

# CRUISING TO SUCCESS

**A guide to working with the cruise industry for Portsmouth tourism businesses**

# Introduction

The Visit Portsmouth Team have worked with Portsmouth International Port to create this document as a guide for businesses working with the Cruise Industry.

The aim of the guide is to:



Update local tourism businesses about Portsmouth's growth as a cruise port.



Evidence how this growth is adding value to the local economy.



Provide advice on how local businesses can benefit from this growth by working with cruise.

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# Cruise industry insights

Cruise Insights: 2024 State of the Cruise Industry report by the Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA)

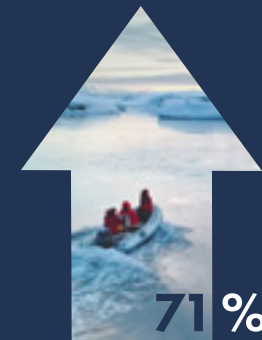
2023 passenger volume reached  
**31.7 million**  
surpassing 2019 by **7%**.

The number of new-to-cruise is increasing – **27%** of cruisers over the past two years are new-to-cruise, an increase of **12%** over the past year.

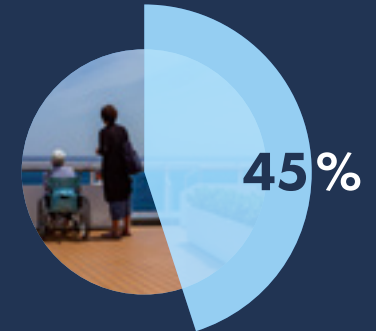


Cruises are a top choice for multi-generational travel – with more than **30%** of families travelling by cruise with at least two generations and **28%** of cruise travellers travelling with three to five generations.

**73%** of cruise travellers say that travel advisors have a meaningful influence on their decision to cruise.



Expedition and exploration are the fastest-growing sectors of cruise tourism, with a **71% increase** in passengers travelling on expedition itineraries from 2019 to 2023.



Accessible tour excursions are on the rise—with **45%** of cruise passengers booking an accessible tour for their most recent cruise.

Full report available here:  
<https://cruising.org/en-gb/news-and-research/press-room/2024/april/state-of-the-cruise-industry-report>

Cruise Europe – some highlights regarding local economic benefit of Cruise taken from the most recent Factsheet



Europe is the **second largest** cruise market in the world.

Cruise passengers have a direct and indirect impact on the local economy.



**58%** of Homeport/Turnaround passengers stay an average of 2.3 nights in the destination before or after the cruise.

Generating future visits to the destination:



**78.7%** of visitors are visiting the city or region for the first time.



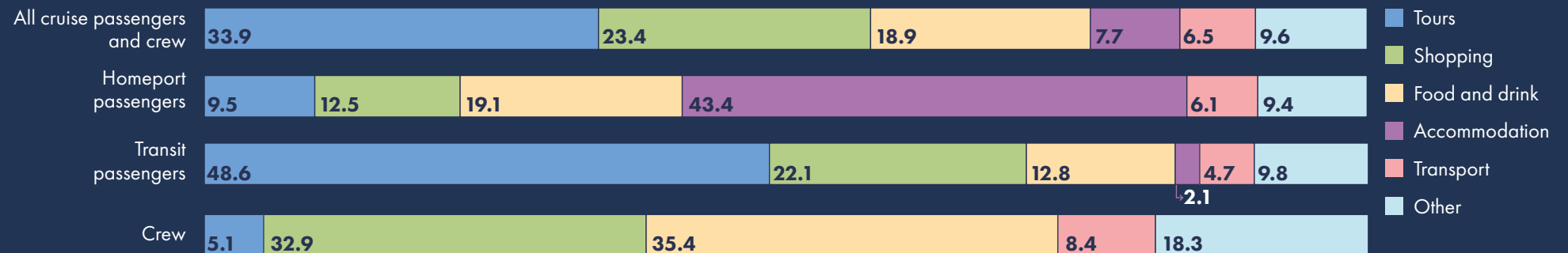
**55%** of visitors say they are likely to return.

