

CLIA DESTINATION FACTSHEET

WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN & CANARY ISLANDS



BEST TIME TO GO/WEATHER

Cruises to the Mediterranean operate year-round, though summer is the peak time, especially for families. However, this is also the hottest and the busiest time. Spring marks the start of the main season, and the mild temperatures and lack of crowds makes this a key occasion to visit. Autumn is another ideal opportunity as temperatures are warm without the blazing heat of summer and crowds have dissipated. Winter weather is more unpredictable, varying between mild sunshine and cool, rainy conditions.

For the Canaries, the winter months are the best time to visit for the abundance of warm winter sun.



10 REASONS TO CRUISE HERE

Easy to get to – there are numerous departure points for sailings that are easily accessible, such as Barcelona, Palma, Genoa or Civitavecchia (for Rome), while UK passengers have the additional choice of cruising from British ports such as Southampton and Dover.

Lots of variety – few other cruising regions in the world offer such a rich medley of experiences, activities, destinations, cultures and historical draws.

Signature cities – tick off some of the world's most famous metropolises, from the Catalan charms of Barcelona and striking landmarks of Rome to the Renaissance splendour of Florence and the historic streets of Lisbon.

Seasonal appeal – fresh spring days full of blossom and blooms stretch into long hot summers with balmy evenings that give way to blissfully warm autumns with clear vistas and fewer crowds.

Different destinations – from Europe to Africa, this region covers two continents with exotic Morocco and Tunisian ports added to a mix of contrasts, from the pretty Neapolitan Riviera to the Spanish Balearic party isle of Ibiza and historic Valletta in Malta.

Ancient wonders v modern marvels – Rome's ancient glories, the ruined cities of Pompeii near Naples and Carthage in Tunisia, along with a string of Unesco World Heritage sites versus the modernist architecture of Valencia and Gaudi's distinctive architectural legacy in Barcelona.

Contrasting cultures – where the continental café culture and sophisticated shopping streets of the French and Italian Rivas meets the hustle of Tunisian medinas and buzz of Moroccan souks.

Island delights – the Spanish Balearic isles led by Majorca are popular stops along with Malta, the Canary Islands and Madeira, while Sicily, Corsica and Sardinia inject a different flavour and the Aeolian Islands, off the coast of Italy, even boast an active volcano.

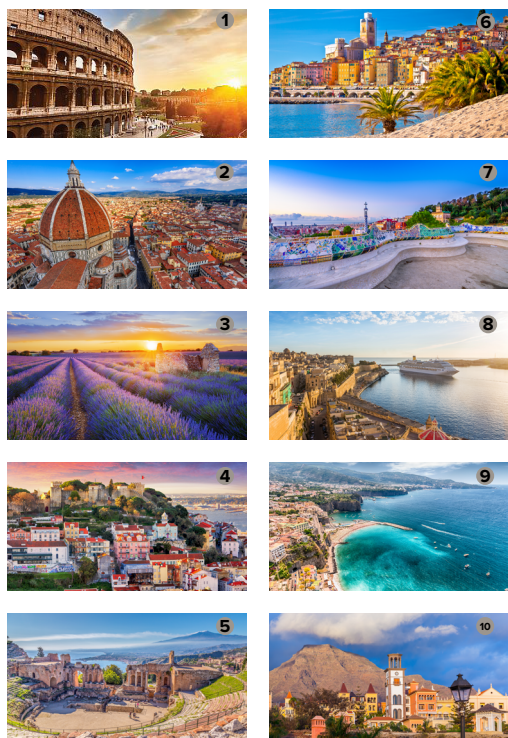
Culinary glories – food glorious food, from Spanish tapas and paella, French wine and fromage and Italian pasta and prosecco. Regional specialities abound along with the flat breads, tagines and dips of North Africa.

Jet-set glitz and rustic escapism – compare the swanky style of Monte Carlo and stylish glamour of Portofino with the romance of Capri and nearby Neapolitan Riviera versus the rugged natural appeal of La Gomera in the Canaries and the craggy landscapes of Corsica.

