

The Trends Shaping Cruise Travel This Fall

(Courtesy of Patrick Clarke, Travel Pulse)

The Latest Fall Cruise Trends

Cruising continues to bounce back in a big way as we head into the final third of 2022. Many cruise lines have [eased COVID-19 protocols](#) to make sailing more accessible and easier this fall. As the industry continues its comeback, it's a good time to zero in on the latest trends fueling its resurgence. Online cruise marketplace CruiseCompete.com has released its monthly [CruiseTrends report](#) for September, revealing the cruise lines, ships, destinations, ports, cabins and itineraries that travelers are seeking out this fall based on the tens of thousands of quote requests received each month. Here's a look at some of the most popular brands, vessels, places and more this fall.

The Hottest Cruise Lines

Royal Caribbean International continues to be the most in-demand premium cruise line, followed by Celebrity Cruises and Norwegian Cruise Line. In the luxury segment, Oceania Cruises tops the list of the most popular cruise lines, edging out Cunard Line and Azamara. Meanwhile, American Cruise Lines is the leading river cruise company based on CruiseCompete quote requests. American Queen Voyages and Viking River Cruises round out the top three river cruise lines.

The Most Popular Cruise Ships

Royal Caribbean dominates the list of the most popular premium cruise ships this fall, with Oasis of the Seas, Allure of the Seas and Harmony of the Seas ranking first, second and third, respectively. Cunard's Queen Mary 2 is the most in-demand luxury cruise vessel as of September, followed by Oceania Cruises' Oceania Riviera and Oceania Marina. Interestingly, when it comes to river cruising, Emerald Waterways ships are generating the most demand, followed by American Queen Voyages' American Countess and American Duchess.

The Most In-Demand Destinations

Europe continues to be the leading cruise region for luxury and river passengers heading into the fall while premium guests are most excited about the Caribbean. North America ranks second among premium and river cruisers while the Mediterranean ranks second among luxury cruise guests. In terms of individual countries, the Bahamas, Spain and the U.S. top the list in the premium, luxury and river cruise segments, respectively. Mexico and the U.S. are also popular among premium guests while luxury passengers are showing interest in Greece and Italy after first-ranked Spain. As for the river cruise market, Germany and the Netherlands round out the top three most sought-after countries.

The Most Sought-After Ports

When it comes to departure ports, South Florida reigns among premium cruise passengers, with Fort Lauderdale, Miami and Port Canaveral comprising the top three most popular this September. Miami is also the top departure port among luxury cruise guests, edging out Civitavecchia, Italy and Piraeus, Greece. For river sailings, Amsterdam, Budapest and Cairo are the most in-demand at the moment. As for the most popular ports to visit, premium guests have their sights set on the Caribbean, specifically Cozumel, Nassau and Royal Caribbean's CocoCay. Meanwhile, luxury travelers are a bit more split, with Barcelona; Kusadasi, Turkey and St. Bart's Gustavia rounding out the top three most preferred ports of call. The top river cruise ports to visit are a bit more surprising as Amsterdam and Cologne, Germany are joined in the top three by second-ranked Paducah, Kentucky at the confluence of the Tennessee and the Ohio Rivers.

The Top Cabin Types and Itinerary Lengths

It should come as no surprise that balcony cabins remain the most sought-after across all three cruise segments. Outside staterooms are second-most popular among luxury and river cruise passengers while premium guests prefer an inside cabin behind a balcony accommodation. Like the balcony cabin, seven-night itineraries are the most popular across the trio of markets. However, premium cruise guests are more likely to opt for a shorter sailing such as a five- or four-night cruise. Luxury passengers are the opposite in that they're more likely to book a longer sailing of 10 or 11 nights.

Interest in Travel Insurance

River cruise guests are the most likely to purchase travel insurance for their sailing, with four out of 10 indicating an interest in protecting their trip. One-quarter of luxury cruise passengers (25 percent) are likely to opt for a travel insurance policy while just 19 percent of premium cruise guests indicated an interest in protecting their sailing this fall.

Fall Booking Window Trends

River cruises have the longest booking window—the average number of days between the date the cruise was booked and the date it sails—this fall, at 357 days or nearly one calendar year. On the other end of the spectrum, premium cruises have the shortest at just 180 days or roughly six months. Luxury cruises tend to fall somewhere in between at 279 days.