

Cruise association reveals North American passenger growth and trends

Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA), the world's largest cruise industry trade organization, has released the latest global cruise passenger statistics.

Cruising continued at a paced growth around the world with an almost 7% increase from 2017 to 2018, totaling 28.5 million passengers. Research also shows North American travelers continue to embrace cruising with an annual passenger upswing of 9% (14.2 million passengers) in 2018.

While the cruise sector represents 2% of the overall global travel industry, this segment is on pace with international tourism worldwide. According to the latest UNWTO World Tourism Barometer, international tourist arrivals grew 6% in 2018, totaling 1.4 billion, while cruise travel grew at almost 7%.

"It is not surprising that cruise travel is on par with overall international tourism growth. Cruising makes international travel accessible for travelers worldwide and it is apparent in the 2018 CLIA global passenger findings," said Kelly Craighead, President and CEO, CLIA. "From a renewed interest in cruises to the Mediterranean to a significant increase in adventure cruising, travelers are embracing cruise travel more than ever before."

Cruise passenger insights in North America

Mediterranean: Globally, Mediterranean cruises saw more than 4 million passengers worldwide. Of those, more than 700,000 passengers came from North America, up 29% from the previous year.

Caribbean popularity: Cruise travelers from North America dominate cruise travel to the easily accessible Caribbean. Continued growth in cruising to the Caribbean, Bahamas, and Bermuda is up 7% to 9.8 million passengers in 2018.

Alaskan adventures: Aligning with global insights, North American cruisers made up the significant portion of cruise passengers traveling to Alaska in 2018 with 906,019 cruise passengers, increasing to 14% from 2017.

Growing destinations: Other growing North American destinations include the Hawaii and North Atlantic Coast region, Mexico, California, and Pacific which increased 4% in 2018, totaling 1.3 million cruise passengers.