

Cruising trends & destinations you should know about | Skyscanner Australia

Cruising is one of the hottest travel trends that shows no signs of easing up. Cruise ship operators are busily building more ships to keep up with demand for holidays afloat adding greater facilities and services to seduce passengers. [Skyscanner Australia](#) checks out what's hot in cruising holidays right now.

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Polar cruising to both ends of the globe

Antarctica is a dream destinations that continues to attract big numbers, despite the hefty cost of an Antarctic cruise. So too is the opposite end of the globe, the Arctic. Polar specialists Chimu Adventures, have seen huge growth in demand for Antarctica cruises in the past 18 months and recently launched Arctic cruise adventures (polar bear spotting is a highlight!).

“Thanks to improved accessibility and affordability, Antarctica numbers have reached record heights over the last few years and we expect interest to keep growing. A bucket list destination for many reasons – its remoteness, exclusivity, spectacular wildlife and dramatic landscapes, the White Continent is a truly inspiring destination,” said Chad Carey, co-founder of Chimu Adventures.

‘A trend we have been noticing recently is that more travellers see that Antarctica offers so much more than the traditional expedition cruise, from discovering the south pole on a ski craft, spending time at an Emperor penguin rookery with expert guides, or exploring the more remote Union Glacier Camp on the mainland.’



Kimberley cruising

Closer to home, the Kimberley region of North West Australia has had a bumper summer, with the wettest wet season since records began in 1900. This is great news for cruise passengers as many of the Kimberley attractions are the waterfalls that tumble spectacularly into the sea. Kimberley Quest II is small enough to nose right up to the base of waterfalls.

Compagnie du Ponant's L'Austral, more a luxury mega-yacht than cruise ship, is a new player in the Kimberley. Plying the route between Broome and Darwin over the winter, Ponant raises the sophistication level with French elegance.



Cruising for Millenials

No longer the stuffy domain of the well-heeled classes, cruising appeals to younger travellers with ships that are part boutique hotel, part yacht, part resort. Uniworld is revolutionising the cruise industry by creating a new brand for Millennials, U by Uniworld, aimed specifically at travellers aged 21 to 45. Nine enticing European cruise itineraries start in 2018 with a fresh approach to experiential travel, introducing an entire new demographic of traveller to cruising. Local pubs, the world's largest cocktail experience and rustic dinner in a bona fide cester are on their Amsterdam itinerary – need we say more?



Health and fitness onboard

Once the domain of the ‘all you can eat buffet’ with smorgasbords bulging at the seams, cruise operators are now incorporating lots of health and wellness activities. MSC Cruises offer a personalised wellness experience including onboard fitness checkup. Seaborn has a new mindful living program offering daily yoga and meditation classes and sea kayaking is popular with water babies. Royal Caribbean’s Quantam-class ships offer indoor roller skating, simulated sky diving, flowrider surfing and indoor sports courts complete with a floating DJ.

Thrill seekers should hop onboard Norwegian Breakaway for adrenalne pumping activities like The Plank, which cantilevers 8m from the side of the ship. More sedate activities include rock climbing and mini-golf.



Australian travellers seek unique cruise holidays

According to Cruise Express Managing Director Meg Hill, Australians are looking for cruise holiday packages that combine different experiences, or even back to back cruises. 'Google cruising and you are overwhelmed with choice. Australians are cruise savvy but are seeking unique experiences so we've packaged up cruise tours that have proved extremely popular such as rail and sail short breaks from Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne using heritage trains and short sector coastal cruises,' Ms Hill said.

'Australians are increasingly taking shorter cruises, more often but conversely, when they do take the big overseas trip, they are increasingly keen to take longer cruises, often by combining two or three cruises back to back. We recently created our own 'Three Queens' fly/cruise package where Australians could sail aboard all three Cunard liners in one holiday. As Australians cruise more, they are seeking more adventurous and remote destinations such as Norway and Iceland.'



New cruise ships

Lindblad Expeditions will launch National Geographic Quest (100 passengers) in mid 2017 and National Geographic Venture (100 passengers) in mid 2018. This on top of the recent launch of National Geographic Endeavour II to replace her tired predecessor in the Galapagos Islands.

The monolithic 5,700 passenger ship MSC Meraviglia will take the record for the largest cruise ship afloat when it launches mid 2017. Cirque du Soleil at Sea promises to be a highlight.

Traditionalists will have to wait until 2018 for Star Clipper's launch of the Flying Clipper, a five masted square-rigged sailing vessel. It's probably going to be worth it – think three swimming pools, including one that captures sunlight and distributes dancing tendrils of light into the ships atrium – we can't wait to see that!