



VisitAberdeenshire

BEING CRUISE READY BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES GUIDE



WELCOME

Cruising is big business. In 2016, some 24 million passengers were welcomed aboard cruise ships across the world and the global value of the market was \$117 billion.

With the development of new, world-class harbour facilities at Nigg Bay, Aberdeen will be able to host the majority of the world's cruising fleet, providing a fantastic opportunity for the area to capitalise on this high spending, growth market.

To make the most of the market opportunity, we need to provide high-quality onshore visitor experiences that make Aberdeenshire stand out as a 'must see, must visit' destination. Importantly, we need to combine this with world-class customer service once visitors arrive in port.

This guide aims to help businesses appreciate the scope and potential of the cruise market for Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire, understand how they can develop and package their services in order to attract cruise operators, and provide the best possible service to cruise passengers when they come onshore.

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THE CRUISE SHIP INDUSTRY

A cruise ship is a passenger ship used for pleasure voyages, where the voyage and ship's amenities are an integral part of the experience, as well as the different destinations along the way.

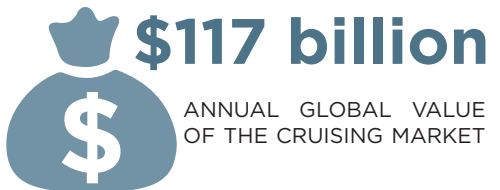
THE BIG PICTURE

24 MILLION



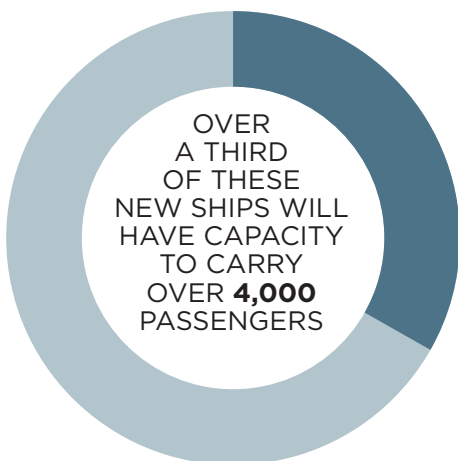
GLOBAL NUMBER OF CRUISE TRIP PASSENGERS IN 2016

AVERAGE ANNUAL GROWTH RATE IN INTERNATIONAL CRUISE PASSENGER NUMBERS SINCE 1990.



475

CRUISE SHIPS IN SERVICE AROUND THE WORLD IN 2016



70 NEW SHIPS SCHEDULED TO COME INTO SERVICE BY 2022 PROVIDING CAPACITY FOR AN ADDITIONAL 180,000 PASSENGERS



TYPES OF CRUISE SHIPS

Cruise ships tend to fall into three categories, irrespective of their size:



ULTRA-LUXURY CRUISE SHIPS

Top of the range vessels for discerning travellers who want and expect the very best in service, food and staterooms. From all-suite ships to champagne on tap and butler service, the on-board experience offers the ultimate in style and sophistication. Examples include Silversea Cruises, Oceania, Cunard and Hebridean Princess.



LUXURY CRUISE SHIPS

Luxury cruise ships are often family-oriented and offer outstanding service with itineraries covering some of the world's best known and sought-after destinations. Examples include the Carnival Group, P&O, Holland America, Fred. Olsen, Cunard and Royal Caribbean.



EXPEDITION AND ADVENTURE SHIPS

In contrast with others, adventure or expedition cruises are very much about the destination, not necessarily the ship itself. The ships are generally smaller than other types and tend to carry passengers with more specialist interests. Many go to inhospitable climes and may involve land-based activities which can be strenuous. Operators include Voyages of Discovery, Noble Caledonia and Swan Hellenic.

WHY DO PEOPLE TAKE CRUISES?