Cruise Line spend

Per passenger the average spend is:



The average spend per cruise passenger in Europe is **86.03 Euros (approximately £72.00)**. This is broken down as follows:



# Portsmouth International Port and Cruise

Spend figures based on Cruise Europe's' most recent commissioned research, across Cruise Europe ports as a whole.

Portsmouth cruise arrivals have grown by **154%** since 2019.

Expected sustainable cruise growth of **5-10%** year on year.


Port to develop pre/post cruise options, for city benefit.

Based on data, potential for **£7m-£8m** cruise tourism spend within the city during 2025.

**29,000 Cruise Transit passengers expected during 2025**

**Evidenced data shows 50% (14,500) stay local x £60 spend = £870,000.**

 Attractions = £422,820


 Shopping = £192,270

 Food, beverage & dining = £111,360

 Transport = £40,890

**43,000 crew expected x £22 and 100% stay local = £946,000.**

 Attractions = £48,246

 Shopping = £311,234

 Food, beverage & dining = £334,884


The wealth of local tours, attractions, shopping and bars/restaurants on the Port's doorstep points to a higher than 'UK average' yield.


**64,000 Turn (Homeport) passengers expected during 2025 (excluding Saga\*)**


**37,120**  
will stay in the city pre/post cruise

**35,200**  
likely to return to the city


**Average passenger spend x £180 = £11,520,000.**

 Attractions = £1,094,400

 Shopping = £1,440,000

 Food, beverage & dining = £2,200,320

 Hotels = £4,999,680

 Transport = £702,720

Crew spend considered minimal due to debark/embark process.

\*The total including Saga is 118,000. Saga have been excluded here as they provide a complete service which includes travel to and from the Port.

# Working with the Cruise Market

Portsmouth International Port and the Visit Portsmouth team continue to highlight the city's breadth of offer to both cruise lines and shore excursion companies at meetings and events.

Cruises into Portsmouth and Southampton offer opportunities for local tourism businesses. There are two types of cruise visit: turnaround/homeport calls where passengers are leaving or joining a cruise ship and day/transit calls where the cruise ship and passengers are staying the day in the city and area.

## Turnaround/Homeport Cruise Visits

The turnaround visits offer opportunities especially for local hotels to provide accommodation and potentially parking for cruise passengers joining or leaving their cruise. Many cruise lines will have arrangements in place already with hotels in the region. A quick online search of cruise lines entering the city is a good way to find out how people are booking their accommodation. In addition to the cruise line websites there are also a range of websites offering options for pre-cruise accommodation which may offer marketing opportunities for local hotels.

There is always the opportunity to pick up those who would rather book directly with the hotel and offering additional services such as transfer to the port or parking can help with this. Collaboration between accommodation providers and local attractions to create attractive pre and post-cruise packages could also be attractive.

## Day/Transit Cruise Visits

The transit cruise visits offer more opportunities for local attractions and venues.

Organised excursions – these are generally arranged by shore excursion companies who deal directly with businesses on behalf of the cruise lines. Passengers might buy the trips while on board, at the point of booking the cruise or the tours may be included in the overall cruise price.

Often there will be trips to London, Stonehenge and Bath for example as the cruise line has sold the cruise partly on the back of these opportunities. The best way to try and get your business included in an arranged excursion is to contact the shore excursion company direct. This will enable you to find out what might appeal to them and what they need from you in terms of pricing and booking etc. It is worth thinking of what you can offer that would be bespoke for the passengers, rather than something they can easily find online and book themselves.

It can take a long time to see any success and sometimes, even if the shore excursion company really like what you are offering, the cruise line will have a different view and still reject the tour.

The main shore excursion companies operating in the UK currently are:

- Abercrombie and Kent
- Communications and Destinations
- European Cruise Service UK Ltd
- Excursions Ltd
- Intercruises

In addition to organised excursions, Portsmouth International Port currently offer a shuttle bus service for cruise passengers who prefer to explore the city on their own. The shuttle bus itineraries vary by brand, but typically stop at the City Centre, the Hard and Southsea. Passengers are welcomed by volunteer Cruise Ambassadors who will have a range of information to give out provided by the Visit Portsmouth team. If you have a specific special offer you would like to provide then this can be shared, as long as it is not competing with a tour being sold on-board the ship – for example if the ship were selling a tour including The D-Day Story they would prefer that volunteers were not giving out 20% off vouchers on the same day.

