

of the
BEST



CLASSIC CRUISE CALLS

Jane Archer rounds up some of the best-loved ports we're longing to get back to

Abseence makes the heart grow fonder, or so they say, and it's certainly the case when it comes to travel. Never again will we take for granted the chance to dust off our passports and pack up our suitcases ready to see the world – whether going somewhere we've never been before or revisiting a favourite destination. In fact, Abta's latest Holiday Habits research found a 13% drop in the number of people intending to go somewhere new on their next trip, preferring to stick to the places they know and love. With that in mind, we've rounded up some classic ports of call that are never far from every cruiser's heart.



1

THE ETERNAL CITY

Cities don't get much more classical than Rome, dubbed the Eternal City by the Caesars because they believed it would live forever. It wasn't built in a day, as the saying goes, but cruisers generally only have a few hours to see the sights so tours with Oceania Cruises tick off the Colosseum, the Forum, the domed Pantheon, the Vatican treasures, the majestic Piazza Navona and Trevi Fountain. Throwing a coin in the water ensures visitors will be back another time so they can see more then. For something less hectic, suggest a tasting tour and culinary treasure hunt around markets to sample the city's best espresso, pizza and gelato.

Book it: From £2,389 including flights for the 12-day Iberia to Italia voyage from Lisbon to Venice, departing October 4. oceaniacruises.com



2

NEW YORK, NEW YORK

The Big Apple or the city that never sleeps – whatever you call it, everyone knows and loves New York, even if they have never been, because it has starred in so many films and TV shows. Central Park, Broadway, Fifth Avenue, the Empire State Building, Lady Liberty, Times Square, Wall Street, the MoMa and The Metropolitan Museum of Art – clients need Crystal Cruises' two-day stay in the city just to scratch the surface. Tours take passengers to must-see sights as well as visiting the 9/11 Memorial Museum. A Brooklyn bike ride gives a different perspective and burns off a few calories at the same time.

Book it: From £3,586 per person cruise-only for Crystal Cruises' 14-night Eastern Seaboard Heritage voyage from Quebec City to Miami, departing October 21, 2022. crystalcruises.co.uk

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TURKISH DELIGHTS

Istanbul, the Turkish city famously located where east meets west, has fallen in and out of cruise lines' favour in recent years, but many had planned to bring it back into their programmes last year. It remains to be seen whether that enthusiasm will remain when cruising restarts, but passengers who can hop off at this port will find its big-hitting sights as enticing as ever. Visit the Blue Mosque, Topkapi Palace, St Sophia, the underground cisterns, the Grand Bazaar and Spice Market, or swap to a smaller vessel for another cruise – along the Bosphorus this time – to see the city from every angle.

Book it: From £1,120 for Holland America Line's seven-day Aegean Sunsets cruise from Piraeus to Venice, departing July 31. hollandamerica.com



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TULIPS FROM AMSTERDAM

The Dutch capital is a mainstay of the cruise world, but even if clients have been there before, there's always more to see in this ever-evolving city. If they've ticked off the Old Masters in the Rijksmuseum, check out its enormous exhibition of Asian art or swap it for the contemporary works of the Stedelijk Museum. If they've climbed the stairs of Anne Frank's House to see the secret annex, explore a different era of Amsterdam's history at the Museum Van Loon, a 17th-century family home, or delve into the city's seafaring heritage at the National Maritime Museum.

