



AIDA is a pioneer for barrier-free travel

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More and more guests with impairments are consciously choosing a vacation with AIDA Cruises. And for good reason: The German market leader has adapted to the special requirements of people with individual and health impairments. A cruise with AIDA should be possible for every guest. AIDA is committed to inclusion and participation and thus offers all guests an unforgettable experience on the high seas.

In order to continuously optimize the barrier-free travel experience both ashore and on board, the company is constantly breaking new ground, for example with the establishment of the Expert Council under the patronage of Kristina Vogel in April 2022. The Expert Council includes, among others, people with limited walking, visual or hearing abilities, who advise the cruise company from the perspective of a wide range of guest and interest groups.

"The close and trusted cooperation with the Expert Council is a great benefit for all involved. The continuous exchange and common understanding are essential for us to make our ships even more barrier-free and to enable all our guests to enjoy a carefree travel experience," says Steffi Heinicke, Senior Vice President Guest Experience at AIDA Cruises.

As patron of the Expert Council, it is a matter close to Kristina Vogel's heart to constantly improve travel on board for all guests with a wide range of impairments and she is enthusiastic about the commitment that AIDA shows to this so important topic. "For a long time, vacationing in a wheelchair was associated with many challenges for me. On board AIDA, I immediately felt comfortable and welcome. The ships are well thought out, and pretty much all areas on board are barrier-free for wheelchair users. To be able to pack my bags just once and discover several dream destinations in one trip - for me, that's pure luxury that feels wonderfully normal," Vogel enthuses.

With the support of the Barrier-Free Travel Expert Council, many new insights have already been gained and measures defined that make barrier-free travel easier for many impaired guests. The focus was on optimizing guiding systems and signage, especially in the service areas of restaurants and elevators. Important further developments also took place in the area of communication and digitization, such as the implementation of ring induction loops in the Theatrium on board all ships. An induction loop enables a hearing-impaired person to receive the acoustic signals amplified by the loop directly in their hearing aid. And a specially designed AIDA catalog for barrier-free travel can now be read aloud using the "ReadSpeaker" text-to-speech software. Similarly, safety-related topics such as the barrier-free digital safety briefing have been implemented. Initial results have also been presented for shore excursions: Starting this summer season, barrier-free excursions can be offered for the first time at no extra charge and booked via myAIDA. In addition, low-floor buses or wheelchair-accessible buses are increasingly being used in many ports. A new categorization of the excursions according to difficulty levels helps with the appropriate selection.

AIDA expert advice "barrier-free travel" on tour

After the premiere voyage in May 2022 on board AIDAPERLA and various workshops on land, the second expert voyage on the topic of "barrier-free travel" took place from June 3 to 10, 2023. Patron and godmother Kristina Vogel and Nikolaos Rizidis, the visually impaired TikTok star, were among those who accompanied the voyage on board AIDANOVA.

This Expert Council trip also produced further important insights. In various workshops, topics such as optimized and simplified personalized booking processes and digital registration forms were explored in greater depth. How excursion options or offers could be expanded were also in focus. More detailed information on the offers and better visibility of recommendations according to the different types of restrictions should be ensured in the future. In addition, the development of apps and a digitalization for the different restrictions on board were discussed, where a technical compatibility for personal devices and supporting digital safety information can be integrated.

The high-caliber panel of experts once again agreed on this trip: "AIDA takes a leading role for barrier-free travel both in the cruise market and in comparison to land-based offerings." AIDA Cruises convinces with corresponding service and product performances and can once again underpin its strong commitment to more accessibility on board the kissing mouth fleet.

Discover the world barrier-free with AIDA

In order to best prepare a **barrier-free trip in advance of booking**, specially trained AIDA employees are available to guests with individual impairments for personal travel advice.

Almost all **public areas of the AIDA ships**, such as bars, restaurants, lifts, outdoor decks, public toilets and cabins are **accessible without barriers** and equipped with orientation signage in profile and Braille.

A **barrier-free meeting** on the first day of travel ensures proper orientation on board. Here, all questions about excursions, restaurant reservations, individual assistance, equipment rental and much more are answered.

The **barrier-free balcony and inside cabins** are perfectly designed to meet the needs of guests with physical disabilities. A wider, inward-opening automatic door, for example, ensures that the personal oasis of well-being can be reached with ease. Plenty of space for your travel wardrobe and other utensils can be found in the spacious wardrobe, whose clothes rails you can easily reach by means of a lift system.

can pull down, space. The bathroom is comfortable thanks to a height-adjustable sink and a ground-level

Shower with shower seat also barrier-free. If desired, a deaf set with vibration alarm function and pager can be installed in all cabins - for haptic alarm signals, calls, wake-up calls or door signals.

Numerous aids can be **borrowed on** board, for example wheelchairs and walkers, shower stools and toilet seat raisers, mobile grab bars for the sanitary area and deaf set (signal system).

Many **restaurants on board are barrier-free**. The paths to and at the buffet are wide enough for wheelchair users to move around and serve themselves comfortably. Several tables are reserved near the entrance area for guests with mobility impairments up to half an hour after the restaurant opens.

All restaurants are prepared for allergies or food intolerances. Only gluten- and lactose-free dishes are offered at the Schonkostbar.

Guests with limited hearing are provided with **reserved seating at shows where** acoustic signals are amplified for hearing aids and implants with tele-coils or inductive receivers.

AIDA's excursion program specifically identifies excursions that are suitable for guests with limited walking ability. To find the optimal shore excursion, these are divided into five levels of difficulty.

Guests can pamper their body and mind in the Body & Soul Spa and Sport. Since not the entire area is barrier-free, the crew finds individual solutions by arrangement.

Further information about an accessible AIDA cruise is available online at www.aida.de/barrierefreiheit or from the Barrier-Free Team at the AIDA Customer Center at +49 (0) 381 / 20 27 08 12.

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