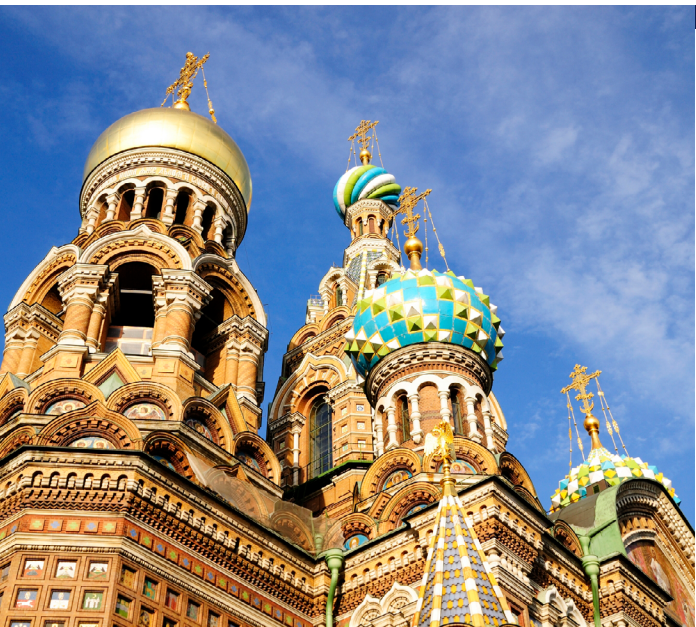


CLIA DESTINATION FACTSHEET

NORTHERN EUROPE & BALTIC



BEST TIME TO GO/WEATHER

Summer is the prime time for Northern Europe and Baltic sailings thanks to longer days and warmer temperatures with June, July and August being peak months.

The season runs from April to October, though sailings to Channel ports are bolstered by Christmas market departures in December.



10 REASONS TO CRUISE HERE

Ease of access – for British cruisers this region is right on their doorstep and for those coming from further afield it is also easily accessible as there are sailings from UK ports and European cities including Amsterdam, Copenhagen and Stockholm.

Cultural treasures – this region, perhaps more than any other, brims with cultural glories, from the Russian majesty of St Petersburg and romantic feel of the Baltic State capitals to atmospheric Amsterdam and the maritime appeal of the British Isles.

Centuries of history – encompassing everything from Scandinavia's Vikings and the rule of tsars and revolution in Russia to the grand royal families of Europe plus the legacy of two world wars and decades of Communist rule.

Lots of choice – this is one of the most popular cruising regions with sailings focusing on Channel ports and around-Britain itineraries or voyages through the Baltic Sea to St Petersburg.

Mixed durations – from mini-cruises of just two or three nights departing the UK for the likes of Amsterdam and Zeebrugge (for Bruges) to two-week or 16-night sailings from British ports to the Baltic and St Petersburg.

Contrasting countries – take your pick from the Nordic spirit of Scandinavia; the medieval roots of the Baltic States; the chirpy craic of Ireland; and the Gallic savoir faire of France.

Russian riches – St Petersburg is the jewel in the crown of Baltic sailings with its collection of ornate palaces, museums, and grand cathedrals, including the Peterhof Palace, Russia's answer to Versailles.

Long summer nights – heading north in summer means days are longer, culminating in the so-called "White Nights" season across the Baltic which is celebrated with festivities and concerts.

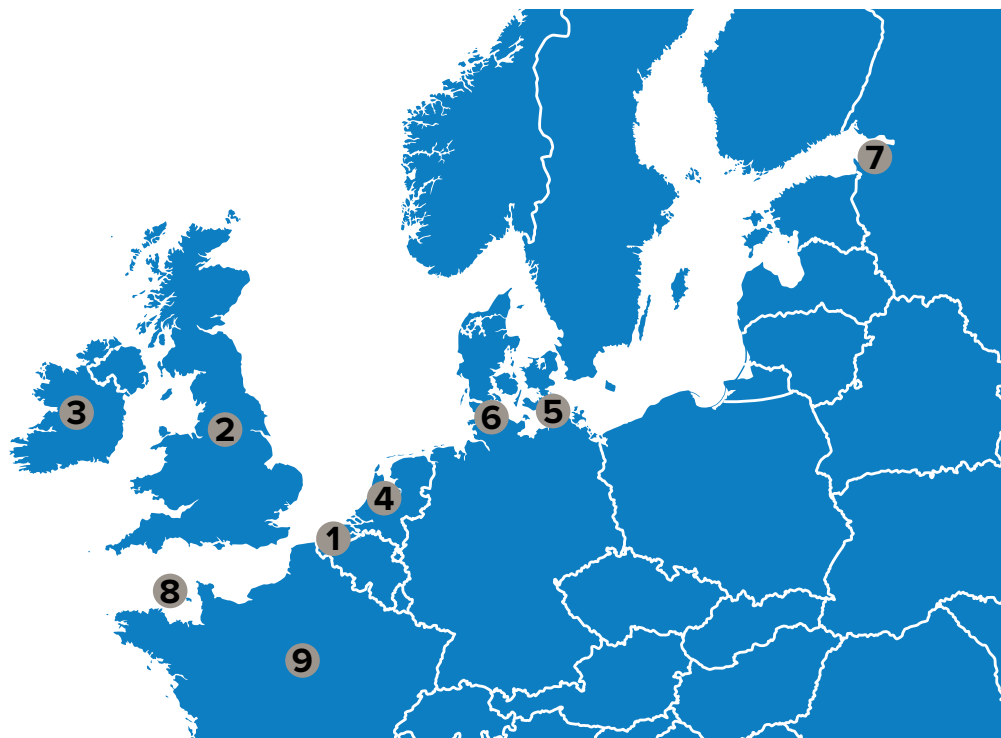
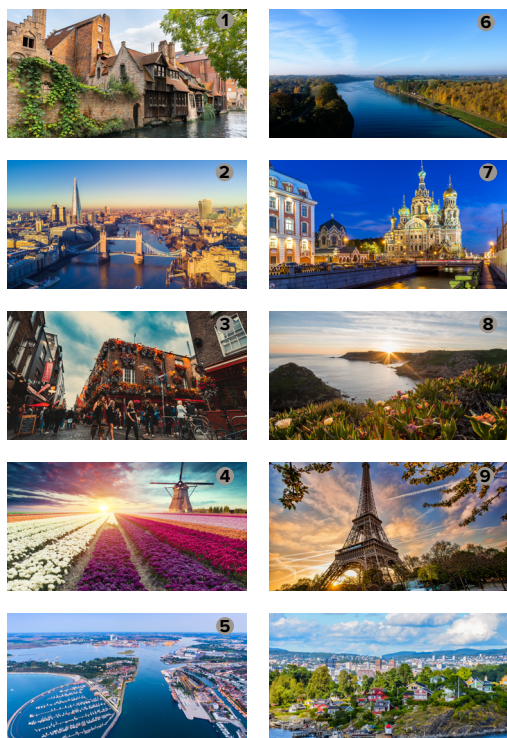
Bucket list bonanza – tick off the Hermitage in St Petersburg, one of the world's most famous museums; the Little Mermaid statue in Copenhagen (though she is rather small!); the canals of Amsterdam; and Giant's Causeway in Northern Ireland.

