CARNIVAL IN EUROPE

Carnival Corporation & plc not only is the world’s largest cruise company, it is Europe’s as well. And it has a long, storied history of serving European customers.

Indeed, Carnival has very deep roots in Europe, going all the way back to the 1820s, when one of its predecessor companies began sailing regularly between the British Isles and the Iberian Peninsula.

Today, there are three Europe-based and Europe-focused cruise lines in the Carnival stable: P&O Cruises, Costa Cruises and AIDA Cruises. All seven of the Carnival family’s other cruise lines also serve Europe. A fifth Carnival branded cruise company, Cunard, technically is no longer based in Europe. But because of its longstanding historical ties to Britain and the U.K (all three of its ships are named for British monarchs) and its continued service to the British Isles and Europe, Cunard continues to be viewed widely as a European line.

On a combined basis, Carnival’s family of cruises lines over hundreds of sailings each year from ports all over Europe and make port calls in 300 European locations (including the large and near-Europe North Atlantic islands, the near-Mediterranean islands, and Turkey).

Just over half of our consolidated revenue comes from North America, which though still growing is the most mature cruise market in the world. Approximately 35% of our revenue comes from the European market, where there remain significant opportunities to grow the cruise travel market. Between them P&O, Costa, AIDA and Cunard operate a fleet of 35 ships. Nearly all of them are home-ported in Europe. That means that while members of their crews come from all over the world, a large percentage of them now make their permanent homes in Europe.

P&O Cruises’ history dates to 1822, when a London shipbroker and a sailor from the Shetland Isles began operating cargo and mail ships between the British Isles and the Iberian Peninsula. That company evolved into Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company, the name under which it was incorporated.

Cunard also traces its roots to 1840, when it became the first line authorized to provide regularly scheduled trans-Atlantic services.

The company now known as Costa was launched in 1854 in Genoa, Italy, as a trading company dealing mainly in fabrics and olive oil. The enterprise was so successful that its founder, Giacomo Costa fu Andrea, began acquiring ships to capitalize on greater trading opportunities. The 20th Century presented significant challenges, including two world wars that decimated the Costa fleet. Costa rebounded from World War II as a combined cargo-and-passenger line. By the 1960s, as air travel began bleeding away customers from oceanliners, many shipping companies began shrinking their passenger operations or dropped passenger service altogether. Costa tacked against that economic wind and found success in developing the concept of cruising as a leisure travel activity in the Mediterranean. In 1997 Costa was acquired by the American company Carnival Corp., which in 2003 joined the former P&O Princess Cruises to form the dually-listed company Carnival Corp. & plc. Ibero (recently merged into Costa Cruises) was founded in 2003 as Viajes Iberojet, and renamed in 2007 when it was acquired by Carnival Corporation & plc. It targets primarily the Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking market of the Iberian peninsula.
AIDA, based in Rostock, Germany, was launched in the 1990s and was aimed at serving the German-speaking holiday market. The company was acquired in 2000 by Britain’s P&O Princess Cruises, which then merged with America’s Carnival Corp. three years later.