The global cruise industry is booming, with experts predicting strong and sustained future market growth. Cruise comparison website ‘Cruise Critic’ lists ten key reasons why cruising is the number one choice for many of today’s holidaymakers:

<p>1 A cruise offers great value for money, with food, accommodation, entertainment and transport between destinations all included.</p>	<p>2  Passengers can see multiple destinations, but unpack only once!</p>	<p>3  Cruise ships are family friendly and fun for all ages.</p>	<p>4  Cruise ships come in all shapes and sizes, so there’s something to suit everybody.</p>	<p>5  Ships offer a variety of on-board activities.</p>
<p>6  Because cruise holidays package everything together, they’re very easy to plan.</p>	<p>7  Cruise ships have everything on-board that passengers could possibly want.</p>	<p>8  A cruise is one of the best ways to see the most exotic and foreign destinations in the world in a safe and easy way.</p>	<p>9  Cruising is romantic!</p>	<p>10  Cruising is social and a great way to meet new friends.</p>

A CHANGING MARKET

The age profile of the cruising market has lowered in recent years. A new generation – the Millennials and Generation X – are taking to cruising in increasing numbers.

The latest Cruise Line International Association research also shows that **48% of non-cruisers** have expressed an interest in cruising.

Responding to this rapidly changing market, cruise line companies have adapted their offers to meet the needs and expectations of today’s increasingly sophisticated passengers.


THE KEY TRENDS

- Passengers expect online connectivity on board ships.
- There is rising demand for luxury travel on cruise ships.
- Cruise ships themselves are increasingly the passenger destination as their range of on-board amenities and experiences expands.
- Overnight stays at ports of call are increasing.
- Inter-generational cruising is increasing as on-board amenities cater for all age groups.
- More cruises are offering passengers volunteering opportunities.
- Cruise ships are increasingly being designed to appeal to the cultures of their main passenger groups.

Source: Cruise Line International Association ‘Cruise Industry Outlook’


DID YOU KNOW?

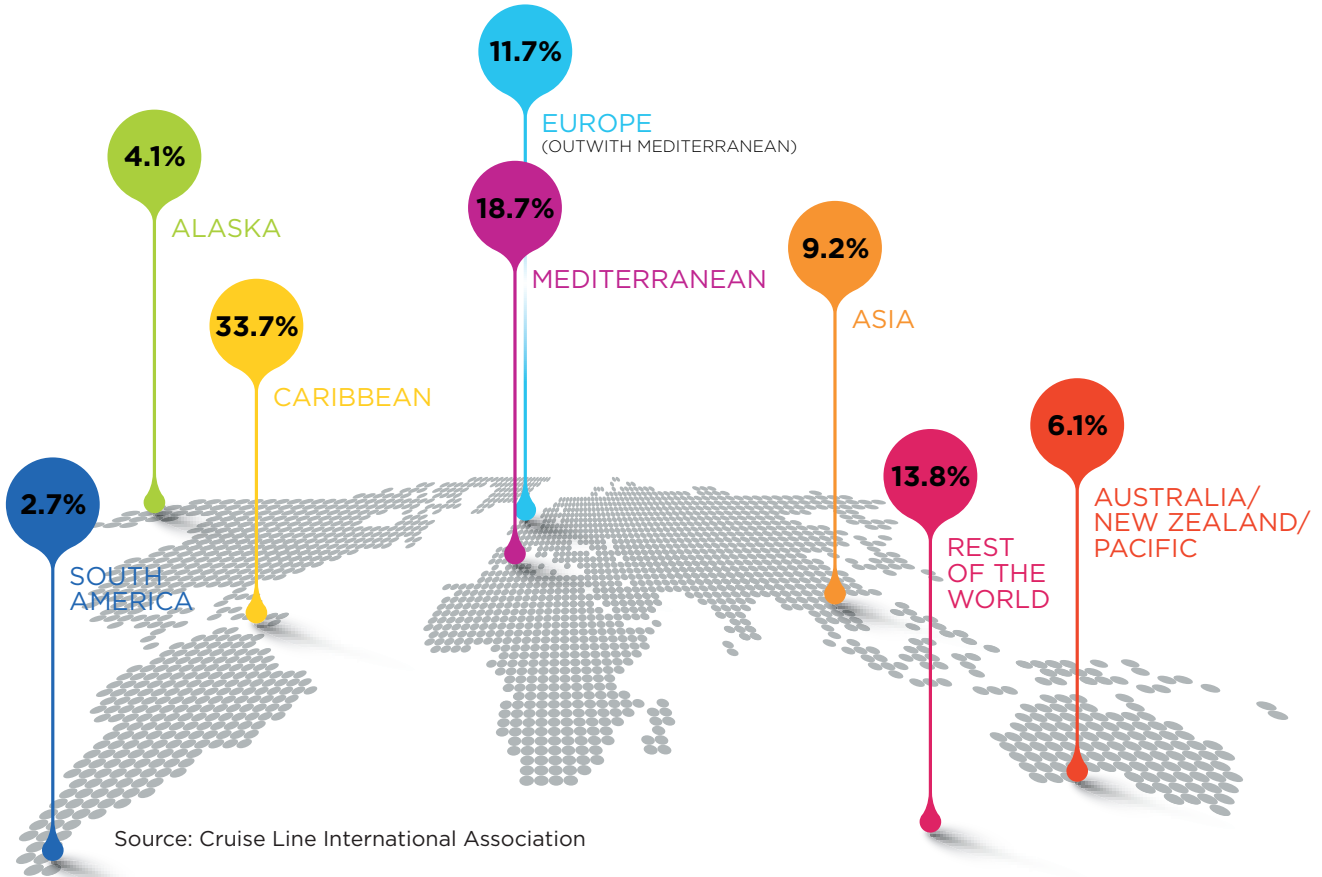
Nearly two thirds of UK & Ireland cruise passengers booked more than one cruise holiday in 2015


