



## **P&O Cruises introduces first ever Arabian Gulf fly-cruise programme**

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### **Oceana to be based in Dubai for round trip exotic cruises in 2019**

P&O Cruises has announced details of an Arabian Gulf fly-cruise programme, the first time it has ever based a ship in the region.

Between January 10 and April 4 2019, P&O Cruises will sail five 10-night cruises from Dubai on Oceana. These cruises are book-ended by two positioning cruises of 20 and 14 nights respectively, to and from Dubai. Prices start from £1,399 per person with up to £450 per person on board spending money on bookings made before May 2, 2017. Past guests will also receive a 5% discount on bookings made before May 2, 2017.

The Arabian Gulf fly-cruise programme goes on sale to top tier Peninsular Club members from March 23, 2017 and on general sale from March 30, 2017. Pre-registration opens on March 13, 2017.

The ten-night Arabian Gulf cruises will be round trip from Dubai and will visit Sir Bani Yas Island, Manama, Khasab, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Salalah and Muscat.

P&O Cruises senior vice president Paul Ludlow said: "Although there have been P&O Cruises ships cruising in the Arabian Gulf for years, this is the first time that we will have cruised in that region for an entire season. This is exactly the kind of exotic mix that our guests love and they know they can trust us to deliver this fantastic experience in surroundings that are both comfortable and secure. We fully expect to fill these cruises in the first year enabling us to expand to many more after that – with guests either just taking the fly/cruise with our airline partner Emirates or including one of our add-on land packages."

The itinerary combines unique cultures and a choice of unusual and exciting shore tours including camel racing and dune rides, mosques, museums, Arabic souks and shopping.

**Sir Bani Yas, UAE:** this island oasis, 110 miles southwest of Abu Dhabi, has been transformed over the past four decades and boasts the Arabian Wildlife Park, a nature reserve home to lush vegetation and 13,000 animals indigenous to the Arabian Peninsula. Guest can choose from dozens of outdoor adventures including nature and wildlife safaris, guided kayaking through the mangrove forest, mountain biking routes and a culture and history tour revealing the intriguing heritage of Sir Bani Yas.

**Manama, Bahrain:** the capital and largest city in Bahrain, a small Arab monarchy in the Persian Gulf. Bahrain is packed with things to do such as a visit to the Bahrain National Museum, the grand Al-Fateh Mosque, Beit Al Quran or any of the country's well preserved forts. Guests can also stroll around the bustling alleyways of Manama Souq where they'll find everything from clothing and

electronics to spices and a separate gold souk.

**Khasab, Oman:** Khasab is the capital of Oman's stunning Musandam peninsula, which is sometimes dubbed the 'Norway of Arabia' due to its fjord-like craggy inlets and mountain-lined coast. Active guests can enjoy mountain safaris and kayaking tours while those less active can relax on a dhow cruise instead. In the city, the well preserved 17th-century Khasab Fort and its inner museum offer a fascinating window into local history and culture while the New Souk is the bustling heart of modern Khasab.

**Dubai, UAE:** Dubai is a place of fascinating contrasts that can best be described as the 'Middle East meets Hong Kong with a little Las Vegas thrown in for style'. Guests can enjoy a multitude of water sports, sand-skiing, four-wheel drive desert safaris or camel riding. Or for something a little more relaxing they can enjoy a moonlit Bedouin barbeque, deep in the heart of the desert or take a boat trip up Dubai creek to admire the beautiful architecture of the Grand Mosque.

**Abu Dhabi, UAE:** before Abu Dhabi struck (black) gold with its rich oil reserves, it was at the centre of the pearl industry and guests can see the traditional dhows used for both pearl diving and fishing along the harbour. The Heritage Village living museum offers a more in depth look at ancient cultures, while for an insight into today's way of life, guests can head to Khalifa Park, a popular recreation landmark for residents and visitors.

**Suez Canal, Egypt (transit):** as Oceana goes through the Suez Canal, guests out on deck will enjoy one of the world's most fascinating maritime experiences as they feel that they are sailing right through the dry heart of the desert.

**Salalah, Oman:** a real city of contrasts, Salalah combines the charms of contemporary resort life with older Arabic influences to dramatic effect. From its ancient ruins and abundance of frankincense to its stunning beaches and soaring mountainous landscape, there is a wealth of attractions and traditions to explore. Guests can visit the resting place of the biblical prophet, Job, or peruse the once palace of the Queen of Sheba. Salalah's antiquity can be enjoyed further by a stroll through the lost city of Samhuran or crumbling remains of Al Blaid, which date as far back as the 12th century.

**Muscat, Oman:** the Sultanate of Oman's capital, Muscat, combines stunning deserts, mountains and beaches with all the comforts of a bustling, modern metropolis. It's also the meeting point of Asian, African and Arabic civilisations and this unique blend of cultures makes Oman a special place to visit and explore. Whether guests want to explore natural freshwater pools, parks and nature reserves, shop in one of the many excellent souks, or relax on unspoilt, soft sandy beaches, this city has something for everyone.

For more information or to book call P&O Cruises on 0843 374 0111, visit [www.pocruises.co.uk](http://www.pocruises.co.uk) or visit your local travel agent.

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### **About P&O Cruises**

P&O Cruises has a fleet of eight ships offering holidays tailored to British tastes combining genuine service, a sense of occasion and attention to detail, ensuring passengers have the holiday of a

lifetime, every time. Britannia, a design-led 141,000 ton ship, was named by HM The Queen on March 10, 2015. A new 180,000 ton LNG-powered ship is on order for delivery in 2020.

**For further press information please contact:**

Michele Andjel, [michele.andjel@carnivalukgroup.com](mailto:michele.andjel@carnivalukgroup.com) 023 8065 6653 / 07730 732 072

Jenny Hadley, [jenny.hadley@pocruises.com](mailto:jenny.hadley@pocruises.com) 023 8065 6650 / 07825 120 088

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