

CRUISE SHIPS ARE BACK ON TRACK IN GERMANY



The main season for cruise ships is set to begin in April, with the first large boats already having visited the northern German ports. Kiel, Hamburg, Rostock-Warnemünde, Bremerhaven, and Wismar terminals will receive regular services again. Despite the pandemic's crisis, the industry has bounced back, and large shipping companies are now on a growth path.

Cruise ships are already forecasting high demand for 2025. Experts attribute the industry's quick recovery after the pandemic to people's desire for family time and shared experiences. **In times of economic uncertainty, consumers tend to prioritize vacations.** The German Travel Association has also reported an increased desire to travel among Germans, despite the economic downturn and inflation. With a sales increase of 41 percent compared to 2023, cruises are expected to be one of the market's growth drivers.

Millions of Cruise Passengers Are Expected in German Ports

The five major German cruise cities estimate a passenger count in the seven-figure range for 2024. Cruise Gate Hamburg (CGH), the operator in Hamburg, anticipates 1.1 to 1.3 million travelers on 270 visits. Kiel's port expects around a million cruise guests on 173 calls, while Bremerhaven expects 101 calls with a total of around 265,000 passengers. The first cruise ships have already docked in all three cities in January.

Shore Power as a Stage for Sustainability Goals

Cruises are often considered an environmentally unfriendly mode of travel due to their high energy consumption, emissions, and waste generation. Port operators and shipping companies strive to reduce their carbon footprint to make cruise vacations more sustainable. The International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) has set a clear goal of completing climate neutrality by 2050. Aida Cruises aims to reach "net zero" emissions by 2040, while Tui Cruises plans to offer some climate-neutral trips by 2030.

One of the significant factors contributing to the high energy consumption of cruise ships is their need to keep running their engines while in port. However, the European Union (EU) has mandated that all major ports provide shore power supply by 2030, which will help reduce energy consumption and emissions.

Since 2016, cruise ships in Hamburg have been able to use shore power at the Altona terminal, and a new shore power system was installed at the Steinwerder terminal in December. The operator, CGH, plans to provide shore power for 180 out of 270 calls at both terminals for this season. In addition, the new cruise terminal in Hafencity, scheduled to open in 2025, will also feature a shore power facility.

Criticism of Insufficient Use of Shore Power

Critics have mentioned concerns about the lack of shore power usage on cruise ships and that shipping companies are making decisions about its use alone. It has been reported that out of 30

different cruise ships docked in Warnemünde in 2023, only 13 could connect to shore power during 42 calls. Similarly, shore power for the cruise sector will only be available from autumn 2025 at Columbuskaje in Bremerhaven.

However, many shipping companies have recognized the need to convert their fleets to shore power supply and have prioritized it. MSC has already expanded 59 percent of its ships to be able to use shore power and plans to increase this number to 72 percent by the end of the year. The company also invests in constructing and purchasing its terminals to equip them accordingly. Meanwhile, Tui Cruises plans to expand its fleet from six to nine ships in the next two years, with five existing ships already equipped with shore power connections.

Fuel as a Future Topic

Fuel plays a crucial role in pursuing a "net-zero cruise." Shipping companies are exploring various options for new vessels, including biofuels, liquid petroleum gas, methanol, or other alternatives. **Tui Cruises recently announced an eco-friendly cruise ship powered by liquid natural gas (LNG) that is scheduled to sail in winter 2024/25.** Aida Cruises already operates two LNG cruise ships, the "AIDAnova" and "AIDAcosma." MSC Cruises is also constructing new ships that run on liquid gas and can be retrofitted to operate on green methanol.

Climate experts and environmentalists in Germany are concerned that the transition towards sustainable cruise operations is not happening quickly enough. The environmental organization Nabu has recently criticized the rise in emissions from the entire industry. However, Germany is taking a positive and pioneering role in using shore power.

Date: 2024-04-08

Article link:

<https://www.tourism-review.com/germany-cruise-ships-to-use-more-shore-power-news14295>