Culinary contrasts – there's French haute cuisine, Belgian beer and chocolate, British fish and chips, hearty stews and soups of the Baltics and an abundance of seafood fare in Scandinavia.

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10 KEY ATTRACTIONS



1. Bruges – overflowing with chocolate-box charm that runs through its picture-perfect cobbled streets, quaint squares and picturesque canals.

2. Best of British – encapsulating thousands of years of history, royal traditions, diverse landscapes and headline cities led by world-leader London with the likes of Liverpool, Edinburgh and Belfast.

3. Irish craic – the irrepressible spirit of the Emerald Isle that flows from Dublin, Cork, Waterford and beyond with friendly locals, outstanding scenery and evocative history.

4. Amsterdam – a metropolitan gem of canals and coffee-shops along with distinctive Dutch gabled houses lining the network of waterways that criss-cross the city.

5. Warnemünde – a pretty seaside German town with an impressive white-sand beach but, most importantly, the gateway port for Berlin, a three-hour drive away.

6. Kiel Canal – acclaimed as the world's busiest artificial waterway, this 61-mile shortcut runs through Denmark's Jutland peninsula, linking the North Sea with the Baltic.

7. St Petersburg – full of imperial splendours dating from the rule of the tsars, and its turbulent history as the seat of the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917.

8. Channel Isles – Guernsey's capital St Peter Port is popular with its pretty harbour, cobbled streets and interesting wartime history. It is also the gateway for excursions to neighbouring Sark and Herm.

9. French fancies – Paris is the star turn on sailings to Le Havre, which is about a three-hour drive away, but other enticing Gallic Channel ports include charming Honfleur, vibrant Bordeaux and stylish St-Jean-de-Luz on the Bay of Biscay.

Capital attractions – Baltic sailings pack in plenty of primary cities from Scandinavian capitals such as Oslo, Stockholm, Copenhagen and Helsinki, plus the Baltic States capitals of Tallinn, Riga and Vilnius. Passengers on cruises to Le Havre can visit Paris, while Berlin is accessible from Warnemunde and round-UK sailings include calls at ports with access to London, plus Edinburgh, Belfast and Dublin.

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10 THINGS TO KNOW BEFORE YOU GO:

Can be costly – prices ashore can be high, especially in Scandinavia, so guests should save spending for the Baltic States and Russia, which are cheaper. In Channel ports, prices are on more of an even par.

Variable weather – Northern European weather can be notoriously fickle and changeable – veering from heatwaves to freezer-type conditions. The answer is to be prepared for everything, so passengers need to pack lots of layers.

Advance planning is key – with such a rich profusion of ports and so much to see, it pays for clients to do their homework and decide where best to explore independently or on an organised tour.

Walking shoes a must – the best way to explore many of the cities is on foot, so with walking tours along historic cobbled streets sensible footwear is essential.

Currency variations – while the Euro covers many nations in northern Europe, plus the Baltic States and Finland, there are individual currencies for the UK, Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Russia, making a prepaid currency card useful.

Overnight stays – these are a must for St Petersburg where passengers can visit the ballet. Most lines offer at least one overnight stay here, while some offer two- or even three-night stops. Overnight stays or late departures in Copenhagen also bring the chance to experience the Tivoli Gardens in the evening.

Don't overdo it – with such port-intensive itineraries, the schedule can prove exhausting. Clients need to pace themselves.

A question of visas – if passengers do the cruise ship excursions, they can avoid the hassle and cost of obtaining a Russian visa. However, if they want to explore independently, they will need to apply for one.

Consider cruise-and-stay – with sailings starting in sought-after cities such as Copenhagen, Amsterdam and Stockholm there's much scope for adding days on. Those passengers departing from a British port can easily add on a stay in the UK too.

Book early – bucket list tours can sell out quickly, especially to the exclusive concerts and other events that individual cruise lines offer, so it pays to get in quick.