Book it: AmaWaterways' expanded range of no-fly cruises includes Tulip Time, a seven-night sailing on AmaCerto departing from Amsterdam, costing from £2,115 for a March 15, 2022, departure; add two nights pre-cruise for £577. amawaterways.co.uk



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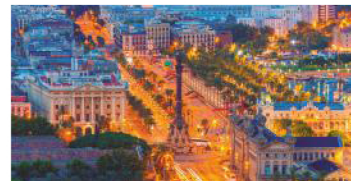


A BALTIC JEWEL

Once a hotbed of revolution, St Petersburg is now a jewel in the Baltic for cruisers on account of its opulent palaces and world-class museums. Regent Seven Seas Cruises is the way to see it all – or at least quite a bit – as cruises not only stay in the city three days, but come with a long list of free tours. They include the Hermitage and Fabergé Museums, the Catherine and Peterhof Palaces, a revolutionary tour, a canal cruise and the Yusupov Palace where Rasputin was murdered. Passengers can do them all for nothing as long as they have the stamina. A night at the ballet does cost extra but after all those freebies, it's hard to moan at the £125 price tag.

Book it: From £7,729 per person including flights for Regent Seven Seas Cruises' 10-night Queens of Europe voyage from Copenhagen to Stockholm, departing August 20.
rssc.com

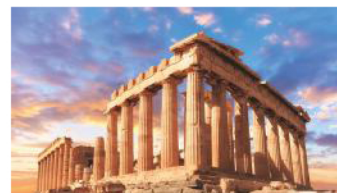
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Barcelona: La Rambla, with its living statues and portrait painters, is the pulsating heart. But you can't miss the Gothic Quarter's labyrinth-like streets and Gaudi's eccentric architecture dotted around the city.



Dubrovnik: The Pearl of the Adriatic is surrounded by stout walls you just have to walk around before exploring the maze of steps and alleys in the interior.



Athens: The Parthenon and National Archaeological Museum are top of the must-see list. Then head to lively Plaka, awash with shops and restaurants, plus plenty of examples of edgy street art adorning its walls.

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GLORY DAYS ASHORE

With its glorious Duomo (cathedral) and reminders of its 14th and 15th-century Renaissance glory days every which way you look, Florence ranks as one of the world's most beautiful cities. Add to that its world-class art galleries – the Uffizi, the Palazzo Pitti and Accademia – stuffed with priceless works by the likes of Raphael, Caravaggio and Botticelli and you see why it's top of the stops for cruisers. And why Azamara has factored in a two-day stay in Livorno, one of the ports nearest the city, on one cruise this year. Tours range from a leisurely look around to skip-the-line tickets to the Accademia to see Michelangelo's David.

Book it: From £909 per person cruise-only for Azamara's seven-night Cities of the Western Med voyage, departing October 28.
azamara.co.uk

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QUEEN OF THE DANUBE

A river cruise really is the best way to arrive or depart from Budapest, sailing along the Danube past the grand façade of the Hungarian Parliament – modelled on our own Palace of Westminster – with Buda on one side and Pest to the other. That way, guests can add some time pre or post-cruise to take in the sights from Buda Castle, eat goulash and grab a drink in Pest's famous ruin bars, or relax in one of the city's thermal baths. Scenic's sightseeing options will give cruisers a head-start on the landmarks, including a choice of a guided tour and piano concert, a walking tour exploring the city's Jewish heritage, or a hike up Buda Hill.

Book it: Darcey Bussell will be on board *Scenic Jade* for a special sailing along the Danube from Budapest to Munich, departing October 20, with prices from £2,320 for eight days.

scenic.co.uk

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VIVA VENICE

Being serenaded by a gondolier is the classic image of Venice, but there's so much more to enjoy in the city, which is why Celebrity Cruises has a host of shore excursions guests can book to extend their holiday. There's nowhere better to live the cliché and wander randomly along canals and over bridges seeking hidden gems – a church maybe, or little restaurant known only to the locals. For those who prefer a guide, tours take in St Mark's Square and Basilica, the Guggenheim Museum, the Doge's Palace, where rulers lived when the city was a republic, and the Bridge of Sighs that led to the palace dungeons, so-called because prisoners were said to sigh as they got a last glimpse of the city before being locked up.

Book it: From £899 cruise-only for an Italy, Croatia & Malta Cruise from Civitavecchia on *Celebrity Infinity*, departing August 2. celebritycruises.com

