



## **Cruises Make Happier Holidays: While Ship's Crew Does the Work, Guests Get to Relax, Enjoy Special Celebrations, Festive Atmosphere**

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MIAMI, Sept. 17, 2018 /PRNewswire/ -- Strange things will be happening on the high seas for Halloween, and Santa Claus will be visiting cruise ships around the world in December. No matter the holiday, cruise lines go all out getting into the spirit with special decorations, traditional food and a plethora of fun activities.

Expect to see your ship done up in black and orange and with goblins and witches wandering around for Halloween; serving turkey with over-the-top trimmings for Thanksgiving; festooned stem-to-stern for Christmas; and becoming the scene for extravagant dress-up parties for New Year's.

And all you have to do is have fun. No need to entertain, or do the cooking – and cleaning -- yourself.

### **Oktoberfest and Christmas, German style**

Experience an Oktoberfest to remember on the high seas with German line AIDA Cruises. The celebration embraces Bavarian tent-style activities from arm wrestling to yodeling. Popular German bands will be onboard AIDAprima and AIDAprima for live performances. Both ships will serve a special Oktoberfest beer brewed in the ships' own breweries, to be enjoyed while sitting or dancing on benches. Traditional Bavarian culinary fare will include pork knuckle, sausage salad and dumplings. Wearing traditional dress is encouraged.

Christmas and New Year's sailings bring AIDA Cruises guests to destinations including the Caribbean, Canary Islands, Mediterranean and Southeast Asia. Ships include the brand new AIDAnova, the first ship in the world powered at sea and in port with liquefied natural gas, the world's cleanest burning fossil fuel. Advent cruises celebrate with Christmas carol singalongs, Advent calendars, trees and other Christmas decorations and gingerbread. Christmas markets take place onboard, making holiday shopping easy. Goose is served on Christmas Eve.

### **Celebrating with Pirate Patch and The Grinch**

For the month of October, Carnival Cruise Line is expanding its already popular "Frightfully Fun" Halloween programming with even more "spook-tacular" activities. The celebration will include costume contests, trick-or-treating and special holiday versions of live deck parties, trivia, Dive-In Movies, arts and crafts, and bingo. The centerpiece of the fun will be Patch, Carnival Cruise Line's pumpkin pirate, who will stand guard in the atrium on each ship.

Starting in late November, it's "Grinchmas Time" throughout the Carnival Cruise Line fleet. Though Mr. Grinch may be "a mean one" as part of the line's exclusive Seuss at Sea program, and decked out in his green "Santy Claus" costume, he's actually a leader of fun. The young and young at heart can catch a glimpse of the cantankerous curmudgeon as he slinks and slithers throughout the ship, with both scheduled appearances and spontaneous pop-up visits.

Carnival Cruise Line's 26 ships also celebrate the holidays with ornately decorated Christmas trees, wreaths, mistletoe, caroling and appearances by Santa Claus, as well as traditional food including roast turkey and pecan pie on Christmas Day.

### **British holiday celebrations on P&O Cruises**

Beginning in late November, special Christmas Market cruises visit markets around Europe, giving P&O Cruises guests opportunity to stock up on gifts, ranging from fine Belgium chocolates to handmade artisan gifts from Amsterdam and everything in between.

The seven ships in the fleet will be lavishly decorated with a total of 249 Christmas trees, adorned with twinkling lights and more than 44,000 decorations. Christmas dinners, festive-themed entertainment and holiday-themed films get everyone in the holiday spirit. On the line's family-friendly ships, Father Christmas comes down the ship's funnel. Guests can choose Christmas sailings in the Caribbean, Baltic and Canary Islands.

### **Ultra-luxury celebrations on Seabourn**

Guests on Seabourn's five ultra-luxury ships will celebrate the holidays in destinations around the world. There's Christmas and New Year's in Australia and the South Pacific or the opportunity to embrace the spirit in the stark white scenery of Antarctica. Guests on Seabourn Odyssey may spend some holiday time beachcombing in the Caribbean, while those on the new Seabourn Ovation will be exploring Thailand and Vietnam.

On all the ships, Thanksgiving brings a traditional turkey dinner. During Hanukkah and Christmas, the Seabourn ships are transformed into holiday wonderlands with gingerbread village displays and evergreen hangings draping railings and balusters. New Year's Eve brings a formal party with a memorable toast to 2019.

### **A holiday wonderland on Princess Cruises**

It actually snows in the atrium on Princess Cruises ships, even if you're celebrating the holidays in the sunny Caribbean or other warm local. Passengers mingle with Kris Kringle, as yuletide carolers sing the classics, and the halls are decked with trees with red ribbons – even the ships' masts get Christmas trees.

There is opportunity to sip eggnog and make gingerbread houses as a family. Christmas dinner brings a choice of roast turkey or goose with all the

trimmings. Special holiday parties take place in the youth and teen centers, with cookies for Santa and carrots for his reindeer on Christmas Eve.

