

INDIA'S LATEST ATTRACTION



In September 2006, Star Cruises' SuperStar Libra started cruising along the coast of India. Over 70,000 Indians traveled aboard this cruise ship annually, averaging about 50-60 per cent of its occupancy.

Indians have shown their interest in spending holidays onboard of a cruise liner. Previously, the Indians had to travel to Hong Kong or Singapore in order to experience such pleasures.

The situation is different now, and more and more cruise companies have started docking on Indian shores. The clients may choose from a get-away weekend or a three-night cruise to the islands, or 14-day holidays starting at Goa, following the ancient spice routes of the Malabar Coast, eventually arriving at the fabulous Sri Lanka. The bottom line in terms of price is about \$ 3,857, and always depends on the time of travel.

Companies like Silversea, Costa Cruises, Oriana of P&O cruises, Phoenix Reisen or Japan Cruise Lines also show interest in the east coast, in the Bay of Bengal, while the west coast is hit by monsoons.

More conventional (and private) way of cruising the coast is to hire a houseboat. The rate is normally \$250 per day (single room) and \$350 (two bedrooms). Boats are well equipped and fully staffed.

Cruising options in this area are not limited to the ocean. Riverboats are becoming very popular, too. Especially on the Brahmaputra, where the cruise is complimented by visits to on-shore attractions, wildlife viewing, or barbecues.

Cruises in general attract more and more tourists. The European Cruise Council's forecasts are very optimistic as well. Only between 2004 and 2005, the economic benefits increased by 13.1%.

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