

# SOLAR POWER

Next year's solar eclipse is lighting up the cruise world – but is there still time to sell it? **Jane Archer** finds out

**Did you know there will be a solar eclipse in Europe in August 2026? If you're a cruise seller, then almost certainly, given all the special eclipse sailings that lines have launched to put passengers in the right place at the right time to watch as the moon moves in front of the sun.**

HX (Hurtigruten Expeditions), Princess Cruises, AE Expeditions, Atlas Ocean Voyages, Seabourn, Fred Olsen Cruise Lines, Albatros Expeditions, Cunard, Carnival Cruise Line and Windstar Cruises are among the lines that will have ships in the 'path of totality' – a 182-mile-wide belt stretching from Greenland to Spain – on August 12, 2026.

They are not the only ones. Virgin Voyages has 15 and 12-night eclipse sailings from Portsmouth and Barcelona on *Valiant* and *Scarlet Lady*. Ambassador Cruise Line's 13-night Land of Fire and Ice sailing from Dundee will be located off Greenland at the moment the moon eclipses the sun. And Holland America Line has 13, 28 and 35-day cruises, aboard *Oosterdam*, *Nieuw Statendam* and *Zuiderdam* respectively, which will be off Spain and Iceland on August 12.

## SWITCH SELLERS

Solar eclipse sailings are a way to grab the attention of would-be cruise customers, especially first-timers, as they'll get a front-row view of the spectacle from the sea.

But what if, having got them hooked, it transpires the dates don't work or availability is low? The answer, say the

experts, is don't give up but switch-sell them to another special sailing instead.

"Agents should be ready with other one-off sailings, in case a client is interested but the timings aren't right or the cruise has sold out," advises Princess Cruises' UK and Europe sales director Hayley Moore.

Fred Olsen's head of sales, Geoff Ridgeon, agrees. "Exclusive cruises centred around bucket-list moments [such as the solar eclipse and northern lights] capture your customers' imagination and drive sales," he says.

Fred Olsen's 12-night Wonders of Iceland solar eclipse cruise departs Rosyth on August 6 and costs from £1,999.

## ONE-OFF EVENTS

Nature isn't the only one who can put on a good show – one-off sailings or celebrity appearances can do just as much to drive demand for specific dates. Ambassador's deputy head of trade, Karen Cameron, points to various themed cruises that agents can offer customers missing out on the solar eclipse. They include northern lights sailings in Norway, cruises with conservationists from ocean charity Orca, crafting voyages and even a trip through the Benelux countries with entertainment from Toyah Wilcox and members of Bucks Fizz.

And for Princess Cruises, a themed sailing on *Royal Princess* this year will mark the line's 60th anniversary by featuring classic R&B group The Temptations, whose famous hit *My Girl* is also 60 years old. Like the eclipse, that's a pretty special occurrence too. ●



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