DID YOU KNOW?

Over **80%** of passengers think that a cruise is a good way to sample a destination they may want to visit again on a subsequent land-based holiday

MOST POPULAR CRUISE DESTINATIONS

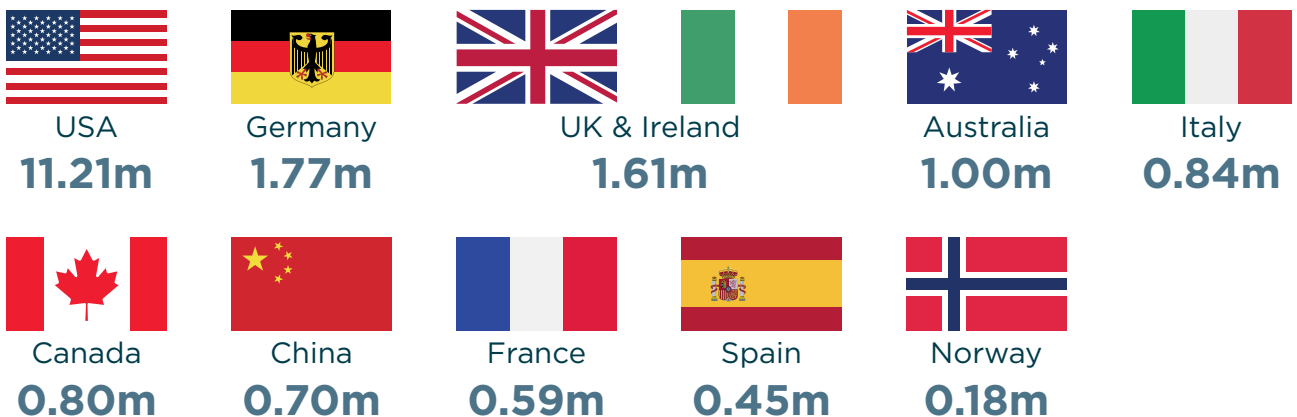
Cruising Area and % of global cruise ship capacity deployed



Northern Europe currently ranks third in the list of the world's most popular cruise destinations, but its popularity is set to grow as cruise companies move ships away from perceived trouble spots and look for new destinations and experiences to offer their customers.

ORIGINS OF CRUISE PASSENGERS

Countries generating cruise passengers / Number of residents booking cruises per annum



North America generates the greatest number of cruise passengers, followed by Europe.

