



COSTA CRUISES' INAUGURAL SEASON KICKS OFF IN TARANTO

June 12, 2023

Taranto has become a new cruise destination for the Italian company: until October 7, Costa Pacifica will call every Saturday as part of a week-long itinerary bound for the Greek islands and Malta. A total of 19 calls and more than 80,000 cruise guests are expected. The 2024 summer season is also already confirmed, with the arrival of Costa Fascinosa.

Taranto, June 10, 2023 – **Costa Cruises'** first season in **Taranto** has started, a brand new addiction in the Italian company's program.

The inaugural call took place last June 3, when **Costa Pacifica**, Italian-flagged ship of the Costa fleet, arrived in Taranto for the first time, carrying more than 5,000 guests among embarkations, disembarkations and transits. Today, on board the ship with another 5,000 guest movements, the start of the season was officially celebrated with the typical maritime tradition "crest" exchange ceremony, attended by **Rinaldo Melucci**, Mayor of Taranto, **Mario Zanetti**, President of Costa Cruises, **Sergio Prete**, President of the Ionian Sea Port System Authority and **Raffaella Del Prete**, General Manager of Italian Cruise Ports of Global Ports Holding.

Until October 7, Costa Pacifica will be in Taranto every Saturday, from 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., for a total of 19 calls, equivalent to an estimated **80,000** guests or more handled. The week-long itinerary includes, in addition to Taranto, Catania, Valletta (Malta), Mykonos (Greece), and Santorini (Greece), allowing guests to enjoy in one vacation the best of the Greek islands, two wonderful destinations in Puglia and Sicily, among the most popular Italian regions for international tourism, and the island of Malta.

In this itinerary, Taranto is both port of embarkation and disembarkation and port of transit for guests embarking at other ports, particularly Catania. The thousands of Italian and foreign cruise guests arriving in Taranto will be able to visit the city and the area on their own, or by choosing from the wide range of organized tours the company has worked on with the support of local institutions and operators. In particular, two tours are entirely dedicated to the city. The first includes a visit to MarTa, Taranto's National Archaeological Museum, and the discovery of the old city; the second is a walking tour of the old city, with a visit to the Aragonese Castle and the cathedral of San Cataldo. Two other special boat tours will also depart from Taranto. One is dedicated to families, aboard a boat with a transparent bottom to admire the spectacular seabed of the Gulf of Taranto. The other will instead allow people to meet researchers from the Jonian Dolphin Conservation association and take them to discover the life and habitat of dolphins in the Gulf of Taranto, in an important activity to observe and defend the marine and coastal heritage of the Ionian Sea. There are also tours dedicated to destinations near Taranto, such as Locorotondo, Alberobello, Matera, Ostuni, Castellana and Polignano, and Manduria.

Costa Pacifica has a gross tonnage of 114,500 and can accommodate up to 3,780 guests. Built in Fincantieri's Genoa Sestri Ponente shipyard and commissioned in 2009, she underwent major renovations in 2022, with the introduction of new experiences to make the vacation on board even more unique, such as the **Archipelago** restaurant, where guests can enjoy menus from three great international chefs such as **Bruno Barbieri**, **Hélène Darroze** and **Ángel León**. This summer Costa Pacifica will also have a special guest: during four cruises departing from Taranto, the Italian comedian **Angelo Pintus** will bring aboard his new show "Bau," staged in the ship's theater on 11/6, 9/7, 6/8 and 3/9.

In 2024, Costa Fascinosa, a 3,800-guests ship, will arrive in Taranto, calling every Sunday from June 9 to September 22, visiting the same destinations offered by Costa Pacifica in 2023.

"We are pleased to have brought Taranto onto the map of the valuable tourism we offer in Italy and in all the world destinations visited by our ships. The debut, a week ago, was a success. We want to continue working together with local institutions and operators to promote the excellence of the area and offer ever better experiences to our guests, most of whom come from abroad and discover Taranto, in many cases, for the first time. As further confirmation of our commitment, we have already planned the 2024 summer season, in which we will position Costa Fascinosa in Taranto," - said **Mario Zanetti**, President of Costa Cruises.

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