Princess Cruises also goes all out for Halloween, with various spooky decorations, a Fright Night Party and costume contest and a special scavenger hunt for families. Thanksgiving festivities include the ever-popular turkey calling contest.

Hanukkah, the Jewish Festival of Lights, is celebrated with a menorah-lighting ceremony, themed crafts, festive décor and such traditional delicacies as potato latkes. New Year's brings a countdown party culminating with a balloon drop and celebratory champagne toast.

Relax during New Year's Day with college bowl championship games shown on the outdoor movie screen and a football tailgate party with game-day treats.

### **Holland America Line ships add holiday sparkle**

On the ships of Holland America Line, Halloween is celebrated with a pumpkin-carving contest where passengers vote their favorite. Kids go trick-or-treating around the ship (parents can join in, too) as part of the Club HAL program, and some crew wear costumes. There's also a costume dance party for guests – with awards (candy) given for funniest, most creative, best team and best overall costumes.

Thanksgiving brings fall décor, spiced pumpkin lattes and an impressive turkey dinner capped with a big selection of pies and desserts.

Whether you are sailing in the Caribbean on the newly launched Nieuw Statendam and other ships or in Australia, Asia, Hawaii, the Mexican Riviera or Asia, a highlight of Christmas Eve is a tree-lighting ceremony and Christmas carols in the atrium, with one child chosen to throw "snow" at the tree – a cue for the holiday lights to be turned on. There's also a Christmas Eve concert featuring international crew members singing carols.

On Christmas morning, Santa arrives and kids, 'tweens and teens receive wrapped presents. Clergy are onboard leading services for Hanukkah and Christmas.

New Year's Eve is celebrated with a gala ball and champagne toast, followed by a selection of college football bowl games shown on New Year's Day.

### **Embracing tradition with Cunard**

A transatlantic or other voyage on a Cunard ocean liner is always an occasion, but even more so when the ships embrace the holiday spirit – especially since the line has nearly two centuries of experience in celebrating.

During the season, Christmas decorations include poinsettias and other seasonal flowers. Gingerbread villages are displayed. There's a festive buffet lunch on embarkation day, and special menus are created for gala dinners on Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and New Year's Eve. Children participate in workshops, decorating cookies and gingerbread.

### **Holiday cruises Down Under**

On the ships of P&O Cruises Australia, Halloween gets spooky with decorations, costumes, themed treats and entertainment for kids and adults alike. Dance enthusiasts can learn routines to iconic tracks such as the "Time Warp" and "Thriller," before showing off their moves at a special Halloween fright night party. Kids will have a ball with activities that include pumpkin and ice-carving, murder mystery games, scavenger hunts, face painting and a junior Monster Mash party. Expect popup appearances by witches and such.

Christmas on the Australian line's ships embrace the "throw a shrimp on the barbie" spirit. With the warm summer temperatures, guests can stay in their flip flops while enjoying such activities as carolling, cookie decorating and visits by Santa.

Christmas Eve brings a special variety concert and Christmas Day is all about lunch and dinner. On Boxing Day, the ships sponsor Backyard Cricket on a special pitch at sea. On New Year's Eve there are parties around the ship including on the top deck, with the South Pacific as the backdrop.

Australia Day on January 26, 2019, is another cause for shipboard celebration, with themed entertainment for guests of all ages – including meat pies and other Aussie eats and an Australian national anthem sing off.

### **Experience the holidays Italian style**

Santa Claus comes onboard to personally host experiences, pose for photos and help make memories at Christmastime on ships from Italy-based Costa Cruises, whether they are cruising in the Mediterranean, South America or the Caribbean. A special show production is themed around the holiday and there are gifts for all kids onboard under a traditional tree. Special menus enhance the festive atmosphere and include a touch of Italian classic tastes – such as Italian panettone or pandoro for dessert.

Memorable New Year's Eve parties bring surprises, and there is opportunity to celebrate on December 31 at the pool, where the giant LED screen broadcasts New Year's events in various time zones around the world.

### **Tips for Holiday Cruises**

1. Plan ahead. Holiday sailings are popular, so it's important to book well in advance to get the stateroom of your choice.
2. Splurge on space. Especially if you are bringing the family, you will want room to spread out. Book a balcony and you can feel warm sea breezes in your own space, while you think of your friends and relatives in snowy locales.
3. Leave the bulk of the gifts back home. You don't want fill your luggage with gifts. Bring one special item for each family member, and plan to open the rest later. Or better yet, seek out surprises in the onboard shops.
4. Bring treats for the crew. These hardworking folks are away from home during the holidays and will appreciate your acts of kindness.
5. Pick up ornaments at each port of call. They'll help you remember your great holiday experience for years to come.

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