Source: Cruise Line International Association



THE CRUISE SECTOR IN SCOTLAND

SCOTLAND ATTRACTS CRUISE SHIPS AND PASSENGERS FROM AROUND THE WORLD AND IS HIGH ON THE LIST OF 'MUST SEE, MUST EXPERIENCE' DESTINATIONS.

CRUISE SHIP ARRIVALS AND PASSENGERS IN SCOTLAND



YEAR	SHIPS	PASSENGERS
2005	305	166,401
2010	342	268,481
2017	810	656,510
% change 2005 - 2010	12%	61%
% change 2010 - 2017	137%	145%

Source: Cruise Scotland, TTC International and Roger Tym & Partners


DID YOU KNOW?

CRUISE SCOTLAND, THE REPRESENTATIVE BODY OF THE CRUISE SECTOR NORTH OF THE BORDER, HAS 17 SCOTTISH PORTS IN MEMBERSHIP, INCLUDING ABERDEEN AND PETERHEAD.

www.cruisescotland.com

The value of passenger spend to Scotland is currently

£72 MILLION
PER YEAR

In 2017, Scotland hosts a record

808 CRUISE SHIP
welcoming **CALLS**
656,000 PASSENGERS

Cruise tourism has enjoyed SIGNIFICANT GROWTH in Scotland, with port calls, passenger numbers and economic value more than doubling since 2010.

This growth shows little sign of slowing down, with both tour operators and destinations continuing to invest heavily in the market.

WHO DOES WHAT IN THE CRUISE SHIP SECTOR

THE KEY PLAYERS

There are many different types of organisations involved in the cruise ship sector.



CRUISE SHIP OPERATORS / TRAVEL AGENTS

The cruise journey starts at home, with passengers researching itineraries and prices via web portals or agencies including: **travel agencies; cruise ship company websites; or cruise 'consolidators'**, where different cruise options can be compared via a central web portal. When passengers book with a cruise ship company they can purchase from a range of shore excursions. These trips and experiences can also be booked on-board at the ship's excursion desk, or online before departing on the cruise.



PORT AUTHORITIES

Port authorities are the official organisations that control and manage activities in a port. They are responsible for safely handling ship arrivals and departures.



SHIPPING AGENTS

Shipping agents are licensed agents in a port who transact a ship's business, such as insurance or documentation, on behalf of the owners. They also arrange provisions and fuel.



GROUND HANDLERS

Ground handlers work on contract to the cruise ship companies. Their role is to develop, organise and sell shore excursion itineraries to cruise ship companies, who then sell these on to passengers.



INDEPENDENT EXCURSION PROVIDERS

Independent from the cruise lines, these companies offer shore excursions directly to passengers who may have researched excursion opportunities at individual ports of call.



WELCOME TEAMS

In many successful ports, 'welcome teams' - often made up of volunteers from the local community - co-ordinate cruise activities to ensure that the welcome, information service and visitor experience for arriving passengers is exceptional.



TOUR GUIDES

At most cruise ports, tour guides are an essential part of the overall visitor experience, providing a guide service to passengers via shore excursion or cruise ship companies, or offering their own tours via the ground handlers or independently.



LOCAL BUSINESSES

At every port of call, local businesses including visitor attractions, activity providers, shops, cafes, bars and restaurants combine to provide memorable onshore visitor experiences.