The crew – this is another opportunity not to be forgotten! The crew of the cruise ships is large in number and often keen especially to go shopping. They can use the shuttle bus and special offers can be relayed to the ship ahead of time to encourage them to your business.

# Case studies

Here are two case studies from Portsmouth businesses outlining their experience and learning regarding working with cruise.

## Case Study 1

Hovertravel, Neil Chapman, Managing Director

Neil and the team started direct conversations with shore excursion companies in 2024 and have the following learnings to share.

You need to take ownership of your own success and be tenacious, Hovertravel now have a few bookings for 2025 and enquires for 2026 and 2027.

Flexibility on payment terms and cancellation policies is key.

Focus on your own business rather than pulling together a few different options for a tour, although you can suggest these. Think about what you can offer that is unique, local and different, that cruise passengers cannot purchase outside of the planned tour.

Consider the risks to the cruise company, they need to be 100% sure that they can get the passengers back to the cruise ship on time.

An off the shelf hovercraft experience on the Solent was not enough, so Hovertravel created 'Solent Iconic Landmarks' and amended the route to include going around the Palmerston Forts and to the Mary Rose Buoy with commentary for uniqueness and added interest. Passengers also meet and receive a certificate signed by the Captain.

Luxury can sometimes be a factor – be prepared to upscale to a more luxurious offer if requested.

Short excursions can sell well as the shore excursion companies can sell two in a day and the passengers can go back to the cruise ship for lunch.

On that point – Hovertravel were advised not to offer food and drink as this can be complex for the shore excursion companies if out of their control.

When quoting keep the details succinct, Hovertravel created a simple template with everything clearly laid out – price, itinerary, cancellation policy etc. Write the product details as if for the customer so it can be easily lifted and used.

Don't look at the retail price of your offer, just make sure it is sustainable for your business!

Use the shore excursion companies, this is the best route to bookings for your business.

Plan ahead, think about availability 12-36 months in advance, this needs to be assured and you need to be able to respond quickly to requests, have all the information to hand etc. Don't over commit.

Work with the Port, the Cruise Ambassadors and Visit Portsmouth to support visiting cruises.

## Case Study 2

The D-Day Story, Ross Fairbrother, General Manager

Over the past three years, The D-Day Story has seen increasing numbers of visitors from cruise passengers.

The team have worked to build relationships with the shore excursion companies which has been central to this growth and the museum now sees regular bookings from three of the main UK organisations.

We took the time to understand what the companies wanted for their customers and have adapted our offer to suit this. Often the visitor standard offer won't be enough for the cruise visitor or may not fit within their itinerary and available visit time so you have to be flexible to ensure they still have a great experience. For us that has included developing bespoke tours, opening at different times or generally offering something which might not be available to the general visitor all of which have been well received and led to regular bookings.

Flexibility is key.

Alongside booked visits, walk up trade is also a key opportunity. Knowing the cruise calendar and the days when there are calls in the city is also important. We see a significant uplift on these days so we not only ensure we are prepared for this from everything from additional staffing to retail stock availability but also recognise that many potential visitors are new to the city and may not know exactly what we have to offer so factor this into our welcome to encourage people to visit.

Working with the Cruise Ambassadors has also been key with this as they will help to promote your venue to those passengers staying in the city who are not on a booked excursion.

## Useful Information

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### Free training for your team

Visit Portsmouth offers free online training for any staff members across the city who are likely to interact with visitors.

The training covers the city's main tourism elements to enable your team to increase their local knowledge and be better informed to answer visitor queries and up-sell the destination.

The training is available here:  
**[visitportsmouth.co.uk/TTT](https://www.visitportsmouth.co.uk/TTT)**

### Contact the team

Email: **[tourism@portsmouthcc.gov.uk](mailto:tourism@portsmouthcc.gov.uk)**

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