

# The long game

No-fly cruising doesn't just mean the Med and the fjords. **Jane Archer** finds out how far clients with time to spare can go on an ex-UK sailing

**f**lying isn't everyone's cup of tea, whether through fear of being at 40,000 feet or simply because they have reached an age where airport hassle, long walks to the gate and sitting for hours on a plane no longer appeal.

But that doesn't mean they have to miss out on more far-flung destinations. Between them, Fred Olsen Cruise Lines, P&O Cruises, Saga Cruises, Cunard and Ambassador Cruise Line provide no-fly voyages from the UK to South America, the Caribbean, Canada and even around the world.

Anyone is welcome, but as most of these cruises are a month or more in duration, they are mostly aimed at retirees with time on their hands who don't mind being at sea, since no matter which route they choose, they get plenty of time to enjoy the days on the open ocean.

Ambassador has a 40-night no-fly Caribbean cruise in January 2026 that has 10 sea days getting to the West Indies, another 10 getting back to the UK and six in between. On the plus side, that means those who enjoy a slightly slower pace don't ➤

PICTURE: Richard James Taylor/P&O Cruises



ABOVE: View of Nelson's Dockyard and English Harbour from Shirley Heights, Antigua PICTURE: Fred Olsen Cruise Lines

### ASK THE expert

"Agents should emphasise the ease and convenience of our affordable, quality no-fly long-haul Caribbean cruises. Departing from London Tilbury, these adult-only sailings offer a stress-free alternative to flying, with unlimited luggage and time to relax and enjoy what the ship has to offer on sea days. Guests can enjoy exceptional value, discover Caribbean destinations and make the most of our onboard facilities."

**Karen Cameron,**  
head of trade (interim),  
Ambassador Cruise Line



need to think about planning off-ship activities every day, and they get time to recover or enjoy the ship facilities in between sightseeing tours.

Fred Olsen also advises that it helps to have good sea legs as these sailings take place out of season, when the weather can be rough. That can be particularly important if the cruise travels via the Bay of Biscay, which has more than its fair share of 'rock-and-roll' moments in winter.

### CARIBBEAN

No-fly Caribbean voyages are typically a month long. As they go in the off season, it means even those who don't care to fly can enjoy island-hopping in the sun when the weather at home is grey and gloomy.

Between them, Fred Olsen, Saga, Ambassador, P&O Cruises and Cunard have more than a dozen no-fly departures to the Caribbean between now and early 2027. They all follow a similar pattern: several days at sea at the beginning and end of the cruise, and a week or so island-hopping in the Caribbean.

"Our long cruises attract loyal guests looking for an escape from the British winter, but also new passengers looking for an experience that ticks off a bucket-list moment," says P&O Cruises sales director Ruth Venn.

For something different, P&O Cruises' 35-night Grand Caribbean and USA Adventure departing February 27, 2026, combines the Bahamas, Cozumel in Mexico, Roatán in Honduras, and Belize, with calls into New Orleans, Miami and Florida's Port Canaveral. Prices start at £2,599.

Saga rings the changes by adding guest speakers to keep passengers entertained on those longer sailings. Celebrity chef Phil Vickery, RAF Tornado pilot Mandy Hickson and fitness guru Mr Motivator are among those on its two Caribbean cruises this year.

### SOUTH AMERICA

No-fly voyages to South America are an enjoyable alternative to a world cruise as they are not quite as long. Once on the other side of the Atlantic, there are also fewer consecutive sea days, as the ships are not subsequently crossing between continents.

Fred Olsen is pairing South America with two days of sightseeing in Antarctica in January 2026, although the 76-night voyage is almost sold out.

That leaves P&O Cruises as the only contender on the no-fly South America run for now. Its Epic South America Journey on adult-only ship *Aurora* includes an overnight stay in Rio de Janeiro, a day in the Falkland Islands and scenic cruising around Cape Horn, through the Beagle Channel and to the Amalia and Pio X Glaciers.

Venn says: "South America offers unique discoveries and new experiences for British holidaymakers, with highlights like the southern glaciers and Panama Canal transit, which are best seen from the sea."

### TRANSATLANTIC

As the only cruise line with regular sailings between Southampton and New York, Cunard rules the roost for transatlantic crossings. Non-flyers will have six sea ➤



# DESTINATIONS

## MATURE TRAVEL | CRUISE



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Rio de Janeiro; Cunard's *Queen Mary 2* in New York; Nagoya Castle, Japan; Ambassador Cruise Line's *Ambience* in the Cayman Islands



PICTURES: Shutterstock/Donatas Dabravolskas, Blonscape, Jonathan Atkin

days getting to the Big Apple, a few hours in the city and another six sea days sailing back to Southampton.

Cunard director of UK sales Tom Mahoney says the round-trip cruises are hugely popular with empty-nester Brits who like the idea of multiple days at sea.

"Most, around 75%, have sailed with Cunard before and understand the luxury offering of *Queen Mary 2*, the world's only ocean liner. This year we have seen a 24% increase in demand for round-trip transatlantic crossings versus 2024," he adds.

*Queen Mary 2* has an Insights programme of illustrious speakers, theatre shows and the only planetarium at sea to keep passengers entertained.

### WORLD CRUISES

Thanks to Cunard, P&O Cruises and Fred Olsen, clients who don't care to fly can see the world without once setting foot in an airport. Their ships depart the UK every January and spend three or so months chasing the sun, so passengers can escape the British winter and be back in time for spring.

Cunard has three world cruises on sale – two in 2026 and one in 2027 – with prices from £11,499 for 110 nights on *Queen Anne* departing January 11, 2026.

P&O Cruises has two sailings: a 100-night voyage in 2026 and a 106-night cruise in 2027, both on adult-only ship *Arcadia*. Prices, from £12,389 and £10,499 respectively, include tips.

Itineraries vary but between them the cruises tick off the Caribbean, Panama Canal, the South

“Ships spend three months chasing the sun, so passengers can escape the British winter and be back in time for spring

Pacific, Australia, New Zealand, Asia and South Africa, and often include overnights in cities such as Sydney, Singapore and Hong Kong.

Fred Olsen is ringing the changes with its 2027 world cruise, which is skipping Australia and instead spending four days in Hawaii and more than a week in Japan.

The round-trip voyage from Southampton departs January 21, 2027, and is on adult-only ship *Borealis*. Prices, from £12,499 for 98 nights, include tips and selected drinks with lunch and dinner.

"The 2027 world cruise offers something different while keeping the duration under 100 days, which helps to make travel insurance more accessible," says Martin Lister, Fred Olsen's head of product innovation. **TW**

### BOOK IT

**Saga Cruises** offers a 30-night Caribbean Christmas cruise on *Spirit of Adventure* departing December 7, 2025, from £11,489, including speciality dining, drinks, tips, Wi-Fi, travel insurance and selected excursions. [travel.saga.co.uk](https://travel.saga.co.uk)

**Cunard** offers a 14-night no-fly transatlantic crossing round-trip from Southampton on *Queen Mary 2* departing October 24, 2025, from £1,419. [cunard.com](https://cunard.com)

**P&O Cruises** offers a 75-night Epic South America Journey on *Aurora*, round-trip from Southampton, departing January 3, 2026, from £6,699 including tips. [pocruises.com](https://pocruises.com)