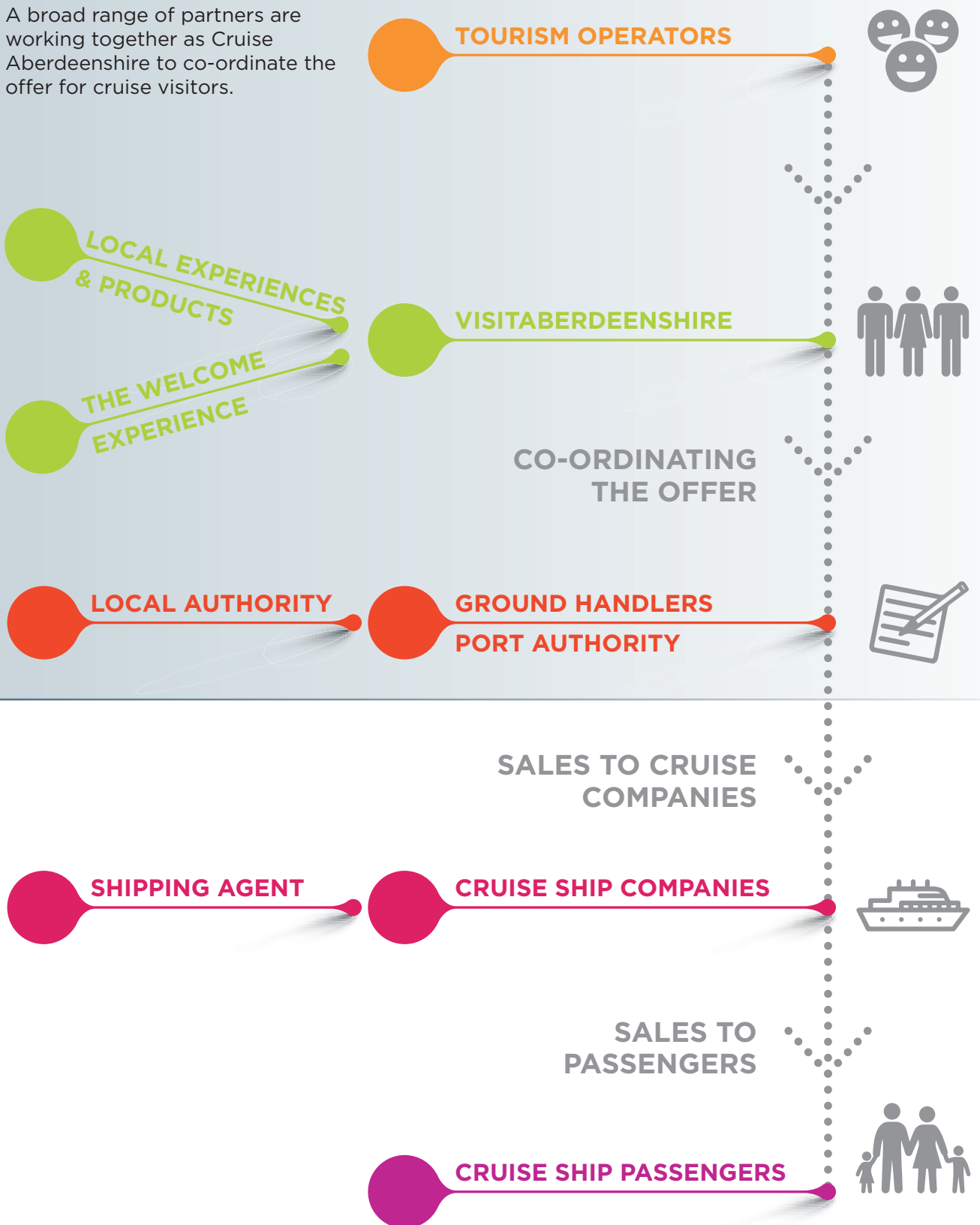
DESTINATION GROUPS

Destination groups have a crucial role to play in marketing a port and co-ordinating / consolidating the onshore visitor offer and experience. In the North-east of Scotland, that destination group is known as Cruise Aberdeenshire.

CRUISE ABERDEENSHIRE

CO-ORDINATING THE OFFER

A broad range of partners are working together as Cruise Aberdeenshire to co-ordinate the offer for cruise visitors.



WHAT CRUISE PASSENGERS ARE LOOKING FOR

These days, there is no such thing as a generic 'cruise passenger' and passengers will have a range of different needs with regard to their onshore activities.

Broadly, passengers fall into three categories:

1. Those who have no pre-booked itinerary but who may come ashore to visit the destination out of interest and may make impulse purchases within the port and destination.
2. Those who have pre-booked their shore excursions via the cruise company or independently. Often they may pre-book a half day tour, leaving time for independent exploration.
3. Those who will remain on board to make use of the on-board services.

