

Three dozen cruise ships expected in Seychelles this season, a 20% increase

The Seychelles' Port of Victoria has started welcoming holidaymakers now that the cruise ship season is open. MS Costa neoRiviera and MSC Sinfonia - two cruise ships from Italian-based companies - were the first to dock in Port Victoria in October, carrying 1,900 and 1,400 guests respectively.



©byvalet via [123RF](#) - Cruise ship anchored at Port Victoria, Mahe Island, Seychelles

The Seychelles' cruise ship season lasts from October to around April, and local authorities expect to see an increase in passenger arrivals this season.

Three dozen cruise ships are expected this season. Last year around 30 cruise ships docked in Seychelles' Port Victoria.

An ideal cruise destination

The chief executive of the Seychelles Tourism Board, Sherin Francis, said that the 115-island archipelago in the western Indian Ocean is an ideal cruise destination as it is surrounded by secluded powder-white beaches and clear turquoise waters.

"We are encouraged that Seychelles is becoming more and more popular among the cruise liners," said Francis.

"The various cruise ship calls this season will give the Seychelles islands the chance to showcase itself to potential visitors with the hope that their short experience will whet their appetite for future visits. That is why it is of paramount importance that their short stays are as real and enriching as possible," added the chief executive.

The chief executive of the Seychelles Port Authority, Andre Ciseau, said they are making a great effort to ensure that Port Victoria becomes the best port of call in the region for cruise ships. "These cruise ships bring additional revenue to the economy. With the decline in piracy and increase in maritime safety, we are seeing an increase in cruise ship docking the island nation," Ciseau told SNA.

Enticing more cruise liners to include the vanilla islands

He added that cruise ships provide an alternative for tourists from all over the world who like to take their travel adventures a little slower.

In July this year, Seychelles came out as the top sought-after destination for cruise ships in the region, winning the Indian Ocean's Leading Cruise Destination at the World Travel Awards 2017.

A lot of efforts in recent years have also been geared at enticing more cruise liners to include the vanilla islands on their itinerary. The Vanilla islands - an affiliation of islands in the Indian Ocean - was set up as a travel destination brand. It comprises Seychelles, Mauritius, Madagascar, Reunion, Mayotte, and the Maldives. The Minister of Tourism, Civil Aviation, Ports and Marine, Maurice Loustau-Lalanne, said: "Our marketing efforts and that of the Vanilla Islands are bearing encouraging results for the 2017/18 cruise ship season.

Loustau-Lalanne said this year is special as Seychelles will be welcoming a number of smaller expedition cruise-vessels going to other granitic and coralline islands of the archipelago.

The majority of cruise ships to Seychelles dock in Port Victoria - the main port of the Seychelles which opened in 1972. Visitors upon arrival are greeted at a special reception area, accompanied by traditional music and dancing from the islands. The passengers can then be whisked away on tour buses to be guided through lush and scenic granitic mountains and beach-side scenery as well as walking tours of the islands' tiny but friendly capital of Victoria.

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