

EUROPEAN CRUISE TOURISM BOOMS



After the pandemic, Europe's cruise industry bounced back completely - current numbers from Eurostat and trade analyses confirm it has moved past its 2019 peak. Growth continues steadily in both arrivals at harbors and traveler interest, showing how widely chosen these trips remain for vacationers here. Despite

earlier setbacks, movement along coastal routes now reflects lasting appeal rather than temporary revival.

Robust Recovery in EU Port Activity

Back in 2024, around 17.9 million people boarded or left cruise ships at European Union ports. That figure shows a jump of nearly a quarter compared to 2019's total of 14.6 million travelers. Numbers of European cruise tourism had crashed during the pandemic - **only 1.2 million cruises were counted in 2020. Since then, activity has climbed back sharply.**

8.73 million passengers boarded ocean cruises at EU ports during 2024, according to data aligned with Eurostat standards. A noticeable jump follows when contrasted with the 7.78 million recorded one year earlier, marking growth of 12.2 percent. Back in 2019, before disruptions shifted travel trends, the number stood lower - 7.39 million, which now translates into an 18.1 percent gain over five years.

Leading Ports and Countries

Italy and Spain dominate the European cruise tourism landscape. In 2024:

- Italy led with 28.4 percent of EU embarkations and handled around 4.9 million cruise passengers overall (27.6% of the EU total).
- Spain followed closely with 22.3 percent of embarkations and approximately 3.9 million passengers (21.8%).
- Germany ranked third, accounting for 16.6 percent of embarkations and about 2.9 million passengers (16.5%).

Almost two out of every three cruise travelers in EU ports came through just three nations combined. Following behind, France showed marked gains - passenger numbers climbed to 2.4 million by 2024. Meanwhile, Greece recorded significant jumps within specific travel categories.

European Source Markets

8.4 million Europeans went on a cruise in 2024, data from CLIA shows - up three percent compared to the year before. That number is expected to climb by 2025, reaching nearly nine million travelers originating from Europe.

Still leading among European travelers, Germany holds top position. Close behind come visitors from the United Kingdom along with those from Ireland. From the south, Italy adds a steady flow of passengers; Spain does too, alongside France. These nations together form a core part of the travel volume.

Economic Impact

European cruise tourism brings significant financial gains to the stakeholders. Back in 2024, money spent directly because of cruises hit €31.3 billion across Europe, helping maintain employment and strengthen regional markets near docking locations. What draws people in is the wide mix available - think sun-drenched southern paths alongside cooler northern voyages - providing trips that cover several places without hassle, suited to many age groups, **now seeing more interest from parents traveling with children along with younger guests**. Despite some perceptions, these journeys aren't just for retirees anymore.

Now arriving on the scene, fresh vessels join ongoing operations aimed at balancing growth with cleaner output and smarter docking schedules. Responsibility drives expansion, as rising needs push forward movement without ignoring pollution cuts or crowded harbor fixes.

Date: 2026-05-25

Article link:

<https://www.tourism-review.com/european-cruise-tourism-reported-increased-numbers-news15470>