Those who come onshore are increasingly seeking unique experiences which allow them to get 'under the skin' of the places they visit and take part in more active pursuits.

The cruise companies have responded to this trend by offering a more diverse range of active experiences. As a result, cruise ship passengers may interact with many different types of business during their stay, including transport operators, visitor attractions, activity and experience providers, tour guides and retail and catering outlets.



THE BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY FOR ABERDEEN & ABERDEENSHIRE

THE CURRENT PICTURE

27 cruise ships were scheduled to call at Aberdeen Harbour in 2017, carrying a total of **1,400** passengers. Restrictions on ship size at the current port mean that most of these existing arrivals are smaller ‘expedition’ type cruise ships.

Peterhead Harbour is able to handle larger cruise ships with capacity for up to **750** passengers. **Five** calls were expected in 2017, including ships operated by Saga and Seabourn Cruises.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

A **£350 million** development of facilities at Aberdeen Harbour, scheduled to be completed by 2020, will see the port expand into Nigg Bay.

The new facilities will provide **1,400 metres of deep-water quay**, with a water depth of up to **10.5 metres**, revolutionising the port’s capacities and opening the door to the majority of the world’s cruise ship fleet.

THE BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY

In welcoming a potentially large number of cruise ships, passengers and crew from 2020, we have a superb opportunity to showcase Aberdeen & Aberdeenshire’s attractions to high earning, high spending visitors from across the world.

The rewards are potentially huge, but we need to be prepared.

Our challenge as ‘Cruise Aberdeenshire’ will be to collectively and individually deliver a world-class cruise port with the distinctive and exceptional range of shore excursions and services required by today’s highly competitive cruise market.

“Aberdeen is a perfect gateway to the attractions and experiences of the North-east of Scotland. European Cruise Service looks forward to working with the port authority and tourism businesses in the area to ensure that cruise ship passengers receive a warm welcome that exceeds their expectations and leaves enduring memories of a wonderful visit.”

RICHARD ALEXANDER, EUROPEAN CRUISE SERVICE





CREATING A WORLD-CLASS VISITOR EXPERIENCE

“For cruise passengers, it’s all about learning and experiencing and being part of the local community for the day. Businesses need to think creatively about how they can broaden their offer to give these visitors a real flavour of the local area.”

RUPERT WOODARD, EXCURSIONS LTD

Cruise companies offer the absolute highest standards for their customers aboard ship and expect their chosen destinations to do the same.

READ ON FOR OUR TOP TIPS TO CREATING A WORLD-CLASS VISITOR EXPERIENCE.

CREATING UNIQUE EXPERIENCES

- Think about how you can create offers that will ‘immerse’ cruise visitors in local culture, such as traditional music sessions or food & drink tastings.
- Tap into the trend for more active onshore experiences by offering pursuits such as cycle hire, guided walks or wildlife watching.
- Consider whether working in partnership with other like-minded businesses could add unique or distinctive elements to your offer and help bring the ‘wow’ factor.
- Remember that cruise ship passengers only have a limited amount of time in port, so onshore experiences need to be tailored accordingly.
- Passengers have varying requirements and budgets, so your offer needs to be flexible.
- Cruise companies and ground handlers are looking for seamless, hassle-free experiences so your offer must be accessible, safe and well-organised.
- Think about how passengers will reach you, and whether you will need to provide transport from the port.
- Consider who your offer is aimed at and how you will reach them. For more advice on getting into sales channels see the ‘Building Your Offer’ section.

CASE STUDY

JACOBITE CRUISES

Loch Ness, with its links to the legendary monster and iconic attractions such as Urquhart Castle, has long been a ‘must see’ for cruise ship passengers coming to Scotland.

Recognising the business potential, award-winning Jacobite Cruises, that offer five star boat trips on the Loch as well as combined coach and cruise tours from Inverness city centre, has been working closely with shore excursion companies at Invergordon, Scotland’s busiest cruise port, to sell its trips to passengers through cruise line excursion programmes.

Freda Newton, Director, Jacobite Cruises Ltd, says: “We recognise that cruise ship passengers are time-limited at each destination they visit and adapt our offer accordingly. Customer service is everything to Jacobite and we look to ensure they have an unforgettable time with us.

