

Carnival Cruise Lines To Carry a Record 2.9 Million Guests on Caribbean Cruises in 2007

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When the new Carnival Freedom begins its winter schedule of seven-day Caribbean cruises from Miami in November, it will further bolster Carnival Cruise Lines' industry-leading and record-breaking 2007 Caribbean cruise season during which the line will carry an unprecedented 2.9 million passengers within the region - the most in its 35-year history.

In 2007, Carnival will deploy 18 ships in the Caribbean with 14 of those offering year-round service. Overall, upwards of 1,150 three- to eight-day cruises will be operated by Carnival, which is the only cruise line to offer the option of departing from 12 convenient U.S. homeports.

According to statistics from the Cruise Lines International Association, the Caribbean is the most sought-after cruise destination by far, with the region featured on roughly half of all itineraries of North American cruise operators.

"The Caribbean offers everything that consumers want in a vacation - picture perfect weather, gracious hospitality, unique sightseeing experiences, great shopping and, of course, gorgeous beaches," said Vicki Freed, Carnival's senior vice president of sales and marketing. "But there's more to the Caribbean than great beaches - this is one of the most culturally diverse regions in the world, with a rich history dating back centuries, magnificent architecture, and historical attractions and landmarks," she added.

According to Freed, while Caribbean demand the past year or so has been impacted by unfavorable economic factors affecting consumers' discretionary purchasing, it was clearly part of a cyclical trend that the industry has seen many times in the past. "Bookings for the second half of 2007 and early 2008 have shown much stronger fundamental demand and the trend we were previously observing clearly was not a reflection of the Caribbean's popularity or desirability," said Freed. "Consumers are unquestionably responding well to the strong value appeal inherent in a cruise vacation versus other vacation options," she added.

"Many of our other guest metrics also point to the strength of Carnival's Caribbean cruise product, with guest satisfaction levels remaining at exceptionally high historical levels including very favorable guest feedback on Caribbean destinations," said Freed.

As the industry leader in Caribbean cruising, Carnival is continually updating its cruise itineraries and destination choices and over the next few months will introduce several new programs.

These include a new five-day itinerary on the Carnival Imagination featuring Grand Turk, the new port in the Turks and Caicos and the award-winning private island of Half Moon Cay; a seven-day, five-port schedule on the Carnival Destiny from San Juan offering extended day-long visits to St. Lucia, Antigua, Dominica, Barbados and St. Thomas; and seven-day cruises aboard the Carnival Triumph from Miami that feature Half Moon Cay, Grand Turk, Turks & Caicos Islands, St. Thomas, and San Juan.

Carnival has also been working with destination partners to enhance and expand shore excursion programming to cater to today's active lifestyles, offering more choices than ever for consumers to immerse themselves in this fascinating destination. In 2007 alone, Carnival will offer approximately 900 landside tour choices in the region.

Carnival's Caribbean expansion will continue in 2008 when the 3,006-passenger Carnival Splendor - the largest "Fun Ship" ever constructed - launches a series of seven-day Caribbean cruises from Fort Lauderdale Nov. 22. Featured will be visits to San Juan, St. Thomas, Nassau and Casa de Campo, one of the Caribbean's finest resorts.

In addition to three- to eight-day cruises to the Caribbean and The Bahamas, Carnival offers three- to 16-day voyages to the Mexican Riviera, Alaska, Hawaii, New England, Canada, Europe, the Greek Isles, and South America.

The line currently has three new ships on order - the 113,300-ton Carnival Splendor, set to debut in Europe July 13, 2008; and the 130,000-ton Carnival Dream and Carnival Magic, scheduled for delivery in October 2009 and June 2011, respectively.

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