CLIA DESTINATION FACTSHEET

WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN & CANARY ISLANDS

10 KEY ATTRACTIONS



1. Rome – Italy's capital is one of the world's ultimate cities overflowing with ancient riches and artistic masterpieces, from the Colosseum to the papal splendour of the Vatican, with busy streets and elegant piazzas filled with al fresco cafes and bars.

2. Florence – this Italian city in the heart of Tuscany city brims with Renaissance treasures; of cobbled streets containing centuries-old palaces, medieval chapels and churches and some of the world's leading museums displaying legendary artworks.

3. Provence – rolling fields of purple lavender and bobbing sunflowers, medieval stone villages straddling sweeping green hills and statuesque palaces and cathedrals are hallmarks of this southern corner of France that sweeps down to its southern coastline at Marseille.

4. Lisbon – Portugal's capital is steeped in the history of the world's great explorers and prosperous trading power that has left a legacy of classical landmarks surrounded by sweeping boulevards and graceful squares.

5. Taormina – this pretty hilltop Sicilian town is known for its spectacular setting and beautifully-located Greco-Roman amphitheatre where there are views across to simmering Mount Etna, Europe's most active volcano.

6. Cote d'Azur – the ultimate summer playground of the world's jet-set where the swanky surroundings of Cannes, St Tropez and Monte Carlo play host to the uber rich and stylish set.

7. Barcelona – the Catalan capital is one of Spain's most colourful and cosmopolitan cities that brims with art and culture. Its Roman roots and medieval quarters beautifully balance its modern and avant-garde architecture and lively restaurant scene.

8. Valletta – Malta's capital has an evocative history that comes from its location as the crossroads of the Mediterranean. Founded by the Knights of St John, its stone streets and stately architecture is a testament to its rich past.

9. Neapolitan Riviera – Naples is the gateway to the ruined Roman city of Pompeii, destroyed by Mount Vesuvius nearly 2,000 years ago, and the Neapolitan Riviera, a beautiful stretch of coastline famous for atmospheric towns such as Sorrento and Amalfi and the romantic isle of Capri.

10. Tenerife – the best known of the Canary Islands and dominated by the Mount Teide volcano. Santa Cruz is the vibrant cosmopolitan capital, noted for its well-preserved old town, interesting shops and pretty beach.

CLIA DESTINATION FACTSHEET

WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN & CANARY ISLANDS



10 THINGS TO KNOW BEFORE YOU GO:

Ex-UK sailings – remember that it generally takes around two days to reach Gibraltar from UK ports; thus four days on a round trip to the Mediterranean, and the route crosses the Bay of Biscay where conditions can be unpredictable.

Seasickness advice – passengers prone to seasickness should either consider a fly-cruise or sail to the Mediterranean on one of the larger, more modern ships with the latest stabiliser technology – and stock up on sea-sickness pills as a back-up.

Cruise durations – sailings from the UK tend to be longer, an average of two weeks, to allow for the time it takes to get there. Voyages from Mediterranean ports can be anything from a few nights to two weeks or more, though most are for seven nights.

Sea days – One-week sailings generally have just one sea day as there are so many available ports. The most sea days tend to be on ex-UK cruises.

Ship size – the larger the ships, the more restricted they will be to larger ports that can handle them, such as Civitavecchia, Naples and Barcelona. Smaller ships can still call at these, but will pepper itineraries with smaller stops at, say, Sorrento, St Tropez, Elba, Cannes and Sardinia.

Advance preparation – encourage passengers to research each port in advance so they can plan the trips they want to do and decide where best to take cruise ship excursions or strike out on their own.

Don't be over-ambitious – advise clients not to fall into the trap of booking too many full-day tours on consecutive days as these can prove to be exhausting. They need to pace themselves and mix and match activities.

Book early – remember that tours to the most popular attractions will get booked up first, so recommend early booking before departing, either for cruise ship excursions or any attractions enroute.

Transfers – be aware that some gateway ports can be quite a distance from the towns or cities they are famously linked to. In Italy, for instance, Civitavecchia is around a 90-minute drive from Rome while Livorno is similar.

Tender ports – at some ports such as Monte Carlo, Cannes, St Tropez and Sorrento ships may have to transport guests ashore by tender, which can be difficult for passengers with mobility issues.