“By providing an outstanding visitor experience and a genuinely warm welcome, we exceed their expectations and ensure they go home with fantastic memories of their time in the Loch Ness area”. www.jacobite.co.uk



TOP TIP

As cruise passengers have varying needs, they should be able to access your product in a number of different ways.

CASE STUDY ORKNEY

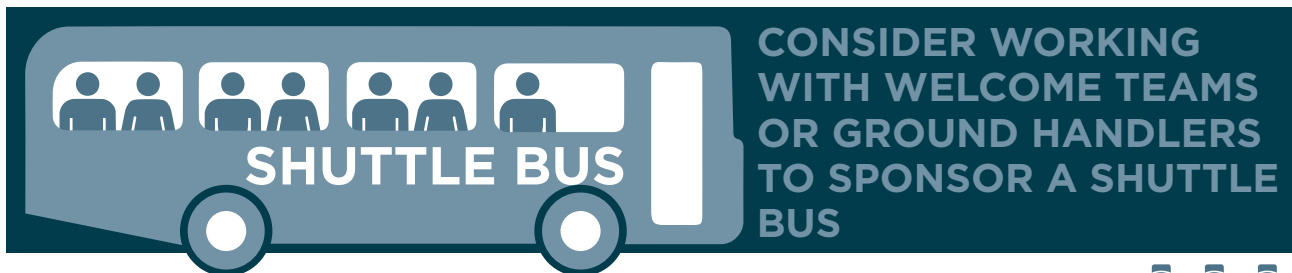
In recognition of the growing number of passengers doing their own independent tours when they arrive in Orkney, Orkney Council’s Marine Services team fund the operation of a regular complimentary shuttle bus between Hatston and Kirkwall town centre on days when cruise ships are in port. The bus drops passengers off at Kirkwall Travel Centre which incorporates Kirkwall Visitor Information Centre and the main bus station for onward travel throughout Orkney.

A Meet ‘n’ Greet team of volunteers is based at the Travel Centre to answer cruise passenger enquiries and advise on things to see and do.

www.cruise-orkney.com

MAKING YOUR BUSINESS ‘CRUISE-FRIENDLY’

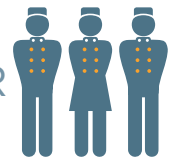
- Retailers, catering outlets and visitor attractions are the customer face of Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire and what you do will shape passengers’ perceptions of us as a destination for ever more!
- Familiarise yourself with which ships are arriving when. Lists are available on the Aberdeen Harbour Board and Peterhead Port Authority websites.
- Consider promoting incentivised offers to passengers, redeemed on production of a ship’s cruise card.
- Display a ‘welcome’ message for passengers at the entry to your premises to make them feel valued and special.
- Offer cruise passengers a taste of the local area by providing a menu based around local produce or the chance to sample local food and drink.



A WELCOMING CITY – BON ACCORD!

- The arrival experience sets the tone for the remainder of the ship’s visit. Let’s make it memorable for all the right reasons!
- Most successful cruise destinations take a ‘welcome team’ approach to hosting cruise ships, with members of local community groups acting as unpaid ambassadors. Could your group take on this ambassadorial role?
- Think about providing a quayside ‘showcase’ to provide local information to passengers. Laying on local food, music or dance will also make passengers feel they have arrived at a vibrant and exciting destination.
- At some ports, destination and community groups have teamed up with Harbour Authorities to offer complementary shuttle buses from the port to the city centre or nearby towns. Could this work for Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire?

LOOKING AFTER THE CREWS



- Don’t forget about the crew! The ratio of crew to passengers is very high, normally about 3:1 but it can be higher.
- Studies suggest that around 30% of crew will go ashore for rest and recreation and to stock up at any port of call. They tend not to be interested in ‘touristy’ items but are looking for provisions in supermarkets, food outlets and clothing shops.
- Crew members may be unfamiliar with a destination if it’s the first time they have visited. The type of arrival information they are likely to need is very similar to passengers.
- If you’re a retailer or catering outlet, think about offering a similar range of incentives to crew members as to passengers.

