship, further contributing to the destination's economy.

Disembarking passengers traditionally take post-cruise tours, with new passengers seizing the opportunity to explore the destination pre-boarding the ship.

"The success of the past Cape Town cruise season speaks to the untapped potential held by this lucrative tourism sector, significantly boosting visitor numbers to the destination. The Cruise Cape Town initiative is currently conducting a comprehensive Economic Impact Study, which is expected to be finalised in the coming months. We are confident the results will demonstrate the significant economic impact and job creation potential of the sector.

Together with our partners, we look forward to continuing to support the cruise industry," comments Wrenelle Stander, Wesgro CEO and the official spokesperson for Cruise Cape Town.

Western Cape grows as popular tourism destination

David Green, CEO of the V&A Waterfront, says: "The return of a full cruise season to the city has been a remarkable success, testament to the hard work all of the role-players involved in Cruise Cape Town. It's been exciting to welcome back local and international cruise including the iconic world cruises such as the Queen Mary 2, highlighting the value of our destination to the choice of global traveller experiences.

"The Waterfront, as the operator of the terminal, continues to invest in an improved traveller experience at the terminal to surpass the regular as well as new generation of vacationers to the city."

Western Cape Minister for finance and economic opportunities, Mireille Wenger, says: "The confirmation that the 2022/2023 cruise tourism season reached record highs is fantastic news and is yet another indicator that tourism is truly back in the Western Cape. Cruise tourism contributes significantly to our economy and the knock-on effect of cruise ships, not only through passenger spend but across the whole value chain, cannot be understated.

"Going forward I look forward to working with all stakeholders to attract even more cruise ships to the province so we can help this sector contribute even more to our economy and to create many more jobs for our residents."

Alderman James Vos, the City of Cape Town's mayoral committee member for economic growth concludes: "These figures are proof that the Mother City is becoming a major player in the cruise travel market and shows the value of the Cruise Cape Town initiative of which the City is a proud partner.

"Every passenger, crew member, and ship that hits our shores is a boon to our local economy and helps the City to fulfil its mission of creating a tourism-related job in every household in the metro."

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