

Cape Town Routes *Unlimited*

NICHE MARKET: Cruise Ship Tourism

Introduction

A cruise is, according to the *Collins English Dictionary*, 2008, a trip by sea on a liner for leisure, unusually docking at various ports during its journey. A cruise ship tourist is one who travels around on such a ship. A cruise ship travels at a pace according to the weather and the sea conditions, and is depended on the harbor traffic and the distances between the destinations it has to cover. Tourists mostly take a cruise for leisure purposes rather than point-to point transportation (Dowling R.K 2006:3). Cruise ships can also be an immense form of transportation which is able to accommodate huge amounts of travelers. South African Tourism has estimated that a cruise liner passenger spends approximately six times more than the average tourist.

The cruise industry has developed remarkably since the early days of the first passenger ships. This development has incorporated “excursion voyages, transatlantic travel, the post-war boom, the demise of passenger ships, and the advent of modern cruising” (Dowling R.K 2006:3). The cruise industry is growing at a rapid speed and is one of the major areas of tourism growth at the beginning of the new millennium. There are few specific features that are appealing to travelers to cruise traveling:

- Passengers have the opportunity to visit many places in a short period of time without issues pertaining other modes of transport;
- The ships are self-contained;
- Cruise ships have a cruise director and staff whose only function is to make sure passengers have an pleasant time;
- High quality food is served in a stylish manner and
- Everyone begins and ends their vacation on the same day (Dowling R.K 2006:3).

Tourists enjoy the pleasure of having accommodation included in their travel package. Accommodation varies from rooms sleeping up to four persons to lavish suites. Meals are offered throughout the day ranging from several course meals to theme event dinners. Food is of an outstanding quality and variety on board. After breakfast, a mid morning snack is served and lunch is followed by afternoon tea. All this, as well as dinner and midnight buffet is included in the fare. Most cruise ships have many bars and lounges on board and alcoholic beverages are not

included in the fare. The bars are not usually open when the ship is docked at the port as this would encourage tourists to spend money at the destination where they have docked.

Tipping is always at the discretion of the passenger. Tip to bartenders, wine stewards and hairstylists are given at the time of service. Cabin stewards are tipped at the end of the cruise, but the cruise line will suggest the tipping policy.

Activities on a cruise ship

The most attractive part of cruise ship tourism is the wide variety of entertainment facilities available on board. Large cruise ships are able to cater for a variety of services and facilities, and of which are mostly included in the fare.

Passengers have the opportunity to participate in cruises for the entertainment, as a full programme is worked out to entertain passengers while on board. Entertainment includes musical productions, cabaret performances, gambling, and discos. Most of the entertainment is included in the fare and there is continually entertainment for everyone on board. When the ship is not in port, there are deck games, swimming pools, exercise classes, navigational bridge visits, lectures on interesting subjects, cinemas, casinos, lounges and bars, theme dinners and cabarets. Certain cruise ships have entertainment sections for children as well. Many ships have fully equipped gyms and health spas. For those passengers wanting a less active type of vacation can relax at the pool or deck area. Almost all cruise ships have casinos on board and this entertainment area is available for the adults as there is a minimum age restriction of 18 years to enter the casino.

Facilities on a cruise ship

The currency of the cruise ship is usually the currency of the destination where it has been registered. However, majority of cruise ships have banks on board to exchange travelers' cheques, some accept credit cards and other don't.

Passengers have access to small electric appliances such as hair dryers, clothing steamers, as well as access to their passengers to facilities such as telephones, fax and telegrams at the sea address. These facilities, however, are not included in the passengers cruise fares. Cruise passengers enjoy additional facilities like hair salons, sauna & massages and laundry facilities at an extra charge, but these activities have to be arranged with the steward assigned on the cruise. All cruise ships have medical staff that will see to emergencies from seasickness to broken limbs and the costs of medical treatment and medication are not included in the fare.

Shops offer anything from the most basic goods to most luxury goods such as jewelry and perfume. Shore excursions can be booked on board. If the ship is docked for more than a day, passengers who go ashore will return to the ship at night for the overnight stay.

Factors which determines the cost of a cruise

The season and the length of the cruise will determine the cost of the cruise. The longer the cruise trip is, the higher the fare will be as well as during peak season as a result of high demand. During the low season the rates are lower to attract the tourist ([http://wiki,answers...](http://wiki.answers...)27 October 2008 (online]).

The size and type of cabin determines the cost as well, because some cabins have upper and lower berths which will be lower priced, larger cabins on higher decks provide wonderful views and are more expensive. The position of the cabin also determines the cost of the cruise, the fact that the inside cabins and cabins on the lower decks are cheaper than outside cabins with views on higher decks and in the center of the ship. Passengers prefer to be in the center of the ship as this is where the motion is least felt. It also depends on the number of passengers in the cabin, because prices are obviously quoted on a person sharing basis, a passenger traveling alone must pay a single supplement, while the price is lower per person when three or four passengers share a cabin. The density of passengers/crew on ship can be more expensive than the crew per passenger.

Revenues earned by local government through cruise ships

The revenues earned by local governments from the cruise industry may be made up from sales taxes generated by local governments as a result of local spending by cruise ship passengers, crew and from cruise lines directly. The following all add addition to the revenue of the local government:

- The transient room taxes paid by cruise passengers;
- The revenues from fees paid by cruise lines and cruise passengers including docking fees, littering fees and other port charges;
- The Garbage disposal fees and charges for water sales;
- The passenger fees including admissions and payments for medial services;
- Tax payments made by businesses selling goods and services to cruise visitors or sale taxes paid by business operations and;
- Local purchases in support of their business operations and secondary or indirect tax revenues (such as sales and property tax payments) made by employees (and their

dependants) of the cruise industry also form part of the revenue which goes to the governments are also making up the governments revenue (Dowling R.K 2006:13).

Cruise tourism in Cape Town

It is mentioned by consultants, on a cruise liner strategy before the 2010 World Cup, that without a multi-use cruise liner terminal, Cape Town might be at loss of millions of rands in tourism revenue. Proposals have been given to the Cape Town International Convention Centre in regards to the extension to double as a cruise liner terminal for bigger ships which are unable to dock at the Victoria & Alfred Waterfront. It is mentioned to the economic and development committee that the international cruise liner trade is worth \$29-billion (Powel A, October 6 2008).

The cruise industry in Cape Town is noted to be developed and the leadership thereof was needed and as the 2010 World Cup is drawing nearer, cruise liners would be ideal to accommodate visitors during this time. Cape Town, Durban and possibly Richard's Bay is potential "port-of-call" option for cruises and consultants agreed that if a terminal is built, it would indefinitely attract cruise liners to port (Powel A, October 6 2008).

References

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