BUILDING YOUR OFFER

The first step is to consider which type of passengers you wish to attract:

- Those who have booked organised excursions via the cruise companies and their contracted ground handlers.
- Those who have researched and booked their own onshore excursions and experiences.
- Those with no fixed excursion plans, but who may come onshore to explore at their own pace.

For cruise companies and ground handlers, tour sales are a critical revenue source which can mean the difference between a port being viable or not.

When cruise passengers book directly with a provider, the cruise company loses revenue. As a result, the port call becomes less viable and may even be excluded from future itineraries.

This does not preclude independent sales, of course, but there is a need to ensure that profitability of the call, visitor experience and value for money are maximised.

GETTING YOUR OFFER INTO THE SALES CHANNELS

ORGANISED EXCURSIONS

Ground handlers are key partners in each port and are always looking for unique, high quality visitor experiences which they can sell via the cruise ship companies to passengers.

While ground handlers are happy to speak to local businesses and providers direct, it is beneficial for both the port and the cruise company if new experiences are consolidated locally and then sold via the ground handler to the cruise ship company.

In Aberdeenshire, this co-ordinating role will be undertaken by VisitAberdeenshire. As such, if you are planning a new offer aimed at the cruise market, your first port of call should be the business development team at VisitAberdeenshire.

INDEPENDENTS

Increasingly, passengers are researching experiences and offers online in advance of their trip and booking direct with the relevant shore excursion companies or activity/experience providers.

As there are currently no shore excursion companies offering excursions out of Aberdeen or Peterhead, the best way of reaching these independent explorers will be via your website.

WALK-OFFS

'Walk-offs' may be influenced by special offers and promotions within the port or destination, however placards on the quayside are not normally welcomed by cruise ship companies. If you want to attract 'walk off' business, contact VisitAberdeenshire to discuss the best way to promote your offer via the official welcome/information channels.

WHICHEVER SALES CHANNEL YOU DECIDE TO USE, REMEMBER THAT YOUR OFFER NEEDS TO BE EASILY ACCESSIBLE IN TERMS OF TIME AND DISTANCE FROM THE PORT, AND TAILORED TO A WIDE VARIETY OF PASSENGERS AND POCKETS.

THE NEXT STEPS FOR YOUR BUSINESS

1

Assess if your offer is appropriate for the cruise ship market – is it of the right quality? Is it unique or readily adaptable for cruise ship passengers? What partners do you need, such as activity operators and tour guides? How can you ensure that it meets the quality levels expected by cruise ship passengers?



2

Consider if you need to join up with other operators to enhance the overall experience, such as a coach company to bring passengers to your premises or other attractions to add to the itinerary.



3

Consider how you can add value to it, perhaps by linking your activity with a high quality and cruise-friendly catering outlet.



4

Determine what the offer price might be – remember there may be commission added onto it by your sales agent and the cruise company.



5

Provide VisitAberdeenshire with details of your offer, so they can assess its suitability for the cruise market and include it in a co-ordinated approach to ground handlers and port authorities.



REMEMBER THAT THERE WILL BE A LONG LEAD-IN TIME BETWEEN AGREEMENT TO SELL YOUR OFFER AND THE FIRST VISITORS – TYPICALLY TWO OR THREE YEARS.

Most of all, keep it friendly and make it unique.



FURTHER INFORMATION & SUPPORT

Cruise Aberdeenshire is working with the ports and cruise companies to make Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire an attractive and unique destination for cruise passengers. If you'd like to keep up to date with opportunities to welcome cruise ship passengers, please contact info@visitabdn.com

USEFUL WEBSITES

VisitAberdeenshire www.visitabdn.com

VisitScotland www.visitscotland.org

Scottish Enterprise www.scottish-enterprise.com

Aberdeen Harbour Board www.aberdeen-harbour.co.uk

Peterhead Port Authority www.peterheadport.co.uk

Cruise Scotland www.cruisescotland.com

Cruise Lines International Association www.cruising.org



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